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SPELLING AND WORD GAME AND TOOL

INVENTOR: Krug, Jacqueline - 1759 Hyland Rd., Bayside, California, 95524, United States (US)**APPL-NO:** 248294 (10)**FILED-DATE:** January 7, 2003**LEGAL-REP:** GREENBERG & LIEBERMAN - 314 PHILADELPHIA AVE., TAKOMA PARK, Maryland, 20912**PUB-TYPE:** July 8, 2004 - Utility Patent Application Publication (A1)**PUB-COUNTRY:** United States (US)**US-MAIN-CL:** 273#272**CL:** 273**IPC-MAIN-CL:** [7] A63F 003#00**ENGLISH-ABST:**

A spelling and word game including a multitude of letter tiles, buzzers with lights for each player, and an optional dictionary for looking up words that are contested by players. The letters are shuffled face down before dealing to assure that each player does not know the letters that they have been dealt. At the beginning of play the players divide the letters into even piles, or as close to even as possible piles, face down. The first player to take their turn is determined by each player flipping a random chip in their pile. The person who flips the chip with the highest value goes first and play proceeds clockwise thereafter. Each player takes a turn by flipping one of their letters into the middle of all the players. Once a word has been spotted the player should hit their buzzer and immediately shout out their word. The player then receives points for the correctly spelled word. Words can be stolen from another player by adding letters from the central pile to make a new word using all the letters from the original word. Plural forms of words, and separate verb tenses of the present word are not allowed for stealing purposes. Play continues until an agreed amount of points is met and one player is then declared the winner.

EXMPL-FIGURE: 1**NO-DRWNG-PP:** 4

SUMMARY:**BACKGROUND OF INVENTION**

[0001] The present invention is a spelling and word game including buzzers and lights for each player and letter pieces. More specifically, the present invention is a game for children and adults wherein each player attempts to create words from random letter variations and receives points for words created.

[0002] Often parents and teachers use games to help children learn to spell various words, and to help children's learning experience. These games sometimes include letter tiles, as in SCRABBLE, or letter cubes as in BOGGLE. Parents and teachers can also use more conventional games such as Hangman, wherein the children must ascertain the word or phrase from a series of blanks, while guessing letters one at a time.

[0003] One such spelling game is Spelling Bee Bingo, distributed by Pressman. Spelling Bee Bingo is unlike the present invention because the game is won by completing lines on a Bingo board, it has no buzzers for players to use if they wish to announce a word, and it does not have letter tiles displayed in random formations so the user may guess words of an increasing number of tiles in play as the game progresses.

[0004] The Alphabetical Speed Test, as displayed on the 21st Century Schoolhouse Homepage is a spelling game in which the parent or teacher writes words on separate slips of paper. The student or child must then turn over the pieces of paper and put the words in alphabetical order while another student, the teacher or parent times the child. The Alphabetical Speed Test is unlike the present invention because the words are formed prior to playing the game, it does not display a means of playing for points wherein the person who forms a word most quickly gains points, and it does not have letter tiles arranged in a random fashion so a user may attempt to create words from the random letter tile assortment.

[0005] Another possible tool that teachers and parents can use to test children on their spelling ability is the use of flashcards. The flashcards would each have a word, and possibly a picture of the word. The parent or teacher can call out the word, or show the picture and the student must then spell the word. Flashcards are unlike the present invention because it does not have a method of play including letter tiles, and points and would not be an age appropriate game for adults as well as children.

[0006] Therefore a need has been established for a word game and spelling tool for adults and children including letter tiles, a buzzer and light system a point system corresponding to words created, and a system for stealing words from other players.

SUMMARY OF INVENTION

[0007] The present invention is a spelling and word game including a multitude of letter tiles, buzzers with lights for each player, and an optional dictionary for looking up words that are contested by players. The letters are shuffled face down before dealing to assure that each player does not know the letters that they have been dealt.

[0008] At the beginning of play the players divide the letter chips into even piles, or as close to even as possible piles, face down. The first player to take their turn is determined by each player flipping a random chip in their pile. The person who flips the chip with the highest value goes first and play proceeds clockwise thereafter. Each player takes a turn by flipping one of their letters into the middle of all the players. The player should flip the letter away from himself or herself in such a way that the other players see the letter revealed at the same time as the person revealing the letter. In this manner each player has the same amount of viewing time for each letter. Each letter should be displayed in the center of the playing area in a flat group so that all letters that have been revealed can be seen at all times.

[0009] Play proceeds from one player to the next around the circle or table. When a player believes that they have found a word from the revealed letters they then press their buzzers and call out the word. The words are rated a series of points from the letters and the players continue the game in consecutive rounds. Each round consists of play proceeding from player to player until one player has reached a goal of 5 words completed. The round then ends and the points for that round are calculated for each player. The process of rounds continues until a player reaches the winning point amount set at the beginning of play. A player must press their buzzer before calling out the word for the word to count toward their point total. In alternate embodiments of the present invention, a musical tone, or a small chime may replace the buzzer sound. The amount of winning points is set at the beginning of the game, and is flexible to change with each playing situation.

[0010] The amount of time between letter turns for each player is also flexible, so the players may decide for themselves how much time the letters are analyzed before the next letter is turned. The lapse in time can be a few seconds to a few minutes depending on the player's desires for the length of the game. Once a player presses their buzzer they have three seconds to shout out their word before the light on the buzzer unit goes off. If the player does not shout out the word in this three-second period, they may push their buzzer again for an additional 3-second to shout out their word. The exception to the player pushing their buzzer again and having an additional three seconds is that the other players may push their buzzers when the light goes off from the first buzzer goes off. In this example whichever player hits the buzzer first is the next player to have a chance to call out a word. If two players hit their buzzers at the same time both buzzers will sound simultaneously. This is considered a tie, and the players should then turn over the letter in the pile that caused the tie (the most recent letter to the pile), and place it back in a draw pile. Neither player should call out their word, and no points are received. Play then proceeds in a continuous manner until the end of the round.

[0011] When one player has their buzzer signaled the other players cannot activate their buzzers until the active buzzer and light have finished their buzzer and illumination cycles. The buzzer sounds for a split second and the light stays illuminated for a full three seconds to give the player a chance to call out their answer. Once the light is off, the other players may push their buzzers for a chance to call out a word. Additionally the original player may push their buzzer again after their light is no longer illuminated to call out another word, or to have another chance to call out a word that they did not call out in time. If the player fails to shout out their word in the three seconds while their light is activated, they do not receive credit for the word on their points total, and they lose 10 points from their score total. If the player fails to call out a word while their light is activated or calls out a misspelled word that is challenged successfully by the other players they may choose to lose one of their already formed words instead of the ten point loss from their score. However, since the round ends when one player has reached five words, a player may choose that the loss of points is more advantageous than losing an already formed word. The loss of points can be adjusted for children, in which the child will not lose points for not calling out the word in the three second time period. The reason for not deducting points from a child when they call out a wrong word is that the game should encourage children to learn to spell and the deduction of the points takes the fun out of learning to spell with the game for the children.

[0012] The amount of letters needed to constitute a word is also flexible. For example, a family with small children may wish to allow the children to call out two or three letter words, whereas a group of adults may set the minimum letters needed for each word at five or higher to make the game more interesting and challenging. The game can be used as a vocabulary or learning tool for adults or older children and as spelling and learning tool for young children.

[0013] When a word has been called out, and accepted by the other players the letter chips for that word are removed from the central pile and spelled out in front of the player who called out the word. If the other players believe the word is incorrectly spelled or not a word at all, a dictionary may be used to look up the word and check the spelling. If the word is indeed incorrectly spelled or is not a word the letter chips are moved back to the draw piles. The player who incorrectly spelled the word has a choice of losing ten points from their score, or forfeiting a word that they have already formed. If the player has no words formed they must lose 10 points for the incorrectly spelled word, and play resumes. If the word is correctly spelled the user leaves the word in front of them, and the points from that word are added to their score. Additionally the challenger loses ten points from their score or one of their already formed words,

for an incorrect challenge of the word.

[0014] Players may steal a word from another player at any point by using at least one more letter from the chip pot in addition to the word. For example, if the spelled word is "SHOE" another player may hit their buzzer and call out the word "HORSE" when an "R" becomes available in the center pile. The player who spelled "SHOE" loses the points scored for "SHOE" and the challenger gains the points scored for "HORSE". The challenger then collects the letter chips for "HORSE" and places the word in front of their play space. A player may not steal a word from another player by making a plural of the word, or by changing the tense of a verb by adding a suffix such as "-ED" or "-ING". For example a challenger cannot steal "HORSE" by calling out the word "HORSES". The challenger also has to add letters to the word in order to steal it. For example a player cannot steal "HORSE" by calling out the word "SHOE". Additionally, the players may not call out a verb ending in "ED" or "ING", or a plural form of a noun from the chip pot.

DRWDESC:

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

[0015]FIG. 1 shows a view of the letter chips with each point value shown on each chip.

[0016]FIG. 2 shows a top view of the circuit box, and the storage space for the buzzers.

[0017]FIG. 3 shows a side view of a possible embodiment of a buzzer.

DETDESC:

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0018] The present invention is a spelling and word game for children and adults. The game consists of letter chips (10), and a buzzer (20) with an attached light bulb (100) for each player. The players would additionally supply a dictionary, a score pad and a writing utensil. The letter chips (10) have repeats of certain letters, which are commonly used in spelling words. This allows play to continue after several words have been made.

[0019] First the players should each obtain a buzzer (20), and test the buzzer (20) to make sure that the buzzer (20) and attached light (100) properly works and that the buzzer control box (50) is plugged into an electrical outlet (not shown). In alternate embodiments the buzzers (20) can be supplied with batteries to eliminate the need for an electrical outlet. In alternate embodiments of the present invention, the buzzers (20) can be equipped with musical chimes, tunes or notes instead of a buzzing sound. Once the buzzers (20) have been checked the players should place all the letter chips (10) in the center of the players on a table or other flat surface with the letter sides down. The letter chips (10) should then be moved around for shuffling purposes. Each player may then draw a letter chip (10) to see which player takes the first turn. The player who pulls the letter chip (10) with the highest point value has the first turn and play proceeds in a clockwise direction from that player.

[0020] After the first player has been determined, the players should deal or divide the letter chips (10). The players may either appoint a dealer who passes out the letter chips (10) while they are face down in a clockwise motion until a playable amount of letter chips (10) has been dealt, or grab approximately the same amount of letter chips (10) from the main pile. Regardless of the method used to allocate the letter chips (10), each player should attempt to have approximately the same amount of letter chips (10) as the other players in the game. As there are so many letter chips (10) it is suggested that the players attempt to draw or deal approximately the same amount of letter chips (10) from the beginning and when those letter chips (10) have been played, if necessary the players may draw additional letter chips

(10) or take letter chips (10) from another player. Since the letter chips (10) displayed in the center pile are for all players to use sharing drawing piles or taking letter chips (10) from another player does not deter from play of the game.

[0021] The players must also decide what the minimum number of letters in each word that they agree is acceptable for earning points for that word. For example, the players may decide that 5 letters is the minimum number of letters acceptable for points, and all words below 5 letters are not allowed in game play at all. The goal is to keep the game at a challenging pace of 5 or more letter words. If a young child is playing in the game the players may choose to allow the child to use two or three letter words so that the game is fun for all involved, and age appropriate for the child.

[0022] The players should also decide a target point level for winning the game. The players may choose any point level, and the player who reaches that level has won the game. Additionally the players should decide how long they wish to pause between letter turnings to look for words. The time frame can be anywhere from a few seconds to a few minutes depending on the desired pace of the game. The less time allotted in between each turn, the more challenging the game becomes.

[0023] The players then begin with the determined first player turning a letter chip (10) up in the center of the play area. The turning of the letter chip (10) should be made in a motion away from the player, so that no one player has more opportunity to discern a letter before any of the other players. The turning or flipping of the letter chip (10) must be quick but controlled. The player flipping the letter chip (10) must remove their hand and arm from the playing area immediately so that they do not obstruct the vision of other players. The players should also have their hands on their buzzer (20) at all times during the turning process.

[0024] After the agreed amount of time has passed, the next player then turns a letter chip (10) from their pile. Play continues until a player sees a word spelled from the letters in the central pile of letter chips (10). The player then hits their buzzer (20) and calls out the word they see in the pile. The player must hit their buzzer (20) for the word to count, and the player must shout out their word in the three seconds that the buzzer (20) and light (100) is activated. Once the word has been called the player should move the letter chips (10) from the letter pile that spell the word to in front of their play area. If another player contests or challenges the word, the spelling of the word is checked in the dictionary. Then if the spelling is incorrect the player receives no points for the word and loses either 10 points from their score, or another word that they have already formed. If the word is spelled correctly, the player receives the points for the word corresponding to the to the points on each letter chip (10) of that word, and the challenger loses ten points from their score or one of their already formed words. The loss of points discourages players from taking advantage of the challenge process. After a word has been formed, the player that spelled the word then flips the next letter chip (10) from their draw pile into the center of the play area and the play resumes in a clockwise manner. The points are then written on a score pad at the end of each round. The letter chips (10) associated with the word are considered to no longer be a part of the central pile of letters. A round consists of the players taking turns flipping letter chips (10), and calling out words until one player has reached five words. The play then continues in this manner in a clockwise manner in as many rounds as is necessary until the agreed amount of points has been met.

[0025] The players have a chance to take points from the other players by stealing their words. For example, if a player spelled the word "NOVEL" and the letters "L", and "A" becomes available another player may press their buzzer (20) and call out the word "NOVELLA". The player who called out "NOVELLA" then takes the word "NOVEL" from the first player, and adds the letters "L" and "A" from the central letter chip (20) pile. The stealing of words only requires the other players to add one or more letter to the existing word, and the use of all the existing letters in the existing word. Additionally, proper names and a capital form of a word are not allowed as words that can be made in the game, either as a stealing word or as the original word called. Each of these elements makes the game more challenging for the players and keeps letter chips (20) in the central pile available for other words. These rules can be modified for young children to keep the game at an age appropriate level for all involved.

[0026] FIG. 1 shows a possible embodiment of the letter chips (10). Each letter chip (20) in this embodiment is approximately 1 inch in diameter and is made of a polished wood material, but is not limited to this measurement or

material. As is shown each letter chip (10) is assigned a point value. The letter chips (10) have been assigned points relative to the commonality in words from the English language. However in separate embodiments of the present invention the letter chips

[0027] may be assigned different point values depending on the language group to which the game is marketed. For example, the letter "Q" is assigned a high point value of 11 because it is an uncommon letter in the English language. However the letter "Q" may have a lower point value in a French version of the game, as the letter "Q" is more commonly used in the French language than in the English language.

[0028] As is shown in FIG. 1, the word from the example above "NOVEL" would gain the player 13 points, and the word "NOVELLA" would gain the challenger 17 points. There are 306 total letter chips (10) included in the game. The distribution of letter chips (10) per each letter is as follows: A-29, B-6, C-6, D-12, E-37, F-6, G-9, H-7, I-28, J-3, K-3, L-13, M-7, N-18, O-25, P-6, Q-4, R-14, S-13, T-19, U-12, V-6, W-6, X-4, Y-7, and Z-4. The distribution of letter chips (10) may also change with separate language versions of the present invention.

[0029] FIG. 2 shows a top view of the circuit box (50) with the receiving circuits (40) for the buzzers (20) and the A/C adapter plug (30). In between the receiving circuits (40) there is a storage space (60) for the player to place a small dictionary, score pad, extra light bulbs, and pencils when the game is not in use. The six buzzers (20) each have a cord (FIG. 3) leading to the circuit box (50) and are shown in FIG. 2 in their respective storage spaces for when the game is not in use. The circuit box (50) in this embodiment is 14 inches long, by 7 inches wide and 6 inches high, but is not limited to those measurements.

[0030] FIG. 3 shows a side view of a possible embodiment of a buzzer (20). The buzzer (20) has a rubber base (80) to keep the buzzer (20) still on a table or slippery surface during play. The cord (70) from the buzzer (20) connects the buzzer (20) to the circuit box (50). The light bulb (100) is a long lasting bulb and can be replaced as conventional light bulbs. When the player believes they see a word in the central letter chip (20) pile they should depress the switch (90) on the top of the buzzer (20). Once the switch (90) is depressed, the buzzer emits a short buzzing sound, and lights the light bulb (100). The player has three seconds from depression of the switch (90) to shout out the word before the light bulb (100) is no longer illuminated, and another player can depress their switch (90) and call out a word. The circuit box (50) does not allow more than one buzzer (20) to illuminate or buzz at the same time, unless two buzzers (20) are pressed at exactly the same time. If two buzzers (20) are pressed at exactly the same time, both buzzers (20) will buzz and illuminate, and neither player should call out a word. The letter chip (10) which caused the tie, the most recently exposed letter chip (10) should be turned over and returned to the draw pile. Play will continue until the end of the round. In alternate embodiments of the game the buzzers (20) can be battery operated through conventional means. The buzzer (20) in this embodiment is 1 inch high, by 5 inches long and [Threequarters] inches wide, but is not limited to those measurements. The light bulbs (100) can be of any color, and the game will come with six separate color bulbs for use in the six buzzers (20). Also, the buzzer (20) can be manufactured with musical tones, or jingles instead of a buzzing sound.

[0031] In the alternate embodiments of the present invention the light bulbs (100) can come with decorative themes such as wildlife, or sports team names. Additionally a deluxe version of the game may include a dictionary, score pad, and pencils for scoring.

[0032] The present invention is not limited to the sole embodiments described above.

ENGLISH-CLAIMS:

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1. A method for using a spelling and word game tool for at least two players, comprising: dividing a series of letter chips amongst the players; flipping one of each of the player's letter chips upon each of the player's turns; and providing each of the players a period of time to call out words formed of said series of flipped letter chips after each of

the player" s turns.

2. A method for using a spelling and word game tool, as in claim 1, wherein each of said players has a buzzer for signaling the player" s intent to call out a word.

3. A method for using a spelling and word game tool, as in claim 2, wherein said at least two players are each assigned one of said at least two buzzers at beginning of play.

4. A method for using a spelling and word game tool, as in claim 3, wherein said letter chips show a letter of the alphabet on one side and are exactly the same as said other letter chips on the opposite side.

5. A method for using a spelling and word game tool, as in claim 4, wherein said at least two players should allocate approximately even numbers of said letter chips to each player at beginning of play, with said letter side down and not visible to any of said at least two, players.

6. A method for using a spelling and word game tool, as in claim 5, wherein said at least two players should turn up one of said letter chips and the player with the closest letter to the top of the alphabet should make the first move.

7. A method for using a spelling and word game tool, as in claim 6, where in said first player should turn up a letter chip in a central pile, and play should continue with other of said at least two players turning up their allocation of said letter chips one chip per one player at a time around the group of said at least two players in a clockwise fashion.

8. A method for using a spelling and word game tool, as in claim 7, wherein one of said players can call out a word from said uncovered letter chips in said central pile, but must first activate one of said at least two buzzers before calling out the word, in order for the word to count toward said player" s point total.

9. A method for using a spelling and word game tool, as in claim 8, wherein said player removes said letter chips from said central pile which form their called out word.

10. A method for using a spelling and word game tool, as in claim 9, wherein another player may steal said player" s formed word by adding one or more letters to said already formed word to form a new word.

11. A method for using a spelling and word game tool, as in claim 10, wherein said new word must be an entirely new word, and not a plural form of said new word, or another tense of said new word.

12. A method for using a spelling and word game tool, as in claim 11, wherein each of said letter chips have an assigned point value for said game.

13. A method for using a spelling and word game tool, as in claim 12, wherein said player gains the total of points from said letter chips in their formed word score.

14. A method for using a spelling and word game tool, as in claim 13, wherein another player may challenge the formed word of said player, if said another player believes the word is misspelled or is not a word at all.

15. A method for using a spelling and word game tool, as in claim 14, wherein if said formed word is misspelled or not a word at all said player loses 10 points from their score, and if the word is spelled correctly said challenging player loses ten points from their score.

16. A method for using a spelling and word game tool, as in claim 15, wherein play continues until at least one player has reached five completed words, completing one round of play.

17. A method for using a spelling and word game tool, as in claim 16, wherein play continues through as many rounds is needed, until one of said at least two players reaches an agreed point amount, and wins the game.

18. A method for using a spelling and word game tool, as in claim 2, wherein players may determine a minimum number of letters needed for a word to count for any said players point total.

19. A method for using a spelling and word game tool, as in claim 2, wherein said at least two players should decide a winning point amount before beginning play.

20. A method for using a spelling and word game tool, as in claim 2, wherein said at least two players can modify the length of words needed to count for younger players or school age children learning to spell.

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