

WildWords' Rules

WildWords is the adventurous crossword game that explores and expands creative thinking and strategizing skills. Choices abound as you navigate your vocabulary out of old familiar word-game waters into the uncharted territory of WildWords. The more you play, the more you'll discover the demanding complexities and engaging subtleties of WildWords!

Getting Started: 2 to 4 players.

Players draw seven letter tiles from "the pot" and place them on their trays.

One player goes first, by coin flip (or any other mutually agreed method). Proceed clockwise.

The game's first play must cover the board's center square.

Players may "play" (make a word on the board) or "pass" their turn.

After any *successful* play – that is, a play on the board that *goes unchallenged* or *survives a challenge* -- the player draws tiles to restore his/her tray to seven tiles. If "the pot" lacks enough tiles to supply replacement, then the player empties "the pot" and plays on with fewer than seven tiles in the tray.

All subsequent plays must include at least one tile that lies adjacent to a tile already on the board. If a play consists of placing two or more tiles on the board, then *all* of said play's tiles must lie in either the horizontal or the vertical direction on the board. No intervening *empty* board squares are permitted. A play may, however, incorporate tiles already on the board.

The Asterisk Tile: The asterisk tile introduces a wildcard function into WildWords. There are 12 asterisk tiles in the pot. The asterisk tile may represent **any one letter or a string of contiguous letters**. Asterisk tiles have a point value of zero.

A single asterisk tile at the intersection of vertical and horizontal words may represent **different letters or different**

letter-strings in the two words. An asterisk tile that is already on the board may be used to represent a *new letter* or *letter-string* in a new play that includes that tile.

Turn-To-Wild Squares on the board transform any tile played on them into an asterisk tile for the remainder of the game. A tile played on any of the Turn-To-Wild squares is always placed blank-side-up. A player need not display the other side of the tile to opposing players. Thus players can never be sure what tiles remain in the pot.

Trading Letter Tiles: A player may trade all letter tiles every time it is his/her turn. Only *one* such trade is allowed per turn. The trade option may be exercised any time during a player's own turn but never during an opponent's turn. A trade is exercised as follows: (1) **all (not some) tiles on the tray are put back into "the pot,"** (2) "the pot" is mixed or shuffled, and (3) a fresh draw is made. The player may then proceed to make a play. There is no penalty for trading tiles.

The Play: When it is a player's turn, s/he may play (that is, by making a word) or pass. Players are not obliged to tell opponents what letters or letter strings are represented by their asterisk tiles (or flipped tiles) UNTIL and UNLESS that play is challenged by an opponent.

The Bluff: Since players are not obliged to tell opponents what letters or letter strings are represented by their tiles, players can bluff; i.e., play tiles for which they have no corresponding word or words in mind.

Challenges: When a play is made, an opponent might choose to challenge if s/he believes the player has bluffed, misspelled, or otherwise misrepresented a word. An opponent is entitled to know the point value of the play before deciding whether or not to challenge.

2-Player Game Challenge: Once challenged, the player making the play must spell out the letters or letter strings represented by the asterisk tiles (or flipped tiles) used in his/her play. Remember, one asterisk tile may require two

explanations—vertical use and horizontal use.

All words made in the play are checked against the agreed dictionary reference. If any word made by the play fails this dictionary check, then the entire play fails.

(Note: After a game or two, the complete spelling of all words formed in the play makes it obvious what asterisk tiles represent. It will not be necessary to explain each asterisk individually. Be sure to check, however, that the opponent has offered a spelling that is compatible with the tiles played. If not, the challenge succeeds as well.)

If the challenge **succeeds** (the played word is **not** in the dictionary reference as spelled), then tiles are removed from the board, and the player has lost his/her turn. It becomes the challenger's turn.

If the challenge **fails** (the played word **is** real and correct), then the play remains on the board, the score is added, and the player gets another turn. The challenger has lost his/her next turn.

3 or 4 Player Game Challenge: Any of the opposing players may launch a challenge. Once a challenge is launched, the player is obliged to explain the use of asterisk tiles in all new words. At that point (before the play is checked in the dictionary) each of the other opposing players must decide if s/he agrees with the challenge or disagrees with the challenge. (Note: these players, who did not start the dispute, have the benefit of hearing the spelling before taking sides.)

If the challenge **succeeds** (the played word is **not** in the dictionary reference as spelled), then the tiles are removed from the board. The player has lost his/her turn. It becomes the next person's turn. Opponents other than the challenger who chose to disagree with the challenge lose 20 points.

If the challenge **fails** (the played word **is** real and correct), then the play remains on the board and the score is added. It still becomes the next person's turn, but the challenger – and all other players who chose to agree with the challenge -- lose 20 points.

Only the player making a play in a 3 or 4 player game can lose a turn as a result of a challenge. The opposing players can lose 20 points at most.

Important Note: For quality players, the 20 point penalty should be raised to 40 points.

The Game's End: The game is over when one player uses all his/her tiles, and there are none remaining in the pot.

2-Player Game End: The total value of tiles held by the opponent is tripled and added to the score of the player who went out. If both players repeatedly pass, the value of the opposing player's tiles is added to each player's score.

3 or 4-Player Game End: When playing with three or four players, the player going out adds the value of the tiles held by all other players to his/her score.

Scoring: Special squares increase or decrease a play's score. DOUBLE-THE-LETTER and TRIPLE-THE-LETTER squares multiply the value of the individual letter played on them. DOUBLE-THE-WORD and TRIPLE-THE-WORD squares multiply the total score of a word played across them. **Special squares give their bonuses only the first time a tile is played on them.**

TURN-TO-WILD SQUARES: 20 squares convert any tile played on them to an asterisk – thus reducing that tile's point value to zero but also allowing that tile to represent one letter or a string of letters of the player's choosing. A tile played on such a square is flipped so the blank side is up.

PENALTY SQUARES: Four special squares subtract 20 points from the value of a play as a whole. Even if words are formed in two directions over a penalty square, only 20 (not 40) points are subtracted. To lose 40 points, you must cover two penalty squares.

BONUS FOR "THE BOMB." There is a 40-point bonus for playing all 7 tiles in a single play.

The scoring procedure is as follows:

1. Find all new words made.
2. Figure the value of each new word made.
3. Add those values.
4. Make special adjustments for the play as a whole.

For example, the first player plays:

TURN TO WILD			DOUBLE THE LETTER		DOUBLE THE LETTER
LOSE 20 ON PLAY	F 5	E 1	N 1	D 2	
TURN TO WILD			DOUBLE THE LETTER		DOUBLE THE LETTER

Only one word is played here -- FEND. It's not possible to make more than one word on the first play since all plays must be a contiguous string of tiles laid down in either a horizontal or a vertical direction. The first play is also the game's only play that need not attach to tiles already on the board.

The "F" is played on a DOUBLE-THE-LETTER square. Thus the initial score for the word is $2 \times 5(F) + 1(E) + 1(N) + 2(D)$, which totals 14. The "D" covers the center square, which is a DOUBLE-THE-WORD square. Thus the value for the play is 2×14 , which totals 28.

The second player plays:

1	S				TURN TO WILD
1	T				TURN TO WILD LOSE 20 ON PLAY
1	A	DOUBLE THE WORD			DOUBLE THE LETTER
1	I		TRIPLE THE LETTER		
				DOUBLE THE LETTER	
0	*	5	F	1	E
					DOUBLE THE LETTER

This player has made two words, DEFEND and STAINING. DEFEND is worth $0 + 5 + 1 + 1 + 2$, which totals 9 points. Since the FEND tiles were previously played, the second player is neither benefited nor penalized by special squares under FEND's letters. To make STAINING the player took advantage of 2 squares that turn a tile into an asterisk -- thus also losing the point value for those letters.

The points for the word are $1 + 1 + 1 + 1 + 0 + 0 + 0$, which totals 4. Since the player placed the "T" on a DOUBLE-THE-WORD square, the value of the word is 2×4 , which is 8. Thus the combined value for the two words the player made is $9 + 8$, which totals 17. However, the player also covered a LOSE-20-ON-PLAY (Note: "*ON-PLAY*" *not* "*ON-WORD*") square, which brings the total score (at this point) to $17 - 20$, or minus 3.

HOWEVER, the player did this because it allowed him to collect the 40 bonus points for using all seven tiles in the same play. The score for the play is thus $-3 + 40$, which totals 37.

The first player now plays:

S 1	* 0			TURN TO WILD
T 1	O 1		TURN TO WILD	LOSE 20 ON PLAY
A 1	X 7			DOUBLE THE LETTER
I 1		TRIPLE THE LETTER		
			DOUBLE THE LETTER	
* 0	F 5	E 1	N 1	D 2
			DOUBLE THE LETTER	

This player has made 4 new words -- SO, TO, AX, and FOX.

SO is worth 1 point.
TO is worth 2 points.
(The T was already played, so the DOUBLE-THE-WORD square under it does not count.) AX is worth 8 points, but the X was placed on a DOUBLE-THE-WORD square, which makes that word 16 points. FOX is worth 8 points, but again the X is on a DOUBLE-

THE-WORD Square, which makes that word 16 points.

The total score for the play, then, is the total of all the new words made: 1 + 2 + 16 + 16, which totals 35 points. There are no adjustments to this total since the player neither covered a LOSE-20-ON-PLAY square nor used seven tiles in the play.

Tile Distribution: There are 94 tiles in total ranging in point value from zero to nine. Six spare tiles are provided to be used as needed in the event tiles are lost. These tiles should be removed and stored separately until needed.

Tile	Pts	#	Tile	Pts	#	Tile	Pts	#
*	0	12	I	1	6	R	1	6
A	1	7	J	8	1	S	1	4
B	4	2	K	6	1	T	1	5
C	2	2	L	2	3	U	2	3
D	2	3	M	3	2	V	6	1
E	1	10	N	1	5	W	6	2
F	5	2	O	1	6	X	7	1
G	3	2	P	3	2	Y	5	2
H	3	2	Q	9	1	Z	7	1

The Dictionary and Allowable Words: Players may agree on one or more dictionaries prior to the start of the game. Capitalized words, strictly foreign words, hyphenated words, and abbreviations are not allowed.

Challenged plays incorporating words (as spelled by the player) not in any of the agreed upon dictionaries (applying their conventions for regular endings) are deemed to be successful challenges.

It does not matter if the word was found at some other time in some other dictionary.

Having some idea of the breadth of the dictionary you are playing with—encyclopedic versus collegiate—is another factor that can add depth and challenge to WildWords.

Playing With A Chess Clock: While a player is contemplating his play, his clock is running. Once the play is made, the clock is stopped while the score is determined. Once the score is determined, the clock of his opponent is started while the opponent contemplates whether to challenge or not. If the opponent does not challenge, he announces that and the player may draw his new tiles. If the opponent does challenge, the clock is stopped while the merits of the challenge are determined.

ACCEPTED TERMINOLOGY:

THE BOMB – using all seven tiles in a play

HIPSWOP – High Point Short Word Opportunity (often played in the corners)

TD or **TOUCHDOWN** – a play incorporating both a TRIPLE-THE-WORD and DOUBLE-THE-WORD square thus yielding 6 times the word played.

BLT – Bad Letter Trade (a problem for players who trade letters too often)

For other information and tips, visit www.wildwords.us
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