

# Braille Scrabble (GB95)

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Designed in association with Royal National Institute of Blind People.

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## General description

Scrabble (TM) is a word game for two, three or four players. Play consists of forming interlocking words, crossword fashion, on the Scrabble playing board, using letter tiles with various score values. The object of the game is to get the highest score. Each player competes by using their tiles in combinations and locations that take best advantage of letter values and premium squares on the board. The combined total score for a game may range from about 400 to 800 points or more, depending on the skill of the players.

This version of the game has been adapted to include braille markings on both the board and tiles.

## Items supplied with Braille Scrabble

100 letter tiles

4 racks

1 tile bag

1 playing board

## Letter tiles

There are 100 tiles: 98 tiles have a letter of the alphabet and the associated number score in braille and print. Two tiles are blank and have no score value, but can be used as any letter desired. When a blank tile is played, the player must state what letter it represents, after which it cannot be changed during the game.

The braille embossed on the tile consists of two items: a letter from A to Z at the top left, the number that letter scores at the bottom left, which ranges from one to ten. Please note there is no numeral sign before the number.

There are 27 different tiles in the Scrabble game: 26 have different letter and number combinations; the other is completely blank. The following table describes the 27 types of tiles, giving: the letter; its value; and the quantity of tiles supplied in the set.

* Letter A; value 1; 9 tiles.
* Letter B; value 3; 2 tiles.
* Letter C; value 3; 2 tiles.
* Letter D; value 2; 4 tiles.
* Letter E; value 1; 12 tiles.
* Letter F; value 4; 2 tiles.
* Letter G; value 2; 3 tiles.
* Letter H; value 4; 2 tiles.
* Letter I; value 1; 9 tiles.
* Letter J; value 8; 1 tile.
* Letter K; value 5; 1 tile.
* Letter L; value 1; 4 tiles.
* Letter M; value 3; 2 tiles.
* Letter N; value 1; 6 tiles.
* Letter O; value 1; 8 tiles.
* Letter P; value 3; 2 tiles.
* Letter Q; value 10; 1 tile.
* Letter R; value 1; 6 tiles.
* Letter S; value 1; 4 tiles.
* Letter T; value 1; 6 tiles.
* Letter U; value 1; 4 tiles.
* Letter V; value 4; 2 tiles.
* Letter W; value 4; 2 tiles.
* Letter X; value 8; 1 tile.
* Letter Y; value 4; 2 tiles.
* Letter Z; value 10; 1 tile.
* Blank; value 0; 2 tiles.

The tiles have small notches at each corner on the underside. These notches fit onto pegs located at the corners of each square on the playing board. This is called the Tilelock (TM) system.

## Racks

Each player takes a rack at the beginning of the game on which they can display and arrange their tiles. Place the rack in front of you on a flat surface and feel at both ends for a curved surface. With the curved surface facing you, there are two flat surfaces, recessed inside the curved area. One of these surfaces has a small lip and the other is flat. Ensure that the surface with the lip is at the bottom of the curved surface. The rack is now the correct way up. Throughout the game, tiles are placed in the rack so that they sit just behind the lip at the front of the rack

## Tile bag

All the tiles are placed in the bag at the beginning of the game.

## Playing board

The playing board consists of 15 by 15 squares in the playing area. There are pegs at the corners of each square to help locate the tiles in their proper positions.

On some squares there are labels with tactile dots and bars. These mark the premium letter squares and premium word squares. To ensure that the board is correctly orientated, turn it so that the markings on the premium squares run horizontally at the bottom of the labels, nearest you. The board is now facing you correctly and can be rotated as each player takes their turn.

## Premium letter and word squares

The premium letter and word squares are identified by colours and tactile marks on the labels.

The double letter square is blue and has two dots at the base of the label. This square doubles the score of a letter placed on it.

The triple letter square is blue and has three dots at the base of the label. This square trebles the score of a letter placed on it.

The double word square is red and has two horizontal bars at the base of the label. This square doubles the score for the entire word when a tile is placed on it.

The triple word square is red and has three horizontal bars at the base of the label. This square trebles the score for the entire word when a tile is placed on it.

If a word crosses both premium letter and word squares, all the bonus letter values are added up before the complete word score is doubled or trebled.

The bonus scores of the premium squares only apply to the turn in which the tiles are placed on them. When a blank is placed on a red triple or double word square, the sum of the tiles in the word is doubled or trebled even though the blank itself has no score value. When it is placed on a blue triple or double letter square, the value of the blank tile is still zero.

## Navigating around the board

Place the board so that it is facing you with the tactile marks at the bottom of the labels on the premium letter and word squares.

Locate the first pin at the top left corner of the board. This is also the top left corner of the first square on the board. The next pin on the right of this marks the top left corner of the second square. Continue across the top of the board until you have found 16 pins. The sixteenth pin marks the top right corner of the fifteenth square horizontally.

Go back to the first pin at the top left corner of the board and then move down to locate the pin below it. This marks the top left corner of the second square vertically.

Continue down the board until you have found the sixteenth pin, which marks the bottom left corner of the fifteenth square vertically.

In the centre square of the board is a label with a tactile star shape on it. The first word in a Scrabble game is always placed so that one of its letters is on the star, either vertically or horizontally.

Locate the star and notice that most of the premium letter and word squares are arranged in an ‘X’ (diagonal cross) formation right across the board, with others appearing as an arrow shape formation pointing at the centre of the ‘X” (the tactile star).

Everyone is now ready to play Scrabble.

## Rules of play

### Keeping score

One player is elected as scorekeeper. They may also take part in the game. The scorekeeper keeps tally of all the players’ scores, entering a value after each turn.

### To begin playing

All the tiles are placed in the bag. Each player takes a tile out to determine who plays first. The player who has the tile nearest the beginning of the alphabet, with the blank preceding ‘A’, plays first. The exposed tiles are put back into the bag and the bag is shaken to shuffle them.

Each player, in turn, then draws seven new tiles and places them on their rack without disclosing them to the other players.

Play continues clockwise, and on each subsequent turn players have the choice of exchanging tiles, passing, or placing a word on the board.

### Exchanging tiles

Any player may use their turn to replace any or all of the tiles on their rack. They do so by discarding them face down, drawing the same number of new tiles, then mixing the discarded tiles with those remaining in the bag. They then wait their next turn to play.

### Passing (missing a turn)

Instead of placing tiles on the board, or exchanging tiles, a player may also decide to pass, whether or not they are able to make a word (or words). However, should all players pass twice in succession, the game ends and the person with the highest score is declared the winner.

### Placing the first word

The first player combines two or more of their tiles to form a word and places them on the board to read either across or down with one tile on the centre square (star). Diagonal words are not permitted.

All tiles played in this and subsequent turns must be placed in one continuous line horizontally or vertically. Any words listed in a standard English dictionary are permitted, except those spelt with an initial capital letter, abbreviations, prefixes and suffixes, and words requiring apostrophes and hyphens. Foreign words in a standard English dictionary that are considered to have been absorbed into the English language are allowed. Once a tile has been placed on the board, it may not be moved unless the word is successfully challenged.

### Challenging words

Once a word has been played, the word may be challenged before the score is added up and the next player starts their turn. At this point only, you may consult a dictionary to check spelling or usage. If the word challenged is unacceptable, the player takes back their tiles and loses their turn.

### Example of playing the first word

The first player picks seven tiles randomly from the bag and arranges them on their rack. The letters are:

A I T R N V R

The player plays the word TRAIN.

The letter N is placed on the centre square (the tactile star) and the other letters are placed to the left of the letter N.

### Scoring the first word

A player completes their turn by counting and announcing their score, which is recorded by the scorekeeper. The score for the turn is calculated by adding up all the values of the numbers on the tiles, plus the premium values resulting from placing tiles on premium squares.

In this example, T scores 1 and is doubled to 2 because it is on a double letter square; R, A, I and N each score 1, giving a total of 6. **Please note:** The centre square with the star counts as a double word square, so the whole score is doubled to 12 points.

### Ending a turn

At the end of every turn, the player draws as many new tiles as they have played, thus always keeping seven tiles on their rack. After their first move, Player 1 has the letters R and V left on their rack, so they must therefore draw five new tiles.

### Added 50 point bonus

Any player who plays all seven of their tiles in a single turn scores a premium of 50 points in addition to their regular score for the turn. The 50 points are added on after doubling or trebling a word score.

In the previous example, if player one had originally picked the letter E instead of the letter V, giving: A.E.I.N.R.R.T, they could play the word TRAINER, placing the letter R at the end of the word on the centre square, and the other letters to its left. This word scores 16 points in normal play (A is on a double letter square and the whole word is doubled), plus 50 bonus points for placing all seven tiles in one go – a total of 66 points. Player one then draws seven new tiles.

### Subsequent turns

The second player, and then each player in turn, has the choice of exchanging tiles, passing or adding one or more tiles to those already played so as to form new words of two or more letters.

All tiles played in any one turn must be placed in only one row across, or only one column down the board. If they touch other tiles in adjacent rows, they must form complete words, crossword fashion, with all such tiles.

The player gets the full score for all words formed or modified by their play. They include the bonus scores of any premium squares on which they have placed the tiles.

Returning to the example, player two has the following tiles on their rack: H O B R T S S

### There are five different ways that new words can be formed:

1. Adding one or more tiles to the beginning or end of a word already on the board, or to both the beginning and end of that word.

So in the example, TRAINER becomes TRAINERS, STRAINER or STRAINERS.

Player two makes STRAINER, and because the S is on a triple word square, the score is 3 \* 8 = 24. The double letter under the A and the double word of the centre square do not count because these tiles had already been played.

1. Placing a word at right angles to a word already on the board. The new word must use one of the letters of the word already on the board.

For example, player two adds H R O B to the T already on the board to make THROB (refer to example 1).

On the playing board the H sits under the T, the R under the H and so on. The R in THROB is on a triple letter square which trebles its value.

THROB scores 12. (T =1, H =4, R = 3 \* 1, 0 =1, and B =3), giving 1 + 4 + 3 + 1 + 3 = 12

1. Placing a complete word parallel to a word already played so that adjoining tiles also form complete words.

For example, HOB is played, which also forms the three short words HI, ON and BE (refer to example two).

The H sits above the I in TRAINER, the O sits above the N in TRAINER and the B sits above the E in TRAINER.

In this example, more than one word is formed in the same turn, and each of the four words is scored. The common letters are counted (with full premium value when they are on premium squares) in the score for each word. So, as the letter B is on a double letter square,

HOB: scores 4 + 1 + (2 times 3) = 11.

HI: scores 4 + 1 = 5.

ON: scores 1 + 1 = 2.

BE: scores 2 \* 3 + 1 = 7 (as the letter B is on the double letter square).

So the total for the turn is 11 + 5 + 2 + 7 = 25.

1. The new word may also add a letter to an existing word.

For example THROBS is played with the S linking onto TRAINER to make STRAINER as well. The B in THROBS sits above the S in STRAINER, the O above the B, and so on (refer to example three).

The S in STRAINER is on a triple word, scoring 3 \* 8 = 24. S is also on a triple word in THROBS (with H on a double letter square). This scores 3 \* 15 = 45.

Adding the two scores, this gives 24 + 45 = 69 points for the turn.

1. The last variation would be to “bridge” two or more letters. This can only happen on the fourth move or later in the game.

In this board layout THROBS and STRAINER are in the same place. TEACHER has been added by using the T in THROBS. NEAR has been added vertically using the A in TEACHER. SORT has been added vertically by using the R in TEACHER (refer to example four).

Adding the following letters makes the bridge:

C and O is fitted horizontally before the N in NEAR; Q U E is fitted after the N and before the S in SORT; T is added after the S in SORT to make CONQUEST (refer to example five).

Sometimes a word may cross two premium word squares. The word score is doubled then re-doubled – four times the complete word score; or trebled and then re-trebled – nine times the complete word score!

CONQUEST is played for 19 points, with Q over the double letter for an extra 10 points = 29. It is then trebled to 87 points, and then trebled again for a total of 261 points!

### End of the game

The game ends when all the tiles have been drawn (the bag is empty) and one of the players has used all the tiles in their rack. Alternatively, the game ends when all possible turns have been taken or all players have passed twice in consecutive turns.

After all the scores are added up, each player’s score is reduced by the sum of their un-played tiles, and if one player has used all their tiles, their score is increased by the sum of the un-played tiles of all the other players.

For example, if Player one has an X and an A left on their rack at the end of the game, their score is reduced by 9 points. The player who used all their tiles adds 9 points to their score. Remember – the game can be won or lost on the last letter in the bag!

## Clarification of commonly misunderstood rules

If any tile touches another tile in adjacent rows, it must form part of a complete word, crossword fashion, with all such tiles.

A word can be extended on both ends within the same move e.g. TRAINER to STRAINERS.

All tiles played in any one turn must be placed in one continuous line horizontally or vertically.

It is not permissible to add tiles to various words, or form new words in different parts of the board in the same turn.

The bonus scores of the premium squares only apply to the turn in which the tiles are placed on them.

When more than one word is formed in a single turn, each word is scored. The common letters are counted (with full premium value when they are on premium squares) in the score for each word.

If a word crosses two premium word squares the word is doubled and re-doubled - four times the complete word score: or trebled and re-trebled - 9 times the complete word score.

## Other common queries

When one player has used all their tiles and the bag is empty, the game is at an end. No more moves may be made. In some games no player succeeds in using all their tiles. In this case the game continues until all possible moves have been made. If a player is unable to move, they pass their turn. If all players pass twice, in consecutive turns, the game ends.

A dictionary or word guide may not be used while a game is in progress to search for words to fit the tiles on your rack. It may only be consulted after a word has been played and challenged.

The same word can be played more than once in a game.

Pluralised words are allowed.

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