(Model.)

A. F. SMITH.

SPELLING BOARD.

No. 336,266. Patented Feb. 16, 1886.

Fig. 1.

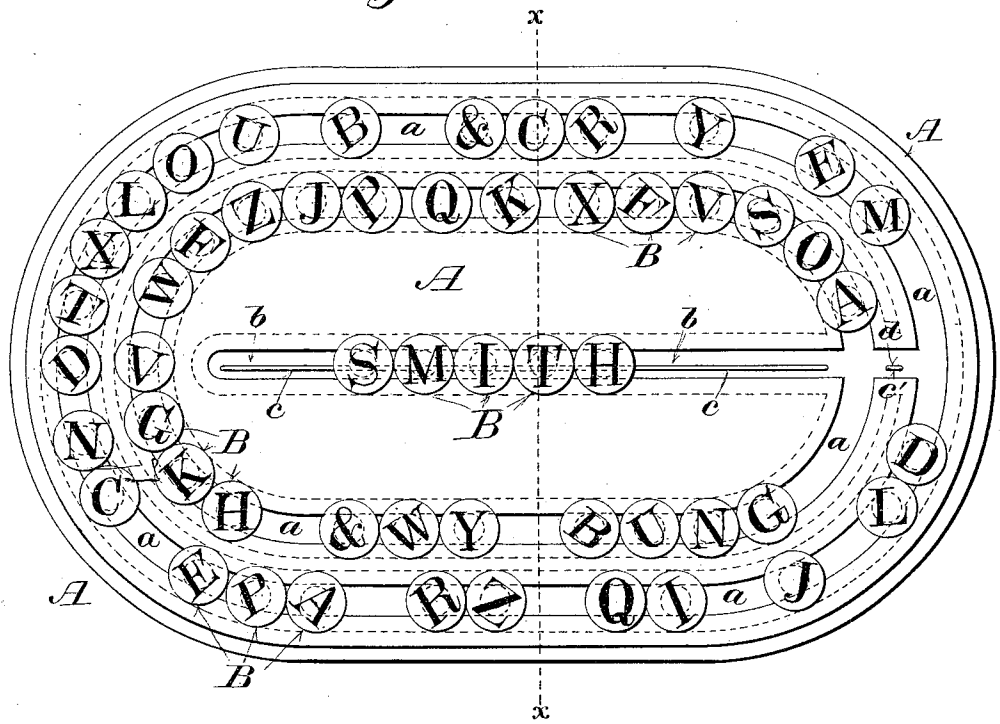
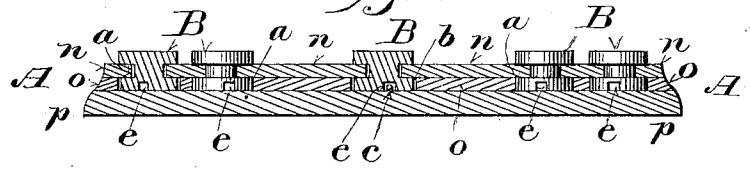


Fig. 2.



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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

ALONZO F. SMITH, OF MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN.

SPELLING-BOARD.

SPECIFICATION forming part of Letters Patent No. 336,266, dated February 16, 1886.

Application filed July 3, 1885. Serial No. 171,905. (Model.)

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, ALONZO F. SMITH, of the city of Milwaukee, in the county of Milwaukee and State of Wisconsin, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Spelling-Boards; and I do hereby declare that the following is a full, clear, and exact description of the invention, which will enable others skilled in the art to which it appertains to make and use the same, reference being had to the accompanying drawings, and to the letters of reference marked thereon, which form a part of this specification.

The objects of my invention are, first, to amuse and at the same time to instruct children, and, second, an advertising board or tablet upon which the characters may be variously arranged to spell different words, sentences, &c.

It consists, essentially, of a board or tablet provided with lettered, figured, or pictured buttons or blocks, movable in grooves formed in said tablet.

In the accompanying drawings, like letters refer to the same parts in both figures.

Figure 1 is a plan view of my improved tablet, and Fig. 2 is a cross-section of the same on the line *x x*, Fig. 1.

A is a board or tablet, formed of any suitable material, preferably of wood, and of any suitable shape—round, square, or oval. It is provided about the edge with dovetailed or inverted-T-shaped grooves *a a*, curved preferably to conform to the contour of said tablet and to permit the blocks to be easily moved about therein individually or in coiled rows.

I prefer to provide the tablet A with two or more grooves, *a a*, about the edge, in order to give room for a sufficient number of blocks within a small area. *b* is a straight horizontal groove of like form, communicating with the inner groove, *a*, and running through the center of said tablet. It is provided at the bottom with a rib, *c*, formed of wire or any suitable material, and located a little to one side of the longitudinal center of said groove. The grooves *a a* are connected adjacent to the end of the groove *b*, communicating therewith by a short groove, *d*, of like shape, and provided, like groove *b*, with an eccentric rib, *c'*.

B B are button-shaped blocks having similar cylindrical heads and bases, and central cylindrical connecting-posts between, as shown in Fig. 2. The bases of said buttons are inserted into and retained in the grooves *a a*, and are provided upon their under faces with transverse grooves *e e*, formed a little to one side of the centers of said block, so as to engage with the ribs *c c'* in grooves *b d*, cause the blocks to enter said grooves right side up, and retain them in that position while they remain therein.

For the purpose of more readily forming the grooves in tablet A, and inserting the blocks B B therein, said tablet may be formed in three sections or layers, a base, *p*, middle section, *o*, in which the wider and deeper portion of the grooves *a a*, *b*, and *d* are formed, and the upper section, *n*, the edges of which, forming the contracted portions of said grooves, overhang the edges of said section *o*, and retain the bases of said blocks B therein. I prefer, however, to form the tablet out of a single block, cutting the grooves therein by a tool specially formed for the purpose, and causing it to enter the block through one side or edge, which produces an opening, through which the blocks B may be inserted into the grooves, said opening being afterward closed by a block or other suitable means.

The operation of the device is very simple. For instance, to arrange the blocks in groove *b* to spell the word "Smith," the letter S is first found and brought around to the entrance of said groove and inserted therein, the rib *c* in said groove and the groove *e* in the base of the block permitting it to enter said groove *b* in the proper position only. The remaining letters to complete the word are then found in turn among the blocks B in the outer grooves, *a a*, and brought in like manner to and into the groove *b*. The whole row of blocks in either of the grooves *a a* can be readily moved by a slight pressure of the finger upon any single block in said row, and the block bearing any particular letter or character brought into the proper position to enter the groove *b* or the groove *d*, and thence groove *b*.

Various styles of characters, figures, or designs may be painted, printed, or otherwise formed upon the faces of said blocks, according to the purpose to which they are to be applied, or to suit individual taste.

The blocks B B may be turned out of wood, ivory, bone, or otherwise formed of any suitable material.

I am well aware that spelling-boards or puzzles have been heretofore patented, in which straight grooves and square blocks were employed; therefore I do not claim the combination of those elements, broadly, in this application.

In this device all the blocks are free to rotate in the outside grooves of the board, as the stems of the blocks are cylindrical. Thus all the blocks, save those in the transverse groove, may be turned over, so that they will not distract attention from the word which is spelled by the letters in the transverse groove.

In practice the letters in the outer groove naturally drop into angular or reverse positions, and no special care is required to keep them in such position, that it will at once appear that no endeavor has been made to arrange these letters in proper position for spelling words, and the attention of the observer naturally reverts to the letters standing upright in the transverse groove.

Having thus described my invention, what I claim as new, and desire to secure by Letters Patent, is—

1. The spelling-board having undercut groove near its periphery and a transverse groove connecting therewith, combined with a series of lettered blocks in the groove, each block having a cylindrical stem entering the groove, so that the blocks are free to be moved in the grooves and to rotate in the peripheral groove, substantially as shown and described.

2. As an improved article of manufacture, a spelling-board composed of the tablet A, a continuous curved groove, *a*, and an offset groove, *b*, communicating therewith, said grooves *a* and *b* being inverted-T-shaped in cross-section, and blocks B B, having cylindrical heads and bases and central cylindrical connecting-posts, said blocks being retained by their cylindrical bases in said grooves and capable of being variously grouped therein, substantially as and for the purposes set forth.

3. As an improved article of manufacture, a spelling-board composed of the tablet A, having the continuous curved groove *a* and the offset groove *b* communicating therewith, and provided with the eccentric rib *c*, and the interchangeable cylindrical blocks B B, having eccentric grooves *e e* formed in their bases, substantially as and for the purposes set forth.

In testimony that I claim the foregoing as my own I affix my signature in presence of two witnesses.

ALONZO F. SMITH.

Witnesses:
CHAS. L. GOSS,
GEORGE GOLL.