United States Patent [19]

Pierre

[11] **3,877,703**

[45] **Apr. 15, 1975**

[54] **WORD GAME**

[76] Inventor: **Donna J. Pierre,** 1213 Rosedale Ave., Bronx, N.Y. 10472

[22] Filed: **Nov. 8, 1973**

[21] Appl. No.: **413,882**

[52] **U.S. Cl.** ..... **273/130 E;** 273/153 R; 283/1 R

[51] **Int. Cl.** **A63f 9/06**

[58] **Field of Search** ..... 273/153 R, 130 E, 135 D; 283/1 R

[56] **References Cited**

UNITED STATES PATENTS

1,555,125	9/1925	Lange	273/135 D

FOREIGN PATENTS OR APPLICATIONS

747,598	4/1956	United Kingdom	273/135 D
775,170	5/1957	United Kingdom	273/135 D

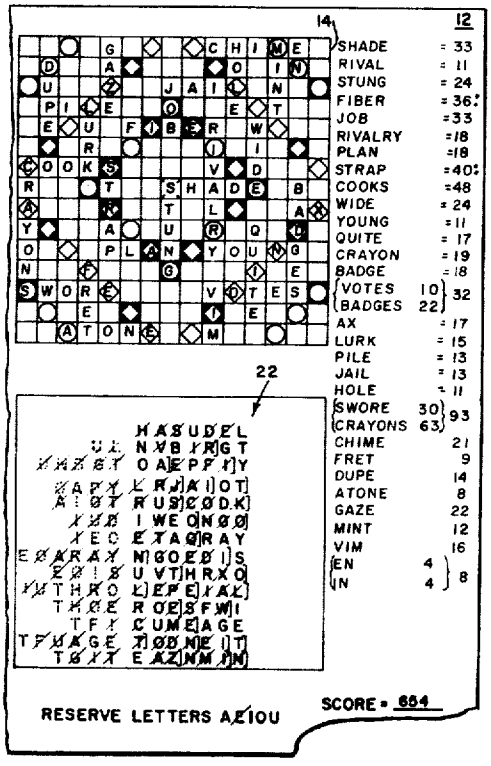
Primary Examiner—Anton O. Oechsle

Attorney, Agent, or Firm—Curtis, Morris & Safford

[57] **ABSTRACT**

A word game and method for playing a game are provided in which a playing area is formed with a predetermined array of letter boxes including at least one set of designated bonus score boxes. A matrix, consisting of a predetermined number of alphabet letters arrayed in a predetermined sequence, wherein each of the letters of the alphabet being assigned a predetermined score value, is used to form words on the play area with only one letter of each word in any letter box. The matrix includes a first group consisting of a predetermined number of letters from which letters are selected to form a first word in the play area. The remainder or unselected letters of this first group are then combined with succeeding letters in the matrix to form a second group of letters equal in number to the first group and from which letters are selected to form a second word extending from and including a letter of the first word. The game continues in this manner by forming additional groups of letters with each group being the remainder of the next prior group and successive letters in the matrix, and each forming an additional word on the play area. A letter from each newly formed word is connected to a previously formed word or words. The player determines the score of each word by adding the score values of the letters and the bonus score values of the word, and the word scores are added to give a total score at the end of the game.

16 Claims, 8 Drawing Figures



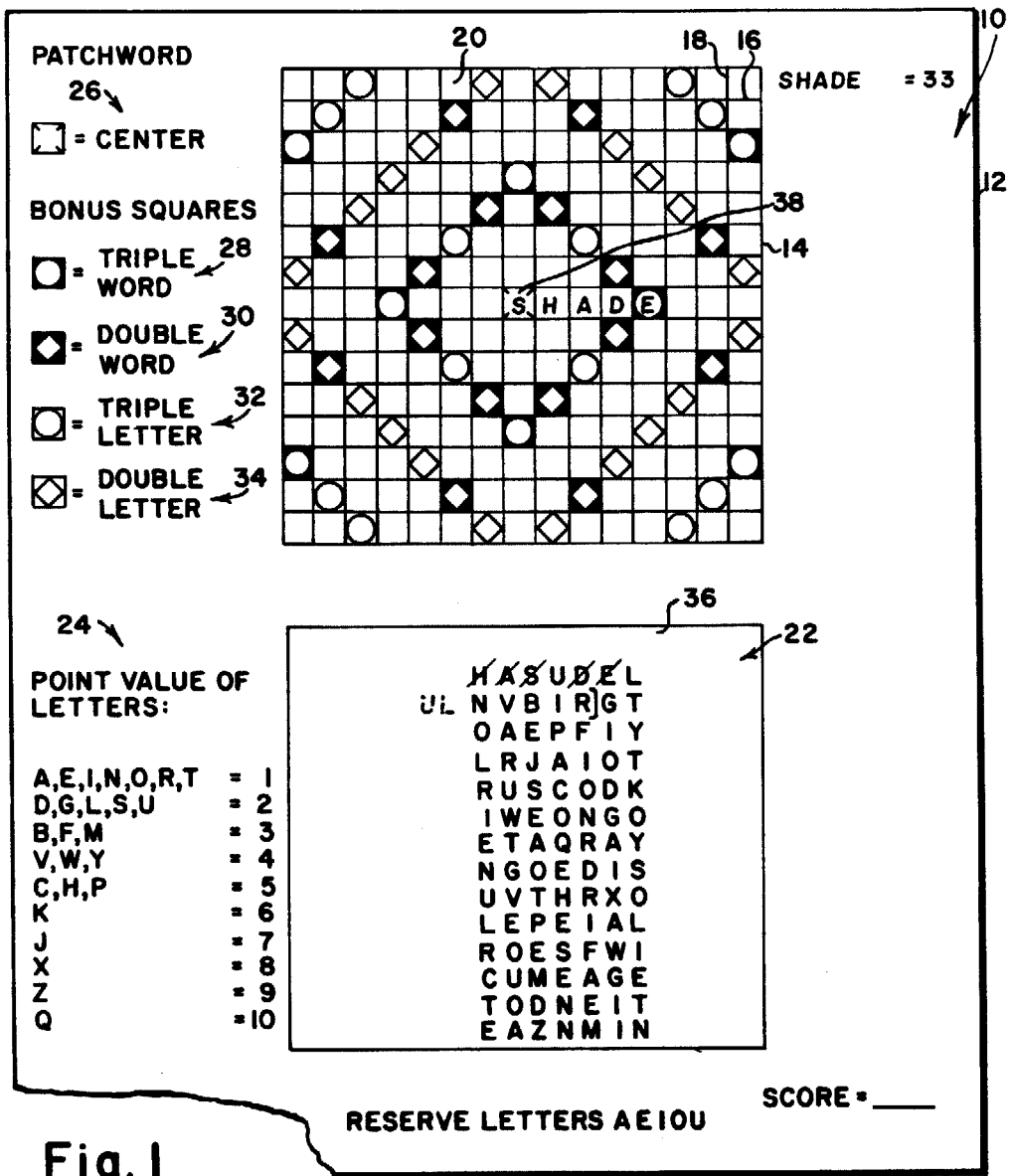


Fig. 1

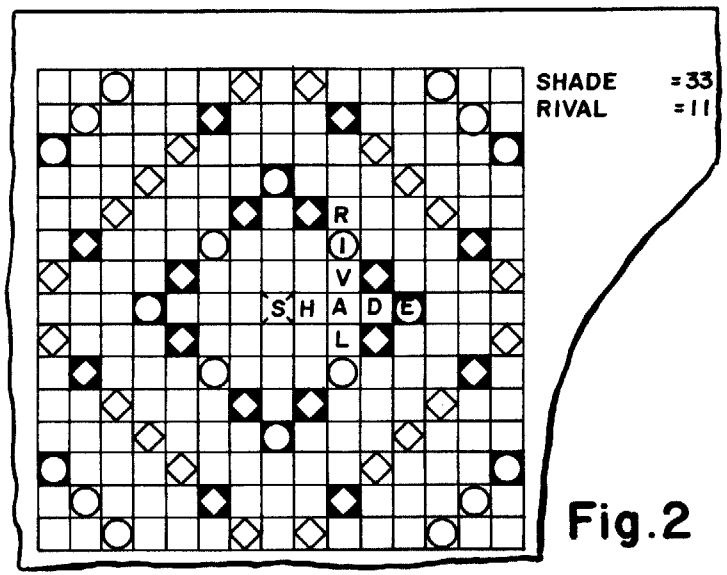


Fig. 2

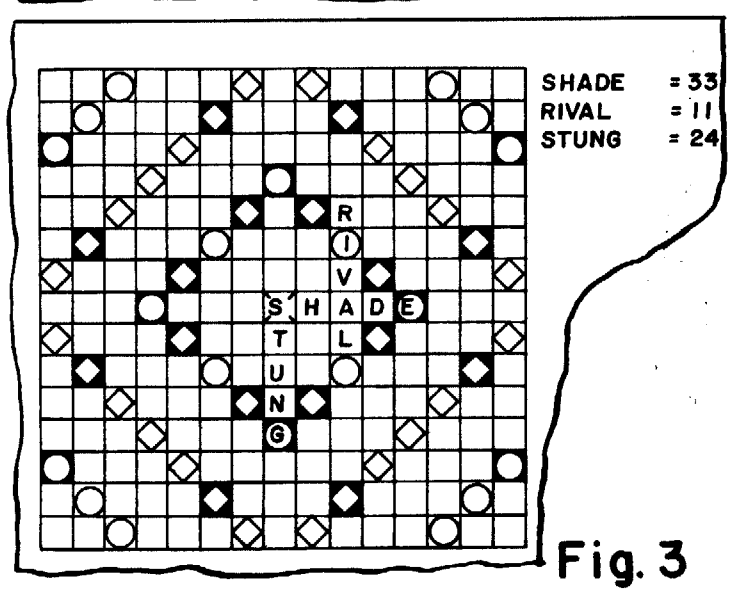


Fig. 3

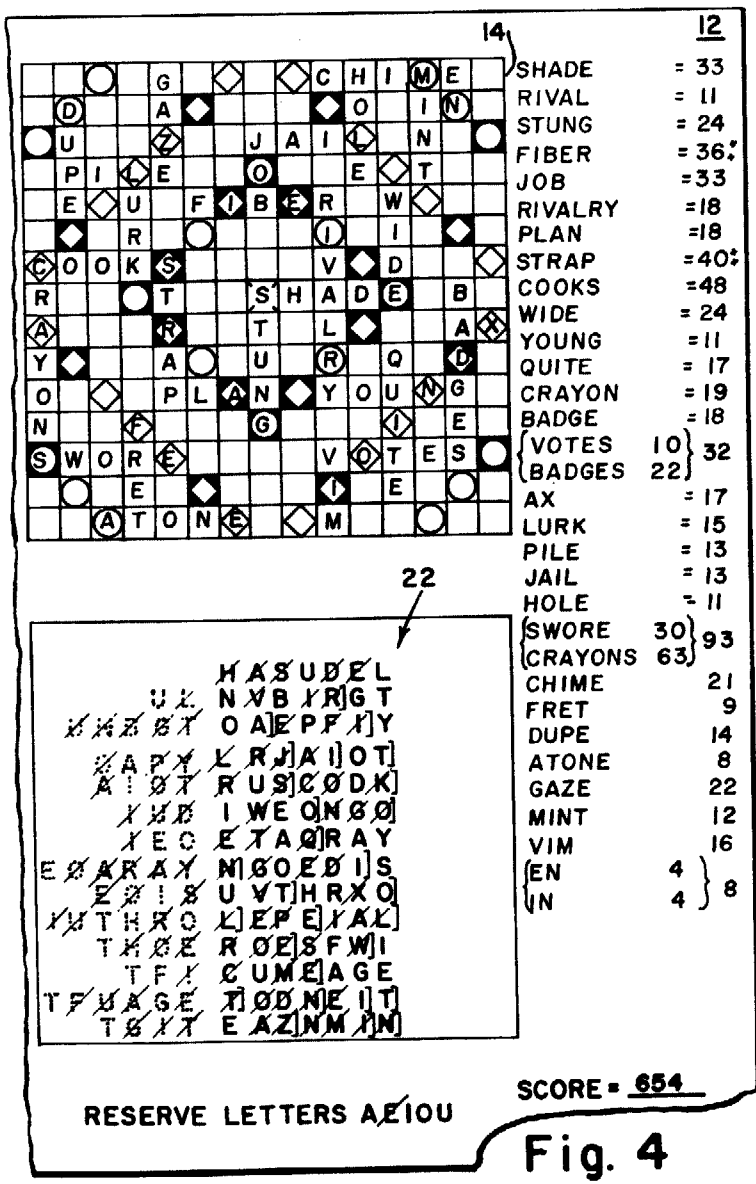


Fig. 4

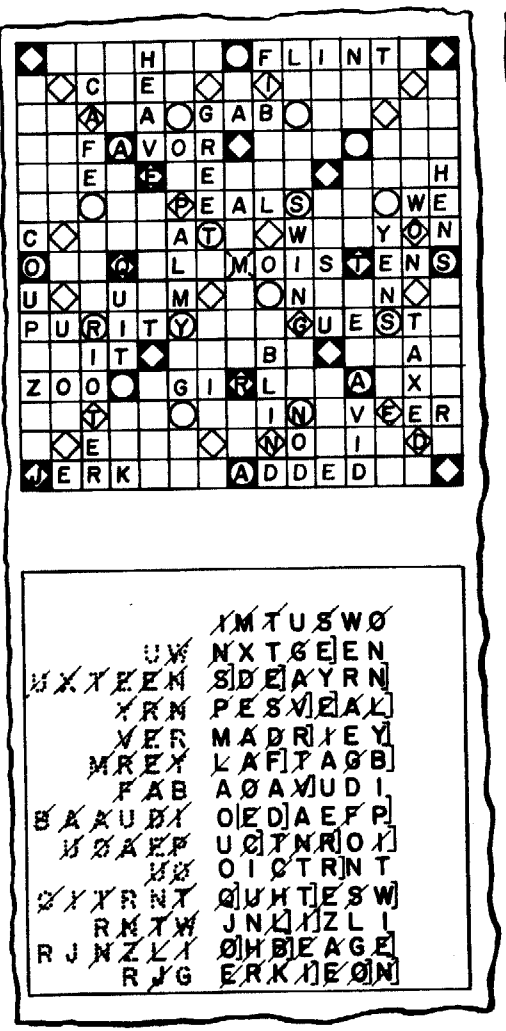


Fig. 5

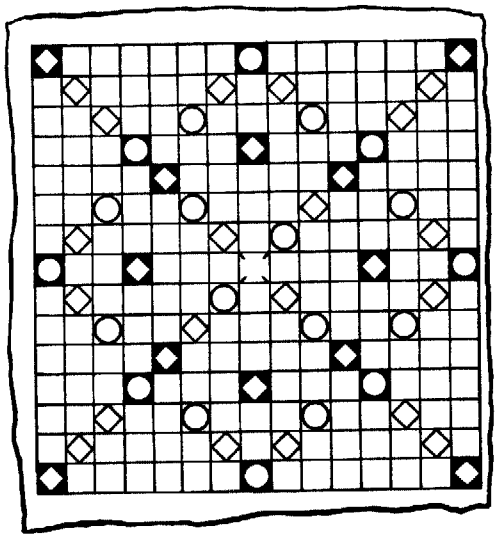


Fig. 6



Fig. 7



Fig. 8

WORD GAME

The present invention relates to word games, and in particular to a solitaire type word game in which letters selected from a predetermined matrix are used to form words on a play area.

Numerous word games have previously been proposed for play by individuals or groups of people. Such games include, for example, the well known Scrabble game and the newspaper games of Scramble and, of course, crossword puzzles. However, crossword puzzles are usually somewhat difficult for the average individual to complete, while a game such as Scrabble requires two and preferably more people. The Scramble game, on the other hand, is quite short and its object is simply to form a predetermined word from the scrambled letters of the word. Thus, such games have only one solution and are not particularly challenging.

In accordance with the present invention a word game is provided which is adapted to be played as a solitaire game, but which can have a variety of solutions. More specifically, the game permits the player to form a variety of words on a play area in order to obtain a total end score based upon letter score values and bonus score values. In forming words from a particular array of letters the player can obtain high values of a variety of scores with the proper selection of the words. As a result, the game is substantially more challenging than such games as crossword puzzles and Scramble, wherein only a single solution is available, which solution, in the case of the crossword puzzle are extremely difficult, or in the case of Scramble, are exceedingly easy. In addition, the game is played by an individual, so that the need for additional players as in Scrabble is avoided.

It is an object of the present invention to provide a solitaire type word game which is challenging to the player and which may have a variety of solutions.

Another object of the invention is to provide a word game for play by an individual in which the player can form a variety of words to achieve a maximum score.

Yet another object of the present invention is to provide a word game which is relatively simple to play and manufacture.

The above, and other objects, features and advantages of this invention will be apparent in the following detailed description of illustrative embodiments thereof which are to be read in connection with the accompanying drawings wherein:

FIG. 1 is an illustration of a word game board of the present invention, after the first word has been formed in the game;

FIGS. 2 and 3 are illustrations of the game board in the game of FIG. 1 showing the successive formation of words on the game board in accordance with the present invention;

FIG. 4 is a partial illustration of the game board shown in FIG. 1, showing the arrangement of words on the game board at the completion of the game;

FIG. 5 is a partial illustration, similar to FIG. 1, of another word game board in accordance with the present invention showing the location of the words on the game board at the completion of the game;

FIG. 6 is an illustration of another game board for use with the game of the present invention; and

FIGS. 7 and 8 are perspective views of letter blocks for use in another embodiment of the present invention.

Referring now to the drawing in detail, and initially to FIG. 1 thereof, word game 10 constructed in accordance with the present invention is seen wherein the game board or grid 14 having a plurality of boxes formed thereon by horizontal and vertical lines 16, 18 respectively, in a predetermined array. In accordance with the preferred embodiment of the invention the game board 14 is square and has an equal number of boxes 20 formed along each side thereof.

Game 10 also includes a matrix 22 of alphabet letters arranged in a predetermined sequence. The matrix can include a plurality of each alphabet letter in a predetermined distribution for use in forming letters on the game board as described hereinafter.

Each of the letters of the alphabet is assigned a point value in accordance with a predetermined distribution, for example, as illustrated by the point value legend 24 on sheet 12. The values of the respective letters can be assigned in accordance with their relative frequency of use in the formation of English words, or the values can be assigned in any other desired manner. In the illustrative embodiment of the invention the point values of the various letters, illustrated in the legend 24, are assigned substantially in accordance with their frequency of use.

In the illustrative embodiment of FIG. 1, game board 14 has a plurality of sets of bonus score boxes formed or otherwise printed thereon. Each of the sets of bonus score boxes have a distinctive formation, as illustrated in the upper legend 26 at the upper left hand corner of the sheet 12. The first set of bonus boxes or squares 28 represent a triple letter score, whereby, as described hereinafter, when a word is formed in the game board 14 with a letter in one of the boxes of the set 28 the sum of the point values of the letters of that word is tripled for purposes of calculating the final score in the game. Similarly, the set 30 of bonus squares represents a double word score whereby the sum of the letter values of a word having a letter in one of the double word score boxes is doubled.

The other two bonus sets of boxes 32, 34 respectively represent triple and double letter scores wherein a letter of a word placed in one of these boxes has its value tripled or doubled in determining the point score awarded for the formation of a word.

The game of the present invention is intended for play as a solitaire game by one player using the game board 14 and matrix 22 of alphabet letters arranged in a predetermined array. Matrix 22, as seen in FIG. 1, has a series of rows 36 of letters arranged in vertical columns. Each row of letters, in the preferred embodiment of the invention, has seven letters therein arranged in a predetermined sequence. (It is noted that any other number of letters in a row can be provided as desired, but seven letters has been found to be most practical in use.)

In the play of the game, the player must first make a word from the first seven letters in the first row or group of letters in matrix 22. Thus, in the game illustrated in FIG. 1, the player must make a word from the letters *h*, *a*, *s*, *u*, *d*, *e*, or *l*. The player can use or select any or all of the letters in this first group to make a first word on the game board. For example, in the illustrated game, the player can make the word "shade" from this

first group of letters in the matrix **22.** Having determined that the word "shade" is the one the player desires to make with this group of letters, he places the word on the game board by writing the same in the boxes **20** of the board.

Preferably, the game board **14** is provided with a square of a predetermined configuration or having a predetermined indicia thereon, indicating that it is the start square. This square, in the preferred embodiment of the invention, is located at the exact center of the board, as illustrated in FIG. **1** at square **38.** In placing the word formed from this first group of letters, the player must place one of the letters of the word in the center or start square. Preferably, the word is placed in a position so that one or more of its letters is located in one of the bonus squares so as to increase the point value awarded for the formation of the word. The words, however must be formed either in a horizontal row or vertical column of the squares **20.** In accordance with the game, no word can be formed on a diagonal or irregular line or arrangement of rows.

After the word is formed, the player determines the point value of the word and records the same. Thus, for example, with the word "shade" the point value is determined by totaling the values of the various letters as follows:

s =	1
h =	5
a =	1
d =	2
e =	1
Total Word Score	11

Since the letter *e* was placed in a triple word bonus square, as represented by the indicia on the game board representative of the triple word bonus square shown in the legend **26,** the total value of the word is tripled, so that the formation of the word "shade" in this manner results in a total score of **33,** which score can be recorded along the margin of sheet **12** as seen in FIG. **1.**

It is noted that by the arrangement of letters in matrix **22,** the player is not limited, as is usually the case in Scramble, to forming a certain word. Thus, for example, the player of the game in FIG. **1** could have formed in lieu of the word "shade," the words "has," "duel," "had," "lash," etc. However, since the object of the game is to obtain a maximum final score, the player preferably forms a word which will give him an optimum score. Thus, the word "shade" was selected because it has a higher word value and, more importantly, since it is large enough to permit the player to place one of its letters in an adjacent bonus score box.

In any case, after the first word is formed the player cancels from the matrix **22** the letters in the first group or row of letters which he used to form the word. This leaves, in the illustrative embodiment of the invention where the word "shade" was formed, two letters: *u, l,* from the first group which are unused. These letters are carried to the next row of letters (i.e., the row having letters *n, v, b, i, r, g, t*) and are available for use in forming the next word. However the player, in accordance with the present invention, must first form a new group of letters, limited in number to the same number as the first group. In this embodiment of the invention, since the first group of letters contained seven letters, the second group of letters using the extra letters *u* and *l* from the first group, are added only to the first five letters of the second row so as to form a second group of letters containing seven letters. Accordingly, the next group of letters from which the player must form a word in the illustrative embodiment of the invention are the letters *u, l, n, b, v, i, r.* In FIG. **1,** the formation of this group, and the cancellation of previously used letters are illustrated by slash marks through the letters used to form the word "shade" and by a bracket at the right of the letter *r* in the second row to indicate the end of the second group formed. The letters *u* and *l* shown in dotted lines at the left of the matrix are the letters which have been carried down from the first group.

The player then forms a second word from this second group of letters, *u, l, n, v, b, i, r* in conjunction with one or more letters from the word which was previously formed, i.e., the word "shade." In accordance with the present game, each word formed must be connected to one of the previously formed words by incorporating therein one of the letters of a previously formed word. Thus, in the illustrative embodiment of the invention, the player, with the letters available in this second group of letters, can form with the originally formed word "shade" the word "rival" in the manner illustrated in FIG. **2.** All additional words, in accordance with the game, must be connected in some manner to a previously formed word and must extend in a vertical or horizontal row.

After formation of the second word in this manner the player calculates his score by totaling the values of the letters used including the letters used from the previously formed word. Thus, for the word "rival," the score is calculated as follows:

r =	1
i =	1
v =	4
a =	1
l =	2
Total Word Score	9

In addition to the total word score, it is noted that the letter *i* was placed in a triple letter box **32,** so the value of the letter *i* is tripled in the above summation. Thus, the total value of the word "rival," as formed on the game board shown in FIG. **2,** is 11. The player, after totaling the score for the word, records the word for later use in summing the total score achieved in the game. Again, the player has attempted to select the word formed from the second group which will give him a maximum score.

After formation of the second word, the player again eliminates from the group of letters in the second group with which he was working the letters which were used to form the last word. Thus, in the illustrative embodiment, from the second group of letters the player eliminates the letters *l, v, i* and *r;* leaving unused from that group the letters *u, n* and *b.* These letters are then combined with successive letters in the matrix in order to form yet another group of seven letters. Thus, the letters *u, n, b* are combined with the letters, *g, t, o* and *a* to form a third group of letters from which the next word must be formed. This next word, as discussed above, must be formed in conjunction with one or more letters of a previously formed word so that this next word is connected to a previously formed word. Thus, in the illustrative embodiment of the invention, out of the group of letters *u, n, e, g, t, o* the player can form

the word "stung" in connection with one of the previously formed words "shade." This is illustrated in FIG. 3. Again, the selection of the word which is to be formed from the available group of letters, and from the letters of previously formed words, is determined by the player in order to give him the maximum point value for the formation of the word. Thus, by selecting the formation of the word "stung" from the available group of letters the player can place a letter *g* in a triple word bonus square **28**, as illustrated in FIG. **3**.

After the word is formed and placed on the game board, for example, by writing the letters in the appropriate squares, the total of the score for that word is calculated in the manner described above. Thus, it will be seen that for the word "stung," including the triple word bonus, the score achieved for that word is 24 points and this score is recorded on the sheet **12** as indicated in FIG. **1**.

The game continues in this manner by the player forming groups of words from the unused letters of a previously formed group and the next successive letters in the matrix, with each group containing seven letters, i.e., the same number of letters used in the first group of the matrix. Each new word must be placed at right angles to one already on the board, using one of the letters of a previously formed word, or by adding letters to a word, at either end thereof to form a new word. For example, in FIG. **4** wherein the game board **14** is illustrated with all of the words formed from the matrix **22** placed thereon, it can be seen that the word "rival" has been expanded in a subsequent play to form the word "rivalry," thereby giving the player 18 points as illustrated in the right hand margin of the sheet **12**. In addition to positioning the newly formed words in this manner, a complete word can be placed parallel to an existing word, if all of the adjacent letters in the two words form words of the English language.

It is contemplated that game **10** of the present invention be played in accordance with rules which limit the formation of words to words of the English language which are not proper nouns, abbreviations, or contractions. Moreover, once a word is written on the game board it cannot be moved. Another rule of the game is contemplated that an additional 30 bonus points will be awarded to the player when all seven letters of a group are used to form one word.

In order to assist the player in the game, in the event that a particular group of letters formed during the course of the game contains no vowels or contains letters from which it is not possible to form a word in conjunction with previously formed words, the game **10** is provided with a plurality of reserve letters which are available for addition to a group by the player. Thus, for example, as illustrated in FIG. **1**, in the game **10** shown therein a series of reserve letters *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, *u* are provided which a player may use. These letters, however, have no point value and would not be included in determining the point value of a word formed therewith. The letters may be used at any point in the game, in addition to the seven letters of a group available to the player, for formation of a word.

The use of reserve letters with no point value can be expanded to include a number of each of the most frequently used letters. It is contemplated that the player can have a choice as to the number of reserve letters which can be used, thus permitting the player to make it easier or harder to play the game. In other words, the player can reduce the number of reserve letters and thereby create a "handicap" or can increase the number of reserve letters and make the game easier, i.e., reduce the handicap. This can be understood by considering that an increase in the number of reserve letters can increase materially the number of words which can be formed. The compensating factor is that the reserve letters have no point value so that the use of a large number of them will reduce the total score. However, a person new at the game or with a desire to complete the game rapidly can select a large number of reserve letters, recognizing that the total score will be low.

In accordance with the game, once a letter or word is placed on a bonus square it will remain at that bonus score each time it is added to or used. Thus, for example, in the illustrated game in FIGS. **1** and **4**, the word "rival" formed as the second word of the game has been expanded later on in the game, at the sixth word formed, to be the word "rivalry," by the addition of the letters *r* and *y*. Accordingly, in totaling the game the letter *i* retains its triple letter value and the value of the total score for the new word "rivalry" is 18 points, calculated as described above.

It is contemplated that the game would be played by the player forming a new group of letters after each word has been formed, and continuing the word and letter group formation process in the manner described above until it is no longer possible to form a word from any of the letters left in the matrix, or until all of the letters in the matrix are utilized. In the event that letters remain at the end of the matrix which are not utilized in the formation of any words, and no further words are possible to be formed with those remaining words, then it is contemplated that, in accordance with the game, the value of those remaining letters will be deducted from the total score value at the completion of the game. That is, at the completion of the game, the player totals all of the score values for each of the words formed, to achieve a total score and from that total score deducts the value of any letters remaining in the matrix.

The words formed by the letters provided in the matrix **22** are not limited to specific words, as is the case with the crossword or Scramble puzzles, but rather are a function of the extent of the vocabulary of the player. Moreover, the word selected to be made from the letters in a group is a function not only of the available letters in the group but also of the location of the bonus squares with respect to previously formed words. That is, the player selects the word to be formed from a group of letters not only in accordance with the letters available but also so that the word formed will have a maximum value by placement of one of the letters in a bonus square. Thus, the optimum word would be one with one or more of its letters in a bonus square. For example, in the game of FIG. **1**, the word "fiber" has two letters in triple word bonus squares so that the score value of that word is maximized.

As mentioned FIG. **4** illustrates the completed word game of FIG. **1**, showing at the right each of the words formed in their respective score values, and also showing the matrix **22** as it is used in forming the respective groups. The letters shown in dotted lines at the left of the matrix are the letters carried over from a previous group to the next lower line of letters in the matrix.

The game of the present invention can be formed in a number of various configurations by varying the num

ber of squares **20** provided on the game board **14**, by varying their their arrangement from a square form to other forms, such as crosses, diamonds, and the like, and in particular by varying the array and number of bonus squares on the game board. Thus, for example, in FIGS. **5** and **6**, two additional game boards having different arrays of bonus squares formed thereon are illustrated.

The game of FIG. **5** is shown with the game board filled in with all of the words formed from the matrix associated with that game. In this connection, the matrix **22** can be provided with any desired sequence of letters in the array in any predetermined order. Thus, there are a substantially infinite number of game variations which can be formed with the game of the present invention. Moreover, with any one matrix a variety of different end solutions are available. Accordingly, a player may play the same game several times, to determine which solution gives him the highest score.

In one embodiment of the present invention the game **10** may be provided in a pad, for example, consisting of a plurality of sheets of paper each having a different game printed thereon. The sheets may have the same game board and different matrices. It also is contemplated that in lieu of such a pad of games, game boards may be provided in individual sheets in the game, or may for example be printed in a magazine or newspaper in the manner of a conventional crossword puzzle. In a newspaper a different game would appear each day, with the same or different game boards and different matrices.

In accordance with another embodiment of the present invention the game may be provided as a parlor game with a hard backed game board having an array of boxes formed thereon and, in one embodiment, with the bonus squares printed in a predetermined array on the game board. In this embodiment of the invention, the letters could be provided as a plurality of blocks, adapted to fit within the confines of letter squares printed on the board, such as for example, blocks of the type illustrated in FIG. **7** wherein a letter block **40** bearing the letter A is shown. Each of the letter blocks could have printed thereon the point value assigned to that letter. It is contemplated that in this embodiment of the invention, the matrix **22** would be formed initially by the player by randomly selecting the letters **40** and placing them in an array of rows of letters, in a manner similar to the array illustrated in FIGS. **1** and **4**. The game would thence be played in the same manner as described above with respect to the game of FIG. **1**.

In yet another embodiment of the present invention, for use as a parlor game, the game board may be provided simply with a grid of squares formed thereon with no bonus squares printed on the board. In this embodiment of the invention certain of the letter blocks **40** would be provided with indicia thereon indicating that that letter represents a bonus score block. These bonus score letter blocks would be arranged in the matrix with the other letter blocks in the manner described above and when used to form a letter in accordance with the play of the game would represent a bonus score for the letter or a word formed with the letter, depending upon the bonus score designation printed thereon. This designation could be of the type of designation illustrated in the legend **26** in FIG. **1**. Thus, for example, as shown in FIG. **8**, the letter block could have a triangular designation indicating a double word score for a word formed with the letter A shown therein.

Although illustrative embodiments of the present invention have been described herein with reference to the accompanying drawings, it is to be understood that the invention is not limited to those precise embodiments and that various changes and modifications may be effected therein by one skilled in the art without departing from the scope or spirit of this invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A word game comprising a play area having a predetermined array of letter boxes formed thereon, said boxes including a first designated starting box and at least one set of boxes designated as bonus boxes; a fixed matrix consisting of a predetermined number and array of alphabet letters, arranged in a predetermined fixed sequence established prior to the play of the game and exposed to view throughout the game, with each of the letters of the alphabet being assigned a predetermined score value; said predetermined fixed sequence being selected to provide a predetermined solution to the game having an optimum score value wherein substantially all of the letters of the matrix are used; said matrix comprising a plurality of rows and columns of alphabet letters arrayed in said predetermined fixed sequence and including a first set of a predetermined number of letters in a fixed sequence from which letters are selected to form a first word in said play area, with one letter of said first word being placed in said starting box; said first set of letters comprising the first row of said matrix; the unselected letters in said first set being combined with immediately succeeding letters in the fixed sequence of letters in said predetermined array of said fixed matrix to form a second set of letters equal in number to said first set and from which letters are selected to form a second word extending from and including a letter of said first word; said matrix containing sufficient letters in said predetermined array to form a plurality of successive letter sets of fixed sequences of letters whereby a player can form a plurality of interconnected words on said playing area, with only one letter in any box, to obtain a score by addition of the score values of letters used and the bonus scores for letters being placed in bonus boxes.

2. The word game as defined in claim **1** including a plurality of unvalued reserve letters available for addition to any of said sets by the player for formation of a word.

3. The word game as defined in claim **2** including four sets of bonus score boxes located in predetermined arrays in said play area, the first of said bonus score box sets representing triple word scores for any word including a letter located in one of the boxes of said set, the second set representing double word scores, the third set representing a triple letter score for any letter of a word placed in one of the boxes of said third set and the fourth set representing a double letter score.

4. The game as defined in claim **3** wherein said matrix comprises a plurality of vertically aligned rows of letters arranged in a predetermined sequence, with each of said rows including seven letters therein.

5. The game as defined in claim **4** wherein the uppermost row in said matrix defines said first set of letters and includes seven letters.

6. The game as defined in claim 5 wherein said reserve letters comprise one letter of each of the vowels *a, e, i, o, u.*

7. The game as defined in claim 6 including a plurality of independent letter matrices each including a plurality of independent letter matrices each including a predetermined number of alphabet letters differently arrayed in fixed predetermined sequences, whereby a plurality of different games may be played on said play area.

8. A solitaire word game comprising a fixed matrix of a plurality of alphabet letters arrayed in a fixed predetermined sequence, established prior to the play of the game and exposed to view throughout the game, said alphabet letters each being assigned a predetermined score value, and a game board having a plurality of letter boxes formed thereon, said letter boxes including a plurality of sets of bonus score boxes, at least one of said sets representing a multiple of the score of a letter placed in a box of the set and another of said sets representing a multiple of the sum of the letter scores of a word formed on said game board and having a letter thereof in one of its boxes, said matrix comprising a plurality of rows and columns of alphabet letters arrayed in said predetermined fixed sequence and having a plurality of sets of letters arranged in a predetermined sequence with each set of letters having the same number of letters therein, at least some of the letters in the first set in said matrix being used to form a first word on same game board with only one letter placed in any letter box and the unused letters in said first set being added to immediately succeeding letters in the fixed sequence of letters in the fixed matrix to form a group of letters equal in number to the letters of said first set and from which a second word is formed on said game board extending from and including a letter of said first word; said first set of letters comprising the first row of said matrix; the unused letters in said group being added to immediately succeeding letters in the fixed sequence of letters in said matrix to form another group of letters equal in number of the letters of said first set and from which a third word is formed extending from and including a letter of at least one of the previously formed words; the successive matrix letters in the fixed predetermined sequence of letters in said matrix being used to form successive letter groups in this manner from which group words are formed on said game board until no further words can be formed from the letters in the matrix, whereby a player of the game may calculate a total score by the addition of the score of the values of letters used and the bonus scores for letters placed in bonus boxes.

9. The solitaire word game as defined in claim 8 wherein said game board is square and said letter boxes are formed as a square grid on said board.

10. The solitaire word game as defined in claim 9 wherein said grid includes a letter square located at the center of the game board, which square is designated as the starting square on which at least one letter of said first word must be placed.

11. The solitaire word game as defined in claim 10 including four sets of bonus score boxes located in predetermined arrays in said play area, the first of said bonus score box sets representing triple word scores for any word including a letter located in one of the boxes of said set, the second set representing double word scores, the third set representing a triple letter score for any letter of a word placed in one of the boxes of said third set and the fourth set representing a double letter score.

12. The solitaire word game as defined in claim 11 including a plurality of unvalued reserve letters available for addition to any of said sets by the player for formation of a word.

13. The solitaire word game as defined in claim 12 wherein said reserve letters comprise one letter of each of the vowels, *a, e, i, o, u.*

14. The solitaire word game as defined in claim 11 wherein said matrix comprises a plurality of vertically aligned rows of letters arranged in a predetermined sequence, each of said rows including seven letters therein.

15. The solitaire word game as defined in claim 14 including a plurality of independent letter matrices each including a predetermined number of alphabet letters differently arrayed in fixed predetermined sequences, whereby a plurality of different games may be played on said play area.

16. The solitaire word game as defined in claim 8 wherein the score of any letters remaining in said matrix after no further word can be formed from the letters in the last group of letters formed from said matrix is deducted from said total score.

* * * * *