Sept. 12, 1950 E. O. BROWER 2,521,775

WORD GAME APPARATUS

Filed Dec. 26, 1945

FIG. 1.

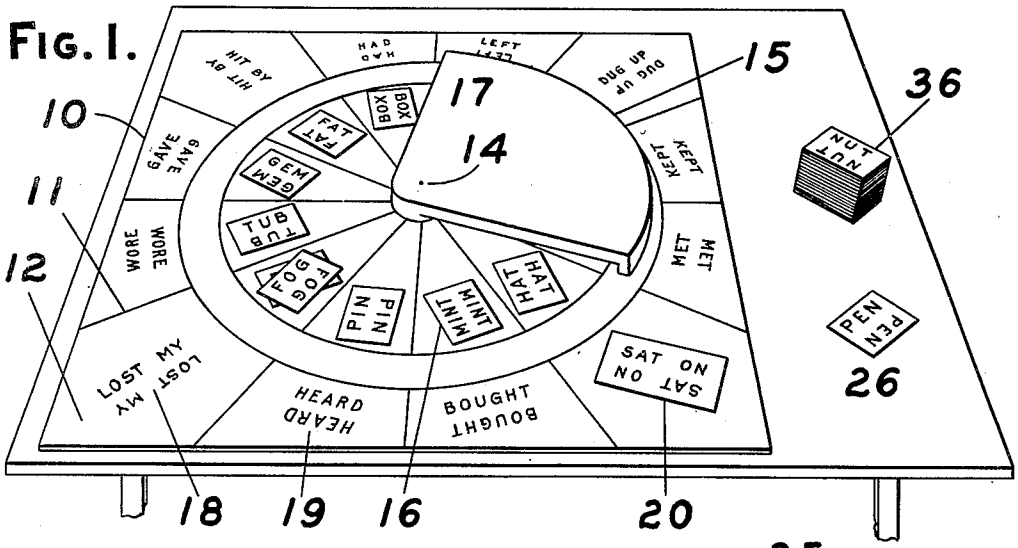


FIG. 3.

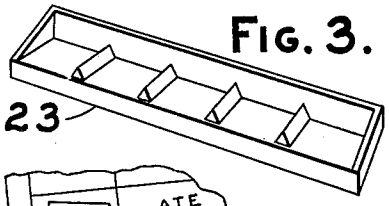
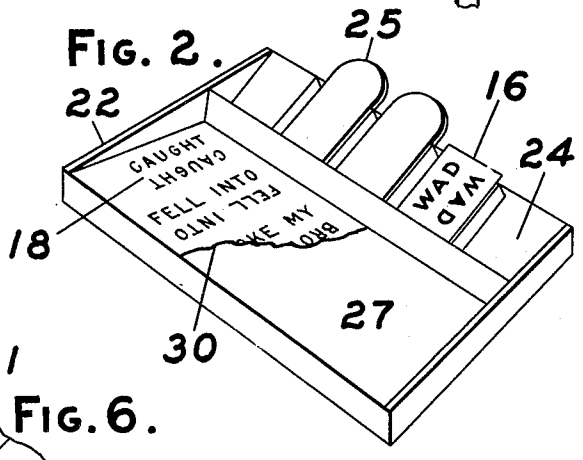


FIG. 2.



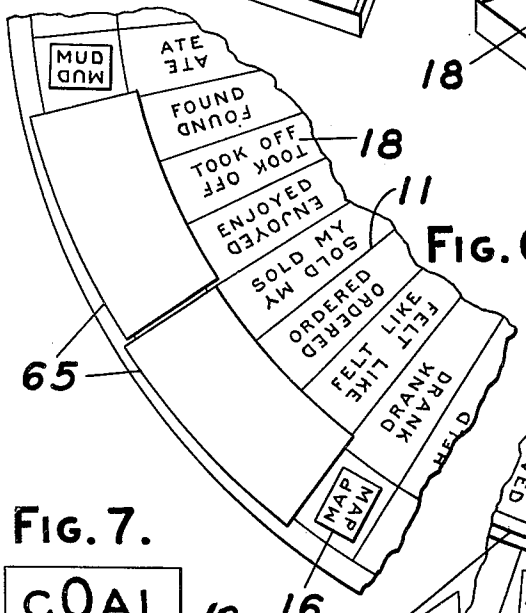


FIG. 6.

FIG. 4.

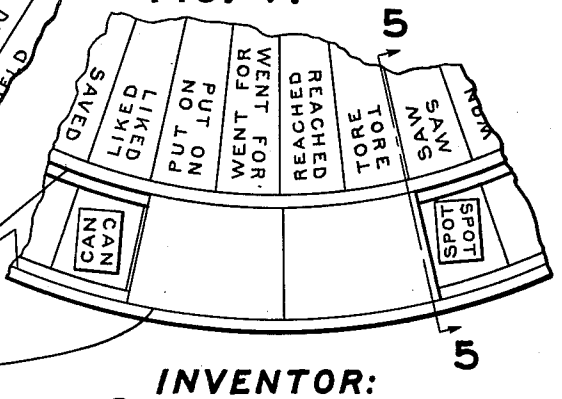


FIG. 7.

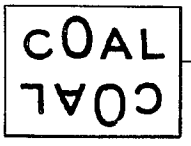
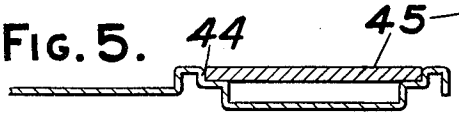


FIG. 5.



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WORD GAME APPARATUS

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2 Claims. (Cl. 273—135)

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This invention relates to amusement devices, and more particularly to table games involving both chance and ability.

A primary object of the invention is to provide a table game suitable to be played by two or more persons, and adapted to entertain people of ordinary mentality.

Another particular object of the invention is to provide a game or contest which can be made more or less difficult at the pleasure of the players, according to their momentary preference for an intense battle or a relaxing diversion.

Another particular object of the invention is to provide apparatus for a game in which the element of chance can be subordinated to the factor of ability to different degrees which can be altered at pleasure.

In the accompanying drawing,

Figure 1 is a perspective view of one embodiment of the invention.

Fig. 2 is a perspective view of a single unit which can be assembled with other like units to constitute the playing field of another embodiment.

Fig. 3 is a perspective view of a unit which can be substituted for the unit of Fig. 2.

Fig. 4 is a plan view of a portion of another embodiment.

Fig. 5 is a section taken on the line 5—5, Fig. 4.

Fig. 6 is a plan view of an embodiment which is ultra simple structurally.

Fig. 7 is a plan view of a single playing piece or card.

In Fig. 1, 10 is a game board divided by lines 11 into a plurality of stations 12 which radiate from a pivot or axis 14 around which the cover element 15 is moved manually one station at a time during progress of the basic game, so as to conceal and uncover, in succession, indicia of playing pieces 16 on said stations of the board 10.

Each station 12 is provided with an index 18 which may be printed upon the game board 10 as at 19, or may be carried by loose members or cards 20 of which a generous plurality may be provided to be exchanged at the pleasure of the players, to add variety to the game.

It is considered desirable to have the indicia of the members or cards 20 complementary to the indicia of the playing pieces 16 in a general or crude way which sometimes will make good sense, sometimes will provide entertaining absurdity, and not uncommonly will stimulate the players mentally and tax their minds to improvise mnemonic relations between two indicia at the same station 12.

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For example, as illustrated in the drawing, each index carried by a playing piece 16 consists of a word which is a noun, or which is usable as a noun, and each index 18 relating to a seat or a station 12 of the playing field, is a verb or a verbal phrase. Obviously the verb or verbal phrase of a station 12 sometimes will make good sense with the noun of the playing piece 16 temporarily occupying said station, while at other times the relation will be entertainingly absurd, and/or be so striking as to put the connection securely in the memory without exertion by the player; and in cases of sundry combinations not especially logical or striking, one player may manage to improvise a relation which will enable him to remember the connection during the time the playing piece 16 is concealed by the cover element 15, but another player may be unable to think of any idea effective in assisting his memory.

As illustrated in the drawing, the playing pieces 16 are classified into five distinct categories according to the particular vowel of the noun in question.

Fig. 7 shows a single playing piece 16 in which one vowel letter is featured by making it taller than the other letters of the word. Although not essential, such a distinction is convenient for the players, and permits use of words having different vowels in the same word. Of course the distinction can be made in other ways, as by using letters of different style or of different color.

Breaking now into the middle of a basic game to facilitate explanation of its routine, and referring to the playing pieces as cards for the sake of brevity, a player chooses from his hand one card, and plays said card by placing it in full view of the players at some convenient location, as upon the table at 26, Fig. 1; and then the player moves the cover element 15 about its pivot 14, in the clockwise direction to the extent of one station, thereby revealing the category of a card previously concealed by that portion of the cover designated at 17.

The table play at 26 is of the nature of a prediction regarding the disclosure about to be made by movement of the cover element 15, and the play is won if the prediction proves correct.

For example, if the played card is "Pen" as at 26, Fig. 1, and the cover shift reveals the card "Desk," both of these words have the same vowel "E," the prediction was made correctly, and this play is won, which means that (1) the player retains possession of the played card "Pen," (2) he gains possession of the card "Desk" together with any cards beneath it, (3) he takes the top

card from the pile at 36, Fig. 1, and places it at the station 12 just vacated by removal of his winnings, and (4) he is entitled to play again immediately.

Suppose that this time he plays the card "Bug" and uncovers the card "Dog." As "O" is different from "U," he loses this play, which means that (1) he forfeits the card "Bug" and puts it on top of the card "Dog," and (2) he loses the turn to the player next in succession.

Thus when he has the turn, a player is entitled to continue playing and winning from the field as long as all his predictions are correct. As soon as any prediction proves false, the next player has the turn. This routine continues to the end of the game, which end occurs at the completion of one or more circuits of the playing field, according to the players' preference for short games or long ones. Each separate game is won by the player having the most cards in hand at its finish. To begin the next game, all cards in players' hands are collected, shuffled, and placed at the bottom of the pile at 36; and new hands are dealt to the players from the top of this pile; the board remaining as it was when the previous game ended, and the player who had the turn then, making the first play of the new game.

For the very first game of a session, and later if the board should be cleared accidentally, said board 10 may be loaded in full view of all the players with a minimum of one card at each station; after which lots may be drawn to determine the order of succession of the players.

In Fig. 2, the unit 22 has a plurality of inclined seats 24 to hold playing pieces 16 with or without cover members 25 on the pieces; and adjacent to the row of seats 24, the unit 22 has a single large seat 27 to receive a member 30 carrying a like plurality of indicia 18 relating to the several seats 24 individually. Thus when the unit 22 has five of the seats 24, as shown in said Fig. 2, the member 30 carries five separate indicia 18 relating to the five seats 24 respectively.

The unit 23 of Fig. 3 is the same as the unit 22 of Fig. 2, except that the unit 23 has no large seat 27 to hold the member 30 which can simply rest on the table beside the unit 23.

Any desired number of the units 22 or 23 may be assembled to constitute a playing field, the units being positioned to form a rough circle, or otherwise as may be preferred. It will be clear that when a cover member 25 is taken from a particular seat 24 and placed upon a playing piece on another seat 24, this performance corresponds to a movement of the cover element 15, Fig. 1, to the extent of one station.

A particular reason for inclining the seats 24, is to allow relatively careless placing of a cover member 25 on a seat 24, such inclination providing a tendency for the cover to settle, under the influence of gravity and casual jogging or vibration of the table or board 10, to a normal position of rest in which it appears very like other covers. The point of the matter is to avoid tempting any player to misplace a cover member 25 intentionally according to some code of his own devising, in the hope that the peculiarity may disclose to him, altogether illegitimately, information more or less complete regarding the category of the playing piece beneath. Likewise, a reason for rounding one end of the cover member 25 is to make the two ends of the member so different that an end-for-end misplacement would be very conspicuous. Also it is desirable to have the upper and lower surfaces of the cover members 25 readily distinguishable from each other, as by a difference of finish of the card stock if the members are die-cut from cardboard, so that any cover would attract attention if placed on a seat 24 upside down.

If a more difficult game is desired, this is easily had in the case of an embodiment employing the units of Fig. 2, by using more of the cover members 25. If an easier game is wanted, the number of categories can be made fewer by using only four or three of the vowels, or by employing a different system of indicia having fewer categories; or one card can be played on the table against two places of the playing field, moving two cover members 25 at each play, or moving the cover element 15 two stations, and calling the play won if the played card matches either disclosed card on the game board 10.

Fig. 4 is a plan view, and Fig. 5 is a section, of a portion of an embodiment having concentric portions that jointly define a track 44 in the playing field to guide a cover element consisting of adjoining members 45 which may be of various lengths. When a number of the members 45 are chosen, to make a cover element of the desired length or extent, the aggregated members can be pushed around the track 44 as a unit in steps of one or two or more stations. Obviously the track 44 prevents illegitimate manipulations of a cover member 45, whether short or long, since the whole cover is moved at each step. Also, a step of three stations, say, is made more easily than by moving three individual cover members 25.

When the cover 25 is to be shifted always three stations at each play, this permits employment of the ultra simple apparatus of Fig. 6, which has neither inclined seats nor a guide track. That is to say, with indicia of three different playing pieces 16 concealed by a single cover member 65, the possible number of different combinations of these indicia is so great that attempts to cheat by intentional misplacement of a cover 65 might be regarded as impracticably futile; hence the track 44 of Fig. 4 can be dispensed with if simplicity or economy is imperative.

When a cover element is shifted three stations at each play, three cards can be played on the table against three cards of the field to afford numerous complex situations with various respective meanings in gains or losses. Thus for example, the three cards played on the table can be put down in a line approximately paralleled to the direction defined by the three field cards about to be uncovered, thereby pairing each played card with a specific field card, and no field card being won unless it matches its particular mate. And quite independently of these winnings and losses which may both occur in the same play, it may be ruled that a player is entitled to another play immediately only if an even number of cards, not paired as above, have the same vowel, the turn being lost if this number is odd, or if no played card matches any disclosed, special meanings can be given to the occurrence of two cards of the same vowel with three cards of another particular vowel, and to four, five and six of a kind.

When cards are used as the playing pieces, it will be convenient to pile them one upon another on the seats 24, and to a limited extent in the path of the cover element 15 of Fig. 1; but such stacking is not an essential feature of the invention, because there is no need to conceal more than one playing piece at any station 12 at any one time. Thus for example, if the playing pieces

16 were relatively thick, like ordinary dominoes, the cover element 15 could be placed high enough to provide suitable clearance between said cover and one playing piece resting upon the board 10; then when a forfeited piece is due to be placed in the path of the cover element 15, the piece 16 then occupying the station 12 in question, can be relegated to a place on the table or board 10 adjacent to the same station 12; and when the said forfeited piece 16 has been matched and won, the winner will take both the matched piece 16 and the relegated pieces belonging at this same station 12.

I claim:

1. In a word game apparatus, the combination of a plurality of playing pieces, means depicting a playing field having stations distinct from each other and fewer in number than said playing pieces, and a cover element physically separate from said playing field, and from said playing pieces, and able to conceal, at any one time, indicia of playing pieces at a plurality of the stations; said playing pieces bearing indicia to distinguish them from each other and to classify them into different categories, said playing field stations bearing indicia complementary, in a general way, to the indicia of the playing pieces, whereby the mental abilities of players may be taxed to improvise mnemonic relations between the indicia of the playing field stations and the indicia of the playing pieces occupying said stations; and the playing field and the cover element being

mutually adapted to permit relative movement therebetween, whereby the cover element can conceal, at different times, indicia of playing pieces at different distinct stations,

2. The invention of claim 1, wherein the plurality of playing pieces simulate a set of playing cards; wherein each such card bears a word including a vowel; and wherein said vowel is distinctively portrayed to classify the cards, into more than one group, whereby each said group is individually characterized by a common vowel.

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