

[54] WORD GAME APPARATUS

[75] Inventor: Malcolm C. Forgrave, Cedar, Mich.

[73] Assignee: Leelanau Industries, Inc., Cedar, Mich.

[22] Filed: Oct. 15, 1973

[21] Appl. No.: 406,377

[52] U.S. Cl. 273/135 D, 35/73, 273/136 E, 273/137 R

[51] Int. Cl. A63f 3/00

[58] Field of Search 35/31 E, 73, 75; 273/130 E, 131 G, 134 AB, 135 R, 135 A, 135 AD, 135 D, 136 E, 136 F, 136 W, 136 R, 137 R, 137 A, 137 AE, 137 AB, 137 AC, 137 AD, 160

[56] References Cited

UNITED STATES PATENTS

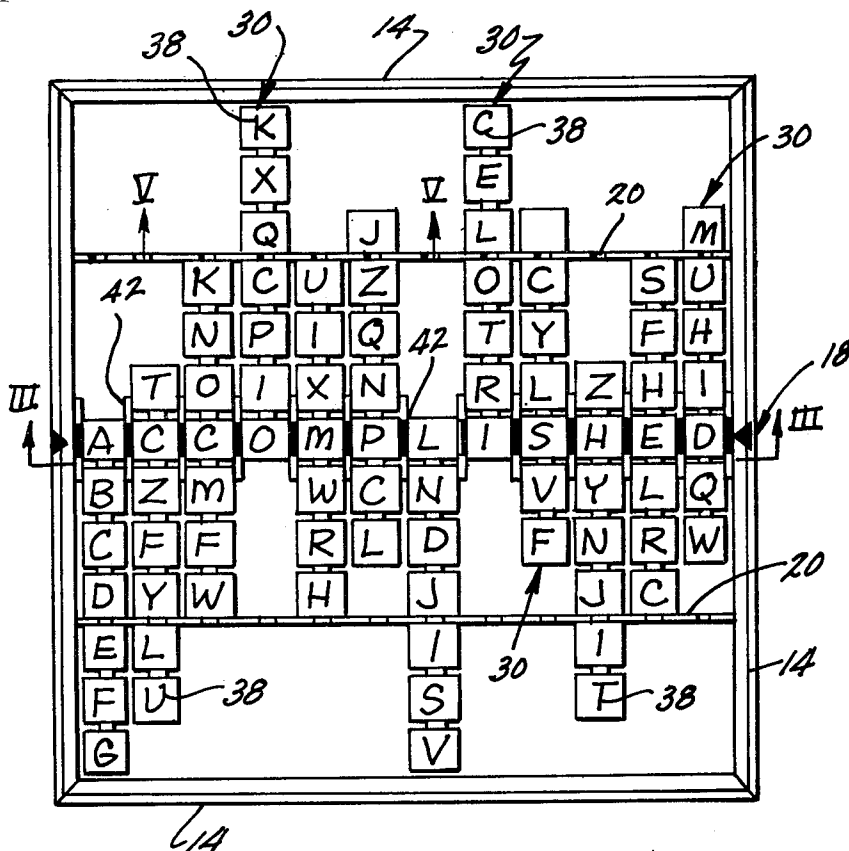
523,676	7/1894	McGrath.....	35/75
1,094,570	4/1914	Jacobs.....	35/75
1,613,204	1/1927	Smith.....	273/136 W

Primary Examiner—Richard C. Pinkham
 Assistant Examiner—Joseph R. Taylor
 Attorney, Agent, or Firm—Price, Heneveld, Huizenga & Cooper

[57] ABSTRACT

Apparatus for playing a competitive scoring game including a game board and a plurality of playing pieces. The playing pieces include a plurality of elongated rod-like elements each having a plurality of individual discrete faces upon which reference indicia is provided. Each discrete face is separated from an adjacent face by a slot or groove. The slot forms interlocking means adapted to mate with upstanding projections on the game board such that they may be positioned in parallel, side-by-side relationship on the board. Reference indicia is provided on the board to indicate a row of selected faces on each playing piece as they are arranged on the board to form words or the like.

13 Claims, 10 Drawing Figures



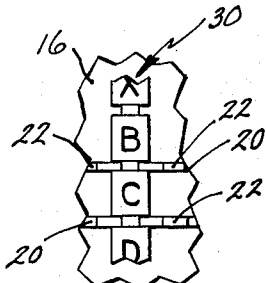


FIG. 10.

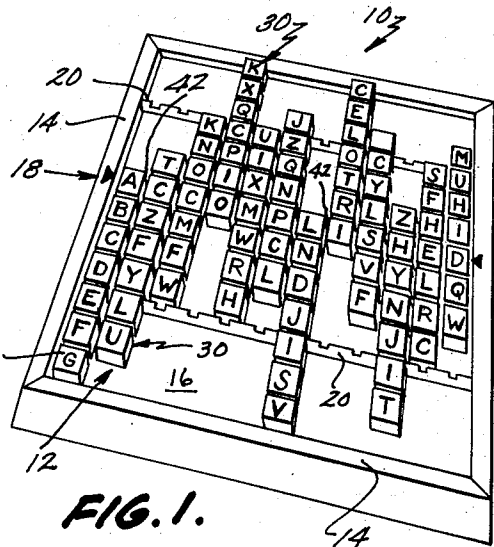


FIG. 1.

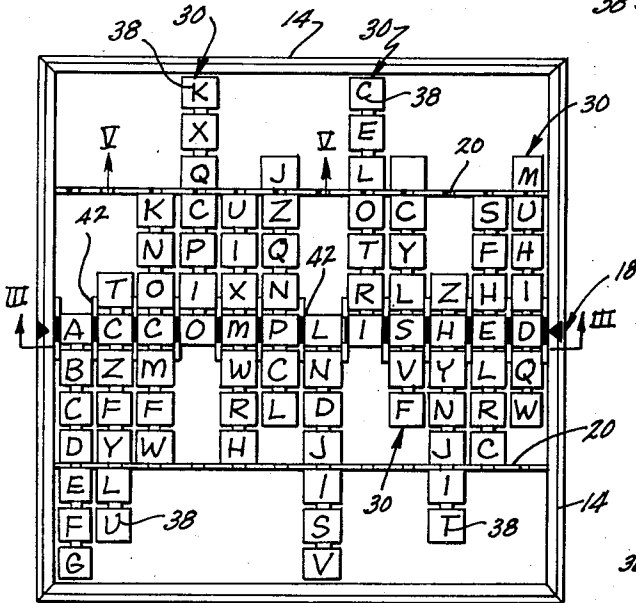


FIG. 2.

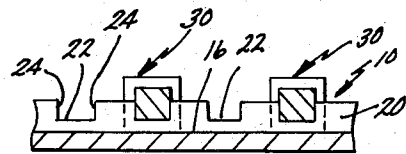


FIG. 5.

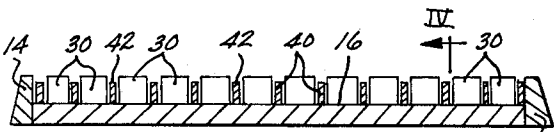


FIG. 3.

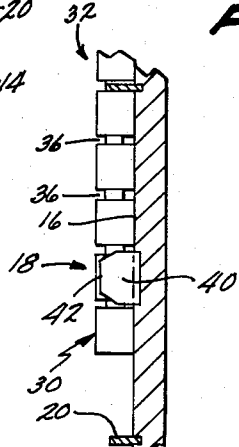


FIG. 4.

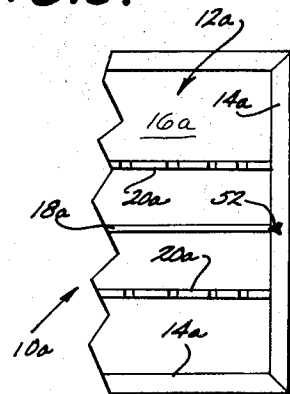


FIG. 9.

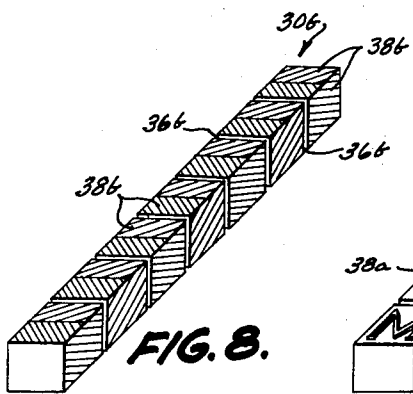


FIG. 8.

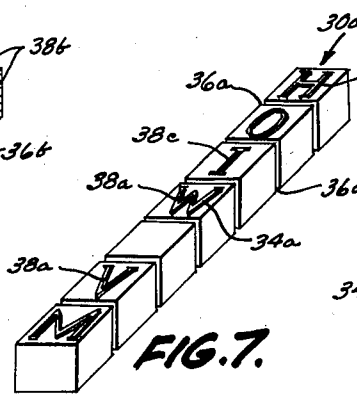


FIG. 7.

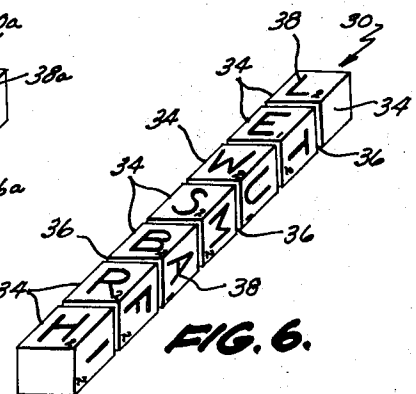


FIG. 6.

WORD GAME APPARATUS

This invention relates to word games and more particularly, to an apparatus on which such word games are played. The game apparatus provides an exciting and fun game designed for the maximum enjoyment by players of all ages. The game apparatus designed for attractiveness, utility of use, and inherent educational value includes a plurality of specially configured playing pieces positionable on a special playing board in parallel, side-by-side relationship. The playing pieces are movable to form words or other ordered sequences of letters, numbers, colors, or the like.

In the preferred embodiment of the invention, the playing apparatus comprises a supporting framework forming a playing board upon which a plurality of elongated bar-shaped playing pieces are adapted for positioning in parallel, side-by-side relationship. The board includes upwardly extending engaging means for holding the playing pieces in position. Each of the playing pieces are in the form of an elongated bar-shaped rod having a plurality of longitudinal faces each of which is divided into a number of individual discrete face segments. Each of the face segments is adapted to carry reference indicia. Receiving means for the engaging means on the board is located between each face segment and is adapted to receive interlocking means in the upwardly extending engaging means to hold the playing pieces in position. Indicator means extends across the board perpendicular to the playing pieces to provide an indication of a selected portion of each of the individual face segments of each playing piece such that they are readily discernable when arranged in playing position.

The many objects and advantages of the present invention will be readily appreciated as the invention becomes better understood by reference to the following detailed description and the accompanying drawings illustrating the invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of the game apparatus of the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a top, plan view of the apparatus shown in FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a cross-sectional view taken along the plane III—III of FIG. 2;

FIG. 4 is a cross-sectional view taken along the plane IV—IV of FIG. 3;

FIG. 5 is a cross-sectional view taken along the plane V—V of FIG. 2 illustrating the engaging means for the playing pieces;

FIG. 6 is a perspective view of one of the playing pieces;

FIG. 7 is a perspective view similar to FIG. 6 illustrating a modified playing piece;

FIG. 8 is a view similar to FIGS. 6 and 7 illustrating yet another embodiment of a playing piece;

FIG. 9 is a fragmentary, top plan view of the playing surface having a modified reference indicator thereon; and

FIG. 10 is a fragmentary, top plan view of the preferred playing surface.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

Referring now to FIGS. 1—6, the invention will be de-

scribed in detail. In accordance with the invention, the game playing apparatus generally designated by the numeral 10 includes a playing board 12 having a flat planar top surface 16 bounded by side walls 14 forming a supporting framework. A plurality of elongated bar-shaped playing pieces 30 are adapted for positioning on playing surface 16 in parallel, side-by-side relationship. Each of the elongated, bar-shaped playing pieces as best illustrated in FIG. 6 includes a plurality, preferably four, of longitudinal faces. Each of the longitudinal faces is further divided into a plurality of individual discrete face segments 34 upon which reference indicia 38 is printed or otherwise disposed. Grooves or slots 36 cut around the playing pieces 30 across the elongated faces separate each of the individual faces 34. The grooves formed between each individual face segment define a spacing therebetween and are adapted to mate with engaging means 20 on the playing surface.

Spaced-apart upwardly extending engaging means 20 on the playing surface holds the elongated playing pieces in position during use. As illustrated in FIGS. 3, 4, and 5, upwardly extending engaging means 20 includes a pair of spaced-apart elongated strips extending across the width of playing surface 16. Each of the strips includes spaced-apart notches 22 corresponding in number and position to the desired position of the rows of elongated playing pieces. The notches depend downwardly toward the playing surface 16 and include upwardly extending sidewalls 24. As shown in FIG. 5, the grooved area 36 of the playing piece is adapted to seat in the notch 22. The cooperative engagement of the notches and grooves holds the playing pieces in a perpendicular relationship with respect to the upwardly extending engaging means and additionally, because of the spacing between the notches, holds the playing pieces in aligned side-by-side parallel rows.

Indicator means 18 may be provided to extend across the surface of the board perpendicular to the playing pieces. The indicator is centrally located and in parallel alignment with the upwardly extending engaging means 20. In one embodiment of the invention, the indicator means includes a plurality of spaced-apart raised projections 40 each of which extend a slight distance either side of the lateral centerline of the board. Preferably, raised projections 40 taper generally upwardly where the uppermost surface thereof 42 may be painted or otherwise provided with means as contrasting coloring for identifying an aligned predetermined position across the surface of the board, the contrasting color thereby forming the indicator 18. The upper contrasting colored surface is preferably approximately equal to the length of an individual face 34 of a playing piece. The raised indicator means are positioned between each aligned row of playing pieces and cooperatively form channels to loosely embrace and guide the selected portion of each of the playing pieces.

I have found that the preferred construction is to space the upwardly extending engaging means 20 only one cube or letter apart as shown in FIG. 10 so that the spaced means 20 will automatically locate the position at which the selected letter or other indicia is to be positioned. By this construction, the colored portion (FIG. 2) can be eliminated and if the upstanding means 20 extends a slight distance beyond the intermost playing pieces 30 (FIG. 10), they will provide the indicator means thus eliminating the need for indicator means 18 of FIG. 2.

The individual playing pieces may then be lifted from the playing board and moved upwardly, downwardly, and rotated in their respective rows and repositioned such that a selected one of the individual faces 34 is positioned in alignment with indicator 18 between a pair of the raised indicators 40. Spacing between the upwardly extending engaging means 20 and the indicators is such that when an individual face is positioned in alignment with indicators 18, the notch 22 and groove 36 in the playing piece are also in alignment to hold the playing piece in the selected position.

During competitive playing of the game, a plurality of individual cubes 50 (FIG. 1) are provided. Each cube has reference indicia printed or otherwise disposed on each of its six faces. These cubes are used, as will be more fully explained hereinafter, in an attempt to match words spelled out on the game board with the playing pieces in alignment with indicator 18.

In its simplest form, the game is a competitive game played by two or more persons. The person controlling the board is called the "speller" and those competing are called "rollers" for they roll the cubes and match the speller's word. In playing the game, the speller declares his word. Once declared, neither he nor the competitors look at any references, for the spelling of the words may be challenged and if in error, the challenger is rewarded. Starting with the first playing piece to the left of the board, the speller manipulates the playing piece searching for the required letters and if found, places the bar-shaped playing piece into its special interlocking arrangement, e.g., with engaging means 20 positioned in slots 36. The selected letter is positioned at the indicator position. At this point it should be noted that the playing pieces in the game typically provided for adult playing have only twenty letters on each. The first or left-hand bar has the alphabet in sequence with its continuation on the last bar. Each letter is assigned a numerical value which may be indicated as by the small numerals appearing on the individual faces 34 adjacent the reference indicia 38 (FIG. 6). After a word is spelled, the score is recorded by simply adding the assigned numbers. The cubes, as will be more fully explained hereinafter do not have numerical values because in competitive play, the word score is matched.

As the speller starts arranging the playing pieces, if a letter is not found, he must declare another word. When eventually a word is completed, the speller moves the last playing piece at the end of the word so as to create a space—unnecessary, of course, when all the bars are used. When a speller indicates that the word is finished, his spelling is now subject to challenge. The number values assigned to the various letters used are added for score. The roller can now challenge the spelling. If the speller is in error and if the roller can spell the word correctly, the roller obtains double the score. If not, the roller obtains one-half the number of points for catching the error. The speller, of course, gets nothing. He may use the corrected word if the letters are available to him or a new word and if that is correct, the roller goes into action. The roller has a set of cubes 50 and endeavors to match the spelled word. The roller has three choices—by matching the word exactly, by synonym, or by antonym. The choice determines the score. The number of letters in the words determines points and also the number of rolls allowed to match. The fewer letters used in spelling the

word on the board, the fewer rolls allowed. The difficulty factor of matching, of course, increases with the increased number of letters used by the speller although this can be offset by the roller using similar or opposite words. In the examples shown, the 12-letter word "accomplished" positioned on the board along indicator 18, allows the roller four rolls to match the word although he must deduct one point for each roll not counting the first one. In the example shown, the cubes 50 have been rolled to form the synonym "attain" for the word outlined by the speller. Accordingly, it is equivalent to the speller's points. It is possible for a roller to outscore the speller. No game is complete until all spellers and rollers have had an equal number of spellings and rollings. The highest score wins. It will be realized, of course, that many variations can be made and that point tabulation, word spelling, and the like may be varied as desired. The game is so designed that an unlimited number of variations are conceivable with a number of boards and sets of cubes available for play determining the adaptability.

FIGS. 7 and 8 disclose modified embodiments of the playing pieces. In FIG. 7, the playing piece is essentially identical to that shown in FIG. 6 and is identified by the reference numeral 30a. The reference indicia placed thereon in this embodiment is in the form of raised letters 38a and/or impressed letters 38c fixed on each of the individual faces. This particular embodiment adapts the game for use by blind persons since they can feel the individual letters on the game. In addition, it is useful to teach children a "feel" for the various letters used. Variations of the game when playing with children, for example, can include matching of letters between rollers and spellers without necessarily spelling the words.

In the modification shown in FIG. 8, playing piece 30b includes reference indicia 38b in the form of areas of contrasting color arranged on each of the individual faces. The cubes used during the playing of this modification of the game have similarly marked faces which are arranged to correspond to those selected by the speller.

Referring briefly to FIG. 9, an alternate embodiment of the indicator means is shown. The game board shown in FIG. 9 is essentially identical to that shown in the previous figures and therefore, only a minimum number of reference numerals suffixed by the letter "a" are shown to indicate like parts. In this embodiment, reference indicator 18a extends across the width of the board on the board surface 16a. When the playing pieces are arranged between engaging means 20a, they effectively cover indicator 18a. An arrow or other indicator 52 is therefore positioned on either side of the board on the upper wall of the frame 14a.

Although a specific embodiment of the invention has been described and illustrated together with several modifications of the playing pieces and the playing board itself, it will be readily appreciated by those skilled in the art that many other modifications may be made in the light of the foregoing disclosure. Other rules may also be employed to play other games with the same apparatus and the device may be advantageously utilized for solitary play. It will be recognized that these and other modifications may be made without departing from the principles hereof. Therefore, these modifications are to be considered as included in

the appended claims unless these claims by their language expressly state otherwise.

The embodiments of the invention in which an exclusive property or privilege is claimed are defined as follows:

- 1. A game apparatus comprising:
 - a supporting framework forming a playing board;
 - a plurality of elongated bar-shaped playing pieces adapted for positioning on said board;
 - upwardly extending engaging means on said board
 - for engaging and holding said playing pieces in position thereon, said engaging means extending across said board and having interlocking means thereon for fixing said plurality of playing pieces in aligned rows in parallel, side-by-side relationship;

each said elongated bar-shaped playing piece having a plurality of longitudinal faces, each said longitudinal face being divided into a plurality of individual discrete face segments, each said face segment being adapted to carry reference indicia thereon; receiving means on each said playing piece for receiving said engaging means, said receiving means including slots positioned between each said face segment defining a spacing therebetween, said slots being adapted to receive said interlocking means to hold said playing pieces in position.

- 2. The game playing apparatus of claim 1 in which indicator means is provided extending across the surface of said board perpendicular to said playing pieces for indicating designated portions of selected individual face segments of each of said playing pieces.

- 3. The game playing apparatus of claim 2 wherein said upwardly extending engaging means comprises at least one elongated strip member extending across said board transversely to said aligned rows of playing pieces, said strip having a plurality of U-shaped notches formed therein, each said notch being adapted to matingly engage with said groove formed in said playing pieces.

- 4. The game playing apparatus of claim 3 wherein a pair of said elongated strips are provided on said board, said pair of strips each extending across said board, one of said strips being spaced from the other of said strips and said indicator means being positioned therebetween.

tween.

- 5. The game playing apparatus of claim 4 wherein said indicator means comprises an area of contrasting color extending across the surface of said board, said elongated strips being positioned equidistant from said indicator.

- 6. The game playing apparatus of claim 4 wherein said indicator means comprises a plurality of spaced, raised projections on said board, said projections extending perpendicular to said elongated strips between said aligned rows of playing pieces and cooperatively forming channels to embrace a selected portion of said playing piece, the upper surface of each of said projections forming a contrast with said board to indicate aligned face segments of said playing pieces.

- 7. The game playing apparatus of claim 6 wherein said upper surfaces of said raised projections each have an area of contrasting color thereon defining a preferred position of aligned face segments when positioned between adjacent projections.

- 8. The apparatus as defined in claim 1 wherein reference indicia is carried by at least some of said face surfaces of said playing pieces.

- 9. The apparatus as defined in claim 8 wherein said reference indicia comprises raised letters.

- 10. The apparatus as defined in claim 8 wherein said reference indicia comprises areas of contrasting color on said face surfaces of said playing pieces.

- 11. The apparatus of claim 2 in which the upwardly extending engaging means is spaced one segment thus providing the spaced indicator means.

- 12. The apparatus as defined in claim 8 wherein said reference indicia comprises impressed letters.

- 13. The game playing apparatus of claim 1 in which said engaging means includes a pair of elongated strip members extending across said board transverse to said row of playing pieces, one of said strip members being spaced from the other of said strip members a distance to receive an individual face segment therebetween, said strip members cooperatively forming indicator means for indicating designated portions of an aligned row of selected individual face segments of each of said playing pieces.

* * * * *

50

55

60

65