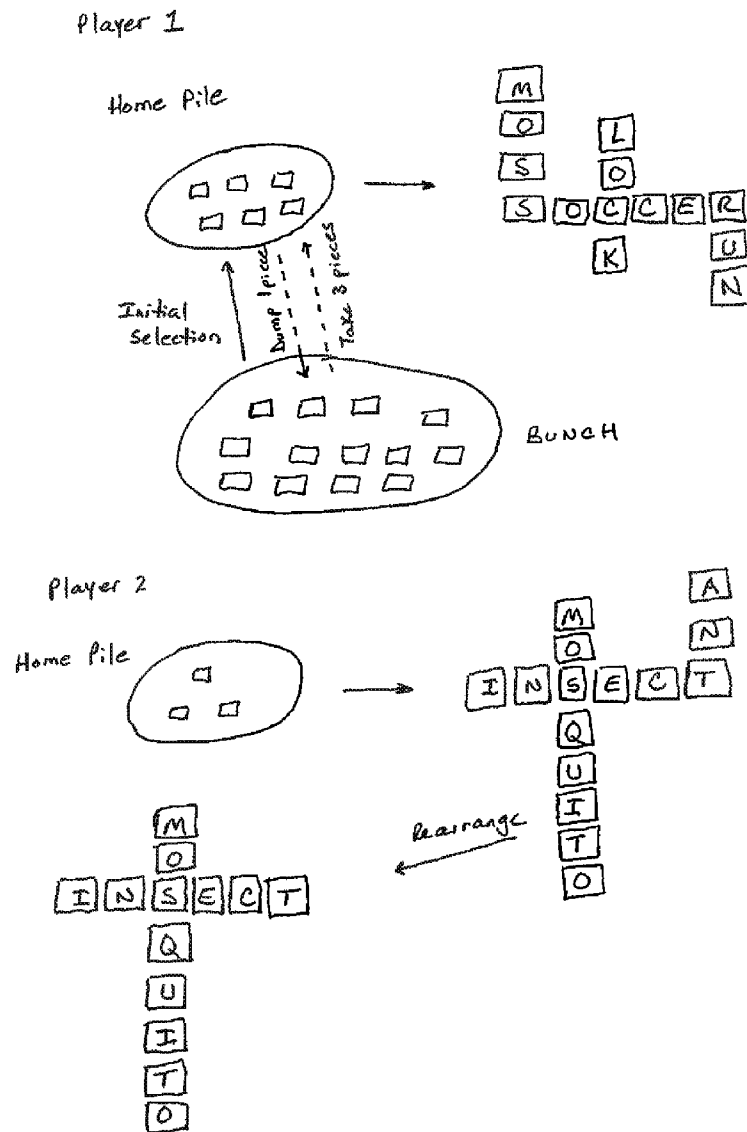




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Nathanson(10) **Pub. No.: US 2014/0131946 A1**(43) **Pub. Date: May 15, 2014**(54) **WORD GAME AND METHOD OF PLAY****Publication Classification**(71) Applicant: **Bananagrams, Inc.**, Providence, RI
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A63F 9/00 (2006.01)(72) Inventor: **Rena Nathanson**, London (GB)(52) **U.S. Cl.**
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USPC **273/272**(73) Assignee: **Bananagrams, Inc.**, Providence, RI
(US)(57) **ABSTRACT**(21) Appl. No.: **14/077,365**(22) Filed: **Nov. 12, 2013****Related U.S. Application Data**(60) Provisional application No. 61/725,083, filed on Nov.
12, 2012.

A method of game play comprising forming crossword grids out of gaming pieces which depict one or more letters of the alphabet. The gaming pieces are dimensioned, configured, and constructed such that the game may be played in a variety of settings, including, for example, swimming pools, lawns, beaches, parks, gymnasiums, classrooms, throughout a house, campgrounds, and the like.



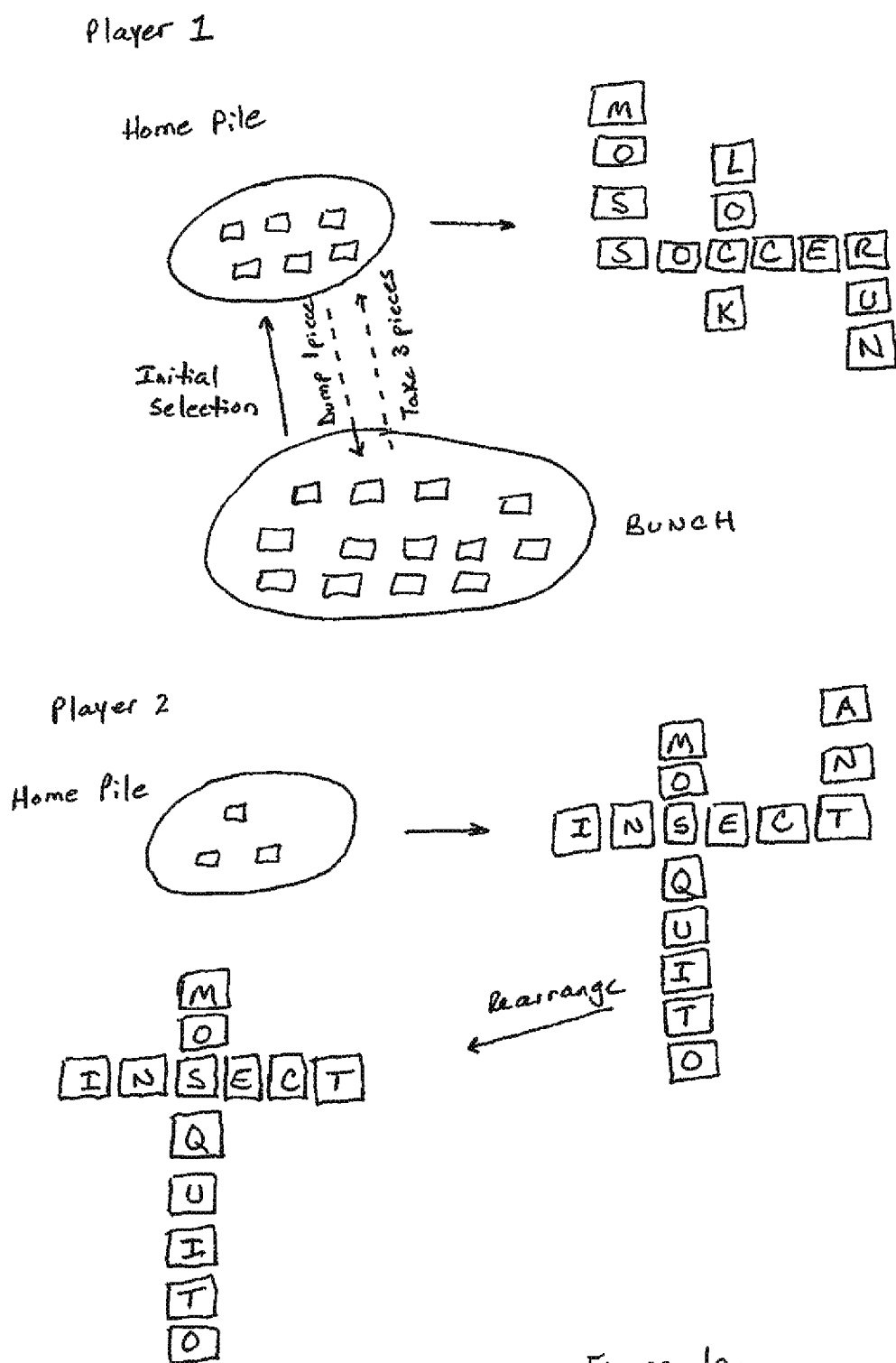


Figure 1a

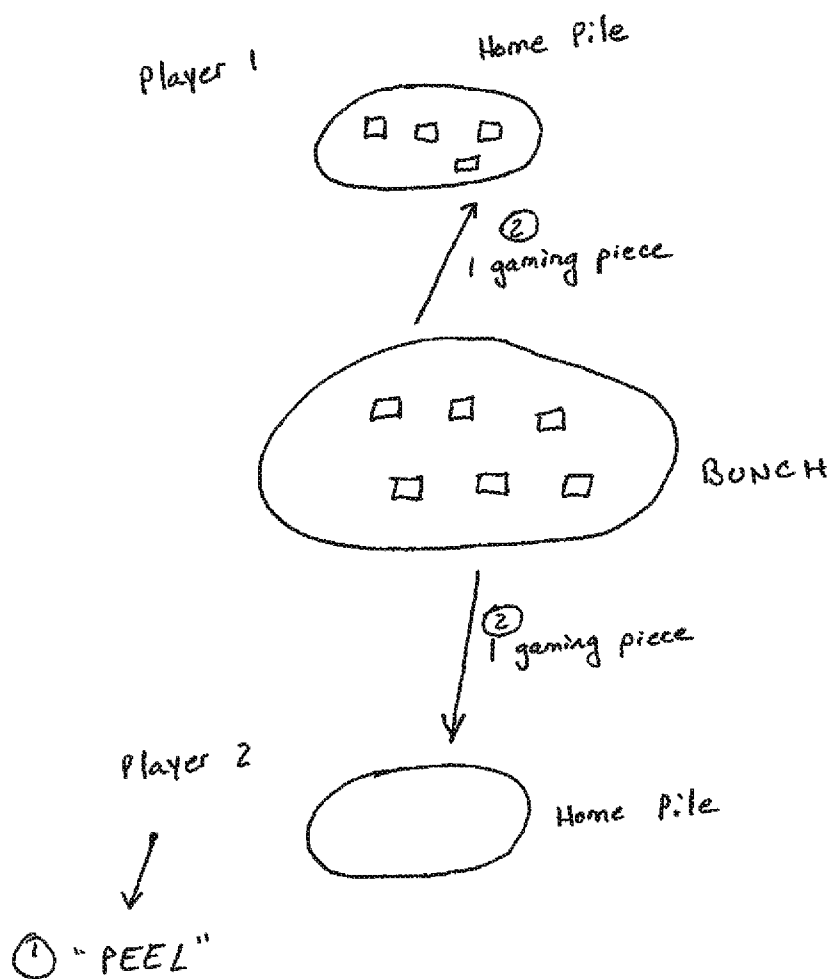


Figure 16

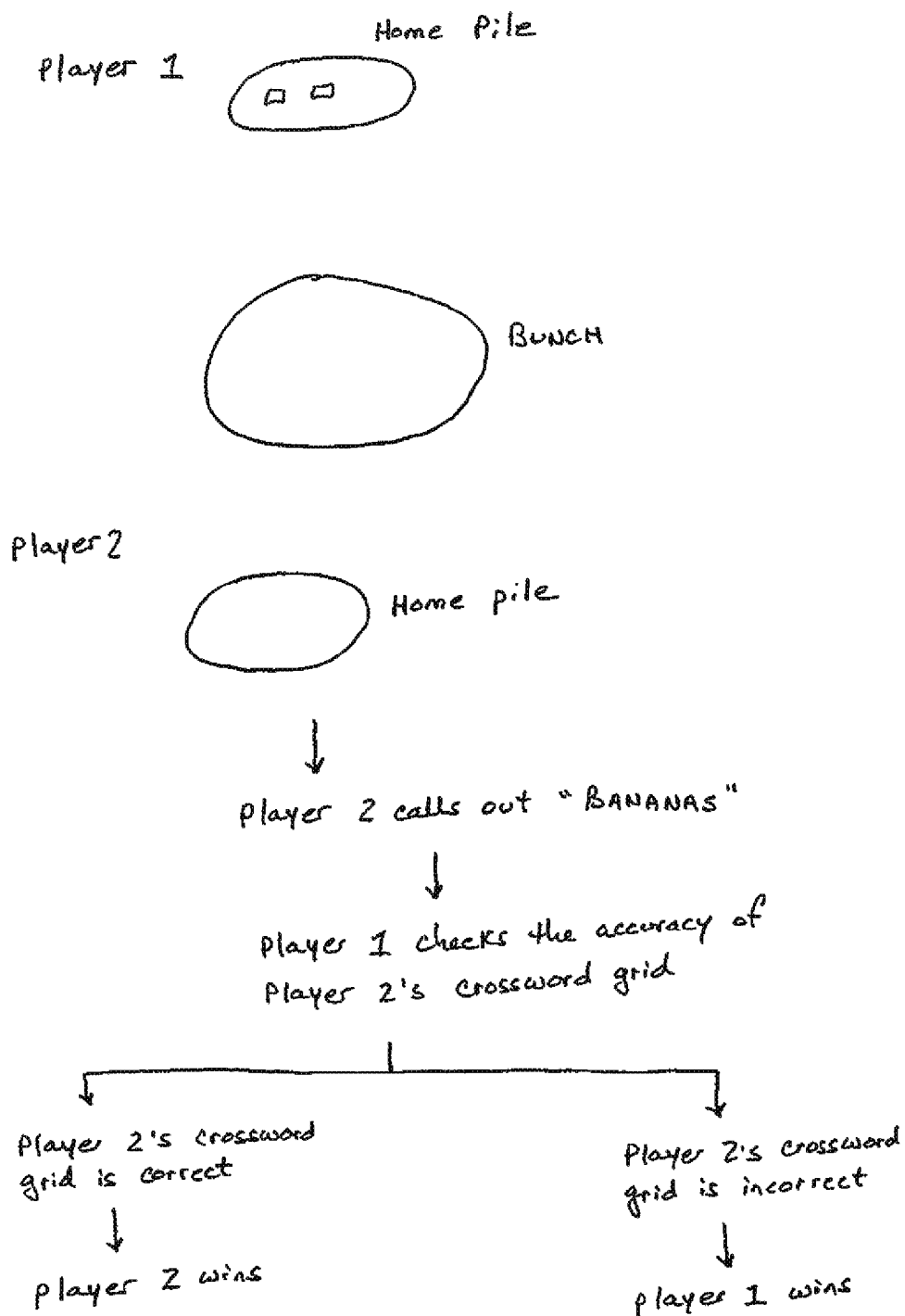


Figure 1c

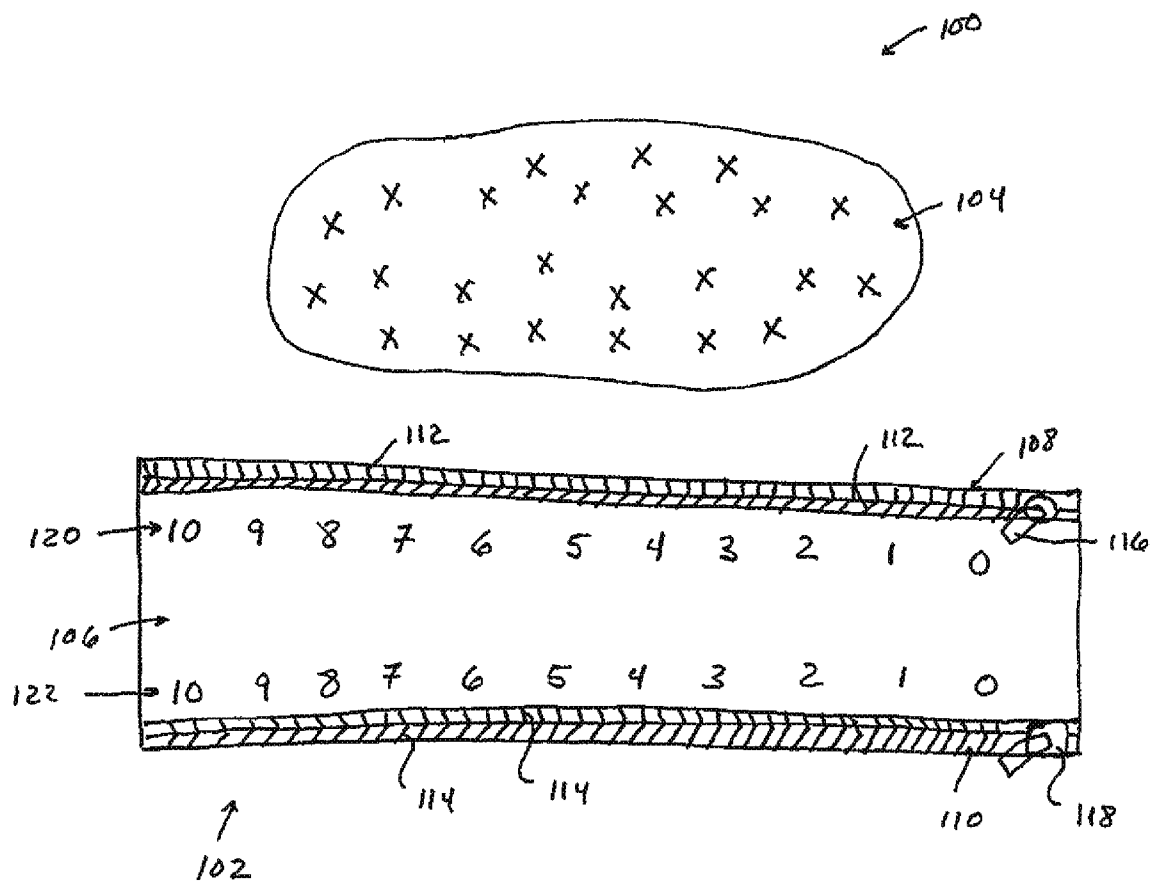
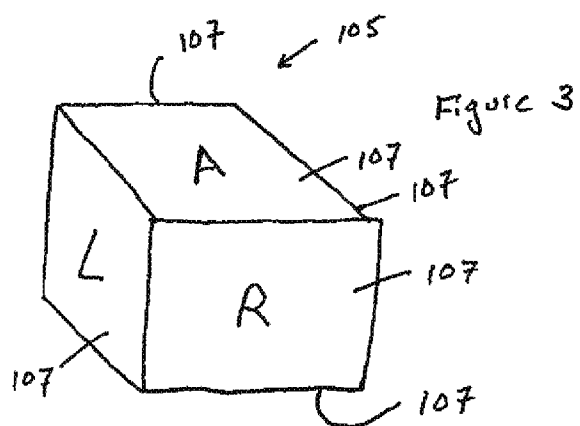


Figure 2



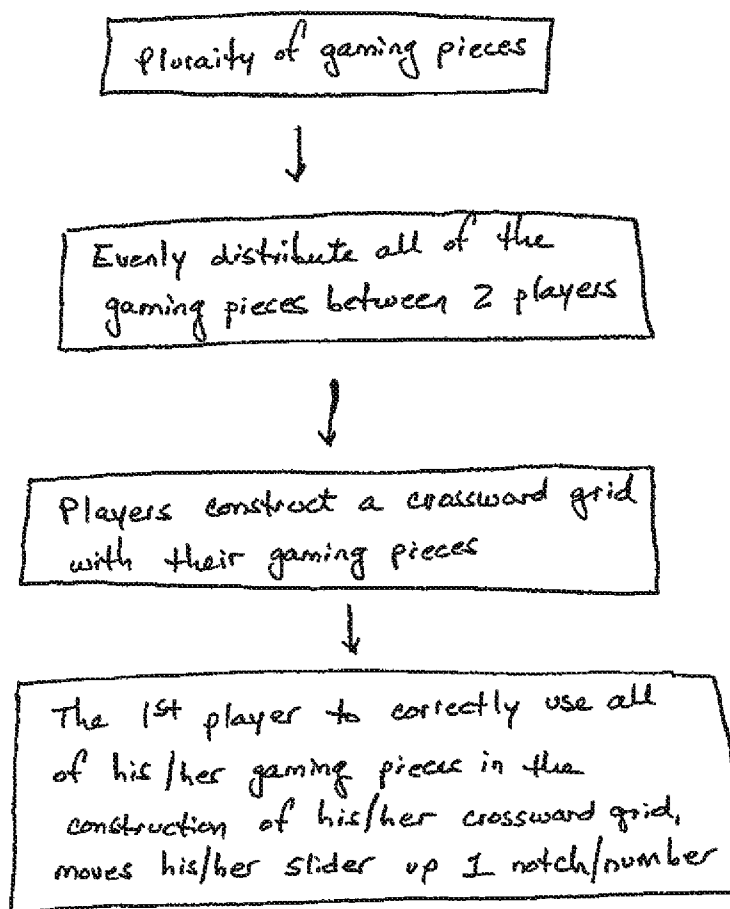


Figure 4

WORD GAME AND METHOD OF PLAY

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] 1. Field of the Invention

[0002] The present disclosure relates generally to a game and to its method of play, and, more particularly, to a word game preferably played on an enlarged scale.

[0003] 2. Background of the Invention

[0004] A variety of word games exists including those which use cubes with letters thereon, tiles, or cards. Generally, it is the purpose of these games to be entertaining and to be educationally challenging to the players. In addition, where the games may be used by children, games may have a positive effect helping the child to learn to spell. Typical games simply provide a player with a certain number of letters wherein each player uses those letters to form words. In some games, the player will draw from a draw pile or letter bank, to create a word. Such games provide limited intellectual stimulation and only involve slight strategy with regard to the selection, or arrangement of letters. Additionally, these games are typically restricted to tabletop play which restricts the range and location of play. A need has thus arisen for a word game that is fun to play, physically challenging, which maintains the interest of the players to provide an entertaining and educational game, and which expands the scope of where and when the game may be played and by whom the game may be played.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0005] Disclosed herein is a game and a method of play comprising gathering gaming pieces and using the gaming pieces to spell out words in a crossword grid format. The size and/or scale of the gaming pieces along with the material(s) used to form the gaming pieces is selected to increase the venues and the opportunities in which and by whom the game may be played.

[0006] These and other features and advantages of the present invention will be more fully understood from a reading of the following detailed description,

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0007] FIG. 1a-1c are schematics depicting an exemplary method of playing an exemplary word game;

[0008] FIG. 2 is a schematic depicting an exemplary word game;

[0009] FIG. 3 is a schematic depicting an exemplary gaming piece; and

[0010] FIG. 4 is a schematic depicting a method of playing the word game depicted in FIG. 2.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0011] A word game disclosed herein comprises a plurality of gaming pieces, wherein each of the gaming pieces has one or more letters of the alphabet visible thereon. In a preferred embodiment, the number of gaming pieces which reflect a particular letter is dependent upon that letter's frequency of occurrence in the written language. In general, the gaming pieces are manipulated in such a way as to spell out words in a crossword grid configuration, i.e., the gaming pieces are positioned vertically and horizontally relative to one another, to spell out words which build off of one another. A variety of rules may be implemented regarding which type of words may or may not be spelled out in the game, such as, for

example, and without limitation, precluded words may include proper nouns, obscenities, abbreviations, acronyms, and the like. Additionally or alternatively, rules may be implemented in the direction in which the words may be laid out relative to one another, i.e., words may be spelled from left to right and/or from up to down, but not from right to left and/or from down to up. Additionally, players may restrict the words to a certain category and/or topic, e.g., all of the words may be required to be a noun, a verb, an adjective, and the like; must spell out a type of animal, color, and the like; etc.

[0012] The gaming pieces are preferably formed and dimensioned for play which encourages movement on a greater scale than which would ordinarily be involved in typical table-top or typical indoor floor play. That is, it is contemplated that the game disclosed herein be played, for example, on a larger scale, such as, for example, on one or more of a lawn, a beach, a park, a gymnasium, a classroom, an auditorium, a swimming pool, a campground, throughout a house, and the like to promote a greater range of movement when played while increasing the number of play opportunities and venues. Accordingly, the material(s) which are used to form the gaming pieces, and the size and configuration of the gaming pieces, is/are selected according to the place and the manner in which game play is contemplated. For example, where the game is intended for play in water, such as, e.g., a swimming pool, the gaming pieces preferably comprise a floatable, water-resistant material, such as, e.g., foam, plastic, and the like, and is dimensioned so that the players can readily see, manipulate and maneuver around the gaming pieces while the players are in the swimming pool. Furthermore, to the end of allowing the game to be played on a large scale, in an exemplary embodiment each of the playing pieces comprises a cube configuration having a height of at least 19 inches, a width of at least 4 inches, and a length of at least 4 inches, wherein in an exemplary embodiment, each of the playing pieces comprises a cube configuration comprising a height of about 3 inches, a width of about 3 inches, and length of about 3 inches.

[0013] In general, the game is played by distributing an even number of gaming pieces to all of the players. As used herein and throughout, a "player" shall include the concept of a team, wherein a team includes two or more players working to assemble a shared crossword grid. The player manipulates his/her gaming pieces to correctly spell out one or more words which are not proscribed by the predetermined rules for that particular round of play. Where more than one word is spelled out, the words preferably build off of one another and are physically positioned in a crossword grid fashion. In an exemplary embodiment, the first player to use all of his/her allotted gaming pieces to form a crossword grid wins a round. Total game play may include one or more rounds of play. Accordingly, a winner of a particular game is the one to win the most number of rounds of play for the particular game.

[0014] In an exemplary embodiment, a game comprises a plurality of gaming pieces, wherein each of the gaming pieces is in the form of, e.g., a tile which bears a letter of the alphabet on a face thereof. In an exemplary embodiment, the frequency of the letters is dependent upon the frequency in which the letters are used in forming words. For example, letters that are more frequently used in the spelling of English words, such as "A", "E", "R", "T", and "O", would be represented more frequently than would letters such as "Z", "X", and "Q" which are less commonly used in the spelling of English words.

[0015] In an especially preferred embodiment, the game comprises 144 tiles or gaming pieces, wherein each gaming piece bears a single letter from the English alphabet in a frequency according to Table 1 provided directly below herein.

TABLE 1

Letter of Alphabet	Number of Gaming Pieces Per Letter
J, K, Q, X, Z	2
B, C, F, H, M, P, V, W, Y	3
G	4
L	5
D, S, U	6
N	8
R, T	9
O	11
I	12
A	13
E	18

[0016] An exemplary method of playing the exemplary game disclosed above is depicted in FIGS. 1a-1c. As shown, and exemplary method comprises placing gaming pieces 12 face down to form a grouping referred to herein as a “bunch” 14. In an initial selection of gaming pieces 12, each player selects an equal and pre-determined number of gaming pieces 12 from bunch 14, and places them face down in front of the respective player in what is referred to herein as the player’s “home pile” 16. For games of 2-4 players, each player may take at least 21 gaming pieces 12 from bunch 14; for 5-6 players, each player may take at least 15 gaming pieces 12 from bunch 14; for 7-8 people, each player may take at least 11 gaming pieces 12 from bunch 14; etc.

[0017] When one or more of the players signals, such as, for example, by calling out the word “split”, all of the players turn up their gaming pieces 12 from their respective home piles 16 and attempt to spell out words in a crossword grid 18 by manipulating the gaming pieces 12 and placing them in a horizontal and vertical fashion and building off of one or more of the other words. At any point during game play, any of the players may rearrange his/her words and crossword grid 18 as often as desired. In a preferred embodiment, players do not take turns, but play independently of each other and at the same time.

[0018] In an exemplary embodiment, when a player has used all of his/her tiles from his/her respective home pile 16, all of the players take a preselected number of additional gaming pieces 12 from bunch 14, and continue forming words as described above. In an exemplary embodiment, such each player would take one additional gaming piece from bunch 14. To indicate when the other player(s) must select another gaming piece from bunch 14, the player having used all of his/her gaming pieces 12 may call out a word, such as, for example, “peel”.

[0019] At any time, and as often as desired during play, any of the players may signal out, such as, for example, by calling out the word “dump”, and return a gaming piece back from his/her home pile 16 to bunch 14, face down. The same player may then take additional gaming pieces 12 from bunch 14, preferably three additional gaming pieces 12, and take these gaming pieces 12 back to his/her home pile 16. This exchange need not affect the other players. When bunch 14 has fewer than the “additional gaming pieces 12” referred to in this

paragraph, then the player takes all of the remaining gaming pieces 12 included in bunch 14.

[0020] Play continues until there are fewer gaming pieces 12 in bunch 14 than there are players in the game. The first player with no remaining gaming pieces 12 in his home pile 16 indicates that he/she has completed his/her crossword grid 18, such as by, for example, calling out the word “Bananas”. The other players may then check the completed crossword grid 18 for misspelled or prohibited words. If all of the words are acceptable, that player is the winner of the round. If any word of crossword grid 18 is found to be unacceptable, i.e., the word is misspelled or does not conform to other established rules, e.g., the word is an acronym, a proper noun, an obscenity, and the like, the player who completed crossword grid 18 and first indicated that he/she was finished is out of the round. Once out of the round, such player returns all of his/her tiles face down to bunch 14, and the play of the round resumes for the remaining players. If there were only two players, then the other player automatically wins the round.

[0021] Rounds may continue in this fashion, until the players have played a desired number of rounds. The winner of the game is the player who has won the most rounds.

[0022] Another exemplary method of play comprises essentially all of the steps set forth above in reference to FIGS. 1a-1c except that there is no “peeling” and “dumping”, i.e., players do not exchange their gaming pieces 12 in their respective home piles 16 with those in bunch 14, and once a player has finished constructing crossword grid 18 using all of his/her gaming pieces 12 as first collected from bunch 14, such player is the winner so long as none of the words used by the player in crossword grid 18 violate any of the rules of the game. Should the game end in a stalemate, the player with the fewest number of gaming pieces 12 remaining in the respective player’s home pile 16 is the winner.

[0023] In another exemplary method of play, the method comprises essentially all of the steps set forth above in reference to FIGS. 1a-1c, except that there is no peeling. That is, players are allowed to exchange their gaming pieces 12 according to the embodiment depicted in FIGS. 1a-1c; however, once a player has finished constructing crossword grid 18 using all of his/her gaming pieces 12 from player’s home pile 16 such player is the winner so long as none of the words used by the player in crossword grid 18 violate any of the rules of the game. In this embodiment, preferably each player selects at least 21 gaming pieces 12 from bunch 14 and places them in his/her home pile 16.

[0024] Another exemplary method of play is especially well-suited for solitaire play. In this embodiment, the method is substantially similar to the method described with reference to FIGS. 1a-1c, except that a single player takes a certain number of gaming pieces 12, preferably at least 21 gaming pieces 12, from bunch 14 and plays them from his/her home pile 16. Once the player can no longer figure out how to use all of his/her gaming pieces 12 in the construction of the crossword grid, the player may select one or more additional gaming pieces 12 from bunch 14, wherein in an exemplary embodiment, the player selects one additional gaming piece from bunch 14. In this embodiment, the player can try to beat his own best time in using all of the gaming pieces 12 from bunch 14, try making as few words as possible to use up all of the gaming pieces 12 from bunch 14, and the like.

[0025] Specific manners of play are described in the following examples.

EXAMPLE 1

[0026] 144 gaming pieces are placed face down to form a bunch. For games of 2-4 players, each player takes 21 gaming pieces from the bunch, for 5-6 players, each player takes 15 gaming pieces from the bunch, and for 7-8 players, each player takes 11 gaming pieces from the bunch. All of the selected gaming pieces are placed face down.

[0027] Any one player calls out “split”. All players reach down to turn their own gaming pieces face up and proceed to form their individual grid of connecting and intersecting words. Words may be horizontal or vertical, reading left to right or top to bottom. At any point, each player may rearrange their own words as often as desired. Players do not take turns, but play independently of each other and at the same time.

[0028] When a player has used all of their original gaming pieces, they call “peel” and take a new gaming piece from the bunch. At this point, all of the other players must also take a gaming piece from the bunch and add it to their collection of gaming pieces. This may entail some running on the part of the players depending on where the bunch is in relation to the player’s grids.

[0029] At any time, and as often as desired during play, any player may return a gaming piece back to the bunch, face down, but must take 3 gaming pieces in return. The player declares this action to the other players by saying “dump”.

[0030] Play continues until there are fewer tiles in the bunch than there are player in the game. The first player with no remaining tiles calls out “bananas” and is the winner. The other players may check the winning grid for misspelled or incorrect words. If all words are acceptable, that player is the winner of that round. If any word in the grid is found to be unacceptable, that player is out of that round. Such player must return all of their gaming pieces face down to the center bunch and the game resumes for the remaining players.

EXAMPLE 2

[0031] In another exemplary embodiment, all of the gaming pieces are placed face down, and the gaming pieces are divided equally among the players, face-down. Players may then play as discussed in Example 1 except that there is no peeling or dumping. The first player to use all of his/her tiles calls out “bananas” and is the winner of that round. If the game ends in a stalemate, the player with the fewest tiles is the winner.

EXAMPLE 3

[0032] Each player takes 21 gaming pieces from the bunch. Players then proceed to play the game as described in Example 1 with dumping but no peeling. The first player to use all of his gaming pieces calls out “bananas” and is the winner.

EXAMPLE 4

[0033] All of the gaming pieces are placed face down in an open area. 21 gaming pieces are chosen and play proceeds as described above in Example 1 except that only one player is participating in game play. Unlike the play described in Example 1, the player only peels when needed. The player tries to beat his own best time in using all 144 gaming pieces, or tries making as few words as possible to use all 144 gaming pieces.

[0034] FIG. 2 depicts another exemplary game. Here, a game 100 comprises a scoring member 102 and a plurality of gaming pieces 104. In an exemplary embodiment, plurality of gaming pieces 104 comprises about 24 cubes. As shown in FIG. 3, an exemplary gaming piece includes a cube 105 made from, e.g., plastic, wood, tile, ceramic, marble, and the like. Cube 105 comprises faces 107 each of which has at least one letter from the alphabet visible thereon.

[0035] Referring again to FIG. 2, scoring member 102 comprises a housing 106 which stores plurality of gaming pieces 104. Disposed on housing 106 is a zipper 108 and a zipper 110, each of which respectively comprises two rows of teeth 112 and 114, wherein rows of teeth 112 are engaged by a slider 116 and rows of teeth 114 are engaged by a slider 118. Further disposed on housing 106 is a series of numbers 120 and 122 each of which range from 0-10. Series of numbers 120 is aligned with zipper 108 while series of numbers 122 is aligned with zipper 110.

[0036] To begin play of game 100, plurality of gaming pieces 104 is evenly distributed between two players. Slider 116 of zipper 108 is aligned with the number 0 from series of numbers 120, while slider 118 of zipper 110 is aligned with the number 0 from series of numbers 122. At approximately the same time, each of the players begins to construct a crossword grid comprising words with the player’s allotted gaming pieces. The first player to properly use all of his allotted gaming pieces in the formation of a crossword grid gets to move his respective zipper up one point, e.g. from 0 to 1 from respective series of numbers 120 and 122. Should a player having a finished crossword grid have made a mistake in the spelling of a word and/or have used a word that is proscribed under the rules of play, then the other player receives the point and gets to move his respective slider 116 and 118 up one number from respective series of numbers 120 and 122.

[0037] Once a round of play has been completed and the point earned and recorded via movement of the respective slider 116 and 118, the gaming pieces from plurality of 104 are redistributed evenly to the players. The first player to reach a score of 10 wins the game.

[0038] In another exemplary embodiment, game 100 may be played essentially as described above with reference to FIG. 2, except that the players may win a bonus point for each pair of rhyming words in a completed grid.

[0039] In another exemplary embodiment, game 100 may be played essentially as described above with reference to FIG. 4, but may be awarded additional points based upon the length of a word used in the formation of the crossword grid. For example, a 7 letter word may be awarded 1 bonus point, an 8 letter word may be awarded 2 bonus points, a 9 letter word may be awarded 3 bonus points, and so on.

[0040] In another exemplary embodiment, game 100 may be played essentially as described above with reference to FIG. 4, however, palindromes and/or semi-palindromes may receive bonus points.

[0041] Additionally or alternatively to any of the embodiments disclosed hereunder, players may agree that words must have at least a certain number of letters. Further, players may agree that the words must belong to a particular type or category, such as, e.g., a particular language, sports, animals, etc.

[0042] Specific manners of play of the game described above with reference to FIG. 2 are described in the following examples.

EXAMPLE 1

[0043] Each player selects a zipper and keeps a running score by moving their zipper on the pouch. Each player then takes 12 cubes. One of the players calls “go” and each player then proceeds to make a crossword grid using any side of his own cubes. Words can be any length, reading top to bottom, left to right only. The first player to complete a grid with no remaining cubes calls out “zip” and moves his zipper 1 point. If a player’s grid includes a misspelling or a non-existent word or non-allowed word, that player receives no points for the round and the opponent gains 1 point. At the end of each round, all of the cubes are mixed and redistributed to each player. The first player to reach 10 on the scoring pouch calls out zip-it and is the winner of the game.

EXAMPLE 2

[0044] The rules are played as described above in Example 1, except that players win 1 bonus point for each pair of rhyming words in a completed grid.

EXAMPLE 3

[0045] The rules are played as described above in Example 1, except that any 7 letter word wins 1 bonus point. An 8 letter word receives 2 bonus points, and a 9 letter word receives 3 bonus points, and so forth.

EXAMPLE 4

[0046] The rules are played as described above in Example 1, except that in a completed grid, each palindrome or semi-palindrome receives 2 bonus points. A palindrome is a word that reads the same forwards and backwards, and a semi-palindrome is a word in which letters form one word reading left to right, and a different word reading right to left.

[0047] In any of these embodiments of play, players can agree to amend the rules to suit the players’ skill level and abilities. For example, adults playing against adults may agree that words must have at least 3 letters, while children are allowed to use 2 letter words. Additionally, players may modify the rules such that all of the spelled-out words must fall into a particular category, such as, e.g., all of the words must be nouns, sports, animals, etc.

[0048] While the disclosure has been shown and described with reference to certain preferred embodiments thereof, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that various changes in form and detail may be made therein without departing from the spirit and scope of the disclosure.

What is claimed is:

1. A method of game play, comprising:

providing a plurality of gaming pieces in a bunch pile, wherein each gaming piece has a letter of the alphabet displayed on a face thereof, and further wherein each gaming piece from the plurality is sized and dimensioned for large-scale play;

having players each select a predetermined number of the gaming pieces and placing the selected gaming pieces into each of the players’ respective home pile;

having players create words in a cross-word grid layout from gaming pieces located within the players’ respective home pile;

wherein the players create the cross-word grid layout in a venue of play selected from the group consisting of a lawn, a beach, a park, a gymnasium, a classroom, a campground, and a swimming pool.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein each of the gaming pieces comprises foam.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein each of the gaming pieces comprises a configuration having a height of at least 19 inches, a width of at least 4 inches, and a length of at least 4 inches.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein the venue of play is in a swimming pool.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the gaming pieces located within the bunch pile are face-down such that the letters of the alphabet displayed on the faces of the gaming pieces are obscured.

6. The method of claim 1, further comprising returning a predetermined number of gaming pieces from a player’s respective home pile to the bunch pile, and having the player choose an alternate set of a predetermined number of gaming pieces from the bunch pile and placing the alternate set in the player’s respective home pile.

7. The method of claim 6, further comprising having all of the players select another set of a predetermined number of gaming pieces from the bunch pile once a player has used all of the gaming pieces located within the player’s respective home pile, and placing this other set of gaming pieces into the players’ respective home pile.

8. A method of game play, comprising:

providing a plurality of gaming pieces, wherein each gaming piece has a plurality of faces, wherein each face from the plurality has an alphabetical letter displayed thereon; having players select a predetermined number of gaming pieces from the plurality; and

having players form words from their selected predetermined number of gaming pieces in a cross-word configuration;

wherein the players create their respective cross-word configuration in a venue of play selected from the group consisting of a lawn, a beach, a park, a gymnasium, a classroom, a campground, and a swimming pool.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein each of the gaming pieces comprises foam.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein each of the gaming pieces comprises a cube having a height of at least 19 inches, a width of at least 4 inches, and a length of at least 4 inches.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the venue of play is in a swimming pool.

12. The method of claim 8, further comprising selecting a winner from the players, wherein the winner is the player having first used all of the respective player’s cubes in the formation of the player’s cross-word.

13. The method of claim 8, further comprising selecting a winner from the players, wherein the winner is the player with the fewest remaining cubes after all of the players have come to a stale-mate.

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