Nov. 6, 1934. B. F. FINN 1,979,459

GAME APPARATUS

Filed May 22, 1933 2 Sheets-Sheet 1

Fig. 1.

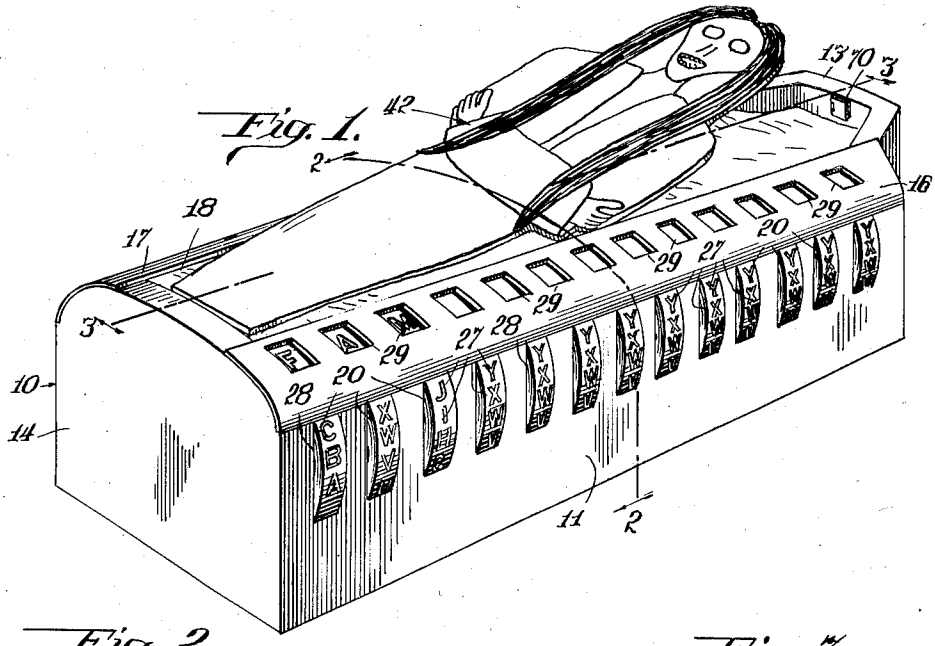


Fig. 2.

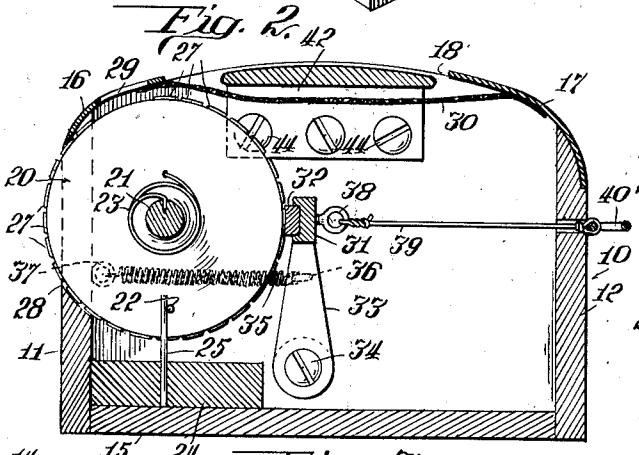


Fig. 7.

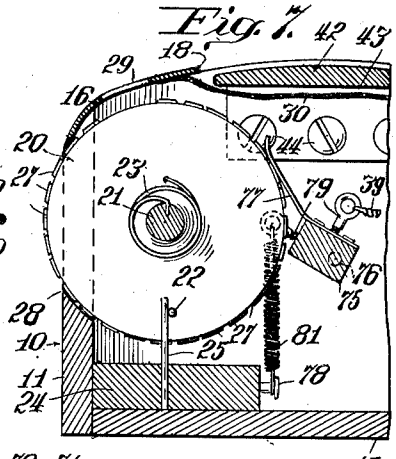
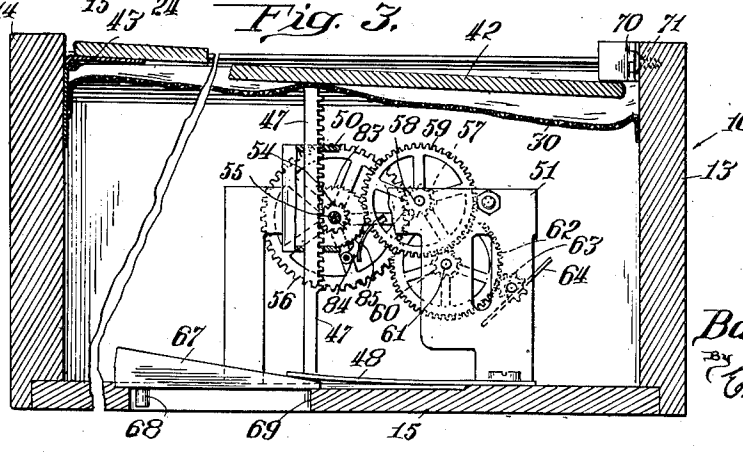


Fig. 3.



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GAME APPARATUS

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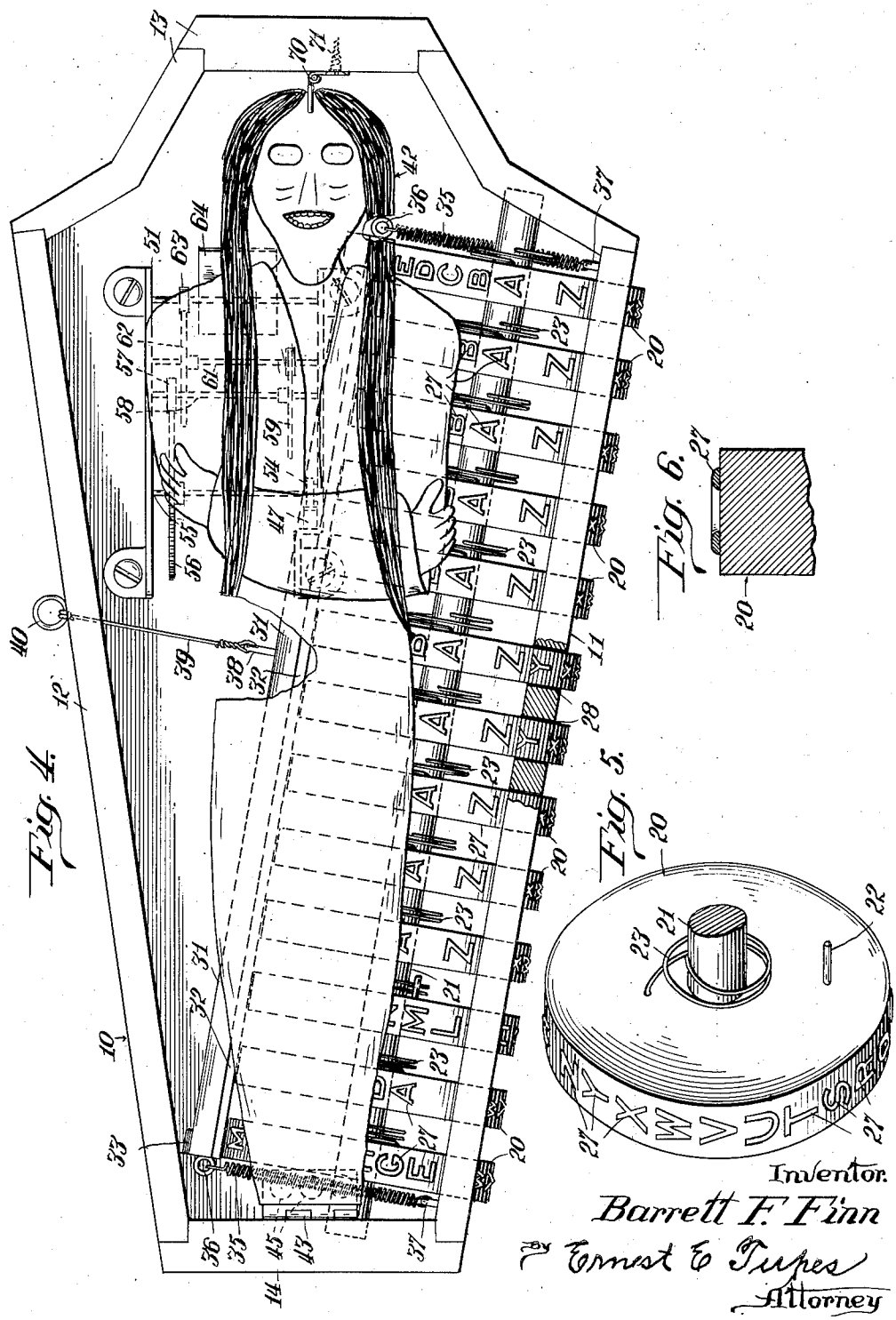

Fig. 4.

Fig. 6.

Fig. 5.

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GAME APPARATUS

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Application May 22, 1933, Serial No. 672,142

12 Claims. (Cl. 273—143)

The invention relates to game devices and more particularly to devices adapted for use in playing competitive games.

The invention is embodied in apparatus especially adapted for use in playing the game commonly known as "Ghosts" in which two or more players compete in the formation of words by each in turn contributing a letter until a word is completed or until it is found impossible to make a complete word by the addition of a further letter. The players taking part in the game are eliminated, either by their inability to add a letter contributing to the spelling of a word, or by reason of the letter so contributed making a complete word incapable of being extended to form another word by the contribution of additional letters, or by the failure of the player to contribute a letter within the time allotted therefor. Although the apparatus is described as adapted especially for use in playing the game of "Ghosts", it may also be utilized for playing other competitive games of similar character.

In playing a game of the kind suggested without the use of apparatus except perhaps paper pads and pencils for keeping a record of the letters contributed in sequence to the forming of a word, it is the experience of those playing the game in this manner that confusion sometimes results and mistakes occur owing to the failure to properly record the letters in the sequence contributed. The playing of competitive games of the character suggested also requires concentration, particularly in building up long words, and there is sometimes a tendency for individual players to take an undue amount of time in suggesting a letter, thereby retarding the progress of the game with the result that it may become unnecessarily tedious and uninteresting.

The apparatus provides means operable, by the players in turn, to expose to view individual letters in proper sequence to form a word with the contributed letters remaining exposed until the word is completed or its completion becomes impossible. The device also provides apparatus automatically operable to signal the expiration of the time allotted to an individual player in which to add a letter to the word and as a result of his failure to do so within the time allotted, the player is eliminated from the game for the time being.

An object of the invention is the provision of an improved competitive game device taking the form of word forming apparatus adapted for use by a plurality of players each of whom contributes to the construction of a word by in turn contributing a letter by actuating the apparatus to expose the letter selected by him to view, all of the letters so contributed remaining in view during the building up of the word.

Another object of the invention is the provision of word forming apparatus of the kind described wherein each participant plays by actuating the apparatus and is eliminated for failure to play within his allotted time by a device automatically operable to indicate that the time for the play has expired.

Additional interest and zest is added to the game by providing a housing of novel and suggestive form or outline such, for example, as a replica or representation of a mummy chest or box, the word forming apparatus and timing apparatus together with a shrouded figure suggestive of a ghost and preferably simulating a mummy, all being mounted in the housing. The timing mechanism is operatively connected with the ghost or mummy figure to slowly lift or move the figure out of the housing during the playing period and upon the expiration of the period causing it to signal either by a quick movement or otherwise to indicate expiration of the time in which a player may move or contribute a letter.

A further object of the invention is to provide an improved game apparatus of the kind described which provides novel and suggestive features not heretofore employed by means of which interest and zest is intensified in a competitive game of the kind described.

A further object of the invention is to provide a game apparatus of the kind described which is simple, durable, reliable, efficient and satisfactory for its intended purpose.

Many other objects and advantages of the construction herein shown and described will be obvious to those skilled in the art from the disclosure herein given.

To this end, my invention consists in the novel construction, arrangement and combination of parts herein shown and described, and more particularly pointed out in the claims.

In the drawings, wherein like reference characters indicate like or correspondng parts:

Fig. 1 is a perspective view of a device embodying the principles of the invention;

Fig. 2 is a sectional view along the line 2—2 of Fig. 1;

Fig. 3 is a fragmentary view along the line 3—3 of Fig. 1;

Fig. 4 is a plan view of the device shown in Fig. 1 with the cover removed;

Fig. 5 is a perspective view of a wheel forming a portion of the device;

Fig. 6 is a view to a larger scale of a fragmentary portion of the wheel shown in Fig. 5; and

Fig. 7 is a view of an alternative form of brake for the wheels shown in Figs. 5 and 6.

Referring now more particularly to the drawings, the numeral 10 generally designates a box or housing in which the word forming apparatus is mounted. The housing may take any desired form and in the drawings, it is shown as elongated and as generally simulating a mummy box.

The housing 10, comprises side walls 11 and 12, end walls 13 and 14 and a bottom wall 15 is partially covered by members 16 and 17, positioned on opposite sides, with an open space 18 therebetween. The end, side and bottom walls of the housing are shown as constructed of timber and the cover members as constructed of sheet metal but it is understood that any other suitable material may be used.

The word forming apparatus includes a plurality of wheels 20 rotatably mounted on a rod or shaft 21. The shaft 21 has its opposite ends mounted in the walls 13 and 14 respectively in such a manner as to be fixed against rotation. The wheels 20 are prevented from longitudinal movement on the shaft by projecting the same through a side wall of the housing.

Individual springs 23, mounted on the shaft 21 adjacent each wheel 20, have one end fastened to the shaft and the other end fastened to the wheel as best shown in Fig. 5. The springs 23 are so arranged as to normally hold the wheels 20 in the position shown in Figs. 2 and 7. The wheels 20 are held in this position by individual stop means each comprising a vertical rod 25 mounted in and projecting upwardly from a stop block 24 into the path of a pin 22 projecting laterally from the adjacent wheel. A loosely hung fabric sheet 30 fastened to the cover members 16 and 17, provides a closure underneath the space 18 and renders the interior of the housing 10 normally invisible.

The cover member 16 provides a plurality of apertures 29 each respectively positioned adjacent to one of the wheels 20 so that a portion of the periphery of the wheel is visible therethrough. A plurality of characters 27, representing the individual letters of the alphabet are formed on the outer periphery of each wheel in spaced apart relation, and the size of the apertures 29 is preferably such that only one letter of each wheel will register with or be visible through an aperture. The letters represented by the characters 27 are preferably arranged in the usual alphabetical sequence with a larger spacing between the adjacent letters A and Z than the regular spacing between the remainder of the letters. The described blank space between the letters A and Z is so positioned as to register with a corresponding aperture 29 in the cover member 11 when the wheels are in the position shown in Figs. 2 and 7. The letters are preferably embossed and of a different color than that provided by the peripheries of the wheels. White letters on a dark background are preferred to provide easy visibility although other colors may be satisfactorily used.

Suitable apertures 28 are provided in the side wall 11 through which a portion of the wheels 20 respectively project in order to make them accessible for independent manual rotation in counter clockwise direction as observed in Figs. 2 and 7. The rotation of the wheels 20 in the described direction tends to wind up the springs 23, the winding process thereby increasing the resistance or resilience of the individual springs which constantly tends to return the corresponding wheel to a position wherein further movement is prevented by engagement of the pin 22 with the stop member 25.

Brake mechanism is provided which permits the described manual rotation of the wheels 20 and is adapted to hold the wheels in any position against their return by the action of the springs 23 from any position to which they may have been rotated. The brake mechanism comprises a bar 31 extending parallel to the longitudinal axis of the wheels and providing a mounting for a member 32. The member 32 is preferably of felt or similar soft, yielding material which will not abrade or mar the wheels 20 or the characters 27 by frictional contact therewith.

A pair of arms 33, one mounted on each of the end walls 13 and 14 by means of pivots 34, provides a support for the bar 31. The member 32 is held in frictional contact with the outer periphery of the wheels 20 by the action of a pair of tension springs 35 each having one end fastened to the side wall 11 by an eye bolt or screw 37 and its other end similarly fastened to the adjacent arm 33. The resilience of the springs 35 is such that the pressure of the member 32 against the wheels 20 permit them to be easily rotated manually and prevents their movement by the action of the springs 23 which constantly tend to return their respective wheels to a position wherein none of the letters are exposed to view through the aperture 29. A link 39, having one end projecting through the side wall 14 and its other end connected to the bar 31 by means of an eye bolt or screw 38, is provided to operatively release the brake mechanism by disengaging the member 32 from its contact with the wheels 20 and thereby permitting all of said wheels to be moved to their normal position wherein none of the letters are visible through the apertures 29. The link 39 is actuated to release the brake mechanism by pulling on a ring 40 provided for that purpose on the projecting end of the link. The ring 40 is preferably pivotally connected with the link 39 and normally hangs suspended along side the wall 12.

Operation of the word forming apparatus to build up words is accomplished by successive rotation of the wheels 20 in turn, beginning at the left as shown in Fig. 1. Rotation of the individual wheels 20 successively as described in proper sequence to expose the letters necessary to form a word enables words of any length to be formulated within limits determined by the number of wheels provided. In the drawings, only thirteen of such wheels are shown but it is understood that any larger or smaller number of wheels can be used if desired. Each player in turn successively actuates the apparatus until a word is formed or it becomes impossible to formulate a known word by the addition of further letters. Upon completion of the game as described, all of the wheels 20 that have been moved to a registering position will be automatically returned to their non-registering position by pulling on the ring 40 to release the brake mechanism.

The players are allotted a definite time in which to select a letter and move the proper wheel 20 to register the letter so selected by him with its corresponding aperture 29 and signal mechanism is provided which automatically indicates the expiration of the player's allotted time. The signal mechanism includes a figure 42 preferably

shrouded to simulate a mummy or ghost automatically movable to indicate that the time has expired and that the player is temporarily out unless he has made his play. The ghost or mummy 42 normally extends longitudinally of the box 10 immediately below the opening 18 and above the fabric sheet 30 and has the end, opposite to the head, fastened to the wall 14 by a strap hinge 43. One leaf of the hinge 43 is secured to the wall 14 by screws 44 and the other leaf is fastened to the figure 42 by screws 45 to provide a pivot about which the figure may be rotated from horizontal position to the elevated position shown in Fig. 1.

Timing mechanism, mounted in the housing 10, provides a support and actuating means for elevating the ghost or mummy figure 42. The mechanism includes a vertically movable rack 47 having its upper end pressing the loosely hung fabric sheet 30 against the back of the figure with its lower end resting on the free end of a leaf spring 48. A guide member 50 forming part of a frame work 51 prevents lateral movement of the rack. The other end of the spring 48 is fastened to the bottom wall 15 of the housing and the resilience of the spring 48 constantly tends to actuate the rack 47 to lift the figure 42 from its horizontal to its elevated position. The mummy or ghost may be fastened in horizontal position within the box 10 by means of a strap hinge 70 having one leaf fastened to the end wall 13 by screws 71. The other leaf of the hinge 70, when in the position shown in Fig. 4, is adapted to hold the mummy or ghost in its longitudinal position. Upon turning the outstanding leaf parallel to the wall 13, the spring 48 will then actuate the rack 47 vertically and thereby elevates the mummy or ghost.

The frame 51 provides a support for clock mechanism actuating a fan or governor 64 and thereby tending to retard upward movement of the rack 47. Any suitable clock mechanism may be used for this purpose and that shown comprises a pinion 54, mounted on a shaft 55, in operative engagement with the rack 47 and a gear 56, rotatable by the shaft 55 in mesh with a pinion 57 mounted on a shaft 58. A gear 59, actuated by the shaft 58, meshes with a pinion 60 suitably mounted on a shaft 61 and a gear 62 fixedly mounted on the shaft 61, in mesh with a pinion 63. The fan or governor 64, operatively connected as described with the pinion 63, retards the rate at which the spring 48 would otherwise move the rack 47 upwardly and elevate the figure 42. Only the upper portion of the rack is provided with teeth and the pinion 54 upon reaching the lower blank section is thereby operatively disconnected from the clock mechanism, and the full force of the spring 48 is released and thereby causes a sudden upward movement of the ghost or mummy figure 42 to signal that the allotted time is up. The figure 42 may then be pushed down to horizontal position against the resistance of the spring 48 and be again released to permit its upward movement at the instant the device is surrendered to the following player.

A ratchet wheel 83, mounted on the shaft 55, is controlled by a pawl 84 pivotally mounted on the gear 56. The pawl 84 is held in operative engagement with the ratchet wheel 83 by a spring 85. The ratchet wheel 83 is fixedly mounted on the shaft 55 and the gear 56 is rotatable relative to the shaft. In pushing the rack 47 downwardly, only the pinion 54, shaft 55 and ratchet wheel 83 are rotated, the remainder of the clock mechanism being stationary and thereby permitting quick and easy downward movement of the figure 42 without actuation of the fan or governor 64.

The time allotted to each player may be varied by adjusting a wedge 67, slidably mounted on the bottom wall 15, with its narrow edge positioned under the spring 48. A pin 68, projecting into a slot 69 in the bottom wall 15, keeps the wedge 67 in proper alignment and by moving the wedge 67 longitudinally, the travel of the rack 47 while in meshing engagement with the pinion 54 may be varied and the time allotted to the players be correspondingly changed.

An alternative form of brake mechanism is shown in Fig. 7 as comprising a plurality of spring detents 77 each mounted on a bar 75 in frictional engagement with an adjacent wheel 20. The bar 75 is supported at each end by pivot members 76 mounted in the adjacent end walls 13 and 14. A tension spring 81 at each end of the bar 75 holds the bar in a position where the detents 77 frictionally engage the wheels 20. One end of each spring 81 is fastened to the block 24 by a bolt 78 and the other end is fastened to the bar 75 by an eye bolt or screw 79. The bar 75 is actuated to release the detents 77 from engagement with the wheels 20, by pulling on a ring 40 to actuate a link 39 identical with the ring and link shown in Fig. 2, the link 40 being connected with the bar by an eye bolt or screw 79.

Thus, it will be seen that I have provided a game device adapted to be used by a plurality of players in competition in the formulation of words, whereby the assembled letters are constantly visible and the termination of the time allotted to a player is indicated by the movement out of the device of a figure simulating a mummy or ghost, and that I have also provided novel timing mechanism and control means therefor operable to actuate the figure.

Having thus described my invention, it is obvious that various immaterial modifications may be made in the same without departing from the spirit and scope thereof. Hence, I do not wish to be limited to the exact construction, arrangement and combination of parts herein shown and described, or uses mentioned.

What I claim as new and desire to cover by Letters Patent is:

1. In a game device of the kind described, a housing providing a plurality of apertures arranged in spaced apart relation, means mounted in the housing providing a plurality of letters of the alphabet normally invisible through the apertures, said means operable by the players to successively expose letters to view by selectively bringing them into registry with said apertures in proper sequence to spell out a word and spring means operatively related to said operable means and adapted to yield to permit movement of said operable means from its position of invisibility of said letters and to actuate said operable means to return it to its original position of invisibility of its letters.

2. In a competitive game device of the kind described, a housing providing a plurality of apertures arranged in spaced apart relation, means mounted in the housing providing a plurality of letters of the adphabet normally invisible through the apertures, said means operable by the players to successively expose letters to view by selectively bringing them into

registry with said apertures in proper sequence to spell out a word, and means operable to actuate said first mentioned means to a position wherein none of the letters are visible through said apertures.

3. In a competitive game device of the kind described, a housing providing a plurality of apertures arranged in spaced apart relation, means mounted in the housing providing a plurality of letters of the alphabet normally invisible through the apertures, said means operable by the players to successively expose letters to view by selectively bringing them into registry with said apertures in proper sequence to spell out a word, spring means tending to return said first mentioned means to non-registering position of the letters, and brake means adapted to permit the actuation of said first mentioned means to successively bring letters into registry with said apertures and to prevent movement of said means by the action of said spring means.

4. In a game device of the kind described, a plurality of independently movable elements each having characters formed thereon in spaced apart relation, a cover member providing a plurality of apertures respectively adjacent to said elements, said elements being so positioned relative to the cover member that a portion thereof is visible through an adjacent aperture, spring means tending to hold each of said elements in a position where its characters are invisible through the apertures and yielding to permit movement of the elements to successively bring its characters into registry with the adjacent aperture, said spring means tending to maintain the elements in a position of invisibility of its characters through its adjacent aperture, and brake means adapted to permit movement of the elements by manipulation and to prevent movement thereof by the action of said spring means.

5. In a game device of the kind described, word forming apparatus comprising a plurality of independently movable elements each having the letters of the alphabet formed thereon in spaced apart relation, a cover member providing a plurality of apertures respectively adjacent to one of said elements, said elements each being so positioned relative to the cover member that a portion thereof is visible through a corresponding aperture, spring means tending to hold each of said elements in a position where the letters are invisible through the apertures and yielding to permit movement of the elements to successively bring said letters into registry with the adjacent aperture, said spring means tending to maintain the elements in a position where its characters are invisible through the adjacent aperture, and brake means adapted to permit movement of said elements by manipulation as desired and to prevent movement thereof by the action of said spring means.

6. In a game device of the kind described, a plurality of independently movable elements each having characters formed thereon in spaced apart relation, a cover member providing a plurality of apertures respectively adjacent to said elements, said elements being so positioned relative to the cover member that a portion thereof is visible through an adjacent aperture, spring means tending to hold each of said elements in a position where its characters are invisible through the apertures and yielding to permit movement of the elements to successively bring its characters into registry with the adjacent aperture, said spring means tending to maintain the elements in non-registering position of the characters, brake means adapted to permit movement of the elements by manipulation and to prevent movement thereof by the action of said spring means, and means operable to release said brake means and to permit said spring means to return the elements to a position of non-visibility of said characters through said apertures.

7. In a game device of the kind described, word forming apparatus comprising a plurality of independently movable elements each having the letters of the alphabet formed thereon in spaced apart relation, a cover member providing a plurality of apertures respectively adjacent to said elements, said elements being so positioned relative to the cover member that a portion thereof is visible through an adjacent aperture, spring means tending to hold each of said elements in a position where its letters are invisible through the apertures and yielding to permit movement of the elements to selectively bring its letters into registry with the adjacent aperture, said spring means tending to maintain the elements in non-registering position of its letters, brake means adapted to permit movement of the elements by manipulation as desired and to prevent movement thereof by the action of said spring means, and means operable to release said brake means and to thereby permit said spring means to return the elements to a position of invisibility of its letters through said apertures.

8. In a game device of the kind described, a plurality of rotatable wheels each having a plurality of characters formed on its outer periphery in spaced apart relation, a cover member providing a plurality of apertures respectively adjacent to said wheels, said wheels each being so positioned relative to the cover member that its characters are successively brought into registry with the adjacent aperture as the wheel is rotated, spring means tending to hold each of said wheels in a position where none of its characters are visible through the adjacent aperture and yielding to permit rotation of the wheels by manipulation, said spring means tending to maintain the wheels in non-registering position of its characters, and brake means operatively engaging the wheels in a manner to permit their rotation by manipulation as desired and to prevent rotation thereof by the action of said spring means.

9. In a game device of the kind described, word forming apparatus comprising a plurality of rotatable wheels each having the letters of the alphabet formed on its outer periphery in spaced apart relation, a cover member providing a plurality of apertures respectively adjacent to said wheels, said wheels each being so positioned relative to the cover member that its letters are successively brought into registry with the adjacent aperture as the wheel is rotated, spring means tending to hold each of said wheels in a position where none of its letters are visible through the adjacent aperture and yielding to permit rotation of the wheels by manipulation, said spring means tending to maintain the wheels in non-registering position of the letters, and brake means operatively engaging the wheels in a manner to permit their rotation by manipulation as desired and to prevent rotation thereof by the action of said spring means.

10. In a game device of the kind described, a plurality of rotatable wheels each having a plurality of characters formed on its outer periphery in spaced apart relation, a cover member providing a plurality of apertures respectively adjacent to

said wheels, said wheels each being so positioned relative to the cover member that its characters are successively brought into visibility by registry with the adjacent aperture as the wheel is rotated, spring means tending to hold each of said wheels in a position where none of its characters are visible through the adjacent aperture and yielding to permit rotation of the wheels by manipulation, said spring means tending to maintain the wheels in non-registering position of the letters, brake means operatively engaging the wheels in a manner to permit their rotation by manipulation as desired and to prevent rotation thereof by the action of said spring means, and means operable to operatively disengage said brake means from said wheels and to thereby permit said spring means to return the wheels to non-registering positions of their letters with said apertures.

11. In a game device of the kind described, word forming apparatus comprising a plurality of rotatable wheels each having the letters of the alphabet formed on its outer periphery in spaced apart relation, a cover member providing a plurality of apertures respectively adjacent to said wheels, said wheels each being so positioned relative to the cover member that its letters are successively brought into visibility by registry with the adjacent aperture as the wheel is rotated, spring means tending to hold each of said wheels in a position where none of its letters are visible through the adjacent aperture and yielding to permit rotation of the wheels by manipulation, said spring means tending to maintain the wheels in non-registering position of the letters, brake means operatively engaging the wheels in a manner to permit their rotation by manipulation as desired and to prevent rotation thereof by the action of said spring means, and means operable to operatively disengage said brake means from said wheels and to thereby permit said spring means to return the wheels to non-registering position of their letters with said apertures.

12. In a game device of the kind described, a housing providing a plurality of apertures in spaced apart relation, a plurality of members respectively positioned adjacent said apertures, said members each providing the letters of the alphabet normally so positioned as to be invisible through the adjacent aperture, said members being movable to severally bring the letters carried thereby into visibility through the adjacent aperture, a plurality of resilient members each operatively related to and adapted to yield to permit movement of a different one of said members and to return the member controlled thereby to the position of normal invisibility of its letters.

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