

MAKE A WORDSEARCH

Crissing-and-a-crossing

20ish minutes **1-∞** players

by Behrooz 'Bez' Shahriari

Overview

Use letters from 25 words to fill 25 boxes. Try to use every letter you write in a word. You get bonus points for 4-letter, or 5-letter words.

Components needed:

A book (of at least 50 pages)

Blank paper (a sheet for each player)

1-2 Pen(s) per player (ideally 2 colours - one for writing letters, one for circling the words you score)

Setup

Draw a 5x5 grid on your sheet of paper.

Each turn

Open the book and **find a random word**. Use the top-left word, ignoring chapter headings and book titles. On the first turn, open the first page. On subsequent turns, simply turn to the next page spread.

Write one of the letters of that word in a line determined by the word length.

For a 1-letter word, write that letter in line 1.

For a 2-letter word, write one of those letters in line 2.

For a 3-letter word, write one of those letters in line 3.

For a 4-letter word, write one of those letters in line 4.

For a 5-letter word, write one of those letters in line 5.

It 'wraps around', so...

For a 6-letter word, write one of those letters in line 1.

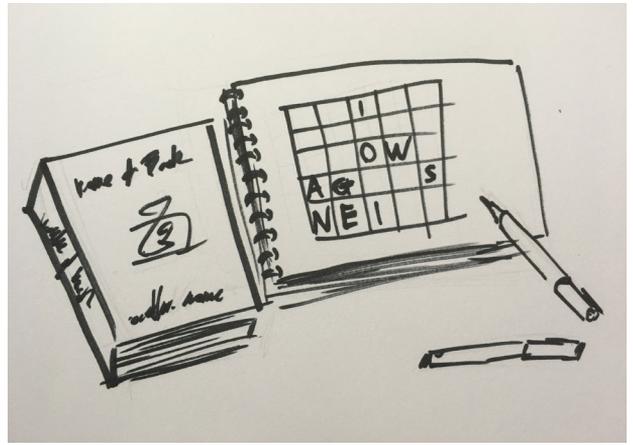
For a 7-letter word, write one of those letters in line 2.

And so forth.

Repeat!

After 25 turns, you have filled the grid and the game is over.

If you are meant to write a letter on a line but all those boxes are full, you may use an adjacent line. If an adjacent line is also filled, you may fill a box in a line adjacent to THAT filled line.



E.g. The word for the turn is 'playfully'. As a 9-letter word, you would normally use one of the letters on line 4. However, if lines 3 and 4 are already full, you could write any of the letters from the word 'playfully' (P, L, A, Y, F, U, or Y) on lines 2 or 5.

If lines 3, 4, and 5 were all full, you could only fill in a box on line 2 when the word for the turn is 'playfully'.

Ending:

The game ends when all boxes are filled. This will happen after 25 turns.

Anytime, you want, **circle each word you make**. Words must be **3 or more letters long**. You can do it during the game, or at the end of the game, when finished. Doing it during the game is just a memory aid and has no real significance.

Score 1pt for each box that was used in a word. A maximum of 25 if you used all boxes.

Also score a bonus 1 pt for every 4-letter word, and 3 pts for every 5-letter word.

Each letter in a word must be adjacent to the previous letter and the entire word must read in one direction. Words can run in any of the 8 directions. (Left to right, right to left, top to bottom, bottom to top, and the 4 directions for the diagonals.) You can NOT 'loop around'.

NOTE: words may not include an entire other word. E.g. if you score 'Boats' you get 3 pts and do not score 'boat'. But if you have 'ETONE' on a line, you score both 'TONE' and 'NOTE' for 2 pts total.

40 pts or more is a super-great score!

TUTORIAL MODE

For anyone who will struggle, I suggest you ignore the bonus points for 4-letter and 5-letter words for your first game. Simply score one point for each word that is used in a word. *The maximum score is 25.*

When you start consistently scoring 20+, move to the advanced scoring.

VALID WORDS/NOTES

Players may play in any language - potentially even a different language to other players - but should stick to just one.

It will be easier if your book is in your target language. Maybe you can try the game in a language you are trying to learn!

No proper nouns or abbreviations may be used.
No names of people, places, or companies.

Before the game starts, feel free to choose an appropriate dictionary. This will help resolve any disputes (whether with other people, or internal disputes as you argue with yourself whether a word is OK or not).

Generally, only words of 3+ letters are allowed. But if playing with anyone who is struggling, maybe allow shorter words! Different people can play by different rules, even at the same table!

TRY DIFFERENT BOOKS

Counter-intuitively, children's books will actually be harder. *Shorter words give you fewer choices of letters to use. If there are more 6-letter words than 1-letter words, you will naturally be more likely to get the letters you need.*

Different authors might use words in different frequencies, giving you more of certain letters.

If you want to replay a particular book, try using the second (*or third, or fourth...*) word on that page.

TRY ANY WORD LIST

E.g. Try playing with a poem of 25+ lines. Use the last word of each line. Or everyone puts a few words into a 'hat' and one is chosen randomly each turn.

TAKE TURNS PICKING WORDS

If you are playing with a few folk, maybe try taking turns to choose the word for that turn. This might get a bit mean and nasty!

CREDITS/HISTORY

Designed/developed by Bez for Michael J. Fox's Game Jam on 29th/30th December 2020.

The restrictions were that it should be a '---- and write' style game, be a 'multiplayer solitaire' affair, and feature no bespoke components. The slightly-weirdly-worded rules sparked discussions of exercise, a stretch-and-write, a 'chore-and-write' (from Xate) and a 'read-and-write' from me, an idea I decided to pursue.

I considered something much more complex but decided for something simpler. It was the first 'read and write' game after all, so probably didn't need extra complexity.

The first game was purely about how many letters remained unused. Essentially the same as 'tutorial mode' but 0 being perfect rather than 25. I played with my parents. 0-1-9 were the scores, I think.

The next morning, on my daily stream, I played 4 games, using 4 books. It felt pleasant and interesting but a bit too easy. I wanted to add an extra challenge to aim for; a greater ability to show skill.

I was considering a mechanism of trying to use many different letters. Bonus points for having a variety of letters on your board.

I considered only allowing words of 4+ letters rather than 3+. I think it was Alex Cannon who suggested rewarding longer words (an obvious idea in retrospect, as are ALL the best ideas).

I quickly wrote the first draft of the rules and submitted. Thanks to Michael J. Fox for facilitating the contest, everyone in the chat for being lovely, Andrew January for initial feedback and encouragement, Ken for being lovely, parents for trying it and being encouraging, Alex Cannon for the 'obvious' idea of rewarding word length, everyone who watches my streams (specially Xate) for encouraging me to keep going, and everyone who tried it on stream and gave feedback.

This version of the rules was edited/re-written on 21st July 2021 whilst preparing it to be a giveaway on 'Bez Day' (1st August) 2021.

It was 'blind-tested' by Krystyan Hacker-Hurnn.