

# Scrabble Glossary

<u>A</u> <sub>1</sub>	<u>B</u> <sub>3</sub>	<u>C</u> <sub>3</sub>	<u>D</u> <sub>2</sub>	<u>E</u> <sub>1</sub>	<u>F</u> <sub>4</sub>	<u>G</u> <sub>2</sub>	<u>H</u> <sub>4</sub>	<u>I</u> <sub>1</sub>	<u>J</u> <sub>8</sub>	<u>K</u> <sub>5</sub>	<u>L</u> <sub>1</sub>	<u>M</u> <sub>3</sub>
<u>N</u> <sub>1</sub>	<u>O</u> <sub>1</sub>	<u>P</u> <sub>3</sub>	<u>Q</u> <sub>10</sub>	<u>R</u>	<u>S</u> <sub>1</sub>	<u>T</u> <sub>1</sub>	<u>U</u> <sub>1</sub>	<u>V</u> <sub>4</sub>	<u>W</u> <sub>4</sub>	<u>X</u> <sub>8</sub>	<u>Y</u> <sub>4</sub>	<u>Z</u> <sub>10</sub>

## A

**AGGREGATE SCORE** Cumulative game score during a tournament. This statistic is sometimes used for ranking players having equal wins in place order during tournaments. cf. SPREAD, MARGIN.

**ANAMONICS** Mnemonic phrases (often idiosyncratic) used to group the add-on letters for combos. For example, if you want to remember all the letters with which the stem INMATE combines, think of the phrase **INMATE - RELAXING BY HIS CELL DOOR**. That tells me that INMATE plus R forms a legitimate word so my memory is triggered to find MINARET and RAIMENT, then INMATE plus E (MATINEE, ETAMINE) etc.

## B

**BACK HOOK** A single letter which can be added to the end of a word on the board: e.g. JUMP.....JUMPY

**BANKING** Deliberately underscoring points for a move, with the intention of cashing in those points in a recount after a close finish.

**BINGO** The term used in North America for a bonus word.

**BLOCKED GAME** A game which can't be continued because there are no more legitimate moves possible. The game is deemed over and the players deduct the value of the tiles on their racks from their current score.

**BLOCKER** A word which can't be extended or which is difficult to build on: e.g. VLY

**BLOWOUT** A one-sided game in which one player gets all the good tiles and wins easily. Also called **GRANNIE** or **NO-BRAINER**.

**BONUS** A word which uses all seven tiles on a player's rack in one go gaining a 50-point bonus. **BONUS WORD**, **BINGO** or **SEVEN** are also used.

**BRILLIANCY** An ingenious move which floors your opponent and dazzles the spectators e.g. QUETZALS linking two Triple Word Squares for 374

## C

**CHALLENGE** The verbal indication to your opponent that the word they have just played may be wrong.

**CLOCK** The device used for timing total time taken by each player during a game. Generally, any fraction of a minute over time costs the player 10 points PLUS each further minute over time attracts an additional 10-point penalty.

- **ANALOGUE CLOCK** Has two clock dials plus a flag on each side which drops when the minute hand exactly reaches the number 12.
- **DIGITAL CLOCK** Has a digital display on each side which will display a negative number when a player has gone over time.

**CLOSED BOARD** A board situation which offers no openings for bonus words and yields few scoring options.

**COFFEEHOUSING** Talking to your opponents (or whistling, humming etc.) with a view to distracting them from the game. This is considered unethical play and is frowned upon in club and tournament games.

**COMBO** Any group of six or seven letters which combines with a range of single letters to yield a large number of bonus words.

e.g. SATIRE plus H = HASTIER, SHERIAT

HASTIER plus N = HAIRNETS, INEARTHS, THERIANS

**CONNECTOR** A word formed by linking tiles with empty squares between them, e.g. when letters are spaced on a board, e.g.

. . . . N . C . . . . . and a play is made to "fill in the gaps" such as  
.CONNECT . . . . .

**COUNTING** Keeping a mental record of the tiles played so you can calculate what is still in the bag and what is on your opponent's rack. See also **TILE-TRACKING**.

**CUME** Short for cumulative game score. This term is mostly used in North America. See also **AGGREGATE SCORE**.

## **D**

**DINGLE CHALLENGE** A penalty challenge system where each player can challenge freely until they incorrectly challenge a word. After that, they are effectively playing under the double challenge rule. The word DINGLE derives from combining the leading "D" from the word "Double" plus the rest of the word "Single" (in the true spirit of compromise). Also called ONE OFF FREE CHALLENGE (OOF challenge rule).

**DINGO** An unplayable bonus word on your rack - so called because it "di'n go" anywhere.

**DISHING** See **FISHING**

**DLS** (abbrev.) Double Letter Score

**DOUBLE-DOUBLE** A move which spans two Double Word Squares in one go earning four times the value of the word played. Also called **FOUR-TIMER**.

**DOUBLE CHALLENGE** A rule of play whereby the challenger forfeits a turn (or incurs a points penalty) if his or her challenge proves to be incorrect. Double Challenge is practised in clubs and tournaments in North America, New Zealand and Israel. Elsewhere the **SINGLE CHALLENGE** applies. Supporters of Double Challenge say that it adds finesse and adventure to the game but its opponents claim it leads to the playing of **PHONIES** and is conducive to bluffing and one-up-man-ship.

**DOUBLE CROSS** Using the X both ways on a Triple Letter Square or Triple Word Square.

**DOUBLE-WHAMMY** North American term for a **DOUBLE-DOUBLE**.

**DRECK, DREK** A set of letters which combine poorly and do not fit well on the board, e.g. UUGMMPW may look like dreck because Ws and Us combine poorly. However, it actually forms an allowable word (MUGWUMP).

**DUMP** or **DUMPER** A word which allows you to unload awkward letters for a low score with a view to creating a more balanced rack.

**DUMPING** Making a low scoring move which rids the rack of awkward letters.

**DWS** (abbrev.) Double Word Score

## E

**ENDGAME** The last few moves of the game in which counting and positional finesse can determine the outcome.

**EXCHANGING** The act of forgoing your turn to discard lousy tiles for better ones **OR** to discard lousy tiles for even lousier ones.

**EXTENDER** A group of two or more letters which extend a word on the board: e.g. SPIRE can be extended by IN- RE- CON- and PERS-

## F

**FEINTING** Making a play to allow your opponent a scoring opportunity while distracting him from the real seat of action elsewhere on the board (e.g. the only spot for your bonus word).

**FISHING** Throwing out one tile in the hope of picking up a specific tile to make a bonus word:

e.g. discarding the R from the rack Q-U-E-T-R-A-L in the hope of picking up the Z to make QUETZAL.

- **DISHING** is discarding one tile with the high probability of forming a bonus with the new letter: e.g. discarding the Q from the rack S-A-T-I-R-E-Q.
- **WISHING** is exchanging all seven tiles in the hope of picking up a seven-letter word.

**FLOATER** A letter available for playing through to form an 8-letter word.

**FREE CHALLENGE** Same as **SINGLE CHALLENGE**

**FRONT HOOK** A letter which can be added to the front of a word on the board e.g. **SHEARING**.

## **G**

**GOING OUT** Playing the last move in the game and emptying your rack.

**GRANNIE** A term coined by former New South Wales Champion George Winter to describe a game in which one player "gets everything" and which even George's grannie could have won.

## **H**

**HOOK** A letter which forms a new word when added to the front or back of a word already on the board, e.g. the W-hook in **WHELPING**

**HOT SPOT** A square or area of the board offering the opportunity for a bonus or other high scoring move.

## **I**

**IDIOCY** An incredibly stupid move - like exchanging your blank by mistake.

## **J**

**JABBERWOCK** Derryn Hinch's term for any weird word which doesn't exist -after Lewis Carroll's mythical creature the Jabberwock.

**JABBERWOCKY** and **JABBERWOCKERY** - the practice of inventing and playing **JABBERWOCKS**.

## **K**

**KNOCKOUT** Playing the game to win rather than to obtain high scores. Same as **MATCHPLAY**.

## **L**

**LAY-DOWN BONUS** An everyday seven-letter word which is easy to find.

**LEAVE** What's left on your rack after you make your move.

## **M**

**MARGIN** *See* **SPREAD**

**MATCHPLAY** Playing the game to win rather than for high scores - mainly used in the U.K. in contrast to **OPEN** or high-scoring Scrabble which was popular in Britain in the 1980's.

## N

**NATURAL BONUS** Any bonus play which does NOT include either of the two BLANK tiles.

**NIGELLIAN PLAY** Brilliant move. The type of play which world-beating player Nigel Richards (NZ) would make.

**NINE-TIMER** A move which links two Triple Word Scores scoring nine-times the value of the word played.

Also **TRIPLE-TRIPLE**, **TRIPLE-WHAMMY**

**NON-GO** A promising combination of letters that doesn't make a bonus word. e.g. I-R-E-L-A-N-D

## O

**OPEN BOARD** A board with openings for bonus words and offering good chances for a high-scoring game.

**OPEN GAME** A form of the game in which both players attempt to achieve high scores rather than win the game. Popular in the U.K. in the 1980's but has now been almost completely replaced by **MATCHPLAY**

**OPEN SCRABBLE** A variation of the game in which all letters are placed face up and are visible to both players. This format is used in Postal Scrabble.

**OSPD** Pronounced Oh-Ess-Pee-Dee, this is the familiar abbreviation of the Official SCRABBLE Players Dictionary published by Merriam-Webster.

**OSW** Pronounced O-Ess-Double-U, this is the familiar abbreviation of *Official Scrabble Words* - a listing of allowable words derived from Chambers Dictionary previously used for adjudication in the United Kingdom (and elsewhere).

**OSWI** Pronounced O-Ess-Double-U-Eye, this is the abbreviation of *Official Scrabble Words International* - a listing of allowable words derived from Chambers Dictionary and OSPD.

**OVERDRAWING** Taking too many tiles from the bag.

**OVERLAP** A move in which one word overlaps another

e.g.      B O O  
          E F F

## P

**PALMING** The unethical act of retaining tiles in the palm of the hand when drawing new tiles and slipping undesirable ones back into the bag.

**PARALLEL PLAY** Same as **OVERLAP** or **UNDERLAP**

**PASSING** Passing your turn by neither making a move nor exchanging tiles.

**PHONEY, PHONY** An unallowable word - which sometimes escapes a challenge.

**POLECAT PASS** Discarding an unplayable Q towards the end of the game.

**POWER TILES** The big ten tiles - Q Z J and X plus the two blanks and four S's.

**PREMIUM SQUARE** Any square on the board that doubles (or triples) the face value of a tile (or word).

## **Q**

**Q, BEING STUCK WITH THE** Picking up the Q at the end of the game and having no place on the board to play it.

**Q-GAME** A game decided by one player being caught with the Q.

## **R**

**RACK MANAGEMENT** Playing moves which leave a healthy balance of vowels and consonants.

**ROTATING BOARD** A board mounted on a "lazy Susan" for easy swivelling. Also called **SWIVEL BOARD**.

## **S**

**SETUP** A move which sets up a hook for a specific letter.

**SEVEN-LETTER WORD** Same as **BONUS WORD**

**SHEPHERDING** Making a move which obliges your opponent to play along a lane which will give you counterplay

**SIGHT OF THE BOARD** The ability to identify scoring opportunities across the board.

**SINGLE CHALLENGE** A rule of play whereby the challenger does not forfeit a turn if his or her challenge proves to be incorrect. A variation of this is **DINGLE CHALLENGE** or **ONE-ONLY-FREE CHALLENGE** which allows the challenger one free incorrect challenge before incurring a penalty.

**SLOTTER** The last tile drawn to replenish a rack, which turns out to be highly favourable, e.g. holding AEESW, you draw two tiles: a B first, then an X (The X is the only suitable "slotter", forming BEESWAX).

**SOWPODS** The use of both **OSPD** and **OSW** combined as a source of adjudication - as occurs in the World Scrabble Championships. Most countries outside North America currently play according to this combined lexicon.

**SPREAD** The arithmetic difference between two players scores is the **GAME SPREAD** (i.e. **MARGIN**). Cumulative game spreads for a tournament form the **TOTAL SPREAD** (or just **SPREAD**). This is the most common statistic used for ranking players having equal wins in place order during tournaments.

**STUTTER WORDS** Words ending in duplicate letters, e.g. BAA, BIGG, MODII, SHTUMM.

**SWINDLES** Games won through desperation plays which often require the opponent to overlook a basic play or challenge. Encourages the opponent to "Snatch defeat from the jaws of victory".

**SWITCH-HITTER** A word which can be transposed into another word - e.g. ANYTIME is a switch-hitter of AMENITY.

**SWIVEL BOARD** *See* **ROTATING BOARD**.

## T

**TILE-TRACKING** The practice of marking off letters as they are played on a tracking grid or letter frequency list.

**TLS** (abbrev.) Triple Letter Score

**TRIPLE-TRIPLE** *See* **NINE-TIMER**

**TURNOVER** The total number of tiles eliminated from the rack during a move. Early in a game, players usually try for a "high turnover" in pursuit of power tiles.

**TWS** (abbrev.) Triple Word Score

## U

**UNDERLAP** A move in which a word is played underneath another already on the board.

e.g.      MAP  
            ERA

## V

**VOWEL ISCHAEMIA** A shortage in the supply of consonants to the rack - an exchange transfusion is often indicated.

## **W**

**WORD DUMP** See **DUMP**

## **X**

**X+1 RULE** A severe rule which penalises a player for overdrawing. The player's opponent who spots the infringement has the right to remove the surplus tiles on the rack (X) PLUS ONE more tile of their choice as an extra penalty. This rule is rarely used in Australia (but occurs in some other countries, e.g. New Zealand).

## **Y**

**YAKKA** Hard work put into playing exactly the right words in the hope of balancing a rack or creating an opening.

## **Z**

**ZARF** A type of cup holder. Commonly found at tournaments for holding FINJANS full of tea or coffee.