

Lost for Words

2 players

Loosely based on the wonderful game *Lost Cities* by Reiner Knizia.

Overview

Each turn a player plays or discards a card, trying to build words of five or more letters in up to five columns. However, starting a column costs points so the player must judge whether they will be able to make enough points from the word to make the column worthwhile. Players can also use vowel cards as multipliers to a column's value, but these can only be laid before the word is started. Bonuses are scored for longer words. Play halts when the draw deck is exhausted. The player with the most points wins the game.

Preparation

Shuffle the deck and deal 8 cards to each player. Put the rest of the cards to the side as the draw deck. Choose a player to start – players then alternate turns.

Playing the Game

On your turn you *must* (a) play *or* discard a card then (b) draw a card.

- a) Play a Card – you must either play a card to one of your columns or discard a card. You may have up to five columns in front of you. A column scores 0 if it has no cards in it. As soon as a card is played into a column, that column's base score is -10. Usually a player will open a new column by playing a letter card (which will be the first letter of the word in that column), subsequent plays to that column are added to the end of the word. It is not allowed to insert letters at the beginning or in the middle of a word.

A player may also play a vowel card *sideways* (to show it is not part of the word) to act as a multiplier for the column, but multipliers may only be played *before* that column's word has been started. The player may play more than one multiplier card in a column, but all multiplier cards within a particular column must be *exact* copies (i.e. all A/E cards). One multiplier card doubles the score of the column, two multiplier cards treble the score and three quadruple it. So, a column which contains just three multiplier cards is worth -40.

If you choose to discard a card instead of playing, you must discard it onto the appropriate pile (either the red/vowel pile or black/consonant pile).

- b) Draw a Card – you must draw the top card from either the draw deck or one of the discard piles. It is not permitted to take a card from the discard pile if you discarded it this turn.

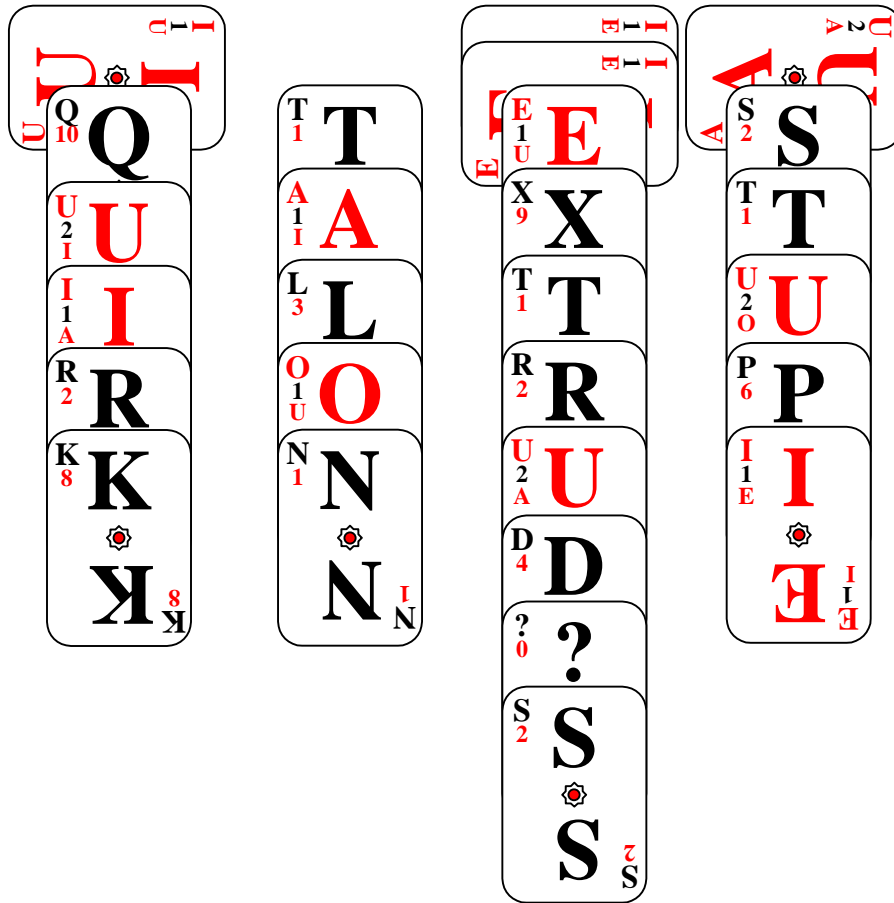
Game End and Scoring

The game ends *immediately* when the last card is taken from the draw deck.

Score each column as follows:

An empty column scores 0. A column with cards in scores -10 , plus the total point value of the cards in a *complete* word. If the word in a column is less than five letters, illegal or incomplete, it scores no points and the base value of the column is simply -10 . Now multiply this value according to the multiplier cards in this column (if any) – one, two or three cards multiply the column by $\times 2$, $\times 3$ or $\times 4$ respectively. Finally, score a bonus of $+10$ if the word is seven letters or more in length.

Example:



	1 st Column	2 nd Column	3 rd Column	4 th Column	5 th Column
Base Value	-10	-10	-10	-10	0
Points	23	7	21	0	0
Sub-Total	13	-3	11	-10	0
Multiplier	$\times 2$	-	$\times 3$	$\times 2$	-
Bonus	0	0	10	0	0
Total	26	-3	43	-20	0

Adding the totals for each column together gives a final score of 46.

Game Variant

In order to increase the interaction, a player *must* play a card *and* discard a card each turn. They must pick up two cards. The player may take both cards from the draw deck, both from the discard piles or one from the draw deck and one from the discard piles.

Alternative Scoring Method

Instead of a column having a base value of -10 , it has a value of 0 . However, if a column contains a word which is illegal, incomplete or less than five letters, that column scores negative the points value of the letters in the column (times any multiplier). Using this scheme, the previous layout would score $46 + 7 + 73 - 24 = 102$.