War of Words

2 players
Loosely based on the games *Shotten-Totten/Battleline* by Reiner Knizia.

Overview

Each turn a player plays to one of nine locations, then draws a card. At the end of the game, when all cards have been played, the player with the longest word at a location wins the counter for that location. However, a player may win a counter before the end of the game by forming a seven-letter word. The player who wins five or more counters wins the game. A player may win the game before the end by winning three adjacent counters.

Preparation

Put a line of nine counters or pawns in a row between the players, you need to space these at least one card's width apart. These mark the nine locations (columns) where players will play their cards.
Shuffle the deck and deal 7 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* play a card to a location then draw a card from the draw deck. You play a card to any one of the columns – the card is played to your side of the line of counters. You are attempting to build a word at each location. Cards cannot be moved or reordered once played. If you complete a word of two letters or more at a location and that word is longer than your opponent's at that location, then you should move the counter there slightly towards you as a reminder that you formed the longest word there *first* (this may become important at the end of the game if the words at a location are of equal length).
If a location is won during the game, neither player may play any more cards at that location. Once the draw deck is exhausted, players no longer draw cards but *must* still play one card each turn (this may mean that they are forced to play cards to a location even when this means that they are ruining a word by doing so) until all cards are played.

Winning a Location

A location can be won in one of three ways:
1. At the end of the game, if you have a longer word at a location than your opponent, or a word of the same length as your opponent where you completed your word first, you may take the counter for that location.
2. During the game if you complete a seven-letter word at a location, you may immediately take the counter for that location.
3. During the game if you complete a word at a location, you may *claim* the counter for that location. If your opponent cannot prove that they could possibly beat your

word, then you may take the counter for that location. This is a risky strategy, and is explained fully below.

Claiming a location: You may take the counter for a location mid-game without making a seven-letter word by *claiming* that location. By doing this you are asserting that it is *impossible* for your opponent to create a longer word at that location than the one that you have already laid. If your opponent can show that it *is* possible (by suggesting a possible word that they could complete and showing that there are sufficient unplayed cards to complete it), then they immediately win that location, and take the counter for it. Note that they only have to make reference to cards that are visible on the table, so you cannot use the fact that you hold particular cards in your hand. For example, suppose you lay down an 'R' to complete the word 'BADGER'. Your opponent has already played the letters 'RAB', and the two '?' cards have already been played elsewhere. You claim the location, reasoning that your opponent can no longer make the word 'RABBITS'. You will win the counter for the location unless your opponent realizes that they *could* make the word 'RABIDLY' and show that there are the necessary unplayed cards to do so (in which case *they* will win the counter). It is not permitted for a player to consult a dictionary in order to find a word that they could make, although a dictionary can be used to decide the validity of a word once it has been decided on. You will also often claim a location if an opponent is 'dumping' cards there – it is fairly safe to claim the location where your opponent has laid the cards 'EASPX'!

Winning the Game
The game can end in one of three ways:
1. If a player successfully claims three adjacent counters during the game, they win.
2. If a player successfully claims any five counters during the game, they win.
3. If all the cards are played, the game is over. Any undecided locations are won by the player who has the longest word at that location. In the case of a tie, the location is won by that player that finished the word *first*. Words may be challenged during this scoring process, if a word is challenged successfully the challenger will win the location if they themselves have a legal word at that location. The player with the most counters wins.