

10 WAYS TO BECOME AN INSTANT SCRABBLE® EXPERT

Co-authors Joe Edley and John D. Williams Jr. of "Everything SCRABBLE®" (Pocket Books ISBN # 0-671-86686-9) discuss these strategy-boosters in detail in their definitive book on the world's most popular word game. Edley, the only two-time winner of the National SCRABBLE® Championship and Williams, Executive Director of the National SCRABBLE® Association, provide hints that have helped many players improve their games and tips which are utilized in the National School SCRABBLE® Program to jump start learning.

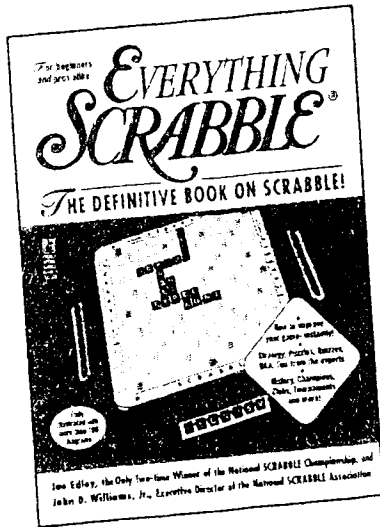
1. TWO and THREE-LETTER WORDS

Learn the two and three-letter words. They are the building blocks of expert play and can increase your average score by as much as 50 points per game.

2. SECRET OF THE "S"

Remember this secret: Use an S to form two words at once. Pluralize one word while forming another at the same time. **Example:** Add an S to DOCK while also forming SCRUB on the board and score points for both words.

Note: Don't use the S unless you score 8 more points than if you save it.



3. SHUFFLE TILES

Constantly shuffle the tiles on your rack. Many novices simply look at the tiles in a row and hope the words will miraculously come to them. Instead, move them around on your rack frequently. Look for some of the common ways that letters go together. Some of these are BR, CH, CL, DLE, ED, ENT, EST, FUL, GHT, ING, NK, KLE, MIS, ISM, IUM, MB MP, ND, NT, PR, PL, RE, STR, TH, UN, IVE, and OUS. As you form these combinations, it may surprise you how words will often appear on your rack.

4. BONUS SQUARES

Always look for ways to play across bonus squares, the brightly colored squares on the board. Check especially for any bonus squares next to vowels. For example, given ME on the board, with the E above a Triple Letter Score square, adding AX beneath, also forming MA and EX, will score 54 points.

5. CONSIDER YOUR NEXT PLAY

Make your play with an eye toward your next play. You can do so simply by saving some good tiles. Your best odds of having a great next rack is to save some combination of the letters "AEILNRST", while you save either the same number of vowels and consonants, or just one extra consonant.

6. BINGOS

Always look for bingos (using all seven tiles at once) and earn 50 bonus points. Here's how: First learn the common beginnings and endings. Some of these are: IES, ION, ING, PRE, DE, OUT and OVER. When you see them on your rack, put the letters together and work with the other tiles to form 3, 4 or 5-letter words that can be attached to them. That way, you'll discover it's much easier to find words like OVERRULE, OUTGOING, PREFERS, RESTRING, PARTING, STARRED or ORATION.

7. Q WITHOUT U

Learn the Q without U words. They are: QAT(S), QAID(S), QOPH(S), FAQIR(S), QANAT(S), TRANQ(S), QINDAR(S), QINTAR(S), QWERTY(S), SHEQEL, QINDARKA and SHEQALIM.

8. HOOKS

Hooks are single letters that you add to existing words to form other words. We've already mentioned the S hook, but also look for words you could end with a Y, E, R or D. **Example:** HAND (Y), PLAN (E), TAME (D, R).

9. CHOICE OF PLAYS

After you find a good play, if you have time, look for a better one. Always try to give yourself a choice of plays. By exercising your decision-making abilities, you'll likely also develop keener strategic skills.

10. ATTITUDE

Develop the right attitude by keeping in mind that anyone can beat an opponent if they have a certain amount of luck. Also remember that everyone draws poor combinations of tiles at times, so when you do, take pleasure in making the best play you can. Finally, don't dwell on your mistakes. Everyone makes them, so go easy on yourself and just enjoy the game.