

BookWorms

A Literacy Game for Kids

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BookWorms is a simple word game where players, acting as worms, dig up letters to form words while avoiding the hungry book-eating mole.



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LASERCUT COMPONENTS

- Underground game board (four sections ~17x17 inches)
- 108 book tiles with single letters A-Z and bigrams
- 5 worms
- 1 mole.

GOAL

Dig up books and assemble letters to score the most valuable words.

SETUP

1. Assemble the game board.
2. Each player grabs a bookworm and places it on an empty hexagon near the centre of the board.
3. Place the mole near one of the corner locations.
4. Randomly scatter about 60 book tiles face up on the game board, one per hexagon.
5. Place the remaining book tiles face up in four, more or less equal draw piles at the corners of the board.
6. When playing with much younger players, set a maximum word length to be fair to them.
7. Agree on the number of rounds to play.

PLAY IN ROUNDS

Play at least two rounds. Each round consists of setup and game play until no more words can be made.

GAME PLAY

On each turn, the current player ...

1. Examines letters closest to their location and in a path of contiguously-adjacent letters.
2. Calls out a word using a path of adjacent letters and optionally one letter from a draw pile
3. Moves their bookworm to the location of the last letter used.
4. Collects all the book tiles used.
5. Places these tiles upside down in front of them.
6. Takes random tiles from the draw piles and places them face up on empty board spaces (see below).
7. Moves the mole (see below).

Making a Move

1. Move your bookworm onto a location where the first letter will be used to form your word. The location must be adjacent to, or within a continuous “tunnel” of five empty spaces from your worm’s current position. However, you cannot move next to, or pass next to the mole.
2. The word will be a combination of adjacent letters in sequential order and optionally a letter or bigram from any draw pile.
3. Call out the word for others to verify.
4. Pick up the tiles used and then place in front of you upside down.
5. Move the worm to the location of the last letter used.

TIP: Try to use letters with the highest values.

Example: A player visualizes the word “**WIDE**” and moves their bookworm to the “E” location, collecting the books worth 8 points.



Book Tile Replenishment

After making your word, take two or three book tiles from the draw piles and place on random hexagons as follows:

Add two book tiles if you made a word of 2-4 letters. Otherwise add three tiles.

Tiles must be placed adjacent to existing tiles.

Tiles cannot be placed next to your bookworm.

Try to place tiles next to “orphaned” tiles first. Orphaned tiles are those not next to any other tile.

Corner Assist

When you have a word that can be formed, but you are missing a letter, use one of the books from any draw pile. A letter or bigram from a draw pile can be added to the start, middle or end of your word to complete it.

Moving the Mole

The current player moles the mole at the end of their turn. The mole is moved onto a book tile whose letter matches the first letter of the word just made.

If the mole is moved next to a worm, that player loses one of their collected letter tiles at random. The current player selects one of the that player's tiles and places it face up on a random board location.

DRAW PILES

When one of the draw piles is depleted, redistribute new tiles equally from the existing draw piles.

When the draw piles are completely depleted, continue playing until no more words can be made.

Example: A player forms the word “SEED” using S and EE as well as D from the corner draw pile. The mole will be moved to one of the books with the letter “S”.



ENDING THE ROUND

When all players agree that no more words can be formed, the game is over.

Each player tallies their collected books' points and records them on a score sheet. Repeat the setup and play at least one more round.

Repeat the setup and play at least two rounds.

ENDING THE GAME

At the end of the last round, the winner will have the most points. In case of a tie, the youngest player wins.

SCRAMBLED WORDS OPTION

Optionally, allow making words from scrambled letters instead of contiguous letters. For example, if you spot the word "BRAIN", but the letters are in the order "BNRIA", you can call out "BRAIN" and move the worm to the "N".

STRATEGIES

- Move the mole next to an opponent whenever possible.
- Move the mole next to an important letter to block your opponent from using that letter.
- Pick letters with the highest values.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What happens if nobody can form a word? *Shuffle the draw piles and recreate new ones. However, if there are no draw piles remaining, the round is over.*

What is considered a tunnel? *Any path of empty spaces on the board.*

If the only choice to move the mole is adjacent to my bookworm, do I still lose a book? *Yes.*

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