

WORD LIFT

GAMEPLAY INSTRUCTIONS

Setup

Separate the consonant and vowel cards into two decks, and then shuffle them separately. Deal each player 4 cards from the consonant deck and 3 cards from the vowel deck, for a total of 7 cards. Place the remaining cards as two face-down decks in the center of the table to serve as draw piles.

For the first round, decide who goes first. On subsequent rounds, the player with the lowest score from the last round (or lowest cumulative score if there's a tie) starts the game.

Play continues clockwise from the first player.

On Your Turn

During your turn, you can use cards in your hand to play word(s) on the table in front of you.

- You can only make one play: playing one word from your hand, **or** performing a steal-and-split action to play two words (see **Stealing Words**).
- All words need to be a minimum of 3 letters long and valid English words, no proper nouns.
- If a player is unsure if a word is valid to play, ask the group if they'll accept it. Leniency with your fellow players will likely come back around to help you.
- Some cards have special rules that must be followed (see **Special Cards**).

At the end of your turn, draw 2 cards from the draw piles. You can take any combination of cards you like, 2 consonants, 2 vowels, or one of each.

Stealing Words

To be eligible to steal another player's word, you must first have played one word from your hand. (Even if all your words have been stolen, as long as you've played one word in the round, you're eligible to steal.)

You can only steal a player's word by splitting it into exactly two new words, adding in your own letter(s) to each word.

- *Example: You have the letters DIRT in your hand. You could play that, but someone has played the word FORGE. You should instead steal that and split it (adding your letters DIRT) to create two new words: ORDER and GIFT. Those two words are worth +9 points rather than the +4 points you'd get if you only played DIRT, plus they take 5 points away from the player who had FORGE.*
- Stealing and splitting a word is your one play for your turn; you cannot play an additional word from your hand.
- You must create two completely new words that do not merely change the word's form, like pluralizing or changing tense. *Example: If you steal the word GAMES, you can't make one of your split words GAMED.*
- You must use all of the cards in the stolen word (meaning you can't pick any cards up and put them into your hand.) Additionally, each of the two new split words must include at least one new card from your hand. *Example: If you steal the word CHART, you couldn't make one of your split words CAR, as you didn't add a card from your hand to the word.*

- You can only steal words from players who have the same or greater number of words than you. *Example: You have 3 words in front of you, and another player has 2 words. You cannot steal either of their words, because they have fewer words than you.*
- Any rules for special cards still apply. If you plan on stealing and splitting someone's word that includes a special card, you still need to adhere to the rule.
- It's better to steal another player's word, but as a last resort you can steal one of your own words. If you steal your own word, any Special Card properties still apply, like the Dagger Card.

Special Cards

Some cards have special properties, noted with a special character. The special properties modify how the card is allowed to be played or how the card is scored. Be careful stealing the wrong word, because you still have to adhere to the rules of special cards.

The special cards are divided into benefits (green) and limitations (red). However, most work as both—for example, the Pilcrow Card that requires the card to be used as the first or last letter in a word makes it harder to use the card, but once you've played it, it makes the word harder for someone else to steal.

Conversely, the Question Mark Card that acts as a wildcard for any letter is really easy to play, but it makes any word it's played in much easier to steal since it can become any other letter for the person stealing the word.

Ending the Round / Final Turn

Once a player uses all of the cards in their hand (before their end-of-turn draw), the round enters a final turn.

Be careful about going out too early though, as your words are still vulnerable to being stolen.

Note: If a player who would have run out of cards encounters a Special Card that requires gaining additional cards before the end of their turn (the Dagger Card), the round does not end.

Everyone else gets one last turn, and then the round is over. In everyone's final turn, some rules are suspended:

- You do not draw any cards at the end of your turn, including the person who went out. (Unless you steal a word with a Dagger Card in it, that penalty still applies.)
- Everyone is eligible to steal and split words on their final turn, even if they haven't had a chance to play a word themselves yet.

At the end of the final turn, calculate each player's score. Then return all the cards to the two Consonant and Vowel decks, shuffle them, and deal for a new round.

Scoring

Each card played on the table in front of you is worth +1 point, while any cards remaining in your hand are worth -1 point.

- The Lozenge Card, if still held in hand, is worth -2 points instead of -1 point.
- The Dollar Sign Card, if played in a word on the table, is worth +2 points instead of +1 point.
- Any words 6 letters or longer give a bonus of an additional +2 points.
- The first player who went out gets a bonus of +3 points.
- You cannot score less than 0 in a round. If your end-of-round score would be negative, count it as 0.
- After 3 rounds, the player with the highest cumulative score wins!