

The

Type: Bonus Consonant
 Duplication Fear: High
 Friends: Y, B, A, C

Tile Equity: -1
 Volatility: Low
 Enemies: N, R, H, M

Bonus Strength: 9th
 Scoring Strength: 18th

The L is a good bonus tile but a poor scoring tile. Although many bonuses contain an L, these bonuses contain high point consonants which should not be retained in your leave. Oddly, the L is anti-synergic with the N and R. However, this anti-synergy should not keep you from keeping the L and the R or N together if they are a part of a strong bonus leave.

The L can easily clear vowels from your rack. The L is present in words such as AALII, ULU, LOUIE, and OLIO. For this reason, the L has a low volatility, since you will rarely need to exchange with an L on your rack.

Although many words contain the sequence LL, the L duplicates quite poorly. It does not form parallel plays easily, and goes poorly with other high scoring tiles.

Sample Page 1

The

Type: Scoring Consonant
 Duplication Fear: Low
 Friends: A, R, U

Tile Equity: 0
 Volatility: Low
 Enemies: N, T

Bonus Strength: 12th
 Scoring Strength: 6th

Many amateur players underestimate the M's value. The M is a scoring consonant that can also be used for bonuses. It is versatile because of its ability to score with both vowels and consonants. It is particularly useful at scoring 20 or more points with bad tiles on your rack, and parallels exceptionally well, forming many short words with other high point tiles.

The M is a reasonable bonus tile and plays a role similar to the C and P. The M should be kept for bonuses if your leave can absorb another consonant, and can be added to leaves such as ERT, ES, or AR?. If your rack does not turn into a bonus, then you can score with the M and bonus on the next turn.

Like the L, the M can be used to get rid of excess vowels. Words like OLEUM, MIAOU, AMIE, and AMIA can help you balance your rack.

Compound words

Another way that novice players find words is by finding a shorter root word and identifying how their other tiles can extend that word. Using this technique, players often find *compound words*. Compound words should be sought any time you find a common word such as WOOD, BOOK, WORK, etc. in your rack. Compounds are also useful since it allows you to extend existing words for potentially high-scoring plays.

Word 1: CNOOPPR
Word 4: ABDGINW

Word 2: AAILRWY
Word 5: AAJKLWY

Word 3: ABCGKLO
Word 6: BENOSWY

Above is an example of compound words. In Word 1, you might notice the word POP, which leaves CNOR, and then realize that you actually have the word POPCORN. In Word 2, you might spot the word WAY, then realize that you have RAILWAY. In Word 3, you might see the 4 letter BACK before you realized that you have BACKLOG. In Word 4, you might see the word BAG before you see WINDBAG. In Word 5, you might see the word JAY before the word JAYWALK. In Word 6, you might see the word BOY before you come up with NEWSBOY.

Diagram 1:

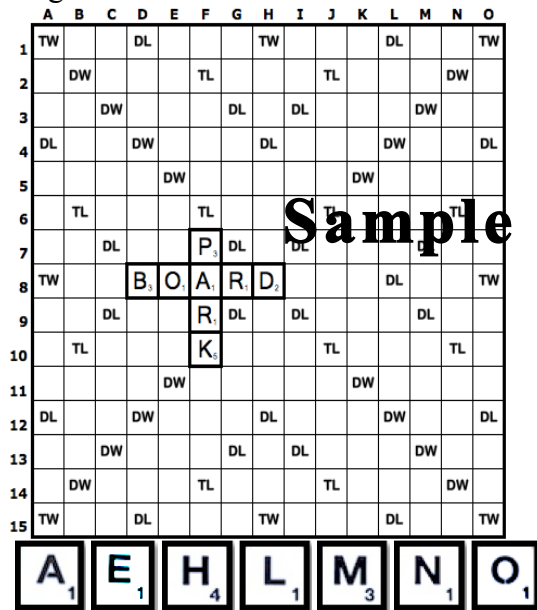
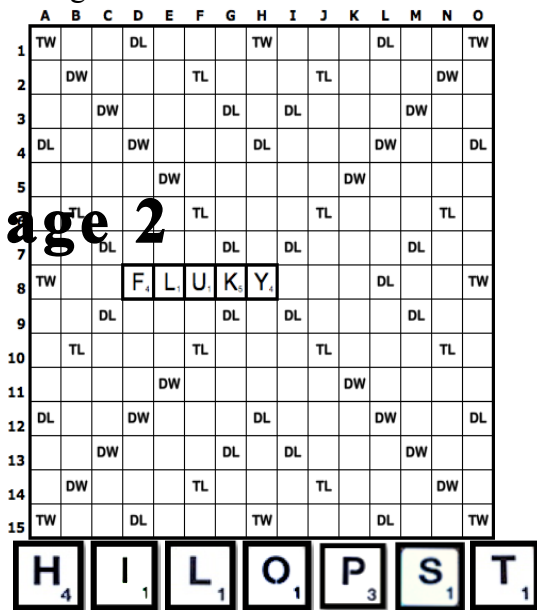


Diagram 2:



In Diagram 1, there are two compound words: an 8 letter word through the D in BOARD, and a 7 letter word hooking PARK-A (or A-BOARD). Answers at the bottom of the next page.

In Diagram 2, there are two compound words through the F and L of FLUKY. Answers at the bottom of the next page.

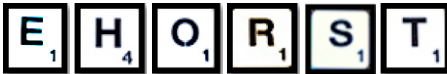
Diagram 5: DELUSION (UNSOILED), UNSOLVED, LOUDNESS

Diagram 6: MOISTURE, HUMORIST, TOURISM

The Test

One of the most common problems that new players have is the inability to figure out what racks make good candidates for fishing. While top players can go through the entire alphabet quickly to figure out which racks are good for fishing, for the rest of us that's just not practical. To deal with this problem, I have devised the BINGO test.


The BINGO test is simple: simply look at whether the rack bonuses with the letters in the word BINGO. If the rack forms a seven letter word with 3 or more tiles, it is likely to be a good candidate to fish with.

Example: 

This rack bonuses with 4 of the 5 letters, forming BOTHERS with the B, SHORTIE with the I, THRONES with the N, and SHOOTER with the O (as well as a few other bonuses).

Sample Page 3

Sometimes this technique will show you the strength of some seemingly ugly

racks. For example:  bonuses with many letters, such as RUBBERS with the B, BURGERS with the G, BURIERS with the I, and BURNERS with the N.

Similarly, some good looking racks are weaker than they appear, and often fail the BINGO test. CEINOT and EILPRT look like good fishing candidates and form common 6 letter words (NOTICE and TRIPLE) but both fail the BINGO test, and are not all that great for fishing.

The BINGO test is not foolproof. Some poor racks will pass the BINGO test (DEMOOR bonuses with B, I, N, and G, but not much else) while some good racks with fail (EEIRST only bonuses with N, but bonuses with a lot of other tiles).

Quiz: Which of these racks is the stronger bonus rack?



or



A quick inspection will show you that the second rack is much stronger, bonusing with 4 out of 5 letters. The first rack forms a bonus with none of the letters in the word BINGO.

