

A NEW VERSION OF SCRABBLE

Apr 11th, 2024

WARM-UP QUESTIONS: *Discuss the following questions with your partner(s).*

1. What kinds of games do you enjoy?
2. Read the headline above. Have you heard this news story? If so, say what you know. If not, can you guess what it is about?

VOCABULARY: *Match the following vocabulary words with a description. Use a dictionary if you need to.*

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| 1. Collaborative | a) a small flat piece made of plastic, cardboard, or wood that is used for playing games |
| 2. Accessible | b) to quickly become popular |
| 3. Tile | c) the legal authority to sell, publish, or perform a work |
| 4. Royalty | d) done by people working together |
| 5. Stock | e) money that is paid to a person who created something each time it is sold |
| 6. Take off | f) has two sides that can be used |
| 7. Double-sided | g) to keep a supply of a product to sell |
| 8. Rights | h) easy to understand and use |
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LISTEN: *Listen to the audio track on eslnewsstories.com or to a reader of the text. Try to fill in the missing words. Then check your answers with the full text (below).*

Mattel, the major game and toy-making company, has a new _____ of the classic board game, *Scrabble*. The new version, *Scrabble Together*, is more collaborative and accessible than the original.

In the original *Scrabble*, players try to form a word from a group of _____ tiles that they draw at random. Tiles are placed on a board so that they connect and share letters with previously played words. Each letter is worth a _____ amount of points, and the goal of the game is to get the most points. There are also bonuses that can multiply the value of certain letters or entire words.

In the new game, players can work in teams, and instead of getting the most points, the _____ is the player or team that completes 20 word-related challenges. According to Mattel, the new game is more likely to appeal to Gen Z and Millennials, who are less competitive than previous generations.

Scrabble, invented in 1938 by Alfred Mosher Butts, was originally _____ *Criss-Crosswords*. Butts was unable to sell the game to a major game company and made just a few copies. A decade later, an owner of one of those few copies saw its _____, and began producing it under the new name *Scrabble*, with a royalty on each unit going to Mr. Butts. The game took off in 1952 when the president of the Macy's Department Store played the _____ and decided to stock it.

The new game comes packaged together with the original version (the board is double-sided), and it is currently available outside of the United States and Canada. Because the rights for the game of *Scrabble* are _____ by Hasbro in the two countries, Mattel cannot sell the new version there.

WORD FORMS: *Fill in different forms for the vocabulary from the article. Use a dictionary if you need to. Where there is an x, the word is unimportant for ESL students, has a different meaning, or does not exist. Sometimes there are multiple possible answers, and sometimes the adjective form is a past or present participle.*

VERB	ADJECTIVE	ADVERB	NOUN
	collaborative		
	accessible		
stock		x	

FULL STORY:

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In the original *Scrabble*, players try to form a word from a group of letter tiles that they draw at random. Tiles are placed on a board so that they connect and share letters with previously played words. Each letter is worth a different amount of points, and the goal of the game is to get the most points. There are also bonuses that can multiply the value of certain letters or entire words.

In the new game, players can work in teams, and instead of getting the most points, the winner is the player or team that completes 20 word-related challenges. According to Mattel, the new game is more likely to appeal to Gen Z and Millennials, who are less competitive than previous generations.

Scrabble, invented in 1938 by Alfred Moshier Butts, was originally called *Criss-Crosswords*. Butts was unable to sell the game to a major game company and made just a few copies. A decade later, an owner of one of those few copies saw its potential, and began producing it under the new name *Scrabble*, with a royalty on each unit going to Mr. Butts. The game took off in 1952 when the president of the Macy's Department Store played the game and decided to stock it.

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Sources: cnn.com, bbc.com, wikipedia.org
For source links, see the article on ESLNewsStories.com

COMPREHENSION: *Decide if the following are true (T) or false (F), and then discuss your answers with your partner(s).*

1. Scrabble is a board game. (T / F)
2. In the new version of Scrabble, players need to get points. (T / F)
3. Mattel is now selling Scrabble in the USA. (T / F)
4. Macy's helped popularize Scrabble. (T / F)

COMPLETE: *Re-order the following sentences. Capitalize certain words and add punctuation.*

1. scrabble / try / players / in / words / make / to
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2. younger / version / scrabble / appeal / people / to / the / of / new / might
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DISCUSSION: *Discuss the following questions with your partner(s). Try to speak in sentences and ask follow-up questions.*

1. What did you think about this story? Was there any surprising information?
2. Did you know about *Scrabble* before reading this article? Have you played it? If not, would you like to give it a try?
3. Do you like words? How can words be interesting?
4. Do you have a big vocabulary in your first language? How did you learn all the words that you know?
5. Have you played many board games? Talk about a game that you played.

6. Classic department stores like Macy's are becoming fewer and fewer. Why is this?
7. Imagine you are receiving royalty payments. What did you create that keeps earning you money?
8. Mattel has several famous brands. Can you name a toy or game that they produce?
9. In the board game's success, how important was the name change to *Scrabble*?
10. Would you describe yourself as competitive? How important is winning to you?
11. Do you agree that Gen Z and Millennials are less competitive than previous generations? Are there other differences between the generations that you can think of?
12. Do you prefer working in a team or going it alone?
13. Was it a good idea to make a new version of *Scrabble*? What's wrong with just keeping the original?

WRITING: *Write a paragraph that clearly states your opinion on the above news article. Give reasons for your opinion.*

ANSWERS

VOCABULARY: 1-d, 2-h, 3-a, 4-e, 5-g, 6-b, 7-f, 8-c

WORD FORMS: collaborate, collaboratively, collaboration, access, accessibly, access/accessibility, stocked, stock

COMPREHENSION: 1-T, 2-F, 3-F, 4-T

COMPLETE: 1. In Scrabble, players try to make words. 2. The new version of Scrabble might appeal to younger people.