

Quiddler: A Fun, Easy Word Game for All Levels

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Levels	<i>All</i>
Aims	<i>Better understand how letters may be arranged to form multiple words</i>
Class Time	<i>30 minutes–1 hour</i>
Preparation Time	<i>20–30 minutes</i>
Resources	<i>Quiddler card game Quiddler score sheet (optional; Appendix) Video Tutorial</i>
Cost	<i>\$ to \$\$</i>



Quiddler is a card-based word game whose solitaire version can be played one-on-one with students or in a multiplayer version with up to eight students. Words can be as short as two letters (with a minimum of two cards played). Learners can also practice pronouncing the words they form. In either version, players will learn how in English various letters can form any number of words. They will also observe the relationship between consonants and vowels in English. Because the game allows for the formation of short words, and even includes a bonus for the player than can form the most words in one round, learners whose vocabularies aren't as extensive as others won't be intimidated by that shortcoming and will feel more comfortable about taking part in the game. Because certain types of words, such as proper nouns, slang terms, and acronyms, aren't allowed in Quiddler, learners are able to look up words in an agreed-upon online dictionary, thereby increasing vocabulary and knowledge of English.

- Quiddler is available for purchase at www.setgame.com/quiddler.

PROCEDURE

Before the Game

1. Become familiar with Quiddler by reading through the rules and playing both the solitaire/cooperative version and the multiplayer, competitive/scoring version. Consider sending students the rules beforehand so they can read through them; as with many games, it's easiest to learn Quiddler simply by playing it.

During the Game

2. Show your student or students the game and briefly explain how it is played. To calm any anxiety, tell students that it is an easy game to learn, and the best way to learn is to simply start playing it.
3. Show them samples of the cards (e.g., some cards have two letters, such as “th”). In addition to displaying one or two letters, each card also shows a point value.

4. Stress that forming short words is not only part of the game, but in the multiplayer version, actually scores bonus points. Using this approach, students won't feel they have to have an extensive vocabulary to play and enjoy the game.
5. Shuffle all the cards. The group playing should decide who will go first (they can do this however they would like) and that player will be the dealer. The multiplayer version is played in eight rounds, starting with three cards in the first round, four in the second round, and so on, with 10 cards in the final (eighth) round. After dealing the cards, the dealer places the remainder of the deck facedown in the middle of the group and one card from that deck is placed faceup next to the deck (this is the discard pile).
6. The dealer goes first. When it is a player's turn, they look at their hand to search for a possible word spelled from the cards in their hand; that player must also draw one additional card to add to their hand either from the top of the discard pile or from the top of the facedown deck. (If the faceup card does not seem helpful to form a word, they will probably choose from the deck.) If a player is able to form a word or words during their turn, they lay out the cards they used to form the word in front of them so that they are visible to the entire group and then discard one additional card to the top of the faceup discard pile. It may not be possible for a player to lay down all their cards on their first turn, but as soon as one player does so, all the remaining players get one last turn to try to use all their cards.
7. After that last turn happens, each player adds up the points shown on each card they used to create words. They then add up the points from the remaining cards in their hand that they were not able to use and subtract those points from the positive total given based on their word(s) created. However, no player can be given a score on any round that is less than zero. Ten-point bonuses are awarded for each round to the person with the longest word and to the person with the most words. Any ties nullify the bonuses.
8. After scoring, the dealer collects all the cards and deals the next round. The dealer shuffles *all* the cards prior to playing each of the eight rounds.
9. No proper nouns, prefixes, suffixes, hyphenated, or abbreviated words/acronyms can be used. Before starting, students should agree on one dictionary source for resolving questions or disputes about allowable words.
10. After eight rounds, the player with the highest score wins; ties are possible.

After the Game

11. Discuss what was difficult: for example, having too many consonants or vowels, or how hard it is recognize how many words can be formed from the same letters, or whether to try for the most words or longest word bonus. Quiddler is great for students with limited vocabularies because it's so easy to form short words and be rewarded for it.
12. Students can purchase the game and play it themselves. If they do so, ask them to note how many words they can form by moving around the same letters (on cards) and what is the longest word or words they have formed. Encourage them to use online sources to check whether words are admissible (e.g., not proper nouns, acronyms, or slang expressions).

CAVEATS AND OPTIONS

1. Think about the students' ability level, including vocabulary and spelling ability. Adjust your emphasis accordingly with regard to the number of letters of words they may be able to form given available letters on cards.
2. Encourage students to move around the same letters so that they realize that many different words can be spelled using the same letters. Often with Quiddler, students quickly take the lead in playing the game.
3. Group information: Although Quiddler can accommodate up to eight players, for the multiplayer version outlined in this activity, groups of four to six players work best. Therefore, because one Quiddler deck contains 48 cards, for each group you would need one additional copy of the game.
4. For the cooperative/solitaire version of the game, deal eight stacks of five cards facedown. Deal one card faceup on each stack. Make a word from the eight cards showing. Remove the letters used to make the word. Turn over the top card on the stacks that have had cards removed. When all of the cards in the stack have been used, turn over a card from the top of any remaining stack and use it to replenish the depleted stack so there are eight stacks again. The players all win if they are able to use all 48 cards to make words. *Note:* It's difficult to use all 48 cards, but emphasize to students that they're doing well if only a few are left. This version is great for people who aren't as competitive, and it also allows students to see how, working together, they can come up with so many different words.
5. Useful resources for Quiddler, such as rules, questions, and variant game versions, are available at www.boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/339/quiddler.

APPENDIX: Quiddler Score Sheet (Multiplayer Version)

	QUIDDLER SCORE SHEET		NAME _____		
	POINTS	# WORDS BONUS	LONGEST WORD BONUS	ROUND SCORE	TOTAL SCORE
ROUND 1 (3 cards)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
ROUND 2 (4 cards)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
ROUND 3 (5 cards)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
ROUND 4 (6 cards)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
ROUND 5 (7 cards)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
ROUND 6 (8 cards)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
ROUND 7 (9 cards)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
ROUND 8 (10 cards)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____