

10 Ways to Become an Instant SCRABBLE® Game Expert

There's no doubt about it – it takes a stellar vocabulary and super strategies to become a SCRABBLE® expert. Looking for instant results? These tips from seasoned SCRABBLE® players could help you rule the board!

1. TWO- AND THREE-LETTER WORDS

Learn the 2-letter and 3-letter words. They are the building blocks of expert play and can boost your average score by as much as 50 points per game.

2. SECRET OF THE "S"

Use an S to form two words at once. Pluralize one word while forming another at the same time. Hint: Use your S wisely. Don't add it unless you can earn at least 10 points by doing so.

3. SHUFFLE TILES

Shuffle the tiles on your rack frequently. Look for some common letter combinations, like BR, CH, CL, DLE, ED, ENT, EST, FUL, GHT, ING, NK, KLE, MIS, ISM, IUM, MB, MP, ND, NT, PR, PL, RE, STR, TH, UN, IVE and OUS. As you form these combinations, it may surprise you how often words will appear on your rack, even when you least expect them.

4. BONUS SQUARES

Always look for ways to play across premium squares. Check especially for premium squares next to vowels.

5. CONSIDER YOUR NEXT PLAY

Make your play with an eye toward your next play. You can do so simply by saving some good tiles on your rack. Your best chance of having a great next rack is to save some combination of the letters "AEILNRST" (hint: think "starline"), ideally saving either the same number of vowels and consonants, or just one extra consonant.

6. BINGOS

Always look for bingos (using all 7 tiles at once.) Optimism and know-how will mean more 50-point bonuses. Learn common word beginnings and endings and look for them on your rack.

7. Q WITHOUT U

Learn the Q-without-U words. The *Official SCRABBLE® Players Dictionary, Fourth Edition* lists these: They are: QABALA(S), QABALAH(S), QADI(S), QAT(S), QAID(S), QI(S), QOPH(S), FAQIR(S), MBAQANGA(S), QANAT(S), TRANQ(S), QINDAR(S), QINTAR(S), QWERTY(S), SHEQEL(S), QINDARKA and SHEQALIM.

8. LOOK FOR HOOKS

"Hooks" are single letters that you can add to existing words that form other words. We've already mentioned the "S hook," but also look for words you could add to with a Y, E, R or D. Examples: HAND(Y), PLAN(E), TAME(D,R).

9. CHOICE OF PLAYS

Even if you find a good play, look for a better one. Always try to give yourself a choice of plays. By exercising your decision-making abilities, you'll likely develop keener strategic skills.

10. ATTITUDE

Keep in mind that anyone can beat anyone else with a certain amount of luck. Also remember that everyone draws poor combinations of tiles at times, so when you do, take pleasure in making the best play you can. Finally, don't dwell on your mistakes. Everyone makes them, so go easy on yourself and just enjoy playing.

Excerpted from *Everything SCRABBLE®* by John D. Williams Jr. and Joe Edley
To order books visit www.wordgear.com



NATIONAL
SCRABBLE
ASSOCIATION



PO Box 700 Greenport, NY 11944 • (631) 477-0033
For more information check out www.scrabbleassociation.com