

INFINITE-TILE SCRABBLE

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Some time ago, I began to wonder how high a Scrabble^R game score I could get from an infinite pool of tiles. My first inclination was to play as many bingos (seven-tile plays having a bonus value) as possible, but Steve Root suggested the pattern of ZAXes in the game below, which improved the score considerably. In fact, Player 1 scores 1759 points and Player 2, 5337, for a grand total of 7096. Webster's Second is the dictionary of record.

If any combination of letters is allowed to count as a "word", the final board position is easy to visualize: a Z or Q in every square. It's hard to find the optimum order of moves, but the final score will certainly exceed 50,000.

| | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | B | U | K | E | S | | Z | A | F | F | R | E | S | | B |
| 2 | E | N | O | W | | Z | A | X | | L | A | X | | F | E |
| 3 | N | E | W | | Z | A | X | | Z | A | X | | F | A | N |
| 4 | Z | A | | Z | A | X | | Z | A | X | | F | I | Z | Z |
| 5 | D | R | Y | A | S | | Z | A | X | | W | A | X | E | D |
| 6 | I | L | E | X | | Z | A | X | | Z | A | X | | N | I |
| 7 | O | Y | S | | Z | A | X | | Z | A | X | | A | D | O |
| 8 | X | | | Z | A | X | | Z | A | X | | F | L | A | X |
| 9 | D | E | W | A | X | | Z | A | X | | Z | I | P | | D |
| 10 | I | L | E | X | | Z | A | X | | Z | A | X | | F | E |
| 11 | A | U | M | | Z | A | X | | Z | A | X | | P | I | A |
| 12 | Z | A | | Z | A | X | | W | A | X | | F | U | Z | Z |
| 13 | I | T | H | E | R | | Z | A | X | | K | A | G | | I |
| 14 | N | E | A | P | | Z | A | X | | Z | E | C | H | I | N |
| 15 | E | S | K | | P | A | X | Y | W | A | X | Y | | F | E |

Moves: 8H-ZA(22), H8-ZA(11), G9-ZA(42), F10-ZA(62), E11-ZA(44), D12-ZEP(50), 13C-HE(10), B9-ELUATES(74), 13A-ITHER(20), A13-IN(4), 14A-NEAP(11), C9-WE(20), 9A-DEW(7), 9A-DEWAX(16), C9-WEM(12), 8D-ZA(51), 10B-LEX(29), A9-DI(14), 7E-ZA(30), 6F-ZA(62), 5G-ZA(22), 4H-ZA(42), 3I-ZA(42), 2J-LA(8), 2J-LAX(10), K2-AX(28), J2-LAX(29), 1G-ZAFFRES(153), G1-ZA(11), F2-ZA(62), E3-ZA(22), D4-ZA(44), 5D-AS(28), 6C-EX(28), B1-UNEARLY(86), 1B-UKE(8), A2-EN(6), 5A-DRYAS(14), A5-DI(14), A1-BENZDIOXDIAZINE(1866), 2B-NO-8, 2B-NOW(11), 4D-ZAX(38), 3E-ZAX(54), H1-AX(28), 7I-ZA(42), 6J-ZA(62), 12D-ZAX(38), 11E-ZAX(38), 10F-ZAX(38),

9G-ZAX(54), 8H-ZAX(38), 7I-ZAX(28), 6J-ZAX(19), 5L-AX(18),
 N2-FAZENDA(104), M3-FIX(47), L4-FAX(56), O5-DI(17), O2-EN(13),
 K5-WAX(58), M7-AL(9), 9K-ZIP(25), K9-ZA(11), J10-ZA(62), I11-ZA(22),
 H12-WA(18), G13-ZA(42), F14-ZA(62), H12-WAX(32), 15E-PAXYWAXY(231),
 L12-FACY(24), 14L-CH(7), 14K-ECH(17), M11-PU(9), 11M-PI(4), 10N-FI(26),
 N10-FIZ(30), 14J-ZECHIN(111), N14-IF(5), 13K-KA(20), O13-IN(2),
 O9-DI(3), O1-BENZDIOXDIAZINE(1902), L8-FI(27), L8-FIX(32), K9-ZAX(76),
 J10-ZAX(32), I11-ZAX(54), 8D-ZAX(38), 7E-ZAX(54), 6F-ZAX(38),
 5G-ZAX(38), C13-HAK(17), 3A-NEW(32), M11-PUGH(36), 1A-BUKES(11),
 7A-OYS(14)

A NATIONWIDE DIRECTORY OF STREET NAMES

A book entitled *The Street Directory of the Principal Cities of the United States* was issued by the Postmaster-General in five editions between 1883 and 1908; the final edition was photographically reproduced by the Gale Research Company in 1973 for \$75. Including 1280 cities and towns in the U.S. where post offices had then been established, this 904-page book has some 180,000 entries of streets, roads, avenues, alleys, courts, lanes, places, squares, boulevards, parks, terraces, drives, pikes, ways, circles and rows. This book contains a wealth of raw material for both the onomastician and the statistician. For example, few people would be surprised by the fact that the commonest name is Main Street (746 post offices), but who would have guessed that 2nd Street (700), 3rd Street (691), 4th Street (664), 5th Street (620) and 6th Street (588) all exceed 1st Street (568)? The most common surnames used for streets are Washington Street (648) and Franklin (442), and the most common tree names, Walnut Street (636) and Elm (627). Many onomastic studies suggest themselves, such as the relative frequency of different generic names (street, road, etc.), the relative frequency of different specific names in various categories (given names, surnames, statenames, presidential names, number names, color names, tree names, etc.), the correlation between generic names (or specific names) and geographical regions, and the correlation between generic names of 1908 and those of today (gleaned from a sampling of city street maps). The browser is rewarded with many interesting discoveries, such as the double generics Terrace Drive, Way Place, Road Street, Avenue Boulevard, and Lane Alley, or the cliches Easy Street (Boston, Johnstown) and Tennis Court (Brooklyn), or the oddities Ulp Street (Sharon PA) and Hooey Street (Dover NJ). (For an up-to-date report on Hooey, the reader is referred to Kickshaws in this issue.)