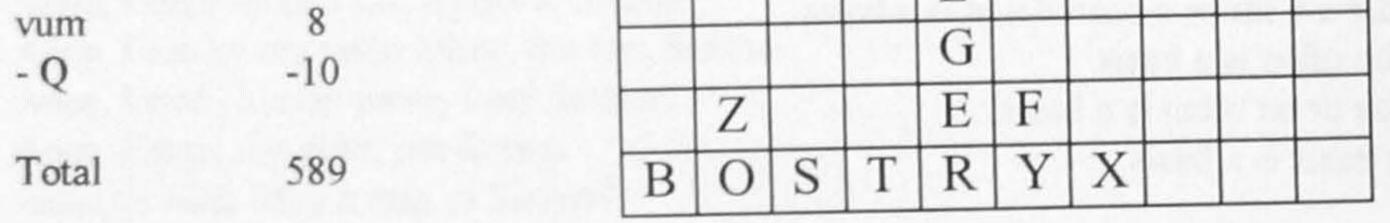# ONE ALPHABET SCRABBLE

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You're playing solitaire Scrabble, where the bag of tiles has just one of each letter and no blanks. The game is open, i.e. you choose which letters to draw when. After all your plays, deduct the values of the unplayed tiles. How much can you score?

Can you improve on this? The S is played on the central square.

		W	H	I	P	J	A	C	K
				N					
				D					
			V	U	M				
				L					
				G					
	Z			E	F				
B	O	S	T	R	Y	X			

bostryx	104
indulger	66
whipjack	383
zo	21
ef,fy	13
um	4
vum	8
- Q	-10
Total	589

The first stage in making such a construction is to pick a good word for the nine-timer play. WHIPJACK is the best word I found, beating several words with a Q or Z, such as QUETZALS, BRITZKAS, MITZPAHS and WHIZBANG. It is an advantage for this word to have only two vowels. A drawback of using Q in the nine-timer word is that that word then needs three vowels, which usually means fewer options for the other words.

But picking the nine-timer word isn't the whole story, because, even if the nine-timer's score is less than best, the other words are sometimes good enough that their score compensates. The letters not in the nine-timer, together with the letter where it intersects a connecting word (in this example, I, where it intersects INDULGER), will give a choice of eight-letter words for that connecting word, enabling it to be played with a 50-point bonus. The above example is especially good because the eleven letters not in these two eight-letter words, together with the R in the middle row, allowed the word BOSTRYX to be played with yet another bonus.

All words are in OSW. The idea is, so far as I know, original; Gyles Brandreth in *The Scrabble Omnibus* set a similar puzzle, but in his case the letters had to be drawn in alpha-betical order.