

# WYSIWYG WORDS FOR SCRABBLE PLAYERS

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The Swiss author Max Frisch once observed 'The truth is the best camouflage – nobody believes it'. Recently at a suburban Scrabble club meeting the truth of that observation was brought home to me. I opened my game against a neophytic player with AI. 'Hang on a tick' he exclaimed. 'What does that mean?' 'It's the three-toed Brazilian sloth', *Bradypus tridactylus* I replied 'named after the Tupi word for the sound it makes. As opposed to the unau or two-toed sloth.' By way of demonstration I jumped up and cavorted about the room yelling 'Ah-ee, ah-ee, ah-ee', beating my chest and scratching my armpits like an ai might do. My opponent folded his arms in disbelief. 'Yeah right. As if. I happen to know that 'ai' is the first person singular form of the French verb *avoir* 'to have'. That makes it a foreign word. Challenge!'

Later in the game I managed to drop my SCUPPER on top of his NONG along a triple file for 113 points. 'Hah. SCUPPERNONG' he guffawed. The practice of coffeehousing is considered unprofessional and a definite no-no in tournaments but I reckoned that if this character was going to upset my concentration with his extraneous banter he was fair game.

As I scribbled down the score I added 'For your information, a scuppernong is an Australian halfwit who keeps scuttling ships. Like the captain of the disaster-prone HMAS Melbourne'. 'No' he countered. 'A scuppernong is a silvery amber-green muscadine grape variety, *Vitis rotundifolia*, named after the Scuppernong river in North Carolina. Nice move.'

I felt like a nong who had just been scuppered.

This incident prompted me to compile a vade mecum of wysiwig (what you see is what you get) words with appropriate daffynitions - Scrabble players are welcome to use them in comparable situations or – better still – invent their own and post them on the notice board at club nights (but I suggest you forgo the accompanying charade). I have included the genuine meaning in square brackets after each entry – they are often more exotic and unbelievable than the bogus one.

APRICOCK (*ape-re-cock*) – a rare breed of apricot-coloured rooster  
[ *an archaic form of the word 'apricot'* ]

ARSMETRICK (*arse-met-ric*) – Herrick's fanciful adjective coined to describe a pair of buttocks that display perfect symmetry [ *an obsolete form of 'arithmetic'* ]

BUMBLEPUPPY (*bum-b'l-pup-ee*) – a frisky young dog inept at learning new tricks  
[ *a game of whist played carelessly or unscientifically* ]

CHOWRY (*chow-ree*) – a cheap eating house (like the Original Original Joe's in San Francisco) [ *an instrument used for driving away flies in India* ]

DALMAHOY (*dalm-a-hoy*) – a breed of large white seafaring dog with black spots  
[ *a bushy eighteenth century bobwig* ]

ETHERCAP (*ether-cap*) - the throwaway antiseptic paper hat that anaesthetists wear  
[ *a Scottish form of attercop – a spider* ]

FURBELOW (*fur-b'-low*) – Spenser's term for pubic hair first mentioned in his epic poem 'The Faerie Queen' of 1596 [ *a flounce on a petticoat or skirt* ]



GEORGICS (*jaw-jix*) – the scientific study of the spelling gaffes of George W. Bush  
[ *poems on an agricultural theme* ]

HERMANDAD (*her-man-dad*) – the middle-aged lover of a young Hollywood starlet  
[ *a confederation of Spanish burghers formed in 1282 for police and judicial functions* ]

HORNBOOK (*horn-book*) – any publication designed to stimulate prurience in men  
[ *a manual for children to teach them the rudiments of knowledge* ]

INTROITUS (*in-tro-'t-us*) – the medical term for sexual foreplay, an intro to coitus  
[ *an entrance to an anatomical cavity like the vagina or an opening anthem at Mass* ]

JAWBATION (*jaw-bay-sh'n*) – the autoerotic pleasure experienced in the act of mastication  
[ *a variant of jobation – a tedious scolding* ]

JOCKTELEG (*jock-t'-leg*) – an unusual fielding position in Scottish cricket whereby a player in kilts straddles the pitch, placing one foot at forward short leg and the other at silly point, and pulls faces at the batsman – the bowler being required to deliver the ball between the crouching fieldsman's legs (also known as the 'silly sporran' position)  
[ *a large Scottish clasp pocketknife – possibly strapped to the leg and hidden under a kilt* ]

KITTIWAKE (*kit-ee-wake*) – a funeral ritual for felines in which friends and family of the deceased caterwaul all night long on top of a roof  
[ *a small grey North Atlantic gull with a rudimentary hind toe* ]

LOGOLOGY (*log-oll-o-jee*) – the scientific study of the timber industry  
[ *a form of wordplay and recreational linguistics first developed by Dmitri Borgmann in 1965 – ironically the word itself is not allowable in tournament Scrabble* ]

LULIBUB (*lull-ee-bub*) – an old Celtic cradle song for wee bairns  
[ *an archaic version of 'lollipop'* ]

MEACOCK (*me-cock*) – the offspring of a moorhen and a peacock  
[ *a dastardly bastard in Shakespeare's day* ]

NUNATAK (*nun-a-tack*) – a horde of ferocious crucifix-wielding Franciscan Sisters who famously attacked Dalmietta during the Eighth Crusade in 1269  
[ *an isolated rocky peak encircled by a glacier* ]

NUNCHUKKU (*nun-chuck-a*) – a period of play in an English medieval equestrian sport in which Little Sisters of Charity were snatched up by knights on horseback and hurled through suspended wooden hoops much to the merriment of the peasant spectators  
[ *an oriental hand weapon comprising two sticks joined by a chain* ]

OCTOPUSH (*ock-t'-push*) – the eighth stage of labour in the birthing experience of a parturient octopus [ *underwater hockey for two teams of eight swimmers with snorkels who 'push' a lead 'squid' around at the bottom of a pool* ]

PISSASPHALT (*piss-ass-falt*) – a horizontal urinal with a porous bitumen surface installed for the micturition needs of long-haul truck drivers in outback Australia  
[ *a form of semi-liquid bitumen* ]

PLUMBUM (*plum-bum*) – a tropical disease in which the sufferer's buttocks gradually take on the colour and shape of a drupaceous fruit from trees of the genus *Prunus*  
[ *an obsolete word for lead* ]



QUOAD (kwoad) – Australian slang for the *Bufo Marinus* or Queensland cane toad  
[ *an adverb meaning 'to this extent'* ]

RURP (rurp) – a burp that inadvertently repeats on itself  
[ *a small piton for mountaineers - the acronym stands for realized ultimate reality piton* ]

RUTHENIC (ruth-ee-nic) – pathologically obsessed with the baseball legend Babe Ruth  
[ *pertaining to ruthenium – a metallic element of the platinum group* ]

SCOTOPIA (scot-ope-ee-a) – a short-sighted fascination with all things Scottish  
[ *vision in fading light* ]

SEXTILES (sex-tiles) – the blue tiles used in a game of X-rated Scrabble  
[ *in astronomy, positions sixty degrees apart* ]

SLAMMERKIN (slam-'r-kin) – recidivist relatives who are often serving time  
[ *an obsolete word for a slovenly-dressed woman* ]

SQUINCH (skwinch) – an old measure of snuff (a contraction of square inch) there being four pinches to the squinch [ *a small arch built across the interior angle between two walls* ]

TIMBO (tim-bo) – a lumberjack born from the marriage of a bimbo with a himbo  
[ *an insecticide obtained from the bark of a South American sapindaceous climber* ]

TRAMPETTE (tramp-et) – a precocious juvenile prostitute [ *a small trampoline* ]

TURDINE (turd-ine) – tending to behave like a turd [ *pertaining to the thrush family* ]

UMWHILE (um-while) – the average length of time it takes to say 'um'  
[ *a Scottish adverb meaning 'formerly'* ]

VIAMETER – (vie-am-'t-'r) vertical diameter, a straight line drawn geometrically north south from the apex of a circle to its base [ *an archaic word for an odometer* ]

WATERPOX – (waw-t'r-pox) a form of venereal disease caught by swimming with strangers in unchlorinated pools [ *another term for varicella* ]

WILLIEWAUGHT (will-e-wawt) Chaucer's ribald term for a small hard excrescence on the male member [ *a deep draught of drink in Scotland* ]

XYSTER – (ex-why-ster) geneticists' jargon for a person with an XY chromosome pair  
[ *a surgical instrument for scraping bones* ]

YUNX (yunx) – the young of a minx [ *the wryneck genus* ]

ZEBUB (zee-bub) – a baby zebu [ *an Ethiopian dipterous insect harmful to cattle* ]

ZUGZWANG (zoog-zwang) – the crush experienced by passengers on German railway platforms as they rudely force their way onto a train when the doors open  
[ *a blockaded position in chess* ]