

Rollable

Overview: The game I've been working on is Rollable, which can best be described as a modification of Scrabble, which incorporates dice in order to create challenge for players in a three round system. Words are played in a crossword style and bonuses are given for playing words/letters in certain spots on a board. Chance determines length of words you may play while providing sufficient opportunities for players to show knowledge of words and spelling. All players know what each other player has in hand and has used. It can be played with two to four players.

Game Objective: The main goal for players is to achieve the highest number of points. These points are received based on the number values for each letter of words played on the board. Each player will roll the dice on their turn to determine the length of the word they can play as well as based on the letters they have in hand. Certain spaces for letters give multiplicative (Double and triple) bonuses for the letter in the space or the word it is a part of so players will seek to place words in places that may increase their score the most.

Set Up: The game requires a Scrabble board, 6 copies of letter tiles A-Z for each player, a sheet to keep score, and two dice. All players begin the game with one copy of each letter A-Z. Each player rolls two dice to determine who takes the first turn so that the player with the highest total value roll (2-12) will go first. To begin the 1st round each player has a single copy of each letter available to them (a second set and third set will be available in subsequent rounds and all letters will be refilled between rounds). In case of a tie the players will roll again until a winner is determined to go first. The first player rolls a single die and plays a word of the same length as the value of the die with at least one letter on the star square (If the number is 1 the word be between 2-6 letters and if it is 6 the word may have 6 or more letters). Play then rotates to the left of the player.

Game Board: The game board is the same as used for Scrabble. It is a 15x15 tile square board where letter tiles can be played on each individual square of the board. The first word played must have a letter placed on the star square and subsequent words must be connected to previous letters played in some fashion. Words must be played so that they can be read from left to right or top to bottom and no words can be played diagonally. The board contains bonus squares placed in an X and V pattern that include double/triple word and letter bonuses. Only the first word that has a letter on those tiles may use the bonus incorporated into its score.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	
1	3x WS			2x LS				3x WS				2x LS			3x WS	1
2		2x WS				3x LS				3x LS				2x WS		2
3			2x WS				2x LS		2x LS					2x WS		3
4	2x LS			2x WS				2x LS					2x WS		2x LS	4
5					2x WS							2x WS				5
6		3x LS				3x LS				3x LS					3x LS	6
7			2x LS				2x LS		2x LS				2x LS			7
8	3x WS			2x LS				★				2x LS			3x WS	8
9			2x LS				2x LS		2x LS				2x LS			9
10		3x LS				3x LS				3x LS					3x LS	10
11					2x WS							2x WS				11
12	2x LS			2x WS				2x LS					2x WS		2x LS	12
13			2x WS				2x LS		2x LS					2x WS		13
14		2x WS				3x LS				3x LS				2x WS		14
15	3x WS			2x LS				3x WS				2x LS			3x WS	15
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	

Game Procedure: After the first player has placed the first word, the 1st round of the game begins. Each player will have two turns in the first and second rounds. To start their turn, each player will roll a die and will have to come up with a word with the same number of letters as on the die and must include a tile already placed. If the number is one though, the word may be between 2 and 6 letters long, and if it is 6 the word may be six or more. Because in the first round each player has only one set of letters A-Z every unique letter may only be placed once during a the first round. Letters placed by player but used by another player to create a word is not counted in the second players' letter tally (If a player makes the word SUN but a second player uses the U for CURL, the player still may use his U for his next turn). Once the player has placed the word, he tallies his score taking into account bonuses and records it on the sheet. Then the next player on the left takes his turn, and the process repeats until all players have had two turns. If a players feels they have no words to place, they may pass and loses the turn (This is true for all rounds).

The second round then begins and all letters are refilled and a second set of letter tiles is given to each player (so each players has 2 copies of A-Z). From there the player who stated the game begins the second round now rolling two dice. Based on the value of the dice, the player must place a word of the same number of letters as the number of the combined dice (If the dice show a double six, or 12, then the player may place a word 12 words or more. If they cannot do so, then they pass to the next player) and tally the word score like the previous round. The play again proceeds to the left and the round ends when each player has 2 turns (includes passes).

Round three then begins like round 2 where letters are refilled and a third set is added. The same process as the last round is completed, except that each player now gets three turns. There is still only two dice. When all players have finished their 3 turns the tally of all the word scores they earned are totaled and the player with the most points wins. If there is a tie, the player with the most vowels (a,e,i,o,u) left over is the winner. If there is still a tie then the dice is rolled until a winner is determined.

Reasoning Behind Design: I created this game to give a variation to the Scrabble formula by giving different parameters for word selection. By providing a limit on letters usable in each round, I believe it would provide a different challenge to producing words in addition to the needed length of the word. Because I felt that due to the randomness of the dice players would be occupied with having to think about the word they were creating, I left the letters each player has as something visible to all participants, so that there is no need to predict letters other players may have in order to counter play. Also the fact that there is a limit on the letters forces the player to be more creative in making words.

In this game, players who would be more superior in Scrabble may be more leveled with those less experienced or skilled because the randomness of the dice could potentially limit the potential plays one could make in a given turn as it may not physically be possible to make words of some lengths due the board size. Because of this randomness, unskilled players may also have the potential to create larger or more point heavy words based on what numbers they roll.

Play Test 1 + 1A: I was able to play the game with my parents (both speak English as a second language) and my sister. They all said they had fun playing the first round and somewhat the third round. I was able to play with both of my parents the first time and while they had some trouble with coming up with words because they are not as skilled in English as in Spanish they both agreed the earlier stages of the game were more fun, mostly because of they could come up with smaller words much easier. But with my sister, whom I played a game with 1 versus 1, we had less of an issue coming up with words in the later round. Though due to this, we noticed that the later rounds of the game seemed to run very slowly as players would take very long to produce words, slowing the game and reducing the enjoyment of the game.

To address these issues, I decided to add a time limit to the turns of all the players, except the first turn of the first player. The first round, which were fast paced to begin with, I decided a minute and a half time limit to the turns was suitable to keep the game moving. The subsequent rounds would have 2 minute time limits per turn.

Also, I had to make sure that if anything were to occur in the game which stopped the game from being enjoyed due to the time limits there would be a way to fix it. If no player other than the first were able to produce a word in the first round, the points of the first word will be counted, and the round will restart with the next player to the left, who will have unlimited time to place a word. The process repeats until other players play a word. In the next round the player who started the game will take the first turn. In the second and third rounds, if the same thing occurs,

then the board is emptied, a new word is placed by the player to the left of the one who started the round, and the game continues with the rules of the respective round.



My mom and I testing the semifinal product. As you can see the letter tiles are fully visible and the phone in my hand is the timer, and the other one has a dice roll application.

Play Test 2: Having played the new rules, all players agreed the game felt more enjoyable throughout, and while they felt rushed after rolling certain dice combinations to get out a word, the game never stopped completely in order to implement the round restart rule. Therefore 2 minutes seems to be a time that works well with the game. The game felt more enjoyable but words scored in the third round seemed to define the game more than those in the previous rounds.

I think in order to address this problem I may find a way to amplify the influence of the first two rounds in the overall score, perhaps by multiplying them by some number when included in the final tally.

Another issue is that by round 3 the spaces seem limited to be able to play words that are larger than about 9, therefore I may increase the time limit of the turns in that round by 30 seconds or

that dice combinations of 10 or more will allow players to produce words of 10-15 letters (so if you roll a six and five, the value is 11 but you can still place a word of 10 letters). This issue I have yet to completely resolve.

The improved version is essentially the same game but with time limits on turns and a restart mechanism when the game becomes frozen in a gameplay sense.