Overview

In Crux, players take on the role of an up-and-coming crossword editor in the early stages of constructing a new puzzle. You're really hoping this will be your big break, and your work will finally get published!

Don't worry - you won't have to come up with any devious clues! This game is just about fitting words into a grid in the cleverest way possible.

Each round, flip over one letter and roll both dice. Everyone uses the same result to write a word in their grid, according to the rules that are generated.

The game ends after 16 rounds, and since there are 26 spaces for words in your grid, it won't be complete yet! You'll usually have plenty of options on each turn, but you only score points for words that share at least one letter with another word.

When the game ends, calculate whose puzzle has the most potential so far, and that one will get completed and sent for publication.

Components and Setup

- A pad of sheets with crossword grids. Give one to each player.
- Pencils! You'll each need one of these too.
- 16 letter cards. Shuffle them and make a face down deck.
- A black die, which determines how each letter must be used in a word.
- A white die, which determines where each word must be placed.

There is no upper limit to the number of players. If you need more pencils than we've provided in the box, grab some more!

You can download player sheets from powgi.com/crux to print more copies, or save on your tablet to play using a stylus.

The free Crux app, also available from powgi.com/crux, provides an interactive player sheet that you can use on your phone, tablet or laptop, and it will calculate your scores automatically!

Gameplay

At the start of each round, flip over the top card of the letter deck and roll both dice. Combining the results together, you create the conditions for how the next word must be placed.



In this case, the word must start with a P and read vertically down in the grid.

Every player uses the same information and plays simultaneously.

Once everyone has written a word (or chosen to skip the turn), draw the next card and roll the dice again. This continues until all 16 letter cards have been drawn.

The **black die** determines how the letter on the card must be used.



Your word must start with this letter



Your word must contain this letter at least once



Your word must not contain this letter



Your word must end with this letter



Your word must contain this letter at least twice



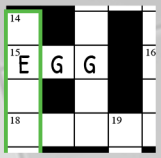
This letter must be at the edge of the grid

For **HAS**, the letter may be anywhere in the word, including the start or end.

For **TWICE**, the letters do not have to be adjacent. For example, *HAMMER*, *MOMENT* and *MUMMY* are all valid for **M, TWICE**.

For **EDGE**, the position of the letter within your word does not matter, but it must be placed in one of the outermost boxes. For example, *HELP* in 1D, *EGG* in 15A and *GAME* in 21A are all valid for **E, EDGE**.







Letters that were written in the grid on previous turns still count towards the letter requirements when adding new words.

For example, if you had already written *HELP* in 1D, as above, then **L, START** would allow you to write a word at 6A using the existing *L*.

Conversely, you cannot add a word that crosses an existing *G* if the condition is **G, NONE** – even if none of the new letters you would write are *G*.

However, the **white die** restricts where in the grid you may place the word.

ACROSS

Left to right in a horizontal space

ODD

Beginning at any odd numbered box

SHORT

Any space which is 3, 4 or 5 letters long

DOWN

Top to bottom in a vertical space

EVEN

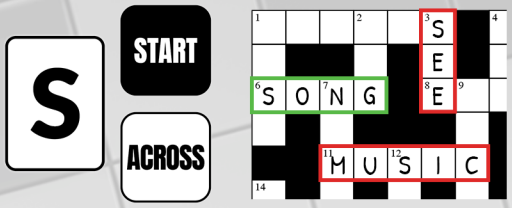
Beginning at any even numbered box

LONG

Any space which is 5, 6 or 7 letters long

Note that 5-letter spaces are both **SHORT** and **LONG**.

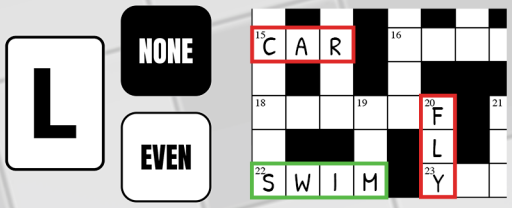
Examples



✔ *SONG*
Valid placement

✘ *SEE*
Must be across

✘ *MUSIC*
Must start with *S*



✔ *SWIM*
Valid placement

✘ *CAR*
Must be even

✘ *FLY*
Cannot contain *L*

Letters Used

The 16 letter cards used in the game are shown in the corner of your player sheet. Each letter will be used exactly once per game.



You can use this area of the sheet to note which letters have been drawn, so you can see what is still to come.

You can, of course, use all 26 letters of the alphabet when making words.

Valid Words

As a general rule, a word is valid if you could also write a crossword clue to describe it, and it is reasonable to expect your clue to be solved.

You don't have to do this (unless you want to!) but if you are in doubt about a word, that's the test. It's also how you can show your word is valid, if challenged by another player!

By this reasoning, proper names are allowed. You can expect that someone would be able to solve a clue about a famous *HARRY*, or work out that you're describing *ESSEN*.

Foreign words are only permitted if they are in common English usage, or are names that you would expect an English speaker to know. *CHORIZO* and *EIFFEL* are fine, but *HOLA* and *MERCI* are not.

Acronyms and initialisms are not permitted, unless they are also genuine words. Even though any mix of letters could be shown to be the initials of a phrase you claim to know, don't do that. We don't want the *FBI* showing up.

No abbreviations. You have to fit the whole word into the space.

Two-word phrases are not allowed. Word lengths are defined in the clue area used for scoring, so *GOFISH* (2,4) cannot be used for a word that shows (6) as its length.

Finally, in case it needs saying, you have to fit words into the grid spaces exactly. A six-letter word must go in a six-letter space. You may not shade in extra black squares to make shorter words fit, nor squeeze two letters into one box.

Skipping a Turn

If you cannot think of a word that meets the conditions, or there is no valid space in your grid to place a word, you must skip.

You may also freely choose to skip any turn, if you wish.

Final Scoring

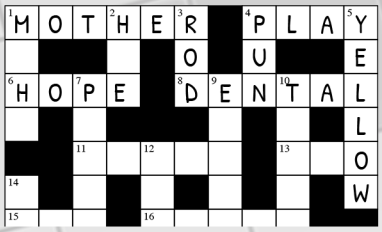
Only words which cross another word score points. If they cross several other words, you score more points!

Each word you wrote in the grid scores points as follows:

Multiply the length of the word by
the number of other words it crosses.

For example, a six-letter word that crosses two other words scores 12 points.

Any word which does not share any letters with another word by the end of the game will not score any points.



In this example, *MOTHER* in 1A crosses the *R* of *ROD* in 3D, so *MOTHER* scores its length (6) once, for 6 points.

ROD, however, also uses the *D* in *DENTAL* at 8A, so it crosses two words and scores its length (3) twice – also 6 points.

DENTAL crosses three words (*ROD*, *PUN* and *YELLOW*) so it scores its length (6) multiplied by 3, a total of 18 points!

HOPE in 6A does not cross any other words, so it does not score any points.

For each clue number in the scoring area at the bottom of the sheet, check if there's a word in that space, and if there is, write in its points.

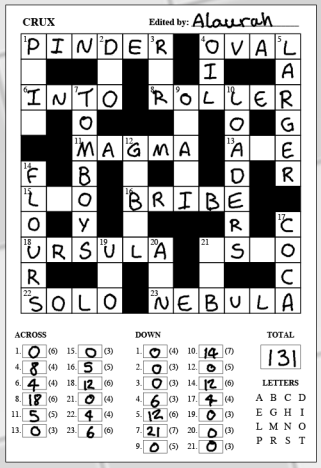
Add everything together to get your final score. The player with the most points wins. In the case of a tie, play another game :)

Example Games

These sheets are from actual games, played in our Discord community.









Solo Play

The rules for the solo game are the same as above. Challenge yourself to score as many points as possible, and track your personal best.

100 points or more is solid, and 150 is a great score. Over 200 is exceptional, and rare. If you manage to do this, send us a copy of your sheet!

More Information

Visit powgi.com/crux for the following:

- How To Play video
- Printable extra player sheets
- Interactive player sheet/scorer app
- Daily challenge game
- FAQ and rule clarifications as needed

Follow us on social media:
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Join our Discord community:
Go to powgi.com/discord for the invitation link

Contact us: support@lightwoodgames.com

Credits

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