Letter Jam

ONDRA SKOUPÝ

WELCOME TO THE JAM

Letter Jam is a cooperative game for 2 to 6 players. In each round, every player has a letter that everyone else can see. But no one can see their own letter!

Players try to find words that can be made with the letters they see. The player with the best clue spells it by marking the letters with numbered tokens. Your letter's position in the clue helps you guess what it might be. Then you can move on to a new one! Guess them all before clues run out, and unscramble your hidden word.

rules overview video

cge.as/ljv

COMPONENTS



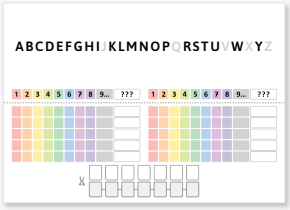
64 letter cards



1 wildcard



4 setup cards



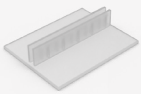
1 pad of guessing sheets



8 numbered tokens



6 pencils



6 card stands



6 red clue tokens
9 green clue tokens

SETUP

Players sit around the table so that every player will be able to see 5 letters once the game is set up. The numbered tokens, the setup card, and the wildcard go in the middle.

SECRET WORD SETUP

Start by making a secret word for the player on your right:

1. Shuffle the deck of letter cards.
2. Divide the deck roughly evenly among all players. Search through your part of the deck to make a 5-letter word. Discard the rest face down.
3. Players having trouble making a word may look through other players' discards.
4. Once everyone has made a 5-letter word, they all shuffle their words and pass them to the right.
5. Shuffle all discarded cards to make a deck. Place it in the middle of the table.

Or use the Letter Jam setup app!

cge.as/lja



Difficulty Level: Shown here is a standard 5-letter game. You can play with 4 letters or even 3, if some players are unsure spellers. Once you have mastered the game, try it with 6 or even 7!

PLAYER SETUP

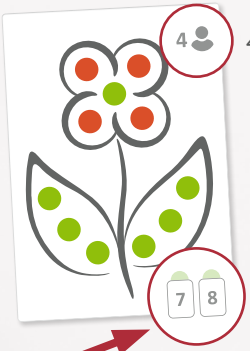


You receive a scrambled secret word (created either by the app or by the player on your left). **You never look at your own letters.** Lay them in a row face down in front of you. Place your leftmost letter in the stand, as shown, so that it is visible to everyone except you.

Take a pencil and a guessing sheet. Fold the sheet in half to make a screen so that no one can see the letters you write down during the game.

SETUP CARD

Choose the setup card based on the number of players, and place it in the middle of the table. Place red and green clue tokens on the marked spots.



4 players

These numbers tell you how many cards to deal to each nonplayer stand.

NONPLAYER STANDS

You always use all six stands. If you have fewer than 6 players, some stands will be nonplayer stands.

Give each nonplayer stand 1 green clue token.

Deal each nonplayer stand a stack of random cards from the deck. Place this stack face down atop the clue token. The number of cards in each stack is given by the setup card.

After making stacks, put the top card of each stack in its stand so that all players can see it.

GAMEPLAY — ONE ROUND

Look at the letters.

At the start of each round, all players can see one letter in every card stand except their own. Look for a word you can spell using the letters you see. The same letter can be used multiple times, even if it is on only one card.

Example: *You are sitting in the position illustrated below. You see several possible clues, including* ***HUGS***, ***HOG***, *and* ***SHUSH****.*

Choose a cluegiver.

Players discuss their potential clues to see who has the best one. **You must not give any information about players' letters,** so follow the rules at the bottom of this page. Do not talk about a specific player's letter and do not talk about what kind of word your clue is. All players choose the cluegiver together.

Take a clue token.

Each token on the setup card represents a clue someone can give. **When you give your first clue, take a red clue token.** If you already have a red token from a previous round, see Counting Clues on page 6.

Spell the clue.

The cluegiver spells out the clue using the numbered tokens. The first token marks the first letter, the second marks the second, and so on.

The player with the letter ***O*** *has given a 7-letter clue. She has used your letter twice.*



WHEN DISCUSSING CLUES

You can say ...

- How many letters are in your clue.
- How many players it helps, but not which ones.
- How many nonplayer stands it uses, but not which ones.
- How many bonus letters (see p. 6) it uses, but not which ones.
- Whether it uses the wildcard.

Do not say ...

- "This helps everyone but Lisa."
- "My clue is sort of obscure."
- "Can my clue be a place name?"
- "You two have the same letter!"
- "I see nothing but vowels."
- "I use that letter twice."
- "Paul's letter is hard to use."

Example: *"I have a 7-letter word that uses all players' letters and one nonplayer letter. It does not use the wildcard."*

Write the clue down.

If the cluegiver uses your letter in the clue, write down the clue on your guessing sheet. Write a question mark to represent your unknown letter.



Keep your guessing sheet hidden so no one accidentally sees their letter on your sheet.

Try to guess your letter.

You should have one or more guesses for your letter. Write them down.

Examples: *If you had spelled* ***HUGS****, the player with the* ***U*** *might see these possibilities.*

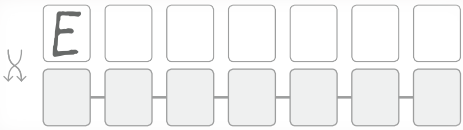


But instead, you let your friend give the clue illustrated on the facing page. You see only one possibility.



Decide whether to move on.

If you are mostly sure about your letter, tip it over face down. Record your guess in the corresponding box at the bottom of your guessing sheet.



If you aren't sure, you can keep the same letter for the next round. The choice is yours.

Once everyone has decided, those who chose to move on return their cards to their rows without looking at them. **You never look at your own cards.**

THE WILDCARD

The wildcard can be used to represent one letter. Simply place numbered tokens beside it to show where it is used in your clue. If the letter appears more than once in the word, you use the wildcard multiple times. However, you cannot use it to represent two different letters in the same word. **The cluegiver is not allowed to say what letter the wildcard represents.**

Example: *Suppose you are sitting in the position illustrated on the facing page. You could use the wildcard as a* ***T*** *to spell* ***∗HOUGH∗S****. The player with the* ***G*** *would record the clue like this:*





SETUP FOR NEXT ROUND

All players who chose to move on get new letters. Whenever you return a letter to your row, move your stand one space right and give it the next letter.



You must progress from left to right. **Once you move on from a letter, you can never return to it.**

If a nonplayer stand is used in the clue, discard its letter and draw a new one from its stack. (Details are on the next page.)

Once players start taking new letters, return all numbered tokens to the center of the table.

COUNTING CLUES

The tokens on the setup card represent the clues you can give. You always take a token when you give a clue.

With 4, 5, or 6 players:

Take a red token when you give your first clue. If you have already given one, take a green token whenever you give a clue.

Initially, the only available green tokens are those on the leaves. If none are left, you must choose a cluegiver who can take a red token – that is, a player who has not yet given a clue.

When all red tokens are gone, everyone has given at least one clue and your team is rewarded – the green token in the center of the flower becomes available.

In a 3-player game, you take red tokens for your first two clues. **In a 2-player game,** you take red tokens for your first three clues. Once all red tokens are gone, three green tokens become available.

NONPLAYER STANDS

The game always uses 6 stands, so each player will always see 5 letters. Cards in nonplayer stands can be used in any clue, just as if they were players' letters.

At the end of the round, a nonplayer stand discards its letter if it was used in the clue. (Discards can go in the box.) Give it the next card from the top of its stack.

When the last card in the stack is drawn, the green clue token is revealed. Place it on one of the leaves of the setup card. Your team has earned one additional clue.

Once its stack is empty, the nonplayer stand draws its new cards from the deck in the middle of the table.

BONUS LETTERS

Late in the game, some players will run out of letter cards. **If you return your last card to your row, draw a new one from the deck.** Place your stand in front of your row to show you are done with your original letters. When someone uses this extra letter in a clue, you can try to guess it. State your guess out loud, then look at the card. **If you guess correctly, it becomes a bonus letter.** Place the bonus letter near the wildcard. (If you guess wrong, discard it.)

Whether you guessed right or wrong, draw a new letter from the deck. There is no limit to the number of bonus letters your team can have.

If multiple players are guessing for bonus letters, they may guess in any order. Nonplayer stands cannot make bonus letters.

A bonus letter can be used to help spell a clue as though it were a letter in a nonplayer stand. **After it is used in a clue, discard it.** Bonus letters can also be used at the end of the game.

A Game by Ondra Skoupý

Illustration: Lukáš Vodička, František Sedláček
Art Direction & Layout: Michaela Zaoralová, Dávid Jablonovský
Additional Art: Radim "Finder" Pech
Rulebook: Jason Holt
Project Management: Petr Murmak, Dita Lazárková
Production: Vít Vodička

Czech Games Edition

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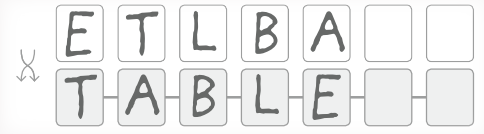
END OF THE GAME

There are two ways the game can end:

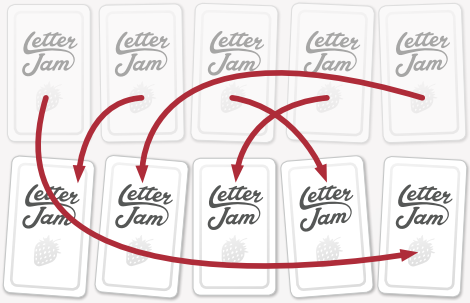
- If you end a round with no clue tokens for the next round, the game is over.
- The game ends with leftover tokens if everyone decides they don't need any more clues.

Look at your guessing sheet and try to spell a word.

You should have a guess for each letter in your row. Hopefully, these letters can be rearranged to spell a word. When you think you've figured out your word, write it down.



Keeping cards face down, rearrange them to spell your secret word.



Tip: Some players find it helpful to mark their cards with the numbered tokens before moving them.

You can use bonus letters or the wildcard to help.

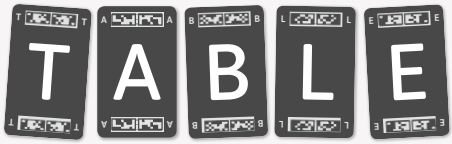
When trying to spell a word, any of your letter cards can be replaced by a bonus card or the wildcard. Simply place it face up on top of the card you want to replace. You can use more than one of these cards from the middle of the table, but no card can be used by more than one player.

__Example:__ Paul's best guess is that he has __B__, __N__, __H__, __C__, and __M__, but he can't spell a word, so something must be wrong. Paul is least sure of his __M__ guess, so he decides to replace that card. He can spell __BENCH__ by replacing it with the wildcard or with a bonus __E__.

Note: You can also use bonus letters or the wildcard to help make a longer word than the one you started with. In the optional scoring system on the next page, this gives you 1 point for each extra letter.

Everyone reveals their word.

Take turns. We recommend starting with the players who are most sure of their words.



You don't have to spell the word you were given. If you were given **HORSE**, you can spell **SHORE**. You can use a bonus **E** to spell **SHEER** or even **HEROES**. Your goal is just a correctly spelled English word whose meaning you know without looking it up. And it counts even if you thought you were spelling something else.

If more or less everyone has spelled a word, then you have all more or less won.

All players share in the victory equally. Of course, the goal is for everyone to correctly spell a word, but it's hard to play a perfect game. If you get close, that's close enough.

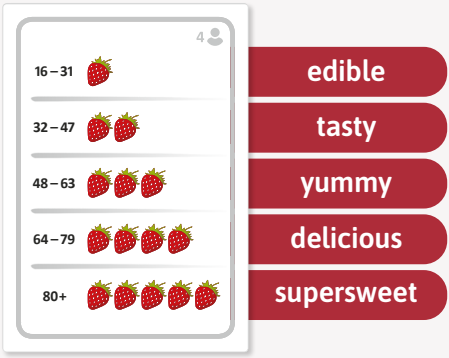
SCORING

If you like, you can count up your Letter Jam score. Incorrect words score 1 point for each of the original letters guessed correctly. For each correctly spelled word:

- Score 3 times its original length.
- Plus 1 point per letter beyond that length.
- Plus 1 point per available green token left on the setup card.

Example: *If you were given* ***HORSE*** *and you used a bonus* ***E*** *to spell* ***HEROES*** *and your team has 2 leftover green tokens, your word gives the team 15 + 1 + 2 = 18 points.*

The back of the setup card shows you how sweet your victory is:



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Is this a legal clue?
Yes. Any word is a legal clue as long as you believe it's a real word. This includes abbreviations like **USA** and the name of your favorite anime character. However, you are not allowed to indicate that your clue might be unusual in any way.

Can I give a 10-letter clue?
Sure. Just pretend you have extra numbered tokens and tell your friends where your pretend tokens should go.

What if I see two Rs?
Don't say anything. If you see a clue that uses multiple **R**s (like **BERRY**) you can use the same letter card twice, or you can use both letter cards. It's up to you.

On my guessing sheet, are those letters in gray because they aren't in the deck?
Yes. If you need one of them to spell a word, you can use the wildcard.

When making secret words, is it okay for some players to get shorter or longer words than others?
Yes, that works just fine. But remember, players with more letters need more clues, so they will probably give fewer clues.

Can I use my own letter in a clue?
No, you can only use letters you can see.

Late in the game, can I say whether my clue will help those who need it most?
You can discuss strategy and goals before you start comparing clues. And if you believe your clue helps people who need it, you can say you have a good clue. You just can't say who is included and who isn't.

Can I move on from a letter I'm unsure of?
You can move on if you have been given a clue for it, even if the clue was in an earlier round. You can't go back to it later, but sometimes you have to take a chance – especially if you are running out of clues.

What if I get information from other players' guesses?
Use it! You are allowed to say whether you are sure or unsure of your letter. This information might help others move on. You can't say your guess out loud, except when guessing for a bonus letter, in which case, even a wrong guess can be helpful!

If I can't figure out my final word, may I make a smaller word?
No, but try using the wildcard.