

# CAMBRIDGE

*A word game for two to five players  
Design by Brendan Herlihy*

## Components:

26 letter tiles, 4 Honor tiles (Crown, Colt, Joker and Gift)) & 5 player markers.  
You supply pencil and paper to each player to write words and keep score.

Cambridge is played in several rounds (hands) until a player accumulates 100 points.

## I. SETUP

1) Randomly deal the tiles face-up in a 5x6 array. A typical board setup is shown below...



Each player then chooses a word of at least five letters and no more than nine letters (no abbreviations, words with punctuation or proper names). They write that word down secretly and keep it face-down in plain sight. They then write down a number of dashes equal to the number of letters in that word for the other players to see (as in Hangman)

*Example: You choose the word "superb", write it down, turn the piece of paper over, write six blank spaces " \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ " and are ready to play.*

Randomly determine who goes first. Play proceeds clockwise.

The player who goes last takes the token of the player to the left (the player who goes first) and places it on any letter tile on the board. The player who goes first then takes the token of the player going second and places it on a letter tile unoccupied by another token. Then the second player puts the third player's token on an unoccupied letter tile, and so on until all player tokens are on the board.

## II. PLAY

Each player on their turn may *either*: a) Move, OR b) Guess.

### A) Move

If you choose to Move, move your token onto any adjacent tile. You cannot move off the playing board. Diagonal tiles are not adjacent. For example, if your token was on “M”, legal moves are shown below:



If the tile you move onto is face-up, you get that tile’s *Benefit*, then flip the tile face-down. If the tile is already face-down, your turn is over.

You may move onto a tile occupied by an opposing player. Nothing special happens in this case; both tokens simply occupy the same tile. If it is the opening move and the tile is face-up, the player who moved onto the tile first gets its benefit then flips it over normally.

### 1. Tile Benefits

#### *a. Letter Tiles*

When you land on a letter tile, each player (including yourself) reveals each and every instance of that letter in their word by writing it down in the appropriate dash. You receive 1 point for each instance of each letter revealed.

*For example, if you move to “A” and your opponent’s word is “banana”, you would receive 3 points. You do not receive points for letters revealed in your own word.*

If as a result of choosing your letter, an opponent reveals their last hidden letter, that player is out of the hand, and you get an additional 5 points. If you reveal your own word this way, you are out of the hand, but do not get additional points.

#### *b. Honor - Colt*

When you land on the Colt, you may move your token onto any face-up letter square on the board, get its Benefit and then flip it over.

#### *c. Honor - Gift*

When you land on the Gift, you receive 2 points for each person playing. This is regardless of whether they are currently out of this hand. For example, in a 4-player game, the benefit of the Gift is 8 points.

*d. Honor – Joker*

When you land on the Joker, choose two face-up tiles on the board (other than the Joker) and exchange their positions. The tiles may be letters or honors as long as they are face-up.

*e. Honor - Crown*

When you land on the Crown, you may make a free Guess at any player's word (except your own). If you are correct, you receive the Guess Bonus. If you are not correct, your turn is over, but you are not out of the hand (unlike the standard Guess).

B) Guess

If you think you know what an opponent's secret word is, you may forgo moving your token and instead try to guess what it is. If you are correct, that player is out of the hand and you get the Guess Bonus. You may then, if you choose, guess another player's word.

*The Guess Bonus is equal to 2 points, plus 2 additional points for every player who is now out of the hand (including the player just eliminated).* This means the first person whose word is guessed is worth 4 points, the second 6 points, the next 8, and so on.

If you make an incorrect guess of any player's word, you are out of the hand. You keep any points you received from earlier Guesses on the same turn. You may not guess your own word.

C) "Out Of The Hand"

You are out of the hand when your word is correctly guessed, or when all letters in your word are revealed, or when you make an incorrect guess of an opponent's word.

Players who are out of the hand remove their token from the board. All their future turns are skipped; they do not move or guess words. If their word has not yet been correctly guessed, that word is still in play. They continue to reveal letters in their word as players land on letter tiles, and opponents continue to collect points off that word. The word may be guessed just like any other word.

D) Ending the Hand

Play continues until all players except one are out of the hand or all the words have been guessed. At that point, if there is no winner (see Winning), gather the tiles, shuffle and play another hand.

All players must reveal what their word was at the end of the hand. If there is a question as to whether any player's word was acceptable, consult your agreed-upon word source (e.g. dictionary). Any player who used a word deemed unacceptable by your source loses all points they gained in that hand. If a player is shown to have not revealed all instances of a letter landed when they were required to, they lose all points they gained in that hand.

### **III. WINNING**

At the end of each hand, check the scores. If any player has 100 points or more, then the player with the most points wins the game. In case of a tie, the player tied for high score who scored the most points on the last hand wins.

### **IV. VARIATIONS**

The following rules variations may be added if all players agree:

*Shorter/Longer Cambridge:* Play to 50 or 150 points. All rules remain the same.

*Fixed Hand Cambridge:* Play to an agreed number of hands. High score at the end of the last hand is the winner. All rules remain the same. Ties go to the player who scored the most points in the last hand.

*Blind Cambridge:* Players may agree to choose their secret words before the board is dealt.



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