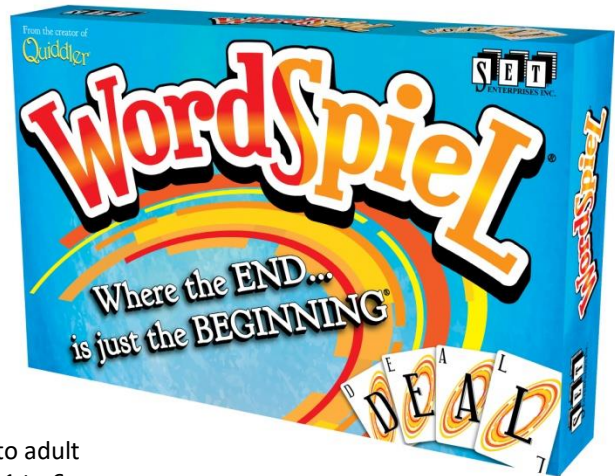


WordSpiel Skill Connections for Teachers

WordSpiel is a game primarily played for fun and entertainment. The fact that it teaches, strengthens, and exercises an abundance of skills makes it one of the best possible tools for your classroom. Because it is fundamentally a game people enjoy, WordSpiel inspires an intrinsic motivation and desire to “play.” The repetition of playing again and again reinforces the skills that lead to success.



WordSpiel Strengthens

- **Cognitive Skills**
- **Interpersonal Skills**
- **Intrapersonal Skills**
- **Academic Connections**

Ages: 8 to adult
Players: 1 to 6

About WordSpiel

WordSpiel is a simple yet dynamic card game that everyone enjoys! The goal is to get rid of all ten of your cards by making words. In each turn, simply start your word with the last card(s) played. Just like the name, *WordSpiel*, *Spiel* uses the **S** from *Words*. Use the timer or take your time; just be sure to put your best word forward. Word size doesn't matter, but ending with a tricky letter can really challenge your opponents. Each word spins off of the last, so the game will never be the same twice. The first player to use all of his or her cards ends the round. All other players count their remaining cards. Each card counts as one point. At the end of five rounds, the person with the lowest score wins!

How WordSpiel Develops Skills

Cognitive Development:

- **Analytical Skills:** During WordSpiel, players continually analyze and evaluate their cards to find the best possible word combinations because the first person to get rid of all their cards wins that round. Players must also analyze the advantages and disadvantages of exchanging cards from their hand, but they must be careful as each player can only exchange a total of three in the whole round.
- **Attention:** When playing WordSpiel, players must divide their attention between evaluating word options in their hand and watching what is being played before them. Each player must play off of whatever the last letter/letters were that were played by the person to their right. Being focused and aware of your options to play fast during your turn is critical and great for attention development.
- **Cognitive Flexibility or Flexible Thinking:** Because players don't know what letters their opponent to their right will leave them with, they need to be prepared to adjust their strategy at the last moment. A turn only lasts sixty seconds. Each turn brings an opportunity to rearrange letters, change strategy, and come up with more word choices. Cognitive flexibility and creative thinking are continually reinforced throughout WordSpiel because players must rearrange and reevaluate word choices in response to the new options they are left with.
- **Cognitive Processing Speed:** WordSpiel is fun and educational! Players exercise many cognitive skills at a fast pace. Each turn only lasts sixty seconds and during this repetitive process, players are exposed to new situations and must use a variety of cognitive skills over and over. The repetition strengthens these skills and increases processing speeds.
- **Creative Thinking:** The goal of WordSpiel is to get rid of all ten of your cards in each round. However, each turn starts with an unknown word that requires players to think in new ways as they determine if they can use the whole word, only a few of the last letters, or just the last letter itself. Players must look at problems or situations from a different perspective and be able to see non-obvious patterns or answers.

- **Critical Thinking:** In WordSpiel, play begins with the player to the dealer's left creating a word that begins with the letter on the card the dealer flips over. Players will then continue in a clockwise motion where they will have sixty seconds to sort through their hand, relate it to the letters played before them, conclude what is their best option, and create that word before the timer runs out. The goal of each round is to be the first to get rid of your ten cards. Any cards left in your hand count as one point each and the player with the lowest points at the end of five rounds wins.
- **Higher Order Thinking Skills:** WordSpiel requires players to use their higher order thinking skills. Players must analyze the cards played before them. They must then evaluate their hand against these cards and then create the word that uses the most cards. Additionally, players must analyze and evaluate if exchanging cards would be of benefit to their play. They can only do this when it isn't their turn and they can only exchange up to three cards for the whole round.
- **Left Brain – Right Brain Connectivity:** With the unknown variable of what word will be played before your turn, the left brain sequences the letters in your hand, looking at what word endings you could make while the right brain tries to predict what possible letters could be before you. Additionally, right-handed or left-handed, opposite sides of the brain control opposite sides of the body. So, a player may hold the cards in one hand and draw or lay down cards with the other hand. These processes allow the brain to exercise its cross-connectivity.
- **Logic & Reasoning:** In WordSpiel, a great strategy is to use your logic and reasoning skills to evaluate your cards and deduce what word endings you could create. Then you are more readily prepared for whatever word your opponent lays down before your turn.
- **Memory:** WordSpiel requires you to analyze the letters on different cards to create usable words for different situations. This requires your working memory to process the cards you are looking at and bring forth vocabulary knowledge from your long-term memory to make those words. Strong memory skills allow kids to successfully follow multi-step directions, process and retain information easier, and to recall that information effortlessly when necessary.
- **Metacognition:** A wonderful activity to do with players after playing WordSpiel is to ask them to write out their thinking process that they used during the game step-by-step. Metacognition allows learners to monitor and regulate their learning and, as a result, assume greater responsibility for their learning progress. Retracing the steps of thought, strategy, and how the player adjusted and handled unknown variables develop strong cognitive skills and the ability to regulate emotions.
- **Multiple Intelligences:** WordSpiel is a great activity for multiple learning styles. This hands-on game allows bodily-kinesthetic learners to be active during play. WordSpiel is a wonderfully social game, which the interpersonal learner finds invigorating. Each player oversees their own hand and their own success, which makes your intrapersonal learner feel comfortable. Verbal-linguistic learners enjoy the word play as well as the challenge of finding words in such a short time frame. The logical-mathematical learner will enjoy the strategy of game play as well as determining how to win with the fewest points possible. WordSpiel is a must for any classroom!
- **Non-Routine Problem Solving:** Potential words in your hand aren't always obvious. Before the game starts, players decide if they will use a dictionary and which dictionary that will be—we suggest [The Quiddler SHORT Word Dictionary](#) to help you find the right words. All words and common abbreviations such as ave (for avenue) and apt (for apartment) are allowed. But be aware, players cannot use contractions, acronyms, hyphenated words, proper nouns, and common abbreviations that stand for proper nouns. The dictionary can be used at any time during play. This creates a complex problem that will require some degree of creativity to solve, especially when your turn comes around and you only have sixty seconds to solve it.
- **Pattern Recognition:** WordSpiel requires players to arrange all the cards in their hand into potential allowable words. To do this, cognitive processes must take place that allow the player to match letters into known word patterns that they recall from their long-term memory. This process during the game is repeated over and over, strengthening this skill.
- **Problem Solving:** WordSpiel requires players to evaluate their hand and put it in a useful order; however, when a player's turn comes around, they may have to use some creativity to come up with a word once they see the letters they must play on.

- **Reading Process:** During the reading process, the mind must retrieve and comprehend stored information or ideas to process what is being read. It has long been a proven best practice that increasing a person's vocabulary is one component of improving the reading process in learners. WordSpiel is an award-winning game that offers a unique way to use a player's existing vocabulary, as well as, give them an opportunity to learn new vocabulary during game play.
- **Reflection:** During WordSpiel, players are always reflecting on their own choices and other players as they watch cards spiral around the deck. Pay close attention! If you feel a word being played isn't real, you can challenge that player. If you are right, they must pick up the word as well as a penalty card from the top of the deck. Reflection is a key skill in developing critical thinking skills.
- **Visual Processing:**
 - **Visual Perception:** Players build their abilities to see, interpret, and analyze the jumble of letters they are dealt. Continually developing the visual information into words strengthens players' visual perception.
 - **Visual Memory:** Looking up words that use specific letters they have in their hands or remembering previously used words improves players' visual memory.
 - **Visual Sequential Memory:** Players practice their visual sequential memory each time they remember the sequence of letters to spell a word.

Interpersonal Development (Social Skills)

- **Collaborative Learning:** If you need to further level the playing field for players of different skill levels, pair players of different skill levels or ages and have them play as a team. This teaches older players to become more of the teacher and gives younger players more confidence. All the while, everyone is having fun, and everyone is learning while playing WordSpiel.
- **Peer Assessment:** If any player does not believe that a word played is a bonafide word, then they may challenge the word after it is laid down. If the word is not in the dictionary or is not an allowable word, then the player must pick up the word and take a penalty card from the top of the deck. This gives players an opportunity to review each other's work and maybe learn a new word in the process.
- **Social learning:** WordSpiel is a fun and interactive game which gives extroverted and introverted players a chance to be social in a structured situation. During the game, players will learn social behavior by observing other player's behavior, attitudes and outcomes of those behaviors. These behaviors are modeled repeatedly during play which requires players attention, retention, reproduction and motivation, all part of Social Learning Theory.
- **Social Skills:** WordSpiel is so much fun, players won't even realize the social skills they are using to interact with each other, both verbally and non-verbally, through gestures, body language and personal appearance. Players learn to listen to others, follow the rules, ignore distractions, take turns, stay calm during play, get along with others, and be responsible for their behavior.
- **Teamwork:** WordSpiel is for ages 8 to adult. Players can create a new word or just simply add an ending to the previously played word. Even though it is an easy game to learn, sometimes when younger players are learning it is helpful to play as teams until players can play on their own. This manner of introduction gives young players confidence in the rules of play so that they can play successfully by themselves in the future.

Intrapersonal Development (Personal and Emotional Growth)

- **Adaptability:** During WordSpiel, players are faced with many unknown variables, from the cards they are dealt to the words they will have to play off on their turn. Throughout all of this, players are trying to determine the correct strategy to win. This important construct requires adaptability, particularly for adolescents who frequently face changeable experiences. Learning how to cope with changes and emotionally regulate during them is a key skill to future success.

- **Emotional Skills:** Each time a player finds a word, his or her **confidence** grows. As players repeatedly play WordSpiel their cognitive, physical, social and emotional skills continually develop increasing their overall self-confidence. Over time each player's ability to compose words each round increases dramatically. Excelling at something that was once difficult reinforces a **growth mindset**. Playing WordSpiel is fun, so players are **intrinsically motivated** to play again and again; this repetition is key to developing skills. Each time a player "goes out" first, he or she feels a sense of accomplishment, which creates an urge to win more rounds and ultimately the game. The enjoyment of playing and the feeling of success every time a hand is played successfully, or a round is won is found to naturally **enhance moods**. It is purposeful play that impacts each player's environment and **mindset** in a very positive way. Playing WordSpiel increases a player's skills and abilities, which builds their confidence and improves their overall **self-esteem** and **self-efficacy**.
- **Executive Functioning:** WordSpiel is a great way for players to hone their executive functioning skills. Players must remain **flexible** in their choices. They need to watch opponents and use what **insight** they have of them to determine their strategy. They need to use **sequencing** to break down game play as well as create words. They must try to **anticipate** the cards that may be played or drawn. Players must use their **problem-solving skills** to **make the best decisions** possible.
- **Inhibitory Control (including self-control):** WordSpiel is exciting and can get competitive. The sixty second timer adds a sense of urgency to each player's turn. Players will have to stay focused and ignore distractions. Practicing this skill helps kids regulate their emotions and keep them from acting impulsively.
- **Self-Assessment:** WordSpiel is great for self-assessment. Before a player plays their cards, they must reflect on their strategy. The goal is to be the first to get rid of all of your cards. But using common ending letters like -s, -ed, or even an -ly early in the game may not be the best strategy. Sometimes holding on to those until your last move is the best way to go. Assessing your cards and strategy is key to success in the game and a good skill for learners to practice.
- **Time Management:** Players must prepare for their turn as best they can because in WordSpiel players only have sixty seconds to complete their turn. Therefore, players need to stay focused, organized and be ready to adjust their strategy if necessary. If they can't play during their turn or run out of time, they must draw a card from the deck, but before they look at it they must decide if they will add it to their hand or place it at the end of the spiral.

Academic Connections:

- **Collaborative Learning:** If you need to further level the playing field for players of different skill levels, pair players of different skill levels or ages and have them play as a team. This teaches older players to become more of the teacher and gives younger players more confidence. All the while, everyone is having fun, and everyone is learning while playing WordSpiel.
- **Creative Writing:** WordSpiel, Where the End...is just the Beginning®. WordSpiel is a great brain booster as well as warm-up for any literary activity. Before playing, give players a theme to the game based on a current lesson. If they play a word that relates to that theme, you can offer bonus points. After playing, students can continue as part of their warm-up or a stand-alone activity. They can take the tagline as their topic, Where the End...is just the Beginning® and write a creative story with their own cast of characters.
- **Cross-Curricular Approach:** WordSpiel is excellent for vocabulary building as well as language acquisition. Use WordSpiel to support language in all English classrooms, English Language Acquisition classrooms, and Foreign Language classrooms. While playing WordSpiel, cards are placed in a spiral around the deck that begins to form a nautilus. In math classes, this is a great way to tie in lessons about the Golden Spiral or a Fibonacci spiral.
- **Decoding Skills:** WordSpiel requires players to use their knowledge of letter patterns to correctly create words and to say them. An additional rule you can require your players -if age or level appropriate-is when they lay down their cards they must say each word or use it correctly in a sentence, or have them do both.

- **Differentiated Instruction:** WordSpiel is a great way to personalize learning based on the individual needs of each player. To supplement lessons on reading, writing, vocabulary building, or any of the other skills mentioned above, allow learners to have WordSpiel as a choice to reinforce that skill.
- **Hidden Curriculum:** While players are having fun playing WordSpiel, they won't even realize the social, behavioral, and cultural lessons they are learning by group play.
- **Informational Text:** Use our WordSpiel instructions to fulfill the Informational Text Common Core requirement with lower age groups. Students can read, annotate, jigsaw, comprehend, discuss, and teach each other how to play WordSpiel. The assessment is built in when you see which players understand the rules and can successfully play WordSpiel.
- **Kinesthetic Learning:** WordSpiel is a fun, entertaining, hands-on game that allows teachers and students to take a break from direct instruction and supplement a current English, ELA or Foreign Language lesson in an educational way.
- **Math Skills:** To win, players must use all their cards first during each round. Every card you are left with is one point after someone goes out. The player with the least points at the end of five-rounds is the winner. Additionally, WordSpiel has players spiral the cards in the shape of a nautilus around the deck in the center of the table. This is a great way to introduce the Golden Spiral or Fibonacci Spiral.
- **Reading Literacy:** While playing WordSpiel, players improve their reading literacy by building vocabulary in a fun and entertaining way.
- **Remedial Activities:** WordSpiel allows players to play any allowable word. This makes the game attractive to all learning levels. WordSpiel is an excellent way to allow players with learning difficulties to practice and expand their vocabulary.

Sharing is Caring:

Check out the Teachers' Corner at setgame.com for more ideas of how to use our games in your classroom. Have an idea you would like to share? Please email us your ideas, worksheets, and ways to play and we will add them to the Teachers' Corner.