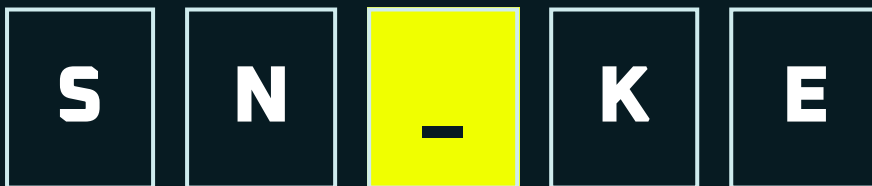


STUDY GUIDE

READ. ROUTE. RECOVER.

A player's guide to the spelling snake game: how a round works, how scoring and lives work, and every word you might meet at every length from 3 to 13 letters, with strategies, questions and space for your notes.



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1 WHAT THE GAME IS AND YOUR ROLE

Spellaconda is a spelling game played with a snake. On the right of the screen you see a definition and a word with one letter missing. In the arena on the left, twelve letter tiles are scattered across a 20 by 20 grid. Only one of them is the letter that fills the gap. Your job is to work out which letter it is, plan a safe route, and steer the snake into that tile.

You are both the speller and the pilot. The speller reads the clue, hears the word in their head and decides which letter is missing. The pilot looks at the grid, finds the right tile, and chooses a path that avoids the eleven wrong letters, the edges of the arena and the snake's own body. The best players do the spelling first and the steering second, because a snake that sets off before it knows where it is going usually ends up somewhere it did not want to be.

What a run looks like

A run is called a circuit. It has 44 words. The first four words have three letters, the next four have four letters, and so on up to four words of thirteen letters. The game picks the four words at each length at random from a bank of ten, so two runs are never quite the same, and this guide lists all ten at every length so that you can practise them all.

44 WORDS IN A RUN	3 to 13 LETTERS PER WORD	110 WORDS IN THE BANK	5 LIVES
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You start with five lives. Collecting a wrong letter or crashing costs one life. If you lose all five, the run ends and you can start again. Your score builds up word by word; a clean run with perfect routes is worth a great deal, and every clean word is worth celebrating on its own.

The screen

- **The arena** on the left: a slate grid, the metallic snake, and twelve ice-blue letter tiles.
- **The clue panel** on the right: the word length as a big number, the definition, the word with its gap shown in yellow, the Hear clue and Hint buttons, and the Start or Pause button.
- **The status strip** under the arena: what the game is doing [awaiting input, circuit active, paused and so on] and your lives shown as dots.
- **The footer** of the clue panel: your score in points, four progress marks for the current level, the pace button [Calm pace or Step mode] and How to play.
- **Restart level** at the bottom of the page starts a brand new run with a fresh draw of words.

KEEP IN MIND

The missing letter is always inside the word. It is never the first letter and never the last one, so you always have a letter on each side of the gap to help you.

2 HOW A WORD ROUND WORKS

Every one of the 44 words follows the same six steps. Once the rhythm is familiar, you can spend your attention on the spelling and the route rather than on the controls.

1. Read the clue

Read the definition on the right. Then look at the word with its gap. Say the whole word in your head, or quietly out loud, and listen for the sound that belongs in the gap. If you want the definition read to you, press **Hear clue**; the game pauses while it speaks.

2. Work out the letter

Decide which letter fills the gap. Use the letters on either side of the gap, the sound of the word, and any spelling pattern you know (a doubled letter, a silent letter, a common ending). If you are really stuck, press **Hint**. The first hint tells you whether the letter is a vowel or a consonant and gives you a tip; a second hint tells you the letter itself. Hints cost you points, so try to work it out yourself first.

3. Plan the route

Find the tile with your letter in the arena. Now look at what is between the snake's head and that tile: wrong letters, the edges and the snake's own body. Count the squares. The shortest safe route earns a 500-point bonus, so it is worth taking a moment to see whether a straight run and one turn will do it, or whether you need to go around something.

4. Steer

Press a direction to begin. In Calm pace the snake moves by itself, one square every 0.42 seconds, and you only press when you want to turn. In Step mode the snake moves one square each time you press, so you can take as long as you like between moves. The snake cannot turn straight back on itself, so think one square ahead.

5. Collect the letter

When the snake's head enters the correct tile, the word is complete: you earn points, the word is shown filled in, and the game moves straight on. If you hit a wrong letter instead, you lose a life, that tile disappears, and the game pauses so you can think again. If you hit the edge or your own body, you lose a life and the snake is placed safely back in the centre with a fresh set of tiles.

6. Countdown and next clue

After a correct word, the snake returns to its six-segment starting shape in the centre, the next clue appears at once, and a countdown runs: 3, 2, 1, GO. Use those three seconds to say the new word to yourself and find its tile: players who do lose fewer lives and earn more route bonuses. In Calm pace the snake sets off at GO; in Step mode it waits for your first press.

3 THE SKILLS THE GAME BUILDS

Spellaconda is a game about spelling, but it rewards a cluster of habits that help with reading and writing generally. Here is what you are practising every time you play.

Reading a definition and finding the word

Each clue is a short definition, the kind you would find in a dictionary. Turning “A small animal that purrs” into CAT, or “The protection of wildlife, natural resources, and habitats” into CONSERVATION, is vocabulary work. You are matching meaning to a word, with the letters you can see as a check.

Sounding out and chunking

Short words can be sounded out letter by letter. Longer words need to be broken into chunks: syllables [GAR-DEN], smaller words inside the word [RAIN-BOW, UNDER-STAND] or a base word plus an ending [CONFIDENT, CONFIDENCE]. The game’s own first hint changes at six letters from “say the sounds slowly” to “break the word into smaller parts”, and that is exactly the shift in strategy you should make too.

Spotting vowel and consonant patterns

The first hint always tells you whether the missing letter is a vowel or a consonant. Knowing which family a sound belongs to, and knowing patterns such as a doubled consonant after a short vowel [RABBIT], a silent E making a vowel long [KITE], or two vowels working together [TRAIN], narrows the choice before you look at a single tile.

Planning before moving

The arena rewards patience. Twelve tiles are spread out so that the right one always has a clear route, but the wrong ones are often close to it. Counting squares, choosing a turn early and avoiding your own tail are planning skills, and the 500-point route bonus is the game’s way of telling you that your plan was the best one possible.

Recovering from mistakes

Everyone collects a wrong letter sometimes. The game pauses, keeps your spelling progress, and lets you try again with the wrong tile removed. A crash puts the snake back in the centre. Five lives is enough to make it through a run with a few mistakes, as long as you learn from each one rather than rushing the next word.

4 SCORING, LIVES, HINTS AND THE ROUTE BONUS

These are the exact numbers the game uses. Knowing them helps you decide when a hint is worth it and how much a perfect route adds.

Points

WHAT YOU DID	POINTS	NOTES
Collected the correct letter	40	Awarded every time you fill the gap.
Completed the word independently	100	No wrong letters and no hints on that word.
Completed the word with help	30	Instead of 100, if you used a hint or collected a wrong letter.
Shortest safe route	500	Your route to the letter took exactly the fewest possible squares.

So a word solved cleanly by the shortest route is worth 640 points. A clean word by a longer route is worth 140. A word where you needed a hint is worth 70, plus the 500 route bonus if you still took the shortest path, because hints do not spoil the route bonus. Your score is shown as points in the clue panel and carries on from word to word through the whole run.

Lives

You begin with five lives, shown as five dots under the arena. You lose one life when:

- the snake collects a **wrong letter**: the game pauses, the wrong tile is removed and you resume where you are;
- the snake hits the **edge of the arena** or its **own body**: a Life lost dialog appears, and Reposition snake puts you back in the centre with a new set of tiles.

Lives are not refilled between words. When the last life goes, the run ends and the Run ended dialog offers Try again, which starts a fresh run with new words.

Hints

1. **First hint**: tells you whether the missing letter is a vowel or a consonant, plus a tip. For words under six letters the tip is "Say the sounds slowly, then check each letter." For longer words it is "Break the word into smaller parts and check each letter."
2. **Second hint**: tells you the letter itself: "Look for the letter E."

Pressing Hint pauses the game. Any hint on a word means that word scores 30 instead of 100, so a single hint costs you 70 points. It never costs a life, and it does not affect the route bonus.

The route bonus

Before each word the game works out the fewest squares the snake could possibly take to reach the correct letter, allowing for the fact that the snake cannot reverse, that its body moves as it goes, and that wrong-letter tiles must be avoided. If your snake reaches the letter in exactly that many squares, you earn 500 points and the message OPTIMAL PATH! appears. Collecting a wrong letter or crashing on the way disqualifies the bonus for that word. Pausing does not.

WORTH KNOWING

The game counts squares, not time. A slow, careful route in Step mode earns the same bonus as a fast one in Calm pace, as long as it is the shortest.

5 CONTROLS AND PACE MODES

Steering

INPUT	WHAT IT DOES
    or W A S 	Turn the snake up, down, left or right. In Step mode each press also moves one square.
Swipe on the arena	Turn in the direction of the swipe (touch screens).
On-screen arrow buttons	The same as the keys, for tablets and for anyone who prefers to tap.
Space or the pause button	Pause and resume. The countdown pauses too.
Any key	Starts the first word of a run and resumes after a wrong letter.

The snake cannot turn straight back on itself: if it is heading right, pressing left does nothing. Only one turn is taken per square, so press once and wait for the snake to move before pressing again.

Calm pace and Step mode

When the game opens it asks you to choose a play style. You can change your mind at any time with the pace button in the clue panel.

- **Calm pace:** the snake moves by itself every 0.42 seconds. You press only to turn. This is the standard way to play.
- **Step mode:** the snake moves one square each time you press a direction. Nothing moves while you think. This is ideal when you are learning the game, when the words are long, or when you want to concentrate on the spelling.

Other buttons

- **Hear clue:** reads the definition aloud using your browser's voice. The game pauses while it speaks.
- **Hint:** see the previous section.
- **Sound:** mutes or unmutes the short beeps for correct and wrong letters.
- **How to play:** shows a short reminder of the rules.
- **Restart level:** abandons the current run and starts a new one with a new draw of words. Your score goes back to zero.

If you switch to another tab or window, the game pauses automatically, so you never lose a life because you looked away.

6 THREE-LETTER WORDS

Short, everyday nouns: animals, objects you use at home and things you see outside. Nine of the ten follow the consonant, vowel, consonant pattern, and one [KEY] uses the letters EY to spell a long “ee” sound.

Example of how a word at this length appears. The missing letter is always inside the word, never first or last, and its position changes from run to run.



Spelling strategies for this level

- At three letters the gap is always the middle letter, and in these words that is the vowel. Before you move, say the word slowly and listen for the vowel sound in the middle.
- Try each vowel in the gap in your head: c-a-t, c-e-t, c-i-t. Only one makes a real word that matches the definition.
- The game's first hint at this length always says the missing letter is a vowel. Use that only if you are stuck; a clean word without a hint scores 100 instead of 30.
- The tiles are spread around the arena, so planning matters even for a short word. Spot the letter you need, then count the squares before you steer.

Practice list: all ten words at this length

Any four of these can appear in a run. Read each definition, cover the word and try to spell it before you play.

#	WORD	DEFINITION SHOWN IN THE GAME
1	CAT	A small animal that purrs.
2	DOG	An animal that barks.
3	SUN	The star that gives Earth light and warmth.
4	HAT	Something you wear on your head.
5	BAT	A flying mammal that often comes out at night.
6	CUP	A small container used for drinking.
7	PIG	A farm animal with a flat snout and a curly tail.
8	BED	A piece of furniture you sleep on.
9	BUS	A large road vehicle that carries many passengers.
10	KEY	A small shaped piece of metal used to open a lock.

Before you play

1. Write the five vowels. Which one do you hear in the middle of “sun”?
2. Read the definition “Something you wear on your head” and say the word before you look at the letters.
3. How many squares is the snake from the right-hand edge when it starts? Why does that matter?

After you play

1. Which middle vowel did you find hardest to hear? Write the word and underline it.
2. Did you take the shortest route on any word? What did you do differently that time?
3. Did you use a hint? Could you have worked out the letter from the definition alone?

My notes for 3-letter words

7 FOUR-LETTER WORDS

Familiar nouns from nature and the home. Several start with a consonant blend or digraph [SHIP, FROG, TREE, STAR, FISH] and several spell a long vowel with two letters [TREE, MOON, BOOK, RAIN] or with a split digraph [KITE]. LION has two syllables.

Example of how a word at this length appears. The missing letter is always inside the word, never first or last, and its position changes from run to run.

S	H	_	P
---	---	---	---

Spelling strategies for this level

- Say the word and clap the sounds. SHIP has three sounds but four letters because SH is one sound spelt with two letters.
- Listen for long vowels: “ee” in TREE, “oo” in MOON and BOOK, “ai” in RAIN. Two letters often work together to make one sound.
- KITE has a silent E at the end that makes the I say its name. If the gap is in the middle, it is the I, not the E.
- The gap can now be the second or the third letter. Read the letters on either side of the gap before you choose.

Practice list: all ten words at this length

Any four of these can appear in a run. Read each definition, cover the word and try to spell it before you play.

#	WORD	DEFINITION SHOWN IN THE GAME
1	SHIP	A large boat that travels across the sea.
2	FROG	An animal with smooth skin and long back legs for jumping.
3	TREE	A tall plant with a wooden trunk and branches.
4	STAR	A huge ball of hot gas that shines in space.
5	FISH	An animal that lives in water and breathes through gills.
6	MOON	The natural object that travels around Earth.
7	BOOK	Pages bound together for reading.
8	KITE	A light frame covered in paper or cloth that flies on a string.
9	LION	A large wild cat; the adult male usually has a mane.
10	RAIN	Drops of water that fall from clouds.

Before you play

1. Which of these words has a vowel sound spelt with two letters: SHIP, MOON, FROG?
2. Say “lion” slowly. How many beats does it have? Which letter starts the second beat?
3. Look at the arena layout before you press a key. Where is the nearest wrong letter to the one you want?

After you play

1. Write any word you got wrong and mark the letter you confused. What sound were you listening for?
2. Which word had the longest route to the correct letter? Did you have to go round other tiles?
3. What is your score so far? How many points came from route bonuses?

My notes for 4-letter words

8 FIVE-LETTER WORDS

Concrete nouns: vehicles, animals, food and furniture. Many open with a consonant blend [TRAIN, CHAIR, CLOUD, SNAKE, BREAD, BRUSH, CLOCK] and the vowel sound is usually spelt with a digraph [AI, OU, EA] or a split digraph [SNAKE, HORSE]. APPLE has a doubled consonant and OCEAN has a soft C.

Example of how a word at this length appears. The missing letter is always inside the word, never first or last, and its position changes from run to run.

T	R	_	I	N
---	---	---	---	---

Spelling strategies for this level

- Chunk the word: beginning blend, vowel sound, ending. TR + AI + N. Find which chunk the gap sits in.
- BREAD looks like it should say “breed” but says “bred”. The EA is still the standard spelling. Trust the spelling you have seen in books.
- APPLE has two Ps. If the gap is right after the first P, the answer is another P.
- OCEAN: the “sh” sound is spelt with CE. Do not look for an S or an H tile.
- CLOCK ends in CK. The K comes after a short vowel and a C.

Practice list: all ten words at this length

Any four of these can appear in a run. Read each definition, cover the word and try to spell it before you play.

#	WORD	DEFINITION SHOWN IN THE GAME
1	TRAIN	A vehicle that runs on railway tracks.
2	CHAIR	A seat with a back, usually for one person.
3	CLOUD	A mass of tiny water drops in the sky.
4	SNAKE	A long reptile with no legs.
5	APPLE	A round fruit with a core and red, green, or yellow skin.
6	BREAD	A food made from dough that is usually baked in a loaf.
7	BRUSH	A tool with bristles used for cleaning or painting.
8	HORSE	A large animal with hooves that people can ride.
9	OCEAN	A huge area of salt water covering part of Earth.
10	CLOCK	An instrument with a face or display that tells the time.

Before you play

1. Which five-letter words here have a silent E at the end? What does it do to the vowel before it?
2. Say “cloud” and “clock”. Which has the longer vowel sound? How is each one spelt?
3. Pick one word and write it with every letter in a different box, like the slots in the game.

After you play

1. Which word had a letter that surprised you? Write the word and circle it.
2. Did a wrong tile sit on your shortest route? How did you go around it?
3. How many lives do you have left after this level? What cost you a life, a letter or a crash?

My notes for 5-letter words

9 SIX-LETTER WORDS

Two-syllable nouns about places and objects: BRIDGE, PLANET, GARDEN, ROCKET, BOTTLE, FOREST, RABBIT, PENCIL, ISLAND, WINTER. Doubled consonants (BOTTLE, RABBIT), a silent S (ISLAND), a soft C (PENCIL) and the DGE ending (BRIDGE) appear here. From this length the game's first hint changes to "Break the word into smaller parts and check each letter."

Example of how a word at this length appears. The missing letter is always inside the word, never first or last, and its position changes from run to run.

B	R	I	—	G	E
---	---	---	---	---	---

Spelling strategies for this level

- Split the word into two beats: GAR-DEN, ROCK-ET, WIN-TER. Say each beat and spell it separately.
- Doubled letters sit in the middle of the two beats: RAB-BIT, BOT-TLE. If the gap is just before or after a B or T, think double.
- ISLAND has a silent S. Say "is-land" in your head to remember it.
- Endings matter: PLANET and ROCKET end in ET; GARDEN ends in EN; PENCIL ends in IL. Learn the ending as a chunk.
- BRIDGE: the D comes before the GE. Remember that DGE spells the "j" sound after a short vowel.

Practice list: all ten words at this length

Any four of these can appear in a run. Read each definition, cover the word and try to spell it before you play.

#	WORD	DEFINITION SHOWN IN THE GAME
1	BRIDGE	A structure built over a river or road to cross it.
2	PLANET	A large, round object that travels around a star.
3	GARDEN	An area where flowers or vegetables are grown.
4	ROCKET	A vehicle driven by a powerful jet of hot gas.
5	BOTTLE	A container with a narrow neck used to hold liquids.
6	FOREST	A large area of land covered with trees.
7	RABBIT	A small furry animal with long ears and strong back legs.
8	PENCIL	A writing tool with a graphite core inside a wooden case.
9	ISLAND	An area of land surrounded by water.
10	WINTER	The coldest season of the year.

Before you play

1. Split FOREST and WINTER into two beats. Write each beat with a gap between them.
2. Which words here have a doubled letter? Say each one and listen: can you hear the double?
3. What does the first hint say at this length? Why might “break the word into smaller parts” help?

After you play

1. Write the two-beat split of any word you got wrong. Which beat had the mistake?
2. Did the snake get in its own way on a longer route? Try a wider turn next time.
3. Are you starting to plan your route during the 3, 2, 1 countdown?

My notes for 6-letter words

10 SEVEN-LETTER WORDS

Two- and three-syllable words, with a compound (RAINBOW), a PH spelling (DOLPHIN), unusual consonant clusters (SCIENCE, KITCHEN), a Y acting as a vowel (BICYCLE) and words whose spoken form hides a letter (LIBRARY, JOURNEY, FEATHER, TEACHER, VOLCANO).

Example of how a word at this length appears. The missing letter is always inside the word, never first or last, and its position changes from run to run.

R	A	I	—	B	O	W
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Spelling strategies for this level

- Look for words inside words: RAIN + BOW. Spell each part on its own.
- LIBRARY has two Rs. Say “li-bra-ry” in three beats to hear both.
- DOLPHIN spells the “f” sound with PH. If you need an F sound, look for a P or an H tile, not an F.
- SCIENCE starts with SC even though you only hear an S. The middle is IE, as in “sci-ence”.
- BICYCLE has a Y in the middle doing the job of a vowel, and a soft C saying “s”.
- KITCHEN: the “ch” sound after a short vowel is spelt TCH.

Practice list: all ten words at this length

Any four of these can appear in a run. Read each definition, cover the word and try to spell it before you play.

#	WORD	DEFINITION SHOWN IN THE GAME
1	RAINBOW	An arc of colours seen when sunlight shines through rain.
2	LIBRARY	A place where you can borrow books.
3	JOURNEY	A trip from one place to another.
4	SCIENCE	The study of the natural world through evidence and experiments.
5	DOLPHIN	A sea mammal with a curved fin, known for its intelligence.
6	TEACHER	A person whose job is to help others learn.
7	VOLCANO	An opening in Earth where lava, ash, and gases can erupt.
8	BICYCLE	A two-wheeled vehicle powered by turning pedals.
9	FEATHER	One of the light structures that cover a bird.
10	KITCHEN	A room where food is prepared and cooked.

Before you play

1. Which of these words is made from two smaller words? Write both parts.
2. Say “library” slowly. How many Rs do you hear? How many are in the spelling?
3. Which word has PH making an “f” sound? Which one has TCH?

After you play

1. Which word did you have to split into three beats? Write the beats.
2. Did a hint tell you the missing letter was a consonant? Which consonant did you expect, and were you right?
3. How many words have you solved without a hint or a wrong letter so far? That number appears at the end of the run.

My notes for 7-letter words

11 EIGHT-LETTER WORDS

Three-syllable nouns and adjectives from science, travel and daily life: ELEPHANT, MOUNTAIN, COMPUTER, UMBRELLA, SANDWICH, TREASURE, CALENDAR, HOSPITAL, MAGNETIC, DISCOVER. Unstressed endings [-AIN, -AR, -AL, -ER, -URE] and double letters [UMBRELLA] are the main challenge.

Example of how a word at this length appears. The missing letter is always inside the word, never first or last, and its position changes from run to run.

E	L	E	P	_	A	N	T
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Spelling strategies for this level

- Say the word in beats and stress each one clearly: CAL-EN-DAR. The last beat is usually mumbled in speech, so spell it from memory, not from sound.
- MOUNTAIN ends in AIN, not IN. Think of “rain on the mountain”.
- CALENDAR ends in AR. HOSPITAL ends in AL. COMPUTER and DISCOVER end in ER. Learn which ending goes with which word.
- UMBRELLA has two Ls. SANDWICH has a D that people often skip when they speak.
- TREASURE: the middle sound is spelt with an S and the word ends in URE, like “measure”.

Practice list: all ten words at this length

Any four of these can appear in a run. Read each definition, cover the word and try to spell it before you play.

#	WORD	DEFINITION SHOWN IN THE GAME
1	ELEPHANT	A very large animal with a trunk and tusks.
2	MOUNTAIN	A very high area of land with steep sides.
3	COMPUTER	An electronic machine that processes information.
4	UMBRELLA	A folding cover held above your head to keep off rain.
5	SANDWICH	Food made by placing a filling between slices of bread.
6	TREASURE	A collection of valuable objects, such as gold and jewels.
7	CALENDAR	A chart showing the days, weeks, and months of a year.
8	HOSPITAL	A place where sick or injured people receive medical care.
9	MAGNETIC	Able to attract iron or be affected by a magnet.
10	DISCOVER	To find or learn something for the first time.

Before you play

1. Write the ending chunk of each word (the last two or three letters). Which endings sound the same but are spelt differently?
2. Say “sandwich” naturally, then slowly. Which letter appears when you slow down?
3. Which word has a doubled letter? Which has PH?

After you play

1. Did any wrong letter tile tempt you because it sounded right? Which word and which letter?
2. Which route did you plan during the countdown, and did you follow it?
3. How many lives did you lose in this level? Were they spelling mistakes or steering mistakes?

My notes for 8-letter words

12 NINE-LETTER WORDS

Three- and four-syllable words, including abstract nouns and adjectives: BEAUTIFUL, ADVENTURE, IMPORTANT, KNOWLEDGE, BUTTERFLY, CHOCOLATE, CROCODILE, CURIOSITY, TELESCOPE, DIFFICULT. Silent letters, swallowed vowels and suffixes all appear.

Example of how a word at this length appears. The missing letter is always inside the word, never first or last, and its position changes from run to run.

B	E	A	U	-	I	F	U	L
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Spelling strategies for this level

- BEAUTIFUL starts with the unusual chunk EAU. Learn it as a picture: B-EAU-TI-FUL. The ending FUL has one L.
- KNOWLEDGE begins with a silent K and ends in DGE. Think “KNOW + LEDGE”.
- CHOCOLATE has a middle O that is hardly spoken: CHOC-O-LATE. Say every beat when you spell it.
- DIFFICULT has two Fs and one L. IMPORTANT ends in ANT.
- CURIOSITY comes from “curious”, but the U before the S is dropped: CURI-OS-ITY.
- BUTTERFLY is BUTTER + FLY. TELESCOPE is TELE + SCOPE.

Practice list: all ten words at this length

Any four of these can appear in a run. Read each definition, cover the word and try to spell it before you play.

#	WORD	DEFINITION SHOWN IN THE GAME
1	BEAUTIFUL	Very pleasing to look at.
2	ADVENTURE	An exciting or unusual experience.
3	IMPORTANT	Having great value or significance.
4	KNOWLEDGE	Information and understanding gained through learning.
5	BUTTERFLY	An insect with broad, often colourful wings that develops from a caterpillar.
6	CHOCOLATE	A sweet food made from roasted cocoa beans.
7	CROCODILE	A large reptile with strong jaws that lives near rivers and lakes.
8	CURIOSITY	A strong desire to learn or find out about something.
9	TELESCOPE	An instrument that makes distant objects look closer.
10	DIFFICULT	Needing considerable effort or skill to do.

Before you play

1. Which words here are made of two smaller parts? Write the parts.
2. Which word has a silent letter at the start? Which has a vowel you hardly hear?
3. Write BEAUTIFUL with its four beats separated by dashes.

After you play

1. Which gap position was hardest, near the start, in the middle or near the end of the word?
2. Did you take a hint? If so, did the vowel or consonant clue narrow the choice enough?
3. Twelve tiles crowd the arena. How did you keep the snake clear of its own body on the turns?

My notes for 9-letter words

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins or other markings visible.

13 TEN-LETTER WORDS

Abstract nouns and verbs built from recognisable parts: EXPERIENCE, CONFIDENCE, DIFFERENCE, FRIENDSHIP, DICTIONARY, PLAYGROUND, UNDERSTAND, GENERATION, TECHNOLOGY, ATMOSPHERE. Three words end in -ENCE and two are compounds.

Example of how a word at this length appears. The missing letter is always inside the word, never first or last, and its position changes from run to run.

E	X	P	E	R	-	E	N	C	E
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Spelling strategies for this level

- Three of these words end in ENCE: EXPERIENCE, CONFIDENCE, DIFFERENCE. If the gap is in the last few letters of one of them, think E-N-C-E.
- PLAYGROUND and UNDERSTAND are two words joined together. Spell each half.
- FRIENDSHIP is FRIEND + SHIP. Remember the IE in FRIEND: “a friend to the end”.
- TECHNOLOGY spells the “k” sound with CH, and ATMOSPHERE spells the “f” sound with PH.
- GENERATION ends in ATION, a chunk you will see many more times in the longer levels.
- DICTIONARY ends in ARY. Say “dic-tion-ar-y” to hear all four beats.

Practice list: all ten words at this length

Any four of these can appear in a run. Read each definition, cover the word and try to spell it before you play.

#	WORD	DEFINITION SHOWN IN THE GAME
1	EXPERIENCE	Knowledge or skill gained by doing something.
2	CONFIDENCE	A feeling of trust in your own ability.
3	DIFFERENCE	A way in which two things are not the same.
4	FRIENDSHIP	A caring relationship between people who like and trust each other.
5	DICTIONARY	A reference book or resource that explains the meanings of words.
6	PLAYGROUND	An outdoor area with equipment for children to play on.
7	UNDERSTAND	To grasp the meaning of something.
8	GENERATION	People born and living at about the same time.
9	TECHNOLOGY	Tools and methods developed by applying scientific knowledge.
10	ATMOSPHERE	The layer of gases surrounding a planet.

Before you play

1. Write the three words that end in ENCE. What base words are they built from?
2. Which two words are compounds? Which two use CH or PH for a different sound?
3. What is the longest word you can spell confidently without looking? Test yourself on one from this list.

After you play

1. Which ending chunk did you use to work out a missing letter? Write the word and the chunk.
2. Did you lose a life to a near-miss letter, such as an A tile for an E? Which word?
3. What is your current score, and how many 500-point route bonuses have you earned?

My notes for 10-letter words

14 ELEVEN-LETTER WORDS

Four- and five-syllable words from science and personal qualities: TEMPERATURE, ENVIRONMENT, OPPORTUNITY, INTELLIGENT, IMAGINATION, CELEBRATION, EXPLANATION, INFORMATION, RESPONSIBLE, INDEPENDENT. Four of them end in -ATION.

Example of how a word at this length appears. The missing letter is always inside the word, never first or last, and its position changes from run to run.

T	E	M	P	E	-	A	T	U	R	E
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Spelling strategies for this level

- Four words end in ATION: IMAGINATION, CELEBRATION, EXPLANATION, INFORMATION. Learn the chunk once and reuse it.
- ENVIRONMENT has an N before the M that is easy to miss: EN-VI-RON-MENT. Say the “ron” beat clearly.
- TEMPERATURE: say TEM-PER-A-TURE. The A in the third beat is often skipped in speech.
- EXPLANATION comes from EXPLAIN, but the I is dropped: EX-PLAN-ATION.
- RESPONSIBLE ends in IBLE, not ABLE. INDEPENDENT and INTELLIGENT end in ENT.
- OPPORTUNITY has two Ps. INTELLIGENT has two Ls.

Practice list: all ten words at this length

Any four of these can appear in a run. Read each definition, cover the word and try to spell it before you play.

#	WORD	DEFINITION SHOWN IN THE GAME
1	TEMPERATURE	A measure of how hot or cold something is.
2	ENVIRONMENT	The surroundings in which a living thing exists.
3	OPPORTUNITY	A favourable chance to do something.
4	INTELLIGENT	Able to learn, understand, and solve problems well.
5	IMAGINATION	The ability to form ideas or pictures in your mind.
6	CELEBRATION	A special event or activity to mark something happy.
7	EXPLANATION	A statement that makes something clear or easier to understand.
8	INFORMATION	Facts or details about a subject.
9	RESPONSIBLE	Trusted to act sensibly and carry out a duty.
10	INDEPENDENT	Able to act or work without relying on others.

Before you play

1. List the four words ending in ATION. What base word is each one built from?
2. Say “environment” slowly. Which letter is hidden when people say it quickly?
3. Which words have doubled letters? Write them with the double underlined.

After you play

1. Did you spot a word where the spelling does not match the base word (EXPLAIN, EXPLANATION)?
2. Which gap did you solve by using a chunk you already knew?
3. How long did this level take you? Compare with the three-letter level.

My notes for 11-letter words

[illegible]

15 TWELVE-LETTER WORDS

Long abstract nouns and two compounds: ACCOMPLISHED, APPRECIATION, CONVERSATION, INDEPENDENCE, CONSERVATION, CONTRIBUTION, INTELLIGENCE, ORGANISATION, BIODIVERSITY, THUNDERSTORM. Double consonants after a prefix and the British -ISATION spelling appear.

Example of how a word at this length appears. The missing letter is always inside the word, never first or last, and its position changes from run to run.

A	C	C	O	M	P	-	I	S	H	E	D
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Spelling strategies for this level

- Many of these words begin with a prefix and a doubled letter: AC-COMPLISHED, AP-PRECIATION. The double comes right after the first vowel.
- CONVERSATION and CONSERVATION use the same letters in a different order. Read the definition carefully: talking or protecting?
- ORGANISATION is spelt with an S in the game, the British way.
- INDEPENDENCE and INTELLIGENCE end in ENCE. INTELLIGENCE has two Ls.
- BIODIVERSITY is BIO + DIVERSITY. THUNDERSTORM is THUNDER + STORM.
- CONTRIBUTION ends in UTION, not ATION. Listen for the “u” sound.

Practice list: all ten words at this length

Any four of these can appear in a run. Read each definition, cover the word and try to spell it before you play.

#	WORD	DEFINITION SHOWN IN THE GAME
1	ACCOMPLISHED	Highly skilled at doing something.
2	APPRECIATION	A feeling of gratitude or recognition of value.
3	CONVERSATION	A spoken exchange of ideas between people.
4	INDEPENDENCE	The freedom to act without being controlled by others.
5	CONSERVATION	The protection of wildlife, natural resources, and habitats.
6	CONTRIBUTION	Something given or done to help a shared effort.
7	INTELLIGENCE	The ability to learn, understand, and reason.
8	ORGANISATION	A group of people working together for a shared purpose.
9	BIODIVERSITY	The variety of living things in an area.
10	THUNDERSTORM	A storm with thunder and lightning.

Before you play

1. Which two words share exactly the same letters? What is the difference in meaning?
2. Write the two compound words with a line between their parts.
3. Which words have a doubled consonant near the start? Say each one and clap the beats.

After you play

1. Which of the two look-alike words came up in your run? Did the definition make the choice clear?
2. Did you take any hints at this level? Which tier, vowel/consonant or the actual letter?
3. How is your route planning holding up with twelve tiles in the arena?

My notes for 12-letter words

[illegible]

16 THIRTEEN-LETTER WORDS

The longest words in the game, from ACCOMMODATION to COLLABORATION. Six end in -ATION; several have two sets of doubled letters or unusual clusters.

Example of how a word at this length appears. The missing letter is always inside the word, never first or last, and its position changes from run to run.

A	C	C	O	M	M	-	D	A	T	I	O	N
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Spelling strategies for this level

- ACCOMMODATION has two Cs and two Ms. Think “two cots and two mattresses”.
- EXTRAORDINARY is EXTRA + ORDINARY: the A and O sit side by side. UNDERSTANDING is UNDER + STAND + ING.
- MISCELLANEOUS: MIS-CELL-AN-EOUS. The SC spells an “s” sound, there are two Ls and the ending is EOUS.
- Six words end in ATION. Count the beats before the chunk: COMMUNICATION has two Ms, COLLABORATION two Ls, and PRECIPITATION a soft C: PRE-CIP-I-TATION.

Practice list: all ten words at this length

Any four of these can appear in a run. Read each definition, cover the word and try to spell it before you play.

#	WORD	DEFINITION SHOWN IN THE GAME
1	ACCOMMODATION	A place to stay when travelling.
2	MISCELLANEOUS	Made up of various different kinds of things.
3	COMMUNICATION	The sharing of information, thoughts, or feelings.
4	DETERMINATION	A firm decision to keep trying until you reach your goal.
5	UNDERSTANDING	An ability to grasp what something means or how it works.
6	EXTRAORDINARY	Very unusual or far beyond what is ordinary.
7	CONCENTRATION	The act of focusing your attention closely on something.
8	PRECIPITATION	Water that falls from clouds as rain, snow, sleet, or hail.
9	INVESTIGATION	A careful search for facts to find out what happened.
10	COLLABORATION	Working together with others to create or achieve something.

Before you play

1. Write ACCOMMODATION and circle every doubled letter.
2. Which word is made from EXTRA and ORDINARY? Write it and underline where the two parts meet.
3. Pick the word you find hardest and split it into beats before you play.

After you play

1. Which thirteen-letter word did you solve cleanly? Write it from memory now.
2. Did you reach the end of the run? Look at the summary: how many of the 44 words were solved without hints or wrong letters?
3. If you play again, which level would you most like to improve, and how?

My notes for 13-letter words

17 PLAYING AGAIN: BEAT YOUR BEST

Because the words are drawn at random, every run is a new mix. The end-of-run summary shows your points and how many of the 44 words you solved without hints or wrong letters. Here are ways to make your next run better than your last.

Targets to set yourself

- **Cut the hints.** Count how many words needed a hint. Next run, aim for fewer. Before you press Hint, try saying the word slowly one more time and checking the letters either side of the gap.
- **Protect your lives.** If you finished with two lives, aim to finish with three. Decide before each run whether your lives usually go on wrong letters (a spelling target) or on crashes (a steering target).
- **Collect route bonuses.** Count your OPTIMAL PATH! messages. Short words are the easiest place to earn them, because you have more thinking time per letter. Then try to keep earning them as the words get longer.
- **Finish the circuit.** Reaching the thirteen-letter level with lives to spare is a real achievement. If you have not finished a run yet, switch to Step mode for the long words and give yourself time.

Practising away from the game

- Use the practice lists in this guide. Cover the word, read the definition, write the word, then check.
- Ask someone to read a definition aloud while you write the word with one letter missing, then fill the gap. That is exactly what the game asks of you.
- Keep a list of the words that caught you out. Most people find the same few patterns tricky (a doubled letter, a hidden vowel, an ending that sounds like another). Once you know yours, you can look out for them.

Run record

Fill this in after each run so you can see your progress.

DATE	POINTS	WORDS WITHOUT HINTS	LIVES LEFT	ROUTE BONUSES	LEVEL REACHED

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

18 GLOSSARY OF GAME TERMS

Arena

The 20 by 20 grid on the left of the screen where the snake and the letter tiles are.

Calm pace

The play style in which the snake moves by itself every 0.42 seconds and you press only to turn.

Circuit

A full run of 44 words, four at each length from 3 to 13 letters. The game calls it the First circuit.

Clue

The definition shown on the right, together with the word and its gap.

Consonant

Any letter that is not a vowel. The first hint tells you whether the missing letter is a vowel or a consonant.

Countdown

The 3, 2, 1, GO that runs after each correct word while the next clue is already on screen.

Definition

A short explanation of what the word means, like a dictionary entry.

Gap

The missing letter, shown as a yellow underscore in the word. It is always an interior letter.

Hear clue

A button that reads the definition aloud and pauses the game while it does so.

Hint

Help with the missing letter. The first hint gives vowel or consonant and a tip; the second gives the letter. Using a hint reduces the word's points from 100 to 30.

Independent word

A word completed with no hints and no wrong letters. It scores 100 points and counts in the end-of-run summary.

Level

Four words of the same length. The big number in the clue panel shows the length.

Life

One of five chances. A wrong letter or a crash costs one. Zero lives ends the run.

Optimal path

The shortest possible safe route from the snake's head to the correct letter. Taking it earns 500 points.

Pause

Stopping the snake and the countdown. Space, the pause button, Hint, Hear clue and switching tabs all pause the game.

Recover

After a crash, the snake is placed back in the centre and the tiles are dealt again.

Restart level

Starts a new run from the first word with a fresh set of words and a score of zero.

Route bonus

Another name for the 500 points earned by taking the optimal path.

Run

One attempt at the circuit, from the first three-letter word to the end or to zero lives.

Step mode

The play style in which the snake moves one square each time you press a direction.

Syllable

A beat of a word. GAR-DEN has two; IN-VES-TI-GA-TION has five. Breaking long words into syllables makes them easier to spell.

Tile

One of the twelve lettered squares in the arena. One carries the correct letter; eleven are wrong.

Vowel

A, E, I, O or U. The game also treats Y as a vowel-family letter when it chooses look-alike wrong tiles.