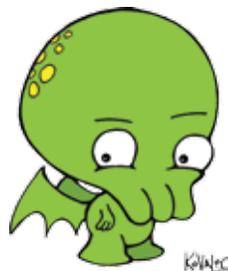


Unspeakable WORDS™

THE CALL OF CTHULHU WORD GAME
BY JAMES ERNEST AND MIKE SELINKER

DELUXE EDITION



Number of Players: 2 to 8

Ages: 10 to Adult

Approximate Playing Time: 30 minutes

You are an intrepid researcher, unearthing words man was not meant to spell. As you seek out these baleful words, the evil Hounds of Tindalos lurk in every corner. You have five totems to Cthulhu to protect you from lunacy, so hold on to them tightly. Find words as long as you dare, careful not to lose your tender grip on your sanity.

Object of the Game:

Be the first to reach at least 100 points worth of words without going insane.

Contents:

148 Letter Cards

a 20-Sided Die

40 Cthulhu Pawns (5 each of 8 colors)



A pencil and paper will also be needed to record words and keep score.

CTHULHU (n.)
Kthu'-hloo

The Great Old One who lies in sleep in the sunken city of R'l'yeh, waiting to arise and devour us all.

Setup:

Shuffle the letter cards. Deal **seven** cards to each player. The rest of the deck is placed face down at the center of the playing area as a draw pile. Give each player **five** Cthulhu pawns.

Each player rolls the die. The player with the highest roll goes first (re-rolling any ties), and play proceeds clockwise around the table. Place used cards into a discard pile face up next to the draw pile. If the draw pile is ever empty, shuffle the discard pile to form a new one.

Game Play:

Each player takes the following four steps on their turn, in order:

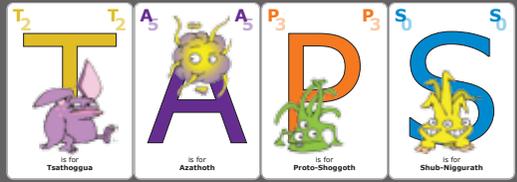
1. Form a word by displaying cards from their hand face up on the table (alternatively, a player may instead discard all of their cards without scoring, draw back to seven, and end their turn).
2. Score the word by adding the numbers on the cards. Each card's value is determined by the number of angles that the letter contains (so a "C" is worth 0 points, and an "A" is worth 5). Add the score to the player's current total and write down the word. **That word may not be used by any player again this game.**
3. Roll a **sanity check**. In a sanity check, the player must roll **equal to or higher than** the value of their word on the 20-sided die, or they will lose one Cthulhu pawn. A roll of 20 is always a success, no matter what the value of the word is. Regardless of the outcome of the sanity check, the player still scores for the word (unless it would bring them to 100 or more points - see **Winning the Game**). If a player loses their last Cthulhu pawn, they are out of the game.
4. Draw back up to seven cards. If the draw pile is empty, shuffle the discard pile to form a new one. Play continues to the left.

Forming Words:

A player may form any common English word of three or more letters. The plural version of a word counts as separate from the singular. Players may not form proper nouns (Dave, London), abbreviations (blvd.), acronyms (NASA), or contractions (they'll, don't). No word may be used more than once by any player per game.

Forming Words Example:

Chandra uses the letters A, S, P, and T to form the word TAPS. She scores 2 for the T, 5 for the A, 3 for the P, and 0 for the S, for a total of 10 points. 10 points are added to her score, and the word TAPS may not be used again this game. However, players with the same letters could still form SPAT, PAST, or PATS (but not APTS, which is an abbreviation).



Chandra must now make her sanity check. She must roll at least 10, or lose one Cthulhu pawn (but she keeps her 10 points for the word regardless).

Christopher uses the letters H, T, O, and R to form the word THOR. Fang notices that this is a proper noun and not allowed. Christopher curses Fang under his breath and makes the word HOT instead. Fang has the letters D, O, O, L, and Y and makes the word YOLO. Giap points out to Fang that YOLO is an acronym and therefore not allowed, either. Fang now wishes he hadn't mocked Christopher so openly earlier and makes OLD instead. Giap makes the word PATS, using the same letters Chandra used earlier, but not the same word. On Steven's turn he makes the word ITS. Erich tries to call out Steven for using a contraction, but Steven rebuts, claiming the use of ITS here is possessive, not a contraction. Erich grumbles and makes the word MAD and no one has a problem with his word.

Note: Although it is not required, players are encouraged to provide a humorous or quirky definition for the word they form and/or use it in a sentence creatively.

A player with only one Cthulhu pawn left may be allowed to make any word out of any number of letters and score for it (still rolling a sanity check to keep their last Cthulhu pawn), whether or not it is gibberish. Unhinged folk can believe anything is a word.

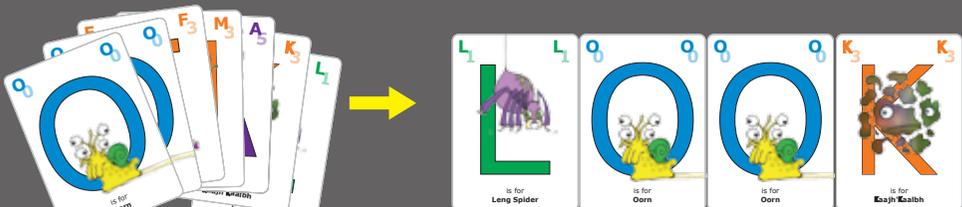
Winning the Game:

If a player forms a word that would bring them to 100 or more points, they must succeed at their sanity check in order to score. If the sanity check fails, they score 0 points. If it succeeds, they win the game.

A player may also win the game if they are the only player left with any Cthulhu pawns.

Example 1 (Scoring):

Marc-Anthony has OOFMAKL. He makes the word LOOK and writes down a score of 4 points (1+0+0+3). He rolls the die and gets a 7, which exceeds the value of his word. He draws four cards and ends his turn without losing a Cthulhu pawn.



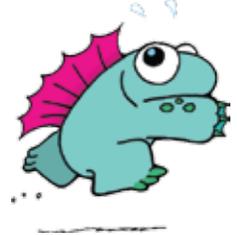
1 + 0 + 0 + 3 = 4 points

Brian has MDAHPDC. He makes the word CHAMP and writes down a score of 15 points (0+4+5+3+3). He rolls the die and gets a 12, which is lower than the value of his word. He curses the M, gives up a Cthulhu pawn, and draws five cards.

Ray has NTOONOP in his hand, but decides to play it safe. Instead of making the word PONTOON, Ray puts down TOP and writes down a score of 5. He rolls a 3, and wishes he'd gone for the higher point score as he loses a Cthulhu pawn and draws three cards.

LOGOTOMY (n.)
low-GAH-tuh-me

The forcible removal of part of one's brain due to invoking Words Man Was Not Meant To Spell.



Example 2 (Scoring):

Towards the end of the game, Marc-Anthony has just tossed in his last Cthulhu pawn, so he is out. Brian and Ray only have one Cthulhu pawn, but Dave and Sean have two and Nicole has three left. The score: Brian 89, Nicole 95, Ray 90, Dave 91, Sean 92.

Dave has only consonants. He discards all his cards and redraws a nice mixed hand: EBLNAST. Dave's pretty sure he can make a word on his next turn.

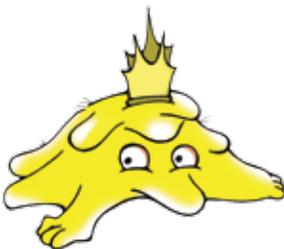
Brian's hand is packed with riskily angular letters (EMHANRT). He has one Cthulhu pawn left. If he goes for it all, he could lose. He makes the lowest-scoring word he can (TEN) for 8 points. He rolls a 9 and counts his lucky stars. He redraws three cards, all Us.

Nicole realizes she can make COLUMNS for 6 points, enough to get her to a potential game-winning 101 points. She makes the word and rolls - and gets a 4. This costs her a Cthulhu pawn and scores her 0 points (as a player may not score on her final word if she fails her sanity check). Nicole redraws.

Ray has only one pawn left so he is able to make a nonsense word, since the letters he has in his hand won't allow him to make a high-scoring, sane word. He makes the "word" GRZLK for 12 points. He rolls a 9 and scores nothing since he failed the sanity check on his last word. Having lost his last pawn, he is out of the game as well.

Sean also presses his luck by playing a high-scoring word in a last-ditch effort to win but fails his sanity check, meaning he scores nothing for his word.

Brian is at 97, so all he needs is 3 points. He makes RUM for 7. He rolls a 17, succeeding at his sanity check. He now has 103 points. The game immediately ends and Brian is the winner.



ELDER SPELL (n.)
EHL-dur spehl

The spelling of an eldritch word to ward off evil creatures from beyond, often with disastrous results.

Optional Rules:

1. **Nightmare Mode:** If you roll the exact value of your word, you fail your sanity check.
2. **Spell Binding:** When a player discards their entire hand instead of making a word, other players may examine the discarded letters for words. Any other player may force the discarder to form a legitimate word from those letters, rolling and scoring as normal. If several players point out words that can be created, the discarding player must form the highest-scoring word out of those letters. After that, the player draws a new hand.
3. **Psychotherapy:** When a player discards their entire hand, they may roll against the total value of the hand. If the player rolls higher than that value, they regain a Cthulhu pawn. If not, nothing happens. No one may have more than five Cthulhu pawns during the game.
4. **Last Words:** Once a player reaches 100 or more points, each other player gets one more turn in which they have the opportunity to beat that player's score. The player with the highest score wins the game. If two (or more) players tie for the highest score, the one who reached their final score first wins the game. In other words, it is not enough to simply tie for the high score – a player must beat it in order to win.
5. **The Thor Rule:** Determine as a group before gameplay begins whether proper nouns will be allowed when forming words.
6. **Chewx:** Players who have only one Cthulhu pawn left **must** provide a definition for their gibberish word.

HOUNDS OF TINDALOS (n.)
howndz uhv tin-DAH-lohse

Demon dogs that enter through the corners of your room to feast on your brain...



The Card Deck:	4 Fs (3 points)	5 Ms (3 points)	8 Ts (2 points)
	4 Gs (2 points)	7 Ns (2 points)	7 Us (0 points)
11 As (5 points)	5 Hs (4 points)	10 Os (0 points)	3 Vs (1 point)
4 Bs (5 points)	10 Is (4 points)	4 Ps (3 points)	4 Ws (3 points)
5 Cs (0 points)	3 Js (2 points)	1 Q (4 points)	2 Xs (4 points)
6 Ds (2 points)	3 Ks (3 points)	7 Rs (4 points)	5 Ys (3 points)
11 Es (4 points)	7 Ls (1 point)	8 Ss (0 points)	2 Zs (2 points)

2 Unspeakable Letters: Usable as any letter, worth points equal to your current number of Cthulhu pawns

Game design by James Ernest and Mike Selinker. Development: Gaby Weidling. Artwork by John Kovalic. Graphic Design by Jessica R. Eyler.

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