Word Square Workshop

PLAYER SHEET - no solutions | A4 | v1.0.0

2-6 players, with an adult host | Suggested ages 8-11 | Plan 20-30 minutes

Build a square of words that reads the same across and down. Your group has a small word bank, so the challenge is arranging and checking letters, rather than knowing obscure vocabulary. One person writes while the others test the columns; change writer after each square.

Set up and play

One player sheet per team, pencils and an eraser. Print in black and white at 100% / actual size. No cutting, folding, props or account required. Keep the host guide separate.

1. Use every word in the supplied bank exactly once. Each word occupies one whole row, from left to right.

2. Keep the stated first row. Row 2 must equal column 2, row 3 must equal column 3, and so on.

3. Write trial rows lightly. A word that fits a clue still has to fit every crossing letter. Explain a rejected arrangement before replacing it.

Warm-up: a three-letter square

Use CAT, TEN and ARE. The first row is CAT. Write the remaining rows.

Round 1: make every column agree

Use LADY, LEAD, BALL and AREA. The first row is BALL. Here LEAD means guide, and AREA means a space or region.

Round 2: check before you commit

Use NEAR, DART, AREA and SAND. Start with SAND. DART here is a quick movement, not a physical game to play.

Final: repair the mixed rows

A draft has WALL / LADY / AREA / LEAD. Keep WALL first and rearrange the other rows into a word square. Read all four columns to prove the repair.

Finish together

Finish when everyone can read the final square across and down and point out the same four words in both directions. Each player names one crossing that helped them decide.

Mechanism reference: Project Gutenberg 49137, WORD SQUARES.. New session instructions and examples.

Age and time are planning estimates. No child playtest or physical print trial is claimed.