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COMPLETE SPECIFICATION.

Device for Playing Puzzle Games.



I, MAURICE HERBERT CARPMAEL, British subject, of 24, Southampton Buildings, London, W.C. 2, do hereby declare the nature of this invention (which has been communicated to me by Louis Marx & Company, Inc., a corporation organised and existing under the laws of the United States of America, of 200, Fifth Avenue, New York, United States of America), and in what manner the same is to be performed, to be particularly described and ascertained in and by the following statement:—

This invention relates to an improved device for playing puzzle games of the character involving the formation of words or sentences out of letters or even of a picture or representation from portions of the same, each letter for example being formed on a rectangular tablet or block freely slidable in a holder or receptacle, the number of tablets being one less than the number required completely to fill the holder.

According to the present invention the device comprises a rectangular receptacle containing a plurality of square or other rectangular tablets, which are of uniform size, the receptacle being provided with a cover piece having apertures which are so arranged with respect to the tablets as to permit adjustment thereof but prevent their removal, so that a person can only move tablets by sliding one past another into the vacant space.

The cover may be hinged to the receptacle but in the preferred embodiment of the invention the receptacle is permanently closed in by an openwork grid or lattice, the apertures of which are in registration with the lines of movement of the tablets. It will be appreciated that each or only certain of the tablets may have a letter, word, picture or the like formed thereon.

The invention is illustrated in the accompanying drawings, as applied to a word forming puzzle, in which:—

Figure 1 is a perspective view of one form of the device with the cover removed;

Figure 2 is a section taken in the plane of the line 2—2 in figure 1;

Figure 3 is a perspective view of a preferred form of the device.

Figure 4 is a schematic showing of one possible assemblage of letters for a five letter word game; and

Figure 5 shows one possible assemblage of letters for a six-letter word game.

Referring to the drawings, and particularly to figures 1 and 2 thereof, the puzzle device comprises a shallow rectangular container or box 1, and a plurality of rectangular tablets 2 carried within the box 1. It will be noted that the number of tablets is one less than the number just completely filling the receptacle 1, and that each of the tablets has a letter formed thereon. The space resulting from the missing tablet, which space is here indicated at 3, permits limited sliding and readjusting of the tablets within the box. The object of the puzzle is to so rearrange the tablets by sliding the same and without at any time lifting a tablet out of place, that the letters will form words.

It is intended that when the puzzle is in use that a cover piece 4 having a latticed or openwork top, the respective apertures of which are indicated at 5, shall be placed over the top of the box so as to prevent the tablets from unintentionally falling out and also if possible to frustrate any attempt by the user from wrongly moving the tablets. The apertures are, preferably as shown, arranged in alignment with the lines of movement of the tablets and permit of the insertion of the finger to adjust the tablets. If desired the cover piece may be hinged to the box and in some cases a latch (not shown) may be provided which may be an ordinary spring catch or permanent lock.

Considering the particular example of figures 1 and 2 in greater detail, it will be observed that the receptacle 1 is as shown preferably square in configuration, and that the tablets 2 are likewise square in outline. The linear dimensions of the tablets 2 are one fourth of the linear dimensions of the box 1. Specifically, the tablets may be, say, three fourths of an inch square, one fourth of an inch thick and moulded of a preferably light composition material. The box 1 may be

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made of heavy sheet metal so that the tablets which are relatively thin and of light weight are readily movable without resulting in movement of the box even though it be laid freely on a table. In all, fifteen tablets are provided, the sixteenth space being left blank. The letters used in the particular example illustrated, when arranged in alphabetical order, are as follows:—

B, D, E, F, G, H, I, K, L, L, M, N, O, S, U.

The letters are moved about and rearranged within the limitations previously described, until the player succeeds in forming three four-letter words and one three-letter word.

It will be readily apparent that an enormous amount of sliding and moving of the tablets about and within the container may be needed before the puzzle has been completely solved. In order to facilitate these movements so as not to detract from the pleasure and relaxation obtained from the game, the letters (or representations) depicted on the tablets are substantially raised from the surface thereof, as is indicated at 6, and this substantial projection of the letters produces surface irregularities, depressions, bars, and the like, which permit the player to shift the tablets about by simply resting a finger on the tablet to be moved. Alternatively, the letters may be deeply recessed for the same purpose. If the letter or other representation were painted or printed on the tablet as is contemplated in some cases the top surface of the tablet would be left smooth, so that the player must bear on the tablet with a certain amount of pressure in order to move the same, and this in turn increases the frictional resistance to movement at the bottom of the tablet, and consequently the game may become physically tiring or at least annoying, even though retaining mental interest.

To further facilitate free movement of the tablets, the outer surfaces or walls, other than the top wall having the letter, are made smooth. Thus the peripheral walls 7 and the bottom wall 8 are given a smooth finish or polish. Part of the bottom wall may be cut away, as is indicated at 9, in order to reduce the sliding area of the tablet. The corners of the tablets are substantially rounded, as is indicated at 10, and this serves to permit free passage of the tablets around one another. Furthermore, the box or casing 1 is preferably made of drawn heavy gauge sheet metal, and may be enamelled or otherwise given an exceedingly smooth finish. The inside and bottom walls indi-

cated respectively at 11 and 12 are given a perfect finish even though not exposed to view, and the corner 13 where the walls meet is preferably slightly rounded, as indicated in figure 2. All these details contribute importantly to the result that the tablets are exceedingly freely slidable within the container, so that the player may concentrate on the game in its mental aspects, without being conscious or hindered in any way by the necessary physical movements of the tablets.

As illustrated in figure 3 the casing instead of or in addition to a cover 4 may be provided with a grid 14 which while it enables the tablets easily to be manipulated prevents their removal or in other words the player cannot make a movement except by sliding the tablets in the proper manner.

The puzzle has an enormous number of possible variations, and therefore provides indefinite entertainment. This is so because after arranging the tablets in alphabetical order and shifting the same about in order to spell three four-letter words and one three-letter word, as previously explained, the words of the solution may be noted down, the letters again arranged in alphabetical order, and the puzzle started all over again until a solution containing four words different from those already found is discovered. This can be continued for a number of times until the possibility of contriving new word combinations appears to be exhausted. However, even at that time the value of the puzzle has just begun, because instead of starting off by arranging the blocks alphabetically, they may be differently arranged according to any desired scheme, or they may be dumped out of the box (figures 1 and 2) mixed up, and replaced indiscriminately, and then shifted in the usual manner until the puzzle is solved. This process obviously can be carried on practically indefinitely.

The puzzle as so far described is simply one of a series of four-letter word puzzles, and the particular assemblage of letters shown in figure 1 of the drawings is typical of one of the puzzles in use. Each puzzle in the series may be numbered, so that a player may purchase different puzzles in the series. Ten typical solutions for the particular puzzle here set forth are copied hereinbelow:—

1. HELD GOLF SKIM BUN
2. SIGN FLED HULK MOB
3. DESK MOLL HUNG FIB
4. BOSH FELL MINK DUG
5. SINK BOLD GULF HEM
6. KILL BOSH FUND GEM
7. KILL BOSH FEND MUG

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8. SONG FILM HULK BED  
 9. SUNG MILK HELD FOB  
 10. MELD BUL K HOGS FIN

The game is also provided in additional series, using, for example, five-letter words, six-letter words, and so on. Here again, different combinations of letters may be provided in each of the series, and the several puzzles may be given identifying numbers in that series. A typical example of the letters used for a five-letter word series is given in figure 4. The instructions for this game may provide for a solution containing four five-letter words and one four-letter word, or two two-letter words. The letters in the example given, when arranged in alphabetical order, are as follows:—

20 A, A, B, B, C, E, E, F, H, I, I, I, M,  
 M, N, O, O, P, S, T, V, W, X, Y.

25 An example of a puzzle arranged for the production of six-letter words is shown in figure 5. Here again a series of puzzles may be provided, and that shown in figure 5 is simply typical of a series. The letters used in the example given are as follows:

B, E, A, A, A, C, F, G, E, E, B, D, I, K,  
 G, G, F, F, J, O, L, L, H, M, N, U, Q, R,  
 I, S, S, U, V, S, V.

30 It will be self-evident that the difficulty of solution of the puzzle increases very greatly with an increase in the number of letters used for each word, and we are therefore not taking the trouble to illustrate possible forms of a puzzle for more than six-letter words, as shown in figure 5. However, for those who enjoy exceedingly difficult and intricate puzzles, the scheme may obviously be carried on to higher numbers of letters, without any change in the arrangement or method of playing the game.

40 It is obvious also that in place of single letters complete words or portions of words may be formed on the tablets. In this case the puzzle could be used for instructive purposes. Moreover it will be understood that while in the arrangement illustrated each of the tablets is provided with a letter, certain of the tablets may be blanks. In this case the blank tablets to facilitate shifting may be formed with a raised projection such as a full stop.

50 In place of words or sentences pictures or representations may be formed on the tablets, each tablet, except certain blanks that may be necessary, containing a portion of the complete picture.

60 In a modification, in order to introduce further variations into the puzzle, blocks

of tablets may be provided by connecting together some of the uniformly sized tablets in pairs or other convenient multiples, each block or blocks thus formed moving as a single unit.

Having now particularly described and ascertained the nature of my said invention and in what manner the same is to be performed, I declare that what I claim is:—

1. A device for use in a word, sentence or picture forming puzzle game comprising a rectangular receptacle containing a plurality of square or other rectangular tablets which are of uniform size there-within, the number of said tablets being one less than the number just completely filling the receptacle, a cover piece for the receptacle provided with apertures which permit of adjustment of the tablets but prevent their removal, certain or each of which tablets has a letter, word, part of a word or of a picture or like representation formed thereon.

2. A device as claimed in claim 1 comprising a cover piece of lattice design, the apertures of which are in registration with the tablets, substantially as described.

3. A device as claimed in claims 1 or 2 comprising a cover piece hingedly connected to the receptacle.

4. A device as claimed in claims 1 or 2 in which the cover piece is in the form of a grid formed in one with or permanently secured to the receptacle.

5. A device as claimed in any of the preceding claims comprising tablets in which the letter or other representation is depicted by forming a depression or raised portion in or on the surface of the tablet for the purpose specified.

6. A device as claimed in claim 5 comprising blank tablets the surfaces of which are provided or formed with a raised portion or depression to facilitate shifting.

7. A modification of the device claimed in any of the foregoing claims comprising a block or blocks of tablets formed by attaching together some of the tablets in pairs or other convenient multiples.

8. A device as claimed in any of the foregoing claims in which the outside walls of the tablets and the inside walls of the receptacle are smooth and meet in rounded corners in order to facilitate rapid shifting of the tablets.

9. A device as claimed in any of the foregoing claims comprising a receptacle made of heavy sheet metal, and a plurality of tablets contained therewithin, which are comparatively thin and made of a relatively light moulded composition and having a letter thereon, the contrasting weights of the tablets and receptacle making it possible to move the tablets

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without holding the receptacle.

10. A device for use in a word, sentence or picture forming puzzle game substantially as described with reference to the accompanying drawings.

Dated this 15th day of June, 1932.  
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24, Southampton Buildings, London,  
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[This Drawing is a reproduction of the Original on a reduced scale.]

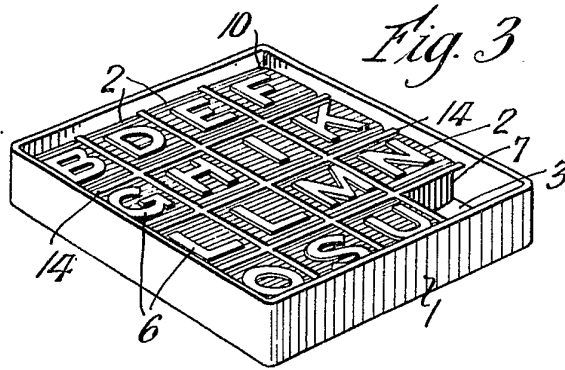
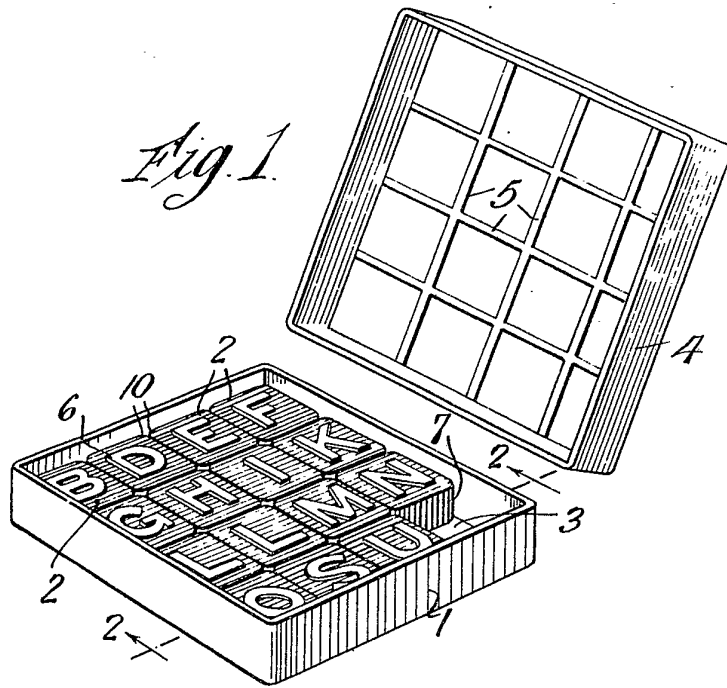


Fig. 4.

A	A	B	B	C
E	E	F	H	I
I	I	M	M	N
O	O	P	S	T
V	W	X	Y	

Fig. 5.

B	E	A	A	A	C
F	G	E	E	B	D
I	K	G	G	F	F
J	O	L	L	H	M
N	U	Q	R	I	S
S	U	V	S	V	

Fig. 2.

