

Escrow: a one-player game

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Escrow is a one-player game. Here are the rules. For every letter of the alphabet, you have to think of a pair of words, where the second word is obtained from the first word by adding a prefix that sounds like the name of the given letter. For example:

S: `crow, escrow`

Scoring is as follows:

1. It's better for the two words to be as different as possible in the etymological sense. For example, L: `bow, elbow` is good at first glance, but the suffix 'bow' in 'elbow' derives from the sense of bending, which is the same for the first word 'bow'.
2. It's better for the first word to be spelled exactly the same in both words. For example, G: `purse, jeepers` is less than ideal.
3. It's better for the first word to be pronounced exactly the same in both words. Thus F: `fete, effete` is not so good.

Proper names and loanwords are fine if they are not obscure. No two-letter Scrabble words please. Some letters, namely H and W are extremely difficult, and it is reasonable to bend the rules a little in these cases. The game has no time limit, so you can revisit your answers at any point if you think of better ones.

The answers I came up with yesterday are listed below the fold, so as to avoid spoilers. If you want a numerical score, ask Claude to make one up.

A: ping, aping
B: set, beset
C: Crete, secrete
D: fine, define
E: yore, Eeyore
F: fort, effort
G: had, jihad
H: bone, aitchbone
I: deal, ideal
J: cob, Jacob
K: per, caper
L: ate, elate
M: bark, embark
N: sue, ensue
O: pine, opine
P: quant, piquant
Q: bit, cubit
R: ray, array
S: crow, escrow
T: thing, teething
U: phony, euphony
V: a, via
W: nit, double unit
X: hale, exhale
Y: zen, wizen
Z: bra, zebra

A couple of near misses:

H: oral, achoral and W: chreh, double euchre