

# ALPHABET SOUP:



## Word Play

By GYLES BRANDRETH

"Dear Gyles," a reader writes from Scranton, Pa., "May I call you Gyles?"

You may indeed.

"Reading your column, I can tell you love words, but do you also love word games?"

I do indeed.

"And if you do, can you tell me your current favorites?"

I can indeed.

To play these games you need three or more players — and the rules. Here they are:

### I SPY

One of the players thinks of some object that is visible in the room — a spoon, for example — and announces to the other players its initial letter, saying:

"I spy with my little eye something beginning with S." The other players then have to guess what the object is.

"Sofa?"

"No"

"Slippers?"

"No"

"Ceiling?"

"???"

"Shoelace?"

"No"

...etc. etc. The first player to guess correctly is allowed to "spy" the next object.

### SPELLING BEE

One player acts as question-master and calls out a word to each of the other players in turn, who must then give the correct spelling of the word. If the player spells the word correctly he scores one point.

The question-master may call the words from a prepared list or he may make up the list as he goes along. It is, of course, most important that the words used should be matched to the abilities of the players taking part. It would be just as silly to ask a group of 6-year-olds to spell words like "parallel," "psychological," "committee" and "furlough," as it would be to ask an average group of teenagers or adults to spell words like "door," "school," "yellow" and "horse."



When a predetermined number of rounds has been played, the player with the most points is the winner.

### ACTION SPELLING

Action spelling is a form of Spelling Bee that is played strictly for laughs. It can be organized in any of the ways described for Spelling Bee but usually uses words less difficult to spell.

The point of the game is that certain letters must not be spoken by the players when spelling the words — actions must be substituted instead. For example, the rule may be that no vowels may be spelled out — instead of saying "A" a player must raise his left hand; instead of saying "E" he must raise his right hand; instead of saying "I" he must point to his eye; instead of saying "O" he must point to his mouth; instead of saying "U" he must point to any other player.

Alternatively, actions may be substituted for other letters — a growl for a "G," a whistle for an "S," shading one's eyes for a "C," a buzz for a "B" and so on. The game can be made as silly and as complicated as one wants it to be.

### BUZZ, FIZZ AND BUZZ-FIZZ

"Buzz," "Fizz" and "Buzz-Fizz" are three closely related games, and are very silly. For any of the three games the players sit or stand in a circle and call out numbers, one after the other, the first player calling "one," the second player "two," the third player "three" and so on, round and round the circle, as quickly as possible.

If Buzz is being played, then the word "buzz" must be substituted for every multiple of 5, and substituted for the digit 5 whenever it occurs in a number. Thus 5, 10 and 15 should all be pronounced "buzz" and 50 and 51 should be pronounced "buzzty" and "buzzty-one."

Fizz is similar except that 7 is the forbidden number, not 5, and the word "fizz" is substituted.

Buzz-Fizz (believe it or not) is a combination of Buzz and Fizz. Fifty-seven, for example, becomes "buzzty-fizz" and 75 becomes "fizzty-buzz." You may, if you wish, switch from Fizz to Buzz in the course of a game, just to make it more confusing.

Any player who says a number instead of fizzing (or vice versa) or who fizzes when he should buzz (or vice versa) drops out of the game. The last player left is the winner.

### WORD ASSOCIATIONS

The players sit or stand in a circle. The first player says the first word that comes into his mind. The second player immediately says the first word that comes into his mind in response to the first player's word. The third player responds likewise to the second player's word, and so on round and round the circle. If a player hesitates before saying his word he is out. The last player left in is the winner.

This game is sometimes called "Psychotherapy," and psychiatrists may charge very high fees for playing it with you!