GRABBLE ROAD

Number of players: 2-4

Required components: Board, tiles, tile racks, and tile bag from a popular letter tile game. One dictionary, shared by all players.

Optional components: One distinct token per player that will fit on top of a letter tile, such as a miniature car or a coloured bead. One upright screen per player.

Setup

Each player draws a tile from the bag. The player that draws the tile with the lowest letter in alphabetical order is the first player. If there is a tie for the lowest tile, the tied players draw again to break the tie, repeating until the tie is broken. Each player then places their tiles back in the bag. Finally, each player draws ten tiles and places them on their rack, or, if they find the tiles difficult to balance, on the table behind a screen.

Play Order

Starting with the first player and proceeding clockwise, each player takes a turn, during which they can either take a mulligan, play tiles from their rack to the board, or pass.

Creating a Road

The first tile played on a turn determines how many tiles MUST be played on that turn. For example, if the first tile played is worth one point, that is the only tile that may be played, but if it is worth four points, three additional tiles must be played to the board. This means that one of the blank tiles, which are worth no points, cannot be played as the first tile. It also means that, if a player does not have enough tiles to match the number on the first tile, they may not play that tile as their first tile. All letters must be placed in the same orientation as the game board.

The first tile each player plays in the game must be played into one of the four corners of the board. Thereafter, each new tile must be played orthogonally adjacent to the last tile played by that player, but not necessarily in a straight line from the first tile. The tiles that connect a player's starting tile to the player's last tile is called the road. If players believe that it will be difficult for them to remember which tile they last played, the last tile may be placed on its edge or a token (optional component) may be placed on top of it.

Scoring

Once all of a player's tiles for a turn have been played, points are scored for each word that contains at least one tile that was played during the turn.

Words are only scored reading from left to right or from top to bottom. Each word's score is equal to the sum of the numbers on the tiles of which it is composed, modified by the bonus scoring spaces on the game board. Double and triple letter and word scores are only counted if the board space indicating the bonus was empty before the turn started.

Redraw

Before passing the turn to the next player, the player must draw enough tiles to fill their rack back to ten, if possible. Once the bag is empty, play continues without the redraw step.

Ending the Game

The game ends when all players pass. Normally this will not happen until a few turns after the bag empties. The highest score wins.

Taking a Mulligan
In many games a "mulligan" refers to a second chance to perform an action that didn't work out. In this game, you take a mulligan by choosing any number of tiles from your rack, placing them back in the bag, shaking the bag, and drawing enough tiles to fill your rack to ten tiles. You do this instead of playing tiles to the board. Once the bag is empty, taking a mulligan is no longer an option.

Interacting with Existing Tiles
When the last tile a player placed is adjacent to an existing tile, whether it is part of that player's road or that of another player, it is possible to play OVER or THROUGH the existing tile.

To play over an adjacent tile, the player simply places a tile on top of the existing tile and continues as if the original tile is not there.

Internal Word Scoring
It is possible to score multiple words if one word contains another. For example, the word FIRE contains the words FIR, I, IRE, and RE.