



WORD BUFFET

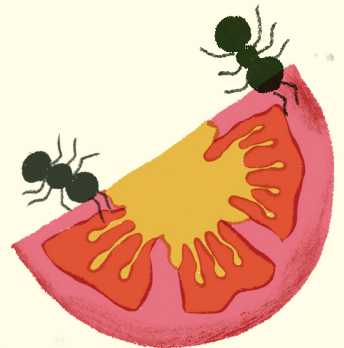
RULEBOOK

A game by Andrea Mainini and Simone Luciani
Duration: 30 min • Players: 2 - 4 • Age: 10+



The ants are invading the kitchen and are headed straight for the sandwich that fell to the floor. To mark their trail, they use words. They move by trying to find the largest words that will allow them to approach the food faster or by marking just the right word so that they can reach the portions of wasted food in the kitchen before their rivals. This is a buffet of words!

Word Buffet is a game of speed and letters, in which you have to obtain the largest amount of food and rival nests to earn points. Use your magnifying glass to find the letters on the board and put together the words that will lead you to victory as fast as you can!

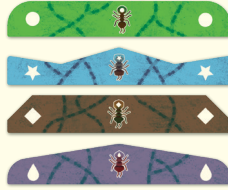




COMPONENTS



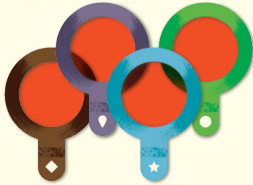
12 letters tiles



4 nest tiles
(1 of each color)



160 ant tokens
(40 of each color)



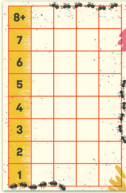
4 red filtering
magnifying glasses



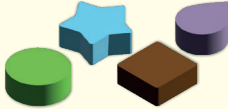
1 30-second hourglass



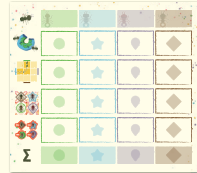
20 special ant tokens
(5 of each color)



1 turn order chart



4 turn order markers



1 scorebook



1 rulebook



GAME SETUP

- 1 Create the game board by placing 9 randomly selected letters tiles in a 3 x 3 square. Which direction each tile is pointed must also be random. The remaining letters tiles are then put back in the box, as they will not be used in that game anymore.
- 2 Each player chooses a color and then take 5 of their color's special ant tokens and as many ant tokens as are indicated by the table below:

Players	Ant tokens
2 players	40 tokens
3 players	35 tokens
4 players	30 tokens

Each player must set up a stack of their ant and special ant tokens, with the special ant tokens at the bottom of the stack.

- 3 Give each player the magnifying glass matching their color.
- 4 Place the nest tiles in accordance with the number of players as indicated in the image below:



- 5 Put the turn order chart next to the game board and place each player's turn order marker next to the chart.
- 6 Finally, put the 30-second hourglass next to the turn order chart.





HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED



Word Buffet is played in rounds. At the start of each round, all the participants play that round simultaneously, by trying to connect the letters available on the board into words. At the end of the round, each player will then place ant tokens of their color on the word that they found.

In the first round, you must find a Word whose first letter is **one of the 5 that is directly in front of your nest tile**. In the following rounds, you can move forward on the board, and look for a word whose first letter is in front of your nest, or adjacent (vertically, horizontally, or diagonally) to one of your ant tokens already on the board.

The words can be made up of adjacent letters and must be in the correct order.

For example, making the word **HOME** by uniting the letters **H - O - M - E** is valid, but you cannot make the same word using **E - M - O - H**.

THE GAME ROUND

Each round of Word Buffet has two different phases, which must be played in order:

1 SEARCH FOR WORDS

2 MARK WORDS

1 SEARCH FOR WORDS

At the start of each round, players must count down: 3, 2, 1!

The moment “one” is vocalized, all of the players in the game start looking for words on the main board at the same time, each using their own magnifying glass.

The Word you find must be made up of the letters that are available and adjacent to one another (vertically, horizontally, or diagonally). Also, the first letter must be connected to your nest or to ant tokens of your color that you placed in prior rounds.

When you find a word, **you may announce it out loud** by saying **the number of letters in your word**, for example: 6!. If you decide to do so, you must then place your turn order marker in the appropriate space on the turn order chart. Additionally, just after that, you must put your magnifying glass down on the table. If you are the first person to announce a word in that round, **you must turn over the 30-second hourglass**.

Example 1:

Flick finds the word **CUBIC** on the board and says **5!**, out loud to indicate the number of letters in the word he found.

Then, **Flick** puts his magnifying glass down on the table and places his turn order marker on the turn order table, in the farthest left, available space for the number 5.

Since **Flick** is the first person to announce a word this round, he also turns over the hourglass, starting the countdown.





Note: remember, **there is no obligation** to announce the first word you find. It may be a better choice to wait a little until you find a word that will allow you to place your ant tokens in a better position on the board, or a word that has more letters in it.

As soon as the hourglass is turned over, all the other players must find a word before the sands run out. When a player decides to announce a word, they must also say the number of letters the word has and place their turn order marker on the appropriate row of the turn order chart. If there are one or more markers in that row of the chart, the player must place their marker to the right of the preexisting ones. Players that are no able to find a word before the time runs out must place their marker in the row for **1 letter** on the chart.

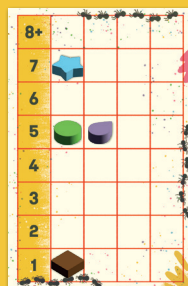
Example 2:

Atta ★ states, **7!** and places her turn order marker in the row for number 7 on the turn order chart.

Dot ♡ says **5!**. Since the 5 row already has a marker in it, she places her marker in the farthest left space available in that same row, alongside **Flick's** ○.

Queen ♦ is unable to find a word before the hourglass sands fall to the bottom. So, she places her turn order marker in the number 1 row.

When all the turn order markers have been placed on the chart, the word searching phase is completed, and it is time to mark the words that were found.







2 MARKING WORDS


In the second phase of the round, the words found by each player are checked and then marked. The order to check the words is designated by the position of the players' turn markers. The order always starts with the markers that are highest up in the chart, and if there are 2 or more markers in the same row, they are checked according to their position from left to right.

That means that it will always be the person who found the longest word who checks first. In cases of a tie, whoever announced their word first will go before the others. To mark the words, you will use the ant tokens in your color, which you place on the letters on the board. **Only once you have exhausted all the ant tokens of your color, and only the special ant tokens remain, will you be allowed to use the special ant tokens to mark your words.**

Example 3:

The marking phase begins with **Atta** , since she has the word with the most letters (7). Atta places her ant tokens so that they cover the word she found.

Then comes **Flick's**  turn, as he was the first person to announce a word with 5 letters. He is then followed by **Dot** , who also found a 5-letter word but after **Flick** .

Finally, **Queen** , checks her words, since she was the one with the fewest number of letters. In this case, it was just 1.









Before starting the check, the person who is being checked must take their turn order marker and place it on the table in front of them, and then **say the word out loud**. Then, all the other players will verify the word using their magnifying glasses.

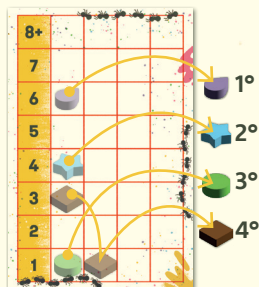
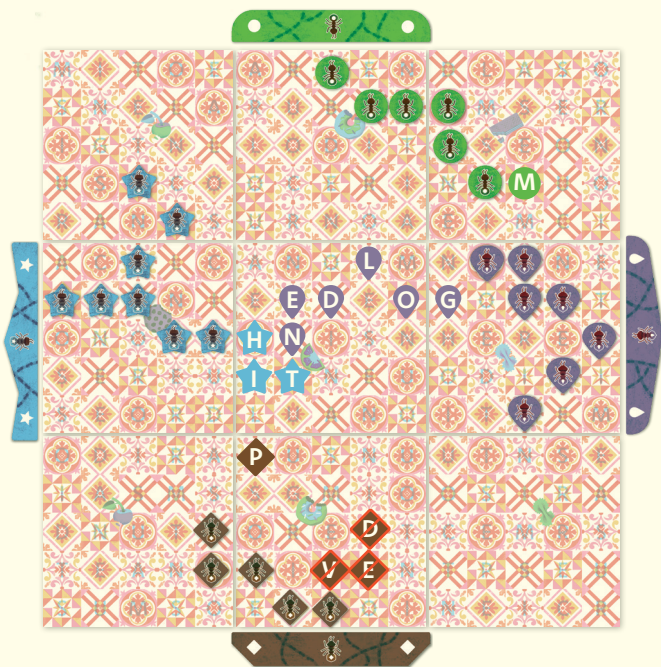
This can lead to 3 different situations:

- The word exists and is valid: the player moves their ant tokens from their reserve to cover the word they found.
- The word does not exist and is not valid: the player moves their turn marker to the "1 letter" row, and the checking moves to the next player
- One or more letters in the word were previously covered by another player's ant token(s): the entire word is covered, EXCEPT for those already occupied by the other players' ant tokens.

Example 4:

In a later turn, **Dot**  found the word **GOLDEN**. Since she is first on the turn order chart, she checks that the word is correct and places her ant tokens on its letters. **Atta**  found the word **HINT**, but the **N** was covered by **Dot's**  ant token. So, she only uses her ant tokens to cover the letters **H-I-T**. **Queen**  found the word **VED**, but the word she announced was **BED**. So, the word is not valid and she must move her turn marker to the **1 letter** row of the chart. Then, it is **Flick's**  turn and he places his ant token on the board on the **M**. He is followed by **Queen**  who places her single ant token on the letter **P** on the tile.



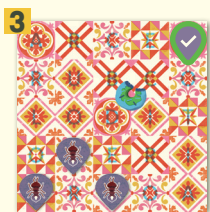
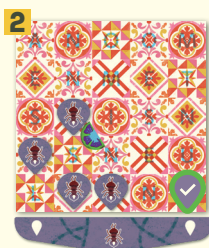
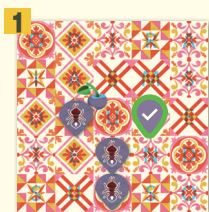


When there are only turn markers in the **1 letter** row, those players' turns go from left to right.

Each player that has their turn order marker in that row places a single ant token according to the following rules:

- The token is placed adjacent to another ant token **1** or in front of their nest **2**.
- The token is located in a free space on the letters tile where that player already has a presence (other ant tokens) **3**.

In either case, a player can never place their token on top of food **4**, or next to another player's nest **5**.



Once all the turn markers have been checked and returned to the players, and each player has placed at least one ant token on the board, then the round comes to an end. Unless the end of the game has been triggered by the required events, the process will then be repeated, starting with the countdown to allow players to look for words.



Valid words:

- You can find any word that is commonly used in English, so long as it does not have any spelling mistakes. They can be nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, etc., even proper names.
- With regard to common acronyms that are used as words (UFO, AWOL, CIA, NGO, etc.), they are considered acceptable so long as the entire group of players is familiar with them.
- Borrowed words that come from other languages are accepted only when they have become part of the standard English vocabulary (e.g., sushi, bongos, hula, moped, fiancee, etc.), but all accents and marks are to be ignored.

The spirit of the game is to be flexible. So long as most of the players know the word, it should be considered valid. If there are disagreements about its validity, you can verify it using a dictionary.

THE FOOD

Each letter tile has a piece of food printed on it that is touching 4 letters on the tile.

When a player puts one of their ant tokens on at least one of the 4 letters adjacent to the food, it is in contact with the food. At the end of the game, each player will receive the number of victory points shown in the following table, depending on the number of pieces of food their ants are in contact with.



Food	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Victory Points	2	5	8	12	17	23	29	35	41



END OF THE GAME



The game comes to its end when one player uses one or more special ant tokens to mark a word. This means that that player has already placed all of their ant tokens on the board.

If that happens, the round in play must be completed and then the victory points of each player are added up, and whoever has the most points is declared the winner. You can use the scorebook to keep track of the players' points.

Below are the ways you can earn points.



You get the points shown in the table depending on the number of food items you are in contact with.



You are given 3 points for each rival nest you are able to reach. To get these points, you must place one of your ant tokens in one of the 5 letter spaces in front of another player's nest.



You get 1 point for each special ant token placed on the board.



You lose -1 point for every 3 ant tokens that you are not able to place on the board (the special ant tokens are not counted, only the normal tokens).



Whoever gains the most points wins the game. If there is a tie, whoever placed more ant tokens and special ant tokens on the board wins. If there is still a tie after comparing the tokens, then the victory is shared between the tied players.

Example 6:

At the end of the game, each player adds up (or subtracts) their victory points (VP) according to the scoring criteria.

Flick ●

Points for food: touching 3 food → 8 VP

Points for nests: touching 1 rival nest → 3 VP

Points for special ant tokens: 3 special ants → 3 VP

Penalty for remaining ant tokens: 0 left over → 0 VP

Flick's final score: 14 VP

Atta ★

Points for food: touching 5 food → 17 VP

Points for nests: not touching any rival nests → 0 VP

Points for special ant tokens: 0 special ants → 0 VP

Penalty for remaining ant tokens: 2 left over → 0 VP

Atta's's final score: 17 VP

Dot ♡

Points for food: touching 5 food → 17 VP

Points for nests: touching 1 rival nest → 3 VP

Points for special ant tokens: 0 special ants → 0 VP

Penalty for remaining ant tokens: 4 left over → -1 VP

Dot's final score: 19 VP

Queen ◆

Points for food: touching 4 food → 12 VP

Points for nests: touching 1 rival nest → 3 VP

Points for special ant tokens: 0 special ants → 0 VP

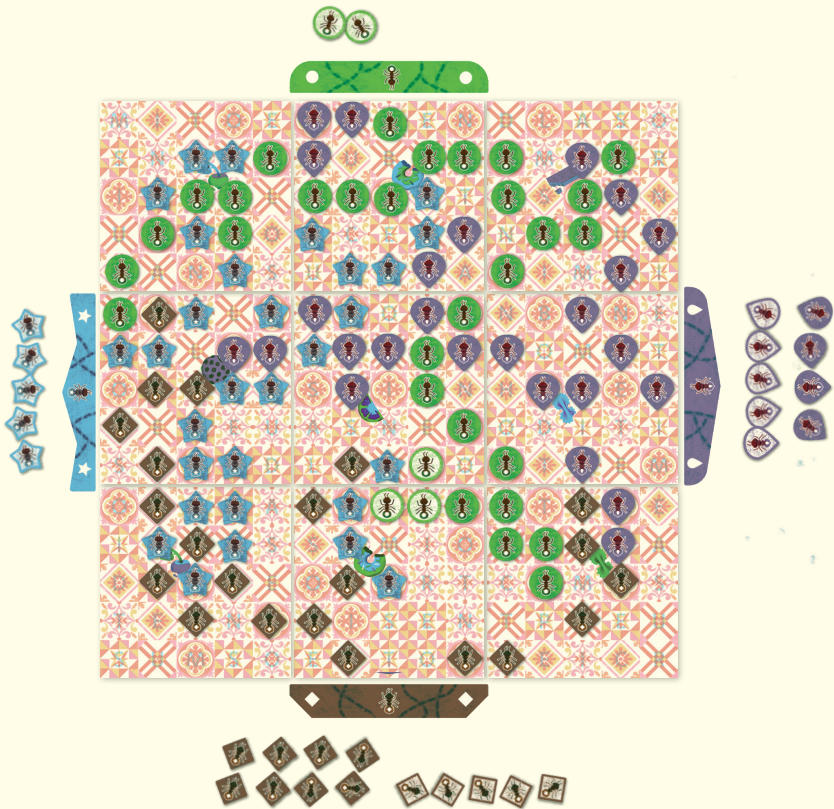
Penalty for remaining ant tokens: 8 left over → -2 VP

Queen's final score: 13 VP



Dot achieved more points and therefore is declared the winner.

	FLICK	ATTA	DOT	QUEEN
	8	17	17	12
	3	0	3	3
	3	0	0	0
	0	0	-1	-2
Σ	14	17	19	13



CREDITS

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