

Game rules

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SPUK
STABEN



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Author: Moritz Dressler
Graphics: Christian Oppere
Editor: Steffen Benndorf

SPUKSTABEN

A game by Moritz Dressler
for 1-4 players
10 years and older

It could be so nice in your old print shop, but right at midnight the haunting – a horde of cheeky letter ghosts (in the vernacular also SPUKSTABEN) is after your letters (printing letters – see explanation on the side of the box) and they carry them off one by one. You don't know what they're going to do with it and honestly you don't want to know – you just want to keep your letters so that you can print beautiful books again the next day. Will you be able to hold the ghosts back until dawn? Hopefully the haunting will come to an end then!

OBJECT OF THE GAME

SPUKSTABEN is a cooperative game. That means you can only success as a team. Your goal is to stop as many letter ghosts as possible from escaping. To do this, you must use the stolen letters in words to scare the letter ghosts. The more letters you save, the more points you get at the end of the game.



SPUKSTABEN is a great single player game as well. The same rules as in the team game apply, but fewer ghosts come into play and they are a little easier to scare.

*Many thanks to all the
game testers!*

PLAYING MATERIALS

55 letter cards

letter cards
back



letter cards front



letter or
combination of letters

condition

instant effect

haunting
power
bar

3 room cards

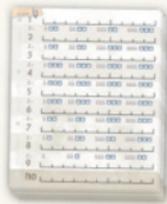


10 spooky cubes



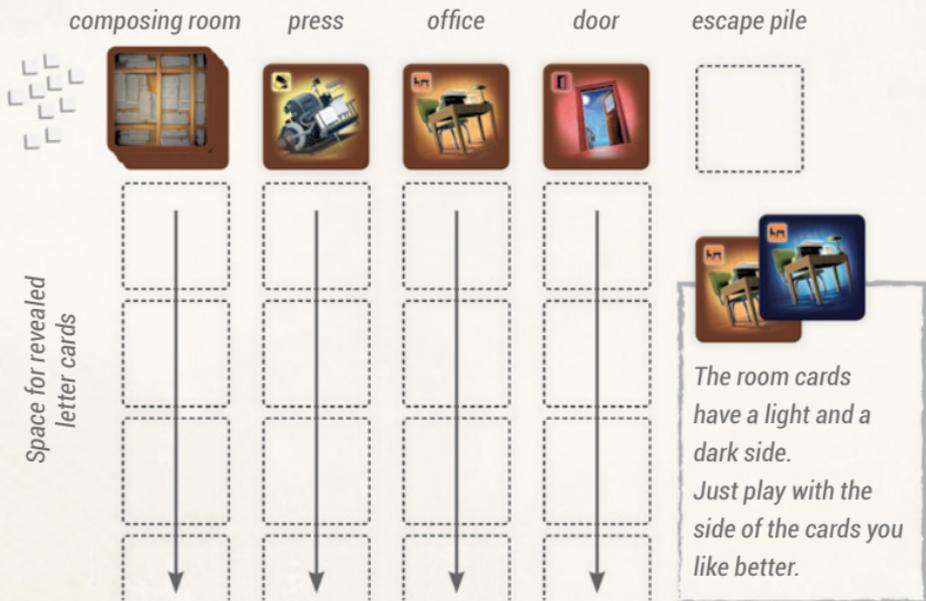
1 hourglass (1 minute)

1 game pad and 4 pencils



GAME SETUP

Shuffle the letter cards and place them in the centre of the table as a face-down pile. This stack represents your composing room. Place the 3 room cards next to it in the following order: press, office, door. Below them you need space for the active letter ghosts. On the right side you need some space for the escape pile. Get the 10 spooky cubes and the hourglass ready and take a sheet of the game pad and a pencil for every player.



GAMEPLAY

Spukstaben is played **10 turns**.

Every turn is played as follows:

1. At the beginning of each turn, **new ghosts appear**. They start their escape either directly in the composing room or in rooms further away. So the number of turns you can scare them differs. (→ page 6)
2. Now you have a total of **1 minute** in which all of you think of **1 secret word each** and write that down on your game sheet. This word should contain many letters that correspond to the letters of the fleeing ghosts. (→ page 7)
3. Once you are done with that, you can **scare the letter ghosts**. Each letter in your word will **scare exactly one of the letter ghosts**, which will weaken their haunting power. If a ghost has no power left, he will immediately drop the letter and flee. This specific haunting is then over and the letter is saved. (→ page 8)
4. When all words have been spoken and the ghosts are frightened, they **flee** to the next room. If a ghost escapes through the door, the stolen letter is lost; this results in a point deduction at the end of the game. (→ page 10)

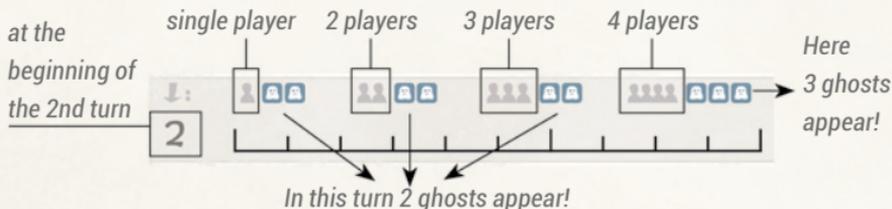
In round 10 you say the **word of power together**, after that the game ends. (→ page 11)

1. New letter ghosts appear

In the 1st turn you reveal **6 cards** from the deck and lay them out in **any order** as shown in the picture: **3 cards are placed in the composing room, 2 in the press and 1 card in the office. The space below the door remains empty.**



From the 2nd turn on, you turn over **as many new cards** as shown in the **corresponding line on the game sheet next to the symbol with the number of players.**



From the 2nd turn on, all letter ghosts **start in the composing room** (below the pile of cards), unless an **instant effect** says otherwise. You can find instant effects in the **top left corner** of the card.



Example for an instant effect

There are two types of instant effects: especially nimble ghosts and ghosts with big siblings.



ESPECIALLY NIMBLE GHOSTS

This ghost **starts** his escape **directly** in the given room.
Place the card directly under the corresponding room card.



GHOSTS WITH BIG SIBLINGS

You must immediately reveal **another letter card** and lay it out according to the rules.

For every ghost that comes into play, the haunting power must be determined immediately. Place a **spooky cube** on the field of the **haunting power bar** that corresponds to the number of players.

Depending on the number of players the cube starts on a different square.

For 2 players the cube is set on the square showing 2 persons.



The ghost now has a haunting power of 4!



IMPORTANT NOTE: If you do not have any more unused cubes available, the ghost will **immediately** escape and the card will go straight to the escape pile.

2. Turn over the hourglass and search for words

Turn the hourglass over! Now you have **1 minute** together to write down **1 word** per person which should contain as many of the revealed letters as possible. Write down your word **hidden for the others** on your game sheet in the row of the current turn.

Your word may be **up to 10 letters** long. You have to write down the word **in its basic form** or **in the singular**. You will find a detailed explanation of permitted words and spellings under "Valid words" in the appendix of the rules (—page 13).

IMPORTANT NOTE: You must not say which word you are writing down or give the other players tips on possible matching words.

As each word can only scare the ghosts **once**, you should avoid writing down the same words. Therefore, **each person** is allowed to give **exactly 1 hint** per hourglass to their **own** word. In order to give a hint you may either name a **single haunted letter** or a **row** or a **room** in which the letters are currently displayed. It is also possible to make a statement about the **word length**.

You may also point out certain obvious circumstances at any time. You can find more information and a few tips for possible and useful hints under "Giving the right hints" in the appendix of the game rules (—page 14).

3. Scaring ghosts

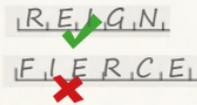
First, all of you take turns saying the word you have written down. Since each word can only be used to scare **once**, you will unfortunately have to cross duplicate words. After that you can scare the ghosts with the remaining words.

You can find out exactly how to proceed with duplicates or wrong words under "check validity" in the appendix of the game rules (—last page).

Proceed in the **order of your word lengths** when scaring ghosts:
Whoever has thought of the shortest word begins.

Go through your word letter by letter:

- If there is a **matching ghost to the letter**, you may **reduce its haunting power by 1 level**. To do this, move the spooky cube down one position.
- **If the cube falls below the lowest field and thus from the card, the ghost is defeated.** Put the card **into the box**. You will get the spooky cube back for your supply.
- If the letter matches more than one ghost, you will have to choose a ghost to scare.
- Ghosts with a combination of letters can only be scared by words with the same letter combination.



- **A word can frighten a ghost only once!**



The word SANATORIUM can only frighten an "N" or an "A" once.
However, two "N"s or three "A"s could be frightened once each.

Some ghosts can only be scared if your word meets certain **conditions**. For example, the letter may not be at the beginning or the end of your word, or the letter must not be part of a certain sequence of letters. Some ghosts can only be frightened if the word has no more than 6 letters.



*Example for a condition
You can find all conditions on
the side of the box.*



VERY IMPORTANT NOTE! *In the solo game you do not have to fulfil the conditions of the ghosts!*

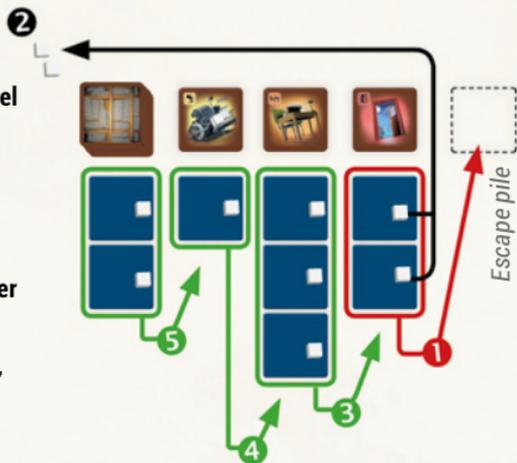
4. Flight of the ghosts

All the ghosts that are still at door level now escape through the door. Put the card on top of the escape pile (❶).

You will get the spooky cube back for your supply (❷).

Now carefully move all remaining letter cards one room to the right (❸-❹).

When all the ghosts have been moved, the next turn starts.



Special case 10th turn of the game: The word of power

In the 10th and final round, no more ghosts come into play. Furthermore, you can now mobilize your last reserves of strength together. **Consult with each other** and find **exactly 1 word** to scare as many of the still active ghosts as possible. You only have one minute to do this as well!

SPECIAL: Every ghost that you scare with your word of power will immediately lose all its haunting power and is defeated. For the word of power you have to follow all rules mentioned under 2. and 3.

END OF GAME AND VICTORY POINTS

The game ends after the 10th turn at the latest. All the ghosts that have not yet been defeated can now escape. Put the letter cards on the escape pile.

Finally there is peace again. You have fought the ghosts bravely! The sun is rising and it's morning in the print shop. How many letters did the ghosts escape with?

Now check how many letter cards are in the escape pile. The fewer, the better your score. All teams who would like to have their results more accurately evaluated can calculate their points using the following formula:

POINTS = 15 + BONUS POINTS – NUMBER OF CARDS IN THE ESCAPE PILE

You can earn bonus points in the following ways:

- If you don't have to use the word of power because there are **no more ghosts after the 9th round**, the game ends immediately: **+1 bonus point**
- To increase the difficulty, you can use fewer spooky cubes for your game: **+1 bonus point per cube**

The table below shows how well you have played:

Points	Rating
0-5	Waste of words → You urgently need more practice, otherwise soon only cloze texts can be printed.
6-8	Word twisting → Not bad, but you need to improve. Otherwise, in the long run the print shop will run out of letters.
9-11	Word acrobatics → You are already quite decent letter night watches. Only a few letters have gone missing.
12-13	Enthusiasm for words → You have put a powerful stop to the haunting spells! Have you ever considered teaching English or even writing a book?
14-15	Fireworks of words → Your team is the pride of the entire printing industry. The ghosts didn't expect so much eloquent resistance. Mr. Johnson would take his hat off to you.
16 and more	Word magic → A fantastic performance! The ghosts are impressed by your unerring choice of words. In the future they will think twice before making another mess with the letters of your print shop.

VALID WORDS

Here you will find an overview of the words you can use to scare the ghosts.

- Each word can be a **maximum of 10 characters** long.
- **Valid words are:**
 - all words from a dictionary in their **common basic form** or in the **singular** (e.g. cultivate, agriculture, run, runner, unworn, untold)
 - meaningful compound nouns (e.g. check-up, blackboard; but not: car-bird)
- **Invalid words are:**
 - **proper names** of persons, things, brands, film characters, etc.
 - **geographic terms** ((e.g. names of cities, countries, mountains or rivers)
 - **abbreviations** (e.g. asap, imho) or **neologisms** where the spelling is unclear
 - words to which certain letters (groups) are appended to lengthen the word (e.g. **smallest**, **scariest**).

HOUSE RULES: of course you can also choose to play less or different valid words to make the game easier or harder for you.

GIVING THE RIGHT HINTS

Basically, you may **point out certain obvious circumstances** at any time in the game, such as *"If we still want to catch this ghost, everyone has to use an E!", "We now have to defeat 3 ghosts so that we have enough spooky cubes for the next round!"*

To avoid writing down duplicate words, it is important to give each other useful tips on your secret word. As **only one tip per person** is allowed, you should think carefully about how to phrase it in a way that helps the others.

You may say,

- that you **use or do not use a particular single letter**
or
- that you **use some or all or no letters from a certain row or a specific room**
or
- **how long the word you want to write down will be.**

Here are some examples of what is possible:

Anna would like to write the word "farseeing" and gives the hint that she **does not** take a letter from the door.



Florian wants to form the word "poke", his hint is "I take a word with 4 letters".



Lea wants to write "pilot" and gives the hint: "I use all letters, which are at the door".



Paul wants to take the word "singular", he gives the hint: "I take all the letters from the 1st row".



CHECK VALIDITY

The table on the last page shows possible problems that may occur in the game and explains what to do then. If you need to delete words or parts of words, then decide as a team, which word you want to keep to scare the ghosts.

Problem	Solutions	Example
Word misspelled	Correct spelling	absense → absence
Word does not have the basic form	Use basic form of the word	farmers → farmer running, ran → run smaller, smallest → small
Wrong or not allowed word	a) if possible, shorten to a valid word b) otherwise cross completely	a) unraw , woodboat or woodboat b) Polen , Thames , Merkel , AKW , imho
Same word as another person	Keep the word once, all others cross their duplicates	<i>Both Anna and Bea have written the word CHANCE. Bea sadly has to cross her word completely.</i>
Partially same word as another person	Keep the word once, all others a) if possible, shorten to a valid word b) cross the duplicate	<i>Anna wrote down GREENHOUSE while Bea wrote down HOUSEWIFE. As HOUSE is a duplicate, Bea has to cross it but WIFE is still a valid word.</i>
Word or root of a word has already appeared in the current game	a) if possible, shorten to a valid word b) cross the duplicate	<i>Last turn Anna chose the word DESIGN, this turn Bea writes down DESIGNER. The word sadly has to be crossed in that case.</i>