

Words on Target



No darts are used in the playing of this game.

301 is one of the very common games in English darts. Throw three darts on your first turn, add up the points earned and deduct them from 301. The object is to deduct exactly 301 points, ending up with zero, before your opponents do so.

Let's play the game **Words on Target** with common English uncapitalized 5-letter words – no hyphens or apostrophes allowed. The letters score points on the familiar scale seen below. I'll be your opponent for this practice game and you may go first. Of course, I'll have to imagine what words you might pick. I'll say you pick FUZZY, an excellent choice. It scores the sum of 6, 21, 26, 26, and 25, or a total of 104. Congratulations on a good opener. Your 301 has been whittled down to 197, i.e. $301 - 104 = 197$.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13

N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

At this point we may want to adopt the rule that words over the course of a game or the course of an evening may be used only once. It prevents me from using your FUZZY.

My move and I'll pick YURTS for a total of 103. I'm left with 198.

It's your turn and you choose WRYLY. It scores $23 + 18 + 25 + 12 + 25 = 103$. Impressive. You're left with 94. At this point, as in the actual dart game, you need to plan ahead. If your next word adds to more than 94, you can deduct nothing – you lose your turn. Worse than that would be having your word add to 90 or so. Then your balance would be less than 5 points and less than any word can score. You lose.

Rather than putting a time limit on each turn to prevent the proverbial putterer taking ponderous amounts of time, we instead play the LIGHTNING ROUND. When both players,

that is, the second player in a game with more than two players, have reached a balance of 75 or less, all players can play at once, and play as many words as they want. The first person to reach zero exactly calls GAME and everyone **stops to check** that person's score. If the person made an error, then the LIGHTNING ROUND continues until a winner is certified by the others.

Darts players get good at knowing the "finishes" for each balance. The photo at the top [and below] illustrates word finishes for 19, 20 and 50 points. By playing Words on Target often enough, you might also build up a bank of finishing words. I think this game has potential for the stay-at-home student as well. Good practice with addition and subtraction.

I think you understand the game well enough so rather than finishing ours, I'll leave you with the tasks of finding word finishes. What word will win the game for you if your balance of points is:

- a. 40
- b. 66
- c. 75
- d. 100
- e. 25



Good hunting, and remember – eye on the bull's-eye and wrist flexed. Ha!