On May 12, 1875, Asylum Hill Congregational Church in Hartford held a fund-raising spelling bee with many prominent members of the community as participants. The church’s minister, Reverend Joseph Twichell, asked his best friend Sam Clemens to open the event with a speech. Sam’s thoughts on the importance of good spelling were as irreverent as you would expect. He declared that when it came to the spelling of words, “sameness is tiresome; variety is pleasing.”

During his speech, he explained the rules to a word game—one that you can play at home!

There is a game called Verbarium. A dozen people are each provided with a sheet of paper, across the top of which is written a long word like kaleidoscopical, or something like that, and the game is to see who can make up the most words out of that in three minutes, always beginning with the initial letter of that word.

You can play with any number of people, of course. Once you’ve tackled “kaleidoscopical,” here’s a list of words from Twain’s spelling speech that you can use:

ORTHOGRAPHICAL
ORANG-OUTANG
TEMPERANCE
PHOTOGRAPIED
CORRESPONDENT
UNTRAMMELED
VARIEGATED
NECESSITATES

And here are some of the words from the spelling bee itself that you can also use:

PORTEMONNAIE
TRANQUILITY
VERDIGRIS
ACHIEVEMENT
METONYMY
CAISSON