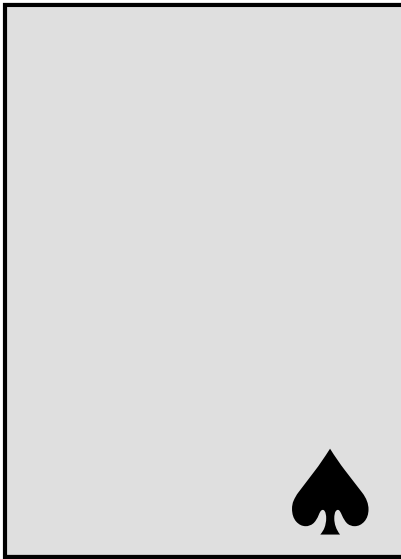


“I am sorry I have not learnt to play at cards. It is very useful in life: it generates kindness, and consolidates society.”

- *Samuel Johnson*



one

Mechanics of the game

The book

Bridges

Bridge in 3D

What in? How high?

Bidding elevator

The fundamentals

The nuts and bolts

Players

Four people are needed to play the game of Bridge. North and South are partners, against East and West who are partners. The use of geographic positions (N, S, E and W) is appropriate as Bridge brings people together from all over the world. It transcends religious, ethnic, education, sex and cultural differences.

Tools

A square table with four chairs. An apple cart and four bales of hay will do in a pinch. A deck of standard playing cards. There are 52 cards in the deck, with each player getting 13 cards each.

Cards

The cards are divided into four suits. 13 cards in each suit, ranking in descending order from the ace down to the two. Cards are represented as: Ace, King, Queen, Jack, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2.

Suits

There are four suits and their rank in descending order is; spades, hearts, diamonds and clubs. (No trump is higher ranking than the suits). Spades and hearts are the major suits and diamonds and clubs are the minor suits. You will come to know why the major suits are more important than the minor suits; hence the titles, 'major' and 'minor'. Each suit has a symbol:

♠ = Spades ♥ = Hearts ♦ = Diamonds ♣ = Clubs

Tricks, revokes and discards

A **trick** is won, after each person has in a clockwise direction, in turn, contributed a card face up on the table. You must follow suit to the card that was first played. The person who wins a trick must lead a card to the next trick. If you do not follow suit and you could have, this is called a **revoke**. It is not legal and will bring sadness to you and your partner. If you are unable to follow suit, then you must **discard** (play a card from another suit).

The book

There are 13 tricks to be won in every Bridge hand. The first six tricks are called the **book**. The book is similar to an 'ante' in poker. It is expected and a given. So - if you bid 1♣, 1♦, 1♥, 1♠ or 1NT you are contracting to make the book (six tricks) plus the one you bid, which makes seven tricks in total. The highest bid you can make is 7NT. To make 7NT you must take all 13 tricks. The book, plus the seven you bid (6 + 7 = 13). Think of the book as an entry fee and think on it no more.

Bidding (the auction)

A bid consists of a number and a symbol. 1♣ is a bid. The dealer has the first bid with the **bidding** continuing clockwise around the table, each player getting a turn to bid or pass. The bidding must adhere to the hierarchy of the bidding elevator on page 9. If all four players pass, the hand is not played. If the auction is opened, it stays 'open', until there are three consecutive passes, at which time the auction is closed. The highest bid buys the contract. If the last bid was 4♠ then 10 tricks are required with spades as trumps.

Bridge in 3D (the players)

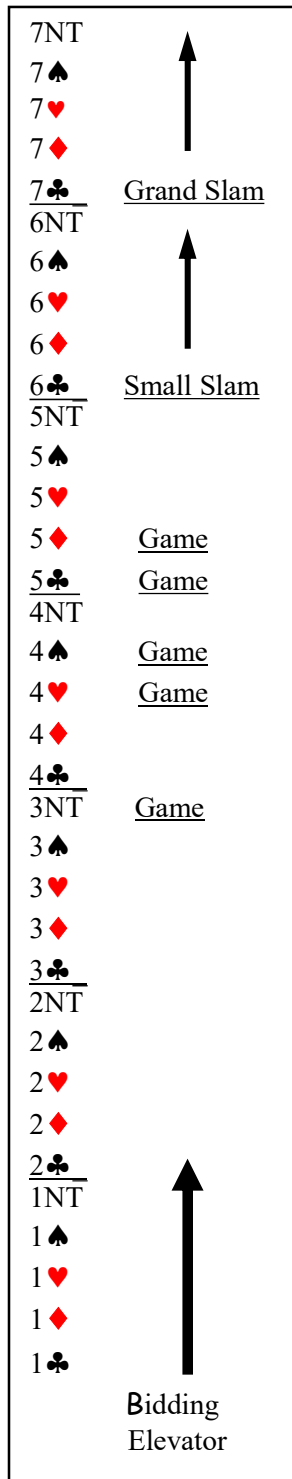
The end of an auction determines the roles of each player for that hand.

The players are designated as the **D**eclarer, two **D**efenders and **D**ummy.

Declarer: In a contract of 4♠, the partner who first introduced spades into the auction will become the **declarer**. Declarer plays the cards from both her hand and from partner's.

Defenders: If the opponents win the auction, you and your partner are the **defenders**. As defenders you will work in concert to take as many tricks as you can in an attempt to defeat declarer's contract. The person to the left of declarer leads the first card, face up on the table.

Dummy: Declarer's partner is **dummy**. When the opening lead is placed face-up on the table, all 13 cards in dummy's hand are arranged by dummy face-up on the table in four neat columns for all to see. (Figure 1:2)



There are two questions which you should ask yourself during the course of any auction.

How high?

The bidding occurs somewhere between the one-level and the seven-level. The decision of 'how high' is determined by the collective strength of both hands.

What in? There are five possible denominations in which you can play a contract; clubs, diamonds, hearts, spades or no trump. You determine your preference in the exchange information during the bidding.

| | |
|-------------|---------------|
| Four | Spades |
| 4 | ♠ |
| (how high) | (what in) |

Bidding elevator

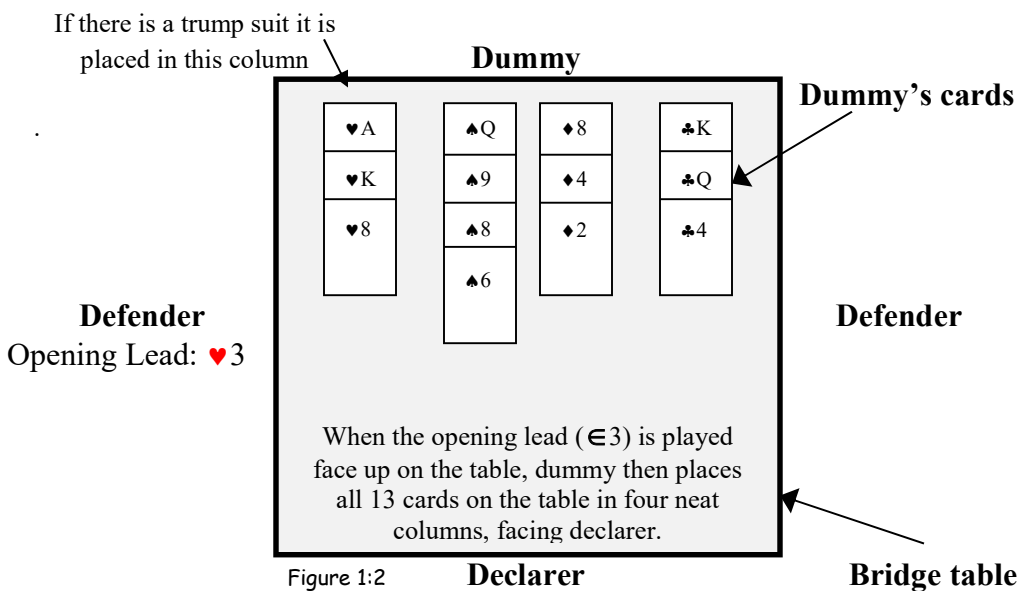
When a bid is made, locate that bid on the bidding elevator in Figure 1:1. Any subsequent bids must be made at a higher level. It is that simple. If someone bids 1♠ and you then bid 1♦, you have made an insufficient and therefore, illegal bid. To compete against 1♠ with a diamond bid) or any suit bid) you must go to the two-level or higher.

On the bidding elevator you can see that there are seven levels. Game in no trump is at the three -level. Game in major suit is at the four-level. Game in a minor suit is at the five-level. A small slam in any denomination is at the six-level, and at the seven-level you are in a grand slam!

Figure 1:1

At the table

The auction is over. We now have a declarer, a dummy and two defenders. The player to the left of declarer, left hand opponent (LHO) makes the opening lead (a card is placed face up on the table). Dummy's cards are now placed on the table in four neat columns facing declarer. If the final contract is a suit contract, then that suit (trumps) should be placed to dummy's right (declarer's left). Declarer nominates which card to play from dummy, right hand opponent (RHO) then plays a card and declarer decides which card to play from her own hand. With all four people having played a card, this is the first trick. Dummy can never suggest, hint or assist declarer in the play of the hand. It is not only frowned upon, it is illegal. Dummy will, without emotion, obediently follow declarer's verbal instruction on what card to play. The player who wins a trick must lead to the next trick. This continues until all 13 tricks have been played.



"Of course I have played outdoor games.
I once played Bridge in an open-air cafe in Paris".

- *Oscar Wilde*

Card play technique

Lead from weakness toward strength

When you are the declarer in a contract you have to play the cards in both your hand and in dummy. Knowing how to play your cards to best advantage is truly rewarding. A good card play technique is to lead from the hand that has weakness in a suit toward the hand that has strength in the same suit.

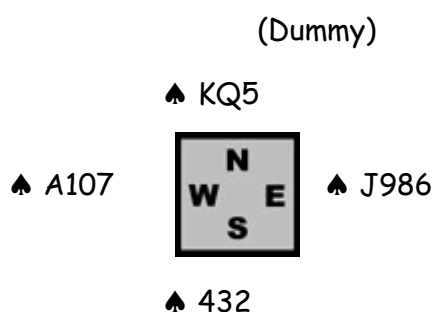


figure 1:3

In figure 1:3, the correct way to play the spade suit is to **lead from weakness toward strength** (a card from the S hand first). Because W has the ♠A, and must play a card before dummy, you will win two spade tricks. If W takes her ♠A, you will play the ♠5 from dummy, making the ♠K and ♠Q both high.

If W follows with the ♠7, you will play the ♠Q from dummy, which wins the trick. Upon the lead getting back to S in another suit, S will lead a second spade, again forcing W to play a spade before you have to commit one from dummy. S was lucky, but played the suit properly.

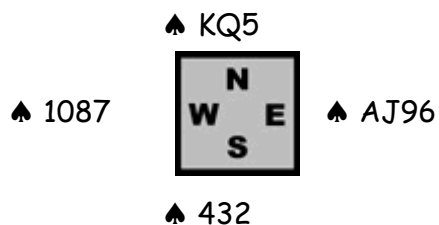


figure 1:4

In Figure 1:4, the hands have been altered slightly in that E now holds the key card, the ♠A. S should play the spade suit the same way as in figure 1:3 (remember, at the table you cannot see all the cards and therefore do not know who has the ♠A). This time S will win one spade trick as E can head dummy's ♠K with the ♠A. S was unlucky, but still played the suit

Department of defence

“They say that the best defense is a good offence...and I intend on offending right now, with my opening lead.”

Opening leads

The opening lead can be the most important decision a defender has to make. Declarer has a huge advantage over the defenders in that she sees her partner's cards, while you and your partner cannot see each other's hands. There are, however, ways in which the defenders can communicate with each other. The foundation of this silent communication lies in the first card a defender leads.

Top of a sequence (headed by an honor)

A sequence is when you hold at least three cards in a row, in numerical order, containing an honor. The sequence must have an honor. When you lead a card from a sequence, lead the top card of the sequence. From each of the following spade holdings, lead the card in bold.

♠ **Q**J1084

♠ **J**1094

♠ **K**QJ3

♠ **9**873

Lead the ♠**Q** Suggests that you hold the ♠**J** and ♠10.

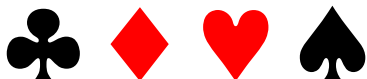
Lead the ♠**J** Suggests that you hold the ♠10 and ♠**9**.

Lead the ♠**K** Suggests that you hold the ♠**Q** and ♠**J**.

Lead the ♠**8** To be deemed a sequence it must have an honor in the suit (ace, king, queen, jack or 10). The lead of the ♠**8** is called MUD or second best from three or more rag cards (rag = a card less than the 10) and you will learn more about this in chapter six, page 80.

Play Bridge at least twice a week...

“How use doth breed a habit in a man.” Shakespeare



Summary

- Bridge is a partnership game. North/South vs East/West.
- Spades and hearts are the **major suits** while diamonds and clubs are the **minor suits**.
- A **trick** is when all four players play one card each in a clockwise direction. There are 13 tricks in every game of Bridge.
- You must follow suit when you hold a card in the suit led. If you don't follow suit, and you could have, you have **revoked** and will incur a penalty.
- **Bridgese** is the language of **bidding** the players use to compete for the contract, with the highest bid winning.
- There are many clever tricks in the way you can play the cards. **Lead from weakness toward strength**, is a card play technique that allows you to capture the maximum tricks from a given suit.
- A good opening lead is the **top of a sequence**.

Nearly Normal Norman says: If partner makes a nice play, a kind mention at the end of the hand is akin to planting an acorn in partner's garden of self-confidence. Be nice to partner.



Nearly Normal Norman

"I have always believed that your attitude towards your partner is as important as your technical skill at the game"

- Rixi Markus

Exercises - chapter one

A. True or false?

1. Every hand has a dummy.
2. Hearts are the highest ranked suit.
3. You do not have to follow suit.
4. A revoke is an illegal bid.
5. 2♦ is a higher bid than 2♥.
6. Declarer plays two hands.
7. Lead small towards big.
8. A 6♥ contract requires 11 tricks.
9. 7NT is the highest bid.
10. Whoever wins a trick leads next.

B. Leads

Which card would you lead from each of the following holdings?

1. AKQ7
2. J1093
3. KQJ5
4. QJ1093
5. 109832

C. Card play technique



1. In the above example, which hand would you lead from first? N or S?
2. Which card would you lead?
3. If W plays a small card which card do you play from the N hand?

D. Tricks

State the number of tricks needed to make the following contracts.

1. 7♥
2. 4♣
3. 1♠
4. 5♦
5. 2♥
6. 6♦
7. 3♠