

LESSON 1: STUDENT NOTES

Introduction to Bridge

The Game of bridge is played in 2 distinct phases

The Auction

The partnerships compete to win the contract

The Play

The winning partnership must now fulfil the contract

The Auction (more on the auction next week)

- We use compass directions (NS/EW) for the four players.
- The **DEALER** is the 1st player to call. A player may **PASS** or make a positive bid.
- A positive bid **must** be higher than the previous bid.
- After the first round of bidding, the auction continues in a **clockwise** direction until there are 3 consecutive passes.
- The **CONTRACT** is the last bid made before those passes.
- The player, who first bids this suit, will be the **DECLARER**

The play of the hand

- The **DECLARER** is the player who plays the hand
- **DUMMY** (Declarer's partner) places their cards face up on the table
- The faced cards on the table are also referred to as the **DUMMY**
- The **OPENING LEADER** is the opponent on declarer's left
- Declarer makes **all** decisions in the play of the hand; **both their own and DUMMY's cards**
- Dummy cannot suggest a play to declarer
- A **TRICK** is a collection of 4 cards – 1 from each player in turn
- A player must follow suit if possible
- If a player can't follow suit, they can play any other card
- Highest card of the suit led wins the trick (unless a **TRUMP** is played)
- The next trick must be played from the hand which won the previous trick

How the cards are placed

- The cards are placed individually in front of each player
- The cards are placed vertically (towards us) if we win the trick
- The cards are placed horizontally (towards opponents) if we lose



Ranking of Cards in a Suit

A K Q J 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2

Ranking of the Suits

Notrumps

NT

Spades

♠

Hearts

♥

Diamonds

♦

Clubs

♣



Spades and Hearts are also called the **MAJOR** suits

Diamonds and Clubs are also called the **MINOR** suits

Naming a suit

- Naming a suit declares that suit to be **TRUMPS** (the dominant suit)
- A card from the trump suit is more powerful than cards from any other suit
- **NOTRUMPS** means that there is **no** dominant (trump) suit

Value of the Honour Cards (HCP – High Card Points)

A = 4

K = 3

Q = 2

J = 1

Each suit totals = 10 HCP

Each deal totals = 40 HCP

What is the Partnership looking for in a Contract?

Their aim is to find the best contract at the correct level. There are 3 levels to bid to:

Partscore combined points less than 25

Game combined points 25-32

Slam combined points 33+

What is Game?

You get a large bonus when you make a Game, but you must make a certain number of tricks to succeed. The number of tricks varies according to the trump suit or NT.

Game is: 3NT – 9 tricks

4♥/♠ – 10 tricks

5♣/♦ – 11 tricks

Rules of Mini-Bridge

Who Becomes Declarer?

- Each player, starting with the **DEALER**, adds up their HCP.
- The pair with the majority of points becomes the declaring side.
- The player of the partnership with the most points is the **DECLARER**.
- That is the end of the Auction phase at this stage.

What Happens Next?

- The partner of the declarer, who is called **DUMMY**, places their cards in suits on the table.
- Declarer studies the dummy cards and their own hand and then decides what the contract should be - one of the **SUITS** or **NOTRUMPS** (NT).
- The partnership must try and find a **FIT** which is 8+ cards between the two hands.
- If there is a **fit**, then declarer chooses this as the trump suit.
- Trumps are then placed on dummy's right.
- The partnership **must** always try for a **MAJOR fit** first.
- If no good **fit** is possible, then they choose a NT or minor contract.
- Declarer now decides whether to bid Game.
- If the combined point tally of both hands is **25** or over, the contract is declared in Game. Otherwise declarer plays in a partscore and needs to make **7** tricks, which is the minimum number to make any contract.

Then What?

- The opponent on declarer's left leads a card to start the play.
- A **TRICK** is a collection of four cards – 1 from each player in turn.
- The player who wins this first trick then leads to the second trick.
- This continues until all 13 tricks have been played.