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BRIDGE IN A HURRY!



(Not for dummies)

THE "RULES"

These rules are a guide to help you remember the most important information. You will find them reprinted at the end of the book also. They will seem like a foreign language right now. All the same, it's worth glancing at them before we get started in earnest...

Rule I Bid your longest suit first!

Rule II Count your tricks!

Rule III A partnership needs 25+ points to make game

Rule IV Bidding has 2 goals: finding a fit and deciding on level

Rule V 8+ cards is a FIT

Rule VI Every player starts with 13 cards

Rule VII 4-card suits: 'up the line'. 5-card suits: start at the top

Rule VIII High cards from the short hand first

Rule IX 2nd player play low!

Rule X Return partner's suit

Bridge for '500' Players

No Kitty, Bowers, Misére, or Jokers. Card Ranking: AKQJ1098765432. The order of suits is the same except spades are now the highest. The rank of suits from highest to lowest is; *notrumps*, ♠, ♥, ♠, ♣

The bidding runs from 1 to 7, meaning 7-13 tricks (just add 6 to your bid to discover your trick target).

You can also "**double**" the opponents' bid if you think they are out of their depth, thereby upping the stakes. More on this later.

The scoring is usefully different to 500. Going down in a contract does not simply score the negative of what making the contract is worth. This difference means that you can often profitably "sacrifice" (bid to a contract that you know is going down).

Two Big Differences

Firstly, the bidding: in 500, you might bid just to "stay in". In Bridge you may re-enter the bidding and therefore you can pass with impunity. "Pass" is one of the most useful calls bridge players have.

The second difference is in the play: after the opening lead, one player (the "**Dummy**") faces their cards, as in Open Misére. If you've defended well against Open Misére you'll know that having one hand in open view facilitates inferences and strategies that are difficult to achieve with all four hands concealed. Inference is the Bridge player's best friend. You will find that the more correct inferences you make, the better bridge player you will become.

The Basics in a Hurry

Bridge is a card game for four players in two partnerships.

Each player sits opposite his or her partner.

Rank of Cards: A,K,Q,J,10,9,8,7,6,5,4,3,2

Thirteen cards are dealt to each person.

There is then an **auction**: Each player bids, one after the other, clockwise around the table, starting with the *dealer*.

Each bid must be "higher" than the one before it.

Rank of Suits (highest to lowest): ♠ ♥ ◆ ♣

So the bidding could be, " $1 \leftarrow 1 \triangleq$ " but not " $1 \triangleq -1 \leftarrow$ ".

A bid of "1♦" is an offer to win 7 out of 13 "tricks".*

A bid of "2♦" is an offer to win 8 of the 13 "tricks".

What is a 'trick'?

After the auction, we play the cards, clockwise, one from each player.

The highest card of the suit "led" \$\psi\$ wins.

So a trick which proceeds ♦6 ♦8 ♦J ♥Q is won by ♦J.

Whoever wins a trick leads to the next trick.

What are 'trumps'?

The trump suit, determined in the bidding, creates an exception. In the trick above, (•6 •8 •J •Q) the •J won. If Hearts was the **trump**



^{*} Just add 6 to your bid to discover the number of tricks you have promised to win.

⁶ The card "led" is the 1st card played to the trick.

suit, however, the ♥Q would have won. In fact, if the fourth player had produced the ♥2, they would still have won the trick! Just in case you were thinking of trumping every time you couldn't win in the suit led, you should know that players must "follow suit" if they can.

Which suit becomes trumps?

The last suit mentioned during the bidding becomes trumps.

You can also play without a trump suit. "1 notrump" is a bid promising to win 7 tricks with no trump-suit. 'Notrumps' is ranked as the highest 'suit' in the auction.

If the bidding looks like this (the dealer bids 1st):

Dealer	East	South	West
1♣	pass	1♠	pass
2♠	pass	pass	PASS

...Spades becomes the trump suit.

I have capitalised the last "pass" because it is significant. 3 passes in succession mark the end of the auction. There is one exception – can you figure out what it is?

What then?

After the **auction** above, South (having been first to mention the eventual trump suit) would become **declarer**, West would make the **opening lead**, and then North would become the **dummy**. Dummy places his/her cards face up on the table and declarer, not dummy, chooses a card from dummy on each trick.

Ok! We're ready to play Bridge!

This is a good point to take stock. If you feel confident with everything so far, try the quiz on the next page. If not, try re-reading this chapter and then test yourself with the quiz.

Quick Quiz 1: The Basics

- 1. What is the highest ranking suit?
- 2. ...is it higher or lower ranking than notrumps?
- 3. Who makes the first call in the auction?
- 4. Who becomes the *declarer*?
- 5. Who makes the opening lead?
- 6. Who becomes the *dummy*?
- 7. Playing in notrumps, North leads the ♠7. The trick continues:

North	East	South	West	
♠ 7	∳ 9	• 0	♥ K	who wins the trick?

8. Playing with Hearts as trumps, North leads the ♦2

North	East	South	west	
* 2	♦ 10	♦ A	v 2	who wins the trick?

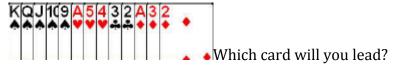
- 9. A bid of "4♥" is a promise to win how many tricks?
- 10. How many tricks are there in one hand of bridge?

Answers:

- 1. Spades
- 2. Lower ranking: notrumps is ranked as the highest "suit".
- 3. The Dealer
- 4. The player who first mentioned the eventual trump suit
- 5. The player to the left of declarer
- 6. The partner of declarer
- 7. South because they played the highest card of the suit led •
- 8. West: hearts are trumps so the ♥2 beats all non-trumps
- 9. 4+6=10. Just add 6 to the number bid to find how many tricks are required
- 10. 13: The same as the number of cards in each player's hand.

PLAYING THE CARDS 1: The Opening Lead

Suppose you are to make the opening lead with this hand:



Most players are tempted to play an ace straight away. They will be disappointed, however. After winning their 2 tricks (♥A & ♠A) they will get to work on those spades. But if the opponents hold the ♠A, they will not play back spades. They will be too busy enjoying their tricks in the red suits. It would have been better to start with the longest, strongest suit. Yes, the opponents might win the ♠A but then, when you regain the lead with the ♥A or the ♠A, you can take tricks with the rest of your spades. It doesn't matter to you which spade you choose to lead because they are all "touching". You can send partner a message, however, by leading the ♠K – the lead of an "honour" card (A, K, Q, J or T) promises the next one in the sequence. So if you lead the King, partner will know you also hold the Queen. We call this agreement:

Lead from the TOP OF TOUCHING HONOURS

So; from AKJ62, lead the A

From QJT5, lead the Q

From JT83, lead the J

And even from T9732, lead the T

Sometimes you might not be dealt such a nice suit. With, say QT542, you don't have touching honours, so lead a low card instead. Maybe partner has the King or the Jack to help you out. We call this "leading"

LOW FROM AN HONOUR

How Good is Your Hand?

You are dealt this hand: ▲J107

- **♥** KQ84
- ♦ A53
- *****962

How good is it? If you think it looks average, you're doing well. The **shape** of the hand is not special—there are no long or short suits. The **strength** of the hand, I'm sorry to say, is not special either. In fact, you have one card of each rank! One Ace, one King and so on. Because the high cards (A,K,Q,J) are more useful during the play than the low ones, let's assign them some values. 4 Points for an Ace, K=3, Q=2, J=1. According to our scale, there are ten points in each suit, 40 points in the whole pack, and an average hand, like the one above, will have exactly 10 points (40pts÷4 players).

During the Auction, we need to tell partner about our hand through the calls we make. With an ordinary hand we don't open the bidding. We can pass and re-enter the bidding later. We need significantly more than 10 points (average) to "open" the bidding. Let's say 12 or more points.

Here's a less ordinary hand:

- **▲** AKQ10643
- **♥** void
- ♦ AKQJ109
- ♣ void

How extraordinary is this one? Well, what would we do with it?

We would like spades or diamonds to be trumps so, when it's our turn to bid, let's choose one of them. Which suit should we bid; ♠ or ♠? Spades is our longest suit so we ought to bid "1 spade". Our left-hand opponent bids 2♥, our partner bids 2♠ and our right-hand opponent passes. Our turn: Count your tricks *Rule II*

I think we'll make all 13 tricks if spades are trumps so let's bid "7♠"*. Do you see why? This is the hand:

Dealer: South	North	
	♦ 9875	
	♥ 642	
	♦ 654	
West	♣ KQ5	East
♦ J2		★
♥ AKQ109875		♥ J3
♦ 8		→ 732
♣ A10	South	♣ J9876432
	♦ AKQ10643	·
	*	
	◆ AKQJ109	
	.	

West will make the opening lead - probably the ♥A. Because we do not have any hearts, we can win the trick with a small spade i.e. a trump. Do you see how we can take all 13 tricks? If not, deal out the whole hand and play one card from each hand at each trick. The best way to grasp the card play at bridge is to do exactly this. Deal 13 cards to 4 hands and, dummy style, turn every player's cards face up and play all the cards for all the players. You'll be a pro in no time!

Bridge For Beginners

^{* 7♠} promises to win 13 tricks. 1♠ promises 7 tricks, 2♠ promises 8 tricks, and so on.

Quick Quiz 2: How Good is Your Hand?

- 1. An Ace is worth how many points?
- 2. A Queen?
- 3. How many points are there in one suit?
- 4. How many points are there in the whole deck?
- 5. How many points in an average hand?
- 6. How many points do you need to open the bidding?
- 7. Which suit should you bid first?

Answers:

- 1. 4 points for an Ace
- 2. 2 points for a Queen
- 3. 4+3+2+1=10 points for A+K+Q+J
- 4. 4 suits x 10 points in each = 40 points
- 5. 40 points in the pack/4 players, average = 10points
- 6. 12 points to open
- 7. Your longest suit.

OK! Now we know how to play bridge – let's learn how to win at bridge...

PLAYING THE CARDS 2: Drawing Trumps

If you've chosen your trump suit well, you should have more trumps than the opponents. In this case, "drawing the trumps" will often serve you well. Let's take a look... **North**

_	-
North	
♠ T52	
♥ 863	
♦ K QT	
♣ KJ32	East
	♠ AQJ7
	♥ KJ974
	♦ 94
South	♣ 84
♦ 8	
▼ T2	
◆ J8762	
♣ AQT96	
	 ★ T52 ▼ 863 ★ KQT ★ KJ32 South ★ 8 ▼ T2 ◆ J8762

Declarer wins the first trick with the \bullet A. There are 5 juicy heart tricks to take but taking them straight away would lead to disappointment. On the 3^{rd} round of hearts, South would "ruff" with a small trump, spoiling your fun. The solution, of course, is to begin by "drawing" all of the opponents' trumps. First the \triangle A, then the \triangle Q and then the \triangle J. Only now, that all their trumps are depleted, is it safe to try running your long heart suit. This time it took 3 rounds to draw the trumps because they divided (or "broke") 3-1. If each opponent had 2 trumps it would only take 2 rounds

to draw them all.

A tip: A good way to count the opponents' trumps is to imagine, at the start of the play, *how they might break*. Missing 5 trumps, say to yourself: "they might break 3-2, or 4-1, or 5-0. Then, as you draw the trumps, note which of those options are still possible. It's easier than counting them 1 by 1.

Scoring in a Hurry

Hearts and spades are called the "major suits." Diamonds and clubs are the "minor suits." You don't score anything for making only 6 tricks:

Tricks	NT	Major	Minor	Game
		♠ /♥	* / <i>*</i>	Bonus
7	40	30	20	
8	70	60	40	
9	100	90	60	NT
10	130	<i>120</i>	80	Major
11	160	150	100	Minor

You also score 50pts just for making your contract. However, you score a 300 point bonus for *bidding & making* "game". (Game is any contract worth 100 or more points). As a result, bidding methods revolve around bidding to 3NT, $4 / \$, and $5 / \$. It wouldn't help to bid to these levels on every auction because there are penalties for not making a contract—50pts for every 'undertrick'. So, how do you know how high to bid during each hand? There is a remarkably accurate way of assessing your chances of making a game contract.

A partnership needs 25+ points to make game. Rule III

This is where A=4, K=3, Q=2, J=1. So if you have 13pts and partner opens the bidding, you know you have enough for game.

Quick Quiz 3: Scoring

- 1. A bid of $4 \triangleq$ is a promise to win how many tricks?
- 2. What do you need to bid to make game with diamonds as trumps?
- 3. How many tricks would you need to take to make game in notrumps?
- 4. If you bid 4♠ and make 9 tricks, what would you score?
- 5. if you bid 2♠ and make 11 tricks, what would you score?
- 6. Which contract scores higher: 2♥ making 9 tricks or 3♥ making 9 tricks?
- 7. Which contract scores higher: 2NT making 9 tricks or 3NT making 9 tricks?

Answers

- 1. 10 tricks: (4 plus 6)
- 2. 5
- 3. 9 (...or more; of course a little more never hurts ☺ Any extra tricks are called "overtricks")
- 4. -50. You contracted to make 10 tricks and you missed by 1.
- 5. 200. You get 150 for making 30+30+30+30+30 (5♠) and 50 points for making a partscore you do not get the game bonus because, despite making more than enough tricks, you didn't bid to 4♠.
- 6. Trick question: they both score 140pts (50 for the partscore plus 30 plus 30 plus 30)
- 7. This time the game bonus comes into play. 3NT=400pts

PLAYING THE CARDS 3: Short Hand First

Have a look at this suit: You Dummy A5 KQIT

Which card would you play first? The Ace is the right card to play first. If you start the other way – by playing the 5 first, then, on the 2nd round of the suit, you will win the lead in your own hand. But you really want the lead in dummy to continue playing the suit. If you play the Ace first, you can then *lead over to* dummy to "run" the suit. In other words, you are trying to *end up in the long hand*.

The following is a well known bridge adage:

Play high cards from the short hand first

This applies whenever you are trying to "run a long suit"

Here are some examples:

You QJT94	Dummy K7	Play the King from Dummy first!
You JT965	Dummy AKQ2	Play dummy's A, K & Q, then over to hand with the 2
You AQ	Dummy KJT92	Play the A, then the Q, OVERTAKING with the King in dummy!
You KQT93	Dummy J2	Play the Jack first! You don't want to be stuck in dummy after the 2 nd round.

If you find it hard to translate the card play from paper to the table, visit



www.acbl.org and download their free *learn to play bridge* software. It's a brilliant way to familiarise yourself with the card-play basics.

Fit and Game in a Hurry

Bidding has 2 goals:

1. Finding a Fit and 2. Deciding on the Level.

Rule IV

A "fit" is 8+ cards in one suit, in a partnership.

Rule V

How do you find such a thing? Your partner bids 1♣ and you hold this AQ5

hand:

♥ I109

♦ KQ5

4 753 What do you bid?

Rule VI

It's hard to say because you only have 12 cards!

Every Player Starts with 13 Cards

Let's add the \$2 to that hand. Now you have 3 spades, 3 hearts, 3 diamonds and 4 clubs. Again partner opens 1. What do you bid? Go back to rule I and discover that partner must have 4+ clubs. Now check rule V. Have you found a fit? The only question left is the level at which to play:

		Opener	Responder
"Mini"	point	12-14	6-9
range			
Invitational		15-17	10-12
"Midi"			
"Maxi" rang	ge	18-19	13+

To open the bidding you need 12 points. Without 12pts, you can pass and wait for partner to make some noise. If partner responds to your opening bid, s/he is showing 6+ points. So if you have 19 points, you should eventually bid to game because 25 is enough for game (rule III).

If you are dealt say, 23 points, you might be fearful that partner will pass your opening bid... and you might have enough for game between you! In that case, you can open with a bid of "2\subsetential". This says "partner, you don't need 6+ points to respond". A balanced hand of 20-22pts can open "2NT". A hand better than that can open with 2\subsetential.

The Strong 2C Opening: In every auction we must decide whether or not to bid game. We do this by showing partner our point range (Mini, Midi, or Maxi) and then partner will add up our combined assets (searching for 25pts). Alternatively, partner will show us their point range and we will decide on game. How do we show our point range? We show our point range whenever we do one of the following things:

		Pard	Us
1.	Support partner's suit. i.e.	1♠	2♠ here
		Pard	Us
2.	Rebid our own suit. i.e.	1♥	1♠
		2♣	2♠here
3.	Bid notrumps	Pard	Us
		1♥	1NT here

In each of the examples above, we have shown a MINIMUM hand for responder because in each example we have made a MINIMUM bid. In example 1, 2♠ was the lowest level at which we could bid spades. We could have bid 3♠ - that would have been a "midi" or... we could have bid 4♠ - that would have been a "maxi".

Because we are the responder, our mini, midi and maxi bids show 6-9 pts, 10-12pts, and 13+pts respectively. You will have plenty of chances to practice this technique as we go along. For now, test yourself on what we have talked about so far.

Quick Quiz 4: Fit & Game

- 1. What are your two goals during the auction?
- 2. How many cards in one suit constitute a "fit"?
- 3. If you bid $1 \checkmark$, can you have just 3 hearts in your hand?
- 4. You hold ★A43 ♥KQT6 ◆Q974 ★85 and partner opens with 1♥
 - a. How many points do you have?
 - b. Have you found a fit?
 - c. Are you mini, midi or maxi?
 - d. What should you bid?
- 5. How many points could opener have (maximum) if they open 1♦?
- 6. What is the minimum number of points required to respond?

7. If the bidding looks like this:

Pard

You

1♦

1♥ pass

4♥

How many points will partner have?

Answers

- 1. To find a FIT and decide whether or not to bid GAME
- 2. 8 cards or more *within the partnership*
- 3. No! When we bid our own suits, we promise at least 4 cards.
- 4. a, A+K+Q+Q=11.
- 4 + 3 + 2 + 2 = 11
- b. Yes. Partner must have at least 4 Hearts. 4+4=8
- c. Midi. You are the responder. Responder's 10-12pts is a "midi"
- d. 3♥. Bidding 2♥ would show a minimum & 4♥ would show a max.
- 5. 19. With more than 19 points, she would open 2♣ or 2NT.
- 6. Tricky question seeing we haven't mentioned it up til now. 6 points is the minimum required to respond. With less than 6 points, responder can simply pass.
- 7. 18 or 19. Seeing that you might have as few as 6 points, partner needs

about 19 to be sure of making game. 2♥ by partner would have shown minimum, 3♥ would have shown a midi. 4♥ was maximum

BRIDGE BASE ONLINE

All these words and so few cards.... Of course, the best way to learn this wonderful game is to play this wonderful game. When I first learned, if there weren't 3 other players nearby, I would deal 4 hands and make all the bids and plays for each hand. Although this was better than nothing at all, it was pitiful compared to the wonderful resources available to you today.

Bridge Base Online www.bridgebase.com is an online bridge room where you can play, watch & learn bridge... FOR FREE!

There are literally thousands of players there at any given time and all standards of play are catered for. Of particular benefit for new players is the *Beginners and Intermediate Lounge* or B.I.L. This club allows you to play with other beginners in a relaxed environment – nobody will chop off your head for a mistake!

When you log into Bridge Base for the first time, you will see a menu which includes an option to PLAY OR WATCH BRIDGE. Click that link. Then click PUBLIC AND PRIVATE CLUBS. One of the private clubs is BIL. You will find instructions for joining that club through that link.

Another fantastic tool on Bridge Base is the *Learn to Play Bridge* software. Again, it's completely free. This software will help you particularly with the card play. The cards "come to life" through the software in a way

which is impossible with the written word.

I can't recommend Bridge Base highly enough for the keen bridge student.

Give it a go!

Showing your Shape

Your hand can be roughly classified as one of 3 shapes:

Balanced	Single-Suited	2-Suited
4-3-3-3	6-3-2-2	5-4-2-2
4-4-3-2	6-3-3-1	5-4-3-1
5-3-3-2	7-x-x-x	5-5-x-x

Let's try the **single-suited** hand first:

You have 14 points and a 7-2-2-2 shape. Your opening bid is easy: bid your longest suit: "1 a". Partner bids "2 a" and it's back to you. Show your single- suited hand; bid your suit again; "2 a"

▲ AKJ8432

V 05

♦ A5

. 98

This hand is represented on the bottom row of the 'single-suited' column.

And the **2-suited** hand:

You have 14 points and a 5-4-2-2 shape. Your opening bid is easy: bid your longest suit: "1 a". Partner bids "2 a" and it's your turn again: Show your 2-suited hand; bid your other suit; "2 ""

▲ KQ983

♥ A543

♦ K5

. 02

This hand is represented on the top row of the '2-suited' column.

And the **balanced** hand:

You have 13 points and a 4-3-3-3 shape. Your opening bid is not so easy: We show balanced hands by bidding no trumps at some stage. The question is when, and how many. Here you are in the minimum range (12-14pts). Open with your longest suit: "1.→". Partner bids 1.→". Your turn: Show your balanced hand; bid no trumps: "1NT"

This is how to show partner your balanced hand:

♠ AJ4

♥ K64

♦ 9732 represented

This

♣ KQT

represented on the top row of the 'Balanced' column.

hand

is

- With 12-14 (minimum), open a suit, then bid notrumps.
- With 15-17 (invitational), open 1NT.
- With 18-19 (maximum), open your longest suit then *jump* in NT.

Quick Quiz 5: Shape

- 1. What are the 3 hand types?
- 2. After you open 1♥, partner bids 1♠. What would you now bid with the following hands:



- 3. Partner opens 1. You bid 1 and partner rebids 2NT. How many points does partner have? What type of hand does partner have?
- 4. What should you open with the following hand:

 ♠ K2

 ♥ Q32

 ♦ J65

 ♣ AKQT8
- 5. Can a balanced hand contain a singleton? (a singleton is a 1 card suit)
- 6. Partner opens 1♦, you bid 1♠, and partner bids 2NT. What is your call with this hand: ♠ KJT764 ♥A2 ♦764 ♣82?

Answers

- 1. Balanced, single-suited and two-suited.
- 2. a. 1NT show your balanced hand (5-3-3-2). Don't be deceived by a good 5 card suit.
 - b. 2♥ show your single suited hand (6-3-2-2).
 - c. 2 your hand is 2-suited (5-4-3-1) so show your 2nd suit.
 - d. 2♠ your hand is balanced but there is no need to bid notrumps as you have already found your fit!
- 3. 18-19pts, balanced.
- 4. 1NT. Again, don't be deceived by the good suit this hand is balanced.
- 5. NO
- 6. Bid 44! You know partner has at least 2 spades and 18-19pts.

BASIC BIDDING TREE

WHAT TO OPEN

<12 pts

pass

12+pts Balanced? 12-14pts 15-17pts $\frac{18-}{19pts}$ 20-22pts 23+pts

Unblanced 12-21pts 22+pts

1-of-a-suit "2C"

Which suit? your longest

two 4-card start suits low two 5-card start

suits high

WHAT TO RESPOND

<6 pts pass

6+pts found fit? 6-9pts 10-12pts 13+pts

2-of-a-suit 3-of-a-suit 4-of-a-suit

no fit? 1-of-longest

impossible? 1-of-another

impossible? 6-9pts 10+pts

"1NT" 2-oflongest

Further into the auction, a table or "cheat sheet" will help you less than you can help yourself with the following crucial rule:

NEW SUITS ARE FORCING (UNLIMITED)

OLD SUITS AND NOTRUMPS ARE NON-FORCING (LIMITED)

Е	W	Е	W
1♥	1♠	1 ♣ *	1♥*
2♣*	2 ♦*	1 ♠ *	3♣***
2NT***	3NT***	4.** **	

^{*=}new suit, forcing, unlimited

^{***=}old suit/notrump, non-forcing, limited

Shape and Strength at Once

You hold: ♠ J532

♥ Q9

♦ AQ65

♣ AJ9

Assess every hand with these two questions!

What hand shape is this? It is balanced (4-4-3-2)

What is your point range? Minimum (14pts)

What do we do with a balanced hand of minimum opening strength?

Open a suit, then bid no trumps. Here you have two suits of equal length. Which suit do you open? Here is yet another rule:

Bid 4-card suits 'up the line'. With 5-card suits, start at the top. *Rule IV*

So you should open 1♦ with the hand above. Partner bids 1♠ and it's back to you. You could show your shape by bidding 1NT now. You could tell partner that you have 4 spades. Partner has 4+ spades (rule I + rule VI) and 4+4=8 makes a fit. What should you bid, NT or spades? Here's a clue; you show your shape only so that you and partner can find a fit. Here's another one; you've found a fit! So bid spades. How high should you bid? You have already opened the bidding. You have a minimum (12-14pts). So you should make a minimum rebid – bid 2♠

With 15-17 (invitational), you would bid '3♣' (invitational). With 18-19 (maximum) you would bid '4♠' (maximum). With minimum strength, you make a minimum rebid, 2♠

Remember! We narrowly limit our strength only when we:

1: bid notrumps

2: support partner's suit

3: rebid our first suit again...

Bids of new suits are generally unlimited in value and forcing on partner to make another bid.



Quick Quiz 6: Shape & Strength

Here are some auctions. Identify how many points each player has. In each case, North is the first to bid:

1.	North 1♥ Pass	South 1NT	2. North 1♣ 2♥ Pass	South 1♥ 4♥
3.	North pass 2♥	South 1♥ 4♥	4. North 1	South 1♥ 4♥
5.	North 1♥ 1NT 3NT	South 1♣ 2NT Pass	6. North 1NT	South Pass

Answers

- 1. North = less than 17. South has shown minimum for responder (6-9) and North is therefore not interested in bidding game.
- 2. North = Minimum for opener (12-14). North showed this range when they raised hearts to the minimum level. South = 13+. South is willing to play game with as little as 12 points in partner's hand.
- 3. North = minimum for responder (6-9). South \approx 19. South can see 25 points if partner has as little as 6.
- 4. North = again minimum for opener (12-14) as they made a minimum raise. South = 13+ as they are willing to play game opposite 12 points.
- 5. North =13 or 14. 1NT showed a minimum balanced hand (12-14). Then South invited North to bid game if she was maximum (14). North accepted and, thus, has a maximum (within the range she has already shown). South, therefore, has 11-12 points. That is enough for game opposite 14 pts but not enough opposite 12 pts.

6.	The easy one: North = 15-17 and South < 8 points. So points even if partner had 17.	outh could not see 25

NOTES



Musical Chairs

You hold: ♠ Q542

♥ A9

K7

♣ AJ986

and partner opens '1♠'

Partner has four spades. You have four spades. That makes an 8-card fit. Support partner by bidding spades... but how many? Now that you have found a fit, you should bid as high as your combined strength (what you know about your combined strength) will allow:

Known combined strength: 12 + 13 = 25

You are now the **responder** and you know that partner has an opening bid (12+ points). You have 13 points. That makes 25+ points. That's enough for game. Bid $4 tilde{4}$!

How about this: ♠ KQ98

10743

♦ QJ3

♣ 97 Partner opens 1♦. Your turn...

You have 8 points, so make a bid! Responder needs only 6+ points. Hearts or spades? When you have two suits of the same length, you may need to consult the rules...bid 4-card suits up the line (rule II), so 1♥ is your call. Partner **rebids** 1♠ and it's your turn. Your fit is in spades so bid 'em! Now is also the time to show our strength (or lack thereof ③) because we are about to *support partner's suit*. You have 8 points so you are in the 6-9 range (minimum for a responder) so show your support at the minimum level: 2♠ is the bid.

Now observe the view from the other side...

You hold: ♠ A532

♥ K8

♦ AK1075

♣ K3

and the bidding has been: you pard $1 \bullet$ 1 \bullet

?...

...partner has promised 6-9 points so,

Known combined strength: 17 + (6 to 9) = 23 to 26

You don't know whether you have enough for game (26). If partner is maximum (9 points) you should be playing in $4 \clubsuit$. If she is minimum (6 points), $2 \spadesuit$ or $3 \spadesuit$ will be high enough, thank you very much. What should you do? **Invite** partner to game by bidding $3 \spadesuit$! If she is minimum, s/he will pass. If maximum, she will bid $4 \spadesuit$. Let partner have the final say on this hand.

Bidding involves 3 things: axioms, inferences, and trust. The first set of axioms are rules I-VII, which you already know. The inferences will be flooding in very shortly (you have already made several). The trust—yours and partner's – is up to you when you sit down to play. Here's a chance to draw a difficult, but valuable inference.

North	East	South	West
1♦	pass	1 🌲	pass
2♥	pass	hmmm	

What is North's shape?

2 v	That auction again:	North 1∳ 2♥	East <i>Pass</i>	South 1 ♠	West <i>Pass</i>
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Drawing an Inference

North has bid her suits up the line so they could be two 4-card suits ...or could they? Let's try some possible shapes:

♦ ♥ ♦ ♣

- 4-4-4-1 No way. She would have supported South's spades.
- 1-4-4-4 Nope. That's not starting with the lowest of 4-card suits.
- 2-4-4-3 That's a **balanced** hand. She would have rebid 1NT
- 3-4-4-2 Also balanced
- 0-4-4-5 Clubs is the longest suit. North began with diamonds.
- 5-4-4-0 She would have opened with spades, not diamonds.

Notice that we have swiftly eliminated all of the possible shapes with 4 diamonds and 4 hearts?

- x-5-4-x Here she would have started with hearts
- x-4-5-x This looks ok
- x-5-5-x Check back on rule VII. She would have bid ♥ first.
- x-4-6-x This looks ok but less likely than x-4-5-x $\checkmark\checkmark$
- x-4-7-x Unlikely; wouldn't you rebid your seven card suit?
- x-5-6-x This is ok but far less common than x-4-5-x

///

you can make many inferences along these lines as long as you keep one very important fact in mind:

Each player starts with exactly 13 cards (rule VI again).

Trumps

♠ KQT83

♥ A85

◆ AQJ

♣ K6

←You have 19 points and a 5-3-3-2 shape (balanced) so you open '1♠', planning to rebid with a *jump* in NT. But Partner supports you, bidding '2♠' before you have a chance to show off. With points for game (19 + at least 6), you bid 4S and your left-hand opponent leads ♥Q.

A A974

K1097

976

& 84

Count your tricks! 5 spades + 1 heart + 4 diamonds = 10

That's how many you want. Now count the opponents' tricks! 2 hearts (after the ace is gone) and the ace of clubs makes 3. That's all they're allowed if you're to make your contract. Hold on! How do you plan to limit the opponents to just 1 club trick? If you lead the *K from your own hand, they'll take the A and then the Q. That's two club tricks for them in addition to their two heart tricks. Ouch. What if you lead clubs from dummy? If your left-hand opponent has the *A and *Q you're up the same creek. What's the solution?

Win your 10 tricks first! Win the \P A. Play the \P A, \P Q and \P J. Then, when you play the \P K from dummy, you can throw away a losing club or heart from your own hand and the opponent's fourth

tricks but I think you have another problem. How many diamonds in the pack? ...13 is correct. What will happen when you play dummy's •K (the 4th round of diamonds)? One of the opponents *must* run out of diamonds by then: if both opponents Started with 4 diamonds, there would be 15 diamonds in the pack. So, if the opponents are on the ball, one of them will play a small trump when dummy plays •K. There goes your 10th trick. Remember a small trump beats a big non-trump. That's why you bid for spades to be trumps—so you would have more trumps than the opponents. Incidentally, how many spades do the opponents have?

So how many times will you have to play spades before they have none left?

That's what you should do first on this hand. Consume the opponents' trumps, *then* go about winning your other tricks. Here's the hand again, this time with the opponents' hands included:

	North	
	♦ J62	
	♥ Q J103	
	♦ 53	
West	♣ AQ32	East
♦ KQT83		♦ A974
♥ A85		y 976
◆ AQJ		◆ K1097
♣ K6	South	♣ 84
	♦ 5	
	♥ K42	
	♦ 8642	

Contract: 4♠ by West ♣ J10975

Opening Lead: ♥Q

So you should win the first trick with the Ace, **draw trumps** (this time it takes 3 rounds to consume all the opponents' trumps), and play 4 rounds of diamonds. Well played.

How about those diamonds; was there something tricky there?



Card Tricks in a Hurry

Here's that diamond suit you just played:

	♦ AQJ	◆K1097
You played	A	7
then	Q	9
then	J	K
then	another suit	10

It wouldn't have worked so well if you'd played

	A	7	
then	Q	K	
then	J	9	because

...which hand would have to lead to the next trick? Your hand, not dummy.

The winning ◆10 would now be "stranded" in dummy.

There is a principle at work here: when playing a long suit,

Play high cards from the short hand first Rule VIII

How do you play the following suit combinations?

QJ2	AK1065	play the Q, J, then small to the A
KQJ103	A2	play the A, then small to the K
AQ109	KJ	play the K, then overtake the J

Unfortunately, we don't have all the high cards all the time. How do you play these suits?

If you're lucky, your opponents will have 2 each. Play the A and K and your little ones may now be winners. If not, keep playing the suit until they are!

The Finesse

How do you play this suit: **Dummy You**

AQJT 8653

...before we play this suit, let's see what the opponents have: Well, what cards do the opponents have in this suit? The **K**, the **9**, the **7**, the **4** and the **2**. Let's assume that one opponent has 2 cards and the other holds 3 cards. If you play the A first, the opponent with the K will play a smaller card now and win with the K on the next trick. If you lead the Q, they will win with the K now, giving up on the next one. Either way, they win one trick. Can you see a way that you might keep the opponents from winning a trick with their K? Here's a clue: it's only going to work if a specific defender has the king. If their partner has it - it won't work.

If you're stumped, try looking at it from another seat:

In one suit you have only K7. Dummy, on your left, has AQIT.

Your right hand opponent leads the 3 and it's your go:

Dummy Declarer leads:

AQJT 3

You

K7

What do you play? If you play the king, the opponents will win with the ace. If you play the 7, they might play the ace, giving up the next trick to your king. They might not, but you ought to give them the chance to go wrong, no? So play the 7.

Back to our original problem: AQJT opposite 8653. Let's say you lead the 3 and left-hand opp plays the 7. What do you play from dummy? The Q wins! Congratulations on the first of many successful finesses.

It's true that half the time the Q will lose to the K, but if the finesse fails, you were always going to lose a trick to the K weren't you?

RHO

K7

Dummy You AQJT 8653

In other words, you lose nothing by trying a finesse like this; nothing you weren't going to lose anyway. 50% of the time, however, you gain a trick.

Two-way Finesse

With AJ3 opposite K105 you have 2 sure tricks. Depending on which opponent you think has the Q, you can play small towards the J or small to the 10. If you guess correctly, you make 3 tricks, not 2. The Queen could be,

here→ North

Qxx

AJ3 KT5

or here→ South

Qxx

If you think North has the Queen, lead the 3 towards the KT5. If North plays low, insert the ten. If you think South has the Queen, lead the 5 towards the AJ3. If South plays low, insert the Jack. If you play the Ace and King on the first two tricks, you will only score 3 tricks if one defender holds exactly Q

and one other card.

Defence in a Hurry

There really are "golden rules" when it comes to defence. The 18 carat rule is **2nd player play low Rule IX**

That is, if you are the 2nd player to play to a trick, it is *very often* right to play low. On the previous page we saw it was right to play low when holding K7 "under" the AQ, thereby giving declarer a guess. There are less obvious, but more important times to play low in the 2nd seat. You hold: AJ3 and dummy, on your left, has K842. Declarer leads the 6 and it's your turn. If you play the A, declarer may lose only 1 trick in this suit. If you play small, declarer will win this trick with the King but her future in this suit will be hard yakka. It may look like this:

There are 2 copies of the layout so you can cross off the cards as they are played in each scenario. Try playing the A on the first trick and then try ducking the first trick. This rule is so useful, we are going to say it again: **2**nd **player play low!**

Which suit to lead?

If you are making the opening lead, it is usually good to lead your longest suit. By playing your long suits, you **establish** tricks, even if you are not blessed with high cards.

On the next page, you are defending against a notrump contract.

The opponents have bid 3NT and you have to lead from:

- **♦** 9875432
- **♥** A3

What do you lead?

- **♦** 43
- ♣ AK

Sure it feels great running off with your three guaranteed tricks but that wouldn't be making the most of the cards you were dealt. Lead a spade! With any luck, after one more spade trick you will be the only player with spades. Then you won't win only those 3 tricks staring you in the face; you will win 5 spade tricks as well. Let's check out the view from partner's seat.

Dummy

- **♦** KJ
- **♥** QT87
- ♦ A08
- **♣** Q987

Lead:

S/he holds:

♠ X

- **♦** 106
- **9** 6542
- ♦ K2
- **♣** T6543

S/he sees declarer win your spade lead with the Ace and lead a diamond toward dummy's \AQ8. Declarer plays dummy's \Q and your partner wins her ♦K. You would love your partner to lead another spade. You are in luck because she knows rule X:

Return partner's suit unless you know better *Rule X*

If you find that playing the cards is the toughest part of the game, then I can't recommend highly enough the free program "LEARN TO PLAY BRIDGE". It makes the cards come alive in a way that ink on paper can not. The program is available from www.acbl.org

Which Card to Lead?

1st preference: The top of touching high cards

2nd preference: The 4th highest of your longest suit

In other words, don't lead the A unless you have the K, don't lead the K unless you have the Q, and so on. When your partner leads a high card, you can infer that they have the next highest one. When they lead a small card, you can infer that they have no more than 3 cards higher than it.

When you are to make the opening lead, partner will sometimes have bid a suit during the auction. If you have no outstanding lead of your own, and partner has bid a suit, you should lead that suit. When you do this, you may not have 4 cards in the suit, nor touching honours. Which card should you lead? Here are some examples with the correct lead in bold type:

8 3	lead the top of a doubleton	$(\mathbf{x}\mathbf{x})$
Q 7	even if it's an honour	(Hx)
K8 3	lead lowest from 3 cards with an honour	(Hxx)
9 7 2	lead the middle card from 3 small cards	(xxx)
0==0		

lead the 2nd highest from 4 small cards

A62 ??? if you are defending against a suit contract, it often pays not to lead this suit at all! Years of wretched experience have warned us that:

if you lead the Ace, the whole suit will look like this:

And if you lead a small one, the whole suit will look like this:

Declarer		Dummy	Declarer		
	Dummy				
K854		void	K		854
	Partner			Partner	
	QJT973			QJT973	

In this case, declarer will trump the first trick in dummy, and later win a trick with the K in her own hand.

In this case, declarer will win the first trick with the K, and never lose a trick in the suit.



So it pays not to lead a suit with the Ace unless you have the King to back it up. This is only true when defending against a suit contract. When the opponents are playing notrumps, they cannot trump your ace and, therefore you can lead the suit with impunity. In that case, you should treat the Ace like all the other honours and lead your lowest card unless you have only Ax.

3rd Hand

Now we know what partner's leads are all about, let's try sitting across the table: in each case, declarer's 1NT opening was raised to 3NT and partner makes the opening lead:

nakes the oper	illig leau.	
Lead: 3 You: QT5	Dummy plays the 2 Dummy 76 2	Partner's lead of a low card indicates they have an honour in the suit. Her aim is to decimate declarer's holding in the suit. You should cooperate by playing your highest card. The Queen
Lead : 3 You : QT5	Dummy plays the J Dummy A J 2	Again, partner seems to have length and strength in this suit. She will have the king (it's the only honour you can't see) so you should win the queen and return the ten to kill dummy's ace.
100. 0.10		
Lead: J You: K82	Dummy plays the Q Dummy Q 53	This is an easy one. Your king will lose to declarer's ace but that will make partner's ten a winner. How do we know partner has the ten? Because she led the J.
Lead: J You:A982	Dummy plays the 3 Dummy Q53	This one is not so easy. Suppose that declarer has the king. If you play the A, she will play a small one and eventually win 2 tricks in this suit. If you play small, however, declarer will win the King now but no further tricks in this suit – as long as you don't lead the suit. It must be partner who continues the suit later in the hand.
Lead: 9 You: AJT62	Dummy plays the 4 Dummy Q74	This suit is similar to the last one in that you must force out declarer's king by playing the J or T. Then, as long as it is <i>partner</i> who continues the suit, declarer will only take 1 trick.

Higher or Lower from Equals?

Although we *lead* the top of touching honours, we should *follow suit* with the lowest of touching high cards when defending:

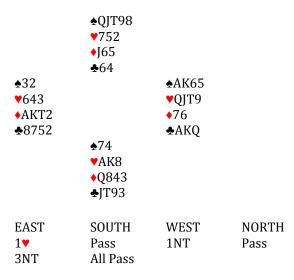
Partner leads ♥7 against 3NT and dummy comes has: ♥ KT4. you hold: ♥AQJ65. When dummy plays the ♥4, you should play the J, not the Q. This is purely for partner's benefit. Try sitting at the other side of the table to see why:

Partner has bid hearts and then spades and you are on lead against 3NT with \$IT2

- **v**872
- ♦A52
- ♣5432 You lead the ♥7 and dummy comes down with:
 - **◆**076
 - ♥KT4
 - **♦**KQJT
 - **♣**A87

Declarer plays a small card from dummy, partner wins the ♥Q and switches to the ♦9. What is your next move? How can you know who has the ♥J? If partner has it, leading hearts again will be successful but if declarer has it, you should switch your attack to another suit. Without the ♥J, partner gains nothing by having you lead the hearts – she may as well have played them herself. The answer of course, is that with AQJx of hearts, partner would have won the first trick with the jack, at the same time letting you know that she had the queen. So you must switch to a spade now (partner's other suit), attacking the dummy by leading your ♠J.

Practice Hand 1 - setting up winners

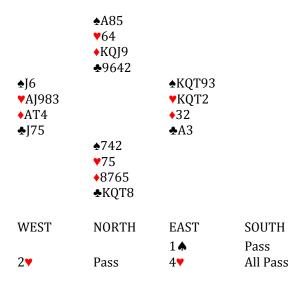


The bidding: West's 1NT response shows 6-9 points and denies 4 spades (since they could have been comfortably shown at the 1-level). It also denies 4 hearts (as she would have supported East). Therefore, East chooses the notrump game.

Lead: **♠**Q, top of touching high cards.

The play: The key is for declarer to create two more tricks with dummy's hearts. How does declarer know to do this? She knows from counting her tricks: ♠AK plus ♠AKQ makes only 7 yet 9 tricks are needed for the contract. Once the ♥AK have been removed, there will 9 tricks to take. If declarer panics and grabs all her *top tricks* at the start, she will have created extra tricks for the defence! When the defenders finally gain the lead with the ♥AK, they will be able to win tricks with their small cards in spades, diamonds and clubs.

Practice Hand 2 - trumps

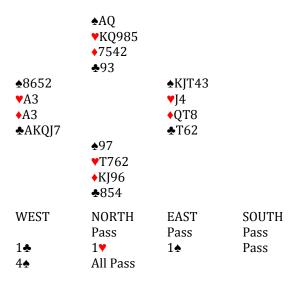


The bidding: West's 2-level response promises 10+ points. East has a fit with hearts and, liking the look of his short suits, thinks 24 combined points will be enough for game. Short suits are assets in a suit contract because you can trump but they are liabilities in notrump contracts.

Lead: ♦K, top of the sequence of touching honours.

The play: Upon winning the lead, declarer draws trumps (two rounds) then plays the spades. Lead the ♠J first, so that you still have a little spade to lead to get over to the long spades in dummy. Upon winning the ♠A, North can win one round of diamonds, but another round would be ruffed, so a club switch is in order. But East is up to the challenge – having "set up" dummy's spade suit, declarer throws two losing clubs away on the third and fourth rounds of spades. 11 tricks in all.

Practice Hand 3 - overcalls



The bidding: West is the only player with opening points and starts with 1♣. Once one side has opened the bidding, if the other side then comes into the bidding: that is an **overcall**. An overcall can be made with less than opening strength, but promises a decent 5-card suit. North can overcall 1♥ and East responds 1♠ regardless, and West likes the look of those short suits again, upgrading his hand to 20pts and bids game.

Lead: The ♥2. Best to lead partner's suit unless you know better.

The play: The ♥A wins the first trick and declarer starts drawing trumps, leading a small spade for a finesse. Say North wins with the ♠A, and cashes a top heart. Any further leads of hearts would allow declarer to trump in one hand and discard a loser in the other. So North switches to diamonds, but it is too late for the defence. East can draw the remaining trumps, and play dummy's clubs, eventually throwing away two diamonds from their own

hand.

Competitive Bidding: Overcalls & Doubles

Overcalls: There is only one opening bid on every hand. If the opponents open the bidding before you get a chance, you are now the *overcaller*, not the openener.

An overcall doesn't promise opening strength. It merely promises a good 5 card suit (KTxxx at worst) and about 8+ points at the one level. At the two level, an opening hand, or thereabouts, is needed.

If your right hand opponent opens $1 \blacklozenge$, the following hands would make fine $1 \blacktriangledown$ overcalls,

♠ Q2	♠ J	♠ AJ42
♥ AKJ64	♥ KQJ874	♥ AQT97
♦ 7643	♦ J3	♦ A7
♣ 82	♣ KT96	♣ 87
♣ 82	♣ KT96	♣ 87

Because we promise a good 5-card suit, partner only needs 3 card support to raise an overcall.

Doubles: Players may "double" their opponent's bids, thereby "upping the stakes". If a doubled contract goes down, the penalty is heavier. If a doubled contract makes, it scores more. At the low levels of bidding, however, it is rare that you know your opponents are not going to make their contract. Therefore, after the opponents open the bidding, "double" is used to ask partner to choose a trump suit. It suggests a good hand, but with no clear opinion about which suit will

play best as trumps. For example, you hold, ♠AQ42 ♥KT93 ♠AJ43 ♣4. When the opponents open 1♣, it is not clear which suit you would like to be trumps. Here you can double to ask partner to choose. More specifically, a takeout double shows a hand which has;

- 1- shortage (usually 2 or less) in the opponents' suit
- 2- opening high-card strength (12+)
- 3- support for the other suits (at least 3 cards in each)

This kind of double is called a **takeout double** because it asks partner to "take it out" to another suit. If partner is loaded with the opponents' suit and expects their contract to fail, s/he can pass your takeout double "for penalties."

When to double and when to overcall:

Sometimes it is not so clear. The scales are often tipped by how robust your major suits (\checkmark & \spadesuit) are. If your right hand opponent opens 1 \spadesuit , you should double on the following hands:

♦ KQT3	♦ AQ6	♠AJT
♥ AJ54	♥ KQ84	♥ KJ4
♦ 32	♦ 7	♦ A4
♣ KJT	♣ KT753	♣ QT872

2

... but overcall your long suit if it is a major. Eg:

 AQJ86	♠ QJ4	♠ QT872
♥ JT53	♥KJT73	♥ KJ4
♦ 3	♦A	♦ A4
♣ KJT	♣ AJ64	♣ AJT

Because the majors are rewarded in the scoring, we accentuate them during the bidding. Therefore, a takeout double of hearts guarantees 4 spades and a takeout double of spades guarantee 4 hearts. Rules were made to be broken but knowing *when* to break them is an art you will learn with practice. Good luck!

5-Card Majors

Though I wish it weren't true, a popular bidding method these days is "5-card majors". Even if you don't like the sound of it, you should learn how it works because many of your opponents will use it – and it's a good idea to know what your opponents are up to!

Very simply, playing 5-card majors, you and your partner agree not to open $1 \checkmark$ or $1 \spadesuit$ with less than 5 cards in that suit. This approach comes with pros and cons: An advantage is that responder, with only 3 cards in opener's major, knows of a fit (3+5=8). As you might have guessed the minor suits become the ugly ducklings in this clutch. Playing 5-card majors, what do you open with this hand:

- **♠** AJ73
- ▼ K842 You can't bid 1♥; that shows 5+♥s. "1♠"=same problem
- Q53 Instead, you must choose a minor suit to bid. A
- ♣ K9 sensible agreement here, is to bid your "longer minor" In this case, you would say "1♦".

The key to understanding 5-card majors becomes apparent when you think about this question:

If partner opens 1 of a minor and has less than 4 cards in that suit,

WHAT KIND OF HAND DO THEY HAVE?

Once you have the answer to that question, you'll have an easy time understanding the subsequent bidding in a 5-card major system.

If you would like to play 5-card majors, make sure you understand that *if partner opens 1*♠ *or 1*♦ *with less than 4 cards in that suit, THEY MUST HAVE A BALANCED HAND.*

The next important thing to know is what partner's rebid will be with a balanced hand. Suppose partner opens 1♣ and you respond 1♥ and now partner bids 2♠. Can they possibly have only 3 clubs?

NO WAY! If they had only 3 clubs and opened "1♣" they would have had a balanced hand... and they would have rebid 1NT, not 2♦.

If you're playing 5-card majors, it's very helpful if opener REBIDS 1NT WITH ALL BALANCED HANDS (unless, of course, they've found a fit). So with ♠KJT5 ♥876 ♦K52 ♣AQ4, by all means, open with "1♣". But when partner responds 1♦ or 1♥, DO NOT THEN BID "1♠"! Rebid 1NT instead, so partner knows the "nature" of your hand!

Suggested Further Reading

On Bidding: the "bible" of bidding for new players is unquestionably Ron Klinger's outstanding book: *Guide to Better Bridge*. Derrick Browne takes a more conversational tone in *Improver's Bridge*. Also highly recommended is Paul Marston's *The Language of Bidding*. As its title would suggest, Marston's book fosters a deliciously intuitive understanding of bidding as a language, rather than merely describing the "rules" as some authors seem content to do (gasp).

On Play: This topic has two entwined branches; defending and declaring. Some books attempt to do both and only a few succeed. Ron Klinger's *Guide to Better Card Play* is one such book but, laden with detail, is not for the faint-hearted. Marston's *Principles of Card Play* is more digestible with less information in total.

On Declarer Play: One of the best bridge books ever written is Dorothy Hayden Truscott's *Winning Declarer Play*. It literally takes you from beginner to advanced in 100 or so pages. Eddie Kantar's *Introduction to Declarer Play* is easy to read and less ambitious in scope.

On Defender's Play: Kantar has written swathes on this topic. His book, *Introduction to Defender's play* makes the hardest part of the game fascinating, fun and simple. If you finish that, *Advanced Bridge Defence I & II* are even better.

SOFTWARE: Try *Bridge Base Online* www.bridgebase.com to practice playing and bidding. If you need particular help with declarer play, *Bridge Master* is fantastic and the *Audrey Grant Edition* is pitched at the right level. Even better than this, visit www.acbl.org and download their free *Learn to Play Bidge* program. It's free!

Bridge opens doors you cannot imagine exist until you have played the game. These doors are not always plated with gold. Bridge players can be sadistic:

Where's the hand you held during the auction?

-Jan Nanitschke when he saw dummy.

They can be self-effacing:

I favour light opening bids. When you're my age, you're never sure that the bidding will get back around to you in time.

-Oswald Jacoby at 77.

And great bridge players know that;

...the sum of all technical knowledge cannot make a master bridge player.

-Ely Culbertson.