

# INTRODUCTION

Bridge is a game of logic where two partnerships play against each other in two steps:

- 1) the bidding - players make bids to show each other the value of their hands - how many tricks their 2 hands will take, and
- 2) card play.

## THE CARDS.

The deck you will use consists of 52 cards which breaks down into four suits. The suits are ranked in the following order:

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

The spade suit is the highest and the club suit is the lowest. In each suit are the **honour** cards AKQJ10 and then the lower rank cards ranging from 9 to the 2. The 2 is the lowest card and the Ace the highest.

## TRUMPS

The "trump" suit is decided during the bidding - a **trump** beats any other card. It can be played when you have no more cards in the suit led and will win the trick. When more than one trump is played the highest wins.

## STEPS IN THE GAME OF BRIDGE.

1) Deal

2) The Bidding Period (Auction)

As soon as all cards are distributed, each player picks up his hand and arranges it according to suits (spades altogether, hearts altogether, etc.)

Dealer makes the first bid and then his left hand opponent makes his bid and so on, rotating around the table in a clockwise movement.

After the opening bid the bidding continues until three consecutive passes. You may bid again after having passed

A bid is an undertaking to win the stated number of tricks plus six with the chosen suit as trumps. You can bid from 1 to 7 in any suit or No Trumps. The minimum number of tricks which you can contract for is seven. A bid of 1 club contracts to make 7 tricks with clubs as trumps. A bid of 2 clubs contracts to take 8 tricks in clubs. A bid of 5 clubs contracts to take 11 tricks in clubs.

Each bid must be higher than the previous bid. This can be done by bidding for more tricks or by bidding for the same number of tricks in a higher-ranking suit. (Suit rank: NT, Spades, Hearts, Diamonds, Clubs). In other words, any player at his turn can make a higher bid. A bid is higher than a previous bid if it is larger in number than the previous bid (eg. 3 clubs is higher than 2 hearts) or if it is the same number but in a higher rank (1 heart is higher than 1 club).

The Declarer is the player who first bids the trump suit or NT from the partnership that wins the contract. Declarer plays both partnership hands.

### 3) OPENING LEAD,

The player on declarer's left makes an opening lead the first card to be played.

4) REVEALING THE DUMMY. The partner of the declarer places his hand face up on the table.

### 5) THE PLAY PERIOD

One card played from each hand constitutes a trick. When all cards are played 13 tricks will have been played. The player who plays the highest-ranking card of the suit led wins the trick. You must follow suit when possible. If you cannot follow suit, you can play any other card, e.g. if the king of spades is led, the ace of clubs will not win the trick (unless clubs are trumps).

Card play aim, is to make your contract or to stop the opposition making theirs. As declarer, play on your long suits, counting your hand and dummy.

### 6) SCORING

Briefly, the first six tricks do not count. The score for the seventh and subsequent trick depends upon which suit is trumps.

- 30 points in spades and hearts (major suits)
- 20 points in diamonds and clubs (minor suits)
- 30 points in no trumps, plus 10 points bonus for no trumps

In addition to the trick score you also get a bonus of 50 points for making the contract, known as the part score bonus. There is also a game and slam bonus you will hear about in later lessons.

## BIDDING.

The aim in the bidding is to win the contract and to bid the full extent of your hands.

The first bid (not a pass) at the table is known as the opening bid - bid your longest suit or NT if you do not have a long suit.

The opener's partner's (known as the responder) first move will be to agree with partner on a trump suit - called FINDING A FIT - very important. You have a suit fit when you hold 8+ cards between you, e.g.

OPENING BID	PARTNER
♠ AK982	Q73
♥ 54	9642
♦ AK7	Q8
♣ 964	A732

1♠

2♠

In the above you opened 1S with your longest suit. Partner (the responder) raised the spade suit confirming the "fit".

Another example:

OPENING BID	<u>PARTNER</u>
♠ AJ76	K9832
♥ J2	A93
♦ AQJ76	84
♣ 76	Q82

1♦

1♠

2♠

This time the opening bid is a diamond, the long suit but this time partner suggests an alternative and you agree - you have found a fit in spades.

**FINDING A FIT IS IMPORTANT BUT FINDING A MAJOR FIT IS VERY IMPORTANT.**

## HAND EVALUATION FOR OPENING BIDS.

Levels of Bidding		
7 level 13 tricks	7 NT	Grand Slam 37+ pts
	7 ♠	
	7 ♥	
	7 ♦	
	7 ♣	
6 level 12 tricks	6 NT	Small Slam 33+ pts
	6 ♠	
	6 ♥	
	6 ♦	
	6 ♣	
5 level 11 tricks	5 NT	Game 29 + pts
	5 ♠	
	5 ♥	
	5 ♦	
	5 ♣	
4 level 10 tricks	4 NT	Game 25 + pts
	4 ♠	
	4 ♥	
	4 ♦	
	4 ♣	
3 level 9 tricks	3 NT	Game 25 + Pts
	3 ♠	
	3 ♥	
	3 ♦	
	3 ♣	
2 level 8 tricks	2 NT	part score
	2 ♠	
	2 ♥	
	2 ♦	
	2 ♣	
1 level 7 tricks	1 NT	
	1 ♠	
	1 ♥	
	1 ♦	
	1 ♣	

This system is orientated towards 5-card major suits

Value of the honour cards (HCP = High Card Points)

A = 4

K = 3 Each suit contains 10 HCP

Q = 2 Each deal contains 40 HCP

J = 1

### Ranking of the suits

No Trumps NT

Spades ♠

Hearts ♥

Diamonds ♦

Clubs ♣

Note: Spades and Hearts are known as the Major suits Clubs and Diamonds are the Minor Suits

### Basic 1 level Opening Bid rules

- The **Dealer** is the first to call, they may either **Pass** or make a bid naming the level of bidding and a suit
- **To open the bidding at the 1 level you need between 12 and 21 HCP**
- Bid your longest suit
- Bid the higher ranking 5 card suit
- Opening the bidding at other levels will be covered in Lessons 4 and 5
- Finding an 8-card (or longer) major suit **fit** is a priority as major suit contracts are worth more than minor suit contracts. 4♥ and 4♠ need one less trick than 5♣ and 5♦. With no major suit fit, the next priority should be to play in a No Trump contract

### Order of priority for Opener's first bid at the 1 level

1NT	15 - 17	must be Balanced
1♠/♥	12 - 21	At least 5 spades
1♦/♣	12 - 21	At least 3 cards in suit

### Hand Pattern or Shape.

The pattern of the hand describes the length of each suit in the hand starting with longest suit. For example to say that a hand is a 5-4-2-2 shape means it contains a 5 card suit, a 4 card suit and two doubletons (2 card suits) while a 6-3-3-1 pattern means that the hand has a 6 card suit, two 3 card suits and a singleton (1 card). A void suit means the hand contains no cards in that suit.

♠ 98742

♥ K4

♦ AKQ4

♣ Q2

♠ AK76

♥ KQ95

♦ AK8

♣ 86

♠ K10854

♥ AK1096

♦ 6

♣ K3

♠ K86

♥ KJ3

♦ AQ64

♣ K102

♠ A9743

♥ QJ3

♦ Q9

♣ JS1082

**Bid**      1 ♠                      1 ♦                      1 ♠                      1 NT                      Pass

## Opening Lead.

You defend when the opposition wins the bidding. Whether you play high or low depends whether you are first, second or third player to the trick.

### The Lead.

Lead your longest suit:

- Lead the highest card it is headed by a sequence of honours.
- Lead a low card if your honours are not in sequence.  
But not if the Ace is the honour. The Ace is **not a good lead** – it should be used to "chop the head" off the King when the opposition leads it.
- Lead your short suit. (generally in a suit contract). But NOT an singleton honour.  
If you have 2 cards in the suit lead the top card.

### Examples:

- \* KJ72 lead 2 - honours are not next to each other (touching)
- \* KQJ6 lead K – sequence of honours
- \* AK742 - lead A - K is adjacent.
- \* A 10942 - lead A – **never underlead** an Ace
- \* 82 - 8 in a suit contract or if partner has shown length in that suit
- \* Q singleton - Lead another suit

## Play Period

### Finessing

A useful technique for declarer to gain an extra trick is to "Finesse". To finesse you need a high card then miss a card then the next card or better the next few. AQ or 108 or KJ109 for example. These cards can be in hand or in dummy or a combination of the two.

How it works

Say the AQ is in dummy. If you lead a small card towards the AQ then if the LHO has the King, it is trapped. If he plays the K you will take the A and the Q is the next highest. If he doesn't play it you will finesse by playing the Q which will win and the A will win also so you will win two tricks.

Say you have the Axx in dummy and QJx in hand. Lead the Q and you are guaranteed two tricks (but not three) If the LHO rises with the K you will win the ace and the Jack. If he doesn't you play low in dummy and the Q wins, then the A will win but no defender will let you win the jack.

Of course if the King is with RHO the queen will be taken by the K and only the A will win. The Finesse fails All things being equal the finesse will work 50% of the time.

Things are rarely equal however if you are going to finesse LHO for the King of Spades and RHO has bid spades twice he will have at least 5 spades probably six. Therefore, he is much more likely to have the K, similarly if the RHO opened 1NT then he will have more points than the other opponent and is therefore more likely to have the K.

When not to finesse.

1. When you have the tenace in the two hands and do not have the card underneath i.e.  
Dummy has Axx and You have Qxx. If you play the Q then you cannot make more than one trick on best defence.
2. When it could cost more than the one or two tricks you could gain.
3. When there are better alternatives. A seven-card suit that breaks 3-3 may provide you with a discard that enables you to make the contract.