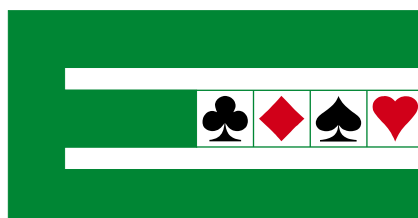


# Basic Youth Bridge Course

- One of the world's greatest card games, at home, at the club and on the Internet -



- Are you up for the Challenge?



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## Introduction and basic ideas of the game

**Bridge is arguably the world's most popular card game. The basic rules are relatively simple, whereas the possibilities are endless. To play bridge you need four people and a normal deck with 52 cards.**

A normal deck has four suits, spades, hearts, diamonds and clubs. The Ace (A) is the highest card. After that come the King (K), Queen (Q), Jack (J), Ten (10) all the way down to the Two, the lowest card. Ace, King, Queen, Jack and even Ten are named honour cards or just honours, and all cards below are named spot cards (pips).

When all four players have sorted their cards, it could look like this:

♠ Q 3 2 ♥ 9 8 5 ♦ A 7 3 ♣ A K J 7	♠ A J 7 4 ♥ T 7 6 3 ♦ 6 5 4 ♣ T 4	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;">             N              W     E              S           </div>	♠ 8 5 ♥ Q 4 2 ♦ K Q T 9 2 ♣ Q 8 2
♠ K T 9 6 ♥ A K J ♦ J 8 ♣ 9 6 5 3			

Bridge is a pairs game where you and your partner must co-operate to take as many tricks as possible. In order to make it easier when we play bridge we name the four players West, North, East and South. North and South are partners against East and West.

A bridge hand is named a deal, a hand or a board, and is played with thirteen tricks, where all four players follow with a card to each trick. One card from each of the four players is a trick, hence thirteen tricks altogether. The player with the highest card wins the trick. The play is always clockwise, card by card.

In the example above we pretend that West starts with the Ace of Clubs. North plays the four, East the two (deuce) and South the three. West has played the highest card and wins the trick.

East-West (E-W) are leading 1-0, and as West won the trick he is also the player to continue at trick two.

When all thirteen cards have been played the deal is over. You are entitled to play any card you like, with the exception that you must always follow suit if you can. In other words, if West starts with the Ace of Clubs, every player

with a club must play one. However, if you are out of clubs (void), you have a free choice among all other cards.

## A pairs game

At bridge it is important to bear in mind that you must co-operate with your partner at all times. If your partner plays the king, it does not make sense that you play the ace. Even if you play the deuce, your side will win the trick!

In tournaments, bridge is played with pre-dealt cards, which means that everyone around the room plays the same cards. In order to make sure that the next table gets the exact same distribution of the four hands it is important to remember that you must not play 'to the middle' of the table.




Instead, all players place their cards face down in front of him/her from right to left or left to right (your choice). If you place the card horizontally, your side has lost the trick, whereas if you place the card vertically your side won the trick. When the deal is complete, it is easy to count tricks won and lost. It is also easy to collect all your cards and put them back into the pocket you took them from when the deal was about to begin.

## Declarer, dummy and defenders

One side will always be 'attackers'. Accordingly, the other side will become 'defenders'. The leader of the attacking side is called declarer, and here comes a rule that makes bridge unique. Every time you become declarer your

partner will table his thirteen cards, fully visible to the other three players.

In bridge books and magazines you will always see South as declarer; then it will be easier to illustrate. A deal could look like this:

	Dummy	
	♠ A Q 8 7	
	♥ Q 9 8	
	♦ Q J 5	
	♣ K 7 5	
♠ J 10 9 4		♠ 6 5
♥ J 6 4 3		♥ A 7 2
♦ 9 6 3		♦ A K 4 2
♣ 9 8		♣ Q J 10 2
		
	♠ K 3 2	
	♥ K 10 5	
	♦ 10 8 7	
	♣ A 6 4 3	
	Declarer	

South has become declarer. Obviously, any player can become declarer, and we will come back to that a little later.

The play begins with the opening lead by declarer's left hand opponent (LHO), this time West. He can choose any card he likes. When the opening lead has been made, North will table his thirteen cards face up sorted in vertical columns in suits, with the highest card nearest to him/herself. From here, only declarer decides which cards should be played from the table, known as "dummy". As dummy your only duty is to play the cards declarer asks for.

As dummy you will not be an active player, and you are not allowed, directly or indirectly, to let declarer know which cards he should play to the various tricks. The play will always run clockwise, so one after the other West, North, East and South will play a card to a trick. The hand that wins the trick decides which card to lead to the following trick, and the play will continue like that until all

thirteen cards from the four hands have been played.

As South is declarer he will have to administer twenty-six cards, his own thirteen and dummy's thirteen. In order to avoid that South must stretch to reach the cards he wants to play from the dummy; he will ask his partner to play a specific card. He takes the card and holds it in front of him.

As declarer, your main objective is to achieve a goal. A typical goal could be to take nine tricks. If you succeed, you will be rewarded with a number of points. As defender, your goal is evidently the opposite, namely, if possible, to stop declarer from taking the nine tricks he needs. If you are successful, you will be rewarded with a number of points and declarer "penalized" for not taking the tricks he was supposed to.

It is always best to take as many tricks as possible, but the point scheme will first of all reward your goal. If you get nine tricks it may for example give you 400 points. If you take ten or eleven tricks (overtricks), you will get 430 or 460 points, whereas you will lose 50 points if you only manage to take eight tricks. To risk your nine tricks in order to maybe take ten or eleven tricks therefore rarely pays off as the potential loss is much greater than the potential gain.

We concede that it might be boring to be defenders to fight for lowly 50s, when declarer can get several hundreds or even thousands of points, but if you compete at bridge you will always be compared to the ones with the same cards as yourself. Trying to achieve the best result possible is therefore a reward in itself, and if you take two tricks and the defenders at the next table only take one, you have done a better job than them. 100 is better than 50.

## Auction and contract

We now have a basic idea of how the game is played technically. Before we get to the play of the cards, we have, through a bidding auction, decided what declarer's





goal is. When we looked at a deal you might have noticed that the spade suit was at the very top and named first. It is because the spades are the highest ranking suit. After spades come in descending order hearts, diamonds and clubs. Additionally, we have something named Notrump (NT). As the word notrump implies, the play in NT has no trumps. Notrump is higher ranking than any suit.

When we talk about bidding, we often use the terms "minors", "majors" and "notrump". The minor suits (minors) are diamonds and clubs, the major suits (majors) spades and hearts.

The (bidding) auction starts with the player who dealt the cards. As is the case with the play, the auction is always clockwise, and you are only allowed to make a bid when it is your turn.

In tournament bridge you will have bidding boxes in front of you to the right, and you will use the bidding cards from that box instead of speaking out the bid you want to make. If you play at home or in the cafeteria with friends and with no bidding boxes on hand, it is perfectly fine to speak your bids.

The lowest possible bid is One Club, followed by One Diamond, One Heart, One Spade, 1NT, and so on until you get to 7NT, the highest contract possible. If you bid say One Spade, it means that your goal is to take seven (one + six) tricks with spades as trumps. We will come back to what trumps are. You can never reverse the auction, i.e. bid something lower than someone has bid already. If we assume that North has bid Two Spades, your lowest legitimate bid is 2NT. If you want to bid a suit, you must bid at least three of that suit. If you have no wish to bid, you are always allowed to pass, which essentially means "no bid", a term used in the old days before the bidding boxes were introduced. The auction is over when three players have passed after the last bid (suit or notrump).

Before we look at the play in a suit contract, we will focus

on the play in notrump. To reach a contract of 1NT or 3NT is relatively normal. Playing in 1NT we need to take seven (one + six) tricks. If the final bid, or the contract as it is usually called, is 3NT, our goal is to take three + six = nine tricks. To play in 7NT we must consequently try to take all thirteen tricks (seven + six = 13 tricks).

The player within the declaring partnership who first bid the suit or notrump of the final contract is always the declarer. If you open the bidding with 1NT and your partner bids 3NT, you who opened 1NT will be declarer, although it was your partner who bid notrump last. The issue is that you bid notrump first!

If you are still with us, you may ask why we want to bid higher, for example 3NT or 6NT, when we could have stopped in 1NT. The risk of bidding high is of course that we might not take that many tricks and consequently go down (concede points to the defenders). This has something to do with the points you are awarded for bidding high. If we, as an example, bid 1NT and take twelve tricks, we will get 240 points. That sounds quite good, does it not? But the thing is that if we bid 6NT instead and take the same twelve tricks, the reward will be 990 or 1440 points, depending on the vulnerability (see later).

The reason why the points vary so dramatically is because we are awarded a bonus for certain pre-determined levels. In notrump play the bonus levels are 3NT, 6NT and 7NT.

To bid 4NT or 5NT will then make little sense, as you will get the same points for bidding 3NT with one or two overtricks (ten or eleven).

## Simple declarer play

As declarer you have much to think about. When dummy is spread the first thing to do (after thanking your partner) is to count your 100% certain tricks.

### Let us take a couple of examples

You are declarer in 1NT (seven tricks, one + six). West leads the King of Spades, and this is what you see when your partner has tabled his cards:

♠K	♠ 9 6 5									
	♥ K J 5									
	♦ 8 6 4 3									
	♣ Q J 7									
	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">N</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">W</td> <td style="background-color: #008000; color: white;"></td> <td style="text-align: center;">E</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">S</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		N		W		E		S	
	N									
W		E								
	S									
	♠ A 7 4									
	♥ A Q 4 2									
	♦ T 9 5									
	♣ A K 2									

We start by counting our certain tricks. In spades we have one trick, the ace. In hearts we have four tricks, ace, king, queen and jack.

No trick in diamonds, whereas clubs will yield three tricks. It is true that we have the four highest clubs, but at notrump we can never take more tricks than the number of cards held by the hand with the greatest number cards in the suit.

When we add up we arrive at eight tricks,  $1+4+0+3 = 8$ .

As 1NT requires that we take seven tricks, everything seems to be fine. We win the lead with the ace and start by cashing our winners. A good rule of thumb when cashing your winners is to start by playing the honour(s) from the hand with fewer cards in the suit. In the actual example we should start hearts by playing the two to the jack. Then we play the king (again the honour from the hand with fewer cards) and follow with the four from hand.

When we finally play the five from dummy, we can take the ace and queen in comfort. If we had started with the Ace of Hearts, we might be facing a problem. We follow with the five from dummy, and then we play a low card to dummy's king. Now we can cash the jack, but then we are stuck in the dummy and can't cash the queen.

Since we must always play from the hand that won the previous trick, we need to come back to our hand in another suit in order to cash the Queen of Hearts. As it is here, we can come back to the hand by leading a club to the ace, but you don't always have that opportunity.

We now assume that you are declarer in 3NT (nine tricks,  $3+6$ ). West leads the Queen of Clubs and this is what you see:



♠ K Q T 3  
♥ A Q 9  
♦ 8 7 4 2  
♣ 8 4



♠ J 7 4  
♥ K J T 2  
♦ A 9 5  
♣ A K 3

When you count your certain winners, you have four in hearts. You do indeed have the six highest hearts, but remember that you must follow suit when you cash your tricks, so you cannot take more than four tricks (number of cards in the South hand). You have one trick in diamonds (the ace) and two in clubs (ace and king). So altogether you have seven certain winners you can take whenever you want to. You need at least another two tricks to fulfill the contract, so must look for tricks elsewhere.

It does not look promising in the minor suits (diamonds and clubs), but there is a good chance in the spade suit once the Ace of Spades has been knocked out. When the ace is driven out, there are three tricks to take in that suit.

So win the lead of the diamond queen with the ace and resist the temptation to cash all your certain tricks at this point. Lead the Jack of Spades from hand. Again, start with the honour from the hand with fewer cards in the suit. You "unblock" the honour from the hand with only three cards and will later have small cards in your hand to reach dummy's high cards in the suit.

Remember that you must always play from the hand that took the previous trick.

If you cash your certain tricks in hearts and clubs before you set up (establish) the spade suit, you will also set up club tricks for the defence when they get in with the Ace of Spades. Establishing the spade suit is no good if you have set up five or six tricks for the defence before you can come to nine.

As a defender in a notrump contract the technique is more or less the same.

We assume that the contract is 3NT. As West you are on lead with this hand:

♠ Q J 10 9 8  
♥ A K  
♦ K T 9  
♣ 9 8 4

**Which card do you select?**

There will usually be many different aspects to take into consideration before you decide what to lead but, as is the case for declarer, it is often a good idea to delay cashing your certain tricks and instead try to establish winners in the long suits. Normally you will get your aces and kings in due course anyway.

The important issue for you with this hand is that you will be able to take spade tricks before declarer has time to knock out your ace and king of hearts (entry cards) and your King of Diamonds. The full layout could be:

♠ K 7 3 2		♠ 6 5
♥ 7 3		♥ 6 5 4 2
♦ Q 7 4		♦ J 6 5 2
♣ K Q 5 2		♣ T 6 3
♠ Q J 10 9 8	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="margin-bottom: 5px;">N</div> <div style="margin-bottom: 5px;">W</div> <div style="margin-bottom: 5px;">S</div> <div style="margin-bottom: 5px;">E</div> </div>	
♥ A K		
♦ K T 9		
♣ 9 8 4		
♠ A 4		
♥ Q J T 9 8		
♦ A 8 3		
♣ A J 7		

If West starts by leading a spade, declarer is a tempo behind and cannot set up heart tricks before West has established his spades. If West is impatient and cashes the ace and/or king of hearts prematurely, declarer can easily wrap up ten tricks.

## Hand evaluation

As said earlier, a bridge deal always starts with the (bidding) auction. The auction determines a contract which you will fight for during the play of the hand. Let us pretend that South is dealer (the player who bids first).

South's thirteen cards are:

♠ AK64 ♥ QJ7 ♦ AQ84 ♣ 82

Do we have a good or a bad hand? There are different ways of evaluating a hand. The most important one is the point count. We count points for the four highest cards in each suit. These points are named high card points (hcp), and the scale is as follows:

**Ace 4 points (hcp)**  
**King 3 points (hcp)**  
**Queen 2 points (hcp)**  
**Jack 1 point (hcp)**

Before the bidding begins and after we have sorted our cards we count the combined points in the hand. In the example above South has been dealt 16 hcp. AK in spades

seven, QJ in hearts are three, and AQ in clubs are six.  $7+3+6 = 16$  hcp.

The deck has four suits with ten hcp in each ( $4+3+2+1 = 10$ ), and the total is  $4 \times 10 = 40$  hcp. Since we have four players at the table, each player, on average, will be dealt ten hcp, and therefore we have got a pretty good hand, way above average. The more hcp we have, the higher we hope to play.

Apart from counting hcp, we also want to determine which hand type we have. There are three different hand types: balanced hands, semi-balanced hands, and unbalanced hands. A balanced hand can have three different patterns:

**5332** Five cards in one suit, three cards in two suits and one suit with two cards (doubleton).

**4432** Here we have two four-card suits, one three-card suit and one suit with two cards (doubleton).

**4333** This is the most balanced of them all. We have one four-card suit and three cards in the other three suits.

Hands with a shortness (shortage), i.e. no more than one card in a suit, are named unbalanced and all other hand types that do not contain a singleton or void, or that don't have the required patterns for a balanced hand, are named semi-balanced, for example a 5422 or 6322 shape.

## Opening 1NT

We have now learned a simple and good way of evaluating our hand. If we have 13 points or more, we must open the bidding, if we have fewer we pass.

One of the most common opening bids is 1NT. If we open 1NT, we have 15-17 hcp altogether and a balanced hand. Let us take the example from earlier, where South was dealer with these cards.

♠ AK64 ♥ QJ7 ♦ AQ84 ♣ 82

This is a perfect hand for an opening of 1NT. We have 16 hcp and a balanced hand! The fact that we don't have honour cards in all suits is less important.

## Partscore, game and slam

The aim of the auction is to collect as many points as possible for your side. The higher we bid and the more tricks we take, the more points we get. When the contract has been determined, we know what is at stake. There are three pre-determined levels. A partscore is the lowest level. At notrump, 1NT and 2NT are called partscores or partscore contracts. Next level is game. If we bid to 3NT, the stake is higher and we get a bonus if we manage to

take the nine tricks that are required. The third level is small slam. If we bid 6NT, we must take twelve tricks. If we succeed, we will get the bonus for game and in addition the bonus awarded for a small slam.

Above everything else we have the grand slam. If we bid 7NT and take all the tricks we get a bonus for game, an additional bonus for a small slam, and finally another bonus for the thirteenth trick.

How do we know how high to bid? As at the end of the day it is a matter of taking as many tricks as possible, the scale below is merely a rule of thumb, but on average it works remarkably well.

You need this many combined hcp (you and your partner between you) for the various bonus levels:

- 3NT 25 hcp
- 6NT 33 hcp
- 7NT 37 hcp

### Practice examples 1NT

We take four examples. Your partner has opened 1NT (15-17 hcp)'s and you are dealt the following cards. What do you want to bid?

- A. ♠ QJ62 ♥ T52 ♦ AT6 ♣ 872
- B. ♠ KQ6 ♥ 952 ♦ AK3 ♣ T872
- C. ♠ 842 ♥ AK5 ♦ Q952 ♣ 742
- D. ♠ AK7 ♥ QJ73 ♦ AJ8 ♣ KT3



A. Pass! At best your partner has 17 hcp, so between you your maximum is 24 hcp. As we can never have the required 25 hcp for game (3NT), we pass at our first opportunity. Although we have a fair chance of taking eight tricks and thereby making 2NT, there is no reason to bid it, because you don't get a bonus for bidding 2NT. When game is out of the question, we try to stop as low as possible in order not to go down when there is no need. 1NT with an overtrick (eight tricks) will give the same score (120) as 2NT just made will.

B. Bid 3NT! We now have 12 hcp. Between partner and us we have 27-29 hcp, more than is normally needed for 3NT, but not enough for slam.

C. Bid 2NT! Now the situation is a little unclear. We have 9 hcp, and if partner has 16-17 it will often be enough for 3NT. If he or she has 15, however, it will normally not be enough. The bid of 2NT is an invite to game. If partner has a maximum for his 1NT, 16-17, he will raise to 3NT. If he or she only has 15, we will get a pass and the contract will be 2NT. Then let us hope that it can make.

D. Bid 6NT! Our 18 hcp added to partner's 15-17 will give us between 33 and 35 hcp. We have enough strength for a small slam but not for a grand slam.

### Declarer play in notrump

When you as declarer see the dummy, you should always pause to plan the play. A simple and easy way to go about it is to ask yourself the following three questions:

- \* How many certain tricks do I have?
- \* Where can I establish extra tricks?
- \* Any dangers to consider?

An example. As South we are declarer in 3NT. West leads the Queen of Hearts, and this is what we see:

♥ Q	♠ 7 5 3 2									
	♥ A K									
	♦ A Q T 3									
	♣ 7 5 3									
	<table border="1" style="background-color: #4CAF50; color: white; width: 40px; height: 40px; text-align: center; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S	
	N									
W		E								
	S									
	♠ K Q 8									
	♥ 8 7									
	♦ K J 8 4									
	♣ A 9 4 2									

We have the dummy in front of us, and it is time to plan the play. Step one is to count our certain tricks (winners). We have two in hearts, four in diamonds and one in clubs.



We need another two tricks and so must look for extra tricks. Hearts can never give you more than two tricks, diamonds never more than four, because you must follow suit when you cash your winners. Making more than one club trick is also a bleak prospect, because we only have the ace.

Let us turn attention to the spade suit, where we need to develop two extra tricks to fulfill our contract. In order to take two spade tricks we need the king and queen to score separately. In other words, the defenders' ace must not be played on the same trick as our king or queen. If we lead the king or queen from our hand, one defender will win with his ace and continue hearts to establish their suit. Then we will only get eight tricks and go one down.

Is there a chance to take the missing two tricks in spades then? Yes there is, but it requires that East has the ace. If we can force him to decide before we do, then there is hope. We win the first heart trick in the dummy with the king or ace and lead the two of Spades. When East follows with a small card we try the queen. If East has the ace, West cannot win the trick. If we succeed we get one of our missing tricks. Now what?

We are in the South hand and we want to get back to the dummy to lead another spade up. So we play a low diamond to dummy's ten and continue with the Three of Spades. If East has the ace, he has no good answer. If he goes up with the ace, we will play a small card and score our remaining honour later, and if East follows with a small card, we try the honour. Again West cannot win the trick when East has the ace.

By playing the hand like this we have increased our chance of success from 0 to 50%. Our wish was that East was dealt the Ace of Spades, and that will happen half of the time. Either East has it or West has it. If West has the ace we are about to go down, but at least we did the best we could.

## Hold up and finesse

We take one more example. Once again you are declarer in 3NT, and West leads the King of Spades. This is what you see:

♠ 8 2	N W     E S
♥ A K 2	
♦ A Q T 7 4	
♣ 7 5 3	
♠ K	
♠ A 7 4	
♥ 8 7 3	
♦ J 9 8 3	
♣ A K 4	

We always start by thanking partner and counting our certain tricks. We have one in spades, the ace, two in hearts, one in diamonds and two in clubs. That adds up to six certain tricks. As we need nine tricks to make 3NT, we must look for three extra tricks.

Question two is where we are going for those extra tricks. It seems impossible to get more than the one we have in spades, the same applies to hearts. In diamonds, however, the prospects are pretty good. If we concede a trick to the king, we should be able to get extra tricks in that suit. We have all the high diamond cards except the king, and as we have five diamonds in dummy. The suit should yield at least four tricks.

With four diamond tricks, one in spades, two in hearts and two in clubs we have the nine tricks we require. We have a line of play!

Now we have an answer to question two and proceed to question three. Are there any dangers to consider? Well, maybe. West has hit our sore spot with his lead of a spade. As we may lose a trick to the King of Diamonds, there is a risk that the defence can take four spade tricks along with diamond king before we have taken our nine. The fact that we have tricks to spare is hardly a consolation if they have taken five tricks before we get in again.

Is there a way to guard against this? Well, maybe again. We can let West hold the first trick. He will no doubt continue with another spade, and we will now stick to the plan by holding up (ducking) again. The third spade we must win perforce, and from the table we let go (pitch, discard) a club. Definitely not a diamond as this is the suit we will go after for extra tricks.

What we have achieved by holding up twice in spades will materialize later when we play diamonds. After the first three tricks the position is:

♠ ---	N W     E S
♥ A K 2	
♦ A Q T 7 4	
♣ 7 5	
♠ ---	
♥ 8 7 3	
♦ J 9 8 3	
♣ A K 4	

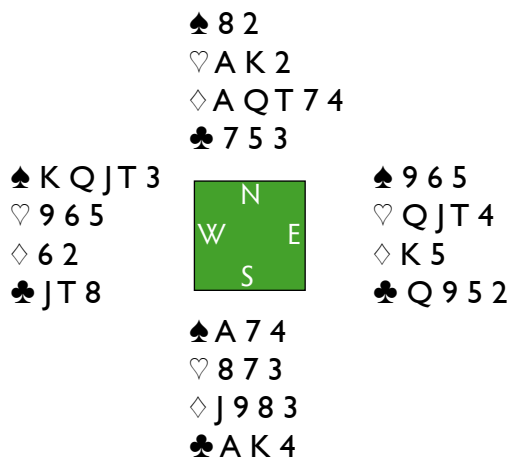
We have taken one trick and E-W two. We are in our hand and can tackle the diamond suit. Who would we like to hold the King of Diamonds?

West! If West has that card, we will be able to take five diamond tricks if we play correctly. Our aim is to lead the Nine of Diamonds from hand (jack or eight are also fine because the cards are "equals" when we have the ten in dummy). If West follows with a small card, we will ask for the four from dummy. If West covers the nine with the king, we will of course overtake with the ace and will easily take five tricks.

If the nine holds the trick, we continue playing diamonds from our hand and repeat the procedure from earlier. If West produces the king, we win the trick with the ace, and if he follows with a small card, we play the seven from dummy.

This way of play is known as a "finesse" in bridge terminology. Our hope is that a particular honour card is in the "pocket" (also known as "onside"). The important point is, as earlier seen, that we play from "weakness towards strength". If we play diamonds from dummy, this will not work equally well. If we cash the ace, West will play a small card, and if we play the queen from dummy, West will win the trick with his king.

A finesse will work 50% of the time; either West or East has the card. If we play the Queen of Diamonds from the dummy, it does not matter who has the king, because the defence will win a trick no matter what. And a 50% chance becomes no chance. Here is the full layout:



Now it becomes apparent why it was so important for us to hold up twice in spades. The King of Diamonds is not right ("onside") for us, and East gets in because the card was wrong ("offside") for us. But East is not dangerous anymore, because he has no more spades to play when he wins the diamond trick. If we win the first or second trick with the Ace of Spades, the defence will take five tricks: four in spades and one in diamonds before we have managed to take our nine because East will then have a spade remaining to lead to his partner when he wins the king of diamonds.

It is almost always a good idea not to cash the certain tricks until we have established the missing tricks. The goal is nine tricks in total, not necessarily the first nine!

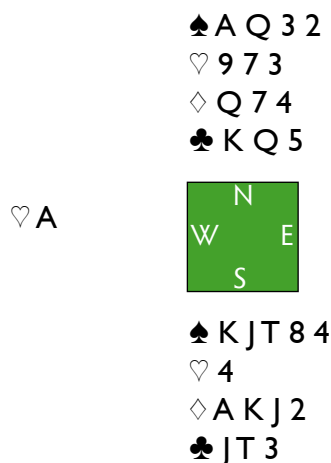
## Trump (Suit) Play

Every time the auction ends with a bid in a suit, as opposed to notrump, we will be playing with that suit as trumps. The trump suit will be higher ranking than the other three suits, and every time you run out of cards (void is the bridge term) in a suit played, you are entitled to trump it. A more common bridge term is "ruff". If hearts are trumps, the Deuce of Hearts is higher than the Ace of Spades led by a defender if you are out of (void in) spades. With many trumps you will often be in a position to take many tricks even if you don't have strong cards in the other suits.

But remember this! The rules in a suit (trump) contract are the same as in notrump. If you can follow suit, you must. If the leader has led the Ace of Spades and you have a spade, you must play one even if you would have preferred to win the trick with a small trump. If you don't you "revoke", and that will be penalized.

When we play a suit contract, we will always try to have more trumps than the opponents. The more trumps we have between our hands, the better. A good trump suit will have at least eight cards between the two hands. If we have eight trumps between us, the opponents have five, as there are thirteen cards in each suit.

We are sitting in the South chair and are going to play Four Spades. Our goal is to take ten tricks (4+6=10). This is what we get:



The lead from West is the Ace of Hearts. Everyone must follow suit, so West wins the first trick. At trick two West continues with the King of Hearts. Dummy and East follow, but South is out of hearts and can therefore win the trick with a small spade. As pointed out earlier, when we win a trick that started with a different suit it is called to "ruff". You will hear that word over and over again in your bridge life.

After winning trick two, South should draw trumps. Drawing trumps means that you play as many rounds of trumps as necessary to extract the trumps from the defenders' hands. When we have nine trumps between us, the



opponents have four (thirteen cards in every suit, remember). Accordingly, South plays a spade to the ace and continues with another trump to the king in hand. If both opponents have followed suit twice, they have no more trumps, and South can abandon the trump play.

If West or East shows out on the second round, there will still be a trump outstanding, and then declarer must play a third round of spades to get rid of the last one. Keeping track of cards played is something you must get used to in order to become a competent declarer. It is particularly important to keep track of trumps.

When trumps are out of the way, South can cash his winners in diamonds. Eventually, the defence will score the Ace of Clubs, but then declarer will take the rest because he still has a trump left in his hand to ruff a heart. If South errs by taking his diamond tricks before drawing trumps, there is a risk that East or West will ruff one of the winners with a small trump.

This is why, while planning the play, you should always consider whether you should not start by drawing (playing) trumps. You are not always in a position to draw them, but you can always play them if you wish. With this said, it is totally wrong to play more rounds of trumps than necessary. If South in the example above cashes all of his trumps before playing diamonds and clubs, he could very well go down because he no longer has a trump to ruff a heart when a defender plays that suit upon winning the Ace of Clubs.

Apart from this, the technique is more or less the same as the play in notrump. Set up the side suit(s) where you

must lose trick(s) before taking your certain winners in other side suits. The big difference in suit contracts is that you, at your earliest opportunity, should consider drawing the opponents' trumps in order to avoid the risk that they ruff one or more of your winners in the side suits.

In the example hand N-S can take as many as eleven tricks, whereas at best they will only get seven in notrump (the defence decides what to lead, and they have at least five heart tricks and the Ace of Clubs). With many trumps we will aim at playing in a suit rather than in notrump.

## Distributional Points (dp)

We have learned what is required for opening 1NT (15-17 hcp and a balanced hand). We have also mentioned that we should open the bidding if we have 13 points, and then we will get many hands that need to be opened with something else. With 13-21 points we always open with one of our longest suit (except for the hands that meet the requirements for notrump openings).

The reason you see points rather than hcp in the previous paragraph is that that with unbalanced hands we add some points because we have one or more long suits. Instead of adding points for our long suit(s) we prefer to add points for our shortages (void, singleton, doubleton). In the long run there will be no major difference between counting extra points for long suits and short suits. The points for short suits are called distributional points (dp's) and are as follows:

<b>No card in a suit (void)</b>	<b>3 dp</b>
<b>One card (singleton)</b>	<b>2 dp</b>
<b>Two cards (doubleton)</b>	<b>1 dp</b>

If we add hcp and dp and reach at least 13 hcdp (high card and distributional points) we will open the bidding. With 10 hcp or less we should consider passing even if we get to 13 when including the dp. The risk is that we may get too high with two unbalanced hand that do not fit, i.e. hands that do not have a suit in common (at least eight cards).

This is quite logical. If we have short suits but no trumps left it is rather pointless because we no longer have the option of ruffing. With balanced hands we do not count dp (same as hcps) when we open. The reason is that we often will end up in notrump, and without the option of ruffing there is no point in having few cards in a suit. However, it could still be beneficial to have long suits.

## Opening Quiz

How many hcdp (high card + distributional points) do you have with the four example hands below? Which one would you rather have?

- A. ♠ KQJT953 ♥ 8 ♦ AKQT ♣ 4  
 B. ♠ KJ62 ♥ Q52 ♦ KQ54 ♣ A3  
 C. ♠ K ♥ AQJ753 ♦ 8765 ♣ K2  
 D. ♠ KQT9 ♥ AT ♦ KJT9 ♣ QT9

- A. 19 hcdp. We have fifteen hcp and four dp.
- B. 16 hcdp. The second hand contains fifteen hcp and one dp.
- C. 14 hcdp in total. In the third example we have 13 hcp and 3 dp. However, counting twice for the singleton spade king is not really fair. Honours in long suits are often better than in short ones, and accordingly, when we have a singleton honour we will only count hcp (the exception is the ace which we give full value even if it happens to be single).
- D. In the last example we have the exact same shape and the exact same honour cards as in example B. This hand, however, is better. The reason is that we have intermediate cards (tens and nines), whereas in example B we only have small cards. If we just stick to the point count we will also get 16 hcdp for this hand.

Finally, it's worth mentioning that the first hand is by far the best of them all. No matter what partner has we will almost surely take ten tricks with spades as trumps. The other hands are more difficult to evaluate, because now it depends very much on which cards partner has.



## Opening One of a Suit and Game Levels

As stated earlier, apart from the notrump hands, we must always open with our longest suit. If we have two suits with equal length, the following rules apply:

With two five-card suits we open with the higher ranking. With two four-card suits we will open One Heart if one of the suits is hearts. If we do not have hearts we will focus on spades, and with both minor suits (diamonds and clubs) the choice is yours. Normally you would choose your better minor.

There is even an instance where you have three four-card suits, i.e. a 4-4-4-1 shape. A hand like that is difficult to bid and has got a name of its own, a "Marmic" hand. With 4-4-4-1 we open with the lowest four-card suit hoping that partner can bid one of our other suits.

The reasoning behind all this is that the major suits (spades and hearts) are more important. When we learned about bonus levels for play in notrump, 3NT was the contract to get to in order to get a bonus. In suit contracts it is different. In the majors Four Spades and Four Hearts are the interesting contracts, and in the minors they are Five Diamonds and Five Clubs to get a game bonus.

Regarding slams (small slam and grand slam) the same bonus levels apply in suit contracts as in notrump.

Schematically it will look like this:

Game	Small slam	Grand slam
3NT, 25 hcp	6NT, 33 hcp	7NT, 37 hcp
4♥/♠, 25 hcdp	6♥/♠, 33 hcdp	7♥/♠, 37 hcdp
5♣/♦, 28 hcdp	6♣/♦, 33 hcdp	7♣/♦, 37 hcdp

For game in a major we need around 25 hcdp (and a trump suit with at least eight cards). For game in a minor we must take eleven tricks and therefore we need a little more, roughly 28 hcdp. As we require that many points for a game in a minor suit, we will look for notrump even if we have a minor-suit fit between the hands. It is often easier to take nine tricks in notrump rather than eleven tricks with a minor as trumps.

We now give you five hands. What is your choice of opening bids?

- A. ♠ AQ87 ♥ KQ87 ♦ QT2 ♣ 82  
 B. ♠ AK62 ♥ AQ83 ♦ KT3 ♣ J4  
 C. ♠ 8 ♥ AKQ8 ♦ T9753 ♣ AJ3  
 D. ♠ AQ875 ♥ AQJ72 ♦ 82 ♣ J  
 E. ♠ KJ8763 ♥ 8 ♦ AJ764 ♣ T

- A. One Heart. We have a balanced hand with 13 hcp.



We are not strong enough for 1NT and must open with our longest suit. With four cards in hearts and spades our choice is One Heart. The idea is that partner must be able to bid spades as cheaply as possible. If we open One Spade, partner must bid Two Hearts to show that suit.

B. 1NT. Although we have four cards in hearts as well as spades we also have a balanced hand within the 1NT range. So the choice will always be 1NT.

C. One Diamond. The heart suit is stronger, but we will always bid our longest suit first. "Quantity before quality".

D. One Spade. With 5-5 we open the higher ranking suit. The idea is that we, on our next turn, will bid the hearts.

E. Pass! We have 13 hcdp, but with less than 10 hcp we prefer to pass. Despite the fact that we pass at our first turn it will not preclude that we enter the auction later. If, for example, partner bids spades or diamonds, we will most likely be able to play quite high in one of those denominations.

## Responder's (R) first bid, trump support and support points (sp)

What do we do if partner already opened the bidding? Since someone who has opened the bidding with one of a suit can have anything from 13 to 21 points, we must be prepared to bid with considerably weaker hands than we need for opening the bidding. If we pass with say 7-8 points and partner has 21, we are going to miss a lot of games (3NT/4 major/5 minor). The bottom limit for a response is therefore six points.

The first priority for responder is to show genuine support for a major. The faster we agree on a trump suit, the easier the subsequent auction becomes. If we have found a fit in a major, the subsequent bidding will only be a matter of how high we are going to play. If our partner opens One Heart or One Spade and we have four or more cards in support for that suit, we will always raise the suit to the appropriate level.

Apart from the usual hcdp you are even allowed to add extra points for every trump beyond eight you know your side has. If you have five trumps, seven hcp and two dp, you will have 10 support points (sp), 7 hcp, 3 dp and one extra for the ninth trump. Depending on how many points you have your bids with trump support will be:

- 2MA** 6-9 sp, simple raise. Partner will only bid again if he is strong
- 3MA** 10-12 sp, strong invite to 4MA
- 4MA** No slam! Many trumps, few high cards
- 2NT\*** 13+ sp

The 2NT bid was invented to simplify slam investigation. As we (at least) have 13 sp and partner must have (at least) 13 hcdp for his opening, we know that we must play at game level, if not higher.

As a general rule of bidding at bridge it makes it easier to find the right contract if we give ourselves as much bidding room as possible. That is why we will always avoid unnecessary jumps when we are not certain where this is going to end. If on the other hand we do know what contract to play the opposite applies. In that scenario we bid as quickly as possible to the appropriate level.

A good example of the latter is when partner opens 1NT. We already know much about his hand and can often bid what we think we can make.

## Responder's first bid without trump support

If partner has opened one of a major and we have support, we support immediately. If we do not have support, however, we must bid a suit of our own. We must also cater for partner being strong, so we only require six points to respond. When we bid a new suit, we are unlimited upwards and opener must bid again. For responder the same rules apply, the higher of two five-card suits, and with two four-card suits we bid them up the line.

If we bid a new suit, we force opener to bid again. In order not to get too high too often we need at least 12 points to bid at the two-level. If partner has opened One Heart it is fine to respond One Spade with six points, but if you want to bid Two Diamonds you must have at least 12 points because you are raising the auction one level.

Consequently, this will often lead to a response of 1NT. Without a biddable suit at the one-level, without trump support and with 6-11 points you will have to bid. The opening bid of 1NT is well defined, but responder's bid of 1NT is unclear. It can easily contain a singleton and a long suit or two that responder is too weak to show.

## Responder's bids without trump support:

<b>One-over-One</b>	<b>6+ points</b>
<b>1NT</b>	<b>6-11 points</b>
<b>Two-over-One</b>	<b>12 + points</b>

## Practice examples

Your partner has opened One Heart. What do you respond with the following five hands?

- A. ♠ AQT82 ♥ 8732 ♦ 82 ♣ 74
- B. ♠ A4 ♥ 98 ♦ KT3 ♣ QT9642
- C. ♠ 76 ♥ AQ82 ♦ AK982 ♣ Q7
- D. ♠ QJ82 ♥ 54 ♦ KJT87 ♣ 53
- E. ♠ 4 ♥ K832 ♦ AQ87 ♣ T975

A. Two Hearts. 6-9 points and trump support. Although the spade suit is better we always support a major right away.

B. 1NT. With nine points we are not strong enough to bid the club suit at the two-level (two-over-one). As we must bid with at least six points, the only option is 1NT.

C. 2NT. We have trump support and more than 13 points. 2NT is forcing to game and tells partner that we are going to play in hearts. The only question is now at which level. If partner has strong cards, this may be enough for Six or even Seven Hearts, but if he has a minimal hand for his opening, we will eventually end up in game.

D. One Spade. Normally we bid our longer suit first, but in this case we are not strong enough to bid the diamonds at the two-level (12+ points). We must therefore bid spades, as a new suit at the one-level only requires six points.

E. Three Hearts. With 11 sp's (nine hcp and two dp) we have adequate values to invite to game. Opener will pass with a minimal hand and raise to Four Hearts with a little extra for his opening.

## Opener's second bid

You have opened the bidding and your partner has responded. On our second turn we must try to describe our hand. As is the case for responder, our first priority is to show trump support. Let us assume that the auction started with One Heart - One Spade, and now it is our turn to bid again. This is our hand:

♠ AK82 ♥ KQT87 ♦ K82 ♣ 8

We have opened the bidding with One Heart and have trump support for spades. In other words, we have at least eight spades between us and know that spades should be trumps. How do we proceed?



With a normal opener, 13-15 sp, we would raise to Two Spades. We have opened the bidding already, so to bid higher than that would not be safe with a minimal hand. Remember that we asked partner to bid with only six hcdp. If partner is strong, he or she can bid more. We tell partner what we have and hope that he/she can judge whether we should bid more based on that information. With better cards, approximately 16-18 hcdp, we raise to Three Spades, and if we have as much as 19-21 we will bid game directly.

With a hand as strong as that added to the six points he already promised when he responded we can jump to game.

With the actual hand Three Spades seems about right. We have fifteen hcp and two dp. Seventeen sp puts us in the 16-18 point range. If partner has a weak hand, he gets the chance to pass, and with a little extra he will raise to Four Spades.

If partner has as many as 15-16 points slam could be on. Where we end up we do not know when we bid Three Spades; the important issue is that we tell partner what we have, and then he or she is in a better position to judge.

If we have trump support the subsequent auction after 1x - 1Major (MA) is the following. When we write x we mean any suit, which suit is immaterial.

#### 1x-1MA:

- 2MA Trump support, 13-15 hcdp**  
**3MA Trump support, 16-18 hcdp**  
**4MA Trump support, 19-21 hcdp**

As is the case for responder, opener will say approximately how many points he has when he shows support.

## Opener's second bid (rebid) without trump support

Once again we pretend that the bidding begins with One Heart - One Spade. If we don't have support for partner's spades, we must find something else to bid. As opener at our second turn it is our duty to describe our hand type. Earlier, when we wrote about the 1NT opening, we emphasized balanced, semi-balanced and unbalanced hands. If you have a balanced hand without trump support, your second bid (rebid) should be notrump.

The unbalanced or semi-balanced hand types are either two-suited or one-suited hands. A two-suited hand is described as a hand with at least five cards in one suit and at least four cards in another suit. In fairness, a hand with a 4-4-3-2 pattern could be interpreted as a two-suited hand, but since we already decided that this is considered a balanced hand, we will stick to this.

A one-suited hand is described as a hand with at least six cards in one suit and not as many as four cards in any another suit. A 6-4 shape is a two-suited hand. In other words, a one-suited hand can have no more than three cards in another suit. A biddable suit is described as a suit with at least four cards.

## Balanced hands

If you have opened one of a suit with a balanced hand you must have either 12-14 hcp or 18-19 hcp (with 15-17 you would have opened 1NT, and with 20-21 you are going to open 2NT). In order to describe your hand type you will rebid notrump as cheaply as possible with 12-14 and jump to 2NT with 18-19. Schematically, it will look like this (x and y stand for any suit as this is immaterial for your rebid):

<b>1x-1y;</b>		<b>1x-2y;</b>
<b>1NT 12-14 hcp</b>		<b>2NT 12-14 hcp</b>
<b>2NT 18-19 hcp</b>		<b>3NT 18-19 hcp</b>

If partner has responded 1NT over our opening bid, we pass with 12-14 and raise to 2NT with 18-19. When we pass a 1NT response with 12-14 it is because partner has limited his hand and that the combined strength is not strong enough for game.

When you have rebid notrump, partner now knows more than he or she would have if you had opened 1NT. You have shown your longest suit first and denied support for partner's suit (major). Consequently, it will often be relatively simple to judge at which level we are going to play. The ball is in partner's half of the field, and unless we are encouraged to bid again we are not going to bid much more.

## One-suited hands

With a one-suited hand you must always rebid your suit. Every time you rebid your suit, support your partner or rebid notrump you also say something about your strength. Once more we assume that the bidding goes One Heart - One Spade. With six hearts and without another suit with four cards you will rebid your hearts. With 13-15 points you rebid Two Hearts, a rebid of your suit as cheaply as possible. With 16-18 points you bid Three Hearts and with 19-21 your choice is Four Hearts. To sum it up, this is how it looks:

<b>1♥-1♠;</b>		<b>1♥-2♣:</b>
<b>2♥ 13-15 points</b>		<b>2♥ 13-15 points</b>
<b>3♥ 16-18 points</b>		<b>3♥ 16+ points</b>
<b>4♥ 19-21 points</b>		



The reason we never bid Four Hearts after One Heart - Two Clubs is that we are going to at least game no matter what (we have promised 16 points and partner at least 12). Exactly as is the cases when we use 2NT as 13+ with support after One Heart or One Spade we try to save bidding space in order to explore slam.

## Two-suited hands

With at least 5-4 in two suits and without trump support you rebid your second suit. As opener, when you bid a new suit at the two-level at your second turn you not only show four cards in that suit but also that you have at least five cards in the suit opened. A bidding sequence could look like this:

1♥-1♠  
2♦-4♥

When opener bids diamonds, he promises four cards in that suit and at the same time five or more cards in hearts. On this auction it is likely that responder, who bid spades first, has exactly three hearts; 3+5 add up to the required eight trumps for a contract at game level.

The downside of a two-suited auction is that opener does not give specific information regarding his strength. As long as he bids news suits, the range is still 13-21 points.

## Declarer play in suit (trump) contracts

As always it is a good idea to plan the play before you ask for a card from dummy. Apart from counting certain tricks, it is also prudent to count losers when you play a suit contract. If for instance you play Four Spades and look at

four losers this is one too many, so instead of establishing winners you must try to avoid the fourth loser.

Let us take an example. The contract is Four Spades and West leads the King of Hearts. This is how it is:

♠	K Q T 7 2									
♥	A 7 3									
♦	Q 8 6 2									
♣	5									
♥K	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center; width: 60px; height: 60px;"> <tr> <td></td> <td>N</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>W</td> <td></td> <td>E</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>S</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		N		W		E		S	
	N									
W		E								
	S									
♠	J 9 8 5 4									
♥	6 5 2									
♦	K J									
♣	A K 3									

We thank our partner and instead of counting certain tricks we try to count possible losers. In spades we have one loser, the ace. In hearts we win the first trick, but after that we have two losers in the suit. In diamonds we are also off the ace, i.e. one loser. When we play Four Spades we can only afford to lose three tricks, so we must try to get rid of one loser.

Ducking the first heart, as we did when we played in notrump, would work if the defender with five hearts has no side entry. The downside is that East might be able to ruff the second heart if we let the King of Hearts hold the trick. A better plan is to win the lead and discard one of dummy's hearts on a high club.

If we discard one heart before playing trumps, the defenders can only take one heart trick when they are in with the Ace of Spades. Accordingly, we win with the Ace of Hearts and cash the Ace and King of Clubs. On the ace, dummy must follow suit, but when the king is played we discard the Three of Hearts. We have now reduced our losers to three and can safely switch to spades and draw trumps. If we play trumps immediately at trick two, the defence will take four tricks altogether. Having tricks in abundance after that will not help.

Counting losers should only be used as an extra tool. If we are in Four Spades with three obvious losers it is no good if it turns out that we only have nine winners.

## Ruffs in the short hand

Using your trumps to best effect is something that may take a while to learn. For instance, you can use trumps to establish a suit by ruffing, or as stoppers in a side suit. Ruffing a few times in your hand with many trumps does not yield extra tricks. If, however, you manage to ruff losers



in the hand with fewer trumps, you will normally come to additional tricks.

An example. You are in Four Hearts and West leads the Queen of Clubs. This is what you see:

♠ A J 5 3 2										
♥ K Q 8										
♦ 8 7 5 4										
♣ 5										
♣ K	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center; width: 60px; height: 60px;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S	
	N									
W		E								
	S									
♠ 7										
♥ A J T 9 7										
♦ A 9 6 2										
♣ A 8 3										

If we start by counting certain winners, we see that we have eight tricks, five in trumps and one in each of the other three suits. We have no imminent losers, so our goal should be to establish more winners. Ruffing spades in our hand with five trumps will not give extra tricks, but ruffing clubs in the hand with fewer trumps (dummy) will indeed yield additional tricks and take our total to ten.

We win the lead with the Ace of Clubs and ruff a club with the Heart Eight. We can now play the Queen of Hearts and overtake it with our ace in order to ruff the last club with Heart King. Now back to the hand with a diamond to the ace, and only now is it time to draw the opponents' small trumps.

With the recommended line of play we have increased the number of trump tricks from five to seven by ruffing in the short hand.

As a rule of thumb it is still normal that you at your earliest opportunity draw trumps. However, if you need to add to your total of trump tricks, it might sometimes be a good idea to take ruffs before you begin drawing trumps. In the example above, South will end up with only eight tricks if he draws trumps without ruffing his club losers in the North hand.

Other than that, roughly the same general principles apply as is the case in notrump contracts. Try to lead towards honours rather than lead away from them. Finessing will work equally well in suit play and notrump.

## Defence

When the bidding is complete and the contract determined; on average we will be defending every other deal. As declarer you will always get to see your partner's

cards, but as a defender you must do with your own and dummy's cards. In order to make the defence a little easier you must somehow be able to communicate with our partner. As talking is not allowed, it has to be through the cards you play.

Our only real advantage as defenders compared to declarer is that we decide what to lead. In extreme instances this could mean a difference of up to four or five tricks, depending on which card you lead.

## Leads

When we start the play (lead), we use certain pre-determined rules. These rules have been made to make it easier for partner. We use something we call the Rule of 1-3-5. This means that we lead 1st, 3rd or 5th best card from the top. If we lead from a long suit, we lead third best from four cards (we cannot lead the fifth highest card when we only have four), or fifth best from a suit with five or more cards. When we lead first from the top (the Rule of 1) we have a short suit (fewer than three cards) or we have several touching honour cards (an honour sequence). If we have a suit like KQJ102 it is not a good idea to lead the deuce. The risk is that declarer takes a cheap trick with the nine, which would never happen if we start with (lead) the king.



Every time we lead an honour we therefore promise the card immediately below it, preferably even two more consecutive cards. If we lead the queen, partner knows we have the jack and possibly the ten, and if we lead an ace we promise the king.

## Leads against notrump contracts

Against notrump we would normally lead from our longest suit. If partner has bid a suit, we choose that suit if we do not have a compelling reason to select a different lead. If we do not have an obvious choice, perhaps we can get a clue or two from the bidding. If a defender has bid our longest suit, it could be better to try a different suit, an unbid suit, hoping that partner has length in that suit.

Also, as a defender you need a game plan. The plan is often to establish (set up) our own long suit, but occasionally it could pay off to hit the suit where partner has the goodies.

In the following five examples the bidding went 1NT-3NT and you are on lead. Which card do you choose in each case?

- A. ♠ KQJ92 ♥ A73 ♦ 986 ♣ 74
- B. ♠ A4 ♥ QT863 ♦ KT3 ♣ 862
- C. ♠ JT98 ♥ J852 ♦ K85 ♣ Q7
- D. ♠ 98743 ♥ AK ♦ AK ♣ 9652
- E. ♠ 85 ♥ QT3 ♦ KJ873 ♣ A97

A. King of Spades. It is always an advantage to have a plan when you play bridge. Here the plan is a simple one. You want to knock out the Ace of Spades and later take four spade tricks and the Ace of Hearts. Five tricks, exactly what you need to defeat 3NT. If you start by leading the Deuce of Spades, there is a great risk that declarer can win the trick cheaply, with the eight or ten perhaps. No need to risk that.

B. Three of Hearts. Now things are not that obvious. Our hope is that partner has a bit of help in that suit, and if he has, we may manage to set up winners while we still have a certain entry in spades (the ace) and a possible entry in diamonds (the king). Even if partner can only contribute the jack, there is still hope of establishing the suit in time and hopefully ending up with three heart tricks, one trick in spades and one in diamonds. On occasion, the heart lead can turn out to be wrong, but that is impossible to know when we lead. We will play with the odds and lead from the suit that gives us the best odds in the long run.

C. Jack of Spades. A genuine sequence (three consecutive cards) in a long suit is a safe and often a good lead. Of course a heart or a diamond could have worked out better, but we will select the card we think will be right in the long run.

D. Deuce of Spades. We have four certain tricks in the red suits, but we are in no rush to cash them. When we have 14 hcp and the opponents have bid to 3NT, there will not be much left for partner, so our hope is to set up the spade suit, slowly but surely, before declarer manages to set up his own winners in the red suits.

E. Three of Diamonds. Once again we try the fifth best card from our longest and strongest. If partner has the queen or the ace as help, this looks quite promising. Even if he or she only has two or three small cards, we may still need to lead the suit in order to set it up later.

As partner of the leader you should always try to help out by playing the highest card necessary. Let us assume that partner leads the 2, the dummy has 76 and you have K84. Now you must absolutely insert the king. There is a useful rule, "third hand high". If partner has led the 2 from QJ532 (it is quite likely that he has five cards in the suit according to the Rule of 1-3-5) and if we contribute the 8, declarer will win the trick cheaply with the nine. Remember that bridge is a partnership game and that we must try to help each other at all times. By playing the king you help partner take tricks with his queen and jack later.

## Leads against suit contracts

Against suit contracts the tactics are a little different. We still use the Rule of 1-3-5, but the strategy should be different. Leading from your longest suit is no longer obvious. Even if we eventually can set up tricks in the suit, they are not of much use if declarer can ruff them. Against suit contracts your aim should be to go for "safe leads". Honour sequences are always good because they do not give declarer a trick he could not otherwise have taken. Another excellent lead is a singleton, something you would never lead against a notrump contract.

By leading a singleton we hope to get a ruff, either now or a little later, while we still have trumps left. For example, partner can have the ace and he is then able to give you a ruff immediately. If he does not have the ace in the suit you lead, he could have the ace of trumps, and then he can give you the ruff when he gets in.

If partner has bid a suit, you should almost always lead it, particularly if he has overcalled the suit (see later).

## Signals

When we play the low cards in a suit we have a tool to tell partner about our holding in that suit. There are two common situations. The first one is when partner leads an honour. Let us assume that partner leads the ace (promising the king), we follow with a small card if we have the queen. A low card tells partner that we have help for him in that suit and like him to continue. In suit contracts we

can also follow low with two small cards in the suit, because we want partner to continue with the king and play a third round of the suit for us to ruff.

If on the other hand we have no help in the suit we follow with a high "pip" or "spot" card ("pip" and "spot" are bridge slang for a card from 2 to 10).

Signals are also used when we discard. Perhaps declarer plays a suit to which we can no longer follow, and now we are forced to discard a card in another suit. If we discard a low card we tell partner that we like that suit. If we have nothing but small cards (pips) in a suit, we discard a high card to let partner know that we are not interested in that suit. If partner pays attention, perhaps he will be able to figure out how to defeat the contract. Again, bridge is a partnership game, where you must co-operate with your partner in order to succeed.

## Awarding points and vulnerability

We have already talked about the various bonus levels, the goals for all bidding. When you want to find out how many points you get, you start by counting the total number of tricks you have bid to and fulfilled. If you have played with a minor as trumps, you will get 20 points for every level. If you have played with a major as trumps, you will get 30 points for every trick, and in notrump you win 40 points for the first level, 30 for the rest. If you have played in a partscore, i.e. below game level, you will get an additional bonus of 50 points for making your contract.

### Example:

We assume that you have played in 1NT and have taken eight tricks. The first level (the seventh trick) gives you 40 points. Furthermore, you get 30 points for the overtrick.  $40+30+50 = 120$  is the total because you can add the bonus of 50 points for making your partscore. If you take nine tricks, you will get another 30 points for a total of 150 points.

Now, let us assume that you played the hand in 3NT and still take nine tricks. Apart from the 40 (the seventh trick) you get  $30+30$  points for the eighth and ninth tricks. You will not be awarded a bonus for a partscore because you bid to game level, but you will get a game bonus instead. And that is worth much more. How much depends on the vulnerability.

If you play at the club, the board will illustrate whether you are vulnerable or non-vulnerable. If you are "red" you are vulnerable, and if you are "green" or "white" (even "black" in some places) you are non-vulnerable. If you make a game non-vulnerable, you will be awarded a bonus of 300 points, and if you are vulnerable you will get 500 instead. So the total will be 400 and 600 respec-

tively. Non-vulnerable  $40+30+30+300 = 400$ , vulnerable  $40+30+30+500 = 600$ .

If you bid and make a small slam, you will even get an extra bonus for the slam. If you are uncertain regarding how many points you get, you can look at the back of the bidding card for the contract you played in your box. All the scores are listed there.

The three bonus levels, non-vulnerable and vulnerable respectively, will yield the following points:

	<b>Non-vulnerable</b>	<b>Vulnerable</b>
Game	300	500
Small slam	$300 + 500$	$500 + 750$
Grand slam	$300 + 500 + 500$	$500 + 750 + 750$

In order to get the bonus, it requires that you have bid to the respective levels. If you for example bid 3NT and take twelve tricks, you will only be awarded a bonus for the game, not for the small slam because you did not bid it.

## Undertricks and Doubles

If you defeat the opponents' contracts you get 50 points (non-vulnerable) or 100 points (vulnerable) per undertrick you take. If you think that the opponents have bid too high, it can sometimes be profitable to double them. If they are vulnerable and you double them with the result that the contract goes two down, you will collect 500 points (200 for the first and 300 for the second undertrick). If you play bridge at the club you double by using the red card with a D or an X on it.



If declarer believes he can make his contract despite your double, he can redouble, in other words raise the stake a second time. If you go for several doubled or redoubled under tricks, it can be extremely expensive, but on the other hand declarer can gain lots of extra points if he makes a doubled contract, perhaps even with overtrick(s).

Exactly how many points you get for doubled and redoubled under tricks can be found on the back of the red and blue cards in the bidding box. For example, the first doubled under trick non-vulnerable costs 100 points, the second and third 200 each, and the fourth and upwards will cost 300 each. When vulnerable the numbers are 200 for the first, and 300 each for the rest. A redoubled under trick non-vulnerable yields 200, and so on.

To figure out how many points declarer gets for making a doubled contract is pretty difficult, but even here you can just look at the back of the bidding cards.

To sum up, you could say that it is extremely profitable to make games and slams when vulnerable, but that you, on occasion, need to be a little careful. If you get doubled and go three down, it will cost you 800 points!

## Overcalls

Until now only one side has contributed to the auction, but obviously the other two players are also allowed to bid if they feel like it. The exact same rules apply as in an uncontested auction. You must always bid higher than the previous bid, and the auction is once again not over until the last bid has been followed by pass, pass, pass from the other three players.

When you overcall, one opponent has already opened the bidding, and the chances for your side of bidding slam is therefore remote. The most likely scenario is that the two sides compete for the part score or game. Although we interfere by overcalling, it can well happen, and often does, that we still end up as defenders. However, even when that happens you have at least given your partner some help by telling him what to lead.

This means that you should have a decent suit if you want to get into the auction. If you overcall on, say, 108632, it is not exactly lead-directing, and it may convince partner that he should lead from K5. Not a good idea as it often presents declarer with a trick he could not otherwise have taken with a different lead.

An overcall at the one-level promises at least five cards and something like 8-17 hcp. The weaker your hand is point wise, the stronger your suit should be.

An overcall at the two-level promises at least a strong five-card suit, preferably a decent six-card, suit and 10-17 hcp.

An overcall of 1NT shows 15-17 hcp and a balanced hand and is therefore similar to an opening of 1NT. The only difference is that by overcalling 1NT you promise at least one stopper in the suit opened. In other words, you must have a holding that will not allow the defenders to take too many tricks in the suit on the go. A8 -- K106 -- QJ43 -- J1092 are examples of a stopper. The stronger the holding, the better.

As you now see, we differentiate between overcalls at the one and two-level. The reason is that it is considerably more dangerous the higher you are. If you find your partner with poor cards and the opponent sitting over you has a fine hand with a nice holding in the suit you overcalled, he may double you and then it will be expensive.

As responder (advancer) to a partner who has overcalled, we, more or less, use the same principles as we do when partner opens. The difference is that the ranges are different. Since we can overcall with as little as 8 hcp and the upper limit is 17, we also demand a little more by advancer. For example, a simple raise shows about 7-10 sp and a jump to the three-level around 11-13 sp.

As we always promise at least five cards when overcalling, advancer needs no more than three cards to support. Then he can be certain of having at least eight cards between the hands and the suit can serve as trumps.

## Take-out double

The upper limit for an overcall is set at 17 hcp. With more than that there is only one alternative, and that is the double. A double at a low level is not for penalties but a so-called take-out (TO) double. A normal take-out double shows the unbid suits and is therefore the direct opposite of a penalty double.

In order to double an opening bid you must have opening values yourself and at least three cards in all unbid suits. You hope that partner will bid his longest suit (take your double out, hence the term take-out double) and that you thereby will find a common trump suit. The ideal shape for a TO double is 4441 with a singleton in the suit opened by your right hand opponent.

As a 4441 shape is a rare one we have decided that you only require at least three cards in all unbid suits to make a TO double. We will add that you should have no more than two cards in the suit opened. The fewer, the better. A 4243 or 4135 shape will also work well for a TO double as long as your short suit is the one opened by your opponent, in this case hearts.

You force your partner to bid (take your double out) regardless of his point count, and you should therefore not bid again unless you are encouraged to do so. The exception is when you are very strong.

The other hand type that doubles is the one with 18 or more hcp. Your plan is to bid your longest suit later and by doing so you show a strong hand.

## Strong and weak opening bids

As we have set the upper limit for an opening bid at the one-level to 21 hcp, we also need a bid for hands that are stronger than that. Occasionally, you are dealt more than 21, for example 24 or 25 in your own hand, and in order not to risk that partner passes your opening at the one-level, we require a strong bid that partner is not allowed to pass. The strong opening bids are Two Clubs and 2NT.

2NT shows 22-24 hcp and a balanced hand, but the bid is non-forcing.

Two clubs shows either a 20-21 notrump hand, 22+ hcp with any shape or 25+ balanced.

After Two Clubs partner will usually bid Two Diamonds, which basically shows nothing at all. It's a "waiting bid" or "relay", asking you to describe your hand.

After Two Clubs - Two Diamonds the subsequent auction is as follows:

2♣- 2♦;	
2♥/♠ 3♣/♦	At least 22 hcpdp with at least five cards and forcing.
2NT	20-21 hcp, balanced, non-forcing.
3NT	25-27 hcp, balanced, non-forcing.
4NT	28-30 hcp, balanced, non-forcing.

## Weak opening bids

Other high opening bids are reserved for weaker hands with a long suit. Two Diamonds, Two Hearts and Two Spades are called "weak two's" or "pre-emptive openings". A weak opening at the two-level shows 6-10 hcp and a decent six-card suit.

♠ KQT842 ♥ 6 ♦ QT6 ♣ 832

is an excellent hand for an opening of Two Spades. The major idea behind the weak openings is that we intend to make life difficult for the opponents when we find them with the good cards. The higher you must bid after a pre-emptive opening, the more you must guess because much bidding space has been taken away from you.

The same applies to openings at the three and four level. Again we require 6-10 hcp, but the difference is that the suit must be longer. With seven cards in your long suit you can open at the three-level and with eight at the four-level.

♠ KQT9763 ♥ 8 ♦ T97 ♣ K2

is a perfect hand for an opening of Three Spades.

In this context it is important to remember that with 11+ hcp and a long suit must open with one of the suit as usual. If you open Three Spades with AKJ10652 AK5 4 87 your partner will not play you for such a strong hand, and the risk that you stop too low is therefore apparent.



# Practice Examples, Lesson 1

1. North  
None

♠ A K Q 7  
♥ 7 6 5  
♦ 9 6 5 4  
♣ 5 4

♠ 6 5  
♥ K Q J T 2  
♦ K 8 7  
♣ J 9 8



♠ T 9 8 3 2  
♥ 9 4  
♦ Q J  
♣ T 7 6 2

♠ J 4  
♥ A 8 3  
♦ A T 3 2  
♣ A K Q 3

3. South  
EW

♠ T 7 6 2  
♥ 9 6 5  
♦ Q T 6 4  
♣ 8 5

♠ K J  
♥ K Q J 8  
♦ A K 5 3  
♣ 6 4 2



♠ A Q 9 8 3  
♥ A 7 2  
♦ J 8  
♣ A 9 7

♠ 5 4  
♥ T 4 3  
♦ 9 7 2  
♣ K Q J T 3

South is declarer and must take nine tricks. West leads the King of Hearts.

After the lead South counts his certain winners and sees that he has nine. Four in spades, one in hearts, one in diamonds and three in clubs. The only thing South must remember is that he must start with the Jack of Spades first when he plays that suit - "honour(s) from the short hand first".

East is declarer and must take twelve tricks. South leads the King of Clubs.

East wins the lead with the ace and must remember to cash the king and jack of spades before he uses the Ace of Hearts as an entry to the long spade suit. If West takes his heart tricks immediately, he will not be able to take all the spade tricks he is entitled to.

2. East  
NS

♠ Q J T 9 8  
♥ A 8 6 3  
♦ 9  
♣ Q 8 4

♠ A 3 2  
♥ Q J T 2  
♦ K J 3  
♣ A 9 3



♠ 7 4  
♥ 9 4  
♦ A Q 6 4 2  
♣ T 7 6 2

♠ K 6 5  
♥ K 7 5  
♦ T 8 7 5  
♣ K J 5

4. West  
All

♠ J 3 2  
♥ 9 7 3  
♦ Q 10 8 7  
♣ K 7 5

♠ K 10 9 7 6  
♥ A 5 4  
♦ 9 2  
♣ Q 8 4



♠ A 8 5  
♥ 8 6 2  
♦ A 6 5 4  
♣ J 10 9

♠ Q 4  
♥ K Q J 10  
♦ K J 3  
♣ A 6 3 2

West is declarer and North leads the Queen of Spades.

Declarer has seven certain tricks as long as diamonds do not break 5-0. West wins the lead and cashes the king and jack of diamonds. Then it is easy to lead the last diamond to dummy's three tricks in the suit. If West starts with a small diamond to the ace the suit is "blocked".

South is declarer and must take seven tricks. West leads a small spade.

Declarer must play low from the dummy. To prevent declarer from winning a cheap trick, East must go up with the ace. The singleton queen opposite J3 is now a combined stopper for declarer who will be on lead at trick two or three. More tricks can be established in hearts or diamonds. The defence can take four spade tricks and two aces, but declarer makes his contract.

5. North  
NS

♠ K 8 4		♠ QJT52
♥ A 8 7 2		♥ 9 5
♦ Q 9 6 5		♦ JT
♣ K 3		♣ QT 9 6
		♠ 9 6
		♥ KQT 4
		♦ K 7 2
		♣ 7 5 4 2

North is declarer and must take seven tricks. East leads the Queen of Spades.

North has four certain winners. Extra tricks can be set up in hearts. The correct approach is to start with the jack from hand before North takes his tricks in diamonds and clubs.

6. East  
EW

♠ 7 4 3		♠ AKQ 2
♥ QT 9 8 2		♥ KJ
♦ K 2		♦ A 7 5
♣ J 6 5		♣ Q 7 3 2
		♠ 9 5
		♥ 7 4 3
		♦ QJT 9 4
		♣ A 9 4

East is declarer and must take nine tricks. South leads the Queen of Diamonds.

The best chance of setting up the four missing tricks is the heart suit. If East can make the defence win the ace, he has four tricks in the suit. In order to retain an entry to dummy, East must win the lead in his hand with the ace and lead the King of Hearts. If the defence refuses to win, declarer must overtake the jack with dummy's queen next in case the defence ducks a second time.

7. South  
All

♠ KQ 4 3		♠ A 8
♥ K 5 2		♥ QJT 9 8
♦ 9		♦ J 8 7 2
♣ QT 8 6 3		♣ J 9
		♠ 9 7 5 2
		♥ 7 6
		♦ AT 6 3
		♣ K 7 4

North is declarer and must take seven tricks. East leads the Queen of Hearts.

North wins with the ace and must turn his attention to diamonds. To ensure four tricks in the suit, if possible, declarer must cash the king and queen first. When West shows out on the second round, North can lead a diamond towards the A10. If East follows small, the 10 will hold the trick. You have finessed! A marked finesse perhaps, but still a successful finesse.

8. West  
None

♠ A 6 5		♠ K 8 3 2
♥ KJT 5		♥ Q 8 4
♦ AKJ 7		♦ QT 4
♣ J 9		♣ AKQ
		♠ Q 4
		♥ A 3
		♦ 9 5 2
		♣ T 8 6 5 3 2

West is declarer and must take twelve tricks. North leads the Jack of Spades.

West has nine top tricks. The three missing tricks can be set up in hearts. It is important for West to play hearts before he cashes his winners in the side suits. If he starts by taking his winners, the defence will have a couple of high cards once they get in with the Ace of Hearts.

# Practice Deals, Lesson 2

1. North  
None

♠ A K 7  
♥ Q J 4  
♦ A Q 4  
♣ T 8 4 2

♠ 9 6 5  
♥ T 8 6 5  
♦ T 9 5 3  
♣ K Q



♠ Q J T 3 2  
♥ A 9 3  
♦ 8 6  
♣ J 7 6

♠ 8 4  
♥ K 7 2  
♦ K J 7 2  
♣ A 9 5 3

West	North	East	South
Pass	INT	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Lead: Queen of Spades

With seven certain tricks North needs another two to make his contract. The suit to establish is hearts. When the ace has been driven out, North has set up the missing two tricks.

2. East  
NS

♠ J T 7  
♥ 8 6 3  
♦ A 9 4 2  
♣ 8 7 6

♠ A 3 2  
♥ T 2  
♦ 7 6 3  
♣ K Q J 5 4



♠ 8 6 4  
♥ Q J 9 4  
♦ K Q T 5  
♣ T 3

♠ K Q 5 3  
♥ A K 7 5  
♦ J 8  
♣ A 9 2

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Pass	INT

Lead: King of Clubs

South wins the lead and should set up spades by playing a small card towards the ten and jack in dummy. With three spades, two hearts and one trick in each minor, South has the seven tricks that are required for making 1NT.

3. South  
EW

♠ Q T 9 6  
♥ J T 9 5  
♦ 8 6 2  
♣ K 3

♠ J 8 3  
♥ A 8 4  
♦ 9 4  
♣ A J T 6 2



♠ A K 2  
♥ K 7 2  
♦ A 5 3  
♣ Q 9 7 5

♠ 7 5 4  
♥ Q 6 3  
♦ K Q J T 7  
♣ 8 4

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	INT	Pass
3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

Lead: King of Diamonds

East must duck (hold up) twice in order to possibly cut the communications between the defenders. After winning trick three East takes a club finesse. North gets in with the king but has no diamonds left. If East wins the first or second diamond, the contract goes down.

4. West  
All

♠ T 9 8 5  
♥ Q T 6 5  
♦ 9 6 5 4  
♣ 4

♠ Q J 6  
♥ A J 2  
♦ K 8 7  
♣ K Q T 6



♠ A K 3  
♥ K 7 4  
♦ A Q J 4  
♣ A J 2

♠ 7 4 2  
♥ 9 8 3  
♦ T 3  
♣ 9 8 7 5 3

West	North	East	South
INT	Pass	7NT!	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Lead: Ten of Spades

With 22 hcp's opposite partner's (at least) 15, E-W have the necessary 37 points you normally need for a grand slam. With thirteen top tricks a heart finesse is not needed.



5. North  
NS

♠ 7 4 2  
♥ 6 4 3  
♦ A 7 4  
♣ K J T 9

♠ K 8 3  
♥ A 8 7  
♦ Q 8 6 5  
♣ 7 5 3



♠ A Q J T 5  
♥ K 5  
♦ J 3 2  
♣ A Q 4

♠ 9 6  
♥ Q J T 9 2  
♦ K T 9  
♣ 8 6 2

West	North	East	South
	Pass	INT	Pass
2NT	Pass	3NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Lead: Queen of Hearts

West invites game with 2NT. With a maximum East accepts. Declarer has eight certain tricks, and the best chance for a ninth is to finesse in clubs through North. Nine tricks are there for the taking when North has the king as East hoped.

7. South  
All

♠ A 7 2  
♥ Q J 7  
♦ K Q 5 2  
♣ T 8 5

♠ K Q J 9 8  
♥ 5 4 2  
♦ 6 4  
♣ 7 4 2



♠ 6 4 3  
♥ A 8 6  
♦ T 9 7  
♣ J 9 6 3

♠ T 5  
♥ K T 9 3  
♦ A J 8 3  
♣ A K Q

West	North	East	South
			INT
Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

Lead: King of Spades

South counts eight certain tricks. The only chance for an extra trick is in hearts, but one of the defenders has the ace. Hoping that that the defender with the Ace of Hearts does not have five spades, South must hold up spades twice. There are ten tricks if South does that, otherwise he will be defeated.

6. East  
EW

♠ 9 4  
♥ K J 8 7 2  
♦ Q 7 2  
♣ K T 8

♠ A K Q J  
♥ Q 6 3  
♦ A 5 4  
♣ J T 6



♠ 8 5 3  
♥ T 9 5  
♦ K T 9  
♣ Q 5 3 2

♠ T 7 6 2  
♥ A 4  
♦ J 8 6 3  
♣ A 9 4

West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
INT	Pass	Pass	Pass

Lead: Two of Hearts

North leads from his longest suit. South wins the ace and continues the suit. If West plays the queen, North takes the king, and if West follows with a small card, North can win the trick cheaply with the jack. The defence has finessed declarer's queen. N-S will now come to at least seven tricks and the contract goes down.

8. West  
None

♠ A K 5  
♥ K 3  
♦ A Q 9 4  
♣ J 9 7 2

♠ Q T 4 2  
♥ 8 6 4  
♦ K 6 5 3  
♣ 6 5



♠ J 8 6  
♥ Q J T 9 5  
♦ 8 2  
♣ K 4 3

♠ 9 7 3  
♥ A 7 2  
♦ J T 7  
♣ A Q T 8

West	North	East	South
Pass	INT	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Lead: Queen of Hearts

North has six certain tricks. By finessing in clubs as well as diamonds declarer can take as many as twelve tricks.

# Practice Deals, Lesson 3

1. North  
None

♠ A K 7  
♥ K Q T 7 4  
♦ 4  
♣ K 8 6 2

♠ J 9 6 5  
♥ 5 2  
♦ T 9 7 2  
♣ A J T



♠ Q T 3 2  
♥ 9 6  
♦ K Q J 8 6  
♣ 9 4

♠ 8 4  
♥ A J 8 3  
♦ A 5 3  
♣ Q 7 5 3

West	North	East	South
	1♥	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			

3. South  
EW

♠ J  
♥ J T 9 5  
♦ A 8 5 2  
♣ Q J T 9

♠ A K T 8 6 2  
♥ A K 8 7  
♦ K 7  
♣ 8



♠ Q 9 5 3  
♥ Q 2  
♦ 9 6 3  
♣ K 7 6 3

♠ 7 4  
♥ 6 4 3  
♦ Q J T 4  
♣ A 5 4 2

West	North	East	South
			Pass
1♠	Pass	2♠	Pass
4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

Lead: King of Diamonds

North wins the lead and draw trumps. Then it is time to establish the club suit. West must come to two tricks in clubs, but after that North can take the rest by ruffing a spade in dummy.

Lead: Queen of Clubs

With 19 hcp West is strong enough to bid game when East supports the spade suit. If the defence can avoid presenting West with a trick with the King of Diamonds, declarer will wind up with ten tricks for just made.

2. East  
NS

♠ K J 7  
♥ T 6 3  
♦ A Q J 9 4  
♣ 6 5

♠ A 9 5  
♥ 8 7 5  
♦ 7 6  
♣ K T 8 7 4



♠ 8 6 4  
♥ Q 9 4 2  
♦ 8 2  
♣ Q J 3 2

♠ Q T 3 2  
♥ A K J  
♦ K T 5 3  
♣ A 9

West	North	East	South
		Pass	INT
Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

Lead: Four of Clubs

South has eight tricks and needs a ninth. Setting up spades will not work as the defence will then take four club tricks and the ace of spades. Instead, East must rely on East to have the Queen of Hearts and take a finesse in that suit.

4. West  
All

♠ Q J T 9 7  
♥ T 6 5  
♦ 9 6  
♣ K J 9

♠ A 6  
♥ K 2  
♦ A K 8 7 4 3  
♣ Q T 7



♠ K 2  
♥ J 8 3  
♦ Q J 5 2  
♣ A 8 6 3



♠ 8 5 4 3  
♥ A Q 9 7 4  
♦ T  
♣ 5 4 2

West	North	East	South
1♦	Pass	3♦	Pass
3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

Lead: Queen of Spades

West has 16 hcp and stoppers in all four suits. When East shows an invitational hand with diamond support, West chooses 3NT rather than Five Diamonds. It is often easier to take nine tricks in notrump than the eleven you need to make game in a minor.

5. North  
NS



<p>♠ 8 7 3 ♥ K J 9 2 ♦ T 9 5 2 ♣ A 5</p>		<p>♠ A K 5 2 ♥ A Q T 7 ♦ 7 3 ♣ J 9 2</p>
		

West	North	East	South
2♥	Pass	1♥	Pass
	Pass	Pass	Pass

Lead: Queen of Spades

With his single raise West shows 6-9 hcdp. East with only 14 hcp knows that game is far away and passes.

6. East  
EW



<p>♠ 6 5 3 ♥ Q T 6 3 2 ♦ K 3 ♣ K J 5</p>		<p>♠ T 9 4 2 ♥ J 9 7 5 ♦ A Q 7 ♣ Q 2</p>
		

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Pass	INT

Lead: Two of hearts

West leads a heart and South quickly counts seven tricks. However, South must realise that he should unblock the king and jack in spades first in order to "free" the honours in his hand before he takes the certain tricks in the side suits.

7. South  
All



<p>♠ 9 ♥ A 8 4 2 ♦ K T 9 4 2 ♣ T 7 5</p>		<p>♠ A K T 7 2 ♥ Q 7 6 5 ♦ Q 7 ♣ A 4</p>
		<p>♠ 6 4 3 ♥ 9 ♦ A J 8 6 ♣ Q J 9 6 2</p>

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♠	Pass	Pass
Pass	4♠	Pass	3♠
Pass			Pass

Lead: Nine of Hearts

East leads the Nine of Hearts, hoping to get a ruff. If West wins with the ace and plays another, East can ruff. E-W must also get the ace and king of diamonds and will take the contract one down. If E- W do not take the heart ruff, North makes easily by drawing trumps and setting up the heart suit.

8. West  
None

<p>♠ K Q T 4 2 ♥ 8 ♦ Q J 6 5 3 ♣ 6 5</p>		<p>♠ 9 ♥ 7 6 3 2 ♦ K T 9 4 ♣ K Q J 7</p>
		<p>♠ A J 8 7 3 ♥ A T 5 4 ♦ 8 2 ♣ A 4</p>

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♠	Pass
4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

Lead: King of Hearts

West has a perfect hand for Four Spades - many trumps and a nice shape often mean that the contract makes despite the lack of high card points. If West has more hcp he will start with a 2NT response (13+).

# Practice Deals, Lesson 4

**1. North**  
None

♠ A K J 4  
♥ J 8 7  
♦ K J  
♣ T 9 7 2

♠ 9 8  
♥ K 9 6 5 3  
♦ 7 5 2  
♣ K Q 6

N	E
W	S

♠ Q T 6 2  
♥ Q 4  
♦ A 6 4 3  
♣ J 8 3

♠ 7 5 3  
♥ A T 2  
♦ Q T 9 8  
♣ A 5 4

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Lead: Three of Hearts

South is too weak to bid a new suit at the two level (12+ points) and so is forced to respond 1NT instead. West's lead goes to East's queen, and it makes no sense for South to hold up, because the jack and ten combined give him a further stopper in the suit. If South sets up the diamonds, he will come to at least seven tricks.

**2. East**  
NS

♠ 8 4  
♥ 3 2  
♦ Q J T 8 5  
♣ Q 7 4 3

♠ A Q J 6 3  
♥ 9 7  
♦ K 7  
♣ 9 8 6 2

N	E
W	S

♠ K T 7 2  
♥ A K Q 6 5  
♦ 6 2  
♣ A T

♠ 9 5  
♥ J T 8 4  
♦ A 9 4 3  
♣ K J 5

West	North	East	South
1♠	Pass	1♥	Pass
4♠	Pass	3♠	Pass
		Pass	Pass

Lead: Queen of Diamonds

East's cards are perfectly adequate for a jump to Three Spades at his second turn. West gets in at trick two, draws trumps and tests hearts. When the suit does not break, he has to be content with eleven tricks.

**3. South**  
EW

♠ J T 3  
♥ K Q T 5  
♦ K 8 5  
♣ 9 5 3

♠ A 9 4  
♥ 9 7 3  
♦ 7 3 2  
♣ Q J T 7

N	E
W	S

♠ K 8 6 2  
♥ A J 8 2  
♦ 9 6  
♣ A 4 2

♠ Q 7 5  
♥ 6 4  
♦ A Q J T 4  
♣ K 8 6

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♥	Pass	1♦
Pass	Pass	Pass	1NT

Lead: Queen of Clubs

With his rebid South shows 12-14 hcp and a balanced hand. North does not have the values for game to be realistic, so he passes. After the lead South have six certain tricks. A seventh will be set up in hearts.

**4. West**  
All

♠ Q T 9 7  
♥ K 6 5  
♦ Q J 6 4  
♣ K 7

♠ A 6 3  
♥ Q 8 3  
♦ A K 8 7  
♣ A J 8

N	E
W	S

♠ K 5 2  
♥ A T  
♦ 5 3 2  
♣ Q T 9 6 2

♠ J 8 4  
♥ J 9 7 4 2  
♦ T 9  
♣ 5 4 3

West	North	East	South
1♦	Pass	1NT	Pass
2NT	Pass	3NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

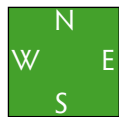
Lead: Two of Hearts

West's jump to 2NT shows 18-19 hcp. 1NT would be the correct rebid with 12-14. It is important that East asks for a small card from dummy in order to ensure two stoppers in the suit. If East tries the Queen of Hearts the contract will fail when North has the King of Hearts and the club finesse loses.

5. North  
NS

♠ A J T 8 6  
♥ A 4 3 2  
♦ J T 3  
♣ A

♠ 4  
♥ K J T 9 5  
♦ 9 8 6 2  
♣ T 9 4



♠ 5 3 2  
♥ 8 7 6  
♦ A K Q  
♣ K 8 6 2

♠ K Q 7 5  
♥ Q  
♦ 7 5 4  
♣ Q J 7 5 3

West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

Lead: Ace of Diamonds

East starts by cashing the first three tricks in diamonds. To make his contract North must use his trumps to the maximum. All three losing hearts in hand must be ruffed in dummy, and to do that declarer has to get back to his hand with club ruffs. His line of play is known as a "cross-ruff".

6. East  
EW

♠ 7 6 4  
♥ 9 8 5  
♦ A 5 4  
♣ A Q T 3

♠ J  
♥ K 6 3  
♦ T 9 7 2  
♣ K J 5 4 2



♠ K Q T 9 8 2  
♥ A 4 2  
♦ Q J 3  
♣ 8

♠ A 5 3  
♥ Q J T 7  
♦ K 8 6  
♣ 9 7 6

West	North	East	South
	Pass	1♠	Pass
INT	Pass	2♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Lead: Queen of Hearts

When East rebids the spade suit as cheaply as possible he promises 13-15 points. West has no interest in a higher contract and passes. On best defence, N-S can take five tricks, but they cannot beat Two Spades.

7. South  
All

♠ 8 6 3  
♥ A Q 5  
♦ Q 7 4  
♣ K 8 7 3

♠ K T 7  
♥ 9 6 3  
♦ A 2  
♣ Q J T 9 4



♠ J 5 4  
♥ J T 4 2  
♦ 9 8 5 3  
♣ 6 2

♠ A Q 9 2  
♥ K 8 7  
♦ K J T 6  
♣ A 5

West	North	East	South
			INT
Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

Lead: Queen of Clubs

Declarer wins the lead and sets up the diamonds. There are at least nine tricks unless South gets greedy and takes a spade finesse after the defence have set up clubs.

8. West  
None

♠ 9 2  
♥ K Q 7 4  
♦ J 5 4  
♣ A 5 3 2

♠ K Q T 4  
♥ J 8 3 2  
♦ A 9 7  
♣ K 6



♠ A J 8 7 3  
♥ 6  
♦ K Q T 6 2  
♣ 8 7

♠ 6 5  
♥ A T 9 5  
♦ 8 3  
♣ Q J T 9 4

West	North	East	South
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♠	Pass	4♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Lead: Queen of Clubs

The East hand becomes considerably better when West shows support for spades, and it is obvious for him to jump to game. The lead finesses dummy's King of Clubs, and the defence must also come to a heart trick. Contract just made.

# Practice Deals, Lesson 5

1. North  
None

♠ Q 4  
♥ A J 9 8 2  
♦ K 9 2  
♣ Q J 3

♠ A 8 7 2  
♥ 7 6 5 3  
♦ Q 8 6  
♣ K 6



♠ J T 9 6  
♥ K 4  
♦ J T 5 3  
♣ 8 5 4

♠ K 5 3  
♥ Q T  
♦ A 7 4  
♣ A T 9 7 2

West	North	East	South
	1♥	Pass	2♣
Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

3. South  
EW

♠ T 5  
♥ K Q 7 5  
♦ K 8 4 2  
♣ Q 7 3

♠ K 9 8 6 3  
♥ J T 2  
♦ J T 7 5  
♣ 5



♠ Q 7 2  
♥ A 9 8 2  
♦ 9 6  
♣ J T 9 4

♠ A J 4  
♥ 6 4  
♦ A Q 3  
♣ A K 8 6 2

West	North	East	South
	1♥		1♣
Pass	3NT	Pass	2NT
Pass		Pass	Pass
Pass			

Lead: Jack of Spades

East leads the Jack of Spades, and declarer asks for the three from dummy. Best defence by West is to follow small, and declarer will only get one trick in the suit. North tries the club finesse and, if West can resist the temptation to play spades, East will get in eventually to lead another spade through dummy. This excellent defence will result in one down and 50 points to E-W.

2. East  
NS

♠ A 9 6 4  
♥ 8 7  
♦ 9 8 4  
♣ K Q J 4

♠ 8 3  
♥ A 9 3  
♦ A K 7 5  
♣ A 9 6 3



♠ Q T 2  
♥ K Q T 6 5 4 2  
♦ 6 2  
♣ T

♠ K J 7 5  
♥ J  
♦ Q J T 3  
♣ 8 7 5 2

West	North	East	South
		3♥	Pass
4♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

Lead: Queen of Diamonds

After East's pre-emptive opening West raises to game. If East has seven hearts headed by the king West can simply count ten tricks; 450 to E-W.

Lead: Three of Spades

On this lead declarer plays small from dummy and East inserts the queen (third hand high). Thanks to dummy's ten declarer has the suit stopped twice and should therefore win the trick. When it transpires that clubs break 4-1, South has to concede a trick in that suit. If the defence discard accurately declarer must be "content" with nine tricks and 400 points.

4. West  
All

♠ A 9 3  
♥ K 9 7 6 5  
♦ Q 9  
♣ K 7 6

♠ Q J 4  
♥ 8 3  
♦ A K 8 7 2  
♣ T 9 2



♠ K 5 2  
♥ A Q 2  
♦ 6 2  
♣ A Q J 8 4

♠ T 8 7 6  
♥ J T 4  
♦ J T 5 3  
♣ 5 3

West	North	East	South
	1♠	INT	Pass
Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass

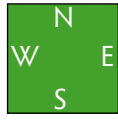
Lead: Jack of Hearts

East's overall promises 15-17 and at least one stopper in hearts. East wins as cheaply as possible, and the next step is to lead a spade towards the dummy and later finesse in clubs. Eleven tricks is the most likely outcome for 660 to E-W.

5. North  
NS

♠ K Q T 9 6  
♥ K Q 9 4  
♦ J 7 3  
♣ T

♠ A J 4  
♥ A T 7  
♦ Q T 5 4  
♣ K 8 3



♠ 5 3  
♥ J 5  
♦ K 9 2  
♣ A Q J 7 6 4

♠ 8 7 2  
♥ 8 7 6 3  
♦ A 8 6  
♣ 9 5 2

West	North	East	South
	1♠	2♣	Pass
3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

7. South  
All

♠ A K 8 6 4  
♥ A Q 5  
♦ 9 8 5  
♣ 8 6

♠ Q T 7  
♥ 8 7 6 3  
♦ K Q J 2  
♣ J 7



♠ J 9 5 2  
♥ 4  
♦ T 6 3  
♣ K Q T 9 4

♠ 3  
♥ K J T 9 2  
♦ A 7 4  
♣ A 5 3 2

West	North	East	South
	1♠		1♥
Pass	4♥	Pass	2♣
Pass		Pass	Pass
Pass			

Lead: King of Spades

After East's overcall, West with his 14 hcp should bid game. With stoppers in all suits and a completely balanced hand 3NT seems easier than Five Clubs. West should duck the spade at trick one. Regardless of the continuation by North, West will have time to set up his ninth trick.

Lead: King of Diamonds

When South rebids Two Clubs, he also guarantees five hearts. After the lead declarer can reduce his number of losers by discarding a diamond on the King of Spades. In order to get to ten tricks, South must ruff at least one club in dummy; 620 or 650 to N-S.

6. East  
EW

♠ 6  
♥ Q J T  
♦ J 9 8 5  
♣ A 9 7 6 3

♠ K Q T 9 8 2  
♥ A 4 3  
♦ A K 3  
♣ 8



♠ J 7 6 4  
♥ K 6 2  
♦ Q 7 4 2  
♣ J T

♠ A 6  
♥ 9 8 7 5  
♦ T 6  
♣ K Q 5 4 2

West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
1♠	Pass	2♠	Pass
4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

8. West  
None

♠ K Q J 3  
♥ K Q J  
♦ K Q T  
♣ A K 5

♠ 9 6 5  
♥ T 7 2  
♦ J 5 4  
♣ 7 6 3 2



♠ T 4 2  
♥ 8 6 5 4  
♦ A 7 2  
♣ T 9 8

♠ A 8 7  
♥ A 9 3  
♦ 9 8 6 3  
♣ Q J 4

West	North	East	South
Pass	2NT	Pass	6NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Lead: Queen of Hearts

After East's single raise West should jump to game with his 18 hcdp. If North holds on to all his diamonds, the defence can hold declarer to ten tricks for 620 to E-W.

Lead: Ten of Clubs

Despite the 35 combined high card points, declarer only has ten certain tricks. The only chance for the extra two tricks is to lead twice towards the king and queen in diamonds. If East is a clever defender, he ducks smoothly when the first diamond is led to the king or queen. Then declarer will have a nasty guess when he leads another diamond up later. Should he insert the ten or play the other top diamond?



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