



Bridge Basics

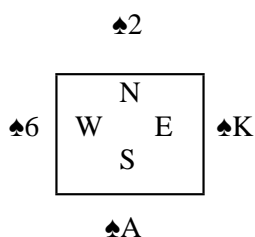
Bridge is a FUN card game played with a standard pack of 52 cards split into 4 suits:- Clubs, **Diamonds**, **Hearts** and Spades. Each suit consists of **AKQJ1098765432**. The Ace, King, Queen, Jack and Ten are known as honour cards, the others are small or spot cards. The ACE is the highest ranked card, down to the two – the lowest ranked card. Millions of people all over the world love to play bridge. **ENJOY!**

Bridge is a Partnership Game. North sits opposite South, they are partners. East sits opposite West, they are also partners. Each pair (NS & EW) are competing against each other, trying to get the best score on each board. Each pair tries to achieve the best score possible, working together.

At classes the cards will usually be provided pre-dealt in a board or wallet showing N, E, S & W cards. North should align the board so that each player is adjacent to the appropriate cards. Each player should count their cards without looking at them and if they have 13 should sort into suits. Do not discuss the cards or let other players see them. Bridge is a Clockwise game. The bidding begins with the Dealer and continues clockwise and the play begins with the player to the left of Declarer and continues clockwise.

Bridge is a Trick-taking Game. A trick consists of four cards, one from each player. Players must follow suit (play a card in the suit led) if they can. The player who wins a trick leads to the next one. Boards can be played in no-trump (NT) or a suit contract (**♣, ♦, ♥, ♠**). In no-trump the highest card played in the suit led wins the trick. In suit contracts, if you cannot follow suit you may ruff with a trump. Any trump beats any cards in the suit led – the highest trump played wins the trick

When all four players have laid a card on the table in clockwise order we have a **trick**. Each board in bridge has 13 tricks ($13 \times 4 = 52$). The aim of the game is for each pair to win as many tricks as possible



A trick is played like this. West plays ♠6. This is the **lead**. North plays next, the ♠2, East plays next, the ♠K and South completes the trick with ♠A. South wins the trick and leads to the next trick.

The pair that wins the trick place their card face down on the table with the short side of the card towards them. The pair that lost the trick place their card face down on the table with the long side of the card towards them. All four cards point the same way

At the end of play everybody has a neat row of 13 cards in front of them, clearly showing how many tricks each side has won

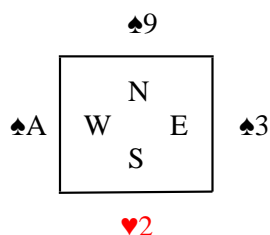
YOU MUST FOLLOW SUIT IF YOU CAN. YOU MAY TRUMP IF YOU WISH

Players must “follow suit” (play a card of the suit led) whenever they can. But when a player has no cards left in the suit led he must play a card from another suit.

If your partner and you both have 4 or more cards in the same suit it is usually best to declare that suit **TRUMPS**. When a player cannot “follow suit” they may win a trick by playing a card from the trump suit. Any size of trump beats higher cards in non trump suit.

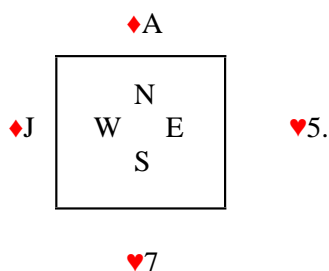


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Here hearts are trumps, West leads ♠A, North plays ♠9 and East ♠3. South has no spades, so cannot follow suit, and plays ♥2 which wins the trick because it is a trump. This is called **trumping** or ruffing. **It is not compulsory to ruff.** South might play a club or diamond, Now West wins the trick with ♠A.

The order of cards in trump is the same as the other suits - the ace is the highest card and the two the lowest. When more than one player cannot follow suit, if the first one plays a trump, the second one can win the trick by playing a higher trump. This is called overruffing and is not compulsory.



Again Hearts are trumps. West leads ♦J making diamonds the suit which must be played. North tried to win the trick with ♦A but East, who has no more diamonds ruffs with the ♥5. South has no more diamonds either and overruffs with ♥7. South wins the trick because he played the highest trump. (South does not have to overruff - he might play a club or a spade, in which case East would win the trick.)

We may choose to play without a trump suit. When we play in no-trumps there is no ruffing.



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HAND EVALUATION

The 13 cards which we are dealt are called a **hand**. A “good” or “strong” hand is one with honour cards which we hope will win tricks. When we have a few high cards - say one ace, one king and one queen - that is an average hand. When we have one or no high cards that is a “poor” or “weak” hand.

We can get an idea of the strength of our hand by allocating High Card Points (HCP):
(Also known as the Milton Work Count)

Ace = 4, King = 3, Queen = 2, Jack = 1

Which means an average hand has about 10 HCP.

Here are some examples hands:

♠	QJT72	3	AQT32	6	T75	0
♥	AK92	7	KJ6	4	J843	1
♦	T2	0	K2	3	QT76	2
♣	A4	4	KQT	5	T4	0

In spades Q (2),J (1)	In spades A (4) Q (2)	In spades 0
In hearts A (4),K (3)	In hearts K (3) J (1)	In hearts J (1)
In diamonds (0)	In diamonds K (3)	In diamonds Q (2)
In clubs A (4)	In clubs K (3) Q (2)	In clubs 0
14 HCP, 4 points above average	18 HCP Strong	3 HCP a very weak hand

A HCP of 30 or more is rare. A point count of 0 will occur once in 275 hands. (A hand with no points and no tens is called a ‘yarborough’ after the English Lord who made a lot of money out of this 1:1828 shot).

The number of tricks that a pair can win does not depend entirely on their combined total point count. Although other factors come into play, such as the number of trump held, there is usually a connection between HCP and the number of tricks won.