

BEGINNING BRIDGE – ANNE BASS

DATES: (Note: Each class is from 10:30 AM to 12:00 PM.)

September 16, 2020 – LESSON ONE: An Overview of the Basic Rules of Bridge (SEE BELOW)

September 23, 2020- LESSON TWO: Opening Bids and Overcalls

September 30, 2020- LESSON THREE: Strong Opening Bids at Level Two

October 7, 2020- LESSON FOUR: Simple Responses to Opening Bids- Pt. 1

October 14, 2020- LESSON FIVE- Simple Responses to Opening Bids- Pt. 2

October 21, 2020- LESSON SIX- Preempt Bids/ Course Review

LESSON ONE: BASIC RULES OF BRIDGE

1. Bridge is a game for four people only. The four bridge seats are labeled **north, south, east and west.**
2. The person sitting opposite you is your **partner.** You work as a team with your partner. The only two people at the table are your **opponents.**
3. The purpose of the game is to take a desired number of **tricks.** For each trick, one player **leads** a card and all other players must **follow suit** (play a card in the same suit). The high card wins the trick. Do not beat your partner's high card with your own!
4. In bridge one side is the **offense** (trying to accomplish a goal) and the other partnership is the **defense** (trying to stop the offense from accomplishing their goal).
5. Each hand of bridge involves a **contract.** In order to make the contract, the offense is required to make a certain number of tricks. To determine the number of tricks required, take the level of the contract (ex: in the contract 4 spades, the level is 4), and add 6 to that. So if the contract is 4 spades, the offense would have to take 10 tricks.
6. The first thing that happens in every hand is the **deal.** Cards are dealt **clockwise**, with the dealer getting the last card. Since the entire deck is dealt (no jokers), you should have 13 cards at the end of the deal. Count them!!

7. Set up your cards according to suits. Separate each red suit with a black suit. Order your cards from highest to lowest (Ace is always high). This is not a bridge rule, but a really good idea.
8. After the deal, the players will **bid**. Bidding starts with the dealer. We will discuss what you need to bid starting next week. Bidding continues clockwise. Each player, in turn, will make a bid. If any player does not choose to bid, they may **pass**. (Think of this as an auction). Bidding continues with each player either making a bid, or passing. Remember that each bid made must be higher on the **bidding scale** than the previous bid. When any bid is followed by 3 consecutive players passing, the bidding phase of the game is over, and the **play of the hand** begins. The bid that was followed by 3 players passing is the contract. So if the final bid was 2 diamonds, that means the side that made that bid has the contract. We add 6 to the level of the contract (2), and that means that the side who has to make the contract has to make 8 tricks to make the contract. The other side is trying to stop them. They would have to, in this case, make 6 tricks to keep the offense from making 8 tricks.
9. The play of the hand starts when a player (you'll find out who later) **leads** a card. At that point, the next player clockwise will place his entire hand on the table. That is called the **dummy** hand. You will learn how we know who leads the first card, and who is the dummy, and what that means.
10. After each player follows suit, one player will have the high card and take the trick. That player gets to decide what card to lead next. He can play any card in his hand, though some make more sense than others.
11. Playing a hand of bridge often involves the use of **trump**. This is a particular suit, established through the bidding, that can take a trick, even if your opponent has a high card in the suit that was led. For example, say spades has been established as trump. The first card led is a diamond by North. He leads the 6. East is the dummy, and lays down his hand on the table. His partner decides to play the 5 of diamonds from the dummy hand. South, feeling that this trick will belong to him, plays the Ace of diamonds. However, West has no diamonds, but does have a spade (the trump suit). West can play a spade, any spade, after the Ace of diamonds is played and take the trick.



12. When you look at the bidding scale, you will see all the possible bids that can be made. Remember, any bid that is followed by three passes becomes the contract. I have already told you that the level of the contract determines the number of required tricks taken by **declarer** (more later). The suit that is named in that contract is now the trump suit. So a contract of 2 hearts means that hearts is trump, and that the side who has to make the contract must make 8 tricks to be successful (2+6).
13. When your side wins a trick, place the card you played in that trick in front of you with the short side of the card facing you and your partner. If your side loses the trick, place the card in front of you with the short side facing your opponents. After each hand, you can count the tricks your side won easily.
14. Back to the bidding scale – Notice that I have put a star next to some bids. If those bids become contracts, and they are successfully made, that side has made a **complete game**. There are hundreds of bonus points involved in bidding and making a complete game. However, you shouldn't bid it unless you and your partner together have enough combined strength to make the necessary number of tricks. More on this next week. If you and your partner wish to bid, but don't think you have enough for a complete game, you can stop bidding at a level below that. That means you are playing in a **partial game**. No shame there! For example, while 4 hearts is a complete game, 2 hearts is a partial game. Hearts would still be trump, but the number of tricks needed to make the contract changes (also the score).
15. Sometimes, you don't want a particular suit to be trump. Maybe you and your partner together don't have a clear majority of any one suit, but you have enough strong cards to take a lot of tricks. You may then want to play in **no trump**, which means that there is no trump suit. High card takes the trick. If a card is led, and you don't have any cards in that suit, you can play any card in your hand.
16. The player who first bids the suit that ends up being trump is called the **declarer**. He makes the decisions as to what cards are going to be played from the dummy hand as well as his hand.
17. The player who ends up being dummy makes no decisions about cards to be played from his hand. His entire role is to pull out the cards that his partner, the declarer, tells him to play. No faces, signals, nothing. After the

hand is over, you can say something diplomatic like, “What were you thinking???”

18. We know the person who first bid the suit that ends up being trump is the declarer. We also know that declarer’s partner is the dummy, and will put down his hand on the table after the first card is led. The person to the right of the dummy (or the left of the declarer, same thing), gets to lead the first card of the game. We will talk at length about what is a good card to lead. Not today. After that, as I said, whoever wins the trick, either by having the high card, or by beating a high card with a trump card, gets to lead the next card for the next trick.
19. By the way, if you’re going to trump a card (remember you must be **void** -- don’t have any--in the suit that is led in order to use trump), be careful which one you use. Let’s say hearts are trump. Your opponent leads a spade, and you are out of spades. It looks like you have the trick, since you have hearts. But you trump with the 2 of hearts, and your **left hand opponent** is also out of spades. He plays the 3 of hearts, and takes the trick because he used a higher trump than you. That’s called **overtrumping**.
20. In terms of scoring the hand, the only way to get a score is by making your contract. If you make extra tricks over the requisite number (called **overtricks**), your score is higher. If you don’t make the minimum number, you get no score at all, and your opponents get a score for **defeating** the contract. The more tricks you **go down** (the more tricks under the amount you had to make), the higher the opponents score is.

How many tricks does each contract require? Is the contract a complete game or a partial game? What’s trump?

3 No Trump \_\_\_\_\_ 2 Spades \_\_\_\_\_ 3 Spades \_\_\_\_\_ 3 Hearts \_\_\_\_\_  
5 Clubs \_\_\_\_\_ 5 Diamonds \_\_\_\_\_ 4 Diamonds \_\_\_\_\_

SAMPLE HAND #1 – LESSON ONE – CONTRACT 3 No Trump (3NT)

DEALER-: SOUTH

NORTH

Spades- A Q 8 7

Hearts- 9 2

Diamonds- Q 8 7 6

Clubs- 10 9 3

WEST

Spades- 4 3 2

Hearts- K 10 8

Diamonds- 5 4 3

Clubs- A J 8 7

EAST

Spades- J 9 6

Hearts- 7 6 4 3

Diamonds- A J 10

Clubs- 5 4 2

SOUTH

Spades- K 10 5

Hearts- A Q J 5

Diamonds – K 9 2

Clubs – K Q 6

1. Which partnership do you think will play this hand?
2. How many tricks do they have to make to win the contract?
3. How many tricks do their opponents have to make to defeat the contract?
4. What is the trump suit?