YES, NO or MAYBE

A NEW WAY TO LEARN BRIDGE

INTRODUCTION AND CARD PLAY BASICS

DAVID GLANDORF

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The *Yes, No or Maybe* series is dedicated to my father

Oscar Glandorf

an elementary school teacher
from whom I must have inherited my love of teaching.

Other books in the *Yes, No or Maybe* series

Introduction and Card Play Basics Workbook
Bidding Basics
Bidding Basics Workbook
More Bidding Basics
More Bidding Basics Workbook

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

Yes, No or Maybe is designed to teach beginning players the fundamental concepts of contract bridge. While it can be used as a self-study resource by a student with some understanding of the game of bridge, the intent is that it be used in a classroom format with an experienced teacher.

CONTENT

Yes, No or Maybe is a series of three textbooks, each with an associated workbook. Each textbook has 13 chapters plus an Index of Terms. Each chapter is designed for one three-hour lesson. ***Yes, No or Maybe*** therefore provides a resource for approximately a one-year series of classes meeting weekly with some time off for holidays, short breaks or personal (teacher) scheduling factors.

Each workbook also has 13 chapters with several exercises for the associated textbook chapter and most chapters include practice deals. The exercises can be done in the classroom, assigned as homework or divided between these two activities.

Each textbook/workbook can be used for a single 13-week course or divided approximately equally between two courses.

Introduction and Card Play Basics covers the mechanics of the game, a little bridge history, scoring, hand valuation and preferred contracts, along with the basics of declarer play and defense. No bidding is included here but MiniBridge or a variant is used for sample and practice deals. The Yes, No, Maybe bidding concepts are introduced for the determination of preferred contracts even though no real bidding is involved. The associated workbook includes a set of supplemental scoring exercises for both duplicate and rubber bridge.

Bidding Basics introduces the student to bidding including opening bids at the one level with responses and rebids, overcalls and takeout doubles with advances and rebids, the use of cuebids by responder and advancer and the practical application of the Law of Total Tricks. This textbook also includes an appendix containing some of the basic bridge information provided in ***Introduction and Card Play Basics***.

In ***More Bidding Basics*** the student learns about balancing, several conventions (Stayman, Jacoby transfers, negative doubles, fourth suit forcing, new minor forcing), strong opening bids, preemptive opening bids and overcalls, game tries, slam bidding (direct, Blackwood, Gerber, control bidding) and opening the bidding in third or fourth chair.

The basic material presented in these volumes is not new; in fact, books on fundamental card play and bidding in contract bridge have been around for about a century. What is new is the organization and methodology. To the best of my knowledge the ***Yes, No or Maybe*** approach to bidding decisions presented herein is unique in the world of teaching bridge. Finally, while MiniBridge has been around for some time, I don't know that it has previously been worked into a complete framework for teaching beginners of all ages.

Be forewarned that there is a tremendous amount of information in the two bidding books. While some of the content may be considered to be more intermediate-level material, every bridge player needs to have at least a rudimentary understanding of all the basic elements of bridge. In the classroom it is possible to play in a controlled environment using deals that are set up to illustrate the topic of the day. When playing in the real world you will frequently encounter situations that were not considered in practice deals. The details included herein should provide a handy reference for many, but by no means all, of these puzzling scenarios.

Several different bidding systems, each with several variations plus optional partnership agreements, exist in today's bridge world. One of the most common systems in current use is Standard American – 5-card majors, which is used in the ***Yes, No or Maybe*** series. The method of presenting this system differs significantly from that used in other textbooks because of its emphasis on logic rather than memorization. Nonetheless, you will be compatible with anyone who plays this system even if your partner is unfamiliar with this way of thinking.

BACKGROUND

After several years of teaching beginner and intermediate bridge using the ACBL Bridge Series, I realized that students with limited past experience struggled significantly with the task of simultaneously learning the intricacies of bidding, playing the cards as declarer, and reasonably defending a deal. In particular, I observed that the demands of learning the fundamentals of bidding often adversely impacted their ability to study and comprehend the fundamentals of declarer play and defense.

I concluded that part of the problem was that the students were trying to learn how to bid using a memorization process rather than a logical sequential thought process. This realization came from the multitude of questions in the form "How many points do I need to make that bid?" or "How many points does that bid show?"

Many years ago as I worked with new players in a social environment, the idea of teaching the card play aspects of bridge before addressing bidding germinated in the back of my mind. Then a few years ago I was introduced to the concept of MiniBridge and found out that I was not the only person who was aware of the challenges of learning bidding and card play simultaneously and that someone else had actually done something about it.

About the same time, I began to present the basic bidding topics from the ACBL series in a somewhat different manner from the traditional approach. My method consists of (1) formulating a few basic questions, the answers to which are always "**Yes", "No"** or **"Maybe"** and (2) using the answers, along with some other guidelines and rules, to make bidding decisions. This required my students to make mental adjustments/conversions as they studied their student textbooks. I received much positive feedback from my students, perhaps best summarized by a comment from one of my students who had been with me for about two years: "***Yes, No or Maybe*** will take you a long way." At the same time, I found myself apologizing to them for having to convert from the textbook approach to my approach. Eventually many of them suggested that I just write my own book.

I initially just rolled my eyes at their suggestion but in 2009 I decided to take their advice. The result was the first draft of my ***Yes, No or Maybe*** bidding books. This bidding book maintained the overall approach of starting new students with bidding concepts but referred them to the ACBL series bidding book for introductory play and defense topics. In the fall of 2011 I wrote the first draft of ***Introduction and Card Play Basics*** and in January of 2012 began using it for my introductory course for new students. Eventually the bidding book expanded and split into ***Bidding Basics*** and ***More Bidding Basics***.

NOTATIONAL ISSUES

I realize that the modern style of writing is one of gender neutrality. While I understand the social implications of this style, I personally feel it makes for very awkward reading at times. I have found a way around this for much of this series. Opener and intervener (overcaller or takeout doubler) are assigned the masculine gender while responder and advancer (partner of the intervener) are assigned the feminine gender. When reference is made to a player outside of any of these roles the traditional masculine style is used.

Here are a few notational issues:

- I sometimes use M to represent either major suit, e.g., 4M for a contract of either 4♥ or 4♠.
- I sometimes use m to represent either minor suit, e.g., 3m for a contract of either 3♣ or 3♦.
- I sometimes use N and sometimes use NT to denote a notrump contract, e.g., 3N and 3NT both denote a contract of three notrump.
- The result of a contract that is made is written as LSD+N where L is the level of the contract, S is the strain of the contract, D is the declarer compass position and N is the number of tricks above **book** that were taken, e.g., 3SS+4 is written for a contract of 3♠ by South for which 10 tricks were taken.
- The result of a contract that is defeated is written as LSD-N where L, S and D are the same as above and N is the number of tricks the **contract** was defeated, e.g., 2NW-1 is written for a contract of 2NT by West that was defeated by 1 trick.

- Bold italics are used to identify the first introduction of a bridge term and that term is included in the Index of Terms.
- Bold is used for major emphasis.
- A player's position relative to another is often denoted by LHO (left-hand opponent) or RHO (right-hand opponent) .
- Distribution of the four suits in a hand without regard to specific suits is written in the form "i-j-k-l" where each letter represents a number 0-13 with $i \geq j \geq k \geq l$, e.g., 5-3-3-2 represents a hand with 5 cards in one suit, 3 cards in each of two suits, and 2 cards in one suit with specific suits unspecified. Equals signs (=) replace the dashes when the distribution of the cards with regard to specific suits is desired, with the corresponding suits identified in decreasing rank from left to right, e.g., 3=5=1=4 designates a hand with 3 spades, 5 hearts, 1 diamond and 4 clubs.
- Sections and topics: A major division of a chapter is referred to as a section while a major division of a section is referred to as a topic. Sections are identified by large, bold, all caps, centered titles. Topics are identified by medium, bold, left-justified titles with first letters of significant words capitalized.

I truly hope that you will find these books helpful in your journey into the wonderful world of bridge.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My greatest debt of gratitude must go to my students. I could not have written this book without their encouragement and cooperation in putting up with the experimentation of my approach to teaching them this game we all love.

Second, many thanks go to Audrey Grant and Betty Starzec who wrote and updated the ACBL Bridge Series which made it easy to start teaching bridge and provided the background for much of the content of this Series. In addition I owe so much to the other great players and authors whose works were such valuable resources for this endeavor. They are listed in the next section.

Third, I must thank two of my students who are also editors, Diane Cuttler and Leah Marchand, for the numerous hours they put into proofreading and editing the text along with their many suggestions for improving its readability. In this regard thanks are also due to Ray Lee of Master Point Press for his helpful suggestions regarding layout and formatting. Thanks also go to Sally Sparrow of Master Point Press for getting my copy ready for press and Ebook distribution.

Finally, special thanks go to my wife, Becky, who is not a bridge player but knows enough about the game to listen to my bridge stories and is willing to provide help with my class preparation and writing when I need it.

RESOURCES AND PERMISSIONS

Several books were invaluable resources for writing the ***Yes, No or Maybe*** series, and this author is deeply indebted to those authors for their contributions to bridge education. Of particular importance were the following five books in the ACBL Bridge Series originally written by Audrey Grant and later revised by Betty Starzec:

1. *Bidding in the 21st Century*, Baron Barclay, Louisville, KY, © 1990, Updated 2006
2. *Play of the Hand in the 21st Century*, Baron Barclay, Louisville, KY, © 1988, 2002, Revised April 2007
3. *Defense in the 21st Century*, 2nd Edition, Baron Barclay, Louisville, KY, © 1988, 2002, Revised October 2007
4. *Commonly Used Conventions in the 21st Century*, Baron Barclay, Louisville, KY, © 2001, Revised 2008
5. *More Commonly Used Conventions in the 21st Century*, Baron Barclay, Louisville, KY, © 2001, Revised January 2008

I used these books for several years when I first started teaching and was heavily influenced by them while writing the ***Yes, No or Maybe*** series. Most of the chapters in the ***Yes, No or Maybe*** workbooks include many sample deals for practice in the classroom or at home. All of these deals have been extracted from the above five books and are used with the permission of the American Contract Bridge League (www.acbl.org). Special "EZ-Deal" decks of cards for these deals are available from Baron Barclay Bridge Supply (www.baronbarclay.com).

Commentary in *Bidding Basics*, Chapter 9 – "Overcalls and Advances - Part 1" relating to the Law of Total Tricks was drawn from Larry Cohen's book:

6. *To Bid or Not to Bid – The Law of Total Tricks*, Natco Press, Boca Raton, FL © 1992

The following book by Max Hardy was influential in my presentation of the opening bid of 2♣ and responses thereto in *More Bidding Basics*, Chapter 6 – "Strong Opening Bids:"

7. *Two Over One Game Force*, Devyn Press Inc., Louisville, KY, © 1989

My treatment of weak two-bids and other preemptive bids, as well as their use in third and fourth seat in *More Bidding Basics*, Chapter 7 – "Preemptive Opening Bids and Overcalls," Chapter 12 – "Opening the Bidding in Third or Fourth Chair - Part 1" and Chapter 13 – "Opening the Bidding in Third or Fourth Chair - Part 2" was drawn primarily from the following book by Ron Anderson and Sabine Zenkel:

8. *Preempts from A to Z,* Magnus Books, Stamford, CN, © 1996

While the ACBL Series includes a chapter on negative doubles, that material was supplemented by information gleaned from the following book by Marty Bergen devoted to this single topic for *More Bidding Basics,* Chapter 11 – "Negative Doubles."

9. Points Schmoints Series, *Negative Doubles*, Magnus Books, Stamford, CN, © 2000

Most of the content on balancing in Chapter 1 – "Balancing," Chapter 2 – "Advances after a Balancing Double or Bid" and "Chapter 3 – "Rebids after a Balancing Double or Bid" of *More Bidding Basics* was based on the following book by Mike Lawrence:

10. *The Complete Book on Balancing in Contract Bridge – Revised Edition,* Baron Barclay Bridge Supply, Louisville, KY, © 2012

Many of the sample hands were extracted from this book and used with the permission of Mike Lawrence and Baron Barclay Bridge Supply.

The above five books are highly recommended for further reading once you become comfortable with the material presented in ***Yes, No or Maybe***.

The bridge history presented in *Introduction and Card Play Basics,* Chapter 1 – "Getting Started" and the Bridge Essentials portion of the Appendix of *Bidding Basics* was derived almost entirely from the following book written by Charles Goren and the editors of Sports Illustrated:

11. *The Sports Illustrated Book of Bridge,* Chancellor Hall Ltd., NY, NY, © 1961

Additional information included in the bridge history material came from private communication with Julian Laderman who so graciously read that portion of a draft of the book and provided a few corrections and enhancements.

CHAPTER 1

– Getting Started

Introductory Concepts

The Shuffle and Deal

The Play

The Auction

Start of Play

Bridge History

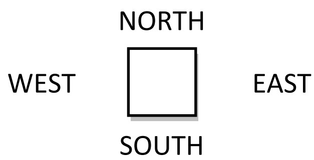
Learning the Game of Bridge

Summary

INTRODUCTORY CONCEPTS

This book addresses the play of the cards in the game of ***contract bridge*** or, in a shortened form, simply ***bridge***. The two most popular forms of bridge are ***rubber bridge*** and ***duplicate bridge***. The main differences between these two forms are the environment, certain aspects of the play and the scoring. These differences are further described later in this chapter and the following chapter.

Bridge is a game of cards for four players. For convenience the players are assigned compass points (independent of the physical polar directions): North, East, South and West as shown below.



Players sitting across from each other are ***partners*** and form a ***partnership***. Partnerships may be arranged ahead of time or a foursome may draw for partners. When drawing for partners the cards are randomly spread face down on the table. Each player draws a card and turns it face up. Typically the players with the two highest cards form one partnership and those with the two lowest cards form the other partnership. Of course upon mutual agreement some other system might be used (such as the player with the highest card partnering with the player with the lowest card; the two with the middle cards forming the other partnership).

Your partner is your friend and accomplice in the game. You both have the same goals – to have fun and score more points than your opponents. Learn to appreciate your partner and respect his decisions, even if you don't always agree. Even experts sometimes have differing opinions.

> *There is no reason to expect that you and your partner will always agree on everything.*
>
> *Learn to compromise.*

Bridge is played with a deck of 52 cards divided into four suits: clubs (♣), diamonds (♦), hearts (♥) and spades (♠). The cards in each suit are ranked from the lowest to the highest as follows: 2, 3, …, 10, J (jack), Q (queen), K (king), A (ace). The top 5 cards (10 – A) are called honor cards or simply ***honors***. The king, queen and jack are called ***face cards*** because of the faces on the cards; the lowest 9 cards (2 – 10) are called ***spot cards*** because of the numerous spots or ***pips*** indicating the suit and rank of the card. The 2 is sometimes referred to as the ***deuce*** and the 3 as the ***trey***. The side of the card showing the suit and rank is called the ***face*** of the card; the opposite side is the ***back*** of the card.

A session of bridge consists of a series of deals each of which entails four stages:

- The ***shuffle*** *and* ***deal***
- The ***auction***
- The ***play***
- The ***scoring***

The number of deals in a session may be (1) predetermined (typical for duplicate bridge), (2) based on a time limit (typical for a group social environment) or (3) based on scoring criteria (typical for a single table home rubber bridge session).

There are two goals to the game of bridge. The first is to have fun. If you don't enjoy playing this game, give it up and take up some other activity. The second is to score more points than your opponents. Most bridge players find they usually have more fun when they score more points than their opponents.

THE SHUFFLE AND DEAL

A deal begins when one of the players shuffles and deals the cards. The first player to deal may be the one who drew the highest card to determine partners or a separate draw may be done. Dealers for subsequent deals proceed clockwise around the table.

Shuffling is usually done by first dividing the deck into two approximately equal groups. Each group is held in one hand between the thumb on one longitudinal end of the stack and the middle and ring fingers on the opposite end. The cards are bent slightly by pressing down on the middle of the stack with the index finger. The middle and ring fingers are placed on the table with the thumbs slightly elevated and fairly close together. The two stacks are rotated slightly so the thumbs are closer to the body than the middle and ring fingers. The cards are then slowly released from both thumbs in a fanning manner so that the cards from both groups interlace (zipper) at the corners as they drop to the table. The two groups are then pushed together and the process repeated. Studies have been done to determine that the cards should be shuffled at least SEVEN times in this manner to ensure a random deal. When repeating the shuffle it is often helpful to alternate holding the cards face up one time and face down the next to prevent the cards from becoming deformed. Of course the last shuffle should always be face down so that the dealer cannot see the cards.

After the shuffle has been completed it is considered a common practice and good etiquette to offer the player to the dealer's right an opportunity to cut the cards. Dealer then distributes the cards one at a time beginning with the player to his left and continuing in a clockwise manner until the deck has been exhausted.

After all of the cards have been dealt each player picks up his 13 cards (called his ***hand***) and fans them so that he can see them but they are hidden from the other players. Although not necessary, most players find it helpful to sort their cards into suits with the highest card in each suit to the left. It is also common practice to alternate colors when arranging the suits.

♠ K J 10 6 ♥ Q 4 3 ♦ A 8 7 3 ♣ 9 6	When a bridge hand is displayed in a book, magazine or newspaper it usually appears in a symbolic manner as shown here. Sometimes the symbols for hearts and diamonds are printed in red instead of black – especially in a commercial textbook.
S K J 10 6 H Q 4 3 D A 8 7 3 C 9 6	When presenting a hand in a classroom environment or discussion with another player, the suit symbols are usually replaced with the first letters of the suit name. The above hand might appear like this.

A complete deal is usually presented like this:

	♠ K J 7 4 ♥ A 9 3 ♦ Q 7 ♣ A 7 6 3	
♠ 9 5 2 ♥ 7 2 ♦ 8 5 4 3 2 ♣ 8 4 2	N W E S	♠ 10 3 ♥ 10 6 4 ♦ A K J 10 9 ♣ Q 10 9
	♠ A Q 8 6 ♥ K Q J 8 5 ♦ 6 ♣ K J 5	

THE PLAY

A ***trick*** consists of 4 cards – 1 from each player. One player ***leads*** to a trick by selecting a card from his hand and laying it face up on the table in front of him. Each of the other players, in turn clockwise, selects a card from his hand and lays it face up on the table in front of him. BUT each of the other players MUST whenever possible play a card in the same suit that was led. This is called ***following suit***. If he has no cards in the suit that was led he may select any card from his hand. **NOTE: It is not only considered poor etiquette to select the card you are going to play before it is your turn, but such action may actually provide an unauthorized insight to another player regarding cards you may or may not hold. Just make a practice of not even touching the card you are going to play until it is your turn. Then remove that card from your hand and place it on the table.**

Normally the player who plays the highest card in the suit that is led will ***win*** (***take***) the trick.

During the auction one of the suits may have been designated as a ***trump suit***. If so, cards in the trump suit act as "wild cards." They outrank all of the cards in any other suit. If a trump suit has been designated the deal is said to be played in the name of that suit. If no trump suit was specified the deal is said to be played in ***notrump***. When there is a trump suit the other three suits are called ***plain suits*** or ***side suits***.

If you cannot follow suit at your turn to play and you play a card in the trump suit, you are said to ***trump*** or ***ruff*** (slang) the trick. If you play a card in some other suit, you are said to ***discard*** or ***sluff*** (slang) that card. A trump card can be led at any time by the player who has the lead.

If one or more trump cards are played on a trick, the player who played the highest trump card wins the trick.

There are two common variations in the mechanics of playing a card to a trick.

In a rubber bridge game all of the cards played to the trick are often placed in the middle of the table and then picked up by one of the partners of the side that won the trick – stacking them face down in overlapping piles in front of him as play continues.

In a duplicate bridge game each player must retain all of the cards he started with for the deal. After a trick has been completed he turns the card face down and places it near the edge of the table a slight distance from the left of center – maybe half way to the left end. If he or his partner won the trick, he turns the card vertically so that it "points" toward his partner's side of the table. If an opponent won the trick he turns it horizontally so it "points" to the opponents' sides of the table. Subsequent tricks are placed in a similar manner – slightly overlapping previous tricks and strung out from left to right in front of him so he can always see which side won each trick. Rubber bridge players, especially beginners, may also find it convenient to record their tricks in this manner so they can review and discuss the deal after the play is complete. Such a discussion is called the ***post mortem***.

The player who wins a trick leads to the next trick. Play continues until the players have played all of their cards to a total of 13 tricks.

Beginner players often wonder what card they should play to a trick when it is their turn and they have a choice of two or more cards. This is not an easy question to answer and is the focus of the remainder of this book. We will consider this question both from an offensive viewpoint and a defensive viewpoint. But there are two principles to keep in mind:

- One of the objects of any deal is to win tricks.
- While the player who won a trick leads to the next trick, from a scoring viewpoint it matters not whether you or your partner wins a trick.

Tricks are won with high cards, low cards in long suits and trumps.

The last point is significant in many cases. For example, if your partner has already played the king of a suit that was led and you have the ace and a small card or two, you do not need to play the ace for your side to win the trick. On the other hand, there are some situations in which there is a tactical advantage to ***overtaking*** a trick which would otherwise have been won by your partner.

THE AUCTION

If the players could each look at their partner's hands, they might be able to come to an agreement on whether they would like a deal to be played with a particular suit as a trump suit or in notrump. Of course this is not allowed, but, before the play of a deal begins, an auction is conducted. During the auction the players are allowed to exchange information regarding their hands through a restricted language consisting of certain allowable ***calls***.

A Player's Call

After the cards have been dealt and the players have looked at their hands, the **dealer** starts the auction by making the first call. A call is one of the following:

- ***Pass*** – Indicates the player has nothing to say regarding the auction at this time but retains the right to say something later if any subsequent player makes any call other than pass
- A ***bid*** – A tentative ***contract*** for the partnership to take some number of tricks with the deal being played in a specified suit (the trump suit) or notrump (there will not be a trump suit). A bid must always be higher than the preceding bid. The final bid in the auction becomes the contract. A bid is of the form LS where L is the ***level*** of the contract (a number from 1 to 7) and S is the ***strain*** in which the deal is to be played (one of the four suits or notrump). It only stands to reason that if a partnership is to win the auction, it must contract to take at least half the tricks. So the first 6 tricks are called ***book*** and do not count toward the contract. For example, a bid of 1♠ is a tentative contract to take 7 tricks with spades as the trump suit.
- ***Double*** – Generally a statement of intent of defeating the contract for the most recent bid provided it was made by an opponent. (You are not allowed to say double if the most recent bid was by your partner.) If no subsequent bids are made the points scored for the deal are greater than if the double had not been made. If a subsequent bid is made by any player the double is no longer in effect. The double is often used for other purposes to pass certain information to your partner.
- ***Redouble*** – Generally a statement that you think your side can make a contract for which a double is in effect. This call can be made only if an opponent doubled a bid made by you or your partner and that double is

still in effect. The redouble further increases the points scored for the deal if no subsequent bids are made. If another player makes a bid after a redouble, the redouble is no longer in effect. The redouble is sometimes used for other purposes.

The first player to make a **bid** is called the ***opening bidder*** or the ***opener***. Opener's partner is called the ***responder***. If an opponent of the opening bidder enters the auction with a bid or a double, the first one to do so is called the ***intervener*** and his partner is called the ***advancer***. For ease of writing in this book the opener and intervener are assigned the male gender and their partners the female gender.

The Complete Auction

The auction proceeds clockwise around the table with each player making his call in turn. This continues until either all four players have passed at their first opportunity or until three successive players pass after a bid (or double or redouble) was made. If all four players pass at their first opportunity, the deal is completed except for the scoring. Otherwise the final bid becomes the contract and the play commences. Note that if you pass at your turn you may not get another chance to bid.

For the purpose of bidding the four suits have rank. Their rank from bottom up is particularly easy to remember because they are in alphabetical order: **c**lubs, **d**iamonds, **h**earts and **s**pades. Notrump sits on top of all the suits so at any particular level there are five available bids. If you wish to make a bid in a strain that is higher ranking than the strain of the most recent bid, you may bid at the same level. But if your strain is lower ranking you must increase the level of the bid. For example, suppose you wanted to make a bid in hearts as cheaply as possible. If the most recent bid was 1♣ you could bid 1♥; but if the most recent bid was 1♠ you would have to bid 2♥. The two lower-ranking suits, clubs and diamonds, are called the ***minor suits*** (***minors***). The two higher-ranking suits are called the ***Major Suits*** (***Majors***). The Majors are more important than the minors not only because they outrank the minors, but, as you will see in the next chapter, you will score more points in a Major than a minor for the same number of tricks.

A complete auction usually appears in print as successive lines of calls for each of the four players, identified by their compass positions, and starting with West as illustrated below.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	Pass	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

For this deal North was the dealer and passed initially, but then bid at his second opportunity. The following three players passed, ending the auction.

This was a fairly mundane auction. It was ***uncontested*** meaning that East-West did nothing but pass and let North-South have their way. The final bid was 2♠ by North meaning that to fulfill their contract North-South had to take 8 tricks (the book of 6 plus the contract level of 2) and spades would be the trump suit. Since North-South won the auction they will be on offense during the play attempting to make their contract. East-West will be on defense trying to prevent them from fulfilling their contract or to ***set*** them.

Bids are usually spoken in a rubber bridge game. The modern method of communicating bids in a duplicate bridge game is through the use of ***bidding boxes***. Bidding boxes are special small boxes that sit on the table to the right of each player. Each box has two partitions, each containing special cards for a subset of the calls that can be made. One partition contains one card for each bid that can be made from 1♣ up to 7N. The cards are notched, of different lengths, and labeled so that each of the 35 different bids is clearly visible. The other partition contains several colored cards labeled Pass (green), a few labeled D or X (red) for Double and a couple labeled RD or XX (blue) for Redouble. These are used for the other calls that can be made during the auction. These bidding cards are placed in front of you on the table to display your call at your turn and remain there until the auction is complete. Once the auction has been completed, the bidding cards are returned to the boxes. There is no requirement that bidding boxes be used in a duplicate game, but most duplicate players prefer them and most duplicate bridge venues use them. These boxes may be used in a rubber bridge game.

START OF PLAY

The first partner to bid the strain of the contract is called the ***declarer***. One of the more interesting features of bridge is that the defenders get to attack first. The lead to the first trick (***opening lead)*** is made by the player sitting to the left of the declarer. As with the start of any trick, the ***opening leader*** may choose any card from his hand for the opening lead. But there are two differences for the opening lead, as described in the following topic.

The Inquiry

Before choosing the opening lead, that player may ask for a review of the auction and also ask the opponents to explain any bids they had made, especially if they seemed unusual. When doing so it is proper for such questions to be asked of and answered by the **partner** of the player who made the bid.

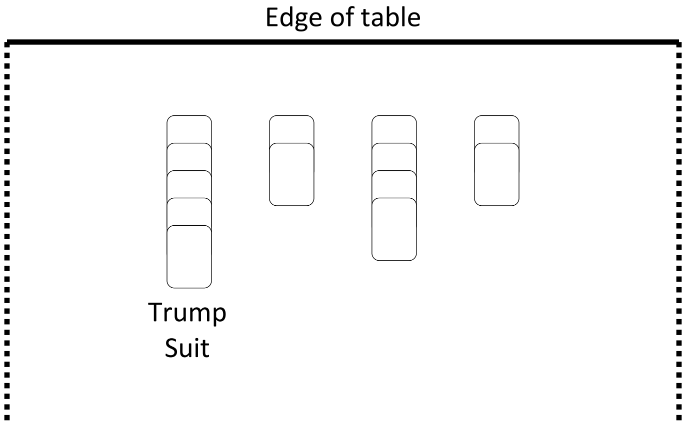
At the end of this Q&A period, if any, the opening leader chooses his lead and places it **face down** on the table. He then asks his partner if he has any questions. At this point the opening leader's partner has the same Q&A opportunity as had the opening leader. The card chosen for the opening lead is kept face down to avoid any influence on questions asked by the opening leader's partner.

On rare occasion the wrong defender may attempt to make the opening lead. If this is the case that player should be directed to return the card to his hand and the proper defender makes the opening lead in the normal manner. Due to the opening lead initially placed face down, the player who erred has not relayed any unauthorized information to his partner.

After the Opening Lead

Most of the time there are no questions asked. But regardless once the Q&A is complete the opening leader turns his card face up. At this point something unusual happens. Declarer's partner, referred to as the ***dummy*** (as in puppet), lays all of his cards on the table face up. He arranges them in four columns, one for each suit, pointing toward declarer. If there is a trump suit, those cards are positioned in the right-most column (to declarer's left). It is common practice to alternate the colors of the suits. The highest card in each suit is nearest dummy's table edge but with space reserved for recording the tricks. The remaining cards are arranged in descending rank and partially overlapped so that each card is clearly identifiable.

LAYOUT OF DUMMY'S CARDS (FACE UP)



Declarer determines which card to play from dummy on each trick and directs dummy to play those cards at dummy's turn. If necessary, declarer may physically play the cards from dummy.

Play then continues as discussed earlier.

Suit Pairings

It is sometimes advantageous to divide the four suits into two pairs. There are three ways this can be done:

- By rank – Major Suits (Hearts & Spades) or minor suits (Clubs & Diamonds)
- By color – ***Black suits*** (Clubs and Spades) or ***red suits*** (Diamonds and Hearts)

- By shape – ***Pointed suits*** (Diamonds and Spades) or ***rounded suits*** (Clubs and Hearts). If you look at a deck of cards, the pointed and rounded features will be obvious.

These divisions allow us to refer to any two specific suits in a "shorthand" manner.

Player Identification

While we can always refer to a specific player by his compass point, sometimes it is more convenient to use a relative notation. This is done by referring to your left-hand opponent (***LHO***) or your right-hand opponent (***RHO***).

BRIDGE HISTORY

The history of bridge is part factual and part speculative. Europeans were playing triumph, a game similar to bridge, back in the 16th century. Whist evolved from triumph sometime during the next 100 years. By the end of the 17th century whist was common throughout England and played there for three centuries. In 1742 Edmond Hoyle published the internationally renowned, *A Short Treatise on the Game of Whist*. A later version of the book brought about the phrase "according to Hoyle" which is still heard today. This book became the second most widely circulated book in the 18th century, the Bible being first. Whist was so popular it eventually became the subject of hundreds of books. There was even a game called "Duplicate Whist" the forerunner of today's duplicate bridge format.

But when, where and how did whist evolve into bridge? The Russians, Turks, British and French all lay claims to the beginning of bridge, and to this day no one knows for sure who is right. We do know that its documented arrival in England occurred in 1894 by Lord Brougham at the staid Portland Club, the traditional headquarters of whist. He had just returned from the South of France where he had been introduced to the game.

It was not long before bridge overcame whist in popularity at the Portland Club. Understand that this establishment was not just a neighborhood pub but a gathering place for the aristocrats of London society. As might be expected this new game was not accepted by many who considered whist to be "the game" to be played.

Bridge had been introduced in the United States a little earlier. In the fall of 1892 Henry Barbey brought the game to the New York Whist Club after having learned it in Paris.

This early game of bridge is now called "***bridge whist***" and was much simpler than the game we play today.

In the mid 1800's the idea of "dummy" and "bidding with levels" arose in India when a foursome became a threesome because one player failed to arrive. This idea also spread quickly. Throughout the remainder of the first quarter of the 20th century, there were several other attempts to make changes to the game, but none of them came to fruition.

Then came 1925… the year of bridge as we know it today! Harold S. "Mike" Vanderbilt was on a long cruise from San Francisco to Havana on the liner *Finland*. Vanderbilt and his three companions, just enough for a game of ***auction bridge*** as it had become known, tired of the relatively simple game. Vanderbilt devised a new scoring system adding the idea that you had to bid to the game or slam level to receive the associated bonus and the concept of ***vulnerability***. The contract concept was part of auction bridge and adapted from the French game of ***plafond*** which had been well established 10 years earlier. The term ***vulnerable*** was suggested by a young female observer as Vanderbilt was explaining his system of scoring.

Vanderbilt had no intention of revolutionizing the game of bridge as it was currently being played. He was simply looking for a change in the daily entertainment of his cruise partners. But, once they returned home and introduced the idea to their bridge-playing friends, the idea took off like wild fire, quickly spreading throughout the United States and overseas. There were several early changes to scoring associated with notrump contracts, but that soon settled down to the present system. Otherwise, except for two minor changes to the scoring system (adopted by the World Bridge Federation in 1987 for duplicate bridge and in 1993 for rubber bridge[1]), the contract bridge game we play today is essentially the same one Vanderbilt introduced.

In the early days of contract bridge many different bidding systems developed in the United States. Much of the impetus for this was the prospect of writing and selling books on your 'system,' thus gaining fame and fortune. This made it very difficult for a group of strangers to join in a game, none being familiar with the system played by the others. Communication was very difficult if not impossible, almost like everyone speaking a different language. The British, on the other hand, did not believe in trying to pass information to partner through an artificial bidding process.

Enter Ely Culbertson, a flamboyant personality, expert player and writer who had devised his own system. The year was 1930. Culbertson came across a challenge in a bridge book written by Lt. Col. Walter Buller, the bridge editor of the London *Daily Telegraph*. In essence, Buller stated that he believed any good British foursome could beat any American foursome 'sky-high' regardless of what fancy 'system' they used and would lay heavy money on the line. Of all the American bridge experts who must have been aware of this challenge, Culbertson was the only one to formally accept it through a column in his own magazine, *Bridge World*. Culbertson won the match and soon thereafter launched a new book espousing his 'system' which he naturally claimed was the reason his team won the match. Thus was born the Culbertson System which was used by many

[1] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bridge_scoring#Recent_scoring_changes

players for several years. By the way, Ely's partner in marriage and bridge was Josephine, who many experts today believe was a better player than Ely.

A new era, a new expert player and writer, a new system. It is the 1940s and 1950s. Enter Charles Goren and the point-count system which was based on earlier ideas from Milton Work. In fact, the system is sometimes referred to as the Work point-count system. Charles Goren was "Mr. Bridge" during his prime, winning many major events and the undisputed leader in tournament competition, playing most often with his favorite partner Helen Sobel, although he remained a bachelor. Goren's bidding system was easier to learn than Culbertson's and had many advantages, so eventually it overtook the Culbertson system in popularity. Although several changes have been made over the years, Goren's system is essentially the one that is the basis for bidding in this series.

Goren could not have had his success without an outstanding partner in her own right, and there is an interesting anecdote involving Ms. Sobel. She was once asked what it felt like playing with a great expert. Her reply: "Ask Charlie!"

While not as prolific as in the early days of contract bridge, other bidding systems do exist in today's bridge world. Nonetheless, the one presented in this series is known by almost all players in the United States and many other countries. So, once you learn it, you should be able to join in a game almost anywhere you might be.

There are almost 40 million bridge players in North America playing home style rubber bridge or tournament style duplicate bridge, both forms of contract bridge. Most duplicate bridge is played under the auspices of the American Contract Bridge League (ACBL – www.acbl.org). There are more than 3200 ACBL bridge clubs, and hundreds of tournaments are held each year across the United States, Canada and Mexico. The American Bridge Associaton (ABA – http://ababridge.org/) is another sponsor of duplicate bridge in North America.

LEARNING THE GAME OF BRIDGE

As you continue your bridge adventure it might be helpful if you compare learning this game with working a giant jigsaw puzzle. We can't fill in all the pieces at once but start with a framework and then build on that to fill in more pieces. Just like many jigsaw puzzles have certain features you might concentrate on, so does bridge. Here is a partial outline: