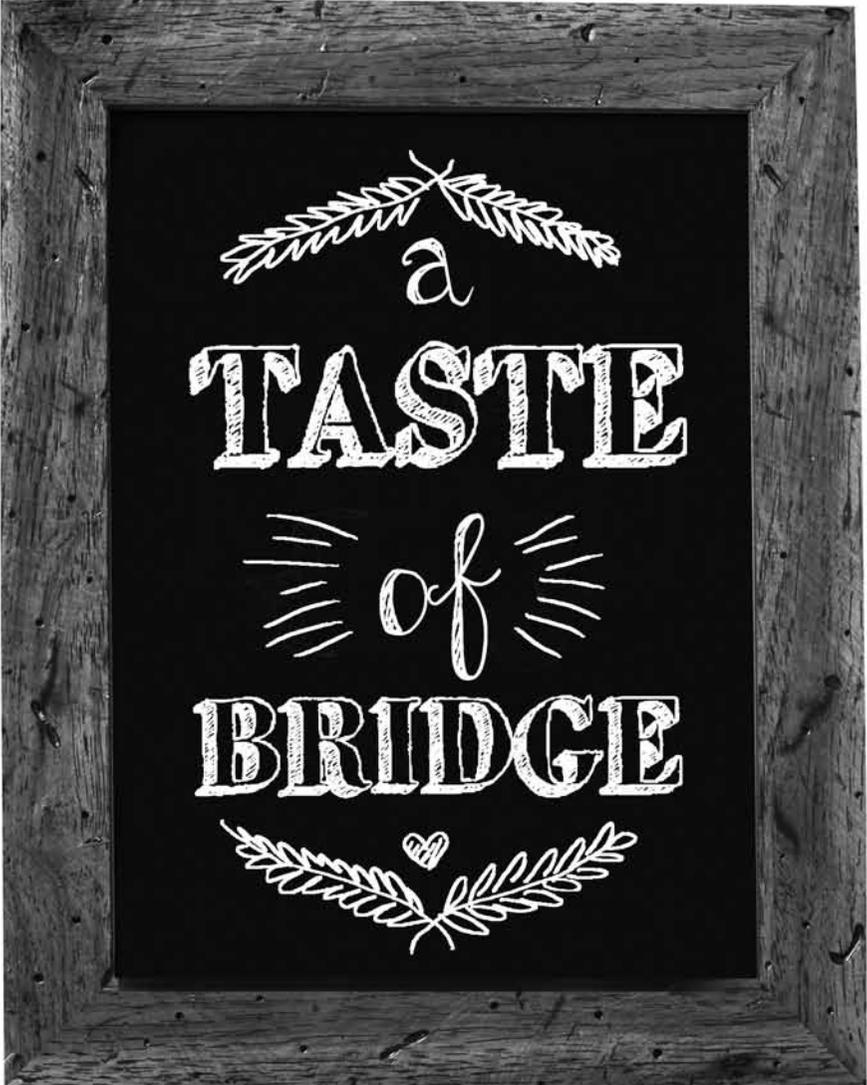


a
TASTE
of
BRIDGE

8♠ A♠ K♠
5♠ 3♠ A♥ 8♥ 5♥ 3♣ A♦ Q♦ 10♦ 2♦
jeff bayone

jeff bayone



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foreword



A taste of Häagen Dazs (or Ben & Jerry's) ice cream.

A taste of the good life.

A taste of Heaven.

A taste of your own medicine.

A session of bridge is usually all of these. An individual hand takes between five and ten minutes to play. Every hand is an adventure, and it happens so fast. A champion on one, a goat on the next. Sometimes a taste of Heaven, sometimes not. Bridge is fast-paced, exciting, and takes no prisoners; it's the perfect game for these times.

You're almost there. It's a big step, getting involved in something brand new. Let me tell you how Betsy Lerner, in her book, *The Bridge Ladies*, described her first foray into the game. It was when she attended a class at her local bridge club. Her words: 'I was nervous and full of anxiety and went home thoroughly discouraged and completely energized. But I also had fun, felt stimulated. I felt an immediate affinity for the game.' The local bridge club she attended was our club. My wife and I taught her.

There must be dozens of books for people who want to learn to play bridge. How do you decide if this is the one? Is this the book for you? *A Taste of Bridge* is Honors Bridge Club's beginner course. It's been tinkered with, kicked around, and field-tested for over thirty years. It has introduced thousands to the game. The course is fun and it works! It has helped build Honors into the largest-ever bridge club in the country.

I rest my case.

You've probably heard a friend say something like, 'Oh, bridge is so complicated.' Well let me assure you, it is! It's complicated — but not hard. There are just so many parts to the game. Each on its own is easy. It's the putting it all together that's the complicated part. I've uncomplicated it as much as possible and done it, I hope you will agree, in a very readable way.

Skim the first few pages. If you like the feel, the approach and the explanations, know that's what you will be getting throughout the book.

I took great pains to build slowly and carefully, to ensure that your foundation is as solid as possible, and, especially, to make certain that I would not be losing you along the way.

The book is made up of lots of short chapters. Twenty-eight in all. Reading two or three chapters in one sitting (while you're on your way home, perhaps) should take less than an hour. That's how it was designed. Two weeks on the train and you'll be a bridge player.

Not!

You'll be just about where you would expect yourself to be had you decided to take up the piano, or Chinese, or tennis. I would hope that somewhere, early on, you'd begin to be awed at bridge's beauty and logic. It's a winning combination. After that, the rest, from my perspective, is easy.

Here is a breakdown of how I see you working on the book.

Session	Chapters
1.	1 - 3
2.	4 - 5
3.	6 - 7
4.	8 - 9
5.	10 - 11
6.	12 - 13
7.	14 - 16
8.	17 - 18
9.	19 - 21
10.	22 - 23
11.	24
12.	25-26
13.	27

Twelve practice hands follow in Chapter 28.

Perhaps you already know that Bill Gates and Warren Buffett don't generally have time for games, but bridge is the exception. Do you happen to share their taste *for* bridge?

Let's find out!

Jeff Bayone
June 2017

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A decorative flourish consisting of two symmetrical leafy branches curving upwards and outwards, meeting at a central point where a small heart is placed.

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Chapter 1

getting started



Thinking back to your carefree childhood days, do you remember playing a card game called War? For those of you who never heard of the game, or if you can't remember that far back, this is how it would have gone:

A deck of cards was split in two, half was placed face down in front of you and the other half placed face down in front of your buddy. You would each then pick the top card from your pile and turn it over. Whoever had the higher card would win. The winner would take the two cards and put them at the bottom of his pile. You didn't know it at the time, but the two cards, one contributed from each player, constituted a **trick**. There are fifty-two cards in a deck, therefore twenty-six tricks. The game ended when someone won all the cards by taking tricks.

Like War, bridge is a game of tricks. But unlike War, in bridge you get to see your cards before you play them and you decide for yourself which card to play. It's no longer just plain luck that wins tricks. Planning, vision, common sense, logic, experience, and even imagination, now all play roles in determining the outcome.

It takes four people to play bridge. Each trick consists of four cards. With fifty-two cards in the deck, that means there are thirteen tricks in the game. The object of the game, in its most basic terms, is to win as many tricks as you can. A bridge hand ends when all thirteen tricks have been played.

Before we go any further, it's not a bad idea for you to get a deck of bridge cards — or poker playing cards if you must. Bridge cards are the same as poker playing cards except they are smaller in size. This makes it easier to hold and view thirteen cards at one time.

BASIC TERMS

Lawyers, cooks, the police, musicians — all have their own unique language. It should come as no surprise that bridge players do, too. Let's listen to one of them discussing a hand played earlier in the day:

'Remember board six? Your LHO doubled you in four hearts. I believe you held stiff queen, ace king sixth, four baby, king-jack tight. You dropped the doubleton queen of diamonds offside to make an overtrick! Don't you think his partner should have pulled to four spades?'

Yes, we really do talk that way. And soon you will too.

Let's begin.

We'll start with a few basic terms. In a standard deck of fifty-two cards, there are four suits: spades, hearts, diamonds, and clubs. Each suit consists of thirteen cards. Let's examine one suit, say diamonds. Spread them out. Notice that some of these diamond cards have diamond spots in the center. The two, for example, has two diamond spots, the three has three spots, etc., all the way up to the ten, the highest one of these numbered cards, which has ten spots. Now, whether these spots happen to be shaped like spades, hearts, diamonds, or clubs, do you know what we call these cards? **Spot cards!** (Did you really think this was rocket science?)

Next come three cards with faces on them — the jack (J), the queen (Q), and the king (K) — the **face cards**. The ace (A) is simply the ace and it is the most powerful and highest-ranking card in the suit. In order of strength, strongest to weakest, we have the ace, the king, the queen, the jack, the ten, the nine, etc., all the way down to the lowly deuce (the two). The ace beats any other card in the suit, the king beats every other card but the ace and so on down to the two, which loses to every card in the suit. The five highest cards, the ace, the three face cards, and that highest spot card, the ten, hold an esteemed position. They are your **honors**, as in our club's name, Honors Bridge Club.

Chapter 2

setting up



Bridge is played by four people sitting around a table. The person opposite you is your partner. You work together as a team. The players to your left and right are your opponents. They also work as a team. At the bridge table you always have one friend and two opponents.

In order to discuss the various players at the table, let's give them names. We'll base the names on where they are sitting. Assigning each seat a direction, we refer to one team as North-South and the other as East-West. (This is purely for convenience — you don't have to figure out which wall in your living room is North before you start playing!)

Bridge is played in a clockwise direction, so, for example, if we start with North, the order of play will be North, East, South, and then West.

	North	
West		East
	South	

From South's vantage, North is his partner. West is his left-hand opponent (**LHO**); East is his right-hand opponent (**RHO**).

Let's begin. Our players will decide on partnerships, and then one of them will deal.

PICKING PARTNERS

There are two ways to decide who plays with whom in a bridge game:

Formal method: each person picks a card out of the deck. The person with the highest card sits wherever he or she wants, whoever drew the next highest card becomes that person's partner, and the other two players become the opposing pair.

Informal method: everyone sits wherever they want. Whoever sits across from you at the table is your partner.

DEALING THE CARDS

Who deals first?

Formal method: the person who drew the highest card deals first.

Informal method: whoever wants to deal gets to deal.

The **dealer** shuffles the cards and deals one card at a time around the table in a clockwise direction starting with the person to the dealer's left (LHO), until all fifty-two cards are distributed. This will produce four hands of thirteen cards each.

Now each player picks up his cards and arranges them into suits, alternating colors so as to be able to distinguish between them. Something like this:



THE PLAY

Whenever you see a description of a bridge game in a newspaper or book, you get to see all four hands at once. There are no secrets. But when you're playing a real game of bridge, three of the four hands are hidden. One hand is actually visible to all the players. This open hand is called the dummy and it goes on the table at the start of play. The person who sits behind the dummy hand is not involved in the play (I'll explain how the dummy is determined in a later chapter). The person across from the dummy plays both his own cards and those of the dummy. This person is called the declarer. The two other players are called the defenders. These three players look at their hands and the dummy hand, open on the table, and attempt to visualize what cards each of the other

players are holding. Then they decide how and when they should play the cards in their own hands to give themselves the best chance to make as many tricks as they can. In essence, they become bridge detectives.

This is how a complete deal might be displayed in your local newspaper's bridge column:

	North	
	♠ A K Q	
	♥ A Q 5	
	♦ Q 8 7 3	
	♣ Q 6 2	
West		East
♠ J 10 9 7 4		♠ 8 6
♥ 10 8 2		♥ J 9 7 4
♦ 5		♦ A 9 6 2
♣ J 9 8 4		♣ 10 7 3
	South	
	♠ 5 3 2	
	♥ K 6 3	
	♦ K J 10 4	
	♣ A K 5	

The order of the suits displayed is important. They are displayed the same way we say them... spades first (at the top), followed by hearts, then diamonds, and then clubs. (Reverse alphabetical order, if you will: S, H, D, C).

For consistency, as far as this book is concerned, North will always be the dummy. The declarer therefore will always be South. (It's just easier to look at a diagram the 'right way up'.) That makes East and West the defenders. Also, since bridge is not gender-linked, and to avoid arguments about pronouns, in this book East and West will always be men, and North and South will always be women.

Let's talk about this hand as bridge players would. Even if you can't play yet, isn't half the battle sounding like you know what you're doing?

When describing a suit, we always name the top cards from the highest one down to a nine, but rarely mention the smaller cards. Small spot cards are less important and so are usually mentioned simply as part of the total number of cards in the suit. For example, North's diamond **holding** would be 'queen fourth'. That means the queen in a four-card holding, or the queen with three small cards (like North's ♦Q873).

When you have a suit with only one card we call it a **singleton** — in bridgese, it is said to be **stiff** (like West's ♦5). Two-card suits are **doubletons** (East's ♠86). When describing suits with only honor cards (North's ♠AKQ) we use the word 'tight'. We always say the suits in the

learn bridge the really easy way

A whole new approach to the world's most popular card game, developed and tested with thousands of students at North America's largest bridge school. With the six easy lessons in this book, you'll get a taste of bridge, and be able to start playing with your friends. And who knows, maybe you'll develop a taste for bridge!



Thinking about taking up bridge? Intimidated? All you need are two things: a great teacher and a sense of humor. You get both for the price of one in Jeff Bayone, owner of Manhattan's premier bridge club, Honors, and a teacher for over thirty years. He's a natural teacher and with every page, you'll be coddled, cajoled and given the best coaching imaginable. He taught me, and if I could learn bridge, you can too.

Betsy Lerner, author of the *New York Times* bestseller *The Bridge Ladies*

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