

## **1, 2 and 3 handed Bridge**

**Below are some rules and variants for these. This is not definitive nor exhaustive but is a good place to start**

### **1-Player Bridge**

**YOU WILL NEED PATIENCE TO GET YOUR HEAD  
ROUND THIS!**

**There are Examples to help you**

The object of Bridge Solitaire is score as many points as possible playing a game of Contract Bridge against the stock. Points are scored by accurately predicting the number of tricks in excess of six that you will be able to win. The ultimate goal is to thus win two games, which constitute a rubber.

### Setup

Bridge Solitaire uses the same standard 52-card pack that Contract Bridge uses, plus two jokers.

You also need a typical Rubber Bridge scoring sheet. If you don't have any you can easily make one by simply dividing a sheet of paper with a vertical and a horizontal line. ('WE' and 'THEY' seem a little pretentious if you're playing solitaire, though. 'ME' and 'IT' are probably more appropriate, or 'PLAYER' and 'HOUSE' if you feel like being more serious about it.)

Shuffle and deal seven cards face down without looking at them. Then, deal thirteen cards face up in front of you. The remainder becomes the stock, which will serve as the your opponent for the rest of the hand. For the sake of clarity, the theoretical player the stock is representing is the House.

## Choosing your hand

Cards rank in their usual order, with aces high. The jokers (★) do not have any rank and cannot win or lose a trick.

The player begins by choosing their hand. The seven face-down cards will be part of your

Before looking at them, choose six cards in their hand from the thirteen face-up cards available. If there are any jokers in these thirteen cards, the player has to take them.

The unchosen cards are discarded in a face-up discard pile, and the face-down cards are turned up, allowing the player to see their full thirteen-card hand.

The discarded cards (save for the top card of the discard pile) cannot be inspected after this point.

## Bidding

The House always bids first; its bid is determined by the contents of your hand. The House will bid the suit that the player has the least cards in. The numerical content of the bid is calculated by examining each suit and counting the number of “winning tricks” the player can make. For example, in diamonds, the player has A-Q-10-9. The A♦ would win a trick (being the highest diamond), the 9♦ would lose to the K♦ (which is held by the House), the Q♦ then wins a trick (being the highest unaccounted-for diamond), and the J♦ would take 10♦, so the player has two winning tricks in diamonds. The sum of the values from each of the four suits is subtracted from six. If the result is zero or negative, the House passes. Otherwise, the resulting value (combined with the player’s short suit) is the House’s bid.

No Trump bids may only be made when the player holds one of the following suit distributions: 4-3-3-3, 3-3-3-3-★, 3-3-3-2-★-★.

If the House passes, the player is required to make a bid. Otherwise, the player has the option to overcall the House and play as declarer. They may also pass, and play as defender.

If the player holds one joker, the contract is doubled. If holding two jokers, it is redoubled.

## Play of the Hand

The play of the hand is conducted according to the usual Bridge rules. Both the player and the House must follow suit if possible. If the player is unable to follow suit, they may play any card.

Whichever player is defending leads to the first trick. When the House leads, it does so by simply playing the top card of the stock. If the player leads, cards are turned over from the stock until a card that can be legally played is exposed. The trick is then placed in one of two discard piles (one for the player and one for the House), face down. The player that won the trick leads to the next one.

A special rule applies during No Trump contracts. When the player leads, the House may play a maximum of only four cards from the stock. If, by the fourth card, the House has not made a legal play, the player wins the trick by default. They then lead to the next one, as usual.

Jokers have a special role in the game. If the player cannot follow suit, they may use a joker instead of playing any other card. If the House leads a joker, the player may play any card they wish. The House wins any trick containing a joker, with one exception. Should the player respond to a joker led by the House with the other joker, the player wins the trick instead. (A player may lead a joker as well. There seems to be little point in doing so, however.)

The hand ends when thirteen tricks have been played, meaning that the player has run through their entire hand. In the event that the stock is exhausted before the hand is completed, the last card of the stock is the House's play for the last trick. Each remaining card in the player's hand is considered a trick won by the player.

## Scoring

Scoring is done according to typical Contract Bridge scoring rules.

## Example hands

### Example 1

After shuffling, a player deals out seven face-down cards face down into a pile, and then thirteen cards face-up, setting the rest of the House aside to form the stock. The thirteen face-up cards look like this: J-10-7-2♠, 9♦, A-K-10-8♣, Q-8-5-4♥.

The player, not particularly thrilled with this draw, begins weighing their options of which cards to keep. The 9♦ is an obvious throwaway, while A-K♣ will automatically give them two winning tricks against the stock. Taking Q-8-5♥ would also guarantee a third trick in hearts, but taking half the potential draw for a single trick seems unwise, and going J-10-7-2♠ for a single trick in spades is right out. The player ultimately selects A-K-10-8♣, Q-8♥, throwing out the other face-up cards into a face-up discard pile with the J♠ on top, a reminder that they threw away one of the honors in that major suit. This gives them two tricks for sure and a potential third if the face down cards include at least one lower-ranked heart.

The player then picks up the seven face-down cards and, having looked them over, happily adds them to their hand—the final disposition of their hand is: A-K-Q-J-10-8♣, Q-8-7♥, 9-4♠, 3♦, ★.

Next, they need to evaluate their hand for the House bid—here it's an easy thing to determine. With five honors in clubs, they have five winning tricks in that suit. They were also given another heart, so the queen is good for a trick there. Diamonds and spades are duds, but it doesn't matter—the player has six tricks in hand, so the House will pass. The player decides to play conservatively since they have two suits without stoppers in them, and bids 1♣. Thanks to the joker in their hand, the final bid is 1♣ Doubled.

Since the player bid to play, a card is dealt off the top of the stock, in this case the 3♣, which the player counters with 8♣, winning the first trick. The player then leads the A♣ and draws the next card off the stock, which is the 7♦. Since this is neither a trump nor a card of the suit led, it is ignored and another card is dealt, the 5♦. This is also invalid—the A♥ is turned up (something of which the player takes note) before the House finally yields up 9♣, a valid play. Player wins the second trick.

The player plays their next three trump honors in sequence, forcing the House to cough up high cards in other suits while running it out of trumps. The player decides to wait to play the 10♣, which at that point is their last trump, opting instead to play the Q♥, since the A♥ has already fallen. The House responds 10♦ before coughing up 4♣, winning the trick.

The House leads the K♠ next, which player must respond with 4♠; next comes the 4♦ which player must answer with 3♦. The Q♦ is led out of the pack next. Since player is out of diamonds at that point, they decide to use the joker in their hand, losing the trick but keeping other options open. The House's next lead is 2♥; here the player answers with 7♥, winning a trick they didn't expect.

Player next leads the 9♠, only for the House to answer with a joker, costing the player that trick. The next card out of the House is 6♦, which the player collects with their last trump. On the final trick, the player leads the 8♥, the last card in their hand, which the stock collects with the 5♣. In all, the player won seven tricks during the course of game play, sufficient to make the contract, earning them 40 points below the line, 150 above the line for five honors, and 50 above the line for insult.

## Example 2

After dealing the cards, a player winds up with this face-up set of cards: A-10-3-2♥, 7-6-2♦, K-4-2♣, 10-5-4♠. There's not much to work with here—the diamonds and spades don't offer up tricks, while the K♣ is only good if the player takes one of the other clubs. Ultimately that's what that player chooses to do, taking all four hearts in the hope of getting something with some length to it. The player picks up the face down cards, and winds up with this hand: A-Q-10-3-2♥, 3♦, K-4-3♣, A-9-3♠, ★, receiving precious little help there.

The K♣ is a winning trick, as is the A♠. In the hearts suit, the player has the A♥, would lose the 2♥ to the K♥, making the Q♥ good, and would lose the 3♥ to the J♥, making the 10♥ good, so three winning tricks there. The player has five tricks in their hand and their short suit is diamonds, so the House bid for the hand is 1♦. The player isn't entirely confident in their hand, but still elects to go ahead and bid 1♥. The final contract is at 1♥ Doubled.

The House opens play with J♥, which the player counters with the Q♥. Going for broke, the player plays the A♥. The House answers first with Q♦, an invalid play, but the next turn up is the other joker, which goes to the House. Needless to say, this particular hand winds up going very badly for the player, who might've been better off had they decided to defend rather than bid...

## **2-Player Bridge**

**The term *Honeymoon Bridge* (or *Divorce Bridge*) is often used to describe bridge variants designed for two players. Here are a few**

### **A) Semi-Exposed Dummies**

This version brings in an element of chance which can be adjusted according to your preferences.

Players deal four 13-card hands and take one each for themselves. The remaining two hands form the dummies, one for each player. The dummy cards are semi-exposed, with some cards face down and others face up. Typically, there are between 4 and 7 exposed cards, but it's your choice.

The two players bid, taking into account the cards they know their dummy (and that of their opponent's) to possess. After one player has won the contract the lead is made towards dummy and then the fully dummy hands are revealed. From then on, the normal rules of bridge are followed.

### **B) Double Dummy Bridge**

The two players sit next to each and four 13 card hands are dealt as normal. Each player receives a dummy hand which remains face down until after the bidding.

Bidding proceeds as normal, with each player bidding only on the strength of their own 13-card hand. At the end of the auction each player is allowed to look at their own dummy, but the cards are not revealed to the opponent until after the lead has been made.

**For this version of bridge, the lead is always into declarer (rather than their dummy).** After this has been made, both dummies are turned face up so that both players can see them and play and scoring proceeds as normal.

## C) Single Dummy Bridge





This variant is extremely similar to Double Dummy Bridge (above). In this version, one dummy is revealed *before* bidding begins (the other is left face down).

Bidding proceeds as normal, and the winner of the auction then gets the option between the exposed dummy and the other dummy. You can either choose to play that they can look at the other dummy before deciding, or leave it as a gamble.

## D) Draw Bridge

This one involves two distinct phases of play:

- **Step 1:** Deal out 13 cards to each player and set aside the rest as a draw pile (face up, so the card can be seen).
- **Step 2:** The player who isn't dealer leads a card and the other player must follow suit if they can, or discard if they can't (no trumps).
- **Step 3:** The winner of the trick takes the top card from the draw pile and puts it to one side, the loser of the trick takes the next card, whatever it is.
- **Step 4:** Play is continued until 13 tricks have been played, at which point each player should have drawn another 13-card hand.
- **Step 5:** The players now bid their new hand as they would in bridge.
- **Step 6:** The player who hasn't won the auction leads and 13 more tricks are played out. Players with good memories will know what cards their opponent has! Score as normal but without game or part-score bonuses:

Trump Suit	Points for tricks (beyond 6)
 & 	20 points per trick
 & 	30 points per trick
No Trumps	40 points per trick

- **Step 7:** First to 100 points wins a round, play is normally best of three rounds.

N.B. No points are scored if the contract is not achieved. There are no negative scores for undertricks

### 3-Player Bridge

Deal four hands, with one nominated as dummy.

Some or none of the dummy's cards are turned face up (depending on the variant played)

The three players bid to compete for the auction. The player that wins the auction sits opposite the dummy and attempts to make their contract.

Players take it in turn to deal and four 13-card hands.

Each player takes a hand with the 4th hand belonging to dummy.

Depending on what you agree, anywhere from zero to eight cards in dummies hand are turned face-up so that all players can see them.

Players bid as if the dummy were their partner.



The player that wins the auction moves to sit opposite the dummy and their LHO leads.

At this point the rest of dummies cards are turned face-up and arranged as normal. The play then proceeds as it would in a normal game of bridge.

### Doubles and Redoubles

Doubles and redoubles are on a one-to-one basis.

If Player 1 bids 4♥ and Player 2 doubles that bid, that double does not automatically follow-through for Player 3 (even though he or she will defend as a partnership with Player 2). Instead Player 2 also has to double if they believe that Player 1 will go down. Player 1 then has the opportunity to redouble if they choose.

### Scoring

Scores are recorded as in bridge except that there are three individuals competing, rather than two pairs.

Score it as two different contracts. This means that in the case that one opponent doubles and one does not, the three scores will be different.

If the contract makes the declarer receives the appropriate points for making against each player (score for both and add) and the other players receive a negative for the contract, they played.

If the contract goes down, the declarer loses for undertricks to both players, and they both gain. It is easiest to explain with a couple of quick examples:

In this hand, Player 1 bids 3♠, Player 2 doubles, and Player 3 passes. Player 1 makes 10 tricks; 3♠+1 against each opponent (doubled vs Player 2) . The scores are recorded as follows:

Player 1	Player 2	Player 3
360	-240	-120

Player 1 has scored 3♠+1 doubled against Player 2 for 240, and 3♠+1 against Player 3 for 120, for a total of 360. The other two players receive negatives for the same amounts.

In the next hand, Player 2 bids 4♥ and only makes eight tricks. The scores are now as follows:

Player 1	Player 2	Player 3
360	-240	-120
100	-200	100

At the end of the game the scores are added up and the winner revealed. Play as many or as few hands as you like. If you are competing seriously (or as seriously as 3-player bridge can get) you should ensure each player is dealer an equal number of times.

### Strategy

Since most of dummy's cards are hidden, there is a distinct random element to each hand. Dummy can easily have hidden points (or a lack of them) and significant surprises in its shape. However, the revealed cards do give quite a lot of information. Not only can you see some of what is in dummy's hand but you can also use this information to infer what your opponent's bids mean. For example, if LHO bids hearts, and dummy's shown cards don't contain a heart, you can assume it's likely LHO has more than just a 4-card suit.

Additionally, it is worth bearing in mind the "average" hand when looking at dummy. The average hand will have ten high-card points and a balanced shape. If for example, you can see six of dummy's cards and they show nine high-card points you can conclude it likely that dummy has an above average hand, since the remaining cards will take it above ten – probably to 13 or 14 on average.