

Bridge Basics I

An Introduction

Sedona Bridge Center

Mark Ducharme

(603) 321-1696

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Thanks to Marsha Helton

Created most of these slides

Revived Sedona bridge club

Taught bridge for many years

Course Objectives – 4 weeks

Learn the basics of Bridge

Be able to play in a “social” setting

Meet new people and learn a new game

Course Objectives – Follow Up

We will cover Audrey Grant Bridge Basics I in the next 4 weeks.

For those who are interested in continuing their learning process, we will have supervised play weekly

Starting on April 24, 2024

Exercise One - Familiarize

Bridge is a game of four people

The players sit at a table and are referred to by their compass position

**Guide Card
(North, South, East, West)**

Exercise One - Familiarize

Bridge is played with a deck of 52 cards

There are four suits

Spades, Hearts, Diamonds & Clubs

Spades and Hearts are major suits

Diamonds and Clubs are minor suits

Exercise One – Familiarize

The Cards within each suit are ranked

The Ace is high, followed by the King, Queen, Jack, Ten, Nine, etc. down to the 2.

**The Top Five cards in a suit
(Ace, King, Queen, Jack, Ten)
are called “honors”**

Bridge is a game of Communication

You are going to learn a new language

You communicate not by talking, but:

The bids you make

By the cards you play

Bridge is a game of trick taking

- **A trick is four cards, one from each player, in turn, clockwise around the table.**
- **You have to follow suit.**
- **The highest card wins the trick.**
- **If you can't follow suit, you play a card from another suit. This is called discarding.**
- **Play continues until all 13 tricks have been played.**
- **Players keep track of how many tricks won.**

Types of Bridge

- **Rubber (or party) bridge**
- **Duplicate bridge**

Two phases of game

- **Bidding – where you and our partner decide how many tricks you can take.**
- **Play of hand – where you attempt to make the number of tricks you bid.**

Language of bidding

- Bid consists of a **level** and a **strain**.
- **Level** is the number of tricks you are trying to make beyond the initial six tricks (called book).
- **Strain** is the suit you want for trumps (or no trump).
- 1 diamond – commitment to make at least 7 tricks with diamonds as trumps.
- 3 spades – commitment to make at least 9 tricks with spades as trumps.
- 6 no trump – commitment to make at least 12 tricks with no trump suit.

Declarer and Dummy

- **Declarer** – person who first names the strain for the winning bid.
- **Dummy** – declarer's partner.
- Dummy places their hand face up on table.
- Declarer makes all decisions as to the cards played.
- Player to left of declarer makes opening lead.

Hand Valuation – High Card Points

Ace – Four Points

King – Three Points

Queen – Two Points

Jack – One Point

There are **40** High Card Points in the Deck

Hand Valuation - Length

The Distribution or shape of the hand – the number of cards in each suit, plays a part.

Length Points

5 Card Suit	1 Point Extra
6 Card Suit	2 Points Extra
7 Card Suit	3 Points Extra
8 Card Suit	4 Points Extra

Hand Valuation

Value this hand:

♠ Q 7 4

♥ A J 3

♦ Q 10 7 6 4

♣ K 4

Hand Valuation

		High Card Points	Length Points
Value this hand:	♠ Q 7 4	2	0
	♥ A J 3	5	0
	♦ Q 10 7 6 4	2	1
	♣ K 4	3	0
	Total	12	1

Value of hand is 13 points.

Hand Valuation

Value this hand:

♠ Q J 7 4

♥ A 3

♦ A K 10 7 6

♣ K 4

Hand Valuation

		High Card Points	Length Points
Value this hand:	♠ Q J 7 4	3	0
	♥ A 3	4	0
	♦ A K 10 7 6	7	1
	♣ K 4	3	0
	Total	17	1

Value of hand is 18 points.

Bidding phase

- Dealer begins the bidding.
- Bidding moves clockwise around the table.
- First person to bid is the **opener**
- Their partner becomes the **responder**
- Each bid must be higher than previous bid
- Bidding continues until there are 3 consecutive passes.

The Opening Lead – Declarer's Left Hand Opponent

**Assume that North is declarer
East places card face down, then
asks “Any questions partner?”**

Why do this?

- **We do this in the event East has led out of turn**
- **If east is not the correct opening leader, he may withdraw his card with no penalty. West will then make the proper lead.**
- **It does allow west to ask questions, but east may not withdraw his card.**

After Opening Lead

The partner of declarer puts his hand face up on the table. His hand is called the **“dummy”**

Dummy arranges the cards with the trump suit on his right or declarer's left.

Cards should be arranged by suit ranked from highest card to lowest card.

The **‘dummy’** hand is sometimes referred to as **‘the board’** or **‘the table’**.

Bridge can be played in two ways:

In No Trump – where the highest ranking card in the suit led wins the trick

Bridge can be played in two ways:

In a Trump suit

- **If you can't follow suit, you can play a trump this is called trumping or ruffing**
- **You don't have to play a trump if you can't follow suit – instead you can discard from another suit.**
- **The highest ranking card played to a suit automatically wins the trick, however, a low Trump will win over a non-trump card.**

Opening Lead and Third Hand Play

Imagine you are West. If there is no trump suit and it is your turn to lead, which suit do you have that is strong and capable of taking tricks?

Discuss with the others at your table

♠	K Q J 10 9
♥	A x x x
♦	x
♣	x x x

Opening Lead and Third Hand Play

♠ K Q J 10 9
♥ A x x x
♦ x
♣ x x x

The Spade suit is obviously your strongest suit

Would it not be nice if we had a way to tell partner that we have the King/ Queen/ Jack/ Ten/ Nine of Spades?

Opening Lead and Third Hand Play

♠ K Q J 10 9

When you hold cards such as the
those above, we call this a

“Sequence”

or

“Touching Honors”

Opening Lead and Third Hand Play

A standard agreement that we have with partner
Is that we lead the top of touching honors.

♠ K Q J 10 9
♥ A x x x
♦ x
♣ x x x

So, if we lead the King, we are promising the Queen
and possibly the Jack of the same suit

Opening Lead and Third Hand Play

If you decide to lead a spade, does it matter which Spade that you choose to lead?

♠	K Q J 10 9
♥	A x x x
♦	x
♣	x x x

Opening Lead and Third Hand Play

If you decide to lead a spade, does it matter which Spade that you choose to lead?

♠ K Q J 10 9
♥ A x x x
♦ x
♣ x x x

Yes, it does matter. Because the card you lead will tell your partner something about your suit.

Opening Lead and Third Hand Play

Which card do you lead?

♠ **K** Q J 10 9
♥ A x x x
♦ x
♣ x x x

The ♠ K (King of Spades) – We may lose this trick to the Ace of spades, but we will set up the Queen, Jack, Ten and nine of spades.

The ♥ A will be available to get the lead

Opening Lead and Third Hand Play

Which card do you lead?

♠ **K** Q J 10 9

Leading the King of Spades promises partner the Queen and possibly the Jack.

It is called the “Top Card of a Sequence”

or “Top of Touching Honors”

Opening Lead and Third Hand Play

Partner has led the King of Spades which the opponents won with the Ace.

♠ **K** Q J 10 9

If partner (east) gains the lead, what would be a good choice of a suit to lead?

Opening Lead and Third Hand Play

If partner (east) gains the lead, what would be a good choice of a suit to lead?

♠ **K** Q J 10 9

The partnership works together to establish and take tricks.

Unless you clearly have a better choice of suit to lead, a useful guideline is to return partner's suit.

Opening Lead and Third Hand Play

Would the King of spades be a reasonable lead if Clubs were the trump suit?

♠ **K** Q J 10 9

Opening Lead and Third Hand Play

Would the King of spades be a reasonable lead if Clubs were the trump suit?

♠ **K** Q J 10 9

Yes – You will still establish the Queen and possibly others as winning tricks.

Opening Lead and Third Hand Play

Is there a difference between leading spades against a no trump contract and a suit contract?

♠ **K** Q J 10 9

Opening Lead and Third Hand Play

Is there a difference between leading spades against a no trump contract and a suit contract?

♠ **K** Q J 10 9

Yes – Even if west can establish winners in the spade suit, the opponents may trump these.

Against a club contract, another possibility is to lead a short suit, the diamond, hoping to get a trump (Called a “ruff”) with one of the clubs.

Opening Lead and Third Hand Play

If West does not have a solid sequence in spades, would a spade lead still be a good choice against a no trump contract?

♠	K J 8 5 2
♥	A x x x
♦	x
♣	x x x

Opening Lead and Third Hand Play

♠ K J 8 5 2
♥ A x x x
♦ x
♣ x x x

Yes, in No Trump, the spade suit is the best suit for setting up extra tricks in West's hand.

West will need help from partner (East) in setting up this suit. Perhaps East has the ♠ A or ♠ Q.

Opening Lead and Third Hand Play

Which card to lead?

♠ K J 8 5 2
♥ A x x x
♦ x
♣ x x x

Opening Lead and Third Hand Play

Which card to lead?

♠ K J 8 **5** 2
♥ A x x x
♦ x
♣ x x x

Traditionally, we lead the Fourth highest card from our Longest and strongest suit.

Opening Lead and Third Hand Play

West – make your opening lead. If north plays low, which card does East play?

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

Opening Lead and Third Hand Play

	North	
	♠ 7 6	
West		East
♠ K J 8 <u>5</u> 2		♠ <u>A</u> 9 3
	South	
	♠ Q 10 4	

East plays the Ace of Spades or Third Hand High.

Opening Lead and Third Hand Play

Second Hand Play?

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

There is also a guideline for second hand play (North)

The general guideline when you are second hand to play to a trick is to play a low card and give your partner a chance to win the trick.

Opening Lead and Third Hand Play

Continue the play of this suit – East is in the lead
Which card does east lead?

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

Opening Lead and Third Hand Play

Continue the play of this suit – East is in the lead
Which card does east lead?

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

East leads the 9 of spades (next highest).
If south plays the ten, west wins with the jack
If south plays the Queen, west wins with the King

Exercise Four – Opening Lead and Third Hand Play

What have we learned?

Review - Opening Lead and Third Hand Play

- **Against a No Trump contract** – lead your longest and strongest suit.

Top of a Sequence

Fourth highest from your longest and strongest

Review – Opening Lead and Third Hand Play

- **Against a Suited contract** – leading your longest and strongest suit may not be as effective because of the opponents trump suit.

The top of a sequence is always a good lead or a short suit will sometimes be effective.

Review – Opening Lead and Third Hand Play

Third Hand Play

When Playing third to a trick, if partner's card
Is not winning, play third hand high

Unless there is something clearly better to
do, return partner's lead.

Review – Opening Lead and Third Hand Play

Second Hand Play

When playing second to a trick, play either
Low or Cover an Honor with an Honor.

Second Hand Low

Cover an Honor with an Honor

**Before calling for his first card, Declarer
must “plan his play”**

A B C

A – Assess the Situation

B – Browse Declarer’s Checklist

C- Consider the Order

Exercise Seven – Deal #1 Auction Bridge Declarer's Plan

A B C

A – Assess the Situation

The first step is the **Goal – How many tricks** have you committed to take by winning the auction?

Deal #1 Auction Bridge Declarer's Plan

A B C

A – Assess the Situation

North has committed to take 7 tricks

Deal #1 Auction Bridge Declarer's Plan

A B C

A – Assess the Situation

The second step is to count sure tricks

Sure tricks are tricks that can be taken without giving up the lead to opponents.

How many sure tricks do we have in the combined hands?

Exercise Seven – Deal #1 Auction Bridge Declarer's Plan

A B C

A – Assess the Situation

North has committed to take 7 tricks

We count 9 sure tricks

Exercise Seven – Deal #1 Auction Bridge Declarer's Plan

A B C

A – Assess the Situation

The third step is to compare the goal to the sure tricks

**Does declarer have enough sure
tricks to make the goal?**

Exercise Seven – Deal #1 Auction Bridge Declarer's Plan

A B C

A – Assess the Situation

Yes, We have nine tricks, but only committed to make 7 tricks, so we have two extra tricks.

Exercise Seven – Deal #1 Auction Bridge Declarer's Plan

A B C

B – Browse Declarer's Check List

This item applies to when we don't have all the tricks we need, or want to take extra tricks.

Since we have all the tricks we need, we will defer to a later example to explain this item in more detail.

Exercise Seven – Deal #1 Auction Bridge Declarer's Plan

A B C

C – Consider the order

The third stage is to consider the order.

**Generally, when declarer has enough tricks,
“Take the tricks and run.”**

Exercise Seven – Deal #1 Auction Bridge Declarer's Plan

A B C

C – Consider the order

In a Trump contract, there is another consideration.

**As a general guideline, declarer
should play the trump suit first.**

**Prevent the opponents from trumping
Declarer's winning tricks.**