

The First Lesson

Teaching - You don't have to be born a good teacher – you can learn¹.

Being prepared helps to ease nerves. Reading through your teaching notes and setting up your classroom in advance of your students arriving is a must. If you do this, you may not feel calm when your students arrive, but you will be ready for them.

Setting up the boards for play. It's extremely helpful to have a set of boards that are just for your classes. Hopefully you will have a dealing machine and be able to use the deal files provided to set up the playing boards. If not, it takes about 5 minutes to set up one board. It speeds up the process if you first split the pack into the four suits. It's best to deal the hands before the day of the class so you aren't rushing to do this just before the class. During the class, after playing each board, it will help your set up time for the next lesson if you ask students to put all of the spades in north, all of the hearts in east etc.

What do you need to bring for a lesson? If you're using a white board, you will need appropriate pens and an eraser. Ask your Club to purchase you a set so that you can bring them with you and can therefore be assured that they are there and they work. With respect to white board pens, the thicker the nib, the easier to read your writing. Check the nib before you buy them. You will also need name tags and bring extras in case you have spelt someone's name incorrectly. If using power point slides, you'll need a lap top and a hdml cable. It's helpful to have a class list with you. And you will need the boards that the students will play in your class.

Do you have notes that you can put on the board in advance? It's much better to do that than spend a lot of time with your back turned to your students while you write. Some students will have difficulty hearing you if you talk while facing the board. Or do you need to set up so that you can display power point slides. Come early so you can be sure that your equipment is working.

The seating set up will depend on the number of students and the size of your room. Most often it's fine to have students sit at bridge tables for the lesson. The tables have to be staggered so people can see past each other and have a clear view of you and the board.

Introduce yourself. Let your students know who you are and why you are enthusiastic about bridge.

Let students know where the facilities are, when the tea break will be, to turn down their phones etc.

¹ Please note that this document has been developed specifically for face to face teaching.



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Teachers often use ice-breakers in a first class to help introduce students to each other and also to help the teacher to remember the students. If you have a small class, a great ice-breaker to help everyone remember names is to ask people to come and write their full name on the board, and then tell the class something about their name. The teacher starts the process. Everyone has something they can say about their name. An internet search can give you lots of ideas about ice-breakers.

If you are feeling nervous about teaching, it can help to ease your nerves if you learn off by heart the first few sentences of what you are going to say. Once you have done that, your nervousness has often diminished and you are 'off and running'. You are always allowed to look at your notes.

Let the students know from the beginning that you will provide them with notes at the end of the lesson, either hard copy or that you will send them a copy via email. Some people like to give the notes to the students at the beginning of the lesson. This is a matter of choice. If you do give the notes out at the start of the lesson, be prepared for the fact that some of your students will read them and not listen to you.

Ask students to help you put away any tables/chairs/whiteboards that need to be put away. It's useful if you aren't the only person who knows where everything goes.

Immediately after the class, take notes of things you will change for the next time you teach that lesson.



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