

LESSON 1: TEACHER NOTES

Introduction to Bridge

List of Lessons + Some Suggestions

In principle, each of the lessons is a self-contained module, so you could change the order of presentation if you preferred. It may be that your students find the content of one or more of the lessons more than they can handle in a single session – there is no reason why a lesson cannot be spread over a couple of sessions.

Lesson 1: Introduction to Bridge

In this lesson you will cover the basics: what is a trick-taking game, the concept of the auction and the play as separate phases of each deal, how suits and cards are ranked, trumps vs notrumps, counting high card points, part-score vs game vs slam. It's quite possible that some of your students have already played another trick-taking game in the past, but by the end of this lesson you need to be confident that everyone is "on the same page" about how it all works.

To engage your students, it helps to keep the theory brief and to get students playing cards from the outset. To achieve that, you may find it useful to try MiniBridge in this lesson – a single sheet with the rules is provided for your students, plus there is a detailed guide from the EBU website. Your students can also experiment with MiniBridge by themselves, even if at this stage they lack any understanding of what might be a good line of card play. Although MiniBridge obviously isn't "proper" bridge, it can help you to introduce concepts to be developed in the next 2 lessons.

Teaching bridge etiquette early on is a good idea and this very first lesson provides an opportunity to talk about what dummy may and may not do. MiniBridge scoring is highly simplified but you can make the point that you will in due course return to a discussion of scoring – when you do so is your choice.

While recognising that individual teachers will have skills such that a different approach will work for them, we suggest much of the Beginners Course is best given informally at the bridge table by experienced players working in conjunction with the Course Teacher.

First Steps

- Be there early, especially the first few lessons. If students walk in a club without anyone greeting them, that's awkward for them. Have the place open a bit early, be there a bit early, students will tend to talk to each other already (once there are 3, try not to get involved, so they can get to know each other, rather than get to know you).
- When students first arrive, make sure that you chat to them, find out their names and give them their name badges.
- What type of "trigger" does a teacher use to get the student's attention? i.e. What would you do when you want them to stop whatever they are doing at the table and listen to you as a group? Explain it in the first lesson.
- Set some rules for classroom behaviour in the first lesson, what is acceptable and what is not. Simple as, can they bring a cuppa to the table?
- How do you ask those who have played before not to teach in the classroom? How do you prevent the students from being overwhelmed by those "expert friends" outside the classroom? This needs to be done in the first lesson.
- Use the right posture throughout the course. If you need to be authoritative & firm, stand tall. If answering a question at the table, try to lower yourself to their eye level - like talking to a child.
- Since this is the first lesson, start by introducing yourself to the class & introduce the students to one another. One of the best ways to do this is by having the students in turn give their names and one or two sentences to tell about themselves. We could ask the students why they are taking bridge lessons or whether they have played before. The idea is to break the ice & give the students an opportunity to feel at home with the other players at their tables.
- It's useful to have visible the new terms that the students will encounter in the lesson. Include terms like, tricks, high count points, bidding, north, south etc
- Course structure - lay out the structure of your course and, in brief, what you will cover each week. This will help students understand their commitment & give them a structure to follow.
- Teaching approach - Explain that in your lessons you will provide some information, and then to help them understand that information, they will either play some hands, or do some practice sheets and then play some hands. So they will have several opportunities in a lesson to understand the ideas that are taught. Please feel free to ask questions as we go.
- Students will receive electronic notes after the lesson & voluntary homework
- These introductory bridge lessons are based on a teaching principle that students learn best by doing the things that they are learning about, while interacting with other students.
- Elicit answers from the class rather than just telling them what the next bid/play is eg Can anybody explain what a trick is? Can anybody explain what trumping a trick means?
- Try and mix players up a little - but be careful with this process - players should be encouraged to swap around but watch out for poor dynamics

Teacher Tips

- When teaching, make sure you look at people's faces to see if someone is having difficulty with the content. If you have time to go over the concepts again, great, but if not, let them know that you will catch up with them later to go over it again
- If someone is struggling to hold the cards offer a card holder
- People who have already played a bit showing how much they know – address these students directly. Say something like , “I can see you’ve played some bridge before. That’s great. You’re going to find the first couple of lessons very easy. I’m going to ask you to take a vow of silence for the next few weeks. Let everyone make lots of mistakes. Is that ok with you?”
- Wrap up the lesson with a quick review of the concepts we have introduced. Don’t go into a lot of detail. Refer the students to the text, so they can get used to using it as a reference. The text provides many additional examples of what has been covered in the lesson

Preparation for This Lesson

- Ideally students will have read Trick Taking Notes and watched MiniBridge video 1 before attending the first lesson. If only one hasn’t you will need to spend more time with this person at the table.
- Either print out or have available electronically:
 - Teacher Notes. (You may also wish to printout Quiz for each table(s))
 - Handouts (includes “slides”, Quiz with answers, Homework Quiz)
 - Deal Analysis (deal layout and brief analysis of each hand)
- “Slides” in Handouts can be used by the Teacher at a table to walk through Lesson Content
- Will you have helpers (do they know “script” approach – have they read Preparation Manual?)
- Plan the break (tea & biscuits) – make it social
- How to show HCP, ranking of cards & suits, balanced vs unbalanced – do at table/whiteboard?
 - At table – prepare a hand with each player holding a separate suit, sorted Ace down to 2 (to show ranking of suits, cards, HCP)

Lesson Introduction (ideas)

- Introduce yourself & get student to introduce themselves
- Go through facilities so student’s know where the toilets are
- Go through course and brief mention of the topics
- Go through how the session today will work (introduce topics/quiz then play hands to reinforce). Mention break for tea/coffee. Mention club will send out notes and voluntary homework after the lesson has finished
- Introduce personal safety eg will not ask a direct question to anyone
- If you have recommended students watch the MiniBridge videos ask if anyone has watched it. Maybe try a few questions (e.g. what is a trick, what is a trump suit, ...)
- And you’re off ...

What is in this Lesson

- Run through of trick taking games (if necessary) eg NSEW, dealer, dummy etc
- Brief description and vocabulary of the 2 parts to the game (Auction & Play)
- The mechanics of play - tricks, trumps, notrumps, dealer, declarer, dummy, responder
- How suits and cards are ranked
- Trumps vs no trumps
- Counting high card points
- Finding a fit (**Golden Fit**)
- Balanced Hand
- Part score vs Game
- Basic etiquette
- Introduction to "Top Tricks"
- Introduction to MiniBridge (simplified Auction)

Main Points to Emphasise

- A fit is 8+ cards between the two hands
 - Declarer to choose the best contract - trump suit or notrumps - MiniBridge
 - Declarer to choose the best level - partscore (7 tricks) or game (large bonus for game)
- MiniBridge

Lesson Progression

- Try and get the class handling cards as soon as possible. Elicit as much from the class as you can – encourage questions from class.
- One way to explain the language of bridge is to compare it with learning French for example. You learn a new vocabulary, such as the bids 1C, 7NT, declarer, dealer, dummy and so on.
- Stress the best asset at the table is not your aces and kings but your partner. So, re-emphasise the partnership aspect of the game.

Explain

- In bridge we have the auction and then the play. Today we concentrate on the play.
- Discuss Ranking of the cards and the card values (High card points)
- Is the hand Balanced or Unbalanced?
 - A balanced hand has no void, no singleton and not more than 1 doubleton.
 - If teaching balanced show single suited, 2 suited & no second suit (balanced) - so can show 5332, 4432, 4333 shapes.

<< Place pre-sorted hand 1 on each table & run through ranking of cards & suits, HCP, balanced vs unbalanced >>

Helpers “Script”

Using a dealing board, while sat at a table, run through:

- Dealer
- N/S & E/W are partners
- The Auction – which we’ll start to learn next week
- The mechanics of play – tricks, trumps, notrumps, dealer, declarer, dummy, responder, who leads. (Terminology trumping or ruffing)
- Suit ranking, High Card Points, HCP, Finding a fit (**golden fit**)
- Part score vs Game (25+HCP)
- How to place winning/losing tricks on the table.
- Stress “trumps” on Dummy’s right
- Bidding 1 level means 6 + 1 - must make 7 tricks, 2 level - 8 tricks
- Balanced vs Unbalanced
- Introduce “Top Tricks” if lesson going well
- Basic Etiquette
 - Be courteous to your partner, and the opponents – greet your opponents, introduce yourself.
 - General conversation is not encouraged
 - Practise good table manners:
 - Cards are counted face down
 - Opening lead card is tabled face down by the player on the left hand side of the Declarer. After acceptance by their partner, the card is turned over
 - As Declarer, thank your partner when the Dummy is tabled
 - At the end of the hand, do not pick up your cards until the result is agreed with the opponents

Mini Bridge – please note that there is no auction during this lesson


- Players announce their points either verbally or written on the bidding pad
- The partnership with the most points becomes the declaring side
- Within that partnership, the player with the most points becomes the declarer.
- Opening lead comes from the player on declarer’s left
- Dummy is tabled
- Explain fit. If no fit – play notrumps.
- Declarer looks at dummy before deciding to choose a trump suit or NT. Declarer chooses trumps – ask why – longest or best suit? AKQ or AJ654

Place Hand 1 on each table (suggest all hands visible at this stage)

- Lead discussion that partnership needs 25+ HCP to make game & get a bonus. Get players to write down their HCP & ask if they have a long suit. Here N/S should be in game, they're balanced so play in 3NT

NO TRUMP CONTRACT

North is the dealer

<p>West</p> <p>♠ 8 4</p> <p>♥ 9 6</p> <p>♦ J T 6 3</p> <p>♣ Q 9 8 7 6</p>	<p>North</p> <p>♠ A K 9</p> <p>♥ A K Q 8</p> <p>♦ 9 5 4 2</p> <p>♣ T 2</p>  <p>♠ T 5 4</p> <p>♥ 5 3 2</p> <p>♦ A K 7</p> <p>♣ A K 5 3</p> <p>South</p>	<p>East</p> <p>Lead ♠ 6</p> <p>♠ Q J 7 6 3</p> <p>♥ J T 7 4</p> <p>♦ Q 8</p> <p>♣ J 4</p>
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Auction

N	E	S	W
1NT	Pass	Pass	Pass
3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

- North is the Declarer
- East is Defender on lead
- South becomes Dummy

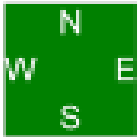
N/S likely makes:

- 2 spades
- 3 hearts
- 2 diamonds
- 2 clubs

Total 9 tricks

Here the As & Ks win the tricks

Place Hand 2 on each table (suggest all hands visible at this stage)

<p>Board 2</p> <p>East Deals</p> <p>None Vul</p> <p>♠ A J 10 9</p> <p>♥ K 7</p> <p>♦ 7 5 3</p> <p>♣ J 5 4 3</p> <p>♠ 3 2</p> <p>♥ J 8 5 4</p> <p>♦ 9 8 6</p> <p>♣ A K 10 6</p> <p>♠ K Q 6 5 4</p> <p>♥ A 10 9</p> <p>♦ A 10 2</p> <p>♣ 9 2</p> <p>♠ 8 7</p> <p>♥ Q 6 3 2</p> <p>♦ K Q J 4</p> <p>♣ Q 8 7</p> <p>West</p> <p>2 ♠</p> <p>Lead: ♦ K</p>		<p>MiniBridge: Suggest E/W have a good ♠ fit & 13+9HCP - not enough for game.</p> <p>Makes 8 tricks off the top & can ruff a heart trick for the 9th trick.</p>
<p>North</p> <p>All pass</p>	<p>East</p> <p>1 ♠</p>	<p>South</p> <p>Pass</p>

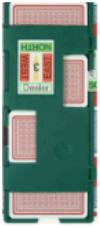
<< Maybe time for a break >>

Place Hand 3 on each table (suggest all hands visible at this stage)

- Lead discussion that need 25+pts to make game & get a bonus. Write down HCP & ask if they have a long suit => N/S could be in game, they have a fit in ♥s (& ♦s) but any ♥ contract is fine.

SUIT CONTRACT

South is the dealer

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

Auction

S W N E
1H Pass 4H Pass
Pass Pass

- South is the Declarer
- West is Defender on lead
- North becomes Dummy

- E/W are partners
- West's ♣K is winning so East plays low
- West plays ♣Q, East plays low
- West plays ♦K, North the ♦A, East can now trump with ♥3

Introduces the concept of trumping

<< Play another Hand then run through Summary &/or Quiz >>

SUMMARY - What You Have Learned

- basic bridge terms and their meaning
e.g. high card points, winning tricks, a trump suit, ruffing, the concept of a work suit
- how to evaluate your hand counting high card points
- that bridge is a partnership game
- who is the opener & responder, declarer & dummy, and who are the defenders
- the difference between balanced and unbalanced hands
- that the trump suit beats other suits
- as declarer, how to make a simple plan to win the tricks you need.

Handout

- Notes, suggestions for some videos to look at and voluntary homework

<< Play the rest of the boards as time permits >>

LESSON 1: Introduction to Bridge Quiz

1 Which card is denoted by the letter "K"?
And which by the letter "J"?

2 Write down the names of these cards

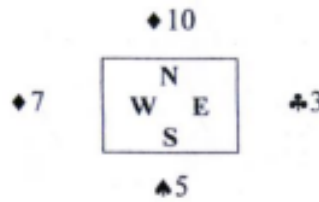
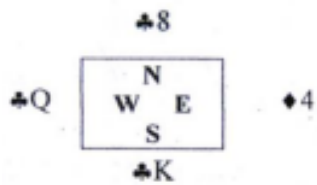
♠Q

♥A

♦T

♣J

3 Clubs are trumps. West has just won a trick, and leads a club in the first example, and a diamond in the second example of hands below. You can see all 4 cards played. Who has won the trick in each hand?



4 This time we are playing the same hands but in No Trumps. Who has won this time?

5 What is the point count of these hands?
Are they balanced or unbalanced hands?

a) ♠K Q 3
♥A K T 8 7
♦A J 6
♣9 2

b) ♠A J 9 3
♥T 8 7 6
♦8
♣A K J 6

c) ♠K Q 9 7 5
♥Q J
♦7 3
♣A 7 4 3

6 Write down the order of ranking of the suits including NT

7 If I win the Auction with a bid of 5 Diamonds, how many tricks does that mean I have to win to make my contract?

8 What do these words mean?

- a) Declarer
- b) Responder
- c) Dummy
- d) Void