

A Teaching Package for Young Bridge Players

What is in this Kit?

The main function of this kit is to provide those who wish to teach young people the game of bridge with support materials and a simple lesson plan. The overhead projector masters and example hands are intended for use with the simple lesson outlines. How (or whether) all of these materials are used will depend on the style and approach of the individual teacher. The kit does not attempt to dictate how bridge should be taught to children of school age but it would be advised that the philosophies outlined below be kept in focus.

Philosophies

Approaches to teaching adults to play bridge have undergone some dramatic changes in recent years and similar principles are being applied to younger learners. If the following can be kept in focus, you will have some exciting and rewarding outcomes:

1. Keep it simple and stick to fundamentals
2. Avoid emphasising rules and correctness but do encourage agreements
3. Create a teaching environment where kids can have fun playing bridge

There is a mountain of theory associated with the game of bridge and young learners are interested in very little of it. If their interest develops, they will gain opportunities to absorb the deeper concepts in good time.

Hands On

The more learning that takes place “hands on” the more fun your pupils will have. Whether you teach them well or badly, the bottom line will be the experiences that they have had around the table.

It is recommended that your lessons involve no less than 80% with the cards in front of the students.

Text Book/Notes

Depending on the age and ability level of the pupils, a text book or simple set of notes may be useful. Paul Marston's *Introduction to Bridge* is an easy-to-read and inexpensive text which may suit the purpose. If you prepare your own notes, keep to the fundamentals and avoid excessive detail. The secret of a good introductory course is not about what is taught but what is left out.

The synopsis overleaf is not prescriptive. Information should be added or deleted according to such variables as the age of the pupils and the time frames for lessons. Most concepts in play and defensive strategies should be dealt with informally at the table rather than at the whiteboard or blackboard.

Recommended Lesson Synopsis:

Lesson 1:

- **Mechanics of Play**
Tricks and trumps – partnership play -- mechanics of dummy -- opening lead.
- **Mechanics of Bidding**
Rules of the auction – rank order of suits – relationship to declarer, dummy and lead.
- **Opener & Responder**
Essential notion of trick-taking capacity to open.
Importance of fits to be introduced early.
- **Set Practice Hands**
Lead choices – count tricks as declarer.

Lesson 2:

- **Hand Evaluation**
Milton Work Point Count (4,3,2,1) and Shape considerations (Balanced, Semibalanced, Unbalanced).
- **Hand Evaluation as a Basis for Agreements**
Normal agreements for opening and response.
- **Mechanical Agreements**
Longer suits first – Lower of 4 card suits
- **Set Practice Hands**
Opener's second bid -- Drawing trumps as declarer

Lesson 3:

- **Game Bonuses (Premiums)**
Contracts which attract Game Bonuses – Combined strength (& Fits) needed to have reasonable chances of success -- Majors/Minors
- **Adding Distributional Points with a Fit**
Understanding the value of shortages when the partnership has a fit.
- **Limit Raise Structure -- Agreements**
 - 2 6-9 & fit
 - 3 10-12 & fit
 - 4 13+ & fit (major)
- **Set Practice Hands**
Adding combined strength – cardplay principles such as short honour first

Lesson 4:

- **1NT Opening**
Dual promise of strength and shape – Responding – using arithmetic – fit information opposite a balanced hand (no singleton).
- **Later NT Bids by Opener**
Particularly Min Balanced
- **Set Practice Hands**
NT Play – finesses

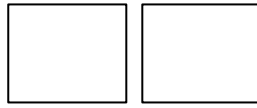
Lesson 5:

- **Bidding after the Opponents Open**
Concepts of disruption, description and safety (quality 5 card suits ~ 9 –15)
- **Bidding after Partner has Overcalled**
3 card support OK danger of changing suit
- **Take-out Doubles**
Brief only
- **Set Practice Hands**
Scoring – even have a mini duplicate session

BIDDING

Lesson 1

A Bid:



**Number of tricks
in excess of 6**

**Denomination
(Suit or No-Trumps)**

Rank Order of Suits

§	♦	♥	♠	NT
Clubs	Diamonds	Hearts	Spades	No-Trump

An Auction

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♦	1♥	1♠
2♥	2♠	3♥	3♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

How many tricks?

Who: Is declarer? Dummy? Leads?

EVALUATION

Lesson 2.1

SHAPE or HAND PATTERN

Balanced 4-3-3-3
 4-4-3-2

Semibalanced
 5-3-3-2

Unbalanced
 Not ↑

HAND STRENGTH

Hand strength calculated by giving a value to each high card (A, K, Q, J)

ACE 4 Points

King 3 Points

Queen 2 Points

Jack 1 Point

Total =
High card strength

OPENING and RESPONDING

Lesson 2.2

An Opening Bid (eg. 1[♦])

**Promises 13 or more High Card Points
(and 4 or more diamonds)**

A response to an Opening Bid (eg. 1[♠])

**Promises 6 or more High Card Points
(and 4 or more spades)**

**An OVERCALL against the opposition
suggests:**

**A good 5 card or better suit
Not necessarily a hand to open**

GAME BONUSES**(Premiums)****” & § 20 points per trick****^a & © 30 points per trick****NT 10 points + 30 points per trick****GAME BONUSES FOR CONTRACTS****100 Points + BID AND MADE****Contract Combined Requirements****3NT 26 Points & four suits stopped****4^a , © 26 Points & a fit****5” , § 29 Points & a fit**

RAISING OPENER'S SUIT (SUPPORT)

Supporting Opener's Suit Promises:

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">A fit</div> +	6-9	Points if raise is to	2
	10-12	Points if raise is to	3
	13+	Points if raise is to	4
			<major>

ADDING POINTS FOR DISTRIBUTION

If you have a fit

Partner: 1©

a A64	a 987
© Q983	© K976
¨ J97	¨ A8652
§ 854	§ 6

Which hand is better?

Doubleton (xx)	1 Point
Singleton (x)	3 Points
Void (-)	5 Points

BALANCED HANDS

Lesson 4.1

a AJ6

© KJ7

¨ K654

§ Q74

13-15 Open 1¨

a KQJ6

© AJ7

¨ K963

§ Q7

16-18 Open 1NT

a KQ7

© AQ5

¨ KJ6

§ KQ74

19-21 Open 1§

a AK6

© QJ94

¨ KQJ5

§ AQ

22-24 Open 2NT

Overcalls

<input type="checkbox"/>	1^{..}	^a AQJ75
		© K87
		^{..} 863
??		§ 94

<input type="checkbox"/>	1[©]	^a AJ96
		© 4
		^{..} K863
??		§ KQJ3

1^{..}	1^a	(1) ^a Q974
	<input type="checkbox"/>	© K75
	Pass	^{..} 87
	??	§ K964

(2) ^a J975
© 6
^{..} 1064
§ 85432

(3) ^a AJ6
© 73
^{..} QJ94
§ 9852