

So, You Want to Learn Bridge?

Let's Start Small

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Before we begin

Right, let's get one thing out of the way: bridge has a reputation.

People think it's complicated, stuffy, something old people play in hushed rooms with disapproving looks.

That's what I thought too.

Then I sat through a lesson where the teacher spent forty minutes full of jargon before anyone touched a card. Half the room looked terrified, the other half were asleep.

I'm Keith and I became Education Officer for the Welsh Bridge Union to change all that.

Fun first. Cards second. Theory later.



Credit Alex Cao 1

Mini Bridge is where we start. If you can play Snap, you can play this.

The Basics

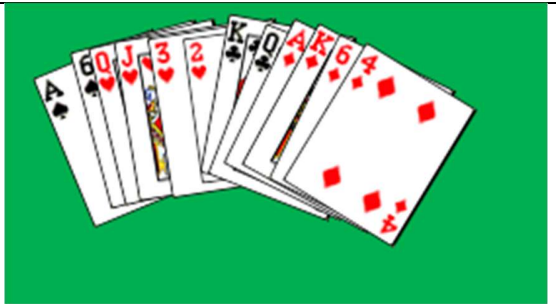
Four people sit around a table. You and your partner face each other - you're a team. The other two are the opposition.

What are you trying to do?

Win more cards than the opposition.

Everyone gets 13 cards.

Sort your hand into suits, alternating black and red.



Cards run from Ace (the boss) down to Two (apprentice).

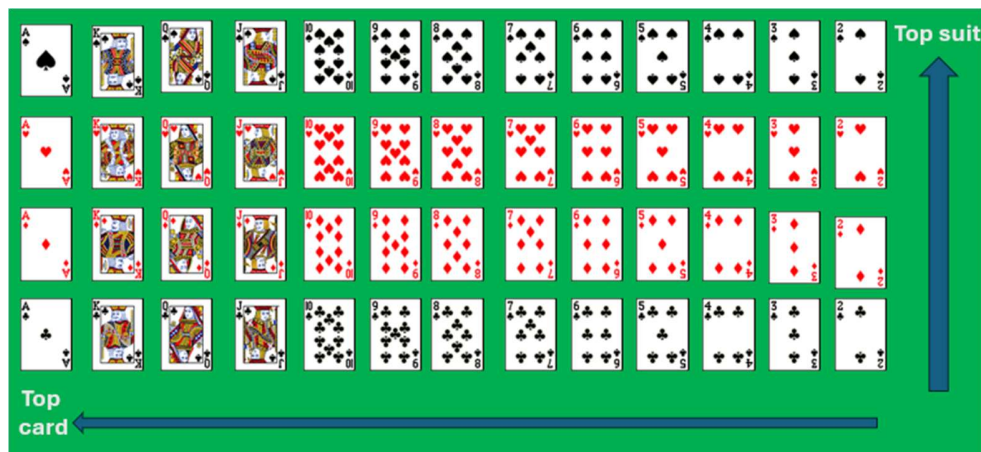
Suits have a pecking order:

Spades are the boss.

Hearts are management.

Diamonds are the workers

Clubs make tea.



What's a Trick?

Everyone plays one card, going clockwise. Highest card wins.

Golden Rule: You must follow suit if you can.

If someone leads with a spade and you've got spades, you play a spade.

Only when you've run out can you play something else.



[Watch winning a trick](#)

Trumps

Before play begins, one suit gets crowned as 'trumps.' Trumps beat everything else.

Say hearts are trumps. Someone leads the ten of spades. You haven't got any spades left. Play even the tiniest heart - the two - you win.

[Watch winning with a trump card](#)

Feels like cheating the first time. It isn't. It's tactics.

Who gets to choose the trump suit?

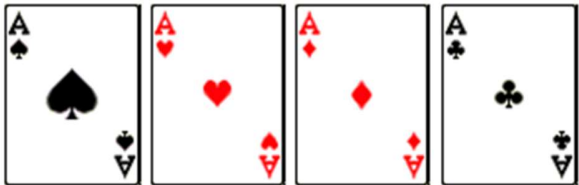



The person with the most points.

What are points?

I'll show you now.


Counting Your Hand

Before anyone plays, everyone values their hand:

	Each Ace is worth 4 points
	Each King is worth 3 points
	Each Queen is worth 2 points
	Each Jack is worth 1 point

The whole pack contains exactly 40 points. When everyone announces their totals, they should add up to 40.

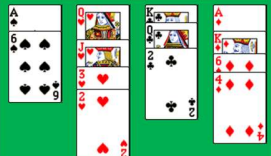
Bridge hands in books and online games are shown like this

	<p>Here's how we count-</p> <p>♠ A = 4</p> <p>♥ Q = 2 ♥ J = 1</p> <p>♦ A = 4 ♦ K = 3</p> <p>♣ K = 3 ♣ Q = 2</p> <p>Total 19 points</p>
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[Try my counting quiz.](#)

Who Does What?

The partnership with more combined points plays the hand. The player with the highest count is crowned Declarer. Their partner becomes Dummy.

	<p>Dummy lays their entire hand face-up on the table.</p>
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Declarer looks at both hands and chooses which suit will be trumps.

Simple rule: pick whichever suit you have most of between the two hands.

What if you don't have a clear long suit - everything's evenly spread?

That's where 'no trumps' comes in.

But that's Part 2 of this series.

Declarer then plays both hands. No hints from Dummy – they do as Declarer asks.

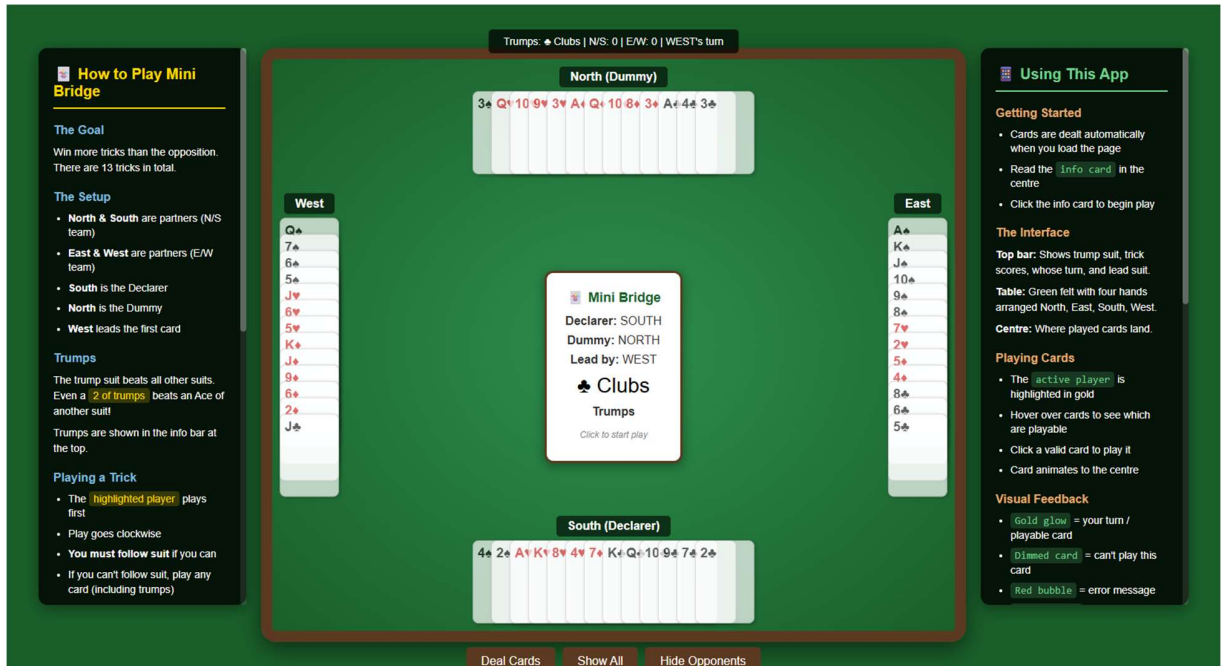
The Play

The person to Declarer's left plays the first card. Then clockwise around the table.

The winner of the trick leads the next one. Thirteen tricks total.

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What Next?

Once you've got the hang of this, there's a whole world of bridge waiting.

Coming soon:

- [No Trumps](#)
- [Improve play](#)
- [Avoid mistakes](#)

Bonus:

- [Quiz pdf](#)
- [Take the Quiz online](#)
- [Mini bridge cheat sheet \(PDF\)](#)
- [Practice hands](#)
- [YouTube Channel](#)
- [Mini-bridge online](#)

May the points be with you.

Reference List

Figures

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