

Lesson 4 Teaching Guide: Playing with a Trump Suit

Learning Objectives

How to play a hand when there is a trump suit.

How to create extra tricks and/or get rid of losers:

1. Trump in the short hand
2. Take a finesse
3. Develop a long suit
4. Discard a loser on an extra winner

Key questions in playing with a trump suit:

1. Do you pull trumps first or must you use your trumps for some other reason first?
2. How many winners do you have, how many losers?
3. When does using trumps separately create an extra trick (when trumping in the short hand) and when doesn't it (when trumping in the long hand)

Vocabulary

- ✓ Trump
- ✓ Ruff
- ✓ Counting winners
- ✓ Counting losers
- ✓ Trumping in the "Short Hand"
- ✓ Creating a void
- ✓ Pulling trump
- ✓ Discarding losers

Teaching Strategy:

The four hands used in Lesson 4 are not designed to be bid. They are intended to demonstrate the different options you have for making tricks and/or discarding losers when one suit has been named trump.

Let the students know that there will be no bidding and that you will tell them what suit is trump and how many tricks they should be trying to take with each hand.

Hand #1: Introducing the power of a trump suit.

Lay out the dealer and companion hands and ask your students what would happen if the opening lead were a heart. They would see that they would be unable to stop the defenders from taking all of their heart tricks.

Now say, what if, during the auction, we could name one suit to be more powerful than any other suit. Then ask them, if they could see both hands, which suit they would want that to be. Let them know that when there is a trump suit, that suit has an additional way to make tricks that is not available when a hand is played in no-trump. When they are out of a suit, they can play any trump card they want and win the trick, as long as, no one else is also out of the same suit. Give them their target on this hand:

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Number of Tricks: 12

Opening Lead: Q of diamonds

Start by counting winners with the table. They should come up with 10 off the top.

6 Spades

2 Diamonds

2 Clubs

Total: 10

The declarer needs to find 2 more tricks to achieve his goal!

Count losers next. Emphasize that losers should be identified (counted) from the long trump side of the table. Let's start with the spade suit. Have the table cover up the spade holding in the dummy and look only at the spades in the declarer's hand. This spade suit is missing the Q and therefore has a potential loser. Now look to the dummy. With the queen in dummy there are no losers in spades. Repeat this process with each suit.

Spades=0 Losers

The declarer has 3 losing hearts in his hand and the dummy can't help so there are 3 losers in hearts.

Hearts=3 losers

The declarer has 2 losing diamonds but the dummy has him covered!

Diamonds=0 losers

The declarer has 2 losing clubs but the dummy has him covered!

Clubs = 0 losers

Making a Plan. Declarer has 10 sure tricks and 3 losers with a goal of 12 tricks and only 1 loser. What is the plan?

Time to talk about the ways to make extra tricks and/or discard losers:

- a. Trump in the short hand
- b. Take a finesse
- c. Set up a long suit
- d. Discarding a loser on an extra winner

Go through options b, c, and d with the table to they can see none of these will work in this case. That leaves option a. Have them identify which suits could possibly be trumped because there is unequal length. They will come up with three suits, hearts, diamonds and clubs.

Time to discuss why trumping in the short hand creates extra tricks while trumping in the long hand doesn't. Lay out the trump suits and play the suit first by playing the cards together to demonstrate that this option will produce only six tricks. Then use two spades in the long hand to trump clubs or diamonds and then play the rest of the trumps together. This option will again produce six tricks. Finally, use two trumps on the short side without touching the long side and count up the tricks. This option produces eight tricks!

Armed with this explanation, they should begin to see that trumping hearts will create two extra tricks while trumping clubs or diamonds won't make any additional tricks. Trumping hearts in dummy also serves to eliminate two losers.

Since it is dangerous to leave trump cards in the opponents' hands, we like to take away their trumps as soon as we can. Time to teach them the key question when playing in a trump suit:

Can I afford to pull trump right away or is there something I need to do first?

In this hand, we need to trump two hearts in dummy to create two extra tricks. Since we own ten trumps and the opponents only have three divided between the two hands, we have the ability to pull trump twice and still have two trumps in dummy to take care of our hearts. So, go ahead and have them pull out the opponents' trump first.

At the end of the hand, ask the table to identify what assets the dummy had that made it possible for the declarer to make twelve tricks. Help them to realize that shortness has value.

Hand #2:

Target: 10 tricks

Trump: Spades

Repeat the process outlined in Hand #1 above.

Count winners:

5 Spades

1 Heart

1 Diamond

1 Club

Total 8. 2 more tricks are needed.

Count Losers:

0 Spades

3 Hearts

1 Diamond

1 Club

Total 5. We need to shed 2 losers

Make a plan:

There are no finesses to take

There are no long suits to develop

There are no extra winners

Hopefully we can use our trumps separately to create some tricks and/or take care of some losers

Only hearts can be trumped on the short side of the table to create extra tricks so this has to be our target.

Should I pull trump right away or is there something I need to do first? It helps the students come up with the answer if you visually remove the three small trumps from the dummy that would need to be played in order to pull trump and then ask them if they will be able to make any extra tricks by trumping in the dummy. The answer here is no. If the trump in dummy are gone because they pulled trump first,

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then they won't make our contract. Draw trumps as soon as you can, not necessarily right away. We have to trump hearts first and then pull trump.

Hand #3

Target: 10 Tricks

Trump: Spades

Count Winners:

5 Spades

0 Hearts

2 Diamonds

3 Clubs

Total: 10 Tricks

Things are looking good. Now how about those losers?

Count Losers:

0 Spades

3 Hearts

0 Diamonds

1 Club

Total :4 Losers

Ten winners/four losers. Doesn't add to thirteen. This happens all the time. How can we get rid of one of our losers?

Finesse it away, throw it away on an extra winner, or trump it away. Hearts are unequal in length with the short side being in the dummy. Short hearts with short trump (spades) is a winning combination. So, plan to trump one heart in dummy so that you'll lose only two heart tricks, not three.

Can I pull trump right way or must I do something else first? Again, ask the students to visualize how many trumps will be left in dummy if they pull trump first. The answer will be none. Then it will be impossible to trump a heart in dummy and we will lose three hearts instead of two and go down one.

Hand #4

10 tricks

Trump: Hearts

Count Winners:

2 Spades

5 Hearts

2 Diamonds

0 Clubs

Total: 9 Tricks

Count Losers:

1 Spade

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0 Hearts
1 Diamond
2 Clubs
4 Losers

Nine winners/four losers. We somehow need to both create a winner and eliminate a loser (turn a loser into a winner).

This is a two-step process and the most difficult hand we've had to date. You must show them first the diamond discard on the extra spade (unequal lengths offer choices of plays) and then trumping that losing diamond in THE SHORT HAND, creating that extra trick.

Can I pull trump right away or must I do something else first? We don't have four quick losers and we have nine trumps between us. We can afford to draw out the opponents' trump before tackling the spades.

Homework:

Read chapters 10-14 in *Taste of Bridge*.