



A

Avoidance – Losing a trick to the safe opponent.

Auction – When each side makes bids to name the final contract for a hand of bridge. Also known as bidding.

B

Bid – An undertaking to win at least a specified number of odd tricks (tricks in excess of 6) in a specified suit or notrump.

Bidding – Bidding is when each side makes bids to name the final contract for a hand of bridge. This is also known as the auction.

Board – See deal.

Book – Six tricks is called the book. After you take six tricks you start fulfilling your contract with each subsequent trick.

BOSTON – An acronym for a leading standard. Bottom of Something Top of Nothing. It means when you have an honor in a suit, you lead a low spot card, but if you have all spot cards in a suit you lead the top card.

Broken Honor Sequence – A holding in a suit that is “almost” a 3 card honor sequence. A broken sequence has a single gap before the third card of the sequence, so a holding like ♦Q J 9 3 2 or ♦K Q T 3 2 would both be a broken sequence. However ♦Q T 9 3 2 would not be a broken sequence, the gap can only be before the third card of the sequence.

C

Call – Any bid, double, redouble or pass.

Contract – The contract is the bid that won the bidding auction. It is also called the final contract.

Convention – A meaning to a bid which is not natural, but is used to describe a particular type of hand, or is meant to convey information to partner, or request information from partner. Stayman is a bidding convention used to find out if a Notrump opener has a 4 card major.

Cross Ruff – A declarer technique where instead of drawing trump, declarer cashes side suit winners and then proceeds to use high trump to ruff in both dummy and declarer’s hand scoring all the trump separately. It is called a cross ruff because declarer is continually crossing from one hand to the other as they ruff with high trump.

D

Danger Hand – The opponent that has established winners that can defeat your contract; or an opponent that can lead a suit where you have a vulnerable holding. For example, if you hold:

♦8 7 6

♦K 5

East is the danger hand because they can lead a diamond through your holding.

Deal – 1. The act of handing out 13 cards to each player. 2. One particular allocation of the 52 cards to the four players including the bidding, the play and the scoring based on those cards. Also called a board or hand.

Dealer – The person that distributes the 52 cards to the players. The dealer also makes the first call to start the auction.

Declarer – The partner in the declaring side that first mentioned the suit (or notrump) during the auction. Declarer plays both hands of the partnership.

Declaring side – The partnership that won the contract during the auction.

Defending side – The partnership that did not win the contract. They are trying to defeat the contract by taking enough tricks so the contract is not fulfilled.

Developing Long Suits – When you drive out all of the defenders cards in a suit so your low cards are sure winners, you are developing a long suit. For example with this suit holding:

J T 9 8 3 2

Q 5 4

Leading the Q to drive out the opponent's Ace, and then the J to drive out the opponent's King, you have developed the suit, and will have 4 sure winners.

Doubleton – When you only hold two cards in a suit.

Down – When declarer fails to take the number of tricks contracted, the contract is said to go down, or that the defenders set the contract. If the contract is 3 NT, and declarer only takes 7 tricks, we say the contract has gone down 2 tricks.

Duck - When you want the opponents to win a trick to promote your small cards, you 'go under' or play low.

Duck or Ducking – To play low cards on a trick thus losing an early trick in a suit to the opponents. Usually used when entries are a problem, and you want to save your high card(s) as a later entry to run the suit. Example:

♦A 8 7 6 4

♦J 5 3

Here if you have no other entry to the hand with 5 diamonds, you would want to duck the first two tricks in diamonds. Assuming the diamond suit breaks 3-2, you could then lead your third diamond to the ♦A, which provides the entry to cash the remaining two diamonds.

Dummy – The partner in the declaring side that puts their hand face up on the table. This is the partner that did not mention the suit (or notrump) first.

E

Entry – A sure winner that you can play to in a hand that you want to be in to either take a finesse or cash winners. For example if Dummy has the ♥A and the ♣JT9 which are all sure winners, but declarer's hand doesn't have a club, but it does have the ♥3, you can lead the ♥3 and win the ♥A, and then cash the 3 club tricks. The ♥A is said to be an entry to dummy.

Establish – Playing of cards in a suit to drive out high cards so that smaller cards become trick winners, either through promotion or eliminating the opponents cards in the suit so that remaining low cards are winners.

F

Final Contract – See contract.

Finesse – Taking advantage of favorably placed high cards. When you lead a low card toward A Q, if your left hand opponent holds the King, you can win two tricks by first playing the Queen and then playing the Ace on the next trick. The King is said to be onside. If the Queen loses to the King in right hand opponents hand, the finesse is said to be offside.

Frozen Suit – This is a suit that if either side leads the suit, they risk losing a trick in that suit. The following is an example:

♥ J 4 2

♥ K T 5

♥ A 9 8 6

♥ Q 7 3

If declarer leads the suit, the defense will take all 4 tricks in the suit. If a defender leads the suit, declarer is guaranteed one trick.

G

Game – A final contract of 3 Notrump or higher, 4 ♥ or higher, 4 ♠ or higher, 5 ♣ or higher, and 5 ♦ or higher. Game is when the declaring side gets 100 points or more for the tricks they take. See scoring.

H

Hand – 1. The 13 cards that a player holds. Example: East's hand was ♠AJT95 ♥QJ4 ♦A43 ♣T8. 2. Informally used to substitute for deal to refer to all 4 hands. Example: I played 3NT on that hand.

HCP – High card points that are assigned to honor cards. An Ace counts for 4 points, a King 3 points, a Queen 2 points and a Jack 1 point. The Ten has zero points.

Honor card – Ace, King, Queen, Jack or Ten.

Honor Sequence – When you hold a 3 card or longer sequence of honors in a suit, like ♣Q J T 8 3 or ♦K Q J 4 3. See also Broken Honor Sequence.

L

Lead – The first card played to a trick. It determines the suit that must be played to the trick, if you have one.

LHO – The opponent to your left.

M

Major suit – Spades and hearts are the major suits. They are the higher ranking suits. When scoring you get 30 points for major suit contract.

Make – To make a contract is for declarer to take the number of tricks contracted. If the contract is 3NT, declarer needs to take 9 tricks to make the contract. See also set and down.

Master Hand – In a suit contract, the master hand is the hand with the longest trump suit. Losers are always counted with respect to the master hand. If both hands have an equal number of trump, the hand with the stronger trump cards is the master hand.

Minor suit – Clubs and diamonds are the minor suits. They are the lower ranking suits. When scoring you only get 20 points for a minor suit trick.

Moyasian Fit – A 4-3 trump fit. Since the six outstanding trump will tend to break 4-2, one defender will typically have as many trump as declarer, and so this fit

requires careful play. Named after Alphonse Moyse Jr. a top bridge player in the 1930's – 1960's.

N

Notation – Shorthand for writing or talking about a bridge hand. 3+ means 3 cards or more. 12+ HCP means 12 or more high card points.

O

Odd trick – Each trick that the declaring side takes after book. In the bidding you only state how many odd tricks you think you will take.

Offside – When a card you are finessing against is in the hand that keeps you from winning an extra trick.

Onside – When a card you are finessing against is in the hand that lets you win an extra trick.

Opening Lead – The first card played to the first trick of a particular deal. The opening lead is made by declarer's LHO.

Overcall – An overcall is a bid of your own suit after the opponents have opened the bidding.

Overtake – Used when you want to play a higher card on a trick. It is usually used when for entry or unblocking purposes you want to play a higher honor in order to "overtake" the trick and be in the proper hand for your next lead.

P

Part Score – A final contract that is less than game in a particular suit or NT. In other words, a part score would be a final contract in:

- Clubs below 5♣
- Diamonds below 5♦
- Hearts below 4♥
- Spades below 4♠
- Notrump below 3 notrump

Potential winners – Winners that can be established by promotion, finessing or setting up a long suit.

Present Count – When on defense and partner leads an honor, your first signal is attitude, whether you have an honor in the suit or not. When you lead the suit back, you need to give them count, so you use the present count of the cards you have left in the suit. So if you now have two cards in partner's suit, you would lead back your highest card. If you have three cards in partner's suit, you would lead back your lowest card.

Promotion – When you make sure tricks from lower cards in a suit, it is called promoting tricks, or promotion. For example if you hold the King, Queen and Jack in a suit but not the Ace, you lead the King and the opponents take their Ace. You have promoted the Queen and Jack to sure tricks.

R

Rank – The order of the suits is called their rank. The rank order from highest to lowest is:

- NT Notrump
- ♠ Spades

- ♥ Hearts
- ♦ Diamonds
- ♣ Clubs

Renegé – When you accidentally fail to follow suit when you have a card of the suit led. This cannot happen in an online game, because the software prevents it from happening. However in a face to face game this can happen. There are penalties when you renege.

Revoke – Same as a renege. See above.

RHO – The opponent to your right.

Ruff – When a player is out of the suit led and they play a trump. This is also known as trumping the trick.

Ruffing finesse – Leading an honor card from one hand, and if the honor is covered with a higher honor, ruffing in the opposite hand. If the card is not covered, then discarding a loser instead.

S

Safe Hand – The opponent that doesn't hold established winners that can defeat your contract; or an opponent that cannot effectively lead a suit where you have a vulnerable holding. For example, if you hold:

♦8 7 6

♦K 5

West is the safe hand because if they lead a diamond your ♦K is sure to take a trick.

Safety Play – Losing a trick that you may have been able to win in order to insure your contract. As an example, if you have the following hands and are playing in 3NT and the lead is the ♦5:

♠5 4 ♥A K Q T 9 3 ♦8 4 ♣8 5 4

♠A J 6 ♥8 7 2 ♦A K 3 ♣A Q J 3

If diamonds split no worse than 3-1, then you have 10 tricks, 1♠, 6♥, 2♦ and 1♣. However if hearts split 4-0 you only have 7 tricks, because there is no entry to the long diamonds. To insure the contract you duck the first heart trick. You give up one possible trick, but you guarantee your contract will make no matter how the heart suit breaks.

Scoring – Bridge is scored based on tricks taken. When the declaring side makes their contract:

They get 20 points for each odd trick they take in a minor suit.

They get 30 points for each odd trick they take in a major suit.

They get 40 points for the odd trick in a notrump contract, and 30 points for each subsequent trick.

The declaring side also gets bonus points. For bidding and making a part score contract they get 50 points. For bidding and making a game contract they get 300 points if they are non-vulnerable and 500 points if they are vulnerable. If the declaring bids and makes a slam, then if they are not vulnerable they get 500 points for a small slam and 750 points for a grand slam. If they are vulnerable they get 1000 points for a small slam and 1500 points for a grand slam.

The defending side gets 50 points for every trick they set a contract if the declaring side is non-vulnerable, and 100 points for every trick they set a contract if the declaring side is vulnerable.

Set or Setting a contract – When declarer fails to take the number of tricks contracted, the defenders set the contract or the contract went down. If the contract is 3 NT, and declarer only takes 7 tricks, we say the contract was set 2 tricks.

Short Side – The partner's hand that has the fewest cards in a suit. You should almost always play high cards in a suit from the short side first. This prevents you from being blocked in the short hand.

Singleton – When you only have one card in a suit.

Slam – A final contract at the 6 or 7 level. A contract at the 6 level is said to be a small slam, and a contract at the 7 level is a grand slam.

Spot Card – Any card 9 or lower.

Stiff – Another term for singleton, when you have only one card in a suit.

Stopper – A high card in a suit that will stop it from being run. An Ace is a sure stopper, as is K Q. K 4 3 would be an example of a partial stopper, because the Ace can be played after the King preventing it from taking a trick.

Sure Winner – A high card in a suit that is a guaranteed winner (if it doesn't get ruffed!). An Ace is one sure winner, an Ace and King are 2 sure winners, etc. Frequently used in a Notrump contract to plan declarer play.

T

Transportation - When declaring, you will frequently want to be in either dummy to lead toward declarer's hand, or in declarer's hand leading toward dummy. Sure tricks, which provide a way to get into the proper hand are called transportation.

Trick – A set of four cards played, one by each player, during the play of a hand.

Trump – The suit the final contract is being played in. If there is no suit, you are playing in a notrump contract.

Trump a trick – When a suit is led that you have no cards in, and you play a trump. See also Ruff.

U

Unblock – To intentionally play high cards on a trick in order to make sure you can remain in the hand with the long cards in a suit. For example if you have:

♥ A K Q 7 3 2

♥ T 9 8 6

When you cash this suit, you need to play the ♥T 9 8 under the ♥A K Q, so that when you play the ♥7 in the north hand, south plays the ♥6 and the lead stays in the North hand to cash the ♥3 2. If you don't unblock, you will be forced to win the 4th heart in the south hand, stranding the two winning tricks in hearts.

Uppercut – A defensive technique where you lead a suit that both declarer and partner can ruff. Typically partner has one trump, the second highest, and declarer has the highest trump. When you lead the suit, if declarer ruffs low, partner can overruff and so scores a trump trick. If declarer ruffs high, then partner can discard and partner's trump has been promoted to a winner. If the uppercut doesn't happen, declarer could lead their high trump, drawing partner's last trump.

V

Void – When you have no cards in a suit you are said to be void in the suit.

Y

Yarborough – When you have no card higher than the 9 in your hand, you have a Yarborough. It is the worst hand in bridge. Even worse is a Yarborough that is 4-3-3-3.