Lesson 1: Introduction to Bridge

The Game of bridge is played in 2 distinct phases

The Auction: The partnerships compete to win the contract
The Play: The winning partnership must now fulfil the contract

The Auction (more on the auction next week)
- We use compass directions (NS/EW) for the four players.
- The DEALER is the 1st player to call. A player may PASS or make a positive bid.
- A positive bid must be higher than the previous bid.
- The auction continues in a clockwise direction until there are 3 consecutive passes.
- The CONTRACT is the last bid made before those passes.
- The player, who first bids this suit, will be the DECLARER.

The play of the hand
- The DECLARER is the player who plays the hand.
- DUMMY (Declarer’s partner) places their cards face up on the table.
- The faced cards on the table are also referred to as the DUMMY.
- The OPENING LEADER is the opponent on declarer’s left.
- Declarer makes all decisions in the play of the hand; both their own and DUMMY’s cards.
- Dummy cannot suggest a play to declarer.
- A TRICK is a collection of 4 cards – 1 from each player in turn.
- A player must follow suit if possible.
- If a player can’t follow suit, they can play any other card.
- Highest card of the suit led wins the trick (unless a TRUMP is played).
- The next trick must be played from the hand which won the previous trick.

How the cards are placed
- The cards are placed individually in front of each player.
- The cards are placed vertically (towards us) if we win the trick.
- The cards are placed horizontally (towards opponents) if we lose.

Ranking of Cards in a Suit
A  K  Q  J  10  9  8  7  6  5  4  3  2

Ranking of the Suits
- Notrumps (NT)
- Spades, Hearts, Diamonds, Clubs
- Spades and Hearts are also called the MAJOR suits.
- Diamonds and Clubs are also called the MINOR suits.

Naming a suit
- Naming a suit declares that suit to be TRUMPS (the dominant suit).
- A card from the trump suit is more powerful than cards from any other suit.
- NOTRUMPS means that there is no dominant (trump) suit.
Value of the Honour Cards (HCP – High Card Points)

A = 4
K = 3
Q = 2
J = 1

Each suit totals = 10 HCP
Each deal totals = 40 HCP

What is the Partnership looking for in a Contract?

Their aim is to find the best contract at the correct level. There are 3 levels to bid to:

- **Partscore** combined points less than 25
- **Game** combined points 25-32
- **Slam** combined points 33+

What is Game?

You get a large bonus when you make a Game, but you must make a certain number of tricks to succeed. The number of tricks varies according to the trump suit or NT.

**Game is:**
- 3NT – 9 tricks
- 4♥/♣ – 10 tricks
- 5♦/♦ – 11 tricks

Rules of Mini-Bridge

Who Becomes Declarer?

- Each player, starting with the DEALER, adds up their HCP.
- The pair with the majority of points becomes the declaring side.
- The player of the partnership with the most points is the DECLARER.
- That is the end of the Auction phase at this stage.

What Happens Next?

- The partner of the declarer, who is called DUMMY, places their cards in suits on the table.
- Declarer studies the dummy cards and their own hand and then decides what the contract should be - one of the SUITS or NOTRUMPS (NT).
- The partnership must try and find a **fit** which is 8+ cards between the two hands.
- If there is a **fit**, then declarer chooses this as the trump suit.
- Trumps are then placed on dummy’s right.
- The partnership must always try for a **MAJOR fit** first.
- If no good **fit** is possible, then they choose a NT or minor contract.
- Declarer now decides whether to bid Game.
- If the combined point tally of both hands is **25** or over, the contract is declared in Game. Otherwise declarer plays in a partscore and needs to make **7** tricks, which is the minimum number to make any contract.

Then What?

- The opponent on declarer’s left leads a card to start the play.
- A **TRICK** is a collection of four cards – 1 from each player in turn.
- The player who wins this first trick then leads to the second trick.
- This continues until all 13 tricks have been played.