

## ***Teachers' Manual***

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# **1. General Teaching Philosophy**

This Teaching Manual is directed primarily for Beginner's classes. Each module is self-contained and may be taught in a slightly different order if preferred. Please be careful to ensure that your revised format flows in a logical sequence.

Teaching beginners must be fun – it must also be as simple as possible.

If you are laughing, enjoying yourself and including your beginners in your fun, it will be infectious. They will have a great time too.

From the time you start your lessons, you have between 3 and 4 months to teach the basics and hook them on the game.

Bridge is a fantastic game and will sell itself. If you are successful during this critical period, you will have members for life.

Do not imagine that a fully-fledged bridge player will emerge from your class. All you can hope to do is make them enthusiastic and fascinated so that they will continue to play.

Too much information can be totally off-putting. Tell the class at the start that you will teach only the basics. Try to encourage your beginners to listen only to you, the teacher, for the duration of the lessons.

One of a bridge teacher's worst friends is the spouse / friend who has previously learnt to play and thinks they can help!

Involve existing club members at the earliest opportunity, particularly at the session the beginners will filter into. Tell them the numbers that have come along, tell them of their progress. Make them feel a part of the lessons, even though they are not.

## **2. Retention of New Players**

### ***Introduction***

The bridge lessons and play practice comprise only 20% of the task of retaining new members. The next 80% relies on how the club handles the introduction of new players into the club scene.

Unfortunately many new players are "put off" by the unacceptable behaviour of a few club players. Clubs need to take control of rudeness at the table. They should adopt a "Zero Tolerance" to rude behaviour.

What will get the beginners through the next few weeks is friendliness, kindness and encouragement. Remind the players in the session(s) where you introduce the beginners that the onus is on them to make their new players comfortable welcome and most importantly, unintimidated.

Choose your most helpful and patient Director(s) for the beginners' sessions.

This Director should attend one lesson and explain his role – he should tell the class that:

- he is a friend not a critic
- he knows the rules better than the players – he is the referee / umpire of the game
- it is normal practice to ask a director for a ruling

Established players should not call the Director for minor infringements by a new player.

Do not expect the beginners to initially play at the normal speed of 24+ boards per session. Playing 16 to 22 boards would be more realistic.

### ***Introducing the Beginners into Larger Clubs***

Play them as a separate group until the players feel ready to join the rest of the club session.

Allow cheat sheets to be used for at least a couple of months. The use of cheat sheets may take up extra time – supervised sessions may be quicker and easier to manage.

## ***Introducing the Beginners into Smaller Clubs***

If a small club has only one room, it is likely they will be teaching their lessons on a separate night / session.

At the end of the lessons, the beginners will join the regular playing session. It is important to keep them as a separate group until they feel ready to join the rest of the players. Cheat sheets may be used during this time.

New players joining the regular sessions could carry an "L plate" to highlight their status. Hopefully the established players will ignore minor infringements, offer encouragement and praise the new players.

## ***Other Initiatives***

When new players are introduced to the Club, the Convenor or Director will introduce the new players and remind existing members to be encouraging and friendly.

This first night is in effect the beginners' Graduation Night, so make this evening a fun and happy evening – what about nibbles and drinks or something for supper e.g. muffins or biscuits.

Initially, sit the beginners East / West so they don't have to score. Do this for a limited time as they do need to learn to score and play at the same time.

Offer free lessons to any club member wishing to repeat all or part of the beginners' course.

Run supervised sessions for the beginners – choose your helpers carefully!

Run simple seminars and ongoing lessons for both beginners and intermediates.

Limit these social / seminar sessions to approximately two hours. This will allow participants time to socialise.

A suggestion to mix new players into a club is to run an Individual (no conventions) session. This requires careful organisation, but if done successfully is a great way of integrating new members.

If your Club decides to use mentors to assist new players, be very careful to hand pick them – do not ask for volunteers. Choose mentors with patience and warmth – bridge ability has nothing to do with it!

### **3. Advertising for Beginner's Lessons**

#### ***Introduction***

Getting new members to join your Beginners' Lessons is not easy. The Club needs to try as many ways as possible of getting their message out to the broader public. What follows are some ideas used by Clubs around New Zealand. A suitable length for an advertising campaign is about 4 to 6 weeks.

Where appropriate, there are examples of posters, flyers, mailbox drops, adverts of various descriptions, etc in the Appendices.

#### ***Radio Advertising***

Use the free advertising section of your community radio station. Some stations will also run paid advertising for your lessons but cost may be an issue.

Alternatively, some stations do give clubs / societies a cheaper rate for short advertisements.

#### ***Newspaper Advertising***

Choose the best day or days to do this advertising – say Saturday and / or Wednesday evening.

If money is an issue, advertise during the 1<sup>st</sup> and / or last week of the campaign.

The free community newspapers in your area are happy to run club advertising for free. Try and get this article at the same time you are about to advertise your Beginners' Lessons.

- This advertising can be for lessons or simply to advertise your club session times.
- They are always keen to get content and will do an article on your club (with photos).

Some newspapers run a "Join a Club" promotion. Ask if one of your local paid or free newspapers has this available and make sure your Club is mentioned.

Make your Lesson advertisement into the form of a discount voucher.

## ***Poster Placements***

Design posters in colour (both A4 and A3 sizes) and print, or photocopy onto coloured paper.

Many of your club members will have businesses, belong to other clubs / societies or work at a school, and should be able to assist with getting a poster into these places.

Plan where you will place these posters e.g.

- Shopping areas / centres and malls
- Retirement Villages / Homes
- Golf, Bowling and other sports clubs notice boards
- Supermarket bulletin boards
- Library, Business and Community notice Boards
- School staffroom notice boards
- Service Clubs such as Probus, Over 60's, Zonta, Lions, etc
- Doctors, Dentists, Accountants and other professional practices

## ***Mailbox Drops – Probably more successful in smaller communities***

Design and print a hand-out (up to A5 size) for mailbox drops.

Club members can do this job while walking the dog or taking exercise.

Make up bundles of 100 to 200 pamphlets for members to collect.

Have a street plan of the town or neighbourhoods and highlight the areas covered as members take the pamphlets for distribution.

## ***Have Promo Leaflets available to promote your Lessons and Club***

They can be placed in the local town / City Library and Information Office.

Some towns / cities have a Tourist Office – ask if is possible to leave leaflets with them.

Many hotels / motels like to have such leaflets for guests to pick up.

## ***Have a PowerPoint Presentation about your Bridge Club***

This can be available for places that have a public TV i.e. the library. It needs to be short and to the point and could include comments from famous people who play bridge, comments about health benefits and anything that you think may be of interest.

## ***Face to Face Promotion***

Allow club members to take the Club promotional leaflet for friends and family.

Ask members to promote the upcoming Beginners' Lessons – maybe offer an incentive.

Put a notice in the Club Newsletter – if your club has one.  
Place this notice in a prominent position on the Club website.

The Club Programme should include the dates of Beginners' Lessons.

## ***Your Local Regional Committee can assist with promoting the Clubs in their area***

It can run advertisements in all the free community newspapers around the region, listing the clubs, contact details and address.

Ask if you can place an advertisement on the Regional website – if it has one.

# ***4. Bridge Teaching Resources***

## ***Introduction***

What do we need to teach bridge? – The right personnel, a pleasant environment, a board to write on and of course cards and notes.

It is not necessary for the club to provide all the items listed below but hopefully they will be helpful in making your lessons run more smoothly.



## ***Personnel Options***

Irrespective of the size of the club, we strongly urge that **club members** assist the **Club Secretary** in the many administrative tasks relative to the Beginners' Lessons.

**Teacher** – You don't need to be a good player in order to teach bridge well, as long as you have a sound knowledge of the basics. It is much more important to have a friendly personality and enthusiasm for the game.

**Teacher's Assistant** – members who can take a role in helping the teacher in areas such as:

- making up the numbers so that every table has 4 people
- following directions of the teacher when helping students in a large class
- assisting the teacher with housekeeping chores

**Administrative support for the Teacher** – It is extremely helpful to have someone else in the Club taking pressure off the teacher by contacting / enrolling students, taking the money at the beginning, printing name tags, compiling phone lists and email addresses.

This support person can be responsible for the attendance register. The register should have a complete list of names, addresses, phone number(s) and email addresses. If someone is absent, ring the person to find out why.

A catch-up lesson could be offered (if possible) to those who miss a lesson. While this may be difficult to achieve, it pays dividends in reducing dropout rates.

## ***Email Contact***

It is a good idea to send a weekly email during the course. It should be cheery, encouraging, telling them not to worry if they didn't grasp it at first and urging them to do their quiz homework before the next lesson.

Homework should also include playing the pre-set hands on the Sky Bridge Club website [www.skybridgeclub.com](http://www.skybridgeclub.com).

## ***Online Practice during Beginners' Courses***

The ability to practise between lessons is invaluable both in terms of bridge knowledge and also in terms of keeping up students' enthusiasm.

Students are able to play all the NZ Bridge Lesson Hands free of charge on the Sky Bridge Club website ([www.skybridgeclub.com](http://www.skybridgeclub.com)) for the duration of their course. There are tips for each hand and students can practise freely in their own time.

Each class needs a password to activate temporary membership of the site. This password will be valid for 10 weeks. When a student registers, it is necessary to provide an email address and the specific password for their class.

Teachers must ask for the appropriate password for their class from the House of Cards. [bridge@houseofcards.co.nz](mailto:bridge@houseofcards.co.nz) or 03 355 0643.

There is a help line available in case of any problem; just ring Helen on 0800 451 228.

## ***Resource Options***

Clean whiteboard, felt pens (various colours), whiteboard eraser, bidding pads, pencils, rubbers, table numbers, etc

Folders for student notes – 20 pocket A4 display book is perfect!

Pre-dealt cards for each set of lessons – easy for clubs with a Dealing Machine.

If a club does not have a Dealing Machine, another option is to use cards with backing guides and students can deal the pre-set hands. These packs are called Arrow Cards. See below for more details on Arrow Cards.

NZ Bridge Teaching Manual – containing a full set of student notes, teacher notes, and pre-set hands with commentary and quizzes with answers.

A laptop and data projector or large format TV will allow the teacher to access online resources such as the Sky Bridge Club website. Alternatively some teachers may use the computer for a PowerPoint presentation of the notes, quizzes and pre-set hands.

## ***Teaching Environment***

Ensure that the room is neat and tidy with clean table cloths, pre-dealt hands or arrow cards available. Student notes should be ready to hand out. Most importantly, there should be Name Cards for all participants, including the teacher and assistants.

Cardholders for those who have difficulty holding 13 cards should be available.

It is nice to be able to provide tea and coffee (and biscuits) or orange juice. Having a break during or after the class gives the class a chance to meet and greet and to socialise.

## ***Arrow Cards***

These arrow cards are very useful in that you never have to pre-deal a hand before a lesson. Simply put a pack of cards on each table and your students can deal the hands themselves.

It is therefore simple for all students to play the same hand simultaneously. This is an effective teaching technique as the teacher can talk through the hand to the whole class.

Another advantage of arrow cards is that the class never runs out of hands. If one table is particularly fast they can play some of the other hands in the pack.

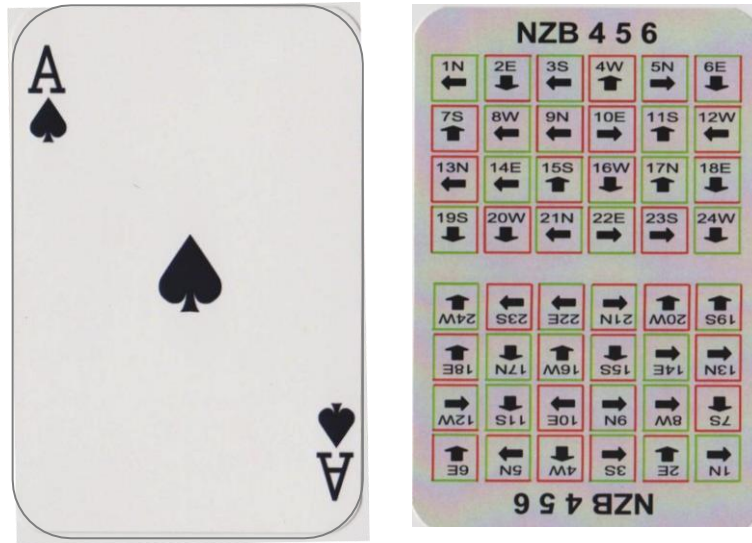
The NZ Bridge Arrow Card set consists of 4 packs of cards with 24 deals on each card.

Pack 1 has the eight Hands for	Lessons 1, 2, 3
Pack 2 has the eight Hands for	Lessons 4, 5, 6
Pack 3 has the eight Hands for	Lessons 7, 8, 9
Pack 4 has the eight Hands for	Lessons 10, Play & Defence

These last 16 hands can be used for improvers' lessons or a follow-up beginners' lesson.

The cards are accompanied by printouts of the hand and a summary of each auction for quick reading. These cards are available for purchase from NZ Bridge for \$50.00 a set.

## Explanation of how to deal with Arrow Cards



Above you can see both sides of the spade Ace. The back of each card indicates who deals each hand and to whom the card is to be dealt.

<b>What board are you dealing?</b>	Indicated by the number "1" or "2", etc
<b>Who deals the board?</b>	Indicated by the "N" or "E" etc next to the number
<b>To whom is the card dealt?</b>	Indicated by the direction of the arrow

Hand 1 is dealt by North and this card (following the arrow) goes to their left (East in this case).

Hand 2 is dealt by East and this card (following the arrow downwards) goes to East, as from East's perspective, the arrow points down to their own hand.

Hand 3 is dealt by South and the arrow points to their left (West in this case), and so on.

## **5. New Zealand Bridge Lessons**

### ***Acol – The Basic System Used***

The system used is Acol with

- 4-card suits as one level openers,
- weak 1NT (12-14 HCP),
- weak 2♦ 2♥ 2♠ openings
- strong 2NT & 2♣ openings
- pre-emptive 3/4 openers

No conventions except Blackwood 4NT and the strong 2♣ opener and its negative response.

Stayman is not covered in these initial lessons but may be taught in Improvers' Lessons later on.

### ***Ten Lessons***

These 10 lessons are intended to be a comprehensive coverage of basic Acol. In order to fit these lessons into 10 weeks, some of the lessons have become more weighty than others.

A teacher may wish to take more than 1 session to cover a lesson e.g. Lesson 5 on 1NT openings and NT rebids. Alternatively, the lesson in question could be reinforced with follow up classes.

### ***The Acol Notes Package***

#### ***Each Lesson has***

- ***Student Notes***
- ***Teacher Notes***
- ***Quizzes & Answers***
- ***Pre-set hands***

#### ***There is also a***

- ***Teachers' Manual***

All of the above are available on the NZ Bridge website.

The pre-set hands are also available for dealing machines as 'bri' files from the NZ Bridge website. Alternatively, you may use Arrow Cards to deal these pre-set hands.

## **Lesson Format**

It is recommended that your lesson should be in two parts

**1<sup>st</sup> hour      15-20 minutes talking maximum**

*15 min          Coffee break*

**2<sup>nd</sup> hour      15 more minutes talking, if necessary,  
otherwise mostly play**

A good lesson is well prepared. Teachers should have studied the student notes as well as the teacher's notes prior to the lesson. It is important to use the same terminology. It is helpful to have both in front of you during the lesson.

Each lesson has 8 practice hands on the subject. You should attempt to play at least 6, preferably all 8 hands. Ideally, each table should play the same hand at the same time – at least for the first half of the lesson. This way you can emphasise the important teaching points to the whole class.

## **Online Practice**

Students will be able to play these hands free of charge on the Sky Bridge Club website ([www.skybridgeclub.com](http://www.skybridgeclub.com)) for the duration of the course. Please get the appropriate password for your class from Sky Bridge Club. This section has been covered under Bridge Teaching Resources.

## **6. Bridge Etiquette**

As you teach a lesson you should also include bridge etiquette. It is important for the new players to know what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. This is a tricky subject to get across so be careful not to use the pupils as examples.

### ***On being a good player***

Never criticize your partner. "Well done!" and "Bad luck!" are ideal comments. Your partner does not want to hear that "the 9 of diamonds was good, why didn't you play it?" This kind of comment will only distract your partner from the next hand.

Never offer advice to an opponent ± it's not your business.

Avoid extreme facial expressions as they give away unauthorised information.

Do not comment or indicate that you have made a mistake or do not know what to bid, as this gives unauthorised information and is also considered unethical.

Thank partner for the dummy hand regardless of its quality.

Take your time before playing to the first trick.

### ***On being a good dummy***

Ensure that partner plays from the correct hand.

Ensure that partner follows suit; "Having none, partner?" is a legitimate question.

Play the card that is nominated without comment, hesitation or suggestion.

## **7. Appendices**

These documents are available on: [Marketing Materials | NZB \(nzbridge.co.nz\)](http://nzbridge.co.nz/MarketingMaterials)

### ***Advertising Options***

- 1.1 Letter Box Drop
- 1.2 Supermarket Card Notice
- 1.3 Newspaper Club Advert ± from local newspaper
- 1.4 Waikato-Bay of Plenty Club Advert ± for Community Newspapers
- 1.5 Advertising Poster ± for shop windows, notice boards, etc

### ***Teaching Resources***

- 1.1 Name Tags ± for class attendees to wear
- 1.2 Lesson Register ± of class attendees  
Include phone numbers home and work  
Address, email address and Computer Number
- 1.3 Course Evaluation Survey
- 1.4 Cheat Sheet ± that players may use for up to 6 months

## List of Lessons

Please note: Option A lessons are for teaching 1-level bids first

### Lesson 1: Introduction to Bridge

Lesson 2A: 1-Level Opening Bids

Lesson 2B: Opening 1NT

Lesson 3A: Responder's Limit Bids

Lesson 3B: Opening 1 of a Suit

Lesson 4A: Responder's New Suit Bids

Lesson 4B: Responder's Limit Bids

Lesson 5A: Balanced Hands

Lesson 5B: Responder's New Suit Bids

Lesson 6: Responder's Rebids

Lesson 7: Overcalls & Scoring

Lesson 8: Takeout Double

Lesson 9: Pre-emptive Openings

Lesson 10: Strong Opening Bids