

Kitchenbridge

AN INTRODUCTION TO BRIDGE

“Bridge is the King of all games”

Bill Gates

Bridge is the second most popular card game in the world, played in over 50 countries by all classes of people of all ages.

It can either be a serious tournament game or a fun social game with friends. More and more online bridge clubs are appearing all the time offering even more opportunities for people to play.

The game is always challenging and for most people it becomes a game for life.

In this brief introduction, I explain the basic elements of the game so that you can get a flavor of what makes people want to play it again and again.

If you like the sound of the game, you can download one lesson at a time or an entire course. You can do this alone or with friends.

I hope you will take up the challenge of learning how to play bridge, because experience has taught me that it can change your life forever.

www.kitchenbridge.co.uk

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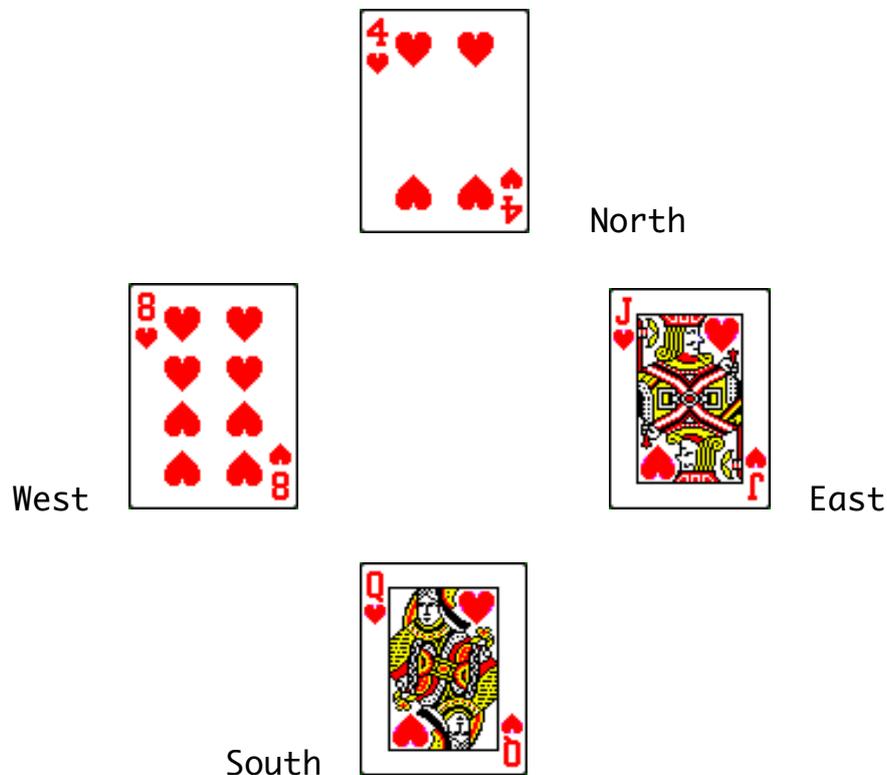
Standard Acol

WHAT IS BRIDGE?

Bridge is a game for four players known as North & South and West and East who play as partners.

A pack of cards is dealt out between four players so each player receives 13 cards.

One player plays a card and then each player has to play a card in that suit if they have one. The highest card played wins and so all four cards are placed in a pile (called a trick) that is placed in front of the winner. At the end of the hand, there will be 13 piles or *tricks* on the table.

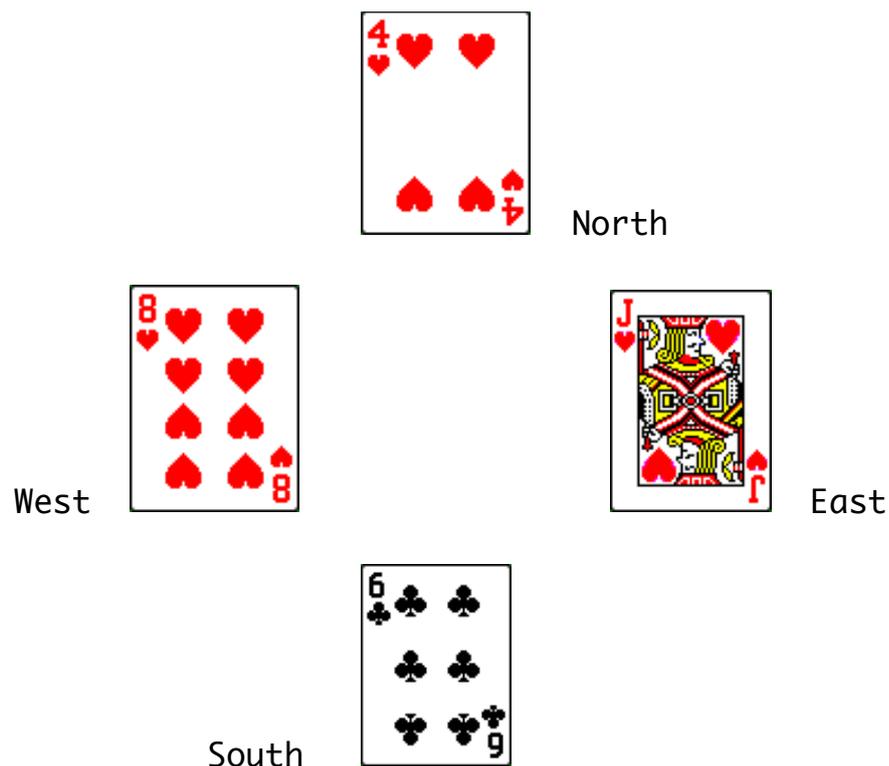


South wins the *trick*, having played the highest card and so the North/South partnership wins the trick.

There are also times when the winning card is a *trump* card. You may be familiar with the concept of *trumps* if you have ever played a game of whist, but for those of you who do not know, I will explain what *trumps* are.

Sometimes a partnership will elect one particular suit as trumps. This means that the suit chosen is the superior suit and so, if a player cannot follow suit then they can play any trump card and win the trick.

Let us suppose that clubs have been chosen as the *trump* suit. In the hand below, south did not have a heart card (they must play it if they have one) and so they play a *trump* card. They win the trick for the partnership.



In bridge, you will always be playing a *trump* game or a no trump game called *NT*.

How do you choose which suit is trumps? All will be explained but for now it is important that you understand the two concepts shown above regarding how a trick is won.

A Game of Two Halves

Bridge is a game of two halves, each half requiring different skills. The first half of the game is when the two partnerships decide how many tricks they can win out of the thirteen available, and whether they will elect a suit as trumps or play no trumps. This is called the **Auction**.

This is the most difficult part of playing bridge.

Remember, you play the game in a partnership, therefore you are trying to work out how many tricks the partnership can win and whether trumps or NT is best for the partnership.

To do this you need to tell your partner about your hand, but you cannot just say "partner I have the Ace of Spades and three other spades" instead you have to use *bidding language*, a special bridge language that enables you and your partner to exchange information about your cards.

This *bidding* is the most complicated part of bridge and there are lots of 'words' or 'bids' you will need to learn and when to use them. The wider your vocabulary, the more you can talk with your partner.

It is called *bidding*, because that is what you do in an Auction.

The partnerships bid, depending on the value of their hand (how much cash they have) called High Card Points, or points, for short, which come from having certain cards in their hand. At the same time as telling their partner how many points they have in their hand, they also try to tell their partner how many cards they have in each suit.

By doing so, the partnership can build up a picture of each other's hand and so work out how many tricks the partnership might win and if it should be trumps or no trumps. At the end of the Auction, one partnership will have won the Auction and so onto the next half of the game.

Now it is time for the partnership that won the Auction to do what they said they would do. If in the Auction they said they would win ten tricks with hearts as trumps, then they must now win at least ten tricks, with the opposition trying to stop them and hearts are trumps for that particular hand.

A unique aspect of the game is that in the winning partnership only one of the players will actually play the hand trying to win the required number of tricks. The other partner puts their cards face up on the table, so that all the players can see their cards. This hand, (called the *dummy*), will be played by the other partner who therefore has two hands to play, their own hand plus their partner's hand.

If the partnership is successful and make the number of tricks they bid for in the Auction, they will be awarded points, but if they fail, the other partnership is awarded points.

Once a partnership has won a certain number of points, they win a game of bridge.

Most people play rubber bridge, this means the winners are those who won the best of three games. This means to win a rubber you will need to win either 2 - 0 or 2 - 1. Only then are the scores worked out.

That is the basis of bridge, two partnerships competing in an Auction and then having to do what they committed to in the Auction, with the other partnership trying to stop them.

Bridge takes a long time to learn, but once you have even the basic skills, you have a game, which is exciting, challenging and never ever boring. Each time you pick up a new hand your skills will be tested regarding the bidding, then again when the hand is actually played.

There are bridge clubs you can join, you can play online in 'live' bridge clubs, or you can get software and play on your computer. Best of all is getting three friends to learn with you and so you have all the makings of some great time with friends, doing something challenging, competitive and always fun.

People become hooked on bridge, finding that no other card game provides as much enjoyment. I hope you will find that too.