

DealTales — Flashcards

A Spark & Anvil printable flashcard deck. Quiz yourself on the DealTales cast's curriculum — one card at a time.

How to use these cards

Fold each sheet down the middle line so the answers are hidden. Read the **question** on the left, say your answer out loud, then **unfold** to check the right side. Testing yourself — then checking — is one of the most powerful ways to remember. Get one wrong? That's the best kind of practice: try it again tomorrow.

Want real flashcards? Cut along the fold line and the rows into cards — question on one side, answer on the other.

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DealTales — Flashcards

How to use these cards

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1. The Deck, Suits & Ranks

⌘ Question (fold →)	Answer
Why do players sort their hand by suit before playing?	So they can see their cards clearly and follow suit quickly — Sorting by suit (and by rank within a suit) lets you read your hand at a glance and follow suit without error.
How many cards does each player get at the start?	13 — The 52 cards are dealt evenly, so each of the four players receives 13 cards.
How many players are in a game of bridge?	Four — Bridge is played by four people in two partnerships of two.
What do we call all 13 cards one player holds?	A hand — The 13 cards a player holds are called that player's hand.
Which two suits are the MINORS?	Diamonds and clubs — Diamonds and clubs are the minors; spades and hearts are the majors.
A 'balanced' hand has cards spread fairly evenly across the suits. Which shape is balanced?	4-3-3-3 — 4-3-3-3 is a balanced shape. Very long or very short suits (like 7-4-1-1) make a hand 'unbalanced'.
Which suit symbol looks like a black leaf or spade?	Spades ♠ — The ♠ symbol marks spades, the highest-ranking suit.
How many cards are in a bridge deck?	52 — Bridge uses a standard 52-card deck — no jokers.
How many red suits are there?	Two — Hearts and diamonds are red; spades and clubs are black.
Clubs and diamonds are the minors; which ranks HIGHER of the two in bidding?	Diamonds — In the bidding order clubs are lowest, then diamonds, then hearts, then spades — so diamonds outrank clubs.
Rank these from highest to lowest: King, Ace, Queen.	Ace, King, Queen — The order is Ace (high), King, Queen, Jack, 10, 9 ... down to 2.
Do all four suits rank equally when NO trump suit is chosen?	Yes — within a trick only the led suit's ranks matter — With no trump suit, suits are equal; a trick is won by the highest card of the suit that was led.
Where does your PARTNER sit?	Directly across from you — Your partner sits directly across the table; the two opponents sit on your left and right.
The Jack is just below which card?	The Queen — The order at the top is Ace, King, Queen, Jack — so the Jack sits just below the Queen.
Which two suits are the MAJORS?	Spades and hearts — Spades and hearts are the majors; diamonds and clubs are the minors.
Is the 10 higher or lower than the 9?	Higher — Among spot cards the higher number is higher, so the 10 beats the 9.
The four seats are named after which four directions?	North, East, South, West — The seats are North, East, South, West. North–South are one partnership; East–West are the other.
How many cards are in each suit?	13 — Each suit has 13 cards: A K Q J 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2.

Card ranks below the Jack are called what?	Spot cards (number cards) — The 10 down to the 2 are 'spot cards' (number cards); A K Q J are the honor cards.
Which card is the HIGHEST in a suit?	The Ace — The Ace is the highest card in each suit, followed by King, Queen, Jack, then 10 down to 2.
What is the lowest card in every suit?	The 2 — The 2 (the 'deuce') is the lowest card in each suit.
Which of these is an HONOR card?	The Queen — Honor cards are the Ace, King, Queen, Jack (and the 10 counts as an honor for some purposes).
Two partners together hold how many cards?	26 — Each partner holds 13, so a partnership holds 26 cards between them — exactly half the deck.
Why is knowing suit and card rank the FIRST bridge skill?	Everything else — tricks, bidding, play — is built on it — Suit rank and card rank are the foundation: tricks are won by rank, and bids name suits — so this comes first.
How many suits are there?	Four — The four suits are spades ♠, hearts ♥, diamonds ♦, and clubs ♣.

2. Tricks & Trick-Taking

⌘ Question (fold →)	Answer
Can you win a trick by playing a low card of a DIFFERENT suit than the one led (in notrump)?	No — off-suit cards can't win in notrump — In notrump, a card not of the led suit can never win the trick — it's just a discard.
What ends a deal?	When all 13 tricks have been played — A deal ends after all 13 tricks are played and every card has been used.
What can you do if a heart is led and you have NO hearts?	Play any card from another suit — If you can't follow suit you may play any card — discard a different suit, or trump if there is a trump suit.
Across a full deal, the two partnerships' tricks add up to what?	13 — Each of the 13 tricks is won by one side, so the two sides' trick counts always total 13.
What is a 'trick' in bridge?	One round where each of the four players plays one card — A trick is one round of play: each player contributes one card, so a trick has four cards.
A trick is led with ♦Q. You hold ♦A and ♦3. Which wins the trick if you play the Ace?	Your ♦A (if it's the highest diamond played) — The Ace outranks the Queen, so playing ♦A beats the ♦Q — assuming no one plays a trump.
What is a 'sure trick' or 'winner'?	A card that will win a trick whenever you choose to play it — A 'winner' is a card certain to take a trick — most obviously a top card no opponent can beat.
If you have the led suit but play a different suit instead, that's called what?	A revoke (an illegal play) — Failing to follow suit when you could is a 'revoke' — an illegal play that carries a penalty.
Who leads to the NEXT trick?	Whoever won the previous trick — The winner of each trick leads to the next one, which is why controlling the lead matters.
Leading your Ace at the right moment does what to that suit?	Guarantees a trick before opponents can trump or discard cleverly — Cashing a sure winner (like an Ace) at the right time banks that trick before anything can go wrong.
What is the main GOAL of the play phase?	To win enough tricks for your contract (or, on defense, to stop it) — Play is a battle for tricks: declarer tries to take the number promised by the contract; defenders try to prevent it.
What is a card called when you throw a useless off-suit card away on a trick you can't win?	A discard — Throwing an off-suit card (when you can't follow suit) is a 'discard'.
Hearts led: you play the ♥K, others play ♥5, ♥9, ♥2. Who wins?	You, with the ♥K — All four followed suit; the highest heart, your King, wins the trick.
If a heart is led, what MUST you do if you have a heart?	Play a heart (follow suit) — You must follow suit — play a card of the suit led — if you have one. This is the core rule of trick-taking.
How many cards must you play to a trick?	Exactly one — Every player plays exactly one card per trick.
Why must defenders also follow	The follow-suit rule applies to everyone, every trick — Following suit is

suit?	required of all four players on every trick, defenders included.
The player who plays the FIRST card of a trick is said to do what?	Lead — The first card of a trick is the 'lead'; that player 'leads' to the trick and sets the suit.
In notrump, spades led (♠7). You have no spades. Can your ♥A win?	No — your heart can't win because spades were led — The Ace of a different suit cannot win when it isn't the led suit (in notrump) — it's just a discard.
In NO-trump, who wins a trick?	The highest card of the suit that was led — In notrump, only the led suit can win; the highest card of the led suit takes the trick.
How many tricks are there in one deal?	13 — Since each player has 13 cards and one is played per trick, there are 13 tricks in a deal.
You have ♣A ♣K ♣Q. About how many club tricks are these likely worth?	Three — they are the top three clubs — A-K-Q are the three top clubs; barring a trump ruff, they are three winners.
If everyone follows suit, which card takes the trick?	The highest card of the led suit — When all follow suit, the trick goes to the highest-ranked card of the suit that was led.
Bram says 'read the trick.' What does watching each played card help you do?	Track which high cards are gone so you know what's still a winner — Watching cards fall lets you count honors and lengths, so you know which of your cards are now winners.
Why is WINNING a trick valuable beyond just the card?	The winner leads next — you control what suit comes — Winning gives you the lead, letting you choose the next suit — a big part of good play is controlling the lead.
If your side takes 7 tricks in a deal, how many did the opponents take?	6 — The 13 tricks are split between the sides, so if your side takes 7, the opponents took the other 6.

3. The Trump Suit

⌘ Question (fold →)	Answer
Which is more powerful in a suit contract: the ♠2 (trump) or the ♦A (not trump), spades trump?	The ♠2 — a trump beats a non-trump Ace — With spades trump, even the ♠2 beats the ♦A, because any trump outranks any non-trump card.
A 'singleton' is how many cards in a suit?	One — A singleton is exactly one card in a suit; after it's gone you can ruff that suit.
Why don't you usually trump your PARTNER's winning trick?	It wastes a trump — partner was already winning — If partner's card already wins, ruffing wastes a trump you could use to win a different trick.
A 'crossruff' is a plan to do what?	Ruff back and forth in both hands to win extra trump tricks — A crossruff wins tricks by ruffing in each hand in turn, scoring the trumps separately for extra tricks.
Spades are trump. You have one losing club; dummy has no clubs and two spades. A good plan is to —	lead the club and ruff it in dummy — Because dummy is void in clubs and holds trumps, you can ruff your club loser there — turning a loser into a won trick.
Can you trump if you CAN still follow suit?	No — you must follow suit first — You may only trump when you can't follow suit; if you hold the led suit, you must play it.
In a heart contract, which suit are the 'trumps'?	Hearts — The strain of the contract is the trump suit; a heart contract makes hearts trump.
What is a 'trump' suit?	A chosen suit whose cards beat cards of any other suit — The trump suit is a special suit for the deal; any trump beats any card of a non-trump suit.
Playing a trump on a suit you can't follow is called what?	Ruffing (trumping) — Using a trump on a trick where you're out of the led suit is called 'ruffing' or 'trumping'.
Why might declarer 'draw trumps' early?	To remove opponents' trumps so they can't ruff your winners — Leading trumps until opponents have none ('drawing trumps') stops them ruffing your good cards.
Why can a short suit (void or singleton) be an ASSET in a trump contract?	It lets you ruff — turning small trumps into winners — Short side suits create ruffing chances, letting even small trumps win tricks — extra tricks a flat hand couldn't make.
Auntie Audrey says trumps are 'the boss suit.' The simplest reason is —	any trump beats any card that isn't a trump — The core power of trumps: a trump beats any non-trump card — that single rule is what makes the suit 'the boss.'
Hearts are trump. Spades led (♠A); you have no spades and play ♥2. Who wins so far?	You — a trump beats the ♠A — With hearts as trump, your ♥2 beats even the Ace of spades — trumps outrank all non-trump cards.
What is an 'overruff'?	Ruffing with a higher trump than an opponent just used — An overruff is beating an opponent's ruff by playing a higher trump on the same trick.
Diamonds are trump. You're void in the	

led suit and want the trick. What do you do?	Ruff with a diamond — Being void (no cards of the led suit) lets you ruff — play a trump to win the trick.
A 'trump fit' usually means the partnership holds at least how many trumps together?	Eight — Bridge players aim for an eight-card (or longer) combined trump fit so their side controls the suit.
If you're out of a suit AND out of trumps, what happens when that suit is led?	You must discard — you can't win the trick — With no card of the led suit and no trump, you can only discard, and you cannot win that trick.
Trumps let a partnership win tricks even with LOW cards. This mainly rewards what?	Distribution (suit lengths and shortness), not just high cards — Trump play rewards good distribution — long trumps and short side suits — not only high cards.
A contract in 'notrump' means what about trumps?	There is NO trump suit that deal — In a notrump contract there is no trump suit, so tricks are always won by the highest card of the led suit.
A 'void' means you have how many cards in a suit?	Zero — A void is zero cards in a suit — which lets you ruff when that suit is led (if there's a trump suit).
When is NOTRUMP often the right contract?	When both hands are balanced with stoppers in every suit — Balanced hands with high cards in every suit often play best in notrump, where high cards alone win tricks.
Why is a LONG trump suit powerful?	You can ruff opponents' winners and control the deal — Lots of trumps let you ruff the opponents' high cards and keep control, which is why long trump suits win deals.
Spades trump. ♠K led, then ♣A, then you (void in clubs) play ♠3, last player plays ♣5. Who wins?	The ♠5 — highest trump — Both trumps beat the clubs; between the two trumps the higher one, ♠5, wins.
If BOTH sides could trump freely, what keeps trumps under control?	Declarer usually draws trumps to remove the opponents' — Declarer typically draws the opponents' trumps first so they can't ruff, then cashes side winners safely.
If two players both trump the same trick, who wins?	The one who played the higher trump — When more than one trump is played, the highest trump wins the trick.

4. Counting High-Card Points

⌂ Question (fold →)	Answer
How many high-card points are in the WHOLE deck?	40 — Each suit has $4+3+2+1 = 10$ points, and 10×4 suits = 40 points in the deck.
How many points is a QUEEN worth?	2 — A Queen is worth 2 high-card points.
How many points is a JACK worth?	1 — A Jack is worth 1 high-card point.
A hand with 0-5 HCP is usually described as —	very weak (a 'bust') — A hand of 0-5 HCP is very weak — well below average and unlikely to take many tricks on its own.
Roughly how many combined HCP does a partnership usually need to bid GAME?	About 25-26 — A partnership typically needs around 25-26 combined HCP to make a game contract.
Two Queens and two Jacks — how many HCP?	6 — Queen (2) + Queen (2) + Jack (1) + Jack (1) = 6 HCP.
Partner has 12 HCP; you have 13 HCP. Combined, do you likely have enough for game?	Yes — 25 combined is about the game threshold — $12 + 13 = 25$ combined HCP, right at the usual game threshold — game is likely.
Do high-card points count SHAPE (suit lengths)?	No — HCP counts only the honor cards — HCP measures only honor strength. Suit length and shortness are valued separately (distribution points).
A King with NO small cards to protect it (a 'singleton King') is —	worth less than 3 in practice — it can be captured by the Ace — The count says 3, but a singleton King is fragile — the Ace can capture it — so experienced players downgrade it.
If you have 20 HCP, your partner has 5, how many do the OPPONENTS hold?	15 — The deck has 40 HCP; your side has $20 + 5 = 25$, so the opponents hold $40 - 25 = 15$.
Which hand is stronger: (A) ♠A ♥A ♦A ♣A + small, or (B) all four Jacks + all four Queens?	Hand A — four Aces = 16 HCP beats four Jacks + Queens = 12 — Four Aces = 16 HCP; four Jacks (4) + four Queens (8) = 12 HCP. Hand A is stronger.
What's the smart way to treat the point count?	As a helpful estimate to be adjusted by judgment, not an exact law — HCP is a strong starting estimate; good players adjust it for shape, fit, and honor location rather than obeying it blindly.
An 'average' hand holds about how many HCP?	10 — With 40 points shared among 4 players, an average hand has about 10 HCP.
Is a 13-HCP hand always worth the same as another 13-HCP hand?	No — shape and where the honors sit also matter — Two 13-HCP hands can differ a lot: long suits, fitting honors, and shape all change real trick-taking value.
Your hand: ♠A K, ♥Q, ♦J, and small cards. How many HCP?	10 — Ace (4) + King (3) + Queen (2) + Jack (1) = 10 high-card points.
Why do bridge players COUNT points before bidding?	It estimates how many tricks the partnership can take — Counting points estimates trick-taking power so you know how high it's safe to bid.

Why are ACES valued the highest?	They are certain to win a trick and can't be captured — Aces are worth the most because they are sure winners — nothing beats them, and they can't be trapped.
You have ♠A K Q J (all four top spades). How many HCP just in spades?	10 — $A + K + Q + J = 4+3+2+1 = 10$ HCP, all in one suit.
Whisp reminds you: before every auction, the FIRST thing to do is —	count your high-card points — Counting your HCP first gives you the estimate every bidding decision is built on.
In the standard point count, how many points is an ACE worth?	4 — The Milton Work count: Ace = 4, King = 3, Queen = 2, Jack = 1.
Your hand: two Aces and two Kings, rest small. How many HCP?	14 — $4 + 4 + 3 + 3 = 14$ high-card points.
You hold ♠A ♦K ♣Q ♥J plus nine small cards. HCP?	10 — One Ace, King, Queen, and Jack = $4+3+2+1 = 10$ HCP.
Which honor is 'undervalued' when it stands ALONE with no support?	The Queen or Jack (they work best next to higher honors) — The simple 4-3-2-1 count slightly overrates lone Queens and Jacks, which are easily captured without a higher honor nearby.
How many points is a KING worth?	3 — A King is worth 3 high-card points.
Why does counting the opponents' likely points help you?	It tells you how much strength they have to fight back or defend — Since points total 40, knowing your side's count reveals the opponents' — useful for judging how hard they'll compete.

5. The Auction: Opening Bids

⌘ Question (fold →)	Answer
Which is the LOWEST possible opening bid?	1♣ — 1♣ is the lowest bid: level 1 in the lowest-ranking strain (clubs).
A 'Pass' by everyone at the start means what?	The deal is passed out and thrown in (no contract) — If all four players pass, the deal is 'passed out' — no contract is played and the cards are reshuffled/next deal.
Which hand better fits a 1NT opening? (A) 4-3-3-3, 16 HCP (B) 6-4-2-1, 16 HCP	Hand A — it's balanced — 1NT promises balance; 4-3-3-3 qualifies, while the unbalanced 6-4-2-1 hand should open its long suit.
What does it mean that bids are 'natural' in a basic system?	A suit bid shows real length/strength in that suit — In natural bidding, a suit bid shows genuine length and values in that suit (before conventions add special meanings).
What does 'opening 1NT' tell partner about SHAPE?	The hand is balanced (no long or very short suit) — A 1NT opening promises a balanced hand — shapes like 4-3-3-3, 4-4-3-2, or 5-3-3-2.
Opening bids describe your hand so partner can do what?	Picture your hand and choose the right final contract together — Your opening paints a partial picture; partner adds their own hand to steer toward the best contract.
Auntie Audrey calls the opening bid 'the first sentence.' Why?	It starts the description that leads to the right contract — The opening bid is the first sentence of the bidding conversation — it sets the direction for everything that follows.
Why not just bid the final contract immediately with one big jump?	Two hands must describe and combine — a step-by-step conversation finds the best spot — Neither partner sees the other's cards, so bidding trades information in steps to find the contract that fits both hands.
Who gets the first chance to bid?	The dealer — The dealer bids (or passes) first, and the auction then proceeds clockwise.
After the dealer, the auction moves in which direction?	Clockwise — Bidding proceeds clockwise, each player in turn bidding or passing.
The auction ends when —	a bid is followed by three passes — When a bid is followed by three consecutive passes, the auction ends and that bid becomes the contract.
A hand with 18-19 balanced HCP is too strong for 1NT (15-17). A common plan is —	open a suit, then bid notrump strongly next — 18-19 balanced is above the 15-17 1NT range, so you open a suit and show the extra values with a strong notrump rebid.
Why open your LONGEST suit first (in suit systems)?	It points toward the best trump fit — Opening the longest suit helps the partnership locate its best trump fit as early as possible.
Each new bid must be HIGHER than the last. Which is a legal bid over 1♥?	1♠ — Over 1♥ you can bid 1♠ (same level, higher strain) or anything at the 2-level or higher; 1♦/1♣ are too low.
Rank the strains from lowest to highest for bidding.	♣, ♦, ♥, ♠, NT — The order is clubs, diamonds, hearts, spades, notrump — so 1♥ can be bid over 1♦, and 1NT over 1♠.
	HCP + your two longest suit lengths total at least 20 — The Rule of 20: if HCP

The 'Rule of 20' suggests opening light when —	plus the lengths of your two longest suits reach 20, a shapely 11-count is worth opening.
Bidding '1♠' promises to win how many tricks if it becomes the contract?	Seven (6 + the level of 1) — Contracts are 6 + the level: '1♠' means winning 7 tricks; the first 6 tricks are the 'book'.
If an opponent opens the bidding, can you still enter the auction?	Yes — you can bid over them (an 'overcall') or double — Both partnerships compete; if an opponent opens, you may overcall a suit, bid notrump, or double.
With a 5-card major and opening strength, you usually open —	that major (e.g. 1♥ or 1♠) — In standard methods you open a 5-card (or longer) major to start describing your best suit.
Roughly how many HCP do you usually need to OPEN the bidding?	About 12-13+ — You generally need about 12-13+ HCP (adjusted for shape) to open the bidding.
A bid names two things. What are they?	A level (1-7) and a strain (a suit or notrump) — Every bid has a level (1-7) and a strain (♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ or NT), e.g. '1♥' or '3NT'.
A very long, strong single suit (like 7 solid spades) suggests you should —	make that suit trumps by bidding it — A long, strong suit is a natural trump suit; you bid it so it becomes trumps.
What is the 'auction' (bidding) in bridge?	A conversation where partners bid to name the contract — The auction is a coded conversation: each bid describes a hand, and it decides the final contract.
If your hand is too weak to open, what do you say?	Pass — With a hand too weak to open, you 'Pass' — you make no bid this turn.
With a balanced 15-17 HCP hand, a common opening bid is —	1NT — 1NT is the standard opening for a balanced hand of 15-17 HCP — it shows both shape and strength at once.

6. Responding to Partner

⌂ Question (fold →)	Answer
Opener 1♥, you 1♠, opener 2♠. What did opener just show?	Spade support — a fit for your suit — By raising your spades to 2♠, opener showed a spade fit, so spades become the likely trump suit.
With a strong hand (13+ HCP) opposite an opening, responder should —	keep the auction going toward game (don't stop low) — 13+ HCP opposite an opening means game values are likely, so responder keeps bidding rather than stopping in a part-score.
A jump to game (like partner opens 1♠, you bid 4♠) shows —	a fit and enough combined strength for game — Raising straight to 4♠ shows a good spade fit and enough combined strength to contract for game.
With about 6-9 HCP, the responder's hand is called —	a minimum (weak) responding hand — About 6-9 HCP is a minimum response — enough to keep bidding, but not inviting game on its own.
Responder's MAIN job is to —	describe strength and shape so the pair can pick the best contract — The responder describes strength and shape, combining with opener's picture to steer to the right contract.
A 'sign-off' bid means —	please pass — I want to stop here — A sign-off asks partner to pass; the responder has decided on the final contract.
Why is finding a TRUMP FIT with partner so important?	An 8+ card fit lets your side control the suit and ruff — An eight-card-or-longer combined fit gives your side control of the trump suit and ruffing tricks.
Your partner opens 1♥. What are YOU called now?	The responder — After partner opens, you are the 'responder' — your job is to describe your hand in reply.
Partner opens 1NT (15-17). You have a flat 10 HCP. A good response is —	3NT (bid game — combined ~25-27) — Opposite a 15-17 1NT, 10 HCP gives about 25-27 combined — enough to bid the notrump game, 3NT.
Why is it dangerous to bid too HIGH with a weak responding hand?	You may end in a contract you can't make and lose points — Overbidding a weak hand risks a contract you can't make, which loses points — responses should match your strength.
Why does responder often bid a new suit rather than notrump with an unbalanced hand?	To keep searching for a trump fit — Bidding a new suit keeps the search for a trump fit alive, which unbalanced hands usually prefer to notrump.
What does 'invitational' mean in bidding?	You're inviting partner to bid game if they have extra strength — An invitational bid says 'game if you have a little extra' — it hands the final decision to partner.
Why bid a four-card MAJOR before rebidding a longer minor sometimes?	Major-suit fits are worth finding — majors score better and often play well — Because major-suit games score better and 4-4 major fits play well, responders often show a major before repeating a minor.
Responding in a NEW suit at the one level shows about how many HCP (minimum)?	6 or more — A new-suit response promises about 6+ HCP; below that you'd normally pass.
Partner opens 1NT; you have 5 hearts and only 5 HCP. Many pairs let you —	sign off in 2♥ (a weak transfer/escape to your long suit) — With a long suit and few points, escaping to 2♥ usually plays better than a struggling 1NT (many pairs use a transfer for this).

A response that partner is NOT allowed to pass is called —	forcing — A 'forcing' bid requires partner to bid again — it keeps the conversation going toward the right contract.
With how few HCP should the responder usually just PASS partner's 1-of-a-suit opening?	0-5 HCP — With 0-5 HCP the responder normally passes a one-level suit opening — the combined values won't be enough to bid on safely.
Bram says responding well means 'answering the question partner asked.' The question is —	'what do you have?' — so you describe strength and shape — Partner's opening asks 'what do you have?'; a good response answers with your strength and shape.
Bidding is a two-way conversation because —	each partner adds information until the best contract is clear — Both partners describe their hands in turn; the shared picture points to the best final contract.
Partner opens 1♣. You have 5 spades and 10 HCP. A natural response is —	1♠ (show your suit) — Bidding 1♠ shows your spade suit and keeps the auction low so you can find the best fit.
If you have game-going values but no clear fit yet, you should —	keep bidding (stay forcing) to explore — With game values and no fit found, keep the auction alive to explore which game (a suit or 3NT) is best.
Partner opens 1♦; you hold 4 spades, 4 hearts, 8 HCP. Standard style bids which first?	1♥ (bid the lower of two four-card suits up the line) — With two four-card majors, standard style bids them 'up the line' — the cheaper (hearts) first, leaving room to find either fit.
Partner opens 1♥ and you have 4 hearts and 8 HCP. A good simple raise is —	2♥ (raise partner's suit) — With 4-card support and a modest hand, raising to 2♥ shows the fit and about 6-9 support points.
A raise of partner's major to the 3-level (e.g. 1♥–3♥) traditionally shows —	a fit and INVITATIONAL strength (about 10-12 support points) — A jump raise to 3♥ shows the fit plus invitational values (roughly 10-12), asking opener to bid game with extras.
Partner opens 1♠. You have 3 spades and 7 HCP. Simple raise to 2♠ shows about —	6-9 support points with 3+ spades — 2♠ is a simple raise: about 6-9 support points and at least three-card spade support.

7. Suit Contracts vs Notrump

⌘ Question (fold →)	Answer
A hand with a singleton or void is usually a poor fit for —	notrump (unstopped short suits get attacked) — In notrump, opponents run a suit you're short and weak in; shapely hands usually prefer a trump contract.
When is a SUIT contract often best?	When your side has an 8+ card trump fit — With an eight-card-or-longer fit, a suit contract lets you use trumps for control and ruffs.
Two flat 13-counts with stoppers everywhere and no 8-card fit belong in —	3NT — Balanced hands with 25-26 combined, no eight-card fit, and stoppers everywhere point straight to 3NT.
Your side has a 5-3 heart fit and balanced shape. Which is usually better, 4♥ or 3NT?	It depends — a good 8-card major fit often prefers 4♥, but 3NT can be right with flat hands — With an eight-card major fit the trump game (4♥) is often best, but very flat hands with all suits stopped can prefer 3NT — it's a judgment call.
Why can NOTRUMP sometimes make more tricks than a suit contract?	No trumps are 'wasted' drawing the suit; pure high cards cash freely — In notrump you don't spend tricks drawing trumps, so with solid running suits and stoppers, high cards cash quickly.
Why is choosing the STRAIN as important as choosing the level?	The wrong strain can fail even with enough tricks-worth of cards — The same 26 cards can make different numbers of tricks in different strains, so picking the strain well is crucial.
A 'stopper' in a suit means —	a card that can stop opponents from running that suit (like an Ace or guarded King) — A stopper (an Ace, or a guarded King, etc.) stops the opponents from cashing a whole suit — vital for notrump.
Which MAJOR-suit contracts are game?	4♥ and 4♠ (ten tricks) — Game in a major is 4♥ or 4♠ — winning 10 of the 13 tricks.
Which is the LOWEST game contract by tricks required?	3NT (9 tricks) — 3NT needs only 9 tricks — fewer than any suit game — which is why it's a popular game contract.
For 3NT you especially want —	stoppers in the suits you don't control, plus enough tricks — 3NT needs stoppers so opponents can't run a suit, plus enough winners to reach nine tricks.
Auntie Audrey's rule of thumb: 'A good 8-card fit is worth a lot.' Why?	It usually means the suit contract will play better than notrump — An eight-card fit usually means the trump contract will out-perform notrump thanks to control and ruffing tricks.
A long, strong MINOR fit with weak major stoppers might still prefer —	3NT if the minor provides running tricks and majors are stopped, else 5m — A strong minor can fuel 3NT (fewer tricks needed) when the majors are stopped; otherwise the 11-trick minor game is the fallback.
Which contract type lets you RUFF opponents' winners?	A suit contract — Only a suit contract has trumps, so only there can you ruff the opponents' high cards.
Why do partners usually prefer a MAJOR game (4♥/4♠) over a minor game (5♣/5♦)?	A major game needs only 10 tricks, not 11, and scores well — A major game needs just 10 tricks versus 11 for a minor, and majors score well — so majors are preferred.

Which notrump contract is 'game'?	3NT (nine tricks) — 3NT is the notrump game: you must win 9 of the 13 tricks (6 book + 3).
If opponents have bid and shown a long suit, a suit contract can help by —	letting you ruff their long-suit winners — When opponents have a running side suit, playing in a trump contract lets you ruff it and cut off their tricks.
With a wild 7-card suit and little strength outside it, you usually prefer —	a suit contract in your long suit — A very long suit wants to be trumps; notrump would let opponents attack your weak short suits, so a suit contract is better.
Which MINOR-suit contracts are game?	5♣ and 5♦ (eleven tricks) — Game in a minor requires the 5-level: 5♣ or 5♦, winning 11 tricks.
A 'notrump' contract means —	there is no trump suit; high cards win tricks — In notrump there's no trump suit, so tricks are won by the highest card of the led suit and there's no ruffing.
Why is 3NT often preferred over a 5-of-a-minor game?	3NT needs only 9 tricks, while 5 of a minor needs 11 — 3NT (9 tricks) is usually easier to make than 5♣/5♦ (11 tricks), so pairs steer to notrump when suits are stopped.
Before choosing notrump, you should check that —	no suit is dangerously weak/unstopped — A weak, unstopped suit is the classic reason to avoid notrump — opponents will attack it.
Why can a suit contract make MORE tricks than notrump with the same cards?	Ruffing wins extra tricks with small trumps — Ruffing lets small trumps take tricks they never could in notrump, so a fit can produce extra tricks.
When is NOTRUMP often best?	When both hands are balanced with stoppers in every suit — Balanced hands with high cards in all four suits usually play best in notrump.
The FIRST job of the auction, strain-wise, is to —	find whether an 8-card major fit exists before settling on notrump — Standard bidding first checks for an eight-card major fit; if none exists (and suits are stopped), notrump is the fallback game.
A combined 4-4 fit in a major usually plays —	well as trumps — the extra length in each hand can ruff — A 4-4 fit is a full eight-card trump holding and often plays very well, with ruffing chances in both hands.

8. Scoring: Games & Slams

⌂ Question (fold →)	Answer
A 'small slam' means contracting to win how many tricks?	12 (a 6-level contract) — A small slam is a 6-level contract — winning 12 of the 13 tricks.
An 'overtrick' is —	a trick won beyond what the contract required — An overtrick is a trick taken above the contract's requirement; it scores a small extra amount.
Because game earns a bonus, partners try hard to reach game when they hold about —	25-26+ combined HCP — Around 25-26 combined HCP is the usual game threshold — enough trick power for the bonus to be worth chasing.
Making 4♠ (bid as game) vs making 3♠ +1 (a part-score with an extra trick) — which usually scores more?	4♠ bid as game — you get the game bonus — You earn the game bonus only if you BID game; taking the same tricks in a part-score misses the bonus.
Vulnerability makes bonuses and penalties —	bigger — When 'vulnerable,' both your bonuses for making and your penalties for failing are larger.
Roughly how many combined HCP is often needed for a small slam?	About 33 — A small slam usually needs about 33 combined HCP (plus the right controls) to win 12 tricks.
Which is a SLAM contract?	6♦ — 6♦ is a small slam (12 tricks); 5♦ is game, and 3NT/4♦ are below slam.
What happens if you bid a contract and DON'T make it?	The other side scores penalty points — Failing your contract ('going down') gives the opponents penalty points for your undertricks.
The tension in scoring is between —	bidding high enough to earn bonuses but not so high you fail — Good bidding balances reaching for game/slam bonuses against the risk of going down — reward vs risk.
Making a GAME contract earns a large bonus. About how many combined HCP is game?	About 25-26 — Because game earns a big bonus, you aim for it with about 25-26 combined HCP.
Which is a GAME contract?	4♥ — 4♥ is game (10 tricks); 3♥, 2♥, and 1NT are all part-scores.
If you can make exactly 3NT but bid only 1NT, you —	miss the game bonus even though you took 9 tricks — Taking 9 tricks in 1NT scores overtricks, not the game bonus — you had to BID 3NT to earn it.
Whisp says: 'Bid what you can make — no less, no more.' This captures —	reaching bonuses without overreaching into failure — The scoring goal is to bid exactly to the level you can make — capturing bonuses while avoiding going down.
If you're unsure between a safe game and a risky slam, the scoring-smart default is usually —	take the sure game unless slam is clearly likely — A sure game bonus is valuable; risk the slam only when the tricks are clearly there, or you may lose the certain game.
An 'undertrick' is —	a trick short of the contract (you went down) — An undertrick is being one trick short of the contract — each one is a penalty to the opponents.
Why bid game rather than stopping in a comfortable part-score when you have the values?	Game earns a big bonus that a part-score doesn't — Bidding and making game earns a substantial bonus, so with game values you shouldn't settle for a part-score.

Why do experienced pairs treat the 'game bonus' as the main target?	It's a big jump in score, so reaching makeable games wins matches — Because game bonuses are large, consistently bidding and making your makeable games is what wins over time.
A contract that is LESS than game is called a —	part-score — A contract short of game (like 2♥ or 1NT) is a 'part-score.'
Bidding a slam you can make earns —	an even bigger bonus than game — Slams carry large bonuses, so reaching a makeable slam is very rewarding.
A 'grand slam' means winning how many tricks?	All 13 (a 7-level contract) — A grand slam is a 7-level contract — winning all 13 tricks.
The whole point of learning scoring is to —	guide HOW HIGH to bid so your good hands earn their full value — Understanding scoring tells you how high to bid, so your strong hands capture the game and slam bonuses they deserve.
Why NOT overbid to slam without the values?	If you go down, you lose points and miss a safe game — Bidding a slam you can't make loses points and forfeits the safe game — reach slam only with the values.
Why should you count tricks, not just points, before reaching slam?	Slam needs 12 tricks — controls (Aces/Kings) matter, not only points — Slam needs 12 tricks; you must have the Aces/Kings (controls) to avoid losing early tricks, not just raw points.
Bidding a grand slam (7-level) is risky because —	you must win EVERY trick — one loser fails it — A grand slam requires all 13 tricks — with no margin for a single loser, so it's bid only when tricks are certain.
Which scores a bonus ONLY if you actually bid it?	Game and slam (you must contract for them) — Game and slam bonuses are earned only by bidding (contracting for) them; taking extra tricks in a lower contract doesn't grant the bonus.

9. Declarer Play: Making a Plan

⌘ Question (fold →)	Answer
When is the dummy laid down?	After the opening lead, before declarer plays — The opening lead is made, then dummy's hand is placed face-up so declarer can plan using both hands.
You need 9 tricks in 3NT and count 7 sure winners. Your plan must —	develop 2 more tricks (e.g. from a long suit or a finesse) — With 7 top tricks and a 9-trick target, the plan is to develop 2 more before the opponents develop theirs.
If you have exactly enough winners in notrump, the priority is to —	cash them safely and not let opponents in to run their suit — With just enough winners, cash them while keeping control so the opponents never get in to run a suit.
An 'entry' is —	a way to get the lead into a particular hand — An entry is a card that lets you win a trick IN a particular hand so you can lead from it — vital for using long suits.
Whisp's motto: 'Plan the hand, then play the hand.' Its real lesson is —	thinking first turns a hard contract into an easy one — A clear plan before playing turns many 'lucky' contracts into routine ones — thinking first is the declarer's best tool.
You can also get rid of a loser by —	discarding it on an extra winner in the other hand — If you have a spare winner, you can discard a loser from the other hand on it — a 'loser-on-loser' or discard play.
'Counting winners' works best in which strain?	Notrump — Counting winners fits notrump; in suit contracts counting losers (which you can ruff/discard) is usually clearer.
What is the FIRST thing a good declarer does after seeing dummy?	Make a plan — count winners and losers — Before playing a card, count your sure winners (or losers) and make a plan to reach the contract.
You have a losing ♦ but dummy is void in diamonds with trumps. You can —	ruff the diamond loser in dummy — A void in dummy plus trumps lets you ruff your diamond loser, turning it into a won trick.
A 'loser' in a suit contract is —	a card that will lose a trick unless you do something about it — A loser is a card likely to lose a trick; the plan is to ruff, discard, or finesse to avoid enough of them.
In a suit contract, declarer often DRAWS TRUMPS to —	stop opponents from ruffing your winners — Drawing trumps removes the opponents' trumps so they can't ruff your good side-suit cards.
Why plan BEFORE playing to trick one?	The first card you play can wreck a later plan — Careless early plays can block suits or waste entries; planning first avoids ruining your own plan.
The best declarers 'play the whole hand in their head' first. This means —	picturing the full plan to 13 tricks before playing — Strong declarers map out the plan to the finish before playing, so each card serves the plan.
A common way to develop extra tricks is —	establishing a long suit by driving out opponents' high cards — Knocking out the opponents' high cards in a long suit turns your remaining low cards into winners.
What is the 'danger hand'?	The opponent who, if on lead, could hurt you (e.g. cash their long suit) — The danger hand is the opponent whose lead would damage you; good technique

	keeps that hand off lead.
When might declarer DELAY drawing trumps?	When they need dummy's trumps to ruff losers first — If you need to ruff losers in the short trump hand, you delay drawing trumps until after the ruffs.
Why count the opponents' cards as they fall?	So you know when a suit is 'good' (they have none left) and your low cards win — Counting a suit tells you when the opponents are out of it, so your remaining low cards become winners.
Who is the 'declarer'?	The player who plays both their hand and the dummy — The declarer is the player (for the side that won the contract) who plays both their own hand and the dummy.
Who is the 'dummy'?	Declarer's partner, whose cards are placed face-up on the table — The dummy is declarer's partner; their hand is laid face-up and played by the declarer.
In a SUIT contract, declarer often counts —	losers, and how to avoid or ruff them — In a suit contract it's often easiest to count losers and plan how to ruff, discard, or avoid them.
A 'stopper' matters to declarer in notrump because —	it lets you hold up and stop opponents running their suit — A stopper lets declarer control the opponents' long suit — often by holding up — so they can't cash it all.
In a NOTRUMP contract, declarer usually counts —	sure winners (top tricks) and how to develop more — In notrump you count your immediate winners, then plan how to develop enough extra tricks to reach the contract.
Why are entries to DUMMY often precious?	You need them to cash dummy's established winners — You must be able to reach dummy to cash its winners; running out of entries strands good cards.
A declarer's plan should always aim at —	the number of tricks the contract requires, no fewer — Plan to reach exactly the contract (safely) — overtricks are nice but the target is making the contract.
Order matters: often you should develop your extra tricks —	BEFORE cashing all your sure winners (keep entries/stoppers) — Develop the tricks you need early, while you still have entries and stoppers to protect and reach them.

10. The Finesse

⌘ Question (fold →)	Answer
Compared to cashing top cards, a finesse trades certainty for —	a chance at an extra trick — A finesse gives up certainty to chase an extra trick — worth it when you need the trick and the odds are decent.
A 'tenace' like A-Q (missing the King) is best used by —	leading TOWARD it, not away from it — You lead toward a tenace (A-Q) so the opponent must commit before your Queen plays — the heart of finessing.
A simple finesse (like guessing where one King is) succeeds about —	half the time (50%) — A single finesse for a missing honor works about 50% of the time — the missing card is roughly equally likely on either side.
Two finesses that BOTH must work give you about what chance?	About 25% ($\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{2}$) — Two independent finesses each ~50% combine to about 25% — so needing both is much less likely than needing one.
Why do you sometimes need TWO entries to dummy to finesse twice?	Each finesse is led from the opposite hand, so you must return there — Each repeat of a finesse is led from the same side, so you need an entry to return there and lead again.
You hold ♠A Q in one hand and small spades opposite. You lead LOW toward the AQ hoping the King is —	in front of your AQ (on your left) — Leading toward A-Q wins an extra trick when the King lies in front of the A-Q, so it's trapped and you can play the Queen.
Why finesse instead of just cashing your Ace and King?	It can win an EXTRA trick you couldn't win by force — Finessing can capture a trick that brute force can't — it develops an extra winner when the honor sits well.
Auntie Audrey says a good finesse is 'a smart guess made with the odds.' The lesson is —	play the best percentage line and accept the outcome — A finesse is a calculated chance: pick the highest-percentage line, and judge yourself on the decision, not the luck.
A finesse LOSES when the missing high card is —	behind your honor (positioned to capture it) — If the missing honor sits behind your tenace, it captures your card and the finesse fails.
Finessing is a 'character moment' in DealTales because —	it's a clever, daring play — trying to win with a lesser card — The finesse is a signature clever, daring play — winning with a lesser card by outguessing where the big one hides.
A 'two-way finesse' for a Queen means —	you could finesse either opponent for it and must pick a side — A two-way finesse gives you a choice of which opponent to play for the missing Queen; bidding/play clues help you choose.
A finesse needs you to lead from the hand —	OPPOSITE the tenace (toward the honors) — You lead from the hand opposite the tenace so the missing honor must decide before your honor plays.
Before finessing, a good declarer looks for —	clues from the bidding and earlier tricks about who holds the missing card — Clues from the auction and the cards already played help you place a missing honor, improving on a blind 50% guess.
If the finesse of the Queen loses to the King, what did you learn?	The King was behind your tenace this time — but you tried the best odds — A losing finesse isn't a mistake if it was the best chance — sometimes the honor simply sits wrong. Good process, unlucky result.

If you have A-K-Q of a suit, do you need to finesse it?	No — you already have three sure winners — With A-K-Q you hold the top three cards — no finesse needed; simply cash your winners.
A finesse into the 'danger hand' is risky because —	if it loses, that opponent may run a dangerous suit — If a losing finesse puts the danger hand on lead, they may cash a threatening suit — so, when possible, finesse into the safe hand.
A finesse is really a bet that a card is —	positioned favorably (on the side that lets you trap it) — A finesse bets on POSITION: that the missing card lies on the side where you can trap it.
You lead low toward ♣A Q; left-hand opponent plays low. You should —	play (finesse) the Queen — After leading toward A-Q and LHO plays low, you finesse by playing the Queen; if the King was in front, it wins.
A finesse's power comes from making the OPPONENT —	commit a card before you decide, so a well-placed honor is trapped — Leading toward your honor forces the opponent to commit first; if the missing honor is well-placed, it gets trapped.
The safest finesse is one where —	even if it loses, the opponent on lead can't hurt you — A finesse is safest when a loss puts the harmless opponent on lead, so failing costs only that one trick.
If you can either finesse (50%) or play for a suit to split evenly, a good declarer —	compares the odds and picks the better chance (or combines them) — Good play compares the odds of each option — and often combines chances (try one; if it fails, fall back on the other).
What is a 'finesse'?	An attempt to win a trick with a card while a higher card is still out, by leading toward it — A finesse tries to win a trick with a card (like a Queen) even though a higher card (the King) is out, hoping it's favorably placed.
You have ♥K x opposite ♥x x. To try for a heart trick with the King, you lead —	toward the King, hoping the Ace is in front of it — Leading toward K-x wins a trick when the Ace is in front of the King (on your left), so the King is not captured.
You need only your sure winners to make the contract. Should you risk a finesse?	No — take the safe sure tricks instead — If sure winners already make the contract, avoid the finesse — never risk a made contract for an unneeded overtrick.
With A-Q-J opposite small, you can finesse —	twice against the King (repeat the finesse) — A-Q-J lets you finesse against the King twice if the first finesse wins and you have an entry to repeat it.

11. Establishing Long Suits

⌘ Question (fold →)	Answer
A suit splitting 3-3 in the opponents' hands is helpful because —	after three rounds they're out and your 4th card wins — With a 4-4 fit and a 3-3 opponent split, three rounds exhaust them and your fourth card becomes a winner.
Why do you need ENTRIES to establish and cash a long suit?	You must reach the hand with the long suit to lead and later cash it — You need entries to lead the suit while setting it up and, crucially, to reach it again to cash the established winners.
The classic reason to hold up an Ace TWICE in notrump is to —	leave one opponent with none of the suit, so their partner can't reach them — Holding up until the third round can strip a defender's cards so that, if their partner later gets in, they can't return the suit.
Which hand's long suit do you usually try to establish?	Whichever hand's long suit can be reached and run given your entries — You establish the long suit you can actually reach and cash — entry position decides which hand's suit to develop.
A suit that won't 'come home' usually lacks —	entries to reach it after it's established — Establishing winners you can't reach ('stranded' tricks) is a common error — plan the entries before you start.
The 'timing' problem in establishing a suit is —	doing it before opponents establish and cash THEIR suit — Establishing is a race: you must set up and cash your tricks before the opponents can set up and cash theirs.
Ducking (deliberately losing) a round of your OWN long suit can help by —	keeping an entry or fixing communication so the suit runs — Sometimes you duck a round of your own suit to preserve entries or unblock it, so it runs smoothly later.
You can combine establishing a suit with a finesse by —	leading toward honors in the long suit to gain extra tricks — Often you set up a long suit AND finesse within it — leading toward honors to win extra tricks as you establish.
You have ♣K Q J x x opposite ♠x x. To set up club tricks you should —	lead clubs to drive out the Ace — Leading clubs forces out the opponents' Ace; then your K-Q-J plus length become winners.
To establish a suit you often must —	give up (lose) a trick or two first to drive out their honors — Establishing usually costs an early trick or two to remove the opponents' high cards, after which your low cards win.
The safest order is often to establish your long suit —	while you still hold stoppers/controls in the opponents' suit — Set up your suit while you still control the opponents' suit, so you don't lose the race for tricks.
In notrump, holding up an Ace (refusing to win early) can help by —	cutting the opponents' communication so they can't reach their long suit — Holding up an Ace can exhaust one opponent's cards in the suit, cutting communication so their long suit can't be run.
To 'establish' a suit means —	to make your remaining low cards in it into winners by removing opponents' cards — Establishing a suit means playing it until the opponents have none left, so your remaining small cards become winners.

You hold ♦A K Q x x (5 cards) opposite ♦x x. If diamonds split 3-2 for the opponents, after three rounds your last two diamonds are —	winners (opponents are out) — Cashing A-K-Q clears the opponents' five diamonds (3-2); your last two low diamonds are then winners.
Bram calls a long suit 'a slow river of tricks.' The lesson is —	patience — invest early losses to let the length pay off — A long suit rewards patience: invest a trick or two early, and the length delivers a stream of winners later.
A long suit is more valuable when you ALSO have —	the entries and stoppers to establish and cash it in time — Length alone isn't enough; you need entries to set it up and cash it, and stoppers to survive while you do.
The single most common reason an established suit fails to score is —	no entry left to reach and cash it — Most 'lost' length winners are simply unreachable — running out of entries is the classic establishing mistake.
Which is usually the BIGGER source of tricks in notrump games?	A long suit that can be established — A long, establishable suit is often the main trick source in notrump — it can supply several tricks at once.
The point of establishing low cards is that —	small cards can win tricks once the higher cards are gone — Once all higher cards in a suit are gone, even a 2 is the highest remaining — length turns small cards into winners.
Why is a 5-card suit often worth more than its high cards suggest?	The 4th and 5th cards can become length winners — Length adds value beyond HCP because the extra cards can become winners once the suit is established.
Establishing a suit in a SUIT contract usually needs you to —	keep control (trumps) so opponents can't cash their tricks first — In a trump contract you must keep trump control while setting up a side suit, or opponents will cash out first.
Establishing a suit is fundamentally a plan to —	trade a few early losses for several later winners — The whole idea is to accept a couple of early losers to unlock several length winners later.
Length winners come from —	the EXTRA cards in a long suit once opponents are exhausted — A long suit produces 'length winners' — the small cards left after the opponents have run out.
If a suit splits badly (like 5-1), establishing it —	may cost too many tricks or fail — you may need another plan — Poor splits can make a suit too expensive to establish; a good declarer has an alternative plan for when suits break badly.
A 'source of tricks' means —	a suit that can be developed into several winners — A 'source of tricks' is a suit — usually long — that can be developed to provide several winners.

12. Defense: Leads & Signals

⌘ Question (fold →)	Answer
Leading a TRUMP on defense can be good when —	you want to stop declarer from ruffing losers in dummy — A trump lead can remove dummy's trumps early, stopping declarer from ruffing losers there.
When partner plays a discouraging (low) card in a suit you led, you should usually —	switch to a different suit — A low (discouraging) card asks you not to continue that suit, so you look for a better suit to attack.
Signals are useful mainly because a defender —	cannot see partner's hand and needs the information — Since defenders can't see each other's cards, the rank of a played card is a legal way to share information.
Why is the OPENING LEAD often the most important card of the deal?	It's chosen before seeing dummy and can set the whole defense's direction — The opening lead is made 'blind' (before dummy), yet it often decides whether the defense succeeds — so it's chosen carefully.
Whisp and Bram 'read each other' on defense. The real skill is —	combining signals + counting to picture the hidden hands and pick the best plays — Great defense combines signals, counting, and logic so two defenders act like one mind against declarer.
Why lead your LONG suit against notrump?	To set up length winners for your side before declarer sets up theirs — Leading your long suit starts establishing your side's tricks, racing declarer for the winners you each develop.
A good defender treats each of partner's cards as —	a possible message to be read, not just a random play — Alert defenders read partner's card choices as signals, piecing together the hidden hands to defend accurately.
A defensive 'signal' is —	a card played to send partner a message (encourage, count, or suit preference) — Signals use the RANK of a played card to tell partner something — whether you like the suit, how many you hold, etc.
Who makes the OPENING LEAD?	The player to the declarer's left — The defender on declarer's left makes the opening lead, before dummy is put down.
Beating a contract by ONE trick is called —	setting the contract (a 'one-trick set') — Taking enough tricks to make declarer fall short 'sets' the contract; even down one scores a penalty for the defense.
A 'count' signal tells partner —	how many cards you hold in the suit (often high-low = even) — Count signals show your length (commonly high-low for an even number) so partner can count out declarer's hand.
An 'active' defense tries to —	set up or cash your tricks quickly before declarer discards losers — When declarer threatens to discard losers on a long suit, defenders go active — cashing/setting up tricks quickly.
Against a suit contract, a 'passive' lead means —	a safe lead that gives nothing away while you wait for tricks — A passive lead avoids helping declarer; you wait for your natural tricks rather than risk creating one for them.
'Second hand low' is a guideline meaning —	the second player to a trick usually plays low — As the second player to a trick, playing low is usually right — you save honors and make declarer commit first.

Good defense depends most on —	the two defenders working together, since neither sees the other's hand — Defenders can't see each other's cards, so signals and cooperation are how they combine into one effective plan.
The two DEFENDERS are —	the partnership that did NOT win the contract — The defenders are the pair that didn't win the auction; their goal is to take enough tricks to defeat the contract.
In standard attitude signals, a LOW card means —	discourage — don't continue this suit — A low spot card discourages — it asks partner to switch to a different suit.
Why return your PARTNER's led suit after winning a trick (often)?	It continues the suit your side is establishing — Returning partner's suit usually keeps developing the suit your side chose to attack — a core cooperative play.
When you return partner's suit, which card do you usually lead back?	Your original higher/appropriate card to help partner's count — The card you return (e.g. high from a remaining doubleton) helps partner read how the suit lies — part of the signal system.
In standard 'attitude' signals, a HIGH card played on partner's lead means —	encourage — I like this suit, keep leading it — A high spot card encourages — it tells partner you like the suit and want it continued.
'Third hand high' is a guideline meaning —	the third player to a trick usually plays high to win it or force declarer's honor — As the third player, you usually play high to win the trick for your side or drive out declarer's honor.
Leading the TOP of a sequence (like K from K-Q-J) is good because —	it's safe and can establish tricks without giving one away — From a solid sequence you lead the top honor — a safe lead that helps set up your suit without gifting a trick.
Against a SUIT contract, leading an unsupported Ace (Ax) early is often —	risky — you can set up declarer's King — Cashing a bare Ace can promote declarer's King; against suits, leading away from or holding Aces is often wiser.
A defender counts declarer's shape by —	adding up what's visible (dummy + own hand + signals) to deduce the rest — By counting dummy, their own cards, and partner's signals, a defender can deduce declarer's hidden distribution.
A classic opening lead against NOTRUMP is —	fourth-highest of your longest and strongest suit — Against notrump, leading fourth-highest of your longest, strongest suit aims to establish it for your side.

13. Squeezes & End Plays

⌂ Question (fold →)	Answer
Why are these among the LAST bridge skills to learn?	They require solid counting and planning built on all the earlier fundamentals — Squeezes and end plays sit on top of counting, planning, and card-reading — which is why they come last.
A 'ruff and discard' (ruff-sluff) helps declarer by letting them —	ruff in one hand and discard a loser from the other — When a defender must lead a suit both declarer hands are void in, declarer ruffs in one hand and discards a loser from the other.
These plays are 'character moments' in DealTales because —	they're dramatic, clever endings where careful preparation pays off — Squeezes and end plays are the dramatic, prepared finishes DealTales celebrates — careful setup springing a clever trap.
An end play essentially transfers the DISADVANTAGE of leading to —	the defender who is thrown in — Sometimes being on lead is a disadvantage; an end play forces that disadvantage onto a defender.
A squeeze usually works near the END of the hand because —	hands are short, so a defender can no longer keep every guard — Squeezes bite when hands are short: with few cards, a defender can't hold onto every guard at once.
For a simple squeeze you generally need —	all the tricks but one (be 'one off') with two threats against one opponent — A basic squeeze needs the count rectified (losing your extra loser first) and two threats one opponent must guard.
These advanced plays reward the declarer who —	counts the hand and plans several tricks ahead — Squeezes and end plays reward careful counting and planning — you must see the ending position several tricks early.
Auntie Audrey says these endings feel like magic but are really —	logic — counting and planning made to look effortless — The 'magic' of a squeeze or end play is really careful logic — counting and planning that only looks effortless.
'Rectifying the count' means —	losing your extra loser early so the squeeze operates at the end — You often must concede your one loser early ('rectify the count') so that, at the end, the squeeze card does its work.
Even if you can't name a squeeze, simply —	cashing your winners can auto-squeeze a defender who must guard two suits — Even without planning a formal squeeze, running your winners can pressure a defender guarding two suits into a fatal discard.
The best way to START learning these plays is to —	practice counting the hand accurately on every deal — Accurate counting on every hand is the foundation; once you count well, squeeze and end-play patterns start to appear.
An 'end play' (throw-in) forces a defender to —	lead a suit that helps you (into a tenace or giving a ruff-and-discard) — An end play throws a defender in on lead so they must lead a suit that gives you a trick — into your tenace or a ruff-sluff.
The mindset behind these plays is —	patience and preparation — set the position, then let it spring — Squeezes and end plays reward patience and preparation: build the position carefully, then let the trap close.

A 'squeeze' forces an opponent to —	discard a card they needed, because they can't keep everything — A squeeze runs winners until a defender must discard a guard they needed, giving you an extra trick.
A 'double squeeze' applies pressure to —	both opponents (each must guard a different suit) — A double squeeze pressures both defenders at once — each is forced to give up a guard, yielding an extra trick.
The 'squeeze card' is —	the winner you cash that forces the fatal discard — The squeeze card is the winner whose play forces the defender to make the losing discard.
Why must you usually 'strip' the hand before an end play?	So the defender has no safe suit left to lead — Stripping removes a defender's safe suits (often by drawing trumps and cashing side winners) so a throw-in leaves them stuck.
A key sign a squeeze might be available is —	you're one trick short and one opponent guards two suits alone — When you're a trick short and a single defender must guard two threats, a squeeze may hand you the missing trick.
A ruff-and-discard is BAD for defenders, so good defenders —	avoid leading a suit both declarer hands are void in — Defenders try never to lead a suit both declarer hands are void in, since that gifts a ruff-and-discard.
A squeeze needs a 'menace' (threat), which is —	a card that will become a winner if the defender lets go of their guard — A menace is a not-yet-winner that becomes a winner if the defender discards the card guarding it.
The simplest end play to spot is when —	a defender is out of safe suits and must lead into your A-Q (tenace) — If you can strip a defender of safe cards and hold a tenace, throwing them in forces a lead into your A-Q.
An end play often gains a trick you could NOT win by —	leading the suit yourself (finessing) — By forcing the defender to lead a suit, you can win a trick you'd have lost if you led it yourself — no finesse needed.
A 'throw-in' works because the thrown-in defender —	has only losing options — any lead helps declarer — A throw-in strips a defender of safe cards so whatever they lead gives declarer a trick.
A squeeze against ONE opponent is called —	a simple (single) squeeze — A squeeze operating on one defender is a 'simple' or single squeeze; squeezing both is a 'double' squeeze.
Before a squeeze can work, you usually must lose —	all your other losers except the one the squeeze will save — You typically reduce to needing all remaining tricks; then the squeeze supplies the one extra trick you were missing.

14. Bidding Conventions

⌂ Question (fold →)	Answer
A 'natural' bid vs a 'conventional' bid differ in that —	natural shows the suit bid; conventional carries an agreed different message — A natural bid shows length in the suit named; a conventional bid carries a special agreed meaning instead.
Overusing conventions can backfire when —	you forget the meaning and misbid — A forgotten convention causes a misunderstanding worse than plain natural bidding — better to know a few conventions well.
Stayman is used only after —	a notrump opening (like 1NT) — Stayman is a response to a notrump opening; it doesn't apply after suit openings.
Why do partners need to AGREE on conventions beforehand?	Both must know the artificial meaning, or the message is lost — A convention only works if both partners know the agreed meaning — otherwise the 'message' is misunderstood.
A bidding 'convention' is —	a bid whose meaning is agreed in advance, not its natural meaning — A convention is an artificial bid with a partnership-agreed meaning that differs from its natural sense.
The risk of a convention both partners DON'T know equally is —	one bids it, the other takes it naturally — a misunderstanding — If only one partner knows a convention, the message is misread — which is why agreement and practice matter.
Conventions are also disclosed to opponents because —	fair play requires both sides know your agreements — Bridge requires full disclosure: opponents are entitled to know your conventional agreements — no secret understandings.
Conventions are best thought of as —	extra vocabulary added to natural bidding, learned a few at a time — Think of conventions as added vocabulary: build on solid natural bidding and add a few well-understood tools at a time.
The Vanderbilt (tradition) reminds players that conventions serve —	clearer communication, not showing off — Conventions exist to communicate more clearly with partner — not to show off or to trick opponents.
If opener has NO four-card major after Stayman, opener rebids —	2♦ (a conventional 'no major' reply) — Lacking a four-card major, opener rebids 2♦ over Stayman as the agreed 'no major' answer; responder then chooses the contract.
The 'Stayman' convention is a 2♣ response to 1NT that asks —	'do you have a four-card major?' — After partner opens 1NT, responder's 2♣ (Stayman) asks whether opener holds a four-card major, hunting for a 4-4 major fit.
A 'Jacoby transfer' after 1NT (2♦ shows hearts) works by —	having opener bid the next suit so responder's long major becomes trumps with opener as declarer — A transfer makes opener bid responder's real suit (2♦ shows hearts), so the strong 1NT hand becomes declarer and stays hidden.
Why use Stayman?	To find a 4-4 major fit that plays better than notrump — Stayman locates a 4-4 major fit; a major game often outperforms 3NT when the fit exists.
Auntie Audrey's convention rule: 'Only use what you both	a shared, well-practiced tool beats a fancy one you'll forget — A few conventions you both know could beat a long list you'll misremember — shared

truly know.' Because —	mastery is what actually helps.
Why might beginners learn Stayman and transfers FIRST among conventions?	They come up constantly after 1NT and greatly improve results — Stayman and transfers arise on nearly every 1NT auction and add a lot of value, so they're usually the first conventions taught.
Before adopting a new convention, a partnership should —	agree on its meaning and the follow-up bids together — A convention is only useful once both partners agree its meaning AND the follow-up auctions — so discuss before you use it.
The 'Blackwood' convention (4NT) asks partner —	how many Aces do you have? — Blackwood (4NT) asks partner to show the number of Aces held — used to decide whether a slam is safe.
After a transfer to hearts (1NT-2♦), opener normally bids —	2♥ (completing the transfer) — Opener 'completes' the transfer by bidding the suit responder showed — 2♥ after the 2♦ transfer to hearts.
A convention's whole purpose is to —	let partners exchange specific information a natural bid couldn't — Conventions let a partnership ask and answer precise questions (Aces, majors, fit) that natural bids can't convey.
Blackwood is used mainly when —	you're heading for slam and need to check you aren't missing two Aces — Blackwood is a slam tool: it checks the partnership isn't off two Aces before committing to a 6- or 7-level contract.
A convention doesn't change the CARDS — it changes —	the meaning of a bid, to describe hands more precisely — Conventions add expressive power to the bidding language; the cards and rules of play are unchanged.
A convention that helps you STOP in the right part-score is just as valuable as one that —	helps you reach the right game or slam — Good conventions help you land in the right contract at any level — stopping low is as valuable as reaching game or slam.
Transfers are especially valuable when responder's long suit is —	a MAJOR they want to become trumps with the strong hand hidden — With a long major, a transfer sets the trump suit while keeping the strong 1NT hand as the concealed declarer.
The 'Gerber' convention (a 4♣ ace-ask) has the same JOB as Blackwood, namely to —	count the partnership's Aces before slam — Gerber (4♣) is an ace-asking convention, like Blackwood — it counts Aces for slam, typically after a notrump opening.
A big benefit of a transfer is —	the strong hand (opener) becomes declarer, hiding it from the opening lead — Transfers put the strong 1NT hand as declarer, so the opening lead comes up to the strength and stays concealed.

15. Slam Bidding & Judgment

⌂ Question (fold →)	Answer
Before bidding slam you should check you're NOT missing —	two cashing Aces (or an Ace and a fast loser) — If opponents can cash two quick tricks (often two Aces), slam fails — so you check for missing Aces first.
If Blackwood shows you're off TWO Aces, you should —	sign off below slam — opponents can cash two tricks — Off two Aces, the opponents can cash two quick tricks, so you sign off below slam.
Reaching a good slam and STOPPING out of a bad one are —	both signs of excellent judgment — Great pairs both reach the makeable slams AND avoid the bad ones — judgment cuts both ways.
Why can bidding a slam you can't make be a big MISTAKE?	You lose a penalty AND miss the safe game bonus — A failed slam costs a penalty and forfeits the certain game — a double loss, so slams need real justification.
A 'small slam' commits you to winning —	12 of the 13 tricks — A small slam is a 6-level contract — you must win 12 of the 13 tricks.
The overall lesson of slam bidding is —	extra reward comes with extra risk, so investigate before you leap — Slams offer big bonuses but demand precision — investigate fit and controls before committing to the higher level.
A common cause of a BAD slam is —	counting points but forgetting to check controls (Aces) — Bidding slam on point count alone — without confirming controls — is a classic way to reach an unmakeable slam.
Beyond points, slams especially need —	controls: Aces and Kings to avoid losing early tricks — Slams need controls (Aces, then Kings) so opponents can't cash two quick tricks; raw points aren't enough.
If exploring slam reveals a problem (a missing control), the disciplined action is —	stop in game rather than gamble the slam — If your slam try uncovers a weakness, discipline says stop in the safe game rather than gamble.
A slam bid on 'power' (huge HCP) differs from one on 'shape' (fit + void) because —	shape slams can make on fewer points thanks to ruffing — Slams come in two flavors: high-card power, or distributional power (fit + shortness); the latter makes on fewer points.
Slam decisions reward partners who have —	described their hands well earlier so they can trust the picture — Accurate earlier bidding builds a trustworthy picture, which is exactly what slam decisions depend on.
Why is trust between partners essential in slam auctions?	Neither sees the other's cards, so each must rely on the other's described values — Slam auctions push to the limit, so each partner must trust that the other's bids accurately described their hand.
The single question every slam decision must answer is —	'can we take 12 tricks and are we safe from two fast losers?' — Before any slam, confirm you can win 12 tricks AND that opponents can't cash two quick tricks — tricks and controls together.
Slam bidding is a case where	combine strength AND controls AND fit — judgment, not just points — Reaching good slams blends point strength, control count, and fit quality — it's

partners must —	judgment, not a single number.
Blackwood (4NT) is used in slam auctions to —	count the partnership's Aces — Blackwood asks how many Aces partner holds so you can judge whether slam is safe or you must stop.
If Blackwood shows you're off ONE Ace, you should usually —	stop in a small slam or game (not bid grand) — Missing one Ace rules out a grand slam; a small slam may still be safe since only one fast loser exists.
A void opposite partner's Ace-less suit is valuable because —	you don't need high cards there — you'll ruff — A void covers a suit where you lack honors — you simply ruff losers, which is why shape can power a slam.
A strong trump fit plus extra shape (a void) increases slam chances because —	shortness lets you ruff losers and needs fewer high cards — A void plus a good trump fit lets you ruff losers, so slams can make on fewer HCP when the shape is powerful.
The safest time to explore slam is when —	you have a known strong fit and control-showing room in the auction — A known fit plus bidding room to show controls is the ideal setting to investigate slam safely.
Roughly how many combined HCP typically suggests a small slam?	About 33 — About 33 combined HCP (plus the right controls) is a common guideline for a small slam.
A slam built on a great trump fit plus a side void can make on —	fewer high-card points than a flat slam, because ruffing wins tricks — Distributional power (a strong fit + shortness) lets a slam make on fewer HCP than a balanced slam, thanks to ruffing tricks.
The Vanderbilt's advice on slams: 'Be bold, but count first.' This means —	aspire to slams, yet confirm the tricks and controls before bidding them — Aim high, but verify the tricks and controls — boldness works in slam bidding only when it's backed by counting.
A grand slam (7-level) should be bid only when —	you can count 13 tricks (or are as close to certain as possible) — A grand slam needs all 13 tricks; bid it only when you can essentially count them, since one loser fails it.
A 'cue bid' on the way to slam typically shows —	a control (an Ace or void) in that suit — A cue bid shows a control (Ace or void) in the bid suit, helping partner judge whether slam is safe.
Partnership 'judgment' means —	reading all the clues (fit, controls, extras) to make the best decision, not obeying one rule — Judgment is weighing fit, controls, shape, and strength together — rules guide you, but judgment makes the final call.

16. Putting It Together

⌘ Question (fold →)	Answer
If you must choose between two lines of play, you should —	pick the one with the better odds (or that combines chances) — When lines compete, choose the higher-percentage one — and, when possible, a line that combines several chances.
On defense, your goal is to —	take enough tricks to set (defeat) the contract, working with partner — Defenders cooperate — via leads and signals — to take enough tricks to defeat declarer's contract.
Across a whole deal, the three things you keep COUNTING are —	points (to bid), tricks (to plan), and the cards as they fall — Counting threads through the whole game: points to bid well, tricks to plan the play, and cards as they fall to place the hidden ones.
The three phases of a bridge deal, in order, are —	the auction (bidding), the play, and scoring — Every deal goes: the auction to set the contract, the play of the 13 tricks, then scoring the result.
Why is bridge called a game of INCOMPLETE information?	You never see the other three hands, so you deduce from bids and cards — You see only your 13 cards (and dummy in play), so bridge rewards deducing the hidden hands from every clue.
A finesse, a long suit, and a squeeze are all ways to —	win extra tricks in the play — Finesses, long-suit establishment, and squeezes are all techniques for winning the extra tricks a contract needs.
Before bidding, you count points; before playing, you should —	make a plan (count winners or losers) — Just as you count before bidding, you plan before playing — counting winners or losers and mapping the route to the contract.
The order to develop your OWN tricks vs let opponents develop theirs is —	a timing race — usually set up your tricks first while keeping control — Much of play is a timing race: develop your tricks first while retaining control so opponents can't cash theirs.
When bidding and play work together, declarer should —	let the auction's clues guide the play (who holds what) — The auction reveals a lot about the opponents' hands; a good declarer uses those clues to guide finesses and plans.
The most important attitude for improving at bridge is —	curiosity and reviewing hands to learn, without shame over mistakes — Improvement comes from curiosity and reviewing deals to learn — mistakes are lessons, not failures to hide.
Good bidding aims to reach —	a contract you can make at a level that earns the bonuses you deserve — The goal of bidding is the makeable contract at the level (game/slam) that captures the bonuses your cards deserve.
Bidding, play, and defense are unified by one idea:	winning tricks — everything you do serves that goal — Every part of bridge — the bids, the play, the defense — ultimately serves one aim: winning the tricks you need.
The reason to keep your bids DISCIPLINED (matching your values) is —	partner relies on your bids being accurate to make good decisions — Disciplined bidding keeps your descriptions accurate so partner can trust them and decide well — the heart of partnership.
Across a whole deal, the single most important partnership skill	communication — describing hands accurately and reading partner — Bridge is a partnership game; clear communication in bidding and signals in

is —	defense is the master skill.
The best players treat a LOSING finesse or set contract as —	a normal part of a game of odds, learning for next time — Bridge is a game of odds; a well-judged play can still lose. Good players focus on decisions, not single results.
Auntie Audrey's final word: 'Bridge is a conversation you win together.' This captures —	that partnership, communication, and teamwork are the essence of the game — Bridge is fundamentally cooperative — a conversation between partners that, played well, you win together.
Counting — points, tricks, and the suits as they fall — is important because it —	turns guessing into knowing across the whole deal — Counting runs through the whole game — points to bid, tricks to plan, cards to place — replacing guesswork with knowledge.
What makes bridge a lifelong game to learn?	It blends math, logic, memory, and teamwork with endless variety — Bridge combines odds, logic, memory, and partnership across endlessly varied deals — which is why players learn for life.
A part-score, a game, and a slam differ mainly in —	how many tricks they require and how big a bonus they earn — Higher contracts require more tricks and earn bigger bonuses — part-score, game, then slam.
Bridge partnerships work best when partners —	support and trust each other, especially after a bad result — The best partnerships stay supportive and trusting — bad boards happen, and blame only weakens the team.
The single biggest habit that improves a bridge player is —	STOP and make a plan before playing to the first trick — Across bidding, play, and defense, pausing to plan before you act is the habit that most improves results.
When declarer and defenders both play well, the result usually turns on —	small edges: a count, a signal read, a percentage line — Between good players, deals turn on small edges — an accurate count, a well-read signal, the better percentage line.
A well-chosen opening lead reflects —	thinking about the whole deal from the auction, not just your own cards — Strong defenders choose the opening lead by picturing the whole deal from the bidding, not by habit alone.
Whisp and Bram's partnership works because they —	communicate honestly, trust the plan, and enjoy the game together — The DealTales cast models great partnership: honest communication, trust in the shared plan, and joy in playing together.
A hallmark of an expert partnership is that they —	trust each other's bids and signals and rarely surprise one another — Expert pairs build reliable agreements so bids and signals mean what they should — the partnership acts as one.

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