

Bridge Teachers for Youth

Beginning Bridge Outline (1 hour classes)

A Guideline for New Teachers

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A teaching methodology guideline and script for bridge players to use in conjunction with Bridge: A Path to Math or other bridge curricula. This is not intended as a stand-alone document.

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CLASS	TITLE	TOPICS
Day 1	Mechanics of Bridge	The deck, Suits, Order of Cards, Deal, Sort, No Trumps, Tricks
Day 2	Trumps	Review, Trumps, Fit, Declarer, Dummy, Opening Lead
Day 3	Scoring	Contract, Book, Minor Suits, Major Suits, Trick Points, Game Points and Setting Points, High Card Points,
Day 4	Bidding	High Card Points, Opening the Bidding
Day 5	Bidding	Review, Rank of Suits, Responding to an Opening bid of 1♣ or 1♦
Day 6	Bidding	Review, Responding to an Opening bid of 1♥ or 1♠
Day 7	Play of the Hand in Suits	Basic suit play. Counting Trumps
Day 8	Play of the Hand in Suits	Basic suit play, Finesse
Day 9	Bidding	Opening NT, Responding to NT, Jacoby Transfers
Day 10	Bidding	Stayman
Day 11	Play of the Hand in NT	Basic NT play
Day 12	Play of the Hand in NT	Basic NT play, Setting up a Long Suit
Day 13	Overcalling	Rules to Overcall
Day 14	Opening Leads	Rules and theory for leading
Day 15	Practice	Practice Play and Bidding
Day 16	Game	

Day 1 Mechanics of Bridge

Supplies: Cards, duplicate table mats, name tags, card holders (for ages 12 and under), hand out of the bridge terms they have learned by the end of the lesson

Introductions: Introduce yourself and bridge, the deck of cards and show how the cards are played in bridge.

General notes about teaching bridge: Repetition is good. Saying phrases and key concepts, and doing exercises multiple times helps students remember. You can never say a key concept too often. Remember there are three key ways people learn; verbally, visually and by doing (no those aren't the technical terms). Verbally is by listening to you talk. Visually is by looking at the board or the cards in front of them. Doing is the actual physical completion of an exercise. You may also find that some people learn by writing what you are saying even when they have notes available. The physical act of writing it down helps them remember. As much as you can, try to hit all learning styles to help the students. Repeat, Repeat, Repeat. Key phrases, concepts, points etc. Repetition helps them remember and it keys them into what is most important.

Introduce yourself and the game of bridge. Have a deck of cards at each table and a deck of cards at the head of the class.

Hi I'm Patty Tucker. I learned to play bridge when I was 11 and I've been playing bridge 47 years...and yes...that makes me *very* old. But I love bridge and it's still the best game I know. Every time I play I learn something new! (*Tell the students a brief history of bridge as you get them settled in*). 'Bridge is a grandchild of a game called Whist which first started being played in Europe in the 1700's. Whist evolved to a game called 'bid whist', then in the late 1890's to 'bridge', and around 1910 to 'contract bridge'. Between 1910 and 1930 some really smart people (financiers, lawyers, doctors, even spies) decided to add some ideas and rules to make the game more fun and more challenging and the game they created is basically the game we play today. There are a lot of rules and a lot to learn but those smart people, almost everything they did, was to make the game more exciting!

Introduce the deck of cards.

So let's get started. (*Hold up your deck of cards*) Bridge is played with a regular deck of playing cards, minus the jokers. There are four suits (*hold up a card of each suit as you name it*) spades, hearts, diamonds and clubs. If we have 52 cards and only four suits, then $52/4 = 13$. There are 13 cards in each suit. The strongest cards are the (*hold up each honor card as you name it*) Ace,

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King, Queen, Jack and then the 10, 9, 8.....etc. all the way down to the 2 which is the lowest card.

Tell them how to deal them and how to sort the cards.

One person at each table take your deck of cards and deal them out, one at a time, in a clockwise rotation until all the cards are gone. If we have 52 cards and four people, then $52/4 = 13$. Each person should have 13 cards. Those 13 cards are called your 'hand'. Each of you take your 13 cards and sort them into suits. (*Hold up a sorted hand as you talk*). Put all of yours spades together, your hearts, your diamonds, and your clubs; arrange each of the cards within the suits highest to lowest. Separate your red and black suits. That's not a rule but it makes it easier to see all of your cards and sort correctly if you arrange them this way. When you play bridge the highest card in the suit being played wins the trick. If you have a card in that suit you must play it, that's called following suit. If you do not have a card in the suit being played you can play any other card in any other suit, that's called discarding. So, high card wins, if you can follow suit you must, if you can't follow suit you can discard anything you like.

Tell them what is involved in bridge and then how to start the play in bridge.

There are three parts of bridge; the bidding (that's the hardest), the play and the scoring. We are going to start by looking at how to play bridge. In bridge the person across the table from you is your partner, the people to either side of you are your opponents. Your partner is your best friend right now! The bidding determines who plays a card first, but for right now I'm going to do it.

Teach them how to keep the cards duplicate style and that each four cards played is a trick.

I want the person sitting North to lead a card and place it face up directly in front of you. (*Right now there are some players who are going to start playing and throw the card in the middle of the table*). Everyone just hold on a minute. Don't start playing all of your cards...I'm going to show you a special way to keep your cards that we use when we are learning. Keep your card directly in front of you face up. Now, East, you must play a card in the same suit that was led. If you can't play a card higher, you should play your lowest card in the suit that was led. Now, South, you play a card, keeping it in front of you....remember North is your partner. Now West you play a card. Those four cards are called a trick. Each of you has thirteen cards...so there are 13 tricks in each hand of bridge. We use the word hand to describe two things. The cards you hold are your 'hand'. The act of playing out all of our cards until they are gone in those thirteen tricks is called a 'hand of bridge'.

Ok, keeping your cards directly in front of you; of those four cards which player played the highest card? That person 'won the trick' for him and his partner. Turn the card in front of you

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face down with the length pointing towards the side that one the trick. (*You will have to go around to each table and show them how this works as you are talking*).

Tell them how the rest of the play goes and that they should have thirteen tricks between the number they won and the number the opponents won.

The person who won the trick leads to the next trick. You can play any card you like and any suit you like. Play until all the cards are gone. If you can't follow suit you can 'discard' (throw away) a card in any other suit. Generally you'll throw away a small card that you don't expect to win a trick.

When you've finished playing just wait a minute before you 'scrunch' the cards back up so I can show you something. (*It'll take them 5-7 minutes to play the hand*)

All done? (*clap with enthusiasm*) Congratulations! You've just played your first hand of bridge! What you just played is a type of hand we call a "No trump hand", the type of hand where the card that wins is the highest card played in the suit that was led. If you count the number of tricks you won and the number of tricks the opponents won; you'll find that those two numbers add to 13...the number of tricks available to win in each hand of bridge.

Discuss what cards win in a No Trump hand.

If you turn your hand back over and look, I think you'll find that the side that had a lot of aces, kings, queens and jacks won; we call those 'honor cards'. But I bet you can see a time when someone won a trick with a small card. Maybe they led a small card, but since no one at your table had any of the suit but them, they were able to win the trick. In No Trump, high cards win tricks and sometimes small cards when you have long suits.

Practice.

Let's do that again. Play another hand. But this time I want East to deal and South to lead the first card. (*Let them relax play and have fun. It will get kind of noisy. Go around the room see if anyone needs help*)

Review.

You've learned an awful lot today. (*Distribute your handout*) We learned the names of the suits, the strength of the cards, partner, opponent, what a trick is, how many cards in a suit, in your hand and how many tricks in a hand of bridge!

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Typical things you might run into:

- *Some kids will want to play counter-clockwise.*
- *For some reason Kings & Jacks pose a problem.*
- *Many kids have trouble with deciphering which is higher.*
- *Some children see an Ace as a '1'.*
- *Some don't really know that 9 is higher than 7 etc.*
- *Spades and clubs are hard for some to distinguish*

Things you should never say:

- *Why did you do that (instead say, I think you might not remember that.....)*
- *Don't you see that your partner won that trick (Instead say, remember that Joe's your partner, so if he's winning the trick, it's the same as you winning it. Save your big one to try and win one later)*
- *Why would you play your Jack under their Ace? Play your two instead. (Instead say, remember that the Ace isn't a '1' so your Jack won't win if you play it. Wouldn't you like to play a small card instead, something that you don't think will ever win a trick)*
- *Why didn't you play your Ace! (Instead say, did you remember that the Ace is the highest card? You could have played the Ace and won the trick if you had wanted to. They might tell you they were 'saving it'. Some kids don't like playing out their big ones until the end. I've tried to explain over the years....but best to just let them lose a couple and then they'll quit)*

Day 2 Trumps

Supplies: Cards, duplicate table mats, name tags, card holders (for ages 12 and under), hand out defining trumps, fit, declarer, dummy and opening lead. I sometimes have a hand out that's an easy quiz for them to take home.

Review the previous lesson

Last week we learned a lot of new information. Let's see what we remember. *(Call out questions and as the kids raise their hands call on different kids each time. Never call on someone who isn't volunteering to answer. If no hands go up, answer your own question. If someone gets an answer wrong, then say something like, 'no, I askedrepeat your question.'* *(By repeating your question you're kind of giving them an out. I.e. It's not that they didn't know the answer, they just didn't hear your question correctly).*

Questions you can ask:

- How many cards in a deck?
- What are the four suits?
- What is a trick?
- How do we use the word hand? *(remember there are two correct answers)*
- What is the highest/strongest card?
- What is the lowest card?
- Which cards do we call honors? **(after they name them AKQJ this is a good time to tell them we also call a 10 an honor card even though it's not very big)**
- How do you win a trick?

Introduce the concept of 'trumps'

That was great! Today I'm going to tell you about something called 'trumps'. It's a new way to win tricks. It's like having 13 wildcards! Sometimes in the bidding in bridge a certain suit will become 'trumps'. You don't know bidding yet so I'll explain how it happens later. But when a suit is chosen as trumps in the bidding, the smallest trump is bigger than the highest card in any other suit. You still have to follow suit if you can, but if you can't follow suit you can choose to trump, but you don't have to. So if hearts were trumps and North led the Ace of spades, if I didn't have any spades I could play the two of hearts and win that trick. The only way someone could take it away from me is if they also didn't have any spades and played a higher heart than mine.

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Play out a hand with either diamonds or clubs as trumps (reviewing what they learned in Lesson 1 about how the cards are dealt and sorted and that they have a partner).

So let's try this. Deal out the cards, make sure you have thirteen, sort into suits, highest to lowest, separate your red and black suits.....I'm going to choose for Clubs (*never pick hearts or spades because of the other games*) to be trumps! So now the lowest club is higher than a high card in any other suit. South I want you to lead. You can lead any card you like and any suit. Remember to play clockwise and remember that the person across the table is your partner....don't trump their Ace! They'll get really testy. Remember how to keep your cards in front of you. Let's play this out and when you finish don't scrunch your cards up I'll need to show you something.

Tell them what cards win tricks when you have a trump suit

Ok if you look at your and partner's hand; what cards won tricks? I think you'll see that you won tricks with high cards, with trumps and maybe with small cards in long suits.

Ask them which side had the most trumps.

Who had the most trumps between their two hands? I bet the partnership that had the most trumps took most of the tricks.

Introduce the concept of a 'fit'

Did you have 8 or more trumps between your two hands? I bet it was really easy to take tricks if you had 8 or more cards in the trumps suit between your two hands. Finding a suit in which you and partner have 8 or more cards is called a 'fit'. That's what you'd like to have.

Introduce the concept of bidding.

The bidding is a conversation between you and your partner trying to tell each other how strong your hand is...how many Aces, Kings, Queens and Jacks you have....and what your long suits are, so that you can decide what suit you'd like to be trumps.

Introduce the concept of declarer and dummy.

In the bidding one side is going to have the privilege of naming what suit is trumps. The person who names trumps becomes what we call declarer and his partner becomes dummy and lays his hand in rows, face-up and declarer gets to tell dummy which cards to play. In Fact, dummy may not play a card unless declarer tells him to. So whoever declarer is plays the hand, the person to declarer's left leads the first card, we call that the opening lead, and declarer's partner is dummy and his hand goes face up on the table. Let's try it.

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Practice

In bridge the bidding determines who names trumps, but this time I'll do it! We'll make Diamonds trumps. South will be declarer, West leads the first card and North is Dummy.

Review

We've learned a lot so far. Probably more than you realize. We've learned about trumps, a fit, declarer, dummy and opening leads. Next week? Scoring!

Day 3 Scoring

Supplies: Cards, duplicate table mats, name tags, card holders (for ages 12 and under), handouts showing high card points, minor and major suits, trick score, bonus scores and setting points.

Review the previous lesson

So far we've really talked about some new things. Let's see what we remember. *(Call out questions and as the kids raise their hands call on different kids each time. Never call on someone who isn't volunteering to answer. If no hands go up, answer your own question. If someone gets an answer wrong, then say something like, 'no, I askedrepeat your question.'* *(By repeating your question you're kind of giving them an out. i.e. It's not that they didn't know the answer, they just didn't hear your question correctly).*

Questions you can ask:

- How many cards in a deck?
- What are the four suits?
- What is a trick?
- How do we use the word 'hand'? *(remember there are two correct answers)*
- What is the highest/strongest card?
- What is the lowest card?
- Which cards do we call honors? *(see if anyone remembers that a ten is an honor)*
- How do you win a trick? *(by playing the highest card in the suit led or by playing the highest trump)*
- What is a trump? *(a suit decided in the bidding that will win any trick unless someone plays a higher card in the trump suit- it's like a wildcard)*
- Who is declarer?
- What is a fit?
- Who is dummy?

Introduce Scoring

You don't have to understand everything about scoring yet....but I need to tell you a little because all of the bidding is built/based on how the scoring works.

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Introduce the word 'Contract'

In the bidding one partnership is going to 'bid' higher than the other side and win the contract...the right to name trumps. In that bid is going to be a number and a suit (or no trump). You might say something like 3♣ and then the next three players say Pass –Pass –Pass. That 3♣ bid, after the three passes, becomes the contract. Now right now you don't know how to bid and you don't know how that happens...just trust me. So clubs would be trumps and you'd think that partnership would have to take three tricks wouldn't you? But ...oh no....that would be too easy.

Introduce 'book'.

Those smart people I told you about the first day decided to do some tricky things to make the game more interesting. The first thing they realized is that if a partnership got to name trumps they had a tremendous advantage in taking tricks. So they decided that they wouldn't get any points for the first six tricks they took. Those first six tricks are called 'book'. You only get points for the tricks you take after book.

The bid is a contract; an expectation that if clubs are trumps we can take 9 of the 13 tricks. If you take 9 tricks, your side gets points. If you don't take 9 tricks the opponents get points.

Introduce Minor and Major suits

They divided the four suits into 'major suits' and some 'minor suits'. The major Suits are Hearts and spades. The minor suits are Clubs and Diamonds.

Introduce trick score

If your side names trumps, then for every trick you take above book, if a major suit is trumps you get 30 points. If a minor suit is trumps you only get 20 points. Well...duh....you want a major suit to be trumps if you can because you get more points! No Trump is kind of squirrely. You get 40 points for the first trick above book and then 30 points for every trick after that....but NT is much harder because it's just high cards.

Introduce the concept of game and bonuses

Well, for a while this worked pretty well and they liked the game, but then they realized it was still too easy. The people that were lucky enough to have high cards and trumps took trick after trick. Borrrinnggg! So they made another change (just to make it more interesting, strategic and challenging). They came up with the concept of bonuses for bidding higher. If you and partner are willing to bid higher 3NT- 4♠- 4♥- 5♣- 5♦ (if you add up the trick score, what you'll find is that each of those trick scores equal 100 points or more) – and if you make it we'll give

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you a BIG bonus; but if you go down you get no points and your opponents get points. If you decide to bid at the six or seven level....your bonus is even bigger, but that's really hard!

Now the game's interesting. That's why when you bid you are going to be trying to tell your partner what your long suits are (so you can pick what suit should be trumps) and how strong your hand is (so you can decide whether to go for that bonus or stay low and safe).

Introduce high card points.

So how do you tell your partner how strong your hand is? Around 1915 this man came up with a way. He assigned a numerical value to each of the honor cards. He said for every Ace you count 4 points, a King is 3, a Queen is 2 and a Jack is 1. If you add those numbers up you get 10 points. $10 \times 4 \text{ suits} = 40 \text{ points}$. There are 40 high card points in a hand of bridge. If you and partner want to try for the bonus you need around 25 or 26 points between your two hands to try for bidding game in a major or NT and about 28 or 29 points for game in a minor suit.

Practice counting points

So let's deal out some hands and count our points. Everyone after you count your points tell everyone at your table and add them up. If you don't get to 40....someone needs to recount!

Practice and Play

Shuffle the cards and do it again but this time the partnership that has the most points gets to name trumps and the person with the most points is going to be declarer. Go ahead: shuffle, deal, sort your cards, count your points, add them up, see what side has the most and let's name trumps and play the hand out.

Review

I know this was a lot to learn but you did great! Next lesson we're going to start learning how to bid....then the fun begins!

Day 4 Bidding

Supplies: Cards, duplicate table mats, name tags, card holders (for ages 12 and under), handouts showing rules for opening the bidding.

Review the previous lesson

If you remember, last session we talked about scoring. Remember that the bidding is driven by the way the scoring works. You get more points if a major suit is trumps, so the bidding is designed to give you the best chance to find a 'fit' in a major suit. Who remembers what a fit is? The bidding is really the hardest part about bridge because it's like learning a whole new language.

Introduce Bidding

The bidding is a conversation. If I called 'Mary' (use the name of one of your students) on the phone, she answered and I said 'hi, this is Patty'...she wouldn't hang up on me! We're going to talk back and forth. I might say. "I was thinking about lunch. Do you want to go with me?" *(Make up a small conversation....what you want to get to is that, the conversation ends when neither of you has anything else important to say, or when your plans are made).* If you can remember that every time you bid you are trying to tell partner something he didn't already know and that he needs to know about your long suits and your points.

The dealer is the first person who has a chance to talk about his hand. You deal the cards, count your cards, sort into suits and count your points. If you don't have at least 12 points you say the word 'Pass'. That is code for 'I don't have 12 points'. Then the next person in a clockwise rotation has a chance to bid. The first person to have 12 points and say something other than pass is called 'Opener' or the 'Opening Bidder'.

Here are the rules for opening in a suit. We'll talk about opening NT later. *(Pass out the hand out for What Should I Open?).* The first thing you look for is 'Do I have 12 points or more?' If the answer is 'yes' the next thing is "do I have a five-card or longer major?" If the answer is 'yes', open 1♥ or 1♠ whichever is your five-card suit. If you are lucky enough to have two five-card majors, open the highest in rank first – spades. You can remember that by 'High-Five' (do a high-five).

If you have 12 or more points and do not have a five-card major you still want to tell partner you have some points so you will open either 1♣ or 1♦. The rules for opening a minor can get a little squirrely, but for right now you open your longest minor or if you have:

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- Five diamonds and five clubs; open 1♦, High-five
- Four diamonds and four clubs; open 1♦. You can remember this because a diamond has four points.
- Three diamonds and three clubs open 1♣. You can remember this because a club has three petals.

Practice

Have them deal out hands, count their points and then each person in turn, one at a time, announce the number of points they have and, if they were dealer, what they would open. Do this two or three times until they feel comfortable with what suit they would open. *(At this point they are going to start getting impatient and want to know what comes next. Adults could do this for 20-30 minutes easily; kids will want to go forward quickly)*

If you find that you have lots of time left, or if the kids have this down quickly, let them take the last hand they dealt and let them play a hand of mini-bridge like you did the first couple of days. Let the side with the most points name trumps and decide whether or not they want to try and take enough tricks to get the bonus for game.

Review

Next time we're going to talk about what to do *after* your partner opens. When you go home practice dealing out hands, counting points and deciding what you would open. Remember you always want to look for a major suit first and you must have at least 12 points to open.

Day 5 Bidding

Supplies: Cards, duplicate table mats, name tags, card holders (for ages 12 and under), bidding boxes, handouts showing rules for responding to an opening bid in a minor suit.

Review the previous lesson

If you remember last session we talked about the rules for opening the bidding. Remember that the bidding is driven by the way the scoring works. You get more points if a major suit is trumps, so the bidding is designed to give you the best chance to find a 'fit' in a major suit. Who remembers what a fit is? The bidding is really the hardest part about bridge because it's like learning a whole new language.

Side note: the rules for responding and rebids for opener and responder are in the text Bridge: A Path to Math (and in the handout I gave you). You will tell the kids the rules. You will tell them they have to memorize them. However, the best time spent in your actual lecture is going to be in the 'sense' of bridge. What your purpose is, the logic behind the bidding, the feeling of how good their hands are and the inferential information that the bidding gives them. Any of the kids can look at the handout and figure out his bid...what they won't get or see unless you tell them is the logical progression and information the bidding gives them. Spend more time on the 'why' than the 'do'.

One thing we haven't talked about yet is something called the 'rank' of the suits. This is only important in the bidding. In bridge, clubs is the lowest, then diamonds, then hearts, spades and No trump is the highest. One way to help you remember is that the suits are alphabetical: **C**lubs-**D**iamonds-**H**earts-**S**pades. (Say and/or write CDHS). Let's look at your box on the table. **(Open the bidding boxes and show them how they work).** As you see, there is every bid you can make in bridge in that box. Remember that, after three passes, the number and suit of the last bid becomes trumps and the number of tricks you have to win above book to get points. If you look closely you'll see that if you bid 1♣ then you still have left in your box one of every other suit. So you can bid any of the other suits at the one level. But if you bid 1♠ then all of the other one of a suit bids are gone. You'd have to go to the two level to talk about any of those other suits. You're going to learn the rules about responding today, but what I want you to remember is that with weak hands you don't want to get the bidding very high unless partner has a really really good hand.

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If you can remember a few things, kind of drill them into your memory, and then the bidding becomes much simpler.

- 1) You are always trying to tell your partner two pieces of information. What are they?
 - a) How strong your hand is
 - b) How many cards you have in your suits
- 2) What are your priorities based, on how the scoring works?
 - a) Major as trumps
 - b) No Trump (*yes you get a few more points for NT, but it's soo much harder*)
 - c) Minor as trumps – your last resort
- 3) How high do you want to bid?
 - a) Less than 25 points between your hands...low and safe
 - b) 25+ points between your two handsgame somewhere (*remember more for a minor game, about 28 or so*)
 - c) 32+ points between your two hands....SLAM!

If you can focus on those three questions and goals the bidding kind of falls into place for you.

So here we go. You deal the cards. You sort your hand. You count your points. Dealer gets the first opportunity to open the bidding.

After **your partner** opens the bidding, you become 'Responder'. The good news is responder only has to have 6 points to bid!

What you choose to bid is based on what suit partner opened. (***Always talk about a minor opening first***)

Responding to an Opening Bid in a Minor Suit

If partner opens a minor suit (clubs or diamonds), then the first thought should be 'could we have a fit in a major suit?' How many cards would you need in a major suit for it to be possible for you to have a fit, eight between your two hands? (***Wait here a little while to see if someone can answer. If not, say 'Remember if partner opened a major suit they would have to have five, so how many cards in a major could opener have? Wait a minute again. If no answer***

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from the kids, answer yourself. Either write $4+4=8$ on the board, or hold up four fingers in each hand drawing them together).

So here are your rules. Go through the handout's rules for responding to an opening bid in a minor suit.

Okay. So if partner opens one club or one diamond and you have six points and you have a four card or longer major.....you would bid one of your major suit; one heart or one spade.

That bid is code for "Partner, I have at least six points and at least four cards in this major suit". Opener is then going to look and see if he has a fit for your major suit and, if so, he is going to 'raise' your suit by bidding it back to you. For instance two hearts or two spades saying "If you have four cards in this suit we have a fit since I also have four. Let's play this suit as trumps."

Then you and partner will decide how high to bid. Whether or not to go for the bonus - 'bidding game'.

If partner doesn't have four cards in your major suit, he will either bid another suit to see if you match him, or bid NT or maybe even bid his minor suit again.

Play Practice hands.

Review

If partner opens a minor suit (clubs or diamonds), then the first thought should be 'could we have a fit in a major suit?' How many cards would you need in a major suit for it to be possible for you to have a fit, eight between your two hands?

Okay. So if partner opens one club or one diamond and you have six points, what is the first thing you look for?

Day 6 Bidding

Supplies: Cards, duplicate table mats, name tags, card holders (for ages 12 and under), handouts showing rules for responding to an opening bid in a major suit.

Review the previous lesson

If your partner opens one of a minor suit; what's the first thing you look for? 6 points

What's the second thing you look for? Four or more cards in a major suit

What's the last thing you look for? A minor suit fit

Remember:

- 1) You are always trying to tell your partner two pieces of information. What are they?
 - a) How strong your hand is
 - b) How many cards you have in your suits
- 2) What are your priorities based on how the scoring works?
 - a) Major as trumps
 - b) No Trump
 - c) Minor as trumps – your last resort
- 3) How high do you want to bid?
 - a) Less than 25 points between your hands...low and safe
 - b) 25+ points between your two handsgame somewhere
 - c) 32+ points between your two hands....SLAM!

Responding to an Opening Bid in a Major Suit

When partner opens a major suit the bidding is usually much easier. If partner opens a major suit, how many cards does he promise in that suit? (**Wait for an answer. If you don't get one tell them**) How many cards do you need for ya'll to have a fit? (**Wait for an answer. If you don't get one tell them**).

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The first thing you look for if partner opens a major suit is 'do I have six points', the second thing is 'do I have three or more cards in partner's major, a fit. If you have a fit you are generally going to tell partner that immediately, unless you have a really good hand.

So here are your rules. Go through the handout's rules for responding to an opening bid in a major suit.

Tell them....the fact that you raise partner shows a fit. The level at which you bid (how high you go) talks about the points in your hand.

Explain that when you don't have a good hand, you don't want to bid too high. That's why sometimes you just bid 1NT even though you have a long suit.

Also tell them that a new suit by responder is forcing. That their partner has to bid one more time when they bid a new suit.

Play Practice hands.

Review

If partner opens a major suit (hearts or spades), then the first thought should be 'could we have a fit in partner's major suit?' How many cards would you need in a major suit for it to be possible for you to have a fit, eight between your two hands?

Day 7 Playing a suit contract

Supplies: Cards, duplicate table mats, name tags, card holders (for ages 12 and under).

Review the previous lessons

Briefly go over the general idea in responding to an opening bid of a suit and how that changes whether a minor or major is opened.

General Note: by this time the kids are tired of listening to rules. They want to play. Let them deal the cards and play a hand or two. You are going to teach them some simple play techniques over the next two sessions but let them have lots of fun with this also. You can pre-duplicate some hands or let them do random hands. If random, when they hit hands that don't fit the rules they've learned yet, and they ask you, just tell them that they'll learn how to bid this hand later. Allow them a little leeway in their opening and responding bids. When they get it wrong, tell them what they forgot to remember. When they ask you what to bid, don't tell them. Instead ask them a series of questions that will help them remember or show them where to look in their notes. Telling them what to do or bid does not help them.

Playing a Suit Contract

There are lots of things you can learn that will help you play the hand out and take lots of tricks and over the next two classes I'm going to teach you a couple of things that will really help you. Right now though it's going to be really hard for you to take a lot of tricks. Don't get discouraged! You'll learn it all. Just do the best you can and as you learn new things and play more hands out....you'll do better every time.

One thing you won't be able to do very well at first is count your trumps, but that's one thing you should start practicing right away. If you are declarer and you and partner have decided on playing with a trump suit, you probably have eight of them between your two hands. The opponents only have five. You also probably have some high cards. You don't want the opponents to play trumps on your high cards and take the trick away from you. The way to keep the opponents from trumping your high cards/winners is to play trumps until they don't have any left; 'pull the opponent's trumps'. How many cards are there in each suit? Okay, so that's how many trumps there are in each hand of bridge. I want everyone at the table to keep track of how many trumps have been played. ***(Depending on your class and where your class is, you could make a game here with chocolate or stars or some very small prize and go around to tables at different times and ask them how many trumps have been played with stars for the table that knows)***

Beginning Bridge Outline (1 hour classes)

Ya'll deal out a hand and let's bid and play it!

Practice Playing Suit Contract Hands

Day 8 Playing a suit contract

Supplies: Cards, duplicate table mats, name tags, card holders (for ages 12 and under), one presorted deck for each table.

Review the previous lessons

Remind them the importance of counting trumps.

Finesse

I'm going to teach you a way to take more tricks. It's called a 'finesse'. Finesse is an opportunity to win a trick with a smaller card; even though there is a card higher in one of the opponent's hand.

Get them to actually lay out the cards on the table. I want you to take this deck of cards (the presorted deck) and each of you take one suit. Whoever has spades I want you to give the Big Ace, the queen and the 4 to North. Give the 5 & 3 & 2 to South. Give the King and 9 & 8 to West and the rest of the spades to East. East and West turn your cards face down on the table. North is the dummy. Now all of you South's, if you play your Ace do you think either East or West would play their King under your Ace? Turn over the West hand. West, if South leads the 2 and you saw the Ace in dummy would you play your King? Of course not. You wouldn't want to let the Ace win your King. South, what if you led the two and, when West played a low card, you played your Queen? Would the queen win the trick? And wouldn't your Ace still win a trick later? That's finesse.

Give them another example (with East/West as dummy), perhaps AKJ opposite 3 small cards. Make sure you point out that, if the queen is in the other hand, yes they would lose to the Queen, but that was always going to happen; just later instead of sooner.

Practice playing suit contracts.

Let them deal and play at least two hands.

Day 9 Bidding

Supplies: Cards, duplicate table mats, name tags, card holders (for ages 12 and under), bidding boxes, handouts showing rules for an opening bid in No Trump and Jacoby Transfers

Tell them about the difference between NT and Suit opening bids. That NT is very specific range of points so you know almost immediately whether or not bidding game is an option.

Use the 'Stop Light' poster as a reminder. Tell them when partner opens NT that the first thing to do is to add their points to the NT bidder's points and see where they stand.

There is a tendency by opener after these NT responses, whether it is a NT bid or Jacoby Transfer, to pass. It's almost an instantaneous reaction to pass responder's second bid. Stress to them that opener sometimes has a decision to make concerning what information responder has given him.

Bidding NT

Give them the rules for opening 1NT and show them how the math works so that they understand the stop light concept. Emphasize that the points for responding to an opening suit bid are not the same as the points for responding to a NT opening bid.

Give them the rules for responding to 1NT with a balanced hand. Review that information.

Now have them lay out a hand with the 2-3-4-5-6-7 of hearts the 2-3 spades the 3-4 diamonds and the 5-6-7 of clubs. Ask them how many tricks this hand could take if their partner opened a NT and they passed. Then ask them how many tricks they could take with this hand if hearts were trumps. ***You will probably be surprised at how many of the kids get this right away. Adults seem to find this a much harder concept than the youngsters.***

Now hand out the Jacoby Transfer rules. Tell them that, the weaker their hand, the more important it is to bid with a long major suit.

One way to approach the Jacoby Transfer second bid is to tell them that when you bid your major at your second opportunity to bid it is like bidding your major suit again, as you promised five cards in the major when you bid the Jacoby Transfer.

Practice Hands

Play at least three or four practice hands with Jacoby Transfers

Day 10 Bidding

Supplies: Cards, duplicate table mats, name tags, card holders (for ages 12 and under), bidding boxes, handouts showing rules for bidding Stayman

Review

Review the points for responding to NT with balanced hands. Remind them that Jacoby Transfers are used when you have a five-card or longer major suit.

Stayman seems to be much harder for the kids. One thing that is especially hard is when, after opener bids a major, the second bid by responder goes back to No Trump and the Opening bidder is supposed to know that they have the other major suit. That inferential step is very tough. It has to happen several times before they understand the concept. As there was in Jacoby Transfers, there is a tendency for opener to pass responder's second bid...whether he should or not.

The Stayman Convention

Hand out the rules for bidding Stayman. Go over the requirements to bid Stayman and the point ranges and inferences for the second bids by responder.

Practice Hands

Play at least three or four practice hands with Stayman.

Day 11 Play of the hand in a No Trump contract

Supplies: Cards, duplicate table mats, name tags, card holders (for ages 12 and under), bidding boxes

Introduce NT Play concepts

Layout a typical NT hand and show them how to look suit by suit and count their sure tricks. You will be unable to get too involved with them on a technical level. However you should review Finesse and show them how to play 'the high card from the hand with the shortest number first' when they are trying to take their tricks in their long suit. Avoid words like 'cash' unless you explain them. There are many words we use on a regular basis as bridge players that have no meaning for non-bridge players.

An example of a hand would be:

North	South
♠AJ43	♠KQ2
♥KJ93	♥QT2
♦J93	♦Q42
♣AQ	♣K973

Four spades, three hearts, no diamonds and three clubs...IF they play the high cards in the short suits first.

Another concept to explore would be to 'build your tricks, before you take your tricks'. An example would be playing hearts and making the opponents take their Ace before they take their tricks in clubs and spades.

There is a fear of letting the opponents win a trick if you don't have to and it's hard for them to see that if they lose the Ace of hearts they are really gaining tricks for their side, not losing control.

Practice hands

Let them bid and play three or four hands where NT is the contract, but that involved some examples of Stayman and Jacoby transfers

Day 12 Play of the hand in a No Trump contract

Supplies: Cards, duplicate table mats, name tags, card holders (for ages 12 and under), bidding boxes

Introduce NT Play concept of Setting up a Long Suit

Remind them of the Finesse and the concept in the last lesson of playing the high cards in the hand with the shortest number of cards first. Tell them that the latter is especially important when setting up a long suit.

An example of a hand would be:

North	South
♠AK43	♠Q2
♥KJ3	♥QT2
♦QJ93	♦42
♣Q8	♣KJ9763

When setting up clubs you should play the Queen and then the 8 to the King or Jack.

Practice hands

Let them bid and play three or four hands where NT is the contract, but that involved some examples of Stayman and Jacoby transfers

Day 13 Overcalling

Supplies: Cards, duplicate table mats, name tags, card holders (for ages 12 and under), bidding boxes

Introduce the Concept of Overcalling

This is really important to introduce before they play in their first game. Up to this time they have only had the two people with points bidding and (even though you have told them that they'll learn how to bid when the opponents open) this is the first time they'll get the real flavor of what the game is like. Give them a general rule. A five-card or longer suit, at least 10 points, a suit with two of the top three honors. 10-5-2. Then tell them that they can vary that rule.

A longer suit doesn't have to be as strong, and with more points your suit doesn't have to be as strong. With

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a longer and or stronger suit you could have less than 10 points.

Tell them that responding is basically the same as when partner opens the bidding

Practice hands

Let them deal, bid and practice as many hands as possible

Day 14 Opening Leads

Supplies: Cards, duplicate table mats, name tags, card holders (for ages 12 and under), bidding boxes

Opening Lead Concepts

Give them some basic opening leads.

- 1) Top of touching honors
- 2) Fourth from your longest and strongest
- 3) Top of two small cards
- 4) Low from an honor

Keep it very simple. The most common mistake they will make is trying to take their Ace on the opening lead even if they do not have the King. Ask them if they ever played 'War'. Almost all will say yes. Then say 'how did you like it when your opponent turned over a two and you turned over an Ace? Did you feel like you wasted your Ace? Don't you wish you had gotten a big card with it? They will all say yes or nod their heads. Tell them this is the same thing. When you lead your Ace you're just going to get a two and a three.....'**Aces are made to take Faces!**

Practice Hands

Deal and play as many hands as possible

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Day 15 Practice Playing

Supplies: Cards, duplicate table mats, name tags, card holders (for ages 12 and under), bidding boxes

Deal and play as many hands as possible.

Beginning Bridge Outline (1 hour classes)

Day 16 Game

Supplies: Cards, duplicate table mats, name tags, card holders (for ages 12 and under), bidding boxes

Run a duplicate game. Let the players write in their scores on each hand on the white board or put some white paper on a table. They love writing in their scores.

Have something for the winners. It can be as small as a special pen or a ribbon. But something. I usually do a ribbon for the winners and have 'bridge pencils' for everyone.

Diplomas are a great addition to the program here at the end. A recognition of how well they've done and what they've learned.