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Presents:

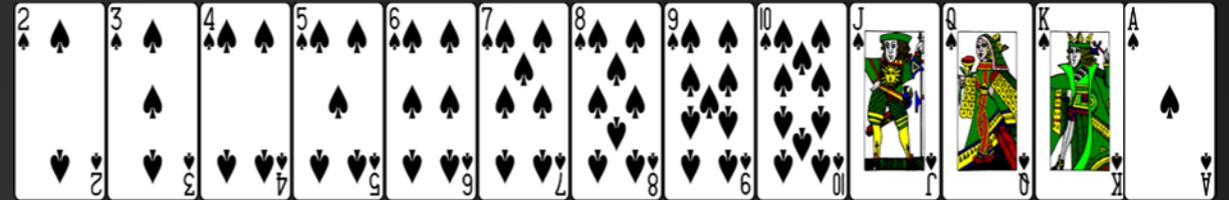
**Basic Card Play** in Bridge

# THE BASICS of CARD PLAY in BRIDGE

Bridge is played with the full standard deck of 52 cards. In this deck we have 4 Suits, and they are as follows:



Each Suit has 13 cards, and their ranks are as follows:



The Ace is the highest ranking card in each of the suits

#1

#2



#3



#4



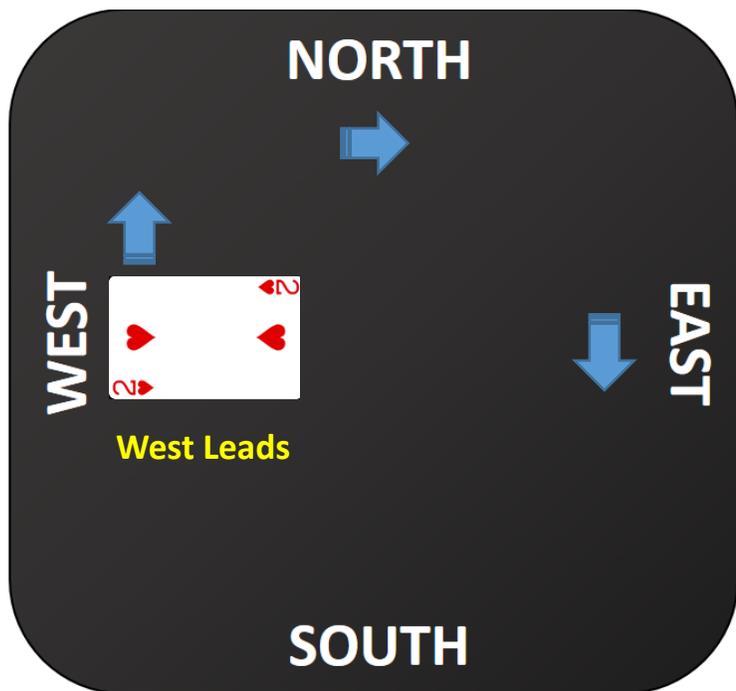
The Two (a.k.a. deuce) is the lowest ranking card in each of the suits

#13

etc ..



The object of the card play segment, in every Bridge hand, is to take as many **TRICKS** as possible. Each player starts with exactly 13 cards, so every Bridge hand has 13 **TRICKS** available for the taking. So what is a **TRICK**?



A trick starts with one player putting a card face up on the table. This is called **leading** a card. After the **Lead** there are some things we need to know....

**RULES:**

- Play always proceeds clockwise around the table until each player has played a card to the trick.
- All players must **Follow Suit** at all times.
  - So, when West leads the 2 of Hearts every player must play a Heart to this trick if they have one.
- When you have no cards left in the suit led, you can play any card from your hand to the trick.

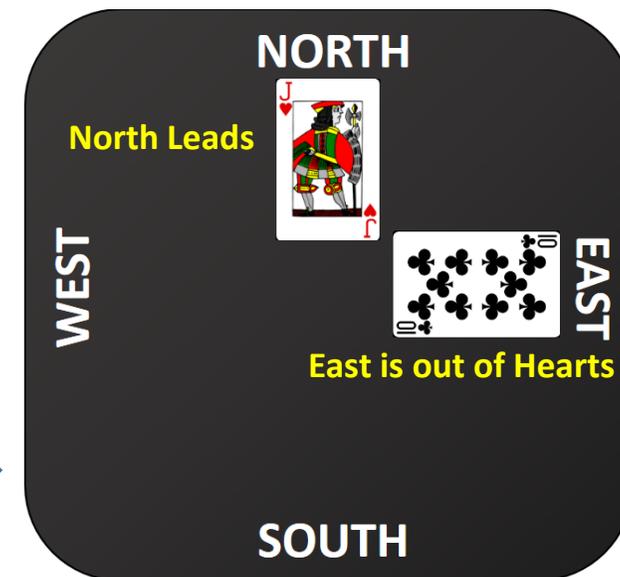
Some Terms to know:

**Lead** – to play the first card to a trick

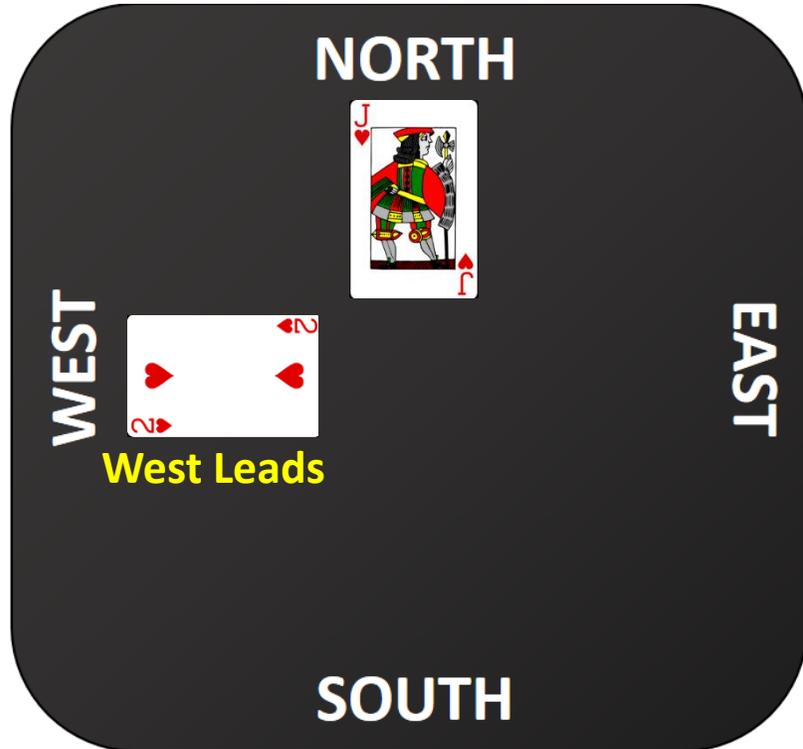
**Follow** – to play a card from the same suit led (we must do this at all times, if we have a card in the suit led)

**Discard** – to play a card different from the suit led to a trick.

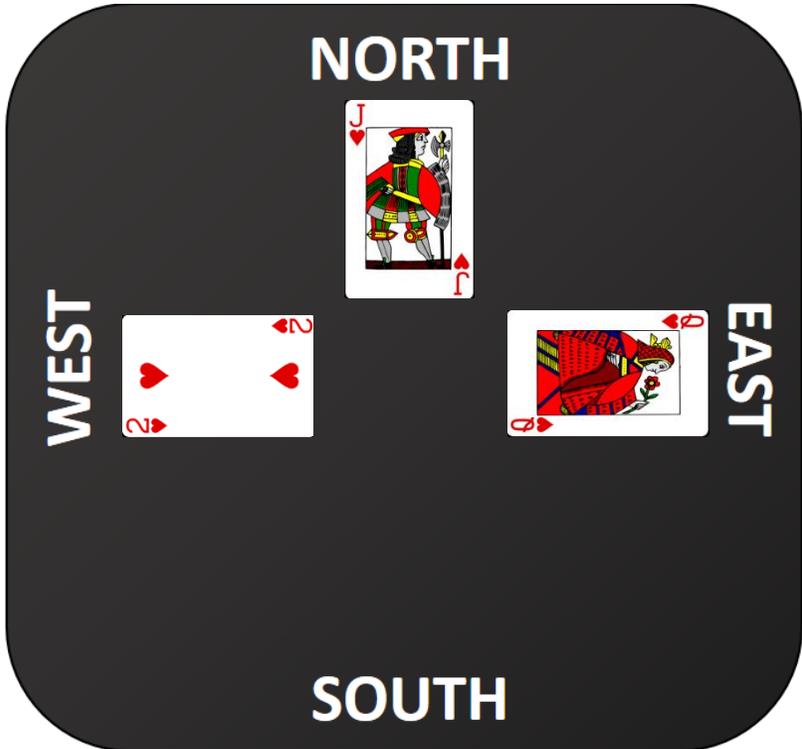
*(East is "Discarding" the 10 of Clubs on this hand)* →



# HIGHEST CARD IN SUIT LED WINS THE TRICK

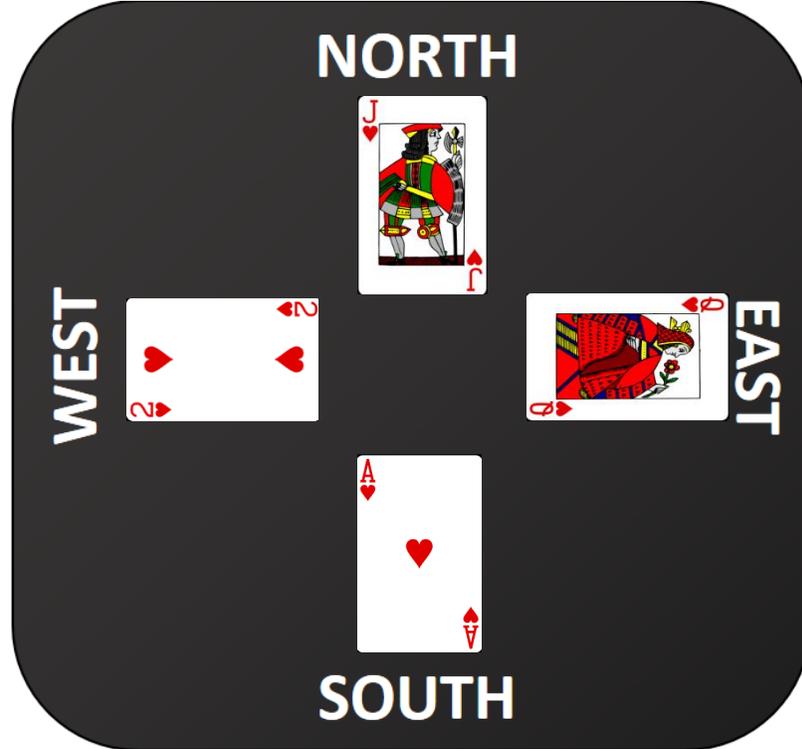


West has led the 2 of Hearts on this trick. All the players must play a Heart if they have one. North follows suit by playing the Jack of Hearts



East plays the Queen of Hearts and is currently winning this trick.

**Rule:** Each player can play 1 card to each trick. So once you've played a card to a trick you do not play again until the next trick.



The final card to this trick is played by South and it is the Ace of Hearts. South wins the trick.

**Rule:** The player that wins the trick will lead to start the next trick. (So in our example above, South would start the next trick by leading a card.)

Each Bridge hand consists of two segments. We begin every hand with the **Auction**. This is where each pair has the opportunity to describe their hands and decide on the final contract. (See “**Basic Bidding in Bridge**” to learn about **The Auction**)

After the *Auction* we will have determined which side is playing the contract and which player from that side is the **Declarer**.

**The Declarer** is the person that will control both the dummy and their own hand during the play portion.

The player to the Declarer’s immediate left will choose any card they want from their hand and place it face up on the table. This is what’s called the **Opening Lead**, and this lead starts the 1<sup>st</sup> of the 13 tricks on every single bridge hand.

**RULE:** The Opening Lead is always made by the player to the declarer’s immediate left.

Immediately after the Opening Lead, the partner of the Declarer places their entire 13 card hand face up on the table. This is what is called the “**Dummy**”.



After the opening lead the dummy will be placed **face up** on the table for the **remainder** of the hand.

The person sitting in the Dummy position, North in this example, is no longer involved in the hand. South (the Declarer) will control what card gets played from the Dummy and their own hand for the rest of the play.

Play always proceeds **clockwise**, so after the opening lead, South gets to choose which card she wants from the dummy next on this trick.

South chooses the 2 of hearts to be played from the Dummy.

**Note:** In Duplicate Bridge, South will usually just call for the card from dummy; “The two of Hearts Please”, and the person sitting North will pull the card from the Dummy.

The trick proceeds with East and South both following the Heart lead. South wins the trick with her Ace, and will lead to the next trick from her hand.

**Rule:** Whoever wins the trick will lead to start the following trick.

So, when North wins a trick during this hand, the lead, to the next trick will start from the Dummy.



Who wins this trick?

Who leads next?



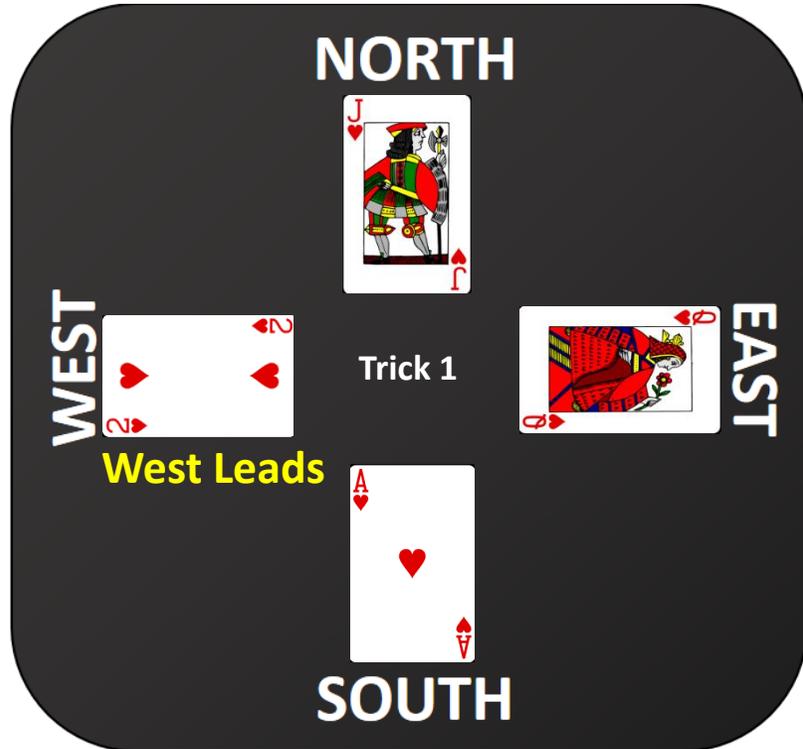
North (**the dummy**)  
wins this trick.

**Declarer** (South) will  
now choose which card  
to play next from the  
dummy.

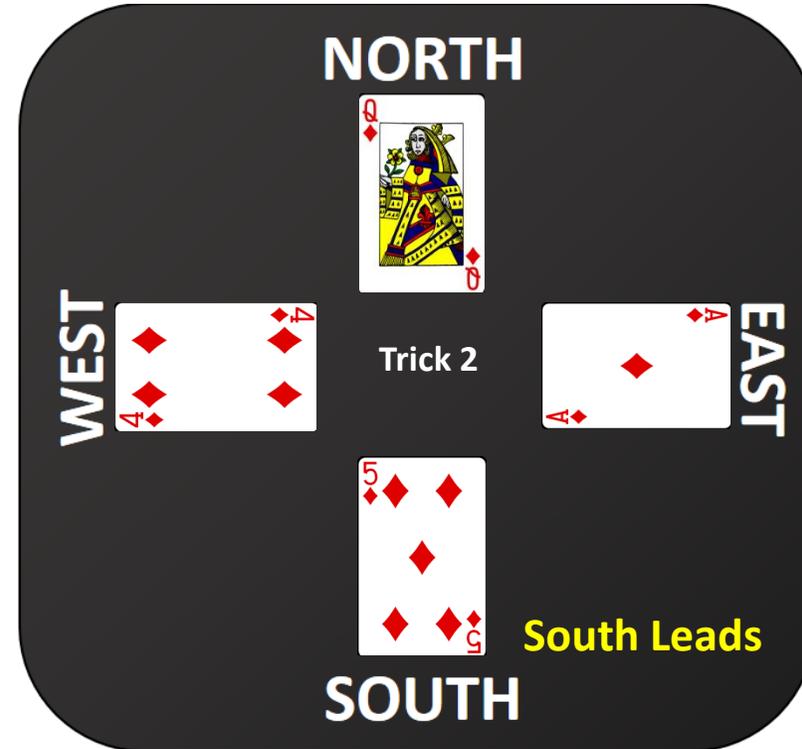
The **lead** from the  
dummy will start trick 3



# MORE EXAMPLES OF TRICKS



Trick 1 sees South winning with the Ace of Hearts. Now South can choose any card to lead from her hand. This lead will begin trick 2.



South leads the 5 of Diamonds and the trick ends with East winning it with the Ace of Diamonds. Now East will lead to trick 3.



**Who wins trick 3?**



EAST wins this trick with the 3 of Diamonds!!

### No – Trump Rule:

*With no trump suit, the highest card in the suit led wins the trick.*

So when East leads the 3 of Diamonds and no other player plays that suit, East Wins!

## THE TRUMP SUIT

All of the tricks we have seen, so far, have been played in what is called a No – Trump Contract. This means that whoever plays the highest card in the suit led will win that trick.

When there is a trump suit, this rule changes a bit.

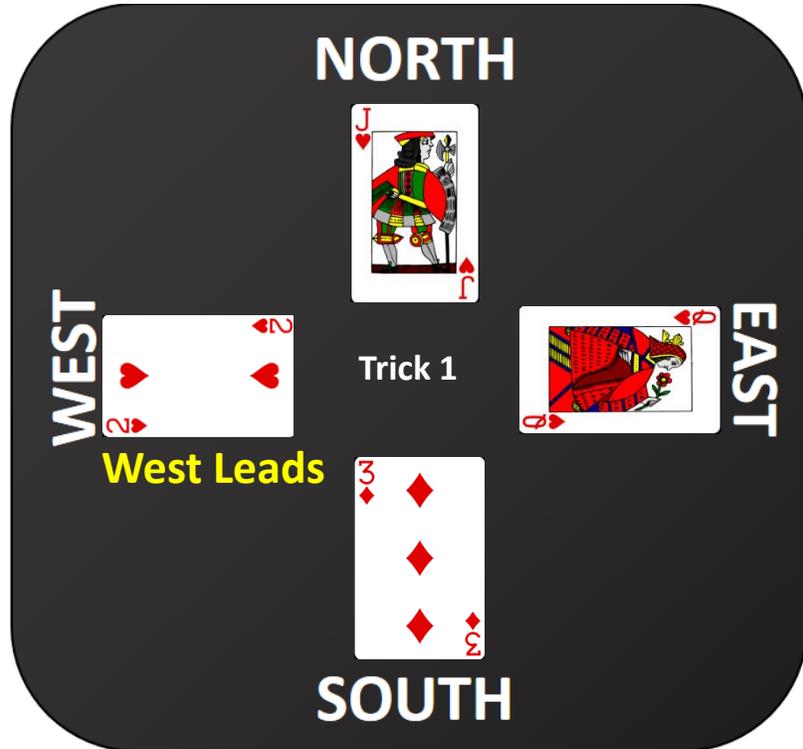
The trump suit is used similar to wild cards in other card games. So on the trick to our left;

- If Hearts were the trump suit, South would win this trick.
- If Clubs were trump, West would win the trick.
- If Spades were trump, North would win the trick.

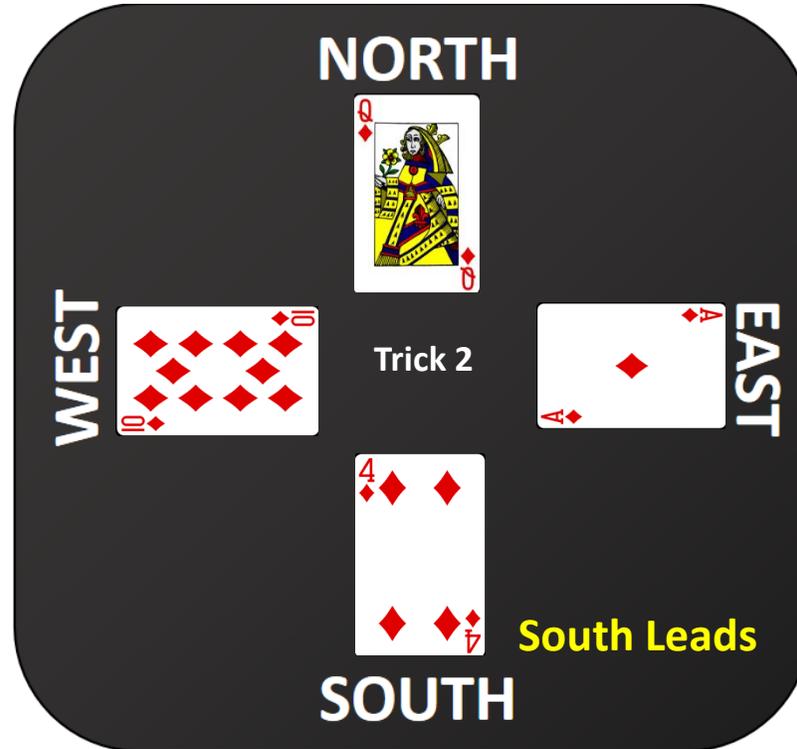
**Trumps Rule:** *With a trump suit, the highest trump card played to the trick will win it. If no trump are played during a trick, then the no – trump rule applies.*

***How do we know if there is a trump suit?*** The **auction** will determine if there is a trump suit or not. If the last bid of the auction is a suit, then that suit will be the trump suit. If the last bid of the auction is No – Trump, then there will be no trump suit. *(See “Basic Bidding in Bridge” to learn the Auction)*

## Diamonds are trump on the tricks below:



Trick 1 sees South winning with the 3 of Diamonds. This is what is called trumping a trick. East might say “South trumped my Queen of Hearts.” **Remember:** you must follow suit at all times so this trick guarantees that South has 0 hearts in her hand.

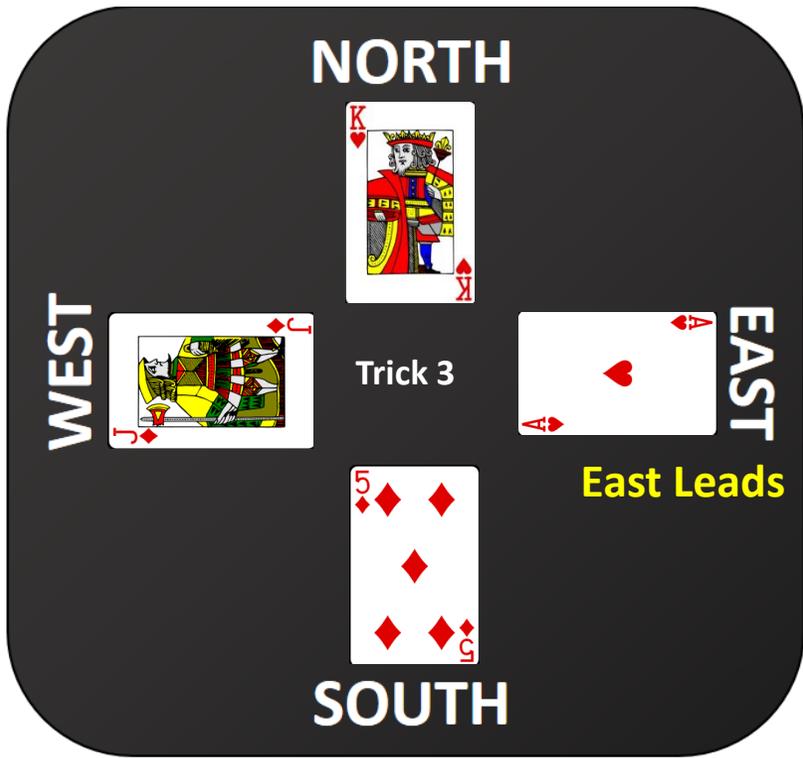


Trick 2 starts with South leading trump. **Any player can lead trump at any time during the play.**

When your side has a lot of trumps, it is usually best to get rid of the trump cards of your opponents. You do this by leading the trump suit. This is called “**Drawing Trump**”



**Who wins Trick 3?**



West wins trick 3 by “over trumping” South’s 5 of diamonds.

**Remember:** The highest trump card played to the trick will win it.

**Note:** After this trick we know that both South and West are out of Hearts.

There are 13 tricks to play in every single Bridge hand. This is why the card play portion of any Bridge hand can be one of the most challenging and most fun endeavors in all of gaming. You could spend a lifetime focusing on only this portion of the game and still not completely master every situation. Combine the bidding with the play and you can see the greatness in the Game of Bridge.

Don’t forget to check out our other Bridge Basics documents and videos at [LearnBridge.nyc](http://LearnBridge.nyc)

We recommend:  
“Basic Bidding in Bridge”  
“The Rules of The Game of Bridge”

# LearnBridge.nyc Rules Reminder:

## Glossary

**Lead** – to play the first card to a trick

**Trick** – One person leads a card and the following 3 players (in clockwise order) play a card. The highest card in the suit led or the highest card in the trump suit wins.

**Follow** – to play a card from the same suit led (you must do this at all times, if you have a card in the suit led)

**Trump** – the boss suit during the play of the hand.

**Trumping** – to play a trump card after a player has led a different suit. (this will win the trick, unless another player plays a higher trump card to the same trick)

**Drawing Trump** – To purposely play the trump suit in an effort to get rid of the trump cards held by the opponents.

**Discard** – to play a card different from the suit led to a trick.

- The Opening Lead is always made by the player to the declarer's immediate left.
- Play always proceeds clockwise around the table until each player has played one card to the trick.
- All players must **Follow Suit at all times**.
- When you have no cards left in the suit led, you can play any card, from your hand, to the trick.
- **No – Trump:** The highest card in the suit led wins the trick.
- **Trumps:** The highest trump card played to the trick will win it. If no trump are played during a trick, then the no – trump rule applies.
- The player that wins the trick will lead to start the next trick.

## Simple strategies

- If you can't win a trick it is best to play the lowest card you have in the suit led.
- When discarding, it is usually best to play cards that are least likely to win tricks.
- When declarer, in a trump contract, it is usually best to **draw trump** until the opponents are out of the trump suit... **(Then Stop)**

I hope these notes helped you understand the basics of card play. If you would like to learn more, please join us at:

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**and**

**Learn the Game of a Lifetime**