



BRIDGE LINGO

Auction: The bidding phase of a bridge hand.

Bid: A number (1-7, called the *level*) and suit (♣/♦/♥/♠/NT, called the *strain*) announced during the auction, suggesting a *contract*.

Clockwise: The direction the hands in a clock travel.

Contract: The highest level and strain (e.g., 2♥ or 3NT) bid during the auction. To make its contract, the declaring side (i.e., the *declarer* and the *dummy*) must take 6 tricks plus the level of the contract bid. The trump suit is the strain of the contract (if it is NT then there is no trump suit).

Conventional bid (advanced concept): A bid made during the auction that sends a special message to partner, rather than simply suggesting a contract to play.

Dealer: The person who dealt the cards, or is designated dealer in duplicate bridge. The dealer bids first during the auction.

Declarer: The person who wins the auction and his partner are called the *declaring side*. Between these two people, the first to have bid in the strain (suit or NT) of the final contract is called the *declarer*. He controls his own cards *and* his partner's during the play of the hand.

Defender: One of the two players not on the declaring side. Their goal is to *set the contract*—i.e., prevent the declarer from taking the number of tricks specified in the contract.

Discard: To play a card of a suit that was not led to the trick. (Can only be done if the player has no more cards in the suit led.) Same as “sluff.”

Double (advanced concept): A special call that increases the penalties for undertricks and the rewards for making the contract, especially with overtricks.

Dummy: The partner of the declarer. Dummy's cards are controlled by declarer during the play of the hand.

Follow suit: To play a card of the same suit that was first led to the trick.

Game: A contract of 3NT, 4NT, 5NT, 4♥, 5♥, 4♠, 5♠, 5♣, or 5♦. Comes with a 300 point bonus (500 if vulnerable)

Grand slam: A contract of 7♣, 7♦, 7♥, 7♠, or 7NT. Comes with a 1000 point bonus (1500 if vulnerable), to be added to the game bonus (but *not* to the small slam bonus).

Hand: The 13 cards held by a single player for a given deal.

High Card Points: A commonly used system of hand evaluation whereby values are assigned as follows:

Ace = 4, King = 3, Queen = 2, Jack = 1. Experienced players use bids as code to communicate with partner on the strength of the hand, and the length of specific suits, in order to determine which contract to bid for.

Major Suit: Hearts (♥) or Spades (♠). Also called “the majors.”

Minor Suit: Clubs (♣) or Diamonds (♦). Also called “the minors.”

Notrump (NT): Part of a bid (or the resulting contract) specifying that there is to be no trump suit.

Opening Leader: The player to the left of the declarer, who must play the first card to the first trick of a hand.

Overtrick: Any trick taken by the declaring side in addition to the number needed to make the contract.

Part score: A contract below game, i.e., at the 1 level, the 2 level, the 3 level (except 3NT), or at the 4 level in a minor suit (♣,♦). Comes with a 50 point bonus.

Partners: Two players at opposite compass positions (East/West and North/South). Both partners achieve the same score on any deal.

Play a card: To contribute a card to a trick by placing it face up in front of the player.

Redouble (advanced concept): If the opponents double, this is another special call that becomes available to the side that was *doubled*. The redouble *further* increases the penalties for undertricks and the rewards for making your contract, especially with overtricks.

Rank of Suits: For bidding purposes, the five possible strains are ranked, from high to low: Notrump, Spades, Hearts, Diamonds, Clubs. In order to bid a lower ranking *strain*, a player must bid at a higher *level*. E.g., Spades outrank diamonds, so after a bid of 2♠, to bid diamonds one must bid at least 3♦.

Set (verb): To prevent the declarer from making the number of tricks specified by his contract.

Shape: The suit distribution of a hand.

Small slam: A contract of 6♣, 6♦, 6♥, 6♠, or 6NT. Comes with a 500 point bonus (750 if vulnerable), to be added to the game bonus.

Strain: The trump suit (or lack thereof) specified in a bid or the resulting contract (♣/♦/♥/♠/NT).

Trick: The four cards played during a single round of play, one from each player in rotation.

Trump (noun): The “master suit”; during the play of the hand, trumps beat all other suits.

Trump (verb): Trying to win the trick with a trump card when a different suit is led. (Can only be done when unable to follow suit.) Same as “ruff.”

Undertricks: The number of tricks by which the declaring side misses the number required to make its contract. Defenders receive a score for each undertrick.

Vulnerability (advanced concept): Determined by the board number, this property affects the scoring.