

Glossary

Balanced hand - A hand is said to be balanced if it has a distribution of 4-3-3-3, 4-4-3-2 or 5-3-3-2 (also defined as “no voids, no singletons, and at most one doubleton”).

Board - 1) A device that keeps each player’s cards separate. 2) The dummy’s hand. For example, “You’re on the board” means “The lead is in the dummy.”

Bonus - In bridge scoring, beyond points for bid tricks taken, which are awarded for making a contract. There are different bonus amounts at the part score, game levels.

Book - (Noun) The basic six tricks that must be taken by the declaring side. The first six “book” tricks are always assumed and are not taken into account in bidding or scoring. Thus, a contract at the 1-level commits declarer to take at least 7 (that is, 6 + 1) tricks and provides trick points only for the tricks above book. The term apparently originated from the whist practice of arranging the first six tricks into a stack called a “book.”

Break - 1) (Noun) The distribution of cards in a suit between two (often unseen) hands: “I got a 4-1 spade break.” An *even break* occurs when the cards are distributed evenly or nearly so, such as 3-3 or 4-2. A *bad break*, connoting a distribution that is difficult to handle, suggests an unexpectedly uneven distribution, such as 5-1 or 6-0. 2) (Verb) To be divided between two hands. “The spades broke 3-2.” 3) (Verb) To lead a particular suit for the first time during a particular deal.

Call - A bid in a strain (1-7 in a suit or no-trump), pass.

Cash - To take a trick with a card that is currently the highest in the suit, thought certain to succeed, or to take all available winners in a suit.

Contract - The statement of the pair who has won the bidding that they will take at least the given number of tricks. The contract consists of two components: the level, stating the number of tricks to be taken (in addition to the book tricks), and the denomination, denoting the trump suit (or its absence in a no-trump bid). The last bid in the bidding phase denotes the final contract.

Control - A feature of a hand which prevents the opponents from taking immediate tricks in a suit. Aces are termed “first-round” controls and kings are termed “second-round” controls. An equivalent or similar term is stoppers.

Deal - The set of particular 52 cards as distributed to each player, and the bidding and play based on those cards. Also called board or hand.

Dealer - The player who deals the cards.

Deck - The 52 cards used in bridge.

Declaration - The contract in which a hand is played.

Declarer - The player who controls the play of the dummy and one’s own holdings.

Defenders - The pair that tries to defeat the contract.

Defense - Declarer’s opponents or their line of play.

Denomination - The strain.

Develop - To establish tricks in a suit, usually by forcing out the opponents’ stoppers.

Discard - 1) (Verb) To play a card that is neither of the suit led nor trump, and therefore cannot win the trick. 2) (Noun) The card so played.

Distribution - 1) The number of cards in each suit in a player’s hand, usually expressed as a series of four numbers. A distribution of 4=6=2=1 means 4 spades, 6 hearts, 2 diamonds and 1 club. Also called a “Hand pattern.” 2) The degree to which a player’s hand consists of particularly long and short suits.

Distribution point - A measure of a hand’s strength due to the length or shortness of suits.

Doubleton - A holding of exactly two cards in a suit.

Down - 1) A contract that is defeated is said to be *down*. 2) (Followed by a number) The number of tricks by which a contract fails: for example, “Down two.”

Draw - To extract, usually trumps. To remove the opponents’ trump cards is to “draw trumps.”

Dummy - 1) The declarer's partner. 2) The cards of the declarer's partner, exposed after the opening lead. The partner of the declarer shall arrange the cards vertically in suits from highest to lowest, with the trump suit on the dummy's right.

Even - 1) A split with the same number of cards in each hand. A 2-2 split is an *even* split. 2) Of the number of cards in a suit found in a hand: two cards, four cards and so on.

Face - 1) (Noun) The front of a card; the side that displays its suit and rank. 2) (Verb) To turn a card so that its face is visible to other players.

Finesse - A technique that attempts to gain a trick or tricks by taking advantage of a favorable lie of the opponents' cards.

Fit - A long suit (usually eight cards or more) in two combined hands that might be used as trumps.

Follow suit - To play a card of the same suit as the one that was first led to the trick. Failure to follow suit when one can do so constitutes a revoke.

Game - A contract, bid and made, worth 100 points or more. The game contracts are 3NT (40 for the first trick + 30 each for the second and third); 4♥ and 4♠ in the majors (4 tricks × 30 points per trick); 5♣ and 5♦ in the minors (5 tricks × 20 points per trick).

Hand - 1) The cards held by one player. 2) The player holding the cards. 3) The entire deal.

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Hand pattern - See distribution.

High card - 1) An honor card. 2) The highest-ranking card in a suit at any point during the play.

High card points (HCP) - A method for evaluating a hand's strength where every honor card is assigned a numeric value.

Honor Cards - The ace, king, queen, jack and 10 of the four suits.

Invitation - A bid which invites the partner to bid on to game or slam if he has extra values. It is a non-forcing bid by definition.

Lead - 1) The first card played in a trick, which dictates the suit that others must play if able to do so (see follow suit). 2) The hand that is entitled to lead to the next trick is said to be "on lead" or to "have the lead."

Leader - The player to the left of the declarer who makes the opening lead.

Length - The number of cards held in a suit.

Level - 1) The number of tricks that (when added to the book of six tricks) a bid or contract states will be taken. For example, a bid at the four level contracts to take (6 + 4) = 10 tricks. 2) The property of a contract that states whether it is at the part-score, game level.

Long suit - 1) In a hand, the suit with the greatest number of cards. Seldom used of a suit with fewer than five cards. 2) Any suit of unusual length.

Loser - A card which apparently cannot take a trick.

Major Suit - Referring to either the spade or heart suit.

Major suit - The heart suit and the spade suit are major suits.

Make - (Verb) To take as many tricks as a contract calls for.

Minor Suit - One of the two lower-ranking suits, including diamonds or clubs.

Minor suit - The club suit and the diamond suit are minor suits.

Open - To start the bidding.

Opener - The player who makes the opening bid.

Opener's rebid - Opener's second bid.

Opening bid - The first bid in the auction.

Opening lead - The first card led by defenders. The dummy is not faced until after the opening lead, which makes the choice of opening lead more difficult than other leads. The opening lead can determine the outcome of the deal.

Opening leader - The declarer's left-hand opponent, who always makes the opening lead.

Opponent - A member of the other partnership or team.

Pair - Two players playing bridge together as partners.

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Part-score - 1) A trick score less than 100, obtained by making a contract. 2) The contract that results in that score.

Partner - The other member of the partnership.

Pass - A call indicating that the player does not wish to change the contract named by the preceding bid. To pass transfers the right to make the next call to the passer's left-hand opponent - unless it is the third consecutive pass, which ends the bidding.

Point count - A method of hand evaluation which assigns a numeric value to a hand's high cards and distributional features, used as a guideline in bidding.

Promote - In the play, to cause a card to become a winner.

Rank - 1) The position of an individual card relative to others: Aces have the highest rank, followed by K, Q, J, 10 ... 2. 2) The order of denominations in the bidding. No-trump is highest-ranked denomination, followed by spades, hearts, diamonds and clubs. A higher-ranked suit may be bid at the same level as a lower-ranked suit; the reverse is not true.

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Rebid - 1) Second and subsequent bids by the same player. 2) A bid by the same player in a suit he has already bid.

Responder - Opening bidder's partner.

Response - A bid by the responder immediately following an opening bid and right-hand opponent's call.

Revoke - Failure to follow suit as required when a player is able to do so.

Ruff - To play a trump on a trick when a side suit was led.

Score - 1) The numeric result of a deal. 2) (Verb) Of a card, to win a trick: "The ♠Q scored."

Side suit - A suit that is not trump.

Singleton - A holding of exactly one card in a suit.

Sort - To arrange one's cards by suit and rank within suit.

Stopper - A high card (normally an honor) whose primary function is to prevent the opponents from running a suit in a no-trump contract. (See also control.)

Strain - Referring to the four suits and no-trump in the context of a bid, auction or play.

Suit - A ranked division of the deck of cards into (in descending rank order) spades, hearts, diamonds and clubs. The suit ranking has a profound effect on the bidding and scoring, but none at all on the play. (See also denomination, major suit and minor suit.)

Trick - A set of four cards played by each player in turn, during the play of a hand

Trump - (Noun) A card in the trump suit whose trick-taking power is greater than any side suit card. (Verb) To play a trump after a side suit has been led; see ruff.

Void - No cards in a given suit.