

GLOSSARY OF BRIDGE TERMS

- Alert** When your partner makes a **conventional bid** you must alert this to the opponents by knocking the table (or displaying the 'Alert' card if using bidding boxes).
- Auction** Another term for the bidding.
- Avoidance** An attempt to prevent a particular defender from regaining the lead.
- Balanced Hand** A hand containing no void, no singleton and not more than one doubleton.
- Barrier** When planning your [opener's rebid](#), imagine a 'barrier' just above your first suit at the next level up. A new suit rebid below the barrier shows 12-15 points (occasionally 16 or 17 points after a 1 level response when opener doesn't have enough for a jump shift). A new suit rebid above the barrier that isn't a **jump shift** shows 16-19 points (also known as a **reverse**).
- Blocked** A suit is blocked if there is a high card in the short hand that prevents the suit from being cashed. A player will often aim to **unblock** the suit.
- Break** The way in which the defenders' cards in a particular suit are divided between their two hands. For example, a 4-2 break indicates that with 6 cards in a suit missing, one defender has 4 cards of the suit and his partner has 2 cards. Also referred to as **split**.
- Cash** Playing a card that is certain to win the trick. This card is known as a **master**.
- Clear a suit** Knocking out the opponents' last **stopper** in a suit, after which it will be possible to **cash** one's tricks in the suit.
- Competitive bidding** When both partnerships contribute to the auction. The term is most frequently used when one side bids to a normal contract but the opponents make a higher bid.
- Contract** The final bid in the **auction**, which determines the trumps suit (or no trumps) and the number of tricks to be won
- Conventional bid** A bid that has a special meaning and is not natural. For example, a 2♣ bid after a 1NT opening is the 'Stayman' convention and does not show length in clubs. Other conventional bids include 'Blackwood', 'Gerber' and **Fourth Suit Forcing**.
- Cover** When second or third to play to a trick, following suit with a card that beats the opponent's card.

Crossruff	Trumping losing cards from both hands in the opposite hand. This sometimes involves not drawing trumps .
Cue bid	There are two types of cue bid: (1) A bid of the opponent's suit below the level of 3NT. This is a cue bid that asks partner to describe his hand further, normally with emphasis on a stopper in the opponent's suit, in which case partner bids NT. (2) When a suit has been agreed and the partnership is committed to game, a bid of a new suit is a cue bid, normally showing the ace of that suit and inviting slam.
Danger Hand	The defender who would be able to cause damage if he gained the lead. See also Safe Hand .
Dealer	The first person to speak in the bidding. In Rubber bridge the dealer deals the cards. In Duplicate bridge the dealer is specified on the board.
Declarer	The person who plays the hand.
Defenders	The Declarer's opponents i.e. the pair who are not Declarer or dummy.
Discard	To throw away a card of a different suit (when you can't follow suit)
Double for Penalties	If you think the opponents have bid too high and will fail to make their contract you can double for penalties. This doubles the number of points you will score for each trick they fail by, it also doubles the points they will score if they make the contract.
Doubleton	Two cards in a suit
Drawing trumps	Playing trumps until neither defender has any left.
Ducking	Refusing to win a trick when this would be possible.
Dummy	The Declarer's partner. After the opening lead the dummy's hand gets placed face upwards on the table and is played by the Declarer.
Duplicate Bridge	The form of bridge where the same deal is played by a number of players. Each of the four hands are put in a board or wallet which is passed from table to table. Each board is scored in its own right and the objective is to make a higher score on the deal than others who played it.
Elimination	Playing so as to exhaust both declarer and dummy of a particular suit. Often performed in preparation for a throw-in .
Endplay	A play, normally near the end of the hand, that gains an additional trick by a means other than the normal approaches of finessing and promotion. An endplay can be classified as either a throw-in ,

trump coup or squeeze. They can often be difficult to bring off.

Entry	A card that allows a player to get on lead.
Establish	Playing to dislodge the opponents' high cards in a suit in order to make tricks with lower cards. This can often be accomplished by using one's highest cards to knock out the opponents' winners. At a suit contract an alternative technique is to ruff out the opponents' winners. Sometimes termed set up .
Exit	Getting off lead by playing a card (an "exit card") in the knowledge that the opponents will win the trick. Sometimes performed because this won't give away an additional trick. Sometimes performed as an Endplay in order to force the opponents to give away an additional trick.
Finesse	An attempt by declarer to win a trick with a card that is lower in rank than a card of the same suit still held by an opponent.
Following Suit	Playing a card in the same suit as the one led by another player.
Forcing Bid	A bid which tells partner that he must bid again.
Forcing Play	Leading a winner in a suit that declarer (or dummy) will be able to ruff. The objective is often to weaken the declarer's trumps, but sometimes to remove a later ruffing entry to dummy.
Fourth Suit Forcing	When three suits have already been bid, a bid in the fourth suit that generally asks partner to describe his hand further.
Game	In Duplicate bridge: A contract that results in a score of 100 or more points. In Rubber bridge: 100 points below the line.
High Card Points	Ace = 4, King = 3, Queen = 2, Jack = 1
Honours	The Ace, King, Queen, Jack and 10 are known as honours. The 10 doesn't contribute to a hand's High Card Points but is frequently a useful asset.
Interior Sequence	Two or more consecutive cards in a suit plus one nearby non-consecutive card (e.g. QJ9). Also sometimes called an Near Sequence .
Invitational Bid	Invites partner to bid again if he has a maximum hand.
Jump Bid	A bid that is at a higher level than necessary. This can be either a Jump Raise or a Jump Shift .
Jump Raise	A bid in a partner's suit that is at a higher level than necessary.
Jump Shift	A bid in a new suit that is at a higher level than necessary.

Knock out	Using a high card to dislodge an opponent's higher card in a suit, with the aim of establishing the suit.
Limit Bid	Has a small and precise point range including an upper limit to the number of points. A bid that tells everything in one bid.
Long Hand	The player (usually declarer or dummy) that has more cards in a key suit than his partner. See also short hand .
Loser	A card that cannot (or is unlikely to) win a trick. Sometimes it's possible to eradicate losers, e.g. by ruffing them in dummy or discarding them on established winners in another suit. In a suit contract one way to plan the play of the hand is to count losers.
Major Suits	Hearts and Spades
Marked Finesse	A finesse that is guaranteed to succeed because the opponent that is last to play to the trick has already shown out .
Master	A card that the opponents cannot beat (except by ruffing). See also cash .
Minor Suits	Clubs and Diamonds
Near Sequence	Two or more consecutive cards in a suit plus one nearby non-consecutive card (e.g. QJ9). Also sometimes called an Interior Sequence .
Non-Vulnerable	When a pair is vulnerable it affects game and slam bonuses and undertrick scores. In Duplicate bridge the vulnerability changes on each board. The pair that are non-vulnerable are shown in green. In Rubber bridge a pair is non-vulnerable when they have not won a game .
Opener	The first person to bid anything other than 'Pass'.
Opening Lead	The very first card played. It is always made the person on the left of Declarer.
Overcall	A bid made by the opponents of the player who opens the bidding.
Overtake	Playing a higher card when partner's card would have won the trick. Usually performed for entry reasons.
Penalty	Points scored by defenders when a contract is defeated.
Penalty Double	A double made in the expectation that the opponent's contract will be defeated. Partner is usually expected to pass. See also Takeout Double .
Pre-empt	Making a high-level bid with a weak hand and a long suit with the objective of causing problems for the opponents.
Percentage Play	A way of playing the hand that works more often than an alternative approach.
Principle of	When the play of a suit indicates that a defender could have either

Restricted Choice	a single significant card in a suit or two or more equivalent cards, declarer should generally assume the former, since in the latter case the defender might have played different cards.
Promote	A card is promoted when the opponents' higher cards have been knocked out . See also establish and set up . Occasionally a trump is promoted when a side suit is played in a particular way.
Responder	The partner of the player who started the partnership's bidding.
Reverse	Bidding a new suit above the barrier .
Revoke	Failure to play a card of a suit led when it was possible to do so.
Rubber Bridge	The form of bridge that can be played by four players at home. Unlike duplicate bridge, the scoring is cumulative. Each score for a contract bid and made counts towards a game . The main objective is to be the 1st pair to get two games.
Rule of 11	The Rule of 11 is most commonly used in a No Trump contract by 3 rd player when it looks like partner's opening lead was 4 th highest of their longest suit. It helps work out how high we need to play.
Rule of 14	The Rule of 14 is used when responding to an opening bid. It helps to decide whether or not we can make a change of suit response at the two level when we have less than 10 points.
Rule of 15	The Rule of 15 is used by the 4 th player from the dealer after there has been 3 passes. i.e. when 4 th player is deciding whether to open the bidding or 'pass out' the hand.
Rule of 20	The Rule of 20 is used by the opening bidder when deciding whether or not to open with an unbalanced hand of 10-11 points.
Ruff	To win a trick with a trump (when you can't follow suit).
Ruff and discard	When a defender leads a suit where declarer and dummy are both void and each have one or more trumps. Conceding a ruff a discard frequently gives away a trick.
Ruff out	Leading a long suit and trumping in the opposite hand, with the aim of establishing the suit.
Run a card	Taking a finesse by leading a high card and (if not covered by the next hand), playing low from the opposite hand.
Safe Hand	The defender who would not be able to cause damage if he gained the lead. A declarer will often aim to lose tricks to the safe hand. See also Danger Hand .
Safety Play	A play that aims to cater for unfavourable distributions, even though this would frequently cost a trick.
Set up	Another term for establish .
Sequence	Two or more consecutive cards in a suit: usually honours (e.g. KQJ).

Shortage Points	When you have a certain eight card fit, you can count extra points for short suits. Void = 5, Singleton = 3, Doubleton = 1
Short Hand	The player (usually declarer or dummy) that has fewer cards in a key suit than his partner. See also long hand .
Show Out	Fail to follow suit, through either discarding or ruffing .
Sign Off Bid	A sign off bid tells partner not to bid again.
Singleton	Only one card in a suit.
Split	The way in which the defenders' cards in a particular suit are divided between their two hands. For example, a 4-2 split indicates that with 6 cards in a suit missing, one defender has 4 cards of the suit and his partner has 2 cards. Also referred to as break .
Squeeze	Playing so as to force a defender to make an advantageous discard.
Stand Up	Sometimes declarer wants to cash one or more winners before drawing trumps. These winners are said to stand up if nobody ruffs.
Stopper	A card that prevents the opponents cashing tricks in the suit. Always important in NT, but also sometimes in a suit contract.
Switch	When a defender doesn't return his partner's suit but instead leads a different suit.
Take-out Double	A call of 'double' that is not for penalties but asks partner to bid their longest suit. See also Penalty Double .
Throw-in	Losing a trick to a defender so that he has to make an advantageous lead.
Top Tricks	Tricks that are readily available to either declarer or the defending side without needing to lose the lead. Also called Top Winners .
Top Winners	Tricks that are readily available to either declarer or the defending side without needing to lose the lead. Also called Top Tricks .
Trick	Four cards, one from each player, played in clockwise rotation.
Trump Control	Being able to draw the opposing trumps and establish or cash one's winners in the side suits.
Trump Coup	Gaining an additional trick in trumps by leading a side suit through a defensive trump holding.
Unblock	Cashing a winner in order to facilitate the cashing of tricks in the same suit in the opposite hand.
Void	No cards in a suit.

Vulnerable When a pair is vulnerable it affects game and slam bonuses and undertrick scores. In Duplicate bridge the vulnerability changes on each board. The pair that are vulnerable are shown in red. In Rubber bridge a pair becomes vulnerable when they have won a **game**.

Winner A card that is certain (or reasonably certain) to take a trick. As declarer it's usually best to count one's winners at the start of the hand, especially in a NT contract.