

# Bridge Boot Camp

## #1 – Your Supply List

Welcome to Bridge Boot Camp! I am your DI (Drill Instructor). Before you can play bridge you will need to outfit yourself with certain supplies.

Most likely, you already have everything around your house. So, you won't have to buy one thing — just hunt them down. Here's the minimum you need:

- Four warm bodies
  - Including yours
  - In a pinch, you can even play a three-handed version (more about that a little later)
- A table — square works best, but round or rectangular will do
  - Or, a blanket
  - Or, a bed
  - Or, sit on the ground
- One “deck” (American) or “pack” (English) of regular playing cards
  - Two decks with different color backs works even better
  - Remove the Jokers  
(Bridge is serious stuff. We don't want no Jokers.)
- Some way to keep score
  - Pencil and paper works great
  - A pen will do
  - TP tears too easily but brown bag is OK
  - You can write on your arm with a ballpoint pen

If anything is missing, drop and give me 20 push-ups!  
No, you don't have to do that. Just purchase it at the PX.

If you understand this much, it's time for the 3:15 pm NEWS,  
uh, ... I mean the 3:15 pm NESW ...

(Remember: **N**ever **E**at **S**hredded **W**heat = **NESW**)

*Now the 3:15 pm NESW ...*



# Bridge Boot Camp

## #2 – Your Compass: Knowing Your Directions

If you have ever looked at a chess column in a newspaper or a chess book, you know that chess is a two-player game:

- One-on-one
- Head-to-head
- Black verses White

If you have ever looked at a bridge column in a newspaper or a bridge book, you should know that bridge is a partnership game:

- Two-on-two
- We and They
- North & South verses East & West

Who decides who is who?

The cards decide! More specifically, "The Draw" decides.

Often, players agree in advance to play as partners. Nothing wrong with that. However, if you get together with three strangers, we have a method called "The Draw." *You only draw once each four-deal session (called a "chukker").\**

[Some people say, "Cut for partners."  
*Technically, they are wrong; but don't argue with them!*  
You "cut" before each deal.  
You "draw" for partners before each chukker.]

\* **In four-deal bridge each unit of play** – called a chukker (from a Hindi word meaning "round" or "wheel," also used as the name of a period of play in polo) – **consists of exactly four deals, one dealt by each player.**

Four-deal bridge offers (1) predictability of the time required for one unit of play [about 20 minutes – rarely more than half an hour] and (2) the regular changing of partners.

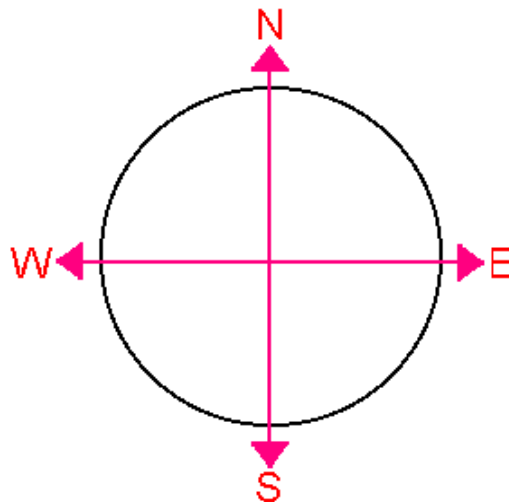


A compass may keep you from getting lost at sea.

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## #3 – Securing Your Position (“The Draw”)

1. Fan the cards out – face down – on the table (playing surface)
2. Each player “draws” one card and turns it over immediately
  - The four cards on each end may **NOT** be drawn
  - If a player draws two cards, that player must draw again
3. The player with the highest card becomes North
4. Second highest becomes South
5. Third highest becomes East
6. Fourth highest becomes West
7. Fifth highest becomes the first alternate
  - Yes, a bridge table can have more than four players
  - However, only four play at one table at the same time



**Where you sit depends on where North sits.**

**North decides which table, seat, and deck (pack) of cards N-S will use. E-W must follow the compass.**

**North is also the scorekeeper ...  
*East checks to make sure it's right!***

# Bridge Boot Camp

## #4 – “Let the Action Begin”

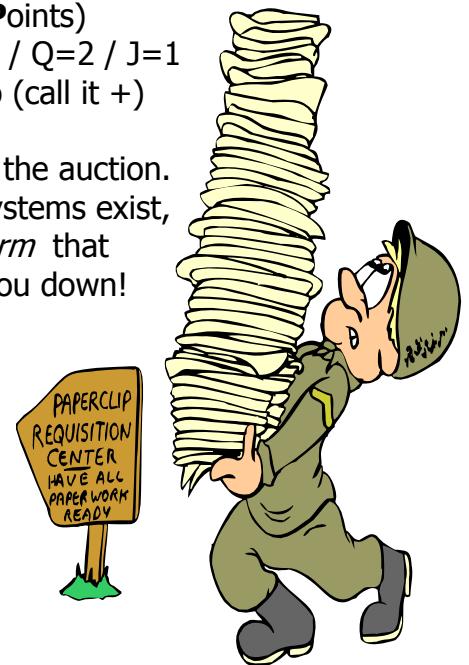
8. After a quick Draw, everyone knows where to sit – right?
9. Dealer’s **Left-Hand Opponent** (LHO) — East on the first deal!
  - Shuffles the deck/pack several (seven?! ) times and
  - Places the deck on LHO’s right [same as Dealer’s left]
10. Dealer moves the cards toward the **Right-Hand Opponent** (RHO)
  - The RHO lifts off the top of the deck and
  - Moves it toward the Dealer *who completes the cut* by
  - Picking up the stack farther away (it used to be the bottom)
  - Placing it on the nearer stack (what used to be the top)
11. Now (what people usually think of as) “The Deal” begins.
  - The dealer passes out the cards: first to the LHO then
  - “clockwise” — one at a time — until each player has 13
12. No one else touches the cards until they have all been dealt
13. All the players count their cards *before* looking at them
  - Make sure the Dealer didn’t goof up
  - Redeal, if necessary
14. Players then sort out their suits and determine their **Shape**
  - Balanced (5-3-3-2 • 4-4-3-2 • 4-3-3-3)
  - **NOT** balanced (any other “Shape”)
15. Players then determine their **HCP** (**H**igh-**C**ard **P**oints)
  - Use the standard point count: A=4 / K=3 / Q=2 / J=1
  - Don’t forget 10s are worth something too (call it +)

Playing many other *forms* of bridge it would now be time for the auction. Because the auction is complex and many different bidding systems exist, we are going to start playing bridge by playing a simplified *form* that eliminates the auction (bidding). All those *forms* can weigh you down!

We will play **MiniBridge** — an aBRIDGED *form* of bridge.

MiniBridge is a simplified *form* of bridge. Read about it in other *forms* from the **Quick Start Bridge Workshops**.

All those rounds and rounds of bidding are replaced by a simple announcement and a little math.  
All this will be explained shortly!



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## #5 – Sentry Duty

Keep Your Eyes (and Ears) Open

- Be ready to draw inferences from what “the enemy” says and does.
- Especially: Watch each card your partner plays.
  - Trust your partner.
  - Don’t trust “the enemy.”

Many experts say defense is the hardest part of bridge.

- Develop a “Dynamic Duo Defense” Attitude.
- Develop a reputation as a ferocious defender.

***Always watch the spot cards your partner plays (for “signals”).***

***HELD: High Encourages / Low Discourages***

***Or: High = “Aye” (Yes) & Low = “No”***

