



## Bridge dictionary

Find the definition of bridge expressions and technical terms.

## Bridge dictionary

"Triggering" bid, Slam try:

Bid making your partner believe that a slam is possible.

5-card major:

To hold at least 5 cards in Hearts or 5 cards in Spades in your hand.

Aggressive:

Active defence play used in emergency situations, like underplaying an opponent's King in the hope of taking future tricks.

Auto-forcing:

The player who makes such a bid commits to not passing over partner's next bid if game has not been reached and neither opponent has overcalled.

Balanced, Balanced hand, Balanced hands:

A hand is said to be balanced when it includes at the most one doubleton without a singleton or a void.

Balancing bid:

Bid made after two passes.

Bare suit, bare:

Having only one card (singleton) in a suit. Can also be said of cards: "to have a bare King" means to have only the King in the suit.

Baron:

Bidding convention consisting of naming your long suits in suit ranking order (Clubs, Diamonds, Hearts, Spades).

Bath Coup:

Technique used by declarer consisting of ducking a King lead in a no-trump contract with a holding such as Ace and Jack to make leader play into his tenace again.

Be out (of):

To have no cards left in a suit.

Better minor:

Bid made in the following conditions:

- 1st bid made at the table.

- In minor suits, i.e. Diamonds or Clubs.

- In the longest suit (in which you hold the highest number of cards) among the two minors.

If the minors are of equal length, you bid 1 Club with 3 cards in Clubs and 3 cards in Diamonds. Otherwise, you bid 1 Diamond.

#### Blackwood:

Conventional bid of 4NT asking partner how many Aces he is holding. Classic response bids are: 5 Clubs = 0 or 3 Aces, 5 Diamonds = 1 or 4 Aces, 5 Hearts = 2 Aces.

#### Blocking:

When a suit cannot be fully run between declarer and dummy because of card rank.

Example: dummy holds Ace and Queen. Declarer holds King, 3 and 2. You cannot directly take 3 tricks in that suit. The suit is said to be blocked.

#### Bonus, Bonus points:

When you make a contract, in addition to the points you score for won tricks, you can also score bonus points. 50 points are awarded for a part-score, 300 or 500 points for a game, 800 or 1,250 points for a small slam, 1,300 or 2,000 points for a grand slam.

#### Call, Calls, Bidding, Bids, Bidding sequence, Auction:

Process with the aim of determining the final contract using bids. Together, the bids of a deal are called the bidding sequence or auction.

#### Card play:

Refers to the part of the game after the auction, when players play their 13 cards.

#### Cash:

To play your master cards.

#### Ceiling:

Maximum strength held by both players of a pair. It is calculated by adding your points and the maximum number of points that partner can possibly hold.

#### Communication, Communications, Entry, Entries:

Cards allowing you to switch from one hand to another (within your pair).

#### Contract:

Commitment by declarer to win a specific number of tricks indicated in the final bid at the end of the auction.

The final contract for a given deal is determined after 3 Passes. Example: after 1NT - Pass - 3NT - Pass - Pass - Pass, the contract is 3NT and the opener of the 1NT bid becomes declarer.

#### Control bid, Control:

Bid in a suit telling your partner that you won't lose two immediate tricks in that suit.

#### Control, Controls:

Guarding a suit through honours (when you hold the Ace or the King) or through shortness (when you hold a singleton or a void).

#### Convention, Conventions:

Bid allowing you to give a precise meaning to it after agreement with partner. May also refer to a card-play convention in defence which has a meaning agreed with one's partner.

#### Convert (to):

The action of passing over a take-out double in order to score a penalty when you have strong opposition in the trump suit.

Correct (to):

To bid the suit promised by partner. Correction is not always mandatory.

Count:

The count of a suit shows whether the number of cards in a suit is even or odd.

Cover:

To play a higher honour over the honour presented by an opponent, most of the time in order to establish one of your own honours or one of the honours you hope your partner holds.

Cover card:

Master card placed opposite a loser.

Cue-bid:

To cue-bid is to bid an opponent's suit. The aim is often to look for a stopper in that suit in order to play in no-trump or to show a strong hand.

Deal:

Distribution of the 52 cards of the card deck to form the four players' hands. A deal also refers to related distribution, bidding and card play as a whole.

Dealer:

Player dealing the cards.

Declarer:

The player who was the first to bid the strain of the final contract played by his pair. He therefore plays both his cards and those of the dummy sitting across from him.

Defence:

The pair playing against declarer and dummy.

Discarding, Discard, Discards:

The action of following with a card of another suit than the requested one when you have no cards left in that suit.

Distribution points:

These are points added to high card points when a fit other than no-trump is known to be held between the two players in a pair. It is then considered that a void is worth 3 points, a singleton 2 points, a doubleton 1 point, the 9th trump 2 points and each trump from the 10th onwards is worth 1 point. Of course, if you have a fit with your partner but you only have 1 trump for example, it will be difficult for you to ruff and, as a result, taking distribution points for your short suits into account is not appropriate.

Double, Take-out double, Doubles, Penalty double, Penalty:

A call over an opponent's bid which increases the scoring value of the contract made or defeated. It takes a take-out or penalty meaning depending on the situation. A take-out double asks partner to bid one of the unnamed suits. A penalty double or punitive double asks partner to pass because you think you can defeat the opponents' contract. The double bid is symbolised by a white cross on a red background.

Doubleton:

"To hold a doubleton" means to have only two cards in that suit.

Drive out:

Also "to draw out". The action of continuing to play a suit so that opponent plays an honour, allowing you to establish yours.

Drury:

Convention used by responder when he initially passes to make sure that his partner's opening bid is not weak.

Duck:

Also "to hold off". Technique consisting of keeping hold of a control in order to break communications between the two players of the opposing pair.

Dummy:

Declarer's partner. "Dummy" also refers to the cards of declarer's partner, which are laid on the table once the opening lead has been played.

Entry:

When you play in defence, it is a card which will allow you to regain the lead later. A well-positioned King or an Ace are typical entries.

Establish, Establishment:

Playing several rounds of a suit to draw out the opponents' cards so that you can take length tricks in that suit, or playing an honour to draw out a higher honour before taking one or several tricks in the suit.

Finesse:

Technique consisting of playing a suit hoping for a specific positioning of opponents' cards, allowing you to take one or several extra tricks. This technique is never certain but can allow you to win a trick that you would never have won if you had not tried it.

Fit, Have a fit:

Having at least eight cards of a suit between both hands of a pair. The two players are said to have a fit.

Fit-bid:

Bid in a suit implicitly confirming the fit in one of partner's suits.

Follow (suit):

To play a card of the requested suit.

Forcing:

Bid after which partner is forced to rebid.

Fourth-best, 4th-best:

Lead convention mainly used in a no-trump contract where the opening lead is the 4th card (from the top) in a suit with no sequence.

Fourth-suit forcing, 4th-suit forcing:

When three different suits have been bid on the first three bids made by the same side, a bid in the fourth suit is artificial. It asks opener to give more details about his hand. Fourth-suit forcing requires at least 11 HCP.

Gambling:

Called Gambling 3NT. This bid shows a solid 7-card minor with no outside Ace or King.

Game, Games:

To score a game at bridge, you need to take a certain number of tricks, depending on the suit in which the contract is played.

In notrump: from the 3 level (i.e. at least 9 tricks).

In a major suit: from the 4 level (i.e. at least 10 tricks).

In a minor suit: from the 5 level (i.e. at least 11 tricks).

Hand, Hands:

The 13 cards initially dealt to a player.

**High-card points:**

This method of hand evaluation dates from the pre-war period and was invented by the Englishman Milton Work. It allows a player to determine a certain number of points for his hand. 4 points for the Ace, 3 points for the King, 2 points for the Queen and 1 point for the Jack. There are 10 high card points per suit and therefore 40 points per deck.

**Hold off:**

Also "to duck". Technique consisting of keeping a control in order to break communications between the two players in the opposing pair.

**Honour, Honours:**

There are 5 honours per suit: Ace, King, Queen, Jack and 10.

**Jacoby transfer:**

Convention used after the 1NT or 2NT opening bid. This convention consists of bidding 2 Diamonds or 2 Hearts (3 Diamonds or 3 Hearts over 2NT) to show 5 cards in Hearts or Spades. In theory, opener corrects the Jacoby transfer. This convention allows responder to describe both weak, intermediate and strong hands.

**Jump:**

Bid made at a level higher than necessary.

**Jump rebid:**

Jump-rebidding a suit means bidding a suit that you could name at the level below.

**Kibitzer:**

Spectator of a game.

**Lead:**

First card played to a trick.

**Leader, Leading:**

Once the contract has been chosen, this is the first person to play a card (always sitting to the left of declarer).

**Length points:**

These are points added to high card points to refine hand evaluation in no-trump contracts. There is 1 additional point for a good 5-card suit and 2 for a good 6-card suit.

**Level, Levels:**

Number of tricks beyond 6 to make in a contract. A contract at the 1 level will be made if the pair playing it takes at least 7 tricks.

**Major:**

Refers to the Heart and Spade suits.

**Master card, Master cards:**

Card with which you are sure to win the trick. It is therefore the highest remaining card in the suit played.

**Mess:**

Accident between the two players of the same pair leading to a bad contract or card play.

**Mini-maxi:**

A mini-maxi bid is a forcing bid showing either a weak hand or a strong hand.

**Minimum rebid:**

Rebidding a suit at the minimum level means bidding the same suit twice at the lowest level.

Minimum strength:

Minimum strength held by both players of a pair. It is calculated by adding your points and the minimum number of points that partner can possibly hold.

Minor:

Refers to the Club and Diamond suits.

Misfit, Have a misfit:

Having fewer than eight cards of the same suit between the two hands of a partnership. The two players are said to have a misfit.

Namyats:

Convention consisting of changing the meaning of opening bids at the 4-level. 4C shows a 4H opening bid with maximum one loser in trumps. 4D shows a nice 4S opening bid. 4H and 4S show opening bids with a not-so-good suit.

Natural:

To make a natural bid means to bid a suit in which you hold at least 4 cards.

Neutral:

Refers to defence deemed to be risk-free.

Non-forcing:

Refers to a bid that partner is allowed to pass.

Opener:

The player making the first bid (other than Pass).

Opening:

The first bid made other than Pass.

Opening lead, Opening leads:

The first card played to the first trick, just after the end of the auction.

Opponent:

Player on the opposing side; player in the pair you are playing against.

Overcall, Overcalled:

Bid made when the other side has opened the bidding.

Overtake:

To play a higher card than partner (usually an honour) so that he does not keep the lead.

Overtrick, Overtricks:

Each extra trick won in addition to the contract bid by declarer's side.

Pairs tournament, Pairs event:

This is a type of tournament in which the results of a pair are compared to all results of the pairs playing on the same side (North-South or East-West) at the table. MP (Matchpoint) ranking is used in such tournaments.

Part-score, Part-scores:

All contracts inferior to game or slam, i.e. all contracts from 1C to 4D, except 3NT.

Partner:

Player with whom you play against the other two players.

Pre-empt:

Jump bid showing a long suit and few defensive tricks. As well as giving precise information to partner, it aims to prevent the opponents from finding their best contract.

Preference bid:

Bid saying which suit you prefer when your partner has described two suits (a two-suiter) during the auction. It does not, however, mean that you have a fit.

Quantitative, Quantitative bid:

Bid inviting partner to play a slam if he has a maximum hand.

Redouble:

Declaration over an opponent's double increasing the scoring value of contracts made or defeated. The redouble bid is symbolised by two white crosses on a blue background.

Responder:

In an auction, it refers to opener's partner.

Roudi and Checkback Stayman:

Conventions used by responder when making his second bid after opener's 1NT rebid, in order to describe his hand.

Ruff, Ruffed, Overruff, Overruffed:

Consists of playing a trump when you have no cards left in the suit played. It allows you to win the trick, except if you are overruffed, i.e. another player plays a trump higher than yours.

SEF:

Acronym standing for "Système d'enseignement français", literally French teaching system.

Sequence, Top of a sequence:

A sequence is a series of cards in the same suit. It differs depending on whether it is a no-trump or a suit contract.

- In a suit contract, a sequence is made up of two consecutive honours (10 and 9 are also considered a sequence).
- In a no-trump contract, you need three consecutive honours for a top-of-sequence lead but false sequences are also accepted. A 4-card sequence with one card missing is called a broken sequence.

Setting trick, Setting tricks:

Each trick missing in declarer's side to win the contract bid.

Side:

Two players forming a pair against two other players. Often called East-West side and North-South side.

Signal, Signals, Signal for:

In some situations, to follow with a card which conventionally invites partner to play a specific suit, generally by following with a high card in that suit.

Single-suiter:

Hand with at least a 6-card suit and without any other 4-card suit (6322, 6331, 7222, 7321, 7330, 8...).

Singleton:

"To hold a singleton" means to only have one card in that suit.

Slam, Slams:

**Small slam:** contract at the 6 level, i.e. 12 tricks.

**Grand slam:** contract at the 7 level, i.e. 13 tricks.

### Splinter:

Jump bid showing a shortage in the suit jumped into and a fit in the last suit bid by partner. Normally, you do not make a splinter bid in a suit in which you hold a bare Ace or King.

### Standard count, Odd-even:

A signalling system consisting of showing an even number of cards by first playing a card higher than the next one (6, then 2 with 6 and 2 or with Jack, 7, 6 and 2 e.g.) or showing an odd number of cards by first playing the lowest card (2, then 6 with 8, 6 and 2 or with Jack, 8, 7, 6 and 2). These signals only apply to cases in which you have no interest in playing a high card at the trick in progress.

### Stayman:

Convention used after the 1NT opening bid to ask opener if he holds a 4-card major.

### Stopper, Stop, Guard:

Also "guards". Term used mostly in no-trump contracts. A card or card combination preventing opponents from taking all tricks in a suit on the opening lead.

### Suit, Suits:

The suits in a deck of cards are Spades, Hearts, Diamonds and Clubs. Therefore there are 13 cards per suit in a deck of 52 cards.

### Suit-preference signal:

Card showing partner which suit to return. It is mainly used when you give partner a ruff or when dummy has a singleton.

### Switch (to):

When you play in defence and you gain the lead, it consists of not returning the suit led by partner.

### Teams-of-four match:

A type of tournament in which two teams of four players play one against one another. The North-South pair of table A is associated with the East-West pair of table B, whereas the deals are identical at both tables. The way score is calculated is different from a pairs tournament.

### Tenace:

To hold two out of three consecutive cards in a suit, the one missing being the middle one. Example: holding Ace and Queen without the King, or King and Jack without the Queen.

### Third-suit forcing, 3rd-suit forcing:

After opener has repeated his opening suit, the next suit up is artificial when this is a new one. It asks opener to give more details about his hand. Third-suit forcing requires at least 10 HCP.

### Three-suiter:

Hand with at least 3 4-card suits (4441 or 5440).

### To Pass, Pass, No bid:

It means not bidding, doubling or redoubling when it is your turn during the auction and therefore "passing" with the "Pass" bid.

### Top of nothing:

[Mainly in France] Refers to a lead from a bad suit (without honours) when you play in a no-trump contract. With 2 or 3 cards, you lead the highest one. With 4 cards or more, you lead the second highest one.

### Trick points:

All points scored by declarer's side to make the contract. They depend on the contract's trump suit. Clubs or Diamonds: 20 points per trick taken above six. Hearts or Spades: 30 points per trick taken above six. No-trumps:



40 points for the first trick, then 30 points for the following tricks. Bonus points have to be added to these points.

**Trick, Tricks:**

A trick is made up of 4 played cards, one from each player at the table. The tricks taken by a pair allow the result of the contract to be determined at the end of the deal.

**Tripletton:**

"To hold a tripletton" means to have three cards in that suit.

**Trump:**

In a suit contract, trumps are the thirteen cards of that suit. When you don't hold any cards in the suit played, playing a trump (i.e. ruffing) allows you to win the trick.

**Two-suiter, Jump two-suiter, Strong two-suiter, Economical two-suiter, Two-suiters:**

**Two-suiter:** distribution including at least one 5-card suit and one 4-card suit. Examples: 5422, 5431, 5521, 5530, 6421, 6430, etc.

**Jump two-suiter:** bid in a second suit which could be made at the lower level.

**Strong two-suiter:** bid in a second suit which forces partner to bid your first suit at the 3 level.

**Economical two-suiter:** bid in a second suit allowing partner to go back to the first one at the same level.

**Unbalanced, Unbalanced hand, Unbalanced hands:**

A hand is said to be unbalanced when it includes one singleton, one void or at least two doubletons.

**Unbid suit, Unbid suits:**

During an auction, it refers to the suits which have not been bid yet.

**Unblocking:**

Technique consisting in getting rid of the cards hindering communications.

**Void:**

"To be void" or "to have a void" means having no cards in that suit.

**Vulnerability:**

The way bonus points or penalty points for setting tricks are awarded. When you are vulnerable, setting-trick penalties are higher but game and slam bonuses are higher too. Historically, in rubber bridge, a rubber was made of two winning games. It was then said that the side having already scored one game was vulnerable, while the side having not scored a game was not vulnerable. Vulnerability affects game and slam bonuses as well as the value of the setting tricks, whether they are undoubled, doubled or redoubled. In tournaments, each deal is independent. To recreate the conditions of a rubber, both sides are given a shadow vulnerability on each deal.

**XYZ:**

Convention used by responder to describe his hand when making his second bid, where the auction is still at the 1-level.

**Play practice deals at your own pace.**

Funbridge is a bridge game for smartphones, tablets and computers allowing you to play duplicate bridge 24/7.

Compare yourself with thousands of other players, get ranked and make rapid progress.

[Play bridge online with Funbridge](#)