

## U3ABC02 Practice Session

Welcome!

Here is a list of all 16 hands available to play in today's MiniBridge Practice Session. It tells you useful stuff like the cards in each hand, the High Card Points, the "correct" contract and lead. It also explains how to play each hand – **don't worry too much about any of this!** The explanations are quite detailed, they are there if you want them, but don't feel bad if they make no sense right now or the play is totally different to how you played the hands. You're just getting started; these first few practice sessions are more about getting used to playing on your computer, meeting the other students and your instructors.

Bridge is a great game, but it can be overwhelming, so much to think about. Don't worry, it will get easier. We're here to help it all make sense. Don't worry about making mistakes, we all do. We're always happy to explain or answer questions. Remember, you're playing with other people who are just starting out, too. Let's have fun together!

-Ed

Boards 1 – 8: MiniBridge No Trump hands

### North East South West

21      1      12      6

♠AK2  
♥A543  
♦AKQJ  
♣32

♠7543  
♥Q2  
♦987  
♣KJ97

♠86  
♥JT987  
♦T62  
♣T84

♠QJT9  
♥K6  
♦543  
♣AQ65

### Board: 1    Dealer: North    Lead: ♥J    #1

We have 33 points so we choose game in No Trumps. East leads ♥J (top of a sequence).

We have eleven top winners: 4♠, 2♥, 4♦ and 1♣.

The simple way to play this hand is just to cash these eleven top winners. The order of play doesn't really matter, but it's good technique to start playing Spades by cashing ♠AK. This enables the rest of the suit to be cashed without having to worry about entries.

If you've already played a few hands of MiniBridge you might spot a way to try for a twelfth trick: win the first trick with ♥K, cross to hand with ♦A and lead a Club.

If East plays low, play dummy's ♣Q, which will win the trick if East holds ♣K. (This is an example of a simple finesse.)

In practice West wins with ♣K, so we have to be content with eleven tricks. Even so, we've lost nothing by playing Clubs in this way because we can regain the lead in any suit and resume cashing our top winners. On this hand, finessing ♣K never loses and might win.

**East South West North**

14 8 13 5

♠ 532  
♥ Q642  
♦ K987  
♣ 32

♠ K7  
♥ KJ8  
♦ Q32  
♣ KJ964

♠ A86  
♥ A73  
♦ T64  
♣ AQT8

♠ QJT94  
♥ T95  
♦ AJ5  
♣ 75

**South West North East**

12 12 10 6

♠ A32  
♥ 92  
♦ QJT52  
♣ K75

♠ KQJ  
♥ KQJT76  
♦ 987  
♣ 6

♠ 974  
♥ 543  
♦ 64  
♣ AQ932

♠ T865  
♥ A8  
♦ AK3  
♣ JT84

**Board: 2 Dealer: East Lead: ♠Q #2**

We have 27 points so we choose game in No Trumps. South leads ♠Q (top of a sequence).

We have 9 top winners: 2♠, 2♥, 0♦, 5♣.

A straightforward hand, we will cash our 9 top winners, but remember to play Clubs starting with ♣A and ♣Q (play high cards from the short side first).

If you've already played a few hands of MiniBridge you might spot a way to try for a tenth trick: if South holds ♥Q we could lead a Heart from hand, planning to play dummy's ♥J if South plays low.

This is an example of a finesse, but it's not advisable on this hand because if North holds ♥Q the opponents could score too many tricks in Diamonds.

Did you notice that the combined hands contain 9 cards in Clubs? If so, did you think of choosing a Club contract?

In practice, with two fairly balanced hands and some high cards in each suit there's little to be gained by having Clubs as trumps. It's possible to make ten tricks by careful play, but this extra trick doesn't help because ten tricks aren't enough for game in a minor suit.

**Board: 3 Dealer: South Lead: ♥K #3**

We have 22 points so we choose part score in No Trumps (7 tricks).

West leads ♥K (top of a sequence).

We have 7 top winners: 1♠, 1♥, 5♦, 0♣.

We win the lead and immediately take five Diamond tricks. Remember to play the Diamonds starting with ♦A and ♦K (play high cards from the short side first).

**West North East South**

13    7            11    9

♠ 64  
 ♥ J87543  
 ♦ AQ8  
 ♣ 32

♠ JT3                    ♠ KQ2  
 ♥ AK6                    ♥ 2  
 ♦ JT52                   ♦ 963  
 ♣ AT9                    ♣ KQJ875

♠ A9875  
 ♥ QT9  
 ♦ K74  
 ♣ 64

**Board: 4    Dealer: West    Lead: ♥5            #4**

We have 24 points so we choose part score in No Trumps (7 tricks).

We have 8 top winners: 0♠, 2♥, 0♦, 6♣.

The simple way to play this hand is just to cash these 8 winners. After winning the opening lead with ♥A we cash ♣A and ♥K. We play dummy's Clubs from the top and concede the last 5 tricks.

If you've already played a few MiniBridge hands you might see you can set up additional tricks in Spades. We have ♠KQJ between the two hands and if we use one of these cards to drive out ♠A our remaining high Spades will be winners.

Before doing this we need to check that it's OK to give the opponents the lead. In this case it is: we still have a top Heart to prevent the opponents cashing tricks in the suit, while in Diamonds our ♦JTxx in hand serves to prevent the opponents making tricks with more than their ♦AKQ.

At trick 2 we therefore play a Spade to dummy's ♠K (instead of cashing ♥K). South wins and returns a Heart to our ♥K, dummy discarding a Diamond. We cash ♠J and ♣A, after which we can claim six more tricks with dummy's winners (♠Q and ♣KQJ87). We finish with ten tricks.

On this hand NS can make at least nine tricks in NT against any defence and distribution, so our combined 24 points were actually sufficient for game in NT.

As you play more MiniBridge you'll realise that points are only a guideline: sometimes game can be made with 21-24 points, while game is sometimes not possible even with as many as 25-28 points.

On this hand dummy's Clubs were very useful, while the ♥AK in our short suit allowed us to lose the lead safely so that we could establish more tricks.

Did you notice that the combined hands contain 9 cards in Clubs? If so, did you think of choosing a Club contract?

In practice, with some high cards in each suit there's nothing to be gained by having Clubs as trumps. See above for why playing in No Trumps works well.

The same number of tricks (nine or ten - depending on the defence) are available in Clubs and No Trumps, but the No Trump contract scores more.

**North East South West**

13	9	9	9
	♠K43		
	♥AQ		
	♦A753		
	♣T987		
♠76		♠QJT982	
♥T964		♥532	
♦KQJT		♦84	
♣K62		♣AQ	
	♠A5		
	♥KJ87		
	♦962		
	♣J543		

**Board: 5 Dealer: North Lead: ♠Q #5**

We have 22 points so we choose part score in No Trumps (7 tricks).  
 East leads ♠Q (top of a sequence). We have seven top winners: 2♠, 4♥, 1♦, 0♣.  
 Before playing to the first trick we must check the entry situation. To make four tricks from Hearts we'll need an entry to dummy outside Hearts to allow us to cash ♥KJ. This means that we must win the first Spade with ♠K.  
 We next unblock the Heart suit by cashing ♥AQ. Then we cross to the South hand with ♠A and cash ♥KJ. We finally win ♦A for seven tricks.

**East South West North**

17	9	10	4
	♠8753		
	♥654		
	♦A7		
	♣5432		
♠T62		♠AKQJ	
♥T7		♥A32	
♦K653		♦T942	
♣AQJ6		♣K9	
	♠94		
	♥KQJ98		
	♦QJ8		
	♣T87		

**Board: 6 Dealer: East Lead: ♥K #6**

We have 27 points so we choose game in No Trumps.  
 South leads ♥K (top of a sequence). We have nine top winners: 4♠, 1♥, 0♦, 4♣.  
 We will win ♥A and at some stage must cash ♣K then lead ♣9. That way four Club tricks can be cashed, together with four Spades. (It doesn't matter if we cash the Spades before the Clubs.)  
 Remember: to unblock, always play high cards from the short side first.

**South West North East**

16	8	9	7
	♠KJ74		
	♥A		
	♦T932		
	♣J932		
♠32		♠T9865	
♥KQJT76		♥985	
♦Q65		♦AK	
♣75		♣T84	
	♠AQ		
	♥432		
	♦J874		
	♣AKQ6		

**Board: 7 Dealer: South Lead: ♥K #7**

We have 25 points so we choose game in No Trumps. East leads ♥K (top of a sequence). We have nine top winners: 4♠, 1♥, 0♦, 4♣.

After winning the first trick with ♥A we should immediately play a Spade to cash ♠AQ. We can get back to dummy by leading ♣6 to ♣J and can then cash ♠KJ. The ♣J is a vital card, being the only entry to two winners in dummy. (We can, if we want, cash some or all of ♣AKQ before cashing ♠AQ.)

We must play ♠AQ first so we can cross to the other hand and play ♠KJ (play high cards from the short side first to avoid blockages).

**West North East South**

17	7	6	10
	♠QJ9854		
	♥74		
	♦98		
	♣A72		
♠AK2		♠T	
♥AQ3		♥KJT2	
♦A642		♦J753	
♣T86		♣J954	
	♠763		
	♥9865		
	♦KQT		
	♣KQ3		

**Board: 8 Dealer: West Lead: ♠Q #8**

We have 23 points so we choose part score in No Trumps (7 tricks)

North leads the ♠Q (top of sequence). We can see seven top winners: 2♠, 4♥, 1♦, 0♣.

After winning the first trick with ♠A we should play ♥AQ followed by ♥3 to cash the remaining Hearts. We cash ♦A and ♠K, then concede the rest.

Boards 9 – 16: MiniBridge Suit contracts

**North East South West**

13 13 10 4

♠AKQ875

♥T8

♦74

♣A96

♠3

♥J5

♦QT962

♣JT753

♠62

♥AKQ97

♦KJ83

♣42

♠JT94

♥6432

♦A5

♣KQ8

**East South West North**

19 5 9 7

♠Q

♥T75

♦QJT62

♣QT63

♠843

♥KQJ3

♦K73

♣952

♠AK92

♥A8642

♦A9

♣A4

♠JT765

♥9

♦854

♣KJ87

**Board: 9 Dealer: North Lead: ♥A #41**

We have 10 Spades so we choose to play with Spades as trumps. We have slightly less than the 25 normally needed for game but we have great trumps and we will make some tricks with our small trumps. This means we can choose game which will give us the 300 bonus!

East leads ♥A (top of a sequence).

We have 10 top winners (6♠, 0♥, 1♦, 3♣).

Defenders play ♥AKQ and we win the third round by ruffing in hand. We must draw out the defenders' trumps before playing the rest of our winners.

**Board: 10 Dealer: East Lead: ♠6 #42**

We have 28 points and nine cards in Hearts so we choose game with Hearts as trumps.

South has no good lead so starts with a low Spade which is probably safer than leading away from ♣KJ.

We have 10 top winners (2♠, 5♥, 2♦, 1♣).

We must draw trumps first as we don't want to risk the defenders trumping one of our winners in the other suits.

We can make an extra trick by ruffing the fourth Spade in dummy after drawing trumps.

**South West North East**

13 10 8 9

♠ 642  
♥ T7654  
♦ K3  
♣ AJ6

♠ AKQ8753  
♥  
♦ JT9  
♣ T93

♠ JT9  
♥ QJ9832  
♦ 7  
♣ KQ4

♠  
♥ AK  
♦ AQ86542  
♣ 8752

**West North East South**

15 8 6 11

♠ KQJT  
♥ 972  
♦ QT843  
♣ 2

♠ 432  
♥ AK5  
♦ A9  
♣ A8764

♠ 975  
♥ QJ8  
♦ 652  
♣ K953

♠ A86  
♥ T643  
♦ KJ7  
♣ QJT

**Board: 11 Dealer: South Lead: ♠A #43**

We have 21 points and 9 Diamonds so we choose to play in part score with Diamonds as trumps.

West lead ♠A (top of a sequence). We have 10 top winners (0♠, 2♥, 7♦, 1♣).

We ruff the first trick and play a low Diamond to ♦K and back to ♦A. When East shows out on the second round we draw the last trump with ♦Q.

Rather than just claim our ten top winners we should try for an eleventh trick in Clubs. We start by playing a Club towards ♣J, which would win the trick if West started with ♣KQ.

In practice East wins with ♣Q and returns a Spade, which we ruff in hand. We now try our second shot in Clubs by playing ♣A and another. When the suit breaks 3-3 ♣8 becomes our eleventh trick.

Note: it was important to start drawing trumps with ♦K, following the principle of playing the high card from the short side first. If we play ♦A before ♦K West will ruff if we try to get back to our hand with a Heart.

**Board: 12 Dealer: West Lead: ♠K #44**

We have 21 points and nine cards in Clubs so we choose part score in Clubs.

North leads ♠K (top of a sequence).

We have 6 top winners (0♠, 3♥, 1♦ and 2♣) but with nine cards in Clubs there will be more Club winners once we have drawn the defenders trumps.

Defenders win three Spades and switch to Diamonds. We win and draw trumps. South will win a Club and a Diamond but we have 8 tricks.

**North East South West**

14 7 7 12

♠QJT9  
♥A854  
♦87  
♣AK2

♠A7  
♥32  
♦AK642  
♣J943

♠532  
♥QJT9  
♦QT9  
♣QT8

♠K864  
♥K76  
♦J53  
♣765

**East South West North**

13 8 12 7

♠Q96  
♥3  
♦J954  
♣KJ965

♠T753  
♥AJ72  
♦K2  
♣A83

♠A84  
♥KQ964  
♦A86  
♣72

♠KJ2  
♥T85  
♦QT73  
♣QT4

**Board: 13 Dealer: North Lead: ♥Q #45**

We have 21 points and eight cards in Spades so we choose part score in Spades.

East leads ♥Q (top of a sequence). We have 4 top winners (0♠, 2♥, 0♦, 2♣) but three more will come from Spades once the ♠A has been driven out.

The simple approach is to draw trumps, hoping that the suit breaks 3-2. When trumps are drawn there will be a trump left in our hand and dummy's hand. We can ruff a Diamond and this provides the eighth trick. There is an alternative line of play that usually makes an overtrick if trumps are 4-1 or 5-0. We win the first trick in dummy and immediately play a Heart to ♥A. We cash ♣AK and give up a Heart trick. At some point we'll win a trick with one of our ♠QJT9, after which we can ruff the fourth round of Hearts with ♠8 for our eighth trick.

**Board: 14 Dealer: East Lead: ♥5 #46**

We have 25 points and 9 cards in Hearts so we choose game with Hearts as trumps.

South leads a trump to avoid giving a trick away. We can see 9 top winners (1♠, 5♥, 2♦, 1♣). The extra trick can come from ruffing a Diamond in dummy which has the shorter trumps.

Ruffing in the hand with the short trumps gives us an extra trick. Note that ruffing in the hand with the long trumps usually doesn't provide an extra trick.

As long as Hearts break 2-2 or 3-1 we can draw all the trumps before taking the ruff with dummy's fourth trump. If North discards at trick 1 we'll need to ruff the Diamond first.



**South West North East**

16 12 7 5

	♠T86		
	♥3		
	♦AQJ872		
	♣432		
♠QJ95		♠7432	
♥AJ7		♥KT85	
♦T		♦53	
♣KJ865		♣QT7	
	♠AK		
	♥Q9642		
	♦K964		
	♣A9		

**West North East South**

14 12 7 7

	♠AKQT		
	♥T8642		
	♦T		
	♣K98		
♠J64		♠9732	
♥KJ		♥AQ	
♦AK93		♦654	
♣Q753		♣JT62	
	♠85		
	♥9753		
	♦QJ872		
	♣A4		

**Board: 15 Dealer: South Lead: ♠Q #47**

We have 23 points and 10 Diamonds. We have fewer high card points than we normally need for game but we can choose game in Diamonds because we have ten trumps and our small Diamonds will make tricks once the defenders three trumps are drawn.

West leads ♠Q (top of a sequence). We have 9 top winners (2♠, 0♥, 6♦, 1♣) with only one Heart and one Club to lose on top. The extra tricks come from ruffing a Spades and a Club in our hand (the one with the SHORTER trumps).

The simple approach is to draw trumps in two rounds and then give up a Club trick. We enter dummy with Heart ruffs to take the two ruffs in our hand.

This line would fail if an opponent was void in trumps (a 22% chance). We could guard against this by cashing our second top Spade before playing a Diamond to ♦A. We would then be able to make the contract by ruffing a Spade in hand and playing ♣A and ♣9 before playing any more trumps.

**Board: 16 Dealer: West Lead: ♠A #48**

We have 21 points and 8 cards in Clubs so we choose part score in Clubs.

North leads ♠A (top of a sequence). We can see only 4 top winners (0♠, 2♥, 2♦, 0♣)

Clubs provide 2 more after the ♣A and ♣K have been driven out. An extra trick comes from ruffing a Spade in our hand. If North plays four top Spades, this happens at trick 4. Otherwise it can happen after trumps have been drawn.

Did you think about choosing part score in NT because both hands were balanced? Often this is a good idea, but not here because both hands are short in Hearts. If you play in NT you'll be unable to make more than your four top winners. Try it and see if you're not convinced.