

Lesson 9: The Bidding Box

General

Today we will go from the simplified form of the staircase, to using an advanced variant that contains contracts. Be aware that it can be a difficult transition, where the children have to unlearn thinking when they report their points, and move on to thinking about contracts.

Plan for the day

1. Set the mood: Until now, we have played with simplified rules for bidding. Now we're going to get closer to proper bidding, and use the bidding box (show them!). Hopefully they think this seems exciting!
2. Repeat concept: Sequence. Top of a sequence. Low from honour. Strength signals.
3. Today's topic: The bidding box, contract. [Video link](#) (2:40 mins).
4. Talk about today's topic (3 mins): To go from tricks to contract: tricks above 6. Show many examples of contracts: Take the bidding box and hold up, e.g. 1 heart: How many tricks, and what is trumps? 3 clubs? 7NT etc. Give enough examples that the vast majority of people have taken it on board.
5. Divide into tables of 4. Take 10 minutes and let everyone on the table practice grabbing the bidding box (e.g. everyone picks up 2 spades), put it correctly on the table, and put it back in the bidding box again. "Dry run" on several contracts until they master the technique. Let them look at the back of the 2NT and 3NT cards to see how many points they get. They may also wonder about the black and red numbers (the points for making contracts and going down).
6. NB! We will still announce honour points out loud and use the stairs to decide the contract. Remember to put the correct staircase (the advanced one) on the table.
7. Play the hands for Lesson 9: Let them write the contract and result on the score slip.
8. Be careful: Focus on the fact that it is fun to use the bidding box. Be prepared for someone to protest and want to go back to the old method. Have a plan for how to handle it.
9. Extra tasks (if someone finishes early): exercise sheet about contracts.
10. Wrap up and summarise the session.

Today's tip for assistants:

Spend plenty of time practicing the gripping technique on the bidding box, and plenty of time to let everyone understand how to find the score for a made contract. Don't take the bids out for them, let them do it for themselves, and instead show with your own bidding box how it should be done.

Ending

Make sure you have a summing up. If possible, let them borrow a bidding box to take home with them.