



Junior Award Scheme

Teachers' notes

Record of student learning and achievement – Teacher’s Notes

MINIBRIDGE AWARD

Criteria	Criteria details - Marking
Deciding the contract	
1	Be able to count the points correctly. The student will know the values for each honour card and add them up.
2	Know the correct suit names and order. From clubs to NT.
3	Say what is trumps (or NT) and who is declarer/boss. Will happen as part of the game.
4	Know number of tricks needed for game or part score. Will be important as to their choice of contract.
5	Identify a hand suitable to play in NT. Will note things like balanced hands, no 8-card trump fits, stoppers in suits.
6	Identify whether to call game or part score in NT. Based on points and counting likely tricks.
7	Identify a hand suitable to play in a suit. Lots of trumps, lack of stoppers etc.
8	Identify whether to call game or part score in a suit. Based on tricks and points.
Playing The Cards	
1	Count the total number of winners. When playing a contract (or defending one), the student should be aware of how many tracks they need and how many they have to help form a plan of where to get the remainder they require.
2	Knocking out high cards to establish winners. Playing the top cards in a suit in order to promote the next ones into winners. The student understands that knocking out opponents top cards and cashing their winners in the suit to remove the other cards can make winners of the long suit tricks they hold in that suit.
3	Drawing trumps in a suit contract. This incorporates counting a suit and understanding the lie of cards in a suit in all four hands. The student should also appreciate this play removes a threat from the opponents.
4	Count the points to work out where the outstanding cards lie. Find a missing king or queen for example. The student will note from the announcing where the points are and work out the positions of remaining cards as more clues become available.
5	Take a finesse against an outstanding card. Having worked out where the missing card will be, work out to play a lower (but winning) card in the right situation.
Playing	
1	Take part in an in-class competition. Teacher is free to set their own format.
2	Show respect for your partner and everyone else in the game.
3	Work out and record the score. By adding up the points for each (under)trick and any bonuses.

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BRONZE AWARD

Criteria	Criteria details – Marking
BIDDING	
1	Open 1NT with the right shape and point range. The student should always be opening 1NT when balanced and within the agreed partnership point range. They should not be opening 1 of a suit in preference.
2	Open and rebid suits to show the correct shape. The student opens their longest suit and rebids their hands to show the correct relative suit lengths and where appropriate, hand strengths.
3	Open a suit and rebid NT when out of range. Similar to previous, except that No Trumps should be rebid to convey the message of balanced hand with a different point range.
4	Bid suits in the right order when responding. The student bids 4 card suits up the line, but prefers to respond in their longer rather than stronger suit.
5	Understand the values and shape required to make an overcall. Overcalls require 5 card suits at the 1 level and more often need 6 card suits at the 2-level. Overcalls do not require opening values, but slightly stronger hands are required for 2-level overcalls.
CARDPLAY	
1	Count winners. The student will count the number of tricks they have at the start of play to work out how many they need to make their contract. They can then work out where they might be able to make the extra tricks they require to make the contract.
2	Count suits. The student should take note of how many cards have gone in a suit to work out how many are left and which one is the winner.
3	Establish a suit by driving out high cards. The student will notice by counting that they do not have sufficient tricks to make a contract, so will seek to establish winners in suits by knocking out the opposing high cards.
4	Take a finesse against an outstanding card. The student will not cash a high card, but instead will play a lower one (for example an AQ combination) in an attempt to make an extra trick depending on the layout of the suit.
5	Use entries to go from one hand to another to cash tricks. The student will work out how to use both hands to make tricks and use high card entries to get from one hand to another in order to do this.
6	Play hands by drawing trumps. The student will recognise the danger of leaving enemy trumps outstanding and neutralise it by cashing trumps.
PLAYING	
1	Play in a class competition. The format is at the teacher’s discretion
2	Show courtesy and respect to partner and opponents at all times. Good behaviour is something we regard as most important of all!

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SILVER AWARD

Criteria	Criteria details – Marking
BIDDING	
1	Use simple takeout doubles. Where a hand is not suitable for any other bid, but the student has the values to compete, they are able to use double to convey this message.
2	Understand what is meant by a conventional bid. A bid that doesn't use the natural meaning of the bid made, but replaces it with an 'artificial meaning'. Conventions are used to improve the effectiveness of a bidding system.
3	Use the Stayman convention in response to an opening 1NT. The student will use Stayman to enquire after 4-4 major suit fits and understand how to continue the auction after they have received a response.
4	Bid hands to slams using Blackwood. The student will use Blackwood (any variant is fine) to find out about Aces (and Kings) and in doing so determine which level it is safe to bid to.
5	Make a natural overcall of 1NT after an opening bid. With balanced hands (and stops) the student looks to show that type of hand by overcalling in No Trumps.
6	Use strong opening bids. Where the hand is too strong to open at the one-level, the student uses an opening bid to specifically show the extra values. For most students, this will be with a 2C opening, but may also include 2NT (for balanced hands) and natural strong twos if taught by the teacher. Explain in terms of points, tricks and/or extra shape.
CARDPLAY	
1	Establish tricks by ducking in a suit. The student will deliberately lose a trick or two in a suit while retaining control in order to establish extra tricks.
2	Make extra trump tricks by ruffing losers in a suit. The student should ideally aim to ruff losers using the short trump hand as using the long trumps to ruff doesn't necessarily mean extra tricks. If however they manage to ruff sufficiently in the long hand and then still retain trump control in the short hand (a dummy reversal) then extra bonus points!
3	Lead the correct cards from suit holdings. The student should be leading the expected card from a combination according to lead agreements. These will mostly be 4 th highest, top of sequences etc as played by most people, but as with bidding, there are no prescribed methods they are required to be taught.
4	Make the correct defence based on partner's opening lead. Based on partner leading the correct cards in a suit, the student will work out the layout of the suit (using tools such as the Rule of 11) from the information they have and consistently play the right card.
5	Establish a suit by using ruffs. The student will recognise that by using ruffs to establish a suit, they can make extra tricks from the long cards.
6	Demonstrate a cross-ruff play. This could happen either when declaring or defending. The player will ruff sequentially in opposite hands to increase the number

	of separate trump tricks they make.
PLAYING	
1	Play regularly at school (or in a club). Students should be playing most weeks at their school clubs or in a local duplicate with their parents if that is where they play.
2	Show courtesy and respect to partner and opponents at all times. Good behaviour is something we regard as most important of all!
3	Understand bridge scoring. The players should be able to calculate the scores for their contracts – both making and going down!

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GOLD AWARD

Criteria	Criteria details
BIDDING	
1	Use pre-emptive opening bids. The student opens at the 3 or 4 level with a weak hand and long suit. If their partner does so, then the student tries to work out the best spot and doesn't panic if it is a misfit.
2	Show false preference as responder. When opener has shown two suits, the student goes back to opener's first when
3	Use and understand reverses (or bidding through the 'barrier'). They will understand that rebidding a higher ranking suit at a higher level shows extra values, so will rebid their first suit if they lack sufficient extras to reverse.
4	Use negative doubles in an auction. After the opposition have overcalled, a double by responder is for takeout, not penalties. This is a much more useful interpretation of double and represents a further step from simple takeout doubles of an opening bid.
5	Respond correctly to takeout doubles. The student bids at the minimum level with a weak hand, jumps or forces with stronger hands. They also pass the double for penalties when holding good trumps – demonstrating awareness of opportunities to score heavily in the auction.
6	Respond correctly to overcalls. The student shows judgement in passing misfits, raising with fits, forcing with good hands or introducing new suits.
CARDPLAY	
1	Take note of the bidding when planning the play. This will involve things like placing high cards based upon the auction or likely distributions.
2	Perform basic cardplay combinations in a single suit correctly. The student should show a level of understanding of how to develop common suit combinations for the most tricks, to guard against bad breaks where possible and to keep entries fluid. This will mean things like knowing to cash short hand honours first and how to combine cashing honours and taking finesses to best effect.
3	Use count or attitude signals consistently when defending. The partnership agrees a signalling method (the choice is not important) and uses it consistently to give each other information which they use to help defend contracts.
4	Demonstrate a suit preference signal. This can happen in many situations when defending – such as giving a ruff or when discarding. The important thing is that the card is played attempting to give the information and that the other defender recognises it and responds.
5	Understand safe and danger hands. The student will recognise that they have some suits that are safe if one defender is kept off lead (the danger hand).
6	Demonstrate an avoidance play. Having recognised the danger hand, they will then plan the play of the contract to prevent this hand from getting on lead.
PLAYING	

1	Understand the difference between teams (IMPs) and pairs (Matchpoint) scoring. This should manifest itself in the tactics at the table, i.e. pushing for games at teams and playing harder for overtricks at matchpoint scoring.
2	Be able to play at eight boards per hour. The normal rate of club competition and higher is eight boards per hour. As the students become more proficient at the table, they should be encouraged to speed their play up accordingly so that they are then ready to explore the competitive arena should they wish to do so.
3	Continue to demonstrate excellent etiquette and behaviour at the table. This is a demonstration of continued excellent behaviour by the student. As they become more knowledgeable and aware, a higher standard of etiquette should be expected. The player should know to call the director (politely!) whenever a breakdown at the table has occurred and have some understanding of common rules such as leads out of turn and revokes.

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PLATINUM AWARD

Criteria	Criteria details
BIDDING	
1	Show the ability to use judgement – not just stick strictly to point counts. Where the hand has distributional value or cards lie badly or well based on the auction, the student makes note and tries to adjust accordingly.
2	Bid a slam using cue bidding as part of the auction. The partnership agrees a suit and then uses control showing cue bids to determine if there are top losers that would prevent a slam from making.
3	Use competitive and responsive doubles in an auction. The modern style of bidding uses double in competitive auctions as a flexible bid to suggest a desire to compete with no clear bid. The student should be using double as a bid to show unbid majors and multiple places to play.
4	Use fourth suit forcing correctly, understanding the alternative responses. Fourth suit is a vital tool to constructive natural bidding. The student should be able to use it to develop forcing auctions and understand what the different continuations should show.
5	Use and understand Weak Two openings. While Strong Twos were traditionally used, the Weak Two has overtaken it in popularity by a long way. Students will use them, understand how to respond to them and have some appreciation of how to vary the values of the bid according to the tactical situation at the table.
6	Use transfers in response to a 1NT and 2NT opening. While we don't intend to force lots of 'system' on students, transfers are a vital part of many areas of modern bidding systems. At Gold level, it is reasonable to expect them to be able to use and understand them – in this case in the position they are most commonly used.
CARDPLAY	
1	Demonstrate an elimination play in either a suit or no trump contract. An elimination involves stripping the outside suits before throwing an opponent in to force a favourable lead – a technique related to the avoidance play. Students should tend to play along these types of lines as a matter of course where possible. These are common techniques, so there should be plenty of opportunity to demonstrate at the table.
2	Demonstrate a safety play. A play that guarantees or increases the chances of a minimum number of tricks while possibly sacrificing the chance of extra tricks. Particularly relevant to guaranteeing contracts at teams scoring.
3	Perform a trump promotion in defence. The defenders will cash their outside winners before then playing another card through to force declarer to ruff high then promoting a trump trick for the defence.
4	Understand basic distributional percentages. Assessing the chances of differing lines of play in a contract requires this basic knowledge. The student should know the common percentage chances of differing suit distributions and be able to apply them to guide their line of play. For example – 8 ever 9 never or taking a finesse instead of

	a 3-3 break.
5	Demonstrate a dummy reversal. A much more advanced method of using the trump suit to ruff losers/establish a suit. This requires using the long suit to ruff sufficient times to make extra tricks while retaining the short holding to draw enemy trumps. This is a rare play, so the student may make up an example to show their knowledge.
PLAYING	
1	Play outside school in a club or school competition. Either play in a local club if the student doesn't do so, or play in a school's competition – maybe a head to head match or organised event such as the School's cup or U20 pairs.
2	Continue to demonstrate excellent etiquette and behaviour at the table. This is a demonstration of continued excellent behaviour by the student. As they become more knowledgeable and aware, a higher standard of etiquette should be expected. The player should know to call the director (politely!) whenever a breakdown at the table has occurred and have some understanding of common rules such as leads out of turn and revokes.

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DIAMOND AWARD

Criteria	Criteria details
BIDDING	
1	Demonstrate 4 th hand/protective bidding. Tactical bidding with lighter and shape suitable hands in the pass out seat is an essential tactical manoeuvre to compete in auctions – both to win them, to gain favourable leads or force the opponents up to a higher level.
2	Understand the Law of Total Tricks. A general bidding guide to competitive auctions, the law states that the total number of tricks available is approximately equal to the total number of trumps held by both sides. It breaks down at high levels, especially when there is a double fit. If both sides hold broken suits then the total is likely to be lower.
3	Bid slams using splinter bids. Splinter bids are a valuable tool to pinpointing hands that fit together well – this makes them an invaluable aid to slam bidding. Students will be able to identify when the splinter bid increases or decreases the value of the hand opposite and bid accordingly.
4	Use a forcing 2NT response system to 1Major openings. One other essential piece of system is to have a forcing raise available. The continuations after the raise can be as simple or complex as the student wishes.
5	Use unassuming cue bids (UCB) to aid competitive bidding. Showing the type of support a player has for partner is fundamental to competitive judgement. The student should use a UCB when holding stronger hands with support to help partner judge the auction. The corollary is that the student should use direct raises when holding weaker, shapelier support hands.
6	Demonstrate a knowledge of common two-suited overcalls (such as Michaels Cue Bid or Unusual NT). While the student doesn't have to play them as part of their system, these methods are sufficiently common that they should be aware of how they work.
CARDPLAY	
1	Demonstrate a trump coup. It is recognised that some of these plays are sufficiently rare that the pupil may need to demonstrate them using whiteboards or by creating a layout using a pack of cards.
2	Demonstrate coup en passant and elopements. These are useful techniques for handling weaker trump suit holdings – and related to the trump coup. The student may revert to these techniques when drawing trumps is inappropriate – such as weak trump holdings and scrambling for tricks.
3	By playing, show that you are counting every deal you play. All techniques flow from building up a complete picture of the deal. The student should be working out the distributions of all four hands in a deal and know which cards have been played. This does take time and practice to master.
4	Be able to explain Smith Peters. A signal used in defending No Trumps where the players play a high-low order signal on the first suit that declarer plays to say whether they want the opening lead suit lead back towards them or not. It is optional if the students wish to use these signals themselves.

5	Demonstrate a simple squeeze. Squeeze play is an advanced technique and can be relatively rare. The student may therefore demonstrate the position using a whiteboard or pack of cards. They should understand squeeze cards, loose cards, menaces and entries. Bonus points for differentiating between positional and automatic squeezes or explaining the Vienna Coup.
PLAYING	
1	Play in a national event. Having completed the diamond award, the student's name will be added to a database at EBU HQ where they will qualify for one free entry from a selection of national events as a prize (TO BE CONFIRMED).
2	Attend a junior squad training session. Should players complete their platinum awards, their details will be passed to the junior squad leaders who can then add them to their database with a view to inviting them to a squad training session that may be in a convenient location.
3	Continue to show high levels of ethics and behaviour at all times when playing. To achieve this, we would expect the students to know their responsibilities to the other players at the table including familiarity with the laws of the game.