

Lesson 4

Introduction to Trumps

(Student pages)

HCP Review

1. What does HCP stand for?
2. How many HCP are in a suit?
3. How many HCP are in the deck?
4. How many HCP does each player hold on average?
5. If you have 12 HCP, do you have an above-average or below-average hand?
6. If you have 5 HCP, do you have an above-average or below-average hand?
7. What is the purpose of HCP?
8. If you have 18 HCP, how many tricks do you estimate you can take?



Describing the Distribution (or Shape) of your hand

Deal yourself 13 cards and sort them into suits.

Count the number of **spades** and write down your result: _____

Count the number of **hearts** and write down your result: _____

Count the number of **diamonds** and write down your result: _____

Count the number of **clubs** and write down your result: _____

Instead of vertically, now write your results horizontally for each suit this way:

Spades	Hearts	Diamonds	Clubs
_____	_____	_____	_____

Read out your results, left to right, just stating the four numbers. This is what is meant by the **distribution** of your hand. It describes exactly how many cards you hold in each suit. Always name the suits in this order (to help you remember, the suits are listed in **reverse alphabetical order**). If everyone states their suits in this order, then you don't have to say "spades" and "hearts" every time and this saves time! If you state your suits in the wrong order, it will be confusing for everyone.

Isn't it cool that just by saying, "I have 12 HCP, and my shape is 5-3-2-3," you've said a lot about your hand?

Exercise: Make a 3-2-4-4 hand with 10 HCP. When you're done, compare your hand to a classmate's. Are they exactly the same 13 cards? Would you expect them to be the same 13 cards?



Long and Short Suits...Understanding when a Trump suit is wanted

Suits that have 5 or more cards are known as long suits. This is very common, actually. You will often get hands that contain 6-card or 7-card suits. 8-card suits are rare, and very infrequently you may even see 9-card or 10-card suits.

Suits with 2 or fewer cards are known as **short** suits. In fact, if you start with just 2 cards in one suit, you say that you have a **doubleton** in that suit. If you start with 1 card in a suit, you say that you have a **singleton** in the suit. If you are dealt no cards in a suit, you say you are **void** in that suit.

In all, how many cards are in a suit?

How many cards on average will be dealt to you in any given suit?

If you are dealt 5 cards in a suit, is this above average or below average? How many cards on average will the others players have in that suit?

What if you were dealt 7 cards, how many cards on average would the other players have?

PBJ with Trumps

You can win extra tricks when you are holding a long suit, because the other players will run out of it and your small cards will eventually win tricks. In other words, long suits can add value to your hand beyond HCP value. Pretty neat!!

When you have 5 or more cards in a suit, you typically want it to become the **Trump** suit. The trump suit has magical powers because it outranks all the cards in all the other suits. Even the lowly 2 of trumps outranks the Ace of another suit. However, be careful! You can't play a trump whenever you feel like it. There are rules to follow.

Rules when there is a trump suit:

1. You must follow suit. If trump or another suit is led and you have any, you must follow suit.
2. If another suit is led and you have no more cards in that suit, you may **trump (ruff)** if you want to, or you may **discard** from another suit. You do not have to trump just because you have no more cards in the suit led, but it's often a good way to win a trick with a small card.

Let's play 4-person PBJ with a trump suit! If the dealer has a 5-card suit (or longer), he will name that suit as trump, and the person to the left of the dealer, the Left-Hand Opponent (LHO), will make the opening lead. If the dealer does not have a 5-card suit, then the LHO will name the trump suit if he or she has a 5-card (or longer) one.

YOU WILL BE USING THE SAME CARDS FOR 5 GAMES, SO DO NOT RESHUFFLE.

Record what happens with each hand in the table. In the last column, subtract the estimated number of tricks (based on HCP) from the actual number of tricks won.

	HCP	Estimated tricks	Trump suit	Number of Trumps	Actual tricks won	Actual tricks won minus estimated tricks
Hand 1						
Hand 2						
Hand 3						
Hand 4						
Hand 5			No Trump	0		

How does the number of trumps you start with affect the number of tricks you win?

