

Teacher's Tip for Preparing Hands Ready for Play:

If you are fortunate enough to have duplicate boards and several decks of cards, you may wish to set up the hands ahead of time to play these games with a group, but even so, that could take up a lot of time and effort. Here is an alternate way to set up the hands. This method requires only one deck of cards (per table), plus it gets every player involved in the process. Once players do this a few times, it will go much faster.

1) Using one deck of cards at each table, each of the 4 players takes one suit, any suit. Identify who is sitting North, South, East and West.

2) One person is in charge of calling out the cards for the game. That could be the teacher or anyone designated, perhaps one player at each table.



So this is how to call the cards for North's hand as above:

Call out: **"Spades – 10, 5"**

The player with the spade suit selects those two cards and places them, face down, in front of North.

Call out: **"Hearts – The Big Ace*, King, Jack"**

The player with the heart suit selects those three cards and places them, face down, in front of North.

*Note: If you say "the Ace," it can be confused with the "8" and you may have to repeat it to clarify. By saying "The Big Ace," there is less chance of it being confused with the 8.

Call out: **"Diamonds – The Big Ace, 10, 3, 2"**

The player with the diamond suit selects those four cards and places them, face down, in front of North.

Call out: **"Clubs – 9, 5, 4, 3"**

The player with the club suit selects those four cards and places them, face down, in front of North.

Now North's hand should be complete with 13 cards in front on him/her, all face down.

4) Do the same, in turn, with the other 3 hands (South, West and East), calling out each suit and placing them, face down, in front of the corresponding player. You

will realize that the 4th player will get all the remaining cards, so that hand is easy to make. Now all 52 cards should be distributed, 13 for each player.

Each player should count his cards to make sure he has 13 before looking at them. This is a good habit to instill in all players and takes only a moment.

Note: You may realize that some players may remember where some of the cards were placed in other hands, but it will not make a huge difference. In fact, it might be good practice for the player's memory! It is not likely to affect the game very much.

5) Bid until the auction is completed (3 passes in a row). What is the final contract? At this point, you may wish to check the bidding and compare with the suggestions, or you may wish to finish playing before reviewing.

6) Play the hands. After each round is played, remind the players to keep each card played in front of him/her, face down, either vertical to show a trick won or horizontal to show a trick lost. After the game is finished, count how many tricks declarer's side took to make sure that you all agree. It is important that all players agree on the final contract and how many tricks were taken (or lost).

For example, the picture on the right shows 4 tricks won, 4 lost, 2 won, 2 lost, and the final trick won.



7) Did the number of tricks taken match the predicted number? If it's quite different, the playing may have been less than perfect. Either the defenders did not defend well or the Declarer did not play well, or both. This should not be looked at as a failure — it should be regarded as an opportunity to learn.

The practice games show the cards as you would see them in your hand, so it's easier to reference the bidding from the printout of the hands. Even so, sometimes you may wish to lay the cards out in front of each player, dummy style, and review the bidding and playing. This is a good time to ask questions, identify weaknesses and learn from your mistakes and from each other in a congenial manner.

How closely did your game match the bids and expected results shown? If the bidding is not the same, then why not? Sometimes you may reach the same final contract even though the bidding was different. You will also see how important it is for partners to communicate accurately with each other, using the same rules.