

Scoring at Bridge.

You need to understand the scoring method. A blank score sheet is shown on the right and on the next page, with a horizontal line roughly two-thirds of the way down the page. This is known as “*the line*” (!) and the area above is “*above the line*”. Unsurprisingly the area below the line is known as – er – “*below the line*”.

Contracts bid and made score below the line and *overtricks* and *undertricks* score above the line. (As do “honors”, slam bonuses and rubber bonuses).

You need 100 (or more) points below the line to score a *game* and you need two games to win the *rubber*. (Although it is possible to win two games but lose overall.) A game can be made up from two or more *part-scores* or in one fell swoop with a *game contract*.

The ranking of the suits in Bridge is associated with the scoring:

No-trumps	NT				40, then 30, 30, 30 etc per bid trick.
Spades	♠	}	Major suits	30	points per bid trick.
Hearts	♥				
Diamonds	♦	}	Minor suits	20	points per bid trick.
Clubs	♣				

We	They
Above the line	
Below the line	

As an example: a successful contract of 2♥ would score 60 (that is: 2 × 30) points *below the line*. A successful contract of 3NT would score 100 (that is: 40 + 30 + 30) points *below the line*. Note that a contract of 2♥ making nine tricks would score 60 points below the line and 30 points above the line.

It follows that contracts of 3NT, 4♠, 4♥, 5♦, 5♣ are all **game contracts** (because they are worth 100 points or more to be scored below the line). Contracts which score less than 100 points below the line (there are many examples of these including 1♦, 2NT, 4♣) are known as **part-score** contracts.

A pair that has scored a game (and are therefore half way to winning the rubber) is said to be *vulnerable*. The explanation for this term comes from the table of *penalties* for undertricks:

Down	Non-vulnerable		Vulnerable	
	Undoubled	Doubled	Undoubled	Doubled
1	50	100	100	200
2	100	300	200	500
3	150	500	300	800
4	200	800	400	1100
5	250	1100	500	1400

If someone has Redoubled the final contract then the Doubled scores are themselves doubled. (Huge penalties like these can prove expensive. **Very** expensive). Notice that a player can only Double an opponent’s contract and can only Redouble a contract of his own side if an opponent has Doubled it.

There are bonuses for winning the rubber. These are: **700** for a two game rubber (i.e. winning by two games to nil) and **500** for a three game rubber (i.e. winning by two games to one)

Slam bonuses are quite attractive but remember you have to bid the slam to get the rewards:

	Non Vulnerable	Vulnerable
Small Slam	500	750
Grand Slam	1000	1500

Finally, there are points for *honors* although in many forms of Bridge they have been abandoned. These points are scored above the line. Just for completeness sake they are listed here:

In a trump contract: {	a holding of 4 out of the 5 top honors in one hand: = 100
	a holding of all 5 out of the 5 top honors in one hand: = 150
In No-trumps :	a holding of all four aces in one hand: = 150

These bonuses are available to both the declaring side and to the defenders.

Above the line →

Below the line →

We	They

Scores that go **above the line** are:
Overtricks;
Undertricks (aka penalties);
Slam bonuses;
Rubber bonuses;
Honors;

Scores that go **below the line** are:
 Contracts **bid and made.**

Nothing else is scored here

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The total of all our scores	The total of all their scores
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At the end of the rubber *all* of the scores in each column are totalled.

The difference between the totals of the two columns (**We** and **They**) is the overall result of the rubber.

Rubber No. 1.	
We	They

Rubber No. 2.	
We	They

Rubber No. 3.	
We	They

Totals:		
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Scoring at Bridge: an example rubber.

Here is an example rubber to help you understand the scoring. The four players are, as always, North, South, East and West, playing as North-South against East-West. As it happens the rubber took nine hands to complete.

	Score	Comments
Hand 1 North-South bid 3♥ and make 10 tricks.	30 above the line 90 below the line to NS.	A <i>part-score</i> of 90 to NS. The <i>overtrick</i> is also worth 30 points.
Hand 2 East-West bid 4♠ and make 8 tricks.	100 above the line to NS.	A <i>penalty</i> to NS. Two <i>undertricks</i> at 50 points each.
Hand 3 East-West bid 2NT and make 8 tricks.	70 below the line to EW.	A <i>part-score</i> of 70 to EW.
Hand 4 North-South bid 3♦ and make 12 tricks.	60 above the line 60 below the line to NS.	The NS <i>part-score</i> is converted into a game. NS are now <i>vulnerable</i> .
Hand 5 North-South bid 5♦ and make 8 tricks.	300 above the line to EW.	A <i>penalty</i> to EW. Three <i>vulnerable undertricks</i> at 100 points each.
Hand 6 East-West bid 3NT and make 9 tricks.	100 below the line to EW.	A <i>game contract</i> bid and made. Both sides are now <i>vulnerable</i> .
Hand 7 East-West bid 4♦ and make 9 tricks.	100 above the line to NS.	A <i>penalty</i> to NS. Each <i>undertrick</i> when <i>vulnerable</i> costs 100 points.
Hand 8 North-South bid 1NT and make 8 tricks.	30 above the line 40 below the line to NS.	A <i>part-score</i> bid and made with one <i>overtrick</i> .
Hand 9 East-West bid 5♣ and make 11 tricks.	100 below the line to EW.	EW have made two <i>games</i> so the rubber is now over.

East-West are entitled to a bonus for winning the rubber. This is worth 500 points since they won by two games to one. (Had they won by two games to none the bonus would have been 700 points.)

NS	EW
30	
100	
60	
100	500
30	300
90	70
60	
	100
40	100

The final score-sheet should look like the one on the left.

Now that the rubber is over **all** the scores in both columns are added up. The totals come to 1070 points to East-West and 510 points to North-South, making an aggregate of 560 points to East-West.

It is important to realize that completing the rubber does not necessarily mean that the side that scored the two games turned out to be the winners.

As an example, suppose that on Hand 4 North had bid and made a grand slam in Diamonds, scoring 140 below the line and 1000 above the line. Now when the rubber is totted up it is North-South who would have won by 460 points, despite the fact that their opponents have completed the rubber.

Those players who like to play for money now settle up and the next rubber commences. However, money bridge is rare these days and what usually happens is that a rubber restarts with different partnerships. There are two ways this may be done. One is simply to rotate the partnerships, the other is to *cut for partners*. Here, each player takes a card at random from a pack and the players with two highest cards form a partnership against the players with the two lowest cards. The bridge ranking of the suits plays a part here in the cut. If two players cut a card with the same value then Spades ranks higher than Hearts ranks higher than Diamonds ranks higher than Clubs.

For example, in a cut-for-partners game of rubber bridge, Alan picks the ♦7, Belinda the ♠Q, Colin the ♦Q and Delia the ♣A. The two highest cards are the ♣A and the ♠Q so the partnerships would be Belinda and Delia against Alan and Colin. In this case the ♠Q outranks the ♦Q because Spades outrank Diamonds in bridge.

This method is also used when there are more than four players wanting to play; everyone selects a card and the lowest card sits out, the others forming two partnerships. As a point of fact, the player with the highest card (here it is Delia) can select which chair to sit in. Some players are very superstitious about such things...!

Scoring at Rubber Bridge: Quiz

Try scoring these rubbers yourself. The answers are overleaf.

Number 1.

Hand 1. North-South bid 4♠ and make 12 tricks.
Hand 2. East-West bid 3NT and make 10 tricks.
Hand 3. North-South bid 4♥ and make 8 tricks.
Hand 4. East-West bid 3♦ and make 10 tricks.
Hand 5. North-South bid 4♠ and make nine tricks.
Hand 6. East-West bid 1NT and make 10 tricks.

Number 2.

Hand 1. East-West bid 3♣ and make 8 tricks.
Hand 2. North-South bid 1NT and make 8 tricks
Hand 3. East-West bid 2♠ and make 9 tricks.
Hand 4. East-West bid 2♥ and make 7 tricks.
Hand 5. North-South bid 2NT and make 8 tricks.
Hand 6. North-South bid 4♠ and make 9 tricks.
Hand 7. North-South bid 3NT and make 7 tricks.
Hand 8. East-West bid 3♥ and make 9 tricks.
Hand 9. North-South bid 1NT and make 7 tricks.
Hand 10. East-West bid 3♦ and make 8 tricks.
Hand 11. North-South bid 3♥ and make ten tricks.

Number 3.* This is a much harder example as it contains bonuses for *honors* and *slams* and a nasty penalty for a Doubled contract.

Hand 1. North-South bid 4♠ and make 11 tricks.
Hand 2. North-South bid 5♦, get Doubled and make 7 tricks (very expensive!)
Hand 3. North-South bid 2♥ and make 9 tricks. North has ♥A Q J 10.
Hand 4. North-South bid 2NT and make 7 tricks.
Hand 5. East-West bid 6♠ and make 12 tricks. West has ♠A K Q J 10.
Hand 6. North-South bid 1NT and make 9 tricks.
Hand 7. East-West bid 3NT and make 7 tricks.
Hand 8. North-South bid 2♦ and make 7 tricks.
Hand 9. North-South bid 2♥ and make 11 tricks.

Number 1.	
NS	EW
Totals:	

Number 2.	
NS	EW
Totals:	

Number 3.	
NS	EW
Totals:	

Answers.

Number 1.	
NS	EW
	500
	90
	100
	20
	200
60	30
120	
	100
	60
	40

Number 2.	
NS	EW
700	
30	
50	
50	200
30	100
50	30
40	60
70	
40	90
90	

Number 3.	
NS	EW
500	
90	
200	100
60	150
100	500
30	100
30	1100
120	
60	180
40	
60	

Totals:	180	1140
Aggregate:	960 to East-West	

1150	480
670 to North-South	

1290	2130
840 to East-West	