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This is a set of eight very easy hands (culled from minibridge) to allow players to get used to playing VuBridge. SA version. Updated spring 2015.

VB#1 Y1 General Hands SA	Contract: 3N
Date: 23/03/2016	By: South
Dealer: East	Board #: 1
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

	North		
	♠ 984		
	♥ A43		
	♦ AKQJ		
	♣ 985		
West		East	
♠ T75		♠ QJ62	
♥ JT97		♥ 865	
♦ 8765		♦ T3	
♣ K7		♣ QJT3	
	South		
	♠ AK3		
	♥ KQ2		
	♦ 942		
	♣ A642		

This set of six deals is a gentle introduction to VuBridge and shows you how this program can help you learn how to play the cards at bridge. We can give you a useful nudge with the bidding, too...

Hand 1 is an easy start to VuBridge. There are no trumps and you just have to take nine tricks. No surprises, no pitfalls.

When you are ready click on **Play**.

West	North	East	South
-	-	P	1NT
P	3NT	P	P
P			

Lead: ♥ J

Bidding.

We open 1NT showing 15 to 17 points and partner raises that to game. There is nothing more to be said and three Passes end the auction.

Play.

West leads the ♥J. It is customary for the player on lead to lead his longest suit against a No-trump contract. When that suit is headed by a sequential holding he selects the top card. Here, as West's best suit is headed by the ♥J 10 9, he selects the highest card from his "run".

When dummy goes down it is advisable (even essential) to take a few moments to take in what we can see and come to a plan. One piece of bridge etiquette is that you should always acknowledge the dummy by thanking partner for his contribution as it is arranged on the table.

Having gravely followed the formalities we should count our tricks. Here we should see that we have a plethora of available tricks; it being easy to make two Spades, three Hearts, four Diamonds and a Club. If we add that up it comes to ten tricks – one more than the contract specifies. Having worked out what to do (having formulated a **plan**) we should then proceed to play the hand.

Note that we could win the Heart lead with any of the three top Hearts. As VuBridge setters we have to decide which Heart to win with. Here (on a whim) we chose to win with the ♥K in the closed hand. If you clicked on the ♥A in dummy or on the ♥Q in your own hand the program will gently correct you by playing the ♥K and moving your chosen card up and down. This does not mean you were wrong in your choice! If the choice of card **is** important then you will not be allowed to play that card. You will hear a noise and your chosen card will bounce up and down. If that happens – choose another one!

Here we should switch from Hearts (the lead chosen by the opponents) to our best suit. In this case that's Diamonds. We play off four Diamonds and then turn our attention

elsewhere – Spades would be a good choice. Having taken the ♠A K we cash the remaining two Hearts and the ♣A for ten tricks. The last three tricks belong to the opponents but that is of little importance; we have recorded the contract with an overtrick.


One important point to notice here is that we do not flit from one suit to another. A bad habit that players get into is to cash the Ace from one suit, then the Ace from another suit and then switch to yet another suit. We call this play “butterflying” as it resembles a butterfly being unable to settle anywhere for a length of time. It is good practice to play off one suit (our best suit) to its conclusion before looking elsewhere.



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VB#1 Y1 General Hands SA	Contract: 1N
Date: 23/03/2016	By: South
Dealer: South	Board #: 2
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

	North	
	♠ 72	
	♥ 9753	
	♦ KT9	
	♣ KJ97	
West		East
♠ KQJT6		♠ 984
♥ A42		♥ KQJ
♦ 7532		♦ 864
♣ 4		♣ 6532
	South	
	♠ A53	
	♥ T86	
	♦ AQJ	
	♣ AQT8	

This deal, like Hand 1, is played in No-trumps. Here you have to make as many tricks as you can – which should be eight.

When you are ready click on **Play**.

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	1NT
P	P	P	

Lead: ♠ K

Bidding.

We open 1NT showing 15 to 17 points and partner has nothing to say. So 1NT becomes the contract.

Play.

West leads the ♠K. As in the previous deal, it is customary for the player on lead to lead his longest suit against a No-trump contract. As West has a five-card suit headed by the ♠K Q J 10 he leads the ♠K, the top of a sequence.

As usual we thank partner for his dummy and then take a few moments to take in what we can see and come to a plan. Here we can see that we have the ♠A, three Diamond tricks and four Club tricks. It may be irritating that we have been dealt all of the ♦A K Q J 10 9 but can only make three tricks in the suit. That's the way it is sometimes – live with it. As the French say, *c'est la vie*.

You may also note that we have between us the ♣A K Q J 10 9 8 7. Still, that lot is only worth four tricks and no more. We are able to make eight tricks on this deal for an overtrick in 1NT.

To play the hand, we win the ♠A at trick one and switch to our best suit – Clubs in this case. We play four rounds of this suit before playing Diamonds. When we play these suits it doesn't really matter how we play them – however, we may find the lead in the dummy rather than our own hand at various stages. No matter, no problem.


Once we have taken eight tricks we must concede the rest to the opponents.



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VB#1 Y1 General Hands SA	Contract: 3N
Date: 23/03/2016	By: South
Dealer: East	Board #: 3
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

	North		
	♠ 62		
	♥ Q32		
	♦ AKQJ8		
	♣ 875		
West		East	
♠ 853		♠ KQJT	
♥ T8		♥ J9765	
♦ T76		♦ 95	
♣ KQJ96		♣ 43	
	South		
	♠ A974		
	♥ AK4		
	♦ 432		
	♣ AT2		

More No-trump play. Can you make ten tricks on this hand?

When you are ready click on **Play**.

West	North	East	South
-	-	P	1NT
P	3NT	P	P
P			

Lead: ♣ K

Bidding.

We open 1NT showing 15 to 17 points and partner raises that to game. There is nothing more to be said and three Passes end the auction.

Play.

West leads the ♣K. Once again (see Hands 1 and 2), it is customary for the player on lead to lead his longest suit against a No-trump contract. Here, West has a suit headed by the ♣K Q J so selects the highest card (the *top of a sequence*) from this holding.

When dummy goes down we thank partner and settle down to count the tricks. We can see one Spade, three Hearts, four Diamonds and a Club. That makes nine tricks so we are in Easy Street; nine tricks is what we want – nine tricks is what we've got.

We take the ♣A and immediately shift our attention to our best suit. In this context we mean the best suit between dummy and declarer. Clearly that's Diamonds in this deal. Having won the Club lead we cash the top four Diamonds. Now, a small problem arises, one that will turn up time and time again at the bridge table. The ♦8 is on the table – is it the boss Diamond? The answer is **Yes**, all other Diamonds have gone.

There are a number of ways of working this out – best practice is to count all the Diamonds as they are played so we know there are none out. Here it's more obvious than that as both East and West discarded on the ♦J so neither can have a Diamond left (let alone one bigger than the ♦8!)


So, before we forget, we take the ♦8 before switching attention to the other suits. We then take three Hearts and the ♠A to complete a haul of ten tricks, and an overtrick. As for the last three tricks – well, they belong to the opponents.



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VB#1 Y1 General Hands SA	Contract: 1N
Date: 23/03/2016	By: South
Dealer: South	Board #: 4
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

	North	
	♠ Q2	
	♥ KQ4	
	♦ T964	
	♣ 7652	
West		East
♠ JT9		♠ 87654
♥ 762		♥ JT983
♦ AKQJ		♦ 3
♣ J98		♣ KQ
	South	
	♠ AK3	
	♥ A5	
	♦ 8752	
	♣ AT43	

You are in 1NT. Can you make this contract?

When you are ready click on **Play**.

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	1NT
P	P	P	

Lead: ♦ A

Bidding.

We open 1NT showing 15-17 points and no one else has anything to say. So 1NT becomes the contract.

Play.

West leads the ♦A. With the ♦A K Q J West has an easy lead but still selects the top card from a long suit with a sequential holding.

As ever, we thank partner for his dummy and then take a few moments to absorb what we can see and come to a plan. Now, we are not in control of the hand for the first trick or two (West holds the lead) but that doesn't prevent us from deciding what we intend to do.

We can see three Spades, three Hearts and the ♣A – a total of seven tricks. That is what we will go for – what we have to do is to wait patiently while West has some fun with his Diamonds. As the cards lie, West takes the first four tricks before leading the ♠J (we hope you can see why he led the ♠J rather than the ♠10 or ♠9).

Now the problem is to cash three Spades and three Hearts. This is a little trickier than it may appear and many players have mucked it up in the past (you are by no means the first to play this hand!) The secret of handling both Spades and Hearts is to pay heed to the following "rule": *"Play the high cards from the short suit first."* This rule applies to suits that are split unequally between dummy and declarer (here both Spades and Hearts are split 3-2 between North and South).


When playing Spades we must play the ♠Q first (it's the high card in the short suit). Similarly, when playing Hearts we must play the ♥A first. It, too, is the *"high card in the short suit"*. If we don't do that the suit(s) will become tangled up – try the play mentally and see how we'd end up in the wrong hand.

Having taken three Spades and three Hearts we make the ♣A and give the rest away. We have secured the contract.



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VB#1 Y1 General Hands SA	Contract: 45
Date: 23/03/2016	By: South
Dealer: North	Board #: 5
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

	North	
	♠ J953	
	♥ QJT	
	♦ AT8	
	♣ 985	
West		East
♠ 42		♠ 6
♥ 94		♥ 87632
♦ 97		♦ KQJ65
♣ AKQJT43		♣ 62
	South	
	♠ AKQT87	
	♥ AK5	
	♦ 432	
	♣ 7	

We are now going to let you play in some suit contracts.

As the bidding would be well in advance of this level we are going to "fake it".

Don't worry - as Shakespeare said, "*The play's the thing*"

When you are ready click on **Play**.

West	North	East	South
-	P	P	4♣
P	P	P	

Lead: ♣ A

Bidding.

Hmmm. Well, we arrive in 4♣. We have "fixed" the bidding so you open 4♣. There is no way that anyone would bid this hand in this manner – you will learn how to bid these hands properly at a later date. For now, we simply want you to focus on the play.

Play.

We observe the etiquette of the game by thanking partner and pausing to plan the hand. West starts off by leading the ♣A and ♣K.

We trump the second round of Clubs (we also use the word "ruff" as a synonym for "trump" when it's a verb) and can see (hopefully!) ten tricks. These are: six Spades, three Hearts and a Diamond. So in what order should the cards be played?

Well, we could play off all the Spades, then the Hearts and then the ♦A; that would work. However, best practice is to play on trumps first – just enough rounds to extract the opponents' cards in the suit. This process is called "drawing trumps" (or "pulling trumps" or a few other idioms you will meet later). This involves counting trumps as they are played.

Counting trumps is an essential part of the game as declarer – you can't escape it. Here we have ten trumps (you have to add up the total between dummy and declarer) so the opponents have three. These three trumps will "split" 2-1 or 3-0. When we cash the ♠A K and both follow to the first round it is clear that trumps are 2-1 (they can't be 3-0!) So after two Spades have been cashed all of the opponents' trumps have been drawn. Now it is quite safe to play off three rounds of Hearts and the ♦A.

Two important questions...

1) What would have happened to 3NT on this hand?

2) What would have happened in 4♣ if we had omitted to *draw trumps*? Suppose we had played on Hearts first.

Two important answers.

1) West would have taken the first seven Club tricks. North-South have ten tricks but they have no Club *stopper*.


2) If we were to play on Hearts before playing on Spades West would score a cheap trick with his ♠2 – he would trump (or *ruff*) the third round of Hearts.



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VB#1 Y1 General Hands SA	Contract: 4H
Date: 23/03/2016	By: South
Dealer: East	Board #: 6
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

	North		
	♠ AKQ		
	♥ 542		
	♦ KQJ		
	♣ 7652		
West		East	
♠ J9532		♠ 76	
♥ 8		♥ 763	
♦ T8		♦ 976432	
♣ AKQT9		♣ J4	
	South		
	♠ T84		
	♥ AKQJT9		
	♦ A5		
	♣ 83		

Here Hearts are going to be trumps. How many tricks can you see?

How many are you about to make?

When you are ready click on **Play**.

West	North	East	South
-	-	P	4♥
P	P	P	

Lead: ♣ A

Bidding.

Hmmm. Well, we arrive in 4♥. As in the previous deal we have “fixed” the bidding so we open 4♥. Once again, there is no way that anybody would bid this hand in this manner. The point of this deal is to focus on the play.

Play.

West starts off by leading the ♣A and ♣K. We thank our partner courteously and pause to make a plan.

When we count the number of tricks we have we can see twelve – three Spades, six Hearts and three Diamonds. Unfortunately, West starts off with the ♣A K, killing our chances of making the twelve tricks we can see. We *ruff* the third round of Clubs and take stock – what to do first?

Well, the answer is that we must play on Hearts – we must *draw trumps*. By cashing some Hearts we extract all of the opponents'. We must do this or the opponents may be able to trump one of our *side-suit* winners.

We should count nine trumps in our hands, leaving the opponents with four. When we cash two top Hearts West discards on the second round. This leaves East with a remaining trump, which must be drawn as quickly as possible. Once three rounds of trumps have been played it is quite safe to cash the *side-suits* (Spades and Diamonds).


Despite the fact that we have twelve tricks (three Spades, six Hearts and three Diamonds) we make only eleven. If West hadn't led a Club initially we would have made twelve tricks – we would have discarded one of our baby Clubs on a Diamond winner from dummy. As it goes, we have to trump one of our own winners at the end of the hand. *That's the way the cookie crumbles...*



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VB#1 Y1 General Hands SA	Contract: 5D
Date: 23/03/2016	By: South
Dealer: East	Board #: 7
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

	North		
	♠ AK3		
	♥ QJ2		
	♦ 9842		
	♣ K64		
West		East	
♠ J75		♠ QT62	
♥ T9764		♥ 85	
♦ 7		♦ T3	
♣ QJT2		♣ A9875	
	South		
	♠ 984		
	♥ AK3		
	♦ AKQJ65		
	♣ 3		

Diamonds are trumps on this deal. Can you make eleven tricks?

When you are ready click on **Play**.

West	North	East	South
-	-	P	5♦
P	P	P	

Lead: ♣ Q

Bidding.

Hmmm. Well, we arrive in 5♦. As in the previous two deals we have “fixed” the bidding so we open 5♦. Once again, there is no way that anyone would bid this hand in this manner. The point of these three hands (and the next) is to focus on the play.

Play.

West starts off by leading the ♣Q. We thank our partner graciously and pause to make a plan.

When we count the number of tricks we have we can see eleven – two Spades, three Hearts and six Diamonds. What about extras? What are our prospects in Clubs?

Well, this opening lead is bad news (for us – the opponents have a different perspective). To lead the ♣Q West must have the ♣Q J 10 and East, by implication, has the ♣A. The defenders are about to make a sandwich out of our unfortunate ♣K. What can we do? If we play the ♣K East would knock that off with his ♣A. If we play a low card East would allow the ♣Q to win and West would continue with the Club attack. *Heads you lose, tails they win.*

Although the loss of dummy's ♣K is of little importance on this deal (you have eleven tricks without it) we are making an important point of precisely why the defenders lead the top card of a sequence. Here East is in a comfortable armchair, waiting to see what we do. If we play the ♣K he would kill it with the ♣A. If we play small East knows he can withhold the ♣A as his partner's ♣Q will win the trick.

Anyway... back to the plot. The defense play two rounds of Clubs and we ruff the second round. We know the procedure by now – we must *draw trumps*. We have ten of them between the closed hand and dummy so East-West have just three. As the cards lie, it takes two rounds to extract all of the opponents' Diamonds and now it is quite safe to take all the side-suit winners.


Eventually, at the last, East-West come to a Spade trick.



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VB#1 Y1 General Hands SA	Contract: 7N
Date: 23/03/2016	By: South
Dealer: North	Board #: 8
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

	North	
	♠ 753	
	♥ QJT53	
	♦ AK3	
	♣ 85	
West		East
♠ QT6		♠ J984
♥ 9742		♥ 8
♦ 9		♦ 8765
♣ QJT92		♣ K763
	South	
	♠ AK2	
	♥ AK6	
	♦ QJT42	
	♣ A4	

Back to No-trumps for the final deal. All you have to do is to make all thirteen tricks.

That's not asking too much, is it?

When you are ready click on **Play**.

West	North	East	South
-	P	P	7NT
P	P	P	

Lead: ♣ Q

Bidding.

Hmmm. Well, we arrive in a **grand slam** – 7NT. No one in their right minds ever opens 7NT (the chances of getting a hand to justify such a call are too remote to contemplate). Still, the play's the thing and we want you to have the fun of landing a grand slam.

Play.

West starts off by leading the ♣Q. We thank our partner profusely and pause to make a plan.

We should be able to see thirteen tricks – two Spades, five Hearts, five Diamonds and a Club. So that's good news. Is there a problem? Well, maybe there is and maybe there isn't.

To be successful we have to remember one very important guiding principle (call it a "rule" if you like): "*Play the high cards from the short suit first*".

Also, we have to be careful to discard accurately when playing off a long suit.

Now, we take the ♣A at trick one and have to play on either Hearts or Diamonds. It actually doesn't matter on this deal – we decided to play on Diamonds first. To do this we must follow the principle stated above: "*Play the high cards from the short suit first*". If we were to play the ♦Q first we would end up in the wrong hand at the wrong time.

So, we cash the ♦A K first and then run the rest of the Diamonds. However, there are two discards to find from dummy – what should be thrown away? The answer is "anything but Hearts"! We need five Heart tricks – these won't accrue if we chuck them away. So we can pitch Spades or Clubs as they are readily disposable.

Having run off the Diamonds we now turn our attention to Hearts. How? By "*playing the high cards from the short suit first*". This means taking the ♥A K first before playing the ♥Q J 10. Having taken the first eleven tricks it's an easy matter to cash the last two tricks with the ♠A K.

7NT made – well played!

