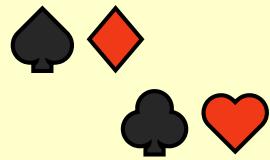


Bridge on Sundays



Asking Questions

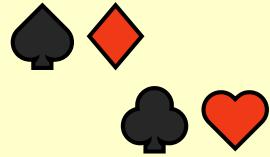
Bridge is an open game and secret understandings between partners are strictly forbidden. Your opponents have a right to know the meanings of any bid which may have a special meaning or is different from usual practice. Anyone may ask about a bid but only when it is your turn to bid. Asking a question may convey unauthorised information to partner.

The following may help.

- Only ask a question if you intend to bid or need to know. Obviously if the answer is unfavourable, you may decide not to bid. If you have no intention of bidding, refrain from asking during the auction.
- The bidder must explain the partnership understanding and that is all. If there is no understanding, then say so. As the bidder, you are not required to pass on anything you have gained from the bidding so far or deduced from your own hand. The questioner may ask a supplementary question if the answer is obviously incomplete but may not badger the opponent. Call the Tournament director if you are faced with persistent questioning about a particular bid.
- The questioner should ask about all the bids so far rather than a specific bid but, to save time, it is common practice to ask about a specific bid. The answer should avoid just stating a convention name.
- Bids that are not alerted are considered to be natural, so do not ask about them. You may ask about the minimum suit length if you intend to play in a suit contract. The questioner's partner should not take any advantage of such a question. Bids above 3NT are not alerted, except in special cases, so there may be more justification in asking a question about such a bid in a competitive auction.
- You are perfectly entitled to ask any question once the auction has finished. If you are on lead, you may do so before selecting a lead but partner must wait until you have placed the card face down. Declarer can ask for a full review of the bidding before playing the first card from dummy and a defender can ask before playing to the first trick if partner has led.
- Either declarer or a defender can ask about a specific call at his turn to play.
- As declarer, you can ask about opponent's lead style or discards during the play. Dummy is not allowed to ask.

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Asking Questions

What happens if the explanation given turns out to be wrong? Always call the TD.

If the explanation is inaccurate, your opponents may be entitled to an adjusted score. If, however, the explanation is accurate but partner has deviated from the agreement, no adjustment is likely unless partner has taken advantage of unauthorised information. You can only benefit from this if you have been damaged.

Declarer or dummy must correct a mistaken explanation from partner before the opening lead is faced. The TD may well re-open the auction. A defender must wait until the play is over. If you realise that you gave the wrong explanation, call the TD immediately and the TD may allow a call to be changed by the non-offending side.