

**"List of the 2021-2025 American Bridge
Teachers' Association (ABTA)
'Best / Recommended Bridge Books'"**

Bruce Thompson

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<https://esther-bridge.com/index.html>

To go to the **ABTA Web Home Page**, CLICK:
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To go to a **more comprehensive list** of bridge learning resources, CLICK:
<https://esther-bridge.com/learn.html>

Throughout the long history of bridge, various bridge books¹ have been published that have been massively influential. For example, in 1932 George Sturgis Coffin (1903-1994) published his hugely influential book, Endplays at Bridge: A Systematic Treatise on Three Kinds of Master Plays, Elimination, Coups, and Squeezes.

Similarly, the 1934 book by Louis Henry Watson (1906-1936), Watson on the Play of the Hand at Contract Bridge, was hugely influential. Both the Sturgis and the Watson books remain available in various editions for online purchase.

More recent bridge books have been similarly influential. The 1992 book by Larry Cohen (1959-), To Bid or Not to Bid, That is the Question: The LAW of Total Tricks, has forced players to recognize the focal importance of card counts and Hand "shapes", rather than HCPs, when bidding Suit contracts. And the 1996 book by

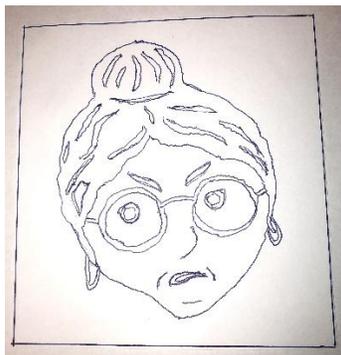
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¹ See the comprehensive Wikipedia entry, "List of Contract Bridge Book":
http://wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_contract_bridge_books

Marty Bergen (1948-), Points Schmoints!, has reinforced this fundamentally important notion. These last **3** books are **particularly noteworthy**, in Esther's (not very) humble opinion.

Other good resources are two excellent books published by ACBL, and available on the Baron Barclay website. First, there is a very popular, excellent bridge book titled, 25 Bridge Conventions You Should Know-2nd Edition, Revised and Updated, by Barbara Seagram and Marc Smith, with additional material by David Bird. This book has sold more than 200,000 copies in English alone! Second, there is a subsequent book, 25 More Bridge Conventions You Should Know, by Barbara Seagram and David Bird. Barbara ran one of the largest bridge schools in North America, and David Bird has written more than 125 bridge books, and has won the American Bridge Teachers' Association Book of the Year Award a record **9** times.

Even in an internet and computer age, bridge books remain a *super important* resource for learning and improving at playing duplicate bridge. It is for this reason that the American Bridge Teacher's Association (ABTA) each year recognizes "best" and "runner-up" books at various learner levels. **ALL of these books are readily available for online purchase!**



Esther Says:

Esther says that the **Best Bridge Book of ALL TIME** is Marty Bergen's little 2011 "pocket book", Pocket Posh: Tips for Bridge Players. This is called a "pocket book" because the book is small enough literally to fit in a

shirt pocket or a pants pocket. This book can be found for purchase on the internet. For example, Bergen's "pocket book" is available from Baron Barclay:

<https://baronbarclay.com/products/pocket-posh-tips-for-bridge-players>

DO IT! Esther particularly loves the "Hand Evaluation" chapter. So much bridge wisdom in such a physically little book!

2025 ABTA "Best" and "Runner Up" Bridge Books

"Beginner"/"Intermediate" Books

Winner

Bridge Basics 4: play of the Deal, by **Audrey Grate**.

Runners-Up

Five-Minute Contract Bridge Puzzles, by Bruce W. Blakely.

Play Better Bridge—All About Declarer Play: Part 1, by Lars & Knut Blakset.

"Advanced"/"Intermediate" Books

Winner

Twelve Important Bridge Lessons on Declarer Play: The Next Level, by David Bird.

Runners-Up

Guarantee Your Contract, by John-Paul Meyer.

Improving Your Timing, by James Marsh Sternberg with Danny Kleinman.

2024 ABTA "Best" and "Runner Up" Bridge Books

"Intermediate" Books

Winners

Twelve Important Bridge Lessons on Defense, by David Bird.

The Magic of Defense, by Barbara Seagram.

"Advanced Intermediate" Books

Winner

Parrish the Thought: Modern Defensive Thinking, by Adam Parrish.

Runners-Up

Method Bridge, by Matthew Granovettor.

Solving the Mystery of the Redouble, by James Marsh Sternberg & Danny Kleinman.

Secret JoJo Plays Lebensohl, by Joanne Waldron.

"Advanced" Books

Winner

Simple Squeezes Made Simple, by James Marsh Sternberg & Danny Kleinman.

Runner-Up

Why I Lose at Bridge: A Collection of Cardplay Errors,
by Ben Norton.

2023 ABTA "Best" and "Runner Up" Bridge Books

"Advancing Beginner" Books

Winner

Step By Step: Playing Notrump Contracts (trans. from
French), by Robert Berthe and Norbert Lébely.

Runners-Up

Step by Step: Playing Suit Contracts, by Robert Berthe
and Norbert Lébely.

Suit Preference: The Abused and Misused Signal, by
James Sternberg and Danny Kleinman.

"Intermediate" Books

Winner

Active or Passive?: A Guide to Being a Better Defender,
by James Sternberg.

Runners-Up

Trump Promotion: The Uppercut, by James Sternberg.

Let's Play Some Bridge, by Frank Stewart.

"Intermediate/Advanced" Books

Winner

Insights on Bridge: Bid, Play, and Defend, by Mike Lawrence.

Runners-Up

Better Declarer Play: Combining Your Chances, by Danny Roth.

Sublime Declarer Play: After the Contested Auction, by Nick Smith.

2022 ABTA "Best" and "Runner Up" Bridge Books

"Intermediate" Books

Winner

Play It Safe, by Barbara Seagram and David Bird.

"Advanced Intermediate" Books

Winner

Parrish the Thought (Vol. 1), by Adam Parrish.

"Advanced" Books

Winner

Test Your Bridge Judgment, by Barry Rigal.

2021 ABTA "Best" and "Runner Up" Bridge Books

"Beginner" Books

Winner

Larry Teaches Modern Bidding (Vols. 1-3), by Larry Cohen.

Runner-Up

Building Bridges (Student manual & facilitator guide),
by Jeanne Wamack.

"Intermediate" Books

Winner

Barbara's Bridge Tips, by Barbara Seagram.

Runners-Up

Coming Back to Bridge, by Paul Goldfinger.

Winning at Matchpoints, by Bill Treble.

"Advanced" Books

Winner

Two-over-one Game Force: The Final Word, by Neil Timm.

Runners-Up

Masterpeice Deals, by Augie Boehm.

Useful Probabilities for Bridge Players, by Julian
Laderman.

“Lagniappe”

“*Lagniappe*” means “a little something extra”, and is a phrase often heard in New Orleans restaurants, and there is even a Louisiana magazine about restaurants named *Lagniappe*. Mark Twain even wrote about this special word!

“We picked up one excellent word--a word worth traveling to New Orleans to get; a nice limber, expressive, handy word--'*lagniappe*.' They pronounce it lanny-yap. It is Spanish--so they said. We discovered it at the head of a column of odds and ends in the *Picayune*, the first day; heard twenty people use it the second; inquired what it meant the third; adopted it and got facility in swinging it the fourth. It has a restricted meaning, but I think the people spread it out a little when they choose. It is the equivalent of the thirteenth roll in a 'baker's dozen.' It is something thrown in, gratis, for good measure. The custom originated in the Spanish quarter of the city. ... If the waiter in the restaurant stumbles and spills a gill of coffee down the back of your neck, he says 'For *lagniappe*, sah,' and gets you another cup without extra charge.”

Mark Twain, *Life on the Mississippi*

Your “*lagniappe*” book recommendation is about bidding within competitive auctions, but may be more suitable for Intermediate players:

Partnership Bidding at Bridge: The Contested Auction
(1993) by Andrew Robson & Oliver Segal.

And it is even **FREE** at:

[https://www.bridge.is/files/Partnership%20Bidding%20at%20Bridge 2054397795.pdf](https://www.bridge.is/files/Partnership%20Bidding%20at%20Bridge%202054397795.pdf)

and other websites that you can find via a GOOGLE search for “partnership bidding at bridge Robson Segal PDF”.