STARTING BRIDGE

OPENING THE BIDDING

(You are opening the bidding if no one has done anything other than 'pass' before you.)

1. Count the shape (e.g. 4-4-3-2, 5-4-3-1)
2. Count the points (A-4 K-3 Q-2 J-1)

Balanced Hands (4-4-3-2, 4-3-3-3, 5-3-3-2)

You need 12 or more points to open the bidding on a balanced hand.

12 - 14 points	open 1NT
15 - 19 points	open one of a suit and rebid in no trumps
20 - 22 points	open 2NT

Unbalanced hands (at least 5-4 shape, or a 6-card suit)

You need at least 11 points to open an unbalanced hand.
Open one of a suit and rebid in a suit.
With 5- 4 shape open one of the 5-card suit and rebid in the 4-card suit.
With a 6-card suit open one of that suit and rebid in the same suit.
You should have your rebid planned before you make your first bid.

RESPONDER - PARTNER OPENED ONE OF A SUIT

If partner opened one of a Major (Hearts or Spades):-
raise to the 2-level with at least 4-card support and 5 - 9 points;
raise to the 3-level with at least 4-card support and 10 - 12 points.

Otherwise

Change suit at the 1-level with 5+ points and at least a 4-card suit;
change suit at the 2-level with 9+ points and a 5-card suit, or 10 points and a 4-card suit;
raise a major to the 2-level with 3-card support and 6 - 9 points.

With none of the above

Pass with 0 - 5 points;
bid 1NT with 6 - 9 points.

RESPONDER - PARTNER OPENED 1NT

The target is to bid 3NT with a combined 25 points, and to stop with less.

0 - 10 points	Pass
11,12 points	Bid 2NT
13+ points	Bid 3NT.

PLAY -DECLARER

Try to plan your play;
do not be in a hurry to cash your aces - better to set up tricks first;
in a trump contract it is frequently best to get out the opponents' trumps first;
in No Trumps it is usually correct to try to set up a long suit.

PLAY - THE OPENING LEAD

(Frequently described as the most difficult part of the game - but there are a few guidelines)

If partner bid a suit it is frequently correct to lead that suit;
if you have an honours sequence (e.g. KQJ or KQT) it is usually good to lead the top of that sequence;
a singleton is frequently good against a suit contract;
long suits (5+ cards) are frequently good against no trumps;
if nothing else appeals try a suit which the opponents have not bid.

Which card?

A high card will usually suggest the top of a sequence;
a low card will usually suggest 'small from an honour'.

PLAY - THE DEFENCE CONTINUES

Remember - it is a partnership game.
'Second player plays low' is usually a good guideline.
Returning partner's lead is frequently a good move.