



Mike Levine Bridge Legacy Award Student Essay Booklet

A collection of student reflections on bridge

Year
2026

Essays
25

Grades
3rd-8th

Inaugural Jump Start Bridge Student Essay Contest

The **Jump Start Bridge** initiative was created in 2023 to encourage and support school teachers in introducing bridge to their students. Through classroom materials, teacher support and student engagement, the program helps young people discover the joy, challenge, and connection that bridge can offer.

This inaugural essay contest honors **Mike Levine**, a philanthropist, inventor and accomplished bridge player from Boca Raton, Florida. Mike has supported numerous bridge-related efforts, including Jump Start Bridge, bridge documentaries, research, youth programs, and more. He has also made meaningful contributions beyond bridge, including support for education, community projects and charitable causes. In addition to his philanthropic work, Mike is credited with major innovations including digital video recording, the programmable thermostat and the microprocessor, and he holds approximately 80 patents. As a bridge player, he has earned eight NABC+ titles, three national online titles and a silver medal in world competition.

The Jump Start Bridge student essay contest was created to give young players a voice, a chance to share what bridge has meant to them, what they have learned and how the game has affected their lives. It is our pleasure to dedicate this first collection of essays in Mike's honor.

The winning essayist will be presented with **The Mike Levine Legacy Award** at the Youth NABC in Minneapolis.

We hope you enjoy reading these reflections from the next generation of bridge players.

Essay Prompt

Tell us what bridge means to you! What do you enjoy about bridge? What have you learned? How has bridge connected you to others?

The contest was open to Jump Start Bridge students during the 2025–2026 school year. Students were invited to write a short essay, in their own words, responding to the prompt above.

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Alddon | 4th Grade Gifted

Bridge Essay
By Alddon [REDACTED]

I'm arranging my cards, counting my high card points, and visualizing everyone else's hands. As the dealer bids, my brain gets an image of everyone's cards. My mind sorts through the information. There is much more to Bridge than just playing a normal card game. To me Bridge means learning and connecting.

In Bridge, I've realized that you don't just learn Bridge, but you also discover valuable life lessons. I have learned how to count high card points and keep track of trump. Teamwork skills with my partner during bidding I have also learned. A Bridge life lesson that I learned was going big is not always better. During bidding, you need to carefully analyze your cards before making a high bid, otherwise, you won't be able to keep your contract. In life, you must carefully analyze situations before making decisions. Bigger is not always better.

Connections to others are vital in Bridge. In Bridge, you connect with your partner and your opponent. Do they raise the bidding high or keep it low? Do they use their trump conservatively or do they spend it quickly? What information am I giving and receiving? These connections help me to develop strategy, and that is my favorite part of the game.

As the dealer bids one spade, and everyone else passes. I'm sitting with twenty three high card points. My partner passed though, which is not a good sign. I have to make the decision, Do I pass, or raise the bidding? This is the strategy that makes Bridge enjoyable. I just started playing this year, and I have already learned many lessons. I've even taught my family how to play. Now you know what Bridge means to me. What does it mean to you?

What does bridge mean to me

- Aleina [REDACTED]

* a four player strategic card played with a regular 52 deck of cards game divided between two partners who sit opposite to each other." Now that's the dictionary definition but to me it means so much more.

To me it means a table game filled with teamwork, skill, challenge, and Intellect.

For me bridge is an escape from regular classes. On top of that bridge is a place for me to think intuitively and show off our schools hard work that we practice every day with Miss Allen. Additionally bridge is a game for me to play with my friends and sometimes even against them. Not to mention it teaches children communication skills and gives our brains a workout.

Bridge is also a game which helps me and have fun in one fast paced table game. Furthermore bridge is a game where i can express my love for table games and gate. On top of that bridge is a game for me to learn hands-on experience while still having fun. Finally to me bridge is Bright Remarkable Insightful Dynamic Great Edifying table game.

For some people bridge is just a card game that some people know and some people dont but for me it is so much more. - thank you

Alena | 4th Grade

Go fish is really fun but not as fun as bridge with your friends. Bridge is so fun but the bad thing is you need four players and if you don't have four players you need a dummy or two. My friends and I don't like playing with three or two players because we think it is more fun with four players.

Things that I don't like about bridge is that aces beat everything and so that means if your team doesn't get any aces the other team can win four times.

Things I like about bridge is that it is really fun and I can teach other people in my family and I can teach my friends who don't know what bridge is.

Dawson | 6th Grade

Hi Patty, my name is Dawson [REDACTED]. I am in 6th grade, I am a student at Kallespell Middle School. Today I want to take time and explain to you what bridge means to me. I enjoy bridge because when I first started playing, it reminded me of when I was in 4th grade. We had a cribbage tournament that was really fun. My partner and I won the class tournament and got to go to the city tournament in Kallespell with about 8 different schools. Even though we didn't place against all the other schools, we did really well and it was fun to experience a real tournament in 4th grade. So when we started bridge, I knew I was going to love it. When my teacher first introduced bridge, I thought it would be really fun, and I was right. The first game we played, we got to sit wherever we wanted. We could talk, have fun, and just play with no interruptions. But as we got more advanced at the game, we had to be quiet and play like you would in a real tournament. I actually liked that better because it helped me focus and think. After that, my partner and I started to win trick after trick. We worked really well together, and it brought us closer. One time, my friend and I were playing against another student and the teacher, and we won even though we didn't make the bid! We had about 24 high card points, which helped us take most of the tricks and we won seven to six which was a close game. and on Thursday April 23, me and my partner Ashlyn played really well, but not well enough to get 1st, 2nd, or 3rd but we did get 7th out of 35 groups of people. Bridge has taught me a lot. It has helped me think quickly because you always need to be ready with a card to play. How to work well with others, because you need a strong relationship with your partner to play well. It has also helped me become more independent, since you can't talk or help each other during the game. If I got the chance to go to Minneapolis, I would definitely take it because I love playing bridge with my friends and family. Playing with my family is really fun. Bridge is really fun to teach as well. And it has brought us closer together. Now, most nights, we sit around the table and play bridge and cribbage together as one big family.

Felicity | 3rd Grade

Have you ever wonderd how you can learn things and conect your self to others just by playing brige. Now you are properly wondering what brige is it is a card game but unlike other card games there is a place to play it called the brige club. You still can play it at home though. I play at the brige club and playing brige is hard but also really fun you get to meet new people and make new frends. Brige is not only fun for meeting people it is for making people happy because a lot of people there are old and alone so you should be kind. They also have trips to go on because you can play brige any where and one of the trips were going to philidelphia and I met a lot of new people like my parterner named Aurther we had a lot of fun playing together. I really enjoy playing brige because brige is not only a card game it is a game that helps you meet people.

What Bridge Means to Me

By: Jax [REDACTED]

Bridge is so fun and I love to play it! There are so many things I enjoy about playing the game, one of the many things I enjoy about Bridge is playing and hanging out with my friends. This is fun because we know each other so well that we can communicate without talking. Another reason I enjoy playing bridge is the bridge teachers. Our bridge teachers are Ann and Susan; they are awesome! Anytime we mess up or we need help, they are willing to help us with anything. They even taught me what cross roughing is, and it helped a lot! Me and my class always play on Tuesdays and on that day I can't wait until second period to play bridge with my friends and teacher.

I have learned a lot about Bridge with Ann and Susan. I have never played Bridge in my life, so it was a whole new experience for me. But it was super fun to learn and play. Ann, Susan and my teacher, Mrs. Steele, taught me everything I know about Bridge, and I can tell that they are very good and experienced. I have also learned how to be a good teammate. I am very competitive and I don't like to lose, but Bridge is fun and I know I can just play again tomorrow.

My class and I went on a super fun field trip to the Flathead Valley Bridge Center to play a tournament against each other. The games were very fun and me and my partner got fifth place! We didn't get an award but it was very fun to play together in a real tournament. Now me and my friends even play during school like in math. In that tournament I learned a lot too, I learned what the X and the double X cards mean. I hope I can go again to the Flathead Valley Bridge Center

Bridge isn't just fun, it also connects me to others. I love to play with my friends, and we also sometimes play it at lunch because we all love it. Even though we can't talk during the game, it is now easy to tell what your partner has from what they place down. In conclusion I love bridge because it connects me to others, and it is a super fun strategic game.

Bridge to me means a lot! It has given me fun, sportmanship, and playing the game itself changed a part of me. At first, I thought the game was going to be complicated and boring, but boy was I wrong.

First Bridge is SO MUCH FUN. I loved when you get a good hand and win a game, but it's even better when you win a game with a bad hand. I remember in competition when me and my teammate had a bad hand, but we still pulled through and that made me super happy!

Now I love when I win, but Bridge also teaches Sportmanship!

Bridge is a luck-skill type of game. If you have a bad hand, you'll probably try, but fail even with a very skilled person. And when that happens, people easily get mad about it. When I lose in Bridge, sometimes I feel frustrated. For example, in our school Bridge competition, I lost mostly because of bad luck, I was bummed out but didn't get mad... instead I congratulated all the winner and kept going. Bridge taught me that very well, so now it's a life lesson that I will never forget.

Finally, Bridge was just an amazing memory I'll never forget. First of all, since it is my first, AND last year in the GATE program, every little memory means a lot to me. Second of all, I had gigantic amounts of fun playing it. I played with friends, and even taught my family to play. And third of all, every thing I did about Bridge was just amazing, nothing words could describe.

In conclusion, Bridge is one of, if not, the best experiences I've ever had. This essay was not only to try to win... but to also maybe, just maybe inspire someone out there to try and do what I did.
 I hope I can inspire someone else.

Kate | 6th Grade

Kate [REDACTED]

5/12/2028

Mrs. Steele's Math

I love Bridge. The teachers are so nice and the game is so fun, plus I love the thinking part. Actually, it's a love-hate relationship. I'm not sure what I enjoy most about playing, but I like seeing what cards I have and how the game turns out; making bids, even though it's hard sometimes; and figuring out what to do, plus making inferences about the other players' cards based on what they play. I have learned most-ish of the details and ways to play bridge along with things about the other players and some math skills. Bridge lets me practice math and know more about different people. To me, bridge means the chance to have fun, play a game, be with my friends, and do some thinking.

It connects me to many others in many ways, one person being my partner, whoever that might be, because I get to talk to them, see how they play, and have fun with them. When I play with someone new or some new people who I don't usually play with, I get the same opportunities and a chance to make new friends. Also, it connects me to the bridge teachers because they teach me how to play, better and better, and I learn more about them. It connects me to my real math teacher too. Sometimes she plays with us, and she's really fun and good at the game. She's awesome, and I've gotten to connect with her more because of bridge. Some other people it connected me with were the people who helped out at the bridge competition at the bridge center. I only met them briefly, but I could tell they were really nice.

The game has made a difference in my life and community in multiple ways. Not only was I a bridge student this year in sixth grade, where it was basically required (even if it wasn't, I would still do it), but a few other kids and I were in a bridge club in fifth grade too. Even though I started a bit late, I learned a lot, got the gist of the game, and had something fun to do after school, rather than just laying around bored at my house. It was really fun.

Also, this year I learned a lot, like how to bid, because they hadn't really gone over that in the bridge club. And even though none of my family knows how to play, I can now teach them and my friends and then have a new game to play. Plus I met new people and had a good time with my friends. Playing bridge is a really fun pastime for me. It involves thinking, working together, calculations, and risk. Lots of risk. It's awesome. I love bridge.

Kessner | 6th Grade

Kessner

Bridge: A Pathway

When I learned how to play bridge, it opened up opportunities I didn't know were there. I first learned how to play bridge in fifth grade. The kids in the program got a special introduction to bridge. There was more time for one-on-one learning and the games were all practices, so it was a judgement and stress free environment. I think this is the best way for kids to learn. Since we started near the end of the year, we didn't get to finish learning how to play. We didn't learn how to bid properly, so when my sixth grade math teacher said we were going to learn bridge, I was excited for another opportunity to learn how to play the whole game.

Susan and Anne were great teachers who made sure to hop around from table-to-table to help everyone, even though it was a full class. I think it is especially amazing that they devote an entire day three times a week to help kids learn a game that is often forgotten by new generations. I think bridge has helped me connect more to people I didn't really know before we started. Back when we started I did not know many people in my class except for people that I had already gone to school with. Playing bridge, my partner would always switch, so I had a new partner every time. That's when one day I had a partner named Blanca. We really had fun together and now we are very close friends. I think bridge helped me branch out and it made math class very fun.

Also, my parents think it's cool I have learned to play bridge because they said that they didn't get that opportunity, and they think it's phenomenal that kids get to learn how to play card games that connect them to their family. Many kids do not grow up in houses like mine, where families would play a card or board game every night. That's why it's especially cool for them to get to play at school when they might not have normally had the chance. Bridge also connects me to my family. One of my Great Grandmas died a short time after I was born, and my dad says that when he was little he would sit around the table at their house and watch her play bridge all day. He says that if she was alive it would have made her happy to know that one of her great grandkids loves to do one of the many things that made her happy. Also two Great Grandmas on my mother's side played bridge as well.

Some things I enjoy about Bridge when we are playing it differ depending on what kind of environment I'm in. When we are playing when we just have some extra time and deal out some cards, it is fun because you don't have to be serious with your friends and sometimes you can get a very good hand. One example of this is when my friends and I were at a table but that day we didn't have any bridge boards so we got to deal them from hand. It was fun for me because I got 19 points! I also enjoy a serious environment so I can focus and actually play the game. It's good to have fun, but not too much fun, when you want to play a game seriously.

Therefore, I think bridge can mean different things to different people depending on what environment they like or what experiences they have had with the game. Face-to-face interaction is scarce these days and most people are getting lost in screens, so it is important that we don't lose the art of bridge. There is a lot of strategy to be learned mathematically, socially, and interpersonally. That is also why I think that trip to NABC would not only be amazing, but I believe it would be a once in a lifetime experience and a great way to learn. I also think it would be fun to see how other people play bridge. I think it would be incredibly beneficial for me to go and participate in a bridge competition. I think this is an awesome opportunity, and I would be eternally grateful to have it.

Kyleigh | 3rd Grade

Bridge means joy to me. The first time I heard of it I thought we will build a bridge. But bridge is super fun, challenging, and a game of luck. I have also learned alot.

I learned about highcards, trump suits, and about the dummy. I also learned the first six wins don't count. I enjoy mostly the winning part of it when my partner is the dummy. I also like when I can help somebody. That is what I learned and enjoy about bridge.

I also loved the volunteers. They were very

helpful. They also very kind. These volunteers were the best. And they treated us great.

In conclusion bridge means great, teamwork, and luck to me. I enjoy bridge I think it's great. I think it's super fun and challenging. I learned alot from bridge. And I am so happy that I learned how to play it. I love bridge and I think it is very enjoyable if you try it.

Laina | 4th Grade

Bridge is the best game in the existence of card games. First, bridge lets us see our friends after school. This is the greatest because some of us don't see our friends out of school very often. Second, it helps us with math and strategy. We learn math by counting our high card points and we learn strategy by bidding and playing. Learning strategy by bidding is one of my favorite parts about playing bridge. It can teach you strategy because you have to consider your partner's bid and your two opponents' bids. You have to consider your high card points (HCP) then you can make a bid. That's one reason that it's one of my favorite parts of bridge. It also makes our brains stronger. Lastly, being dummy is my absolute favorite because when we are dummy we just get to put out the cards and eat while our partner is handling both hands. All in all, bridge is the most amazing game in the entire Omniverse. That's why I love it so much.

Sincerely,

Laina [REDACTED]

Marley | 4th Grade**On My Toes with Bridge**

Marley [REDACTED]

I bolted down the hallway on a Monday afternoon. My sneakers were squeaking against the checkered floor. This was the moment I had been counting down to since my first class. It was Bridge time. I love Bridge because it keeps me on my toes and challenges me to use my knowledge in every play.

Bridge keeps me on my toes and forces me to use everything I know about the game in every single play. For example, when I was playing Bridge with my friends, a new suit was played. Like always, I carefully studied my hand. When I realized that I had no cards in that suit, I used everything I knew about the game and sketched a plan in my head. When it was my turn to lay a card, I grinned and gently placed a trump card on the table. This shows that when you stay on your toes, you can use your knowledge of the game to win the trick.

Bridge is a fun and exciting game, and it takes a lot of concentration. I love Bridge because it challenges me to think carefully during every play. I enjoy it, and it is my favorite part of Monday. That is why Bridge is so important to me.

Mathew | 3rd Grade**Mathew** [REDACTED]**My Bridge Essay**

Bridge is like having people to help you win as many tricks as you can. In the bridge tournament, I learned about trump suites, trumps, overtrumps, tricks and bridges. I enjoyed having a teammate and the feeling of placing cards down and winning tricks. I also enjoyed participating in the bridge tournament and it was a lot of fun. I have connected with a student named Charlie and got to know more about her. I was learning about students from Triple A. We were winning a lot of games at the bridge tournament. We got cards, pencils, stickers and keychains.

We once got eleven tricks and we also won ten in games.

Mohammad | 6th Grade

BRIDGE

Bridge: Bridge is very important to my life. I love it when people visit us and teach us about bridge. When they come on Tuesday, I'm the happiest person in the world. Why do people ask? Because it teaches me and so many other people about bridge And especially math.

Bridge tournament: I'm so excited that my class and so many other students are going to this bridge tournament. Even if I wanna win there alot more stuff that is better than winning. You can meet new people which brings me to my next topic.

Meeting new people: bridge is about having fun meeting new people. If you stick with 2-3 friends you're probably gonna be bored. So bridge is about meeting new people. If you meet new people you're gonna have an awesome time learn about different people and have fun with your new friends.

What did I learn : I learned that bridge is a very hard game to learn but when you get the hang of it you're gonna have an awesome time. I learned you can't talk to your partner. I learned when you sit down check if north is north and south is south and east is east and west is west. And a bunch more things from Susan and Ann.

I wanna go to a bridge tournament. because I wanna meet new friends. Also get better at the game. While I'm there I hope I can see Susan and Ann. Why? you may ask because they taught me how to play. I wish we could bridge every day but sadly we can't.

Nora | 6th Grade

Bridge

Hi, my name is Nora Rech from Kalispell Middle School. This year was the first time I've ever played bridge. But I have been taught so well that I am able to say this, bridge is expressing how you feel with no words. You play your low card hoping, trusting your partner will play high. Even if you lose a trick, bridge taught me that it's okay to lose as the game ISN'T over yet. When I chose a new partner not knowing how they play bridge or knowing that person, was a great opportunity to meet new people. Bridge showed me how to work with other people, and soon enough, we became better friends than we've ever been. Bridge isn't just a game, it's a life skill. In Bridge you need to learn how to place your cards in a strategic way, that's why it has helped me concentrate on one thing at a time. Each card you play is a huge risk, you are constantly testing your luck. You never truly know if you have made the right choice. And that's why I quickly fell in love with this game. It's not like playing any other card game, you place your card down in a random suit hoping your partner has got your back, but wait there's more. Your luck is balancing on a tight rope, thoughts will run through your mind during the game, wondering if you bid too high or not high enough, wondering if this game is over or if you will fight to the end.

Getting to know the game was extremely rough for me. I couldn't understand how to put two and two together. Then we started bidding, and that got me very excited. I started bidding a four of diamonds, which left my partner clueless. What was I thinking? Bridge is a very serene game, only for the most calm minds. Some may say, but if you get to know me I am the very opposite of that, I can't control anything. Bridge is calm, relaxing and very wild all at once. Once you pick up your hand of cards the strategy begins. After I bid a four of diamonds for the first time, it only took seconds before the game was in my hands, so close to the finish. With another win comes another day.

After our field trip at the *Bridge Center in Kalispell Montana* I went home and told my mom all about it. I only managed to get a participation award, but the best part was seeing the smile on the other kids' faces that won. One of the main reasons why I was so happy for them is because we all started from scratch, so watching my classmates win first place brought me joy.

Oliver | 3rd-5th Grade

Playing bridge means a lot to me. It means having fun, and connecting with ~~others~~ other people. It also means I get to stretch and challenge my brain. It means I get to relax and just have fun. That is why bridge means so much to me.

What I enjoy most about bridge is I get to work as a team with someone. It is my favorite part of bridge because most card games you work alone. In bridge you get to have a partner to be with you as you play. It is a great way to connect with people. That is why it is my favorite part of bridges.

I have learned many things by playing bridge. It has also connected me with others. I learned many strategies. I have also played against and with many people. I even taught my family. Bridge is very fun and I enjoy playing it a lot.

Raelyn | 4th Grade**What bridge means to me:****By: Raelyn [REDACTED]****4th Grade**

Bridge means so much to me. It's fun, it's entertaining, and it can bring communities together.

My favorite part of the game is just playing. It's so fun to play a game you love with your friends who enjoy the game just as much as you do. It is also a very fun yet complicated experience. It is the perfect amount of hard and easy. It is really just perfection. It takes a while to get a hang of the game but after a bit, it is so much fun.

All in all, bridge is absolutely amazing and Everyone should give it a try. Bridge means so much to me. What does bridge mean to you?

Ray | 6th Grade

Why I Love Bridge

By: Ray [REDACTED]

At first, bridge was hard for me. I did not know how to open or respond to a bid nor how to play a trick. I kept messing up my bids and playing the wrong cards. But I stuck with it and soon caught on and got better, and better. I had brilliant bridge teachers and a love for the game.

At K.M.S. (Kalispell Middle School) I am lucky to have two great bridge teachers who come every Tuesday, Ms. Susan and Ms. Ann, along with my wonderful math teacher Mrs. Steele. They have taught me how the game works and how to play it. I was recently on the school math team, and we would play bridge whenever we had extra time, and it connected me with other kids on the team. I also recently went to a bridge tournament with my sixth grade class. My partner, Bentley Barkley, and I lost three games and won four but we still came out victorious and got first place because we scored a lot of points. My friends Camden and Muhammad won six games and lost one but scored fewer points. Something funny is that in the newspaper they wrote down Quintin Hicks name who is three grades older than us instead of Bentley's name as my partner.

I have always loved strategy games so bridge has been so fun for me. I love bridge because I get to use my brain to figure out what cards are in other people's hands. I play chess with my parents and sister, which is a strategy game too. I want to teach them how to play bridge because I think it is a lot more fun.

In January, I started Brazilian Jiu Jitsu which requires lots of patience and strategy while fighting and training. Sadly, I have had to take a break from it until June because I broke my collarbone. When I broke it, I could not do baseball, Jiu Jitsu, or track, but I could still play bridge.

I also grew up playing card games with my family. My grandma taught me how to play games like Crazy Eights, King's in the Corner, and Spoons, while my other grandma taught me how to play Cribbage. She is learning bridge too right now and I cannot wait to play with her. I did not know this until recently, but two of my other relatives were really great bridge players as well. My great great grandma lived to be 105 years old, and she regularly played bridge. I also just found out that my great aunt Marion played too and was an expert player. I guess loving bridge runs in the family.

Speaking of my family, they actually live in Minnesota! After I moved to Montana I have only been able to see them once or twice a year. So it would be so nice to see them again in July, and I could play bridge with my grandma.

I love bridge, and if I had the opportunity to go to Minneapolis, Minnesota (where I am originally from) and play in the YNABC I would be so happy. It would be wonderful to see my family again. If I could go to the championship, I would be able to meet other kids who love bridge just as much as I do.

-Yours sincerely, Ray

Sam | 6th Grade

Bridge and Me

By Samuel [REDACTED]

The card game Bridge is more than just a game old people play, but a game for all ages. At first, it seemed really hard to understand because there are so many rules and lots of details. There are a lot of rules that you have to remember, such as bidding, and you have to remember all of them. But once you start to get it, it is really fantastic! With good teamwork, you win the tricks.

The most important thing Bridge has taught me is teamwork. You have a partner, so you can't just think about yourself. You have to trust your partner and try to figure out what they are thinking without talking. I think that's cool because you have to find out what your partner is communicating. If you don't work together, you probably won't win. Bridge also makes you concentrate, think strategically, and DO THE MATH! It's not just about luck like other card games. You have to think, guess what is going to happen. Sometimes, you have to guess what cards other people have, which can be hard. For me, I feel accomplished when you make a smart move and it works.

Playing bridge can be frustrating sometimes. If you mess up, it can make you lose the round. Bridge teaches you to be patient and keep trying even when it's hard. I have had a pretty amazing experience with my Bridge coaches Susan and Ann. They are great and they helped me improve my game each week. My teacher also helped me understand bidding and responding to my partner. Bridge is SO great for all ages because it requires brain power, which all ages benefit from. In my opinion, I think that more card and board games should be included in schools and at home instead of phones and computers.

In the end, Bridge has taught me about teamwork, staying focused, and not giving up. Even though learning Bridge is hard at first, it's a pretty fun game that helps you think faster and work better with other people. Bridge is more than a game; it's strategic. Although I still think that bridge is meant for people that are really smart, due to lots of rules, and if you try to learn the game, it is possible. In conclusion, Bridge is a game for everyone who loves to spend time with others and enjoy community comradeship. Overall, the influence of physical games is beneficial for our brains and is a great way to learn patience, strategy, and teamwork.

Serena | 8th Grade**Learning Bridge to Learn Life Lessons**

By Serena [REDACTED]

Like life, the game of bridge requires practice and work in communication, decision making, failing, and learning more. When Mrs. Thomas told us we'd have a guest teacher helping us learn a card game and Mrs. Susan started explaining how to sort cards, I definitely found myself on an unexpected journey!

Some of my first lessons through the Jump Start Bridge program taught me to communicate clearly. Before we could even have cards in our hand, we had to learn the vocabulary of the game. Tricks, bids and singletons were just the beginning. Then, we started to play together. You and your partner must try to communicate about high cards and points in subtle ways. During a hand when my partner and I definitely misread one another's clues, I saw how communication like this carries over into my life. It is important to speak, but also to listen and observe. Details mattered in bridge and also when I wrote emails to my teachers, filled out my first job application and talked to my friends about science projects. When I consider carefully what I want to say and listen closely to other people, I will win more hands in life, just like in bridge.

Through bridge I also saw the importance of each choice. Sometimes in bridge I wonder, "Should I play my high card or is the next person going to have a higher card?" I have to decide based on what I've noticed and sometimes with a willingness to take a risk. Sometimes, I choose not to play my high card, but then when the next person plays a card that is even worse, I think, "I should have played my high card!" The same thing happens outside of bridge. When I had to decide if I would play tennis, run track, or have fewer commitments in the spring, I didn't know what to do. I decided to play tennis and am enjoying the time with new friends and new skills. I risked something and it changed my next steps, and now I get to make the next decision as well as I can with the information I have.

As lessons continued, I learned that in bridge and life, there is always more to learn. My math class has been taking lessons once a week most of the year and every time I think I have it figured out, I see a new way to play a hand or a new rule to learn. A couple weeks ago, I got in the driver's seat of a car for the first time and knew I would fail at something! I'm sure I'll push the wrong pedal or park across a line or drive too close to the edge of the road someday. Just like in bridge, though, every time I fail, I can also find a way to get back up from it and use my failure to succeed the next time. I also know my partner forgives me when I miss a trick and I forgive her when she forgets to count cards. Making mistakes is a chance to learn to make better decisions in the future.

At the end of a game of bridge, we count the number of tricks and congratulate the other team no matter what. Then, I know we'll get to play again next week and that if someone else wants to play bridge, I'm prepared to communicate, make careful choices, and recognize when I have something new to learn!

Teddy | 6th Grade

When I joined the bridge club, I wasn't expecting it to be what it was. I was thinking it would be like most other card games, and that's why I almost didn't join. That and other reasons like my schedule, and that having a whole entire club for one card game seemed trivial. Almost pointless. But when I was introduced to the world of bidding, tricks, trumpsuits and so much more, I was easily proved wrong. The bridge club welcomed me with open arms, since the people there are great along with the coach, who usually has to deal with an uneven amount of players when people are absent. This means he usually has to play two hands.

I really do like bridge. For one, its complexity. I'm in my third quarter and I'm still at the tip of the iceberg. The only thing I'm positive of, are the way the cards face when the tricks are over. And I still mess that up! The whole bidding concept is so cool, with thirty nine different calls, each one saying something quite different about your hand. Like that bidding 1 spade means 12 or more HCP and that you have five spades and you can win at least seven tricks. It also means that that's the trump suit, and if you run out of cards for the suit that's being played, then you can just play the trump suit and win the trick! With so many different plays and ways to end up in the game, from having no face cards, or only facecards, the game is very complicated.

Another reason why I love bridge, is how you predict people's moves. You can figure out just based on your hand, the dummy's hand, and what's been played to figure out what cards are in your opponents' hands. You can tell based on their opening bid what their strongest suit is, and you can tell based on how they respond to certain cards or even if they can't play a card of the matching suit what their weak spot is. I love how predictable bridge can get, and how much it falls in your favor. Especially when you realize they're out of one suit. On top of predicting, there's also communicating. Your bids communicate with partners, and same with when you play some cards and how high the number on the card is.

Over winter break, I got to visit my 83 year old grandpa. I visit him only one or two times a year, so I savor every chance I can get with him. My grandpa also plays bridge, which makes my time with him more enjoyable. I feel like every time I play bridge with him, it brings us closer together. And maybe this bond will become greater when I fully learn how to play bridge. He even showed me a great place to do online bridge, and taught me a couple tricks. (not trick meaning play in bridge, but things you can do in bridge).

Bridge really is not what I expected. Bridge isn't just a card game, it brings people together. I made new friends at bridge club, and I'm now closer together than ever with my grandpa. It may be taking me a long time to understand, but when I get all the rules down, it'll be even more fun. I'm glad I started playing bridge, and I hope to still be playing when I'm 83, like my grandpa. And an extra bonus - It's fun!

Tenley | 4th Grade**Bridge Essay**

By: Tenley [REDACTED]

I study the cards in my hands, trying to remember what has already been played. My partner places her card on the table. I have to decide if I should trust the signal or play my best card. In that one moment, everything comes down to confidence, focus, and partnership. Bridge is more than just a card game to me, it is a fun way to think, learn, and grow.

It took me a while to learn how to play bridge. At first the game seemed simple, but every hand I was dealt became a new piece to a puzzle. The object of the game is to score points by winning tricks by what partners bid. This means I always have to remember what has already been played or I could lose the trick. I am not the best at that, but I'm working hard at my memory skills to become a better player.

Although I might not be the best yet, I enjoy playing bridge because it is an engaging challenge and has taught me two important lessons. First, it helped me learn how to strategize with my cards. Next, the biggest lesson bridge taught me is teamwork. In the game, I have to trust my partner and work together to accomplish a win. This is special to me because it connects me to all kinds of students that I might not have been friends with. I love that we all understand each other and I can be myself.

Overall bridge brings challenges, teamwork, and life lessons. It is not just a card game, but a rewarding experience that helps me academically grow and build relationships with others. I always look forward to bridge club at my school and enjoy the connections I made.

Violet | 3-5 Grade**Mike Levine Bridge Legacy Award - Essay Contest**

Violet [REDACTED] - 5th grade

ASFL Elementary

Bridge means a lot to me, and I feel super lucky to have had the opportunity to learn and play the game. I had so much fun playing with a partner at the competition and getting to meet other people who also love to play bridge. I know that it was a lot of work to organize the competition and am honored that the volunteers from the bridge community were willing to set up, provide the materials, and spend time with us to oversee and score our games. I love how bridge is a combination of strategy and luck of the draw. While learning to play bridge, I learned the values of the cards and various strategies for using different hands of cards. But the most important thing I learned through bridge was that happiness and fun aren't found in winning, they're found in the playing of the game and bonding with other people through the shared interest of the game.

Zanna | 4th Grade

Hi, my name is Zanna [REDACTED] and I am in the 4th grade at The Academy for Science and Foreign Language. This year in our G.A.T.E. program we had the opportunity to learn how to play bridge. Now, allow me to share with you what bridge means to me and how it has changed my life.

I love a challenge, maybe not at first sometimes, but that's one thing I like about Bridge. The game challenges me to stay focused, calm, and think quickly. It has really helped me strengthen and use the coping skills that I have learned over the years.

I have lost many times and that is okay. Losing, just like making mistakes, helps me learn and grow. My mom always says to me, "Play with a purpose not with an attitude".

Playing bridge makes me feel like I can be me, my real self, and that I can connect with others. In the past while playing games I did not always show the best sportsmanship. So, it has been a challenge in the past to connect with others when I played games. Bridge has helped me bridge that gap, get it?

In conclusion, when I first learned about bridge, I was excited but nervous at the same time, but I was ready to play. I became eager to learn and I'm happy that I got to learn how to play bridge this year. Now I have the skills to teach my family and friends! That's why bridge means so much to me!

Zoe | 3-5 Grade**My Hand In Bridge**

By Zoe [REDACTED]

Bridge is a fun and educational card game that I absolutely love. It is exciting and it can be played by all ages. First, my favorite part is the different variety of ways a game can go. I also love the adrenaline and how everyone is so polite and gracious. Second, bridge means a lot to me, it is something that can join people together even if it is just a game. At my school everyone loves the game and we are all appreciative of it.

Bridge means to me a hobby that people love. The game of bridge connects me to many other people by sharing this fun hobby, being able to relate by it, having a fun game to play with someone else, and being able to teach someone this valuable skill. I have learned many rules, how to play, how to have gracious professionalism, and why everybody loves this wonderful game. It has made my days a little brighter and less boring. Bridge has an endless place in my heart.

I appreciate this game and I could play it forever. For me playing a game for practice or fun is the same as a tournament. The rules are the same and you should always play the same even if you don't earn anything. I respect the people who are masters at this game and I cannot thank them enough for coming to help us. My teacher and all of the volunteers who help us, teach us, and take up their time for me with this wonderful game. This game means so much to me. Bridge allows me to express myself through cards, and it is my favorite game that you can play with traditional playing cards.

JumpStart Bridge

Jump Start Bridge (JSB) is introducing the wonderful game of bridge to a whole new generation. Bridge combines math, problem-solving, teamwork and socialization in a fun, competitive game that can be played for a lifetime.

Playing bridge results in improved logic and reasoning, math skills, and memory. Bridge requires you to analyze the information you receive, translate that information into a vision, make a plan for success based on that vision, and *learn to adjust that plan* when additional information becomes available – all basics of inferential thinking.

Bridge enhances concentration, fosters teamwork and teaches social-emotional skills like sportsmanship and patience. Your greatest success as a bridge player often comes from your ability to depend on information from your partner when making decisions. Bridge teaches a young player how to trust and communicate with others for mutual gain.

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– Warren Buffet