Understanding
Bridge Players and Non-Players
in the U.S.

2019 Bridge Survey Report
By Robert S. Todd
ACBL Educational Foundation

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2019 Bridge Survey Summary

Survey Background
- We used Survey Monkey to ask Americans 45 and over a variety of questions, including: Do they play bridge? How much? What types? Do they know people who play bridge? Are they interested in learning bridge?
- We limited the survey to people 45+ with some college education. We are confident that the vast majority of bridge players fall into this category, and this enabled us, at a reasonable cost, to generate results from roughly 2550 participants that can be projected onto this population of 75 million Americans. (We intend to gather information on younger players and non-players later.)
- The numbers in the remainder of this report and stated for this 75M people, by extrapolating from the 2550 respondents.
- A screening question divided the people surveyed into two groups – those who know how to play bridge and those who do not.
- We then asked the two groups different questions.

Survey Results - People who know how to play bridge
- About 16M (out of 75M) people said they know how to play bridge (over 20%) -- WOW!
- 10M+ have not played in a long time, 3M+ play a few times a year, 2M+ play regularly (monthly/weekly/weekly+)
- Almost two-thirds of the players learned before 1990. But more than 2 million in this age group have learned to play in this decade, a big uptick compared with either of the two prior decades.
- Social/rubber bridge is the most prominent form of play, followed by robots/apps, online with people, non-sanctioned duplicate, and then ACBL games.
- The more frequently people play, the more likely they are to play forms other than social. Though ACBL play increases with frequency of play, it never exceeds online with people or playing with robots.

ACBL-related Results
- About 6% of the bridge players have had something to do with ACBL. These fall into three groups:
    - ACBL members at some point in last 15-20 years (about 2%).
    - People that played an ACBL event years ago but have not done so in years (about 2.5%).
    - People that have played in bridge clubs or events but did not join long term (1.5%).
- If we look at "still playing," the ACBL connection goes up to 15% and for those still playing regularly 25%.

Survey Results – People who do not know how to play bridge
- Most know what bridge is but do not know anyone who plays bridge.
- About 19% of non-players are interested in learning to play bridge (11M). EXCITING!
- About 27% not sure, 54% not interested.
- Interest in learning is about 50% higher among people who know one or more people who play than among people who know about the game but do not know anyone who plays. (This suggests that current players could be great ambassadors for selling the game to people they know.)
- Those Interested in learning are interested in a variety of ways:
  - Computer/App – 55%, Teacher – 36%, Ed Video – 28%, Books – 15%
  - The more bridge players you know, the more likely you are to want to learn from a teacher.

Introduction

The goal of this survey was to collect information about the game of bridge in the US. We inquired about people's awareness, interest, and play of the game. To keep the scale of the survey reasonable we focused on people who are **45+ years of age (in 2019) with some college education** (more about this in the Methods Overview below).

We began by dividing our respondents into those who know how to play bridge and those who do not. For the bridge players, we asked when they learned to play bridge, how often they currently play bridge, and what types of bridge they play. For the non-bridge players, we asked if they know about bridge, know people who play bridge, are interested in learning to play, and if so, how they would like to learn to play.

Methods Overview

The survey was conducted in July 2019, using SurveyMonkey Audience. This is a well-accepted method for surveying people who are demographically representative of the US population. About 2550 people completed the survey in a fashion that was logically consistent with other data collected (about 137 entries were eliminated for data conflict; this data, even if included, would not materially skew the results). In order to make the survey cost-effective, we focused on Americans 45+ years of age, with at least some college education. This reduced the audience size to about 75 million people (instead of 320+M people in the US population) while retaining a very large percentage of bridge players, making it easier to get statistically relevant information. An extremely high percentage of the members of the American Contract Bridge League (ACBL) fall into this population group.

In the future, we plan to collect information about younger players and non-players, but those are not the focus of this report.

In addition to the questions that we asked the participants, basic demographic information was provided for them. This ensured that the sampled group matches the demographic makeup of the US population and allows us to do some basic demographic analysis of the answers to our question.

Error Analysis
The estimated error for this survey audience is +/- 2-3%, based on the sample of respondents for each question. This is using a standard 95% confidence interval.

Survey Questions Asked

Screening Question – Asked of all respondents
Q1. "Do you know how to play the card game bridge?"

Questions for those who said they know how to play bridge:
Q2. "Approximately when did you first learn to play bridge?"
Q3. "How often do you currently play bridge?"
Q4. "What type(s) of bridge do you play?" (multi-select)

(There was no Q5.)

Questions for those who said they do not know how to play bridge:
Q6. "What do you know about bridge?"
Q7. "Are you interested in learning to play bridge?" (multi-select)
Q8. "What is your educational level?"
Q9. "What year were you born?"

Demographic Information
Data not presented. Mostly used to compare other data in more detail.
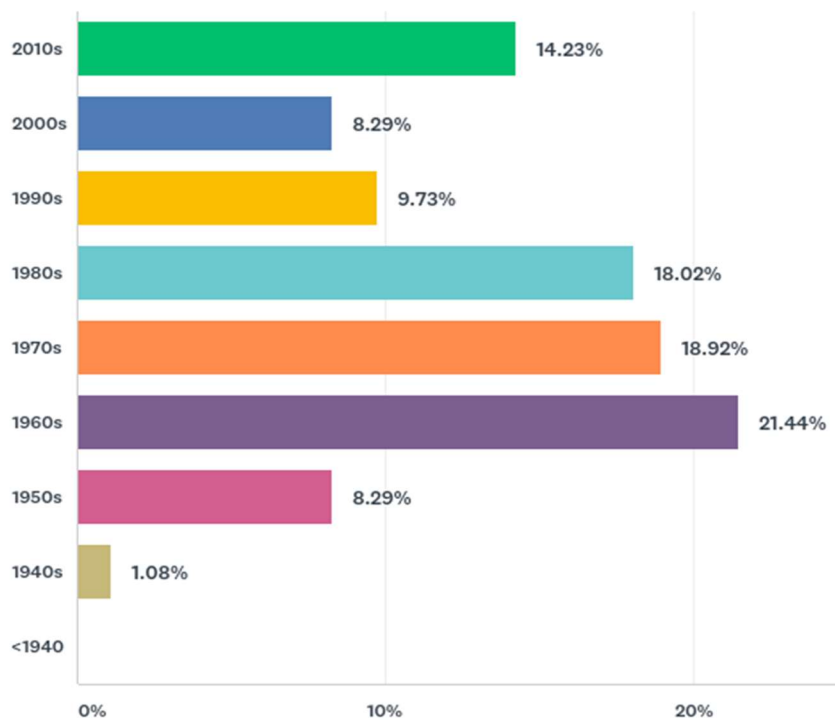*Q12. Gender*
Q13. Device
Q14. Income
Q15. Region

Bridge Player Questions, Results, and Analysis

Q1. Do you know how to play the card game bridge?

Over 20% of people surveyed (555/2550) said they know how to play bridge. *That means about 16M people (of about 75M in the audience - 45+ years old with some college education) identify as knowing how to play bridge.* This is a significant number of people who know how to play the game.

Q2 Approximately when did you first learn to play bridge?

Decade	Percentage
2010s	14.23%
2000s	8.29%
1990s	9.73%
1980s	18.02%
1970s	18.92%
1960s	21.44%
1950s	8.29%
1940s	1.08%
<1940	

Learned to Play	# of Players	% Change
2010s	*2.28M*	*+71%*
2000s	1.33M	-15%
1990s	1.56M	-45%
1980s	2.88M	-5%
1970s	3.03M	-12%
1960s	3.43M	*n/a*
1950s	1.33M	*n/a*
1940s	173K	*n/a*

|		
TOTAL	**16M**	

When Players Learned to Play Bridge
Data Analysis and Conclusions

The median year the surveyed players began playing is 1980. The mean about 1983. After about four decades of declining numbers of people learning to play, in 2010s there was a significant uptick in the number of new players in this age group.

Note: These tables (presented without a top) are designed to be read down each column. The # of people is the projection from the sampled data.

Q3 How often do you currently play bridge?
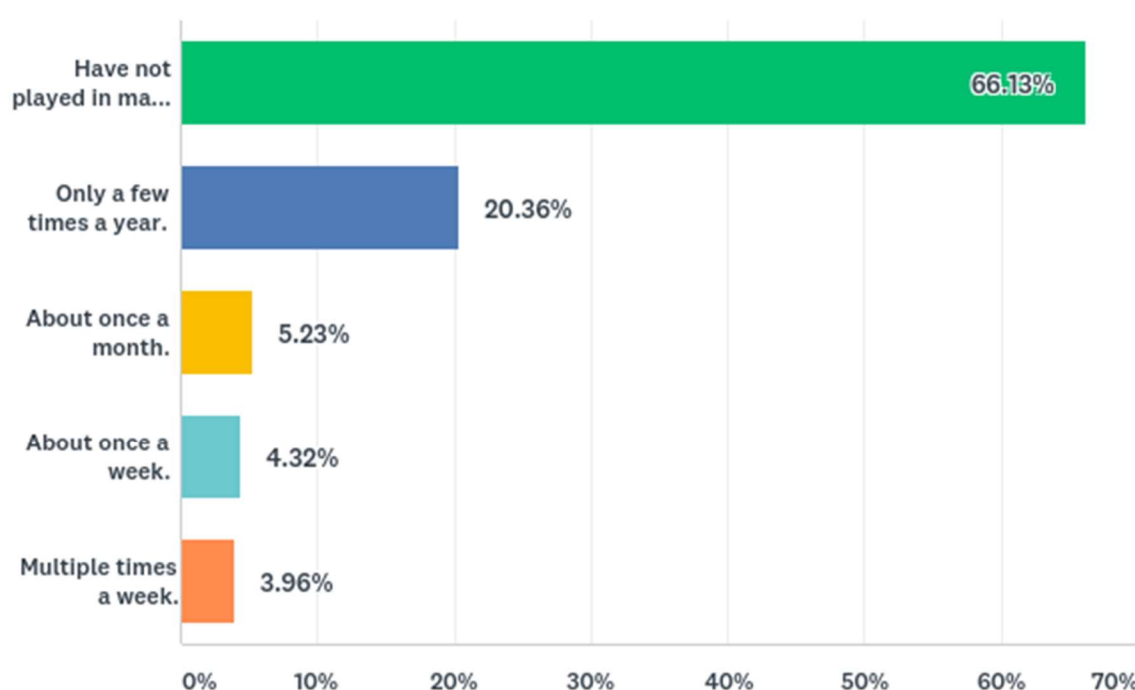
Understanding How Often Players Currently Play Bridge

Frequency of Play	**# of Players**
Have not played in years	10.5M (66.1%)
Only a few times a year	3.25M (20.4%)
About Once a month	800K (5.2%)
About Once a week	700K (4.3%)
Multiple times a week	625K (4.0)
TOTAL	*16M*

Data Analysis and Conclusions

For most of our analysis we will treat this data in three groups: Not Playing Anymore "Dropouts" (10M+), Playing only Occasionally "Occasionals" (3M+), and Playing Regularly "Frequents", which means monthly, weekly, or multiple times a week (2M+).

Q4 What type(s) of bridge do you play?
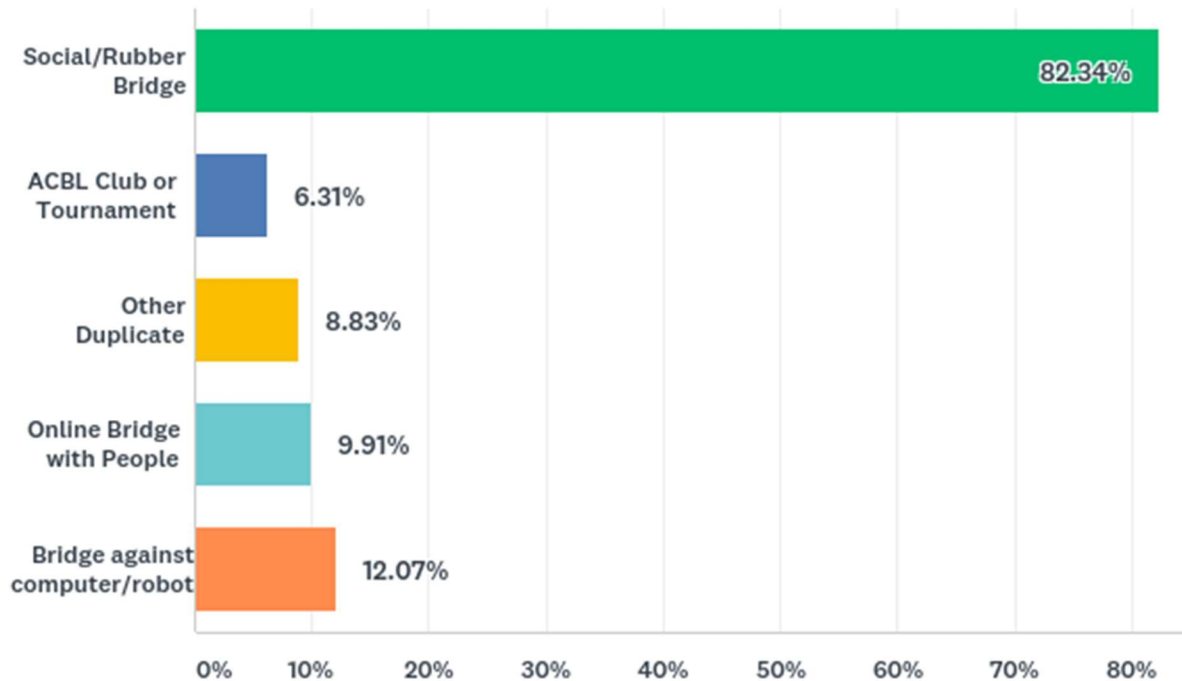
Note: For this question players could select more than one type of bridge played.

Types of Bridge Played based on their Frequency of Play

Type of Bridge	All Players	Play Occasionally+	Playing Monthly+
Social / Rubber	13M (82%)	3.7M (69%)	1.4M (65%)
ACBL	1M (6%)	800K (15%)	550K (26%)
Other Duplicate	1.5M (9%)	750K (14%)	400K (19%)
Online w/ People	1.6M (10%)	1M (20%)	550K (25%)
Against Robots	2M (12%)	1.2M (22%)	600K (28%)
TOTAL	16M	5.4M	2.15M

Note: Total players in a frequency category do not equal the sum of the column because players play more than one type of bridge.

Data Analysis and Conclusions

As players play more frequently the % playing social bridge decreases. The % playing all other forms of bridge goes up with playing frequency, with ACBL going up the most.

Further Analysis – Detailed Look at Additional Findings

Uptick in People Learning to Play in 2010s

In the 2010s about 2.28M people who are now 45+ learned to play. This is a significant change, from about four decades of decline in the number of new players, to an increase of 70+% in this last decade. Let's look at a breakdown of the players that learned in the last decade compared to our general population. *This group is referred to as the 2010s Uptick below.*

Frequency of Play	All Players	2010s Uptick
Dropouts	66%	28%
Occasionals	20%	48%
Frequents (m, w, w+)	13%	*24%*

The fact that not as many new players say that they have "not played in a long time" seems normal, given that not as much time has passed. But the significant increase in players playing frequently shows that the level of engagement with newer players is presently high. Many of the Occasional players may change into *Not Played in Long Time* as time progresses, but it is less clear what will happen to the higher percentage of frequent players. This is a good sign.

Types of Bridge	All Players	2010s Uptick	All Players Occasional+	2010 Uptick Occasional+
Social	82%	63%	*69%*	*63%*
ACBL	*6%*	*10%*	*15%*	*12%*
Other Dup	9%	8%	*14%*	*11%*
Online	*10%*	*22%*	*21%*	*23%*
Robots	*12%*	*27%*	*22%*	*25%*

When we look at types of bridge that players are playing, we see a decline in social/rubber bridge and significant gains in the number of players playing ACBL, online with people, and against robots (computer/apps). When we look into these online and robots increases in more detail, we see that a significant amount of that increase is coming from the youngest players in our survey – players born from 1970-1974. *Clearly computer bridge is having a significant effect on the number of people who play bridge and specifically on the younger players (as would be expected).* Additionally, these groups Online with people (representing about 500K+ new players) and Robots/Computer (representing about 600K+ new players) are quite distinct. They have fewer than 200K players in common. *Together they represent almost 1M new players in the last decade.*

Gender	All Players	2010s Uptick
Female	53%	*73%*
Male	47%	27%

The Uptick is largely made up of new female players (almost 3 times as many).

Year Born	All Players	2010s Uptick	2010s Female	2010s Male
1970-74	16.6%	34.2%	36.2%	28.6%
1960s	26.5%	45.6%	43.1%	52.4%
191950s	22%	10.1%	10.3%	9.52%
40s	25.6%	10.1%	10.3%	9.52%
<1940	9%	--	--	--

This Uptick comes from people in their late 40s and 50s. The females (who constitute most of the players) are generally younger as well.

Deeper Look into Players of Each Type

Breakdown of Players by Type of Bridge Played

Type of Bridge	All Players	Only	Social	ACBL	Other Dup	Online	Robots
Social / Rubber	*13M (82%)*	*85%*	N/A	3%	4.5%	4.8%	6.8%
ACBL	*1M (6%)*	*40%*	40%	N/A	23%	23%	17%
Other Duplicate	*1.5M (9%)*	*37%*	42.9%	16.3%	N/A	18.4%	10.2%
Online w/ People	*1.6M (10%)*	***40%***	40%	14.5%	16.4%	N/A	***27.3%***
Online Robots	*2M (12%)*	***42%***	46%	9%	7.5%	***22%***	N/A

Note: Tables with these dark tops are design to be read across, giving information about the group on the left and breaking that down as you read across. For each type of bridge player, we give the percentage who play ONLY this type and then those who play this type AND other types.

Interesting Findings

- The relatively large % of players who selected only one type of bridge suggests that either the question (or survey method) led them to only select one type or, more likely, that a large number of players tend to play only one type of bridge – sticking to their group of players.
- The *Online with People* players and *Robot* players only have about 25% overlap. These are largely distinct groups of players.
- Almost half of the social bridge players who play other forms of bridge play with robots.
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Notes on the Number of *ACBL Club or Tournament Players*

Listed in the data are 1M people who have played in ACBL clubs or tournaments. Three subgroups:

- *Recent members*
  - There are presently about 150K members of the ACBL that fit in our target audience. Each year about 12K people cycle in and out of the ACBL. Some of these are new members and others are rejoining players. Over the least 15-20 years, this results in about <u>300K members in recent years</u>.
- *Have Not Played in a Long Time*
  - The data shows that about <u>400K players</u> have played in an ACBL event or tournament, learned bridge long ago, and have not played in a long time (subset of the "Dropouts" data below). These members are not in the ACBL's database.
- *Non-Members*
  - The wording of the questions is such that there will be a third group of players (still playing bridge, mostly occasionally) that played bridge at a tournament, club, or special event over the last 20-50 years, but never joined the ACBL. These non-members are difficult to measure in other ways, but it appears they make up about <u>300K players</u>, also not in the ACBL's database.

Analysis of Player by Bridge Type Compared to the General Player Population

Type of Bridge	Frequency of Play	When Learned	When Born
Social / Rubber	More Dropouts. Fewer of everything else.	Small changes. More 1960s-70s, fewer 1990s-2010s.	Similar distribution.
ACBL	Far fewer Dropouts. Much more of those who play weekly or weekly+	Changes in distribution. More 50s-60s, 10s. Less 70s-00s.	Older. More 1930s, 40s. Much fewer 1960s, somewhat fewer 70s.
Other Duplicate	Fewer Dropouts. More everything else.	More in 1950s and 2000s!	Older. More 1930s, fewer 1970s.
Online w/ People	Far fewer dropouts. Much more everything else.	Very few learned before 1980s. Many more recent. 2010s-- 14% up to 31% 2000s-- 8% up to 15%	Much Younger. 1970s– 16% up to 40% 1960s– 26% up to 32%
Online Robots	Fewer Dropouts. Much more likely to be frequent players	Far more 2010s. Far fewer of everything else.	Younger. More 1970s, fewer 1930s.

Summary Notes

- Social/Rubber – Not sticky (most Dropouts). Learned a bit longer ago.
- ACBL – Sticky (far fewer Dropouts). Most players learned long ago with decades of declining starters followed by recent *Uptick* in last decade.
- Other Duplicate – Older, but dedicated. Resurgence in play in 2000s.
- Online w/ People – Youngest. Most Sticky (far fewer Dropouts). Recently learned.
- Online Robots – Young. Sticky (fewer Dropouts). Many players playing robots just recently learned to play bridge in 2010s.

Deeper Look into Players by Frequency of Play

Detailed Look at Players by Frequency

| Frequency of Play	When Learned	Social	ACBL	Other Dup	Online	Robots
Dropouts (D)	Few from 2010s	89%	2%	6%	4%	7%
Occasionals (o)	Many 2010s	72%	7%	12%	18%	18%
Monthly (m)	Most 2010s	76%	3%	10%	24%	28%
Weekly (w)	2010s and 1960s-70s	63%	33%	25%	25%	21%
Multi-weekly (w+)	Oldest w/ some 2010s	55%	50%	23%	27%	36%
All Players	*2010s Uptick*	*82%*	*6%*	*9%*	*10%*	*12%*

Summary Notes

- *Dropouts* – Similar distribution as all players, but skews towards having started 60s and 70s (few 2010s). Most of these were social bridge players only.
- *Occasionals* – Many new players, still many social players, but large increase in all other categories, especially both Online with People and Robots.
- *Monthly* – Most new players, still many social players, but even larger amount of computer, especially both Online with People and Robots.
- *Weekly* – This group seems to be a mix of those who ramped-up from monthly and people who cut back from multiple times a week. Some new players are being converted to weekly, and some older players are reducing to this frequency.
- *Multi-Weekly* – This group is the oldest and plays all types of bridge. Though this group of people play bridge multiple times per week only about half of them play ACBL events.

Non-Bridge Player Questions, Results, and Analysis

Q1. Do you know how to play the card game bridge?

A little less than 80% of people surveyed (1995/2550) said they do not know how to play bridge.   This is about 59M people (of about 75M in the audience - 45+ years of age, with some college education). It turned out that this group was made up of about 2/3 Females and 1/3 Males. (This was not the case for our bridge players, since the process for our survey ensure a population representation, about 53/47%, for our bridge players).

Q6 What do you know about bridge?
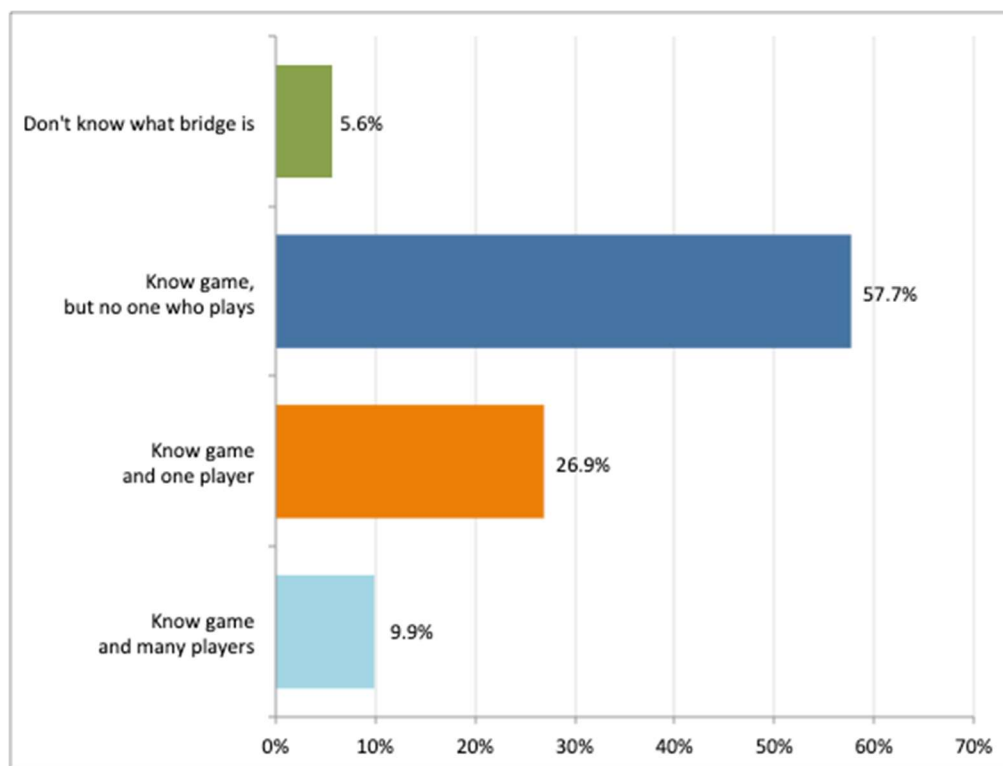
People's Knowledge of the Game Bridge

Knowledge of Bridge	# of People
Do not Know What it is	3+M (5.6%)
Know game, but no player	34M (57.7%)
Know game and one player	16M (26.9%)
Know game and many players	6M (9.9%)

Data Analysis and Conclusion

Of the 59M people who do not know how to play, very few do not know about bridge (only 3M+).   That means there is a good amount of popular knowledge about the game, even among those who do not know how to play.

Q7 Are you interested in learning to play bridge?
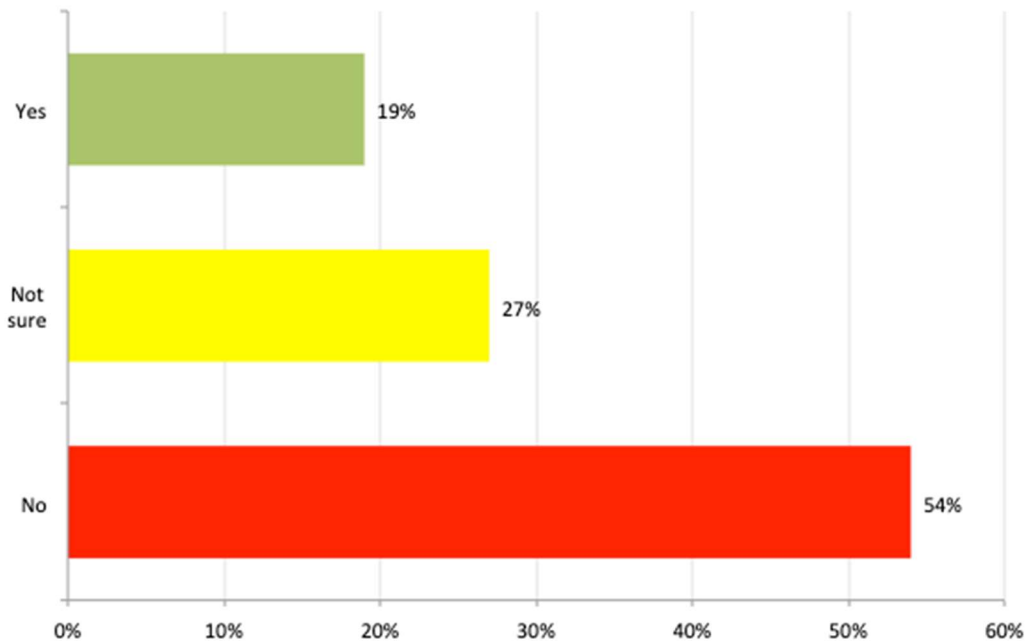
Types of Learning Interest for Non-Players

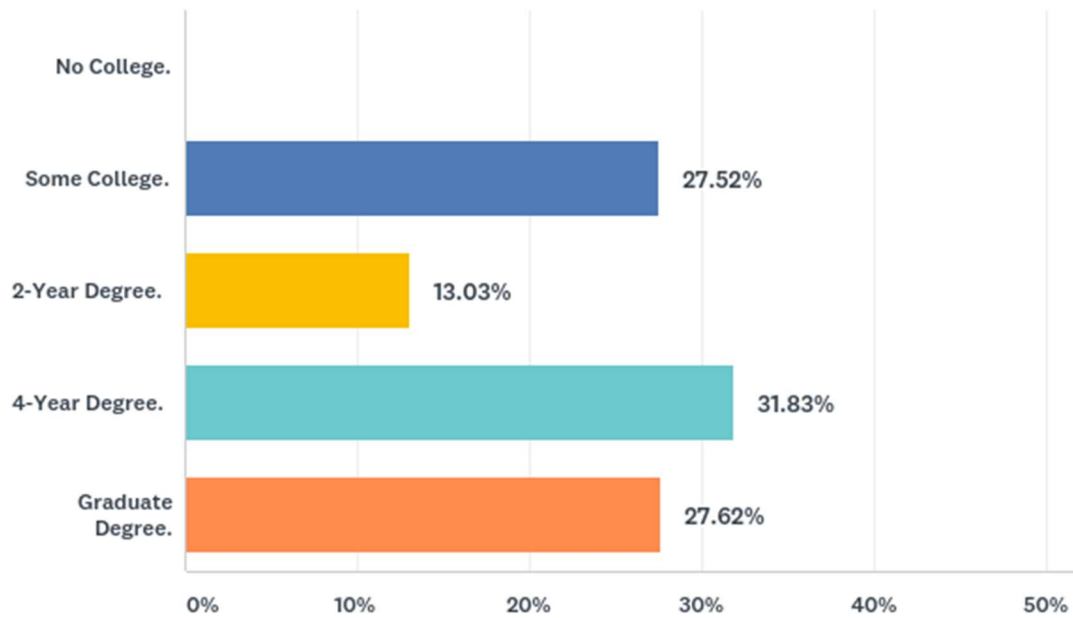| Interested in Learning	# People
Yes, Teacher	4M (7%)
Yes, Books	1.5M (2.5%)
Yes, Ed Videos	3.2M (5.4%)
Yes, App	6.3M (10.7%)
Not Sure, more info	14.4M (24.4%)
Not Sure, but knowing famous people play helps	2.78M (4.7%)
No	31.9 (54%)

Data Analysis

Of the 59M people who do not know how to play, about 19% showed interest in learning – over 11M people! The most popular way they would like to learn is through a computer application (over 50% more than from a Teacher), with Teacher and Educational Video being next most popular. Learning from books was the least popular option.

About 17M people are not sure if they are interested in learning to play. Most of this 45+ year old group do not suggest that famous people playing bridge would influence them to learn to play.

Note: Percentages sum to more than 100% because people could choose multiple answers

Q8 What is your educational level?

Category	Percentage
No College.	
Some College.	27.52%
2-Year Degree.	13.03%
4-Year Degree.	31.83%
Graduate Degree.	27.62%

Q9 What year were you born?

Category	Percentage
1970-74	15.34%
1960s	31.23%
1950s	31.08%
1940s	18.35%
1930s	3.56%
1920s	0.45%
<1920	
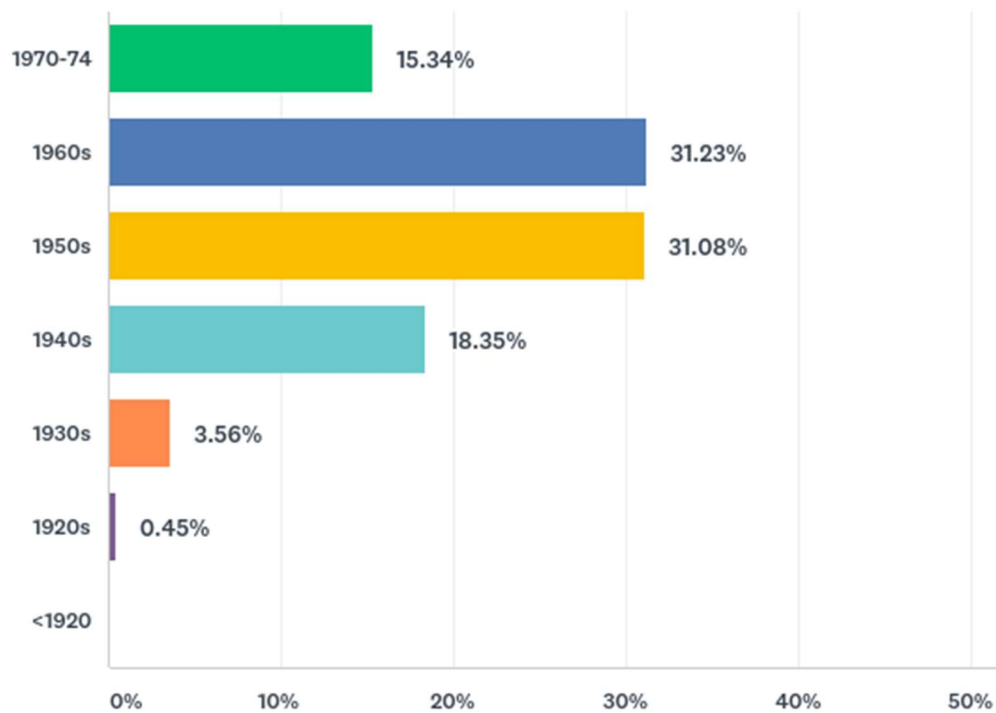
These two demographic questions are used to spot trends in a deeper-dive analysis.

Further Analysis – Detailed Look at Additional Findings

Deeper Look into Ways People Want to Learn

Interests in Learning by Multi-Type

Interested in Learning	All People	Only	Yes, Teacher	Yes, Book	Yes, Video	Yes, App	Not Sure	Fam	No
Yes, Teacher	4M (7%)	66.4%	n/a	15.7%	22.1%	24.3%	2.9%	4.3%	n/a
Yes, Books	1.5M (2.5%)	31.4%	43.1%	n/a	56.9%	49%	7.8%	7.8%	n/a
Yes, Ed Videos	3.2M (5.4%)	38.9%	28.7%	26.9%	n/a	52%	6.5%	6.5%	n/a
Yes, App	6.3M (10.7%)	65.9%	15.9%	11.7%	24.3%	n/a	4.2%	3.3%	n/a
Not Sure, info?	14.4M(24.4%)	93.8%	1%	1%	1.4%	1.9%	n/a	1.7%	n/a
Not Sure, famous?	2.78M (4.7%)	79.6%	6.5%	4.3%	**7.5%**	**7.5%**	8.6%	n/a	n/a
No	31.9 (54%)	98.7%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1%	0.2%	n/a

Note: Tables with these dark tops are design to be read across, giving information about the group on the left and breaking that down as you read across

Interesting Findings about Ways People Want to Learn

- About 2/3 of people interested in learning from a *Teacher* only wanted to learn in this way. This is also true for *App* people.
- Book people showed interested in Educational Videos and Apps.
- Video people showed a lot of interested in learning from Apps.

Interest in Learning for People with Different Levels of Knowledge of the Game

Interested in Learning	All People	Not Know Game	Know Game, not people	Know Game, and player	Know Game, and players+
Yes, Teacher	4M (7%)	**6.3%**	**5%**	**8.8%**	**14.2%**
Yes, Books	1.5M (2.5%)	2.7%	2.4%	2.6%	3.1%
Yes, Ed Videos	3.2M (5.4%)	2.7%	5.2%	6.7%	4.6%
Yes, App	6.3M (10.7%)	6.3%	10.3%	12.7%	10.2%
Not Sure, more info	14.4M (24.4%)	17.1%	25.5%	24.6%	20.8%
Not Sure, famous?	2.78M (4.7%)	5.4%	4.3%	5.2%	4.6%
No	31.9 (54%)	65.8%	55.8%	48.7%	51.2%
TOTAL	59M (100%)	3.3M (5.6%)	34M (57.7%)	16M (26.9%)	6M (9.9%)

Interested in Learning (Grouped Results)	All People	Not Know Game	Know Game, not people	Know Game, and player	Know Game, and players+
Yes	11.4M (19.3%)	*13.5%*	*17.3%*	*22.8%*	*25.3%*
Not Sure	16.9M (28.6%)	22.5%	29.6%	29.1%	24.7%
No	31.9 (54%)	65.8%	55.8%	48.7%	51.2%
TOTAL	59M (100%)	3.3M (5.6%)	34M (57.7%)	16M (26.9%)	6M (9.9%)

Interesting Findings about Interest in Learning Relative to Bridge Players Known

- An important result from the data is that *the more people someone knows who play bridge, the more likely they are to be interested in learning the game.* This is a powerful demonstration of the lure of the game and how players can be great promoters of the game.
- Another, more specific result, is that the more people you know who play bridge, the more likely you are to want to learn from a teacher.

Knowledge of the Game for Each Interest in Learning Types

Game Knowledge	All People	Yes, Teacher	Yes, Books	Yes, Ed Video	Yes, App	Not sure, More info	Not sure, famous	No
Not Know Game	5.6%	**5.0%**	5.9%	2.8%	3.2%	3.9%	6.5%	6.78%
Know Game, no people	57.7%	**41.4%**	54.9%	55.6%	55.6%	60.5%	53.8%	59.6%
Know Game, a player	26.9%	**33.6%**	27.5%	33.3%	31.8%	27.2%	30.1%	24.2%
Know Game, Players++	9.9%	**20%**	11.8%	8.3%	9.4%	8.4%	9.7%	9.4%
Total	59M (100%)	4M (7%)	1.5M (2.5%)	3.2M (5.4%)	6.3M (10.7%)	14.4M (24.4%)	2.75M (4.6%)	29.8M (50.8%)

Interesting Findings about Interest in Learning Relative to Bridge Players Known

- A deeper look into those interested in learning to play bridge shows that this group tends to be younger (an increased number being born in the 1970s and 1960s). Also, this group tends to skew more female than the population of general non-players. This suggests that females under 60 are a good audience for searching for players interested in learning.

Contact Us

If you have questions about the methodology of this survey, feel free to contact the author.
Robert S. Todd

VP & Program Chair, ACBL Educational Foundation
robert@advinbridge.com

If you wish to comment on the results, please write to Kristen Frederick, Executive Director of the ACBL Educational Foundation, Kristen@acbleducationalfoundation.org, who will share comments with the foundation trustees.

Please visit our website at www.acblef.org to find out more about the foundation and its activities.