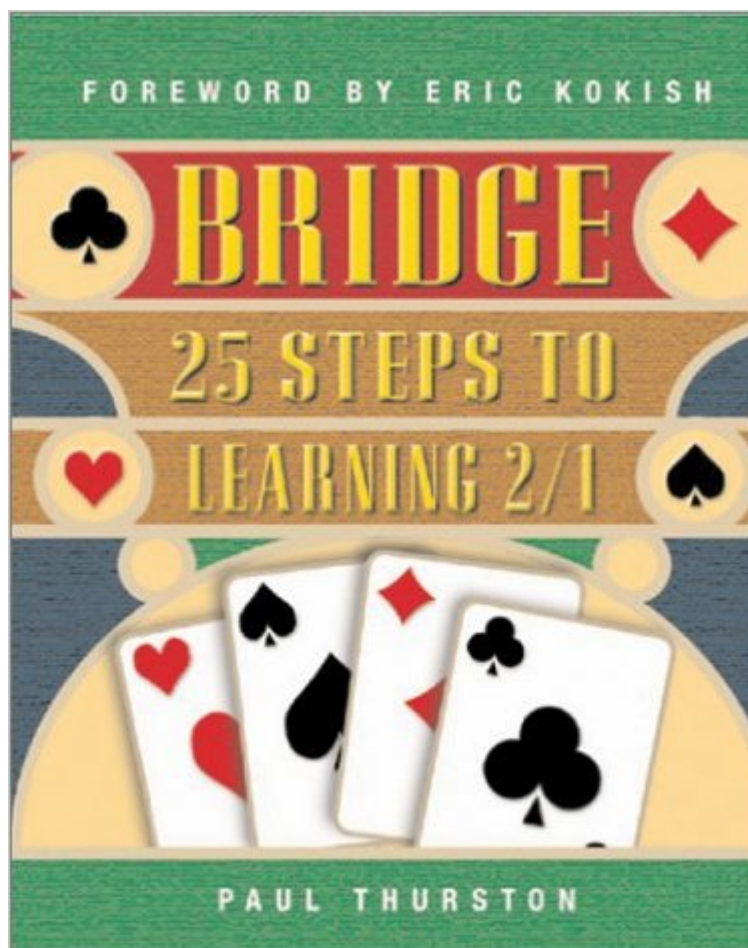


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# Bridge: 25 Steps To Learning 2/1



## Synopsis

Another title in the best-selling '25' series, using the same popular format. Over the last fifteen or so years, the 2/1 Game Forcing bidding method has gained substantial popularity, but for various reasons it is not taught in beginner classes. This book is therefore designed for players who are familiar with Standard bidding and are interested in switching to the 2/1 method. It covers basic concepts as well as the differences between 2/1 and Standard auctions, and includes a discussion of more advanced ideas and conventions that fit particularly well with 2/1 methods. Existing books on this topic (notably by Max Hardy and Mike Lawrence) are too advanced and/or too technical for this level of player.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I've read Mike Lawrence's and Max Hardy's books on 2/1 (several times actually) and found them hard to comprehend because their organization was not structured so that my engineering mind could follow them easily. This book, "25 Steps to Learning 2/1", is certainly simplistic compared to the others, but I found that I could understand the "system" as presented here. The detail is certainly sufficient for the beginning 2/1 bidder. It is well organized and flows well from the basic system to the necessary additional conventions. I have purchased about 10 copies of this book for bridge playing friends and they all have found it very understandable.

Paul Thurston takes you to learning 2/1 in 25 steps. His choice of conventions to use is good, but some of them are not really related to 2/1 (New Minor Forcing, FSF, while excellent conventions,

are both things that are fairly independent of 2/1 for instance), so one wonders about including them in this book -- likely he just needed to fill "25 steps". Also, he has a strange choice of hand evaluation, and really he need not place that in this book. Generally, someone that buys this book will already have some basic form of hand evaluation, and this could do better just let each player use his/her own system without imposing "HCP" as the standard (and explicitly telling readers not to do things like count points for long suits, etc.) for seemingly every bid. This is probably my biggest criticism with the book. My second biggest complaint is that he places Bergen raises in the book so early that someone reading this book is forced to learn Bergen while learning 2/1. This is not necessary. This chapter belongs later in the book -- placing the chapter so early on just results in a needless delay of getting to the point where you can start playing 2/1 at the table. On the plus side, it does get you to the point where you are functional in 2/1, and the quizzes are well designed (just having them is a plus). He also does a respectable job warning the reader of potential sticky spots.

I thought this book was an excellent way to learn 2/1. It started with the very basic- point count - which was a good refresher for the bridge player who has not played in a while. You can easily skip it. You learn constructive, limit, invitational, and preemptive raises. It explained the simple conventions - Bergen, Jacoby transfer, and splinter. These are routinely used in bridge auctions. It covers major and minor bids and responses. It stops short of NT opening bid, strong 2 clubs, weak two-bids. Does not cover slam bidding. But, for someone who really wants to learn the basics, it is excellent. There are plenty of exercises with explanations for each bid. Also, there are flow charts of a sort that you can easily refer to when doing the exercises.

This book continues in the excellent tradition of the "25 xxxs" by striking the right level in teaching effectively without overburdening the subject with detail. I've bought and read thru all three Max Hardy books but just didn't want to uproot my hard earned bridge knowledge to essentially start over. Thurston's book showed me that the Two Over One system is not that much different from what I've spent the last two years learning. It's not much different than learning several new conventions at the same time. My teacher swears by the precision of the Two Over One system. I'm not far enough along to testify to that but it was clear during the learning that many of the thorny problems I've encountered are much better handled with 2ov1. Of course, there are those in-between hands that require the experience and judgement that I can only hope to achieve some day but there are far fewer of them. Yes, the inclusion of some conventions does seem like a

gimmick to flesh out to the number 25 but they are useful conventions that were not included in the Seagram & Smith book, "25 Conventions You Should Learn". And yes, the quizzes are excellent and really help in the learning process. All in all, this book is certainly worth the money and time if your partnership is considering moving to Two Over One.

I enjoyed the 2/1 book as I am just learning the system and found it contained great information about the system written in a clear concise manner with good examples. What I did not like about it is that it seemed to insist that the conventions of splinter bids and Bergen raises are necessities to playing 2/1 (which I'm sure are fabulous), but my partner and I don't choose to play those conventions at this time. I read this book after I read the Audrey Grant book on 2/1 Game Force, and am glad I read Audrey's book first. ~~ Paul says in this book: "Whenever responder has not passed previously and makes a simple two-level response in a new suit, the auction is 100% forcing to game. No exceptions!" "A One No Trump response to One Heart or One Spade by an unpassed hand promises 5-12 HCP and is absolutely forcing for one round - opener must find a rebid!"

I actually learned 2/1 in the early 1990's and then started playing less and less until by the late 1990s I had given up the game. About 2 years ago an old partner coaxed me out of retirement but I started with "SAYC" again and didn't try moving back to 2/1 until recently. I had Mike Lawrence's 2/1 workbook from before, and I tried reading it but found it too disorganized and stream-of-consciousness for my taste. I'd read another "25 steps" bridge book and liked it, so I tried this one. It was clear, concise, and really easy to read .. I basically went through it in one sitting. I can't recommend it highly enough.

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