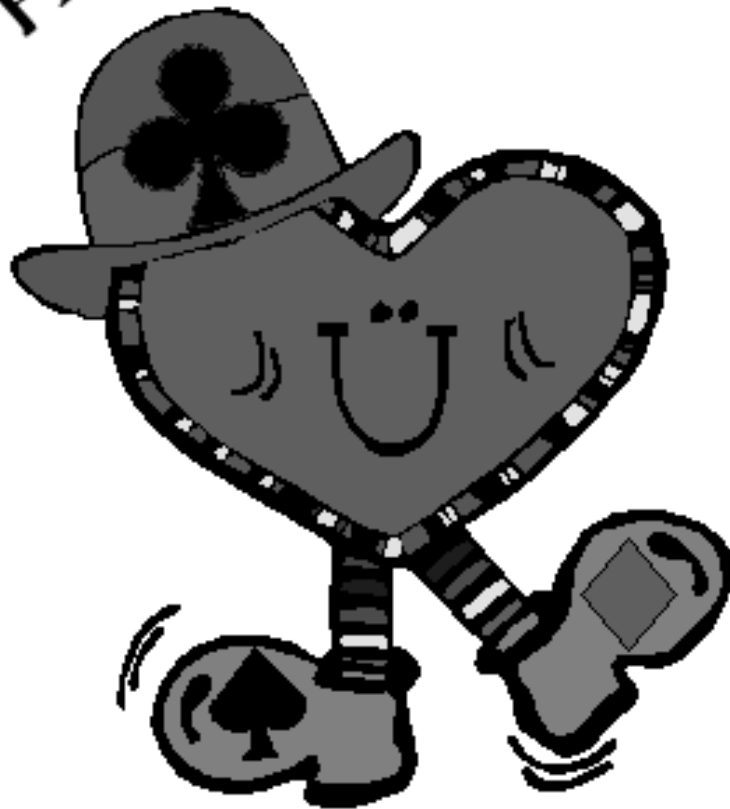


FRIENDLY BRIDGE



RBA

Beginning Bridge Lessons

By Ed Kinlaw and Linda MacCleave



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The History of Friendly Bridge

September of 2011 marked our 10th anniversary year of Friendly Bridge! Where had the time gone? Some of our players who started with us are still part of Friendly Bridge, and some have become Life Masters. We have made so many friends over the years!

In the spring of 2001, Mike Fine, who was then the president of the Richmond Bridge Association, looked around the room during a bridge game, saw only 5 of the 15 tables filled with bridge players, and decided that bridge in the Richmond area was in crisis. At that time the average age of a Richmond area bridge player was 65. Unless we took some action, the game that we love would be practically gone in 20 years.

He talked to me about our starting up some lessons. At that time, the ACBL—American Contract Bridge League—was helping bridge units and clubs with a new program called Easybridge!™. We knew that if we could just let people see how challenging and fun the game is, we would be able to increase our number of players.

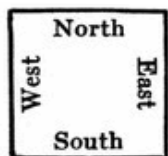
We were so excited about this venture, that we asked the *Richmond Times Dispatch* to do an article about us. To our delight, they agreed. That article helped us bring in our first group of students in September of 2001. We had 2 lesson slots available--Sunday afternoons and Tuesday evenings. With the help of the late Jim Goodwin, Ed Kinlaw, Jim Poulson, Bob MacCleave, and numerous volunteers who came to help, we started giving lessons. The Bridge Center was standing room only for both classes. We actually had more people wanting lessons than we had seats, so we started again in January of 2002.

Before our second week of lessons could begin, our world shattered. September 11 brought Americans face to face with our complacent sense of safety. We were united in grief, and everyone's need for a sense of community was heightened. The students who continued in the lessons formed bonds with each other that have caused the entire bridge community to realize that what is the most important thing about this game we love is the opportunity for sharing our lives with each other.

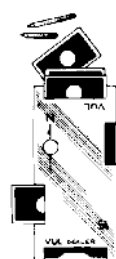
Our Sunday afternoon and Tuesday evening classes soon developed into regular bridge games for novice players. We had to find another time for giving lessons to new players (0-20 masterpoints), and the only time left was Sunday evenings at 6:00. We decided to keep that time open for beginning lessons all the time and encourage the students to come to Sunday afternoon (now 0-499 masterpoints), Tuesday evening (now 0-499 masterpoints), and Thursday night Bridge Center games (mixed master) as soon as they were ready. We have had many Sunday evening groups since then, and bridge has flourished in Richmond.

After the first lessons were over, the students decided to rename the games "Friendly Bridge." Although Easybridge!™ was a great program, the participants felt that one of the reasons the game is so much fun is that it is not easy. However, learning this game in a friendly atmosphere makes all the difference in the world.

Lesson 1: Mechanics of a Hand in Duplicate Bridge



Bridge is a four-player game. The people sitting across from each other are **partners**. Each player is dealt 13 cards. The sides **bid** to determine what **trump** will be and how many tricks their side will attempt to take. After bidding is completed, the hand is played. During play, each player plays a card and the best of the four cards wins the **trick** for his side. Play continues until all 13 tricks have been played, then on to the next hand. What? You want details?



Partners



Believe it or not, sometimes people will want to describe a bridge hand to others after the game. To protect the innocent, we'll name the players **North**, **East**, **South**, and **West**. North and South are partners, as are East and West. In **duplicate bridge**, the cards are kept in a **board**. Each player gets 13 cards, which they take from the board and arrange into **suits**. Then the bidding begins.

The dealer for the hand (either North, East, South, or West) is marked on the board, and opens the **bidding or auction** by making a **call**. He will either pass or make a bid. Bidding then proceeds clockwise. A bid is made up of a number from 1 to 7 followed by a suit (or no-trump). The order of suits in bidding from lowest to highest is **clubs** (C), **diamonds** (D), **hearts** (H), **spades** (S), and **no-trump** (NT). Clubs and diamonds are called **minors**, and hearts and spades are called **majors**.

If you want to bid, you must make a bid higher than the previous bid, i.e. you can bid 1D over 1C, but not 1C over 1D. (You would have to bid 2C or more, if you wanted to bid clubs over a bid of 1D.) If you don't want to bid, you **pass**. Three consecutive passes ends the bidding, unless you are at the beginning of a game and the first three players pass, in which case, the fourth person can still bid. The calls **double** and **redouble** also exist. We'll get to those later.

The Contract

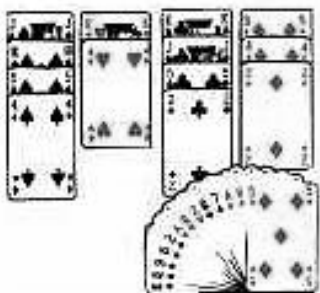
The side that makes the highest bid wins the **contract**. The contract is a number 1 to 7 followed by a suit (or NT – which is called no-trump because that means there is no trump suit). There are 13 tricks in each hand. One trick is made up of 4 cards, one from each player, so each side will take an average of six. The first six tricks are considered **book**. A one-level bid (1C or 1H or 1NT, for example) means that the side has contracted to take seven tricks – book plus one. A seven-level bid means that the side has contracted to take all 13 tricks – book plus seven. The suit of the highest bid is called the **trump suit**. A card in the trump suit will win any trick that does not contain another trump card. Therefore, the bidding is an **auction** to determine which side gets to name trump.

Whichever player first named the suit (or NT, if the final contract is NT) of the final **contract** is **declarer**. The person on his left plays—**leads**—a card, and then declarer's partner (the "**dummy**") places all of his cards face-up on the table. Play proceeds clockwise. The first trick will be the **opening lead** made by declarer's left-hand-opponent (**LHO**), whichever card declarer selects from dummy, a card from declarer's right-hand opponent (**RHO**), and then declarer's card. Players should play the cards in front of them rather than throwing the cards

into the middle of the table. The hands can then be returned to the board when the play is over exactly as they came out of the board. This insures that the next players who play the same board your table just finished get exactly the same hands that your table had. Final scores at the end of the session are determined by comparing which table did the best for that particular board.

Play of the Hand

If a player has a card in the suit that was led, he must play a card in that suit (follow suit). If he doesn't, he can play anything he wants (including trump). The person who plays the highest card in the suit that is led (ace being highest) wins the trick unless there is a trump played, in which case, the highest trump wins.



The side that wins the trick should turn the card toward them, and the side that loses the trick should turn the card toward the opponents. This way, everyone can see how many tricks each side has taken. (Tricks that are yours are standing soldiers, and tricks that belong to the opponents are fallen soldiers.)

Whoever wins the trick leads first to the next trick. If dummy's card won the first trick, then declarer is "**on the board**," meaning that the **lead** has to be made from dummy. If he won the trick with the card he played from his hand, then he is "**in his hand**," meaning that the lead must be made from his hand. Play continues until all 13 tricks have been played.



Making Your Bid or Going Down

If the declaring side takes at least as many tricks as they **contracted** for, that means they **made their bid**. If they take less, that means they **went down**. The declarer should state the result, and the defenders should agree. After agreement ("Down one", "Making three", or some variation), all players should mix up their 13 cards (only) and put them back into the correct slot in the board. The player sitting North is given the responsibility of writing down the **score**. Usually there will be more than one board on your table. After you play all of the boards on your table, you wait for the **director** to call for the next **round** to start. If you finish early, you can get some refreshments or make quiet conversation.

What is the Name of This Game?

You will hear many people refer to this game as **Auction Bridge** or **Contract Bridge**. Auction Bridge developed into Contract Bridge about 80 years ago. Contract bridge consists of an auction (made up of one bid followed by a higher bid and so forth) to determine the contract. You may also have heard the terms **Party Bridge**, **Social Bridge**, and **Duplicate Bridge**. These are also not different games. They are all **Bridge**. Party Bridge (also known as Social Bridge) differs from duplicate bridge in **scoring** only. Duplicate Bridge simplifies the scoring and creates an exciting competitive element to the game by comparing the scores for everyone who played the same hand. The lessons you are taking assume that you will love seeing how your bidding and play compares to the others. Duplicate Bridge does not remove the element of luck from this game, but it does diminish it. You can't win Social Bridge unless you receive good hands; however, duplicate bridge depends on how well you play the hand you are dealt, whether good or bad.

Quiz for Lesson 1:

1. How many cards are in the deck? ____
2. How many cards are in each suit? ____
3. How many cards does each player get? ____
4. There are ____ cards in each trick.
5. The order of suits, lowest to highest, is _____, and _____.
6. The person who plays the hand is called the _____.
7. Declarer's partner is called the _____.
8. How many tricks does a declarer in 3H have to take to make his contract? ____
9. Why is the dummy called the dummy?

Answers: 1-52 2-13 3-13 4-4 5-clubs, diamonds, hearts, spades 6-declarer 7-dummy 8-9 Bonus- Because he doesn't get to say anything – it comes from the French word for "silent".

There are a lot of new and important concepts introduced in the hands that follow. You are not expected to understand all the terms at this point (danger hand, finesse, leading the top of a sequence, etc.) but it is still helpful to hear them. They will be covered in more detail in later chapters.

Bridge Etiquette

It's never too early in your bridge game to think about proper behavior at the bridge table. Most of this is common sense.

One of the things that many bridge players dislike is card slamming or snapping when playing a card. This behavior is aggressive and can appear to say "so there."

Many new players are unaware of the inappropriateness of communicating information illegally. Doing anything that gives your partner unauthorized information is not allowed. These things might include such things as tapping on the bidding box or touching a lot of the cards before making a call, hesitating and then passing, or talking about your hand in any way. Beginners can get away with more than experienced players can, of course, but it's important to

Lesson 1, Hand 1 (Hand played by South)

	♠K 9 7 3	
	♥K T 3	
	♦K T 8 3	
	♣9 5	
♠J 8 4		♠Q 6 5 2
♥8 6		♥A 7 4 2
♦Q 7 4		♦9 6
♣K J 8 7 2		♣Q T 6
	♠A T	
	♥Q J 9 5	
	♦A J 5 2	
	♣A 4 3	



West is on lead against 3N. He's heard that fourth from his longest and strongest is a good lead, so he leads the club seven. Declarer should start by counting his tricks. He can count 2 sure winners in spades and diamonds and the club ace. That's five, so he needs to develop four more. He can develop three heart winners and a diamond winner for nine, but will he be able to take them?

Playing a no-trump contract is a race. Declarer is trying to develop nine winners before the defense can take five. It looks like the defense has gotten off to a good start—that happens sometimes. Declarer should hold up his club ace until the third round of the suit, in the hopes that East will 1) have the heart ace and 2) not have a clubs to return. Happily, that turns out to be the case.

Now declarer has three hearts to go along with his two spades, two diamonds, and a club. That makes eight, and he should be able to develop another in diamonds. Still, he doesn't want to lose the lead to West because West is sitting over there with two club winners. West is called the danger-hand. So he takes the diamond ace and then leads toward the king-ten on the board. This is called a finesse. Declarer doesn't mind losing the trick to East because East doesn't have any more clubs to lead. Making four?

	♠Q J T 5 2	
	♥Q 6	
	♦K J T 4	
	♣8 7	
♠A 9 6		♠K 8 4
♥A T 8 3		♥7 2
♦A Q 6 2		♦9 5 3
♣Q J		♣A K 9 4 2
	♠7 3	
	♥K J 9 5 4	
	♦8 7	
	♣T 6 5 3	



Lesson 1, Hand 2 (Hand played by West)

North is on lead against 3N. What does he lead? He may think that his diamonds are stronger than his spades, but his lead should be the spade queen for a couple of reasons. First, this is his longest suit. Second, this lead will usually not give anything away. This is called leading from the top of a sequence. Note that if he chooses to lead fourth best (not appropriate when you have a sequence) that declarer's nine would take the first trick.

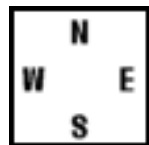
Declarer should count his winners. Two spades, one heart, one diamond, and five clubs should get him up to nine. How does he manage to take five club tricks? First, he needs to take the spade trick with his ace and leave the spade king on the board. Saving entries will become a recurring theme.

Second, he needs to play the club queen and jack from his hand before crossing to the carefully preserved spade king to take the remaining three clubs. When running a long suit, declarer should play his high cards from the short side first to unblock the suit. That way, his high cards will remain in the long suit, and enable him to run the suit. Making three?

Lesson 1, Hand 3 (Hand played by North and then East)

♠A Q J 9 7 4
 ♥8 6 2
 ♦Q 5 3
 ♣6

♠6 5
 ♥A T
 ♦T 6 4
 ♣A K 9 8 4 3



♠K T
 ♥5 3
 ♦A K J 9 8 2
 ♣7 5 2

♠8 3 2
 ♥K Q J 9 7 4
 ♦7
 ♣Q J T

This hand should be played in 3NT first to see the disadvantage of this contract with some hands. Playing 3NT was no fun - for North, anyway. I'm sure East and West enjoyed themselves immensely.

This is why bridge players conduct an **auction** before the play of the hand. This will introduce us to the concept of the trump suit. If spades were trump on this hand, after declarer or dummy ran out of a suit, a spade could be played to take the trick. After that, declarer would pull trump, run the opposition out of trump, and then take a bunch of diamonds for the rest of the tricks.

Play the same hand again. Only this time, north plays it in 4S. If you have time, let E play the hand in 4H.

Note that with perfect defense N-S can take 10 tricks if spades are trump and E-W can also take ten tricks if hearts are trump. This is why we call spades the master suit—the side with spades can outbid the other side without going to a higher level. It's an advantage to have spades. If North bids 4S, E-W would have to bid 5H to win the auction, and they can't make 5H if NS take their 2 spade tricks and one diamond trick before they let declarer in!

Zero Tolerance Policy

The RBA has adopted the ACBL Zero-Tolerance Policy. If someone is being rude at the table, you can call the director and simply say, "This player is interfering with my enjoyment of the game." The director may then choose to either warn the player or assess a penalty.

Expected Behavior

Anything that makes bridge more enjoyable for others

1. Greeting others in a friendly manner prior to start of play on each round.
2. Be a good "host" or "guest" at the table.
3. Making your convention card readily available to your opponents and filling it out completely.
4. Do EVERYTHING possible to make bridge enjoyable for yourself, partner and opponents.
5. Give credit when opponents make a good bid or play.

Unacceptable Behavior

Anything makes bridge less enjoyable for others

1. Publicly criticizing partner or opponents.
2. Badgering, rudeness, insinuations, profanity, threats, or violence.
3. Negative comments concerning opponents' or partner's play or bidding.
4. Gloating over good results.
5. Objecting to a call for the director.
6. Disputing or arguing with a director's ruling.
7. Poor personal hygiene, grooming, or dress.

Scoring in Duplicate Bridge



All scoring in duplicate bridge is done on a hand to hand basis – there is no carryover from one hand to the next.

Trick Score:

If you bid and make a contract, you get points for each trick you make as follows:

NT	-	40 points for the first trick, 30 for each additional trick
Majors	-	30 points per trick
Minors	-	20 points per trick

Bonuses:

Making a part-score contract	-	50 points
Making a game (100 point) contract	-	300 if not vulnerable, 500 if vulnerable
Making a slam (6-level) contract	-	500 if not vulnerable, 750 if vulnerable
Making a grand slam (7-level) contract	-	1000 if not vulnerable, 1500 if vulnerable

Note that slam bonuses are in addition to game bonuses.

Undertricks:

If you do not take enough tricks to fulfill your contract, your opponents will be awarded points, as follows:

Non-vulnerable	-	50 points per undertrick
Vulnerable	-	100 points per undertrick

If the opponents think that you have bid too high, they can double you for penalties. Then the penalties get more costly.

Non-vulnerable	-	100 for the first trick, 300 for down 2, 500 for down 3, and 300 more for each additional trick
Vulnerable	-	200 for the first trick, 500 for down 2, 800 for down 3, and 300 more for each additional trick

Making Doubled contracts

It happens. If you make a doubled contract, you get double your trick score, plus 50 points for an insult bonus, plus any game or slam bonus you've earned. You can't be doubled into slam, but you can be doubled into game – if you make 2H doubled, you get a game bonus! If you make overtricks, you receive 100 per overtrick not vulnerable, and 200 per overtrick if you are vulnerable.

Redoubling:

If you are confident that you can make your contract, or if you want to see if you can get the opponents to take another bid, you can redouble. That's when the point scores get really interesting. Redoubling doubles all doubled trick scores. The redouble insult bonus is 100 points.

Ed's note – I've been playing tournament bridge for about ten years, and I've gone down twice in redoubled contracts. It wasn't pretty.
Linda's note—Redouble is rarely used as a penalty bid nowadays. Redouble is usually used as a way to ask your partner to bid or give information about your hand. More information on the redouble can be found in the Bonus Lessons.

Scoring examples:

1N making 2	120 (40 plus 30 plus a 50 point part-score bonus)
2N making 2	120 (40 plus 30 plus a 50 point part-score bonus)
3N making 4 (NV)	430 (40 plus 3 times 30 plus 300 NV game bonus)
4N making 4 (NV)	430 (40 plus 3 times 30 plus 300 NV game bonus)
2D making 3	110 (3 times 20 plus 50 point part-score bonus)
2H making 2	110 (2 times 30 plus 50 point part-score bonus)
2H making 3	140 (3 times 30 plus 50-point bonus)
3H making 4	170 (4 times 30 plus 50-point bonus)
4H making 4 (V)	620 (4 times 30 plus 500-point bonus)
4SX down 3 (NV)	-500 (<i>X means doubled; XX would mean redoubled</i>)
4SX down 4 (NV)	-800
4SX down 2 (V)	-500
4SX down 3 (V)	-800
4HX making 5 (V)	990 (4 times 30 times 2 plus 500-point game bonus plus 200 vulnerable overtrick plus 50 point insult bonus)

Some observations:

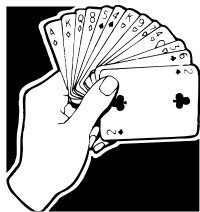
- 1) The score for 1N making two and 2N making two are the same. There is no bonus for making your contract on the nose.
- 2) The score for 2H making two is the same as the score for 2D making three. If at all possible, you should strive to play your contracts in majors as opposed to minors.
- 3) The score for 3N making three is significantly higher than the score for 3D making three. Similarly, there is a big difference in the score for 3H making four and 4H making four. It pays to bid game if you can make it.
- 4) The score for 4S doubled down 3 NV is -500. If your opponents are vulnerable and you allow them to make 4H, your score on the board will be -620. Sometimes, it pays to **sacrifice** (make a bid that you don't expect to make), especially not vulnerable
- 5) The score for 4S doubled down 4 NV is -800. Sometimes it doesn't pay to sacrifice.

There are three kinds of bridge players:

- (1) Those who can count, and
- (2) those who can't.



Lesson 2: How to Open and How to Respond to One-level Suit Bids



The next two chapters will lay the foundation for basic bidding. We need to cover this well, so we will take 3 weeks to complete Lessons 2 and 3.

The bidding in bridge is really what separates it from other card games. The play of the hand in spades is somewhat similar to bridge, and numerous card games have partners and feature some bidding – whist, euchre, canasta, and pinochle, among others.

The Goal

The object in any one hand of duplicate bridge is to score the highest score possible on the hand. One of the features of the scoring at bridge is that **major-suit contracts score higher than minor-suit contracts**. Another feature of scoring in duplicate bridge is awarding of bonuses. If a side bids and makes a contract that scores 100 points (game) or more, they get a sizable bonus on that hand. **Game** contracts are 3N, 4H, 4S, 5C, and 5D. Bidding and making six on a hand is called making a **slam** (bigger bonus), and bidding and making seven on a hand is called a **grand slam** (much bigger bonus). Note that it takes **nine tricks** to make game in no-trump, **ten** to make game in a major, **eleven** to make game in a minor, twelve for a small slam, and all thirteen for a grand slam

These scoring features encourage duplicate players to gear their bidding systems to finding a major-suit **fit**. If a side has eight or more cards between them in a major, they should strive to declare a contract with that major as trump because they have eight trumps to only five for the opposition. Declarer will usually take more tricks in the 8-card major-suit fit contract than in no-trump (xxx given the same cards?).

Hand Evaluation:



High-card points (HCP) give a quick (although not always a complete) indication of the playing strength of a hand. For a more accurate assessment of your hand, you must also consider the shape of the hand (how many or how few cards you hold in each of the suits). This is also referred to **Distribution**.

Ace	-	4 points
King	-	3 points
Queen	-	2 points
Jack	-	1 point

10s are worth more than 2s, but not by enough to value them in the initial hand evaluation. The hand ♠AT98 ♥AT9 ♦AT9 ♣AT9 is significantly stronger than ♠A432 ♥A32 ♦A32 ♣A32. **When describing a hand in written form, spades are always listed first, followed by hearts, then diamonds, then clubs.** You could describe a hand as Axxx Axx Axx Axx, with the x representing a non face card without mentioning the suits.

Note: You could say your hand was ace-fourth, ace-third, ace-third, ace-third. It also could be described as a 4 by 3 (or 4-triple 3)–a hand with one four-card suit and three three-card suits.

Bidding



Bidding is simply a language with a limited number of words (15 words if you count no trump as two words) to convey information to your partner about what suit you have the most of and how good your hand is. Bidding is conducted in an auction. Like any other auction, only one person can open. The opponents can **overcall**, and opener's partner can **respond**. Also, like any other auction, the bidding can only go higher. After someone has opened, three consecutive passes ends the auction. If no one chooses to open, the hand is "passed out."

Do I have enough to open?

There are three ways to determine if your hand has trick-taking potential and whether you should open it in first or second seat:

1. **HCP:** If you have **13 high card points**, open the bidding always. If you have **12 high card points**, open the bidding most of the time.
2. **The Rule of 20 or 22:** Take your high-card points and then add the number of cards in your two longest suits. If the total is 20 or more, you should open the bidding. Many prefer Rule of 22: Rule of 20 plus 2 quick tricks. *Note: You could have only 10 points with 2 five-card suits. Your HCP should also be in the LONG suits, not the short suits.*
3. **Quick Tricks:** Does your hand have 2.5 immediate tricks? This means 2 aces and a King or an A and AQ. If your hand could take 2-3 tricks immediately, you should open the bidding.

1 Quick Trick: Ace

2 Quick Tricks: Ace/King in the same suit

1½ Quick Tricks: Ace/Queen in the same suit

1 Quick Trick: King/Queen in the same suit

½ Quick Trick: King

What should I open?

Unless you have a MASSIVE hand (over 20-points, which we'll learn about later) or a PREEMPTIVE hand (10 or less points with a very long suit, which we'll also learn about later), there are three options:

1. If you have a five-card major, open one of your major, (with 5-5, open 1S).
2. If you have a **balanced** hand with 15-17 high card points (HCP), open 1NT.
Note: A balanced hand has no voids, no singletons, and not more than one doubleton. Possible distributions are 5-3-3-2, 4-4-3-2, and 4-3-3-3.
3. Open your longest minor (with 3-3 open 1C, 4-4, 5-5, or 6-6, open 1D).

Opening Examples

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| 1. ♠Ax ♥Qxxx ♦Jxx ♣Axxx | Pass – only 11 HCP, and 19 on the Rule of 20. |
| 2. ♠Axxxx ♥Ax ♦Kxxx ♣xx | 1S – only 11 HCP, but 20 on the Rule of 20. |
| 3. ♠xxxxx ♥Ax ♦xx ♣AKQx | 1S – open with a five-card major, no matter how anemic it is. |
| 4. ♠AKx ♥Qxxx ♦AQxx ♣xx | 1NT – don't worry about your worthless doubleton - much. If you don't open 1NT, you will never convince partner that you have 15-17 points and a balanced hand. |
| 5. ♠xxxx ♥Axx ♦AKQ ♣xxx | 1C – open 1C with 3-3 in the minors in first or second seat, no matter what they look like. |

6. ♠AKQx ♥Qxx ♦AKxx ♣Jx 1D – No-trump bids are very specific. This hand has 19 HCP. If you open it 1N, partner will read you for no more than 17.
Looking ahead, 2N shows 20-21 HCP, so you must open 1D.
7. ♠AQxx ♥x ♦Axxx ♣AKxx 1D – 17 HCP, but you are not balanced. With 4-4 in the minors, open 1D.

Partner Opened. Should I Respond?

If you have 6+ points and partner opened one of a suit, **YES!**



Responding to One of a Minor

If he opened in a minor, he (probably) does not have a five-card major, but he may have a four-card major.

- Since bidding is geared toward finding an **eight-card major-suit fit**, bid your **4-card majors up the line**. If partner opens 1C and you have ♠AKQJ ♥5432 ♦432 ♣32, respond 1H. Your partner must bid again, and your hand is unlimited. If partner opens 1D, you will respond 1H with the shape ♠xxxx ♥xxxx ♦xx ♣xxx whether you have 6 HCP or 19 HCP.

Note: If you have 5 spades and 4 hearts, bid spades first. If you have 5 spades and 5 hearts, bid spades first. In both situations, you can bid hearts on your next bid, and in the second situation, you can bid hearts on your next 2 bids. When you bid spades followed by hearts, partner knows you have 5 spades because you didn't bid up the line.

Important: Even though we emphasize the importance of bidding a major over a minor, it should be mentioned that a bid of 1D over 1C is sometimes the correct call, especially when you have a good hand with 5 diamonds and a 4-card major. So, never assume your partner does not have a 4-card major if he bids 1D over your 1C opening.

- If you have five of partner's minor, **raise** him to 2 with 6-10 points and to 3 with 10-12 points. Raising your partner's minor denies having a four-card major.
- If you have 5 of the other minor, bid it.
Note: You should have 10+ HCP to respond at the two level, so if partner opens 1D, you should have 10+ HCP and a five-card suit to bid 2C.
- If you haven't found your bid yet, you are bidding some number of no-trump. With 6-10 HCP, respond 1NT. Respond 2NT with 11-12, and 3NT with 13-15. Sometimes you must respond 1NT even if you are unbalanced. If partner opens 1D and you have no 4-card major, a 6-card club suit, and only 6-9 HCP, you have no choice other than to bid 1NT.



Responding to One of a Major

With support for partner's major, tell him.

- With 6-10 points, raise him to 2 of his major.
- With 10-12 points, raise him to 3 of his major.
- With 13+, bid another suit at the two level, then raise him to game in his major on your next bid.
- If partner opens 1H and you don't have 3+ hearts but have 4+ spades, bid 1S.
- You should have 10+ HCP to bid a new suit at the two-level. If you don't have 10+ HCP or support for partner, bid 1N.
- With a balanced 11-12 HCP and no suit to bid, respond 2N.
- With a balanced 13-15 HCP and no suit to bid (or that you want to bid), bid 3N.

NOTES

“HCP” is mentioned in some areas and “points” in others. IF you are certain that your side has at least an **eight card fit** and IF you have at least 3 cards in the suit, you can upgrade your hand if you have shortness in a side (non-trump) fit:

Responder (With fit in partner’s suit)

Add 1 point for a **doubleton** (2 cards in a suit)

Add 3 points for a **singleton** (1 card in a suit)

Add 5 points for a **void**. (no cards in a suit)

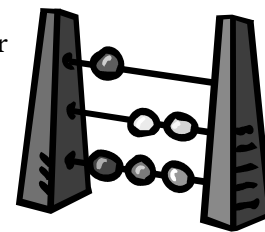
Opener (After partner has shown you a fit)

Add 1 point for a **doubleton**

Add 2 points for a **singleton**

Add 3 points for a **void**

These guidelines will help you determine the value of a hand and help you to decide if you should bid game. Distributional points should be used with caution. If your void is in a suit in which your partner has HCP, you may find the void to be of little value.



Raising

Did anyone notice that you are advised you to raise partner’s 1H bid to 2H with 6-10 points and to raise him to 3H with 10-12 points? A 10-point hand when you are responder is what I call a **tweener** – you want to bid 2½ H, but that isn’t allowed. You need to either upgrade or downgrade your hand. Here are some guidelines:

1. Aces and kings are worth more than queens and jacks. Really? In the grand scheme of things, aces and kings are worth a little more than 4 and 3 points, respectively, and queens and jacks are worth a little less than 2 and 1. Why? Aces and kings can prevent your side from losing two **quick tricks** in a suit.
2. Tens and nines are worth more than twos and threes. Having more than your fair share of 10s and 9s is something to evaluate when you have a tweener.
3. Having your face cards in long suits is a good thing. The hand ♠AJxx ♥xx ♦Kxxxx ♣xx is better than the hand ♠xxxx ♥AJ ♦xxxx ♣Kx.

Responding to Partner’s Opening Examples

Partner opens 1C

1. ♠AKQx ♥xxxx ♦xx ♣xxx

1H – if partner then bids 1S, you have an eight-card fit. This will allow you to find out whether you have an eight-card major suit fit.

2. ♠Axxx ♥xx ♦Jxxx ♣Qxx

1S – Bid your major when you have such a weak hand rather than your 4-card diamond suit.

3. ♠Ax ♥Qxx ♦xxxx ♣Kxxx

1N – you show your points and distribution on the same bid. You don’t have a strong preference for clubs, and NT scores better than clubs.

4. ♠AJxx ♥xx ♦AQxxx ♣xx

1D – with 11+ points, you can afford to show your longest suit, because you can bid spades later if partner bids 1H.

5. ♠Kxxx ♥QTxx ♦xxx ♣xx

1H – You are a point short for your response. Still, leaving partner in 1C might not be a good idea. No one could argue with a pass, though.

Partner opens 1D

1. ♠Ax ♥Qxx ♦xx ♣Qxxxxx
2. ♠AKxx ♥AKxx ♦xx ♣xxx

1NT – you need 10+ points to bid 2C over 1D.

1H – There's no need to jump the bidding to show extras.

Partner can't pass, and you can show your strength with your next bid.

Partner opens 1H

1. ♠Axxxx ♥Kxx ♦Jxx ♣xxx
a
2. ♠Axxx ♥Kx ♦xxxx ♣xxx
3. ♠Qxx ♥Ax ♦Qxxx ♣Axx
4. ♠Qx ♥Axx ♦Axx ♣KJxxx
to
5. ♠Qxx ♦Qxxxx ♣Axxxx
6. ♠Ax ♥Qxxxx ♦Jxxxx ♣x

2H – 6-10 points and at least 3-card support. Your spades will be nice surprise.

1S – you don't have 3 hearts, so you shouldn't raise partner.

Mention your 4-card spade suit.

2N – no 3-card support for partner, and no suit to mention. Let him know you have 11-12 HCP and a balanced hand.

2C – with 14 HCP, tell partner about your suit. You will plan bid 4H on your next bid.

1N – You aren't going to bid a new suit at the two-level with 8 HCP. This bid does not show a balanced hand; it's just a hand that has no other bid.

4H! – Note the difference between this hand and hand #4. Are you going to make 4H? Who knows? If you can't, odds are that the opponents will be able to make something.

Partner opens 1S

1. ♠Axxx ♥xx ♦Axxx ♣Qxx
for
2. ♠Axxx ♥xx ♦Axxx ♣xxx
3. ♠Ax ♥Axxx ♦Qxxx ♣xxx
level.
- partner
4. ♠Axxx ♥x ♦Axxx ♣xxxx
11
5. ♠Kx ♥Qxxx ♦AQxx ♣Qxx

3S – show partner that you have a hand with more than a minimum raise. This is called a **limit raise** – it's an invitation him to bid 4S if he has more than a minimum.

2S – this is a 6-10 point raise with at least 3-card support.

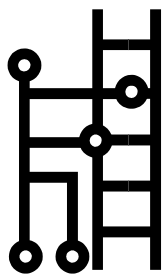
1N – you don't have a five-card suit to mention on the two-
With 10 HCP, you are at the top of your bid. Still, you are a point short of a 2N response, and you don't want to raise with only two-card support.

3S – You only have 8 HCP, but should upgrade your hand to points because of your singleton heart (worth 3 points as responder).

3N – 13-15 HCP, and you only have 2-card support for partner.

Don't worry about how high your side should bid yet. There are two main things you need to worry about in bidding – 1) What **strain** (suit or no-trump), and 2) **how high**. Following the above guidelines will always allow you to find your 8-card major suit fit.

Lesson 3: Rebids by Opening Bidder and Responder



Last week's lesson advised how to find **eight-card major suit fits**. Today's will give advice on **how high** the bidding should go.

In general, it takes about 25 points for one side to be able to make game. Of course, sometimes you can make game with less than 25, and sometimes you can't make game even if you have more than 25. Note that I didn't say HCP. With extreme distribution, it's possible to take all 13 tricks with only 5 HCP! Of course, HCP should be your guide if you are investigating a 3N contract. Also, when I say a "**game contract**," I'm referring to either **3N, 4H, or 4S**. It takes about 29 points to make ***bold*5C** or ***bold*5D**—game in a minor. To seriously think about a 5C or 5D contract, at least one hand should contain a singleton or a void. Bidding game gives you either a 300 (non-vulnerable) or 500 (vulnerable) bonus. To duplicate players, it's all about the score.

*Note: It's not important for this lesson, but it can be mentioned here. It takes about **33 points** to make a **slam**, and about **37** to make a **grand slam**.*

There are three types of opening hands – **minimum**, **invitational**, and **game-forcing**. The point ranges are based on the fact that if partner responds to your opening bid, he promises 6 points. Of course, 6 is a minimum. If you describe your hand accurately to your partner, he will be able to do something intelligent.

Minimum rebids (or calls) are:

1. Opener rebidding his suit cheaply
2. Opener raising responder's suit cheaply
3. Opener rebidding no-trump cheaply
4. Opener bidding a new suit that is lower than the one opened.
5. Opener bidding a new suit at the one level
6. Opener passing a minimum raise

1D-P-1H-P-2D

1D-P-1H-P-2H

1D-P-1H-P-1N (denies 4 spades)

1D-P-1S-P-2C

1D-P-1H-P-1S

1S-P-2S-P-P



Note: Hands 1-3 are true minimums—you will never have a 17-count and only raise partner's 1H response to 2H because you would make an invitational bid of 3H. On hands 4 and 5, your point range is not as clear. You could be invitational.

Considering whether you have a minimum, invitational, or game forcing hand is an important concept! You cannot bid hands that are larger than minimum (12 to a bad 16) as if they are minimum, because partner can and very well may pass any minimum response you make. If, and only if, you have found an 8-card fit, opener can add **distribution points** as follows: **3 points for a void**, **2 points for a singleton**, and **1 point for a doubleton**. If you have ♠AKx ♥KQxx ♦Qxxxx ♣x, you have 14 HCP. If you open 1D and partner responds 1H, you have an 8-card fit, and you can upgrade to an invitational hand (bid 3H). If partner responds 1S, you have not found an 8-card fit, so you need to bid as though you have a minimum response.

Also, remember that partner's first suit bids place no limit on the value of his hand. This means that a first suit response may have 6 HCP or might have 19 or more HCP. Even if you opened a rule of 20 dog, if partner responds in a new suit, you need to find a second bid. (You could also say that a new suit response at the one level is **FORCING** for one round.) He could have 19 points and be thinking about slam.

Invitational rebids are:



- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Opener jumping in opened suit | 1D-P-1H-P-3D |
| 2. Opener jumping in partner's suit | 1D-P-1H-P-3H |
| 3. Opener jumping in notrump (shows 18-19 HCP) | 1D-P-1H-P-2N |
| 4. Opener bidding a suit at the 2-level that is higher than the suit opened (called a reverse) | 1H-P-1N-P-2S |
| 5. Opener bidding again after a minimum suit raise | 1H-P-2H-P-2S
or 2N, 3C, 3D, 3H, etc. |

These bids show hands that are willing to play in game opposite a non-minimum response. They contain 16 to 18 or so points (counting distribution with a fit and HCP). Verbally, the bid is "I heard you respond, so I know you have 6+ points. If you have 8 or 9, I want to be in game. If you have a bare minimum, pass or return me to my suit, whichever is appropriate."

Note: Most of these bids are straightforward and common sense, but the fourth is unusual (and a little advanced). Bidding a suit higher than the one you opened at the two level is called a **reverse**. We are taught to open in our longest suits, and with two five-card suits, we always open the higher one. With five clubs and four diamonds, we open 1C. Partner could respond 1S with as few as 6 HCP. If we then bid 2D, we **force** him to the three level if he prefers clubs over diamonds. We need to have a good hand to do this, or we could be playing at the three level on a seven-card fit with about half the deck. A reverse promises an unbalanced hand – the long suits could be 5-4, 6-4, 7-4, 6-5, or 7-6 – and a hand strong enough to play in game opposite an 8 or 9-count. With a minimum hand with five clubs and four diamonds, many players choose to open 1D in order to have a 2C rebid.

Game forcing bids are:



- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------|
| 1. Opener jumping to game | 1D-P-1H-P-4H |
| 2. Opener making a jump-shift | 1S-P-1N-P-3H |

These bids show 19+ points a willingness to play game opposite a six point response. Have you ever said to yourself, "I only have five points, but I'm going to respond to partner. What's the worst thing that could happen?" 1D-1H-4H is the worst thing that can happen, or if it works, it's the best thing that can happen.

Opener's Rebid Examples

The bidding has gone 1D by you, 1H by partner

1. ♠Axxx ♥AKQ ♦xxxx ♣xx
2. ♠Axx ♥AKQ ♦Jxxxx ♣xx
3. ♠Axxx ♥AKxx ♦Qxxx ♣x
4. ♠Axxx ♥AKxx ♦AJxx ♣x
5. ♠AKxx ♥AKxx ♦AJxx ♣x
6. ♠AK ♥AQx ♦Kxxx ♣Qxxx

1S – partner is only promising a four-card heart suit and may also have four spades.

1N – This bid denies having a four-card major. If you had one, you would either be raising partner's hearts or bidding spades.

2H – You have found an eight-card fit in a major. Tell partner immediately, instead of mentioning your spades.

3H – You still have an eight-card fit, but now you have an invitational hand (counting distribution). If partner has eight or so points, 4H should be a good contract.

4H – partner should have at least 6 HCP for his response. His 6 plus your 21 (counting your singleton) should be enough for game.

2N – With your 18 HCP, you were too big to open 1N. Your jump to 2N shows a hand with 18-19 HCP, and denies 4-card support for partner's major.

The bidding has gone 1H by you, 1S by partner

1. ♠Axxx ♥AQxxx ♦Kx ♣xx
2. ♠Ax ♥AJxxxx ♦Axx ♣xx
3. ♠Axx ♥KJxxx ♦Qxx ♣Qx
4. ♠Axx ♥AQxxx ♦Kxx ♣Qx
5. ♠Ax ♥AQxxx ♦Kxxx ♣Qx
6. ♠JTxx ♥AKTxx ♦A ♣AQxx
7. ♠AK ♥AQxxx ♦AKxxx ♣x

2S – You have found an eight-card fit in a major. Tell partner immediately, while showing him a minimum hand.

2H – You told partner that you have at least five hearts with your opening bid. Rebidding them promises six, and your minimum rebid shows a minimum hand.

1N – You have a minimum hand, no four-card spade support, no second suit, and only five hearts. Sounds like a balanced hand with 12-14 HCP.

1N – You have 15 HCP; partner will play you for no more than 14 HCP. Some players will open 1N with this hand.

2D – You have a second suit. This doesn't promise more than a minimum, but you could have up to 18. Partner could pass with a count of 6 or a bad 7 but should squeeze out another bid with an 8-count.

2C – Wow, an 18-count. Can you force to game? You shouldn't. Partner should try to keep the bidding alive, so if he passes 2C, you probably wouldn't want to be in game. This is a quirk in standard bidding. If your longest suit is higher than your second suit, there is no invitational bid you can make. Bid it like a minimum, and then take another call if partner doesn't pass. You really don't want to force to game with an 18-count.

(Remember, partner could have a 6-count.)

3D – Partner should read you for a hand that wants to be in game opposite a 6-count. hand. You promise at least 9 red cards on this bidding.

8. ♠AKQx ♥AQxxx ♦Qxx ♣x

4S – Your 17 HCP and singleton (making 20 points) should make game a good bet. Note: This is a better hand than ♠AKQx ♥AQxxx ♦xxx ♣Q, which would be a 3S bid.

The bidding has gone 1H by you, 2H by partner.

1. ♠AQxx ♥AJxxx ♦Jx ♣xx

P – partner has no more than 10 points. Could you make game? Maybe – give partner both major suit kings and a minor suit ace, and you'd have a shot. However, that is not likely.

2. ♠AQxx ♥AKxxx ♦Kx ♣xx

2S – This is worth an invitation to game. If partner is near the top of his 6-10 points, you should have a reasonable shot at game. Note that 2N, 3C, 3D, and 3H would also be invitational. 2S shows that you have spade values. Partner would accept a 2S invitation by bidding 4H and reject a 3C invitation by bidding 3H with ♠KJxx ♥xxxx ♦Ax ♣xxx.

3. ♠AKx ♥AKxxxx ♦Ax ♣xx

4H – You don't care what partner's six points look like.

Rebids by Responder

There are also three types of responding hands,: **minimum**, **invitational**, and **game forcing**. Sound familiar? By the time partner has made his second bid, you should have a good idea about his shape and point count. Let's compare what minimum, invitational, and game-forcing hands look like for both opener and responder:

Strength	Opener	Responder
Minimum	12-16	6-10
Invitational	16-18	10-12
Game-forcing	19+	13+

This will make sense if you remember that you need about 25 points to be in game. Note that if either person has a game-forcing hand, the pair should have enough for game, even if partner barely had enough to make his bid. Also, note that if both pairs have minimum hands, the pair usually won't belong in game. It's the hands where one partner has an invitational hand and the other has a minimum that hand evaluation comes into play.

Here are some guidelines: If you are responder and partner has shown a minimum hand with his second bid, you should make a minimum bid with a minimum hand, make an invitational bid with an invitational hand, and make a forcing bid with a game-forcing hand. It's really not much harder than that.

Minimum calls by responder are:

- | | |
|--|-------------------|
| 1. Rebidding your suit cheaply | 1D-P-1H-P-2D-P-2H |
| 2. Raising opener's second suit cheaply | 1D-P-1H-P-1S-P-2S |
| 3. Rebidding no-trump cheaply | 1D-P-1H-P-1S-P-1N |
| 4. Showing a preference for partner's first suit cheaply | 1H-P-1S-P-2D-P-2H |
| 5. Passing partner's minimum rebid | 1D-P-1H-P-2H-P |
| 6. Bidding a suit lower than your first after partner rebids 1NT | 1D-P-1H-P-1N-P-2C |

On hand 1, you should have 6 hearts to rebid your suit, such as ♠xx ♥AQxxxx ♦xx ♣Qxx.

On hand 2, you promise four-card support for partner, because he's only going to have four spades (or he would have opened them), such as ♠Axxx ♥Qxxx ♦Qx ♣xxx.

On hand 3, you deny six cards in your suit or four-card support for partner's major.

On hand 4, you only show two cards in partner's first suit, such as ♠AJxxx ♥Qx ♦xx ♣xxxx. If you had three-card support, you would have raised him on your first bid with a minimum hand. **This is an important nuance.**

On hand 6, you promise at least nine cards between your two suits, and your second bid is **non-forcing**.

Invitational hands are either making a bid one below game, or taking another bid after opener has made a minimum rebid (in either his suit, your suit, or NT).

Invitational rebids are:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Jumping in your suit | 1D-P-1H-P-1N-P-3H |
| 2. Jumping in partner's suit | 1D-P-1H-P-1S-P-3S |
| 3. Jumping in notrump | 1D-P-1H-P-1S-P-2N |
| 4. Taking any action over a minimum suit raise | 1D-P-1H-P-2H-P-2S
or 2N, 3C, 3D, and 3H |

On hands 1 and 4 partner has already indicated a minimum. He may have a non-minimum hand on 2 or 3, but you still jump to show your invitational hands. On hand 1, you promise a good six-card heart suit.

Game Forcing Bids

If you have a **game forcing hand** as responder, you have two choices. The first is obvious – jumping to game. Jumping to game shows a hand you know belongs in game, but you are pretty sure that slam is not “in the cards.” If you think that slam could be in the picture, or don't know which game will be best, you can mark time by bidding a new suit (unless partner's rebid was 1N).

Bridge is such a sensational game that I wouldn't mind being in jail if I had three cellmates who were decent players and who were willing to keep the game going 24 hours a day.

- Warren Buffett

Responder Bidding Unbid SUITS

If you OPEN a SUIT and partner keeps bidding unbid SUITS, you should not pass. Please note that NT is NOT a suit, so if either of you bids NT, new suits are (usually) NOT forcing. It is very easy for beginning bridge players to pass partner's forcing bid, and beginning bridge students may do it often.

The idea of “**forcing bids**” is an important part of the game and one that you will get a better feel for as you become more experienced. One tip, however, is that if you or your partner have either bid NT or passed at any point in the bidding sequence, then most new suit bids will not be forcing. Of course, like most things in bridge, there are a few exceptions. Forcing bids will be covered in more detail in a later chapter.

Repsonder's Rebid Examples

The bidding has gone 1D-1H-1N (opponents passing)

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| 1. ♠xxxx ♥Qxxx ♦Kxxx ♣K | 2D – You have no eight-card major suit fit, and 2D should play better than 1N. Partner promises at least four diamonds. The only time he'll have three diamonds is if he has 4-4-3-2 distribution, and he would have raised your hearts if he had that. |
| 2. ♠Axxx ♥Qxxx ♦xx ♣Axx | P – Partner has 14 HCP at most, and you don't have an eight-card major suit fit. |
| 3. ♠Ax ♥Kxxxx ♦x ♣Qxxxx | 2C – One of your suits should play better than 1N. This still shows a minimum hand. |
| 4. ♠Ax ♥Kxxxx ♦xxx ♣Qxx | P – It's usually not right to rebid your five-card suits - save your rebids for when you have six. |
| 5. ♠AKxx ♥AQxx ♦x ♣Qxxx | 3N – You hoped that partner would have support for one of your majors. He didn't, so raise him to game. |
| 6. ♠Ax ♥AKxxxx ♦x ♣Qxxx | 4H – Partner should have at least two hearts for his 1N rebid, and since he has a minimum, slam shouldn't be in the picture. |
| 7. ♠Ax ♥AQxxxx ♦x ♣xxxx | 3H – If partner opened a 12 HCP point hand, you probably won't want to be in 4H. |

The bidding has gone 1D-1H-2H (opponents passing)

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| 1. ♠xx ♥Kxxx ♦xx ♣Kxxxx | P – No-brainer—you barely had enough for your 1H response. |
| 2. ♠AQxx ♥Kxxx ♦Qx ♣xxx | 2S – This shows an invitational hand. With a minimum, you would have passed partner's 2H rebid. |
| 3. ♠Ax ♥AKxx ♦xx ♣AQxxx | 3C – Your hand is too big for a jump to 4H. No one says that won't be where you end up. Remember partner can't pass – in theory. Turn the club ace into the club 9, and your bid would be 4H. |

The bidding has gone 1D-1H-3H (opponents passing)

1. ♠xx ♥KJxx ♦xx ♣Kxxxx 4H – You only have 7 HCP, but you have a shapely hand with a 5-card suit, not 4. Partner has invited you to bid game if you have more than a bare (6-7 point) minimum.
2. ♠xx ♥KJxx ♦Ax ♣AQxxx 4C – Any bid other than pass, 3N, or 4H by you here shows interest in slam. Partner has shown 16-18 points. That plus your shapely 14 could be enough.

You won't get these all correct in the beginning, but this should be a lesson that you review often. If you can remember the **minimum, invitational, and game-forcing bids** and when to apply them, you'll be ahead of 90% of the bridge players out there. Really.

Suggested Reading

- Bergen, Marty
Points Schmoints!: Bergen's Winning Bridge Secrets
- Bird, David
25 Bridge Myths Exposed
- Bird, David and Tim Bourke
Test Your Bridge Technique Series
- Bird, David and Marc Smith
Bridge Technique Series
- Downey, Ned and Ellen Pomer
Standard Bidding with SAYC
- Grant, Audrey
Bridge Basics 1: An Introduction (The Official Better Bridge Series)
- Huggett, Dave and Stephen Cashmore
The Monster Book of Basic Declarer Play
- Kantar, Edwin B.
Bridge For Dummies
Eddie Kantar Teaches Advanced Bridge Defense
Eddie Kantar Teaches Modern Bridge Defense
Introduction to Declarer's Play
Introduction to Defender's Play
- Mollo, Victor and Nico Gardener
Card Play Technique
- Root, William S.
How to Play a Bridge Hand: 12 Easy Chapters to Winning Bridge by America's Premier Teacher
- Sands, Norma
The New Standard American Bridge Updated
- Seagram, Barbara and David Bird
25 Ways to Be a Better Defender
- Seagram, Barbara and Marc Smith
25 Bridge Conventions You Should Know
25 Ways to Take More Tricks as Declarer
- Thurston, Paul
Bridge: 25 Steps to Learning 2/1



Lesson 4: Overcalls



There is a huge advantage to being able to open the bidding. In tennis the player who serves tends to win the point. In bridge the side that opens the bidding tends to win the auction most of the time. However, “most of the time” is not all of the time, and that’s where overcalling comes in.

There are a few reasons that a player may want to **overcall**. The first is obvious: the player has an opening hand, but the opponent opened first. Don’t you hate it when that happens? The second is less obvious, but also important. The **overcaller** wants to let partner know what to **lead** if partner has the opening lead. In fact, there is a third reason to **overcall**, although said somewhat “tongue and cheek;” overcalling is often something you can do to obstruct your opponents and make it a little more difficult for them to just run away with the bidding unopposed. You don’t want to abuse this, but if you have an overcallable hand, it is a tactic you may wish to consider.

The requirements of an overcall are actually pretty simple. The overcaller should have some HCP. How many? At the **one level**, at least **8 HCP not vulnerable**, and at least **10 HCP vulnerable**. At the **two level**, at least **10, regardless of vulnerability**. Either way, **16 HCP should be the maximum** for your suit overcalls (Note: With more than 16 HCP, start with a **double**. The next lesson will cover this topic.)

The overcaller should also have a **good suit**. It should contain at least five cards, and if you have less than 13 HCP the suit should contain at least one of the top two or at least two of the top four **honors**. If you overcall a suit that looks like this: JTxxx, don’t be surprised if your partner leads the K right into declarer’s AQ.

A 1NT overcall is a special exception. When you overcall 1NT you have almost exactly the same hand as if you had opened 1NT (15-17 HCP). The only difference is that you must have at least one **stopper** (Axx, Kxx, QJxx) in the opener’s suit.

Vulnerability

Why is **vulnerability** important? Well, if you look at your board, you’ll note that it either says “**VUL**” or not, or is **red** or **white**. In scoring there are **penalties** for **going down or not making your contract**. The **vulnerable** penalties for not making your contract are twice as harsh **undoubled** and even harsher if you are **doubled** (100 per trick undoubled red, compared to 50 per trick white). That is why you need to exercise more caution in your bidding. (*Doubled penalties more than double the score if you are down more than one. See the scoring chart on pages 10 and 11.*)

Overcalling is very similar to opening the bidding in that it’s fairly obvious when to do it. It’s the overcaller’s partner who needs to exercise some judgment. If your partner overcalls, do *not* expect him to have an opening hand. You should usually pass without a **fit** unless you have 10 or so points of your own. If you have a fit, you can give partner a **raise** with a minimum type hand.

Note: This is advanced, but it’s very important. With a 10+ point hand and a fit, you cue bid the opponent’s suit. This just means you bid the opener’s suit, which you don’t really have. Your partner needs to know you are doing this. (See Cue Bids in Bonus Lessons.)

How to Respond to Partner's Overcall

Here is an example of how to respond to your partner's overcall if your right hand opponent opens 1 club and your partner overcalls 1 spade. His 1 spade bid shows at least a 5-card spade suit and 8-16 HCP.

OPP	PARD	OPP	YOU
1 ♣	1 ♠	P	1NT = 8-11 hcp, club stopper, not forcing
			2 ♣ = forcing, asking about the point count of the overcall (shows support for spades with 10+ points)
			2 ♦ = not forcing*
			2 ♥ = not forcing*
			2 ♠ = simple raise (shows 3+ spades with 6-10 points)
			2NT = 12-14 HCP, clubs stopped, invitational
			3 ♦ = good suit, good hand, highly invitational
			3 ♥ = good suit, good hand, highly invitational
			3 ♠ = preemptive (shows 4 spades with 6-9 points, including distributional points)
			3NT = to play; 14+ hcp with clubs stopped

*You and your partner need to discuss whether a new suit bid over the overcall is forcing or not forcing. Standard bidding says that it is not forcing, but many people play that if you are a non-passed hand, you can bid a new suit over your partner's overcall as a one-round forcing bid. Note that if you would prefer to play this non-forcing, you can jump in your suit to show a good hand, as indicated on the chart.

How to or whether to respond to your partner's overcall is one of the hardest parts of this game, so don't feel overwhelmed. With practice and partnership trust, you will get this.

The bids on this chart introduce some concepts we haven't yet mentioned. Notice that after partner overcalls 1C with 1S, both your 2S and 3S bids show weak hands with **support**. Believe it or not, 3S shows a weaker and/or shapelier hand than 2S, while the **cue-bid** of 2C shows a good hand with support.

The 3S bid is called **preempting** – jumping the bidding with a weak hand. There will be more information on preempting in a future lesson, but the idea is to crowd the bidding when you have a long suit to make it more difficult for the opponents to bid. Jumping to 3S would show a hand such as ♠Axxx ♥x ♦xxxx ♣Qxxx.

With another spade, you would think about bidding 4S, especially **not vulnerable**. You probably won't make it, and you will probably be **doubled**. Still, if partner has five spades and a weakish hand, the opponents are probably taking a bunch of tricks if they get to decide what the trump suit will be. It's a **sacrifice** bid.

Note: Good duplicate players know scoring very well so they can know when to do this and when not to.

Final Word on Overcalling

One great thing about making overcalls is that it makes it difficult for opener's partner to describe his hand. **Negative doubles** are a tool most players use. The easiest use of a negative double involves showing your partner your heart suit after the opponents have the nerve to overcall spades.

Example:

Your hand: ♠K3 ♥AJxx ♦10xxx ♣xxx

You have 8 HCP and your partner opens 1C. You are all ready to say 1H, but here's how the bidding goes:

Partner	Opponent	You
1C	1S	???

You are now stuck. You can't bid 2H. That is telling your partner that you have at least 5 hearts and 10 or more HCP. So what are you to do?

The solution is the **negative double**. You simply say **double**, which does NOT say the opponents cannot make 1S. It simply says: "I have at least 4 hearts, and I might have less than 10 HCP."

We'll discuss this bid in greater detail in Lesson 11.



The sum of all technical knowledge cannot make a master contract player.

Ely Culbertson

Lesson 5 - Takeout Doubles



You have three options when the opponents open the bidding. You can either **pass**, **overcall**, or **double**. We've already learned about overcalls (a good 5+ card suit with at least 8 HCP - more if vulnerable or at the 2 level), and, of course, you know how to pass. The third option is to double. By the way, there are several other types of doubles you can use in different situations. We will discuss some other doubles in later chapters.

Lets look at the **takeout double**. Here's how it works. If RHO opens 1S, you are far more likely to hold a hand with a ♠x ♥xxxx ♦xxxx ♣xxxx -type shape than one with a ♠xxxxx ♥xx ♦xxx ♣xxx -type shape. In old (really old) bidding theory, 1S-X would have been a penalty double, meaning "You aren't going to make 1 spade, so I'm doubling to increase your penalty." Since hands like that seldom came up, using the double to force partner to make a call became a better use for the double.

In modern bidding the **doubler** in the sequence 1S-X is saying, "**I have about an opening hand. I don't have many spades, but I can support all of the unbid suits.**" A textbook double of 1S would look like ♠x ♥AJxx ♦Kxxx ♣AJxx. With this **shape**, you could double with as few as 11 or so points because you have 4-card support for any suit partner bids. If the shape is not quite as good as the textbook example above for instance ♠xx ♥xxxx ♦xxxx ♣xxx, then the 1S doubler should have at least 13 HCP. A takeout double strongly suggests having at least four of the **unbid major(s)**, but sometimes you will be dealt a hand like ♠x ♥AJx ♦AJxx ♣Qxxxx. You would double 1S because of your weak five card suit and your tolerance for the other two suits. You could also be dealt Axxx KJx Axxx ♣Jx and double a 1C opener. Remember, if you don't have perfect shape, you need to have a full opening bid.

If you don't have a shape for an overcall, and you don't have a shape for a takeout double, and you can't overcall 1NT, you should **pass**. If you **double**, you need to be able to tolerate any suit partner bids. If RHO opens 1S and you have ♠Axx ♥Axxx ♦KQxx ♣xx, you should pass.

Ed's Law: If you double with a hand that has a short suit (not opponent's), your partner will bid that suit.

Responding to Takeout Doubles

Responding to partner's takeout double is relatively simple. First, partner is NOT inviting you to pass. He doesn't have many of the opponent's bid suit. If partner doubles 1C, you expect him to have a hand that looks like ♠Axxx ♥Axxx ♦Axxx ♣x, or thereabouts.

Your options:

- If you have **4 cards** in an unbid suit (prefer a **major** over a minor) and **0-8 points**, **bid it**.
- If you have **4 cards** in an unbid suit (prefer **major** over minor) and **9-11 points**, **jump in your suit**. For example, if the bidding goes 1C-X-P to you and you have ♠Ax ♥KQxx ♦xxx ♣Qxxx, let partner know you have 9-11 points by bidding 2H.
- If you have **4 cards** in an unbid major (preferably both) and **12+ points**, bid the suit opponent opened (cuebid).
- If you have **5+ cards** in an unbid major and **12+ points**, bid game in that suit.
- With **0-6 points** and no 4-card major, but your best 3-card major.
- With **7-9 points**, no four-card major and **stoppers** in opponent's suit, bid 1NT.
- With **10-12 HCP**, no four-card major and **stoppers**, bid 2N.
- With **13-15 HCP**, no four-card major and **stoppers**, bid 3N.

Note: Since 1NT promises 7 HCP, you will occasionally find yourself bidding your best 3-card major. You cannot pass a takeout double with a weak hand. You must have a good hand with 5 or more trumps in order to pass.

If you have 17+ HCP, you may want to make sure that everybody has the same-colored cards, or that you aren't playing pinochle. You are forced to bid even if you have zero points. **Doubler will usually not take another free call unless he has 17+ points.**

LHO opens 1D and partner doubles. RHO passes.

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| 1. ♠xxxx ♥xx ♦xxxx ♣xxx | 1S - Partner is NOT inviting you to pass!! He doesn't have many diamonds in his hand, so unless he has a moose (technical term for a massive hand), 1D will make, probably with overtricks. |
| 2. ♠Axxx ♥Kx ♦KJxx ♣xxx | 2S - Partner has invited you to bid a four-card major. You have one, and 10+ HCP. Show him that you have a good hand. Notice that this hand has the same shape as the above example. This is why the takeout doubler needs 17+ points to take a second bid. |
| 3. ♠Axx ♥Kx ♦KJxx ♣Jxxx | 2N - Partner should have about an opening hand and you have two stoppers in opener's suit. If you are white on red, converting the takeout double to a penalty double by passing might pay off. |
| 4. ♠xxx ♥xxx ♦xxxxx ♣xx | 1H - You aren't going to pass - see the comments for hand #1! Bid 1H, and hope that partner doesn't jump to 4H. |
| 5. ♠AKxxx ♥Qx ♦xxxx ♣Ax | 4S - If partner has enough for a takeout double, you should have enough to make 4S. |

RHO opens 1D. You double, and partner bids 1S

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| 1. ♠Axxx ♥Qxxx ♦x ♣AQxx | P - You promised about an opening hand with support for the unbid suits. That's what you have. Partner would have bid something other than 1S if he had had 9+ points. You'd rather play 1S than 2S if you could. If the opponents come back into the bidding, you can then raise to 2S. |
| 2. ♠Axxx ♥AKxx ♦x ♣AQxx | 2S - This is a big hand. Partner will play you for 17+ points and at least four spades. He isn't forced to bid again, but probably will if he has 7 points or so. |
| 3. ♠Ax ♥AKQxxx ♦xx ♣AKx | 2D - Wow, that's a big hand. Partner should play you for about a 20-count. He cannot pass, as your bid doesn't promise diamonds. (It's one of those cuebids again.) You plan to bid hearts at your next turn. |
| 4. ♠AKQx ♥AQxx ♦x ♣AQxx | 4S - Yes, partner could have a zero-count and he could go down. Still, a rounded king (heart or club king) would be enough for him to make game. |

Takeout doubles and **overcalls** tend to be difficult concepts for beginning bridge players. It takes discipline to pass with a 13-count where your hand doesn't fit the requirements for an overcall or a takeout double. Believe it or not, partner will usually be able to figure out about how many points you have. How? He knows that if the opponents stop in a part score, they have less than 25 HCP. If they stop in a two-level contract, they usually will have between 19 and 22. If he's looking at a 5-count and the opponents stop in 2D, he'll be able to figure out that you either 1) have about an opening hand or 2) the opponents should be bidding more. You should always assume that if the opponents could bid more, they would. Why? They like to score game bonuses as much as you do!

Lesson 6: Responding to No-Trump Opening—Stayman

Opening 1NT is a great bid because it tells partner you have **15-17 HCP** and a **balanced** hand. Your partner has a couple of tools to find out more about the strength and/or major suit holdings of your hand in order to find the best contract.

If your partner opens 1NT and you **do not have 4 or more cards in a major suit**, you have very easy choices.

Partner opens 1NT

- With **0-7 points**
- With **8-9 points**

Pass

Bid 2NT

This bid asks your partner if he is on 15 or 17. If he is on 15, he passes, and if he is on 17, he bids 3NT. What about 16, you say? Well, he looks for other good stuff, such as a 5-card suit or some well placed 10's to make his decision. In other words, he uses judgment.

- With **10-14 points**
- With **15-17**

Bid 3NT

Bid 4NT

Now what if you do have 4 or more cards in a major suit? It is usually worth exploring whether or not your side has an 8-card major suit fit. The good news is that there are 2 conventions that can help you find out about your partner's major suit holding—**Stayman** or **Jacoby Transfer**.

Stayman

The basic premise of Stayman is simple. A **2C** bid over 1NT usually shows at least **8 HCP** (with one exception which is described below) and at least one **four-card major**. The 1NT opener has only three choices:

- **2D** - I don't have a four-card major.
- **2H** - I have four (or five) hearts, and I may have four spades.
- **2S** - I have four (or five) spades, and I don't have four hearts.

Responses to 2D

Bidding has gone 1NT-P-2C-P-2D

- **2H or 2S** shows a minimum hand (less than 7 HCP) with five of the bid major and four of the other.
Note that you do NOT have to have 8 HCP to bid Stayman if you have 5 of one major and 4 of the other. You simply bid your 5-card major if partner bids 2D.
- **2NT** shows an invitational hand with at least 1-four-card major (8 or 9 HCP).
- **3 of a major** shows five cards in the bid major and four in the other and 10+ HCP.
- **3NT** shows a hand with at least one 4-card major and 10+HCP.

Responses to 2H or 2S

(bidding has gone 1NT-P-2C-P-2H or 1NT-P-2C-P-2S)

- **2NT** shows that responder to the 1NT opener has 8-9 HCP without four cards in partner's major. (You have the four-card major that he didn't bid.) Partner can pass with 15 or a bad 16 HCP or bid **3NT** with

good 16 or 17 HCP.

- Raising partner's major to **3H** or **3S** shows 8-9 HCP with four-card support.
- Bidding **4H** or **4S** (partner's major) promises four-card support with 10+ points.
- **3NT** shows 10+ points but the other major (not partner's).

Note: Therefore, if 1NT opener has four hearts and four spades and responder has four spades and 10+ HCP, the bidding would go 1N-2C-2H-3N-4S.

Garbage Stayman



Your hand is ♠Jxxx ♥Jxxx ♦Qxxx ♣x, and partner opens 1NT. You expect that partner will do better in a suit contract than in 1NT. Bid 2C. He only has three possible responses, and you can pass whichever one he makes.

Beyond 17

Stayman isn't just played over 1NT openers. You should play Stayman over 2NT openings, also. Of course, responder's strength requirements to bid game will be less. Over 2NT (20-21 HCP), 3C is Stayman.

Opening NT

1NT 15-17

2NT 20-21

What if you have **18-19 HCP** and a balanced hand? You just bid 1 of a suit and then jump to 2NT on your second bid. What if you have more than 21 points? That's a very good question, and we will talk about how to open that hand in Lesson 9.

Stayman Examples

Partner opens 1N

1. ♠AKxx ♥AJxx ♦xxxx ♣x

2C - If partner bids a major, you'll raise him to four. If he bids 2D, you'll raise him to 3N. Don't worry about your singleton club - much.

2. ♠AJxx ♥Qxx ♦xxxx ♣xx

P - Yes, it would be great if partner responded 2S if you bid 2C. However, if he doesn't, you'll be forced to make an invitational bid and partner could end up in 3NT, which could be bad.

3. ♠Axxx ♥xxxx ♦xxxxx ♣V

2C - You'll pass whatever response partner makes. This is Garbage Stayman. Partner will expect you to have at least 8 HCP; he'll figure out you don't when you pass his response. He'll thank you, too.

You open 1NT and partner bids 2C

1. ♠AJx ♥KQx ♦xx ♣AJxxx

2D - This hand is the worst hand you can hold when partner holds a garbage Stayman hand.

2. ♠AJxx ♥KQxx ♦Axx ♣Qx

2H - With 4-4 in the majors, respond 2H to Stayman.

3. ♠Ax ♥Qxxxx ♦AQx ♣KJx

2H - You opened this 1NT. Some players will - some won't. here are a couple of good reasons to open it 1NT. First, it describes your point count. Second, it makes it tougher for the opposition to come into the bidding if they have spades. The problem is that you can't tell partner you have 5-card major.

Partner opens 1NT and responds 2S to your 2C bid

1. ♠AJxx ♥Qx ♦Axxx ♣xxx

4S - You have an eight-card major suit fit and enough points to be in game.

2. ♠Qx ♥AJxx ♦Axxx ♣xxx

3N - You don't have an eight-card major-suit fit, but you have enough points to be in game.

3. ♠AJxx ♥xx ♦Axxx ♣xxx

3S - You've found your eight-card major-suit fit, but you wouldn't want to be in game if partner only has a 15-count or has 16 HCP with a 4-3-3-3.

4. ♠xx ♥AJxx ♦Axxx ♣xxx

2NT - No eight-card major suit fit, but you want to be in 3NT if partner has a maximum 1NT opener.

You open 1N, and partner bids 2N over your 2H response to Stayman

1. ♠AQx ♥AKxx ♦Kx ♣xxxx

P - This is a tweener hand. You want to evaluate on shape and **spot-cards**. With 2 10s in your hand, you would take a gamble on 3NT.

2. ♠AQxx ♥AKxx ♦Ax ♣xxx

4S - Why did partner bid Stayman? He would raise hearts if he had a four-card heart suit. Since he doesn't have four hearts, he must have four spades and an invitational hand. You accept his invitation - in spades. Turn the heart king into the heart jack, and you would bid 3S and expect partner to pass.

Other than when you bid Garbage Stayman with 0-7 points (or with 0-7 points and 5-4 in the majors), the Stayman bidder has at least an invitational hand. In general, you have four choices after partner makes his response. They are:

1. With an invitational hand (8-9), raise partner to 3 of his major if you have an eight-card fit.
2. Bid 2NT (8-9) if you haven't found an eight-card major-suit fit.
3. With a game-going (10+) hand, raise partner to 4 of his major if you have an eight-card fit.
4. Bid 3N (10+) if you haven't found an eight-card major-suit fit.

Remember these choices. They will come in handy not only for Stayman, but also for next week when we learn about **transfers**.



Lesson 7: Jacoby Transfers



The last lesson featured the **Stayman Convention**. The other common convention after partner has opened no-trump is the **Jacoby Transfer**, named after Oswald Jacoby. The Jacoby Transfer tells partner that you have a 5+ card major. **Stayman asks, Jacoby Transfer tells.**

The Jacoby Transfer bid is used after opener has opened some level of no trump. How do you do it? After partner opens 1NT, the partner bids the suit *under* his 5+ card major, i.e. he bids 2D with a 5-card heart suit. The 1NT opener has no choice - he must **accept the transfer** by bidding the next higher suit, so he would bid 2H over 2D, even if he only had 2 of them.

After the Jacoby Transfer sequence, the next bids are similar to the simple stuff.

- With 0-7 points, the transfer bidder passes.
- With 8 or 9 and a 5-card major, the transfer bidder invites to game by bidding 2NT.
- With 8 or 9 and a 6-card major, the transfer bidder invites to game by bidding 3 of the major.
- With 10+ points and a 5-card major, the transfer bidder bids 3N.
- With 10+ points and a 6+-card major, the transfer bidder bids 4 of the major.

Note these point ranges are lower if partner opens 2N or shows a NT hand that has 22 or more points.

Pretty simple! Okay, what if the Jacoby transfer bidder has two suits? Well, that's a very good hand. The main thing to remember is that the first suit you bid is a **transfer**, the second suit you bid is **natural**, and you are interested in going to game in one of those suits.



Announcing Your Bid

If you and your partner agree to play **Jacoby Transfers**, you need to let your opponents know. This is how you do it. After the transfer bid is made, the 1NT opener says "**transfer.**" This lets the opponents know that the 2D bid doesn't mean that the bidder has diamonds; he has hearts. If you goof (and we have all done that), and your bid of 2D really means diamonds, don't say a word. Keep a poker face. (No oops—that's why directors are sometimes called.) Remember, if you go back and bid the diamonds again, your partner will now think you have 5 hearts AND 5 diamonds.

Why Play Jacoby Transfers

There are two major advantages to playing Jacoby Transfers. First, the no-trump opener gets to play the hand. Having the stronger hand in the partnership, declarer will often gain an extra trick. Second, if you don't play Jacoby Transfers you are less able to describe your hand. Playing Jacoby Transfers gives you the ability to describe **invitational** and **game forcing** hands with 5+-card majors. Also, everyone in the room is playing them, so you don't want to be at a disadvantage by not playing that convention.

BIG Transfer (Texas-Style)



Want something fancy? A **Texas Transfer** shows a hand with a 6+-card major that belongs in game. With a six-card spade suit and 9-12 or so HCP (depending on shape), a person playing Texas transfers would bid 4D or 4H over partner's 1NT bid. Partner would know to bid 4H or 4S. That's all there is to Texas Transfers. Texas Transfers are similar to Jacoby Transfers in that partner says “transfer” after the 4H bid, announcing that you have spades, not hearts. You are also showing a hand that has no interest in slam.

Note that if you play Texas Transfers, the sequence 1N-2D-2H-4H shows a hand that could belong in slam if partner has good heart support and a maximum.

Minor Suit Relay

Want something else? Since you never have to bid 2S over 1NT again (because if you have spades, you will bid 2H), you could play that 2S over 1NT shows a weak hand with a long minor. Partner will say “**alert**,” not “transfer,” and bid 3C. This bid is called a relay to clubs. If clubs is your suit, you would pass. If you have a weak hand with lots of diamonds, you bid 3D, and partner will pass.

There are two advantages to this. First, the no-trump opener will get to play the hand if your suit is clubs. Having the strong hand hidden is often worth an extra trick. Second, if you play 2S as a relay to clubs, the sequence 1NT-2C-2S-3C shows a weak hand with a four-card major (the one partner didn't bid) and at least six cards in the minor. That way, if partner bids your four-card major, you can pass or raise, if so inspired. 6-4 hands tend to play pretty well.

Note: Some pairs play the above sequence as a strong hand with a major and clubs, so be sure to discuss this bidding sequence with your partner.

Try Transfers

Once you get used to the concept of bidding a suit that you don't have, transfers will become a very useful part of your bidding. Without them, you'd have no way to bid the hand ♠KQxxx ♥Kx ♦Jxx ♣xxx with any certainty after partner opens 1NT. 2S would be a sign-off, 3S could be too high if partner has a two-card spade suit and 15 HCP, and Stayman won't let partner know that you have a five-card major.

Did You Know?

43.6 percent of all slam contracts fail.

62.7 percent of all bridge players are women.

97.8 percent of all bridge statistics, including these, are made up.

Jacoby Transfers Examples

Partner opens 1NT

1. ♠xxxxx ♥xx ♦xxxx ♣xx
2. ♠AKxxx ♥Qx ♦Qxxxx ♣x
3. ♠AKJxxx ♥x ♦xxxx ♣xx
4. ♠Q ♥xxx ♦Jxxxxx ♣xxx
5. ♠xx ♥Qx ♦AQxxxx ♣Kxx
6. ♠Ax ♥KJxxxx ♦xx ♣xxx
7. ♠AJxxx ♥KQx ♦Qx ♣Qxx

2H - transfer to 2S. Partner may not make 2S, but he certainly won't make 1NT.

2H - transfer to 2S, then plan to bid 3NT on your next bid. Yes, partner could have a hand that makes 5D or 6D and goes down in 3NT. However, if 3NT makes, partner needs to take 12 tricks in diamonds to get a better score.

2H - transfer to 2S, then bid 3S inviting partner to game. 4S would also be reasonable with this 6-4 shape.

2S - transfer to a minor. Partner will bid 3C, and you will correct to 3D. Partner must pass 3D. Partner likely won't have a chance in 1N. 3D may not make, but your side should take at least two more tricks if diamonds are trump.

3NT - Yes, you have nice diamonds, but you shouldn't expect to take 12 tricks if diamonds are trump. That being said, bid your most likely game.

2D - transfer to 2H, planning to raise to 3H (an invitational bid showing a six-card suit).

2H - transfer to 2S, planning to raise to 3N. Slam could make on this hand, but partner would need to have a maximum and good spade support. Game is probably the limit, so advise partner that you have enough for game with a 5-card spade suit. He'll bid 4S with three or four-card support and pass 3N with only two.

You opened 1NT. Partner transferred you to 2S, and then bid 3NT.

1. ♠Ax ♥AQx ♦Kxxx ♣Axxx
2. ♠AQx ♥Ax ♦Kxxx ♣Axxx

P - You don't have an eight-card fit in a major, so play 3N.

4S - You have an eight-card major-suit fit.



Lesson 8: Opening Preempts



This is going to be a foreign concept to some of you. Everything you have learned so far has been based on bidding when you have a good hand and passing when you don't. As far as concepts go, that's a pretty good one. There are a couple of exceptions, though. Both of them deal with ways to bid **weak, but shapely, hands**. You will learn about **single-suited** shapely hands today.

Making an **opening preempt** is making a bid at 2D or higher with a hand that you wouldn't open under the **Rule of 20**. (Note: 2C is not a preempt—see Lesson 9.)

There are three good reasons for making preempts: 1) you make things difficult for the opponents, 2) you describe your hand to your partner, and 3) you make things difficult for the opponents.

Preempt Requirements

An opening preempt should contain between 5 and 10 points, with most of the points contained in the long suit.

- With a six-card suit, open at the 2-level (except for clubs).
A Disciplined Weak 2 Bid promises 2 of the top 3 honors if vulnerable, 2 of the top 4 honors if not vulnerable, and no voids.
- With a seven-card suit, open at the three-level.
- With an eight-card suit, open at the four-level.

So, with the hand ♠AQxxxx ♥xx ♦xxx ♣xx, you have the requirements for a preempt - open 2S. With ♠AQxxxxx ♥xx ♦xxx ♣x, open 3S. With ♠AQxxxxxx, ♥x ♦xxx ♣x, open 4S.



Vulnerability

Vulnerability has a huge influence on preempting. A good rule of thumb is the **2-3-4 rule**. If you are at **unfavorable vulnerability** (You are vulnerable; they aren't.), you should be within 2 tricks of your bid. At equal, you should be within 3 tricks, and at favorable, you should be within four tricks.

You expect to take six tricks with the suit ♠AJxxxxx. (Assume the other cards split 2-2-2.) If you open 3S, you will be within 3 tricks of your bid. The worst case scenario in the outside suits will cause you to go down 3. If you have equal or favorable vulnerability, you should definitely preempt. At unfavorable, you may want to wait for further developments. The general principle is that if you are vulnerable, you should have a very good suit.

Partner

Another thing to consider is whether partner has already bid. If you are 1) vulnerable and 2) in **first or second seat**, you especially want to have a **good suit** for your preempt. Why? Partner may have a good hand, and your preempt will make it tougher for him to bid. When you make a vulnerable preempt in first or second seat, partner will expect you to have a suit no worse than AJTxxx or KQJxxx. This way, if he has an **honor** he can expect to take six tricks in your suit. If partner hasn't bid, you should NOT preempt with a hand that has an outside **four-card major**. If partner opens the bidding, your side will usually find

an **eight-card major suit fit** if one exists. If you preempt in front of partner, you rarely find your four-four major suit fit.

The great thing about preempts is that it makes things hard on your opponents. If partner has already passed, you don't have to worry about making things tough on him.

Preemptive Overcalls

Do you have to be the opening bidder to preempt? Of course not! You can **preempt as an overcall**, too! RHO opens 1C and you have ♠KQxxxx ♥x ♦Qxx ♣xxx. Do they have an eight-card heart fit? Probably. Will they find it if you overcall 1S? Probably. Will they find it if you overcall 2S? Maybe, but they may not know how high to bid when they find their fit. You'll be amazed at how often opponents will go overboard when you preempt.

Preempting Your Partner

The bad thing about preempts is that your partner may have a good hand and not know what to do. Remember the rule of 2-3-4 - if partner opens 2S at favorable vulnerability, he could have as little as ♠AJxxxx ♥xx ♦xxx ♣xx. That doesn't mean you can't bid; just don't be disappointed when your partner shows up with a piece of cheese. Remember, if he had had a good hand, he would have opened it at the 1-level. In general, you should be able to fill in his suit and have three tricks outside to think about game.

If partner preempts and you have a singleton in his suit, do not rescue him! That's how doubling starts. A new suit is **forcing** over a 2-level preempt (if you have not already passed.) The only **non-forcing bid** (partner may pass) is a **raise** in partner's suit (2H-3H).

If you have a **fit**, you can give partner a raise. Assume that partner opens 2S and RHO doubles (for takeout). Your hand is ♠Kxxx ♥xxx ♦Qxxxx ♣x. Wow! You expect partner to have something like ♠AQxxxx ♥x ♦xxx ♣xxx. Look at how many tricks they will be able to take in a heart or club contract, probably 12. Look how many you will lose in spades, probably five. Raising partner to 4S is a **sacrifice** and will make it hard for them to find their slam. With a hand like ♠Kxx ♥Qxxx ♦Axxx ♣Qx, you would want to give partner a raise to the three level. You don't necessarily expect to make it, but you want to make things tougher for the opponents. Certainly, they'll be able to make something.

Of course, if you pick up a hand like ♠Ax ♥AKx ♦KQJxx ♣xx, you would bid 4S. The great thing about the bidding sequence 2S-P (or X)-4S is that the opponents don't know whether you are bidding to **make** it or just to be a pest.



*A master wrote a book on rebids by opening preemptors. It contained 300 blank pages. The great thing about preempts is that you have bid your hand, and you only bid it once unless your partner forces you to bid again. If you open 2S and partner raises you to 3S, he is not inviting you to bid 4S; he is **extending the preempt**.*

Responding to Preempts

There are a couple of ways of finding out specific information about partner's opening preempt - both involve bidding **2NT** to find out more about partner's hand. The first is called "asking for a **feature**." After your 2NT bid, partner will bid a **feature** (Ace or **guarded** King (not a singleton). If he has no feature, he repeats his suit, and with AKQxxx in his suit, he responds 3N. The theory behind using features is to find out whether your hand has a potential **entry** so that you can play in no-trump or to find out if the hand has a card that might help partner's.

The second is called **OGUST**. The partner of the preemptor bids 2NT. Here are the responses: 3C=bad hand - bad suit, 3D=bad hand - good suit, 3H=good hand - bad suit, 3S=good hand - good suit

A good hand is a hand that contains an outside ace, king, or two queens or a hand that contains 9 or 10 points. A good suit usually contains two of the top three honors, although some people would consider AJTxxx to be a good suit.

3NT Preempt

Many duplicate players use 3NT to describe a very specific preempt. It's called **Gambling 3NT**. In first or second seat, it shows a hand with a seven-card minor headed by the AKQ with no outside aces or kings. In third or fourth seat, you may have some cards outside. If you can take seven tricks in your minor and partner shows up with a few cards, you may be able to take nine tricks before the opposition can take five. Partner should **pull** the 3NT bid by bidding 4C, which can be passed or corrected to 4D if he doesn't have **stoppers** in two of the three **side suits**. So how do you open a very strong hand in no trump? We'll get to that later.

Tip: If an opponent opens a gambling 3NT against you, lead an ace so that you can look at dummy. You know that declarer won't have any aces outside of the long minor, so if you can't see them in your hand or on dummy, your partner has them.

Card sense is when it's technically right to do something, the little man that sits on my shoulder or anyone else's shoulder says, "Don't do that." And you say to yourself, "Well, wait a minute, that's the right way to play." And he says, "Yeah, but you don't wanna play that way." That instinct is card sense. It's almost an ability to feel where the cards are. It's something that you can't buy, you can't find; you're born with it. The ability to do the right thing at the wrong time or really to do the wrong thing at the right time.

~Barry Crane

Preempting Examples

First seat, red on red (Everyone vulnerable.)

1. ♠AQxxxx ♥Ax ♦Jxxx ♣x
1S - This is an opening hand. Save your preempts for hands that don't meet the Rule of 20.
2. ♠x ♥Axxxx ♦KQxxxx ♣xx
P - Try to avoid an opening preempt if you have an outside 4-card major. If partner has ♠Kxxx ♥Kxxx ♦Ax ♣Axx, your side is probably cold for 4H. You'll never get there if you open 2D.
3. ♠QJxxxx ♥x ♦Axx ♣Kxx
P - You have a six-card spade suit, but it's headed by the QJ. Try to have a better suit for your vulnerable preempts. You'll have a chance to show your spades later.
4. ♠x ♥Qx ♦xxxx ♣AKxxxx
3C - Yes, you only have a six-card suit. 2C would show a strong hand. Your side almost certainly won't be missing an eight-card major-suit fit, but the opponents might after your preempt!

Your partner opened 2S in first seat, white on red. RHO doubles

1. ♠Axxx ♥Qxx ♦Axxxx ♣x
4S - Will it make? It could. If it doesn't, are the opponents taking a bunch of tricks in either hearts or clubs? Oh, yeah.
2. ♠x ♥AKxx ♦Qxxx ♣AQxx
P - What does partner need to make 3NT? ♠AKxxxx and either the heart queen and club king, plus some luck. Any bid you make is forcing, so don't take the chance.
3. ♠xxxx ♥xx ♦xxxxxx ♣xxx
4S - Will it make? Not in a million years. Do the opponents have slam? Probably. Make it tougher on them to find.
4. ♠Axx ♥Qxx ♦Kxxx ♣Kxx
3S - It may make it tougher for LHO to bid 4H. This is extending the preempt, not an invitation for partner to take another bid.

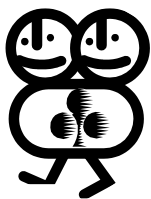
You open 2S and partner raises you to 3S. The opponents have passed

1. ♠AKxxxx ♥x ♦Kxx ♣xxx
P - Again, partner is extending the preempt. With a better hand, he'd either bid 4S or bid 2NT (forcing).

Partner opens 3S in first seat, red on red

1. ♠xx ♥AKxx ♦Axx ♣Axxx
4S - Partner needs a good suit to open 3S red on white. In theory, he should be within three tricks of his bid. That means he should have six tricks, and you have four more for him.
2. ♠x ♥AQxxxxxx ♦Qx ♣xx
P - I don't know who shuffled, but there's no guarantee that partner has a heart in his hand.
3. ♠Axx ♥AKQ ♦AKx ♣Axxx
7N - There's no way partner is opening 3S without suit headed by the king, and he should have the KQ. That should make 13 tricks a laydown.

Lesson 9: Opening 2 Clubs



You now know the rules. Open 1 of a major with a five-card major, open 1NT with 15-17, 2NT with 20-21 and a balanced hand, or open your longer minor. Last week, we learned about preempting—opening 2, 3, or 4 of a suit with a six, seven, or eight-card suit and less than an opening hand. Today, we learn how to open **BIG** hands.

How Big is Big?

- With a **balanced hand**, big is too big to open 2NT- namely, **22+ HCP**.
- With an unbalanced hand, you should be **within a trick or so of making game** opposite a 0-count. You also need to have some defensive values.

I'll never forget sitting opposite a player who opened 2C on ♠AKQxxxxx ♥xx ♦x ♣x in a tournament. Bad things happened.

Guidelines

- With a long major suit, you need to have at least **8 ½ tricks**. (A half a trick is a guarded K without the ace. Half the time it will be a trick for you and half the time it won't.) Amazingly enough, some opponents will dare to come into the bidding over your 2C opener. Partner will expect you to be able to take a few tricks if you wind up on defense.
- With a long minor suit or a minor **two-suiter**, you should have at least **8 ½ tricks** if 3NT is an option, and at least **9 ½ tricks** if 3NT is not an option. Why the difference? - If 3NT isn't an option, your cheapest game option would be five of a minor, which requires 11 tricks.
- With a **two-suiter**, you may be better off bidding your hand naturally. (Open at 1 and then jump in a lower ranking second suit on your second bid.) If, however, you can make **game** in your hand, open 2C to avoid being passed out. A minimum 2C opener with spades would be something like ♠AKJxxx ♥Axx ♦KQx ♣A. You don't want to open 1S, because partner would pass with ♠Qx ♥Kxxx ♦xxx ♣xxxxxx. With a minor, you'd need something along the lines of ♠x ♥AKx ♦AQx ♣AKQxxx.

Responding to 2C

Okay, your partner has opened 2C. What do you do?

- First, **YOU HAVE TO BID!** Partner might not have a club in his hand.
- Second, **GET OUT OF HIS WAY!** The way to get out of his way is to bid **2D**. This is a **waiting bid**, giving the opener the opportunity to further describe his hand. If you have a **five card suit headed by two of the top three honors AND 8 HCP** then **DO NOT** respond 2D but bid your suit instead – bid either 2H, 2S, 3C, or 3D. These bids are relatively universal. Most of the time, however, you will bid 2D.



Opener will now tell you about his hand.

- A suit bid shows that suit - it promises at least a five card suit, but it is usually at least six.
- A 2NT bid shows a hand that was too big to open 2N. (22-24)

Note: Stayman and Jacoby can be used here to find your major suit fit. With the hand ♠KJxxx ♥Qxx ♦xxx ♣xx, you would respond 2D to a 2C opener. If partner then bids 2N, you would make a transfer bid of 3H, then bid 3N over his 3S response. With ♠KJxx ♥Qxxx ♦xxx ♣xx, you would bid 3C after a 2C-2D-2N sequence, then raise partner to game in his major if he has one, or respond to 3D with 3N.

- A 3NT bid shows 25-27.
- A 4NT bid shows 28-30.

What if you are totally broke? After you respond 2D, you must take another bid unless partner responds 2NT (If partner has 22-24 and you have 0 or 1, you should pass. With 2 HCP, you may want to push toward game). A widely used convention is called **cheapest minor**. If the 2C opener makes a suit bid, then your bid of 3C over a major, or 3D over 3C, shows a **bust**, which is a hand with no aces, no kings, and 0 or 1 queen.

If you are not broke and you like partner's suit, you have two ways to show him. Jumping to game is weaker than giving him a simple raise. Over 2C-2D-2S, he is going to game opposite any bid by you other than 3C (cheapest minor). A jump to game by you means that you have trump support, but game is probably the limit of the hand. You would jump to 4S with ♠xxx-♥Qxx-♦Qxxxx-♣xx.

A simple raise means that you not only have trump support, but you also have a hand with some values (an ace or a king). So after 2C-2D-2S, you would bid 3S with ♠xxx-♥Kxx-♦Qxxxx-♣xx (or better).

Practice with 2C Openers

It's your bid, in first seat

1. ♠AKQxxxxxx ♥xx ♦x ♣x

1S - expecting to bid 4S on your next call. You might also choose to open 4S.

2. ♠AKxxxx ♥AKx ♦Qxxx

1S - not even close to a 2C opener. Add the diamond ace and you'd be there. If partner passes your 1S bid, you almost certainly don't have game.

3. ♠Qxxx ♥AKQ ♦AKQxxx

2C - you plan to rebid 3D over partner's expected 2D response. Hearing 3C from partner won't thrill you, although usually you should be in the slam range if partner has a positive response. If partner bids 2S, over your 2C, 7S should be a laydown.

4. ♠AKQxx ♥AKQxx ♦xx ♣x

2C - Yes, you only have an 18-count. Still, if partner has a three-card major, game should make. Plan on bidding 2S, then rebidding 4H over partner's next bid.

5. ♠AQxx ♥AQJx ♦Ax ♣Axx

2NT - You have a balanced 21-count.

Partner opens 2C, and RHO passes

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| 1. ♠xxx ♥xx ♦x ♣xxxxxxx | 2D - You owe partner a response. He could have a hand that makes game in his hand. |
| 2. ♠Axx ♥Axx ♦Qxx ♣Qxxx | 2D - Let partner describe his hand. You expect that you'll be in slam somewhere, but there's no rush. Partner will describe his hand with his next bid. |
| 3. ♠KQxxx ♥xx ♦xxx ♣xxx | 2D - You have a good five-card suit, but only 5 HCP. If partner rebids 2NT, you will transfer him to spades, then bid 3NT. |
| 4. ♠x ♥Qxx ♦AQxxx ♣Kxxx | 3D - this promises a good five-card diamond suit and at least 8 HCP. Of course, Murphy's Law says you should expect partner to bid 3S over this. No one said that bidding over a 2C opener was easy. |

Partner opens 2C and bids 2S over your 2D response

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| 1. ♠Axxx ♥xx ♦Qxxxx ♣xx | 3S - You have a good hand for partner. He's showing a huge hand with spades and you have good support with an ace. Show him that you have support with slam interest. |
| 2. ♠xxxx ♥xx ♦Qxxxx ♣xx | 4S - You have great support for partner, but no outside ace or king. Unless partner has an extraordinary hand, game is the limit. |
| 3. ♠x ♥Qxxx ♦Jxxx ♣xxxx | 3C - Announce to partner that you are broke - no ace or king, and less than two queens. If he rebids 3H, raise him to 4H. If he rebids 3S, pass. He may not even make it. |
| 4. ♠xx ♥KJxxxx ♦Kx ♣xxx | 3H - Partner should play you for a decent suit with at least five cards. Note that you could have had more than eight HCP and initially respond 2D because of your suit quality. |

You open 2C, and rebid 2H over partner's 2D response. Partner then bids 3H

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| 1. ♠AQ ♥AKxxxx ♦AKQx ♣x | 3S - Partner has shown support for hearts. Your 3S bid shows the spade ace. If partner then bids 4C - showing the club ace, grand slam should be a good bet. |
| 2. ♠Qx ♥AKQxxx ♦AKQx ♣x | 4D - A similar principle. You don't have extra strength, but have great shape. Unfortunately, you are missing the club and spade aces. Let partner know; he'll do something intelligent. |
| 3. ♠Qx ♥AKQxxx ♦AKx ♣Kx | 4H - Nothing extra over here, partner. |

Regardless of what sadistic impulses we may harbor, winning bridge means helping partner avoid mistakes.

Frank Stewart

Lesson 10: Blackwood and Gerber



Okay, you know you need 25 or so points to bid game. What about **slam** (12 tricks)? Well, usually, the magic number is 33 points. **Grand slam** (all 13 tricks)? 37 points. Of course, these are just guidelines. If you pick up a hand with 13 spades, please don't open 1S because you only have 10 HCP. The more shapely your hand is, the better its ability to take tricks.

Blackwood

Is it possible to bid slam and be missing two aces? Sometimes you get lucky. However, usually, being in slam off two aces (and no void) is a recipe for disaster. How can you prevent this? Easley Blackwood came up with a convention 50 years ago that has been helping bidders for years. The Blackwood convention is a bid of **4NT** after a trump suit has been determined that asks partner how many aces he has.

Say you pick up the hand ♠KQJxx ♥Kx ♦AKxxx ♣x. You open 1S and partner says 2C. You bid 2D, and he bids 4S. What do you know? Partner should have an opening hand with spade support. Do you belong in slam? Hard to say. If his hand is ♠Txx ♥QJxx ♦x ♣AKQxx, you only make 5S. If his hand is ♠ATx ♥Axx ♦xx ♣AQxxx, you should make 7S without any difficulty. Bidding **Blackwood** will allow your partner to tell you how many aces he has.

Here's how you do it. His 4S bid names spades as the trump suit. If you want to know how many aces he has, bid 4NT. He'll tell you. His answers are:

5C: 0 or 4 aces
5D: 1 ace
5H: 2 aces
5S: 3 aces

Note that his lowest response is the worst-case scenario, unless he has 4 (in which case you probably shouldn't be asking in the first place). If you find out that you don't have all of the aces, you place the contract. If partner responds 5D, then your side is off 2 aces. Tough to make 6 when the opponents have two aces, so you **sign off** in 5S. If partner bids 5H you have a decision to make. Sometimes you'll make six, sometimes you won't. If partner bids 5S, he should have 3 aces.

If you discover that you have all the aces, you might want to know how many kings he has. You never ask for kings unless you have all the aces. To ask for **kings**, bid **5NT**. This bid does two things. First, it advises partner that your side has all of the aces. Second, it asks him how many kings he has. The answers are the same: **6C is 0 or 4, 6D is 1, 6H is 2, and 6S is 3**. After his answer, you place the contract. That's it. When you have agreed on a trump suit, use Blackwood to find out how many aces and kings partner has.

Gerber

What if you don't have a trump-suit agreement? Here's a dream hand: ♠KQJ ♥KQx ♦KQJTx ♣Ax. You are expecting to open 2NT when your partner opens 1NT. Really? You'd like to know how many aces and kings he has, because if partner has 3 aces and a king for his 1NT opener, you'll make 7NT. If he's missing an ace or a king, you'll still make 6NT. Use the **Gerber** convention to ask him by bidding 4C. The responses are:

4D: 0 or 4 aces
4H: 1 ace
4S: 2 aces
4N: 3 aces

A bid of 5C after partner's response guarantees that your side has all of the aces and asks for **kings**. Again, 5D is 0 or 4, 5H is 1, 5S is 2, and 5NT is 3.

Most people use **Gerber** over "first and last no-trump." This means if the hand was opened 1N, 4C is Gerber. If the bidding is 2C-2D-2N, 4C is Gerber. If the bidding is 1C-1H-2N, 4C is Gerber. If the bidding goes 2C-2D-2N-3C (Stayman)-3D(no 4-card major), 4C is Gerber.

Got it? Here's one for you. You open 1NT and partner responds 4NT. Is this Blackwood? Have you agreed on a suit? Partner would use **Gerber** over a no-trump bid, so the answer is no. What is it? It's a **quantitative bid**. You know that a 2N response to 1N says, "Bid 3N with a maximum, and pass with a minimum." The sequence 1N-4N says, "Bid 6N with a maximum, and pass with a minimum." Partner should go to slam with 16 or 17 points and pass with 15.

Ace-Asking Advice

- You only want to bid Blackwood or Gerber if you are thinking about **slam**.
- Be careful about using Blackwood if the trump suit is a minor. There is nothing worse than having clubs as your trump suit and using Blackwood holding one ace. Partner responds 5D. OOPS!
- **Be wary of using Blackwood when you have a void.** Your hand is ♠AKxxx ♥KQJx ♦KQJx ♣Void. You open 1S and partner responds 3S. Partner's club ace would be worthless, but if he holds two red aces you are **cold** for seven, and if he holds one red ace you are cold for six. Over 1S-3S, any bid you make other than 4S is fishing for slam.

Note: There are other ways to fish for a bid for slam. A bid 4C would show first round control in the bid suit, and denies first round control in the suits you bypass. Over 4C, partner will tell you whether he has a red ace. (See Cue Bids in Bonus Lessons)

One last thing. When my partner makes an ace-asking bid, I'll sometimes count on my fingers under the table to come up with my correct response. I usually come up with the right response, but mistakes happen.

Bridge is the most entertaining and intelligent card game the wit of man has so far devised.

- W. Somerset Maugham

Blackwood/Gerber Examples

You open 1S and partner raises to 3S

1. ♠AKxxx ♥v ♦KQxx ♣AKxx 4C - Any bid you make other than 4S here is exploring for slam.
Do you care how many aces partner has? No, you want to know whether partner has the diamond ace. Bid 4C, and he'll tell you whether he has a red ace by bidding that suit.

Note: This example is similar to the one on the previous page where you must be careful of bidding a slam when you have a void. Therefore the bid of 4C is NOT Gerber but rather a Control Showing Bid which shows first round control (either an ace or a void) in the bid suit.

1. ♠AKQxx ♥KQxx ♦Kx ♣Kx 4NT - You can pretty much place the bid depending on how many aces partner has. With one, you want to be in 5S. With two, you'll take a shot at 6S. With 3, you'll bid 7S.
2. ♠AKxxx ♥AKx ♦Qxx ♣Qx 4H - You have extras, but don't have either minor-suit ace. Partner will either sign off in 4S, go forward, or ask you for aces.

Partner opens 1NT

1. ♠KQx ♥Kxx ♦Axx ♣KJxx 4NT - Yes, you care how many aces partner has. However, you are more interested in whether he has 15 HCP or 17 HCP. He could have three aces and three jacks and you'd need some good fortune to make slam. Therefore, this is a quantitative bid rather than Blackwood or Gerber.
2. ♠x ♥AKQxxx ♦Kx ♣KQx 4C. If partner shows up with 3 aces, you want to be in 7NT. If partner only has one ace, you want to be in 4H. With 2 aces, you'll probably bid 6H.

The actual mechanics of both Blackwood and Gerber are pretty simple, although I've certainly fouled them up in the past. The best advice I have for you is to make sure that you really just want to know the number of aces partner has before you trot out Blackwood or Gerber.

Well, you've made it through ten lessons. Congratulations! You now know the basics of bidding—or at least you've been exposed to them. If you know these ten lessons backwards and forwards, you will bid as well as most at the bridge table. The next ten lessons will focus on more advanced bridge topics such as Negative Doubles, Michaels Cue Bids, Unusual No-trump, Third and Fourth Seat Openers, and the play and defense of a hand. I hope you'll stick with it! Expect to learn something pretty much every time you play—forever. Also expect to make friends that you will have for a lifetime. What more can you ask of a pastime?

Learn from the mistakes of others. You won't live long enough to make them all yourself.

Alfred Sheinwold

Lesson 11: Negative Doubles



Remember what it takes to overcall? An overcall requires a good 5-card suit with a reasonable number (8-16) of points, right?

Note: If you have a hand that is too strong for an overcall (17+) or has a great shape (support for all the suits except the suit opened), you make a takeout double.

How to Use Opponent's Overcall to Describe Your Hand

If your partner opens and your right-hand opponent overcalls, your **double** promises (or strongly implies) at least four cards in all unbid majors and 6 points or more (depending on the level you are requiring your partner to bid).

A Simple Example

Partner opens 1D and RHO overcalls 1S. What do you need to bid 2H? You should have at least 10 points and a 5-card suit (the same requirements for bidding 2H after your partner opens 1S and RHO passes). A double will promise at least four hearts and about 7 points. It basically says that you were going to respond 1H, but you can't because RHO overcalled 1S.

The negative doubler could have a couple of different hands. The first is a hand with 5+ hearts, but less than 10 points. You aren't big enough to bid 2H, so you start with a double. The second is a hand with 4 hearts and 7+ points. The negative doubler could even have an opening hand. With

♠AQx ♥KTxx ♦Axxx ♣Jx, you would double if partner opens 1C and RHO overcalls 1S. Are you going to game on this hand? You have two stoppers in spades and an opening hand, so 3NT should be a good bet. Wouldn't it be nice to find out if partner has a 4-card heart suit? We like playing in an eight-card major suit fit.

How to Respond to Partner's Negative Double

What if your partner makes a negative double? This is NOT an invitation to pass. If the bidding has gone 1C-1S-X-P, assume that partner has a hand with at least 7 points and 4 hearts and take some bid. Pretty much,



you rebid as though the bidding had gone 1C-P-1H-P, except that now you don't need to mention your 4-card spade suit, if you have one. With a 4-card heart suit, bid 2H, 3H, or 4H depending on the strength of your hand (minimum, invitational, or game forcing). With one (or better, two) spade stoppers and no 4-card heart suit, bid no-trump based on your points (1NT, 2NT, or 3NT with a minimum, invitational, or game-forcing hand). Rebidding your minor or the other minor are also appropriate with proper distribution. Passing is usually not a good option.

Preemptive Overcalls

If the opponents have made a preemptive overcall, you need more points to make a negative double. Over 1C-2S, you should have at least 9 points to make a negative double. Remember that you are pretty much forcing your partner to make a bid, even with a minimum opener. Over 1D-2C, your negative double only promises 4-3 distribution in the majors and 8+ points, but partner will expect 4-4.

Negative Double Point Guidelines

Level of Overcall	HCP Needed
One of a suit	6-7 (6+ for double of 1H, 7+ for double of 1S)
Two of a minor	8
Two of a major	9
Three of a suit	10
Four or higher of a suit	10

One Spade over One Heart Overcall Means Five+

Remember how a negative double promises 4 cards in the unbid majors? If partner opens 1C and RHO overcalls 1H, your double promises a 4-card spade suit. With a 5-card spade suit, you can bid 1S. Since you play negative doubles, partner will know you have five. Pretty cool, since if RHO had not overcalled, your 1S bid would only have promised a four-card suit.

Note: A major suit bid over a one-level diamond suit overcall still shows only a 4-card suit. So 1C-1D-1S only promises a 4-card suit because a double of 1D would show BOTH 4-card majors.

Alert?

Not so long ago a negative double was alertable – meaning that the bid was unusual enough that if you played that convention you had to alert the opponents that your partner’s double was not for penalty. Now that requirement no longer exists. Nowadays, if a tournament player doubles in the sequence 1C-1S-X, they have to alert the opponents if the double is anything *other* than negative. Marty Bergen calls the negative double the best new convention in modern bridge.

Quiz

- You hold ♠Qxxx ♥xx ♦Axx ♣Qxxx
Partner bids 1 diamond; RHO (right hand opponent) bids 1 heart. What do you bid? _____
- You hold ♠Axx ♥xx ♦QJxx ♣Qxxx
Partner bids 1 diamond; RHO bids 1 heart. What do you bid? _____
- You hold ♠AQxxx ♥x ♦Kxx ♣Qxxx
Partner opens 1 diamond; RHO bids 1 heart. What do you bid? _____
- You hold ♠AQxx ♥x ♦Kxxx ♣Qxxx
Partner opens 1 diamond; RHO bids 1 heart. What do you bid? _____
- You hold ♠Qxxx ♥Kxxx ♦xx ♣QJx
Partner opens 1 club; RHO overcalls 1 diamond. What do you bid? _____
- You hold ♠Qxxx ♥xx ♦Kxxx ♣QJx
Partner opens 1 club; RHO overcalls 1 diamond. What do you bid? _____
- You hold ♠AKxx ♥x ♦Axxx ♣KQxx
Partner opens 1 diamond; RHO overcalls 1 heart. What do you bid? _____
- You hold ♠xx ♥Kxxx ♦Kxxx ♣QJx
Partner opens 1 club; RHO overcalls 1 spade. What do you bid? _____
- You hold ♠xx ♥Kxxx ♦Kxxx ♣QJx
Partner opens 1 club; RHO overcalls 1 heart. What do you bid? _____
- You hold ♠xx ♥KQxx ♦Kxxx ♣QJx
Partner opens 1 club; RHO overcalls 2 spades. What do you bid? _____

Answers: 1. X 2. 2D 3. 1S 4. X 5. X 6. 1S 7. X 8. X 9. 1NT or Pass 10. X

Lesson 12: Finesses



What is a finesse? A finesse is an attempt to win a trick with a card that is lower than the opponents' highest card. You are hoping for a favorable lie of the missing card. Normally, you lead a small card toward the higher card.

Here are some simple sequences:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
A	K	Q	K	A	A	K	K
Q	x	x	Q	x	J	J	T
x	x	x	J	x	10	x	9
x	x	A	x	Q	x	x	x
x	x	x	x	J	x	x	x
x	x	x	x	T	x	x	x

1. The first example is easy. Lead a small card toward the AQ, and if LHO doesn't play the king, "**finesse**", or "**hook**" the queen. What are the chances it will win? 50%.
2. On the second, play toward the Kx. If LHO doesn't play the ace (which should not be played even if held), play the king. Again, you have a 50% chance of winning the trick.
3. On the third, cash the ace – then you have the same play as the second example except the king is the card you are finessing, not the ace. *Note that if you play the queen toward the ace, you have almost no chance of a second trick, as a competent defender will cover with the king if he has it.*
4. On the fourth to try for 2 tricks in the suit, play toward the KQx. If your king wins, get back to your hand and lead toward the Qx.
5. For the fifth example, you hope LHO has the king. Play, or "**run**" the queen. If LHO plays a small card, you do, too.
6. On the sixth example, play a small card toward the AJT. If LHO plays a small card, play the ten. If it wins, LHO did not split his honors (KQ). He will still get one trick, but you will get 2. If the ten does not win, get back to your hand and lead toward the AJ. You have a 75% chance of winning this finesse. The only time it does not work is when the KQ are both on right.
7. The play on the seventh is similar – start with small to the jack. If that loses to the queen, then try small to the king. Only if RHO has both the ace and queen will you lose all three tricks.
8. What about the eighth example. Well, the odds of LHO having either the queen or jack are 75%, while the odds of him having the ace are only 50%. Therefore, your best play for one trick is small to the nine, then small to the ten (assuming LHO plays low both times.)

On occasion, you will have high cards in both hands, such as AQxx opposite Jxxx. When should you lead a high card to start your finesse? Only when it will benefit you if the card is covered. In this case, starting with the jack will cost you a trick if LHO has Kx because the 10 would eventually set up.

Why Finesse?

It's just a matter of math. Even though the odds of the card being where you want it to be is usually about 50-50, the odds of the hand you are finessing having the card are greater than the odds of the other hand having the card as a singleton. Our goal is always to take as many tricks as we can, regardless of the contract.

Eight Ever, Nine Never

This is a phrase which describes whether you should **finesse for a queen**. With eight cards between the hands, including the AKJ, the odds favor the finesse. With nine, the odds favor "playing for the drop." Says who? **Eddie Kantar**, one of the all-time greats. He (and many others before him) figured out how often cards will be divided between two hands. I have attached information on the odds for your convenience. This information is your friend. Note that the odds of an even number of cards splitting evenly is significantly under 50%, while the odds of an odd number of cards splitting favorably is significantly over 50%.

The odds of a simple finesse working are 50%. With AKJT_x opposite xxx, cash the ace (just in case the queen is singleton), then play toward the KJT_x, intending to finesse if LHO doesn't play the queen. Missing five cards, and assuming a 3-2 split, the odds of the player with only two cards having the queen is significantly under 50%. This also wins if LHO has Qxxx.

Two-Way Finesses

Sometimes, you will have a two-way finesse.

A	A
J	J
T	x
K	K
x	T
x	x

Note that if you guess correctly, you can finesse the queen no matter which opponent has it. How do you guess which player has it? One of my favorite partners always assumes in these situations that the queen lies over the jack and plays accordingly. How often is he right? About 50% of the time.

Two Finesses

The subject of probability is more often a case of logical thinking than an exercise in mathematics. Do you have a logical mind? Assuming that any finesse is a 50-percent chance, what is the chance that at least two out of three finesses will work?

Answer:
The outcome of three finesses can be thought of as two distinct cases: (1) More of the finesses win or (2) more of the finesses lose. Logically, either case must be equally likely, so it is 50 percent.

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Playing the Odds

When you're declaring a bridge hand, it's beneficial to know some simple odds about the chances for favorable suit breaks and finesses. This knowledge will help you estimate the potential number of tricks you can take in a specific suit combination.

Knowing the odds will also help you decide which overall line of play you should take to make your contract. For example, if you have to choose between playing for a 7-card side suit to break 3-3 or taking a successful finesse, you'll know that the finesse is a better bet (50%) than the suit break (36%).

Odds of suit breaks:

In general: An **ODD** number of missing cards will tend to break **evenly** -- if you are missing 5 cards in a suit, they will divide 3-2 more often than 4-1. An **EVEN** number of missing cards will tend to break **UNEVENLY** -- if you are missing 6 cards in a suit, they will divide 4-2 more often than 3-3.

If you have a combined fit of 7 cards in a suit (your opponents have 6):

3-3 break = 36%
4-2 = 48%
5-1 = 15%
6-0 = 1%

You have 8, they have 5:

3-2 = 68%
4-1 = 28%
5-0 = 4%

You have 9, they have 4:

2-2 = 40%
3-1 = 50%
4-0 = 10%

You have 10, they have 3:

2-1 = 78%
3-0 = 22%

Finding honors:

Your expected percentage of success when you need:

One finesse = 50%
One of two finesses = 75%
Two of two finesses = 25%
At least two of three finesses = 50%

The presence of spot cards (10's and 9's) will often increase your odds of finding or dropping honors:

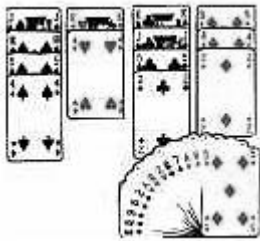
AKQ10 opposite **xxx** = 61% chance of 3 tricks (because when the suit breaks 4-2 or 5-1, the jack may drop singleton or doubleton).

AJ98 opposite **xxx** = 38% chance of 3 tricks (finesse the 9 first, which wins when K10, Q10 or KQ10 are onside).

Cards Missing	Break	%
2	1-1	52.0
	2-0	48.0
3	2-1	78.0
	3-0	22.0
4	3-1	49.7
	2-2	40.7
	4-0	9.6
5	3-2	67.8
	4-1	28.3
	5-0	3.9
6	4-2	48.5
	3-3	35.5
	5-1	14.5
	6-0	1.5
7	4-3	62.2
	5-2	30.5
	6-1	6.8
	7-0	0.5
8	5-3	47.1
	4-4	32.7
	6-2	17.1
	7-1	2.9
	8-0	0.2

From <http://www.prairienet.org/bridge/odds.htm>

Lesson 13: Play of the Hand at No-trump

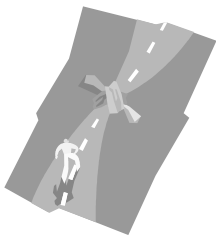


What is the first rule for playing any hand of bridge? **THINK BEFORE YOU PLAY!** Take a moment (or two, or three) to plan your play. Here are a few more guidelines:

Count your tricks. Count your winners, then try to come up with the safest way to develop any additional tricks. For instance, in 3NT, you have:

♠	♥	♦	♣
K	Q	J	K
8	J	T	x
6	x	9	
		X	
		x	
♠	♥	♦	♣
A	A	K	A
5	x	x	Q
		x	x
		x	x
		x	

The four of spades is led. Okay, make your plan. You have five club tricks, two spades, and a heart – that makes eight. If East has the diamond queen, you might end up taking twelve tricks. However, if you play the jack toward the king in hopes that the queen is to your right (double finesse) and it loses, you could end up losing five tricks if West also has the diamond ace to go along with his expected five spades. The safer play is to cross to dummy and play the queen of hearts toward the ace in hopes that the king is on your right (**finesse or hook**). Win or lose, you have your nine tricks.



Don't Block Your Suits

What does that mean? Have you ever had good tricks on the board, but you've been unable to get to them? You blocked the suit. In general, you want to play your high cards from the side that is short first to prevent blocking a suit. With the suit KQx opposite Axxxxx, you need to take the king and queen, and then cross to the ace to take the last three cards in the suit. This is especially important if one hand lacks entries. For instance, you have a suit QJT opposite Axxxxx, and there are no other entries to your long suit. When you play the queen, LHO covers with the king. If you take the ace, you have blocked the suit because your J and T cannot be overtaken by any other card on the board. It is best to allow the K to take the trick so you can overtake your T with the ace when you get back in the lead.

Proficiency in whist [a forerunner of bridge] implies capacity for success in all these more important undertakings where mind struggles with mind.

- Edgar Allan Poe

Preserving your Entries

This goes hand-in-hand with unblocking. You don't want to have good cards that you can't take because you can't get to them. Here's a simple example:

♠	♥	♦	♣
A	x	K	x
6	x	Q	x
5		J	x
		T	
		x	
♠	♥	♦	♣
K	A	x	A
7	K	x	x
4	Q	x	
2	x		

You are in 3NT and LHO leads the spade queen. Count your tricks. You have two spades, three hearts, and a club – six winners. You should be able to take four diamond tricks after you force out the ace. How do you plan the play? You'd better take the first spade before they find a club switch. Almost as important: you need to take it in your hand so that your spade ace will remain as an **entry** to your diamonds. If, instead, you take the spade ace and then start on diamonds, the player with the diamond ace will refuse to take the ace (**hold up**) for two rounds. Then you won't be able to take your good diamonds. Bummer.

Hold-up play

You just saw one on defense. It's used to prevent a person from being able to take winners because he can't get to them. Players on offense can use them, too. The **Rule of 7** is how you determine how many times you should **hold up** (not play) your ace if the opponents have found your soft spot. Count the number of cards you have in the suit between your hand and dummy, and subtract it from seven. So, with xx opposite Axx, you have five cards. Subtract 5 from 7, and the rule instructs you to hold up the ace twice. What does this do? It doesn't help you if the suit breaks 4-4, but if it is 5-3, holding up twice will prevent you from losing additional tricks in the suit if you can prevent the player with five cards from getting in. The person with only 3 cards in the suit will not be able to get back to partner.

Danger hand

That's the player with five cards in the suit you don't want led (from the previous example). It could also be the player you don't want to allow to be on lead because he can make a lead that will hurt you (such as leading through your Kxx).

No matter where I go, I can always make new friends at the bridge table.

- Martina Navratilova

Here's one last example hand:

♠	♥	♦	♣
7	A	A	K
6	x	x	J
	x	x	x
		x	x
♠	♥	♦	♣
A	K	K	A
9	Q	x	T
8	x	x	x
			x

LHO leads an ominous looking spade 4. Plan the play. First, count your winners. One spade, three hearts, two diamonds, and two clubs makes eight. You should be able to develop at least one more trick in clubs for your ninth. Okay, first, you want to hold-up the ace twice and then take the third spade lead.

West is the **danger hand** on this hand, because he has five spades (you know this because East took the first two tricks with the king and jack and then played the two, and West played the three on the second trick). If you lose a club trick, you want to lose it to East.

So, after you take the spade ace, play your club ace, then lead (finesse) toward the king-jack in hopes that the queen is on your left. If it loses, East has no more spades to lead to his partner.

1. Common Contracts

Most people are aware that 3 NT is the most common contract reached. What would you guess are the next five most common contracts? And what is the least common contract of all?

2. Least Likely Hand

Which of these bridge hands is the least likely to be dealt? (A) A-8-4 K-9-2 J-10-2 Q-8-7-4, (B) 13 cards in the same suit, (C) 13 black cards.

Answers
The most common contracts are, in order: 3 NT, 4S, 4H, 2S, 2H, 1NT. As the least common contract most people would guess one of the grand slams (say, 7C) but that is wrong. Think about it. When was the last time you played 5 NT?

(A) because it is one specific hand. Note that "13 cards in the same suit" comprises four specific hands, hence it is four times more likely, and "13 black cards" comprises millions of hands.

Lesson 14: Openings Leads Against No-trump



It's been stated by one of the world's best players that if an average player were able to make the perfect opening lead every time, he would be a world champion.

Terrence Reese, one of England's all-time greats, stated, "There are no blind leads – only deaf bridge players." Additionally, the defense gives away more tricks on the opening lead than at any other time of the hand.

Sounds pretty important? Yeah. Do good bridge players always make good leads? Of course not. Can you follow the guidelines and end up with bad results? Of course.

3NT tends to be a race. The declarer is trying to set up nine tricks before he loses five. Since his side has most of the high cards, the defense is trying to build tricks in declarer's weakest suit. What is his weakest suit? In general, these guidelines will serve you well.

You know one great thing about overcalls? They tell partners what to lead. If your partner has bid a suit, that's the suit to lead. Also, if he has doubled a bid to indicate a suit, that's the suit to lead. For instance, 1N-2D starts a Jacoby transfer sequence. The 2D bidder has hearts, not diamonds. If partner doubles 2D, he wants you to lead a diamond.

Unbid suits tend to make good leads. You should avoid opponents' suits promising five-cards (especially declarer's suit), unless you have a very strong holding in the suit.



If the opposition landed in 3NT without going through Stayman, that indicates that the dummy probably won't hold a four-card major. Declarer may, of course. If dummy bid Stayman and declarer has no four-card major (responds 2D to 2C), that would make leading a major a good choice.

The above guidelines only point out the possible suit of weakness for the opposition. Okay, look at your hand. If partner told you a suit to lead, that's the one to lead. With three or more cards to an honor (K, Q, J, or T), lead your lowest card. (If you gave partner a raise in the suit, lead your honor.) With the ace and any length, lead the ace. With three without an honor, some choose to lead small (showing count) and some choose to lead high (denying a higher card in the suit). Either works well, as long as your partner knows what you are doing. With two cards, lead your highest one. With one card, you should probably still lead it unless you have a dramatically better choice.

Okay, no clues from partner? Has an opponent strongly bid a suit? **AVOID THAT SUIT!** Now, look at your hand. Do you have a suit with three-card **sequence** of honors (AK with the Q or J, KQ with the J or T, QJ with the T or 9, JT with the 9 or 8)? If you do, lead the **top card of the sequence**. You almost never end up giving away a trick with this lead, and if partner has an honor, you've probably set up some tricks for your side. When you have K J 10 x you should lead the J, the **top of an interior sequence**.

No clues from partner, and no sequence? In general, the guideline "**fourth from your longest and strongest**" is a valid lead. With the suit AT843, lead the 4. With any luck, partner will have an honor in the suit.

With a lot of luck, partner will have KQx in the suit and you will run off the first five tricks.

Weak Hand Leads

If the bulk of the defensive points are held by your partner, you will not have enough entries to set up your own long suit. Therefore, you must guess which suit is your partner's suit and lead it. At no trump contracts, the first to the goal wins. You don't have time to see the dummy before making a defensive lead. Your short suit is most likely your partner's long suit because the declarer and his partner have not made any long suit bids. Prefer majors over minors because a dummy with a four card major will usually bid Stayman.

Points Evenly Divided

When the defensive points are evenly divided between you and your partner, you must make a lead that does not give anything away. In this case, the key to the declarer's success may be a finesse.

If you **underlead** a queen or four to a jack, you may give declarer his contract. If you lead to your partner, you may send his queen or king to the declarer's **tenace**. Give the declarer a trick that he will always get by making a "top of nothing" lead in a three or four card suit.

If you have only one four-card suit and the opponents have strongly bid that suit, you want to look for another suit to lead. Still, you have to lead something. If you must lead a suit that the opponents bid, lead a suit that you think the dummy has, not the declarer. I'm going to leave you with "the rule of thumb." Lead whatever card your thumb is resting on. GOOD LUCK!

1. Four Aces

What are the odds against being dealt all four aces? (A) 4 to 1, (B) 64 to 1, (C) 256 to 1, (D) 378 to 1.

2. Most Likely HCP

It should not be surprising that a hand with exactly 10 HCP is the most likely to be dealt. What is the second most likely? (A) 9 HCP, (B) 11 HCP, (C) 9 or 11 HCP is equally likely.

Answers
1. D). The probability of one player being dealt all four aces is calculated as: $13/52 \times 12/51 \times 11/50 \times 10/49 = 11/4165$, so the probability of not getting four aces is $4154/4165$. Hence, the odds would be 4154 to 11 against, or approximately 378 to 1.
2. A). The probability percentages are: 9 HCP = 9.3562, 10 HCP = 9.4051, and 11 HCP = 8.9447.

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Lesson 15: Play of the Hand in Suit Contracts



What is the first rule for playing any hand of bridge? **THINK BEFORE YOU PLAY!** The play in a suit contract is significantly different than in no-trump. There are more ways to win tricks, but also more ways to lose them. Here are some things you should think about.

Remember that you have two hands

You should **count the number of losers** in each to determine which hand to make the **master hand**.

Here's an example:

♠	♥	♦	♣
K	T	A	6
Q	7	K	
T		8	
9		7	
		3	
		2	
♠	♥	♦	♣
A	A	6	A
J	Q	4	T
3	8		8
2	4		

The opponents lead the club king against your 6S contract. You have five losers in hearts and clubs in your hand—three hearts and two clubs. If you try to establish your hand you'd start by **ruffing** a club, hope the heart finesse works, and then ruff some more clubs and hearts. Unfortunately, you are short on **entries**, and midway through the hand, you would get stuck on the board. You also have losers on the board (one heart and four diamonds), so it's a much better plan to try to establish the dummy. If diamonds break 3-2 (a 68% chance), you can take the ace and king of diamonds, ruff a diamond with the jack, pull trump, cash the diamonds, and then take the heart finesse (if trumps break 3-2) for a chance to make seven.

Sometimes you want to pull trumps

Pull trumps first if you have strong side suit. You should also pull trumps if one of the opponents makes a lead that indicates that he or she is looking for a return of the suit from partner for a ruff. You should always ask yourself what bad things could happen if you don't pull trump. There's no worse feeling that watching the opponents ruff a few of your good tricks as you follow suit helplessly.

Sometimes, you want to delay drawing trump

Maybe you have a side suit that you need to **set up** before you pull trumps, as in the example given above. (In the above example, you will not be able to set up the diamond suit if you pull trumps first, especially if you get a 4-1 break in trumps.) Sometimes you have **losers** you want to ruff. Sometimes your trump suit is so poor that if you start to pull trump, the opponents will finish pulling them for you.

Here's another example of setting up a side suit before you pull trumps:

♠	♥	♦	♣
Q	T	K	8
3	6	7	6
	5		3
	4		2
	2		
♠	♥	♦	♣
A	J	A	Q
K	8	Q	
J		6	
T		5	
7		4	

The opponents lead a club to the ace and return a club against your 4S contract. If diamonds break 3-3, you should be able to take five spades and five diamonds. That's about a 36% shot. Better to cross to the diamond king, return to hand with a diamond, and ruff a third diamond with the spade queen. This line increases your chances to about 84% (diamonds being no worse than 4-2). What if diamonds are 5-1, and they ruff one of your diamond winners? You weren't going to make the hand anyway because you would lose two diamonds in the end. You may have learned by now that ruffing tricks in the hand with the long trumps doesn't get you any extra tricks. What you usually want to do is ruff tricks in the short hand before pulling trumps.

The Dummy Reversal

The only time you will establish an extra trick by ruffing in the long hand is with a **dummy reversal**. Here's an example, courtesy of William S. Root in *How to Play a Bridge Hand*.



♠	♥	♦	♣
K	K	Q	9
J	J	7	8
T		4	5
		3	2
♠	♥	♦	♣
A	A	A	7
Q	Q	8	
9	T		
8	9		
7	5		


As people develop and grow they search out challenges suitable to their current situation. Some never outgrow video games, but those who seek the highest level of mental stimulation move on to activities such as bridge.

- Mike Lawrence

They lead the club king against your 6S contract. Time for a plan. You have two losers in your hand (one in each minor) and no place to park them. In dummy, you have four club and three diamond losers. If you can ruff three clubs in your hand, you can throw your diamond losers on the good hearts and make the hand.

The Cross-Ruff

Okay, now for a **cross-ruff**. One very important part of playing a cross-ruff is to take your side suit winners before you start your ruffs. Here’s an example, again courtesy of William S. Root in *How to Play a Bridge Hand*:



♠	♥	♦	♣
K	A	4	A
J	K		6
T	7		5
7	3		2
♠	♥	♦	♣
A	5	A	8
Q	4	Q	
9	2	7	
8		6	
		3	

West leads the club queen against your 6S contract. Time for a plan. When you are planning a cross-ruff, count your side-suit winners first. That will tell you how many trump tricks you need to take. With only four side suit winners, you need to take eight trump tricks. Best play is to cash the ace and king of hearts and the ace of clubs, cross to the diamond ace, then start ruffing diamonds and clubs. At trick twelve, dummy will have two small hearts and you will have the spade ace and one low heart.

What if they lead a trump? Then you only have seven possible tricks from the trump suit. Best to cash your hearts, the club ace, and lead towards your diamond queen for the finesse. If it works, you have your twelfth trick. If it doesn’t work, then their trump lead worked.

Don’t forget everything you learned in Lesson 13. The concepts of the **danger-hand**, conserving **your entries**, and even the **hold-up play** all still apply in suit contracts. In the hand above if you start your cross-ruff by ruffing a club instead of a diamond, you will get stuck on the board. If you are going to make a plan, make a plan – not half a plan!

Many games provide fun, but bridge grips you. It exercises your mind. Your mind can rust, you know, but bridge prevents the rust from forming.
- Omar Sharif

Lesson 16: Openings Leads Against Suit Contracts



Playing a suit contract is significantly different than playing a no-trump contract. If the defenders happen to hit declarer's weak suit, he'll be able to trump in at some point. Fortunately, what's good for the declarer is good for the opposition. Therefore, leading a non-trump singleton or the top of a doubleton (if you have control of the trump suit) is a popular lead. Against a 4H contract, (auction 1H-P-3H-P-4H) holding ♠J9x ♥Axx ♦86 ♣Qxxxx, the lead of the diamond eight would not be a bad lead. Against a similarly bid 4S contract, it probably would be, as it could help declarer set up the diamond suit and almost certainly wouldn't lead to a ruff because you do not have control (a quick trick) in the trump suit.

You must listen to the auction to make consistently good leads. In the absence of shortness in a side suit, you want to lead partner's bid suit.

Sequence

Do you have a suit with a good honor sequence (AKQ, AKJ, AKx, KQJ, KQT, QJT, QJ9, JT9, JT8)? You very rarely give any tricks away by leading from the top of an honor sequence.

Long in Trumps

Do you have four trumps in your hand? If you do, and you have a long suit, you may be able to force declarer to ruff your long suit with his trump. If he only started with five, you now have as many as he does. The same thing goes if you have zero or one trump--your partner may have four or five. For instance, against the same 1H-P-3H-P-4H bidding, with ♠x ♥Qxxx ♦Qxx ♣KQTxx, lead your club king instead of your singleton spade. When you are long in trumps, lead your long suit, not your short suit.

Two or Three Trumps

If you have only 2 or 3 trumps, trumps are splitting well for declarer. Your choices are to lead a trump or a side suit. Unless you have a holding in the trump suit that will probably give away a trick if you lead it (Kx, Qx, Qxx, Jx, Jxx), a trump lead is probably your best bet, especially if the bidding indicates that declarer has a suit he wants to ruff in dummy before he pulls all of the trump. For instance, against the bidding 1H-P-2C-2D-3H-4H, if your hand is ♠Kxxx ♥xxx ♦KJxx ♣xx, you expect to take a couple of diamond tricks if you can get rid of dummy's trump. Starting with a trump lead will help.

No Clear Lead

Okay, no clues from the bidding or from partner, no shortness in side suits, no good sequences, and you are holding Kx in the trump suit. Sounds like you are leading a side suit. You always prefer an **unbid suit** to one that the opponents have bid. If they've bid them all, you would prefer **one of dummy's suits** to one of declarer's suits. Lead **through strength**, not up to strength. **You never want to lead away from an ace in a suit contract.** (Don't lead the 4 from a AT74 suit.) Imagine the declarer with the singleton King—ouch! **Leading away from a king** is what you prefer because you set up a trick if partner has the ace or queen. If you don't have a side king, then look for a queen.

It's generally bad to lead away from a jack, although, sometimes you don't have any better options. If you can't lead trump and have no side suits without aces or with other honors, you still have to make a lead.

Three Small Cards

If you have the 852 in the suit you pick, some people lead the 2. The good news is that partner will know you didn't start with a doubleton – the bad news is that he'll expect you to have an honor. If you lead the 8, partner won't expect you to have an honor in the suit, but he might play you to have a doubleton – OOPS! Some people play a convention called **MUD**, for Middle-Up-Down. They would lead the five, then play the eight, then the two. You won't make this lead often, but you should talk to your partner about what you will do with three small if that is to be your lead.



Suit Leads in Summary

You usually want to make a "safe" opening lead that will set up tricks for your side without giving declarer extra tricks. Your choices:

- A singleton if you have a quick trick in trump (hoping partner can lead the suit back for you to trump).
- A suit partner has bid. (Lead top of a doubleton, low from 3, top if you supported the suit or if suit is headed by the ace.)
- A suit that offers a good attacking combination: two or more touching honors (**KQ10x**, **QJ10**, **AKxx**, **J109**) or the top of an interior sequence (**KJ109**)
- Your longest suit. Lead fourth best if you don't have touching honors.
- A suit the opponents have not bid.
- If there are no unbid suits, choose a suit that dummy has bid.
- Lead trumps if you have no other safe lead OR if declarer has shown a two-suited hand OR if responder has supported declarer's second suit. This may prevent declarer from using dummy's trumps separately.

When leading to a suit contract, AVOID

- Leading an unsupported ace if you have another safe lead.
- Underleading an ace (don't lead a small card from a suit headed by the ace).
- Underleading broken honor combinations (**KJxx**, **Q10x**) unless it's in partner's suit.
- Leading a non-trump suit declarer has bid.

Lesson 17: Third and Fourth Seat Openers



If you have ever filled out a convention card, you may have noticed that under Major Seat Openers there are boxes to be checked for minimum expected length of major-suit openers in 1st/2nd seat and 3rd/4th seats. Have you wondered why there could be a difference? Well, the theory behind opening in third and fourth seat is different because you know that your partner couldn't open the bidding.

Third Seat Light



Many bridge players use the 3rd seat as the place to open “light,” less than a full opening hand, but about **10 HCP**. This is done to protect the partner, who may have passed with 10 or 11 points. It makes things tougher for LHO, who may have a good hand and probably would much rather be able to open instead of overcall. Here are some things to think about if you decide that to open light in third seat.

1. Have a good reason. Normally, that reason will be a suit you want led. With ♠AKxx ♥Qx ♦Qxx ♣xxxx, you don't quite have a rule of 20 hand. Still, many people will open this hand in third seat, but NOT with 1C. Open 1S! You do NOT want partner to lead a club if the opponents win the contract.
2. Similarly, we've advised you to always open 1D with 4-4 in the minors and 1C with 3-3. In third seat open the **stronger minor** if they have equal lengths because that is the suit to **lead**.
3. Preempt aggressively, especially non-vulnerable. Here's a hand for you. In third seat you have ♠AKxxx ♥xx ♦Qxxx ♣xx. What's going on here? You have a nine-count and partner couldn't open. The opposition has at least half the high-card points in the deck. Some people will open this 2S. You've told your partner what to lead and made life significantly more difficult for LHO. If you decide to preempt a level higher than your suit length ordinarily would warrant, you should have a good suit.
4. If you have opened light, you are not entitled to take another bid. This is the signal to partner that you opened light. Therefore, opening one of a minor if you are light will not usually work. The best thing about opening light is that it has a mild preemptive effect on the opposition. Opening 1C or 1D probably won't slow them down much.

Partner's Response

The worst thing about opening light is that partner does not know if you are light or not. You could easily have a hand in third seat that you would have opened in first or second seat anyway. If you open 1S in third seat on ♠AKxx ♥Qx ♦Qxx ♣xxxx and partner holds ♠QJxx ♥Axx ♦xx ♣Axxx he will probably raise you to 3S, which is down at least 1.

Note: You may opt to use a convention called Drury or Reverse Drury. This bid gives your partner a chance to ask you if you opened light or not. See the Bonus Lessons (page 70) for a complete explanation.

Playing bridge reflects intelligence. It's one of the really great pleasures of life. Anybody who's missing bridge is missing so much in life.

- Malcolm Forbes

Opening in Fourth Seat



Fourth seat openers are relatively simple. The bidding has gone pass-pass-pass to you. If you choose to pass, your score will be a zero. That's not zero matchpoints. You will beat all of the pairs that had a negative score on the hand and lose to all of the pairs that scored a positive (either bid and made something or set the opposition). Therefore, if you choose to open, you should be relatively sure that you can **make 2S or any three-level contract**. If the points are evenly split, you can be certain that the opposition probably won't let you play a one-level contract. The method to use to determine if you should open is called **The Rule of 15**. It's a simple rule. Add your HCP and spades. If that adds up to 15 or higher, you should open (your normal opening). If it comes to less, you should pass and just take your zero. Why spades? They are the highest suit, and if you don't hold them, your opponents might. If they do, and they bid to 2S, you either need to be able to set them or make a three-level contract to avoid a non-negative score. Remember, you will have had a non-negative score just by passing.

Note: the Drury or Reverse Drury bid explained in the Bonus Lessons (page 70) is also often used for fourth seat openings.

Preempting in Fourth Seat

Usually preempts exist to make things tough on your opponents. In the fourth seat, your opponents have both passed. If you have your usual preemptive hand in fourth seat, you may just want to pass. Fourth seat preempts are made with better hands than in the other seats. Here's a hand for you: ♠AKJxxx ♥x ♦Axx ♣xxx. This is a good 1S opener, but in fourth seat you should open it 2S.

Partner will expect you to have a hand that looks like this. No sense in opening it 1S and letting the opponents find their heart fit. You'd much rather play 2S than 3S, and you don't want to defend 3H.

Similarly, with the hand ♠x ♥Kx ♦KQJxxxx ♣Axx in fourth seat if you open 1D the opposition will almost certainly find their major suit fit. If you open 3D, partner doesn't need to have much for you to make 3D, and you surely don't want to defend a major suit contract below the 3 level.

Three-Two Fit

Most players have had the bizarre experience of being declarer in a 3-2 trump fit, typically through a bidding mishap. What is the most tricks that could be won?

Answer
All 13! Say, declarer has: A-Q-J A-K-Q-5 4-3-2 4-3-2 and dummy has: K-2 4-3-2 A-K-Q-5 5. If both enemy hands are 4-3-2-5 (with four spades), declarer can win all the tricks, even after a trump lead.

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Lesson 18: Two-Suit Overcalls--Michaels and Unusual NT



We already know how to bid one suited hands when the opposition opens the bidding. We double if we have a huge hand, overcall if we have a good suit, and pass with a dog. With two-suited hands (at least 5-5), there are two popular bids that most players use.

Michaels Cue-Bid

The first is called a **Michaels** cue-bid. A direct-seat cue-bid of a one-level suit bid shows a two-suited hand with at least five cards in the unbid majors. So 1C-2C and 1D-2D show hands with both majors. 1H-2H shows a hand with spades and a minor, and 1S-2S shows a hand with hearts and a minor.

How many **points** does partner promise for his Michael's cue-bid? Some people play it as **either a preempt (weak) or good hand (16+)**. That way if you have that 12-15 point hand, you could simply overcall the higher ranking suit first and then the lower ranking suit.

Note: You will know whether partner has a weak or strong hand because if he's weak, he will pass whatever you bid. If he is strong, he will take another call or jump your request for his minor.

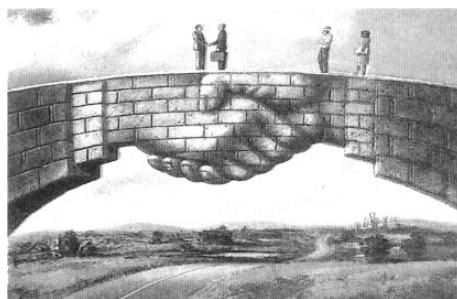
One of the best things about being two-suited is that chances are good that partner has a fit for one of your suits. Of course, you don't want to make silly bids when you are vulnerable. Save those for when your opponents are vulnerable and you aren't. If you are vulnerable, it would be nice to have two reasonably good suits to make a Michaels bid.

Answering Michaels

If your partner makes a Michaels cue-bid showing a major and an unspecified minor, bid 2NT to find out what the minor is. If you have a good fit for one of partner's suits with a good hand, you can jump to three of partner's major to make an invitational bid. Remember that he could have a dog of a hand for his Michael's bid, so you should have at least 10 HCP or appropriate shape to make an invitation. If you have a really good fit for partner, you could jump to four of his major. Let the opposition figure it out if it's to make or a **sacrifice**.

Rebids

For the Michael's bidder, your rebids are similar to what you would do if you had made a takeout-double. You need a big hand (16+ HCP or extreme distribution) to take another bid unless you are responding to partner if he bids 2NT asking for your minor or responding to an invitation by partner.



Bridge Hands
Illustration in an art book, Olbinski

Unusual No-Trump

Over a one-level suit bid, a direct-seat call of 2NT shows a hand that's at least 5-5 in the two **lowest unbid suits**. So 1H-2N and 1S-2N shows hands with both minors, 1C-2N shows a hand with the red suits, and 1D-2N shows a hand with the round suits (clubs and hearts). Again, this bid is usually defensive. It's tougher for partner of opener to show his hand over 1H-2N than it is over 1H-P.

Note: Some play Unusual NT with the same range as the Michaels-Cue—weak or strong, choosing to overcall the 2 suits when holding a hand in the 12-15 point range.

Answering Unusual NT

One advantage that Unusual NT has over Michaels is that both of partner's suits are known immediately. Bidding one of partner's suits at the three-level shows a minimum-type hand. It's rare that you will have an invitational bid because minor-suit games are at the five-level. Jumping to game in one of partner's suits is similar to jumping to game over one of partner's weak-two bids. You could be doing it expecting to make, or you could be doing it to preempt the opponents. Let them figure it out. If you make an Unusual NT bid, you should have at least 16+ HCP or extreme distribution to take another call if partner names one of your suits.

As mentioned above, some players won't make a Michaels or Unusual NT bid with between 12 and 15 HCP in their hand if partner is an unpassed hand. They will overcall in their higher ranking suit and then bid their lower ranking suit on their next bid. This makes it easier for partner to respond. Of course, the disadvantage is that you don't get to show a two-suited hand with your first bid, so you could miss some good contracts. For instance, red on white you hold ♠AQxxx ♥KJxxx ♦Ax ♣x, so you overcall 1D with 1S. LHO jumps to 3D which gets passed around to you. Do you dare take a 3H call at this point? It's risky.

Bidding Two Suits

Making a Michaels or Unusual NT bid isn't complicated. The responses really aren't difficult, either. Remember that shapely hands with good trump fits tend to play well, especially if both hands have some shortness.

Note: Even with these two bids, an overcaller can't immediately show a hand with spades and a minor.

How To Score +550

At duplicate bridge there are several ways to score +550. The common ways are to bid and make three notrump or five of a minor (doubled, nonvulnerable). How else can +550 be obtained?

The only other way is to defeat your nonvulnerable opponents 11 tricks! Did somebody forget to double?

Answer

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Lesson 19: Balancing



Balancing is bidding after you have assessed how many points your partner probably has. One balancing action is making a bid when the bidding ends if you don't. In general, allowing the opposition to play a contract at two hearts or lower doesn't tend to be good, especially where they have established a fit. Why? They will usually make it (-110 for you).

Even if they don't, your side possibly could make a contract and achieve a better score.

Here's some simple math: if the opposition has an eight-card fit, your side usually will, too. If they have 8 diamonds, then your side has 21 non-diamonds. Unless you have 3 seven-card fits (rare), you have at least one 8+ card fit. If they have a nine-card fit, your side has at least one 8+ card fit.

Balancing After You Have Opened

There are specific situations in which you may choose to balance, and they all have subtle nuances. One occurs after you have opened. You open, LHO overcalls, and the next two bidders pass. You open 1D with ♠AQxx ♥x ♦KQTxx ♣AQx, LHO overcalls 1H, pass, pass to you. What do you know about partner's hand? He doesn't have 4 spades or 5 spades with 6+ points because he would have doubled or bid 1S. (But he could have a hand with 4+ spades and less than 6 points.) He doesn't have a stop in hearts with 6-9 points because he would have bid 1NT. He doesn't have a long club suit with 11 or more points because he would have bid 2C. He doesn't have 4 or 5 diamonds, or he would have given you a raise. He could have a bunch of hearts and be waiting for you to reopen with a double. His hand could be ♠Jx ♥KJTxxx ♦J ♣Kxxx. Or he could have a hand with a long club suit with less than 11 points. His hand could be ♠Jx ♥JTxx ♦xx ♣KJxxxx. If you make a reopening double when it comes back around to you, your partner can pass with the first hand, or bid 2C with the second hand. You would even be willing to up the bid to 3C if the overcaller stuck in a 2H bid.

A world champion advises "If it's worth opening, it's worth reopening." In general, you should reopen when 1) your shape suggests that partner may have a penalty double or a suit he could not bid and 2) you can survive any obvious dangers. Here's another hand. You have ♠Kx ♥KTxx ♦xx ♣AQxxx. You open 1C, LHO bids 1H, pass, pass. What does partner have? He doesn't have 4 spades or 5 spades with 6+ points because he would have doubled or bid 1S. Wow, the opposition has more spades than hearts. It has to be good to allow them to play 1H. Rebidding 1NT would indicate 18 or 19 points because partner has passed, meaning he may not have 6+ points.

What bad things can happen if we choose to balance? We could allow them to find a better spot (spades, in the prior example). We could allow them to bid up to a makeable game. Or we could step in it and get doubled. Fortunately, if they've found a fit it's more unlikely that they can penalize us. More often, they'll just bid one level higher. You'd much rather defend 3H than 2H.

Bridge presents all the challenges we know of. It is a human game, yet it is an intellectual game. If I sit down to play, I am likely to run into some sort of situation that I've never seen before.

- Edgar Kaplan

Balancing in Fourth Seat

Another balancing situation occurs when LHO opens and the next two bidders pass. What kind of hand does partner have? Well, he didn't make a takeout double, and he didn't make an overcall. Could partner be broke? If he is, then opener should have a huge hand because his partner couldn't cough up a bid. To protect partner, we “**borrow a king**” from him to evaluate our balancing bid. Here are your choices:

- Bid a 5+ card suit with 8-13 points (sometimes a GOOD 4-card suit).
- Jump in a new suit with 13-16 points (6-card suit). This is NOT a preempt.
- Bid 1NT with 11-14 points and stoppers or moderate length in opener's suit. If you have 15-17 points, you must double first. Discuss with your partner if Stayman and transfers will be on or off with a balancing 1NT bid.
- Make a takeout double with 10+ points and shortness in opponent's suit. If you have more than 14 points, you can bid 1NT or your own suit after your partner makes a call.
- Bid 2 of opener's suit to show a Michaels bid OR strong takeout. You and your partner should discuss this.
- Bid 2NT to show unusual NT OR strong 20-21 point hand. You and your partner should discuss this.

Balancing When Opponents Find Fit at 2-Level

The third time that we find ourselves in the balancing seat is when the opponents have found a fit but have stopped at the two level. RHO opens 1H, you pass, LHO raises to 2H which gets passed around to you. Your hand is ♠Qxxxx ♥Kx ♦Qxxx ♣xx. What's going on? How many points does your partner have? He should have close to an opening hand. Why else would the opposition be stopping at the two level? Your hand, which isn't strong enough to overcall 1S, is perfect for a 2S balance. Here's another hand: ♠KJx ♥Qxxxxx ♦xx ♣xx. RHO opens 1C, LHO raises to 2C which gets passed around to you. Partner must have stuff on this hand, and they have found a fit. Stick in a 2H bid. Same bidding, and your hand is ♠Jxxx ♥KJxx ♦Jxxx ♣x. Your hand wasn't strong enough to make a takeout double in the direct seat, but it's perfect for the balancing seat. Partner knows that you don't have enough strength for a direct seat double (or you would have made one).

Don't Punish Your Balancing Partner

One last thing. Don't assume that your partner has a great hand for his balancing call. He may be borrowing one of your kings to come up with his bid. Don't hang him for it by jumping to game. Balancing bids require that your partner knows the bid is designed to either steal the contract or force the opponents up one more level where you can set them.

It's not enough to win the tricks that belong to you. Try also for some that belong to the opponents. —Alfred Sheinwold

Lesson 20: Signaling Your Partner—Defensive Carding



About every other hand, you will end up playing defense. Defense is fun if you and your partner have worked out a way to communicate when defending a hand.

Defending with a Sequence

There are a few basic ways to communicate with partner. The first is knowing which card to play when you have a sequence. When you are on lead, lead the top of touching honors; however, **when playing to a trick play the lowest of touching honors**. This can be vitally important. If you are following third hand and hold the queen and jack, playing the queen will tell partner that you definitely do not hold the jack. If you play the jack, you may or may not have the queen. Why is this important? Well, if you hold ATxxx and the board has xx against 3NT, and declarer captures partner's queen with his king, you know declarer has the jack. Of course, declarer should play the higher of touching honors to confuse the issue for you. Similarly, if you have the opportunity to win a defensive trick with either the ace or king, play the king. It's an important principle – we like helping partner when we can.

Returning Partner's Suit

Another signal can be made when leading partner's suit back to him. In a NT contract, partner led the heart 4. You won the trick with the ace. Of course you are going to continue the suit. Which card do you play back? Well, if you started with four of the suit you now have three left, so you lead low. If you started with three, you now have two left, so lead high. Of course, if you only had two, you lead the only one you have left. You also need to be careful not to block the suit. If you're holding is AJT6, lead the J (higher of touching honors).

Trump Echo

Another signal is called a trump echo. If you expect that you will be able to obtain a ruff, with three trump play high-low to indicate having an extra trump. With only two play low-high.

Signaling by Following Suit

Were those complicated? Well, these signals can be. There are three basic types of suit-following signals: 1) attitude, 2) count, and 3) suit preference.

Attitude

Partner leads the ace of a non-trump suit. He will usually have the king unless he has a doubleton. Of course, if you have the king or queen, you want partner to continue the suit. Play the **highest card you can afford** – anything above a six will usually get the message across. This is an **attitude signal**.

Count

In a suit contract, if you don't have the king or queen, tell him how many cards you have in the suit. A **high card** indicates an **even number**, and a **low card** indicates an **odd number**. If your partner leads A from AK, and you place a high card on the table, he does not know if you are signaling a doubleton or the queen. It doesn't matter. He should continue the suit. If you are dealt a singleton it's helpful if it's the eight and not the two. Partners have a tough time working out 3-2 doubletons, too.

Suit Preference

What if partner leads the ace and the board hits with a singleton, or with QJTxxx? Partner probably doesn't care how many you have or whether you like the suit. He wants to know what to lead next. Here you use a **suit-preference signal** – a **low card** indicates you want the **lower suit**, and a **high card** indicates you want the **higher suit**.

Discards

You can signal with your discards, too. A discard is a card you play when you are out of the suit being led. Using standard discards, a low card means you don't like the suit you are discarding, and a high card (or high followed by low) indicates you like the suit you are discarding. For instance, you are defending a 4S contract with ♠x ♥KQJ2 ♦8762 ♣7653. If declarer needs to draw three rounds of trump, discard your diamond 2 and club 3. Don't waste your heart jack. Partner will be able to figure out that if you do not like diamonds or clubs, you must like hearts.

A word about discards. There are all kinds of discarding systems. In odd-even, an odd card indicates you like the suit, a low even card indicates you want the lower suit, and a high even card indicates you want the higher suit. Some people play upside down signals, where a low card would indicate you like the suit. There's also Lavinthal discards and Colorful discards. What should you play? They all have advantages, so play whatever you and your partner like.

Is all of this complicated? You bet. There have been numerous books written on the subject. Two are *How to Defend a Bridge Hand* by Bill Root and *Killing Defense* by Hugh Kelsey. Playing good defense requires trusting your partner, so it's good to talk to your partner about defense strategies before you sit down to play.



Bonus Lessons

The lessons on the next few pages are designed for you to read on your own to improve your game. They are divided into two categories: Non-alertable Bids and Alertable Bids. No attempt has been made here to present these bids in great detail. However, these are bids that will be used by your opponents, and you will want to add them to your game eventually.

We encourage you to continue to study bridge by reading more information and learning from other players. We also hope to see you on Sunday afternoons at 1:30 and Tuesday evenings at 6:30. At those games you will meet more new players who are continuing to learn more about the bidding and play of this game. We begin with a 30-minute lesson or practice hand followed by discussion. The game consists of 20-21 boards in about 3 hours.

Non-Alertable Bids

Non-alertable bids should be learned first because they are standard and do not require that you change the meaning of any of the bids you have learned so far.

Cue Bids

A cue bid is a bid of a suit that you have no desire to set as trumps (usually the opponent's suit). Here are some of its most common uses:

1. To show a **limit raise in partner's opening suit** in competition

Partner opens in a major suit. Opponent overcalls.

1S-2C-3C

This must be an immediate cue bid and shows a limit raise or better (10+ points and 3+ Spades)

1H-1S-2S

This must be an immediate cue bid and shows a limit raise or better (10+ points and 3+ Hearts)

Partner opens in a minor suit. Opponent overcalls.

1C-1S-2S

This must be an immediate cue bid and shows limit raise or better (10+ points and 5+ Clubs, sometimes with 4 very good Clubs)

1D-2C-3C

This must be an immediate cue bid and shows limit raise or better (10+ points and 5+ Diamonds, sometimes with 4 very good Diamonds)

2. To show a **limit+ raise to partner's overcall**

1H-1S-Pass-2H

This must be an immediate cue bid and shows limit raise or better (10+ points and 3+ Spades)

1H-2D-Pass-2H

This must be an immediate cue bid and shows limit raise or better (10+ points and 3+ Diamonds)

1C-1H-1S-2C or 2S

Cue bid of most-convenient opponent's suit shows limit raise or better (10+ points and 3-card support)

Cue bid of least-convenient opponent's suit shows limit raise or better (10+ points and 4+ cards)

3. Opponents have bid only one suit, **Cue bid asks for stopper** (Western Cue Bid)

1H-1S-2C-Pass-3C-Pass-3S

This is asking partner to bid 3NT with a spade stopper (at least Kx or Qxx)

4. Cue bids are also used to **show controls (aces and kings) in the bid suits**, usually used to probe for slam. Holding say ♠AKxxxx/♥AKxx/♦xx/♣A, opener starts 1S and partner offers a limit raise to 3S. There are clearly excellent chances for slam, but it would be dangerous to launch Blackwood holding a small doubleton diamond. Opener should bid 4C a cuebid, hoping that partner can show a diamond control. If he cannot, opener should be content with game. Responder might have either ♠QJxx/♥QJx/♦Qx/♣KQJx (no slam) or ♠QJxx/♥QJxx/♦AKx/♣xx (grand slam).

NO ALERT REQUIRED ON ANY CUEBIDS

Redouble

There are a number of places in the auction where a redouble may be used, but the most common use is after a takeout double. In standard bidding, a redouble after a takeout double simply means that you have 10+ points. It strongly

suggests that you are willing to defend a contract played by the opponents, and that you don't think they can make anything because you and your partner have the majority of the points. After a redouble the partner of the takeout doubler should show his best suit, even though he is marked for very few points. The redouble does not tell partner if you have his suit or not, but generally the opener will pass around to the redoubler to give redoubler a chance to bid or double the bid made by opponents. (See Jordan in Alertable Bonus Bids.)

Interference Over NT (Standard)

There are conventions to handle the opponent's interference after your partner has opened 1 NT; however, learn the standard way of handling it first. When you are ready to branch out to a convention, try Lebensohl, which is just a slight extension of Standard.

1NT (2C, 2D, 2H or 2S)-Double—Penalty

1NT (2C, 2D, 2H or 2S)-2D, 2H, 2S (Any 2-level suit bid you can make) To play. Remember that transfers are off over interference. (Many play that transfers are on over 2C or double.)

1NT (2C, 2D, or 2H)-3D, 3H, or 3S

Natural and gameforcing. Shows a 5+ suit and 10+ points. Sometimes requires that you jump to that level; other times not, but still shows same strength.

1NT (2C, 2D, 2H or 2S)-3C, 3D, 3H or 3S

The cue bid is gameforcing Stayman. You indicate 4 of the unbid major(s). Opener will rebid 3NT without a holding of 4 or more of the major you are asking for.

1NT (2C, 2D, 2H or 2S)-3NT

Natural and gameforcing--no 4-card major (at least not the one not bid).

1NT (2C, 2D, 2H or 2S)-2NT

Natural and invitational (rarely used because a double is usually better).

NO ALERT REQUIRED

Reverse

If partner bypasses a suit he could have shown at the one-level, you should always assume (at least temporarily) that he does not have 4-card length in that suit. For example:

You open 1D with ♠94 ♥KQ103 ♦AJ764 ♣K10, and partner responds 1S. With your minimum opening, it's pointless to bid 2H (a suit partner has denied for now), which could force the bidding to the 3-level. You should rebid 1NT with this hand to show your minimum point-count and keep the auction low. It's possible that partner has 5 spades and 4 hearts, but in that case, he'll bid 2H over your 1NT rebid.

When you have a stronger hand, though -- such as ♠4 ♥KQ103 ♦AKJ76 ♣A102 -- you can afford to take the bidding higher. To show extra strength, you can make a reverse, which is a bid of a suit partner has bypassed (in the above example, your rebid of 2H would be a reverse). Put another way, it's a bid that will force partner to bid at the 3-level if he prefers your first suit. Some typical reverse auctions are:

Opener Responder

1C 1H

2D

Opener Responder

1H 1NT

2S

Opener Responder

1D 1S

2H

A reverse promises:

- 1 - At least 17+ high-card pts.;
- 2 - At least 5-4 distribution in your two suits;
- 3 - Your first suit must be longer than your second suit;
- 4 - Your second suit must be higher in rank than your first suit; and
- 5 - Partner must have bypassed your second suit with his response.

Opener's one-level rebid (1C-1H-1S) is not a reverse. Your rebid is a reverse only if you must go to a higher level to show the suit (1C-1H-2S would be the equivalent of a reverse, showing a good hand with at least 5 clubs and at least 4 spades).

NO ALERT REQUIRED

Alertable Bids

The alertable bids presented here are bids that are becoming so widely used that you will find yourself wanting to add them to your game eventually. They will also be used by your opponents, so even if you don't use them, it would be good to know what they mean.

Cappalletti

Opponents open 1 or 2 NT. This convention is usually made in the direct seat though some partnerships use it in the balancing seat also. The Cappalletti (also known as Hamilton) convention is used to describe your hand to partner for the purpose of competing or play for a set.

Bidding Over Opponent's 1NT Opener With Proper Shape And Strength

17+ points with a balanced hand - only in direct seat or not a passed hand:

Double = Willing to play for a set. Partner may pass or bid a long suit to compete.

10 to 16 points - only in direct seat or not a passed hand:

2 Clubs = One-suited hand (6 or more).

2 Diamonds = 5-5 in the majors (rarely 5-4).

2 Hearts = 5 hearts and 5 in a minor (rarely 4). Partner may ask for your minor by bidding 2 NT.

2 Spades = 5 spades and 5 in a minor (rarely 4). Partner may ask for your minor by bidding 2 NT.

2 NT = 5-5 in the minors.

Advancer's Bids

The 2C bid asks advancer to bid 2D. The overcaller passes 2D if his suit is diamonds or corrects to the proper suit.

Advancer may ignore the 2C relay and pass 2C with a strong club suit, or he may bid two of a major with a good 5-card suit. He may also bid 2NT with 11-13 points and a balanced hand.

The 2D bid usually shows at least 5-4 in the majors and requests advancer to bid his better major. With poor major-suit support, advancer is allowed to pass 2D with a good diamond suit or bid 3C with a good club suit.

A 2NT response shows either a minor-suit hand asking advancer to bid 3C or 3D or a limit raise in one of the majors. In the latter case, advancer plans on rebidding 3H/3S after partner has bid a minor. As a result, an immediate response of 3H/3S to 2D is preemptive.

ALL BIDS AND RESPONSES REQUIRE ALERT

Drury

Drury is a handy gadget that lets you get away with opening 1S in third seat with hands like

♠K Q J 4 ♥K 8 5 ♦J 8 4 2 ♣7 6

Invented by Douglas Drury, the Drury convention is an effective way of gauging the strength of partner's third and fourth seat openers. When partner opens 1S or 1H in third or fourth seat, a 2C response shows 10-12 points with at least three trumps. With a hand that wouldn't accept an invitation, opener bids 2D, telling responder to sign off in 2S or 2H. With a normal opening bid, opener rebids his suit at the two-level. The natural 2C response is lost, but many players consider this a marginal sacrifice.

Reverse Drury

Many if not most players reverse the positive and negative meanings of opener's rebids in accordance with the principle of fast arrival. Using Reverse Drury, P-P-1H-P-2C-2H shows a hand that wouldn't accept an invitation, while P-P-1H-P-2C-2D shows a full opener.

Two-Way Drury

If the natural 2C response to partner's third or fourth seat major-suit opening can be sacrificed, why not put the 2D response to work as well? In this scheme, 2C shows a three-card limit raise, while 2D shows a four-card limit raise.

This variant can be very helpful, but it necessarily changes the structure of opener's rebids. A rebid of the opening suit shows a subminimum opener, while any other rebid shows a full opener.

ALL DRURY BIDS REQUIRE ALERT

Fourth-Suit Forcing

Everyone plays the fourth suit as forcing, but many people use the fourth suit as an artificial bid when they have no way to force partner to bid. After you have made three natural suit bids, you very rarely wish to play in the fourth, so bidding the fourth suit is given a conventional meaning. It asks partner to describe his hand further, helping the bidder to pick the correct contract. It also avoids some hands that seem to be 'impossible' to bid.

Suppose you had:

♠A9543 ♥532 ♦K7 ♣A106

After the bidding:

1D Pass 1S Pass

2C Pass ?

What do you bid? You want to make an encouraging bid, as you have 11 HCP and could be in game. However, you do not have enough clubs to bid 3C, enough diamonds for 3D, enough spades for 3S or a heart stopper for 2NT. You seem to have no natural bid.

The problem is solved by bidding 2H, the fourth suit. It shows 10+ HCP, denies an available natural bid, and asks opener to describe his hand further.

If he has a heart stop he bids 2NT or 3NT

With 3 spades, or a good doubleton, he bid 2S

With 5+ clubs and no heart stop he bids 3C

With 6 diamonds, or a good 5 with no alternative, he bids 3D

With 15 HCP and none of the above, he raises the Fourth Suit, a game-forcing bid

REQUIRES ALERT.

Note that some people play fourth suit forcing as a one round force and other players play it forcing to game, and would have to find another bid with the example hand.

Jacoby 2NT

To use this convention, your partnership agrees that after you open 1H or 1S and your partner is an unpassed hand, his jump to 2NT shows:

- Forcing-to-game strength (12+ points)
- Good trump support (4 or more cards)

The 2NT response forces you to at least game level. It is not a suggestion to play in notrump; it shows support and asks the 1H or 1S opener to further describe his hand.

Note that the Jacoby 2NT convention is "on" only if responder has not previously passed in the auction. If you are a passed hand, your jump to 2NT is natural, showing a balanced hand of 11-12 points.

Opener's Rebids

In addition to giving responder a direct way to show a forcing hand, the Jacoby 2NT improves the accuracy of your slam bidding. Its biggest advantage is that it gives opener room to further describe his hand. There are a number of different meanings you can assign to opener's rebids. Here's one of the most commonly used structures:

If you open 1 of a major and partner responds 2NT:

- Your first obligation is to bid 3 of a suit where you have a singleton or void.
- If you have a another semi-strong 5-card suit, show it by jumping to 4 of the suit.
- If you have extra values (but no singleton or void), describe your strength and pattern by rebidding 3NT with a fairly balanced hand,
- If you have a bare-minimum opener with no singleton or void, jump to 4 of your suit. This is your weakest rebid.

It shows a fairly balanced hand with no interest in slam.

REQUIRES ALERT

Jordan 2NT and Redouble

The meaning of a redouble was already discussed in the non-alertable bids section. However, most modern players have refined the meaning of suit bids and the redouble after an opponent doubles your partner's opening. The meanings and slight differences are listed below.

Recommended by Goren (30+ years ago)

Partner opens 1 of a suit, next person doubles

Choices for your call

Pass: Weak hand, no support for partner's suit

Raise partner's suit: Weak hand with 4-card support

Jump in partner's suit: Weak hand with 5-card support

Bid 1 of a suit: Forcing-unlimited

Bid 2 of a suit: Non-forcing 8-10 HCP

Bid 3 of a suit: 9-10 points self-sufficient suit (Encouraging, though not forcing)

Redouble: 11+ points may or may not show support for partner's suit

Most Modern Players

Partner opens 1 of a suit, next person doubles

Choices for your call

Pass: Weak hand, no support for partner's suit

Raise partner's suit: 6-9 points with 3+ card support

Jump in partner's suit: Weak hand with 4+ card support

Bid 1 of a suit: Forcing-unlimited

Bid 2 of a suit: Non-forcing 6-9 HCP

Bid 3 of a suit: Weak, pre-emptive (vulnerability favorable)

Redouble: 10+ points with no fit for partner's suit

2NT: 10+ points with 3 or 4 card support for partner's suit (**Jordan** convention)

JORDAN (2NT to show a fit for suit after a double) **REQUIRES ALERT**

New Minor Forcing

Here's a frequent bidding dilemma:

♠KQ854 ♥A82 ♦J5 ♣K72

Partner opens 1D; you respond 1S, and partner rebids 1NT. You know you want to bid game, but which game? If partner has three spades, a 4S contract rates to play better. If partner has only two spades, you'd rather play 3NT.

Many pairs solve this problem with a treatment called **New Minor Forcing**. This is a simple bidding agreement that specifies that after the first round of bidding, responder's rebid of 2 of the unbid ("new") minor is forcing for at least one round, and it may be artificial. It asks opener for more information about his hand, specifically the other major and his length in the suit responder has already bid.

Note that this bid deviates significantly from standard bidding, where a new suit over partner's rebid of 1NT is natural and completely non-forcing. When you add a convention, you often have to give up the natural meaning, and you have to decide if it's worth it.

New Minor Forcing is used only by responder, usually at his second turn to bid. You should have at least **invitational strength** (a good 10-11+ pts.) and some doubt about what the final contract should be. In most cases, you have a 5-card major and want to know whether or not partner has a fit. With the example hand above, clubs is the new minor, so after 1D-1S-1NT, you would rebid 2C to force. Your bid doesn't promise club length or even a stopper -- it only asks opener to bid again and tell you more about his hand.

Some players call this **Checkback Stayman** because it gives you a way to check back with partner about his major suit holding and/or support for your major.

Opener's priorities are in this order: (1) show an unbid four-card major (2) support partner's major with three of them (3) deny either (1) or (2) with the cheapest available bid (which will be 2D over a 2C query, or 2NT over a 2D query). *Some partnerships reverse the priority of 1 and 2 above.*

ALL NMF BIDS REQUIRE ALERT

2H to Show a Bust

Alternate response structure to a 2C opener

In standard, responder will respond 2D with almost all hands. If the opener bids a suit over a 2D response, responder must bid again. The standard response to show a bust (a hand with no ace, no king, and not more than one queen) is bidding the cheapest minor.

With a positive response, hands with at least 8 HCP and a five-card suit with two of the top three honors, responder will bid his suit - 2H, 2S, 3C, or 3D - instead of bidding 2D. Some players use a response structure that allows them to show a bust immediately by bidding 2H. The advantage of this system is that responder gets the hand off of his chest with a 2H bid. Getting to say "Partner, I have a bust - your next bid could be your last." immediately is a good thing. Of course, if 2H shows a bust then 2D promises a hand with some redeeming value (at least an ace, a king or two queens). With a positive response with hearts, responder will bid 2N. All three of these bids are alertable.

This response structure is cleverly referred to as "2H shows a bust." One bit of advice. If you are playing that 2H shows a bust, it's vitally important that your partner is also playing that 2H shows a bust - otherwise silly and unfortunate things will start happening.

REQUIRES ALERT

A knowledge of the mechanics will suffice to put a player in a commanding position in the post-mortem. To become a member of the upper crust calls for more, much more. Resilience, imagination, occasional flashes of inspiration, these are the hallmarks of quality. And this transcends the realm of science.

~Victor Mollo

Hand Patterns

There are 39 hand patterns, ranging from 4-3-3-3 to 13-0-0-0. (A) Which hand pattern is the most common? (B) Which is more likely, 4-3-3-3 or 5-4-3-1? (C) Which is more likely, 4-4-4-1 or 6-4-2-1?

Answer
(A) 4-4-3-2 is by far the most common. It occurs 21.56 percent of the time. (B) 5-4-3-1 occurs 12.93 percent of the time, and 4-3-3-3 only 10.54. (C) 6-4-2-1 occurs 4.70 percent of the time, and 4-4-4-1 only 2.99. Are you surprised?

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Afterword

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank some people.

First among them is Linda MacCleave. She spent countless hours transforming my writing into the book you hold in your hands, and her editing has saved you from an unknown number of my typos.

Next is Bob MacCleave. He's put more hours into Friendly Bridge than just about anyone, a lot of them behind the scenes. Without him, Friendly Bridge may have gone into the vapor many years ago.

Third are the Richmond Bridge Association and the Bridge Center. Without their financial support, there may have never been a Friendly Bridge class in Richmond - and I would have missed out the most satisfying experience in my bridge career.

Fourth are all of the experienced players who agreed to take a fledgling partner under their wing fifteen years ago when I was just starting to play this great game. Jim Goodwin, Jim Poulson, Ann Rae Gershman, Abe Linder, John Kloke, Patsy Williams, Lynn Wolf, Jeff Selbst, and Mike Fine come to mind, and I know I'm leaving some out. Jim Goodwin, Lynn Wolf, and Abe Linder have passed away. and Jeff Selbst has moved out of the area, but the rest are still playing in the Richmond area and helping new players.

Thanks!

Next, I would like to recognize Edith McMullin. She is the originator of Easybridge!™, a series of books that help budding teachers develop a method of leading students. Were it not for her beginning, it's doubtful that we would have a Friendly Bridge class here in Richmond.

Lastly, I would like to thank you, my students. Having the opportunity to teach you over the past few years has given me great joy. I look forward to seeing you in other club games in Richmond and tournaments in Richmond, Fredericksburg, Williamsburg, Virginia Beach, and beyond. Until then, I remain

Ed Kinlaw

Friendly Bridge Presenter

Glossary

A Partial list of Bridge Jargon, Terms and Slang

- ABA:** acronym for American Bridge Association, one of the governing bodies for organized bridge in America.
- ACBL:** acronym for American Contract Bridge League, the largest governing body for organized bridge in America.
- Accept:** (1) (of a game-try or a slam-try or an invitation to take a particular action) make the call suggested or invited, or a move in that direction (2) (of a transfer) make the call suggested by the transfer.
- Ace from ace-king:** a conventional opening-lead agreement.
- Adjusted score:** in tournament bridge, a score artificially assigned to adjust for an irregular occurrence.
- Agreed suit:** a suit in which a partnership has located and announced a fit. or that has been or is being designed as the intended trump suit.
- Agreement:** an advance understanding between partners about the meanings of their calls and defensive card plays..
- Alert:** a technique used by tournament players to draw opponents' attention to unusual agreements.
- Appeal:** in tournament bridge, a requested review of a ruling (usually of a director's ruling).
- Artificial:** (of a call) one that, through prearrangement between partners, does not indicate a desire to play the bid being stated, doubled or redoubled; or does not indicate interest in the strain named.
- Asking bid:** a bid that requests information about a specific feature of partner's hand (e.g., number of aces, controls in spades, quality of heart support).
- Attacking lead:** an opening lead intended to institute active defense.
- Attitude:** whether a defender does or does not want a suit led, or does or does not want to show strength in it. [A defender's attitude toward a suit is usually described as "encouraging" or "discouraging."].
- Auction:** the bidding; portion of a deal in which the players bid for the right to name the final contract.
- Average:** the mean (arithmetic average) score on one deal, or over one session, in a duplicate bridge contest.
- Baby:** (1) (slang) (adjective) low. [Usage: "two baby hearts" = two hearts of insignificant rank.]
- (2) (adjective) occurring one level lower than usual (e.g., Baby Blackwood: three notrump as an ace-asking bid).
- bagger** (slang) indicative of the length held, as in "five-bagger" (a five-card suit).
- Balanced distribution:** 4-3-3-3, 4-4-3-2, or 5-3-3-2 suit distribution.
- Balancing:** entering or reentering the auction on the basis of values partner is presumed to hold from the relative weakness of the opponents' bidding.
- Bare:** (slang) unprotected; not accompanied by small cards. [bare king = singleton king; queen-jack bare = doubleton queen-jack].
- Barred:** (1) required to pass by law (as after the imposition of a penalty);(2) constrained to pass by partnership agreement.
- Bath:** (slang) large penalty. (As in "I took a bath."--went down a lot doubled)
- best:** having the indicated rank, as fourth-best (fourth highest in rank among the cards held).
- Bid:** a bet to take the specified number of tricks above six, in the specified strain; a number of tricks from one to seven combined with a strain (notrump, spades, hearts, diamonds or clubs).
- Biddable suit:** a suit long or strong enough to be indicated in a given bidding situation.
- Bidder:** (1) player who makes a bid; (2) (slang) someone who is usually aggressive during the auction.
- Bidding box:** physical device that enables silent auctions.
- Bidding system:** a collection of partnership understandings about the meanings of calls.
- Blackwood convention:** a conventional method through which one partner can ask about the number of partner's aces by bidding four notrump.
- Blank:** (1) void; a holding of no cards in a suit; (2) (slang) (noun) bare; unaccompanied by protecting cards; (3) (slang) (verb) leave unaccompanied by small cards through discarding.
- Blind lead:** (1) the opening lead; a lead made without benefit of seeing the dummy; (2) an opening lead made with only weak clues from the bidding.
- Blitz:** (slang) (verb) defeat severely; (slang) (noun) a big win; (slang) (noun) a win that obtains the maximum possible score.
- Block:** (verb) prevent the running of a suit by denying the hand long in the suit an entry therein.
- Blockbuster:** (slang) a very powerful hand; powerhouse.
- Blocked:** (adjective) (of a suit) unable to be run without use of an entry in another suit. [In a particular suit, dummy has queen-jack-ten-nine; declarer has ace-king. The suit is blocked.].
- Board:** (1) (slang) the dummy; dummy's cards, as spread on the table; (2) in duplicate bridge: a holder, usually of metal or plastic, used to preserve the cards as originally dealt; (3) (slang) a deal.
- Body:** strong intermediate cards (such as 10's and 9's).
- Book:** (1) (noun) the first six tricks taken by declarer. (2) (noun) tricks (possibly zero) taken by the defense leaving it one short of defeating the contract. (3) (adjective) in accordance with the common wisdom or the usual procedure.
- Boost:** (1) (slang) raise; (2) (slang) bid in the hope of pushing the opponents to a higher contract.
- Bottom:** in matchpoint scoring, the lowest score on one deal.
- Break:** (1) (noun) the division of the adversely held cards in a suit; [A three-two break = finding one opponent with three of the missing five cards and the other with two.]. (2) (verb) defeat (a contract); (3) (verb) make the first lead in (a suit).

Bridge: a card game for four players, acting in two partnerships, in which bets are made on the number of tricks each side will win during the play of the cards; contract bridge.

Bring in: (slang) fulfill (a contract); play (a suit) without loss, or without adverse circumstance, or to win a particular number of tricks.

Broken sequence: an interrupted run of cards, such as K-J-10.

Business double: penalty double.

Bust: (slang) a very poor hand; a hand weak in honor cards; a hand weak for the holder's earlier bidding.

By me: (slang) improper form of "pass."

Bye: (noun) a round without an opponent;

(adjective) in a duplicate bridge movement, referring to a table (sometimes "bye stand") where boards are placed but not played.

Caddy: a tournament director's assistant, typically responsible for distributing to and picking up from the tables in play.

Call: a bid, pass, double or redouble.

Captain: partner with the responsibility of making the final decision (in bidding) for his side.

Capture: (1) (verb) (of a trick) win; (2) (verb) (of a card) prevent an opponent's card from taking a trick by winning the trick with a higher card of the same suit.

Card reading: analysis of the lie of the unseen cards from the bidding and play.

Carding: (1) the set of agreements between partners relating to the meanings of cards played on defense. (2) the choice or order of cards to play as a defender; signaling.

Cash: (slang) take a trick with (a winning card).

Cash out: (slang) cash all available immediate winners.

Cheapest bid: the lowest legal bid. [Over one club, one diamond is the cheapest bid.].

Check: (slang) improper form of "pass."

Claim: statement of intention to win or concede a certain number of tricks, suggesting that further play is unnecessary.

Clear a suit: remove obstacles to a suit's being run.

Closed hand: declarer's hand.

Coffehousing: (slang) making gratuitous statements, often (and highly improperly) with the intention of misleading or confusing the opponents.

Cold: (slang) easily makable; laydown.

Come-on (signal): a defensive card-play signal encouraging partner to lead or continue leading a particular suit.

Commit to: (1) drive or force to (a given bidding level); (2) decide on (an overall course of action in the bidding).

Competitive auction: (1) an auction in which both sides are attempting to name the contract--contested auction; (2) bidding from the point of view of the opening side when the other side enters the auction.

Concede: give some or all of the remaining tricks to the opponents without contest.

Contract: (1) (noun) a bet that a certain number of tricks will be taken; (2) (verb) to make such a bet.

Contract bridge: bridge in which only tricks bid for and made count towards game, as opposed to auction bridge (an earlier form), in which all tricks made, bid for or not, count towards game; bridge as usually played since the 1930's, when auction bridge began to die out (contract bridge was invented in 1925).

Control: (1) ability to prevent the opponents from winning immediate tricks in a side suit at a trump contract [first-round control = ace or void, second-round control = king or singleton, and so on]; (2) command of the play at a trump contract; in particular, being able to use trumps to prevent the opponents from cashing winners.

Convention: an understanding between partners that would not ordinarily be understood by the opponents in the absence of an explanation.

Convention card: a listing of a partnership's understandings, used in duplicate bridge.

Correct: adjust the contract to a different strain, having been offered a choice by partner. [Example: "Correcting" is often equivalent to "taking a preference" between two indicated suits, as in the partnership sequence one spade -- one notrump -- two diamonds.

"Correct" is often used instead of "prefer" when the choice is offered implicitly rather than explicitly; for example, if opener bids two diamonds, showing a weak two-bid in either spade or hearts, a response of two hearts asks opener to pass with hearts or to correct to spades.]

Count: (1) (noun) the number of cards held in each suit by an opponent; (2) (verb) to determine such numbers; (3) (verb) to add the number of possible or probable tricks, of winners, or losers.

Count signal: (1) a defensive signal to show whether a defender holds an even or odd number of cards in a suit; (2) a defensive signal to show exactly how many cards a defender holds in a suit.

Coup: (1) any master stroke; (2) [sometimes Trump coup] the shortening of one's trumps to enable the eventual lead of a plain-suit card to substitute for the lead of a trump to take a finesse; (3) more generally, any trump-shortening process aimed at creating a particular

end-position. (4) (verb) to capture without loss or to reduce the trick-taking power of an opponent's trump holding by any combination of trump reduction and/or arranging effectively to lead a plain-suit card through that opponent in an ending.

Cover: to play a higher card than one previously played to the same trick (usually applied when a higher card is played directly over an opponent's play).

Cover an honor with an honor: a guideline of play stemming from whist (an earlier game similar to bridge) that is sometimes, but by no means always, sound, meaning that if possible one should play a higher honor than one played by right-hand opponent.

Crack: (slang) double (for penalty).

Crossruff: a line of play through which ruffing tricks are made in both partner's hands.

Cue-bid: (1) (noun) a bid in a strain that an opponent has bid; [Example: a two-spade overcall of a one-spade opening bid.] (2) (noun) a bid in a suit that an opponent has suggested artificially (a "virtual cue-bid"); [Example: a three-spade overcall of a three-heart opening that indicates spades.] (3) (verb) to make a bid satisfying (1) or (2).

Danger hand: the one opponent who may profitably gain the lead for his side.

Deal: (1) (verb) distribute the cards; (2) (noun) the 52 cards as distributed; (3) (noun) the entire course of bidding and play; one unit of a bridge game.

Dealer: (1) the player who deals the cards; (2) the player first to call.

Declarer: the player who first named the strain of the final contract for his or her side and who manipulates both his own cards and partner's during the play.

Deep finesse: a finesse against more than one missing card.

Defeat (the contract): prevent declarer from taking the number of tricks required by his contract; set.

Defender: (1) an opponent of the declarer. (2) an opponent of the side that made the first bid in the auction.

Defense: (1) declarer's opponents; (2) the approach taken by declarer's opponents; (3) countermeasure against an opponent's call or systemic agreement.

Defensive bid: (1) a bid made to prevent the opponents from naming the final contract of their choice; sacrifice; (2) a bid made by a defender (meaning 2).

Develop: establish.

Direction: (1) the location of a player at a bridge table: North, East, South or West; (2) one of the partnerships, North-South or East-West.

Director: the supervisor of a duplicate bridge event.

Discard: (1) (verb) play a plain-suit card of a suit other than the one led; (2) (noun) a card thus played.

Discouraging card: a card played by a defender as a signal to partner not to lead, or to discontinue leading, a particular suit, or to suggest weakness in the suit.

Distribution: (1) the number of cards in each suit held by one player; [5=4=3=1 distribution = five spades, four hearts, one diamond and three clubs] (2) the number of cards of a particular suit held by each player; (3) (slang) the lie of the adversely held cards.

Distribution points: valuation points awarded because of the trick-taking potential of long or short suits at trump contracts.

Ditch: (slang) discard (usually a loser).

Dog: (1) (slang) (noun) a very weak hand, or one that is very weak for the previous bidding; (2) (verb) [usually with "it"] bid conservatively.

Double: (1) (noun) a call that increases scoring values. (2) (verb) to make the call described in (1).

Double-dummy: (1) (adjective) with all four hands exposed; (2) (slang) (adjective) action taken as if in sight of all four hands, i.e., perfect for the lie of the cards; (3) (slang) (verb) criticize for not acting as though having seen all four hands. [Example: "My partner double-dummied me for not starting clubs first."]

Double finesse: a finesse against two missing cards.

Double into game: a double of a contract that is not a game undoubled but is when doubled.

Double negative: a further negative by a player who has already taken a negative action.

Doubleton: a holding of two cards in a suit.

Down: set; defeated.

Drive out: force an opponent to part with (a certain card or cards).

Duck: (1) play a small card when holding a higher one; (2) surrender (a trick).

Dummy: (1) partner of declarer; (2) that player's cards, exposed on the table after the opening lead.

Dump: (slang) discard;

Duplicate bridge: form of bridge in which two or more sets of participants have an opportunity to play the same deals.

Duplication of values: both partners having strong values in the same suit, generally to their side's disadvantage.

East-West: one of the two partnerships; the defending side in the standard diagram.

Echo: the play of a high card followed by a low card (in the same suit); [Commonly used to show attitude, encouragement or discouragement, or parity of count, even or odd, in the suit.].

Eight ever, nine never: a general rule for deciding when to finesse for a missing queen, it advises to finesse with a combined holding of eight or fewer cards but not with nine or more.

Empty: without any significant cards other than those specified. [Example: Ace-empty-fifth means a five-card holding in which the only significant high card is the ace.]

Encouraging: (1) a defensive card play signal asking partner to lead or continue a specified suit; (2) a bid suggesting that partner continue to a higher contract.

Endplay: (1) (verb) force an opponent to lead disadvantageously; (2) (noun) the position of the cards so resulting;

Entry : (1) a card that can win a trick and thereby gain the lead for its holder; (2) seating assignment given to a tournament participant, in effect a receipt for the entry fee.

Equal: (1) (of cards) having equivalent rank. (2) See: Vulnerability conditions.

Establish: make into winning cards by removing higher cards of the suit.

Established: (1) (of a suit) consisting of winning cards; (2) (of a revoke) no longer correctable.

Even: (1) (of a suit split) exactly equal; [Example: a three-three split is an even split.] (2) (of a card) with an even number of pips (the 2, 4, 6, 8 or 10); (3) (of a suit holding) of even parity.

Exit: get off lead.

Exposed card: (1) a card whose face becomes visible at an incorrect time under the laws; (2) a card that must be played in accordance with a penalty.

Extra values: significantly more than the minimum strength or potential indicated by earlier bidding.

Face: (1) place upwards on the table; (2) the side of a card indicating its suit and rank; front.

Face card: (1) king, queen or jack. (2) v. to place card with face showing

Face down: with the face not showing.

Fall: drop; succumb to higher cards.

Falsecard: an unnecessarily high card (or, less often, a low card instead of a high one) played with deceptive intent.

Fast arrival: a jump to the level the bidding is already forced to deny extra values. [e.g., one heart--two clubs--two spades--four spades to show spade support but a minimum two-club response].

Feature: (1) a high honor (usually ace or king; sometimes ace, king or queen). (2) anything of interest in a particular suit, such as a high honor or shortness.

Field: the totality of entries to a tournament or game.

-fifth: within or heading a five-card holding. [Usage: jack-fifth = five cards headed by the jack = Jxxxx.]

Final contract: the last bid made.

Finesse: (1) (verb) attempt to take advantage of the location of the opponents' cards; (2) (noun) a play that makes such an attempt.

Fit: (1) degree of support for partner; (2) combined partnership holding in a suit. [In a four-four fit, each partner has four cards in the suit.].

Five-card majors: an understanding between partners that an opening bid in a major suit will be based on a suit at least five cards long.

Fix: an unfortunate result caused by happenstance or undeservedly rewarded poor performance by the opponents.

Fixed: (1) (slang) placed in a difficult position; (2) (slang) in line for a poor result because of winning action taken by the opponents.

Flat hand: (slang) a hand with 4-3-3-3 suit distribution.

Flat board: in pairs play, a board on which all (in casual usage, almost all) of the participants achieved equivalent results.

Flighted: (1) (adjective for tournament) having separate, usually simultaneous, events for players in different rating categories.

(2) (adjective for tournament) having all players compete together but with prizes awarded for the best performances by players in each of two or more rating categories.

Float: (1) (during the bidding) (slang) be followed by passes. [Example: Three notrump floated = three notrump was passed out. West's three spades floated around to South = North and East passed over three spades.] (2) (during the play) (slang) lead and duck; let ride (usually by declarer's not putting up a higher card from his hand or dummy's) [Example: South floated the jack of hearts around to East's queen.] (3) (during the play) (slang) not get covered. [Example: The ten of spades floated (i.e., was led and won the trick).]

Follow: play a card of the same suit as the one led.

Forcing call: a call that requests that partner not pass.

Four by three (sometimes Four by triple three): 4-3-3-3 distribution.

Four-card majors: bidding methods that permit opening in a major suit of four-card length (very popular in the early decades of bridge, very unpopular in the electronic age).

-fourth: within or heading a four-card holding. [Usage: jack-fourth = four cards headed by the jack = Jxxx.]

Free bid: a bid made when it is not necessary to bid to allow partner another chance to call.

Fulfill: make enough tricks for the contract.

Gadget: (slang) a convention designed to cover a specific bidding situation rather than an entire class of auctions.

Gambling three notrump: a three-notrump opening based on a long, solid minor suit.

Game: a score of 100 or more points below the line; 100 or more in trick score. (3NT, 4H, 4S, 5C, 5D)

Game-forcing bid: a bid that requests partner to continue bidding until game is reached.

Game-try: game invitation.

Gerber: a conventional four-club bid asking partner to show a count of aces.

Gin: (1) (exclamation) (slang) "I claim the rest of the tricks." (2) (adjective) (of a contract) certain to be made.

Good: (1) established; (2) consisting of all winners.

Goren system: a derivative of the Culbertson system that described hand valuation in points (where Culbertson had used honor tricks) and replaced the older version as the standard American system, a position it held for several decades.

Go to bed with: (slang) fail to take a trick with [usually, of a card that could have won a trick in a straightforward manner].

Grand slam: a bid of seven.

Guide card: a set of instructions for the movement of a pair from table to table in a duplicate bridge movement.

Half table: a table with only one pair.

Hand: (1) one of the players; (2) the cards held by a player;

Hand hog: a player who attempts to become declarer as often as possible.

Handicap: score adjustment based on seeding.

Hand record: a permanent record of the cards, bidding and play of a deal.

HCP: common abbreviation for high-card points

Help suit: a suit in which high cards in partner's hand will be valuable.

Hesitation: a break in the usual tempo.

High: (1) of winning rank. (2) currently top-ranking of its suit; (3) (slang) high-card points.

High-low signal: echo.

Hit: (1) (slang) double; (2) (slang) ruff; (3) (slang) (relating to a dummy) come down; track.

Holding: cards in one's hand.

Hold-up: delay the taking of a winner.

Honor: ace, king, queen, jack or ten.

Hook: (slang) finesse.

Howell movement: a tournament arrangement in which most or all pairs do not remain seated at fixed compass directions (North-South or East-West) and may meet any of the other pairs.

Illegal: not in accordance with the laws.

IMP: (1) (noun) International Match Points; a special unit of scoring used in tournament play. (2) (verb) calculate the imp score on a deal.

Interference: a call that disrupts the flow of the opponents' bidding sequence.

Interior sequence: a sequence that does not include the highest card held in a suit. [King-jack-ten is an interior sequence; the jack-ten are in sequence, but are not in sequence with the king.].

Intermediate: (1) (of a card) roughly of the rank of ten or nine; (2) (of a jump overcall) showing fair values, usually interpreted as a hand in the minimum opening-bid range with a strong six-card or longer suit; (3) (of an opening two-bid) just under the values for a forcing opening bid.

Intervening bid: overcall.

Invitation: request that partner continue to game (or slam) if with maximum values.

Invitational: offering an invitation.

Irregularity: an occurrence not in conformity with the Laws.

Jacoby transfers: responses to one notrump of two diamonds to show hearts and two hearts to show spades; responses to two notrump of three diamonds to show hearts and three hearts to show spades.

Jam: (slang) preempt.

Jettison: a discard, particularly the discard of a blocking card.

Jump: (1) (verb) bid at a higher level than the minimum required to be legal. (2) (adjective) at a higher level than the minimum required to be legal.

Jump-overcall: (1) (noun) an overcall at higher than minimum level, as an overcall of two spades or three clubs over a one-heart opening. (2) (verb) to make a bid described in (1).

Jump-raise: (1) (noun) a raise at higher than minimum level, as in the partnership sequence one club -- one heart -- three hearts. (2) (verb) to make a bid described in (1).

Jump-rebid: (1) (noun) a same-suit rebid at higher than minimum level, as in the partnership sequence one club -- one heart -- three clubs. (2) (verb) to make a bid described in (1).

Jump-shift: (1) (noun) a jump bid in a new suit. (2) (verb) to make a bid described in (1).

Keeping the bidding open: refusing to pass, to allow partner another turn to call.

Kibitzer: spectator.

Kiss of death: a score of minus 200 at matchpoints when the maximum possible contract is at the part-score level.

Knock out: force out so as to establish lower cards.

Laydown: (slang) easily makable; cold.

Lead: (1) (noun) the first card played to a trick; (2) (verb) to play such a card.

Lead back: return; play the same suit partner led previously (particularly when the earlier lead was the opening lead).

Lead-directing bid (or double): a bid (or double) that requests partner to make the opening lead in a particular suit.

Lead through strength: a principle of defensive card play; to play a suit when honors lie to your left.

Leave in: pass partner's double; pass; fail to disturb the previous bid.

LHO: abbreviation for left-hand opponent; the player to one's left.

Limited: (of a call) with specified lower and upper strength requirements, the latter below the maximum possible.

Limit raise: (1) a raise that invites game; (2) a raise from one to three that shows the range of strength just under that required to force to game.

Lock: (1) (slang) (usually said of a contract or a set of circumstances) certainty; (2) (slang) place the lead irrevocably in a particular opponent's hand.

Locked: (slang) restricted to or away from ["Locked in dummy" means unable to get the lead out of dummy; "locked out of dummy" means unable to get the lead to dummy.].

Loser: trick that must be lost; card that must be played to such a trick; card that cannot under present circumstances win a trick if played.

Loser-on-loser: a card-play technique (usually for declarer) that attempts to gain by playing two losing cards to the same trick.

Major penalty card: a card prematurely exposed deliberately, or any honor prematurely exposed.

Major suit: spades or hearts.

Make: (1) (verb) fulfill (a contract); (2) (verb) capture a trick, or a number of tricks. (3) (slang) (noun) successful contract. (4) (verb) shuffle the cards

Master: (1) (adjective) the highest outstanding card of a suit; (2) (noun) an expert player.

Master hand: the hand having (or eventually having) the predominant trump length.

Masterpoint: a unit of measurement of achievement in tournament play.

Matchpoints: (1) a common form of scoring in duplicate bridge in which a pair scores one unit for every other pair whose score they best and one-half unit for every other pair whose score they tie. (2) the scoring units in (1).

Maximum: a relatively strong holding for the previous calls made.

Minimum: a relatively weak holding for the previous calls made.

Minnie: (slang) minimum.

Minor penalty card: a card below honor rank inadvertently exposed prematurely.

Minor suit: diamonds or clubs.

Mirror: (of distributions) identical.

Misbid: (1) (noun) a bid that is inappropriate because it is of the wrong kind, or is misdescriptive to partner (as opposed to an underbid or an overbid). (2) (verb) to err by making a misbid (1).

Misfit: a pair of partnership hands, each having poor support for the long suits of the other; no combined eight-card or greater trump holding despite skewed distributions.

Mitchell movement: a tournament arrangement in which all pairs remain seated at fixed compass directions (North-South or East-West) and meet only pairs seated in the opposite direction.

Monster: (slang) a strong hand.

Moose: (slang) a strong hand.

Movement: the arrangement and readjustment of players in a tournament.

Moysian fit: a partnership trump holding of four cards in one hand and three in the other.

MUD: acronym for Middle-Up-Down; the lead of the middle card from three small cards.

Negative double: a takeout or informatory double of an overcall.

New suit: a suit not previously bid.

No bid: an improper form of "pass."

No call: an improper form of "pass" and a misnomer as well, for each player must call at his or her turn, even if that call is a pass.

Nonforcing: allowing partner to pass under the partnership understanding.

Nonvulnerable: not vulnerable--in duplicate, white, in social bridge game already scored

North-South: one of the competing partnerships; the declaring side in the standard diagram.

Notrump: the highest-ranking strain in the bidding, in which the play proceeds with no trump suit.

Notrump distribution: balanced distribution. (4-3-3-3, 4-4-3-2, or 5-3-3-2)

Novice: inexperienced player.

Nuisance bid: action aimed at disrupting the opponents' auction.

Off: (1) (slang) down; set; (2) (slang) offside (3) (slang) missing.

Off the top: (adjective) describing tricks that can be taken without gaining the lead or lost before gaining the lead [Usage: Four spades was down off the top = the defenders could take at least four tricks before declarer gained the lead.]

Offender: a player in violation of the laws or regulations.

Offside: unfavorably located;

Ogust: the use of artificial step rebids by an opening weak two-bidder after a two-notrump response. [The most popular version: three clubs = weak hand, weak suit; three diamonds = weak hand, strong suit; three hearts = strong hand, weak suit; three spades = strong hand, strong suit; three notrump = six-card suit headed by ace-king-queen.]

One-round force: a call that requests that partner not pass on the current round of bidding, without sending any message about later in the auction.

One-suiter: a hand including only one suit of four or more cards, but generally not applied to 4-3-3-3 distribution, and often not to 5-3-3-2 distribution.

Onside: favorably located.

Open: (1) (verb) make the first bid; (2) (verb) be the first to play (a suit); (3) (adjective for event) in tournament play, unrestricted as to who may enter. (4) (adjective for hand) dummy's; visible. (5) (adjective for room) permitting spectators.

Opener: the player making the first bid; opening bidder

Opening lead: the lead to the first trick, made by the player to the left of the declarer before dummy's cards are exposed.

Opponent: adversary; member of the other partnership.

Our hand: (slang) a deal on which "our side" can make a higher contract than the opponents.

Overbid: (1) (verb) bid more than one's partnership can make; (2) (verb) bid unwarrantedly high (result aside); (3) (verb) overcall; (4) (noun) the bid made in (meaning 1), (meaning 2) or (meaning 3).

Overcall: (1) (noun) a bid following an opposing bid. (2) (verb) to make the call described in (1).

Overruff: ruff with a higher trump after another player ruffs; overtrump

Overtake: play a higher card of the suit led as the highest such card already played to the trick. [Usually refers to playing a higher card than partners.]

Overtrick: trick made in excess of those required to fulfill the contract.

Pard: (slang) partner.

Partial: part-score.

Partnership: (1) one of the two competing teams of two players; (2) the totality of understandings between two players.

Partnership understanding: an agreement between partners.

Pass: (1) (noun) a call indicating no desire to bid, double, or redouble at that turn; (2) (verb) to make such a call; (3) (verb) (after leading from declarer's hand or dummy,) to play a smaller card from the opposite hand when a higher card was available.

Passed out: (1) (of a contract) allowed to stand; (2) (of a deal) thrown in because no player bid.

Passive: (of a defensive play) not risking tricks but not tending to promote any immediately.

Penalty: (1) points awarded to the defenders when declarer fails to fulfill his contract; (2) a remedy for an infraction provided by the laws.

Penalty card: an exposed card subjecting its holder's side to restrictions. (See also Major penalty card, Minor penalty card.)

Penalty double: a double intended as an attempt to obtain a penalty against the opposing contract (as opposed to a "takeout double" suggesting that partner bid).

Phone number: (1) (slang) a penalty in four digits; (2) (slang) any large penalty.

Picture card: king, queen, or jack.

Piece: (1) (slang) part-score; (2) (slang) a high honor [A piece in spades means a spade honor.]; (3) (slang) any card. [In general card-playing lingo, "a piece in spades" sometimes means any spade.] (4) (slang) double for penalty [I wanted to take a piece of that contract.]

Pitch (1) (noun) (slang) discard. (2) (verb) (slang) to discard.

Play: (1) (noun) the phase of bridge in which the players try to take tricks to determine the outcome of bets made during the bidding; (2) (verb) act as declarer; (3) (verb) place (a card) in the center of the table.

Play for: (verb) assume a holding of (as the basis for declarer play or defense) [Usage: South had to play for diamonds to break three-three. = South assumed that diamonds would break three-three as the basis of further planning or reasoning.]

Point count: a method of hand valuation in which numerical values (points) are assigned to various features of a hand.

Pointed (suit): spades or diamonds.

Position: (1) location at the table; (2) order of speaking relative to the dealer; [The dealer is in first position, the player to dealer's left is in second position, and so on.] (3) seat; [First position means first seat, and so forth.]. (4) chair. [First chair means first position, and so forth.]

Positive response: a bid affirming certain values.

Post-mortem: (slang) discussion of deals following play.

Powerhouse: (slang) a very strong hand.

Preemptive: (1) (adjective) intended to hinder the enemy through the removal of bidding space from the auction; (2) (noun) a preemptive bid, or a bid that acts preemptively no matter how intended.

Preference: indication of choice of strain from among those suggested by partner.

Promote: (1) (of a card) move to or closer to winning rank; (2) (of a hand's value) add to the number of valuation points counted for.

Protected suit: a suit including a stopper.

Pull: (1) draw (trumps); (2) remove partner's double.

Pump: (slang) force out a trump; = force (2).

Push: (1) (slang) (verb) bid more than justified by the values held; (2) (slang) (verb) force the opponents to a higher level; (3) (slang) (noun) in team-of-four contests, a no-score result on a deal; wash; washout. (4) (slang) (verb) in team-of-four contests, to create or to achieve a no-score result on a deal. (5) (slang) (verb) lead; (6) (slang) (adjective) having no net score.

Quantitative: (of a bid) asking partner to determine the strength of his hand by the total values (usually high-card values) held rather than by the presence or absence of any specific cards.

Quick trick: a high-card holding likely to take a trick on an early round of a suit. [Typical quick-trick values: ace-king = 2; ace-queen = 1.5; ace or king-queen = 1; king = 0.5.].

Raise: (1) (verb) make a further bid in a suit bid by partner. (2) (noun) a strain-suggesting bid in a suit bid by partner. (3) (noun) a hand that meets the requirements for supporting a suit bid by partner.

Rank: (1) the relative position of suits or cards as applied to play or bidding; (2) level achieved by a tournament player.

Rebid: (1) (noun) a player's second bid; (2) (verb) to bid again a suit already bid by the same player.

Rebiddable suit: a suit long and/or strong enough to be bid again in a given bidding situation.

Recap (or recapitulation): summary of results in a tournament.

Redouble: a call that raises the scoring of a contract already doubled.

Refuse: duck.

Reneg: fail to follow suit (when able to do so); revoke.

Reopen: (1) take an action other than pass after a bid, a double, or a redouble has been followed by two passes. (2) refuse to allow the opponents to buy the contract at the present level.

Rescue: remove the current bid to a different one. [Usage: Usually refers to changing the contract after partner's bid either has been doubled for penalty or is expected to be set heavily even if undoubled.]

Respond: make a bid after an opening bid by partner.

Responder: partner of the opener.

Response: bid by opener's partner at first opportunity after the opening bid.

Result player: one who determines the soundness of bids and plays by the way they turned out; Monday-morning quarterback.

Retain the lead: lead a winning card, thus keep the right to lead to the next trick.

Return: lead back.

Revalue: adjust hand valuation based on the progress of the auction.

Reverse: (1) (noun) a non-jump bid in a new suit that bypasses a bid in a lower-ranking suit already bid by the same player. [North one club, South one spade, North two hearts is a reverse (bypasses two clubs). But North one club, South one heart, North one spade is not (no bypass).]. (2) (verb) to make a bid described in (1).

Review the bidding: repeat the calls made.

Revoke: fail to follow suit when able to do so (an infraction of the laws).

RHO: an abbreviation for right-hand opponent; the player to one's right.

Rock crusher: (slang) powerful hand.

RONF: acronym for Raise Only NonForce. [Usage: Usually applied as a summary of methods for responding to a weak two-bid.]

Rotation: the order of calls and plays (clockwise).

Rounded (suit): hearts or clubs.

Ruff: (verb) trump; (noun) the play a trump on the lead of another suit.

Ruff and sluff: the ability to trump in one hand and discard (usually a loser) from the other.

Ruff out: establish by ruffing.

Ruffing finesse: a finesse that takes advantage of the ability to trump a high card in a plain suit. [Dummy has king-queen of a side suit in which declarer is void. Declarer can lead dummy's king, ruff RHO's ace, and later make a trick with the queen.].

Ruffing value: shortness that may lead to ruffing tricks.

Rule of Eleven: a rule (from whist) that says: if partner has led fourth best, the number of cards outstanding above the card led is the spot on the card, subtracted from 11.

Rule of Twenty: a guideline that suggests opening the bidding when the sum of highcard points and the two longest suit lengths is at least 20.

Rule of Two and Three: a rule propounded by Ely Culbertson as a guide for preemptive bids: you should be within two tricks of your contract when vulnerable and within three tricks when not vulnerable.

Ruling: decision by a tournament director or committee.

Run: (1) play off winners in a suit; (2) (slang) escape to a new strain (particularly after being doubled in a different one).

Sack: (slang) sacrifice.

Sacrifice: deliberately bid above one's trick-taking potential in the hope of losing fewer points than if the opponents were allowed to play and make their contract.

Safety play: the surest line to make the contract, disregarding extra tricks that might be made in some other way.

Sandbag: (slang) pass with strong values, hoping to trap the opponents or come into the bidding later on.

SAYC: acronym for Standard American Yellow Card, the system defined by the current set of listings on a form of convention card identified by its color.

Score: (1) a numerical result of a deal, match, session or event; (2) (slang) take a trick with; [Usage: Score the queen of spades = take a trick with the queen of spades.] (3) (slang) win. [Usage: Score three spades and two hearts = take three spade tricks and two heart tricks.]

Seat: (1) place at a table; (2) (slang) position (meaning 2).

Second hand: (1) the player second to have the opportunity to bid (i.e., at the dealer's left); (2) the player second to play to a trick.

Second hand low: a principle of card play from whist.

Seeding: (1) arranging entrants, through objective or subjective criteria, approximately in order of strength; (2) selecting a small number of entrants believed to be stronger than the rest.

Semi-balanced hand: hand with suit distribution 5-4-2-2 or 6-3-2-2.

Sequence: (1) all calls made in an auction; (2) an auction; (3) two or more cards of adjacent ranks.

Set: (1) defeat; prevent from fulfilling the contract; (2) playing in fixed partnerships.

Set up: (1) (noun) established; (2) (verb) establish.

Shaded: (of a bid) made on slightly fewer values than usual.

Shape: (1) (slang) distribution. (2) (of a suit) pointed or rounded. [Spades and diamonds are pointed suits; hearts and clubs are rounded suits.]

Shift: (1) lead a different suit; (2) bid a new suit.

Short club: opening one club on a suit of only three cards (usually because of a systemic prohibition against opening a four-card major suit).

Short diamond: opening one diamond on a suit of only three cards (usually because of a systemic prohibition against opening a four-card major suit).

Short-suit points: valuation points awarded to short suits because of their trick taking ability (or the trick-taking ability of the long suits whose possession they imply).

Show out: fail to follow suit.

Side suit: (1) a suit other than the trump suit; (2) a suit of four or more cards other than the trump suit in declarer's or dummy's hand. (3) a suit of significant length but secondary to the main suit in a player's hand (such as the four-card suit in a 7-4-1-1 distribution).

Signals: conventional plays made by the defenders to give each other information.

Signoff: (1) (noun) a call that requests partner to pass (2) (noun) a call that denies additional values. (3) (adjective) having the meaning of a signoff

Simple: (1) (of a bid) not a jump; (2) (of a finesse) against only one missing card; (3) (of an overcall) a minimum defensive bid in a new suit; (4) (of a raise) a bid in partner's suit one level higher (also single raise);

Singleton: a holding of one card in a suit.

Sit (or sit for): (slang) allow to stand (usually a double).

Sitout: round in a duplicate bridge movement for which a pair has no opponents (because of a half-table).

Skip: a round in a tournament movement where players bypass the table they would reach according to their regular pattern.

Slam: any bid of six (small slam) or seven (grand slam).

Sluff: discard.

Small slam: a bid of six.

Soft values: lower honors, usually queens and jacks, as compared with aces and kings.

Solid: (of a suit) with no gaps, or with no gaps after the specified card. [Usage: five solid = AKQJ10 (sometimes AKQJx). jack-ten-solid-fifth = J10987.]

Sort: arrange one's cards by rank within suit.

Split: (1) (verb) play one of a group of cards equivalent in rank (usually applied to honor cards). (2) (noun) the distribution of missing cards (e.g., a two-two split of four missing cards).

Spots: (slang) (noun) strong intermediate cards;

Spot card: any card from deuce through nine.

Square hand: hand of 4-3-3-3 distribution.

Squeeze: a play that forces an opponent to part with a needed card.

Standard bidding: bidding methods used by most players

Stayman convention: an agreement between partners under which a response of two clubs to an opening bid of one notrump asks opener to bid a four-card major suit if he holds one.

Steal: (1) (of a trick) win with an unusually low card (2) (of a trick) win without losing the lead (3) (of a tempo) gain time needed to perform some other function or deprive the opponents of such time. (4) (of a contract) make through deception when there was a way to defend successfully. (Also refers to a successful deceptive defense but not usually so applied.) (5) (of an auction) become declarer at a (perhaps surprisingly) low contract when the opponents could profitably have bid higher.

Stiff: (1) (slang) (adjective) unsupported by low cards. [stiff king = singleton king; queen-jack stiff = queen-jack doubleton] (2) (slang) (noun) singleton. (3) (slang) (verb) discard protection from or all other cards in a suit except. [stiff the ace of clubs = discard all clubs other than the ace]

Stop: (1) an exclamation to inform the opponents of a special occurrence (such as a skip-bid warning); (2) stopper.

Stopper: a holding that will (or is likely to, or might) prevent the opponents from immediately running a large number of tricks in a suit at notrump.

Strain: one of the four suits or notrump; the non-numerical element of a bid; denomination.

Strength: valuation of a hand; honor cards.

Strong notrump: a one-notrump opening to show a balanced hand above the minimum opening strength range (often 15-17 or 16-18 points).

Suit: (1) one of the four divisions of the pack; spades, hearts, diamonds, or clubs; (2) with a trump suit, as opposed to notrump (as in "suit contract").

Suit combination: a partnership's combined holding in one suit.

Support: (1) (noun) cards in a suit bid by partner; (2) (verb) raise.

Swish: (slang) followed by all passes. [Usage: four spades swish = four spades, pass, pass, pass.]

Switch: lead a different suit

System: the collection of partnership understandings about bidding.

Table: (1) (noun) a bridge game; the four players in such a game. (2) (noun) board; dummy (meaning 2); (3) (noun) one of the units of activity in a tournament; (4) (verb) put down (dummy's cards); (5) (verb) play (a card).

Takeout double: a double that encourages a partner to bid (as opposed to a penalty double, which suggests that he pass).

Tank: (1) (slang) (verb) not act for a long time. (2) (slang) (noun) a state of intense concentration. [Usage: South went into the tank.]

Tap: (slang) force to ruff; pump; force.

Tempo: (1) the time (in terms of tricks during the play) needed to take an action or to execute a plan; (2) the opportunity to lead at any point during the play; (3) the speed at which a player executes a call or play.

Tenace: a non-sequential honor holding.

Texas: four-level transfer responses to a notrump opening (four hearts = spades, four diamonds = hearts).

Their hand: (slang) a deal on which "their side" can make a higher contract than ours.

-third: within or heading a three-card holding. [Usage: jack-third = three cards headed by the jack = jack-tripleton = Jxx.]

Third hand high: a principle of card play from whist.

Tickets: (1) (slang) high cards; (2) pick-up slips

Tight: (1) (slang) conservative; (2) (slang) (of an honor or honor holding) not protected by small cards. [Usage: tight king = singleton king; queen-jack tight = doubleton queen-jack.]

Timing: (1) the order of play, or of planned activities during the play; (2) (slang) (of an auction) the following a particular order of activities.

Top: in matchpoint scoring, the highest possible score on one deal.

Top of nothing: method of leading a relatively high spot card, often the highest, to show no honor in the suit.

Touching: adjacent (usually in rank, as "touching cards," "touching honors" or "touching suits").

Transfer: (1) (noun) a bid that shows length in a different suit; (2) (noun) a call that asks partner to make a certain call regardless of his holding; (3) (verb) to use a transfer (meaning 1); (4) (verb) to remove protection in a suit from one opponent and give it to the other; (5) (adjective) a squeeze involving a transfer (meaning 4).

Trap pass: pass made with enough values to take other action.

Traveler: a score sheet that accompanies the board in a duplicate game.

Treatment: a partnership's interpretation of an action.

Trick: a collection of four cards, one contributed by each player at the table.

Trump: (1) (noun) a card that ranks above all cards of all other suits; (2) (verb) to play such a card after the lead of another suit.

Trump control: enough trumps to prevent the opponents from cashing side-suit winners.

Trump suit: a suit, determined in the bidding, whose cards rank above all cards of all other suits.

Two-suiter: a hand with two suits of four or more cards, but usually not applied to 4-4-3-2 distribution.

Unauthorized information: knowledge that a player is not entitled to use (as, for example, that obtained through partner's uneven tempo).

Unbalanced distribution: a distribution that includes a void, a singleton, or two doubletons; any distribution other than 4-3-3-3, 4-4-3-2 or 5-3-3-2.

Unbid suit: a suit that has not been named, or indicated, in the bidding.

Unblock: play or discard a high card that is preventing the run of a suit.

Underbid: (1) bid less than one's cards warrant; (2) bid less than can be made.

Underlead: lead a card that does not rank equally with the highest card held in the suit.

Undertrick: trick that declarer fails to make, thus failing in his contract.

Unguard: discard accompanying, protecting small cards.

Unlimited: (of a call) with no specified upper strength requirement below the maximum possible.

Unpassed: not having passed before the first bid.

Up the line: (1) describing bidding the cheapest of equivalent features; [Responding one heart to a one-diamond opening with four cards in each major is bidding up the line.] (2) describing playing the lowest of available cards.

Void: a holding of zero cards in a suit.

Vulnerable: having scored one game.

Vulnerability: statement of which side, if any, is vulnerable.

Vulnerability conditions: (slang) amber (U.K.) = both sides vulnerable. (slang) equal = neither side vulnerable or both sides vulnerable. (slang) favorable = nonvulnerable against vulnerable opponents. (slang) green (U.K.) = nonvulnerable against vulnerable opponents. (slang) horse and horse = both sides vulnerable. (slang) red (U.K.) = vulnerable against nonvulnerable opponents. (slang) red (U.S.) = vulnerable. (slang) red against red (U.S.) = both sides vulnerable. (slang) red against white (U.S.) = vulnerable against nonvulnerable opponents. (slang) unfavorable = vulnerable against nonvulnerable opponents. (slang) white (U.S.) = nonvulnerable. (slang) white (U.K.) = neither side vulnerable. (slang) white against red (U.S.) = nonvulnerable against vulnerable opponents. (slang) white against white (U.S.) = neither side vulnerable.

Waiting: nondescriptive: (of a call) made because any other action would be misdescriptive.

Weak: (1) lacking strength; (2) preemptive.

Weak jump overcall: a jump overcall used as a preemptive bid.

Weak jump shift: a single jump response in a new suit used as a preemptive bid.

Weak two-bid: an opening two-bid used to show a long suit and values below those for an opening one-bid.

Whist: one of the forerunners of bridge.

Wide open: (1) lacking a stopper; (2) lacking a control.

Winner: high card; card that can or will take a trick.

Working card: card of potential value to the partnership in its intended strain.

x: (lower case) any small card below the ten, such as KJxxx.

X: (usually upper case) abbreviation for "double"

XX: (usually upper case) abbreviation for "redouble" in bidding diagrams or the naming of contracts. [Usage: 1 NT XX = one notrump redoubled.]

Yarborough: (1) a hand containing no honor card; (2) (slang) a weak or relatively weak hand.

My Bridge Partners

Names

Phone Numbers

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For More Information Contact

Richmond

Bob and Linda MacCleave	804-744-6577	oldengr@comcast.net, ljbm@comcast.net
Ed Kinlaw	804-744-4870	mekinlaw@yahoo.com
Richard Deyerle	804-672-2831	rickdey_49@hotmail.com
The Bridge Center	804-359-0108	

Fredericksburg

Judy Haney 540-220-1884 judyhaney80@gmail.com
Art Florack 540-899-5377 artflorack@gmail.com

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<http://richmondbridge.net> or <http://richmondbridgeassociation.org>

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