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Bridge Lesson Workbook



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This book belongs to: _____

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Section 1: Introduction to the basics

What is bridge? The most brilliant card game in the world! (but then we may be biased!)



The game of bridge uses a pack of 52 cards. The 4 players are called North, South, East and West, corresponding to the position of the seats at the table. North and South play as partners, as do East and West. Each player holds 13 cards for each hand played. In each suit, the Ace is the highest, and the 2 is the lowest, in the order A K Q J 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2.

Suits also have a rank among themselves. From lowest to highest the suit ranks are

Clubs = C
Diamonds = D
Hearts = H
Spades = S
No Trumps = NT

All bridge versions are called Contract Bridge.

One social version is called Rubber Bridge, where the cards are re-dealt for each hand, and scores are based on partial or full games. Scores in rubber bridge depend a great deal on the luck of the cards you are dealt.

The version we play at our club is called Duplicate Bridge, where all 24 (number can vary) hands are dealt at the start of the night and placed in "boards", and each board is played in rotation by all North-South and all East-West pairs. Usually, the North-South pair remains seated at the same table all night, and the East-West pairs rotate around the room, playing two or more boards with each North-South pair before moving on. Scores are recorded for each play of each board, and at the end of the night, compared against all others who played that board. You can do very well with a poor hand, and very badly with a great hand. Your score in duplicate bridge depends on how well you played each board, compared to all others sitting in your direction (N-S or E-W) that night. Therefore, the luck of the draw of cards dealt is removed, and your score depends on what you did with what you were dealt (kind of like life, in a way!).

The game starts off by a “ **Bidding process** “ or “ **Auction** “ which is a way of communicating between partners (and sometimes opposition) describing the “**Hand**” in terms of “**Points Value**” and “**Shape**“ so as to try and end up in the right “**Contract**”.

This is done by a way of “**silent bidding**”, where your bid is written on a pad of paper in the centre of the table. No speaking of bids is allowed, or talking between partners, so the room is mostly quiet as bidding goes on.

The point value of your hand is determined as follows:

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

Hence the pack has a total of 40 points.

The auction starts with the Dealer and rotates to the left. The first hand that qualifies for opening starts the bidding. This person becomes the **Opener**.

Bidding then proceeds in clockwise rotation each bid having to be higher than the last. Bidding at the level 1 means you need to get a total of 6 tricks plus 1 (or 7 total); at the 2 level 6 plus 2 (8 total); 3 level 6 plus 3 (9) and so on.

Communication is done (silently) and the intention is to find out as much as possible about each other's hands in terms of value and shape and to see whether to be in a **GAME** contract or **PART GAME** contract.

The system of bridge bidding we will be learning is called **ACOL**.

There are a number of other bidding systems in use, including what is called "five card majors", which you may see other people using when you start playing in the Club. For now, we will concentrate only on the ACOL system of bidding.

Tip of the day:

Don't ever be afraid of making mistakes!

It's the most valuable thing you can do to improve your bridge because as we all know it is from the mistakes we learn the most. And as bridge is a game you will **never** know absolutely everything about, you had better get used to making mistakes. The theory is that the more mistakes you make, the faster you improve!

Terminology



Bid - Convention bid	A bid not meaning what it says (stayman /ace asking/2C opener)
Bid - Forcing bid	Partner must respond
Bid - Intervening bid/overcall	Bidding over the opposition in order to compete or disrupt
Bid - Invitational bid	Asking partner to go to game if maximum points or pass if minimum points
Bid - Pre-emptive bid	Trying to shut the opponents out of the bidding by going to a high level early
Bid - Shut-out bid	Trying to cut the opponents out of the auction
Bid -Limit bid (non forcing)	Showing the value and shape of your hand in one bid
Bidding	Communication between all 4 players (no secrets)
Contract	Final Bid which decides who plays the contract (declarer)
Declarer	Plays the final contract
Discarding	Playing a different suit from the one being led
Distribution	Shape of the hands. Extra point value can be given to or subtracted from your hand.
Doubleton	Having 2 of a suit
Ducking (Hold up play)	Not playing an Ace or an Honour (playing low to not win trick on purpose!)
Dummy	Declarer's partner
Entry	A trick winning card enabling you to gain entry to the other hand
Finessing	Trying to create extra tricks by trapping a higher card of the opponents
Flat (Balanced) Hand	Distribution of 4/3/3/3 or 4/4/3/2 or 3/3/5/2
Following Suit	Playing the same suit as is led
Game	Playing at a level that does <u>Qualify</u> for Bonus points
Grand slam	13 tricks
Having a Fit	Having at least 8 cards of a suit between 2 partners
Honours	A K Q J 10
Insufficient bid	Making an illegal bid that is at a lower level than previous one
Jump overcall	Missing out a level of bidding/shows strength 16pts+ and 6 card suit

Jump shift	Missing out a level of bidding /shows strength and 16 pts+
Length	Having a long suit
Major suit	Hearts or Spades
Masters	Trick winning cards (could be a 2)
Minor suit	Clubs or Diamonds
Non Vulnerable	Game bonuses are worth less AND SO ARE PENALTIES
Off Suit	Any of the three non trump suits
Opening hand	First player to start bidding process
Opening lead	First card played by opponent to the left of declarer
Opponents	Other 2 players trying to defend/defeat the contract
Overtricks	tricks won above the level of the contract
Part game	Playing at a level that does not qualify for Bonus points
Point count	Value or strength of hand
Rags	9-2
Revoke	Not following suit when one is supposed to
Ruffing	Putting a trump card on another suit when unable to follow suit only
Silent bidding	Communicating between players by way of writing
Singleton	Having 1 of a suit
Small slam	12 tricks
Suit	Clubs/Diamonds/Hearts/Spades / No Trumps
Trick	The highest Card played in a round of 4 cards played wins the TRICK
Trump	The suit that the contract is being played in (unless NT)
Unblocking	Making sure you can enter the hand with the long suit
Void	Having none of a suit
Vulnerable	Game bonus points are worth more BUT SO ARE PENALTIES
Yarborough	Having no high card points



Section 2: Declarer Playing Techniques

Cashing top tricks or certain winners is the first thing we look at when dummy goes down. Can we make the contract or not. What are certain winners?

7 6 2 *		A 3 2 *
A 10 4 = one top trick	=	K 8 5 = two top tricks

A K Q *		A K Q *
9 5 3 = three top tricks	=	J 4 3 = three top tricks

Q J 6 4 *		Q J *
A K 5 2 = four top tricks	=	A K = only two top tricks

An important aspect of play when you are cashing your winners or at any stage of the play is to be careful not to block yourself. In other words you must make sure you can communicate between declarers hand and dummy to cash in all your top tricks. You have to establish which **order** you need to take your tricks in.

A Q 3 2 *	(A)		Q 3 2 *		
---	---	---	---	=	suit blocked
K 4	(4)	K			

The next trick will be won by the K and there is no way you can cash the Q .To avoid blocking try to remember the following. **Top tricks in the shorter holding of the suit must be taken before those in the longer holding**
There may be another way to avoid blocking yourself and that is to use so called

Outside Entries. Outside entries are cards that are certain winners. Sometimes these outside entries **are already** there in form of top tricks

S Q J 6 3	
H A 5 4	
*	as long as you cash A K of spades first
S AK	before using A of hearts you can cross to
H 10 7 4 2	cash Q J of spades

but sometimes they **have to be created**. To be able to create them we have to **drive out the opponents top cards**. In other words we are looking to lose a trick so as to make one or more.

6 3 2

*

K Q J = two tricks after A is gone

6 3 2

*

Q J 10 9 = two tricks after the A and K have gone

We can now differentiate between **top tricks** and **established tricks**. Top tricks are always there i.e. A or A K. Established tricks are those we have manufactured. And yes there are all sorts of different methods in how to create winners and extra tricks and we will look at some of those techniques next.



Section 3: More declarer playing techniques

We can also create winners by exhausting the opponents of cards in a suit, also known as **setting up a long suit**.

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

three top tricks but in actual fact five tricks. However not always will the cards lie in your favour with the opposition.

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

Three rounds of tricks will exhaust the opponents of cards but in the process of creating two winners you need to lose a trick. A and K will drop Q 9 and 10 8 and next the J will win for the opposition leaving declarer with the 7 and 4 as two winners. This is all very well as long as we have an **outside entry** to go to declarer`s hand to cash those two tricks. But if we do not we need to use another playing technique which is called **maintaining communication by ducking**

Using the same example as above **without an outside entry** you will need to change your approach. Instead of playing A K you loose a trick first by playing low first , so after the first trick the picture will look like this

	5 2	
Q		J 10
	A K 7 4	

You are now able to communicate with the hand without needing an outside entry and next time you get the lead you can cash four tricks in the suit.



Another way of creating extra tricks is by way of leading towards **honours** also called **finessing**. This is giving you a 50/50 chance of winning a trick versus no chance at all. You are gambling that the so called key card is in the right opponents hand for success. There is no guarantee for success but you are giving yourself the best and only chance of success.

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

South will always make the K as long as you lead from north. If A goes up you play 2 and K is established as a winner if A doesn't go up you put the K on and hope!

A 4 2

*

Q 5 3

Two tricks required-- lead 2 towards Q and hope K is in east hand

A Q 3

*

6 4 3

Two tricks required-- lead 3 towards Q and hope K is in west hand.

A Q J

*

5 3 2

Three tricks required -- lead small towards Q and hope K is in west hand

In all three examples if the K is in the right place you will always make the required number of tricks whether the K goes up or not.

Another technique is called **'hold up' play**. This is sometimes used after opponents opening lead. The opponents opening lead is often indicating a danger suit for declarer. Like declarer opponents try to also set up long suits to make extra tricks to defeat your contract. Lets look at the following hand
Declarer in 3NT having to make 9 tricks
lead from west K of hearts



	S	A Q 7		
	H	9 5		
	D	K Q J 10 9		
	C	9 7 4		
S	J 5 4		S	10 9 3 2
H	K Q J 7 6		H	10 4 2
D	8 4		D	A 7 3
C	K 8 2		C	Q 10 5
	S	K 8 6		
	H	A 8 3		
	D	6 5 2		
	C	A J 6 3		

If you win the first trick with the A of hearts (which is called a **stopper**) the opponents will make 4 heart tricks after they get in with the A of diamonds. We therefore need to hold up play for as long as required or till we can consider east to be **safe**. To determine how many times we need to hold up we use something called **the rule of seven** which works like this. We count the number of cards declarer and dummy hold in the suit of the opening lead and deduct this from seven. In this case we hold five cards. We need to hold up twice. By taking the A of hearts on the third round east is now considered safe i.e. unable to return another heart to west if he regains the lead.



You must **not** feel forced to use your only stopper at the first opportunity.

Section 4: Scoring extra tricks with trumps

At all times during any play you must follow suit (play the same suit as the one that is led).

This is pretty straight forward in NT contracts, which is what we have been looking at so far.

However when the contract is in a trump suit, tricks can be **won or lost** in different ways.

When unable to follow a suit (you have run out of that suit in your hand), a trick can be won by using a trump suit card, because any trump card is more powerful than the highest card in a non-trump suit for that hand. This applies for declarer as well as defender. Both parties will obviously try to use their trump power to its maximum.

So when should declarer strip the opponents of trumps and when not? After looking at dummy once the opening lead has gone down, declarer must look at his losing tricks and decide how best to make the contract. The general rule is for declarer to draw opposition trump at the earliest opportunity, but this is not always the best path. The next two examples will show when to draw trumps at the earliest opportunity and when to hold off and utilise the trump power later to win losing tricks.

Contract 4 Spades (ten tricks)

	S A K Q 5	
	H 10 8 7	
	D J 10	
	C A K Q 2	
S 3 2		S 9 8 4
H A 9 6 5 3 2		H 4
D 9 7 5 3 2		D 8 6 4
C none		C 9 8 6 5 4 3
	S J 10 7 6	
	H K Q J	
	D A K Q	
	C J 10 7	



Eleven top tricks between N-S hands, but look what can happen.

A of hearts led by W, winning, followed by a low heart led by W trumped

(**ruffed**) by east followed by small club led by E (which can be signalled but more of that later) **ruffed** by west and so on spells instant disaster. There is nothing you can do to stop that sort of attack but with any other lead the contract can be made as long as you get the trumps out first to avoid the danger of the opponents **ruffing in**.

Contract 3 Spades (nine tricks)

	S	10 7 4		
	H	5		
	D	10 9 5 3 2		
	C	8 6 5 3		
S	8 6 5		S	3 2
H	K Q J 10		H	9 8 7 4 2
D	7 4		D	A K Q J
C	K J 10 2		C	Q 7
	S	A K Q J 9		
	H	A 6 3		
	D	8 6		
	C	A 9 4		

Seven top tricks but nine required. If we get the trumps out first we will be left with two losers in H,D and C = 6 tricks and contract defeated by 2 tricks. So we must use some of dummies trumps to eliminate those losers.

With a lead of the K of hearts we win with the ace and play a small heart to be ruffed in dummy back to the A of clubs or spades and ruff another heart in dummy and there are the extra two tricks needed to make the contract.



So you can see that by **creating a void** in dummy you can win tricks with small trumps which otherwise would just fall on declarers A K Q and more or less be wasted. It is important to take a moment once dummy goes down to make a plan in your head as to how you are going to play the hand provided the opponents give you the opportunity.

Section 5: Defenders` play

Before we get into the objectives of defence we need to know a little bit about the scoring. If declarer makes his contract he scores some points and depending



whether it is a **game contract** or **part game contract** he scores more or less; however if he fails the opponents (or as we call them now defenders) score the points and these points are scored per trick that the contract was defeated by. So there is also incentives for defenders to play their best. This little chart

will give you some idea as to how this works.

Scores for part game contracts

Clubs	50 for making contract	(plus 20 for each trick over 6)
Diamonds	50	“ (plus 20 for each trick over 6)
Hearts	50	“ (plus 30 for each trick over 6)
Spades	50	“ (plus 30 for each trick over 6)
NT	50	“ (plus 40 for first trick over 6 and 30 for each subsequent trick)

Scores for game contracts

5 C/D (11 tricks)	100 plus 300	400 (600 vul) plus 20 for each overtrick
4 H/S (10 tricks)	120 plus 300	420 (620 vul) plus 30 for each overtrick
3 NT (9 tricks)	100 plus 300	400 (600 vul) plus 30 for each overtrick

Defeated contracts earn defenders **50 points per trick not vulnerable and 100 points per trick vulnerable**

As you can see playing in a **minor suit** requires taking a lot more tricks than NT for the same score and is therefore the least popular contract to be in.

The HIGH CARD POINTS PLUS DISTRIBUTION POINTS

(which we shall cover later) required between 2 partners to be in a game contract should be , and I say **should** for a reason, because we all break the rules sometimes.

5 C/D	28/29
4 H/S	26/27
3 NT	25/26

So what are the objectives for the defence? The prime objective is to stop declarer making his contract. We know there are 13 tricks to be made so if declarer needs to make 9 to get his contract the defence needs 5 to defeat it.

The bidding or the auction gives clues as to how to tackle the defence. Try to paint a picture of partner's hand when dummy goes down. We will look at this more closely when we start with the bidding. All the techniques that are available to declarer such as ducking--holding up---finessing---establishing long suits are also available to the defenders. The most important aspect of good defence is the **opening lead**. Because we don't have the auction to help us we will look at some standard opening leads against NT contracts.

Leads against NT contracts

Which suit do I lead?

Which card of that suit do I play?

It is important that you and your partner stick to the same methods!!

There are four standard opening leads against NT contracts

- Top of sequence leads **KQJ85 QJ1064 J1098 QJ986**
- Top of interior sequence leads **KJ1096 AQJ106 Q10975**
- Fourth highest of longest & strongest suit **A9753 K1063 KJ842 J954**
- Top of nothing **865 75 9874 643** if you don't have an attractive lead.

These are all good leads for you to know.

Remember the opening lead is one of the most important parts of the game and must not be underestimated and should be understood by the partnership

Now what does defender's partner play, which we call **Third hand play** knowing full well the message of the opening lead?

If the opening lead is the fourth highest, the third hand should always play high to force out a high card in declarers hand.

10 7 3 (1) **K** 8 (2) **A** 9 5
 4 led (3) **Q** **J** 5 (4) **K** **Q** 2
 (5) **Q** 6 (6) **K** **J** 2

Decl.

In (3) and (4) it's not necessary to play the highest. By playing the lower of touching honours you are telling partner you have the higher if declarer doesn't play it. In (3) if declarer plays the A to the J you know he doesn't have the Q or he would have played it.

Q 7 3 (1) **K** 5 (2) **K** **J** 5 depends on dummy
 4 led (3) **A** **J** 6

If the opening lead is from a sequence

K 5 2
 Q led **A** 4 3 only play A if king goes up

 8 6 4
 Q led **K** 5 always play king remember the unblocking chapter

 8 6 4
 K led **A** 5 same applies; play A and unblock

 6 4 3
 J led **K** 8 5 J denies Q so play K. If declarer holds A Q he will
 always make both, but what if partner has A J 10 ?

Remember, it is always a question of **giving you the best possible chance.**

Leads against suit contracts

These very much depend again on the auction, the suits bid by the opposition and also by your partner. We will look at this again a bit later in the lessons but for now we will look at some standard opening leads against suit contracts.

a) Top of an honour sequence **KQJx** **QJ10x** **KQ10x**

b) Singletons

c) Doubletons **A7 J6 10x 86 52** **but not with K6 or Q4**
they may possibly win a trick
on an attempted finesse by declarer.

d) Top of nothing **10xx 742 964**

e) The unbid suit if three suits have been bid by the opponents, lead the fourth suit

f) Sometimes it can be ok to lead a trump if nothing seems to appeal especially if you have good strength in the other three suits

g) **Don't underlead Aces and Kings!**

h) If partner has bid a suit it is often best to lead his suit

i) From three or four to an honour lead the lowest **Qxx K10x**

j) Top of a sequence **J109 1098 J 65**

k) From a holding of small cards lead the highest **984 732 10 53**

l) From a doubleton honour lead the honour **Unblock A3 K5 Q7**

m) When on lead during open play, there is a saying that goes **“lead through strength and up to weakness”** this is something very important for you to learn. It gives your partner the **best possible chance** of winning a trick.

Dummy	S	A Q 10 x	
	H	K 10 x	
	D	J x x x	
	C	x x	
W			E

S

If west was to lead it would be best to play S or H in the hope partner may have the cards in the gaps of dummies S and H. If east was on lead attack D or C with the hope partner has something higher than dummy and declarer. Declarer won't know how high to play.

Not always will you as defender have to decide what to lead but more often than not declarer will be leading either from dummy or his own hand and you as defender will then be known as **second hand player**. As a rule for most instances **second player plays low**.

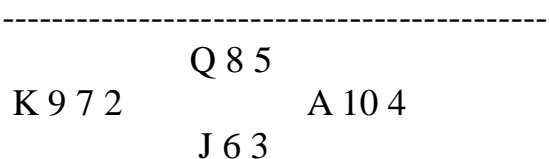


Let's look at some second hand play situations.

- Second hand low

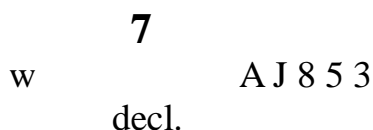
	K74	
A 10 8 3		J 9 5
	Q 6 2	

South leads the 2 west plays low. If he plays A he sets up two tricks for decl.

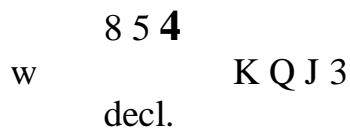


South leads the 3 west plays low and south can not win a trick in that suit. Do not be tempted to rise with a high card as second player **unless!**

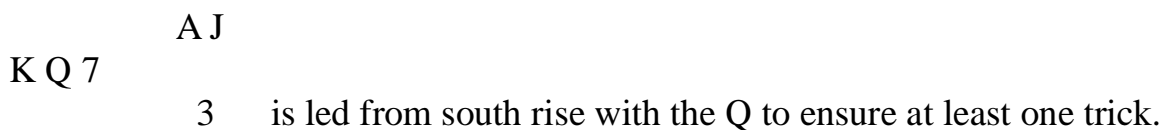
Second hand not so low ----- and why??



With a singleton led from dummy it is best to make sure of the only chance you may get and rise with the Ace declarer may have the K



Play the J. This is a strong holding that could win two tricks and by playing the J wont mislead partner in guessing where K Q are .



	S	K 10		
	H	J 8 2		
	D	K Q J 4		
	C	K Q J 5		
S	8 2		S	9 6 3
H	A K Q 10 5		H	7 6
D	8 6 5		D	10 7 3 2
C	10 7 2		C	A 9 8 4
	S	A Q J 7 5 4		
	H	9 4 3		
	D	A 7		
	C	6 3		

Contract 4 S by south.

Opening lead A hearts followed by K. East plays high/low (7 then 6) showing a doubleton. West could now play a small heart knowing that partner could trump in but in this case plays the Q. Now east gets the opportunity to show a switch to clubs by playing the 9 or 8 of clubs. Contract defeated. Any other lead after the three heart tricks and declarer can run the trumps discard, losing clubs on diamonds and make his contract.

In summary it is said that defence is a difficult part of the game and sometimes it doesn't matter how good the defensive understanding is there will always be contracts that will make that could have been defeated. The main thing is to have some sort of defensive guidelines and to follow them as best as possible. **It is from the costly errors that you will benefit the most.**

Just to finish off this page a few pointers that will help make the partnership a harmonious one.

- Always return partners suit unless the lead indicates differently or declarer or dummy seem to be holding the strength.
- Don't deceive your partner i.e. don't win with the ace if king is also held.
- If in doubt, believe your partner even if the outcome is not successful.
- Try to help your partner; things don't always look the same from the other side of the table.
- Don't criticise your partner ; I'm sure s/he doesn't make mistakes on purpose.
- Don't argue with each other at the table.



Section 7: Bidding

Before we can start to bid we must evaluate our hand. We need to know our hands strength and trick taking potential and find out whether to play in a game contract or part game contract. The primary aim is to bid a game contract if possible. As a rough guide you will need 25 points or more between yours and your partner's hand. As you already know there are 40 points in a deck made up of

A = 4 points K = 3 points Q = 2 points J = 1 point



Bidding is the **language** used between partners to exchange sufficient information to select the best possible contract to be in. Each bid shows a point range or suit length or both. Each subsequent bid must be higher than the previous one.

Opening Bids

The first player to make a bid is called the opener and the requirement for that is 12 or more points.

There are two types of hands either **BALANCED** (also referred to as FLAT) or **UNBALANCED**.

Balanced hands are hands with a 4-3-3-3 / 4-4-3-2 / 5-3-3-2 distribution. They **must not** have voids or singletons and no more than one doubleton.

All other hands are called unbalanced. With unbalanced hands you may open the bidding with 12pts or

11 points if you have a good **five card** suit

10 points if you have **two five card** suits or a **six card** suit.

To be playing in a trump suit you need to have at least an eight card fit (**you and your partner have to have a minimum of eight trumps between you**). If you don't have eight trumps between you and your partner, you should choose to be in a NT contract.

The opener always promises a rebid unless he has opened with a limit bid!!

How to choose your opening bid.

a) Balanced hands 12-14 points you open 1 NT

b) All other hands balanced 15-19 pts or unbalanced 12-19pts you open 1 of your longest suit (20 or more points will be covered later).

You must **never open with less than a four card suit.**

With suits of **4 card suits of equal length** open the **lower** ranking first.

With suits of **5 card suits of equal length** open the **higher** ranking first

If they are not equal length, open the longest suit first.

S	A K Q	S	K Q 6 5	S	4 2	S	K J 5 4 3
H	5 4 3 2	H	K Q 3 2	H	A Q 5 3 2	H	K 2
D	A K Q J	D	A 4 3	D	A K J 4 2	D	A Q 9 8 7
C	6 5	C	Q 7	C	9	C	4

Open 1D

Open 1H

Open 1H

Open 1 S

Response bids

Now we know the requirements for opening, the opener's partner **needs to (must)** respond with 6pts or more. . If the opener has maximum 19 points, then together with partner's 6, they should be in game. If responder has less than 6 points you should pass because the required minimum- 25 points for game- is not there (refer bottom page 14). There is no need to push yourselves beyond the one level if you know the points are not there.

Partner's response bids fall into the following categories

- Limited support response
- Limited NT response
- Change of suit response
- Jump shift response (we will cover this in slam bidding in last chapter)

Let's go through each one of these first response bids and openers rebids.

a) Limited support response

You **must** have at least **4** card support

Single raise (1H--2H) = 6 - 9 pts

Double raise (1H--3H) = 10-12pts

Triple raise (1H--4H) = 13-15pts

Opener can now decide where to go from here according to the points in his own hand. Partner told him everything in one bid hence the term **limit**.

Opener opens 1H - what is your response?

S A 7	S A 7	S A 7
H K J 8 7	H A K Q 5	H 8 7 6 5
D Q 3 2	D Q 3 2	D Q 3 2
C 5 4 3 2	C 6 4 3 2	C 7 4 3 2
3H	4H	2H

b) Limited NT response

A one NT response to a 1 H opener **denies 4 card support** for opener and your hand is flat (balanced). You respond with a no trump bid.

One NT = 6-9pts

Two NT = 10-12pts

Three NT = 13-15pts

Opener once again decides where to go from here. He knows partners point range (**limit bid**).

Opener 1H - what is your response?

S A 7	S A 7 2	S A 7	S A 7
H K 8 7	H K Q 5	H 7 6 5	H 7 6 5 2
D Q J 3 2	D Q 3 2	D Q 4 3 2	D Q 4 3
C 5 4 3 2	C K 4 3 2	C 7 4 3 2	C 7 4 3
2NT	3NT	1NT	2H (4card support!)

After a limit response opener can assess the combined strength of the two hands. If the response is 1NT or a single raise opener has 3 possibilities.

- 12-15pts - there is no game so you should **pass** with balanced hand.
- 16/18pts - you are not sure so make **an invitational bid**. Game is on if responder has maximum 8/9 pts.
- 19pts - there are enough points for game so **bid a game**.

Auction 1H---2H and you as opener hold:

S	A 7	S	A 7	S	A 7
H	A K Q 5	H	A K Q 5	H	A K Q 5
D	Q 3 2	D	Q 3 2	D	Q 3 2
C	5 4 3 2	C	Q 4 3 2	C	A 4 3 2
	Pass		3H (invitational)		4H

Making an invitational bid by opener puts the responsibility back to partner (responder) to decide whether to pass or go to game.

If the auction goes 1H--1NT and you as opener hold:

S	A 7	S	A 7	S	A 7	S	A 7	S	K 9 8
H	A K Q 5	H	A K Q 5	H	A K Q 6	H	A K Q 7 6 5	H	Q J 8 5 3 2
D	Q 3 2	D	Q 3 2	D	Q 3 2	D	A Q 3	D	A Q 5
C	5 4 3 2	C	Q 4 3 2	C	A 4 3 2	C	5 4	C	7
	Pass		2NT (invitational)		3NT		4H		2H

In the last two examples you can be certain partner has at least two if not three hearts so your eight card fit is guaranteed so bid hearts. Its a lot safer to play in a suit contract with such unbalanced hands

c) Change of suit responses.

This is a **forcing bid** in other words opener **must** bid again. Always bid your suit at the lowest available level. This gives you the best possible chance of finding the right contract.



Change of suit response at the one level 1H--1S promises a min. of 6pts.

Change of suit response at the two level 1H--2C promises a min. of 10pts.

With more than one biddable suit respond in your longest.

With two five card suits respond with the higher ranking.

With two four card suits respond with the lower ranking.

Partner opens 1D and you have:

S A J 7 6 5
H A 9 7 6 3
D 8
C Q 2

1S

S A J 7 5
H K 9 8 6
D Q 3
C Q 4 2

1H

S A J 7 5 4
H Q 4
D 2
C A J 4 3 2

1S

S A J 6 5
H K 4
D K 7 6
C Q 6 5 4

1S

With an eight card fit in a major try to play in the major rather than NT.

With an eight card fit in a minor, try to play in NT. More often than not easier to get and requires fewer points and tricks between you .

The following priorities are worth knowing when responding to an opening bid of one in a suit.

- (1) Support a major suit if you can
- (2) Bid a four-card or longer major yourself if you can
- (3) Support partner's minor suit if that is your best bid
- (4) Bid NT with balanced hand and no support for partner's opener
- (5) Bid a four-card or longer minor suit with unbalanced hand

Section 8: Opener`s rebids

As we established a change of suit response **must** be answered by opener which is called a **rebid**. There are four choices of rebid.

- Rebids with support
- Rebids in NT
- Rebids with single suited hand
- Rebids with two suited hand



a) Rebids with support convey a point range and are also limit bids.

12-15pts make a single raise

16-18pts make a double raise

19pts make a triple raise

Lets say the auction starts 1H--1S opener rebids

S A J 7 6
H K Q J 8 7
D 3 2
C 3 2

S A J 8 7
H K Q J 7 5
D A J
C 9 2

S A K Q 7
H A K J 6 5
D Q 9 4
C 7

2S

3S (invitational)

4S

Responder is now in charge as opener`s rebid is a limit bid. Responder now adds opener`s points to his own and will be left with three choices.

Opener	Responder
1H	1S
2S	?

(1) 6-10 pts **pass** not enough pts for game

(2) 13+pts 4S enough pts for game so **bid game**

(3) 11/12 pts unsure so make an **invitational bid** of 3S asking opener to pass with minimum or go to game with maximum. As you can see invitational bids can be made by either partner at any time of the auction.

So using the same auction as above:

S A J 7 6 2
H K 7 2
D Q J 3
C 5 4 3

S A J 7 4
H 6 5 3
D 5 3 2
C K 4 3

S A K J 7 6
H 7 6 5
D A K
C 4 3 2

3S (invitational)

pass

4S

b) Rebids in NT by opener shows a balanced hand and no 4 card support for partner's response. After a sequence 1H--1S opener rebids

- 1NT with 15/16 pts
- 2NT with 17/18 pts
- 3NT with 19 pts

After a sequence 1H--2C opener rebids

- 2NT with 15/16 pts
- 3NT with 17-19 pts

As you can see, partner response of 2C shows a min. of 10 pts. Hence you can bid 2NT with the same pts as 1NT over 1S

After 1H--1S, opener rebids

S	AJ2	S	AJ7	S	AKJ
H	AKJ2	H	AKJ2	H	KQJ7
D	QJ3	D	32	D	A4
C	543	C	KJ32	C	J432

1NT

2NT

3NT

With exactly the same hands but a bidding sequence of 1H--2C, opener would rebid 2NT with the first hand and 3NT with the other two hands.

If opener rebids with 1NT responder has three possibilities

- 6/7 pts he **passes** (not enough pts for game).
- 10 or more pts definitely enough for game so **bid game**.
- 8/9 pts you are not sure so **the invitational bid** comes to the fore again so bid 2NT

Bidding sequence 1H-----1S
1NT ----- ?

S	AJ76	S	A876	S	AJ87	S	AK7643
H	Q65	H	A6	H	A5	H	43
D	82	D	J987	D	Q32	D	K76
C	5432	C	432	C	Q765	C	54

Pass

2NT (invitational

3NT

4S (you can
be sure of 8 card fit)

c) Opener rebids with a single-suited hand which contains a **six** card or longer suit and **no other** four card or longer suit.

After 1H-----1S(1NT/2C/2D)

- 12-15pts -----2H
- 16-18pts-----3H
- 19pts-----4H

S	A J 2	S	A J 7	S	A K
H	A K J 7 6 2	H	A K J 7 6 2	H	K Q J 8 4 3
D	3	D	3 2	D	A 4
C	5 4 3	C	K 2	C	Q 3 2
2 H		3 H		4 H	

Responder again has three possibilities (the pattern keeps reoccurring)

After 1H-----1S or 1NT/2C/2D
2H----- ?

- 6-10 pts not enough for game so **pass**
- 13 or more pts enough for game so **bid game**
- 11-12 you are not sure so make **invitational bid 3H**

Auction goes 1H-----1S
2H-----?

S	A J 7 3	S	A J 7 3	S	A K Q 2
H	Q 4	H	6 5 4	H	K 2
D	8 7 6 5	D	K 3 2	D	Q 6 5 4
C	5 4 3	C	K 3 2	C	J 3 2
Pass		3H (invitational)		4H	

d) Rebids with two suited hands by opener **show one five card suit or longer** and a **second four card suit or longer**. In this chapter we will look at a term called **THE BARRIER** which is the two level of the opening suit bid. So if the opening bid was 1H the barrier is 2H .

A second suit rebid by opener **below the barrier** shows 12 or more pts

A second suit rebid by opener **above the barrier** shows 16+ pts

So with less than 16 pts you **must not** show your second suit above the barrier level or you will be **misleading** your partner.

Auction 1D-----1S
?

S 7 6
H A Q 6 3
D A Q 7 6 5
C 5 2

S 7 6
H 5 2
D A Q 8 6 5
C A Q 6 5

S A 6
H 7
D Q J 8 7 6 5
C K Q J 5

2D

2C

2C

Auction 1H-----2D
?

S A Q 6 5
H A Q 6 5 3
D 6 5
C A 2

S 7 6
H A Q 6 5 3
D A 2
C A Q 3 2

1D-----1S
?

S J 6
H A Q 6 3
D A Q 8 6 5
C A 2

2S

3C

2H

All these rebids by opener are above the barrier level because all the hands contain 16+ pts. It also shows the first suit bid as the longer suit.

Normally opener rebidding a second suit is asking partner to show **preference** or he may be looking for a NT contract.

Choosing which suit you can support better. If you can support both suits equally choose to go back to the first bid suit as it is more likely the longer suit. You will also get the opportunity once again to give opener a point count range

6 - 9 pts give preference at the two level
10-12 pts give preference at the three level (invitational)
13-15 pts give preference at the four level

These preference bids are once again called limit bids.

If you have no support in either of the suits; for instance two weak doubletons but strength in the other two suits bid

10-12 pts 2NT

13 or more pts 3NT

Auction	opener	responder		
	1C	1H		
	1S	?		
S K 8 7	S A K 8 7	S 8 7 5 2	S 6 2	
H A 9 7 5 4	H A 9 7 5 4	H K 9 7 6	H K Q 9 7	
D 8 5	D 8 5	D 8 7	D A Q J 5	
C K 9 6	C K 5	C K Q 3	C 7 3 2	
3C	4S	2S	2NT	

Auction	opener	responder		
	1H	1S		
	2C	?		
S 10 8 5 3 2	S K J 7 5 4	S K J 7 5 4	S K Q J 7 5	
H J 7	H Q 8 5	H Q 8 5	H 7 4	
D 7 6 5 3	D A 9	D A 9	D A Q J 6	
C A Q	C J 9 2	C K J 6	C 6 2	
* 2H	3H	4H	3NT	

*When you give low level preference or as we call it **simple preference** you can occasionally only have a doubleton.

But when you give **jump preference** you must have three of the suit.

If you were to have four of the suit you would have supported opener in the first instance.

When a trump fit has been established and **only in a trump contract** you can upgrade your point count with so called **distributional points**. If your hand contains in any of the other three suits

A doubleton = upgrade 1 pt

A singleton = upgrade 3 pts (just upgrade by 2pts when you are starting out)

A void = upgrade 5 pts (just upgrade by 3 pts when you are starting out)

Use the higher upgrades when you have been playing for a while!



By now you are getting a bit confused, or very confused, or even thinking “I will never get my head around this !” That is totally normal and is experienced by everyone learning to play bridge. Hang in there!

But believe it or not, it does get better and easier, and you'll soon figure out which techniques are important for most hands, and which ones only come up occasionally. It all comes with experience, and playing the game. If it was impossible, we wouldn't have many bridge players in the world. So ignore all feelings of despair, keep smiling, and keep trying.



Section 9: Responding to a 1NT opening

We already know that with balanced hands and 12-14 pts we open 1 NT
Responder knows immediately the combined strength of the two hands and therefore takes control of the auction from here onwards.

Responder's hand will fall into three distinct point ranges

a) 0-10 no chance of game so **pass** or - with a 5 card or longer D/H/S suit - other bid 2D/H/S. This is a sign off called **weakness take-out** and opener **must not** speak again. In other words responder decided the hands will play better in trumps than NT. The weaker the hand the more important the weakness take out becomes. If partner needs to do a weakness take out in clubs, s/he must bid 2C and then 3C.

2 clubs in response to a NT opening is called the STAYMAN CONVENTION and is a special bid – refer below.

b) 11-12 pts. and balanced there will be game if opener has maximum pts. bid 2NT which is invitational and opener will bid 3NT with 14 pts or pass with less. If you hold a four card major you can use **2c STAYMAN** to check for an eight card major fit. Stayman is a convention bid which has nothing to do with clubs at all; it is just asking opener to describe the hand a bit further. It goes something like this.

1NT(12-14pts)	-----	2C (do you have a four card major??)
(1) 2D (no)	-----	2NT
(2) 2H/S (yes H/S	-----	3 or 4 H/S if you have four yourself or back to 2NT or 3NT

c) 13+ pts opposite a 1NT opener there is certainly some game

- With a balanced hand bid 3Nt
- With a four card major use stayman to look for a four card major fit. You can still end up in 3NT if unsuccessful.
- With a six card major go straight to game.
- With a five card major jump to three H or S. This is a **game force** bid and opener must go to 3NT with only two of that major or to 4H/S with three or more in that major
- With a long minor generally opt to play in NT (2 less tricks to make)

Let's have a look at some responses after opener bids 1NT

S 9 8 6 2
H K J 6 2
D 3 2
C 5 4 3

Pass

S 9 8 7 6 5 2
H 8 7
D 5 4 3 2
C 3

2S
(weakness take-out)

S A K 3
H K J 8
D 7 6 5 4
C J 7 6

2NT

S A J 2
H A J 6
D K 10 6 5
C Q J 3

3NT

S A J 7
H A K J 7 6 2
D 3 2
C 3 2

4H

S A Q 9 7 5
H A J 7
D A 4 3
C 3 2

3S

S A J 7
H K Q 5
D Q J 8 7 4
C A 3

3NT

S A Q J 6
H K Q J 4
D 6 4
C J 6 3

2C
(stayman with
game as end result)

This brings us to the end of one level openers ----- response-----rebids----and continuation bidding. Next we will see what happens when the opposition throws their tuppence worth into the auction. Until now there has been no intervention but when that happens it gets really exciting.

Section 10: Intervening bids or overcalls and doubles

After your opponents have opened the bidding your side becomes the **defending side** and any bid you make is called an **overcall or intervening bid**.



Overcalls are made for several different reasons.

1. To be competitive and be in a contract of your own. Contest the auction.
2. To give your partner a lead indication if the opponents win the contract.
3. Disrupt the auction--interfere with their bidding--make them overbid.
4. To “sacrifice” and prevent them from scoring something better.

In this next section we shall look at

- The 1NT overcall
- Simple overcall
- Take-out doubles and penalty doubles

a) The 1NT overcall shows a balanced hand 16-18 pts and a good **stopper** in the opponent's suit. A stopper is a guaranteed trick in that suit.

A 2 K Q K J 7 Q J 8 J 10 6 5

After an opening bid of one D, you hold these hands :

S K J 6	S A Q 7 6	S A J 10
H K J 6 2	H A 7	H K Q 5 2
D A Q 2	D Q J 9 5	D K J 10
C 5 4 2	C K 8 3	C Q J 8

pass

1NT

1NT

Your partner can use exactly the same responses to this overcall as if it was an opening bid of 1NT except these same responses can be made with **four pts fewer** because

1NT opening=12-14pts

1NT overcall =16-18pts

0-6 **pass or weakness take-out** with 5card suit or longer but not 2C (stayman)

7-8 pts **invitational 2NT**, game is on if partner has max.18pts.or you can use

Stayman to look for a major fit. But don't look for a fit in opener's suit.

9+pts bid **3NT** if balanced or again use Stayman for major fit .

or **Four of a major** with a **six** card suit.

or **Three of a major** with five card suit this is game **forcing** to 3NT with a doubleton or four in that major with three card or longer support .

With a long minor you would usually opt to play in 3NT but you may bid three or five of your minor in exactly the same way as you would bid three or four of a major.

Lets look at some examples:

Opener	Partner	Responder	You
1D	1NT	pass	?
S 9 8 6 2	S 9 8 7 6 5 2	S K 4 3	S J 3 2
H K J 6 2	H 8 7	H K J 8	H A J 6
D 3 2	D 5 4 3 2	D 7 6 5 4	D K J 6
C 5 4 3	C 3	C J 7 6	C Q 4 3 2
pass	2S(weakness take-out)	2NT	3NT
S A J 7	S A Q 9 7 5	S A J 7	S A Q 6 3
H K J 7 6 3 2	H A J 7	H K Q 5	H K J 7 5
D 3 2	D 7 4 3	D 3 2	D 7 5
C 3 2	C 3 2	C Q 7 6 5 4	C 10 4 2
4H	3S	3NT	2C (Stayman)

b) Simple overcalls are bids made at the minimum available level.

They always guarantee:

At least a **five** card suit (**that is a must**)

At the one level, shows 8+pts

At the two level, shows 12+pts

After an opening of 1H, you hold:

S	K Q J 7 6	S	K J 6 2	S	K 4 3	S	A 7 6
H	A 5	H	A 7 6	H	A 7	H	7 6
D	6 3 2	D	4 3 2	D	K Q J 9 8 7	D	Q J 7 5 4
C	5 4 3	C	A 7 6	C	7 6	C	K 7 4
	1S		pass		2D		pass

When responding to a simple overcall you bid roughly the same way as when responding to an opening bid however:

- You only need three cards to support partner
- **You must have a stopper in opponents suit to bid NT**
- You need two more pts than you would for the same response to a convention opening bid. 8pts minimum at the 1 level.

Partner makes 1level overcall

Partner makes 2 level overcall

opener	partner	responder	you
1C	1H	pass	?

opener	partner	responder	you
1S	2H	pass	?

2H shows 8-11 pts
 3H shows 12-14 pts
 4H shows 15-17 pts
 1NT shows 8-11 pts
 2NT shows 12-14 pts
 3NT shows 15-17 pts

3H shows 10-12 pts
 4H shows 13-15 pts
 2NT shows 10-12 pts
 3NT shows 13-15 pts



Let's look at some simple responses to partners overcall

Opener 1H	Partner 1S	Responder pass	You ?
S A 6 3	S 9 8 7	S K 4 3	S A J 3 2
H 6 2	H 8 7	H A 8 7	H Q 6 2
D K J 3 2	D A K J 6	D K Q J 8 7	D A K J 7 6
C 9 8 7 6	C K 8 7 6	C 7 6	C 3

2S

2S

3S
(invitational)

4S

S 9 8	S Q 9	S J 7	S 5 2
H K J 7	H A J 7	H K Q 5	H J 10 4
D A J 8 7	D K Q J 6	D A K 7 6	D K J 7 2
C Q 4 3 2	C 5 4 3 2	C Q J 5 2	C J 9 6 2

1NT

2NT
(invitational)

3NT

pass

Opener 1S	Partner 2H	Responder pass	You ?
S A 6	S A 9 8 7	S K 3	S A Q 4
H 8 6 4	H K J 7	H A K 7	H 6 2
D K J 3 2	D 8 7	D 7 5 3 2	D K J 7 6
C 9 8 7 6	C K 8 7 6	D K 8 7 6	C J 8 7 6

pass

3H
(invitational)

4H

2NT
(invitational)

3NT

c) Take-out doubles and penalty doubles

Penalty doubles are made when you believe the opponents will fail to make the contract by two or more tricks and by doubling you can substantially increase your points for defeating the contract. Doubling for penalties will come with playing practice and is best left until you have more confidence. Some examples of **when to double for penalties**



- When the opponents are trying to sacrifice
- When they stagger into NT trying to find a fit in a suit
- After you have pushed them to too high a level trying to sacrifice yourself

The take-out double however is asking your partner to choose a trump suit from the unbid suits. This is also called a convention call (bid).

A take-out double is made after

1. A suit has been bid at the one, two and sometimes three level (see pre-emptive defence in later chapter)
2. At the first opportunity of that players bid
3. Before partner has made a bid (he may have passed already though)

A take-out double shows

1. 12+ pts (really no upper pts. limit)
2. Support for all unbid suits (definitely for the unbid major)
3. A shortage in the opened suit (preferably a void/singleton or doubleton)

Ideal hand shapes for take-out doubles

5-4-4-0 4-4-4-1 5-4-3-1 4-4-3-2

Less ideal but sometimes acceptable 5-3-3-2

A take-out double after a 1NT opener is always intended for

penalties. It shows 16-18 pts and a balanced hand. It is the same as a 1NT overcall and partner can respond accordingly. However unless game is on or a weakness take-out is required partner is best to pass as the strength of the double is equal to opening 1NT and therefore should make 7 tricks and take the opposition down by 1 trick or more.

Your right hand opponent opens 1D and you have

S	A K J 5	S	K J 7 6	S	K Q 5 3	S	A Q 10 8	S	A Q 8
H	K J 6 2	H	A 8 7 6 5	H	8	H	A K Q 6	H	K Q 4
D	3 2	D	none	D	A K J 7	D	8	D	7 4
C	Q 4 3	C	J 9 8 7	C	J 9 7 6	C	A K J 5	C	A 7 6 4 2

double

pass

pass

double

double

As you can see in the last two hands there really is no upper pts limit with doubling it just gives your side **the best chance** to find **the best fit**.

The second hand not quite strong enough but a double wouldn't be a really bad bid; you are guaranteed to find a good fit or push the opponents up too high.

Responding to a take-out double, **YOU MUST BID** even with **NO** points. Bid your longest suit your strength determining the level of your response. With a **choice of suit to respond in always choose a major over a minor**.

If you **respond in NT you must have a stopper** in the opponent's suit.

The only time you are excused from responding to your partner's double is if opener's partner bids before you which in turn makes the double nil and void and you are let off the hook

Opener	Partner	Responder	You
1H	double	pass	must bid
1H	double	1S	may pass

Level of responses in a suit after a take-out double

1. 0-7 pts bid your suit at min. level
2. 8-10 pts make single jump suit response
3. 11/12+ pts make double jump suit response

Level of responses in NT

1. 6-9 pts 1NT must have stopper
2. 10-12 pts 2NT must have stopper
3. 13-15 pts 3NT must have stopper

Let's look at some examples of responding to partners double

Opener	Partner	Responder	You
1D	double	pass	?
(1) S 9 8 6 2	(2) S K J 8 7	(3) S K 4 3	
H J 8 5	H A 8 7	H K Q J 7 6	
D 3 2	D 8 7 6	D Q 6 4	
C 5 4 3 2	C Q 7 6	C 7 3	

1S	2S	3H
(4)S J 3 2 H A J 2 D K J 6 C Q 4 3 2	(5) S A 8 3 H K J 6 D J 10 9 7 C 5 3 2	(6) S A 7 5 H A J 7 D K Q 10 C J 4 3 2
2NT	1NT	3NT
(7) S J 9 6 5 H K 6 D 10 7 4 C K Q 4 3	(8) S J 9 6 5 H K 6 D A 7 C Q 8 7 6 3	(9) S A 6 5 H K Q 7 6 5 D A 7 2 C 8 3
2S	2S	4H

Pick major over minor in (7) and (8) even though minor is longer or stronger.
 With 13 points or more in an **unbid** major go straight to game as in (9).

Section 11: Strong opening two bids

We have two different types of strong opening two-bids

- 2NT balanced hand 20-22 pts
- 2C 20+pts unbalances or 23+ balanced
 - may have nothing to do with clubs
 - this is a convention bid



a) **2NT** opening has got the same characteristics (4-3-3-3,4-4-3-2,5-3-3-2) as the 1NT opening but the point count is 20 -22. It is a non forcing opening limit bid.

All responses are game forcing. To respond you need only 4 to 5 points. There is no weakness take-out but you can use 3C as Stayman convention provided you have that understanding with your partner.

Responses with 4/5+ pts are

1. **3NT** with balanced hand
2. **4** of a major with a six card major suit
3. **3** of a major with a five card major suit (**game forcing**) opener supports with **three** in that suit
4. With a minor you opt to play in NT when possible.

After a 2NT opener

S 9 8 6 2	S 9 8 7 6 5 2	S K 4 3	S K J 9 8 7 4
H K 9 6 2	H 8 7	H K J 8	H J 6
D 3 2	D 5 4 3 2	D 7 6 5 4	D Q 8 5
C 5 4 3	C 3	C J 7 6	C 4 3

Pass

pass or 4S

3NT

4S

With the 2nd hand there is no weakness take out and its highly likely that both 2NT and 4S will fail but that's just how it is sometimes!

S A J 7	S 6 3	S K J 6 5
H K J 6 3 2	H 7	H 10 5 4 3
D 4 3 2	D A 6 4 3	D Q J 4 2
C 3 2	C Q J 8 7 6 5	C 5

3H

5C

3C (stayman)

c) **The 2C opening** is the powerhouse hand and is pretty rare. It is a completely artificial (**conventional**) bid. **IT MUST NEVER BE PASSED**. It says nothing about C and is completely forcing to game. Normally the point count is 23+ but again some powerful distributional hands may have less.

The first duty responding to 2C is to show point count.

With **less than 8** pts you make the **convention 2D** bid. This is the **negative** response. After 2D you are still obliged to bid until game is reached unless opener rebids 2NT which is the only bid you are allowed to pass remembering that **2 points is all you need for game**.

All responses other than 2D are positive (8+pts). **Bidding must not stop** until game is reached and slam becomes quite likely.

Respond in new suit with five card suit but with five D you must respond at the 3 level (2D being negative).

With no five card suit, respond 2NT (positive after 2C opener). You are excused from having stoppers in all suits for your partner has all the points.

Opener 2C and you hold

S	9 8 6 2	S	J 6 5	S	K 7 2	S	3 2
H	9 8 6 2	H	K Q J 9 8	H	Q 8 7	H	A 6 2
D	3 2	D	Q 3 2	D	J 9 8	D	K Q J 9 8
C	5 4 3	C	3 2	C	Q J 9 8	C	Q 4 3

2D

2H

2NT

3D

Opener rebids with balanced hand

1. 23-24pts 2NT
2. 25-26pts 3NT

With unbalanced hand rebid

1. The longest suit
2. The higher ranking of two equal length suits

Auction 2C -----2D what is your rebid with

S	A K J 8	S	K Q J 8	S	A K Q 3	S	K Q J 9 8
H	K J 6	H	A K Q 6	H	K Q	H	A K Q 8 7
D	A K J	D	A K 6	D	7	D	A K
C	K J 8	C	A 9	C	A K Q J 5 2	C	A
	2NT		3NT		3C		2S

The only bid you as responder may pass now is 2NT with less than 2pts or 3NT because game has been reached. You must not pass 3C or 2S.

Section 12: Pre-emptive Opening bids

Opening two and three level bids and jump overcalls are also known as **pre-emptive** bids. This is a **weak hand** not strong enough to open at the one level and promises a six card suit (opening at 2 level) or a seven card suit (opening at 3 level) and 6-10 pts. It is an effective bid to try and stop the opponents finding a fit denying them bidding space or even shutting them out of the auction even though they may have the majority of points and a possible game contract. They may double for penalties but rarely score as much than the value of a missed game contract. . It may be a sacrifice bid so beware bidding this if you are vulnerable and the opposition is non vulnerable eg 2 light doubled = -500 whereas game to them is -420.

Opening two bids (2S/ 2H/ 2D) look like this

S 6 5
H K J 10 9 8 6
D Q 7 6
C 5 4

2H

S 9 8
H 8 4
D Q J 10 7 5 3
C A 6 4

2D

S K Q 10 9 8 6
H 7 4
D A 8 5
C 8

2S



Opening three bids (3S/ 3H/ 3D/ 3C) look like this

S 6 5
H K Q J 9 8 6 5
D J 7 6
C 4

3H

S 9 8
H 4
D Q J 10 7 5 3 2
C A 6 4

3D

S K J 10 9 8 6 3
H 7 4
D A 8 5
C 8

3S

You may also use a pre-emptive bid as an overcall but be certain you jump two levels with a six card suit eg 1C----- 2H, 1D-----2S



Or three levels with a 7 card suit

eg 1D-----3H 1H-----3S 1H-----4D 1S-----4H

A pre-emptive 7 card suit hand will generally take about six maybe seven tricks.

Responding to a pre-empt requires a **very good hand** or **support for partner**. If neither is the case your best bet is to pass.

With partner support but not a very good hand it is almost certain that game is on for the opposition so by raising the pre-empt it will make it even more difficult for the opponents to find their proper contract even though you will fail.

To raise a pre-empt constructively you require a minimum of four tricks preferably five. Combinations such as A.....AK.....KQJ....QJ109 provide tricks but scattered points do not.

Partner opens 3H

(1) S	A 9 4	(2) S	J 4 3	(3) S	K 10 4	(4) S	K J 9 3
H	5	H	A 10 2	H	3 2	H	4
D	A K 10 7 6	D	8 4	D	A 9 8	D	A K 4
C	A J 5 3	C	K 8 7 6 2	C	Q J 5 2	C	K 10 9 6 3
	4H		4H		pass		pass

Be extremely careful of going into NT contracts because communication between the two hands most often proves to be difficult. As tempting as it might be to go to NT with (1) 4H will almost certainly make. (2) will almost certainly fail but will stop the opposition scoring something better. In (3) and (4) you simply don't have enough tricks. In fact you hope the opposition does bid then your hands could make things rather difficult for them.

How do we defend against pre-emptive bids?

As we have established the bidding space has been taken away from you so its imperative you can describe your hand accurately with one bid at the lowest possible level. There are four possibilities of doing that.

- 14-18 pts and a good five card suit: make a **simple overcall** at the next available level
- 17 or more pts and a good six card suit: make a **jump overcall**
- 14 or more pts and a shortage in openers suit and support for the other three suit: make **double for take out**
- 16 or more pts and a balanced hand with a **good** stopper in the pre-emptive opener: shut your eyes and bid 3NT.

A double over a pre-emptive opener - even though it is at the three level - is not for penalties. (See section on take-out doubles)

Let's look at some defensive approaches

Right hand opponent opens 3H and you hold:

(1)S	A K J 8	(2)S	K Q 7 6	(3)S	K Q J 8 7	(4)S	A K 8
H	8 7	H	8 7	H	3 2	H	A J 10 3 2
D	A Q 7 6	D	K J 9 8	D	A Q 7 6	D	9 8
C	Q 9 8	C	A 3 2	C	Q 6	C	8 4 3
	Double		Pass		3S		Pass

With hand (2) you would double 1H but not 3H (not enough pts)

With hand (4) you hope partner doubles for take out which you would pass for penalties. Whatever the case may be the best chance is to take the opposition down. With hand (3) you are asking partner to go to game with 11/12pts. 3S is (invitational)

(5)	S	A Q 10 7 6 3	(6)	S	K Q 5
	H	8		H	A 9 2
	D	A K 7		D	A J 9 4 3
	C	A J 8		C	K 3
	4S			3NT	

With hand (5) you don't want to take the risk of missing out on game.

With hand (6) you are hoping for partner to come up with 7 or more pts and 3NT (**shut your eyes bid**) will have a reasonable chance of making.

Section 13: Slam bidding

Slam bidding is the undertaking of winning 12 tricks (small slam) or thirteen tricks (grand slam). There are substantial bonuses to be scored additional to the game bonuses. Slams are a lot of fun to play but you must be careful with your bidding. Slam bidding is a vast subject and a lot of it will come with experience.



In this course we will look at two basic requirements for slam.

For a small slam (1) 33/34 pts
(2) at least three aces

For grand slam (1) 37 pts
(2) all four aces

After two or three bids, and sometimes straight after the opening bid you may realise slam values are present but **don't try for slam unless the partnership knows there are at least 30 points or better**. With 33 points the opposition can not hold two aces.

The jump shift response is a bid by responder made **in a new suit** and **one level higher than is necessary**. Do not confuse this with a double raise in opener's suit which is a limit support bid). After openers 1H the following are considered jump shift responses 2S----3C----3D. Jump shift responses show **16+points**. It is an immediate signal to opener that slam may be within reach.

S A K 9 7 3	1S --- 3C	S Q J 8 2
H K Q J 5	3H --- 4S	H 6 3
D 4	6S --- pass	D A K 7
C K J 4		C A Q 9 2

Responder could simply bid 4S but as we know that would be a limit raise and with this hand we must **show our strength first** (bidding is **NOT** going to stop before game is reached!).

3C shows 16+pts and a four card club suit.

3H shows a four card heart suit and **keeps the bidding open**.

4S shows four card spade support. With opener's 17pts he knows there are a minimum of 33pts in the partnership and the opponents can only have at the most one ace so bidding slam is the answer.

However if we change the openers point count slightly.....

S	A K 9 7 3	1S	---	3C	S	Q J 8 2
H	K Q 8 5 2	3H	---	4S	H	6 3
D	4	??	---		D	A K 7
C	K 4				C	A Q 9 2

Now the partnership may only have 31pts from the opener's view point and the partnership needs to find out how many aces they hold between them and a convention bidding sequence is used for that. There are two conventions you can use and the partnership must have an understanding as to which one they will use. They are called ace (king) asking conventions.

Ace asking Blackwood convention

Let's look at the blackwood convention first. It is a bid of 4 NT and not a natural bid. It is asking partner **how many aces do you have?????**

4NT ----- 5C means NO aces or all FOUR aces
 5D means ONE ace
 5H means TWO aces
 5S means THREE aces

BLACKWOOD

It is always obvious from looking at your own hand and by reviewing the bidding whether 5C means none or all four aces. Lets look at the previous hand .

S	A K 9 7 3	1S	---	3C	S	Q J 8
H	K Q 8 5 2	3H	---	4S	H	6 3
D	4	4NT	---	5H	D	A K 7
C	K 4	6S	---	pass	C	A Q 9 2

4NT Blackwood how many aces do you have??

5H is saying two aces and has no relation to hearts at all.

So all four aces are there, so slam is bid in S.

Another example for Blackwood.

S	A Q 7 6	1C	---	1S	S	K J 9 5 3
H	9 3	3S	---	4NT	H	A K 8 5
D	K 5	5H	---	6S	D	8
C	A K 7 4 2	pass			C	Q J 10

Openers 3S shows 16-18 pts 4 card spade support and at least five clubs.

Responder sees a good trump fit in spades and a good fit in clubs at least 30 pts and possibly enough for twelve tricks and unless opponents have two aces slam will be a good prospect. So 4NT is asking for aces 5H shows two aces and slam is bid.

So the logical order of thought to bid slam is

- (1) the partnership finds a fit or balanced hands for NT
- (2) one player realises the total strength of the partnership and the twelve trick capability.
- (3) maybe the opponents have an ace or two **LET'S CHECK!**

After establishing the number of aces held bidding 5NT would be asking for kings and the responses are the same

6C = NONE or FOUR kings

6D = ONE king

6H = TWO kings

6S = THREE kings

However this step is only taken if looking for grand slams for the responses are already at the slam level and can sometimes force you into bidding a grand slam when it would be safer to just be in slam. For instance you are looking for a grand slam in clubs and you are getting a king response of 6D = one king which might leave you two kings short you can't leave the contract in 6D and your only escape route is to bid 7C. So generally speaking when using **BLACKWOOD**, King asking is not used.

Ace asking Gerber convention

This is a system used by some; we are no longer teaching it as part of NZ bridge lessons. However you may come across it.....

Responses to Gerber 4C are :

4D = NONE or ALL aces

4H = ONE ace

4S = TWO ace

4NT = THREE aces

Asking for kings with 5C:

5D = NONE or ALL kings

5H = ONE king

5S = TWO kings

5NT = THREE kings

As you can see if the given response is not what is required for bidding slam you are able to bail out by leaving your contract at the 4 or 5 level provided it is in the suit you have a fit in.

Section 14: Bridge Etiquette



This is a very important part of bridge and something you should read often and become familiar with!

So here are some Do's and Don'ts

- Always be courteous to your partner and opponents.
- Always welcome new opponents coming to your table don't ignore them through your own discussion you may be having.
- Always thank dummy after he or she has put the hand down.
- Never argue with your partner or your opponents.
- Never discuss previous boards or hands once your new opponents have come to your table.
- **KEEP YOUR VOICE DOWN AT ALL TIMES!!**
There are lots of other people in the room trying to concentrate.
- Acknowledge when your partner or opponent has played well but don't cheer and clap or high five! Remember, the opponents may be feeling bad as they have made a mistake or played badly. Don't rub it in!
- **DON'T BE A SLOW PLAYER!** This is viewed as inconsiderate and rude to take too long to make a bid or play a card! As difficult as it may be to make the right decision when you first start to play bridge, just tell yourself to **GET ON WITH IT.** It is better to get it wrong and make a mistake than to ponder too long. The longer you take with your thinking the more confused you'll become and it is from your mistakes that you learn the most.
- Any problems or if a breach of the rules occurs, call the director....
"Director please!"



The more mistakes you make and the faster you make them the more you will learn and improve your bridge!

Section 15: Rules

The following rules usually apply but **do not follow them blindly**. Discretion is the name of the game!!

- Mistakes are positive...
- Lead partner's bid suit
- Return partner's lead
- Never under lead an Ace or a King
- Second player plays low
- Third player plays high
- Lead through strength and up to weakness
- Lead the top of a sequence (internal sequence)
- Lead a singleton
- Signal a doubleton by playing high --low
- Signal 3 of a suit with MUD middle-up-down
- Lead top of nothing
- Lead 4th highest of longest and strongest suit against NT
- Protect your entries in the hand you need them
- Discard high --encouraging; low -- discouraging or whatever your partnership understanding demands.
- Never pass after a forcing bid from partner unless opponents intervened
- Opener promises a rebid except after
 - opening 1 NT
 - opening 3rd or 4th in hand
 - after partners limit bid (NT or suit raises)



NOTES