

LESSON 9

Negative Doubles



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GENERAL CONCEPTS

The Negative Double

This lesson covers the use of the negative double by responder when there is an overcall of partner's opening suit bid. The students should be familiar with two other doubles – the takeout double and the penalty double. This lesson introduces a third use for the double. For most students, understanding the concept of the negative double should not be difficult.

During the lesson, it's important to emphasize the flexibility of the double and the necessity for firm partnership agreements to avoid confusion. While the negative double has become one of the most commonly used and misused conventions, it is a “must-have” convention in our Standard American/five-card major system.

Bidding

The Negative Double

- Applies only after a one-level suit opening bid by partner and an overcall in another suit by the next opponent.
- Shows support for the two unbid suits.
- The double should always promise four-card support for an unbid major.
- A negative double of a one-level overcall promises at least 6 points.
- A negative double of a two-level overcall promises at least 8 total points.

Responder's Bids

- The negative double is used to look for 4–4 fits.
- A suit bid tends to show a five-card or longer suit.
- After a 1♥ overcall of a minor suit opening, responder bids 1♠ with a five-card spade suit and makes a negative double with a four-card spade suit.
- Without the strength to introduce a five-card suit at the required level, responder starts with a negative double, planning to bid the suit at the next opportunity.

Negative Double through what level?

- SAYC (Standard American Yellow Card) says negative doubles apply through 2♠.
- Negative doubles can be used through much higher levels.
- The level is ultimately decided through partnership agreement.

Doubling for Penalty

As soon as you introduce the negative double, students want to know what happens when they want to make a penalty double of the overcall. This is actually the most challenging part of the lesson, since it involves a reopening (balancing) double. Many of the students may not have heard of this type of double. The key to a proper balancing double is shortness in the opponent's suit. The student text, as well as the *Learn to Play Bridge 2* program, provides a number of guidelines to determine the best action in the balancing position.

Opener's Rebid

- Opener assumes responder has support for both unbid suits and enough strength to compete based upon the level required for opener's minimum rebid.
 - With a minimum-opening bid, rebid at the cheapest available level.
 - With a medium-strength hand, jump a level.
 - With a maximum-strength hand, go to game.

Responder's Rebid after Making a Negative Double

- With a minimum hand (6 to 9 total points),
 - Pass opener's minimum rebid.
 - Give a simple preference to opener's original suit, or
 - Bid a new suit without a jump.
- With an invitational-strength hand (10 or 11 total points)
 - Bid again to invite opener to game.
- With a maximum hand of 12 or more points,
 - Bid game.

Play & Defense**Negative doubles in action**

The deals in this lesson show the negative double in action. Since the bidding concepts may be new, the emphasis is on the auction and getting to the appropriate contract. It will be difficult to control the actual final contract when the students find themselves in a competitive situation. The format is different — suggesting bids and plays — since the students will begin to use judgment and may achieve different results. Be sure to review the bidding carefully and discuss the play and defense only after everyone is assumed to be in the appropriate final contract.

Challenging play concepts

- Handling suit combinations
- Trump management
- Dummy reversal

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

“So far you have learned two uses for a double. The first is a penalty double – you don’t believe your opponents can make their contract, so you double them and hope to collect a nice penalty. The second double is the takeout double – your opponent has opened the bidding, and you double, asking your partner to bid.

“Today we will learn another use for a double which is officially called the negative double.”

GROUP ACTIVITIES

EXERCISE ONE: The Negative Double

Introduction

“Listen to this auction. North opens the bidding with 1♦, East overcalls with 1♠, and South says “double.” Historically, this “double” signified penalty. In the 1950’s, Alvin Roth and Tobias Stone said there was a better use for the double in this situation. Originally called the Sputnik Double, the convention they created is known as the negative double and is one of the most popular and effective conventions ever devised. The negative double now has replaced the penalty double at low levels in standard bidding. Let’s see how it works.

“Open a deck of cards at the table, and everyone take a suit. Let’s put the following hand on the table and make it South’s hand.”

Call the cards by saying, “In spades, give South two small cards, etc.” Remember that it is the high cards and distribution that matter in this lesson. As the bidding examples are plentiful, you may want to have your students use bidding boxes so they can follow the lesson more easily.

South’s hand: ♠ 7 2
 ♥ A Q 8 5
 ♦ 8 5 3
 ♣ Q 10 9 7

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♦	Pass	1♥

“Let’s suppose North opens the bidding with 1♦. What do you plan on bidding? (1♥.) South doesn’t have much, just eight high-card points, but game is still possible if North has a good hand. The auction would proceed until a final contract is reached.

“Let’s change the bidding just a bit. This time after North opens the bidding, East makes an overcall of 1♠. What are South’s options now over this interference?”

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1 ♠	1 ♣	?

“With eight high-card points, South cannot bid a suit at the two-level and cannot bid 1NT without a spade stopper. Another possible call is to pass, but this would not give North any indication of South’s strength and desire to compete for the final contract. This is the situation where we will use the negative double.

“A negative double is similar to a takeout double in that it is rare to want to double an opponent’s one-level or two-level bid for penalty. Responder’s double of an opponent’s low-level overcall is for takeout and shows support for the unbid suits with enough strength to compete.

“Following this definition, we can see with the hand on the table that South has four cards in each of the unbid suits – hearts and clubs – and enough strength for the partnership to compete to the two level. South has the perfect negative double.

“Let’s change the bidding once again.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1 ♠	3 ♣	?

“This time East overcalls 3 ♣. There is an upper limit of 2 ♣ for an overcall if responder’s double is to be defined as negative. This is the established upper-level limit in Standard American bidding. However, there is nothing to prevent a partnership from playing negative doubles through higher levels of the bidding. If the overcall is at a higher level than agreed upon by the partnership, then the double would be for penalty.

“Let’s change the bidding again.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1 ♠	2 ♣	?

“This time East overcalls with 2 ♣. Can South still make a negative double? (Yes.) You can see that South is forcing North to bid at the three level (unless North decides to rebid notrump), so the South hand needs to have at least eight total points. A negative double of a one-level overcall promises at least six total points. A negative double of a two-level overcall, as in this instance, promises at least eight total points.

“Let’s change the hand a bit. Add the ♠Q and ♠8 and take away the ♣Q and ♣10.

South’s hand: ♠ Q 8 7 2
 ♥ A Q 8 5
 ♦ 8 5 3
 ♣ 9 7

“This time North opens the bidding with 1 ♠ and East overcalls with 2 ♣.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♦	2♣	?

“Again, South can make a negative double to show both majors. In fact, a negative double promises at least four cards in all of the unbid major suits. When there are no unbid major suits, a negative double suggests at least four cards in both minor suits.

“Once again, let’s make a change to South’s hand. Take away the ♠7 and ♠2 and replace them with the ♣J and ♣4. Take away the ♥A and ♥Q and replace them with the ♦A and ♦J.

South’s hand: ♠ Q 8
 ♥ 8 5
 ♦ A J 8 5 3
 ♣ J 9 7 4

“This time North opens the bidding with 1♥ and East overcalls with 1♠.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♥	1♠	?

“You have nine total points and cannot bid on the two-level, but this hand is perfect for a negative double. Again, don’t forget you need support for both unbid suits – the minors in this case.

“Let make some changes to this hand. Add the ♥K and ♥J and take away the ♦A and ♦J.

South’s hand: ♠ Q 8
 ♥ K J 8 5
 ♦ 8 5 3
 ♣ J 9 7 4

“This time the bidding goes like this. North opens the bidding with 1♣ and East overcalls with 1♦.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♣	1♦	?

“Remember, negative doubles promise four cards in each major. For the responder to bid a new major suit at the one-level, all responder needs is at least four cards in the suit and at least six total points. Regardless of whether an overcall or a takeout double is made, the bid of a new suit at the one level by the responder has the same requirements it would have over a pass by the opponents. So, South’s bid is 1♥.

“Let’s remove this hand from the table and create a totally new hand. Give South the following cards:

South’s hand: ♠ A Q 8 5
 ♥ 8 3
 ♦ Q J 7
 ♣ K 9 5 3

“North opens the bidding with 1 ♦. When you hear North’s bid, you know your partnership has enough total points for game. The question is what is the correct strain? However, East interferes and overcalls 1 ♥.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1 ♦	1 ♥	?

“Again, your hand is perfect for a negative double. As we established before, there is a minimum point requirement for making a negative double, but there is no maximum point requirement. So, making a negative double with an opening hand is totally appropriate.

“Let’s change this hand slightly. Take away a small diamond and add another small spade.

South’s hand: ♠ A Q 8 5 4
 ♡ 8 3
 ♦ Q J
 ♣ K 9 5 3

“With the same bidding – 1 ♦ by North and a 1 ♥ overcall by East – the overcall has provided a unique opportunity for South to show partner a hand that has five spades. South does this by bidding 1 ♠ instead of making a negative double. In other words, the heart overcall allows South to tell North whether the hand has a four-card or a five-card spade suit.

“So, after hearing partner open a minor suit followed by an overcall of 1 ♥ by the opponents, you make a negative double with four spades and bid 1 ♠ with a five-card suit.

“Let’s change the hand once again. Switch the cards in the spade and heart suits.

South’s hand: ♠ 8 3
 ♡ A Q 8 5 4
 ♦ Q J
 ♣ K 9 5 3

“This time North opens 1 ♦ and East overcalls 1 ♠. What should South bid now? (2 ♥.)

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1 ♦	1 ♠	?

“South should bid 2 ♥. After an overcall, a new suit bid at the two-level or higher shows at least 11 total points. If the new suit is a major, the responder must have at least a five-card suit to take this action. If the responder’s hand is appropriate for bidding a new major suit at the two level or higher, the responder should make the bid and not use the negative double. This is an important adjunct to our guidelines for using negative doubles. But what if South doesn’t have the required 11 total points?

“Take away the ♣K and replace it with a small club. Replace the ♦J with a small diamond.

South’s hand: ♠ 8 3
 ♥ A Q 8 5 4
 ♦ Q 2
 ♣ 9 5 3 2

“Now what do you bid? (Double.) Given the same auction with North opening 1♦ and East overcalling 1♠, you do not have enough points to freely bid 2♥. You must begin with a negative double, and perhaps you will get an opportunity to show your five-card suit later in the bidding.

“Once again let’s change the hand. Take away a small club and add the ♠J. Take away a small diamond and add the ♥J.

South’s hand: ♠ J 8 3
 ♥ A Q J 8 5 4
 ♦ Q
 ♣ 9 5 3

“North opens with 1♦, and East overcalls 1♥. It looks like South would like to make the rare penalty double of a one-level overcall.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♦	1♥	?

“When you want to make a penalty double of an opponent’s overcall, you should pass! When a partnership is using negative doubles and an opponent’s overcall is passed around to the opener, the bidding should be reopened with a double if the opener is short in the opponent’s suit. This would be a reopening double, which also is called a balancing double, because if the opener should now pass, the bidding would have ended. It is beyond the scope of this lesson to delve into balancing doubles per se, but please consult your text for the guidelines that will help you understand further how negative doubles and balancing doubles work together.”

Instructions

“Open your textbook to Exercise One in Chapter Nine. What would East respond with each of the following hands after the auction starts:”

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♣	1♥	?	

- ♠ A 8 4 2
 ♥ 8 5
 ♦ K Q 8 7
 ♣ 10 9 8

Double. With support for both unbid suits, the best action is to begin with a negative double.

2. ♠ K Q 8 5 3
♥ 4 2
♦ A J 10 8
♣ 7 4
- Bid 1♠. When you bid spades over an overcall of 1♥ you promise five spades. This is the perfect hand to show your five-card spade suit.
3. ♠ A 7 3
♥ K J 8
♦ J 10 9 8
♣ 7 4 3
- Bid 1NT. The 1NT bid describes East's hand accurately.
4. ♠ K 10 5 4
♥ 9 4
♦ J 4
♣ K J 8 3 2
- Double. Although East doesn't have support for diamonds, East can support clubs if West picks diamonds and not spades.
5. ♠ A Q 4 2
♥ A Q 10
♦ Q 7 4
♣ 8 5 4
- Bid 3NT. Do not think of trying to double for penalties. East's hand has strong hearts, but not enough cards in the suit. Settle for game.
6. ♠ 8 4
♥ K J 10 9 8 4 2
♦ K 9
♣ Q 3
- Pass. A double would be for takeout. East's best chance to get a good score is to pass and hope that West will reopen with a double. East then will convert the double to penalty by passing.

Follow-up

Go through each of the hands, making sure your students understand how negative doubles fit into their bidding structure.

Conclusion

“When partner opens the bidding with one of a suit and the next player overcalls in another suit through the 2♠ level, a double by responder is a negative double. This bid is meant as takeout and not penalty.

“A negative double shows at least four cards in all of the unbid major suits. When there are no unbid major suits, the negative double suggests at least four cards in both minor suits.

“After a 1♣ or 1♦ opening and a 1♥ overcall, a negative double shows exactly four spades and a 1♠ response promises at least five spades.

“A negative double of a one-level overcall promises at least 6 total points.

“A negative double of a two-level overcall promises at least 8 total points.

“If responder doesn’t have enough strength to introduce a five-card suit at the required level, responder starts with a negative double, planning to bid the suit at the next opportunity.

“When there is an overcall followed by two passes, opener reopens (balances) the bidding with shortness in the opponent’s suit, even with a minimum-strength hand. This essentially is a takeout double, but responder can now pass for penalty with length and strength in the opponent’s suit.”

EXERCISE TWO: Opener's Rebid after a Negative Double**Introduction**

“When responder makes a negative double, the opener has easy guidelines to follow to determine the proper rebid. With a minimum-strength hand, opener chooses a rebid at the cheapest available level. Actually, opener may pass if the next opponent bids or redoubles after the negative double.

“With a medium-strength hand, opener jumps a level or bids further in competition. With a maximum-strength hand, opener makes sure the partnership gets to game – even employing a cuebid of the opponent's suit if necessary.

“Let's see how this all fits together by placing the following hand on the table.

North's hand: ♠ 4 3
 ♥ K Q 8 4
 ♦ A 4
 ♣ A 10 9 8 7

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1 ♣	1 ♠	Double
Pass	?		

“North opens the bidding with 1 ♣. East interferes with an overcall of 1 ♠ and South says “Double.” West passes. What would North rebid? (2 ♥.) In this sequence, North's rebid of 2 ♥ is not a reverse. South's bid implies that South has at least four hearts.

“Let's change the hand. Take away a small club and replace it with the ♣K. Again, the bidding remains this same, but does your rebid remain the same? (No, you should rebid 3 ♥ with this medium-strength hand.)

North's hand: ♠ 4 3
 ♥ K Q 8 4
 ♦ A 4
 ♣ A K 10 9 8

“Let's make another change. Take away a small diamond and replace it with the ♦K. Now what should North's rebid be? (4 ♥ with this maximum hand.)

North's hand: ♠ 4 3
 ♥ K Q 8 4
 ♦ A K
 ♣ A K 10 9 8

“Now take away a small heart and the ♣K and replace them with the ♠K and a small spade. When you saw this hand, you were planning on opening 1♣ and jumping a level in notrump to show your 19 HCP hand. But remember how the bidding has gone:

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♣	1♠	Double
Pass	?		

North's hand: ♠ K 4 3 2
♥ K Q 8
♦ A K
♣ A 10 9 8

“So what will you bid? (2NT.)

“Take away North's hand and put a new hand on the table.

North's hand: ♠ A 9 5 4
♥ 8 3
♦ A Q 10 9 4
♣ K 6

“The bidding now goes:

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♦	2♥	Double
Pass	?		

“The higher the level of competition, the more opportunity there is to defeat the opponent's contract. Remember, responder needs to be stronger to make a negative double at the two-level. However, the negative double is still meant as a takeout bid. What should North rebid? (With a minimum hand, North should rebid 2♠.)

“Let's keep the hand the same, but let's change the bidding.

“The bidding now goes:

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♦	1♥	Double
2♥	?		

“Does North's rebid of 2♠ stay the same? (Yes.) Bidding at the cheapest level doesn't promise extra values. With a stronger hand, North could jump in the bidding. If opener's right-hand opponent bids after responder's negative double, opener no longer has to bid. Passing essentially means that opener has nothing valid to say.

“Let's do an exercise. Will each table please work together as a team to try to display a hand for North that would have to pass given this same bidding.”

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1 ♦	1 ♥	Double
2 ♥	?		

This may be a difficult but fun task for your class. Remember to look and evaluate each table. Depending on the size of your class, you may want to have the students from each table get up and look at the hands at the other tables.

“Let’s change the bidding a bit.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1 ♦	2 ♥	Double
Pass	?		

“This time, class, work at each table to create a hand for North that would pass South’s negative double, converting the double to a penalty double.”

Your students should have fun with this. Get them up and moving around and discuss the hands your students display. Don’t expect them to be accurate. They should remember one of the key things in converting a negative double to a penalty double is vulnerability. They don’t want to get 300 points for a two trick set, if the opponents are non vulnerable and they can make a vulnerable game.

Instructions

“Open your text to Exercise Two in Chapter Nine. What does West rebid with each of the following hands after the auction begins?”

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1 ♠	2 ♣	Double	Pass
?			

1. ♠ A 8 4 3 2
♥ K J 9 5
♦ A 7
♣ J 8

2 ♥. East has promised the unbid suits. Bid the heart suit at the lowest level with this minimum-strength hand.

2. ♠ K Q 8 4 3
♥ K 4
♦ A K J 10
♣ 8 3

3 ♦. East promised diamonds in addition to hearts. You prefer diamonds and have a medium-strength hand. A re-bid of 2 ♦ would show a minimum-strength hand.

3. ♠ A J 10 5 4
♥ K 3
♦ J 9 3
♣ K Q 10

2NT. West doesn’t have a fit with either of East’s suits, but does have clubs stopped. Bidding notrump at the cheapest available level shows a minimum-strength hand.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>4. ♠ A K J 10 4 3
♥ Q 4
♦ K 8 3
♣ 7 2</p> | <p>2♠. Opener tends to rebid a suit if that's what opener always planned on doing</p> |
| <p>5. ♠ K Q J 9 4
♥ A Q J 9
♦ A K 9
♣ 8</p> | <p>4♥. West has a maximum-strength hand in support of hearts and needs to jump to game.</p> |
| <p>6. ♠ A K Q 5 3
♥ 5
♦ 8 4
♣ K Q J 10 8</p> | <p>Pass. This is the type of hand that West needs to hold in order to convert a negative double to a penalty double.</p> |

Follow-up

Make sure your students understand the bidding in the exercise examples.

Conclusion

“When you open the bidding and the opponent’s interfere with an overcall, partner can make a negative double to show the other two suits. Your rebid should be based on whether or not you have a fit with partner, as well as the strength of your hand.

“With a minimum-strength hand, opener chooses a rebid at the cheapest available level. Opener may pass if the next opponent bids or redoubles after the negative double. With a medium-strength hand, opener jumps a level or bids, even if there is further competition. With a maximum-strength hand, opener gets the partnership to the game level, cuebidding the opponent’s suit if in doubt about the best contract.

“Remember, opener rarely passes to convert a negative double into a penalty double, unless opener holds considerable strength in the opponent’s suit. Responder’s double is meant for takeout.”

EXERCISE THREE – Responder’s Rebid after a Negative Double**Introduction**

Now, you and your students are getting into more complicated auctions with several bids and rebids. This exercise will have both the North and South hands on the table.

“Let’s discuss responder’s rebid after a negative double. Give the following hand to North:

North: ♠ A 5
 ♥ 10 4
 ♦ A Q 7 4 3
 ♣ K 9 8 7

“Now give the following hand to South.

South: ♠ Q 10 7 3
 ♥ 8 5 2
 ♦ 8 6
 ♣ A J 10 6

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♦	1♥	Double
Pass	2♣	Pass	Pass
Pass			

“North is the opener. What would North bid? (1♦.) East makes a 1♥ overcall. What does South’s bid? (Double). South has enough to compete over the overcall.

“West passes. What is North’s rebid? (2♣.) With a minimum-strength opening, North bids clubs at the cheapest available level.

“After East passes, what is South’s call? (Pass.) With a minimum for the negative double, North passes opener’s minimum rebid. The partnership stops in partscore in its best fit.

“Let’s change the South hand. Replace a small diamond with the ♦K.

South: ♠ Q 10 7 3
 ♥ 8 5 2
 ♦ K 8
 ♣ A J 10 6

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♦	1♥	Double
Pass	2♣	Pass	3♣
Pass	Pass	Pass	

“Again North opens the bidding with 1♦ followed by a 1♥ overcall by

East. South still has a negative double, but this time South has a medium hand. After North rebids 2♣, South makes a game try by bidding 3♣. North would pass the game try with this minimum hand.

“Let’s change the South hand again. Take away ♣J and a small club and add two small diamonds. Replace the ♠Q with the ♠J.

South: ♠ J 10 7 3
 ♥ 8 5 2
 ♦ K 8 6 5
 ♣ A 10

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♦	1♥	Double
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦
Pass	Pass	Pass	

“Again North opens the bidding with 1♦ followed by a 1♥ overcall by East. Does South still have a negative double without support in clubs? (Yes.) If so, why? (Because South can go back and support diamonds.) South’s simple preference back to opener’s first suit doesn’t promise anything extra, so North passes, leaving the partnership in partscore.

“This time in the North hand, replace a small heart with the ♥A. Also in the North hand, replace the ♠A with the ♠J. In the South hand, replace the ♠J and a small spade with the ♠A and ♠Q. And, replace a small diamond with the ♣J.

North: ♠ J 5 South: ♠ A Q 10 7
 ♥ A 10 ♥ 8 5 2
 ♦ A Q 7 4 3 ♦ K 8 6
 ♣ K 9 8 7 ♣ A J 10

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♦	1♥	Double
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♥
Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

“Again North opens the bidding with 1♦ and East makes a 1♥ overcall. What does South know about the level of the final contract for the partnership? (They belong in game.) Should South begin with a negative double? (Yes. South still wants to know if there is a spade fit.)

“When North rebids 2♣, what should South bid? (2♥.) South has discovered that the partnership doesn’t have an eight-card spade fit, but still isn’t certain what the best game contract would be. With no strength in hearts, South doesn’t want to bid notrump, but South needs to find a forcing bid. A jump to 3♦ would be invitational, so the only choice left is to cuebid the opponent’s suit with a 2♥ call. Cuebidding the opponent’s suit is forcing to game and gives South a chance to hear another bid from North before deciding what to do.

“When South rebids 2♥ and West passes, what should North do next? (2NT). North has already shown diamonds and clubs. With a semi-balanced hand, what should South say now? (3NT.) South knows that North has something in hearts and can put the partnership in game in notrump.

“Let’s change the hands once again. From South, take away the ♠A and ♠Q and replace them with the ♥Q and ♥J. Take away the ♦K and replace it with a small spade. Take away the ♣J and replace it with a small heart.

North: ♠ J 5	South: ♠ 10 7 2
♥ A 10	♥ Q J 8 5 3 2
♦ A Q 7 4 3	♦ 8 6
♣ K 9 8 7	♣ A 10

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	1♦	1♠	Double
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

“This time after North opens 1♦, East overcalls with 1♠. What is South’s call? (Double.) South doesn’t have enough points to bid 2♥. South could pass and hope to get an opportunity to bid hearts later, but that might not happen. Instead, South can start with a negative double.

“West passes, and North again rebids 2♣ to show a preference for clubs over hearts. East passes. What should South now do? (2♥). This bid shows a five-card or longer heart suit without enough strength to bid 2♥ directly over 1♠. Remember that after an overcall, a new suit bid at the two-level or higher shows at least 11 total points.

“After West passes, what should North do? (Pass.) Since South has shown five or more hearts but only enough strength to compete, South should pass and leave the partnership in partscore. With these hands, 2♥ looks like the correct level and strain.”

Instructions

“Open your text to Exercise Three in Chapter Nine. What does East call with each of the following hands after the auction has started?”

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♣	1♥	Double	Pass
1♠	Pass	?	

1. ♠ 10 9 8 7
♥ 8 4
♦ K Q 9 4
♣ K 8 2

Pass. East has described this hand with the double. West’s minimum rebid does not put game in sight. East should be willing to compete with 2♠ if necessary.

2. ♠ Q J 9 6
 ♥ 9 5
 ♦ A Q 9 4
 ♣ J 10 9

3 ♠. East has an invitational hand and should jump a level inviting West to bid game

3. ♠ A K 8 2
 ♥ 8
 ♦ A Q 8 2
 ♣ 8 7 6 4

4 ♠. East always had enough points to bid game, and, now that a spade fit has been uncovered, East knows the proper strain.

Follow-up

The Introduction to this exercise may have been fairly intense for your students, but the exercise was fairly simple. Make sure your students understand the use of the cuebid by responder.

Conclusion

“Remember the following responses for responder’s rebid:

“With nothing extra, responder passes opener’s minimum rebid. Responder can give a simple preference to opener’s original suit or bid a new suit without a jump.

“With an invitational-strength hand of 10 or 11 points, responder can bid again. A raise of opener’s second suit, a jump preference of opener’s first suit and 2NT are all invitational bids. After an overcall, the responder should not bid notrump without a stopper in the suit that was overcalled.

“With 12 or more points, responder should get the partnership to the game level. If responder still isn’t sure about the best contract after hearing opener’s rebid, responder can cuebid the opponent’s suit. The cuebid is forcing to the game level.”

EXERCISE FOUR – More Practice with Negative Doubles**Introduction**

“When playing negative doubles, you also need to know what to do if both opponents decide to compete. Listen to this auction:

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1 ♣	1 ♦	Double	2 ♦
Pass	Pass	?	

“East has a number of options – pass, support clubs, cuebid or bid a new suit. The decision should be based upon the strength of East’s hand and the length of the club suit. Put a hand on the table that your group feels would qualify as a 2 ♣ rebid by East.”

The hand that your students display should be at least 4-3 (preferably 4-4) in the majors with four club cards and no more than 9 points.

“You now know the basic convention for negative doubles. For more practice, along with additional information regarding negative doubles, please download *Learn to Play Bridge 2* and check out the chapter on ‘Bidding – Conventions for Competitive Auctions.’ Remember when learning a new convention, the more practice you have, the better.”

Instructions

“Open your textbook to Exercise Four in Chapter Nine and let’s practice more bidding using negative doubles. What call does South make in each of the following situations?”

- | | | | | | |
|----|--------|-------|--------|-------|---|
| 1. | WEST | NORTH | EAST | SOUTH | ♠ K 4
♥ K J 10 9 5 3
♦ 8 3
♣ 7 5 3 |
| | 1 ♠ | 2 ♦ | Double | Pass | |
| | 2 ♣ | Pass | ? | | |
| 2. | WEST | NORTH | EAST | SOUTH | ♠ A Q 8 5 4
♥ K 7 3
♦ A J 6 5
♣ 9 |
| | Double | Pass | 1 ♠ | 3 ♣ | |
| | | | ? | | |
| 3. | WEST | NORTH | EAST | SOUTH | ♠ Q J 10 5 4
♥ A Q J 4
♦ K 9 3
♣ 8 |
| | Pass | Pass | 1 ♠ | 2 ♣ | |
| | | | ? | | |
| 4. | WEST | NORTH | EAST | SOUTH | ♠ K J 7 3
♥ A Q 8 4
♦ Q J 6 3
♣ 4 |
| | 1 ♠ | 2 ♣ | ? | | |
| | | | | | |
| 5. | WEST | NORTH | EAST | SOUTH | ♠ A K 10 9
♥ K Q J 8
♦ K Q 7 4
♣ 5 |
| | Double | Pass | 1 ♦ | 2 ♣ | |
| | | | ? | | |
| 6. | WEST | NORTH | EAST | SOUTH | ♠ K 8
♥ 7
♦ A J 9 5 3
♣ K Q 10 8 7 |
| | Double | Pass | 1 ♦ | 2 ♣ | |
| | | | ? | | |
| 7. | WEST | NORTH | EAST | SOUTH | ♠ A Q 8 5 3
♥ A J 9 7
♦ K 6
♣ 5 4 |
| | Double | Pass | 1 ♠ | 1NT | |
| | | | ? | | |
| 8. | WEST | NORTH | EAST | SOUTH | ♠ 9
♥ 8 3
♦ A K J 10 8 4
♣ Q 8 5 3 |
| | Double | Pass | 2 ♦ | 2 ♠ | |
| | | | ? | | |

Answers to Exercise Four

1. 2♥. East did not have enough points at first to bid 2♥. After beginning with a negative double, East can finish describing the hand.
2. Pass. West's double of the 3♣ overcall is penalty, assuming you have agreed to play negative doubles through the 2♠ level.
3. Double. With shortness in the opponent's suit, East should reopen with a double. It is quite likely that West has length and strength in clubs and wants to penalize the overcall. If that is the case, West will pass the reopening double. If not, West will bid something.
4. 3♣. After a major suit opening and an overcall by the opponents, the responder should prefer a cuebid over a negative double when the hand is suitable for either action. A direct raise to 4♠ is a preemptive call and not suitable for this hand.
5. 3♣. A game contract is certain and a slam might be possible if West has more than a minimum negative double. The problem is that East does not know which major suit will make the best trump suit. By cuebidding, East is able to bring partner's judgment into play. West will bid the longer and stronger major at the three-level and East can raise that suit to game.
6. Pass. West's negative double was for the major suits. However, East wants to defend against 2♣ doubled. East should pass and expect to collect a reasonable penalty.
7. Pass. After a 1NT overcall, a double is for penalty. It is not a negative double.
8. Pass. Negative doubles are used only after opening suit bids at the one level. West's double is for penalty. East should pass.

Follow-up

Go through the examples slowly to make sure your students understand the applications of the negative double.

Conclusion

“The negative double has become an integral convention in modern bidding. Make sure you practice them even more with the *Learn to Play Bridge 2* program.”

EXERCISE FIVE: Dummy Reversal*Deal 1*

Dealer: North					
	♠ K Q 8 4				
	♥ 8				
	♦ A 10 4 3				
	♣ K J 9 8				
♠ 9 7 6	<table style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ 3 2
N					
W E					
S					
♥ Q J 7		♥ A K 10 5 3			
♦ 8 7 6 5		♦ K 9 2			
♣ 4 3 2		♣ Q 10 7			
	♠ A J 10 5				
	♥ 9 6 4 2				
	♦ Q J				
	♣ A 6 5				

Suggested Bidding

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♦	1♥	Double
Pass	1♠	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

North opens the bidding with 1♦, the higher-ranking of two four-card minors. East has a good heart overcall. South has enough points to bid game, but does not know the proper strain in light of East's overcall. Using negative doubles, South can show a four-card spade suit by saying "double." When North bids 1♠, South now shows the proper level and strain by rebidding 4♠.

Suggested Opening Lead

East is on lead and starts with the ♥A.

Suggested Play

With both the North and the South hands each having four spades, North has the ability to make either hand the master hand. When the declarer decides to make the dummy the master hand, this technique is known as a dummy reversal. On this hand, when North sees both hands together, it seems likely that the opponents will play a forcing defense – in other words, make North ruff hearts. With this in mind, North should consider making the dummy the master hand.

The play is interesting because North will ruff the second round of hearts, but cannot draw all of the trumps at this time. North first must try the diamond finesse. North can get to the South hand (dummy) with a club to take the diamond finesse, which loses. If East leads another heart, North can ruff in hand and then finish drawing trumps, ending in the South hand (with the North hand discarding a club). After playing the $\diamond J$ from the dummy, North goes back with the $\clubsuit K$. On the $\diamond A$ and $\diamond 10$, North gets rid of dummy's last heart and a losing club. North's remaining card is a club, and the dummy's remaining card is a trump. The contract makes with an overtrick – losing only the $\heartsuit A$ and $\diamond Q$. North does not need to try the club finesse when a losing club from the South hand can be pitched on a good diamond.

If East returns a spade after winning the $\diamond K$, North should win the trick in the South hand with the $\spadesuit J$ or $\spadesuit 10$ and then ruff a heart. North then should finish drawing trumps and end up in the dummy (South). Again, North plays the $\diamond J$ and goes back to the hand with the $\clubsuit K$. On the $\diamond A$ and $\diamond 10$, North gets rid of dummy's last heart and a losing club.

If North waits to try the diamond finesse until after drawing trumps and the diamond finesse loses, North will not have any trumps left when East leads hearts. The contract will be down one trick.

Suggested Defense

The defense must hope that North plays the spade suit early. If that is the case, the forcing defense (forcing North to continuously ruff the heart suit) will be successful. The key is not to set up the dummy's $\heartsuit 9$. West must make sure to signal with the $\heartsuit Q$ when East plays the $\heartsuit A$. On the next trick, East will lead a low heart to West's known $\heartsuit J$. If East and West cooperate in this play, the suit will not be blocked, and the $\heartsuit 9$ will not become a winning card.

EXERCISE SIX: Trying to Cut the Opponent's Communication*Deal 2*

Dealer: East											
	♠ J 7 6										
	♥ J 5										
	♦ 9 8 7 5 3 2										
	♣ 9 4										
♠ Q 10 9 4	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A 5 2
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ Q 9 8 7		♥ 3 2									
♦ A		♦ K Q J 6									
♣ A 10 8 3		♣ Q J 7 6									
	♠ K 8 3										
	♥ A K 10 6 4										
	♦ 10 4										
	♣ K 5 2										

Suggested Bidding

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♦	1♥
Double	Pass	2♣	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

West has a difficult bidding decision to make after East rebids 2♣. West was hoping that East held four spades, but that did not happen. West knows that the partnership has enough points for a Golden Game. There is also the possibility of a game in clubs. However, West's diamond shortness in a suit East is known to have is not a good thing. Plus it takes 29 total points to make a game in a minor suit. West doesn't know if the partnership has that many points. Therefore, West settles into 3NT despite holding a singleton in partner's diamonds. East is happy to pass.

Suggested Opening Lead

North is on lead and leads the ♥J in partner's overcalled suit.

Suggested Play

West counts winners – one spade, four diamonds and one club. The heart suit should provide the stopper promised with the 3NT bid, and the club suit has the potential to provide at least two, possibly three, more tricks. If the club suit provides three total tricks, there will be nine tricks. There are 10 tricks if the club finesse is on.

South should play the ♥6 on the ♥J, an encouraging card. West must be very careful and very lucky when able to win the first trick with the ♥Q. If the defense gets in again, they have four heart tricks to cash. West must make the contract before letting the opponents back in. After winning the ♥Q, West must unblock the ♦A and then go to the dummy with the ♠A. West cashes the good diamonds and then leads the ♣Q for the finesse. If the finesse works, West continues with the ♣J. After winning the first 10 tricks, West can concede the remaining tricks. If the finesse loses, North still has a heart to lead back to South, and the defense will defeat the contract.

Another plan is for West to decline the first heart trick. North will probably continue hearts, and West will take a heart trick. (This may be after South cashes the ♥A and ♥K, however.) This time the difference will be that, if the club finesse loses, North will not have a heart to lead back to South. However, if South cashes the ♥A and ♥K and the club finesse loses to North, the defense will be able to cash the ♠K, and the contract will be down.

Fortunately for West, the cards are sitting favorably for either of the above plays.

Suggested Defense

There is no reason for North to lead anything but partner's suit. As the cards lie, there is nothing that North-South can do to prevent the contract from being made. However, when North leads the ♥J, South should play the encouraging ♥6.

When West finesses in clubs, South typically should not cover the ♣Q but should wait until West plays the ♣J. This guarantees a trick for North when North holds the ♣10xx. However, when listening to the bidding for this specific hand, South should recognize that North has at most two clubs. So, whether South plays the ♣K on the second or third trick really doesn't matter this time.

EXERCISE SEVEN: What Can Go Wrong?*Deal 3*

Dealer: South											
	♠ Q 3										
	♥ K Q 7 6										
	♦ J 10 8										
	♣ A Q J 2										
♠ A J 10 9 7	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 8 6 4 2
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ 10 8 4		♥ 9 5									
♦ A 6 4 2		♦ 5									
♣ 7		♣ K 8 6 5 4 3									
	♠ K 5										
	♥ A J 3 2										
	♦ K Q 9 7 3										
	♣ 10 9										

Suggested Bidding

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♦
1♠	Double	Pass	2♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

When South opens the bidding, North knows there is game, even after West makes a 1♠ overcall. However, North cannot bid 2♥ directly, as that would show five hearts. North must begin with a negative double and see what South bids. When South shows four hearts, North has an easy raise to 4♥.

Suggested Opening Lead

West does not want to lead from the spade suit – it would be better if partner leads the suit. West does have an interesting lead with the ♣7. This lead should be thought of as the last resort. A diamond lead is not attractive, and a heart lead might help declarer pick up the suit – if in fact declarer needs help. Normally, when you lead a singleton, you can stop the trump suit from being drawn. Although this is not the case with this singleton lead, West is hoping to get lucky.

Suggested Play

South should count losers. Spades – 1, hearts – 0, diamonds – 1, clubs – 1. What could go wrong? Well, the hearts could split 5-0, but that is really against the odds. What happens if South decides to give up the ♣K early? When West leads ♣7, South can see that a club loser will be eliminated if West is leading from the king. A greedy South will pay the price when East wins the trick and returns a club for West to ruff. The defense will then have a club, a club ruff, a diamond, a diamond ruff, a spade and another diamond ruff for down three. South can avoid this situation by simply winning the ♣A and drawing trumps. South knocks out the ♦A, and the defense gets their three tricks.

Suggested Defense

The lead of the ♣7 by West gives the defense their best shot. If declarer makes a mistake by taking the finesse, East will win the trick and should return a club, not partner's spade suit. The only outstanding club at this point would be either the ♣10 or the ♣9 (whichever card declarer didn't play), making it pretty clear that West led a singleton. East tries to convey shortness in diamonds by returning the ♣3, a suit preference for diamonds. If West has the ♦A and plays it and another diamond, East can now ruff. If the defense is careful, they will make South pay a big price for not playing the ♣A on the first trick.

If declarer wins the ♣A, the defense really does not have a chance to inflict any more damage than the three tricks to which they are entitled.

EXERCISE EIGHT: Finding the Right Contract*Deal 4*

Dealer: West											
	♠ 9 6										
	♥ 9 8 7 6 5										
	♦ J 2										
	♣ K Q 9 4										
♠ 5 4 3	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A J 10
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ A 4 3 2		♥ K 10									
♦ K 9		♦ A Q 8 4									
♣ J 8 6 5		♣ 10 7 3 2									
	♠ K Q 8 7 2										
	♥ Q J										
	♦ 10 7 6 5 2										
	♣ A										

Suggested Bidding

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	Pass	1♦	1♠
Double	Pass	1NT	All pass

East begins with 1♦, and South has a nice overcall of 1♠. West doesn't have many high-card points, but does have enough to make a negative double. East has to choose between a bid of 1NT and a bid of 2♣. If East chooses to bid 2♣, East will have an impossible contract to make as the cards lie. With a minimum hand, only four weak clubs and five of the hand's high-card points in the opponent's suit, East should choose 1NT. South would love to bid again, but South's second suit is diamonds, which East has bid already.

Suggested Opening Lead

South is on lead, and the traditional lead is the ♠7.

Suggested Play

If South leads a spade, any spade, East wins the trick and can count two spade winners. (If South leads the ♠7, East will win the ♠J and still has the ♠A. If South leads the ♠K, East wins with the ♠A, and the ♠J and ♠10 provide East with another trick after knocking out the ♠Q.) In addition, East can take two hearts and three diamonds to make the contract.

East's only problem will occur if South finds a different lead. For example, if South leads the fourth best diamond. As the cards lie, East must then try to set up a club. A lead from declarer's hand will bring the ♣A to the table. South will lead another diamond, and the dummy will win the ♦K. A small club from the dummy will probably make North win the trick and then lead a spade for South. (By winning the club lead, North now guarantees East a club winner.) East must hold up until the third round – East will then win one spade, two hearts, three diamonds and one club. This becomes a much more difficult hand for East to play without a spade lead.

Suggested Defense

Although the traditional lead is a spade, South can make things much more difficult for East by leading a diamond. That is definitely a non-percentage lead, but one that has some merit. South does not want West to win a cheap spade trick – which is what would happen with the lead of the ♠7 – and the ♠K lead guarantees East the contract from the go.

