



**Hand Shapes:**

Balanced patterns: 4-3-3-3 4-4-3-2 5-3-3-2 – No void, no singleton, not two doubletons  
 Semi-balanced patterns: 5-4-2-2 6-3-2-2 7-2-2-2 – No void, no singleton, two or three doubletons  
 Unbalanced patterns all contain at least one void or one singleton.

**Hand Valuation : High card points (HCP):**  
 A = 4  
 K = 3  
 Q = 2  
 J = 1

**Distributional points after a trump fit is found:**  
 Void = 5  
 Singleton = 3  
 Doubleton = 1

**Points needed for games:** 3NT or 4♥ or 4♠: 25 points For 5♣ or 5♦: 28 points.

**Points for slams:** Small slam (any 6-contract): 33 points Grand slam (any 7-contract): 37 points

**Trumps needed for games and slams:** At least an 8-card trump fit is required.

**Opening the bidding:** 0-11 points: Pass 12-21 points: Open with a 1-bid. 21-up: Open with 2♣. (2NT with 20-22 bal)

**Which suit to open :**

1. Start with your longest suit.  
*Exception : With 11-13 HCP and five good spades and six poor hearts, prefer to open 1♠.*
2. With a 5-5 or 6-6 pattern, bid the higher-ranking suit first. This also applies to five clubs and five spades.
3. (a) 4-3-3-3: Open 1NT or 2NT with the right point count. If not, open the 4-card suit (or 2♣ with 23+).  
 (b) 4-4-3-2 pattern: Open 1NT or 2NT with the correct point count. Open 2♣ with 23+ HCP. In the 12-14 or 18-19 zone, open the cheaper 4-card suit.  
 (c) 4-4-4-1 pattern : Black singleton, open the middle suit. Red singleton, open the suit below the singleton.

**1NT opening:** 15-17 points, balanced shape.

**2NT opening:** 20-22 points, balanced shape.

**With 12-14 or 18-19 balanced:** Open with 1-in-a-suit and rebid no trumps later according to the strength held.

**With 23-up balanced:** Open 2♣ and rebid no-trumps next (unless you can support responder).

**Leads:** Top from a sequence of three or more cards as long as the sequence contains at least one honour. Fourth-highest from a long suit with no sequence. Top from a doubleton. Middle-up-down from three low cards.

**Signals:** High-low is encouraging on partner's lead or as a discard. Lowest card is discouraging.

**Overcalls:**

A suit overcall at the 1-level shows a strong 5+ suit and 8-16 HCP. A suit overcall at the 2-level (not a jump-overcall) shows a strong 5+ suit and 10-16 HCP. **The 1NT overcall shows 15-18 points, balanced shape and at least one stopper in their suit.**

Doubling a suit at the 1-level or 2-level is for takeout. **A double of no-trumps is normally for penalties.**

**Responding to a suit opening:** Single raise = 6-9. 1NT response = 6-9. 1-level suit = 6+ points. 2-level new suit reply = 10+ points. Jump-shift = 16+ points and a powerful one-suiter or a strong suit and support for opener's suit. Jump-raise = 10-12 points, 4-card support. 2NT response = 11-12, balanced. 3NT response = 13-15 points, 4-3-3-3 pattern. Responder's change of suit is forcing (unless responder is a passed hand or there has been a 1NT bid in the auction).

**Responding to 1NT:** With a balanced hand, pass with 0-7, bid 2NT with 8-9, 3NT with 10-15 and explore slam with 16+. With an unbalanced hand, bid a suit at the 2-level with 0-7 points, jump to the 3-level or to game with a long suit and 8+ HCP. Any suit bid over 1NT shows a 5-card suit at least.

**Responding to 2NT:** With a balanced hand, pass with 0-3 points, bid 3NT with 4-10 points and explore slam with 11+ points. The 2NT opening is not forcing, but any reply commits the partnership to game. A suit bid at the 3-level shows a 5-card suit and is forcing.

**4NT Blackwood Convention asking for aces:** 5♣ = 0 or 4 aces, 5♦ = one ace, 5♥ = two aces, 5♠ = three aces. After the reply to 4NT, a bid of 5NT indicates all the aces are held and asks for kings: 6♣ = no kings, 6♦ = one king, 6♥ = two kings, 6♠ = three kings and 6NT = four kings.