

SUMMARY GUIDE TO RESPONSES AFTER A 2NT OPENING (20-22 BALANCED)

2NT

3♣

3♦

3♥

3NT

4♠

3♠

3NT

4H

3NT

3♥

3NT

4♣ / ♦

4♥

4NT

3♠

3NT

4♣ / ♦ / ♥

4♠

4NT

3♦

3♥

3♠ / 4♣ / 4♦

4♥

3♥

3♠

4♣ / 4♦ / 4♥

4♠

3♠

3NT

4♥ / 4♠

3NT

20-22

5 card Puppet Stayman

No 5cd M; at least 1 4cd M

4 Spades

4 Hearts – to play

4 Spades – to play

4 Hearts

4 Spades – to play

4 Hearts – to play

To play

Five hearts

Wanted Spades – to play

Cues agreeing H; slam interest

3 or 4 Hearts – to play

Quantitative NT raise (10-11)

Five Spades

Wanted Hearts - to play

Cues agreeing S – slam interest

3 or 4 Spades – to play

Quantitative NT raise

Transfer to Hearts

2 or 3 hearts - accept

4 hearts and max – cues

4 hearts not max

Transfer to Spades

2 or 3 spades - accept

4 spades and max – cues

4 spades not max

5 spades, 4 hearts – pick a game

< 3 Spades; <4 Hearts - to play

To play

To play!

Let's look at some of the responding bids in more detail and explain what they mean.

3♣ asks partner whether they have a **five or a four card major**.

- With a five card major, they bid it
- With a four card major (either) they bid 3♦ and you bid THE ONE YOU DON'T HAVE
- Without a four or five card major, they just bid 3NT

3♦ shows at least **five hearts** and forces partner to bid 3♥ unless they have four card support in which case:

- 4♥ shows a minimum
- 3♠/4♣/4♦ shows an Ace in that suit and a maximum

If they've just bid 3♥ then you bid

- 3NT with just five hearts (give them the choice)
- 4♥ with six or more of them (don't – they must have two, right?)

3♥ shows at least **five spades** and forces partner to bid 3♠ unless they have four card support in which case:

- 4♠ shows a minimum
- 4♣/4♦/4♥ shows an Ace in that suit and a maximum

If they've just bid 3♠ then you bid

- 3NT with just five spades (give them the choice)
- 4♠ with six or more of them (don't – they must have two, right?)

3♠ shows that you have **five spades** and **four hearts** and **gives partner the choice**:

- Without interest in either major, they bid 3NT
- With four or more hearts, they bid 4♥
- With three or more spades, they bid 4♠

Some examples:

West
♠ K2
♥ AJ953
♦ 8732
♣ 95

East
♠ AQ82
♥ Q72
♦ AQT4
♣ AK

The auction should start with East opening 2NT. West has a five card heart suit and enough points for game, so chooses a transfer (3♦) which East accepts. West now offers East a choice of games by bidding 3NT, and East chooses to play in his 5-3 fit, bidding 4♥.

West
♠ AKJ9
♥ KQ4
♦ AK32
♣ QT
and

East
♠ Q42
♥ AJ85
♦ T9
♣ 9852

After West opens 2NT, East has points for game, but if partner has either five spades or four hearts, that will be a better place than 3NT. So East starts with 3♣. West has a four card major but no five card major, so bids 3♦. East now bids the four card major he DOESN'T have – 3♠ – West knows 3NT is best.

West
♠ KQJ3
♥ AK4
♦ KQ32
♣ A5

East
♠ A9764
♥ Q82
♦ 96
♣ T76

After West's 2NT, East again has points for game, but wants to give West the information to choose the best one. East starts with 3♥ as a transfer. West likes the sound of this and can show his club Ace on the way with ♣. If East had a better hand (eg if he had the diamond Ace) he could look for slam but here 4♠ is high enough.

Quiz time!

What's your first bid, and planned continuation, if partner opens 2NT and you find yourself with:

A	B	C	D	E	
♠ AJ8	♠ KQ874	♠ 763	♠ A4	♠ QT652	
♥ Q86	♥ 965	♥ KJ86	♥ 92	♥ Q932	?
♦ 9852	♦ J7	♦ A642	♦ T986	♦ T87	
♣ T6	♣ T8	♣ 98	♣ QT532	♣ 6	

Now let's move across to the other side of table and think about how we'd respond to different enquiries:

Hand 1	Hand 2	Hand 3	Hand 4
♠ AK42	♠ A52	♠ KT3	♠ Q9
♥ Q8	♥ QJ98	♥ AJ	♥ KT
♦ AQJ3	♦ AKQ	♦ AKT83	♦ AQJT2
♣ KQJ	♣ KQ84	♣ AJ	♣ AKJ6

Respond to:

A 3♣?

B 3♦?

C 3♥?

D 3♠?

As responder, your priorities are (in order):

Points:

< 4	will pass unless shapely (in which case transfer)
4 – 9	look for the right games
10 – 13	look for the right slam
14 +	be pleased

Shape:

With five of a major, transfer to it then

< 4	pass (unless you have a singleton)
4 – 9	bid 3NT
10 – 13	bid 4NT

With four of a major, go through Puppet Stayman, remembering to bid the one you DON'T have.

4 – 9	find the best game
10-13	more difficult – want to probe for slam. More lessons needed!

With three of a major, use puppet Stayman and

4 – 9	subside in 3NT unless partner shows the major you want
10 – 13	try 4NT unless partner shows you what you want

With a long minor suit (minimum six cards) you have to decide whether you think 3NT or 5m better

4 – 9	typically just bid 3NT unless you have a good reason not to
10 – 13	might try 4(minor) response to 3NT as a slam try in that minor

With no particularly interesting shape just

4 – 9	bid 3NT
10 – 13	bid 4NT

4NT, the “quantitative invite” tells partner to bid 6NT if maximum (22 or a nice 21, with lots of tens and nines) or pass if minimum.