Lesson 2 – "2/1" for Beginners

Topic: Bergen Raises and Jacoby 2NT

Bergen Raises: Immediate response of 3♣ or 3♦ by Responder.
Jacoby 2NT: Immediate response of 2NT by Responder.

Why are these bids used?

They are used by Responder to show **4+-card support** for Opener's major suit. Having at least 9 trump gives your hand extra strength. You can often make Game or a slam with fewer points than usual.

Requirements for Bergen Raises or Jacoby 2NT by Responder:

1. Opener must be in 1st or 2nd seat* and have opened 1♥ or 1♠.
2. Responder must have 4-card support (or better) for Opener's major suit.
3. Responder must have at least 8 points.
4. There cannot be an opening bid or intervening bid by opponent (except a "double").

*Seat position was explained in Lesson 1, but here is a re-cap: The dealer is considered to be in 1st seat. The next player sits in the 2nd seat. Opener must be in one of these seats for Bergen Raises or Jacoby 2NT to apply. Another way to think of it is: If you passed and your partner opens, these conventions do not apply.

Important to Note:

Immediately after the Responder bids using a Bergen Raise or Jacoby 2NT, the Opener must alert it before the next player bids. The way to do that is to say "Alert," tap the Alert card on the table, then put the Alert card back in the bidding box.

The reason for the "Alert" is to show your opponents that these responses are special conventions and have different meanings from what would normally be expected. They do not mean the suit bid.

Bergen Raises and Jacoby 2NT:

So, your partner opened 1♥ or 1♠ in 1st or 2nd seat and you have 4+-card support for their major suit. Indicate the strength of your hand, based on points, as follows:

Points	Your bid	Convention	Alert?	Forcing/Non-Forcing?
8-9 HCP	3♣	Bergen	Yes	Forcing for one round
10-11 HCP	3♦	Bergen	Yes	Forcing for one round
12+ HCP	2NT	Jacoby 2NT	Yes	Forcing to game

Jacoby 2NT is similar to Game Force (both partners know that game is attainable in the major suit), except now you have the "magical 9th trump." A combination of your hands with 9 trump is more powerful than with 8 trump. You are guaranteed to get to game in that major, and you may be able to bid and make slam with fewer points than usual.

After a Jacoby 2NT response, the Opener will next bid a short suit if he has one. This is also alertable, since it doesn't mean strength in that suit. In fact, it means the opposite. There are other bids with different meanings as well.

To keep it simple, just use the knowledge that Jacoby 2NT means 4+-card support in that major and 12+ pts. Use that information and bid to game or explore slam as appropriate.

Remember, the suit has already been decided and agreed to, because you have at least 9 trump in the major. You must not leave your partner in any other suit except the major suit agreed upon.

Shortness means 1 card in that suit or a void.
So, for example, the bidding might go like this:

Opener	1♠	(in 1st or 2nd seat)
Responder	2NT	"Alert!"
Opener	3♦	"Alert!" Showing shortness or a void in diamonds.

Without shortness in a suit, Opener should bid his major suit again.
The partnership can use these bids to figure out if they can make slam or not. Obviously, a minimum of a game contract in the major is guaranteed after Jacoby 2NT.

If you wish to know more about the responses to these bids, you will need to study "2/1" bids in more depth. This lesson is just a start.

To summarize:

After an opening bid of a major in 1st or 2nd seat, these responses can be used:
3♣ means 4-card support and 8-9 HCP   Alert! (Bergen)
3♦ means 4-card support and 10-11 HCP   Alert! (Bergen)
2NT means 4-card support and 12+ HCP   Alert! (Jacoby 2NT)

Use your judgement and try to get to the best possible contract.
Remember: These bids are only in effect if there are no intervening bids and the Opener is not using an overcall. An intervening "double" can be ignored.