



# Bidding Basics

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## After 1♥: two-level and higher responses

In this installment, we look at auctions where partner has responded at the two level or higher to our 1♥ opening. We are assuming that a “2-over-1” response is natural and game forcing. Disclaimer: There are some topics in this installment where no 100% agreed method exists. My suggestions, however, are based on the way the majority plays in the 21st century.

### After 1♥-2♣

2♣ typically shows four or more clubs and is forcing to game. Opener should show shape (distribution). With a flat notrump hand (5-3-3-2 shape), rebid 2NT. With six or more hearts (and no four-card minor), repeat them with a 2♥ bid. With self-sufficient hearts (ones that can play opposite a singleton or void, such as K-Q-J-10-x-x or A-K-Q-J-x-x) and a decent hand (not a dead minimum), jump to 3♥. With a second suit (four or more cards in diamonds or spades), bid it on the two level regardless of strength. Don't jump (other than the solid-suit jump) and don't worry about “reverses.” Raising to 3♣ usually shows four-card support, but could be three cards if it seems the best description. Examples:

Rebid 2♦ with:

♠9 2 ♥K Q 10 8 3 ♦A Q 10 5 ♣8 3.

Rebid 2♥ with:

♠A 7 ♥K Q 8 7 6 5 ♦Q J 2 ♣10 2.

Rebid 2♠ with:

♠K Q 10 7 ♥A J 7 6 5 ♦Q 3 2 ♣2.

Note: Although 2♠ is a reverse, it doesn't promise extras; the partnership is already forced to game. Reverses only apply after a one-level response.

Rebid 2NT with:

♠J 7 6 ♥A 8 7 6 5 ♦K Q 2 ♣K 2.

Rebid 3♣ with:

♠K 2 ♥K 7 6 5 4 ♦Q 2 ♣A J 7 6  
or

♠5 4 3 ♥A K 4 3 2 ♦3 2 ♣K Q 2.

Although 2NT would show a 5-3-3-2 hand, the good three-card club support and lousy holdings in the unbid suits makes raising clubs the best description.

### After 1♥-2♦

2♦ shows four or more diamonds and is forcing to game. All the same principles as above apply. Examples:

Rebid 2♥ with:

♠K 9 ♥A Q 8 7 6 5 ♦Q 9 2 ♣J 6.

Rebid 2♠ with:

♠K Q 10 7 ♥A 8 7 6 5 ♦K 2 ♣5 2.

Rebid 2NT with:

♠Q 7 6 ♥A 8 7 6 5 ♦Q 2 ♣K Q 10.

Rebid 3♣ with:

♠K 2 ♥K 7 6 5 4 ♦2 ♣A Q 7 6 2.

Raise to 3♦ with:

♠A ♥J 8 7 6 5 ♦K Q 7 6 ♣K 10 2  
or

♠7 6 ♥Q 8 7 6 5 ♦A K 10 ♣A 3 2.

Jump to 3♥ with:

♠A 4 2 ♥K Q J 10 9 8 2 ♦K 2 ♣2.

but rebid only 2♥ with:

♠A K 2 ♥A J 8 7 6 2 ♦A 2 ♣Q 2.

### After 1♥-2♥

Responder is showing approximately 6-10 points in support. Opener will pass with most minimum hands (no game interest). Bidding a new suit is a try for game (good hand, natural, with cards in the new suit). Bidding 2NT is natural, inviting 3NT or 4♥. Bidding 3♥ is preemptive (extra shape, but a minimum hand). 3NT offers a choice of games (strong balanced hand with stoppers). 4♥, of course, shows a very good hand that wants to be in game. Examples:

Pass with:

♠K Q 8 ♥Q J 7 6 5 ♦K Q ♣J 3 2.

Bid 2♠ with:

♠Q 9 3 2 ♥A Q 7 6 5 2 ♦A Q ♣2.

Bid 2NT with:

♠K 3 2 ♥K Q 10 8 7 ♦K Q 2 ♣A J.

Bid 3♥ with:

♠2 ♥A Q 8 7 6 5 ♦K Q 6 ♣J 10 8.

Bid 4♥ with:

♠A Q 10 ♥A K J 7 6 ♦2 ♣A J 6 5.

### After 1♥-2♠/3♣/3♦

Agreements matter: You must know what responder is showing. Most play responder's jump shifts as weak. If so, opener will usually pass. Opener can raise with support (preemptively), bid a new suit (forcing and looking for game), or bid game. Some might use conventional jump responses such as Bergen raises, which changes every- ➤

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thing. Also, if you play strong jump-shift responses, that obviously alters everything written above.

### After 1♥-2NT

Most players – even newer ones – play this conventionally. If 2NT shows a four-card, game-forcing raise (Jacoby 2NT), then you must study the follow-ups to that convention. Typically, three of a new suit shows shortness, while a jump to 4♥ shows a flat minimum. If you play this 2NT jump as natural, all follow-ups are natural.

### After 1♥-3♥

Responder shows 11–12 points in support and usually a four-card or longer raise (unless you play a special convention). With a minimum, opener will likely pass, though with a singleton or void, he should go to game. Examples of hands that should pass:

♠A 6 5 ♥Q 8 7 6 3 ♦A J 2 ♣J 2  
♠K J 6 ♥A J 8 6 5 ♦J 3 2 ♣Q 4.

A bid of a new suit would show slam interest (and typically the ace or king in that suit). A raise to 4♥ is a signoff. Examples of hands that should bid 4♥:

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

### After 1♥-3NT

Assuming this shows 13–15 balanced, opener will usually pass. However, don't think of 3NT as a "closeout" bid. It simply shows a specified range. If opener has slam interest opposite, he shouldn't pass.

### After 1♥-3♠/4♣/4♦

If both partners know this is a splinter bid (showing a singleton or void in the suit jumped into, four or more trumps, and enough strength for game), opener can either sign off in 4♥ or look for slam.

### After 1♥-4♥

This is a weak (distributional) raise, so opener will almost always pass. ■

What is opener's rebid after 1♥-2♣ with:

1. ♠A Q ♥Q 10 8 7 6 5 ♦A Q 2 ♣A 2
2. ♠K 10 8 ♥A Q J 7 6 ♦Q 8 7 6 ♣2

What is opener's rebid after 1♥-2♥ with:

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

What is opener's rebid after 1♥-2NT (Jacoby) with:

5. ♠K Q J 9 ♥J 8 7 6 5 ♦2 ♣A Q 2
6. ♠J 6 5 ♥7 6 5 4 2 ♦K Q J ♣A Q

What is opener's rebid after 1♥-3♥ with:

7. ♠A Q ♥Q 6 5 4 2 ♦K Q 10 ♣A J 4
8. ♠A K 2 ♥A 10 9 8 7 ♦2 ♣J 10 7 6

## ANSWERS

1. 2♥. Shows six or more hearts, any strength. Don't jump without a solid or almost solid suit.
2. 2♦. Show the second suit.
3. 4♥. Plenty to bid game. Points, schmoits.
4. 3♣. A natural game try. Partner will evaluate both strength and club help.
5. 3♦. Showing diamond shortness and saying nothing else.
6. 4♥. Showing a flat minimum.
7. 3NT. Natural, offering responder a choice of 3NT or 4♥. This hand isn't good enough to look for slam.
8. 4♥. Always accept a four-card limit raise if you have a singleton or a void.