

Gary Brown's

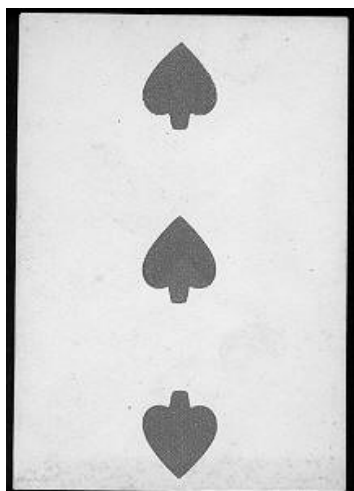
Learn to play Bridge

A modern approach

to

Standard Bidding

with 5 card majors



Bridge teachers

The approach and philosophy of this book is to present the game of Bridge to aspiring players in the way the game is played today, not yesterday. As a full-time Bridge teacher, it has been a constant up-hill battle bridging the gap between the old style ideas prevalent in old teaching material **versus** the many modern approaches which are in actual practice across the country.

old: 16-18 NT

new: 15-17 NT

old: Strong Twos

new: Weak Twos (with strong 2♣)

old: high encourage

new: low encourage

old: 1♥ - 4♥ = 13+

new: 1♥ - 4♥ = weak freak

When I first started teaching Bridge I taught the old way. That was because the main teachers publishing books, manual and guides were still teaching old style ideas. However, because I am in it for the long haul, teaching old ways in a new world has come back to haunt me. I have started producing my own material, as well as networking with Bridge organizations and teachers around the world who are leading the charge and blazing new trails into the new millennium of Bridge.

There may be ideas in this book which are not completely in sync with your style. I have stayed true to modern Standard American Bidding, with one self preference. (1NT - 3♣/♦ as invitational). Whenever I have a choice of multiple accepted ways (invitational, weak or strong) I let the frequency factor guide me.

Bridge teachers can email: brownbridge@ozemail.com.au for a PDF teacher's manual to use this book in your introductory classes. All bulk orders of this book will be sold to Bridge teachers at a discount.

Table of contents

	Page
Acknowledgements	6
Forward	7
Introduction	8
1 Mechanics, Bridgese, Bridge in 3D and bidding elevator.	9
2 Hand evaluation and opening bids at the one-level.	19
3 Scoring and responses to a 1NT opening bid.	29
4 Responses to an opening bid of one of a suit.	45
5 Opener's second bid.	61
6 Conventions: Blackwood and Stayman.	73
7 Competitive Bidding: overcalls and take-out doubles.	83
8 Opening at the two-level: strong 2♣, weak twos and 2NT.	93
Glossary	104
Exercises answers	108

Each chapter has sub-topics entitled:

At the table
Card play technique
Department of defence

Acknowledgements

Mucho gracias to my wife Joanne, Jo Ann Lynds, Kathie Macnab, Joe Hortie, Gilbert Farrow and Judith Wood, for their tireless efforts in editing this ever-evolving manuscript.

Also, a nod to every student I have had the privilege to teach Bridge.

To my father, Avon Brown.

Your literary influence was there after all.

Bridge is a partnership game. Thank you: Don Aylward, Gylfi Baldursson, Joe Hortie, Leo Weniger and Eric Balkam.

Bridgese - get into the conversation

You are about to learn **Bridgese** the 'conversation' of Bridge.

This sounds a bit daunting, but Bridgese is a 'conversation' you will want to be in.

“First learn the meaning of what you say, then speak.”

Epictetus, AD 55

And then...

Speak only when you have something to say...

“Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice”.

Shakespeare

I quote others only in order to better express myself.

Forward

Writing this book is something I have thought about doing for 12 years and have now done. The whole writing process has been one of the pleasures of this past year. This book is an introduction to Bridge through the eyes of Standard American, the most popular bidding system in the world. Not everything you will eventually learn about Bridge is in this book, but what you need to know to get both oars in the water, is here. Let enjoyment be your guide as you relax and take in what you can. The game will captivate you all by itself. If you enjoy cards, you will love Bridge.

One of the exciting things about teaching Bridge is the opportunity to develop and implement new teaching methods. I don't think there are 'dumb' questions and I like the challenge of making things understandable. My style of teaching is a blend of seizing the teachable moments while entertaining the class. I know that feeling uptight and tense stifles the student, while feeling loose and comfortable facilitates the learning process, creating a nice energy in the room. Some people ask, "Don't you ever get sick of teaching Bridge day in and day out?" I say, "I love Bridge and I love teaching". They say "oh".

I have created several learning aids and written several Bridge books including the one in your hands. My most recent book **Standard American: With a Limit Bidding Structure**, is a comprehensive compilation of the bidding system you will learn in this book. I also created the popular learning aid, **Flash Cards**. And, for people who love to combine travel with Bridge, I organize and host Bridge tours all over the world, through my company Oz Bridge Travel. For more information on Flash cards and travel visit: www.ozbridgetravel.com

Am I perspiring?

There will be times when you will feel overwhelmed while learning Bridge. This cannot be avoided. Do not let this get you down as it is part and parcel with learning the game. Like anything worth its while, you must put in an effort. Take it one card, one hand at a time and stick with it. Learning Bridge happens at what I would call a glacial pace, but persistence will defeat resistance. Eventually you will get a grasp of the basics. The game will capture your imagination, intoxicate you, and finally become a big part of your life.

Introduction

Bridge is the fastest growing game amongst people aged 45+. That is not to say that young people do not play because they do. There are world junior championships! Of all the card games in the world Bridge is by far the most popular and the most intellectual. Bridge offers a social outlet as you meet new friends and enjoy new experiences. This results in your social landscape changing. Bridge keeps your mind sharp and your people skills honed. There seems no in-between for Bridge players. Either you are an addict or you are not. If an addict, you will share a common bond with millions of people the world over. It is said that playing Bridge forces you to think in ways that actually fend off senility. Also, did you know that Bridge players live longer?

There is a well known Zen story about the learned university professor of oriental studies who visited a master at a temple in Japan. The master received the professor in his private room, and an attendant served tea. As soon as he had seated himself, the professor began talking on and on about Zen philosophy. The master said nothing as he poured the tea into his guest's cup. The professor hardly noticed, and kept talking and talking - he felt, in fact, wonderfully inspired.

Suddenly he realized that the Zen master was still pouring tea even though the cup had long since overflowed, and the tea had spilled out onto the tatami mat. Yet still the master continued to pour.

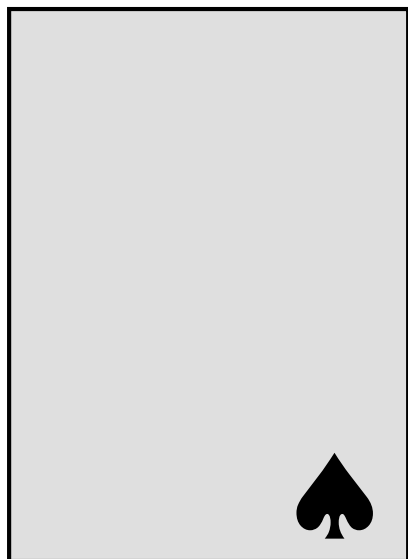
"Stop, stop, what are you doing?" cried the professor. The master looked up. "Just as the cup cannot hold anymore tea when it is already filled," he said, "how can I give you anything when your mind is already filled?"

Rick Fields, Chop Wood, Carry Water

What the Zen Master is suggesting, is that to facilitate the learning process we must first empty our minds of any pre-conceived notions and ideas. If you feel a bit anxious, that is ok. But let go of what you think you know about Bridge. If you feel in a bit of a fright, then let go of that too. Now you can just relax and take it all in.

“I am sorry I have not learnt to play at cards. It is very useful in life: it generates kindness, and consolidates society.”

- *Samuel Johnson*



one

Mechanics of the game

The book

Bridgese

Bridge in 3D

What in? How high?

Bidding elevator

The fundamentals

The nuts and bolts

Players

Four people are needed to play the game of Bridge. North and South are partners, against East and West who are partners. The use of geographic positions (N, S, E and W) is appropriate as Bridge brings people together from all over the world. It transcends religious, ethnic, education, sex and cultural differences.

Tools

A square table with four chairs. An apple cart and four bails of hay will do in a pinch. A deck of standard playing cards. There are 52 cards in the deck, with each player getting 13 cards each.

Cards

The cards are divided into four suits. 13 cards in each suit, ranking in descending order from the ace down to the two. Cards are represented as: Ace, King, Queen, Jack, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2.

Suits

There are four suits and their rank in descending order is: spades, hearts, diamonds and clubs. (No trump is higher ranking than the suits). Spades and hearts are the major suits and diamonds and clubs are the minor suits. You will come to know why the major suits are more important than the minor suits; hence the titles, 'major' and 'minor'. Each suit has a symbol:

♠ = Spades ♥ = Hearts ♦ = Diamonds ♣ = Clubs

Tricks, revokes and discards

A **trick** is won, after each person has in a clockwise direction, in turn, contributed a card face up on the table. You must follow suit to the card that was first played. The person who wins a trick must lead a card to the next trick. If you do not follow suit and you could have, this is called a **revoke**. It is not legal and will bring sadness to you and your partner. If you are unable to follow suit, then you must **discard** (play a card from another suit).

The book

There are 13 tricks to be won in every Bridge hand. The first six tricks are called the **book**. The book is similar to an 'ante' in poker. It is expected and a given. So, if you bid 1♣, 1♦, 1♥, 1♠ or 1NT you are contracting to make the book (six tricks) plus the one you bid, which makes seven tricks in total. The highest bid you can make is 7NT. To make 7NT you must take all 13 tricks. The book, plus the seven you bid ($6 + 7 = 13$). Think of the book as an entry fee and think on it no more.

Bidding (the auction)

A bid consists of a number and a symbol. 1♣ is a bid. The dealer has the first bid with the **bidding** continuing clockwise around the table, each player getting a turn to bid or pass. The bidding must adhere to the hierarchy of the bidding elevator on page 9. If all four players pass, the hand is not played. If the auction is opened, it stays 'open', until there are three consecutive passes, at which time the auction is closed. The highest bid buys the contract. If the last bid was 4♠ then 10 tricks are required with spades as trumps.

Bridge in 3D (the players)

The end of an auction determines the roles of each player for that hand. The players are designated as the **Declarer**, two **Defenders** and **Dummy**.

Declarer: In a contract of 4♠, the partner who first introduced spades into the auction will become the **declarer**. Declarer plays the cards from both her hand and from partner's.

Defenders: If the opponents win the auction, you and your partner are the **defenders**. As defenders you will work in concert to take as many tricks as you can in an attempt to defeat declarer's contract. The person to the left of declarer leads the first card, face up on the table.

Dummy: Declarer's partner is **dummy**. When the opening lead is placed face-up on the table, all 13 cards in dummy's hand are arranged by dummy face-up on the table in four neat columns for all to see. (Figure 1:2)

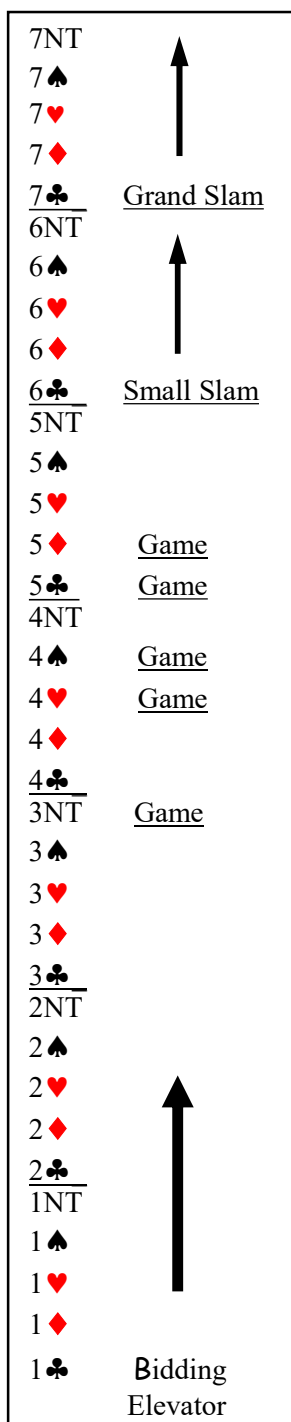


Figure 1:1

There are two questions which you should ask yourself during the course of any auction.

How high?

The bidding occurs somewhere between the one-level and the seven-level. The decision of 'how high' is determined by the collective strength of both hands.

What in? There are five possible denominations in which you can play a contract; clubs, diamonds, hearts, spades or no trump. You determine your preference in the exchange information during the bidding.

Four	Spades
4	♠
(how high)	(what in)

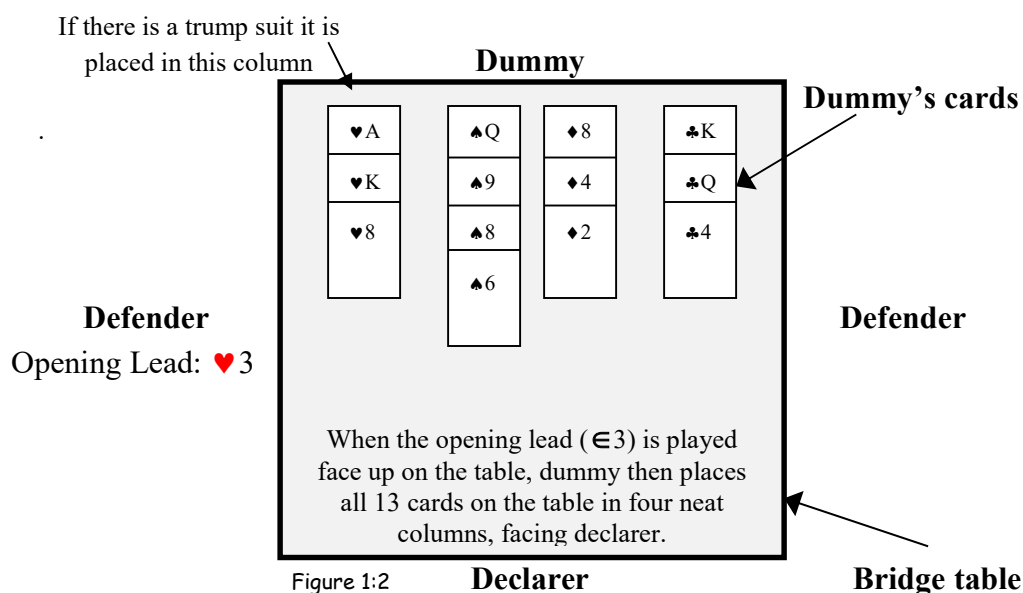
Bidding elevator

When a bid is made, locate that bid on the bidding elevator in Figure 1:1. Any subsequent bids must be made at a higher level. It is that simple. If someone bids 1♠ and you then bid 1♦, you have made an insufficient and therefore, illegal bid. To compete against 1♠ with a diamond bid (or any suit bid) you must go to the two-level or higher.

On the bidding elevator you can see that there are seven levels. Game in no trump is at the three-level. Game in major suit is at the four-level. Game in a minor suit is at the five-level. A small slam in any denomination is at the six-level, and at the seven-level you are in a grand slam!

At the table

The auction is over. We now have a declarer, a dummy and two defenders. The player to the left of declarer, left hand opponent (LHO) makes the opening lead (a card is placed face up on the table). Dummy's cards are now placed on the table in four neat columns facing declarer. If the final contract is a suit contract, then that suit (trumps) should be placed to dummy's right (declarer's left). Declarer nominates which card to play from dummy, right hand opponent (RHO) then plays a card and declarer decides which card to play from her own hand. With all four people having played a card, this is the first trick. Dummy can never suggest, hint or assist declarer in the play of the hand. It is not only frowned upon, it is illegal. Dummy will, without emotion, obediently follow declarer's verbal instruction on what card to play. The player who wins a trick must lead to the next trick. This continues until all 13 tricks have been played.



“Of course I have played outdoor games.
I once played Bridge in an open-air cafe in Paris”.

- *Oscar Wilde*

Card play technique

Lead from weakness toward strength

When you are the declarer in a contract you have to play the cards in both your hand and in dummy. Knowing how to play your cards to best advantage is truly rewarding. A good card play technique is to lead from the hand that has weakness in a suit toward the hand that has strength in the same suit.

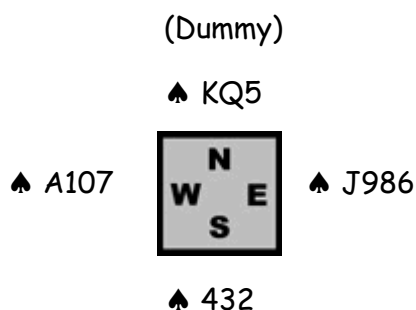


Figure 1:3

In Figure 1:3, the correct way to play the spade suit is to **lead from weakness toward strength** (a card from the S hand first). Because W has the ♠A, and must play a card before dummy, you will win two spade tricks. If W takes her ♠A, you will play the ♠5 from dummy, making the ♠K and ♠Q both high.

If W follows with the ♠7, you will play the ♠Q from dummy, which wins the trick. Upon the lead getting back to S in another suit, S will lead a second spade, again forcing W to play a spade before you have to commit one from dummy. S was lucky, but played the suit properly.



Figure 1:4

In Figure 1:4, the hands have been altered slightly in that E now holds the key card, the ♠A. S should play the spade suit the same way as in Figure 1:3. (Remember, at the table you cannot see all the cards and therefore do not know who has the ♠A). This time S will win one spade trick as E can head dummy's ♠K with the ♠A. S was unlucky, but still played the suit

Department of defence

“They say that the best defence is a good offence...and I intend on offending right now, with my opening lead.”

Opening leads

The opening lead can be the most important decision a defender has to make. Declarer has a huge advantage over the defenders in that she sees her partner's cards, while you and your partner cannot see each other's hands. There are, however, ways in which the defenders can communicate with each other. The foundation of this silent communication lies in the first card a defender leads.

Top of a sequence (headed by an honor)

A sequence is when you hold at least three cards in a row, in numerical order, containing an honor. The sequence must have an honor. When you lead a card from a sequence, lead the top card of the sequence. From each of the following spade holdings, lead the card in bold.

♠ **Q**J1084♠ **J**1094♠ **K**QJ3♠ 9**8**73

Lead the ♠Q Suggests that you hold the ♠J and ♠10.

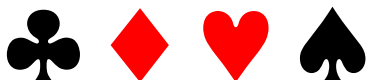
Lead the ♠J Suggests that you hold the ♠10 and ♠9.

Lead the ♠K Suggests that you hold the ♠Q and ♠J.

Lead the ♠8 To be deemed a sequence it must have an honor in the suit (ace, king, queen, jack or 10). The lead of the ♥8 is called MUD or second best from three or more rag cards (rag = a card less than the 10) and you will learn more about this in chapter six, page 80.

Play Bridge at least twice a week...

“How use doth breed a habit in a man.” Shakespeare



Summary

- Bridge is a partnership game. North/South vs. East/West.
- Spades and hearts are the **major suits** while diamonds and clubs are the **minor suits**.
- A **trick** is when all four players play one card each in a clockwise direction. There are 13 tricks in every game of Bridge.
- You must follow suit when you hold a card in the suit led. If you don't follow suit, and you could have, you have **revoked** and will incur a penalty.
- **Bridgese** is the language of **bidding** the players use to compete for the contract, with the highest bid winning.
- There are many clever tricks in the way you can play the cards. **Lead from weakness toward strength**, is a card play technique that allows you to capture the maximum tricks from a given suit.
- A good opening lead is the **top of a sequence**.

Nearly Normal Norman
says: If partner makes a nice play, a kind mention at the end of the hand is akin to planting an acorn in partner's garden of self-confidence.
Be nice to partner.



Nearly Normal Norman

"I have always believed that your attitude towards your partner is as important as your technical skill at the game"

- *Rixi Markus*

Exercises - chapter one

A. True or false?

1. Every hand has a dummy.
2. Hearts are the highest ranked suit.
3. You do not have to follow suit.
4. A revoke is an illegal bid.
5. 2♦ is a higher bid then 2♥.
6. Declarer plays two hands.
7. Lead small towards big.
8. A 6♥ contract requires 11 tricks.
9. 7NT is the highest bid.
10. Whoever wins a trick leads next.

B. Leads

Which card would you lead from each of the following holdings?

1. AKQ7
2. J1093
3. KQJ5
4. QJ1093
5. 109832

C. Card play technique

♥ KQ5



♥ 642

1. In the above example, which hand would you lead from first? N or S?
2. Which card would you lead?
3. If W plays a small card which card do you play from the N hand?

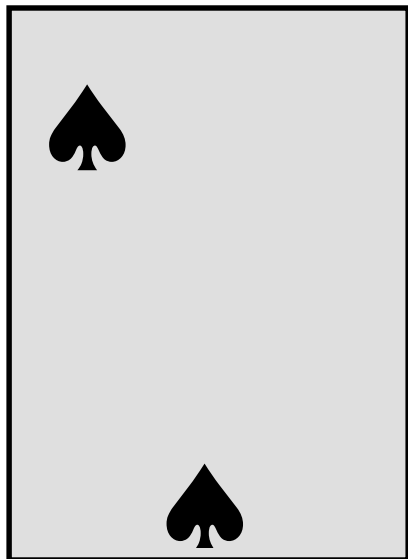
D. Tricks

State the number of tricks needed to make the following contracts.

1. 7♥
2. 4♣
3. 1♠
4. 5♦
5. 2♥
6. 6♦
7. 3♠

“There are three kinds of Bridge players.
Those who can count, and those who can't”.

- *Alfred Sheinwold*



two

Hand evaluation
High card points and length points
Opening bids at the one-level
opening 1NT
Rule of 15 and 20

Opening one bids

Palm reading

The most common method of reading your hand strength is counting high card points.

High card points (HCP)

Card	Value
Ace	4 Points
King	3 Points
Queen	2 Points
Jack	1 Point

Chart 2:1

There are 10 HCP in each suit. Since there are four suits, the maximum number of HCP in a single deck of cards is 40. The **A, K, Q, J** and **10** are honor cards.

Length points (LP)

In a no trump contract, how many tricks would you expect to take with this club suit?

♣AKQJ874

According to the HCP method this suit has 10 HCP. From a trick stand point, the ♣AKQJ should extract the outstanding clubs making the ♣874 winners. So even though you have only 10 HCP, by way of attrition you can take seven tricks. The strength of this hand is not just in the HCP, but also in the length of the suit. Hence, let us give value for length. **Length points** (LP) are added as follows:

Suit length	Length points
Eight Card Suit	4
Seven Card Suit	3
Six Card Suit	2
Five Card Suit	1

Chart 2:2

If a suit is longer than four cards in length, add one point for each card in excess of four cards. The above suit ♣AKQJ874 is worth 13 points: 10 HCP plus three length points.

Opening bids at the one-level

Before a Bridge hand can be played we must first have an auction to determine who wins the contract and who defends. The dealer is the first to bid and thus the auction is off and running. You can open the bidding at any level you want - but in this chapter, we will start with an opening bid at the one-level. 1♣, 1♦, 1♥, 1♠ and 1NT.

Opening bid of 1NT

An opening bid of 1NT shows 15-17 HCP (not length points) and a balanced hand. A balanced hand can be one of the following three distributions.

4-3-3-3 or 4-4-3-2 or 3-3-5-2

1)	2)	3)
♠ KQ84	♠ KJ95	♠ KJ10
♥ Q87	♥ K4	♥ K4
♦ KQ4	♦ KJ2	♦ AK3
♣ A94	♣ A983	♣ QJ542

Hand 1 **Open 1NT.** With a 4-3-3-3 distribution, the four-card suit can be in any suit. 1NT aptly describes your shape and strength.

Hand 2 **Open 1NT.** With a 4-2-3-4 distribution, the two four-card suits can be in any suit.

Hand 3 **Open 1NT.** With a 3-2-3-5 distribution the five-card suit should be in a minor, not a major.

Clear and concise

As you can see, an opening bid of 1NT is a very descriptive bid. It shows your strength (15-17 HCP) and shape (a balanced hand) all in one go. Open 1NT whenever you have the appropriate hand to do so.

Opening bids of one of a suit

When opening the bidding with one of a suit (1♣, 1♦, 1♥ or 1♠) you can use both HCP and LP to assess the value of your hand. An opening bid of 1♣, 1♦, 1♥ or 1♠ shows 13-21 **total points** (TP). 13-21 is quite a big range and you will usually need two or more bids to clarify your exact strength and distribution.

suit opened	minimum length	strength
1 ♠	5+ cards	13-21 TP
1 ♥	5+ cards	13-21 TP
1 ♦	4+ cards*	13-21 TP
1 ♣	3+ cards	13-21 TP

Chart 2:3

*If your distribution is four spades, four hearts, three diamonds and two clubs and you have 13-21TP (not 15-17 HCP balanced), you should open the bidding with 1♦. This is the only time you will open the bidding 1♦ with a three-card suit. This happens less than 5% of the time. Hence, 95% of the time when you open 1♦ you will have four or more diamonds.

♠ AJ43 ♦ J983 ♥ AQ6 ♣ J3

This is an example of a hand you would open 1♦ with a three-card suit. You do not want to pass with 13 points!

A golden fit

As you can see, the length required to open a minor suit is less than that of a major suit. If you do not have a five-card major, opening a minor suit gets the auction open, with a major suit contract still possible. The term 'fit' refers to the number of cards you and partner hold in a particular suit. If you hold four spades and partner has three spades you have a seven-card spade fit. A '**golden fit**' is when you and partner have an eight-card fit. An eight-card spade fit gives you a clear majority of the 13 available spades. When determining whether to play in a suit contract or a NT contract, a golden fit usually steers you to the suit contract, especially if it is a major suit.

At the table

When deciding which suit to open, the longest suit gets preference provided you have the minimum number of cards required to open that suit (Chart 2:3). If you have a 5+ card major, that is the suit to open.

1)	2)	3)	4)
♠ KQJ84	♠ K975	♠ 2	♠ 108762
♥ 87	♥ K84	♥ K4	♥ K4
♦ K1094	♦ KJ2	♦ AK1083	♦ AKQ3
♣ A4	♣ A93	♣ QJ1054	♣ K4

Hand 1 **Open 1♠.** Technically speaking you have the requirements to open 1♦ also as you have 13-21 TP and a four-card suit. However, the spades are longer and preferred.

Hand 2 **Open 1♣.** You want to open with 13+ points and clubs is the only suit where you have the required length.

Hand 3 **Open 1♦.** This is a new one as you have two suits of equal length. With two five-card suits open the higher-ranking suit first, regardless of the strength. (Read this again).

Hand 4 **Open 1♠.** When you open the bidding with a suit bid, you are showing 13-21 TP in your hand. But you are not promising any points in the suit you bid. You are promising length, but not strength (This is important to remember).

FYI

1. Open the bidding 1♥ or 1♠ when holding 5+ cards in either suit.
2. With two three-card minors, open the bidding with 1♣.
3. With two five-card suits, open with the higher-ranking suit.
4. With 4-4 in the minors, it is best to open 1♦ until further notice.
5. When you open 1♣, 1♦, 1♥ or 1♠, you are promising length in the suit you bid, not strength in the suit.

Addendum to opening bids of 1♣, 1♦, 1♥ and 1♠

Spades are an important suit

You are in fourth seat and the auction has gone three passes to you. If you now pass, the hand is not played. In 4th seat, if your hand is a marginal opener, let the 'Rule of 15' guide you. Add your HCP to the number of spades you hold. If it adds up to 15 or more, you can open. The logic is in spades being the 'boss' suit. Spades control the two-level in a competitive auction.

Rule of 15

♠ AQ983 ♥ 873 ♦ KJ72 ♣ 43

Open 1♠ (10HCP + 5S = 15)

♠ 10743 ♥ 3 ♦ AJ10 ♣ AQ543

Open 1♣ (11HCP + 4S = 15)

♠ 42 ♥ KJ43 ♦ Q982 ♣ AJ4

Pass (11HCP + 2S = 13)

♠ 1098763 ♥ A87 ♦ KQ8 ♣ 5

Open 1♠ (9HCP + 6S = 15)

Figure 2:1

Shape rules

HCP are important, but so is the shape of a hand. Distribution can overwhelm HCP. The 'Rule of 20' accounts for distribution and HCP working together in the same hand. In first and second seat, add your HCP to the length of your two longest suits. If it adds up to 20 or higher, open the bidding.

♠ KJ983 ♥ AQ432 ♦ 7 ♣ 73

10 HCP + 5 (spades) + 5 (hearts) = 20

Does this hand feel good? That good feeling comes from the distribution.

Rule of 20

♠ AJ974 ♥ 6 ♦ AJ743 ♣ 74

Open 1♠ (10 HCP + 5S + 5D = 20)

♠ 742 ♥ KQJ83 ♦ 6 ♣ KQ74

Open 1♥ (11 HCP + 5H + 4C = 20)

♠ A97643 ♥ 2 ♦ 3 ♣ KQ987

Open 1♠ (9 HCP + 6S + 5C = 20)

♠ J1054 ♥ KJ4 ♦ AQ84 ♣ J3

Open 1♦ (12 HCP + 4S + 4D = 20)

♠ QJ ♥ K ♦ Q7532 ♣ Q7654

Pass (10 HCP + 5D + 5C = 20)
This passes the test, but it doesn't feel good.

Figure 2:2

Marty Bergen (1948 -) is a New Yorker, Bridge teacher, writer and Bridge professional since 1976. Marty is well-known for his development of new conventions and treatments. He is the leading innovator in bidding theory today. The Rules of 15 and 20 are just a couple of his sweethearts.

Card play technique

High card from the short side first

♠ 543
 ♥ 7652
 ♦ AKQ7
 ♣ 94



♠ A76
 ♥ AK3
 ♦ J5
 ♣ KQ652

Figure 2:3

In Figure 2:3, let us assume that you need four diamond tricks to make your contract. The N hand has ♦AKQ7 and no entries, other than in the diamond suit. If you carelessly play a high diamond from dummy first (the long side), you will no longer be able to get the four diamond tricks you have coming to you. If however, you play the ♦J first (high card from the short side first) you can then continue with the ♦5 over to the ♦Q and take the four tricks which are rightfully yours. High card from the short side first is a card play technique that allows you to unravel suits to your advantage.

♠ A7
 ♥ KJ102
 ♦ 7643
 ♣ 543



♠ K943
 ♥ Q5
 ♦ AQ5
 ♣ 8652

Figure 2:4

In Figure 2:4, you can establish the heart suit for three tricks. You knock out the ♥A and three tricks will come to you. Good card play technique suggests that when tackling this suit, you should play the high card from the short side first. S has the short hearts, so you should play the ♥Q first. If the opponents do not take the ♥Q you can continue with the ♥5 to the N hand and persist with knocking out the ♥A. You will use the ♠A as an entry to the established hearts in the N hand.

Department of defence

Not quite a sequence

It is generally a good idea against a no-trump contract to lead your longest and strongest suit. The reason being that if you can establish your suit (make it all winners), you can continue to win tricks as the opponents cannot trump. The best card to lead from your longest and strongest suit is the top of a sequence. If you do not have a sequence, perhaps you have a 'broken sequence'.

Top of a broken sequence

A '**broken sequence**' is when you have the first two cards in the sequence, you are missing the third card, but have the fourth.

You hold: ♦ KQ102

You have the ♦ K (the first card), the ♦ Q (the second card), you are missing the ♦ J (the third card), but have the ♦ 10 (the fourth card). When you have a broken sequence with an honor in the sequence, lead the top card. Lead the ♦ K.

In the following four combinations lead top of a broken sequence.

- | | | | |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|
| 1. ♠ 109762 | Lead: ♠ 10. | 2. ♥ QJ984 | Lead: ♥ Q |
| 3. ♦ J10872 | Lead: ♦ J | 4. ♣ AKJ103 | Lead: ♣ A |

You have the first two cards in each sequence; you are missing the third, but have the fourth. From each holding lead the high card of a broken sequence). Like a sequence, a broken sequence must contain at least one honor card, to enjoy the honor of being called a sequence.

Led astray

The guides you are learning, concerning which card to lead from certain combinations, are actually 'carding agreements' between you and your partner. In the second example above, if you lead the ♥ J (rather than the correct ♥ Q) you deny possession of the ♥ Q. Such is your agreement with partner. Whether you are having a 'senior's moment' or perhaps a 'creative deviation', the ♥ J will lead your partner astray.



Summary

- **High card points (HCP)** is one method of evaluating the strength of a hand.
- **Length points (LP)** is another method to evaluate the strength of a hand.
- An opening bid of 1NT shows **15-17 HCP** and a balanced hand.
- An opening bid of one-of-a-suit promises **13-21** total points (TP).
- **Opening bids of one-of-a-suit**, promise a minimum number of cards in the suit. An opening bid of 1♥ or 1♠ promises 5+ cards. An opening bid of 1♦ promises 4+ cards. An opening bid of 1♣ promises 3+ cards.
- Leading the **high card from the short side first** is good card play technique.
- Leading the top card from a **broken sequence** is a popular opening lead.

Nearly Normal Norman says: When practicing your card play technique, it is a good idea to deal the cards face up on the table and play the cards as is if in a real game. It makes a difference.



Nearly Normal Norman

She who gets to play the last card has an advantage...

"Although last, not least".

- Shakespeare

Exercises - chapter two

State the strength of each hand and your opening bid.

1)

♠ KJ87

♥ AQ6

♦ KQ73

♣ 54

2)

♠ 4

♥ A4

♦ K9873

♣ AKQ73

3)

♠ AK84

♥ A1084

♦ K3

♣ 986

4)

♠ AJ7

♥ K984

♦ KQ2

♣ J43

5)

♠ AK764

♥ AQ643

♦ 5

♣ A3

6)

♠ K7

♥ 98764

♦ AKQ4

♣ J4

7)

♠ KJ4

♥ KJ3

♦ QJ84

♣ AJ8

8)

♠ A98765

♥ 7

♦ K8642

♣ A

9)

♠ KJ4

♥ AJ10

♦ QJ73

♣ A92

10)

♠ A83

♥ 97

♦ KQ43

♣ KJ84

11)

♠ AJ104

♥ A10842

♦ K3

♣ 96

12)

♠ KQ97

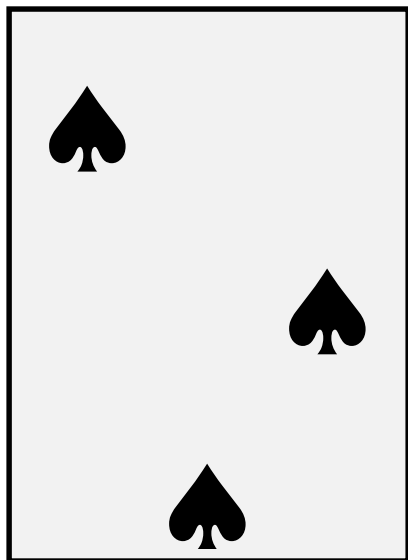
♥ KJ54

♦ K43

♣ J4

“If 3NT is a viable option then bid it”.

- Paul Soloway



three

Vulnerability
Scoring
Bonuses
Dead bid
Caution bid
Live bid

Responses to a 1NT opening

I feel so vulnerable

Vulnerability is a scoring condition that effects three out of every four hands you play during a Bridge session. You are either '**vulnerable**' or you are non-vulnerable. The condition of being vulnerable increases the bonus you receive for making game and slam contracts. (Chart 3:2) If unsuccessful in a vulnerable contract, the penalty increases from minus 50 per trick to minus 100. (Chart 3:3)

The meat of the matter is this: The increased scoring for success (bonuses) and failure (penalties) will influence your strategy in the bidding of each hand.

Big bonus All conditions and calculations regarding vulnerability are done automatically for you with a duplicate board and instant scorer.

Figure 3:1 is picture of a duplicate Bridge board. The board has four slots (**N**, **E**, **S** and **W**), each slot containing 13 cards. The board number (board 2) is clearly displayed. The dealer is **E**. Also note that **N/S** is underlined while **E/W** is not. The underline denotes vulnerable status. If this picture were in color, the **N/S** print would be in 'Red' to further emphasize their vulnerable status. To be 'red' is to be vulnerable. On Board 2, if **N/S** wins the contract, they will refer to the vulnerable score chart, while if **E/W** wins the contract they will refer to the non-vulnerable score chart.

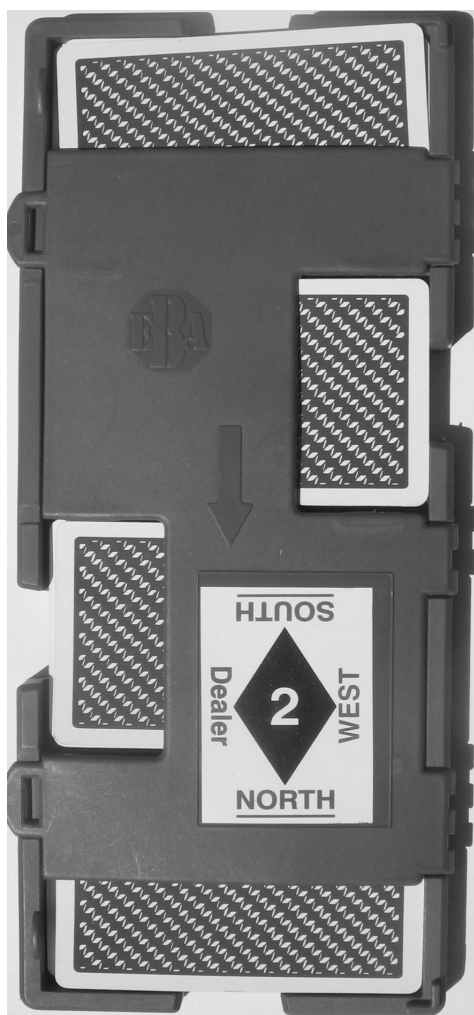


Figure 3:1

Being vulnerable is a pre-set condition. Just accept it and get on with it.

Scoring

Scoring occurs upon completion of each hand. If a contract makes, you will be rewarded with a plus score. If a contract goes down, you will be penalized with a minus score. Charts 3:2 and 3:3 illustrate the numbers.

Tricks points (trick score)

For every trick over the book, declarer receives **trick points**.

♣/♦ = **20 points** per trick. ♥/♠ = **30 points** per trick.

No trump = **40 points** for the first trick and **30 points** for every subsequent trick.

Bonus levels

For successful successfully fulfilling your contract you receive the trick points plus a **bonus**. Bonuses are awarded for all four-levels of contracts: part-scores, games, small slams, and grand slams. The bonuses can be viewed in Chart 3:2.

Part-score bonus

A **part-score** contract is any time your trick-score totals less than 100.

Assume a contract of 3♥ (nine tricks required). The book is six tricks.

1. The next three tricks are worth 30 each for a total of 90 trick points, plus **50** for the part-score bonus.
2. For making 3♥ you receive +140. (90 + 50 = 140)

Contract	Trick-score	Bonus	Total score
1♦	20	50	70
2♥	60	50	110
4♣	80	50	130
3♠	90	50	140
2NT	70	50	120

Chart 3:1

Game bonus

A **game** contract is when your trick-score totals 100 or more*. Assume a contract of 4♠ (ten tricks required). The book is six tricks.

1. The next four tricks score 30 points each for a trick-score of 120, plus **300** for the game bonus.
2. For making 4♠ you receive +420. ($120 + 300 = 420$)

Game in the minors is 5♣ or 5♦ ($20 + 20 + 20 + 20 + 20$) = 100

At 20 points per trick you must bid to the five-level to be in a minor suit game. 4♣ is a part-score contract because $4 \times 20 =$ only 80 trick points.

Game in the majors is 4♥ or 4♠ ($30 + 30 + 30 + 30$) = 120

At 30 points per trick, you must bid to the four-level to be in a major suit game. 3♠ is a part-score because $3 \times 30 =$ only 90 trick points.

Game in no trump is 3NT ($40 + 30 + 30$) = 100

Since the first trick is worth 40 and subsequent tricks worth 30, you need only bid to the three-level to be in a game contract in no trump.

Go to get

* You must **go** to the game level **to get** the game bonus. If you bid 2NT (eight tricks) but win 11 tricks, you will receive the trick points for the extra tricks you won, but only the part-score bonus.

- 2NT making 11 tricks = $40 + 30 + 30 + 30 + 30 = 160 + 50 = 210$
- 3NT making 11 tricks = $40 + 30 + 30 + 30 + 30 = 160 + 300 = 460$

Thus the decision to stop in a contract of 2NT (part-score) and not go to 3NT (game) can be a precarious one with the game bonus so enticing.

You score bonuses based on what you bid, not what you make.

Small slam bonus

A **small slam** is any bid at the six-level. Assume a contract of 6♦ (12 tricks required). The book is six tricks.

1. The next six tricks score 20 points each, for a trick-score of 120, plus 300 for the game bonus, plus **500** for the slam bonus.
2. For making 6♦ you receive +920. ($120 + 300 + 500 = 920$)

6♣/♦: $20 + 20 + 20 + 20 + 20 + 20 = 120$ (trick-score) + 300 (game bonus) + 500 (small slam bonus) = **920**

6♥/♠: $30 + 30 + 30 + 30 + 30 + 30 = 180$ (trick-score) + 300 (game score) + 500 (small slam bonus) = **980**

6NT: $40 + 30 + 30 + 30 + 30 + 30 = 190$ (trick-score) + 300 (game bonus) + 500 (small slam bonus) = **990**

Grand slam bonus

A **grand slam** is any bid at the seven-level. Assume a contract of 7♥ (13 tricks required). The book is six tricks.

1. The next seven tricks score 30 points each for a trick-score of 210, plus 300 for the game bonus, plus **1000** for the slam bonus.
2. For making 7♥ you receive +1510. ($210 + 300 + 1000 = 1510$)

7♣/♦: $20 + 20 + 20 + 20 + 20 + 20 + 20 = 140$ (trick-score) + 300 (game bonus) + 1000 (grand slam bonus) = **1440**

7♥/♠: $30 + 30 + 30 + 30 + 30 + 30 + 30 = 210$ (trick-score) + 300 (game score) + 1000 (grand slam bonus) = **1510**

7NT: $40 + 30 + 30 + 30 + 30 + 30 + 30 = 220$ (trick-score) + 300 (game bonus) + 1000 (grand slam bonus) = **1520**

Scoring chart (bonus points)

Contract	Non-vulnerable bonus	Vulnerable bonus
Part-score	50	50
Game	300	500
Small slam	500	750
Grand slam	1000	1500
Count your trick-score first and then include the appropriate bonuses.		

Chart 3:2

Defeated contracts

	Non-vulnerable			Vulnerable		
Down	Not doubled	Doubled	Redoubled	Not doubled	doubled	Redoubled
1	50	100	200	100	200	400
2	100	300	600	200	500	1000
3	150	500	1000	300	800	1600
4	200	800	1600	400	1100	2200
5	250	1100	2200	500	1400	2800
6	300	1400	2800	600	1700	3400

Chart 3:3 This chart is not in its entirety. Penalties for down 7-13 tricks are not included.

Heaven can be hell

There was a man who died and found himself in a beautiful place, surrounded by every conceivable comfort. A white-jacketed man came to him and said, "You may have anything you choose, any food, any pleasure any kind of entertainment." The man was delighted, and for days he sampled all the delicacies and experiences of which he had dreamed on Earth. The days rolled into weeks and the weeks into months. One day he finally grew bored of it all and calling the attendant to him, he said, "I am tired of all this. I need something to do. What kind of work can you give me?"

The attendant sadly shook his head and replied, "I am sorry, sir. That is one thing I cannot do for you. There is no work here for you."

To which the man answered, "That's a fine thing. I might as well be in hell." The attendant hesitated and said softly, "Sir, where do you think you are?"

Margaret M. Stevens, Prosperity is God's Idea

Aim for game or higher

Once you and your partner have found a fit, you have to decide how high to go in the auction. Your decision will depend on the combined strength of the two hands. The following chart is a general guide outlining the strength required to be in a game or slam contract.

Points required	Contract bid
26	3NT, 4♥, 4♠
29	5♣, 5♦
33-36	6♣, 6♦, 6♥, 6♠, 6NT
37+	7♣, 7♦, 7♥, 7♠, 7NT

Chart 3:4

9/11

If you discover that you have the combined values to be in a game contract, but with no major suit fit, you will have to play in 3NT, 5♣ or 5♦. A game contract in 3NT requires **9** tricks while a game contract in clubs or diamonds requires **11** tricks. It all comes down to which is easier to make, 9 or 11 tricks? The pundits vote in favor of 9 tricks in 3NT and so should you.

The higher you soar, the more you score

...provided you make your contract. You get to refer to Chart 3:2 to calculate your plus score. However, the bonuses awarded for bidding games and slams are the incentive that causes many a player to over bid their values. Sometimes, instead of soaring, they crash and burn and will have to refer to Chart 3:3 to ascertain their penalty.

Vulnerability is a convoluted concept and is best learned at the table.

For your convenience, all scoring in this book will assume non-vulnerable status.

Responding to a 1NT opening bid

Remember that there are two questions in all auctions. What denomination should we play in and how high should we bid in this auction? After a 1NT opening bid, responder takes charge of the auction.

How come responder gets to be in charge?

Responder is in charge because responder knows a lot about opener's hand (opener has 15-17 HCP and a balanced hand) whereas opener knows nothing about responder's hand. The partner with the more information is the one who should take charge.

There is a list of responses to a 1NT opening bid which allows responder to direct the auction to the safest contract. These responses are:

Red Light bid

Caution bid

Green Light bid

Red = stop

Caution = invitational

Green = forcing

Red Light bid responses

A **Red Light** bid response is exactly as it implies. The auction is now over as far as responder is concerned. Because responder knows a fair bit about opener's hand, responder is deemed to have enough information to make definitive decisions. Opener should pass and trust the decision responder has made. The following chart details the **Red Light** bids.

Dead bid	Meaning	Strength
Pass	I want to play in 1NT.	0-8
2♦ 2♥ 2♠	5+ card suit, I want to play in the nominated contract.	0-8
3NT 4♥ 4♠ 5♣ 5♦	I want to play in a game contract in the denomination stated.	10-15
Six-level or seven-level bids	I want to be in slam. Let us pray.	16+

Chart 3:5

At the table

Partner has opened 1NT (15-17 HCP, balanced)) and it is your bid?

1)	2)	3)	4)
♠ 2	♠ 983	♠ AKJ976	♠ K74
♥ A108762	♥ AK5	♥ 4	♥ AQ5
♦ 8764	♦ A52	♦ K53	♦ AQ84
♣ 72	♣ Q973	♣ 972	♣ AK3

Hand 1 **Bid 2♥.** You have a weak hand and no desire to be in game. You want to play in hearts. 2♥ is a **Red Light** bid.

Hand 2 **Bid 3NT.** With 13 HCP opposite 15-17, you have enough strength to be in game and with a balanced hand, 3NT seems a reasonable contract. 3NT is a **Red Light** bid.

Hand 3 **Bid 4♠.** With 13 TP you have the strength to be in game, and with six spades opposite a partner who has at least two spades, you want to play in spades. 4♠ is a **Red Light** bid.

Hand 4 **Bid 7NT.** A big bid for a big hand, but you have two bull elephants in the back yard to back it up. With 22 HCP opposite at least 15 HCP you are looking at a minimum of 37 HCP. 7NT is the mother of all **Red Light** bids.

Once partner makes a dead bid...“The rest is silence”. - *Shakespeare*

Caution bid responses

A **caution bid** response to a 1NT opening bid invites opener to bid again if holding a maximum hand. A caution bid is an admission by responder that assistance is needed in deciding where to play this contract.

caution bid	meaning	strength
2NT	Invites opener to bid 3NT with maximum hand.	9ish Points
3♣/3♦	Shows a six-card suit headed by two of the top three honors (with nothing else). Invites opener to bid 3NT if holding the other top honor.	5-7 HCP

4NT	Invites opener to bid 6NT with maximum hand.	16-17 points
-----	----------------------------------------------	--------------

Chart 3:6

At the table

Partner has opened 1NT (15-17 HCP, balanced) and it is your bid.

1)	2)	3)
♠ Q54	♠ 83	♠ AK106
♥ A72	♥ 865	♥ Q104
♦ K764	♦ 95	♦ K5
♣ 1072	♣ AQ9743	♣ A1072

Hand 1 **Bid 2NT.** With 9 HCP points you are not sure if there are enough values to bid 3NT. Invite opener to decide. With 17 points or a good 16, opener will accept the invite and bid 3NT. With 15 she will pass. 2NT is a caution bid.

Hand 2 **Bid 3♣.** You only have 6 HCP but this hand could potentially take six tricks if opener has the ♣K. A 3♣ response shows a six-card club suit with two of the top three honors. 3♣ invites opener to bid 3NT if opener has the other top honor (the ♣K). If opener does not have the ♣K, opener will pass. 3♣ is a caution bid.

Hand 3 **Bid 4NT.** With a chunky 16 HCP opposite 15-17 HCP a small slam is possible if opener has 17 TP. A 4NT response to a 1NT opening bid invites opener to bid 6NT with a maximum hand and to pass with a minimum. 4NT is a caution bid.

Green Light bid responses

A **Green Light** bid response is also as it implies. The auction is still alive and opener must bid again. A live bid response reveals that responder may want to be in game but is uncertain of what is the best contract. There are two **Green Light** bids, 2♣ and three of a major (3♥ and 3♠). 2♣ is a special bid which we will explore in chapter six.



Live bid	Meaning	Strength
2♣	Stayman convention	9+ points

3 ♥/3 ♠	Five-card suit	10+ points
---------	----------------	------------

Chart 3:7

At the table

Partner has opened 1NT, 15-17 HCP, balanced, and it is your bid?

1)	2)	3)
♠ Q2	♠ AK983	♠ K76
♥ A10762	♥ K5	♥ 108764
♦ KQ64	♦ 975	♦ 3
♣ 92	♣ J73	♣ AK92

Hand 1 **Bid 3♥**. As responder you know that you have the values to be in game (either 4♥ or 3NT). So, you respond 3♥, to announce you have a five-card suit and 10+ points, forcing opener to make the final decision of where to play the contract. Opener will bid 4♥ if she has three or four-card heart support, or she will bid 3NT if she has only a two-card heart suit. 3♥ is a **Green Light** bid.

Hand 2 **Bid 3♠**. Again, you have the values to be in game but you are unsure if you should be in 4♠ or in 3NT. No problem. Bid 3♠ which forces opener to make the final decision. Opener knows you want to be in game and that you have a five-card spade suit. 3♠ is a **Green Light** bid.

Hand 3 **Bid 3♥**. I know that the heart suit is weak but with 10+ points you do want to be in game opposite 15-17. Holding five hearts and a singleton diamond, 4♥ may well be the best contract if opener has a heart fit with you. Permit opener to place the contract. 3♥ is a **Green Light** bid.

The philosophy of responding to 1NT

Green Light bid, caution bid, **Green Light** bid, no bid...whatever bid. When you respond to a 1NT opening bid you are in control and any bid you choose to make is a definitive statement about the direction you want the auction to take.



The 'No Passing Zone' road sign indicates you are reading about a bid that is forcing. Forcing means you cannot pass.

Suit contracts versus no trump contracts

It is all too easy to talk about playing in a suit contract or in a no trump contract. But what does this really mean? Let us look at a hand played first in a suit contract and then in a no-trump contract.

♥ A Led

<u>Declarer</u>		<u>Dummy</u>
♠ KJ87		♠ AQ43
♥ 963		♥ 42
♦ A863		♦ KQJ2
♣ A9		♣ 632

1. **W** is in a contract of 4♠. **N** led the ♥A. As you can see, dummy (**E**) has the ♥42 and declarer (**W**) the ♥963. If **N** continues to lead hearts, dummy has to follow twice, (with the ♥42), but is then depleted of hearts. On the third round of hearts, declarer can 'trump' with dummy's ♠3. In simple terms, when one of the suits (♣, ♦, ♥, or ♠) has been nominated as the 'trump suit' (like a wild suit), you have the ability to 'trump' another suit in which you have a void.

2. Now let us look at the same hand with **W** as declarer, but playing in a 3NT contract. Again, **N** leads the ♥A and continues playing hearts. However, this time no suit has been assigned as the 'trump suit'. (There is no wild suit). In a no trump contract all suits are equal, with the high card winning. Trumping is not permitted. On the third round of hearts dummy has to discard from another suit. Dummy cannot trump. **N/S** will take as many hearts as they have to take. 4♠ is clearly a better contract. A well bid auction by a practiced partnership will end up in 4♠.

Adverse advantage

Sometimes you will experience the crisis of being in a contract that appears hopeless. When this happens, try to be calm, cool and collected. The Chinese use two brush strokes to write the word 'crisis'. One brush stroke stands for danger; the other for opportunity. When you find yourself in a scrappy contract, be aware of danger – but recognize opportunity. This approach will put you in a position to turn adversity to advantage.

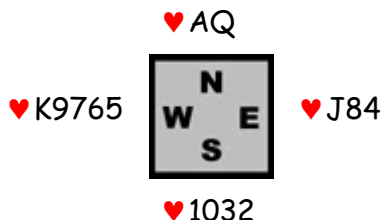
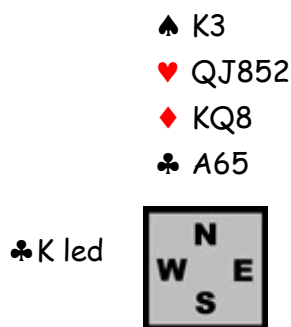
Card play technique**The finesse**

Figure 3:2

In Figure 3:2, there is a card play technique called a finesse that may allow you to make the ♥ Q as well as the ♥ A even though the ♥ K is at large. We touched on this concept in chapter one's card play technique (lead from weakness toward strength). You can finesse W out of her ♥ K by leading from weakness (S) towards strength (N). W has to play a card before N. Since W has the ♥ K you can finesse her out of it. If W plays a small card, you can play the ♥ Q from the N hand, which will win the trick. If W plays the ♥ K you will win the ♥ A and the ♥ Q is now a winner. Your odds are 50-50.



In Figure 3:3, you are S in a contract of 4♥. W led the ♣ K. You can afford to lose three tricks. With two clubs to lose for sure, you will have to confine your spade losers to just one. You have to try and make a trick with the ♠ K even though the ♠ A is lurking. Either W or E has the ♠ A. When you tackle the spade suit, lead the ♠ 6 from the S hand towards the ♠ K. W must now play a card, before you commit a card from the hand holding the ♠ K, the N hand. If W has the ♠ A, W is in a pickle. If W plays the ♠ A, you will play the ♠ 3 from dummy and the ♠ K comes good. If W plays a small spade, this is where you have to close your eyes and call for the ♠ K. ☺ If W has the ♠ A, the ♠ K wins. If E has the ♠ A

♠ 76
♥ AK743
♦ AJ5
♣ 872

Figure 3:3

Department of defence

Fourth best from your longest and strongest

The term: 'lead fourth best from your longest and strongest' is indelibly etched in my brain. Say it over and over a few times and you will never forget it either.

We know that the lead of top of a sequence and top of a broken sequence, are preferred leads from a long suit. But your suit may be a broken suit, with no sequence to speak of. From such a suit, lead your 4th best card, providing you hold at least one honor in the suit.

♦ Q9763 ♦ KJ9632 ♦ K1085 ♦ 10873 *♦ A973

From each holding, lead the card underlined. The lead of your 4th best card from your longest and strongest suit promises an honor card in that same suit.

*The last combination has a restriction. Against a no-trump contract, I would lead the ♦3. But against a suit contract, it is considered dangerous to lead away from a suit combination containing an ace. If you lead the ♦3, you will have 'under-led'

Window

Opening leads are the window into the world of defensive carding.

Question: Why is it so important that we lead specific cards from particular combinations?

Answer: The defenders cannot see each other's hand while declarer has the luxury of seeing partner's hand (dummy) giving declarer an obvious advantage. The defence can counter this somewhat by the manner in which they play their cards. If partner leads the ♥2 against 3NT, you can (without seeing partner's hand), predict that there will be four hearts including at least one honor card. 'Leads' are the first step in establishing a line of communication with your partner on defence.

your ace. Leads against a no-trump contract and a suit contract are quite similar. However, you now know of one difference. On opening lead against a suit contract, do not 'under-lead' an ace.



Summary

- **Vulnerability** is a concept best learned by experience.
- **Scoring** is the end result of all contracts. Whether it succeeds or not, a plus or minus score is assigned.
- A contract can be a **part-score**, a **game**, a **small slam** or a **grand slam**.
- There are four different **bonuses** awarded for the success of each of these contracts.
- When partner opens 1NT **you are in charge**. Direct the auction to the safest contract.
- There are **dead** bids, **caution** bids, and **live** bids in response to a 1NT opening bid.
- A **finesse** is a card play technique that offers a chance to win a trick with a card even though the opponents hold a higher card.
- The lead of **fourth best from your longest and strongest suit** is a good lead, provided you do not have a sequence or broken sequence in the holding.

Nearly Normal Norman says: When deciding what card to lead against the opponent's contract, review the bidding for clues. The bidding is often a road map to the best opening lead!



Nearly Normal Norman

Self prophesy

One student said,
"I'm too old to learn this game".
The teacher replied,

“Yes, you are right”.

“If you argue for your short comings strongly enough, then sure enough, they're yours.”

- *Avon Brown*

Exercises - chapter three

Partner opened 1NT. State your response with the following hands.

1)

♠ 1097432

♥ A5

♦ 874

♣ 32

2)

♠ 83

♥ AKQ985

♦ 65

♣ 873

3)

♠ K86

♥ A84

♦ 9853

♣ 986

4)

♠ K94

♥ AQJ85

♦ K4

♣ 1032

5)

♠ AJ764

♥ AQ643

♦ 5

♣ 3

6)

♠ KJ5

♥ 964

♦ QJ4

♣ Q1084

7)

♠ K43

♥ 6

♦ J109874

♣ 753

8)

♠ AJ42

♥ KJ73

♦ K86

♣ Q5

9)

♠ 4

♥ AJ1065

♦ 1083

♣ 10987

10)

♠ 103

♥ J103

♦ A43

♣ QJ1084

11)

♠ 62

♥ 1085

♦ AKQ874

♣ 54

12)

♠ KQ6

♥ A83

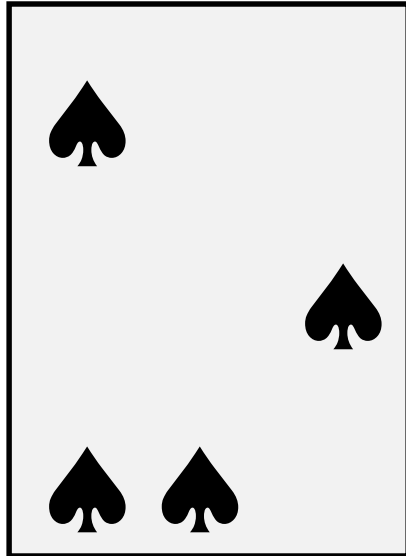
♦ K843

♣ J94

Entertainment

"Bridge is the most entertaining and intelligent card game
the wit of man has so far devised."

- *W. Somerset Maugham*



four

Responding to an opening bid of

1♣, 1♦, 1♥ or 1♠

"up the line"

Weak freak

Two-step approach

Shortage points

Responses to suit openings

Responding to an opening bid of one-of-a-suit

When partner opens the bidding with one-of-a-suit there will be 13-21 TP and the minimum number of cards required to bid that suit. Because opener might have 19-21 TP, you are obliged to respond when you hold six or more points, as game is a possibility.

Responding to an opening bid of 1♣ or 1♦

Bid	Strength	Priority of responses
1♣ 1♦	min. hand (6-9 pts)	1) Bid a new suit at the one-level 'up the line'. 1♣ - 1♦. 2) Raise partner's suit to the two-level with a fit. 1♦ - 2♦. 3) Bid 1NT - could be an unbalanced hand.
1♣ 1♦	med. hand (10-12 pts)	1) Bid a new suit 'up the line', or 2♣ over 1♦. 2) Bid 2NT - shows a balanced hand. 3) Jump raise with 5+ card support. 1♣ - 3♣.
1♣ 1♦	max. hand (13+ pts)	1) Bid a new suit 'up the line', or 2♣ over 1♦. 2) Bid 3NT - shows a balanced hand with 13-15 points.

Chart 4:1

If your partner opens 1♣ or 1♦, refer to the above chart. First refer to the strength column and then go to the row which reflects your point count. For instance, if you have 11 TP, go to the second row (medium hand 10-12), then move over in the same row to the column priority of responses. Starting with the first priority, take appropriate action. If you take the second priority, you deny the first.

Note that the first priority is the same whether you are minimum (6-9) medium (10-12) or maximum (13+). Bid a new suit 'up the line'. A new suit response to an opening suit bid has unlimited strength (6+) and is forcing. The first priority is to bid a new four-card suit 'up the line' as you are still seeking out a major suit fit. (When partner opens the bidding with 1♣ or 1♦, she may hold a four-card major).

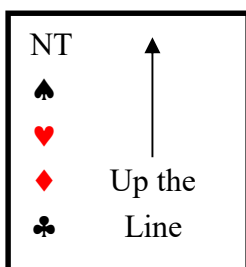
Do not confuse responses to a 1NT opening bid with responses to a suit opening bid. They are completely different situations with different response structures.

"If confusion is the first step to knowledge, I must be a genius"

- Larry Leissner

Up the line

The term '**up the line**' refers to bidding at the one-level. Whenever partner opens the bidding with a suit, the act of bidding your four-card suits 'up the line' is a technique which conserves space while allowing you room to locate a fit in hearts or spades if one exists.



'Up the line' refers to the relative ranking of the suits. Say partner opens the bidding with 1♥. There is only one suit 'up the line' and that is 1♠. To bid clubs or diamonds, you would have to go to the two-level. A new suit at the two-level promises 10+ points. If partner opens the bidding 1♣, then 1♦, 1♥ or 1♠ are all 'up the line' responses.

Figure 4:1

When looking at both hands in Figure 4:2, you can count 27 HCP and note the golden fit in spades. **E/W**, who cannot see each other's cards, still bid the hand to 4♠. **W** opened 1♣ and **E** responded 1♠ ('up the line'). **W** now bid 2♠ agreeing spades as trumps and **E** with 14 HCP opposite an opening hand, bid 4♠. The structure of bidding "up the line" is a major suit fit locator.

West	East
♠ AQ74	♠ KJ109
♥ 76	♥ A4
♦ AK93	♦ Q8642
♣ 874	♣ A3
Auction	
1♦	1♠
2♠	4♠

Figure 4:2

Anomaly

Because bidding revolves so much around the majors, there is merit in bypassing a four-card diamond suit to show a four-card major, especially if you have a weak hand. Say partner opens the bidding with 1♣ and you hold: ♠ Q43 ♥ QJ94 ♦ 10873 ♣ J6. You would not be a bum if you responded 1♥ instead of bidding 1♦. The point is that if you bid a diamond and LHO overcalls 1♠, the heart suit may get lost in the auction. Don't exploit this. Bid 'up the line' for the most part. But with a weak hand in response, this is a style that is gaining favor.

At the table

Your partner has opened the bidding with 1♣. Consider your response with each of the following hands.

1)	2)	3)	4)	5)
♠ A532	♠ 84	♠ 10764	♠ 1053	♠ AQ876
♥ 65	♥ A974	♥ K4	♥ A84	♥ A984
♦ KQJ6	♦ 1094	♦ 85	♦ Q84	♦ 42
♣ 873	♣ K873	♣ AQJ96	♣ 10743	♣ K6

Hand 1 **Bid 1♦** Bid your four-card suits 'up the line'. Opener will continue to bid her suits 'up the line' as well, so if there is a spade fit it will be uncovered.

Hand 2 **Bid 1♥** With only seven points (6-9 range) it is still a priority to bid 'up the line', hoping to locate a heart fit.

Hand 3 **Bid 1♠** You do have lovely support for partner's clubs, but seeking out a major suit fit is still the priority. If a spade fit does not exist, then you can show your club support with your next bid.

Hand 4 **Bid 1NT** When you respond 1NT to a 1♣ opening bid, you deny having four diamonds, four hearts or four spades (or you would have bid 'up the line').

Hand 5 **Bid 1♠** You are allowed to bypass a four-card suit in order to bid a longer suit. (read this again).

Exchange of information

It is illegal to pass information with body language, fingers or facial expressions. It is unthinkable. All information exchanged between players must be done in the 'conversation of bidding.'

"Your face is a book, where people may read strange matters..."

- *Shakespeare*

Responding to a 1♥ or 1♠ opening bid

When partner opens the bidding with 1♥ or 1♠ you know right away that she has at least a five-card suit. Your priorities are now quite different from when partner opened 1♣ or 1♦. As responder, if you hold 6-9 or 10-12 TP, you should show support for partner's major immediately.

Bid	Strength	Priority of responses
1♥ 1♠	min. hand (6-9 Pts)	1) Raise partner's suit to the two-level with a fit. 1♥ - 2♥ 2) Bid a new suit 'up the line' 1♥ - ♠ 3) Bid 1NT - could have an unbalanced hand.
1♥ 1♠	med. Hand (10-12 Pts)	1) Jump raise partner's suit with a fit. 1♠ - 3♠ 2) Bid a new suit 'up the line' or at the two-level. 1♥ - 2♣ 3) Bid 2NT - with a balanced hand.
1♥ 1♠	max. hand (13+ Pts)	1) Bid a new suit 'up the line' or at the two-level if necessary. 2) With a fit, bid a new suit first (the two-step approach, p. 48) 3) Bid 3NT - balanced hand with 13-15.

Chart 4:2

If your partner opens the bidding with 1♥ or 1♠, refer to Chart 4:2 for your priorities. Go to the row under 'strength' that reflects your hand strength. Now move over on the same row to the column, 'priority of responses' and bid accordingly. With 6-9 points and support (3+ cards) you should make a simple raise of partner's suit (1♥ - 2♥). With 10-12 and support, jump raise partner's suit (1♥ - 3♥).

Priority means: importance, weighty, paramount, crucial, critical....

When you open the bidding - **importance** is given to the major suits. When you respond to a minor suit opening bid, **weight** is given to bidding "up the line" to locate a major suit fit. When you respond to a major suit opening bid, it is **paramount** (in most cases), that you show support for partner's major. When partner opens with a no-trump bid, it is **crucial** that you seek out a major suit fit, if one exists. With the choice to play a game contract in the majors, in no trump or in the minors, it is **critical** that you know where your priorities lie. **Priority** means...

Weak freak

Introducing this concept in an introductory book is a departure from main stream teaching. However, I have decided to do so, because if not now, then later. I think it is best to create a 'good habit' now rather than fix a 'bad habit' later. ☺ The simple and logical structure for raising opener's suit is:

$$1♥ - 2♥ = 6-9 \quad 1♥ - 3♥ = 10-12 \quad *1♥ - 4♥ = 13+$$

This scale makes perfect sense and follows a continuum which the learning player can relate to. With support for partner's major, the more points you have, the higher you bid. However, in the real world of Bridge an immediate raise to game in a suit contract (1♥ - 4♥) is reserved for a weak hand with extra length in trumps.

*An immediate raise to game of a 1♣, 1♦, 1♥ or 1♠ opening bid is referred to as a '**weak freak**'. A 'weak freak' is a hand where you have little in HCP (a weak hand), but extra length in partner's suit (a freak hand). Partner's opening bid is stated below each hand. Your response?

Why jump to game with a weak freak?

There are two reasons.

1. You are telling partner that you have a weak hand with extra length in trumps. You are revealing the true nature of your hand with one bid.
2. You are stifling the opponent's ability to communicate information to each other about their hands. The opponents may have a 'fit' and a contract of their own to make. Your jump to game makes it extremely difficult, if not impossible for the opponents to exchange the necessary information. They are in the dark. You will not always make your contract, but you do hope to get the best score you can get. A small minus is better than a big minus. (Read this a few times).

At the table

You hold each of the following three hands. Consider your response to your partner's opening bid which is underlined.

1)	2)	3)
♠ A6532	♠ 4	♠ 104
♥ 5	♥ KQJ974	♥ 4
♦ J8763	♦ 94	♦ QJ109632
♣ 83	♣ 8753	♣ A83
1♠	1♥	1♦

- Hand 1** **Bid 4♠.** Jump raise partner to game. You have extra length for partner's suit and few HCP. You have a 'weak freak'.
- Hand 2** **Bid 4♥.** Jump immediately to game. You have few HCP (weak) and six-card support (freak) for an 11-card fit!
- Hand 3** **Bid 5♦.** You can do it in the minors too. Do not let the opponents find their heart fit! Jump to game immediately. This hand is a 'weak freak'. You have seven-card support (freak) and few HCP (weak).

The two-step approach

If an immediate raise to game (1♥ - 4♥) is reserved for a 'weak freak', how do you respond with a hand that has trump support and 13+ points?



You hold: ♠ 2 ♥ AJ84 ♦ 753 ♣ AKJ65

Your hand is valued at 13+ points, you know you want to be in game (opposite an opening hand) and you know you have a nine-card fit in hearts. However, bidding 4♥ takes up a lot of bidding space, limiting the space to communicate. If you bid 2♣ first (going slowly), this gives partner room to tell you more about her hand. By going slowly and communicating more information, you may find you have the values to be in a heart slam!

At the table

Your partner has opened the bidding with 1♥ and you hold the following hands. Consider your response.

1)	2)	3)	4)	5)
♠ A5	♠ 84	♠ 1064	♠ 4	♠ Q953
♥ J65	♥ A974	♥ K4	♥ AJ984	♥ A765
♦ K10963	♦ KJ94	♦ A53	♦ 87	♦ A2
♣ 873	♣ K83	♣ AK872	♣ Q9873	♣ K63

Hand 1 **Bid 2♥.** With 6-9 points and a major suit fit, show your support with a 'simple raise'.

Hand 2 **Bid 3♥.** With 10-12 points and a major suit fit, show your support with a jump raise of partner's suit.

Hand 3 **Bid 2♣.** Your second priority is to bid a new suit "up the line" or at the two-level if necessary. You know you want to be in a game and that partner has least five hearts. However, you do not know what the best contract is, so simply follow the priorities of responding to a major suit opening bid and discover the best strain.

Hand 4 **Bid 4♥.** This hand qualifies as a 'weak freak'. You have extraordinary trump support and your hand is otherwise weakish. 4♥ sticks it to the opponents, if they had ideas of competing for the auction.

Hand 5 **Bid 1♠.** You have the values to bid game in hearts, but should take the 'two-step approach' to show your heart support. By bidding 1♠ (a forcing bid) you are giving your partner room to describe her hand further.

With a good hand go slowly

When responder has 13+ points opposite an opening bid she may have support for partner's suit but is still uncertain as to the combined strength of the two hands. It is sometimes best to go slowly in the auction, facilitating room to convey more information. You can always show your support with your next bid. (That my friend, is the two-step approach).

More hand evaluation - shortage points

<u>North</u> (dummy)
♠ 2
♥ AQ86
♦ A7653
♣ K65
<u>South</u> (declarer)
♠ A765
♥ KJ109
♦ 9
♣ A832

With a trump suit, shortage in a side suit is valuable. In Figure 4:3, **S** is declarer in a contract of 4♥. **W** led the ♦K. Dummy has a singleton spade and declarer a singleton diamond. If you win the ♦A, following with the ♦9 from **S**, you can trump the ♦3 with the ♥9. You could then play the ♠A, following with the ♠2 from dummy, and now trump the ♠5 with the ♥6. You could continue trumping diamonds and spades back and forth between the two hands, scoring your trumps separately. To 'trump' is also to 'ruff'. In 4♥, you cross-trumped the hand. (It is best to cash your ♣AK before embarking on the cross-trump). Having shortage in a side suit sure can be an asset. There is a third method of hand evaluation and it is called '**shortage points**' (SP).

Figure 4:3

Shortage with length

Shortage points (SP) are given for voids, singletons and doubletons. There are two scales to consider when adding SP. One is where the short trumps has three-card support and the other is with 4+ card support. The more **length** in trumps you have, the more often you can trump! Do not count shortage points until you have found a fit.

Shortage points

Shortage	Three-card support	Four-card support
Void	3 points	5 points
Singleton	2 points	3 points
Doubleton	1 point	1 point

Chart 4:3

“One should always play fairly when one has the winning cards”.

- *Oscar Wilde*

Two out of three ain't bad

Of the three evaluation methods available to assess the strength of your hand, high card points (HCP), length points (LP), and shortage points (SP), do not use all three at the same time as it gets a bit inflated. Use HCP and LP or HCP and SP, whichever is greater. Remember! You can only add SP once you have an agreed suit.

Dummy points

In some circles, shortage points are also referred to as dummy points. That is because shortage is generally more valuable in the hand with fewer trumps, which is usually dummy. Consider the following two hands:

<u>West</u>	<u>East</u>
♠ AKQ87	♠ J109
♥ 2	♥ A83
♦ KJ75	♦ A87
♣ 1065	♣ Q982

Figure 4:4

<u>West</u>	<u>East</u>
♠ AKQ87	♠ J109
♥ A83	♥ 2
♦ 752	♦ AQ983
♣ 82	♣ AQ92

Figure 4:5

In both hands **W** is in a contract of 4♠. Note that in both hands there is a singleton ♥2.

With the first hand (Figure 4:4), the singleton ♥2 is in the **W** hand with the long trumps. If you play the ♥A and then trump **E**'s ♥3 and the ♥8 in the **W** hand, you will be trumping with the long trumps and not gaining any extra tricks. By the time you trump the ♥3 and ♥8 you will now have the ♠AKQ left in the **W** hand opposite the ♠J109 in the **E** hand. You only have three more spade tricks coming to you.

With the second hand (Figure 4:5), the singleton ♥2 is in the **E** hand with the short trumps. If you trump the ♥3 and ♥8 in the **E** hand, you will gain extra tricks. By the time you trump the ♥3 and ♥8 you will still have the ♠AKQ76 in the **W** hand opposite the ♠J in the **E** hand. You still have five more spade tricks coming to you. So, while shortage is good, it is better to have shortage in the hand with the short trumps.

At the table

Your partner has opened the bidding with 1♠ and you hold the following hands. Consider your response.

1)	2)	3)	4)	5)
♠ A532	♠ K84	♠ 10764	♠ 109853	♠ KQ85
♥ 5	♥ A974	♥ KQ74	♥ 4	♥ K87
♦ KQJ6	♦ 104	♦ ---	♦ 4	♦ 98742
♣ 8743	♣ J873	♣ AQJ96	♣ QJ7432	♣ 6

Hand 1 **Bid 2♦.** With 10 HCP, four-card spade support and a singleton heart, this hand is now valued at 13 TP. Take the 'two-step approach', giving partner room to tell you more about her hand.

Hand 2 **Bid 2♠.** With 8 HCP and a doubleton diamond, this hand weighs in at 9 TP. Your priority is to show spade support.

Hand 3 **Bid 2♣.** Take the 'two-step approach'. This hand comes in at around 17 TP. 12 HCP plus five shortage points (SP) for the void in diamonds. There might well be a spade slam. Give your partner room to talk.

Hand 4 **Bid 4♠.** Shut the opponents out of this auction. This hand is a 'weak freak'. You do not necessarily expect to make 4♠, but the opponents surely have something if you give them room to find it.

Hand 5 **Bid 3♠.** This hand is worth about 11 TP. 8 HCP plus three shortage points (SP) for the singleton club. 3♠ announces that you have spade support and a hand valued at 10-12.

“Always make the right bid even if you think your partner might not understand it...few things will help your partnership more than to place responsibility on your partner and let her know that you trust her.”

“Trust is like a vase...once it's broken, though you can fix it, the vase will never be the same again.”

- *Nietzsche*

Card play technique

The double finesse

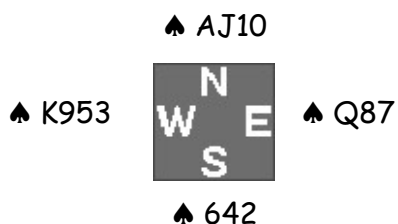


Figure 4:6

In Figure 4:6, you require two spade tricks to fulfil your contract. As you can see, you are missing both the ♠Q and the ♠K. When you are missing two specific cards, they are usually split between the opponents. Following the axiom of leading from weakness towards strength, you should lead a small card from the S hand. W will play the ♠3 and you will finesse dummy's ♠10 which loses to E's ♠Q. This loss is not unexpected. However, when you later gain the lead, you should lead another spade from the S hand towards strength, and when W again plays a small card you should insert the ♠J from dummy. This will win the trick as W has the ♠K. A **double finesse** will win an extra trick 75% of the time.

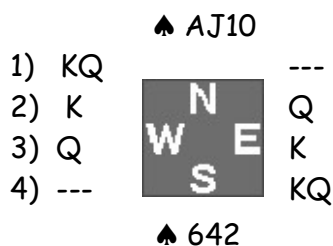


Figure 4:7

In Figure 4:7, you can see the four possible ways in which the missing key cards (♠K and ♠Q) can be distributed between W and E. Assume that W and E have small spades as well and that you always lead spades from the S hand.

- 1) W has both the ♠K and ♠Q. You will lose only one spade trick.
- 2) W has the ♠K and E has the ♠Q. You will lose the first finesse, but win the second.
- 3) W has the ♠Q and E has the ♠K. You will lose the first finesse, but win the second.
- 4) E has both the ♠K and ♠Q. You will lose both finesses to E. In only one out of four situations will you lose two tricks. That means three out of four times you come away with a second spade trick.

Department of defence

Small promises an honor

In chapter three you learned about leading fourth best card from your longest and strongest suit. In this chapter let us look at a holding where you only have three cards to an honor.

You can tell partner about your honor card by leading the smallest card you have in that holding.

♦ Q63 ♦ K96 ♦ Q85 ♦ 1073 ♦ A92 *

From each of these diamond holdings lead the smallest card to promise an honor card in that suit. *In the last hand with ♦ A92, the lead of the ♦ 2 is fine against a NT contract. However, lest we forget, you should not under-lead an ace against a suit contract.

When small is big

Sometimes your holding in a suit may have an honor but your small card is kind of a big card. Say you hold ♣ K97. Relatively speaking the ♣ 7 is your smallest card and the one you should lead. However, because it is actually a middle strength spot card, how will partner know that it is small? Do not fret. Lead the ♣ 7 anyway and let partner figure it out. Partner can see her own club holding as well as dummy's clubs and may be able to discern that the ♣ 7 is a small card, relatively speaking.

Consider your lead against a NT contract from the following.

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------------------------------|
| ♥ Q8 <u>2</u> | Lead the ♥ 2 (small promising an honor). |
| ♥ <u>K</u> Q103 | Lead the ♥ K (top of a broken sequence). |
| ♥ K9 <u>8</u> | Lead the ♥ 8 (small promising an honor). |
| ♥ J7 <u>5</u> | Lead the ♥ 5 (small promising an honor). |
| ♥ <u>J</u> 1092 | Lead the ♥ J (top of a sequence). |



Summary

- There are **priorities** to follow when responding to an opening bid.
- Responding to a minor suit opening, you first bid a new suit '**up the line**'.
- Responding to a major suit opening bid, you generally **show support** for opener's major immediately.
- A **weak freak** is when you have great length in opener's suit, but few HCP.
- The **two-step approach** is the right way to show support for opener's suit when you have 13+ points.
- Count **shortage points** (SP) only when you have a 'fit' with partner.
- A **double finesse** is when you are missing two key-cards and take a finesse twice in the same suit, hoping one of the finesses will succeed.
- The lead of a small card usually **promises an honor**.
- Do not **under-lead an ace** against a suit contract.

Nearly Normal Norman says: There are three components to Bridge: Bidding, Card Play and Defense. You are learning a little about each one, in each chapter.



Nearly Normal Norman

Shortage points

Length points

"This is the short and long of it"

- Shakespeare

Exercises - chapter four

A. In the first four hands your partner has opened the bidding with 1♣. Consider your points and your response.

1)	2)	3)	4)
♠ AKQ8	♠ A3	♠ KQ876	♠ 74
♥ 10865	♥ AKQ985	♥ A864	♥ 985
♦ 874	♦ 65	♦ 53	♦ 843
♣ 32	♣ 873	♣ 96	♣ AK932

B. In the next four hands your partner has opened the bidding 1♥. Consider your points and your response.

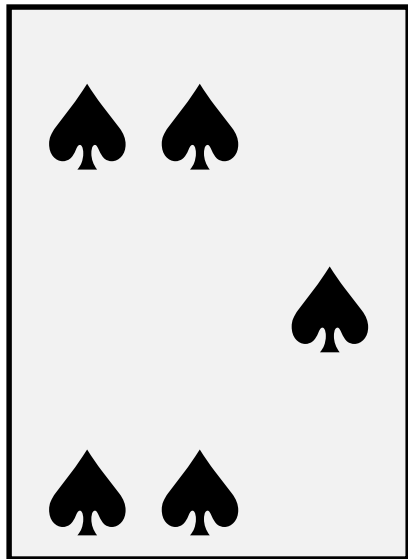
1)	2)	3)	4)
♠ A64	♠ KJ5	♠ K43	♠ AQJ4
♥ A43	♥ A64	♥ 1096	♥ QJ73
♦ 985	♦ Q54	♦ 98754	♦ 863
♣ J1093	♣ QJ104	♣ K3	♣ 95

C. In the last four hands your partner has opened the bidding 1♦. Consider your points and your response.

1)	2)	3)	4)
♠ 4	♠ 103	♠ 2	♠ K83
♥ AJ10653	♥ KJ103	♥ K1085	♥ 73
♦ 103	♦ A43	♦ A874	♦ J103
♣ 10987	♣ AJ104	♣ Q954	♣ KQ43

“Not everything that can be counted - counts;
and not everything that counts, can be counted.”

- *Albert Einstein*



five

Raise responder's major
Bid a new suit "up the line"
Bid a new suit at the two-level
Re-bid your primary suit
Bid no trump
Raise responder's minor

Opener's second bid

You got to know your limitations

Range	Strength
Min.	13-15 points
Med.	16-18 points
Max.	19-21 points

Chart 5:1

An opening bid of 1♣, 1♦, 1♥, or 1♠ has a point range of 13-21 points. Opener's second bid enables her to 'limit' the strength of her hand to a minimum (13-15), medium (16-18) or maximum range (19-21).

Opener has six options for a second bid.
(Pass is also an option if responder's bid was limiting)

- 1) Raise responder's major.
- 2) Bid a new suit "up the line"
- 3) Bid a new suit at the two-level.
- 4) Re-bid your suit with 6+ cards.
- 5) Bid no-trump.
- 6) Raise responder's minor suit.

1) Raise responder's major suit

The first priority is to raise responder's major. Say you opened the bidding 1♥ and partner responded 1♠. With four-card support you could raise to 2♠ (13-15), 3♠ (16-18) or 4♠ (19-21). The level you choose will reflect the point range you hold.

At the table

You open 1♣ and partner responds 1♥. Consider your second bid.

1)	2)	3)
♠ AQ8	♠ A83	♠ AKQ6
♥ 10865	♥ AQ95	♥ 10987
♦ 32	♦ 73	♦ 3
♣ AKJ3	♣ AK65	♣ AKJ6

Hand 1 2♥ shows four-card support in the minimum range (13-15).

Hand 2 3♥ shows four-card support in the medium range (16-18).

Hand 3 4♥ shows four-card support in the maximum range (19-21).

The thing I am most aware of is my limits. And this is natural; for I rarely occupy the middle of my cage; my whole being surges toward the bars.

- Alan Bennett *Andre Gide*

2) Bid a new suit 'up the line'

The dictum that responder should bid four-card suits 'up the line' also applies to opener's second bid.

You hold: ♠ AQ54 ♥ 65 ♦ A87 ♣ KJ32

You open 1♣ and partner responds 1♥. With no heart support you should continue "up the line" with a 1♠ bid. Bidding 'up the line' refers to:

1. Bidding at the one-level.
2. Is relative to partner's last bid suit.

Bidding 'up the line' is a structured bidding style that makes it easy to locate a 4-4 major suit fit. The importance of continuing 'up the line' is reflected in a deduction made from the auction in Figure 5:1. You open



You	Partner
1♣	1♥
1♠	

the bidding 1♣, partner responds 1♦ and your second bid as opener is 1♠. You have by-passed hearts in order to bid 1♠ and thus have denied holding a four-card heart suit.

Figure 5:1

You open each of the following hands 1♣, and partner responds 1♦. Consider your second bid as opener.

1)
♠ AKQ8
♥ 10852
♦ 32
♣ AJ3

2)
♠ J76
♥ A93
♦ A53
♣ A986

3)
♠ AK95
♥ K3
♦ K5
♣ A8753

4)
♠ K4
♥ Q852
♦ AK3
♣ AK92

Hand 1 Bid 1♥. 'Up the line'. Shows four hearts and is **forcing**.

Hand 2 Bid 1NT. Denies four hearts or spades (13-15).

Hand 3 Bid 1♠. 'Up the line'. Shows four spades and is **forcing**.

Hand 4 Bid 1♥. 'Up the line'. Shows four hearts and is **forcing**.

Forcing means you cannot pass. If opener's second bid continues 'up the line' her strength has yet to be clarified, so the auction is forcing.

3) Bid a new suit at the two-level

If your second bid is at the two-level it must be in a lower ranking suit than your first suit.* You promise at least four cards in the that suit and a minimum to medium strength hand **(13-17 total points).

1)	2)	3)
♠ K8	♠ KQJ76	♠ -
♥ A10865	♥ A	♥ QJ56
♦ 32	♦ AJ109	♦ AQ653
♣ AJ73	♣ 963	♣ A732
<u>You</u> <u>Responder</u>	<u>You</u> <u>Responder</u>	<u>You</u> <u>Responder</u>
1 ♥ 1 ♠	1 ♠ 1NT	1 ♦ 1 ♠
2 ♣	2 ♦	2 ♣

Hand 1 2 ♣ shows 4+ clubs and **(13-17).

Hand 2 2 ♦ shows 4+ diamonds and (13-17).

Hand 3 2 ♣ shows 4+ clubs and (13-17).

The point with hand three, is not to bid *2 ♥ which is higher ranking than your first suit and is also a suit that responder by-passed in the bidding.

* If your second bid is a new suit at the two-level and in a suit higher ranking than your first bid suit, this is called a '**reverse bid**' and it shows a good hand. We will not delve into 'reverse bids' at this point, although there is an explanation at the bottom of this page.

** If you second bid as opener is a new suit at the two-level (lower ranking than your first suit) your hand strength can overlap a minimum (13-15) and medium (16-18) hand to be from 13 to a bad 17.

Reverse bid

If your second suit is a suit that partner had a chance to bid in the auction but declined to do so, you have made a 'reverse bid'. In hand three above you opened the hand 1 ♠ and partner responded 1 ♠. Note that partner bypassed hearts in order to bid 1 ♠. If you now bid 2 ♦ (a suit partner has by-passed) you probably do not have a heart fit so the auction will be kept alive as you seek out a better contract. A reverse bid promises (17+).



4) Re-bid your primary suit

“When you re-bid your first suit you are limiting the value of your hand to a minimum, medium or maximum hand”.

If one of the above priorities is not available, you can always re-bid your first suit with *6+ cards in your suit.

1)	2)	3)
♠ K8	♠ KQ6	♠ AKQ873
♥ A108652	♥ A3	♥ AQ5
♦ Q2	♦ AQ10932	♦ Q6
♣ A73	♣ 32	♣ 102

You	Responder	You	Responder	You	Responder
1♥	1♠	1♦	1♥	1♠	1NT
2♥		3♦		4♠	

Hand 1 **2♥** *6+ hearts and a minimum strength hand (13-15).

Hand 2 **3♦** 6+ diamonds and a medium strength hand (16-18).

Hand 3 **4♠** 6+ spades and a maximum strength hand (19-21).

* With some hands you may have to re-bid a suit with only five cards. However, these are exceptions and not to be trifled with at this point.

Partnership bidding

“If we are together nothing is impossible. If we are divided we fail”

- Winston Churchill

Longevity

“Because every hand is different, the intellectual challenge of Bridge never ceases. Besides, and more importantly, my father often noted that, ‘If you don't play Bridge, you'll have a miserable old age’. Since that time is getting closer, this is no time for my interest in Bridge to lag or diminish”.

- Rudy Boschwitz

5) Bid no trump at the cheapest level

“When you make a no-trump bid, you are limiting the value of your hand to within a range of 2-4 points.”

If opener's second bid is in no trump, it generally shows a balanced hand, while denying the other priorities: support for responder's major suit, a new suit "up the line" or 6+ cards in the original suit.

♠ Q8
♥ Q65
♦ AQ932
♣ A73

Figure 5:3

In Figure 5:3 you opened 1♦ and partner responded 1♠. When going through opener's second bid possibilities, your options are eliminated one at a time until you get to where you are now: Bid no trump at the cheapest level. Respond 1NT, showing a balanced type hand.

♠ A84
♥ AQ865
♦ 32
♣ KJ3

Figure 5:4

In Figure 5:4 you opened 1♥ and partner responded 2♦. With 13-15 points, re-bidding no trump at the cheapest level (2NT) states that you do not have any of the priorities aforementioned and that along with a five-card heart suit, you have a balanced hand.

6) Raise responder's minor suit

If partner's response was a minor suit, you should follow the above priorities if possible. With an unbalanced hand and support for responder's minor suit, you can always raise responder's suit.

1)	2)
♠ A	♠ 732
♥ 843	♥ AKJ52
♦ AJ82	♦ 3
♣ AQJ32	♣ A875

Hand 1 You open 1♣ and partner responds 1♦. You should jump raise partner to 3♦, showing four-card support and 16-18.

Hand 2 You open 1♥ and partner responds 2♣. Raise responder to 3♣ showing your support and 13-15 pts.

At the table

1)	2)	3)
♠ J985	♠ AKQ8	♠ Q64
♥ J4	♥ 9764	♥ J4
♦ AK963	♦ K974	♦ AQ532
♣ A3	♣ 3	♣ AJ7

With the three hands in Figure 5:5 you open 1♦ and if partner responded 1♥. What would your next bid be?

Figure 5:5

- Hand 1** **Bid 1♠.** Your first priority when responder bids a major suit is to show support. If you don't have support, continue "up the line".
- Hand 2** **Bid 2♥.** Your first priority is to show heart support. 2♥ shows a minimum hand, 13-15 and four-card support.
- Hand 3** **Bid 1NT.** You can't support hearts, you can't bid "up the line", you have no other four-card suit to bid, you do not want to re-bid your diamonds with only five, so bid no trump at the cheapest level to show 13-15 and a balanced hand.

1)	2)	3)
♠ J985	♠ 8	♠ 64
♥ AJ432	♥ AQ974	♥ A108764
♦ AK3	♦ KJ94	♦ A73
♣ A	♣ K32	♣ A7

With the three hands in Figure 5:6 you open 1♥ and your partner responds 1♠. Consider your second bid.

Figure 5:6

- Hand 1** **Bid 3♠** Jump raise responder's suit. You show four-card support and a 'medium' strength hand (16-18).
- Hand 2** **Bid 2♦** Show your second suit. Now partner will know you have hearts and diamonds and (13 -17).
- Hand 3** **Bid 2♥** Re-bid your hearts to show 6+ hearts and a 'minimum' strength hand (13-15).

Thinking at the table

Deductive thinking is the key to winning at Bridge. What logically follows from the facts, whether known or assumed, is a deduction. While playing Bridge you are in a constant state of making deductions.

1. If your RHO revealed a five-card heart suit in the auction and you have two hearts in your hand while dummy shows up with two hearts (accounting for nine hearts), it is a simple deduction to assume your partner has the remaining four hearts. Elementary, dear Watson.
2. Your RHO opened the bidding 1NT (15-17), you have 14 HCP and dummy turns up with 10 HCP for a total of 40 points (give or take a point). You can deduce that your partner's hand looks like a foot.

Sherlock on the job

"It follows logically from the facts my dear Watson, that one can deduce with certainty, based on his broken watch, the amber colored stains on his shirt, the bruises on his shins, the bump on his forehead, and the Ace of spades playing card stuffed firmly in his mouth, that last evening, at precisely nine o'clock, the deceased gentleman was, while sipping on a brandy, playing Bridge right here in the parlor, partnered with his wife...that is, of course, until he trumped her ace".

Opportunity

"Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work."

- *Thomas Edison*

An allegedly true Bridge story

Bridge clubs rarely do any business during morning working hours, and those that open as early as lunchtime have few games going until later in the afternoon. On one particular day, a New York club had only four players, thus only one table in play, at the noontime hour. The four contestants were quite companionable and enjoyed their game. However, at one point, one of the four, a young woman, looked at her watch and announced, "I'm sorry to have to break up this very pleasant game, but I'm getting married in half an hour."

Card play technique

More finessing



Figure 5:7

In Figure 5:7, you can always win a trick with the ♥A, but would like to score a second trick with the ♥Q. With the ♥K lurking in one of the opponent's hands, you will have to try a finesse. Lead the ♥5 from the S hand towards the ♥Q (the card you want to win). If W holds the ♥K, W must commit herself to playing a heart before N does. This is the main thrust of all finesses: forcing one of the opponents to commit to playing a card before you have to play a card from the hand with the key card. In this case, the ♥O is the key card in the N hand.

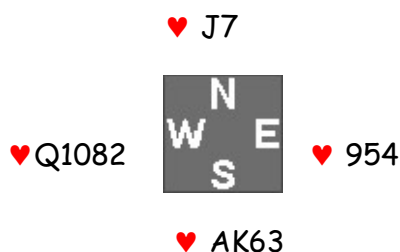


Figure 5:8

In Figure 5:8, we have the same type of finesse. This time you are hoping for the ♥J to win a trick even though the ♥Q is outstanding. The ♥A and ♥K will always score two tricks. Any ambition for a third trick lies with the ♥J.

Pearls by Pearl

Pearl was my oldest student when she decided to take up Bridge at 93 years. Her husband had passed and she wanted to get out socially. She was a small frail woman, 85 lbs soaking wet and her body, always elegantly garbed, was like a bag of dried twigs. Pearl was that kind of old where her eyes were always watery and her head wobbled precariously on her shoulders, like that fake dog people have in the back window of their car. But Pearl's mind was sharp and her humor surgical. In one class while explaining the concept that length can be more important than strength, Pearl, fired back "don't kid yourself honey", and the class broke out in a roar. Pearl shared her infectious zest for life in every class and for years later, at the local duplicate club. She passed at 101 years, always claiming it was Bridge that kept her going. Pearl made me think about things. Mostly, she made me laugh.

Department of defence

High - low from a doubleton

If you hold only two cards in a suit and decide that this is the suit you want to lead, you should lead the top card. This is referred to as 'Hi-Lo' from a doubleton. Consider the following holdings:

♥ 92♥ K8♥ J2♥ 32♥ A2

In each of these heart combinations you have only two cards (a doubleton). If you lead from any of these combinations, lead the top card first followed by the bottom card. This is also referred to as a 'peter' or an 'echo' ('petered' in hearts or 'echoed' in hearts).

The knowledge of which card to lead from particular combinations is essential. When deciding which suit to lead, you should consider the auction.

Leads

Leads are when you play the first card to a trick. Just remember that in each chapter thus far, you have learned something new about the correct card to lead from specific combinations. These only apply when you are on lead. These do not apply when you are following suit (third hand play), nor do they apply to the manner in which cards are played by the declarer. Those are different situations that call for different techniques.

Never talk about your partner's Bridge mistakes to other players, behind his or her back. It is considered bad form and is not a good look.

"True friends stab you in the front".

- *Oscar Wilde*

Limitations

Knowing the limitations of opener's strength (minimum, medium or maximum) is what puts responder in charge of the auction.



Summary

- Consider opener's **second bid**. Opener can: raise responder's major suit; bid a new suit 'up the line'; bid a new suit at the two-level; bid NT; re-bid her first suit; raise responder's minor suit.
- If responder's first bid has **limited** her hand (such as a no-trump response or a raise of your suit), you can pass if you want.
- Limiting your hand means to reveal to partner the approximate strength of your hand **within a range** of 2-4 points.
- The opener's second bid often can limit the strength of opener's hand to a **minimum** (13-15), a **medium** (16-18) or a **maximum** (19-21).
- There are several variations of a **finesse**. With most, you lead toward the card you hope will win the trick.
- Leads refer to the first card played to a trick. There are guides as to which card to lead from various combinations. From a **doubleton** holding, lead **hi - lo**.
- **Deductive thinking** is part and parcel with solving problems at the Bridge

Nearly Normal Norman says: Deduction is the thought process of a competent player. Think deductively and your game will prosper.



Nearly Normal Norman

Win or lose - do it fairly.

"That is all I have to say about that".

- Forrest Gump

Exercises - chapter five

A. You opened 1♦, partner responded 1♥ and it is your second bid.

1)	2)	3)	4)
♠ AQ8	♠ 10983	♠ K76	♠ 764
♥ J865	♥ AK5	♥ A64	♥ 5
♦ Q874	♦ AQ65	♦ KJ53	♦ AQJ843
♣ A2	♣ 73	♣ K62	♣ AJ2

B. You opened 1♥, partner responded 1♠ and it is your second bid.

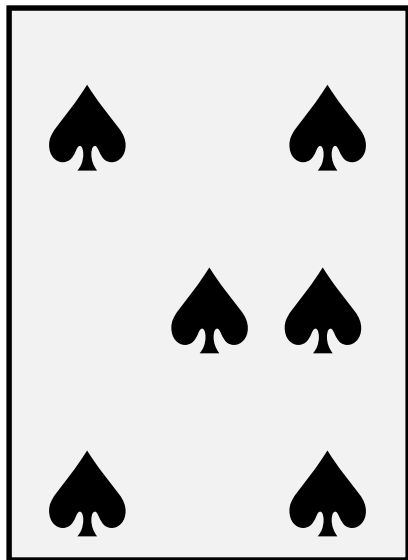
1)	2)	3)	4)
♠ AQ64	♠ J5	♠ Q4	♠ A4
♥ A9843	♥ AQ764	♥ AK1096	♥ AKQ1076
♦ A85	♦ K54	♦ A754	♦ K32
♣ 3	♣ A104	♣ 103	♣ 95

C. You opened 1♠, partner responded 2♦ and it is your second bid.

1)	2)	3)	4)
♠ AJ1064	♠ A9873	♠ AQJ1092	♠ KJ983
♥ AJ3	♥ 83	♥ 85	♥ KQ73
♦ 103	♦ AJ43	♦ 74	♦ 3
♣ KJ9	♣ A4	♣ AQ4	♣ AJ3

“Bridge is such a sensational game that I wouldn't mind being in jail if
I had three cellmates who were decent players and who were
willing to keep the game going 24 hours a day.”

- *Warren Buffett*



six

2♣ Stayman
Responses to Stayman
4NT Blackwood
Responses to Blackwood

Two conventions

Conventional wisdom

In this chapter you are going to learn your first two 'conventions'. A convention is an artificial bid and implies something other than what it normally means. The use of conventions in an auction is akin to using big words in a sentence. Big words, like Bridge conventions enable you to be more articulate about what you say. The good news is there are only three conventions (the third is in chapter eight) you will need to learn in this book. The road to good bidding is paved with good conventions.

2♣ Stayman

When partner opens 1NT you know she has 15-17 HCP, a balanced hand, and at most one doubleton. As responder and the person in charge, you will make decisions about what denomination to play in and how high to bid. In many cases, because you have so much information about opener's hand, your decision will be easy. Sometimes however, you will require more information about opener's hand before you decide how high or what in. For instance, you may have a four-card major and want to know if opener has the same four-card major (a golden fit). A 2♣ response to a 1NT opening bid is conventional, asking if opener has a four-card major.

The auction and hands:

♠ AQ74	♠ KJ63
♥ 65	♥ 97
♦ AQ92	♦ KJ85
♣ A73	♣ K83
<u>West</u>	<u>East</u>
1NT	2♣*
2♠	4♠
* Stayman	

The conversation

West	1NT - "I have 15-17 HCP with a balanced hand."
East	2♣ - "I have 9+ points and was wondering if you have a four-card major?"
West	2♠ - "I do not have four hearts but, I do have four spades."
East	4♠ - "We have a 'golden fit'. Let's play in spades and in game."

Figure 6:1

Responses to 2♣ Stayman

When partner responds 2♣ **Stayman** to your 1NT opening bid, you will have to be alert first to recognize the conventional meaning and then how to respond. You cannot pass. 2♣ Stayman says:



1. Nothing at all about clubs.
2. Shows 9+ points.
3. Asks if opener holds a four-card major.
4. Promises at least one four-card major.

The 1NT bidder has the option of three responses to Stayman:

- 2♦ Denies a four-card major.
- 2♥ Reveals a four-card heart suit.
- 2♠ Reveals a four-card spade suit and denies holding four hearts.

North

♠ J873
♥ Q763
♦ 32
♣ K76

South

♠ A2
♥ J54
♦ AQ6
♣ AQ832

*Auction

<u>S</u>	<u>N</u>
1NT	2♣
2♦	2NT
3NT	

Stayman 'Verboten'

Do not use Stayman with less than nine points. In the hand on the left, S opened the bidding 1NT, showing 15-17 HCP and a balanced hand. N has four cards in both majors but only 6 HCP. N bid 2♣ Stayman and S responded 2♦ (denying a four-card major). Now N is in trouble. She can't pass 2♦ as they do not have a diamond fit. N will have to bid 2NT (caution bid) which invites S to bid 3NT. With a maximum hand, S will accept the invitation and bid 3NT. 3NT is an ambitious contract with a total of only 23 HCP and will most likely fail. With less than nine points and no long suit to bid, it is generally best to pass 1NT and wish partner good luck. **Culprit:** North

*The auction should have gone 1NT – pass.

At the table

In each of the following hands you open 1NT and partner responds 2♣ Stayman. It is your second bid.

1)	2)	3)	4)	5)
♠ A532	♠ K94	♠ AQJ6	♠ K85	♠ KQ5
♥ K65	♥ AQ4	♥ J1094	♥ AJ104	♥ KQ7
♦ KQJ6	♦ 104	♦ K8	♦ AKQ4	♦ 987
♣ A3	♣ AK873	♣ KQ7	♣ 87	♣ AQ42

Hand 1 **Bid 2♠.** Denies four hearts, but shows four spades.

Hand 2 **Bid 2♦.** Denies a four-card major.

Hand 3 **Bid 2♥.** Shows a four-card heart suit.

Hand 4 **Bid 2♥.** Shows a four-card heart suit.

Hand 5 **Bid 2♦.** Denies a four-card major.



Remember! A 2♣ response to a 1NT opening bid is an artificial bid and says nothing about clubs. A 2♦ response to Stayman is also an artificial bid and says nothing about diamonds.

Sam Stayman

(1909-1993) was a New Yorker. The eponym of the 'Stayman' convention, Stayman was actually invented by George Rapee, a regular partner of Sam. Sam gave it a head of steam in an article he wrote and has been given credit for it ever since.

"With 4-3-3-3 shape, don't bother with Stayman. With no side suit shortage, the opportunity to trump is diminished!"

4NT Blackwood

Your second convention is called '**Blackwood**'. A jump to 4NT asks how many aces partner has. It would be great if you could ask out loud; "partner how many aces do you have"? But you cannot do that, it is an indictable offence. People will stare in your general direction and you will not be invited back.

'4NT Blackwood' is the legal way to ask for aces. If you have a hand with slam ambitions, and need only to know how many aces your partner has, bid 'Blackwood'. 4NT Blackwood is a forcing bid.



4NT (Blackwood)

Responses

5♣ = 0 or 4 aces

5♦ = 1 ace

5♥ = 2 aces

5♠ = 3 aces

If you find you hold all four aces, you can ask for kings by bidding 5NT.



5NT (Blackwood)

Responder

6♣ = 0 or 4 kings

6♦ = 1 king

6♥ = 2 kings

6♠ = 3 kings

Happiness

4NT Blackwood will elicit a response from partner at the five-level, so you must be careful if diamonds or clubs is the agreed suit. You must consider all possible responses partner can make when replying to 'Blackwood'. As an example, let us say that clubs are the agreed suit and you are interested in a slam in clubs. You bid 4NT 'Blackwood' asking for aces and your partner responds 5♦, showing one ace. The 5♦ response takes you past the game level of 5♣ (the agreed suit) which now commits you to 6♣. If you have only one ace in your hand to go with the one ace your partner has shown, that means you are at the six-level (needing 12 tricks) and missing two aces! You are one ace shy of any hope of happiness.

At the table

<u>West</u>	<u>East</u>
♠ 3	♠ 9842
♥ AKJ10965	♥ Q872
♦ KQ6	♦ A4
♣ A3	♣ KQ9

Figure 6:4

<u>West</u>	<u>East</u>
1♥	3♥
4NT*	5♦+
6♥	pass

* Blackwood
+ One ace

W has a real blockbuster of a hand and figures that a slam in hearts stands a fair chance provided the partnership is not missing two aces. **W** bid 4NT asking for aces. The 5♦ response from **E** reveals one ace. With three aces all up (missing only one ace), **W** went onto 6♥.

<u>West</u>	<u>East</u>
♠ Q9862	♠ AK42
♥ A3	♥ 4
♦ AQ54	♦ 2
♣ 93	♣ AKQ8764

Figure 6:5

<u>West</u>	<u>East</u>
1♠	4NT*
5♥+	7♠
pass	

* Blackwood
+ Two aces

In this auction **E** gets excited when **W** opens the bidding 1♠. **E** has a rock-crusher of a hand and needs only to know how many aces **W** holds. If **W** has no aces, **E** will stop in 5♠. If **W** has one ace, **E** will stop in 6♠. If **W** has both the missing aces, (accounting for all four aces) **E** bids 7♠.

Easley R. Blackwood (1903 - 1992) was an Indianapolis player. The eponym of the 'Blackwood' convention, Easley created 'Blackwood' to ask for aces and kings. Along with Stayman, 'Blackwood' is the most recognized and used convention in the world of Bridge.

Card play technique

Length tricks

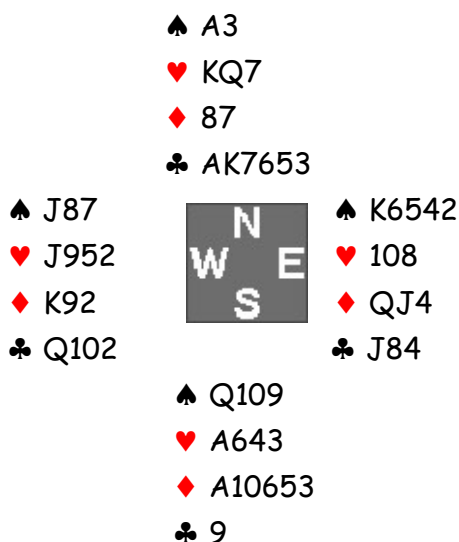


Figure 6:6

In Figure 6:6 S is in a contract of 3NT. The N hand has length in the club suit. When playing in a no-trump contract it is good to establish tricks from long suits. Note what would happen if declarer played three rounds of clubs. (The ♣A, followed by the ♣K and then the ♣3). Both opponents would have to follow suit with W winning the ♣Q on the third round. Now the remaining three clubs in the N hand, the ♣7, ♣6 and ♣5 are established tricks. When establishing 'length tricks' you have to concede a trick or two to the opponents before the suit comes good. Give and ye shall receive.

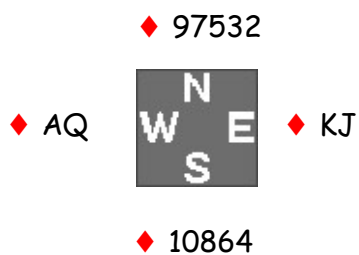


Figure 6:7

In Figure 6:7 N and S have length in the diamond suit, but the suit is very weak. As ugly as it is, with a bit of patience, you can still establish length tricks. In this case, you have to lead the diamond suit twice, allowing the opponents to win the first two tricks. However, the last laugh is yours as you have established three length tricks in diamonds. Do not fret about giving up the lead to the opponents if it means you gain tricks in the end. Length is strength.

Department of defence

Middle - Up - Down (MUD)

As we learn more about which card to lead from certain combinations, be cognitive of the fact that you are giving information to partner about your holding in the suit. The idea that you can convey information about your holding in a suit from the card you choose to lead is one of the fascinations of Bridge.

If you hold three or more rags (small cards) in a suit, such as ♣ 962, you have options as to which club to lead. If you lead the ♣2 you will be suggesting to partner that you have an honor card in the suit (small, promising an honor). If you lead the ♣9, followed by the ♣6 or ♣2 you will have suggested a doubleton club (hi - lo from a doubleton). From the ♣ 962, lead **Middle-Up-Down (MUD)**. Lead the ♣6 (Middle) then the ♣9 (Up) and finally the ♣2 (Down). After three rounds of clubs, partner will get the picture.

From each of the following club combinations, lead the card underlined.

♣ 98632 ♣ 865 ♣ 9753 ♣ 876542 ♣ 10872

In the first four combinations, by the time the third round of clubs has been played, partner will have a good idea of the club situation in all four hands. Note in the last example how the ♣2 is the suggested lead. This is because **MUD** only applies when holding rags in a suit. The ♣10 is an honor card, so lead the ♣2 (small, promising an honor)

If you do not put time and attention into learning about leads and how to defend, you will not be able to defend yourself. Your only cry will be...

"Defend me God, from myself"

When leading **MUD**, the suit combination does not have an honor.



Summary

- **Conventions** are an important component of any bidding system. A convention is an artificial bid which implies something other than its natural meaning.
- When partner opens 1NT, a response of 2♣ has a conventional meaning that says nothing about clubs. A 2♣ response to a 1NT opening bid is **Stayman** asking if opener has a four-card major.
- In response to Stayman opener **must respond** with 2♦, 2♥ or 2♠.
- Another convention is **Blackwood**. You can ask partner how many aces she holds by jumping to 4NT. You can continue to ask for kings (if all aces are accounted for) by bidding 5NT.
- **Length tricks** come from long suits. You develop long suits by leading them. You might have to lose a trick or two to establish the suit, but eventually they come good.

Nearly Normal Norman

says: By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail. When you are declarer, formulate some type of plan before you embark on playing the cards. Any plan, so long as you have a plan.



Nearly Normal Norman

Mental challenge

“Many games provide fun, but Bridge grips you. It exercises your mind. Your mind can rust, you know, but Bridge prevents the rust from forming.”

- Omar Sharif

Exercises - chapter six

A. Your partner opened 1NT. Your bid.

1)	2)	3)	4)
♠ A8	♠ 10983	♠ J864	♠ J1074
♥ J865	♥ K95	♥ K6	♥ Q95
♦ A10874	♦ A1065	♦ QJ953	♦ A103
♣ Q2	♣ 73	♣ A2	♣ A92

B. You open 1NT and partner responded 2♣ Stayman. Your bid.

1)	2)	3)	4)
♠ AKQ4	♠ KJ5	♠ Q984	♠ A94
♥ 10943	♥ AQ4	♥ AJ9	♥ A76
♦ A76	♦ K54	♦ A74	♦ 32
♣ K2	♣ A1074	♣ A83	♣ AK985

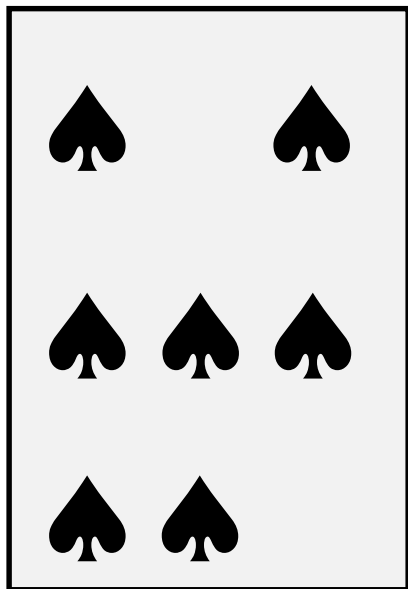
C. You open 1♠ and partner responded 4NT Blackwood. Your bid.

1)	2)	3)	4)
♠ AJ1064	♠ K8753	♠ AJ932	♠ KQ983
♥ A3	♥ Q73	♥ KJ85	♥ KQ73
♦ 1093	♦ QJ3	♦ 7	♦ 3
♣ A75	♣ A4	♣ A97	♣ QJ3

Spank me

“If you have the slightest touch of masochism,
you will love this game”.

- Victor Mollo



seven

Overcalls

Jump overcall

Responding to an overcall

Take-out double

Responding to a take-out double

Competitive bidding

Battle of bids

Thus far in this book, the bidding has been between just you and your partner, with the opponents remaining silent. In real life Bridge, the auction is often contested with a battle of bids between the two sides. When partner opens 1NT we have a structured set of responses. Same holds true if she opens 1♣, 1♦, 1♥ or 1♠. With competitive bidding there is also a set bidding structure.

There are two ways to get into the auction once the opponents have opened the bidding.

- One is to '**overcall**' with a suit bid or with a no-trump bid.
- The second way is to make a '**take-out double**'.

Guide to making an overcall

In the following three auctions your RHO opened the bidding with 1♥ and you have made an **overcall** as indicated.

1)			2)			3)		
	RHO	You		RHO	You		RHO	You
	1♥	1♠		1♥	2♣		1♥	1NT

1. A **one-level** overcall promises a decent 5+ card suit and 8-16 points.
You might have: ♠AK1084 ♥J109 ♦42 ♣1074
2. An overcall at the **two-level** (non-jump) promises a 6+ card suit (or very good five-card suit) and 11-16 points.
You might have: ♠76 ♥AJ3 ♦43 ♣KQJ974
3. A **1NT overcall** is the same as if you had opened 1NT except you could have a point more. 15 - 18 HCP with a stopper(s) in the opponent's suit.
You might have: ♠K3 ♥AQ8 ♦QJ10 ♣KQ932

Jump to conclusions

RHO opens 1♦ and you hold: ♠AQ10943 ♥32 ♦854 ♣98. You have a weak hand, but a good six-card suit. Conclusion: If spades are the trump suit, your hand is smashing. With a weak hand and a long suit, make a **jump overcall**. With the above hand, jump overcall 2♠. A jump overcall at the two-level shows a six-card suit and 6-9 points. By jumping in the auction, you have usurped valuable bidding space from the opponents.

Guide to responding to an overcall

The opponents have opened the bidding, your partner has overcalled at the one-level and it is now your bid.

With support for partner's major suit overcall

<u>HCP</u>		<u>LHO</u>	<u>Partner</u>	<u>RHO</u>	<u>You</u>
8-11	Raise partner.	1♣	1♠	pass	2♠
12-14	Jump raise partner.	1♦	1♠	pass	3♠
15+	Bid game.	1♥	1♠	pass	4♠

Without support

8+	Bid a new suit of your own with 5+ cards and a decent suit.
8-11	1NT - shows a stopper(s) in the opponent's suit.
12-14	2NT - shows a stopper(s) in the opponent's suit.
15+	3NT - shows a stopper(s) in the opponent's suit.

With support for partner's minor suit overcall

When responding to partner's minor suit overcall it is still best to bid a major suit if you have one, provided you have 8+ points and a good suit. If you do not have a major suit you can always raise partner's minor suit with a fit (same as the point scale for raising partner's major suit overcall). Not to steer you away from playing in a minor suit, but if you do have a stopper in the opponents suit you could bid no trump, following the guide above.

Pass Nothing constructive to say and denies any of the above.

Ponder responder's strength

Note how you need more strength to respond to an overcall than you do to an opening bid. This is because partner can make a suit overcall with less strength than needed to open the bidding with a suit.

Raise partner's opening bid of a major: 1♥ - 2♥ (2♥ shows 6-9).

Raise partner's major suit overcall: 1♣ - 1♥ - pass - 2♥ (2♥ shows 8-11).

Guide to making a take-out double

Sometimes you will have a hand that is not suitable for an overcall, but you still want to compete for the auction. Your RHO opens the bidding 1♥ and you hold:

♠K984 ♥2 ♦AK104 ♣KJ62

With no five-card suit to overcall, there is another option. A **take-out double** (X) asking partner to bid one of the un-bid suits. With the above hand, after RHO opened 1♥, your take-out double promises:

- 1) 11+ points
- 2) Shortage in the opponent's suit (less than three cards).
- 3) Tolerance for the three un-bid suits (emphasis on the majors).

The emphasis of a take-out double is in 'take-out'. Partner wants you to take it out to a preferred suit. By making a bid, your response has taken out the double. If you were to pass, the takeout double becomes a 'penalty double'. Not what partner intended.

Note: If you do have a big hand of 17+ points (too strong to overcall), the requirements for a take-out double are relaxed, and you do not need tolerance for all three un-bid suits. You do need a suit to 'run' to should your partner bid a suit you cannot tolerate. Your RHO opens the bidding 1♣ and you X with this hand: ♠ AKQ10983 ♥ AK73 ♦ 3 ♣ 2. You have no tolerance for diamonds; however, if partner does bid diamonds, you could safely bid spades with your strong suit and powerful hand. When partner makes a takeout double, you must respond!

Guide to responding to a take-out double

0-8	A new suit response. 1♦ - X - pass - 2♣
9-10	Jump-bid in a new suit. 1♣- X - pass - 2♥
11-12	Jump to 3 level in a suit. 1♣ - X - pass - 3♥
13+	Jump to game in a suit: 1♦ - X - pass - 4♠
6-9	Bid 1NT with a stopper in the opponent's suit.
10-12	Bid 2NT with a stopper in the opponent's suit.
13-15	Bid 3NT with a stopper in the opponent's suit.



At the table

Your RHO has opened the bidding with 1♥ and it is your bid.

1)	2)	3)	4)	5)
♠ KQ84	♠ KJ1095	♠ KJ10	♠ 82	♠ AQ73
♥ 7	♥ 94	♥ AQ4	♥ AQJ93	♥ 73
♦ K842	♦ K2	♦ K83	♦ K73	♦ 1093
♣ A984	♣ A983	♣ QJ105	♣ K97	♣ AK73

- Hand 1** **Double (X)** This hand is a textbook take-out double. You show a hand with shortness in the opponent's suit, tolerance for all three un-bid suits and 11+ points. Nice.
- Hand 2** **Bid 1♠.** With a five-card suit, it is best to overcall, thus telling partner you have 5+ spades and 8 - 16 points.
- Hand 3** **Bid 1NT.** With a balanced 15 - 18 points and a stopper in hearts you can show your hand by overcalling 1NT. Partner is now in charge because she knows a lot about your hand, while you know nothing about her hand.
- Hand 4** **Pass.** You cannot overcall because you do not have a five-card suit (other than the opponent's suit). You have the wrong shape for a take-out double. Whenever the opponents open with your longest suit it is generally best to pass and wait for further developments.
- Hand 5** **Double (X).** You have shortage in hearts, 11+ points and tolerance for the un-bid suits. The three-card diamond suit is the minimum length to satisfy the requirements of the term 'tolerance'.

Doubler's next bid?

Question: After you have made a take-out double asking partner to bid, what do you do next?

Answer: Add your values to the values your partner reveals with her response and take appropriate action. If there are values for game, bid it. If there is still a chance for game, invite partner to bid higher. If there is no chance for game, then pass. Simple addition is often all that is required when the hand strength and preferred suit are known.

Card play technique

The hold up play

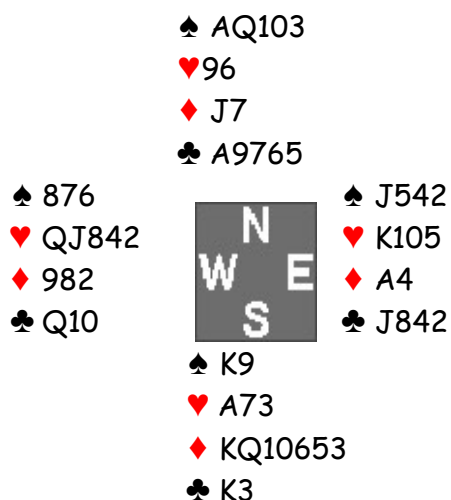


Figure 7:1

In Figure 7:1, S is in 3NT. W led the ♥4 (fourth best from her longest and strongest). Dummy offered the ♥6, E the ♥K (third hand plays high) and it is S to play. There are two scenarios to consider. Firstly, S wins the ♥A on the first round and secondly S makes a **hold up** play, and wins the ♥A on the third round. In the first scenario, S wins the ♥A immediately and tackles diamonds. Upon winning the ♦A, E will return a heart to W who will cash four heart tricks, promptly defeating 3NT by a trick. (-50) In the second scenario, S delays winning her ♥A until the third round and then tackles diamonds. (It is important to note that E has only three hearts). When E wins the ♦A she is fresh out of hearts. Your hold up play in hearts has depleted E of hearts and her ability to communicate with W in the heart suit. Contract making with an over-trick. +430

This is a 'hold-up'

The purpose of the hold-up play is to 'snip' communications between the opponents in a particular suit. Against no trump, the opponents tend to lead their longest suit. Say the opponents lead clubs against 3NT. They have eight clubs between them and you have one stopper (♣A). If the opposing clubs breaks 4-4 the 'principle of equal length' states the opponents will always have relevant communication in the suit. If the suits breaks 5-3, (unequal length) the hold-up play could disrupt lines of communication. By holding up on your ♣A until the third round, the opponent who had only three clubs is now void. If this same opponent later wins a trick, communications in clubs have been severed.

Department of defence

Attitude

When partner leads a suit, there is a way of letting partner know what your **attitude** is about the suit that has been led. "I like that lead" or "I do not like that lead". Your attitude about partner's lead can be revealed in the card you choose to follow suit with. A low spot card says, "I love your lead" while a high spot card says, "I hate your lead". A spot card includes the: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and the 10.

Low I Love, High I Hate

You hold: ♠ K862 ♥ 83 ♦ Q73 ♣ 6543 and partner leads the ♠Q.

With the above hand play the ♠2 (a small card) to say "I like your lead", **Low I Love (LIL)**. You love partner's lead because you have the ♠K and want the suit continued. If partner had led the ♣A, you would follow with the ♣6 saying, "I do not like that lead", **High I Hate (HIH)**. You do not want to encourage more club leads based on your poor club holding.

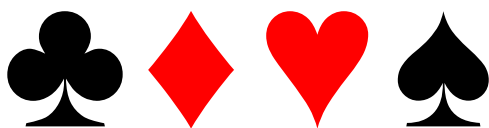
At the table

What is your attitude after partner leads the ♣K.

♣ 8743	♣ 8	Let partner know how you feel about clubs. (HIH)
♣ A843	♣ 3	You are delighted with partner's lead. (LIL)
♣ J832	♣ 2	Partner promises the ♣Q, you have the ♣J. (LIL)
♣ 9876	♣ 9	You want to discourage clubs. (HIH)

What is your attitude after partner leads the ♥Q.

♥ 10832	♥ 2	The ♥10 is reason enough to encourage. (LIL)
♥ 843	♥ 8	You are not interested in hearts. (HIH)
♥ K83	♥ 3	My ♥K loves your ♥Q. (LIL)
♥ 432	♥ 4	The ♥4 and a high card and is discouraging. (HIH)



Summary

- Bridge is not a one-sided game. Like any auction you attend, the goods (contracts) are up for grabs to the highest bidder. **Competitive bidding** is part and parcel with most Bridge hands.
- One way of competing in the auction is to **overcall**. Make sure your suit is good and is at least five cards in length.
- If you do not have a 5+ card suit, you may try a **take-out double**. A take-out double is signified by an X.
- Do not be afraid to allow the opponents to win a few tricks, especially if it eventually benefits your side. The **hold-up play** is an oft used card play technique used to snip communications between the opponents.
- Give me **attitude**! You are on defence 50% of the time. Learning how to signal with partner will garner positive results immediately.

Nearly Normal Norman

When partner responds to your take-out double or overcall, if you can remember what strength of hand the response shows, simply add it to the value of your hand and Bob's your uncle!



Nearly Normal Norman

Competition

"Competition is good, but if you make every game a life and death proposition, you're going to have problems. For one thing, you'll be dead a lot."

- Dean Smith

Exercises - chapter seven

A. RHO opened the bidding with 1♦. It is your bid.

1)	2)	3)	4)
♠ AQ983	♠ 10983	♠ K76	♠ 74
♥ 65	♥ AK95	♥ A64	♥ 5
♦ Q4	♦ A5	♦ KJ53	♦ AJ843
♣ A872	♣ Q73	♣ KQ2	♣ AK982

B. LHO opened the bidding 1♥, partner made a take-out X and RHO passed. It is your bid.

1)	2)	3)	4)
♠ A10954	♠ 1095	♠ 94	♠ AQ984
♥ A3	♥ AQ4	♥ 1096	♥ 1076
♦ 865	♦ K54	♦ 98754	♦ K32
♣ 542	♣ 10942	♣ 1032	♣ A5

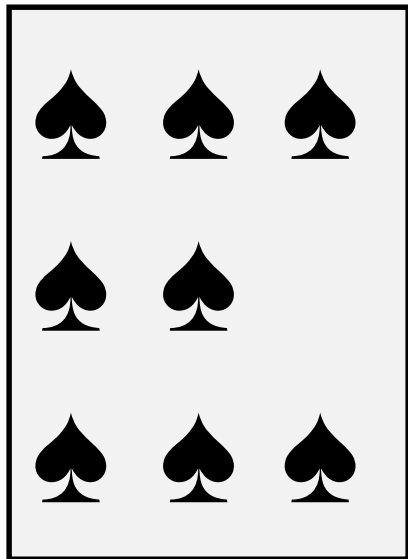
C. Your LHO opened the bidding with 1♥, your partner overcalled 1♠, and RHO passed. It is your bid.

1)	2)	3)	4)
♠ A64	♠ 973	♠ 42	♠ 3
♥ J3	♥ A83	♥ K985	♥ 732
♦ K1032	♦ KQ43	♦ Q74	♦ K973
♣ Q1098	♣ AJ4	♣ AQ74	♣ AKQ82

Play as much as you can

“I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand”.

- *Confucius*



eight

Strong 2♣ opening
Negative 2♦ response
Weak two bids
2NT opening bid

Opening at the two-level

Opening bids at the two-level

An opening bid of 1♣, 1♦, 1♥ or 1♠ shows 13-21 points, while 1NT shows 15-17 HCP and a balanced hand. You can also open the bidding at the two-level (2♣, 2♦, 2♥, 2♠, or 2NT).

Strong two club opening bid

A 2♣ opening bid is a conventional (artificial) bid, does not promise clubs and is forcing partner to respond. It shows a huge hand with lots of points. (22+) You could have considerably less if holding a distributional hand. A 2♣ opening bid is also referred to as a demand bid. It forces partner to respond, even if she has nothing!



At the table

Consider your opening bid with each of the following three hands.

1)	2)	3)
♠ AKJ2	♠ 7	♠ A
♥ AKQ10763	♥ AKQ108	♥ AK2
♦ 4	♦ KQJ8	♦ AKQJ832
♣ 6	♣ AQ6	♣ A8

Hand 1 **Open 2♣.** Even though you only have 17 HCP, I hope your instincts can 'appreciate' the strength of this monster. You can practically make a game in hearts in your own hand.

Hand 2 **Open 2♣.** With 21 HCP and great shape, you want to force the auction. If you were to open 1♥ and partner passed, an anxious feeling would cascade over you in anticipation of what partner has. If partner has as little as one ace or even the ♣K, you will probably have missed a game.

Hand 3 **Open 2♣.** With two losers this hand is bigger than huge! If partner has the ♥Q or two small hearts, you can make 6♣.

A strong 2♣ opening bid is forcing to game, with one exception: If opener's second bid is 2NT (showing 22-24 points), responder is allowed to pass with an absolutely bust hand. Otherwise, the auction is forced to the game level.

Responses to a strong 2♣

Because an opening bid of 2♣ is a forcing bid, responder must conjure up a response regardless of how poor the hand is. The most common response to a 2♣ opening bid is the '2♦ negative'.

2♦ negative response

A 2♦ response to a 2♣ opening bid is also artificial. It says nothing about diamonds and shows 0-6 points. It is a great way for responder to tell the 2♣ opener (who is roaring and ready to go) that while the opener obviously has a great hand, you unfortunately hold a weak hand.

If you do have 7+ points, you are in possession of what is referred to as a 'positive response'.

At the table

What is your response to a 2♣ opening with the following three hands?

1)	2)	3)
♠ 432	♠ 82	♠ 3
♥ 432	♥ Q10854	♥ K762
♦ 432	♦ 8432	♦ 9832
♣ 5432	♣ J6	♣ 8653

With all three hands respond 2♦ and give partner the bad news that you hold a dog. Hand one is the worst hand in the history of the game but yet you still have to respond.

Structure of responses

2♦	0-6 points and any distribution.
2♥/2♠ or 3♣/3♦	5+ card suit and 7+ points.
2NT	7-9 HCP, balanced hand.
3NT	10-12 HCP, balanced hand.

At the table

Consider your response to a 2♣ opening bid with the following.

1)	2)	3)	4)
♠ J82	♠ A92	♠ 83	♠ 643
♥ J42	♥ Q87	♥ AKJ32	♥ Q8754
♦ AKJ987	♦ 1098	♦ Q2	♦ 987
♣ 2	♣ Q943	♣ 9854	♣ 94

Hand 1 **Bid 3♦.** Shows you have 5+ diamonds and 7+ points. Note: you had to jump to 3♦, as 2♦ is an artificial response to 2♣.



Hand 2 **Bid 2NT.** You have 8 HCP and a balanced hand. 2NT is a positive response to a 2♣ opening bid and clarifies your hand nicely.

Hand 3 **Bid 2♥.** With 7+ points and a five-card suit, make a positive response to partner's 2♣ opening bid.

Hand 4 **Bid 2♦.** Bid your hearts with your next bid if still relevant. 2♦ lets partner know right away that you have a negative response.

Second bid by the 2♣ opener

Assuming responder bid 2♦ as they usually do:

2NT	22-24 points, balanced. (Responder can pass.)
2♥/♠ 3♣/♦	5+ card suit. Still forcing to game.
3NT	25-27 points, balanced hand.

2♦ negative (or waiting)

A 2♦ response to a 2♣ opening bid is a 'negative response' promising 0-6 points. Experienced players like to extend the meaning of 2♦ to include a 'waiting bid'. Responder could have a positive response (7+) but prefer to respond 2♦ anyway. Going slowly allows the big hand room to describe it at the lowest level. Once the opener has described the hand with a suit bid or with no trump (balanced hand), the responder is now in a better position to make an informed decision. For now, you can leave 2♦ as 'negative'.

Weak twos and pre-emptive bids

Now that you know how to open the power-house hands, you have freed up 2♦/♥/♠ for a more frequent holding, a weak hand. If you have a six-card suit (not clubs) and 6-9 points you can open the bidding with a 'weak two' bid. Consider each of the following:

1)	2)	3)	4)
♠ KQJ984	♠ 87	♠ 3	♠ 76
♥ 83	♥ AJ10984	♥ 842	♥ J3
♦ 43	♦ Q43	♦ AQ9432	♦ 854
♣ Q95	♣ 98	♣ 1095	♣ AKJ873

- Hand 1** **Open 2♠.** You are weak (6-9) and have a good six-card suit. 2♠ describes this hand nicely.
- Hand 2** **Open 2♥.** Again, you get to show your 6-9 HCP and six-card heart suit in one bid, with a 'weak two' bid.
- Hand 3** **Open 2♦.** An opening bid of 2♦ is not as effective as 2♠ in keeping the opponents out of the auction but it is still descriptive, showing 6-9 HCP and six-card diamond suit.
- Hand 4** **Pass.** You cannot open 2♣ with this hand as a 2♣ opening bid is reserved for strong hands.

Pre-emptive bids

1. A opening jump bid in any of the four suits at the three-level or higher is a pre-emptive bid. It is like a 'weak two' bid, with 6-9, only with a longer suit. A three-level pre-empt promises a seven-card suit and a four-level pre-empt promises an eight-card suit.
2. An overcall is also pre-emptive when it is a jump bid in a new suit.
1) (1♣) - 3♦. 2) (1♦) - 3♠. The 3♦ overcall and the 3♠ overcall are both pre-emptive bids, showing a seven-card suit and 6-9 points.
3. If the pre-emptive suit is a major, you generally do not have support for the other major.
4. If a minor suit pre-empt, you do not have support for either major suit.
5. 'Length not strength'. A pre-emptive bid has the length to justify the suit bid, but not the strength of an opening hand.

Opening the bidding 2NT

An opening bid of 2NT is similar to an opening bid of 1NT, but stronger. A 2NT opening bid shows 20-21 HCP and a balanced hand. Again, responder is in charge because she knows a lot about opener's hand while opener knows nothing of responder's hand. For example:

1)	2)	3)	4)
♠ KJ4	♠ A932	♠ K3	♠ A83
♥ AQ	♥ KJ8	♥ AKJ32	♥ KJ7
♦ KQ932	♦ KQJ8	♦ AJ2	♦ AKJ74
♣ AJ9	♣ AK	♣ AJ8	♣ AJ

Each of these hands is an example of a 2NT opener. The only hand which may raise an eyebrow is the third hand where you hold a five-card heart suit. It is not recommended that you open 1NT with a five-card major, however, it is deemed okay to do so when opening 2NT. It is thought that the importance of revealing a balanced hand with 20-21 outweighs the need to show the five-card major. I need so little to make game, I would be afraid partner might pass if I open the bidding with 1♥!

Responses to a 2NT opening bid

0-4 Points	Pass
5-10 Points	You have the values for game. 3NT is a dead bid. 3♥ / ♠ are live bids, letting opener set the contract.
11-12 Points	Bid 4NT inviting opener to bid 6NT with a maximum opening hand of 21.
13-16 Points	Simple addition reveals the values for small slam. $(20-21) + (13-16) = 33-37$ HCP
17+ Points	You know you have the values for a Grand Slam.

Stayman revisited

You can bid Stayman in response to a 2NT opening bid. 3♣ is Stayman, asking opener if she has a four-card major. Opener responds: 3♦ = denies a four-card major. 3♥ = four-card heart suit. 3♠ = four-card spade suit.

At the table

Consider your opening bid with each of the following hands.

1)	2)	3)	4)
♠ AQ9875	♠ K2	♠ 3	♠ 86
♥ 83	♥ AQ9	♥ AKQ42	♥ A3
♦ 43	♦ KQ43	♦ AQJ32	♦ KJ9854
♣ Q95	♣ AK98	♣ A5	♣ 983

Hand 1 **Bid 2♠.** Ideal hand for a 'weak two' bid. You have a good six-card suit and 6-9 points. 2♠ encroaches on the opponent's space to communicate, while describing your hand clearly to partner.

Hand 2 **Bid 2NT.** With 21 HCP and a balanced hand, 2NT says it all. Partner should have a good idea what to do now.

Hand 3 **Bid 2♣.** This hand is strong enough to force the auction. If partner has as little as the ♥J53, ten tricks in a 4♥ contract has promising possibilities.

Hand 4 **Bid 2♦.** Another hand where a 'weak two' bid reveals your hand. "Partner I have a six-card suit and 6-9 points."

A conversation indeed

Bidding is a conversation and the more competent you and partner are at exchanging information regarding the strength and distribution of your hands, the more often you will end in the correct contracts.

Take a look at the following simple auction. The main point is that **E** understands what the 2NT opening bid from **W** means. This knowledge allows **E** to make a big bid (3NT) with a little hand (7 HCP).

<u>West</u>	<u>East</u>
♠ AQ8	♠ K92
♥ KQJ3	♥ 1075
♦ A8	♦ KJ95
♣ AJ103	♣ 842

West - 2NT: "I have 20-21 points and a balanced hand.

East - 3NT: "We only need 26 points for game and my 7 HCP with your 20-21 HCP means we have the combined strength to contract for game.

Figure 8:1

Card play technique

Count your winners


♠ A43		
♥ 65		
♦ J876		
♣ KQJ10		
♠ QJ965		♠ 108
♥ J97		♥ Q842
♦ Q102		♦ 9543
♣ A2		♣ 943
♠ K72		
♥ AK103		
♦ AK		
♣ 8765		

Figure 8:2

In Figure 8:2, **S** is in 3NT and **W** leads the $\spadesuit Q$ (top of a broken sequence). In a no-trump contract, you **count your winners**. The plan in no trump goes like this:

Q: How many tricks do I need? **A:** 9

Q: How many sure tricks do I have? **A:** 6
(two spades, two hearts and two clubs)

Q: How many tricks elude me? **A:** 3

When you know you do not have enough sure tricks to make your contract, leave the sure tricks alone, and go about establishing the elusive tricks now. In the case of this hand, the club suit offers those elusive tricks. So, win the ♠A and knock out the ♣A. You will get your six sure tricks plus the three clubs tricks for a total of nine. 3NT making for a score of +400.

Count your losers

♠ A543
 ♥ 965
 ♦ AK6
 ♣ 1087

♠ 96
 ♥ K1074
 ♦ 10987
 ♣ KQJ

♠ 108
 ♥ QJ8
 ♦ J543
 ♣ 9432

♠ KQJ72
 ♥ A32
 ♦ Q2
 ♣ A65

Figure 8:3

In Figure 8:3, S is in a contract of 4♠. W leads the ♣K (top of a sequence). In a suit contract, you **count your losers**. The plan in a suit contract goes like this:

Q: How many losers can I afford? **A:** 3

Q: How many losers do I have? **A:** 4

Q: Can I get rid of excess losers? **A:** Yes

When you have excess losers, there are three ways to get rid of them.

1) finesse 2) trump 3) discard.

With no finesse available and nothing to trump, you will have to discard a loser. Note how dummy has the \spadesuit AK6 and South has the \spadesuit Q2. Play the \spadesuit Q (high card from the short side first). On the third round of diamonds you can throw away a loser.

Department of defence

Deciding which suit to lead

Knowing which card to lead from certain combinations is fine, in and of itself, but the decision about which suit to actually lead is the tough part.

You hold: ♠ A97 ♥ 3 ♦ Q108653 ♣ KQ3

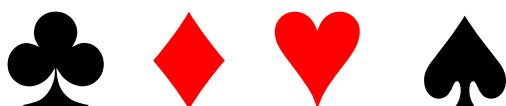
Consider your lead against the following contracts:

- 1) **3NT** Lead the ♦6. Fourth best from your longest and strongest. You hope to establish your diamonds
- 2) **6NT** Lead the ♣K. The ♠A is one defensive trick. By promoting the ♣Q into a second trick, 6NT will be defeated.
- 3) **4♠** Lead the ♥3. By short suiting your hand in hearts, you may be in position to trump a heart later in the hand.

The main point with the above three examples is that the choice of lead is different each time, even though the hand is the same. What influenced the choice of lead was the final contract.

1. Always review the bidding before deciding on which suit to lead.
2. Against a no-trump contract leading your longest suit is a good choice as you may be able to establish your length into winners.
3. Against a suit contract, leading a singleton offers possibilities. By short suiting yourself, you are in a position to trump that suit later.
4. Leading a suit with a sequence can trap the opponent's honor cards while promoting your lesser honor cards.
5. Did partner bid a suit? That may be a good choice (partner will like you).
6. Leading an un-bid suit. If the opponents bid three of four suits, leading the un-bid suit certainly seems attractive.
7. Know technically the right card to lead, then review the auction before deciding which suit to lead.

Your opening lead is influenced by the cards you hold and by the auction that unfolds. Use the former in deciding the card and the latter in deciding the suit.



Summary

- You can open the bidding at the **two-level** or higher.
- An opening bid of 2♣ shows a **strong** hand of 22+ points. You could have less than 22+ if your hand is distributional.
- A 2♦ response to a 2♣ opening bid is **negative**, (0-6 HCP)
- An opening bid of 2♦, 2♥ or 2♠ is a **weak two** showing a six-card suit and 6-9 HCP.
- An opening bid of **2NT** shows 20-21 points, and a balanced hand.
- An opening bid at the three-level or higher is a **pre-emptive bid** showing a weak hand (6-9ish) and a long suit. At the three-level you show a seven-card suit. At the four-level you show an eight-card suit. The higher, the longer your suit.
- In a no-trump contract **count your winners**.
- In a suit contract **count your losers**.
- **Review the auction** before you make your opening lead.

Nearly Normal Norman

Do not be afraid to make a pre-emptive bid with a weak hand. The length in your suit compensates for the lack of HCP. The damage you inflict on the opponent's ability to communicate is usually worth the risks involved.



Nearly Normal Norman

"When partner bids, listen carefully to what she is saying. Amazingly, a lot of players do not listen".

- *anonymous*

Exercises - chapter eight

A. You open 2♣ and partner responds 2♦. It is your bid.

1)	2)	3)	4)
♠ AQ983	♠ AK3	♠ KQ6	♠ A
♥ AK	♥ AK5	♥ AQJ4	♥ K109875
♦ K4	♦ KJ763	♦ 3	♦ AKQ103
♣ AK72	♣ A5	♣ KQJ102	♣ A

B. Your partner opened the bidding 2NT. It is your bid.

1)	2)	3)	4)
♠ A94	♠ A1095	♠ 1098763	♠ 984
♥ J109	♥ AQ94	♥ A6	♥ Q76
♦ 108752	♦ 94	♦ Q754	♦ 1032
♣ 109	♣ 942	♣ 2	♣ J875

C. What is your opening bid with each of the following hands?

1)	2)	3)	4)
♠ AQ6742	♠ 93	♠ 82	♠ Q3
♥ 3	♥ 32	♥ KJ98765	♥ 32
♦ 102	♦ KQJ98743	♦ 74	♦ KQ9873
♣ J1098	♣ 4	♣ K4	♣ 872

Glossary

Attitude	Attitude carding is used by the defenders to say whether or not they like the suit that their partner has led.
Blackwood	A convention used to ask partner how many aces she has. You can also ask partner how many kings she has by continuing with a 5NT bid.
Bidding	Also referred to as the auction. Both sides compete for the contract during the bidding.
Bonus Score	A bonus is given to a successful contract. There are bonuses for part-score, game, small slam and grand slam contracts.
Book	The book is the first six tricks. When you enter the auction, it is assumed you will take the first six tricks plus any additional tricks you mention.
Call	Another term which refers to a bid. You can 'bid' 1NT or 'call' 1NT.
Card Play	The actual playing of the cards, by both declarer and defenders.
Caution Bid	An invitational bid that limits the value of your hand to a certain strength and invites partner to take the final action.
Competitive Bidding	When both sides are bidding for a contract, the auction is competitive.
Contract	The final bid of the auction.
Convention	A bid that is artificial, implying something other than its natural meaning.
Dead Bid	A response to partner's no-trump opening bid that says, "stop!"
Dealer	The person who dealt the cards is also the first person to bid.
Declarer	The player who first bid the denomination in which the final contract is played and plays the contract.
Defenders	Opponents of declarer. The defenders try to defeat declarer in the contract.
Demand Bid	A bid that forces partner to bid. An opening bid of 2♣ is an example of a demand bid. Responder must not pass!
Double Finesse	Leading twice in a suit to take a finesse each time.
Dummy	Declarer's partner. Dummy puts all 13 cards on the table face up after the opening lead has been made.
Evaluation	The process by which the general strength of your hand is determined. HCP, LP and SP are used to evaluate hand strength.
Finesse	A finesse is a card play technique which allows a player to take advantage of a favorable lie of the cards. This technique allows a lesser card to win a trick even though there is a higher card(s) out that can beat it.
Forcing Bid	A bid that is by definition, insisting that you bid again. A bid that forces the auction. Partner must not pass
Fourth Best	The lead of fourth best from your longest and strongest suit promises an honor.

Game contract	Any contract where the trick points add up to 100 or more. 5♦ is game, 5 X 20 = 100. 4♠ is game. 4 X 30 = 120.
Golden fit	When you and partner have a combined holding of eight cards in a suit.
Grand slam	Any contract at the seven-level is a Grand Slam. All 13 tricks must be won.
HCP	High Card Points are a common method of evaluating the strength of a hand. Points are allocated to the 'court' cards: A = 4 K = 3 Q = 2 J = 1
Hi – Lo	When on lead with a doubleton combination (two cards in a suit), you should lead the high card first followed by the low card.
Hold up play	A card play technique whereby you can win a trick, but decline to do so, allowing the opponents to win it instead. The act of keeping control of a particular suit. Can also be referred to as 'ducking' a trick.
Honor cards	The ace, king, queen, jack and the ten are referred to as honor cards.
Jump raise	To raise partner's suit, but jump a level in the bidding. i.e. 1♥ - 3♥.
LHO	Left hand opponent.
LP	Length points are a value given to a suit with extra length. One point is given for each card in excess of four cards in a suit.
Length tricks	Small cards promoted to winners by virtue of the length in the suit.
Limit bid	When you limit the strength of your hand to within a small range of points. (eg. 1♥ - 1NT). The 1NT response limits your strength to 6-9 points.
Live bid	A forcing bid. A bid that tells partner that they cannot pass. Partner must keep the auction alive by revealing yet more information.
Majors	Spades and Hearts are the Major suits.
Middle up down	Mostly referred to by its acronym 'MUD'. A guide for which card to lead from a suit that consists of nothing but three or more small cards.
Minors	Diamonds and clubs are the minor suits.
Negative 2♦	A response to an opening bid of 2♣ that generally shows 0-6 points (could be waiting).
No trump	No trump means all suits are of equal status and the highest card wins.
Opening bid	The first bid made on any hand, other than a pass. There is only one opening bid in each hand of Bridge.
Opener's re-bid	The second bid made by opener.
Overcall	An overcall is when you compete for the auction by bidding in a suit or in no trump after the opponents have opened.
Part-score	Any contract where the trick points add up to less than 100. 4♣ is a part-score. 4 X 20 = 80. 3♥ is a part-score. 3 X 30 = 90.
Pre-empt	A jump bid to the three-level or higher. Shows length and 6-9 points. Examples of an opening pre-emptive bid are 3♠ or 4♦.

Rags	Bridgese for 'small cards'. A holding where the highest card is the nine.
Responder	When your partner opens the bidding, you are the responder. Some refer to responder as 'advancer'. Your bid is a response to opener's bid.
Revoke	Failure to follow suit when you could have. eg. If a club is played and you have a club in your hand, but play a heart, you have revoked.
RHO	Right hand opponent.
Ruff	When you trump an opponent's suit.
Rule of 15	A guide to an opening bid in fourth seat with marginal values. Add your HCP to the length of your spade suit. If it adds up to 15 or more, you can open the bidding.
Rule of 20	A guide used in first and second seat when an opening bid is border-line. Add your HCP to the length of your longest suits and if they add up to 20 or more you can open the bidding.
SP	Shortage Points are allocated for having shortage in a side suit once you and partner have found a fit in another suit.
Scoring	The process of adding up the results of a game.
Simple raise	When you raise your partner's suit. eg. 1♥ - 2♥.
Singleton	A holding of only a single card in a suit.
Small slam	Any contract at the six-level is a Small Slam. 12 tricks must be won.
Spot card	A card that is not a court card. eg. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 are spot cards.
Stayman	A convention used in response to a no-trump opening bid from partner. It asks opener if she has a four-card major suit.
Strong 2_♣	An opening bid that says nothing about clubs, shows a powerful hand and forces responder to bid.
Take-out double	X marks the spot. A take-out double is asking partner to bid one of the un-bid suits. Usually made at a lower level in the bidding, a take-out double is deemed a natural convention.
Trick	When all four players have contributed a card, this is called a trick. There are 13 tricks for the taking in each hand of Bridge.
Trumps	When a suit has been nominated as the final contract you are in a trump contract. One suit is granted status as a 'wild suit'.
Two-step approach	When you have 13+ points and support for partner's suit in response to her opening suit bid. Bid a new suit (forcing) and then show support on your second bid.
Up-the-line	When you bid a new suit at the one-level moving up in rank from the previous bid. Four-card suits are bid "up the line".
Weak freak	A hand that is low in HCP making it a weakish hand, but has excess length in partner's suit making it a freakish hand.
Weak two	A jump bid at the two-level. Shows a six-card suit and 6-9 points.

Exercise Answers

Chapter One

- A. 1) True 2) False 3) False 4) False 5) False 6) True 7) True
8) False 9) True 10) True
B. 1) ♦A 2) ♦J 3) ♦K 4) ♦Q 5) ♦10 C. 1) South 2) ♥ 2 3) ♥ Q
D. 1) Thirteen 2) Ten 3) Seven 4) Eleven 5) Eight 6) Twelve 7) Nine

Chapter Two

- 1) 15 points, 1NT 2) 18 points, 1♦ 3) 14 points, 1♣ 4) 14 points, 1♣
5) 19 points, 1♠ 6) 14 points, 1♥ 7) 16 points, 1NT 8) 14 points, 1♠
9) 16 points, 1NT 10) 13 points, 1♦ 11) 13 points, 1♥ 12) 13 points, 1♦

Chapter Three

- 1) 2♠ 2) 4♥ 3) pass 4) 3♥ 5) 3♠ 6) 2NT
7) 2♦ 8) 3NT 9) 2♥ 10) 2NT 11) 3NT 12) 3NT

Chapter Four

- A. 1) 1♥ 2) 1♥ 3) 1♠ 4) 2♣
B. 1) 2♥ 2) 2♣ 3) 2♥ 4) 3♥
C. 1) 1♥ 2) 1♥ 3) 1♥ 4) 2♦

Chapter Five

- A. 1) 2♥ 2) 1♠ 3) 1NT 4) 2♦
B. 1) 3♠ 2) 1NT 3) 2♦ 4) 3♥
C. 1) 2NT 2) 3♦ 3) 2♠ 4) 2♥

Chapter Six

- A. 1) 2♣ 2) pass 3) 2♣ 4) 2♣
B. 1) 2♥ 2) 2♦ 3) 2♠ 4) 2♦
C. 1) 5♠ 2) 5♦ 3) 5♥ 4) 5♣

Chapter Seven

- A. 1) 1♠ 2) X 3) 1NT 4) 2♣
B. 1) 2♠ 2) 1NT 3) 2♦ 4) 4♠
C. 1) 2♠ 2) 3♠ 3) 1NT 4) 2♣

Chapter Eight

- A. 1) 2♠ 2) 2NT or 3♦ 3) 3♣ 4) 2♥
B. 1) 3NT 2) 3♣ 3) 4♠ 4) pass
C. 1) 2♠ 2) 4♦ 3) 3♥ 4) 2♦

Bridge Books by Gary Brown

Gary Brown's: Learn to Play Bridge

Standard Bidding: With five-card majors

Intermediate Concepts in Bridge

Club Cards: Modern analysis of Audrey Grant's Club Series

Diamond Cards: Modern analysis of Audrey Grant's Diamond Series

Bridge Learning Aids by Gary Brown

Flash Cards: A guide by your side

The Definitive Beginner's Cheat Sheet

Michaels & Unusual No Trump Laminated Guide

Over Calls & Take-out Doubles Laminated Guide

email Gary: ezeriah78@gmail.com

Three-Magnifying Glass Stories (You will need a magnifying glass to read these!)

Make a Difference

Once upon a time there was a wise man who used to go to the ocean to do his writing. He had a habit of walking on the beach before he began his work. One day he was walking along the shore. As he looked down the beach, he saw a human figure moving like a dancer. He smiled to himself to think of someone who would dance to the day. So he began to walk faster to catch up. As he got closer, he saw that it was a young man and the young man wasn't dancing, but instead he was reaching down to the shore, picking up something and very gently throwing it into the ocean. As he got closer he called out, "good morning! What are you doing?" The young man paused, looked up and replied, "Throwing starfish in the ocean." "I guess I should have asked, why are you throwing starfish in the ocean?" "The sun is up and the tide is going out. And if I don't throw them in they'll die." "But, young man, don't you realize that there are miles and miles of beach and starfish all along it. You can't possibly make a difference!" The young man listened politely. Then he bent down, picked another starfish and threw it into the sea, past the breaking waves and said, "It made a difference for that one."

What's Prettier Than Freckles

An elderly woman and her little grandson, whose face was sprinkled with bright freckles, spent the day at the zoo. Lots of children were waiting in line to get their cheeks painted by a local artist who was decorating them with tiger paws. "You've got so many freckles, there's no place to paint!" a girl in the line said to the little fellow. Embarrassed, the little boy dropped his head. His grandmother knelt down next to him. "I love your freckles. When I was a little girl I always wanted freckles," she said, while tracing her finger across the child's cheek. "Freckles are beautiful." The boy looked up, "Really?" "Of course," said the grandmother. "Why just name me one thing that's prettier than freckles." The little boy thought for a moment, peered intensely into his grandma's face, and softly whispered, "Wrinkles."

The Duke and the Wheelwright

The Duke Huan was reading a book in the hall. Wheelwright Pian, who had been chiseling a wheel in the courtyard below, set down his tools and climbed the stairs to ask Duke Huan:

"What words are in the book your Grace is reading?"

"The classic of a famous sage," the Duke responded.

"Is he still alive?"

"Oh no, he is long dead"

"Then you've been reading the dregs left over by a dead man?"

Duke Huan said, "How dare a wheelwright to have opinions about the book I read! If you can explain yourself, I'll let it pass. Otherwise, it's death!"

Wheelwright Pian said, "In my case I see things in terms of my own work. I chisel at a wheel. If I go too slow, the chisel slides and does not stay put. If I hurry, it jams and doesn't move properly. When it is just right, I can feel it in my hand and respond to it from my heart. I can explain this to my son, but I cannot pass on the skills to him. That is why at seventy years old, I am still making wheels. The sage who couldn't pass down his wisdom is already dead; and that's why I say the book you're reading is merely the dregs of a dead man."

What is the moral in this story? Can you always believe in what you read? Are there skills that cannot be taught, but must be learned by yourself?

Now leave the dregs of this book and go out and play Bridge.