

Contract Bridge Bidding Tips - ♠ ♥ ♦ ♣

(From the book *Bridge for Dummies* by **Eddie Kantar**)

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Bidding

Opening First Bids

Opening Bid Minimum Requirements

- 12-20 HCP's (unbalanced) or 12-15 (balanced) ...
 - Bid your LONGER suit first (4 or more), even if it is not necessarily your STRONGEST suit
 - *To open with either ♠ or ♥, you must have at least 5 cards in that suit.*
 - Example: Open with 1 ♠ or 1 ♥ (**only if you have 5 or more in the suit**)
 - Partner now knows you have 12+ or more HCP's and at least 5 spades or hearts.
 - Example: Open with 1 ♦ or 1 ♣ if (if less than 5 cards in ♠ or ♥)
 - Partner now knows that you have 12+ HCP's but do not have 5 cards in ♠ or ♥

*** If partner opens 1 ♠ or 1 ♥, and you as the partner have at least 3 cards in that suit, you now know that between the two of you, you have at least 8 trump. That's generally a very GOOD thing.*

- Exceptions
 - 11 HCP's and a 6 card suit, or 2, 5 card suits
- Opening of 2 ♣ is a special designation indicating a very strong hand

Balanced Hands (at least 2 in each suit but none >5)

- Hand **MUST** be balanced (4333, 4432, 5332)
- 15-19 HCP's
 - Open with **1 NT**
- 20-24 HCP's
 - Open with **2 NT**
- 25+ HCP's
 - Open with **3 NT**

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21+ HCP's balanced (or 19-20 and a strong 6 or 7 card suit)

- Bid 2 ♣ if ...
 - Balanced hand (22+ HCP's)
 - Unbalanced hand (21+ HCP's)...
- This bid is a signal only – it does not necessarily say that ♣ is your best/longest suit. It does say that you have a strong hand, likely enough to win the contract on your own.
- Your partner must respond to this bid – typically 2 ♦ - which is a waiting bid giving opener the chance to up the bid

Opening First Bids after Opponent Has Made a Bid

Takeout Double

- This is a Double made by your partner on the first round of bidding after your opponent has made an opening bid
- It is made when you have 2 or less cards in the suit just bid by your opponent AND that you have 13+ points and also 3+ card support in EACH of the unbid suits.

Why do this?

- It is a signal to your partner that you have fairly even strength in all of the unbid suits but you don't want to bid one of them yet without knowing which suit your partner has the best support for.

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Partner's Response to a Takeout Double

By Doubling your opponent's first bid, your partner has signaled to you that they have 13+ points and 3+ card support in EACH of the three suits not bid by your opponent. Partner wants to find out which is your longest/strongest suit before making their next bid.

No bid /Pass

- Only do not bid when your strongest and longest suit is the suit bid by your opponent (you have 5+ cards in that suit and 2+ honors in that suit). You are basically telling your opponents: *Go for it if you dare.*

0 - 8 Points

- Bid the lowest you can in your strongest, no-bid suit (1 or 2)

9-15 Points

- Jump the bidding one level higher than necessary (Ex: opponent bid 1 ♦, you bid 2 ♠). This tells your partner you have strength in points as well as what is your longest suit.

16+ Points

- Make a "**CUE BID**"
- You bid the next highest in your OPPONENT's suit regardless of whether or not it is your longest (it probably is not)
 - This tells your partner that you have a very strong hand, which combined with the 12+ points in your partner's hand is an indicator that you may want to go for a game contract
- This will allow your partner to make a following bid to try and determine which suit is your strongest in your partnership

1NT

- Your longest suit is the one your opponent bid, but it is not strong enough to make to pass
- You have 6-11 points

2NT

- Your longest suit is the one your opponent bid, but it is not strong enough to make to pass
- You have 12-13 points

3NT

- Your longest suit is the one your opponent bid, but it is not strong enough to make to pass
- You have 13-15 points

Note: If you have 16+ points, then make a **CUE BID**

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Responding to the Opening Bid

Basic Assumptions if your partner has made an opening bid

- Assume that your partner has 12-20 points and has bid in his strongest suit, unless bid is **2 ♣** or **NoTrump**
- Typically, you must have at least 6 HCP's in your hand and 4+ cards in the suit you want to bid, unless **2 ♣** or **2+ NoTrump** is the opening bid. Then you must respond.
- Pass with less than 6 HCP's, but not **2 ♣** or **2+ NoTrump**

*** If partner opens 1 ♠ or 1 ♥, and you as a partner have at least 3 cards in that suit, you now know that between the two of you, you have at least 8 trump. That's generally a very GOOD thing.*

No Trump Responses

- **You MUST have a balanced hand:** No 5+ card major suit (Spade or Heart), then bid ...
 - 6-12 HCP's: **1NT**
 - 13-15 HCP's: **2NT**
 - 16-18 HCP's: **3NT**

One Over One Response

- If you have more than 6 HCP's ...
 - Unbalanced hand: If **ABLE** to respond at the 1 level, respond with your **LONGEST** suit.
 - This is an Unlimited Response.
 - This tells your partner only that you have at least 6 HCP's and that your 1 level bid is your LONGEST suit.
 - It forces your partner to bid again because your partner does not yet know how many HCP's over 6 you have
- Respond with another 1 level if your hand is strong enough to bid up. This is called a **One Over One** bid.
 - This tells your partner you have *at least* 6 HCP's and that your bid is in your **LONGEST** suit.

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Two Over One Response

- If **NOT** able to respond at the 1 level (opening 1 level is higher than your longest suit)
 - Respond with **1NT** unless your hand is strong enough to up the bid to the 2 level.
 - This is a WEAK response. It tells your partner that you have 6-10 HCP's but don't have support for partner's suit and don't have a 4+ major suit.
- Bid the 2 level **ONLY** if you have 11 or more HCP's. Otherwise, bid **1NT** – the **weak** response.

*** When your partner bids a 1 level and you respond with a 2 level, that tells your partner you have at least 11 HCP's.*

- This response should FORCE your partner to bid again – not leaving you with that suit as the possible contract

Jump Rebid

- With 17 or more points and a ...
 - 4+ card support in opener's suit
- Partner can respond to an **opening bid of 1 by jump shift bidding to 3 of that same suit**. Ex: 1 ♦ to 3 ♦
 - This shows extraordinary strength to your partner
- This is a **game forcing bid**. Neither of you can pass to leave contract below game level

Jump Shift

- With 17 or more points and a ...
 - A strong 5 or 6 card suit in another suit
- Partner can respond to an **opening bid of 1 by jump shift bidding to 3 of your 5 or 6 card suit**. Ex: 1 ♦ to 3 ♥
 - This shows extraordinary strength to your partner
 - This is a **game forcing bid**. Neither of you can pass to leave contract below game level.

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Response to an opening bid of 1 ♠ or 1 ♥

- They are telling you they have at least 5 cards in a major suit

You have 6+ HCP's and exactly 3 cards in the major suit bid

- You now have at least 8 total trump between you.
 - **REVALUE** your hand by adding support points (**SP**) to your HCP's to get your revalued points (**RP**)
 - Add 1 point for doubleton, 2 points for singleton and 3 for void.
 - **6-10 RP**: Respond with 2 of the major suit bid by your partner
 - **11-12 RP**: Respond in your longest suit first, but then respond again with the cheapest level for the major suit.
 - **13-16 RP**: Respond in your longest suit and then bid **4** in the major suit with your next response.

You have 6+ HCP's and 4 or more cards in the major suit bid

- You now have at least 9 total trump between you.
 - **REVALUE** your hand by adding support points (**SP**) to your HCP's to get your revalued points (**RP**)
 - Add 1 point for a doubleton, **3** points for a singleton and **5** for a void.
 - **6-9 RP**: Respond with 2 of major suit bid by your partner
 - **10-12 RP**: Respond with 2 of major suit bid by your partner
 - **13-16 RP**: Respond in your longest/strongest suit and then bid **4** in the major suit with your next response.

Jacoby Transfer Response to partner's opening bid of 1NT

Partner's opening bid of 1NT means that opener has 15-17 HCP and a balanced hand. Your response to this takes on added significance.

- If you have 8+ points & 5 or more hearts or spades
 - Bid 2 ♦, telling your partner to bid 2 ♥
 - Bid 2 ♥, telling your partner to bid 2 ♠
- If you have 8+ points, but don't have a 5+ major, but do have good ♦ or ♣
 - Rebid ♦ or ♣ telling your partner that you really didn't have 5 of the major suit.

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Response to a Takeout Double

By Doubling your opponent's first bid, your partner has signaled to you that they have 13+ points and 3+ card support in EACH of the three suits not bid by your opponent. Partner wants to find out which is your longest/strongest suit before making their next bid.

No bid /Pass

- Only do not bid when your strongest and longest suit is the suit bid by your opponent (you have 5+ cards in that suit and 2+ honors in that suit). You are basically saying to your opponents: *Go for it if you dare.*

0 - 8 Points

- Bid the lowest you can in your strongest, no-bid suit (1 or 2)

9-15 Points

- Jump the bidding one level higher than necessary (Ex: opponent bid 1 ♦, you bid 2 ♠). This tells your partner you have strength in points as well as what is your longest suit.

16+ Points

- Make a "**CUE BID**"
- You bid the next highest in your OPPONENT's suit regardless of whether or not it is your longest (it probably is not)
 - This tells your partner that you have a very strong hand, which combined with the 12+ points in your partner's hand is an indicator that you may want to go for a game contract
- This will allow your partner to make a following bid to try and determine which suit is your strongest in your partnership

1NT

- Your longest suit is the one your opponent bid, but it is not strong enough to make to pass
- You have 6-11 points

2NT

- Your longest suit is the one your opponent bid, but it is not strong enough to make to pass
- You have 12-13 points

3NT

- Your longest suit is the one your opponent bid, but it is not strong enough to make to pass
- You have 13-15 points

Note: If you have 16+ points, then make a **CUE BID**

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Response to an opening bid of 2 ♣

- Normally bid 2 ♦
- This is a “waiting response”. It is intended to simply allow the bidding to get back to the partner. You will tell the partner more by your next bid.

The 2 ♣ opening bid indicates that your partner's strong hand probably has enough strength to take a game contract on its own. You don't want to chance leaving the bid at 2 ♣ so you MUST bid something. You CANNOT pass.

- The opener's NEXT bid will tell you more about their great hand. But you must bid 2 ♦ in order to ensure that they have chance to rebid.

Opener's rebid after 2 ♣ is 2 NT

- If opener then REBIDS **2 NT**, he is telling his partner that not only that he has a great hand (22-24 HCP's) but also that it is balanced.
- The partner then becomes the Captain for this contract
- Based upon the strength of the partner's hand, the partner makes the decision how to proceed
- You can pass ...
 - Only if you have less than 6 HCP's
 - But even with 3-5 HCP's, because your partner is so strong, you may still have a chance at a game contract.

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Rebidding by the Opener

Your partner has responded with ...

A One-Over-One Bid

- This is an Unlimited response
- Partner has at least 6 HCP's and 4 or more cards in the new suit
- Opener should raise partner's response 1 level (Ex: 1♥ to 2♥) ...
 - If opener has 13-15 RP's, 4 or more cards in responder's suit or 3 cards and a high honor in the opener's suit.
- Opener should rebid their opening suit at the 2 level ...
 - If opener has a 6 or more card suit and 12-14 HCP's ...
- Opener should rebid their opening suit at the 3 level ...
 - If opener has a 6 or more card suit and 15+ HCP's ...

1-Suiter: Opener has a 6 or more card suit and all other suits <4 ...

- Show your partner you have a 1-suiter and show your strength
- 12-14 HCP's: rebid opening suit at 2 level
- 15+ HCP's: rebid opening suit at the 3 level

Opener has support for responder's 1 level major suit bid ...

- Raise your partner's 1 level major bid the 2 level if ...
 - You have 4+ cards or 3 cards with high honors in partner's suit, a single or doubleton and 13-15 **RP's**
- Raise your partner's 1 level major bid to the 3 level if
 - You have 4 or more cards with high honors in partner's suit and 15+ **RP's**

Opener has a balanced hand ...

- If you have 4 card support in partner's 1 level major bid ..
 - Raise partner's major bid to the 2 level
- Otherwise ..,
 - 12-14 HCP's: Rebid 1NT
 - 15+ HCP's: Rebid 2NT

Opener has a great hand: 2 suits with total of 9+ cards and 18+ HCP's ...

- Jump shift your bid
 - If you could bid 1♥ or 1♠, bid 2♥ or 2♠ instead
 - If you can't bid 1 of anything, bid 3 of something

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A Two-Over-One Bid

- Partner has 11 or more HCP's (also an unlimited response but with a higher minimum HCP's and partner promises to bid again...
 - Start thinking about a game contract.
 - Your next bid tells partner more about your hand and then your partner decides where and how high the contract should be.

- If partner has made a 2 level **major** suit response ...
 - They are telling you they have 11+ HCP's and 5 or more cards in that major suit.
 - Opener should raise the level of that major suit if they have 3 or 4 card support in that suit.

If Opener has 11+ HCP's and no suit >5 ...

- If opener has a balanced hand and 12-14 HCP's ...
 - Bid **2NT**
- If opener has a balanced hand and 18+ HCP's ...
 - Jump the bid to **3NT**
- If opener has 4+ card support in the 2 level suit responded by partner and 12-14 HCP's ...
 - Increase the suit bid by partner to the 3 level
- If opener has 4+ card support in the 2 level suit responded by partner and 12-14 HCP's ...
 - Jump the suit bid by partner 2 the 3 level

If Opener has 11+ HCP's and a 6+ card suit ...

- 12-14 HCP's: Make a minimum 2nd bid
- 15+ HCP's: Make a jump rebid in your 6 card suit

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If opening bid is 2 ♣ and partner has responded 2 ♦

Opener's next bid is 2NT if he has 22-26 HCP's

- If opener then REBIDS **2 NT**, he is telling his partner that not only that he has a great hand (22-24 HCP's) but also that it is balanced.
- The partner then becomes the Captain for this contract
- Based upon the strength of the partner's hand, the partner makes the decision how to proceed
- This the **ONLY** time that partner would be allowed to pass and let the contract be **2NT**
- Normally, partner will then bid his **LONGEST** suit unless it is much weaker than his next longest

Opener's next bid is 3NT if he has 27+ HCP's

- Opener is now saying he has 27+ points, partner **MUST** bid again.
- **This is most DEFINITELY a forcing bid.** Partner must respond to this rebid.
- Partner will then bid his LONGEST suit unless it is much weaker than his next longest

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Bidding for a Slam

Bidding for a slam

The Blackwood Convention

This is a method for determining whether or not the combined hands of both you and your partner provide enough strength to give you a legitimate chance of taking 12 (*small slam*) or all 13 tricks (the *grand slam*).

If you have determined that you have a very strong hand, and your partner also has a strong hand, possibly with strong support in the called suit ...

- The opener with the strong hand bids **4NT**
 - **4NT** at this point is a signal to your partner that you want to know how many Aces they have
- The partner responds ...
 - **5 ♣** - this indicates that they have NO Aces
 - **5 ♦** - this indicates that they have 1 Ace
 - **5 ♥** - this indicates that they have 2 Aces
 - **5 ♠** - this indicates that they have 3 Aces

Editor's Note : While I have not seen the following written anywhere, I would **NEVER** bid **4NT** to signal my partner to tell me how many Aces they have **UNLESS** I have at least 2 Aces myself.

Think about it. No matter how many points you have in your hand, if you have only 1 Ace and your partner bids **5 ♣**, that now means that you are almost guaranteed to lose 2 or 3 tricks.

That makes your partner's **5 ♣** bid very suspect even if your strong suit happens to be ♣. If your strong suit is NOT ♣, your butt is really in a ringer. 😊

Contract Bridge Bidding Tips - ♠ ♥ ♦ ♣

If it is determined that the partners have all 4 aces between them ...

- The opener with the strong hand bids **5NT**
 - **5NT** at this point is a signal to your partner that you now want to know how many Kings they have.
- The partner responds ...
 - **6 ♣** - this indicates that they have NO Kings
 - **6 ♦** - this indicates that they have 1 King
 - **6 ♥** - this indicates that they have 2 Kings
 - **6 ♠** - this indicates that they have 3 Kings

The final game decision is now left with the opener.

- If the 6 suit bid (♠ ♥ ♦ ♣) by partner is NOT the strongest suit between the 2 partners ...
 - Bid **6** or **7NT** if partners have enough Kings between them
- If the **6** suit bid (♠ ♥ ♦ ♣) by partner **IS** the strongest suit between the 2 partners ...
 - Leave the bid at **6** in the suit bid if you do not feel you have enough Aces and Kings to bid **7**
 - ****** BID **6NT** if you feel that **NT** would be easier to guarantee **6** tricks and you do **NOT** feel you have enough Aces and Kings to take all 13 tricks
 - ****** BID **7** in the suit bid (♠ ♥ ♦ ♣) or bid **7NT** if you feel that you **DO** have enough Aces and Kings to take all 13 tricks

****** Keep in mind that it may be easier to make a 7NT contract since you will not be in danger of having to worry about any opponent voids allowing them to take a trick with trump.

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Playing

Playing as the Declarer

- First, add up your sure tricks
 - Sure tricks can only be counted if you have the Ace in a suit
- **# 1 tip: Take tricks with Honor cards from the short side suit first**
 - This allows you to have the short side win with their Honor card first and then still have a suit card left to lead back to the long side suit who can then continue to lead their winning Honor cards
- Count the cards remaining in a suit as each hand is played
 - This tells you how many outstanding cards in that suit your opponents have.
- Try to take your tricks first
 - Don't wait and count on taking tricks at the end
- Normally, play your sure Trump tricks first
 - This tries to eliminate all Trump cards from your opponents so that they cannot "Trump" your non-Trump suits
- You have high Honor cards in a suit, but NOT the Ace
 - Lead the highest honor card in which you are missing the Ace
 - This forces opponents to take the trick with the Ace or to allow you to take the trick
 - Leading the highest honor if you have more than one is best because it disguises that you also have more Honors in that suit
- Establish **extra** tricks needed before taking **sure** tricks
 - Example: You have all the high cards in a suit but NOT the Ace
 - Give up the lead to get that Ace out of the way first.
 - That makes your other Honor cards high in that suit but also does not allow the defender with the Ace to take that later in the hand when they may be able to lead cards that are no longer able to beat.
- Seven or more cards in a suit between both hands
 - If your opponents cards in that suit are divided equally, your low cards may be winning ones
- If you have only the AK in a 5 card suit, meaning your opponents have the QJ10 and at least one winning trick, let them have that trick early

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- This may allow your smaller cards in that suit to become winners if you have the lead.
- This is called "ducking".
- Finessing your opponent's Ace or King
 - **Lead from weakness toward your strength**
 - You have the King but no Ace in a suit
 - **Try to lead in the hand that does NOT have the King**
 - Your opponent in between will either play the Ace which makes your King good on the next trick, or will NOT play it in which case your King has a 50/50 chance of taking the trick.
 - If you lead the King, or lead other than the King from the hand that has the King, your opponent may take the trick without having to use their Ace.
 - You have the AQ but no King
 - Lead away from the hand that has the AQ.
 - If your opponent plays the King, take it. If they do not play the King, you have a 50/50 chance of taking the trick with your Queen.
 - Finessing in a long suit, even if it does not work, sets up lower cards in that suit for taking tricks later.
 - If one of the opponents "shows out" – i.e cannot play a suit card because they are out of them, then you know where all the remaining Honor cards are in the suit, and you can finesse with certainty.
 - Finess in long suits because even if they don't work at first, your length may set you up for future tricks.

Playing as the Defender

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Bridge Base Online

Support

support@bridgebase.com

Boyan Halachev via RT rt@rt.bridgebase.com

Bridge Base Online Logins

\$1 for 7 days playing against computer opponents

Pearl1952 Stnd5(264)

Deb0722 Stnd – Cap D, 2 0's

Jan1027 bbojanb

Fred0705 bbofredb

To Start a table against a Robot pair

- **Casual > Start a Table > Start an IMP Pairs Table**
- **Privacy Options for Your Table:** Check **Permission Required to Play** and **Invisible**
- **Reserve Seats at Your Table**
 - **South: Pearl1952 North: deb0722**
- **Start Table – Relaxed Game**
 - **Click Robot to select Robots to play both East & West**
- **Deb0722 must then login and Join the table – “YES” to Are You There**
 - **That should deal the cards for the first hand**
 -

To Start a table against friends (free)

- **Casual > Relaxed Bridge Club > Start Table**
- **Invite players by User Name**

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Playing with your partner against 2 robots

In order to play with your partner against two robots, you need to ...

1. Rent a robot. Only one member of the partnership needs to rent the robot. That member hosts the table and can sit as many robots at that table as they want.
2. How to rent a robot ...
 - a. Log in to BBO 2.
 - b. Click on the button "Robot world"
 - c. Click "Robot rental" to rent a robot for the day or the week, as you like It is described with images here:
http://www.bridgebase.com/help/v2help/robots_how_to_rent.html
3. Start a table:
 - a. Click "Casual"
 - b. Click "Start a table"
 - c. Click "Start an IMP Pairs table (or MP)"
 - d. Click "Reserve seats at your table"
 - e. Put your user name in "South" and you partner's in "North" and click "
 - f. Optional but recommended
 - i. In the "Privacy options for your table" select "Permission required to play". This is to prevent other players from hopping in at the robot seats before you managed to sit the robots there
 - g. Click "Start a table - competitive / relaxed game"
 - i. You will then be seated at table immediately
 - ii. Your partner will receive an invitation to join you (he/she needs to be online)
 - h. In order to sit robots as opponents, click the option "Robot" on the East seat and then do the same on the West seat.