

Card Rankings

In ascending order

Minors:

1. C
2. D

Majors:

3. H
4. S

5. NT

Scoring

Minors: 20 points per trick (over 6th tricks; i.e. from 7th trick up)

Majors: 30 points per trick

NT: 40 points for the first trick and then 30 points per additional tricks

- Part score is to bid below game and make the contract
- Game is to bid and make 100 points or more
- Slam is to bid 6 and make it
- Grand slam is to bid 7 tricks and make it

Number of tricks needed to bid and make game:

- NT – bid 3 (6+3=9 tricks) $40+30+30=100$ points
- Majors – Bid 4 and make it; $4 \times 30 = 120$
- Minors – Bid 5 and make it $5 \times 20 = 100$

Bonus points to make part score = 50 points. So if someone bids 3S and make 4 will score $4 \times 30 + 50 = 170$

Bonus points to bid and make Game:

- Vul – 500
- Non Vul – 300

Bonus points to bid and make Slam:

- Vul – 1250
- Non Vul – 800

Bonus points to bid and make Grand Slam:

- Vul – 2000
- Non Vul – 1300

Penalty points for failing to make the contract

- Vul – 100 points per trick short
- Non Vul – 50 points per trick short

Penalty points for failing to make the **doubled** contract

- Vul – 2 x -100 points for first trick and 3 x -100 for subsequent tricks short
- Non Vul – 2 x -50 points for first trick and 4 x -50 for subsequent tricks short

High Hard Points (hcp)

- Ace = 4
- King = 3
- Queen = 2
- Jack = 1

Total points in a deck of card are 40.

As a guide:

- To make 3NT game, partners need to have 25-26 points between them

- To make 4H/4S games partners need 26 points and **fit** in the major
- To make 5C/5D games, you need about 29 points
- Every extra 3 hcp helps to make an extra trick, so you need about 32 points to make slam.

When partners have 8+ cards between them in a suit, they have a “fit”. A contract can be played in a suit (when partners have a fit in that suit). When no fit is established usually it is better to play the contract in NT.

Objectives during bidding:

- To find optimum contract and stop at that
- To find strength between partners
- To establish if there is a fit between partners (preferably in majors) or to decide on NT contract
- To interfere and disrupt opponents bidding
 - Take space away from opponent’s communication
 - To direct partner on what to lead
 - To compete for part score or game
 - To push opponents beyond their limit
 - To sacrifice if viable

Bidding Process:

- Starts with dealer and goes clockwise
- As minimum should start at 1 level ($6+1=7$ tricks)
- Any subsequent bid need to be higher (same level but higher rank suit or at higher level)
- X (double) after opponent’s bid is an acceptable bid
- If one is passed and bidding come back to him, he can bid any legal bid
- Any artificial bid by partner up to and including 3 level need to be “alerted”
- Players need to have a “System Card” and present it to opponents
- Opponents can ask partner what your bid mean
- A contract is reached after 3 passes
- First person who opens with a bid becomes “opener” and his partner is called “responder”

- An opponent who bid after “opener” is called “overcaller” and his partner is called “advancer”

Guidance for opening and responding:

- One should open with 13+ hc points
 - Most partnerships in modern bridge open with 12 hcp
 - Most open with 11 points 6+ cards in a suit and 4 spades
- One should respond with 6+ hcps

Definition of a “balanced” (flat) hand:

- Has no 5 card major
- Has no “singleton” or “void”
- Has no more than 1 “doubleton”

What to open when you have an opening hand?

- Open major (1H or 1S) with 5+ card in the major
- Open “better minor” (1C or 1D) when no 5 card major
- Open 1NT with a balanced (flat) hand and 15-17 hcps

What to respond when you have 6+ points?

- Support partner’s major if you have 3+ cards in his suit (you have a fit)
 - Raise by 1 if you have 6-9 hcps
 - Invite by raising 2 level if you have 10-12 points
 - Bid game if you have 13+ points
- Bid your 4 card suit up the line (rank)
- Bid your 5 card suit first if you have any (but not at a higher level)
- If you have 2 x 5 card suits, bid the higher rank suit first
- If no fit and no 4 or 5 card suit to show, bid NT

Hand classification

You should classify your hand as follows:

	<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
Minimum	11-15 hcp	6-9 hcp
Intermediate	16-18 hcp	10-12 hcp
Strong	19+ hcp	13+ hcp

Bids by both partners can be:

- Forcing – partner should not pass
- Invitational – partner can decide to pass or keep going
- Sign off (drop dead) – partner should not bid unless in special circumstances such as decide to sacrifice or has exceptional distributional hand

Some Golden rules of bidding:

- Partners bid up the line (rank)
- Any change in suit is forcing
- When any of the partners bid NT, he has no other suit to bid and is communicating his strength
- NT bid by any partner is not forcing
- When one bid NT, a suit bid by his partner at 1 level higher is not forcing (usually indicates unwilling to play NT and gives partner a choice to select one of the suit contracts)
- When one bid NT, a jump bid by partner is showing extra strength (usually enough for game) and is forcing
- A “reverse” by opener (his 2nd bid is at 2 level and is in higher rank than his first suit. For example 1C by opener – 1D by responder – 2H by opener) is forcing and shows at least intermediate values
- When partner opens and opponents bid, “Cue bid” of opponent’s suit indicates strength and usually support for partner. This is forcing and partner should bid.
- Opener who opens pre-emptive or weak, if partner pass or don’t bid and bidding comes back to him, should not bid again (he already said what he has to say. If any further action needs to be taken, it is up to his partner to do so).
- When one opens or overcall pre-emptive, if partner change suit, this is not forcing. Also to change suit, partner need to have a solid suit of his own, expecting to make without any help from pre-empter.
- Responding:
 - With 6-9 points respond at 1 level (suit or NT). If support for partner at minimum level

- With 10-12 points you are entitled to bid twice
- With 13+ points, don't stop until game is reached

Opening:

- With minimum hand, show your minimum hand in your 2nd bid by:
 - Support responder suit if you can at minimum (e.g. 1D by you, 1H by responder, 2H by you, having 4 H card)
 - Bid at 1 level up the rank if available (e.g. 1C by you, 1D by responder, 1S by you)
 - Bid 1NT when no suit at 2 level is available (e.g. 1D by you, 1S by responder, 1NT by you – you may have 4 H but no point in bidding H after partner 1S bid)
 - Repeat your 6 card suit (e.g. 1S by you 1 NT by partner, 2S by you – this is showing minimum hand and 6 cards in S)
- With intermediate hand continue bidding and show your strength when needed.
 - Support responder's suit at one level higher (e.g. 1D by you, 1H by responder, 3H by you)
 - Bid 1 level up the rank as change of suit is forcing and you will have further opportunity to show your strength later (e.g. 1C by you, 1D by responder, 1H by you)
 - Reverse (e.g. 1C by you, 1H by responder, 2D by you)
 - Bid your 6 card suit at 3 level (e.g. 1H by you, 1S by responder, 3H by you shows 6+ hearts and 16+ hcp)
- With strong opening hand (19+ hcp), when partner responder, do not stop until game is reached.

You can overcall with good suit and as few points as 8 hcp.

All jump overcalls are pre-emptive (weak hand and good quality long suit)

You can also open 1H or 1S with 2 suited hands, less than opening hand but good major suit and another 5 card suit that you can rebid and repeat (rule 20).

When partner opens strong 2C, responder should bid twice (even with 0 point).

When you have singleton K, Q or J or doubleton QJ in opponent's suit, you should not count these points as your high card point for hand valuation.

An immediate take-out double shows opening hand with shortage in opponents suit and tolerance for all the other suits (if over major usually promises 4 card in the other major or 3 very good cards). You should respond even with zero points (unless your right hand opponent bids, which in this case you can pass).

When your partner doubles for take-out, with 8+ points make a jump bid to show your strength. If you think there is prospect for game, bid it immediately.

If your partner is a passed hand and makes a take-out double, he obviously doesn't have opening values. He is asking you to select from unbid suits. You have to select and bid, even with zero values and 3 card support only. In this case do not jump with 8+ points (bid at minimum level).

A cue bid of opponent's suit is never a genuine suit and is always forcing partner to bid. It normally indicate

good support and at least invitational hand for partner's last suit.

Special hands & how to open them?

- Strong balanced hands
 - 18-20 hcp
 - 21-22 hcp
 - 23+ hcp
- Strong single suited hands (19+ hcp and at least 8 ½ tricks)
- 2 suited hands and less than opening strength
- Weak Major (6H or 6S and less than opening strength)
- Weak hand with 7+ card in one suit
- Single suited hand with AKQxxxx but no other suit

There are special ways in how to bid such hands. Following is one recommended approach:

- Strong balanced hands
 - 18-20 hcp – open 1C or 1D and if partner responds, bid 2NT next
 - 21-22 hcp – Open 2NT
 - 23+ hcp – Open 2C
- Strong single suited hands (19+ hcp and at least 8 ½ tricks) – Open 2C
- 2 suited hands and less than opening strength
- Weak Major (6H or 6S and less than opening strength) – Open 2H or 2S
- Weak hand with 7+ card in one suit – Open at 3 level (pre-empt)
- Single suited hand in a minor with AKQxxxx but no other suit – Open 3NT (this is called gambling NT as you have 7 tricks in the suit and need 2 tricks from partner to make your 3NT contract)

How to respond (basic) to partner's 1NT opening (15-17 hcp balanced)

This is one of the simplest decisions as it is just a simple mathematics.

- With <8 points pass as there is no prospect of game $17 + 7 = 24$

- Exception is when you have 5+ cards in Majors or 6+ in minors (refer to “Transfer” convention)
- Another exception is when close to zero point, shortage in C, with 4 diamonds and at least 4-3 in majors
- Another exception is when close to Zero point and at least 4-5 in majors
- With 8-9 points bid 2NT (invitational). If partner has 17 points he can bid 3NT and with less will pass
 - Exception is when you have 5+ card in a major or 4 card in one or both majors (refer to “transfer” and “Stayman” conventions)
- With 10+ points you can bid 3NT as there is enough points for game
 - Exception is when you have 5+ card in one major or 4 card in one or both majors
 - Also when you have 15+ points and there is “slam” possibility (refer to “Gerber” convention).

Distributional points in a suit contract (total points)

When a fit is established between partners, short suits or long suits will have additional values. Partners can re-evaluate their hand and add following distributional points.

- One point for each extra trump length (e.g. trump is H and responder has 4 trump cards – add 1 point)
- 4 points if you are void
- 2 points if you have singleton
- 1 point for doubleton
- One points for a suit with 4+ card and 2 honours

For example if P opens 1S and you have

S – Jxxx

H – Axx

D – x

C – KJxxx

In this example you have:

9 hcp

1 for extra trump

2 for singleton

1 for club length and quality

Total = 13 “total points”

With 13 total points, you can simply bid 4S game end of story.

Other conventions / topics

- Overcall / 3rd seat opening
- Leads
- Signals (attitude, discard, count)
- Take out double
- Negative double
- Support double
- Stayman (and varieties – garbage, modified garbage)
- Transfer / super accepts
- Looking for slam:
 - Roman Key Card Blackwood 1430
 - CRO Gerber 1430
- Responses to 2C strong opening
- Responses to strong 2NT opening
- Respond sequence to gambling 3NT
- Responses to weak 2H or 2S openings
- Responses to 2 suited openings
- Rule of 11
- Rule of 20
- Rule of total tricks – competitive auctions
- What to do if partner opens 1NT and opponents interfere with a bid
- What to do if partner opens 1NT and opponents X (double) for penalty
- What to do if opponents open and you have an opening hand
 - They open 1NT
 - They open 1 of suit
 - They open weak 2 or pre-emptive
 - They open artificial strong 1C (precision) opening

- Your partner overcalls 1H/1S or opens 1H/1S in 3rd seat. You have strong support and at least invitational hand, how do you find out if partner opened/overcalled with genuine opening strength or weak?
- Partner opens 1C or 1D. You have 5 hearts (or 5 spades) and at least invitational hand. You bid 1H, partner bids 1NT (saying he doesn't have 4 hearts to support you, doesn't have 4 spades to bid up the line and has minimum hand). Opener may have 3 heart support for you and between you enough points for a game, how do you find out?
- Playing strategy:
 - Suit contract
 - NT contract

Stayman & Transfer after partner opens 1NT

Stayman objective is to find 4-4 fit in majors by bidding an artificial 2C.

You use Stayman when you have 8+ points and one or 2 4-card major.

Opener responses are:

- 2D – sorry partner I have no 4 card major
- 2H – Partner I have 4 card in hearts, but I may also have 4 card in spades
- 2S – Thank you partner I have 4 card in spades and don't have 4 card in hearts

Responder actions after above responses are as follows:

- After 2D
 - With 8-9 points bid 2NT (inviting to game)
 - With 10+ points bid 3NT
 - If 5-4 in H-S, bid S at appropriate level
- After 2H
 - With 8-9 points and 4H, bid 3H (inviting to game)
 - With 8-9 points and spade bid 2NT (inviting)
 - With 10+ points and 4H, bid 4H
 - With 10+ points and spades bid 3NT
 - If 5-4 in S-H, bid H at appropriate level
- After 2S respond by opener
 - With 8-9 points and 4H, bid 2NT (inviting)

- With 10+ points and 4H, bid 3NT
- With 8-9 points and 4S, bid 3S (inviting)
- With 10+ points and 4S, bid 4S

When responder has length (5+ in majors and 6+ in minors) in a suit, he can use “Transfer”. There are number of advantages in this, mainly: responder has communicated his length, opener with stronger hand becomes declarer, and responder in a subsequent bid can give further information about his strength and distribution to the opener. Following are transfer bids and subsequent actions by responder.

- 2D → transfer to 2H
 - After that with <8 points responder with pass
 - With 8-9 points and 5H responder bids 2NT (3H with 6+H)
 - With 10+ points and 5H responder bids 3NT (4H with 6+H)
- 2H → transfer to 2S
 - After that with <8 points responder with pass
 - With 8-9 points and 5S responder bids 2NT (3S with 6+S)
 - With 10+ points and 5S responder bids 3NT (4S with 6+S)
- 2S → transfer to 3C (only when <8 points)
 - After that with <8 points responder with pass
- 2NT → transfer to 3D (only when <8 points)
 - After that with <8 points responder with pass

RKCB (Roman Key Card Blackwood) 1430

This is used to identify important cards (aces and kings) when partners are looking for slam. When trump is established, a 4NT bid is asking for “Key Cards” (Aces and King of trump). Responses are:

- 5C = 1 or 4 key cards
- 5D = 0 or 3 key cards
- 5H = 2 key cards but no queen of trump
- 5S = 2 key cards as well as queen of trump

After 5C and 5D, asking partner will assume you have 1 or 0 key card and simply go back to 5 of the trump suit. If you have 1 or 0, you pass. Otherwise it is your responsibility to take it to slam.

After 5C or 5D response, a bid of next higher suit (but not trump suit) is asking partner if he has queen of trump. If you don't have the queen, you can bid the trump suit. If you bid any other suit, you are telling partner that, yes I have the Queen as well as king of this particular suit.

5NT bid will ask for kings (except King of trump which is classified the same as aces). Responses are:

- 6C = no king
- 6D = 1 king
- 6H = 2 kings
- 6S = 3 kings

CRO Gerber 1430 a bid of 4C anytime ask for aces

Responses are:

4D = 1 or 4 aces

4H = 0 or 3 aces

4S = 2 aces of the same **C**olor

4NT = 2 aces of the same **R**ank

5C = 2 **O**dd aces

After above response, bid of the next unbid suit (or NT) asks for number of kings.

Responses are:

- Next suit = 0 king
- The suit after = 1 king etc

Signals

Attitude: This is used when partner leads an honor card (usually K or A)

- Your smallest card = I like the suit (usually you have one of the top honours or only 2 cards and will ruff the 3rd the third one).
- A high card says you don't like partner to continue that suit and is better to switch to something else

Discard: When you can't follow suit and are discarding, you give signal to your partner as follows:

- An odd card = I like this particular suit
- An even card = I don't like this suit

- Low even shows preference for lower rank suit
- High even shows preference for higher rank suit

Count signal:

- Low-High = even number of cards
- High-Low = odd number of cards

Leads

- From a sequence, always lead top of the sequence (e.g. from QJTx, lead your Q)
- From 4 or more card with an honour, lead your 4th highest card (e.g. from KT952, lead your 5).
- From 3 small cards, lead the top card (e.g. from 976, lead 9)
- From 4 small cards, lead 2nd highest (e.g. from 9765, lead 7)
- Pay attention to bidding and if partner doubled (lead directing) or bid a suit, prefer to bid your partner's suit, unless you have your own sequence or a good reason to lead your own suit.
- Once dummy is revealed, use the information to select follow up leads.

Bids over opponent's weak 2s

Normally we should contemplate to enter into bidding which will be at 2 level or higher if we have genuine opening hand.

If opponents open multi 2D (indicating weak major or strong balanced hand), we should wait until they reveal their major suit (except when we have weak or strong D suit). With following hands we bid:

- With 15-17hcp, stoppers, we bid 2NT
- With Good 5 or 6 cards in a suit (in particular majors), 11-15 points we bid it (unless it is their suit which we pass & if partner doubles convert to penalty)
- With very strong hand or opening hand with shortage in their suit we use take out double.
- If 2D is weak major, we can double immediately with weak hand and long D
- If 2D is weak major, with opening hand and good D, we bid 3D immediately
- All jumps are constructive and show strong hands. Over 2H, 3S bid shows 6 cards suit, for example S AQJ1087 H 3 D K2 C AJ108
- Leaping Michael – Shows 5 cards in bid suit and 5 cards in other major. For example a bid of 4D over 2H, shows 5 Diamonds and 5 Spades
- Cue Bidding – asks partner to bid 3NT with stopper in the opponent's suit.

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