

1 Introduction

The name of the game is *Bridge*. The object of the game is to win. You win by being in the partnership with the most points when time is called. You obtain points by bidding and making contracts or by preventing the other partnership from making contracts. The goal of the bidding process is to agree on a suit (or NT) and to then determine how many tricks can be taken in that suit. In addition, there are artificial bidding conventions that allow you to communicate extra information in certain exceptional scenarios.

2 Valuation

Count the cards in your hand and sort by suit. The worst bridge hand has 4 As, 4 Ks, 4 Qs and 2 Js.

Feature	Points	Feature	Points
A	4	void	3
K	3	singleton	2
Q	2	doubleton	1
J	1		

The AKQJ points are called *high-card points* or *HCPs*; the rest are called *distribution points*. If you are going to make an NT bid or respond favorably to an NT bid (i.e., with the hopes of playing NT), *do not* count distribution points. In any particular suit, count the maximum of HCPs and distribution points.

The suit order is ♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ NT with ♣ the lowest and NT the highest. 5+♣, 5+♦, 4+♥, 4+♠ and 3+NT are *game bids*.

3 Opening Bids

For our purposes, you are making an *opening bid* if you are the first one in your partnership to bid. In order to make an *opening bid* you need at least 13 points.¹ Consult the following chart and make the *first* bid that applies.

Your Points	Your Cards	You Bid
6-12	6♦♥♠, 3+ HCPs in that suit	2♦♥♠ (preempt)
6-12	7♣♦♥♠, 3+ HCPs in that suit	3♣♦♥♠ (preempt)
10-21	strength in all unbid suits, opponents must have bid at 1-2 level	Double
0-12		Pass
16-18	0-1 doubleton	1NT
20-21	0-1 doubleton	2NT
13-21	5+♥ or 5+♠	1♥ or 1♠
13-21	3+♣ or 4+♦	1♣ or 1♦
22+		2♣, partner <i>may not</i> pass

¹You may encounter people who will open if their HCPs and the length of their suit total at least 20. This is called the *rule of twenty*.

Interference Rule: If it is not possible for you to make the specified bid because someone has already bid something higher, (e.g., you would like to bid 1♦ and someone has bid 1♥), make the lowest bid you can of the appropriate suit. Your partner will understand.

If you make an opening bid your partner may not pass unless someone makes an intervening bid or your partner has 0-5 points.

If anyone asks, you're playing "five-card majors, opening-count overcalls, weak-two, Stayman, Jacoby, Blackwood, Gerber."

4 Responses to Opening 1♣♦♥♠

Points	Your Cards	You Bid
0-5		Pass
6-9	3+ cards in bid ♥♠	Raise bid by 1
6-9	4+ cards in bid ♣♦	Raise bid by 1
6-9	good 4 card new suit	Bid your suit
6-9	balanced hand no support	Bid NT
10+	3+ cards in bid ♥♠	Raise bid by 2
10+	4+ cards in bid ♣♦	Raise bid by 2
10+	good 4 card new suit	Jump up 1 Bid your suit
0-10	5+ cards in bid suit 1+ singleton or void	Jump to game

5 Opener Rebids on 1♣♦♥♠

You opened 1♣♦♥♠ and your partner responded but left your suit. If your partner bid non-NT and you have 4+ card support in your partner's suit, rebid it. You may also rebid your original suit, but only if you have 1 more card than you promised before. If all else fails, bid NT. Until you find a fit, you may not pass (unless someone bids between you and your partner). Exception: you may pass as a weak show of support for your partner's bid if you are certain you don't want to go higher.

6 Responses to Opening 1NT

Points	Your cards	You Bid
0-5		Pass
6+	both majors strong	2♣ ("Stayman")
6+	strong 4+♥	2♦ (partner will rebid ♥)
6+	strong 4+♠	2♥ (partner will rebid ♠)
10+	as above	as above, raise 1
8+	good NT hand	2 NT

If you bid 2♣ in response to 1NT you are invoking the Stayman convention, which calls for 4 card majors. Your

partner (the one who bid 1NT) will rebid the best such major or 2♦ if no such major exists.

7 Responses to Opening 2♣

Points	Your cards	You Bid
0-5		2♦ (not pass!)
6+	5+♣♦♥♠	3♣, 3♦, 2♥, 2♠
6+	balanced	2NT

If you do not bid 2♦, the partnership must go to game (since you have 28+ points).

8 Responses to Preempts

If your partner opened with a 3-level preempt, adjust all of the numbers for card support by -1 and bid levels by +1 in the following table:

Points	Your cards	You Bid
	3 card support	Raise
"5 tricks"	4 card support	Raise to Game
"Invite Game"		2NT
Otherwise		Pass (really)

Usually you pass in response to your partner's preempt, even with a fairly strong hand. If you have 4 card support and your hand can take 5 tricks (e.g., 3 As, 1 K, 1 singleton), raise to game. If you are not sure about game, bid 2NT. Your partner will rebid at the 3 level to show a weak preempt and at the 4 level to show a strong preempt (i.e., you should settle in game).

9 Finding a Fit

Once your partnership has made an opening bid and a response, you are now trying to *find a fit*. That is, you are trying to find a major where you have 8+ cards between the two of you or a minor where you have 7+ cards or a NT contract where you have a *stopper* (A or K or general strength) in every suit. Keep mentioning suits that you have at least 4 cards in until your partner agrees. Bid NT if you run out of things to say. Each time you rebid a suit you have previously bid you are promising one more card in it.

After your partnership has made an opening bid and a response bid *you may not pass* until you have found a fit (unless someone bids between you and your partner). Note that if your partner mentions a suit and you have 3+ card support in it but you do not want to go any higher, you may pass as a show of support, but that's pretty much the only exception.

Once you find a fit (i.e., the partnership has decided on a suit), determine if you can *go to game*. The partnership needs about 28+ points in the minors and 25+ points in the majors to go to game (remember not to count distribution

points in NT games). If you know that the partnership has that many points, make a game bid. If you know that the partnership does not have that many points, stop bidding at the agreed-upon suit. If you determine that you will have that many points *only if* your partner was at the top of a promised range, bid just below a game bid and let your partner decide. Use the following chart:

The Suit	You Think The Partnership Has	You Bid (or Pass to stop the bid at)
♣♦	0-27 points	1-3♣♦
♣♦	24+ points (and you're not sure)	4♣♦ (partner will bid 5♣♦ or pass)
♣♦	28-30 points	5♣♦ (Game Bid)
♥♠	0-24 points	1-2♥♠
♥♠	21+ points (and you're not sure)	3♥♠ (partner will bid 4♥♠ or pass)
♥♠	25-30 points	4♥♠ (Game Bid)
NT	0-21 points	1NT (at most 2NT)
NT	21+ points you're not sure	2NT (partner will bid 3NT or pass)
NT	25-30 points	3NT (Game Bid)
♣♦♥♠	31+ points	4NT = Blackwood
NT	31+ points	4♣ = Gerber

10 Game Bids

Game bids in the minors are very hard to make. Many partnerships will always pick 3NT rather than 5♣ or 5♦.

If you can determine that the partnership has over 30 points and you are not discussing a NT game, bid 4NT. This is the Blackwood artificial convention bid that *calls for aces*. If you are discussing NT already, bid 4♣ (the Gerber convention to call for aces). Your partner will use the following chart:

Your Aces	Response to Blackwood (4NT)	Response to Gerber (4♣)
0 or 4	5♣	4♦
1	5♦	4♥
2	5♥	4♠
3	5♠	4NT

If the partnership does not have all of the aces, go back to the favorite suit and stop. If you do have all of the aces, you can repeat the process to *call for kings* by bidding 5NT (or 5♣). If you have all the As and all the Ks, settle the contract at the 6 (*small slam*) or 7 (*slam*) level.