New England Youth Bridge, Inc.
Teacher’s Manual and Lesson Plans
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Teaching Methodologies
New England Youth Bridge, Inc.

New England Youth Bridge, Inc. is a Section 501(c)(3) charitable organization with a mission of teaching bridge to school children. Our teachers are volunteers, members of the American Contract Bridge League who have chosen to pass along to a younger generation a pastime that our teachers have found personally rewarding.

Our teaching methodologies are based upon a few underlying principles, observations, and experiences* … many of which are unique to teaching young students rather than adults:

- We keep lessons short and interactive. Typically, lessons last the first 10-15 minutes of a 45-60 minute class, with the remainder of the class time being spent playing**. We find that the study attention span of young students is short; students need to “do it” and “see it” in order to learn.
  - We tend to focus the lesson section on items that can be taught quickly, such as card combinations; or advice that will likely be frequently repeated, such as “lead honors from the short hand first” or “count your winners and compare to the number of tricks for which you have contracted”.
  - We generally refrain from focusing the lesson section on items that can take extended time, such as multiple themes appearing in a complete pre-dealt hand.
  - We also find that creating questions to ask the students that relate to the lesson plan keeps the students interested and attentive.
  - We use visual tools such as flowcharts, rather than handouts (which might look like homework), to assist learning.

- We focus lessons on card play before bidding. Our students learn mini-bridge (bridge without bidding) before they learn to bid. Our approach is based upon the principle that students should learn how to win tricks before learning the partnership language for projecting the number of tricks contracted to be won.

- We tend to overlook all mistakes in the play portion of the class, unless such mistakes relate to prior lesson plans. Young students won’t try to “digest” material that is over their heads. They’ll become irritated – either with the teacher or themselves – and class control problems can result.

- We try to focus the student on the task at hand and to reinforce lessons already learned by interjecting appropriate questions and frequent referencing to the flowcharts. We seek to provide positive enforcement to students, but selectively and in a non-gratuitous manner. Who knows? Maybe the students will learn some lessons independently!

- We do keep played cards in front of the player, duplicate style. Without diminishing the need for the lessons to be fun to the students, we do subscribe to the objective of improving the quality of play of our students – we hope that the students become duplicate players at the clubs and tournaments. We encourage the students to develop a plan for the play, defense, and bidding of each hand.

- We anticipate that students might not recognize that they have to develop a plan for each hand and to study to learn a game. They might say, “Why can’t we just play?” We realize, and accept, the fact that some students are interested only in learning how to play, and not interested in learning to play well.

- We fully expect the pace of play to be, well, glacial. And for the noise (and energy) level to be high. Young students are energetic, playful, and inventive. Try to recognize and guide the
energy, while not losing sight of the fact that decisions do have to be made within a reasonable
time frame.

- We believe that students are not afraid to make mistakes. They are willing to take a chance
  because they MIGHT be right. They also like for their cards to be secret and we are willing to
  embrace that preference.
- We introduce scoring and duplicate boards early and, as soon as lessons turn to bidding, we
  introduce bidding boxes. Kids love keeping score and they love gadgets. For similar reasons, we
  look for opportunities for students from one school to compete against students from other
  schools.
- We do teach ethics and appropriate table behavior as important elements of the game.
- We seek a safe and productive class environment. We demand that each of our teachers be CORI
  certified, treat students respectfully, receive respect from students, be attentive to medical issues
  such as food allergies, and communicate as needed with school administration and/or parents.
- While we recognize that a bridge club is a social/recreational event for which the standards of
  behavior and attentiveness are less strict than in a school classroom, we expect students to adhere
  to three rules: respect the school (by not abusing school property); respect the teacher and other
  adults present (by not talking over verbal lessons, except, of course, to ask bridge-related
  questions); and respect fellow students (by avoiding criticism or shortling or exclusivity).
- We seek involvement of school faculty and administration. We value their support and their
  advice. Our teachers, after all, are more likely to excel at knowledge of bridge than to excel at
  knowledge of educational methodologies conducive for children to learn. And the faculty
  members can be the most successful recruiters of new students!

The teacher should consider asking each student to bring to the first class a cardholder (often an empty
box that used to contain a box of aluminum foil, with the serrated edges taped for safety). (Holding 13
cards can be difficult for small hands.) All other items will be supplied by the teacher.

* Many of the methodologies are excerpted from the ACBL School Bridge Lesson Series Program
  Teacher Manual.

** If the size of the class and the locale of the club permit, we seek to supplement the teacher with bridge
players who can act as Table Supervisors during the play segment of a club meeting. See Guidelines for
Table Supervisors, included at the end of this Manual.
Components of Teacher’s Manual
New England Youth Bridge, Inc.

The materials that follow in this document represent the integration of two distinct sets of documents:

- A series of flowcharts that are to be shared with students and used by teachers and students as: (a) learning tools for the duration of the instruction time; and (b) guidelines to be used by students to help them for the duration of the playing time. Many of the flowcharts are layered: As a new lesson is taught, the flowchart that was used during the previous lessons is updated, so that the flowchart retains the information that was learned during the previous lessons and supplements that information with new information that is learned in the current lesson.

- A series of lesson plans – accompanied by illustrations of card combinations, card layouts, or charts, intended for the teacher to help the teacher “flesh out” some Teaching Steps that can be derived from sharing the new information on each flowchart.

The individual lesson plans that follow are intended to take only the first 10 to 15 minutes of each class. Even that limited time is intended to be spent in interactive instruction. Each lesson plan adopts a particular construct. Each lesson plan first states the overall Objectives of the lesson plan and then suggests individual Teaching Steps* to achieve the Objectives. (The Teaching Steps are intended to help the teacher identify key instructional elements of the material; they are not intended to “script” the way such elements are raised to the class. What works best with one class can differ from what works best with another set of students.) If the teacher wishes, the Objectives of the lesson can be converted into bullet points highlighted on an easel or blackboard. Of course, each teacher can assess how adequately their students are achieving the Objectives and adjust how much of an Objective should be deferred until the next lesson or advanced from the next lesson.

The general sequencing of lessons is for students to learn as follows:

- the concepts of winning tricks and following the inviolable rules of Bridge such as playing in clockwise order, following suit, counting tricks by the partnership, etc.
- the concept of having a contract for a specified number of tricks and the roles of declarer, dummy, and the defenders
- the fundamentals of mini-Bridge, including the counting of HCP to identify the declarer and the level of the contract, the scoring for making or defeating a contract, and the achieving of potential bonuses by contracting for games or slams
- the importance of declarer formulating a plan for the play of a contract
- techniques for declarer to develop more winners
- the concept of suit contracts, using trumps, including techniques for declarer to eliminate losers
- defensive play to counter declarer’s plan for the play of a contract
- and, finally, bidding (we teach 2/1, but with few conventions other than Stayman, takeout doubles, and negative doubles)

The lessons on play and defense are generally plan-oriented. By contrast, the lessons on bidding are much more rules-oriented. The distinction is intentional.

The general purpose of the lessons on play and defense is to “think like a bridge player”, to formulate a goal for the hand and to consider various techniques to plan to achieve the goal. Accordingly, when presenting the lesson plans on play and defense, the teacher should attend to distinguishing the very few
rules of bridge (such as following suit) from the very plentiful guidelines (such as “second hand low”), so that the students understand the difference and recognize that each hand has to be analyzed on its merits. As the student chooses to further pursue bridge – by practice, by study, by being mentored – we anticipate that the student will retain the processes learned during the lessons on play and defense and build upon them.

The general purpose of the lessons on bidding is to enable the student to participate in a regular bridge tournament (i.e., non mini-bridge tournament) as soon as possible. Accordingly, when presenting the lesson plans on bidding, the teacher should attend to focus on finding a combined major suit fit of eight or more cards and discovering whether the combined strengths of the two hands merit bidding for a game bonus, while allowing that many alternative methods for implementing that focus exist. As the student chooses to further pursue bridge, we anticipate that the student will improve their ability to evaluate the play and defensive value of a hand and will choose to replace the (fairly crude) bidding agreements taught in the lesson plans with bidding agreements that reflect improved evaluation.

Following the lesson plans, the students play hands at tables of four, using duplicate boards. To produce specific hands that reinforce the lesson plans, the bridge teacher might want to consider using deal-generator software.

The number of lesson plans included probably exceeds the number of sessions of class. The sequence of lesson plans is based upon the principle that students should learn the basic skills of winning tricks before learning the partnership language for projecting the number of tricks contracted to be won.

We encourage students to participate in bridge tournament competitions – youth-only events in the presence of “regular” tournament players being the preferred environment for tournaments. Referencing the Table of Contents: Students should be prepared to play mini-bridge tournaments by no later than the date they have learned the last DEFENSIVE PLAY lesson; and should be prepared to play regular tournaments by no later than the date they have learned the last CONSTRUCTIVE BIDDING lesson. The COUNTING CARDS, COMPETITIVE BIDDING and MORE lesson segments are for students who have progressed beyond the lessons learned in DECLARER PLAY, DEFENSIVE PLAY, and CONSTRUCTIVE BIDDING.

Needless to say, learning about bridge is more than learning about techniques for declarer play, defensive play, and bidding. However, learning about the selection of techniques for particular hands, based upon drawing inferences from clues about the play or the auction, is generally beyond the lesson plan scope of this Manual … although one lesson plan does address COUNTING CARDS. For a few students, lessons about the acts of building clues and drawing inferences from those clues can be injected into discussion of a particular deal.

* Many of the teaching steps in card play are derived from Fred Gitelman’s “Learn to Play Bridge” software program that is available as a free download from the [Bridge Base Online](https://www.bridgebaseonline.com) website (alas, only for Windows computers). Many of the pre-sorted hands are derived from bridge author Eddie Kantar [www.kantarbridge.com](http://www.kantarbridge.com) and are used with his permission. Many of the teaching steps in bidding are derived from Audrey Grant’s ACBL Bridge Series “Bidding in the 21st Century”.
DECLARER PLAY

Lesson 1 – Winning Tricks and the Rules of Bridge

Objectives:
- to welcome the students
- to introduce the concepts, rules, and language of bridge:
  - to learn that a bridge hand consists of 13 cards
  - to learn the suit of each card
  - to learn the rank of each card
  - to learn that the objective of bridge is to win tricks
  - to learn some basic rules for winning tricks:
    - that each player must, if possible, follow suit to the card that is led to a trick … or else discard (and discard losers, not potential winners)
    - that each player plays one card to a trick, and in clockwise order
    - that each deal has 13 total tricks
    - that the player who leads to a trick is the player who won the previous trick
  - to learn that bridge is a partnership game:
    - a trick won by your partner is just as valuable as a trick won by you
    - to keep track of the number of tricks won by each partnership

That tricks can be won by trumps will be introduced later; here (and for quite a few lessons thereafter), tricks are in notrump.

The teacher should keep the questions and answers flowing; interactivity is important.

Teaching steps:
- The teacher can begin by welcoming the students to the bridge club and talking about why they might enjoy learning to play bridge:
  - Bridge is fun. If you like other card games or mind games of strategy, you will enjoy playing bridge.
  - Bridge is an activity you can share with your friends and can use to develop new friendships; all you need is one other player to be your partner and two more players to be your opponents. That, and a deck of playing cards.
  - Bridge is easy to learn to play – there are only a few absolute rules in bridge and you will learn most all of them by the end of today’s lesson, so that you will actually be playing a form of bridge before the end of this first class.
  - Yet playing bridge well is something that is incredibly complex. Your bridge abilities will improve with each club meeting; yet, no matter how much your game improves, you will always have new bridge skills to learn that will improve your game even more.
The teacher can allow that students will come to the bridge club with varying objectives:
  - Some might be looking to learn an activity to enjoy socially with friends and family.
  - Some will be looking to compete in bridge against others and to achieve the intellectual challenge of growing bridge skills as much as possible.
  - The bridge club will help accomplish either objective, or an objective in between.

The teacher will configure the classroom for tables of four players:
  - Because bridge is a game for four people, ask the students to arrange desks so that there is room for four players to sit around the desks, as if each of the four players were the point on a compass.
  - Also ask each student to turn their chair so that the student is looking toward the teacher.

The teacher will describe a bridge hand.
  - As students arrange their tables and chairs as described, give each student a pre-sorted bridge hand from a duplicate board. [See below for a construct of the four hands.] South should be the player closest to the teacher.
  - Announce that the bridge hand given has been pre-sorted; normally one player would have to shuffle a deck of cards and distribute the cards to each of the four players.
  - Possible pre-sorted bridge hand to be distributed:

```
North
♠ K6
♥ T842
♦ AQ83
♣ 972

West
♠ AQ952
♥ J
♦ J9754
♣ QT

East
♠ T743
♥ 753
♦ K6
♣ A864

South
♠ J8
♥ AKQ96
♦ T2
♣ KJ53
```

  - See exhibit for above deal.
  - Note that the bridge hand given has thirteen cards. That will always be the case at the beginning of each bridge hand. The number 13 is a key number in bridge.
  - Show how to hold the thirteen cards in a way so that the player can see each of the thirteen cards. For many people this is hard. If it is hard to hold or “fan” cards so that all thirteen of the cards can be seen, do not worry. For next class, consider bringing an empty aluminum foil box with the top lid positioned so that cards can be placed between
the top lid and the side. Just be sure to tape over the serrated edge, so that no one is injured by being cut.

- Note also that the thirteen cards given are sorted two ways.
  - The first way the cards are suited is by **suit**. [Show the four suits in a deck of cards.] Because two of the suits are black – spades and clubs – and two of the suits are red – hearts and diamonds – a player typically sorts his hand by alternating suit colors, so that two black suits are not next to each other and two red suits are not next to each other. Alternating the suit colors makes it easier to not confuse one suit with another.
  - The second way the cards are suited is by **rank**. Each of the four suits has 13 cards – ah, there is that number 13 again. [Show the thirteen cards in a suit arranged in order from highest to lowest.]
    - The highest card in each suit is the Ace. Then the king, the queen, the jack, and the ten. These top five cards in a suit are collectively referred to as **honor cards**.
    - The rest of the cards in a suit, the cards from a nine to a two, are referred to as **spot cards**.

- Note that each of the other four players at the table are also dealt 13 cards, so that all 52 cards in a deck (jokers aren’t used) have been dealt. If the cards had not been pre-sorted, one player would have dealt out 52 cards, one card at a time to each of the four players, face down. Before play begins, each player could check to see that he was dealt exactly 13 cards. Only when each player has counted to 13 cards would that player actually look at the face side of his cards and sort them by suit and by rank.

- The teacher can introduce the concepts of four players playing as two partnerships:
  - Students were asked to organize tables so that each player was aligned as if sitting at a point on a compass. In bridge, we actually refer to each player by a position on the compass. In this case, the player sitting closest to me is the South player. The player sitting across from the South player is the North player. The player sitting to the left of the North player is the East player. And the player sitting across from the East player is the West player.
  - Who is sitting across from you is important, because that player is your partner. At a bridge table, one partnership, the **North-South partnership**, is competing against another partnership, the **East-West partnership**. You and your partner are working together toward the same goal.

- The teacher can demonstrate how a trick is played and who wins a trick:
  - The teacher can ask each student to place all thirteen of the student’s cards on the table at a position immediately in front of the student; not at the center of the table, but right in front of the student; i.e, playing “open handed”.
  - The teacher can tell the students that when they are really playing bridge, rather than being shown this illustration, the student will not show cards to the opponents or to partner. But playing “open handed” now will help demonstrate some key elements of bridge.
The teacher can tell the students that bridge is a game of **tricks**. Ask the students if anyone has played other trick-taking card games such as hearts or spades or euchre, or even War. Even if the student has not played a trick-taking card game before, very soon the student will understand what is meant by a trick when the first trick is demonstrated.

The objective in bridge is to win lots of tricks. Because bridge is a partnership game, what should be said is that the objective in bridge is for your partnership to win lots of tricks; it makes no difference how many of those tricks are won by you and how many by your partner.

The teacher can begin to teach the technical rules of bridge by illustrating the first trick.

- The teacher can ask the South players to take the ace of hearts from their thirteen cards and place the ace of hearts (duplicate style) just slightly in front of the rest of their cards, toward the center of the tables, but not at the center of the table. In bridge language, South has **led** the ace of hearts to the first trick.
- One rule of bridge is that the **play progresses in the clockwise direction**. Thus the player who plays a card to the first trick after South has played the ace of hearts is the West player. Then the North player plays a card and then the first trick is completed by the East player playing a card. Always, one card at a time to a trick and always in the clockwise order.
- Given that South has led the ace of hearts to the first trick, what card should West play to the first trick? Well, another rule of bridge is that each of the other three players needs to **follow suit**; that is, play to a trick a card of the same suit as the suit that was led to that trick. Because the card that was led by South was a heart, each of the other three players has to play a heart to the trick. What card will West play to this trick? [Await answer.] Because West has only one heart, West has to play the Jack of hearts to the first trick.
- North is the next player to play to the first trick and North also has to follow suit by playing a heart at Trick 1. Which heart should North play? Well, North’s partner, South, has played the ace of hearts and since that card is the highest ranking heart in the deck, North knows that his partner South is going to win the trick. Accordingly, North would choose to play his lowest-ranking heart, the heart that is least likely to win a trick later in the hand. What heart should North play to this trick? [Await answer.] North plays the two of hearts.
- Now East has to play. What card do you think East should play to Trick 1? [Await answer.]
- That completes Trick 1. Which partnership won Trick 1? Why? [Await answer.] Given that Trick 1 is completed and that the N-S partnership won the first trick, each of the four players should turn over their card played at Trick 1 and turn that card so that the long sides of the card are pointed toward the N-S partnership and not toward the E-W partnership.
Another rule of bridge is that the player who won the last trick leads to the succeeding trick. Since South won Trick 1, this means that South gets to lead to Trick 2. Playing the top ranking heart of the ace of hearts worked pretty well for the N-S partnership at Trick 1, so let’s have South, from the twelve cards he can lead from now, lead another card that is the highest-ranking heart at Trick 2. What is the highest-ranking heart not yet played through Trick 1? [Await answer.] OK, South, please now lead the King of hearts at Trick 2, placing it face up next to the face down card played at Trick 1.

Whose turn is it to play next? [Await answer.] What suit must West play to Trick 2? [Await answer.] Correct. West must play a heart. Just one problem with that; what is the problem? [Await answer that West has no hearts among his remaining twelve cards.] West still has to play a card to Trick 2, but because he has no heart cards to play to Trick 2, he has to play a card in another suit. In bridge language, we call the play of a card to a trick that is in a different suit from the suit that was led to that trick a discard. If a player has to discard on a trick, that player will not win the trick; instead the trick is won by the player who plays the highest-ranking card in the suit that was led to that trick; here that suit is hearts. West has twelve cards remaining, any one of which he could choose to discard. What do you think about West maybe discarding the ace of spades? Is that a good idea? [Await answer.] Because the ace is the highest ranking card in the spade suit, the ace of spades is sure to win a trick whenever a spade is led to a later trick. So, West should want to keep the ace of spades. What do you think about West maybe discarding the two of spades instead? [Await answer.]

What card might North play to Trick 2? [Await answer.] Note that the suit to which North must follow is the suit led to the trick (meaning hearts) and not the suit discarded by the player playing before North. How does North feel about playing the four of hearts on this trick? [Await answer that North is happy to play the four of hearts, because his partnership is going to win this trick.] What card might East play to Trick 2? [Await answer.]

Who won Trick 2? [Await answer.] Now that Trick 2 is over, what are you going to do to the card that you played to Trick 2? [Await answer.]

How many tricks will there be in a hand by the time each and every card has been played? [Await answer.] There’s that number 13 again! If the N-S partnership wins 8 of the tricks, then how many tricks were won by the E-W partnership? [Await answer.]

Have the students turn their seats so as to face the center of the bridge table.
• Distribute a duplicate board with unsorted hands to each table.
  o Ensure that each student takes the cards out of the board keeping them face down.
  o Next ensure that each player counts to make sure he was dealt exactly thirteen cards, and
    next sorts his hand by suit (alternating red and black suits) and, within suit, by rank.
  o Ensure that each student holds his cards so that all thirteen can be seen by the holder (if
    possible), but not by other players. The cards are not to be open-faced.
  o Designate the player to the left of the dealer to be the opening leader.
    ▪ There will be no dummy hand
    ▪ There will be no contract
    ▪ Each pair will still act as a partnership in winning and counting tricks
    ▪ Play will be in notrump
  o Ensure thereafter that play proceeds in clockwise order, and that each student follows suit
    if he can.
  o See if the students can determine who wins each trick and turns the trick in the proper
    direction.
  o As each trick is completed, be sure the students correctly determine who leads to the next
    trick.
  o After the last card has been played, ask one person from each partnership to count the
    number of tricks won by his side. And check that the total number of tricks won equals
    13.
Lesson 2 – Contract for Tricks: Roles of Declarer, Dummy, and Defenders

Objectives:
- to understand the objective of the bridge club, including:
  - overall goal of the bridge club
  - the standard itinerary for each session
  - expectations for class conduct
- to introduce all student and adult members, if necessary
- to understand that bridge includes not only technical rules but also a code of ethics and good behavior
- to understand what means a bridge contract
- to understand that one partnership (the declarer partnership) has an objective of winning the number of tricks to satisfy the contract and that the other partnership (the defenders partnership) has an objective of winning the number of tricks to ensure that the contract is defeated. This is a change from the prior objective of winning as many tricks as possible.
- to understand the concept of dummy, and thus to redefine how the opening leader is determined.

Note that contracts are defined as number of tricks, and not yet as X+6.
Note that all contracts will continue to be notrump contracts, with suit contracts not to be introduced until later.

Teaching steps:
- Share the overall goal for the bridge club: for students to enjoy learning and playing bridge
- Discuss the standard itinerary for each session: first will be a short lesson, usually no longer than ten-fifteen minutes in duration; and following the lesson plan, the students will play bridge at tables of four, typically with a monitor present to remind them to follow the basic rules and to reinforce the content of past lesson plans.
  - Each lesson plan is designed to help you learn to select each card to play with a purpose, to help you develop a plan to win more tricks and teach you techniques to fulfill that plan. Most lesson plans are presented with a visual aid [show one of the flowcharts]. You will later be given a folder organizing the visual aids so that you can, if you choose, reference the aid in choosing an action during the play portion of the bridge club session.
  - For the play portion of the bridge club session, students will break into tables of four, where you will have the help of a table supervisor (might not be true at all club locations). Recognizing that you have differing amounts of experience at bridge, you will be asked to seek out a table of four with similar experience. That way, if you want to do something that will be covered by a lesson that has not yet been presented – say, playing in a suit contract or using bidding – you can, without overwhelming a player who does not yet have that experience. One caveat: we will not tolerate exclusionary behavior when it comes time to break out to tables of four. No player should be rejected by other members of that table. Not always will the number of students be divisible by four and so sometimes five students will have to rotate in and out at a table of four.
• Discuss how students are expected to conduct themselves
  o Bridge club is an after-school activity and not a during-school activity. You are here to have fun and there is no homework and no grades. Mostly, what is asked of you is respect.
    ▪ Respect the school property and the bridge club property. Leave the classroom in at least as good a condition as it was when the session began: place desks and chairs in their previous locations; avoid any actions that will make the classroom less effective for the school teacher who teaches in the classroom.
    ▪ Respect fellow students by avoiding criticism, chortling or exclusionary actions.
    ▪ Respect the adult volunteers. During the lesson portion, this means avoiding non-bridge distractions (conducting non-bridge discussions, using mobile devices, etc.). During the play portion, this means listening to the directions and advice of the table supervisors.
• Introduce the students and adult volunteers.
• Review the basic technical rules learned the previous lesson: objective of winning tricks as a partnership, how a trick is won (remembering following to the suit that is led and the rank of cards in the suit led to a trick – that’s why when you sort your hand you separate one suit from another and you place your cards within a suit in rank order), and who plays next when a trick is won.
• In addition to following technical rules, bridge players must also follow ethical rules and should try to follow some common courtesies:
  o You cannot communicate with your partner by something that you say or by facial expression or other gesture. That would be a violation of ethics, and bridge is a game that abides by ethics. As ethics are being violated, acknowledge that maintaining good ethics is hard, but it is important to ensure that the game is being played fairly. The teacher might consider referring to the ethics of other games, such as sports, in order to present better known analogies.
  o A good partner is one who is supportive of his partner and who is respectful to members of the opposing partnership. As stated earlier, criticism and chortling are both discouraged.
  o Bridge players should also follow some common courtesies at the table. Some of these courtesies relate to the way cards are played: detach and play a card only when it is your turn, fully detach a played card and place it in a flat position on the table so that other players have an unobstructed view of the card, keep your card face up until the last of the four players has played to the trick.
• In the last lesson you played deals of bridge where you counted the number of tricks won by each partnership. You might have noticed that the partnership likely to have won the most tricks was the partnership that was lucky enough to have been dealt more than their fair share of honor cards (aces, kings, queens, jacks, and tens). Today, you will learn how to limit the impact of luck.
• Rather than focus just on how many of the 13 available tricks each partnership can win, we are going to give one partnership a target. Let’s say that on one particular deal, the N-S partnership was dealt more high cards than was the E-W partnership. Let’s set a target is for the N-S partnership to take 9 of the 13 tricks. In bridge language, we say that the N-S partnership has a contract to win (or “take”) nine tricks.
• The N-S partnership will have a plus score on a deal (don’t worry yet about how the score is calculated) if N-S wins at least 9 tricks. The E-W partnership will have a plus score on a deal if N-S makes fewer than 9 tricks. How many tricks must E-W win in order to keep N-S from winning 9 tricks? [Await an answer.]

• Some more bridge language comes about when there is a contract. For the partnership that is trying to defeat a contract – E-W in our example – we call each of the partners a **defender**. For the partnership trying to make a contract – N-S in our example – we call one of the partners the **declarer** and the other of the partners the **dummy**. In a few moments you will learn why the term dummy is used; it has nothing to do with how smart or articulate is that partner. On this deal, let’s say that North is the declarer, and thus that South is the dummy.

• Knowing which player is declarer also determines which player makes the lead to Trick 1; that is, who is the **opening leader**. The opening leader is the defender who is to the left of the declarer.

• Let’s get back to the partner of the declarer, the dummy. The way you are learning now, the dummy actually places all of his cards on the table – so that they can be seen by the other three players – before the opening lead is made. This means that each of the other three players can now see not only the 13 cards that are in their hand but also the 13 cards that are in the dummy hand.

• Once the opening lead is made by the player to the left of the declarer, the next card is played, in normal clockwise progression, from the dummy hand. But dummy does not determine which card is played to the first trick, or to subsequent tricks. Instead the declarer tells the dummy which card to play and the dummy is obligated to play that card. Some courtesies relate to the way that declarer calls for cards from dummy: declarer should thank dummy once dummy exposes his cards, and when declarer calls for a card from dummy, declarer should refer to the rank and suit of the card declarer wants dummy to play. The player is called the dummy because the player acts solely to obey the directions of the declarer.

• For this lesson, a note on the duplicate board will tell you the number of tricks required to make the contract and will identify the declarer. That will change next week.

• Have the students break into tables of four players. Distribute a duplicate board with unsorted hands to each table; the duplicate board should include a note naming the contract (e.g., win nine tricks) and identifying the declarer.

• See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
Lesson 3 – Introduction to Mini-Bridge and Bridge Scoring

Objectives:
- to learn to count HCP
- to learn mini-bridge rules:
  - to determine who is declarer
  - to determine the level of the contract
- to learn that bridge is scored, with bonuses for contracting for nine tricks (game), twelve tricks (small slam), and thirteen tricks (grand slam) … and then making at least the contracted number of tricks
- to learn the bridge language for contracts (for example, that a contract to take 9 tricks with no trump suit is referred to as 3NT)

Teaching steps:
- Last lesson, you learned about declarer having a contract for a specified number of tricks. The contract and the declarer were noted on the duplicate board.
- This lesson, you will learn how to determine the contract and identify the declarer on your own.
- Before that happens, tell the students that bridge players customarily refer to contracts not by the number of tricks needed to make a contract (say, nine tricks) but rather by linking two words:
  - The first word is the number of tricks contracted for, minus 6. Thus, a contract to win nine tricks is not called “nine” but is rather called “three”. The “minus 6” is because the first six tricks won in a contract are called the “book”. Accordingly, contracting to make “one” is contracting to win the book of 6 tricks, plus one, or 7 of the 13 possible tricks. We call this number – one in this example – the “level” of the contract.
  - The second word is the trump suit. Because for now all of the contracts are contracts with no trump suit – trumps will be introduced later – a contract to make nine tricks with no trump suit is simply called 3NT. We call this word – notrump in this example – the “suit” of the contract, although a more appropriate, but lesser used, word is the “strain” of the contract.
  - How many tricks would you have to win to make a contract of 1NT? [Await answer.] To make a contract of 6NT? [Await answer.]
- Reference the Mini-Bridge Instructions and Table #1 and pass it out. You know that aces are more powerful than kings, which are more powerful than queens, etc. We can approximate measuring that power by assigning points (“high card points” … generally shortened in writing to “HCP”) to each high card in the deck (A = 4; K = 3; Q = 2; J = 1; all others = 0)
  - How many HCP in each suit (10)?
  - How many HCP in a deck (40)?
  - How many HCP for one partnership to own more HCP than the opposing partnership (21 or more)?
  - Given that there are 40 HCP in each deal and 13 tricks in each deal, about how many HCP do you think might win 1 trick? [Await answer.] About 3 HCP. 40/13 = just very slightly more than 3. You will notice that the contract determination of the mini-bridge table does assign about 3 points to each trick: if your partnership has about 24 HCP, the
table assigns you a contract to win 8 tricks; if your partnership has about 36 HCP, the table assigns you a contract of 6NT, etc.

- Notice on the mini-bridge table that certain contracts are emboldened. Contracting for, and then making, an emboldened contract earns your partnership a big scoring bonus. The scoring bonuses include a bonus for a game (3NT = nine tricks at notrump contract; also available for contracts of 4NT or 5NT), and additional bonuses for a small slam (6NT = twelve tricks) or a grand slam (7NT = all thirteen tricks). Of course, if you contract for a bonus level contract and then you do not make your contract, you will earn a minus score: that is part of the reward and risk of bridge!

- You can calculate your score by referring to the **Duplicate Bridge Scoring flowcharts**. (Handout the flowchart.)

- Have the students break into tables of four players. Distribute a duplicate board with unsorted hands to each table.
- See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
Mini-Bridge Instructions and Table #1

- Deal all 52 cards in clockwise order, beginning on dealer’s left. (Or receive 13 cards from a duplicate board.)
- After the cards are dealt, each player should count their cards face down, checking that total is 13.
- Each player should sort their cards by suit, alternating red and black suits, and by rank.
- Each player should announce their HCP (High Card Points), in clockwise order beginning with the dealer, and accumulate the HCP, checking that the total for all 4 players is 40.
- The partnership with the highest combined HCP will be the declaring partnership; in the case of each side having 20 HCP, the declaring partnership will be the dealer’s partnership. The declaring partnership should use the chart below to denominate the contract.
- The player named as declarer will be the member of the declaring partnership with the higher number of HCP; in the case of each partner of the declaring partnership owning the same number of HCP, the declarer will be the dealer or the player immediately to the left of the dealer.
- Declarer uses the chart below to determine the final contract, based upon declaration partnership’s combined HCP. An emboldened contract that is satisfied by declarer produces a game bonus. A six or seven level contract that is satisfied by declarer produces a small slam or grand slam bonus, in addition to the game bonus.
- Dummy is displayed before the opening lead is made.
- Optional: Declarer has the option, before the opening lead is made, to announce an increase to the contract to a game or slam level contract.

### Counting HCP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Card</th>
<th>HCP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ace</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queen</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Combined HCP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Combined HCP</th>
<th>Contract (with bonuses for games and slams in bold)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-21 HCP</td>
<td>1NT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-24 HCP</td>
<td>2NT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-27 HCP</td>
<td>3NT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28-30 HCP</td>
<td>4NT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-33 HCP</td>
<td>5NT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34-36 HCP</td>
<td>6NT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37+ HCP</td>
<td>7NT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Remember: the number of won tricks required for declarer to satisfy (“make”) a contract is 6 plus the number in the contract. For example, to make a contract of 3NT, declarer must win at least 9 tricks (6+3).
Duplicate Bridge Scoring for Notrump Part Scores and Game Contracts
(Undoubled and Not Vulnerable)

Is the final contract a game contract?

No

Scoring for a part score (or "partial")

Was the contract made?

Yes

Score +50 for making a partial

Also score for each trick won (over 6):

For notrump contracts, score +40 for first trick won, +30 for each other trick won

No

Score -50 for each undertrick

Was the contract made?

Yes

Score +300 for game bonus

Also score for each trick won (over 6):

For notrump contracts, score +40 for first trick won, +30 for each other trick won

No

Score -50 for each undertrick
Lesson 4 – Winning Notrump Tricks with Top Cards

Objectives:
- to understand how to win tricks with top cards in a suit
- to understand importance of counting tricks
- to understand how to avoid blocking a suit
- to understand the importance of entries to a hand with good tricks awaiting

Teaching steps:
- Tell the students that to date, you have been learning the rules for how to play mini-bridge. But we hope you aspire to a more ambitious goal: not only to learn the rules of play, but also to learn to play well.
- *(Show first exhibit.)* To play well, you need to begin every bridge hand that you declare with a plan. When dummy is displayed, declarer needs to determine how he expects to win the number of tricks for which he has contracted; that is, how he expects to make his contract. (Similarly, the defenders need to determine how many tricks declarer can win, so that they can develop a plan to keep the declarer from making his contract. For teaching/learning purposes, the focus will, at this time, be on the planning from the perspective of declarer.)
- The first step in declarer’s plan is to count the number of top tricks declarer’s side can win. A “top trick” is defined as a trick declarer can win without giving up the lead. To learn to count the number of top tricks, you will be shown some “card combinations”. Using card combinations is an approach that will be used regularly to illustrate techniques for taking more tricks with the cards you are dealt.
- *(Show next exhibit.)* The teacher should layout the following card combinations in a suit and ask the students how many top tricks the partnership can win with:
  - AKQ opposite 432 (3)
  - AQ4 opposite K82 (also 3)
  - AKQ opposite J32 (still 3)
  - AKQ opposite 2 (still 3, but with two discards)
  - AK opposite Q9 (only 2)
  - KQJ opposite 865 (0, because lead can be lost to the ace)
- As each new card combination is shown, point out why the number of top tricks differs from one to the next or, if the number does not differ, why.
- *(Show next exhibit, and then the two after.)* Present the first of the two 26-card layouts that follow, introducing the concepts (and bridge language) of transportation and to generally avoid blocking a suit by playing a suit in an order such that the high cards from the shorter hand in that suit are played before the high cards from the longer hand in that suit are played. For the first hand, this means playing the ♠Q before playing the ♠AKJ.
- *(Show next exhibit.)* The terms “transportation” and “entry” are related to one another and are illustrated on this page by these two two-card card combinations held by the partnership: AK opposite 32 and A3 opposite K2.
• *(Show next exhibit, and then the two after.*) Present the second of the two 26-card layouts. Note that this hand requires not only playing the ♠AKQ early (high cards from the short hand first) but also winning the first trick with the ♠A, so that a spade entry to dummy is preserved to enable you to win the ♠JT.

• Have the students break into tables of four players. Distribute a duplicate board with unsorted hands to each table. [See Kantar, Introduction to Declarer’s Play, p.7(a), www.kantarbridge.com]. (Have diamonds split 4-0.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dummy</th>
<th>Declarer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>♠ KQ3</td>
<td>♠ A4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♥ AJ</td>
<td>♥ KQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ AJ76</td>
<td>♦ KQ832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♣ K432</td>
<td>♣ A765</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
Develop a Plan for Each Deal

- For each deal that declarer plays, declarer should develop a plan to win the contracted number of tricks.

- The first steps in developing a plan:
  
  - Know your trick target: how many tricks you must win to make your contract
  
  - Compare your trick target to your count of top trick winners (suit by suit)
Winning Top Tricks

AKQ     432

AQ4     K32

AKQ     J32

AKQ     2

AK      Q9

KQJ     865

How many top tricks can your partnership win when you and your partner hold each of the above card combinations?
You are sitting South, declaring a contract of 3NT (enough for a game bonus). The opening lead is the ♥Q.

1. How many tricks do you need to make your contract?

2. Count your top tricks, suit by suit. Compare the count to the number of tricks needed to make the contract.

3. What special care is required to ensure that you can win all of your top tricks in the spade suit?
This is the position if South wins the ♥A and then leads the ♠3 to North’s ♠A.

Declarer has won the first two tricks. How many more spade tricks can declarer win? How many top tricks in total can declarer win?
Alternatively, this is the position if South wins the ♥A and then plays the ♠Q and North’s ♠2.

Declarer has won the first two tricks. How many more spade tricks can declarer win? How many top tricks in total can declarer win?

**Guideline:** Play the top cards from the short side first. (In bridge language, this is called “unblocking” a suit, and is used to retain “transportation” between hands of the partners.)
Transportation and Entry

Each of these terms are related, and can be illustrated below:

```
A K
N W E
S 3 2
```

```
A 3
N W E
S K 2
```

“Transportation” (or “communication”, a synonymous term) is the ability to get from one hand to another. In the first example, the partnership has “transportation” from the South hand to the North hand, but has no transportation from the North hand to the South hand. In the second example, the partnership has transportation between both hands.

“Entry” is the card used to get from one hand to another. In the first example, the A and K are “entries” to the North hand; the 3 and 2 are not entries to the South hand. In the second example, the A is an entry to the North hand and the K is an entry to the South hand. North’s 3 and South’s 2 are not entries.

Each of these terms can refer to a deal as a whole or (as above) to only one particular suit in the deal.

In the previous hand, “unblocking” the ♠Q allowed South to retain transportation to win a third spade trick in North, to add to the spade trick won by South’s ♠Q.
You are sitting South, declaring a contract of 3NT (enough for a game bonus). The opening lead is the ♠J.

1. How many tricks do you need to make your contract?

2. Count your top tricks, suit by suit. Compare the count to the number of tricks needed to make the contract.

3. What special care is required to ensure that you can win all of your top tricks in the club suit?
This is the position when South follows suit with the ♠2, and, remembering the previous guideline to play the top cards from the short side first, immediately plays the three top clubs from the South hand.

Declarer’s side has won the first four tricks. How many more club tricks can declarer win? How many top tricks in total can South win?
Alternatively, this is the position when South follows suit with the ♠A, and, remembering the previous guideline to play the top cards from the short side first, immediately plays the three top clubs from the South hand.

Declarer’s side has won the first four tricks. How many more club tricks can declarer win? How many top tricks in total can South win?

**Guideline:** Preserve entries to your good tricks.
Lesson 5 – Developing Notrump Tricks by Promotion from Strength

Objectives:
- to understand how not-quite high cards can be promoted into winning tricks, after higher cards in the suit have been played (promotion from strength)
- to understand the importance of playing to develop tricks before playing top tricks

Handout: at beginning of class, consider handing out the flowchart(s) reproduced at end of this lesson plan. Note that these flowcharts will be updated to reflect both what was learned in prior lessons and – the highlighted part – what is being learned in the current lesson. Students will eventually learn each of many ways/branches for developing more winners. Thus, the flowchart will act as sort of a road map to a common theme of techniques you can use to develop more winners when playing a notrump contract. To help remind you of all the techniques you have learned that are available to you to develop more winners, you can keep a copy of the document at your table.

Teaching steps:
- **(Show first exhibit.)** Layout the following card combinations in a suit and ask the students how many top tricks the partnership can win and how many not-top tricks the partnership can win:
  - QT54 opposite KJ32 (0 top, 3 not-top)
  - Q3 opposite KJT2 (which card to play first?) (also 0, 3)
  - QJ54 opposite T932 (0, 2)
  - QJ95 opposite T6 (which card to play first?) (0, 2)
- As each new card combination is shown, point out how the partnership needs to lose some tricks in the suit in order to win the number of tricks. And since you are probably going to lose tricks to the A or AK anyway, why not get a return from the near-inevitable loss of those tricks by establishing your Q’s, J’s, T’s?
- Indicate why (the unavoidable) losing of the top tricks can be attractive by developing not-quite high cards into tricks. This process is called developing more winners by **promotion** or **promotion from strength**.
- For unequally distributed card combinations above (“unequal” meaning that dummy and declarer have a different number of cards in the suit), when there are high cards in each hand, remind the students of the potential benefit of playing high cards from the short hand before high cards from the long hand.
- Present the two 26-card layouts that follow, focusing on the concept (and bridge language) mentioned below.
  - **(Show next exhibit, and then the two after.)** On the first hand, establish the (general) play guideline: **develop tricks before playing top tricks**. Focus on playing the diamond suit, which has no top tricks, so that after the ace of diamonds – an unavoidable loser for declarer – is played by the opponents, declarer has promoted three more winning tricks from the diamond suit. The diamond suit should be played at Trick 2 and continued until the ace of diamonds has been played by the opponents. That way, declarer has established enough tricks to make his contract and retains the top cards in the non-diamond suits. If, instead, declarer plays the top tricks in the suits other than diamonds before developing tricks in diamonds, the opponents might win not only the ace of
diamonds but also a long card or more in any of the other suits. (Consider showing an opponent’s hand of 4=4=1=4 distribution with the ♦A, to help emphasize how declarer, if playing top tricks before developing tricks, can be held to nine tricks … while, if developing top tricks before playing top tricks, will win twelve tricks!)

(Show next exhibit.) On the second hand, focus on the card combination in the spade suit. With declarer’s side owning the AJT, the only higher cards are the KQ. Show how, once a spade has been led by the opponents, no matter where lie the KQ, a second spade trick will be promoted as a winner for declarer (provided that a small card is played from dummy at Trick 1).

- Have the students break into tables of four players. Distribute a duplicate board with unsorted hands to each table. [See Kantar, Introduction to Declarer’s Play, p.14(b), www.kantarbridge.com]. (Contract is 3NT. Opening lead is ♠J.)

**Dummy**
- ♠ AK5
- ♥ 32
- ♦ A765
- ♣ 5432

**Declarer**
- ♠ Q7
- ♥ QJT9
- ♦ K432
- ♣ AK6

- See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
Winning Tricks by Promotion from Strength

QT54        KJ32
Q3          KJT2
QJ54        T932
QJ95        T6

1. How many top tricks can your partnership win when you and your partner hold each of the above card combinations?

2. How many not-top tricks can your partnership win when you and your partner hold each of the above card combinations?

3. For the card combinations that are “unequally distributed”, what special care must you often take to win the non-top tricks?
You are sitting South, declaring a contract of 6NT (with small slam scoring bonus!) The opening lead is the ♣J.

1. How many tricks do you need to make your contract?

2. Count your top tricks, suit by suit. Compare the count to the number of tricks needed to make the contract.

3. What suit might help produce extra winning tricks? When should you begin playing that suit?
This is the position when South chooses to win the first nine tricks by playing top card winners in spades, hearts, and clubs before playing the diamond suit.

When South plays the diamond suit and an opponent wins the ♦A, what suit will the opponent play next? (Hint: not diamonds!) Will declarer or the opponents win that next trick?
Alternatively, this is the position when South plays the diamond suit after winning the first trick and an opponent wins the ♦A. Does it matter what suit will the opponent play next? Will declarer or the opponents win that next trick?

**Guideline:** Play to develop more winners before playing top tricks.
You are sitting South, declaring a contract of 3NT. The opening lead is the ♠4.

1. How many tricks do you need to make your contract?

2. Count your top tricks, suit by suit. Compare the count to the number of tricks needed to make the contract.

3. What suit might help produce extra winning tricks? How quickly might a suit begin to produce an extra trick? (Difficult question.)
Planning the Play in a Notrump Contract

- Know your trick target
- Count your winners (suit by suit), starting with top tricks
- Play to develop more winners before playing top tricks
- Develop more winners for you
- By promotion from strength ...
- Preserve enough entries*
- Play to force out opponents' high cards in the suits in which your side owns the not-quite-high cards

* including consideration of ...
  1. playing high cards from short hand first, to avoid blocking a suit
Lesson 6 – Developing Notrump Tricks by Establishment of Length

Objectives:
- to understand how small cards can become established as winning tricks (establishment of length), based upon how the cards held by the opponents happen to be distributed
- to understand the importance of counting the cards played in a particular suit
- to understand the importance of ducking a trick in order to preserve an entry

Handout: at beginning of class, consider handing out the flowchart(s) reproduced at end of this lesson plan

Teaching steps:
- Review past sections of the document “Planning the Play in a Notrump Contract”, with a motivation of learning how to declare a notrump contract with a plan, and to choose to play cards purposefully to fulfill that plan:
  - Plan begins before playing from dummy at Trick 1, to include noting the number of tricks needed to satisfy the contract, a count of the number of top tricks that can be won, and a check on preserving entries to be able to win that number of top tricks
  - Plan continues with ascertaining how many additional winning tricks you need to develop, choosing which techniques (i.e., which branch of the flow chart) to follow to develop the additional winning tricks, and understanding that you need to work on developing the additional winning tricks before you work on winning the top tricks.
  - So far, you have learned one of the techniques for developing additional winning tricks – by promotion from strength --; today you will learn about another technique for developing additional winning tricks – by establishment of length.
- (Show first exhibit.) Layout the following card combinations in a suit and ask the students how many top tricks the partnership can win and how many not-top tricks the partnership can win:
  - K654 opposite AQ2 (3, maybe 1)
  - AK76 opposite 5432 (2, maybe 1)
  - AK432 opposite 765 (0, maybe 3)
  - KQJ4 opposite 753 (2, maybe 3)
- As each new card combination is shown:
  - explain why the number of not-top tricks in a suit is dependent upon the distribution of the suit in the opposing hands, demonstrating various suit splits (or suit breaks)
  - introduce (or review) discussion of the following bridge play concepts:
    - counting card length in a suit: your side’s original card length, the opposing side’s original card length (“13 minus …”), the opposing side’s remaining card length
    - playing high card(s) from the short side before high card(s) from the long side, when the card length is unequally distributed between your side’s two hands
  - Anytime either your hand or dummy’s hand has more length in a suit than any other hand at the table, there is a possibility that you can develop additional winning tricks by establishment of length
• Present the two 26-card layouts hands below, focusing on the concept (and bridge language) mentioned below.
  
  o (Show next exhibit, and then two after.) On the first hand, the concept is a player thinking of not only the winning tricks of the player’s side, but also the potential winning tricks of the opponent’s side. For this hand, this means not playing diamonds, where you will have to lose the lead three times in order to establish an extra diamond trick and the opponents might have won not only three diamond tricks but also some tricks with their long spades … but rather playing clubs, where you can hope that the missing six cards are split 3-3 and thus that you will have to lose the lead only once (on the third round of clubs) before establishing by length a winning trick of the ♣6 (while preserving the ♠A as an entry to win the ♣6). With respect to question 3, about when the club suit should be played, review the need to play to develop tricks before playing top tricks. With respect to question 4, about which suit is least attractive for declarer to attack had the opponents led hearts, the answer is spades: because spades is the suit most likely to establish winning tricks by length for the opponents.)
  
  o (Show next exhibit, and then two after.) On the second hand, the concept is “ducking” to take advantage of a favorable suit break in order to win extra tricks from long cards in a suit when there are not many entries to the hand with the long cards in the suit. With respect to question 3, about when the club suit should be played, review the need to play to develop tricks before playing top tricks. Note that “ducking” is a special form of “preserving entries”. Here, the reason for the ducking play in the club suit is to preserve entries to the fourth, fifth, and sixth (small) clubs. The three small clubs are winners you have developed by “establishment of length”.

• After the hands are presented, relate the establishment of small cards as winners to the frequent strategy for winning tricks in a notrump contract (and making the opening lead in defense of a notrump contract); that is, that notrump contracts often are decided by who wins the race to establish small cards in their long suit, the defenders or the declarer. Highlight that the race is not to see who can first cash their aces and kings – those tricks will often be there later – but who can establish as winners the small cards in long suits.
• Have the students break into tables of four players. Distribute a duplicate board with unsorted hands to each table. [See Kantar, Introduction to Declarer’s Play, p.22a, www.kantarbridge.com]. (Contract is 3NT. Opening lead is ♠J.)

**Dummy**

♠ 32  
♥ A43  
♦ A9876  
♣ 432

**Declarer**

♠ AK4  
♥ K52  
♦ K432  
♣ A76

• See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
Winning Tricks by Establishment of Length

K654      AQ2

AK76      5432

AK432     765

KQJ4      753

1. How many top tricks can your partnership win when you and your partner hold each of the above card combinations?

2. How many not-top tricks can your partnership promote from strength, for each card combination above?

3. Winning tricks by establishment of length in a suit depends upon how the opponents’ cards in the suit are split. For each card combination above:
   a. How many cards were the opponents dealt in the suit?
   b. What “suit split” will allow your partnership to win the extra tricks?
   c. How do you determine how the suit has split?

Guideline: Count the number of cards played by opponents in a key suit (including discards of that suit)
You are sitting South, declaring a contract of 3NT. The opening lead is the ♠J.

1. Count your top tricks, suit by suit. Compare the count to the number of tricks needed to make the contract.

2. What suits might help produce an extra winning trick? Is there a reason to choose one of those suits over the other?

3. When would you begin to play the suit that you hope might produce an extra winning trick?

4. Let’s say that the opponents had led a heart instead of a spade. Which suit would be least attractive for you to try to develop extra winners?
This could be the position if you play the diamond suit when you are in the lead and the opponents play another spade when they are in the lead with a diamond.

In this position, after you have won the ♠A, how many tricks can you now win in addition to the two spade tricks you have won? If you lead a diamond now, in order to continue developing the ♦8 into your ninth trick by promotion of strength, how many diamond tricks and spade tricks might the opponents win?
Alternatively, this could be the position if you play ♣A, then ♣K and then ♣2 when you are in the lead (the club suit splitting 3-3 … you counted!) and the opponents play another spade when they are in the lead with the third round of clubs.

In this position, after you have won the ♠A, how many tricks can you now win in addition to the two spade tricks and two club tricks you have won?

**Guideline:** Count not only your winners, but also the opponents’ possible winners.
You are sitting South, declaring a contract of 3NT. The opening lead is the ♣Q.

1. Count your top tricks, suit by suit. Compare the count to the number of tricks needed to make the contract.

2. The long club suit seems to offer some opportunities for developing extra winners by establishment of length. When would you begin to play the club suit?

3. Considering the lack of entries to the North hand, how should you play that suit to develop extra winners and retain transportation to those winners?
This will be the position if you win the spade lead and then play ♠A, then ♠K and then ♠3 (the club suit splitting 3-2).

The opponents return another spade which you win with the ♠A.

The three clubs in the North hand are winners, having been established by length.

What is your entry to such winners?
Alternatively, this will be the position if you win the spade lead and then play the ♠7 to the ♠3 (!) (a “ducking play”) – losing the trick – and the opponents return another spade.

The opponents return another spade which you win with the ♠A.

You now play the ♠8 to the ♠K, and discover that the club suit split 3-2. You next play the ♠A.

The three small clubs remaining in the North hand are winners, having been established by length. And you are in the North hand, able to win them.

**Guideline:** Consider using “ducking plays” to retain transportation and preserve entries to use them at the most opportune time.
Planning the Play in a Notrump Contract

Know your trick target

Count your winners (suit by suit), starting with top tricks, and count your opponents' possible winners (suit by suit)

Play to develop more winners before playing top tricks

Develop more winners for you

Preserve enough entries*

* including consideration of ...
1. playing high cards from short hand first, to avoid blocking a suit
2. ducking a round of a suit, to preserve an entry within that suit

By promotion from strength ...

Play to force out opponents' high cards in the suits in which your side owns the not-quite-high cards

By establishment of length ...

Play your partnership's long suit so as to establish smaller cards in the long suit

Count the number of cards played by opponents in the suit, including discards of the suit
Lesson 7 – Developing Notrump Tricks by Finesses, Part 1

Objectives:
- to understand finesses, how the placement of cards between hands of the opponents can affect the number of winning tricks from a specific card combination
- to understand how finesses can work only when leading from the correct position and when hope is realized that the key missing honor held by one particular opponent. And how having the lead be from the right position is dependent upon there being entries to that hand.
- to understand the meaning of a finesse being “onside” or “offside”

Handout: at beginning of class, consider handing out the flowchart(s) reproduced at end of this lesson plan

Teaching steps:
- (Show first exhibit, and then one after.) Layout the following card combinations in a suit and ask the students how many top tricks the partnership can win and how many not-top tricks the partnership can win:
  - AK opposite 32
  - KQ opposite 32
  - AQ opposite 32
    - Note that since the third card combination is not quite as good as the first but is better than the second, one might expect the number of total expected tricks of the third card combination to lie between the first and second card combinations. And how it does, demonstrating the effect of the placement of the missing K in the opponents’ hands.
    - Introduce word finesse.
    - Introduce the bridge language of a finesse being “onside” or “offside”.
- (Show next exhibit.)
  - AQJ opposite 732
  - A82 opposite Q73
- As each new card combination is shown:
  - demonstrate the effect of placement of the missing king.
  - identify the two core elements for developing an extra winner by finessing:
    - hope: hoping for a particular position of the key high card held by the opponents (in these cases, the missing king)
    - position: leading from the hand opposite the hand with honor cards; that is, leading through the hoped-for high card of the opponent and toward the high cards of your side.
  - introduce (or review) the following bridge play concepts:
    - having an entry to the hand that must be on lead
    - repeating a finesse
- (Show next exhibit.) Present the 26-card layout below, focusing on the concepts (and bridge language) of hoping for the missing spade king to have been dealt to East and leading toward the South hand – the hand with the honors – and thus leading from the North hand. Since you need to
promote two extra winning tricks from the spade suit by leading from the North hand two times, you need to lead spades from the North hand each of the two times you are in the North hand. The spade suit offers a repeatable finesse. Also, note the playing to develop extra winners before playing top tricks. (Note: Best play on this hand is to take the spade finesse first, and then, when the spade finesse wins, duck a heart. This line of play wins when hearts split 3-3, while preserving the chance to win a third spade trick when the hearts do not split 3-3.)

- Highlight sections of the document “Planning the Play in a Notrump Contract”. The technique you have just begun to learn is developing more winners “By finessing”. You have now learned a third technique for developing more winners, adding “finessing” to “promotion by strength” and to “establishment by length”. Although each of these techniques are shown separately on this document, quite often multiple techniques apply to one particular deal, or even one particular suit!

- Have the students break into tables of four players. Distribute a duplicate board with unsorted hands to each table. [See Kantar, Introduction to Declarer’s Play, p.33b, www.kantarbridge.com]. (Contract is 3NT. Opening lead is ♠Q.)

**Dummy**
- ♠ A54
- ♥ J76
- ♦ Q32
- ♣ A765

**Declarer**
- ♠ K76
- ♥ Q5
- ♦ AKJ4
- ♣ Q432

- See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
1. AK   32
2. KQ   32
3. AQ   32

How many tricks can you win from card combination 1?

How many tricks can you win from card combination 2?

Card combination 3 appears to be a little weaker than 1 and a little stronger than 2. By extrapolation, how many tricks might you expect to win from card combination 3?
Assume you lead this suit from the South hand.

- How many tricks can you win in the suit if West plays the 4?
- How many tricks can you win in the suit if West plays the K?

Assume you lead this suit from the South hand.

- How many tricks can you win in the suit if West plays the 5 or 6 and you play the Q from North?
- How many tricks can you win in the suit if West plays the 5 or 6 and you play the A from North?

Notice the two elements of this finesse: You hope that the K is owned by West; and you position yourself to lead the suit from South toward North.

When the K is in the position you hope, the bridge language is that the king is “onside”. When the K is not in the position you hope, the bridge language is that the king is “offside”.
Winning Tricks by Finessing

In the first layout, do you hope the king is held by West or by East; that is, for the king to be onside, would the king be held by West or by East?

What position do you need to be leading from in order to try to take advantage of your hope that the king is onside? How many tricks can you win if you lead from the correct position (multiple times) and discover that the king is onside?

How many tricks can you win if your hope is not realized and you discover that the king is offside?

How many tricks can you win when the king is onside, and you are not leading from the right position?

Same questions for the second layout
You are sitting South, declaring a contract of 3NT. The opening lead is the ♣Q.

1. Count your top tricks, suit by suit. Compare the count to the number of tricks needed to make the contract.

2. What suit might help produce the needed extra winning tricks? What key high card in that suit is held by the opponents? Which opponent do you hope holds that key high card?

3. If you choose to win Trick 1, what cards do you play from each hand at Trick 1? What cards do you play at Trick 2, from each hand?

4. Assume that you win Trick 2. What cards do you play at Tricks 3 and 4?

**Guideline:** To win extra tricks by finessing, you need: (1) to find key card(s) of the opponents in the hoped-for position (i.e., onside); and (2) to lead from the right position (i.e., through the key card(s) toward your side’s high cards).
Planning the Play in a Notrump Contract

Know your trick target

Count your winners (suit by suit), starting with top tricks, and count your opponents’ possible winners (suit by suit)

Play to develop more winners before playing top tricks

By promotion from strength ...

Play to force out opponents’ high cards in the suits in which your side owns the not-quite-high cards

By establishment of length ...

Play your long suit so as to establish smaller cards in your long suit

Count the number of cards played by opponents in the suit, including discards of the suit

Preserve enough entries*

*including consideration of ...
1. playing high cards from short hand first, to avoid blocking a suit
2. ducking a round of a suit, to preserve an entry within that suit

By finessing ...

Play a suit from one hand ("position") so that you can lead through hoped-for high cards of opponents ("hope") toward your side's high cards
Lesson 8 – Developing Notrump Tricks by Finesses, Part 2

Objectives (same as in Lesson 7):
- to understand finesses, how the placement of cards between hands of the opponents can affect the number of winning tricks from a specific card combination
- to understand how finesses can work only when leading from the correct position and when hope is realized that the key missing honor held by one particular opponent. And how having the lead be from the right position is dependent upon there being entries to that hand.
- to understand the meaning of a finesse being “onside” or “offside”

Handout: at beginning of class, consider handing out the flowchart(s) reproduced at end of this lesson plan

Teaching steps:
- The finesse is probably the most frequently used of the various techniques you are learning for developing more winners. Most bridge hands contain one or several finesses.
- (Show first exhibit.) Layout the following card combinations and ask the students: (1) what card(s) are you hoping to be held by which player?; (2) how many non-top tricks might the partnership win if the hope is granted and the finesse is successful?; and (3) exactly how will you play the card combination to develop extra winners by finessing?
  - AQ opposite xx (refresher from prior lesson) (review that the two core elements to the third question above, the question about how you play the card combination in order to develop an extra winner by finessing: (1) leading from the hand opposite the hand with honor cards; that is, leading through the hoped-for high card of the opponent and toward the high cards of your side (“position”); and (2) hoping for a particular position of a key card held by the opponents [in this case, the missing king] (“hope”).
  - Kx opposite xx
  - KQx opposite xxx
- (Show next exhibit.) When a key card in a suit is offside for one side (let’s say N-S side), the other side (E-W side) should expect N-S side to win fewer tricks in the suit than N-S had hoped. However, the expectation of E-W side might not be realized if the E-W side leads the suit.
  - Illustrate how N-S tricks are increased from 1 to 2 in the first example if East leads any card in the suit.
  - Illustrate how N-S tricks are increased from 0 to 1 in the second example if East leads any card in the suit.
  - Illustrate how N-S tricks are increased from 1 to 2 in the third example if West leads the ace or leads a small card (away from the ace) twice.
  - (Show next two exhibits.) QJx opposite xxx
- Ax opposite QJ
- AJT opposite Qx
- Axx opposite Qxx
- Axx opposite Qx
- Ax opposite Qx (explain why there should be no second trick, skipping any discussion of end plays)
- See supplement for additional finesses, if time permits
• As each new card combination is shown:
  o identify the key high card of the opponents and the position in which that high card is hoped to be located
  o review the bridge play concepts of:
    ▪ playing the high card from the short side first
    ▪ repeatable finesses
    ▪ leading an honor for a finesse only when holding consecutive honors

• Have the students break into tables of four players. Distribute a duplicate board with unsorted hands to each table.
• See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.

• For those who are interested, consider issuing a sheet with extra finesse card combinations, combinations that include finessing against lower honors than the king or ace, two-way finesses, and finesses against two cards:
  o AKJ opposite xxx
  o AJx opposite Kxx
  o AJx opposite KTx (a two-way finesse!)
  o AJT opposite xxx (a finesse against two cards, not just against one card)
  o AJx opposite xxx
  o KJx opposite xxx
  o AJ9 opposite xxx (tougher than others, because the two cards being finessed against include a T!)
More Finessing Positions

For each card combination held by North-South:

- Identify the key card(s) held by an opponent (i.e., the card you are finessing against)
- Which opponent – East or West – do you hope holds the key card(s)?
- Which hand – North or South – do you want to be in position to lead from?
  - … more than once?
Danger of Leading Suits with “Unprotected Honor Cards”

For each card combination held by North-South and just shown:
- Assume the key card held by the East-West partnership is “offside” for North-South (that is, not in the position “hoped for” by North-South).
- How many tricks will North-South win if North-South begins the play of the suit (from the correct position)?
- How many tricks will North-South win if the East-West player who holds the key card begins the play of the suit?

Guideline: Leading an “unprotected honor card” can often increase the number of tricks to be won by the opponents.
For each card combination held by North-South:

- Identify the key card(s) held by an opponent (i.e., the card you are finessing against)
- Which opponent – East or West – do you hope holds the key card(s)?
- Which hand – North or South – do you want to be in position to lead from?
  - … more than once?

```
Q J 4
N W E S
6 3 2
```

```
Q J
N W E S
A 2
```

```
A J 10
N W E S
Q 2
```
For each card combination held by North-South:
- Identify the key card(s) held by an opponent (i.e., the card you are finessing against)
- Which opponent – East or West – do you hope holds the key card(s)?
- Which hand – North or South – do you want to be in position to lead from?
  - … more than once?

A 6 4
N
W
E
S
Q 5 2

Q 4
N
W
E
S
A 5 2

A 5
N
W
E
S
Q 4
Planning the Play in a Notrump Contract

1. Know your trick target
   - Count your winners (suit by suit), starting with top tricks, and count your opponents’ possible winners (suit by suit)

2. Play to develop more winners before playing top tricks
   - Develop more winners for you

3. By promotion from strength ...
   - Play to force out opponents’ high cards in the suits in which your side owns the not-quite-high cards

4. By establishment of length ...
   - Play your long suit so as to establish smaller cards in your long suit

5. By finessing ...
   - Count the number of cards played by opponents in the suit, including discards of the suit
   - Play a suit from one hand (“position”) so that you can lead through hoped-for high cards of opponents (“hope”) toward your side’s high cards

6. Preserve enough entries*
   - *including consideration of ...
     1. playing high cards from short hand first, to avoid blocking a suit
     2. ducking a round of a suit, to preserve an entry within that suit
Lesson 9 – Introduction to Trumps, Part 1

Objectives:
- to understand how a trump suit contract (typically called “suit contract”) differs from a notrump contract
- to understand the attributes of a hand that makes a suit contract more attractive than a notrump contract
- to understand the meaning of the bridge language associated with trump suit contracts: “ruff”, “trump”, “void”, “singleton”, “doubleton”, “short side suits”, “drawing trumps”

Teaching steps:
- The teacher should tell the students that, to date, the player who wins a trick has been the player who plays the highest card in the suit that was led to that trick. Any player who had no cards in the suit that was led to the trick – that is, a player who had to discard on the trick – never won that trick. That’s because all of the contracts we have played to date have been “no trump contracts”. Today, all of that changes. Today you are going to learn the concept of some contracts having one of the suits be named the trump suit for that deal.
- When the suit that has been designated as a trump suit is discarded by one player on a trick, the player that discards the trump will win the trick.
- (Show first exhibit.) Use a pre-arranged duplicate board to make an (extreme) illustration of the value of having a trump suit:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>North</th>
<th>West</th>
<th>East</th>
<th>South</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>♠ 765432</td>
<td>♠ --</td>
<td>♠ --</td>
<td>♠ AKQJT98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♥ 5432</td>
<td>♥ AKQJT</td>
<td>♥ 9876</td>
<td>♥ --</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ --</td>
<td>♦ AKQJ</td>
<td>♦ T98</td>
<td>♦ 765432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♣ 432</td>
<td>♣ AKQJ</td>
<td>♣ T9865</td>
<td>♣ --</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Ask how many tricks can E-W win when E-W is on lead against a notrump contract? And, thus, how many tricks N-S win?
- Tell students to assume that the contract is a suit contract, and that spades is designated as the trump suit, with South being the declarer.
- Have East or West lead any card. Play out the contract on a diamond/rounded suit crossruff until diamonds are established, asking the following questions:
- How many trumps have E-W?
- Is there a way that N-S can win the opening lead?
- After either North (if opening lead is a diamond) or South (if opening lead is a club or a heart) discards a trump on the opening lead, ask if there is a suit that can be led from the hand that won Trick 1 upon which the opposite hand can discard a trump? Then, introduce the verb “trump” or “ruff” to describe the act of discarding a trump on a trick.
- Continue by crossruffing (five times in North, four times in South), reaching a four-card end position where South has ♠AK and ♦76.
- What can you tell me about South’s hand at this point (four cards remaining)?
- How many tricks did South win?

- So … you can see that the trump suit has a lot of power, having moved N-S trick total from 0 in a notrump contract (the type of contract you have been playing to date) to 13 in a suit contract with spades as the trump suit (“spade contract”).
- What does the hand suggest about declarer identifying the key attributes for declarer to win more tricks at a suit contract than at a notrump contract? *(Show next exhibit.)*
  - Having lots of trumps owned by declarer and dummy (usually at least 8 of the 13 cards in the trump suit; the more, the merrier)
  - Having short side suits (define “side suits”, and terms “void”, “singleton”, and “doubleton”)
- Key points:
  - Players still have to follow suit led if they can; that remains an inviolable rule.
  - But, a discard of a trump can win the trick in a trump suit contract but cannot win a trick in a notrump contract.
  - In effect, when, say, spades are trump, the ♠2 can be more powerful than the ♥A! (when the player with the ♠2 has no more hearts)
- Note that the defenders can win tricks by discarding a card in the trump suit, too, just as can declarer.

- As you break into tables of four to play, the teacher should note that students will have a new mini-bridge table to use, one that lists trump suit contracts as well as notrump contracts. Note that the new mini-bridge table determines the contract based upon not just the number of combined HCP held but also upon the number of combined cards held in the trump suit. You also will have a new scoring table to use, one that shows you how to calculate the scores for trump suit contracts as well as for notrump contracts. The new mini-bridge table also introduces vulnerability into the scoring.
- See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
How many tricks can East-West win if on lead against a notrump contract?

How many tricks can North-South win if on lead against a notrump contract?

Demonstrate answer: How many tricks can North-South win if East or West is on lead against a suit contract for which spades has been designated as the trump suit?
Key Attributes Favoring a Trump Suit Contract over a Notrump Contract

- Having lots of trumps owned by declarer and dummy

- Having short side suit(s):
  - Doubleton(s)
  - Singleton(s)
  - Void(s)
Mini-Bridge Instructions and Table #2

- After each player has counted their cards face down and checked that total is 13, each player should sort their cards by suit -- alternating red and black suits -- and by rank.
- Each player should announce their HCP (High Card Points), in clockwise order beginning with the dealer, and announce the accumulated HCP, checking that the announced accumulated total by the fourth player is 40.
- Determining the declarer:
  - The partnership with the highest combined HCP will be the declaring partnership; in the case of each side having 20 HCP, the declaring partnership will be the dealer’s partnership.
  - The player named as declarer will be the member of the declaring partnership with the higher number of HCP; in the case of each partner of the declaring partnership owning the same number of HCP, the declarer will be the dealer or the player immediately to the left of the dealer.
- Preliminarily determining the contract. Declarer uses the chart below to preliminarily determine the contract, based upon declaring partnership’s longest combined suit length in a major suit, longest combined suit length in a minor suit, and combined HCP. An emboldened contract that is satisfied by declarer produces a game bonus. A six or seven level contract that is satisfied by declarer produces a small slam or grand slam bonus, in addition to the game bonus.
- Dummy is displayed before the opening lead is made.

### Longest combined suit length:  
**Combined HCP**

#### Contract (with bonuses for games and slams in bold), when partnership holds 8+ cards in a major suit (♠, ♥):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major suit length (♠, ♥):</th>
<th>2♥ or 2♦</th>
<th>3♥ or 3♦</th>
<th>4♥ or 4♦</th>
<th>5♥ or 5♦</th>
<th>6♥ or 6♦</th>
<th>7♥ or 7♦</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>... 8 cards</td>
<td>20-21 HCP</td>
<td>22-24 HCP</td>
<td>25-27 HCP</td>
<td>28-30 HCP</td>
<td>31-33 HCP</td>
<td>34+ HCP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... 9 cards</td>
<td>20-21 HCP</td>
<td>22-24 HCP</td>
<td>25-27 HCP</td>
<td>28-30 HCP</td>
<td>31+ HCP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...10 cards</td>
<td>20-21 HCP</td>
<td>22-24 HCP</td>
<td>25-27 HCP</td>
<td>28+ HCP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...11 cards</td>
<td>20-21 HCP</td>
<td>22-24 HCP</td>
<td>25-27 HCP</td>
<td>28+ HCP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...12 cards</td>
<td>20-21 HCP</td>
<td>22-24 HCP</td>
<td>25+ HCP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...13 cards</td>
<td>20+ HCP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Contract (with bonuses for games and slams in bold), when partnership does not hold 8+ cards in a major suit (♠, ♥), but holds 9+ cards in a minor suit (♦, ♣):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minor suit length (♦, ♣):</th>
<th>3♦ or 3♥</th>
<th>4♦ or 4♥</th>
<th>5♦ or 5♥</th>
<th>6♦ or 6♥</th>
<th>7♦ or 7♥</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>... 9 cards</td>
<td>20-21 HCP</td>
<td>22-24 HCP</td>
<td>25-27 HCP</td>
<td>28-30 HCP</td>
<td>31+ HCP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...10 cards</td>
<td>20-21 HCP</td>
<td>22-24 HCP</td>
<td>25-27 HCP</td>
<td>28+ HCP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...11 cards</td>
<td>20-21 HCP</td>
<td>22-24 HCP</td>
<td>25+ HCP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...12 cards</td>
<td>20+ HCP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...13 cards</td>
<td>20+ HCP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Contract (with bonuses for games and slams in bold), when partnership holds neither 8+ cards in a major suit (♠, ♥) nor 9+ cards in a minor suit (♦, ♣):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1NT</th>
<th>2NT</th>
<th>3NT</th>
<th>4NT</th>
<th>5NT</th>
<th>6NT</th>
<th>7NT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-21 HCP</td>
<td>22-24 HCP</td>
<td>25-27 HCP</td>
<td>28-30 HCP</td>
<td>31-33 HCP</td>
<td>34-36 HCP</td>
<td>37+ HCP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Adjusting the contract after the dummy is displayed:
  - If contract determined by chart above is a part score contract, declarer can choose to increase the contract to a game level contract.
  - If contract determined by chart above is a slam level contract, declarer can choose to decrease the contract to a 5- or 6-level contract in the same strain.
Duplicate Bridge Scoring for Undoubled Part Scores and Game Contracts
(Not Vulnerable/Vulnerable)

Is the final contract a game contract?

No

Scoring for a part score (or "partial")

Was the contract made?

Yes

Score +50 for making a partial

Score -50/-100 for each undertrick

Also score for each trick won (over 6), an amount depending upon the strain:

For notump contracts, score +40 for first trick won, +30 for each other trick won
For major suit contracts, score +30 for each trick won
For minor suit contracts, score +20 for each trick won

No

Was the contract made?

Yes

Score +300/+500 for game bonus

Also score for each trick won (over 6), an amount depending upon the strain:

For notump contracts, score +40 for first trick won, +30 for each other trick won
For major suit contracts, score +30 for each trick won
For minor suit contracts, score +20 for each trick won

Games are 3NT, 4 major suits, 5 minor suits

No

Score -50/-100 for each undertrick
Lesson 10 – Introduction to Trumps, Part 2

Objectives:
- to understand the benefit of drawing trumps
- to understand that ruffing tricks are more valuable when the ruff is taken in the short trump hand than in the longer trump hand

Teaching steps:
- In the previous lesson you learned that some deals can produce many more tricks for declarer when there is a trump suit than when there is no trump suit.
- In this lesson you will learn that declaring a trump suit contract, just like declaring a notrump contract, requires declarer to develop a plan.
- (Show first exhibit, and then one after.) Present the 26-card layout below, focusing on the concepts (and bridge language) mentioned below:
  o Your thirteenth trick can come from trumping (or ruffing) a club in the North hand.
  o If you play your second high club at Trick 2 and then ruff your small club at Trick 3, what happens if either opponent was dealt only two clubs and was dealt a trump higher than dummy’s ♠8? [Await answer]. Right, that opponent will play the ♠T or 9 and defeat (or “set”) your grand slam. What a pity!
  o What if you, instead of playing a second high club at Trick 2, played the ♠A and then continued playing high spades until the opponents were exhausted of trumps? In bridge language, we call that “drawing trumps”. How many trumps will you have to play in order to exhaust the opponents of trumps?
  o An important principle for playing hands in a suit contract is often to draw the opponents’ trumps. There are many reasons to delay drawing the opponents’ trumps, but unless you are sure you have a valid reason not to, it is a good idea to draw the opponents’ trumps.
- (Show next exhibit.) Present the second 26-card layout, focusing on the concepts mentioned below:
  o Notice that when you were counting the top tricks, you counted six spade tricks.
  o When you ruffed a diamond in the South hand, you have only five spade tricks remaining. In other words, you gained no extra winners by ruffing in the “longer trump hand”; you just substituted a ruffling winner for a top trick winner.
  o Contrast that to ruffling a club in the North hand. After ruffling a club in dummy (North hand), you still have those six spade tricks in declarer’s hand (South hand).
  o In other words, you gained no extra winners by ruffing in the “longer trump hand”; you just substituted a ruffling winner for a top trick winner. By contrast, you did gain an extra winner by ruffing in the “short trump hand”. So … not all ruffling of losers are equal; typically you develop an extra winner only by ruffing in the “short trump hand”.
- Next lesson you will learn more about winning tricks by ruffing and you will be introduced to a new “Planning the Play in a Trump Suit Contract” flowchart. The new flowchart retains some similarities to the flow chart presented for planning the play in a notrump contract, but also contains many new techniques – or at least new applications of already learned techniques – that are peculiar to trump suit contracts. You are being welcomed to a whole new and expanded part of the World of Bridge!
- Have the students break into tables of four players. Distribute a duplicate board with unsorted hands to each table. [See Kantar, Introduction to Declarer’s Play, p.73, www.kantarbridge.com]
modified by giving North only two top diamonds and a fourth heart.] (Give opening leader ♥AKQJT.)

**Dummy**
- ♠ Q853
- ♥ 7632
- ♦ AK
- ♣ A75

**Declarer**
- ♠ AKJ92
- ♥ 84
- ♦ 962
- ♣ KQ4

- See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
You are sitting South, declaring a contract of 7♠! The opening lead is the ♣Q.

1. Count your top tricks, suit by suit. Compare the count to the number of tricks needed to make the contract.

2. How can you develop an extra winner to make your contract (and earn the bonus for a grand slam!)?

3. You win the club lead in your hand with the ♣A (or K). What is your plan at Tricks 2 and 3?
If you win the opening club lead with the ♣A, cash the ♣K, and then ruff (or “trump”) the ♣5, what happens?

How would the result have differed had you first played (“drawn”) the trumps held by the opponents, before you ruffed (or “trumped”) the ♣5?

How do you determine how many rounds of trump you should draw?

**Guideline:**  when playing a trump suit contract, declarer should immediately draw the opponents’ non-master trumps … unless having a reason not to
You are sitting South, declaring a contract of 4♠, enough for a game bonus. The opening lead is the ♦A.

1. Count your top tricks, suit by suit. Compare the count to the number of tricks needed to make the contract.

2. How can you develop an extra winner to make your contract?

The opponents continue with the ♦K and a third diamond which you ruff in your hand (South).

3. Have you developed an extra winner by ruffing the third round of diamonds?
Lesson 11 – Eliminating Losers in Trump Suit Contracts, by Ruffing

Objectives:
- to understand how to count losers in a trump suit contract
- to understand that ruffing tricks are more valuable when the ruff is taken in the shorter trump hand
- to understand when declarer or defender might want to draw trumps

Teaching steps:
- When playing a notrump contract, you were asked to count your top trick winners. And if the count of top trick winners was not enough to make your contract, you were asked to develop extra winners using several techniques.
- When playing a trump suit contract, it can be useful to also count your top tricks and to develop extra winners. However, in a trump suit contract, *it is absolutely critical to count your losers*. Counting losers and looking at how to eliminate some losers will be the subject of this lesson.
- *(Show first exhibit.)* To count losers in a trump suit contract, declarer looks at both hands, but declarer’s focus is on the longer trump hand first. Layout this hand as an example; it is a hand that you saw at the last lesson:

```
North
♠ 8765
♥ A432
♦ K32
♣ 32

South
♠ AKQJ32
♥ K5
♦ A4
♣ AK5
```
- South, having six-card trump length to North’s four-card trump length, is the longer trump hand. You begin counting losers in the longer trump hand by looking at the trump suit. Here, realizing that you have ten spades and thus the opponents have only three spades, all of which can be drawn by your top spades, you look at the South hand and count no spade losers.
- Next you look at each of the other three suits, again focusing on the longer trump hand of South. South has only two hearts and since, between the two hands, you have the top two hearts, you have no heart losers. Similarly, you have no diamond losers. But when you look at the club suit, you see that the longer trump hand has three clubs and the ♣5 is a loser.
As you learned last lesson, you can eliminate the club loser by trumping the ♠5 in the North hand, the shorter trump hand. (And you also learned last week to draw trumps first, unless you consider a reason to delay drawing trumps.)

Present the two new 26-card layouts below, focusing on the concept (and bridge language) mentioned below.

On the first hand, you have ruffed the third round of clubs (which does not develop an extra winner because you ruffed the club in the longer trump hand). You want to eliminate two heart losers in the South hand (the longer trump hand) by ruffing the losers in the North hand (the shorter trump hand). Focus first on the threshold question in any trump suit contract: consider whether to delay drawing the non-master trumps of the opponents. Here, if trumps split 2-1, you will have drawn the opponents’ trumps in two rounds. Accordingly, draw the two rounds of trumps before ruffing a heart with North’s third trump. You can then get back to your hand with the ♥A and ruff your last losing heart with North’s fourth (and last) trump. Do you want to draw more than two rounds of trumps? [Await answer.] No. If you do draw a third round of trumps, then how many trumps will remain in the North hand to be able to ruff your two heart losers? [Await answer.] Only one.

The second hand is similar to the first hand except that North has only three trumps rather than four trumps as in the first hand. How many trumps will be left in the North hand if South first draws all the trumps of the opponents (requires two rounds of trumps if trumps split 2-2)? [Await answer.] Only one. So, does that leave North with enough trumps to ruff (or trump) the two losing diamonds in the South hand? [Await answer.] No, it does not. The solution is: (1) to draw only one round of trumps early (with the ♥K); (2) then to ruff South’s losing hearts with North’s two remaining trumps as in the first hand (by playing the ♥A and ruffing a small heart, and then playing a diamond to get back to your hand of South, then ruffing your last heart; and (3) only then to draw the rest of the trumps held by the opponents (by ruffing a club to your hand and then drawing all the remaining outstanding trumps).

Reemphasize a part of the prior lesson: trump contracts are most valuable when your side has lots of trumps and shortness in some/several side suits.

Let’s take a look at the new flowchart, titled “Planning the Play in a Trump Suit Contract”. Notice that this flowchart looks similar to the one you have seen for Planning the Play in a Notrump Contract, but also has some differences. One set of differences relates to an emphasis on counting losers and eliminating losers instead of counting winners and developing more winners. We just did that. Another difference is the oval “Draw opponents’ non-master trumps … unless having a reason not to”. Well, in the first example, there was no reason to delay drawing trumps held by the opponents and that was accomplished by playing two rounds of trumps. But in the second example, drawing two rounds of trumps would have left North with only one trump when a trump was needed in North to eliminate each of the two heart losers in South’s hand. Accordingly, there was a reason to delay drawing the opponents’ trumps.

Let’s say that you do decide to draw all of the trumps held by the opponents. Generally, you will want to draw all the trumps of the opponents, so that the opponents do not have any trumps with which they can ruff your winners. (However, as you saw in a couple of hands, there can be reasons not to draw all of the trumps held by the opponents.) Once you have drawn all of their trumps, will you want to play more trumps? (No, not usually, because if you continue to draw trumps when only your own side owns trumps, you might find that you no longer have any
trumps with which to ruff any losers.) In fact, you should generally stop drawing the opponents’ trumps when the only remaining trump of the opponents is the “master trump”; that is, the highest outstanding trump: that high trump is going to be a loser for declarer anyway, so why waste one of your smaller trumps to draw it? That is why the actual wording of the box is **“Draw opponents’ non-master trumps … unless there is a reason not to”**.

- How can you tell how many trumps of the opponents are not drawn? And how can you tell whether the only trump of the opponents that is not drawn is the master trump? You have to be **counting** how many trumps are retained by the opponents at each stage of the play. Counting is a great bridge habit to begin; being able to count the distribution of each suit held by the opponents is pretty much the first step to becoming a really good bridge player. Counting the trump suit is especially important.

- Have the students break into tables of four players. Distribute a duplicate board with unsorted hands to each table. [See hand record that follows.]
- See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.

This is the pre-sorted hand to be distributed. The mini-bridge contract should be 4♠ by South.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>North (dummy)</th>
<th>West</th>
<th>East</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>♠ Q865</td>
<td>♠ T74</td>
<td>♠ 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♥ 7</td>
<td>♥ AQT</td>
<td>♥ 98543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ KJ85</td>
<td>♦ 9764</td>
<td>♦ AQT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♣ A643</td>
<td>♣ Q92</td>
<td>♣ T875</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>South (declarer)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>♠ AKJ32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♥ KJ62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ 32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♣ KJ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PS to Table Supervisors: Under the assumption that the lead is not the ♥A: If any declarer knows to draw only one round of trumps; or if, declarer had drawn two rounds of trumps, any West knows to play a third round of trumps when in with a heart, please let the teacher know!
Eliminating Losers in a Trump Suit Contract, by Ruffing

This is the same hand you saw last week. The contract is 7♠. The opening lead is the ♠Q.

Determine which hand – North or South – is the longer trump hand.

1. Count the losers, suit by suit, in the longer trump hand (remembering that high cards in the shorter trump hand can cover losers in the longer trump hand). Compare the count to the number of losers you can afford and still make your contract.

2. How can you eliminate any extra losers?

3. Is there any reason to delay drawing trumps before you try to eliminate any losers?
You are sitting South, declaring a contract of 4♠. The opening lead is the ♠A. The opening leader continues with two more high clubs, his partner following suit on only the first club trick. (Questions: How many clubs do the opponents have? How are those clubs split?) You ruff (or trump) the third round of clubs with a small trump in the South hand.

1. Which hand is the longer trump hand?

2. Count the losers in the longer trump hand, first in the trump suit and then in each other suit. (Remember to include the two club tricks you have already lost.) Compare the count to the number of losers allowed if you are going to make your contract.

3. Which losers might be eliminated? (Hint: this is a lesson on ruffing losers with trumps!)

4. Is there any reason to delay drawing the trumps of the opponents (assume the three missing trumps are split 2-1)?

5. After you have drawn the trumps of the opponents, should you continue playing your side’s remaining trumps?
Again, you are sitting South, declaring a contract of 4♠. The opening lead is the ♠K. The opening leader continues with two more high clubs, his partner following suit on only the first club trick. You ruff (or trump) the third round of clubs with a small trump in the South hand.

1. With the longer trump hand being the South hand, count the losers in the South hand, first in the trump suit and then in each other suit. Compare the count to the number of losers allowed if you are going to make your contract.

2. Which losers might be eliminated?

3. Is there any reason to delay drawing the trumps of the opponents (assume the four missing trumps are split 2-2)?

4. After you have drawn the trumps of the opponents, should you continue playing your side’s remaining trumps?
Planning the Play in a Trump Suit Contract

1. Count your probable losers (suit by suit) and count your opponents’ possible winners (suit by suit).
2. Count losers by looking at the longer trump hand; begin with trump suit losers.
3. Draw opponents’ non-master trumps ... unless having a reason not to.
4. Eliminate losers for you and winners for opponents.
5. Preserve enough entries*.
6. Keep enough trumps to ruff losers.
7. By ruffing losers.

* including consideration of ... 1. playing high cards from short hand first, to avoid blocking a suit 2. ducking a round of a suit, to preserve an entry within that suit.
Lesson 12 – Eliminating Losers in Trump Suit Contracts, by Extra Winners from Top Tricks

Objectives:
- to understand how to count losers in a suit contract
- to understand how to eliminate losers by discarding (“pitching”) the losers on extra winners that are top tricks
- to understand the difference between immediate losers and eventual losers
- to understand when declarer or defender might want to draw trumps

Handout: at beginning of class, consider handing out the flowchart(s) reproduced at end of this lesson plan

Teaching steps:
- When playing a trump suit contract, you count your losers. To count losers in a trump suit contract, declarer looks at both hands, but declarer’s focus is on the longer trump hand first. *(Show first exhibit.*) Layout this hand as an example: [See Kantar, Introduction to Declarer’s Play, p.80, modified here and then repeated next without modification www.kantarbridge.com.] *(Contract is 4♠. Opening Lead is ♠K.)*

```
 North
 ♠ A532
 ♥ KQ4
 ♦ A72
 ♣ 983

 South
 ♠ KQJ98
 ♥ A5
 ♦ 985
 ♣ QJT
```

- You begin counting losers by looking at the trump suit and focusing first on the South hand, the longer trump hand. How many losers in the trump suit? [Await answer.] There are no losers in the trump suit.
- Next you look at each of the other three suits, again focusing on the longer trump hand of South. How many losers in the heart suit? [Await answer.] There are no losers in the heart suit. In the diamond suit, there are two losers, once the ♦A has been played. How many losers in the club suit? [Await answer.] There are two losers in the club suit, the ♣AK. That is a total of four losers. If the contract is 4♠, how many losers can declarer afford if declarer is to make his contract? [Await answer.] Declarer has to win ten of the thirteen total tricks to make his contract, meaning that he can afford only three losers.
- Can South (the longer trump hand) eliminate any of his four losers by ruffing a loser in the North hand (the shorter trump hand)? [Await answer.] No, he cannot, because North has no suit of a length shorter than South’s length (outside of the trump suit).
- Let’s try something else. Can South eliminate any of his four losers by taking advantage of any excess winner in the North hand? Look at the heart suit. South has two hearts and no heart losers. Between North and South, however, there are three top trick heart winners. There is a way for South to eliminate one of his losers by discarding (or “pitching”) it on the extra heart winner.
- Assume that West leads the ♦K; diamonds is the best suit for E-W to lead. Demonstrate this line of play: Win the ♦A and, there being no reason not to, draw the opponents’ trumps. Let’s assume that the opponents’ trumps split 3-1, and so three rounds of trumps had to be played in order to draw all of their trumps. If South were to next play a club or a diamond, E-W could win two diamonds as well as the ♦A and ♦K, for four tricks, one too many for South to make his contract. Let’s instead say that South plays on hearts. How would South play the heart suit of N-S? [Await answer.] South would play the ♥A from his hand (high card from the short side first) and then play to the ♥K. Next South would play the ♥Q. South gets to discard on the ♥Q. When South chooses to discard one of his two diamond losers, South has eliminated one of his four losers and will make his contract.
- Why should the loser to be discarded be a diamond rather than a club? Because discarding a club does not reduce the number of club losers in South’s hand. South is dealt three clubs but only two club losers, the ♣A and ♣K. South’s third club is a winner by promotion of strength and not a loser. By contrast, discarding a diamond does reduce the number of diamond losers in South’s hand from two to one.
  - (Show next exhibit.) This layout is very similar to the first layout. Focus on the concept (and bridge language) mentioned below.
    - Looking at the South hand (the longer trump hand), there are again four losers, one too many.
    - Note that when the opening lead is a diamond, the two diamond losers are immediate losers; had the opening lead been a heart, the two diamond losers are only eventual losers.
    - Immediate losers must be eliminated before losing the lead. South has a reason not to draw trumps right away because on this layout the opponents can gain the lead with the ♦A (one trick), after which they can win the two diamond tricks that are immediate losers (two more tricks), as well as the ♦A (a fourth trick). (Reference the document “Planning the Play in a Trump Suit Contract” and the oval “Draw opponents’ non-master trumps ... unless having a reason not to”). That is the difference between this layout and the previous one. In the previous layout, South could draw trumps without losing the lead and so could eliminate one of the immediate diamond losers later. On this layout, South must try to pitch a losing diamond on the extra heart before (losing the lead by) drawing trumps. South must assume the risk that the defense can use a small trump to ruff a heart before South can pitch a losing diamond. So, here is the principle to remember: When you need to eliminate an immediate loser (as opposed to an eventual loser), you need to do so without losing the lead.
By contrast, look at what happens when West led a heart instead of a diamond. Declarer still has two diamond losers, but because declarer still has the ♦A to control the diamond suit, the diamond losers are only eventual losers. Because the diamond losers are not yet immediate diamond losers, declarer can afford to draw the opponents’ trumps before pitching a losing diamond on the extra heart winner.

(Show next exhibit.) This layout is also very similar to the first layout. The South hand is the longer trump hand and counts to four losers. However, on this hand, South can pitch none of his four losers on the third heart winner in North. Do you see why? [Await answer.] Because South must follow suit to all three heart winners and cannot pitch a loser on a heart winner. A pitch is available only on an extra winner, and for a winner in a suit to be an extra winner, the suit must have unequal lengths between the two hands. On this hand, the heart suit lengths are equal; each hand has three hearts. South remains with four losers.

Have the students break into tables of four players. Distribute a duplicate board with unsorted hands to each table. [See Kantar, Introduction to Declarer’s Play, p.83b, www.kantarbridge.com] (Contract is 4♥. Opening lead is ♠Q.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dummy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>♠ A65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♥ QT65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ QJT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♣ AQ6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Declarer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>♠ 732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♥ AKJ974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ 84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♣ K9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
Eliminating Losers in a Trump Suit Contract, by Extra Winners from Top Tricks

♠ A 5 3 2
♥ K Q 4
♦ A 7 2
♣ 9 8 3

N W E S

♠ K Q J 9 8
♥ A 5
♦ 9 8 5
♣ Q J 10

South is declaring a contract of 4♠. West leads the ♦K.

1. Determine which hand – North or South – is the longer trump hand.

2. Count the losers, suit by suit, in the longer trump hand (remembering that high cards in the shorter trump hand can cover losers in the longer trump hand). Compare the count to the number of losers you can afford and still make your contract.

3. How can you eliminate a loser?

4. Which loser would you choose to eliminate?

5. Is there any reason to delay drawing trumps before you try to eliminate a loser?
You are sitting South, declaring a contract of 4 ♠. The opening lead is the ♦K.

1. Count your losing tricks as South (the longer trump hand), first in the trump suit and then in each other suit. Compare the count to the number of losers allowed if you are going to make your contract.

2. Which loser can be eliminated? And how can that loser be eliminated? [Hint: this is almost the same as the hand that was just illustrated.]

3. Is there any reason to delay drawing the trumps of the opponents?
   a) If you do try to draw trumps and the opponents win the ♠A for one trick, how many other winners can E-W win?
   b) If you do not draw trumps until after pitching (or “discarding”) a losing diamond and the opponents then win the ♠A for one trick, how many other winners can E-W win?

4. Assume that instead of the opening lead being the ♦K, the opening lead was the ♥J. Does this affect your decision to draw the trumps of the opponents first, before pitching a diamond loser?

**Guideline:** Eliminate losers that are immediate losers before losing the lead, if possible.

[See Kantar, Introduction to Declarer’s Play, p.80, www.kantarbridge.com]
South is declaring a contract of 4♠. West leads the ♣A and then ♣K, before switching to the ♦J.

1. Determine which hand – North or South – is the longer trump hand.

2. Count the losers, suit by suit, in the longer trump hand (remembering that high cards in the shorter trump hand can cover losers in the longer trump hand). Compare the count to the number of losers you can afford and still make your contract.

3. How can you eliminate a loser?

**Rule:** A winner in a suit can be an “extra winner” only when the two hands have unequal length in the suit.
Planning the Play in a Trump Suit Contract

1. Know your trick target
2. Count your probable losers (suit by suit) and count your opponents’ possible winners (suit by suit)
3. Count losers by looking at the longer trump hand; begin with trump suit losers
4. Draw opponents’ non-master trumps ... unless having a reason not to
5. Eliminate losers for you and winners for opponents
6. Keep enough trumps to ruff losers
7. By ruffing losers
8. Pitch immediate losers before losing the lead
9. By pitching losers on extra winners ...
10. By preserving enough entries *
11. For a winner to be an “extra” winner, the suit must have unequal lengths between the two hands
12. ... from top tricks

* including consideration of ...
  1. playing high cards from short hand first, to avoid blocking a suit
  2. ducking a round of a suit, to preserve an entry within that suit
Lesson 13 – Eliminating Losers in Trump Suit Contracts, by Extra Winners from Promotion from Strength

Objectives:
- to understand how to count losers in a suit contract
- to understand how to eliminate losers by discarding (“pitching”) the losers on extra winners by promotion from strength
- to understand the difference between immediate losers and eventual losers
- to understand when declarer or defender might want to draw trumps.

Handout: at beginning of class, consider handing out the flowchart(s) reproduced at end of this lesson plan

Teaching steps:
- You have learned how to eliminate losers not only by ruffing but also by using extra top trick winners. Would it surprise you to learn that the techniques you learned to develop extra winners for notrump play also can be used to eliminate losers for trump suit play? The ways in which such techniques are executed is a little bit different because there is a trump suit. However, you will discover a number of ways to benefit from what you have already learned.
- (Show first exhibit.) Let’s start with an example, in a trump suit play context, that is about eliminating losers by promotion from strength. Here’s an example [See Kantar, Introduction to Declarer’s Play, p.95, www.kantarbridge.com]:

North
♠ 5432
♥ 765
♦ A54
♣ KQ2

W   E
N

South
♠ AKQJ876
♥ A4
♦ K2
♣ J3

- You are declarer in a contract of 6♠. West leads the ♦Q. Which hand is the longer trump hand? You identify the South hand as the longer trump hand and count your losers: no losers in the trump suit of spades. How many losers in hearts? How many losers in diamonds? How many losers in clubs? [Await answers to each question.] That is two losers in total, one more than you can afford if you are to make your 6♠ contract.
When learning techniques for developing more winners in play of a notrump contract, you learned about developing winners by promotion from strength, to promote not-quite-high tricks into top tricks. If you were looking at the club suit in notrump play, you would say that you have no top tricks, but that once the ♣A had been played, you would own the two highest clubs, and so could promote two club tricks.

You can think similarly in trump suit play, except that your focus is on eliminating your heart loser. Assume you play the ♣J (high card from the short hand first) to force out the ♣A. Both the ♣K and ♣Q of North will be promoted into winners. At that time you only have one club remaining and so on the second of North’s club winners, you get to discard (or pitch) something from your hand. What card will you pitch? [Await answer]. Yes, you will pitch your heart loser. By eliminating the heart loser, you are down to just the one loser of the ♣A and you will have made your small slam contract!

Is there any reason to delay drawing trumps before you try to eliminate a loser? [Await answer.] No.

Assume the defense chose a hold-up play on the first round of clubs, choosing to play the ♣A on the second round of clubs. Would it matter in which hand declarer chose to win the opening diamond lead? [Await answer.] Yes, it would! Declarer should win the opening diamond lead in the South hand, so as to preserve the ♦A as an entry in the North hand to the extra club winner.

There is sort of a hidden requirement – well, maybe two of them – in the analysis just concluded.

- One reason that you could pitch a losing heart from South on a club from North is because North and South have unequal numbers of clubs. (Show next exhibit.) Let’s modify the South hand from the first layout just a bit: let’s substitute a small club for a small spade. Just as before, you can play the ♣J to force out the ♣A and North’s ♣K and ♣Q are promoted by strength into winners. However, this time when you play the second winner from North, South has to follow suit with his third club and cannot pitch the losing heart. The heart loser cannot be eliminated, and, when added to the loss to the ♣A, South will have two losers and be defeated one trick in his contract of 6♣. Do you remember the rule addressed in the previous lesson?: A winner in a suit can be an “extra winner” only when the two hands have unequal length in the suit. The ♣K and ♣Q were promoted into winners from strength, but neither is an extra winner.

- The second reason you could pitch a losing heart from South on a club from North is because the heart loser was not an immediate loser. (Show next exhibit.) Had West led a heart instead of a diamond, the heart loser would be an immediate loser and not just an eventual loser. Note that to eliminate an immediate loser, you have to do so before you lose the lead. In this case, the play of forcing out the ♣A to develop an extra winner meant that you had to lose the lead. When the defense wins the ♣A, they can also win a heart and set your contract. Yes, many times a contract that could have been set will make, because the opponents did not choose the winning opening lead.
• Have the students break into tables of four players. Distribute a duplicate board with unsorted hands to each table. [See Kantar, Introduction to Declarer’s Play, p.92, modified (so as to induce a non-heart lead) to give West ♥QT86 www.kantarbridge.com]. (Contract is 5♦. Opening lead is ♠Q.)

**Dummy**
- ♠ QJT
- ♥ A32
- ♦ KT76
- ♣ 654

**Declarer**
- ♠ 32
- ♥ K54
- ♦ AQJ985
- ♣ AK

• See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
Eliminating Losers in a Trump Suit Contract, by Extra Winners from Promotion from Strength

You are South declaring a contract of 6♠. West leads the ♦Q.

1. Determine which hand – North or South – is the longer trump hand.

2. Count the losers, suit by suit, in the longer trump hand (remembering that high cards in the shorter trump hand can cover losers in the longer trump hand). Compare the count to the number of losers you can afford and still make your contract.

3. How can you eliminate a loser?

4. Is there any reason to delay drawing trumps before you try to eliminate any extra losers?

5. Assume the defense holds up playing the ♠A until the second round of clubs. Does it matter in which hand you win the opening lead?

[See Kantar, Introduction to Declarer’s Play, p.95, www.kantarbridge.com]
You are South declaring a contract of 6♠. West leads the ♦Q.

The longer trump hand of South has the same two losers as in the previous layout, a heart and a club, one too many. This layout, however, differs from the first layout by substituting a small club for a small spade.

Do you remember the rule in the previous lesson?: A winner in a suit can be an “extra winner” only when the two hands have unequal length in the suit.

You cannot eliminate a loser because the winners in the club suit developed by promotion of strength are not extra winners; the lengths of the club suit in each hand are equal, not unequal.
You are South declaring a contract of 6♠. West leads the ♥Q.

This is the same hand as the first layout presented. But the lead has changed from a diamond to a heart.

How can you eliminate either the club loser or the heart loser?
Planning the Play in a Trump Suit Contract

Planning the Play → Know your trick target → Count your probable losers (suit by suit) and count your opponents' possible winners (suit by suit)

Count losers by looking at the longer trump hand; begin with trump suit losers

Draw opponents' non-master trumps ... unless having a reason not to

Keep enough trumps to ruff losers → By ruffing losers

Eliminate losers for you and winners for opponents

Pitch immediate losers before losing the lead

By pitching losers on extra winners ...

By preserving enough entries *

* including consideration of ...
1. playing high cards from short hand first, to avoid blocking a suit
2. ducking a round of a suit, to preserve an entry within that suit

For a winner to be an "extra" winner, the suit must have unequal lengths between the two hands

... from top tricks

... from promotion from strength
Lesson 14 – Eliminating Losers in Trump Suit Contracts, by Extra Winners from Finesse

Objectives:
- to understand how to count losers in a suit contract
- to understand how to eliminate losers by discarding (“pitching”) the losers on extra winners from a finesse
- to understand the difference between immediate losers and eventual losers
- to understand when declarer or defender might want to draw trumps.

Handout: at beginning of class, consider handing out the flowchart(s) reproduced at end of this lesson plan

Teaching steps:
- In this lesson, you are going to learn about the technique of eliminating a loser in a trump suit contract by extra winners “from finesses”.
- *(Show first exhibit.)* Present the 26-card layout below, focusing on the concept (and bridge language) noted below. [See Kantar, Introduction to Declarer’s Play, p.98 www.kantarbridge.com.] South is the longer trump hand. South has no losers in the trump suit and, given the club lead, an immediate loser in the club suit. With finesses possible to limit losers in the heart and diamond suits, South could have 0-1 losers in each of those suits. In order to make his contract, South is going to need some luck!

  - *(Show next exhibit.)* This is the same hand just shown. A key question in declaring this hand is: which finesse – heart or diamond – should you take first? To answer that question, let’s go through two options in which one of the finesses is onside and the other of the finesses is offside.

    - Assume first that the diamond finesse is onside (with West, the hoped-for position) and the heart finesse is offside (with East, the position not hoped-for). Assume further that South can take two diamond finesses. How many losers remain in the diamond suit? [Await answer.] 0. So far, so good. How many losers remain in the heart suit? [Await answer.] 1. How many losers remain in the club suit? [Await answer.] 1, there is no place to pitch the club loser. With two losers in total, the contract will not be made.

    - Assume next that the heart finesse is onside (with West, the hoped-for position) and the diamond finesse is offside (with East, the position not hoped-for). Assume further that South can take two heart finesses. How many losers remain in the diamond suit? [Await answer.] 1. How many losers remain in the heart suit? [Await answer.] 0. How many losers remain in the club suit? [Await answer.] 0, because the club loser can be pitched on the extra winner in hearts!

  - Why is the success of the heart finesse critical to making the contract but the success of the diamond finesse is not? Because the success of the heart finesse produces an extra winner (for a pitch of a loser) and the success of the diamond finesse does not produce an extra winner (for a pitch of a loser). Refer to the box on “Planning the Play in a Trump Suit Contract” that says “for a winner in a suit to be an ‘extra’ winner, the suit must have unequal lengths between the two hands”. Because the heart suit has unequal lengths between the two hands (two hearts in South and three hearts in North), a successful heart finesse can create an extra winner. By contrast, the diamond suit has
equal lengths between the two hands (three diamonds in South and three diamonds in North). A successful heart diamond finesse does create an extra winner; a successful diamond finesse does create an extra winner. Take the heart finesse first!

- Should you draw all the opponent’s non-master trumps before you take the heart finesse?
  - Possibly yes. Having won the club lead with South’s ♣A, you can draw the opponents’ trumps in 2-3 rounds. Then take a heart finesse. If it wins, you can then lead a trump to the South hand and take the heart finesse a second time. If it wins again, you can then play the ♥A from North and pitch your losing club. You will eventually concede a diamond trick to an opponent’s ♦K, but that is your only loser and the contract is made.
  - Alternatively, you can play slightly more riskily and try to make all thirteen tricks if both kings are onside. In this case, you can still afford to draw one round of trumps first. But you will have to delay drawing the rest of the opponents’ trumps so that you can use all three of your remaining trump entries to try three finesses. South wins the ♣A and takes an immediate heart finesse (first finesse). Lead a second trump to South (which might or might not complete the drawing of all the opponent’s trumps, depending upon whether the three missing trumps split 2-1 or 3-0) and take a second heart finesse. Win the ♥A (the extra winner) and pitch South’s losing club. Lead a third trump to South and take a diamond finesse (first diamond finesse, third finesse overall). Then lead a fourth trump to South and take a second diamond finesse (fourth finesse overall). This line risks having one of the first three heart tricks ruffed, frustrating declarer’s plan to pitch a losing club on the extra heart winner.

- Have the students break into tables of four players. Distribute a duplicate board with unsorted hands to each table. [See Kantar, Introduction to Declarer’s Play, p.101, www.kantarbridge.com.] (Contract is 4♠. Opponents lead top three clubs.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dummy</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>♠ 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♥ KQ54</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ A7654</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♣ 876</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Declarer</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>♠ AKQJT98</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♥ 32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♣ 32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ 32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
Eliminating Losers in a Trump Suit Contract, by Extra Winners from Finesse

You are South declaring a contract of 6♠. West leads the ♣K.

1. Determine which hand – North or South – is the longer trump hand.

2. Count the losers, suit by suit, in the longer trump hand (remembering that high cards in the shorter trump hand can cover losers in the longer trump hand). Compare the count to the number of losers you can afford and still make your contract.

3. How can you eliminate any losers?

[See Kantar, Introduction to Declarer’s Play, p.98 www.kantarbridge.com.]
On this hand, you have potential finesses against an opponent’s king in both the diamond suit and the heart suit. Which finesse should you take first? Consider the following alternative assumptions:

1. Assume the ♦K is onside (with West) and the ♥K is offside (with East), how many losers remain in the diamond suit? in the heart suit? in the club suit?

2. Assume the ♥K is onside (with West) and the ♦K is offside (with East):
   a. If you finesse in diamonds (even twice) before you finesse in hearts, how many losers remain in the diamond suit? in the heart suit? in the club suit?
   b. If you finesse in hearts (twice) before you finesse in diamonds, how many losers remain in the diamond suit? in the heart suit? in the club suit?

Why do the questions above suggest that the success of one finesse against an opponent’s king is more important than the success of the other finesse against an opponent’s king?

Is there any reason to delay drawing trumps before you try to eliminate any extra losers?
Planning the Play in a Trump Suit Contract

Know your trick target

Count your probable losers (suit by suit) and count your opponents' possible winners (suit by suit)

Count losers by looking at the longer trump hand; begin with trump suit losers

Draw opponents' non-master trumps ... unless having a reason not to

Eliminate losers for you and winners for opponents

Preserve enough entries*

* including consideration of...
   1. playing high cards from short hand first, to avoid blocking a suit
   2. ducking a round of a suit, to preserve an entry within that suit

Keep enough trumps to ruff losers

By ruffling losers

Pitch immediate losers before losing the lead

By pitching losers on extra winners ...

For a winner to be an "extra" winner, the suit must have unequal lengths between the two hands

... from top tricks
... from promotion from strength
... from establishment of length*
... from finesses

* not covered by a lesson plan
DEFENSIVE PLAY

Lesson 15 – Opening Lead against a Notrump Contract: Choosing “Longest (and Strongest)” Suit

Objectives:
- to understand the objective of the defenders is often to establish and win small cards in their partnership’s combined longest and strongest suit
- to understand some guidelines for determining the longest (and strongest) suit held by the defenders

Handout: at beginning of class, consider handing out the flowchart(s) reproduced at end of this lesson plan

Teaching steps:
- Until today, the bridge lessons had been about declarer play. You will be declarer on about 25% of all deals. You and your partner can expect to declare 50% of all deals, and you expect to declare half of them and be dummy half of them. By contrast, you will be a defender on about 50% of all deals, and so you will benefit even more from good defensive skills than from good declarer skills.
- So … why until today have all the bridge lessons been about declarer play? For two reasons: (1) declarer play is easier to teach … the various techniques for developing winners and eliminating losers are easier to understand when presented from the viewpoint of the declarer, even though the same techniques apply to defenders; and (2) because a primary objective of the defense is to frustrate the objective of the declarer, it is essential for the defense to first understand what is the objective of declarer.
- Refer to “Planning the Defense against a Notrump Contract”. Notice that the success of the defenders can come from “establishment of length” in their partnership’s long suit, (just as the success of declarer can come from establishment of length in his partnership’s long suit). The success or failure of a notrump contract often comes down to a race: which partnership can first win small cards in their long suit?
  - (Show first exhibit.) E-W own A9432 opposite 876 and N-S own JT opposite KQ5.
  - Note that West has more cards in the suit than any other player and that E-W own 8 cards in the suit compared to only 5 cards owned by N-S in the suit. The suit might well be the longest suit owned by the E-W partnership.
  - Note also that N-S has most of the honor strength in the suit, and can, in fact, develop two tricks in the suit by promotion from strength (once the ace is played, two honor cards of N-S are developed into winners).
  - Although N-S has much of the honor strength in the suit, E-W not only can win the top trick of the ace but also can develop two more tricks in the suit by establishment of length.
  - Of course, having strength to accompany length helps E-W develop more winners in the suit. Demonstrate how E-W can win four tricks in the suit, rather than just three tricks in the suit, if South’s K were to be exchanged for one of the small cards owned by E-W.
(Show next exhibit.) Note that having even more length in the suit would help E-W develop more tricks by establishment of length, especially when such length is held by the hand with the most cards in the suit:

- Give East the 5 held by South.
- Alternatively, give West the 5 held by South.

- How do you, on defense, win the race to be the first partnership to establish and win small cards in your “longest and strongest” suit?
- At what point in the hand can the defenders begin the race?
- The defenders can begin the race when making the opening lead. The opening leader gets to start the race first!
- How can the opening leader determine which suit is the long suit of his partnership (where “long” hopefully means five cards or longer, although many times “long” can mean only four card length)? Well, he does not know for sure because he can’t see his partner’s hand, but he does have two clues to guess at the longest suit of the partnership when playing mini-bridge:
  - Opening leader can look at his own hand and determine which suit he has length in; and
  - Opening leader can look at dummy’s hand and determine which suit dummy has shortness in.

(Show next exhibit.) Let’s show an example, where you are defending a mini-bridge contract of 3NT by South:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>North (dummy)</th>
<th>West (you)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>♠ 76</td>
<td>♠ KJ943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♥ QJT98</td>
<td>♥ AK3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ KQ5</td>
<td>♦ 862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♣ JT3</td>
<td>♣ 54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Your longest suit is spades – you have five of them – and, with dummy having only two spades, there are six spades left (5+2 subtracted from 13) for partner East and declarer South. Chances are quite good that spades is your partnership’s longest suit. Lead a spade.
Let’s show a second example, same contract and declarer but a much different dummy:

North (dummy)
♠ AQT87
♥ 76
♦ KQ5
♣ JT3

West (you)
♠ KJ943
♥ AK3
♦ 862
♣ 54

Your hand is the same, but look at that dummy hand! Not only does dummy have spade length, but also any finesses that declarer wants to take in the spade suit are sure to win. This time, you will be unable to develop any winners from the spade suit and you definitely do not want to lead a spade. So … you look for a different suit to lead. You notice that while the dummy hand has long, good spades, the dummy hand has short hearts. Maybe your partner might have long hearts (hopefully 5 or more)? You don’t have great length in the heart suit, but you do have great strength in the heart suit, and if partner has the heart length you hope he has, hearts might be the longest and strongest suit of your partnership. Taking a clue from seeing this dummy, you should lead a heart.

(Show next exhibit.) Three other guidelines that you have learned in planning the declarer play in a notrump contract to develop more winners by establishment of length in declarer’s partnership’s long suit apply equally to planning the defense against a notrump contract to develop more winners by establishment of length in defenders’ long suit:
- Defenders must preserve enough entries to win the smaller cards that are established by length, including consideration of: (1) playing high cards from short hand first, to avoid blocking a suit; and (2) ducking a round of a suit, to preserve an entry within the long suit
- Defenders should count the number of cards played by opponents in the defenders’ long suit, including discards of the suit
- Defenders should play to develop more winners (by establishment of length in the defenders’ long suit) before playing top tricks (in the other suits)

Have the students break into tables of four players. Distribute a duplicate board with unsorted hands to each table. (Hands need to be determined.)

See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
Opening Lead against a Notrump Contract: Choosing the “Longest (and Strongest)” Suit

East-West is on defense against a notrump contract. Note that West owns more cards in this suit than any other player and that East-West as a partnership own more cards in this suit than does North-South.

1. How many winners in top tricks in this suit have East-West?

2. How many winners by promotion from strength in this suit can be developed by East-West? By North-South?

3. How many winners by establishment of length in this suit can be developed by East-West?
Revising the original layout to move South’s 5 to East, how many tricks could East-West win in the suit?

Revising the original layout to move South’s 5 to West, how many tricks could East-West win in the suit?

_The sooner East-West attacks this suit, the more likely they are to develop the E-W winners by establishment of length before declarer can develop the N-S winners by establishment of length. Best chance for E-W to win the race for development of winners by establishment of length is to begin on opening lead._

**Guideline:** Defense should lead the partnership’s long suit, especially a suit in which one defender was dealt 5+ card length. Choosing a 5+ card length suit with strength is favored over choosing a 5+ card length suit with weakness
You are West, on lead against a notrump contract. Dummy is North.

What suit do you think is the “longest (and strongest)” suit held by your partnership?

Now, what suit do you think is the “longest (and strongest)” suit held by your partnership?
Other Guidelines for Defense to Develop More Winners by Establishment of Length

Guideline: As in notrump declarer play, defenders must preserve enough entries to win the smaller cards that are established by length, including consideration of: (1) playing high cards from short hand first, to avoid blocking a suit; and (2) ducking a round of a suit, to preserve an entry within the long suit.

Guideline: As in notrump declarer play, defenders should count the number of cards played by opponents in the defenders’ long suit, including discards of the suit.

Guideline: As in notrump declarer play, play to develop more winners (by establishment of length in the defenders’ long suit) before playing top tricks (in the other suits).
Planning the Defense against a Notrump Contract

1. Know your trick target
2. Count your probable winners (suit by suit) and count your opponents’ possible winners (suit by suit)
3. Play to develop more winners before playing top tricks
4. Develop more winners for you
5. By establishment of length ...
6. Play your partnership’s long suit so as to establish smaller cards in the long suit
7. Count the number of cards played by opponents in the suit, including discards of the suit
8. Preserve enough entries*
9. * including consideration of ... 1. playing high cards from short hand first, to avoid blocking a suit 2. ducking a round of a suit, to preserve an entry within that suit
Lesson 16 – Opening Lead against a Notrump Contract: Choosing the Card from the Led Suit, Part 1

Objectives:
- to understand some guidelines for the choice of card to lead from the suit chosen for the lead

Handout: at beginning of class, consider handing out the flowchart(s) reproduced at end of this lesson plan

Teaching steps:
- Last lesson you learned that the success or failure of a notrump contract can often depend upon which side – the defenders or the declarer – wins the race to develop winners by establishment of length. The defenders get to start the race by making the opening lead, often in the suit the opening leader believes is the longest (and strongest) suit held by his partnership.
- Now that you have an idea which suit to lead, how do you choose which card in that suit?
- Highlight the document “Choosing the Card to Lead from Your Suit against a Notrump Contract” [See Kantar, Introduction to Defender’s Play, pp. 7-8. www.kantarbridge.com]
  From a suit of four cards or longer in length, that includes at least one honor, usually lead your fourth highest, commonly called “fourth best”: (Show first exhibit.)
  - From KJ765, lead the 6
  - From AK765, lead the 6. Demonstrate why leading the 6 could be preferable to leading two high honors and then a third card, by distributing the rest of the suit around the table so that partner has three small cards in the suit, one opponent has QJT in the suit, and the other opponent has two cards in the suit. And then ask what happens if partner of opening leader gains the lead before opening leader gains the lead. Note that leading the 6 is another form of “preserving entries” to your small cards in the suit that are developed into winners from “establishment of length”.
    - From A872, lead the 2
  - The reason for choosing a fourth best lead when leading the suits above is to retain transportation between the hands of the defenders; that is, to preserve entries to win the smaller cards in the partnership’s long suit that are established by length. (Show next exhibit.) Note that when East is next on lead, the opening lead of the fourth best card in the suit means that East now has transportation to the West hand, where lie the winners that have been developed by establishment of length.
  - (Show next exhibit.) Notice how opening leader’s having started the defense by leading a fourth best card helps opening leader’s partner assess the length of opening leader in the suit led.
    - When opening leader has led the 6 and opening leader’s partner can see all the spot cards lower than the 6, opening leader’s partner can assess the length of opening leader in the suit led as four cards.
    - When opening leader has led the 6 and opening leader’s partner cannot see all the spot cards lower than the 6, opening leader’s partner cannot determine whether the length of opening leader in the suit led is five cards (meaning that opening leader was dealt the 4) or four cards (meaning that declarer was dealt the 4). However … if declarer plays the 4 on the opening lead, the ambiguity is eliminated!
• *(Show next exhibit.)* A fourth best lead can also help each of opening leader’s partner and declarer calculate how many cards higher than the spot card are held by the other.
  - For the curious (not suggested for lesson time), Rule of 11 works because:
    - Subtracting the spot card led from 14 determines how many cards higher than the spot card led by opening leader were dealt to the other three players. That is, if the 2 were led, then 12 (14-2) of the 13 cards in the suit are higher than the spot card led; if the 3 were led, then 11 (14-3) of the 13 cards in the suit are higher than the spot card led; etc.
    - Three of the higher spot cards are held by opening leader; that is because the spot card was opening leader’s fourth best
  - $14-3 = 11$
• The “fourth best” agreement you are learning is a “standard partnership agreement” for what to lead (as will be the subsequent lead and defensive agreements you will learn); they are the agreements most commonly used by bridge partnerships.
• Why is it important to have agreements with partner on the meaning of your opening lead? In the next lesson, you will see how having partnership lead agreements helps your partner conduct the defense in the best way. Having partnership agreements about the meaning of your choice of card for the opening lead results in your giving important information to your partner, in a legal way, information that your partner can use to help the results achieved by your partnership.
• Doesn’t your partnership having agreements so that your partner knows something about your hand from your lead also mean that declarer knows something about your hand? Yes, it does. But bridge experience has strongly shown that it is generally much more helpful to inform your partner than it is harmful to inform declarer.
• Please note that the guidelines for choosing an opening lead are just guidelines; they are not rules. Sometimes the lead that works out best on a hand is the lead that the guidelines might suggest is least attractive to the opening leader. Bridge is a complex game to play well, and as you play more bridge and study more about bridge, you will improve your ability to choose the best opening lead, just as you will improve your general techniques for developing more winners.
• And also remember that while the guidelines are presented as guidelines for the opening lead, they apply also to leads by the defenders after the opening lead. In fact, when the defenders have the additional clue of observing the plan of play of the declarer, the defenders can be more certain than when they were on opening lead about which subsequent leads will be preferable for their partnership.

• Have the students break into tables of four players. Distribute a duplicate board with unsorted hands to each table. (Hands need to be determined.)
• See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
“Fourth best”

KJ765

AK765

A872

Some exceptions for 4+ card suits not headed by honors:

9642
Why “fourth best” from AK765, against a notrump contract?

1. Assume that West begins with A, then K (both winners), then 5. If East later gains the lead, how can East place West on lead – that is, what is transportation from East to West – to win the 7 and 6?

2. Assume that West begins with the 6. South wins the trick. If East later gains the lead, how can East place West on lead – that is, what is the transportation from East to West – to win the AK75?
How does partner’s “fourth best” lead help you assess partner’s length in the suit led?

Your partner West leads a presumed “fourth best” 6 (note that a played card, in bridge notation is marked by being surrounded with parentheses). As East, what do you assess is partner West’s length in the suit led?

Guideline: When partner is expected to have led “fourth best”, assess partner’s length by counting unseen lower spot cards than the card led.
Rule of 11

When opening leader has led a spot card as “fourth best”, you – whether you are the partner of opening leader or the declarer – can calculate how many cards higher than the spot card are held by the other, by applying the Rule of 11, as follows:

- 11, minus
- the number on the spot card led, minus
- the number of cards higher than the spot card seen in the hands of dummy and opening leader, equals
- the number of cards higher than the spot card dealt to declarer.

Example:

```
K 6 5
N
7
W E
A J 9 2
S
? 
```

West has led the 7, presumptively as “fourth best”; declarer South calls for the 5 from North. East sees four cards higher than the 7 between North’s hand (K) and his own hand (A, J, and 9). East applies Rule of 11:

- 11, minus
- 7, minus
- 4, equals
- 0, the number of cards higher than the 7 that are held by declarer

East should play the 2, allowing West to win the trick with the 7!

(West might have led 7 from QT87, leaving South 43.)
Choosing the Card to Lead from Your Suit against a Notrump Contract

Often the suit you determine to lead is the suit in which your side can develop winners by establishment of length

Once you have chosen the suit to lead, lead according to your partnership agreements

Informing partner is more important than not informing declarer

Look to your length and honor holding in the suit you are leading

Length of 4 cards or more, that includes an honor

lead 4th highest card ("4th best")

... unless (to be later noted)

Examples:
- KQ965
- AK975
- KQ95
- J943
Lesson 17 – Opening Lead against a Notrump Contract: Choosing the Card from the Led Suit, Part 2

Objectives:
- to understand some guidelines for the choice of card to lead from the suit chosen for the lead

Handout: at beginning of class, consider handing out the flowchart(s) reproduced at end of this lesson plan

Teaching steps:
- Last lesson you learned that when opening leader was leading from a suit of four cards in length with at least one honor, opening leader usually leads “fourth best” from such suit. However, there are many exceptions to “fourth best” leads. In this lesson, you will learn the standard partnership agreements for those exceptions.
- From a suit of four cards or longer in length, that includes at least one honor, these are the exceptions:
  - (Show first exhibit.) If your suit includes a three card or longer sequence headed by an honor (“sequence” meaning cards that are right next to each other in rank order, and “honor” being the T or a higher ranking card), you lead the top card of the sequence:
    - From KQJ2, lead the K
    - From KQJT2, lead the K
  - (Show next exhibit.) If your suit is headed by a two card sequence, and the next highest card is just one card in rank removed from being the third card in that sequence – so that you almost have a three card sequence headed by an honor (called a “near sequence”) –, you lead the top card of the sequence:
    - From KQT65, lead the K, because the T is only one card in rank lower than the J, which would complete a three card sequence headed by an honor
    - But from KQ965, lead the fourth highest 6
    - From JT853, lead the J
  - (Show next exhibit.) If your suit includes an “interior sequence”, you lead the highest card of that interior sequence. When does a suit have an interior sequence? A suit has an interior sequence when it includes a two-card or longer honor sequence headed by the J or T (so, the JT or the T9) and a higher non-sequential honor. That’s a mouthful and is easier explained by example:
    - QT942 is a suit with an interior sequence because it not only includes the T9 combination but also includes the higher honor of the Q. Lead the T.
    - Similarly, KT942 or KJT42 is a suit with an interior sequence. Lead the T from the first and the J from the second.
    - By contrast, JT942 is not an interior sequence, because all three cards in sequence are in rank order; there is no non-sequential honor. Lead the J.
    - Leading the Q from AQJ42 is a rarer interior sequence from which to lead.
Now that you have learned the leads from four card or longer suits, let’s quickly go through the leads from holdings shorter than four cards, as listed on the flowchart. Let’s highlight just a couple of the applications, for leading from a three card suit.

- From a holding with two or more honors in sequence, such as KQ5, lead the highest honor. That’s only a two-card sequence but you might think of this lead as an application of the advice you have heard before about “leading a high card from the short hand first”, because when you lead a three card suit, you are really hoping that your partner has more length in the suit than do you.
- From a suit with no honors with no honor, such as 852, lead highest. In bridge language, this lead is referred to as “top of nothing”.
- From a suit that includes one honor (only) lead small. Note that leading an unsupported honor (such as the honor card from K53, Q53, J53, or T53) is not recommended.

As noted in the previous lesson:

- The agreements you are learning are “standard partnership agreements” for what to lead; they are the agreements most commonly used by bridge partnerships.
- Following your agreements with partner on the meaning of your opening lead helps your partner conduct the defense in the best way. You will later learn many applications for this advice.
- Bridge experience has strongly shown that it is generally much more helpful to inform your partner than it is harmful to inform declarer.
- The guidelines for choosing an opening lead are just guidelines; they are not rules.
- While the guidelines are presented as guidelines for the opening lead, they apply also to leads by the defenders after the opening lead. In fact, when the defenders have the additional clue of observing the plan of play of the declarer, the defenders can be more certain than when they were on opening lead about which subsequent leads will be preferable for their partnership.

Have the students break into tables of four players. Distribute a duplicate board with unsorted hands to each table. (Hands need to be determined.)

See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
“Top of sequence”

KQJ2

KQJT2
“Top of near sequence”

KQT65

KQ965

JT853
“Interior sequence” led by J or T (or, Q)

QT942

KT942 or KJT42

not JT942
From holdings of fewer than four cards:

K75 (not the K)

KQ5

852

K5

82
Choosing the Card to Lead from Your Suit against a Notrump Contract

Often the suit you determine to lead is the suit in which your side can develop winners by establishment of length.

Once you have chosen the suit to lead, lead according to your partnership agreements.

Informing partner is more important than not informing declarer.

Look to your length and honor holding in the suit you are leading.

Length of 4 cards or more, that includes an honor:

- Lead 4th highest card ("4th best")
- ... unless
  - your suit is headed by three or more cards in sequence
    - lead highest card of the sequence (Examples: QJ4, KQJT)
  - your suit is headed by two cards in sequence and a lower third card in near sequence
    - lead highest card of the sequence (Examples: QJ4, KQJT)
  - your suit contains an "interior sequence" headed by the ten or higher
    - lead highest card of the interior sequence (Examples: QJ4, KQJT)

Length of 3 cards, that includes an honor:

- Lead lowest card
- ... unless
  - your suit is headed by two or more honors in sequence
    - lead highest honor (Examples: KT9)
  - your suit contains an "interior sequence" headed by the ten or higher
    - lead highest card of the interior sequence (Examples: KT9)

Length of 3 or more cards, that includes no honor:

- Lead highest or second highest card ("top of nothing")
  - lead higher card (Examples: 865, 9864, 9642)
  - lead higher card (Examples: 62, K5)

Length of 2 cards:

- Lead highest card
Lesson 18 – Third Hand Play, when Dummy has only Small Cards in the Suit Partner Led, Part 1

Objectives:

- to understand partnership agreements about the plays by third hand at Trick 1
- to understand partnership agreements about the card returned by third hand at Trick 2
- to understand to play the “lowest of equal” (or “lowest of equivalent”) high cards
- to understand to unblock a suit

Handout: at beginning of class, consider handing out the flowchart(s) reproduced at end of this lesson

Teaching steps:

- In previous lessons, you learned that the success or failure of many notrump contracts depends upon which side – the declarer or the defenders – wins the race to develop more winners by “establishment of length”. The defenders, because they get to make the opening lead, get to start the race first. Often opening leader chooses to lead the suit in which the opening leader expects that his partnership has the most length.

- In the last lesson, you also learned some standard partnership agreements for choosing the card to lead in the suit that opening leader thought was likely to be his partnership’s longest suit. In this lesson, you will learn more partnership agreements on defense and how the partnership can use the information from the agreements to help the partnership conduct the best defense.

- In bridge language, the partner of the opening leader is called “third hand”. (Opening leader being the first hand, dummy being the second hand, and declarer the fourth hand, because that is the clockwise order of play for Trick 1.)

- When opening leader has led a “fourth best” card from length, third hand already has some information available to help conduct the best defense. Recall that by looking at spot cards that are lower in rank than the presumed “fourth best” spot card led by partner/opening leader, third hand can sometimes precisely calculate the lengths in the suit led of all four players. That information will help third hand determine whether the suit led should be continued, or whether a switch to another suit will produce more winners for the defense.

- The choice of cards played by third hand to Trick 1 can help opening leader determine whether the suit led should be continued. And, whenever third hand is on lead – which might be as early as Trick 2 – so will the card returned by third hand help opener select the best line of defense. Just as opening leader follows some partnership agreements to help third hand determine the layout of the led suit, third hand should follow some partnership agreements to help opening leader determine the layout of the led suit. (Show first exhibit.) The partnership agreements for third hand play, when dummy is dealt only small cards in the suit led are:
  - At first trick, play highest card, but lowest of equal (or equivalent) high cards
  - On next play in the suit led, from an original three card holding in the suit, play the higher of the two cards remaining. Note that this part of the agreement is another application of “playing the high card from the short hand first”.
Let’s assume that opening leader has led the ♠2 and that dummy has three small spades. Declarer calls for the ♠5 from dummy. Refer to the document “Choosing the Card to Lead from Your Suit against a Notrump Contract”. Third hand can assume that the ♠2 is a “fourth best” lead from a suit that is headed by an honor. What should be the play plan of third hand from:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>North (dummy)</th>
<th>♠ 86(5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West (opening leader)</td>
<td>♠ (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East (third hand – you)</td>
<td>♠ KJ3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South (declarer)</td>
<td>♠</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Third hand should play the king. When dummy has small cards in the suit that was led by opening leader, third hand should play the highest card in the suit.
- Assume that the ♠K won the trick, declarer following suit with the ♠4. What card should third hand lead to Trick 2?
- Third hand should return the ♠J. When third hand has only two cards remaining in a suit, third hand should play the higher of the two remaining cards.

Here is a holding that is consistent with the play thus far:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>North (dummy)</th>
<th>♠ 865</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West (opening leader)</td>
<td>♠ AT72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East (third hand – you)</td>
<td>♠ KJ3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South (declarer)</td>
<td>♠ Q94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- When you win the king and return the jack, your side is sure to take all four tricks in the suit: if declarer plays the ♠9 at Trick 2, your ♠J will win Trick 2 (West will follow with the ♠7) and when you continue with the ♠3 at Trick 3, your partner will capture declarer’s ♠Q with the ♠A and cash the ♠T. On your play of the ♠J at Trick 2, if, instead of playing the ♠9, declarer decides to play the ♠Q, your side will still win all four tricks. In that case, West will capture the ♠Q with the ♠A at Trick 2 and then follow with the ♠T at Trick 3. At that point the ♠T is the highest ranking spade. All three players will follow suit on the ♠T and West’s ♠7 will win Trick 4.
- No other combination of plays will result in E-W winning the first four tricks with spades. If, for example, East should win the ♠K at Trick 1 and continue the ♠3 (rather than the ♠J as suggested) at Trick 2, declarer can play the ♠Q at Trick 2. West can capture the ♠Q with the ♠A. West can now lead one of his two remaining spades to
East’s ♠J for a third trick, but with East on lead and having no more spades, E-W cannot immediately win a fourth spade: the wrong hand is on lead.

- You might recognize East’s play of the ♠J at Trick 2 as another application of something you learned in declarer play: play the high card from the short hand first.
- How did East know, at the time he held ♠J3, that his hand was the short side? That gets back to the partnership agreements on leads: when West led the ♠2 at Trick 1, East could be pretty sure that his partner owned four spades (the two being the fourth best card) headed by an honor.

• (Show next exhibit.) Let’s try some more examples, with the same opening lead and dummy, but with the cards held by East changing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>North (dummy)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>♠ 86(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West (opening leader)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♠ (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East (third hand – you)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♠ KQ3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South (declarer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♠</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Again opening leader leads the ♠2 and dummy plays the ♠5. You can still assume that West is leading fourth best from a suit headed by an honor. With dummy having small cards, you should play a high card. But the high card you should choose is not the ♠K, but rather is the ♠Q. When you have a choice to play among cards that are “equals”, you should play the lowest of the equals. Here, that is the ♠Q.
- (Show next exhibit.) If you fail to follow the partnership agreement and play the K instead of the Q, who will partner think was dealt the Q?
- Assume that the ♠Q wins Trick 1, declarer following suit with the ♠4. What card should you play at Trick 2? You should play the ♠K at Trick 2, returning the higher of your two remaining spades. Here is a holding that is consistent with the play thus far:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>North (dummy)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>♠ 865</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West (opening leader)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♠ J972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East (third hand – you)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♠ KQ3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South (declarer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♠ AT4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Declarer can, and probably should, hold off on playing the ♠A at Trick 2. But when you continue a third spade at Trick 3, declarer must then play the ♠A and your partner, if he can get on lead later in the hand just once, will be able to cash a third spade winner for your partnership.
Here’s another example, that will help you learn better what is meant by playing “lowest of equals”:

North (dummy)
♠ 86(5)

West (opening leader)
♠ (2)

East (third hand – you)
♠ 973

South (declarer)
♠

- Declarer calls for the ♠5 from dummy. What card do you play?
- You have learned that when dummy has all small cards, that third hand plays a high card. And you have also learned that when third hand is to play a high card, third hand should play the “lowest of equals or equivalents”. Here, both the 7 and the 9 are equivalents. With the 8 shown in dummy, you know that playing the 7 is just as good as playing the 9; for either of those two cards, the next highest ranking card is the ten. Accordingly, the high card third hand should play at Trick 1 is the 7, the lowest from equals of the 9 and the 7.

Have the students break into tables of four players. Distribute a duplicate board with unsorted hands to each table. (Hands need to be determined.)

See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
Third Hand Play Partnership Agreements

Assume your partner (opening leader or “first hand”) makes the opening lead, and dummy (“second hand”) has only small cards in the suit led. Most of the time the correct card to play from third hand is:

- Highest card, but …
- … Lowest of equal (or equivalent) high cards

And on third hand’s next play in the suit lead, play:

- From an original three card holding, the higher of the two cards remaining (an application of playing the high card from the short hand first)
Your partner is West; dummy is North; you are East; declarer is South.

Your partner West was opening leader and led the 2. The 5 was played from North.

What card do you play on this trick?

When you next play the suit led, what card do you play?
This could be the layout of the entire suit.

What cards will remain if you play the J on the first round of the suit?

Alternatively, what cards will remain if you play the K on the first round of the suit?

After you win the K, what card do you return?

Notice that playing the cards dictated by your partnership agreements is the only way that EW can win the first four tricks in the suit.
Your partner is West; dummy is North; you are East; declarer is South.

Your partner West was opening leader and led the 2. The 5 was played from North.

What card do you play?
This could be the layout of the entire suit.

If you play the K on the first round of suit, who will partner think has the Q?

Alternatively, if you play the Q on the first round of suit, who will partner think has the K?

When you next play this suit – say when you are next on lead –, what card do you lead?

Even if South holds up the play of the A until the third round of the suit, playing the cards dictated by your partnership agreement is the only way for EW to win three tricks in the suit, provided only that West has one entry to his J.
Your partner is West; dummy is North; you are East; declarer is South.

Your partner West was opening leader and led the 2. The 5 was played from North.

What card do you play?
Third Hand Play when Dummy Has Only Small Cards

Follow your partnership’s agreements → Informing partner is more important than not informing declarer → Look to dummy’s honor holdings and to your honor holdings in the suit led → Dummy has no honor cards in the suit led → on the first trick, you play → your highest card, but the “lowest of equals” among cards equal to your highest card*

* ... And on your next play in the suit led, you play:

from an original three card holding, your higher remaining card
Lesson 19 – Second Hand Play, Part 1

Objective:
- to understand second hand play guideline of “second hand low”

Teaching steps:
- Since the first couple of classes, what you have learned have been guidelines. Most of the actual rules of bridge you learned in the first few classes although one of the distinctions between expert and non-expert bridge players is knowing when to make a play that is outside of a guideline, the goal for this class is more modest. Guidelines can help you establish a good bridge foundation. If you choose to study and play bridge more, you will come to learn better both the reasons for the guideline and the situations that are exceptions to the guideline. Yes, bridge is a very difficult game. That is what makes the game so interesting.
- Today’s lesson is about play by “second-hand” play. Second hand means “second-to-play”. In other words, second hand play guidelines apply when the lead is made to your immediate right. Second hand play does not apply to Trick 1, because at Trick 1 second-to-play is the dummy, and the dummy makes no decision during a hand.
- Sometimes second hand play examples will involve a lead from dummy, the exposed hand, with your hand being the hand to play right after dummy’s. And sometimes second hand play examples will involve a lead from declarer, a hidden hand, with your hand being the hand to play right after declarer’s.
- The second hand play guideline you will learn today is “second hand low”:  

  North (dummy)
  ♠ A965
  West (second hand – you)
  ♠ KT2
  East (partner)
  ♠
  South (declarer/leader)
  ♠ (3)

- Declarer plays the ♠3 toward dummy. Play the ♠2.
- (Show next exhibit.) illustrating how playing the 2 on the first round will produce one fewer trick for declarer. Do not make the mistake of playing the ten to force declarer to play the ace. You can infer that your partner East holds either or both of the ♠Q and ♠J; if declarer held both of those cards, declarer would probably have led one of them in order to try to finesse against your king.
- [See Kantar, Introduction to Defender’s Play, p. 112 www.kantarbridge.com]
(Show next exhibit.) Second hand low is also a good guideline when the lead is coming from the exposed hand of dummy toward the hidden hand of declarer:

North (dummy/leader)
♦ Q9(2)

West (partner)
♥

East (second hand – you)
♠ KT6

South (declarer)
♣

- Declarer calls for the ♠2 from dummy. Play the ♠6. If declarer is about ready to play a high honor from his hand, say, the ace, your having retained the KT sitting over dummy’s Q9 might produce two tricks for your partnership. And if your partner holds the ace, it is possible that you having retained the KT sitting over dummy’s Q9 might produce three tricks for your partnership.

- (Show next exhibit) illustrating how playing the 6 on the first round will produce one fewer trick for declarer. [See Kantar, Introduction to Defender’s Play, p. 98 www.kantarbridge.com.]

- Have the students break into tables of four players. Distribute a duplicate board with unsorted hands to each table. (Hands need to be determined.)
- See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
Guideline (with many exceptions): Second Hand Low

You are West. Declarer is South and dummy is North.

Declarer South leads the 3.

Which card should you play?

[See Kantar, Introduction to Defender’s Play, p. 112 www.kantarbridge.com.]
You are West. Declarer is South and dummy is North.

Declarer South leads the 3.

A 9 6 5
K 10 (2)
J 8 7 4 (3)

How many tricks will declarer win if West plays the (second hand low) 2?

A 9 6 5
K (10) 2
J 8 7 4 (3)

How many tricks will declarer win if West plays the 10?

Bonus question: if South held the Q and J, would South have led the 3?
You are East. Declarer is South and dummy is North.

Declarer calls for the 2 from dummy North.

Which card should you play?

[See Kantar, Introduction to Defender’s Play, p 98  www.kantarbridge.com.]
You are East. Declarer is South and dummy is North.

Declarer calls for the 2 from dummy North.

How many tricks will declarer win if East plays the (second hand low) 6?

How many tricks might declarer win if East plays the 10?
Lesson 20 – Preventing Opponents’ Notrump Tricks by Hold Up Play, Part 1

Objective:
- to understand how holding up the playing of an ace might limit the number of tricks won by the defense

Handout: at beginning of class, consider handing out the flowchart(s) reproduced at end of this lesson plan

Teaching steps:
- You have learned that the objectives of both the declarer and the defenders in a notrump contract include the development of winners by establishment of length. In fact, frequently the defenders begin to pursue that objective on opening lead, by leading fourth best from their longest and strongest suit.
- This lesson you will learn about a technique that declarer can use to try to prevent the defense from succeeding at their objective to develop extra winners by establishment of length. In the succeeding lesson you will learn about how defenders can use the same technique.
  o (Show first exhibit.) Demonstrate a layout of this card combination held, led, and continued by the defenders: KQJT9 opposite xxx, with one member of declaring side owning Axx. (Note that “x” is bridge language for a card of low rank.) (Show next exhibit.) For the first hand, focus on the reason for holding up the ace until the third spade has been played by E-W. What happens if you play the ♠A on the first or second round of spades, East holds the ♦K, and also holds exactly three spades? In that case, when you lose a finesse to the ♦K, East can continue spades and E-W will win 4 spade tricks in addition to the ♦K, to defeat the N-S contract of 3NT. By contrast, note what happens if you hold up the ♠A until the third round of the suit and then lose a finesse to the ♦K held by East. East will then be exhausted of spades and forced to lead a suit that you can win and then be able to win enough diamond tricks to make your contract of 3NT.
  o (Show next exhibit.) For the second hand, focus on the reason for not holding up the ace, for even one round. What happens if West remains on lead after Trick 1 and then switches to a heart? In that case, you, who would already have lost a spade, might later lose not only the ♠A, but also maybe at least three heart tricks, thus not making your contract. If, instead, you win the ace at Trick 1, you can lead clubs and force out the ♣A in order to promote your other club honors to win nine tricks, while the opponents will have no extra immediate winners at the time that they win the ♣A.
- Highlight the document “Planning the Play in a Notrump Contract” and the section about “Holding Up an Ace”. Note that often the alternative language used in bridge can be “ducking” an ace. This technique, you will notice, is not about developing extra winners for your side but rather about something equally valuable: preventing the opponents from developing more winners. Thought of in that manner, you can treat holding up an ace as a counter to the techniques of developing extra winners by promotion or by length.
• Have the students break into tables of four players. Distribute a duplicate board with unsorted hands to each table. [See Kantar, Introduction to Declarer’s Play, p.42, www.kantarbridge.com].
(Give opening leader ♠KQJT9 with no side entry. Contract is 3NT.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dummy</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>♠ 32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♥ A54</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ KJT92</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♣ K54</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Declarer</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>♠ A54</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♥ K632</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ Q6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♣ A632</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
You are South, declaring a notrump contract.

West leads the K. Assume that East-West continue to lead this suit at every available opportunity.

1. If you win the A on the first round of this suit and later lose the lead (in any other suit), how many tricks will you lose in this suit, in total?

2. If you win the A on the second round of this suit and later lose the lead (in any other suit), how many tricks will you lose in this suit, in total?

3. If you win the A on the third round of this suit and later lose the lead to West (in any other suit), how many tricks will you lose in this suit, in total?

4. If you win the A on the third round of this suit and later lose the lead to East (in any other suit), how many tricks will you lose in this suit, in total?
You are sitting South, declaring a contract of 3NT. The opening lead is the ♠Q.

1. Count your top tricks, suit by suit. Compare the count to the number of tricks needed to make the contract.

2. The diamond suit seems to be the suit to play to develop the extra winners you need to make your contract. How do you plan to play the diamond suit?

3. When do you plan to play the diamond suit?

4. Assume that West continues with high spades as long as he remains on lead, with East following suit for three rounds only. What is your plan in the spade suit?

5. Assume that East was dealt exactly three spades. How many tricks will you win if East were dealt the ♦K76? How many tricks will you win if West were dealt the ♦K76?

[See Kantar, Introduction to Declarer’s Play, p.41, www.kantarbridge.com]
You are sitting South, declaring a contract of 3NT. The opening lead is the ♠Q.

1. Count your top tricks, suit by suit. Compare the count to the number of tricks needed to make the contract.

2. How many extra winners can you develop by promotion from strength in the club suit?

3. What is your plan at Trick 1?

4. How might your plan differ if the lead were the ♥Q instead of the ♠Q?

[See Kantar, Introduction to Declarer’s Play, p.45b, www.kantarbridge.com]
Planning the Play in a Notrump Contract

Know your trick target

Count your winners (suit by suit), starting with top tricks, and count your opponents' possible winners (suit by suit)

Play to develop more winners before playing top tricks

Develop more winners for you

Preserve enough entries*

*Including consideration of ...
  1. playing high cards from short hand first, to avoid blocking a suit
  2. ducking a round of a suit, to preserve an entry within that suit

Prevent more winners for opponents

By promotion from strength ...

By establishment of length ...

By finessing ...

Play to force out opponents' high cards in the suits in which your side owns the not-quite-high cards

Play your partnership's long suit so as to establish smaller cards in the long suit

Count the number of cards played by opponents in the suit, including discards of the suit

Hold up playing an ace in one opponent's long suit until the other opponent has no cards remaining in the suit

Play a suit from one hand ("position") so that you can lead through hoped-for high cards of opponents ("hope") toward your side's high cards

By holding up ("ducking") an ace ...
Lesson 21 – Preventing Opponents’ Notrump Tricks by Hold Up Play, Part 2

Objectives:
- to understand how holding up the playing of an ace might limit the number of tricks won by the declarer
- to understand how defenders can legally signal to each other in order to determine how long to hold up the playing of an ace

Handout: at beginning of class, consider handing out the flowchart(s) reproduced at end of this lesson plan

Teaching steps:
- Last lesson you learned how declarer can try to prevent the defense from developing winners from establishment of length by holding up the playing of an ace. The same technique can be used by the defense to prevent declarer from developing winners from establishment of length.
- To make the most effective use of the technique of holding up the ace, the defense must be able to determine how long to hold up the ace.
- (Show first exhibit.) Let’s look at this example. [See Kantar, Introduction to Defender’s Play, p. 40 www.kantarbridge.com.]

North (dummy)
- ♠ 763
- ♥ 32
- ♦ KQJT4
- ♣ 743

West (you)
- ♠ Q942
- ♥ J9
- ♦ 832
- ♣ J865

East (partner)
- ♠ JT8
- ♥ QT876
- ♦ A95
- ♣ T9

South (declarer)
- ♠ AK5
- ♥ AK54
- ♦ 76
- ♣ AKQ2

- Declarer is playing 3NT and you lead the ♦ 2 (“fourth best” from an honor), won by declarer. Declarer plays the ♦ 7 and you follow suit.
- How many tricks will declarer win if your partner plays the ace on the first round of diamonds? [Declarer will win 11 tricks: 2+2+4+3, making his contract with two overtricks.]
- (Show next exhibit.) How many tricks will declarer win if your partner holds up the playing of the ace on the first round of diamonds, declarer continues a second round of diamonds (as you follow suit), and your partner again holds up the playing of the ace? [Declarer will win 9 tricks: 2+2+2+3, making his contract.]
o (Show next exhibit.) How many tricks will declarer win if your partner holds up the playing of the ace on the first round of diamonds, declarer continues a second round of diamonds (as you follow suit), and your partner wins the second round of diamonds with the ace? [Declarer will win 8 tricks: 2+2+1+3, failing to make his contract.]

• (Show next exhibit.) Notice that the winning defense was for your partner to hold up the playing of the ace until exactly the round of diamonds upon which declarer played his last diamond. Here – because declarer was dealt two diamonds –, that was the second round of diamonds. How can your partner know that the winning defense is to hold up the playing of the ace on the first round of diamonds but not to hold up the playing of the ace on the second round of diamonds?

• (Show next exhibit.) The answer to that question lies in your partner knowing how many diamonds you hold. Assuming that your partner can read you for having been dealt three diamonds, then your partner knows that declarer was dealt only two diamonds. Your partner’s thought process would be this:
  o There are 13 diamonds in the deck.
  o 8 diamonds are held by his hand (3 diamonds) and dummy’s hand (5 diamonds).
  o That leaves 5 diamonds (13 minus 8) to be shared by your hand and declarer’s hand.
  o If partner believes that you hold three of those five diamonds, then declarer must hold two of those five diamonds.

• You can legally inform your partner how many diamonds you hold not by verbally telling him how many diamonds you hold – that would be against the rules of bridge – but by your choice of diamond cards while you follow suit to the rounds of diamonds played by declarer. The diamond cards you play when following suit can give your partner a (legal) count signal.

• (Show next exhibit.) Let’s go back to the example and illustrate use of the count signal. You play the ♦2, a low card as a count signal showing an odd number of diamonds. If your partner East can read your odd number of diamonds as three, then East will know that declarer has only two diamonds. Partner lets dummy’s ♦T win the first trick, but when declarer calls for the ♦K on the next trick, East plays the ♦A. Declarer can win no more diamond tricks because he has no diamond remaining to reach dummy’s good diamonds and no outside entry to dummy in any side suit, either. By holding up the ♦A for only one round, East limited declarer to only one diamond trick and declarer will take only eight tricks on the deal.
* (Show next exhibit.) Now let’s change the example a bit and see what would happen if declarer and West exchanged West’s ♦3 for South’s ♣Q.

North (dummy)
- ♠ 763
- ♥ 32
- ♦ KQJT4
- ♣ 743

West (you)
- ♠ Q942
- ♥ J9
- ♦ 82
- ♣ QJ865

East (partner)
- ♠ JT8
- ♥ QT876
- ♦ A95
- ♣ T9

South (declarer)
- ♠ AK5
- ♥ AK54
- ♦ 763
- ♣ AK2

- That would mean that declarer holds three diamonds (763) and West holds only two diamonds (82), while South now holds only six top tricks outside of the diamond suit. When declarer leads a diamond toward dummy, you will play a high diamond, the ♦8, as a count signal showing an even number of diamonds. Your partner East can likely read you for two diamonds, meaning that declarer has three diamonds. East will allow declarer to win two diamond tricks. When declarer leads a third diamond (his last diamond), however, East will win the ace and declarer will be unable to win get to dummy for dummy’s two good diamonds. Down one.

- When declarer is trying to develop extra winners by establishment of length in a particular suit, the count signal can be used by the defense to help prevent declarer from using the extra winners.

- You should be very careful about when to play a count signal. Sometimes giving a count signal can help declarer more than it helps your partner. Experience will help you learn better when not giving a count signal is beneficial to your partnership.

- Does signaling apply to declarer’s side, too? No. Because declarer (as well as each defender) can see the cards of dummy – declarer’s partner – declarer has no reason to signal to his dummy and vice versa.

- Effective signaling is one of the hallmarks of a successful partnership. You will learn much more about effective signaling in subsequent lessons.

- Have the students break into tables of four players. Distribute a duplicate board with unsorted hands to each table. (Hands need to be determined.)

- See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
You are West; dummy is North; your partner is East; declarer is South.

Declarer is playing 3NT and you lead the ♠2 ("fourth best" from an honor), won by declarer. Declarer plays the ♦7. You follow suit. Declarer calls for the ♦T from dummy.

If your partner wins this trick with the ♦A, how many tricks will declarer win?

[See Kantar, Introduction to Defender’s Play, p. 40 www.kantarbridge.com.]
You are West; dummy is North; your partner is East; declarer is South.

Declarer is playing 3NT and you lead the ♠2 ("fourth best" from an honor), won by declarer. Declarer plays the ♦7. You follow suit. Declarer calls for the ♦T from dummy.

Assume your partner holds up the ♦A on this trick, playing the ♦5. Declarer next calls for the ♦K from dummy. Assume your partner again holds up the ♦A, playing the ♦9.

How many tricks will declarer win?
You are West; dummy is North; your partner is East; declarer is South.

Declarer is playing 3NT and you lead the ♠2 ("fourth best" from an honor), won by declarer. Declarer plays the ♦7. You follow suit. Declarer calls for the ♦T from dummy.

Assume your partner holds up the ♦A on this trick, playing the ♦5. Declarer next calls for the ♦K from dummy.

If your partner wins this trick with the ♦A, how many tricks will declarer win?
Prevent Winners for Declarer by Hold Up Play

Assume that declarer is developing extra winners in dummy from Establishment of Length in a suit in which the defenders hold the ace.

The defenders should hold up the playing of the ace of such suit until exactly the round upon which the declarer plays his last card in such suit: not sooner and not later.
Using the Count Signal

How can the defense determine when declarer has played his last card in the suit in which declarer is trying to develop more winners by Establishment of Length, and the defense holds the ace of such suit?

The defender who holds the ace of the suit can: (1) count the number of cards in the suit that he was dealt; (2) count the number of card in the suit that dummy was dealt; and (3) infer the number of cards in the suit that declarer was dealt because the defender’s partner can signal his count in the suit:

- The defender’s partner signals odd count in the suit by following suit with a low card and playing a higher card on the next round of the suit.

- The defender’s partner signals even count in the suit by following suit with a high card and playing a lower card on the next round of the suit.

Count signals can also be used when the long suit is held by declarer rather than by dummy.
This, of course, is the same hand you have been viewing.

You are West; dummy is North; your partner is East; declarer is South.

Declarer is playing 3NT and you lead the ♠2 (“fourth best” from an honor), won by declarer. Declarer plays the ♦7.

What card do you play? Why?

[See Kantar, Introduction to Defender’s Play, p. 40 www.kantarbridge.com.]
You are West; dummy is North; your partner is East; declarer is South.

Declarer is playing 3NT and you lead the ♣6 (“fourth best” from an honor), won by declarer. Declarer plays the ♦7.

What card do you play? Why?

[See Kantar, Introduction to Defender’s Play, p. 40 www.kantarbridge.com.]
Planning the Defense against a Notrump Contract

1. Play to develop more winners before playing top tricks
2. Develop more winners for you
3. Preserve enough entries*

   - By establishment of length...
   - Play your partnership’s long suit so as to establish smaller cards in the long suit
   - Count the number of cards played by opponents in the suit, including discards of the suit

4. Count your probable winners (suit by suit) and count your opponents’ possible winners (suit by suit)

   - * including consideration of ...
     1. playing high cards from short hand first, to avoid blocking a suit
     2. ducking a round of a suit, to preserve an entry within that suit

5. Prevent more winners for opponents

   - By establishment of length...

6. Lead a suit that attacks entries to opponents’ long suit*
7. Hold up playing an ace in one opponent’s long suit until the other opponent has no cards remaining in the suit

*not covered by a lesson plan
Lesson 22 – Opening Lead against a Trump Suit Contract, Part 1

Objectives:
- to understand when/how to frustrate the objective of declarer to eliminate side suit losers by ruffing the losers
- to understand when/how to develop more winners for the defense by ruffing declarer’s winners

Handout: at beginning of class, consider handing out the flowchart(s) reproduced at end of this lesson plan

Teaching steps:
- A primary objective of the defense, beginning with the opening lead, is to frustrate the play plan of declarer.
- How can you identify the play plan of declarer, when you cannot see declarer’s hand?
- You have two clues available to you at mini-bridge at the time of the opening lead:
  o Opening leader can look at dummy’s hand and project how declarer plans to eliminate side suit losers
  o Opening leader can look at his own hand and determine which suit to be led might frustrate the projected plan of declarer
- In this lesson, the defense’s focus will be on the ruffing game: both to increase losers for declarer by reducing opportunities for declarer to ruff losers them and to increase winners for the defense by creating opportunities for defenders to ruff winners of declarer.
- (Show first exhibit.) Here is an example, against a mini-bridge contract of 2♥ by South, where the defense might frustrate declarer’s objective to eliminate side suit losers by ruffing them in the shorter trump hand:

```
North (dummy)

♠ 2
♥ T54
♦ A9832
♣ K652

West (you)
♠ AQ78
♥ 73
♦ K764
♣ J87

East (partner)

South (declarer)
```

- Lead the ♥7. [See Kantar, Introduction to Defender’s Play, p. 71 www.kantarbridge.com.]
- You know that declarer, the long trump hand, has losers in the spade suit. Any spade honors that declarer might hold will not be winners, because you hold higher spade honors sitting after any of declarer’s spade honors. Declarer might be planning to eliminate his spade losers by ruffing them in the (short trump hand of) dummy. (Show next exhibit.) You can frustrate his plan by drawing trumps of dummy before they can be used to ruff spades. When you win the first round of spades, you can continue your plan by leading a second trump.
Here is an example, defending a mini-bridge contract of 4♥ by South, where the defense might develop extra winners by ruffing a trick that, otherwise, could be a winner for declarer:

North (dummy)
♠ 763
♥ KJ85
♦ KT4
♣ 943

West (you)
♠ K842
♥ A64
♦ Q763
♣ 72

East (partner)

South (declarer)

Lead the ♣ 7 (high from a doubleton). [See Kantar, Introduction to Defender’s Play, p. 66(a) www.kantarbridge.com.] You hope to be able to ruff one of declarer’s club winners with one of your small trumps.

- When you have a singleton or a doubleton in a side suit, you can hope to be able to ruff the second or third round of that suit.
- Leading a singleton or doubleton is especially attractive when you or your partner has a first or second round winner in the trump suit. Having a first or second round winner in the trump suit means that declarer cannot draw your trumps before you can try to use a small trump to ruff one of declarer’s winners.
- (Show next exhibit.) Leading a singleton or doubleton is not attractive when your ruff would be with a natural trump winner. For example, if you held ♥QJT and were to ruff a club, you would be trading a natural trump trick for a ruffing winner.
- As to be illustrated later, opening leader might have a better choice than leading a singleton or doubleton when opening leader has four trumps.
- See exhibit for above deal.

Have the students break into tables of four players. Distribute a duplicate board with unsorted hands to each table. (Hands need to be determined.)

See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
You are West; dummy is North; your partner is East; declarer is South.

How do you project that South plans to eliminate side suit losers?

What suit do you lead against a 2♥ contract?

What are you hoping to gain by choosing that suit?

What card in that suit do you lead, according to your partnership agreements?

[See Kantar, Introduction to Defender’s Play, p. 71 www.kantarbridge.com]
This could be the whole hand. If you do not lead trumps at Trick 1 and again when in lead with the ♠A, South can force you to cover South’s spade plays, ruff two losing spades in North, and establish multiple winning spade tricks. If you do lead trumps at Trick 1 and again when in lead with ♠A, you will win two or three more spade tricks on defense.

**Guideline:** When a defender projects that declarer plans to eliminate side suit losers by ruffling them in dummy (the shorter trump hand), the defender should consider leading trumps.
You are West; dummy is North; your partner is East; declarer is South.

What suit do you lead against a 4♥ contract?

What trick(s) are you hoping to gain by choosing that suit?

What card in that suit do you lead, according to your partnership agreements?

[See Kantar, Introduction to Defender’s Play, p. 66(a) www.kantarbridge.com.]
Guideline: When a defender can project the possibility of a defender ruffing a short side suit with a small trump (when a defender holds two or fewer cards in the side suit and, in particular, when the defenders can stop declarer from drawing all of the defenders’ trumps), the defender should consider leading the short side suit.

[See Kantar, Introduction to Defender’s Play, p. 66(a) www.kantarbridge.com.]
Planning the Defense against a Trump Suit Contract

Know your trick target

Count your opponents’ probable losers (suit by suit) and count your possible winners

Prevent declarer from eliminating losers

By ruffing losers (in the short trump hand)

Lead trumps

By establishing winners by length in a side (non-trump) suit

Lead a suit that attacks opponents’ entries to the side suit*

Ruff declarer’s winners

Lead a short suit that you can ruff with a trump that is not a natural trump trick

Works best when the defense can win a trump trick before your small trumps have been drawn

Develop more winners for defense

Hold up an ace or key honor card in the side suit

* not covered by a lesson plan
Lesson 23 – Opening Lead against a Trump Suit Contract, Part 2

Objectives:
- to understand when/how to frustrate the objective of declarer to eliminate side suit losers by pitching the losers on extra winners

Handout: at beginning of class, consider handing out the flowchart(s) reproduced at end of this lesson plan

Teaching steps:
- In the previous lesson, you learned that a primary objective of the defense, beginning with the opening lead, is to frustrate the play plan of declarer. You also learned that the play plan of declarer can sometimes be projected based upon clues derived from your looking at the dummy hand and your looking at your own hand.
- *(Show first exhibit.)* Let’s show an example, where you are defending a mini-bridge contract of 4♥ by South:

```
North (dummy)
♦ 984
♥ K54
♠ AKJT9
♣ 64

West (you)
♠ K76
♥ J83
♦ Q2
♣ J9732

East (partner)

South
(declarer)
```
- Lead the ♠6 (low from three cards to an honor). You are desperate. When you look at the diamond suit in dummy and you look at your own diamonds, you project that declarer will, after drawing defenders’ trumps, plan to eliminate losers by pitching them on the extra diamond winners in dummy. Your hand can provide little help to partner should declarer be planning to pitch club losers on dummy’s diamond suit. However, your ♠K might provide help to partner should declarer be planning to pitch spade losers on dummy’s diamond suit.
- *(Show next exhibit.)* This could be the whole hand. Here, your ♠K combines nicely with your partner’s spade honors to result in your side winning three spade tricks before declarer can draw trumps and pitch his three losing spades on dummy’s extra winners in the diamond suit. An alternative gain from your spade lead could result if your partner had held the ♦Q and and, instead of the ♦A, the ♥A. If that had been the case, then declarer might be faced with two losing options: (1) trying to draw trumps … but your partner will win the ♥A and your side will win spade tricks by promotion of strength before declarer’s spade losers can be eliminated by being pitched on diamond winners; or (2) trying to pitch spade losers on diamonds before drawing trumps … but you will ruff the third round of diamonds and win a trump trick or prevent a pitch.
Let’s show another example, again defending a mini-bridge contract of 4♥ by South:

**North (dummy)**
- ♠ KJ94
- ♥ KJ85
- ♦ K5
- ♣ 943

**West (you)**
- ♠ 752
- ♥ 764
- ♦ QJ98
- ♣ A52

**East (partner)**

**South**
(declarer)

This time, the lead being addressed is not on opening lead, but later in the hand. Assume that declarer wins your lead of the ♦Q with North’s ♦K and draws trump. Then declarer plays a club to his ♦K, losing to your ♣A.

**Lead the ♣7 (top of nothing).** You have a new clue as to the play plan of declarer, a clue not available to you until now. Looking at the spade suit in dummy, you might have anticipated that declarer would develop extra winners in the spade suit, perhaps to pitch club losers. After all, if declarer owned the ♦Q, he could promote the ♦KJ in dummy by strength. And if declarer owned the ♦A, he might be taking a finesse in the spade suit. However, declarer did not play the spade suit; he instead played the club suit. Perhaps declarer has not played the spade suit because he does not hold any of the missing spade honors. You know that you do not hold the missing spade honors and so can hope that your partner holds the missing spade honors. If you lead the ♣7, you might be leading from the right hand toward your partner’s ♦AQ (or even ♦AQT), finessing against the ♦K (or even ♦KJ) in dummy and developing an extra winner in the spade suit.

**Have the students break into tables of four players.** Distribute a duplicate board with unsorted hands to each table. (Hands need to be determined.)

**See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.**
You are West; dummy is North; your partner is East; declarer is South.

How do you project that South plans to eliminate side suit losers?

What suit do you lead against a 4♥ contract?

What are you hoping to gain by choosing that suit?

What card in that suit do you lead, according to your partnership agreements?
This could be the whole hand.

Note that a spade lead can produce three immediate spade winners for the defense. With any other lead, declarer can win all thirteen tricks.

Guideline: When a defender projects that declarer will eliminate side suit losers by pitching the losers on extra winners in dummy, the defender should consider leading that side suit to try to win tricks in the side suit before declarer can pitch them.
You are West; dummy is North; your partner is East; declarer is South.

You led the ♦Q (top of a “near sequence”) against a 4♥ contract. Declarer won the lead in dummy with the ♦K. At Trick 2, declarer led a club from dummy to South’s ♠K and you won with the ♣A.

How do you project that South plans to eliminate side suit losers?

What suit do you now lead (at Trick 3)?

What are you hoping to gain by choosing that suit?

What card in that suit do you lead, according to your partnership agreements?
This could be the whole hand. On the next page is displayed the hand after Trick 8 if you do not lead a spade at Trick 3, and then the hand after Trick 9 if you do lead a spade at Trick 3.

**Guideline (as to be illustrated on next page):**
When a defender projects that declarer plans to reduce losers in a side suit by forcing their partner to play that side suit, the defender should consider leading that side suit.
This could be the position after Trick 8 if you do not lead a spade at Trick 3. South is in lead and can lead a spade to North. East will win two spade tricks *but must concede one spade to North.*

This could be the position after Trick 9 if you do lead a spade at Trick 3), which is won by East. (Each hand holds one fewer spade than in the first position shown.) South is in lead and can lead a spade to North. East will win two more spade tricks, *allowing North to win no spade tricks.*
Planning the Defense against a Trump Suit Contract

1. **Know your trick target**
   - Count your opponents' probable losers (suit by suit) and count your possible winners

2. **Prevent declarer from eliminating losers**
   - By ruffing losers (in the short trump hand)
     - Lead trumps
   - By establishing winners by length in a side (non-trump) suit
     - Lead a suit that attacks opponents' entries to the side suit*
     - Hold up an ace or key honor card in the side suit

3. **Develop more winners for defense**
   - Ruff declarer's winners
     - Lead a short suit that you can ruff with a trump that is not a natural trump trick

4. **By pitching losers on extra winners**
   - Lead a suit where your side can quickly develop tricks
     - suit where your side's honor(s) are positioned after opponent's honor(s)
     - suit with top tricks or high sequential honors

5. **By pitching losers on extra winners**
   - Lead a suit where your side can quickly develop tricks

* not covered by a lesson plan
Lesson 24 – Opening Lead against a Trump Suit Contract, Part 3

Objectives:
- to understand when/how to create defensive trump winners, by conducting a forcing defense
- to understand when/how to frustrate the objective of declarer to eliminate side suit losers, by conducting a passive defense
- to understand some guidelines for the choice of card to lead

Handout: at beginning of class, consider handing out the flowchart(s) reproduced at end of this lesson plan

Teaching steps:
- You have already learned one way of developing defensive winners … by ruffing declarer’s winners in a side suit in which a defender is short.
- *(Show first exhibit.)* Here’s an example of another, where you are defending a mini-bridge contract of 4♥ by South.

```
North (dummy)  
♠ 984  
♥ T54  
♦ A983  
♣ K653

West (you)  
♠ K7632  
♥ K853  
♦ Q2  
♣ 72

East (partner)  

South (declarer)  

```

- Lead the ♠3 (fourth best from a suit headed by a non-sequential honor). When you have four trumps, your defensive plan can be to force declarer to ruff a winner of your side once or twice. You hope to force the long trump hand of declarer to use his trumps to ruff. If the ruffs shorten declarer’s trump length enough so that you have equal or longer trump length than declarer, your defense might produce extra trump winners for your partnership.
- *(Show next exhibit.)* This could be the whole hand, where repeated spade leads can cause declarer to ruff spades in the South hand, shortening South’s trumps, resulting in a position shown on the next exhibit.
- *(Show next exhibit.)* Note the quandary faced by South. The strategy conducted by the defense is called a “forcing defense” and is most effective when one defender was dealt four trumps.
(Show next exhibit.) Let’s look at an example where the objective of the defense is “to do no harm”; that is, to allow declarer to play key suits on his own, without helping declarer by leading a key suit that can give declarer additional options to reduce the number of his losers.

You are defending a mini-bridge contract of 4♥ by South:

**North (dummy)**
- ♠ K65
- ♥ KJ54
- ♦ AT8
- ♣ 874

Look at just the North hand. Do you expect North hand to produce any extra winners upon which South can discard side suit losers? [Await answer.] No. North hand appears to have no extra winners or a side suit that can be established to produce pitches for any side suit losers of South. Do you expect the North hand to ruff any side suit losers of South? [Await answer.] No. North hand appears to have no side suit shortness.

(Show next exhibit.) This could be the whole hand.

**North (dummy)**
- ♠ K65
- ♥ KJ54
- ♦ AT8
- ♣ 874

**West (you)**
- ♠ J94
- ♥ 762
- ♦ Q93
- ♣ K532

**East (partner)**
- ♠ A832
- ♥ 9
- ♦ J742
- ♣ JT96

**South (declarer)**
- ♠ QT7
- ♥ AQT83
- ♦ K65
- ♣ AQ

When viewing a dummy that appears to have no identifiable means for declarer to eliminate side suit losers, the objective of the opening leader may be to be passive, to make a safe lead rather than a risky lead that could allow declarer additional chances to reduce the number of side suit losers.

Leads from suits with non-sequential honors can be risky. Demonstrate what occurs when West leads his lowest card in any of the three side suits and South calls for a small card from North. (In each case, the number of side suit losers of South is reduced by one in the side suit led by West.)
• **(Show next exhibit.)** Review “Safe vs. Risky Leads” sheet.
  o Safe leads
    ▪ Leads of sequential honors are not only effective at developing winners for the defense because they can cause not-quite-high cards to be promoted by strength, but are also quite safe.
    ▪ Leads of the ace from an AK combination are also generally safe, and can even produce a ruffing trick for the defense should partner be short in the suit of opener’s AK.
    ▪ Leads of a trump from small cards in the trump suit are sometimes safe (as was the case in the example), because declarer often has so many cards in the trump suit that opening leader’s partner is less likely to own an honor card that could otherwise win a trick. Only sometimes, however.
  o As shown in the previous hand, leads from suits with unprotected honors can sometimes be risky, enabling declarer to reduce the number of his losers in the suit led.
  o Some leads against trump suit contracts are so risky as to be generally classified as foolhardy: Leading low from ace with any number of small cards in the suit, leading the ace when not also holding the king of the suit, leading an honor card from a three card or longer holding in the suit that is headed by only one honor. These are almost always leads to be avoided.

• **(Reference the document, “Choosing the Card to Lead from Your Suit against a Trump Suit Contract” and show next exhibit).** Note that for some holdings, the card you agree to lead against a trump suit contract differs from the card you agree to lead against a notrump contract.
  o From AK763, lead the ace against a trump suit contract
  o From KQ84, lead the king against a trump suit contract
  o *If* you are leading from A762 at all (generally not a good idea), lead the ace against a trump suit contract.
  o Why is there a difference between the card you lead on defense against a trump suit contract and the card you lead against a notrump contract? You are frequently trying to establish winners by length against a notrump contract and thus do not mind leading a small card (fourth best) to give declarer an early trick, when your lead might retain communication/transportation with your partner to allow you to later win several tricks with your small cards in the suit. But when defending a trump suit contract, your long suit tricks can often be ruffed by declarer and so you are more prone to promote winners by strength than to establish winners by length.

• Have the students break into tables of four players. Distribute a duplicate board with unsorted hands to each table. (Hands need to be determined.)
• See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
You are West; dummy is North; your partner is East; declarer is South.

If declarer were dealt only five trumps, might you be able to inconvenience declarer’s play plan by leading a suit that declarer must ruff (or else concede a loser)? If declarer chooses to ruff that suit, what trump length will declarer then have?; what trump length will you then have?

What tricks(s) are you hoping to gain by choosing that suit?

What suit do you lead against a 4♥ contract?

What card in that suit do you lead, according to your partnership agreements?
This could be the whole hand. If the defense plays spades at each available opportunity, the position, with South yet to play to a spade led to Trick 5, could be as shown on the next page:
South has yet to play to the ♠J led by East to Trick 5. Whether or not South ruffs the spade led at Trick 5, South will lose one more trick on the hand.

Guideline: When a defender projects that declarer’s trump length can be reduced to an amount equal to or shorter than a defender’s trump length (which can be the case when a defender is dealt 4+ card length in trumps), the defender should consider leading a suit that declarer must ruff in order to win the trick; that is, conduct a “forcing defense”.

You are West; dummy is North; your partner is East; declarer is South. You are defending a 4♥ contract.

How do you think declarer is planning to eliminate side suit losers? Do you expect declarer to pitch any side suit losers on extra winners in dummy? Do you expect declarer to ruff any side suit losers in dummy?
This could be the whole hand.

Should you lead a small card from any of the three side-suits, how will South’s number of losers in that side suit be affected, assuming South calls for a small card from North?

Would the same be true if your holding in any side suit were three honors in sequence instead of only one honor?

**Guideline:** When a defender projects that dummy appears to be non-threatening (providing declarer with no apparent means to eliminate side suit losers), the defender should consider leading passively.
When Passive Defense is Called for, Safe vs. Risky Leads against Trump Suit Contracts

Safe leads:
- High from suits with sequential honor holdings
- Often, ace from three-card or longer holdings in a suit headed by AK
- Sometimes, from two or three small trumps

Risky leads:
- Often, low from a suit with non-sequential honor(s) holdings
- Sometimes, from a side suit with only small cards

Often foolhardy leads:
- From a suit headed by the ace without the king
  - Very poor to lead the ace
  - Even worse to lead small
- High from a suit with non-sequential honor(s) holdings (such as leading K from K63 or KJ3)
Planning the Defense against a Trump Suit Contract

Know your trick target

Prevent declarer from eliminating losers

- By ruffing losers (in the short trump hand)
  - Lead trumps

- By establishing winners by length in a side (non-trump) suit
  - Lead a suit that attacks opponents' entries to the side suit*
  - Hold up an ace or key honor card in the side suit

- By pitching losers on extra winners
  - Lead a suit where your side can quickly develop tricks
    - suit with top tricks or high sequential honors
    - suit where your side's honor(s) are positioned after opponent's honor(s)

Develop more winners for defense

- Ruff declarer's winners
  - Lead a short suit that you can ruff with a trump that is not a natural trump trick
    - Works best when the defense can win a trump trick before your small trumps have been drawn

Avoid allowing declarer any additional chances to reduce number of side suit losers, by playing passively

- Create additional trump tricks for defense
  - Lead a suit that opponent must ruff, shortening their trump length to less than your trump length
    - Works best when your trump length is four or more

- Lead a safe suit and not a risky suit

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* not covered by a lesson plan
Standard choice of cards to lead: noting some differences between trump suit contracts and notrump contracts

Suit contract: **AK763**; Notrump contract: **AK763**

Suit contract: **KQ84**; Notrump contract: **KQ84**

Suit contract: **A762** (although usually preferable to avoid leading the suit); Notrump contract: **A762**

Why is choice of card to lead different?

Because of differences in objective for establishing winners by length:

- in suit contracts, winners by length can be ruffed by declarer
- in notrump contracts, winners by length cannot be ruffed, and lead of a small card can retain transportation with partner
INTRODUCTION TO BIDDING

Lesson 25 – Introduction to Bidding

Objectives:

- to understand that each partner uses the bidding auction to communicate with his partner in an attempt to reach the partnership’s highest scoring contract
- to understand the objective of bidding that helps frame the target to “reach the highest scoring contract”
- to understand how the level of contracts and the rank of suits affect the progress of the bidding auction
- to understand the play consequences from an auction once three players in a row have passed

Handout: at beginning of class, consider handing out the flowchart(s) reproduced at end of this lesson plan

Teaching steps:

- Note: Teacher should try to bring bidding boxes to this lesson and subsequent lessons, because the visual of the bids organized in the sequential order of the bidding box aids instruction. Note also that for this lesson, the teacher should pre-arrange duplicate boards and the suggested auction for each pre-arranged board.
- A bridge deal consists of two main parts: the play and defense of a contract to take a certain number of tricks in a particular strain, such as 7 tricks with no trump suit for a contract of what? (1NT) or ten tricks with spades as trump for a contract of what? (4♠); and the bidding auction that precedes the play and defense and determines what that contract is going to be.
- Before this lesson, you had not learned anything about how the bidding auction determines what is going to be the final contract; instead you used the mini-bridge charts to determine the final contract.
- What you will begin to learn next lesson and in subsequent lessons is how each player bids in a bidding language generally described as “Standard American”. Next lesson you will learn the guideline requirements for a player to make an “opening bid”. From there you will later learn about the meaning of the bids made by the partner of the player that made the opening bid, and so on.
- To prepare yourselves for learning the guideline requirements for opening bids, you must first learn some preliminaries:
  - The bidding auction, like the play and defense, progresses in a clockwise direction. The bidding auction begins with the player who is designated as the Dealer. I am going to use the bidding box cards to demonstrate a possible bidding auction.
  - When bidding boxes are available, you do not speak your calls; instead you communicate your call by pulling out the bidding card that has your call written.
  - Teacher can pull a Pass card and place it in front. Use the bidding box cards to show the following auction: P-1♥-P-1NT, P-3NT-P-P, P, making the following points as you lay down the bidding card for each successive call:
    - 1st Pass. As you will learn next lesson, some hands are too weak to be able to open the bidding. If you are the dealer and you hold such a hand, the bidding call that you make is “Pass”. “Pass” is technically not a “bid”, but is a “call”.


1♥. Let’s say that you in second hand do have enough strength to open the bidding. And let’s say that your longest suit is a 5-card heart suit. You choose an opening bid of 1♥. Like all bids, your bid consists of two words. (Show first exhibit.) Notice how the two word elements of the bidding box cards are referenced on the flowchart. The first word is a number, referring to the level of your bid. The second word is a strain, meaning one of the four suits or notrump. Your bid is a proposal for a final contract. If the final contract were 1♥, how many tricks are you proposing to make (7)? And what would be the trump suit (hearts)?

2nd Pass. Just because the opposing pair has opened the bidding does not mean that your pair has to Pass. But for this example, you will assume that one side does choose to pass.

1NT. Let’s say that responder has enough strength to respond to his partner’s opening bid. You will learn how much strength that means at a later date. By responding 1NT, responder is proposing a final contract to take seven tricks with no trump suit. While Pass is always a legal call, bids are not legal if they progress in the wrong order.

- You can’t make a bid at the one level (contracting to take seven tricks) if a player before you has made a bid at the two level (contracting to take eight tricks).
- Strain (that is, the four suits as trump plus notrump) also has to progress in a certain order. This order is called rank. The rank, from lowest to highest, is clubs, diamonds, hearts, spades, and then notrump (point to the order in the bidding box cards). Notice that the two lower suits – clubs and diamonds – are what we have referred to as the minor suits (where you have to contract for 11 tricks to try to earn a game bonus), while the two higher suits – hearts and spades – are what we have referred to as the major suits (where you have to contract for only 10 tricks to try to earn a game bonus). Notice also that the bidding box is arranged so that all the bids – remember this does not include the calls that are passes but only the calls that are bids – are in legal order. So, for example, if the player before you had bid 2♠, and you wanted to bid clubs, you would have to bid 3♣.
- In this auction, it is legal for responder to bid 1NT after opener has bid 1♥, because while 1NT is at the same level as the 1♥ bid, notrump outranks hearts.

Dealer’s 2nd pass. Notice how the bidding card for a player’s second call (and subsequent calls) is not only placed on top of but also beside the player’s previous calls, so that each call made by the player is visible to all players.

3NT. Responder rebids 3NT, offering to take nine tricks with no trump suit. What is special about a contract of 3NT? (If you make your contract of 3NT, you will score the game bonus.) But you have to win nine or more tricks to get that bonus!
• Three consecutive passes. When there are three consecutive passes, the bidding auction is over, and each of the following can be determined:
  • The final contract is the last bid made before the three consecutive passes. Here, the final contract is 3NT.
  • The declarer is the player on the side that bid the final contract who first mentioned the strain that becomes the final contract. Here, even though the 3NT call was made by this player (pointing to the player who bid 3NT), this player becomes the declarer (pointing to the player who first bid notrump). As we know, the declarer’s partner becomes the dummy.
  • One exception: when the first three calls in a bidding auction are passes, the auction continues and the fourth player still gets a chance to make an opening bid.

• While I used only one bidding box to illustrate this auction, at the table each of the four players has a bidding box. Each player would extract from their own bidding box the card that shows each call that player chooses.
  o Beginning with this lesson, you will no longer use the mini-bridge cards to determine the final contract. You will also no longer announce to the other players how many High Card Points you own. For this lesson (and only this lesson), you will be given written instructions about all the calls you should make; in fact, you will be given a script for a bridge play in which each of the four players, and the table supervisor, is an actor. (At a later date, you will decide to make the calls on your own, and you will find that because each player exercises his bidding judgment differently, the final contract will not always be the same at each table.) You will be responsible for using the bidding boxes to pull the cards for the bids to make those calls, and laying the bidding cards before you, until there are three passes in a row. Teachers note: print copies of script without the hand layout for the students; print copies of script with the hand layout for the teacher.
  o Also, beginning with this lesson, dummy will no longer expose his cards before the opening lead is made. From now on, the dummy will expose his cards only after the opening lead is made.
  o Won’t not seeing the dummy make the opening leader’s task more difficult? Well, it is true that not seeing the dummy is eliminating for opening leader a key clue about the play plan expected from declarer. But each defender will now have clues available to him from the meaning of the opponents’ bids (both opponents) and even their partner’s bids. So, there will actually be more clues available to everyone; you will just have to learn how to use the new clues by understanding what a chosen bid communicates about the hand of the bidder!

  o Ask the students to play the duplicate boards, which are accompanied by the script bids.
  o See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
Objective of Bidding is for partners to select the partnership's highest scoring contract, starting with ...

- Each bid selected by a partner
- Consists of two elements
  - Level (1 level = 7 tricks; 2 level = 8 tricks, etc.)
  - Strain (major suit as trump suit, no trump, minor suit as trump suit)
South: Pass. [Pull a Pass card from the front section of the bidding box.] As dealer, I have the first call in the auction. I do not have enough strength in my hand to open the bidding and so I tell my partner that by starting the auction with a call of Pass.

West: 1♣. [Pull the 1♣ card from the back section of the bidding box.] I do have enough strength to open the bidding. That’s why I am making a bid and not a Pass. Because I do not own a major suit (that is, ♥ or ♠) that is five cards or longer in length, I open the bidding with 1 of my longer minor suit (♣ or ♦).

North: Pass. [Pull a Pass card from the front section of the bidding box.]

Table supervisor: After you have learned some of the bids of the side that has opened the bidding, you will learn some of the bids for the opponents of the side that has opened the bidding.

East: 1♥. [Pull the 1♥ call from the back of the bidding box.] Opposite a partner that has shown enough strength to open the bidding, I think that it is possible that partner and I might be able to earn a game bonus by bidding and making a game contract. Accordingly, I do not want to pass my partner’s opening bid of 1♠. I respond 1♥.

Table supervisor: East chooses to respond by bidding the heart suit because often the easiest game contract to make and earn the game bonus by bidding is a major suit game. What contracts are game in a major suit? [Await answer.] East’s response of 1♥ tells his partner that East owns four or more hearts and helps his partner determine whether the partnership has a combined total of eight or more hearts, the minimum recommended length to designate hearts as the trump suit.

You will learn later that East’s response of 1♥, the bid of a new suit by responder (by new suit, I mean a suit that has not been bid by the partnership), is a forcing bid. That means that West should not pass 1♥.
but should instead make another bid to best describe his hand. This is the communication by exchange of bids that helps the partnership determine the best final contract.

South: Pass.

West: 2♥.

Table supervisor: By raising his partner’s 1♥ response, West is confirming that the partnership holds a combined total of at least eight hearts, the minimum required combined length to suggest that hearts be the trump suit. Because East showed at least four hearts by responding 1♥, how many hearts must West be showing by raising to 2♥? [Await answer.] Remember that East’s response of 1♥ was forcing and so West should not Pass 1♥, even though hearts seems to be an adequate trump suit. By raising the 1♥ response to 2♥, West is not only telling his partner that their side has at least eight combined hearts, he is also allowing his partner to judge whether the partnership might have enough strength to try to earn the game bonus by bidding game with hearts as trumps.

North: Pass.

East: 4♥.

Table supervisor: East believes that with his hand opposite his partner’s opening bid strength, the partnership has enough combined strength to bid a game and earn a game bonus. Having established that the partnership has an eight card or longer combined length in the major suit of hearts, East chooses to bid game in hearts.

South: Pass.

West: Pass.

North: Pass.

Table supervisor: With three passes in a row, the bidding is concluded. What is the final contract? [Await answer.] Who is the declarer? [Await answer.] Who makes the opening lead? [Await answer.]

Now that the hands include bidding, you are going to learn one Rule of Bridge that differs from what you were learning when you were playing mini-bridge. Now the opening lead is going to be made before the dummy hand is displayed.

[Proceed to opening lead, play, defense, and scoring of 4♥E.]
South: 1♥. [Pull a 1♥ card from the back section of the bidding box.] As dealer, I have the first call. I want to tell my partner that I have enough strength to open the bidding. Accordingly, I did not Pass. Instead I opened 1♥, because I wanted to tell my partner that not only do I have enough strength to open the bidding, but also I have five or more cards in hearts.

Table supervisor: Because one of the easiest games to make can be a major suit game, South wants to tell his partner right away two messages: one message is that he has a strong enough hand to open the bidding, and the second message is that he has five or more cards length in a major suit. Knowing that South has at least five hearts, North will be able to determine if the partnership has a combined length of at least eight hearts, which is the suggested minimum for denominating hearts as the trump suit.

West: Pass. [Pull a Pass card from the front section of the bidding box.]

North: 2♥. [Pull a 2♥ card from the back section of the bidding box.]

Table supervisor: By raising his partner’s opening bid of 1♥ to 2♥, North is telling his partner that the partnership has a combined length of at least eight cards in hearts. Given that you were told that South’s opening bid of 1♥ promised at least five cards in the heart suit (as well as enough strength to open the bidding), what are the minimum number of hearts that are promised by North’s raise to 2♥? [Await answer.]

East: Pass. [Pull a Pass card from the front section of the bidding box.]

South: Pass.

Table supervisor: Although South is pleased to hear that his partner has at least three hearts in support for his suit, South, for reasons that you will learn later, does not believe that the partnership has enough
combined strength to make enough tricks for game. With no expectations that the partnership will be able to earn a game bonus, and an adequate trump suit having been located, South passes his partner’s 2♥ raise.

West: Pass.

Table supervisor: With three passes in a row, the bidding is concluded. What is the final contract? [Await answer.] Who is the declarer? [Await answer.] Who makes the opening lead? [Await answer.]

Now that the hands include bidding, you are going to learn one Rule of Bridge that differs from what you were learning when you were playing mini-bridge. Now the opening lead is going to be made before the dummy hand is displayed.

[Proceed to opening lead, play, defense, and scoring of 2♥S.]
CONSTRUCTIVE BIDDING

Lesson 26 – Opening Bids

Objectives:

- to understand the guideline requirements for an opening bid
- to understand that the requirements for making an opening bid are based not only upon counting High Card Points, but also upon counting Length Points
- to understand which strain should be selected for an opening bid at the one level

Handout: at beginning of class, consider handing out the flowchart(s) reproduced at end of this lesson

Teaching steps:

- The teacher can remind the students to recall from the script used in the previous lesson that each call/bid chosen by each member of a partnership is chosen to allow the partnership to reach the highest scoring contract.

  *(Show first exhibit.*) As partners exchange information to try to select the highest scoring contract, much of the information exchange will be directed toward trying to discover: (1) the combined strength of the partnership; and (2) the combined distribution of the partnership.

  - With respect to strength, are the combined strengths of the hands of the partners such that the partnership can win enough tricks to merit bidding to a contract for game (game bonus) – noting the differences in the tricks required for a game in notrump (9), a major suit (10), and a minor suit (11) – or even a contract for slam (slam bonus, for contracting and winning 12 or 13 tricks) – or neither (called a “partial” or a “part score”)?

  - With respect to distribution, does the partnership have sufficient combined length in a suit to name that suit as the trump suit? When the partnership has sufficient strength to contract for a game and also has a combined length of at least 8 major suit cards, often the highest scoring game contract is a major suit game contract. Accordingly, you will learn that much of the exchange of information between partners about suit length or suit distribution focuses on discovering whether the partnership has combined length of at least 8 cards in a major suit.

- The bids a player chooses to exchange information with his partner represent sort of a coded language. The coded language you will be learning is called Standard American.

  - Because the input of both partners is needed to determine if a makeable game can be bid, and, if “yes”, which game should be bid, the coded language of Standard American can seem complex, even though the version of Standard American you will be taught is, intentionally, much less complex than most. You will learn that some bids made by one partner cannot be passed by the other partner (in bridge terminology, the bid is “forcing”); some bids are *forcing for only one round* (meaning partner cannot pass the bid just made); and some bids are *game forcing* (meaning neither partner can pass until one of the partners has bid game.)

  - Just as you have begun to learn that play and defense is subject to continual improvement and refinement – you can play bridge quite quickly, but you can always learn to play better so that you can make more tricks – you will also begin to learn that it is easy to
• When you were first learning about the play of the cards, you also learned that, because bridge is a game of fairness, there are rules against communicating by any means other than the actual cards you play. You should not communicate by table talk or by gesture or facial expression. The same rules apply to your bidding. You can legally exchange information only by the calls you choose and not by the ways you make those calls.

• *(Show next exhibit.*) The first part of Standard American you will learn is the **opening bid**. An opening bid is the first call in an auction, by any player, that is not Pass. If you own a hand that is not strong enough for an opening bid, you should choose to pass.

• How do you approximate the strength of a hand? By applying valuation techniques that convert estimated trick-winning values into “points”. For example, you have learned that tricks are more likely to be won by top cards (aces) than by, say, jacks. Accordingly, an ace, as you learned in counting High Card Points for mini-bridge, is assigned more points than is a jack. You have also learned that one way of developing more winners is to establish smaller cards in your long suits; that is, to develop more winners “by length”. Accordingly, you will learn to assign points not only for High Card Points but also for length in a suit.

• The valuation technique you will learn is that a hand is strong enough for an opening bid at the one level (or, you might say, strong enough to open) if the hand counts to at least 13 Total Points. Total Points consist of two types of points:
  - High Card Points – you already know how to count these; and
  - Length Points – you will learn this now
    - Length Points are assigned for each suit five cards or longer. One point is added for each card over four. Thus a five card suit counts for how many Length Points (1)? A six card suit counts for how many Length Points (2)? A seven card suit (3)?
    - *(Show next exhibit.*) Because of the trick-winning potential of long cards in a suit, this 11 HCP hand that has a long suit (A65432, K95, Q2, Q4 as an example) will win more tricks than this 11 HCP hand that has a “balanced” distribution of suits (A654, K95, Q72, Q84 as an example). The fifth and sixth spades are quite likely to be winners.

• *(Show next exhibit.*) Count the Total Points (HCP + Length Points) for these hands and determine if each hand is strong enough to open the bidding:
  - AQJ43, 532, KQ7, J7 (13 HCP + 1 Length Point for the five card spade suit = 14 Total Points, more than the 13 for an opening bid)
  - A2, K9873, QJ987, A (14 HCP + 1 Length Point for the five card heart suit + another 1 Length Point for the five card diamond suit = 16 Total Points, more than the 13 for an opening bid)
  - KQ3, 987632, 84, T6 (5 HCP + 2 Length Points for the six card heart suit = 7 Total Points, not close to the 13 for an opening bid).

• Given what you have learned about the objective of bidding, why do you think it might be important for your partner to know that your opening bid contains a minimum of 13 Total Points? (One reason is so that your partner can use that knowledge to ascertain whether partner’s hand is strong enough opposite your opening bid to try to bid for a game bonus.)
There is not only a lower limit of 13 Total Points for opening the bidding with a bid at the one level, there is also an upward limit so that you can say that the range of strength for opening the bidding at the one level is from 13-21 Total Points. You will learn much later what to open the bidding should you be favored with being dealt a hand with more than 21 Total Points.

(Show next exhibit.) Once a player has concluded that his hand has the strength for an opening bid (meaning 13 to 21 Total Points), what opening bid should be chosen?

- With a five-card or longer major suit (which suits are the major suits?):
  - Bid your longest suit.
  - Bid the higher ranking of two five-card or two six-card suits (which is the higher ranking major suit?)

- With no five-card or longer major suit:
  - Bid your longer minor suit (which suits are the minor suits?); or
  - With two equal length minor suits of four or more cards, bid the higher ranking minor suit of diamonds; or
  - With two equal length minor suits of three cards; bid the lower-ranking minor suit of clubs.

More information about each of these opening bids will be covered in later lessons.

(Show again the exhibit that reads “Are these hands opening bids? ... ”) You concluded earlier that the first two hands had enough Total Points to open the bidding. What would be your choice of opening bid? (Open 1♠ on the first hand and 1♥ on the second hand.)

- Why do you think that you should look preferentially to the length of your major suits when choosing to determine the strain of an opening bid? (Because the major suits outrank the minor suits, and because earning a game bonus in a major suit requires you to contract for only 10 tricks while earning a game bonus in a minor suit requires you to contract for 11 tricks.)

- In a later lesson you will learn even more about the preference in the choice of bids to find a major suit in which you and your partner have a combined length of at least eight cards, over finding a minor suit in which you and your partner have a combined length at least eight cards.

- Next lesson you will learn about the requirements for making an opening bid in no trump.

- Meanwhile, please notice how the flowchart you are receiving on Opening the Bidding will be layered with more information each lesson, as you learn more about each opening bid.

Randomly deal the deck. Or, if the teacher prefers, pre-deal the cards ensuring a layout where the opening bid is 1 of a suit (that is, is not 1NT, nor is a hand too strong for an opening bid of 1 of a suit).

See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
Objective of Bidding

- For partners to reach the partnership’s highest scoring contract
  - By communicating each hand’s
    - Strength
      - ... the discovery of potential for earning game bonus
    - Distribution
      - ... often, the discovery of a major suit fit, meaning combined holding of 8 or more cards
  - Via a coded language, comprising
    - Level
    - Strain
  - Via a legal exchange of information
Standards for Strength for an Opening Bid

• 13- 21 Total Points

• Where Total Points is sum of:

  o High card points, and

  o Length points, of 1 for each card in each suit over four cards in length
Why Total Points Include Length Points (as well as High Card Points)

♠ A 6 5 4 3 2
♥ K 9 5
♦ Q 2
♣ Q 4

♠ A 6 5 4
♥ K 9 5
♦ Q 7 2
♣ Q 8 4

Length points: 1 for every card over four in each suit
Are these hands opening bids? Why or why not?

♠ A Q J 4 3
♥ 5 3 2
♦ K Q 7
♣ J 7

♠ A 2
♥ K 9 8 7 3
♦ Q J 9 8 7
♣ A

♠ K Q 3
♥ 9 8 7 6 3 2
♦ 8 4
♣ 10 6
Choice of Opening Bid

The choice of opening bid begins the exchange of information with partner about opening bidder’s distribution

- If opener has a five card or longer major suit, choose to open at one level in the longer major suit
  
  - With two five card major suits, open the higher major suit (spades)

- If opener has no five card or longer major suit, choose to open at one level in the longer minor suit
  
  - With two equal-length minor suits of four or more cards, open the higher minor suit (diamonds)
  
  - With two equal-length minor suits of three cards, open the lower minor suit (clubs)
Objective of Bidding

Each bid selected by a partner consists of two elements:
- An exchange of information between partners by any means other than the selection of a bid is illegal.
- A level (1 level = 7 tricks; 2 level = 8 tricks, etc.)
- A strain (major suit as trump suit, no trump, minor suit as trump suit)

And is designed to exchange information between partners to discover:
- If the partnership has the combined strength
- If the partnership has the combined major suit length

4 of a major suit = 10 tricks
3NT = 9 tricks
5 of a minor suit = 11 tricks

To bid to a game contract and win enough tricks to score a game bonus.
To be content with a part score contract.
To select a major suit as trump suit of the final contract.
Opening the Bidding

Opening the Bidding

How many Total Points?

Total Points are HCP + Length Points

13-21 TP

General priorities are in order from left to right

Major suits are spades and hearts

If holding two major suits of same length, open higher-ranking major suit (spades)

with a 5+ card major suit, open 1 of longer major suit

open 1 of longer minor suit

Minor suits are diamonds and clubs

If holding two minor suits of equal length of 4 cards or longer, open higher-ranking minor suit (diamonds)

If holding two minor suits of equal length of 3 cards, open lower-ranking minor suit (clubs)
Lesson 27 – Opening Bid of 1NT

Objectives:
- to understand the guideline requirements for opening 1NT

Handout: at beginning of class, consider handing out the flowchart(s) reproduced at end of this lesson

Teaching steps:
- In the last lesson you learned the guideline requirements for a hand to be strong enough to open the bidding (at least 13 Total Points). You also learned which suit to choose for your opening bid. Today you will learn what hands can open the bidding in the strain of no trump.
- (Show first exhibit.) Hands that can be opened 1NT are hands that appear unlikely to win many ruffling tricks:
  - Hands with no singleton or void
  - Hands with no five card or longer major suit
  - Hands with no six card or longer suit, even a minor suit
- The minimum strength for an opening bid of 1NT is greater than the minimum strength for an opening bid of 1 of a suit:
  - 15-17 Total Points for an opening bid of 1NT. You will have noticed how much more defined are the parameters for opening 1NT, when compared to the parameters for opening 1 of a major suit or 1 of a minor suit. Not unrelatedly, you might also have noted that, because notrump is higher-ranking that any suit, the opening bid of 1NT allows less subsequent bidding room than an opening bid of 1 of a suit, subsequent bidding room that can be used to refine the meaning of the opening bid.
  - 20-21 Total Points for an opening bid of 2NT
  - Don’t worry about the range of Total Points not covered above (13-14 Total Points, 18-19 Total Points, 22+ Total Points). You will learn about how to bid hands in those ranges later.
  - The valuation technique is the same as you learned for opening bids in a suit strain. You count Total Points, by adding High Card Points and Length Points.
- (Show next exhibit.) Should you open 1NT with the following hands?
  - JT9, A76, K872, AKJ? (Yes, no singleton or void, no five-card major, no six-card or longer suit, HCP of 16 + Length Points of 0 = Total Points of 16, within the 15-17 range.)
  - JT9, A76, 9872, AKJ? (No, OK for distribution [no singleton or void, no five-card major, no six-card or longer suit] but not OK for Total Points [HCP of 13 + Length Points of 0 = Total Points of 13], too low for the 15-17 range.) So, what opening bid would you choose for this hand, given that it will not be opened 1NT? (1♣, no 5-card major suit and so open longer minor suit.)
  - J, AQ93, KQT85, AJ7? (No, hand has a singleton.) So, what would this hand open, given that it will not be opened 1NT? (Also 1♣, no 5-card major suit and so open longer minor suit.) You can see that this hand is much different from the previous hand that opened 1♣. Not only does it have way more HCP than the previous hand, but also the previous hand was balanced but this hand is unbalanced – it has a singleton. As you
might guess, the bids the players who hold these hand will make after the 1♦ opening bid will help differentiate the two hands.

- Randomly deal the deck. Or, if the teacher prefers, pre-deal the cards ensuring a layout where the opening bid is 1NT. Using hand generator software that allows the setting of parameters is a good way of ensuring such a layout.
- See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
Standards for Opening 1NT

• No singleton or void

• No five-card or longer major suit

• No six-card or longer suit, even a minor suit

• 15-17 Total Points (High Card Points + Length Points)

• (Opening 2NT has same standards, but with 20-21 Total Points)
Are these hands opening bids of 1NT?

If “no”, why not, and what call would you choose as dealer?

♠ J 10 9
♥ A 7 6
♦ K 8 7 2
♣ A K J

♠ J 10 9
♥ A 7 6
♦ 9 8 7 2
♣ A K J

♠ J
♥ A Q 9 3
♦ K Q 10 8 5
♣ A J 7
Opening the Bidding

How many Total Points?
Total Points are HCP + Length Points

13-21 TP

General priorities are in order from left to right

- Major suits are spades and hearts
  - with a 5+ card major suit, open 1 of longer major suit
  - with a balanced hand of 15-17 TP, open 1NT
  - Balanced hand means hand with no singleton or void and without a six card or longer suit
  - with a balanced hand of 20-21 TP, open 2NT
  - open 1 of longer minor suit

Minor suits are diamonds and clubs
  - If holding two minor suits of equal length of 4 cards or longer, open higher-ranking minor suit (diamonds)
  - If holding two minor suits of equal length of 3 cards, open lower-ranking minor suit (clubs)
Lesson 28 – Responding to 1 Major Opening with Support

Objectives:
- to understand the general responsibilities of responder when partner opens the bidding with 1 of a major suit (promising at least 5 cards in the opened major)
- to understand the bids by responder when responder has support for opener’s major suit (at least 3 cards in the opened major suit)

Handout: at beginning of class, consider handing out the flowchart(s) reproduced at end of this lesson plan

Teaching steps:
- Your partner has opened the bidding with 1 of a major suit. You know that he has from 13-21 Total Points, but you might not know if your partner’s hand has balanced distribution with no singletons or voids or unbalanced distribution with singleton or void. You know that your partner has at least 5 cards in the major suit he opened. You don’t know whether your partner has more than 5 cards in his major suit and you don’t know whether partner has a second suit of four cards in length or more. And even the known range of strength of your partner’s hand, from 13-21 Total Points, is quite broad. Only rarely would you know enough about your partner’s hand to conclude on the highest scoring contract for your partnership. If the next player passes, you must continue the exchange of information to help your partnership reach the highest scoring contract by bidding to discover:
  o if the combined strength of your hand and opener’s hand is such that you should bid a game (or slam); and
  o which trump suit (if any) is best.
- When opener chose 1 of a major suit as the opening bid, opener communicated to responder both a distributional feature of his hand – that opener has at least five cards in the opened major suit – and a strength feature of his hand – that opener has at least 13 Total Points. The same is true of responder’s communication to opener. When responder raises the major suit of opener, responder is communicating to major a distributional feature of his hand – that responder holds enough trumps so that the partnership has a combined holding of at least eight trumps – and a strength feature of his hand.
- (Show first exhibit.) Responder first determines whether he has adequate support for the major suit of opener. Given that the partnership is seeking a combined length of at least eight cards in a major suit to make that major suit the trump suit, how many cards in opener’s major suit must responder hold to constitute “adequate support”? (3 cards or more, because opener has shown at least five cards in the major suit by having opened the bidding with 1 of that major suit.) When responder does have at least three cards in opener’s major suit, then responder bids to show his strength, so that opener can determine what level of the major suit to place the final contract.
  o To determine his strength, responder calculates Total Points by adding to his High Card Points not his Length Points but his Ruffing Points. Ruffing Points apply only when: (1) the partnership has a combined major suit fit of at least eight cards; and (2) holding side suit shortness (meaning, a side suit void, singleton or doubleton). Responder counts Ruffing Points by:
• Adding the number of cards he holds in opener’s major suit; and
• Subtracting the number of cards he holds in his shortest side suit:
  • 0 for a side suit void
  • 1 for a side suit singleton
  • 2 for a side suit doubleton

• Why does responder add points for having long trumps with shortness in a side suit? Do you remember the hands presented when you were introduced to play in a trump suit? The NS hands could win 0 tricks playing a notrump contract and could win all 13 tricks playing a contract with spades as the trump suit. The reasons, we then noted? The hands had lots of trumps – between the two hands, all thirteen spades! – and lots of side suit shortness – between the two hands, voids in each of the other three suits! Ruffing Points is an attempt to assign a Total Points number to the number of trumps and side suit shortness.

○ *(Show next exhibit.)* Having calculated Total Points to include Ruffing Points, responder supports opener’s major suit as follows:
  • When responder has 0-5 Total Points, by passing.
  • When responder has 6-9 Total Points, by raising opener’s major suit to the two level. Responder bids with as few as 6 Total Points, because game is possible if opener has more than a minimum. To make a major suit game usually takes a combined total for the partnership of about 25 Total Points. Remember, opener might have as many as 21 Total Points for his opening bid.
  • With 10-11 Total Points, by raising opener’s major suit to the three level. If opener has slightly more than a minimum opening bid, then, knowing that responder has 10-11 Total Points, opener will be able to try to score the game bonus by bidding game and trying to win ten tricks.
  • With 12 or more Total Points, by bidding game. The minimum of 12 Total Points + opener’s minimum of 13 Total Points = 25 Total Points for the partnership, which is generally enough for game.

○ *(Show next exhibit.)* Try these examples. What do you respond after your partner has opened 1♠?

  • Why?
    ○ With 987, K6, QJT43, T84? *(You raise to 2♠.)* You have 6 HCP and 1 Ruffing Point: Add your number of trumps [3] and subtract the number of cards in your shortest side suit (here, hearts) [2]). The raise to the two level is called a single raise. Opener will bid game if he has much more than a minimum opening bid; otherwise opener will pass.
    ○ With 9876, K6, QJT8643, --? *(You raise to 3♠.)* You have the same 6 HCP, but now you have 4 Ruffing Points: Add your number of trumps [4] and subtract the number of cards in your shortest side suit (here, clubs) [0].) The raise to the three level is called a limit raise. Opener will raise to game level of 4♠ if he has a little more than a minimum; opener will pass if he has a minimum.
    ○ With Q87, K6, QJT43, A94? *(You bid 4♠.)* You have 12 HCP and 1 Ruffing Point: Add your number of trumps [3] and subtract the number of cards in your shortest side suit (here, hearts) [2].

• Responder’s bids when he lacks 3-card support for opener’s major will be the subject of the next lesson.
• Randomly deal the deck. Or, if the teacher prefers, pre-deal the cards ensuring a layout where the opening bid is 1M and responder has support. Using hand generator software that allows the setting of parameters is a good way of ensuring such a layout.
• See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
When Raising Partner’s Major Suit Opening Bid

- Requires combined holding of at least eight cards in the opened major suit

- Requires at least 6 Total Points

- Determine Total Points by adding Ruffing Points, and not Length Points, to High Card Points

- Ruffing Points apply (only) when responder holds side suit shortness (void, doubleton, singleton). Calculate Ruffing Points as:
  - Adding the number of trumps responder holds, and:
  - Subtracting the number of cards in his shortest side suit:
    - 0 points for side suit void
    - 1 point for side suit singleton
    - 2 points for side suit doubleton
Level of Raise by Responder

With 3+ card support for opener’s major suit and 6+ Total Points, responder raises the major suit:

- With 6-9 Total Points, raise to two level
- With 10-11 Total Points, raise to three level
- With 12+ Total Points, raise to game (four level)
What do you respond after your partner has opened 1♠? Why?

♠ 9 8 7
♥ K 6
♦ Q J 10 4 3
♣ 10 8 4

♠ 9 8 7 6
♥ K 6
♦ Q J 10 8 6 4 3
♣ --

♠ Q 8 7
♥ K 6
♦ Q J 10 4 3
♣ A 9 4
Lesson 29 – Responding to 1 Major Opening without Support

Objectives:
- to understand the bids by responder when responder does not have support for opener’s major suit (meaning responder has fewer than 3 cards in the opened major suit)
- to understand that 2 over 1 bids require game forcing strength

Handout: at beginning of class, consider handing out the flowchart(s) reproduced at end of this lesson plan

Teaching steps:
- Assuming that responder has at least the 6 Total Points to respond to his partner’s opening bid, remember that responder’s first priority is to show his support (3 cards or more) for opener’s major suit. Last lesson you learned what responder should bid when he does have support for opener’s major suit. This lesson you will learn what responder should bid when he does not have support for opener’s major suit.
- (Show first exhibit.) When responder lacks support for opener’s major suit, responder will describe his hand by bidding a new suit or bidding no trump. The particular bids available to responder to describe his hand depend upon responder’s strength; that is, responder’s calculation of his Total Points. Given that responder lacks a known fit with opener, responder calculates his Total Points as equaling his High Card Points. No Total Points are added for Ruffing Points or Length Points. Because the opening bidder might have as many as 21 Total Points, responder should make some bid with as few as 6 HCP.
- Responder’s priorities when he has no support for opener’s major suit:
  - With 0-5 HCP, responder has insufficient strength to make a bid. Responder passes.
  - With 12+ HCP, responder has sufficient strength to bid to game to try to earn the game bonus, opposite a hand that was strong enough to open the bidding. Responder has available a series of bids that cannot be passed by opener; some of those bids even evidence responder’s game forcing strength right away.
    - If responder has a suit of 5+ cards, he bids that suit.
      - If the rank of the 5+ card suit requires that suit to be bid at the two level, then responder’s bidding that suit exchanges two important pieces of information with opener: one message of strength – because, in the 2-over-1 form of Standard American bidding you are learning, a bid of 2 of a new suit over an opening bid of 1 of a different suit is a game forcing bid; and one message of distribution – because the new suit bid at the two level shows at least five cards in the bid suit.
    - Even if the rank of the 5+ card suit does require that suit to be bid at the one level – this would be the case if responding 1♣ over an opening bid of 1♥ -- the bid by responder – actually any bid of a new suit by responder – is forcing for one round; that is, opener cannot pass a bid of a new suit by responder. The minimum strength of responder’s bid of a new suit is only 6 HCP … but it also can be 12+ HCP, enough to merit the partnership bidding to game in order to score the game bonus. Although the bid of a new suit at the one level by responder cannot be passed by opener, the bid of a new suit at the one level is not game forcing; it is only forcing for one round. Responder will choose later bids to show his game forcing strength.
- If responder lacks a 5+ card suit, but has four spades when opener has opened 1♥, responder will bid 1♠. You will note that a response of 1♠ to an opening bid of 1♥ will be responder’s choice if he held 5+ spades and will also be responder’s choice if he held only 4 spades and lacked 5+ cards in another side suit. As just noted, responder’s bid of a new suit is “forcing for one round”. By his choice of later bids, responder plans to show not only his game forcing values but also any extra length over four cards in his spade suit. You will learn how in later lessons.
- If responder lacks both a 5+ card suit and 4 spades, responder will bid show his game forcing strength by jumping the bidding and bidding notrump.
  - With 12-15 HCP, responder bids 2NT. The 2NT response is game forcing.
  - With 16-18 HCP, responder bids 3NT.

With 6-11 HCP, responder must make some bid, just in case opener has extra strength above the minimum for opening the bidding and can bid for the game bonus opposite responder’s 6-11 HCP. However, with only 6-11 HCP, responder should not bid a new suit at the two level; that would be a 2-over-1 game forcing bid and responder does not have enough strength for that. Responder must choose between two bids when he has 6-11 HCP.
- With 4+ spades, responder will choose to bid 1♠ over an opening bid of 1♥. As always, looking for an 8+ card major suit fit is a high priority. Also, as noted earlier, the 1♠ bid will be responder’s choice on many hands with more than 11 HCP; this is why responder’s bid of a new suit cannot be passed by opener and is a one round force on opener.
- Without 4+ spades, responder will choose to bid 1NT.

(Show next exhibit and one after.) Try these examples. Can you respond at the two level on the following hands?
- After opener has bid 1♥, with A4, KQT83, AJ2, 542? (Yes. 2♥. At least five hearts and 12+ HCP)
- After opener has bid 1♥ (or 1♠, for that matter), with 3, A3, AKT974, QT83? (Yes. 2♠. At least five diamonds and 12+ HCP.)
- After opener has bid 1♠, with A4, KQT3, AJ82, 542? (No. You lack the five card suit to bid either 2♥ or 2♦). What do you respond on this hand? (2NT, showing 12-15 HCP. The 2NT response is game forcing.)
- After opener has bid 1♠, with J8, QJ9864, K6, 754? (No. You cannot bid 2♥ because you lack the 12+ HCP required for a game forcing 2-over-1 bid.)

(Show next exhibit.) What do you respond on the following hands after a 1♥ opening bid?
- With J975, J4, QJ854, A2? (1♠. Show your four cards in an unbid major suit.)
- With AJ97, A4, QJ85, A32? (Also 1♠.)

(Show again the exhibit with the hand that follows.) What do you respond to 1♠ with J8, QJ9864, K6, 754? You cannot bid 2♥ because you lack the 12+ HCP required for a
game forcing 2-over-1 bid. You must bid 1NT. You hope you are able to show your heart length later, but for your response now, you have no choice but to respond 1NT.

- Next lesson, you will learn about responding to your partner’s opening bid of 1 of a minor suit.

- Randomly deal the deck. Or, if the teacher prefers, pre-deal the hands so that the opening bid is 1M and responder has fewer than three cards in the opened M. Using hand generator software that allows the setting of parameters is a good way of ensuring such a layout.

- See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
When Unable to Raise Partner’s Major Suit Opening Bid

Responder’s priorities depend upon his strength:

- With 0-5 HCP, Pass

- With 12+ HCP, keep bidding until game is bid
  - Bid longest 5-card suit
  - With 4+ spades, bid 1♠ over a 1♥ opening bid
  - Bid 2NT with 12-15 HCP, or bid 3NT with 16-18 HCP

- With 6-11 HCP
  - With 4+ spades, bid 1♠ over a 1♥ opening bid
  - Without 4+ spades, bid 1NT
Can you respond at the two level in your longest suit on the following hands? Why or why not?

♠️ A 4
♥️ K Q 10 8 3
♦️ A J 2
♣️ 5 4 2

West North East South
1 ♠️ Pass ?

♠️ 3
♥️ A 3
♦️ A K 10 9 7 4
♣️ Q 10 8 3

West North East South
1 ♠️ Pass ?
♠ A 4  
♥ K Q 10 3  
♦ A J 8 2  
♣ 5 4 2  

West North East  South
1 ♠  Pass  ?

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

West North East  South
1 ♠  Pass  ?
What response do you choose on the following hands? Why?

♠ J 9 7 5
♥ J 4
♦ Q J 8 5 4
♣ A 2

West North East South
1 ♥ Pass ?

♠ A J 9 7
♥ A 4
♦ Q J 8 5
♣ A 3 2

West North East South
1 ♥ Pass ?
Responding to Opening Bid of 1 of Major Suit

Responder's general priorities are in order from left to right:

- **Responding to Opening Bid of 1 of Major Suit**
- **Promise 12-21 TP and 5-cards or more in major suit**
- **Opening bid of 1 of major suit**

**with 3+ cards in opened major suit, show support for the opened major suit**

- **TP are HCP + Ruffing Points**
  - **with 0-5 TP, pass**
  - **with 6-9 TP, bid 2 of opened major suit**
  - **with 10-11 TP, bid 3 of opened major suit**
  - **with 12+ TP, bid 4 of opened major suit**

**with 0-5 HCP, Pass**

**with 12+ HCP**

keep bidding until game is reached

- **bid longest 5+ card suit**
  - **with two 5+card suits, bid higher-ranking suit**
  - **with 10-11 HCP, bid 2NT**

- **with 4+ spades, bid 1S**

**with 6-11 HCP**

- **with 4+ spades, bid 1S**
- **bid 1NT**

- **with 12-16 HCP, bid 2NT**

- **with 16-18 HCP, bid 3NT**
Lesson 30 – Responding to 1 Minor Opening

Objectives:
- to understand the general responsibilities of responder when partner opens the bidding with 1 of a minor suit
- to understand the bids by responder that prioritize finding a major suit fit for the partnership

Handout: at beginning of class, consider handing out the flowchart(s) reproduced at end of this lesson plan

Teaching steps:
- Your partner has opened the bidding with 1 of a minor suit. You know that he has from 13-21 Total Points, but you might not know if your partner’s hand has balanced distribution with no singletons or voids or unbalanced distribution with a singleton or void. You know that your partner has at least 3 cards in the minor suit he opened. You don’t know whether your partner has more than 3 cards in his minor suit, even 6 cards or more, and you don’t know whether partner has a second suit, especially a four card major suit. And even the known range of strength of your partner’s hand, from 13-21 Total Points, is quite broad. Only very rarely would you know enough about your partner’s hand to conclude on the best final contract for your partnership. If the next player passes, you must continue the exchange of information to help your partnership reach the best final contract by bidding to discover:
  - Strength -- if the combined strength of your hand and opener’s hand is such that you should try to earn the game bonus or should settle for a partial.
  - Distribution/choice of strain:
    - a major suit, if you and your partner have a major suit with a combined length of at least eight cards
    - no trump, if you and your partner do not have a major suit fit of at least eight cards
    - a minor suit, if you and your partner do not have a major suit fit of at least eight cards and you have extra combined length in a minor suit

- (Show first exhibit.) Responder’s first responsibility is to determine if he has enough strength to make any bid in response to the opening bid. Because the opening bidder might have as many as 21 Total Points, responder should make some bid with as few as 6 HCP.

- Responder’s priorities depend upon his strength:
  - With 0-5 HCP, responder has insufficient strength to make a bid. Responder passes.
  - With 12+ HCP, responder has sufficient strength to bid to game to try to earn the game bonus, opposite a hand that was strong enough to open the bidding. Responder has available a series of bids that cannot be passed by opener; a few of those bids even evidence responder’s game forcing strength right away.
    - If responder has a side suit of 5+ cards, he bids that suit.
    - Responder’s bid of a new suit, you will recall, is forcing for one round; that is, opener cannot pass a bid of a new suit by responder. As you will see in a moment, the minimum strength of responder’s bid of a new suit is only 6 HCP … but the range also includes 12+ HCP, enough to merit
the partnership bidding to game in order to score the game bonus. Although the bid of a new suit at the one level by responder cannot be passed by opener, the bid of a new suit at the one level is not game forcing; it is only forcing for one round. Responder will choose later bids to show his game forcing strength.

- One new suit bid by responder is game-forcing. Responding 2♣ to an opening bid of 1♠ is game forcing, because, in the 2-over-1 form of Standard American bidding you are learning, a response of 2 of a new suit over a 1 level opening suit bid is forcing to game. The 2♣ response to an opening bid of 1♦ also promises 5+ clubs.

  - If responder lacks a 5+ card side suit, but has four cards in either major suit when opener has opened 1♣ or 1♠, responder will bid that major suit. Why does responder prioritize looking for a major suit fit when partner has opened 1 of a minor suit, denying a 5-card major suit? One reason is that the game contract that requires the most Total Points to make is a minor suit game. A minor suit game of 5♥/5♦ generally takes about 29 Total Points to make, while a major suit game of 4♥/4♦ generally takes only about 25 Total Points to make. (By the way, it also takes about 25 Total Points to make a game of 3NT ... but, as you have learned, responder counts no Ruffing Points in a contract of 3NT, because there are no trumps with which to ruff losers.)

  - If responder lacks both a 5+ card side suit and a four card major suit, but has 5+ card support for the minor suit of opener, and has an unbalanced hand (say, a hand with a side suit singleton or void), responder should bid his longest side suit … hoping that opener can show enough strength in the side suit of the singleton or void to bid notrump.

  - If responder lacks all of the above – has no 5+ card suit of his own, has no 4-card major suit, and has fewer than 5 cards in the minor suit bid by opener, responder should bid notrump.
    - With 12-15 HCP, responder bids 2NT. The 2NT response is game forcing.
    - With 16-18 HCP, responder bids 3NT.

  - With 6-11 HCP, responder must make some bid, just in case opener has extra strength above the minimum for opening the bidding and can bid for the game bonus opposite responder’s 6-11 HCP. However, with only 6-11 HCP, responder should not bid a new suit at the two level; that would be a 2-over-1 game forcing bid and responder does not have enough strength for that. Responder must choose among four bids when he has 6-11 HCP.
    - With 4+ cards in a major suit, responder should bid the major suit. As always, looking for an 8+ card major suit fit is a high priority. As was shown for the 12+ HCP hands responding in a major suit to a minor suit opening, responder should choose to respond in his longest major suit. With two 5-card major suits, bid the higher-ranking major suit of spades; with two 4-card major suits, bid the lower-ranking major suit of hearts.
If responder lacks a 4+ card major suit, but has 5+ card support for the minor suit of opener, responder should raise the minor suit.
- With 6-9 HCP, responder would raise the opened minor suit to the two level
- With 10-11 HCP, responder would raise the opened minor suit to the three level.

If responder lacks both 4+ cards in a major suit and 5+ card support for the minor suit of opener, but has 5+ diamonds when opener had bid 1♣, responder should bid 1♦.

With none of the above, responder should bid 1NT.

(Show next exhibit and then one after.) Let’s try some examples.

- What do you respond to 1♣ with KJ543, A8, 943, AQ7? (1♠. Bid your longest suit.)
- What do you respond to 1♣ with AQ874, 8, 93, AQ874? (1♠. With two five card suits, respond in the higher-ranking suit. You can expect to be able to later bid your other five-card suit.)
- What do you respond 1♦ with AQ54, 8, 943, AQ874? (2♣. With 12+ HCP, bid your longest suit. Your 2-over-1 bid shows 5+ clubs and game forcing strength. If your partnership has an eight card spade fit, you will learn about it later in the bidding.)
- What do you respond to an opening bid of 1♣ with AQ54, J654, AK54, 5? (You respond 1♥. Even though hearts is the weakest of your three four-card suits, you prioritize showing a 4-card major suit over a 4-card minor suit. And, with two 4-card major suits, you respond in the lower-ranking major suit of hearts. If partner has fewer than four hearts but does have four spades, you will expect to soon hear your partner bid the spade suit. By the way, a response of 1♦ is also acceptable; much depends upon the style your partnership has chosen to adopt. A response of 1♦ would not be acceptable because it makes finding an eight-card heart fit difficult.)
- What do you respond to 1♦ with AJT, KJ9, KT73, Q96? (You respond 2NT. It is more important to show your general hand type of 12-15 HCP [with no 5+ card suit, no 4-card major suit, and no 5+ card support for opener’s minor suit in an unbalance hand] than it is to show four card support for opener’s minor suit. Note how different this is than when you have four-card support for opener’s major suit. When you have four-card support for opener’s major suit, showing that support becomes your first priority. In bridge bidding, minor suits do not receive the same respect as major suits.)
- What do you respond to an opening bid of 1♠ with K52, 6, 432, AJT864? (1NT. You do not have enough strength to bid a game-forcing 2♠, and you have no suit you can bid at the one level. All that remains is to bid 1NT.)

Randomly deal the deck. Or, if the teacher prefers, pre-deal the hands so that the opening bid is 1m. Using hand generator software that allows the setting of parameters is a good way of ensuring such a layout.

See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
When Responding to Partner’s Minor Suit Opening Bid

Responder’s priorities depend upon his strength:

- With 0-5 HCP, Pass

- With 12+ HCP, keep bidding until game is bid
  
  - With a 5+ card side suit, bid the longest suit
  - With 4-card major suit, bid the major suit
  - With 5+ card support for partner’s minor suit and an unbalanced hand, bid the longest side suit
  - Bid 2NT with 12-15 HCP or bid 3NT with 16-18 HCP

- With 6-11 HCP
  
  - With 4+ card major suit, bid the longest major suit
  - With 5+ card support for partner’s minor suit, raise the minor suit
  - With 5+ diamonds, bid 1♦ over a 1♣ opening bid
  - Bid 1NT
What response do you choose to an opening bid of 1 of a minor suit? Why?

♠ K J 5 4 3
♥ A 8
♦ 9 4 3
♣ A Q 7

West North East South
1 ♠ Pass

♠ A Q 8 7 4
♥ 8
♦ 9 3
♣ A Q 8 7 4

West North East South
1 ♦ Pass

♠ A Q 5 4
♥ 8
♦ 9 4 3
♣ A Q 8 7 4

West North East South
1 ♦ Pass
West North East  South
1 ♠  Pass  ?

West North East  South
1 ♦  Pass  ?

West North East  South
1 ♦  Pass  ?
Lesson 31 – Responding to 1NT Opening

Objectives:
- to understand the general responsibilities of the partners after opener has opened 1NT
- to introduce the concept that a 2♣ response to 1NT is different from the other two level responses to 1NT

Handout: at beginning of class, consider handing out the flowchart(s) reproduced at end of this lesson

Teaching steps:
- Your partner has opened the bidding with 1NT. You know that he has from 15-17 Total Points, and you also know that he has no five-card major suit and that he has a balanced hand (no singletons or voids, no six-card or longer suit). When you compare your knowledge about partner’s hand when he opened 1NT with your knowledge about partner’s hand when he opened 1 of a suit, you realize how much more defined is his 1NT opening bid. Still, the general description of your responsibilities as responder remains the same as when responding to a less-defined opening bid of 1 of a suit:
  - to communicate your strength, to help decide what level should be the final contract … a contract for game or a contract for a partial; and
  - to communicate your distribution, to help determine the strain of the final contract, in particular whether the partnership has an eight-card or longer fit in a major suit
- (Show first exhibit.) Responder’s first priority is to communicate his strength. Because opener has a balanced hand with at least two cards in each suit, responder can calculate his Total Points by adding his HCP and his Length Points.
  - When responder has 0-7 Total Points, the partnership has combined Total Points from 15-24, less than the 25 generally estimated to make a game contract. Responder will make a signoff bid.
    - Responder can pass partner’s opening bid of 1NT.
    - Or, responder can signoff in his long suit (five or more cards) by bidding 2♦, 2♥, or 2♠. (You cannot sign off in a long club suit by bidding 2♣; you will later learn why that is the case.) Because responder knows that partner has a balanced hand (no singleton or void), responder can expect partner to have at least two card support for responder’s long suit; in fact, partner might have three or four card support for responder’s long suit … even five card support is possible if the long suit is diamonds. Partner will pass responder’s signoff bids of 2♦, 2♥, or 2♠.
  - When responder has 8-9 Total Points, the partnership has combined Total Points from 23-26, sometimes enough and sometimes not enough for the 25 generally estimated for game. Responder will make a game invitational bid.
    - If responder has four or more cards in a major suit – so that it is possible for the partnership to have a combined eight cards or more in the major suit – responder bids 2♣, the Stayman convention, to try to uncover a major suit fit. You will learn in the next lesson how the Stayman convention operates. (This is why responder cannot signoff in 2♣, bidding 2♣, unlike bidding 2♦, 2♥, or 2♠, is not a signoff bid but is the Stayman convention.)
- If responder has no four card or longer major suit – so that it is not possible for the partnership to have a combined eight cards or more in the major suit (remember, you know that partner has fewer than five cards in a major suit or else he would have opened 1 of the major suit) – responder invites game by bidding 2NT.
  - When responder has 10+ Total Points, the partnership has combined Total Points of at least 25, which will often be enough to make game. Responder will make a game forcing bid.
- If responder knows which game should be bid, responder bids game directly.
  - Given that opener is expected to have no more than four cards in any one major suit – because he would not open 1NT if he held a major suit of 5+ cards – on what hands can responder immediately conclude that the partnership has no combined length of 8 or more cards in a major suit? (When responder has fewer than four cards in any major suit.) In such a case, responder might bid 3NT directly.
  - Given that opener is expected to have no fewer than two cards in any one major suit – because he would not open 1NT with a singleton or a void in any suit – on what hands can responder immediately conclude that the partnership has a combined length of 8 or more cards in a major suit? (When responder has 6 or more cards in a major suit.) In such case, responder might bid 4 of his long major suit directly.
- When responder has 4 or 5 cards in a major suit – so that it is possible for the partnership to have a combined eight cards or more in the major suit – responder has bids available to him that will tell him whether opener has the 4 or 3 card support he needs to bid game in a major suit. In the next lesson, you will learn those bids. One of the bids is 2♣, the Stayman convention.
- *(Show next exhibit and then one after.)* What do you respond to your partner’s opening bid of 1NT with these hands? Why?
  - With JT9, 987, Q974, K42? (You pass. You count 6 Total Points (6 High Card Points + 0 Length Points). You conclude that opposite partner’s 15-17 Total Points, the Total Points for your partnership is only 21-23, not enough for game.)
  - With JT9, Q9875, 97, K42? (You respond 2♥, a signoff bid that opener will pass. You know that opener has at least two card heart support for your long suit; he might even have three or four card heart support.)
  - With Q85, K6, KJ42, T953? (You bid 2NT. You count 9 Total Points [9 High Card Points + 0 Length Points]. You conclude that opposite partner’s 15-17 Total Points, the Total Points for your partnership is 24-26, maybe enough for the 25 Total Points generally needed for game but maybe not enough. With no four card or longer major suit in your hand, you invite game by bidding 2NT. Opener will pass if he has a minimum and will bid 3NT if he has a maximum.)
  - With Q8, AT9, J3, T98653? (2NT. You count 9 Total Points [7 High Card Points + 2 Length Points]. You bid 2NT to invite game. You do not bother to show your long club suit, because it generally takes at least 29 Total Points to make a game contract of 5♣. You don’t have enough for a minor suit game.)
• With A87, AQ8763, 862, 7? (You bid 4♥. You count 12 Total Points [10 High Card Points + 2 Length Points]. You conclude that opposite partner’s 15-17 Total Points, the Total Points for your partnership is 27-29, more than enough for the 25 Total Points generally needed for game. You also know that your partnership has at least eight cards in the heart suit [you have six; partner, who has promised no singleton or void in his hand, must have at least two, if not three or four]). Opener will pass, because he knows that you have enough information from his tightly-defined opening bid of 1NT to decide what should be the final contract.

• With T9, Q2, A9864, KJ53? (You bid 3NT. You count 11 Total Points [10 High Card Points + 1 Length Point]. Accordingly the Total Points of the partnership is from 26-28, generally enough for game. Because you have no four card or longer major suit [and you know that opener does not have as many as five cards in a major – since he did not open 1 of a major suit] – you know that the partnership has no major suit with a combined length of eight cards.) Opener will pass.

- Randomly* deal the deck. Or, if the teacher prefers, pre-deal the cards ensuring a layout where the opening bid is 1NT. Using hand generator software that allows the setting of parameters is a good way of ensuring such a layout.
- See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.

* Because the students have not been taught the Stayman convention, the parameters might also direct hands for responder that do not contain a major suit that is exactly four cards in length.
When Responding to Partner’s 1NT Opening Bid

Responder’s priorities depend upon his strength:

• With 0-7 TP, signoff in a partial
  
  o With 5+ diamonds, hearts, or spades, bid 2♦, 2♥, or 2♠, respectively

• With 8-9 TP, invite game
  
  o With 4-5 cards in a major suit, ask opener about his major suit lengths*
  o Bid 2NT

• With 10+ TP, keep bidding until game is bid
  
  o With 6+ cards in a major suit, bid major suit game
  o With 4-5 cards in a major suit, ask opener about his major suit lengths*
  o Bid 3NT

* How to legally ask opener about his major suit lengths will be addressed in the next lesson
What do you respond to your partner’s opening bid of 1NT? Why?

♠ J 10 9
♥ 9 8 7
♦ Q 9 7 4
♣ K 4 2

♠ J 10 9
♥ Q 9 8 7 5
♦ 9 7
♣ K 4 2

♠ Q 8 5
♥ K 6
♦ K J 4 2
♣ 10 9 5 3

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

♠ 10 9
♥ Q 2
♦ A 9 8 6 4
♣ K J 5 3
Lesson 32 – Responding to 1NT Opening – the Stayman Convention, Part 1

Objectives:

- to understand the use of 2♣, the Stayman convention, to uncover a 4-4 major suit fit following an opening bid of 1NT
- to understand how to take inferences from the bids chosen by your partner

Handout: at beginning of class, consider handing out the flowchart(s) reproduced at end of this lesson plan

Teaching steps:

- Your partner has opened 1NT, promising 15-17 Total Points, no five card major, and a balanced hand. Let’s assume that you have categorized your hand as either invitational to game (8-9 Total Points) or game forcing (10+ Total Points). In the last lesson, you learned to bid game in a major suit when you held 6 or more cards in the major suit (because you expect partner to have at least two cards in your long major suit, giving your partnership a combined total of at least eight cards in your long major suit.) You also learned to invite or bid game in NT when you held fewer than four cards in any major suit (because you expect partner to have no more than five cards in any major suit, giving your partnership fewer than eight cards in any major suit.)
- When you have exactly four cards in one or both major suits and you have game invitational or game forcing strength, you will generally want to play a contract in your four-card major suit when your partner also has four cards in your four-card major suit. And you will generally not want to play a contract in your four-card major suit when your partner does not have four cards in your four-card major suit. That is, you want to play in a major suit only when your partnership has a combined major suit length in such suit of at least eight cards.
- (Show first exhibit.) The Stayman convention enables responder to discover whether there is a 4-4 major suit fit. Responder bids 2♣, the Stayman convention. When responder bids 2♣, opener rebids as shown:
  - With no four card major suit, opener bids 2♠. Just like the 2♣ bid by responder says nothing about clubs – instead it asks a question about opener’s major suit lengths – , the 2♠ response by opener says nothing about diamonds – instead it answers the question asked by responder by saying that opener has no four-card major.
  - With four hearts, opener bids 2♥.
  - With four spades, but without four hearts, opener bids 2♣.
- (Show next exhibit and then one after.) Try some examples. In each case you have opened 1NT and your partner has responded 2♣, the Stayman convention. As opener, what do you reply to responder’s inquiry? Why?
  - With KT3, AJ7, 53, AKT63? (Opener will bid 2♠. Here, opener has five clubs and only two diamonds. If opener’s minor suits were reversed, so that he held five diamonds and two clubs, he would still rebid 2♣. This is because the only message provided by opener from his rebid of 2♠ is that he has no four card major.)
  - With KJ, 8763, AKT4, AJT? (Opener would bid 2♥ over responder’s 2♣ Stayman bid. Note that the quality of the heart suit is irrelevant; opener will bid 2♥ whether his four
hearts are all low hearts or his four hearts include multiple high hearts. Opener’s bid is based solely upon the quantity of his hearts, not their quality.)

- With KJ83, JT8, AK, K953? (Opener will bid 2♣.)
- Note, however, that with two four-card majors, opener will show his hearts. With KJ83, JT82, AK, KT5, opener will bid 2♥ and not 2♦. If responder also has four or more hearts, fine, the eight card fit has been found. If, on the other hand, responder has four or more spades but fewer than four hearts, then, you will learn, the opener can later infer that responder has four or more spades and opener can bid spades later.

• What are responder’s bids once he bid Stayman and heard opener’s response to the Stayman inquiry about major suits?
  - If opener’s bid causes responder to discover that there can be no eight card or longer major suit fit, responder can bid 2NT with 8-9 Total Points (invitational to game) or can bid 3NT with 10+ Total Points.
  - If opener’s rebid causes responder to uncover an eight card major suit fit, he can raise opener’s rebid of 2 of the major suit to 3 of the major suit with 8-9 Total Points (invitational to game) or can bid 4 of the major suit (game) with 10+ Total Points.

(Show next exhibit.) Display third page of hand records.) Let’s try some examples. You are responder and have already bid 2♣, the Stayman convention. Now you have heard opener’s reply. What is your next bid?

• With AQ72, Q53, 9876, 87 over partner’s opening bid of 1NT, your bid of 2♣, and opener’s next bid of 2♦, denying having a four-card major? (2NT. There can be no eight-card major suit fit in this invitational-to-game hand.)
  - With AQ3, AQ72, 9876, 87, after opener bids 2♣ in response to your 2♣ Stayman bid? (3NT. You now know that there is no eight-card major suit fit: opener has spades but you have hearts.)
  - With AQ72, Q53, 98765, 8, after 1NT opener bids 2♣ in response to your 2♣? (4♠. With a known eight card fit in spades, you can count Total Points of 11, consisting of the same 8 High Card Points but now 3 Ruffing Points [adding 4 for trump length and subtracting 1 for the length of your shortest side suit of clubs]. So now you have upgraded your hand from invitational to game forcing. You will rebid not 3♠, but will instead rebid 4♠. Good bridge players realize that the value of a hand will change as the auction progresses and they can better assess how well their hand fits with the hand of their partner). By the way, what should you bid if opener had bid 2♥ or 2♥ over 2♣? (2NT.)

(Show next exhibit.) Let’s move back to opener’s seat. As opener, you open 1NT with KJ54, T954, AK3, A6. Over responder’s 2♣ bid, what do you reply? (You bid 2♥. Recall that you will bid 2♥ to responder’s 2♣ Stayman bid, when you have four hearts and four spades.) Responder now bids 3NT. What do you bid and why? (You should ask yourself the question: why did responder employ the Stayman 2♣ bid and bid 3NT despite my having shown a four card heart suit? And you can infer that the reason is that responder was interested in learning that opener has four spades. Accordingly, when responder rebid 3NT over your rebid of 2♥, you can next bid 4♠!)
- Randomly deal the deck. Or, if the teacher prefers, pre-deal the cards ensuring a layout where the opening bid is 1NT. Using hand generator software that allows the setting of parameters is a good way of ensuring such a layout.
- See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
When opening bid is 1NT, responder’s 2♣ response is Stayman convention

2♣ asks opener: do you have a four-card major suit?

Opener’s reply:

- 2♦. I have no four-card major suit.
- 2♥. I have four cards in the heart suit.
- 2♠. I have four cards in the spade suit. I do not have four cards in the heart suit.
You opened 1NT. What is your next bid? Why?

♠ K 10 3  
♥ A J 7  
♦ 5 3  
♣ A K 10 6 3

West North East South
1 NT Pass 2 ♠ Pass ?

♠ K J  
♥ 8 7 6 3  
♦ A K 10 4  
♣ A J 10

West North East South
1 NT Pass 2 ♠ Pass ?
West North East  South
1 NT Pass  2 ♠ Pass
?

West North East  South
1 NT Pass  2 ♠ Pass
?
Your partner opened 1NT; you responded 2♣. What is your next bid? Why?

West North East South
1 NT Pass 2 ♣ Pass
2 ♦ Pass ?

West North East South
1 NT Pass 2 ♣ Pass
2 ♠ Pass ?

West North East South
1 NT Pass 2 ♣ Pass
2 ♠ Pass ?

West North East South
1 NT Pass 2 ♣ Pass
2 ♠ Pass ?
You opened 1NT and responded to partner’s 2♣. What is your next bid? Why?

♠ K J 5 4
♥ J 10 9 5
♦ A K 3
♣ A 6

West North East South
1 NT Pass 2 ♣ Pass
2 ♥ Pass 3 NT Pass
?

?
Lesson 33 – Responding to 1NT Opening – the Stayman Convention, Part 2

Objectives:
- to understand how responder shows a five-card major suit following an opening bid of 1NT, including the use of 2♣, the Stayman convention
- to understand how to take inferences from the bids chosen by your partner
- to understand the meaning of playing a “convention”

Handout: at beginning of class, consider handing out the flowchart(s) reproduced at end of the previous lesson plan

Teaching steps:
- In the last lesson you learned how to use the Stayman convention. The Stayman convention is used by responder after partner has opened 1NT, when responder has game invitational or game forcing strength and wants to uncover whether partner has four card length in the same major suit in which responder has four card length, so that the partnership has an eight card or longer fit in that major suit.
- (Show first exhibit.) In this lesson, you will learn how, with game invitational or game forcing strength, responder can show exactly five cards in a major suit. When responder has shown five cards in a major suit, opener can choose:
  - to play a contract in that major suit with length of three cards or more in responder’s major suit – that is, when the partnership has a combined length of at least eight cards in responder’s major suit; or
  - to play a contract in notrump with length of only two cards in responder’s major suit – that is, when the partnership does not have has a combined length of at least eight cards in responder’s major suit.
- When partner has opened 1NT and responder has game invitational strength (8–9 Total Points) and exactly five cards in a major suit, responder should bid 2♣, and then plan on bidding his five card major suit at his next turn to bid.
- When partner has opened 1NT and responder has game forcing strength (10+ Total Points) and exactly five cards in a major suit, responder should bid 3 of his long major suit.
- When partner has opened 1NT and responder has less than game invitational strength and responder holds a major suit of five or more cards, you have learned that responder bids 2 of the long major suit, a signoff bid. Opener will pass the signoff bid, even when opener has length of only two cards in responder’s major suit.
- (Show next exhibit.) Try these examples. As responder, what is your bidding plan with these hands, after your partner has opened 1NT?
  - With KJ843, 9, A86, T962? (Responder counts 9 Total Points, consisting of 8 High Card Points + 1 Length Point for the five card length in spades. Responder should bid 2♣.)
    - If opener bids 2♦, responder will re-count his hand as 12 Total Points, consisting of the same 8 High Card Points plus (now that an eight card, actually a nine card, fit has been uncovered) 4 Ruffing Points. That’s enough to bid game, 4♣.
    - If, on the other hand, opener bids either 2♦ or 2♥, responder is uncertain whether the partnership has a combined length of eight cards in spades. He shows that
uncertainty by rebidding 2♠. Because opener knows that this sequence of bids by
responder shows game invitational values and exactly five spades, opener is in a
good position to choose whether to bid 4♠, pass 2♠, sign off in 2NT, or bid 3NT.
Yes, good bidders know their agreements and can derive lots of good inferences
from the bids their partners choose!

- With 986, AJ962, KQ3, Q7? (3♥. Responder has shown game forcing strength with
exactly five hearts.)
  - If opener has length of three or more cards in the heart suit, opener will next bid
    4♥, playing game in the major suit when the partnership has combined length of
    at least eight cards in the heart suit.
  - If opener has length of only two cards in the heart suit, opener will next bid 3NT.

- (Show next exhibit.) The teacher can explain why the 2♣ response to a 1NT opening bid is called
  a convention.
  - In bridge language, a convention is a bid that has a coded meaning that differs from what
    one would expect from the bid; that is, it differs from its natural meaning. Here, because
    a bid of 2♣ is not saying anything about the bidder’s holding in the club suit, the 2♣ bid
    is a convention, specifically the Stayman convention. Also, the 2♦ bid by opener to a 2♣
    response by opener is a convention, because it says nothing about the diamond suit.
  - You should note that each time a partnership agrees to play a convention, the partnership
gives up the natural meaning of a bid. When you bid the Stayman convention bid of 2♣
after your partner has opened 1NT, you lose the ability to sign off in a contract of 2♣
when you have 0-7 Total Points. Accordingly, you should agree to play a conventional
bid only if you think the gain you can achieve by employing the convention outweighs
the loss you concede by being unable to use the bid in its natural sense. Tournament
players typically play lots of conventions, but both partners have to remember the
conventions, they have to use them properly, and, in cases in which a convention bid by
one player is not commonly used and understood, the partner of that player is required to
alert the opponents that a bid is a convention and not a natural bid. All in all, you will be
learning very few conventions in these lessons. The only conventional bids you will
learn are those that are almost universally used by all experienced players and have
proven to have clear benefits that outweigh their losses.

- Randomly deal the deck. Or, if the teacher prefers, pre-deal the cards ensuring a layout where the
opening bid is 1NT and where responder has exactly five cards in a major suit. Using hand
generator software that allows the setting of parameters is a good way of ensuring such a layout.
- See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
Responder’s Bids with a Five-Card Major Suit, after Partner Has Opened 1NT

Responder categorizes his hand by strength, allowing the partnership to play a contract in the major suit only when opener has length of three or more cards in responder’s major suit:

- With game invitational strength, responder bids 2♣ (Stayman), planning to next bid 2 of his long major suit

- With game forcing strength, responder bids 3 of his long major suit

(With less than game invitational strength, responder bids 2 of his long major suit)
Your partner opens 1NT. How do you plan to bid the following hand?

♠ K J 8 4 3
♥ 9
♦ A 8 6
♣ 10 9 6 2

West North East  South
1 NT Pass  ?

♠ 9 8 6
♥ A J 9 6 2
♦ K Q 3
♣ Q 7

West North East  South
1 NT Pass  ?
Bridge Conventions

- A convention is a coded bid that is not “natural”; i.e., not showing length in the suit of the bid.

- Must weigh benefit of the coded meaning of a bid against detriment of losing a natural meaning of the bid.

- Volume of conventions in tournament bridge tends to be high, although perhaps unnecessarily so.

- Stayman is among the more popular conventions. Some less common conventions require alerting.
COUNTING CARDS

Lesson 34 – Counting Cards

Objectives:
- to understand how to guide card play by counting the distribution and strength of the hands of each opponent

Teaching steps:
- Some bridge writers and teachers say that counting cards is the beginning of expert bridge declarer play and defense. And not far from the end. A player who counts the distribution and High Card Points of the cards played by the opponents can sometimes play as if looking at all 52 cards in the deck and not just the 26 cards seen between the player’s hand and the dummy hand.
- You have already learned some counting of cards:
  - When you learned about establishing winners by length, you learned to count the number of cards held by the opponents in the long suit you were trying to establish. For example, if a suit were distributed AK932 opposite 654, you learned to count that because you hold eight cards combined in that suit, the opponents hold only five cards; if those five cards split 3-2, the you could win not only the ace and king, but also two small cards in the suit. When playing a trump suit contract, you also learned to count the number of trumps held by the opponents, perhaps so that you could draw their trumps and then not play any more trumps.
  - You also have learned to count High Card Points to help you choose the best call in a bidding auction.
- In this lesson, you will learn about counting the opponents’ distribution and the opponents’ strength. These counting techniques will help you win more tricks both as declarer and as defender. The ways to count the opponents’ distribution and strength are most easily demonstrated by example. You will be the declarer, South, in each example.
  - (Show first exhibit.) You and your partner reach a game contract of 4♠ and can afford only three losers if you are to make your contract.
  - West leads the ♦5 against your 4♠ contract. East wins the ♦J, ♦K (while West discards the ♦2), and ♦A (while West discards the ♥2). East next plays the ♦Q and you win the trick with North’s ♦K.
    - As you count the losers, suit by suit, in the long trump hand of South, you realize that, having already lost three diamond tricks, you cannot afford to lose a heart trick if you want to make your contract.
    - If the ♥Q is with West, you can avoid a heart loser by finessing the ♥T; if the ♥Q is with East, you can avoid a heart loser by finessing the ♥J.
    - What is your declarer play plan, to help you decide whether to play East or West for the ♥Q? (The more hearts an opponent was dealt, the more likely that the ♥Q is one of the hearts that opponent was dealt. Your objective on this deal is to try
to count how many hearts each opponent was dealt, so that you can position yourself to hope that the opponent who was dealt more hearts holds the ♥Q.)

- Having no reason to avoid drawing the trumps help by the opponents, you play ♠A and ♠K. Each opponent follows suit. How many spades were dealt to West? [Await answer.] Two. to East? [Await answer.] Two. How many trumps do the opponents still hold? [Await answer.] None.
- How many diamonds were dealt to West? [Await answer.] One. West discarded on the second round of diamonds. to East? [Await answer.] Six.
- You now play the ♣A and ruff a club in your hand, as both East and West follow suit.
- How many clubs were dealt to West? (At least four. West discarded a club on the second diamond trick at Trick 2 and followed suit to three rounds of clubs.) to East? (At least three. East followed suit to three rounds of clubs.)
- Putting all that information together, you realize that West was dealt one diamond, two spades, and at least four clubs. That is seven known cards. How many unknown cards was West dealt? [Await answer.] Six. West was dealt 13 cards and seven of those cards are known, leaving six of those cards unknown. You also realize that East was dealt six diamonds, two spades, and at least three clubs. That is 11 known cards. How many unknown cards was East dealt? [Await answer.] Two. East was dealt 13 cards and eleven of those cards are known, leaving two of those cards unknown.
- With your count having informed you that West has 6 unknown cards and East has 2 unknown cards, which opponent is more likely to own the ♥Q? [Await answer.] West. What, then, are your next plays? … to play the ♥A and then finesse the ♥T, playing West for the ♥Q.

- (Show next exhibit.) You played well, counting the distribution. West was indeed dealt the ♥Q and you avoid losing a heart trick to make your game contract of 4♠.
- (Show next exhibit.) You and your partner again reach a game contract of 4♠ and can afford only three losers if you are to make your contract.
- West leads the ♥J against your 4♠ contract. East wins the ♥A and the plays the ♠A. East next plays the ♣9 and West wins the ♠K. West plays the ♦9 at Trick 4.
  - As you count the losers, suit by suit, in the long trump hand of South, you realize that, having already lost one heart trick and two club tricks, you cannot afford to lose a trump to the ♠K if you want to make your contract.
  - How many HCP has East shown (actual and implied)? (East has actually shown 8 HCP, the ♥A and ♣A. Because West’s lead of the ♥J should be expected to deny the ♥Q – he would have been expected to lead the ♥Q if he held both the ♥J and the ♥Q –, East also has implied holding the ♥Q. The ♥Q would give East a total of 10 HCP.) Considering the bidding auction, how many HCP might East have been dealt? [Await answer.] Because East has passed as dealer, East is quite unlikely to own 13, or even 12, HCP.
What is your declarer play plan, to help you decide how to play the trump suit to try to avoid losing a trick to the ♠K? (If East held the ♠K along with the 10 HCP you have already counted for him, he would have held 13 HCP and would likely have opened the bidding. But he actually passed as dealer. East is quite unlikely to own the ♠K. Accordingly, your best play is to play West for the ♠K. To avoid losing a trick to the ♠K, you have to hope that West’s implied ♠K is his only spade. You play the ♠A.)

(Show next exhibit.) You played well, counting the HCP to infer that West held the ♠K. You were lucky that the ♠K was West’s only spade. You continue to draw the remaining two trumps held by East to make you game contract of 4♠.

(Show next exhibit.) When you count the distribution and strength of the opponents, you will find that you choose plays that will cause you to win more tricks. Sometimes the counting can be certain; sometimes the counting can be only inferential. The better players count the distribution and strength of the opponents (and their partners, too!) on each hand, enabling them to sometimes play as though they can see all 52 cards instead of just the 13 cards in their hand and the 13 cards in the dummy hand.

- **Distribution**
  - Beginning from the point that each opponent was dealt only thirteen cards, you can learn how those thirteen cards are distributed, especially when one opponent fails to follow suit in the play of the hand.
  - You can also take clues from the bidding auction. If, for example, an opponent opened the bidding auction with 1♥, you can infer that the opponent holds at least five hearts.
  - When you aggregate the distributional clues from what you have seen or can infer, you are left with distributional clues about what you have not seen.

- **Strength**
  - Beginning from the point that each opponent has shown some particular strength from the bids such opponent made, you can learn how much strength the opponent is marked with from the bidding auction.
  - You can also take clues from the bids not made in the bidding auction. If, for example, an opponent passed his partner’s opening bid, you can infer that that opponent has fewer than 6 HCP.
  - When you compare the strength from the cards you have seen played to the strength each opponent showed or denied in the bidding auction, you are left with strength clues about the high cards you have not yet seen played.

- Randomly deal the deck.
- See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
West leads the ♦5 against your 4♠ contract. East wins the ♦J, ♦K (while West discards the ♦2), and ♦A (while West discards the ♥2). East next plays the ♠Q and you win the trick with North’s ♠K.

1. As you count the losers, suit by suit, in the long trump hand of South, you realize that, having already lost three diamond tricks, you cannot afford to lose a heart trick if you want to make your contract.

2. If the ♥Q is with West, you can avoid a heart loser by finessing the ♥T; if the ♥Q is with East, you can avoid a heart loser by finessing the ♥J.

3. What is your declarer play plan, to help you decide whether to play East or West for the ♥Q?
West North East    South

1 ♠

Pass 4 ♠    All pass
West leads the ♥J against your 4♠ contract. East wins the ♥A and the plays the ♦A. East next plays the ♣9 and West wins the ♣K. West plays the ♦9 at Trick 4.

1. As you count the losers, suit by suit, in the long trump hand of South, you realize that, having already lost one heart trick and two club tricks, you cannot afford to lose a trump to the ♠K if you want to make your contract.

2. How many HCP has East shown (actual and implied)? Considering the bidding auction, how many HCP might East have been dealt?

3. What is your declarer play plan, to help you decide how to play the trump suit to try to avoid losing a trick to the ♠K?
West  
North  
East  
South  
Pass  
1 ♠  
Pass  
2 ♠  
Pass  
4 ♠  
All pass
Counting Cards

Count the distribution and strength of opponents, to guide your choices of plays.

Distribution:

- Each opponent is dealt only thirteen cards
- Determine how many card each opponent holds in “known suits”
  - As disclosed by the play
  - As disclosed by the bidding auction
- Estimate how many cards held in “unknown suits”

Strength:

- Determine how much strength (especially HCP) each opponent has disclosed in the bidding auction
- Compare the strength actually shown with the implied strength
  - From calls made by the opponent
  - From calls not made by the opponent
- Estimate the location of key missing high cards
COMPETITIVE BIDDING

Lesson 35 – Overcalls, Part 1

Objectives:
- to understand meanings of competitive bidding and overcall
- to understand rewards and risks of competitive bidding
- to understand factors that alter the rewards and risks, including the vulnerability and the penalty double

Handout: at beginning of class, consider handing out the flowchart(s) reproduced at end of this lesson plan

Teaching steps:
- To date, all of the bidding you have learned relates just to the side that opened the bidding: what is an opening bid, what is the response to an opening bid, what are some of the rebids of opener and responder. With this lesson, you will learn some bids that are made not by the pair who opened the bidding, but instead by the pair who did not open the bidding.
- When the pair that did not open the bidding makes a bid (remember that Pass is a “call”, but not a “bid”), the bidding auction is a competitive bidding auction.
- The most common bid that makes an auction a competitive bidding auction is an overcall.
  - (Show first exhibit.) Here are some examples of an overcall. Let’s say that the opponent right before you opens the bidding with 1♦. If you were to bid 1♠ with KQJ43, K95, T4, 765, that is an overcall … a one-level overcall. If you were, instead, to bid 2♣ with K4, K86, T4, AQT654, that is an overcall … a two-level overcall. You can also make an overcall after both of your opponents have bid. Let’s say that your partner passed the 1♦ opening and that responder bid 1♥. If you were to then bid 1♠ or 2♣, those bids would be overcalls.
- In the next lesson, you will learn some possible standards for determining whether your hand should overcall. To provide a context for that lesson, you will learn in today’s lesson some of the rewards and risks that should be considered by the pair that did not open the bidding, before that pair decides to engage in competitive bidding.
  - (Show next exhibit.) Before you learn the hands with which you might engage in competitive bidding, you will learn, in general terms, some of the rewards and risks of competitive bidding, and some of the factors you will balance in deciding whether the rewards outweigh the risks or whether the risks outweigh the rewards. Let’s discuss first the rewards.
    - Compete to declare own contract, for a better score. Let’s say that the opponents open the bidding with 1♥ and bid up to 2♥. Many times, the opponents can make their contract with no overtricks and you will earn a score of -110. But let’s say that on the hand that the opponents can make 2♥, your pair can make 2♦. (It is not unusual that both sides can make a contract, because maybe the long spades that your side has, that will be highly useful in declaring a spade contract, will be of little use defending a heart contract … because when you play a high spade, the declarer ruffs that spade with one of his hearts.) If you can find a way to bid 2♦ on the hand, and you make your contract of 2♦, then your side can score +110. That is a much better result for your side than being -110. And
maybe if the opponents bid on to 3♥ over your 2♠ bid, they will be down one trick, again a better result for your side than scoring -110 defending 2♥.

- Interfere with the bidding of the opponents. You have learned some about how to respond to an opening bid. Let’s say that responder plans to respond 1♥ to his partner’s opening bid of 1♦. But if you bid 1♠ immediately after the 1♦ opening bid – that bid is called an overcall because you are making a call “over” the opening bid – responder can no longer bid 1♥. If he wants to bid hearts, he now must bid 2♥ and that gives his pair less bidding room to try to determine their best final contract. Although there are ways to make a competitive bid other than by making an overcall, for now let’s assume that when the term “competitive bidding” is used, it means an overcall; that is, a bid in a suit in which you hold some length and some strength. (You will learn the details later.)

- Help your partner defend. When your partner is on opening lead, he is often guessing what suit to lead. He might want to lead a suit in which you have strength, and if you have made an overcall in a particular suit, he has a good idea that the suit you bid for your overcall is the suit in which you have length and strength.

- So … with all of these rewards for engaging in competitive bidding, would you want to make a bid each time the opponents open the bidding? No … because there are risks to competitive bidding, too. Let’s discuss those risks.

  - Compete, for a worse score. Let’s say that the opponents open the bidding with 1♥ and bid up to 2♥. As you have learned, if they make their contract with no overtricks, you will score -110. But maybe the cards do not lie well for the opponents – perhaps your partner has all five missing trumps. Or perhaps if you compete to 2♠ over their 2♥ contract, the opponents can beat your 2♠ contract multiple tricks. If either of those scenarios occurs, then you would have had a better score by defending 2♥ than by competing over the 2♥ contract.

  - Present more bidding options to the opponents. Sometimes the bidding auction can go unfavorably for the side that opened. One opponent might realize that the hands fit poorly and that his partner has already bid to too high a level. Your making an overcall can rescue the other pair by allowing them a new option in the auction, the option to let you play the hand – maybe being defeated in your contract – when had you not made a competitive bid the opponents would have had no choice but to get a negative score by playing a contract that they were not going to make.

  - Help opponent declare. Declarer makes a play plan based not only upon the 26 cards he can see, but also upon his guess at which of the unseen 26 cards are held by you and which are held by your partner. When you make an overcall, declarer’s guess about which of the other 26 cards you hold is improved and he can maybe make a contract that, without the information you had given him by overcalling, might have been defeated.

- So there are rewards and risks to overcalling. By the way, did you notice how the rewards and risks lined up on the document? For example, just as your overcall can help your partner defend better, it can also help the opponent declare better. Nothing worthwhile is ever easy, right? How do you balance the rewards and risks to help you make an overcall only when the situation suggests that the rewards outweigh the risks? Here are some of the factors to consider.

  - Quality of suit. The better the suit of your overcall, the better the overcall.
Let’s say you overcall a spade suit of KQJTxx. You can probably win five tricks when declaring, losing only to the ♠A, while your length in spades makes it more likely that the opponents have very few spade losers, and can ruff some of your high spades. You would also welcome a spade lead from your partner because the lead might help the defense develop spade winners by promotion of strength.

On the other hand, if you overcall on a poor suit, which would be any suit that is fewer than five cards in length or a suit without much strength, let’s say J9xxx, you might find that your suit is worth very few tricks on offense. And if your partner is on lead against a contract of the opponents and leads a spade based upon his expectation that you have a good spade suit, he might find that he has not made as good a lead as he would have had you not overcalled.

Strength of hand. The stronger your hand, the better the chance that you can successfully compete for the part score. (Do you know what I mean when I use the word “part score” or the word “partial”?) But if you overcall on a weak hand, you might find that your overcall causes no direct harm to the opponents, and, in fact, helps them to better determine something about which cards your hand holds.

Bidding space used. The more bidding space that is taken by your overcall, the more difficulty have your opponents in continuing their bidding to find the best final contract. Let’s say that you decide to show your good diamond suit by overcalling a 1♣ opening bid with 1♦. If responder had planned to respond 1♥, your overcall has not affected responder’s planned auction at all. But let’s say that your good suit was not diamonds but was spades. Now if you overcall the 1♣ opening bid with 1♠, your overcall has affected responder’s planned auction to bid 1♥.

Vulnerability. Vulnerability is a bridge term that affects risk vs. reward. Each side in a bridge hand is either not vulnerable or vulnerable. If you can bid and make a game, you will score more points when you are vulnerable than when you are not vulnerable. However, if you are defeated in a contract, you will score a bigger minus when you are vulnerable than when you are not vulnerable. Bigger rewards and bigger risks occur for your side when you are vulnerable. The duplicate board will display the vulnerability for that board. In a regular game, you will find that the vulnerability changes every board in a cycle of eight boards: sometimes neither side is vulnerable, sometimes both sides are vulnerable, and sometimes one side is vulnerable and the other side is not vulnerable. The vulnerability has a big impact on a player’s strategy. What you need to learn now is just that making a vulnerable overcall is more risky than making a non-vulnerable overcall. And so your standards for making a vulnerable overcall should be higher than your standards for making a non-vulnerable overcall.

Penalty double. Just as this lesson is the first time you have learned about the complicating factor in bridge of vulnerability, it is also the first time you will learn about the penalty double. If you think the opponents have overbid, you can choose to “increase the stakes” on the hand by making a penalty double. If you make a penalty double and the opponents are defeated in a contract, you score more than you would if the opponents were not doubled. But if you make a penalty double and the opponents make their doubled contract, you will score very badly;
in fact, sometimes when the opponents stop in a partial, doubling the opponents will earn them a game bonus if they fulfill their contract.

- All of these rewards and risks you have learned help make bridge such a fun and complex game.
- In the next lesson, you will learn how to apply these concepts of reward/risk to decide which hands might be best to overcall. For the hands at the table, however, you should just exercise your judgment to decide whether to overcall, thinking about the rewards and risks you just learned.

- Randomly deal the deck. Or, of the teacher prefers, pre-deal the hands so that one hand is likely to overcall an opening bid. Using hand generator software that allows the setting of parameters is a good way of ensuring such a layout.
- See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
Overcalls are suit bids by opponents of the opening bidder.

♥ K 9 5
♦ 10 4
♣ 7 6 5

West North East South
1 ♠ 1 ♠

East has made a one-level overcall in ♠.

♥ K Q J 4 3
♦ K 4
♣ K 8 6
♠ A Q 10 6 5 4

West North East South
1 ♠ 2 ♠

East has made a two-level overcall in ♣.
Making a Suit Overcall

Effect of overcalling

Compete to declare own contract

Interfere with constructive bidding of opponents

Provide information about your hand

Rewards of overcalling

Reach a better contract

Complicate the opponents' exchange of information

Help partner defend

Not being vulnerable reduces risks

Having opponents who are reluctant to double for penalty

Risks of overcalling

Reach a worse contract

Offer opponents additional bidding options

Help opponent declare

Being vulnerable increases risks

Having opponents who are not reluctant to double for penalty

The more bidding space used, the greater the complication to opponents

The better the quality of the suit, the better the probable result from partner's lead of the suit
Lesson 36 – Overcalls, Part 2

Objectives:
- to understand the length and strength generally required for an overcall
- to understand the bids by the advancee to an overcall

Teachers note: The main body of material below covers only the advances to overcalls that are raises of the overcalled suit. Following the main body of material is supplemental material that covers advances to overcalls that are other than raises.

Handout: at beginning of class, consider handing out the flowchart(s) reproduced at end of this lesson plan

Teaching steps:
- In the last lesson, you learned that overcalling – that is, bidding a suit in an auction in which an opponent had opened the bidding – has many rewards and risks. (Show first exhibit.) You also learned something about factors that will affect the decision whether the rewards outweigh the risks or the risks outweigh the rewards.
- In this lesson, you will learn some general requirements, in terms of the suit quality and the overall hand strength, for making an overcall. Then you will learn how to bid when your partner has overcalled.
- The teacher should disclose that the decisions on whether to overcall are very dependent upon the style of the partnership. Some partnerships will agree to have less restrictive, looser requirements for making an overcall. And some partnerships will agree to have more restrictive, tighter requirements for making an overcall. The exact requirements you and your partner choose is not as important as: (1) your having made an agreement as to those requirements; and (2) your partnership’s agreements reflecting some consideration of the factors that you balance when you are deciding whether or not to overcall.
- What you will see on the right side of the flowchart as the requirements are, some would say, sort of middle of the road requirements. In this lesson, you will not hear about every factor that you balance when deciding to overcall — that is, as one example, that overcalls should be stronger when you are vulnerable than when you are not vulnerable, but you should always bear in mind those factors.
  - The first item to address is the length of the suit in which you overcall. If the suit in which you overcall becomes the trump suit, quite likely the extra length cards in the trump suit will be winners. Generally speaking, the longer the suit, the more reward to the overcall.
  - The second item to address is the quality of the suit in which you overcall. When you overcall in a suit, you should anticipate that your partner, if he is on defense, will lead the suit of your overcall. Your partner leading your suit is probably good for your side if you have overcalled on a good suit; but is probably bad for your side if you have overcalled on a bad suit. You might remember that when you learned about choosing an opening lead, you were often looking to find a suit in which your side has strength and/or length.
Because an overcall is showing a long suit that usually has some strength, your partner, if on opening lead, is quite likely to choose to lead the suit in which you made an overcall.

- The third item to address is the strength of your hand. The stronger your hand, the more likely it is that your overcall might lead to your side being able to declare the contract, maybe even a game contract.

- Note that the flowchart distinguishes between a suit overcall at the one level and a suit overcall at the two level. The suit quality requirements – both suit length (usually six cards at the two level, often only five cards at the one level) and suit quality (headed by more honors at the two level than at the one level) – for a two-level overcall are higher than for a one-level overcall. And so are the hand strength requirements. You will note that a minimum one-level overcall would be much weaker in Total Points than a minimum opening bid. But that a minimum two-level overcall is pretty close to the Total Points of a minimum opening bid.

- You have learned that the partner of the opening bidder is called the responder and that the responder can bid, too. The partner of the overcaller is called the advancer and the advancer can bid, too. Next you will learn what bids can be made by the advancer and what those bids tend to show.

- You will learn in this lesson the requirements for advancer to raise the suit bid by his partner, the overcaller. Although an advancer can also bid a new suit and bid notrump after his partner has made a suit overcall, it is beyond the scope of this class to discuss bids by advancer other than raises. *(Show next exhibit.)*

  - What must advancer have to constitute “support” for the overcall? Because an overcall shows at least five cards in the suit of the overcall, three card support is sufficient. Because a two-level overcall usually (but not always) delivers at least six cards in the suit of the overcall, two card support might be sufficient. To what level should advancer support his partner’s overcalled suit depends upon the strength of advancer’s hand.

    - Let’s say that his partner overcalled 1♠ and this is advancer’s hand: QJ6, A84, T4, T7653. That’s not much of a hand but it does have three card support for partner’s spade suit of at least five cards in length and it does have 8 Total Points, consisting of 7 High Card Points + 1 Ruffing Point. That’s enough to raise 1♠ to 2♠.

    - Now, let’s strengthen the hand of advancer to the 1♠ overcall. Let’s now give him QJ6, A84, T4, AKT53. Now advancer has 15 Total Points, consisting of 14 High Card Points + 1 Ruffing Point. This is enough for advancer to bid 4♠. Why is 15 Total Points enough for advancer to bid a game when his partner could have as few as only 9 Total Points … when 15+ 9 is only 24, just short of the 25 Total Points that you have learned is generally enough to bid game? This is because when partner was counting his Total Points to make his 1♠ overcall, he was counting High Card Points + Length Points for his long suit (he definitely has at least one Length Point because he has shown at least 5-card length in the spade suit) … but now, since your hand as advancer is known to have a fit for partner’s hand as overcaller, partner can count his Total Points by adding to his High Card Points his Ruffing Points rather than his Length Points. Much of the time, the recast count results in partner having at least 10 Total Points.
By the way, notice that the Total Points required by advancer to bid game opposite a partner who has made a two-level overcall are about three Total Points fewer than the Total Points required by advancer to bid game opposite a partner who has made a one-level overcall. Why is that? (Because the Total Points required for partner to make a two-level overcall are about three more than the Total Points required for partner to make a one-level overcall.)

- (Show next exhibit.) Just as you can overcall in a suit, you can also overcall 1NT. The 1NT overcall looks very much like a 1NT opening. One difference is that when you overcall 1NT, you show a stopper in the suit that the opponents have bid. A “stopper” means enough strength in the suit bid by the opponents so that the opponents are unlikely to take more than a few top tricks in the suit. If you were the dealer, you would 1NT with AJ4, J5, QJ83, AK92. If the opponent right before you opened the bidding with 1♣, 1♦, or 1♠, you should overcall 1NT. But if the opponent right before you opened the bidding with 1♥, you should not overcall 1NT. Since you know that the 1♥ opening bid of the opponent shows long hearts, it is just too likely, when you hold only J5 of hearts, that the opponents, if on lead against your no trump contract, can run off at least the first five tricks just by playing the heart suit.

- You have already learned the responses to a 1NT overcall … because they are exactly the same as the responses to a 1NT opening bid!

- Randomly deal the deck. Or, if the teacher prefers, pre-deal the hands so that one hand is likely to overcall an opening bid. Using hand generator software that allows the setting of parameters is a good way of ensuring such a layout.

- See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.

Supplemental material on advances to suit overcalls other than raises:

- If the overcaller overcalled in a major suit, the first thing advancer should ask is, do I have support for my partner’s major suit? If the overcaller overcalled in a minor suit, then, by contrast, the first thing advancer should consider is, do I have a stopper in the suit(s) bid by the opponents? You will note that the favoring of advancing in major suits and no trump over minor suits is consistent with the favoring of major suit games and notrump games that you learned in opening and responding.

- What bids does advancer make when he does not have support for the suit bid by overcaller? Or, if the suit bid by overcaller is a minor suit? Well, a better question is, should advancer bid at all when he does not have support for his partner’s suit? After all, if he does not fit his partner’s suit, he might think it is prudent to pass before the bidding gets so high that any contract his side reaches will be defeated. Accordingly, when advancer does bid even though he does not have support for the suit overcalled by his partner, advancer should have some values. If advancer has a stopper in the suit(s) bid by the opponents, he can bid notrump, with higher notrump bids showing more Total Points. No notrump bid is forcing on overcaller because each notrump bid has a top range. Or if advancer has a good suit of his own, he can bid the suit. As you are learning, the new suit is a bid that overcaller cannot pass, because the new suit might be the first bid by an advancer who has a hand that might make game.
Advancing Your Partner’s Overcall when You Have Support

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

West North East South

1 ♠ 1 ♠ Pass ?

♠ Q J 6
♥ A 8 4
♦ 10 4
♦ A K 10 5 3
♣ A K 10 5 3

West North East South

1 ♠ 1 ♠ Pass ?
Overcalling 1NT

An overcall of 1NT is similar to an opening bid of 1NT, with one exception. Overcall of 1NT should show a stopper in the suit the opponent opened.

*♠* A J 4  
*♥* J 5  
♦ Q J 8 3  
♣ A K 9 2

Over an opening bid of 1♣, 1♦, or 1♠, the hand above would overcall 1NT

Over an opening bid of 1♥, the hand above would not overcall 1NT
Making a Suit Overcall

Possible standards for overcalling:
- Quality of suit: suit headed by A, K, or Q or better, suit headed by AT, KJ, or QJ/9 or better, suit headed by 2 of top 3 honors or 3 of top 5 honors or better
- Length of suit: 5+ cards, usually 6+ cards, 6 cards at 2 level, 7 cards at 3 level, 8 cards at 4 level
- Strength of hand: 9-17 TP, 12-20 TP, fewer than 9 TP

Effect of overcalling
- Rewards of overcalling
- Risks of overcalling

Compete to declare own contract
- Reach a better contract
- Reach a worse contract

Interfere with constructive bidding of opponents
- Complicate the opponents' exchange of information
- Offer opponents additional bidding options
- The more bidding space used, the greater the complication to opponents

Provide information about your hand
- Help partner defend
- Help opponent declare
- The better the quality of the suit, the better the probable result from partner's lead of the suit

Net being vulnerable reduces risks
- Being vulnerable increases risks

Having opponents who are reluctant to double for penalty
- Having opponents who are not reluctant to double for penalty
Lesson 37 – Takeout Double, Part 1

Objectives:
- to understand which doubles are for takeout

Handout: at beginning of class, consider handing out the flowchart(s) reproduced at end of this lesson plan

Teaching steps:
- The last few lessons, you have learned about bidding in an auction in which an opponent has shown the strength to open the bidding. You learned that you could bid a suit in such an auction – that is, you could make an overcall – and by competing for the final contract achieve some rewards for your side, while also creating some risks.
- In this lesson, you will begin to learn about another way to bid in an auction in which an opponent has opened the bidding. In this lesson, you will learn how to compete without your bidding a possible trump suit by making an overcall, but rather by asking your partner to select a possible trump suit by your making a “takeout double”.
- Sounds fine, but, you remember, a few lessons ago, when you were learning about the rewards or risks of entering the auction by making an overcall, didn’t you learn that double was a bid the opponents can make to say “I think you will be defeated in the contract of the overcall and I am going to increase the size of the penalty by doubling you”? Noting that there is only one type of double card in the bidding box, how can you now be learning that double instead means “I think you will make your contract and I want to compete in one of the other suits … and I would rather compete by asking my partner to choose a trump suit rather than by my choosing a trump suit by making an overcall”?
- (Show first exhibit.) The teacher can ask the students about what they want their a double to mean when the opponent right before them opens 1♥ and they own K65, AQT872, 9, AK8 (for penalty, and you want your partner to pass … but note that the opponents are not required to pass, and, in fact your double might cause the opponents to choose a different suit.) or when they own KQ76, 5, AT43, KQT4 (for takeout, and you want your partner to bid one of the other three suits). The teacher can then inform the students that – given that the opening 1♥ bid promises five or more hearts, they are more than eight times as likely to own a hand with one of the remaining eight or fewer hearts than they are to own a hand with six of the remaining 7 or 8 hearts.
- Well, double can have each of these two distinct meanings … you just need to have a partnership agreement about the circumstances in which Double is a penalty double (“I think you are going to be defeated and I want my partner to pass my double so that I can penalize you”) and the different circumstances in which Double is a takeout double (“I think you are going to make and I want my partner to take-out my double to his best suit so that we can compete in that suit”).
• When is a double for takeout and when is a double for penalty? That can be a complicated question, because different partnerships have different understandings. Some general guidance is this:
  o Most doubles are for takeout and not for penalty.
  o Prominent, generally agreed exceptions – that is, situations where most partnerships would have reached agreement that double is for penalty include:
    ▪ Doubles of notrump bids.
    ▪ Doubles when the opponents have already mentioned more than two suits.
    ▪ Doubles of bids made after the opponents have already been doubled for penalty.
    ▪ Doubles in competitive auctions where both partners have bid and at least one partner has already limited his hand.

• (Show next exhibit.) Ask the meaning of the double in the following auctions:
  o (1♥)-Dbl. Or P-(1♥)-Dbl. Or (P) - P-(1♥)-Dbl. Or even P-(P)-P-(1♥), Dbl? (In each of these four situations, your double is a takeout double, asking your partner to bid his longest suit that is not hearts.)
  o (1♥)-P-(2♥)-Dbl? (Again your double is a takeout double. Because partner’s minimum advance of your double is at a higher level than when you were making a takeout double of 1♥, you will be a little stronger to make this takeout double, but the double is still a takeout double.)
  o (1♣)-P-(1♣)-Dbl? (Again the double is for takeout. A difference between this takeout double and the other takeout doubles you have seen is that this takeout double is asking partner to takeout to one of two suits not bid by the opponents (hearts and diamonds, the suits that are not the clubs and spades that the opponents have bid) rather than asking partner to takeout to one of three suits not bid by the opponents.)
  o (1♠)-P-(1♠)-P; (2♣)-P-(2♥)-Dbl? (This double is a penalty double and not a takeout double. The opponents have bid three suits; a takeout double cannot apply when there are fewer than two unbid suits.)
  o (1NT)-Dbl? This double is a penalty double and not a takeout double. In this auction, the opponents have not bid any suits; they just bid no trump.
  o (1♥)-2♣-(2♥)-3♣; (4♥)-Dbl? (This double is a penalty double. In this auction, your side has shown its values (the 3♠ raise is limited) and the doubler is simply expressing his view that the opponents have bid too much.)

• In the next lesson, you will learn how strong your hand should be in order to make a takeout double.

• Randomly deal the deck. Or, if the teacher prefers, pre-deal the hands so that each hand includes a hand that would open the bidding with 1 of a suit and the next hand satisfies the general requirements for making a takeout double. Using hand generator software that allows the setting of parameters is a good way of ensuring such a layout.

• See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
Frequency of Need for Takeout Double

You are West. The dealer is South and South opens the bidding with 1♥. What do you want your double to mean …

… when this is your hand?:

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

… when this is your hand?:

♠️ K Q 7 6
♥️ 5
♦️ A 10 4 3
♣️ K Q 10 4

Which hand are you more likely to hold?
Is the double for takeout or for penalty? Why?

West North East  South
1 ♥  Dbl

West North East  South
Pass  1 ♥  Dbl

West North East  South
Pass  Pass  1 ♥
Dbl

West North East  South
1 ♥  Pass  2 ♥
Dbl

West North East  South
1 ♠  Pass  1 ♠
Dbl
West North East  South
  1 ♣  Pass  1 ♣
Pass  2 ♣  Pass  2 ♥
Dbl

West North East  South
  1 NT  Dbl

West North East  South
  1 ♥  2 ♣  2 ♥
  3 ♠  4 ♥  Dbl
Takeout Doubles

Most doubles by members of the partnership that has not opened the bidding are takeout doubles, unless...

- a notrump bid is doubled
- only one suit remains unbid
- opponents have already been doubled for penalty
- both partners have bid and one has tightly limited the strength of his hand
Lesson 38 – Takeout Double, Part 2

Objective:
- to understand the strength and distribution required to make a takeout double

Handout: at beginning of class, consider handing out the flowchart(s) reproduced at end of this lesson

Teaching steps:
- In the last lesson you learned which doubles are takeout doubles. In this lesson, you will learn about the strength and distribution required to make a takeout double.
- (Show first exhibit.) There are two general requirements:
  - At least 11 High Card Points, excluding “unconnected minor honors” in suits bid by the opponents. “Unconnected minor honors” would be queens or jacks that are not accompanied by the higher honors of the ace or king in the suit. The HCP for these cards are disregarded because they are unlikely to be of value should your side declare the hand. The higher the level of an opponent’s bid over which you are considering making a takeout double, the higher is the strength requirement.
  - At least three cards in each unbid suit. This requirement exists because you do not want your partner to takeout to an unbid suit in which you do not have adequate support. If that happens, then your side might be playing in a trump suit in which you might have fewer trumps than the opponents!
  - There is one hand type that can make a takeout double without three card support for each unbid suit. That type would be a hand that has at least 18 High Card Points (again excluding HCP from unconnected minor honors in suit bid by the opponents). When you later bid your suit on this type of hand, partner will realize that your distribution is not the expected distribution of a takeout double but rather is the expected distribution of an overcall. You double and then bid your long suit in order to inform your partner that your hand is too strong to settle for a direct overcall.
- (Show next exhibit and then one after.) Do these hands qualify as takeout doubles when your RHO opens 1♥? Why or why not?
  - KQ76, 5, AJ43, KQT4? (Yes. 15 High Card Points, all of which are “working”, and at least three cards in each of the suits not by the opponents.)
  - KJ98, 32, AT76, K84? (Yes. 11 High Card Points, all of which are “working”, and at least three cards in each of the suits not bid by the opponents.) Note that this hand would not be strong enough to open the bidding, but is strong enough to make a takeout double.
  - KT98, QJ, AT76, K84? (No. Excluding the 3 points for the ♥QJ, only 10 High Card Points. Note that this hand, having 13 High Card Points in total, is strong enough to open the bidding, but is not strong enough to make a takeout double because three of the HCP are likely not to be useful except when defending a contract in the heart suit bid by the opponents.)
  - 32, AT98, AT76, KQ4? (No. The hand does not have three cards in the unbid suit of spades.)
• AQJ987, 3, AK75, A4? (Yes. You would double a 1♥ opening bid. Whatever suit your partner chooses, you would next bid your spade suit. By the parlay of doubling and then bidding your own suit, you show that your double was based not upon support for the unbid suits but rather was based upon your having 18 or more HCP and a good suit of your own. If your hand were a little weaker – say that your ♦A became the ♦8 – you would be content to overcall 1♠. But with your actual hand, you are too strong to overcall 1♠ for fear that your partner would pass your overcall with a hand good enough to make a spade game.)

• In the next lesson, you will learn what to bid when your partner has made a takeout double.

• Randomly deal the deck. Or, if the teacher prefers, pre-deal the hands so that each hand includes a hand that would open the bidding with 1 of a suit and the next hand satisfies the general requirements for making a takeout double. Using hand generator software that allows the setting of parameters is a good way of ensuring such a layout.

• See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
Requirements for Making a Takeout Double after Opponents Have Opened the Bidding

- Overall strength:
  - When takeout double is of a one-level bid of opponents, 11 or more High Card Points, excluding HCP from “unconnected minor honors” in the suit of the opponents
  - When takeout double is of a higher-level bid of opponents, more High Card Points are required

- Distribution: at least three cards in each unbid suit

- Exception: any hand with 18 or more HCP - excluding HCP from “unconnected minor honors” in the suit of the opponents - can make a takeout double
Do these hands qualify as takeout doubles when your Right Hand Opponent (RHO) opens 1♥? Why or why not?

♠ K Q 7 6
♥ 5
♦ A J 4 3
♣ K Q 10 4

♠ K J 9 8
♥ 3 2
♦ A 10 7 6
♣ K 8 4

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

♠ A Q J 9 8 7
♥ 3
♦ A K 7 5
♣ A 4
Takeout Doubles

Most doubles by members of the partnership that has not opened the bidding are takeout doubles, unless...

- a no-trump bid is doubled
- only one suit remains unbid
- opponents have already been doubled for penalty
- both partners have bid and one has tightly limited the strength of his hand

Requirements for making a takeout double, can meet either of requirements below:

- with fewer than 18 HCP, must meet each requirement below:
  - at least 3 cards in each unbid suit
- with 18+ HCP, excluding "unconnected minor honors" in suits bid by opponents; any distribution
  - at least 11 HCP, excluding "unconnected minor honors" in suits bid by opponents
Lesson 39 – Advancing a Takeout Double

Objectives:
- to understand how to bid once your side has made a takeout double

Handout: at beginning of class, consider handing out the flowchart(s) reproduced at end of this lesson plan

Teaching steps:
- In the previous lessons, you learned about making a takeout double. In this lesson, you will learn what to bid after your side has made a takeout double.
- Remember that when the conditions were such that your partner’s double is a takeout double, your partner is showing at least 11 High Card Points (excluding “unconnected minor honors” in suits bid by the opponents) and at least three card support for each of the suits not bid by the opponents who had opened the bidding. (Usually there are three unbid suits; sometimes there might be only two unbid suits.) How do you advance (“advance” is the bridge term for the calls made by the partner of the overcaller or takeout doubler) when your partner has made a takeout double?
- *(Show first exhibit.)* Priorities in advancing a takeout double are similar to priorities when responding to an opening bid:
  - 1st, find a major suit fit by bidding a four card or longer unbid major suit
  - 2nd, bid no trump when you have a stopper in the suit(s) bid by the opponents
  - 3rd, bid a four card or longer unbid minor suit
- As advancer, to what level you bid to show the priorities above depends upon the strength of your hand:
  - *(Show next exhibit.)* When you can bid an unbid four card or longer major suit, you bid that suit.
    - At the minimum level with 0-8 Total Points
    - By jumping one level with 9-11 Total Points
    - By jumping two levels or by bidding game with 12+ Total Points
    - Here is a special case. When your partner has made a takeout double of an opening minor suit bid by the opponents, and you hold both major suits and 9+ Total Points, you **cue bid** the minor suit bid by the opponents. Your cue bid is not trying to make that minor suit your trump suit, but is asking your partner to bid his longer 4+ card major suit. Whichever major suit he bids next, you plan to raise that major suit. With 9-11 Total Points, you raise the major suit one level; with 12+ Total Points you raise the major suit to game. You cue bid rather than jumping to game yourself, just in case your partner holds only three cards in length in one major suit and four cards in length in the other major suit. You want to be sure to be contracting to play in your eight card major suit fit rather in your seven card major suit fit.
  - *(Show next exhibit.)* When you have a stopper in the suit(s) bid by the opponents, you can bid no trump:
    - By bidding 1NT with 8-10 Total Points
- By bidding 2NT with 11-12 Total Points
- By bidding 3NT with 13+ Total Points
- With 0-7 Total Points, you will not bid no trump. Although sometimes you can make a contract in a trump suit with very limited strength, because you can win tricks with small trumps by ruffing some high cards of the opponents, you can rarely make a contract in no trump with very limited strength.

(Show next exhibit and then one after.) Try these examples. What bid do you make as advancer of your partner’s double? Why?
- With 874, J9652, 962, 43 after your partner has made a takeout double of an opening bid by the opponents of 1♣? (You bid 1♥. You have only 1 HCP and 3 Ruffing Points, but matters could be much worse: at least you have a five card unbid major suit to bid.)
- With J743, A9, J9754, 32, after your partner has made a takeout double of an opening bid by the opponents of 1♥? (You bid 1♦. Your diamonds are longer than your spades, but bidding an unbid major suit of four cards or more in length is your first priority.)
- With T974, Q86, KQJ8, K3, after your partner has made a takeout double of an opening bid by the opponents of 1♥? (You bid 2♠. Excluding the “unconnected minor honor” in the heart suit bid by the opponents, you have 9 High Card Points and your doubleton club, combined with your four trumps, adds 2 Ruffing Points. You would prefer to have five spades, because your partner might have as few as three spades, but you have to exercise some judgment and bidding only 1♥ might cause you to miss a game.)
- With 72, A9752, AK3, J52, after your partner has made a takeout double of an opening bid by the opponents of 1♦? (You bid 4♥.)
- With AQ64, KJ72, A83, 65 after your partner has made a takeout double of an opening bid by the opponents of 1♦? (You bid 2♦! Your cue bid – a bid of a suit already bid by the opponents – is asking your partner to describe his hand. In this case, you are asking your partner, the takeout doubler, to bid his longer major suit. Whichever major suit he bids next, you plan to raise that major suit to game. You made the cue bid of 2♦ rather than jumping to game yourself by bidding, say 4♦, just in case your partner holds only three spades but holds four hearts; you prefer to be playing game in your eight card major suit fit rather than in your seven card major suit fit.)
- With 973, KQJ, QT63, J43, after your partner has made a takeout double of an opening bid by the opponents of 1♥? (You bid 1NT.)

(Show next exhibit.) The next bids by the takeout doubler are dependent upon whether the takeout doubler thinks the partnership has enough strength for game.
- If “no”, the takeout doubler signs off by passing advancer’s bid.
- If “maybe”, the takeout doubler invites game by raising the response of the advancer, or by bidding no trump with a stopper in the suit(s) bid by the opponents.
- If “yes”, the takeout doubler bids game.
- Remembering that there was a second type of hand with which partner’s takeout double was the proper bid, a hand with 18 or more High Card Points, how does advancer follow up? Advancer bids as if his partner has a normal takeout double and not a special takeout double with 18 or more High Card Points, a long suit, and maybe not three card support for each unbid suit. Once advancer’s partner bids his long suit over the advance, advancer will know that his partner has a special takeout double. After hearing the new
suit bid by partner, advancer can next bid as if his partner has 18+ High Card Points and a good six card suit.

- One special case will now be discussed. Is there a time when advancer should pass his partner’s takeout double … that is, advancer converts the takeout double to a penalty double by not making a choice of unbid suits as requested by his partner? Yes, but it is quite rare. Only when advancer has both length (at least five cards) and strength (QJ973 might be an example of a minimum) in the suit which your partner doubled, should advancer consider passing the takeout double. And even then, passing often does not work well as the opponents can make their contract, now with the extra points of having been doubled.

- Randomly deal the deck. Or, if the teacher prefers, pre-deal the hands so that each hand includes a hand that would open the bidding with 1 of a suit and the next hand satisfies the general requirements for making a takeout double. Using hand generator software that allows the setting of parameters is a good way of ensuring such a layout.

- See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
Priorities when Advancing a Takeout Double:

- Bid an unbid four card or longer major suit
- Bid notrump with a stopper in opponent’s suit
- Bid an unbid four card or longer minor suit
Advancing a Takeout Double of a One-Level Opening Bid by Bidding a 4+ Card Unbid Major Suit

- With 0-8 Total Points, at the minimum level
- With 9-11 Total Points, by jumping one level
- With 12+ Total Points, by jumping two levels or bidding game
- With 9+ Total Points and both unbid major suits, “cue bid” the suit bid by the opponents
Advancing a Takeout Double of a One-Level Opening Bid by Bidding Notrump, when Holding a Stopper in Suit(s) of Opponents

- With 8-10 Total Points, bid 1NT
- With 11-12 Total Points, bid 2NT
- With 13+ Total Points, bid 3NT
- With 0-7 Total Points, bid longest suit and not NT
What bid do you make as advancer of your partner’s double? Why?

♠ 8 7 4 
♥ J 9 6 5 2 
♦ 9 6 2 
♣ 4 3 

*West North East  South*
1 ♠  Dbl  Pass  ?

♠ J 7 4 3 
♥ A 9 
♦ J 9 7 5 4 
♣ 3 2 

*West North East  South*
1 ♥  Dbl  Pass  ?

♠ 10 9 7 4 
♥ Q 8 6 
♦ K Q J 8 
♣ K 3 

*West North East  South*
Pass  Pass  1 ♥ 
Dbl  Pass  ?
♠ 7 2  
♥ A 9 7 5 2  
♦ A K 3  
♣ J 5 2  

West North East  South  
1 ♠  Dbl  Pass  ?  

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

West North East  South  
1 ♦  Dbl  Pass  ?  

♠ 9 7 3  
♥ K Q J  
♦ Q 10 6 3  
♣ J 4 3  

West North East  South  
1 ♥  Dbl  Pass  ?
Rebids by Takeout Doubler

When double is a regular takeout double:

- Pass, when there is not strength for game
- Raise advancer’s suit or bid Notrump, when there is possibly the strength for game
- Bid game, when there is probably the strength for game

When double is 18+ HCP double, too strong for an overcall, bid doubler’s long suit
Advancing a Takeout Double of a One-Level Opening Bid or Response

With a 4+ suit, bid the major suit.

With a 6-8 TP, bid the major suit at minimum level.

With 9-11 TP, takeout double.

With 12+ TP, takeout double.

Takeout doubler has previously shown 9+ cards in one suit (not bid by opponents and 11+/HCP, excluding "decremented minor honors") in no other bid by opponent.

Advancer's general priorities are in descending order from left to right.

With opener's suit bid by opponents and 6+ HCP, bid NT.

With opener's suit bid by opener and 8+ HCP, bid NT.

With opener's suit bid by opener and 11+ HCP, bid 3NT.

With opener's suit bid by opener and 13+ HCP, bid 4NT.

With 9-11 TP, bid minor suit by jumping one level.

With 9-11 TP, bid minor suit by jumping two levels (or go game, if better).

With 12+ TP, bid minor suit by jumping two levels (or go game, if better).

Rebid by takeout doubler.

Regular takeout double of 11-13 HCP.

18+ HCP takeout double.

Did game: raise adversary's suit, or bid NT.

Bid more (next) suit, raise adversary's suit, or suit NT.

In there the strength for game?

Pass

Yes

No

Bid game

Rebid priorities of doubler: depend upon type of takeout double.
Lesson 40 – Bidding in Passout (“Balancing”) Position

Objective:
- to understand the requirements for an overcall or (takeout) double in passout (or “balancing”) position
- to understand the requirements for bids by partner of the balancing overcaller or doubler

Handout: at beginning of class, consider handing out the flowchart(s) reproduced at end of this lesson plan

Teaching steps:
- You have learned that one of the rewards for making an overcall or a takeout double is to compete, for a better score. Your better score could be caused by your side’s earning a positive score by making a contract or by “pushing” the opponents to a higher level where their contract will be defeated. For example, assume that the opponents can make a contract of 2♥, and that your side can make a contract of 2♠. If you allow the opponents to play 2♥, you will score -110. If you compete to a contract of 2♠, your side will score +110 if allowed to play 2♠, or your side will score a plus if the opponents compete to a contract of 3♥.
- The rewards for competing with an overcall or a (takeout) double apply also when the opponents have bid to a suit contract and your pass will end the auction allowing them to play in that contract. (Show first exhibit.) When your pass is the third consecutive pass following an opponent’s bid, you are said to be in the passout position, or the balancing position.
- How can balancer tell whether making a balancing bid is likely to achieve a reward (that is, improve his side’s score) or is likely to be produce a risk (that is, to make his side’s score worse)? The clues come from two sources: the auction of the opponents and the content of balancer’s hand.
  - Auction of the opponents. If the opponents have not denied a fit with their auction – or, even better, if the opponents have shown a fit with their auction –, balancing is more advisable. If, on the other hand, balancer chooses to make a balancing overcall or double on a hand where the opponents do not have a suit fit, the opponents can often double balancer’s partnership for penalty. That is why the nature of the auction is an important element in deciding whether to make a balancing overcall or double.
  - Content of balancer’s hand. The requirements for a balancing overcall or a balancing takeout double are quite similar to those for a direct overcall or a direct takeout double, except that the minimum strength is about 3 HCP fewer. The shorter is the hand in balancing position in the suit shown by the opponents, the more attractive is the making of a balancing overcall or double.
- (Show next exhibit.) Have the opponents denied a fit in a suit on these auctions?
  - 1♥-P-2♥-P; P-P-?. (No, the opponents have not denied a fit in a suit. Quite the contrary, the opponents’ auction has disclosed a fit in the heart suit. This auction is a highly attractive auction with which to make a balancing overcall or [takeout] double.)
  - 1♥-P-?. (No, the opponents have not denied a heart fit. Responder has denied the strength to respond to opener’s bid of 1♥. A heart fit is not assured, and so this auction is a less attractive auction with which to make a balancing call than the previous auction, but a balancing overcall or double might still be an attractive call.)
o 3♥-P-? (Hard to say. The shorter is balancer in the opened suit of hearts, the more likely it is that the opponents have a heart fit, but have insufficient strength to bid game in hearts. But it is a guess as to whether they have a heart fit or not.)

o 1♥-P-1♣-P; 2♦-P-2♥-P; P-?. (Probably. You might think that since East has supported West’s hearts, the opponents’ auction has disclosed a heart fit. However, West has promised only five hearts on this auction. And if East had three hearts, he might have raised West’s 1♥ opening bid on the first round. Quite likely, East has only two hearts. Balancing with an overcall or double on this auction is fairly dangerous.)

o 1♣-P-1♦-P; 1♠-P-2♦-P; P-?. (Almost surely. East might well have fewer than three spades [contrast to the previous auction] and almost surely has fewer than four clubs. East is likely to have at least six diamonds, while West has not shown that he has any diamonds. This auction is highly dangerous to make a balancing overcall or double.)

- When balancer makes an overcall or a takeout double, how does his partner choose his next bid? (Show next exhibit.) The partner bids just as he would have over a non-balancing overcall or takeout double … except that the maximum for his bids is about 3 HCP more than it would be had the overcall or takeout double been made in the non-balancing position. This compensates for the minimum for the overcall or takeout double in the balancing position being about 3 HCP fewer than it would be for an overcall or takeout double in the non-balancing position.

- Randomly deal the deck. Or, if the teacher prefers, pre-deal the hands so that each hand includes a hand that would consider making a balancing overcall or (takeout) double. Using hand generator software that allows setting the parameters is a good way of ensuring such a layout.

- See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
Bidding in Passout ("Balancing")

Position

Objective is to compete, for a better score

Applies when a pass is the third consecutive pass and would end the auction

Balancing calls include overcalls and (takeout) doubles

General requirements for a balancing overcall or (takeout) double:

- Opponents have not denied a fit in a suit

- Minimum strength is about 3 HCP fewer than for a non-balancing overcall or (takeout) double. The shorter is balancer in the suit of the opponents, the more attractive is making a balancing call.
Have opponents of balancer likely denied a fit in a suit in these auctions? Why or why not? (Difficult questions.)

West North East South
1 ♥ Pass 2 ♥ Pass
Pass ?

West North East South
1 ♥ Pass Pass ?

West North East South
3 ♥ Pass Pass ?

West North East South
1 ♥ Pass 1 ♠ Pass
2 ♦ Pass 2 ♥ Pass
Pass ?

West North East South
1 ♣ Pass 1 ♦ Pass
1 ♠ Pass 2 ♦ Pass
Pass ?
Bids by Partner of Player who Makes a Balancing Overcall or (Takeout) Double

Partner bids as if the overcall or takeout double were in non-balancing position …

… except that the maximum strength for the partner’s bids is about 3 HCP more
Bidding in Passout ("Balancing") Position

Two passes have followed an opponent's suit bid

If you pass, the auction is over. You are in the "passout" or "balancing" position

Two balancing calls are available to you

Objective is to try to compete, for a better score

Should satisfy these requirements

Opponents have not denied a fit in a suit

Balancer's minimum strength in the balancing position for the call to be taken (overcall or double) is about 3 HCP lower than the minimum strength in the non-balancing position

The shorter is balancer's length in the last suit bid by the opponents, the more attractive is making a balancing call

Bids by Partner of Balancer

Partner of balancer chooses the same call he would choose after a non-balancing overcall or (takeout) double ...

... except the maximum for such call is about 3 HCP higher
MORE CONSTRUCTIVE BIDDING

Lesson 41 – Negative Double by Responder

Objective:
- to understand the requirements for responder to make a negative double
- to understand the bids by opener after responder has made a negative double

Handout: at beginning of class, consider handing out the flowchart(s) reproduced at end of this lesson plan

Teaching steps:
- You have learned that one of the rewards of making an overcall is to complicate the opponents’ exchange of information. *(Show first exhibit.*) You hold 85, KT43, 752, KQ64. As West, your partner opens 1♦. You are prepared to respond 1♥ to describe your 6+ HCP and your 4+ cards in hearts, hoping to find opener with four hearts, too, and to contract for some number of tricks with hearts as the trump suit. But North foils you plan by overcalling 1♠. What can you do? If you choose to bid 2♥, your partner is entitled to assume that you have much more than 8 HCP and at least five hearts, when you have neither. Accordingly, you do not want to mislead your partner by bidding 2♥. When you and partner have agreed to play negative doubles, you have a solution: you double!
- Your double is not a penalty double. Instead, your double is more like a takeout double. Unlike the takeout double that is used by members of the partnership that has not opened the bidding, the negative double is used by the responder to the opening bid.
- *(Show next exhibit.*) A purpose of the negative double is to discover a fit in an unbid major suit. In the example hand you were shown, your partner as West had opened 1♦ and North had overcalled 1♠. The unbid major suit is hearts.
- The negative double by responder applies when partner opens the bidding and Right Hand Opponent overcalls in a suit. The negative double applies without regard to the level or suit of the overcall. After partner’s 1♦ opening bid, responder’s double would be a negative double whether North’s overcall is 1♠, 2♠, or 2♣, for example.
- There are three general requirements for responder to choose to make a negative double:
  - Inability to safely bid the unbid major suit naturally. If responder has the appropriate strength and adequate length in the unbid major suit, responder would prefer to directly bid the unbid major suit.
  - 4+ card length in at least one unbid major suit. In the example you were shown, there was only one unbid major suit, hearts. Accordingly, responder’s negative double would show at least four cards in the heart suit. If there were two unbid major suits – say partner opened 1♦ and RHO overcalled in clubs – responder’s negative double would show at least four cards in one of the two unbid major suit and, ideally, in both of them.
  - 8+ HCP. When opener could bid the unbid major suit at the two level, responder shows 8+ HCP for the negative double. This would be the case, for example, when the negative double by responder is made after an overcall of 1♠ or 2♠ … where opener, if he wanted to bid hearts, would have to bid 2♥. Assume instead, that responder made a negative double of an overcall of 2♠ or 3♠. Then, opener, if he wanted to bid hearts, would have to bid 3♥. In that case, responder’s negative double shows 10+ HCP. The higher opener
would have to bid the unbid major suit, the more HCP is required by responder to make a negative double.

- *(Show next exhibit.)* Your partner as West opens the bidding with 1♠. North overcalls 1♠. You, as responder, are East. What call do you make? Why?
  - With the hand shown earlier, 85, KJ43, 752, KQ64? (Double. Your hand meets all the requirements for a negative double: you have neither the heart length nor the strength to bid 2♥, you have at least four cards in an unbid major suit, and you have 8+ HCP.)
  - With 85, KT432, 752, KQ6? (You also double. With this hand, you have enough heart length to bid 2♥, but you do not have enough strength to bid 2♥. Hence, you double. Opener will not know that you have five hearts and not just four hearts, but the negative double is the best choice to describe your hand.)
  - With 85, AKT42, 752, KQ6? (2♥. Bidding 2♥ exchanges much useful information with your partner. You show 5+ hearts and a hand that is strong enough to bid at the two level. This is much more useful information than the limited information that would be exchanged if you were to make a negative double.)

- *(Show next exhibit.)* What does opener bid, when his partner, the responder, has made a negative double, showing 4+ cards in an unbid major suit? Opener bids as if responder had bid the unbid major suit. So, if responder made a negative double of an overcall of 1♠, opener bids as if responder had responded 1♥.
  - With four cards in an unbid major suit, opener bids the unbid major suit at the appropriate level. The “at the appropriate level” means that when opener has a minimum opening hand, he should bid the unbid major suit at the minimum level possible. Over a negative double of a 1♠ overcall, for example, opener would bid 2♥. If opener had extra values, he might bid 3♥ or 4♥.
  - Without four cards in an unbid major suit, opener should not bid the unbid major suit. Instead opener should bid naturally. Over a negative double by responder that followed an overcall of 1♠, for example, opener should choose the same bid he would have chosen had responder bid 1♥.

- *(Show next exhibit.)* Try these examples. You opened 1♦ as West, North overcalled 1♠, your partner East as responder doubled (a negative double). South passes. What bid do you choose as opener? Why?
  - With J97, QJ65, AJ86, A7? (2♥. You do have four cards in the unbid major suit of hearts and so you bid hearts. Because you have a minimum opening hand of only 14 Total Points [13 HCP + 1 Ruffing Point], you bid the minimum number of hearts.)
  - With A97, QJ65, AKJ62, 7? (3♥. With 18 Total Points [15 HCP + 3 Ruffing Points], you jump raise to 3♥.)
  - With A97, QJ6, AJ62, J75? (1NT. You do not have four cards in the unbid major suit of hearts, and so you should not choose to bid hearts. Instead you choose to bid 1NT, the same bid you would have made had responder been able to respond 1♥.)

- Randomly deal the deck. Or, if the teacher prefers, pre-deal the hands so that each hand includes a hand that responder would consider making a negative double. Using hand generator software that allows setting the parameters is a good way of ensuring such a layout.

- See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
Why negative doubles are needed

♠️ 8 5
♥️ K J 4 3
♦️ 7 5 2
♣️ K Q 6 4

West North East South
1 ♦️ 1♠️ ?

Had North passed, East planned to respond 1♥️.

After North’s 1♠️ overcall, East still wants to show his strength and his four-card heart suit, but …

A 2♥️ response shows both more hearts than East owns and more strength than East owns.
Negative Double by Responder

- Targeted at discovering a fit in an unbid major suit

- Applies when partner opens and Right Hand Opponent (RHO) overcalls in a suit

- Requirements:
  - Inability to safely bid the unbid major suit naturally
  - 4+ card length in at least one unbid major suit
  - 8+ HCP
What do you bid as responder? Why?

♠ 8 5
♥ K J 4 3
♦ 7 5 2
♣ K Q 6 4

West North East  South
1 ♦  1 ♠  ?

♠ 8 5
♥ K 10 4 3 2
♦ 7 5 2
♣ K Q 6

West North East  South
1 ♦  1 ♠  ?

♠ 8 5
♥ A K 10 4 2
♦ 7 5 2
♣ K Q 6

West North East  South
1 ♦  1 ♠  ?
Opener’s Bid after Negative Double by Responder

Opener bids as if responder had shown exactly four cards in the unbid major suit(s):

- With four cards in an unbid major suit, opener bids the unbid major suit at the appropriate level

- Without four cards in an unbid major suit, opener bids naturally
What do you bid as opener? Why?

♥ Q J 6 5
♦ A K J 6 2
♣ 7

West North East  South
1 ♠  1 ♠  Dbl  Pass

♥ Q J 6 5
♦ A J 6 2
♣ J 7 5

West North East  South
1 ♠  1 ♠  Dbl  Pass

♥ Q J 6
♦ A J 6 2
♣ J 7 5

West North East  South
1 ♠  1 ♠  Dbl  Pass
Negative Double by Responder

Partner opens the bidding, Right Hand Opponent overcalls in a suit

Responder's double is a negative double

Objective is to try to discover a partnership major suit fit in at least one of the unbid major suits

Should satisfy these requirements

Inability to safely bid the unbid major suit naturally, because of:

Either

Inadequate length: for a bid at the two level or higher in longest unbid major suit, fewer than five cards in length

or

Insufficient strength: too few HCP to bid suit naturally at the minimum level

4+ cards in at least one unbid major suit

8+ HCP if opener's bid of the unbid major suit must be at the two level; 10+ HCP if opener's bid of the unbid major suit must be at the three level; etc.

Opener's Bid after Negative Double by Responder

When responder has made a negative double of a suit overcall

Opener bids as though responder has shown:

both

exactly four cards in opener's longest unbid major suit

and

the minimum strength required for the level of the negative double
Lesson 42 – Opening Bid of 2♣ and Responses

Objective:
- to understand the requirements for a strong opening bid of 2♣
- to understand the general scheme of responses to an opening bid of 2♣ and opener’s rebids after such responses

Handout: at beginning of class, consider handing out the flowchart(s) reproduced at end of this lesson plan

Teaching steps:
- You have learned the guidelines for all the opening bids of 1 of a suit. The range for the opening bids of 1 of a suit is 13–21 Total Points. Because the upper range of partner’s opening bid was as much as 21 Total Points, you also learned the guideline to respond to an opening 1-level suit bid with as few as 6 Total Points. That way, opener would be able to continue to look for the best contract that has a game bonus if opener were at or close to the upper range of 21 Total Points.
- In this lesson, you will learn that if opener has more than 21 Total Points, opener should open the bidding with a bid of 2♣. Because the 2♣ opening bid does not promise any length in the club suit: (1) the 2♣ opening bid cannot be passed by responder, even when responder has fewer than 6 Total Points; and (2) the 2♣ opening bid is a convention (just as the 2♣ Stayman response to a 1NT opening bid, a bid that promises nothing in the bid suit of clubs, is a convention).
- (Show first exhibit.) Here’s an example of a 2♣ opening bid: ♠AK4, ♥KQT8, ♦AJ6, ♣AQT. Being a balanced hand, this hand looks like a hand that should open the bidding in notrump. But this hand has 23 Total Points, while the guidelines for opening 1NT is 15–17 Total Points and for opening 2NT is 20–21 Total Points. The solution is to open 2♣, and then, once responder bids something, to rebid 2NT.
- Here’s another example of a 2♣ opening bid: ♠AKJT96, ♥AQ4, ♦AQT, ♣4. With a long spade suit, this hand looks like a hand that should open the bidding with 1♠. But this hand has 20 High Card Points and 2 Length Points, for Total Points of 22, above the 13–21 Total Point range for an opening bid of 1♠. The solution is to open 2♣, and then, once responder bids something, to rebid 2♦.
- The responder to an opening bid of 2♣ cannot pass. Not only is the 2♣ bidder not promising any length in clubs, but the opening 2♣ bidder might have enough strength to try for the game bonus, even if responder has no useful values. Thus, in most cases, responder will bid 2♦ over a 2♣ opening bid (yet another convention because the 2♦ bid does not promise any length in diamonds), in order to allow opener to make a 2-level rebid that describes his hand … as, for example, with the 2NT rebid or 2♦ rebid shown above.

Randomly deal the deck. Or, if the teacher prefers, pre-deal the hands so that each hand includes a hand that would open the bidding with 2♣. Using hand generator software that allows the setting of parameters is a good way of ensuring such a layout.

See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
What do you plan to open each of the following hands? Why? What is your planned next bid?

♠ A K 4
♥ K Q 10 8
♦ A J 6
♣ A Q 10

♠ A K J 10 9 6
♥ A Q 4
♦ A Q 10
♣ 4
Opening the Bidding

How many Total Points?
- Total Points are HCP + Length Points

13-21 TP
- General priorities are in order from left to right

22+ TP
- Minor suits are diamonds and clubs
- Open 2 clubs

Major suits are spades and hearts
- If holding two major suits of same length, open higher-ranking major suit (spades)

with a 5+ card major suit, open 1 of longer major suit
- See "Responding to Opening Bid of 1 of Major Suit"

with a balanced hand of 15-17 TP, open 1NT
- See "Responding to Opening Bid of 1NT"

Balanced hand means hand with no singleton or void and without a six card or longer suit

with a balanced hand of 20-21 TP, open 2NT
- See "Responding to Opening Bid of 1 of Minor Suit"

open 1 of longer minor suit
- If holding two minor suits of equal length of 4 cards or longer, open higher-ranking minor suit (diamonds)
- If holding two minor suits of equal length of 3 cards, open lower-ranking minor suit (clubs)
Lesson 43 – Preemptive (Weak) Bids

Objective:
- to understand the intention for an opening preemptive bid
- to understand the general requirements for an opening preemptive bid
- to understand the intention for a weak jump overcall

Handout: at beginning of class, consider handing out the flowchart(s) reproduced at end of this lesson plan

Teaching steps:
- You have learned not only the general guidelines for opening bids at the 1-level, but also the general guidelines for opening bids of 2♦ (any hand with more than 21 Total Points) and 2NT (a balanced hand of 20-21 Total Points).
- In this lesson, you will learn the general guidelines not only for the opening bids of 2♦, 2♥, and 2♠, but also for opening bids of 3♦, 3♥, 3♠, and 3♣ … or even 4♣, 4♥, 4♠, and 4♦. These high level opening bids are, in bridge terminology, called preemptive bids. Preemptive bids have that name because they take away, or preempt, the other three players (two opponents and one partner) from making constructive bids to help the partnership bid to its best contract.
- (Show first exhibit.) Because preemptive bids preempt not only the opponents but also partner, the guidelines for opening a preemptive bid generally include two factors:
  - One factor is that the hand that makes an opening preemptive bid contains a very long, very good suit. The reason for this factor is that, should the opponents decide to double you in the contract of your preemptive opening bid, you might, even if you cannot make the contract you bid, produce a negative score from suffering a penalty that is smaller than the negative score you would have if the opponents were to have the bidding room to bid to a makeable game or slam. In short, you are “trying to cut your losses”.
  - The other factor is that the opening preemptive bid contains less strength than an opening 1-level bid; that is, the opening preempt has fewer than 13 Total Points. The reason for this factor is that, when you open a preempt, you actually hope that the opponents have most of the High Card Points. Your intent is to raise the level of bidding right away so that you make it very difficult for the opponents to explore their best contract.
- How long and good of a suit might you have to open with a preemptive suit bid of 2♦ or higher? Let’s address the quality of the suit of the preempt first: generally speaking – and remember that what you are learning are just guidelines and not rules – the suit of the opening preemptive bid should include either two the top three honors in the suit (that would be two of the A, K, and Q) or three of the top five honors in the suit (that would be three of the A, K, Q, J, and T). Now let’s address the length of the suit of the preempt: generally speaking again, a preemptive opening bid at the 2-level shows a six-card suit, at the 3-level shows a seven-card suit, and at the 4-level shows an eight-card suit.
- You can also apply these guidelines to make weak jump overcalls. For example, if your RHO opens 1♠ and you hold a weak hand with a good six card spade suit, you should consider overcalling not just 1♠, but a weak jump overcall of 2♠!
Let’s try some examples. What would you bid as opener with the following hands? Why?

- With KQT854, JT, Q65, 93? (Open 2♠. You have a six card spade suit headed by two of the top three honors and you have less strength than is required to open the bidding with 1♠.)
- With 6, AJT7654, J32, 96? (Open 3♥. You have a seven card heart suit headed by three of the top five honors and you have less strength than is required to open the bidding with 1♥.)
- What would you bid with the above hands if your Right Hand Opponent were the opening bidder and bid 1♠? (You choose the same bid you would have chosen when you were the opening bidder.)

Randomly deal the deck. Or, if the teacher prefers, pre-deal the hands so that each hand includes a hand that would open the bidding with a preemptive bid or would make a weak jump overcall. Using hand generator software that allows the setting of parameters is a good way of ensuring such a layout.

See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
Preemptive (Weak) Opening Bids

Preemptive opening bids are suit bids of 2♦ and higher.

Show good, long suits and less strength than an opening bid of one of a suit.

Good suit guideline: suit that includes two of top three honors (A, K, Q) or three of top five honors (A, K, Q, J, T)

The level of the preemptive opening bid depends mostly upon the length of the long suit:

- Six card suit, can be opened at the two level
- Seven card suit, can be opened at the three level
- Eight card suit, can be opened at the four level

Can apply same guidelines to preemptive (weak) jump overcalls
What would you open, holding the following hands? Why?

♠ ♦ K Q 10 8 5 4
♥ J 10
♦ Q 6 5
♣ 9 3

♠ 6
♥ A J 10 7 6 5 4
♦ J 3 2
♣ 9 6

If the opponent before you opened the bidding with 1♦, what bid would you make with the hands above?
MORE DEFENSIVE PLAY

Lesson 44 – Third Hand Play, when Dummy has only Small Cards in the Suit Partner Led, Part 2

Objectives:
- to understand partnership agreements about the plays by third hand at Trick 1
- to understand partnership agreements about the card returned by third hand at Trick 2
- to understand to play the ‘lowest of equals” card
- to understand to unblock a suit

Handout: at beginning of class, consider handing out the flowchart(s) reproduced at end of this lesson plan

Teaching steps:
- Several lessons ago you learned about third hand’s play when dummy has only small cards in the suit partner led, and third hand held three cards in the suit partner led. You learned that third hand should play his highest card, but when two or more cards were equal, he should play his lowest of equals (or lowest of equivalents). You also learned that if third hand won the trick from his three card holding and decided to continue the suit, he should lead the higher of his two remaining cards in the suit.
- In this lesson, you will learn about third hand’s play when dummy has only small cards in the suit partner led, and third hand holds four or more cards in the suit partner led. And, importantly, how the opening leader can use the information about how many cards his partner holds in order to conduct the best defense for the partnership.
- (Show first exhibit.) Here is an example, where you hold not three spades but four spades, while dummy still holds only small cards, no honors.

```
North (dummy)  ♠ 8(5)
West (opening leader)  ♥ (2)
East (third hand – you)  ♦ K963
South (declarer)  ♣
```

- Declarer calls for the ♦5 from dummy.
- You play your high spade, the ♦K and declarer follows suit with the ♦4. This time, having been dealt four spades, you have three spades remaining and not just two spades remaining. With an original holding of four cards, you should return your original fourth best at Trick 2. Return the ♦3.
(Show next exhibit.)  Declarer covers the ♠3 with the ♠T.  Your partner wins Trick 2 with the ♠J. The play is consistent with a holding of:

North (dummy)
♠ 85
West (opening leader)
♠ AJ72
East (third hand – you)
♠ K963
South (declarer)
♠ QT4

Reading you for four spades because you returned the ♠3 at Trick 2, West can then play the ♠A, capturing South’s ♠Q, and then play ♠7 to your ♠9 for a fourth trick.

(Show next exhibit.) One last example with you back to holding three spades and dummy still holding only small spades:

North (dummy)
♠ 8(5)
West (opening leader)
♠ (2)
East (third hand – you)
♠ K93
South (declarer)
♠

This time you are back to having been dealt only three spades. You play the ♠K at Trick 1, declarer following suit with the ♠4, and you return your higher of two spades remaining, the ♠9.
(Show next exhibit.) As in the last example, declarer plays the ♠T and your partner wins the ♠J. Let’s look at all four hands and decide what West should play next.

| North (dummy) | ♠ 85 |
| West (opening leader) | ♠ AJ72 |
| East (third hand – you) | ♠ K93 |
| South (declarer) | ♠ QT64 |

After Trick 2, with West on lead with the ♠J, the position is this:

| North (dummy) | ♠ -- |
| West (opening leader) | ♠ A7 |
| East (third hand – you) | ♠ 3 |
| South (declarer) | ♠ Q6 |

If West were to play the ♠A at Trick 3, he would win that trick, but then the ♠Q of declarer would win the fourth round of spades. But if West does NOT play a spade at Trick 3, look at that position in the spade suit. If East is able to get on lead later in the hand and THEN return the ♠3, West would win both the ♠A and the ♠7. Do you see why? [Demonstrate.] In effect, by waiting for East to later lead spades, the ♠Q of declarer has been successfully finessed against and E-W will win all four spade tricks.

(Show next exhibit.) So … how would West know to NOT play the ♠A in this example and yet to play the ♠A in the previous example? Because of partnership agreements! When East, having won the ♠K at Trick 1 – denying possession of the ♠Q –, returned the ♠9 at Trick 2 in this example, West could read East for having been dealt only three spades and knew that declarer had two spades remaining, including the ♠Q. But in the earlier example, when East returned the ♠3 at Trick 2, West could read East for having been dealt four spades and knew that declarer had only one spade remaining, and that that spade was the ♠Q.

And that is the strength of having partnership agreements!

- Have the students break into tables of four players. Distribute a duplicate board with unsorted hands to each table. (Hands need to be determined.)
- See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
Your partner is West; dummy is North; you are East; declarer is South.

Your partner West was opening leader and led the 2. North played the 5.

What card do you play?

You play the K. You win the trick, declarer playing the 4.

What card do you return?
This could be the layout of the entire suit.

You won the K, declarer played the 4. You return the suit, playing the 3.

What does your partner play if declarer plays the 10 on the second round of the suit? And, what cards does your partner play on the third and fourth rounds of the suit?

What does your partner play if declarer plays the Q on the second round of the suit? And, what cards does your partner play on the third and fourth rounds of the suit?

In either case, how many tricks does your partnership win in this suit?
Your partner is West; dummy is North; you are East; declarer is South.

Your partner West was opening leader and led the 2. North played the 5.

What card do you play?

You play the K. You win the trick.

What card do you return?
This could be the layout of the entire suit.

You win the K, declarer playing the 4. You return the suit, playing the 9. Declarer follows with the 10 and your partner West wins the J. The remaining layout of the suit would be this:

```
A 7
W
E
S
```

What happens if your partner plays a third round of the suit?
How was your partner able to tell the difference between this layout:

```
8 5
A J 7 2
N W E
K 9 6 3
S Q 10 4
```

... where your partner **should** cash the A on the third round of the suit and your partnership will win four tricks in the suit ...

... and this alternative layout:

```
8 5
A J 7 2
N W E
K 9 3
S Q 10 6 4
```

... where your partner **should not** cash the A on the third round?
Third Hand Play when Dummy Has Only Small Cards

Follow your partnership’s agreements

Informing partner is more important than not informing declarer

Look to dummy’s honor holdings and to your honor holdings in the suit led

Dummy has no honor cards in the suit led

on the first trick, you play

your highest card, but the “lowest of equals” among cards equal to your highest card*

* ... And on your next play in the suit led, you play:

from an original three card holding, your higher remaining card

from an original holding of four or more cards, your original “fourth best” card
Lesson 45 – Third Hand Play, when Dummy has only Small Cards in the Suit Partner Led, Part 3

Objectives:
- to understand how partnership agreements about the plays in a suit by third hand at Trick 1 help inform partner to make well-considered future plays in the suit

Handout: at beginning of class, consider handing out the flowchart(s) reproduced at end of this lesson plan

Teaching steps:
- In previous lessons, you learned about third hand’s play when dummy has only small cards in the suit partner led. You learned that third hand should play his highest card, but when two or more cards were equal, he should play his lowest of equals (or lowest of equivalents).
- You also learned that when third hand was next in lead, the choice of card he then returned would inform opening leader of third hand’s length in the suit.
  - if he then had two remaining cards in the suit, he should return the higher of those two remaining cards.
  - if he then had three remaining cards in the suit, he should return his “original fourth best” in the suit; that is, the lowest of the three remaining cards.
  - You were shown an example where being informed the length in the suit held by third hand helped opening leader determine the best continuation for the defense: specifically, whether he should continue playing the suit or whether he should switch suits in order to prevent declarer from winning an undeserved trick in the suit.
- Not only will the card in the suit returned by third hand help opening leader determine the length in the suit that was held by third hand, but the choice of card played in the suit by third hand on the first round of the suit will help inform opening leader which high cards in the suit are owned by third hand and which high cards in the suit are owned by declarer. That information, too, helps opening leader determine the best continuation for the defense.
- Of course, that help is realized only when third hand follows the partnership agreements you have learned.
- (Show first exhibit.) Let’s see how much those agreements help the opening leader place key as-yet unplayed high cards.

North (dummy)
♠ 76(3)

West (you)
♠ Q98(4)2

East
♠ (J)

South (declarer)
♠ (A)

- You lead a fourth best ♠4, declarer calls for the ♠3 from dummy, your partner in third hand plays the ♠J, and declarer wins the trick with the ♠A.
- Who owns the ♠K?
You know that declarer owns the ♠K, because if partner owned the ♠K, he would have played the ♠K at Trick 1 and not the ♠J. When dummy holds only small cards, third hand is supposed to play his highest card in the suit (or, lowest of equal high cards). And you know that the ♠J can’t be the lowest of high equals, because you hold the ♠Q. Accordingly, even though declarer played a sneaky ♠A at Trick 1, your partnership agreements have informed you that declarer also owns the ♠K. (Note that while each defender should follow partnership agreements, such as playing the lowest of equal cards, declarer is free to play whatever cards he wants. The defenders have to use partnership agreements to legally communicate their holdings to each other so that they can conduct the best defense possible. Declarer, on the other hand, already can see his partner’s hand, and so has no need to communicate with his partner; declarer can afford to try to confuse the defenders, but the defenders cannot afford to confuse each other!)

• (Show next exhibit.) Try one more example:

```
North (dummy)
♠ 76(3)

West (you)
♠ K95(4)2

East
♠ (J)

South (declarer)
♠ (Q)
```

- You lead a fourth best ♠4, declarer calls for the ♠3 from dummy, your partner in third chair plays the ♠J and declarer wins the ♠Q.
- You have seen the ♠J and ♠Q and you own the ♠K. Who owns the ♠T?
- Declarer owns the ♠T, because if your partner owned the ♠T as well as the ♠J you have seen him play, then your partner would have played the ♠T, lower of equal cards, at Trick 1, rather than the ♠J.
- Who owns the ♠A?
- Declarer owns the ♠A, because if third hand, your partner, owned the ♠A as well as the ♠J, he would have played the ♠A at Trick 1 and not the ♠J.
- See how easy it is to “place the missing honors” when you and partner adopt and follow partnership agreements?

- Have the students break into tables of four players. Distribute a duplicate board with unsorted hands to each table. (Hands need to be determined.)
- See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
You are West. You led the 4 (fourth best).

Who owns the K?
You are West. You led the 4 (fourth best).

Who owns the T?

Who owns the A?
Third Hand Play when Dummy Has Only Small Cards

Follow your partnership’s agreements

Informing partner is more important than not informing declarer

Look to dummy’s honor holdings and to your honor holdings in the suit led

Dummy has no honor cards in the suit led

on the first trick, you play

your highest card, but the “lowest of equals” among cards equal to your highest card*

* ... And on your next play in the suit led, you play:

from an original three card holding, your higher remaining card

from an original holding of four or more cards, your original “fourth best” card
Lesson 46 – Third Hand Play, when Dummy has at Least One Honor Card in the Suit Partner Led, Part 1

Objectives:
- to understand partnership agreements about the plays by third hand at Trick 1
- to understand partnership agreements about the card returned by third hand at Trick 2

Handout: at beginning of class, consider handing out the flowchart(s) reproduced at end of this lesson plan

Teaching steps:
- In previous lessons, you learned about third hand’s plays when dummy had only small cards in the suit that partner led on opening lead. Today, you will learn about third hand’s play when at least one of dummy’s cards is an honor card.
- (Show first exhibit.) Let’s first talk about the layouts where dummy’s highest honor card is higher than any card that you, in third hand, hold in that suit:

```
North (dummy)   ♠ K85
                  ♠ Q93
West (opening leader)  ♠ (2)
South (declarer)  ♠
East (third hand – you)  ♠ Q93
```

- Here, the guidelines are simple: if declarer calls for a small card from dummy, you play exactly as if dummy held all small cards, following the same guidelines as you learned in the last lesson. With your ♠Q93, you play your highest spade, the ♠Q. If you held QJ3, you would play the ♠J, the lowest equal of your high spades, the QJ.
- What if declarer played the ♠K from dummy? Well, you definitely do not want to sacrifice your ♠Q, when you know you are not going to win the trick, so you do not want to play your highest card. Instead, you would play one of your two low cards. There really is a correct play from the two low cards, but that is the subject for a later lesson.
What if declarer played the ♠K and you held QJ3?

Well, in that situation, you would play a high spade (actually, the queen). That’s because you want to play a high card from the short hand first, advice you have heard quite often by now. (Show next exhibit.) Here’s the layout that makes attractive your playing the ♠Q:

Once you have played the ♠Q (“unblocked” the ♠Q would be the bridge language), the layout will look like this:
If you are on lead twice more, you can then lead the ♠J (highest from the short hand first, right?) to force out the ace, and then the ♠3 to allow partner to win the ♠T and the ♠7. Declarer can’t be stopped from winning his top two spades of the ♠A in hand and the ♠K in dummy, but you want your partnership to be in the position of winning two spade tricks, one by promotion of partner’s ♠T (after declarer and you have played the top four spade honors) and one by establishment by length of partner’s ♠7. Your Trick 1 play/unblock of the ♠Q helped that happen and your later continuation/unblock of the ♠J helped finish that off. You knew to make these plays because partner’s leading the ♠2 at Trick 1 suggested to you that partner held four spades (the ♠2 being his “fourth best”) headed by an honor.

- Have the students break into tables of four players. Distribute a duplicate board with unsorted hands to each table. (Hands need to be determined.)
- See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
Your partner is West; dummy is North; you are East; declarer is South.

Your partner West was opening leader and led the 2.

What card do you play after declarer South calls for the 5 from dummy North?

… Would you play that same card if declarer South had called for the K from dummy North?
Your partner is West; dummy is North; you are East; declarer is South.

Your partner West was opening leader and led the 2.

What card do you play after declarer South calls for the K from dummy North?
This could be the layout of the entire suit.

Your partner is West; dummy is North; you are East; declarer is South. Your partner West was opening leader and led the 2. Dummy was directed to play the K.

If you played the 3, the remaining layout of the suit would be this:

When you are next on lead, assume that you lead the Q and declarer plays the A. If you are on lead next for your partnership, how many tricks can your side immediately cash in the suit?

If you played an honor (the Q is the correct honor to play, because playing the J happens to deny ownership of the Q in this unblocking situation), the remaining layout of the suit would be this:

When you are next on lead, assume that you lead the J and declarer plays the A. If you are on lead next for your partnership, how many tricks can your side immediately cash in the suit?
Third Hand Play when Declarer Calls for a Small Card from Dummy

Follow your partnership’s agreements

Informing partner is more important than not informing declarer

Look to dummy’s honor holdings and to your honor holdings in the suit led

Dummy has no honor cards in the suit led

on the first trick, you play

your highest card, but the “lowest of equals” among cards equal to your highest card*

* ... And on your next play in the suit led, you play:

from an original three card holding, your higher remaining card

from an original holding of four or more cards, your original “fourth best” card

Dummy has honor card(s), and you hold no higher card than dummy’s honor card(s)

on the first trick, you play

your highest card, but the “lowest of equals” among cards equal to your highest card*
Lesson 47 – Third Hand Play, when Dummy has at Least One Honor Card in the Suit Partner Led, Part 2

Objectives:

- to understand partnership agreements about the plays by third hand at Trick 1
- to understand partnership agreements about the card returned by third hand at Trick 2

Handout: at beginning of class, consider handing out the flowchart(s) reproduced at end of this lesson plan

Teaching steps:

- In the last lesson, you learned about third hand’s plays when dummy held an honor in the suit led and you held an honor (or more than one honor) but held no honor higher than the honor held by dummy.
- Today, you will learn about third hand play in a slightly different layout. In this layout, dummy holds an honor and you hold at least one honor higher than dummy’s honor. *(Show first exhibit.)* Here’s an example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>North (dummy)</th>
<th>♠ Q85</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West (opening leader)</td>
<td>♠ (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South (declarer)</td>
<td>♠</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- If declarer calls for a small card from dummy, you should not play the ♠A, your highest spade, but instead should play your ♠J, your highest card other than the high spade honor. Why is that?
- *(Show next exhibit.)* Well, here is a possible complete layout of the suit:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>North (dummy)</th>
<th>♠ Q85</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West (opening leader)</td>
<td>♠ K752</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South (declarer)</td>
<td>♠ T94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- When you play the jack, you have finessed against dummy’s queen. You will win the ♠J at Trick 1. And then play the ♠A at Trick 2 (high hand from the short hand first), also winning that trick. When you return your ♠3 at Trick 3, partner will be able to win both the ♠K and the ♠7. That is four tricks for your side and none for declarer.
By the way, had you held ♠AJT instead of ♠AJ3, you would play the ♠T at Trick 1, lowest of equals between the ♠J and ♠T.

There is a tricky rule of thumb in the type of layout shown above, when dummy holds an honor and you, in third hand, hold a higher honor, and declarer calls for a small card from dummy. You would play your highest card other than your highest honor (or its lowest equal), only if that high card is the nine or higher. (Show next exhibit.) Let’s look at the example where your second highest spade is not the jack but instead the six:

North (dummy)
♠ Q85

West (opening leader)
♠ KJ72

East (third hand – you)
♠ A63

South (declarer)
♠ T94

Now, playing the 6 won’t allow you to keep declarer from winning a trick. There is nothing you can do about that. You might as well win the ♠A and continue a spade. With which spade do you continue? Well, when you have only two spades remaining you play your higher spade. If you had three spades remaining you would play your original fourth best spade and partner would know that you had been dealt at least four spades. So, you return the ♠6 at Trick 2 and declarer plays the ♠T or ♠9. Partner can choose to either win the ♠K right now, even though that promotes the ♠Q in dummy into a trick, or, perhaps better, partner can play a small spade at Trick 2, allowing declarer to win the trick but also positioning his partnership to win two spade tricks when either partner next is in lead.

(Show next exhibit.) Let’s address one more third hand play before we break for play. The third hand play being addressed is what third hand should play when opening leader has led an honor card and third hand has only two cards in the suit led and one of those two cards is an honor card. Here is an example:

North (dummy)
♠ K85 or 865

West (opening leader)
♠ (J)

East (third hand – you)
♠ A3

South (declarer)
♠
In this situation you need to unblock the ♠A. You don’t want to be left with the singleton ♠A, blocking the suit, in case the whole layout is this: (Show next exhibit.)

North (dummy)
♠ Kxx or xxx

West (opening leader)
♠ JT976

East (third hand – you)
♠ A3

South (declarer)
♠ Qxx or KQx

where “x” represents a small card. You can’t keep declarer from winning both the ♠Q and the ♠K, and so the best you can hope for is for your side to lose to one of those cards at Trick 2, lose to the other of those cards later in the hand, and then, even later, have partner be able to win his two long spades. If that happens, then your partnership can win three tricks in the suit, while you can’t help from having declarer win two tricks in the suit.

- Have the students break into tables of four players. Distribute a duplicate board with unsorted hands to each table. (Hands need to be determined.)
- See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
Your partner is West; dummy is North; you are East; declarer is South.

Your partner West was opening leader and led the 2.

What card do you play after declarer South calls for the 5 from dummy North?
This could be the layout of the entire suit.
Your partner is West; dummy is North; you are East; declarer is South.

Your partner West was opening leader and led the 2.

What card do you play after declarer South calls for the 5 from dummy North?

What shows above could be the layout of the entire suit.
Your partner is West; dummy is North; you are East; declarer is South.

Look first at the spade suit.

Your partner West was opening leader and led the ♠J.

What card should you play when declarer South calls for the ♠5 from dummy?

Look next at the heart suit.

Now assume that your partner West was opening leader and led the ♥J.

What card should you play when declarer South calls for the ♥5 from the dummy?
In each case, you should play the A.

This could be the layout of the entire spade and heart suits:
Third Hand Play when Declarer Calls for a Small Card from Dummy

- Follow your partnership’s agreements
- Informing partner is more important than not informing declarer
- Look to dummy’s honor holdings and to your honor holdings in the suit led

- Dummy has no honor cards in the suit led
  - on the first trick, you play
    - your highest card, but the “lowest of equals” among cards equal to your highest card

- Dummy has honor card(s), and you hold no higher card than dummy’s honor card(s)
  - on the first trick, you play
    - your highest card, but the “lowest of equals” among cards equal to your highest card

- Dummy has honor card(s), and you hold higher card(s) than dummy’s honor card(s)
  - on the first trick, you play
    - if your second highest card is a 9 or higher, your second highest card, but the “lowest of equals” among cards equal to the second highest card
    - if your second highest card is not a 9 or higher, your highest card, but the “lowest of equals” among cards equal to the highest card

* ... And on your next play in the suit led, you play:

- from an original three card holding, your higher remaining card
- from an original holding of four or more cards, your original “fourth best” card
Lesson 48 – Second Hand Play, Part 2

Objectives:
- to understand guidelines for some common exceptions to the general guideline of “second hand low”
  - “cover an honor with an honor”
  - “splitting honors”
- to understand some common exceptions to the guideline of “cover an honor with an honor”
- (optional) to understand second hand play guideline of “do not play ace on air”

Handout: at beginning of class, consider handing out the text sheet reproduced at end of this lesson plan

Teaching steps:
- In a previous lesson you learned a second play defense guideline of “second hand low” and saw some examples of how following that guideline reduced the number of tricks won by declarer. In this lesson, you will learn some guidelines that represent some of the more common exceptions to “second hand low”. Although one of the distinctions between expert and non-expert bridge players is knowing when to make a play that is outside of a guideline, the goal for this class is more modest. Guidelines can help you establish a good bridge foundation. If you choose to study and play bridge more, you will come to learn better both the reasons for the guideline and the situations that are exceptions to the guideline.
- *(Show first exhibit.)* One guideline that represents a common exception to the guideline of “second hand low” is “cover an honor with an honor”.

```
North
(dummy/leader)
♣ (Q)3

West (partner) ♥ ♦ E
East (second hand – you) ♠ KT6

South (declarer) ♠
```

- *(Show next exhibit.)* Play the king when declarer calls for the queen from dummy. Playing the king might help promote by strength an intermediate honor card of your partnership.
- Illustrate how your playing the king on the lead of the queen produces one fewer trick for declarer. [See Kantar, Introduction to Defender’s Play, p. 100 www.kantarbridge.com.]
If you know that “covering an honor with an honor” will not promote any card for your partnership, then do not cover.

**North (dummy)**

♥ AQT9

**West (second hand – you)**

♥ K864

**East (partner)**

♠

**South (declarer/leader)**

♠ (J)

Play a small card on the lead of the jack. (Show next exhibit.) See Exhibit illustrating how playing a small card produces one fewer trick for declarer, compared to playing the king on the lead of the jack.

Frequently, one situation where “covering an honor with an honor” will not result in promoting by strength a lower card for the defense arises when the suit of the honor lead is the trump suit. The reason you cover an honor with an honor is to promote by strength an intermediate card held by your partnership. When, however, the suit from which the honor is led is the trump suit, declarer and dummy might own so many cards in the suit, that your partnership owns no intermediate card to be promoted. Worse, the honor you used to cover the opponent’s honor might have been about to win a trick … until you played the honor and declarer was able to capture it! One additional caveat: if you are not going to “cover an honor with an honor”, you will be well-advised to play in tempo. If you had not planned ahead and hesitate before deciding not to cover (and to hesitate when you do not have an honor is unethical!), declarer will be able to “read” you for owning the honor and play the suit as if your hand were exposed.

(Show next exhibit.) When dummy has more than one equal honor, a second hand play guideline is to “cover the last of the equal honors”:

**North (dummy/leader)**

♥ (Q)J9

**West (partner)**

♥

**East (second hand – you)**

♥ K32

**South (declarer)**

♠

Declarer calls for the queen from dummy. Play a small card on the lead of the queen. If dummy next plays the jack, cover the jack with the king.
Illustrate how your playing a small card on the lead of the queen produces one fewer trick for declarer (provided declarer finesses the 9 on the second round of spades if East made the mistake of covering the first honor led from dummy). [See Kantar, Introduction to Defender’s Play, p. 103 www.kantarbridge.com.]

The same second hand play guideline can apply when declarer, the hidden hand, is leading the Q toward dummy. The problem then, though, is that you do not know if the queen is declarer’s only spade honor (in which case you should cover the queen) or if declarer holds equal honors of the queen and the jack (in which case you should not cover the first honor led from declarer but should cover the second honor led from declarer). As a general rule, you should assume the latter.

Consider that declarer is likely to have led toward the queen if declarer did not also own the jack.

Another common exception to second hand low arises when first hand has led a card and you have multiple equal honors higher in rank than the card led by first hand.

If you held Q64, you would play a low card, following the general guideline of second hand low. But with more than one equal honor that is higher in rank than the 2 led from first hand, you should follow the common exception and split your equal honors by playing the J. Notice how splitting the J from the QJ guarantees on this layout that your queen will win the third round of the suit. In this case, splitting your equal honors gave the defense a trick they would have lost had declarer chosen to finesse the T.

For the splitting of equal honors to earn the defense a trick, the splitting has to promote a card held by your side. Sometimes, you can’t know.

Have the students break into tables of four players. Distribute a duplicate board with unsorted hands to each table. (Hands need to be determined.)

See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
Optional material: Another second hand play guideline is to avoid playing the ace unless it is capturing another honor.

North (dummy)
♠ KJ5

West (second hand – you)
♠ A74

East (partner)
♠

South (declarer/leader)
♠ (3)

Declarer plays the ♠3 toward dummy’s KJ5. Play the 4. You know that declarer can win the king when you play small on this trick. But declarer cannot see your cards. Perhaps declarer is missing not only the ace (which you hold) but also the queen (which your partner holds). If you play low, and in tempo, declarer might decide that you hold the queen and finesse against the queen by playing the jack from dummy. If that happens, your partner will win the jack with the queen and you still own the ace to take a trick later.

In bridge language, players might say “do not play the ace on air”. That means to withhold the ace until you know that the ace will capture another high card. The same reasoning is why you learned to generally avoid making an opening lead of an ace (unless you also held the king of the suit led).

You might have noticed that if the 3 led by declarer happens to be a singleton, your playing the 4 causes declarer to have no losers in the spade suit. Bridge is not an easy game.

Before concluding this lesson on Second Hand Play, the teacher might like to refer back to the earlier lesson on Third Hand Play. Although most of that lesson, that you learned in the context of defense against a notrump contract, applies equally to defense against a trump suit contract, these two big caveats can cause you to change your third hand plays:

- Opening leader against a trump suit contract might well be leading from a short suit, while opening leader against a notrump contract is more likely to be leading from a long suit.
- Opening leader against a trump suit contract is unlikely to be leading a small card from a holding that includes the ace (and even more unlikely to be leading a small card from a holding that includes the ace and king), while opening leader against a notrump contract might well be leading small from such holdings.
Cover an Honor with an Honor

(Q) 3

You are East. Declarer is South and dummy is North.

Declarer calls for the Q from dummy North.

Which card should you play?
You are East. Declarer is South and dummy is North.

Declarer calls for the Q from dummy North.

![Card layout](Q 3)

How many tricks will declarer win if East plays the (cover an honor with an honor) K?

![Card layout](Q 3)

How many tricks will declarer win if East plays the 6?

[See Kantar, Introduction to Defender’s Play, p. 100](www.kantarbridge.com)
You are West. Declarer is South and dummy is North.

Declarer South leads the J.

Which card should you play?
You are West. Declarer is South and dummy is North.

Declarer South leads the J.

How many tricks will declarer win if West plays the 4?

How many tricks will declarer win if West plays the K?

Why the difference?
You are East. Declarer is South and dummy is North.

Declarer calls for the Q from dummy North.

Which card should you play?

[See Kantar, Introduction to Defender’s Play, p. 103  www.kantarbridge.com.]
You are East. Declarer is South and dummy is North.

Declarer calls for the Q from dummy North. This could be the layout of the entire suit.

How many tricks will declarer win if East plays the 2 (or 3) and, when the J is continued, plays the (cover the last honor with an honor) K?

How many tricks might declarer win if East plays the K?

[See Kantar, Introduction to Defender’s Play, p. 103  www.kantarbridge.com]
You are West. Declarer is South and dummy is North.

Declarer South leads the Q.

1. Who do you expect to own the J? Why?

2. Which card should you play? Why?
Split Equal Honors

You are East. Dummy is North. Declarer calls for the 2 from North.

K 5 (2)
N
W
E
Q J 4

Which card should you play?
You are East. Dummy is North. Declarer calls for the 2 from North. This could be the layout of the entire suit.

K 5 (2)

9 8 6

N W E

Q (J) 4

S

A 10 7 3

How many tricks will declarer win if you play the (split equal honors) J?

K 5 (2)

9 8 6

N W E

Q J (4)

S

A 10 7 3

How many tricks might declarer win if you play the 4?
Some Second Hand Play Guidelines (many exceptions)

- Second hand low

  - … except, cover an honor with an honor

    - … if you can promote a card held by your side; and

    - … if the honor is the last of equal honors

  - … except, split equal honors

    - … if you can promote a card held by your side

- Avoid playing the ace “on air”
Lesson 49 – Signaling on Defense against a Notrump Contract

Objectives:
- to understand how defenders can legally signal to each other in order to produce an effective defense
- to learn to apply attitude signals when partner leads

Handout: at beginning of class, consider handing out the flowchart(s) reproduced at end of this lesson plan

Teaching steps:
- You learned long ago that because bridge is a game with rules of conduct, it is unethical to communicate to your partner by words or by body language what you want him to play or how you feel about a play he has made. But there are ethical ways to signal to your partner. Some ways of signaling you have already learned:
  - You learned about following partnership agreements for choosing a card to lead. That is a form of signal. For example, you would lead the K from KQ2. If you lead, say, the Q from KQ2, your partner would not think that you also own the K.
  - Similarly, if you were in third hand and were playing a high card from KQ2, you would play the queen, the lowest of equals. If, instead you were to play the K from KQ2 in third hand, your partner would not read you for also owning the Q. Thinking that you have a different honor holding than your signal shows is likely to induce partner to pursue a plan that is not best for the defense.
  - You also learned about giving your partner a count signal to help your partner know how long to hold up an ace in order to prevent declarer from developing extra winners from establishment of length.
    - Count signals can be given in situations other than those involving holding up an ace. You can regularly give a count signal whenever the opponents are leading a suit, you are following suit, and the trick in that suit is not going to be won by you.
    - When you give count signals as you are following suit, you often help your partner to construct the distribution of the hidden hand of declarer; that can help partner conduct the most effective defense.
    - You should, however, be very careful when considering giving a count signal. Sometimes giving a count signal can help declarer more than it helps your partner. Experience will help you learn better when not giving a count signal is beneficial to your partnership.
- In this lesson you will learn about other ways to signal your partner and help the partnership conduct a successful defense. Although you give a count signal when declarer’s side leads a suit, you give an attitude signal when your partner leads a suit. (*Show first exhibit.*) You also give an attitude signal when you are discarding on a suit.
  - When you are following suit, an attitude signal is asking your partner to either continue playing the suit he has just led or to switch to play another suit. An attitude signal to continue playing the suit he has just led is an encouraging attitude signal and is shown by playing a high card … so long as the card is not so high as to give away a trick; an attitude signal to switch to play a different suit is a discouraging attitude signal and is shown by playing a low card.
When you are not following suit but are discarding
- a high card in the discarded suit is encouraging partner to lead the suit you have discarded, and a low card in the discarded suit is discouraging partner to lead the suit you have discarded, but …
- you should generally follow the guideline of “discard losers, keep winners”

(Show next exhibit.) Let’s give some examples of when you would typically give your partner an encouraging attitude signal, when you are following suit to a trick partner has led and you are not winning the trick.

- When your partner has led an honor card and you have an adjacent or higher honor to an honor partner either has led or has suggested he owns. [See Kantar, Introduction to Defender’s Play, p. 46 www.kantarbridge.com.]

North (dummy)
♠ 76(3)

West (partner on lead)
♠ (Q)

East (third hand – you)
♠ K82
♠ K8
♠ 82
♠ 854
♠ T82
♠ A82

South (declarer)
♠

- Reference “Choosing a Card to Lead …”. You can assume that for the lead of the queen, partner also owns the jack and either the ten or the nine; that is, that partner is leading from a suit headed by QJT or QJ9.
- From K82, play the 8, a high spot card as an encouraging attitude signal. Your king is an honor adjacent to the queen led by partner.
- From K8, play the king. High card from the short side first, remember? You do not want to block the suit by remaining with the singleton king.
- From 82, play the 2, a low spot as a discouraging attitude signal. You do not have an adjacent honor to partner (in fact, you have no honor).
- From 854, play the 4. You do not want to play the 5, because it will be clearer to partner that your 4 is a low card than that your 5 is a low card.
- From T82, play the 8, a high spot card as an encouraging signal. You expect partner’s lead to be from QJ9 and your ten is an honor adjacent to the jack expected to be held by partner.
- From A82, play the 8, a high spot card. Declarer owns the king (because partner would not lead the Q from a holding that also includes the K). You might as well let declarer win his king, because when you are next on lead, you can win the ace and then lead your 2 to partner’s JT or J9 holding.
(Show next exhibit.) When your partner has led a card that could be from an interior sequence and you hold a higher card than the card that partner led. For example, assume that your partner has led the jack. [See Kantar, Introduction to Defender’s Play, p. 52 www.kantarbridge.com.]

North (dummy)

♠ 76(3)

West (partner on lead)

♠ (J)

E

S

West (partner on lead) East (third hand – you)

♠ A82
♠ K82
♠ Q54
♠ 84

South (declarer)

♠

- Reference “Choosing a Card to Lead …”. A lead of the jack might be from an interior sequence holding such as KJT7.
- From A82, play the ace. If partner owns the KJT7, you can next play your ♠8 (higher of two cards remaining) through declarer’s Q and partner will win both his K and his T, and then his 7.
- Similarly from K82, play the king. Maybe partner owns the AJT7 and the plays will work out just like the last example.
- From Q54, play the five, a high card as an encouraging attitude signal (at least when compared to the 4!). You own an honor adjacent to the honor that partner has led and so encourage continuation of the suit.
- From 84, play the four, a low card as a discouraging attitude signal.
- When your partner leads a suit, and, even when you do not care for the suit he has led, you fear even more the effect on the defense of partner switching to another suit. This happens more often than you want.

(Show next exhibit.) Should you be careful about which card you use to make an encouraging attitude (or count) signal? Yes, when you want to signal with a high card, you do not want to signal with a card that is so high it gives away a future trick.

When you make a discouraging attitude signal – asking partner to switch to another suit – can you signal him which other suit you want him to next lead? No, in most situations; you have to hope that partner can work out which suit you want him to lead based upon what partner can observe from declarer’s play plan and the appearance of dummy.

Effective signaling is one of the hallmarks of a successful partnership. Directing partner to a successful defense without directing declarer to a successful line of play is very tricky.

Have the students break into tables of four players. Distribute a duplicate board with unsorted hands to each table. (Hands need to be determined.)

See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
Attitude Signal

Encouraging attitude signal:

- When partner has led a suit:
  - Asks partner to continue the suit partner led
  - Signal by playing a high card (so long as the high card does not give away a trick)

- When you are discarding:
  - Signal by playing a high card (so long as the high card does not give away a trick; “discard losers, keep winners”)

Discouraging attitude signal:

- When partner has led a suit:
  - Asks partner to switch to a different suit from the suit partner led
  - Signal by playing a low card

- When you are discarding:
  - Signal by playing a low card
**North**
(dummy)
76(3)

**West**
(partner on lead)
(Q)

**East**
(third hand – you)
K82
K8
82
854
T82
A82

**South**
(declarer)

What honor holdings in the led suit might you expect from your partner?

What card do you play?

[See Kantar, Introduction to Defender’s Play, p. 46  www.kantarbridge.com.]
North  
(dummy)  
76(3)

West  
(partner  
on lead)  
(J)

East  
(third  
hand)  
– you)

A82  
K82  
Q54  
84

South  
(declarer)

What honor holdings in the led suit might you expect from your partner?

What card do you play?

[See Kantar, Introduction to Defender’s Play, p. 52  www.kantarbridge.com.]
Signaling Caveats:

- Attitude signals are given with reference not just to the suit led, but with reference to the hand as a whole.

- Signal with a high card only if such high card will not give away a trick (and, in discarding, “discard losers, keep winners”).

- Refuse to signal when you believe that the signal provides information more useful to declarer than to partner (rare).
Signaling on Defense against a Notrump Contract

Signaling applies only to defenders and not to declarer

Types of signals

Attitude signals
- Applies when partner leads, or when you cannot follow suit
- Always give attitude signal unless your signal would give away a trick

Play high card (encouraging) in the suit led to welcome partner to continue the suit
Play low card (discouraging) in the suit led to welcome partner to shift to different suit

Discard high card in a side suit to encourage partner to lead that suit or discard low card in a side suit to discourage partner to lead that suit

but ... “discard losers, keep winners”

Signal high, then low with even count
Signal low, then high with odd count

Count signals
- Applies when declarer leads and you are following suit
- Only give count signal when you think partner needs to know the count, and only signal with a card that will not give away a trick
Lesson 50 – Signaling on Defense against a Trump Suit Contract

Objectives:
- to understand how defenders can legally signal to each other in order to produce an effective defense
- to learn to apply attitude signals when partner leads, count signals when declarer leads, and suit preference signals when giving partner a ruff

Handout: at beginning of class, consider handing out the flowchart(s) reproduced at end of this lesson plan

Teaching steps:
- Most of the signals that apply to defense against a trump suit contract are similar to the signals that apply to defense against a notrump contract. That is, attitude signals apply when you are following suit to a lead of partner or discarding and count signals can apply when you are following suit to a lead by the opponents.
- However, because the objectives of defense against a trump suit contract differ from the objectives of defense against a notrump contract, the attitude signals are made on much different types of hands. For example, against a trump suit contract, you might encourage partner to continue playing a suit if you thought that continuing the suit would develop a winner by ruffing the suit.
- You will also learn an additional signal that applies only to trump suit contracts.
- (Show first exhibit.) Let’s start, however, with the attitude signal. You will recall that one application of the attitude signal applies when partner has led a suit and you are following suit and not winning the trick. If you play a high card, you are welcoming partner to continue the suit he has led, either right away if he should win the current trick, or later on, if he should later be on lead; that’s an encouraging attitude signal. Conversely, if you play a low card, you are welcoming partner to switch to another suit, again either right away if he should win the current trick, or later on, if he should later be on lead; that’s a discouraging attitude signal.
(Show next exhibit.) One situation in which you would give an encouraging attitude signal against a trump suit contract is when a continuation of the suit by partner will allow you to ruff one of declarer’s winners:

North (dummy)
♥ Q65

West (opening leader)
♠ (A)

East (third hand – you)
♥ T3

South (declarer)
♠

You are defending a contract of 4♥ by South. [See Kantar, Introduction to Defender’s Play, p. 75 www.kantarbridge.com.] Partner leads the ♠A. Because leading an ace that is not part of a sequential honor holding is such an unattractive lead, you assume that partner is leading the ♠A from a sequential honor holding of AK and some small cards.

(Show next exhibit.) Play the ♠T, an encouraging attitude signal. If partner has three, four, or five card length in spades, you realize that partner can next win the ♠K and then continue a third round of spades that you can ruff, while declarer must follow suit. (For illustration purposes, you have not been shown the full hand of East, and so can just assume that East has a small trump with which he would welcome ruffing a third round of spades.)

Please note that each of the examples shown here is displaying only the suit led. Displaying only one suit makes the teaching point easier to digest, but, as always, your holding in all four suits, the bidding conducted by the opponents, and many other factors will influence your choice of defensive signaling.
• (Show next exhibit.) Contrast the above layout in the spade suit with another layout of the spade suit:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>North (dummy)</th>
<th>West (opening leader)</th>
<th>East (third hand – you)</th>
<th>South (declarer)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>♠ 765</td>
<td>♠ (A)</td>
<td>♠ 982</td>
<td>♠</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• Again you are defending a contract of 4♥ by South and partner leads the ♠A. [See Kantar, Introduction to Defender’s Play, p. 78 www.kantarbridge.com.] As before, you read partner for a spade holding that includes the ♠K and one or more additional spades.

• Play the ♠2, a discouraging attitude signal if you welcome partner switching to another suit. (Show next exhibit.) Assume that you do have an entry in another suit and that that suit is the suit to which partner will likely switch. When you are on lead in that suit, you can play the ♠9 (higher of two remaining cards). If declarer has something like ♠Qxx, leading a second round of spades from your side will result in the defense winning three spade tricks, because your partner, who would have been dealt AKJ of spades, will be able to win all three of his high spades and declarer will not win the ♠Q.
You can make an encouraging attitude signal, defending a trump suit contract, even when you are not going to ruff the suit that partner has led. 

North (dummy)  
♥ 765  
East (third hand – you)  
♣ Q82  
South (declarer)  
♣  

Again you are defending a contract of 4♥ by South and partner leads the ♠A. [See Kantar, Introduction to Defender’s Play, p. 79 www.kantarbridge.com.] As before, you read him for also owning the ♠K and one or more small spades. 

Play the ♠8, an encouraging attitude signal. This time, you are not asking partner to continue spades because you expect to ruff the third round of spades. Rather, you are asking partner to continue spades because your partnership has an extended sequential honor holding in spades. 

(Show next exhibit.) You expect partner to own the ♠AK and you own the ♠Q. You might be able to win three spade tricks. And it might be crucial to win the spade tricks right now, in case declarer can develop an extra winner in another suit and pitch a losing spade on that extra winner. 

One matter that should be addressed when discussing attitude signals. Whether a spot card attitude signal made by partner is a high spot card (an encouraging signal) or a low spot card (a discouraging signal) cannot be determined by just looking to the rank of the spot card. 

For example, assume partner makes an attitude signal with an 8. You immediately recognize that there six spot cards lower than the 8. Does that mean that the 8 is a high spot card, an encouraging attitude signal? No, not necessarily. What if you hold the 765 spot cards in that suit, and dummy holds the 432 spot cards? Then you can determine that the 8 is actually the lowest spot card not seen, and partner has made a discouraging signal. Conversely, assume that partner makes an attitude signal with the 4 on your lead of an ace, from an AK holding with one or more spot cards. You know that there are only two spot cards lower than the 4. However, partner might be giving an encouraging attitude signal with the 42 doubleton or with Q42. 

How can you tell whether a spot card is a “high” encouraging spot card or a “low” discouraging spot card? You can better interpret the nature of partner’s spot card attitude signal by looking around for unseen lower spot cards. In the first example, you realized that there were no lower outstanding spot cards and so could interpret the 8 as “low”, discouraging. In the second example, you might notice that the 2 and 3 are unseen and might guess – you can’t be sure – that partner owns the 2 and/or 3 and so that the 4 is “high”, encouraging.
• The same caveats about attitude signals and count signals apply to signaling on defense against trump suit contracts that you learned for signaling on defense against notrump contracts:
  o Signals don’t apply when you are winning, or trying to win, a trick. Signals apply only when you are otherwise following suit or are discarding.
  o Don’t signal with a card if this might give a trick away.
  o Give count signals only if you judge that partner needs to know the count. Otherwise, your signal will be helping declarer more than helping partner.

• There is one new signal that applies to defense against trump suit contracts but not to defense against notrump contracts. *(Show next exhibit.*) That is the suit preference signal that applies when one partner is leading a suit for his partner to ruff. Here is an example.

North (dummy)
   ♠ KQJ

West (opening leader)
   ♠ (2)

East (third hand – you)
   ♠ AT9763

South (declarer)
   ♠

• Again you are defending a contract of 4♥ by South and partner leads the ♠2. [See Kantar, Introduction to Defender’s Play, p. 83 www.kantarbridge.com.] Partner cannot be leading the 2 from a three card or longer holding, because he would lead the 2 from such a holding only if he held an honor. And, between your hand and dummy’s hand, you can see all the honors. Yes, your confidently making this inference is another benefit from having partnership lead agreements! In fact, the only holding that partner can be leading the ♠2 from is a singleton.

• You win the ♠A and give partner a ruff.

• *(Show next exhibit.*) Assume that partner has more trumps and can ruff a third round of spades, too. Assume further that you happen to hold another side suit ace. The defense you want to happen is for partner, having ruffed a spade at Trick 2, to lead the suit of your other ace, so that you can lead a third round of spades for him to ruff again.

• How can partner tell whether the other ace you own is in the club suit or the diamond suit? (Partner is not interested in leading a trump because he wants to use his trump to ruff a third round of spades.)

• If you played the ♠3 at Trick 2 for partner to ruff, your lowest spade, you are asking partner to return the lower ranking side suit of clubs at Trick 3. If you played the ♠T at Trick 2 for partner to ruff, your highest spade, you are asking partner to return the higher ranking side suit of diamonds at Trick 3. That is the suit preference signal. The suit preference signal you are learning is used only when giving partner a ruff.

• Have the students break into tables of four players. Distribute a duplicate board with unsorted hands to each table. (Hands need to be determined.)

• See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
Attitude Signal

Encouraging attitude signal:

- When partner has led a suit:
  - Asks partner to continue the suit partner led
  - Signal by playing a high card (so long as the high card does not give away a trick)

- When you are discarding:
  - Signal by playing a high card (so long as the high card does not give away a trick; “discard losers, keep winners”)

Discouraging attitude signal:

- When partner has led a suit:
  - Asks partner to switch to a different suit from the suit partner led
  - Signal by playing a low card

- When you are discarding:
  - Signal by playing a low card
This is a side suit in a trump suit contract. Your partner West leads the A. Dummy is North; declarer is South.

1. What honor holding in the led suit do you expect from your partner when partner leads the A of a side suit?

2. Do you want your partner to continue the suit? Why?

3. Which card should you play at Trick 1?

[See Kantar, Introduction to Defender’s Play, p. 75 www.kantarbridge.com.]
This is a possible layout of the entire side suit.

You encourage your partner to continue with the K and a third card that you can ruff.

If your partner does not continue the suit, declarer might be able to draw your trumps and will later win a trick with the Q or J.

[See Kantar, Introduction to Defender’s Play, p. 75 www.kantarbridge.com.]
This is a side suit in a trump suit contract. Your partner West leads the A. Dummy is North; declarer is South.

1. What honor holding in the led suit do you expect from your partner?

2. Do you want your partner to continue the suit? Why?

3. Which card should you play at Trick 1?

[See Kantar, Introduction to Defender’s Play, p. 78 www.kantarbridge.com.]
This is a possible layout of the entire side suit.

You discourage your partner from continuing the suit. You hope to gain the lead later and lead through declarer’s Q 10 toward your partner’s K J.

If your partner continued the suit, declarer’s Q 10 would win a trick.

[See Kantar, Introduction to Defender’s Play, p. 78 www.kantarbridge.com.]
This is a side suit in a trump suit contract. Your partner West leads the A. Dummy is North; declarer is South.

1. What honor holding in the led suit do you expect from your partner?

2. Do you want your partner to continue the suit? Why?

3. Which card should you play at Trick 1?

[See Kantar, Introduction to Defender’s Play, p. 79 www.kantarbridge.com.]
This is a possible layout of the entire side suit.

You encourage your partner to continue with the K and a third card in the suit that you can win with the Q.

If your partner does not continue the suit, declarer might later discard a card from the suit on an extra winner in some other side suit.

[See Kantar, Introduction to Defender’s Play, p. 79 www.kantarbridge.com.]
Signaling Caveats:

- Attitude signals are given with reference not just to the suit led, but with reference to the hand as a whole.

- Signal with a high card only if such high card will not give away a trick (and, in discarding, “discard losers, keep winners”).

- Refuse to signal when you believe that the signal provides information more useful to declarer than to partner (rare).

Additional Signaling Caveats:

- Look for unseen lower spot cards to assess whether a signal is “high” or “low.

- Signals don’t apply when you are winning a trick.
K Q (J)

N

W E

S

(2) A 10 9 7 6 3

This is a side suit in a trump suit contract. Your partner West leads the 2. Dummy is North; declarer is South.

1. What holding in the led suit do you expect from your partner?

2. Do you want your partner to continue the suit? Why?

3. Which card should you play at Trick 1?

[See Kantar, Introduction to Defender’s Play, p. 83 www.kantarbridge.com.]
K Q J  N
2  W  A 10 9 7 6 3
E  S  8 5 4

This is the expected layout of the entire side suit. You win the A and continue the suit at Trick 2, expecting your partner to ruff the suit.

*Which* card you continue at Trick 2 conveys a special message by *suit preference signal*. That message is to help partner determine which of the other two suits (that is, the suits other than the suit partner has ruffed and the trump suit) partner might play to reach your hand so that you can lead a third card in the shown side suit for partner to ruff.

[See Kantar, Introduction to Defender’s Play, p. 83 www.kantarbridge.com.]
Signaling on Defense against a Trump Suit Contract

Signaling applies only to defenders and not to declarer

Types of signals

- Attitude signals
  - Applies when partner leads, or when you cannot follow suit
  - Always give attitude signal unless your signal would give away a trick
  - Play high card (encouraging) in the suit led to welcome partner to continue the suit
  - Play low card (discouraging) in the suit led to welcome partner to shift to different suit

- Count signals
  - Applies when declarer leads and you are following suit
  - Only give count signal when you think partner needs to know the count, and only signal with a card that will not give away a trick
  - Signal high, then low with even count
  - Signal low, then high with odd count

- Suit preference signals
  - Applies when giving partner a ruff
  - Requests partner what suit to return (perhaps to give another ruff)
  - Play card in suit in which you are giving partner a ruff to request return of lower side suit
  - Play high card in suit in which you are giving partner a ruff to request return of higher side suit

but … “discard losers, keep winners”
MORE CONSTRUCTIVE BIDDING – SECOND BIDS

Lesson 51 – Opener’s Rebid after Responder’s Raise of a Major Suit Opening Bid

Objectives:
- to learn how opener’s rebid after a major suit raise explores game in that major suit

Handout: at beginning of class, consider handing out the flowchart(s) reproduced at end of this lesson plan

Teaching steps:
- Responder, if he has the 6+ Total Points to bid at all, can respond three different ways: he can raise opener’s suit to some level, he can bid some level of notrump, or he can bid a new suit. In this lesson, you will learn how opener chooses his rebid when responder has raised opener’s suit.
- Responder’s raise of opener’s suit can be either a single raise (that is, a raise to the two level) or a limit raise (that is, a raise to the three level).
- You will learn that opener’s choice of rebid, after responder’s raise, will be affected by two factors: the strain of the raise is one factor -- whether responder’s raise was of opener’s major suit or opener’s minor suit; and the strength of opener’s hand is the other factor. As is the case for all the lessons about bidding, what you will learn is one approach to bidding, one that is pretty close to the mainstream in bridge. Each partnership, or sometimes each player, develops a style that might differ from the approach that you are learning. The purpose of the bidding lessons here is to present you with an approach that you can use as a foundation for the style of bidding that best suits you.
  o Choice of strain when responder has raised opener’s suit. When responder has raised opener’s major suit, the strain of the final contract is settled; the strain will be that major suit. Opener has at least five cards of the major suit for his opening bid, responder has at least three cards of the major suit for his raise; thus the partnership has at least an eight card major suit fit. On the other hand, when responder has raised opener’s minor suit, the preferential strain for the final contract is no trump, and the second choice of strain is the agreed minor suit (where it takes 11 tricks to make game). In this lesson you will learn about opener’s rebids after his opening of 1 of a major suit has been raised. In the next lesson you will learn about opener’s rebids after his opening of 1 of a minor suit has been raised.
  o Opener’s strength. Once opener’s major suit has been raised, opener should determine whether the Total Points of the partnership sum to the 25 Total Points generally needed for a major suit game. Opener can calculate that sum by adding his own Total Points to the (range of) Total Points shown by responder’s bid. If the sum must equal or exceed 25 Total Points, then opener should ensure that the partnership bids a game. If the sum must be less than 25 Total Points, then opener should pass the raise. If the sum might or might not be 25 Total Points or more, opener should invite game and allow responder to choose whether to bid game (with a hand toward the maximum for his range) or to sign off in a partial (with a hand toward the minimum for his range).
• *(Show first exhibit.)* When opener’s major suit has been raised by responder, opener calculates his Total Points by adding to his High Card Points his Ruffing Points. Ruffing Points are included, rather than Length Points, because in a suit contract, opener expects that his short suits will lead to winning tricks by ruffing losers. Recall that Ruffing Points apply only to a hand that includes shortness (void, singleton, or doubleton) in a side suit. Ruffing Points are calculated as follows:
  o Add the number of trumps you hold, and:
  o Subtract the number of cards in your shortest side suit:
    ▪ 0 points for a side suit void.
    ▪ 1 point for a side suit singleton
    ▪ 2 points for a side suit doubleton
• *(Show next exhibit.)* Try some examples. What call do you make?
  o (Display hand records.) With K97, KJ753, A82, J7, after you open 1♥ and are raised to 2♥? What are your Total Points after the raise? (15 = 12 HCP + 3 Ruffing Points for the club doubleton [+5 trump length, -2 for length of short side suit of clubs].) What is the range of partner’s Total Points? (6-9.) What, then, are the Total Points of the partnership? (21-24.) What do you bid? (Pass.)
  o With AQJ742, A9, 742, K6, after you open 1♠ and are raised to 2♠? What are the Total Points of the partnership? (24-27.) What do you bid? (You invite game by bidding 3♠.) With a hand toward the maximum of his range of 6-9 Total Points, responder accepts the invitation by bidding 4♠; with a hand toward the minimum of his range of 6-9 Total Points, responder rejects the invitation by passing the 3♠ bid.
  o With AQJ742, A9, K742, 6, after you open 1♠ and are raised to 2♠. What are the Total Points of the partnership? (25-28.) What do you bid? (You bid game by bidding 4♠.) This hand and the previous hand valued the same at the time you opened the bidding. After your opening bid was raised, however, this hand revalued to higher TP than the previous hand because it has more shortness and thus more ruffing value.

• Randomly deal the deck. Or, if the teacher prefers, pre-deal the hands so that there is an opening bid of 1M and a raise to 2M or 3M. Using hand generator software that allows the setting of parameters is a good way of ensuring such a layout.
• See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
When Responder Raises a Major Suit Opening Bid

Opener recalculates Total Points by adding Ruffing Points, rather than Length Points, to High Card Points. Ruffing Points apply one when holding side suit shortness (void, singleton, or doubleton)

Ruffing Points:

- Add the number of trumps held, and

- Subtract the number of cards in the shortest side suit:
  - 0 points for a side suit void
  - 1 point for a side suit singleton
  - 2 points for a side suit doubleton
What call do you make? Why?

♠ K 9 7
♥ K J 7 5 3
♦ A 8 2
♣ J 7

West North East South
1 ♥ Pass 2 ♥ Pass
?

♠ A Q J 7 4 2
♥ A 9
♦ 7 4 2
♣ K 6

West North East South
1 ♠ Pass 2 ♠ Pass
?

♠ A Q J 7 4 2
♥ A 9
♦ K 7 4 2
♣ 6

West North East South
1 ♠ Pass 2 ♠ Pass
?
Opener's Rebid when Responder Raises Opener's Major Suit

1. **Responder raised opener's major suit**
   - **Responder has 6-9 TP for a single raise, 10-11 TP for a double raise**
   - **Responder has 3+ cards in opener's major suit**

2. **Opener's general priority is to evaluate strength for chances for game in opener's major suit**

3. **Does the partnership have the 25 TP for major suit game?**
   - **Yes**
     - **bid major suit game**
   - **Maybe**
     - **Invite major suit game by bidding three of agreed major suit**
   - **No**
     - **Pass**

4. **TP are HCP + Ruffing Points**
   - **Ruffing Points = length of trumps, minus length of shortest side suit**
Lesson 52 – Opener’s Rebid after Responder’s Raise of a Minor Suit Opening Bid

Objectives:
- to learn how, after a minor suit raise, opener first explores game in no trump and only secondarily explores game in the minor suit

Handout: at beginning of class, consider handing out the flowchart(s) reproduced at end of this lesson plan

Teaching steps:
- Remember that opener’s choice of rebid, after responder’s raise, will be affected by two factors: the strain of the raise is one factor – whether responder’s raise was of opener’s major suit or opener’s minor suit; and the strength of opener’s hand is the other factor.
  o Choice of strain when responder has raised opener’s suit. In the previous lesson, you learned that when responder has raised opener’s major suit, the strain of the final contract is settled; the strain will be that major suit. Opener has at least five cards of the major suit for his opening bid, responder has at least three cards of the major suit for his raise; thus the partnership has at least an eight card major suit fit. On the other hand, when responder has raised opener’s minor suit, the preferential strain for the final contract is no trump, and the second choice of strain is the agreed minor suit (where it takes 11 tricks to make game). In this lesson, you will learn how opener chooses a rebid to explore whether a no trump contract is playable.
  o Opener’s strength. Once opener’s minor suit opening bid has been raised, opener should determine whether the Total Points of the partnership sum to the 25 Total Points generally needed for game (that is, for a game in no trump; game in a minor suit generally requires about 29 Total Points).
    ▪ Opener can calculate that sum by adding his own Total Points to the (range of) Total Points shown by responder’s bid. If the sum must equal or exceed 25 Total Points, then opener should explore contracting for a game of 3NT. If the sum must be less than 25 Total Points, then opener should pass the raise. When the sum might or might not be 25 Total Points or more, opener should invite the 3NT game and allow responder to choose whether to bid game (with a hand toward the maximum for his range) or to sign off in a partial (with a minimum toward the minimum for his range).
    ▪ Remember that by opening the bidding one of suit, opener has shown from 13 to 21 Total Points. Not surprisingly, given that the final strain when a major suit has been raised will be that major suit while the final strain when a minor suit has been raised might well be in no trump, the method that opener uses to calculate his Total Points for his rebid differs when a minor suit has been opened and raised from what you learned last lesson when a major suit had been opened and raised.
  - (Show first exhibit.) When opener’s minor suit has been raised by responder, opener calculates his Total Points by adding Length Points to his High Card Points. Length Points are included, rather than Ruffing Points, because the partnership is still exploring a final strain in no trump and...
no ruffing tricks would be available in a no trump contract. With 98, 97, AKJ64, AKQ4, you counted 18 Total Points when you opened 1♦ (17 HCP + 1 Length Point for the five card diamond suit). After partner raises you to 2♦, you still count Total Points the same way. You count only Ruffing Points (instead of Length Points) when you are certain that the final contract will be a suit contract. When a minor suit is raised, your primary target is to play 3NT, not 5 of the agreed minor suit.

- *(Show next exhibit and then one after.)* Try some examples. What call do you make and why?
  - With Q97, JT, A98763, KQ, after you open 1♦ and are raised to 2♦? What are the Total Points of the partnership? (20-23.) You have 12 HCP + 2 Length Points for the six-card diamond suit; partner has 6-9. (Be sure that students calculate Length Points and not Ruffing Points when the target contract is no trump and not a suit contract.) What do you bid? (Pass.)
  - With AK7, KT4, KJT7, KJ5, -- a balanced hand --, after you open 1♦ and are raised to 2♦? What is the range of the partnership’s Total Points (24-27.) With a balanced hand, you can invite 3NT by rebidding 2NT.
  - With AK7, KJ4, KJT74, K5, you open 1♦ and are raised to 2♦? What are the Total Points of the partnership? (25-28.) Is your hand balanced or unbalanced? (Balanced.) What is your bid? (3NT.)
  - With 9, 97, KQJ642, AKQ4, -- an unbalanced hand --, after you open 1♦ and are raised to 2♦? What is the range of the partnership’s Total Points? (23-26.) With an unbalanced hand – that is a hand with a singleton or void –, you are concerned that if you were to play a contract in no trump, the opponents might win the first five or more tricks in the side suit in which you have shortness. With an unbalanced hand that is game invitational, you describe your hand by next bidding 3♣, or, perhaps better, by bidding 3♦. Responder can choose to rebid 3NT or to return to the agreed minor suit.

- Randomly deal the deck. Or, if the teacher prefers, pre-deal the hands so that there is an opening bid of 1m and a raise to 2m or 3m. Using hand generator software that allows the setting of parameters is a good way of ensuring such a layout.
- See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
When Responder Raises a Minor Suit Opening Bid

Opener continues to calculate Total Points by adding Length Points to High Card Points.

Ruffing Points are not calculated until such time as the partnership has determined that the hand will be played with a minor suit as trumps.

♠ 9 8
♥ 9 7
♦ A K J 6 4
♣ A K Q 4

West North East South
1 ♦ Pass 2 ♦
Pass ?

North hears his partner raise his opening bid of 1♦. What is North’s count of Total Points?
What call do you make? Why?

♠ Q 9 7
♥ J 10
♦ A 9 8 7 6 3
♣ K Q

West North East  South
1 ♦ Pass  2 ♦ Pass

♠ A K 7
♥ K 10 4
♦ K J 10 7
♣ K J 5

West North East  South
1 ♦ Pass  2 ♦ Pass

?
♠ A K 7
♥ K J 4
♦ K J 10 7 4
♣ K 5

West North East  South
1 ♦  Pass  2 ♦  Pass

♠ 9
♥ 9 7
♦ K Q J 6 4 2
♣ A K Q 4

West North East  South
1 ♦  Pass  2 ♦  Pass

?
Opener's Rebid when Responder Raises Opener's Minor Suit

- Responder has 5+ cards in opener's minor suit
- Responder has 6-9 HCP for a single raise, 10-11 HCP for a double raise
- Responder raised opener's minor suit

Opener's general priority is to evaluate strength and stoppers for chances for 3NT game

- TP are HCP + Length Points
- Does the partnership have the 25 Total Points for 3NT game?

  Yes
  - Does opener have a balanced hand?
    - Yes: bid 3NT game
    - No: bid a side suit of strength

  No
  - Balanced hand is a hand with no singleton or void
    - Yes: bid 2NT
    - No: bid a side suit of strength or rebid long minor suit

Minor suit games (11 tricks) require 29 TP of HCP + Ruffing Points

- Maybe
- No: Pass
Lesson 53 – Opener’s Rebid after Responder Bids 1NT

Objectives:
- to understand how opener rebids after responder bids 1NT
- to understand how, after a 1NT response, opener’s choice of rebid with an unbalanced hand differs from his choice of rebid with a balanced hand
- to understand that extra strength is required to make a reverse bid or a jump shift bid

Handout: at beginning of class, consider handing out the flowchart(s) reproduced at end of this lesson plan

Teaching steps:
- In the previous two lessons, you learned opener’s rebid after responder had raised the suit of the opening bid. In this lesson, you will learn opener’s rebid after responder bids 1NT. Remember that responder’s 1NT bid shows 6-11 High Card Points and denies the abilities to: (a) support opener’s major suit (meaning responder has fewer than three cards in opener’s major); or (b) bid a four-card suit, especially a major suit, at the one level.
- You will learn that opener’s choice of rebid, after responder’s 1NT bid, will be affected by two factors. One factor is whether opener’s hand is balanced or unbalanced (an unbalanced hand is one with a singleton or void, or one with a six card or longer suit). The other factor is opener’s strength.
- (Show first exhibit.) When opener’s hand is balanced, opener is pleased that the contract is in no trump and will not make further suit bids. Opener’s next call will be to pass, invite game by bidding 2NT, or bid game of 3NT, depending upon the overall combined Total Points of the partnership.
  - With fewer than 16 HCP, to pass 1NT
  - With 16-17 HCP, to invite game by raising to 2NT
  - With 18+ HCP, to bid 3NT
- When opener’s hand is unbalanced, opener will prefer not to pass the 1NT bid. Instead, opener will bid a suit in a way that best describes his distribution to responder. First, however, opener must categorize his hand by the number of HCP he holds.
  - With fewer than 16 HCP, opener will seek to bid to the safest part score contract by showing his distribution
  - With 16-17 HCP, opener will explore a game in notrump, by showing his game invitational strength and his stoppers
  - With 18+ HCP, opener will explore a game in notrump, by showing his game forcing strength and his stoppers, reserving ability to choose to bid a minor suit game
- The caveats about reverse bids and strong jump shifts will be illustrated by some of the example hands.
- (Show next exhibit and then three after.) Try some examples. What call do you make and why?
  - With K73, AQT95, KT3, 82, after you open 1♥ and responder bids 1NT? (You count 12 HCP. Responder has shown 6-11 HCP, so that your partnership Total Points are from 18-23. With a balanced hand and fewer than 25 HCP for the partnership, you pass.)
• With AK3, AQT95, KT3, 82 – a balanced hand of 16 HCP –, after 1♥-1NT? (The partnership has 22-27 HCP. Invite game by bidding 2NT.)

• With AKJ87, T42, AQ7, AT – a balanced hand of 18 HCP –, after 1♥-1NT? How many HCP does the partnership have? (24-29 HCP.) What do you bid? (3NT.)

• With A76, 5, KQJ865, K82, after you open 1♦ and responder bids 1NT? (You count 13 HCP. Responder has shown 6-11 HCP, so that your partnership HCP are from 19-24. With an unbalanced hand, describe your distribution. When you have no second suit of at least four cards of length, rebid your diamond suit. Bid 2♦.)

• With Q98, KQ643, AJ84, 3, after you open 1♥ (12 HCP) and responder bids 1NT? (Your partnership has HCP of 18-23. Bid your second suit of four cards in length. Bid 2♥.)

• With AJ84, KQ643, Q98, 3 and the same auction? (Your hand is identical to the previous hand, with the spades and diamonds exchanged. In this case, you rebid 2♥ and not 2♦. [Passing 1NT is a viable alternative.] The difference between the last two examples is derived from the level of responder’s next bid that might be preferring hearts, the suit you opened. When you held four diamonds and your second bid was 2♦, partner could prefer hearts by making a two level bid of 2♥. But when you hold four spades, a second bid of 2♥ bid by you would force responder, if he prefers hearts over spades, to support hearts by making a three level bid of 3♥. Your hand of 12 HCP is not strong enough to force responder to prefer hearts at the three level. Accordingly, you should not bid a new suit that is higher ranking than the suit you opened at a higher level of bidding; that is, you should not make a “reverse” bid.)

• With AQJ4, AKJ63, Q98, 3 (17 HCP), after you open 1♥ and responder bids 1NT? (This hand has the same distribution as the previous hand, but is a much stronger hand. With 17 HCP, your unbalanced hand is strong enough to make a reverse bid and bid 2♦ at your second turn.) Discussing the follow up to reverse bids by opener is beyond the scope of this class. For now, just know that reverses by opener generally show at least 16 HCP.

• With 2, AKJ976, A83, A42 (16 HCP), after you open 1♥ and responder bids 1NT? (With an unbalanced hand, you want to escape from notrump and describe your distribution. You can do so, show your extra values and your extra heart length by jump bidding 3♥.)

• With AQT53, 9, AKQ6, A32, after you open 1♦ and responder bids 1NT? (With 19 HCP, you are strong enough to force to game. Your most descriptive bid is to jump to 3♦. Because you could have bid 2♦, your jump to 3♦ is a very strong bid, forcing to game. The jump in a new suit is called a jump shift.)

• Randomly deal the deck. Or, if the teacher prefers, pre-deal the hands so that there is an opening bid of 1 of a suit, and a response of 1NT. Using hand generator software that allows the setting of parameters is a good way of ensuring such a layout.

• See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
When Responder Bids 1NT

Opener’s priorities depend upon whether his hand is a balanced hand (one with no singleton or void and no six card or longer suit), or an unbalanced hand:

- With a balanced hand, play a notrump contract
  
  - With fewer than 16 HCP, Pass
  - With 16-17 HCP, bid 2NT
  - With 18+ HCP, bid 3NT

- With an unbalanced hand, opener’s priorities depend upon his strength:
  
  - With fewer than 16 HCP, explore a partial score in a suit contract
  - With 16-17 HCP, explore a notrump game by showing his distribution
  - With 18+ HCP, explore both a notrump game and a minor suit game by showing his distribution

… but do not make a bid that is a “reverse” unless you have sufficient strength.

… and do make a bid that is a “strong jump shift” when you have sufficient strength.
What call do you make? Why?

♠ K 7 3  
♥ A Q 10 9 5  
♦ K 10 3  
♣ 8 2  

West  North East  South
1 ♥  Pass  1 NT  Pass
?

♠ A K 3  
♥ A Q 10 9 5  
♦ K 10 3  
♣ 8 2  

West  North East  South
1 ♥  Pass  1 NT  Pass
?

♠ A K J 8 7  
♥ 10 4 2  
♦ A Q 7  
♣ A 10  

West  North  East  South
1 ♠  Pass  1 NT  Pass
?
♠ A 7 6
♥ 5
♦ K Q J 8 6 5
♣ K 8 2

West North East South

1 ♦ Pass 1 NT Pass

♣ Q 9 8
♥ K Q 6 4 3
♦ A J 8 4
♠ 3

West North East South

1 ♥ Pass 1 NT Pass

♠ A J 8 4
♥ K Q 6 4 3
♦ Q 9 8
♣ 3

West North East South

1 ♥ Pass 1 NT Pass

?
West North East South
1 ♥ Pass 1 NT Pass
?

♠ A Q J 4
♥ A K J 6 3
♦ Q 9 8
♣ 3

West North East South
1 ♥ Pass 1 NT Pass
?
♠ 2
♥ A K J 9 7 6
♦ A 8 3
♣ A 4 2

West North East South
1 ♥ Pass 1 NT Pass
?

♠ A Q 10 5 3
♥ 9
♦ A K Q 6
♣ A 3 2

West North East South
1 ♠ Pass 1 NT Pass
?
Opener's Rebid when Responder Bids 1NT

- Responder bid 1NT?
  - Responder has 6-11 HCP
  - Opener's Rebid when Responder bid 1NT
    - Balanced hand is a hand without a singleton or void and without a 5-card or longer suit
    - Is opener's hand balanced or unbalanced?
      - Balanced
        - with a balanced hand: play NT
          - fewer than 16 HCP: pass
          - 16-17 HCP: bid 2NT
          - 18-19 HCP: bid 3NT
        - with an unbalanced hand: evaluate strength and stoppers for NT game
          - fewer than 16 HCP: passing strength
          - 16-17 HCP: explore possibility of NT game
            - fewer than 16 HCP: pass
            - 16-17 HCP: bid NT
          - 18+ HCP: see below
      - Unbalanced
    - with an unbalanced hand: evaluate strength and stoppers for NT game
      - fewer than 16 HCP: passing strength
      - 16-17 HCP: explore possibility of NT game
        - fewer than 16 HCP: pass
        - 16-17 HCP: bid NT
      - 18+ HCP: see below

- see below...
Lesson 54 – Opener’s Rebid after Responder Bids New Suit at One Level, Part 1

Objectives:

- to learn how opener rebids after responder bids a new suit at the one-level
- to understand how, after responder has bid a new suit at the one-level, opener’s priority is to find a major suit fit

Handout: at beginning of class, consider handing out the flowchart(s) reproduced at end of this lesson

Teaching steps:

- In previous lessons, you learned opener’s rebid after responder had raised the suit of the opening bid or after responder bid 1NT. In this lesson and the next one, you will learn opener’s rebid after responder has bid a new suit at the one-level, often a new major suit.  (Show first exhibit.)

  Remember that responder’s bid of a new suit at the one level shows 6+ Total Points.  Should opener’s opening bid have been 1 of a major suit, responder’s bid of a new suit denies the ability to support opener’s major suit (meaning responder has fewer than three cards in opener’s major suit).  Because responder’s bid of a new suit has no upward limit of Total Points, opener must bid again.

- In choosing his rebid when responder has bid a new suit at the one-level, opener follows a specified list of priorities.  In this lesson, you will learn about opener’s first priority.  Opener’s first priority is to explore the existence of a 4-4 (or better) major suit fit.

  - When opener has four cards in a major suit bid by responder, the partnership is known to have a 4-4 major suit fit (or better, since responder’s major suit bid shows at least four card length).  Opener shows four card support for responder’s major suit by immediately raising the major suit to the appropriate level determined by calculating his Total Points.
  
  - When opener does not have four card support for a major suit bid by responder but does have four card length in an unbid major suit, opener will explore the existence of a 4-4 fit in the unbid major suit.

- (Show next exhibit and then two after.)  Try these examples.  What is opener’s bid and why?

  - With A93, K764, AJ732, 9, after opener bids 1♦ and responder bids 1♥?  (Opener holds four card support for the heart suit bid by responder; accordingly, opener should follow the first priority and raise the heart suit.  To determine to which level opener should raise hearts, opener should count his Total Points.  When an eight-card fit in a major suit is assured, opener counts his Total Points by adding to his High Card Points not his Length Points but his Ruffling Points.  Ruffling Points are counted because the contract will play in the strain of hearts and opener’s shortness can be used to win more tricks by ruffling tricks of the opponents.  With the shown hand, opener counts 15 Total Points (12 HCP + 3 Ruffling Points for the singleton club [adding four cards for the length of his trumps and subtracting one point for the length of his shortest side suit of clubs]).  15 Total Points falls within the range for raising 1♥ to 2♥.)
  
  - With AK64, 93, AKJ63, J8, after opener bids 1♦ and responder bids 1♠?  (With four-card support for responder’s major suit of spades, opener’s priority is to raise spades.  Opener
has how many Total Points in support of spades? [18 Total Points, 16 HCP + 2 Ruffing Points]. What should opener bid? Bid 3♠.)

- With QJ94, J82, Q5, AKJ4, after opener bids 1♠ and responder bids 1♥? Does opener have four card support for responder’s hearts, the first priority to show? (No.) Does opener have four cards in the unbid major of spades? (Yes.) What should opener bid? (1♠.)

- With J82, QJ94, Q5, AKJ4, after opener bids 1♠ and responder bids 1♥? Opener holds the same hand as above but with the major suits exchanged. Opener does not have four card support for responder’s spades, but opener does have four cards in the unbid major of hearts. Should opener therefore bid 2♥? (No, opener is not strong enough to bid 2♥.) Remember learning in the last lesson about the extra strength required for opener to make a reverse bid? A reverse bid is a non-jump bid at the two level in a higher-ranking suit than the suit that opener opened. In this case, a rebid of 2♥ would require a responder who prefers opener’s clubs over opener’s hearts to bid clubs at the three level (1♣-1♠; 2♥-3♣). With only 14 HCP, opener is not strong enough to make the 2♥ bid. Given that a 2♥ bid would overstate the strength of opener’s hand, what bid do you think opener should choose? (1NT.)

- With A8, KJ94, Q5, AKJ42 (18 HCP), after opener bids 1♠ and responder bids 1♥? (When opener has 16-18 HCP, opener is strong enough to show his four card heart suit by making a reverse bid of 2♥.)

- With KJ94, A8, A5, AK942 after opener bids 1♠ and responder bids 1♥? (Opener cannot support hearts and so will bid his four card spade support, trying to find an eight card fit in spades. With 19 HCP, opener is strong enough to jump bid his spades, making a jump shift by bidding 2♠. The jump shift announces to responder that opener is strong enough to force the partnership to bid a game.)

- Randomly deal the deck. Or, if the teacher prefers, pre-deal the hands so that there is an opening bid of 1 of a suit, and a new suit response at the 1 level. Using hand generator software that allows the setting of parameters is a good way of ensuring such a layout.
- See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
When Responder Has Bid a New Suit at the One-Level

Remember that responder’s bid cannot be passed.

First priority of opener:

- Explore whether there is a 4-4 (or better) major suit fit
  - With 4-card support for responder’s major suit, raise responder’s suit
  - With 4 cards in an unbid major suit, bid the unbid major suit*

* Caveats to be illustrated
What call do you make? Why?

♠ A 9 3
♥ K 7 6 4
♦ A J 7 3 2
♣ 9

West North East South
1 ♦ Pass 1 ♥ Pass
?

♠ A K 6 4
♥ 9 3
♦ A K J 6 3
♣ J 8

West North East South
1 ♦ Pass 1 ♠ Pass
?
♠ Q J 9 4
♥ J 8 2
♦ Q 5
♣ A K J 4

West North East South
1 ♠ Pass 1 ♥ Pass

♠ J 8 2
♥ Q J 9 4
♦ Q 5
♣ A K J 4

West North East South
1 ♠ Pass 1 ♠ Pass
♠ A 8  
♥ K J 9 4  
♦ Q 5  
♣ A K J 4 2  

**West North East South**  
1 ♠ Pass  1 ♠ Pass  
?

♠ K J 9 4  
♥ A 8  
♦ A 5  
♣ A K 9 4 2  

**West North East South**  
1 ♠ Pass  1 ♥ Pass  
?
Opener's Rebid when Responder Bids a New Suit at One Level

Responder bid a new suit at one level

If not a passed hand, responder's bid cannot be passed by opener, because responder's bid is unlimited in strength

Opener's general priorities are in order from left to right:

- with 4+ card support for responder's major suit, raise responder's suit
- with an unbid major suit of 4+ cards

Three cases:

- TP are HCP + Ruffing Points:
  - with 13-15 TP, bid 2 level of responder's suit
  - with 16-18 TP, bid 3 level of responder's suit
  - with 19-21 TP, bid 4 level of responder's suit

If unbid major suit be bid at 1 level?

- Yes
  - bid the unbid major suit
  - with fewer than 19+ HCP, bid the unbid major suit at the one level
  - with 19+ HCP, bid the unbid major suit at the two level (a "jump shift")

- No
  - Have 16+ HCP?
    - Yes
      - bid the unbid major suit at 2 level (a "reverse")
    - No
      - bid 1NT or rebid the opened suit
Lesson 55 – Opener’s Rebid after Responder Bids New Suit at One Level, Part 2

Objectives:
- to learn how opener rebids after responder bids a new suit at the one-level
- to understand how, after responder has bid a new suit at the one-level and no 4-4 major suit is to be explored, opener’s next priority is to describe features of his distribution

Handout: at beginning of class, consider handing out the flowchart(s) reproduced at end of this lesson plan

Teaching steps:
- (Show first exhibit.) In the last lesson, you learned that after responder has bid a new suit at the one-level, opener’s first priority was to explore the existence of a 4-4 (or better) major suit fit. Remember that responder’s bid of a new suit at the one level shows 6+ High Card Points. Should opener’s opening bid have been 1 of a major suit, responder’s bid of a new suit denies the ability to support opener’s major suit (meaning responder has fewer than three cards in opener’s major suit). Because responder’s bid of a new suit has no upward limit of Total Points, opener must bid again.
- When opener has no 4-4 (or better) major suit fit to explore, but opener has one of two distributional features in his hand – those distributional features being either 5+ cards in the suit opened and 4+ cards in an unbid minor suit, or 6+ cards in the opened suit – opener’s priority is to describe the distributional feature.
- When opener has a hand that does not fall within the two priorities mentioned, opener should rebid the appropriate level of notrump.
- (Show next exhibit and then two after.) Try these examples. What is opener’s rebid and why?
  - With 5, KQT73, AT8, AJ42, after opener opens 1♥ and responder bids 1♠? Does opener have four card support for responder’s spades? [Await answer.] (No.) Does opener have an unbid major suit? (No, both major suits have been bid.) Opener does have, however, 5 or more cards in length in the heart suit he opened and 4 cards or more in length in an unbid minor suit of clubs. What does opener bid? [Await answer.] (2♣).
  - With a stronger hand of identical distribution of 5, KQT73, AK8, AKJ4, after opening 1♥ and responder bids 1♠? (Opener bids 3♣. With 20 HCP, opener has enough strength to make a “jump shift” bid. The “jump shift” shows a hand of 19+ HCP and forces the partnership to continue bidding until the partnership has contracted for a game bid.)
  - With 7, Q983, A75, KQJT5, after opener opens 1♠ and responder bids 1♠? (Opener cannot bid 2♥, because 2♥ is a reverse bid and with only 12 HCP, opener is not strong enough to make a reverse bid. Opener does own a distributional hand, however, because of the four card side suit of hearts and the singleton spade. Opener has no lower ranking suit than his clubs to bid. Perhaps opener’s best choice is to bid 2♣. Bidding 1NT is another viable choice.)
  - With AT, AQJ853, T4, 754, after opener opens 1♥ and responder bids 1♠? How does opener show his extra distribution in the form of six hearts? [Await answer.] (Opener bids 2♥.)
- With a stronger hand of AT, AKQ53, T4, K53, after opener opens 1♥ and responder bids 1♣? (With 16 HCP, opener bids 3♥ to show both his extra distribution in the form of six hearts and his extra strength.)

- With AK4, QJ9, KJ65, AJ2, after opening 1♣ and responder bids 1♥? (2NT.) Notice now how all the ranges of balanced hands without five card majors are covered, from Total Points of 13 all the way up to Total Points of 21. The ranges of 15-17 and 20-21 are covered by opening 1NT and 2NT. The Total Point range of 13-14 is covered by bidding 1NT over responder’s bid of a new suit at the one level and the Total Point range of 18-19 is covered by jump bidding 2NT over responder’s bid of a new suit at the one level.

- Randomly deal the deck. Or, if the teacher prefers, pre-deal the hands so that there is an opening bid of 1of a suit, and a new suit response at the 1 level. Using hand generator software that allows the setting of parameters is a good way of ensuring such a layout.

- See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
When Responder Has Bid a New Suit at the One-Level

Remember that responder’s bid cannot be passed.

General priorities of opener:

• Explore whether there is a 4-4 (or better) major suit fit
  o With 4-card support for responder’s major suit, raise responder’s suit
  o With 4 cards in an unbid major suit, bid the unbid major suit*
• Describe one of these distributional features of your hand
  o With 5+ cards in opened suit and 4+ cards in an unbid minor suit, bid the unbid minor suit*
  o With 6+ cards in opened suit, rebid the opened suit
• Otherwise, bid notrump

* Caveats to be illustrated
What is opener’s rebid, and why?

♠ 5
♥ K Q 10 7 3
♦ A 10 8
♣ A J 4 2

West North East South
1 ♥ Pass 1 ♠ Pass
?

♠ 5
♥ K Q 10 7 3
♦ A K 8
♣ A K J 4

West North East South
1 ♥ Pass 1 ♠ Pass
?
♠7
♥Q 9 8 3
♦A 7 5
♣K Q J 10 5

West North East South
1 ♠ Pass 1 ♠ Pass
?

♠A 10
♥A Q J 8 5 3
♦10 4
♣7 5 4

West North East South
1 ♥ Pass 1 ♠ Pass
?
♠ A 10
♥ A K Q 8 5 3
♦ 10 4
♣ K 5 3

West North East South
1 ♥ Pass 1 ♠ Pass
?

♠ A K 4
♥ Q J 9
♦ K J 6 5
♣ A J 2

West North East South
1 ♠ Pass 1 ♥ Pass
?
Opener’s Rebid when Responder Bids a New Suit at One Level

If not a passed hand, responder’s bid cannot be passed by opener, because responder’s bid is insufficient in strength.

Responder bid a new suit at one level

Opener’s general priorities are to order them left to right:

- TP are HCP or Bidding Points
- 15+ 10+ TP, bid 4 level of responder’s suit
- 10-16 TP, bid 3 level of responder’s suit
- 10-16 TP, bid a level of responder’s suit

with 4+ card support for responder’s major suit, raise responder’s suit

with an unbid major suit of 4+ clubs

Can the unbid major suit be bid at 1 level?

with fewer than 15+ HCP bid the unbid major suit at the one level

with 15+ HCP bid the unbid major suit at the one level (a “jump shift”)

bid TNT or rebid the opened suit

... from above

Is the unbid minor suit better ranking than the suit opened?

Yes

with an unbid minor suit of 4+ cards and an opened suit of 2+ cards

No

Have 16+ HCP?

Yes

with six or more cards in the opened suit

No

with fewer than 15+ HCP, rebid the opened suit at the two level

with 15+ HCP, rebid the opened suit at the three level

with fewer than 15 HCP, rebid 1NT

with 15-19 HCP, rebid 2NT

Bid stiff trump

other

Have 16+ HCP?

No

with fewer than 15+ HCP bid the unbid minor suit at the two level (a “jump shift”)

bid the unbid minor suit at the three level (a “reverse”)

bid 1NT or rebid the opened suit
Lesson 56 – Opener’s Rebid after Responder Bids New Suit at Two Level or 2NT or 3NT, Part 1

Objectives:
• to learn how opener rebids after responder bids “2 over 1” 2♥ or bids 2NT or 3NT

Handout: at beginning of class, consider handing out the flowchart(s) reproduced at end of this lesson

Teaching steps:
• In previous lessons, you learned opener’s rebid after responder had raised the suit of the opening bid, after responder bid 1NT, and after responder bid a new suit at the one-level. In the next two lessons, you will learn opener’s rebid after responder has bid a new suit at the two-level, or has bid 2NT or 3NT. Because a response of a new suit at the two level (a “2 over 1” response) and a response of 2NT are game forcing – and a response of 3NT is already a bid of game – opener’s primary objective is to help identify the best game for the partnership.
• (Show first exhibit.) As usual, opener’s first priority is to uncover an eight card or longer major suit fit. How this priority is applied depends upon whether responder’s bid was 2 of a major suit (meaning, 2♥ over an opening bid of 1♠) or was 2NT or 3NT or was 2 of a minor suit (meaning, 2♣ or 2♦ over an opening bid of 1♥ or 1♠ or 2♣ over an opening bid of 1♦).
  o (Show next exhibit.) A bid of 2♥ by responder, after opener has bid 1♠, is not only a 2 over 1 game force, but also shows at least five hearts.
    ▪ If opener has three or more hearts, the partnership has uncovered an 8+ card fit in hearts and opener’s first priority is to disclose that fit by raising hearts.
    ▪ With fewer than three hearts, opener’s priority is to disclose his distribution.
      • With a 4+ card side suit, bid the side suit.
      • With 6+ cards in the spade suit, rebid the spade suit.
      • With a balanced hand – that is a hand without a singleton or void and without a six card or longer spade suit – bid notrump.
  o (Show next exhibit.) Try these examples. What bid should opener choose and why?
    • With AQT76, K53, 7, KT87, after you open 1♠ and responder bids 2♥? (You have at least an eight card fit in hearts. You have Total Points of 14 [12 HCP + 2 Ruffing Points for your diamond singleton, since you have a suit fit in hearts.] Bid 3♥.)
    • With AQT76, KQ5, 7, KT87 on the same auction? (You bid 4♥. You have 16 Total Points, enough to jump raise hearts.)
    • With the red suits reversed from the first hand illustrated (AQT76, 7, KQ5, KT87), on the same auction? (You show your 4+ card side suit. Bid 3♣.)
  o (Show next exhibit.) A bid of 2NT by responder shows a balanced hand of 13-15 Total Points.
    ▪ If opener has an unbid major suit, opener should bid 3 of the second major suit.
    ▪ If opener has extra length (more than the minimum of five cards) in the opened major, opener should rebid the long major.
- If opener has a side suit of 5+ cards, opener should bid that side suit.
- Otherwise, opener should raise to 3NT.
  - A bid of 3NT by responder shows a balanced hand of 16-18 Total Points. If opener has extra length in the opened major or a second five card major suit, opener should bid the long major at the four level. Otherwise, opener would pass 3NT.
  - *(Show next exhibit.)* Try these examples. What bid should opener choose and why?
    - With AJ875, KJ64, 5 2, A7, after you open 1♠ and responder bids 2NT? (You show your hearts by bidding 3♥.) However, with the red suits reversed, so that you hold AJ875, 52, KJ64, A7, over partner’s response of 2NT to your opening bid of 1♠, you bid 3NT.
    - With A7, KJ8652, QJ5, 76, after you open 1♥ and responder bids 2NT? (You bid 3♥, showing that you have six hearts. When responder has exactly two hearts, he will next bid 4♥, knowing that your partnership has an eight card fit in hearts.)
  - In the next lesson, you will learn opener’s bids when responder’s “2 over 1” bid was in a new minor suit.

- Randomly deal the deck. Or, if the teacher prefers, pre-deal the hands so that there is an opening bid of 1 of a suit and a response of 2 of a new suit or 2NT or 3NT. Using hand generator software that allows the setting of parameters is a good way of ensuring such a layout.
- See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
When Responder Has Bid a New Suit at the Two-Level or Has Bid 2NT or 3NT

Responder’s bid is game forcing.

Opener’s first priority is to discover if the partnership has an 8+ card combined fit in a major suit.

How that priority is applied by opener depends upon whether responder’s response in a new suit was 2 of a major suit (2♥ over opener’s 1♠ opening bid) or was 2NT or 3NT or was 2 of a minor suit (2♣ or 2♦ over opener’s 1♥ or 1♠ opening bid, or 2♣ over opener’s 1♦ opening bid).
When Responder Has Bid 2♥ (Showing 5+ Hearts) over Opener’s 1♠ Opening Bid

Opener’s priorities depend upon his distribution:

- With 3+ card support for responder’s heart suit, raise responder’s heart suit
- With a second 4+ card suit, bid the second suit
- With 6+ cards in the opened spade suit, rebid the spade suit
- With a balanced hand, bid NT
What call do you make? Why?

♠ A Q 10 7 6
♥ K 5 3
♦ 7
♣ K 10 8 7

West North East South
1 ♠ Pass 2 ♥ Pass

♠ A Q 10 7 6
♥ K Q 5
♦ 7
♣ K 10 8 7

West North East South
1 ♠ Pass 2 ♥ Pass

♠ A Q 10 7 6
♥ 7
♦ K Q 5
♣ K 10 8 7

West North East South
1 ♠ Pass 2 ♥ Pass
When Responder Has Bid 2NT or 3NT

Opener’s priorities depend upon his distribution:

- Over 2NT, with an unbid 4+ card major suit, bid the major suit
- Over 2NT or 3NT, with 6+ cards in the opened major suit, rebid the opened major suit
- Over 2NT, with 5+ cards in an unbid minor suit, bid the unbid minor suit
- Over 2NT, otherwise raise to 3NT
What call do you make? Why?

♠ A J 8 7 5
♥ K J 6 4
♦ 5 2
♣ A 7

West North East South
1 ♠ Pass 2 NT Pass

♠ A 7
♥ K J 8 6 5 2
♦ Q J 5
♣ 7 6

West North East South
1 ♥ Pass 2 NT Pass

?
Opener's Rebid when Responder Bids Two Hearts after One Spade Opening Bid

Responder's bid of 2H cannot be passed by opener, because responder's bid is game forcing and unlimited, with a minimum of 12 HCP.

Responder's 2H bid shows 5+ card suit.

Opener's general priorities are in order from left to right:

- with 3+ card support, raise responder's heart suit
- with a second suit of 4+ cards, bid the second suit
- with 6+ cards in the spade suit, rebid the spade suit
- with a balanced hand, bid NT

TP are HCP + Ruffing Points

- with 12-15 TP, bid 3H
- with 16-21 TP, bid 4H

- with fewer than 16 HCP, rebid 2S
- with 16-18 HCP, rebid 3S

- with fewer than 16 HCP, bid 2NT
- with 16-18 HCP, bid 3NT
Opener's Rebid when Responder Bids 2NT or 3NT

How many notrump did responder bid?

Responder bid 2NT (12-15 HCP)

- Opener's general priorities are in order from left to right
  - with unbid 4+ card major suit, bid the unbid major suit
  - with 6+ cards in opened major suit, rebid the major suit
  - with 5+ card in an unbid minor suit, bid the unbid minor suit
  - with no second 5+ card suit, bid 3NT

Responder bid 3NT (16-18 HCP)

- Opener's general priorities are in order from left to right
  - with 6+ cards in opened major suit, rebid 4 of opened major suit
  - Pass
Lesson 57 – Opener’s Rebid after Responder Bids New Suit at Two Level or 2NT or 3NT, Part 2

Objectives:
- to learn how opener bids after responder bids “2 over 1” in a new minor suit

Handout: at beginning of class, consider handing out the flowchart(s) reproduced at end of this lesson plan

Teaching steps:
- In the previous lesson, you learned about opener’s bid when responder had made a “2 over 1” response in a new suit of 2♥ over opener’s 1♠ opening bid and a game forcing 2NT or 3NT response over opener’s 1 level suit opening bid. In this lesson, you will learn about opener’s bid when responder has made a “2 over 1” response in a new minor suit over opener’s 1 level suit opening bid in a higher ranking suit. As usual, opener’s first priority is to uncover an eight card major suit fit.

  - *(Show first exhibit.)* A new suit bid of 2♣ or 2♦ by responder, after opener has opened 1 if a higher ranking suit, is not only a 2 over 1 game force, but also shows at least five cards in the suit of responder’s bid. Notice the priorities that are listed on the flowchart.
    - When opener has opened 1♠, 1♥, or 1♦ and responder bids 2 of a lower-ranking suit, opener’s first priority is to show whether he has four of the other major suit. If he does, he bids that major suit at the two level. As usual, the first priority is to uncover a combined major suit fit of at least 8 cards.
    - Without four cards in an unbid major suit, opener’s priorities are as follows:
      - With 4+ cards in the minor suit bid by responder, to raise responder’s minor suit. Perhaps this is the rare deal where the highest-scoring contract is a minor suit game or slam.
      - With 4+ cards in an unbid minor suit, to bid that minor suit. This bid might help disclose whether the partnership has a stopper in the only unbid suit. If neither partner has a stopper in the only unbid suit, the partnership will want to avoid playing a notrump contract.
      - With 6+ cards in the opened major suit, to rebid the opened major suit. If responder has two cards in the major suit opened, responder will now know that the partnership has a combined major suit fit of at least eight cards and can raise the rebid major suit.
      - With a balanced hand, bid notrump.
      - With 6+ cards in the opened minor suit of diamonds, to rebid the opened diamond suit.

  - *(Show next exhibit and then three after.)* Try these examples. What do you bid and why?
    - With AQ76, KJ65, --, Q872, after you open 1♠ and partner responds 2♣? (Bid 2♥. You have four card club support, but finding a major suit fit is your first priority.)
    - With AQ7, KJ65, KJ654, 7, after you open 1♦ and partner responds 2♣? (Bid 2♥, showing your four card major.)
- With AJ875, KJ6, 5, A763, after you open 1♠ and partner responds 2♣? (With 4+ cards in responder’s minor suit of clubs, you support partner’s clubs. Bid 3♣.)
- With your minor suits reversed, your having AJ875, KJ6, A763, 5, after you again open 1♠ and partner responds 2♣? (Bid 2♦. You do not have either an unbid major suit or 4+ cards in responder’s minor suit. The bid that best describes your distribution is 2♦, showing at least four diamonds.)
- With A7, KJ8652, QJ5, 76, after you open 1♥ and partner bids 2♣? (Bid 2♥, showing that you have more than the five promised hearts. If responder has two hearts, he will next support your hearts, knowing that your partnership has an eight card fit in hearts.)
- With AJ, AKJ862, QJ5, 76, after you open 1♥ and partner bids 2♣? (Now you bid 3♥, showing not only your extra heart length but also your extra strength.)
- With AT, AJT62, QJ5, 764, after you open 1♥ and partner bids 2♣? (You have none of an unbid 4+ card major suit, four card support for opener’s minor suit, four cards in the other minor suit, or six cards in your opened heart suit. Bid notrump; because you have minimum strength, bid 2NT.)
- With a stronger hand of AJ, AKJ62, QJ5, Q64 on the same auction? (With 18 HCP, you are within the range of 16-18 HCP for 3NT.)

- Randomly deal the deck. Or, if the teacher prefers, pre-deal the hands so that there is an opening bid of 1 of a suit and a response of 2 of a new suit or 2NT or 3NT. Using hand generator software that allows the setting of parameters is a good way of ensuring such a layout.
- See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
When Responder Has Bid 2♣ or 2♦
(Showing 5+ Cards in the Responded Suit)

Opener’s priorities depend upon his distribution:

- With an unbid 4+ card major suit, bid the major suit
- With 4+ card support for responder’s minor suit, raise responder’s minor suit
- With 4+ cards in the minor suit not bid by responder, bid the 4+ card minor suit
- With 6+ cards in the opened major suit, rebid the major suit
- With a balanced hand, bid NT
- With 6+ cards in the opened minor suit, rebid the minor suit
What bid do you choose? Why?

♠ A Q 10 7 6
♥ K J 6 5
♦ —
♣ Q 8 7 2

West North East South
1 ♠ Pass 2 ♣ Pass

♠ A Q 7
♥ K J 6 5
♦ K J 6 5 4
♣ 7

West North East South
1 ♦ Pass 2 ♣ Pass
♠ A J 8 7 5  
♥ K J 6  
♦ 5  
♣ A 7 6 3  

West North East  South

1 ♠ Pass  2 ♣ Pass  
?

♠ A J 8 7 5  
♥ K J 6  
♦ A 7 6 3  
♣ 5  

West North East  South

1 ♠ Pass  2 ♣ Pass  
?

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

West North East  South
1 ♥  Pass  2 ♣  Pass
?

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

West North East  South
1 ♥  Pass  2 ♣  Pass
?
♠ A 10
♥ A J 10 6 2
♦ Q J 5
♣ 7 6 4

West North East South
1 ♥ Pass 2 ♣ Pass
?

♠ A J
♥ A K J 6 2
♦ Q J 5
♣ Q 7 4

West North East South
1 ♥ Pass 2 ♦ Pass
?
Opener’s Rebid when Responder Bids Two of a New Minor Suit after a One Level Opening Bid in a Higher Ranking Suit

- Shows 5+ card suit, is game forcing and unlimited, with a minimum of 12 HCP
- Responder bids 2 of a new minor suit after a 1-level opening in a higher-ranking suit

Opener’s general priorities are in order from left to right:

- With unbid 4+ card major suit, bid the unbid major suit
- With 4+ card support for responder’s minor suit, raise the minor suit
- With unbid 6+ card minor suit, bid the unbid minor suit
- With 6+ cards in opened major suit, rebid the opened major suit
- With a balanced hand, bid NT
- With 6+ cards in opened minor suit, rebid the opened minor suit

1. TP are HCP + Support Points
   - With 13-15 TP, bid 3 of minor suit
   - With 16-18 TP, bid 4 of minor suit

2. With fewer than 16 HCP, rebid opened major suit at 2 level
   - With 16-18 HCP, rebid opened major suit at 3 level
   - Balanced hand is a hand with no singleton or void and no six-card or longer suit

3. With fewer than 16 HCP, bid 2NT
   - With 16-18 HCP, bid 3NT

4. With fewer than 16 HCP, rebid opened minor suit at two level
   - With 16-18 HCP, rebid opened minor suit at three level
Lesson 58 – Responder’s Second Bid, Part 1

Objectives:
- to understand which second bids by responder are signoffs

Handout: at beginning of class, consider handing out the flowchart(s) reproduced at end of this lesson plan

Teaching steps:
- Partner opened the bidding, showing 13-21 Total Points. You responded, showing 6 or more Total Points. You have learned the meanings of opener’s second bid. Today you will begin to learn the meanings of your second call.
  - (Show first exhibit.) As responder considering your second call, your first priority is to determine if the partnership has enough strength for game:
    - If the answer is “no”, then pass or choose a bid that shows less than game invitational values
    - If the answer is “maybe”, then choose a bid that is invitational to game
    - If the answer is “yes”, then bid game directly or make a forcing bid
- To determine if the partnership has enough strength for game, you as responder have to assess not only your strength but also the strength of opener. (Show next exhibit and one after.) For example, assume that you hold this hand: KJ65, 54, AJ7, T832. Your partner opens 1♥ and you respond 1♠. Does your partnership have enough for strength for game when your partner makes the following alternative bids at his second turn?
  - 1NT? (No. Opener has shown fewer than 15 HCP. You have 9 HCP. The partnership’s maximum total of 23 HCP is not enough for game. You should make a signoff call of Pass.)
  - 2♥? (No. Same reasoning as above. You have an eight card heart fit and should pass 2♥.)
  - 2♠? (Maybe. Partner’s rebid is wide ranging. He has a maximum of 18 HCP, but could have much fewer, perhaps only 11 HCP with compensating Length Points to elevate Total Points for opening the bidding to 13. Opposite your 9 HCP, the partnership has a total of 20-27 HCP, making game possible. You should make an invitational bid to allow opener to bid on if he has a maximum and to sign off if he has a minimum. In the next lesson, you will learn that the invitational bid you should make is 3♣.)
  - 2NT? (Yes. Opener has shown 16-18 HCP. Opposite your 9 HCP, the partnership has 25-27 HCP, enough generally for game. Bid 3NT.)
- (Show next exhibit.) In this lesson, you will learn which second calls of responder show less than game invitational values. Notice that these signoff bids are on the flowchart.
  - Pass. Pass is the ultimate signoff bid!
  - Bid of 1NT, if possible. If opener’s second bid is a new suit bid at the one level, you can show a hand that does not have enough strength to even invite game by bidding 1NT. The 1NT second bid by responder is a bid responder could choose if the suit of responder’s first bid were not worth rebidding and responder did not hold length in either of the two suits that opener had bid.
Bid at 2 level of a suit already bid by the partnership. This applies when the auction has begun something like 1♦-1♥; 1♣ or 1♥-1♠; 2♠.

- This could be a bid by responder at the two level of the suit of the opening bid. In other words, responder has preferred the first suit bid by opener over the second suit by opener. When the opening bid was in a major suit, the preference probably shows two card length by responder. If responder had three cards in opener’s major, responder would have supported opener’s major suit at his first turn.

- Or, this could be a rebid by responder at the two level of the suit responder bid at the one level at his first turn, if that suit has extra length, typically six cards or longer.

Over opener’s rebid of 1NT, a bid at the 2 level in a lower-ranking suit than the suit of your response. This is a way that responder can show length in two suits, without having shown the extra strength of a reverse bid. Bidding a lower ranking suit over 1NT is not a reverse bid because, if opener wants to prefer responder’s first suit over responder’s second suit, opener can make that preference at only the two level.

- (Show next exhibit and one after.) Try these examples. If you agree that, holding these hands, your partnership has insufficient strength for you to even invite game, what signoff call do you choose at your second turn?

  - With a hand of J65, Q5432, 62, K98 after 1♦-1♥; 1♣? (Pass. Opener has a maximum of 18 HCP [with 19+ HCP, opener would have rebid 2♠, a game forcing jump shift], but could have much fewer, perhaps only 11 HCP with compensating Length Points to elevate Total Points for opening the bidding to 13. Opposite your 6 HCP, the partnership has a total of 17-24 HCP, not have enough strength to invite game. This pass promises at least three spades. Responder should not consider rebidding his five card heart suit. Responder knows that opener does not have as many as four hearts [because with four hearts, opener would have raised hearts rather than bid 1♠]. In the actual auction there is no assurance that opener has any hearts, because he might have opened 1♣ and rebid 1♠ on a hand such as KJ85, --, A87, KJT764. 1♠ might or might not be your partnership’s best contract, but it is a reasonable contract and you should pass to make it your final contract.) (As a note of general bridge advice, one should try not to rebid five card suits that have not been supported by partner.)

  - After the same auction, but with 62, Q5432, K98, J65? (1NT. With only 6 HCP opposite an opener with fewer than 19 HCP, you do not have enough strength to invite game. You can’t pass 1♠, risking playing in a contract where your side has six cards in trumps and the opponents have seven cards in trumps. Bidding 1NT allows opener to pass with a minimum opening bid.)

  - With J6, KJ76, QT84, 864 after an auction of 1♦-1♥; 1♠? (Bid 2♦ to prefer opener’s first bid suit of diamonds over opener’s second bid suit of spades. Opener has shown fewer than 19 HCP and could have far fewer. If he is at the minimum of his range so that there is no game, he will pass 2♠ and you will have reached a playable part score contract. You could choose to bid 1NT at your second turn, but with no stopper in the fourth suit of clubs, supporting diamonds is a better choice.)
With J3, KJ84, 5, JT9865, after an auction of 1♦-1♥; 1NT? (Bid 2♣. Responder knows there is no game opposite opener’s maximum of fewer than 15 HCP. Responder also knows that opener has at least two clubs for his 1NT rebid. Hence playing in a club fit of at least eight cards in combined length is the safest part score contract.)

- Randomly deal the deck. Or, if the teacher prefers, pre-deal the hands so that responder must decide on a rebid after an opening bid, a response, and a rebid by opener. Using hand generator software that allows the setting of parameters is a good way of ensuring such a layout.
- See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
Responder’s Second Bid

Responder’s priorities depend upon whether the partnership has the combined strength for a game:

- With an unlikely chance for game, make the most appropriate signoff call

- With a possible chance for game, make the most appropriate game invitational bid

- With a likely chance for game, make the most appropriate game forcing bid
Does your partnership have the combined strength for game? Why or why not?

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

West North East South  
1 ♥ Pass 1 ♠ Pass  
1 NT Pass ?  

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

West North East South  
1 ♥ Pass 1 ♠ Pass  
2 ♥ Pass ?
♠ K J 6 5
♥ 5 4
♦ A J 7
♣ 10 8 3 2

West North East  South
1 ♥  Pass  1 ♠  Pass
2 ♣  Pass  ?

♠ K J 6 5
♥ 5 4
♦ A J 7
♣ 10 8 3 2

West North East  South
1 ♥  Pass  1 ♠  Pass
2 NT Pass  ?
Responder’s Signoff Calls

Include:

- Pass

- 1NT (if possible)

- Preference to opener’s first suit at the 2 level

- Rebidding 6+ card responded suit at the 2 level

- Over opener’s 1NT rebid, bidding a 4+ card suit that is lower-ranking than suit of response
What call should responder choose? Why?

♠ J 6 5
♥ Q 5 4 3 2
♦ 6 2
♣ K 9 8

West North East South
1 ♠ Pass 1 ♥ Pass
1 ♠ Pass ?

♠ J 6 5
♥ Q 5 4 3 2
♦ K 9 8
♣ J 6 5

West North East South
1 ♠ Pass 1 ♥ Pass
1 ♠ Pass ?
♠ J 6  
♥ K J 7 6  
♦ Q 10 8 4  
♣ 8 6 4

West North East  South
1 ♠ Pass  1 ♥ Pass
1 ♠ Pass  ?

♠ J 3  
♥ K J 8 4  
♦ 5  
♣ J 10 9 8 6 5

West North East  South
1 ♠ Pass  1 ♥ Pass
1 NT Pass  ?
Responder's Second Bid

For the bids made by opener, responder needs to determine opener's range of strength and likely length(s) in suit(s) opener bid, and responder should consider how opener's strength and suit length(s) match with responder's own strength and suit lengths, in order to determine:

- Does the partnership have the strength for game?
- With unlikely chance for game, make most appropriate signoff call, to include the following calls:
  - Pass
  - 1NT (if possible)
  - Prefer opener's first suit at 2 level
  - Rebid 6+ card responded suit at 2 level
  - Over opener's 1NT rebid, bid a 4+card suit that is lower ranking than suit of response
Lesson 59 – Responder’s Second Bid, Part 2

Objectives:
- to understand which second bids by responder are game invitational but non-forcing and which second bids by responder are forcing

Handout: at beginning of class, consider handing out the flowchart(s) reproduced at end of this lesson plan

Teaching steps:
- Partner opened the bidding, showing 13-21 Total Points. You responded, showing 6 or more HCP. You have learned the meanings of opener’s second bid. Today you will learn more about the meanings of responder’s second call.
- (Show first exhibit.) You learned in the previous lesson that, as responder considering your second call, your first priority is to determine if the partnership has enough strength for game:
  - If the answer is “no”, then pass or choose a bid that shows less than game invitational values
  - If the answer is “maybe”, then choose a bid that is invitational to game
  - If the answer is “yes”, then bid game directly or make a forcing bid
- In the previous lesson, you learned the second calls of responder that are nonforcing (signoffs). In this lesson, you will learn about the second calls of responder that are game invitational and the second calls of responder that are game forcing. (Show next exhibit.) Notice that these game invitational and game forcing bids are on the flowchart.
- Second calls of responder that are invitational
  - 2NT. The 2NT bid is expected to show about 10-11 HCP. When opener has a minimum opening bid, opener will often pass 2NT. When opener has some extra values over a minimum opening bid, opener will often raise to game by next bidding 3NT.
  - Bid at 3 level of a suit already bid by the partnership.
    - The suit already bid by the partnership could be a suit already bid by responder. For example, responder’s last bid in the auction 1♣-1♥; 2♥-3♥ is invitational to game. With a signoff hand, responder would have passed opener’s raise to 2♥. And with a game forcing hand, responder would have bid 4♥ and not 3♥ at his second turn.
    - Alternatively, the suit already bid by the partnership could be a suit already bid by opener. For example, responder’s last bid in the auction 1♣-1♥; 1♠-3♦ is invitational to game. If responder wanted to signoff in diamonds, responder would have chosen to rebid 2♦ and not 3♦. You will soon learn that responder could have chosen to bid the fourth suit if responder wanted to force to game rather than just invite to game.
- Second calls of responder that are game forcing
  - Bid of game directly. When responder knows which game contract should be bid, responder can bid the game contract directly.
  - Over opener’s rebid of 1NT, a bid at the 2 level in a higher-ranking suit than the suit of your response. For example, in an auction such as 1♣-1♥; 1NT- 2♣ responder’s 2♣ bid is a reverse bid. Similar to what you have learned about why opener’s reverse bid promises
extra values, responder’s 2♣ second bid forces his partner to prefer responder’s first suit (hearts) at the three level. Responder’s reverse bid is game forcing, promising at least 12 Total Points.

- Any bid over opener’s rebid of 2NT. Opener’s jump rebid of 2NT – when opener could have rebid 1NT – shows extra values, about 18-19 Total Points. Accordingly any call by responder at his next turn, other than Pass, is game forcing.

- Bid of the “fourth suit”. When responder bids a suit at his second turn and all three other suits had already been bid, then responder’s bid is a bid of the fourth suit, called fourth suit (game) forcing. Sample auctions could be 1♥-1♣; 2♦-3♣ or 1♦-1♥; 1♠-2♠.  
  Responder’s bid of the fourth suit is the way that responder can force the bidding to continue until game is bid, when no other game forcing bid describes his hand.

- (Show next exhibit and then two after.) Try some examples. What call should responder make?

- After an auction of 1♥-1♠; 2♦, with KJ65, 63, K9852, AT? (2NT. Responder shows 10-11 by rebidding 2NT. With more than a minimum opening bid, opener can bid game by raising to 3NT. With a minimum opening bid, opener can choose to Pass.)

- After an auction of 1♦-1♥; 2♥, with A754, KT64, 87, Q72? (What is the range of opener’s raise to 2♥? [13-15 Total Points, which includes Ruffing Points]. How many Total Points has responder? [11 Total Points including two Ruffing Points for the doubleton diamond.] This means the partnership has 24-26 Total Points. Responder should bid 3♥ to invite opener to bid 4♥ with a maximum for his previous bidding. Responder already knows that hearts will be trumps; mentioning his spade length will only help the defenders to better guess his hand and conduct a better defense.)

- After an auction of 1♦-1♥; 1♠, with K7, KJ8764, 65, A62? (3♥. Responder shows 10-11 HCP and six or more hearts).

- After an auction of 1♦-1♥; 1NT, with KJ32, AKJ84, 52, 65? (With this hand responder is strong enough to force to game by bidding 2♠. 2♠ is a reverse bid by responder, and promises at least 12 HCP and thus is game forcing. Similar to what you have learned about why opener’s reverse bid promises extra values, responder’s 2♠ second bid forces his partner to prefer responder’s first suit (hearts) at the three level.)

- After an auction of 1♥-1♣; 2♣, with KJ532, 4, J2, AKJ97? (3♣. Although opener might have a minimum opening bid, responder’s 3♣ call, being a fourth suit forcing bid (the other three suits have already been bid), forces game. Responder thinks the partnership has enough HCP for game, but he is uncertain of the strain for game. When he makes a second bid of 3♣, he gives opener the information needed for opener to choose next a bid of 3♠ [what opener will do when he has three spades] or a game bid of 3NT [what opener will do when he has a stopper in the unbid suit of diamonds], or some other descriptive bid [what opener will do when he has neither three spades nor a diamond stopper].)

- After an auction of 1♥-1NT; 2♥, with J65, --, K9852, QT543? (Better Pass, before matters get worse than they already are! Sometimes bridge can be a cruel game.)
• Randomly deal the deck. Or, if the teacher prefers, pre-deal the hands so that responder must decide on a rebid after an opening bid, a response, and a rebid by opener. Using hand generator software that allows the setting of parameters is a good way of ensuring such a layout.
• See Guidelines for Table Supervisors.
Responder’s Second Bid

Responder’s priorities depend upon whether the partnership has the combined strength for a game:

- With an unlikely chance for game, make the most appropriate signoff call

- With a possible chance for game, make the most appropriate game invitational bid

- With a likely chance for game, make the most appropriate game forcing bid
Responder’s Game Invitational Bids

Include:

• 2NT bid

• Bid at 3 level in a suit already bid by partnership

Responder’s Game Forcing Bids

Include:

• Bid of game

• Over opener’s 1NT rebid, bid of a 4+ card suit that is higher-ranking suit than suit of response (a “reverse”)"

• Any bid over opener’s 2NT or higher bid

• Bid of the fourth suit, called “fourth suit (game) forcing”
What call do you make? Why?

♠ K J 6 5
♥ 6 3
♦ K 9 8 5 2
♣ A 10

West North East South
1 ♠ Pass 1 ♠ Pass
2 ♠ Pass ?

♠ A 7 5 4
♥ K T 6 4
♦ 8 7
♣ Q 7 2

West North East South
1 ♦ Pass 1 ♥ Pass
2 ♥ Pass ?
♣ K 7  
♥ K J 8 7 6 4  
♦ 6 5  
♣ A 6 2  
West North East South  
1 ♦ Pass 1 ♥ Pass  
1 ♠ Pass ?  

♣ K J 3 2  
♥ A K J 8 4  
♦ 5 2  
♣ 6 5  
West North East South  
1 ♦ Pass 1 ♥ Pass  
1 NT Pass ?
♠ K J 5 3 2
♥ 4
♦ J 2
♣ A K J 9 7

West North East South
1 ♥ Pass 1 ♠ Pass
2 ♦ Pass ?

♠ J 6 5
♥ —
♦ K 9 8 5 2
♣ Q 10 5 4 3

West North East South
1 ♥ Pass 1 NT Pass
2 ♥ Pass ?
Responder's Second Bid

For the bids made by opener, responder needs to determine opener's range of strength and likely length(s) in suit(s) opener bid.

and responder should consider how opener's strength and suit length(s) match with responder's own strength and suit lengths.

In order to determine

Does the partnership have the strength for game?

No

with unlikely chance for game, make most appropriate signoff call

to include the following calls

Pass
1NT (if possible)
prefer opener's first suit at 2 level
rebid 6+ card responded suit at 2 level
over opener's 1NT rebid, bid a 4+ card suit that is lower ranking than suit of response

Maybe

Yes

with possible chance for game, make most appropriate bid that is a game invitational bid

to include the following bids

2NT
bid at 3 level in a suit already bid by partnership
with likely chance for game, make most appropriate game forcing bid

... from above

to include the following bids

bid of game
over opener's 1NT rebid, bid a 4+ card suit that is higher ranking suit than suit of response (a "reverse")
any bid over opener's 2NT or higher bid
bid of the "fourth suit"
SUPPLEMENTS

Scoring in Duplicate Bridge

Objective:
- to understand the scoring of doubled contracts
- to understand the impact of scoring table on determining the winner of a duplicate bridge pairs event

Teaching steps:
- The scoring for a contract that has been doubled is more extreme than the scoring for a contract that has not been doubled. Your positive score for setting a doubled contract is greater than your score for setting an undoubled contract. And your positive score for making a doubled contract is greater than your score for making an undoubled contract. Of course, the converse is true, too. Your negative score for being set in a doubled contract is worse than your score for being set in an undoubled contract. And your negative score for defending a doubled contract that was made is worse than your negative score for defending an undoubled contract that was made. You will see a chart that calculates the score for making and not making contracts that are doubled.
- You have already learned the scoring for contracts that have not been doubled. And you have learned how the scoring can be affected by vulnerability of the side that is declaring the undoubled contract.
- (Selecting a bidding box card to demonstrate …) Note that the score for each contract, a score that reflects both vulnerability and whether the contract is doubled, is shown on the reverse side of the bidding box card for that contract. Note also that the score is calculated automatically from results entered into a Bridgemate table computer.
- As an exercise, might consider asking students to use the flowsheets to perform score calculations:
  - Referencing the Undoubled … flowchart:
    - Assume contract is 2♣. What is score for winning 8 tricks? 9 tricks? 7 tricks? (+90, +110, -50/-100) [Ensure students capture impact of vulnerability on last score.]
    - Assume contract of 4♠. What is score for winning 10 tricks? 11 tricks? 9 tricks? (+420/+620, +450/+650, -50/-100)
  - Referencing the Doubled … flowchart:
    - Assume contract of 2♥ doubled. What is score for winning 7 tricks? 8 tricks? (-100/-200, +470/-670)
    - Assume contract of 4♥ doubled. What is score for winning 7 tricks? 10 tricks? (-500/-800, +590/+790)
- How the determined score on hands is used to determine the winners of a duplicate bridge pairs event
  - For each individual board or hand, all of the scores are listed for each pair sitting the same direction as you are sitting (that is, either N-S or E-W). You receive one matchpoint for each pair that you scored better than (whether “better” means a bigger plus score or a smaller minus score), plus ½ matchpoint for each pair whose score you
tied, plus 0 matchpoints for each pair whose scored better than did you. For example, if seven other pairs played a board and you scored better than five of those seven pairs, tied one of the seven pairs and scored worse than the other of the seven pairs, you would score 5½ matchpoints on that board. A “top” score would be 7, meaning that you scored better than all seven other pairs who played the board; a “bottom” score would be 0, meaning that all seven other pairs who played the board scored better than you. In any one event, you are likely to have some top scores and some bottom scores … and many scores between top and bottom.

- Your matchpoint scores on each of the boards or hands you play are summed. The pair with the greatest total is the winner. Often the sum is converted to a percentage. If you scored a sum of 48 matchpoints and a perfect score would be to score 80 matchpoints, you would be said to have scored 60% (48/80). 50% game is average. Scores in the 60% range are great and might win.
Duplicate Bridge Scoring for Doubled Part Scores and Game Contracts
(Not Vulnerable/Vulnerable)

Was the contract made?

Yes

Score +50 for making doubled contract

Score double the trick score for each of the tricks required to make the contract

Score +100/+200 for each doubled overtrick

Is doubled trick score enough for game?

Yes

Score game bonus of +300/+500

No

Score -100/-200 for first undertrick; -200/-300 for next two undertricks, -300/-300 for each additional undertrick

No

Do not score game bonus
Matchpoint Scoring in Duplicate Bridge Pairs

Compare your pair’s score for the hand to the score for the hand by other pairs sitting in the same table position

- For each pair you scored higher than:
  - Score +1 matchpoint

- For each pair you scored the same as:
  - Score 1/2 matchpoint

- For each pair you scored less than:
  - Score 0 matchpoint
Guidelines for Table Supervisors

- General Procedures.
  o Because the most important product of the club sessions is to foster the students’ enjoyment of the game, table supervisors should use their discretion in deciding whether or not observed actions are “commentable”.
  o Generally avoid commenting on skills or techniques that have not yet been taught.
  o Ensure that each student:
    ▪ arranges cards properly
    ▪ takes the cards out of the board keeping them face down
    ▪ counts to make sure he was dealt exactly thirteen cards, and next sorts his hand by suit (alternating red and black suits) and, within suit, by rank
    ▪ holds cards so that all thirteen can be seen by the holder (if possible), but not by other players
  ▪ exercises good behavior
    ▪ treats other students, you, and school and bridge club property respectfully
    ▪ plays ethically: objectives include limiting table talk and communications by gesturing, detaching cards and placing them properly on the table, playing cards only at their turn to play, etc.
  ▪ follows rules of bridge, when play begins
    ▪ plays in clockwise order, and follows suit
    ▪ determines who wins each trick and turns the trick in the proper direction
    ▪ recognizes who leads to the next trick

- Contract Determination/Bidding:
  o If playing mini-bridge, ensure that:
    ▪ players employ mini-bridge rules to determine the contract and identify the declarer
    ▪ declarer, if understanding the reward and risk of contracting for a game or slam contract, considers choosing, upon first seeing the dummy:
      ▪ to contract for a game or slam contract that is higher than the part-score contract shown by the mini-bridge table; or
      ▪ to contract for a five-level or six-level contract (in the same strain) that is lower than the slam contract that is shown by the mini-bridge table.
  o If bidding, ensure that players:
    ▪ focus on two priorities of: (1) discovering a combined major suit fit of at least eight cards; and (2) bidding on to achieve game bonus with sufficient combined strength
    ▪ consider applying guidelines covered to date that are outlined on flowcharts in Bidding Folder. Bidding guidelines taught include the following:
      ▪ opening bid of 1NT denies a five-card major
      ▪ after a 1NT opening bid, 2♣ is Stayman; 2 of other suits are natural and non-invitational (i.e., no transfers)
• immediately raise an opening bid of 1 of a major suit with three-card or longer support: single jump raise to 3 of major shows invitational strength; double jump raise shows game forcing strength (i.e., not preemptive)
• two-over-one is game forcing; however, a 1NT response to opening bid of 1 of a major is not forcing
• some doubles are for takeout; some doubles are negative doubles
  o When the determination of the final contract is concluded, emphasize the roles of each player by asking the players:
    ▪ how many tricks must declarer win to satisfy the contract?
    ▪ how many tricks must the defenders win to keep declarer from satisfying the contract?
    ▪ who is the declarer?
    ▪ who is the dummy?
  o if playing mini-bridge, dummy is displayed before the opening lead (displaying the dummy hand before the opening lead gives opening leader some clue about the best defense to undertake, thus ameliorating the absence of clues that otherwise could be derived from hearing a bidding auction)
  o if not playing mini-bridge, dummy is displayed after the opening lead
    ▪ who makes the opening lead?
• Defenders
  o Ensure that defenders consider adopting a plan that applies guidelines covered to date that are outlined on flowcharts in Play Folder, including “Planning the Defense …”, “Choosing the Card to Lead …”, “Signaling …”, and “Third Hand Play …”.
• Declarers
  o Ensure that declarer considers adopting a plan that applies guidelines covered to date that are outlined on flowcharts in Play Folder, including “Planning the Play …”.
• Scoring
  o After the last card has been played, check on the status of the contract:
    ▪ ask one person from each partnership to count the number of tricks won by his partnership. And check that the total number of tricks won equals 13.
    ▪ ask if the contract was made or defeated.
  o Ask players to calculate their score (duplicate style) for the hand.
• Post mortem
  o If declarer or defenders neglected to follow any play or bidding techniques taught to date, consider exploring how the play or bidding might have been altered in order to have achieved a better result.
Student Packet

Objective:
- to collate and organize the charts by subject matter

Teaching steps:
- Teacher might choose to organize the charts to be included in a folder available to each student
- Organization of Play and Defense folder and Bidding Folder:
  - Play and Defense
    - Declarer Play of a Notrump Contract
      - Planning the Play in a Notrump Contract
    - Defense against a Notrump Contract
      - Planning the Defense against a Notrump Contract
      - Choosing the Card to Lead from Your Suit against a Notrump Contract
      - Signaling on Defense against a Notrump Contract
    - Declarer Play of a Trump Suit Contract
      - Planning the Play in a Trump Suit Contract
    - Defense against a Trump Suit Contract
      - Planning the Defense against a Trump Suit Contract
      - Choosing the Card to Lead from Your Suit against a Trump Suit Contract
      - Signaling on Defense against a Trump Suit Contract
    - Second and Third Hand Play
      - Third Hand Play when Declarer Calls for a Small Card from Dummy
      - Some Second Hand Play Guidelines
  - Counting Cards
    - Bidding
      - Objective of Bidding
      - Opening the Bidding
      - Responding to Opening Bid
        - Responding to Opening Bid of 1 of Minor Suit
        - Responding to Opening Bid of 1 of Major Suit
        - Responding to Opening Bid of 1NT
        - Stayman Convention
        - Negative Double by Responder
      - Opener’s Rebids
        - Opener’s Rebid when Responder Raises Opener’s Suit
        - Opener’s Rebid when Responder Bids a New Suit at One Level
        - Opener’s Rebid when Responder Bids 1NT
        - Opener’s Rebid when Responder Bids 2♣ after 1♠ Opening Bid
        - Opener’s Rebid when Responder Bids 2NT or 3NT
        - Opener’s Rebid when Responder Bids 2 of a New Minor Suit after a One Level Opening Bid in a Higher Ranking Suit
      - Responder’s Second Bid
- Competitive Bidding
  - Making a Suit Overcall
  - Advancing an Overcall
  - Takeout Double
  - Advancing a Takeout Double
  - Bidding in Passout ("Balancing") Position
- Scoring of Tournament Bridge
  - Duplicate Bridge Scoring for Undoubled Contracts Made or Defeated
  - Duplicate Bridge Scoring for Doubled Contracts Made or Defeated
  - Matchpoint Pairs Scoring
- Convention Card
Planning the Play in a Notrump Contract

Know your trick target

Count your winners (suit by suit), starting with top tricks, and count your opponents' possible winners (suit by suit)

Play to develop more winners before playing top tricks

Develop more winners for you

Preserve enough entries*

Prevent more winners for opponents

*including consideration of ...
1. playing high cards from short hand first, to avoid blocking a suit
2. ducking a round of a suit, to preserve an entry within that suit

By promotion from strength ...

By establishment of length ...

By finessing ...

By holding up ("ducking") an ace ...

Play to force out opponents' high cards in the suits in which your side owns the not-quite-high cards

Play your partnership's long suit so as to establish smaller cards in the long suit

Count the number of cards played by opponents in the suit, including discards of the suit

Play a suit from one hand ("position") so that you can lead through hoped-for high cards of opponents ("hope") toward your side's high cards

Hold up playing an ace in one opponent's long suit until the other opponent has no cards remaining in the suit
Planning the Defense against a Notrump Contract

Know your trick target

Count your probable winners (suit by suit) and count your opponents’ possible winners (suit by suit)

Play to develop more winners before playing top tricks

Develop more winners for you

Preserve enough entries*

* including consideration of ...
1. playing high cards from short hand first, to avoid blocking a suit
2. ducking a round of a suit, to preserve an entry within that suit

Prevent more winners for opponents

By establishment of length ...

Play your partnership’s long suit so as to establish smaller cards in the long suit

Count the number of cards played by opponents in the suit, including discards of the suit

Lead a suit that attacks entries to opponents’ long suit*

Hold up playing an ace in one opponent’s long suit until the other opponent has no cards remaining in the suit

* not covered by a lesson plan
Choosing the Card to Lead from Your Suit against a Notrump Contract

- Often the suit you determine to lead is the suit in which your side can develop winners by establishment of length.
- Once you have chosen the suit to lead, lead according to your partnership agreements.
- Informing partner is more important than not informing declarer.
- Look to your length and honor holding in the suit you are leading.

- Length of 4 cards or more, that includes an honor:
  - lead 4th highest card ("4th best")
  - ... unless
  - Examples: KQ965
  - AK975
  - KQ95
  - J943

- Length of 3 cards, that includes an honor:
  - lead lowest card
  - ... unless
  - Examples: K76
  - A43 (avoid leading the honor card)

- Length of 3 or more cards, that includes no honor:
  - lead highest or second highest card ("top of nothing")
  - Examples: 865
  - 9864
  - 9642

- Length of 2 cards:
  - lead higher card
  - Examples: 62
  - K5

- your suit is headed by three or more cards in sequence:
  - lead highest card of the sequence
  - Examples: QJT4
  - KQJT

- your suit is headed by two cards in sequence and a lower third card in near sequence:
  - lead highest card of the sequence
  - Examples: QJ94
  - KQ76

- your suit contains an "interior sequence" headed by the ten or higher:
  - lead highest card of the interior sequence
  - Examples: KJT4
  - AT97

- your suit is headed by two or more honors in sequence:
  - lead highest honor
  - Examples: KQ5
  - JT6

- your suit contains an "interior sequence" headed by the ten or higher:
  - lead highest card of the interior sequence
  - Examples: KT9
  - KJT
Signaling on Defense against a Notrump Contract

- **Signaling applies only to defenders and not to declarer**
- **Types of signals**
  - **Attitude signals**: Applies when partner leads, or when you cannot follow suit. Always give attitude signal unless your signal would give away a trick.
  - **Count signals**: Applies when declarer leads and you are following suit. Only give count signal when you think partner needs to know the count, and only signal with a card that will not give away a trick.
  - **Play high card (encouraging) in the suit**: led to welcome partner to continue the suit.
  - **Play low card (discouraging) in the suit**: led to welcome partner to shift to different suit.
  - **discard high card in a side suit to encourage partner to lead that suit** or discard low card in a side suit to discourage partner to lead that suit.
  - **but ... "discard losers, keep winners"**
  - **Signal high, then low with even count**
  - **Signal low, then high with odd count**
Planning the Play in a Trump Suit Contract

Know your trick target

Count your probable losers (suit by suit) and count your opponents’ possible winners (suit by suit)

Count losers by looking at the longer trump hand; begin with trump suit losers

Draw opponents’ non-master trumps ... unless having a reason not to

Eliminate losers for you and winners for opponents

Preserve enough entries*

* including consideration of ...
1. playing high cards from short hand first, to avoid blocking a suit
2. ducking a round of a suit, to preserve an entry within that suit

Keep enough trumps to ruff losers

By ruffing losers

Pitch immediate losers before losing the lead

By pitching losers on extra winners ...

For a winner to be an “extra” winner, the suit must have unequal lengths between the two hands

... from top tricks

... from promotion from strength

... from establishment of length*

... from finesses

* not covered by a lesson plan
Planning the Defense against a Trump Suit Contract

- **Know your trick target**
  - Count your opponents' probable losers (suit by suit) and count your possible winners

- **Prevent declarer from eliminating losers**
  - By ruffing losers (in the short trump hand)
    - Lead Trumps
  - By establishing winners by length in a side (non-trump) suit
    - Lead a suit that attacks opponents' entries to the side suit
  - By pitching losers on extra winners
    - Hold up an ace or key honor card in the side suit
    - Lead a suit where your side can quickly develop tricks
    - Lead a short suit that you can ruff with a trump that is not a natural trump trick
    - Lead a suit that opponent must ruff, shortening their trump length to less than your trump length

- **Develop more winners for defense**
  - Ruff declarer's winners
    - Lead a suit where your side's honor(s) are positioned after opponent's honor(s)
  - Create additional trump tricks for defense
    - Works best when the defense can win a trump trick before your small trumps have been drawn
    - Works best when your trump length is four or more

- **Avoid allowing declarer any additional chances to reduce number of side suit losers, by playing passively**
  - Avoid allowing declarer any additional chances to reduce number of side suit losers, by playing passively
  - Lead a safe suit and not a risky suit

*not covered by a lesson plan*
Choosing the Card to Lead from Your Suit against a Trump Suit Contract

**Determine the suit to lead by reviewing your hand and selecting an objective from Planning the Defense against a Trump Suit Contract**
- From AK
  - hope to prevent declarer from pitching losers
  - lead ace, then king, unless holding AK doubleton
  - Examples: AK
  - "AK"

- From 2 or more sequential honors that do not include the ace
  - hope to promote winners by strength
  - lead highest honor
  - Examples: KQJ5
  - JT9432

- From non-sequential honor(s) in a suit of length of at least three cards that does not include the ace
  - if partner holds missing sequential honor(s), hope to promote winners by strength
  - lead "fourth best" from 4 cards or more; lead lowest from 3 cards unless your suit contains an "interior sequence" headed by the ten or higher, in which case...
  - lead highest card of the interior sequence
  - Examples: KQ43
  - KJ43
  - Q963
  - Q95
  - (avoid leading the honor card)
  - KT9
  - KT

**Once you have chosen the suit to lead, lead according to your partnership agreements**
- From length of 2 or fewer cards
  - hope to ruff declarer's winners
  - lead higher card
  - Examples: 62
  - K5

**Inferring partner is more important than just informing declarer**
- From no honors
  - hope to avoid giving up a trick or hope to win tricks by finesse
  - lead highest card ("top of nothing")
  - Examples: 865
  - 964
  - 942

**Look to your honor holding and length in the suit you are leading**
- From trump suit
  - hope to prevent declarer from ruffing losers
  - generally, a lead to avoid
  - lead the ace

- From non-sequential honor(s) that does not include the ace
Signaling on Defense against a Trump Suit Contract

Signaling applies only to defenders and not to declarer

Types of signals

Attitude signals
- Applies when partner leads, or when you cannot follow suit
- Always give attitude signal unless your signal would give away a trick

Count signals
- Applies when declarer leads and you are following suit
- Only give count signal when you think partner needs to know the count, and only signal with a card that will not give away a trick

Suit preference signals
- Applies when giving partner a ruff
- Requests partner what suit to return (perhaps to give another ruff)

Play high card (encouraging) in the suit led to welcome partner to continue the suit

Play low card (discouraging) in the suit led to welcome partner to shift to different suit

Discard high card in a side suit to encourage partner to lead that suit or discard low card in a side suit to discourage partner to lead that suit

but ... “discard losers, keep winners”

Signal high, then low with even count

Signal low, then high with odd count

Play low card in suit in which you are giving partner a ruff to request return of lower side suit

Play high card in suit in which you are giving partner a ruff to request return of higher side suit
Third Hand Play when Declarer Calls for a Small Card from Dummy

* And on your next play in the suit led, you play:

- from an original three card holding, your higher remaining card
- from an original holding of four or more cards, your original "fourth best" card
Some Second Hand Play Guidelines (many exceptions)

- Second hand low
  
  o … except, cover an honor with an honor
    
    ▪ … *if* you can promote a card held by your side; and

    ▪ … *if* the honor is the last of equal honors

  o … except, split equal honors

    ▪ … *if* you can promote a card held by your side

- Avoid playing the ace “on air”
Counting Cards

Count the distribution and strength of opponents, to guide your choices of plays.

Distribution:

- Each opponent is dealt only thirteen cards
- Determine how many cards each opponent holds in “known suits”
  - As disclosed by the play
  - As disclosed by the bidding auction
- Estimate how many cards held in “unknown suits”

Strength:

- Determine how much strength (especially HCP) each opponent has disclosed in the bidding
- Compare the strength actually shown with the implied strength
  - From calls made by the opponent
  - From calls not made by the opponent
- Estimate the location of key missing high cards
Objective of Bidding

Each bid selected by a partner consists of two elements and is designed to exchange information between partners to discover

an exchange of information between partners by any means other than the selection of a bid is illegal.

4 of a major suit = 10 tricks

3NT = 9 tricks

5 of a minor suit = 11 tricks

if the partnership has the combined strength

TO BID TO A GAME contract and win enough tricks to score a game bonus.

TO BE CONTENT WITH A PART SCORE contract.

if the partnership has the combined major suit length

TO SELECT A MAJOR SUIT AS TRUMP SUIT of the final contract.

level (1 level = 7 tricks; 2 level = 8 tricks, etc.)

strain (major suit as trump suit, no trump, minor suit as trump suit)
Responding to Opening Bid of 1 of Major Suit

- **Responder’s response priorities are in order from left to right:**
  - **with 3+ cards in opened major suit, show support for the opened major suit**
    - **with 0-5 HCP:** Pass
    - **TP are HCP + Ruffing Points**
      - **with 0-5 TP:** pass
      - **with 6-9 TP, bid 2 of opened major suit**
      - **with 10-11 TP, bid 3 of opened major suit**
      - **with 12+ TP, bid 4 of opened major suit**
  - **with 0-5 HCP, Pass**
  - **with 12+ HCP**
    - keep bidding until game is reached
      - **bid longest 5+ card suit**
        - **with 4+ spades, bid 1S**
      - **with 4+ spades, bid 1S**
        - **bid NT**
        - **bid NT**
      - **bid 1NT**
        - **bid 1NT**
      - **bid 1NT**
        - **bid 1NT**
  - **Opening bid of 1 of major suit**
    - **with 13-21 TP and 5-cards or more in major suit**
    - **with 6-11 HCP**
      - **bid 2NT**
      - **bid 3NT**
Responding to Opening Bid of 1NT

Opening bid of 1NT

Premises 15-17 TP, no five card or longer major suit, and a balanced hand

Balanced hand is a hand with no singleton or void and no six card or longer suit

How many Total Points?

TP are HCP + Length Points

0-7 TP

Responder’s priority is to signoff, in order from left to right

with 5+ cards in any suit other than clubs, bid 2 of long suit

Pass

Responder will pass

8-9 TP

with a 4-card or longer major suit, bid 2C Stayman convention

See “Stayman convention”

Responder’s priority is to invite game, in order from left to right

10+ TP

see below ...

10+ TP

from above

Responder’s priority is to keep bidding until game is bid, in order from left to right

with 6-card or longer major suit, bid game in long major suit

with one 5-card major suit and no 4-card major suit, bid 3 of long major suit

with one 5-card major suit and one 4-card major suit, bid 2C Stayman convention

with two 5-card major suits, bid 3C

If opener takes to 4S, Pass

See “Stayman convention”

with one or more 4-card major suits, bid 2C, Stayman convention

If opener bids 3NT, next bid 4H

See “Stayman convention”

bid 3NT
Negative Double by Responder

Partner opens the bidding, Right Hand Opponent overcalls in a suit

Responder’s double is a negative double

Objective is to try to discover a partnership major suit fit in at least one of the unbid major suits

Should satisfy these requirements

Inability to safely bid the unbid major suit naturally, because of:

- Inadequate length: for a bid at the two level or higher in longest unbid major suit, fewer than five cards in length
- Insufficient strength: too few HCP to bid suit naturally at the minimum level

4+ cards in at least one unbid major suit

8+ HCP if opener’s bid of the unbid major suit must be at the two level; 10+ HCP if opener’s bid of the unbid major suit must be at the three level; etc.

Opener’s Bid after Negative Double by Responder

When responder has made a negative double of a suit overcall

Opener bids as though responder has shown:

- exactly four cards in opener’s longest unbid major suit
- the minimum strength required for the level of the negative double

both and
Opener's Rebid when Responder Bids a New Suit at One Level

- opener bids a new suit at one level
  - if not a passed hand, opener's bid cannot be passed by responder, because opener's bid is insufficient in strength
  - opener's general prioritization are in order from left to right:
    - with A+ card support for responder's major suit, raise responder's suit
    - TP are HCP, nothing else
      - with 10-13 TP, bid 2 level of responder's suit
      - with 16-18 TP, bid 4 level of responder's suit
      - with 10-12 TP, bid 4 level of responder's suit
    - with an extra major suit of 4+ cards
      - can the extra major suit be bid at 1 level?
        - no
          - see before...
        - yes
          - bid the extra major suit
  - with fewer than 15 HCP bid the suit major suit at the one level
    - with 10+ HCP bid the suit major suit at the new level (a "jump shift")
    - with 10+ HCP, bid the suit major suit at the 2 level (a "renew")
    - bid 1NT or raise the opened suit
  - ... from above
    - with an extra minor suit of 6+ cards and an opened suit of 5+ cards
      - is the extra minor suit lower ranked than the suit opened?
        - yes
          - bid the extra minor suit
        - no
          - with 16+ HCP bid the opened suit at the four level
            - with fewer than 16 HCP bid the opened suit at the three level
            - with 16+ HCP bid the opened suit at the two level
            - with fewer than 15 HCP bid the opened suit at the one level
            - with 10-13 HCP, bid NTY
Opener’s Rebid when Responder Bids 1NT

Balanced hand is a hand without a singleton or void in any suit, if any. If not balanced, evaluate strength and stoppers for 1NT game.

- Balanced hand:
  - Play NT?
    - With fewer than 18 HCP, Pass
    - With 16-17 HCP, bid 1NT
    - With 18-19 HCP, bid 2NT
  - Unbalanced hand:
    - How many HCP?
      - Fewer than 18 HCP
        - Exploring suit part score
      - 16-17 HCP
        - Exploring possibilities of NT game
      - 18+ HCP
        - See below...

Opener’s general priorities are in order from left to right:

- With 4+ cards in a suit that is lower ranking than the suit of opening bid, bid the new suit at 2 level.
- With 4+ cards in the suit of the opening bid, bid the new suit at 3 level or “reserve”.
- Pass
- With 4+ cards in a suit that is higher ranking than the suit of opening bid, bid the new suit at 2 level or “reserve”.
- Bid 1NT
Opener's Rebid when Responder Bids Two Hearts after One Spade Opening Bid

Responder's 2H bid shows 5+ card suit

Responder's bid of 2H cannot be passed by opener, because responder's bid is game forcing and unlimited, with a minimum of 12 HCP

Opener's general priorities are in order from left to right:

- with 3+ card support, raise responder's heart suit
- with a second suit of 4+ cards, bid the second suit
- with 6+ cards in the spade suit, rebid the spade suit
- with fewer than 16 HCP, bid NT

TP are HCP + Ruffing Points

- with 12-15 TP, bid 3H
- with 16-21 TP, bid 4H

with fewer than 16 HCP, rebid 2S

with 16-18 HCP, rebid 3S

with fewer than 16 HCP, bid 2NT

with 16-18 HCP, bid 3NT
Opener's Rebid when Responder Bids 2NT or 3NT

How many notrump did responder bid?

Responder bid 2NT (12-15 HCP)

- Opener's general priorities are in order from left to right
  - with unbid 4+ card major suit, bid the unbid major suit
  - with 6+ cards in opened major suit, rebid the major suit
  - with 5+ card in an unbid minor suit, bid the unbid minor suit
  - with no second 5+ card suit, bid 3NT

Responder bid 3NT (16-18 HCP)

- Opener's general priorities are in order from left to right
  - with 6+ cards in opened major suit, rebid 4 of opened major suit
  - Pass
Opener's Rebid when Responder Bids Two of a New Minor Suit
after a One Level Opening Bid in a Higher Ranking Suit

- Shows 5+ card suit, is game forcing and unlimited, with a minimum of 12 HCP
- Responder bids 2 of a new minor suit after a 1-level opening in a higher-ranking suit

Opener's general priorities are in order from left to right:

1. With unbidd 4+ card major suit, bid the unbidd major suit
2. With unbidd 4+ card minor suit, raise the minor suit
3. With unbidd 4+ card minor suit, bid the unbidd minor suit
4. With 4+ card support for responder's minor suit, raise the minor suit

TP are HCP = Support Points

- With 13-15 TP, bid 3 of minor suit
- With 16-18 TP, bid 4 of minor suit

5. With 4+ cards in opened major suit, rebid the opened major suit
6. With 6+ cards in opened minor suit, rebid the opened minor suit

7. With a balanced hand, bid NT

8. Balanced hand is a hand with no singleton or void and no six card or longer suit
- With fewer than 16 HCP, rebid opened major suit at 2 level
- With 16-18 HCP, rebid opened major suit at 3 level

9. With fewer than 16 HCP, bid 2NT
10. With 16-18 HCP, bid 3NT

11. With fewer than 16 HCP, rebid opened minor suit at two level
12. With 16-18 HCP, rebid opened minor suit at three level
Responder's Second Bid

For the bids made by opener, responder needs to determine opener's range of strength and likely length(s) in suit(s) opener bid and responder should consider how opener's strength and suit length(s) match with responder's own strength and suit lengths in order to determine

Does the partnership have the strength for game?

No

with unlikely chance for game, make most appropriate pass

to include the following calls

Pass 1NT (if possible) prefer opener's first suit at 2 level rebid 6+ card responded suit at 2 level ever opener's 1NT rebid, bid a 4+ card suit that is lower ranking suit than suit of response

Maybe

with possible chance for game, make most appropriate bid that is a game invitational bid

to include the following bids

2NT bid at 3 level in suit already bid by partnership

Yes

with likely chance for game, make most appropriate game forcing bid

to include the following bids

bid of game ever opener's 1NT rebid, bid a 4+ card suit that is higher ranking suit than suit of response (a "reverse") any bid ever opener's 2NT or higher bid bid of the "fourth suit"

see below...
Advancing an Overcall

- Partner has overcalled in a suit, showing a good quality 5+ card suit
- Advancer’s general priorities are in order from left to right
- with a stopper in the suit(s); bid by opponent(s), show stopper
- one level overall: generally shows good quality 5+ card suit and 9-10 TP
- with support for advancer’s minor suit; show support
- two level overall: generally shows good quality 6+ card suit and 12-20 TP
- See section on left for raising a major suit overall

- with 6-7 TP, Pass
- Support for two level overall (6-9 cards)
- with 6-9 TP, bid 2 of overcalled suit
- with 7-8 TP, bid 3 of overcalled suit
- with 9-10 TP, bid game
- with 6-9 TP, bid 3 of overcalled suit
- with 10-11 TP, bid 3 of overcalled suit
- with 12+ TP, bid game

- with support for overcaller’s major suit, show support
- TP are HCP + Bunting Points
- Bunting Points: equal number of cards in trump suit less number of cards in shortest side suit (4 for void, 3 for singleton, 2 for doubleton)

- with 6-7 HCP, Pass
- Bid NT over a one level overall
- with 6-7 HCP, bid 1NT
- with 10-12 HCP, bid 1NT
- with 12+ HCP, bid 2NT

- with 6-7 HCP, bid 2NT
- with 8-11 HCP, bid 3NT

- with 8-11 HCP, bid 1NT
- with 12-15 HCP, bid 2NT
- with 16+ HCP, bid 3NT
- with 8-11 HCP, bid 2NT
- with 12+ HCP, bid 3NT
Takeout Doubles

Most doubles by members of the partnership that has not opened the bidding are takeout doubles, unless...

- A no-trump bid is doubled
- Only one suit remains unbid
- Opponents have already been doubled for penalty
- Both partners have bid and one has tightly limited the strength of his hand

Requirements for making a takeout double can meet either of requirements below:

- With fewer than 18 HCP, must meet each requirement below:
  - At least 3 cards in each unbid suit
- With 18+ HCP, excluding "unconnected minor honors" in suits bid by opponents; any distribution
  - At least 11 HCP, excluding "unconnected minor honors" in suits bid by opponents
Advancing a Takeout Double of a One-Level Opening Bid or Response*

Rebid by takeout doubler

* Note that similar approaches apply to advancing a takeout double of a higher-level opening bid or response. As a guideline, the minimum strength of a takeout double of a higher-level opening bid or response is about 2 HCP extra for each level above the one level.
Bidding in Passout ("Balancing") Position

Two passes have followed an opponent's suit bid

If you pass, the auction is over. You are in the "passout" or "balancing" position

Two balancing calls are available to you

Objective is to try to compete, for a better score

Should satisfy these requirements

Opponents have not denied a fit in a suit

Balancer's minimum strength in the balancing position for the call to be taken (overcall or double) is about 3 HCP lower than the minimum strength in the non-balancing position

The shorter is balancer's length in the last suit bid by the opponents, the more attractive is making a balancing call

Bids by Partner of Balancer

Partner of balancer chooses the same call he would choose after a non-balancing overcall or (takeout) double...

... except the maximum for such call is about 3 HCP higher
Duplicate Bridge Scoring for Undoubled Part Scores and Game Contracts
(Not Vulnerable/Vulnerable)

Is the final contract a game contract?

No

Scoring for a part score (or "partial")

Was the contract made?

Yes

Score +50 for making a partial

Also score for each trick won (over 6), an amount depending upon the strain:

For notrump contracts, score +40 for first trick won, +10 for each other trick won
For major suit contracts, score +10 for each trick won
For minor suit contracts, score +20 for each trick won

No

Score -50/100 for each undertrick

Games are 3NT, 4 major suits, 5 minor suits

Was the contract made?

Yes

Score +100/+, $100 for game bonus

Also score for each trick won (over 6), an amount depending upon the strain:

For notrump contracts, score +40 for first trick won, +10 for each other trick won
For major suit contracts, score +10 for each trick won
For minor suit contracts, score +20 for each trick won

No

Score -50/100 for each undertrick
Duplicate Bridge Scoring for Doubled Part Scores and Game Contracts
(Not Vulnerable/Vulnerable)

Was the contract made?

Yes

Score +50 for making doubled contract

Score double the trick score for each of the tricks required to make the contract

Score +100/+200 for each doubled overtrick

Is doubled trick score enough for game?

Yes

Score game bonus of +300/+500

No

Score -100/-200 for first undertrick; -200/-300 for next two undertricks, -300/-300 for each additional undertrick

Do not score game bonus
Matchpoint Scoring in Duplicate Bridge Pairs

Compare your pair's score for the hand to the score for the hand by other pairs sitting in the same table position.

- For each pair you scored higher than:
  - Score +1 matchpoint
- For each pair you scored the same as:
  - Score 1/2 matchpoint
- For each pair you scored less than:
  - Score 0 matchpoint