



Competitive Bidding

Overcalls, doubles, and the auction both sides are bidding

Most deals are contested · you are South



Most deals are contested

Both sides hold about half the cards. On any given deal, the odds are good that somebody other than your partnership has something to say.

A player who is fluent in uncontested auctions and lost in competitive ones is fluent in the minority of the game. Everything the Two Over One lesson set aside is in here.

Two situations, and they are not symmetrical: they open and we want in, or we open and they come in.



Three things change the moment an opponent bids

Every rule in this deck follows from one of them.

THE GAME-FORCE AGREEMENT IS OFF

Uncontested, 1♠ – 2♦ promises game. After 1♠ – (2♥) – 3♦, it does not. They have taken your describing space, so responder's bids revert to natural and limited.

Two Over One is a system for auctions with room in them.

A PASS IS NOW SAFE

Uncontested, passing out a 22-point hand misses a partscore. Contested, passing hands THEM the contract.

Which cuts both ways: entering is worth more risk, and partner passing is not the disaster it looks like.

SHAPE IS WORTH MORE THAN POINTS

The question is rarely "can we make game" and usually "who can make what, at which level". That is a question about trumps and tricks.

The whole second half of the lesson is arithmetic about that.



Two counts do more work than high card points

High cards still matter — you cannot make tricks out of nothing — but these decide the bid.

Playing tricks What this hand takes with its own suit as trumps and nothing at all from partner. ♠AKQ964 ♥3 ♦K84 ♣972 has six. This is how high you can afford to go on your own.

Defensive tricks What it takes defending: aces and protected kings. Length in your own suit is worth nothing on defence.

The gap between them Exactly the measure of how much a hand wants to bid rather than defend.

Suit quality is a requirement, not a bonus: a five-card suit worth naming holds two of the top three honours, or three of the top five. ♠AQJ94 is a suit; ♠J8532 is five cards.

The same hand is a different bid at different colours

A vulnerable game is worth about 600, a non-vulnerable one about 420. What you are buying changes with the price.

Down	Not vulnerable	Vulnerable
One, undoubled	50	100
Two, undoubled	100	200
One, doubled	100	200
Two, doubled	300	500
Three, doubled	500	800

Red against white is the dangerous colour — you vulnerable, they not — and it is where every borderline action in this deck should be declined.



One bid doing three jobs

(1♦) – 1♠ contests the partscore, tells partner what to lead, and takes bidding space from opponents who were having a comfortable auction.

Worth separating, because different hands are bidding for different reasons. An eight-count with ♠AQJ94 is bidding for the lead and the space, not because it expects to buy the contract — and that is a perfectly good reason to bid.

A four-card suit is NEVER an overcall. Not at any level, not with any strength. Partner will raise it.

The two levels are two different bids

Overcall	Points	Suit
At the ONE level	8-17	A good five-card suit or longer
At the TWO level	11-17	A good five-card suit — better, six
Two-suited, five-four	8 in the two long suits (10 vulnerable)	Count the points where the tricks are
With 18 or more	Do not overcall	Double first, then bid the suit

The two level is a genuinely different bid: one trick higher, no more information, partner may raise you. This is where the quality rule earns its keep.

The range is deliberately wide at the bottom

TEN, AND A REAL SUIT

♠ AQJ94

♥ 73

♦ 85

♣ K1042

(1♦) – ? · the lead is worth having

1♠

ELEVEN, AND NOTHING TO SAY

♠ J8532

♥ AK4

♦ K72

♣ 93

(1♣) – ? · the spades are not a suit

Pass

EIGHTEEN

♠ AKQJ85

♥ A4

♦ K73

♣ J2

(1♥) – ? · too strong to be passed

Double

A simple overcall is a limited bid and partner is entitled to pass it. A hand that cannot afford that doubles first and bids the suit afterwards.

Three doors past the quality rule

The quality rule is a proxy for one question — can this suit stand being raised? There are three other ways to answer it.

The values are elsewhere 11+ high card points OUTSIDE the suit — enough to have opened on their own. ♠86543 ♥74
♦AK9 ♣A106 overcalls (1♦) – 1♠.

The hand is an opening bid 13+ high card points, wherever they sit. ♠K2 ♥954 ♦K9753 ♣AK7 overcalls (1♣) – 1♦ on ten outside the diamonds but thirteen in all.

The suit is longer Six cards with any honour at all — the sixth card does the work the second honour would have done. ♠Q4
♥K6 ♦K2 ♣AJ85432 overcalls (1♥) – 2♣.

The two POINT-COUNT doors are open at the ONE level only. ♠K75 ♥A106 ♦J10753 ♣AJ has twelve outside its diamonds and still passes over (1♠). The LENGTH door is open at both.

Over a one-level opening, a jump is WEAK

The same hand that would have opened a weak two, made one seat later. Read the ladder by the level you land at, not the number of steps you jumped.

Auction	Shows	Points
(1♥) - 2♠	Six-card suit	5-10
(1♥) - 3♠	Seven-card suit	5-10
(1♥) - 4♠	Eight-card suit	5-10
(1♠) - 3♣	SEVEN clubs — it is the three level	one step up, but still seven

The length picks the level: (1♣) - 3♦ on ♠85 ♥1094 ♦AJ98764 ♣K, because bidding 2♦ wastes the card that bought the extra level. A six-card suit that cannot show itself at the two level has no weak jump and passes.



And the values have to be IN the suit

At most 5 high card points outside it.

The weak jump is a shape bid — it takes space and expects to be passed — so high cards sitting outside the long suit are defensive tricks being thrown away.

♠A97632 ♥KQ9 ♦Q4 ♣94 has seven outside its spades and overcalls (1 ♣) – 1 ♠ instead. ♠1063 ♥J109753 ♦AK6 ♣6 bids 1 ♥ rather than 2 ♥ for the same reason.

There is no such thing as a strong jump overcall over a one-level opening. Strong hands double.

(1♦) – 1NT is 15–18 with a stopper

Stronger than a 1NT opening, because the auction is more dangerous and there is a known danger hand on your left.

Everything you play over a 1NT opening is on: Stayman, transfers, the lot. Partner responds exactly as they would to a 15–17 opening — one fewer thing for a partnership to remember.

♠A94 ♥KQ6 ♦AJ83 ♣K105 over (1♦) is 1NT. *Seventeen balanced, diamonds stopped.*

NOT with five of their suit. ♠J953 ♥AK ♦AJ1076 ♣Q7 passes over (1♦) — that hand sits over the opener with their trumps and belongs on defence.



It does not say "they are going down"

(1 ♠) – X says: partner, pick a suit.

The most useful bid in competitive bidding, and the one most often used wrongly. The picture is a hand that is happy whatever partner names.

♠5 ♥KJ73 ♦AQ84 ♣K952 over 1 ♠ is the shape the bid was invented for: thirteen points, a singleton in their suit, four cards in each of the other three.



Three requirements — a hand needs all three

Opening values 12 to 17 points. With 18 or more you double first and bid AGAIN, whatever your shape.

Shortness in their suit A void, singleton or doubleton. Three small is the most you can stretch to, and never three to an honour.

Support for every unbid suit Three or more cards in each, and four in the unbid major is what you really want.

If the long suit can be bid, bid it. ♠10962 ♥— ♦AKQJ8 ♣K1063 over (1♥) is a perfect takeout shape and still overcalls 2♦: naming the suit tells partner where the tricks are, and the double only tells them to guess.

What you do NEXT resolves the ambiguity

The double has a second, quite separate use: any hand of 18 or more, whatever its shape. The correction is the whole point of it.

Sequence	Shows
Double, then PASS partner's suit	The takeout double proper — 12–17 with the shape
Double, then BID A SUIT of your own	18+ one-suiter, too strong to overcall
Double, then BID NOTRUMP	19–21 balanced, too strong for the 1NT overcall
Double, then RAISE partner's suit	18+ with a genuine fit

Partner's answer was compelled and promises nothing, so an ordinary takeout double has nothing to add and passes. Bidding again says the double was never takeout.

One hand with its own trumps

THE DOUBLER

♠ 4

♥ A5

♦ AKQJ92

♣ KQ83

19 HCP and six running diamonds

1♥

They open —

Double

You Too strong for 2♦, which partner is entitled to pass.

1♠

Partner Compelled. It promises nothing at all.

2♦

You Now the story is told: 18+ with a one-suited hand. Partner may pass it.

With ♠KJ4 ♥AQ5 ♦KQJ2 ♣AJ3 the same sequence bids 1NT instead — 19-21 balanced, their suit held, too strong for the 1NT overall, which is why it doubled first.

You MUST bid — pass is not available

Partner doubled, your right-hand opponent passed. This is the single most important thing to know about the convention.

Points	Bid	Meaning
0-8	Cheapest bid in your longest suit	Forced. Prefer a major to a minor at equal length
6-10, with a stopper	1NT	Balanced, their suit held
9-11	Jump in your best suit	Invitational, and NOT forcing
11-12, with a stopper	2NT	Balanced and invitational
12 or more	Cue-bid their suit	Game forcing — the only forcing bid available

♠9752 ♥86 ♦J1043 ♣762 opposite a double of 1♥ bids 1♠. One point, and it is still the right bid. Passing turns partner's takeout double into a penalty double of a contract they will probably make.



The table does not survive being read literally any higher

Partner doubling (4 ♠) has not asked you to bid five of anything on a four-count. So there is a ceiling.

The cue bid Needs to be available at the three level or lower. Above that there is no forcing bid and the hand simply picks a contract.

An answer at the three level Takes 8. Below that, pass.

An answer at the four level or higher Takes 12. Below that, pass — the one place where passing a takeout double is not the beginner's mistake.

If they bid over the double You are released. Everything from there is voluntary: the cheapest natural call only, never a jump, and it takes 8 — or 6 with a five-card suit.

♠A9 ♥QJ6 ♦J864 ♣10653 over (1 ♣) - X - (1 ♠) bids 2 ♦, not 3 ♣. The double stopped compelling anything the moment they bid.

Michaels and the Unusual 2NT

Each shows a FIVE-FIVE hand in one bid — far more than two separate bids usually get the chance to say.

Bid	Shows
(1♣) - 2♣ · (1♦) - 2♦	Both majors, five-five
(1♥) - 2♥	Spades and an unspecified minor, five-five
(1♠) - 2♠	Hearts and an unspecified minor, five-five
Unusual 2NT	The two LOWEST UNBID suits, five-five

Over a major the 2NT is both minors; over 1♣ it is diamonds and hearts; over 1♦ it is clubs and hearts. After Michaels over a major, 2NT asks which minor.

The decision is about the LEVEL, not the strength

Neither bid says anything about strength beyond what a normal overcall says. They are not two-range bids and there is no gap in the middle to avoid.

Auction	Partner answers at	So it needs
(1♣) - 2♣ · (1♦) - 2♦	2♥ or 2♠ — the two level	The values for a two-level overcall
(1♥) - 2♥	2♠ — the two level	The values for a two-level overcall
(1♠) - 2♠	3♥ — the three level	Rather more, or a hand that can stand it
Unusual 2NT, any auction	The three level, always	Rather more, or a hand that can stand it

The second suit needs an honour and a half — one of the top three, or two of the top five. A lower bar than the overcall's long suit clears, because partner is choosing between two suits.



Ten points, three different answers

MICHAELS

♠ KJ1094

♥ AQ863

♦ 5

♣ 74

(1♦) – ? · partner answers at the two level

2♦

UNUSUAL

♠ 6

♥ 84

♦ KQ1075

♣ AJ964

(1♠) – ? · commits partner to the three level, and this can stand it

2NT

ONE SUIT AT A TIME

♠ 5

♥ J8642

♦ AQ1073

♣ K6

(1♠) – ? · the hearts are ragged

2♦

When showing both would push partner too high, overcall the better suit and bid the second later if the auction comes back. With five good and five ragged, the good suit alone is often the better bid.

Multi-Landy — every call describes a shape

Every one of them shows at least the values for an overcall. There is no weak version and no strong version.

Bid	Shows
Double	A four-card major and a five-card minor
2♣	Both majors, at least five-four
2♦	A SIX-card major — which one is not yet said
2♥	Five hearts and a four-card minor
2♠	Five spades and a four-card minor
2NT	Both minors, five-five

Every bid except 2♦ names TWO suits, and 2♦ names one but conceals which. That is what buys the precision — a defence where 2♥ simply meant hearts would use five bids to say less than these six do.



Shape is the reason to bid, not points

They have described a good hand and you are entering at the two level with no room to explore. A two-suiter competes safely because you have somewhere to run.

The one-suiter needs six cards; the two-suiters need five and four. So the shape with no bid is the five-card major with no four-card minor — a 5-3-3-2 or 5-3-3-3 with a major. That hand passes, and it should: it is precisely the hand that gets doubled at the two level opposite a strong notrump. A flat eleven-count passes too, whatever its point count.

♠— ♥A87652 ♦J107 ♣AK65 is six hearts AND hearts-and-a-minor, and it bids 2 ♦. The sixth trump decides where the hand plays; the minor is only somewhere to run to.

The price is the penalty double, which this scheme does not have. A hand that wants to defend 1NT doubled passes and hopes partner reopens — the hands that want to COMPETE are far more common than the hands that want to punish.

Answering Multi-Landy

Partner described a shape, so advancer names the contract — and with a weak hand that means naming it now, at the lowest level that fits.

Partner bid	Advancer
Double	2♣ — pass or correct. With a good hand, 2NT asks for the major
2♣	Bid your longer major. Equal length, bid 2♥ — the overcaller corrects with five spades
2♦	2♥ — the overcaller passes with hearts or corrects to 2♠. 2NT asks with a good hand
2♥ / 2♠	Raise with three trumps. 2NT asks for the minor
2NT	Pick a minor at the three level

Two rules carry all of it. A cheap bid is a PREFERENCE, not an opinion — the overcaller must not read values into it. And 2NT is ALWAYS the ask, which is why advancer needs a real hand to use it.

A jump over a preempt shows EXTRA values

This is the one place the meaning of a jump turns over. There is no preempting over a preempt — they have already taken the room.

Auction	Bid	Shows
(2♥) - ?	2♠	The simple overcall — 13-17, good suit
(2♥) - ?	3♠	A jump: more than that. Extra values, not less
(2♦) - ?	3♥	A jump, same meaning
(3♣) - ?	4♥	A jump at the four level — strong, and expecting to make it

So the hand that would love to preempt over their preempt — seven spades and six points — has no bid at all, and passes. That is not a gap in the system; it is the correct answer.



The rest of the defence

Double is takeout All the way up to 4♥. Opening values or better, shortness in their suit, support for the others — with rather more strength, because you are committing partner to the three level.

2NT over a weak two 15–18 balanced with a stopper — the notrump overcall, one level up. Over a three-level preempt, 3NT is to play.

A three-level suit overcall Sound: 13–17 with a good suit. Six cards is the picture, but a good five-card suit and an opening hand is enough. ♠72 ♥A6 ♦A543 ♣AQ1052 bids 3♣ over (2♦).

A five-card major at the TWO level Takes only 10. ♠K976543 ♥10 ♦A ♣QJ52 bids 2♠ over (2♣) — the two level is cheap and this is the last moment it can be said.

Answering the double works as it does over a one-bid, one level higher — cheapest with 0–8, jump with 9–11, cue-bid with 12+ — but only while the answer is still cheap. With two suits of equal length, the cheapest is the cheapest.

The raise counts TRUMPS, not points

The Law of Total Tricks in its most useful form. Partner's overcall was limited — 8-17 — so most of your bids are limited too.

Your trumps	Raise to
Three	The two level
Four	The three level
Five	The four level
In a MINOR	Stops at three — four of a minor is not a game

♠K1074 ♥95 ♦8632 ♣Q74 raises partner's 1♠ overcall to 3♠. Five high card points, and it is not an invitation — it is four trumps opposite a promised five, and the Law says nine trumps means the three level. Say it before they find their own fit.

Everything else can be passed — one bid forces

Bid	Shows
Raise	By the table before — competitive, NOT invitational
New suit	A five-card suit, by the floors below. Not forcing
1NT	8–11 with a stopper in their suit
2NT	12–14 with a stopper
Cue bid of opener's suit	Limit raise or better — the only force
Jump raise	Preemptive: four or five trumps and a weak hand

The new suit has no ceiling and its floor rises with the level: 8 at the one or two level, 11 at the three — or 9 at the three with a sixth card. ♠KQ9853 ♥KQ107 ♦6 ♣KJ bids 3♠ over (2♦) - 3♣ - (P).



Four cards in EACH unbid major

Both of them, when two are unbid — not one of them, and not "some values somewhere".

It exists because the natural bid has been stolen. After $1\clubsuit - (1\heartsuit)$, a hand with four spades and nine points has no bid: $1\spadesuit$ would promise five in a competitive auction, and $2\spadesuit$ is a jump it cannot afford. The double says "I have the majors and the values, you place the contract".

When both majors have already been bid, it shows four cards in each unbid MINOR instead. The principle never changes — four-four in the two suits nobody has named.

It applies through $3\spadesuit$. Above that, a double is penalty.



Which suits it promises, auction by auction

Auction	Unbid majors	The double shows
1♣ - (1♦) - X	Both	Four hearts AND four spades
1♦ - (2♣) - X	Both	Four hearts and four spades
1♣/1♦ - (1♥) - X	Spades	Four spades — with five, bid 1♠
1♣/1♦ - (1♠) - X	Hearts	Four hearts — with five and the values, bid 2♥
1♥ - (1♠) - X	None	Four clubs and four diamonds
1♠ - (2♥) - X	None	Four clubs and four diamonds

The floor rises with the level it makes partner answer at: 6 high card points over a one-level overcall, 9 over a two-level one, 11 over a three-level one. High cards, not adjusted points.



Responder's other bids all change too

A new suit is forcing — not GAME forcing 1♠ – (2♥) – 3♦ shows five diamonds and a good hand. The 2/1 agreement needed an uncontested auction. Floors: 6 at the one level, 10 at the two, 11 at the three — or 9 at the three with a sixth card.

The raise has two rungs Three trumps and 6–10 raise to two; FOUR trumps raise to three on as little as 4. Three of partner's MAJOR is raised ahead of the negative double — a fit found outranks a double looking for one.

The cue bid takes 11 Support and 11+ adjusted points. Ten raises instead. Opposite a MINOR the cue bid also DENIES a stopper — with the stopper, bid the notrump.

Opposite a minor, show the stopper Nine tricks beat eleven, so the contract is 3NT. The ladder by level, in high card points: 1NT with 6+, 2NT with 10+, 3NT with 12+.

With seven or fewer, PASS Not "may" — pass. The only two exceptions: four trumps raise to three on four, and 6 HCP with a stopper bid notrump at the one level opposite a minor.

1♠ – (2♣) on ♠A52 ♥Q743 ♦KJ9 ♣832 is 2♠, not a double showing the hearts. Five-card support for partner's major is ten trumps: 1♠ – (3♣) – 4♠ is not an invitation, it is the level the fit belongs at.



One hand reaches the bottom of the list with values still in it

No new suit — no five-card suit to name at the two level. No fit to show. No 1NT — no stopper in their suit. No negative double — not four in each unbid major.

What that hand usually holds is length and strength in the OVERCALLER'S suit. That is exactly why every natural bid failed: its cards are sitting in the one suit it cannot name. So it passes — not because it is weak, but because it is waiting.

Rescuing yourself off the trap pass throws away the penalty the pass was setting up.

A takeout double made after you have already opened

Opener has the inference the moment the auction comes back: responder did not bid, the opponents found a fit, and the missing points have to be somewhere.

Seat	Call	Meaning
Responder, first turn	Pass	Could be nothing — or the trap hand, with their suit
Opener, reopening	Double	Takeout. Short in their suit, protecting against the trap
Responder	Pass	Converts to PENALTY: four or more good trumps
Responder	Bid	Was nothing after all, or has a suit to name now

Not with LENGTH in their suit — the trump stack you are protecting cannot exist if you hold it yourself. Not with six of your own: 1♠ - (2♦) - P - (P) on ♠KJ85432 ♥AKQ6 ♦2 ♣J rebids 2♠. And "same shape" means the shape: ♠10862 ♥104 ♦AKJ73 ♣K4 has a doubleton heart and does not double.

Opener's double shows exactly THREE cards. A raise shows FOUR.

After 1♣ – (P) – 1♠ – (2♥), responder's 1♠ promised only four spades — so a raise could be on three trumps or four, and responder cannot tell which. That is the difference between a seven-card fit and an eight-card one.

Auction	Opener's call	Shows
1♣ – (P) – 1♠ – (2♥)	X	Exactly three spades
1♣ – (P) – 1♠ – (2♥)	2♠	Four or more spades
1♦ – (P) – 1♥ – (1♠)	X	Exactly three hearts
1♣ – (P) – 1♠ – (X)	XX	Exactly three spades — the support REdouble
1♣ – (P) – 1♠ – (3♥)	X	Penalty — above two of responder's suit

It is opener's bid and only opener's. The price is the penalty double in exactly that position, and it is worth paying: doubling a two-level overcall for penalty is a rare hand; wanting to tell partner whether the fit is eight cards or seven is nearly every hand.

The redouble carries the strong hands

Their takeout double GAVE your side a bid and took the meaning of everything below it. Because the redouble holds the strong hands, every other bid is weak or shapely.

Bid	Shows
A major at the ONE level	Four or more of it — bid it before anything else, with 6+ HCP
Redouble	10+, usually short in opener's suit, penalty interest
Raise to two	6–9 with three or four trumps — competitive
Jump raise (3M)	Preemptive: four trumps and under 7, or five and weak
3M minus one — the MIXED raise	Four trumps and 7–9
2NT (Jordan)	Limit raise or better with four-card support
New suit at the ONE level	6+ with five or more cards — not forcing
New suit at the TWO level	10+ with five or more cards
1NT	6–9 balanced with a stopper

♠J108 ♥K842 ♦KJ52 ♣Q9 over 1♦ - (X) bids 1♥, not 2NT — the raise, the redouble and Jordan all keep until next time. But almost free is not free: ♠974 ♥Q10542 ♦75 ♣J107 has three points and passes.

The mixed raise is what makes the rest work

Bid one step below three of the major — 1 ♠ – (X) – 3 ♥, 1 ♥ – (X) – 3 ♦ — on four trumps and 7–9.

Too good for the preemptive raise and not good enough for Jordan. Giving it its own call leaves 3M itself meaning the weak hand it ought to mean, which is the hand partner has to be able to read. With the strong raise on 2NT and the mixed raise here, the direct raise is free to be weak — and the partnership can compete to the level of its fit without ever implying more than it has.

♠J432 ♥10852 ♦KJ87 ♣8 over 1 ♠ – (X) bids 3 ♥. ♠64 ♥KQ73 ♦A952 ♣J83 over 1 ♥ – (X) bids 2NT. ♠AQ4 ♥52 ♦KJ973 ♣Q86 over 1 ♣ – (X) redoubles.

Going to the two level in a new suit takes 10 and five cards — a six-count does not push the auction up a level on its own. ♠— ♥Q984 ♦97543 ♣AJ84 over 1 ♠ – (X) passes.

Borrow a king

(1 ♠) – P – (P) – ? is a different auction from (1 ♣) – ?. Opener has 12 or so, their partner denied 6 — so 22 points are on your side of the table, and partner could not act with some of them.

Bid	Direct seat	Balancing seat
Suit overcall	8–17	7 and up
Double	12+ with shape	9+ with shape
1NT	15–18	11–14
Suit quality at the one level	Good five-card suit	ANY five-card suit
2NT	Unusual, two-suited	18–19 balanced

The 1NT change is the one to memorise, because it inverts: balancing 1NT is the WEAK bid and balancing 2NT is the strong one. If you pass, they play 1 ♠ with fewer points than your side holds.

The suit is a vehicle, not a proposal

♠6 ♥AQ93 ♦76542 ♣A108 over (1♣) – P – (P) bids 1♦ on five ragged diamonds.

The alternative is letting them play 1♣ — the cheapest contract they will ever be allowed to buy — with fewer points than your side holds.

And the borrowing works both ways: partner gives the king back. A hand that would cue-bid opposite a direct overcall merely raises opposite a balancing one. The RAISE itself does not change, because the raise counts trumps rather than points.

Do not balance into their strength. After (1♠) – P – (2♠) – P they have found a fit and told each other so; the missing points are in the opener's hand, not partner's.



Bid to the level of your fit, and no higher

The total number of tricks available on a deal is approximately equal to the total number of trumps both sides hold.

Your trumps	Compete to
Eight	The two level
Nine	The three level
Ten	The four level

Not because you expect to make it — often you do not — but because if you are down one, they were making the contract you pushed them out of. Two things bend it: vulnerability (red against white, decline the last push) and HONOURS IN THE SHORT SUITS, which take tricks on defence they would never take as declarer.

The ones that cost the most

Passing partner's takeout double with a bust The one call the convention does not permit. Bid your longest suit, however little you hold.

Overcalling on a four-card suit Partner will raise it, lead it, and never forgive you.

Negative-doubling with four of one major It promises four in EACH. With four of one, bid it if there is room; with no bid available, pass and wait for the reopening double.

Reopening with length in their suit Opener doubles again on SHORTNESS. Holding three or four of the overcaller's suit, the trump stack you would be protecting cannot exist.

Playing a 2/1 response as game forcing after an overcall $1\spadesuit - (2\heartsuit) - 3\diamondsuit$ is forcing, not game forcing. The agreement needed an uncontested auction.

Jumping over their preempt with a weak hand Over a one-level opening a jump is preemptive; over a preempt it shows extra values.

Treating a competitive raise as an invitation Raising to the level of your fit says nothing about your strength. Partner must not bid game because you raised.

Bidding on because you were doubled The double is information. Take it as a reason to defend rather than a challenge.

Competitive bidding on one card

OVERCALL 8–17 AT THE ONE LEVEL

11–17 at the two, and always a good five-card suit or longer — never four

ANSWERING A DOUBLE IS COMPULSORY

cheapest suit with 0–8, however little you hold — while the answer is still cheap

JUMPS FLIP OVER A PREEMPT

weak over a one-level opening, STRONG over a weak two — there is no preempting over a preempt

COUNT TRUMPS, NOT POINTS

eight → the two level, nine → the three, ten → the four

DOUBLE MEANS PICK A SUIT

12–17 with shortness and support for the rest, or 18+ with any shape and a second call coming

THE NEGATIVE DOUBLE IS FOUR-FOUR

in EACH unbid major, 6 HCP over a one-level overcall, 9 over a two, 11 over a three

BALANCING: BORROW A KING

1NT becomes 11–14 and 2NT becomes 18–19 — the one change that inverts

Practice: the trainer at bridge.jmariada.org/learn/competitive-bidding/practice.

Ask the Learn Bridge chat anything about this material.