

Beginner Lesson 1

Opening the Bidding

The Auction

Each suit has a ranking order. When you make a bid during the auction, you must ensure that it is higher than the previous bid, just as you would in any auction. You are now trying to reach a contract at the best level for your side. The first person to make a bid (not pass) becomes the **OPENER**. Opener's partner is called the **RESPONDER**.

Ranking of Suits

Notrumps	NT	
Spades	♠	} Spades and Hearts are also called the MAJOR suits
Hearts	♥	
Diamonds	♦	} Diamonds and Clubs are also called the MINOR suits
Clubs	♣	

The Levels of Bidding

1♣ 1♦ 1♥ 1♠ 1NT 2♣ 2♦ 2♥ 2♠ 2NT 7NT

You must make 6 tricks before you start to score in bridge – therefore:

1- level contracts must make 1+6 tricks = 7 tricks

2- level contracts must make 2+6 tricks = 8 tricks ... and so on

The lowest bid you can make is 1♣ = 7 tricks

The highest bid you can make is 7NT = 13 tricks

What is the Partnership looking for in a Contract?

Their aim is to find the best contract at the correct level. There are 3 levels to bid to:

Partscore	combined points less than 25
Game	combined points 25-32
Slam	combined points 33+

What is Game?

You get a large bonus when you make a Game, but you must make a certain number of tricks to succeed. The number of tricks varies according to the trump suit or NT.

Game is: 3NT – 9 tricks 4♥/♠ – 10 tricks 5♣/♦ – 11 tricks

1-level Opening Bids – Suit or No Trumps?

Opening in a Suit

1♣	12-19	4+ clubs
1♦	12-19	4+ diamonds
1♥	12-19	4+ hearts
1♠	12-19	4+ spades

Which suit to open when holding two or more equal length suits

The order in which you bid your suits is very important. This is to minimize the risk of missing a making game contract in a major because of failure to discover the 8 card fit.

- With two equal length suits (4-4; 5-5; 6-6) open the higher ranked suit, EXCEPT...
-with exactly four hearts and four spades, open 1♥.

4-4 hearts-spades: open 1♥; 4-4 clubs-hearts: open 1♥; 5-5 hearts-spades: open 1♠

Rule of 20

Sometimes hands may not have 12 High Card Points (HCPs) but have good 'shape' and therefore worth opening. The 'Rule of Twenty' can be applied to determine whether a hand is worth an opening bid: Add the number of HCPs to the number of cards in your two longest suits. If the total comes to at least twenty you can open the bidding, **provided you have a sensible rebid if partner responds in your short suit. (Lesson 5 – Opener's Rebid in a New Suit).**

♠ 6 5
♥ A Q 7 4 2
♦ A 10 8 6 3
♣ 3

This hand is very unbalanced and has only 10 HCPs. Using the 'Rule of Twenty', add your 10 HCP's, 5 hearts and 5 diamonds: $10+5+5=20$. This means that you **may** open 1♥. Now ask yourself whether you can cope with any response from partner

If partner responds 1♠, 1NT or 2♣ you can bid 2♦, giving partner a choice of rebidding either of your suits at the 2-level, so **do** open 1♥.

Opening 1NT

There is one hand type where we do not open in a suit when we have 12-19 points. When we have **12-14 points** and what is known as a **BALANCED HAND**, we open 1NT.

A balanced hand contains:

- **no** void or singleton
- **one** doubleton at most

♠ AQ6542
♥ 72
♦ A2
♣ A92

1♠

♠ AJ52
♥ KJ
♦ A75
♣ 9865

1NT

♠ K52
♥ 1076
♦ KQJ75
♣ K7

1NT

♠ K987
♥ A87
♦ KJ3
♣ A52

1♠

♠ 97642
♥ AKQ2
♦ J3
♣ 96

Pass