



Bidding

The bidding is a conversation between partners, used to arrive at a contract. Bidding is a competition between each partnership to determine which contract, would give their partnership their best scoring result, either declaring or defending.

What is a Bid?

A bid describes the number of tricks you need to take and the proposed denomination (suit or notrump). You make bids to describe your hand to partner, so that your partnership can reach the proper contract. The opening bid is simply the first bid made in the auction. The person that makes the opening bid is the opening bidder. A bid describes:

- a. Level = The number of tricks to be taken when added to 6
- b. Denomination = Denotes the proposed trump suit or notrump
- c. Purpose = To show both strength and distribution to partner
- d. Goal = Arrive at the best contract

What is a call?

A call is any bid, or a pass. Once a bid has been made, double is a valid call. If the last call other than pass is a double, then redouble is a valid call. Double is sometimes written as X and redouble is sometimes written as XX.

Bidding Process

The dealer makes the first call. Bidding then proceeds clockwise around the table, each player making a call. If the auction starts out with 4 passes, the bidding ends. This is called a pass out. If there is an opening bid, then three passes end the auction.

The contract (also called the final contract) is the final bid that was made, including any double or redouble. The declarer is the first person to bid the suit or NT that became the denomination of the final contract. The dummy is declarer's partner, and the opening leader will be the Left Hand Opponent (LHO) of declarer. Final contract examples are:

3NT by East

4♥X by South (4 hearts doubled)

3♠XX by North (3 spades doubled and redoubled)

Bidding is an Auction

Each subsequent bid must be higher than the previous one. It can either be higher by the rank of the suit, or by the number of tricks that need to be taken. The higher you bid the greater the risk and reward!

BIDDING CHART					Goal	Tricks Required to Make
Final Contracts						
1♣	1♦	1♥	1♠	1NT		7
2♣	2♦	2♥	2♠	2NT		8
3♣	3♦	3♥	3♠	3NT	3NT = Game Level	9
4♣	4♦	4♥	4♠	4NT	4♥ and 4♠ = Game Level	10
5♣	5♦	5♥	5♠	5NT	5♣ or 5♦ = Game Level	11
6♣	6♦	6♥	6♠	6NT	Small Slam	12
7♣	7♦	7♥	7♠	7NT	Grand Slam	13

Scoring in Bridge

The goal in bridge is to have the best possible score on each hand. Sometimes, when the hand belongs to the opponents, you are going to get a negative score on the hand. In this case the smaller the negative score is, the better you do.

When you are the declaring side, you can only win points if you make or exceed your contract. Scoring is complicated, but briefly:

1. You get points for each trick over 6 that you win.
2. You get a game bonus if you bid and make a game. Game is:
 - In Notrump, bids of 3 or higher
 - In Spades or Hearts, bids of 4 or higher
 - In Clubs or diamonds, bids of 5 or higher.
3. Slam bonus for bidding and making a contract of 6 or 7
4. Declaring side gets bonus points for making a doubled contract

On defense you score points when you set declarer, or prevent declarer from taking the number of tricks that they contracted. You get points for each undertrick, so if the opponents bid 3NT but only take 7 tricks, you get points for 2 undertricks. So briefly:

1. Defense gets points for each undertrick
2. Defense gets extra points for setting a doubled contract

Opening Bids: To Bid or not to Bid that is the Question?

You are in the DEALER seat. You pick up your cards and sort them into suits. What now?

How Good a Hand was I dealt?

The first step in deciding if your hand is worth a bid or not is to evaluate how strong your hand is. To do this we start by counting high card points (HCP). We give a valuation to the honors that you hold:

Ace = 4 points

King = 3 points

Queen = 2 points

Jack = 1 point

Length in a suit is also an important factor in evaluating your hand. The longer a suit you have, the better it is as a trump suit, and even if it is not the trump suit, the suit can be established to take tricks. So you add one point for each card over 4 in a suit:

5 card suit = 1 point

6 card suit = 2 points

7 card suit = 3 points

Counting Practice

Count the high card points and length points in the following hands. The answers are on the next page. No peeking!!

1.

♠A T 8 3

♥6 2

♦A K 6 5

♣K Q 4

HCP _____ Length _____ Total points _____

2.

♠A Q 7 6 4

♥7 3 2

♦6 4

♣Q 3 2

HCP _____ Length _____ Total points _____

3.

♠5

♥8 7

♦K Q T 9 6 5 2

♣J 7 3

HCP _____ Length _____ Total points _____

1. This hand has 4 HCP in spades, 0 HCP in hearts, 7 HCP in diamonds and 5 HCP in clubs) and no length points. The total valuation of the hand is 16 points.
2. This hand has 6 HCP in spades, 0 HCP in hearts, 0 HCP in diamonds, and 2 HCP in clubs. It has one length point in spades. The total valuation of the hand is 9 points.
3. This hand has 0 HCP in spades, 0 HCP in hearts, 5 HCP in diamonds and 1 HCP in clubs. It has 3 length points in diamonds for a total valuation of 9 points.

Using hand evaluation

Hand evaluation is used during the bidding to reach the proper contract level. There are 10 HCP per suit, so 40 total HCP. There are 13 tricks, so it takes 3 points or the equivalent of a King on average to win a trick. An average hand is 10 HCP. Average is expected, so this is not an opening bid. In order to open the bidding you need 12 points or more (this includes length points). Opening bids are divided into ranges to help you describe your strength to partner:

Small Opening Bid = 12-14 points

Medium Opening Bid = 15-17 points

Large Opening Bid = 18-21 points

Note that the difference between small, medium and large is 1 king or 1 trick

Every call you make has a meaning, even when that call is pass! When you pass you are telling partner that none of the other bids you could make would describe your hand.

When all of the calls before you have been pass, and you have 12 points or more, you will make an opening bid. What opening bid do you make? There is a priority order for bidding. You will go down the priority order until you select an opening bid.

Bidding strategy

Your primary goal in bidding is to find an 8 card or longer major suit fit. If you don't have a major suit fit, you will try to decide if you have stoppers in all the suits to enable playing in a Notrump contract.

Your next goal is to decide how high to bid

- a. Part score
- b. Game for game bonus score
- c. Slam for slam bonus score

Finding a Major Suit Fit

The best tool for finding a major suit fit is that we only open a 5 card major. This lets partner know that they only need 3 cards in our suit to support us. The second tool is that when opener rebids any suit, they will have 6 cards in that suit.

The opening bid

First Priority Open 1♥ or 1♠

If you have between 12 and 21 points and a 5 card or longer spade suit, open 1♠

If you have between 12 and 21 points and a 5 card or longer heart suit, open 1♥

The quality of the suit does not matter, if you held ♠6 5 4 3 2 ♥A K T ♦K 8 ♣Q 5 3 you would open 1♠.

Here are some examples of a 1♥ opening bid.

♠ 9 8 3 ♥ A K Q 9 3 ♦ K 7 ♣ 9 7 6
♠ A 6 2 ♥ 9 8 7 5 3 ♦ A 4 ♣ A 6 5
♠ K 8 7 ♥ A K Q J 6 ♦ A Q ♣ 8 3 2
♠ 5 ♥ Q J 9 7 4 2 ♦ K Q 3 ♣ A Q 4

Second Priority Open 1NT or 2NT

If you have 15-17 HCP (a medium opener) and a balanced hand, you should open 1NT. What is a balanced hand? A balanced hand has 4-3-3-3, 4-4-3-2 or 5-3-3-2 distribution (with a 5 card minor).

Here are some examples of a 1NT opening bid:

♠ K Q 3 ♥ A K 8 ♦ K 7 ♣ Q 9 7 6 5
♠ A 6 2 ♥ 9 8 7 5 ♦ A K 2 ♣ A 6 5
♠ K 7 3 ♥ A K Q 6 ♦ A J 3 ♣ 8 3 2
♠ J T 8 3 ♥ Q J 9 ♦ K Q 3 ♣ A Q 4

If you have a 20-21 HCP hand (a large opener) and a balanced hand, open 2NT. A balanced hand has 4-3-3-3, 4-4-3-2 or 5-3-3-2 distribution.

Third Priority Open 1♣ or 1♦

Open 1♣ or 1♦ even if you only have 3 cards in the suit. Clubs and Diamonds are minor suits and so are at the bottom of the priority chain. You must open a hand with 12 or more points, so if your hand doesn't qualify to open a Notrump or major suit, you must open with a minor. You will open your longest minor. If your longest minor is 3 cards, you will still open it. If you are 3-3 in the minors, always open 1♣.

In order of Preference

- Open a 5+ card minor, with 5-5 in the minors open 1♦
- Open your 4 card minor, with 4-4 in the minors open 1♦
- 3-3 in minors you always open 1♣
- With 2-3 in the minors open the 3 card minor