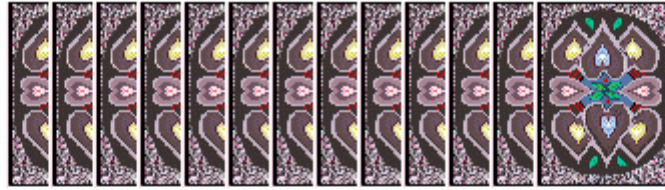
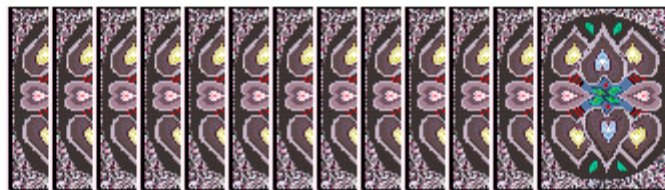


The MMMMajor Bridge Bidding System



North	East	South	West
			1♣
PASS	3♦	PASS	4♥
PASS	4♠	PASS	4NT
PASS	5♣	PASS	5♥
PASS	5♠	PASS	6♦
PASS	PASS	PASS	

6D by East
South to lead



A Bridge Bidding System designed for a computer, but also suitable for human consumption.

Nick Thompson

Version 2.0.0

www.mmmmajor.org

Introduction

I really like Bridge. Living for some years in a place where it was difficult to find “a fourth”, I taught my computer to play. It took a few years. The two difficulties were, and still are, card-play (particularly over-tricks) and the bidding. There are lots of different bidding systems. A (human) player would like to be able to select a Bidding System, and thereby impose their bidding system upon their partner (the computer). The computer doesn't care.

So, I needed bidding systems that the computer could play. In undertaking the thankless task of transcribing bidding systems into computer code, I was underwhelmed by the variety of flavours of systems, the number of Conventions adopted by systems, the opportunities for misinterpretation or clear dispute, the difficulty in finding the real kosher source of the bidding system, etc. I could create my own version (in python) of SAYC (for example), and then try to accommodate ten or so of the most common Conventions, but as new ones pop up and others lose popularity or hybridize, I could only see a giant mess growing in front of me. Furthermore, as errors will occur in this process, no-one would be justified in saying such code a true representation of the original system.

Another problem I quickly identified is the reliance on the human element when creating a bidding system. No system tells you what to open with a 13-card ♥ suit. This hand is uncommon, but it shows a real weakness in most systems. Usually, such hands are opened with the dreaded “psych” bid. Now, the computer needs to have a rule set for bidding which covers all contingencies. This example could be “hard-wired” into the bidding code, but what about a 12-card ♥ suit topped by the Ace, and two 2 of ♣, or an 11-card ♥ suit etc. All of these hands need to be catered for as Opening bids by a “computer-friendly” bidding system. But, I would also like these hands to be bid similarly when responding to a normal Opening bid.

Another problem revealed in this process is the complexity of most bidding systems. Perhaps, in the old days, a new System required a new book, and the fatter the better. Today, with the proliferation of Conventions, an article may suffice to fully explain the new idea – and blithely takes the bidding system as a known given. All of these systems (with or without Conventions) are difficult to learn. A beginner to the Game could easily be put off Bridge by the steep learning curve associated with their bidding system. True enjoyment of the game may be weighed down by the concern – did I bid that hand right?

While I was transcribing SAYC (Standard American Yellow Card – a popular system), I cobbled around creating my own bidding system – first named Neanderthal (because of its heavy-handed nature) then morphed to Denisovan. These systems took on existing Conventions (Blackwood, Gerber, Baby Blackwood, Stayman-sort-of etc.) and filled in some oubliettes, holes etc. that I think I unearthed.

If I were now asked to document the Denisovan Bidding System, I could do no better than point you to the code-in-operation which you could test by example, rudimentary bidding hints, and some sketchy notes. When I tried to write the documentation, I could see a really fat tome, likely to remain unread.

So, I set myself another, and much more enjoyable, task. Create a new Bidding System which someone could learn in a couple of hours. Better still, write first the documentation and then the code, so people could try it out. The program I've written allows me to play, say, 100 hands using one Bidding System, and then replay the same hands with another Bidding System. So, people would be able to compare and contrast differences.

The purpose of any Bidding System is communication between team partners. This communication is an attempt to find the best Trump suit and the best level at which to play that suit. The game of Bridge is biased towards the Major suits. This bias must be acknowledged and exploited. Many systems favour a 4-card Major Opening, others a 5-card Major. Some systems encourage bidding Majors over equal-length Minors. These are all excellent initiatives, but, in my view they are not enough.

Introduction (continued)

My next gripe is two-fold. With most systems, Partner can PASS the Opening Bid. I'd much rather Partner bid and I was free to make a fool of myself. No, not quite, but innumerable times with 20 HCPs and a 5-card Major, Partner drops down a 3-card support, a useful doubleton and the much-needed Ace ... ho-hum. The occasional use of a Demand Opening Bid (say, 2♣ in SAYC) barely justifies a whole bid being dedicated to this function, and the convolutions and conventions I need to remember bear insufficient fruit.

My last complaint is weak two-bids – less than an Opening hand but a 6+-card suit. With a 6+-card Major, I've often found that I'm limiting my chances of finding the optimal contract more than preempting the opposition. With a 6+-card Minor, I've found the preemptive bid works better. This complaint is only mentioned as I was forced to rethink them. Enough complaining.

Suit agreement is one of the goals of bidding. Traditionally (in Majors), an 8-card holding (4-4, 5-3, 6-2 etc.) is considered to constitute suit agreement. However, as solid as a 4-4 holding looks, you'll find you make more tricks as the holdings become uneven. Argument will ensue as to whether the 8-card holding is sufficient in Minors, and some systems require a 9-card Minor holding, given the completely unreasonable necessity to make an extra trick in Game.

But my starting point for this new bidding system will be focused on those hands which are usually undocumented, which come along every blue moon, and which are often left to a guess (the dreaded psych bid). Only after I have adequately addressed this problem will I know what bids are left to play with.

So, I argue that a player with a 7-card Major or an 8-card Minor is not bidding to find Trumps – they have them, they just want to know how high! Not all hands with such suits are the same. The suit may be long but incredibly weak. You may have no other off-suit winners.

The one thing you can always do with a hands is approximately “count your winners”. You might have a 7-card suit topped by the AKQ, and a doubleton AK. Smells like 8+ playing tricks. A slightly weaker 7-card suit and different off-suit may yield a greater or lesser number of playing tricks. This is “rough and ready” in its evaluation of Trumps (do you assume worst splits etc.), but very strict in off-suit (Ace=1; KQ=1; KQJ=2; AK=2 etc.).

Just to further limit hands which qualify for this type of bid, a really weak long suit can still yield 9 playing tricks, but Opener may be missing the AKQ in their long suit. In Minors, this would rule out both Slam and Game. So, the last caveat: the long suit must be topped by at least a Queen.

These type of hands feel like we should be playing in Game or Slam. That's our goal, but we'd like to be able to bail out sooner rather than later. So, now, with all this, I have 9 tricks (well, 8+). That's a 3-call in my Trump suit – cold. But wait, Partner may want to help, so we'll end up above the 3-level.

My solution comes in adopting a new approach – introducing three (3) non-specific Shape Opening bids (specifically 1♣, 1♦ and 1♥), one (1) non-specific Weak Major (1♠), and supporting Sustain Opening hands with both Sustain Opening Bids (2♣, 2♦, 2♥ or 2♠) and Sustain Initiation Responses (2♥, 2♠, 3♣ or 3♦), using almost the same bids and the same rules for both players with these hands. This solution means all Opening bids are forcing – Partner must bid!

Note that 1NT, 2NT and 3NT etc. are not used as Opening bids (yet, when you think of a reason)

Prepare yourselves for a shock. **Your Bridge Partner will never PASS again!**

Nick Thompson
December 28th, 2020

Quick Introduction to Opening Bids

Excluding PASS, there are just three (3) types of Opening Bids:

1. Sustain Opening (2♣, 2♦, 2♥ or 2♠)
2. Shape Opening (1♣, 1♦ or 1♥)
3. Weak Majors Opening (1♠)

Opening bids of 2♣, 2♦, 2♥ or 2♠ (Sustain Opening) shows a hand with a 7+-card Major headed by at least the Queen, or an 8+-card Minor again headed by at least the Queen, and nine (9) playing tricks.

An Opening bid of 1♣ (Shape Opening) shows 13+ HCPs and no 4+-card Major.

An Opening bid of 1♦ (Shape Opening) shows 13+ HCPs and one (1) and only one (1) 4+-card Major suit.

An Opening bid of 1♥ (Shape Opening) shows 13+ HCPs and guarantees both (2) 4+-card Major suits.

Opening bids of 1♣, 1♦ and 1♥ are non-specific. 1♣ can be bid with any hand which doesn't have a 4+-card Major suit, 1♦ guarantees one (1) 4+-card Major suit and has nothing to do with the ♦ suit, while 1♥ does correspond in part with Opener's holding, albeit that Opener has both Majors.

An Opening bid of 1♠ (Weak Majors) shows 10-12 HCPs and a 6+-card Major suit. An Opening bid of 1♠ is also non-specific, in that Opener does have a 6+-card Major suit, albeit in the ♥ suit or ♠ suit.

In a nutshell, the only valid Opening bids are:

- 2♣, 2♦, 2♥, 2♠ - Sustain Opening Bids (hardly ever used) – all showing a 7+-card Major (or 8+-card Minor) with at least the Queen and nine (9) playing tricks, requiring Partner to show their holding in Opener's suit etc.
- 1♣ - Shape Opening Bid – showing 13+ HCPs whilst also denying a 4+-card Major and is non-specific as to suit, requiring Partner to show their HCP range etc.
- 1♦, 1♥ - Shape Opening Bids - both showing 13+ HCPs, non-specific as to suit, indicating information about Majors, requiring Partner to show their HCP range etc.
- 1♠ - Weak Major Opening Bid - showing 10-12 HCPs and an unspecified 6+-card Major (saying nothing about the ♠ suit), requiring Partner to show their HCP range. Opener will then show their 6+-card Major suit at the 2-level (2♥ or 2♠) etc.

All Opening bids are forcing – Partner must bid.

As Sustain Opening hands may also meet the criteria for all other types of Opening bids, hands should be analyzed first to see if they qualify to make a Sustain Opening bid. The criteria for the two (2) other types, Shape Opening and Weak Majors, are mutually exclusive.

Who is captaining the ship?

If the Opening bid is a Sustain Opening bid (2♣, 2♦, 2♥ or 2♠) – that's easy – the Opener is captain.

If the Opening bid is a Weak Major Opening bid (1♠), the captancy has devolved to Partner as Opener has limited their HCPs.

Regardless of the Opening bid, if Partner responds with a Sustain Initiation Response (2♥, 2♠, 3♣ or 3♦), they assume captancy as if they'd opened the bidding.

If the Opening Bid is a Shape Opening Bid (1♣, 1♦, 1♥) and Partner doesn't respond with a Strong Response (13+ HCPs), the captancy falls to the Opener as Partner has limited their hand. Otherwise, Captancy is assumed when any Convention is initiated, or devolved by a Limit reply.

Ace Ask and other Bidding Conventions

Most bridge bidding systems employ Ace Ask Conventions. No doubt, all bridge players are familiar with both the Blackwood and the Gerber convention. Conventions very similar to these are employed in this system. Both these conventions employ a “ladder principle” to show the number of Aces. The only real distinction between these two conventions is their starting bid – Blackwood is initiated by bidding 4NT, while Gerber uses 4♣. Baby Blackwood is another example – which starts with a lower starting bid.

Stayman, Texas Transfers, Jacoby Transfers, Jacoby 2 No Trumps, Michael’s, Roman Key etc. have not been considered necessary or appropriate – so you can forget all them. By not adopting these conventions, I’ve at least guaranteed that the documentation will be in one place. Like all Bridge Systems, this one is thought perfect by its author and no further conventions need be entertained. Unlike other Bridge Bidding Systems, this system has space for new Opening conventions as 1NT, 2NT or 3NT are not used as Opening bids. But that is something for the future ...

In a nutshell, the following Conventions are used:

- Sustain Opening Bids and all following Responses and Replies (refer Sustain Opening Bids)
- Ace Ask Convention – used to discover how many of the four (4) Aces Partner has
- Short Ace Ask Convention – used to discover how many of the other three (3) Aces Partner has
- King Ask Convention – used to discover how many of the four (4) Kings Partner has
- Ace/King Ask Convention – used to discover how many Ace and Kings Partner has

Ace Ask Convention

In this system, depending on the Opening bid, a range of starting bids are employed. For example, after an Opening bid of 1♣ (13+ HCPs, no 4+-card Major), a reply bid as low as 2♠ by Opener could, in some circumstances, be used to initiate the Ace Ask convention. Where no lower bid is available, the starting bid would be 4♣ or 4NT. Both Blackwood and Gerber use a “ladder principle”, where the next available bid shows either zero (0) or four (4) Aces. This helps save space and can easily be interpreted by the initiator of the Ace Ask convention. This approach is also adopted in this system over Opening bids of 1♣, 1♦ or 1♥ (where Opener has 13+ HCPs), and Partner shows 13+ HCPs. Regardless of where the Ace Ask Convention begins, Partner’s replies are:

Partner’s Reply	Meaning
Next Bid	Zero (0) or four (4) Aces
Next Bid + 1	One (1) Ace
Next Bid + 2	Two (2) Aces
Next Bid + 3	Three (4) Aces

Ace Ask and other Bidding Conventions (continued)

Short Ace Ask Convention

In the case where Opener shows 10-12 HCPs (by opening 1♠), Opener at best can have three (3) Aces. To accommodate this circumstance, the Short Ace Ask convention has been created. After these bids, it can only be invoked by non-Opener, and only when they have at least one (1) Ace themselves.

In the case where Opener shows 13+ HCPs (be it by opening 1♣, 1♦ or 1♥), and Partner responds with a limit bid showing 7-12 HCP, the Short Ace Ask convention can only be invoked by Opener, and only when they have at least one (1) Ace themselves.

Regardless of where the Short Ace Ask Convention begins, Partner's replies are:

Partner's Reply	Meaning
Next Bid	Zero (0) Aces
Next Bid + 1	One (1) Ace
Next Bid + 2	Two (2) Aces
Next Bid + 3	Three (3) Aces

If you are in doubt, remember – if Partner has limited their hand, go Short.

King Ask Convention

Only employed after the Ace Ask or Short Ace Ask Conventions, this is initiated after the Ace Asked reply suggests Slam is possible. It is usually initiated with the next available bid, taking some care to “skip” Trumps if needs be. To this Partner's replies are:

Partner's Reply	Meaning
Next Bid	Zero (0) or four (4) Kings
Next Bid + 1	One (1) King
Next Bid + 2	Two (2) Kings
Next Bid + 3	Three (4) Kings

Now, the Ace Ask Player can decide the eventual contract.

Ace Ask and other Bidding Conventions (continued)

Ace/King Ask Convention

This convention is only used by the Opener after a Shape Opening bid (1♣, 1♦ or 1♥) to which Partner has responded with a Bust Response. A Bust Response means 0-9 HCPs.

When Opener bids 1♣, 1♦ or 1♥, even when Partner has shown a Bust Response (0-9 HCPs), Opener (with 16+ HCPs) may still want to bid on to Game or perhaps Slam. Partner, with a maximum of 9 HCPs, can only have a limited number of the top Honours – three Kings (9 HCPs), two Aces (8 HCPs), an Ace and King (7 HCPs), two Kings (6 HCPs), an Ace (4 HCPs) or one King (3 HCPs).

The following table shows Opener, with 3+ Unexpressed HCPs, initiating the Ace/King Ask Convention after Partner's Bust Response to the three (3) Shape Opening Bids.

Opening Bid	Partner's Response	Opener's Reply
1♣	1♦	1♥
1♦	1♥	1NT
1♥	1♠	1NT

Just as the Bust Response in all cases is the next available bid, Opener's Ace/King Ask convention is also initiated by the next available bid (all of this in the interest of saving bidding space). However, in the case of an Opening bid of 1♦ (showing 13+ HCPs and one (1) 4+-card Major), and a Bust Response of 1♥, Opener has to skip 1♠ and bid 1NT, as 1♠ is reserved for sign-off and shows 13-15 HCPs and a 4+-card Major.

Partner then bids:

Partner's Reply	Meaning
Next Bid	Neither Ace nor King
Next Bid + 1	One (1) King
Next Bid + 2	One (1) Ace
Next Bid + 3	Two (2) Kings
Next Bid + 4	One (1) Ace and one (1) King
Next Bid + 5	Two (2) Aces
Next Bid + 6	Three (3) Kings

Ace Ask and other Bidding Conventions (continued)

Ace/King Ask Convention (continued)

Armed with this information, Opener then bids their final bid. If after an Opening Bid of 1♦ or 1♥, Opener bids any other bid than 2NT, Partner with their very weak hand must PASS. 2NT by Opener is an invitation to 3NT. Partner's acceptance depends on the number of unaccounted-for HCPs in their hand. Partner had previously shown the Ace/King holding in their weak hand (0-9 HCPs). Partner does the subtraction, and if the remaining HCPs is greater than 1, Partner takes up invitation and puts Opener in 3NT. Otherwise, Partner must PASS.

Opener should note that if Partner has shown two (2) Kings with their reply to the Ace/King Ask Convention, they have described their hand exactly – no more HCPs can be expected. Opener can still (and probably would) bid 2NT, but its invitational function has been nullified.

Examples used throughout this booklet

Examples provide a clearer way to explain the bidding system. To simplify the examples and to save space, you are always West and Dealer (Opening Bidder) and your hand is shown on the left-hand side of the page. Your Partner (East) is shown on the right-hand side of the page. The hands are separated by the actual bidding. Each deal is then followed by a detailed explanation of the bidding.

Opening Bids

The following Table shows all valid Opening Bids and their meanings.

Opening Bid	Type	Exact Meaning
1♣	Shape	13+ HCPs and No 4+-card Major suit
1♦	Shape	13+ HCPs; One (1) 4+-card Major suit (either ♥ or ♠)
1♥	Shape	13+ HCPs; Both (2) 4+card Major suits
1♠	Weak Major	10-12 HCPs; 6+-card Major suit (either ♥ or ♠)
2♣	Sustain	8+-card ♣ suit topped by at least the Queen and nine (9) Playing Tricks
2♦	Sustain	8+-card ♦ suit topped by at least the Queen and nine (9) Playing Tricks
2♥	Sustain	7+-card ♥ suit topped by at least the Queen and nine (9) Playing Tricks
2♠	Sustain	7+-card ♠ suit topped by at least the Queen and nine (9) Playing Tricks
PASS	Normal	None of the above

Excluding PASS, there are eight (8) valid Opening Bids. There are just three (3) types of Opening Bids – Sustain, Shape and Weak Majors. They are applied in this order to the hand to determine the correct bid. What I mean is – a hand which may qualify as a Shape Opening having 13+ HCPs could well also meet all the criteria for a Sustain Opening Bid, and you'll see it's much better to bid the hand as a Sustain Opening hand. To stretch the point to the ridiculous, a strongest hand imaginable, one with 13 of a suit, has only 10 HCPs, and depending on the held suit (either Major), would qualify as a Weak Major (1♠). The lesson to take away is ... If you can open the hand as a Sustain Opening hand, do so. The other types are mutually-exclusive so raise no further concerns.

The computer didn't open certain hands well. These hands had a long suit and looked like they can win 9+ playing tricks. They could have lots of HCPs or very few, but in any case, they deserved special attention.

These hands are not common, but the chances of Opener having one are the same as Partner having one. If Partner is indeed the owner of the weird, unbalanced hand, and what if Opener (being Dealer) doesn't bid PASS.

Opposite an Opening bid of 1♣, 1♦, 1♥ or 1♠, a hand which would have otherwise been opened by a Sustain Opening bid (2♣, 2♦, 2♥ or 2♠) can still be shown by the Responder by almost the same bidding (albeit the Minors start at the 3-level (i.e. 3♣ or 3♦)). Indeed, there is a small discount given to Responder in the number of playing tricks their hand requires, so some long-suited hands which don't quite qualify as Sustain Opening hands sneak in.

All non-specific Opening Bids (Shape Bids of 1♣, 1♦, 1♥ and Weak Major 1♠) have very limited set of Responses, designed to both use as little bidding space as possible, whilst maintaining the clear distinction between such Responses and those invoked by the very infrequent but legitimate use of the Sustain Initiation Response.

Opening Bids (continued)

As an example of limitation in Responses, over Opening Bids of 1♣, 1♦, 1♥ or 1♠, there are just nine (9) or ten (10) valid responses. When one discounts the responses used for Sustain Initiation Responses ('cos they'll hardly ever happen), there are just six (6) valid responses over 1♣, four (4) valid responses each over 1♦ and 1♥, and just three (3) valid responses over 1♠.

As an example of bidding space used, over an Opening Bid of 1♦, the only valid Responses are 1♥, 1NT, 2♣ and 2♦, while over an Opening Bid of 1♥, the only valid Responses are 1♠, 1NT, 2♣ and 2♦.

As an example of the clear distinction between normal Responses and a Sustain Initiation Response, over an Opening Bid of 1♦, the normal responses (1♥, 1NT, 2♣ or 2♦) allow a Sustain Initiation Response to be shown by 2♥, 2♠, 3♣ or 3♦. In fact, over all Opening bids, this is the case.

The design of this system is bound to throw the wrong player into the contract. As my partner didn't mind being Dummy, I hear few complaints. There is reason not to expose the more powerful hand, but it often comes at too great a cost. However, there are a few concessions made to the desire to save bidding space in an attempt to avoid the "wrong player" syndrome which should be noted. Over an Opening Bid of 1♦ (13+ HCPs and one (1) 4+-card Major suit), the only valid Responses are 1♥, 1NT, 2♣ or 2♦ - 1♠ is not used. This means that, assuming Partner has 7+ HCPs, regardless of Opener's Major suit, Opener will be first to bid that suit.

Over an Opening Bid of 1♥ (13+ HCPs and two (2) 4+-card Major suits) the only valid Responses are 1♠, 1NT, 2♣ or 2♦. No space is wasted. Furthermore, this means that, assuming Partner has 7+ HCPs, regardless of Opener's Major suit, Opener will again be first to bid that suit.

Some immediate implications of this system on Suit Agreement are:

- If Opener bids 1♣ (13+ HCPs, no 4+-card Major) and Partner bids 1♠ (13+ HCPs; 5+-card Major) and Opener replies either 1NT, 2♣, 2♦ or 2♥, a bid of 2♥ or 3♥ and 2♠ by Partner guarantees a 5-card suit or better.
- If Opener bids 1♣ (13+ HCPs, no 4+-card Major) and Partner bids 1♥ (7-12 HCPs; 5+-card Major) and Opener replies either 1♠, 1NT, 2♣ or 2♦, a bid of 2♥ and 2♠ by Partner guarantees a 5-card suit or better.
- If Opener bids 1♣ (13+ HCPs, no 4+-card Major) and later bids a Major (seemingly ridiculous), this bid shows both Suit Agreement in Partner's suit and initiates an Ace Ask Convention.

As there are just three (3) types of Opening Bids – Sustain, Shape and Weak Majors (1♠). However, within the Shape Opening bids, there are three (3) distinct sub-types:

- 1♣ - 13+ HCPs – No Majors;
- 1♦ - 13+ HCPs – One (1) Major suit; and
- 1♥ - 13+ HCPs – Both (2) Major suits.

It's best that they are all dealt with in turn and in order. I'll try to explain each in broad strokes then fall back on examples to clarify the small details (where lives the Devil).

We will start with Sustain Opening Bids, as the system is literally built around them.

Sustain Opening Bids (2♣, 2♦, 2♥ or 2♠)

The hands which can be opened with a Sustain Opening Bid are very unusual, but need to be considered. In all honesty, the entire bidding system has been designed around them. The discussion will continue as if you considering an Opening bid, but you may be in the Responder's seat and Partner has opened (any valid Opening bid other than their very own Sustain Opening Bid), well, the same bids and same rules apply. This hand is so rare that it doesn't matter who gets it or in what position, its treatment deserves to be the same.

Opener bids their long suit at the 2-level in all cases (i.e. 2♣, 2♦, 2♥ or 2♠). This suit is going to be Trumps (unless the Opener chooses to try 7NT).

Opener may indeed have Game or better "on their own", but Partner (i.e. non-Opener) may be able to help. Partner will clarify the team's holding in Opener's suit using the rules outlined for Partner's First Response. Opener then initiates the Sustain Honour Convention by (usually) bidding the next available bid. Partner shows off-suit Honours (usually Aces) by bidding (again, usually) their suit.

Subsequent bidding will continue until:

- Partner bids Opener's long suit and Opener bids PASS; or
- Opener rebids their original long suit, which Partner must PASS

All subsequent bidding is guided by the application of the Sustain Honour Convention.

Opener's Requirements

- A long suit (7+-card Major or 8+-card Minor) headed by at least the Queen
- 9+ Playing Tricks

Note that the long suit must contain (i.e. be headed by) either the Ace, King or Queen of that suit. This is essential as Partner's First Response presumes this minimum Trump suit Honour holding.

Partner's First Response

Partner is going to show as much information as is reasonably possible about the Opener's suit, using the bids like a ladder:

- Next Bid shows a Void in Opener's suit
- Next Bid+1 shows zero (0) of Ace-King-Queen in Opener's suit (but no void at least)
- Next Bid+2 shows the Queen in Opener's suit
- Next Bid+3 shows the King in Opener's suit
- Next Bid+4 shows the Ace in Opener's suit
- Next Bid+5 shows two (2) of Ace-King-Queen in Opener's suit (Opener will know which ones!)

The four (4) Sustain Opening Bids and all possible Responses for each are shown in the following table.

Opening Bid	Void	No AKQ	Queen	King	Ace	2 of AKQ
2♣	2♦	2♥	2♠	2NT	3♣	3♦
2♦	2♥	2♠	2NT	3♣	3♦	3♥
2♥	2♠	2NT	3♣	3♦	3♥	3♠
2♠	2NT	3♣	3♦	3♥	3♠	3NT

After **Partner's First Response**, Opener initiates the **Sustain Honour Convention**, which Partner cannot PASS. After Partner's reply to this Convention, Opener may choose to bid on, again using the **Sustain Honour Convention** up to three (3) times in total.

In reality, with a Sustain Opening hand, as a minimum, Opener is going to bid three times, and Partner is going to bid twice, and as a maximum, Opener is going to bid five times and Partner just four times.

Sustain Opening Bids (2♣, 2♦, 2♥ or 2♠) (continued)

Sustain Honour Convention

The first two bids (**Sustain Opening Bid** and **Partner's First Response**) provide information about Trumps. However, there are three (3) off-suits to be considered. This convention is designed to identify which Aces (if any) are held by the non-Opener, or identify an Ace-King holding, or indeed identify an Ace-King-Queen holding in special circumstances. Opener initiates the Convention by bidding the next available bid.

Subsequent use of this Convention is invoked by the use of the next available bid, or where that coincides with Trumps, the next available bid plus one. This may be best shown by example (refer Examples 1 and 4)

Partner's Reply

Partner cannot PASS. Partner shows an off-suit Ace by bidding its suit. Where Partner has more than one (1) Ace, they will bid to show their "highest" Ace first. In any case where Opener starts the Convention with a bid other than NT, and Partner's only Ace (or "highest" Ace where they have more than one) is in that suit, Partner bids the cheapest NT to show the Ace. In the case where Partner doesn't have an Ace, Partner seeks a safe harbour and bids Opener's original suit at the cheapest available level.

Opener's Third Bid and all subsequent bidding

If Partner has bid Opener's suit (showing no off-suit Ace), Opener can now PASS or bid Game or Slam (which Partner must PASS). However, if Partner shows an Ace, Opener can choose to indulge in this process twice more (yes, three times in all). Care needs to be taken on the choice of bid to re-initiate the convention if the next available bid is the Trump suit, Opener will need to skip a bid (refer Examples 1 and 4). Partner could conceivably have three (3) off-suit Aces. Where Partner has just the one Ace (which they've already shown), they can show the King of their initial suit by rebidding it. If they do so, and Opener persists in using the Convention again, they can show the Queen of their initial suit by rebidding it. Otherwise, and at each opportunity, a rebid of Opener's suit is a sign-off by Partner – which may of course be improved by Opener (see Sustain Example 5).

When Partner's first suit (their Ace) is Opener's void, Opener may be able to enter if Partner has shown a Trump AKQ in their First Response. Otherwise, this trick may not be available ... Dummy may not have any other entry.

When Opener can afford to soldier on after Partner has shown an Ace in their Void and no Trump entry, they effectively skip an extra bid, so that if Partner has no other Ace but does have the King in their previously-indicated suit, they will not show it, but rather run off to Trumps. (Refer Sustain Examples 6a and 6b)

It's worthwhile also mentioning that the Sustain Bidder (either by bidding a Sustain Opening or Sustain Response) should always be re-counting their tricks when Partner shows up with an Ace. Additionally, when Partner shows their Aces, they sometimes will show more. Assuming the Sustain Trump suit is ♥, if you ask for an Ace using 3♣, and Partner responds with 3♠, they have the ♠ Ace, but they've also shown that they do not have the ♦ Ace, whereas if they reply with 3NT, they have the ♣ Ace, but neither ♦ Ace nor ♠ Ace.

Sustain Opening Bids (2♣, 2♦, 2♥ or 2♠) (continued)

Sustain Opening hands held by Responder (non-Opener)

One noticeable feature about the design of this system in its treatment of Sustain Opening hands – it doesn't matter if the Dealer or their Partner has this hand – the bidding will be substantially similar (in most cases, with the exception of the first bid, exactly the same in Majors, while just slightly different in Minors).

Sustain Initiation Response

If Partner opens any of the more normal Opening bids in this system (1♣, 1♦, 1♥, 1♠), and you find yourself with a hand which would have qualified as a Sustain Opening Bid (or where the requirement for 9 playing tricks is discounted by 2.5 tricks over over 1♣, 1♦ or 1♥ (all which of which show 13+ HCPs), or just 1.5 tricks over 1♠ (which shows 10-12 HCPs)), the rules above can be applied equally to your first response.

The caveats are:

- When Partner opens 1♦ or 1♥, and you have a Sustain Hand (probably in Minors), and after the next two bids discussing Trumps, at the first opportunity, Partner shows no Aces by slipping into the Trump Suit, you may add a trick (see Example 1♥ No. 11) where you weren't required to use the temporary discount to make your Sustain bid.

Sustain Opening Bids as Overcalls

These bids are normally unaffected by an Opposition Opening bid and just overcalled as normal. Two exceptions however must be made. If the Opening bid is 2♥, (indicative of 10-12 HCPs and a 6+-card ♥ suit) and your 7-card ♥ suit is the basis of your calculations, best not indulge ... better DOUBLE for penalty. If however, with ten (10) playing tricks, you are justified in just bidding 4♥ (and thus avoiding all the Sustain back-and-forth).

Sustain Opening Bids (2♣, 2♦, 2♥ or 2♠) - Examples (continued)



Example 1a (Aces in Order)

	<table border="0"> <tr> <td></td> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> <td>West</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>2♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>PASS</td> <td>3♦</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>3♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>PASS</td> <td>3♠</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>4♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>PASS</td> <td>4♥</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>4♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>PASS</td> <td>5♣</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>7♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> </tr> </table>		North	East	South	West					2♦		PASS	3♦	PASS	3♥		PASS	3♠	PASS	4♣		PASS	4♥	PASS	4♠		PASS	5♣	PASS	7♦		PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS	
	North	East	South	West																																	
				2♦																																	
	PASS	3♦	PASS	3♥																																	
	PASS	3♠	PASS	4♣																																	
	PASS	4♥	PASS	4♠																																	
	PASS	5♣	PASS	7♦																																	
	PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS																																	

West	East	Bid Explanation
2♦		A 10-card ♦ suit topped by the KQJT9 (9 playing tricks)
	3♦	Ace in ♦ suit
3♥		Initiates Sustain Honour Convention with next available bid
	3♠	Showing the ♠ Ace
4♣		Again, and committing to a higher contract, the Sustain Honour Convention (skipping 3NT to discourage Partner showing the ♠ King)
	4♥	Showing the ♥ Ace
4♠		Again, and committing to Slam, the Sustain Honour Convention
	5♣	Showing the ♣ Ace
7♦		All 4 Aces but no guaranteed entry (Partner may only have the singleton Trump Ace)
	PASS	Pass any bid of original Sustain suit

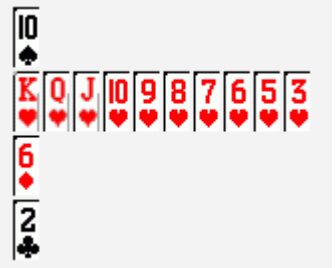
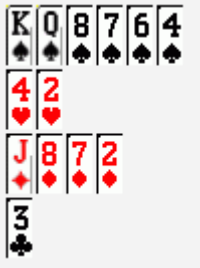
Sustain Opening Bids (2♣, 2♦, 2♥ or 2♠) - Examples (continued)

Example 2

	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> <td>West</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>2♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>3♥</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>3♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>3NT</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>4♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>4♠</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>4NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>5♠</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>7♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	North	East	South	West				2♥	PASS	3♥	PASS	3♠	PASS	3NT	PASS	4♣	PASS	4♠	PASS	4NT	PASS	5♠	PASS	7♥	PASS				
North	East	South	West																											
			2♥																											
PASS	3♥	PASS	3♠																											
PASS	3NT	PASS	4♣																											
PASS	4♠	PASS	4NT																											
PASS	5♠	PASS	7♥																											
PASS																														

West	East	Bid Explanation
2♥		A 10-card ♥ suit topped by the KQJ (9 playing tricks)
	3♥	Showing ♥ Ace
3♠		Initiates Sustain Honour Convention with next available bid
	3NT	Showing the ♠ Ace (given Opener used 3♠ to initiate Honour Convention)
4♣		Committing to Game or more, the Sustain Honour Convention (next available bid)
	4♠	Showing the ♠ King (and no other off-suit Ace)
5♣		Again, and committing to Slam, the Sustain Honour Convention (next available bid)
	5♠	Showing the ♠ Queen
7♥		Opener just counts up the tricks (10 in ♥ and 3 in ♠)
	PASS	Partner must PASS when Opener rebids their original ♥ suit



Example 3

	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> <td>West</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>2♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>2NT</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>3♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>3♥</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	North	East	South	West				2♥	PASS	2NT	PASS	3♣	PASS	3♥	PASS	PASS	PASS				
North	East	South	West																			
			2♥																			
PASS	2NT	PASS	3♣																			
PASS	3♥	PASS	PASS																			
PASS																						

West	East	Bid Explanation
2♥		A 10-card ♥ suit topped by the KQJ (9 playing tricks)
	2NT	No AKQ in ♥ suit
3♣		Initiates Sustain Honour Convention with next available bid
	3♥	No off-suit Aces (back to ♥ Trumps)
PASS		Just the 9 tricks then ... you make 10 if they don't continually switch lead, but ..


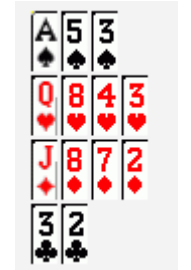
Sustain Opening Bids (2♣, 2♦, 2♥ or 2♠) - Examples (continued)

Example 4

	<p>North East South West</p> <p> 2♣</p> <p>PASS 2♥ PASS 2♠</p> <p>PASS 3♦ PASS 5♣</p> <p>PASS PASS PASS</p>	
---	--	---

West	East	Bid Explanation
2♣		An 8-card ♣ suit topped by the AKQJ (8 playing tricks) plus 1 off-suit Ace
	2♥	Showing no AKQ in ♣ (but at least no void)
2♠		Initiates Sustain Honour Convention with next available bid
	3♦	Showing the ♦ Ace
5♣		Partner cannot have the ♥ Ace so Game seems the go
	PASS	Partner must PASS when Opener rebids their original ♣ suit

Example 5

	<p>North East South West</p> <p> 2♠</p> <p>PASS 3♠ PASS 3NT</p> <p>PASS 4♠ PASS 6♠</p> <p>PASS PASS PASS</p>	
---	---	---

West	East	Bid Explanation
2♠		A 8-card ♠ suit topped by the KQJ (7 playing tricks) and 4 off-suit tricks (11 in total)
	3♠	Showing ♠ Ace
3NT		Initiates Sustain Honour Convention with next available bid
	4♠	No off-suit Aces
6♠		Just the 12 tricks then
	PASS	Partner must PASS when Opener rebids their original ♠ suit

Sustain Opening Bids (2♣, 2♦, 2♥ or 2♠) - Examples (continued)

Example 6a

	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> <td>West</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>2♥</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>2NT</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>3♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>3♦</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>3NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>4♥</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	North	East	South	West			2♥		PASS	2NT	PASS	3♣	PASS	3♦	PASS	3NT	PASS	4♥	PASS	PASS	PASS				
North	East	South	West																							
		2♥																								
PASS	2NT	PASS	3♣																							
PASS	3♦	PASS	3NT																							
PASS	4♥	PASS	PASS																							
PASS																										

West	East	Bid Explanation
2♥		A 8-card ♥ suit topped by the AKQJ (8 playing tricks) and 1 off-suit tricks (9 in total)
	2NT	No AKQ in ♥
3♣		Initiates Sustain Honour Convention with next available bid
	3♦	Showing the ♦ Ace (denying the Ace in ♠)
3NT		Again, the Sustain Honour Convention (notice the extra skip – 3♥ skipped because they're Trumps, 3♣ skipped to tell Partner not to tell me about another ♦ stopper). In reality, nothing more can be expected from Partner.
	4♥	Cannot bid ♦ King (discouraged Partner's extra jump) so Trumps
PASS		Satisfied

Sustain Opening Bids (2♣, 2♦, 2♥ or 2♠) - Examples (continued)

Example 6b

	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> <td>West</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>2♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>2NT</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>3♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>3♠</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>3NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>4♦</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>4♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>5♦</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>6♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	North	East	South	West				2♥	PASS	2NT	PASS	3♣	PASS	3♠	PASS	3NT	PASS	4♦	PASS	4♠	PASS	5♦	PASS	6♥	PASS	PASS	PASS		
North	East	South	West																											
			2♥																											
PASS	2NT	PASS	3♣																											
PASS	3♠	PASS	3NT																											
PASS	4♦	PASS	4♠																											
PASS	5♦	PASS	6♥																											
PASS	PASS	PASS																												

West	East	Bid Explanation
2♥		A 8-card ♥ suit topped by the AKQJ (8 playing tricks) and 1 off-suit tricks (9 in total)
	2NT	No AKQ in ♥ (but not void)
3♣		Initiates Sustain Honour Convention with next available bid
	3♠	Showing the ♠ Ace
3NT		Again, the Sustain Honour Convention with next available bid
	4♦	Showing the ♦ Ace
4♠		Again, the Sustain Honour Convention (next available bid after skipping the ♥ suit). Opener has now worked out that Partner has two (2) Aces, so the entry in ♠ allows Opener to now justifiably count Partner's ♦ Ace as a trick (Playing Trick count now 11)
	5♦	Showing the ♦ King
6♥		12 Playing Tricks now so Slam
	PASS	It's your party

Sustain Opening Bids (2♣, 2♦, 2♥ or 2♠) - Examples (continued)

Example 7 (Sustain Initiation Response)

Note: This example employs the concepts of Sustain Openings, but as Responder.

	<table border="0"> <tr> <td></td> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> <td>West</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♥</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>2NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>PASS</td> <td>3♣</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>3♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>PASS</td> <td>3♠</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>4♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>PASS</td> <td>4♥</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>PASS</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		North	East	South	West					1♦		PASS	2♥	PASS	2NT		PASS	3♣	PASS	3♦		PASS	3♠	PASS	4♣		PASS	4♥	PASS	PASS		PASS				
	North	East	South	West																																	
				1♦																																	
	PASS	2♥	PASS	2NT																																	
	PASS	3♣	PASS	3♦																																	
	PASS	3♠	PASS	4♣																																	
	PASS	4♥	PASS	PASS																																	
	PASS																																				

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♦		13+ HCPs; One (1) 4+-card Major (described later)
	2♥	A 7-card ♥ suit topped by the AKQJ and just 7 playing tricks in total but with the temporary discount of 2.5 playing tricks, enough to qualify as a Sustain Initiation Response
2NT		No AKQ in ♥ suit
	3♣	Initiates Sustain Honour Convention with next available bid
3♦		Showing the ♦ Ace
	3♠	Again, the Sustain Honour Convention (as next available bid (3♥) coincides with ♥ suit, skip to 3♠)
4♣		Showing the ♣ Ace
	4♥	Sustain Player bids Trumps (♥) ... 9 Playing Tricks, might luck in ... Bail Out
PASS		Must PASS Trumps

Note that, if East was the Opener rather than East, the bidding would have proceeded thus:

West	East	Bid Explanation
	1♠	10-12 HCPs; 6+-card Major suit (described later)
2♦		13+ HCPs
	2♥	Showing the specific (♥) 6+-card Major suit
2NT		No Suit Agreement
	PASS	Good luck

I have said that regardless of which player opens the bidding, with a Sustain Opening hand held by one player, the bidding (or perhaps more correctly, the final contract) is the same. Why not in this case? The explanation as to the difference is that East does not really have a Sustain Opening hand, only a quasi-Sustain hand (just 7 playing tricks, hence their Weak Major Opening bid). They relied on the temporary Playing Trick discount (in this case, 2.5 tricks represented by 13+ HCPs) to make up their Sustain Response.

Sustain Opening Bids (2♣, 2♦, 2♥ or 2♠) - Examples (continued)

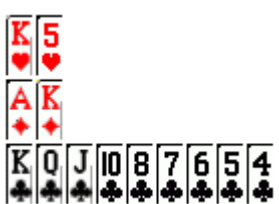

Example 8 (Sustain Initiation Response)

	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> <td>West</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>3♦</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>3NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>4♣</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>4♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>4NT</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>5♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>7NT</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	North	East	South	West				1♥	PASS	3♦	PASS	3NT	PASS	4♣	PASS	4♥	PASS	4NT	PASS	5♣	PASS	7NT	PASS	PASS	PASS				
North	East	South	West																											
			1♥																											
PASS	3♦	PASS	3NT																											
PASS	4♣	PASS	4♥																											
PASS	4NT	PASS	5♣																											
PASS	7NT	PASS	PASS																											
PASS																														

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♥		13+ HCPs; two 4+-card Majors (described later)
	3♦	A 8-card ♦ suit topped by the AKJ9 (7 tricks) and 3 off-suit tricks (10 in total), not counting a discount of 2.5 playing tricks, enough to easily qualify as a Sustain Initiation Response
3NT		The Queen in ♦ suit
	4♣	Initiates Sustain Honour Convention with next available bid
4♥		Showing the ♥Ace
	4♠	Again, the Sustain Honour Convention with next available bid
5♣		Showing the ♣ Ace
	7NT	All four (4) Aces; Can count Partner's two tricks makes 14.5 tricks ... sounds like Grand Slam
PASS		Partner must PASS when Opener rebids their original ♦ suit or 7NT

Sustain Opening Bids (2♣, 2♦, 2♥ or 2♠) - Examples (continued)

Example 9

	<p>North East South West</p> <p> 2♣</p> <p>PASS 3♣ PASS 3♦</p> <p>PASS 3♥ PASS 3♠</p> <p>PASS 4♣ PASS 7♣</p> <p>PASS PASS PASS</p>	
---	---	---

West	East	Bid Explanation
2♣		A 9-card ♣ suit topped by the KQJ (8 playing tricks) and 2 off-suit tricks (10 in total)
	3♣	Showing ♣ Ace
3♦		Initiates Sustain Honour Convention with next available bid
	3♥	Showing ♥ Ace
3♠		Again, the Sustain Honour Convention with next available bid
	4♣	No more off-suit Aces
7♣		Nine (9) Trump Tricks + two (2) off-suit tricks in both ♥ and ♦ – 13 Grand Slam
	PASS	Pass all initial Suit bids

Sustain Opening Bids (2♣, 2♦, 2♥ or 2♠) - Examples (continued)

Example 10

	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> <td>West</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>2♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>2NT</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>3♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>3♦</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>4♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	North	East	South	West				2♥	PASS	2NT	PASS	3♣	PASS	3♦	PASS	4♥	PASS	PASS	PASS		
North	East	South	West																			
			2♥																			
PASS	2NT	PASS	3♣																			
PASS	3♦	PASS	4♥																			
PASS	PASS	PASS																				

West	East	Bid Explanation
	2♥	A 9-card ♥ suit topped by the QT9 (7 playing tricks) and 3 off-suit tricks (10 in total)
	2NT	No AKQ in ♥ suit (but not a void)
	3♣	Initiates Sustain Honour Convention with next available bid (abandoned hope of Slam)
	4♦	Showing ♦ Ace
	4♥	Missing ♥ AK No Slam
	PASS	Partner must PASS when Opener rebids their original ♥ suit


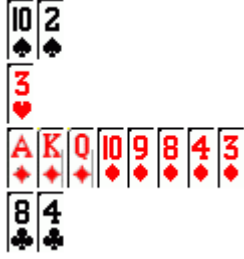
If this hand had been dealt by East, the bidding goes thus:

	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> <td>West</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>1♣</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>2NT</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>3♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>3♦</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>4♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	North	East	South	West		1♣	PASS	2♥	PASS	2NT	PASS	3♣	PASS	3♦	PASS	4♥	PASS	PASS	PASS		
North	East	South	West																			
	1♣	PASS	2♥																			
PASS	2NT	PASS	3♣																			
PASS	3♦	PASS	4♥																			
PASS	PASS	PASS																				

West	East	Bid Explanation
	1♣	13+ HCPs; No 4+-card Major
	2♥	A 9-card ♥ suit topped by the QT9 (7 playing tricks) and 3 off-suit tricks (10 in total)
	2NT	No AKQ in ♥ suit (but not a void)
	3♣	Initiates Sustain Honour Convention with next available bid (abandoned hope of Slam)
	4♦	Showing ♦ Ace
	4♥	Missing ♥ AK
	PASS	Partner must PASS when Opener rebids their original ♥ suit

Sustain Opening Bids (2♣, 2♦, 2♥ or 2♠) - Examples (continued)

Example 11 (Sustain Initiation Response)

	<table border="0" style="width: 100%;"><tr><td style="text-align: center;">North</td><td style="text-align: center;">East</td><td style="text-align: center;">South</td><td style="text-align: center;">West</td></tr><tr><td style="text-align: center;">PASS</td><td style="text-align: center;">3♦</td><td style="text-align: center;">PASS</td><td style="text-align: center;">3♥</td></tr><tr><td style="text-align: center;">PASS</td><td style="text-align: center;">3♠</td><td style="text-align: center;">PASS</td><td style="text-align: center;">4♥</td></tr><tr><td style="text-align: center;">PASS</td><td style="text-align: center;">4♠</td><td style="text-align: center;">PASS</td><td style="text-align: center;">5♣</td></tr><tr><td style="text-align: center;">PASS</td><td style="text-align: center;">5♦</td><td style="text-align: center;">PASS</td><td style="text-align: center;">PASS</td></tr><tr><td style="text-align: center;">PASS</td><td style="text-align: center;"></td><td style="text-align: center;">PASS</td><td style="text-align: center;">PASS</td></tr></table>	North	East	South	West	PASS	3♦	PASS	3♥	PASS	3♠	PASS	4♥	PASS	4♠	PASS	5♣	PASS	5♦	PASS	PASS	PASS		PASS	PASS	
North	East	South	West																							
PASS	3♦	PASS	3♥																							
PASS	3♠	PASS	4♥																							
PASS	4♠	PASS	5♣																							
PASS	5♦	PASS	PASS																							
PASS		PASS	PASS																							

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♥		13+ HCPs; Two (2) 4+-card Majors (described later)
	3♦	Sustain Initiation; A 8-card ♦ suit topped by the AKQ (8 playing tricks) plus Temporary Discount of 2.5 Playing Tricks
3♥		Void in ♦ suit
	3♠	Initiates Sustain Honour Convention with next available bid
4♥		Showing ♥ Ace (and denying ♠ Ace by not bidding 4♠)
	4♠	Again, the Sustain Honour Convention (next available bid)
5♣		Showing ♣ Ace
	5♦	With at least two losers, satisfied here.
PASS		Partner must PASS when Sustain Initiation Responder rebids their original ♦ suit

Notice also that, if East were Dealer, they would have to PASS, and then the rest of the bidding would proceed as above.

Shape Opening Bids (1♣, 1♦ and 1♥)

Having dealt with the unlikely examples of Sustain Opening hands, let's get down to more mundane matters.

These Shape Opening bids make up the large majority of bids, as Sustain Opening hands account for a small percentage of hands, while the only other Opening bid type (1♠) is restricted to hands with 10-12 HCPs and a 6+-card Major.

Shape Opening Bids cover all hands with 13+ HCPs. There are 3 sub-types of Shape Opening Bids:

- 1♣ – No Major (no four (4) card suit in either ♥ or ♠)
- 1♦ – One (1) Major (a four-plus (4+) suit in one of either ♥ or ♠)
- 1♥ – Both Majors (a four-plus (4+) suit in both ♥ or ♠)

I will now consider each of these three (3) sub-types of Shape Opening bids in turn.

1♣ Shape Opening Bid

Opener's Requirements

The hands which can be opened 1♣ have no 4+-card Major and 13+ HCPs.

Opener may indeed have a void in the ♣ suit. This system only cares about Majors (to the extent that knowledge of the Opener not having a 4+-card Major is considered vital). Opener may have 20+ HCPs, or even more. It's not important when opening the bidding. What is critical is that Opener knows Partner will bid, and that extra HCPs can be comfortably shown later in different ways.

Partner's First Response

Partner's valid bids and their meanings are shown in the table below.

Partner Response	Meaning
1♦	0-6 HCPs and any shape or 7-9 HCPs and no 5-card Major (Remember, Partner must bid)
1♥	7-12 HCPs; 5+-card Major (unspecified Major)
1♠	13+ HCPs; 5+-card Major (unspecified Major)
1NT	10-12 HCPs; No 5-card Major
2♣	13-15 HCPs; No 5-card Major
2♦	16+ HCPs; No 5-card Major
2♥	Sustain Initiation Response
2♠	Sustain Initiation Response
3♣	Sustain Initiation Response
3♦	Sustain Initiation Response

As you can see, there is a slight overlap in the HCPs shown by a Bust Response (1♦) and those of the next bid (1♥), but the distributional value of the 5+-card Major distinguishes the two bids in this gray area.

Implications of 1♣ Shape Opening Bid on Subsequent Bids by Opener

Having opened 1♣, Opener has denied a 4+-card Major. Should Opener subsequently bid Majors, it is sure that this bid means something else (usually Ace Ask or Short Ace Ask). If Partner doesn't respond either 1♥ or 1♠ (both indicative of a 5-card Major), a subsequent ♥ bid by them is also an Ace Ask.

1♣ Shape Opening Bid (continued)

Opener's Replies to Partner's First Response

Having opened 1♣, and seen Partner's Response included in the Table, Opener's first replies are as follows:

Partner's Response	Opener's Reply	Meaning
1♦ (0-9 HCPs)	PASS	13-15 HCPs and a ♦ preference
	1♥	16+ HCP (Ace/King Ask)
	1NT	13-15 HCPs and no real interest in Minors
	2♣	13-15 HCPs and a ♣ preference
1♥ (7-12 HCPs; 5-card Major)	1♠	16+ HCPs (Remember, Opener denied Majors)
	1NT	13-15 HCPs; No real interest in Minors
	2♣	13-15 HCPs and a ♣ preference
	2♦	13-15 HCPs and a ♦ preference
1♠ (13+ HCPs; 5+-card Major)	1NT	13-15 HCPs; No real interest in Minors
	2♣	13-15 HCPs and a ♣ preference
	2♦	13-15 HCPs and a ♦ preference
	2♥	16+ HCPs (Remember, Opener denied Majors)
1NT (10-12 HCPs; No 5-card Major)	2♣	13-15 HCPs and a ♣ preference
	2♦	13-15 HCPs and a ♦ preference
	2♥	16+ HCPs; Balanced (Opener denied Majors)
	2♠	16+ HCPs; Unbalanced (Opener denied Majors)
2♣ (13-15 HCPs)	2♦	13-15 HCPs and a ♦ preference
	2♥	16+ HCPs; Balanced
	2♠	16+ HCPs; Unbalanced
	3♣	13-15 HCPs and a ♣ preference
2♦ (16+ HCPs)	2♥	16+ HCPs; Balanced
	2♠	16+ HCPs; Unbalanced
	3♣	13-15 HCPs and a ♣ preference
	3♦	13-15 HCPs and a ♦ preference

Over sequences such as 1♣-1♥-1♠, 1♣-1♥-1NT, 1♣-1♠-1NT, Partner's reply (their second bid) will be their promised 5+-card Major, it's unnecessary to continue the use of tables and the "he said, she said"!

Strong 1C Opening Hands

Opening 1♣ with 16+ HCPs is shown by Opener with their first Reply in various ways. All of them involve bidding a Major suit, be it ♥ or ♠ (the suits initially denied by opening 1♣, so its bid should raise a red flag with Partner in case it's needed.)

Opening Bid	Partner's Response	First Reply	Comment
1♣	1♦ (0-9 HCPs; Bust Response)	1♥	16+ HCPs; Ace/King Ask
	1♥ (7-12 HCPs; 5+-card Majors)	1♠	16+ HCPs
	1♠ (7-12 HCPs; 5+-card Majors)	2♥	16+ HCPs
	1NT (10-12 HCPs; no 5-card major)	2♥	16+ HCPs; Balanced
		2♠	16+ HCPs; Unbalanced
	2♣ (13-15 HCPs; no 5-card Major)	2♥	16+ HCPs; Balanced
		2♠	16+ HCPs; Unbalanced
	2♦ (16+ HCPs; no 5-card Major)	2♥	16+ HCPs; Balanced
2♠		16+ HCPs; Unbalanced	

In addition to showing 16+ HCPs, over Partner's response of 1NT (10-12 HCPs), 2♣ (13-15 HCPs) or 2♦ (16+ HCPs), the Opener also shows the balance of their hands (2♥ Balanced or 2♠ Unbalanced). Balanced means no Void, no Singleton, and also catches the hand with two Doubletons.



Partner's Reply to Opener's Reply of 2♥ Balanced or 2♠ Unbalanced over their original 1♣

After an Opening bid of 1♣, and where Partner has originally denied a 5-card Major and responded 1NT, 2♣ or 2♦, and Opener has replied 2♥ or 2♠, showing 16+ HCPs and their balanced condition, Partner will be able to decide whether to mention their Minor suit. Normal procedure with a Balanced hand would be to bid 2NT. After 2♥ (Balanced) you will bid a Minor (3♣ or 3♦) with an unbalanced hand, and Opener has every right to assume it's a 5+-card Minor. 2NT doesn't preclude a 5-card Minor, but rather shows a hand equally suited to NT. Whereas, after 2♠ (Unbalanced), a Minor (3♣ or 3♦) only imply a 4+-card Minor, and 2NT is not bid, the idea being to give the strong, unbalanced Opening player more information on which to base their suit bid.

Enough! Now is the time to try and show this better by example.



1♣ Shape Opening Bid – Examples (continued)

Example 1a

	<p>North East South West</p> <p>PASS 1♥ PASS 1♠</p> <p>PASS 2♥ PASS 4♥</p> <p>PASS PASS PASS</p>	
---	--	---

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♣		13+ HCPs; no 4+-card Major suit
	1♥	7-12 HCPs; 5-card Major (unspecified)
1♠		16+ HCPs (funny, Opener said no Major suit)
	2♥	5+-card ♥ suit as promised (Opener denied a 4+-card Major but may still have 3)
4♥		Suit Agreement in ♥; Sign-off in Game; No Slam here
	PASS	Finished

Example 2

	<p>North East South West</p> <p>PASS 1♦ PASS PASS</p> <p>PASS</p>	
---	---	---

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♣		13+ HCPs; no 4+-card Major suit
	1♦	0-9 HCPs
PASS		Showing 13-15 HCPs and a ♦ preference

1♣ Shape Opening Bid – Examples (continued)

Example 3

	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> <td>West</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>1♦</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>1♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>1NT</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>2NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>3NT</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	North	East	South	West				1♣	PASS	1♦	PASS	1♥	PASS	1NT	PASS	2NT	PASS	3NT	PASS	PASS	PASS				
North	East	South	West																							
			1♣																							
PASS	1♦	PASS	1♥																							
PASS	1NT	PASS	2NT																							
PASS	3NT	PASS	PASS																							
PASS																										

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♣		13+ HCPs; no 4+-card Major suit
	1♦	0-9 HCPs
1♥		16+ HCPs; Ace/King Ask Convention
	1NT	Showing one (1) King
2NT		3+ Unexpressed HCPs - Basically a non-forcing invitation to Game in No Trumps
	3NT	Showing some unexpressed HCPs (in fact 3 HCPs – only showed 3 with a King)
PASS		Game. You're playing it. Good luck



Example 4

	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> <td>West</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>1♦</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>1NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	North	East	South	West				1♣	PASS	1♦	PASS	1NT	PASS	PASS	PASS		
North	East	South	West															
			1♣															
PASS	1♦	PASS	1NT															
PASS	PASS	PASS																

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♣		13+ HCPs; no 4+-card Major suit
	1♦	0-9 HCPs
1NT		13-15 HCPs; No Shortage
	PASS	Cannot bid after Bust Response



1♣ Shape Opening Bid – Examples (continued)

Example 7

	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> <td>West</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>1♠</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♠</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>3♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>3NT</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>4♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>4♠</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	North	East	South	West				1♣	PASS	1♠	PASS	2♥	PASS	2♠	PASS	3♥	PASS	3NT	PASS	4♣	PASS	4♠	PASS	PASS	PASS				
North	East	South	West																											
			1♣																											
PASS	1♠	PASS	2♥																											
PASS	2♠	PASS	3♥																											
PASS	3NT	PASS	4♣																											
PASS	4♠	PASS	PASS																											
PASS																														

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♣		13+ HCPs; no 4+-card Major suit
	1♠	13+ HCPs; 5+-card Major (unspecified)
2♥		16+ HCPs
	2♠	5+-card ♠ suit as promised (Opener denied a 4+-card Major but may have 3)
3♥		Suit Agreement in ♠; Ace Ask Convention (having denied Majors originally)
	3NT	Showing one (1) Ace (simple ladder 0-4, 1, 2, 3 Aces)
4♣		King Ask Convention (with next available bid)
	4♠	Showing two (2) Kings
PASS		Missing one (1) Ace and one (1) King (and having neither Trump Ace or King), enough

Example 7a

	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> <td>West</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>1♥</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>1♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♠</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>3♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>4♠</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	North	East	South	West				1♣	PASS	1♥	PASS	1♠	PASS	2♠	PASS	3♠	PASS	4♠	PASS	PASS	PASS				
North	East	South	West																							
			1♣																							
PASS	1♥	PASS	1♠																							
PASS	2♠	PASS	3♠																							
PASS	4♠	PASS	PASS																							
PASS																										

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♣		13+ HCPs; no 4+-card Major suit
	1♥	7-12 HCPs; 5+-card Major (unspecified)
1♠		16+ HCPs
	2♠	5+-card ♠ suit as promised (Opener denied a 4+-card Major but may have 3)
3♠		Suit Agreement in ♠
	4♠	3 Unexpressed HCPs
PASS		Enough – no Slam here

1♣ Shape Opening Bid – Examples (continued)

Example 8

	<p>North East South West</p> <p> 1♣</p> <p>PASS 1♦ PASS 2♣</p> <p>PASS PASS PASS</p>	
--	---	--

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♣		13+ HCPs; no 4+-card Major suit (Partner can only rely on 10 HCPs)
	1♦	0-9 HCPs
2♣		Showing 13-15 HCPs and a ♣ preference
	PASS	

Example 9

	<p>North East South West</p> <p> 1♣</p> <p>PASS 1♠ PASS 2♥</p> <p>PASS 3♥ PASS 4♥</p> <p>PASS PASS PASS</p>	
--	--	--

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♣		13+ HCPs; no 4+-card Major suit
	1♠	13+ HCPs; 5+-card Major (unspecified)
2♥		16+ HCPs; Balanced
	3♥	5+-card ♥ suit (Opener denied a 4+-card Major but may still have 3)
4♥		Slam seems so far away (and missing the ♥ AKQ in West's hand kills any idea)
	PASS	

1♣ Shape Opening Bid – Examples (continued)

Example 10

	<p>North East South West</p> <p> 1♣</p> <p>PASS 1♦ PASS 1♥</p> <p>PASS 1♠ PASS 2♦</p> <p>PASS PASS PASS</p>	
--	--	--

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♣		13+ HCPs; no 4+-card Major suit
	1♦	0-9 HCPs
1♥		16+ HCPs; Ace/King Ask
	1♠	No Aces nor Kings
2♦		Showing a ♦ preference
	PASS	Bust Response must PASS all bids (except 2NT Invitational)

Example 11

	<p>North East South West</p> <p> 1♣</p> <p>PASS 3♦ PASS 3♠</p> <p>PASS 3NT PASS 4♥</p> <p>PASS 5♦ PASS PASS</p> <p>PASS</p>	
--	--	--

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♣		13+ HCPs; no 4+-card Major suit
	3♦	9-card ♦ suit; 7 Trump Tricks, 2 off-suit Tricks; Sustain Initiation Response
3♠		No AKQ in ♦ suit
	3NT	Initiates Sustain Honour Convention with next available bid
4♥		Showing the ♥ Ace
	5♦	Void in Partner's ♥ Ace stops East cold – they never get to find out about the ♠ Ace
PASS		Player must PASS when Sustain Initiator rebids their original ♥ suit or 7NT

1♣ Shape Opening Bid – Examples (continued)

Example 12

	<p>North East South West</p> <p>1♣</p> <p>PASS 1♦ PASS 1♥</p> <p>PASS 2♦ PASS 6NT</p> <p>PASS PASS PASS</p>	
--	---	--

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♣		13+ HCPs; no 4+-card Major suit
	1♦	0-9 HCPs; Bust Response
1♥		16+ HCPs; Ace/King Ask Convention
	2♦	Showing two (2) Kings
6NT		Do the math
	PASS	Player must PASS


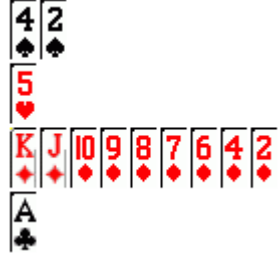
Example 13

	<p>North East South West</p> <p>1♣</p> <p>PASS 1♠ PASS 2♥</p> <p>PASS 2♠ PASS 3♥</p> <p>PASS 3NT PASS 4♣</p> <p>PASS 4♠ PASS PASS</p> <p>PASS</p>	
--	---	--

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♣		13+ HCPs; no 4+-card Major suit
	1♠	13+ HCPs; 5+-card Major (unspecified)
2♥		16+ HCPs
	2♠	5+-card ♠ Major as promised
3♥		Suit Agreement; Ace Ask with Alt Major
	3NT	One (1) Ace
4♣		King Ask
	4♠	Two (2) Kings ...
PASS		Partner stumbled into Trumps (Missing one (1) Ace and one (1) King)


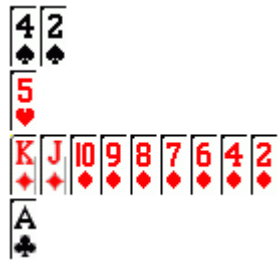
1♣ Shape Opening Bid – Examples (continued)

Example 14

	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> <td>West</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>3♦</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>4♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>4♣</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>4NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>5♣</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>5♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>5♠</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>6♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> </tr> </table>	North	East	South	West				1♣	PASS	3♦	PASS	4♥	PASS	4♣	PASS	4NT	PASS	5♣	PASS	5♥	PASS	5♠	PASS	6♦	PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS	
North	East	South	West																											
			1♣																											
PASS	3♦	PASS	4♥																											
PASS	4♣	PASS	4NT																											
PASS	5♣	PASS	5♥																											
PASS	5♠	PASS	6♦																											
PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS																											

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♣		13+ HCPs; no 4+-card Major suit
	3♦	Sustain Initiation Response (7 ♦ tricks plus 1 off-suit trick plus 2.5 tricks)
4♥		Two (2) of ♦ AKQ
	4♣	Initiates Sustain Honour Convention with next available bid
4NT		Showing ♠ Ace
	5♣	Again, the Sustain Honour Convention with next available bid
5♥		Showing ♥ Ace
	5♠	Again, and committing to Slam, the Sustain Honour Convention with next available bid
6♦		No more Aces to show so bid Partner's suit
	PASS	Sounds right



If East were the Dealer (and hence the Opener) rather than West, the bidding progresses thus:

	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> <td>West</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>3♦</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>4♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>4♣</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>4NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>5♣</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>5♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>5♠</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>6♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> </tr> </table>	North	East	South	West			PASS	PASS				1♣	PASS	3♦	PASS	4♥	PASS	4♣	PASS	4NT	PASS	5♣	PASS	5♥	PASS	5♠	PASS	6♦	PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS	
North	East	South	West																															
		PASS	PASS																															
			1♣																															
PASS	3♦	PASS	4♥																															
PASS	4♣	PASS	4NT																															
PASS	5♣	PASS	5♥																															
PASS	5♠	PASS	6♦																															
PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS																															

West	East	Bid Explanation
	PASS	Only 8 HCPs (and 8 playing tricks)
1♣		13+ HCPs; no 4+-card Major suit (Partner can only rely on 10 HCPs)
	3♦	Sustain Initiation Response (7 ♦ tricks plus 1 off-suit trick plus 2.5 tricks)
4♥		Two (2) of ♦ AKQ
	etc.	
etc.		



1♣ Shape Opening Bid – Examples (continued)

Example 15a

	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> <td>West</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>1♦</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>1♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>2NT</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>3NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	North	East	South	West				1♣	PASS	1♦	PASS	1♥	PASS	2NT	PASS	3NT	PASS	PASS	PASS		
North	East	South	West																			
			1♣																			
PASS	1♦	PASS	1♥																			
PASS	2NT	PASS	3NT																			
PASS	PASS	PASS																				

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♣		13+ HCPs; no 4+-card Major suit
	1♦	0-9 HCPs
1♥		16+ HCPs; Ace/King Ask Convention
	2NT	Three (3) Kings
3NT		Game (19 HCPs and Partner's 9 HCPs)
	PASS	



Example 15b

	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> <td>West</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>1♦</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>1♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♥</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>2NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	North	East	South	West				1♣	PASS	1♦	PASS	1♥	PASS	2♥	PASS	2NT	PASS	PASS	PASS		
North	East	South	West																			
			1♣																			
PASS	1♦	PASS	1♥																			
PASS	2♥	PASS	2NT																			
PASS	PASS	PASS																				

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♣		13+ HCPs; no 4+-card Major suit
	1♦	0-9 HCPs
1♥		16+ HCPs; Ace/King Ask Convention
	2♥	An Ace and a King
2NT		Game maybe (19 HCPs and Partner's 7 HCPs); Invitational
	PASS	Partner declines as their hand has been fully-described



1♣ Shape Opening Bid – Examples (continued)

Example 15c

	North East South West 1♣ PASS 1♦ PASS 1♥ PASS 2♦ PASS 2NT PASS PASS PASS	
---	---	---

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♣		13+ HCPs; no 4+-card Major suit
	1♦	0-9 HCPs
1♥		16+ HCPs; Ace/King Ask Convention
	2♦	Two (2) Kings
2NT		No Game here (18 HCPs and Partner's 6 HCPs)
	PASS	

Example 15d

	North East South West 1♣ PASS 1♦ PASS 1♥ PASS 2♠ PASS 2NT PASS PASS PASS	
---	---	---

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♣		13+ HCPs; no 4+-card Major suit
	1♦	0-9 HCPs
1♥		16+ HCPs; Ace/King Ask Convention
	2♠	Two (2) Aces
2NT		Maybe Game here (18 HCPs and Partner's 8 HCPs)
	PASS	Nothing more to say

1♣ Shape Opening Bid – Examples (continued)

Example 16

<p> Spades: A J 3 Hearts: A K 3 Diamonds: 8 Clubs: J 10 7 5 4 3 </p>	<p>North East South West</p> <p>PASS 1NT PASS 1♣</p> <p>PASS 2NT PASS 2♣</p> <p>PASS PASS PASS</p>	<p> Spades: K 4 2 Hearts: J 10 9 4 Diamonds: K Q Clubs: K 9 6 2 </p>
---	--	---

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♣		13+ HCPs; no 4+-card Major suit
	1NT	10+ HCPs; No 5+-card Major
2♣		13-15 HCPs ♣ preference (showing 4-card ♣ suit)
	2NT	Less than 3 Unexpressed HCPs; Cannot raise the level
3♣		Shortage; Unblocked Shortage; 6-card ♣ suit
	PASS	Respect Partner’s dislike of No Trumps

1♣ Shape Opening Bid – Examples (continued)

Example 17

	<p>North East South West</p> <p>PASS 1♣ PASS 1NT</p> <p>PASS 2♥ PASS 2NT</p> <p>PASS 4♣ PASS 4♥</p> <p>PASS 4♠ PASS 5♣</p> <p>PASS 6NT PASS PASS</p> <p>PASS</p>	
--	--	--

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♣		13+ HCPs; no 4+-card Major suit
	1♣	13+ HCPs; 5+-card Major (unspecified)
1NT		13-15 HCPs; No real Minor interest
	2♥	5+-card ♥ suit
2NT		Cannot raise the level
	4♣	Ace Ask (with the traditional Blackwood value; cannot use Alt Major unlike Opener)
4♥		One (1) Ace
	4♠	King Ask
5♣		One (1) King
	6NT	Four (4) Aces and three (3) Kings – Slam
PASS		Sounds right

1♣ Shape Opening Bid – Examples (continued)

Example 18

	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> <td>West</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>1♥</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>1NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♠</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>3♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>4♠</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	North	East	South	West				1♣	PASS	1♥	PASS	1NT	PASS	2♠	PASS	3♠	PASS	4♠	PASS	PASS	PASS				
North	East	South	West																							
			1♣																							
PASS	1♥	PASS	1NT																							
PASS	2♠	PASS	3♠																							
PASS	4♠	PASS	PASS																							
PASS																										

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♣		13+ HCPs; no 4+-card Major suit
	1♥	7-12 HCPs; 5+-card Major (unspecified)
1NT		13-15 HCPs; No Minor preference
	2♠	5+-card ♠ suit as suggested
3♠		Suit Agreement (13-15 HCPs)
	4♠	Game (11 HCPs and 4 DPs (3 for the ♥ Singleton and 1 for the ♣ Doubleton))
PASS		Fine

Example 19

	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> <td>West</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>1♥</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>1♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♠</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>3♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>4♠</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	North	East	South	West				1♣	PASS	1♥	PASS	1♠	PASS	2♠	PASS	3♠	PASS	4♠	PASS	PASS	PASS				
North	East	South	West																							
			1♣																							
PASS	1♥	PASS	1♠																							
PASS	2♠	PASS	3♠																							
PASS	4♠	PASS	PASS																							
PASS																										

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♣		13+ HCPs; no 4+-card Major suit
	1♥	7-12 HCPs; 5+-card Major (unspecified)
1♠		16+ HCPs
	2♠	5+-card ♠ suit as suggested
3♠		Suit Agreement
	4♠	Game (10 HCPs and 1 DPs for the ♣ Doubleton)
PASS		Fine

1♣ Shape Opening Bid – Examples (continued)

Example 20

	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> <td>West</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♦</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>3♦</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>3♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>4♣</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>4♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>5♣</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>7NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> </tr> </table>	North	East	South	West				1♣	PASS	2♦	PASS	2♠	PASS	3♦	PASS	3♥	PASS	4♣	PASS	4♥	PASS	5♣	PASS	7NT	PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS	
North	East	South	West																											
			1♣																											
PASS	2♦	PASS	2♠																											
PASS	3♦	PASS	3♥																											
PASS	4♣	PASS	4♥																											
PASS	5♣	PASS	7NT																											
PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS																											

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♣		13+ HCPs; no 4+-card Major suit
	2♦	16+ HCPs; No 5+-card Major
2♠		16+ HCPs; Unbalanced (two Doubletons)
	3♦	4+-card ♦ suit (Unbalanced Partner needs suit information)
3♥		Ace Ask (having originally denied Majors)
	4♣	Two (2) Aces
4♥		King Ask
	5♣	Two (2) Kings
7NT		Four (4) Aces and four (4) Kings – two QJ** - surely Grand Slam
	PASS	Your funeral

Example 21

	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> <td>West</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>1NT</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>3♣</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>3NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> </tr> </table>	North	East	South	West				1♣	PASS	1NT	PASS	2♠	PASS	3♣	PASS	3NT	PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS	
North	East	South	West																			
			1♣																			
PASS	1NT	PASS	2♠																			
PASS	3♣	PASS	3NT																			
PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS																			

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♣		13+ HCPs; no 4+-card Major suit
	1NT	10-12 HCPs; No 5+-card Major
2♠		16+ HCPs; Unbalanced (two Doubletons)
	3♣	4+-card ♣ suit (Unbalanced Partner needs suit information)
3NT		Game; Partner limited Max of 12 HCPs remember
	PASS	Should be fine (had the max!)

1♣ Shape Opening Bid – Examples (continued)

Example 22

	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> <td>West</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>1NT</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♦</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>2NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>3NT</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	North	East	South	West				1♣	PASS	1NT	PASS	2♣	PASS	2♦	PASS	2NT	PASS	3NT	PASS	PASS	PASS				
North	East	South	West																							
			1♣																							
PASS	1NT	PASS	2♣																							
PASS	2♦	PASS	2NT																							
PASS	3NT	PASS	PASS																							
PASS																										

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♣		13+ HCPs; no 4+-card Major suit
	1NT	10-12 HCPs; No 5+-card Major
2♣		13-15 HCPs; ♣ preference
	2♦	5+-card ♦ suit
2NT		Game Invitation if Partner has Max of 12 HCPs
	3NT	Should be fine (had the max!) but wait till the ♥ lead
PASS		

1♦ Shape Opening Bid

The hands which can be opened 1♦ have 13+ HCPs and one (1) unspecified 4+-card Major. Partner shows their HCPs range and Opener then (usually) bids their Major at the 2-level. Partner either agrees with Partner's Major, bids their own 5-card Major or 6+-card Minor, or No Trumps. If Opener doesn't bid their Major, they may show a 6+-card Minor at the 3-level, 2NT showing 16-18 HCPs or just a not-so-great Major by bidding 2♦.

Opener's Requirements

- 13+ HCPs
- One (1) 4+-card Major.

Opener may indeed have a void in the ♦ suit. This system only cares about Majors. Again, Opener may have 20+ HCPs, or even more. It's not important when opening the bidding. What is critical is that Opener knows Partner will bid, and that extra HCPs can be comfortably shown later in different ways.

Partner's First Response

Partner's valid bids and their meanings are shown in the table below.

Partner Response	Meaning
1♥	0-6 HCPs or 7-9 HCPs and No Major DPs (Remember, Partner must bid)
2♣	7-12 HCPs (usually 10-12 HCPs unless Major DPs as above mentioned)
2♦	13-15 HCPs
1NT	16+ HCPs
2♥	Sustain Initiation Response
2♠	Sustain Initiation Response
3♣	Sustain Initiation Response
3♦	Sustain Initiation Response

As 1♦ is forcing, there is:

- one (1) response (1♥) - the cheapest available bid - to show the Bust Response (0-6 HCPs etc.).
- one (1) response (2♣) to show 7-12 HCPs;
- one (1) response (2♦) to show 13-15 HCPs;
- one (1) response (1NT) to show a strong hand of 16+ HCPs; and
- four (4) responses (2♥, 2♠, 3♣ and 3♦) to show a quasi-Sustain Opening hand or better.

Implications of 1♦ Shape Opening Bid on Subsequent Bids by Opener

Having opened 1♦, Opener has indicated one (1) 4+-card Major. Normal bidding by Opener at their second bid is usually to show their Major suit. Should Opener subsequently bid the other Major suit without that suit being bid previously by Partner, it is absolutely sure that this bid means something else (usually Ace Ask or Short Ace Ask).

1♦ Shape Opening Bid (continued)

Opener's Replies to Partner's First Responses

If Partner with 0-6 HCPs or 7-9 HCPs and no Major DPs responds 1♥, Opener will bid:

- PASS with 13-15 HCPs and a ♥ preference (i.e. their 4+-card Major suit)
- 1♠ with 13-15 HCPs and a ♠ preference (i.e. their 4+-card Major suit) which Partner must PASS
- 1NT with 16+ HCPs as Ace/King Ask Convention

If Partner with less than 13 HCPs responds 2♣, Opener will bid:

- 2♦ with 13-15 HCPs, a 4-card Major and No Shortage
- 2NT with 16-18 HCPs, a 4-card Major and No Shortage
- 2♥ with:
 - 13+ HCPs, a 4-card Major and a Shortage;
 - 13+ HCPs and a 5+-card Major; or
 - 19+ HCPs and a 4-card Major
- 2♠ with:
 - 13+ HCPs, a 4-card Major and a Shortage;
 - 13+ HCPs and a 5+-card Major suit
 - 19+ HCPs and a 4-card Major

If Partner with 13-15 HCPs responds 2♦, Opener will bid:

- 2♥ showing their 4+-card Major suit; or
- 2♠ showing their 4+-card Major suit

If Partner with 16+ HCPs responds 1NT, Opener will bid:

- 2♥ showing their 4+-card Major suit; or
- 2♠ showing their 4+-card Major suit

In a few situation, Opener, who promised a 4-card Major, doesn't deliver on that promise. Over Partner's response of 2♣, the 1♦ Opener will always show a 5+-card Major, a 4-card Major when they have a Shortage, or a 4-card Major with 19+ HCPs by bidding either 2♥ or 2♠. Their replies of 2♦ and 2NT suggest a flat hand with a 4-card Major, and 13-15 HCPs or 16-18 HCPs respectively.

Partner's Reply and subsequent bidding



If Opener has bid the promised Major and Partner has a 4+-card suit, Partner shows suit agreement.

If Partner has shown less than 13 HCPs with a Response of 2♣, and Opener wants to investigate the possibility of a Slam bid, they may be able to use the other Major to initiate this process, or 4NT. In either case, as this bid is a Short Ace Ask (as Partner cannot hold all the Aces), Opener is required to have at least one (1) Ace.

Now is the time to try and show this better by example.



1♦ Shape Opening Bid Examples

Example 1

	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> <td>West</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♣</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♥</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>3♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>4♥</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	North	East	South	West				1♦	PASS	2♣	PASS	2♦	PASS	2♥	PASS	3♥	PASS	4♥	PASS	PASS	PASS				
North	East	South	West																							
			1♦																							
PASS	2♣	PASS	2♦																							
PASS	2♥	PASS	3♥																							
PASS	4♥	PASS	PASS																							
PASS																										

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♦		13+ HCPs; one (1) unspecified 4+-card Major suit
	2♣	7-12 HCPs (8 HCPs and 2 DPs)
2♦		13-15 HCPs; not a great ♥ suit (4-card Major; No Shortage)
	2♥	4+-card Major suit
3♥		Suit Agreement; less than 19 HCPs
	4♥	1 Unexpressed HCPs and 2 DPs – Game. wish me luck
PASS		Good luck

Example 2

	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> <td>West</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♣</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>3♥</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>3♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>4♣</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>4♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>4♠</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>6♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	North	East	South	West				1♦	PASS	2♣	PASS	2♥	PASS	3♥	PASS	3♠	PASS	4♣	PASS	4♦	PASS	4♠	PASS	6♥	PASS	PASS	PASS		
North	East	South	West																											
			1♦																											
PASS	2♣	PASS	2♥																											
PASS	3♥	PASS	3♠																											
PASS	4♣	PASS	4♦																											
PASS	4♠	PASS	6♥																											
PASS	PASS	PASS																												

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♦		13+ HCPs; one (1) unspecified 4+-card Major suit
	2♣	7-12 HCPs (8 HCPs and 2 DPs)
2♥		19+ HCPs will always show their Major – even a 4-card suit
	3♥	Suit Agreement
3♠		19+ HCPs, At least one (1) Ace; Short Ace Ask Convention (Partner has less than 13 HCPs)
	4♣	One (1) Ace
4♦		King Ask
	4♠	One (1) King
6♥		Four (4) Aces and three (3) Kings ... 27 HCPs risky Slam
	PASS	Good luck

1♦ Shape Opening Bid Examples (continued)

Example 3

	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> <td>West</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">1♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♣</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>3♠</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>4♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>4♥</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>4NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>5♣</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>6♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> </tr> </table>	North	East	South	West				1♦	PASS	2♣	PASS	2♣	PASS	3♠	PASS	4♣	PASS	4♥	PASS	4NT	PASS	5♣	PASS	6♣	PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS	
North	East	South	West																											
			1♦																											
PASS	2♣	PASS	2♣																											
PASS	3♠	PASS	4♣																											
PASS	4♥	PASS	4NT																											
PASS	5♣	PASS	6♣																											
PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS																											

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♦		13+ HCPs; one (1) unspecified 4+-card Major suit
	2♣	7-12 HCPs (8 HCPs and 1-4 DPs)
	2♠	4+ card ♠ suit (with 19+ HCPs, it's okay to show your 4+-card Major)
	3♠	Suit Agreement
	4♣	19+ HCPs, At least one (1) Ace; Short Ace Ask Convention (Partner has less than 13 HCPs)
	4♥	One (1) Ace
	4NT	King Ask (and skipping over 4♠ as that is Trumps)
	5♣	No (0) Kings
	6♣	Slam with four (4) Aces and three (3) Kings
	PASS	



Example 4

	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> <td>West</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">1♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♦</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♠</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>4♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> </tr> </table>	North	East	South	West				1♦	PASS	2♦	PASS	2♥	PASS	2♠	PASS	4♠	PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS	
North	East	South	West																			
			1♦																			
PASS	2♦	PASS	2♥																			
PASS	2♠	PASS	4♠																			
PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS																			

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♦		13+ HCPs; one (1) unspecified 4+-card Major suit
	2♦	13-15 HCPs
	2♥	4+ card ♥ suit (with less than 16 HCPs and No Shortage, it's okay to show your 4-card Major)
	2♠	5+-card ♠ suit (as 1♦ Opener has only one (1) Major (♥), which they've already shown)
	4♠	Suit Agreement and 13-15 HCPs only
	PASS	Nothing left to say



1♦ Shape Opening Bid Examples (continued)

Example 5

	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> <td>West</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♣</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>4♥</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>4♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>5♣</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>5♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>5NT</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>6♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> </tr> </table>	North	East	South	West				1♦	PASS	2♣	PASS	2♥	PASS	4♥	PASS	4♠	PASS	5♣	PASS	5♦	PASS	5NT	PASS	6♥	PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS	
North	East	South	West																											
			1♦																											
PASS	2♣	PASS	2♥																											
PASS	4♥	PASS	4♠																											
PASS	5♣	PASS	5♦																											
PASS	5NT	PASS	6♥																											
PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS																											

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♦		13+ HCPs; one (1) unspecified 4+-card Major suit
	2♣	7-12 HCPs (exactly 12HCPs)
2♥		4+ card ♥ suit
	4♥	Suit Agreement in ♥; 10-12 HCPs
4♠		At least 3 Unexpressed HCPs; At least one (1) Ace; Short Ace Ask (using other Major)
	5♣	One (1) Ace
5♦		King Ask using next available bid
	5NT	Two (2) Kings
6♥		Four (4) Aces and three (3) Kings and 30+ HCPs
	PASS	Pass Partner's original suit

Example 6

	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> <td>West</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>1♥</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>1NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♥</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>3NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> </tr> </table>	North	East	South	West				1♦	PASS	1♥	PASS	1NT	PASS	2♥	PASS	3NT	PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS	
North	East	South	West																			
			1♦																			
PASS	1♥	PASS	1NT																			
PASS	2♥	PASS	3NT																			
PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS																			

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♦		13+ HCPs; one (1) unspecified 4+-card Major suit
	1♥	0-9 HCPs (5 HCPs and no Majors - Bust Response)
1NT		16+ HCPs (Ace/King Ask)
	2♥	One (1) Ace
3NT		At least 2 Unexpressed HCPs; Game Bid
	PASS	Good luck, Partner!

1♦ Shape Opening Bid Examples (continued)

Example 7

	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> <td>West</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♣</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>4♠</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>4NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>5♦</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>5♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>5NT</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>6♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> </tr> </table>	North	East	South	West				1♦	PASS	2♣	PASS	2♠	PASS	4♠	PASS	4NT	PASS	5♦	PASS	5♥	PASS	5NT	PASS	6♠	PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS	
North	East	South	West																											
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PASS	2♣	PASS	2♠																											
PASS	4♠	PASS	4NT																											
PASS	5♦	PASS	5♥																											
PASS	5NT	PASS	6♠																											
PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS																											

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♦		13+ HCPs; one (1) unspecified 4+-card Major suit
	2♣	7-12 HCPs (8 HCPs and 1 DPs)
2♠		4+ card ♠ suit
	4♠	Suit Agreement in ♠; 10-12 HCPs
4NT		At least 3 Unexpressed HCPs; At least one (1) Ace; Short Ace Ask
	5♦	One (1) Ace
5♥		King Ask using next available bid
	5NT	One (1) Kings
6♠		Four (4) Aces and three (3) Kings and 30+ HCPs
	PASS	Pass Partner's original suit

Example 8

	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> <td>West</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>1♥</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>1NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>3♣</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>4♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> </tr> </table>	North	East	South	West				1♦	PASS	1♥	PASS	1NT	PASS	3♣	PASS	4♥	PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS	
North	East	South	West																			
			1♦																			
PASS	1♥	PASS	1NT																			
PASS	3♣	PASS	4♥																			
PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS																			

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♦		13+ HCPs; one (1) unspecified 4+-card Major suit
	1♥	0-9 HCPs (8 HCPs but no Major DPs)
1NT		16+ HCPs; Ace/king Ask
	3♣	Two (2) Aces
4♥		Absolutely hates No Trumps; In for a penny ... Game in ♥
	PASS	Cannot bid again

1♦ Shape Opening Bid Examples (continued)

Example 9

	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> <td>West</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="color: red;">1♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♣</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>2NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>3NT</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	North	East	South	West				1♦	PASS	2♣	PASS	2NT	PASS	3NT	PASS	PASS	PASS				
North	East	South	West																			
			1♦																			
PASS	2♣	PASS	2NT																			
PASS	3NT	PASS	PASS																			
PASS																						

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♦		13+ HCPs; one (1) unspecified 4+-card Major suit
	2♣	7-12 HCPs (exactly 12 HCPs)
2NT		16-18 HCPs; not a great ♥ suit (4-card Major; No Shortage)
	3NT	10-12 HCPs; 4-card Major but No Shortage
PASS		Sound OK to Opener

Example 10

	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> <td>West</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="color: red;">1♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♣</td> <td>PASS</td> <td style="color: red;">2♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♠</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>2NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>3NT</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	North	East	South	West				1♦	PASS	2♣	PASS	2♦	PASS	2♠	PASS	2NT	PASS	3NT	PASS	PASS	PASS				
North	East	South	West																							
			1♦																							
PASS	2♣	PASS	2♦																							
PASS	2♠	PASS	2NT																							
PASS	3NT	PASS	PASS																							
PASS																										

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♦		13+ HCPs; one (1) unspecified 4+-card Major suit
	2♣	7-12 HCPs
2♦		13-15 HCPs; not a great ♥ suit (4-card Major; No Shortage)
	2♠	4-card Major
2NT		13-15 HCPs
	3NT	3 Unexpressed HCPs
PASS		Sounds OK and may even make if the Clubs run and one finesse makes

1♦ Shape Opening Bid Examples (continued)

Example 11

	<pre> North East South West 1♦ PASS 1♥ PASS 1♠ PASS PASS PASS </pre>	
--	---	--

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♦		13+ HCPs; one (1) unspecified 4+-card Major suit
	1♥	0-6 HCPs (Bust Response)
	1♠	♠ Suit preference
	PASS	Good luck



Example 12

	<pre> North East South West 1♦ PASS 1♥ PASS PASS PASS </pre>	
--	--	--

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♦		13+ HCPs; one (1) unspecified 4+-card Major suit
	1♥	0-6 HCPs (Bust Response)
PASS		13-18 HCPs (14 HCPs actually); Bust Responder took my ♥ suit ... Good luck, mate

1♦ Shape Opening Bid Examples (continued)

Example 13

	<p>North East South West</p> <p>1♦</p> <p>PASS 1NT PASS 2♥</p> <p>PASS 2NT PASS 3♠</p> <p>PASS 4♦ PASS 4♥</p> <p>PASS 5♦ PASS 7NT</p> <p>PASS PASS PASS</p>	
---	---	---

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♦		13+ HCPs; one (1) unspecified 4+-card Major suit
	1NT	16+ HCPs
2♥		4+-card suit
	2NT	No 4-card ♥ suit; No 5-card ♠ suit; Balanced
3♠		Ace Ask with other Major (only one Major that that was shown with 2H)
	4♦	Two (2) Aces
4♥		King Ask
	5♦	Three (3) Kings
7NT		Four (4) Aces and four (4) Kings and three (3) Queens – Grand Slam
	PASS	

1♦ Shape Opening Bid Examples (continued)

Example 14

	<p>North East South West</p> <p style="margin-left: 200px;">1♦</p> <p>PASS 1NT PASS 2♣</p> <p>PASS 2NT PASS 3♣</p> <p>PASS 4♣ PASS 4♠</p> <p>PASS 4NT PASS 5♦</p> <p>PASS 6♠ PASS PASS</p> <p>PASS</p>	
--	--	--

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♦		13+ HCPs; one (1) unspecified 4+-card Major suit
	1NT	16+ HCPs
2♣		4+-card suit
	2NT	No 4-card ♠ suit; Non-committal
3♠		5+-card suit (An extra card in ♠)
	4♣	Ace Ask
4♠		Two (2) Aces
	4NT	King Ask
5♦		One (1) King
	6♠	Four (4) Aces and four (4) Kings - Slam
PASS		

1♥ Shape Opening Bid

The hands which can be opened 1♥ have 13+ HCPs and both (2) 4+-card Major. Partner shows their HCPs range and Opener then bids their preferred Major at the 2-level. Partner either agrees with Partner's Major, bids the other Major or 6+-card Minor, or No Trumps.

Opener's Requirements

- 13+ HCPs
- Both (2) 4+-card Major.

In this case, unlike the other Shape Opening bids of 1♣ or 1♦, Opener must have some (at least four) cards in their Opening suit. It may not be their better Major, but it's a start. Again, Opener may have 20+ HCPs, or even more. It's not important when opening the bidding. What is critical is that Opener knows Partner will bid, and that extra HCPs can be comfortably shown later in different ways.

Partner's First Response

Partner's valid bids and their meanings are shown in the table below.

Partner Response	Meaning
1♠	0-6 HCPs or 7-9 HCPs and no 4-card Major (Remember, Partner must bid)
2♣	7-12 HCPs (usually 10-12 HCPs unless Major as above mentioned)
2♦	13-15 HCPs
1NT	16+ HCPs
2♥	Sustain Initiation Response
2♠	Sustain Initiation Response
3♣	Sustain Initiation Response
3♦	Sustain Initiation Response

As 1♥ is forcing, there is:

- one (1) response (1♠) - the cheapest available bid - to show the Bust Response (0-6 HCPs etc).
- one (1) response (1NT) to show a very strong hand of 16+ HCPs
- one (1) response (2♦) to show a moderately strong hand of 13-15 HCPs
- one (1) response (2♣) to show less than 13 HCPs; and
- four (4) responses (2♥, 2♠, 3♣ and 3♦) to show a quasi-Sustain Opening hand or better.

Note that, aside from the first response being different, the other six (6) responses are the same used as those used over an Opening Bid of 1♦. Given that the first response to all Shape Opening bids is always the Bust Response and is always the next available bid, it can be said that the responses are the same in theory.

1♥ Shape Opening Bid (continued)

Opener's Replies to Partner's First Responses

If Partner with 0-6 HCPs or 7-9 HCPs and no 4-card Major responds 1♠, Opener will bid:

- PASS with 13-15 HCPs and a ♠ preference
- 2♥ with 13-15 HCPs and a ♥ preference which Partner must PASS
- 1NT with 16+ HCPs as Ace/King Ask Convention

If Partner with 10-12 HCPs responds 2♣, Opener will bid:

- 2♥ with a 4+-card ♥ suit
- 2♠ if your ♠ suit is longer than your ♥ suit

If Partner with 13+ HCPs responds 1NT, Opener will bid:

- 2♥ with a 4+-card ♥ suit
- 2♠ if your ♠ suit is longer than your ♥ suit

From Partner's perspective, when Opener bids 1♥ and Partner bids either 1NT or 2♣, if Opener then replies with 2♠, Partner may assume Opener has a 5-card ♠ suit, whereas if Opener replies with 2♥, Partner can only assume a 4+-card ♥ suit (though Opener's suit could be longer).

Partner's Reply and subsequent bidding

If Partner has a 4+-card Major suit in Opener's Reply, Partner shows suit agreement.



If Partner has a 4+-card Major in the other Major, Partner bids it at the cheapest level.

If Partner doesn't have a 4+-card Major, Partner does other things.

Now is the time to try and show this better by example.



1♥ Shape Opening Bid Examples

Example 1

	<p>North East South West</p> <p style="margin-left: 150px;">1♥</p> <p>PASS 2♣ PASS 2♥</p> <p>PASS 2♠ PASS 4♠</p> <p>PASS PASS PASS</p>	
---	---	---

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♥		13+ HCPs; both (2) 4+-card Major suits
	2♣	7-12 HCPs (7 HCPs and 1 DPs)
	2♥	4-card ♥ suit
	2♠	4+-card ♠ suit
	4♠	Game (Suit Agreement; Partner limited to 12 HCP and Opener with 16 HCPs – No Slam)
	PASS	Partner has already limited their hand with 2♣ so mum's the word.



Example 2

	<p>North East South West</p> <p style="margin-left: 150px;">1♥</p> <p>PASS 2♣ PASS 2♥</p> <p>PASS 3♠ PASS 4♠</p> <p>PASS PASS PASS</p>	
---	---	---

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♥		13+ HCPs; both (2) 4+-card Major suits
	2♣	7-12 HCPs (exactly 12 HCPs)
	2♥	4-card ♥ suit
	3♠	10-12 HCPs; 4-card ♠ suit
	4♠	Suit Agreement
	PASS	Partner has already limited their hand with 2♣ so cannot bid again



1♥ Shape Opening Bid Examples (continued)

Example 3

	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> <td>West</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♣</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♠</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>3♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>4♠</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	North	East	South	West				1♥	PASS	2♣	PASS	2♥	PASS	2♠	PASS	3♠	PASS	4♠	PASS	PASS	PASS				
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			1♥																							
PASS	2♣	PASS	2♥																							
PASS	2♠	PASS	3♠																							
PASS	4♠	PASS	PASS																							
PASS																										

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♥		13+ HCPs; both (2) 4+-card Major suits
	2♣	7-12 HCPs (7 HCPs and 1DPs)
	2♥	4-card ♥ suit
	2♠	7-10 HCPs; 4-card ♠ suit
	3♠	Suit Agreement
	4♠	♥ void and ♣ Doubleton - 6 DPs in ♠ – let's try Game
PASS		Partner has already limited their hand with 2♣ so cannot bid again

Example 4

	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> <td>West</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>1♠</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>1NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♦</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>2NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	North	East	South	West				1♥	PASS	1♠	PASS	1NT	PASS	2♦	PASS	2NT	PASS	PASS	PASS		
North	East	South	West																			
			1♥																			
PASS	1♠	PASS	1NT																			
PASS	2♦	PASS	2NT																			
PASS	PASS	PASS																				

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♥		13+ HCPs; both (2) 4+-card Major suits
	1♠	0-9 HCPs (Bust Response)
	1NT	16+ HCPs (Ace/King Ask)
	2♦	One (1) King
	2NT	Game Invitation (Partner may have 6 HCPs and has only shown 3 HCPs (with the King))
	PASS	East only has 4 HCPs and has shown 3 – 1 unexpressed HCPs ... PASS

1♥ Shape Opening Bid Examples (continued)

Example 5

	<table> <tr> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> <td>West</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♣</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>3♥</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>3♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>3NT</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>4♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>4♥</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	North	East	South	West				1♥	PASS	2♣	PASS	2♥	PASS	3♥	PASS	3♠	PASS	3NT	PASS	4♣	PASS	4♥	PASS	PASS	PASS				
North	East	South	West																											
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PASS	2♣	PASS	2♥																											
PASS	3♥	PASS	3♠																											
PASS	3NT	PASS	4♣																											
PASS	4♥	PASS	PASS																											
PASS																														

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♥		13+ HCPs; both (2) 4+-card Major suits
	2♣	7-12 HCPs (7 HCPs and 1DPs)
2♥		4-card ♥ Major
	3♥	Suit Agreement
3♠		Short Ace Ask (no other reason to bid ♠ after suit agreement)
	3NT	Zero (0) Aces
4♣		King Ask
	4♥	One (1) King
PASS		No Slam here ... Partner stumbled into Trumps

Example 6

	<table> <tr> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> <td>West</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>1♠</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>1NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♦</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>2NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>3NT</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	North	East	South	West				1♥	PASS	1♠	PASS	1NT	PASS	2♦	PASS	2NT	PASS	3NT	PASS	PASS	PASS				
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			1♥																							
PASS	1♠	PASS	1NT																							
PASS	2♦	PASS	2NT																							
PASS	3NT	PASS	PASS																							
PASS																										

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♥		13+ HCPs; both (2) 4+-card Major suits
	1♠	0-9 HCPs (6 HCPs - Bust Response)
1NT		16+ HCPs (Ace/King Ask)
	2♦	One (1) King
2NT		Game Invitation (Partner may have 6 HCPs and has only shown 3 HCPs (with the King))
	3NT	3 unaccounted-for HCPs; accept Partner's Invitation
PASS		Satisfied customer

1♥ Shape Opening Bid Examples (continued)

Example 7

	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> <td>West</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♦</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♠</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>3♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>3NT</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>4♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>4♠</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>6♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	North	East	South	West				1♥	PASS	2♦	PASS	2♥	PASS	2♠	PASS	3♥	PASS	3NT	PASS	4♣	PASS	4♠	PASS	6♠	PASS	PASS	PASS		
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PASS	2♠	PASS	3♥																											
PASS	3NT	PASS	4♣																											
PASS	4♠	PASS	6♠																											
PASS	PASS	PASS																												

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♥		13+ HCPs; both (2) 4+-card Major suits
	2♦	13-15 HCPs
2♥		4+-card ♥ suit
	2♠	4+-card ♠ suit
3♥		Suit Agreement in ♠; Ace Ask
	3NT	One (1) Ace
4♣		King Ask
	4♠	Two (2) Kings
6♠		Four (4) Aces and four (4) Kings - Slam
	PASS	Fine

1♥ Shape Opening Bid Examples (continued)

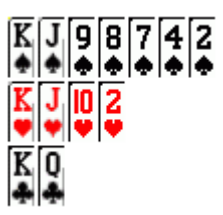

Example 8

	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">North</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">East</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">South</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">West</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">PASS</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">1NT</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">PASS</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">2♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">PASS</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">2♠</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">PASS</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">3♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">PASS</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">4♣</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">PASS</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">4♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">PASS</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">PASS</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">PASS</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">PASS</td> </tr> </table>	North	East	South	West	PASS	1NT	PASS	2♥	PASS	2♠	PASS	3♥	PASS	4♣	PASS	4♠	PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS	
North	East	South	West																			
PASS	1NT	PASS	2♥																			
PASS	2♠	PASS	3♥																			
PASS	4♣	PASS	4♠																			
PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS																			

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♥		13+ HCPs; both (2) 4+-card Major suits
	1NT	16+ HCPs
2♥		4+-card ♥ suit
	2♠	4+-card ♠ suit
3♥		Suit Agreement in ♠; Ace Ask
	4♣	Two (2) Aces
4♠		Three (3) Aces and just two (2) Kings; Escape Slam
	PASS	Partner chickened out

1♥ Shape Opening Bid Examples (continued)

Example 9

	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> <td>West</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>1NT</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>2NT</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>3♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>4♣</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>4♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>4♥</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>5♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>6♠</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	North	East	South	West				1♥	PASS	1NT	PASS	2♠	PASS	2NT	PASS	3♠	PASS	4♣	PASS	4♦	PASS	4♥	PASS	5♦	PASS	6♠	PASS	PASS	PASS				
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PASS	4♣	PASS	4♦																															
PASS	4♥	PASS	5♦																															
PASS	6♠	PASS	PASS																															
PASS																																		

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♥		13+ HCPs; both (2) 4+-card Major suits
	1NT	16+ HCPs
2♠		5+-card ♠ suit (Must have better ♠ than their 4-card ♥)
	2NT	No 4+-card ♠ suit
3♠		6+-card ♠ suit (an extra card in ♠)
	4♣	Suit Agreement; Ace Ask
4♦		No (0) Aces
	4♥	King Ask
5♦		Three (3) Kings
	6♠	Four (4) Aces and four (4) Kings
PASS		Wish me luck

1♥ Shape Opening Bid Examples (continued)


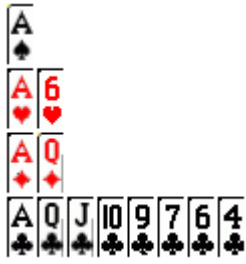
Example 10

<p style="text-align: center;"> <table style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td>K</td><td>Q</td><td>J</td><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>♠</td><td>♠</td><td>♠</td><td>♠</td></tr> <tr><td>K</td><td>Q</td><td>J</td><td>10</td></tr> <tr><td>♥</td><td>♥</td><td>♥</td><td>♥</td></tr> <tr><td>K</td><td>9</td><td>3</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>♦</td><td>♦</td><td>♦</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>K</td><td>2</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>♣</td><td>♣</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table> </p>	K	Q	J	3	♠	♠	♠	♠	K	Q	J	10	♥	♥	♥	♥	K	9	3		♦	♦	♦		K	2			♣	♣			<table> <tr> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> <td>West</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>1NT</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>2NT</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>3♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>3♦</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>6NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	North	East	South	West								1♥	PASS	1NT	PASS	2♥	PASS	2NT	PASS	3♣	PASS	3♦	PASS	6NT	PASS	PASS	PASS		<p style="text-align: center;"> <table style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td>A</td><td>9</td><td>8</td></tr> <tr><td>♠</td><td>♠</td><td>♠</td></tr> <tr><td>A</td><td>6</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>♥</td><td>♥</td><td>♥</td></tr> <tr><td>A</td><td>Q</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>♦</td><td>♦</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>A</td><td>J</td><td>7</td></tr> <tr><td>♣</td><td>♣</td><td>♣</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td>♣</td></tr> </table> </p>	A	9	8	♠	♠	♠	A	6	5	♥	♥	♥	A	Q		♦	♦		A	J	7	♣	♣	♣			6			4			♣
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West	East	Bid Explanation
1♥		13+ HCPs; both (2) 4+-card Major suits
	1NT	16+ HCPs
2♥		4+-card ♥ suit
	2NT	Ace Ask
3♣		Four (4) Aces
	6NT	Four (4) Aces and four (4) Kings
PASS		Yeah!


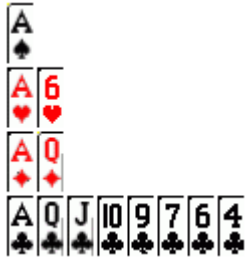
1♥ Shape Opening Bid Examples (continued)

Example 11

	<p>North East South West</p> <p style="padding-left: 150px;">1♥</p> <p>PASS 3♣ PASS 3NT</p> <p>PASS 4♣ PASS 5♣</p> <p>PASS 6♣ PASS PASS</p> <p>PASS</p>	
---	--	---

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♥		13+ HCPs; both (2) 4+-card Major suits
	3♣	Sustain Initiation Response (8+-card ♣ suit; 9+ playing tricks – in fact 10, no discount used)
3NT		Showing the ♣ King
	4♣	Initiates Sustain Honour Convention with next available bid
5♣		No off-suit Ace (seeking shelter in Trumps)
	6♣	Now, remembering 1♥ showed 13+, Partner must have 2 Kings (an extra trick) so now 12
PASS		Way past my bedtime

Example 11a (same as above but with East as Dealer)

	<p>North East South West</p> <p style="padding-left: 100px;">3♣ PASS 3NT</p> <p>PASS 4♣ PASS 5♣</p> <p>PASS PASS PASS</p>	
---	--	---

West	East	Bid Explanation
	3♣	Sustain Opener (8+-card ♣ suit; 9+ playing tricks – in fact 10)
3NT		Showing the ♣ King
	4♣	Initiates Sustain Honour Convention with next available bid
5♣		No off-suit Ace (seeking shelter in Trumps)
	PASS	Which East must sadly PASS

So, no system is perfect!

Weak Major Bid (1♠)

Summary

Opener bids 1♠. Partner, using the bids like a ladder, shows their HCPs range. Opener then shows the real 6+-card suit at the 2-level, which Partner will usually PASS. If Partner has indicated 10-12 HCPs and has suit agreement in Opener's suit, they may support Opener by raising the level. If Partner has shown 13+ HCPs, Partner then guides the team to the appropriate contract. If Partner has a Doubleton or better in Opener's Major suit, this is considered as Suit Agreement.

Opener's Requirements

- 10-12 HCPs
- 6+-card Major

Partner's First Response over 1♠

In the unusual case of Partner having a Sustain Opening hand (with a reduction of 1.5 in the required playing tricks), any bid of 2♥, 2♠, 3♣ or 3♦ is a Sustain Initiation Response, and all bidding follows the rules outlined there.

Otherwise, Partner shows their HCPs by using the bids like a ladder:

- Next Bid (1NT) shows 0-9 HCPs
- Next Bid + 1 (2♣) shows 10-12 HCPs
- Next Bid + 2 (2♦) shows 13+ HCPs

Opener's Reply to 1NT, 2♣ and 2♦

Opener is now going to bid their suit at the 2-level, either 2♥ or 2♠. When Opener does this, effectively bidding a 2-level weak Major Opening bid (without its preemptive nature), they do so with some idea of Partner's holding. This is important as the same reply by Partner is used differently depending on Partner's original response.

Partner's Reply

If Partner responded 1NT (0-9 HCPs), Partner will usually PASS. However, if they have two (2) off-suit tricks and Trump support, their replies are the same as if they had responded 2♣ as detailed below.

If Partner responded 2♣, 10-12 HCPs and good suit agreement, Partner may bid 3♥ or 3♠ as an invitation. If Opener finds themselves with 11-12 HCPs and an off-suit void or singleton, Opener bids Game.

If Partner responded 2♣ and Opener has shown the 6+-card Major by bidding 2♥, and Responder has 10-12 HCPs, a 6+-card ♠ suit and a Singleton or Void in ♥, Responder is allowed to bid 2♠ (which Opener should really PASS). In the case where Opener has a 6+-card ♠ suit and Partner the 6+-card ♥ suit, Partner should just PASS.



If Partner responded 2♦ (13+ HCPs):

- with 13-15 HCPs and no Suit Agreement - PASS
- with 13-18 HCPs and Suit Agreement – Game (4♥ or 4♠)
- with 16-18 HCPs and no Suit Agreement – 3NT
- with 19+ HCPs and Suit Agreement and at least one (1) Ace – Opener's suit at the 3-level (3♥ or 3♠) as a Short Ace Ask Convention
- with 19+ HCPs and no Suit Agreement and at least one (1) Ace – 4NT as Short Ace Ask Convention

As you can see, over 1♠, other than an allowance for Responder to step in and show their Sustain Opening hand, Partner is apparently not permitted to bid other than Partner's suit or NT, or very rarely and in restricted circumstances, their own 6+-card Major. Minors are not encouraged. Partner is not allowed to preempt their Minor.

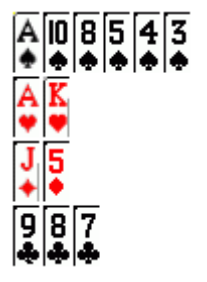
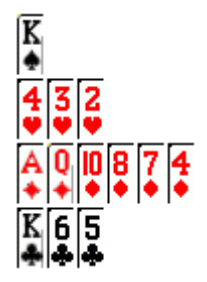
Weak Major Bid (1♠) Examples

Example 1

	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> <td>West</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>DBL</td> <td>1NT</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	North	East	South	West				1♠	DBL	1NT	PASS	2♠	PASS	PASS	PASS		
North	East	South	West															
			1♠															
DBL	1NT	PASS	2♠															
PASS	PASS	PASS																

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♠		10-12 HCPs and a 6+-card (unspecified) Major
	1NT	0-9 HCPs
2♠		6+-card ♠ suit
	PASS	Must PASS Partner's suit preference with 0-9 HCPs



Example 2

	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> <td>West</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>1♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♣</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	North	East	South	West	PASS	PASS	PASS	1♠	PASS	2♣	PASS	2♠	PASS	PASS	PASS		
North	East	South	West															
PASS	PASS	PASS	1♠															
PASS	2♣	PASS	2♠															
PASS	PASS	PASS																

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♠		10-12 HCPs and a 6+-card (unspecified) Major
	2♣	10-12 HCPs
2♠		6+-card ♠ suit
	PASS	With just 12 HCPs, Partner must PASS

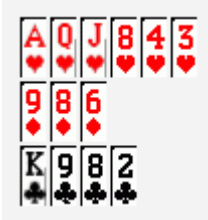

Weak Major Bid (1♠) Examples (continued)

Example 3

	<p>North East South West</p> <p> 1♠</p> <p>PASS 2♣ PASS 2♥</p> <p>PASS PASS PASS</p>	
---	---	---

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♠		10-12 HCPs and a 6+-card (unspecified) Major
	2♣	7-12 HCPs
	2♥	6+-card ♥ suit
	PASS	Weak ♥ Suit; Let it ride



Example 4

	<p>North East South West</p> <p> 1♠</p> <p>PASS 2♣ PASS 2♥</p> <p>PASS 2♠ PASS PASS</p> <p>PASS</p>	
---	--	---

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♠		10-12 HCPs and a 6+-card (unspecified) Major
	2♣	7-12 HCPs
	2♥	6+-card ♥ suit
	2♠	With 10-12 HCPs, a Void in ♥ suit, and at least a 6+-card ♠ suit, Partner may show their own 6+-card Major (looks like a misfit)
PASS		Opener must PASS


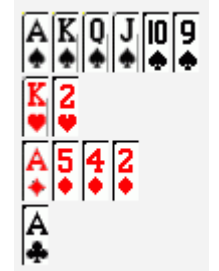
Weak Major Bid (1♠) Examples (continued)

Example 5

	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> <td>West</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♦</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>4♥</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	North	East	South	West				1♠	PASS	2♦	PASS	2♥	PASS	4♥	PASS	PASS	PASS				
North	East	South	West																			
			1♠																			
PASS	2♦	PASS	2♥																			
PASS	4♥	PASS	PASS																			
PASS																						

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♠		10-12 HCPs and a 6+-card (unspecified) Major
	2♦	13+ HCPs
2♥		6+-card ♥ suit
	4♥	Suit Agreement (13-18 HCPs)
PASS		Opener must PASS

Example 6

	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> <td>West</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♦</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>3♥</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>3NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>4♣</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>4♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>6♥</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	North	East	South	West				1♠	PASS	2♦	PASS	2♥	PASS	3♥	PASS	3NT	PASS	4♣	PASS	4♠	PASS	6♥	PASS	PASS	PASS				
North	East	South	West																											
			1♠																											
PASS	2♦	PASS	2♥																											
PASS	3♥	PASS	3NT																											
PASS	4♣	PASS	4♠																											
PASS	6♥	PASS	PASS																											
PASS																														

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♠		10-12 HCPs and a 6+-card (unspecified) Major
	2♦	13+ HCPs
2♥		6+-card ♥ suit
	3♥	Suit Agreement (19+ HCPs); Short Ace Ask after responding 2♦
3NT		One (1) Ace
	4♣	King Ask
4♠		Showing two (2) Kings
	6♥	Four (4) Aces and three (3) Kings Good luck in Slam, Partner
PASS		Opener must PASS

Weak Major Bid (1♠) Examples (continued)

Example 7

	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> <td>West</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♦</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>3♥</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>3♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>6♥</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	North	East	South	West				1♠	PASS	2♦	PASS	2♥	PASS	3♥	PASS	3♠	PASS	6♥	PASS	PASS	PASS				
North	East	South	West																							
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PASS	2♦	PASS	2♥																							
PASS	3♥	PASS	3♠																							
PASS	6♥	PASS	PASS																							
PASS																										

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♠		10-12 HCPs and a 6+-card (unspecified) Major
	2♦	13+ HCPs
	2♥	6+-card ♥ suit
	3♥	Suit Agreement (19+ HCPs) Short Ace Ask Convention
	3♠	0-3 Aces (Partner should be able to work this out)
	6♥	4 Aces and 4 Kings and Slam in ♥
PASS		Partner is captain.

Example 8

	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> <td>West</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♦</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>3NT</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	North	East	South	West				1♠	PASS	2♦	PASS	2♠	PASS	3NT	PASS	PASS	PASS				
North	East	South	West																			
			1♠																			
PASS	2♦	PASS	2♠																			
PASS	3NT	PASS	PASS																			
PASS																						

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♠		10-12 HCPs and a 6+-card (unspecified) Major
	2♦	13+ HCPs
	2♠	6+-card ♠ suit
	3NT	No Suit Agreement; Unexpressed HCP > 2; 16-18 HCPs
PASS		Partner is captain.

Weak Major Bid (1♠) Examples (continued)

Example 9

	<p>North East South West</p> <p>PASS 2♥ PASS 2♠</p> <p>PASS 2NT PASS 3♠</p> <p>PASS 3NT PASS 4♠</p> <p>PASS 4NT PASS 5♥</p> <p>PASS 6♥ PASS PASS</p> <p>PASS</p>	
--	--	--

West	East	Bid Explanation
1♠		10-12 HCPs and a 6+-card (unspecified) Major
	2♥	An 8-card ♥ suit topped by the AKQ, some 10 playing tricks in total (and with the discount of 1.5 playing tricks), more than enough to qualify as a Sustain Initiation Response
	2♠	No AKQ in ♥ suit
	2NT	Initiates Sustain Honour Convention with next available bid
	3♠	Showing the ♠ Ace
	3NT	Again, the Sustain Honour Convention (next available bid)
	4♠	Showing the ♠ King (and no other Ace)
	4NT	Again, the Sustain Honour Convention (next available bid) ... unnecessary as ♠ King didn't really help ... remove later maybe
	5♥	No more off-suit Honours (could have only been the ♠ Queen)
	6♥	Seems reasonable with a Trump split or no ♦ lead
PASS		

Bidding Interference and Overcalls

In all of the examples presented in this booklet, neither North nor South bid, leaving the East-West team free reign over the bidding and the choice of the final contract. I have done this for the sake of simplicity. Unfortunately, such is not the case at the table. Everybody prefers to bid rather than PASS. Everybody seems to prefer to attack than defend. In fact, in my experience, everybody seems to prefer to be Declarer than Dummy. Perhaps it's a matter of ego. My partner – the computer – cares nothing about being Dummy. That is why they don't complain about the unusual contracts they are forced to play with this system. Anyway, the opposition will bid, and this needs to be dealt with.

The first strategy is to ignore the opposition entirely. This can be employed after opposition Opening bids, First Responses and perhaps even a Reply, as long as there is no break in the flow of the bidding. If the opposition opens the bidding, and that bid is less than the bid you intend to make, just bid normally. For example, if the opposition opens with a bid of 1♦, an Overcall of 1♥ shows 13+ HCPs and both (2) 4+-card Majors – just like a normal Opening bid.

The second strategy is to take advantage of the opposition when they bid the bid you intended to make. This strategy, usually employed over Opening bids and first Responses, is to bid DOUBLE. This tells your Partner exactly the same as if you'd made the bid. For example, if the opposition opens with a bid of 1♦, an Overcall of DOUBLE shows 13+ HCPs and one (1) 4+-card Major – just like 1♦. The exception to this use of DOUBLE is when you have a Sustain Opening hand. These hands (capable of making 9+ tricks) are effectively limited by the Sustain Opening rules to 2 of a Major or 3 of a Minor, regardless of the possibility that they could have more tricks. So, if the Opposition bids what the Sustain Opener was going to bid, and the Sustain Opener can make Game or more "on their own bat", they can just bid it. Otherwise, their DOUBLE is for penalties, and must be left in.

So, in almost all of the above examples, the bidding can go on as already documented. So, no further discussion nor examples are required. The remaining strategies apply when the opposition has opened the bidding higher than you are permitted to bid under normal circumstances. These strategies are only employed over certain opposition Opening bids.

The third strategy applies only to Opening Bids not supported by this system (i.e. 1NT, 2♣ or 2♦). Over these bids, a DOUBLE would have no other interpretation than HCPs. As to how many, you'd need to consider the meaning of the opponent's Opening bid – maybe as a rule of thumb, your hand must be equal in strength to that shown by the opposition. In reality, I usually PASS.

The fourth strategy is to bid 1NT, 2♣ or 2♦ (Opening Bid not supported by the system).

If the opposition opens with a bid of 1♦, 1♥ or 1♠, and your permitted Opening bid is less than that bid, but you have 13+ HCPs, you can overcall 1NT. Partner will bid their best suit etc. If you have 16+ HCPs and a 6+-card Minor, perhaps overcalling your Minor by bidding 2♣ or 2♦ may best describe your hand.

Note: If the opposition opens with a bid of 1♣, with 16+ HCPs and no 4+-card Major, you can just DOUBLE as described in the second strategy.

The fifth and final strategy is to PASS. For example, if the opposition opens with a bid of 1♦, and you have 13-15 HCPs and no 4-card Major (i.e. a hand suited to open 1♣), you must PASS.

The use of the DOUBLE for penalties is not encouraged against non-Game bids (other than with a Sustain Opening hand, where you can't make Game on your own). You do not want to DOUBLE your opponent into Game. If the opposition bids Game or better, a DOUBLE is for penalties. Now, I'll again revert to example.

Bidding Interference and Overcalls Examples

Example 1

	North	East	South	West			North	East	South	West
				3♣					2♣	3♣
	PASS	4♣	DBL	4♦			DBL	4♣	PASS	4♦
	PASS	5♣	PASS	PASS			PASS	5♣	PASS	PASS
	PASS						PASS			

This example shows, on the left, the normal bidding that you've been accustomed to – West as Dealer. West opens a Sustain Opening bid (3♣), Partner shows their ♣ Ace (4♣), South bids DOUBLE, West invokes the Sustain Honour Convention (3♦), Partner shows no off-suit Aces with 5♣ ... end of story.

However, on the right, South is the Dealer. North-South are playing SAYC, so South opens 2♣ showing a monster. The bidding then continues in an unaltered fashion to the 5♣ contract. Now, I know it's overbid – down 1 all day, but given that North-South will almost always find their Game fit in ♠, it seems cheap. Most opponents will probably try Slam and fail (so it won't be the best result), but wouldn't you rather bid.

Bidding Interference and Overcalls Examples (continued)

Example 2

<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;"></td> <td style="width: 25%;">North East</td> <td style="width: 25%;"></td> <td style="width: 25%;">South West</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">2♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♠</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>2NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>3♥</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		North East		South West				2♥	PASS	2♠	PASS	2NT	PASS	3♥	PASS	PASS	PASS				<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;"></td> <td style="width: 25%;">North East</td> <td style="width: 25%;"></td> <td style="width: 25%;">South West</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">2♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">DBL</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		North East		South West				2♥				DBL	PASS	PASS	PASS	
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This example shows, on the left, the normal bidding that you've been accustomed to – West as Dealer. West opens a Sustain Opening bid (2♥), Partner shows their ♥ Void (2♠), West invokes the Sustain Honour Convention (2NT), Partner shows no off-suit Aces with 3♥ ... end of story.

However, on the right, South is the Dealer. North-South are playing SAYC, so South opens 2♥ showing 10-12 HCPs and a 6+-card ♥ suit. West bids DOUBLE, North dare not show their 6+-card ♠ suit with 3 HCPs, so that's also a good result

Bidding Interference and Overcalls Examples (continued)

Example 3

North	East	South	West
			PASS
PASS	2♣	PASS	2NT
PASS	3♣	PASS	3♥
PASS	3NT	PASS	4♣
PASS	4♦	PASS	4♣
PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS





North	East	South	West
			1♥
		PASS	PASS
1NT	2♣	PASS	2NT
PASS	3♣	PASS	3♥
PASS	3NT	PASS	4♣
PASS	4♦	PASS	4♣
PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS

On the left, West as Dealer bids PASS (8 HCPs), as does North, then East opens a Sustain Opening bid (2♣), West shows their ♠ Void (2NT), East invokes the Sustain Honour Convention (3♣), West shows ♥ Ace with 3♥, East continues with Honour Convention (skipping 3♣ and bidding 3NT), West shows ♣ Ace (4♣), East continues with 4♦, West shows no more off-suit Aces by bidding Trumps (4♣) to which East bids PASS.

On the right, South is the Dealer and opens 1♥ showing 13+ HCPs and a 4+-card ♥ suit. West bids PASS, North bids 1NT (7-9 HCPs) and East bids their Sustain Opening bid, and the bidding is then the same.

Bidding Interference and Overcalls Examples (continued)

Example 4

<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;"></td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;"> North East South West PASS 2♥ PASS 2♠ PASS 2NT PASS 3♥ PASS 4♥ PASS PASS PASS </td> </tr> </table>		North East South West PASS 2♥ PASS 2♠ PASS 2NT PASS 3♥ PASS 4♥ PASS PASS PASS	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;"></td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;"> North East South West PASS 2♥ 4♥ PASS PASS PASS </td> </tr> </table>		North East South West PASS 2♥ 4♥ PASS PASS PASS
	North East South West PASS 2♥ PASS 2♠ PASS 2NT PASS 3♥ PASS 4♥ PASS PASS PASS				
	North East South West PASS 2♥ 4♥ PASS PASS PASS				

On the left, West as Dealer bids 2♥, initiating the normal Sustain Bidding Sequence which finished in 4♥.

On the right, South is the Dealer and opens 2♥ showing 10-12 HCPs and a 6+-card ♥ suit. West who wanted to bid 2♥ to show the Sustain hand, now “takes the gloves off”, counts their playing tricks and bids the hand as if Partner didn’t exist (11 tricks off-the-top bid Game). Now I know this example is stretching your belief, but any hand may appear at any time. Where West cannot bid at least Game with their Sustain Hand over an Opening bid of the same bid, then they can either DOUBLE with 13+HCP, or PASS.

Bidding Interference and Overcalls Examples (continued)

Example 5

<table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th>North</th> <th>East</th> <th>South</th> <th>West</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">1♦</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♣</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>4♣</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	North	East	South	West			1♦		PASS	2♣	PASS	2♣	PASS	4♣	PASS	PASS	PASS				<table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th>North</th> <th>East</th> <th>South</th> <th>West</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">1♥</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>2♣</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>3♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td>4♣</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PASS</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	North	East	South	West			1♥	1NT	PASS	2♣	PASS	3♣	PASS	4♣	PASS	PASS	PASS			
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On the left, West as Dealer opens 1♦ showing 13+ HCPs and one (1) 4+-card Major, East shows 7-12 HCPs with 2♣, West then bids their Major with 3♣, and East puts them in Game (4♣).

On the right, South is Dealer (playing SAYC) and opens 1♥, West shows 16+ HCPs with a bid of 1NT (and on information about suits), East shows 3+ HCPs and a 5+-card Major with 2♣, West shows Suit Agreement with 3♣, and East 3+ Unexpressed HCPs with Game in 4♣.

Appendix 1 - Summary of Opening Bids and First Responses

As all non-specific Opening Bids (1♣, 1♦, 1♥ and 1♠) are forcing, Responder must bid – even with 0 HCPs!
In the interest of brevity, the table below shows all valid Responses to non-specific Opening Bids.

Opening Bid	Meaning	Partner Response	Meaning
1♣	13+ HCPs No 4+-card Major	1♦	0-9 HCPs
		1♥	7-12 HCPs; 5+-card Major (unspecified)
		1♠	13+ HCPs; 5+-card Major (unspecified)
		1NT	10-12 HCPs; no 5+-card Major
		2♣	13-15 HCPs; no 5-card Major
		2♦	16+ HCPs; no 5-card Major
		2♥	Sustain Initiation Response
		2♠	Sustain Initiation Response
		3♣	Sustain Initiation Response
1♦	13+ HCPs One (1) 4+-card Major (either ♥ or ♠)	1♥	0-6 HCPs or 7-9 HCPs and no Major DPs
		2♣	10-12 HCPs (unless 7-9 HCPs and Major DPs)
		2♦	13-15 HCPs
		1NT	16+ HCPs
		2♥	Sustain Initiation Response
		2♠	Sustain Initiation Response
		3♣	Sustain Initiation Response
1♥	13+ HCPs Two (2) 4+-card Majors (both ♥ and ♠)	1♠	0-6 HCPs or 7-9 HCPs and no 4-card Major
		2♣	10-12 HCPs (unless 7-9 HCPs and 4-card Major)
		2♦	13-15 HCPs
		1NT	16+ HCPs
		2♥	Sustain Initiation Response
		2♠	Sustain Initiation Response
		3♣	Sustain Initiation Response
1♠	10-12 HCPs 6+-card Major (either ♥ or ♠)	1NT	0-9 HCPs
		2♣	10-12 HCPs
		2♦	13+ HCPs
		2♥	Sustain Initiation Response
		2♠	Sustain Initiation Response
		3♣	Sustain Initiation Response
		3♦	Sustain Initiation Response

Appendix 2 - Miscellaneous Concepts and Terminology

High Card Points (HCPs)

These are one of the standard tools used by Bidding Systems to analyze hands. Attributing 4, 3, 2 or 1 HCPs to the Ace, King, Queen and Jack respectively, this turns a pack of 52 cards into something which contains 40 HCPs. A hand (25% of the pack) with one-third (13 HCPs) of the total HCPs is considered unusual.

An Ace will usually win a trick. An Ace is worth 4 HCPs. So, 4 HCPs wins a trick. However, the AKQJ in one suit is worth 10 HCPs, and usually wins 4 tricks. So, 2.5 HCPs per trick. No, 40 HCPs divided by 13 tricks is just over 3 HCPs per trick.

In this system, HCPs are considered in groups of three (3). For example, this very rough tool bundles 7-9 HCPs into a group. Here are the groups presented below. The tool is so very rough, the first group indeed contains 4 elements, not 3. Nevertheless, here they are:

- 0-3
- 4-6
- 7-9
- 10-12
- 13-15 etc.

Any number of contiguous groups of HCPs are aggregated into what I refer to as a HCPs Range. The purpose of all these groups and their bundling in Ranges is to try and represent an almost infinite number of hands in an extremely small and finite bidding auction.

In many systems, normal Opening hands require 13 HCPs, while some preemptive Opening bids can often be made with just 10-12 HCPs. With less than 7 HCPs, some systems require you as Responder to PASS. If Opener shows 13+ HCPs and Partner also has 13+ HCPs, a minimum of 26 HCPs is held by the team, and you should be looking for Game etc. 29 HCPs is considered sufficient to investigate Slam in a suit. But let's not get ahead of ourselves.

To make matters simpler, initial considerations by Opener of their HCPs is limited to the group 10-12 HCPs and the Range 13+ HCP. For Responder (non-Opener), their task is made easier by Ranges – so Responder's consideration is limited to three (3) HCPs Ranges, specifically 0-9 HCPs, 10-12 HCPs, and 13+ HCPs.

Distribution Points (DPs)

Just as an Ace is worth 4 HCPs and wins a trick, having a Void in a non-Trump suit is worth at least a trick, assuming you have sufficient Trumps to take full advantage. A similar but less convincing argument applies for other short suits – both Singletons and Doubletons.

Distribution Points (DPs), only calculated after Suit Agreement is established, are points for Shortages in suits other than Trumps - Voids (5 DPs), Singletons (3 DPs) or Doubletons (1 DP) – to be added to the hand's HCPs for further consideration. In this process is the opportunity for "double-counting" - a Singleton Queen cannot be worth 2 HCPs and 3 DPs, so the HCPs for the Queen should be "discounted" by 1 HCPs

Suit Agreement

Suit agreement is presumed by the Sustain Opening bid with just a 7-card Major or an 8-card Minor.

In all other cases, suit agreement is a combined team holding of eight (8) cards in Majors and nine (9) cards in Minors. As the bidding is a search for suit agreement on the way to the best contract, the chances of having suit agreement in Minors is less than in Majors. However, even when it is clear that the partnership has suit agreement in Minors, the hands may be still suited to Game in No Trumps, so again this reduces the hands played in Minors. By introducing 4+-card Majors in the strictest sense, 5-card Minors are bid less still. Game in Minors is therefore discouraged, but not, it is hoped, Minor Slams (other than the requirement for nine (9) cards), as these are not any more difficult than a Major Slam, and often easier than No Trump Slams.

Miscellaneous Concepts and Terminology (continued)

Balanced or Unbalanced

If you look at all the suits in your hand in turn and find a Void or a Singleton, then you are Unbalanced. However, if your hand contains Doubletons in two (2) of its suits (i.e. 5-4-2-2, 6-3-2-2), it is also considered Unbalanced. All other hands qualify as Balanced.

Shortage

If you look at all the suits in your hand in turn and find a Void or a Singleton, then you have a Shortage. In general, this is undesirable in No Trumps.

Unblocked Shortage

If you look at all the suits in your hand in turn and find a Void or a Singleton which is not the Ace, then you have an Unblocked Shortage. In general, this is undesirable in No Trumps.

Unblocked Off-Suit Shortage

If you look at all the suits (excluding the suit which Partner bid) in your hand in turn and find a Void or a Singleton which is not the Ace, then you have an Off-Suit Unblocked Shortage. In general, this is undesirable in No Trumps.

Team HCPs for Part Scores, Game and Slam Contracts

The number of tricks required for Game depends on the suit bid – nine (9) tricks in No Trumps, ten (10) tricks in ♥ and ♠, and eleven (11) in ♣ or ♦. The following table shows for each Suit Type the minimum number of HCPs that should be held by the partnership. No guarantees are offered that the contract proposed may be successful, just that you should have a fighting chance of making.

Suit Type	Slam Secure	Slam Possible	Game Secure	Game Possible
No Trumps	33	29	26	21
Majors	33	29	26	21
Minors	33	29	28	21

In general, an Opening Hand (13+ HCPs) opposite an Opening Hand (13+ HCPs) should assure the partnership of Game. With 29+ HCPs, Slam should be investigated sooner rather than later.