



Lesson 4: Opening 1 of a Suit; responder's limit bids; opener's basic rebid options: Hands 1-8

This is where you start to learn bidding. Before you come to look at any hands there are issues about procedure. Let's get it all straight right now, at the beginning, before you develop bad habits!

Thoughts about procedure

- 1 During the auction, you are entitled to ask what an opponent's bid means but you may only ask when it is **your turn to bid**.
- 2 If you don't intend to bid don't ask questions – yet. You may not understand your opponents' bids but remember that the more complicated the system, the more likely it is that your opponents have misunderstood each other. Don't risk alerting opponents to their errors. Wait until the end of the auction.
- 3 When it is you who has to make the opening lead, you may ask your questions before you lead.
- 4 However, your partner may also have questions. He may not ask until you have chosen your lead in case his query influences your choice! You need to give him/her the opportunity to ask. You do this by selecting your lead and placing the card **face down** on the table. You only expose the card once partner indicates he is accepts your lead. You could say 'Any questions partner?'
- 5 This procedure minimises the risk of the wrong player facing a card for the opening lead. There are hefty penalties imposed on defenders for this error so avoid it if you can.
- 6 Dummy goes down on the table **after the initial lead has been faced**.
- 7 When dummy puts down his hand, declarer **thanks his partner**. Say "thank you partner" even if you think dummy is rubbish!

Hand 1: Played by North

Open your **LONGEST** suit 1♠ planning to rebid 2♥

Responder does the maths and bids to game.

None Vul	♠ A K 8 5 2 ♥ A J 5 3 ♦ 7 2 ♣ T 3	Dealer N
♠ 9 6 ♥ 9 6 4 ♦ Q T 6 5 ♣ K Q 5 2	N W E S	♠ J T ♥ T 7 2 ♦ A K 4 3 ♣ 9 8 7 4
	♠ Q 7 4 3 ♥ K Q 8 ♦ J 9 8 ♣ A J 6	

North	East	South	West
1 ♠ (1)	Pass	4 ♠ (2)	All pass

Bidding

- 1 Bid longest suit 1♠
- 2 South counts HCP. He has 4 card support of partner's bid suit so he knows that there is a FIT and with 13 HCP knows that the partnership has enough strength for game. Bid it!

Opening lead: East ♦ A top of touching honours

In a suit contract declarer should first count losers – You'd be unlucky to lose one trick in spades, but it's possible if the trumps are divided 4:0 against you, 0 hearts, 2 diamonds and 1 club provided you can ruff a losing diamond and losing club in hand = 3 losers. Good!

Winners –3 Spades, 4 Hearts, 0 diamonds, 1 club = 8. Where can you get another 2 tricks? By ruffing!

Defenders' Plan: Must win 4 tricks to defeat the contract. East hopes to win the ♦ AK, if not more, and hopes that partner can contribute another 2 winning tricks. Count the HCP. Estimate the declaring side to have 25 minimum, you have 8, therefore partner can have no more than 7! Where might these be?

Declarer MUST make a PLAN

Declarer's Work suit - Hearts

Declarers' plan- draw trumps asap, play work suit - hearts

Card play - You lose the first 2 diamonds but ruff the third. Draw trumps in 2 rounds, play hearts (honours from the short hand first) You have nothing to lose in trying the club finesse – but as expected it fails! Nevertheless, NS should make 10 tricks!

Score: NS make 4♠ + 420 (4 x 30 = 120 trick points + 300 non - vulnerable game bonus)

Hand 2

Played by West

Always open the HIGHER rank of TWO FIVE card suits

Responder with a suit FIT invites game & opener does the maths

NS vul	♠ 9 8 ♥ K 7 4 2 ♦ A K T 8 ♣ 9 5 4	Dealer E
♠ A K Q 3 2 ♥ A J 6 5 3 ♦ 9 ♣ Q 6	N W E S	♠ J T 5 4 ♥ Q 8 ♦ J 7 5 3 ♣ A K 3
	♠ 7 6 ♥ T 9 ♦ Q 6 4 2 ♣ J T 8 7 2	

East	South	West	North
Pass	Pass	1 ♠(1)	Pass
3 ♠(2)	Pass	4 ♠(3)	

Bidding

1. With 16 HCP and two 5 card suits, **ALWAYS open the higher rank of two 5 card suits** - 1♠
2. East has 4 card support in Spades and 11 HCP so makes a jump bid to show support and 10-12 HCP
3. West does the maths. Even if East is minimum for his bid (i.e. 16 + 10 = 26 HCP) – enough for game, so bids it - 4♠

Opening lead - North leads ♦A – top of two touching honours

Declarer **MUST** make a **PLAN**

In a suit contract Declarer counts his losers first - 0 Spades, 1 Heart if the ♥K finesse fails, 1 Diamond and 0 Clubs = 2 at most **Winners** - 5 Spades, 3 - 5 Hearts (depending upon the ♥K finesse and a 3:3 suit split), 0 Diamonds and 3 Clubs = 11-12 tricks – contract looks secure!

Defender's plan – Aim to win 4 tricks to defeat the contract

Card play - Ruff the second diamond. Draw trumps in 2 rounds ending in East. Lead the ♥Q and letting it run unless South covers with ♥K. Sadly, the finesse fails and North wins ♥K. North seeing no future in diamonds, should switch to clubs leading ♣9 hoping South may have an honour. Declarer should win with ♣Q (honours from the short hand first) and continue playing clubs discarding a small heart on the third round. Return to playing hearts ruffing the last heart when they don't break 3:3. Defenders should win **two tricks** ♦A and ♥K.

Score EW can make 11 tricks in 4♠ non-vulnerable for +450 (5x30=150 + game bonus of 300)

Hand 3

Played by East

Open your **LONGEST** suit.

E/W Vul	♠ K J 2 ♥ K 8 5 2 ♦ A 7 3 ♣ 5 4 3	Dealer S
♠ Q 5 3 ♥ T 7 6 ♦ Q J 9 ♣ Q J 8 2	N W E S	♠ A 6 ♥ 9 3 ♦ K T 5 2 ♣ A K T 7 6
	♠ T 9 8 7 4 ♥ A Q J 4 ♦ 8 6 4 ♣ 9	

South	West	North	East
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♣ (1)
Pass	2♣ (2)	Pass	Pass (3)

All pass

Bidding

1. Open longest suit
2. West has only 8 HCP but a suit fit in clubs - minimum support bid
3. With a minimum Opener – pass.

Opening lead – South should NOT lead from Hearts **Do NOT lead away from an Ace in a suit contract**. Lead either ♠T (top of a sequence) or 8♦ (top of rubbish)

Declarer MUST make a PLAN

In a suit contract declarer should count his losers first - 1 Spade and 2 Hearts (provided ruffs are available in East), 1 Diamond, 0 Clubs = 3 Looks OK!

Winners – 1 Spade and 5 Clubs = 6 Where can you get 2 more?

Work suit – Diamonds – After trumps drawn, force out A♦ to make 3 tricks

Defenders – Try to work out what Partner's lead means? Aim is to win 6 tricks to bring the contract down.

Declarer's plan - Draw trumps and play diamonds

The Card Play - When you get in, implement your plan. Trumps drawn in 3 rounds. Play diamonds to force out Ace. Defenders should make 1 spade, 2 hearts, and 1 diamond = 4 tricks

Score EW make 2♣ + 1 overtrick 3 x 20 = 60 + 50 part game bonus = +110

Hand 4

Played by South

Open a 4-card MAJOR before a 4-card MINOR suit

Responder with Minimum HCPs and a suit FIT, supports

Opener invites but Responder declines game

All Vul	♠ 9 4 2 ♥ A K 8 5 ♦ T 9 2 ♣ 5 4 3	Dealer W
♠ K T 7 6 ♥ 6 ♦ K 8 5 4 ♣ 9 8 7 6	N W E S	♠ Q J 5 3 ♥ J T 7 2 ♦ Q 7 ♣ A T 2
	♠ A 8 ♥ Q 9 4 3 ♦ A J 6 3 ♣ K Q J	

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Pass	1 ♥(1)
Pass	2♥(2)	Pass	3♥(3)
Pass	Pass (4)	All Pass	

Bidding

1. With two 4 card suits, a major and a minor, bid the major.
2. With 4 Hearts you know you have a FIT. Holding only 7 HCP give a single raise to 2♥ which shows 4 card support and 6 – 9 HCP.
3. Opener thinks “if my partner is at the **top end** of the HCP

range for his bid (6 – 9 HCP) we would have enough for game” (17 + 8 or 9 = 25 or 26) so he bids an INVITATIONAL 3♥

4. With only 7 HCP, Responder has a weak hand at the lower end of the point range so declines the invitation and passes

Opening lead - you have options: ♠6 i.e. small spade promising an honour – Partner please return suit.

Declarer MUST make a PLAN - In a suit contract declarer should count his losers first – 1 Spade, (2 unless he ruffs one in hand) possibly 1 Heart (if suit breaks badly), 2 Diamonds and 1 Club = 5-6! Too many! Can you reduce these?

Winners – ♠A + a spade ruff, ♥AKQ, possible 2 Diamonds once KQ forced out), 2 Clubs once the ♣A has been forced out) = 9

Work Suit – Diamonds. Note your JT9 sequence in diamonds☺

Draw trumps and tackle your work suit

Defenders’ Plan Aim to win 5 tricks!

The Card Play - Declarer is best to win the second spade played by East allowing him to ruff his third losing spade before drawing trumps. West shows out in the second round of trumps – unlucky, a 4:1 split! East now has a winning trump so stop drawing them! Instead, leading from North, play the ♦10 and let it run unless East covers. West wins his ♦K and returns a club. East will win a trump at some stage but you can draw his final trump with your ♥Q. 9 tricks (1S and 1S ruff, 3H, 2D and 2C)

Score N/S make 3♥ = +140, (3 x 30 =90) + 50 part game bonus

Hand 5

Played by North

Open the LOWER of TWO FOUR card suits of the SAME rank
 Responder does the maths and invites game

N/S Vul	♠ A K Q 2 ♥ K 8 5 2 ♦ A T 3 ♣ T 7	Dealer N
♠ J 6 5 3 ♥ J T ♦ 9 8 6 ♣ Q 9 8 2	N W E S	♠ T 4 ♥ 9 3 ♦ K 7 5 2 ♣ A K 5 4 3
	♠ 9 8 7 ♥ A Q 7 6 4 ♦ Q J 4 ♣ J 6	

South	West	North	East
Pass	Pass	1♥ (1)	Pass
3♥ (2)	Pass	4♥ (3)	All pass

Bidding

1. With two 4 card suits of the same rank open the lower suit.
2. South has 10 HCP & excellent support in hearts – jump bid to 3♥ inviting game.
3. Opener with 16 HCP bid game.

Opening lead – ♣ A (top of sequence)

Declarer **MUST** make a **PLAN**

In a suit contract declarer should count his losers first - 0

Spades, 0 Hearts (unless the suit breaks badly), 1 Diamond (if the ♦ K finesse fails), 2 Clubs = 3. Looks good!

Winners – 3 Spades, probably 5 (but definitely 4) Hearts, 2 or 3 Diamonds (depending on whether the finesse for ♦ K works) and 0 Clubs = 9 look certain and 10 probable 😊

Work suit Diamonds playing a finesse hoping for an extra trick!

Defenders – Try to work out what Partner's lead means? Aim is to win 4 tricks to bring the contract down.

Declarer's plan – Ruff the third club, draw trumps and take diamond finesse.

The Card Play - You lose the first 2 clubs and ruff the third.

Trumps drawn in 2 rounds. Lead ♦ Q from south and let it run if ♦ K not played by West. Drat the finesse fails! Win whatever returned to make your contract. (3S, 5H, 2D)

Defenders should win 2 clubs and 1 diamond = 3 tricks

Score N/S make 4♥ vulnerable - +620 (4 x 30 = 120) + 500 vul game bonus

Hand 6

Played by East

Open the LOWER of two 4 card suits of the SAME rank

Responder with a Suit FIT but Minimum HCP

EW Vul	♠ K 9 6 2 ♥ 5 2 ♦ 8 7 ♣ A Q 6 5 4	Dealer E
♠ 8 7 ♥ J 8 7 6 ♦ K T 9 6 2 ♣ K 2	N W E S	♠ J 5 4 3 ♥ A K 9 4 ♦ A Q J ♣ 8 3
	♠ A Q T ♥ Q T 3 ♦ 5 4 3 ♣ J T 9 7	

East	South	West	North
1 ♥ (1)	P	2 ♥ (2)	P
P	P	All Pass (3)	

Bidding

1. Open the lower of two suits of the same rank - 1♥
2. West has 4 hearts (a FIT) and 7 HCP. Bid 2♥ (6-9 HCP)
3. East has 15 HCP and knows that the partnership does not have enough strength for a game even if West was maximum (15 + 9 = 24). Stop in the lowest available part score.

Opening Lead - ♣J top of touching cards **Never lead away from an Ace in a suit contact – so South must not lead spades!**

Declarer MUST make a PLAN

In a suit contract declarer counts losers first: 2 Spades, 1 Heart, 0 Diamonds and 2 Clubs assuming North holds the ♣A = 5

Winners: 0 Spades, possibly 3 Hearts (provided that the suit breaks 3 -2), 5 Diamonds, 0 Clubs given the lead = 9 at most.

Work suit - Diamonds

Declarer's Plan – Draw trumps and play Diamonds

Card play - On ♣J lead put up the ♣K from dummy. The second hand usually plays low, but here if you don't put up the K it will have no hope at all of making a trick. Not surprisingly, it is taken by the ♣A in North. North should continue the suit for 1 round but then stop to consider. North can see that dummy will be able to ruff a Club continuation. North should switch to a low Spade. Declarer will have lost 2 Clubs and now 2 Spades. Declarer has no possible finesse to catch the ♥Q so should just lead out the A and K (sadly, the ♥Q does not fall). Leave this master trump out. Don't waste two of your trumps to draw it out. Play the Diamonds. South can ruff in whenever he chooses. East will make the rest of the tricks.

Thought about playing the Diamond suit – Declarer, play high cards from the short hand first and then play over to the hand in which you have more cards in the suit i.e. play the A, Q, J from East, overtaking the J in West so you can run the rest of the suit. Don't get stuck in the wrong hand 😊

Score 2♥ - 8 tricks made by E/W = +110

Hand 7

Played by South

Open your **LONGEST** suit

Responder with minimum HCP and no fit bids 1NT

Opener with a 6-card opening suit and doubleton spade prefers to play in 2 of his long suit.

All vul	♠ A T 9 ♥ A 7 2 ♦ 3 2 ♣ T 6 5 4 3	Dealer S
♠ K Q 7 6 ♥ J 4 3 ♦ K 5 ♣ 9 8 7 2	N W E S	♠ 5 4 3 2 ♥ K Q 6 5 ♦ T 8 4 ♣ A J
	♠ J 8 ♥ T 9 8 ♦ A Q J 9 7 6 ♣ K Q	

South **West** **North** **East**

1 ♦ (1) Pass 1NT (2) Pass

2 ♦ (3) All pass

Bidding

1. With 13 HCP South opens his longest suit
2. North has 8 HCP, no 4-card major & no FIT so must bid 1NT (6 – 9 HCP and no support for partner's suit)
3. South rebids his 6-card suit preferring to play in a suit contract rather than NT

Opening lead - ♠K – top of touching honours.

Declarer MUST make a PLAN

In a suit contract Declarer counts his losers first: – 1 Spade, 2 Hearts, 1 or 2 Diamonds if the ♦K finesse fails plus the second one if you have to lose a trick to the ♦10, and 1 Club = 5 or 6!
Winners ♠ A, ♥A, 4,5 or 6 Diamonds, 4 Club tricks once the ♣A is forced out (Must play top clubs first from South) = 11 tricks!
Aim to establish winning Clubs on which to discard losing Hearts before the ♥A entry into dummy is driven out.

Defender's Plan – Interpret your partner's opening lead? Lead suit back when you can - he has promised the ♠Q! Need 6 tricks to bring the contract down.

Card Play – If you let West win the ♠K lead and win the ♠Q continuation with your ♠A this will establish a second spade trick for you. Can you see that? Take the Diamond finesse for the ♦K straight away. This will lose as the King is in West's hand. If West continues with spades you can now discard a heart on your established spade to reduce your heart losers to one! Return to drawing trumps in another 2 rounds. Now play a high Club from South to force out the ♣A. Sadly, East is likely to lead a Heart taking out your entry in dummy (North) so you can no longer get over there to use those long Clubs. Declarer will lose 1 Spade, 1 Heart, 1 Diamond and 1 Club (4). Can win a total of 9 tricks.

Score 2♦ by N/S = +110 (3 x 20 = 40) + 50 part game bonus

Hand 8

Played by West

Open a 4-card MAJOR before a 4-card MINOR suit

Responder has minimum HCPs but no FIT so bids 1NT

None vul	♠ K 8 7 6 ♥ 8 7 ♦ J 7 6 5 ♣ A 7 2	Dealer W
♠ 4 3 ♥ J 9 2 ♦ Q 8 4 3 ♣ K J 5 4	N W E S	♠ A Q 2 ♥ A K T 4 ♦ 9 2 ♣ Q 9 8 3
	♠ J T 9 5 ♥ Q 6 5 3 ♦ A K T ♣ T 6	

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♥ (1)	Pass
1 NT (2)	Pass	Pass (3)	All pass

Bidding

1. East has two four card suits – one major and one minor so he opens 1 of the major.
2. West can't support his partner's suit but he does have 7 HCP – he MUST make a bid. His bid has to be 1NT. This shows he has 6 – 9 HCP. It says nothing about any of the suits except that

he does not have 4 card support for his partner, nor does he have 4+ spades otherwise he would prefer to respond 1S. West should not be tempted to pass thinking that his hand is rubbish! East's opening bid of one of a suit shows 12 to 19 HCP!

3. East with 15 HCP knows there is no game even if West is maximum and with no FIT passes leaving West in 1NT.

Opening lead - It is usual to lead a long suit against NT. That means a choice between Diamonds and Spades. If in doubt against NTs, lead the Major, choosing ♠6 – 4th highest.

Declarer MUST make a PLAN - Counts top tricks in NT contacts first ♠ - A & ♥ - A K = Total 3!

Possibilities for extra tricks – Spade lead might give you another trick if ♠K in North. Heart finesse will provide 1 more trick (2 if the finesse works!). In Diamonds the Queen might win if A K are both in the South hand, in Clubs can only lose the ♣A to make 3 tricks.

Work suit – which would be best? Well the Club suit would gain you the most after A forced out so try it first.

Declarer's Plan – On a Spade lead you have your 4th trick if you play your ♠Q. Only 3 more to find. Remember, especially in NT don't cash winners until you have established all the tricks you can elsewhere. Tackle the Clubs which we chose as the work suit. You will win 3 tricks in this suit. That would be enough to make your contract. You still have the possibility of taking the Heart finesse, to knock out the ♥Q. Lead the ♥J and let it run – ♥Q wins but your ♥10 is now winner!

Score – 1NT made by E/W = +90 (1 x 40) + 50 part game bonus.

With 1 overtrick add +30