

STANDARD AMERICAN BRIDGE
Openings & Responses — MAJOR v. minor

MAJOR OPENER 1 ♥ ♠	MAJOR RESPONDER
Min. 13-15 5+ of MAJOR	Weak 0-5 Pass Min. 6-9 Single Raise — 3 Support = 2 ♥ ♠
Inv. 15-18 5+ of MAJOR Max. 18-21 G.G. 5+ of MAJOR	Inv. 10-12 Double Raise — 4 Support = 3 ♥ ♠ Inv. 10+ Temporizing Bid — 3 Support = 2 Banana “New Suit by Responder is Forcing one round.” After Rebid by Opener, show support at Min. Level with Min. Values. Or with G.G. values (12-15) jump to GAME. “The One Who Knows Goes.”
Need 6+ to rebid	

minor opener 1 ♦ ♣	RESPONDER's GOAL — show MAJOR
Min. 13-15 hcp 4+ ♦ 3+ ♣	Weak 0-5 hcp - Pass Min. 6-9 hcp - Single Raise — Undesirable 4 Support = 2 ♦ 5 Support = 2 ♣ 1NT if no 4+ card MAJOR 10-12 Double Raise — 4-5 Support = 3 ♦ ♣ Goal to reach 3NT since 5 of minor requires 28-9 hcp
Min. 13-15 hcp Rebid 2 ♥ ♠ if 4 support Rebid 1NT if neg. or Rebid 2 of minor Inv. 15-18 Rebid 3 ♥ ♠ if 4 support Max. 18-21 G.G. Rebid 4 ♥ ♠ if 4 Support Rebid 2NT if neg.	REAL GOAL ♥ ♠ — 6+ hcp 4+ of MAJOR Up-the-Line Bidding — if 4-4 in MAJORS, bid 1 ♥ Opener might rebid 1 ♠ Compare to 5-5 in MAJORS, bid 1 ♠ later 2 ♥ if neg. If Opener Rebids your Major, re-evaluate your hcp. GAME possible? If Opening bid is 1 ♣, consider responding Up-the-Line with 1 ♦ even with 4 of your MAJOR since this allows Opener to rebid either MAJOR and perhaps become Declarer, which is advantageous.

minor suit opening bids
Sample Hand #1 — Working toward a MAJOR SUIT FIT

Dealer-N; Ignore vulnerability.

	NORTH		
	32		
	QJ54		
	J854		SUGGESTED AUCTION:
	Q32		P,P,P
WEST		EAST	1S, 4S 1D, 2S, P
AQJ5		KT96	P,P,P
T96		A87	
K2		A763	
A964		K5	
	SOUTH		
	874		FINAL CONTRACT: 4S
	K32		W as DECLARER must win at least 10 of 13 tricks.
	QT9		E=DUMMY, N/S=DEFENDERS
	JT87		

Bidding Dialogue:

- N: **P**
- E: **1D** — I have an OPENING HAND (O.H.) but no 5+ MAJOR. I bid my best MINOR, hoping partner will show me a 4+ card major.
- S: **P** — I do not have enough hcp or a good enough suit for an OVERCALL.
- W: **1S** — I have 6+ hcp (actually a whopping 14) plus a 4-card major.
- N: **P** — I, too, do not have enough hcp or a good enough suit for an OVERCALL.
- E: **2S** — I need to let partner know I have 4 of his spades, but am Minimum O.H., 13-15.
- S: **P** — Same as before.
- W: **4S** — We have an 8-card GOLDEN FIT plus GAME VALUES; I should jump to show it. "The One Who Knows Goes."

NOTE: Recognizing that E's second bid (no jump) LIMITS E's Opening Hand to a MINIMUM (13-15 hcp), W decides to jump to Game to show W's Opening values. O.H + O.H. = GAME.

If, on the other hand, W had less than an O.H. W would pass with a minimum 6-9 hcp accepting a Partscore. If W had a Limit Raise, 10-12 hcp, W would bid 3S to invite E to GAME if E should be at the top of E's stated Minimum, perhaps 15 or stretchable.

If, on the other hand, W was even stronger than a mere O.H., W would choose a different bidding scheme. A jump to Game is called FAST ARRIVAL— "Partner, we have just enough for GAME, no more." But with a huge hand, perhaps 19 hcp, W would want to explore possibilities for Slam. That is a more advanced lesson, but understand here at minor Sample Hand #1 that FAST ARRIVAL is an important concept in precision bidding.

Take a look at the backs of the cards in bidding box for 4S and 6S. Compare score of 420 NV GAME to score of 980 NV SLAM.

Play-of-the-Hand Likely Sequence

- Trick 1: Dummy wins h-A
- Trick 2: Dummy leads c-x, W wins c-A
- Trick 3: W leads c-x, Dummy wins c-K
- Trick 4: Dummy leads d-x, W wins d-K
- Trick 5: W leads d-x, Dummy wins d-A
- Trick 6: Dummy leads d-x, W wins s-x (trump)
- Trick 7: W leads c-x, Dummy wins s-x (trump)
- Trick 8: Dummy leads d-x, S discards h-x, W wins s-J
- Trick 9: W leads c-x, N discards h-x, Dummy wins s-9
- Trick 10: Dummy leads h-x, S wins h-K
- Trick 11: S leads s-x, Dummy wins s-K
- Trick 12: Dummy leads h-x, N wins h-J.
- Trick 13: N leads s-x, W wins s-A

After Opening Lead, Declarer studies Dummy with these questions:

1. Count probable LOSERS:
 - S-0 (AKQJT9xx, no problem, particularly good for CROSS-TRUMPING d and c)
 - H-2 Losers
 - D-0 (with CROSS-TRUMPING)
 - C-0 (with CROSS-TRUMPING)
2. PULL TRUMP immediately? No. Though often a good, first strategy, the better strategy for Sample Hand #1 is CROSS-TRUMPING c and d. Using 3 trump in each hand to get rid of Opponents' trump is wasteful here. No fear of being over-trumped since you have all high trump.
3. Analyze OPENING LEAD: Probably no problem; N probably has either the h-QJ or h-QJT. No way to avoid the two heart losers. But that's okay. You still make your bid with an overtrick.

Score: 5X30 = 150 plus a GAME Bonus = 450NV or 650 V

minor suit opening bids
Sample Hand #2 — Working toward a MAJOR SUIT FIT but ...
Responder with no 4-Card Major — NT Partscore Contract

Many of the hands we have played in the class have gotten us to GAME in a MAJOR TRUMP, but you will find that most hands do NOT end up in GAME. Also that a MAJOR SUIT FIT can be elusive. Below is a Partscore example where NT is the best Contract.

Dealer-E; Ignore vulnerability.

	NORTH		
	K54		
	J98		
	K82		SUGGESTED AUCTION:
	Q872		1N
WEST		EAST	P, P P, P
QT86		9732	1C, P
763		A52	
J53		AT94	
AK4		93	
	SOUTH		
	AJ		FINAL CONTRACT: 1NT
	KQT4		N as DECLARER must win 7 of the 13 tricks.
	Q76		S=DUMMY, E/W=DEFENDERS
	JT65		

Bidding dialogue

- E: **P** — “Sorry, Partner, not enough hcp to open.”
- S: **1C** — “Sorry, Partner, wish I had a 5-card Major to bid, but here is my best minor.”
- W: **P** — “I have enough hcp for an Overcall, but not a good enough suit.”
- N: **1NT** — “Sorry, Partner, I do not have a 4-card Major to respond, but I do have 6-10 hcp and honors in all suits. I do have four clubs and will support them if you rebid them which would mean you have six clubs. But for now NT is goal.”
- E: **P** — “I do not have enough hcp or a good enough suit for an Overcall.”
- S: **P** — “With my balanced distribution and our lack of hcp, 1NT is best.”
- N: **P** — “Oh, I hate to pass 1NT because one of the partnerships has to make 1NT, and with such balanced hcp, it might be our partnership. Maybe we can set them.”

Opening Lead (by E)— s-2 (or d-4? 4th from High is true of both suits) I suggest s-2 because with a Major Suit goal, and both N and S lacking a Major Suit Fit, spades is the more likely suit to find gold. Also, the h-A will be an entry if DEFENDERS do make a 4th spade good.

I will not even attempt here a “Likely” Play-of-the-Hand sequence because the variables are so many with hcp balanced all around. N/S will start on their best suit, hearts, and certainly get 3 heart tricks, 2 spade tricks, and at least 1 trick each in clubs and diamonds. E gets 2 diamonds and 2 clubs. Therefore S will make 3NT = 100 + 50 Part-Score Bonus = 150.

**Sample Hand #3 — Working toward a MAJOR SUIT FIT
Happy Responder with 4-4 in the Majors — Up-the-Line Bidding**

Dealer-S; Ignore vulnerability

NORTH	
QJ97	
AQ43	
AT5	
63	
WEST	EAST
54	863
KT6	J72
J9832	Q76
KQ7	JT42
SOUTH	
AKT2	
985	
K4	
A985	

SUGGESTED AUCTION:

1H, 4S
P,P,P P,P,P
1C, 1S, P

FINAL CONTRACT: **4S**

S as DECLARER must win 10 of the 13 tricks.
N=DUMMY, E/W=DEFENDERS

Bidding Dialogue during Up-The-Line Bidding:

- S: **1C** — “I have an Opening Hand (O.H.) but no 5+ Major. I bid my best minor, hoping partner will show me a 4+ card major.”
- W: **P** — “I do not have enough hcp or a good enough suit for an Overcall.”
- N: **1H** — “I have two 4-card Majors. Usual procedure with 4-4 is to bid **Up-the-Line**, bid hearts first and see what Opener says.”
- E: **P** — “I, too, do not have enough hcp or a good enough suit for an Overcall.”
- S: **1S** — “I do not have 4 hearts, but now I can bid my 4-card spade suit. Responder might well be 4-4 in the Majors. By bidding only 1S, I am also showing that I have a Min. 13-15 hcp.”
- W: **P** — “Same as before.”
- N: **4S** — “Great, we have an 8-card GOLDEN FIT in spades. With my 13 hcp, I know that we are in GAME vicinity, but no chance for SLAM with Partner’s Min. I need to jump to GAME, which is FAST ARRIVAL.” See notes in minor Pattern #1.

Opening Lead (by E) — c-K (top of touching honors)

Play-of-the-Hand Likely Sequence

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Trick 1: W wins c-K, leads c-Q | Trick 10: Dummy wins h-A, leads h-x |
| Trick 2: S wins c-A, leads c-x | Trick 11: W wins h-K, leads s-x |
| Trick 3: Dummy wins s-9 (trump), leads s-x | Trick 12: S wins s-A, leads s-K |
| Trick 4: S wins s-10, leads c-x | Trick 13: S wins s-K |
| Trick 5: Dummy wins s-J (trump), leads d-x | |
| Trick 6: S wins d-K, leads d-x | |
| Trick 7: Dummy wins d-A, leads d-x | |
| Trick 8: S wins s-x (trump), leads h-x | |
| Trick 9: Dummy wins h-Q (finesse), leads h-A | |

After Opening Lead, Declarer studies Dummy with these questions:

1. Count probable LOSERS:
 - S-0 (AKQJT9xx, no problem, particularly good for CROSS-TRUMPING d and c)
 - H-2 Losers? (but AQ tenace makes finesse desirable. And it works, h-only 1 loser)
 - D-0 (with CROSS-TRUMPING)
 - C-0 (with CROSS-TRUMPING)
2. PULL TRUMP immediately? No. The better strategy for this deal, as in Pattern #1, is CROSS-TRUMPING c and d. Using 3 trump in each hand to get rid of opponents' trump is wasteful here. No fear of being over-trumped since you have all high trump.
3. Analyze OPENING LEAD: Probably no problem; W is marked with c-KQ. "I COULD take my A at the first lead, but if I let W win with the K, W will probably come back with the Q, thinking E has the A. I can then commence immediately upon my plan of CROSS-TRUMPING before Opponents get wise and lead a trump.
4. Once I start with the Cross-Trumping E/W cannot stop me because they cannot overtrump me. This hand makes 5, losing only 1 heart and 1 club.

minor suit opening bids
Sample Hand #4 — Working toward a MAJOR SUIT FIT
Happier Responder with 5-5 in the Majors

Dealer-W; Ignore vulnerability.

NORTH
 K54
 K82
 QJ9
 JT54

WEST	EAST
AQ	JT632
QJT	A7654
T652	A
A986	K3

SOUTH
 987
 93
 K8743
 Q72

SUGGESTED AUCTION:

P,P,P,P

1D, 1N, 3H, P 1S, 2H, 4H

P,P,P

FINAL CONTRACT: **4H**

E as DECLARER must win 10 of 13 tricks.

W=DUMMY, N/S=DEFENDERS

Bidding Dialogue with a minor opening and Responder with 5-5 in the Majors

- W: **1D** — “I have 4-4 in the minors and could open either one with legitimacy. However, our partnership promises only 3 with 1C but 4 with 1D, 1D is the more specific Opening. As always, however, I am asking Partner to respond in a 4-card Major.”
- N: **P** — “I do not have enough hcp or a good enough suit for an Overcall.”
- E: **1S** — “I have two 5-card Majors. Usual procedure with 4-4 is to bid **Up-the-Line**, but with 5-5, reverse that, bidding the higher-ranking suit first so that Opener can choose the second Major at a lower level.”
- S: **P** — “I, too, do not have enough hcp or a good enough suit for an Overcall.”
- W: **1N** — “Partner’s bid at the moment promises only 4. I do not have the requisite four spades to support his 1S Response; so I bid 1N.”
- N: **P** — “Same as before.”
- E: **2H** — “Okay, but now when I bid 2H, you know that I am at least 5-4 in Spades and Hearts, and perhaps 5-5. Also I must have significant hcp to Respond twice.”
- S: **P** — “Same as before.”
- W: **3H** — “Okay, I prefer your hearts but am not wildly supportive; I think I prefer hearts to NT since my first-bid suit diamonds are pretty lousy.”
- S: **P** — “Same as before.”
- E: **4H** — “That’s good enough for me. I have five hearts, though my bidding promised you only four, and I have hcp for O.H. plus a singleton of your suit. Let’s try it.”

Note: Thinking about E’s second bid, after reflection I believe a jump to 3H is called for especially considering that E has an O.H. and five (not merely four) hearts.

OPENING LEAD by S — c-2 (unbid suit, small club suggests high honor)

Trick 1: N plays c-T, E wins c-K

Trick 2: E leads s-x to finesse s-Q in Dummy, which loses to N s-K

Trick 3: N returns Partner's clubs though seeing c-A in Dummy: a later trick? Dummy wins c-A

Trick 4: Dummy leads h-Q, N ducks hoping E will play h-A, but E ducks, and Q wins

Trick 5: Dummy plays h-J, N covers with h-K, E wins h-A

Trick 6: E leads h-x to pull last trump from N, Dummy wins h-T

Trick 7: Dummy cashes s-A, wins

Trick 9: Dummy leads d-x E wins d-A

Trick 10. E leads s-J, with all trumps gone J wins

Trick 11: E leads s-T, wins

Trick 12: E leads last spade, wins

Trick 13: E wins with last trump

1 Loser: s-K: Final Score 4H making $6 \times 30 = 180 + 300$ NV or 500 V Bonus

minor suit opening bids
Sample Hand #5 — Working toward a MAJOR SUIT FIT but ...
Responder with no 4-Card Major — NT GAME Contract

Dealer-N; Ignore vulnerability.

NORTH	
A52	
A985	
K8	
K763	
WEST	EAST
98	J763
K7432	T6
QJ9	T43
T98	A542
SOUTH	
KQT4	
QJ	
A7652	
QJ	

SUGGESTED AUCTION:

1C, 1N, P
P,P,P P,P,P
1S, 3N

FINAL CONTRACT: **3N**
N as DECLARER must win 9 of 13 tricks.
S=DUMMY, E/W=DEFENDERS

Bidding Dialogue:

- N: **1C** — “I have an O.H. (13-21 hcp) but no 5-card major. Nor do I have a 4-card diamond suit. I’ll bid my “better minor”, asking partner to name a major.”
- E: **P** — “I do not have enough hcp or a good enough suit for an Overcall.”
- S: **1S** — “I have 4 spades and 5 diamonds. Some players would bid 1D and see if partner bids a major, but others like to show a 4-card major at first opportunity.”
- W: **P** — “I, too, do not have enough hcp or a good enough suit for an Overcall.”
- N: **1N** — “I have only 3 of my partner’s major and since partner skipped over hearts, s/he is unlikely to have four to match my hearts. To bid 2H at this point would be a REVERSE, showing a stronger hand than I have. 1NT limits my hand to 13-15 hcp and allows Partner to bid 2H which, at this point, would reveal five spades and 4+ hearts, making this the optimal bidding sequence. If Partner passes, OK.”
- E: **P** — “Same as before.”
- S: **3N** — “I like NT with my Semi-Balanced Distribution (5,4,2,2). Since I have better than Game Values but not nearly enough to consider Slam opposite Partner’s now “limited” O.H. Slam is unlikely. ‘The One Who Knows Goes.’ so I jump to 3NT.

Opening Lead (by E)— c-x 4th from High. True N opened 1C, but 1C is a “convenient minor” and not always a real bid.

Play-of-the-Hand Likely Sequence

- Trick 1: Dummy wins c-J
- Trick 2: Dummy leads d-x, N wins d-K
- Trick 3: N leads d-x, Dummy wins d-A
- Trick 4: Dummy leads d-x, W wins d-Q, N discards h-x
- Trick 5: W leads c-x, E wins c-A
- Trick 6: E returns c-x, Dummy discards s-x, N wins c-K

Trick 7: N leads s-x, Dummy wins s-K
Trick 8: Dummy wins d-x
Trick 9: Dummy wins d-x
Trick 10: Dummy leads h-Q, W covers with h-K, N wins h-A
Trick 11: N wins s-A
Trick 12: N leads s-x, S wins s-Q
Trick 13: S wins h-J

2 Losers: d-Q, c-A:

Final Score 3NT making 5, $40+30+30+30+30=160 + 300$ NV Game Bonus N/S = 460.

NOTE: Slam usually requires about 33 hcp, especially true in NT where trump and distribution do not come so much into play.

South's 15 hcp includes two "dubious doubletons", which means that it is dubious to count both QJ as 3 points when neither card may in fact take a trick (if A and K are in opponents' hands). North's 1NT bid limits the hand to 13-15 hcp and also denies length in spades; hopefully his hcp are in h and c to help out the dubious QJs.

However, this is a somewhat bold move by S since N's opening bid of 1C could be artificial, showing only three with 0 honors. If W holds ATxxx of clubs and E holds Kx of clubs, this contract would be SET in 5 quick leads of clubs. This is a strategic calculation of N's strength by S, and the 3NT turns out beautifully.

minor suit opening bids
Sample Hand #6 — Working toward a MAJOR SUIT FIT and ...
torn between a weaker Major Fit and stronger minor fit

Dealer-E; Ignore vulnerability.

	NORTH		
	J7		
	AJ54		
	A3		SUGGESTED AUCTION:
	JT853		P, P
WEST		EAST	1S, P 1D, 2S
8532		AKT6	P, P
K		876	
QJT98		K762	
K62		A7	
	SOUTH		
	Q94		FINAL CONTRACT: 2S
	QT932		W as DECLARER must win 8 of 13 tricks.
	54		FINAL CONTRACT: 2S
	Q94		

This is a good example of why the **OVER-RIDING FIRST GOAL** of every deal is to find a Major Suit Fit and get to the correct level of bidding. Party Bridge Responders with W's tiny spades would probably ignore them and seek a diamond contract, immediately knowing the partnership to have at least 9 diamonds together.

But with either diamonds as trump or spades, the three losers are exactly the same. So at 30 points per trick instead of 20, no matter if you stop at a Partscore in spades and achieve 170 (vs. 130 in diamonds) or go to 4S and achieve 420 NV or 620 V, you end up with a better score with spades as trump.

And if you were so unwise as to go to GAME in diamonds, 5D, you would be Down-1.

Bidding Dialogues with three different personalities as W — Timid, Aggressive, Moderate

Timid Responder in W:

E: **1D** — "I have 14 hcp but no 5+ Major. I bid my better minor, diamonds, which almost always promises 4+."

W: **1S** — "I have these five fab diamonds, but our agreement is to show the 4-card Major."

E: **2S** — "I like the spades, but I have a minimum O.H., not enough to jump."

W: **P** — "I am tempted to bid 3D to show my great support, also to show that my spades are so poor. But I am really pretty weak, and my h-K singleton cannot be counted both as hcp also as a singleton. We could easily be missing the top two diamonds, and with a bad spade fit, GAME is very iffy. My partner knows me to be a cautious bidder; without a jump from partner, P is probably best."

More Aggressive W-E bidders at this point:

W: **3D** — "Partner, my spades are tiny, and I have 5 great diamonds for you. Where to?"

E: **4S** — "My 14 hcp are strong, not a quack among them, plus I have a good doubleton

with the c-A, plus you obviously have great diamonds which, with my 4 will give us a strong two-suiter hand.”

More Cautious E Opener at this point

E: **3S** — “I certainly don’t want to go to 5D, and with only 14 hcp, I am not completely confident of Game in spades. You have not yet limited your hand? Should we go?”

W: **4S** — “My K singleton in hearts is wasted values, yes, but with 8 spades and 9 good diamonds (my 5 opposite your probable 4), and now, you inviting GAME, I am hopeful you have at least one ace in either hearts or clubs, making my two Ks more valuable. I am aggressive; you are cautious; let’s go.”

Opening Lead (by N)— c-J top of a sequence)

Trick 1: Dummy wins c-A

Trick 2: Dummy leads s-A, wins

Trick 3: Dummy leads s-K, wins

Trick 4: Dummy leads d-K, N wins d-A

Trick 5: N leads h-A, wins

Trick 6: N leads c-T, W wins c-K

Trick 7: W leads d-Q, wins

Trick 8: W leads d-J, S trumps with s-Q

Trick 9: S leads h-Q, W trumps

Trick 10: W leads d-T, wins

Trick 11: W leads d-9, wins

Trick 12 & 13: W and E both have 2 trump remaining, last 2 tricks

Note: When pulling trump and there is only one left out, but it is high, as is the s-Q in S in this deal, don’t bother to lead another trump to get that high trump out, using up two of your trump to collect one when it is high anyway. Start on your long suit, make S trump a diamond, leaving you with your last two trump in both Declarer and Dummy.

3 Losers: d-A, h-A, s-Q

Final Score 2S making 4= $30 \times 4 = 120$ plus Part-Score Bonus 50 = 170

Diamonds as trump also makes 4 (same losers) = $20 \times 4 = 80$ plus Part-Score Bonus 50 = 130 which, you see, is a low board if every other E/W pair goes with spades as trump.