

REVISION EXERCISE 7

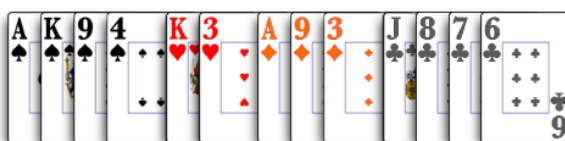
QUIZ ANSWERS AND COMMENTARY

1. You have this hand, what is your opening bid?



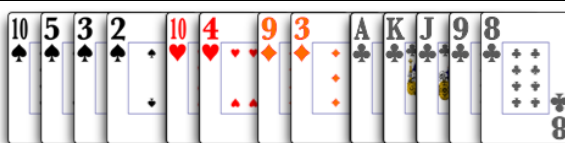
With two 5-card suits, the higher ranked is opened first and the lower rebid where appropriate. The higher ranked here is spades so the opening is 1♠.

2. You have this hand, what is your opening bid?



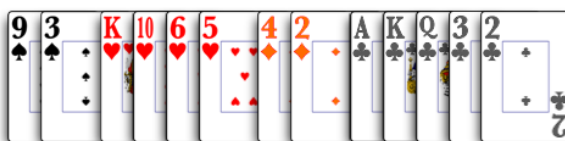
You have 15 HCPs and a balanced hand, but you are too strong to open 1NT. With two 4-card suits, open the lower ranked first – 1♣.

3. Partner has opened 1♥, how do you respond?



The clear temptation is to respond with 2♣ but a 2-level bid of a new suit by responder promises 10+ total points. Here, you have only 9 TP. As it happens, there is another suit you can bid, so you respond 1♠. It would be a mistake to bid 1NT just because your spades are not particularly attractive. The object is to find a major suit fit with partner (if one exists), but one can never be found if a potential bid of a major is bypassed.

4. Partner has opened 1♦, how do you respond?



In contrast to the last example, we now have 13 TP and we will be looking for game somewhere, so the response is 2♣ and we are strong enough to rebid 2♥ later if the situation requires it.

This last point is important as it is often said – correctly – do not deny a 4-card major. This means you should not make a bid that shows that you don't have a 4+ card major. In this instance, we are strong enough to show our hearts later, if required. Denying a major would happen in question 3 were we to respond 1NT, bypassing spades, rather than bidding 1♠ as shown. Denying a major is not the same as failing to bid it at the first opportunity. This is quite a common misunderstanding.

BIDDING SUITS AND BIDDING ORDER

Natural bidding order

Suits are bid naturally in the order clubs, diamonds, hearts, spades, clubs, diamonds, hearts, spades, etc. Where possible, we follow this order. If we do not follow this order, then there will be a reason, such as:

- Limited hand strength
- Relative length of suits

We will say that bidding in the reverse order is the opposite of bidding suits in the natural order. As there will always be a reason for this, it is up to us to divine that reason and bid on accordingly.

In the following, only 1-level openings are discussed showing a hand with 12–19 Total Points or so.

The opening bid

As there is no prior bid to a suit opening, there is no concept of a natural order of bids at this early stage. However, opener must choose the correct suit to open with:

- Do not open with a suit if the hand meets the requirements for a 1NT opening.
- With one suit longer than all the others, open 1-of-this-suit .
- With two 4-card suits, open in the natural order – the lower ranked (ignore 4–4–4–1 hands for now).
- With two 5- or 6-card suits open in the reverse order – the higher ranked.

After only one bid, it is clearly not apparent that opener has bid in the natural or reverse order. Responder can only find out after opener's rebid.

Responder's first bid

Responder's aim is to bid in the same way as opener: longest suit, lower of two 4-card suits, higher of two 5- or 6-card suits. Let's call this "responder's preferred bid". With hands of 10+ TP's, then responder's preferred bid can always be made, but there is a problem with weaker hands in the 6–9 TP's range. It is a golden rule that responder never bids a new suit at the 2-level without 10+ TP's. To make this abundantly clear, if responder bids a new 2-level suit, then opener automatically assumes 10+ TP's and will bid on with possible disastrous consequences.

It should be apparent by now that responder's problem is what to bid if the preferred bid cannot be made because the hand is too weak but still strong enough to make a useful response (i.e. 6–9 TP's). There are two possibilities:

- There is another 4+ card suit that can be bid at the 1-level (quiz question 3 shows such a hand).
- Bid 1NT when no other suit bid is available (shows 6–9 points but **does not promise** a balanced hand).

The 1NT response categorically denies support for opener and also denies having 4 cards in every suit after opener's suit and, in particular, denies a possible 4-card major. So:

1♦ opening, 1NT response

Responder does not have 4 diamonds, 4 hearts or 4 spades. This leaves responder with 4+ clubs and 6–9 points. The bidding as shown is frequently a mistake.

Opener's and responder's rebids bypassing a suit

Opening and rebidding suits both at the 1-level

The following bidding illustrates opener bypassing a suit:

1♣ opening, 1♦ response, 1♠ opener's rebid.

Opener had the opportunity to rebid 1♥ bid did not do so. It follows that opener does not have four hearts so it is of no use responder looking for a heart fit. What we do know is:

- Opener holds four cards in both clubs and spades, or
- Clubs are longer than spades (5–4 say)

It will be correct nearly all of the time to assume there are exactly four cards in spades, so responder should rebid on this basis.

Opening a suit at the 1-level and rebidding a new suit at the 2-level

This is the most frequent scenario in bidding, so it has to be thoroughly understood. Take as an example:

1♦ opening, 1♥ response, 2♣ opener's rebid.

Opener's suits have been made in reverse order (diamonds **BEFORE** clubs), so diamonds have to be 5+ cards in length. Clubs are probably 4 cards but could occasionally be 5 cards. More importantly for responder, opener does not have 4 hearts (opener did not support hearts) or 4 spades (opener bypassed spades). This is a lot of very useful information.

Responder's first bid at the 1-level

Take as an example:

1♦ opening, 1♠ response.

Note that responder has not bid hearts. Why?

- Responder does not have 4 hearts, or
- Responder has 5 spades and 4 (or 5) hearts and so is bidding in reverse order

If responder holds a weak hand in the 6–9 TPs range, responder cannot now make a 2-level bid that would help clarify the situation. Opener must be alert to this possibility and rebid accordingly and, in particular, avoid taking the bidding too high simply because no fit with responder has been found. Note in bidding this way responder does not preclude having 4+ diamonds as we must show a major suit before agreeing opener's minor.

Responder's first bid at the 2-level

Take as an example:

1♥ opening, 2♣ response.

We immediately know responder has 10+ TPs. We see that responder has not bid hearts or spades. Why? Because:

- Responder does not have 4 hearts or they would have been supported immediately
- Responder does not have 4 spades, or
- Responder does have 4 spades but clubs are longer

Opener must be alert to the last possibility in particular but at this point opener's permissible rebids start to get a bit complicated.

There are lots of other nooks and crannies in this area that need to be explored at some stage, but for now the above will cover the vast majority of suit bidding situations you will meet.