

## RESPONDING TO ONE-LEVEL OPENING BIDS (5-CARD MAJORS)

Over a minor suit opening, the emphasis should be to introduce an alternative suit in preference to merely supporting the opening minor (majors and no-trumps score more).

Conversely, over a major suit opening, the emphasis should be to give support for the opening major at the appropriate level.

**When supporting partner's opening suit, you should take account of distribution, by adding say 4 points for a void and 2 points for a singleton. Also add 1 point for extra length in the supported suit (i.e. with five cards in a minor, or four cards in a major).**

There are five basic principles in responding:

- any hand of less than 6 points should be passed (in the absence of any opposition interference bidding).

- supporting partner's suit (at any level), or bidding no-trumps, are known as **limit bids**, and opener is **not** obliged to make a further bid.

- a change of suit in response is an **un-limited bid**, and opener **must bid again**.

- to change the suit at the two-level requires a minimum of **9 points**.

- with a choice of bidding a four card suit at the one-level or a five card suit at the two level, give preference to the four card suit with 9–11 points, but bid the five card suit with 12+ points.

### Responding To Opening Bid Of 1♣ or 1♦

Since the opening 1♣ can be a short suit, you should initially show any other four or more card suit. Also in supporting clubs at whatever level, you need extra length in the club suit. So:

1♣/1♦ - (1♦/)/1♥/1♠: - 6+ points with at least four cards in the new suit. In response always bid the longest suit first. With two suits 5-5, bid the higher ranking first. With two suits 4-4, bid the lower ranking first (except over 1♣, with diamonds and hearts only bid the diamonds with a reasonable suit).

But, 1♦ - 2♣: - 9+ points with probably five clubs (this bid would deny a reasonable four card major in the 9–11 point range). With exactly 9 points and four clubs, it is preferable to respond 1NT.

1♣ - 2♣: - 6–9 points without an alternative four or more card suit, and a *five* or more card club suit.

1♦ - 2♦: - 6–9 points without an alternative four or more card suit, and a *four* or more card diamond suit.

1♣ - 3♣: - 10–12 points without an alternative four or more card suit, and a *five* or more card club suit.

1♦ - 3♦: - 10–12 points without an alternative four or more card suit, and a *four* or more card diamond suit.

1♣/1♦ - 1NT: - 6–9 points without any of the above.

1♣/1♦ - 2NT: - 11–12 points without any of the above.

(for the 1NT and 2NT bids, consider a 10 point hand as a good '9' or bad '11' and bid accordingly)

1♣/1♦ - 3NT: - 13+ points without any of the above (a bid to be avoided if possible).

1♣/1♦ - 2♦/2♥/2♠: - (a 'jump' shift response) – 16+ points with a good six-card suit – forcing to game.

### Responding To Opening Bids Of 1♥ or 1♠

In response to 1♥ or 1♠ you should immediately support the suit with three or more cards. The level of support is shown by 'limit bids' as follows (**remember to add distributional points**):

6–9 points - 2♥ or 2♠

10–12 points - 3♥ or 3♠

13+ points change the suit and then support the major. With even a little experience you should start to play a conventional bid of 2NT (Jacoby) - this is now game forcing – the opener's responses to which are covered separately.

7–10 points with five card support – 4♥ or 4♠ (this is known as a 'pre-emptive response'). Ideally it should contain a singleton or void for maximum ruffing potential.

Without three card support for partner's major suit opening, you can bid any four or more card suit at the one level (i.e. 1♥ - 1♠). To bid a new suit at *the two level requires at least 9 points* (with exactly a 9 count and only 4 cards in your best suit, or a singleton or void in partner's suit, choose 1NT rather than 2♣/2♦ - partner is less tempted to rebid his suit). *To bid 2♥ over 1♠ requires a five card heart suit*. With a choice of suits, bid the lower ranking first (e.g. over 1♥, with four clubs and four diamonds, bid 2♣)

Other hands with 6 - 9 points – bid 1NT.

Jump shift response (e.g. 1♠ - 3♦, or 1♥ - 2♠) - 16+ points with a good six card suit – *forcing to game*.

So over 1♥ with no support for hearts (i.e. less than three cards):

- 1♠: - 6+ points four or more spades.
- 1NT: - 6–9 points, no four card spade suit
- 1NT: - 9 points, no five card suit
- 2♣/2♦: - 9 points and a five card suit, or 10+ cards and a four card suit (these bids would also deny a reasonable four-card spade suit in the 9–11 point range).

Over 1♠ with no support for spades, as above plus

2♥: - 9+ points and a five card suit

### Exercises:

Over partner's 1♠:

a)	♠ KJ752	b)	♠ KJ73	c)	♠ Q64	d)	♠ Q8753	e)	♠ AK8
	♥ 762		♥ A964		♥ K96		♥ AQ843		♥ Q83
	♦ A986		♦ 107		♦ A7		♦ J9		♦ 852
	♣ 4		♣ 743		♣ Q8742		♣ 9		♣ 9742

- a) 1♠ - 8 points, spades the longest suit.
- b) 1♥ - 8 points – two equal length four card suits – bid the lower first.
- c) 3♣ - 10 points – no other four card suit – five clubs.
- d) 1♠ - 9 points – two equal length five card suits – bid the higher ranking first.

e) 1NT - no biddable suit in the 6–9 point range.

Over partner's 1♦:

f)	♠ KJ7 ♥ 653 ♦ A8 ♣ QJ853	g)	♠ 4 ♥ AKJ863 ♦ AQ2 ♣ Q86	h)	♠ 4 ♥ A109743 ♦ AQ8 ♣ A74	i)	♠ 9 ♥ 76 ♦ AQ952 ♣ Q8732	j)	♠ K76 ♥ 732 ♦ A95 ♣ KJ94
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- f) 2♣ - 11 points and no biddable major – five clubs.  
g) 2♥ - with 16 points, the heart suit is solid enough to jump the bidding.  
h) 1♥ - only 14 points, and the heart suit is not solid enough to jump bid. Temporise with 1♥ and then show the extra points next time.  
i) 3♦ (2♦) - diamond support, 8 points + an extra two points for the singleton + an extra point for the fifth diamond, - just worth a 3♦ bid (but I wouldn't argue if you chose 2♦).  
j) 2NT - 11 points, no diamond support. You should bid 2NT rather than 3♣ (1♦ - 3♣ would imply a five card club suit – remember that opener's club suit could be a short suit).

Over partner's 1♥:

k)	♠ K7 ♥ 653 ♦ Q953 ♣ K762	l)	♠ K107 ♥ K6 ♦ J952 ♣ 10862	m)	♠ 42 ♥ K952 ♦ K83 ♣ A1074	n)	♠ 9 ♥ K10763 ♦ KQ92 ♣ 872	o)	♠ K76 ♥ AQ72 ♦ A953 ♣ J9
p)	♠ KJ76 ♥ 63 ♦ K9 ♣ J8532	q)	♠ K1072 ♥ A109 ♦ 9752 ♣ 108	r)	♠ 842 ♥ 76 ♦ AQ85 ♣ K974	s)	♠ K764 ♥ 76 ♦ Q9 ♣ AJ872	t)	♠ K764 ♥ 74 ♦ Q9 ♣ AK742

- k) 2♥ - 8 points – a simple response.  
l) 1NT - not good enough to support hearts, nor to bid at the two level.  
m) 3♥ - 10 points + 1 point for the fourth heart.  
n) 4♥ - five trumps in support, 8 points – bid 4♥ (pre-emptive response). This will make it difficult for the opposition to find their possible spade fit.  
o) 2♦ - 14 points + 1 point for the fourth heart. You want to be in at least a game. Bid 2♦ and then give jump support for hearts. A better method with a little more experience is to bid 2NT (Jacoby - the opener's responses to this will be considered later).  
p) 1♠ - no other bid  
q) 2♥ - your hand is weak. Show the fit first and forget the four card spade suit.  
r) 2♣ - no heart support, and just good enough to bid at the two-level. Bid 2♣ (rather than 2♦).  
s) 1♠ - you have five clubs and a 9 count, but give preference to the four card spade suit at the lower level - bid 1♠.  
t) 2♣ - similar to (s) but 13 points. This time bid 2♣, you will get another chance to show the spades if necessary (via what is known as a 'responder's reverse')

Over partner's 1♠:

u)	♠ 96 ♥ AK95 ♦ QJ7 ♣ 5432	v)	♠ 96 ♥ AK952 ♦ QJ7 ♣ 862	w)	♠ Q9853 ♥ Q7 ♦ J83 ♣ 1085	x)	♠ K852 ♥ 3 ♦ A963 ♣ J1082	y)	♠ Q74 ♥ 10873 ♦ J5 ♣ Q863
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- u) 2♣? - a very awkward hand to bid. 2♥ would show a five card suit. I would reluctantly bid 2♣ despite the very bad suit. (An alternative would be 1NT with a 10 count)
- v) 2♥ - 10 points, no spade support, a five-card heart suit.
- w) 2♠ - weak as regards points and distribution. 5 points + 2 points for length (but the jack is probably useless). Not quite good enough for 4♠ (but close). Content yourself with 2♠ and await developments.
- x) 3♠ - 8 points + 1 point for extra trump length + 2 for singleton = 11 points. Just good enough for 3♠ (but I wouldn't argue with 2♠).
- y) **PASS** - a reasonable spade fit, but only 5 (poor) points, nothing extra.