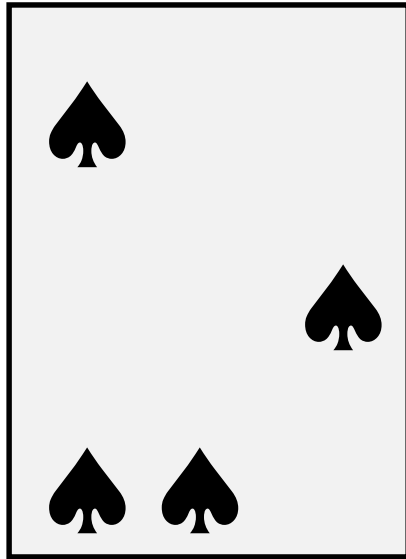


Entertainment

“Bridge is the most entertaining and intelligent card game
the wit of man has so far devised.”

- *W. Somerset Maugham*



four

Responding to an opening bid of

1♣, 1♦, 1♥ or 1♠

"up the line"

Weak freak

Two-step approach

Shortage points

Responses to suit openings

Responding to an opening bid of one of a suit

When partner opens the bidding with one-of-a-suit there will be 13-21 TP and the minimum number of cards required to bid that suit. Because opener might have 19-21 TP, you are obliged to respond when you hold six or more points, as game is a possibility.

Responding to an opening bid of 1♣ or 1♦

Bid	Strength	Priority of responses
1♣ 1♦	min. hand (6-9 pts)	1) Bid a new suit at the one-level 'up the line'. 1♣ - 1♦. 2) Raise partner's suit to the two-level with a fit. 1♦ - 2♦. 3) Bid 1NT - could be an unbalanced hand.
1♣ 1♦	med. hand (10-12 pts)	1) Bid a new suit 'up the line', or 2♣ over 1♦. 2) Bid 2NT - shows a balanced hand. 3) Jump raise with 5+ card support. 1♣ - 3♣.
1♣ 1♦	max. hand (13+ pts)	1) Bid a new suit 'up the line', or 2♣ over 1♦. 2) Bid 3NT - shows a balanced hand with 13-15 points.

chart 4:1

If your partner opens 1♣ or 1♦, refer to the above chart. First refer to the strength column and then go to the row which reflects your point count. For instance, if you have 11 TP, go to the second row, medium hand (10-12), then move over in the same row to the column priority of responses. Starting with the first priority, take appropriate action. If you take the second priority, you deny the first.

Note that the first priority is the same whether you are minimum (6-9) medium (10-12) or maximum (13+). Bid a new suit 'up the line'. A new suit response to an opening suit bid has unlimited strength (6+) and is forcing. The first priority is to bid a new four-card suit 'up the line' as you are still seeking out a major suit fit. (When partner opens the bidding with 1♣ or 1♦, she may hold a four-card major).

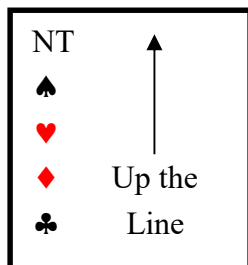
Do not confuse responses to a 1NT opening bid with responses to a suit opening bid. They are completely different situations with different response structures.

"If confusion is the first step to knowledge, I must be a genius"

- Larry Leissner

Up the line

The term '**up the line**' refers to bidding at the one-level. Whenever partner opens the bidding with a suit, the act of bidding your four-card suits 'up the line' is a technique which conserves space while allowing you room to locate a fit in hearts or spades if one exists.



'Up the line' refers to the relative ranking of the suits. Say partner opens the bidding with 1♥. There is only one suit 'up the line' and that is 1♠. To bid clubs or diamonds, you would have to go to the two-level. A new suit at the two-level promises 10+ points. If partner opens the bidding 1♣, then 1♦, 1♥ or 1♠ are all 'up the line' responses.

figure 4:1

When looking at both hands in Figure 4:2, you can count 27 HCP and note the golden fit in spades. **E/W**, who cannot see each other's cards, still bid the hand to 4♠. **W** opened 1♣ and **E** responded 1♠ ('up the line'). **W** now bid 2♠ agreeing spades as trumps and **E** with 14 HCP opposite an opening hand, bid 4♠. The structure of bidding "up the line" is a major suit fit locator.

<u>West</u>	<u>East</u>
♠ AQ74	♠ KJ109
♥ 76	♥ A4
♦ AK93	♦ Q8642
♣ 874	♣ A3
Auction	
1♦	1♠
2♠	4♠

figure 4:2

Anomaly

Because bidding revolves so much around the majors, there is merit in bypassing a four-card diamond suit to show a four-card major, especially if you have a weak hand. Say partner opens the bidding with 1♣ and you hold: ♠ Q43 ♥ QJ94 ♦ 10873 ♣ J6. You would not be a bum if you responded 1♥ instead of bidding 1♦. The point is that if you bid a diamond and LHO overcalls 1♠, the heart suit may get lost in the auction. Don't exploit this. Bid 'up the line' for the most part. But with a weak hand in response, this is a style that is gaining favor.

At the table

Your partner has opened the bidding with 1♣. Consider your response with each of the following hands.

1)	2)	3)	4)	5)
♠ A532	♠ 84	♠ 10764	♠ 1053	♠ AQ876
♥ 65	♥ A974	♥ K4	♥ A84	♥ A984
♦ KQJ6	♦ 1094	♦ 85	♦ Q84	♦ 42
♣ 873	♣ K873	♣ AQJ96	♣ 10743	♣ K6

Hand 1 **Bid 1♦** Bid your four-card suits 'up the line'. Opener will continue to bid her suits 'up the line' as well, so if there is a spade fit it will be uncovered.

Hand 2 **Bid 1♥** With only seven points (6-9 range) it is still a priority to bid 'up the line', hoping to locate a heart fit.

Hand 3 **Bid 1♠** You do have lovely support for partner's clubs, but seeking out a major suit fit is still the priority. If a spade fit does not exist, then you can show your club support with your next bid.

Hand 4 **Bid 1NT** When you respond 1NT to a 1♣ opening bid, you deny having four diamonds, four hearts or four spades (or you would have bid 'up the line').

Hand 5 **Bid 1♠** You are allowed to bypass a four-card suit in order to bid a longer suit. (read this again).

Exchange of information

It is illegal to pass information with body language, fingers or facial expressions. It is unthinkable. All information exchanged between players must be done in the 'conversation of bidding.'

"Your face is a book, where people may read strange matters..."

- *Shakespeare*

Responding to a 1♥ or 1♠ opening bid

When partner opens the bidding with 1♥ or 1♠ you know right away that she has at least a five-card suit. Your priorities are now quite different from when partner opened 1♣ or 1♦. As responder, if you hold 6-9 or 10-12 TP, you should show support for partner's major immediately.

Bid	Strength	Priority of responses
1♥ 1♠	min. hand (6-9 Pts)	1) Raise partner's suit to the two-level with a fit. 1♥ - 2♥ 2) Bid a new suit 'up the line' 1♥ - ♠ 3) Bid 1NT - could have an unbalanced hand.
1♥ 1♠	med. Hand (10-12 Pts)	1) Jump raise partner's suit with a fit. 1♠ - 3♠ 2) Bid a new suit 'up the line' or at the two-level. 1♥ - 2♣ 3) Bid 2NT - with a balanced hand.
1♥ 1♠	max. hand (13+ Pts)	1) Bid a new suit 'up the line' or at the two-level if necessary. 2) With a fit, bid a new suit first (the two-step approach, p. 48) 3) Bid 3NT - balanced hand with 13-15.

chart 4:2

If your partner opens the bidding with 1♥ or 1♠, refer to Chart 4:2 for your priorities. Go to the row under 'strength' that reflects your hand strength. Now move over on the same row to the column, 'priority of responses' and bid accordingly. With 6-9 points and support (3+ cards) you should make a simple raise of partner's suit (1♥ - 2♥). With 10-12 and support, jump raise partner's suit (1♥ - 3♥).

Priority means: importance, weighty, paramount, crucial, critical....

When you open the bidding - **importance** is given to the major suits. When you respond to a minor suit opening bid, **weight** is given to bidding "up the line" to locate a major suit fit. When you respond to a major suit opening bid, it is **paramount** (in most cases), that you show support for partner's major. When partner opens with a no-trump bid, it is **crucial** that you seek out a major suit fit, if one exists. With the choice to play a game contract in the majors, in no trump or in the minors, it is **critical** that you know where your priorities lie. **Priority** means...

Weak freak

Introducing this concept in an introductory book is a departure from main stream teaching. However, I have decided to do so, because if not now, then later. I think it is best to create a 'good habit' now rather than fix a 'bad habit' later. 😊 The simple and logical structure for raising opener's suit is:

$$1\heartsuit - 2\heartsuit = 6-9 \quad 1\heartsuit - 3\heartsuit = 10-12 \quad *1\heartsuit - 4\heartsuit = 13+$$

This scale makes perfect sense and follows a continuum which the learning player can relate to. With support for partner's major, the more points you have, the higher you bid. However, in the real world of Bridge an immediate raise to game in a suit contract (1♥ - 4♥) is reserved for a weak hand with extra length in trumps.

*An immediate raise to game of a 1♣, 1♦, 1♥ or 1♠ opening bid is referred to as a '**weak freak**'. A 'weak freak' is a hand where you have little in HCP (a weak hand), but extra length in partner's suit (a freak hand). Partner's opening bid is stated below each hand. Your response?

Why jump to game with a weak freak?

There are two reasons.

1. You are telling partner that you have a weak hand with extra length in trumps. You are revealing the true nature of your hand with one bid.
2. You are stifling the opponent's ability to communicate information to each other about their hands. The opponents may have a 'fit' and a contract of their own to make. Your jump to game makes it extremely difficult, if not impossible for the opponents to exchange the necessary information. They are in the dark. You will not always make your contract, but you do hope to get the best score you can get. A small minus is better than a big minus. (Read this a few times).

At the table

You hold each of the following three hands. Consider your response to your partner's opening bid which is underlined.

1)	2)	3)
♠ A6532	♠ 4	♠ 104
♥ 5	♥ KQJ974	♥ 4
♦ J8763	♦ 94	♦ QJ109632
♣ 83	♣ 8753	♣ A83
<u>1♠</u>	<u>1♥</u>	<u>1♦</u>

Hand 1 Bid 4♠. Jump raise partner to game. You have extra length for partner's suit and few HCP. You have a 'weak freak'.

Hand 2 Bid 4♥. Jump immediately to game. You have few HCP (weak) and six-card support (freak) for an 11-card fit!

Hand 3 Bid 5♦. You can do it in the minors too. Do not let the opponents find their heart fit! Jump to game immediately. This hand is a 'weak freak'. You have seven-card support (freak) and few HCP (weak).

The two-step approach

If an immediate raise to game (1♥ - 4♥) is reserved for a 'weak freak', how do you respond with a hand that has trump support and 13+ points?



You hold: ♠ 2 ♥ AJ84 ♦ 753 ♣ AKJ65

Your hand is valued at 13+ points, you know you want to be in game (opposite an opening hand) and you know you have a nine-card fit in hearts. However, bidding 4♥ takes up a lot of bidding space, limiting the space to communicate. If you bid 2♣ first (going slowly), this gives partner room to tell you more about her hand. By going slowly and communicating more information, you may find you have the values to be in a heart slam!

At the table

Your partner has opened the bidding with 1♥ and you hold the following hands. Consider your response.

1)	2)	3)	4)	5)
♠ A5	♠ 84	♠ 1064	♠ 4	♠ Q953
♥ J65	♥ A974	♥ K4	♥ AJ984	♥ A765
♦ K10963	♦ KJ94	♦ A53	♦ 87	♦ A2
♣ 873	♣ K83	♣ AK872	♣ Q9873	♣ K63

Hand 1 **Bid 2♥.** With 6-9 points and a major suit fit, show your support with a 'simple raise'.

Hand 2 **Bid 3♥.** With 10-12 points and a major suit fit, show your support with a jump raise of partner's suit.

Hand 3 **Bid 2♣.** Your second priority is to bid a new suit "up the line" or at the two-level if necessary. You know you want to be in a game and that partner has least five hearts. However, you do not know what the best contract is, so simply follow the priorities of responding to a major suit opening bid and discover the best strain.

Hand 4 **Bid 4♥.** This hand qualifies as a 'weak freak'. You have extraordinary trump support and your hand is otherwise weakish. 4♥ sticks it to the opponents, if they had ideas of competing for the auction.

Hand 5 **Bid 1♠.** You have the values to bid game in hearts, but should take the 'two-step approach' to show your heart support. By bidding 1♠ (a forcing bid) you are giving your partner room to describe her hand further.

With a good hand go slowly

When responder has 13+ points opposite an opening bid she may have support for partner's suit but is still uncertain as to the combined strength of the two hands. It is sometimes best to go slowly in the auction, facilitating room to convey more information. You can always show your support with your next bid. (That my friend, is the two-step approach).

More hand evaluation - shortage points

<u>North</u> (dummy)	
♠	2
♥	AQ86
♦	A7653
♣	K65
<u>South</u> (declarer)	
♠	A765
♥	KJ109
♦	9
♣	A832

With a trump suit, shortage in a side suit is valuable. In Figure 4:3, **S** is declarer in a contract of 4♥. **W** led the ♦K. Dummy has a singleton spade and declarer a singleton diamond. If you win the ♦A, following with the ♦9 from **S**, you can trump the ♦3 with the ♥9. You could then play the ♠A, following with the ♠2 from dummy, and now trump the ♠5 with the ♥6. You could continue trumping diamonds and spades back and forth between the two hands, scoring your trumps separately. To 'trump' is also to 'ruff'. In 4♥, you cross-trumped the hand. (It is best to cash your ♣AK before embarking on the cross-trump). Having shortage in a side suit sure can be an asset. There is a third method of hand evaluation and it is called '**shortage points**' (SP).

figure 4:3

Shortage with length

Shortage points (SP) are given for voids, singletons and doubletons. There are two scales to consider when adding SP. One is where the short trumps has three-card support and the other is with 4+ card support. The more **length** in trumps you have, the more often you can trump! Do not count shortage points until you have found a fit.

Shortage points

Shortage	Three-card support	Four-card support
Void	3 points	5 points
Singleton	2 points	3 points
Doubleton	1 point	1 point

Chart 4:3

“One should always play fairly when one has the winning cards”.

- *Oscar Wilde*

Two out of three ain't bad

Of the three evaluation methods available to assess the strength of your hand, high card points (HCP), length points (LP), and shortage points (SP), do not use all three at the same time as it gets a bit inflated. Use HCP and LP or HCP and SP, whichever is greater. Remember! You can only add SP once you have an agreed suit.

Dummy points

In some circles, shortage points are also referred to as dummy points. That is because shortage is generally more valuable in the hand with fewer trumps, which is usually dummy. Consider the following two hands:

<u>West</u>	<u>East</u>
♠ AKQ87	♠ J109
♥ 2	♥ A83
♦ KJ75	♦ A87
♣ 1065	♣ Q982

figure 4:4

<u>West</u>	<u>East</u>
♠ AKQ87	♠ J109
♥ A83	♥ 2
♦ 752	♦ AQ983
♣ 82	♣ AQ92

figure 4:5

In both hands **W** is in a contract of 4♠. Note that in both hands there is a singleton ♥2.

With the first hand (Figure 4:4), the singleton ♥2 is in the **W** hand with the long trumps. If you play the ♥A and then trump **E**'s ♥3 and the ♥8 in the **W** hand, you will be trumping with the long trumps and not gaining any extra tricks. By the time you trump the ♥3 and ♥8 you will now have the ♠AKQ left in the **W** hand opposite the ♠J109 in the **E** hand. You only have three more spade tricks coming to you.

With the second hand (Figure 4:5), the singleton ♥2 is in the **E** hand with the short trumps. If you trump the ♥3 and ♥8 in the **E** hand, you will gain extra tricks. By the time you trump the ♥3 and ♥8 you will still have the ♠AKQ76 in the **W** hand opposite the ♠J in the **E** hand. You still have five more spade tricks coming to you. So while shortage is great, it is better to have shortage in the hand with the short trumps.

At the table

Your partner has opened the bidding with 1♠ and you hold the following hands. Consider your response.

1)	2)	3)	4)	5)
♠ A532	♠ K84	♠ 10764	♠ 109853	♠ KQ85
♥ 5	♥ A974	♥ KQ74	♥ 4	♥ K87
♦ KQJ6	♦ 104	♦ ---	♦ 4	♦ 98742
♣ 8743	♣ J873	♣ AQJ96	♣ QJ7432	♣ 6

Hand 1 **Bid 2♦.** With 10 HCP, four-card spade support and a singleton heart, this hand is now valued at 13 TP. Take the 'two-step approach', giving partner room to tell you more about her hand.

Hand 2 **Bid 2♠.** With 8 HCP and a doubleton diamond, this hand weighs in at 9 TP. Your priority is to show spade support.

Hand 3 **Bid 2♣.** Take the 'two-step approach'. This hand comes in at around 17 TP. 12 HCP plus five shortage points (SP) for the void in diamonds. There might well be a spade slam. Give your partner room to talk.

Hand 4 **Bid 4♠.** Shut the opponents out of this auction. This hand is a 'weak freak'. You do not necessarily expect to make 4♠, but the opponents surely have something if you give them room to find it.

Hand 5 **Bid 3♠.** This hand is worth about 11 TP. 8 HCP plus three shortage points (SP) for the singleton club. 3♠ announces that you have spade support and a hand valued at 10-12.

“Always make the right bid even if you think your partner might not understand it...few things will help your partnership more than to place responsibility on your partner and let her know that you trust her.”

“Trust is like a vase...once it's broken, though you can fix it, the vase will never be the same again.”

- *Nietzsche*

Card play technique

The double finesse

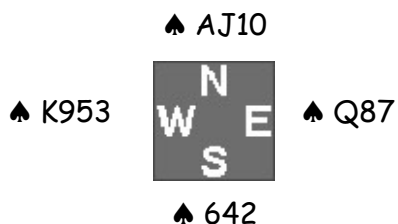


figure 4:6

In figure 4:6, you require two spade tricks to fulfil your contract. As you can see, you are missing both the ♠Q and the ♠K. When you are missing two specific cards, they are usually split between the opponents. Following the axiom of leading from weakness towards strength, you should lead a small card from the S hand. W will play the ♠3 and you will finesse dummy's ♠10 which loses to E's ♠Q. This loss is not unexpected. However, when you later gain the lead, you should lead another spade from the S hand towards strength, and when W again plays a small card you should insert the ♠J from dummy. This will win the trick as W has the ♠K. A **double finesse** will win an extra trick 75% of the time.

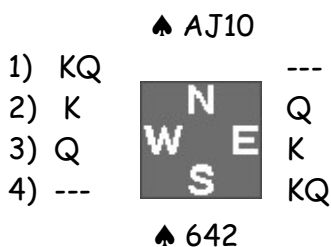


figure 4:7

In figure 4:7, you can see the four possible ways in which the missing key cards (♠K and ♠Q) can be distributed between W and E. Assume that W and E have small spades as well and that you always lead spades from the S hand.

- 1) W has both the ♠K and ♠Q. You will lose only one spade trick.
- 2) W has the ♠K and E has the ♠Q. You will lose the first finesse, but win the second.
- 3) W has the ♠Q and E has the ♠K. You will lose the first finesse, but win the second.
- 4) E has both the ♠K and ♠Q. You will lose both finesses to E. In only one out of four situations will you lose two tricks. That means three out of four times you come away with a second spade trick.

Department of defence

Small promises an honor

In chapter three you learned about leading fourth best card from your longest and strongest suit. In this chapter let us look at a holding where you only have three cards to an honor.

You can tell partner about your honor card by leading the smallest card you have in that holding.

♦ Q63 ♦ K96 ♦ Q85 ♦ 1073 ♦ A92 *

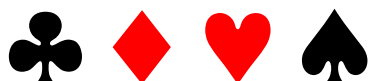
From each of these diamond holdings lead the smallest card to promise an honor card in that suit. *In the last hand with ♦ A92, the lead of the ♦ 2 is fine against a NT contract. However, lest we forget, you should not under-lead an ace against a suit contract.

When small is big

Sometimes your holding in a suit may have an honor but your small card is kind of a big card. Say you hold ♣ K97. Relatively speaking the ♣ 7 is your smallest card and the one you should lead. However, because it is actually a middle strength spot card, how will partner know that it is small? Do not fret. Lead the ♣ 7 anyway and let partner figure it out. Partner can see her own club holding as well as dummy's clubs and may be able to discern that the ♣ 7 is a small card, relatively speaking.

Consider your lead against a NT contract from the following.

- ♥ Q82 Lead the ♥ 2 (small promising an honor).
- ♥ KQ103 Lead the ♥ K (top of a broken sequence).
- ♥ K98 Lead the ♥ 8 (small promising an honor).
- ♥ J75 Lead the ♥ 5 (small promising an honor).
- ♥ J1092 Lead the ♥ J (top of a sequence).



Summary

- There are **priorities** to follow when responding to an opening bid.
- Responding to a minor suit opening, you first bid a new suit '**up the line**'.
- Responding to a major suit opening bid, you generally **show support** for opener's major immediately.
- A **weak freak** is when you have great length in opener's suit, but few HCP.
- The **two-step approach** is the right way to show support for opener's suit when you have 13+ points.
- Count **shortage points** (SP) only when you have a 'fit' with partner.
- A **double finesse** is when you are missing two key-cards and take a finesse twice in the same suit, hoping one of the finesses will succeed.
- The lead of a small card usually **promises an honor**.
- Do not **under-lead an ace** against a suit contract.

Nearly Normal Norman says: There are three components to Bridge: Bidding, Card Play and Defense. You are learning a little about each one, in each chapter.



Nearly Normal Norman

Shortage points

Length points

“This is the short and long of it”

- *Shakespeare*

Exercises - chapter four

A. In the first four hands your partner has opened the bidding with 1♣. Consider your points and your response.

1)	2)	3)	4)
♠ AKQ8	♠ A3	♠ KQ876	♠ 74
♥ 10865	♥ AKQ985	♥ A864	♥ 985
♦ 874	♦ 65	♦ 53	♦ 843
♣ 32	♣ 873	♣ 96	♣ AK932

B. In the next four hands your partner has opened the bidding 1♥. Consider your points and your response.

1)	2)	3)	4)
♠ A64	♠ KJ5	♠ K43	♠ AQJ4
♥ A43	♥ A64	♥ 1096	♥ QJ73
♦ 985	♦ Q54	♦ 98754	♦ 863
♣ J1093	♣ QJ104	♣ K3	♣ 95

C. In the last four hands your partner has opened the bidding 1♦. Consider your points and your response.

1)	2)	3)	4)
♠ 4	♠ 103	♠ 2	♠ K83
♥ AJ10653	♥ KJ103	♥ K1085	♥ 73
♦ 103	♦ A43	♦ A874	♦ J103
♣ 10987	♣ AJ104	♣ Q954	♣ KQ43

