

Bridge Primer #1 – Part B

Teach Your Friends and Family to Play Bridge with Simple Steps

Based on Lesson 1 from website: ATeacherFirst.com

Part A focused on Opening 1 of a Suit and finding an 8-card fit in a major.

The first goal when bidding is to find an 8-card fit in a major suit.

Part B Focus: Opening 1 of a Suit; Opening in a minor suit; Bidding NT when there is no 8-card fit in any suit; playing in a NT contract.

The 2nd goal when bidding is to find a No Trump contract if an 8-card fit in a major cannot be found.

Reminder to the Coach: Explanations are worded in a very simple way. This can be adjusted depending on the age, maturity, and comprehension level of your group. Repetition helps with learning, but if you see that everyone is understanding a concept well, use your judgment as to how much repetition is needed.

Review these points:

The first goal when bidding is to find an 8-card fit in a major suit.

The first goal when opening a suit (first to bid) is to bid a 5-card major suit if you have one.

The suits are ranked in this order ♠ spades, ♥ hearts, ♦ diamonds and ♣ clubs.

Spades and hearts are major suits. Diamonds and clubs are minor suits.

If an 8-card fit in a major suit cannot be found, a No Trump contract may be the next best option.

Part B focuses on bidding and playing in a NT contract because an 8-card fit in a major suit cannot be found.

Important: Explain what a balanced hand looks like. Generally, it should have all suits, with 2 or more cards in each suit and no suit should be longer than 4 cards. That's enough info for now. Lesson 2 will give more specific details on a balanced hand.

These eight games continue with a similar routine as was established with Primer 1A.

One player is designated the Coach and should organize the hands for the group.

Part A routine had players announcing their points to identify the player with 12+ pts. That player would start the bidding. This part of the routine will now change.

Part B: There will now be a Dealer. The "auction" starts with the dealer who will bid or pass.

The Dealer will change with each game, in sequence, clockwise: North, East, South, West and then repeated. This is the same routine we follow in social games and when we use duplicate boards.

Players will no longer verbalize their points to establish who bids first.

There is only one opening bid in a game. To "open" the bidding, a player should have 12+ pts.

If a player does not have 12+ pts, s/he will pass unless their partner has already opened the bidding.

The first player to bid must have 12+ pts and is called the Opener.

The Opener's partner can and should respond to their partner's bid if they have 6+ pts.

Other than that, they will not be bidding; they will pass.

Players will be playing hands in a NT contract which beginners often find difficult and try to avoid.

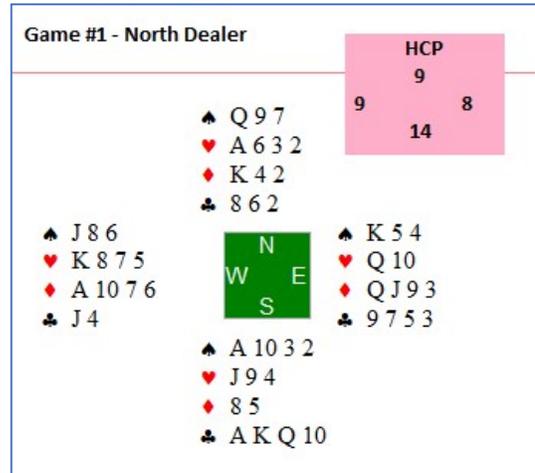
These boards have been set up very carefully to give the Declarer (the "pilot") the best chance to make the contract and possibly an overtrick. We want new players to have success in No Trump contracts as it will help to build their confidence.

If they take more tricks than required to make the contract, that's great!
 As a coach, it will help if you give them hints and strategies to help them succeed.
 If and when they do not make their contract, they should be assured that this happens sometimes, even to the most experienced players.

Game #1

The Coach should set up the hands as shown in the diagram on the right. The Dealer is North and is the first to bid or pass. North will pass because he does not have 12+ pts. East is next and will pass. South is the first player who has 12+ pts so will open the bidding.

Coach: Do you have a 5-card major, South? (no)
 Therefore, you should open with a minor suit (♦ or ♣).



Rules for Opening in a Minor Suit:

1. Open with the minor suit which has the most cards (the longest minor).
2. If the minor suits are the same length, open with the highest-ranking minor (1♦).
3. One exception: If you have exactly 3 cards in both minor suits, open 1♣. (Use the 3 leaves of the clover to help you remember that rule.)

This is the message you are sending when you open in a minor suit:
 "I have 12+ points, I do not have 5 or more cards in a major suit, and I have at least 3 cards in the minor suit bid."

You are describing the shape of your hand. Your partner will know that you do not have a 5-card major suit, because you did not open in a major (but you could have a 4-card major suit). Your partner will know you have at least 3 cards in the minor suit if you opened with 1♣ or 1♦, but does not know exactly how many cards you have in that suit. Your partner knows you have 12+ pts but does not know which suit has any high cards. You are bidding based on the length in the suit you bid, not the strength of the suit you bid.

Rule for opening bids: "Bid on length, not strength."

You cannot tell your partner everything about your hand in one bid. Sometimes it takes a few bids to do that. Together you are trying to find an 8-card fit in a major suit as your #1 goal and you can do this by the process of elimination. For example, when your partner opens with 1♦ or 1♣, you know immediately that your partner does not have a 5-card major suit (usually). Once you realize that, together, you do not have an 8-card fit in a major suit, you start to look at your #2 goal which is to bid No Trump. These hands will focus on that.

No Trump means there is no suit which will be designated "trump" to make it stronger than all other suit. Any trump card (even a 2 if that suit is trump) can take a trick over a suit which is not a trump. In NT, all suits become equal once the play of the hand begins. Usually, we settle on a No Trump contract when the partnership (two players together) do not have 8 cards in any suit.

Now, back to South, who has enough pts to open the bidding.

South: You have no 5-card major; therefore, you will open in a minor. Which of your minors is longer? (clubs) South's opening bid will be 1♣. West will pass.

North, how many pts do you have? (9)

How many do you need to respond to your partner's opening bid? (6 or more)

Can you respond? (Yes)

Guideline: When your partner opens in a minor suit, s/he has not denied having a 4-card major suit. Your first goal is to find an 8-card fit in a major suit, so you should bid a 4-card major suit if you have one.

North, do you have a 4-card major suit? (Yes)

Please bid it! North bids 1♥.

Is hearts ranked lower or higher than spades? (Spades is higher-ranking than hearts.)

Rule: As responder to a minor suit opening bid by your partner, bid a 4+-card major suit. If you have 4 cards in both major suits, start with the lower-ranking one first.

Message you are sending: If you respond 1♥, you could also have 4 spades. If you respond 1♠, you are denying having 4 hearts. Together, you should be reasoning out these messages to determine if you have an 8-card fit in a major suit or not.

Rule: A change of suit in the first round is forcing.

(East and West are passing now.)

South, do you have a fit in hearts (4 hearts to support your partner). (No)

Now you know that you do not have an 8-card fit in hearts.

Could your partner, North, have 4 spades? (Yes)

Before giving up on finding an 8-card major suit, tell your partner you have 4 spades, just in case your partner has 4 spades, because then you will have found an 8-card fit in a major.

South's bid is 1♠. (South can bid 1♠ with only 4 spades because he did not "open" with the suit.)

North, do you have 4 spades to support your partner? (No)

Now you can conclude that there is no 8-card fit in a major suit, not hearts and not spades.

Your next bid is 1NT to show that you have not found an 8-card fit in a major.

As Responder to your partner's opening bid, you should not continue to bid higher when you have just 6-9 pts. When you bid 1NT, you are showing 6-9 pts. You do not have 10 pts or more. You are "limiting" your point range. By bidding 1NT you are giving more information to your partner. In this case, you are communicating your point range as well as the fact that you do not have 4 spades.

Rule: A 1NT response to opener's suit is showing 6-9 pts.

South will pass. Bids are put away.

What is the contract? (1NT by North). Who is on lead? (East)

Guidelines for Opening Leads against a NT contract:

1. Lead the 4th highest card from your longest, strongest suit.
2. Lead the top of touching honors when you have 3 or more touching honors.
3. Usually, you will lead an unbid suit.

East, which is your longest, strongest suit? (diamonds)

Is it an unbid suit? (Yes))

Against a suit contract, leading the top of two or more touching honors is recommended. Against a NT contract, it is better if you have three touching honors. Diamonds has only two touching honors, so lead the 4th highest card. (♦3)

Good habit to practice: East, place your lead card face down on the table, with your hand holding it. Ask if it is your lead or if there are any questions. (This is the chance for someone to stop you if it is not your lead.) Wait a few seconds and when no one says anything, turn the card over and the play of the hand has started.

South's dummy hand is placed on the table in dummy style.

North, you should analyse your hand together with the dummy hand to decide on a strategy.

How many tricks do you need to take to make your contract?

(Reasoning: 1 level contracts require 7 tricks to make – to calculate, add 1 to a base of 6 = 7 tricks.

Players will soon learn that a 1 level contract requires 7 tricks; 2 level requires 8 tricks, etc.)

North, when you look at the two hands you will be playing, count your immediate winners. An Ace is a winner. A King is not a winner unless you also have the Ace in that suit. A Queen is not a winner unless you have the Ace and the King with it.

How many immediate winners do you have? (5 total – 1 spade Ace, 1 heart Ace, 3 clubs with touching high cards, Ace, King, Queen)

How many tricks do you need? (7) You need to find 2 more winners. (The Club suit looks promising, if the 10 can take a trick.)

Remind yourself that you can lose 6 tricks in 1NT and still make your contract! Do not get overly worried if the opponents take a few tricks to start.

What is a stopper? The Ace is a stopper. A King can be a stopper if you have at least two cards in that suit. (The opponent's Ace will take the smaller card, so your King can stop the next round; that is the theory.) A Queen can be a stopper in a suit with at least 3 cards (the Ace and King will take the two smaller cards and the Queen will take the third). A Jack can be considered a stopper in a suit with at least 4 cards.

General strategy hints for NT contracts:

Long suits (7 or more cards in a suit together) will help you in NT contracts.

Sometimes you will have an 8-card minor suit and that can be very helpful.

Because a diamond was led and you have only one stopper in diamonds (the ♦King), play it as soon as you know it will take the trick. If West plays his ♦Ace, the ♦King will take the next diamond trick. If West "ducks" his ♦Ace, take the trick with the ♦King.

You have 7 cards in every suit, except diamonds.

It is not surprising then, that East led a diamond, your shortest suit.

Always pay close attention to the opening lead. Remind yourself that the suit they played is usually their best suit and the most dangerous suit. Do not help them by playing their suit, unless you know with certainty that you can take all the tricks in that suit.

Here's how the game might play out:

Round one: East leads ♦3, play the ♦5, West will play high (third hand plays high, usually), the ♦Ace, North plays low (♦2).

West takes the trick and, as he should, leads back a low diamond to his partner (♦6).

Guideline: If your partner leads a suit, it is usually a good idea to lead the same suit back. If West plays the ♦Ace and takes the trick, he should lead a small diamond back to East. Then you should play the ♦King and take the trick. This is the partnership strategy. Bridge is a partnership game. Together, you win or lose.

Round 2: North will win the next trick with the ♦King. Now E/W have 2 winning diamonds once they take the lead again, so that was a good defence strategy. North now has 1 trick, but 6 more are needed – it's a very good idea to keep track of how many tricks you need as you play the hand – this will test your memory skills).

Round 3: North is leading from his hand, and since the clubs look promising as a source of 4 tricks, lead a small club (♣2). Play the ♣Ace and ♣King. You will notice that the ♣Jack was played from West's hand which makes the ♣10 a winner. Luck was on your side, this time. Take the 4 club tricks = 5 tricks taken. You need only 2 more and you have 2 Aces, so take them. Play a low heart toward the ♥Ace and then a low spade toward the ♠Ace. You've made your contract and you might be lucky to take another trick in another suit later. Now the opponents will get in and play their diamonds.

1NT contract bid and made. Congratulations!

Game #2

East is the dealer. East passes. South has enough pts to open.

South, do you have a 5-card major? (No)

Therefore, you will open in a minor.

Which is your longest minor suit? (diamonds)

South will open 1♦.

West will pass.

North has 6+ points and should respond to his partner's opening bid.

North, do you have a 4-card major? (Yes)

Which suit? (spades)

North will bid 1♠. This bid denies having 4 hearts.

Rule: A change of suit in the first round is forcing.

Game #2 - East Dealer		HCP	
		10	7
		14	
♠ K Q J 3			
♥ Q 9			
♦ J 6 5			
♣ 10 8 6 4			
♠ A 9 8 2		♠ 6 5 4	
♥ 7 5 4		♥ A K 10 8	
♦ 8 3 2		♦ 9 7 4	
♣ K Q J		♣ 9 7 5	
♠ 10 7			
♥ J 6 3 2			
♦ A K Q 10			
♣ A 3 2			

(East and West pass now.)

South, do you have 4 spades to support your partner? (No)

Does North have 4 hearts? (No, since he bid spades which *usually* denies having 4 hearts.)

South can conclude that there is no fit in a major suit.

South's bid is 1NT which sends this message: "I have a minimum opening hand, no fit in spades, and no other suit to bid."

North will pass. Bids are put away.

What is the contract? 1NT by South

Who is on lead? West

West, which is your longest, strongest unbid suit? (clubs)

Guideline for Leads: Against a NT contract, lead the top of touching honors if you have 3 or more.

West, do you have 3 or more touching honors. (Yes) Lead the top card from touching honors. (♣King)
(Follow the usual procedures for leading – card is placed face down, West asks if it's his lead or if there are any questions, next he turns the card over.)

Dummy hand comes down. South should count his winners. How many tricks does South need to take to make the contract? (7)

How many immediate winners does South have (combined with North)? (4 total – 4 diamonds, 1 club)

Which suit(s) might help him get more winners? South needs to lose just one spade and he can take 2 more after he forces out the ♠Ace. That would make the contract.

South, you need to force out the ♠Ace as soon as possible. The opponents will get back in and then they might lead a heart. They should get 2 heart tricks, but then you can stop them with either the ♥Queen or the ♥Jack. Then take your diamond tricks, your club trick and the spade tricks. South may be able to take 8 tricks, but be happy with 7 and making the contract.

