THE 3NT RESPONSE TO A MAJOR OPENING

Opener	Responder
1♥/1♠	3NT

The requirements are:

-- Qxxx or better in opener's suit

-- A balanced hand, no singleton or void

-- Game-going strength, 13-15 points including distribution

If responder is too strong for the 3NT bid, he can use the Omnibus 2NT response (see section 3-10).

This artificial raise applies over a double, but not over an opposing overcall unless 3NT is a **double** jump (i.e., over 1♠):

South	West	North
1♥	1♠	3NT - strong heart raise
		4♥ - preemptive heart raise
		2NT - Omnibus

In overcalling situations a single jump to 3NT is natural, showing 13-16 HCP. A strong major raise is shown in one of two ways, depending on the overcall:

1) When the (preemptive) double jump raise to game is available, a cue bid shows a strong raise to game:

South	West	North
1♠	2♣	3♣ - strong spade raise
		3♠ - limit raise
		4♠ - preemptive raise

North's 3♣ bid tends to deny first or second round control of clubs, with which she can splinter.

2) When the double jump raise is not available, a (single) jump raise to game is strong:

South	West	North
1♠	3♣	4♠ - strong spade raise
		4♣ - normal cue bid

With a preemptive sort of raise to 4♠, responder should just bid 3♠. Even though this is not forcing, it is unlikely to be passed when there is so much strength outstanding. Either opener or an opponent will no doubt bid again. Bidding 3♠ and then 4♠ will sound to the opponents like you're stretching, which may cause them to make a wrong decision (although the opponents must be alerted to what may be going on when you bid twice). Of course you do not stand for a penalty double by opener after this kind of "limit raise."

When an overcall comes at the one level, a simple cue bid is the standard slam-interest hand with first round control of the opposing suit. A jump cue bid is a splinter bid in support of opener's suit, with a probable singleton:

South	West	North
1♥	1♠	2♠ - normal cue bid
		3♠ - splinter bid
		3NT - conventional raise
		3♥ - limit raise
		4♥ - preemptive raise

For appropriate action over conventional overcalls, see section 12-7, Defense Against Two-Suited Conventions. Also see section 3-19, Bidding Over a Double.