ONE-OVER-ONE RESPONSES

The One Notrump Response

A 1NT response requires at least 6 HCP, with a maximum of 9. Occasionally there is no alternative with a poor-looking 10 HCP, especially in a passed hand.

There is no need to stretch for a 1NT response in a matchpoint game when partner opens in a major suit in which you have three cards or a good doubleton. You would not be "improving" the contract by bidding, since you are already in an acceptable matchpoint contract. Pass a 1♠ opening with ♠873 ♥762 ♦A32 ♣Q643. At IMP scoring you might respond 1NT in case partner has a huge hand. At matchpoints the primary aim is to obtain a good part score, not to seek an unlikely game.

Goren's rule that a 1NT response to a 1♣ opening should show 8-10 HCP has very little merit. Holding 6-9 HCP and less than four cards in either major, prefer a 1NT response to 1♣ instead of a pointless 1♦ with a hand such as ♠Q87 ♥Q63 ♦K976 ♣964. The 1NT bid has preemptive value and describes the hand perfectly. Besides, you're going to rebid 1NT if partner rebids in a major. Why not bid it right away?

Avoid the 1NT response with a void or small singleton in partner's suit, and never bid 1NT with such a holding in a side suit. Better to pass or bid a weakish two-over-one.

A free 1NT response must be a little healthier than 6-7 HCP, but a double stopper in the opposing suit is worth an extra point or two.

Response of One of a Suit

A suit response might contain less than 6 HCP. How much less depends on several factors. A good major suit like KJ987 is usually sufficient in itself for a response. Avoid bidding bad suits with bad hands. Partner may be leading your suit against an opposing contract, and it is important for partner to judge the partnership assets accurately when you are weak. He is likely to go wrong when you bid a bad suit with a bad hand.

Another consideration is the preemptive value of the response. At matchpoints a 1♠ response to 1♣ is often made with very weak hands when the vulnerability is favorable. The 1♠ response makes it more difficult for the opponents to enter the auction accurately, if they enter at all.

A free one-over-one response in a suit does not show extra values. It only implies that the hand is not sub-minimum, as it may be when bidding just to give partner a chance or to improve the contract.

Biddable Suits

A biddable four-card suit is one headed by Q10 or better. Any five-card or longer suit is biddable. "Unbiddable" suits may be bid when there is no reasonable alternative. Avoid responding in an unbiddable heart suit when partner opens 1♦. He is unlikely to have four hearts unless he plans to reverse. You don't

want to play a trump suit of J654 opposite K32, or have partner lead from Kx into your Jxxx against an opposing contract.

The same reasoning holds for a 1♠ response to 1♥. Prefer a 1NT response with ♠J873 ♥983 ♦K86 ♣A84. If the alternative to bidding a weak suit is to bid 1NT with a short suit, however, prefer the suit response. If partner raises with three trumps you may be able to get a cross-ruff going. With a singleton honor in partner's suit the 1NT response is more acceptable. Respond 1NT to a 1♦ opening when you hold ♠K65 ♥8762 ♦Q ♣A7532.

With a good hand the dangers of bidding weak suits are somewhat lessened. You can investigate other denominations if partner raises, and he probably won't be on lead. Nevertheless, weak suits should still be avoided. Bidding a poor suit is a bad start for slam bidding, and is never helpful in assisting partner to judge his hand properly. He will downgrade a hand that includes a singleton in your suit, and will upgrade it with Qxx, neither of which is valid opposite 9632.

Choice of Suit

When faced with a choice of suits at the one level, the classic rules are:

-- Bid the longest suit first

-- With two or more suits, bid the highest-ranking suit

The second rule is not in line with current "up-the-line" bidding practices. Too bad. And these rules are not absolute. The best course in bidding is not to follow some arbitrary rule religiously, but to just make the best bid. Lead direction will often play a part, as will preemptive considerations, when the hand is weak enough to suggest that the opponents may buy the hand.

A very strong four-card suit may be bid before a lower ranking five-card suit that is very weak, when they are touching suits and the hand is not worth a reverse. With ♠AKJ2 ♥108754 ♦3 ♣762 respond 1♠ to a 1♣ opening. If you bid 1♥ and partner rebids 1NT, you won't know what to do. After a 1♦ opening, a 1♥ response would not be so bad, since you could pass a 1NT rebid with less worry about the short suit.

Partner opens with 1♣ and you hold either of these hands:

1) ♠432 ♥Q543 ♦AKQ5 ♣84

2) ♠432 ♥Q543 ♦AK52 ♣Q4

Respond 1♥ with hand 1) and 1♦ with hand 2). If you bid 1♦ with hand 1) you will have no good continuation if opener rebids 2♣--a reverse would imply 4=5 distribution. Delete the queen of diamonds and the response is 1♦, planning to pass a 2♣ rebid. With hand 2) you can respond 1♦ because a 2♣ rebid can be raised to 3♣. The idea is that you must sometimes consider your next call as well as the current bid when choosing between four-card suits.

When the opening bid is 1♣, it is usually better to respond 1♥ than 1♠ with 4-4 in the majors. A 1♠ response could cause a 4-4 fit to be lost. This is certainly not an absolute rule. If the spades are very strong and the hearts very weak, it is better to bid 1♠. Remember that it is also possible to miss a 4-4 spade fit when opener raises a 1♥ response with three trumps. It is not correct for him to rebid 1♠ after a 1♥ response when he holds ♠Q963 ♥KJ7 ♦2 ♣AQ876. He will raise hearts because a spade bid followed by a heart raise on the next round would suggest a better hand, or stronger spades and weaker hearts.

When the opening bid is 1♦, lean toward bidding 1♠ with 4-4 in the majors and 10 HCP or less. Opener is unlikely to have four hearts unless he is planning to reverse, and you don't want him to give a three-card heart raise when he has four spades (often the correct rebid). If the spades are weak and the hearts strong, a 1♥ response may work out better.

With four spades and four diamonds respond 1♠ to a 1♣ opening if you won't mind being raised with three trumps. The 1♠ response is better with a hand such as ♠AQ103 ♥92 ♦Q1086 ♣742, because it is lead directing, preemptive (shutting out a 1♥ overcall), and shows the best feature of the hand at once--a strong major suit. Besides, opener might bypass a four-card spade holding and rebid 1NT with a 4=3=3=3 hand.

Raise Partner or Bid Something Else?

The choice will often arise among raising partner's suit, bidding 1NT, or bidding one-over-one in a new suit. The 1NT response is preferable to a minor suit raise if the hand is suitable for notrump play. The raise of a major, on the other hand, is usually better than a 1NT response. With a "square" 4-3-3-3 hand the 1NT response may be preferred if the hand is weak, 6-7 HCP. With 8-9 HCP go ahead and raise with a square hand and adequate trump support. A 1NT response could result in a lost game if opener must rebid two of his suit but would have bid game opposite a raise. Also, a major suit raise is more preemptive than a 1NT response. When in doubt, rebid 1NT after opening a red suit, because responder could be 4=6 in major-clubs. If so, she can use Checkback Stayman (section 4-9) to avoid playing a Moysian (4-3) fit instead of a 6-3 or 6-2 club fit.

In general it is better to respond in a major rather than raise a minor, but there are many exceptions. With a weak hand, don't bid a four-card heart suit with good support for partner's diamonds: ♠83 ♥Q973 ♦KJ53 ♣652. Bid 2♦ in response to 1♦. Partner is unlikely to have four hearts, and you are going to bid 2♦ on the next round anyway. An immediate diamond raise will put partner in a better position to go to the three level if the opponents come in, something you could not do with this weak hand. Also, if partner ends up on lead you want diamonds led, not hearts. Lastly, the 2♦ raise may keep the opponents out of the bidding. Even if it doesn't, they will have to bid one level higher to come in, with a possible loss of bidding accuracy.

To a lesser extent, the same principle applies to a 1♦ opening when you have spades and diamonds, or to a 1♣ opening: With a weak hand, and especially with a weak major, generally prefer a four-card raise to a bid of the major.

When partner opens 1♥ there is often a problem of whether to raise hearts or show a spade suit. With 8-9 points, prefer the raise--even with five spades and three hearts: ♠A9873 ♥Q84 ♦62 ♣Q64. If you respond 1♠ and partner rebids 2♣, you would have to make a weak preference bid of 2♥ (which is not a raise). Opener would place you with a hand of this sort: ♠QJ653 ♥J4 ♦K874 ♣83 and might pass 2♥ when game could be made. He would pass, for instance, with ♠3 ♥A10876 ♦109 ♣AKJ75. With four spades and three-

card heart support, the 2♥ response is preferable even with 6-7 HCP, because a 1♠ response could lead to a 4-3 fit instead of a 5-3 fit when partner raises with three spades and five hearts. Besides, the 2♥ response has more preemptive value. These two factors just barely make up for the possible loss of a 4-4 spade fit.

All this leads to the following rebid meanings:

Opener	Responder
1♥	1♠
1NT	2♥ is weak, five spades and three poor hearts
	3♥ is forcing, probably with three-card support
	4♥ implies four strong hearts, slam interest
	2♣ is Checkback Stayman (see section 4-9)

The 2♥ preference bid shows a hand like ♠Q8743 ♥986 ♦3 ♣K853. Opener can count on five spades, three poor hearts, and a weak hand. The jump to 4♥ implies strong hearts and spades, weakness in the minors: ♠AKQJx ♥KJxx ♦xx ♣xx. It shows mild interest in slam, so opener can bid six hearts with the right cards. Checkback Stayman is used prior to raising hearts with a game-invitational hand, while the jump raise is forcing to game.

TWO-OVER-ONE RESPONSES

Requirements for a two-over-one response cannot be stated simply. To say that it requires 11 HCP or more is a straitjacket approach that does not work for natural bidders. In good bidding there are hands with less points that call for a two-over-one response. These are the hands with distributional features that make them unsuitable for a 1NT response. A two-over-one implies at least 1-1/2 defensive tricks, however.

Notrump is a desirable landing spot, especially at match points. You get more points for a given number of tricks, and game is scored with fewer tricks. Accordingly, partner will believe you when you bid notrump, and will tend to leave you in notrump, or raise you, if at all possible. You must therefore avoid bidding notrump with hands that are unsuitable for notrump play. Use a five-card major system with a forcing 1NT response if you want to bid notrump with suit-oriented hands.

With a hand like ♠ 3 ♥ 732 ♦ AJ7632 ♣ K86, respond 2♦ to a 1♦ opening. A two-over-one response does not promise another bid, so you can pass if partner rebids 2♥ or 2♠.

Avoid bidding notrump with singletons, voids, 5-5 distribution, or a long suit. These features are desirable for suit play. Long suits are good for notrump, but only if they can be run. Bid your long suit and find out if partner fits your hand. A 1NT response is no help in finding a fit for a long suit.

Stretch a little to bid two-over-one after a 1♥ opening if your hand contains four or more hearts. A good heart contract might be missed if you respond 1NT and partner passes with 4-4 in the majors. With ♠ K6 ♥ J875 ♦ 83 ♣ KQ1093 respond 2♥ to a 1♥ opening. Partner may rebid 2♠, and you can stand a 2♠ rebid. If your hearts and diamonds were reversed, a 1NT response would be preferable.

One-Over-One or Two-Over-One?

With two (or more) suits and a choice of bidding at the one or two level:

-- If the longer suit can be shown at the one level, bid it.

-- If the longer suit must be shown at the two level, bid it only if the hand is worth a game try--11 points or more. If you will have to pass a minimum suit rebid by opener, prefer the one level response.

With ♠ 83 ♥ KQ84 ♦ 76 ♣ KJ753 respond 1♠ to a 1♦ opening. Add the ace of diamonds and 2♣ is the correct bid, planning to bid hearts on the next round. It is wrong to bid 1♠ with the stronger hand in an attempt to "keep the bidding low." If partner rebids 2♠, you would have to bid 3♣. Result: the bidding is higher, not lower, and opener has no information as to the relative length of the two suits.

-- If the suits are of equal length a one-level response is usually preferable, but there are exceptions. With ♠ AQ97 ♥ 73 ♦ 843 ♣ AK94 a 2♦ response to 1♥ is preferable to a 1♠ response. Suppose partner rebids 2♥ -- then you bid 2♠, aiming at a notrump contract. If partner then bids 3♣, supposing you have five clubs, you can bid 3♦ (forcing). But suppose you respond 1♠ to 1♥. The bidding might go:

Opener	Responder

1	1
2	3
3	Now what?

Choice of Suit for Two-Over-One

When a two-over-one response is indicated, and there are two suits to choose from:

-- Bid the longer suit first, but count a very weak minor suit as having one card less in length. Treat 108753 as a four-card suit.

-- With equally long five or six-card suits, bid the higher ranking first. With touching 5=6 suits, a strong five-carder may be considered equal in length to a mediocre six-carder, especially with a weakish hand. Respond 2 to a 1 opening with 3 AQ1097 K107642 8. With a stronger hand you could bid diamonds, then bid and rebid hearts, but this hand is not strong enough for that.

-- When choosing between four-card suits, do not choose hearts unless they are very strong (e.g., AKJ3, AQJ10). In a pinch opener can raise with three small hearts because you are supposed to have five. Also, he can jump to 4 with just three-card support. Can you bid a four-card heart suit with four of partner's spades and too much for a raise to 2 ? Only with a game-going hand. It is true that the hand will not play in hearts, but don't get trapped into this auction with a hand of just invitational strength:

Opener	Responder
1	2
3	3 is forcing!

With 986 AJ73 754 AQ9 respond 2 to a 1 opening. Partner will suppose you have a club suit, but you should be able to handle any development. If he raises clubs you can bid 3 (forcing) because he implies five spades and a good hand with that sequence.

In competition it is sometimes necessary to bid two-over-one with only a fair four-card heart suit when you are not playing negative doubles. What else can you do when partner opens 1 , next hand bids 2 , and you hold J3 AJ87 873 KJ97?

-- With two four-card minors it is often wise to bid the suit in which it would be undesirable for partner to have a singleton, when you don't plan to show both suits. Reason: partner will tend to devalue his hand when he has a singleton in your suit. Partner opens 1 and you have J43 Q5 A1087 KJ83. You have too much for 2 or 1NT, so you must bid a minor. Which? Bid 2 , because that is the suit where a singleton would be undesirable in partner's hand. For instance, she could have KQ9652 A43 Q65 7. When you eventually raise her 2 rebid to 3 , she will bid 4 if you responded 2 originally, and pass if you answered 2 . This is an example of how natural bidders can help each other in hand evaluation.

Of course with a hand like this you have no choice: J3 765 AKJ5 KJ87. You must respond 2 to a 1 opening, to prepare for a rebid (3) if opener rebids 2 . You would not want to reverse with a 4-4 holding in touching suits. It is only when you have a real choice that you can use judicial suit selection to assist partner.

When RHO Overcalls in Notrump

-- If the notrump overcall is artificial, showing two suits (e.g., unusual notrump), see section 12-7, Defense Against Two-Suited Conventions.

-- If the overcall is natural, a two-over-one response is not forcing, a double is for business, all raises are preemptive, a jump to three of a new suit is invitational. A cue bid in notrump is unusual notrump, asking opener to choose between the lower two unbid suits:

South	West	North
1	1NT	Dbl - business
		2 /2 /2 - not forcing
		2 /3 - weak, preemptive
		2NT - unusual notrump, clubs and hearts
		3 /3 /3 - invitational

The 2NT bid shows something like void Q10763 J3 A108432. Fourth hand is going to bid some amount of spades, so opener will have the information he needs for his next call. The jumps to three in a major imply a very long suit and a distributional hand, one that cannot double the overcall with assurance: KJ98763 K4 Q87 2 (RHO could have a long solid club suit.). A jump in a minor implies a long suit headed by AQJ, inviting a 3NT bid but not forcing.

When RHO Overcalls in a Suit

Free bids at the two level in a suit lower in rank than opener's suit requires no more strength than non-free bids. When the suit is higher in rank, however, and he may be forced to the three level, responder must have a good enough hand to provide a measure of safety at that level:

South	West	North
1	1	2 - may be light
		2 - promises a better hand

The nominal minimum for bidding 2 is 10-11 HCP, maybe less with diamond support. Neither North response promises another bid, so she may pass a minimum rebid by South.

THE SINGLE RAISE

In a Major

This raise is based on support tricks that may be in high cards or mainly distributional. When you raise 1♥ to 2♥, partner will take you to have at least ♠84 ♥Q1072 ♦984 ♣A752 or ♠9653 ♥J10653 ♦K74 ♣3. Just because partner would regard these as minimum hands for the raise does not mean that raises are never made with weaker hands. It is the same as with sub-minimum opening bids and overcalls--you risk misleading partner because good bidding has to be competitive as well as constructive. Of course, having raised 1♠ to 2♠ with a hand like ♠K763 ♥104 ♦J862 ♣942, you do not jump to 4♠ over a 3♦ game try rebid by opener, just because the hand "fits." A sub-minimum becomes only a minimum when the hand fits, not a maximum.

Over RHO's takeout double, however, sub-minimum raises are standard procedure. They can also be a little light when RHO overcalls, as that may be the last chance to show support.

At the other end of the spectrum are hands that are top-heavy for a single raise, but present no good alternative. These are the 4-3-3-3 hands with no side suit:

♠KQJ3 ♥A42 ♦542 ♣653

♠AK8 ♥QJ7 ♦7543 ♣862

Just raise 1♠ to 2♠ with these hands. The first one is not worth a limit jump raise to 3♠. With the second hand, a game try is just plain bad bidding. If we subtract a point for poor distribution, these 10 HCP hands are really just nine-pointers.

Adequate trump support for a raise is nominally J10x or better, but with good ruffing ability or extra strength in high cards, raises are sometimes in order with three small cards.

In a Minor

Prefer a 1NT response (6-9 HCP, even over 1♣) to a minor suit raise, if the hand looks suitable for notrump play.

Usually prefer a major suit response to a minor suit raise, but the raise is often correct. The issue is discussed in section 3-1, One-Over-One Responses.

Three-card minor suit raises are sometimes necessary in competition, but otherwise are rare (and only in diamonds). Raise 1♦ to 2♦ with ♠5 ♥763 ♦AQ2 ♣J97642. If the minors were reversed and the opening was 1♣, a 1♦ response would be preferable to 2♣ (by far).

LIMIT JUMP RAISE IN A MAJOR

The jump raise of a major suit is not forcing, whether made in competition or not. Requirements are:

-- Four-card trump support, headed by queen or better, or any five
-- About 11 points counting distribution, a game-try hand

-- A balanced hand with generally scattered strength

The limit jump raise implies that it is not important where opener's strength lies; any high cards in his hand will be useful. This in turn implies a balanced hand for the raise, with no good side suit. When the degree of fit may be important, as when responder has a short suit or a good side suit, it is usually better to make a temporizing bid in a new suit before inviting game. This action will help opener in judging whether to bid game or not when he has a close decision.

Partner opens 1♠ and you have ♠Q1042 ♥K3 ♦AJ42 ♣976. This is a good raise to 3♠. But with ♠Q1042 ♥J86 ♦AQ943 ♣8 respond 2♦ and bid 3♠ on the next round. The bidding might go:

Opener	Responder
1♠	2♦
2♠	3♠

or:

Opener	Responder
1♠	2♦
2♥	3♠ - not forcing

Note that responder must go to the three level to *raise* spades. A 2♠ rebid over 2♥ would be a *preference*, not a raise, showing something like ♠J3 ♥4 ♦AJ8763 ♣J764.

In competition one must usually forget about bidding a side suit, both for preemptive reasons and because the overcall often takes away bidding space. If you have ♠KJ54 ♥63 ♦AQ763 ♣95 and partner opens 1♠, then next hand bids 2♥, you cannot bid 3♦--you won't know what to do if partner bids 3♠--so you jump to 3♠ over 2♥.

If RHO had passed, you would have bid 2♦ before raising spades. If RHO had bid 2♣ instead of 2♥, you could bid 2♦, but even then 3♠ is better. An immediate jump might shut out a club raise by LHO, and partner does not need much guidance as to fit. With an opponent bidding clubs, he will know that a singleton or xxx in diamonds is a poor holding.

The trump support is sometimes not up to par in competition. Suppose partner opens 1♠, RHO bids 2♥, and you have ♠KQ8 ♥7 ♦A10874 ♣J953. This hand is too good for a 2♠ raise, but 3♦ over 2♥ is out of the question; the hand is not good enough. In a case like this you must bid 3♠ with three-card support.

When in doubt whether to give a single or double raise, look at the trumps. With good four-card support, lean toward the jump raise. A jump with three trumps should only be made when a single raise is completely ruled out.

As with the preceding hand, a jump raise in competition will often be made with an unbalanced hand.

A passed hand jump raise may also have an unbalanced hand and/or trumps weaker than Qxxx, perhaps only three-card support. See section 3-17, Responses by a Passed Hand.

A limit raiser cannot use Blackwood, so his 4NT bids are natural:

Opener	Responder
1♥	3♥
4♣	4♦
4♠	4NT - natural, club king

A jump raise over an opposing takeout double is a weak preemptive bid. A good raise (not a limit raise) is shown by an artificial jump to 2NT when the hand lacks sufficient HCP for a redouble. See section 3-19, Bidding Over a Double.

LIMIT JUMP RAISE IN A MINOR

The jump raise of a minor suit opening is not forcing, whether made in competition or not. Requirements are:

-- Four good trumps, although five is more usual

-- About 11 points counting distribution--a game try hand

-- No biddble major suit

Notrump Probe

After a minor suit jump raise, opener can probe for a notrump game with a hand that is too good to pass:

-- After a jump raise in clubs:

Opener bids his lowest ranking stopper if interested in probing for a notrump game. If opener bids 3♦ over the 3♣ raise, responder shows a heart stopper by bidding 3♥. With no heart stop, she bids 3♠ to show a spade stopper. With both majors stopped, she bids 3NT over 3♦, and with neither she bids 4♣:

Opener	Responder
1♣	3♣
3♦	3♥ - heart stop, no spade stop
	3♠ - spade stop, no heart stop
	3NT - both majors stopped
	4♣ - neither major stopped

If opener bids 3♥ over 3♣, denying a diamond stopper but implying a spade stopper, responder bids 3NT with a diamond stop (counting on opener to have spades stopped), otherwise bids 3♠ with a partial diamond stopper (e.g., Qx, Jxx), otherwise bids 4♣ (or 4♥ with good hearts, since opener could have a heart suit):

Opener	Responder
1♣	3♣
3♥	3♠ - partial diamond stopper
	3NT - diamonds stopped
	4♣ - no diamond stopper
	4♥ - same, four hearts, four hearts, maximum strength

If opener bids 3♠ over 3♣, denying stoppers in the red suits, responder bids 3NT with those suits stopped, otherwise bids 4♣ (or 4♠, with four spades).

-- After a jump raise in diamonds:

Opener bids 3NT with both majors stopped, not worrying about clubs. There isn't enough room to investigate clubs, and responder will usually have something in clubs anyway. With one major stopped, opener bids that major and responder bids 3NT with a stopper in the other major, otherwise bids 4♦ (or

raises the major with good support and a maximum diamond raise). A 4♣ rebid by responder is a "help-suit game try" with a good hand: ♠32 ♥65 ♦AQ873 ♣KJ75

When to probe? With a doubtful hand, one that makes you think the other pair(s) holding your cards will not automatically go to 3NT. With ♠Q ♥AK3 ♦AJ632 ♣J874, after your 1♦ opening is raised to 3♦, bid 3♥. This shows a heart stop, allowing responder to bid 3NT with ♠K76 ♥Q32 ♦KQ654 ♣108. With ♠J84 ♥K3 ♦AQ8743 ♣K6 just bid 3NT over 3♦. You don't want partner to bid notrump and have the lead come through one of your kings. Besides, the other person(s) holding this hand will bid 3NT, so you might as well go along.

When a probe gets doubled:

South	West	North	East
1♦	Pass	3♦	Pass
3♠	Dbl		

A redouble by North does *not* show spade strength. It tells opener to go ahead and bid 3NT. North might have ♠54 ♥AJ7 ♦KQ832 ♣J76. The redouble is necessary because a 3NT bid by North would send a spade lead through South's possible AQ, Kx, or other vulnerable holding.

Since any new suit bid by opener is forcing, a jump in a new suit is a splinter bid, a slam try:

Opener	Responder
1♣	3♣
4♥ - splinter bid	

Opener has ♠AKQ ♥3 ♦Q87 ♣A87632, too good for a mere notrump probe of 3♦. Responder can now bid 6♣ with ♠753 ♥A54 ♦K3 ♣K9843. See section 4-4, Splinter Rebids by Opener.

A limit raiser cannot use Blackwood. In the last auction, a 4NT bid by responder would be natural--showing secondary heart strength and warning of duplication. Opener might well pass this bid, a good spot if responder has ♠932 ♥KQJ ♦KJ ♣Q10954.

A jump raise over an opposing takeout double is a weak preemptive bid. A good raise is shown by an artificial jump to 2NT when the hand lacks sufficient HCP for a redouble. See section 3-19, Bidding Over a Double.

THE FORCING CLUB RAISE

Opener	Responder
1♣	3♦

The 3♦ response to a 1♣ opening is a forcing raise in clubs, an artificial bid showing five or more clubs and a game-going hand. It crowds the bidding so much that it should be avoided, but with a hand like ♠AK3 ♥765 ♦82 ♣AQ983, there is no alternative.

The forcing club raise tends to deny a biddable major. A subsequent raise of a major will probably be based on three cards.

After a forcing club raise, opener will often probe for a 3NT contract in the same way as he might over an invitational jump raise in diamonds. See the previous section. With both majors stopped, opener can bid 3NT with three small diamonds or even Qx Responder will usually have something in diamonds, since he has no major.

There is no analogous forcing raise for the diamond suit. If partner opens 1♦ you can bid 2♣ with a hand such as ♠AK3 ♥765 ♦AQ983 ♣82. No matter how high partner raises clubs, you can always go back to diamonds without increasing the bidding level.

There is only one situation when the forcing club raise can be made in competition, and that is when 3♦ is a splinter bid:

	South	West	North
	1♣	1♦	3♦ - splinter, no major suit
But:	1♣	1♥	3♦ - weak jump takeout
	1♣	Dbl	3♦ - normal preemptive bid

The forcing club raise cannot be made by a passed hand:

South	West	North	East
Pass	Pass	1♣	Pass

3♦ - normal preemptive bid in diamonds

South has ♠3 ♥85 ♦QJ109732 ♣Q76. North passes with a big 4-4-1-4 hand.

If opener makes a jump rebid in a new suit, that is a splinter bid:

Opener	Responder
1♣	3♦

4♥ - splinter

Opener has ♠AJ10 ♥3 ♦KQ42 ♣AQ765, too much for a 3♠ notrump probe. Responder can now bid 6♣ with ♠KQ4 ♥862 ♦A3 ♣KJ1092. If the major suits were reversed, she would sign off in 4NT (4NT over a splinter bid in support of a minor is always a signoff).

Blackwood is not used by either partner after a forcing club raise:

Opener	Responder
1♣	3♦
4NT	

Opener has too much (18-19 HCP) for a 3NT bid, so invites slam by bidding 4NT.

Opener	Responder
1♣	3♦
4♦	4NT - natural, majors stopped

SPLINTER RESPONSES TO A MAJOR OPENING

A double jump response to an opening of 1♥ or 1♠ is a splinter bid:

	Opener	Responder
	1♥	3♠/4♣/4♦
or:	1♠	4♣/4♦/4♥

The requirements are:

-- A singleton in the splinter suit--not a void
-- Four trumps to the queen, or better
-- Game-going strength, high cards in three suits
-- First or second-round control in the other two suits

A splinter response has a range of 13-15 points or so, counting distribution. That is just a rough guide, because some hands in this range do not qualify. Examples of a 4♦ response to a 1♠ opening:

♠KJ62 ♥Q107 ♦8 ♣AQ863 (a maximum)

♠Q1074 ♥K83 ♦4 ♣AJ762 (a minimum)

But with ♠AKJ3 ♥Q83 ♦6 ♣108762, start with a 2♣ (or 2♥!) response. Too much of the total strength is in the trump suit, and there is no second-round control of hearts.

The splinter bid tends to deny a biddable suit in the other major, but responder may violate this rule if she is quite sure that opener's suit is the right trump suit.

When responder's strength outside of the trump suit is concentrated in one suit, it is necessary to bid that suit rather than make a splinter bid. With ♠AQ75 ♥983 ♦AQ872 ♣4, a 2♦ response is right. Splinter responses imply strength in three suits. If opener rebids 2♠, *then* you can splinter with 4♣, which does not promise control of hearts. Only an immediate splinter would do that.

Splinter Bids in Competition

Splinter bids are used over a takeout double or overcall, with no change in meaning. After an overcall, single jump cue bids are splinter bids, as are any jumps to 4♣ or 4♦:

South	West	North
1♥	2♦	4♣/4♦ - splinter bid
		3♠ - natural, weak, preemptive (see section 3-16)

Note that the jump to 3♠ is a single jump in a major, so it is not a splinter bid. A double jump to 4♥ in response to 1♠ is a splinter, as if the overcall had not occurred, but a single jump to 4♥ is natural.

SPLINTER RESPONSES TO A MINOR OPENING

In the absence of competition, a double jump response in a *major* suit, opposite a *minor* opening, is a splinter bid:

Opener	Responder
1♣/1♦	3♥/3♠

The requirements are:

-- Game-going hand

-- Singleton in the splinter suit

-- Five cards in the unbid major

-- Four or more cards in opener's minor

-- No ace or king in the other minor

The last requirement could have been reversed, guaranteeing an ace or king in the other minor. Opener needs to know about controls, or lack of controls, in the other minor, for example when choosing between 3NT and five of the minor when he lacks support for responder's major. Also, he may need that information when contemplating a slam in one of the partnership's suits. Since responder should have good cards in the two suits he indicates, we choose to restrict high cards to those two suits, with none outside. Another reason is that weakness in the off suit means more probability that opener will have strength there. If opener plays the hand in responder's major, the lead will come up to that strength instead of through it.

Opener	Responder
1♣	3♥

Responder has ♠AJ1073 ♥4 ♦43 ♣KQ863. If responder were to bid 1♠ instead, and next hand preempts with, say, 4♥, this hand may not get described. The 3♥ splinter bid tells the whole story in one call, before the opponents can interfere, and tells it more accurately than any other sequence. It also has more preemptive value than a 1♠ response. Lastly, it can result in the right-siding of a spade contract, opener perhaps having Kx or AQ in diamonds.

A passed hand cannot make this special splinter bid. All such double jumps by a passed hand are normal preemptive bids.

Double jumps in a *minor* suit are not splinter bids:

Opener	Responder
1♣	3♦ - forcing club raise

See section 3-6, The Forcing Club Raise.

Opener	Responder
1♦	4♣ - normal preemptive bid

These splinter bids do not apply over a takeout double:

South	West	North
1♣/1♦	Dbl	3♥/3♠ - natural, preemptive

After an opposing overcall, however, most double jump takeouts by an unpassed hand are splinters, as are single jumps in an opposing suit. Jumps to game are natural bids. Splinter bids in the fourth suit deny control of the opposing suit. Here are all the possible situations after a simple overcall of a minor opening:

North	East	South	
1♣	1♦	3♥/3♠	- splinter, five cards in the other major, no diamond control
1♣	1♥/1♠	4♦	- splinter bid, five cards in the unbid major, no control of RHO's major
1♣/1♦	1♥	3♥	- splinter bid, five spades, no control in the unbid minor
1♣/1♦	1♥	3♠	- natural preemptive bid (since hearts have been bid)
1♣/1♦	1♠	4♥	- natural bid (jump to game)
1♣/1♦	1♠	3♠	- splinter bid, five hearts, no control in the unbid minor
1♦	1♥/1♠	4♣	- splinter bid, five cards in the unbid major, no control of RHO's major
1♣	1♦	3♦	- undefined (diamond void, big club hand?)
1♦	2♣	4♣	- undefined (club void, big diamond hand?)

When opener rebids 4NT after a four-level splinter response, that is natural, to play.

When the Overcall is a Jump

After an opposing jump overcall splinter bids are single jumps, and apply only over a major suit jump overcall at the two level:

South	West	North	
1♣	2♥/2♠	4♦	- splinter bid, five cards in the unbid major, no control of RHO's major
1♦	2♥/2♠	4♣	- same
1♦	2♥	4♥	- splinter bid, five spades, no club control

All show five cards in the unbid major. The last sequence shows five spades, singleton heart, good support for opener's suit, no heart control. You can't do the same over a spade jump, because a 4♠ splinter forces the bidding to the five level. When the jump overcall is in a minor, splinter bids do not apply.

WHEN OPPONENTS DOUBLE A SPLINTER

One of the disadvantages of a splinter bid is that it enables an opponent to show a suit (by doubling) without the risk that an overcall would entail. The splinter bidding side must, in retaliation, use the double as a bidding aid for themselves.

When a splinter bid is doubled, the next hand:

-- *With a poor hand* for the circumstances, signs off in a partnership suit. The signoff implies a hand that would not have been able to make its previous bids without the secondary strength held in the splinter suit.

South	West	North	East
1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass
4♦	Dbl	4♠/5♣	

Either of these signoffs says that North would not have been able to respond 2♣ if it were not for his secondary strength in diamonds. He bids 5♣ with ♠2 ♥Q87 ♦K76 ♣K108732. He bids 4♠ with ♠Q83 ♥42 ♦KJ3 ♣A8742.

-- *With a fair hand* for the circumstances, passes. A passer says that he would have made his previous bids without any king or queen that he may have in the splinter suit. The hand fits. However, he has little or nothing in the way of extra strength for his previous bid(s).

-- *With a good hand* for the circumstances, redoubles or bids something besides a signoff. A redouble does not imply the ace of the splinter suit. It merely shows extra values for previous bidding, disregarding any king or queen in the splinter suit. "Extra values" means a king or better in excess of what was necessary for previous bidding.

OMNIBUS TWO NOTRUMP RESPONSE

There are various conventional 2NT responses to an opening bid of one in a suit (e.g., Jacoby 2NT) that require responder to bid something else with a normal 13-15 HCP notrump hand. The Omnibus 2NT response retains the valuable standard meaning of 2NT while adding two hand types that are hard to describe in standard bidding:

1) A 16-20 high-card point (HCP) notrump type hand. A 3NT response to a major with 16-18 HCP crowds the bidding too much, and may be useful for showing a different sort of hand (e.g., a game-forcing major suit raise). With 19-20 HCP standard practice is to respond 2NT, then bid 4NT (or a five-card suit) over 3NT. Such hands are included in Omnibus, so the 2NT response is expanded to include notrump hands of 13-20 HCP (maybe a good-looking 12).

2) A balanced hand with four-card or better support for opener that is too strong for a mere game-forcing raise. When partner opens 1♥, how do you describe a hand such as ♠K983 ♥AJ97 ♦K32 ♣AQ? A jump to 2♠ is highly questionable--neither the hand nor the suit is good enough for that action. If you respond 1♠, partner's two-level rebid leaves you without a clear-cut continuation.

The range of the Omnibus suit raise is 16-18 points (count 1 point for a doubleton), too good for a standard forcing raise and too weak for a strong jump response in a new suit (or perhaps lacking a good suit for that purpose). For an Omnibus minor suit raise, responder must have at least five-card support, stoppers in the unbid suits, and no major suit. A similar hand with four-card support is treated as a type 1) hand, not as type 2).

Omnibus also enables opener to show a 4-4-4-1 hand opposite a 2NT response. In standard bidding opener has no way of showing a three-suited hand after a 2NT response without going past 3NT, which could be the right contract. Not showing all three suits can result in missing a better contract than 3NT when a 4-4 fit goes undiscovered.

A 2NT response by a passed hand is a natural bid showing 11-12 HCP, and of course is not forcing.

A 2NT jump response to a 1♣ or 1♦ opening in competition by an unpassed hand has to be non-forcing with 11-12 HCP, just like the response by a passed hand. The reason is that such hands are difficult to show otherwise. A jump to 3NT must therefore show 13-15 HCP. The Stoplight Convention (Section 4-12) applies to the 2NT jump response, just as it applies to the 2NT jump response by a passed hand. Omnibus **does** apply after a 1♠ overcall of 1♥ opening, but of course a spade stopper is required with a type 1) hand.

Opener's Rebid

After an Omnibus 2NT response, opener rebids as follows:

> 3♣ - A Stayman-like rebid showing interest in a major suit contract, or a good hand--at least a queen better than a minimum opening. This rebid lets responder show a major (or support for opener's major), and provides maximum bidding space for responder to show a strong hand when opener has extras.

3♦ - A 4-4-4-1 hand of any strength with a singleton in the expected place:

Opening Bid	Expected Singleton
1♠	Clubs
1♥	Spades
1♦	Hearts
1♣	Diamonds

If opener has a 4-4-4-1 hand with the singleton in other than the expected place, he bids 3♣ (to check for a major), not 3♦. He won't be able to describe the hand exactly in this case.

3♥ - a normal 3♣ rebid, minimum hand, probably unbalanced

3♠ - a normal 3♦ rebid, minimum hand, probably unbalanced

3NT - normal notrump raise, minimum hand

4♣ - Gerber, asking for aces

4♦ - "Autosplinter," singleton diamond, long strong holding in the suit opened.

4NT - Natural, 18-19 HCP (Boland applies, see Section 5-6)

5♣ - The Miller convention (Section 5-7)

Game jumps - A minimum hand with one or two long suits:

Opener	Responder
1♠	2NT
4♥/4♠ - minimum opening bid	

When the opening bid is 1♣, 1♦, or 1♥, opener can alternatively invite a notrump slam by bidding 4♠ instead of 4NT. This artificial notrump raise implies that opener's suit needs a good fit to be useful for slam (e.g., his five-card suit is headed by only one of the top three honors). Responder usually signs off at 4NT with a poor fit and only 13-14 HCP.

Responder's Rebids

1) Opener has rebid 3♣, showing interest in a major suit contract, or a good hand, or both:

Opener	Responder
1 any	2NT
3♣	

With a 13-15 HCP notrump hand, responder:

-- shows an unbid major if he has one;

-- shows three-card support for opener's major (Jxx or better);

-- bids 3♥ with both;

-- bids 3NT with neither.

With a 16-18 HCP notrump hand, responder bids 3♦ over 3♣. Opposite a major opening, responder usually has 4-3-3-3 distribution, but could be 4-4-3-2 with both minor suits and a strong doubleton in opener's major. Opposite a minor opening, responder usually has 4-4-3-2 distribution with both minors (respond 3NT with 4-3-3-3), or 5-3-3-2 with a doubleton in opener's minor and five cards in the other minor.

Opener can now bid an invitational 4NT (or 4♠) with a balanced 15-16 HCP hand, make some other move toward slam, or bid slam. His rebid of the lowest unbid suit other than clubs (i.e., 4♦ or 4♥) is Super Gerber (see Section 6-10). Rebids of 3♥, 3♠, or 4♣ are natural:

Opener	Responder
1♦	2NT
3♣	3♦ - notrump hand, 16-18 HCP
3♥/3♠/4♣ - natural	
4♥ - Super Gerber	
4♠ - invitational, weakish diamonds	
4NT - invitational, diamond fit unimportant	

With a 19-20 HCP notrump hand, responder rebids 4NT unless he has a major. If so, he bids three of the major now, to be followed by 4NT on the next round if opener bids 3NT.

With an Omnibus raise (16-18 points) for opener's major, responder bids at the four level, showing his strength at the same time. When judging the quality of the hand, responder considers the quality of the trump support as well as his overall strength. Number of controls (aces and kings) is also important. If in doubt, downgrade a hand with poorish trump support (e.g., Q432) or few controls.

Opener	Responder
1♠	2NT
3♣	4♣ - minimum hand
	4♦ - fair hand
	4♥ - good hand
	4♠ - maximum hand

There is less room when the suit is hearts, so:

Opener	Responder
1♥	2NT
3♣	4♣ - minimum hand
	4♦ - middling hand
	4♥ - fine hand

4NT by either partner is then Roman Key Card Blackwood (Section 6-6).

Minor suit Omnibus raises (showing at least five-card support) are similar, except that 4NT by either partner is natural (responder must have all suits stopped):

Opener	Responder
1♣/1♦	2NT
3♣	4♣ - minimum hand
	4♦ - fair hand
	4♥ - good hand
	4♠ - excellent hand

These artificial four-level raise clarifications apply only after a 3♣ rebid by opener. There is no point to them if opener has a minimum, since Omnibus raises are limited to 18 points.

Opener must rebid 3♣ with a non-minimum hand, even with a second suit to show. He can show the other suit later if he wants to:

Opener	Responder
1♠	2NT
3♣	3NT
4♣/4♦/4♥	

Opener is showing a second suit in a non-minimum hand. He probably has slam hopes despite responder's known maximum of 15 HCP (Responder would have bid 3♦ or 4NT with a stronger notrump hand). If the side suit is hearts, it will be at least five cards long, since responder has denied holding four hearts. The 4♥ bid is non-forcing but mildly invitational, since opener would have bid 4♥ over 2NT with a minimum hand.

2) Opener has rebid 3♦, showing a 4-4-4-1 hand with the "normal" singleton. Responder now takes charge. He can ask for HCP by bidding 3♥:

Opener	Responder
1 any	2NT
3♦	3♥ asks for range of HCP
	3NT is a signoff

The 3NT bid implies no four-card fit with any of opener's suits or too much strength in opener's short suit.

After a 3♥ bid, asking for range, opener bids one step (3♠) with 12 HCP or less, two steps (3NT) with 13-14, 4♣ with 15-16, etc. When showing HCP, do not count a singleton king, queen, or jack, and count a singleton ace as 3 HCP, not 4.

A repeat inquiry is possible by bidding the cheapest non-game suit bid on the next round, asking for further clarification: first step is lower value, second step higher value, of the two-point range previously shown:

Opener	Responder
1♥	2NT
3♦	3♥ - asks for HCP range
4♣	4♦ - asks for clarification
4♥ - 15 HCP	
4♠ - 16 HCP	

The 3♦ rebid shows a 4-4-4-1 hand with the "normal" singleton (in spades). The third-step response to the range inquiry shows 15-16 HCP after an appropriate deduction for any high card in spades. The 4♦ bid asks whether opener has 15 or 16 HCP.

A combined holding of 29 HCP (excluding king, queen, or jack of opener's short suit) is enough for a small slam, 32 for a grand slam.

3) Opener has rebid 3♥ or 3♠ with a minimum hand:

Opener	Responder
1 any	2NT
3♥/3♠	

A 3♥ rebid shows clubs, and a 3♠ rebid shows diamonds. If the opening was in a different suit, these bids imply that the original suit is at least five cards long.

-- When the opening was in a major, responder raises the major with three-card or better support, whether holding a notrump hand or a big Omnibus raise:

Opener	Responder
1♥	2NT
3♥/3♠	4♥

The 4♥ bid is ambiguous, in that responder could have an Omnibus raise with four trumps, or any sort of notrump hand with three trumps. Opener won't care what type of hand responder has, because he is going to pass 4♥ with his announced minimum hand (He must rebid 3♣ with extra values).

With a notrump hand that lacks three-card support for opener's major, responder can rebid 3NT or (fearful of 3NT or in search of a slam) probe further:

Opener	Responder
1♠	2NT
3♥	3♠ - three spades, notrump hand
	4♠ - Omnibus raise
	4♣ - normal club raise
	4♦/4♥ - Notrumper Cue Bid (see Section 10-11)
	4NT - 19-20 HCP notrump hand

The 3♥ rebid shows clubs and a probable lack of interest in notrump. Responder's non-jump suit rebids are ambiguous as to strength, but they all may be made with a normal 2NT type hand. Opener assumes

responder has a 13-15 HCP notrump hand, and bids accordingly. With an Omnibus raise, responder (barring a great fit with the second suit) merely puts the hand in the spade game, knowing there is probably no slam in view of opener's minimum hand. The Notrumper Cue Bid may be in support of spades or clubs (opener assumes spades for now).

If responder has a 16-18 HCP notrump hand with no good fit in either of opener's suits, he will probably sign off in 3NT. In other cases he will just set the contract in a suit, since he knows opener's hand rather closely. With 19-20 HCP he bids 4NT (natural) if he can't see an obvious suit slam.

Sometimes responder can make a trial bid at the three level:

Opener	Responder
1♥	2NT
3♥	3♠

The 3♠ bid shows spade strength, club support, and probable diamond weakness: ♠KQ10 ♥Q3 ♦10432 ♣AQ76.

-- When the opening bid was in a minor, opener is either showing both minors or "rebidding" a minor:

South	West	North	East
1♦	Pass	2NT	Pass
3♥ - diamonds and clubs			

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	2NT	Pass
3♥ - rebiddable clubs			

Both sequences show a minimum opening, so North now bids an appropriate game (or slam) or raises to the four level (forcing). A four-level raise at this point could be based on a 13-15 HCP notrump hand if responder is nervous about a weakly stopped unbid suit. (Opener's rebid implies a dislike of notrump.) Opener may want to cue bid after this raise, in case responder has a big Omnibus raise and a great fit.
4) Opener has rebid 3NT, showing a minimum balanced hand with no special interest in a major suit contract.

Responder can pass with a notrump hand of up to 18 HCP; a raise to 4NT shows 19-20 HCP. With a strong major raise sort of hand, responder will just bid four of opener's major. A four-level new suit bid by responder therefore shows a 5-3-3-2 (doubleton in opener's suit) hand with 19-20 HCP:

Opener	Responder
1♥	2NT
3NT	4♣/4♦/4♠ - 19-20 HCP, 5-3-3-2
	4NT - 19-20 HCP, no 5-card suit

5) Opener has jumped to game. Responder passes or otherwise sets the contract, remembering that opener has a minimum.

When the Opponents Intervene

Omnibus applies in competition, but only when the 2NT bid is a jump over a 1♠ overcall of a 1♥ opening bid. It does not apply to a 2NT bid made over an opposing two-level overcall, or a jump to 2NT after a minor suit opening, which are non-forcing responses showing 11-12 HCP and at least one stopper in the opposing suit. It does not apply over a double, when a jump to 2NT has a different meaning (see section 3-19, Bidding Over a Double).

When an opponent doubles an artificial bid, a redouble shows a stopper in the suit doubled:

South	West	North	East
1♠	Pass	2NT	Pass
3♥	Dbl	Rdbl	

The redouble shows a heart stopper and denies spade support. A 3NT bid implies a double stopper and no spade support. A pass denies both spade support and a heart stop: ♠Q3 ♥9432 ♦AQ108 ♣KJ9. With spade support North usually bids 3♠ regardless of his heart holding, since South must have five spades and notrump is not likely to be the best strain.

Advantages of Omnibus

-- A 16-18 HCP notrump responding hand can be shown at a low level (3♦) when slam is a possibility (i.e., opener rebids 3♣).

-- The opponents will often be in the dark defending 3NT, not knowing declarer's strength very closely when he could have from 12 to 20 HCP. They may well go to bed with an ace or other winner(s).

-- Some suit contracts normally played from opener's side may be played from the notrumper's side, making the opening lead come up to his side-suit strength.

-- Opener's 4-4-4-1 hands will often get quickly described, and the eventual contract will be an accurate one.

-- Extra strong raises will be shown with greater precision.

-- The 3NT response can be used for hands other than the 16-18 HCP 4-3-3-3 notrump hands (e.g., as an artificial strong major suit raise with 13-15 points).

-- Responder can feel free to bid 2NT with four cards in an unbid major and a notrumpish hand (♠AJ3 ♥Q874 ♦KJ4 ♣K108), because opener can easily check (via 3♣) for a major suit. If there is no check, the opening lead will often be in that suit. Besides providing a good picture of responder's hand, the 2NT response gets any notrump contract played from the right side (the hand with tenaces).

-- Opponents may be inhibited from overcalling when it would pay them to do so, out of fear that the 2NT bidder might have a powerful notrump hand.

One-Over-One or 2NT?

Responder sometimes has a hand that is suitable for a 2NT response but includes a four-card major that could be shown at the one level. Some say that a 2NT response denies a major, but with a hand like ♠KJ9 ♥Q984 ♦J76 ♣AQ10 it is correct to bid 2NT over a 1♦ opening:

-- The hearts are weak.

-- Opener is unlikely to have hearts, having opened 1♦.

-- 2NT describes the hand perfectly.

-- If opener has four hearts he will probably bid 3♣, so a superior heart contract is unlikely to be lost.

-- If opener has four weak hearts in a balanced hand and doesn't bother with 3♣, notrump may be better anyway.

-- Notrump should be played from responder's side, because of the tenaces.

-- The opponents may lead hearts if they are not bid.

-- The 4-3-3-3 distribution suggests a notrump contract.

On the other hand, with ♠KQ32 ♥A65 ♦7643 ♣A7, a 2NT response to 1♣ would be wrong:

-- The spade suit is strong and should not be suppressed.

-- Opener quite possibly has four spades, and may not bid 3♣ to ask for a major if his hand is balanced.

-- The hand may well play better in a suit, with the doubleton and lack of secondary strength.

-- Diamonds are not stopped.

-- There are no tenaces to be led up to, so partner should play any notrump contract.

Between these two extremes lies a great variety of hands with which one must judge whether to show a major or make the good descriptive bid of 2NT.

QUIZ

You open 1♥ with each of the following hands, and partner responds with Omnibus 2NT. What is your rebid?

1) ♠AJ97 ♥AQ873 ♦J ♣987
2) ♠653 ♥AJ542 ♦AQ87 ♣2
3) ♠3 ♥AK874 ♦KQ3 ♣8762
4) ♠KJ3 ♥Q8743 ♦A4 ♣K96
5) ♠A98 ♥KQ1098 ♦AJ4 ♣65
6) ♠3 ♥AQ98 ♦AJ98 ♣A874
7) ♠4 ♥AKJ873 ♦Q84 ♣864
8) ♠J873 ♥AK74 ♦AQ93 ♣10
9) ♠A43 ♥AK10874 ♦3 ♣K83
10) ♠8 ♥KJ972 ♦AQ4 ♣AK83

Answers

1) 3♣ - The 2NT response does not deny four spades, and if responder has heart support he can now show it. With both, he will bid 3♥, whereupon you can show the spades. If he rebids 3NT over 3♣, denying both spades and heart support, you will pass.

2) 3♠ - Showing diamonds, implying five or more hearts, denying a good hand.

3) 3♣ - To give responder a chance to show heart support. The clubs are too weak to show.

4) 3NT - This hand should play well in notrump, even if responder has heart support.

5) 3♣ - You may want to play in notrump even if responder has three hearts, but this hand is a little too strong for a 3NT rebid. The good suit counts for a point.

6) 3♦ - Showing a 4-4-4-1 hand with a singleton in the expected place, spades.

7) 4♥ - Minimum hand, good long suit.

8) 3♣ - The singleton is not in the expected place. If responder has four spades you will play in that suit, but you may miss a good diamond contract. You correctly opened 1♥ because the spades are so weak.

9) 3♣ - The automatic rebid with a good hand that is not of 4-4-4-1 shape.

10) 3♣ - Too good to rebid 3♥, showing a club suit but denying a good hand. You will probably bid clubs on the next round.

You open 1♦ with each of the following hands, and partner responds with Omnibus 2NT. What is your rebid?

1) ♠AJ97 ♥J ♦AQ873 ♣987
2) ♠653 ♥2 ♦AJ542 ♣AQ87
3) ♠3 ♥KQ ♦AK8742 ♣8762
4) ♠9432 ♥AK ♥QJ74 ♣K96
5) ♠8 ♥K8732 ♦AK8742 ♣2
6) ♠AQ98 ♥5 ♦AJ98 ♣A874
7) ♠4 ♥3 ♦AJ8742 ♣KJ1076
8) ♠5 ♥J873 ♦AQ93 ♣AQ76
9) ♠A43 ♥3 ♦AK10874 ♣K83
10) ♠8 ♥AQ4 ♦KJ972 ♣AK83
11) ♠K10874 ♥6 ♦AQ10654 ♣7

Answers

1) 3♣ - The 2NT response does not deny four spades, and 3♣ does not promise extra values.

2) 3♥ - Showing clubs, implying five or more diamonds, denying a good hand.

3) 3♥ - "Rebidding" the diamonds. The clubs are too weak to show. It's better not to bid 3NT with that singleton spade.

4) 3NT - This hand should play well in notrump, even if responder has four spades.

5) 4♥ - Showing a two-suited hand, minimum opening.

6) 3♦ - Showing a 4-4-4-1 hand with a singleton in the expected place, hearts.

7) 5♣ - Minimum two-suited hand, unwilling to risk notrump.

8) 3♣ - The singleton is not in the expected place. If responder has four hearts you will play in that suit, but you may miss a good club contract. You correctly opened 1♦ because the hearts are so weak.

9) 3♣ - The automatic rebid with a good hand that is not of 4-4-4-1 shape.

10) 3♣ - Too good to rebid 3♥, showing a club suit but denying a good hand. You will probably bid clubs on the next round.

11) 3♣ - A jump to 4♠ is a conventional notrump raise, so you must bid 3♣, then 3♠, then 4♠ (or 4♠ immediately, if responder rebids 3NT).

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.

THE 3NT RESPONSE TO A MINOR OPENING

Opener	Responder
1♣/1♦	3NT

The requirements are:

-- 16-18 HCP, balanced hand, 4-3-3-3 distribution

-- No biddable major suit (Q10xx or better)

-- Strength in the unbid suits

To ask for aces after the 3NT response, opener bids the lowest unbid suit other than clubs (Super Gerber - see section 6-10):

Opener	Responder
1♣	3NT

4♣ - natural rebid of clubs
4♦ - Super Gerber
4♥/4♠ - natural
4NT - invitational notrump raise, Boland applies
5♣ - Miller

Opener	Responder
1♦	3NT

4♣/4♦/4♠ - natural
4♥ - Super Gerber
4NT - invitationl notrump raise, Boland applies
5♣ - Miller

See section 5-6, The Boland Convention, and section 5-7, The Miller Convention.

The Omnibus 2NT response is used with 5-3-3-2 and 4-4-3-2 notrump hands of this strength. See Omnibus, section 3-10.

When the Opponents Intervene

-- When RHO overcalls a minor suit opening at the one level, the meaning of 3NT changes.

South	West	North
1♣	1♦/1♥/1♠	2NT - 11-12 HCP, not forcing
		3NT - 13-16 HCP
		4NT - RKCB

Stoplight (section 4-12) applies to the 2NT response.

With a 17-20 HCP notrump hand, just make a forcing suit response and decide what to do later..

-- When an overcall is at the two level, a necessarily non-jump 2NT response is not forcing, showing 11-12 HCP (no Stoplight), and 3NT shows 13-16 HCP.

-- When an overcall is at the three level, a 3NT response shows 13-17 HCP, 4NT 18-20.

Also see section 6-7, Four Notrump - Blackwood or Natural?

PREEMPTIVE JUMP RAISE TO GAME

A double jump raise to game in a major implies very good trump support, usually five or six long, and a highly distributional hand including a singleton or void. It lacks the high card strength necessary for a splinter bid. A typical raise of a 1♥ opening to 4♥: ♠3 ♥K8765 ♦KJ632 ♣76. Add the ace of clubs and you have a 3♠ splinter response. With an in between hand: ♠3 ♥K8765 ♦AQ632 ♣76, a 2♦ response is probably better. This hand is too good for 4♥, not good enough for a 3♠ splinter bid.

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

See section 3-11, The 3NT Response to a Major Opening. A single jump raise to game (i.e., in competition) is a strong raise:

South	West	North
1♥	3♣	4♥ is strong

In the last sequence a raise to 3♥ would be taken as a merely competitive action, not a serious move toward game, so responder must bid 4♥ with a hand that is at the upper limit of a normal limit jump raise to 3♥. The single jump raise to game therefore has a fairly wide range, 12-15 points or so.

What should North do with a *preemptive*-type game raise, since the double jump is not available? Answer: Just bid 3♥ as a tactical measure. The bidding will surely not stop there, and your "slow bidding" may allow you to buy the hand, perhaps doubled, at a lower level than would otherwise be possible (although the 3♥ must be Alerted because of its ambiguous strength). With a preemptive-type game raise, responder must pull a double by opener when he hasn’t had a chance to bid a second time.

If you jump to game with both preemptive and strong raises, partner will not have much to go on if he must make a decision at the five level. And if he doubles, you won't be sure whether to leave it in or not. When a two or three-level cue bid is available to show a strong hand, the jump raise to game is preemptive, even when just a single jump.

The jump raise to game in a minor is a rarity, showing a highly distributional hand, nothing in the majors, little defense, six or seven card support for opener's minor. This is a 5♦ response to a 1♦ opening: ♠3 ♥7 ♦KJ97643 ♣Q763. If the game bid is a single jump, however, responder must have a strong hand:

South	West	North
1♣	3♥	5♣ - strong, not preemptive

North must just bid 4♣ with a preemptive type hand, planning to bid 5♣ on the next round.

Also see section 3-17, Responses by a Passed Hand.

STRONG JUMP TAKEOUT RESPONSE

The strong jump takeout, a single jump in a new suit over partner's one level opening bid, is not used in competition.

Opener	Responder
1♦	2♥/2♠/3♣

Responder's strong jump takeout says, "I know we have a game. We might well have a slam. I am afraid that if I do not jump on this round I won't be able to describe my hand accurately on later rounds." The requirements are:

-- With four card trump support for partner's suit, 3-1/2 defensive tricks ("honor count") are sufficient, provided that a decent suit is available for the jump (headed by A, KQ, or better).

-- With good three card support for partner, a stronger hand or stronger jump suit is needed. Usually four defensive tricks are enough.

-- Without trump support for partner, a very good long jump suit or an extremely strong hand (4-1/2 defensive tricks) is required.

The reason for the emphasis on defensive tricks instead of HCP is that we are more interested in aces and kings for this bid, rather than queens and jacks. With a long strong suit that can play opposite a singleton, 3-1/2 defensive tricks are enough if controls look good.

It is not necessary to jump on the first round just because you have a strong hand. The main question is whether the hand can best be described by an immediate jump or an indirect approach. Some hands can never be described accurately without an immediate jump. You hold ♠AKQ543 ♥9 ♦A32 ♣J76 and partner opens 1♣. If you do not bid 2♠ now, later bidding may be guesswork. With a singleton ace of hearts and three little diamonds, however, just bid 1♠. A borderline jump should not have two or more fast losers in an unbid suit.

With a hand such as ♠K10874 ♥A7 ♦AKQ43 ♣5, just respond 1♠. You can jump in diamonds on the next round, and no rebid by partner will give you a problem. Besides, the spades are too weak for a strong jump takeout. Other considerations:

-- Controls. If in doubt whether to jump or not, don't jump with two or more fast losers in an unbid suit.

-- Hand description. With a three-suited hand containing four card trump support and too much for a splinter bid, responder will often defer the jump to the second round (especially if the first suit to be bid is not very strong):

Opener	Responder
1♥	1♠
2♣	3♦
3NT	4♥

Responder has ♠K1084 ♥A932 ♦AKQ4 ♣5. He bids this way to emphasize diamond quality. If the spades and diamonds were reversed, he would jump immediately:

Opener	Responder
1♥	2♠
2NT	3♦
3NT	4♥

Both sequences, in which responder bids three suits including a jump, promise a singleton or void in the fourth suit. See a further discussion of related sequences in section 4-5, Splinter Rebids by Responder, and section 4-6, Non-Jump Splinters.

Remember, however, that jump reverses by a two-over-one responder are splinter bids, not natural:

Opener	Responder
1♦	2♣
2♦	3♥/3♠ - splinter bids in support of diamonds

You can't use this sequence to emphasize the quality of a major suit. See section 4-5, Splinter Rebids by Responder.

These are jump takeouts to 3♥ in response to a 1♠ opening:

♠Q43 ♥AKQ10874 ♦A8 ♣6

♠A5 ♥AKQ87 ♦K6 ♣K432

With ♠10 ♥A105 ♦KQ73 ♣AQ743 respond 3♣ to 1♥, but just 2♣ to 1♠. A jump takeout bidder should have some idea of where the hand can play before she makes the jump.

TWO-FOR-ONE RESPONSES

Two-For-One Limit Raise in Clubs

A two-level major suit jump takeout of a 1♣ opening in competition into a major suit is called 2-4-1. It is highly invitational but not forcing, showing a four-card suit, a game-invitational hand, and at least four clubs. That's two bids for the price of one. A minimum opener can pass with four-card support (or a strong three, with a side singleton), bid 2NT, or retreat to 3♣. A 2NT rebid implies a three-card club suit. He can also bid 2♠ over 2♥ (you could have both majors), but that has to be forcing. With a good hand opener can raise, force with a new suit, or bid game. Having shown support for his minor, you are free to bid something else after opener's forcing rebid.

The purpose of 2-4-1 is to handle hands with a (possibly weak) four-card major and good four-card or better support for opener's clubs. A raise is not forcing, so a jump to game is stronger:

South West North
1♣ 1♦ 2♥ - four hearts, good clubs, may have spades too
Pass - minimum, four hearts
2♠ - forcing, but may be minimum
2NT - natural, minimum hand, maybe only three clubs
3♣ - signoff, minimum, would have passed a limit raise
3♦ - asks for a diamond stopper, but may be a cue toward slam
3♥ - invitational
4♥ - stronger raise
3♠/4♦ - splinter, very good hearts or maybe long strong clubs.
4♠ - invitational

The jump may be made with two four-card majors in a 4=4=4=1 or 4=4=0=5 hand. A jump to 2♥ gives opener room to bid 2♠ (forcing) if he has four spades. A jump to 2♠ therefore denies four hearts. The 2-4-1 response applies to either a passed or an unpassed hand, and over a takeout double.

Two-For-One Limit Raise in Diamonds

After a 1♦ opening the only 2-4-1 limit raise response available is 2♠ over a 1♥ overcall:.

North West South
1♦ 1♥ 2♠ - four spades with diamond raise
Pass - minimum, four spades
3♣ - forcing
3♦ - minimum, would have passed a limit raise
3♥ - asks for a heart stopper, but may be a cue toward slam
3♠ - non-forcing raise
4♠ - stronger raise
4♣/4♥ - splinter bid, good spade support or maybe long strong diamonds

Two-For-One responses are not used in the absence of competition by an unpassed hand, but are used by a passed hand and my be used over a takeout double. See section 3-17, Responses by a Passed Hand, and 3-19, Bidding Over a Double.

WEAK JUMP TAKEOUT RESPONSE

A single jump takeout response at the three level is a weak bid over an intervening simple overcall.. Examples:

South	West	North
1♣	1♥/1♠	3♦
1♦	1♥/1♠	3♣
1♥	1♠	3♣/3♦
1♠	2♣	3♦/3♥
1♠	2♦	3♥
1♥	2♣	3♠

The requirements for a weak jump takeout are a six or seven-card suit and no defense. The suit quality will vary somewhat with vulnerability and the type of game (e.g., IMP, matchpoints). There is no HCP requirement.

Note that the weak jump takeout does not apply at the four level:

South	West	North
1♥	3♣	4♦ - splinter bid

South	West	North
1♠	2♥	4♣/4♦ - splinter bids

Nor at the two level, when playing 2-4-1 responses:

South	West	North
1♣	1♦/1♥	2♠ is a 2-4-1 response (section 3-15)

RESPONSES BY A PASSED HAND

A two-over-one response should seldom be made in a four-card suit, since opener may pass with a doubleton and no good rebid. A 2♣ or 2♦ response should be avoided when the hand is suitable for notrump play.

A one-over-one response in a major can also be passed, but opener usually bids again if he is short in that suit. Nevertheless, a major suit response is undesirable with a weak four-card suit.

A 1♦ response to 1♣ is forcing. The force is often handy when holding a weak major suit. Respond 1♦ to 1♣ with ♠J963 ♥96 ♦AQJ10 ♣K103. If 1♦ were not forcing, you would have to make a bad bid like 1♠ or 2NT.

Two-For-One conventional responses to a minor opening are also handy (see below). Those made in competition are discussed in section 3-15, Two-For-One Responses

Temporizing bids (bid in a new suit, holding support for opener) over a major opening are dangerous, since partner may pass. It is usually better to raise immediately. This policy will lead to some pretty strong single raises when responder has only three-card support, especially in a matchpoint game.

Jump raises are the same as by an unpassed hand, except that major suit jumps do not always include four trumps. With three-card support a singleton or void is desirable.

The jump raise to game is as usual preemptive. If too strong for a limit raise, respond with a splinter (you must be short) or jump in a new suit. A splinter bid may be in order with a two-suited hand that has strength in three suits. Bid 4♦ over a 1♠ opening with ♠A10432 ♥K2 ♦3 ♣A9873. Jump takeouts of a major opening (see below) are unwise with an ace-high suit, because opener will devalue his hand with a singleton in that suit.

A 2NT response shows 11-12 HCP, or a bad 13. Do not stretch for this bid, which often goes down one. Stoplight, section 4-12, applies to this response.

There is no such thing as a 3NT response to a major, as a balanced passed hand can’t be strong enough for the artificial strong raise . A 3NT response to a minor is natural. Partner opens 1♦ and you bid 3NT (maybe once in your life) with ♠K2 ♥A3 ♦K106542 ♣J108.

Cue bid responses are discussed in section 10-2, Cue Bids by Responder.

Jump Takeout of a Major Opening

A jump takeout of a major opening is forcing, implying four cards (maybe a strong three) in opener's suit, and showing a side suit where a fit might be useful. It does not apply in competition, when jumps have other meanings. The jump is forcing for one round only. Responder is quite likely to pass a simple rebid of the "agreed" suit, which is a weak signoff. Opener must therefore bid something else if he thinks game is likely, either because of good overall strength or a good fit with responder's suit.

Suppose you have ♠KJ54 ♥63 ♦AQ763 ♣95. After you pass in first or second seat, partner opens 1♠. You bid 3♦, forcing, showing good spades and a diamond suit. If partner can only bid 3♠, you pass. If she has ♠AQ92 ♥A8 ♦K105 ♣10742 she will bid 4♠, because of the diamond fit. With ♠AQ1098 ♥KQ7 ♦952 ♣Q3 she signs off in 3♠, knowing the hands don't fit well. With ♠A10962 ♥AK ♦985 ♣K76 she bids 4♠ despite the poor diamond fit, because of the extra strength.

Opener will sometimes have a chance to make a trial bid of his own, either to investigate game chances or to find out if slam might be in the cards:

Opener	Responder (a passed hand)
♠1074	♠9
♥AJ873	♥10952
♦KJ3	♦A74
♣Q5	♣KJ842

Opener	Responder
--	Pass
1♥	3♣
3♦	4♥

Opener's 3♦ call is a trial bid that hits responder well. With diamonds and spades reversed, responder would sign off in 3♥, which will probably go off one.

Responder can make a jump takeout even when he wants to bid game for sure. Suppose you have ♠K10942 ♥6 ♦AQ432 ♣J9 opposite a fourth seat 1♠ opening. You respond 3♦ (better than a 4♥ splinter bid), intending to bid 4♠ if partner rebids 3♠. If he jumps to 4♠ by himself you make another move, probably a 5♥ control-showing bid. Then opener can bid 6♠ with ♠AJ765 ♥852 ♦KJ6 ♣A4.

Suppose you open 1♥ in third seat with ♠A42 ♥KJ876 ♦AK4 ♣K5 and partner responds 3♣. Since you could have tried for slam opposite a mere jump raise to 3♥, you certainly have too much to bid 4♥. You should bid 3♦, which partner will think is just a trial bid. If she bids 4♥ over 3♦, you can bid 6♥ with confidence. If she signs off in 3♥, you continue with 4♣ (or 3♠, followed by 5♣). If the king of clubs were the queen, you would just jump to 4♥ over 3♣ and leave any further move to partner.

Since a new suit bid by opener is forcing, his jump rebid in a new suit is a splinter bid (1♠=3♣=4♥). This type of jump does not apply in competition:

South	West	North
1♥	1♠	3♣ - weak jump takeout response (section 3-16)
1♦	1♥	2♠ - Two-Four-One response (section 3-15)

Three-Level Jump Takeout Responses

All three-level single-jump takeout responses are preemptive in competition, and jump takeouts over a takeout double have different requirements (see section 3-16, Weak Jump Takeout Response, and section 3-19, Bidding Over a Double). Jump takeouts at the two level are conventional, see below.

Two-For-One Two Diamond Response to One Club

A 2♦ jump takeout of 1♣ is artificial, showing a 2NT response with (probably) four cards in one or both majors. A light opener can rebid 2NT or sign off with 3♣. He can also show a major (hearts with both), which responder passes with four-card support. With less support responder bids 2NT (or 2♠ spades over 2♥). A stronger opener can employ the usual methods for rebidding after a non-forcing jump to 2NT, as described in section 4-12, Stoplight.

I said "probably" four cards in a major, but that is not mandatory. Having passed conservatively with ♠A32 ♥A76 ♦A87 ♣9865, 2♦ is a better response to 1♣ club than 2NT. If opener now bids a major (or asks for a major) you will have to bid notrump, but maybe he will rebid in notrump and get the play on his side.

Opener Responder (a passed hand)
1♣ 2♦ - equivalent to 2NT, probably one or both majors
2♥/2♠ - minimum, four or more cards in the suit, not forcing
2NT - probably no major, would have passed a 2NT response
3♣ - signoff
3♦/3♥/3♠ - artificial bids (see section 4-12, Stoplight)

By the way, the 2♦ response is always optional. With a weak major, tenaces, and a good hand for notrump, e.g., ♠J965 ♥KJ9 ♦AJ9 ♣Q102, just respond 2NT. You won't be worse off than those making the same bid, and you ensure that a notrump lead comes up to your hand. Opener in like fashion may rebid 2NT with such a hand (or 3NT with a stronger hand), ignoring the major. Others will be in the same contract, probably from the wrong side.

Example deal:

West	East
♠AJ	♠Q872
♥9532	♥Q876
♦Q62	♦K5
♣KQ104	♣AJ3

Pass	1♣
2♦ *	2♥ **
Pass	

* Values for 2NT, with (probably) one or both majors
** Light opening, could have spades too

If West's major suit holdings were reversed, the bidding would go:

West	East
Pass	1♣
2♦	2♥

2♠ Pass

If the 2♦ bid gets doubled, opener's redouble says that the contract may be playable. He probably has at least four diamonds with a high honor. A pass (forcing) denies a four-card major but does not deny a good hand. A 2NT bid is a signoff, as usual, with strength in diamonds, and a 3♦ rebid is a transfer to 3NT, letting the lead come up to partner's hand (Stoplight does not apply in this situation).

Two-Four-One Two Club Response to One Diamond

A 2♣ takeout of 1♦ is artificial, showing a 2NT response with (probably) four cards in one or both majors. A light opener can rebid 2♦ (which asks responder to bid 2NT), 2NT, or sign off with 3♣ (Stoplight) or 3♦ if not playing Stoplight . He can also show a major (hearts with both), which responder passes with four-card support. With less support responder bids 2NT (or 2♠ spades over 2♥). A stronger opener can employ the usual methods for rebidding after a non-forcing jump to 2NT, as described in section 4-12, Stoplight, starting with 3♣.

As with the 2♦ response to 1♣, the 2♣ response is always optional with a weak major and a hand that looks good for notrump.

Two-Four-One Limit Raise in Clubs

After a 1♣ opening a limit raise can be made with either or both four-card majors.

Opener Responder (a passed hand)
1♣ 2♠ - four spades with a club limit raise, denies four hearts
Pass - minimum, four spades, maybe a strong three if unbalanced
2NT - good diamonds/hearts, minimum hand
3♦/3♥ - natural, forcing
3♣ - signoff
3♠ - non-forcing raise
4♠ - stronger raise
4♦/4♥ - splinter bid, good spades (or long strong clubs)

Opener Responder (A passed hand)
1♣ 2♥ - four hearts with a club limit raise, could have spades

A 2♠ rebid by opener has to be forcing, even though his hand could be light.

Two-Four-One Limit Raise in Diamonds

After a 1♦ opening a jump to two of a major shows a limit raise in diamonds and four cards in the major. It is not forcing.

Opener Responder (a passed hand)
1♦ 2♠ - four spades with a diamond limit raise, denies four hearts
Pass - minimum, four spades
2NT - good clubs/hearts, minimum hand
3♣/3♥ - natural, forcing
3♦ - signoff
3♠ - non-forcing raise
4♠ - stronger raise
4♣/4♥ - splinter bid, good spades (or long strong diamonds)

The 2-4-1 2♠ jump response can also be made in competition over a 1♥ overcall, as described in section 3-15, Two-Four-One Responses.

Opener Responder (a passed hand)
1♦ 2♥ - four hearts with a diamond limit raise, could have spades
Pass - minimum, four spades
2NT - good clubs/hearts, minimum hand
2♠/3♣ - natural, forcing
3♦ - signoff
3♥ - non-forcing raise
4♥ - stronger raise
4♣- splinter bid, good hearts (or long strong diamonds)

Two-For-One Summary

Opener Responder (a passed hand)
1♣ 2♦ - 2NT hand with one or both majors (probably)

Opener Responder (a passed hand)
1♦ 2♣ - 2NT hand with one or both majors (probably)

Opener Responder (a passed hand)
1♣ 2♥ - limit raise in clubs, four hearts, maybe four spades
2♠ - limit raise in clubs, four spades, denies four hearts

Opener Responder (a passed hand)
1♦ 2♥ - limit raise in diamonds, four hearts, maybe four spades
2♠ - limit raise in diamonds, four spades, denies four hearts

Two-Four-One responses may also be used over a takeout double. See section 3-19, Bidding Over a Double. Two-Four-One limit raises apply as usual in competition, as described in section 3-15, Two-Four-One Responses. The artificial notrump bids are of course not applicable in competition.

Do not use 2-4-1 if you have a good major and can pass or raise a 1NT rebid. If partner opens 1♣, just bid 1♠ with ♠KJ92 ♥Q4 ♦876 ♣A976, since you are not too strong to pass a 1NT rebid. Why take a chance on getting too high? Similarly, with a strong major and weak four-card support for opener's minor, just bid one of the major even if you won't pass a 1NT rebid. Respond 1♥ to 1♣ with ♠J73 ♥AKJ2 ♦Q4 ♣10842. You don't mind playing hearts opposite three-card support. If opener rebids 1NT you will bid 2NT, suppressing the club support, since this is a good notrump hand.

PREEMPTIVE NEW SUIT RESPONSES

Preemptive single jump takeouts are discussed in section 3-16, Weak Jump Takeout Response.

Higher preemptive responses in a new suit, which are at least double jumps, show about six playing tricks at the three level, seven at the four level, eight at the five level. They tend to deny any defensive trick, although a jump to game in a major may include the trump ace.

Double jump three-level preemptive responses can be made by a passed hand only, since an unpassed hand's 3♦ response to 1♣ is a strong club raise (see section 3-6), a 3♥ or 3♠ response to a minor opening is a splinter bid (see section 3-8), and a 3♠ response to 1♥ is a splinter bid (see section 3-7).

Four-level preemptive takeouts can be made in any suit, but only as double jumps in response to a minor suit opening.

Opener	Responder
1♣	4♦/4♥/4♠ - preemptive

These bids show a weak one-suited hand with seven or eight playing tricks. In response to a major opening such jumps are splinter bids:

Opener	Responder
1♠	4♣/4♦/4♥ - splinter bid

Five-level preemptive responses are made only in a minor, and are very rare. Respond 5♦ to a 1♣ opening with ♠3 ♥6 ♦KQ8765432 ♣J3.

BIDDING OVER A DOUBLE

North	East	South	
1♠	Dbl	2♠	Very weak raise; may have passed 1♠
1♠	Dbl	3♠/4♠	Preemptive, weak, distributional. South is bidding as high as she dares, with few HCP.
1♥/1♠	Dbl	2NT	Artificial raise of opener's suit, four-card support or better, a hand too strong for any natural raise (all raises are preemptive), not good enough for a redouble. The Stoplight convention (section 4-12) does not apply in this situation.
1♣/1♦	Dbl	2NT	
1♥/1♠	Dbl	3NT	Normal strong artificial raise
1♣	Dbl	3NT	Natural bid: ♠K3 ♥K2 ♦J87 ♣A108765
1♦	Dbl	3NT	Similar, with long diamonds
1♥/1♠	Dbl	4♣/4♦	Splinter bid, strong, ignoring the double
1♠	Dbl	4♥	Same
1♥	Dbl	3♠	Same
1♣	Dbl	1♠	Not forcing. Not a weak four-card suit. May be a weak hand, but does not deny redoubling strength. With a major suit and support for partner's suit, it pays to bid the major rather than redouble--even with as much as 11 HCP. When you have two important features to show in a hand, a redouble may get in the way. Of course you must redouble with a game-going hand.
1♠	Dbl	2♣	Not forcing, but not a worthless hand. Typical: ♠64 ♥J76 ♦43 ♣KQ10986
1♦	Dbl	1NT	6-9 HCP, almost as if the double had not occurred. May have a weak four-card major. A minimum is dangerous against good opposition, who may double.
1♣	Dbl	2♦/2♥/ 2♠	Not quite forcing, showing a strong six-card suit and a fairly good hand, like a weak two bid.
1♠	Dbl	3♣/3♦/ 3♥	is the same, but the suit could be seven long. A minor suit jump, even by a passed hand, invites 3NT, requiring a suit headed by AQJ or better.
1♣	Dbl	3♦	Preemptive, not a forcing club raise

1♣/1♦ Dbl 3♥/3♠	Preemptive response, not a splinter bid
South East North West 1♠ Dbl Rdbl P P 2♣ 2♠	A 10-12 point raise, maybe three trumps
1♠ Dbl Rdbl P P 2♣ 3♠	Good limit raise, four or more trumps, not forcing
1♣ Dbl Rdbl P P 2♣ 2♥	Forcing, in view of the redouble
1♥ Dbl Rdbl P P 2♣ 2NT	Forcing. With 11-12 HCP, pass (forcing) and bid 2NT on the next round (not forcing).
1♥ Dbl Rdbl 2♣ P P 2NT	Not forcing, because the auction would be over if the redoubler passes
1♣ Dbl 1♠ P 2♠ P 3♣	Not forcing, in view of the failure to redouble. Not weak, could have 11 points. Does not indicate a psychic spade bid. Probably 4-4 in the two suits.

A redouble nominally shows about 11 HCP or more, sometimes 10 with good support for partner's suit. A pass, however, does not deny a good hand. It is sometimes wise to pass with a good 4-4-4-1 hand that is short in opener's suit, rather than redouble. The redouble may keep the opponents from bidding higher than they should, a common fault of takeout doublers.

With two suits to show, it may be better to start naming the suits rather than redouble. When RHO doubles 1♣, bid 1♠ with ♠K10842 ♥3 ♦AQJ65 ♣42. If 1♠ gets passed out, you probably aren't missing a game.

After a redouble, the general rule is that opener should pass a bid by RHO around to the redoubler, who may want to double. However, if opener’s hand is not suited for defending that suit, he may bid. A simple rebid of the same suit generally implies a minimum hand, but bidding a new suit says nothing about the strength of the hand. Either action is forcing, of course.

There are some medium strength hands that do not lend themselves well to *any* action over a double. With such hands it is better to pass and act later. Partner opens 1♠, next hand doubles, you have:

1) ♠3 ♥K987 ♦Q1087 ♣A974

2) ♠J73 ♥A9642 ♦K843 ♣6

Hand 1) is not good enough for a redouble, even if you like to redouble with this shape. Pass and double whatever the opponents bid.

Hand 2) is too good for a 2♠ raise, but the trumps are not good enough for the artificial 2NT raise. Pass and hope to act later.

When you pass over a double, then bid or double later, partner will assume you have a fair hand like one of the above. Be careful not to pass with a weaker hand and then act later.

When a takeout double has been redoubled, the doubling side cannot play the hand unless they play it doubled. A pass by either partner over an opposing bid is therefore a forcing pass.

When a takeout double is made on opener's right (over responder), opener should redouble with 17 HCP regardless of his holding in partner's suit. A jump rebid therefore tends to be based more on distribution than on high cards. As usual, raises are preemptive and a jump to 2NT is a strong raise.

The same principles apply over an opposing negative or support double: preemptive raises, jump to 2NT is an artificial strong raise, jump bids are not strong, redouble with a strong hand.

Alternative Treatments

After a minor suit opening has been doubled for takeout, 2-4-1 bids (including the 2♦ response to 1♣) can be used exactly as described in section 3-17, Responses by a Passed Hand, provided the hand has merely invitational strength. Redouble with stronger hands.

Another alternative is to use a jump to 2♠ over a double of 1♥ to show an 11-12 HCP notrump hand, which can right-side a notrump contract.

BUSINESS DOUBLES OF OVERCALLS

The business double of an overcall is a cooperative double, a suggestion to partner, not a definite command. See *Why You Lose at Bridge*, by S. J. Simon, for a good discussion of the principles involved: when to double, when to leave the double in, when to pull the double. Marshall Miles has good words on this subject in his book *How to Win at Duplicate Bridge*.

Here are the general rules Simon provides for deciding whether to pass the double or not:

-- With three or more cards in the suit doubled, always pass.

-- With a doubleton, pass unless you have opened with a minimum hand and a six-card or longer suit, or have a five-card second suit that can be shown cheaply (i.e., at the same level as the doubled contract).

-- With a singleton, don't pass unless you have four defensive tricks.

-- With a void, don't pass--period.

Isn't partner likely to have a lot of trumps when you are void? Perhaps, but the dummy is probably going to have some trumps, too. When you play a low level doubled contract, it is the same as playing the contract yourself. You hope to take seven or more tricks, and do you really want to play a suit contract when one hand is void of trumps?

You can count a high honor (A, K, Q) as two cards when following the above rules.

When vulnerable vs non-vulnerable, lean toward bidding if you are confident of game. To show a profit you would have to beat them four tricks, which may not be possible. If you are pretty sure of slam, then of course you would remove the double regardless of your trump holding.

South	West	North	East
1♥	1♠	Dbl	Pass
1NT			

South must have a three-suited hand, 0=5=4=4 or 1=4=4=4. No other holding makes sense.

If the overcaller gets rescued, a pass by opener is forcing:

South	West	North	East
1♠	2♥	Dbl	3♦
Pass - forcing, theoretically			

If North has nothing but hearts, then he should have passed (hoping opener doubles) instead of doubling. At this level, however, the doubler may not be able to find a safe bid and therefore may choose to violate system and pass.

If opener pulls the double, a new suit by responder is forcing:

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♠	Dbl	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♦ - forcing	
		2NT - not forcing	

The same principles for passing or pulling a double apply when higher-level overcalls are doubled. Partner is very unlikely to have good trumps when the overcall is at the three level or higher, and it is sometimes necessary to double with as little as three small in the opposing suit (never fewer). Accordingly, opener should pull when in doubt, especially if he has a reasonable bid to make.

If the doubler on the next round bids a major suit that he has doubled, it shows the suit and is forcing. If opener bids the doubled suit immediately, that is a strong cue bid showing first-round control of that suit. If he bids it after passing the double, that is natural, exposing a psych:

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♠	Dbl	Pass
2♠ - strong cue bid, probably a void			

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♠	Dbl	Pass
Pass	2♣	Pass	Pass
2♠ - natural			
2NT - not forcing			

Doubles of a notrump overcall are pulled only with a highly distributional hand.