



BEGINNING LEVEL	<b>IMPROVING LEVEL</b>	INTERMEDIATE LEVEL	ADVANCED LEVEL	EXPERT LEVEL
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**HELP TRIAL BIDS - An Introduction**  
LESSON SUMMARY

**HELP TRIAL BIDS are a try for Game when you have**

- ✓ A Major fit at the 2-level
- ✓ An invitational hand

Instead of inviting partner to Game by bidding three of the Major, use a HELP TRY instead. With an invitational hand and only *one* problem, name the problem. This is more accurate.

*Example*

1H – 2H

**3D** “Can you help in Diamonds please partner?”

- ◆ Opener’s **3D** is asking for help in the Diamond suit.
- ◆ Opener has an invitational hand and one problem - the Diamond suit.
- ◆ The HELP SUIT must always be below the three-level of your agreed Major.

If Responder can help in the HELP SUIT, go to Game

If Responder cannot help in the HELP SUIT, return back to three of the Major.

**OPENER RESPONDER**

1H      2H  
**3D**      **4H<sup>1</sup>**  
<sup>1</sup> “Yes, I can help in Diamonds.”

**OPENER**

1H  
**3D**

**RESPONDER**

2H  
**3H<sup>1</sup>**  
<sup>1</sup> “No, sorry. I cannot help.”

Opener is *not* asking you how many points you have, only if you can help in the HELP SUIT. Partner can ask for help in any suit. To ask for HELP in the Trump suit itself (quality) bid three of the Major (but see HANDOUT for special things to be aware of).

**WHAT IS HELP?**

For this method, you have help if you can keep the HELP SUIT to only two losing tricks. This is usually **HIGH CARDS or SHORTAGE**.

- ◆ Something like Axx, KQx, QJxx, KJ109 or Void, Singleton or Doubleton
- ◆ Shortage is always more helpful if you have ruffing potential, for example extra Trumps or a 4-4 fit.

**WHAT IS AN INVITATIONAL HAND?**

Sometimes Opener’s decision to go straight to Game or pass is easy. The in-between hands are harder to assess.

Points-based method – usually 16-18

Losing Trick Count – 6 losers and only one problem - Most authors recommend LTC for HELP TRIALS.

- Opener has **5** losers      ●      **GO**
- Opener has **6** losers      ●      **INVITE** with only one problem – otherwise PASS
- Opener has **7** losers      ●      **STOP**

**WHAT IS A PROBLEM?** Usually a suit that can lose three tricks or even two, especially off-the-top.

- ◆ Something like three small in a suit, a poor quality Trump suit, holdings like Qxx and Jxx.

**WHAT IS NOT A PROBLEM?** ◆ Singleton, Doubleton (two small doubletons could be problematic). Good quality Trumps– extra Trumps can resolve a small trump problem sometimes, Suits with good Honour cards.