



When the Opening Bid is 1 of a suit

Unlike the 1NT bid showing 12-14 High Card Points, a 1 of a suit opening bid is “wide ranging” showing anything from 12-19 High Card Points;

It can show a balanced shape that’s too strong for 1NT opening, somewhere from 15-19 High Card Points; or

It can show an unbalanced hand of any strength from 12-19 High Card Points.

The suit bid will be the opener’s longest, or equal longest suit. A hand with 20 or more High Card Points is usually opened at the “two level”.

Choosing which suit to open

The suit should always be the longest suit i.e. the one with the most cards.

Sometimes there are two suits of the same length.

If there are five cards in each suit, or six cards of each suit, the senior ranking suit is bid. For example, if the hand has six spades and six diamonds, the opening bid is 1♠. If the hand has five diamonds and five clubs, the opening bid is 1♦.

If the hand has two four card suits and is a strong balanced hand, (15–19 High Card Points), if there are four hearts, open 1♥. Otherwise open with a bid of the lower ranking suit.



When there is a "fit"

If partner opens 1 heart or 1 spade, a major suit, and the replying hand has four or more cards in the same suit, the partnership has found a "fit" in a major. The priority is now to establish whether a game contract is available in that suit.

If there's very few High Card Points

Partner opens
1♥

You Hold:

♠ Q 9 8
♥ J 4 3
♦ 6 5 4
♣ 10 9 8 7

Pass

If responder has less than 6 High Card Points, pass. There is no chance of a game bonus, even if the partnership has a fit.

Responder informs partner that there is a fit, and shows, within an agreed range, the High Card Point strength of the hand.



There's a fit AND a few High Card Points in Opener's Partner's Hand

If partner has bid a major suit, and you have 4 cards in that major, you know that between the two hands there are at least 8 cards in the suit, so you "raise" the suit. In other **words**, you bid the same suit at a higher level. The level depends on the number of High Card Points in your hand in total. It doesn't matter which suit or suits the High Card Points are in.

For example, if partner opens 1♥ and your hand has 4 Hearts.	With			♠ Q 9 8
	6-9	Bid		♥ J 4 3 2
	HIGH CARD	2♥	Eg	♦ 6 5 4 3
	POINTS			♣ A 7



With 10 or more High Card Points you will make a "jump" (or "skip") raise

Before making a jump bid a player must place the Stop card in front of him, then place his call as usual, and remove the Stop card after 10 seconds. His left-hand opponent should not call until the Stop card has been removed.

With			♠ Q 9 8	
10-12	Bid		♥ J 4 3 2	
HIGH CARD	3♥	Eg	♦ A 5 4 3	
POINTS			♣ A 7	
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With			♠ Q 9 8	
13+	Bid		♥ J 4 3 2	
HIGH CARD	4♥	Eg	♦ A K 4 3	
POINTS			♣ A 7	



Opener may now have a decision to make

If responder passed

There is no game contract available, and opener will probably not get a second chance to bid.

If responder "raised" a major suit to the 4 level, the choice is made

The game contract has been bid and there is no need to go further. Opener now passes.

If responder "raised" a major suit to the 3 level...

Partner has shown a holding of at least four cards in your suit.

Partner has shown that his/her hand has at least 10 High Card Points, but no more than 12 High Card Points.

If your hand has 15 or more High Card Points, you know that there is 25 or more High Card Points between the two hands, and you raise the bidding to the 4 level.

If your hand has 12 High Card Points, you will pass. There cannot be enough High Card Points between the two hands to make a game contract.

If your hand has 13 or 14 High Card Points then you need an extra feature to make 10 tricks. A good example of an extra feature is a void or singleton in a non-trump suit. An even better feature is a singleton Ace. If you've got something that's going to help play the hand, then raise the bidding to the four level. But if your hand looks a bit ordinary, then pass.



If responder "raised" a major suit to the 2 level...

Partner has shown a holding of at least four cards in your suit.

Partner has shown that his/her hand has at least 6 High Card Points, but no more than 9 High Card Points.

If your hand has 18 or 19 High Card Points, you know that there is almost certainly 25 or more High Card Points between the two hands, and you raise the bidding to the 4 level.

If your hand has 12 to 15 High Card Points, you know that there cannot be more than 24 High Card Points between the two hands, and so you will pass. There cannot be enough High Card Points between the two hands to make a game contract.

If your hand has 16 or 17 High Card Points then it depends whether responder is "top of the range" for his raise (8 or 9 High Card Points) or if responder has the lower end of 6 or 7 High Card Points. You make an "invitational" bid at the 3 level. This bid says to responder: "if your hand is top of High Card Points range for your raise to the two level, please now raise to the 4 level, if your hand is at the bottom of the range, please now pass."



Opening leads in suit contracts

Just a few guidelines – there are other possibilities not listed below.

Consider side (non-trump) suits first.

Don't lead a suit bid by declarer, you are leading "through" any good cards in partner's hand and may prevent him winning with them on a trick led by declarer. Avoid a suit bid by dummy, though this can be a "safe" lead, not giving anything away.

Top of a sequence (of at least two honour cards) is usually a safe lead, e.g. the King from ♣K Q J 6 4.

Any honour lead says "I hold the honour immediately below this and I do not hold the honour above".

e.g. ♣ A K 8 5. By leading the Ace you can "have a look at Dummy" whilst still retaining the highest remaining card in the suit (the King).

A singleton or the highest card of a doubleton is sometimes a good lead, particularly if you have a good trump holding, you may be able to trump the second/third round of the suit

Do not "under-lead" an unsupported (no touching honours in the same suit) ace OR king, e.g. if you have ♣A 10 7 3. Find another suit to lead.

If all else fails lead a trump. It rarely gives anything away.



Glossary

Fit – means that your partner has bid a suit, promising that there are at least four cards in the suit in partner's hand AND you have at least four cards in the same suit. This means that you and your partner have at least eight between you, and this suit will be a good trump suit.

Raise – means to bid a suit your partner has already bid, at a higher level. You are letting partner know that there is a fit. You also show how strong (how many High Card Points) your hand is by raising to the next level, skipping or jumping a level or even jumping two levels.

Responder – means a player whose partner has made an opening bid.

Response or Reply – means the bid that a responder chooses to make.

Sequence – means two or more cards in the same suit with "adjacent" values

e.g. 6♥, 7♥, 8♥

or

K♣, Q♣.