

# The Lansdowne Club

## Lansdowne Beginners' Bridge – Lesson 6

NT ♠ ♥ ♦ ♣

ACOL

Bidding: Pre-emptive Bidding (Weak 2s, Weak 3s and Weak Jump Overcalls);  
Opening 2♣

Play: Signalling

Game:	3 No Trumps	9 tricks	25+ HCP	100 pts
	4 ♠ ♥ (major);	10 tricks	25+ HCP	120 pts
	5 ♦ ♣ (minor)	11 tricks	28+ HCP	100 pts
Small Slam:	6 suit / No Trumps	12 tricks	31-3 HCP	
Grand Slam:	7 suit / No Trumps	13 tricks	35-37 HCP	

A = 4  
K = 3  
Q = 2  
J = 1

1pt for each card over 4

Or with FIT:  
Void = 3  
1'ton = 2  
2'ton = 1

**Opening Balanced Hand:** no voids. Singletons, and not 2+ doubletons

<12 pts	<b>PASS</b>	
12-14 pts	<b>1 NT</b>	rebid entirely dependent on partner
15-19 pts	1 suit	expecting to rebid in NT depending on partner's response

**Responses to 1NT:**

Pass	<11 pts, no 5 card major (-> Transfer)
2NT	11-12 pts, no 4 card major (-> Stayman)
3NT	13+, no 4 card major

**Stayman:**

2♣	11+ pts	one or more 4+ card major
Response:	2♦	Opener has no 4 card major
	2♥	Opener has 4+ card ♥s, and may also have 4+ ♠s
	2♠	Opener has 4+ card ♠s, and does NOT have 4+ ♥s

**Transfer** to the majors: 0–17 pts, 5+ card major

**Responder bids:**

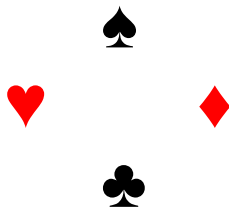
(1NT) - 2♦	asks Opener to bid 2♥
(1NT) - 2♥	asks Opener to bid 2♠

Response at 3 level (♠ ♥ ♦ ♣) -> **FORCING to Game**

### Opening Hand with less balanced or strong balanced hand

<b>Open 1 ♠ ♥ ♦ ♣</b>	<b>R</b> 12-14	<b>Rebid</b> 5+ card suit or bid lower ranking 4 card suit
<b>Pt count</b>	<b>B</b> 15+pts	Opener should rebid NT (if balanced) or 2 <sup>nd</sup> suit OR bid new higher ranking 4+ card suit ('REVERSE')
12-14pts		eg: 1♥ - 2♣ - 2♠
15-19 pts		

<b>Responder with 4+ card support – LIMIT BIDS</b>	1	
Bid 2	6-9	
Bid 3	10-12	
Bid 4 ♠ ♥	13+	
<b>Opener rebids</b> after opening 1 ♠ ♥ ♦ ♣:	2	<b>NT Rebids</b> (strong and balanced)
Responder's Change of suit is <b>FORCING</b>	J	1NT 15-16 pts
Support partner if there is a FIT. If NOT:	S	2NT 17-18 pts
		3NT 19 pts
		Over response at 2 level:
		2NT 15-19pts <b>FORCING to game:</b>



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## Leads: Summary of tips

- What does **bidding** tell you?
- Lead your highest card in **partner's suit**
- **Top of a Sequence**
- Low lead probably means length AND/OR an honour **BUT**:
  - NEVER underlead an Ace

- **TOP OF NOTHING**
- **Lead through strength** and up to weakness
- Singleton / Doubleton: **(HIGH - LOW)**
- Lead **trump** if opposition may be short
- 4<sup>th</sup> highest in longest (strongest) suit (Vs NT)
- Lead an unbid major

## Competitive Bidding – overcalls etc:

### 1 Overcalling a suit

MUST have **5+ cards** to overcall a suit and decent quality – ie some honours.

Never overcall naturally in opposition's suit

➤ Overcall at 1 level	8-17 pts	➤	3 level	12-17 pts
➤	2 level			

#### Responding to an overcall – with **3+** card support

Limit bids:	6-9pts	simple raise	10-17 jump raise
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#### Responding to an overcall – **no 3** card support

0-9 pts	PASS		
10-12 pts & stop in opposition suit	1NT if available, if not PASS	10-12 pts & 5+ card suit	bid 5+ card suit

### 2 Overcall 1NT

- ❖ 15-17 pts & balanced
- ❖ Must have stop in opposition suit
- ❖ **Responses** : as to opening 1NT but adjusted for points (ie need 3 points fewer):
  - Transfers, Stayman, NT limit bids.

### 4 DOUBLE **X** for penalties

You can always look at the back of the bidding card to see the impact of over/undertricks and the scores.

### 3 Double **X** for take-out

Doubling of most sub-game contracts are usually for '**TAKE-OUT**'. This means that partner should bid **their best suit even with no points**. At this level, agree that all **X**s of suit bids below 2NT are for TAKE-OUT, where **X** is the 1<sup>st</sup> bid of that player.

So, in the 1<sup>st</sup> round of bidding: 1♥**X** means

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Opening bid values</li> <li>❖ <i>Shortage</i> in ♥s (max 2 cards)</li> <li>❖ <b>X</b> of major usually guarantees 4 (exactly) cards in <b>other</b> major</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Should be able to support at least 2 of the other suits that partner may take out into.</li> </ul> |
|---|---|
- ❖ OR: 18+ pts

Main exception – **X** of 1NT opening bid (or overcall) is always for **penalties**.

#### Responses to **X**:

- ❖ If RHO passes (1♥ X - ?), Responder should show **longest** suit;
- ❖ BUT if RHO bids, you are not forced

❖ 6-9 & <b>stop</b> in doubled suit (A; K x; Q J x), and no biddable suit:	1NT	1♥ X – 1NT
10-11 ...	2NT	

With biddable suit (4+ cards and preferably at least one honour)

❖ 0-8 pts	bid longest suit	1♥ X - 1♠
❖ 9-11 pts	jump in longest suit	1♥ X - 2♠
❖ 12+ & 5+ card suit	double jump	1♥ X - 3♠
❖ 12+ pts	cue <b>bid enemy suit</b>	1♦ X – 2♦
“unassuming Cue Bid” – FORCING – asks for more info		
❖ PASS is an option only if you have no biddable suit AND 5-6 of the doubled suit – “Pass for penalties”		

## Pre-emptive Bidding

Purpose: bidding at a higher level when weak to crowd out the opposition

**Rule of 20:** You can open 1 of a suit if a little light, if:

Total HCP + Total Number of cards in 2 longest suits = 20+

Eg: ♠ 9 8 2		♠ 9 8 2	
♥ K J 10 9 6 5		♥ 7	
♦ 9 3	11 HCP + 9 cards = 20	♦ K Q J 9 7 4 3	7 HCP + 10 cards < 20
♣ A K	so open 1♥	♣ J 10	so do not open 1♦, BUT...

Open 2 ♠ ♥ ♦ (WEAK TWO)

NOTE: 2♣ is totally different – 23+ pts

Means “I have 5-9 pts and have precisely 6 in the suit, with at least 2 honours”

Open 3 ♠ ♥ ♦ ♣ means “I have 5-9 pts and 7 of that suit (+2 honours)

Open 4 ♠ ♥ ♦ ♣ **NOT VUL** means “I have 5-9 pts and at least 8 of that suit (+2 honours)

‘Do not’ pre-empt in a suit when you have a(nother) 4 card major:

Key issue with light opening: **vulnerability**

EG: 2 down X and <b>Vulnerable</b>	= 500	compared to opposition score of
4♠ Non <b>Vulnerable</b>	= 420	
3 down X and <b>Not Vulnerable</b>	= 500	
4♠ <b>Vulnerable</b>	= 620	

**Opener’s rebid:** you have bid your hand – do not expect to bid again unless partner forces you.

**Responses to Weak Two opening:**

Any change of suit by partner indicates 5 (preferably card suit) and is **FORCING**.

Any raise of opener’s suit should be **PASS**ed.

2NT asks for more information (**Feature**) (**FORCING**). Responder will have 2 card support and 16+ pts:

If minimum (ie < 7/8+ pts), bid 3 of opening suit. 2♠ - 2NT - 3♠ - P

If not minimum: bid a suit with a **guarded honour** (A, Kx, Qxx) or a **singleton /void**. 2♠ - 2NT – 3♥ means a feature in ♥s.

Features should be bid 'up the line', ie the cheapest first. So in this sequence, to show a feature in ♥ denies a feature in ♦s and ♣s.

If not minimum but no feature: bid 3NT – responder can elect to play in NT (esp if opening suit is a minor) or convert to game in opening suit.

Opening 3<sup>rd</sup> of 4<sup>th</sup> in hand: (ie Pass Pass ? or Pass Pass Pass ?)

3<sup>rd</sup> in hand: can be a little weaker to open 2/3 level (not pre-empting partner)

4<sup>th</sup> in hand: be stronger (9-10 pts), as you are not actually pre-empting anyone

1. You Vul – They Not Vul		2 You Not Vul – They Vul		3.	
♠ J 10 9 7 4 3	<b>PASS</b>	♠ Q J 10 9 4 3	2 ♠	W	E
♥ A K 6	Having none of top 3	♥ 7 2	At favourable	♠ K 8 6	♠ A Q J 9 5 2
♦ 9 8 3	honours in ♠s, and	♦ 9 8	vulnerability,	♥ 9 3	♥ 7 4
♣ 7	defensive values in ♥s.	♣ A 7 2	with no	♦ A Q 10 9 6 5	♦ K J
Pts: 8 (+2)	Too risky to open 2 at unfavourable vulnerability	Pts: 7 (+2)	defensive values in other major	♣ 8 5	♣ K Q 7
4.		5.		Pts: 9 (+2)      16 (+2)	
N	S	N	S	2♦	2♠
♠ 8 6	♠ A J 10 6	♠ K 6	♠ A J 10 6	4♠	-
♥ K Q 10 9 6 5	♥ A 7	♥ K Q 10 9 6 5	♥ A 7	E has a good 6 card spade suit, opening values and even honours in partner's suit. Even if she only had 5 ♠s, W's 3 ♠s make a FIT, 4 ♠s should be on. How many winners/losers between the hands?	
♦ 9 3	♦ A K 7 2	♦ 9 3	♦ A K 7 2		
♣ 8 5 4	♣ 9 7 2	♣ 8 5 4	♣ 9 7 2		
Pts: 5 (+2)	16	Ptd: 8 (+2)	16		
2♥	2NT	2♥	2NT		
3♥	-	3♠	4♥ -		
With 16 pts and 2 card ♥ support, S asks for more information. N is pretty minimal so repeats her suit at the lowest level and S can pass.		This time N has good points and a guarded ♠K, so shows the spade feature with 2♠. This also denies a feature in ♦s and ♣s. S counts up to 25 pts and can convert N's spade feature into a trick, so bids game. Critically she can cover 2 of N's 4 losers in ♦s and ♣s.			

## Slam Bidding - BLACKWOOD

Small Slam:	6 suit / No Trumps	12 tricks	31-3 HCP
Grand Slam:	7 suit / No Trumps	13 tricks	35-37 HCP

Points are not everything when navigating to a slam – Aces (/Kings) will also be important. Blackwood is a convention used to establish how many Aces (/Kings) partner has, which can be added to those in your hand.

4NT is a bid which will never start the auction and will almost always ask partner to bid the **number of Aces** she has. You should already have decided which suit the contract will be (ie: 1♥ – 3♥ - 4NT...). The sequence 1♣ – 2♥ - 4NT... always agreed the last naturally bid suit as trumps (ie ♥s).

This is done as follows:

4NT	5♣	0 Aces	5♥	2 Aces	It is most unlikely you will be ; asking the question with no Aces, so the 4 Aces answer is usually not required, but if it is - 5♣.
	5♦	1 Ace	5♠	3 Aces	

If you are really strong and looking to find out about a grand slam, you may have checked that you have all 4 Aces. To find out about **Kings**, the simple way is:

5NT with responses the same as for Aces but at the 6 level 5NT – 6♦

Note that you should aim not to use Blackwood if you might need to stop in a minor suit game – eg: if you have agreed your suit as ♦s, but need 3 Aces for slam, you will be stuck if partner tells you she only has 2 Aces (5♥), as you cannot pass or convert to 5♦.

There are other more complex forms of Blackwood which you may come across at a later date.

7.		8.		9.	
W	E	W	E	N	S
♠ K Q 8 6 3	♠ A J 7 4	♠ A 9 8 7	♠ K Q J 10 6	♠ A K J 5 4 3	♠ Q 8 7 6
♥ K Q J 4	♥ A 7 5 2	♥ J 5	♥ A K Q 8 7 6	♥ A 6	♥ 5 4
♦ 6	♦ A J 5	♦ K Q 7	♦ 5	♦ Q J 7	♦ A K 10 8 6
♣ A K 6	♣ 4	♣ K Q J 6	♣ 5	♣ K 4	♣ A 6
Pts: 18 (+1)	14 (on fit + 2)	Pts: 16	15 (on fit: +4)	Pts: 18	13 (+2)
	1♥	1♠	2♥	1♠	2♦
1♠	3♠	2NT	4NT	2NT	3♠
4NT	3♠	5♦	5♠	4 NT	5♥
7♠				5NT	6♦
				7♠	
<p>With a 4441 shape, E opens the middle of the 444 suits (1♥). W does not need to anything other than to change suit – forcing for one round. E agrees ♠s jumping to show &gt;15 points – extra points for the singleton given the fit. That is enough for W (with a 9 card fit) to ask for Aces, to which the answer is 3 (5♠). W knows she has all 4 Aces, 3 Kings and a singleton. W also know that E is at least 4-4 in the majors, so likely to be short in ♣, meaning that W's club loser can be ruffed - 7♠.</p>		<p>E has a fabulous hand made better by W opening 1♠. She knows there is at least a game in ♠s, but wants more information, so bids her 6 card suit, forcing. W replies 2NT showing 15-19. E asks for Aces, but as she discovers they are missing 2 Aces, has to sign off in 5♠.</p>		<p>S shows her 6 card ♦s, as she can always correct later back to the ♠ fit. N shows 15-19 pts forcing to game and with some extra values (two doubletons), S bids 3♠ rather than 4♠. This is enough for N to ask for Aces and discover they have all the Aces. With what looks like a great ♦ side suit, which can be used for offloading losing ♥, the only risk to 7♠ is if S does not have the ♦K and ♠Q. So she asks if S has a King to offset her ♥ loser – yes. 7♠ is cold, even without the points.</p>	

### EXCEPTION: Quantitative 4NT

The sequence 1NT – 4NT is NOT Blackwood (no suit agreed!). It is a simple slam in NT.

4NT means flat hand and **18-19 pts**. Partner has shown 12-14 ptds. With 14 points, the sum is 32-3 pts which is enough for slam – she bids **6NT**; with less she **PASSES**.

### Opening 2NT

2NT opening means balanced hand and 20-22 pts.

Use the same responses (+1) as for 1NT, point count adjusted. Responder only need 3-5 points for game. So,

2NT - 3♣ is Stayman, asking for a 4 card major.  
 2NT - 3♥ is a Transfer to ♠s.  
 2NT – **PASS** means I have less 2 points or less and no 5 card suit.

The sequence 2NT – 4NT is NOT Blackwood (no suit agreed!). It is a simple slam in NT.

4NT means flat hand and **10-11 pts**. Partner has shown 20-22 pts. With 22 points, the sum is 32-3 pts which is enough for slam – she bids **6NT**; with less she **PASS**es.

### Opening Strong 2♣

Opening 2♣ means 23+ pts, and any shape – it does not necessarily mean ♣s.

Also possible to open 2♣ with less points, but 0-4 losers. Losers are the top3 cards in any suit which are not an A, K or Q:

Eg:

♠ K 4
♥ A 4 3
♦ A K Q J 10 5 4
♣ A

21 points, but Losers: 1♠s; 2♥s = 3

Another way to see it – you can make game without any help from partner.

It is **FORCING TO GAME**, unless opener bids the sequence 2♣ - 2♦ – 2NT, which may be passed with 1-2 pts.

Responses: 2♦ 0-7 pts

FORCING – it does not mean ♦s.

With 0-2 tricks, responder can bid NT next time even with a fit, to show point count: 2♣ - 2♦ - 2♥ - 2NT is the **DOUBLE NEGATIVE** – partner I really have nothing!

Any other response is a slam try:

2♥ 8+ pts and 5 ♥s – your 5 card suit should have good quality: 2 of top3 honours

2♠ 8+ pts and 5 ♠s

2NT 8+ pts and NO 5 card suit

3♣ 8+ pts and 5 ♣s

3♦ 8+ pts and 5 ♦s

Opener's rebid to 2♦ 2NT – 23-24 pts, which can be **PASS**ed

Any other bid is Forcing to game and shows 5 card suit.

Any NT rebid enables responder to use Stayman / Transfers: 2♣ - 2♦ - 2NT - 3♣ is asking for 4 card majors.

10.		11.	
W	E	W	E
♠ Q 9 6 5	♠ A K J 10	♠ K Q 9 8 7 3	♠ A J 10 9
♥ K 6	♥ A K J 10	♥ 9 5 4	♥ A K J 10
♦ 9 7 4	♦ K J 5	♦ A 7	♦ K Q 5
♣ 5 4 3	♣ K J 5	♣ A 6	♣ K Q 5

Pts: 5	24	Pts: 13	23
	2♣	-	2♣
2♦	2NT	2♠	4NT
3NT		5♥	5NT
		6♦	7♠

W's 2♦ means less than 8 points. With no 5 card suit and 23-4 points, E bids 2NT, which can be passed if W has no points. But she has 5 points, so with no obvious suit to bid, she raises to 3NT.

W makes a positive response to E's opening 2♣. She has a 6 card suit (only needs 5) and 2 of the top 3 honours. E agrees ♠s by her 4 NT Blackwood, and hearing that e has both missing Aces, starts thinking about 7. She needs the K to be sure so asks for Kings. Straightforward grand slam – they aren't usually this straightforward!

**Recommended:** buy Andrew Robson's Beginners; Bridge Flipper, and then the Essential Bridge Flipper (Google: [Andrew Robson Bridge Club](#)) – don't get the "Strong No Trump and 5 card Major" Flipper – different system.

Other Useful Practice Sites: Bridge Base Online / Practice / Bridgemastrer – practice playing hands from beginner to Advanced level

**Stellar-Bridge videos:** [Lesson 24](#) (Weak Twos) ; [Lesson 25](#) ( Other Pre-Emptive Bids) ; [Lessons 26](#) (Defence To Weak Bids); [Lesson 22](#) (Strong 2C); [Lesson 23](#) (Slam Bidding)