

Practice Session for U3ABDa06: Opening 1NT and Responding

Contents

Introduction	2
Welcome!	2
Optional (Advanced) Bits!	2
Lesson Summary	2
Opening 1NT	2
Responding to 1NT	2
Easy does it	2
The Practice Hands (1-16)	3
What's a balanced hand?	3
Should I bid my 4-card (major) suit over 1NT?	3
Should I bid my 4-card (minor) suit over 1NT?	4
How should I respond to a 2NT response?	4
What is a GOOD 13 points?	5
How valuable is my 5-card suit in NT?	5
Should I open my 5-card (minor) suit or 1NT?	6
What is a GOOD 13 points?	6
Is 25 points ALWAYS enough for 3NT?	7
Should I choose a minor suit game or 3NT?	7
The Practice Hands (17-32)	9
Should I open my 5-card (minor) suit or 1NT?	9
Should I respond to 1NT with 10 points?	10
How do I respond to 1NT with a 6-card minor suit?	11
How do I respond to 1NT with a 5-card (minor) suit?	13
Should I respond to 1NT with 10 points?	13
Should I open a 5-card (major) suit or 1NT?	13
Summary of Hands	15
Hands 1-16	15
Hands 17-32	16

Introduction

Welcome!

Here is a list of all the hands that you could bid and play in today's Practice Session. It tells you useful stuff about them, like the cards in each hand, the High Card Points, the "correct" bidding and lead. **Don't feel bad** if you bid the hands a bit differently, or ended up in a slightly different contract. This is your first week of ACOL bidding, it will take you a while to get the hang of it, no doubt.

Bridge is a great game, but it can be overwhelming, so much to think about. Don't worry, it will get easier. We're here to help it all make sense, don't worry about making mistakes, we're always happy to nudge you in the right direction, explain or answer questions. Remember, you're playing with other people who are just starting out, too. Let's have fun together!

To help clarify some points in this week's lessons, here's a brief Lesson Summary. It describes the same topics from a slightly different angle to the main handouts, with additional detail where it seems needed.

-Ed

Optional (Advanced) Bits!

In these notes, anything in green is a bit more advanced, so it's optional reading for the adventurous!

Lesson Summary

This week's we introduced ACOL bidding and No Trump contracts. (We'll get to suit contracts soon.)

Opening 1NT

If you have a **Balanced Hand** and enough **High Card Points**, you open 1NT and often end up in a No Trump contract (1NT, 2NT, 3NT) rather than a suit contract like 2H or 3C or 4S.

- A **Balanced Hand** has at least 2 cards in every suit (no singletons, no voids) and more than 2 cards in 3 of the suits i.e. at most one doubleton (xx). You can have a 5-card suit.
- You need **12-14 High Card Points** to open 1NT. With 0-11 points you don't open; with 15+ points you open with a suit and rebid NT, but that will come later. For now, just remember to open 1NT if your hand is balanced, with 12-14 points.

Responding to 1NT

To make a 3NT game, you usually need a total of 25 points. When partner opens 1NT, you know they have 12-14 points. So...

- If you have **0-10** points, you can't have enough points for 3NT (14+10 at best), so **PASS**.
- If you have **11-12** points, you might have enough points for 3NT but only if partner has the maximum 14 points, so **bid 2NT**. Partner will raise to 3NT with 14 points or a good 13 points, but pass with 12 points or a bad 13 points. This 2NT bid is a **Game Invitation**
- If you have **13+** points, you have enough points for 3NT (at least 12+13), so **bid 3NT**.

Note: A 2NT contract (8 tricks) is riskier than 1NT (7 tricks) and does NOT score any better: 1NT+1 scores the same as 2NT. A 3NT contract (9 tricks) scores much better than 1NT+2 or 2NT+1.

What on Earth is a good 13 points? If you've got some tens and nines, or sequences like QJT, or a long suit, your hand is worth a little more - but to be honest, it comes down to optimism or luck.

Easy does it

These first practice hands are easy to bid - and boring! Bidding will soon get more varied - and fun.

The Practice Hands (1-16)

North **East** **South** **West**
1NT Pass Pass Pass

♠ KJ84 ♥ 7542 ♦ KQJ8 ♣ 7	♠ 732 ♥ AK9 ♦ A65 ♣ K963	♠ AT9 ♥ JT8 ♦ T3 ♣ AT852	♠ Q65 ♥ Q63 ♦ 9742 ♣ QJ4
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Board: 1 Dealer: North Lead: ♣5 #2703

North has a balanced hand and 14 HCP (High Card Points), so the best opening bid is 1NT. (They could in principle open 1C, but then would not have a legal second bid if partner responds: bidding a suit twice promises 5 trumps!)

The 1NT opening bid shows 12-14 HCP and a balanced hand.

South has a balanced hand and just 6 HCP. With a maximum total point count of 20, they know there's no chance of game, and pass.

What's a balanced hand?

A Balanced hand is any hand with no Voids, no Singletons, and at most one Doubleton.

East **South** **West** **North**
1NT Pass Pass Pass

♠ 54 ♥ AKT7 ♦ 962 ♣ T654	♠ 76 ♥ 98642 ♦ KQJT ♣ AJ	♠ AK3 ♥ QJ ♦ A753 ♣ 9873	♠ QJT982 ♥ 53 ♦ 84 ♣ KQ2
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Board: 2 Dealer: East Lead: ♠Q #3

East has a balanced hand and 14 HCP. While in principle they could open 1D and plan to rebid 2C if partner responds, 1NT is a more descriptive bid, as it gives partner their point count and shape straight away.

The 1NT opening bid shows 12-14 HCP and a balanced hand.

West has just 7 HCP. With a maximum total point count of 21, they know there's no chance of game, and pass.

Should I bid my 4-card (major) suit over 1NT?

West has a 4-card Heart suit that they might be tempted to bid, but they would have to bid 2H, and that shows 10+ HCP. Don't lie to your partner!

South **West** **North** **East**
1NT Pass 3NT Pass
Pass Pass

♠ QJT853 ♥ A7 ♦ T95 ♣ J2	♠ K42 ♥ 962 ♦ A74 ♣ AK87	♠ 97 ♥ 8543 ♦ QJ8 ♣ QT95	♠ A6 ♥ KQJT ♦ K632 ♣ 643
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Board: 3 Dealer: South Lead: ♠Q #98

South has 13 HCP and a balanced hand. While in principle they could open 1H and plan to rebid 2D if partner responds, 1NT is a more descriptive bid, as it gives partner their point count and shape straight away.

The 1NT opening bid shows 12-14 HCP and a balanced hand.

North has 14 HCP and a balanced hand. Even if partner has the minimum 12 HCP for their 1NT opening bid, that adds up to 26 HCP, so they can bid 3NT with confidence. (3NT will usually make with 25 HCP.)

West North East South

1NT Pass Pass Pass

♠ AK5	♠ 432
♥ K43	♥ A52
♦ 432	♦ A765
♣ QT94	♣ J75
	♠ 87
	♥ JT8
	♦ KQJ8
	♣ A632

Board: 4 Dealer: West Lead: ♠Q #H557

West has a balanced hand and 12 HCP, so their best opening bid is 1NT. (They could in principle open 1C, but then would not have a legal second bid if partner responds: bidding a suit twice promises 5 trumps!).

The 1NT opening bid shows 12-14 HCP and a balanced hand.

East has just 9 HCP. With a maximum total point count of 23, they know there's no chance of game, and pass.

Should I bid my 4-card (minor) suit over 1NT?

East has a 4-card Diamond suit that they might be tempted to bid, but they would have to bid 2D, and that shows 10+ HCP. Yes, 9 points is NEARLY 10 points, but it isn't 10 points. Don't lie to your partner.

North East South West

1NT Pass 2NT Pass

♠ A986	♠ T73
♥ J3	♥ A94
♦ A954	♦ QJT86
♣ A42	♣ 97
♠ J42	♠ KQ5
♥ KQT872	♥ 65
♦ K865	♦ K732
	♣ QJT3

Board: 5 Dealer: North Lead: ♦Q #136

North has 13 HCP and a balanced hand, so opens 1NT, showing 12-14 HCP and a balanced hand.

South has 11 HCP and a balanced hand. This isn't quite enough to be sure of making 3NT, as that requires 25 HCP. They bid 2NT to tell partner they have 11-12 HCP, asking them to bid 3NT if they have the maximum 14 HCP.

North does not have the maximum 14 HCP, so they pass 2NT.

How should I respond to a 2NT response?

The 1NT and 2NT point counts are not precise, they show ranges: the 1NT opening bid shows 12-14 and the 2NT response shows 11-12. So if you open 1NT with 13 points and partner responds with 2NT, you might have 24 points or 25 points in total; if you're feeling optimistic you can try your luck with 3NT!

25 points does NOT guarantee that you'll make 3NT, but you probably will. That's what makes Bridge a game, not a science.

East South West North

1NT Pass 2NT Pass

♠ 653	♠ AT9
♥ T987	♥ Q62
♦ A6	♦ Q985
♣ JT98	♣ AQ2
♠ 87	♠ KQJ42
♥ AKJ	♥ 543
♦ KJT73	♦ 42
♣ 543	♣ K76

Board: 6 Dealer: East Lead: ♠K #568

East has 14 HCP and a balanced hand, so opens 1NT, showing 12-14 HCP and a balanced hand.

West has 12 HCP and a balanced hand. This isn't quite enough to be sure of making 3NT, as that requires 25 HCP. They bid 2NT to tell partner they have 11-12 HCP, asking them to bid 3NT if they have the maximum 14 HCP.

East does have the maximum 14 HCP, so they can happily bid 3NT.

South West North East

1NT Pass 2NT Pass
Pass Pass

♠ KQ5
♥ 65
♦ K732
♣ QJT3

♠ T73
♥ AT42
♦ QJT8
♣ 97

♠ J42
♥ KQJ97
♦ 6
♣ K865

♠ A986
♥ 83
♦ A954
♣ A42

Board: 7 Dealer: South Lead: ♦Q #578

South has 12 HCP and a balanced hand, so opens 1NT, showing 12-14 HCP and a balanced hand.

North has 11 HCP and a balanced hand. This isn't quite enough to be sure of making 3NT, as that requires 25 HCP. They bid 2NT to tell partner they have 11-12 HCP, asking them to bid 3NT if they have the maximum 14 HCP.

South does not have the maximum 14 HCP - not even a "good" 13 points - so they pass 2NT.

What is a GOOD 13 points?

If you've got some tens and nines, or sequences like QJT, or a long suit, your hand is worth a little more so might raise 2NT to 3NT or 1NT to 3NT even if a point or two short. But to be honest, it comes down to optimism or luck.

West North East South

1NT Pass 3NT Pass
Pass Pass

♠ JT962
♥ 975
♦ T98
♣ A8

♠ AK5
♥ KJ4
♦ 432
♣ QJT9

♠ Q43
♥ AQ3
♦ AJ65
♣ 754

♠ 87
♥ T862
♦ KQ7
♣ K632

Board: 8 Dealer: West Lead: ♠J #H95

West has 14 HCP and a balanced hand, so opens 1NT, showing 12-14 HCP and a balanced hand.

East has 13 HCP and a balanced hand. Even if partner has the minimum 12 HCP for their 1NT opening bid, that adds up to 25 HCP, so they can bid 3NT with confidence. (3NT will usually make with 25 HCP.)

North East South West

1NT Pass 3NT Pass
Pass Pass

♠ K542
♥ AK7
♦ A72
♣ 765

♠ 7
♥ QT2
♦ J8654
♣ JT94

♠ QJT98
♥ J653
♦ KQ3
♣ 8

♠ A63
♥ 984
♦ T9
♣ AKQ32

Board: 9 Dealer: North Lead: ♠Q #H382

North has 14 HCP and a balanced hand, so opens 1NT, showing 12-14 HCP and a balanced hand.

South has 13 HCP and a balanced hand. Even if partner has the minimum 12 HCP for their 1NT opening bid, that adds up to 25 HCP, so they can bid 3NT with confidence. (3NT will usually make with 25 HCP.)

How valuable is my 5-card suit in NT?

South has a nice Club suit that might make FIVE tricks in No Trumps, so could raise 1NT to 3NT with one or two fewer points. It really depends how optimistic you are! And how forgiving your partner is, when it goes wrong...

What South shouldn't do is bid their Clubs. To make game (5C) you have to make 11 tricks - usually a lot harder than 9 tricks in 3NT.

East South West North

1NT Pass 3NT Pass
Pass Pass

♠ QJT87
♥ T73
♦ 54
♣ QJT

♠ 432 ♠ K9
♥ K64 ♥ AQJ8
♦ KT7 ♦ A86
♣ AK97 ♣ 5432

♠ A65
♥ 952
♦ QJ932
♣ 86

Board: 10 Dealer: East Lead: ♦Q #H385

East has 14 HCP and a balanced hand, so opens 1NT, showing 12-14 HCP and a balanced hand.

West has 13 HCP and a balanced hand. Even if partner has the minimum 12 HCP for their 1NT opening bid, that adds up to 25 HCP, so they can bid 3NT with confidence. (3NT will usually make with 25 HCP.)

South West North East

1NT Pass Pass Pass

♠ A92
♥ 842
♦ J8652
♣ Q6

♠ QJ ♠ KT643
♥ J9653 ♥ T7
♦ A73 ♦ KQT
♣ 942 ♣ KT3

♠ 875
♥ AKQ
♦ 94
♣ AJ875

Board: 11 Dealer: South Lead: ♥5 #H3547

South has 14 HCP and a balanced hand, so opens 1NT, showing 12-14 HCP and a balanced hand.

North has just 7 HCP. With a maximum total point count of 21, they know there's no chance of game, and pass.

Should I open my 5-card (minor) suit or 1NT?

It's always tempting to open a 5-card suit, but if you have a balanced hand and 12-14 points, it is usually better to bid 1NT - especially if your suit is a minor. We'll explore choices like this later in the course.

West North East South

1NT Pass 2NT Pass
Pass Pass

♠ J9743
♥ A2
♦ JT75
♣ 86

♠ AQ ♠ 865
♥ Q9753 ♥ JT4
♦ A84 ♦ K63
♣ T73 ♣ AK52

♠ KT2
♥ K86
♦ Q92
♣ QJ94

Board: 12 Dealer: West Lead: ♠4 #H2695

West has 12 HCP and a balanced hand, so opens 1NT, showing 12-14 HCP and a balanced hand.

East has 11 HCP and a balanced hand. This isn't quite enough to be sure of making 3NT, as that requires 25 HCP. They bid 2NT to tell partner they have 11-12 HCP, asking them to bid 3NT if they have the maximum 14 HCP. West does not have the maximum 14 HCP - not even a good 13 points - so they pass 2NT.

What is a GOOD 13 points?

If you've got some tens and nines, or sequences like QJT, or a long suit, your hand is worth a little more so you might raise 2NT to 3NT, or 1NT to 3NT even if a point or two short. But to be honest, it comes down to optimism or luck.

North East South West

1NT Pass 3NT Pass
Pass Pass

♠ AQ4
♥ 762
♦ KT98
♣ A75

♠ 52 ♠ JT983
♥ QT3 ♥ J984
♦ AQ76 ♦ J
♣ QT43 ♣ J62

♠ K76
♥ AK5
♦ 5432
♣ K98

Board: 13 Dealer: North Lead: ♠J #H2387

North has 13 HCP and a balanced hand, so opens 1NT, showing 12-14 HCP and a balanced hand. (They could in principle open 1D, but then would not have a sensible second bid if partner responds!)

South has 13 HCP and a balanced hand. Even if partner has the minimum 12 HCP for their 1NT opening bid, that adds up to 25 HCP, so they can bid 3NT with confidence.

Is 25 points ALWAYS enough for 3NT?

NO. If you play this hand in 3NT, it will be a challenge. Not impossible, but not easy! (The key is to lead towards your KT98 in Diamonds 3 times. With a bit of luck you'll make 2-3 Diamond tricks - and the contract.)

Two balanced hands with 25+ points do not GUARANTEE that 3NT will make, but it will usually. With a bit of luck and fairy dust!

East South West North

1NT Pass 3NT Pass
Pass Pass

♠ QJT8
♥ 964
♦ A5
♣ J843

♠ K5 ♠ A642
♥ 52 ♥ A83
♦ KQJ743 ♦ T96
♣ K95 ♣ AT7

♠ 973
♥ KQJT7
♦ 82
♣ Q62

Board: 14 Dealer: East Lead: ♥K #H106

East has 12 HCP and a balanced hand, so opens 1NT, showing 12-14 HCP and a balanced hand. (They could in principle open 1S, but then would not have a sensible second bid if partner responds!)

West has 12 HCP and a balanced hand. If partner has the minimum 12 HCP for their 1NT opening bid, that only adds up to 24 HCP, so should they bid 2NT?

It may only be 12 points, but they're all good points, and that 6-card Diamond suit should provide 5-6 tricks, depending on who has the Ace, so 3NT is a reasonable gambled.

Should I choose a minor suit game or 3NT?

3NT! West could bid their Diamonds, hoping to make game in Diamonds. But they'd need to make 11 tricks (5D scores 100) and you need around 27 points to do that. After the 1NT opening, you know you have 23-25 points. A trump contract MIGHT be safer with two doubletons... but in general, you should choose 3NT; 9 tricks are usually a lot easier than 11.

If you look at the hands, in 5D you must lose a Heart, a Diamond and a Club. Oops! 3NT is relatively easy, you just need to duck the first two Heart tricks, playing your Ace on the third.

Minor suits are so unpopular that, over a 1NT opening bid, 2C and 2D don't mean that you want to play in Clubs or Diamonds, they are used for **conventions**. We'll get to conventions in a while...

South West North East

1NT Pass 3NT Pass

Pass Pass

♠ K3

♥ 874

♦ AKQJ2

♣ 974

♠ AJT984

♥ T65

♦

♣ QT65

♠ Q62

♥ AJ3

♦ T65

♣ AK32

♠ 75

♥ KQ92

♦ 98743

♣ J8

Board: 15 Dealer: South Lead: ♠J #29

South has 14 HCP and a balanced hand, so opens 1NT, showing 12-14 HCP and a balanced hand. (They could in principle open 1C, but then would not have a sensible second bid if partner responds!)

North has 13 HCP and a balanced hand. Even if partner has the minimum 12 HCP for their 1NT opening bid, that adds up to 25 HCP, so they can bid 3NT with confidence. 3NT will usually make with 25 HCP.

West North East South

1NT Pass 3NT Pass

Pass Pass

♠ 96

♥ 63

♦ KQJT3

♣ Q965

♠ AT2

♥ Q95

♦ A754

♣ K87

♠ QJ3

♥ AK7

♦ 982

♣ A432

♠ K8754

♥ JT842

♦ 6

♣ JT

Board: 16 Dealer: West Lead: ♦K #101

West has 13 HCP and a balanced hand, so opens 1NT, showing 12-14 HCP and a balanced hand. (They could in principle open 1C, but then would not have a sensible second bid if partner responds!)

East has 14 HCP and a balanced hand. Even if partner has the minimum 12 HCP for their 1NT opening bid, that adds up to 26 HCP, so they can bid 3NT with confidence. 3NT will usually make with 25 HCP.

The Practice Hands (17-32)

Here are 16 more hands for you to practice NT bidding and play - but to be honest, the bidding should be VERY familiar by now, should not pose a challenge. BORING. Playing the hands is another story...

North East South West

1NT Pass Pass Pass

♠ 953
♥ QJ5
♦ K87
♣ AKJ4

♠ AK
♥ AT98
♦ JT2
♣ QT95

♠ QJ62
♥ 72
♦ Q6543
♣ 62

♠ T874
♥ K643
♦ A9
♣ 873

Board: 17 Dealer: North Lead: ♦4 #H134

North has 14 HCP and a balanced hand, so opens 1NT, showing 12-14 HCP and a balanced hand.

South has just 7 HCP. With a maximum total point count of 21, they know there's no chance of game, and pass.

East South West North

1NT Pass 3NT Pass
Pass Pass

♠ 6543
♥ T8765
♦ T98
♣ A

♠ AK
♥ A4
♦ 76432
♣ QJT7

♠ 72
♥ KQ32
♦ KQJ
♣ K986

♠ QJT98
♥ J9
♦ A5
♣ 5432

Board: 18 Dealer: East Lead: ♠Q #H459

East has 14 HCP and a balanced hand, so opens 1NT, showing 12-14 HCP and a balanced hand. (They could in principle open 1H and rebid 2C, but that promises FIVE Hearts, so not a good idea.)

West has 14 HCP and a balanced hand. Even if partner has the minimum 12 HCP for their 1NT opening bid, they can bid 3NT with confidence.

West's puny 5-card Diamond suit is not worth bidding.

South West North East

1NT Pass Pass Pass

♠ K2
♥ QT8
♦ Q84
♣ J8642

♠ AT7
♥ J54
♦ JT965
♣ AQ

♠ 98654
♥ K732
♦ 32
♣ K9

♠ QJ3
♥ A96
♦ AK7
♣ T753

Board: 19 Dealer: South Lead: ♦J #H567

South has 14 HCP and a balanced hand, so opens 1NT, showing 12-14 HCP and a balanced hand.

North has just 8 HCP. With a maximum total point count of 22, they know there's no chance of game, and pass.

Should I open my 5-card (minor) suit or 1NT?

It's always tempting to open a 5-card suit, but if you have a balanced hand and 12-14 points, it is usually better to bid 1NT - especially if your suit is a minor. We'll explore choices like this later in the course.

West North East South

1NT Pass Pass Pass

♠ K87
 ♥ K9863
 ♦ 872
 ♣ QT
 ♠ 932
 ♥ QJT
 ♦ AKQ5
 ♣ 942
 ♠ AQT4
 ♥ 742
 ♦ 43
 ♣ A763
 ♠ J65
 ♥ A5
 ♦ JT96
 ♣ KJ85

North East South West1NT Pass 3NT Pass
Pass Pass

♠ 73
 ♥ KT74
 ♦ A653
 ♣ AQ9
 ♠ QT5
 ♥ A9832
 ♦ T9
 ♣ 732
 ♠ KJ942
 ♥ 5
 ♦ QJ4
 ♣ T864
 ♠ A86
 ♥ QJ6
 ♦ K872
 ♣ KJ5

East South West North1NT Pass 3NT Pass
Pass Pass

♠ J92
 ♥ J876
 ♦ A9
 ♣ QT42
 ♠ A65
 ♥ K942
 ♦ KJ7
 ♣ K83
 ♠ Q73
 ♥ A53
 ♦ QT54
 ♣ A97
 ♠ KT84
 ♥ QT
 ♦ 8632
 ♣ J65

Board: 20 Dealer: West Lead: ♥6 #H576

West has 12 HCP and a balanced hand, so opens 1NT, showing 12-14 HCP and a balanced hand.

East has 10 HCP. Tricky! With a total point count of 22-24, is it worth bidding 2NT? Not quite, as your Spades, although promising, might only produce one trick; no reason for optimism, **pass**!

Should I respond to 1NT with 10 points?

In the Lesson Summary, we say pass 1NT with 0-10 points, but sometimes you have a GOOD 10 points, good enough to respond with 2NT to encourage partner to bid 3NT (game) if they're strong i.e. have 14 points.

It's a little risky, but nobody dies if you get it wrong.

Board: 21 Dealer: North Lead: ♠4 #H1221

North has 13 HCP and a balanced hand, so opens 1NT, showing 12-14 HCP and a balanced hand. (They could in principle open 1H and rebid 2D, but that promises FIVE Hearts, so not a good idea.)

South has 14 HCP and a balanced hand. Even if partner has the minimum 12 HCP for their 1NT opening bid, they can bid 3NT with confidence.

Board: 22 Dealer: East Lead: ♠4 #H1316

East has 12 HCP and a balanced hand, so opens 1NT, showing 12-14 HCP and a balanced hand.

West has 14 HCP and a balanced hand. Even if partner has the minimum 12 HCP for their 1NT opening bid, they can bid 3NT with confidence.

South West North East

1NT Pass 3NT Pass
Pass Pass

♠ K4
♥ T9
♦ A87
♣ AKT963

♠ QT985 ♠ A76
♥ Q643 ♥ J72
♦ 92 ♦ QJ63
♣ 82 ♣ J54

♠ J32
♥ AK85
♦ KT54
♣ Q7

Board: 23 Dealer: South Lead: ♠T #H1426

South has 13 HCP and a balanced hand, so opens 1NT, showing 12-14 HCP and a balanced hand. (They could in principle open 1H and rebid 2D, but that promises FIVE Hearts, so not a good idea.)

North has 14 HCP and a nearly balanced hand. Even if partner has the minimum 12 HCP for their 1NT opening bid, they can bid 3NT with confidence.

How do I respond to 1NT with a 6-card minor suit?

North has a 6-card Club suit and South must have at least 2 (can't open 1NT with any singletons or voids, remember?). So you must have a nice 6:2 fit.

Tempting, but for game you need to bid 5C and make 11 tricks - and that usually needs around 27 points. After South's 1NT opening, you know you have 26-28 points. Close enough?

NO! Yes, you're probably strong enough to make 11 tricks in 5C and earn 400, but you should make the same number of Club tricks in a NT contract. And for 9 tricks in NT you only need 3-4 more winners. NT looks a little riskier, but it isn't really. You need 5-6 more winners in Clubs!

So with a good long minor suit, you will often prefer to play in NT. It doesn't always work, maybe 90% of the time.

A trump contract MIGHT be safer with two doubletons... but in general, you should choose 3NT; 9 tricks are easier than 11.

If you look at the hands, both contracts have their challenges:

- In 3NT you have to duck the Spade lead in dummy and win the second or third Spade trick. You can then cash 6 Clubs, 2 Diamonds and 2 Hearts for 10-11 tricks. (If you play the King on the first Spade, you lose 5 tricks straight off.) You score 430 or 460.
- In 5C, with the same play, you lose one Spade and one Diamond, making 11 tricks and your contract, for 400 points.

So 3NT scores better, but you have to play the Spades correctly.

Minor suits are so unpopular that, over a 1NT opening bid, 2C and 2D don't mean that you want to play in Clubs or Diamonds, they are used for **conventions**. We'll get to conventions in a while.

West North East South

1NT Pass 3NT Pass
Pass Pass

♠ Q862
♥ T986
♦ Q7
♣ 542

♠ AKJ5 ♠ 743
♥ 53 ♥ KQJ
♦ T843 ♦ KJ52
♣ A63 ♣ K87

♠ T9
♥ A742
♦ A96
♣ QJT9

Board: 24 Dealer: West Lead: ♥T #H1856

West has 12 HCP and a balanced hand, so opens 1NT, showing 12-14 HCP and a balanced hand. (They could in principle open 1S and rebid 2D, but that promises FIVE Spades, so not a good idea.)

East has 13 HCP and a fairly balanced hand. Even if partner has the minimum 12 HCP for their 1NT opening bid, they can bid 3NT with reasonable confidence.

North East South West

1NT Pass 3NT Pass
Pass Pass

♠ 854
♥ A6
♦ 7652
♣ AKQ4

♠ J9 ♠ QT632
♥ KJT53 ♥ Q92
♦ T9 ♦ K84
♣ JT87 ♣ 52

♠ AK7
♥ 874
♦ AQJ3
♣ 963

Board: 25 Dealer: North Lead: ♠3 #H2305

North has 13 HCP and a balanced hand, so opens 1NT, showing 12-14 HCP and a balanced hand.

South has 14 HCP and a fairly balanced hand. Even if partner has the minimum 12 HCP for their 1NT opening bid, they can bid 3NT with reasonable confidence.

East South West North

1NT Pass 3NT Pass
Pass Pass

♠ J986
♥ 764
♦ KJT
♣ T84

♠ A7 ♠ K543
♥ Q53 ♥ AK2
♦ 87432 ♦ 965
♣ AK2 ♣ QJ3

♠ QT2
♥ JT98
♦ AQ
♣ 9765

Board: 26 Dealer: East Lead: ♥J #H2421

East has 13 HCP and a balanced hand, so opens 1NT, showing 12-14 HCP and a balanced hand.

West has 13 HCP and a fairly balanced hand. Even if partner has the minimum 12 HCP for their 1NT opening bid, they can bid 3NT with reasonable confidence.

South West North East

1NT Pass 3NT Pass
Pass Pass

♠ AQ7
♥ 85
♦ K65
♣ AK653

♠ T963 ♠ 842
♥ J972 ♥ T64
♦ QT873 ♦ A94
♣ ♣ QJT8

♠ KJ5
♥ AKQ3
♦ J2
♣ 9742

Board: 27 Dealer: South Lead: ♦7 #H2494

South has 14 HCP and a balanced hand, so opens 1NT, showing 12-14 HCP and a balanced hand. (With two 4-card suits it's tempting to open 1H and rebid 2C, but that promises FIVE Hearts and those Clubs are so puny; not a good idea.)

North has 16 HCP and a balanced hand. Even if partner has the minimum 12 HCP for their 1NT opening bid, they can bid 3NT with reasonable confidence.

West North East South

1NT Pass 3NT Pass
Pass

♠ QT986
♥ J854
♦ T72
♣ K

♠ AKJ
♥ K97
♦ Q43
♣ 6432

♠ 53
♥ AT6
♦ AKJ
♣ JT985

♠ 742
♥ Q32
♦ 9865
♣ AQ7

North East South West

1NT Pass Pass Pass

♠ KT6
♥ AK72
♦ 9653
♣ AT

♠ 975432
♥ QJ9
♦
♣ QJ97

♠ A8
♥ T864
♦ KQJT8
♣ 84

♠ QJ
♥ 53
♦ A742
♣ K6532

East South West North

1NT Pass 3NT Pass
Pass Pass

♠ JT8743
♥ J972
♦ 5
♣ Q4

♠ K9
♥ AQ
♦ AK742
♣ 7653

♠ Q65
♥ KT843
♦ QJ6
♣ AJ

♠ A2
♥ 65
♦ T983
♣ KT982

Board: 28 Dealer: West Lead: ♠T #H2694

West has 13 HCP and a balanced hand, so opens 1NT, showing 12-14 HCP and a balanced hand.

East has 13 HCP and a fairly balanced hand. Even if partner has the minimum 12 HCP for their 1NT opening bid, they can bid 3NT with reasonable confidence.

How do I respond to 1NT with a 5-card (minor) suit?

It's always tempting to show a 5-card suit, but East's suit is a minor and not very good. 3NT is MUCH more likely to make than 5C. And it scores better.

Board: 29 Dealer: North Lead: ♦K #H2779

North has 14 HCP and a balanced hand, so opens 1NT, showing 12-14 HCP and a balanced hand.

South has 10 HCP. Tricky! With a total point count of 22-24, is it worth bidding 2NT? Not quite, your doubleton Spades (QJ) might be worth nothing, if the opponents have the Ace and King. No reason for optimism, **pass**

Should I respond to 1NT with 10 points?

In the Lesson Summary, we say pass 1NT with 0-10 points, but sometimes you have a GOOD 10 points, good enough to respond with 2NT to encourage partner to bid game if they're strong i.e. have 14 points.

It's a little risky, but nobody dies if you get it wrong.

Board: 30 Dealer: East Lead: ♣T #H2796

East has 13 HCP and a balanced hand, so opens 1NT, showing 12-14 HCP and a balanced hand.

West has 13 HCP and a fairly balanced hand. Even if partner has the minimum 12 HCP for their 1NT opening bid, they can bid 3NT with reasonable confidence.

Should I open a 5-card (major) suit or 1NT?

It's always tempting to show a 5-card suit, especially a major, but East's hand is balanced, so won't have much chance to use their Hearts as trumps; the **modern way** to bid this hand is to open 1NT, not 1H.

I say MODERN WAY because many Bridge players (and online Bridge content, cough) still advocate opening the major in this situation. We're teaching MODERN ACOL, as advocated by the EBU, No Fear Bridge, and others.

1NT is a better bid for several reasons, which we will explain them in a later lesson! But for now, just trust me and bid 1NT even if you have a 5-card major, in a balanced hand. Would I lie to you?

South West North East

1NT Pass 3NT Pass
 Pass Pass

♠ AJ5
 ♥ Q75
 ♦ QT95
 ♣ KJ9

♠ T862 ♠ Q73
 ♥ J93 ♥ A864
 ♦ A74 ♦ K82
 ♣ T73 ♣ 542

♠ K94
 ♥ KT2
 ♦ J63
 ♣ AQ86

Board: 31 Dealer: South Lead: ♠2 #H3053

South has 13 HCP and a balanced hand, so opens 1NT, showing 12-14 HCP and a balanced hand.

North has 13 HCP and a fairly balanced hand. Even if partner has the minimum 12 HCP for their 1NT opening bid, they can bid 3NT with reasonable confidence.

West North East South

1NT Pass Pass Pass

♠ A96
 ♥ A75
 ♦ Q54
 ♣ Q972

♠ J74 ♠ QT8
 ♥ QJT2 ♥ 8643
 ♦ KT7 ♦ AJ6
 ♣ AKT ♣ 854

♠ K532
 ♥ K9
 ♦ 9832
 ♣ J63

Board: 32 Dealer: West Lead: ♣2 #H3896

West has 13 HCP and a balanced hand, so opens 1NT, showing 12-14 HCP and a balanced hand.

East has 7 HCP. With a total point count of 19-21, there's no chance of game: pass.

Summary of Hands

Hands 1-16

Commentary Synopsis				
	Subject:	1NT Opener & Responses	Hand #	Declarer / Defender
		Bidding Sequence		
1	N	1NT	2703	Dec
2	E	1NT	3	Dec
3	S	1NT, 3NT	98	Dec
4	W	1NT	557	Dec
5	N	1NT, 2NT	136	Dec
6	E	1NT, 2NT, 3NT	568	Dec
7	S	1NT, 2NT	578	Dec
8	W	1NT 3NT	95	Dec
9	N	1NT 3NT	382	Dec
10	E	1NT 3NT	385	Dec
11	S	1NT	3547	Dec
12	W	1NT 2NT	2695	Dec
13	N	1NT 3NT	2387	Dec
14	E	1NT 3NT	106	Dec
15	S	1NT, 3NT	29	Dec
16	W	1NT, 3NT	101	Dec

Hands 17-32

Commentary Synopsis				
	Subject:	1NT Opener & Responses	Hand #	Declarer / Defender
		Bidding Sequence		
17	N	1NT	134	Dec
18	E	1NT 3NT	459	Dec
19	S	1NT	567	Dec
20	W	1NT	576	Dec
21	N	1NT 3NT	1221	Dec
22	E	1NT 3NT	1316	Dec
23	S	1NT 3NT	1426	Dec
24	W	1NT 3NT	1856	Dec
25	N	1NT 3NT	2305	Dec
26	E	1NT 3NT	2421	Dec
27	S	1NT 3NT	2494	Dec
28	W	1NT 3NT	2694	Dec
29	N	1NT	2779	Dec
30	E	1NT 3NT	2796	Dec
31	S	1NT 3NT	3053	Dec
32	W	1NT	3896	Dec