Standard American Bidding

High Card Points (HCP)

Ace-4 HCP
King-3 HCP
Queen-2 HCP
Jack-1 HCP

Distributional Points

Doubleton-1 Point
Singleton-2 Points
Void-3 Points

For suit contracts only!
Don't count distributional points for no trump contracts.

	Bidding Hierarchy (low-to-high)	Game Level	Points Needed
Minors	Clubs	5	29
	Diamonds	5	29
Majors	Hearts	4	26
	Spades	4	26
	No Trump	3	26

- Bid length before strength.
- The preferred games are 3 No Trump and 4 of a major.
- Look for a major suit fit before raising a minor.
- Bid 4 card suits up the line.
- In general, each time you rebid a suit, you're showing one more card in it.

Opening the Bidding (13+ HCP)

1) Check for a No Trump opener.
   - Flat hand. Any 4333, 4432, or 5332 pattern.
   - No 5-card major.
   - No singletons or voids. At least two cards in each suit.
     - 15-17 HCP = 1 No Trump
     - 20-22 HCP = 2 No Trump
     - 25-27 HCP = 3 No Trump
2) If you have <u>one</u> suit longer than the other three, open it unless it's a 4-card major (opening one of a major promises a 5-card suit).
3) If you have a 5-5 or 6-6 hand, open the higher ranking suit.
4) If you have one minor longer than the other minor, open it.
5) If you have exactly 4441 with a singleton spade, open 1 diamond.
6) Otherwise open 1 club.

Responding to a 1-Level Suit Opening Bid

Bid	Points Shown	Distribution Promised
Pass	0-5 HCP	Nothing. Could be any distribution.
New Suit at the 1-level	6+ HCP	4+ cards in that suit.
1 No Trump	6-9 HCP	No 4 card suit you can bid at the 1-level. Denies support for partner's major.
New suit at the 2-level.	10+ HCP	5+ cards in that suit.
Raise partner's suit to 2-level.	6-8	Support for partner's suit.
Jump shift to a new suit.	17+ HCP	5+ cards in that suit.
2 No Trump	13-15 HCP	Denies support for partner's major. Denies 4-card major.
Raise partner's suit to 3-level.	9-11	Support for partner's suit.
3 No Trump.	16-18 HCP	Denies support for partner's major. Denies 4-card major.

Responding to an Opening 1 No Trump Bid

Bid	Points	Distribution
Pass	0-7	Denies 5-card or longer major.
2C (Stayman)	8+	Asks opener to bid a 4-card major. If opener doesn't have one, he bids 2D. Minimum rebids by responder are invitational to game, except for 3C, which is to play.
2D, 2H, or 2S	0-7	Shows 5+ cards in suit. To Play. Opener must pass.
2NT	8-9	Denies a 4-card or longer major. Invitational to 3NT. Opener will pass or bid 3NT.
3C, 3D	13+	Shows 5+ cards in suit and forcing to game. Suggests a minor suit slam.
3H, 3S	10+	Shows 5+ cards in suit and forcing to game. Opener will bid 3NT with a doubleton in your suit, or raise your suit to game with 3+ card support.
3NT	10-15	Denies a 4-card or longer major. To play. Opener must pass.
4C (Gerber)	16+	Asks opener how many aces he has. Opener will bid 4D with 0 or 4 aces (you'll be able to tell), 4H with 1, 4S with 2, 4NT with 3. If responder can account for all the aces, he can bid 5C to ask about kings, with the same response structure; 5D is 0 or 4 kings, 5H is 1 king, etc. Responder will set the contract.
4H, 4S	10-15	Shows 6+ cards in suit. To play. Opener must pass.
4NT	16-17	Denies a 4-card or longer major. Invitational to 6NT.
5NT	20-21	Denies a 4-card or longer major. Forcing to 6NT!! Invitational to 7NT.
6NT	18-19	Denies a 4-card or longer major. To play. Opener must pass.
7NT	22+	Denies a 4-card or longer major. Obviously to play.

Opening Leads

1) First select which suit to lead.

   If your partner has bid a suit, that's usually the best suit to lead.

   If in a suit contract, consider leading from a short suit (doubleton or singleton). The hope is you'll be able to trump this suit later.

   If in a no trump contract, lead your longest suit. If you have suits of equal length, lead the strongest.

2) Then select which card in that suit to lead (suggested card is highlighted).

   From any doubleton, lead the high card first ("high-low"). **A**K, **K**x, **x**x.
   Top of a sequence or broken sequence. **K**QJ, **Q**J10, **J**109, **10**98, K**J**109, K**10**98, Q**10**98.
   King from ace-king. A**K**x(xxxx), A**K**Q(xxx).
   Lead your fourth best. xxx**x**(xxx)

   In a suit contract, never lead away from an ace. If you really want to lead the suit, lead the ace. This applies to suit contracts only. In no trump contracts, it's quite common to lead away from an ace.

   In general, leading a low card tells your partner you have high cards in that suit and they should lead the suit back to you when they can. Leading a high card denies any strength in the suit ("Top of Nothing").

Opener Rebids a Suit and the Rest of the Auction

With an unfamiliar partner, ask what their "second negative" is after a 2 club opener. We play "the cheapest suit at the 3-level" is our second negative.

After a suit rebid by the 2 club opener, responder must bid again, even with zero points (opener could still have a game-forcing hand). With a completely worthless hand (no aces, no kings, and less than 2 queens), responder rebids the cheapest suit at the 3-level, usually clubs. For example, 2C-2D, 2H-3C, says nothing about clubs. 3 clubs just says, "Partner, my hand is really, really weak. You're on your own." This bid is described as the "second negative" (the 2 diamond bid was the "first negative", denying a 5 card suit with 2 of the top 3 honors, now the 3 club bid denies strength). If responder gives the second negative, the auction is no longer forced to game. For example, after 2C-2D(waiting), 2S-3C(second negative), 3S-, responder can pass. After 2C-2D, 2S-3C, 3H-, responder can pass 3 hearts if they prefer hearts over spades, or bid 3 spades if they like spades better.

Blackwood (4 No Trump)

One way to get to slam or grand slam insuring your side is not missing an ace, is to bid 4 no trump. Since 4 no trump is a silly contract to want to bid (why not bid 3 no trump?), it's used as an ace-asking bid. What you're asking your partner when you bid 4 no trump is, "How many aces do you have, partner?"

The answers to 4 no trump are; with 0 or 4 Aces, bid 5 clubs; with 1 ace, bid 5 diamonds; with 2 aces, bid 5 hearts; with 3 aces, bid 5 spades. The 5 club bid does double duty, showing either no aces or all the aces. You should be able to tell from the auction which it is.

After partner tells you about aces, **and if you can account for all the aces**, you could bid 5 no trump, which asks partner for kings. Don't ask for kings unless your side has all the aces and you're interested in a grand slam. If you bid 5 no trump after 4 no trump, you're promising partner your side has all the aces. Because of this promise, if partner wants, he doesn't have to answer kings. He might bid 7 himself!

The answers to 5 no trump are identical to 4 no trump. With 0 or 4 kings, bid 6 clubs. With 1 king, bid 6 diamonds. With 2 kings, bid 6 hearts. With 3 kings, bid 6 spades.

Beware using Blackwood if partner's answer may take you higher than you want to be. For example, if you're thinking about bidding 6 clubs and want to check on aces first, and your partner has one ace, his 5 diamond response already puts you past 5 clubs. Now what do you do? There may be a solution, depending on your auction. If there's a suit left between partner's Blackwood response (5 diamonds in this example) and 5 no trump, that you can't possibly want to play in, you can bid 5 of that suit, telling partner that you're off two aces and to please bid 5 no trump, which you will pass. For example, 2C-3C, 4C-4N, 5D (oops, off two aces)-5H, 5NT-Pass.

Opening Very Strong Hands

With a unfamiliar partner, always ask if they play "Strong Two's" or "Weak Two's". We play "Weak Two's," meaning an opening 2 club bid is our strong bid and 2 diamonds, hearts, or spades are weak. The "Strong Two's" camp play any opening suit bid at the 2 level is strong and shows that suit.

Occasionally, you will get a hand that is so strong that you can make game regardless of what your partner has. Holding AKJ,AKQ98653,3,2 for example can make 4 hearts all by yourself. If your partner has one ace, you might even make slam! But if you open 1 heart, your partner with his one ace will pass since he only has 4 points. Or change the hand slightly and you might miss game if your partner passes with less than 6 points. How do you bid hands like this? You open the bidding with 2 clubs.

Opening 2 clubs shows either a very strong hand that doesn't fit your point range for 2 no trump (20-22 HCP) or 3 no trump (25-27) opening bids, or more usually, a very strong distributional hand. Opening 2 clubs is an artificial bid. It says absolutely nothing about your club suit. You could have zero clubs. What you're saying is, "Hey, partner! Wake up over there. I've got a big, big hand here and I can't stand for you to pass. Please keep the auction alive and I'll tell you more about it with my next bid."

Opener will have a hand that is one trick short of game, that is, the auction cannot stop below 2 no trump if opener rebids no trump, 3 of a major if opener rebids a major, or 4 of a minor if opener rebids a minor. The exception to this is if the opponents are doubled in any contract.

Responding to Your Partner's 2 Club Opening Bid

With an unfamiliar partner, ask how they play responses to a strong 2 club opening. We play "2 Diamonds Waiting," meaning a 2 diamond response to a 2 club opener doesn't show anything. It **denies** a 5+ card suit with two of the top 3 cards in the suit, but it doesn't show, promise, or deny anything else. Your 2 diamond bid is merely "waiting" for opener to describe his hand.

Your responsibility is too keep the auction alive . To do this, you almost always bid 2 diamonds. This gives your partner as much bidding room as possible to describe his hand. The same way as your partner's 2 club bid was completely artificial and said nothing about his clubs, your 2 diamonds bid is also completely artificial and says nothing about your diamonds. You could have zero points. You could have 20. You could have any distribution.

The alternative to the semi-automatic 2 diamond bid is bidding a suit of your own. A 2 heart, 2 spade, 3 club, or 3 diamond bid would show a 5+ card suit, at least 2 of the top 3 cards in that suit, and being a positive response, is forcing to game.

If over your partner's 2 club opening, your RHO does anything but pass, you don't have to bid. The auction is still alive and partner will get another chance to bid. Therefore any bid by you, even 2 diamonds, is descriptive showing a good suit as above. You don't deny a good hand if you pass. You've fulfilled your responsibility to keep the auction alive. If you don't have a good suit to bid, just pass. Your partner will describe his hand and you can "catch up" later.

Opener Rebids No Trump and the Rest of the Auction

Rebidding 2 no trump shows a hand between an opening 2 no trump (20-22) and 3 no trump (25-27), therefore exactly 23-24 HCP, and denies a 5-card major. The sequence 2C-2D, 2N-, is not forcing. Responder, with a completely worthless hand (say 0-3 HCP), can pass. All other rebids by responder are descriptive and game forcing. Suit bids show 5+ cards (and obviously <u>not</u> 2 of the top 3, else they would have bid the suit the first time). If responder bids 3 clubs (i.e. 2C-2D, 2NT-3C), it's Stayman, asking opener to bid a 4-card major.

What a Take-Out Double Shows

- Shows opening hand strength counting both High Card Points (HCP) **and** distribution.
- Promises support for all unbid suits. Ideally shows 4 cards in each unbid suit. For example, 1 heart-double would ideally show a 4144 pattern with a singleton heart.
- Realistically, a double of a major suit opening promises 4 cards in the other major and 3+ cards in both minors. A double of a minor suit opening promises 4-4 or 4-3 in the major suits, and 3+ cards in the other minor.
- The higher you're forcing your partner to bid, the stronger your hand must be. For example, a double of an opening 3 spade preempt, forcing your partner to the 4-level, is a lot stronger than a double of a 1 spade opening bid.

When is a Double Take-Out and When is it Penalty?

- A take-out double is possible only if your partner has not bid yet or has done nothing but pass.
- If your partner has opened, overcalled, doubled, or redoubled, a double by you is penalty.
- A double of a suit at the 1- or 2-level is take-out.
- A double of an opening preempt at the 2- or 3-level is take-out.
- Any other double is penalty.

If Partner Opens the Bidding and RHO Doubles,

- Redouble with 10 high card points or more. Tells partner you two hold most of the strength and suggests doubling whatever they bid.
- Bid normally with less than 10 high card points. Raises and new suits at the 1-level are normal. New suits at the 2-level do not promise 10+ HCP (you would have redoubled first).

Responding to Partner's Take-Out Double

Points	What to Bid
0-8	If your right-hand opponent passes, bid your best suit at the cheapest level. Strive to bid a 4-card major in preference to a 4- or 5-card minor. Do not pass, even if you have length in their suit!! They're going to make one doubled! If RHO bids, you're off the hook. Pass. If RHO redoubles, bid if you have a clear preference for a suit, otherwise pass. Remember, your partner has another chance to bid.
7-10	1 No Trump is you have their suit well-stopped. Denies a major suit fit.
9-11	Jump one level in your best suit. This is an invitational bid. Your partner may well pass with a minimum take-out double.
11-12	2 No Trump is you have their suit well-stopped. Denies a major suit fit.
12+	If you're assured of an 8-card major suit fit, bid game. If it's possible your partner only has 3 cards to go along with your 4-card major, cue-bid the opponent's suit. This asks partner to bid a 4-card major. For example, after 1 diamond-Double by your partner-pass, he may be 4-3 in the majors. If you have 2 4-card majors and enough for game, bid 2 diamonds. Your partner will bid a 4-card major and you can raise to game.
13+	3 No Trump if you have their suit well-stopped. Denies a major suit fit.

Preempts and Preemptive Bidding

Opening 2 diamonds, 2 hearts, or 2 spades shows exactly a 6-card suit, and less than an opening hand, about 5-11 points. If your preempts are disciplined (my preference), you also show a reasonably good suit - 2 of the top 3 or 3 of the top 5 cards in that suit. You should also not have another 4-card major, nor another 5-card suit. You cannot open a weak 2 clubs. Opening 2 clubs is used to open all really strong hands, hands that you want to force to game.

Opening at the 3-level is similar to the weak 2-bids, but now shows a 7-card suit.

Responding to Partner's Opening Preempt

In general, pass! With 15 HCP or less, just pass. Even with a very weak hand, pass. Even if you don't have even 1 card in partner's suit, pass. Don't try "rescuing" your partner. Any bid you make is forcing and is just going to get you in even more trouble. With "just" an opening hand, pass. Remember, your partner has a weak hand.

If you a <u>good</u> hand, say 16 HCP or so and controls (aces & kings) and tricks, then you could raise to game or bid a new suit which is forcing for one round.

Bidding Again After You Preempt

Simple. Unless your partner has bid a new suit or 4 No Trump, **DON'T BID AGAIN!**

Scoring Basics (Rubber Bridge)

Trick Score:

Clubs or Diamonds.		20
Hearts or Spades.		30
No Trump, first trick.		40
Each additional no trump trick.		30

Slam Bonus:

Small Slam:	Non-vulnerable	500
	Vulnerable	750
Grand Slam:	Non-vulnerable	1000
	Vulnerable	1500

Honors Bonus:

4 of 5 Top Trump Honors:	100
All 5 top Trump Honors:	150
All Aces in No Trump:	150

Rubber Bonus:

For finishing rubber in 2 games:	700
For finishing rubber in 3 games:	500

Score tricks bid and made below the line.
Score bonuses and overtricks above the line.
Game is 100 below the line.
Making game makes you vulnerable.

Scoring Doubled or Redoubled Contracts:
Trick score is double or redouble the normal trick score for tricks bid only (overtricks are added later).
Add 50 "for the insult".
Add Slam Bonus if bid.
For each non-vulnerable overtrick, add 100 (200 if redoubled).
For each vulnerable overtrick, add 200 (400 if redoubled).

Penalties for Going Down:

Undoubled:	Non-vulnerable	50 each trick
	Vulnerable	100 each trick
Doubled:	Non-vulnerable	100 first trick
		200 each subsequent trick
	Vulnerable	200 first trick
		300 each subsequent trick
Redoubled:	Non-vulnerable	200 first trick
		400 each subsequent trick
	Vulnerable	400 first trick
		600 each subsequent trick

Scoring Changes For Chicago or Duplicate Bridge

In Chicago, vulnerability is determined by who deals: The first hand, nobody is vulnerable; The second and third hands, dealer is vulnerable; The last hand, everybody is vulnerable.
In Duplicate, vulnerability is marked on the board.

There is no honors bonus.
There is no rubber bonus. Instead, there's the following Game bonus.
Game bonus while non-vulnerable is 300.
Game bonus while vunerable is 500.

Partial game scores are not carried over to the next hand.
Part-score contracts receive a Partial Bonus of 50 points.

1987 Rule Changes:
The bonus for making a redoubled contract is 100 (was 50).
The penalties for going down four or more tricks has increased. Doubled, non-vulnerable, the fourth undertrick on, is 300 each (was 200). Redoubled, non-vulnerable, the fourth undertrick on, is 600 (was 400).