

## LESSON 4: STUDENT NOTES

# One-Level Opening Bids

### The Auction Revisited

Each suit has a ranking order. When you make a bid during the auction, you must ensure that it is higher than the previous bid, just as you would in any auction. You are now trying to reach a contract at the best level for your side. The first person to make a bid (not pass) becomes the **OPENER**. Opener's partner is called the **RESPONDER**.

### Ranking of suits

Notrumps	NT		
Spades	♠	}	Spades and Hearts are also called the <b>MAJOR</b> suits
Hearts	♥		
Diamonds	♦	}	Diamonds and Clubs are also called the <b>MINOR</b> suits
Clubs	♣		

### The levels of bidding

1♣ 1♦ 1♥ 1♠ 1NT 2♣ 2♦ 2♥ 2♠ 2NT ..... 7NT

You must make 6 tricks before you start to score in bridge – therefore:

1-level contracts must make 1+6 tricks = 7 tricks

2-level contracts must make 2+6 tricks = 8 tricks ... and so on

The lowest bid you can make is 1♣ = 7 tricks

The highest bid you can make is 7NT = 13 tricks

### Opener's First Bid

Every opening bid has a specific meaning. It tells partner about your minimum strength, plus a suit opening indicates whether or not you hold five or more cards in a **major suit** (hearts or spades). Your opening one-bids – listed in the order in which you should consider them – and their basic meanings are:

<i>Bid</i>	<i>HCP</i>	<i>Shape</i>
1NT	15-17	balanced hand
1♠	12-19	5+ spades
1♥	12-19	5+ hearts
1♦	12-19	3+ diamonds and <i>no</i> 5+ major
1♣	12-19	3+ clubs and <i>no</i> 5+ major

### Basic rules for suit opening bids

The order in which you bid your suits is very important. Here are some simple rules to remember:

- Bid your longest suit first (must be 5+ cards for a major suit bid, otherwise bid a minor suit)
- Bid the higher ranking of two 5-card suits
- With two 4-card minor suits, bid the higher ranking i.e. 1♦

## Opening 1♠/♥/♦/♣

Because you require 5 or more cards in a major suit to open 1♥ or 1♠, opening bids of 1♣ or 1♦ may be "bids of convenience". They deny a 5+ major suit or a hand suitable for a 1NT opening.

So with 13 HCP, you would open 1♣ if you had 4=3=2=4 shape (the notation refers to spades=hearts=diamonds=clubs in that order) and you would also open 1♣ with 4=4=2=3 shape (because clubs is the longer minor suit).

What about something like 4=3=3=3 shape? Then you should open 1♣. The effect of this is that a 1♦ opening almost always has 4+ cards, the exception being when opener has 4=4=3=2 shape.

Note that while 1♣ and 1♦ do not *promise* length in the bid suit, of course opener may in fact have a long minor suit.

## Opening with fewer than 12 HCP

Although the suggested range for an opening of one-of-a-suit is 12-19 HCP, there are many hands which have more playing strength than their HCP would suggest. Often this is because of length in one or two suits. Some suggest adjusting the HCP by adding points for extra length e.g. add one point for a 5 card suit, two points for a 6 card suit etc.

A simple approach to hand evaluation that effectively incorporates length points is the Rule of 20, which states: "Add the total of your HCP to the number of cards in your two longest suits. If this is 20 or greater then you can (should) open the bidding."

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