

LESSON 7: TEACHER NOTES

Bidding Balanced Hands

What is in this Lesson

A whole new set of concepts is introduced in this lesson. The major ones to emphasise are:

- what constitutes a balanced hand
- the importance of looking for a 4-4 fit after a 1NT opening (hence Stayman)
- the benefit of playing in a weak responder's 5+ major suit but keeping the strong hand concealed (one of many reasons for playing transfers)
- how to handle balanced hands outside the range for a 1NT opening
- remembering to bid 4-card major suits up the line after a 1-of-a-minor opening, even with a balanced 12-14 HCP hand.

Courses for beginners often avoid teaching Stayman and transfers, but this lesson follows the Scottish Bridge Union example of introducing them early, even if only major suit transfers at this stage. It seems sensible to learn the right things in the first place, rather than to be forced to unlearn some things relatively soon.

This lesson makes no attempt to answer the vexed question of whether or not to teach beginners about opening 1NT with a 5-card major – that's for you to decide!

Preparation

- Decide if teaching Stayman & Transfers or just **Simple Unbalanced Responses**
- Decide if want to teach "must have shortage" if using Stayman?
- Decide if wish to use boards to illustrate the examples below? If so have the cards you wish to swap in readily available.
- Boards 3, 4, 10, 13 & 20-25 are transfers, boards 7, 9, 12 & 14-19 are Stayman, the rest are balanced bidding. So if you wish to split the lesson you can choose the boards.

Introduction / Revision

- Revise what shape is a balanced hand. The 1NT opening is 15-17 HCP
- Responder
 - Bid your longest suit (ie any **5+** card suit **before** any **4** card suit)
 - Bid your **lower** of **two 4** card suits
 - Bid the **higher** ranking of **two 5** card suits
 - With none of the above & 6-10 HCP range, bid **1NT as last resort**
 - To bid at **2 level** Responder must have **10+ HCP (2/1 13+ HCP)**
- Opener's Rebid
 - With a fit in Responder's major, support at the appropriate level
 - With no fit & a **balanced** hand (12-14HCP) bid 1NT
 - With no fit and an **unbalanced** hand: bid your second suit (showing 5:4) at the appropriate level if you can (Barrier)
 - Rebid your suit (shows 6+ cards)

Lesson Terminology

- Stayman, Transfers
- Alerting

Main Points to Emphasise

- Explain the concept of a balanced hand INT is limited and the shape is known, therefore the responder is usually in charge.
- Reinforce INT rebid is 15–17. **Do not worry about not having stoppers in all suits**
- Stress that opener's first priority is to open 1NT if possible.
- Responder should respond if has a 5 card major even if 0pts
- Stayman **asks** Opener if they have a 4 card major; a Transfer **tells** Opener that Responder has a 5+ major

Explain

Responder Has a Balanced Hand (Hand 11)

- 0 – 7 pts: Pass (eg. 1NT p p) – no chance of game
 - 8 – 9 pts: Raise to 2NT (1NT p 2NT) – invitational
 - 10+pts: Raise to 3NT (1NT p 3NT) – game
 - 18+ HCP: Raise to 6NT (1NT p 6NT) – small slam
- | | | |
|---------------|------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ♠ A87 | ♠ K106 | Auction: |
| ♥ AJ98 | ♥ K754 | 1NT – Pass |
| ♦ KQ6 | ♦ 8754 | - Swap ♥7 for ♥Q => 2NT (8 HCP) |
| ♣ J74 | ♣ 105 | - Now swap ♣5 for ♣K => 3NT (11HCP) |
| Opener (West) | Responder (East) | |

<< Boards 1 & 2 reflect Responder Balanced Hand bidding >>

Stayman (asking for a 4 card major) ♠♥♦♣ (Hand 12)

- By bidding 2♣ you guarantee 8+ HCP & at least one 4-card major suit.
- Opener bids his 4 card major (2♥ or 2♠) if he has one.
- If Opener does **NOT have a 4 card major** he bids 2♦ (**alertable**)
This bid says nothing about diamonds and is another **Conventional bid** in saying 'I do not have a 4 card major'
- If Responder's **major matches** Opener's – Responder **supports** the suit
3♥ or 3♠ with 8–9 HCP (invitational) and 4♥ or 4♠ (game) with 10+ HCP
- If Responder's **major does not match** Opener's – Responder bids NT
2NT with 8–9 HCP (invitational) and 3NT (game) with 10+ HCP

- | | | |
|---------------|------------------|----------------------------------|
| ♠ A87 | ♠ K106 | Auction: |
| ♥ AJ98 | ♥ K754 | 1NT – 2♣ (Stayman, 8+ HCP) |
| ♦ KQ6 | ♦ AJ84 | 2♥ (does not deny 4 spades) – 4♥ |
| ♣ J74 | ♣ 105 | |
| Opener (West) | Responder (East) | |

<< Suggest in East swap ♥4 for low ♠ – do we have a fit? NO – now 1NT 2♣ 2♥ 3NT;
In West swap ♥8 for low ♣ – does West have a 4 card major? NO – 1NT 2♣ 2♦ 3NT>>

<< Boards 7 & 9 are Stayman hands >>

Transfers (telling partner you have a 5+ card major) ♠♥♦♣ (Hand 13)

- Changes the meanings of 2♦/2♥ to show 5+ cards in the suit **above** the bid suit: 2♦ shows ♥s & 2♥ shows ♠s. Opener must alert & rebid in the suit shown
- Responder can then PASS with a weak hand.
- Responder with more strength can rebid NT i.e. 2NT with 8–9 HCP
3NT with 10+ HCP
- Opener can convert Responder's NT bid to 3 or 4 of the major, depending upon Opener's HCP, when holding 3+ cards in the major
- Opener will play in NT when only holding only 2 cards in the major.
- Opener can bid 3NT over a 2NT bid with a max 1NT opener (17 HCP)

♠ A87
♥ AJ98
♦ KQ6
♣ J74
Opener (North)

♠ K10643
♥ 74
♦ J1084
♣ 52
Responder
(South)

Auction:

1NT – 2♥ (transfer)

2♠ (opener must bid this) – Pass

(2♠ is likely to make whereas 1NT is hopeless)

<< Suggest in South swap ♦4 for ♦A – now 1NT 2♥ 2♠ 2NT (8 HCP). Do N/S have a ♠ fit? Yes so North prefers to play in ♠s & bids 3♠ >>

<< Play Boards 3 to 4 are on transfers >>

Simple Unbalanced Responses (if not teaching Stayman / Transfers)

0 – 7 pts: Bid 2 of your longest suit (1NT p 2♦/♥/♠)

8 – 9 pts: Bid 2NT (1NT p 2NT)

10+ pts: Bid game with 6+ cards (1NT p 4♥/♠), or to 3 of your suit with 5 (1NT p 3♥/♠)

<< Can try QUIZ Questions 1 & 2 >>

<< Good chance students are overwhelmed at this stage and so defer next section >>

Weaker and Stronger Balanced Hands

- Opener has 2 extra bids to show:
 - 12-14 HCP – Opener rebids 1NT (eg 1C 1H 1NT)
 - 18-19 HCP – Opener jump rebids 2NT (eg 1C 1H 2NT)

♠ A87
♥ AJ98
♦ Q63
♣ K75
Opener (West)

♠ KQJ6
♥ 74
♦ K84
♣ AJ52
Responder (East)

Auction:
1♣ (3:3 in minors) – 1♠ (6+ HCP)
1NT (12-14 HCP) – 3NT (more than
enough to bid game)

<< Suggest in West swap ♦3 for ♦A – now 1C IS 2NT 3NT(18 HCP). Do E/W have a ♠ fit? Yes so West prefers to play in ♠s & bids 3♠ >>

Summary

- The requirements to open the bidding 1NT.
 - Identify **Responder's** bidding options following a 1NT opening bid.
 - Describe and use the **Stayman Conventional Bid** made by Responder **ONLY** after partner's NT opening bid.
 - Explain why and by whom **Conventional Bids** are **Alerted** (eg 2D deny)
 - **Transfers:** Telling partner of your 5+ card major
 - Opener **MUST alert** responder's **conventional** bids and **MUST** rebid accordingly!
 - Responder can pass, invite or bid to game depending upon his HCPs
 - Opener may **choose to convert a NT game bid to a major suit game** bid if a suit fit has been found in the partnership.
- Point out videos in Handout

LESSON 7: Balanced Hand Bids

1. What do you open with these hands?

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
♠ K2	♠ AK5	♠ K6	♠ KQ32	♠ AQ52
♥ AK62	♥ AJ62	♥ K1052	♥ AK83	♥ AK42
♦ A10852	♦ A1085	♦ A2	♦ KJ75	♦ 105
♣ 97	♣ 97	♣ AQ953	♣ 3	♣ KQ9

2. Partner opens 1NT - what do you respond with these hands?

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
♠ A52	♠ A9875	♠ Q8	♠ 62	♠ AQ8762
♥ K962	♥ J62	♥ KJ5	♥ J98652	♥ A32
♦ K1085	♦ A8	♦ AQ85	♦ Q85	♦ Q98
♣ 97	♣ Q97	♣ 8732	♣ 97	♣ 9

3. You open 1NT. Partner's bid is below - what is your rebid in each case?

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
Partner 2♣	Partner 2♣	Partner 2♦	Partner 2NT	Partner 2NT
♠ K2	♠ AQ52	♠ AK52	♠ KQJ76	♠ AK865
♥ K62	♥ 62	♥ K62	♥ 32	♥ Q3
♦ A1085	♦ AQ85	♦ AJ10	♦ AK2	♦ AQ85
♣ KQ10	♣ A97	♣ A97	♣ A92	♣ 97

4. As Responder what is your rebid in each case?

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
Opener Resp	Opener Resp	Opener Resp	Opener Resp	Opener Resp
1NT 2C	1NT 2D	1NT 2C	1NT 2C	1NT 2H
2D ?	2H ?	2H ?	2H ?	2S ?
♠ K2	♠ 52	♠ AK52	♠ 76	♠ Q9865
♥ K862	♥ AQ652	♥ 62	♥ KQJ7	♥ 83
♦ A1085	♦ A98	♦ J1092	♦ A32	♦ 9875
♣ 1083	♣ 987	♣ A97	♣ 10982	♣ 97