Bridge Bidding Cheat Sheet

BridgeTricks

Standard American with five-card majors and a 15 to 17 notrump. Points, openings, responses, rebids, doubles and the conventions most tables play.

COUNTING YOUR HAND

WHAT	COUNT
Ace / King / Queen / Jack	4 / 3 / 2 / 1 high-card points (HCP)
Length points (opener)	+1 for each card over four in a suit
Dummy points, four trumps	Void 5, singleton 3, doubleton 1
Dummy points, three trumps	Void 3, singleton 2, doubleton 1
Game in 3NT, 4♥ or 4♠	About 25-26 combined
Game in 5♣ or 5♦	About 29 combined
Small slam / grand slam	About 33 / 37 combined

OPENING BIDS

OPENING	POINTS	SHAPE
1♣	12-21	3+ clubs; with 3-3 in the minors
1♦	12-21	4+ diamonds (three with 4-4-3-2); with 4-4 in the minors
1♥ / 1♠	12-21	5+ cards; with 5-5, open the higher
1NT	15-17	Balanced
2♣	22+	Strong and artificial, any shape
2♦ / 2♥ / 2♠	5-10	Weak two: a good six-card suit
2NT	20-21	Balanced
3 of a suit	Under 10	Preempt: a seven-card suit
3NT	25-27	Balanced (some pairs use it as gambling)

BALANCED HANDS AT A GLANCE

HCP	BIDDING
12-14	Open one of a suit, rebid 1NT
15-17	Open 1NT
18-19	Open one of a suit, jump to 2NT
20-21	Open 2NT
22-24	Open 2♣, rebid 2NT
25-27	Open 2♣, rebid 3NT (or open 3NT)

OPENER'S SECOND BID

OPENER HAS	POINTS	REBIDS
Minimum	12-15	1NT, simple raise, rebid own suit, new lower suit
Medium	16-18	Jump raise, jump rebid of own suit, reverse
Maximum	19-21	Jump to game, jump shift, jump to 2NT (18-19 balanced)

RESPONDING TO 1♥ OR 1♠

RESPONSE	POINTS	SHOWS
Pass	0-5	Too weak to respond
Raise to 2	6-10	3+ trumps
1NT	6-10	No fit, nothing else to bid; not forcing
1♠ over 1♥	6+	4+ spades; forcing
New suit at the 2 level	10+	4+ cards (5+ hearts over 1♠); forcing
Jump raise to 3	10-12	Limit raise, 3+ trumps
2NT	13+	Jacoby 2NT: 4+ trumps, game forcing
Raise to 4	Under 10	5+ trumps, shape: preemptive

RESPONDING TO 1♣ OR 1♦

RESPONSE	POINTS	SHOWS
New suit at the 1 level	6+	4+ cards, bid up the line; forcing
1NT	6-10	Balanced, no four-card major
Raise to 2	6-10	5+ clubs or 4+ diamonds
2♣ over 1♦	10+	4+ clubs; forcing
Jump raise to 3	10-11	Limit raise
2NT	13-15	Balanced, game forcing
3NT	16-17	Balanced

RESPONDING TO 1NT (15-17)

RESPONSE	MEANING
Pass	0-7, balanced
2♣	Stayman: asks for a four-card major, 8+
2♦ / 2♥	Jacoby transfer to hearts / spades, any strength
2NT	8-9, invitational
3NT	10-15, to play
4♦ / 4♥	Texas transfer: 6+ hearts / spades, game
4NT	16-17, invites 6NT

RESPONDING TO 2♣ AND TO A WEAK TWO

AFTER	RESPONSE	MEANING
2♣	2♦	Waiting: most hands
2♣	2♥ / 2♠ / 3♣ / 3♦	Positive: 8+ with a good five-card suit
2♣	2NT	Positive: 8+ balanced
Weak two	Raise	To play, may be preemptive
Weak two	New suit	5+ cards, forcing one round
Weak two	2NT	Strong ask: feature or Ogust

FORCING OR NOT

A new suit by responder is forcing for one round unless responder has already passed. A 1NT response, a simple raise and a limit raise are limited and can be passed.

WHEN THE OPPONENTS OPEN

CALL	MEANING
Overcall	8-16, usually a good five-card suit
1NT overcall	15-18, balanced, a stopper in their suit
Jump overcall	Weak: a six or seven-card suit
Cuebid of their suit	Michaels: 5-5 two-suiter
Jump to 2NT	Unusual 2NT: 5-5 in the two lowest unbid suits

WHAT A DOUBLE MEANS

DOUBLE	WHEN	MEANING
Takeout	Opponents open a suit, partner has not bid	Opening values, short in their suit, support for the others
Negative	Partner opens, RHO overcalls	Values and the unbid major(s)
Responsive	Partner doubles, RHO raises	Values, no clear suit to bid
Penalty	A notrump opening, or high-level contracts	Expects to defeat the contract

THE CONVENTIONS MOST TABLES PLAY

CONVENTION	BID	MEANING
Stayman	1NT - 2♣	Asks for a four-card major
Jacoby transfers	1NT - 2♦ / 2♥	Five or more cards in the next suit up
Texas	1NT - 4♦ / 4♥	Six-card major, game, no slam interest
Gerber	1NT - 4♣	Asks for aces
Blackwood	4NT	Asks for aces
Roman Key Card	4NT	Asks for keycards: four aces and the trump king
Jacoby 2NT	1♥ / 1♠ - 2NT	Game-forcing raise, 4+ trumps
Bergen raises	1♥ / 1♠ - 3♣ / 3♦	Four-card raises by strength
Splinter	Double jump in a new suit	Game-forcing raise, shortness in that suit
Inverted minors	1♣ - 2♣	Strong raise; the jump raise is weak
New minor forcing	1♣ - 1♥ - 1NT - 2♦	Asks opener about responder's major
Fourth suit forcing	Bidding the fourth suit	Artificial, forcing
Drury	1♥ / 1♠ - 2♣ by a passed hand	Passed hand with a limit raise
Lebensohl	1NT - (overcall) - 2NT	Relay to 3♣ to sign off