

Practice Session for U3ABD07: 1NT Openers and Responses

Welcome!

Here is a list of all the hands that you could 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 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 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, we've added a Lesson Summary. It describes the same topics from a slightly different angle to the main handouts, with additional detail where it seems needed.

-Ed

Additional (Advanced) Discussion

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

Lesson Summary: No Trump hands

This week's lessons and practice session are mainly about bidding No Trump contracts. (We'll focus on suit contracts soon enough.)

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
- You need **12-14 High Card Points** to open 1NT. With fewer points you don't open; with more 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.

To bid game, 3NT, you need a total of 25 points. When partner opens 1NT, you know they have 12-14 points. If you have 13+ points, that's enough (12+13) to bid 3NT. If you have a bit less (11-12), bid 2NT to ask partner to bid 3NT if they have the maximum 14 points. If you have less than 11 points, you can't have enough points for 3NT, so you pass.

These first practice hands are all quite straightforward and boringly similar. They will soon get more varied – and more fun!

Lesson Summary: Using Transfers with a Weak Hand

If your partner opens with a No Trump bid but you want to play in a **Suit Contract** you can ask (tell) them to switch to your suit by using a **Transfer**. Yes, it's already time to start disagreeing with your partner.

Bridge bidding isn't always a cosy chat with your partner, sometimes it's a **negotiation**. But it is still a civilised process, not a tantrum. You suggest a suit contract to your partner, but you might not get your way.

This week we're looking at using a Transfer when you have a long suit (5+ cards) but a weak hand (less than 11 HCP) so there's no chance of game. A suit contract is better than No Trumps, because of your long suit.

Red Suit Transfers

There are several flavours of Transfer, but we're teaching you **Red Suit Transfers**: when partner opens 1NT if your long suit is a MAJOR you bid one of the red suits (Diamonds or Hearts) to ask them to transfer to the next suit up (Hearts or Spades), your major. If your long suit is a MINOR, you pass 1NT.

So:

1. Partner opens 1NT
2. You respond 2D if you want to play in Hearts OR 2H if you want to play in Spades
3. Partner MUST bid 2H or 2S as requested

What you do next depends on how many trumps you have and how many points you have. With a weak hand, you PASS. This is referred to as **Using a Transfer for a Weakness Takeout** and that's what you're trying this week. Partner doesn't get another bid after the transfer, that's the contract.

We'll return to using Transfers later in the course to show how to use them when you have a stronger hand.

Why use a Transfer for Weakness Takeout?

You might wonder, why not just bid 2H if you want to play in Hearts, or 2S if you want to play in Spades? Good question! That is indeed another way of achieving a similar result; it's usually just called a **Weakness Takeout**. We want you to use Transfers instead because they offer two big advantages:

- Partner will be Declarer and you will be Dummy. That means partner's hand, which has most of your points, is hidden from the Defence - making their job harder.

If you use an ordinary Weakness Takeout, the stronger hand is Dummy, so the Defence can see most of your points.

- If you have a stronger hand, you can easily carry on bidding after the transfer (as you will see later in the course) to negotiate a better contract.

If you use an ordinary Weakness Takeout, this is still possible but harder.

Boards 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!)

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.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

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.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

West has a 4-card Heart suit that they might be tempted to bid, but they're not strong enough to bid 2H as that shows 10+ HCP and 4 Hearts.

South **West** **North** **East**
 1NT Pass 3NT 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	3NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		
	♠ Q87		
	♥ QJT9		
	♦ 97		
	♣ AT72		
♠ AK3		♠ 542	
♥ A732		♥ K54	
♦ K52		♦ AQ43	
♣ 643		♣ KQJ	
	♠ JT96		
	♥ 86		
	♦ JT86		
	♣ 985		

Board: 4 Dealer: West Lead: ♥Q #99

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

East has 15 HCP and a balanced hand. Even if partner has the minimum 12 HCP for their 1NT opening bid, that adds up to 27 HCP, so they can bid 3NT with confidence. (3NT will usually make with 25 HCP.)

North	East	South	West
1NT	Pass	2NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		
	♠ A986		
	♥ J3		
	♦ A954		
	♣ A42		
♠ J42		♠ T73	
♥ KQT872		♥ A94	
♦		♦ QJT86	
♣ K865		♣ 97	
	♠ KQ5		
	♥ 65		
	♦ 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.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

Notice that the 1NT and 2NT point counts are not precise, they are ranges (12-14 and 11-12) so if you opened 1NT with 13 points and partner replied 2NT, you might have 24 points or 25 points in total; if you're feeling optimistic you might 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
3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass
	♠ 653		
	♥ T987		
	♦ A6		
	♣ JT98		
♠ 87		♠ AT9	
♥ AKJ		♥ Q62	
♦ KJT73		♦ Q985	
♣ 543		♣ AQ2	
	♠ KQJ42		
	♥ 543		
	♦ 42		
	♣ 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		♠ J42	
♥ AT42		♥ KQJ97	
♦ QJT8		♦ 6	
♣ 97		♣ 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.

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

West	North	East	South
1NT	Pass	2NT	Pass
3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass
	♠ 75		
	♥ AK62		
	♦ KT4		
	♣ 9532		
♠ A93		♠ K84	
♥ T74		♥ J983	
♦ A72		♦ Q53	
♣ KQT6		♣ AJ4	
	♠ QJT62		
	♥ Q5		
	♦ J986		
	♣ 87		

Board: 8 Dealer: West Lead: ♥2 #640

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

East has 11 HCP and a fairly 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 not have the maximum 14 HCP, so they could pass 2NT, but with 13 HCP, a promising Club suit, and two tens, they decide to risk 3NT.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

West has bent the rules slightly here, as tens aren't really worth half a point each – but it's this sort of nuanced decision that makes Bridge a game.

North	East	South	West
1NT	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♥	Pass	3NT	Pass
4♥	Pass	Pass	Pass
		♠ Q874	
		♥ KQ4	
		♦ A43	
		♣ Q42	
♠ A6			♠ K952
♥ JT32			♥ 5
♦ J987			♦ KQT65
♣ 763			♣ T95
		♠ JT3	
		♥ A9876	
		♦ 2	
		♣ AKJ8	

Board: 9 Dealer: North Lead: ♦K #1641

PLEASE SKIP THIS HAND. It shows how to use Transfers with a strong hand, a technique which we have not taught you yet! We will return to this topic later in the course.

South has 5 Hearts and 13 HCP, so when North opens 1NT they start by bidding 2D, asking partner to transfer to 2H. North bids 2H as requested, what does South bid next?

They have 13 HCP, and partner has 12-14, so the partnership has 25-27. You need 25 points for 3NT or 4H, but which is the better contract? West bids 3NT to tell partner:

- I have exactly 5 Hearts
- We have enough points for game in NT or Hearts
- You decide!

Yes, it's a proper dialogue. North can pass to play in 3NT or bid 4H to play in 4H. With just two Hearts, they'd pass 3NT, as they've only got a 5-2 fit, not enough. With three Hearts, they would probably bid 4H unless they hate the idea; with four or more Hearts, they would bid 4H.

With three good Hearts, North is happy to bid 4H, game. (This type of bid is sometimes called a Correction or Preference Bid.)

Additional (Advanced) Discussion

North only has three Hearts, so could pass 3NT, especially as they have a 4333 hand, but they have two good Honours in Hearts, so they decided on 4H. I wonder which you chose - some people prefer playing in a suit, some people prefer No Trumps

East	South	West	North
1NT	Pass	2♥	Pass
2♠	Pass	Pass	Pass
		♠ Q54	
		♥ Q9	
		♦ 7642	
		♣ AJT3	
♠ 97632			♠ AT8
♥ A32			♥ K654
♦ 5			♦ QT83
♣ 8652			♣ KQ
		♠ KJ	
		♥ JT87	
		♦ AKJ9	
		♣ 974	

Board: 10 Dealer: East Lead: ♦A #1897

West has 5 Spades and 4 HCP, so when East opens 1NT, they start by bidding 2H, asking (OK, telling) partner to transfer to 2S. This is a form of Weakness Takeout.

East transfers to 2S as requested (pew), what does West bid next?

They have just 4 HCP. There's no chance of game, they just want to play in Spades because 1NT would go very badly (with just 16-18 HCP); at least in 2S, you can maybe make a trick or two by ruffing Diamonds.

So West passes 2S and hopes it won't go too badly.

Additional (Advanced) Discussion

West could just pass 1NT. Their decision to play in 2S rather than 1NT isn't an easy one, as East will need to make one more trick in 2S than 1NT, to make the contract. Both contracts are likely to go down, West just expects that they'll go down by less in 2S.

There's also a very subtle advantage to the Transfer: the Defence don't know whether West is strong or weak until they pass, so they have less chance to bid for the contract.

Notice also that the Transfer has made sure the stronger hand (East) is hidden from the Defence, making their job a bit harder. If you didn't use Transfers, if North bids 2S as a Weakness Takeout, the Defence will be able to see all of South's points as they will be Dummy - making their job a lot easier.

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	2♥	Pass
2♠	Pass	Pass	Pass
	♠ QJ954		
	♥ T4		
	♦ A97		
	♣ 752		
♠ 83		♠ KT2	
♥ AKJ7		♥ 9865	
♦ KJ86		♦ T32	
♣ J86		♣ KT9	
	♠ A76		
	♥ Q32		
	♦ Q54		
	♣ AQ43		

Board: 11 Dealer: South Lead: ♥ A #2949

North has 5 Spades and 7 HCP, so when South opens 1NT they start by bidding 2H, asking (OK, telling) partner to bid 2S. This is a form of Weakness Takeout.

South transfers to 2S as requested (pew), what does North bid next?

They have just 7 HCP. There's no chance of game, they just want to play in Spades because 1NT might go quite badly (with 19-21 HCP); at least in 2S, you can maybe make a trick or two by ruffing Hearts.

So North passes 2S and hopes it won't go too badly.

Additional (Advanced) Discussion

North could just pass 1NT. Their decision to play in 2S rather than 1NT isn't an easy one, as South will need to make one more trick in 2S than 1NT, to make the contract. Both contracts are uncertain, North just expects that 2S is a safer bet.

There's also a very subtle advantage to the Transfer: the Defence don't know whether North is strong or weak until they pass, so they have less chance to bid for the contract.

Notice also that the Transfer has made sure the stronger hand (South) is hidden from the Defence, making their job a bit harder. If you didn't use Transfers and North bids 2S as a Weakness Takeout, the Defence will be able to see all of South's points as they will be Dummy – making their job a lot easier.

West	North	East	South
1NT	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♥	Pass	3NT	Pass
4♥	Pass	Pass	Pass
	♠ K952		
	♥ 5		
	♦ KQT65		
	♣ T95		
♠ Q874		♠ JT3	
♥ KQ4		♥ A9876	
♦ A43		♦ 2	
♣ Q42		♣ AKJ8	
	♠ A6		
	♥ JT32		
	♦ J987		
	♣ 763		

Board: 12 Dealer: West Lead: ♦ K #1641

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East has 5 Hearts and 13 HCP, so when West opens 1NT they start by bidding 2D, asking partner to transfer to 2H. West bids 2H as requested, what does East bid next?

They have 13 HCP, and partner has 12-14, so the partnership has 25-27. You need 25 points for 3NT or 4H, but which is the better contract? East bids 3NT to tell partner:

- I have exactly 5 Hearts
- We have enough points for game in NT or Hearts
- You decide!

Yes, it's a proper dialogue. West can pass to play in 3NT or bid 4H to play in 4H. With just two Hearts, they'd pass 3NT, as they've only got a 5-2 fit, not enough. With three Hearts, they would probably bid 4H unless they hate the idea; with four or more Hearts, they would bid 4H.

With three good Hearts, West is happy to bid 4H, game. (This type of bid is sometimes called a Correction or Preference Bid.)

Additional (Advanced) Discussion

West only has three Hearts, so could pass 3NT, especially as they have a 4333 hand, but they have two good Honours in Hearts, so they decided on 4H. I wonder which you chose - some people prefer playing in a suit, some people prefer No Trumps

North East South West

1NT	Pass	Pass	Pass
	♠AK3		
	♥QJ		
	♦A753		
	♣9873		
♠76			♠QJT982
♥98642			♥53
♦KQJT			♦84
♣AJ			♣KQ2
	♠54		
	♥AKT7		
	♦962		
	♣T654		

Board: 13 Dealer: North Lead: ♠Q #3

North has a balanced hand and 14 HCP (High Card Points), so the best opening bid is 1NT. (They could in principle open 1D, but then would not have a sensible second bid if partner responds!)

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

South has a balanced hand and 7 HCP. With a maximum total point count of 21, they know that game is impossible, so they pass.

East South West North

1NT	Pass	Pass	Pass
	♠T7		
	♥983		
	♦KQT4		
	♣QJT3		
♠652			♠A43
♥AKJ7			♥Q2
♦973			♦A865
♣986			♣A542
	♠KQJ98		
	♥T654		
	♦J2		
	♣K7		

Board: 14 Dealer: East Lead: ♠K #26

East has a balanced hand and 14 HCP (High Card Points), so the best opening bid is 1NT. (They could open 1D, and later bid 2C, but 1NT scores better.)

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

West has a balanced hand and 8 HCP. With a maximum total point count of 22, they know that game is impossible, so they pass.

South West North East

1NT	Pass	3NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		
	♠K3		
	♥874		
	♦AKQJ2		
	♣974		
♠AJT984			♠75
♥T65			♥KQ92
♦			♦98743
♣QT65			♣J8
	♠Q62		
	♥AJ3		
	♦T65		
	♣AK32		

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		♠ QJ3	
♥ Q95		♥ AK7	
♦ A754		♦ 982	
♣ K87		♣ 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.

Summary

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, 3NT	99	Dec
5	N	1NT, 2NT	136	Dec
6	E	1NT, 2NT, 3NT	568	Dec
7	S	1NT, 2NT	578	Dec
8	W	1NT, 2NT, 3NT	640	Dec
9	N	1NT, 2D, 2H, 3NT, 4H SKIP THIS HAND	1641	Dec
10	E	1NT, 2H, 2S	1897	Dec
11	S	1NT, 2H, 2S	2949	Dec
12	W	1NT, 2D, 2H, 3NT, 4H SKIP THIS HAND	1641	Dec
13	N	1NT	3	Dec
14	E	1NT	26	Dec
15	S	1NT, 3NT	29	Dec
16	W	1NT, 3NT	101	Dec