

U3ABC06A Practice Session: 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 with Acol, 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, you will mistakes, but 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!

-Ed

Boards 1 – 16: No Trump hands

Today's session was all about bidding No Trump contracts. You didn't have suitable cards to bid suit contracts. (We'll come to 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, nor 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!

Additional (Advanced) Discussion

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

North East South West

1NT Pass Pass Pass

♠ KJ84 ♥ 7542 ♦ KQJ8 ♣ 7	♠ 732 ♥ AK9 ♦ A65 ♣ K963	♠ AT9 ♥ JT8 ♦ T3 ♣ AT852	
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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	
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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 rather than a maths problem.

North	East	South	West
1NT	Pass	Pass	Pass
	♠ KT6		
	♥ AK72		
	♦ 9653		
	♣ AT		
♠ 975432		♠ A8	
♥ QJ9		♥ T864	
♦		♦ KQJT8	
♣ QJ97		♣ 84	
	♠ QJ		
	♥ 53		
	♦ A742		
	♣ K6532		

Board: 9 Dealer: North Lead: ♦K #2779

North has a balanced hand and 14 HCP (High Card Points), so the best opening bid is 1NT. (They could in principle open 1H, 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 fairly balanced hand and 10 HCP. With a maximum total point count of 24, they know that game is unlikely, so they pass.

East South West North

1NT Pass Pass Pass

♠ 76
♥ T9642
♦ KQJT
♣ A6

♠ A5
♥ QJ87
♦ 962
♣ J543

♠ K43
♥ AK
♦ A753
♣ T987

♠ QJT982
♥ 53
♦ 84
♣ KQ2

South West North East

1NT Pass 3NT Pass
Pass Pass

♠ K7
♥ A76
♦ 94
♣ AQJT76

♠ T832
♥ QJ3
♦ KJ62
♣ K2

♠ J964
♥ T952
♦ QT73
♣ 9

♠ AQ5
♥ K84
♦ A85
♣ 8543

West North East South

1NT Pass 3NT Pass
Pass Pass

♠ QJT5
♥ T74
♦ Q86
♣ Q97

♠ K43
♥ A86
♦ A53
♣ K863

♠ A86
♥ K93
♦ KT7
♣ A542

♠ 972
♥ QJ52
♦ J942
♣ JT

Board: 10 Dealer: East Lead: ♠Q #25

East 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.

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.

Board: 11 Dealer: South Lead: ♦2 #313

South has 13 HCP and a balanced hand, so opens 1NT, showing 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.

Board: 12 Dealer: West Lead: ♠Q #383

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

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.

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 1NT Pass
North Pass
East 3NT
South Pass

♠ 96
 ♥ 63
 ♦ KQJT3
 ♣ Q965

♠ AT2
 ♥ Q95
 ♦ A754
 ♣ K87

♠ QJ3
 ♥ AK7
 ♦ 982
 ♣ 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	2779	Dec
10	E	1NT	25	Dec
11	S	1NT, 3NT	313	Dec
12	W	1NT, 3NT	383	Dec
13	N	1NT	3	Dec
14	E	1NT	26	Dec
15	S	1NT, 3NT	29	Dec
16	W	1NT, 3NT	101	Dec
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