

Responding to a one-level suit opening bid with a weak hand and no fit

When partner opens with a one-level suit bid and you have a weak hand of 6 to 10 points with no trump fit in partner's suit, you should only make a response at the one level. Do not pass!

Your first option is to bid a suit of four or more cards at the one level. A one-level new-suit response shows 6 or more points.

For example: Partner south opens 1♦, west passes and you are north with ♠105 ♥10765 ♦43 ♣AQJ53.
Respond 1♥.

Your second option is 1NT. A 1NT response shows 6 to 10 points. You do not show a balanced hand and you may have a hand with a long suit. A 1NT response alerts partner to the fact that you don't have a fit in their suit and that you have a weak hand. Partner should be careful of taking the auction too high unless they have a strong hand of 15 or more high-card points.

For example: Partner south opens 1♠, west passes and you are north with ♠105 ♥10765 ♦43 ♣AQJ53.
Respond 1NT. Note that a response of 2♣ shows 11 or more high-card points or 10 high-card points and a strong five-card or longer suit.

If an opponent makes an overcall of partner's opening bid you should still make a response when you have 6 points and can make a bid at a low level. You should not be put off just because an opponent has bid. You might not be able to make the same bid that you would have made had an opponent not bid. You also have an extra bid available – double

D 8	N North	W N E S
	♠ AKQJ7 ♥ 1064 ♦ 108 ♣ A73	1♥ 1♠ X P 2♣ P 3♣ P P P
W West		E East
♠ 1083 ♥ AKJ95 ♦ K5 ♣ K92		♠ 642 ♥ ♦ AJ9742 ♣ QJ108
	S South	
	♠ 95 ♥ Q8732 ♦ Q63 ♣ 654	3♣ W NS: 0 EW: 0

In the above hand West opens 1♥, north overcalls 1♠ and you are east with ♠642 ♥ - ♦AJ9742 ♣QJ108. Do you (a) pass (b) double (c) bid 1NT or (d) bid 2♦?

The correct answer is (b). After both majors have been bid a double in response to partner's opening bid shows four or more cards in both minors and 6 or more points. Do not bid 1NT without a stopper in the opponent's suit and with 8 high-card points your hand is not strong enough to respond 2♦.

After your double, south passes and partner west has a difficult decision with a balanced hand and no stopper in spades. West's best bid is 2♣ even though west has only three cards in clubs. West knows east must have four or more cards in clubs.

The best contract for east-west is in clubs or diamonds, a double is a useful, descriptive bid in this situation.