



The Opening Bid, Revisited



1. Hand Evaluation:

- **High Card Points (HCP):**
 - Ace = 4 points
 - King = 3 points
 - Queen = 2 points
 - Jack = 1 point
- **Note: The Ace is undervalued in this scheme; it's worth about 4 _ points**
- **Length Points:**
 - 5-card suit = 1 point
 - 6-card suit = 2 points
 - 7-card suit = 3 points
 - etc.
- **Combine the HCP and length points to get the total value of your hand**
- **Don't count for shortness until a good trump fit (8 cards) has been found. Then you may upgrade the hand as follows:**

	<u>Declarer</u>	<u>Dummy</u>
○ Doubleton	1 point	1 point
Singleton	2 points	3 points
Void	3 points	5 points

2. Which Hands to Open:

- It is mandatory to open all hands of 14 points or more
- Open almost all 13 point hands, except when the hand contains fewer than 2 Quick Tricks
- Quick Tricks:
 - A = 1 QT
 - AK in the same suit = 2 QT
 - AQ in the same suit = 1 _ QT
 - KQ in the same suit = 1 QT
 - K = _ QT

- Examples: S: AQ52 S: AJ52
 H: KJ3 H: Q94
 D: 652 D: KJ3
 C: K84 C: Q84

Open 1 C

Pass

- You may open hands of 10, 11 or 12 points if your suits are good and the hand has at least 2 Quick Tricks. Your honors should be in your long suits

- Examples: S: A108654 S: KQ8642 S: K2
 H: 7 H: A9872 H: Q9864
 D: AQ75 D: 8 D: Q7542
 C: 82 C: 4 C: A

Open 1S

Open 1S

Pass

- Always open a hand that contains 3 Quick Tricks.

- Examples: S: A875 S: A1052
 H: 963 H: 865
 D: A104 D: 632
 C: A82 C: AK7

Open 1C

Open 1C

3. When to Open, When to Pass:

- Use good bridge judgment when deciding whether to open or not. Some factors to consider:
- High cards in combination are more valuable than separated high cards.

○ Hand A: S: AQJ10	Hand B: S: A852
H: 953	H: Q94
D: 652	D: K53
C: KQ4	C: K84
<u>Open 1 C</u>	<u>Pass</u>

- High cards in long suits are more valuable than high cards in short suits.

○ Hand A: S: 85	Hand B: S: KQ
H: AKJ864	H: 98654
D: K652	D: 7542
C: 7	C: AK
<u>Open 1 H</u>	<u>Pass</u>

- Unguarded high cards are less valuable than guarded ones. Downgrade your hand if it contains holdings like:

- K
- Q-x
- Q-J
- J-x-x

- Aces and kings are “good” points. Queens and jacks are “poor” points.

○ Hand A: S: AK10942	Hand B: S: KJ8
H: KJ2	H: QJ4
D: 63	D: KJ5
C: 76	C: Q832
<u>Open 1 S</u>	<u>Pass</u>

Hand A has good points that are well located. Hand B has poor points and is short of quick tricks.

4. 12-point Hands:

- Lots of modern players are opening all 12-point hands.
- This is recommended only if you know the difference between “good” points and “bad” points and the difference between well-placed high cards and poorly-placed high cards.
- The Easybridge! Comic Book advises its new players to open all 12-point hands. The Easybridge! students get to open the bidding more often. They also become familiar with the scores of -1100, -1400, etc., more quickly than other students.

5. The Rule of 20:

- Some experts use this Rule.
- Marty Bergen says: “Points, Shmoints! – Use the Rule of 20”
- How it works:

- Add your High Card Points and
- Add the length of your two longest suits.
- When the total is 20 or more, open the bidding.

- Example: S: 63 10 HCP
 H: AJ742 5 hearts
 D: 8 5 clubs
 C: AJ943

20 – Open 1 H

- Is it recommended? Not unless you’re able to add your judgment to the equation.
- For example, would you open the bidding with:

- S: K3 10 HCP
 H: J742 4 hearts
 D: A 6 clubs
 C: Q108743

20 – Open 1 C ??

I don’t want to open with this hand. I hope you don’t either.

- [Advanced]: Marty Bergen does recommend refinements to be made to the Rule of 20:

- Subtract one point with a singleton K, Q or J
- Subtract one point with tight KQ, KJ or QJ
- Add one point for two tens, especially when they're in combination with higher honors in the suits.

6. The Rule of 21:

- Developed by Ron Klinger. (See "When to Bid, When to Pass," 2002, Master Bridge Series)
- This is a sound refinement to the Rule of 20
- Here's how it works:
- Add your High Card Points, and
- Add the length in your two longest suits, and
- Add your Quick Tricks
- If the total is greater than 21, you have an opening bid
- With 21 or less, a pass is in order.
- Actually it should be called the Rule of 21 . With less than that, you pass.
- [Advanced}: Klinger also recommend refinements to the Rule:
 - Add point if you have a singleton or void
 - Add point for the Q in AKQ
 - Add point for J with two higher honors in the suit
 - Add point fro J10 with one higher honor in the suit
 - Subtract 1 point with a singleton K, Q, J
 - Subtract 1 point with tight QJ
- At unfavorable vulnerability (they aren't, you are), you need 22 or more to open.

○ Example:	S: AKQ3	12 HCP
	H: K104	4 spades
	D: 872	3 hearts
	C: 542	2 <u> </u> QT's
		<u>21 1/2 – Open 1 C</u>

7. What to open:

- With two 5-card suits or two 6-card suits, open the higher ranking suit

- Any 5-card suit is biddable, regardless of the quality
- Open with your longest suit. Bid a 6-card minor ahead of a 5-card major, unless it would create a severe rebid problem.
- With no 5-card suit, open the longer minor suit
- Don't open 1H or 1S in first or second seat without 5 cards in that suit (Standard American systems)
- If you hold 4-4 in the minors, open 1D. This facilitates your rebid.
- If you hold 3-3 in the minors, open 1C
- Never open a 2-card minor suit.
- Plan your rebid.

8. Popular misconceptions of the 1 Club opening bid:

- We play "short club." No, no, no. We play Standard American or 2-over-1 or whatever. We open 5-card majors or else our better minor.
- An opening bid of 1 Club is forcing. No, it's not, unless you are playing Precision system.
- I have to rebid my 5-card Club suit to tell partner I really have clubs. No, no, no. After your opening bid, you just continue describing your hand in the most natural way possible.
- You need five cards to raise a opener's minor suit. No. The truth is that when partner opens one of a minor, most of the time he has four or more cards in the suit.
 - Example: S: 6
H: J74
D: Q8764
C: KQ106
 - If partner opens 1 Club and RHO overcalls 1 Spade, you'll be missing the boat if you don't raise to 2 Clubs.

9. Third Hand Openings:

- It's good strategy to open light in third chair.

- The thinking is that fourth hand is bound to have enough to bid anyway, so you might as well get in the first blow.
- Your third hand bid should be based on a good suit, one that you want your partner to lead.

○ Hand A: S: AKJ7	Hand B: S: Q7532
H: 53	H: AKJ
D: Q1072	D: 973
C: 843	C: 95

Open 1 S

Pass

- With Hand A, you want partner to lead a spade. Open 1 Spade even if you play 5-card majors. Don't open 1 Spade with Hand B, since you really don't want a spade lead.

10. Fourth Hand Openings:

- We don't shade our strength in fourth chair.
- We only open the bidding with a good expectation of getting a plus score.
- For example, a 2 level opening bid is not weak, but rather a hand of 8-12 points and a 6-card suit. You expect to make your eight tricks if partner has an average 10-point hand.
- If you're not sure whether to open, look at your spade suit.
 - Use Pearson Points:
 - Add your High Card Points, and
 - The number of spades you hold
 - If the total is 15 or more, go ahead and open.