

What's Standard?

Using Grant Standard: Responding to 1♥ or 1♠ — by David Lindop 

This is the last of this series to be published in *Play Bridge*. The series will continue in the new *Better Bridge* publication starting in September. Previous articles in this series, the *Grant Basic* and *Grant Standard Summary Charts*, and the corresponding convention cards, can all be found under 'Articles' at www.audreygrant.com.

In this issue, we'll move on to opening bids of 1♥ and 1♠ and how to respond to them using Grant Standard.

Opening 1♥ or 1♠

Grant Standard uses the popular style of five-card majors. Not much to discuss there ... at least, in first and second position. Still, let's look at some examples.

♠ 5 With 12 high-card
♥ 9 8 7 5 3 points plus 1 point
♦ A 5 for each five-card
♣ A K J 9 4 suit, we have enough
to open. With two five-card suits we
open 1♥, the higher-ranking. The five-
card major style says nothing about
the strength of the five-card suit.

♠ K Q J 9 3 Playing five-card
♥ A majors doesn't stop
♦ 4 us from opening the
♣ A J 8 7 5 4 longest suit. Most
players would open this hand 1♣,
planning to bid and rebid spades to
show the 6-5 distribution. There are
exceptions, but we generally want to
bid the hand as naturally as possible.

♠ A Q 6 With a balanced hand,
♥ Q 9 7 5 2 the recommended
♦ K Q 4 style is to open 1NT,
♣ K 5 even with a five-card
major suit. If we open 1♥, we have
no convenient rebid after a 1♠ or
1NT response.

♠ 3 Only 10 high-card
♥ A Q 9 6 4 points. Even if we
♦ K J 10 7 3 add 1 point for
♣ 6 4 each five-card suit,
the total is only 12. Is this enough to

open in first or second position? The modern style is to be more aggressive than the '13 points to open' tradition. With borderline hands in first and second position, many players use the Rule of 20 or, more appropriately, Guideline of 20:

GUIDELINE OF 20

In first or second position, add the high-card points to the number of cards in the two longest suits. If the total is 20 or more, open; otherwise, pass.

Using the guideline, we'd open 1♥ with this hand: 10 high-card points plus 5 for hearts and 5 for diamonds gives us a total of 20.

In third and fourth position, we can open light and, occasionally, with a four-card suit. However, we'll have to leave that discussion for another time.

Responding to 1♥ or 1♠

The Summary Chart for responding to a major suit looks like this:

RESPONSES TO 1♥/1♠

new suit response: forcing
3♥/3♠: 10/11-12; invit. to game
2NT: 13+; forcing raise (Jacoby)
double jump in new suit: splinter raise

Let's see what it all means.

New Suit Forcing

It was Culbertson who popularized the concept that a new-suit response to an opening bid in a suit should be forcing, and nothing has changed since. There are exceptions — when responder passed initially or when opener's right-hand opponent bids — but, otherwise, opener is expected to bid again. Responder doesn't have to decide How High and Where the partnership belongs right away.

If partner opens 1♥, ♠ K J 7 3
we would respond 1♠ ♥ 8 5
with this hand. Although ♦ Q 9 6 2
we need a five-card ♣ 8 7 3

major suit to open the bidding, we can respond with a four-card suit. Otherwise, we'd never find a 4-4 fit!

The guideline is that we need about 6 or more points to respond. With 0-5, we can pass. Opener is showing about 13-21 points for an opening bid of 1♥ or 1♠, so we'll rarely miss a game by passing, even when opener has a maximum. On the more frequent occasions when opener doesn't have a big hand, we want to avoid getting too high.

If partner opens ♠ A Q 9 7 5
1♥, we also respond ♥ K 4
1♠ with this hand. ♦ A K J 8
Although we know ♣ 9 3
the partnership has at least enough
strength for game, there's no need to
jump since the 1♠ response is forcing.
We can show the extra strength
later. In the meantime, we want as
much room as possible to decide
Where we belong.

What about the jump shift to 2♣? As suggested by Paul Soloway, this is probably best used for three types of hands: 1) when we are sure we belong in spades; 2) when we have a strong hand and a fit for hearts; 3) when we have a strong balanced hand. Alternatively, many players prefer weak jump shifts. That's outside the scope of Grant Standard, but the point is that you rarely need the jump shift since a new suit response is forcing.

Suppose partner ♠ 9 5
opens 1♠ and we ♥ A K 10 9 5 3
have this hand. In ♦ K 6 3
Grant Standard, a ♣ 7 2
new suit at the two level shows
about 11 or more points but is not
game forcing. This hand has 10
high-card points plus 2 length points
for the six-card suit, so we respond
2♥. We aren't committed to game
but we'll probably get there anyway.

One minor point: a response of 2♥ over 1♠ shows at least a five-card suit. That's standard practice.

Requiring about 11 or more points to respond in a new suit at the two level means we follow the standard practice of occasionally responding 1♠ over 1♥ when we have a longer minor. For example, we respond 1♠ over 1♥ with this ♠ Q 9 7 3 hand because we ♥ 7 don't have enough ♦ A J 8 7 5 strength to bid 2♦. ♣ 9 7 3

The Simple Raise

Although it isn't mentioned on the chart — or the Convention Card for that matter — it's assumed we make a simple raise of opener's major to the two level with three-card or longer support and about 6-10 points.

Some authorities use 6-9 points as the guideline for raising to the two level, but most players ♠ Q 6 2 would raise 1♥ or 1♠ to ♥ Q 9 4 the two level with this 10-♦ K J 7 3 point hand. The queens ♣ Q 9 4 and balanced distribution don't make it worth bidding more.

A raise to the two level typically shows three- or four-card support. With this hand, we ♠ Q 9 6 5 would raise 1♥ to 2♥ or ♥ Q J 7 3 1♠ to 2♠. There are ♦ 6 2 only 5 high-card ♣ 10 8 5 points, but it's common practice to replace length points with dummy points when raising partner's major.

DUMMY POINTS

Void=5; singleton=3; doubleton=1

OOPS!



In the May issue, Come to the Party had an incorrect caption on this photo. Lillian Shaman is the player on the left. Emmy Lou Cahn is the player on the right.

Limit Raises

Most partnerships use the jump raise of opener's major as a limit — invitational — raise, promising four-card support and about 11-12 points, or a good 10.

If partner opens 1♠, ♠ Q 9 8 3 we would jump to 3♠ ♥ 4 with this hand. There ♦ K 9 7 2 are 8 high-card points ♣ K 9 6 2 and we can add 3 dummy points for the singleton heart. The jump raise is invitational. Opener can pass with a minimum opening bid or continue to game with a little extra.

It's usually best to have four-card support for a limit raise. With three-card support, start with a new suit. If partner opens 1♠, ♠ K 6 4 we respond 2♣ with ♥ 7 3 this hand, planning ♦ Q 9 4 to show the spade ♣ A J 8 5 3 support at the next opportunity. The advantage of this approach is that opener will be better placed to decide whether to continue to game knowing whether we have three-card or four-card support.

Jacoby 2NT

Extending the concept that a raise to the two level shows 6-10 points and a jump to the three level shows 11-12, it would seem reasonable that a raise to the four level would show 13 or more. However, it's become standard practice to use a jump raise to the four level as a preemptive bid, typically showing a weak hand with five-card or longer support. If ♠ 7 4 partner opens 1♥, ♥ K 10 7 5 3 we would jump to ♦ 5 4♥ with this hand. ♣ J 10 7 4 2

Also, a jump to the four level takes away a lot of bidding room. It becomes difficult for opener to explore slam possibilities without risking getting too high. So, the popular style is to use a jump to 2NT in response to 1♥ or 1♠ as an artificial forcing raise — the Jacoby 2NT convention.

JACOBY 2NT OVER 1♥/1♠

- four-card or longer support
- 13 or more points

Unless the partnership has some other agreement, **Jacoby 2NT no longer applies if responder is a passed hand or if there is a double or an overcall by responder's right-hand opponent.**

If partner opens 1♠, ♠ K 10 7 3 we would respond 2NT ♥ A 4 with this hand. There ♦ 9 6 2 are 12 high-card points ♣ K Q 7 5 plus 1 dummy point for the doubleton heart. We are willing to commit the partnership to at least game after partner opens 1♠.

Is there an upper limit to the strength for the 2NT response? Some partnerships prefer to limit the strength to about 16-17 points. With a stronger hand, responder starts with a jump shift, as discussed earlier.

Replying to Jacoby 2NT

The big advantage of Jacoby 2NT is that it immediately sets the trump suit and leaves plenty of room to explore for slam without risking getting beyond the game level. After the 2NT response, opener describes the distribution and strength of the opening hand as follows:

OPENER'S REBID

With shortness:

- a new suit at the three level shows a singleton or void.
- a jump to the four level in a new suit shows a good five-card side suit.

With no shortness:

- a jump to game in the major shows a minimum opening.
- 3NT shows a medium-strength hand.
- a rebid of the major at the three level shows a maximum

♠ A J 8 6 3 For example, if we ♥ 5 open 1♠ with this ♦ K J 9 4 hand and partner ♣ K 7 6 responds 2NT, we rebid 3♥ to show a singleton or void in hearts. This doesn't promise any extra strength. The next move is up to responder.

How responder uses this information will have to be left for another time and place (see PB-12).