

This series is based on *Grant Standard*, a set of conventions and agreements that are in popular use today, such as 15-17 INT openings, five-card majors, and weak two-bids. A summary chart of *Grant Standard* and the corresponding convention card can be found at www.AudreyGrant.com. The site also has *Grant Basic*, a simpler set of agreements.

Earlier articles in this series appeared in the *Bridge Bulletin* and can also be found under 'Articles' at www.AudreyGrant.com.

When the opponents have opened the bidding, one of the ways we can enter the auction is with an overcall. If we bid at the cheapest available level, we are making a *simple* overcall. However, we aren't constrained to overcall at the lowest possible level. Just as we can open the bidding at the two level or higher, we can also skip one or more levels when making an overcall.

The Jump Overcall

If we skip one level of bidding, we are making a *jump overcall*. If we skip two levels of bidding, we are making a *double jump overcall*. For example:

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♣	2♥

South's 2♥ bid is a jump overcall. A 3♥ bid by South would be a double jump overcall.

Unfortunately, the terminology is a bit confusing. Suppose East opens 1♠ instead of 1♣:

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♠	?

South would now have to bid 3♥ to make a jump overcall and 4♥ to make a double jump overcall.

To simplify things, we usually refer to any overcall that skips one or more levels of bidding as a jump overcall.

The Jump Overcall

At one time, jump overcalls were used to show hands too strong for a simple overcall. In the days of 'strong' jump overcalls, they showed about 18 or more points. In the age of 'intermediate' jump overcalls, they showed about 14-17 points and a good 6-card or longer suit.

The popular modern style is to use weak—preemptive—jump overcalls. A jump overcall shows a long suit and less than values for an opening bid.

To adopt this approach, we modify our system so we can still handle the old-fashioned strong and intermediate overcalls. We expand our range for a simple overcall to about 7-17 points. With about 18 or more points, we start with a takeout double, planning to bid our suit at the next opportunity. So, welcome to the era of the weak jump overcall.

Two-Level Jump Overcalls

A weak jump overcall to the two level shows a hand similar to that for a weak two-bid: a good six-card suit and fewer than 13 points.

Suppose we are South and the auction starts like this:

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♦	?

With this hand, we would have opened with a weak 2♠ bid if East had passed.

When East opens 1♦, we can describe the hand with a weak jump overcall of 2♠.

Why not make a simple overcall of 1♠? We could, but preemptive jump overcalls take more bidding room away from the opponents. That's usually a good idea in a competitive auction. Also, the jump overcall tells

partner what type of hand we have. That will make it easier for partner to judge whether to compete further in the auction.

Here we also have a six-card suit, but the suit is not that strong and we have much of our strength outside of the heart suit. A simple overcall of 1♥ is probably a better description of this hand.

Here we have only a five-card suit, so most players would simply overcall 1♠.

With such a good suit and no strength outside, however, there are some players who might choose to jump to 2♠ with this hand, especially at favorable vulnerability. There's no rule that you must have exactly six cards for a two-level preempt.

Three-Level Jump Overcalls

A weak jump overcall to the three level shows a hand similar to a three-level preemptive opening bid: a good seven-card suit and fewer than 13 points

Suppose we are South and the auction begins:

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♥	?

This hand is ideal for a preemptive jump overcall of 3♠. We would have opened 3♠ if East had passed, and we might as well make the same call now.

We don't have to be directly over the opener to make a weak jump overcall. Suppose the auction started:

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♥	Pass	2♥

We would still make a preemptive jump to 3♠. We would make the same bid if East responded 1NT, or 2♣, or 2♦...any time we can get into the way of the opponents.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♥	?

Here we have only a six-card suit, but some players would make a weak jump overcall of 3♣, especially if the vulnerability is favorable. Why not a simple overcall of 2♣? Because partner would expect a better hand for a simple overcall at the two level—something closer to an opening bid or better.

We are always free to exercise our judgment. If we held this hand as opener, we might bid 3♣ because we couldn't open a weak 2♣.

Higher-Level Jump Overcalls

As with opening preemptive bids, we can make a weak jump overcall at any level we want.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♦	?

With this hand, we can make a preemptive jump overcall of 4♠. A jump to the four level typically shows an eight-card suit.

♠	K Q 10 8 7 6 4 3
♥	—
♦	J 4 2
♣	7 3

Balancing Jump Overcall

Suppose we are South and the auction starts this way:

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♥	Pass	Pass	?

We are in the *balancing* position. If we pass, the auction is over. In this situation, there is no need to make a weak jump overcall. With a weak hand, we should pass and leave the opponents in their partscore. If we reopen the bidding with a weak hand, we give the opponents a chance to reconsider and bid to a better contract, perhaps a game.

So, in the *balancing position a jump overcall is intermediate, not weak*. It shows a good six-card suit or longer and at least the values for an opening bid.

With this hand, we would jump to 2♠ in the balancing position. We do

♠	A Q J 8 6 2
♥	J 7
♦	A Q 5
♣	9 2

this so that partner knows we have a good hand. In the balancing position we might bid 1♠ with a much weaker hand; if the ♠A were a low heart, for example.

With an even stronger hand, we would start with a takeout double and then bid our suit at the next opportunity.

When an Opponent Preempts

It doesn't make much sense for both sides to be preempting on the same deal. If an opponent is showing a weak hand, a jump overcall is strong:

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		2♠	?

After East's weak 2♠ opening, this hand is too strong to make a simple overcall of 3♥.

Partner might pass, and we will likely make game if partner holds as little as the ♦Q, perhaps less. So we should jump right to 4♥.

Why not start with a takeout double, planning to bid hearts next, showing a hand too strong to overcall 3♥? The trouble with this approach is that West might raise to 4♠ over our double and now we'd have to decide whether to introduce our suit at the five level.

The guideline in these situations is **don't preempt against preempts**. When an opponent preempts and you make a jump overcall, partner should assume you are bidding to make, not as a defensive measure.

Advancing Jump Overcalls

When partner makes a weak jump overcall, we are now the *advancer*. Basically, we are in the same position as responding to a preemptive opening bid. We can use a similar approach:

ADVANCING A JUMP OVERCALL

- A new suit is forcing (by an unpassed hand).
- A cuebid is forcing for one round.
- A raise to any level is a signoff and may be a further preempt.

Partner's jump overcall is pretty specific: a good six- or seven-card suit and a weak hand. As advancer, it's better to focus on tricks rather than points. You can assume partner has about five playing tricks for a jump to the two level and about six playing tricks for a jump to the three level.

With enough strength to take the partnership to game, get to game. With interest in game, bid a new suit or cuebid the opponent's suit. With no interest in game, pass with no fit. With a fit, raise to the level of the number of combined trumps as a further preemptive action.

Suppose we are South and the bidding begins:

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♦	2♠	Pass	?

With no fit and not enough tricks to take the partnership to game, we would pass with this hand.

With this hand we would raise to 4♠, expecting to make it. We have a spade trick, two heart tricks, at least one diamond trick, and perhaps a club ruff. That should bring the partnership to ten tricks.

With this hand we're not sure whether we belong in game, so we can cuebid 3♦ to get more information from partner. If partner shows a minimum by rebidding 3♠, we can pass and settle for partscore. If partner shows some interest by bidding something else, we can get to game.

With interest in game, we can bid 3♥, forcing, with this hand. With some support for hearts, partner can raise. If partner returns to 3♠, we might be best to pass.

With this hand, we don't have the tricks for a game contract, but we have a good trump fit. We can jump to 4♠ as a further preempt. ♦

♠	5
♥	A Q 7 5 3
♦	Q 9 6 2
♣	K 8 3

♠	K 8 5
♥	A K 7 2
♦	K Q 8 3
♣	9 2

♠	10 3
♥	A Q J
♦	Q J 7 3
♣	A 7 5 2

♠	4
♥	A K J 9 7 2
♦	A Q 8 3
♣	J 2

♠	Q 8 6 3
♥	8 4
♦	Q 8 7 5 2
♣	9 3