

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.

The partner of the opener is referred to as *responder*. The partner of a player who makes a takeout double — or an overcall — is referred to as the *advancer*. Why the difference? The guidelines for responding to an opening bid are different from those for replying to a takeout double. So it makes sense to distinguish between the two.

Here are the standard guidelines for advancing a takeout double:

ADVANCING A TAKEOUT DOUBLE

0-8 points	Bid at the cheapest level.
9-11 points	Jump a level (invitational).
12+ points	Get to game.

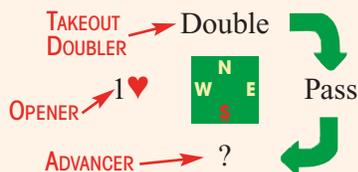
Let's take a closer look.

Take Out Takeout Doubles

The first key when partner makes a takeout double is that **we should almost never pass if our right-hand opponent passes**. The rare exception is when we want to convert partner's takeout double into a penalty double, and we'll look at that option later.

This means advancer may have to bid with no points — a big difference from responder, who can pass an opening bid of one-of-a-suit with fewer than 6 points.

Advancing a Takeout Double



Suppose we are sitting South with this hand. West opens 1♥, partner doubles, and East passes.

We must bid 1♠, even with no high cards. If we pass, West will get to play in 1♥ doubled, likely making several overtricks, since partner wants to play with any suit *except* hearts as trumps. That will be more costly than bidding.

If we bid 1♠, nothing too bad is likely to happen. Partner has promised support for spades, so we are probably in an eight-card fit. If East and West hold the majority of strength, they will usually simply continue bidding to their best spot. If partner holds a strong hand, partner should be cautious about bidding too much, knowing West has an opening bid and we might have a weak hand.

If we think this is as bad as it can get, suppose West opens with a weak two-bid or a three-level preempt:

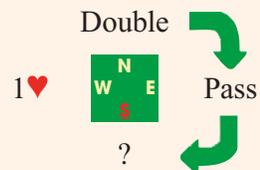


We should still be bidding spades at the cheapest level. One of the most quoted pieces of advice from Edgar Kaplan, Editor and Publisher of *THE BRIDGE WORLD* for 30 years, is "take out takeout doubles." Most partners will be sympathetic when we bid with this hand...but may be less understanding if we pass.

What if West opens 4♥ and our partner doubles? The standard agreement is that this is still a takeout double, so there's some argument for bidding 4♠.

At a high level, however, we are allowed to exercise our judgment, and we might pass, hoping it will be easier for partner to take four tricks on defense than for us to take ten or more on offense. But Edgar Kaplan would still be shaking his head.

Showing Some Values



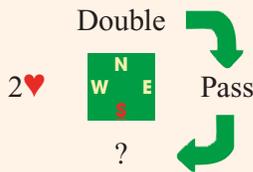
Suppose our partner doubles 1♥, right-hand opponent passes, and we have this hand.

We need to let partner know we have a little something. Otherwise partner will be worried that we hold the previous hand. So the guideline is to jump a level, to 2♠, with about 9-11 points. **A jump by advancer is invitational, not forcing**. Partner can pass with a minimum takeout double, and continue to game with a bit extra.

Notice that we bid spades rather than diamonds, even though our diamonds are better. This follows another principle in advancing a takeout double: **give preference to bidding a major suit**.

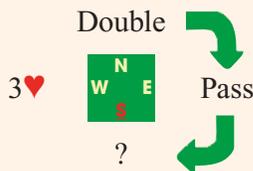
There are good reasons for this. First, it is usually cheaper; we'd have to jump to 3♦ here to show an invitational hand. Second, partner is more likely to have four-card support for an unbid major than an unbid minor. Finally, if there is enough combined strength for game, it is more likely to be in a major suit than a minor.

What if West opened the bidding with a weak two-bid?



We still jump with ♠ Q 9 7 3 about 9-11 points. We bid 3♠. We need to let partner know we have some values. Also, partner should have better than a minimum hand to bring our side into the auction at the two level or higher.

What if West opened a preempt?

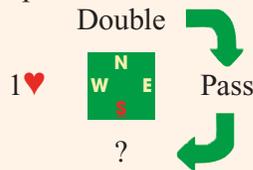


Now a jump takes us to 4♠. That's okay. Partner should have a very good hand to double at the three level.

Getting to Game

The guideline suggests that **advancer should get to game with as few as 12 points**. Why is advancer more aggressive than responder, who needs 13 points to insist on game opposite a minimum opening bid?

Experience shows we often make game opposite a takeout double with as few as 25 combined points, even in a major suit. If opener has 13 points, doubler has 13 points, and advancer has 12 points, there's little left for responder. Opener won't get much help on defense, and declarer can virtually 'see' any missing high cards in opener's hand.



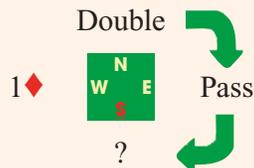
With 11 high-card points plus 1 length point for the five-card spade suit, jump to 4♠ after partner's takeout double. If partner has a holding such as the ♦A-Q, for example, the ♦K is likely to be with West, the opener, so our finesse will work. If we are missing

the ♠Q, we can be fairly certain where it lies — with opener.

We can still exercise some judgment. This hand also has 11 high-card points plus a length point. However, the ♥Q is of dubious value opposite partner's likely shortness in hearts, so we should probably pull in a notch and make an invitational jump to 2♠.

Advancer's Forcing Bid

When advancer is unsure **HOW HIGH** or **WHERE** the partnership belongs, advancer needs a forcing bid to get more information. Since a new suit bid by advancer is non-forcing, and even a jump is merely invitational, **advancer's only forcing bid is a cuebid of the opponents' suit.**



Holding 13 points, we know the partnership belongs in game, but we don't want to jump to 4♥ or 4♠ and possibly land in a 4-3 fit. Partner doesn't guarantee four-card support for any unbid major. To help find the right contract, we can start by cuebidding the opponents' suit, 2♦.

If partner bids 2♥, we can jump to 4♥; if partner bids 2♠, we can bid 4♠. If partner doesn't have four cards in either major, we might end up in 3NT or 5♣.

Advancer's cuebid shows at least interest in game — an invitational hand or better. With this hand, we start with a cuebid of 2♦. If partner bids 2♥, we make an invitational raise to 3♥; if partner bids 2♠, we raise to 3♠.

The takeout doubler doesn't need to jump to show extra values when advancer cuebids, because **a cuebid by advancer promises another bid, unless advancer passed originally.** Doubler can bid naturally, and show the extra strength later.

However, suppose the auction begins this way:

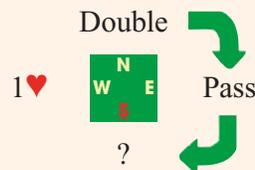
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			Pass
1♦	Double	Pass	2♦
Pass	?		

Now the advancer, South, passed initially and can have at best an invitational hand for the 2♦ cuebid. With extra values, North would need to jump, or make a further forcing cuebid of 3♦, because South doesn't promise another bid.

Advancing in Notrump

A takeout double asks advancer to bid an unbid suit. Doubler is usually short in the opponents' suit. **Advancer should suggest notrump only with a strong holding in the opponents' suit and no better alternative.**

ADVANCING IN NOTRUMP	
6-10 points	Bid at the cheapest level.
11-12 points	Jump a level (invitational).
13+ points	Get to game.



This hand has a strong holding in the opponents' suit, so an advance of 1NT seems more appropriate than a bid of 2♣.

With this hand, we would make an invitational jump to 2NT as advancer, showing about 11-12 points.

This hand is too weak to advance to 1NT, and the heart holding is tenuous. So the best choice is to bid 1♠, treating the spades as a four-card suit. Partner would expect a better hand if we bid 1NT. Also, partner will move cautiously if we bid 1♠, showing 0-8 points. ♦