

# Lesson 1

## Preemptive Opening Bids

# Lesson One: Preemptive Opening Bids

## Preparation

- On Each Table:** BETTER BRIDGE GUIDE CARD (see Appendix); Bidding Boxes; pencils; deck of COLOR-CODED CARDS.
- At Registration Desk:** Textbooks (BRIDGE BASICS 2 – COMPETITIVE BIDDING); Name Tags.
- Class Organization:** Arrange the students with (ideally) four people at each table.
- Teacher Tools:** BRIDGE BASICS 2 – TEACHERS’ MANUAL; microphone.

## Content

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## A note to the teacher

The success of these lesson plans depends on the teacher reading **Important Notes for Teaching This Course**. There is information about using the “cards on the table” method that applies to every lesson. There are tips on how to adapt the lesson plans depending on the experience and skill level of the class. The material is useful for players with a wide range of ability.

The concepts introduced in Lesson One are:

- The concept of preemptive bidding
- Scoring: vulnerability, penalties
- Preemptive opening bids at the three level or higher
- Responding to preemptive opening bids
- Preemptive opening bids at the two level (weak two-bids)
- Responding to weak two-bids
- Review of Declarer’s Plan


The lesson plans are like a script – the teacher/presenter is the actor bringing life to the words through a positive, energetic, professional, well-paced lesson.

A reminder: The italics are notes to the teacher.

- Information in point form is the bridge theory the teacher presents to the class.

**The boxes contain instructions given to the class.**

Textbook references are shaded.

 This graphic indicates a **key point**.




This graphic indicates that the students could be discussing the question among themselves.

Q./A. Questions are posed in a Socratic style while presenting the material. The key is to avoid naming anyone in particular to give a response. Students can discuss a point for a few minutes. Usually, the class answers all at once. This is important to give an opportunity for “Energy” (see STEAM in the introduction).

## **Lesson Introduction**

*Briefly (re)introduce yourself.*

*Start the lesson on time, with a brief introduction such as the following:*

- In this series of lessons, we're going to look at what happens when both sides are competing for the contract.
  - It's an exciting aspect of the game, so let's get started.
-  • During this series, unless you volunteer, I won't ask you to answer a question. So, relax – and don't be afraid to look at me.

## Exercise One – The Preemptive Opening Bid

### Teachers' Key Point

- To review hand valuation, focusing on high-card points
- To introduce hand valuation based on 'trick-taking' ability.

*Student Textbook Reference: pages 1-2.*

### Opening Remarks

- We're going to look at two hands which, at first glance, appear to have nothing in common. Yet a closer look will reveal that there is a similarity – and that will become a key to how we think about competitive bidding.

### Group Activity

Take the cards and sort them into suits. Each player take one suit.

Construct the following hand in front of East.

EAST	
♠	x x x
♥	A K
♦	A K x x
♣	A K x x

Make sure you have read the sections on constructing hands in **Important Notes for Teaching This Course**. To effectively have the participants construct and modify hands requires highly developed skills.

**Q. How many high-card points are in the East hand?**

A. 21.

- An ace is worth 4 points, a king 3, a queen 2, and a jack 1.
- There are 7 high-card points in hearts – 4 for the ♥A and 3 for the ♥K.
- There are also 7 high-card points in diamonds and in clubs for a total of 21.

**Q. How many high-card points are in the remaining three hands?**

A. 19.

- There are 40 high-card points in the deck, 10 in each suit.  $40 - 21 = 19$ .

**Q. Does East expect to win the auction?**

A. Yes.

- East has the majority of the high cards. Even if West has 0 points, East-West have more high-card points than North-South.

- If the remaining high cards are approximately evenly divided among the other three hands, West should hold about 6 or 7 points, giving East-West a combined total of 27 or 28 points.
- A partnership needs only about 25 or 26 combined points for a reasonable chance to make a game contract, so East can expect the partnership is headed for game unless West has a very weak hand.

**Q. Does East expect to make whatever contract the partnership reaches?**

A. Yes.

- This is a strong hand.

**Q. If North-South outbid East-West during the auction, does East expect to defeat them?**

A. Yes, probably.

- East can expect to take at least 6 tricks on defense unless the North-South hands are very distributional – with singletons or voids.
- West may contribute one or more defensive tricks.

**Q. How many playing tricks does East have?**

A. 6.



- A **playing trick** is one that we expect to take during the play if our side wins the auction in our choice of trump suit or notrump.
- East expects to win at least six tricks: the ♥A-K, the ♦A-K, and ♣A-K.

**Pick up your suit from the East hand.**

**Construct the following hand in front of North.**

NORTH	
♠	K Q J 10 9 8 7
♥	x
♦	x x x
♣	x x

**Q. How many high-card points does North have?**

A. 6.

- 3 points for the ♠K, 2 points for the ♠Q, and 1 point for the ♠J.

**Q. How many high-card points are in the remaining three hands?**

A. 34.

- There are a total of 40 high-card points in the deck.  $40 - 6 = 34$ .

**Q. Does North expect to win the auction?**

A. Unlikely.

- If the remaining 34 high-card points are approximately evenly divided among the other three players, South would hold about 11 or 12 points, giving North-South a total of 17 or 18 high-card points.
- That would leave East-West with about 22 or 23 points, the majority of the high-card strength.

**Q. Does North expect to make the contract if North and South do win the auction?**

A. Unlikely.

- Unless South has a strong hand, East and West are likely to have enough high-card strength to defeat any contract that North-South reach.

**Q. If East and West win the auction, does North expect to defeat the contract?**

A. Unlikely.

- North doesn't have a single sure trick to contribute on defense.
- Even if North can promote spade winners by driving out the ♠A, North can't regain the lead to take the winners.

**Q. How many playing tricks does North have?**

A. Six.

- With this hand, North-South would want to make spades the trump suit.
- Once the ♠A is driven out, North's six remaining spades are all winners.

**Q. What does this hand have in common with the East hand we constructed?**

A. Both have six playing tricks.

- Since bridge is a trick-taking game, the fact that this hand has as many playing tricks as a hand with 21 high-card points is an important concept.
- We would like to compete for the contract with this hand as much as we would want to compete with the 21-point hand.

**Q. If North were the dealer, could North open the bidding with 1♠ with this hand?**

A. No.

- An opening bid of 1♠ would promise a hand worth about 13 or more points.
- This hand is only worth 9 points: 6 high-card points plus 3 length points for the seven-card suit.
- Partner would expect more strength if we were to open 1♠ and we might get the partnership too high on the Bidding Ladder.

### **Preemptive Opening Bids**

- We'd like to compete for the contract with this type of hand, where we have a long suit worth lots of playing tricks but less than the values for an opening bid at the one level.
  - To take advantage of such hands, we can make a **preemptive opening bid** at the three-level, 3♠!
  - We're going to look at the guidelines for preemptive opening bids in more detail later.
- For now, it's enough to know that an opening bid of 3♣, 3♦, 3♥, or 3♠ shows:



- A good seven-card suit and ...
- Fewer than 13 points.

*If a student asks why the three level is used and not the two level, mention that opening bids at the two level will be discussed later.*

- One of the advantages of a three-level preemptive opening bid is that it is descriptive. It tells partner that we have a good seven-card suit with about six playing tricks provided our suit becomes the trump suit, but we also have less than the values for an opening bid at the one level.
- At the same time, a preemptive opening bid also makes it difficult for the opponents to reach their best contract if they have the majority of the strength.

**Pick up your suit from the North hand.**

**North, take the 3♠ bid from the Bidding Box and put it in front of you.**

**Construct the following hand in front of East.**

**NORTH**

**3♠**

**EAST**

♠ x x

♥ A K x x x

♦ A J x x

♣ Q x

- We can see that North's 3♠ opening bid creates a challenge for East.
- East is going to have to make a bidding decision at the three level or higher.
- Talk among yourselves and decide what call East might make.



*There will be three different answers: Pass, 4♥, or Double. If this course is being given right after Bridge Basics 1, they will choose between Pass and 4♥.*

**Q. What is East's best call?**

A. It's unclear.

- S. J. Simon, over fifty years ago, in his book WHY YOU LOSE AT BRIDGE, gave advice that is relevant today:

“It's a paradox that the secret of satisfactory defense against nuisance (preemptive) bids is that there isn't one.”

- He says this about East's decision:

“No getting away from it. You are in a spot. You can bid 4♥ and you may come an unholy cropper or you can pass and perhaps miss a slam. Whatever you do, you may get a filthy result. The point to realize is this: Abandon all hope of a scientifically reached par result.”

- What would gold medalist – and Bill Gate's coach - Fred Gitelman bid with this hand?

“4♥ is certainly a dangerous overbid, but you gotta do what you gotta do! If I pass, I can't depend on my partner to come into the auction on a lot of hands where 4♥ is a good spot.”



- Henry Francis, Hall of Fame member and editor of THE OFFICIAL ENCYCLOPEDIA OF BRIDGE, has this to say:

“Pass. 4♥ is too unilateral. Partner still has a bid coming.”

*If you're giving this course to an experienced group, you could mention that Shawn Quinn, one of the world's top-ranked female players, and Andrew Robson, European and North American Champion, chose to double.*

- S. J. Simon made a good point. There is no clear call after an obstructive 3♠ opening. It's a matter of opinion.

## Observations

- Bridge is a trick-taking game, so it seems reasonable that hands with a good source of playing tricks should be able to compete for the contract.
- An opening bid at the three level in a suit is a preemptive opening bid. It shows a hand with less than the values for an opening bid at the one level but a long suit with a lot of playing tricks.
- The advantage of a preemptive opening bid is that it is both constructive – describing the hand to partner – and obstructive – interfering with the opponents' bidding.

## Closing Instructions

**Pick up all the bids and put them back in the Bidding Boxes. Pick up your suit from the East hand. Each player has one suit.**

## Exercise Two – Deal #1: A Preemptive Opening Bid in Action

### 👉 Teachers' Key Point

- To let the students experience, without interference from the instructor, the obstructive nature of a preemptive opening bid.

*Student Textbook Reference: Deal #1: pages 34-35.*

### Opening Remarks

- We're going to play a deal that puts us into the middle of a competitive auction.

### Group Activity

Distribute the **COLOR-CODED CARDS** for Deal #1. The players turn their 13 cards face down and distribute them according to color, following the Guide Card in the middle of the table.

Refer to the Introduction for notes on instructing the students on how to use the **COLOR-CODED CARDS**.

<p>DEAL: 1 DEALER: NORTH VUL: NONE</p>	<p><b>NORTH</b> ♠ K Q J 10 9 8 7 ♥ 10 5 ♦ 6 3 ♣ 8 6</p>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">WEST</td> <td style="width: 25%;">NORTH</td> <td style="width: 25%;">EAST</td> <td style="width: 25%;">SOUTH</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♠ 6 3</td> <td>3♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♥ A K 7 2</td> <td>Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>♦ 8 5 4 2</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>♣ A Q 2</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	♠ 6 3	3♠	Pass	Pass	♥ A K 7 2	Pass			♦ 8 5 4 2				♣ A Q 2			
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH																			
♠ 6 3	3♠	Pass	Pass																			
♥ A K 7 2	Pass																					
♦ 8 5 4 2																						
♣ A Q 2																						
<p><b>WEST</b> ♠ 6 3 ♥ A K 7 2 ♦ 8 5 4 2 ♣ A Q 2</p>	<p><b>EAST</b> ♠ A 5 2 ♥ 9 6 3 ♦ <span style="border: 1px solid red; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px;">K</span> Q J 10 ♣ K 5 3</p>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td>DECLARER:</td> <td>North</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CONTRACT:</td> <td>3♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>OPENING LEAD:</td> <td>♦K by East</td> </tr> </table>	DECLARER:	North	CONTRACT:	3♠	OPENING LEAD:	♦K by East														
DECLARER:	North																					
CONTRACT:	3♠																					
OPENING LEAD:	♦K by East																					
	<p><b>SOUTH</b> ♠ 4 ♥ Q J 8 4 ♦ A 9 7 ♣ J 10 9 7 4</p>																					

**Bid and play Deal #1. North is the dealer. You have 7½ minutes to play as many cards as you can.**

**If you finish before that time, turn all four hands face up, dummy style, and discuss the deal with the others at your table. You can consider the best contract for both sides and how the auction should go.**

*After 7½ minutes give the following instructions:*

**It's time to look at the deal so, even if you haven't completed the play, turn your hand face up and arrange it dummy style in front of you.**

**All 52 cards should be face up on the table, arranged neatly in columns, dummy style, in front of each player.**

*This format will be the same for all the deals, but these directions won't be repeated in the Manual.*

### **The Bidding**

**Focus on the North hand - North is the dealer.**

**Q. What opening bid could North choose to make?**

**A. 3♠.**

- North has only 6 high-card points plus 3 length points for the six-card suit. The total of 9 points is not enough to open the bidding at the one level.
- However, North has a good seven-card suit, worth six playing tricks.

**Focus on the East hand.**

**Q. If East were the dealer, what would East bid?**

**A. 1♦.**

- East has 13 high-card points, enough to open the bidding at the one level.
- With no five-card major suit, East would open the longer minor suit, 1♦.

**Q. What would East do after North opens 3♠?**

A. Pass?

- East doesn't want to bid 4♦, starting the auction for East-West at the four level and contracting for 10 tricks.
- We'll look at other options for East later in the course, but it would be reasonable for East to simply pass, perhaps hoping to defeat North's 3♠ contract.

*Students taking the course directly after Bridge Basics 1 are not yet familiar with the double. Even if they were, it isn't clear to take any action with the East hand.*

**Focus on the South hand.**

**Q. What does South know about North's hand?**

A. Weak with a good seven-card suit.

**Q. Does South have a better contract to suggest?**

A. No.

- South has only one spade, but North is describing a hand with a seven-card suit, so the partnership has an eight-card fit.

**Q. What call should South make?**

A. Pass.

**Focus on the West hand.**

**Q. If West were the dealer, what would West bid?**

A. 1♦.

- West has 13 high-card points, enough to open the bidding at the one level.

**Q. What would West do after North opens the bidding 3♠ and East and South pass?**

A. Pass?

- West is in an uncomfortable spot. There isn't a clear right answer.
- Even the experts would have different opinions.

*Again, the students might not be familiar with the double. West could make a takeout double with this hand, but it's not clear cut and it's uncertain how the East-West auction might go thereafter.*

## The Play

- Let's see what happens if North plays in a contract of 3♠.

East and West, turn your hands face down.

North, keep the order of your suits intact. South, place your suits, dummy style, opposite North's suits: spades opposite spades; hearts opposite hearts; etc.

East, lead the ♦K.

Only 27 cards are face up on the table ... the North and South hands and East's lead. Focus on the North-South hands.

NORTH (Declarer)	
♠ K Q J 10 9 8 7	
♥ 10 5	
♦ 6 3	
♣ 8 6	
WEST	EAST
	♦K
SOUTH (Dummy)	
♠ 4	
♥ Q J 8 4	
♦ A 9 7	
♣ J 10 9 7 4	

- Let's count the playing tricks North will take with spades as the trump suit.

Spades	6 – after the ♠A is driven out
Hearts	0
Diamonds	1
Clubs	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>

**Q. The 3♠ contract will be defeated two tricks. Is this a bad result for North-South?**

A. Not necessarily.

- East-West will score points for defeating the 3♠ contract.
- However, East-West might have scored even more points if they were able to play in their best contract.
- Let's see what contract East-West might reach if North had passed instead of opening 3♠.

North and South, turn your hands face down. East and West, turn your hands face up.

South, lead the ♠4.

Only 27 cards are face up on the table ... the East and West hands and South's lead. Focus on the East-West hands.

NORTH	
WEST	EAST
♠ 6 3	♠ A 5 2
♥ A K 7 2	♥ 9 6 3
♦ 8 5 4 2	♦ K Q J 10
♣ A Q 2	♣ K 5 3
SOUTH	
♠4	

- Let's count the playing tricks in the combined hands.

Spades	1
Hearts	2
Diamonds	3 – After the ♦ A is driven out.
Clubs	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>

**Q. What game contract could East-West make?**

A. 3NT.

- A game contract of 3NT requires nine tricks.

**Q. If North had passed, what would East bid?**

A. 1♦.

- With 13 high-card points and no five-card major suit, East opens the longer minor suit.

**Q. What would West respond?**

A. 1♥.

- West can bid a four-card or longer suit at the one level.
- The 1♥ response – a new suit – is forcing. East must bid again.

**Q. What would East rebid?**

A. 1NT.

- With a balanced hand, East could rebid 1NT.

**Q. What would West rebid?**

A. 3NT.

- West has 13 high-card points and East has also promised 13 points. West knows **HOW HIGH**, game.
- The partnership doesn't have an eight-card or longer major suit fit, so West also knows **WHERE**, notrump.



*It's a good idea to have the class play 3NT with East as the declarer. They can then experience why North doesn't take many spade tricks. (There's no need to discuss the value of holding up with the ♠A on this deal. That's a concept that can be left until Bridge Basics 3.)*

## Observations

- East and West could bid and make a game contract of 3NT on this deal.
- If North and South win the auction in 3♠, they will be defeated two tricks.
- Which is the better result for North-South? To answer this question, we need to take a closer look at how the game is scored.

## Closing Instructions

**Turn all the cards face up. South, West, and East place your cards on top of the corresponding suit in the North hand. Each player then take all 13 cards in your suit and turn them face down on the table, ready to use after we discuss scoring.**

## Exercise Three – Scoring

### Teachers' Key Point

- To show how the scoring impacts competitive bidding decisions.
- To introduce the terms vulnerability and double.

*Student Textbook Reference: pages 3-5.*

### Opening Remarks

- There are both advantages and risks in making a preemptive bid. North's 3♠ opening on the previous deal made it difficult for East-West to reach their best contract of 3NT. However, North was defeated two tricks in the 3♠ contract. Was the opening preemptive bid effective? The answer lies in understanding how the game is scored.

### Group Activity

- Points are scored in three ways:
  - **Trick score** – points are awarded for the tricks taken when we make our contract.
  - **Bonuses** – extra points are awarded for bidding and making various contracts, such as a game contract of 3NT.
  - **Penalties** – points are awarded for defeating the opponents' contract.
- The exact bonuses that are awarded depend on the format in which the game is played and scored: duplicate bridge, rubber or social bridge, or Chicago. There are details about the differences in Appendix 1 of the textbook. For our purposes, we will focus on duplicate bridge scoring.

### Trick Score

**Look at the section on Trick Score on page 4 of the textbook.**

- Minor suit contracts – clubs and diamonds – are worth 20 points per trick.
- Major suit contracts – hearts and spades – are worth 30 points per trick.
- Notrump contracts are worth 40 points for the first trick and 30 points for each subsequent trick.
- We get the trick score for the tricks we bid, not the number of tricks we actually have to take to make the contract. The first six tricks – the book – don't count in the trick score.
- A contract of 1♦ is worth 20 points.
- We have to take seven tricks to make 1♦ but we only get the trick score for the 'one' that we bid. The first six tricks don't count toward the trick score.
- A contract of 2♠ is worth 60 (30 + 30) points.
- A contract of 3NT is worth 100 points (40 + 30 + 30).



## Game

- A total trick score of 100 or more points is a **game**.
- So, a contract of 3NT is a game contract ( $40 + 30 + 30 = 100$ ).
- A contract of 4♥ or 4♠ is worth 120 points ( $30 + 30 + 30 + 30$ ).
- A contract of 5♣ or 5♦ is worth 100 points ( $20 + 20 + 20 + 20 + 20$ ).

## Vulnerability

- One factor that affects bonuses and penalties is **vulnerability**.
- A partnership can be **non vulnerable** or **vulnerable**.
- How vulnerability is assigned depends on the format of the game. In duplicate bridge, vulnerability is assigned on each deal.
- The key point about vulnerability is that bonuses and penalties are higher when we are vulnerable than when we are non vulnerable.

*If you have duplicate boards available, you can show the students how the vulnerability is marked on each board.*

## Bonuses

**Look at the section on Bonuses on page 4 of the textbook.**

- The bonus for bidding and making a non vulnerable game contract is 300 points.
- The bonus for making a vulnerable game is 500 points.
- The bonus for making a **partscore** – a contract with a trick value of less than 100 points – is 50 points. It doesn't depend on vulnerability.
- The total score – trick score plus bonus – for bidding and making a contract of 3NT when the partnership is non vulnerable is 400.
  - The trick score is 100 ( $40 + 30 + 30$ ).
  - The non vulnerable game bonus is 300 points.
- The score for bidding and making 4♥ when vulnerable is 620.
  - The trick score is 120 ( $30 + 30 + 30 + 30$ ).
  - The vulnerable game bonus is 500 points.
- If we took ten tricks in a vulnerable 3♥ contract we would get 170 points.
  - The trick score for 3♥ is 90 ( $30 + 30 + 30$ ).
  - We only get a partscore bonus of 50 points since we did not bid to a game contract.
  - The extra trick is called an **overtrick** and we simply get the trick value of 30 points added to the total score.

## The Double

- Another factor that can affect the size of bonuses and, more importantly, the size of penalties is the **penalty double**.
- The side that doesn't win the auction can double the contract if it feels that declarer can't make the required number of tricks.
- ☞ • We'll discuss the double in more detail later. For now, the key point is that double can dramatically affect the size of the penalty if the contract is defeated.

## Penalties

**Look at the section on Penalty Points on page 5 of the textbook.**

- The penalty awarded for defeating a contract depends on both the vulnerability and whether the contract is doubled.
- If we are not doubled, the penalty is 50 points per trick if our side is non vulnerable and 100 points per trick if we are vulnerable.
- If we are doubled and defeated, we could lose a lot – it happens on occasion to the best players in the world!

## **Observations**

- Let's see how all this information about scoring impacts North's decision to open with a preemptive bid of 3♠ on Deal #1.
- Let's assume that both sides are non vulnerable.
- The penalty for North being defeated two tricks non vulnerable and undoubled is 100.
  - The penalty is 50 points per trick when non vulnerable and undoubled.
  - East-West would get 100 points for defeating the contract two tricks.
- If East-West bid and made a non vulnerable contract of 3NT, they would get 400 points.
  - The trick score would be 100 points (40 + 30 + 30).
  - The bonus for bidding and making a non vulnerable game is 300 points.

**Q. Would North's preemptive opening bid of 3♠ have been successful if that was the final contract?**

A. Yes.

- North-South would have lost only 100 points instead of 400 points.

**Q. Looking at the table at the bottom of page 5, would North's 3♠ bid still have been successful if it had been doubled for penalty by East-West?**

A. Yes.

- East-West would receive a penalty of 300 points (100 + 200) for defeating 3♠ by two tricks non vulnerable.
- North-South would have lost only 300 points instead of 400 points for letting East-West bid and make their 3NT contract.



- In conclusion, preemptive bids can be effective, even if we are defeated ... provided we know how much we can afford to lose in comparison to the value of the opponents' potential contract.
- The textbook has exercises which can be used to practice scoring. For now, we'll simply look at preemptive bidding from the general perspective of how the game is scored.

### **Closing Instructions**

**Each player should have one suit.**

## Exercise Four – The Theory of Preempts and the Guideline of 500

### Teachers' Key Point

- Briefly discuss the theory of preempts and the Guideline of 500 and the Rule of Two and Three.


*Student Textbook Reference: page 6.*

### Opening Remarks

- The rationale behind a preemptive opening bid is that we are expecting to be defeated – unless partner has a strong hand – but are hoping the penalty will be less than the value of the potential contract the opponents could make.
- Deliberately **overbidding** is referred to as a **sacrifice**. We are willing to sacrifice a few penalty points in exchange for the larger score the opponents would get for bidding and making their game, or even slam, contract.
- However, we don't want to be penalized for more than the value of the opponents' potential contract.
- Let's see how this works for a preemptive opening bid at the three level.

### Group Activity

- The total score for bidding and making a non vulnerable 3NT game is 400.
  - The trick score is 100 points (40 + 30 +30).
  - The non vulnerable game bonus is 300 points.
- The score for bidding and making a vulnerable 3NT game is 600.
  - The trick score is 100 points (40 + 30 +30).
  - The vulnerable game bonus is 500 points.

-  So, **the value of a game contract is approximately 500 points.**
- We can assume that, if we can't make our contract, the opponents can likely make a game contract.
- So, we are willing to sacrifice up to 500 points to prevent the opponents from reaching their game contract, but we don't want to sacrifice more than 500 points.
- This is referred to as the **Guideline of 500** ... or, less accurately, the **Rule of 500**.
- How do we know how many tricks we can take? Let's go back to the North hand from Deal #1.

**Construct the following hand in front of North.**

NORTH							
♠	K	Q	J	10	9	8	7
♥	x	x					
♦	x	x					
♣	x	x					

**Q. How many playing tricks does North have?**

A. Six.

- Once the ♠A is driven out, North will have six promoted winners with spades as the trump suit.

**Q. Suppose North is non vulnerable. Is it safe to open with a preemptive bid of 3♠?**

A. Yes.

- If the opponents double 3♠ for penalty, they will get at most 500 points (100 + 200 + 200).
- So, the hand falls within the Guideline of 500.

## Observations

- The theory behind opening a preemptive bid with this type of hand is that we have a lot to gain and very little to lose.
- At worst, we break even, when the opponents double and collect a penalty approximately equal to the value of the contract they could make.
- At best, the opponents will misjudge what to do:
  - They may be unable to double for penalty ... as on Deal #1.
  - They may not be able to defeat our contract if partner can provide some tricks.
  - Since we have taken away a lot of bidding room, they may bid too much or too little and finish in the wrong contract.
- The Guideline of 500 is sometimes referred to as the **Rule of Two and Three**, since we can generally afford to overbid by two tricks when vulnerable and three tricks when non vulnerable. The penalty in both cases would be 500 points if we were doubled.

## Closing Instructions

**Leave the North hand face up on the table for the next exercise.**


## Exercise Five – A Practical Guideline for Three-Level Preemptive Openings

### Teachers' Key Point

- Introduce a more straightforward guideline for preemptive opening bids.

*Student Textbook Reference: pages 7-9.*

### Opening Remarks

- The Guideline of 500 is the general idea behind preemptive opening bids but, in practice, it's a challenge to apply.
- It isn't always easy to estimate the number of playing tricks we have or to take into account factors such as vulnerability.
-  • Instead, most players use a more straightforward guideline to decide whether to open a preemptive bid at the three level:
  - **A long suit** – usually a seven-card suit with two of the top three or three of the top five cards in the suit.
  - **A weak hand** – less than the values for an opening bid at the one level.
- Let's take a closer look.

### Group Activity

Look at the hand in front of North.

NORTH	
♠	K Q J 10 9 8 7
♥	x x
♦	x x
♣	x x

*If necessary, have the students construct the hand.*

**Q. Does this hand meet the straightforward guideline for a preemptive opening bid of 3♠?**

A. Yes.

- It has a good seven-card suit with two of the top three honors, the ♠K and ♠Q.
- There are only 6 high-card points plus 3 for length – less than values for an opening bid at the one level.
- With this hand, it is also easy to determine that we have exactly six playing tricks.

**Change the North hand:**

**In spades: take away the ♠Q; add the ♠A.**

**In hearts: take away a low heart.**

**In diamonds: add a low diamond.**

**NORTH**

♠ A K J 10 9 8 7

♥ x

♦ x x x

♣ x x

**Q. What would North open with this hand?**

A. 3♠.

- North has a good seven-card suit with two of the top three honors, the ♠A and ♠K.
- North has only 8 high-card points plus 3 length points, for a total of 11 – less than the values for an opening bid at the one level.

**Q. How many playing tricks does North have?**

A. Six or seven.

- North can take at least six spade tricks. After playing the ♠A and ♠K, four more tricks can be promoted by driving out the ♠Q if it has not already appeared.
- There is a good chance that North might take seven tricks with this hand. The ♠Q might fall when the ♠A and ♠K are played – if the six missing spades are divided 2-2-2 in the other three hands, for example.
- This would be a sound preemptive opening bid even if North is vulnerable. Since North is likely to take seven tricks, the penalty would be no more than 500 points – down 2 doubled and vulnerable. So it falls within the Guideline of 500.

**Change the North hand:**

**In spades: take away the ♠A; add a low spade.**

**NORTH**

♠ K J 10 9 8 7 x

♥ x

♦ x x x

♣ x x

**Q. What would North open with this hand?**

A. 3♠.

- The hand still qualifies for a preemptive opening bid at the three level.
- North has a good suit with three of the top five honors, the ♠K, ♠J, and ♠10.
- North has less than the values for an opening bid at the one level ... 4 high-card points plus 3 length points.

**Q. How many playing tricks does North have?**

A. Five?

- North should take at least five spade tricks even if South has no help in the suit. The ♠K can be used to drive out the ♠A and the ♠J can be used to drive out the ♠Q, promoting North's remaining five spades into winners.
- North might even take six spade tricks with the help of a finesse by leading a spade from the South hand. North might be able to trap the ♠Q in the West hand, for example.

You could illustrate this by laying out the missing spades with ♠Q-x in the West hand to review the concept of a finesse.

- We can see why it can become challenging to estimate the number of playing tricks in a hand. It's easier to use the guideline of a good seven-card suit and a weak hand.
- Since there might be only five playing tricks, this is the type of hand where we might want to consider the vulnerability. If our side is vulnerable, the penalty could be more than 500 points if we choose to open a preemptive 3♠ with this hand. We might choose to pass.

You can mention that the modern style is to be fairly 'liberal' about the Guideline of 500. Many of today's players would open 3♠ with this hand even when vulnerable. There's generally more to gain than to lose.

**Change the North hand:**

**In spades: take away the ♠K, ♠10, and ♠9;  
add three low spades.**

**NORTH**

♠ J 8 7 x x x x  
♥ x  
♦ x x x  
♣ x x



**Q. What would North do with this hand as the dealer?**

A. Pass.

- The hand has a seven-card suit and less than the values for an opening bid at the one level, but the suit isn't good enough for a preemptive opening bid at the three level.
- There's no guarantee of taking more than about three or four tricks with spades as the trump suit. If North were to be doubled in 3♠, the penalty could be much greater than 500 points.

**Change the North hand:**

**In spades: take away two low spades;  
add the ♠A and ♠Q.**

**In diamonds: take away two low diamonds;  
add the ♦A and ♦Q.**

**NORTH**

♠ A Q J 8 7 x x  
♥ x  
♦ A Q x  
♣ x x



**Q. What would North open with this hand?**

A. 1♠.

- There is a good seven-card suit but the hand has enough strength to open the bidding at the one level.
- There are 13 high-card points plus 3 length points for the seven-card suit.
- Preemptive opening bids describe hands unsuitable for an opening bid at the one level.



## Observations



- A three-level preemptive opening bid – 3♣, 3♦, 3♥, or 3♠ – serves two purposes.
  - It's an obstructive bid designed to make it more difficult for the opponents to enter the auction and find their best contract.
  - It's also a descriptive – constructive – bid, showing a good seven-card suit but fewer than 13 points.



- Typically, the preemptive opening bid promises about six playing tricks if the contract is played in the long suit.
- Now we'll see how responder – the preemptor's partner – uses this information to decide **HOW HIGH** and **WHERE** the partnership belongs.

## Closing Instructions

**Pick up your suit from the North hand. Each player has one suit.**

## Exercise Six – Responding to Three-Level Preemptive Openings

### Teachers' Key Point

- Responder's decision focuses on playing tricks rather than high-card points.

*Student Textbook Reference: pages 10-14.*

### Opening Remarks

- When partner opens with a preemptive bid at the three level, responder imagines about six playing tricks in partner's hand.
- Responder then focuses on the possible combined number of tricks to decide **HOW HIGH** and **WHERE** the partnership belongs.

### Group Activity

North, place the 3♠ bid in front of you.

East, place a Pass in front of you.

Construct the following hand in front of South.

NORTH		
3♠		
		EAST
		PASS
SOUTH		
♠ —		
♥ K x x x x		
♦ K Q x		
♣ A J x x x		

**Q. Approximately how many tricks does North's 3♠ opening bid show?**

A. Six.

- North could have as few as five or as many as seven tricks, but six is a reasonable assumption.

**Q. How many tricks can we contribute to the partnership?**

A. Two or three.

- The ♣A is a sure trick.
- The ♦K-Q can be used to promote a winner in that suit.
- The ♥K might produce a trick if the ♥A is favorably located.

**Q. How many combined tricks is the partnership likely to make?**

A. Eight or nine.

- North has about six tricks and South has two or three.
- That isn't enough for the partnership to make a game contract in spades.

**Q. Why should South not consider a notrump contract?**

A. It's better to play with spades as the trump suit.

- North has only promised about six playing tricks if spades is the trump suit.
- In a notrump contract, North's hand might provide no tricks at all.
- There may be no way to reach North's hand since South doesn't have a single spade to lead.
- Even if South could get to North's hand once to lead spades and establish some winners, there will no way to get back to North's hand to take those winners.
- In general, don't consider playing in notrump with no fit for partner's suit.

**Q. What call should South make?**

A. Pass.

- The partnership is already high enough – or perhaps too high – in a contract of 3♠.
- South has 13 high-card points plus 1 length point for the five-card heart suit and 1 length point for the five-card club suit. That's enough to open the bidding at the one level but, when responding to a preemptive opening bid, we focus on tricks, not points.

**Change the South hand:**

**In spades: add the ♠K, ♠Q, and a low card.**

**In diamonds: take away ♦K, ♦Q, and low card.**

**NORTH**

3♠

**EAST**

PASS

**SOUTH**

♠ K Q x

♥ K x x x x

♦ —

♣ A J x x x

**Q. What should South respond with this hand when North opens 3♠?**

A. 4♠.

- This hand has exactly the same high-card strength and distribution as the previous hand but, with the fit in spades, it is likely to provide enough tricks for the partnership to make a game.
- Both the ♠K and ♠Q are likely to provide tricks because they are in partner's long suit.
- The ♣A is a sure trick and the ♥K might provide a trick if the ♥A is favorably located.
- In addition, North should be able to trump a diamond with a low spade in the dummy – the South hand – because of the diamond void.
- So, the South hand is likely to provide four or five tricks in a spade contract, enough for the ten-trick game when North has five or six tricks.



- In general, the better the fit responder has for opener's suit, the more responder can afford to bid.
- This can even be true when responder has a weak hand ... but for a different reason.
- Let's see why.

**Change the South hand:**

**In spades: take away the ♠Q; add two low cards.**

**In hearts: take away the ♥K and two low cards.**

**In diamonds: add a low card.**

**In clubs: take away the ♣A; add two low cards.**

**NORTH**

**3♠**

**EAST**

**PASS**

**SOUTH**

**♠ K x x x**

**♥ x x**

**♦ x**

**♣ J x x x x x**

**Q. Does South expect to make game when North opens 3♠?**

A. No.

- South can expect to provide one trick with the ♠K and North may be able to ruff one or two diamonds or hearts in the South hand, but the partnership is very unlikely to have enough tricks to make 4♠.

**Q. Why might South consider bidding 4♠ anyway?**

A. As a further preemptive action.

- One reason for North's preemptive opening bid is to make it difficult for the opponents to find their best contract.
- When responder has a good fit but a weak hand, responder can raise to make it even more difficult for the opponents to reach their best contract.
- **Responder raises out of weakness rather than strength as a further preemptive action.**
- Let's see why that can be effective.



**Leave the South hand on the table and construct the following hand in front of North.**

**NORTH**

**♠ A Q J x x x x**

**♥ x x**

**♦ x x x**

**♣ x**

**SOUTH**

**♠ K x x x**

**♥ x x**

**♦ x**

**♣ J x x x x x**

- North has a reasonable 3♠ opening bid with a good seven-card suit and less than the values for an opening bid at the one level.

**Q. How many high-card points do East and West have?**

A. 29.

- North has 7 high-card points and South has 4, for a total of 11.
- There are 40 high-card points in the deck, so East and West have 29 (40 – 11).

**Q. Do East-West have enough combined strength for a game contract?**

A. Yes.

- About 25 or more points are usually enough for a game contract.

**Q. Do East-West have a suitable trump fit?**

A. Yes.

- Since North and South have only four hearts between them, East and West have a nine-card fit in hearts.
- Similarly, East and West have a nine-card fit in diamonds.
- **So, East-West should be able to make at least a game contract with hearts or diamonds as the trump suit.**
- In fact, surprising as it may seem, East-West can take at least 12 tricks with either hearts or diamonds as the trump suit – a small slam!

**Turn the North and South hands face down.**

**Shuffle the remaining 26 cards and deal them to East and West.**

**Turn the East and West hands face up, dummy style on the table.**



**Q. If East-West are in a contract with hearts as trumps, how many tricks will they make?**

A. 12 or 13.

- East and West can take at least 12 tricks with hearts as the trump suit.
- East and West could also take at least 12 tricks with diamonds as the trump suit.



- In summary, when partner opens with a preemptive bid and we have a good fit but a weak hand, consider raising out of weakness rather than strength. The opponents can certainly make at least a game contract and perhaps a slam contract – which gets them a large bonus.

**Pick up the bids and put them back in the Bidding Boxes.**

**Turn all the cards face up. South, West, and East place your cards on top of the corresponding suit in the North hand. Each player then take all 13 cards in your suit.**

**North, place the 3♦ bid in front of you.**

**East, place a Pass in front of you.**

**Construct the following hand in front of South.**

<b>NORTH</b>	
3♦	
	<b>EAST</b>
	PASS
<b>SOUTH</b>	
♠ A K J x x x	
♥ A Q J x x	
♦ x	
♣ x	

**Q. North opens 3♦ and East passes. Is it possible that North-South can make a game contract in spades or hearts?**

A. Yes.

- Although North has a seven-card diamond suit, North could still hold two or three spades or hearts and the partnership could have an eight-card major suit fit.
- When responder isn't sure **HOW HIGH** and **WHERE** the contract belongs after partner opens with a preemptive bid at the three level, responder can bid a new suit.
- **A new suit by responder below the game level is forcing** – opener must bid again.

**Q. What could South respond to get more information when North opens 3♦?**

A. 3♠.

- The response in a new suit is forcing.
- Since South is suggesting a different trump suit, knowing that North has a long diamond suit, South will typically have at least a good five-card suit and likely a six-card suit or longer. So, North can raise with two- or three-card support.
- If North doesn't like spades and rebids 4♦, South could next try 4♥, trying to get North to choose one of the major suits.
- This type of auction is rare. Responder usually passes or raises opener's suit. Responding in notrump or a new suit is unusual. However, the key point is for opener to know that a new suit by responder is forcing, if the situation does arise.

## Observations

- A three-level preemptive opening bid is very descriptive: a good seven-card suit with fewer than 13 points and typically about six playing tricks.
- Responder uses this information to decide **HOW HIGH** and **WHERE** the partnership belongs.
- With less than three-card support, responder usually passes except with enough tricks to expect to make game – about four or more tricks.
- With three-card or longer support, responder can raise for one of two reasons:
  - Expecting to make the contract or
  - Out of weakness, trying to make it even more challenging for the opponents to find their best contract.
- If responder is unsure **HOW HIGH** and **WHERE** the partnership belongs, responder can bid a new suit. A new suit – below the game level – is forcing.

## Closing Instructions

<p><b>Pick up all the bids and put them back in the Bidding Boxes. Pick up your suit from the South hand. Each player has one suit.</b></p>
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## Exercise Seven – Deal #2: Responding to a Preemptive Opening Bid

### Teachers' Key Point

- To let the students experience a preemptive opening bid and response.

*Student Textbook Reference: Deal #2: pages 36-37.*

### Opening Remarks

- We're going to play a deal that illustrates how to reach the best contract after partner opens with a preemptive bid.

### Group Activity

Distribute the **COLOR-CODED CARDS** for Deal #2.

<p>DEAL: 2 DEALER: EAST VUL: <b style="color: red;">N-S</b></p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p style="text-align: center;">WEST</p> <p>♠ A K 4 2 ♥ 9 ♦ A J 8 2 ♣ A 8 5 2</p> </div>	<p style="text-align: center;">NORTH</p> <p>♠ 9 6 5 ♥ A 6 ♦ K 10 7 5 ♣ K Q J 9</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SOUTH</p> <p>♠ <span style="border: 1px solid red; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px;">Q</span> J 10 8 ♥ 5 4 2 ♦ Q 9 4 3 ♣ 6 3</p>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">WEST</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">NORTH</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">EAST</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">SOUTH</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">4♥</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">3♥</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Pass</td> </tr> </table> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>DEALERS: East OPENING LEAD: ♠Q by South</p> </div>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	4♥	Pass	3♥	Pass			Pass	Pass
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH											
4♥	Pass	3♥	Pass											
		Pass	Pass											

Bid and play Deal #2.

*After 7½ minutes have the students turn all 52 cards face up following the instructions given for Deal #1 at the top of page 11.*

## The Bidding

**Focus on the East hand - East is the dealer.**

**Q. East and West are not vulnerable. What opening call could East choose to make?**

A. 3♥.

- East has only 6 high-card points plus 3 length points for the seven-card suit. The total of 9 points is not enough to open the bidding at the one level.
- However, East has a good seven-card suit with two of the top three honors.
- The East hand has six playing tricks with hearts as the trump suit.
- Since East-West are non vulnerable, the East hand falls within the Guideline of 500. Even if East is doubled and defeated three tricks, the penalty would be only 500 points (100 + 200 + 200).
- So, East's hand is ideal for starting with a preemptive opening bid at the three level, 3♥.

**Focus on the South hand.**

**Q. What call would South make after East opens 3♥?**

A. Pass.

- East has only 5 high-card points and no interest in entering the auction.

**Focus on the West hand.**

**Q. What does West know about East's hand?**

A. Weak with a good seven-card suit and about six playing tricks.

**Q. How many tricks can West provide?**

A. Four.

- West has four sure tricks – the ♠A, ♠K, ♦A, and ♣A.

**Q. How many combined tricks can East visualize the partnership making?**

A. Ten.

- East has six tricks and West has four tricks, for a total of ten.

**Q. **WHERE** does the partnership belong?**

A. Hearts.

- East has seven hearts and West has one. So the partnership has an eight-card major suit fit.
- Also, East's hand is only likely to provide six playing tricks if hearts is the trump suit.

**Q. What call should East make?**

A. 4♥.

- 4♥ will give the partnership a game bonus if East can make it.



**Focus on the North hand.**

**Q. What call would North have made as dealer?**

A. 1♦ (1♣).

- North has 13 high-card points, enough to open the bidding at the one level.
- With no five-card major, North would open a minor suit. With four clubs and four diamonds, the guideline is to open 1♦.

**Q. What call would North make after East opens 3♥ and West raises to 4♥?**

A. Pass.

- North doesn't have enough strength to want to enter the auction at the four level or higher.

**Focus on the East hand.**

**Q. What call would East make after West has raised to 4♥?**

A. Pass.

- East has already described the hand with the 3♥ opening bid.
- West hasn't asked for any more information, which West could have done by bidding a new suit.
- East doesn't know whether West has raised because of strength – expecting to make a game contract – or out of weakness – trying to prevent North-South from finding their best contract.



- As a general guideline, we **never bid again after making a preemptive bid unless partner makes a forcing bid**. We have already described our hand, and any further bidding is left to our partner. Partner knows what we have; we don't know what partner has.

**Focus on the South hand.**

**Q. What call does South make?**

A. Pass.

- South's pass ends the auction.

## The Play

- Let's see what happens if East plays in a contract of 4♥.

<p>North and South, turn your hands face down.</p> <p>South lead the ♠Q.</p> <p>Only 27 cards are face up on the table ... the East and West hands and South's lead. Focus on the East-West hands.</p>	<p><b>NORTH</b></p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;"><b>WEST (Dummy)</b></td> <td style="width: 50%;"><b>EAST (Declarer)</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>♠ A K 4 2</td> <td>♠ 7 3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♥ 9</td> <td>♥ K Q J 10 8 7 3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♦ A J 8 2</td> <td>♦ 6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♣ A 8 5 2</td> <td>♣ 10 7 4</td> </tr> </table> <p><b>SOUTH</b></p> <p>♠Q</p>	<b>WEST (Dummy)</b>	<b>EAST (Declarer)</b>	♠ A K 4 2	♠ 7 3	♥ 9	♥ K Q J 10 8 7 3	♦ A J 8 2	♦ 6	♣ A 8 5 2	♣ 10 7 4
<b>WEST (Dummy)</b>	<b>EAST (Declarer)</b>										
♠ A K 4 2	♠ 7 3										
♥ 9	♥ K Q J 10 8 7 3										
♦ A J 8 2	♦ 6										
♣ A 8 5 2	♣ 10 7 4										

- Let's count the playing tricks East, as declarer, will take with hearts as the trump suit.

Spades	2
Hearts	6 – After driving out the ♥A
Diamonds	1
Clubs	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>

**Q. If South leads the ♠Q, which suit should declarer play after winning a trick with one of dummy's high spades?**

A. Hearts.

- As a general guideline, declarer wants to try and draw the defenders trumps as quickly as possible unless the trumps are needed for some other purpose.

**Q. How many tricks would East-West take if West had chosen to play in a notrump contract instead of hearts?**

A. Four.

- The only sure tricks are the ♠A-K, ♦A, and ♣A.
- It would be possible to promote six heart winners in the East hand but, unless the opponents help out, there is no way for West to reach those winners after the defenders take their ♥A.

## Observations

- A preemptive opening bid can be constructive, helping responder decide **HOW HIGH** and **WHERE** the partnership belongs.
- With enough strength to consider game, responder estimates the number of combined tricks the partnership can take rather than counting the combined high-card points.
- The partnership will usually want to play with opener's long suit as trumps rather than in notrump.

## Closing Instructions

Turn all the cards face up. South, West, and East place your cards on top of the corresponding suit in the North hand. Each player then take one suit.

## Exercise Eight – The Weak Two-Bid

### Teachers' Key Point

- Introduce the concept of the weak two-bid.

*Student Textbook Reference: pages 15-16.*

### Opening Remarks

- A preemptive opening bid at the three level typically shows a seven-card suit.
- Preemptive opening bids are so effective, that the modern approach is to use them in other situations as well.

### Group Activity

**Construct the following hand in front of North.**

NORTH	
♠	x
♥	K Q J 10 9 8
♦	x x x
♣	x x x

**Q. What similarity does this hand have to the types of hands we have been discussing for three-level preemptive opening bids?**

A. A weak hand but good suit.

- There are only 6 high-card points plus 2 length points for the six-card suit. The hand is too weak to open at the one level.
- The hand has a good suit which will provide a lot of playing tricks – five – if hearts is the trump suit.

**Q. Why doesn't this hand meet the general guideline for a preemptive opening bid of 3♥?**



A. Only a six-card suit.

- A preemptive opening bid at the three level typically shows a seven-card suit.
- The danger of opening 3♥ with this hand is that it is outside the Guideline of 500.
- With only five playing tricks, North could be doubled and defeated four tricks. Even non vulnerable, that would be a penalty of 800 points (100 + 200 + 200 + 300).

**Q. If North wants to describe this type of hand, what would be a reasonable compromise between opening 1♥ - showing a stronger hand – and 3♥ - showing a longer suit?**

A. 2♥.

- The popular modern style is to treat opening bids at the two level as a “mini-preempt”, typically with a six-card suit.
- This is referred to as a **weak two-bid**.

- 
  - An opening bid of 2♦, 2♥, or 2♠ shows:
    - A good six-card suit – usually two of the top three or three of the top five cards in the suit.
    - About 5-11 points – less than the values for an opening bid at the one level.
  - The main differences between preemptive opening bids at the three level and weak two-bids are:
    - A three-level preemptive opening typically shows a seven-card suit; a weak two-bid typically shows a six-card suit.
    - A three-level preemptive opening can be made in any suit; a weak two-bid can only be made in diamonds, hearts, or spades.
- 
  - An opening bid of 2♣ is reserved for handling very strong hands of about 22 or more points. That's a topic for a future series of lessons.

**Change the North hand:**

**In hearts: take away the ♥K and ♥Q;  
add the ♥A and a low heart.**

**NORTH**

♠ x  
♥ A J 10 9 8 x  
♦ x x x  
♣ x x x

**Q. Does this hand qualify as a weak two-bid in hearts?**

A. Yes.

- North has a good heart suit – three of the top five cards in the suit.
- There are only 5 high-card points plus 2 length points for the six-card suit, but that's fine. A weak two-bid typically shows about 5-11 high-card points.

**Q. How many playing tricks does this hand have?**

A. Four/Five?

- It's challenging to estimate the number of playing tricks on a hand like this. That's why it's usually easier to follow the straightforward guideline of a good six-card suit and less than the values for an opening bid at the one level.
- North can expect to take at least four heart tricks. After taking the ♥A, the ♥J can be used to drive out the ♥Q and the ♥10 can be used to drive out the ♥K, promoting North's remaining three hearts into winners.
- It may also be possible to get five tricks from this suit with the help of the finesse ... perhaps trapping an opponent's ♥K or ♥Q.

**Change the North hand:**

**In hearts: take away the ♥10; add the ♥K.  
In diamonds: take away the three low diamonds;  
add the ♦A, ♦Q, and ♦J.**

**NORTH**

♠ x  
♥ A K J 9 8 x  
♦ A Q J  
♣ x x x

**Q. What would North open with this hand?**

A. 1♥.

- North has a good six-card heart suit but also has enough strength to open the bidding at the one level: 15 high-card points plus 2 length points for the six-card suit.

**Change the North hand:**

**In hearts: take away the ♥A, ♥K, and ♥J;  
add three low hearts.**

**In clubs: take away a low club; add the ♣Q.**

**NORTH**

♠ x  
♥ 9 8 x x x x  
♦ A Q J  
♣ Q x x

**Q. What would North open with this hand?**

A. Pass.

- North has less than the values for an opening bid at the one level: 9 high-card points plus 2 length points for the six-card suit.
- There are six hearts. However, the heart suit is very weak. There's no guarantee that this hand could take more than two or three tricks with hearts as the trump suit.
- It would be very risky to open a weak 2♥ with this hand.

**Change the North hand:**

**In hearts: take away three low hearts.**

**In diamonds: take away the ♦A; add the ♦10  
and three low diamonds.**

**NORTH**

♠ x  
♥ 9 8 x  
♦ Q J 10 x x x  
♣ Q x x

**Q. What would North's opening call be with this hand?**

A. 2♦/Pass.

- This would be a borderline weak 2♦ opening.
- North has three of the top five diamond honors and only 5 high-card points.
- However, the hand may only provide four playing tricks in diamonds once the ♦A and ♦K are driven out ... perhaps fewer if the missing diamonds are badly divided.
- With this type of hand, North should probably take the vulnerability into account.
- North should pass if vulnerable but might consider opening 2♦ when non vulnerable.

**Change the North hand:**

**In diamonds: take away the ♦Q, ♦J, and ♦10.**

**In clubs: add the ♣A, ♣10, and a low club.**

**NORTH**

♠ x  
♥ 9 8 x  
♦ x x x  
♣ A Q 10 x x x

**Q. What would North's opening call be with this hand?**

A. Pass.

- With a good six-card suit and less than the values for opening at the one level, this looks like a suitable hand for a weak two-bid.
- However, an opening bid of 2♣ is reserved for strong hands.
- So, North should probably pass since an opening bid of 3♣ would typically show a seven-card suit.

## Observations



- An opening bid of 2♦, 2♥, or 2♠ is a weak two-bid showing:
  - A good six-card suit.
  - Less than the values for an opening bid at the one level.
- An opening bid of 2♣ is not used as a preemptive opening bid. It is reserved for very strong hands.
- Since a weak two-bid is generally made with a six-card suit rather than a seven-card suit, it typically shows about one less playing trick than a three-level preemptive opening – about five playing tricks instead of six.

## Closing Instructions

**Pick up your suit from the North hand. Each player has one suit.**

## Exercise Nine – Deal #3: The Weak Two-Bid in Action

### 👉 Teachers' Key Point

- To let the students experience a preemptive opening bid and response.
- To review the ABC's of Declarer Play.

Student Textbook Reference: Deal #3: pages 38-39, and Declarer's Plan: pages 23-26.

### Opening Remarks

- Let's see how a competitive auction might go now that we know about preemptive opening bids at both the two level and the three level.

### Group Activity

Distribute the **COLOR-CODED CARDS** for Deal #3.

<p>DEAL: 3 DEALER: SOUTH VUL: E-W</p>	<p><b>NORTH</b> ♠ 10 4 ♥ A Q 7 6 ♦ A 10 8 5 ♣ K 9 3</p>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">WEST</td> <td style="width: 25%;">NORTH</td> <td style="width: 25%;">EAST</td> <td style="width: 25%;">SOUTH</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♠</td> </tr> </table>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	Pass	Pass	Pass	2♠
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH							
Pass	Pass	Pass	2♠							
<p><b>WEST</b> ♠ 3 2 ♥ K 9 4 3 ♦ K J 9 ♣ <b>Q</b> J 10 7</p>	<p><b>SOUTH</b> ♠ K Q J 9 8 6 ♥ 8 2 ♦ 6 3 ♣ 6 4 2</p>	<p><b>EAST</b> ♠ A 7 5 ♥ J 10 5 ♦ Q 7 4 2 ♣ A 8 5</p>								
		<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td>DECLARER: South</td> </tr> <tr> <td>OPENING LEAD: ♣Q by West</td> </tr> </table>	DECLARER: South	OPENING LEAD: ♣Q by West						
DECLARER: South										
OPENING LEAD: ♣Q by West										

Bid and play Deal #3.

After 7½ minutes have the students turn all 52 cards face up following the instructions given for Deal #1 at the top of page 11.



## The Bidding

**Focus on the South hand – South is the dealer.**

**Q. North and South are non vulnerable. What opening call could South choose to make?**

A. 2♠.

- South has only 6 high-card points plus 2 length points for the six-card suit. The total of 8 points is not enough to open the bidding at the one level.
- However, South has a good six-card spade suit with two of the top three honors.
- South can describe the hand by opening with a weak two-bid, 2♠.

**Focus on the West hand.**

**Q. What call does West make after South opens the bidding 2♠?**

A. Pass.

- West has 10 high-card points, not enough to compete for the contract.

**Focus on the North hand.**

**Q. Approximately how many playing tricks has South shown with the 2♠ opening?**

A. Five.

- A preemptive opening at the three level shows about six tricks; a preemptive opening at the two level shows about five playing tricks.

**Q. How many tricks can North contribute to the partnership?**

A. 2 or 3.

- North has two sure tricks, the ♥A and ♦A.
- North might get a trick with the ♥Q if the ♥K is favorably placed with West or North might get a trick with the ♣K if the ♣A is favorably placed with West.
- On balance, the North hand will probably provide about three tricks.

**Q. What call should North make as responder to the weak 2♠ bid?**

A. Pass.

- The partnership likely has a total of only seven or eight tricks. Ten tricks would be needed for the partnership to make a game contract of 4♠. North can settle for a partscore contract of 2♠.
- Looked at from the point of view of high-card points, North has 13 high-card points but South has about 5-11. The partnership won't have the combined total of 25 or 26 that is typically needed to make a game contract.
- However, opposite a preemptive opening bid, it is usually better to think in terms of tricks rather than points.

**Focus on the East hand.**

**Q. What call would East make in the auction?**

A. Pass.

- East has only 11 high-card points, not enough to consider entering the auction at the two level or higher.
- East's pass will end the auction.

### The Play

- Let's consider the play with South as declarer in a 2♠ contract.

**East and West, turn your cards face down.**

**West, lead the ♣Q.**

**Only 27 cards are face up ... the North and South hands and West's opening lead.**

**Focus on the North-South hands.**

	<b>NORTH (Dummy)</b>	
	♠ 10 4	
	♥ A Q 7 6	
	♦ A 10 8 5	
	♣ K 9 3	
<b>WEST</b>		<b>EAST</b>
♣Q		
	<b>SOUTH (Declarer)</b>	
	♠ K Q J 9 8 6	
	♥ 8 2	
	♦ 6 3	
	♣ 6 4 2	

- Declarer should always make a plan after the dummy is put down on the table.
- Let's review the ABC's of Declarer Play.

**Turn to page 23 of the textbook.**



**Q. What are the three stages of Declarer Plan?**

- **A**ssess the Situation.
- **B**rowse Declarer's Checklist to Develop Extra Tricks.
- **C**onsider the Order.



- The first stage – assessing the situation – is to consider the goal, count the sure tricks, and determine the number of extra tricks that are needed.

**Q. What is South's goal as declarer?**

A. Eight tricks.

- To make 2♠, South will have to take eight tricks.
- Let's count the sure tricks in the combined North-South hands. Sure tricks are those that can be taken without giving up the lead.

Spades	0
Hearts	1
Diamonds	1
Clubs	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>



- When declarer doesn't have enough sure tricks to make the contract, the next stage of the plan is to Browse Declarer's Checklist, looking for ways to develop extra tricks.

**Turn to page 24 of the textbook.**

**Q. What are some of the techniques we can use as declarer to develop extra tricks?**

- Promotion – driving out the opponents higher-ranking cards to develop our cards into winners.
- Length – continuing to lead a suit until the defenders have no cards left in the suit so that our remaining cards are winners.
- The Finesse – developing tricks with our high cards when the defenders hold higher-ranking cards. We'll look at some examples in a moment.
- Trumping in Dummy – using dummy's trumps to ruff one or more low cards in declarer's hand that would otherwise be lost. We'll look at an example of this later.
- Let's look at each suit in turn to see what opportunities declarer has to develop extra winners.

**Q. What technique can declarer use to develop extra winners in the spade suit?**

A. Promotion.

- The ♠A is missing but declarer has all the other high cards in the suit.
- Once the ♠A is driven out, declarer's remaining spades will be winners.

**Q. How many tricks can declarer develop in the spade suit?**

A. Five.

- Declarer will have five spade winners once the opponents' ♠A is driven out.
- Notice that this is equivalent to the five playing tricks South was counting on when opening with a weak 2♠ bid.

**Q. What technique might declarer use in the heart suit to try to develop an extra trick?**

A. The finesse.

- Declarer already has one sure trick in the heart suit but would like to make use of the ♥Q to get a second trick in the suit.

- However, the defenders have the ♥K, so simply leading the ♥Q won't work.
- The basic idea behind the finesse is to lead toward the card we hope will take a trick. In this case, declarer wants to lead a low heart from the South hand toward dummy's ♥Q.
- This will trap the ♥K if it is in the West hand.

**East and West, turn your hearts face up.**

NORTH (Dummy)	
♥ A Q 7 6	
WEST	EAST
♥ K 9 4 3	♥ J 10 5
SOUTH (Declarer)	
♥ 8 2	

**Q. If declarer leads a low heart toward dummy what can West do?**

A. Nothing.

- If West plays the ♥K, North can win with the ♥A and the ♥Q is now a winner.
- If – as is more likely – West plays a low heart, declarer finesses dummy's ♥Q and it wins the trick since East doesn't have a higher heart.
- Declarer gets two tricks from the heart suit with the help of the finesse.

**East and West, turn your hearts face down.**

**Q. Can declarer get any extra tricks from the diamond suit?**

A. No.

- Declarer has only the ♦A. The defenders have the remaining high cards in the suit.

**Q. What technique might declarer use in the club suit to try to develop an extra trick?**

A. The finesse.

- The ♣K isn't a winner since the defenders have the ♣A.
- However, declarer can try leading a low club from the South hand toward dummy's ♣K, hoping West has the ♣A. Dummy's ♣K could then be established as a winner.

**East and West, turn your clubs face up.**

NORTH (Dummy)	
♣ K 9 3	
WEST	EAST
♣ Q J 10 7	♣ A 8 5
SOUTH (Declarer)	
♣ 6 4 2	

**Q. Will the club finesse work on this hand?**

A. No.

- If South leads a low club and plays dummy's ♣K, East will win the trick with the ♣A, so declarer can't get a trick with the ♣K.
- The finesse relies on a favorable location of the opponents' high cards. Some finesses will work – as with the heart suit on this hand – and some will fail – as with the club suit on this hand.

**East and West, turn your clubs face down.**

**Q. In total, how many tricks can declarer make in the 2♠ contract?**

A. Eight.

- Declarer can promote five winners in the spade suit to go with the ♥A and ♦A.
- Together with a successful heart finesse, declarer will finish with eight winners.



- The last stage in declarer's plan is to Consider the Order in which to play the tricks.

**Turn to page 26 of the textbook.**

**Q. What are some of the considerations that might apply on this deal?**

- **Draw trumps** – declarer will want to play the spade suit as soon as possible to get rid of the defenders' trumps. That ensures that they won't be able to trump any of declarer's other winners.
- **Develop extra tricks early** – declarer will have to lose a trick to the opponents while promoting winners in the spade suit. Declarer shouldn't be afraid to do that right away since declarer's priority is to draw trumps.
- **Be in the right place at the right time** – declarer needs to lead a heart from the South hand toward dummy's ♥A-Q to take the finesse. Declarer should plan to do that when a suitable opportunity arises. Declarer doesn't want to lead the heart suit from the dummy.

## Observations

- The weak two-bid is very descriptive ... a good six-card suit with less than 13 points.
- On this deal, the opening 2♠ bid immediately got North and South to their best contract. North knew the partnership belonged in a partscore in spades.
- When playing the hand, declarer should always take the time to make a plan, following the ABCs of declarer play.

## Closing Instructions

**Turn all the cards face up. South, West, and East place your cards on top of the corresponding suit in the North hand. Each player then take one suit.**


## Exercise Ten – Responding to a Weak Two-Bid

### Teachers' Key Point

- Show how responding to weak two-bids is similar to responding to three level preemptive opening bids.
- Briefly discuss the additional options for responding to a weak two-bid.

*Student Textbook Reference: pages 17-22.*

### Opening Remarks

- Since a weak two-bid is similar to a preemptive opening bid at the three level, responder can follow the same principles when deciding what to do.
- When partner opens with a weak two-bid, responder imagines about five playing tricks in partner's hand.
-  Responder then focuses on the combined number of tricks to decide **HOW HIGH** and **WHERE** the partnership belongs.

### Group Activity

North, place the 2♠ bid front of you.

East, place a Pass in front of you.

Construct the following hand in front of South.

NORTH		
2♠		
		EAST
		PASS
SOUTH		
♠	x	
♥	K Q x x x	
♦	Q x x	
♣	K x x x	

**Q. Approximately how many tricks does North's 2♠ opening bid show?**

A. Five.

- North could have as few as four or as many as six tricks, but five is a reasonable assumption for a weak two-bid.

**Q. How many tricks can South contribute to the partnership?**

A. One or two.

- South has no sure tricks.
- The ♥K-Q should provide a trick.
- The ♦Q is unlikely to produce a trick since the opponents probably have the ♦A and ♦K.
- The ♣K might produce a trick if the ♣A is favorably located.

**Q. Will the partnership have enough combined tricks to make a game contract?**

A. No.

- Ten tricks are needed to make a game contract of 4♠.
- The partnership is likely to be too high already.

**Q. Should South consider trying to improve the contract?**

A. No.

- North's hand is only likely to produce playing tricks with spades as the trump suit.
- It's usually not a good idea to consider a notrump contract with no fit for partner's long suit. We may not be able to get to any winners in partner's hand.
- A new suit response, such as 3♥, is forcing and will take the partnership even higher on the Bidding Ladder.

**Q. What call should South make?**

A. Pass.

- The partnership is already high enough – or perhaps too high – in a contract of 2♠.
- If South passes, it's possible the opponents will enter the auction. With this hand, South would prefer to be on defense, trying to defeat any contract East-West bid.

**Change the South hand:**

**In spades: add the ♠K and a low card.**

**In diamonds: take away ♦Q and a low card.**

**In clubs: take away a low club; add the ♣A.**

**NORTH**

2♠

**EAST**

**PASS**

**SOUTH**

♠ K x x

♥ K Q x x x

♦ x

♣ A K x x

**Q. How many tricks can South expect to provide with this hand?**

A. Five or six.

- The ♠K is likely to be a trick since it is in partner's long suit.
- The ♥K-Q should provide a trick.
- The ♣A-K should provide two tricks.
- The singleton diamond should also provide one or two tricks. If North has three low diamonds, for example, North should be able to trump one or two diamonds in the South hand to gain tricks.

**Q. What should South respond with this hand when North opens 2♠?**

A. 4♠.

- The partnership should have a good chance of taking ten tricks or more.

**Change the South hand:**

**In spades: add a low spade.**

**In hearts: take away the ♥K; add a low card.**

**In clubs: take away the ♣A and ♣K; add a low card.**

**NORTH**

**2♠**

**EAST**

**PASS**

**SOUTH**

**♠ K x x x**

**♥ Q x x x x**

**♦ x**

**♣ x x x**

**Q. How many tricks can South expect to provide with this hand?**

A. Two or three.

- The ♠K is likely to be a trick since it is in partner's long suit.
- Partner may be able to trump one or two diamonds in the South hand to gain tricks.

**Q. What should South consider responding with this hand?**

A. 4♠!

- Remember, there are two reasons for raising partner's preemptive opening bid:
  - We are strong enough that we expect to make game.
  - We are weak enough that the opponents can likely make a game or a slam.
- With this hand, it's unlikely North and South can take more than one or two tricks if the opponents bid to a game contract such as 5♣ or 5♦.
- South raises to make it more difficult for the opponents to find their best contract.

**Change the South hand:**

**In spades: take away the ♠K.**

**In hearts: take away two low hearts; add the ♥A.**

**In diamonds: add the ♦Q.**

**In clubs: take away a low club; add the ♣A and ♣K.**

**NORTH**

**2♠**

**EAST**

**PASS**

**SOUTH**

**♠ x x x**

**♥ A Q x x**

**♦ Q x**

**♣ A K x x**

**Q. How many tricks can South expect to provide with this hand?**

A. Three, four, or five.

- The ♥A is a sure trick and the ♥Q might provide a trick if the ♥K is favorably located.
- The ♦Q is unlikely to be of value but if North has three diamonds, it may be possible to trump a diamond in the South hand.
- The ♣A and ♣K are two sure tricks.

**Q. What is the possibility that North-South can make a game contract?**

A. Difficult to tell.

- There may be enough tricks if North has a maximum weak two-bid ... five or six tricks and about 9-11 points.



- There may not be enough tricks if North has a minimum weak two-bid ... four or five tricks and 5-8 points.
- A response of 2NT to a weak two-bid has a special – **conventional** – meaning. It asks opener for a further description of the hand:
  - With a minimum weak two-bid, opener simply rebids the suit at the three level.
  - With a maximum weak two-bid, opener can bid a new suit to show a **feature** in that suit – such as an ace or king – or bid 3NT to show a very good suit with no outside feature.

**Q. What response could South make with this hand to help decide **HOW HIGH** and **WHERE** the partnership belongs?**

A. 2NT.

- If North shows a minimum hand by rebidding 3♠, South can pass and settle for partscore.
- If North shows a maximum weak two-bid by bidding 3♦ or 3♥, for example, South can go for the game bonus by bidding 4♠.

*If the students seem confused by this, tell them not to worry about it. They can simply guess whether to stop in partscore or go for the game bonus. Don't focus on the 2NT response, which rarely comes up.*

## Observations

- A weak two-bid is very descriptive: a good six-card suit with fewer than 13 points and typically about five playing tricks.
- Responder uses this information to decide **HOW HIGH** and **WHERE** the partnership belongs.
- With less than three-card support, responder usually passes except with enough tricks to expect to make game – about five or more tricks.
- With three-card or longer support, responder can raise for one of two reasons:
  - Expecting to make the contract or
  - Out of weakness, trying to make it even more challenging for the opponents to find their best contract.
- If responder is unsure **HOW HIGH** and **WHERE** the partnership belongs, responder can bid a new suit or use the conventional 2NT response to ask for a further description of opener's hand.

## Closing Instructions

**Pick up all the bids and put them back in the Bidding Boxes. Pick up your suit from the South hand. Each player has one suit.**

## Exercise Eleven – Deal #4: The Obstructive Value of a Weak Two-Bid

### Teachers' Key Point

- To let the students experience the obstructive nature of a preemptive opening bid.

*Student Textbook Reference: Deal #4: pages 40-41.*

### Opening Remarks

- Let's see how a preemptive opening bid can make the auction challenging for the opponents.

### Group Activity

Distribute the **COLOR-CODED CARDS** for Deal #4.

<p>DEAL: 4                      NORTH</p> <p>DEALER: WEST            ♠ 7 5</p> <p>VUL: BOTH                ♥ A 9 7 5 2</p> <p style="margin-left: 100px;">♦ A 5</p> <p style="margin-left: 100px;">♣ K 7 6 ③</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">WEST</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">♠ A K J 10 9 4</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">♥ J 8 4</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">♦ 9 4</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">♣ 10 5</p> <p style="margin-left: 100px;">SOUTH</p> <p style="margin-left: 100px;">♠ 2</p> <p style="margin-left: 100px;">♥ K Q 6 3</p> <p style="margin-left: 100px;">♦ K 8 2</p> <p style="margin-left: 100px;">♣ A Q 9 4 2</p>	<table style="width: 100%; border: 1px solid black; text-align: center;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">WEST</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">NORTH</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">EAST</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">SOUTH</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">2♠</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">4♠!</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Pass(?)</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <table style="width: 100%; border: 1px solid black; text-align: center;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">EAST</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">♠ Q 8 6 3</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">♥ 10</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">♦ Q J 10 7 3</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">♣ J 8</td> </tr> </table> <table style="width: 100%; border: 1px solid black; text-align: center;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">DECLARER: West</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">OPENING LEAD: ♣3 by North</td> </tr> </table>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	2♠	Pass	4♠!	Pass(?)	Pass	Pass			EAST	♠ Q 8 6 3	♥ 10	♦ Q J 10 7 3	♣ J 8	DECLARER: West	OPENING LEAD: ♣3 by North
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH																	
2♠	Pass	4♠!	Pass(?)																	
Pass	Pass																			
EAST																				
♠ Q 8 6 3																				
♥ 10																				
♦ Q J 10 7 3																				
♣ J 8																				
DECLARER: West																				
OPENING LEAD: ♣3 by North																				

Bid and play Deal #4.

*After 7½ minutes have the students turn all 52 cards face up following the instructions given for Deal #1 at the top of page 11.*

## The Bidding

**Focus on the West hand - West is the dealer.**

**Q. What opening call could West choose to make?**

A. 2♠.

- West has only 9 high-card points plus 2 length points for the six-card suit. The total of 11 points is not enough to open the bidding at the one level.
- However, West has a good six-card suit with the top two honors.
- The West hand has five playing tricks with spades as the trump suit and might even take six tricks if the ♠Q falls under the ♠A and ♠K ... or perhaps with the help of a finesse.
- So, West's hand is ideal for starting with a preemptive weak two-bid, 2♠.

**Focus on the North hand.**

**Q. What call would North make after West opens 2♠?**

A. Pass.

- North has 11 high-card points plus 1 length point for the five-card suit.
- That's almost enough to open the bidding at the one level but not enough to consider entering the auction at the two or three level.

**Focus on the East hand.**

**Q. What does East know about West's hand?**

A. Weak with a good six-card suit and about five playing tricks.

**Q. Can East expect the partnership to make a game contract?**

A. No.

- The ♠Q is likely to be useful since it is in West's long suit.
- The singleton heart should be useful. If West has three low hearts, for example, West should be able to trump a couple of hearts in the East hand.
- However, East can't expect the partnership to take ten tricks.

**Q. Why might East consider raising anyway?**

A. Out of weakness.

- The East hand is so weak that it is unlikely East and West can take many tricks if North and South bid to their best contract. North and South should be able to make at least a game contract and perhaps a slam.
- East can raise to make it even more difficult for North and South to enter the auction.

**Q. How high might East raise?**

A. 3♠/4♠.

- East might raise to the three level but an even more effective bid might be a jump to the four level!
- Let's see what happens if East bids 4♠.

**Focus on the South hand.**

**Q. What call is South going to make after West opens 2♠, North passes, and East jumps to 4♠?**

A. Pass? Double?

- South has 14 high-card points plus 1 length point for the five-card club suit.
- That's enough to open the bidding at the one level but now South would have to bid at the four level or higher.
- In a later lesson, we'll look at South's options with this type of hand.
- For now, we can see how difficult East-West's actions have made it for North and South to enter the auction. South can't even be sure that East has a weak hand. East might be raising to 4♠ with a strong hand, expecting to make the contract.
- Let's assume South passes for now.
- West and North also pass, ending the auction.

**The Play**

- Let's see what happens if West plays in a contract of 4♠. We'll go through the ABCs.

**North and South, turn your hands face down.**

**North, lead the ♣3.**

**Only 27 cards are face up on the table ... the East and West hands and North's lead. Focus on the East-West hands.**

<b>NORTH</b>	
♣3	
<b>WEST (Declarer)</b>	<b>EAST (Dummy)</b>
♠ A K J 10 9 4	♠ Q 8 6 3
♥ J 8 4	♥ 10
♦ 9 4	♦ Q J 10 7 6 3
♣ 10 5	♣ J 8
<b>SOUTH</b>	

- West starts by assessing the situation.

**Q. What's West's goal as declarer in a 4♠ contract?**

A. Ten tricks.

- Let's count the sure tricks.

Spades	6
Hearts	0
Diamonds	0
Clubs	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>

- When there aren't enough tricks to make the contract, the next stage of the plan is to Browse Declarer's Checklist, looking for ways to develop extra tricks.

**Q. What technique could declarer use to get extra tricks from the heart suit?**

A. Trumping in dummy.

- With more hearts in declarer's hand than in the dummy, West could plan to give up a heart trick to the defenders and then use dummy's spades to ruff the remaining two hearts.
- By trumping two hearts in the East hand, declarer will finish with a total of eight trump tricks since there will still be the six spade tricks in the West hand.

**Q. Are there any other possibilities for developing extra tricks?**

A. Diamonds.

- West might consider trying to promote winners in the diamond suit by driving out the  $\spadesuit A$  and  $\spadesuit K$ .
- That won't actually help on this hand, since the defenders will presumably take their heart winner, two diamond winners, and two club winners before West can make use of the diamond suit in dummy.
- West won't be able to take more than eight tricks.
- The last stage of the plan is to Consider the Order.

**Q. Is there anything declarer needs to consider when taking the tricks?**

A. Yes, to leave enough trumps in dummy.

- Since declarer plans to trump two hearts with dummy's trumps, declarer can't afford to take all the spade winners right away.
- West can afford to draw two rounds of trumps but must then give up a heart trick – if the defenders haven't already taken their heart winner – and eventually lead the hearts and trump them in dummy.

*Declarer might also be able to discard the two hearts on the diamond winners in dummy after the  $\spadesuit A$  and  $\spadesuit K$  are gone. If the students can't see how to take eight tricks as declarer on this hand, you can walk them through the play.*

**Q. Assuming West takes only eight tricks and is defeated two tricks in the  $4\spadesuit$  contract, is that a poor result?**

A. Not necessarily.

- It's not bad to go down in a contract if the opponents could score more points by bidding and making a contract of their own.

- Let's see what North and South could make if East and West had not preempted in the auction.

**East and West, turn your cards face down.**

**North and South, turn your cards face up.**

**West, lead the ♠A.**

**Only 27 cards are face up on the table, the North and South hands and West's lead.**

<b>NORTH</b>		
♠ 7 5		
♥ A 9 7 5 2		
♦ A 5		
♣ K 7 6 3		
<b>WEST</b>		<b>EAST</b>
♠ A		
<b>SOUTH</b>		
♠ 2		
♥ K Q 6 3		
♦ K 8 2		
♣ A Q 9 4 2		

**Q. How many points does North have?**

A. 12.

- North has 11 high-card points plus 1 length point for the five-card heart suit.

**Q. How many points does South have?**

A. 15.

- South has 14 high-card points plus 1 length point for the five-card club suit.

**Q. Does North-South have enough combined strength for a game contract?**

A. Yes.

- North-South have 27 combined points.

**Q. Does North South have a suitable trump fit?**

A. Yes.

- North-South have a nine-card fit in hearts.
- They also have a nine-card fit in clubs.

**Q. How many tricks can North-South make if they play with hearts as trumps?**

A. Twelve.

- North and South can take five heart tricks, five club tricks, and the ♦ A and ♦ K.
- So they can make at least a game.
- In fact, they can make a small slam!

## Observations

- A preemptive opening bid can be obstructive, making it challenging for the opponents to find their best contract.
- On this deal, if East-West start with a weak two-bid and make a preemptive raise to 4♠, they will be defeated two tricks. Since they are vulnerable, the penalty would be 200 points ... 100 points per trick.
- Even if North-South were to double 4♠, the penalty would only be 500 points (200 + 300).
- This is an excellent result for East-West since North-South can make at least a vulnerable game with two overtricks. That would be worth 680 points: 120 trick score + 500 bonus for the vulnerable game + 60 for the two overtricks.
- If North-South were to bid to a slam contract, they would get an even larger score (1430 points), so the East-West sacrifice of 200 or even 500 points is worthwhile.
- Preemptive opening bids and responses can be a very effective competitive tool.

## Closing Instructions

**Pick up all the cards and put them back as a single deck.**

- Preemptive bids are an important part of competitive bidding.
- We'll see them again, in different forms, as we experience bidding when both partnerships are in the auction.

