F902 Lesson One: Opening the bidding (Chapters 1, 2 and Preempts)

1. Evaluating the hand:
Opener: 13-15 pts is a minimum hand, 16-18 a medium hand, 19-21 a maximum hand, 22+ is a blockbuster
Good suit: At least 5 cards containing 6 high card points (HCP), 2 of the top 3, or 3 of the top 5 cards.
Game points: 25 total pts for game in major, 25 HCP in NT; 29 pts in minor. Best to find a fit in NT or a major.
Slam points: 33 for small slam, 37 for grand slam
Good Fit: A total of 8 or more cards in a suit in the combined hands.
Distribution: Initially count 1 pt for every card in a suit above four (length points), but do not count pts for short suits.

2. Opening a balanced hand (*no void or singleton, <2 doubletons, need not have stopper in all suits*):

13-14 HCP = bid suit, then rebid 1NT	**20-21 HCP = 2 NT**
15-17 HCP = 1 NT	22-24 HCP = bid 2 ♣, then bid NT
18-19 HCP = bid suit, then jump in NT	**25-27 HCP = 3NT**

3. Opening an unbalanced hand:
        13-21 total pts: with a 5-card or longer suit: bid your longest suit at the one-level. Bid higher ranking of two 5-card or 6-card suits. With no 5-card or longer suit, bid longest minor. With two 4-card minors, bid 1♦. With two 3-card minors, bid 1♣
        22+ pts: Bid 2♣

4. Preempts: In addition to opening a 7-card suit at the 3 level and an 8-card suit at the 4 level, the introduction of the strong 2-Club bid led to the weak-two bid, which requires 6-10 HCP, mostly in the long suit, and 6-10 HCP

5. Opening lead:
partner's bid suit
unbid suit (but OK to lead opener's minor suit)
top of sequence
Singleton
High/Low doubleton
4th down in longest and strongest, especially in NT
Do NOT underlead a K or A against a suit contract, but OK against NT
RETURN PARTNER'S OPENING LEAD!!

6. Plan your play upon seeing the opening lead:
Count winners (NT) and losers (suit).
Count as cards in suit are played.
Pull trump ASAP
Set up long suit – play honors first in short suit.
Pay attention to having an entrée, transportation

Discard losers or ruff in dummy

7. Homework: Read Chapters 3, 9