

Basic Bridge Bids

For a complete summary of bridge bidding as practiced by the Tallwood Bridge Club, see Contemporary Bridge Bidding on DocStore. Every expert pair seems to have its own system, so this is a compromise and attempts to simplify a very complex process. Even in simplified fashion, it is a lot to remember, so using the KISS principle, here is an even more simplified version.

1. Evaluating the hand:

In addition to points for AKQJ, count distribution points as follows:

Initially count a point for every card in a good suit above four (length points), but do not count pts for short suits. If you are going to be dummy and have at least 3 trumps, count 5 pts for a void, 3 for a singleton, and 1 for a doubleton, instead of counting length points. If you bid a takeout double or you are raising responder's suit, you are planning to be dummy, so count dummy distribution points. If responder has supported your trump suit, then you can add 1 pt for a doubleton, 2 for a singleton, and 3 for a void.

It takes 25 pts for game in major, 25 high card points (HCP) for 3NT, 29 pts for game in minor, 33 for a small slam, 37 for a grand slam. Strive to find a fit in NT or a major.

Opener: 13-15 pts is a minimum hand, 16-18 a medium hand, 19-21 a maximum hand, 22+ is a blockbuster

Responder: 0-5 is a bust, 6-9 is minimum, 10-11 is medium, 12+ is maximum

"Good" suit = at least 5 cards containing 6 HCP. A "good fit" in a suit means 8 or more cards in the combined hands.

Opener (first one to say something other than Pass):

6-10 pts and 6+ card suit = preempt (2 with 6 cards, 3 with 7)

13-21 pts = one of longest suit (if major, must be at least 5 cards)

15-17 HCP, balanced hand, no 5-card major = 1NT

18-19 HCP, balanced hand, no 5-card major = bid 1 of longest minor,
then jump to 2NT

20-21 HCP, balanced hand, no 5-card major = 2NT

22+ pts = 2 Clubs

22-24 HCP, balanced hand = 2 Clubs, then bid 2NT

Responder (sits across table from opener)

To a NT bid:

0-7 pts and a 5+card suit (not clubs) = 2 of that suit (drop-dead)

8-9 pts = invite game, e.g. 2NT

10-15 pts = bid game, e.g. 3 NT or 4 of a major with 6 cards

[If you remember Stayman, bid 2-clubs with 8 or more pts]

To a 1-level suit bid:

With trump support (3 in a major, 5 in a minor)

0-5 pts = Pass

6-9 pts = Raise to 2

10-11 pts = Jump raise to 3

12-18 pts = Bid your longest suit at lowest level, then jump raise

13-15 HCP = 2NT

19+ pts = Jump shift in your longest suit

Without trump support:

6-9 pts = 1 of your longest suit, or 1NT

10-18 pts = your longest suit at lowest level

13-15 HCP = 2NT

To a 2-Club opening bid:

With 8 pts and a 5+ card suit, bid it at lowest level, otherwise bid 2 diamonds

Finding the right level:

Both opener and responder should revalue their hands after hearing partner's bid each time with the goal of determining whether there are enough points between the two for game or slam and if there is a good fit. Do the math. If it is evident that neither is the case, the partnership should end the bidding at the cheapest level possible. If you have a good fit in a minor suit, but only 25-28 pts you should usually play in 3NT.