

CHANGE OF SUIT RESPONSES TO 1 OF A SUIT

INTRODUCTION

This handout is a brief overview of responding to 1 of a suit. For full information see the [course on responding](#).

When we are responding to an opening bid of 1 of a suit our priorities are to find out if we have an 8 card majors suit fit and whether we have enough for game.

After an opening of 1 of a suit, with 0-5 points we generally pass but with 6 or more points we must bid something. Opener may be very strong up to 19 points (sometimes more) and we could miss game if we don't respond.

RESPONDING WITH A NEW SUIT AT THE 1 LEVEL

Partner opened the bidding with 1♥

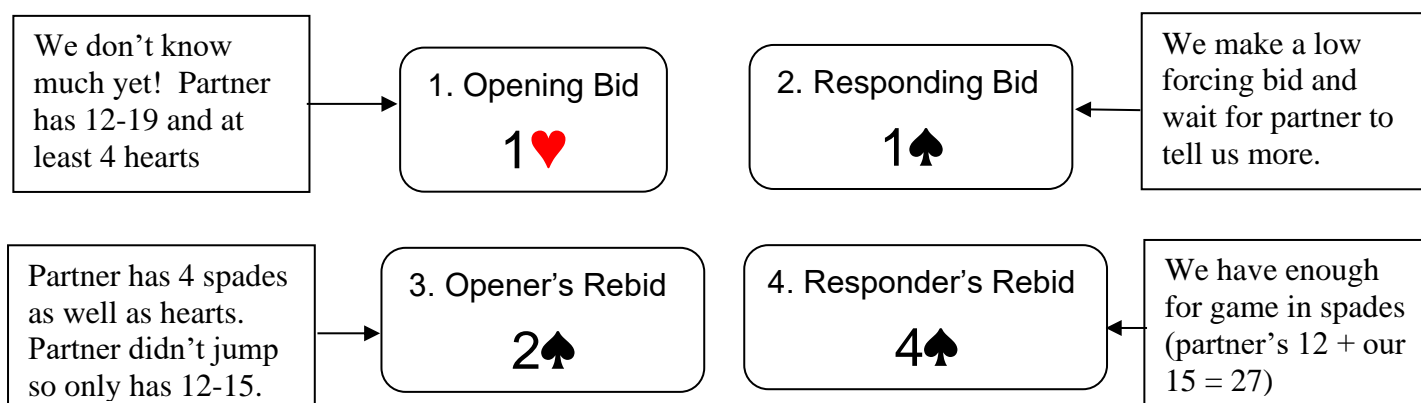
What do we respond with this hand? We have 15 points and partner has at least 12 points so we know there are enough points for 'game', but which contract?

♠	Q J 8 7
♥	K J 5
♦	3 2
♣	A K J 9

We don't know much about partner's hand yet. All we know is that partner has 12-19 points and at least 4 hearts so we need to make a forcing bid and listen to partner's rebid which will tell us more:

- what kind of hand partner has - balanced, one suited or two suited
- the strength of partners hand , 12-15 or 16-19.

Our responding bid will be 1♠, showing 4 or more cards in spades and at least 6 points. Remember that the first few bids are just exchanging information about the hands. It is often not until the 4th bid that we can decide on the final contract.



A change of suit response to 1 of a suit opening is a **forcing bid**. A forcing bid means that partner **must** bid again and not pass.

When we bid a new suit, we should keep the bidding as low as possible even if we have a strong hand. A change of suit at the 1 level promises 6+ points (up to 15 or sometimes more).

It is nearly always right to bid a 4 card or longer major at the 1 level rather than anything else if there is a choice of possible bids. There are some exceptions which are covered in the [course on responding](#).

RESPONDING WITH A NEW SUIT AT THE 2 LEVEL

Requirement of changing suit at the 2 level

When we can't support opener's major suit or bid a new suit at the 1 level, we can bid a new suit at the two level when we have 10+ points (or sometimes less, see below).

We normally need 10+ high card points (HCP) to bid a new suit at the two level but we can bid a new suit at the two level with less than 10 HCP if we satisfy the Rule of 14.

Rule of 14. We add our HCP plus the length of our longest suit and if the total is 14 or more, we can change suit at the two level with less than 10 HCP i.e.:

- 9 HCP and a 5 card suit
- 8 HCP and a 6 card suit
- 7 HCP and a 7 card suit.

[Rule of 14 examples](#)

The exception to the normal requirement of a 4 card suit

We only need 4 cards to bid a new suit at the two level with one exception: after an opening bid of 1♠ we must have **5 or more hearts** to respond 2♥. The main reason is to make it easier to find a 5-3 heart fit, which will normally play better than 3NT.

What happens when the opening is 1♠ and responder only has 4 hearts? Most of the time responder will have a 4 card minor, which can be bid instead. With this hand we respond 2♦. We won't miss a heart fit if opener has 4 hearts. If opener started with, for example, 5 spades and 4 hearts they will bid 2♥ as their 2nd bid.

♠	A 7
♥	K Q 8 2
♦	Q 7 6 2
♣	9 5 3

Normally change suit at the lowest level possible

We should only bid a new suit at the 2 level if we **can't bid it** at the 1 level. Partner opened 1♥ and this is our hand:

The correct response is 1♠, not 2♠. We don't respond at the two level just because we have 9+ points, we should respond at the one level if we can.

♠	A K J 7 6 3
♥	K 8 2
♦	Q 7 6 2
♣	-

A 2♠ response to a 1♥ opening is a jump change of suit bid and this would show and very much stronger hand. This bid is called a 'jump shift' and is covered in the [course on responding](#).

Remember: A change of suit response at the one level (e.g. 1♥ - 1♠ is in our example hand) is a wide ranging bid showing 6-15 or more (NOT 6-9). It is a forcing bid so partner must bid again.