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Bridge Bidding Made Simple · Acol edition



CHAPTER 4

Responding to One of a Suit

When to respond, supporting partner, new suits and no-trump responses

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1. Do you have enough to respond?

When partner opens one of a suit, they may have anything from about 11 to 19 points. If they have a good hand, even a modest hand of yours could give you game. So you respond whenever you can.

Rule 1. With **6 or more points**, respond. With 0–5, pass.

A response in a new suit is **forcing**: opener must bid again. That lets you look for the best contract without jumping about.

2. Supporting partner's major

In Acol, a 1♥ or 1♠ opening shows at least **four** cards. With **four-card support** you know you have a fit of eight or more trumps, and the first thing to do is tell partner, at the right level for your strength:

Your points (with four-card support)	Bid	Meaning
6–9	Raise to **2** (1♥–2♥)	a fit, a modest hand
10–12	Jump to **3** (1♥–3♥)	invites game: opener bids 4 with extra
13 or more	Bid **game** (1♥–4♥)	enough for game

In all the examples below, partner has opened **1♥**.

♠ K 8 4 ♥ Q 10 7 3 ♦ J 6 2 ♣ Q 9 5	**8 points** and four hearts: raise to **2♥**.
♠ A 5 ♥ K J 8 4 ♦ Q 10 7 3 ♣ J 6 2	**11 points** and four hearts: jump to **3♥**, inviting game.
♠ A Q 5 ♥ K 10 8 4 ♦ K 7 3 ♣ Q 6 2	**14 points** and four hearts: bid **4♥**.

> With only **three** of partner's suit, do not raise straight away: partner may have only four. Make another bid first and show your support later.

3. Bidding a new suit

Rule 2. A new suit at the **one level** needs **6+ points** and four or more cards.
A new suit at the **two level** needs **9+ points** (you are pushing the bidding higher).

With two four-card suits, bid the **lower-ranking** first ("up the line"). With two five-card suits, bid the higher-ranking.

♠ K J 7 3 ♥ 8 2 ♦ Q 9 6 4 ♣ K 10 5	**9 points**, no heart fit, four spades. Bid **1♠**: partner may have four spades too.

♠ K 7 3 ♥ 6 4 ♦ A Q 5 ♣ K J 10 8 3	**13 points** and five clubs. Bid **2♣**. It is forcing for one round, not to game, so with 13 points it is up to you to make sure, with your next bid, that the bidding reaches game.

4. Responding in no-trumps

With no fit for partner and no suit you can show at the one level, a no-trump response describes your strength:

Your points	Bid	Notes
6–9	**1NT**	no fit, nothing to bid at the one level
10–12	**2NT**	balanced, invites game
13–15	**3NT**	balanced, enough for game

♠ Q 8 4
♥ 7 2
♦ K J 5
♣ J 9 8 6 2

7 points. No heart fit, no four-card spade suit, and not enough for 2♣ (which needs 9). Bid **1NT**.

♠ J 9
♥ K 7 3
♦ Q 10 6 2
♣ K 8 5 4

9 points but only three hearts. Not enough to bid at the two level, so bid **1NT**.

5. Which response first?

The order of priority

1. Raise partner's major with **four-card support**.
2. Bid a new suit at the **one level**, especially a major.
3. With a balanced hand, respond in **no-trumps**.
4. Bid a new suit at the **two level** (9+ points).

6. Summary

After partner opens 1♥ or 1♠	Bid
0–5 points	Pass
4-card support, 6–9 / 10–12 / 13+	Raise to 2 / 3 / 4
New suit at the one level	6+ points, four+ cards
New suit at the two level	9+ points
No fit, balanced	1NT (6–9), 2NT (10–12), 3NT (13–15)

7. Test yourself

Partner opens **1♥**. What do you respond?

1. ♠ Q 10 7 4
♥ K 2
♦ J 8 5 3
♣ Q 9 6

2. ♠ 5 3
♥ Q 9 6 3
♦ K 10 7 4
♣ J 8 2

3. ♠ 8
♥ J 7 2
♦ Q 8 5 3
♣ 9 7 6 4 2

4. ♠ A J 6
♥ K 10 5 3
♦ A 8 4
♣ 10 9 3

5. ♠ K 10 2
♥ J 4
♦ Q J 7 3
♣ A 9 5 3

6. ♠ K Q 8 5 3
♥ J 10 7 2
♦ A 4
♣ 8 6

Answers

1. 1♠. 8 points, no four-card heart support, four spades: show them at the one level.

2. 2♥. 6 points and four hearts: a simple raise.

3. Pass. Only 3 points.

4. 3♥. 12 points and four hearts: invite game.

5. 2NT. 11 points, balanced, no fit and no four-card spade suit.

6. 3♥. 10 points. Support for partner's major comes first, even with five spades.

Next: Chapter 5, Raising Partner. Free lessons and challenge hands to play: **bridgescorer.com/learn**

About this guide. There are many versions of Acol, and clubs, teachers and books do not all agree on every detail. This chapter describes one common, straightforward version for learners. We do not claim it is the only or the best way: if your teacher or club plays something different, follow them. What matters most is that you and your partner agree.

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