



Bidding Basics

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A tour of the bidding box for newer players

There are other possible ranges, but 15–17 is the most common 1NT opening, recommended for newer players.

If you have a very good 14 HCP with a five-card suit and/or lots of 10s and 9s, you can treat it as 15. I recommend opening a “15–17” 1NT notrump with each of these 14-counts:

♠A 10 ♥A 10 8 ♦A 10 9 ♣Q 10 9 8 6
 ♠K 2 ♥A J 10 ♦K Q J 10 9 ♣10 9 2
 ♠A 10 8 ♥A Q 10 ♦5 2 ♣K J 10 9 7

Most teachers recommend adding a point for a decent five-card suit. Yes, your convention card shows 15–17 HCP, but don't be concerned if an opponent later points out that “you have only 14.” I'd consider each of the hands above to be 15–17. If anyone complains, politely explain: “You count your (wrong) way, I'll count mine.”

If you have 17 HCP and a decent five-card suit (and/or lots of 10s and 9s), your hand should be treated as too good to open 1NT. Each of these hands should be opened in the long suit (intending to rebid 2NT to show 18–19 HCP).

Open 1♣ with:

♠K 10 ♥A 10 8 ♦A 10 9 ♣A Q 10 9 6

Open 1♥ with:

♠K 10 8 ♥A K Q J 10 ♦10 9 5 ♣A 2

Open 1♦ with:

♠A J 10 ♥A K 10 ♦K Q 10 9 8 ♣10 3

When you open 1NT, your partner Announces (not Alerts) the range out loud. Even though she will announce 15–17, you are allowed to use good hand

evaluation to determine what exactly falls into that 15–17 range.

As explained last month, a 5–3–3–2 hand with a five-card major should be opened 1NT if in range. Open 1NT with either of these hands:

♠K Q 8 7 6 ♥K Q 2 ♦J 6 5 ♣K Q
 ♠J 3 2 ♥A Q 6 5 4 ♦A Q 2 ♣K 2

What about other shapes?

While ACBL technically allows a 1NT opening with a high singleton honor, it's not something you should go out of your way to do. Until you have many years of experience, I recommend never opening 1NT with a singleton.

What about two doubletons? This is typically something to be avoided, but if the doubletons are strong and the hand is awkward (explained below), you could open 1NT with a hand such as either of these hands:

♠K 2 ♥A Q ♦Q 9 2 ♣K J 9 7 6 5
 ♠K 2 ♥K J 7 6 ♦K Q 8 7 6 ♣K 2

Why are these awkward? Because if you opened instead with the long suit, you would have a rebid problem. On the first one, if you opened 1♣, what would your rebid be over partner's one-of-a-major response? You are a bit heavy for only 2♣, but not quite good enough to

The definition of a standard 1NT opening bid is:
 15–17 high-card points and balanced (4–3–3–3, 4–4–3–2 or 5–3–3–2) distribution. You need not have a stopper in every suit.

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NT

jump to 3♣. A 1NT rebid would show only 12–14. On the second hand, if you open 1♦, partner will often respond 1♠ (you know how partners are). Now what? A 1NT rebid shows 12–14 HCP, but your hand is too strong for that. You are not strong enough for a 2♥ rebid which is a reverse (discussed in future articles). So on both hands, a 1NT opening would be the least of evils and closest to describing your hand.

Don't go out of your way to distort. With:

♠7 3 ♥A 2 ♦K Q J 10 6 5 ♣A Q 3,

opening 1♦ with the intention of jump-rebidding 3♦ would be more descriptive than opening 1NT. Never open 1NT with a six-card major or two doubletons and a five-card major. Each hand below would be opened one of the major:

♠Q J 9 7 6 2 ♥A 2 ♦K Q 2 ♣K 3

Open 1♠.

♠A 2 ♥K Q 10 7 6 ♦A 10 5 4 ♣Q 8

Open 1♥.

BIDDING BASICS QUIZ

On each hand below, you deal with neither side vulnerable. What is your call?

1. ♠K2 ♥876 ♦AK1076 ♣AJ2
2. ♠KQ876 ♥KQ76 ♦A2 ♣J2
3. ♠A109 ♥A9 ♦QJ1098 ♣K109
4. ♠104 ♥543 ♦KQJ10 ♣AKQJ
5. ♠AKQ108 ♥A102 ♦A102 ♣32
6. ♠QJ2 ♥K2 ♦K2 ♣AQ10765
7. ♠AQ ♥AQ ♦Q1076 ♣J10652
8. ♠A32 ♥J ♦KQ1087 ♣KQ65

Answers

1. 1NT. You don't need all four suits stopped.
2. 1♠. Open 1NT with two doubletons only if you are stuck. This hand is an easy 1♠ opening, followed by hearts on the next round.
3. 1NT. Surely worth 15–17 HCP.
4. 1NT. Even two unstopped suits is OK.
5. 1♠. Too strong for the 15–17 range. Treat this as 18–19 balanced.
6. 1NT. The best description. Opening 1♣ will make this hand hard to describe.
7. 1NT. Wiser than opening in a minor and facing a rebid problem.
8. 1♦. Don't open 1NT with a singleton.



International Fund Game winners

A Kalispell MT pair posted the top score in the ACBL-wide International Fund Game held Dec. 21, 2016. Michael Boreson and Paulette Fopp scored 76.49% playing at the Flathead Valley Duplicate Bridge Club. The game drew 342 tables and raised \$2513.70 to support ACBL players competing in world championships.

1. Michael Boreson – Paulette Fopp, Kalispell MT	76.49%
2. Darien Cozart – James Dulmage, Regina SK	75.83%
3. Timothy Baird, White Plains NY; H. Jay Sloofman, Ardsley NY	68.75%
4. Sheila Gabay, Newton MA; Kevin O'Donnell, Lynnfield MA	67.64%
5. Kay Beck – Jerry Premo, Noblesville IN	67.59%
6. Bruce Peterson, Long Beach CA; Larry Topper, Garden Grove CA	67.50%
7. Susan Bailey Carman – Dennis Carman, Plainwell MI	67.36%
8. Peggy Lou Faylor, Nampa ID; Chester Youngblood, Ontario OR	66.96%
9. Lawrence Christianson, Thornwood NY; Doris Staubi, White Plains NY	66.67%
10. Trudy Bell – Edward Rauch, Fort Lauderdale FL	66.37%

Top scores by district

1 James Gray, Berwick NS; Mark Spear, Port Hawkesbury NS	63.55%
2 Anne Manning – Robert Manning, Egbert ON	65.23%
3 Timothy Baird, White Plains NY; H. Jay Sloofman, Ardsley NY	68.75%
4 Carl Ginsberg, Blue Bell PA; Lucia Nemer, Dresher PA	62.50%
5 Michael Ryan -Denise Slattery, Buffalo NY	65.28%
7 William Pratt – Lisa Wester, Asheville NC	66.15%
8 Carol Phillips, Godfrey IL; Vicki Valley, Edwardsville IL	64.35%
9 Trudy Bell – Edward Rauch, Fort Lauderdale FL	66.37%
11 Kay Beck – Jerry Premo, Noblesville IN	67.59%
12 Susan Bailey Carman – Dennis Carman, Plainwell MI	67.36%
13 Jim Humphrey, Highland Park IL; Marc Passman, Skokie IL	62.08%
14 Walter Case – Gary Raymond, Lincoln NE	62.50%
16 Robert Buchanan – William White, Arlington TX	65.98%
18 Michael Boreson – Paulette Fopp, Kalispell MT	76.49%
20 Peggy Lou Faylor, Nampa ID; Chester Youngblood, Ontario OR	66.96%
21 Joyce Remsen, Sparks NV; Richard Scoggin, Reno NV	60.74%
22 Davis Bennett, San Diego CA; Daniel Boylan, Coronado CA	64.88%
23 Bruce Peterson, Long Beach CA; Larry Topper, Garden Grove CA	67.50%
25 Sheila Gabay, Newton MA; Kevin O'Donnell, Lynnfield MA	67.64%