

Yale Beginner Lessons

Summary 1 – Evaluation, Openings, Play

High Card Points

Ace – 4 points
 King – 3 points
 Queen – 2 points
 Jack – 1 point
 Other – 0 points

Distribution Points

5-card suit – 1 point
 6-card suit – 2 points
 7-card suit – 3 points
 and so on...

Order of Suits:

♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ NT

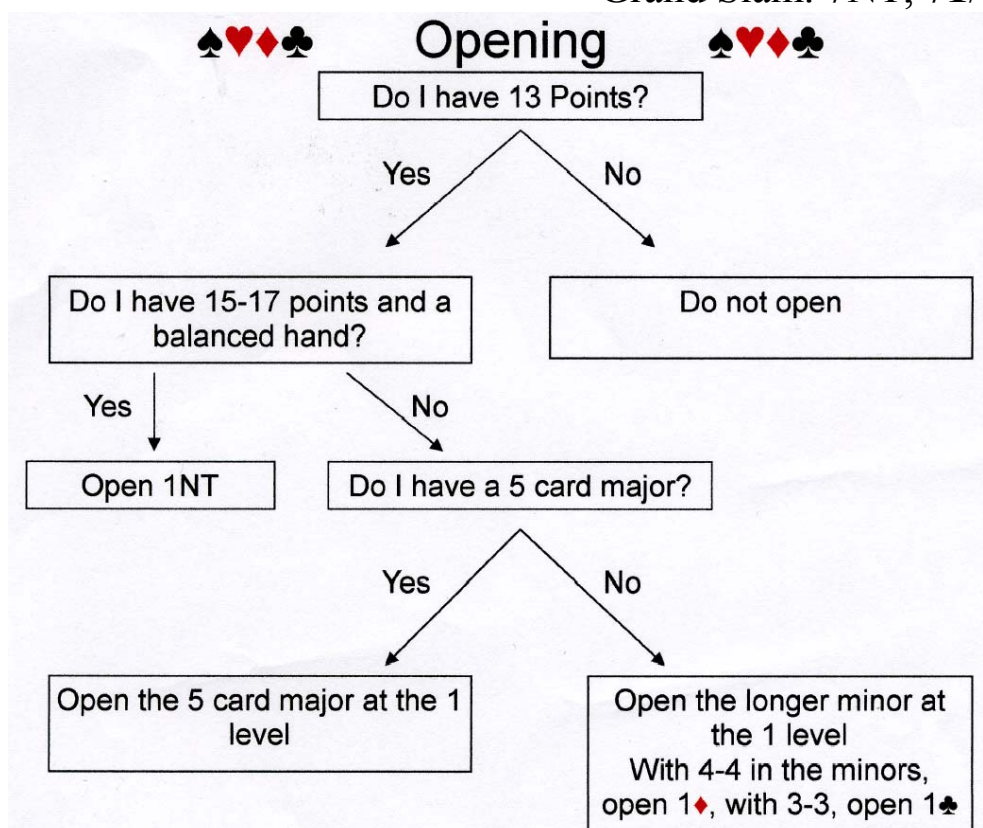
(alphabetical, low to high)

Major suits: ♠ and ♥

Minor suits: ♣ and ♦

Target contracts

Game: 3NT, 4♥/♠, (5♣/♦)
 Small Slam: 6NT, 6♠/♥/♦/♣
 Grand Slam: 7NT, 7♠/♥/♦/♣



Some General Play Strategies

- 2nd hand LOW, third hand HIGH
- Cover an honor with an honor
- Count your winners
- Draw trumps as declarer
- Lead through strength

Basic Leads:

- Top of a sequence
- 4th best (especially in NT)
- Short suit leads
- **DON'T** lead suits with unsupported honors, and don't lead the honors either

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Summary 2 – After Suit Openings (general)

Traffic Light of Bids:

- **Drop-dead: Do not bid again partner!**
- **Invitational: You can pass, but game might be possible.**
- **Forcing: Don't pass, whatever you do!**

Types of Bids:

- **Game Bids – Don't bid on, we're where we need to be!**
- **Passes – You don't bid at all!**
- **Raise – Bidding Partners suit or rebidding the same suit yourself**
- **No Trump – No new suit to mention**
- **New Suits (non jump) – Here's a suit we might play in***

Basic Point Ranges

Responder

- **0-5 Passout**
- **6-9 Constructive**
- **10-12 Almost There**
- **13+ Don't stop before game**

Openers rebids

- **12-15: pass a non-forcing response**
- **12-15: Minimum rebid**
- **16-19: Almost there**
- **19-21: Don't stop before game**

(*technically, **only new suits by responder are forcing**, since opener is limited to 21 points. In practice one rarely passes openers new suit either, just in case they have a strong hand and two suits.)

What do I bid?

- **Game is impossible** – Pass if you can, or bid something drop-dead.
- **Game is possible** – Bid something invitational (if possible) or forcing.
- **Game is sure** – Bid the game yourself (if you can), or a forcing bid.

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Summary 3 – Responding to Opening Suits

General Knowledge

Goals: 26 pts for games (3NT, 4♥/♠). 33 pts for slam, 37 for grand slam.

Fits: Golden fit is an 8-card trump fit. Do 3NT instead of minor games!

Priorities: In majors, support above all. In minors, bid new suits first.

Ranges:

0-5: Pass immediately

6-9: Constructive

10-12: Invitational

13+: Game Forcing

Support

Need an 8-card fit or better.

6-9: Single raise (e.g. 1♥-2♥)

10-12: Double raise (e.g. 1♣-3♣)

13+: Bid game or a new suit first

NT Bids

Need no support, fallback plan.

6-9: Bid 1NT

10-12: Bid 2NT

13+: Bid 3NT or a new suit first

New Suits

Need a four+ card suit, and always bid at lowest available level.

1 level: Need at least 6 points. (1 of 3 ranges)

2 level: Need at least 10 points. (two ranges)

For example: 1♣-1♥ shows 6 TO INFINITY pts, NOT 6-9.

Basic Declarer Strategies

Promotion:

When you counted your winners, you only counted top ones. If you have touching honors below the ace, you can play them until the lower honors are the highest ones left!

Running a suit:

When you have 7 or more cards in a suit between the two hands, you can keep playing the suit until opponents have no more, in which case the rest are winners now! You should keep count of the suit to see if this is still possible. Also, if the suit is the trump suit, you shouldn't run them right away, since you may want to trump some other suit later.

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Summary 4 – Rebids by Suit Opener

Types of Rebids:

- Rebid same suit or reraise partner
- Support partner's suit
- Rebid NT
- Bidding a new suit

Point Ranges:

Minimum:	12-15
Strong	16-19
Game Forcing:	19+-21

Rebidding the same suit:

- Need 6+ cards in suit if partner hasn't supported. (self-supporting)
- **2-level shows minimum** (pass if partner raised you there)
- **3-level shows a strong hand** (bid game if partner raised you there already).
- **4-level shows a game-going hand.**

Supporting Partners Suit:

- Need 4+ cards in suit (4+4 = 8)
- **Single raise shows minimum**
- **Double raise shows a strong hand.**
- Bid game to show a game going hand. (3NT, 4 of major, or rarely 5 of a minor)

Rebidding NT:

- Need a balanced hand, fallback plan.
- Lowest rebid of NT = 12-14 HCP
- Jump rebid of NT = 18-19 HCP (1NT opening showed 15-17!)

New Suit:

- **Non jump/non reverse shows wide range:** 12-17 pts. Not forcing, who knows.
- Jump is forcing, 19-21. (**jump shift**) Partner can't pass until game is reached.

*Note: If you bid so high that partner needs to bid at the 3-level support your first suit, it's called a **reverse**. For instance, 1♣ - (pass) - 1♠ - (pass) - 2♥. You need: 17+, longer first suit than second. It's forcing. This is a complicated topic, so for now, just try and avoid bidding reverses.*

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Summary 5a – Play Tactics

Basics of playing a hand

- **Step 1: Count your winners**
 - If you have enough winners at any point, (draw trumps) and take them.
 - Otherwise, don't just take your winners. Use them tactically to create extras.
- **Step 2: Establishing Extra Winners**
 - **Promotion**
 - Knockout enemy high cards to promote the ones under them.
 - Example: You have KQJ10 in a suit. Once you get rid of the ace, you have three more winners!
 - **Running a long suit**
 - Play enough rounds of a suit until only you have card left in that suit.
 - In a trump contract, you usually need to draw trump first.
 - Don't keep running the trump suit, save some to rough other suits.
 - Make sure to end in the long hand.
 - **Finessing**
 - Leading towards an honor, missing the one above it.
 - Play towards an honor, when missing one above it, hoping that person in between has the one you're missing.
 - Sandwich one between two honors, when you have two honors below the one you're missing, and the one above.
 - **Trumping**
 - You can trump losers in **the hand with a shorter trump suit**.
Roughing in the long hand doesn't give you any new winners!

More on defense:

- **During The Hand**
 - Lead through strength, towards weakness.
 - Try to return partner's opening lead.
 - Try not to lead away from unsupported honors.
- **Opening Leads:**
 - What partner bid
 - Top of a sequence, especially honors.
 - High-low from a doubton or a singleton.
 - Top of nothing

Leading/Defending NT:

Leads that still work:

Top of a sequence
What partner bid

Additional lead:

4th-best from longest, strongest

It's a race – try and establish your own suits, don't give stuff away!