

Lesson 9 - Overcalls

If opponents open the bidding and you bid - you are an overcaller.

Your aims are different. You are trying to:

- Win the contract (generally a part score contract)
- Obstruct the opponents
- Suggest a lead to partner

Suit Quality Test

- SQOT = number of cards in the suit + numbers of honours in the suit
- 10 counts as an honour if there is also a higher honour.
- **K J 9 7 5**: SQOT = 7; **Q 10 9 7 5 6**: SQOT = 8; **K 9 7 6 4 3 2** : SQOT = 8;

Suit Overcalls

- A **good** 5+card suit, (generally a minimum of 2 honours), 8+ HCP and SQOT = 7+
- At the 2-level you need a 6+ suit or a very good 5 cards, and 10+ HCP, and SQOT = 8+
When overcalling an opponent's opening weak 1NT, the requirements are the same as if the opening bid was in a suit. (1NT) – 2♥ is a non-jump overcall and shows at least 5 cards in the suit, preferably 6 cards, 10+ HCP and SQOT = 8+
- Make a 2 level JUMP OVERCALL- (1♥) - 2♠ with 12-15 HCP and a good 6+ card suit.
- Make a 3 level JUMP OVERCALL- (1♠) - 3♦ with 12-15 HCP and a good 7+ card suit.
These jump overcall ranges are 'intermediate jump overcalls'. Some partnerships play different ranges, either 'weak jump overcalls' or 'strong jump overcalls'

Responses to a Suit Overcall with 3+ card support

- Bid to the level of your fit. Ignore your point count!!!
 - If partner overcalls at the 1 level, assume partner has a 5 card suit
 - If partner overcalls at the 2 level, assume partner has a 5 card suit.
....If partner has 6 cards she can bid one more if necessary
 - If partner overcalls at the 3 level, assume partner has a 6 card suit.
....If partner has 7 cards she can bid one more if necessary
- Add partner's cards to yours and bid to the level of your combined holding
 - If the combined holding is 9, bid at the 3 level (bidding to make 9 tricks)

With less than three cards in partner's suit and an unbalanced hand:

0 – 8 points: Pass

9+ points: bid your own suit provided it satisfies the SQOT requirements for the level at which you are bidding.

With less than three cards in partner's suit and balanced hand or a hand suitable for NT (e.g. long minor and stoppers in unbid suits.):

After a 1-level overcall: 0 – 8: Pass; 9 – 12: 1NT; 13 – 14: 2NT; 15+: 3NT

After a 2 level non-jump overcall: 11 – 12; 2NT; 13 – 15; 3NT

(For NT bids you must have a stopper in opponent's suit.)

1NT Overcalls of the opponent's opening suit bid

- 16-19 HCP (or a GOOD 15+ HCP).
- Must have a stopper in their suit – a stopper shows a trick (e.g. Axx, KQx, QJ10)
- N.B. do not overcall 1NT with 12-14. You need 16+ HCP

Responses to partner's 1NT Overcall (assuming no Stayman or Transfers)

Balanced hands:

Pass	0-7	no Game
2NT	8	invitational to 3NT
3NT	9+	bid Game

Unbalanced hands:

2♣/2♦/2♥/2♠	0-7	5+ card suit
3♥/3♠	8+	game force with exactly a 5 card suit (opener will choose 3NT or 4♥/4♠)
4♥/4♠	8+	game with 6+ suit

Takeout Double (separate lesson)

If overcaller has opening points but does not have a hand suitable for overcalling in a suit (no five card suit) or in No Trumps (no stopper), overcaller may be able to make a takeout double, asking partner to bid her best suit. This is the subject of a separate lesson.