

Beginner Bridge Course



Lesson 6: Practise your Overcalls

(Not playing Stayman or Transfers)

Print off and fold down the middle.

<table><tr><th>1</th><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1♦</td><td>?</td></tr></table>	1	West	North	East	South				1♦	?	<p>♠ K8642 ♥ J752 ♦ A92 ♣ 6</p>	<p>Pass You have sufficient honour strength (8+) to overcall, but your SQOT is only 6 (Five spades + one spade honour). You need a SQOT that is at least the same as the number of tricks you are bidding to make, here seven.</p>
1	West	North	East	South								
			1♦	?								
<table><tr><th>2</th><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1♠</td><td>?</td></tr></table>	2	West	North	East	South				1♠	?	<p>♠ K3 ♥ J2 ♦ KJ876 ♣ Q1042</p>	<p>Pass You are just about strong enough to overcall the 2-level, scoring 19 on the Rule of 20, but your SQOT is a poor 7. You need a SQOT that is at least equal to the number of tricks you are bidding for, here 8. West could have a decent hand with very good diamonds and no support for East's spades, and if West doubles you could go for a big penalty.</p>
2	West	North	East	South								
			1♠	?								
<table><tr><th>3</th><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1♥</td><td>?</td></tr></table>	3	West	North	East	South				1♥	?	<p>♠ AKJ10 ♥ 543 ♦ Q72 ♣ K72</p>	<p>Pass You have opening values and your spades are lovely with a SQOT of 8, but you MUST have at least five cards in your overcall suit. Partner would be relying on you having at least 5 spades in order to determine whether there is an 8+ card fit. Your hand is well suited to defending.</p>
3	West	North	East	South								
			1♥	?								
<table><tr><th>4</th><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1♣</td><td>?</td></tr></table>	4	West	North	East	South				1♣	?	<p>♠ KQJ86 ♥ 7 ♦ Q743 ♣ 965</p>	<p>1♠ A classic 1-level overcall - lovely spades with a SQOT of 8 and 8 HCP, and good shape. The singleton heart offers ruffing potential. Overcalls in spades are especially disruptive. If West had been planning to bid diamonds or hearts she will now have to do so at the 2-level instead of at the 1-level, and may not be strong enough to bid.</p>
4	West	North	East	South								
			1♣	?								
<table><tr><th>5</th><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1♠</td><td>?</td></tr></table>	5	West	North	East	South				1♠	?	<p>♠ 6 ♥ KQ1092 ♦ K3 ♣ Q8542</p>	<p>2♥ Your hand satisfies the requirement for a 2-Level overcall, opening values and a SQOT of 8+. If you added a 6th heart (removing a club) then the SQOT would be 9 but it would not follow that you should bid to make 9 tricks (3♥). You would still overcall 2♥.</p>
5	West	North	East	South								
			1♠	?								
<table><tr><th>6</th><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1♥</td><td>?</td></tr></table>	6	West	North	East	South				1♥	?	<p>♠ K943 ♥ KJ9 ♦ Q43 ♣ AK2</p>	<p>1NT To overcall 1NT you need a good stopper in opener's suit and 16+ HCP (or a good 15 HCP). If you are declarer in a No-Trump contract then West will almost certainly lead East's suit (hearts) and your ♥K will win the first or second round of hearts.</p>
6	West	North	East	South								
			1♥	?								

<table><tr><th>7</th><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td>1♣</td><td>1♠</td><td>Pass</td><td>?</td></tr></table>	7	West	North	East	South		1♣	1♠	Pass	?	<p>♠ Q72 ♥ J7642 ♦ K762 ♣ 9</p>	<p>2♠</p> <p>You know that partner has 5+ spades so you have a spade fit. Your bid shows 3+ card spade support and modest values (6-11 points including shortage).</p>
7	West	North	East	South								
	1♣	1♠	Pass	?								
<table><tr><th>8</th><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td>1♣</td><td>1♠</td><td>Pass</td><td>?</td></tr></table>	8	West	North	East	South		1♣	1♠	Pass	?	<p>♠ Q965 ♥ Q965 ♦ AJ32 ♣ 5</p>	<p>3♠</p> <p>You have 9 HCP. You would normally require 11+ HCP to make a jump raise of partner's overcall suit. However you have a singleton in opener's suit, worth three points in ruffing values, and your fourth spade will surely produce an extra trick.</p>
8	West	North	East	South								
	1♣	1♠	Pass	?								
<table><tr><th>9</th><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td>1♣</td><td>1♠</td><td>Pass</td><td>?</td></tr></table>	9	West	North	East	South		1♣	1♠	Pass	?	<p>♠ 76 ♥ AK4 ♦ J987 ♣ K983</p>	<p>1NT</p> <p>You do not have 3 card support for partner's spades but you do have 11 HCP, a stopper in opener's club suit and a balanced hand. To respond in No Trumps to partner's 1♠ overcall you need roughly three more points than the 6-9 points you would need if partner had opened 1♠, i.e. 9-12 HCP.</p> <p>With 13-14 HCP and at least one good stopper (preferably two) you would bid 2NT. With a 16 HCP or good 15 HCP and two good club stoppers you would bid 3NT.</p>
9	West	North	East	South								
	1♣	1♠	Pass	?								
<table><tr><th>10</th><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1♥</td><td>?</td></tr></table>	10	West	North	East	South				1♥	?	<p>♠ Q5 ♥ 952 ♦ KJ53 ♣ AKJ6</p>	<p>Pass</p> <p>You would happily open 1NT with this hand but as an overcaller you have to pass. You don't have a 5-card suit and you are not strong enough to overcall 1NT, which would require 16 HCP (or a good 15) and a heart stopper, of which you have neither. Your hand is more suited to defence, where you will be sitting over opener.</p>
10	West	North	East	South								
			1♥	?								
<table><tr><th>11</th><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td>1♦</td><td>1NT</td><td>Pass</td><td>?</td></tr></table>	11	West	North	East	South		1♦	1NT	Pass	?	<p>♠ KJ8632 ♥ AK2 ♦ 74 ♣ 42</p>	<p>4♠</p> <p>You have an 8-card fit (partner has a balanced hand so at least two spades) and 11 points. You have a spade fit and the values for game opposite partner's 16+ HCP.</p>
11	West	North	East	South								
	1♦	1NT	Pass	?								
<table><tr><th>12</th><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td>1♦</td><td>1NT</td><td>Pass</td><td>?</td></tr></table>	12	West	North	East	South		1♦	1NT	Pass	?	<p>♠ 752 ♥ 98643 ♦ 2 ♣ J972</p>	<p>2♥</p> <p>A rescue bid, a weak takeout. Your hand is worthless playing in No Trumps but your hearts will be very useful as trumps.</p> <p>As with a 1NT opener, a 1NT overcaller will not normally bid again. Overcaller's limit bid has described her hand very accurately and overcaller should respect your bid, appreciating that you might well have this hand type. .</p>
12	West	North	East	South								
	1♦	1NT	Pass	?								
<table><tr><th>13</th><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td>1♦</td><td>1NT</td><td>Pass</td><td>?</td></tr></table>	13	West	North	East	South		1♦	1NT	Pass	?	<p>♠ K52 ♥ K1094 ♦ Q92 ♣ 872</p>	<p>2NT</p> <p>You have 8 HCP. Partner must have a diamond stopper for their 1NT overcall so your diamond holding should provide a second stopper. Your bid is inviting partner to bid 3NT if they have more than a minimum 16 HCP.</p>
13	West	North	East	South								
	1♦	1NT	Pass	?								

<table><tr><th>14</th><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td>1♦</td><td>1NT</td><td>Pass</td><td>?</td></tr></table>	14	West	North	East	South		1♦	1NT	Pass	?	<p>♠ A74 ♥ Q2 ♦ J52 ♣ K10832</p>	<p>3NT</p> <p>Partner has at least 16 HCP (or a good 15) and you have 10 HCP, so enough for game.</p>
14	West	North	East	South								
	1♦	1NT	Pass	?								
<table><tr><th>15</th><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td>1♣</td><td>1♠</td><td>Pass</td><td>?</td></tr></table>	15	West	North	East	South		1♣	1♠	Pass	?	<p>♠ 5 ♥ Q87652 ♦ AJ32 ♣ 52</p>	<p>Pass</p> <p>You must not rescue partner here. You should only introduce a suit of your own if it is good enough to warrant an overcall in its own right. Here you are well short of the HCP and SQOT requirements for a 2♥ overcall. Bear in mind that partner may have a good 6+ card spade suit and is likely to be short in hearts.</p>
15	West	North	East	South								
	1♣	1♠	Pass	?								
<table><tr><th>16</th><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1♠</td><td>?</td></tr></table>	16	West	North	East	South				1♠	?	<p>♠ 763 ♥ AK4 ♦ KQJ ♣ K982</p>	<p>Pass</p> <p>You have 16 HCP, strong enough to overcall 1NT but you do not have a stopper in opener's suit. If you play in No Trumps East is certain to lead a spade. Your hand is good for defending.</p>
16	West	North	East	South								
			1♠	?								
<table><tr><th>17</th><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td>1♣</td><td>1♠</td><td>Pass</td><td>?</td></tr></table>	17	West	North	East	South		1♣	1♠	Pass	?	<p>♠ 97 ♥ A76 ♦ J96 ♣ AK532</p>	<p>1NT</p> <p>You do not have 3+ support for partner's suit but you have 12 HCP and a stopper in opener's suit and no good suit of your own. If partner has opened 1♠ you would have responded 2NT (10-12) but you should assume that partner has 8 HCP for his overcall rather than opening values so you would need 13+ HCP to bid 2NT. A bid of 1NT here shows 10-12 HCP</p>
17	West	North	East	South								
	1♣	1♠	Pass	?								