

Beginner Bridge - Lesson 12

Strong Opening Bids

2NT Opening

- **20-22 HCP**
- **Balanced hand, non-forcing**

Responder needs only 5+ points to bid game over a 2NT opening. With 3 points, pass. With 4 points and a 5 card suit, upgrade to 5 points and bid.

The responses to a 2NT opening are similar to those over 1NT.

Responses to 2NT

Pass	0-3	no game (with 4 points, upgrade or downgrade)
3♣/3♦	5+	5+ card suit
3♥/3♠	5+	5+ card suit (Opener chooses 4♥/4♠ or 3NT)
4♥/4♠	5+	6-card suit
3NT	5+	balanced, no 5+ card major, may have 5-card minor

2♣ Opening

- Balanced hand – 23+ HCP (Open 2NT with balanced 20-22)**
- Unbalanced hand – 23+ HCP or equivalent in distributional strength (shortage).**

Opening 2♣ is an **artificial** bid. It just describes a very strong hand. Responder **must** bid even with no points at all!

Responses to 2♣

By far the most common response is 2♦, an artificial bid. It has nothing to do with diamonds. It is the lowest bid that responder can make, allowing partner as much bidding space as possible to describe his hand shape, which at this stage is totally unknown. It is known as the 2♦ waiting bid.

Responses of 2♥, 2♠, 3♣ and 3♦ are strong responses that show enough strength for as slam even if opener has a minimum 23 HCP. They also show a GOOD* 5 card suit, offering a possible alternative slam contract to what opener may have in mind.

* A GOOD 5+ card suit has two of the top three honours or 3 of the top 5 honours: e.g.: AK876; KQ953; AQxxx; AJ1097; QJ10942

Response	Strength	Shape
2♦	Any strength	any shape, no GOOD 5+ card suit
2♥/2♠3♣/3♦	8+ HCP	GOOD 5+ card suit, combined slam strength

Opener's Rebids after 2♣ - 2♦

2♥/2♠/3♣/3♦	Any	GOOD 5+ card suit
2NT*	23-24	balanced hand
3NT	25+	balanced hand

* The sequence 2♣-2♦-2NT is the ONLY 2♣ sequence where responder is allowed to pass with a very weak 0-1 HCP hand. But with just 2 HCP or more responder must bid again – opener has at least 23 HCP so the partnership has at least game strength.

After 2♣ – 2♥/♠

3♥/♠	20+	Raise with 3+ card fit in hearts or spades
2NT	23+	no fit
New suit	20+	5+ card suit , no fit

After 2♣ – 3♣/♦

3♥/♠	20+	5+ card suit
3NT	23+	balanced

Stayman with Balanced 20+ HCP hands

Use over a 2NT opening bid (20-22 HCP) or after 2♣ - 2♦ - 2NT (23-24 HCP)
Obviously there will need to be an adjustment of point counts in these different situations.

WEST	EAST
♠ K J	♠ Q 5 3
♥ A Q J 4	♥ 9 7 3 2
♦ A Q 3	♦ J 8
♣ A Q 7 4	♣ J 10 6 5

WEST	EAST
2♣	2♦
2NT	3♣ (Stayman)
3♥	4♥