

# Franklin Bridge Club

## 2026 BRIDGE LESSONS



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# Lesson Five

## Balanced Hands



# Opener's First Bid

|      | Points  | Description                                 |
|------|---------|---|
| 1 ♣  | 12 - 19 | 4 + clubs                                   |
| 1 ♦  | 12 - 19 | 4 + diamonds                                |
| 1 ♥  | 12 - 19 | 4 + hearts                                  |
| 1 ♠  | 12 - 19 | 4 + spades                                  |
| 1 NT | 12 - 14 | Balanced hand<br><b><u>SPECIAL CASE</u></b> |



# Basic Rules for Opening INT

- **12 - 14** points
- **Balanced Hand**

**This bid is your FIRST  
choice from now on**



# What is a balanced hand?

- No singleton or void
- No more than 1 doubleton
- No 5-card major
- Balanced = 4333, 4432, 2335 shape

**Balanced hands are  
the most common**



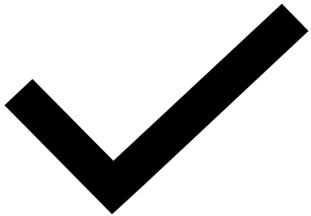
# Is this hand Balanced or Not?



???



# YES! Balanced



- No singleton or void
- No more than 1 doubleton
- No 5-card major



# Is this hand Balanced or Not?



???



# No! Not Balanced



- No singleton or void
- No more than 1 doubleton
- No 5-card major



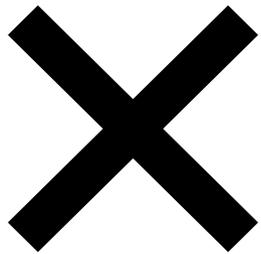
# Is this hand Balanced or Not?



???



# No! Not Balanced



- No singleton or void
- No more than 1 doubleton
- No 5-card major



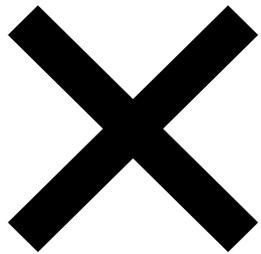
# Is this hand Balanced or Not?



???



# No! Not Balanced



- No singleton or void
- No more than 1 doubleton
- **No 5-card major**



# What does responder decide to do?

- Have you got enough **points** to bid or invite to game?
- If so do you want to play in **NoTrumps** or a **suit**?

**Responder is the BOSS**

**There are ONLY 2 decisions to make**



# Responses to 1NT – Balanced Hand

- 0 – 10 points so no GAME possible **PASS**
- 11 – 12 points so GAME is possible **Bid 2NT**
- 13+ points so GAME ON **Bid 3NT**

Add your points  
to partner's  
**KNOWN 12-14 points**



# After 1NT open what is responder's bid?

Responder's hand shown below.... 8 HCP only



???



# Responder **PASSES**

Responder's hand shown below.... 8 HCP only



**You**  
**PASS**

not enough  
**HCP for GAME**



# After 1NT open what is responder's bid?

Responder's hand shown below.... 13 HCP



???



# Responder BIDS 3NT

Responder's hand shown below.... 13 HCP



**Bid**  
**3NT**

you jointly have enough  
HCP for **GAME**



# After 1NT open what is responder's bid?

Responder's hand shown below.... 12 HCP



???



# Responder BIDS 2NT

Responder's hand shown below.... 12 HCP



**Bid**  
**2NT**

you have almost enough  
HCP for **GAME**. Depends if  
opener has 12, 13 or 14



# Responses to INT open and Responder has an Unbalanced Hand

If you have 0–10 points, **GAME** is not possible, so...

Bid your  card suit at the 2-level

**This is called a WEAK TAKEOUT**

Partner **MUST** then pass ... **YOU ARE THE BOSS**

Add your points to partner's  
**KNOWN 12-14 points**



# Responses to INT open and Responder has an Unbalanced Hand

## 12+ points ... **GAME** Forcing

- Bid your  card **MAJOR** at the 3-level

**(Opener MUST agree your suit or bid NoTrumps)**

- Bid your  card **MAJOR** at the 4-level

**OR**

- Bid your  card **MINOR** at the 5-level



# After 1NT open what is responder's bid?

Responder's hand shown below... 9 HCP and 5♥



???



# After 1NT open what is responder's bid?

Responder's hand shown below... 9 HCP and 5♥



**Bid 2♥ Not enough for GAME**

**Opener MUST pass**



# After 1NT open what is responder's bid?

Responder's hand shown below... 9 HCP and 5♦



???



# After 1NT open what is responder's bid?

Responder's hand shown below... 9 HCP and 5♦



**Bid 2♦ Not enough for GAME**

**Opener MUST pass**



# After 1NT open what is responder's bid?

Responder's hand shown below.... 13 HCP and 6♠



???



# After 1NT open what is responder's bid?

Responder's hand shown below.... 13 HCP and 6♠



**Bid 4♠** Enough for GAME AND a known fit in spades

**Q: Why is this fit guaranteed ?**



# After 1NT open what is responder's bid?

Responder's hand shown below.... 14 HCP and 5♥



???



# After 1NT open what is responder's bid?

Responder's hand shown below.... 13 HCP and 6♠



**Bid 3♥** Enough for **GAME** **BUT** need to check if there is a heart fit

**Opener chooses 3NT or bids 4♥ if they have a fit**



# Questions?



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