

Book One

# WHAT DOES PARTNER HAVE?

VISUALIZING PARTNER'S HAND

Timothy LeVan

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## Introduction

This is a book for experienced Novices and Early Intermediate players. It's a Standard American (not 2/1) bidding review with a unique twist. Like bidding an actual bridge hand, you see only your own hand and partner's bids. You practice visualizing what partner holds – from her bids only.

You (always South) open 1♦ and partner responds 1♥, or you open 1♠ and partner responds 1NT. **What Does Partner Have?** Is partner's bid forcing?

Each chapter presents deals arranged progressively from simple to complex.

In Book One, the opponents always pass. Stayman and Jacoby transfers are the only two conventions used.

(Book Two gets all four players involved in the bidding, and things get more complex. You must then visualize three other hands!)

Individuals or partnerships seeking to clarify their bidding messages will find this book helpful.

## How it Works

Each chapter begins with a **Review**.

Then **Example Deals** show your South hand, along with the full bidding.

Look at your hand and the full bidding, and visualize partner's holding. Then consult:

**What Does Partner Have?** Did you visualize your partner's hand correctly? What did partner's bids mean? Were they forcing?

**Thoughts** give additional ideas on the bidding sequence. Progressively, *negative* inferences are noted, based on what partner *might have* but *did not* bid.

**Quiz Questions & Answers** are presented at the end of each chapter. **Not Sure?** Consult the suggested deals to review the concept – maybe with your partner!

## ***The Overall Picture for Opening Bids***

based on Total (High Card plus Length) Points

0-12 Points = Pass or bid *Preemptively*

6-10 Points =

= Bid 2♦/♥/♠ *Preemptive* (with a good\* 6-card suit)

= 3♣/♦/♥/♠ *Preemptive* (shows a good\* 7-card suit)

= 4♣/♦/♥/♠ *Preemptive* (shows a good\* 8-card suit)

= 5♣/♦ *Preemptive* (shows a good\* 9+ card suit)

\*good means 2 of top 3, or 3 of top 5 honors

13-21 Points = Bid 1 of a suit (♥/♠ with 5, ♣/♦ with 3+)

15-17 Points *balanced* hand = Bid 1NT

18-19 Points *balanced* hand = Bid 1 of a suit; then  
jump to 2NT (too strong for 1NT, too weak for 2NT)

20-21 Points *balanced* hand = Bid 2NT

22+ Points any distribution = Bid 2♣ (forcing); then  
rebid your long suit (forcing),

or show a *balanced* hand (*not* forcing) with:

22-24 Points = 2NT

25-27 Points = 3NT

28-30 Points = 4NT

(etc. by 3-point ranges)

## **Opener's Balanced Hand Bids**

13-14 – Open One of a Suit, rebid 1NT

15-17 – Open 1NT

18-19 – Open One of a Suit, rebid 2NT

20-21 – Open 2NT

22-24 – Open 2♣, rebid 2NT

25-27 – Open 2♣, rebid 3NT

28-30 – Open 2♣, rebid 4NT,

(etc. by 3-point ranges)





## ***Review of the Basics***

### **Counting Total Points**

Total Points equal both:

High Card Points: A/K/Q/J = 4/3/2/1 points, and

Length Points: 5/6/7/8-card suits = add 1/2/3/4 points

### **Total Points needed for Partscore, Game & Slam**

Partscore = fewer than 26 points

Notrump Game = about 25 points

Major (♥/♠) & 3NT Game = about 26 points

Minor (♣/♦) Game = about 29 points

Small Slam = about 33 points

Grand Slam = about 37 points

**Dummy Points** – with 3+ card support for Opener's Suit,  
Responder adds:

Void = 5 points

Singleton = 3 points

Doubleton = 1 point

### **Hand Evaluation (suits only)\***

<b><u>Opener</u></b>	<b><u>Strength</u></b>	<b><u>Responder</u></b>	
13 to 15	<b>Minimum</b>	6 to 9	= Partscore
16 to 18	<b>Medium</b>	10 to 12	= Game
19 to 21	<b>Maximum</b>	13+	= Slam

A Minimum + Medium pair **may** explore for Game

A Medium + Maximum pair **may** explore for Slam

\*some partnerships may have slightly  
different pointcount ranges.

# Chapter One

## OPENING 1NT

**1NT Opener** = 15-17 *balanced* HCPs (no voids or singletons, not more than one doubleton).

### *Balanced* Hand Responder Bids

- 0 to 22+ Points  
    Example Deals #1-10  
    Quiz Questions & Answers

### *Unbalanced* Hand Responder Bids

- Stayman  
    Example Deals #11-16  
    Quiz Questions & Answers
- Jacoby Transfers  
    Example Deals #17-22  
    Quiz Questions & Answers
- 4-4, 5-4, 5-5 in the Majors  
    Example Deals #23-30  
    Quiz Questions & Answers
- Relay to the Minors  
    Example Deals #31-32  
    Quiz Questions & Answers

## Responder's Bids to Opening 1NT Point Range Chart

### Standard Bids

**0-7** *balanced* Points = Pass

**8-9** *balanced* Points = 2NT\* (asks Opener to Pass or Bid 3NT)

**10-15** *balanced* Points = 3NT

### Quantitative Bids (by 2-Point Ranges)

**16-17** *balanced* Points = 4NT\* (asks Opener to Pass or Bid 6NT)

**18-19** *balanced* Points = 6NT

**20-21** *balanced* Points = 5NT\* (asks Opener to Bid 6NT or 7NT)

**22+** *balanced* Points = 7NT

\*Responder's 2NT, 4NT, and 5NT bids ask Opener to further describe his 1NT hand:

- 15 points is minimum
- 16 points requires judgment\*\*
- 17 points is maximum

**Note:** When both partners have balanced hands, it's the "quantity" of points that determines how high to bid (hence "Quantitative" Bids).

### \*\*16-Point Hands Requiring Judgment

- How do I know if my 16 point hand is '**good**' or '**bad**'?
- Do I **upgrade** or **downgrade** my 16-point hand?

Possible considerations may be:

- If your honor cards are working together in the same suits, perhaps upgrade your hand.
- If your honor cards are split up in different suits, perhaps downgrade your hand.
- If you have a good 5-card minor suit, perhaps upgrade your hand.

## Deal #1

Dealer North

	<b>North</b>	
<b>West</b>		<b>East</b>
	<b>South</b>	
	♠ Q53	
	♥ J7	
	♦ KJ84	
	♣ Q987	

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
	1NT	Pass	2NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

### What Does Partner Have?

**1NT.** 15-17 balanced points.

**Pass.** After my 2NT bid, partner's pass shows a minimum 15 point hand, or a bad 16 point hand. Partner does not have 17 points.

### Thoughts

Partner's pass shows a minimum 15 point hand, or a bad 16 point hand.

## Deal #2

Dealer North

	<b>North</b>	
<b>West</b>		<b>East</b>
	<b>South</b>	
	♠ 83	
	♥ 96	
	♦ KQ10962	
	♣ K53	

West	North	East	South
	1NT	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

### What Does Partner Have?

**1NT.** 15-17 balanced points.

**3NT.** Shows a maximum hand.

### Thoughts

I have a 6+ card minor suit to suggest as trump, but with an otherwise balanced hand and only 8 points, I bid 2NT. Partner bids 3NT with a maximum hand. When my dummy hand is tabled, partner should be delighted to see my 6-card minor suit. Even with our known 8+ card minor fit, partner will prefer a NT contract, which scores higher.

### Deal #3

Dealer North

	<b>North</b>	
<b>West</b>		<b>East</b>
	<b>South</b>	
	♠ J103	
	♥ A107	
	♦ K98	
	♣ A987	

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
	1NT	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

### What Does Partner Have?

**1NT.** 15-17 balanced points.

**Pass.** Partner knows I am captain, so passes.

### Thoughts

Partner, having fully described her hand with 1NT, recognizes that I am captain of the auction, and accepts my placement of the auction. Even with a maximum of 17 points, partner does not pursue slam. Partner passes.

## Deal #4

Dealer South

	<b>North</b>	
<b>West</b>		<b>East</b>
	<b>South</b>	
	♠ AJ102	
	♥ KQJ	
	♦ J94	
	♣ K94	

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
			1NT
Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

### What Does Partner Have?

**3NT.** Shows 10-15 points, and no 4+ card major, or may show a 6-card minor suit.

### Thoughts

I assume that partner has 10-15 balanced points.

## Deal #5

Dealer South

	<b>North</b>	
<b>West</b>		<b>East</b>
	<b>South</b>	
	♠ AK42	
	♥ QJ54	
	♦ QJ5	
	♣ Q2	

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
			1NT
Pass	4NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

### What Does Partner Have?

**4NT.** Quantitative Bid showing 16-17 balanced points, asking me to further describe my 1NT bid: pass with minimum 15, use judgment with 16, bid 6NT with maximum 17.

### Thoughts

I pass – showing a minimum 15 point hand.



## Deal #6

Dealer North

	<b>North</b>	
<b>West</b>		<b>East</b>
	<b>South</b>	
	♠ Q53	
	♥ A76	
	♦ KJ8	
	♣ AK82	

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
	1NT	Pass	4NT
Pass	6NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

### What Does Partner Have?

**1NT.** 15-17 balanced points.

**6NT.** Good 16, or 17, points.

### Thoughts

Partner bids 6NT – showing a maximum 17 point hand, or a good 16 point hand.

## Deal #7

Dealer South

	<b>North</b>	
<b>West</b>		<b>East</b>
	<b>South</b>	
	♠ AK64	
	♥ KQ2	
	♦ Q105	
	♣ J102	

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
			1NT
Pass	6NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

### What Does Partner Have?

**6NT.** Quantitative Bid showing 18-19 balanced points.

### Thoughts

After my 1NT bid, I recognize that partner is captain of the auction, and accept her placement of the auction. I pass.

## Deal #8

Dealer North

	<b>North</b>	
<b>West</b>		<b>East</b>
	<b>South</b>	
	♠ QJ5	
	♥ AJ7	
	♦ AK8	
	♣ AKQ8	

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
	1NT	Pass	7NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

### What Does Partner Have?

**1NT.** 15-17 balanced points.

**Pass.** What else can partner do?

### Thoughts

I bid 7NT (Quantitative Bid, showing 22+ balanced points).

Since I am captain of the auction, partner accepts my placement of the auction (what else can she do?)

## Deal #9

Dealer South

	<b>North</b>	
<b>West</b>		<b>East</b>
	<b>South</b>	
	♠ 1095	
	♥ AJ7	
	♦ KJ8	
	♣ AQ98	

West	North	East	South
			1NT
Pass	5NT	Pass	6NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

### What Does Partner Have?

**5NT.** Quantitative Bid showing 20-21 balanced points, asking me to further describe my 1NT bid: bid 6NT with minimum 15, use judgment with 16, bid 7NT with maximum 17.

**Pass.**

### Thoughts

I bid 6NT – showing a minimum 15 point hand.

## Deal #10

Dealer North

	<b>North</b>	
<b>West</b>		<b>East</b>
	<b>South</b>	
	♠ QJ5	
	♥ A7	
	♦ AK8	
	♣ AK983	

West	North	East	South
	1NT	Pass	5NT
Pass	7NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

### What Does Partner Have?

**1NT.** 15-17 balanced points.

**7NT.** Good 16, or 17, points.

### Thoughts

Partner bids 7NT – showing a maximum 17 point hand.

I pass (!)

## Chapter One — Quiz Questions

### *Balanced* Hand Responses to Opening 1NT

a. South: ♠ AQ109 ♥ KQ43 ♦ K98 ♣ Q7

	West	North	East	South
				1NT
Pass	4NT	Pass		???

b. South: ♠ AQ109 ♥ KQ43 ♦ K98 ♣ Q7

	West	North	East	South
		1NT	Pass	???

c. South: ♠ KQ97 ♥ AQ72 ♦ K98 ♣ QJ

	West	North	East	South
				1NT
Pass	5NT	Pass		???

d. South: ♠ KQJ10 ♥ KQJ3 ♦ KQ8 ♣ KJ

	West	North	East	South
		1NT	Pass	???

e. South: ♠ AQ109 ♥ KJ43 ♦ K98 ♣ Q7

	West	North	East	South
				1NT
Pass	2NT	Pass		???

f. South: ♠ Q109 ♥ K73 ♦ K982 ♣ J76

	West	North	East	South
		1NT	Pass	???

## Chapter One — Quiz Answers

### *Balanced Hand Responses to Opening 1NT*

- a. **Pass/6NT.** You'd pass with 15, bid 6NT with 17, but you have 16. You choose. Partner is showing 16-17 balanced points. You have 32 or 33 combined HCPs.  
**Not Sure?** See Deals #5 and #6.
- b. **4NT.** You show a balanced 16-17 HCPs, asking partner to Pass or bid 6NT.  
**Not Sure?** See Deals #5 and #6.
- c. **7NT.** Partner is showing 20-21 balanced HCPs, asking you to bid 6NT with a minimum or 7NT with a maximum. You've got the max!  
**Not Sure?** Review Deal #10.
- d. **5NT.** You show 20-21 balanced HCPs. Now it's up to partner to bid 6NT or 7NT. Partner has at least 3 Aces!  
**Not Sure?** Review Deals #9 and #10.
- e. **Pass.** Partner is showing 8-9 balanced HCPs, asking you to Pass with a minimum, bid 3NT with a maximum, and show judgment with 16. You're minimum.  
**Not Sure?** Review Deal #1.
- f. **2NT.** You show 8-9 balanced HCPs, asking partner to Pass or bid 3NT.  
**Not Sure?** Review Deals #1 and #2.





## **Unbalanced Hand Responses to Opening 1NT – Stayman**

### **Stayman Review**

- After partner opens 1NT, Responder, with 8 or more points and at least one 4-card major, makes an **artificial** bid of 2♣ (Stayman) asking 1NT opener if he has a 4-card major. **Forcing.**
- Opener rebids
  - 2♦ with no 4-card major, or
  - 2♥ with four hearts (and maybe four spades), or
  - 2♠ with four spades (and denies four hearts)
  - with both 4-card majors, opener rebids “up-the-line” – hearts first
- Without a major fit, Responder rebids
  - 2NT (with 8-9 points), or
  - 3NT (with 10-15 points)
- With a major fit, Responder rebids
  - 3 of agreed major (with 8-9 points), or
  - 4 of agreed major (with 10-15 points)

### **Example Deals #11-15**

### **“Garbage” Stayman Review**

- After partner opens 1NT, “Garbage” Stayman is a 2♣ response with **0-7 points**, shortness (singleton or void) in **clubs only**, and no 5-card or longer major suit.
- With this rare and weak hand, Responder knows that opener will be better off playing in any suit **except clubs**. So, responder bids Stayman, and passes whatever opener rebids.

### **Example Deal #16**

### **Quiz Questions & Answers**

## Deal #11

Dealer North

	<b>North</b>	
<b>West</b>		<b>East</b>
	<b>South</b>	
	♠ A1098	
	♥ 874	
	♦ K103	
	♣ J63	

West	North	East	South
	1NT	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♦	Pass	2NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

### What Does Partner Have?

**1NT.** (15-17 balanced points).

**2♦.** After my Stayman bid – forcing, partner shows no 4- card major.

**Pass.** After my 2NT rebid, partner shows a minimum 15 points, or a bad 16 points.

### Thoughts

I start with Stayman, and not finding a fit, rebid 2NT showing 8-9 balanced points. Partner's pass shows a minimum 15 points, or a bad 16 points. Partner does not have 17 points.

## Deal #12

Dealer South

	<b>North</b>	
<b>West</b>		<b>East</b>
	<b>South</b>	
	♠ AJ10	
	♥ KQJ6	
	♦ J942	
	♣ K4	

West	North	East	South
			1NT
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♥
Pass	2NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

### What Does Partner Have?

**2♣.** Stayman convention – forcing: *showing* at least one 4-card major and 8+ points, and *asking* me to name my 4+ card major (“up the line”: hearts first if I have 4 hearts and 4 spades), or bid 2♦ if I don’t have a 4+ card major.

**2NT.** Shows 8-9 points, and four spades (hearts wasn’t a fit).

### Thoughts

Answering Stayman, I bid 2♥ showing 4+ hearts (I could also have 4 spades). Partner bids 2NT to show no heart fit and 8-9 points. I now know that partner’s 4-card suit is spades, with 8-9 points. Without four spades to go with partner’s, and with a minimum hand, I pass (with 17, or a good 16 points, I would bid 3NT).

## A BIDDING REVIEW FOR YOU AND PARTNER

In **Book One**, the opponents pass. You see only your South hand.

**Analyze** partner's bids. What do they promise? Deny?

Are they forcing? What cards and points are required?

Review a **Bidding Concept**.

Bid **Example Deals**.

Consult **What Does Partner Have?** and **Thoughts**.

Take the **Quizzes** and check your **Answers**.

Were you right? **Not Sure?** Refer to the suggested deals.



**Timothy LeVan** is owner & founder of the Camp Hill (Pennsylvania) Bridge Club, and an ACBL-accredited club director, teacher, and soon Silver Life Master. He is also accredited by Easybridge!, and Audrey Grant's Better Bridge.

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