

SAYC OPENING BIDS

1NT/2NT openings

1. Open 1NT with
 - a. 15–17 high-card points (HCP).
 - b. One of the following distributions: 4333, 4432, or 5332 with a 5-card minor (clubs or diamonds).
 - c. Do not open 1NT with any other distribution. In particular, do not open 1NT with a 5332 distribution and a 5-card major (hearts or spades), even if the point count is in the 15–17 range. Such hands should be opened 1H or 1S, as appropriate.
2. Open 2NT with 20–21 HCP and the same distributions as in 1NT.

OPENING BIDS OF ONE IN A SUIT

Hands with 12+ points that cannot be opened 1NT/2NT should normally be opened 1 in a suit. General rules:

1. 1H/1S openings require at least 5 cards in that suit (***no exceptions!***).
2. With a suit strictly longer than all the other suits open 1 in that suit, unless the longest suit is a 4-card major (see point 1 above).
3. With two (or three) suits of equal length, open 1 in the highest-ranking suit, unless the highest-ranking suit is a 4-card major (see point 1 above).

1H/1S openings

1. Open 1H/1S with 12+ points and 5+ cards in the suit.
2. With 5+ ♥ and 5+ ♠, open 1 in the longer suit. If the suits are of equal length, open 1S.

1C/1D openings

1. Open 1C/1D with 12+ points and a hand that does not qualify for any of the other opening bids listed above (1H/1S/1NT/2NT).
2. Normally, 1C/1D opening bids should be made in a suit with 4+ cards (but see the exceptions below):
 - a. With 4+ ♣ and/or 4+ ♦, open 1 in the longer suit. If the suits are of equal length, open 1D.
 - b. With a hand that does not have a 4-card minor suit and cannot be opened 1H/1S/1NT/2NT (e.g. 4333 with a 4-card major and < 15 HCP), open 1C if holding 3 ♣.
 - c. With 4♠, 4♥, 3♦ and 2♣, open 1D (unless the point count is suitable for a 1NT or 2NT opening). This is the only distribution that does not fit any of the other cases listed above.
 - d. Never open in a suit with only 2 cards.

Weak two-level openings

1. Weak two-level openings are 2♦/♥/♠ (*but not 2♣*)
2. Requirements: 5–11 HCP and a 6-card (or longer) suit of reasonable quality
 - a. Most of the points concentrated in the long suit
 - b. If vulnerable, must hold 2 of the top 3 or 3 of the top 5 honors of the long suit
 - c. If not vulnerable, somewhat weaker suits (e.g. KJxxxx) are acceptable

DEFENSIVE BIDDING

Take-out doubles over suit openings

A double after an opening bid by opponents is for take-out when

1. It is the first non-pass bid by *both the player who doubles and his/her partner*
2. It is made against a “low level” opening bid *in a suit* (e.g. no higher than 2♠)

Requirements for a take-out double:

1. Approximately opening strength (11/12+ pts)
2. No more than 2 cards in opener’s suit
3. At least 3 cards in each of the remaining suits (ideally, at least 4 cards in the unbid major suits)

Simple (non-jump) suit overcalls (at the one or two level) over suit openings

Minimum requirements: in all cases, at least 8 HCP (but no more than 16) and 5+ cards in the suit chosen for the overcall. Additionally:

1. For overcalls at the one level: a “good” suit or a “good” hand (11/12–16 HCP) (or both!)
2. For overcalls at the two level: a “good” suit *and* a “good” hand

Jump suit overcalls over suit openings

A jump suit overcall over a suit opening (e.g. 2♥ over 1♦) has the same meaning and the same requirements as a (preemptive) opening bid at the same level.

1NT overcalls

Requirements:

1. 15–18 HCP
2. A balanced hand (distribution requirements are not as stringent as in the case of 1NT opening)
3. *A stopper in opener’s suit*

Note: when holding a hand that contains a 5-card major suit, it is generally preferable to overcall in the major suit, even if the hand qualifies for a 1NT overcall.