

Reverses I

When holding two 4+card suits as Opener, you typically bidding with the higher ranking suit. When you rebid the 2nd suit, which is lower in rank, Responder may choose the 1st suit without increasing the level. However, if Opener bids the suits in **reverse** order, Responder must go to the 3-level to return to Opener's first suit. Clearly, if Responder is forced to a higher level, it follows that Opener must have more than minimal strength.

Reverse bidding agreements solve a difficult bidding problem: you have 16+ to nearly 2♣ opening strength, unbalanced and your longest suit is lower than other suits. Examples:

(a) ♠ 4 ♡ AKQ ♦ A762 ♣ AK432	(b) ♠ A ♡ AK76 ♦ KJ9765 ♣ Q6	(c) ♠ AK8 ♡ 32 ♦ A107 ♣ AK932
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Suggested Reverse Agreements (not universal):

- Opener's reverse shows a minimum of 16+ HE and is a 1-round force.
- Responder rebids a 5+card major, regardless of strength, and is a 1-round force.
- Responder with less than 8 HE without a 5+card major, rebids a new suit at the 2-level (if available) or 2NT (if 4th suit is not available at 2-level). Either of these bids show a weak hand. No Game Force is created. In these cases, the following Opener rebids may be Passed: 2NT, Opener's 1st suit or a raise of Responder's original major. Any other bid by Opener creates a Game Force.
- If Responder does not make a rebid showing a weak hand or a 5+card major, a Game Force is created and bidding proceeds naturally. Jumps are not required.

Opener's rebid at the 1-level is not a reverse, e.g. 1♣ – 1♥ // 1♠ (by Opener) is not a reverse but is a 1-round force. Likewise, after a 2/1 response, Opener bid of a higher-ranking suit than Opener's initial suit is not a reverse, e.g. 1♦ – 2♣ // 2♥ (by Opener).

Example Reverse Bidding Sequences

West has nearly the values for a 2♣ opener but that would make bidding this hand difficult. Instead West begins with 1♣, planning to reverse to 2♦. East responds 1♠; then using HE, decides the hand is worth a positive response of 3♦, which creates a Game Force. The rest of the bidding is natural and left to the reader.

Move East's ♦K to ♥s, so that East's hand is 4333, and East's second bid would be 2♥!, showing a weak hand. West would then bid 3NT.

West

♠ 4
 ♡ AKQ
 ♦ A762
 ♣ AK432

East

♠ A1093
 ♡ 104
 ♦ K953
 ♣ 987

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	Pass	Pass	Pass
1 ♣	Pass	1 ♠	Pass
2 ♦	Pass	3 ♦	

Example Reverse Bidding Sequences

West has a minimum for a reverse, especially after the “expected” 1♠ response. There’s an argument for West rebidding 2♦; such a bid downgrades this hand. Here we’re showing a 2♥ reverse.

West now rebids ♠s showing 5+ but not creating a Game Force. Opener could rebid either 2NT, not a good choice without a ♣ stopper, the expected lead) or 3♦ (shown), neither of these bids are forcing. Note that Opener may not Pass the 2♠ rebid, as this is a 1-round force.

This hand illustrates how a misfit requires many more points, HE or HCP, to make game.

West could immediately support ♠s, but jumping to game with only 3-card support isn’t best. West shows the hand’s power with a reverse, albeit with a 3-card suit. Now when East makes a Game Forcing raise to 3♦, West can show ♠ support and a good game is reached.

West opens 1♣ and East responds with 1♠. West reverses into ♥s, not ♦s with this hand type. East shows 5+cards in ♠s with the 2♠ rebid, but note that this is not Game Forcing.

Now West, the Opener, bids the 4th suit. This is always Game Forcing by the Opener and may be a real suit, as here, or may be an attempt to get to 3NT. East has enough to continue to 3NT rather than try the 11-trick minor contract.

West opens 1♣ and East responds with 1♠. West incorrectly reverses into ♥s with a hand that lacks sufficient values. West should begin with 1♦ and rebid 2♣. East with a minimum returns to Opener’s first suit at the 2-level.

West

♠ A
♥ A K 7 6
♦ K J 9 7 6 5
♣ Q 6

East

♠ Q J 9 7 4
♥ J 8 5
♦ 10
♣ A 4 3 2

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 ♦	Pass	1 ♠	Pass
2 ♥	Pass	2 ♠	Pass
3 ♦	Pass	3 ♥	All pass

West

♠ A K 8
♥ 3 2
♦ A 10 7
♣ A K 9 3 2

East

♠ Q J 10 9
♥ 9 8 7
♦ K Q J 8
♣ 5 4

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 ♣	Pass	1 ♠	Pass
2 ♦	Pass	3 ♦	Pass
3 ♠	Pass	4 ♠	All pass

West

♠ —
♥ A K J 6
♦ A J 9 6
♣ K Q 10 9 4

East

♠ A K J 7 4
♥ 4 3
♦ 10 8 3 2
♣ J 3

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 ♣	Pass	1 ♠	Pass
2 ♥	Pass	2 ♠	Pass
3 ♦	Pass	3 NT	All pass

West

♠ —
♥ A 8 4 2
♦ A 10 7 4
♣ A 9 7 3 2

East

♠ A J 8 4 2
♥ J 6 5
♦ Q 8 2
♣ 10 4

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	1 ♣	Pass	1 ♠
	2 ♥		

Quiz 2-I: Reverses

You are the dealer, except where (You) is designated later in the auction. Your bids are given up to the _____. Fill the blank in with your next bid.

	Bids & Responses	Your Hand		Bids & Responses	Your Hand
1a.	1♦ – P – 1♠ – P _____	♠ AQ ♥ AKJ4 ♦ AQ6432 ♣ 9	2a.	1♣ – P – 1♠ _(You) – P 2♦ – P – _____	♠ KJT87 ♥ Q652 ♦ 875 ♣ 9
3a.	_____	♠ A ♥ QJT98 ♦ AKQ96 ♣ K5	4a.	1♣ – P – 1♥ – P _____	♠ K9 ♥ T ♦ QT2 ♣ AKJT643
5a.	1♣ – P – 1♠ _(You) – P 2♦ – P – 2♠ _(You) – P 3♣ – P – _____	♠ AJ986 ♥ 543 ♦ 87 ♣ KQ8	6a.	1♦ – P – 1NT _(You) – P 2NT – P – _____	♠ Q7 ♥ K94 ♦ J42 ♣ K9853

	Bids & Responses	Your Hand		Bids & Responses	Your Hand
1b.	1♦ – (1♠) – P – P _____	♠ A8 ♥ AKJ4 ♦ AQ6432 ♣ 9	2b.	1♣ – P – 1♠ – P _____	♠ Q2 ♥ AQT5 ♦ K96 ♣ AK87
3b.	1♣ – P – 1♥ _(You) – P 2♦ – P – _____	♠ AQ7 ♥ KT94 ♦ Q42 ♣ 985	4b.	1♦ – P – 1♠ – P 2♥ – P – 2♠ – P _____	♠ 7 ♥ AKJ95 ♦ AKQ864 ♣ 7
5b.	1♣ – P – 1♥ _(You) – P 2♦ – P – 2♥ _(You) – P 2♠ – P – _____	♠ JT8 ♥ Q7652 ♦ 875 ♣ A9	6b.	1♣ – P – 1♥ – P _____	♠ AQ93 ♥ 8 ♦ A84 ♣ AKQT9