The opponents double a conventional bid:
1NT — (Pass) — 2clubs — (Double)
Redouble = Penalty, good diamond suit;

A good hand if their double is for takeout:
1spades — (Double) — Redouble = 10+ points;

SOS, requesting a different suit, if your side is doubled for penalty in a trump suit
at the three level or lower:
1diamonds — (Pass) — Pass — (Double)
Pass — (Pass) — Redouble = SOS, responder can support at least two of the
unbid suits.

Unless otherwise noted elsewhere, any bid or double by an opponent cancels
a convention intended for non-competitive sequences.

Examples: 1hearts — 2hearts — 2NT = natural (12–14 HCP).
2spades — Double — 2clubs = natural and positive.

If the opponents use a convention (such as Michaels or the unusual notrump), you
can double to show at least 10 points, or you can cuebid one of their shown suits
to force to game.

1spades — (2hearts) — 3hearts = game force.
— Double = at least 10 points, probably balanced.

DEFENSIVE LEADS AND SIGNALS
Defensive signals when following suit or discarding are “high encourages, low
discourages.” And “High-low is an even number, low-high is odd when count is
given.”

Leads are fourth best. From three low cards against a suit contract lead low; against
a notrump contract lead high. From four cards or longer lead fourth best. The one
systemic exception is leading from a suit of four or more cards without an honor. In
this instance lead the second highest card.

Leads are top of touching honors and top from an interior sequence. Against suits,
the ace is led from A K x.

NOTE: When playing the ACBL SAYC:
You may add defenses to the opponents’ conventions (e.g., unusual vs. unusual, and
Mathe over big club). Put these convention-defenses in the section “Defenses vs.
Opp’s Conventions” on the left-hand side of the convention card.

ACBL SAYC SYSTEM BOOKLET
Revised January 2006

OVERVIEW
The ACBL Standard American Yellow Card (SAYC) was created to be the required
system to be used in a Standard Yellow Card event. The object was to provide a
simple, modern method that will lead to a good, solid understanding in a partnership
when both players have read this booklet.

Because this system was to be used by each pair, the game was free of a wide
variety of possibly complex systems. There was no necessity to Alert or ask
questions since everyone was playing the same method.

When play began on the Internet, players needing a quick way to establish the
method to be used in a relatively casual partnership adopted the SAYC. It is also
used by players who meet at the partnership desk a few minutes before the game
starts.

Players may still exercise bridge judgment, such as opening a four-card major in
third seat. SAYC “normally five-card majors” approach can withstand an occasional
deviation.

CHOICES
While there are no choices in the present day SAYC, except for an SAYC event in
which everyone must play the method as written, a pair could use the SAYC as a
base and make one or two modifications. If you do make a modification or two in
an open game, you should announce that fact to the opponents – if they think you
are playing straight SAYC and they know SAYC, they would not know about your
modifications.

GENERAL APPROACH
Normally open five-card majors in all seats.
Open the higher of long suits of equal length: 5–5 or 6–6. Normally open 1clubs
with 4–4 in the minors.
Normally open 1hearts with 3–3 in the minors.
Notrump openings show a balanced hand and may be made with a five-card major
suit or a five-card minor suit.
1NT = 15–17
2NT = 20–21
3NT = 25–27
Strong conventional 2clubs opening.
Weak two-bids in diamonds, hearts and spades.

RESPONSES AND LATER BIDDING AFTER A 15–17 1NT OPENING
2clubs is “non-forcing” Stayman, meaning that the bidding may stop in two of a suit.
Opener rebids 2hearts with 4–4 in the majors. If responder rebids three of either minor,
he shows slam interest and at least a five-card suit.

The Jacoby transfer shows a five-card suit and is used for the majors: 2diamonds is
a transfer to hearts, 2hearts is a transfer to spades. Opener accepts the transfer, though
he can jump to the three level with 17 points and four-card support for responder’s
major. For example:
Responder may bid 2NT over a major suit cuebid to ask for partner’s minor.

- 1♥ = 2♥ = (Pass) = 2NT (asks for the minor).
- (Pass) = 3♠ = club suit.
- 3♣ = diamond suit.

A reopening bid means much the same as a direct seat bid, though it can be lighter at the minimum end. A reopening 1NT after an opponent has opened shows 10–15 points. This is a wide range, but there will not usually be a game on for you.

A double is for takeout over an opening partscore bid (4♣ or lower); penalty over opening game bids (4♥ or higher). A below-game jump response to a takeout double is invitational. To force, responder cuebids opener’s suit.

Versus an opening preempt, an overcall in a suit or notrump is natural; a cuebid is Michaels.

**COMPETITIVE BIDDING**

There is almost an endless variety of possible sequences, so it pays to have simple guidelines to prevent bidding misunderstandings.

Bids mean the same things they meant without the intervening bid. Still, it is sometimes necessary to pick a bid that would normally have been a second choice without the overcall: 1NT — 2♠ — Pass = 4–4 or better in the majors. Asking for aces guarantees that the partnership holds all the aces.

Cuebidding right-hand opponent’s suit shows values for game without clear direction for the moment. This is often used to show a game-forcing raise: 1NT — (Double) — 2♦ — 3♠ = game force; usually a raise.

The negative double is used through 2♠, promising four cards (at least) in an unbid major. Bidding a major at the two level or higher shows 11 or more points and a five-card or longer suit. 1♥ = Double = 4–4 or better in the majors.

1♥ = (1♥) = Double = exactly four spades (1♥ promises five). 1♥ = (1♣) = Double = four hearts and 6+ or 5 hearts and 5–10 points.

If RHO makes a takeout double:

- 1♥ = (Double) = 1♥, 1♦ = forcing, point count not limited.
- 2♠ = non-forcing (6–10 points, usually a six-card suit).
- 2NT = limit raise (at least 10 points) or better.
- Redouble = 10 points or more, but it is better to make a more descriptive bid of 1♥, 1♠, or 2NT with the appropriate hand.
- 3♠ = preemptive, good trump support but fewer than 10 points.

A responder’s jump shift after a double is to play:

A redouble can have one of three meanings:

To play if:

Your side is at the four level or higher:

- 4♣ = (Double) — Redouble = Penalty;
OPENING PREEMPTS

Opposite an unpassed partner, an opening 3 or 4-level call in a suit tends toward sound at equal or unfavorable vulnerability. Vulnerable against not, you should be within two tricks of your bid (i.e. with likely distribution of the remaining cards in your suit). When the vulnerability is equal, you should be within three tricks of your bid. At favorable vulnerability, the preempt tends to be lighter, so you should be within four tricks of your bid.

SLAM BIDDING

Blackwood 4NT is used to ask for aces. Responses show the number of aces by steps. 5NT is then used to ask for kings; 5NT guarantees that the partnership holds all four aces.

| 1♣ | 2NT, 3♣, 3♥ = Jacoby transfers to hearts and spades, respectively. |
| 2♣, 3♣, 3♥ = Gerber (ace asking). |
| — 4NT = Invites a slam in notrump. |
| — 4♦ = Stayman. |

RESPONSES TO A 2NT OR A 3NT OPENING

Stayman and Jacoby transfers for the majors are used.

| 2NT — 3♠ = Stayman. |
| — 3♥, 3♥ = Jacoby transfers to hearts and spades, respectively. |
| — 4♣ = Gerber (ace asking). |
| — 4NT = Invites a slam in notrump. |
| 3NT — 4♦ = Stayman. |

RESPONSES AND LATER BIDDING AFTER A 1♣ OR A 1NT OPENING

1♣ and 1NT openings show a five-card or longer suit.

1♥ — 1♣ = at least four spades, 6 or more points. Tends to deny a heart fit.
1♥ — 1NT = 6–9 points, denies four spades or three hearts. NOT forcing.
2♣, 2♥ = 10 points or more, promises at least four of the suit.
2♥ = three-card or longer heart support; 6–10 dummy points.
2NT = Game-forcing raise (Jacoby 2NT), 13+ dummy points. Asks opener to show a short suit to help responder evaluate slam prospects.

1♠ — 1NT = 6–9 points, denies four spades or three hearts. NOT forcing.
1♠ — 2NT, 2♠, 2♥ = 10 points or more, promises at least four of the suit.
3NT = 15–17 HCP, balanced hand with two-card support for partner.
4NT = usually five hearts, a singleton or void, and fewer than 10 HCP.

DEFENSIVE BIDDING

Overcalls show 8–16 points (double and bid the long suit with a stronger hand). The only forcing response is a cuebid of opener’s suit, asking the overcaller about the quality of his overcall:

(1♦) — 1♠ = (Pass) — 2♦
(Pass) — 2♠ = minimum overcall.
— other = extra strength (11 or 12 points minimum).

A 1♠ overcall shows 15–18 points and a balanced hand (preferably a stopper in opener’s suit). No conventional responses are used by the responder to the 1NT overcall except 2♠, which is Stayman.

A jump overcall of 2NT shows at least 5–5 in the lowest two unbid suits.

Jump overcalls are preemptive, showing the same value as an opening bid at the same level:

(1♦) — 2♥ = a hand that would open a weak two-bid in spades.
— 3♥ = a hand that would open 3♠.

A cue bid overcall when the opponents have bid two suits is natural in either suit.

A cue bid overcall when the opponents have bid only one suit is a Michaels cue bid, showing a 5–5 two-suit (or more distributional). If the opening is in a minor suit, the cue bid shows the majors; if the opening is in a major, the cue bid shows the other major and an unspecified minor.

(1♣) — 2♥ = at least 5–5 in the majors, 8 points or more.
(1♠) — 2♠ = at least 5–5 in hearts and a minor; 10 points or more.

A jump overcall of 3NT above a 1♠ opening, that is Jacoby 2NT, asking opener to show a singleton or void. If opener has no short suit, he shows his hand strength;

* If responder jumps to 2NT over a 1♥ or 1♠ opening, that is Jacoby 2NT, asking opener to show a singleton or void. If opener has no short suit, he shows his hand strength;

1♥ — 2NT
3♠, 3♥, 3♣ = singleton or void in that suit. Other bids deny a short suit.
4♥ = minimum hand.
3NT = medium hand (15–17).
3♥ = maximum hand (18+).
4♠, 4♥ = 2nd suit

Responder follows up by attempting to sign off in game, bidding 4NT Blackwood, or cuebidding if still interested in trying to cooperate with opener in making the slam decision.
If responder has bid a suit at the one level, he next determines whether he wishes to sign off in a partscore, invite game, sign off in game, or force to game and get more information about opener’s hand.

**Bids available for a sign-off in partscore:** Pass, 1NT, 2 of a previously bid suit.
- 1♣ — 1♣
- 2♠ — Pass, 2 ♥, 2 ♠ = 6–9 points, sign-off in partscore.

**Bids available for inviting game:** 2NT, 3 of a previously bid suit:
- 1♥ — 1♣
- 2 ♠ — 2NT, 3 ♥, 3 ♠, 3 ♣ = 10–11 points, inviting game.

After opener rebids in a suit, a new suit by responder is forcing. If the new suit is the fourth suit, the bid may be artificial/ conventional.
- 1♥ — 1♣
- 2 ♠ — 2 ♠ = one-round force, could be conventional.

**However, after a 1NT rebid by opener, bids of a new suit at the next higher level are non-forcing.**
- 1NT — 2 ♠, 2 ♦ = non-forcing. Responder must jump shift to 3 ♠ or 3 ♦ to force game.

Second-round forcing bids following a 1NT rebid by opener: a reverse or jump shift into a new suit is a game force.
- 1♦ — 1♥
- 1NT — 2 ♠ or 3 ♦ = game force.

**Bids available for signing off in game.**
- 3NT, 4 ♥, 4 ♣, 5 ♣, 5 ♦.

If responder initially bids a new suit at the two level, the same rules apply EXCEPT that a subsequent jump raise of opener’s first suit to the THREE LEVEL is game forcing — responder should make a limit raise directly over the opening with 10–11 points and at least three-card support:
- 1♠ — 2♠
- 2 ♥ — 2NT, 3 ♥, 3 ♥ = invitation to game (10–11 points).
- 3 ♠ = preference, not forcing. Responder has 11–12 points and a doubleton spade.
- 3 ♣ = game force, could be conventional.

**NOTE:** Responder promises to bid again if he responded with a new suit at the two level unless opener’s rebid is at the game level. This applies when responder is an unpassed hand.
- 1♥ — 2 ♠
- 2 ♦ = forcing one round. Responder can limit his hand by bidding 2 ♠, 2NT, 3 ♠, or 3 ♦ at this point. He should not pass, since opener could have 18 points (just short of a jump shift rebid).

**Responses to a 1♣ or a 1♦ Opening**

A 1♣ opener suggests a four-card or longer suit, since 1♣ is preferred on hands where a three-card minor suit must be opened. The exception is a hand with 4–4–3–2 shape: four spades, four hearts, three diamonds, and two clubs, which is opened 1♦.

Responses and later bidding generally follow the ideas set down in the previous section. Bidding at the one level is up-the-line in principle. Responder needs more support to raise (four to raise 1♣; five to raise 1♦, though one fewer will do in a pinch in a competitive sequence). Responses of 2NT and 3NT are standard:
- 1♣ — 2NT = 13–15, game forcing
- 3NT = 16–18

There is no forcing minor-suit raise.

**A 2♠ Opening, Responses, and Later Bidding**

A 2♠ opening shows at least 22+ points, or the playing equivalent. Responses:
- 2 ♠ — 2 ♠ = conventional, could be “waiting” with a good hand not suited to a positive response.
- 2 ♥, 2 ♣, 3 ♥, 3 ♠ = natural and game forcing. At least a five-card suit and 8 points.
- 2NT = a balanced 8 HCP.

If opener rebids 2NT after a 2 ♠ response (showing 22–24 points), the same responses are used as over a 2NT opening:
- 2 ♠ — 2 ♠ = Stayman.
- 3 ♠, 3 ♥ = Jacoby transfers to hearts and spades, respectively.
- 4 ♠ = Gerber.
- 4NT = inviting a slam in notrump.

If opener rebids a suit over a 2NT response, the bidding is forcing to 3 of opener’s major or 4 of opener’s minor.
- 2 ♠ — 2 ♦
- 2 ♥ — 2 ♠
- 3 ♠ = not forcing.

**Sequence after a Weak Two-Bid of 2 ♠, 2 ♥ or 2 ♣**

A weak two-bid shows a six-card suit of reasonable quality and 5–11 HCP. On rare occasions it may be a very good five-card suit. It is possible to open a weak two with a poor seven-card suit (not good enough to open with at the three level). Responses:

A 2NT response is forcing, showing game interest. (This applies also if the opponents intervene with a double or a bid.) Opener rebids his suit with a minimum weak two (5–8 points). With a maximum hand opener bids another suit to show a “feature” (ace or king in that suit); lacking a feature, he raises to 3NT and lets responder place the contract.

Any raise of opener’s suit is to play and could be preemptive (weak). A 3NT response is also to play.

“RONF” on the card means “Raise Only Non-Force.” A new-suit response is forcing one round and shows at least a five-card suit. Opener should raise a major suit response with a three-card fit, or perhaps with a doubleton honor.

With no fit for responder’s suit, opener rebids:

With a minimum weak two-bid (5–8 points), rebid the suit at the lowest level.

With a maximum weak two-bid, name a new suit or bid notrump.