

REVERSE BIDDING



with ?

*A **reverse**, in the card game contract **bridge**, is a **bidding** sequence designed to show additional strength without the need to make a jump **bid**; specifically, two suits are **bid** in the **reverse** order to that expected by the basic **bidding** system.*



"Oh, please, Harold ... all the ladies in my bridge club have pistols."

The Reverse Bid at the Two Level

A **'Reverse Bid'** is the backbone of the standard bidding structure. Either opener or responder can make a reverse bid. A **reverse bid** is always the second bid made by either Opener or Responder.

Opener's Reverse

To **'reverse'** the bidding, opener must have a hand valued at 17+ points, he must be longer in the first suit then he is in the second suit and his bid is forcing for one round.

Responder's Reverse

To **'reverse'** the bidding, responder needs a hand valued at 13+ points, he must be longer in the first suit then he is in the second suit and his bid is forcing to game.

The word **'reverse'** is by definition, relative to something else. Reverse to what? Consider the two following two auctions.

North	South	*North	South
1♥	1♠	1♦	1♠
2♦		2♥	

N has bid both red suits in the two sample auctions. Of the two suits, hearts is higher ranking than diamonds. Note how in the second

auction **N** reversed the way he introduced the two suits. In the first auction he bid hearts and then diamonds, where as in the second he bid diamonds and then hearts. In the second auction the 2♥ bid is called a **'Reverse Bid'**.

The thing to note is that in the first auction **S** has not denied holding diamonds. (**S** did not bypass diamonds in order to bid 1♠). However, in the second auction, **S** did bypass hearts in order to bid 1♠. If your second suit is a suit that your partner has by passed in the auction, you are making a **'Reverse Bid'**. Think about it: if you show 4 cards in a suit that your partner has denied, your side probably does not have a fit in that suit, so the auction is forced and if the auction is forced you had better have a stronger than normal hand.

Eg.

North	South
1♣	1♠



Note how **S** has bypassed both diamonds and hearts in order to bid 1♠. **S** has denied (temporarily) holding 4 diamonds or 4 hearts. Hence, if **N** now bids 2♦ or 2♥, a suit his partner denied, **N** has made a **'Reverse Bid'** and must have the requirements to do so.

Note: Another way to identify a **'Reverse Bid'** is; if your second bid suit (at the two level) is higher ranking than your first bid suit you have reversed. In the above *example, note that in the second auction, **N**'s second bid suit is higher ranking than his first bid suit.

Which of the following auctions is a **reverse** auction?

1)

North		South
1♦		1♠
2♣		

2)

North		South
1♣		1♥
2♦		

3)

North		South
1♥		1NT
2♠		

4)

North		South
1♦		2♣
2NT		3♠

5)

North		South
1♦		1♠
2♣		

6)

North		South
1♣		1♥
1NT		2♠

- 1) N's second bid suit in clubs is not a suit that S has bypassed in the auction. N shows diamonds and clubs and 13-16ish points.
- 2) N's second bid of 2♦ is a '**Reverse Bid**'. S has bypassed diamonds in order to bid 1♥, so the 2♦ bid by N shows 17+ points and is longer in clubs than in diamonds.
- 3) The 2♠ bid is a "**Reverse Bid**". S responded 1NT to the 1♥ opening bid, denying a 4-card spade suit. Hence, when N bids a suit (spades) that his partner has denied, N has 'reversed' and shows 17+ points with longer hearts than spades.
- 4) This is an example of a '**Reverse Bid**' by responder. Over 2♣, N has bypassed hearts and spades (in this case not necessarily denying the suits) and S has 'reversed', his second bid suit being higher ranking than his first bid suit. S promises 13+ points, longer clubs than spades and is forcing to game.
- 5) This is not a '**reverse**' auction. N's second bid suit is not a suit his partner has bypassed in the auction. N has 13 -16 points with both minors.
- 6) Another example of a '**Reverse Bid**' by responder. When N bid 1NT he denied holding 4 spades. Hence, when S bid 2♠, a suit his partner has denied holding, S has reversed the auction. S shows 13+ points with longer hearts than spades and is forcing to game.
- 7) You now know what it takes for opener or responder to make a **Reverse Bid** at the two-level.

Simple Math

Question: Opener Needs 17+ Pts to reverse, and responder only needs 13+ to reverse.

Answer: Responder only needs 13 points to **reverse** because they have a partner that has already opened and thus has 13+ points as well. Opener needs 17+ points to '**reverse**' because his partner (responder) might have as little as 6 points for their initial response. Hence, opener needs more strength to force the auction.

Opener's Requirements:

1. 17+ points.
2. Must be longer in the first suit than in the second suit.
3. Second suit is higher ranking than the first suit.
4. Forcing for one round. (Responder cannot pass)

Responder's Requirements:

1. 13+ points.
2. Must be longer in the first suit than in the second suit.
3. Second suit is higher ranking than the first suit.
4. Forcing to game.

Responding to Opener's Reverse:

Responder must bid again when opener **reverses**. Below is a list of responses. Research reveals that there are many variations as to the meanings of responders second bid after opener reverses. Hence the ones I am suggesting seem to be fairly widely accepted and played, but not definitive. Using the following auction lets examine responder's forced response to a **reverse bid** by opener.

North	South
1♦	1♠
2♥	?

Weak Responses (opener can pass with a minimum reverse and nothing more to describe)

1. 3♦/3♥ A single raise one of opener's suit shows preference. 6-8 pts
2. 2♠ Rebid of your own suit suggests 6 cards, (may be only 5). 6-8 pts
3. 2NT Shows weakness with a stopper in the unbid suit, clubs. 6-8 pts
It should be noted that 2NT can be used as Lebensohl over a reverse bid. Lebensohl makes it easier to stop below game when there is no game.

Game Going Responses (Game on. Maybe slam)

4. 3♣ Bidding the fourth suit is forcing. Could be natural or artificial. 9+ pts
5. 4♦/4♥ Jump raise one of opener's suit shows enough strength to be in game.
(The jump raise in diamonds actually shows interest in slam).
6. 3♠ A jump rebid in your own suit, shows 6+ cards and game values. 9+ pts
7. 3NT A jump to 3NT shows games values opposite the reverse bid with stopper(s) in the unbid suit. 9-12 pts

In the Heat of Action:

♠43 ♥AKJ5 ♦AKJ1084 ♣2 You open this hand 1♦, partner responds 1♠ and you **reverse** into 2♥. You show 17+ pts, longer diamonds than hearts and force responder to come up with one more bid. If responder bids 2NT or 2♠ or 3♣ you will rebid your diamonds to show your 6-4 shape. If responder bids 3♥ you will bid 4♥.

♠A ♥85 ♦KJ74 ♣AKQ982 You open 1♣ and partner responds with 1♠. With 17+ points and longer clubs than diamonds, you **reverse** into 2♦.

♠43 ♥AQJ5 ♦AJ1094 ♣AQ You open the bidding with 1♦ and partner responds 1♠. You have all the requirements to **reverse** into 2♥. However, I think that a jump rebid of 2NT showing 18-19 with a balanced type hand is also appropriate. A lead of either unbid suit (hearts or clubs) comes right into the jaws of your tenace holdings. Interchange the A♣ and the 4♠ giving you this hand: ♠A3 ♥AQJ5 ♦AJ1094 ♣Q4 and I would **reverse** into 2♥.

♠KJ8743 ♥A5 ♦42 ♣K32 This time you are responder and partner has opened 1♦, you responded 1♠ and opener **reversed** into 2♥. There is one thing you know for sure; you want to be in game opposite a hand that made a **reverse** bid. Jump to 3♠ to show your length and game going strength.

♠Q874 ♥95 ♦1094 ♣A1094 Again you are the responder and the auction is: 1♦ - 1♠ - 2♥. You are forced to bid again and should bid 2NT. 2NT shows a weak hand (6-8 pts) and a stopper in the unbid suit, clubs. **Reverse** auctions are difficult in that it is sometimes hard to put the brakes on and stop below game. However, you do have a number of weak responses to choose from, in response to a **reverse**. 2NT is one such bid.

♠AQ43 ♥J95 ♦AJ974 ♣2 Partner (not you) opened 1♦. You responded 1♠ and partner reversed into 2♥. Wow. You know partner has 5+ diamonds and 17+ points. You must be a wee bit excited. Jump raise opener's first suit with a bid of 4♦. This sets the trump suit, says you definitely want to be in game and shows slam interest. Your singleton club may gold dust.

Backbone of Standard American

I have always considered **Reverse Bids** to be the backbone of Standard Bidding methods. It empowers you with the ability to not only show strength, but to show distribution as well. What a lovely, all purpose, two edged weapon it is. So often a bidding sequence has ambiguities as to whether or not it is forcing. One player meant a bid as forcing but his partner interpreted it as invitational. No such problems with a **reverse** bid. A '**Reverse Bid**' is 100% forcing. Partner must bid at least one more time.

Reverse Bidding Quiz

On the first four hands you are the opener. You opened the bidding with 1♦ and your partner responded 1♠. What is your second bid?

♠72
♥AQ92
♦AJ652
♣K3

♠A3
♥KJ94
♦AQ74
♣KJ2

♠32
♥AKJ2
♦AQJ982
♣A

♠KJ93
♥AQJ3
♦KQ108
♣4

On the next four hands you are the responder. Your partner opened 1♦, you responded 2♣ and partner re-bid 2♦. What is your next bid?

♠AK97
♥94
♦74
♣KQJ107

♠K73
♥A63
♦93
♣A9542

♠832
♥Q72
♦2
♣AKJ1093

♠98
♥AQJ8
♦109
♣KQ962

On the next four hands you are the responder. Partner opens 1♣, you respond 1♠ and partner **reverses** into 2♦. What is your next bid?

♠AQ1096
♥943
♦982
♣76

♠QJ93
♥K96
♦832
♣832

♠K963
♥972
♦732
♣K98

♠10983
♥Q43
♦9876
♣A2

On the next four hands you are the responder. Partner opens 1♦, you respond 1♠ and partner **reverses** into 2♥. What is your next bid?

♠1098762
♥94
♦4
♣AQ87

♠K9873
♥Q1073
♦A9
♣72

♠AKJ32
♥K43
♦KJ72
♣2

♠J9863
♥K874
♦109
♣Q2

Responder's Reverse

Opener's **Reverse** promise 17+, longer in the first suit than in the second and is forcing one round. Responder's **Reverse** is similar, You still to be longer in the first suit than the second suit, however you show only 13+ points and is forcing to game!

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♦
1NT	2♥*

*Responder's **Reverse**
Game Force with 13+ points
longer in the first suit than in
second suit

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♦
2♣	2♠*

and
the

Note that in both auctions above, opener's second bid has categorically denied holding four cards in either hearts or spades. Hence, when you respond with the lower ranking of two suits, you should not show the second higher ranking suit unless you have the shape and strength to **Reverse**.

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♥
2♣	2♠

This sequence is a also a responder's **Reverse** showing 5+ hearts and 4+ spades, with 13+ points and game force. Opener would have rebid 1♠ if she had a 4-card spade suit. Since she did not, responder need not bid her 4-card spade suit unless she has the

requirements to **Reverse**.

Say you hold: ♠AJ105 ♥Q107 ♦Q983 ♣Q3

Respond 1♦ to partner's 1♣ opening and then over 2♣ rebid 2NT, not 2♠. You have neither the shape (longer in the first suit) to **Reverse** nor the strength (13+).

Likewise with: ♠AJ105 ♥K5 ♦Q10983 ♣103

Here, you have the correct distribution to **Reverse** (you are longer in hearts than you are in spades) but you do not have the strength for a **Reverse** bid. Hence, do not bother mentioning the spades, rather you should invite game with 2NT suggesting a balanced hand with 10-12 points.

Beware of the following auction and discuss with partner.

Opener	Responder
1♦	1♥
2♣	2♠*

It seems responder has made a **Reverse** bid, however many experts play a convention called **4th Suit Forcing**, (**4SF**) which means the spades may not be real. So with a hand where you do hold 13+ points with 5 hearts and 4 spades, such as: ♠AJ103 ♥AQ1064 ♦83 ♣K3

Opener	Responder
1♦	1♥
2♣	2♠*
2NT	3♠!

The auction would still go the same with a **4SF** bid, but with responder's third bid she could (if she wanted to) rebid the spades to confirm that she really does have spades (and thus longer hearts).

Responder's Reverse Quiz

Partner opens 1♣, you respond 1♦ and partner rebids 2♣. What is your next bid?

♠ A1076
♥ K43
♦ A982
♣ 76

♠ QJ93
♥ K6
♦ KJ932
♣ 82

♠ K963
♥ 92
♦ AKQ32
♣ 98

♠ A983
♥ Q43
♦ K876
♣ A2

Partner opens 1♦, you respond 1♥ and partner rebids 1NT. What is your next bid?

♠ AQ62
♥ K1094
♦ 42
♣ A87

♠ KQ83
♥ QJ1073
♦ A
♣ 972

♠ AJ102
♥ KQ10432
♦ 72
♣ 2

♠ AK32
♥ KQ10985
♦ 72
♣ 2
