

More on Doubles

There are two types of Doubles:

- Takeout Double - asks your partner to choose a suit
- Penalty Double - tells partner you think the contract will fail

1. Takeout Double

A double is for takeout if:

- it is a double of a suit bid and it is your first opportunity to bid, or
- later in the auction, when there are at least 2 unbid suits remaining below game level

This double can be made by either player in the partnership.

Use it when:

- you have 12+ HCP, at least three cards in the three unbid suits and you want to compete in the auction
- you have 16+ HCP and an unbalanced hand you must first double and then bid your 5+ suit
- you have a balanced hand of 19+ HCP (too strong to overcall 1NT, then double then bid notrumps)
- partner opens and the opponent overcalls. If you as responder have the other two suits, then a double shows these suits (called a negative double).
 - At the 1-level you need 6+ HCP.
 - At the 2-level you need to be closer to 10+ HCP.
- an overcall is passed back to you, you should reopen with a double if you are short in that suit (called a reopening double).

General Principle:

When there are two or more unbid suits in the auction, all doubles at a low level are takeout.

Examples

1)	<table border="0" style="border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">W</td> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">N</td> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">E</td> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">S</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">1♠</td> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">X</td> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">P</td> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">2♥</td> </tr> </table>	W	N	E	S	1♠	X	P	2♥	North is short in spades and has 3+ cards in the unbid suits. North is asking South to choose the trump suit.				
W	N	E	S											
1♠	X	P	2♥											
2)	<table border="0" style="border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">W</td> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">N</td> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">E</td> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">S</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 10px;"></td> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">1♣</td> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">X</td> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">P</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">1♠</td> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">2♣</td> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">2♥</td> <td style="padding-right: 10px;"></td> </tr> </table>	W	N	E	S		1♣	X	P	1♠	2♣	2♥		West responds to partner's take-out double with their best suit (in this case spades). However, East changes the suit to 2♥ - this now shows 16+ HCP and a good 5+ heart suit
W	N	E	S											
	1♣	X	P											
1♠	2♣	2♥												
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W	N	E	S											
1♣	1♠	X												

2. Penalty Doubles

A double is for penalties if:

- it is a double of a 1NT contract
- it is a high-level contract
- there is only one unbid suit
- it is a double of an artificial bid

This double can be made by either player in the partnership.

Use it when :

- the opponents open 1NT - you should have 16+ HCP. With less, you should overcall a good 5+ suit or pass with a minimum opening hand
- the opponents have bid a suit to the 4 or 5-level and you have 4+ good trumps and outside quick tricks
- the opponents have stopped at the 3-level and you have 5+ trumps and outside quick tricks
- the opponents are obviously in a misfit
- you have a good suit in an artificial bid made by the opponent

Examples

1)	<table border="0"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; padding-right: 10px;">W</th> <th style="text-align: left; padding-right: 10px;">N</th> <th style="text-align: left; padding-right: 10px;">E</th> <th style="text-align: left;">S</th> </tr> <tr> <td>1NT</td> <td>X</td> <td>All pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	W	N	E	S	1NT	X	All pass		West opens 1NT (12-14 HCP). North's double shows 16+ HCP. East has nowhere to go and South with 6+ HCP also passes. The NS pair have 21+ HCP against the opponents' 19 HCP at best.
W	N	E	S							
1NT	X	All pass								

2)	<table border="0"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; padding-right: 10px;">W</th> <th style="text-align: left; padding-right: 10px;">N</th> <th style="text-align: left; padding-right: 10px;">E</th> <th style="text-align: left;">S</th> </tr> <tr> <td>1NT</td> <td>P</td> <td>2♣</td> <td>X</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2♥</td> <td>3♣</td> <td>All pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	W	N	E	S	1NT	P	2♣	X	2♥	3♣	All pass		West opens 1NT with 12-14 HCP. East bids 2♣ (Stayman), South doubles 2♣ to show they have a good club suit. West bids 2♥ (shows a 4-card heart suit). North supports partner with 3♣ to win the contract
W	N	E	S											
1NT	P	2♣	X											
2♥	3♣	All pass												

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W	N	E	S															
1♥	P	2♥	P															
3♥	P	4♥	P															
P	X	All pass																