

3-level/4-level Opening Bids

Similar to Weak Twos, openings at the 3 or 4-level are meant to be preemptive and to make it harder for the opponents to enter the auction or find their best contract. Such bids are also very descriptive in nature: a good 7-card suit (8-card suit for a 4-level opening) and less than an opening hand.

Characteristics of a 3-level/4-level opening bid:

- Openings in 1st/2nd/3rd seat
- 6-10 HCP
- Good 6-card suit (2 of the top 3 or 3 of the top 5 honors)
- No side 4-card major
- No 2 aces

Examples:

♠AQT8763
♥43
♦2
♣986

Open 3♠.

♠2
♥AKJT9752
♦5
♣954

Open 4♥.

♠2
♥T75
♦7
♣KQJT8632

Open 4♣.

♠K
♥Q75
♦QT986432
♣7

Pass. You have the right point count for a weak opening, but your diamond suit is not good enough.

♠2
♥KQJT942
♦43
♣AT5

Open 1♥. Your excellent 7-card suit is perfect for a preemptive opening, but this hand is too strong since you have 13 total points (10 HCP + 3 length points).

Weak Jump Overcalls

Sometimes, you have a preemptive hand which you would have opened with a weak 2, 3 or 4-level bid, but the opponents opened at the 1-level. Bad luck the opponents bid before you? No, you can still bid with your weak hand by making a **weak jump overcall!** However, as the name implies, your bid must be a jump, especially if you were going to make a weak two bid. A non-jump overcall would promise a stronger hand, usually about an opening hand or better.

Examples:

Opp You 1♦ 2♠ <i>Weak jump overcall</i>	Opp You 1♦ 3♠ <i>Weak jump overcall</i>	Opp You 1♠ 4♦ <i>Weak jump overcall</i>	Opp You 1♠ 2♦ <i>Strong overcall (opening hand, 5+ diamonds)</i>
---	---	---	--

♠AQT873 ♥432 ♦2 ♣986 The opponents open 1♥. <i>Overcall 2♠.</i>	♠2 ♥AKJT9752 ♦5 ♣954 The opponents open 1♠. <i>Overcall 4♥.</i>	♠52 ♥AKJT72 ♦5 ♣9542 The opponents open 1♠. <i>Pass. 2♥ would show a stronger hand.</i>
--	--	--

♠K ♥Q75 ♦QT986432 ♣7 The opponents open 1♥. <i>Pass. Your diamond suit is not good enough for a weak jump overcall of 3♦.</i>	♠2 ♥KQJT942 ♦43 ♣AT5 The opponents open 1♣. <i>Bid 1♥. You are too strong for a weak jump overcall. In fact, you are strong enough to overcall 2♥ even if the opponents open 1♠</i>
--	--

References and Further Reading:

1. Karen Walker. "Opening 3-bids." <http://www.prairienet.org/bridge/3bids.htm>
2. Karen Walker. "Opening 4-bids." <http://www.prairienet.org/bridge/4bids.htm>
3. Fred Gitelman. "Preemptive opening bids", "Responding to a preemptive opening bid" in Learn to Play Bridge software <http://www.acbl.org/learn/ltpb.html>