

Doubles and Redoubles - Every bridge player employs the call of double, but the meaning can be different in many cases and can also be different from partnership agreement to partnership agreement, and can actually change during the auction. The attempt has been made to present a list of officially designated doubles designed over the years of the evolution of the game of bridge. Bridge experts, bridge theorists, and bridge pioneers have devised and developed such tactics for the bridge player and a basic knowledge is a priority for all bridge players.

This call has so many meanings in the game of bridge, and a quantum of ambiguity among players is practically a given and understandable. The call of double is the subject of many bridge-related articles and the requirements are perhaps not always written or etched in stone. However, the attempt is made to provide guidelines, under which the call can and should be made.

These are all employed in some conventions and treatments, and this call must be understood by your partner. Therefore, a partnership agreement is essential.

It cannot be said that each double is unique, but every time this call is made, certain defined interpretations and understanding accompany it.

In time, there will be yet more doubles, and yet more interpretations, and yet more understanding of their meanings. But we leave that to the future, and shall deal now only with the present.

Following are a few officially designated doubles, but the list is by no means complete.

Competitive Double - The Competitive Double was designed to allow the bridge player to invite partner either to bid game, to give partner the chance to sign off in a partscore, or to simply pass for penalty.

The origin of the Competitive Double is unknown. The bridge player will discover that practically all players are competing for the contract. Your opponents are bidding to keep you out of a game contract, making you believe that you do not have enough strength to make game. Your opponents are bidding simply to disrupt the Line of Communication between you and your partner.

With their intervening overcalls, the opponents are making it difficult for you and your partner to exchange descriptive information about your hands; the opponents are disrupting the line of communication.

The Competitive Double was designed to remedy this situation by allowing the bridge player:

1. to invite partner either to bid game, and
2. to give partner the chance to sign off in a partscore, or
3. to simply pass for penalty.

The following illustration should clarify this action:

North	East	South	West
1 ♥	2 ♣	2 ♥	3 ♣
		♠ J74	
		♥ A853	
		♦ A987	
		♣ 76	
Pass	Pass	???	

In the above situation, South does not know whether to bid **3 Hearts** or **pass**. North has passed and South is assuming that North is leaving the decision up to him. This is where the Competitive Double comes into play. South has enough strength, but South does not know whether his hand is better in defense or in offense. Therefore, South simply **doubles**.

After the Competitive Double, West will pass **3 Clubs doubled**, since this means game. North, however, recognizes the Competitive Double, and will base his bidding decision upon the length, strength and shape of his hand as in the following three examples.

North	North	North
♠ 6	♠ 3	♠ Q
♥ KQJ97	♥ KQJ54	♥ AK976
♦ KQJ6	♦ KJ98	♦ K1063
♣ KJ8	♣ A64	♣ J98
4 ♥(Game Try)	3 ♥(Part-Score)	Pass (for Penalty)

By using the Competitive Double, North and South will find their best contract. Through the descriptive information provided by the double, the other partner will be able to make a more educated decision than just guessing. Since this situation comes up quite often, it is advisable to adopt the Competitive Double as part of your Partnership Agreement, because opponents love to get in a bid to mess up the auction.

Cooperative Double or **Optional Double** - A Cooperative Double is a double that gives the partner the option, decision or opportunity of passing for penalties or to continue bidding. Cooperative Doubles are used mostly on low-levels of the auction. They generally do not reach or exceed the three level.

A Cooperative Double is a double that gives the partner the option, decision or opportunity of passing for penalties or to continue bidding. Cooperative Doubles are used mostly on low-levels of the auction. They generally do not reach or exceed the three level. That is all there is to understand the application of the Cooperative Double.

Most bridge players do not employ the Cooperative Double, but this fact does not in any way signify that this form of the double has become obsolete, or is not worth exploring.

The first and second examples serve to illustrate the difference between a Takeout Double and the initiation of a Cooperative Double.

Example 1:

West	North	East	South	Meaning
Pass	Pass	1 ♥	Double	1. Takeout Double by South. 2. Support in all other unbid suits. 3. Strongly suggests a 4-card Spade suit.

Example 2:

West	North	East	South	Meaning
1 ♠	2 ♦	Pass	Pass	
2 ♥	Pass	Pass	Double	1. Cooperative Double by South. 2. Final decision is the option of North.

From the auction, it is apparent that South has moderate to very good defensive strength, shortness in Hearts, medium support in Diamonds. The Cooperative Double by South puts East-West into a game contract, but South is informing his partner that they may have a contract and also that they may be able to defeat the contract of their opponents. South finds himself in a position that he cannot, with his holding, guarantee a penalty, and therefore, South is clearly leaving the final decision up to his partner.

Example 2:

South	West	North	East	Meaning
1 ♣	Pass	Pass	Double	Takeout / Balancing Double by East.
1 ♠	2 ♦	Pass	Pass	
Double	Pass	Pass	??	Cooperative Double by South.

After two passes, East decides to make a **Take-Out Double**. South rebids 1 Spade, showing generally somewhere around 18-19 high card points. His distribution and strength do not allow him to open No Trump. West decides to enter the auction with a bid of 2 Diamonds, which is passed to South, who doubles. Hence South only has the Cooperative Double left as his only option, leaving the decision up to his North whether to pass for penalty or to bid.

Lead Directing Double - Certain priorities in the meaning of the Lead Directing Double have established themselves in defense.

Lead Directing Doubles

Every now and then, the opponents are heading towards a 3 No Trump or game contract, and one player knows that his partner will most likely be on lead, and the player wishes that his partner would lead a certain suit, which could defeat the contract or at least not allow any additional overtrick. The player thinks that if his partner would only lead that suit, then the partnership would have a good chance of achieving a good score.

During the bidding auction, the player may realize that the opponents will end up in a 3 No Trump contract and that the partner will be on lead. Before the auction is completed, the player has the chance to **lead-direct** the partner with a double.

Certain priorities in the meaning of the Lead Directing Double have established themselves in defense.

1. A Lead Directing Double requests the lead of the opening leader's suit.
2. A Lead Directing Double requests the lead of the doubler's bid suit.
3. A Lead Directing Double requests the lead of the first suit bid by Dummy, which becomes invalid if the suit has been rebid.

The player does not have to wait until the partscore or even game contract has been reached before making a Lead Directing Double, as illustrated in the following auction:

North	East	South	West
Pass	Pass	1 ♦	Pass
2 NT	Pass	Pass	Double
Pass	Pass	Pass	

North becomes the declarer at 2 No Trump. East is on lead. Normally, the 2 No Trump response by North would be a semi-forcing bid, but do not forget that North passed originally.

Without the Lead Directing Double of his partner West, East would have to use his own judgment in choosing the lead. However, with the Lead Directing Double, East now knows that his partner is asking for a Diamond lead. It is true that a contract of 2 No Trump doubled equals game, but West sees a good chance to set the contract, if and only if West leads a Diamond.

On the other hand, if West passes and the contract is 2 No Trump, then, by inference, East should realize that leading a Diamond is not in the best interest of West. This inference-information is sometimes quite valuable. The bridge player should keep this inferred information in mind when on lead.

An example follows, where there is no doubt as to the lead requested:

Dealer: South

Vulnerable: North-South

North

♠ A743
♥ K1062
♦ Q7
♣ 1087

West

♠ K85
♥ 9754
♦ J865
♣ K6

East

♠ 106
♥ J8
♦ 10943
♣ AQ943

South

♠ QJ92
♥ AQ3
♦ AK2
♣ J52

The auction is as follows:

South	West	North	East
1 NT	Pass	2 ♣	Double
2 ♠	Pass	3 ♠	Pass
4 ♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

The double of East is asking West to lead a Club. It is inferred from the bidding that West will be on lead. West should lead the King of Clubs. This is the lead-directing double.

However, if the opponents reach a 3 No Trump Contract:

South	West	North	East
1 NT	Pass	3 NT	Double
Pass	Pass	Pass	

.. and no suit has been bid, then West, with his Lead Directing Double, is showing his partner East, who is on lead, a near solid suit, which could defeat the contract. East will then **decide between the two Major suits** as his lead. The lead will usually be the shorter Major suit, in which he has no honors.

When the opponents are using Blackwood or cue-bidding First Round Controls to reach Slam, the Lead Directing Double is very useful. If the response of the opponents is in a suit, in which you hold 2 Quick Tricks and you double this response, then your partner should realize that you wish this suit lead. Again, if you do not double, this inference-information becomes also a valuable tool in choosing which suit to lead. Remember, his choices have been reduced by 25 percent.

Maximal Doubles - The official designation is *Maximal Double* as described in *The Official Encyclopedia of Bridge* authored by the American Bridge Contract League, Edition 6, page 289. The identical concept is also official designated as *Maximal Overcall Doubles* by other authoritative and sponsoring bodies since this type of double only occurs in competition and generally occurs on the three level. The designation *Maximal Double Overcall* is also employed to describe this concept.

Maximal Double - Maximal Overcall Double - Maximal Double Overcall

This double is a type of **Competitive Double**. The official designation is *Maximal Double* as described in *The Official Encyclopedia of Bridge* authored by the American Bridge Contract League, Edition 6, page 289. The identical concept is also official designated as *Maximal Overcall Doubles* by other authoritative and sponsoring bodies since this type of double only occurs in competition and generally occurs on the three level. The designation *Maximal Double Overcall* is also employed to describe this concept.

This type of double is used in a competitive auction when the auction has become too crowded for any alternative approach to exchange information. The origin of this type of double is unknown.

The bridge player should also be made aware of the fact that there are several designations used for this type of action in a competitive auction, whereby all four players are competing. The *original designation*, more rumored than substantiated, is *Maximal Overcall Double*. This designation apparently also was inverted and the action become known by the designation of *Maximal Double Overcall*. The usage of the word *maximal* was also changed to *maximum* and two other designations became added to the list, that of the *Maximum Overcall Double* and the *Maximum Double Overcall*.

Note: The European Bridge League accepts without hesitation the designation of Maximum Overcall Double and allows other designations for the identical action also. Other European countries have adopted this designation and have also created the abbreviation **MOD** as a reference to this action.

Note: According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary the definition of **maximum** is: 1: the greatest quantity or value attainable or attained; 2: the period of highest, greatest, or utmost development; 3: an upper limit allowed (as by a legal authority) or allowable (as by the circumstances of a particular case).

Note: According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary the definition of **maximal** is: 1: being an upper limit: highest; 2: most comprehensive.

To a larger degree this type of action has also been referred to as an *Action Double*, a term which is also used often among many bridge players. It simply means that the bridge player has no alternative defined method to *act* other than employing the use of the double card under certain circumstances of competition. This designation may be a carry-over from the days of Whist, Bid Whist, and Auction Whist.

The end result is that the bridge community has adopted the designation of *Maximal Double*, not *Maximum Double* or any other term as the more official designation.

Note: The Official Encyclopedia of Bridge, published by the American Contract Bridge League employs the designation of Maximal Double. Other publications, written and digital, also employ the above designations of Action Double, Maximum Overcall Double, Maximum Double Overcall, Maximum Double, all of which describe an identical action.

The following illustrations should assist in clarifying this concept:

South	West	North	East
1 ♣	2 ♥	2 ♠	3 ♥
?			

South finds himself in a predicament and would prefer an approach to this bidding sequence to show:

1. the desire to sign-off in 3 Spades.

2. the desire to invite game in Spades.

This approach has been solved by the partnership agreeing to use the Maximal Double:

1. By bidding 3♠, South shows the desire to sign-off.
2. With the employment of the Maximal Double, South employs the conventional bid to invite game.

Another example is:

South	West	North	East	Meaning
1♥	Double	Pass	2♦	The double by West is a Takeout Double
Double	Pass	2♥		The double by South is the Maximal Double.

- ♠ A95
- ♥ KQJ87
- ♦ A
- ♣ Q976

After the Takeout Double of West, a pass by partner, and a 2♦ response by East, South can show additional strength / values with the Maximal Double, but without additional length in Hearts. Per partnership agreement, North may then support opener's suit with an absolute minimum of 2 cards and 4/5 points. The shown holding of South would be a typical holding.

In mainly competitive auctions, a distinction is generally made between certain auctions. In the above two illustrations the reader will notice that the competitive auctions show auctions, whereby the competition is bidding in a suit, which is one rank below the suit of North-South, or in other words, the competition of the opponents is not in the maximum suit, meaning that the suit of the opponents is one suit below the competitive suit of North-South.

If the suit of the opponents is not just one suit below the maximum suit, then other approaches can apply, and the Maximum Double is not necessary if the partnership agreement is that the available side suit can be bid and constitutes a general game try. For example:

South	West	North	East
1♠	2♦	2♠	3♦
?			

In this auction, since Spades is not the maximum suit, then South has an alternative approach and this is entirely based upon the partnership agreement. North-South can agree to any or all of the following:

1. A bid of 3♥, since there is room for this bid, is generally reserved as invitational. This bid is considered to be conventional and forcing.
2. A bid of 3♠ is generally agreed to mean a sign-off in the original suit.
3. A double can then be considered to be for penalty. This is an optional partnership agreement.

Negative Double - Mr. Alvin Roth and Mr. Tobias Stone developed the Roth-Stone system, which included the Negative Double. The original designation was **Sputnik**, named for the Russian satellite launched by the Soviet Union October 4, 1957.

Many bridge players base their bidding on the 5-Card American Standard System. Using this bidding system, certain requirements are a prerequisite to making a bid. If the opponents would remain quiet and pass, there would be no problem in bidding to the correct contract. However, that is almost never the case. Opponents love to bid, opponents love to disturb the auction, and opponents love cutting off your line of communication.

For this reason **Mr. Alvin Roth** and **Mr. Tobias Stone** developed the Roth-Stone system, which included the Negative Double as a system feature. The original designation was **Sputnik**, named for the Russian satellite launched by the Soviet Union October 4, 1957. The official designation for the satellite is Sputnik I. This first artificial satellite, the first in the world, was about the size of a basketball, weighed only 183 pounds, and took about 98 minutes to orbit the Earth on its elliptical path. That launch of this artificial satellite ushered in new political, military, technological, and scientific developments. While the Sputnik I launch was a single event, it marked the start of the space age.

The same principle stands behind the Negative Double and its effect on the bridge world. It changed forever the way of bidding for every bridge player, who employs this concept. We hope that we have done it justice with our description.

Example 1:

Dealer: North

Vulnerable: North-South

North	East	South	West
1 	Pass	1 	Pass

This auction is fun. No intervening bid. No obstructive bidding by the opponents. No interruption in the line of communication.

Example 2:

Dealer: North

Vulnerable: North-South

North	East	South	West
 KJ9	 AQ1087	 54	
 AQ75	 862	 KJ104	
 Q832	 AK9	 7654	
 Q5	 87	 A63	
1 	1 		

North has opened the auction, East is being a pest by making an overcall, and South is stuck for a bid. If East had not bid, the bid by South would have been simple: 1 Heart. But now, South discovers that South has no bid: 1 No Trump would indicate a stopper in Spades, 2 Diamonds would indicate 5-card support and 9/10 high card points, 2 Hearts would indicate a 5-card suit and 9/10 high card points. The only chance is to show partner any values is by employing the Negative Double.

South has a hand which he can bid with no intervening bid, but once an opponent has overcalled, South has no satisfactory bid. South is lacking either strength and/or length to bid a suit on the two level. That is why the Negative Double was created and is used now by almost all bridge players.

If the opening is a Minor suit and the overcall is a Major suit, then the Negative Double means a 4-card suit in the other Major suit. By using the Negative Double to show this 4-card suit, your partner will take further action.

It is incorrect to believe that the Negative Double also limits your hand to 6-9 high card points.

Take a look at the following hand.

North	East	South	West
♠ KJ9	♠ AQ1087	♠ 54	
♥ AQ75	♥ 862	♥ KJ104	
♦ Q832	♦ AK9	♦ J107	
♣ Q5	♣ 87	♣ AK96	
1 ♦	1 ♠		

South also has a hand worth an opening bid, but he can not bid 2 No Trump since he does not have a stopper in Spades. South can not bid 2 Clubs, even though South does have the strength, because he does not have the length. Using the Negative Double, South informs his partner about his 4-card Heart suit, and keeps the bidding alive. In the case that North does not have a 4-card Heart suit, but does have a Spade stopper, then North will bid 2 No Trump to indicate this.

It is very important to remember that the Negative Double shows an unbid 4-card suit. If the responder does have a 5-card suit and also the required strength, then the responder has the obligation to bid this 5-card suit. Through this manner, the partner of the responder will know the length and act accordingly.

Although many partnerships limit the use of the Negative Double to the One-Level, there is no law saying that this should apply to every bridge partnership. If this is part of your partnership agreement, then that is how you should play. For those partnerships who wish to use the Negative Double at higher levels, please review the following example.

Example 3:

Dealer: North

Vulnerable: North-South

North	East	South	West
♠ AQ1087	♠ K65	♠ J9	
♥ J7	♥ KQ1094	♥ 862	
♦ K832	♦ A74	♦ QJ96	
♣ K8	♣ 54	♣ AQ109	
1 ♠	2 ♥		

South does not have a 5-card suit to bid, although South has the strength. South uses the Negative Double to indicate the two unbid suits. South is making a very descriptive call. South is denying Spade support. South is showing at least 10 plus high card points. South is showing no 5-card suit.

By employing the Negative Double, South is giving North the opportunity to make his rebid on the two level. North can bid 2 Spades, if North has a 6-card suit, or 2 No Trump if North has a Heart stopper, or 3 Diamonds since partner is showing at least a 4-card suit in both Minor suits.

Another important factor in deciding whether to use the Negative Double is the use of an immediate double of an overcall to mean a Penalty Double. This argument does not hold water. Either the double means a Negative Double or a Penalty Double. You cannot have two interpretations of the double. The following example should illustrate this point.

Example 4:

Dealer: North

Vulnerable: East-West

North	East	South	West
♠ AQ1087	♠ 652	♠ J9	
♥ KJ97	♥ AQ6	♥ 852	
♦ 32	♦ AQ875	♦ KJ1096	
♣ K8	♣ J5	♣ AQ10	
1 ♠	2 ♦		

In a situation such as the one above, if South doubles, then North will assume 10 plus high card points and two 4-card suits in Hearts and Clubs, the two unbid suits. This would not be a descriptive bid. If South doubles, intending the double to be a penalty double, then he has broken the partnership agreement, and North will bid 2 Hearts, keeping the auction open.

South would like to penalize the overcall, and therefore, pass is the only alternative open to South. This pass puts the ball into the court of North. If North has minimum strength, and West passes, then North should pass. If North has more strength, then North should reopen the bidding, if West passes.

Understanding the Negative Double and employing it as part of your partnership agreement is essential. Otherwise, a misunderstanding can occur as it did during the **42nd Generali Europeans Bridge Championships in Vilamoura, Portugal**, on June 17th - July 1, 1995.

Appeal # 3**Open Teams Round 5**

Reported by Tommy Sandsmark

Appeals Committee: Steen Moeller, Denmark (Chairman), Ron Andersen, USA, Barry Rigal, Great Britain and Tommy Sandsmark, Norway.

Board 13**Game: All****Dealer: North**

	♠ J1072	
	♥ QJ1052	
	♦ K83	
	♣ 2	
♠ K9		♠ 8653
♥ K93		♥ A4
♦ AQ762		♦ 109
♣ Q74		♣ KJ963
	♠ AQ4	
	♥ 876	
	♦ J54	
	♣ A1085	

North	East	South	West
Pass	Pass	1 ♣	1 ♦
Double*	1 NT	Pass	2 NT
Pass	3 ♣	Pass	3 NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

(*) alerted at both sides of the screen, and explained:

From North to East: Both Majors.

From South to West: Negative Double.

Facts: West called the Tournament Director after the board had been played, and complained about the explanation he had received about the alerted double.

Result on the board: 7 tricks to E/W; N/S +200.
Ruling of the Tournament Director: Score stands.

Appellant: East/West.

The Players: West complained that South had explained the double as negative. To him, a negative double would only show point count values and no distributional values. After the alleged misexplanation, 3 Clubs was, to him, a cuebid asking for support in Clubs. He maintained that if he had known that the double meant at least 4-4 in the Major suits, the meaning of the 3 Clubs bid from his partner would be natural and he would have passed 3 Clubs. South, on the other hand, thought that Negative Doubles were primarily meant to show distributional values in the other suits, in this case, both Majors.

The committee: The committee was of the opinion that West had been misled by his own interpretation of the concept of Negative Doubles. The normal worldwide interpretation of a Negative Double is: When you open the bidding, LHO overcalls and your partner doubles (according to partnership agreement, up to a certain level of overcall), that is a Negative Double. Normally, there is a partnership agreement as to how many high card points are required. The most wide spread agreement is that at the one level, only 6 high card points are required, at the Two Level at least 8 high card points, and at the three level, more than that. If you and the overcaller have bid a Minor and a Major, the double shows 4 cards in the other Major. If you and the overcaller have bid the two Majors, the double shows the Minors. If you and the overcaller have bid the two Minors, the double shows the Majors.

Consequently, the committee strongly felt that the description of South, "negative" was accurate, and in accordance with the universal conception of this term. Being well aware of the fact that Negative Doubles may have special meanings in some countries, the committee still felt that in a European Championship one should apply the universally accepted meaning. The logical consequence of this is that when such a Negative Double only shows point count values, and no distributional values, there would be a need for a more specified explanation. In this specific case, West should have known that the general idea of Negative Doubles in his country did not match the universally accepted concept, and therefore, he could, and should have, asked South about a more specific meaning of the double.

The decision of the committee: The committee unanimously upheld the decision of the Tournament Director. The deposit was forfeited.

Penalty Doubles - The origin of the Penalty Double is unknown. However, it is known that the penalty double is older than the organized game of bridge with its scoring methods devised in the late 1920s and early 1930s. In the card games preceding such scoring methods the penalty double was effective in acquiring a larger score and was mainly devised to painfully punish their opponents for their audacity in competing.

Reopening Doubles of 1 NT Responses and Rebids - Articles regarding the Reopening Doubles of 1 No Trump responses and Rebids were published in the magazine Popular Bridge of June 1977 and in The Bulletin of ACBL in February 1995. This is in a .pdf file format.

Responses to a Takeout Double by Partner - These guidelines for a suggested defense method following a Takeout Double by partner after an opponent opens the bidding auction, generally on the one level, are of unknown origin. These guidelines are only one recommended method of response bids for the advancer.

Responsive Doubles - This concept was devised by and originated with **Dr. F. Fielding-Reid** of Dania, Florida, United States. After an opening, a **Takeout Double** by partner and a two- or three-level raise by the partner (*responder*) of the opener, the partner (*advancer*) of the Takeout Doubler can also double, thereby providing and communicating descriptive information about his hand. This action is known as a responsive double.

Responsive Double

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The importance of distinguishing this double from other doubles is the fact that the partner of the opener has supported the suit of his partner via a raise. In the case that the partner of the opener bids another suit after the Takeout Double, then other interpretations of the double in the Fourth Seat may take on new meanings.

The concept should generally be understood according to the following guidelines:

1. If the opening is a Major suit, then the Responsive Double shows, after the Takeout Double, scattered values and better distribution in the Minor suits. Otherwise it would be more prudent to support the Takeout Double of the partner when holding support in the unbid Major suit.
2. If the opening is a Minor suit, then the Responsive Double shows, after the Takeout Double, scattered values and better distribution in both Major suits and wishes the partner, who has executed the Takeout Double, to choose the better Major suit.

This may sound confusing, but the following illustration should clarify this concept:

West	North	East	South	Meaning
1 ♦	Double			This is a Takeout Double.
		2 ♦		The partner of the opener supports partner's suit with a raise.
			Double	This is a Responsive Double.
			♠ Q873	The advancer holds and promises scattered values and better distribution in both Major suits and wishes the partner, who has executed the Takeout Double, to choose the better Major suit. This Responsive Double communicates this information to partner, who may have doubled on a strong holding in Clubs only. This additional information provided by the Responsive Double is important.
			♥ Q1097	
			♦ 7	
			♣ Q852	

The double of North is a Take-Out Double, but the double of South is a Responsive Double. South is too weak to cuebid the Diamonds, and South does not want to simply guess which suit North, his partner, would prefer. See **Responses To Take-Out Double**. Therefore, South doubles and informs his partner that he has both Major suits and both are suitable for competing. The Responsive Double. If South had a 5-card or longer suit, then South would just bid it.

If South were to cuebid the Diamonds, that would force his partner to bid on the three level, and their contract might possibly be only on the two level. This is one reason why **Dr. F. Fielding-Reid** devised the Responsive Double. The Responsive Double cannot equal a **Penalty Double** in this situation, and should not be construed as a penalty double.

West	North	East	South	Meaning
1 ♥	Double			This is a Takeout Double and strongly implies a 4-card Spade suit.

2 ♥

The partner of the opener supports partner's suit with a raise.

Double This is a Responsive Double.

♠ 873

♥ 72

♦ QJ107

♣ QJ105

South is unable to support the Spades, the suit of North, and must have a means to show the two Minor suits. South executes the Responsive Double to show and communicate to North that he holds both Minor suits. North must now bid a Minor suit if West passes or possibly pass if West raises to three Hearts.

How many High Card Points

The recommended high card points should be between 8 and 11 high card points according to Dr. F. Fielding-Reid. However, the high card point range will differ according to the individual partnership agreement. After the opponents settle on one suit, the shape of the hand also begins to play an important role. Remember also, that South may pass once the partner of the opener (responder) makes a bid. The high card point range also changes with the level of the auction. So the guidelines should be:

1. Partnership agreement.
2. Shape of the holding.
3. Level of the auction.
4. High card points, values, Losing Trick Count.

These four elements must enter into the decision of South. All four elements must be considered. It is conclusive that most high card points are in the other three hands, and that South will be weak. Therefore, a Responsive Double of 2 Clubs or 2 Diamonds would require a minimum of 8 points (distributional points added), and a Responsive Double of 3 Clubs or 3 Diamonds would require a minimum of 11 points (distributional points added).

It is possible that the distribution of the holding of South could be such, that South, instead of executing the Responsive Double, cuebid the suit of the opponents to indicate a much stronger holding. With such a holding, the high card points do not play any important part of the auction as much as the power of the distribution and shape of the holding.

West	North	East	South	Meaning
1 ♦	Double			This is a Takeout Double and strongly implies both Major suits.
		2 ♦		The partner of the opener supports partner's suit with a raise.
			3 ♦	
			♠ QJ9873	
			♥ QJ10987	
			♦	
			♣ 7	

In order to show this very distributional holding, South must cuebid the Minor suit of the opponents. By partnership agreement, North must consider game in a Major suit. The reason behind the cuebid is the logic that the lead must come up to the declarer through the stronger hand, which opened. Whether or not this can also be a partnership understanding, if the opening is a Major suit, depends on the partnership agreement.

To illustrate this use of the Responsive Double, the following hand is from the 1997 World Team Championship between France and the United States.

Dealer: North

Vulnerable: East-West

United States playing North-South

North

♠ 32
♥ K743
♦ Q5
♣ KQJ103

West

♠ Q1087
♥ 10
♦ A9872
♣ 842

East

♠ J4
♥ A985
♦ KJ1043
♣ A5

South

♠ AK965
♥ QJ62
♦ 6
♣ 976

Auction:

North	East	South	West
Pass	1 ♦	1 ♠	3 ♦ (<i>preemptive</i>)
Double			

The Responsive Double by North shows both unbid Suits, Hearts and Clubs.

The Responsive Double of North meets all the requirements. North has length in the two unbid suits, and also the strength required to make the Responsive Double.

If a Responsive Double is called after a raise of the Major suits, more information has already been exchanged than had a Minor suit been opened and raised. The Responsive Doubler knows the suit of his partner, the Takeout Doubler. The Responsive Doubler has therefore more descriptive information about the hand of his partner. The minimum requirement of high card points is approximately the same, but the shape of the hand becomes more important. How many cards in the Major suit of the opponents does the possible Responsive Doubler have? Could his partner, the Takeout Doubler, possibly be void?

In general, most bridge partnerships agree that there is a **Responsive Double through to 4 Diamonds**. The partnership should come to a general understanding and include this in the individual partnership agreement. Also, there should be agreement as to whether a Responsive Double is valid over Weak Two Bids and higher-level preemptive bids.

In the original concept of the Responsive Double, a double by the advancer is *responsive* only when the opponents have opened on the one-level and raised that particular suit. However, other bridge partnerships also use the Responsive Double when the partner has made a simple overcall in a suit. *Modern Bridge Conventions*, a bridge book authored by Mr. Bill Root with Mr. Richard Pavlicek, published in 1995, offers a list of bidding sequences, in which a double by the partner is **not** a Responsive Double.

Bidding Sequence 1:

Opener	2. Seat	3. Seat	4. Seat	
1 ♣	Double	1 ♠	Double	Third Seat has bid a new suit; the double by fourth seat becomes optional.

Bidding Sequence 2:

Opener	2. Seat	3. Seat	4. Seat	
1 ♣	2 ♠	3 ♣	Double	Second seat has made a jump overcall. The double in fourth seat is not responsive.

Bidding Sequence 3:

Opener	2. Seat	3. Seat	4. Seat	
2 ♥	Double	3 ♥	Double	The opening is a preemptive bid meaning that the double in fourth seat is not responsive.

Bidding Sequence 4:

Opener	2. Seat	3. Seat	4. Seat	
1 ♦	1 NT	2 ♠	Double	Second seat has overcalled in No Trump meaning that the double in fourth seat is not responsive.

Support Doubles - Support Redoubles - The Support Double was devised by **Mr. Eric Rodwell**, and is a method that enables the opening bidder to clarify or show precisely the degree of support of the suit of the partner or responder. This generally occurs in a competitive auction, in which an opponent interferes at a low level.

Support Doubles and Support Redoubles

The Support Double was devised by **Mr. Eric Rodwell**, and is a method that enables the opening bidder to clarify or show precisely the degree of support of the suit of the partner or responder. This generally occurs in a competitive auction, in which an opponent interferes at a low level.

The Support Double is generally applied whenever the partner names a new suit and there has been interference by an opponent. In other words, the Support Double normally applies after an opening on the one level has been followed by a suggestion of the partner of a new suit **and** an overcall or raise by the fourth player. The Support Double may also be applied when there is an immediate overcall, followed by a new suit by the partner of the opening bidder, and even after a low-level raise by the partner of the immediate overcaller.

The difference between a one-level raise or jump raise in the new suit, named by the responder and a Support Double by the opening bidder is the amount of cards for the suit support. The following examples should illustrate this important point in the line of communication.

Support Double





Example 1:

North			
♠ A10			
♥ Q10963			
♦ 874			
♣ K32			
West		East	
♠ 7642		♠ KQJ85	
♥ 52		♥ A74	
♦ J9		♦ K32	
♣ AJ754		♣ 98	
South			
♠ 93			
♥ KJ8			
♦ AQ1065			
♣ Q106			
South	West	North	East
1 ♦	Pass	1 ♥	1 ♠
Double	Pass	2 ♥	

In order to indicate a minimum raise which **shows only a 3-card support**, the opening bidder, South, applies the Support Double. By bidding 2♥, North shows a 5-card Heart suit.

Example 2:

North			
♠ A10			
♥ Q10963			
♦ 874			
♣ K32			
West		East	
♠ 7642		♠ KQJ85	
♥ 52		♥ A7	
♦ J9		♦ K532	
♣ AJ754		♣ 98	
South			
♠ 93			
♥ KJ84			
♦ AQ106			
♣ Q106			

South	West	North	East
1 	Pass	1 	1 
2 			

In this example, South, instead of applying the Support Double, would raise the suit of the partner one level, and this raise **shows exactly a 4-card support**. (Note: Some partnerships have agreed that this action shows a 4-card *plus* support.)




This is the difference between a one level raise and the principle of the Support Double. The necessity of this method is apparent in that the opening bidder has no other acceptable rebid with such a card constellation. The opening bidder could have possibly bid 1 No Trump without the interference, but with the interference, the opening bidder would promise a Spade stopper if the opening bidder were to rebid 1 No Trump. If the opening bidder were to rebid 2 Diamonds, then the opening bidder would normally be promising a 6-card Diamond suit. Thirdly, raising the suit of the responder one level with only a 3-card support is not generally acceptable. Thus the Support Double.


Support Redouble

If the interference is not the introduction of a new suit, but instead a **double**, then the opening bidder applies the Support Redouble. The following example illustrates this principle.

Example 2:

North		East	
 A10		 KQJ8	
 Q10963		 A74	
 874		 K32	
 K32		 984	
West		South	
 76542		 93	
 52		 KJ8	
 J9		 AQ1065	
 AJ75		 Q106	

South	West	North	East
1 	Pass	1 	Double
Redouble	Pass	2 	

In order to show a 3-card support for the suit of the responder, the opening bidder **redoubles** after an interference of a double. This is the entire concept of a Support Redouble. Again, if the opening bidder had a 4-card Heart suit, in this example, then the opening bidder would have simply raised the suit of the responder one level. By bidding 2 , North shows a 5-card Heart suit.

Partnership Agreement

The Support Double and the Support Redouble are applied in low-level auctions and many partnership agreements carry the condition that they should not be applied above the two level. Some partnership agreements include the restriction that they may be used only up to and including 2 Hearts. The reason for this limitation by partnership agreement is the fact that a penalty double may become ambiguous and its application place in question. The option of the penalty double may be lost if the partnership agreement includes Support Doubles and Support Redoubles on the three level.

The application of the Support Double in auctions, whereby the partnership is not the opening bidder, is considered acceptable. However, the importance of the value of the overcall becomes the fundamental element in determining the effectiveness of the application of the Support Double. The partnership must take into consideration whether the overcall is an immediate overcall or whether the overcall occurs in Fourth Seat and can be deemed a balancing or competitive call. If this application is included, then there must be a solid partnership agreement.

Whatever the partnership agreement is, it is also important to remember that all subsequent bidding becomes natural according to the individual partnership agreement and the bidding system used.

Additional Support Double Auctions

There are not that many auctions, where a Support Double may be applied, since the opening bidder generally has an acceptable, informative rebid. Other auctions, which include the use of the Support Double and Support Redouble are shown below. Examples are not presented due to the realization that the serious and experienced bridge player will recognize the situation presented by the auction.

In all of the following auctions, the **double** is a Support Double.

Bidding Sequence 1:

South	West	North	East
1 ♣	1 ♥	1 ♠	2 ♥
Double			

Bidding Sequence 2:

South	West	North	East
1 ♣	Pass	1 ♥	2 ♦
Double			

Bidding Sequence 3:

South	West	North	East
1 ♣	Pass	1 ♥	Double
Redouble			

Bidding Sequence 4:

South	West	North	East
1 ♣	Pass	1 ♠	Double
Redouble			

Bidding Sequence 5*:

South	West	North	East
1 ♣	Pass	1 ♦	1 ♠
Double			

5*: This particular auction, whereby both Minor suits have been bid by the partnership, may also become ambiguous since it is not clear whether the double of the opening bidder signifies a Support Double or a Negative Double showing a 4-card Heart suit. Again, a solid partnership agreement is necessary, especially for this particular bidding sequence.

South	West	North	East
1 ♣	Pass	1 ♠	1 NT
Double			

A Case In Particular

In the case of an overcall in fourth seat of 1 No Trump, the opening bidder may still, by partnership agreement, apply the principle of the Support Double, as in the above example. This particular auction may become problematic owing to the possible ambiguity of the double, especially if the double is not recognized as a Support Double and, as a consequence, is not **alerted**. A solid partnership agreement is necessary. A review of one such actual played hands in competition is presented below, which stresses the importance of this feature.

Example 2:

North
 ♠ 65432
 ♥ 9432
 ♦ 76
 ♣ AQ

West
 ♠ J108
 ♥ J106
 ♦ A82
 ♣ 10976

East
 ♠ AQ
 ♥ KQ87
 ♦ KJ94
 ♣ J84

South
 ♠ K97
 ♥ A5
 ♦ Q1053
 ♣ K532

Perry	Pollack	Greenspan	Moss
1 ♦	Pass	1 ♠	1 NT
Double (1)	Pass	2 ♥	Pass
2 ♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

(1) The **double** was not alerted. The Director was summoned.

Committee: Jon Wittes
Harvey Brody
Dick Budd
Jerry Gaer
Dave Treadwell
DIC: Henry Cukoff

Event: Life Master Pairs, 12 August, Second Semi-final Session

Board 3
Dealer: South
Vulnerability: East/West

The Facts: 2♠ made two, plus 110 for N/S. The Director was called after dummy was displayed. South believed she had made a Support Double. North did not believe that anyone played Support Doubles after 1 No Trump overcalls. North was unsure as to the meaning of the double. The Director allowed the table result to stand since neither East nor West had any clear action.

The Appeal: E/W appealed the Director's ruling. North and West were the only players to attend the hearing. West believed that had he known South was making a Support Double, he might have bid 2 No Trump. He believed that North should not have removed the double. North said that South was a relatively inexperienced player, a student of his, though a Life Master. He had explained at the table that his partner might have meant the double as Support Double, though he was not sure. He believed that removing the double was the right action with his hand.

The Committee's Decision: The Committee believed that North went out of his way to explain the possibilities for his partner's double, that it was possibly meant as a Support Double, and that she was relatively inexperienced. At this point E/W could have asked North to leave the table and had South explain the intent of the double. The Committee believed that the decision North had made to bid 2♥ could just as well have worked out badly for his side. The result was "rub of the green" for E/W.

The Committee allowed the table result to stand and believed the appeal just barely met the standard of having merit because N/S were not totally clear on their agreement.

Takeout Double - A low-level double in certain circumstances requesting partner to bid an unbid suit. Doubling on the one-level and giving it the interpretation of a penalty double is certainly neither reasonable logic nor reasonable bridge.

Takeout Double - Takeout Doubles

The concept behind the perhaps most innovative double, especially in competitive events, was formed in games preceding the game of duplicate bridge. More exact the concept was devised during the period of Auction Bridge, which was a form of bridge evolving from the game of Whist, whereby the highest bidder was allowed to play trumps, with trumps being the last suit bid. This feature was totally different from Whist and all other forms of Whist, whereby the declarer, or the highest bidder, was allowed to name the trump suit.

Although not substantiated the development is attributed to not only **Mr. Bryant McCampbell** of St. Louis, Missouri, United States, but also to **Major Charles Patton** of New York City, New York, United States, both of whom, as the claim goes, developed the concept independently in the years 1912 and 1913 until its final version. Major Charles Patton of the United States Army married Virginia Lee Stoval.

Note: The concept of high card points being evaluated on the 4-3-2-1 scale, which was eventually adopted by the majority of the sponsoring bridge organizations was co-developed by Major Bryant McCampbell, died ca. 1930, and Mr. Milton Work. It was Mr. Milton Work, who published the results and for whom the evaluation scale was named and designated.

Mr. Bryant McCampbell authored his publication Auction Tactics in 1916 and was conceived as a tutorial on the art of bidding in the card game Auction Bridge.

Definition: A low-level double in certain circumstances requesting partner to bid an unbid suit. Doubling on the one-level and giving it the interpretation of a penalty double is certainly neither reasonable logic nor reasonable bridge. Therefore it is a natural, conventional double. It is bridge experience, that in most instances, the caller, who doubles, sits usually to the right of the opener, who has opened one of a suit. What does the double mean?

The bridge player who **doubles** indicates a hand worth an opening bid plus with at least 3-card support in all the other unbid suits.

Example:

East	South
♠ AQ43	♠ K98
♥ K95	♥ AQ86
♦ AJ76	♦ 98
♣ 73	♣ AQ86
1 ♦	Double

As you can see, South has no appropriate overcall. **No Appropriate Overcall is the Key Word.** South does not have a 5-card Heart, or a 5-card Spade suit, or a 5-card Club suit, which is essential information for his partner North. If South did have a 5-card Heart, Spade or Club suit, then South would simply have bid 1 Heart or 1 Spade or 2 Clubs over the opening bid.

There are three things which one has to calculate in the decision to make a Takeout Double.

1. The respective vulnerability.
2. The rank of the suit of the opener.
3. The position at the table.
4. Shape and distribution.

A Takeout Double of a Minor suit does not indicate a 4-card suit in the Major suits, but a Takeout Double of a Major suit does strongly indicate a 4-card suit in the other Major suit. The modern theory is that if the other Major suit holds at least two of the top five honers and only three cards, then this is sufficient for a Takeout Double. This holding should be equal to a minimum of 1.5 winning tricks, preferably 2 winning tricks.

A Takeout Double at favorable vulnerability can show as little as 10 high card points. A Takeout Double at unfavorable vulnerability must show at least two winning tricks and a hand worth an opening. If this is not the case, then the hand is more suitable as a defensive hand.

A Takeout Double of the Spade suit forces partner to bid at the two level.

As a general guideline, the required high card points by vulnerable doubles of **1 Heart** increase as the shortness of the holdings of the suit of the opener increases. A few hands should illustrate this guideline:

When the Doubler is vulnerable, he can double on any of these hands.

♠ AQ43	♠ AQ43	♠ AQ4
♥ 5	♥ 54	♥ 543
♦ K984	♦ KJ9	♦ KJ9
♣ KJ72	♣ KQ72	♣ AJ72

The Doubler can remove a Jack from each hand above and double when not vulnerable.

The player who decides to make a Takeout Double should never ignore the requirement of having three cards in all of the unbid suits, unless the hand of the player contains at least 17 plus high card points. Review the following example, and this point will become clear.

♠ AQ965
♥ 86
♦ KQ7
♣ AK9

After the auction has been opened with either 1 Club, 1 Diamond or 1 Heart, the player holding the above hand would be better advised to **double**, instead of bidding **1 Spade**. Bidding 1 Spade would indicate only an opening hand, but in this case the hand is too strong (4 winning tricks and 5 Losing Tricks), and game could be missed. Even though the high card points are present, a bid of 1 No Trump is also not appropriate. Therefore, **double** and then bid **Spades**. This action shows more values than needed for a maximum 1 No Trump range and generally less than needed for a 2 No Trump opening.

This, in essence, covers the original concept of the Takeout Double, its requirements and its use.

Modern bidding theory has reduced the amount of values normally necessary by a King, in order to execute a Takeout Double. This reduction has led to many more doubled bidding sequences and has resulted in the level of aggressiveness of the bridge player being raised considerably. For example, in the following illustration, the player would / could execute a Takeout Double:

East	South
♠ 754	♠ KQ109
♥ K95	♥ KJ109
♦ AQ76	♦ 9
♣ A73	♣ J986
1 ♦	Double

But, what does the partner of the Doubler do? How does he respond with weakness, with strength, with length, with balanced distribution? Click on the following, and read about the possibilities for the partner of the Doubler.

Responses - Responses after the Takeout Double of partner.

Minimum Off Shape Take Out Double: This is a **variation** of the standard and generally accepted concept of the Takeout Double. It is a Takeout Double with less than 3 cards in any unbid suits. It does not imply shortage in the suit of the opponent, over which the Double is employed. This variation of the Takeout Double does not need to be alerted.

The Takeout Double can be used in many different and individual bidding auctions and is not confined to the one level. Many individual partnership understandings may vary according to the individual agreements, but this is a feature of the individual partnership agreement.

If you wish to include this feature, or any other feature, of the game of bridge in your partnership agreement, then please make certain that the concept is understood by both partners. Be aware whether or not the feature is alertable or not and whether an announcement should or must be made. Check with the governing body and/or the bridge district and/or the bridge unit prior to the game to establish the guidelines applied. Please include the particular feature on your convention card in order that your opponents are also aware of this feature during the bidding process, since this information must be made known to them according to the Laws of Duplicate Contract Bridge. We do not always include the procedure regarding Alerts and/or Announcements, since these regulations are changed and revised during time by the governing body. It is our intention only to present the information as concisely and as accurately as possible.