

Takeout Double

And How to Respond to a Takeout Double



Overcall Position Choices



When you start to learn bridge, you are somewhat restricted in the types of hand that you can describe in the Overcall Position. The available descriptions are primarily:

- 5-card suit Overcall – 8-16 points
- 6-card good suit Jump Overcall – 5-10 points
- 1NT – 15-17 points, balanced with stop in opponent's suit
- 7-card weakish suit - pre-emptive jump

However this still leaves many hands which you cannot readily handle. The take-out double addresses many of these other issues. Even then there remain some hands (e.g. two-suited hands) which are only ideally handled by more advanced techniques (Michaels, Unusual 2NT)

The primary message of the take-out double is 'PARTNER - PLEASE BID'. The typical hands described by the takeout double are: 12-20 points with a shortage in the suit opened, and 3+ cards in each of the other suits.

No Bid in Overcall Position



Takeout doubles and **overcalls** tend to be difficult concepts for beginning bridge players. It takes discipline to pass with a 13-count where your hand doesn't fit the requirements for an overcall or a takeout double. Believe it or not, partner will usually be able to figure out about how many points you have. How?

He knows that if the opponents stop in a part score, they have less than 25 HCP. If they stop in a two-level contract, they usually will have between 19 and 22. If he's looking at a 5-count and the opponents stop in 2♦ he'll be able to figure out that you either

- 1) have about an opening hand or
- 2) the opponents should be bidding more.

You should always assume that if the opponents could bid more, they would. Why? They like to score game bonuses as much as you do!

Bidding has gone

West	North	East	South
1♣			

Your hand (North)

♠ 42 ♥ KQ7 ♦ KJ4 ♣ A8742

What should North's call be?

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Bidding has gone

West	North	East	South
1♣			

Your hand (North)

♠ 42 ♥ KQ7 ♦ KJ4 ♣ A8742

What should North's call be? PASS!

Classic Takeout Double: Hand type A



If your opponent opens with a suit bid, a double by you implies:

- At least opening-bid strength (12+ pts.)
- Shortness in the suit the opponent opened.
- Support for all unbid suits. Your double forces partner to bid, so you must have at least 3-card length

in any suit he will choose. Typical hands for a takeout double of an opponent's 1♣ opening would be:

♠ KJ76 ♥ AQ92 ♦ KJ4 ♣ 65

♠ Q104 ♥ AK84 ♦ K10432 ♣ 8

Strong Hand Takeout Double: Hand Type B



There is one type of hand where you can double without support for all unbid suits. You can start with a double if you have a hand that has one long suit and great strength. Check your convention card to see what you have designated as the limit to your overcalls. That number is the point at which you no longer overcall and double instead.

(17+ pts.) -- the type of hand where you don't want to risk having partner pass a simple overcall of your suit. Your hand and your suit should be strong enough that you could make game if partner has as little as 4-6 pts. and a fit -- a hand like ♠ KJ ♥ AQJ1084 ♦ AK65 ♣ 7. To describe this hand, start with a double that forces partner to respond. Then "overrule" partner's choice by freely bidding your heart suit at your next turn.

West	North	East	South
1♣	x	P	1♠
P	?		

North's Hand
♠ KJ ♥ AQJ1084 ♦ AK65 ♣ 7

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West	North	East	South
1♣	x	P	1♠
P	2♥		

North's Hand
♠ KJ ♥ AQJ1084 ♦ AK65 ♣ 7



What is Your Overcall Range?

It is important to have an overcall range on your convention card. Anything over your top overcall limit, is the point at which you must double rather than overcalling, even if your hand is not the classic takeout double shape.

SIMPLE OVERCALL

1 level _____ to _____ HCP (usually)
often 4 cards very light style

Responses

New Suit: Forcing NFConst NF

Jump Raise: Forcing Inv. Weak

Responding to Partner's Takeout Double



Responding to partner's takeout double is relatively simple. First, partner is NOT inviting you to pass. He doesn't have many of the opponent's bid suit. If partner doubles 1♣, you expect him to have a hand that looks like ♠ Axxx ♥ Axxx ♦ Axxx ♣ x, or thereabouts.

Your options:

- If you have **4 cards** in an unbid suit (prefer a **major** over a minor) and **0-8 points**, **bid it**.
- If you have **4 cards** in an unbid suit (prefer **major** over minor) and **9-11 points**, **jump in your suit**. For example, if the bidding goes 1♣-X-P to you and you have ♠ Ax ♥ KQxx ♦ xxx ♣ Qxxx, let partner know you have 9-11 points by bidding 2♥.
- If you have **4 cards** in an unbid major (preferably both) and 12+ points, bid the suit opponent opened (cuebid).
- If you have **5+ cards** in an unbid major and 12+ points, bid game in that suit.
- With **0-6 points** and no 4-card major, but your best 3-card major.
- With **7-9 points**, no four-card major and **stoppers** in opponent's suit, bid **1NT**.
- With **10-12 HCP**, no four-card major and **stoppers**, bid **2N**.
- With **13-15 HCP**, no four-card major and **stoppers**, bid **3N**.

Note: Since 1NT promises 7 HCP, you will occasionally find yourself bidding your best 3-card major. You cannot pass a takeout double with a weak hand. You must have a good hand with 5 or more trumps in order to pass.

Example Hands



In the following example hands, partner has made a takeout double of 1♦. What is your call if right hand opponent passes?

1	2	3	4	5	6
♠ KQ875	♠ KJ85	♠ KJ10875	♠ KQ93	♠ K983	♠ KQ84
♥ A62	♥ A62	♥ 83	♥ AJ82	♥ 82	♥ 62
♦ 854	♦ 854	♦ 864	♦ 864	♦ 7	♦ 834
♣ K3	♣ Q63	♣ J2	♣ Q2	♣ Q109843	♣ J963

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1. 4♠

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1. 4♠ 2. 2♠

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Rebids After Partner's Response



After partner has responded to your takeout double, rebid as follows:

With a Minimum hand (12-16)

- Pass if partner bids at the cheapest level
- Pass with 12-14 if partner jumps a level
- Bid game with 15-16 if partner jumps a level

With an Invitational hand (17-18)

- Raise one level if partner bids at the cheapest level
- Raise to game if partner jumps a level

With a Maximum hand (19-21)

- Jump to the 3 level if partner bid at the cheapest level
- Bid game if partner jumps a level

Exercises



Exercises:

If right-hand opponent opens 1♣, what action should be taken on these hands?

a) ♠ KQ62
♥ 632
♦ A4
♣ K842

b) ♠ K7
♥ AKJ85
♦ Q74
♣ 842

c) ♠ AQ2
♥ Q963
♦ A8432
♣ 2

d) ♠ K762
♥ A2
♦ AJ3
♣ KJ82

e) ♠ K762
♥ AK
♦ AQJ3
♣ 865

f) ♠ K762
♥ AJ84
♦ AQ
♣ K65

g) ♠ KJ84
♥ AQ632
♦ K73
♣ 2

h) ♠ KJ8
♥ AQ632
♦ K732
♣ 2

i) ♠ KQJ4
♥ AQ43
♦ A7
♣ 742

j) ♠ AQ3
♥ AKQ63
♦ Q7
♣ 932

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a) PASS - with less than 16 points, the classic shape is required. It would be suitable for a take-out double of 1♦

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- b) 1♥ - not the desired shape for a take-out double – just a simple overcall.

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- a) PASS - with less than 16 points, the classic shape is required. It would be suitable for a take-out double of 1♦
- b) 1♥ - not the desired shape for a take-out double – just a simple overcall.
- c) Double - (take-out). Classic shape

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- b) 1 ♥ - not the desired shape for a take-out double – just a simple overcall.
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- d) 1NT. - 15-17 points, stop in opponent's suit. If there is a choice between 1NT and a take-out double, choose 1NT (if for example opponent had opened 1 ♥, it is suitable for either double or 1NT, but choose 1NT).

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- d) 1NT. - 15-17 points, stop in opponent's suit. If there is a choice between 1NT and a take-out double, choose 1NT (if for example opponent had opened 1 ♥, it is suitable for either double or 1NT, but choose 1NT).
- e) Double - (take-out). Not suitable for 1NT – no ♣ stop. The extra points compensate for the shortage in hearts (which partner may well bid).

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g) ♠ KJ84
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f) Double - (take-out). Points and stop in suit, suitable for 1NT, but with 4-4 in majors choose a take-out double. If you bid 1NT, the bidding invariably goes pass-pass-pass. By doubling, raise any major bid from partner to the two level.

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If right-hand opponent opens 1♣, what action should be taken on these hands?

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g) Double - (take-out). You could overcall 1♥, but double is better with both majors.

h) 1♥ - better than double, giving emphasis to the major.

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g) Double - (take-out). You could overcall 1♥, but double is better with both majors.

h) 1♥ - better than double, giving emphasis to the major.

i) Double - (take-out). Not the classic shape (only 2 diamonds), but with two good majors and 16+ points, and a doubleton in the other take-out suit, a take-out double is acceptable.

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j) Double - partner will assume a take-out, but over his bid, bid hearts, to show a strong hand, unsuitable for a simple or jump (6 cards) overcall.

Exercises



If right-hand opponent opens 1 ♠, what action should be taken on these hands?

k) ♠ KQ6
♥ 6
♦ AJ42
♣ Q8642

l) ♠ K42
♥ AKJ85
♦ AQ4
♣ 84

m) ♠ 92
♥ KQ
♦ AKQJ84
♣ A52

n) ♠ K76
♥ AJ2
♦ AJ3
♣ 8742

o) ♠ 6
♥ AQJ105
♦ A973
♣ Q65

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l) Double - too strong for 2 ♥, not suitable for 3 ♥. Remove response from partner to 2 ♥.

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m) Double - even too strong for a strong jump overcall. If partner responds 2 ♣, jump to 3 ♦. Over 2 ♥, either bid 3 ♦ or 3 ♠ (the opposition suit) – don't jump to 4 ♦ by-passing 3NT.

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♥ KQ
♦ AKQJ84
♣ A52

n) ♠ K76
♥ AJ2
♦ AJ3
♣ 8742

o) ♠ 6
♥ AQJ105
♦ A973
♣ Q65

k) PASS - minimum and not the classic shape. When you double one major with less than 16 points, the expectancy is that you hold four cards in the other. (Don't overcall 2 ♣).

l) Double - too strong for 2 ♥, not suitable for 3 ♥. Remove response from partner to 2 ♥.

m) Double - even too strong for a strong jump overcall. If partner responds 2 ♣, jump to 3 ♦.

Over 2 ♥, either bid 3 ♦ or 3 ♠ (the opposition suit) – don't jump to 4 ♦ by-passing 3NT.

n) PASS - not the classic shape.

o) 2 ♥ - classic shape for double, but with 5 cards in the other major and below 15 points.

Exercises



If right-hand opponent opens 1 ♠, what action should be taken on these hands?

p) ♠ 6
♥ A1074
♦ AQJ73
♣ Q65

q) ♠ AKJ54
♥ AQ6
♦ 7
♣ J872

r) ♠ KJ8
♥ AQ6
♦ KQ3
♣ AJ98

Exercises



If right-hand opponent opens 1 ♠, what action should be taken on these hands?

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♥ A1074
♦ AQJ73
♣ Q65

q) ♠ AKJ54
♥ AQ6
♦ 7
♣ J872

r) ♠ KJ8
♥ AQ6
♦ KQ3
♣ AJ98

p) Double - rather than the diamond overcall. It is important to show the 4-card heart suit.

Exercises



If right-hand opponent opens 1♠, what action should be taken on these hands?

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p) Double - rather than the diamond overcall. It is important to show the 4-card heart suit.

q) PASS - not shape-suitable for 1NT. Hope they will bid higher.

Exercises



If right-hand opponent opens 1 ♠, what action should be taken on these hands?

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♥ A1074
♦ AQJ73
♣ Q65

q) ♠ AKJ54
♥ AQ6
♦ 7
♣ J872

r) ♠ KJ8
♥ AQ6
♦ KQ3
♣ AJ98

p) Double - rather than the diamond overcall. It is important to show the 4-card heart suit.

q) PASS - not shape-suitable for 1NT. Hope they will bid higher.

r) Double - too strong for 1NT. Start with a double and show the distribution later. In this case re-bid no-trumps over partner's response, showing 18-19 points.

Protective Seat



A player is said to be in the protective seat if a 'pass' would finish the auction e.g. 1♦ - 'pass' 'pass' ?

In this position a good rule-of-thumb is to 'borrow a king' i.e. imagine an extra three points in your hand. So in this position you could double on say a 9-point hand with the classic shape. (This is also known as a **balancing double**.)

West	North	East	South
1♦	pass	pass	X

South's Hand
♠ 10 7 6 5 ♥ K J 4 2 ♦ 6 4 ♣ A J x

**You do not jump with 9-11 points if your partner makes a balancing double.

Exercises



After the auction 1♦ - double - pass, what do you bid on:

s) ♠ 10874
♥ 876
♦ 10432
♣ 104

t) ♠ K1087
♥ 76
♦ 104
♣ J9876

u) ♠ KQ874
♥ K763
♦ 1043
♣ 4

v) ♠ AJ87
♥ AQ54
♦ 10432
♣ 4

w) ♠ 975
♥ J53
♦ AJ103
♣ 763

Exercises



After the auction 1♦ - double – pass, what do you bid on:

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♥ 876
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♦ AJ103
♣ 763

s) 1♠ - you must respond, so choose your best suit at the cheapest level.

Exercises



After the auction 1♦ - double – pass, what do you bid on:

s) ♠ 10874
♥ 876
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♣ 104

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t) 1♠ - favor the major at the one level, rather than the minor at the two level.

Exercises



After the auction 1♦ - double – pass, what do you bid on:

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♥ 876
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s) 1♠ - you must respond, so choose your best suit at the cheapest level.

t) 1♠ - favor the major at the one level, rather than the minor at the two level.

u) 2♠ - (jump bid) - remember to include distribution points - 8 points, plus 2 for the singleton.

Exercises



After the auction 1♦ - double – pass, what do you bid on:

s) ♠ 10874
♥ 876
♦ 10432
♣ 104

t) ♠ K1087
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s) 1♠ - you must respond, so choose your best suit at the cheapest level.

t) 1♠ - favor the major at the one level, rather than the minor at the two level.

u) 2♠ - (jump bid) - remember to include distribution points - 8 points, plus 2 for the singleton.

v) 2♦ - the hand is worth 11 points plus 2 for the singleton (=13 points). Enough for game, but which one. Partner must bid again. Whichever major he bids, raise to game. If he bids NTs, showing a stop in the enemy suit, once again bid the opponent's suit.

Exercises



After the auction 1♦ - double – pass, what do you bid on:

s) ♠ 10874
♥ 876
♦ 10432
♣ 104

t) ♠ K1087
♥ 76
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v) 2♦ - the hand is worth 11 points plus 2 for the singleton (=13 points). Enough for game, but which one. Partner must bid again. Whichever major he bids, raise to game. If he bids NTs, showing a stop in the enemy suit, once again bid the opponent's suit.

w) 1NT - only 6 points, but upgrade to 7 points with two stops in the opponent's suit.

Exercises



After the auction 1♦ - double – pass, what do you bid on:

x) ♠ K76
♥ 864
♦ 76532
♣ 73

y) ♠ 84
♥ 973
♦ KJ1064
♣ J32

Exercises



After the auction 1♦ - double – pass, what do you bid on:

x) ♠ K76
♥ 864
♦ 76532
♣ 73

y) ♠ 84
♥ 973
♦ KJ1064
♣ J32

x) 1♠ - diamonds not good enough to pass the double. With two 3 card suits it is usually better to bid the cheaper, but with both majors bid the stronger (this may help partner if he has to lead).

Exercises



After the auction 1♦ - double – pass, what do you bid on:

x) ♠ K76
♥ 864
♦ 76532
♣ 73

y) ♠ 84
♥ 973
♦ KJ1064
♣ J32

x) 1♠ - diamonds not good enough to pass the double. With two 3 card suits it is usually better to bid the cheaper, but with both majors bid the stronger (this may help partner if he has to lead).

y) PASS - just good enough cards in the opposition suit. However 1NT is an acceptable alternative.

Exercises



After the auction 1 ♠ - double – pass, what do you bid on:

z) ♠ J8432
♥ 764
♦ 108
♣ K104

aa) ♠ A1097
♥ 105
♦ KJ43
♣ 763

Exercises



After the auction 1 ♠ - double – pass, what do you bid on:

z) ♠ J8432
♥ 764
♦ 108
♣ K104

aa) ♠ A1097
♥ 105
♦ KJ43
♣ 763

z) 2 ♣ - there is a temptation to pass, but the spade suit is not good enough. Partner wants you to bid so the best you can do is 2 ♣. It is not ideal. With J10432 of spades, you might decide to pass the double anyway.

Exercises



After the auction 1 ♠ - double – pass, what do you bid on:

z) ♠ J8432
♥ 764
♦ 108
♣ K104

aa) ♠ A1097
♥ 105
♦ KJ43
♣ 763

z) 2 ♣ - there is a temptation to pass, but the spade suit is not good enough. Partner wants you to bid so the best you can do is 2 ♣. It is not ideal. With J10432 of spades, you might decide to pass the double anyway.

aa) 1NT - rather than responding 2 ♦ showing 0–8, 1NT emphasizes the good stops in the opponent's suit.

Doubler's Response



If partner has a less than 15 points, he can pass your bid (assuming 0-8 points). If he has 16+ points he can raise your suit if suitable and leave the final decision to you.

Other Take-Out Double Situations

Traditionally a double is for penalty if it is:

- a double of a no-trump bid
- at the three level or higher (except for three level pre-empts)
- the double arose after the partner of the doubler has already made a bid)

It follows that a double is for take out if it is a double of a suit bid at the one or two level and partner has either passed or not yet had a chance to bid.



Takeout Situations

1. 1♦, dbl - take out
2. 1♣, pass, 1♥, dbl - take out (neg)
3. 2♥, dbl - take out
4. 3♥, dbl - take out
5. 1♥, pass, 3♥, dbl - take out
6. Pass, 1♥, pass, 2♥, dbl - take out
(partner has done no more than pass)

- | | | | | |
|----|------|-------|-------|------|
| 1. | West | North | South | East |
| | 1♦ | X | | |
| 2. | West | North | South | East |
| | 1♣ | P | 1♥ | X |
| 3. | West | North | South | East |
| | 2♥ | X | | |
| 4. | West | North | South | East |
| | 3♥ | X | | |
| 5. | West | North | South | East |
| | 1♥ | P | 3♥ | X |
| 6. | West | North | South | East |
| | P | 1♥ | P | 2♥ |
| | X | | | |



The Opponents Make a Takeout Double

If your right-hand opponent makes a takeout double over your partner's opening, what do your bids mean. You and your partner can decide this, but you need to mark your agreement on your convention card.

Standard Agreements:

- New suit forcing at the 1 Level
- New suit non-forcing at the 2 Level
- Redouble shows 10+ points
- If you play redouble shows no fit, you need a fit-showing bid, such as Jordan 2NT

OVER OPP'S T/O DOUBLE			
New Suit Forcing: 1 level	<input type="checkbox"/>	2 level	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jump Shift: Forcing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Inv.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Weak	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Redouble implies no fit	<input type="checkbox"/>		
2NT Over	Limit+	Limit	Weak
Majors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Minors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	_____		

The Opponents Make a Takeout Double



Meanings

1. West 1♣	North X	East 1♠	South
2. West 1♠	North X	East 2♣	South
3. West 1♣	North X	East 2♠	South
4. West 1♣	North X	East XX	South

The Opponents Make a Takeout Double



Meanings

1. 1♠ means: Hand is unlimited. West must bid again unless South bids

1. West	North	East	South
1♣	X	1♠	
2. West	North	East	South
1♠	X	2♣	
3. West	North	East	South
1♣	X	2♠	
4. West	North	East	South
1♣	X	XX	

The Opponents Make a Takeout Double



Meanings

1. 1♠ means: Hand is unlimited. West must bid again unless South bids
2. 2♣ means: Hand is weak. West should pass in most cases.

1. West	North	East	South
1♣	X	1♠	
2. West	North	East	South
1♠	X	2♣	
3. West	North	East	South
1♣	X	2♠	
4. West	North	East	South
1♣	X	XX	

The Opponents Make a Takeout Double



Meanings

1. $1\spadesuit$ means: Hand is unlimited. West must bid again unless South bids
2. $2\clubsuit$ means: Hand is weak. West should pass in most cases.
3. $2\spadesuit$ means: Hand is weak. West should pass in most cases.

1. West	North	East	South
$1\clubsuit$	X	$1\spadesuit$	
2. West	North	East	South
$1\spadesuit$	X	$2\clubsuit$	
3. West	North	East	South
$1\clubsuit$	X	$2\spadesuit$	
4. West	North	East	South
$1\clubsuit$	X	XX	

The Opponents Make a Takeout Double



1. West 1♣	North X	East 1♠	South
2. West 1♠	North X	East 2♣	South
3. West 1♣	North X	East 2♠	South
4. West 1♣	North X	East XX	South

Meanings

1. 1♠ means: Hand is unlimited. West must bid again unless South bids
2. 2♣ means: Hand is weak. West should pass in most cases.
3. 2♠ means: Hand is weak. West should pass in most cases.
4. Redouble means: 10+ points. West should pass in most cases unless hand is very distributional.

Resources



<https://www.betterbridge.com/misc/StandardArticles/Standard200711.pdf>

<https://www.larryco.com/bridge-articles/takeout-doubles>

http://web2.acbl.org/documentLibrary/play/Commonly_Used_Conventions/takeoutdouble.pdf

<https://www.bridgewebs.com/porthcawl/TUTORIAL%206%20-%20TAKE%20OUT%20DOUBLES.htm>