

**Jacoby Transfers**

A transfer bid is a bid of one suit that requests partner to bid another (usually the next) suit. There are various transfer bids but here we are concerned with transfers after partner has opened 1NT. Why transfer? There are various reasons and perhaps the most obvious when playing a strong NT is that the strong hand becomes declarer. Is that important? Not always, but very often: -

Dealer:	♠ K4	West	North	East	South
North	♥ K1083				
Both vul	♦ KQ52	-	1NT	pass	2♥ (1)
	♣ AQ2	pass	2♠ (2)	pass	pass
		pass			
♠ A96	N	♠ Q7			
♥ AJ6	W E	♥ Q752	(1) transfer to ♠'s		
♦ J1094	S	♦ A83	(2) North completes the transfer		
♣ J108		♣ K963			
	♠ J108532				
	♥ 94				
	♦ 76				
	♣ 754				

If the final 2♠ contract was played by South then a minor suit Jack would doubtless be led. Played by North, any lead by East is fine for declarer.

After an opening of 1NT we use 4-way Jacoby transfers as follows: -

2♦	=	transfer to ♥
2♥	=	transfer to ♠
2♠	=	transfer to ♣
2NT	=	transfer to ♦

Note. Many players prefer to use 2♠ as minor suit Stayman and 2NT as an (ambiguous) transfer to a minor. However, we can locate minor suit fits using our shape ask after Stayman (SARS) and so we will use these 4 way transfers.

The 2♠ and 2NT bids here must be alerted (but the rules keep changing). There is no required point count for a transfer. Transfers to a major are 0+ pts and a 5+ card suit. Transfers to a minor need a few pts and a 6 card suit (as it is the 3 level) or else a very good (game forcing) hand with a good five card minor.

In this chapter we are concerned with major suit transfers. Transfers to a minor suit are covered in chapter 4.

## Major Suit Jacoby Transfers

After partner's opening bid of 1NT, the Jacoby transfer by responder is a bid of 2♦/♥ which requests opener to bid 2♥/♠ resp. The bid always promises 5+ cards in the suit shown and the point range is unlimited.

So, after a 1NT opening: -      2♦ is a transfer to 2♥  
  and      2♥ is a transfer to 2♠.

One of the advantages of playing transfers is that opener gets to play the hand. It is usually better for the stronger hand to be declarer and if you play a strong NT then this aim is achieved. It is usually better for the NT bidder to be declarer as, with a balanced hand, he is much more likely to have a tenace that needs protecting: -

Dealer:	♠ QJ102		West	North	East	South
West	♥ 76					
Both vul	♦ A97		1NT	pass	2♦ (1)	pass
	♣ Q832		2♥	pass	3NT (2)	pass
			4♥ (3)	pass		
♠ A53	N	♠ K7				
♥ Q52	W E	♥ AK983				
♦ K53	S	♦ 862		(1) Transfer		
♣ AK95		♣ J104		(2) game values with 5 ♥'s		
	♠ 9864			(3) ♥'s are fine		
	♥ J104					
	♦ QJ104					
	♣ 76					

So what about this hand? Whether 3NT or 4♥ is the final contract is not so important (both are cold if played by West). The important thing is that West must be declarer, especially in 4♥ when N-S could wrap up the first 3 ♦ tricks and then the contract depends upon the ♣ finesse when East plays it. It is usually best for the more balanced hand to be declarer as he may well have tenace(s) to protect. This, of course, is even more true when a playing strong NT rather than a weak NT.

## When is a Transfer not a Transfer?

So a 2♦ bid is a transfer to ♥'s and a 2♥ bid is a transfer to ♠'s. Is this always the case? There are some conventions that say 'not necessarily so'. Let's have a brief look at a couple of them: -

### a) Walsh Relays

Now we all play that a 2♦ is a transfer to ♥'s, simple, eh? Apparently not. Some players feel the need to complicate the issue: -

After 1NT - 2♦ - 2♥, 2♠ cancels the transfer to ♥'s and is instead shows one of a number of strong hand types, depending upon responder's next bid. I won't bother to list all of the options, suffice it to say that we cover them all by far simpler means. And are there any problems playing Walsh Relays?

Yes.

- 1- If the next player bids over the 2♥ 'transfer' then subsequent bidding is very messy.
- 2- Since the 2♦ bid may or may not be a transfer opener has to be very careful about super-accepting. Only one super-accept bid (2♠) is allowed and the continuations are somewhat convoluted.
- 3- There is considerable loss of accuracy when only one super-accept is available.
- 4- Of course, if the next opponent interferes over this super-accept (or normal accept) then responder is in a real pickle; opener cannot know if the transfer was anything but genuine.
- 5- And, most important of all, we have a *very useful* meaning for 2♠ in this sequence.

### b) Compressed Transfers

If you use 2♠ as a transfer explicitly to ♣'s and 2NT as a natural NT raise (or visa-versa) then you have no bid to explicitly transfer to ♦'s. One solution is to instead use the 2♠ bid (or 2NT) as a transfer to ♦'s. Of course you then have no transfer to ♣'s and so you place a double meaning on the 2♦ 'transfer' bid: -

After 1NT - 2♦ - 2♥, 2♠ cancels the transfer to ♥'s and is instead a transfer to ♣'s.

This, of course, suffers from all of the above problems 1-5 and in addition: -

- 6- A 2♦ bid allows the opposition to come in cheaply when responder has a weak hand with ♣'s.
- 7- When responder makes an artificial (transfer) bid there is always the danger that the next player will get in a 'cheap' double, to show values and/or as an opening lead indicator. If responder makes two such bids then it really does make life easy for the defenders.

So, in my opinion, it's all nonsense and a transfer is a transfer is a transfer.

I have no doubt that there are also numerous other conventions that people have dreamed up (or will do) that cancel transfers. As Sidney James once said, let's 'carry on regardless'.

### 3.1 Responder's 2<sup>nd</sup> bid

After responder has bid 2♦/♥, a major suit Jacoby transfer, and opener completes the transfer then responder has various options after opener's reply and everything is covered in this transfer section.

After opener has simply completed the transfer, responder may continue as follows: -

- Pass = a weak hand (0-7)
- Bid a new suit = 4+ card suit, forcing to game
- 2NT = 5 card major, invitational (8-9) to 3NT or 4 of the major
- 3 of the major = 6 card major, invitational (8-9) to 4 of the major
- 3NT = 5 card major, balanced (10-15)
- 4 of the major = 6 card major (10-15) and mildly slam invitational (otherwise use Texas).

These are the basic options; other options (ace/key card ask, splinters and other slam suggesting bids) are also covered later.

Let's start with the simplest, pass: -

Hand A	Hand B	Hand C	
♠ QJ963	♠ KJ975	♠ J9876	With all of these hands, your partner has opened a strong 1NT, you transferred with a bid of 2♥ and partner completed the transfer with 2♠. Hand A does not have sufficient values to invite a possible NT or ♠ game, and so passes. Similarly Hand B does not have the values to bid (say 2NT or 3♣) and so must pass. Obviously Hand C passes, 2♠ is sure to be a better spot than 1NT.
♥ J64	♥ 98	♥ 983	
♦ 63	♦ 72	♦ 2	
♣ Q85	♣ Q974	♣ J974	

#### Example 1

West	East	West	East	
♠ AK5	♠ J9876	1NT	2♥ (1)	(1) transfer
♥ Q742	♥ 983	2♠ (2)	pass (3)	(2) normal accept
♦ Q87	♦ 2			(3) a better spot than 1NT.
♣ KQ2	♣ J974			

Hand D And how about this hand? Eight points and a five card suit. So invite with 2NT after transferring? No. This hand is from a club tournament and every table except one invited game. 3♠ and 3NT both went down. This hand has a miserable trump suit. High cards belong in long suits, not three carders. This hand should simply pass the 2♠ transfer completion. A very easy way to earn a top board. We meet this hand again when we cover super-accepts by opener.

- ♠ J8652
- ♥ 103
- ♦ K103
- ♣ A52

### 3.1.1 Invitational Bids: - 2NT or 3 of the major

When responder has invitational values, about 8-9 pts, then he has two options to invite game. When the major suit is 6 cards long, 3 of the major invites. With just a 5 card major the invitational bid is 2NT. Note that these are the only two possibilities with invitational hands as any other bid is game forcing (as discussed later).

Hand E	Hand F	Hand G	Partner opened a strong 1NT, you bid 2♥ and partner completed the transfer with 2♠.
♠ QJ1063	♠ KJ975	♠ KQ8762	Hand E bids 2NT, showing exactly 5 ♠'s and invitational values. Hand F would like to show his ♣ suit, but 3♣ is game forcing, so bid 2NT. Hand G has a 6 card suit; so 3♠, invitational.
♥ J64	♥ 103	♥ K103	
♦ 63	♦ 92	♦ 92	
♣ KJ8	♣ KJ74	♣ 74	

#### Example 1

West	East	West	East	(1) transfer
♠ A95	♠ KQ8762	1NT	2♥ (1)	(2) normal accept
♥ QJ42	♥ K103	2♠ (2)	3♠ (3)	(3) invitational, 6 card suit
♦ A87	♦ 92	4♠ (4)	pass	(4) I like the 6-3 fit.
♣ KQ2		♣ 74		

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#### Example 2

West	East	West	East	(1) transfer
♠ A6	♠ KJ975	1NT	2♥ (1)	(2) normal accept
♥ QJ42	♥ 103	2♠ (2)	2NT (3)	(3) invitational, 5 card suit
♦ A876	♦ 92	pass (4)		(4) I'll be happy if I make 8 tricks
♣ A92	♣ KJ74			

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After a 2NT invitation by responder; opener will usually pass, sign off in 3 of the major or bid game in either NT or the major.

But there are other options .....

### 3.1.1.1 Finding a 5-3 fit in the other major after 2NT

Hand H You open this hand 1NT and the bidding has gone 1NT - 2♥ - 2♠ - 2NT - ?

♠ 95 You are near maximum, but with poor ♠'s a 4♠ contract is not an option.  
 ♥ AQ942 3NT could well be right, but 4♥ would be preferable if partner has decent  
 ♦ KJ5 3 card support. How do we tell partner that we are maximum with a 5 card  
 ♣ AQ2 ♥ suit? Simple, we just bid it (the ♥ suit)!

#### Example 3

West	East	West	East	(1) transfer
				(2) normal accept
♠ 95	♠ KQ876	1NT	2♥ (1)	(3) invitational, 5 ♠ card suit
♥ AQ942	♥ K103	2♠ (2)	2NT (3)	(4) I am max with 5 ♥'s
♦ KJ5	♦ 872	3♥ (4)	4♥ (5)	(5) excellent
♣ AQ2	♣ 94	pass		

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#### Example 4

West	East	West	East	(1) transfer
				(2) normal accept
♠ 95	♠ KQ876	1NT	2♥ (1)	(3) invitational, 5 ♠ card suit
♥ AQ942	♥ 103	2♠ (2)	2NT (3)	(4) I am max with 5 ♥'s
♦ KJ5	♦ 872	3♥ (4)	3NT (5)	(5) max is fine
♣ AQ2	♣ K94	pass		

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So the sequence 1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 2NT - 3♠ is forcing, showing a maximum with 5 ♠'s  
 and 1NT - 2♥ - 2♠ - 2NT - 3♥ is forcing, showing a maximum with 5 ♥'s.

### 3.1.1.2 Game tries after 2NT

So we use 3 of the other major when accepting the game invitation but looking for a possible 5-3 fit in the other major; but what are 3♣ and 3♦ in this situation?

Hand J You open this hand 1NT and the bidding has gone 1NT - 2♥ - 2♠ - 2NT - ?

♠ AJ9 You are only slightly more than minimum but with good ♠'s a retreat into  
 ♥ AQ104 3♠ would be pessimistic if partner had something decent in ♣'s.  
 ♦ 85  
 ♣ KJ72 So we use these otherwise redundant bids of 3♣/♦ as help suit game tries.

#### Example 5

West	East	West	East	(1) transfer
				(2) normal accept
♠ AJ9	♠ KQ876	1NT	2♥ (1)	(3) invitational, 5 ♠ card suit
♥ AQ104	♥ J3	2♠ (2)	2NT (3)	(4) can you help in ♣'s?
♦ 85	♦ 964	3♣ (4)	4♠ (5)	(5) yes
♣ KJ72	♣ Q104	pass		

A very reasonable 4♠ contract, the sort that you want to be in at teams. But what if responder does not have decent ♣'s?

#### Example 6

West	East	West	East	(1) transfer
				(2) normal accept
♠ AJ9	♠ KQ876	1NT	2♥ (1)	(3) invitational, 5 ♠ card suit
♥ AQ104	♥ J3	2♠ (2)	2NT (3)	(4) can you help in ♣'s?
♦ 85	♦ Q104	3♣ (4)	3♠ (5)	(5) no
♣ KJ72	♣ 964	pass		

East has the same hand but with the minor suits reversed, 4♠ would be a poor contract this time.

Unfortunately there is no bid for a game try in the other major, if you wish to make a game try then you have to choose the most suitable minor suit.

## Summary of opener's options when responder transfers and then invites with 2NT

The sequence	1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 2NT - pass	is minimum and normally denies 3 ♥'s,
	1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 2NT - 3♣	is a ♣ help suit game try,
	1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 2NT - 3♦	is a ♦ help suit game try,
	1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 2NT - 3♥	is a sign off,
	1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 2NT - 3♠	is looking for a 5-3 ♠ fit (else 3NT),
and	1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 2NT - 3NT	normally denies 5 ♠'s or 3 ♥'s.
The sequence	1NT - 2♥ - 2♠ - 2NT - pass	is minimum and normally denies 3 ♠'s,
	1NT - 2♥ - 2♠ - 2NT - 3♣	is a ♣ help suit game try,
	1NT - 2♥ - 2♠ - 2NT - 3♦	is a ♦ help suit game try,
	1NT - 2♥ - 2♠ - 2NT - 3♥	is looking for a 5-3 ♥ fit (else 3NT),
	1NT - 2♥ - 2♠ - 2NT - 3♠	is a sign off,
and	1NT - 2♥ - 2♠ - 2NT - 3NT	normally denies 5 ♥'s or 3 ♠'s.



### 3.1.2 Bidding Game: - 3NT, 4 of the Major

When responder has game forcing values, about 9+ pts, then he has a lot more options available. We start by considering the cases where responder simply wants to play in game (either 3NT or 4 of the major).

- 1) 3NT = Responder rebids 3NT on all 5332 type hands with about 10-15 points. Also with 5422 type hands when the 4 card suit (a minor) is not very sturdy (and the two doubletons are quite reasonable).
- 2) 4♥/♠ = 4 of the major promises 9-15 points and a 6+ card suit. In fact if playing Texas transfers (section 6.2) then these Jacoby sequences should be the top of the range and mildly slam invitational.

Hand A	Hand B	Hand C	Partner opened a strong 1NT, you bid 2♥ and partner completed the transfer with 2♠.
♠ QJ1063	♠ KJ975	♠ KQJ762	Hand A bids 3NT, showing exactly 5 ♠'s and game values. Hand B does not wish to introduce this anaemic ♣ suit, so bids 3NT.
♥ J64	♥ K8	♥ K103	Hand C has a 6 card suit; so 4♠, partner is invited to bid on if he likes ♠'s.
♦ A3	♦ A2	♦ A2	
♣ K84	♣ J432	♣ J4	

#### Example 1

West	East	West	East	(1) transfer
♠ 106	♠ KJ975	1NT	2♥ (1)	(2) normal accept
♥ AQ42	♥ K8	2♠ (2)	3NT (3)	(3) 5 card ♠ suit
♦ KQ87	♦ A2	pass		
♣ KQ5		♣ J432		

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With 3 card support it is usually best for opener to opt for the major suit contract rather than NT.

#### Example 2

West	East	West	East	(1) transfer
♠ A109	♠ KQJ76	1NT	2♥ (1)	(2) normal accept
♥ QJ84	♥ K103	2♠ (2)	3NT (3)	(3) 5 card ♠ suit
♦ KQJ8	♦ 972	4♠ (4)	pass	(4) I prefer the 5-3 fit
♣ Q8	♣ J4			

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As I said, the sequence of transfer and then 4 of the major is mildly slam invitational: -

### Example 3

West	East	West	East	(1) transfer
				(2) normal accept
♠ A109	♠ KQJ762	1NT	2♥ (1)	(3) 6 card ♠ suit, mild slam invite
♥ QJ84	♥ K103	2♠ (2)	4♠ (3)	(4) RKCB
♦ KQJ8	♦ A2	4NT (4)	etc to 6♠	
♣ A8	♣ J4			

With excellent trumps and a max, West has no problem in going slamming.

Now this is all quite straightforward, at least I think it's all straightforward, but this hand is from the March 2004 issue of the Dutch magazine 'Bridge'.

Hand D                      You were asked what to bid after the sequence had started: -

♠ 5	West	East
♥ KQJ654		
♦ Q105	1NT	2♦ (1)
♣ 765	2♥	?

The article said 3♥, invitational. Now an invitational bid here is 8-9 points, so OK? I don't think so. This hand is not 8 points, it's more like 10! There is a fit (partner must have at least 2 ♥ 's) and this hand is certainly worth game in my view. So 4♥.

But there is, of course, a catch here. I would not be in this position as I would have bid 4♥ (or preferably 4♦, a Texas transfer) at (1).

Hand E                      The article then went on to say that with only a 5 card suit then the invitational bid is 2NT; so change Hand D slightly: -

♠ 54	West	East
♥ KQJ65		
♦ Q105	1NT	2♦ (1)
♣ 765	2♥	2NT

I have no problem with that, Hand E is a good 8 count but is worth no more than an invitation. Hand D is **much** stronger than Hand E, hand evaluation is more than just counting points.

### 3.1.3

### The Jacoby Major-Minor two Suiter

So we have covered the single-suited hands and the balanced hands, that leaves the two-suiters. If you transfer and then bid another suit the sequence shows 4+ cards in the second suit and is game forcing. There is, however, one exception. That is when the second suit is the other major. The 5-4, 4-5, 6-4 etc. major-major hands were dealt with in section 2.6 and hands that are 5-5 in the majors will be dealt with later in section 3.1.4. So here we are just considering a 2<sup>nd</sup> suit that is a minor.

Hand A	Hand B	Hand C	Partner opened a strong 1NT. All three hands transfer to ♠'s. Hand A should then bid 3♣, not so much because he wants to play in ♣'s, but to imply weakness in the other suits. Hand B also bids 3♣, but this time because he is looking for the best slam. Hand C is better off just bidding 3NT. Both short suits are covered.
♠ QJ1063	♠ AKJ97	♠ QJ762	
♥ J6	♥ Q8	♥ K10	
♦ J3	♦ K2	♦ A2	
♣ KQJ8	♣ KQ82	♣ Q942	

This bidding of a 2<sup>nd</sup> suit is game forcing and may, or may not, show slam interest. Since the bid shows where at least nine of responder's cards lie, it is very useful to declarer in establishing if there is a weak suit for NT: -

#### Example 1

West	East	West	East
♠ KQ94	♠ 86	1NT	2♦
♥ K6	♥ AQ1052	2♥	3♣
♦ J32	♦ 75	3♥ (1)	4♥
♣ AQ96	♣ KJ75	pass	

(1) West knows that it is only a 5-2 ♥ fit, but he also knows that the ♦'s may well be wide open. The ♥ game is not certain, but worth a shot (and better than 3NT). West should not bid 4♥ (fast arrival) at (1) because he does not want to rule out a ♣ slam if partner has a good hand.

With example 1 we saw that East only had ambitions for game and was showing his shape so that opener could decide the best game. Often, this bidding of a 2<sup>nd</sup> suit is a prelude for slam

#### Example 2

West	East	West	East	(1) I prefer ♥'s to NT, and quite like ♣'s
♠ KQ94	♠ A86	1NT	2♦	(2) cue bid
♥ K6	♥ AQ1052	2♥	3♣	(3) suggesting a ♣ slam
♦ J32	♦ 7	3♥ (1)	3♠ (2)	(4) West prefers ♣'s to ♥'s
♣ AQ96	♣ KJ75	4♣ (2)	6♣ (3)	
		pass (4)		

Quite often opener will like responder's 2<sup>nd</sup> suit and he can cue bid to show encouragement (although not above 3NT, as responder may only have values for 3NT or 4 of his major).

### Example 3

West	East	West	East	(1) cue bid (2) slam interest
♠ A94	♠ K6	1NT	2♦	
♥ K6	♥ Q9852	2♥	3♣	
♦ KQ75	♦ A6	3♠ (1)	4♣ (2)	
♣ KJ96	♣ AQ75	etc to 6♣		

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Occasionally West may make a mild slam try (a cue bid) but responder was just showing his shape in case 3NT was not secure: -

### Example 4

West	East	West	East	(1) cue bid
♠ Q4	♠ J10975	1NT	2♥	
♥ AJ6	♥ K2	2♠	3♣	
♦ KQ752	♦ 86	3♥ (1)	3NT	
♣ KJ6	♣ AQ75	pass		

If West did not have good cover in both of the red suits, he would pull 3NT to 4♠.

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If opener prefers responder's major suit to the minor or NT but is not interested in slam, then he should bid 4 of the major directly (fast arrival).

### Example 5

West	East	West	East	(1) no slam interest
♠ Q2	♠ 75	1NT	2♦	
♥ K76	♥ QJ985	2♥	3♣	
♦ AQJ75	♦ K8	4♥ (1)	pass	
♣ KJ6	♣ AQ75			

Note the difference between this West hand and the West hand of examples 1 & 2 when West chose the slow 3♥ bid. The difference is that in examples 1 & 2 the West hand had excellent 4 card ♣ support and so a ♣ slam was a possibility.

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If opener is interested in slam, then he cue bids. If, however, he has no ace to cue then instead of cueing a king he could simply bid 3 of the major (this is encouraging, 4 of the major is not).

### Example 6

West	East	West	East	(1) slam interest
♠ KQ2	♠ A5	1NT	2♦	
♥ A106	♥ QJ985	2♥	3♦	
♦ K8	♦ A1075	3♥ (1)	etc to 6♥	
♣ KJ765	♣ A8			

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If opener attempts to sign off in 3NT or 4 of the major, then responder may over-rule him: -

### Example 7

West	East	West	East	(1) no slam interest (2) RKCB (Kickback) *
♠ Q102	♠ 5	1NT	2♦	
♥ K76	♥ AQJ98	2♥	3♣	
♦ AQ75	♦ K86	4♥ (1)	4♠ (2)	
♣ KJ6	♣ AQ75	etc to 6♥		

\* You may well agree to play DRKCB here.

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Sometimes opener may like responder's 2<sup>nd</sup> suit (as he has a weakness somewhere). Supporting the minor at the 4 level may be dangerous (as responder may only have values for 3NT/4 of the major) but it is fine if opener has decent 3 (or good 2) card support for responder's major: -

### Example 8

West	East	West	East
♠ Q1052	♠ KJ6	1NT	2♦
♥ AK7	♥ Q9854	2♥	3♦
♦ AQ75	♦ KJ86	4♦	etc to 6♦
♣ J6	♣ A		

East knows that West must have reasonable ♥'s and good ♦'s for his 4♦ bid, and so goes for the ♦ slam.

### Fast and Slow Arrival after a Jacoby two-suiter

Now I said that 3 of the major is encouraging and that 4 of the major (or 3NT) is not. Let's start with a hand from the club: -

#### Example 9

West	East	West	East
♠ 953	♠ AK864	1NT (1)	2♥
♥ AQ4	♥ K7	2♠	3♣
♦ AK1093	♦ Q4	3NT (2)	pass (3)
♣ K8	♣ A974		

West had both red suits well stopped and so bid 3NT. A comfortable 6♠ slam was missed, just unlucky or was anyone to blame?

Now this one is tricky as there is no blatantly obvious culprit. The 1NT opening at (1)? It is 16 points but worth much more. A 5 card suit headed by the AK is an excellent +, as are the 10,9 in the suit. Two aces and no jacks are a definite + also. Whether that all adds up to too strong for a 1NT opening is debatable. So let's say it is top of the range but acceptable.

Then what about East's pass at (3)? 16 points, but again very good ones. A 5 card suit headed by the AK is a good +, and an outside 4-carder headed by the ace is another +. Two aces and no jacks are a definite + also. This hand is worth 17+. So it's 17 + 15-17. 32 is usually only good enough for slam if there is a fit and South did not know that North had 3 ♠'s. Could anyone have done anything else?

Yes! The correct bid for West at (2) is 3♠ (or a 3♦ cue bid if you prefer). It would be nice to have a ♠ honour but with this max West must make a move. East then knows that West has 3 card ♠ support and slam interest (slow arrival). That's all East needs and the slam is then easy.

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#### Example 10

Now club players can be excused for getting it wrong, but how about internationals? The following deal is from the 2002 Camrose series. This was the bidding at three tables: -

West	East	West	East
♠ K105	♠ A4	1NT (1)	2♦
♥ K105	♥ J87432	2♥	3♦
♦ 7542	♦ KQJ109	4♥ (2)	? (3)
♣ AKQ	♣ -		

1NT at (1) was strong (I think?). I don't think it's worth a strong NT, of course, with the 4333 type shape, AKQ in a 3 card suit and the only 4 card suit headed by the 7. Two 10's are a + factor, but not enough for me. Anyway, that's not the issue here, what does 4♥ mean at (2) and what should East do at (3)? One East thought that 4♥ was a 'picture jump' showing a good trump holding and bid to 6♥. Another was not sure and bid 5♥, passed. Only one (Tim Reese) got it right. He knew that it was fast arrival and passed at (3). South had a singleton ♦, 5♥ was down and 6♥ went two down.

Before we move on, let's have an example from a Dutch bridge magazine.

East	West	East
♠ KQ943	1NT	2♥
♥ 96	2♠	? (1)
♦ 63		
♣ A1063		

This is from the Jan 2004 issue of the Dutch magazine 'Bridge'. A panel of 16 experts were asked what to bid at (1) when vulnerable at teams scoring. The results were: -

Bid	Score	No of votes	% reader's votes
3NT	100	8	16
3♣	80	5	45
2NT	80	2	36
3♠	60	1	1
4♠	30	0	1

I was absolutely amazed when I read this! There is some consolation in that the correct bid was the most popular choice of readers, although it was less than 50% of them. And 36% choosing a non-forcing 2NT is a poor show. 3♣ is totally obvious to me, but let's see what some of these experts said - *my comments are in italics*: -

Den Broeder: 3NT. Because it's teams and we're vulnerable, I want to be in game with these 9 points. If I bid 3♣ that may seduce partner into bidding a too high 5♣.

*Partner will only bid 5♣ if he has weak red suits and then 3NT is not making!*

Smit: 3NT. I will not bid a suit that I do not want partner to support.

*Rubbish. 3♣ simply describes the hand perfectly and you will not get a 4♣ support bid if 3NT is going to make.*

Niemeijer: 3NT. It is between 2NT and 3NT. I reserve the 3♣ bid for slam interest or where 5♣ is an alternative to 3NT.

*2NT a possibility? See my comment on this bid later. At least he has (sort of) said why he does not bid 3♣. I totally disagree, of course. 3♣ could well be looking for slam (responder will clarify later) but for now it warns opener about the red suit weaknesses.*

Cosijn: 3♣. Because of the fact that 4♠ even with a 5-2 fit could well be the best contract. And occasionally partner has ♣Kxxxx with 3 aces and the trumps split in 6♣.

*I agree with the first point – very relevant. The second point is not really an issue.*

Zandvoort: 3♣. I want to be in game and 3♣ initiates the search for the best game. Or more opposite ♣KQxxx and 3 aces. My partnership agreement is that we only bid 3♣/♦ after transferring if you are happy if partner supports with 4 card support. Thus only slam interest or distributional.

*Again a very valid first point. Slam is not an option, ♣KQxxx and 3 aces is far too good for a 1NT opener. The last point about supporting is fine as long as partner will bid 3NT with the other two suits well stopped. And as for partner supporting with 4♣ here, there are much more sophisticated methods (cue bid or shortage ask) as we will see shortly.*

Van Arum: 2NT. Not nice with this hand but 3♣ is game forcing. If partner reverts to 3♠ then I'll bid 4♠.

*Not nice, I totally agree. If partner passes and we miss game what will you say to your team-mates? This hand is far too strong for 2NT. It has 9 points, and the fact that it has two weak doubletons makes it even stronger! Long suits, and points in the long suits are a big + in any book on hand evaluation. This hand must force to game, no but's about it..*

---

### Example 11

Let's have an example West hand to support Cosijn's case that a 5-2 ♠ game may be best:

West	East	West	East
♠ A8	♠ KQ943	1NT	2♥
♥ AK75	♥ 96	2♠	3♣ (1)
♦ J75	♦ 63	4♠	pass
♣ KQ72	♣ A1063		

Not very sophisticated, and we shall cover better bidding methods here later; but certainly an example of why 3NT at (1) is silly.

---

### Example 12

And as for Van Arum's 2NT bid? Well, really! Game has excellent chances opposite most minimum openers, this East hand is **far** too good for an invitation: -

West	East	West	East
♠ J8	♠ KQ943	1NT	2♥
♥ AJ83	♥ 96	2♠	2NT ??
♦ KJ75	♦ 63	pass	
♣ KQ7	♣ A1063		

It looks like a pretty comfortable 3NT to me.

---



Both Niemeijer and Den Broeder state that 5♣ will be too high. I agree, it probably will be, but the point that seems to be missed is that the 3♣ bid warns partner about shortage in the red suits so that he can elect for 4♠ if he too has shortage in one or both. It is not an invitation to bid 5♣! Example 11 is a case in point.

---

But I guess that one has to listen when half of an expert panel expresses an opinion, so what about these types of hand after partner's strong 1NT opening?

East 1	East 2	East 3	West	East
♠ K9743	♠ K9743	♠ QJ762	1NT	2♥
♥ Q6	♥ Q6	♥ K10	2♠	?
♦ 63	♦ K3	♦ A2		
♣ A1063	♣ J1063	♣ Q942		

Doubtless these would receive even more votes for 3NT? I accept the point with East 2 and would not argue with 3NT – although 3♣ could still work out best. But with East 1 I would definitely still bid 3♣ – the point is that we do not expect partner to bid above 3NT at his next turn and we then bid 3NT ourselves and partner is warned about our two doubletons. East 3 is Hand C from the start of this section and 3NT is fine with these red suit honours.

---

Let's just summarize what we mean by the 3 of a minor bid in this situation: -

- It may be strong and looking for slam, but it may only have game values.
- Opener is not normally expected to support the minor unless he has a very good reason to – he must have good support for *both* of responder's suits.
- With just game values, responder is inviting game in his major, a 5-2 fit, if opener is weak in an unbid suit.
- If responder has slam ambitions then he will make this clear next turn.

So there you have it, even a majority of experts apparently fail to realise what a 3♣/♦ bid really means and what subsequent bidding should be. In particular, direct support of the minor at the 4 level is a rare bid (cue bid instead). Even better is for opener to enquire about responder's shape and this is all covered next: -

### 3.1.3.1 Shortage Ask After a Jacoby (Major-Minor) Two Suiter

Hand A      You hold this hand and open a strong NT. Partner bids 2♦ (transfer to ♥'s) and you complete the transfer. Partner's next bid is 3♣. So partner is possibly interested in slam, but is this hand good enough to investigate 6♣? And how do you set about it? You know that partner has at most 4 cards divided between ♦'s and ♠'s. 3NT is probably dicey but 4♥ must be a good bet. But surely 6♣ is there if partner has a singleton ♠. How do we investigate? We come back to this hand in example 2 later.

But first of all, take a look at this similar example.

#### Example 1

West	East	West	East	(1) cue bid
♠ KQ4	♠ AJ975	1NT	2♥	
♥ AQ7	♥ K86	2♠	3♣	
♦ 9653	♦ 2	3♥	(1) 3♠	(1)
♣ AJ6	♣ KQ75	4♣	(1) 4♦	(2) ?

Some straightforward cue bidding, but what is 4♦ at (2)? Is it the Ace, the King or a singleton? West needs to know, as a singleton is sufficient for slam but the ace or king are not.

As we will see later, we do not use splinters directly after a transfer if we have a 2<sup>nd</sup> suit, instead we prefer to bid our second suit. Also, we need a 6 card suit to splinter. Anyway, West liked the transfer to ♠'s but did not have enough for a super accept (this is also covered later). After East has shown a ♣ suit, West's hand has become enormous. All he really needs to know is if East is short in ♦'s. We come back to this example 1 (with new bidding) soon.

In the situations where responder has transferred to a major and then bid a minor suit, he has at most 4 cards in the two unbid suits. Also note that it is unlikely that responder has a minimal hand with decent honours in both of these unbid suits as then he would prefer a 3NT rebid rather than showing a 4 card minor. Expect weakness in at least one of these unbid suits. If opener has adequate cover in both of these unbid suits then he may bid 3NT, but often he will wish to know more about responder's shape. This is achieved by bidding the next free bid (not a return to responder's major) which always asks for responder's shortage:

**Warning:** *This shortage ask is something new and unless you have agreed it, most would take it as a cue bid. Be very careful. If you (or your partner) are likely to forget this convention (and make a cue bid) then skip this section!*

So we are considering the following 4 sequences: -

1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 3♣	responder has 5 ♥'s, 4+ ♣'s
1NT - 2♥ - 2♠ - 3♣	responder has 5 ♠'s, 4+ ♣'s
1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 3♦	responder has 5 ♥'s, 4+ ♦'s
1NT - 2♥ - 2♠ - 3♦	responder has 5 ♠'s, 4+ ♦'s :-

(responder has 5 ♥'s, 4+ ♣'s)

(responder has 5 ♠'s, 4+ ♣'s)

After 1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 3♣, 3♦ asks: -

After 1NT - 2♥ - 2♠ - 3♣, 3♦ asks: -

3♥ = singleton ♦  
3♠ = singleton ♠  
3NT = 2-2 in ♠'s & ♦'s  
4♣ = void ♦  
4♦ = void ♠  
4♥ = no slam interest

3♥ = singleton ♦  
3♠ = singleton ♥  
3NT = 2-2 in ♥'s & ♦'s  
4♣ = void ♦  
4♦ = void ♥  
4♥ =  
4♠ = no slam interest

(responder has 5 ♥'s, 4+ ♦'s)

(responder has 5 ♠'s, 4+ ♦'s)

After 1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 3♦, 3♠ asks: -

After 1NT - 2♥ - 2♠ - 3♦, 3♥ asks: -

3NT = 2-2 in ♠'s & ♣'s  
4♣ = singleton or void ♣  
4♦ = singleton or void ♠  
4♥ = no slam interest

3♠ = singleton ♣  
3NT = 2-2 in ♥'s & ♣'s  
4♣ = singleton ♥  
4♦ = void ♣  
4♥ = void ♥  
4♠ = no slam interest

Obviously we wish to keep the responses at or below 4 of the major and so there is no room to differentiate between singletons and voids in the ♥/♦ sequence. No problem. You could have additional relays to clarify it, but this can normally be sorted out later.

These responses may be remembered by noting that shortage in the minor is mentioned before shortage in the major. The 'flat' 5422 type hand is always 3NT. 4 of the major is a sign off – but opener may (rarely) choose to play in 5 of the minor.

But be careful with the 3NT bid – it is forcing! The 3NT bid should be considered as forcing because responder is interested in slam – he did not 'sign off' in 4 of the major. Responder will bid 3NT with the appropriate shape even if he is definitely slamming. This is no problem as opener would not be asking for shortage (thus usually investigating slam) if he wanted to play in 3NT.

First of all, let's go back to our Example 1 and change West's third bid: -

### Example 1 (continued)

West	East	West	East	(1) shortage? (2) singleton ♦
♠ KQ4	♠ AJ975	1NT	2♥	
♥ AQ7	♥ K86	2♠	3♣	
♦ 9653	♦ 2	3♦ (1)	3♥ (2)	
♣ AJ6	♣ KQ75	etc to 6♠		

---

And how does our shortage ask work with our Hand A?

### Example 2

West	East	West	East	(1) shortage? (2) singleton ♠
♠ 985	♠ 6	1NT	2♦	
♥ KQ	♥ AJ1085	2♥	3♣	
♦ AQ84	♦ K93	3♦ (1)	3♠ (2)	
♣ KQ83	♣ AJ94	etc to 6♣		

West could just bid 6♣, or else try RKCB but then he gets to 6♣ anyway. If you play Kickback here then West can bid 4♦ RKCB. Anyway, 6♣ is easily reached after the singleton ♠ is uncovered. I guess that you could choose 6♥ at pairs scoring.

---

We have the same West hand here, but this time there's no slam: -

### Example 3

West	East	West	East	(1) shortage? (2) 2-2 in ♠'s & ♦'s (3) With these great ♥'s, West judged that 4♥ is just as good as 5♣.
♠ 985	♠ J6	1NT	2♦	
♥ KQ	♥ AJ1085	2♥	3♣	
♦ AQ84	♦ K9	3♦ (1)	3NT (2)	
♣ KQ83	♣ AJ94	4♥ (3)	pass	

West was hoping for ♠ shortage, in which case there might have been slam. However, opener must pull this 3NT bid – it is forcing. Opener would not be asking for shortage if he had adequate cover in both the short suits, and responder may well have slam aspirations.

---

Sometimes these methods may lead to greater things: -

#### Example 4

West	East	West	East	(1) shortage? (2) void ♠
♠ 985	♠ -	1NT	2♦	
♥ KQ	♥ AJ1085	2♥	3♣	
♦ AQJ4	♦ K96	3♦ (1)	4♦ (2)	
♣ KQ83	♣ AJ942	etc to 7♣ (or maybe 7♥ at pairs)		

It really would have been silly for West to try to settle for 3NT or 4♥ at his 3<sup>rd</sup> bid.

---

Nothing is lost, of course, if responder's shortage is not what opener hoped for: -

#### Example 5

West	East	West	East	(1) shortage? (2) singleton ♦
♠ 985	♠ 763	1NT	2♦	
♥ KQ	♥ AJ1085	2♥	3♣	
♦ AQJ4	♦ 3	3♦ (1)	3♥ (2)	
♣ KQ83	♣ AJ94	4♥	pass	

---

If responder definitely does not like NT, he may sign off in 4 of the major himself: -

#### Example 6

West	East	West	East	(1) shortage? (2) no slam ambitions.
♠ 985	♠ 7	1NT	2♦	
♥ KQ	♥ AJ1085	2♥	3♣	
♦ AQJ4	♦ 932	3♦ (1)	4♥ (2)	
♣ KQ83	♣ AJ94	pass		

Remember, opener's shortage enquiry means that he likes responder's suits, and so responder going

past 3NT into 4 of the major is fine.

---

### 3.1.4

### 5-5 in the Majors

Here we consider the situation where responder has two five card majors. Remember that all 5-4's, 6-4 etc. are shown via Stayman, so we are concerned with the situations where responder is at least 5-5 in the majors.

We have already covered weak hands, we bid 2♣ and then our best 5 card major if partner responds 2♦ (Garbage Stayman). We do not play Crawling Stayman as it is unsatisfactory when 5-4 (and for most other situations).

So here we consider invitational and strong 5-5's. There are a few methods used to show these 5-5 hands.

Some players use the direct jump to 3♥/♠ (3♥ either weak or invitational, 3♠ game forcing). We have a better use for these jumps and they really take up too much room, they are covered in section 5.2.

One rather out-dated method with 5-5's is Extended Stayman (1NT - 2♣ - 2♦ - 3♦). But the problem is that there is no differentiation between invitational and strong hands. Also, of course, we use this sequence as a Quest transfer.

Another practice in common use by many players is: -

1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 2♠	shows 5-5 in the majors and is invitational	<u>Note.</u> We don't
1NT - 2♥ - 2♠ - 3♥	shows 5-5 in the majors and is game forcing	use this.

The major drawback with using the second sequence is that there is little room for manoeuvring, especially when looking for slam. Actually, since the first sequence is at a very low level we can use it for both invitational and strong 5-5 hands. The 2<sup>nd</sup> sequence will be re-defined later in section 3.1.5.

Before we start, does the sequence 1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 2♠ have another meaning? Some players who use the direct jumps to show the 5-5 hands use this 2♠ bid here as a Walsh Relay (which involves various hand types and negates the transfer). I don't particularly like this – a transfer is a transfer and you may well run into problems after a super-accept or if the opponents intervene. So no Walsh relays and 1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 2♠ shows our major suit 5-5's, both invitational and game forcing.

## Invitational Major two Suiters

Another common use is that 1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 2♠ shows 5-5 or 4-5 in the majors and is invitational. This is quite reasonable, but needs to be expanded upon to include invitational 5-4's. Now later I give a complete scenario for all invitational and game forcing 5-4, 4-5 and 5-5's but if, for some strange reason, you don't like Quest transfers then the following is a respectable scheme for all of the invitational hands. The responses must, of course, be kept below 3♥ as partner may be minimum: -

After 1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 2♠, 2NT enquires: -

3♣ = 5♥'s & 4♠'s

3♦ = 4♥'s & 5♠'s

3♥ = 5♥'s & 5♠'s

Note. We don't use this.

Now the initial transfer promises 5♥'s but the 2♠ bid means that it may be only a 4 card ♥ suit. I have stated earlier that I do not like a bid that transfers and then later gets negated, but this time it's slightly different. If partner super-accepts (I explain all of this later) there is no problem as you then (hopefully) have a 4-4 ♥ fit with a max partner and so simply bid the ♥ game.

So this scheme is (reasonably) sound and opener should be able to select the best contract. Game forcing 5-4 & 4-5's then go via Stayman and a jump to the 3 level over 2♦. Game forcing 5-5's would then use 1NT - 2♥ - 2♠ - 3♥.

Fine, everything is covered but Quest transfers really are superior and have numerous other benefits (including the obvious one that opener is usually declarer) and our method of showing both invitational and game forcing 5-5's (coming up next) is at a lower level and so is much more accurate.

---

OK, but with only one sequence (1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 2♠) to show both invitational and game forcing 5-5's, how does opener know if responder has just invitational or game going values?

Simple, he just asks! The next bid up (2NT) asks and, what's more, responder's reply will indicate his shortage and so aid declarer in any borderline game decisions: -



When responder has just invitational values, his response must obviously be kept at or below 3♥. We do not have the full range of bids available as in the game forcing case (where we can go up to 4♥) and so we use just two bids (3♦ and 3♥) to show where our shortage (could be singleton or void) is.

So when responder has an invitational hand we have: -

After 1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 2♠, 2NT by opener asks: -

- 3♦ = ♣ shortage, invitational
- 3♥ = ♦ shortage, invitational.

After either of these invitational responses opener may pass (a 3♥ response) or bid 3♥, 3♠, 4♥, 4♠ or (very unlikely) 3NT to play.

And if responder has game going values he has many more options: -

- |                            |                       |                     |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 3♣ = a game forcing hand * | 4♣ = void ♣           |                     |
| 3♦ =                       | 4♦ = void ♦           |                     |
| 3♥ =                       | 4♥ = no slam interest | See note after      |
| 3♠ = singleton ♣           |                       | example 14 for a    |
| 3NT = singleton ♦          | 5♣ = EDKCB            | possible use of the |
|                            | 5♦ = EDKCB            | 4♠/4NT bids.        |

EDKCB is explained shortly. But what's with this \* game forcing hand 3♣ bid? I give some examples of this in a minute, but it is used when responder has a weak doubleton (or triplet) minor in order to warn opener of two possible losers off the top there. This 3♣ bid is a puppet to 3♦ and responder then usually defines his shortage although it may just be because responder wants to use EDKCB (at a low level). Note that we don't use 4NT above (as EDKCB) because the responses may get us uncomfortably high.

After 1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 2♠ - 2NT - 3♣, 3♦ by opener asks: -

- 3♥ = small doubleton ♣
- 3♠ = small doubleton ♦
- 3NT = EDKCB
- 4♣ = small triplet ♣ (thus a ♦ void)
- 4♦ = small triplet ♦ (thus a ♣ void)
- 4♥ = The 4♥ response is used to show 5611 and 6511 hands and is defined (together with a slight addition to the meaning of the 4♣ and 4♦ responses) in section 3.1.4.2.

The 3♦/♥ responses are an interesting example of change of captaincy. After a 1NT opening, responder starts off as captain. After an invitational 3♦/♥ response opener knows that responder has about 11 points (probably way less in HCPs because of re-evaluation due to shape) and takes charge, either bidding game or not. The slam interest sequences are more of a dual captaincy situation, opener knows responder's shape pretty well and that responder has slam aspirations, responder knows the combined points total.

Anyway, it's time for a few examples: -

### Example 1

West	East	West	East	(1) transfer
				(2) normal accept
♠ AK10	♠ J9752	1NT	2♦ (1)	(3) 5-5 in the majors
♥ 985	♥ KJ1042	2♥ (2)	2♠ (3)	(4) relay
♦ KQ7	♦ 6	2NT (4)	3♥ (5)	(5) invitational, ♦ shortage
♣ A732	♣ J5	3♠	pass	

West has good trumps, but with wasted values in partner's short suit he signs off.

### Example 2

West	East	West	East	(1) transfer
				(2) normal accept
♠ AK10	♠ J9752	1NT	2♦ (1)	(3) 5-5 in the majors
♥ 985	♥ KJ1042	2♥ (2)	2♠ (3)	(4) relay
♦ KQ7	♦ J5	2NT (4)	3♦ (5)	(5) invitational, ♣ shortage
♣ A732	♣ 6	4♠	pass	

This time game is far more likely to succeed. So the knowledge of partner's shortage is an important factor for opener deciding whether to go to game or not.

And explicit information about responder's shape will guide slam decisions when responder has game forcing values: -

### Example 3

West	East	West	East	(1) transfer
				(2) normal accept
♠ AKJ4	♠ Q6752	1NT	2♦ (1)	(3) 5-5 in the majors
♥ AQ5	♥ KJ1042	2♥ (2)	2♠ (3)	(4) relay
♦ Q9	♦ A6	2NT (4)	3♠ (5)	(5) game force, singleton ♣
♣ 9852	♣ 6	etc to 6♠		

### Example 4

But if responder has the wrong singleton then it's easy to stay low.

West	East	West	East	(1) transfer
				(2) normal accept
♠ AKJ4	♠ Q7652	1NT	2♦ (1)	(3) 5-5 in the majors
♥ AQ5	♥ KJ1042	2♥ (2)	2♠ (3)	(4) relay
♦ Q9	♦ 6	2NT (4)	3NT (5)	(5) game force, singleton ♦
♣ 9852	♣ A6	4♠	pass	

## Example 5

So that's all very fine, but what are these weak doubleton and triplet showing bids?

West	East	West	East	(1) transfer
				(2) normal accept
♠ AQ94	♠ KJ752	1NT	2♦ (1)	(3) 5-5 in the majors
♥ AJ8	♥ KQ1094	2♥ (2)	2♠ (3)	(4) relay
♦ Q87	♦ J6	2NT (4)	?	
♣ A82	♣ K			

West now has a problem if East's reply of a singleton ♣ said nothing about his doubleton ♦ holding. Basically, the Jacoby bidder usually has 3 cards in the minors, often split 2-1, and it may be essential for opener to know if there are two losers in a suit. This 'small doubleton or small triplet' is defined as two top losers.

West	East	So, in this example 5 we have solved the problem by having the 3♣ response to 2NT as showing game forcing values with a weak doubleton (or triplet). Opener then relays with 3♦ and responder shows his weak suit and minor suit distribution.
1NT	2♦	
2♥	2♠	
2NT	3♣ (5)	(5) game forcing
3♦ (6)	3♠ (7)	(6) relay
4♠	pass	(7) weak doubleton ♦

Note that as a result of us having these weak suit bids, if responder does directly show a singleton or void then his doubleton must be Ax or Kx.

Example 6 But if East's minor suits were reversed, then slam is there: -

West	East	West	East	(1) transfer
				(2) normal accept
♠ AQ94	♠ KJ752	1NT	2♦ (1)	(3) 5-5 in the majors
♥ AJ8	♥ KQ1094	2♥ (2)	2♠ (3)	(4) relay
♦ Q87	♦ K	2NT (4)	3♣ (5)	(5) game forcing
♣ A82	♣ J6	3♦ (6)	3♥ (7)	(6) relay
		? (8)		(7) weak doubleton ♣

Now West is definitely interested in slam, and the next logical step is to ask about key cards. East is 5-5 in the majors and has no idea which is the key suit. In fact, both suits are key! The king in any 5 card suit is very important and so in this situation we employ Double (or two-suit) Roman Key Card Blackwood, DRKCB.

This is covered (and our example continued) in the following section: -

### 3.1.4.1 Asking for Aces or Key cards when Responder is 5-5 in the Majors

The trump suit has not yet been established, only opener knows. After the response to the 2NT enquiry (or after the response to the 3♦ weakness enquiry), opener uses the next available bid (not 4 of a major suit – that would be an attempt to sign off) to ask for key cards. Since no trump suit is yet defined we use two suit, or Double RKCB (DRKCB), so there are 6 key cards.

We use the next free bid as our DRKCB ask and so the responses are: -

- Next step = 0 or 3 key cards
- Next step + 1 = 1 or 4 key cards
- Next step + 2 = 2 or 5 key cards, no ♥Q or ♠Q
- Next step + 2 = 2 or 5 key cards + ♥Q or ♠Q or both

Note that only opener knows which suit is trumps and so the 2 key card response cannot be specific about which queen.

So how does our example 6 progress?

West	East	West	East	(1) transfer
				(2) normal accept
♠ AQ94	♠ KJ752	1NT	2♦ (1)	(3) 5-5 in the majors
♥ AJ8	♥ KQ1094	2♥ (2)	2♠ (3)	(4) relay
♦ Q87	♦ K	2NT (4)	3♣ (5)	(5) game forcing
♣ A82	♣ J6	3♦ (6)	3♥ (7)	(6) relay
		3♠ (8)	4♥ (9)	(7) weak doubleton ♣
		6♠ (10)	pass	(8) DRKCB
				(9) 2 key cards + a ♥/♠ queen
				(10) one key card missing, so 6♠.

If East had had 3 key cards (so the ♦A here), then it's 7♠.

Wow! We covered a lot in that example. It's probably best to have a couple more to make sure that it all works: -

---

Let's have an all-singing all-dancing example. We are using DRKCB but responder is known to have at most 3 cards in the minors – minor suit kings are unimportant and the next bid after the key card response asks for key queens.

Here we need to know about asking for the major suit queens after the initial response to DRKCB. The next bid (not 4 or 5 of a major if no trump suit has been agreed) asks for the queens, the responses are: -

- Next step = no queen
- Next step + 1 = ♥Q
- Next step + 2 = ♠Q
- Next step + 3 = both queens

Example 7

West	East	West	East	
♠ A106	♠ KQJ75	1NT	2♦ (1)	(1) transfer
♥ AJ87	♥ KQ1094	2♥ (2)	2♠ (3)	(2) normal accept
♦ K87	♦ A64	2NT (4)	4♣ (5)	(3) 5-5 in the majors
♣ QJ2	♣ -	4♦ (6)	4♥ (7)	(4) relay
		4NT (8)	5♠ (9)	(5) game force, void ♣
		7♥	pass	(6) DRKCB
				(7) 3 key cards
				(8) queens?
				(9) both

If opener attempts to sign off and responder has slam ambitions, then he must take over: -

Example 8

West	East	West	East	
♠ K6	♠ QJ875	1NT	2♦ (1)	(1) transfer
♥ AJ8	♥ KQ1094	2♥ (2)	2♠ (3)	(2) normal accept
♦ Q876	♦ AK4	2NT (4)	4♣ (5)	(3) 5-5 in the majors
♣ KQ52	♣ -	4♥ (6)	4♠ (7)	(4) relay
		5♦ (8)	6♥	(5) game force, void ♣
		pass		(6) sign off
				(7) DRKCB
				(8) 2 key cards, no ♥/♠ queen

If West had held ♣A, he would not have counted it in his key card response. When partner is known to have a void, holdings in the void suit are not included in responses to Blackwood. Note that 4♠ at (7) is OK as DRKCB here as it cannot be a correction of the final contract, ♥'s are agreed.

This next example is from the April 1994 ACBL Bulletin. The holders got to 4♥ and asked how 6♥ could be reached. Let's see how we do it assuming no super-accept of the initial 2♦ transfer: -

Example 9

West	East	West	East	(1) transfer
				(2) normal accept
♠ AK6	♠ Q10875	1NT	2♦ (1)	(3) 5-5 in the majors
♥ Q987	♥ AKJ104	2♥ (2)	2♠ (3)	(4) relay
♦ Q87	♦ A6	2NT (4)	3♠ (5)	(5) game force, singleton ♣
♣ KQ2	♣ 4	? (6)		

(6) West has two options here. He has good ♥'s but his values in ♣'s are wasted. If he attempts to sign off then East is worth another effort and should bid DRKCB over 4♥.

So, if West decides to have a go, the bidding proceeds: -

West	East	
3NT (6)	4♣ (7)	(6) DRKCB
4♦ (8)	4NT (9)	(7) 3 key cards
6♥	pass	(8) queens?
		(9) ♠ Q

And if West signs off, then East takes over and the bidding proceeds: -

West	East	
4♥ (6)	4♠ (7)	(6) sign off
5♥ (8)	6♥	(7) DRKCB
pass		(8) 2 key cards + a ♥/♠ queen

In the ACBL article, the question was also asked how to avoid the slam if West had say ♠ J9 doubleton? DRKCB sorts that out and you end up in a manageable 5♥. The only type of holding that West could have where 5♥ may fail is this

♠ J9 ♥ Q98 ♦ KQJ7 ♣ KQJ7.

Just possible I suppose.

When the response to DRKCB is 2 key cards plus a ♥/♠ queen then asker may need to know which queen is held (or if it's both queens). So the next free bid asks about queens and the responses are: -

Next step = ♥Q  
 Next step + 1 = ♠Q  
 Next step + 2 = both queens

Example 10

West	East	West	East	(1) transfer
				(2) normal accept
♠ A943	♠ KQ752	1NT	2♦ (1)	(3) 5-5 in the majors
♥ AJ8	♥ KQ1094	2♥ (2)	2♠ (3)	(4) relay
♦ A87	♦ 9	2NT (4)	3♣ (5)	(5) game forcing
♣ A82	♣ 96	3♦ (6)	3♥ (7)	(6) relay
		3♠ (8)	4♥ (9)	(7) weak doubleton ♣
		4NT (10)	5♥ (11)	(8) DRKCB
		7♠	pass	(9) 2 key cards + a ♥/♠ queen
				(10) clarify queens
				(11) both

Example 11

West	East	West	East	(1) transfer
				(2) normal accept
♠ A943	♠ KQ752	1NT	2♦ (1)	(3) 5-5 in the majors
♥ AJ8	♥ K10974	2♥ (2)	2♠ (3)	(4) relay
♦ A87	♦ Q	2NT (4)	3♣ (5)	(5) game forcing
♣ A82	♣ Q6	3♦ (6)	3♥ (7)	(6) relay
		3♠ (8)	4♥ (9)	(7) weak doubleton ♣
		4NT (10)	5♦ (11)	(8) DRKCB
		6♠	pass	(9) 2 key cards + a ♥/♠ queen
				(10) clarify queens
				(11) ♠Q only

Notice that the major suit queen of example 10 is much better than the minor suit queens of example 11.

### 3.1.4.2 6-5 or 5-6 in the Majors

Back in section 3.1.4 I said that after 1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 2♠ - 2NT - 3♣ - 3♦ that the responses to the 3♦ enquiry could be extended to show 6-5 and 5-6 in the majors. The complete scheme is:

After 1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 2♠ - 2NT - 3♣, 3♦ by opener asks: -

- 3♥ = small doubleton ♣ (thus a singleton ♦)
- 3♠ = small doubleton ♦ (thus a singleton ♣)
- 3NT = DRKCB
- 4♣ = small triplet ♣ or 6-5 or 5-6 with a weak doubleton ♣ (thus a ♦ void)
- 4♦ = small triplet ♦ or 6-5 or 5-6 with a weak doubleton ♦ (thus a ♣ void)
- 4♥ = 5-6-1-1 or 6-5-1-1

Example 12 There is an alternative way of bidding this example overleaf.

West	East	West	East	(1) transfer
				(2) normal accept
♠ AQ94	♠ KJ752	1NT	2♦ (1)	(3) in the majors
♥ AJ8	♥ KQ10964	2♥ (2)	2♠ (3)	(4) relay
♦ Q87	♦ J	2NT (4)	3♣ (5)	(5) game forcing
♣ A82	♣ K	3♦ (6)	4♥ (7)	(6) relay
		4NT (8)	5♠ (9)	(7) 5-6-1-1 or 6-5-1-1
		6♠	pass	(8) DRKCB
				(9) 2 key cards + a ♥/♠ queen

Example 13

There is no mechanism (unless you want to make it really complicated) to show 5-6 or 6-5 and a void with a weak doubleton. The best compromise is to show 5-5 and a weak triplet (thus indicating the important feature – the void). Exclusion DRKCB (see next page) is not recommended with a weak doubleton.

West	East	West	East	(1) transfer
				(2) normal accept
♠ AQ94	♠ KJ752	1NT	2♦ (1)	(3) 5-5 in the majors
♥ AJ8	♥ KQ10963	2♥ (2)	2♠ (3)	(4) relay
♦ Q87	♦ -	2NT (4)	3♣ (5)	(5) 5-5 game forcing
♣ A82	♣ 97	3♦ (6)	4♣ (7)	(6) relay
		4♦ (8)	5♣ (9)	(7) weak triplet ♣ (so a ♦ void)
		7♠	pass	(8) DRKCB
				(9) 2 key cards + a ♥/♠ queen

West knows that 2♣'s can be discarded on long ♥'s. The extra ♥ just makes life simpler as only 2♦'s now need to be ruffed.



When responder has two singletons, it may simply be better to take charge.

Example 12 (alternative bidding).

West	East	West	East	(1) transfer
				(2) normal accept
♠ AQ94	♠ KJ752	1NT	2♦ (1)	(3) 5-5 in the majors
♥ AJ8	♥ KQ10964	2♥ (2)	2♠ (3)	(4) relay
♦ Q87	♦ J	2NT (4)	3♣ (5)	(5) game forcing
♣ A82	♣ K	3♦ (6)	3NT (7)	(6) relay
		4♣ (8)	4♦ (9)	(7) DRKCB
		4NT (10)	6♥	(8) 3 key cards
		6♠	pass	(9) queens?
				(10) ♠ Q

West knows that responder is at least 5-5 and so corrects to the 5-4 ♠ fit. Opener would also correct if 3-2 in the majors.

This example shows why we need 3NT as the DRKCB bid, you may get too high if DRKCB starts off at 4NT and you need to ask for key queens which partner does not have.

And when responder is 6-5 or 5-6 with a void but a non-weak doubleton, it may also be best to take charge. We have seen that 3NT after the 3♦ relay (at (7) above) is DRKCB. A jump to 5♣ or 5♦ is Exclusion DRKCB (EDRKCB), whereby the answers do not count honours in the exclusion suit: -

Example 14

West	East	West	East	(1) transfer
				(2) normal accept
♠ AQ94	♠ KJ752	1NT	2♦ (1)	(3) 5-5 in the majors
♥ AJ8	♥ KQ10964	2♥ (2)	2♠ (3)	(4) relay
♦ Q87	♦ -	2NT (4)	5♦ (5)	(5) EDRKCB
♣ A82	♣ Q6	5♥ (6)	5NT (7)	(6) 3 key cards outside ♦'s
		6♥ (8)	7♥	(7) queens?
		7♠ (9)	pass	(8) ♠ Q

(9) West again corrects the final contract.

Note Note that we do get rather high here and can sometimes have problems if West has just the ♠ Q and East does not have the ♥ Q. So you may prefer to use the otherwise idle bids of 4♠ and 4NT as EDRKCB for ♣'s and ♦'s resp.

### 3.1.5 Bidding the other major

As we have mentioned before, modern practice by many players is: -

1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 2♠ shows 5-5 in the majors and is invitational  
 1NT - 2♥ - 2♠ - 3♥ shows 5-5 in the majors and is game forcing

This was fully covered in the previous section. The major drawback with using the second sequence is that there is little room for manoeuvring, especially when looking for slam. Thus we use the first sequence to show both the invitational and game forcing 5-5's.

So that leaves the sequence (a) 1NT - 2♥ - 2♠ - 3♥ undefined,  
 as is the similar sequence (b) 1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 3♠.

Also, what is (c) 1NT - 2♥ - 2♠ - 4♥  
 and (d) 1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 4♠.

### Splinters?

Let's start with 1NT - 2♥ - 2♠ - 3♥ and 1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 3♠.

Hand A	Hand B	Hand C	
♠ Q3	♠ 3	♠ 3	We start with looking at these 3 hands, partner has opened 1NT. Hand A is mildly interested in slam and so a Jacoby transfer followed by 4♥ is best. Hand B has good shape and a singleton, but not really slam values, so a Texas 4♦ is best. Hand C is different; it definitely wants to investigate slam, especially
♥ KQ9642	♥ KQ9642	♥ KQ9642	
♦ A4	♦ AJ4	♦ AJ4	
♣ K98	♣ J98	♣ K98	

if partner has few wasted values in ♠'s. With no other 4+ card suit to mention, we clearly want to splinter with Hand C.

Now 1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 3♠/4♣/4♦ and 1NT - 2♥ - 2♠ - 4♣/4♦/4♥ are all played as splinters by some players. But this is a bit wasteful (using three bids) and, as we will see shortly, we need the 4♣ bid as ace/key card ask and we use the 4♦ bid as a general slam try. But there is absolutely no reason why we cannot use 3♥ and 3♠ here as ambiguous splinters, exactly the same as they were with Stayman.

### 3.1.5.1 Bidding 3 of the other major – ambiguous splinters

So we simply adopt the same philosophy as we did after Stayman – ambiguous splinters. After a simple completion of the transfer, 3 of the other major is an ambiguous splinter. It's just the same as the Stayman sequences: -

So, after 1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 3♠,

3NT asks    4♣ = ♣ singleton/void  
                  4♦ = ♦ singleton/void  
                  4♥ = ♠ singleton/void

and after 1NT - 2♥ - 2♠ - 3♥,

3♠ asks    3NT = ambiguous void  
                  4♣ = ♣ singleton  
                  4♦ = ♦ singleton  
                  4♥ = ♥ singleton

After 1NT - 2♥ - 2♠ - 3♥ - 3♠ - 3NT,

4♣ asks    4♦ = ♦ void  
                  4♥ = ♥ void  
                  4♠ = ♣ void

#### Example 1

West	East	West	East	(1) transfer
				(2) normal accept
♠ KJ4	♠ 3	1NT	2♦ (1)	(3) ambiguous splinter
♥ J8	♥ KQ9642	2♥ (2)	3♠ (3)	(4) where?
♦ KQ87	♦ AJ4	3NT (4)	4♥ (5)	(5) ♠ singleton/void
♣ AQ76	♣ K98	pass		

With wasted values in ♠'s, West settles for 4♥.

#### Example 2

West	East	West	East	(1) transfer
				(2) normal accept
♠ Q42	♠ 3	1NT	2♦ (1)	(3) ambiguous splinter
♥ A108	♥ KQ9642	2♥ (2)	3♠ (3)	(4) where?
♦ KQ7	♦ AJ4	3NT (4)	4♥ (5)	(5) ♠ singleton/void
♣ AQ76	♣ K98	4♠ (6)	etc to 6♥	(6) RKCB

This time there's little wastage in ♠'s.

#### Hand D

♠ 3  
 ♥ KQJ642  
 ♦ AJ4  
 ♣ AQ8

This hand is very powerful and wants to investigate slam even if partner signs off. However, there is a slight problem with this particular holding (♠ shortage) when playing ambiguous splinters in that it goes 1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 3♠ - 3NT - 4♥ and partner may pass! So with this hand type with definite slam interest you cannot splinter and have to simply ask for keycards (with 4♣ after transferring – as we shall see shortly).

### 3.1.5.2 Bidding 4 of the other major

Here we consider the two remaining, perhaps strange, sequences (c) and (d): -

- (c) 1NT - 2♥ - 2♠ - 4♥ (see note at the bottom of the next page)  
 (d) 1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 4♠

On the surface, pretty silly. You have transferred but then leapt to 4 of the other major. Before we write off these sequences as meaningless, consider the sequences: -

1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 4NT and 1NT - 2♥ - 2♠ - 4NT.

These are fully covered later. They are quantitative, showing 5 of the major and suggesting a slam either in the major or in NT. Also possibly in a minor.

But what if responder has a similar slam invitational hand but with 3 cards in the other major? A quantitative 4NT would make a 5-3 slam in the other major very difficult to find. So why not use these otherwise redundant bids of 4 of the other major to show a similar hand to 4NT quantitative but showing 3 (decent) cards in the unbid major? Of course, this also helps to clarify our 4NT quantitative bid (it usually denies 3 cards in the other major). So, we have: -

1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 4♠ quantitative, 3532 or 3523 shape  
 1NT - 2♥ - 2♠ - 4♥ quantitative, 5332 or 5323 shape

Opener should then be in a position to have a good shot at the best contract, game or slam.

#### Example 3

West	East	West	East	
♠ A5	♠ KQ976	1NT	2♥	(1) quantitative, 3 ♥'s
♥ KJ932	♥ AQ5	2♠	4♥ (1)	(2) with good ♥'s but a minimum,
♦ Q64	♦ 82	pass (2)		West settles for the 5-3 fit at the
♣ KQ8	♣ A106			game level.

#### Example 4

West	East	West	East	
♠ 85	♠ KQ976	1NT	2♥	(1) quantitative, 3 ♥'s
♥ KJ932	♥ AQ5	2♠	4♥ (1)	
♦ AK6	♦ 82	6♥ (2)	pass	
♣ KQ8	♣ A106			

(2) 4NT is not available as Blackwood here (it is a sign off). 4♠ is also to play of course. So with excellent ♥'s West simply accepts the slam invitation. You could play 5♦ as a cue bid here but it's best played as looking for a ♦ slam (see example 5).

It looks like 11 tricks in NT if the ♠ A is offside, but West knows of the 5-3 ♥ fit and also that East has a doubleton minor. The 12<sup>th</sup> trick should come from a minor suit ruff.

After responder's 4-of-a-major bid it is still best to reserve bids of 5♣/♦ and 6♣/♦ as looking for a minor suit slam as in the traditional case where responder bids 4NT; responder is known to have a 3 card minor: -

Example 5

West	East	West	East	
♠ 85	♠ KQ976	1NT	2♥	(1) quantitative, 3♥'s
♥ K92	♥ AQ5	2♠	4♥ (1)	(2) suggesting a ♣ slam.
♦ AK6	♦ 82	5♣ (2)	6♣	
♣ KQJ83	♣ A106	pass		

---

**Recap** Just check on these two hands and compare our bidding to 'standard'. Partner (West) has opened a strong NT.

East A	'Standard'		'Our system'	
♠ K10843	West	East	West	East
♥ AJ9				
♦ 52	1NT	2♥	1NT	2♥
♣ Q102	2♠	3NT	2♠	3♥.. etc.

East B	'Standard'		'Our system'	
♠ KQJ83	West	East	West	East
♥ AJ9				
♦ Q2	1NT	2♥	1NT	2♥
♣ K108	2♠	4NT	2♠	4♥.. etc.

Clearly our system is superior as it allows a possible 5-3 ♥ fit to be located at or below game. And, as previously stated, it clarifies the situation when we do rebid 3/4NT (no decent 3 card major).

---

Note

Some players use sequence (c) 1NT - 2♥ - 2♠ - 4♥ to show a 5-5 hand with slam interest. Clearly quite reasonable, but we use our sequence 1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 2♠ - 2NT - ? to define 5-5's with slam interest. Obviously far better as the level is lower and the ? bid informs opener of shortage etc.

### 3.1.6

### 4♣ - RKCB after a Jacoby transfer

We have said that 4NT is quantitative after a Jacoby transfer (more of this next section). 4♣ is used to ask for aces/key cards. Now you could use simple Gerber here, but a key card ask really is superior. Rather than calling it Key Card Gerber, I prefer to say that 4♣ is Roman Key Card Blackwood.

Hand A      Opposite partner's strong 1NT opening you start off with a transfer. When partner simply accepts you really only need to know about key cards for the ♠ slam. So 4♣, RKCB. If partner had super-accepted (we come on to this later) then 4NT (Kickback) would be RKCB.

♠ AQJ964	♥ 4	♦ KQ2	♣ KJ10	So: -	West	East	
					1NT	2♥	
					2♠	4♣	4♣ is RKCB for ♠'s.

---

#### Example 1

West	East	West	East	
♠ K2	♠ AQ7964	1NT	2♥	(1) RKCB
♥ AJ73	♥ 4	2♠	4♣ (1)	(2) 0 or 3 key cards
♦ AJ64	♦ KQ2	4♦ (2) ..		etc to 6♠
♣ Q94	♣ KJ10			

---

#### Example 2

West	East	West	East	
♠ 52	♠ AQ7964	1NT	2♥	(1) RKCB
♥ AKQ3	♥ 4	2♠	4♣ (1)	(2) 2 key cards without the queen
♦ AJ64	♦ KQ2	4♠ (2)	pass	
♣ Q94	♣ KJ10			

---

So we have      1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 4♣ is RKCB for ♥'s  
 And              1NT - 2♥ - 2♠ - 4♣ is RKCB for ♠'s

### 3.1.7 4♦ - The serious slam try

Hand A	Hand B	Hand C	Partner has opened a strong 1NT. How do you proceed with these 3 hands?
♠ AQ10964	♠ AQ10964	♠ AQ10964	
♥ 64	♥ 64	♥ Q4	
♦ Q63	♦ A63	♦ A63	
♣ 85	♣ K5	♣ K5	

We will be covering Texas transfers later and Hand A should use a Texas transfer rather than a Jacoby transfer followed by a 4♠ bid. The difference is that Texas is non-encouraging but the Jacoby sequence is mildly slam encouraging. So Hand B goes via the more encouraging Jacoby route (1NT - 2♥ - 2♠ - 4♠).

Now then. What about Hand C? Not really strong enough to push to slam, but certainly worth an effort. The Jacoby sequence mentioned above probably is a bit too feeble for this nice hand. Taking the plunge (say with 4♣ RKCB after transferring) really is a bit too ambitious. We need an invitational bid below game level. The answer? Transfer and then use the otherwise idle bid of 4♦. This says 'I have a good 6 card suit, no other 4 card suit and have slam ambitions'.

#### Example 1

West	East	West	East	
♠ K85	♠ AQ10964	1NT	2♥	(1) looking for slam
♥ AJ8	♥ Q4	2♠	4♦ (1)	(2) RKCB
♦ QJ94	♦ A63	4NT (2) ..etc..	to 6♠ (or 6NT)	
♣ AQ8	♣ K5			

---

#### Example 2

West	East	West	East	
♠ J8	♠ AQ10964	1NT	2♥	(1) looking for slam
♥ J105	♥ Q4	2♠	4♦ (1)	
♦ KQJ94	♦ A63	4♠	pass	
♣ AQJ	♣ K5			

This example shows why the invitation should be kept below 4 of the major. Anything more and the contract could be in danger.

### 3.1.8

### 4NT Quantitative after a Jacoby transfer

The 4NT bid is quantitative, looking for slam. If you open 1NT and partner transfers then he has a five card suit. If he has game going or better values and another 4 card suit, he will usually bid it. Thus this 4NT bid denies another decent 4 card suit. Suppose you have opened a strong 1NT with these hands and partner has transferred to ♠'s followed by a quantitative 4NT. What is your bid?

Hand A	Hand B	Hand C	Hand A is minimum and you could pass, but 5♠ is probably safer; this is a sign off.
♠ Q103	♠ Q103	♠ 97	Hand B is considerably better and the correct bid is 6♠.
♥ J4	♥ Q4	♥ K93	Hand C simply passes 4NT.
♦ AQ63	♦ AQ63	♦ AQ63	
♣ AQ52	♣ AK52	♣ AQ52	

But what if you have a slam accepting hand with little tolerance for ♠'s. Is there possibly a better strain than NT? Remember, responder has generally denied another 4 card suit.

Hand D	Hand E	Hand F	Hand D is worth slam. Traditionally over a quantitative 4NT a hand like this would bid 5♣ in search of a minor suit fit. Under these circumstances there is no point. Simply bid 6NT.
♠ Q4	♠ Q3	♠ Q7	Hand E is different. If a 5-3 ♣ fit exists, then 6♣ may be a better slam than 6NT. Thus a 5♣ or 5♦ bid shows a reasonable 5 card suit and suggests the suit slam if responder has decent 3 card support. Hand F is similar, but here you really want to emphasise that you have a good ♣ suit. So bid 6♣.
♥ K94	♥ K93	♥ A43	
♦ AQ93	♦ AQ6	♦ J93	
♣ AQ92	♣ AQ952	♣ AKQ92	

#### Example 1

West	East	West	East	(1) quantitative (2) a very good suit
♠ Q4	♠ K8763	1NT	2♥	
♥ J74	♥ AK	2♠	4NT (1)	
♦ AKQ92	♦ J64	6♦ (2)	pass (3)	
♣ A82	♣ KQ6			

(3) Three ♦'s with an honour is sufficient to accept the suit as trumps in this situation.

Hand G	There is, of course, also this type of hand. If you opened this hand with 1NT then 6♣ is probably the best bid now, although you might consider 6NT at pairs scoring.
♠ K3	
♥ K94	
♦ AQ	
♣ KJ9763	

One small point. A few experts recommend that if you wish to accept the 4NT slam invitation, then you should respond as to Blackwood. I don't like this. As we have seen, we really need these 5 level bids to find our decent 5-3 fits or to sign off in a major.

Finally, let's just look at one possible responder's hand.

Hand H	Now I have emphasised here that a sequence such as 1NT - 2♥ - 2♠ - 4NT denies another 4 card suit. This hand has the values to invite slam with nice top cards – but not in ♣'s. It would be silly to suggest a ♣ slam with this hand. So rebid 4NT, quantitative, after transferring.
♠ AKJ73	
♥ QJ	



♦ KJ            If there is a ♣ slam then opener needs a max with a good ♣ suit and he will  
 ♣ 7643           bid 5♣ or 6♣.

Example 2

West (D)	East (H)	West	East	(1) quantitative (2) a good hand but no good suit
♠ Q4	♠ AKJ73	1NT	2♥	
♥ K94	♥ QJ	2♠	4NT (1)	
♦ AQ93	♦ KJ	6NT (2)	pass	
♣ AQ92	♣ 7643			

(3) East has denied a good 2<sup>nd</sup> suit, and so West's ♣'s and ♦'s are not good enough to suggest that suit for slam in this situation. 6NT is a good contract, 6♣ is not.

### 3.2 Super Acceptance of a transfer.

The law of total tricks (The LAW) implies that it is always safe to super accept with 4 trumps. Thus we super accept with 4 trumps and a min or max hand. Super-accepting with just 3 trumps is a bone of contention, many players will super-accept with 3 good trumps and a non-min hand with good shape.

Now onto an interesting point. The LAW states that it is safe to go to the 3 level (combined number of trumps is 9) if the distribution of points between the two sides is approximately even, or if you have more. This is clearly the case with an opening strong NT, but not so with a weak NT. It is dangerous to super accept with a weak NT opening, but if partner is bust, then why have the opponents not said anything yet? If you play a weak NT, it's up to you. I play super-accepts with a strong NT only.

Before we continue, it is only fair to say that my view of super-accepting is not universally accepted. I will super-accept with 4 trumps or with just 3 very good trumps, suitable shape and a max. Some players suggest super-accepting with any max, either 3 or 4 'trumps'. Others insist that the only requirement for a super-accept is 4 trumps (The Law says that's OK even if minimum).

With these four hands you opened with 1NT and partner bid 2♦, what now? :-

Hand A	Hand B	Hand C	Hand D
♠ 64	♠ J4	♠ Q4	♠ 64
♥ KQ84	♥ K984	♥ AJ9	♥ AK9
♦ AK82	♦ AK82	♦ AK82	♦ AK82
♣ AJ3	♣ A73	♣ K1082	♣ K1083

Hand A: An obvious super-accept.

Hand B: With 4 trumps I think that a super-accept is in order, but some players will not as they also require a maximum.

Hand C: This one's a maximum but has only 3 trumps. Much more to think about here and it's really up to your (partnership) style.

Hand D: Similar, but with good trumps and the points concentrated in the longer suits I like the hand. I would prefer to super-accept.

I cover super-accepting with just 3 trumps in more detail later.

There are also umpteen variations on what you should bid when you break the transfer (super-accept). Some players insist that a response of the suit below trumps cannot be made as responder needs that for a re-transfer. Others feel that it is more important to be specific about shape. One popular scheme is to show a 2<sup>nd</sup> suit. Some players prefer only to show doubletons. Yet others will show doubletons only if they are 'worthless' – Qx (maybe Jx) or worse. Another alternative is to pinpoint a weak suit (either 2 or 3 card) that contains no top (A or K) honour. I give one workable scheme here: -

Super Accepts, showing 4 (possibly 5) cards in the major, can work as follows, where min is (15-16) and max is (16½ -17). In this scheme, the doubleton is weak: -

After 1NT - 2♦ (transfer to ♥) -

After 1NT - 2♥ (transfer to ♠) -

2♠ doubleton ♠, max pts

2NT no weak doubleton, max pts

2NT no weak doubleton, max pts

3♣ doubleton ♣, max pts

3♣ doubleton ♣, max pts

3♦ doubleton ♦, max pts

3♦ doubleton ♦, max pts \*

3♥ doubleton ♥, max pts \*

3♥ 4 ♥'s, any shape, min pts \*

3♠ 4 ♠'s, any shape, min pts \*

After these bids, responder often continues with a re-transfer if necessary, which opener must accept. We always use the cheapest re-transfer bid available: -

3♦ transfer to 3♥

3♥ transfer to 3♠

\* and if the three level bid is unavailable (I call these expensive super-accepts) then: -

4♦ transfer to 4♥

4♥ transfer to 4♠

Responder is then able to pass or to investigate slam. A subsequent 4NT bid is RKCB when ♠'s are trumps and 4♠ is RKCB when ♥'s are trumps.

### Example 1

West	East	West	East
♠ KQ84	♠ AJ1073	1NT	2♥
♥ 64	♥ AJ	3♥ (1)	4♥ (2)
♦ AK82	♦ Q63	4♠	4NT (3)
♣ A73	♣ KJ10	5♣ (4)	5♦ (5)
		6♦ (6)	6♠ (7)

(1) West is middle range, but with good trumps and shape he makes the max point super-accept, showing a doubleton ♥.

(2) re-transfer

(3) RKCB for ♠.

(4) 0 or 3

(5) Do you have ♠Q ?

(6) Yes, plus ♦K

(7) East has now located every one of West's high cards, and settles for the small slam.

---

### Example 2

West	East	West	East	(1) super-accept, weak doubleton ♦ (2) re-transfer
♠ KQ84	♠ AJ1073	1NT	2♥	
♥ KQ6	♥ AJ	3♦ (1)	3♥ (2)	
♦ J2	♦ Q63	3♠	4♠	
♣ AQ73	♣ KJ10	pass		

---

### Example 3

West	East	West	East	(1) super-accept, 4 trumps, min pts
♠ KQ84	♠ A10732	1NT	2♥	
♥ K64	♥ J9	3♠ (1)	pass (2)	
♦ K2	♦ Q63			
♣ A932	♣ J76			

(2) opposite a minimum, even with 4 trumps, game does not look good.

---

Now that's all very simple, but the next thing that has to be decided is; what does the next bid by responder mean if it's not a re-transfer? It would be nice to use the same bids/meanings as when opener made a simple accept, but we cannot.

To start with, there is always less room. Also we use Kickback as opposed to 4♣ as RKCB. And we don't need 4♦ as a general slam try as any bid other than a sign off in game or part-score is a slam try. Let's try to sort things out: -

Let's start with a new suit. Is it a game try (if below 3 of the major), a cue bid or a 2<sup>nd</sup> suit? It's up to you, but I prefer that a new minor is natural and looking for slam - either in the agreed major, or in the minor if there is a fit there.

### Example 4

West	East	West	East	(1) super-accept, 4 trumps, min pts (2) 2 <sup>nd</sup> suit, looking for slam (3) DRKCB (4) 2 key cards + ♦Q
♠ K984	♠ AQJ32	1NT	2♥	
♥ AJ4	♥ 75	3♠ (1)	4♦ (2)	
♦ K984	♦ AQJ3	4♥ (3)	5♦ (4)	
♣ A9	♣ 75	6♦	pass	

4♦ at (2) is looking for slam and invites opener to bid RKCB. If opener bid 4NT then that would be RKCB with ♠'s as trumps. 4♥ is Kickback bid for ♦'s, but since there is a known double fit it is DRKCB with ♦'s assumed as trumps.

6♦ is an excellent contract, a good 4-4 fit often plays better than a 5-4 fit.

So that's OK, but what if the new suit is the re-transfer suit? This situation may arise when ♥'s are trumps.

Now we have seen that 1NT - 2♥ - 3♦ - 3♥ is a re-transfer, that is fine as responder cannot have a ♥ suit as hands that are 5-5 or 5-4 in the majors go via Stayman, but we have a problem with the

sequences

1NT - 2♦ - 2♠ - 3♦.  
 1NT - 2♦ - 2NT - 3♦.  
 and 1NT - 2♦ - 3♣ - 3♦.

Is 3♦ a re-transfer or a ♦ suit? You could choose either but I believe that showing a 2<sup>nd</sup> suit and maybe finding a superior 4-4 fit for slam is more important than the NT opener being declarer. But actually you can have both! We use 3♦ as a re-transfer, thus 3♥ is not needed as a natural sign off and so a 3♥ bid shows ♦'s as a 2<sup>nd</sup> suit. But of course you have to be very wary here, standard is that 3♥ would be a weak sign off and you don't want partner passing! And a couple more points about showing the 2<sup>nd</sup> suit. It can only be a minor (Responder would have bid Stayman rather than transferring if he had both majors) and we do not show a second suit if opener has shown a weak doubleton there.

There is one minor 'error' in the above paragraph. Responder may indeed have a 2<sup>nd</sup> suit that is a major; but that is only when he is 5-5 in the majors and in that case the 5-4 ♥ fit is preferable to any possible 5-3 ♠ fit.

### Example 5

West	East	West	East	(1) super-accept, no weak doubleton (2) ♦ 2 <sup>nd</sup> suit, looking for slam
♠ AQ4	♠ 75	1NT	2♦	
♥ K984	♥ AQJ32	2NT (1)	3♥ (2)	
♦ K984	♦ AQJ3	? (3)		
♣ A9	♣ 75			

But now we have another problem with these touching (♦/♥) suits. What would 4♥ at (3) mean? Is it a sign off or (D)RKCB for ♦'s? Clearly it needs to be a sign off and so we shall use 4♦ as the (D)RKCB bid. There is a double fit and so we use DRKCB with ♦'s as trumps. If opener just wanted to use RKCB for ♥'s it would be 4♠ Kickback.

Example 5 cont.	West	East	
	4♦ (3)	5♣ (4)	(3) DRKCB
	6♦	pass	(4) 2 key cards + ♦Q

6♦ is an excellent contract, the good 4-4 fit again playing better than the 5-4 fit.

---

Let's have a summary to check how far we've got so far: -

Partial summary of responder's 2<sup>nd</sup> bid after a super-accept of the transfer to ♥'s,  
so after 1NT - 2♦ - .....

super accept ↓	Responder's 2 <sup>nd</sup> bid								
	2NT	3♣	3♦	3♥	3♠	3NT	4♣	4♦	4♥
2♠		♣'s 2 <sup>nd</sup> suit	re- transfer	♦'s 2 <sup>nd</sup> suit					
2NT		♣'s 2 <sup>nd</sup> suit	re- transfer	♦'s 2 <sup>nd</sup> suit					
3♣			re- transfer	♦'s 2 <sup>nd</sup> suit					
3♦				sign off			♣'s 2 <sup>nd</sup> suit	re- transfer	
3♥						♦'s 2 <sup>nd</sup> suit	♣'s 2 <sup>nd</sup> suit	re- transfer	

Partial summary of responder's 2<sup>nd</sup> bid after a super-accept of the transfer to ♠'s,  
so after 1NT - 2♥ - .....

super accept ↓	Responder's 2 <sup>nd</sup> bid								
	3♣	3♦	3♥	3♠	3NT	4♣	4♦	4♥	4♠
2NT	♣'s 2 <sup>nd</sup> suit	♦'s 2 <sup>nd</sup> suit	re- transfer						
3♣		♦'s 2 <sup>nd</sup> suit	re- transfer						
3♦			re- transfer	♣'s 2 <sup>nd</sup> suit					
3♥				sign off		♣'s 2 <sup>nd</sup> suit	♦'s 2 <sup>nd</sup> suit	re- transfer	
3♠						♣'s 2 <sup>nd</sup> suit	♦'s 2 <sup>nd</sup> suit	re- transfer	

So that's fine and we have lots of unallocated bids so far. But we also need to define splinters, cue bids, general slam try etc.

Let's start with cue bids. It's best to re-transfer first if this is at a low level and this is what we do for the cheapest 3 sequences. So re-transfer and then cue bid after the forced reply.

Example 6

West	East	West	East	(1) super-accept, no weak doubleton
				(2) re-transfer
♠ AQ4	♠ K52	1NT	2♦	(3) cue bid
♥ K984	♥ AQJ32	2NT (1)	3♦ (2)	(4) RKCB (Kickback)
♦ A9	♦ 75	3♥	4♣ (3)	(5) 3 key cards
♣ K984	♣ AJ3	4♦ (3)	4♠ (4)	
		4NT (5)	6♥	
		pass		

---

In the last two 'expensive' super-accept sequences, the re-transfer is up at the four level and so we use 3NT to initiate cue bidding.

Example 7

West	East	West	East	(1) super-accept, 4 trumps, min pts
				(2) general slam try
♠ AJ4	♠ K52	1NT	2♦	(3) cue bid
♥ K984	♥ AQJ32	3♥ (1)	3NT (2)	(4) RKCB (Kickback)
♦ A9	♦ 75	4♦ (3)	4♠ (4)	(5) 3 key cards
♣ K984	♣ AQ3	4NT (5)	6♥	
		pass		

---

But responder may not be interested in slam and the re-transfer ensures that opener becomes declarer.

Example 8

West	East	West	East	(1) super-accept, no weak doubleton
				(2) re-transfer
♠ AK4	♠ Q5	1NT	2♦	
♥ K984	♥ AQ632	2NT (1)	3♦ (2)	
♦ A964	♦ 8732	3♥	4♥	
♣ K9	♣ 65	pass		

---

And now onto splinters. With the normal accept we needed a 6 card suit to splinter. It's different when opener has super-accepted as he has agreed the trump suit.

Hand E	Hand F	With both of these hands you have slam interest after partner has super-accepted your transfer to ♥'s. Hand E has a 2 <sup>nd</sup> suit but Q532 is not really a slam quality suit and so I would splinter.
♠ Q532	♠ 7	With Hand F you could splinter but I would prefer to show the
♥ AQ632	♥ AJ963	♦ suit. A 3♦ bid would be a re-transfer and we see how to bid
♦ 2	♦ K1052	this hand later in Example 11.
♣ KQ7	♣ A93	

When Stayman had found a fit we used three of the other major as an ambiguous splinter and that worked fine, so can we do something similar here? 3♠ is available with ♥'s as trumps but with ♠'s as trumps 3♥ is not available. So we'll use 3♠ as an ambiguous splinter when ♥'s are trumps but use direct splinters when ♠'s are trumps. Note that there is little point in splintering into a suit when opener has shown a weak doubleton there – opener will always be interested in slam! In the ♥ sequences the ambiguous splinter means that all possibilities are covered. With the higher super-accepts in the ♠ sequence there is no room for splinters.

You could develop things further and use spare bids in the cheaper sequences to show voids but I'll leave that up to you.

So, after 1NT - 2♦ - 2♠/2NT/3♣/3♦/3♥, 3♠ is the ambiguous splinter and

3NT asks      4♣ = ♣ singleton/void  
                   4♦ = ♦ singleton/void  
                   4♥ = ♠ singleton/void

#### Example 9

West	East (E)	West	East	(1) super-accept, no weak doubleton
♠ AK4	♠ Q532	1NT	2♦	(2) ambiguous splinter
♥ K984	♥ AQ632	2NT (1)	3♠ (2)	(3) where?
♦ Q964	♦ 2	3NT (3)	4♦ (4)	(4) ♦'s
♣ A9	♣ KQ7	4♠ (5) etc to 6♥		(5) RKCB

---

In the ♠ sequences we splinter directly.

#### Example 10

West	East	West	East	(1) super-accept, no weak doubleton
♠ K984	♠ AQJ632	1NT	2♥	(2) splinter
♥ AK4	♥ Q53	2NT (1)	4♦ (2)	(3) RKCB
♦ Q964	♦ 2	4NT (3) etc to 6♠		
♣ A9	♣ KQ7			



Complete summary of responder's 2<sup>nd</sup> bid after a super-accept of the transfer to ♥'s,

so after 1NT - 2♦ - ....

super accept ↓	Responder's 2 <sup>nd</sup> bid								
	2NT	3♣	3♦	3♥	3♠	3NT	4♣	4♦	4♥
2♠		♣'s 2 <sup>nd</sup> suit	re-transfer	♦'s 2 <sup>nd</sup> suit	ambig. splinter				
2NT		♣'s 2 <sup>nd</sup> suit	re-transfer	♦'s 2 <sup>nd</sup> suit	ambig. splinter				
3♣			re-transfer	♦'s 2 <sup>nd</sup> suit	ambig. splinter				
3♦				sign off	ambig. splinter	general slam try	♣'s 2 <sup>nd</sup> suit	re-transfer	
3♥					ambig. splinter	general slam try	♣'s 2 <sup>nd</sup> suit	♦'s 2 <sup>nd</sup> suit	to play

Complete summary of responder's 2<sup>nd</sup> bid after a super-accept of the transfer to ♠'s,

so after 1NT - 2♥ - ....

super accept ↓	Responder's 2 <sup>nd</sup> bid								
	3♣	3♦	3♥	3♠	3NT	4♣	4♦	4♥	4♠
2NT	♣'s 2 <sup>nd</sup> suit	♦'s 2 <sup>nd</sup> suit	re-transfer			splinter	splinter	splinter	
3♣		♦'s 2 <sup>nd</sup> suit	re-transfer				splinter	splinter	
3♦			re-transfer	♣'s 2 <sup>nd</sup> suit		splinter		splinter	
3♥				sign off	general slam try	♣'s 2 <sup>nd</sup> suit	♦'s 2 <sup>nd</sup> suit	re-transfer	
3♠					general slam try	♣'s 2 <sup>nd</sup> suit	♦'s 2 <sup>nd</sup> suit	re-transfer	

When responder has a 2<sup>nd</sup> suit and also a shortage, should he splinter or show the 2<sup>nd</sup> suit after a super-accept? It probably depends upon the quality of the suits but as I said earlier I would usually prefer to show the 2<sup>nd</sup> suit if it's a good one.

Example 11

West	East	West	East	(1) transfer
				(2) super accept, 2 ♣'s
♠ AJ3	♠ 7	1NT	2♦ (1)	(3) ♦'s 2 <sup>nd</sup> suit
♥ KQ102	♥ AJ963	3♣ (2)	3♥ (3)	(4) DRKCB
♦ AQ96	♦ K1052	4♠ (4)	etc to 6♦	
♣ 85	♣ A93			

Note that West bid Blackwood (DRKCB) at (4) despite holding a worthless doubleton. This is fine in this situation as he has already shown this weak doubleton and partner is looking for slam – and hence has the suit covered.

So that's covers super-accepts with 4 card support. I have not gone into it in as much detail as I have for other aspects (because you may choose to adopt a different super-accept philosophy). And there are many improvements/additions that you may wish to make. And there are even a few murky areas – such as what are the (D)RKCB bids in all the situations where responder has shown a 2<sup>nd</sup> suit. I could write another 20 pages but I don't really want to in an area where you may choose to play something completely different. I'll leave there.

Playing super-accepts clearly has its advantages. And it also has beneficial repercussions elsewhere: -

- ♠ J8652      You hold this hand and partner opens a strong NT. Obviously you transfer
  - ♥ 103        and partner bids 2♠. What now? 8 points so 2NT? No! This is a poor 8 count
  - ♦ K103       with a miserable ♠ suit. Since partner has not super-accepted then game is
  - ♣ A52        remote. If you bid on, you will go down (in either a part-score or game) much more often
- than you will find a makeable game.

This hand was from a club tournament. Nearly everybody was in 2NT or 3♠, with both contracts failing by one trick.

So with this hand it's 1NT - 2♥ - 2♠ - pass. If opener super-accepted then it would depend upon

the type of super-accept as to whether you proceed further or not but you normally would bid game.

### 3.2.1 Super Accept with 3 Card Support?

This is really up to the particular partnership. It may well work with 3 good trumps and a bit of shape:

#### Example 1

West	East	West	East	
♠ AQ3	♠ J5	1NT	2♦ (1)	(1) transfer
♥ KJ10	♥ AQ963	3♣ (2)	4♦ (3)	(2) super accept, 2 ♣'s
♦ AQ963	♦ 108	4♥	pass	(3) re-transfer
♣ 85	♣ 9742			

So, a good game contract that will probably be missed if West had simply accepted the transfer.

---

Super accepting with only 3 trumps (and a max) is by no means that popular. You may run into difficulties when responder has minimal values – you are at the three level with only 8 trumps.

#### Example 2

West	East	West	East	
♠ AQ3	♠ 75	1NT	2♦ (1)	(1) transfer
♥ KJ10	♥ 98632	3♣ (2)	3♦ (3)	(2) super accept, 2 ♣'s
♦ AQ963	♦ 74	3♥	pass	(3) re-transfer
♣ 85	♣ Q742			

---

#### Example 3 But then you may reach a good slam: -

West	East	West	East	
♠ AQ3	♠ 75	1NT	2♦ (1)	(1) transfer
♥ KQ10	♥ AJ963	3♣ (2)	3♦ (3)	(2) super accept, 2 ♣'s
♦ AQ963	♦ K102	3♥	4♣ (4)	(3) re-transfer
♣ 85	♣ A97	4♦ (4)	4♠ (5)	(4) cue bid
		etc to 6♥		(5) RKCB

Note that it is fairly safe for East to bid Blackwood at (5) as West has already shown a weak doubleton ♣ and would normally have a top ♠ honour. If West had simply accepted the transfer, then East probably would not consider investigating slam.

---

When playing 3-card super-accepts it really is important to have our ability to show a 2<sup>nd</sup> suit. A good 4-4 fit elsewhere will virtually always be better for slam.

Example 4

West	East	West	East	(1) transfer
				(2) super accept, 2 ♣'s
♠ AJ32	♠ 76	1NT	2♦ (1)	(3) ♦'s 2 <sup>nd</sup> suit
♥ AK10	♥ QJ963	3♣ (2)	3♥ (3)	
♦ A1096	♦ KQ52	etc to 6♦		
♣ 85	♣ A9			

Now example 4 looks fine but there is a problem with super-accepting a transfer to ♥'s with just 3 card support when you also have 4 ♠'s: -

East	East may be 5-5 in the majors! If West were to super-accept with the hand above opposite this East then it would be very difficult to find the ♠ fit, let alone the ♠ slam.
♠ KQ954	
♥ QJ963	
♦ 532	So my advice is do not super-accept a transfer to ♥'s with just three card support when holding 4 ♠'s.
♣ -	

---

When responder has a 2<sup>nd</sup> suit and also a shortage, should he splinter or show the 2<sup>nd</sup> suit after a super-accept? If you allow 3-card super accepts it is surely best to show the 2<sup>nd</sup> suit.

Example 5

West	East	West	East	(1) transfer
				(2) super accept, 2 ♣'s
♠ AJ32	♠ 7	1NT	2♦ (1)	(3) ♦'s 2 <sup>nd</sup> suit
♥ KQ10	♥ AJ963	3♣ (2)	3♥ (3)	(4) DRKCB
♦ AQ96	♦ K1052	4♠ (4)	etc to 6♦	
♣ 85	♣ A93			

---

It really is a matter of personal preference if you decide to super-accept with just 3 trumps. Sometimes it works, sometimes it does not. With a superb fit like Examples 3-5, it certainly seems to make sense. And it may make finding slam in another strain easier. But on the other hand responder may feel more secure if he knows that opener always has 4 cards in the major.

\*\*\* End of Chapter 3 \*\*\*