

Various “Doubles” in Bridge

During the bidding process in bridge, the call of a “**Double**” is used to mean many different things. It is used for both defensive and offensive purposes, and when invoked, its meaning is singularly dependent upon the bidding environment in which it is called. To differentiate amongst the various available “doubles” one must understand the particular varied circumstances under which each different one is presented. The ten most commonly used of the more than two dozen “Doubles” available in bridge are as follows:

1. **The “Balancing” Double** is one presented in the 4th (“Pass-Out”) seat following an opening bid by one’s LHO, and subsequent to two successive “Passes” by the 2nd and the 3rd seat players. It is a take-out double exhibiting no upper limit in strength, but with only moderate strength, it usually indicates a shortage in the Opponent’s suit and at least 3-card support for the three un-bid suits. Balancing Doubles may be slightly weaker (a minimum of 9 HCP’s with ideal distribution) as compared to direct (2nd) seat take-out doubles.

	<u>North</u>	
	1B	
<u>West</u>		<u>East</u>
“Double”		Pass
	<u>South</u>	
	Pass	

2. **The “Lead-Directing” Double** is one presented as a request for a specific lead by the Doubler’s Partner. The most frequent case is a “Double” of any artificial bid, as subsequent to a Stayman “2C” or “3C” bid, a Jacoby Transfer bid, or responses to the Gerber or Blackwood Ace-asking conventions, among others. It is also used as a defensive lead-directing bid against a voluntary 3-NT bid by the Opponents requesting the lead of the opening leader’s suit, the doubler’s suit, or the first suit bid by Dummy, dependent on the bidding scenario after which it follows

	<u>North</u>	
	1-NT	
<u>West</u>		<u>East</u>
“Double”		Pass
	<u>South</u>	
	“2C”	

3. **The “Lightner” Double** is a Lead-directing double of a Slam contract bid by the Opponents. It calls for a specific lead by Partner dependent upon the preceding bidding scenario. If competent Opponents bid a Slam voluntarily, it may be expected that they will fulfill their contract or simply fail by one trick. Thus, a normal penalty double is unlikely to gain very much in the way of match points. A “double” by the hand not on lead, therefore, is conventional asking Partner for an unusual lead.

	<u>North</u>	
	1H/6-NT	
<u>West</u>		<u>East</u>
Pass		1S/“Double”
	<u>South</u>	
	3-NT	

4. **The “Maximal” Double** is a type of “Competitive” Double used to invite to game when the auction is too crowded for any other approach.

	<u>North</u>	
	1S/“Double”	
<u>West</u>		<u>East</u>
3H		2H
	<u>South</u>	
	2S	

In the example above, North may have a hand in which he/she wishes to compete and to sign-off at 3S, or a hand worth a game invitation. Either hand can be described if the “Maximal” Double is used as a conventional bid inviting to game and the 3S bid is thus reserved for use as a competitive sign-off.

5. **The “Negative” Double** is a “double” by a Responder at his/her ***first*** opportunity, opposite a one-of-a-suit opening bid by Partner subsequent to an interference overcall by Responder’s RHO (Right-Hand Opponent). It is for take-out rather than a double for penalties. A Negative Double exhibits 6 (+) HCP’s at the 1-level, 8 (+) at the 2-level and 10 (+) at higher levels. There is no upper limit to the strength of Negative Doubles. Negative Doubles are ***not*** alertable! It usually shows the two-un-bid suits with either too few HCP’s or the absence of 5-cards in the desired suits, or both, such that a normal suit response is precluded.

	<u>North</u>	
	1C	
<u>West</u>		<u>East</u>
		1H
	<u>South</u>	
	“Double”	

6. **The “Penalty” Double** is a bid in bridge which seeks to increase the consequences should the Opponent’s fail to fulfill their designated contract. It expresses the opinion that the Opponents have bid too much, and that to penalize them is the way to get the best possible scoring results on the hand. A “Double” is presented as a “Penalty” Double when any of the following bidding conditions have been met:

- a. The bidding is ***at*** or ***above*** a pre-emptive 4S level.
- b. A double is presented by a Responder subsequent to a 1-NT overcall, immediately following Partner’s opening bid of one-of-a-suit.
- c. A “Double” is made in a competitive auction where the Doubler’s Partner has ***already*** bid.
- d. A “double” is presented subsequent to you or your Partner having made an earlier “Penalty” Double, or a “Penalty Pass” of any “Take-out” Double.
- e. If either you or your Partner has made a pre-emptive bid and the other “doubles”. **IT IS NOT NEGATIVE!**

	<u>North</u>	
	1C	
<u>West</u>		<u>East</u>
		1-NT
	<u>South</u>	
	“Double”	

7. **The “Responsive” Double** is a “Double” for Take-Out when there has been an immediate raise to the 2- or 3-level over Partner’s Take-Out Double or overcall. It shows HCP strength, and no biddable suit of one’s own.

	<u>North</u>	
	1H	
<u>West</u>		<u>East</u>
“Double”		1S or “Double”
	<u>South</u>	
	2H	

8. **The “Rosenkrantz” Double** is a “Double” by a Responder to an overcall subsequent to the Opponents having shown two other suits. The “Double” shows support for Partner’s overcall suit headed by an Ace, King, or Queen; as opposed to a direct raise in Partner’s overcall suit which also shows support but **without** any such honor being held.

	<u>North</u>	
	1C	
<u>West</u>		<u>East</u>
“Double”		1H
	<u>South</u>	
	2C	

9. **The “Support” Double** is a double used by Opener to show 3-card support for Responder’s presumed 4-card new suit response in a competitive auction scenario.

	<u>North</u>	
	1C/ “Double”	
<u>West</u>		<u>East</u>
1S		Pass
	<u>South</u>	
	1H	

10. **The “Take-Out” Double** is a “double” following an opening suit bid by an Opponent opposite a Partner who has not yet bid or has previously “Passed”. It shows either opening count, its equivalent, or better requesting Partner to bid his/her best suit; or else shows an overcall (Later shown by an introduction of a new suit at the time of the previous Doubler’s re-bid) with 16 (+) HCP’s and a 5-card or longer suit.

	<u>North</u>	
	1C	
<u>West</u>		<u>East</u>
		“Double”
	<u>South</u>	