

FORCING and NON-FORCING BIDS

It is important to recognise whether your partner's bid is forcing or non-forcing. In general, non-forcing bids limit the strength of a player's hand – they show a defined maximum point count.

If partner opens 1♥ then a 2♥ response from you would be non-forcing. The bid shows 6-9 total points and partner is entitled to pass if they have a hand where they don't want to try for game.

If partner opens 1♥ then a 1♠ response from you would be forcing. Your bid shows 6+ high card points. Partner is obliged to keep the bidding open because you may have enough to make game (or slam).

Non-forcing bids (where the bidder's maximum strength is known) include:

Raising partner's opening bid (eg raising opener's 1♥ to 2♥ or to 3♥).

Responding 1NT to partner's opening bid.

Opener's 1NT rebid after opening one of a suit.

Rebidding your suit at the lowest level.

Examples of forcing bids include bidding a new suit at the three level or bidding the fourth suit. Conventional bids (eg Stayman or transfers) are obviously forcing.

The fact that a bid is non-forcing doesn't mean that partner can't bid. They can bid on if they have a suitable hand, but they are not obliged to do so.

In general, forcing bids ask partner to keep describing their hand. If you want partner to keep bidding, or if you have enough information to know where the hand should be played, then you should not make a non-forcing bid.

			♠ A Q J 6
			♥ K Q 6 5
			♦ Q 6 4
			♣ 9 7
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 ♦
Pass	1 ♥	Pass	1 ♠
Pass	?		

Bid 4♠. Don't pussyfoot around with 3♠. It's not forcing and partner might pass.