

In bridge, a reverse is a type of bid by opener that shows extra strength. Specifically, it occurs when opener is unbalanced with 16+ points (some players require 17+ points) and hears a one-over-one response from partner. An example auction:

**West**

♠ K				
♥ AK52	West	North	East	South
♦ T92	1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
♣ AK643	2♥			

Here, your 2♥ bid is natural (4+ cards) and forcing for one round. 2♥ is called a reverse because you, as the opening bidder have now bid a new suit at the 2 level of a higher rank than the suit you opened with.

You see, since 2♥ forces partner to bid (a Reverse is forcing) , this might force partner to choose clubs and bid 3♣, therefore your reverse must show a good hand since you are possibly driving the bidding to the 3-level.

A reverse ALWAYS indicates that your first suit is longer than your second suit and promises an unbalanced hand, or you would be bidding No Trumps. With equal length like 5-5, don't EVER make a reverse. Instead, open the bidding with your higher-ranking suit.

Note that your choice of bids is limited in this scenario. 1NT would have shown a balanced hand.

2♣ or 3♣ would have promised a 6+ card suit. (We seldom rebid a 5 card minor unless we have a 6 card suit.)

**Rules for Reversing**

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You can make a reverse bid when ALL of the following criteria are met:

1. You open the bidding with 1-of-of-a-suit and partner responds at the 1-level.
2. Your hand is unbalanced so you can't rebid no-trumps.
3. You lack 4-card support for partner and therefore can't raise her.
4. You have a second suit whose rank is higher than your first suit.
5. Your second suit is **shorter** than your first suit.
6. You have a strong hand worth 17 or more points, including distribution.

If the bidding has gone

1H - 2C If you are playing Two Over One, you and partner have to agree on whether this reverse (it is still a reverse) shows 17 or more points in spite of playing Two Over One.  
 2S I like it to always show 17 or more but many play that reverses do not show extras when you have had a Two Over One sequence IF you are playing 2/1.

**Note** that if you have a singleton or a void in the suit partner has bid, your hand is now devalued. Deduct some length points that you have previously added for your long suit.

S 4  
 H AKxx  
 D AKJxx  
 C xxx

e.g. You open 1D. Partner responds 1S. Your hand goes downhill. Subtract 1 length point. If you had 2 length points, you would subtract both.  
 Your rebid has to be 2D as you are NOT strong enough to reverse.

Whew! Let's see more examples....

## Examples

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### West

♠ 4	West	North	East	South
♥ AK52	1♦	Pass	1NT	Pass
♦ KQJ83	2♥			
♣ A87				

2♥ is a reverse. (You can check it against all the rules above.) It's a new suit at the 2-level that is higher in rank than you first bid suit. 17 or more points.

### West

♠ KJ3	West	North	East	South
♥ 5	1♣	Pass	1♥	Pass
♦ AKJ4	2♦			
♣ AJT98				

Again, 2♦ is a reverse.

### West

♠ -	West	North	East	South
♥ AK83	1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
♦ KQ8	2♥			
♣ KQT732				

What to do with a 6-card minor? Holding a 4-card major, it's worth investigating a major-suit fit rather than rebidding clubs.

### West

♠ AQT73	West	North	East	South
♥ AK9752	1♥	Pass	1NT	Pass
♦ 5	2♠			
♣ 9				

You can also reverse with 6-5 (or longer!) shape. Here the strict point count of 17+ can be relaxed a bit. 6-5 hands have enormous playing strength.

## Responses to a Reverse

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A reverse bid is forcing for one round. Don't pass a reverse! There are many different philosophies on response structures. You can get fancy by using 2NT response as **Lebensohl**, or Ingberman for instance.

Follow-up bids are another lesson for another day!

Much of this article is taken from [www.bridgebum.com](http://www.bridgebum.com)

## QUARANTINE QUIZ # 5

Question # 1

W            E  
1C           1S  
2D

- a) How many points does West have at least? **17 or more points as this is a reverse bid.**
- b) How many Clubs does West have at least? **5**
- c) How many Diamonds does West have at least? **4**

***Here's the rule: In bridge, you may never bid a suit unless you have at least 4 of them. The exception to that rule is when you open with a minor suit. Then you may bid a minor with only 3 cards.***

***That said, when opener in above auction bids 2D, he MUST have four cards in the Diamond suit at least. If he had 4 C and 4 D, he would always open 1D. (With 3-3 in minors, he opens 1C)***

***So if he has shown 4 D in above auction, then why did he open 1C? He must have MORE Clubs than Diamonds. Ergo, he has at least 5 Clubs and 4 Diamonds.***

Question # 2

You have

S KJ4  
H 4  
D AQJ7  
C Q8542

You are the dealer. What is your opening bid? **1D**

***We almost always bid the longer suit first as opening bidder but this is a rare exception. If you open with 1C and partner bids 1H, you may NOT now bid 2D as that is a reverse and you do not have enough points. You also may NOT bid 1NT as that says you are balanced and do not have any singletons or voids. Partner will thus know that you have at least two Hearts.***

***Therefore, you solve all your headaches by opening 1D, if partner bids 1H, you now bid 2C. Partner will not know you have more Clubs than Diamonds but she will know that you MAY have a minimum hand. Note that the rebid of a new suits never LIMITS the hand in value BUT if you opened 1C and then bid 2D, you guarantee 17 or more points. False advertising and partner will never trust you again!!***

Question # 3

S J9632  
H AKQJ10  
D 32  
C 5

You are the dealer. What is your opening bid?

***With two 5 card suits or two 6 card suits, ALWAYS bid the higher ranking, even with 19 points!! If you start with 1H and partner now bids 2C...If you then bid 2S, partner will know that you have 17 or more points and MORE Hearts than Spades...never the same length. It is all about QUANTITY not quality!!***