

**Esther "Pop" Quiz #0050:  
"Can You Correctly Count the Number of Tricks  
Your Partnership Will Take on Defense, to  
Know Whether You Should 'Double for Penalty'  
Your Opponents' Bid?"**

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<https://esther-bridge.com/index.html>

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*Experienced duplicate bridge players regularly DOUBLE Opponents' bids. As noted on the "Esther Bridge Lessons" website,*

...In the booklet for a recent competition in this venue [the ACBL-wide semi-annual 'Instant Matchpoint Game'], [booklet author Champion Larry] Cohen included the bid of Double on roughly **1 in every 5** of the randomly-generated Boards. The implication of this pattern on 24 randomly-generated Boards is that your Partnership bidding in every game should probably include **2 to 4 bids** of Double! **If you are a less experienced player, you probably are not making enough not-for-penalty doubles!!!**

*Of course, there are **two major flavors** of DOUBLES: (1) "Penalty DOUBLES", and (2) "Not-for-Penalty DOUBLES". Examples of "**Not-for-Penalty DOUBLES**"<sup>1</sup> include (1) the "They Stole My Bid" DOUBLE (e.g., Partner: **1NT**, RHO: **2C**, YOU: **DOUBLE**; or Partner: **1NT**, RHO: **2D**, YOU: **DOUBLE**), or (2) the "Lead Directing" DOUBLE (e.g., LHO: **1NT**, Partner: **PASS**, RHO: **2C**, YOU: **DOUBLE**), or (3) the "I hold a*

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<sup>1</sup> Within the "Esther Bridge Lessons", see: "Convention #14: 6 'Not-for-Penalty' Doubles"  
<https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/double.pdf>

1NT Hand **DOUBLE**<sup>2</sup> (15-17 HCPs, no void, no singleton, no more than 1 doubleton, pretend I opened 1NT, **ALL** conventions [Stayman, Jacoby Transfers] are **ON!**): my RHO: 1NT; me: **DOUBLE**.

**An "Aggressive PASS" Is a Very Important Tool in  
Strongly Defeating Opponents,  
Especially When Opponents are Vulnerable**

Esther recently sat SOUTH against a Vulnerable E/W Pair. The auction began:

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
PASS	PASS	1NT	???

Esther held:

SOUTH (16)

**S:** K 7 5      **H:** A 8      **D:** 8 5      **C:** A K Q T 9 7

Esther knew that:

1. She could not **DOUBLE** to show (1) a 1NT point count and (2) distribution, because she held 2 doubletons.
2. The contract was likely to be finalized at 1NT EAST, because WEST and Partner NORTH were both likely to hold  $\sim 40 - 32 = 8 / 2 = 4$  HCPs.
3. If either WEST or NORTH bid something other than PASS at their second turns, SOUTH could re-enter the bidding latter to show her strong Clubs.
4. A N/S Game contract in either 3NT or 5C would likely not make.
5. A N/S "part score" contract in a Minor, Clubs, even if successful, would not be very lucrative.
6. If the contract was finalized as 1NT EAST, SOUTH would be "on lead", and would likely immediately take 7 Clubs and 1 Heart "off the top", and thus earn a Bridge **Score on defense** of at least +2,300!

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<sup>2</sup> Many players prefer to play the **DOUBLE** of Opponent's 1NT opening as always being a "for-penalty **DOUBLE**". Esther does not, not, not agree! However, Esther also feels that this is not a "Demand/Takeout" **DOUBLE**, and Partner, at Partner's discretion, is *entirely free* to PASS and leave this **DOUBLE** "on", which may be QUITE favorable, especially if Opponents are Vulnerable, and your Partnership can set the Vulnerable 1NT contract bid Big Time! If your Partner does not PASS your **DOUBLE** of 1NT, Partner's *most likely* response bid is a **Jacoby Transfer**, given that the 1NT Opener and you the **DOUBLEr** together hold  $\sim 16 + \sim 16 = 32$  HCPs out of 40, and Responder may prefer a Suit contract at a low level, and does not think your Partnership should play at a high level!

7. Esther deftly concluded that **+2,300** as a Bridge Score was superior to a "Part Score" of **+90** or **+110** or **+130**! In short, Esther deduced that:

**1. You can score positive "Bridge Scores" on defense; and**

**2. An "Aggressive PASS" can be a very important tool in strongly defeating Opponents, especially when Opponents are Vulnerable.**

8. Even Opponents not playing a **1NT DOUBLE** bid as showing a **1NT** Hand would prudently not **DOUBLE** Opponents' **1NT** bid for Penalty!!! Opponents confronting a Penalty **1NT DOUBLE** would simply have "run" to a different contract, and thereby avoided disaster!!!

### **How to Estimate the Approximate Number of Tricks Your Partnership Can be Expected to Take Against the Opponents' Contract**

Bridge players use various strategies to help decide whether to "Double for Penalty" against an Opponents' contract. For example, (1) some players will "Double for Penalty" against Suit contracts only when (a) I hold a long "Trump stack", or (b) I hold no or few Trump cards, and thus know that Partner likely holds a "Trump stack", or (2) I hold a boatload of HCPs against a **NT** contract, and I am sitting "behind"/"after" a Declarer who opened with a **NT** bid.

But a more direct and precise way to decide when sitting on defense whether to "Double for Penalty" is to estimate how many Tricks you will take as against how many Tricks Opponents must take to "make" their contract. The **4-step evaluation system** articulated by Jason Larrivee<sup>3</sup> can be used for this purpose:

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<sup>3</sup> See Jason Larrivee's article, "When and When Not to Double for Penalty":

<https://reginabridge.com/handouts/Doubling.pdf>

The example Hands presented here are variations on similar Hands presented by Jason in his excellent article.

1. How many Tricks will we need to set the Opponents' contract?
2. How many Tricks is Partner likely to take?
3. How many Tricks am I likely to take?
4. How many Tricks do I have to "discount" for Opponents likely being short in our Suit(s)?

Deriving the answer to the first question requires no further explanation. However, the remaining questions are a bit less straightforward, and may require some (1) explanation and (2) practice examples.

### **How Many Tricks is Partner Likely to Take?**

Estimating how many Tricks Partner can be expected to take is done based on Partner's bids during the auction as Larrivee suggests:

<b>What did Partner bid?</b>	<b>Partner's Tricks?</b>
PASS at each turn	0
Any pre-empt bid (e.g., Open 2H, 3S)	0
Overcall at the 1 level	1
Open 1-level Suit bid	1
Overcall of 2 of a Suit	2
Open or Overcall of 1NT	3
Open 2C or 2NT	4

### **How Many Tricks am I Likely to Take?**

There is no particular mechanical way to estimate the number of Tricks that your own Hand can take. Simply use your own best judgment, possibly adding in a bit of a "fudge factor" for safety purposes.

### **How Many Tricks Do I Have to "Discount" for Opponents Likely Being Short in Our Suit(s)?**

When Opponents set a Suit contract, it is possible that Opponents may be "short" in your bid Suit(s), and thus may be able to ruff your "winners". So, you may wish to "discount" the Trick-taking potential of your Partnership's bid Suit(s) in the manner suggested by Larrivee:

**Suit Cards Held by  
You and Partner**

8  
9  
10+

**Likely n of Tricks Your  
Partnership Will Take**

1  
½  
0

*Of course, your judgment on this matter must be informed by any peculiarities during the auction. For example, if you and Partner show a 9-card fit in Hearts, and Opponents nevertheless blithely boom out a 4S bid, you have extra certainty that Opponents are short your Hearts!*

**"Pop" Quiz Question #1**

**You Hold**

**S:** K Q 5 4  
**H:** 8 6  
**D:** 8 6 4  
**C:** K Q 6 5

**Auction**

E S **YOU** N  
P 1**S** P 2**H**  
P 2**S** P 4**S**  
P P ?

**4 Questions**

1. Tricks to set? 4
  2. Partner's Tricks? \_\_\_\_\_
  3. Your Tricks? \_\_\_\_\_
  4. Discounted? \_\_\_\_\_
- #1 - #2 - #3 + #4 = \_\_\_\_\_

**DOUBLE?** \_\_\_\_\_

**"Pop" Quiz Question #2**

**You Hold**

**S:** K Q 5 4  
**H:** 8 6  
**D:** 8 6 4  
**C:** K Q 6 5

**Auction**

E S **YOU** N  
1**H** 1**S** 1**NT** 2**S**  
3**D** 3**S** ?

**4 Questions**

1. Tricks to set? 5
  2. Partner's Tricks? \_\_\_\_\_
  3. Your Tricks? \_\_\_\_\_
  4. Discounted? \_\_\_\_\_
- #1 - #2 - #3 + #4 = \_\_\_\_\_

**DOUBLE?** \_\_\_\_\_

**"Pop" Quiz Question #3**

**You Hold**

**S:** K Q 5 4  
**H:** 8 6  
**D:** 8 6 4  
**C:** K Q 6 5

**Auction**

E S **YOU** N  
2**S** **DBL** 4**S** 5**D**  
P P ?

**4 Questions**

1. Tricks to set? 3
  2. Partner's Tricks? \_\_\_\_\_
  3. Your Tricks? \_\_\_\_\_
  4. Discounted? \_\_\_\_\_
- #1 - #2 - #3 + #4 = \_\_\_\_\_

**DOUBLE?** \_\_\_\_\_

**"Pop" Quiz Question #4**

<b>You Hold</b>	<b>Auction</b>	<b>4 Questions</b>	
<b>S:</b> K Q 5 4	E S <b>YOU</b> N	1. Tricks to set?	<u>6</u>
<b>H:</b> 8 6	1 <b>S</b> P P	2. Partner's Tricks?	_____
<b>D:</b> 8 6 4	1 <b>NT</b> 2 <b>D</b> ?	3. Your Tricks?	_____
<b>C:</b> K Q 6 5		4. Discounted?	_____
		#1 - #2 - #3 + #4 =	_____
		<b>DOUBLE?</b>	_____

**A Less Mechanical Approach to Decide Whether to  
DOUBLE for Penalty**

Or, you might simply ask yourself these global questions:

1. How many Tricks must your Partnership take to set the Opponents?
2. How many Tricks does Partner's bidding suggest that Partner can take?
3. How many Tricks do you think you can take?
4. If Opponents are setting a Suit contract, how likely is it that Opponents are short in your "strong" Suit, and how many Tricks do you think you will lose by being ruffed in your "strong" Suit?

To see Esther's **suggested answers**, CLICK:  
<https://esther-bridge.com/quiz/q0050 a.pdf>