Student Handout: Reopening Doubles

The big idea: when the opponents overcall and the auction comes back to opener, opener should usually **reopen with a double** if short in their suit. Partner may be sitting there with a trap pass.

The auction

Opener	Overcaller	Responder	Advancer
1♦	1♠	Pass	Pass
Dbl	Pass	**Pass**	Pass

Responder: the trap pass

Playing negative doubles, your double of an overcall is **takeout**, so you can't double for penalty. When you want to defend, **pass**, smoothly and in tempo, and wait for partner to double.

Good signs for a trap pass:

- Length and strength in **their** suit (Q-10-9-x-x or better)
- Shortness in **partner's** suit
- No good bid to make

Opener: reopen or not?

Count your cards in **their** suit.

Their suit	What to do
Void	Usually don't double; bid your own suit. Defending with no trumps is rarely right.
1 card	**Double**, even with a minimum. Partner is counting on you.
2 cards	**Double** most of the time, especially at a low level.

Their suit	What to do
3 cards	Usually pass, or bid your own suit.
4+ cards	**Never** double. Partner can't have a trap pass.

The reopening double is **takeout**. It says: "I opened, and I have at most two of their suit." A hand that is all offense (6-5 shape, a void) bids its suits instead.

Responder again: pass or pull?

- **Pass** (convert to penalty) when you are happy to defend: long, strong trumps behind the overcaller.
- **Bid** when you aren't. Name your best suit at the cheapest level; a 4-card major is ideal.
- Being weak is **not** a reason to pass. A pass of a takeout double says "I want to defend."

Quiz

None vulnerable. Answers are at the bottom.

Responder. Partner opens, RHO overcalls. What do you call?

1. 1♦ – (1♠) – ? ♠A Q 10 9 5 ♥K 4 ♦ 7 3 ♣J 8 6 2
2. 1♣ – (1♥) – ? ♠K J 8 5 ♥ 6 3 ♦Q 10 7 4 ♣K 9 2

Opener. You opened, LHO overcalled, and it went Pass, Pass back to you.

3. 1♥ – (2♣) – P – (P) – ? ♠A J 7 4 ♥K Q 10 6 3 ♦K 9 5 ♣ 4
4. 1♠ – (2♦) – P – (P) – ? ♠K Q 10 8 3 ♥A 9 4 ♦J 7 2 ♣A 5
5. 1♦ – (1♠) – P – (P) – ? ♠ 8 2 ♥A 9 3 ♦A J 7 5 4 ♣K Q 6
6. 1♥ – (2♠) – P – (P) – ? ♠ — ♥A K J 10 8 4 ♦K Q 9 5 3 ♣ 7 2

Responder after partner's reopening double.

7. 1♣ – (1♥) – P – (P) – Dbl – (P) – ? ♠J 7 3 ♥K Q 10 8 6 ♦A 4 ♣ 9 5 2
8. 1♦ – (2♣) – P – (P) – Dbl – (P) – ? ♠Q 9 6 3 ♥J 8 5 ♦ 10 4 2 ♣K 7 3

After you play: board results

Double-dummy par results for the six practice boards. Compare them with your table's score.

Board	Key decision	Right call	Result
1	Opener, singleton in their suit	Double, partner passes	1♠ x down 2: +300
2	Opener, doubleton in their suit	Double, partner passes	2♣ x down 4, vul: +1100
3	Responder, weak hand after the double	Bid 2♥	+110 (passing 2♦ x: −580)
4	Opener, three of their suit	Pass	−90 (doubling: −200 or worse)
5	Opener, void and 6-5 shape	Bid 3♦, then 4♠	+650 (doubling: −470)
6	Opener, singleton at the 3 level	Double, partner passes	3♣ x down 3, vul: +800

Quiz answers

1. **Pass.** A trap pass: great spades behind the overcaller, short diamonds. Don't make a negative double just because you could.
2. **Double.** A negative double showing four spades. Your hearts are too weak to want to defend.
3. **Double.** A singleton club: reopen even with a minimum.
4. **Pass.** Three diamonds: partner can't have a trap pass.
5. **Double.** A doubleton spade and a good hand.
6. **3♦.** Void in their suit and all offense: show your second suit.
7. **Pass.** Five good hearts behind the overcaller and no fit: you are thrilled to defend.
8. **2♠.** You are weak and have only three small clubs, so bid your 4-card major at the cheapest level.