Checkback

A very common sequence is 1♥-1♠-1NT (opponents passing throughout)

At this point responder often wants to know more about opener's hand:

- Does opener have 5 Hearts?
- Does opener have 3 Spades?

One way of doing this is by using 2♣ as a "checkback" bid. Over a 2♣ bid by responder:

- Bid 2♠ if you have 3 spades (responders suit)
- Bid 2♥ if you have 5 hearts but < 3 spades
- Bid 2NT if you have 4 hearts and < 3 spades.

What sort of hands would you do this with? Game going hands (so 10+: remember opener has 15-16 points) with 5S and 3H. After opener's response, bid 3NT, 4♥ or 4♠ as appropriate.

If you have 10+ points and 5S but not 3H, bid 3♠ asking partner to choose between 4♠ and 3NT

If you have 10+ points and 3H but not 5S, bid 3♥ asking partner to choose between 4♥ and 3NT

The corollary is that if responder does not use the 2♣ check-back bid, any alternative 2 level suit bid tends to show weakness.

Extended Checkback

You can also use it over 1♥-1♠-2NT (opener has 17-18 points), only this time bid 3♣. Responses are the same but a level higher.

Other versions

There are numerous versions of checkback, many of them far more complicated. The simple version above is best for non-experts. Other versions may be called "checkback Stayman" or "modified Crowhurst"