

Breaker Block vs Order Block; Failed OB Reversal [Sweep, Close] + Free PDF

CATEGORIES ICT



WRITER

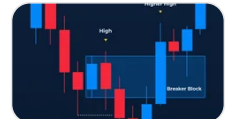
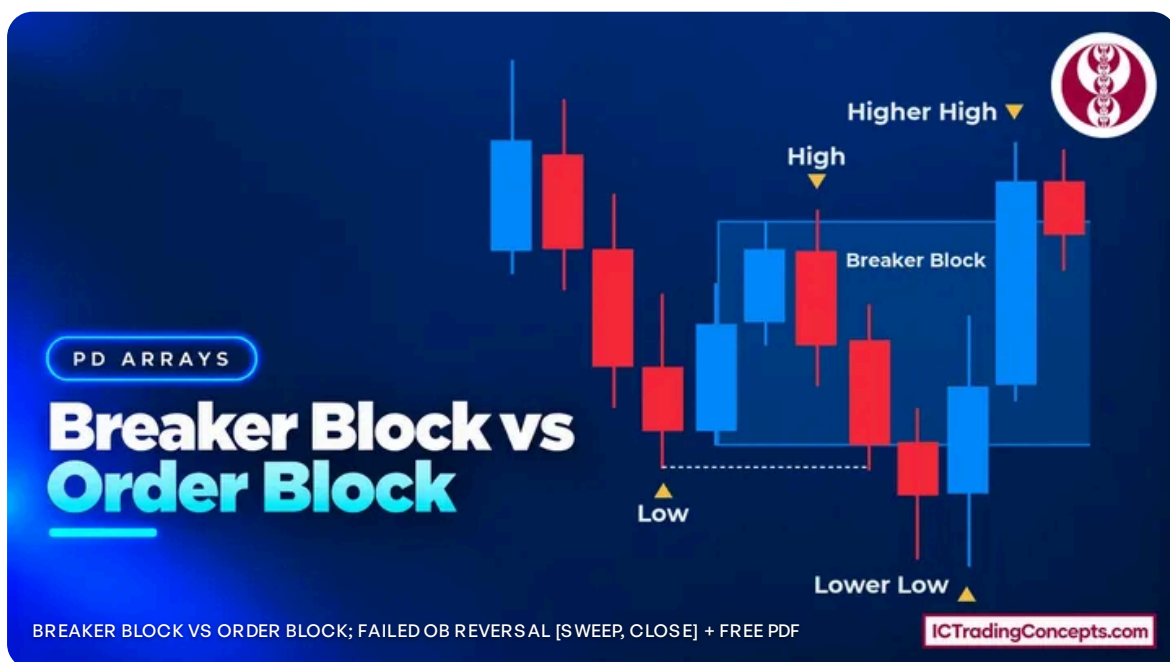
ICT Trading Concepts Desk



REVIEWER

ICT Trading Concepts Editorial Board

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An Order Block (OB) is the last opposite-close candle, or series of candles, before a displacement that breaks market structure; it is marked with a single line at the open of the first candle in that series (or of the candle itself when there is only one), and when it holds, price continues in the same direction. A Breaker Block (BB) is an order block that failed: price first swept the liquidity beyond a prior low or high, then a candle body closed beyond the opposite swing, so the zone now works in the other direction; it is marked over the full range of its candle(s), wick to wick. A breaker block and order block can come from the very same candles, but the order block is a continuation level and the breaker block is a reversal zone.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ✓ An order block is the last down-close candle(s) before an up move (bullish) or the last up-close candle(s) before a down move (bearish), followed by displacement that breaks structure.
- ✓ An order block is marked with one line at the open of the first candle in its series (or of its only candle); a breaker block is marked over the full range of its candle(s), wick to wick.
- ✓ A breaker block is a failed order block: a liquidity sweep first, then a body close beyond the opposite swing (above H for bullish, below L for bearish). Wicks do not count.
- ✓ No sweep before the break (a higher low instead of a lower low) means a mitigation block, not a breaker.
- ✓ The close creates the breaker; the trade comes only on the later retest of the zone.

What Is an Order Block (OB)?

An order block is the last opposite-close candle, or a short series of them, before a displacement that breaks market structure. "Opposite-close" means the candle closed against the move that follows: down-close candles before a rally, up-close candles before a sell-off. Displacement is a strong, fast move with large-bodied candles that carries price beyond a prior swing. Both terms in this comparison come from the teaching of ICT (Inner Circle Trader).

Two things make that candle an order block rather than just the last red or green candle on the screen: the strength of the move away from it and the **structure break** that move produces. Without both, there is no order block to mark. The usual explanation is that larger participants built positions in that area, which is why price can react when it returns; treat that as the reasoning behind the concept, not as a guarantee.

An order block is marked with **a single line at the open** of the first candle in that series; when the order block is a single candle, the line sits at that candle's open. When it holds, price comes back to that line, reacts and continues in the direction of the original displacement. That is its job: **an order block is a continuation level**.

Bullish Order Block

A bullish order block is the down-close candle, or series of down-close candles, before an up move that breaks above a prior swing high. A down-close candle opens at the top of its body, so the order block line sits at the top of the body of the first candle in the series. On a later pullback to the line, the order block is expected to act as support and send price higher again.

An order block does not require a liquidity sweep; the sweep in the examples below is context, not part of the definition.



Bullish order block: a down-close candle sweeps the level; the OB line sits at its open.

Bearish Order Block

A bearish order block is the up-close candle, or series of up-close candles, before a down move that breaks below a prior swing low. An up-close candle opens at the bottom of its body, so the order block line sits at the bottom of the body of the first candle in the series. On a later rally to the line, the order block is expected to act as resistance and push price lower again.



Bearish order block: an up-close candle sweeps the level; the OB line sits at its open.

How to Spot an Order Block on a Chart

Spotting an order block means working backward from a structure break, not forward from a candle that looks important. The sequence is the same for both directions:

1. Find the structure break. Locate a swing high (or swing low) that price has broken with displacement.
2. Trace the move to its origin. Follow the displacement back to the point where it started.
3. Find the opposite-close candles. The down-close candle(s) right before the rally (bullish) or the up-close candle(s) right before the drop (bearish) are the order block; when several come one after another, the whole series is the order block.
4. Draw the line at the open of the first candle in that series. When the order block is a single candle, draw it at that candle's open.

What Is a Breaker Block (BB)?

A breaker block is **an order block that failed**. The block first did its job and moved price, then the market swept the liquidity beyond the prior swing (L for a bullish breaker, H for a bearish one) and a candle body closed beyond the opposite swing. From that point the zone works in the opposite direction to the order block it came from.

All three of these conditions must be present, in this order:

- A valid order block. The candles must first have formed a real order block, with displacement and a structure break.
- A liquidity sweep. Price runs beyond the prior swing: a lower low below L (bullish) or a higher high above H (bearish).
- A body close beyond the opposite swing. For a bullish breaker, a candle body closes above H; for a bearish breaker, below L. A wick beyond the swing does not count.

For the sweep, trading beyond L (or H) is enough, even with a wick; only the confirmation needs a body close.

A breaker block is marked over **the full range of its candle(s)**, from the highest wick to the lowest wick.

If the second condition is missing (a higher low instead of a lower low), the result is not a breaker but a different pattern, the **mitigation block**, explained in its own section further down.

Bullish Breaker Block

A bullish breaker block forms from the swing sequence low, high, lower low, higher high (L → H → LL → HH). Each step has a specific role:

1. Price sets a low (L) and rallies to a high (H).
2. The last up-close candle(s) at H, before the drop, form a bearish order block. It works at first, and price falls from it.
3. The drop makes a lower low (LL) and sweeps the sell-side liquidity below L, the sell stop orders resting under that low.
4. Price then rallies, and a candle body closes above H, making a higher high (HH).

The bearish order block at H has now failed. The full range of those up-close candle(s) becomes a **bullish breaker block**, and when price later returns to it from above, it is expected to act as support.



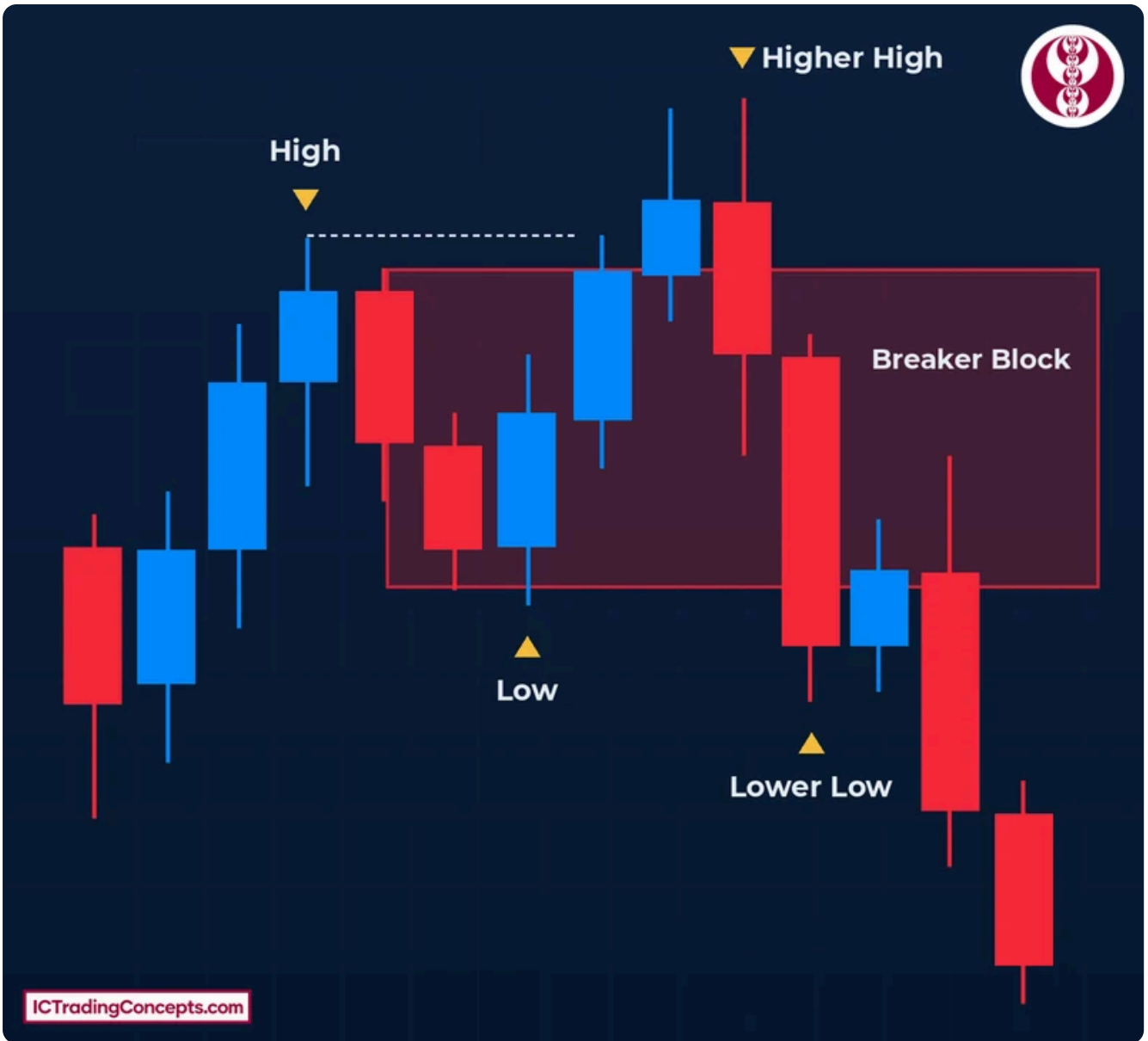
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Bearish Breaker Block

A bearish breaker block follows the same logic in the other direction, through the sequence high, low, higher high, lower low ($H \rightarrow L \rightarrow HH \rightarrow LL$):

1. Price sets a high (H) and drops to a low (L).
2. The down-close candles from H down to L, before the rally, form a bullish order block. Price rallies from it.
3. The rally makes a higher high (HH) and sweeps the buy-side liquidity above H.
4. Price then sells off, and a candle body closes below L, making a lower low (LL).

The failed bullish order block becomes a bearish breaker block, marked over the full range of those down-close candles. When price rallies back into it, the zone is expected to act as resistance.



Bearish breaker block: Higher High sweep, close below the Low, then the zone resists.

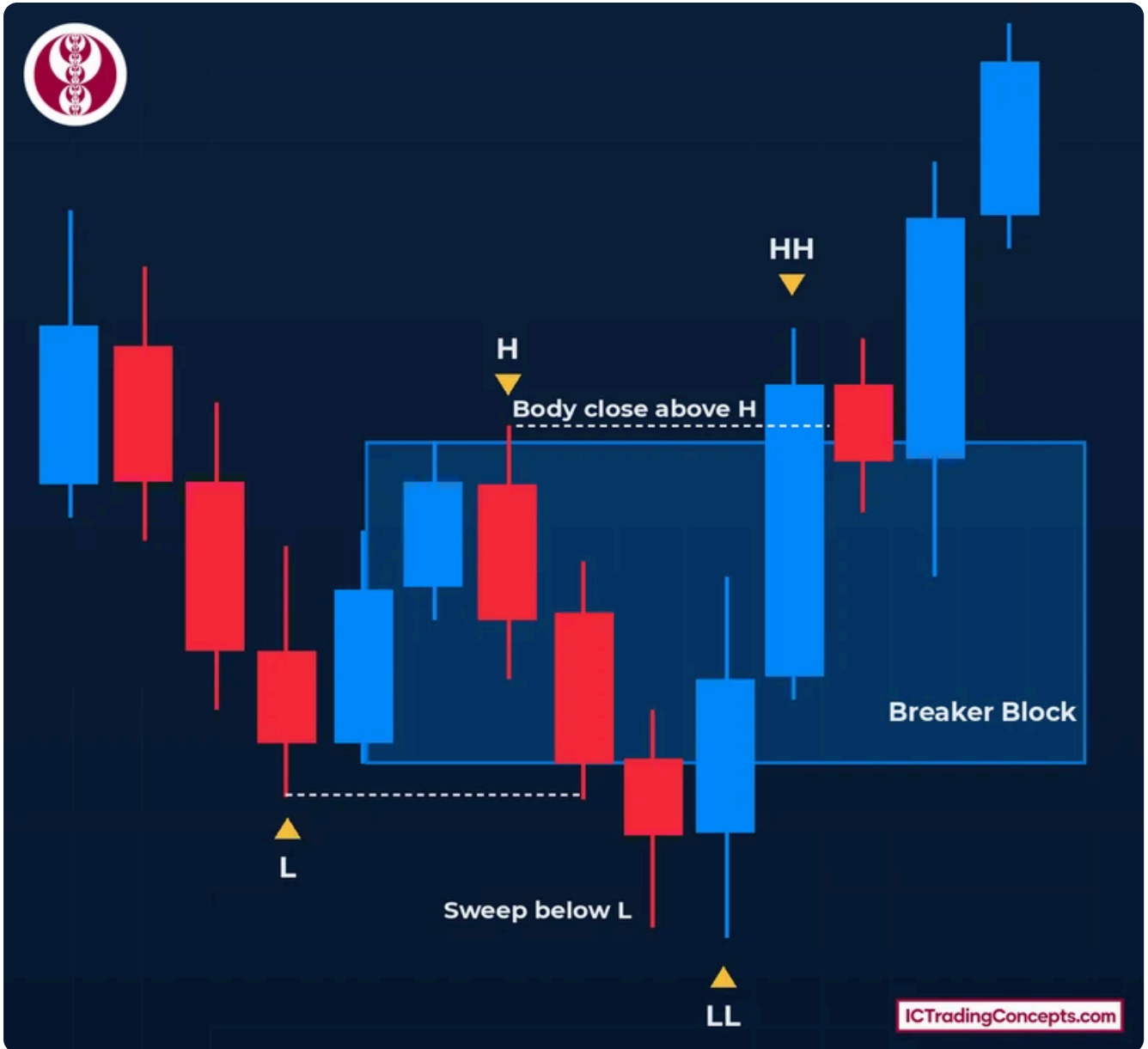
How to Identify a Breaker Block on a Chart (With Video)

A breaker block is confirmed only when every part of the sequence is visible on the chart. For a bullish breaker, check these points in order (reverse them for a bearish one):

- Is there a clear L → H → LL → HH sequence?
- Did the LL actually trade below L, sweeping the liquidity there?
- After that sweep, did a candle body close above H, not just a wick?
- Is the zone marked on the up-close candle(s) at H, full range, wick to wick?

If any answer is no, the zone is not a breaker block.

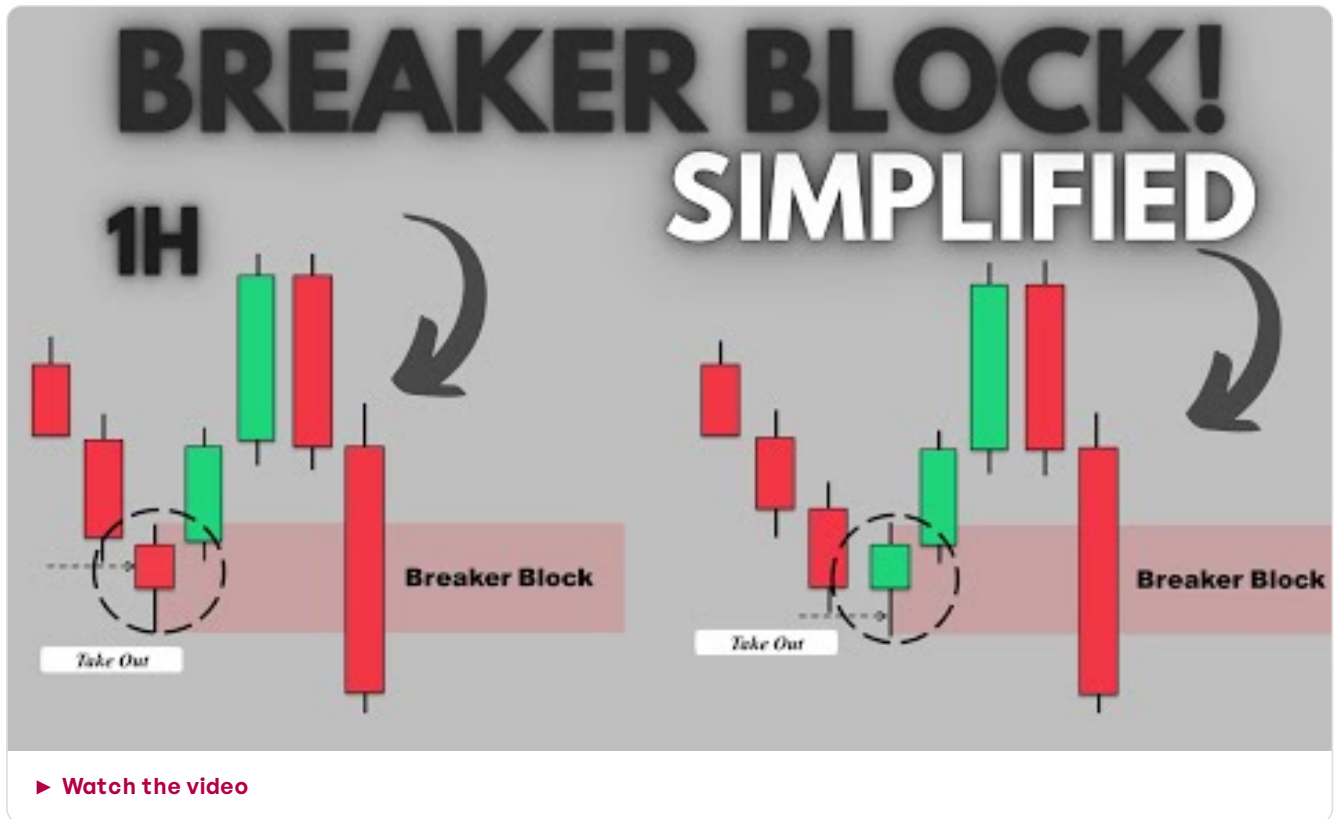
In the chart below, all four checks pass. The swing points are labeled L, H, LL and HH; the LL trades below the dotted line at L; the body of the HH candle closes above the dotted line at H; and the breaker zone covers the up-close candles at H, from the highest wick to the lowest.



Breaker block checks: $L \rightarrow H \rightarrow LL \rightarrow HH$, sweep below L , body close above H , zone at H .

Watch: ICT Breaker Block Simplified

The video marks ICT breaker blocks on EUR/USD 5-minute and 15-minute TradingView charts. Check each one against the three conditions: order block, liquidity sweep, body close.



Why a Breaker Block Flips Support and Resistance

The flip explains why a breaker works in the opposite direction to the order block it came from. Take a bearish breaker: traders who bought from the bullish order block are holding losing positions after the close below L. When price returns to the zone, many of them use the retest to exit, while traders who read the new bearish structure sell at the same level. That mix of exits and fresh selling is the usual explanation for why old support now acts as resistance, a version of the role reversal between support and resistance. The bullish breaker is the same logic reversed: a failed bearish order block becomes support.

The sweep is what separates a breaker block from an ordinary support and resistance flip. Price first runs the stops beyond the prior swing, and only then closes through the opposite swing.

Breaker Block vs Order Block: The Core Differences

The ICT breaker block vs order block distinction comes down to one question: did the order block hold or fail? The answer also changes how the level is drawn: an order block is a single line at the open of the first candle in its series, while a breaker block covers the full range of its candle(s).

Continuation vs Reversal: The Difference That Matters Most

An order block that holds is a **continuation** level: price returns to it and resumes the direction of the displacement that created it. A breaker block is a **reversal** zone: the order block failed after a sweep and a body close beyond the opposite swing, and the zone now supports the new direction.

The same candles can turn from a bearish OB into a bullish breaker, or from a bullish OB into a bearish breaker. A bullish OB and a bullish breaker, however, are built from opposite-close candles. The up-close candles at H are a bearish order block while price is falling from them, and a **bullish breaker block** after the sweep of L and the body close above H. The candles stay the same; the structure around them changes, and so does the marking, from the open line to the full range.

Bullish Breaker Block vs Bullish Order Block

Both act as support, but they come from opposite candles and are drawn differently. A bullish order block is the series of down-close candles before the rally and is marked with a line at the open of the first of them. A bullish breaker block is built from the up-close candle(s) at a swing high that failed as resistance after a sweep of the low, and it is marked over their full range.

The **candle color flips** between the two: down-close candles for the bullish order block, up-close candles for the bullish breaker block.

The chart below shows both on the same move. The breaker block is the blue up-close candle just before the High: it failed after the sweep of the Low and the close above the High, so the box covers its full range. The order block is the three red down-close candles that follow it, which carry price below the Low before the rally; the OB line sits at the open of the first of them. Because that series starts right after the up-close candle, the OB line falls inside the breaker range here: the same price area, built from different candles and marked in a different way.



Breaker block vs order block: the OB is a line at an open; the breaker is a full range.

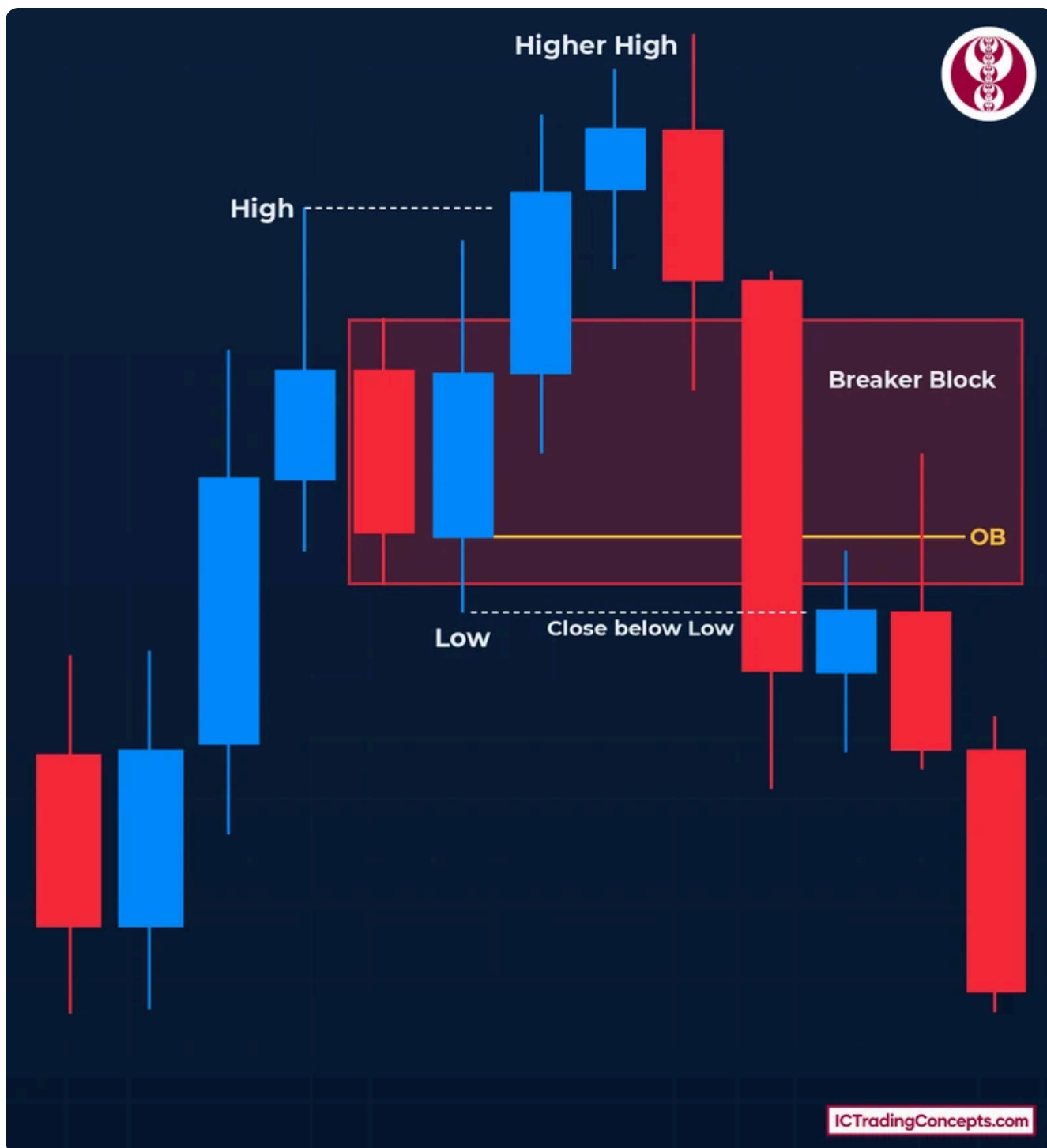
Bearish Breaker Block vs Bearish Order Block

The bearish pair mirrors the bullish one. Both act as resistance, but they come from opposite candles and are drawn differently. In the sequence, H is the first swing high and HH is a later, higher high: here the HH is the sweep, the run above H that takes the buy stops resting there.

	Bearish Order Block	Bearish Breaker Block
Candles	The up-close candle(s) before a drop that broke structure downward	The down-close candles from H down to L, the bullish order block that failed

	Bearish Order Block	Bearish Breaker Block
Sequence	Up-close candle(s), then displacement below a swing low	High (H) → low (L) → higher high (HH) that sweeps above H → body close below L
Marked as	One line at the open of the first up-close candle in the series	Full range of the down-close candle(s), wick to wick
Role	Resistance in a downtrend that is continuing	Resistance in a downtrend that has just begun

The chart below shows both on the same move. The bearish breaker block is the red down-close candle just before the Low: it failed after the sweep of the High and the close below the Low, so the box covers its full range. The bearish order block is the three blue up-close candles that follow it, which carry price above the High before the sell-off; the OB line sits at the open of the first of them. Because that series starts right after the down-close candle, the OB line falls inside the breaker range here, just as in the bullish example.



Order block vs breaker block (bearish): one line at an open vs the full candle range.

Side-by-Side Comparison Table

The table sums up the differences above in one place, as a quick reference. L and H are the first swing low and swing high; LL (lower low) and HH (higher high) are the later swings beyond them. The last row shows the no-sweep case, the mitigation block, which belongs to neither and is explained further down.

Criterion	Order Block (OB)	Breaker Block (BB)
What it is	Last opposite-close candle(s) before a displacement that breaks structure	An order block that failed after a liquidity sweep and a body close beyond the opposite swing

Criterion	Order Block (OB)	Breaker Block (BB)
Bullish form	Last down-close candle(s) before the up move	Up-close candle(s) at H, after L → H → LL → HH
Bearish form	Last up-close candle(s) before the down move	Down-close candles from H down to L, after H → L → HH → LL
Liquidity sweep	Not part of the definition	Required first (LL below L, or HH above H)
What confirms it	Displacement and a structure break in the direction of the move	A body close above H (bullish) or below L (bearish) after the sweep; wicks do not count
How it is marked	One line at the open of the first candle in the series	Full range of the candle(s), wick to wick
Role	Continuation	Reversal
Mitigation Block	The up-close candle(s) at H that started the drop (bearish: the down-close candle(s) at L that started the rally), broken without a sweep: a higher low instead of a lower low, or a lower high instead of a higher high. A separate case, not a breaker	

How Does an Order Block Turn Into a Breaker Block?

Every breaker block starts life as an order block, so the two concepts meet in one sequence. The conversion always happens in this order:

1. The order block forms and works. Price leaves it with displacement and breaks structure.
2. Price sweeps the prior swing. The move runs beyond it (below L for a bullish breaker, above H for a bearish one) and takes the liquidity there.
3. A candle body closes beyond the opposite swing: above H for a bullish breaker, below L for a bearish one.
4. The order block has failed, and its candle(s) are now a breaker block, marked over their full range.

An order block becomes a breaker block only when this whole sequence is complete. **A wick is not a close:** if price spikes beyond the swing but the candle body closes back on the other side, the sequence is not complete.

Formation is also not entry. The close that completes the sequence creates the breaker; the trade, if there is one, comes when price returns to the zone later.

What Is a Mitigation Block?

A **mitigation block** is the origin of a swing that failed without sweeping liquidity. A candle body closes beyond the opposite swing, just as when a breaker forms, but price never ran beyond the prior swing first. In a bullish setup, the zone is the up-close candle(s) at H that started the drop, and the drop makes a higher low (HL) instead of a lower low (LL) before price closes above H.

Is It a Breaker Block or a Mitigation Block?

The missing sweep is the key difference between the two, and it decides the name: a failed order block becomes a breaker only if the sweep comes first. In bullish terms, the mitigation sequence is low, high, higher low, higher high (L → H → HL → HH):

1. Price sets a low (L) and rallies to a high (H).
2. Price drops from H. The up-close candle(s) at H that started the drop are the candles to watch.
3. The drop stops above L, making a higher low (HL). The sell-side liquidity below L is never taken.
4. Price then rallies, and a candle body closes above H.



The drop stops above the Low, so no sweep: a mitigation block, not a breaker block.

The up-close candle(s) at H that started the drop have failed as resistance, as in a bullish breaker, but without the sweep in step 3 they form a mitigation block, not a breaker block. The bearish version mirrors it, through high, low, lower high, lower low (H → L → LH → LL): the rally stops below H instead of sweeping it, and a candle body then closes below L.

Was liquidity swept before the body close beyond the opposite swing?

- Swept, then closed → **Breaker**
- Closed without a sweep (HL/LH) → **Mitigation**
- No close, price continued → **Order Block**

What Makes a Breaker Block or Order Block Worth Trading?

The definition tells you whether a breaker or an order block exists; context tells you whether it deserves your attention. Displacement and a structure break are always required for an order block; the points below are about how strong and clear they are, along with other context that makes a valid setup cleaner to trade.

Conditions That Strengthen an Order Block

These points make an order block easier to trust as a continuation level:

- Strong displacement. Large-bodied candles leaving the order block quickly show the move had real momentum behind it.
- A clean structure break. The move closes beyond an obvious swing, not a minor one.
- A first return. An order block that price has not traded back to yet is usually treated as cleaner than one that has already been tested.
- Alignment with the current structure. An order block formed on a pullback in the direction of the prevailing structure fits its continuation role.

Conditions That Strengthen a Breaker Block

For a breaker block, the extra context sits around the sweep and the close:

- An obvious swept swing. A sweep of a clear, well-defined low or high, where stops are likely to rest, carries more meaning than a sweep of a minor swing.
- A decisive close. A strong body close beyond the opposite swing, with displacement, says more than a hesitant close just past it.
- The first retest after conversion. The first return to the zone is the cleanest test of the flip.
- A compact zone. A narrower zone allows a tighter stop just beyond it, which improves the reward relative to the risk.

How to Trade the Breaker Retest

In breaker block vs order block trading, the breaker gives a reversal trade in three parts: an entry on the retest, a stop in one of two places, and a target set by a fixed R multiple or a leg projection. The steps below use a bullish breaker; reverse them for a bearish one.

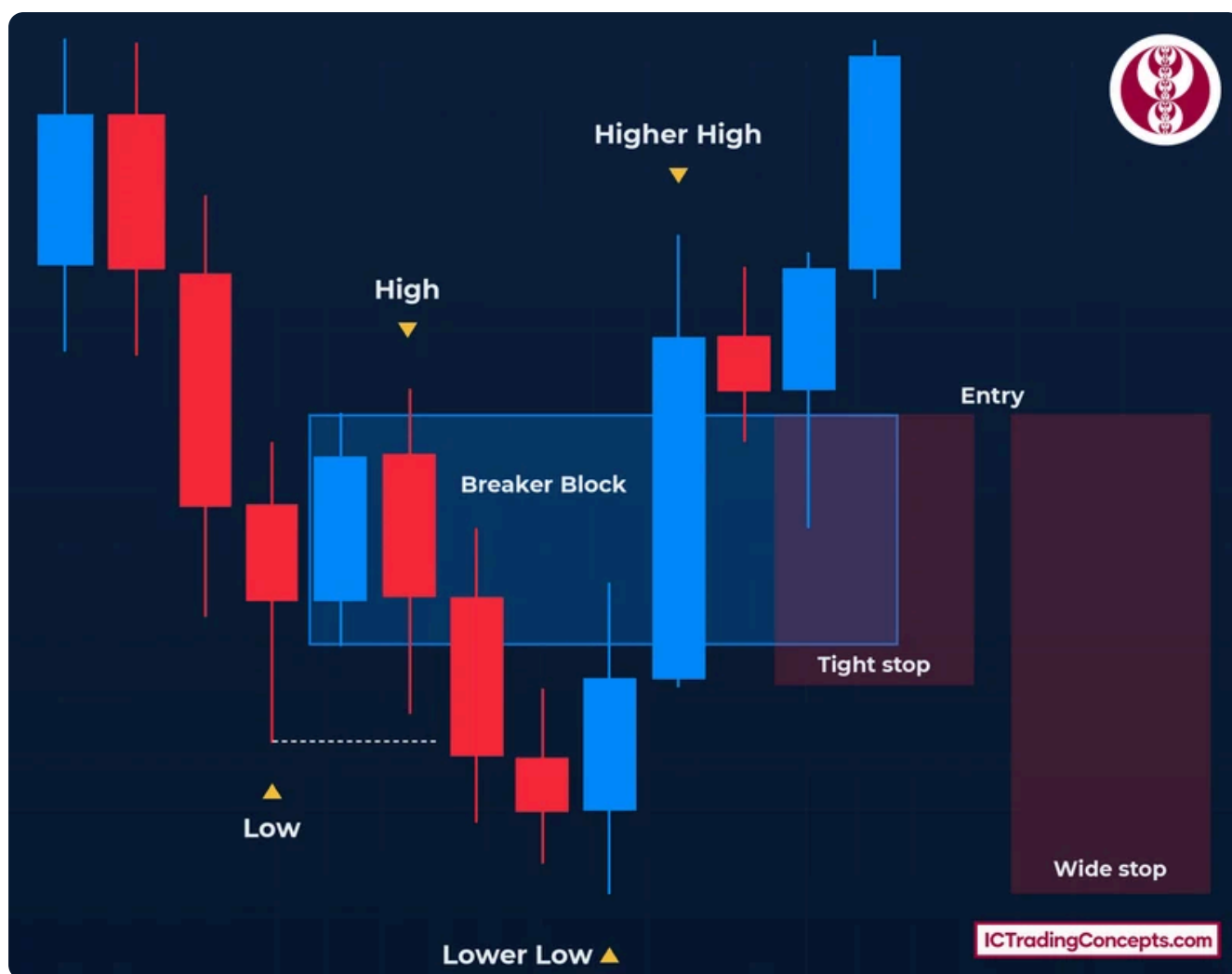
Entry: Wait for the Retest

The candle that closes above H creates the breaker; it is not the entry. **Wait for price to come back into the breaker zone** after the higher high, and take the long as price trades back into it. If price never returns to the zone, there is no trade.

Stop Loss: Beyond the Zone or Beyond the Swept Swing

There are two places for the stop, and the choice is a trade-off between room and risk:

- Just beyond the breaker zone (tighter). For a bullish breaker, just below the zone's low. The risk per trade is smaller, so the same target is a larger multiple of R, but price has less room to move.
- Beyond the swept swing (wider). For a bullish breaker, at or just below the LL that swept L. The trade gets more room, but the target has to be further away to keep the same reward relative to the risk.



Breaker block entry on the retest: tight stop below the zone, wide stop at the Lower Low.

Targets: Fixed R or Leg Projection

The target can be set in one of two ways:

- Fixed R. Set the target at a multiple of the risk, such as 2R or 3R.

- Leg projection. Measure the manipulation leg, the move from H down to the LL that swept L, and project the same distance beyond H in the new direction.

A Worked Example With Prices

The numbers below are illustrative, chosen to show the arithmetic of a bullish breaker trade on EUR/USD with the tighter stop and a 3R target.

Step	Level
Swing low (L)	1.0820
Swing high (H)	1.0880
Breaker zone: up-close candle at H, full range	1.0862 to 1.0880
Lower low (LL), sweeping below L	1.0806
Break: body close above H	1.0889
Entry on the retest, at the top edge of the zone	1.0880
Stop, just below the zone	1.0858 (risk: 22 pips)
Target at 3R	1.0946 (reward: 66 pips)

The trade only exists because the low at 1.0820 was swept first. Had the drop stopped at 1.0830 (a higher low) before price closed above H, the same candle at H would have been a mitigation block rather than a breaker.

Common Mistakes With Breaker Blocks and Order Blocks

Most errors come from calling a zone by the wrong name, which then points the trade in the wrong direction.

1. Calling every failed order block a breaker. Without a sweep of the prior swing first, the failed swing is a mitigation block, not a breaker block.
2. Counting a wick as the close. A wick beyond the opposite swing does not complete the sequence; only a candle body closing above H (bullish) or below L (bearish) does.
3. Entering on the close candle. The close creates the breaker. The entry comes later, on the retest of the zone.
4. Drawing both the same way. The order block is one line at the open of the first candle in its series; once it becomes a breaker (sweep + body close), the breaker block is the full range of its candle(s), wick to wick.
5. Marking every strong candle as an order block. Without displacement and a structure break, there is no order block, and a chart full of marked levels leads to low-quality trades.
6. Treating a first touch as proof the level holds. Price can react briefly and then continue straight through. A touch is a test, not a confirmation, and the stop defines the risk either way.

Indicators on TradingView

Indicators can mark these zones automatically, which saves time when scanning several charts. **Check every automatic breaker label** against the sweep and body-close sequence above before you use it, and note that these tools may draw order blocks as zones rather than the open line.



FREE

Breaker Blocks + Order Blocks confirm [TradingFinder] BBOB Alert

Marks order blocks and breaker blocks on the chart and highlights where the two overlap.

[View on TradingView](#)



FREE

Order Block & Breaker Block Zone (RWBTradeLab)

Marks order block zones and labels the ones that become breaker blocks.

[View on TradingView](#)



FREE

CandelaCharts - Breaker Blocks

Marks breaker blocks that form after price sweeps a prior high or low and then reverses.

[View on TradingView](#)

Conclusion

An order block and a breaker block can come from the same candles, so the name depends on what price did next. If the order block holds and price continues, it is a continuation level: the last opposite-close candle(s) before a structure-breaking displacement, marked with a line at the open of its first candle. If price sweeps the prior swing and a candle body then closes beyond the opposite swing, the failed order block becomes a breaker block: a reversal zone marked over the full range of its candle(s). Without the sweep, the failed swing is a mitigation block. For a breaker, the body close confirms the conversion; in every case the trade comes on a later return to the level.

Sources

- ICT Mentorship Core Content, Month 04, ICT Breaker Block: [ICT, YouTube](#)
- Support and resistance: [Wikipedia](#)

TAGS

Order Block

COMMON QUESTIONS

Frequently asked questions

01 Is a breaker block stronger than an order block?

Neither is stronger in general, because they do different jobs. An order block is used for continuation in the direction of the displacement, and a breaker block for a reversal after an order block fails. Which one matters depends on what the structure is doing.

02 Does a breaker block need a liquidity sweep, or can any failed order block qualify?

It needs the sweep. A failed order block becomes a breaker only after price runs beyond the prior swing first: a lower low for a bullish breaker, a higher high for a bearish one. Without the sweep (a higher low or lower high), the pattern is a mitigation block.

03 Do wicks count when an order block becomes a breaker block?

No. After the sweep, a candle body has to close beyond the opposite swing: above H for a bullish breaker, below L for a bearish one. A wick beyond the swing does not complete the sequence.

04 Is the breaker block zone the same as the original order block?

They come from the same candles but are drawn differently. The order block is a single line at the open of the first candle in its series; once it becomes a breaker (sweep + body close), the breaker block is marked over the full range of the candle(s), wick to wick.

05 How do you mark an order block or breaker block made of several candles?

For an order block, the line goes at the open of the first candle in the series; for a one-candle order block, at that candle's open. For a breaker block, mark the whole series as one zone, from the highest high to the lowest low of those candles.

06 Is a breaker block just a support and resistance flip of an order block?

It is a specific kind of flip. The candles must first be a valid order block, price must sweep liquidity beyond the prior swing, and a candle body must then close beyond the opposite swing. An ordinary support and resistance flip needs none of those conditions.

07 Can you enter a breaker block trade on the candle that closes beyond the swing?

No. That candle creates the breaker block; it does not give the entry. The entry comes on the later retest of the zone.

08 What is an ICT unicorn setup with a breaker block?

A unicorn is a breaker block that overlaps a fair value gap (FVG) in the same zone.

09 Should beginners learn order blocks before breaker blocks?

Yes. A breaker block is defined as a failed order block, so it cannot be identified without first recognizing the order block it came from. Learning swing structure and liquidity sweeps next makes the breaker sequence much easier to read.