

Bridge Booklet #3

Defence

- *Which card to play*
- *Opening leads vs Suit contracts*
- *Opening leads vs NT*
- *Using your high cards*
- *Discards*
- *Signalling*

Name

Date Started.....



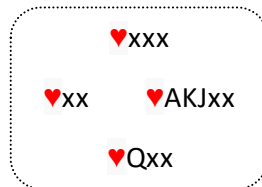
Which card to play

Consecutive cards

Sequences like ♥KQ or ♥T9 are **consecutive cards**

It doesn't matter to you which you play – they are equals

But it makes it easier for your partner if you **follow suit with the lowest of equals**

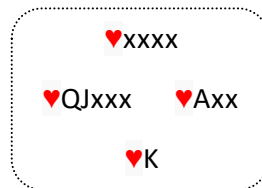


For example, West leads a Heart and East plays *third hand high* to win the trick

Out of ♥AK East should play ♥K, then West will know East has the ♥A (as declarer didn't beat the ♥K)

West also knows that declarer has the ♥Q (as East would have won with the ♥Q if he had that too)

When you are starting a trick though you should **lead the highest of equals**



West leads the ♥Q

East knows that West does not have the ♥K (he would have lead it) so takes the trick with the ♥A

Top of a doubleton

Lead the highest of a doubleton – the underlined card of each suit here:

Then next trick play a low, and partner will know you have a doubleton



Low from an honour

Leading a longer suit with an **honour** (but no consecutive cards) start low:

When you start low partner will work out you have an honour in that suit



Second highest from bad suit

With a bad suit (no honours) lead the second highest



If you have three cards make sure your second card is a higher card – e.g. play ♠4 then ♠7 then ♠3

This pattern is called MUD (middle-up-down)

Partner will know you have three cards, and not a doubleton (in which case you'd play high-low)

If you have four cards also start high-low – e.g. ♥7 then ♥6

Partner should be able to work out that you have four of them and not a doubleton

Quiz

1. This is your hand

♠KQ3 ♥JT965 ♦QJ3 ♣KQ

(a) What card in each suit should do you play to start a trick? _____

(b) What card do you play following suit to try and win the trick? _____

2. You are West defending 3NT

(a) You lead the ♥8, dummy plays low, and partner wins with ♥Q

Who has the ♥J? _____ Why? _____

Who has the ♥K? _____ Why? _____

♥A65

♥83
♥Q?

♥?

(b) Suppose instead partner (East) leads the ♥Q, and declarer wins with dummy's ♥A

Who has the ♥K? _____ Why? _____

3. In each case, chose the card you should lead from each suit

♠A4 ♥865 ♦KJ53 ♣9642

Spades _____ Why? _____

Hearts _____ Why? _____

Diamonds _____ Why? _____

Clubs _____ Why? _____

4. This is your hand

♠AK3 ♥865 ♦KJ5 ♣9642

See if you can work out what partner's lead means

(a) Partner leads ♠7 and on the second round plays ♠2 _____

(b) Partner leads ♠7 and on the second round plays ♠8 _____

(c) Partner leads ♦2 _____

(d) Partner leads ♦9 _____

Score

/20

Opening leads vs Suit contracts

You are looking to get your side off to the best possible start
That means developing extra tricks for your side, and not helping declarer

Which suit to lead

If partner has bid a suit that should be your priority
Otherwise lead the suit that looks most attractive

Singleton	♠4	Trying to get yourself a ruff
Top of doubleton	♠74	
Top of sequence	♠KQ42	Trying to build a trick by force
Low from good suit	♠K42	

Singleton leads

When you get rid of a singleton you hope to get a ruff later
For example, against 4♠ you lead your singleton Heart:

♠J42 ♥7 ♦QJ542 ♣K865

If partner has the ♥A he can give you a ruff immediately
Even if partner doesn't have the ♥A he might be able to give you a ruff later

Other leads

Doubleton: You are also hoping that you can eventually get a ruff
This is also a **safe lead** as you are not leading away from an honour
Remember with a doubleton to play high-low, for example ♠7 then ♠4

Sequence: Top of a sequence is safe (doesn't help declarer) and attacking (builds tricks for defence)
Against a suit contract a two card sequence is enough
"If God deals you an AK, say Thank You for not having to think about what to lead"

Good suit: Leading a long suit is means you might eventually be able to give partner a ruff

♠J4 ♥7 ♦Q75432 ♣KQ86

Against ♥4 you could lead the ♠J (top of doubleton), ♦4 (fourth highest) or ♣K (top of sequence)

Trump leads

"If in doubt, lead a trump"

The auction below suggests that dummy (East) will be ruffing Hearts, so lead a trump

W	N	E	S
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♥	Pass	2♠	Pass

When a low contract (below game) is doubled you should usually lead a trump
This is because declarer is lacking high cards so his only chance is to make it by ruffing a lot

Quiz

1. You are defending 4♥ after the auction 1♥–4♥. What do you lead?

	Your lead	Reason
♠2 ♥A54 ♦QJ84 ♣AK865		
♠2 ♥A ♦QJT742 ♣K8653		
♠J2 ♥J32 ♦A742 ♣K865		
♠KQJ2 ♥J32 ♦74 ♣K865		
♠KT3 ♥732 ♦Q74 ♣K865		

2. You are South. What card do you lead against 4♠ in each auction?

♠K32 ♥876 ♦J5 ♣AK642

W	N	E	S
Pass	Pass	4♠	Pass

W	N	E	S
1♣	Pass	4♠	Pass

W	N	E	S
1♥	2♦	4♠	Pass

- (a) _____ (b) _____ (c) _____

3. In each case imagine you are declarer in 5♣
Which suit are you most worried about the defence leading?

♠K3 ♥J93 ♦AK5 ♣KQ742
♠A52 ♥876 ♦Q3 ♣AJ953

♠KQJ3 ♥3 ♦A52 ♣KQ742
♠T982 ♥A62 ♦4 ♣J9865

♠♥J96432 ♦AK52 ♣A53
♠A962 ♥5 ♦J63 ♣KQ942

- (a) _____ (b) _____ (c) _____

4. You are South defending a Spade contract with this hand. You lead your singleton Heart.
For each auction, decide how likely it is your partner will have ♥A and give you a Heart ruff

♠753 ♥8 ♦KJ5 ♣JT8642

W	N	E	S
Pass	4♥	4♠	Pass

W	N	E	S
1♣	Pass	2♠	Pass
7♣	Pass	Pass	Pass

W	N	E	S
1♥	Pass	4♠	Pass

- (a) _____ (b) _____ (c) _____

- (a) _____ (b) _____

Score

/25

Opening Leads vs NT

When there are no trumps it's all about establishing **length tricks** for your side

Which suit to lead

In the absence of any other information, you should lead your own **longest suit**

But if partner has bid, you should lead his suit

And you should avoid any suits that declarer's side has bid

You are North in each auction below with this hand:

♠A642 ♥K43 ♦K94 ♣K43

W	N	E	S
1NT	Pass	3NT	Pass

W	N	E	S
			1♦
1NT	Pass	3NT	Pass

W	N	E	S
1♠	Pass	2♥	Pass
2NT	Pass	3NT	Pass

Lead ♠2 (longest suit)

Lead ♦4 (partner's suit)

Lead a ♣3 or ♦4 (unbid suits)

Which card to lead

If you are leading your own suit, you should normally lead the **fourth highest**

Suit	Fourth highest
♠A6432	♠3
♠KJ8432	♠4

The exception is that you should lead the top of a **sequence**

This includes a **broken sequence** like ♦KQT3 or ♦QJ92 and an **interior sequence** like ♦KJT4 or ♦QT93

	Suit	Lead
Sequence	♦K <u>Q</u> J2	♦K
	♦J <u>T</u> 93	♦J
Broken sequence	♣K <u>Q</u> T3	♣K
	♣ <u>Q</u> J9	♣Q
Interior sequence	♦K <u>J</u> T4	♦J
	♦ <u>Q</u> T93	♦T

A common mistake is to lead fourth highest when you have a sequence
It's a tragedy if West leads the ♥5 here!

♥87
♥KQJ52 ♥943
♥AT

Partner's suit

If partner has bid you should lead his suit, unless you have a good reason not to

In each suit, the card to lead if partner bid that suit is underlined: ♠AJ32 ♥K3 ♦J43 ♣9763

Quiz

1. You are defending against 3NT after the auction 1NT–3NT

	Your lead	Reason
♠2 ♥A54 ♦QJ84 ♣AK865		
♠2 ♥A ♦QJT742 ♣K8653		
♠J2 ♥J32 ♦AT42 ♣K865		
♠KQJ2 ♥J32 ♦74 ♣K865		
♠632 ♥73 ♦Q742 ♣9865		

2. You are South on lead against 3NT. What card do you choose?

♠K932 ♥87 ♦J5 ♣AK642

W	N	E	S
1♦	Pass	3NT	Pass

W	N	E	S
1♣	Pass	3NT	Pass

W	N	E	S
1♣	1♥	3NT	Pass

- (a) _____ (b) _____ (c) _____

3. In each case imagine you are declarer in 3NT
Which suit are you most worried about the defence leading?

♠K3 ♥K53 ♦A42 ♣KQ742
♠A2 ♥A6 ♦975 ♣JT9653

♠AQ ♥AJ3 ♦A6532 ♣K74
♠KJ ♥KT42 ♦9874 ♣QT5

♠JT92 ♥KT53 ♦652 ♣A3
♠AQ3 ♥AQ4 ♦AQ84 ♣K92

- (a) _____ (b) _____ (c) _____

4. You are South with the hand below. You lead your fourth highest Club against 3NT.
For each auction, how likely it is partner will have some help in the Club suit?

♠753 ♥J82 ♦Q75 ♣KJ86

W	N	E	S
1♥	2♣	3NT	Pass

W	N	E	S
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♦	Pass	3NT	Pass

W	N	E	S
1♣	Pass	3NT	Pass

- (a) _____ (b) _____ (c) _____

- (a) _____ (b) _____

Score

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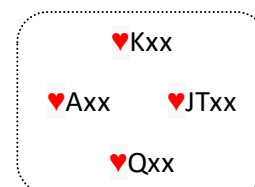
Using your high cards

Leading away from honours

The high cards (Ace, King, Queen, Jack, Ten) are called **honours**

The low cards (Nine down to Two) are called **spot cards**

It's often risky to lead a card from a suit in which you have an honour



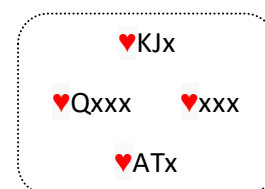
In this example if West starts the trick declarer can get two tricks

If West starts with the ♥A, declarer's ♥K and ♥Q become masters

If West starts low, declarer wins the first trick with the ♥Q then leads up to ♥K for his second trick

If South has to play the suit himself he gets only one trick (as long as West plays *second hand low*)

In this example if West (or East) starts the trick declarer gets three tricks



If South has to play the suit himself he has a **guess**

He must decide who he thinks has the ♥Q, and finesse them

If he guesses right he gets three tricks, if he guesses wrong he gets only two

Attacking and Safe Leads

You are making the opening lead against 3NT

♠K32 ♥KJ74 ♦Q542 ♣98

Leading a Spade, Heart or Diamond is an **attacking lead** and could cost a trick

It will only work if partner has something in that suit (which is more likely when they've bid that suit)

The best attacking suit is Hearts, as partner needs only ♥Q or ♥A for the defence to have a good suit

The **safest** lead is a Club, which is less likely to help declarer

Now you are defending against 4♥

♠AK2 ♥74 ♦Q542 ♣K865

Suppose the auction suggests declarer doesn't have any Spades

Leading your ♠A is safe as declarer will just use up his trumps

But it may be that a more attacking lead is required to get tricks for your side (e.g. Club or Diamond)

Look at dummy and how many tricks your side still needs to decide whether to be attacking or safe

Top of a sequence

This is always a good lead, as it is both attacking (develops tricks) and safe (gives nothing away)

♠KQJ2 ♥74 ♦QJT4 ♣K852

Against 4♥ both ♠K and ♦Q are excellent leads

Quiz

1. Work out how many tricks declarer can get if:

- (a) West leads the ♥3 _____
- (b) West leads the ♥Q _____
- (c) East leads the suit _____
- (d) Declarer plays the suit himself _____

♥KT2

♥QJ3 ♥9876

♥A54

2. Work out how many tricks declarer can get if:

- (a) West leads the ♥3 _____
- (b) West leads the ♥K _____
- (c) East leads the suit _____
- (d) Declarer plays the suit himself _____

♥Q2

♥KJ83 ♥T9765

♥A4

3. West has these cards

♠KQJ3 ♥73 ♦AT3 ♣KJ92

- (a) What are the best safe leads? _____
- (b) What are the best attacking leads? _____

4. The opponents bid 1NT–3NT and you are on lead

♠JT932 ♥J53 ♦A ♣AJ92

- (a) What are two advantages of the ♠J lead? _____
 Declarer wins your ♠J lead in hand with ♠Q and plays a Diamond, which you win with ♦A
 Dummy has ♠54 ♥AK ♦KQJ6432 ♣73 so after losing ♦A has 8 winners ready to go
- (b) Declarer opened 1NT. How many points does he have? _____
- (c) Based on winning ♠Q on the first trick, what high cards does declarer have? _____
- (d) Count how many tricks declarer can get _____
- (e) What should you defend after winning ♦A? _____

Score

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Discards

A **discard** is a card you throw away when you can't follow suit
This happens a lot in defence when declarer is taking his winners

Protected Honours

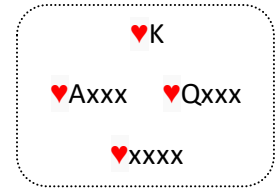
A King **singleton** is fragile – and doomed to drop under the Ace:
You need at least one other card to protect the King

A holding like ♥Kx is called **protected**

With ♥Qxx the Queen is protected, and with ♥Jxxx the Jack is protected

In each case the high card will eventually become a master as declarer cashes his winners

So when you are discarding try and keep your honours protected

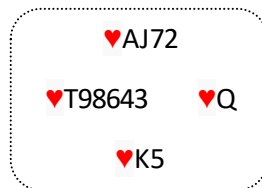


Partner might have honours too

In the layout below when declarer wins his ♥K, the ♥Q will fall

He can then take his master ♥A and ♥J

West should win the fourth round with his ♥T



But if West has thrown away too many Hearts declarer will win the fourth round – with ♥2!

The point is that partner might have high cards too that you can't see

There are two general rules

- it's normally safe to discard the fifth card (or more) in a suit
- try keep the same length as dummy (so keep four Hearts in the example above)

Remember the auction and play

To discard well you need to try and work out what declarer has left in his hand

A simple rule is **keep winners, throw losers**

So if you have cards that you know are masters, hang on to them

But, also, don't keep cards just because they are high!



You defend 5♣ with these cards left

Declarer ruffs a Spade in his hand (you play the ♠5), and he now leads a trump

What do you discard on this trump – the ♠A or the ♥8?

You should throw the ♠A! You know that declarer's last card is not a Spade, but your ♥8 might win

Quiz

1. In each case, is an honour card protected?

♠A ♠K3 ♠QJ ♠Q764 ♠KJ ♠T5432

2. Suppose declarer cashes his Ace and King
Who will win the 3rd and 4th round of the suit?

♥AT74
 ♥QJ86 ♥932
 ♥K5

♠AKJ74
 ♠Q52 ♠T96
 ♠83

♦AKJ74
 ♦Q5 ♦T962
 ♦83

♣AK93
 ♣QJ ♣T542
 ♣876

3rd _____

4th _____

3. After 1NT – 3NT declarer plays six Club winners from this dummy: ♠75 ♥T ♦Q953 ♣AKQJ86

In each case, what four discards should you make to keep honours protected?

(a) ♠Q32 ♥K532 ♦K752 ♣74 _____

(b) ♠932 ♥KQJ52 ♦K72 ♣74 _____

(c) ♠QJ2 ♥97432 ♦Q42 ♣74 _____

(d) ♠KQ3 ♥AK42 ♦K872 ♣74 _____

4. In this deal, South is declarer in 6NT

(a) How many sure winners does he have in each suit?

(b) Which cards does West need to keep?

(c) Which cards does East need to keep?

(d) The opening lead is a Club to ♣K and ♣A. Will declarer succeed?

♠ Q 3
♥ A 9 5 2
♦ A Q
♣ A J 9 8 7

♠ 5 4
♥ J 10 7 4
♦ 10 6 4
♣ K 4 3 2



♠ 10 8 6
♥ 3
♦ K 9 8 5 2
♣ Q 10 6 5

♠ A K J 9 7 2
♥ K Q 8 6
♦ J 7 3
♣ void

Score

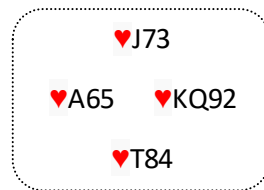
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Signalling

When beginners play **spot cards** (low cards from Two to Nine) they always throw their lowest
But there is an opportunity here to give information to partner
This only works if you remember to signal and partner remembers to look!

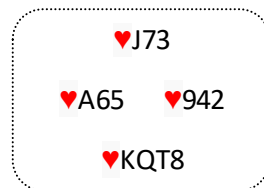
When partner leads

You show your **attitude** to the suit (if you like it)
You can play a high spot card to encourage him (**high means aye**)



West cashes the ♥A. East **encourages** with the ♥9
West now knows partner has the ♥K

A low spot card discourages partner (**low means no**)



West cashes the ♥A. East **discourages** with the ♥2
West now knows partner does not have the ♥K

You should encourage whenever you want partner to **continue the suit**
This might be because you have a high card(s), or because you are hoping to get a ruff
If you want partner to **switch** (play another suit) you should discourage

Note that sometimes a defender cannot signal clearly because he does not have the right spot cards
For example, suppose you want to encourage but only have ♥KQ32
You must play the ♥3 and hope that partner works it out!

Discards

When you are discarding you should also play that throwing a high card encourages in that suit



For example, a heart is lead:

- If you choose to discard a Spade throw away the ♠4 as you don't like Spades (low means no)
- If you choose to discard a Diamond throw away the ♦2 as you don't like Diamonds either
- If you choose to discard a Club throw away the ♣8 as you like Clubs (high means aye)

Quiz

1. Partner plays the ♠A. What do you play in each suit, to encourage or discourage?

Suit	♠Q952	♠Q98	♠Q32	♠KJT2	♠Q5	♠KQ72
Card to encourage						
Card to discourage						

2. You are defending against 4♥ with this hand:
What do you play if partner plays the

♠K42 ♥J6 ♦8762 ♣QJ86

♠A _____ ♥A _____ ♦A _____ ♣A _____

3. You are West. You cash your ♥A and partner plays ♥5. Is he encouraging or discouraging?

♥J642

♥A3 ♥5...

♥

♥976

♥A8 ♥5...

♥

♥T92

♥A6 ♥5...

♥

(a) _____ (b) _____ (c) _____

4. You are East, defending 3NT. Your partner leads the ♦2 and dummy plays the ♦K. What card should you play?

♦AK3

♦2? ♦Q985

♦?

♦AK3

♦2? ♦93

♦?

♦KQ3

♦2? A953

♦?

(a) _____ (b) _____ (c) _____

5. Declarer is drawing trumps in 5♣ and plays three rounds of Clubs. What card should you discard on the third round to signal to partner?

(a) ♠KQJ94 ♥52 ♦J752 ♣86 _____

(b) ♠KJ32 ♥9532 ♦KJ2 ♣86 _____

(c) ♠K64 ♥QJ ♦AQ5432 ♣86 _____

Score

/25

Glossary

- Attacking lead** – leading away from an honour (e.g. ♥K432) hoping partner has something too
- Attitude** – how you feel about a suit partner played, should he continue or switch?
- Broken sequence** – a sequence of high cards with two, then a gap, then one, like ♠KQT... or ♠QJ9...
- Consecutive cards** – cards in a sequence, like ♦K and ♦Q
- Discard** – throw a card away when you can't follow suit
- Discourage** – play a low spot card like ♦3 to show partner you don't like that suit
- Encourage** – play a high spot card like ♦9 to show partner you like that suit
- Fourth highest** – counting from the top, the fourth highest card. For example the ♥7 in ♥KJ873
- Honour** – a high card: Ace, King, Queen, Jack or Ten
- Interior sequence** – a sequence of high cards with one, then a gap, then two, like ♠KJT... or ♠QT9...
- Protected** – an honour is protected if it won't fall under other honours, for example ♠Kx is protected
- Safe lead** – a lead from a sequence like ♣KQJ2 or a bad suit like ♣762
- Signalling** – playing spot cards in a way to give information to partner
- Spot card** – a low card from two to nine, for example ♣2 or ♥5
- Switch** – change suit as a defender, for example cashing ♦A then switching to play Clubs instead

Notes

