



# Finessing

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# What is Finessing?

- ♠ An opportunity for a **Finesse** occurs when you, as **Declarer**, have **high cards with a gap** in a suit, e.g. Ace and Queen without the King
- ♥ The cards could all be in one hand, your hand or Dummy, or spread over both hands
- ♣ A **Finesse** is an attempt to win **an additional trick** if the missing card is with the right Opponent

# Examples of Finessing?

- ♠ The following examples assume that you are either playing in:
  - ♥ No Trumps; or
  - ♣ A Trump contract where you are playing the trump suit; or
  - ♦ A Trump contract where you have already drawn all the Opponents' trumps and you are playing another suit

# Example 1 of Finessing:

	Suit card holding	Lead from	High card to play first
Dummy:	A Q (x..)		Q (unless left Opponent has played the King)
Your hand:	x x (x..)	Your hand	

**x represents a card lower than a 10 in value**

**Outcome:**

- ♠ Win an additional trick if the King is held by your left Opponent
- ♥ Do not win an additional trick if the King is held by your right Opponent
- ♣ You are not worse off than if you had played the Ace first

## Example 2 of Finessing:

	Suit card holding	Lead from	High card to play first
Dummy:	x x (x..)	Dummy	
Your hand:	A Q (x..)		Q (unless right Opponent has played the King)

### Outcome:

- ♠ Win an additional trick if the King is held by your right Opponent
- ♥ Do not win an additional trick if the King is held by your left Opponent
- ♣ You are not worse off than if you had played the Ace first

## Example 3 of Finessing:

	Suit card holding	Lead from	High card to play first
Dummy:	A x (x..)	Dummy	Lead the Ace first, then lead towards the Queen
Your hand:	Q x x (x..)		

### Outcome:

- ♠ Win an additional trick if the King is held by your right Opponent
- ♥ Do not win an additional trick if the King is held by your left Opponent
- ♣ You are not worse off than if you had not led to the Queen after winning with the Ace
- ♦ DO NOT lead the Queen to the Ace – If left opponent has King, she will play it so that you have used Queen and Ace to win just one trick. This is called “False Finessing”.

## Example 4 of Finessing:

	Suit card holding	Lead from	High card to play first
Dummy:	A x (x..)		
Your hand:	Q J x (x..)	Your hand	Q

### Outcome:

- ♠ If your Queen is covered with the King by your left Opponent, you win with the Ace and your Jack is "promoted"
- ♥ If your right Opponent plays the King, you have lost that trick but can win two more with the Ace and Jack

# Example 5 of Finessing:

Suit card holding

Lead from

High card to play first

Dummy:

A x (x..)

Your hand:

Q x

Your hand

Q

Outcome:

- ♠ Most likely outcome is that you will only win one trick (unless an Opponent has a singleton King)
- ♥ You cannot play the Ace first and lead back to the Queen because you would not be able to play a lower card than the Queen if the Opponent on your right has played the King
- ♣ **WAIT**, if you can, for Opponents to first lead the suit



## Example 6 of Finessing:

	Suit card holding	Lead from	High card to play first
Dummy:	A Q x x		
Your hand:	J 10 9	Your hand	J

### Outcome:

- ♠ Win an additional trick if the King is held by your left Opponent
- ♥ Do not win an additional trick if the King is held by your right Opponent
- ♣ You are not worse off than if you had played the Ace first
- ♦ Continue the process by leading from your hand until your left Opponent only has the King to play which you take with your Ace – called a “Marked Finesse” when you know where the missing card is.

# Guidance for Finessing

You will need to think through each situation, but the following should help:

- ♠ **Generally lead toward the high card that may not win if missing winner is in the wrong place**
- ♥ **Do not Finesse if you know it will lose**
- ♣ **Do not Finesse as a defender if your partner may hold the missing winner**
- ♦ **Try not to Finesse if losing the Finesse will cost you more than one trick**
- ♥ **If your high cards are split across both hands and you do not have a third card in the suit with the lower high card, wait for Opponents to lead suit if possible**
- ♣ **Remember to keep entry control cards in a hand if you need to lead from it for a Finesse**
- ♦ **A consideration for Finessing is whether you can afford to lose the lead**