



What are opening leads for?

- To win tricks
- To set up tricks
- To send a message to partner

What Suit? Which Card?

Sometimes the suit you would like to lead does not have the right cards and sometimes the cards in a suit you would not otherwise have chosen, cry out to be led.

Choosing the suit

1. **A suit that partner bid**
2. Suit with touching honours
3. Good Features Against No Trumps
 - Sequence of three or more touching honours
 - Long Suit
 - Un-bid Major Suit
4. Against Trumps
 - Singleton
 - Sequence of two or more touching honours
 - Trump
5. AVOID Suit bid by dummy
6. DON'T LEAD Suit bid by declarer



B3 L07 Opening Leads NOTES

Choosing the card: Message to partner

Honours

A

Player does not have the card immediately greater in rank. E.g., Leading the King says that the Ace is NOT in this hand.

K

Player does have the card immediately lesser in rank. E.g., Leading the Queen says that the Jack is in this hand.

Q

J

Against no trumps promises the next two cards. E.g., Ace promises King Queen in this suit.

10

Low

2-6

(7)

This card is the fourth highest of a suit that contained at least four cards, with at least a ten at the top. Put the highest card you have on it and lead the suit back when you get a chance.

Mid suit

(7)

No interest in a return of this suit and no better idea. Hoping to find values in partner's hand.

8

This lead may be "top of nothing", or may be the first of a "Middle, Up, Down" (MUD) Sequence, generally the second highest card.

9



B3 L07 Opening Leads NOTES

When Partner has bid a suit

When partner bid a suit during the auction, it is your job to lead a card from that suit if you have one.

The choice of card will be quite different to the choice of card from an un-bid suit. You assume that partner has bid that suit because they have many cards in it, and because they have at least one honour in it.

You play the highest honour card in that suit that you have. You are working with partner to establish their suit.

This is one time you can lead an “unsupported” ace:

♥ A 10 2

Lead the Ace and follow it with the ten.

Against a slam contract (six or seven level)

Top priority is to win tricks. This is another time you can lead an unsupported ace!



Fourth Highest - Rule of Eleven

The Rule of Eleven can sometimes give the defender not on lead a useful insight into the distribution of the cards in the suit chosen by the defender on lead.

- Usually against No Trumps, but possibly against a suit contract, partner leads a low value card, typically 2-6.
- Subtract the value (number of “pips”) from 11. This is the number of cards in that suit, with a higher value than the card led, not held by partner.
- Count the number of cards, in that suit, above the opening lead value, in dummy. Subtract the count from your result from (2) above.
- Count the number of cards, in that suit, above the opening lead value, in your hand. Subtract the count from your result from (3) above.
- Now you know the number of cards, above the lead value, held by declarer. You may be able to work out which cards they are.



B3 L07 Opening Leads NOTES

Partner leads 6♥

Declarer

♥ ?

Dummy

♥ J 7 2

Your hand

♥ K 10 9 4

Partner has led his fourth highest Heart. Partner could have more Hearts but it's unlikely with declarer in No Trumps and probably having at least two. Partner has four, dummy has three, you have four, so declarer has two. This does look like a suit for the defence. Now use the Rule of Eleven.

1. Subtract the value of partner's card from 11. $11-6=5$. There are 5 cards in Hearts higher than the 6 in the other three hands at the table.
2. There are three Hearts in dummy, two are higher than the 6♥. Subtract three: $5-2=3$.
3. There are three Hearts in your hand and all are higher than the 6♥ : so declarer has two poor hearts, the 3♥ & 5♥. Partner has ♥A Q 8 6.

Play the King from your hand on partner's lead. Return the 10♥ for your side to take four tricks in Hearts.



Standard Leads

Tables of standard leads have two purposes:

1. Firstly, they contain sound choices shown to give the best results in most situations.
 - These choices are also understood by declarer, so declarer expects the defence to have agreed to use "standard leads"
 - However, some pairs may choose to agree that their opening lead cards have different messages; they do not have to announce this; but if they are using convention cards their non-standard lead agreements will be described on the cards.
2. Secondly, declarers can ask about the lead agreements that the defence have made; Standard Leads are a good shorthand here.
 - Assuming you are using standard leads, if asked what kind of lead style you use, you can say "Standard Leads".
 - Sometimes declarer may prompt you with: "Fourths and Seconds?"; This is part of standard leads. So, you can say Yes.
 - If you have specifically agreed on a non-standard lead, you must disclose it.
 - If you do not know what you have agreed, then just say "No partnership agreement".
 - If there are any more questions call the director.



B3 L07 Opening Leads NOTES

<u>Suit Holding</u>	<u>Vs</u> <u>NT</u>	<u>Vs</u> <u>Suit</u>	<u>Comments</u>
K Q J 4 Q J 10 4 J 10 9 4	K Q J	K Q J	Attacking and safe against both suit and no-trump contracts
K Q 4 2	2	K	With only two touching honours, lead fourth highest against a no-trump contract (hoping for more than one trick), but against a suit contract, be certain of making one trick
K Q 10 2 Q J 9 2	K Q	K Q	Two touching honours, missing the next, holding the third honour or nine.
A J 10 4 2 K J 10 4 2	J J	Avoid Avoid	Top of an interior sequence. Too likely to give a trick away against a suit contract, but an attractive, attacking lead against no trumps.



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<u>Suit Holding</u>	<u>Vs</u> <u>NT</u>	<u>Vs</u> <u>Suit</u>	<u>Comments</u>
A K J 5 2	K	A	In No Trumps, lead of the King asks partner to play the Q. Against suit, promise the K with the Ace lead.
A K 5 4 2 A K 4 2	4 2	A A	Ace from Ace King, against a suit contract. It will, if neither a singleton nor partner's bid suit, virtually guarantee holding the King
A K	Avoid	K	Against suit contract King followed by Ace shows a doubleton looking for a ruff
10 2	Avoid	10	The highest of any doubleton (except trumps)



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<u>Suit</u> <u>Holding</u>	<u>Vs</u> <u>NT</u>	<u>Vs</u> <u>Suit</u>	<u>Comments</u>
A 4 3 2 H 3 2	2 Avoid	A Avoid	If partner has bid this suit. Lead A, but prefer lowest card with any other unprotected honour.
8 7 4	7	7	With three worthless cards, lead the middle card, then the top, then the lowest ("MUD" = Middle, Up, Down). Signals holding of three or five and implies no interest.
8 7 5 4	7	7	Four worthless cards. Playing a relatively high card followed by a lower card signals a holding of two, four or six and no interest in the suit. (Fourth highest against no trumps will encourage partner to return.)