



Making a Plan

1. You are declarer or defending
2. The lead is turned over
3. Dummy is exposed on the table
4. NOW STOP AND THINK

What information do you have?

1. You have the cards in your hand
2. You have the cards in dummy
3. You have the opening lead
4. **You have the auction**

Did the opponents bid?

This tells you about shape and/or strength. Ask for the strength and length of overcalls, especially jump or alerted overcalls.

This might warn you about shortages or suggest which way to take a finesse.

Did the defence double?

Again, ask for the agreement. What are the strength and shape implications? What is in the doublers hand?



Dogs that don't bark!

Passed hands have less than twelve points and may be balanced. Keep a look out for the HCP as they are played.

Has any hand made a limit bid?

If the contract looks close you may choose to count the HCPs as they are played. In the end stages of the hand this may provide a clue as to the whereabouts of a missing honour.

Now consider which suit(s) to count

- ♣ Look at the hands and decide which suit is critical
- ♣ Are you looking to win tricks with the last card in the suit?
- ♣ Do you need to "ruff out" a suit?
- ♣ Do you need to avoid opponents ruffing?

How do you count the cards in a suit?

- ♣ You may count from 1 upwards as they are played
- ♣ You may subtract from 13 downwards as they are played
- ♣ You may work out how many the opposition have and count up to or down from that
- ♣ Do you imagine patterns? A trick of four; another of four; and then three leaves two to go.