

	♠ K Q J 4 ♥ 6 5 3 ♦ A 7 3 ♣ Q J 4	
♠ 7 3 2 ♥ A Q 7 4 2 ♦ J 6 2 ♣ 7 5	NORTH dummy WEST opener EAST responder SOUTH declarer	♠ A 6 5 ♥ 10 8 ♦ Q 10 9 ♣ 10 9 8 6 2
  	♠ 10 9 8 ♥ K J 9 ♦ K 8 5 4 ♣ A K 3	

As West, what do you lead against...

...a no trump contract:

W	N	E	S
			1NT
P	3NT	P	P
P			

...a trump contract:

W	N	E	S
			1♠
P	4♠	P	P
P			

Defence

The *Opening Lead*

Book Pages 77-83 sections 5.1-5.4

Book Pages 84-88 sections 5.7

Objectives

Opening leads:

- Choosing a *lead* against *no trump* contract
- Choosing a *lead* against a *trump* contract

Defence is hard - Good defenders communicate

Declarer has chosen *denomination* & *level*, their side has majority of *points*

Our side has to cooperate to win *tricks* and we cannot see *partner's hand*

Need to communicate to *partner* what you have (or don't have) to win *tricks*

Defenders win *tricks* in the same way as *declarer*:

- *top winners*
- *established winners*
- *length winners*

But you need to know where those *tricks* are...



Active vs. Passive leads

Active - A *lead* which looks to build the *defence's tricks* early and take *tricks* before they can get *discarded*

- Take the initiative
- Building *defensive tricks* early
- An element of risk

Passive - A safer *lead* which often aims to give nothing away and puts responsibility on *declarer* to find enough *tricks* to make their *contract*

- Little to no risk of giving a *trick* away
- Letting *declarer* make their mistakes
- Limiting *declarer's tricks*

Approach to choosing an *opening lead*

1. Is the *final contract* a *trump* or a *no-trump contract*
 2. Does the *auction* give you clues, did your partner *bid*
 3. Does the *contract / hand* require an *active* or *passive lead*
 4. Which *suit* gives you more *trick* taking options
 5. Which *card* within the *suit* - using *standard opening leads*...
- ...notice how we choose the *card* within the *suit* last

Standard opening leads

*Lead an honour = I **LOVE** my suit*

*Lead a low card = I **LIKE** my suit*

*Lead a high card = I **HATE** my suit*

‘Standard’ opening leads are so-called because on average they provide a good basis for your defence...

*Partner usually leads back the opener's **LOVE** or **LIKE** suit*

A

K

Q

J

10

9

8

7

6

5

4

3

2

Standard opening leads

***Standard leads* come with no guarantee
that they are the 'right' *lead***

**However when you've *defended* against
hundreds of *hands*, they offer the best
percentage of success**

A

K

Q

J

10

9

8

7

6

5

4

3

2

Suits to avoid

Unsupported aces against a suit contract

♠ A 6 4 2

A doubleton with one honour

♥ Q 4

Broken honour sequences against a suit contract

♣ A Q 8 4 or ♣ K J T 9

Suits bid by opponents

Priorities for *leading*

Best *leads* against *no trumps (NT)*

High priority *leads* vs NT

Which *suit* to lead?

- Spades

Which *card* to lead?

- ♠K

Why?

- *Top of a sequence of three consecutive cards* headed by an honour

♠ K Q J 8

♥ 7 6

♦ K 7 5 2

♣ J 4 3

High priority *leads* vs NT

Which *suit* to lead?

- Spades

Which *card* to lead?

- ♠Q

Why?

- *Top of an internal sequence, of three honours of which two are in sequence*

♠ A Q J 8 5

♥ 7 6

♦ K 7 5

♣ J 4 3

High priority *leads* vs NT

Which *suit* to lead?

- *Diamonds*

Which *card* to lead?

-  3

Why?

- *4th highest* (from one or two *honours*)
 - we make *tricks* from *length winners*, so our little *cards* will take *tricks*!

 K J 4

 7 6

 K J 5 3 2

 J 4 3

Without a good *lead* against *NT*...

Make a safe / *passive lead*

Low priority *leads* vs NT

2nd highest from 4 or more low cards

♠ 9 8 6 4 3

Middle from 3 low cards (*MUD*)

♥ 7 3 2

Top of *doubleton*

♦ 9 8 4

♣ 6 5 3 2

Leading vs 3NT - first which *suit*, then which *card*

Hand 1	Hand 2	Hand 3
♠ Q J 10 4 2 ♥ 8 5 ♦ 9 5 3 ♣ K J 7	♠ J 8 ♥ 9 7 6 4 2 ♦ Q 8 5 ♣ A 10 3	♠ Q 10 5 4 2 ♥ A 9 3 ♦ J 7 6 ♣ 8 5
♠ Q Top of a <i>sequence</i> of three headed by an <i>honour</i>	♥ 7 Second highest from a long <i>suit</i> but without an <i>honour</i>	♠ 4 Fourth highest from a long <i>suit</i> headed by one or two <i>honours</i>

Leading vs 3NT - first which *suit*, then which *card*

Hand 4	Hand 5	Hand 6
♠ Q J 8 2 ♥ K J 3 ♦ A 8 4 ♣ 9 7 5	♠ Q 4 ♥ Q 3 2 ♦ J 7 5 ♣ 9 8 6 3 2	♠ Q J 8 4 2 ♥ K Q 9 4 3 ♦ K ♣ 8 3
♠ 2 Fourth highest from a long <i>suit</i> headed by one or two <i>honours</i>	♣ 8 Second highest from a long <i>suit</i> but without an <i>honour</i>	♥ 4 Fourth highest from a long <i>suit</i> headed by one or two <i>honours</i>

Priorities for *leading*

Best *leads* against *Trump contracts*

Opening leads against Trump contracts

- Against a *trump contract* it's usually the first two *rounds* of a *suit* that are important
- Concentrate on the quick-*trick*-taking potential of a *suit* – i.e. *honours*
- Subsequent *rounds* tend to be less important, since there is an increasing probability that they are going to be *ruffed*

High priority *leads vs Trumps*

Which *suit* to lead against *hearts*?

- *Spades*

Which *card* to lead?

- ♠A

Why?

- *Top of a sequence of two or more card sequence* headed by the Ace and King

♠ A K 3 2

♥ 4

♦ 8 5 2

♣ J 8 7 6 4

High priority *leads vs Trumps*

Which *suit* to lead against *hearts*?

- *Diamonds*

Which *card* to lead?

-  2

Why?

- Singleton - provides *ruffing* opportunities

 4 3 2

 J 7 6 5 2

 2

 Q 7 4 3

High priority *leads vs Trumps*

Which *suit* to *lead* against *spades*?

- *Clubs*

Which *card* to *lead*?

-  *K*

Why?

- *Top of a sequence of two or more honours*

 4 3 2

 A Q J 5 2

 2

 K Q 7 4

High priority *leads vs Trumps*

Which *suit* to *lead* against *hearts*?

- *Clubs*

Which *card* to *lead*?

- ♣Q

Why?

- *Top of a sequence of two or more honours*
- No need to play the *singleton*, as your *hearts* are already *winners*

♠ 6 5 4 3 2

♥ A K

♦ 2

♣ Q J 7 4 3

Low priority leads vs Trumps

Which *suit* to lead against *hearts*?

- *Spades*

Which *card* to lead?

- ♠2

Why?

- Low from a *suit* with a single *honour* (risky)

♠ K 5 2

♥ 6 4

♦ 9 7 3 2

♣ 9 8 6 3

**Without a good *lead* against
Trumps...**

Make a safe / *passive lead*

Low priority *leads* vs *Trumps*

Top of a small *doubleton*

- e.g. against a heart *contract*

♠ 8 5

♥ 6 4 2

♦ J 9 8 3

♣ 10 8 6 3

Low priority *leads* vs *Trumps*

Second highest from four *cards*
without an *honour* or *MUD* from three

- e.g. against a heart *contract*

♠ 8 7 5 2

♥ 6 4

♦ 9 7 3

♣ 9 8 6 3

Leads to avoid vs Trumps

Unsupported Aces

Leading away from an Ace

Broken honour sequences

Leading away from a King

Suits bid by the opponents

Honour doubleton

Your lead against a heart contract?

- you could *lead a non-singleton trump*

♠ Q 5

♥ 6 4 2

♦ K J 8 3

♣ A 8 6 3

Pick your *lead* against 4♠ - first which *suit*, then which *card*

Hand 1	Hand 2	Hand 3
♠ 6 5 3 ♥ A J 6 4 2 ♦ Q 8 7 3 ♣ 10	♠ 8 7 ♥ Q 3 2 ♦ A 7 5 ♣ J 10 9 3 2	♠ J 10 4 2 ♥ 8 7 5 ♦ K 10 6 ♣ A Q 3
♣ 10 <i>A singleton lead</i>	♣ J <i>Top of a sequence headed by an honour</i>	♥ 7 <i>Middle Up Down (MUD)</i>

Choosing the correct *suit* to *lead*

Bridge is a context game

Opening leads are no different

Look at the *auction*

South's *hand*

♠ Q 9 7 6

♥ K 10 7 6

♦ 9 6 2

♣ Q 4

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♣	Pass	3NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

On the *uncontested auction* 1NT (Pass) 3NT, we would normally *lead a heart*. Having gained more information from the *auction*, we now can stray from our list of priorities knowing a *heart lead* into *dummy's* likely five won't be productive, a *spade* and a *club* have similar downsides therefore the *auction* points us towards *leading the unbid suit*, a *diamond lead*, *middle* from three so ♦ 6 looks to be the best *lead*.

Look at the *auction*

South's *hand*

♠ A 7 6 4

♥ K 10 7 6

♦ 9

♣ Q J 4 3

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♣	Pass	3NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

A slightly stronger *hand* but now only one *diamond* makes the *diamond lead* less appealing, *partner* won't have enough to beat 3NT even with a smattering of *diamond honours* without a *2nd entry* and there aren't enough *HCP* in the *pack* for that. The 25 *HCP* from the opponents and our 10 *HCP* only leaves *partner* with 5 at most. A *low club lead* is now the best *lead* as a *heart*, *spade* and *diamond leads* look to not be fruitful.

Which *suit to lead*?

South's *hand*

♠ Q 3 2

♥ Q J 5 3

♦ 10 8 4 2

♣ 7 6

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

- A *trump lead* will help declarer find the queen
- A *heart lead* may promote tricks, but dummy has 4+ hearts so we might be setting up dummy's winners
- A *club lead* may allow ruffs later, but taking a ruff with ♠Qxx might swap a natural spade trick for a ruff
- A *passive diamond* is less likely to give anything away

Which *suit to lead*?

South's *hand*

♠ Q 3

♥ 10 9 5 3

♦ 10 8 4 2

♣ A K 2

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♥	1♠	3NT	Pass
Pass	Pass	Pass	

- East *bidding* 3NT over your *partner's* 1♠ *overcall* suggests at least one *stopper* in Spades in *declarer's hand*
- Your Hearts and Diamonds don't look interesting, your Clubs have two *winners*, but only two *honours* not three
- But your *partner bid* Spades (a clue!) *Leading* the ♠Q may knock out *declarer's stopper*, then your Clubs allow *entries* back to your *hand* to *lead* another Spade to *partner's* original 5+ card spade holding

Quiz...

You are West on *lead* against the *final contract*. What do you *lead*?

♠ 9 7

♥ K 10 4 3 2

♦ 9 7 3

♣ A Q 2

SOUTH	NORTH
1NT	3NT

♥ 3 4th highest

SOUTH	NORTH
	1♥
2♣	2♦
3NT	

♠ 9 the *unbid suit*

SOUTH	NORTH
1♥	1♠
1NT	3NT

♦ 7 *MUD*

SOUTH	NORTH
1♥	1♠
2♦	2♠
2NT	3NT

♠ 9 *passive*

You are West on *lead* against the *final contract*. What do you *lead*?

♠ A 8 7

♥ 7

♦ K Q 2

♣ 9 7 6 4 3 2

SOUTH	NORTH
1NT	3NT

♣7 the longest *suit*

SOUTH	NORTH
1♠	3♠

♥7 the *singleton*

SOUTH	NORTH
1NT	6NT

♦K to set up a 2nd trick

SOUTH	NORTH
1♥	4♥

♣7 passive

You are West on *lead* against the *final contract*. What do you *lead*?

♠ Q J 10 9

♥ 8 5 4

♦ A 8 6 4 3

♣ 2

SOUTH	NORTH
1NT	3NT

♠Q top of a sequence or ♦4

SOUTH	NORTH
1NT	3♠
3NT	6NT

♠Q a solid suit

SOUTH	NORTH
1♠	4♠

♠Q cut down cross ruffing

SOUTH	NORTH
1♥	4♥

♣2 the singleton

Recap: *Leads vs NT*

High priority:

Top of a *sequence* - three *consecutive cards* headed by an *honour*: K Q J 8

Top of an *internal sequence* - three *honours*, two are in *sequence*: A Q J 8 5

4th highest - from one or two *honours*: K J 5 3 2

Low priority:

2nd highest - from 4 or more low cards: 9 8 6 4 3

Middle from 3 low cards (*MUD*): 9 8 4

Top of *doubleton*: 5 4

Recap: *Leads vs Trumps*

High priority:

Top of a *sequence* - 2 or more card *sequence* headed by the Ace & King: A K 3 2

Singleton: 5

Top of a *sequence* - 2 or more *honours*: K Q 7 4

Low priority:

Low from a *suit* with a single *honour* (risky): K 5 2

Top of a small *doubleton*: 8 5

Second highest from four cards without an *honour* or *MUD*: 8 7 5 2 or 9 8 4

Recap: Opening Lead

Look at the *auction*, did your *partner bid*?

Does the *contract* or *hand* require an *active* or *passive lead*

Choose the *suit* to *lead*

Choose the standard card in that suit (**LOVE**, **LIKE**, **HATE**)

Without a good *lead*, make a *passive lead*

The 10 is **not** an *honour*, unless in an (*internal*) sequence:

◦ J 10 x x or K J 10 4 or Q 10 9 7 the 10 is an *honour*

◦ 10 9 x x the 10 is **not** an *honour*

A
K
Q
J
10
9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2