

Opening Leads and Partner's Signals

Okay, it's your lead and you look at your hand and go, "Good Grief!!!! What do I lead?????"
Let's look at the best opening leads first!!!

Best Leads

1. Ace from AK ~ Lead of the Ace **PROMISES** the king unless it is partner's suit!!!
2. With AK doubleton, lead the King then Ace. This lead specifically shows a doubleton!!!
3. From KQJ ~ Lead of the King **PROMISES** the queen unless it is partner's suit
4. Partner's suit especially if you have singleton in a suit contract. (Talk to your partner!! Does she want you to **ALWAYS** lead the top card in her suit?????? Some do!!!)

Better Leads

1. Top honor from two touching honors KQxx, QJxx . Why not lead the lower honor??? Partner has no way to know that you have the honor **ABOVE** what you have led; however, if you lead the top honor, you **PROMISE** the lower touching honor!!!!!!
2. Lead the top of an interior sequence (K J 10 9 5)
3. MUD (Middle, Up, Down ~ provided this is your agreement) This is especially good when you have three skuzzy cards in a suit!!! Authors disagree on whether this is best!!!

Worst Leads

1. Unsupported Ace (A 9 6 4)
2. Suit headed by singleton honor (K 9 8)
3. Doubleton with an honor unless it is partner's suit, then lead honor (Q 7)
4. Doubletons are worst lead in bridge!!! Lead them **ONLY** if in partner's suit or trump!!! Some authors recommend leading doubletons, but one author said, "Lead a doubleton **ONLY** if it's a singleton!!!"
5. Singleton trump (This is desperation!!! Looks like you've got "stuff" in all the other suits!!!!!!)
6. Singleton Honor ~ such as a singleton King!!!! There are those (usually not the greatest of bridge players) who believe you **ALWAYS** lead a singleton regardless of size!!!! Don't believe it!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

One Golden Rule in Bridge: NEVER underlead an ace in a suit contract!!!!

Best Advice: Listen to the bidding and before leading try to visualize declarer's hand and plan your play.

How can your partner tell you that she likes or doesn't like your lead???? By what she plays on your lead!!!! This is called Carding!!!!

As partner, your first priority is to give **ATTITUDE**!!!! What does this mean???? Do you like the suit or not!!! Then find a way to let partner **KNOW** how you feel about her lead!!!!!!

We will concentrate on "standard" today!!!!!!

Concentrate on Attitude Signals

- Attitude signals are given **ONLY** when *partner leads*. (Talk to partner!!! Do you do attitude each time partner leads or **ONLY** on the opening lead?) Trick Question!!!!
- A high card indicates you like the suit and would like partner to continue if you are playing “standard.” (If you play “upside-down” then you would play low if you like the lead and high when you don’t like it!!!!!!!)
- A low card means that you cannot help with the suit.
- Make signals as clear as possible.
- Choose the **highest** card you can afford as an **encouraging** signal.
- Use the **lowest** card possible when giving **discouraging** signals.
- When figuring out partner’s signal, look at dummy, your hand and consider what cards partner might possibly have.
- Watch the spot cards in all four suits. Yes, this is difficult!!! The best players can do this and since you are the best ~ you, too, can do it!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Which spot card is high or low?

- Many think that a seven or higher is encouraging and the two, three or four are discouraging and the five and six are neutral, but Partner can only play the cards she has.
- Suppose she has Q53 in the suit you lead? The only encouraging card she can play is the five!! Is it encouraging or discouraging? What can you do to decide? Look at your hand and dummy!!!! You can often determine if that 5 is encouraging or not!!!!
- To discourage, play the lowest card you possess in the suit ~ even if it seems to be a relatively high card.
- Do not signal with a card that could be a trick.
- Partner leads the King and you have A1053. The ten may become a trick and if you play it, this could cost a trick in the suit. Before you play, look closely at the dummy!!!

Now let’s look at leads: What do you lead from the following?

- | | | |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| a) Q 8 3 | b) A K 7 5 | c) K J 10 9 |
| d) Q J 10 9 | e) 9 7 4 2 | f) J 6 2 |
| g) A K | h) J 10 9 4 | i) 8 7 6 |

Your partner leads the high honor card in parenthesis. What do you play from the following card combinations?

- | | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| a) J 10 8 5 (K) | b) 9 7 2 (K) | c) Q 10 7 6 (A) |
| d) A 6 4 3 (K) | e) Q J 4 2 (A) | f) J 10 9 5 (K) |
| g) K 9 2 (Q) | h) 10 6 5 4 2 (Q) | i) 10 6 5 (K) |

❖ Playing against four spades, partner leads the K♥.

Dummy	Your Hand
♠ A103	♠ J74
♥ 965	♥ J83
♦ KQ94	♦ A1083
♣ K95	♣ A82

What do you play on partner's K♥? _____

If you had the 873, what would you play? _____

If you had the 83, what would you play? _____

❖ Playing against four spades, partner leads the K♥.

Dummy	Your Hand
♠ A103	♠ 974
♥ 9	♥ J83
♦ KQ942	♦ A1083
♣ K954	♣ AQ2

Who has the A♥? _____

What card do you play? _____

What does your card say? _____

Extra Credit

Partner leads the K♥. You have the A 2. What card do you play and why?????????
