

OPENING LEADS

Your decision for the opening lead is in two parts: (a) what suit (b) what card.

If partner has bid, you normally lead that suit; small from 3 or 4 to an honour, highest from doubleton honour and highest if no honour. This holds for both suit contracts and no-trump contracts. However if against a suit contract you hold 3 or more to the A in your partner's suit, it is better to lead the A or, perhaps, to lead another suit if you suspect that the K might be on your right. If partner has not bid you may be influenced by the bidding. Unless you decide to lead trumps, you may be guided in your suit choice by Andrew Robson's rough order of desirability (next page) but this is a very rough guide only.

Against suit contracts one normally leads (i) the top of 2 or more touching high cards (ii) small from 3 to an honour and 4th highest from 4 or more to an honour, (iii) second highest from a suit of 3 or more with no honour (but with 3 small, follow with highest second time- MUD leads). (iv) top of a doubleton (v) highest of partner's suit if you don't have an honour. Exception: from AK bare, lead the K first. Also, lead the top of an interior sequence (i.e. J from K J 10 (x) and 10 from Q 10 9). There is a guide to standard leads on the next page.

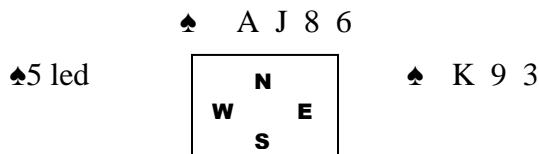
Against no trumps, lead your longest and strongest suit; top of a sequence of 3 honours or 2 honours with the next but one card below (i.e. Q from QJ 9 x and K from KQ10x) and top of an internal sequence (as above). Otherwise you lead the fourth highest

What can be deduced? The opening lead gives information to both the defence and the declarer but it is generally recognized that the information is usually more valuable to the defence. Here are some points that follow from standard leads (they are fairly obvious but the difficulty is to remember them and to act on them!).

1. The lead of a small card shows the leader has an honour (unless it is a singleton)
2. The lead of an honour promises that the leader has the card below (unless it is H x)
3. The lead of a high spot card shows that the leader has nothing in that suit
4. If a suit has been bid by the leader's partner and the lead is another suit, it might be because the leader has the A (or the leader is void in the suit!).

Rule of 11. When the lead is the 4th highest (which is the most usual lead against a NT contract) deducting the number of the card from 11 is the total of the cards higher than the lead held by the other three players.

Example 1. West leads 5♠. East can see that declarer has no card higher than the 5 so if declarer plays low then the ♠9 will win



Example 2. North leads the ♠5. West as declarer plays the 2 from dummy and South plays the J. Declarer sees that South has no other card higher than the 5 so can safely finesse the ♠10.



STANDARD LEADS

In the table below, the underlined card is the NORMAL lead from a suit that partner has not bid.

Against suit contracts				
A <u>K</u>	<u>A</u> K X	<u>K</u> Q 10	<u>K</u> Q X (X X)	K <u>J</u> 10
K <u>10</u> 9	<u>Q</u> J 10	<u>Q</u> J X	<u>J</u> 10 X	10 <u>X</u> X
<u>10</u> 9 X	9 <u>8</u> 7 X	10 X X <u>X</u>	H X X <u>X</u> X	H X X <u>X</u> X X
H X X <u>X</u>	H X <u>X</u>	<u>X</u> X	X <u>X</u> X	X <u>X</u> X X
Against NT contracts				
<u>A</u> K X (X)	A <u>J</u> 10	<u>K</u> Q 10	<u>K</u> Q X <u>X</u> (X)	K <u>J</u> 10 (X X)
K <u>10</u> 9	<u>Q</u> J 10	<u>Q</u> J X	<u>J</u> 10 X	<u>10</u> X X
10 X X <u>X</u>	<u>10</u> 9 X	9 8 7 <u>X</u>	H X <u>X</u>	H X X <u>X</u> X X
H X X <u>X</u> X	H X X <u>X</u>	<u>X</u> X	<u>X</u> X X	X X X <u>X</u>

In the above, H stands for any honour card. However, you should never underlead an ACE against a suit contract (exceptions to this are too few to consider!).

Leading partner's suit. Here you normally lead your highest card in the suit, except if you have 3 (or more) to an honour you lead a low card.

LEADS.

Andrew Robson's rough mark out of 10 about how desirable it is to choose a suit to lead from against a suit contract (when not leading partner's suit, when not deciding to lead trumps and when there is no other indication). Lead the underlined card.

<u>A</u> K x x (x)	10
<u>x</u>	9
<u>K</u> Q J (x)	8
<u>K</u> Q x (x)	7
<u>Q</u> J 10 x	7
<u>Q</u> J x (x)	6
<u>x</u> x	5 (ish)
x <u>x</u> x	5 (ish)
Q x x <u>x</u>	4
<u>J</u> x	3
Q x	3
K x x <u>x</u>	2
<u>A</u> x x x	0