

PLAYING A SUIT CONTRACT

1. **Listen to opponents' bids.**
2. **Observe the opening lead.**
3. **Plan your offense:**
 - a. Consider number of tricks you can lose.
 - b. Count losers in the hand with the longest trump suit, the *master hand*. Include losses needed to promote high cards.
 - c. Analyze ways to eliminate extra losers:
 - Ruff losers from master hand using trump from the *support hand*.
 - Finesse opponents' high cards.
 - Discard losers from master hand on extra winners in the *support hand*.
4. **Execute the plan:**
 - If your plan does not include ruffs, draw trump early to protect against a bad split of missing cards.
 - If your plan uses a crossruff to gain entries back into the master hand, be sure to take winners in your side suits early.
 - To promote high cards, lead the high card from the short side first.
 - To finesse, lead toward the card that you want to finesse.
 - Be careful to preserve necessary entries to get to the dummy or get back to your hand.
 - Avoid the temptation to try for an overtrick unless the odds are definitely in your favor or a failure will not defeat the contract.
5. **Watch defenders play.**
6. **Keep track of cards played.**

DEFENSIVE PLAY GUIDELINES

- Return partner's opening lead.
- Play second hand low.
- Play third hand high but only as high as necessary.
- Cover an honor with an honor.
- Lead through broken strength toward weakness.
- Communicate with attitude and count signals.

DEFENSIVE SIGNALS

LEAD BY	FOLLOWING SUIT	DISCARDING
Partner	1. Attitude 2. Count	1. Attitude
Declarer	1. Count 2. Suit Prefer	1. Attitude 2. Suit Prefer

Attitude Signals

Encourage: High card (followed by low)

Discourage: Low card (followed by high)

Count Signals

Even Count: High card (followed by low)

Odd Count: Low card (followed by high)

Suit Preference Signals

Higher Rank: High card

Lower Rank: Low card

Some partnerships prefer *reverse* (or *upside down*) signals.

DECLARER PLAY CHEAT SHEET

Last Revised on April 29, 2019

OPENING LEADS AGAINST NO TRUMP

- Develop a long suit by driving out declarer's stoppers in the suit.

A Card from Partner's Suit:

- ✓ Top of a doubleton.
- ✓ Top of touching honors.
- ✓ Top of three or four small.
- ✓ Low from three or four with an honor.

A Card from Leader's Suit:

- ✓ Top of connecting honors in a three card sequence or broken sequence. *Promises the next lower card in the suit.*
- ✓ Fourth highest card in your longest and strongest suit. *Promises an honor.*
- ✓ Top of nothing (usually a 9, 8, or 7).

OPENING LEADS AGAINST SUITS

- Take winners in long suit(s) early.
- Play short suit(s) early to setup a ruff.
- Lead trump to reduce declarer's ruffing power.

A Card from Partner's Suit:

- ✓ The Ace if you have it.
- ✓ Top of a doubleton.
- ✓ Top of touching honors.
- ✓ Otherwise lead low.

A Card from Leader's Suit:

- ✓ Top of connecting honors. *Promises the next lower card in the suit.*
- ✓ Fourth highest card in your longest and strongest suit. *Promises an honor.*
- ✓ Top of a doubleton. *Starts a high-low signal.*
- ✓ A singleton.
- ✓ A trump.

PLAYING A NO TRUMP CONTRACT

1. **Listen to opponents' bids.**
2. **Observe the opening lead.**
3. **Plan your offense:**
 - a. Consider number of tricks you must win.
 - b. Count sure winners in the combined hands.
 - c. Analyze ways to develop needed winners:
 - Promote high cards.
 - Develop long suits.
 - Finesse opponents' high cards.
4. **Execute the plan:**
 - *If you must lose tricks, lose them early.*
 - It is often best to hold up your ace in opponents long suit.
 - If you have a solid long suit and do not need to preserve entries, run the suit early to force opponents to discard from other suits.
 - Develop a long suit early so you can run the remainder of the suit to force opponents to discard other suits.
- To promote high cards, lead the high card from the short side first.
- To finesse, lead toward the card that you want to finesse.
- Be careful to preserve necessary entries to get to the dummy or get back to your hand.
- Avoid the temptation to try for an overtrick unless the odds are definitely in your favor or a failure will not defeat the contract.
5. **Watch defenders play.**
6. **Keep track of cards played.**

MISSING CARD DISTRIBUTION

Most of the time, missing cards will divide unevenly but as close to even as possible.

MISS	MOST LIKELY		NEXT LIKELY	
	SPLIT	PERC	SPLIT	PERC
3	2-1	78%	3-0	22%
4	3-1	50%	2-2	41%
5	3-2	68%	4-1	28%
6	4-2	48%	3-3	35%
7	4-3	62%	5-2	31%

DECLARER'S RULE OF 11

When left hand opponent's opening lead is fourth highest:

- a. Subtract size of lead card from eleven
- b. Subtract number of higher cards you see in dummy
- c. Subtract number of higher cards you see in your hand

The result is the number of higher cards in your right hand opponent's hand.

A negative number means lead was top of nothing.

WHEN TO FINESSE

If bidding does not reveal likely location of defenders' high cards, there is:

- 50% chance 1 finesse takes 1 trick
- 75% chance 2 finesses takes 1 trick
- 25% chance 2 finesses takes 2 tricks

If defender made a bid, chance is:

- higher if bidder plays second hand
- lower if bidder plays fourth hand

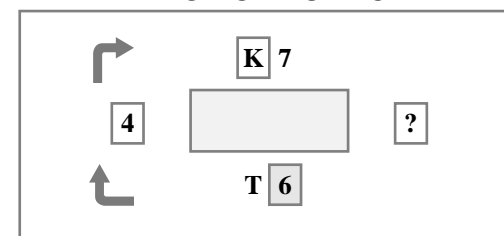
Make a finesse regardless of chance if you:

- ✓ Can not make contract without finesse.
- ✓ Can not lose contract if finesse fails.

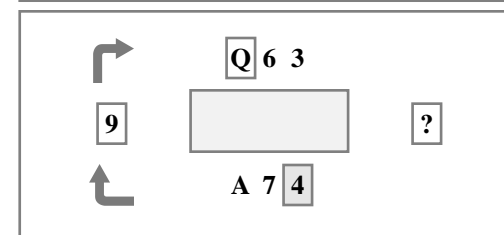
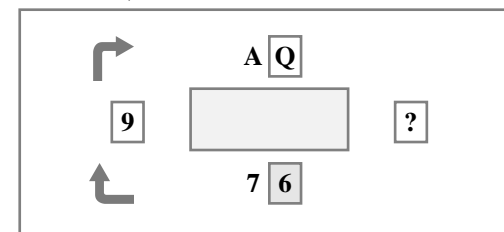
FINESSING HIGH CARDS

Lead toward the card you want to finesse.

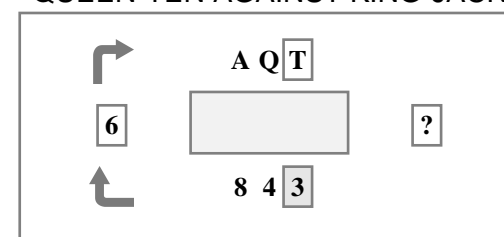
KING AGAINST ACE



QUEEN AGAINST KING



QUEEN-TEN AGAINST KING-JACK



JACK-TEN AGAINST KING-QUEEN

