

DEFENCE 13 - WHICH CARD TO LEAD

These suggestions are GENERAL and well recognized in basic bridge. There are exceptions and you always listen to the bidding. And you are entitled to come to different agreements with your partner.

1. With a doubleton, lead the top card:

K6, 98, 42.

2. With 3 cards to an honour (an honour is A, K, Q, J or 10), lead the lowest card. Low cards tell partner you have an honour:

K62, Q32, J94.

3. With 4 or more cards to an honour, lead the 4th highest. We lead the 4th highest because partner can subtract the value of that card from 11 and find out how many cards higher than that card are in the other 3 hands.

K642, Q984, J8732

4. With 3 cards in a sequence headed by an honour, lead the top honour. This top honour tells partner you have the honour below:

KQJ, QJ10, J10942, 10984

5. With 2 cards in a sequence headed by an honour, a single gap and then the next lower card, still lead the top honour:

KQ104, QJ9843, J108, 109732

6. With an internal sequence (An honour, a gap, another honour with the card immediately below) you lead the top of the internal sequence:

KJ104, Q10965, K1096

7. With 2 cards in a sequence headed by an honour:

(a) In No Trumps, lead a low card/4th highest. This is done to try to run the suit smoothly between you and your partner:

KQ32, J10742, 10943

(b) In a suit contract, lead the highest honour. This is to make sure you get all the tricks you are entitled to in the suit before declarer starts ruffing:

KQ32, J10742, 10943

8. With 3 little cards it is up to you and partner to decide what you lead. Amongst strong bridge players there are advocated for all 3 cards! With my partners:

(a) We lead the top card in No Trumps. This tells partner we have no honours in the suit
984, 632, 843

(b) In a suit contract, we lead the middle first, then the top then the bottom (MUD). By playing the middle then a higher card, partner knows you don't have a doubleton and can't ruff the next trick:

984, 632, 843

(c) When leading my partner's bid suit in a suit contract, I prefer top to tell partner I have no honours. And hopefully partner can tell that I have lower cards from looking at declarer's card and thus can't get a ruff.

9. With 4 or more little cards, most players lead the 2nd highest, followed by the 3rd highest, then the 4th highest etc. This tells partner you don't have an honour, and partner should notice lots of little cards missing and realize you have them and can't ruff the 3rd round (ie you don't have a doubleton):

98532, 8754, 96432