

WHICH CARD TO PLAY FROM AN HONOUR SEQUENCE

An Honour sequence is a sequence of cards headed by an honour (A, K, Q, J or 10)

As Defender on Lead:

As the defender on lead, you normally lead top of a sequence (K from KQ, Q from QJ, J from J10 etc). This is called, "Leading with a Leader". It tells your partner that you have the card immediately below the one you have led. So, from this holding as West:

	432	
KQJ65		98
	A106	

You would lead the K.

As Defender Following to Partner's Lead:

When you are the defender following to partner's lead, you should play the lowest of a sequence. This is called "Following with a Follower". It tells your partner:

1. You don't have the card immediately below the one you have played, and
2. You might have some of the honours immediately above the card you have played.

So, from this holding as East:

	432	
98		KQ1065
	AJ7	

After partner leads the 9, you should play the Q. When declarer wins the ace, partner knows you don't have the J, but might have the king.

Alternatively, on this holding as East:

	432	
98		K10765
	AQJ	

You are forced to play your K (third player plays high) and the fact you didn't play your Q tells partner declarer has this card.

Sometimes you can place every card in the suit with this process:

	1065	
Q7432		8
	K	

You lead the 3, 5 from dummy, partner contributes the 8 and declarer wins with the K.

Partner must have the 9 (otherwise declarer would have won with this card)

Partner must have the J (otherwise declarer would have won with this card)
Declarer must have the A (otherwise partner would have played third player
plays high)

As Declarer:

Generally, you should play the top of a sequence. If you play lower or the lowest card you normally let the defenders work out that you have the remaining cards in the sequence:

	432	
65		A98
	KQJ107	

As the South declarer, you lead the 2 from dummy, East ducks playing the 8. You should play the K, leaving the defenders unsure where the Q and J are. If you play the 10, East knows you have the KQJ because their partner did not win the trick with one of these cards.

Similarly, when drawing trumps avoid showing off with little cards:

	432	
65		87
	AKQJ109	

As the South declarer, you shouldn't draw trumps by playing the 9 then the 10. The defenders know you have the AKQJ because their partner is not winning the tricks with any of these cards. Better to play the AK and leave the defender's wondering if partner might have the Q.

There are exceptions as declarer. A well known one is where you are worried about ruffs. You might lead a low card to induce a defender not to take their A and give partner a ruff.

	432	
A65		87
	KQJ109	

If I'm worried about a ruff in another suit, as the South declarer I might lead the trump 9 rather than the K to induce the West hand to duck with the A for fear of dropping an honour in their partner's hand.