

Ref	Priority	The cards highlighted in <b>red</b> are the standard leads. The <b>green</b> highlights show Rusinow and Journalist leads.	E.g.
<b>No Trumps - choice of SUIT</b>			
1	1	A suit that you might be able to establish, usually longest (and ideally strongest), and unbid by opponents. When choosing this or the next option, remember the goal! <i>Establish your team's best suit.</i>	
2	2	Your partner's long / strong suit (unbid by opponents).	
3	3	Suit unbid by opposition.	
4	4	<i>If desperate....</i> a suit bid by LHO (your opponents will prefer to play 4th player high, not second player).	
<b>No Trumps - choice of CARD</b>			
11	1	Top of sequence, promising 3 honours. This is the best type of NT defence. K promises Q and one more honour, not A. (In suits, 2 touching honours is enough, see 48).	KQJ84
12	1	..similar. Q promises J and one more honour, not K could be A.	QJT5
13	1	..similar. Q promises J + one more honour, and denies K. Note: leading away from A allowed here!!	AQJ7
14	1	..similar. J promises 10 + one more honour (denies Q).	KJTxx
15		..similar. You can under-lead an Ace when trying to establish your suit in NT. Note: although it can still make RHO (Declarer)'s King good, if he has it.	AQJ7
16	2	4th highest, promising <i>exactly</i> 1 or 2 honours. Allows partner to use rule of 11. Two honours OK.	QJ853
17	3	4th highest, promising <i>exactly</i> 1 or 2 honours. Allows partner to use rule of 11. One honour not great.	Q7432
18		High-ish, denying any honours.	98532
42		Take your winners early when defending Slam contracts. But see 42b	A74
43		Take your winners early, if you might never get the lead again.	
44		My A, promising the K, denying AK doubleton, and hoping you've got Qxx(x), so you can win the 3rd round. Play higher x to encourage leader to continue. (AKQ a little rare in NT, & no ruffing options, see S44).	AKx(xx)
<b>Suit contract - choice of SUIT</b>			
21	1	Your partner's suit (unless you have a good reason not to). Only lead an honour if top of 2.	
22	2	A suit you know your partner is likely to be void in.	
23	2	<b>Play trumps</b> if (1) opposition need to ruff, (2) as low risk lead, (3) if you both bid another suit or if (4) they overstretched themselves in bidding. (But don't if you don't have either only one, or Qxx, see 36).	
24	2	<b>A trump</b> if dummy plans to ruff. It removes their supply of tricks to be won in the short hand.	
25	2	<b>A trump</b> if all the other suits are risky. It gives you a chance to assess the dummy.	
26	2	<b>A trump</b> against a sacrifice. They've spoiled your contract, and are probably hoping to limit the damage by cross-ruffing, so try wasting the trumps.	
27	2	<b>A trump</b> when you and partner both bid the same suit. If you hold the Ace, can you be sure he has the King? Leading a trump might be safer.	
28	3	<b>A trump</b> if declarers have stretched themselves for game, & again are likely to resort to ruffing.	
29	2	With a probable long suit in dummy, lead one of the other 2 aggressively (before they get a chance to slough your short suit winners).	
30	2	Lead through beatable strength. I.e. partner might be sitting on top of their strength.	
31	3	Force declarer to trump in hand when known to be void. Trumping in the long hand gains no extras.	
32	3	An unbid suit. It's a sign of weakness.	
33	3	A suit that you might be able to establish, allowing for shortages. No point doing it if they'll trump as soon as you've done it.	
34	3	Singleton, provided you have some small trumps which you don't think will otherwise win.	x
35	4	Don't under-lead an Ace, when playing suits. You'll set up their King instead of killing it later.	
36	4	Trump lead: <b>Don't lead trumps</b> with only 1, or Qxx. If you have only one, partner often has 4.	x, Qxx
37	4	Don't lead a minimally protected suit. Sometimes a Qx will win 50% of the time if they play a finesse.	
4	4	<i>If desperate....</i> a suit bid by LHO (your opponents will prefer to play 4th player high, not second player).	
38	4	Another suit, when all the others have problems.	
<b>Suit contract - choice of CARD</b>			
41		Take your winners early, if opposition are likely to be short.	
42a		Take your winners early when defending Slam contracts, if enemy probably short	A76543
42b		Don't lead Ace against Slam <i>if enemy not short</i> - you lose chance to beat the King to your right.	AQx
43		Take your winners early, if you might never get the lead again.	
44		My A, promising the K, denying AK doubleton, and hoping you've got Qxx(x), or xx, so you can either win or ruff the 3rd round. Co-defender <i>play your higher x to encourage another lead of same suit.</i>	AKx(xx)
45		My K, promising Q, hoping you've got A, or Jxxx(x), or xxx, so you can win or ruff the 4th round. Partner please play your higher x to encourage, <b>BUT</b> King lead against a Slam promises A, and asks for <i>count</i> . (Ambiguous with AK only, unless you use the <b>Rusinow convention - partnership agreement need</b> ).	KQx(xx)
46		King then Ace, promising AK doubleton. (But ambiguous with KQx, see 45 & 48, unless you use the <b>Rusinow convention</b> ).	AK
47		My Q denies K, promises J, maybe partner you have the 10, or better still K/A, so we can at least win the 3rd round. Tell me, with a (legal) encouraging signal.	QJx(xx)
48		Top of touching honours, promising at least 2 honours. (In NT, 3 honours promised, see 11). The <b>Rusinow convention</b> resolves ambiguity with AK, see 46, by requiring the lower of touching honours, and is now considered standard by some.	KQ(xxx)
49		Lower of single or non-touching honours. Unless you use the <b>Journalist convention</b> - and don't lead this suit.	KJx
50		My J, promising either the 10 or the King / better. (The <b>Journalist convention</b> resolves the ambiguity).	J10x(xx)
51		Top of nothing, denying any good cards. Beware, 9 lead implies singleton, see 55, 56.	9843
52		Top of doubleton, ONLY IF knowing that you have a high chance of winning these two, and then leading a 3rd time.	xx
53		Don't lead a singleton A, (it promises the K). Partner will lead back to you later, expecting your King.	lone-Ace
54		Trump lead: lowest. (Leading trumps is good with 2-4 low ones). <b>Ax, Axx, Kxx, xxxx, xxx, xx</b>	
55		MUD. Middle-Up-Down. With nothing in the suit, play the middle card first. <i>Can't play a lower one next, or your partner will think you had only 2.</i> (So 9 implies possible singleton, see 56).	975
56		Lowest of 3 with single honour. Since 10 is an honour, don't lead 9 as "MUD" (55), or "top of nothing" (51).	K85
57		4th highest, promising 1 or 2 honours. Can't use rule of 11 in suit contract, as the lead is ambiguous.	K9432
58		If partner doubled, he probably wasn't relying on his own suit, & is more likely to have high cards elsewhere	

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