



Making a Plan

1. You are declarer in a Suit Contract
2. The lead is turned over
3. Dummy is exposed on the table
4. NOW STOP, THINK AND MAKE A PLAN.

Look at your trump holding

- ♣ How many trumps? How many do opponents have? What is the likely split?
- ♣ Are there missing honours in the trump suit? How should the cards be played?
- ♣ How many winners are there in trumps?
- ♣ Are there any reasons to delay clearing trumps? (The answer is usually "no")



Anticipating the Trump Split

Odd number of missing trumps

e.g. 3,5, 7,

they are most likely to divide in an equitable way between the defenders' hands

e.g. five missing trumps are most likely to split 3 in one hand and 2 in the other (but they won't always)

Even number of missing trumps

e.g. 2,4,6

they are most likely to divide in an unequal way

e. g. six missing trumps are most likely to split 4 in one hand and 2 in the other (but they won't always)

<u>Opponents have:</u>	<u>Distribution</u>	<u>% Odds</u>
7	4-3	62
	5-2	30
	6-1	7
	7-0	1
6	3-3	35
	4-2	48
	5-1	15
	6-0	2
5	3-2	68
	4-1	28
	5-0	4
4	2-2	41
	3-1	50
	4-0	9
3	2-1	78
	3-0	22
2	1-1	52
	2-0	48



Look at each side suit

- ♣ How many winners in each? And Losers?
- ♣ Missing honours? How to play the suit?
- ♣ Can short suits be cleared so you can trump?

Look at the lead

- ♣ An honour promises the next e.g. King promises the Queen
- ♣ A low value card invites return, suggesting an honour
- ♣ Middle ranking card may be a singleton, or top of a doubleton, looks for strength in partner's hand
- ♣ A trump suggests reluctance to lead from any side suit, may be nothing there, may be some unsupported honours



Planning the Play

In most trump contracts the plan is:

1. Get the lead

You may win the first trick, but often it's the second or third

2. Play enough rounds in trumps to take away all the opponents trumps

This is to stop the opponents using their trumps on our side suits

3. Win available tricks in the other suits

4. Exit



Clearing Trumps (Get the kids off the street)

Ten Trumps with top three honours

Dummy

A 10 9 8

Declarer

K Q 7 6 5 4

- ♣ 10 trumps, including A, K, Q;
- ♣ Opponents have 3; Likely split 1:2 clear in 2 rounds leaving 6 for you
- ♣ Worst case the split is 0:3, clear 3 rounds, the J has to drop, leaving 4 for you
- ♣ (If Ace missing, play the same.
Don't delay clearing because you have to lose a trick or two)

When honours are missing8 Trumps, King MissingDummy

A 8 5 4

Declarer

Q J 10 7

Declarer & Dummy have eight trumps, missing the King;
Defence has 5 trumps, including the King

The finesse gives the only chance of avoiding losing a trick to the King. It works 50% of the time.

Play the Queen from Declarer towards the Ace, make sure you spot the King if played and cover it with the Ace, if not, play low from Dummy and cross fingers. If the King is on declarers left, the Queen will win the trick, and Declarer can lead the Jack. If the King is in the hand on Declarer's right, it is almost certain to win a trick whatever Declarer does, but it is usually best to try the finesse.

9 Trumps, Queen MissingDummy

A 10 9 8

Declarer

K 6 5 4 3

- ♣ 9 trumps, including Ace and King
- ♣ Opponents have 4 trumps, including Queen
- ♣ 41% chance the split is 2:2, and the Queen will fall
- ♣ 50% chance the split is 3:1 but 1 in 4 times the Queen is a singleton: 12%. So the chance is $41\% + 12\% = 53\%$ that the Queen will fall if you play two winning trump tricks.
- ♣ "Playing for the drop" has a slightly better chance of success than taking a finesse (50%) (if it's available!)
- ♣ Clear 2 trump rounds using Ace and King looking for Queen
- ♣ If 3 trumps fall but no Queen, the Queen is now going to win a trick whatever you do. Play a long side suit, preferably with winners.
- ♣ If the Q is used to trump, you still have 2 trumps



8 Trumps, Queen Missing, Finesse Available

Declarer

K 5 4 3

Dummy

A J 8 7

- ♣ 8 trumps, including Ace and King; Opponents have 5 trumps, including Queen
- ♣ Your holding makes a finesse possible
- ♣ The likely split is 3:2, the possibility the Queen will fall is less than 50%, the possibility of finesse succeeding is 50% exactly, so try the finesse.
- ♣ Sometimes you may have a choice which way to try it, think about any hints in the auction or opening lead.
- ♣ Whichever way you decide to go, play the King honour first to increase the chances of a drop.
- ♣ Clear 1 round using King.
- ♣ Play low card toward the remaining "gap", make sure you spot the Queen. If Queen played, cover with Ace; if not play lower honour and cross fingers.



8 Trumps, Queen Missing, Finesse NOT Available

Declarer

K 6 5 4

Dummy

A 8 7 2

- ♣ 8 trumps, with Ace and King; Opponents have 5 trumps, including Queen.
- ♣ NO is finesse possible. The likely split is 3:2.
- ♣ Clear 2 rounds using Ace & King.

One trump is still out, and it's bigger than any of yours.

It's going to win a trick whatever you do.

Now run a long side suit, trying to get defence to use their trump as a trump.

You then have four small ones to use individually as trumps.

If you (or they) play another round of trumps, it will take two of your trumps to force out an inevitable winner.