

# LESSON 3: HANDOUT Declarer Play in a Suit Contract

## Student Notes ♠♥♦♣

**Count winners:** In a diamond contract, how many winners are there between these two hands?

♠ K5	♠ A62
♥ A53	♥ K42
♦ KJT832	♦ AQ7
♣ 5	♣ JT98
Declarer (West)	Dummy (East)

spades 2, the ace and king  
 hearts 2, the ace and king  
 diamonds 6  
 clubs 0  
 Total 10

**Count losers:** In a spade contract, how many losers are there here?

♠ KQJ98	♠ T765
♥ 985	♥ KQJ
♦ K	♦ 983
♣ K832	♣ AQ5
Declarer (West)	Dummy (East)

spades 1, the ace  
 hearts 1, the ace  
 diamonds 3 in the East hand, but West can ruff the 2nd & 3rd rounds  
 clubs 1, unless there is still a trump in East to ruff the 4th round  
 Total = 6

### DECLARER PLAY IN SUITS - Count Losers

**Contract - 4♥ by North**  
 Lead - ♠K (top of touching honours)  
**Assess the hand**

♠ AK4	♥ QJT32	♦ KJ42	♣ 6
♠ QT875	♥ 9	♥ A87	♠ J732
♠ J9	♥ 876	♦ Q96	♠ KQT85
♠ 632	♥ AK54	♥ T53	♠ A94

Count winners & losers  
 ♠ 2 ♥ 5 ♦ 0 ♣ 1    ♠ 1 ♥ 0 ♦ 2 ♣ 0  
 Total winners = 8 - 2 more needed  
**Work suit - diamonds** Force out ♦A  
**Default setting in a suit contract is DRAW TRUMPS**  
 COUNT the cards in the trump suit so you KNOW if the opponents have any cards remaining in the trump suit

Bidding  
 North 1♥ East South Pass 3♥ West Pass  
 4♥ All Pass

### DECLARER PLAY IN SUITS - Count Losers

**Contract 4♠ by South**  
 Lead - ♦J by West

♠ 9542	♥ KQJ	♦ KQ	♠ A876
♠ J6	♥ AT76	♦ JT976	♠ T3
♠ T3	♥ 5432	♦ 8543	♠ KQJ
♠ AKQ87	♥ 98	♦ A2	♠ 9542

Declarer Count your Losers  
 ♠ -0 (but 1 if split 4:0) ♥ -1, ♦ -0, ♣ -3 = 4 maybe 5  
 Declarer Count Winners  
 ♠ -5 ♥ -0 ♦ -2 ♣ -1 = 8 (2 more needed)  
**Work suit** is needed - Where? **Hearts!**  
 Draw trumps - remember to count  
 Force out the ♥A - now there are 2 winners.

### DECLARER PLAY IN SUITS - Count Losers

**Contract - 4♥ by West**  
**Work suit - Clubs - Force out ♠A**  
**North's opening lead - ♦Q**, top of touching high cards  
**Declarer's Plan** - draw trumps  
 Force out ♠A. Now there are 3 club winners  
**Danger** - What happens if Declarer fails to draw trumps before playing clubs?  
 North will win the ♠A and continue with a second diamond which South can ruff ☹️

♠ A753	♥ 63	♦ QJT542	♠ A
♠ QT	♥ AJ987	♥ A7	♠ JT98
♠ J	♥ KQ42	♦ K986	♠ KQ52
♠ K98642	♥ T5	♦ 3	♠ 7643

### DECLARER PLAY IN SUITS - Ruff in the Short Hand

East is in 4♠  
 Lead ♥Q

♠ T	♥ 754	♦ AQJ96	♠ QJT8
♠ AQ65	♥ 83	♦ K54	♠ A542
♠ J98	♥ QJT9	♦ T72	♠ 973
♠ K7432	♥ AK62	♦ 83	♠ K6

Possible Options:  
 - try ♦K finesse (50%)  
 - try ♥ruff in East (does not add a trick)  
 - try ♥ruff in West (need a trump left)  
 Best Option is the last (♥ ruff in West) - if it fails we can try ♦K finesse anyway  
 - Win lead with ♥K & draw trumps (split 3:1)  
 - Play ♥A & then a 3rd ♥ & ruff in West with the remaining trump  
 - Later can try ♦K finesse but fails

Winners: 5♠ 2♥ 0♦ 2♣ - need another trick  
 Losers: 0♠ 2♥ 2♦ 0♣

### DECLARER PLAY IN SUITS - Techniques

Draw Trumps  
 High from Short Side  
 Discarding a Loser on a Winner

**Contract - North playing in 4♠**  
 East - leads ♥Q  
 Winners: 5♠ 1♥ 3♦ 0♣ - need 10  
 Losers: 0♠ 0♥ 0♦ 3 maybe 4♣  
 Plan: Need to create 2 extra tricks & the length of diamonds looks promising

- 1 Win lead & draw trumps (how did they split?)
- 2 Play ♥Q (high from the short side)
- 3 Play ♥3 to South's ♦K - how did ♠s split?
- 4 Play remaining ♠s & discard ♠s from North (discarding loser on a winner)
- 5 Now only have 2 losing ♠s & can make 11 tricks

♠ KQT98	♥ A	♦ Q53	♠ K975
♠ 4	♥ KT5432	♦ JT9	♠ Q84
♠ AJ32	♥ 9	♦ AK642	♠ J63
♠ 765	♥ QJ876	♦ 87	♠ AT2

### DECLARER PLAY IN SUITS - Leads against Suits

#### Recommended leads against suit

<b>GOOD LEADS</b>	<b>POOR LEADS</b>
AK83 A from AKxx	852 High x from rubbish.
4 Singleton (not trump)	Q952 Low from Qxxx
KQJ6 K from KQJx	J4 Honour top of doubleton
KQ76 K from KQxx	K7532 Low from Kxxxx
QJ104 Q from QJ10	KJ53 Low from KJxx
QJ52 Q from QJxx	AT74 Low from an A - Don't
83 Top of xx doubleton	

### What you have Learnt

- Assess the hand - **Count winners and losers**
- **Choose good opening leads in a suit contract**
- **Draw trumps** as soon as it is safe to do so
- **Count** the trump suit
- Look for **ruffs in the short hand**

It may be necessary to take the ruffs in the short hand **BEFORE** drawing trumps

### Additional Material

[J Butts Youtube](#) - under Card Play

**BRIDGE-TRAINING.COM** (click on link)

[Hand 1](#) [Hand 2](#) [Hand 3](#) [Hand 4](#)

[Hand 5](#) [Hand 6](#) [Hand 7](#) [Hand 8](#)

## LESSON 3: Declarer Play in Suits Quiz

### Q1 Count losers in this hand (in a Heart contract)

West- Declarer	East - Dummy
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♠AK	♠984
♥AKJ73	♥QT82
♦AQ	♦95
♣KJ42	♣AQ65

**Answer:** Your losers are 1♠, 0♦, possibly 1♦, 0♣. In Spades, you have the Ace & King. However, there might be 1 loser if there are no trumps left in Declarer's hand (West) to ruff the third one. In Diamonds, there is a finesse position. Lead a Diamond from East & play the Queen from West if the King is not played from South. If South has the King there are 2 tricks in the suit (Ace and Queen). If North has the King, then the Queen will be taken by the King & there will be only 1 Diamond winner.

### Q2 a) Is it possible to make 11 tricks in Diamonds on the hand below?

### b) Is it possible to make 9 tricks in NT in the hand below?

♠ K 5 3	♠ A 6 2
♥ A 5 3	♥ K 4 2
♦ K J T 8 3 2	♦ A Q 7
♣ 5	♣ J T 9 8
Declarer	Dummy

**Answer:** 4a No. You must lose 1♠, 1♥, 0♦, 1♣ = 3 so only 10 tricks

4b Yes. Top tricks are 2♠, 2♥, 6♦, 0♣ = 10. Dummy has JT98 of ♣s providing a stopper in ♣s.

### Q3 How many winners & losers do you have if playing in 4♠ (i.e. to make 10 tricks)?

♠ A Q J 8 4 2	♠ K T 9
♥ J 9 4	♥ 7
♦ A 9	♦ T 8 6 5 3
♣ A K	♣ J 5 3 2
You, Declarer	Dummy

**Answer:** Winners - 6♠, 0♥, 1♦, 2♣ = 9; Losers - 0♠, 3♥ (but look to ruff second & third rounds of ♥s in Dummy), 1♦, 0♣ (but there will be more if there are no trumps left in Declarer's hand to ruff the 2 small club cards). There are 2 unavoidable losers in the red suits.

**Q4 In the hand above it seems obvious to count if you have enough winners to make your contract, but why bother to count losers?**

**Answer:** If Declarer just cashed winners the contract will be down by one trick (only 9 winners). Thinking through the loser situation gives a clue about where to find that extra trick. "Losers – 1 diamond but there will more if there are no trumps left in Declarer's hand to ruff the 2 small cards". Declarer needs to ruff at least one Heart in Dummy. Do this before drawing trumps. Two hearts ruffs would see the contract make + 1. "Look for Ruffs in the Short hand"

**Q5 You are declarer playing a 4♥ contract (i.e. to make 10 tricks) in the hands below.**

A How many winners are there?

B How many losers have you?

C Plan the play. Lead is ♠Q – looks like top of a sequence.

♠ K 5 3 2	♠ A 8 4
♥ K Q J T	♥ A 4 3 2
♦ T 5	♦ K Q J 9 7 6
♣ KQ6	♣ -
West (Declarer)	East (Dummy)

**Answer:** A Winners – 2♠, 4♥, 0♦, 0♣ = 6. 4 more winners needed

B Losers – 1♠ (provided 4th round can be ruffed in Dummy), 0♥, 1♦, possibly 1♣ (0♣ if opponents play clubs first) = 2/3 Looking good

C Plan – Win the first trick. Draw trumps. Extra tricks from ♦s. Play ♦s starting with the ♦T from West (**high card from the short hand first**) & then continue the suit until defenders win their Ace. There are now are a total of 5 ♦s winners on which to discard losers from the West hand.

**Q6 The contract is 4♠ in the hand below. The lead is ♣K which the ace wins. Trumps are drawn in three rounds. What next?**

♠ A K 9 8 7	♠ Q T 2
♥ A K 8	♥ 7 3 2
♦ T	♦ A K 6 3 2
♣ A 6 4 3	♣ J 7
Declarer, West	Dummy, East

**Answer:** Count losers – You have one loser in hearts & 3 in clubs. Cash one top ♦ & discard one of those losers on the second top ♦ honour to make the contract.

**Q7 In a suit contract, drawing the defenders' trumps is usually the first priority. How many situations can you think of when you should either delay drawing the trumps or stop doing so while defenders still hold trumps?**

**Answer:** 1 When you need trumps for ruffing – This is usually when you need trumps in the "short hand".

2 When there are too many losers and declarer does not hold the Ace of trumps. If the lead is lost to the defenders, they can cash their winners before you have time to discard them.

3 Stop drawing trumps may be suitable when a bad break is discovered – one defender has many trumps cards. To draw these Declarer has to use two of his trumps to draw each one from the Defender's hand.

4 Stop drawing trumps if the outstanding trump/s is/are masters. These tricks will be lost whatever declarer does so keep non master trumps for ruffing

## HOMEWORK QUIZ

1)	How many losers can be discarded here	<b>Dummy</b> AKQJ	<b>Declarer</b> 98	2 losers. Play two rounds & now Declarer has no cards left in the suit. So can discard losers on next two rounds
2)	How many tricks do you make by trumping with the 2 & 3?	♥J32 ♥J64 ♥J632	♥AKQ96 ♥AKQ32 ♥AKQ9	7 - 5 in hand & 2 in Dummy 5 - 5 in hand & 0 in Dummy (ruffing in long hand does not gain extra tricks) 6 - 4 in hand & 2 in Dummy
3)	<b>Contract:</b> 7♠ <b>Lead:</b> ♦9 Should you draw trumps ?	<b>Dummy</b> ♠42 ♥Q632 ♦AK73 ♣AK42	<b>Declarer</b> ♠AK76 ♥AKJT4 ♦Q82 ♣7	<b>Winners:</b> 2♠ 5♥ 3♦ 2♣ <b>Losers:</b> 2♠ <b>Plan:</b> Need to make 13 tricks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• can discard a ♠ loser on a ♣</li> <li>• need to ruff other ♠ loser</li> <li>• we have control of trumps (all top cards) so can afford to draw trumps</li> </ul>
4)	<b>Contract:</b> 3♠ <b>Lead:</b> ♥Q Should you draw trumps ?	<b>Dummy</b> ♠42 ♥62 ♦96432 ♣A873	<b>Declarer</b> ♠KQJ954 ♥AK6 ♦75 ♣42	<b>Winners:</b> 0♠ 2♥ 0♦ 1♣ <b>Losers:</b> 1♠ 1♥ 2♦ 1♣ <b>Plan:</b> Need to make 9 tricks Only chance to make contract is to ruff losing ♥ in Dummy. If draw trumps it will lose to ♠A &, good defence, will see another trump played & so cannot ruff in Dummy. So win & immediately play other winning ♥ & then a 3rd round - Dummy ruffs & now make 9 tricks