Opening Leads

Look at the auction before you make the opening lead
The following are the most commonly used guidelines for the defence

1. Leads versus a Notrump Contract
The defenders aim to establish their longest or strongest combined suit

Which suit?
1. Lead partner's bid suit (if they have bid one)
2. Lead your longest or strongest suit (the suit that gives the best opportunity to win tricks)
3. Lead an unbid suit (a major before a minor)

Which card?
The lead is underlined
1. Lead top of a sequence of 3 honours or broken sequence

   KQJ3   **K**Q109   **Q**J97
2. Lead a low card - **a low card promises an honour(s)**

   AJ87**5**   K93**2**   Q6**4**
3. Lead top from small cards - **a high card denies an honour**

   974   **8**742   **8**3
4. Lead top of an interior sequence of 2 or more honours

   K**J**103   Q**10**94   A**J**104

2. Leads vs a Suit Contract
The defenders aim to win quick tricks or to use their trumps for ruffing

Which suit?
1. Lead partner's bid suit (if they have bid one)
2. Lead top of a sequence of 2 or more honours
3. Lead a singleton (or top of a doubleton) - you may be able to get a ruff
4. Lead low from your longest or strongest suit
5. Lead an unbid suit
   NB: Do Not lead low from a suit headed by the ace

Which card?
1. Lead top of a sequence of 2 or more honours

   KQ73   **Q**J98

2. Lead a low card **- a low card promises an honour**

   K93**2**   Q64**2**

3. Lead top from small cards **- a high card denies an honour**

   974   **8**742

4. Lead top of an interior sequence of 2 or more honours

   K**J**103   Q**10**94   K**10**93

Summary

- o If there is an unbid suit and you do not have an obvious lead, lead that suit
- o If you lead a **low card** you **promise an honour in that suit**
- o If you lead a **high card** you **deny an honour in that suit**
- o If you lead an honour card, **it should at least show the honour below**
- o **DON'T** lead away from an Ace in a **suit contract** - you may lose to a singleton King

These principles apply throughout the defence

`