

Ten developing deals

(reinforcing chapter 4: Development)

Example A

Dealer West

	North	
	♠ Q754	
	♥ AQJ5	
West	♦ AK6	East
♠ J6	♣ 85	♠ 10983
♥ K108		♥ 3
♦ QJ10		♦ 9832
♣ AKJ76	South	♣ 10432
	♠ AK2	
	♥ 97642	
	♦ 754	
	♣ Q9	

The bidding:

South	West	North	East
	1♣ (i)	Double (ii)	Pass
2♥ (iii)	Pass	4♥ (iv)	End

(i) West has a balanced hand but, too strong to open 1NT, starts with 1♣ and plans to rebid no-trumps. A plan that will soon have to be scrapped ...

(ii) Take-out, showing support for all unbid suits, opening values and shortage in the suit bid.

(iii) Jumping a level to show nine+ points (the key bid).

(iv) Knows from partner's jump that there is enough strength for game.

The play:

West cashes ♣A, (perhaps ♣K), and switches to ♦Q (in truth, he should probably switch to this card at Trick Two). Winning dummy's ♦K, you as declarer want to avoid a trump loser, via a finesse against West's hoped-for ♥K (he is the opening bidder after all). So cross to your ♠K, and lead ♥2, to ♥8, and ♥J. The finesse successful, you now need to repeat the finesse, in order to promote ♥Q. So cross back to your ♠A, and lead ♥4, to ♥10, and ♥Q. Cash ♥A, and you have picked up the trumps without loss.

The game is now secure, but, trying for an overtrick, you cash ♠Q. If the suit splits three-three, you are in a position to enjoy ♠7, a length winner. But East (who does well to stay interested holding, as he does, such a meagre collection), clings hold of all his spades (discarding clubs on the second and third round of trumps). In this way, East can beat dummy's ♠7 with ♠10, and you are held to ten tricks (losing a third round of diamonds at the end). Game made.

If you remember just one thing about ...

Bidding: With nine+ points facing a take-out double, you must jump the bidding.

Declaring: When finessing, lead from the opposite hand to the honour or honours you are trying to promote.

Defending: When discarding, keep equal length with dummy.

Example B

Dealer East

	North	
	♠ KJ9	
	♥ 653	
West	♦ 762	East
♠ 65	♣ KJ109	♠ AQ1073
♥ Q1097		♥ 4
♦ A53		♦ K84
♣ A754	South	♣ Q862
	♠ 842	
	♥ AKJ82	
	♦ QJ109	
	♣ 3	

The bidding:

South	West	North	East
			1♠ (i)
2♥ (ii)	Double (iii)	Pass	Pass (iv)
Pass			

- (i) Rule of 20. East opens happily, given the nice five-card spade suit.
(ii) Perfectly normal overcall, satisfying SQOT, and with the pleasing 5431 shape.
(iii) For penalties – as his partner has bid. West has two trump tricks – satisfying the Penalty Double Rule (see figure on p. 107 of *need to know? Bridge*) – plus two aces. That’s four defensive tricks. Surely he can rely on his partner for at least two more. West reasons that he can defeat 2♥, and may well have no game contract.
(iv) You need a much more shapely hand to think about removing partner’s penalty double, such as a void heart and/or a six-five shape.

The play:

West leads ♠6 to dummy’s ♠9 (it doesn’t matter), and East wins ♠10. East does not cash ♠A (promoting dummy’s ♠K). Instead he switches to ♦4

(dummy's weakness), to ♠A. West reverts to ♠5, crucially leading through ♠KJ, and East beats ♠J with ♠Q, and cashes ♠A. West discards ♦3, such that East can now cash ♦K and lead ♦8 for West to 'ruff' (i.e. trump).

The defence has won the first six tricks, so a happy West now cashes ♣A and waits to score one further trump trick with ♥Q109. Down three.

If you remember just one thing about ...

Bidding: The Penalty Double Rule.

Declaring: If you can't do anything about it, there is no point in ruining the play.

Defending: Do not promote unnecessary winners in dummy (such as, in this example, ♠K).

Example C

Dealer West

	North	
	♠ 43	
	♥ AQ9	
West	♦ KJ1092	East
♠ QJ10	♣ AK4	♠ K9875
♥ KJ54		♥ 1063
♦ A73		♦ 4
♣ J96	South	♣ 10752
	♠ A62	
	♥ 872	
	♦ Q865	
	♣ Q83	

The bidding:

South	West	North	East
	1NT	Double (i)	2♠ (ii)
2NT (iii)	Pass	3NT (iv)	End

(i) Penalties – showing 16+ points (any shape).

(ii) Rescuing into a five-card suit.

(iii) Tricky bid, but South knows partnership almost has the points for game, and he is balanced with a spade stopper.

(iv) Close – because he has just one more point than a minimum. But his five-card diamond suit looks good for tricks, and he knows that his partner will be able to place the missing high-cards (with West).

The play:

West leads ♠Q – top of a sequence in his partner’s five-card suit. Should you as declarer win your ♠A? The reason for withholding (ducking) your ace is to exhaust West of his spades. When he wins a subsequent lead, he will not have any more spades to lead to his partner. Let’s see how it works.

You duck ♠A at Trick One, and again at Trick Two when West follows with ♠J. You win ♠A at Trick Three, and are confident that West has no more spades (East showed five in the bidding). You now lead ♦Q and, when West wins ♦A (if he ducks, then you lead diamonds until he is forced to take his ace), he has no spade to lead. Say he switches to ♥4. You can rise with ♥A, cash the promoted diamonds, and follow with the three top clubs. Nine tricks and game made.

Note for the overtrick-hungry amongst you (and those with aspirations to Duplicate Bridge should take note, as overtricks are very valuable in that form of the game): West must hold ♥K to justify his 1NT opener (count the missing high-card points). So you can safely finesse ♥Q on his ♥4 return at Trick Five. This ensures a tenth trick.

If you remember just one thing about ...

Bidding: The double of 1NT is for penalties – showing any hand with 16+ points.

Declaring: In no-trumps, withhold ('duck') your one certain stopper, until you have exhausted an opponent of their cards in the suit.

Defending: Do not always lead 'fourth highest of your longest suit' against no-trumps. Remember the bidding.

Example D

Dealer South

	North	
	♠ AKJ	
	♥ AQJ	
West	♦ Q1054	East
♠ 872	♣ Q62	♠ Q954
♥ 108532		♥ 76
♦ A9		♦ 8763
♣ J95	South	♣ 1084
	♠ 1063	
	♥ K94	
	♦ KJ2	
	♣ AK73	

The bidding:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	4NT (i)	Pass
6NT (ii)	End		

- (i) Small slam invite in no-trumps – are you minimum or maximum? If maximum, we have the 33 points we need.
- (ii) Maximum – 14 points.

The play:

West would tend to lead an ace (even without the king) against a trump slam; but there is more time against a no-trump slam, and to take only low cards would be poor use of an ace. West leads ♥3. You, as declarer, count up eight top tricks, but know that you can easily generate three more by forcing out ♦A.

You win ♥J, and lead ♦4 to ♦K. West wins ♦A, and leads a second heart. You are just one trick short now – with your three promoted force winners in diamonds. Where is the twelfth trick coming from?

There are two possibilities:

(a) It could come from the spade finesse – leading to dummy's ♠J, and hoping West holds ♠Q (an even money chance). Or

(b) It could come from a fourth-round club length winner, should the six opposing clubs split three-three.

Whilst (b) is less likely (a missing even number of cards do not usually split evenly), nonetheless you should test clubs first. Why?

Answer: Should the suit fail to split evenly, you still have the spade finesse in reserve: in other words you can test both your options. The problem with taking the spade finesse before testing clubs is that, if a spade to the jack loses to ♠Q, you are down (a second trick to the defence).

So win the second heart and lead out ♣Q and over to ♣AK. The suit does split three-three, so you can now enjoy the thirteenth club length winner, discarding ♠J. It is now a simple matter to cash the remaining heart, three promoted diamonds, and ♠AK. 12 tricks and small slam made.

If you remember just one thing about ...

Bidding: If partner's last bid is no-trumps, 4NT is a no-trump slam invite (not an ace-ask).

Declaring: With a choice of methods of making extra tricks, finessing is typically the last resort (because a losing finesse often spells irrevocable failure).

Defending: Cash an unsupported ace against a suit slam, but not a no-trump slam.

Example E

Dealer South

	North	
	♠ 763	
	♥ 65	
West	♦ A743	East
♠ 842	♣ 7632	♠ 9
♥ KJ103		♥ A984
♦ Q10		♦ K9852
♣ QJ109	South	♣ 854
	♠ AKQJ105	
	♥ Q72	
	♦ J6	
	♣ AK	

The bidding:

South	West	North	East
2♠ (i)	Pass	2NT (ii)	Pass
3♠ (iii)	Pass	4♠ (iv)	End

(i) Around 20–22 points and an unbalanced hand with a good five – or preferably six – card suit.

(ii) Negative – up to seven points.

(iii) Non-forcing – ‘if you are bereft, partner, I’m happy to play in part-score’.

(iv) An ace, three trumps and ‘ruffing value’ (i.e. trumping potential) in hearts: a clear 4♠ bid.

The play:

West leads ♣Q and you as declarer count nine tricks. Needing one more, you notice that dummy has fewer hearts than you – crucial in a trump contract (see p. 81 of *need to know? Bridge*). You win ♣K, and lead a heart (key play), in order to void dummy of hearts whilst trumps are still held.

The defence win the heart, and switch to a trump, in an attempt to remove dummy’s trumps (West reflecting that an – unlikely – trump lead would

have worked well). You win and lead a second heart, thus voiding the dummy of hearts. West wins and leads a second trump. You win, and can now make your extra trick: in spite of the defence's best efforts, you still hold one trump in dummy. That card is about to make a trick in its own right: you lead your third heart, and 'ruff' (i.e. trump) with it. Extra trick: you now cross to ♣A, draw West's last trump, and nine tricks have become ten.

If you remember just one thing about ...

Bidding: Remember the 2NT 'no slam' negative response to a 2♦/♥/♠ opener.

Declaring: In a trump contract, look for a side-suit shorter in dummy than in hand. If so, try to void that suit and trump extra card(s) before drawing trumps.

Defending: If you see declarer voiding dummy of a side-suit before drawing your trumps, then switch to a trump.

Example F

Dealer East

	North	
	♠ AQ1062	
	♥ AKJ	
West	♦ J954	East
♠ 9754	♣ A	♠ 8
♥ 6		♥ 873
♦ AK83		♦ 102
♣ 10862	South	♣ KQJ9543
	♠ KJ3	
	♥ Q109542	
	♦ Q76	
	♣ 7	

The bidding:

South	West	North	East
			3♣ (i)
Pass (ii)	5♣ (iii)	Double (iv)	Pass
5♥ (v)	End		

(i) Pre-emptive. Less than an opening hand, with a good seven-card suit.

(ii) Bidding over an opposing pre-empt shows a near-opening hand or better.

(iii) Knowing his partnership hold 11 clubs, West bids to the 'level of the fit'. With good support (plus a side-suit singleton), West thinks that 5♣ will be a good sacrifice against an opposing heart game.

(iv) Essentially for take-out, but partner will often play for three tricks on defence at this high level (by passing, effectively converting the double into penalties).

(v) With a decent six-card heart suit, it is reasonable to try for the 11-trick contract. Indeed, had South passed and opted to defend, he would defeat East (in 5♣ doubled) by just one trick (scoring a spade, a heart and ♣A, but nothing else).

The play:

West leads ♠A, the best opening lead against a trump contract. Holding third-round control (i.e. a doubleton), East signals 'throw high means aye' by playing ♠10. West then cashes ♠K, and leads a third diamond. East ruffs. You as declarer can win any return, draw trumps, and claim the remainder, but you are down one.

If you remember just one thing about ...

Bidding: When bidding to spoil, bid to the level of the fit.

Declaring: Did you think about playing ♠Q under ♠A at Trick One? Cost-nothing foxing opportunities like that can lead the opponents astray.

Defending: If partner leads an ace against a trump contract, normally you should signal encouragement ('throw high means aye') when you hold the queen, or a doubleton (i.e. third-round control).

Example G

Dealer South

	North	
	♠ A3	
	♥ AK64	
West	♦ A3	East
♠ 5	♣ 108753	♠ K76
♥ QJ102		♥ 8753
♦ KJ95		♦ Q1076
♣ Q962	South	♣ AK
	♠ QJ109842	
	♥ 9	
	♦ 842	
	♣ J4	

The bidding:

South	West	North	East
3♠ (i)	Pass (ii)	4♠ (iii)	End

(i) Pre-emptive, and bottom of the range! You are showing less than an opening hand with a good seven-card suit. Here – much less.

(ii) Perfect shape for a take-out double, but about an ace short of opening values.

(iii) Four wonderful quick tricks. A pre-emptor can normally make about six tricks from his hand (hmmm), to bring the total to the required ten.

The play:

West leads ♥Q, and your frisky pre-empt will pay off nicely if you play well. Pleased to have avoided an (impossible to find) opening trump lead from West, you win ♥K, and immediately cash ♥A, throwing a club. You do not throw a diamond because, in effect, your third diamond is a winner. The reason for this is our old favourite: dummy having fewer cards in a side-suit to us. And that's the basis of our strategy here.

At Trick Three cash \spadesuit A, and follow with \diamond 3. The defence is best for West to win the second diamond, and fire through \clubsuit 5. If you play low, you risk East winning \clubsuit K, and leading a second trump. This would remove both of dummy's trumps before your third diamond has been trumped. So you rise with \clubsuit A, ruff a third heart (to get back to hand), then, the crucial extra trick, lead the third diamond and ruff it with dummy's small trump. Your remaining \spadesuit QJ1098 are equals against \spadesuit K, so you must score four more tricks. 10 tricks and game made. The key was ruffing the third diamond in dummy.

If you remember just one thing about ...

Bidding: It is clear to raise a $3\heartsuit/\spadesuit$ opener to game holding four quick tricks. Even less – opening points in aces and kings – may give game a good chance (see p. 126 of *need to know? Bridge*).

Declaring: If you are trying to ruff in dummy, you cannot afford to have all dummy's trumps removed.

Defending: When you and partner have a choice of which player wins (such as the second round of diamonds), think to the next trick. Which defender can do more damage with his next lead?

Example H

Dealer South

	North	
	♠ A1096	
	♥ 65	
West	♦ Q7	East
♠ 8753	♣ AK843	♠ 4
♥ Q10		♥ KJ984
♦ AJ4		♦ K10852
♣ J1096	South	♣ 52
	♠ KQJ2	
	♥ A732	
	♦ 963	
	♣ Q7	

The bidding:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	2♣ (i)	Pass
2♥ (ii)	Pass	3NT (iii)	Pass
4♠ (iv)	End		

- (i) The Stayman convention – a request for four-card major suits.
- (ii) Showing four hearts (also possibly four spades).
- (iii) Correct to assume partner does not have four spades – if he does then he has a further obligation ...
- (iv) Knowing partner has four spades – he would not bid Stayman without either four-card major. Even though you are balanced, you must remove 3NT into 4♠. Partner's 2♣ bid, in effect, says, 'I want to play in a major-suit, should a fit exist'.

The play:

West leads ♣J against 4♠. Plan the play. One important area, with which we have not fully dealt, is using trumps to set up a long suit. Here is an example:

Win ♣Q and cash ♠KQ. When East discards, do not draw more trumps. Instead seek to establish dummy's five-card club suit. The suit could easily be four-two (the likeliest split), in which case you will need to trump a round. Lead your second club to ♣K, and then trump a low club (key play) with ♠J. Cross to ♠A10, drawing West's trumps, cash ♠A, and then follow with the established ♣8 (thanks to your trumping a round). ♥A brings the trick total to ten – game made.

If you remember just one thing about ...

Bidding: The Stayman bidder should assume that a 2♥ reply does not also contain four spades. It is opener's duty to take the partnership back to spades should he happen to hold both four-card majors.

Declaring: Look for a five-card side-suit to set up. In a trump contract, this can be done by 'ruffing out the suit'. Normally, you will be well advised to address yourself to this task *before* drawing all the missing trumps.

Defending: Nothing specific to say, so I'll give you a tip that applies to every defence. When dummy is tabled, try to sense declarer's reaction. Is he happy? Unhappy? What do *you* think of dummy – if it is better than you thought, then desperate measures may be needed to defeat the contract.

Example I

Dealer North

	North	
	♠ AK65	
	♥ J4	
West	♦ 103	East
♠ J10	♣ AK873	♠ 9843
♥ Q1096		♥ 8
♦ KQJ4		♦ A8752
♣ J95	South	♣ 1062
	♠ Q72	
	♥ AK7532	
	♦ 96	
	♣ Q4	

The bidding:

South	West	North	East
		1♣	Pass
1♥	Pass	1♠ (i)	Pass
3♥ (ii)	Pass	4♥ (iii)	End

(i) Showing (at least) a five-four shape.

(ii) The key bid. Using the Responder's Line (see p. 159 of *need to know? Bridge*), 10-12 points with six hearts (and presumably no black-suit fit).

(iii) Knows of the eight-card heart fit, and that there is enough combined strength (15+10 points) for game.

The play:

West leads ♦K, follows with ♦Q (after ♦K wins the trick), and switches to ♠. Your only problem as declarer is a four-one trump split. In that case it will be imperative to try to promote ♥J – catering to West holding four trumps headed by the queen. (Note that nothing can be done if East holds those trumps: if you make the mistake of actually leading ♥J, East will simply cover ♥J with ♥Q, and you have achieved nothing.)

In order to promote ♥J, you must lead from the opposite hand, and to this end you must win ♠J with ♠Q, and, without cashing either of ♥AK, lead a low trump (key play). Look at West's dilemma. He can play ♥Q, and take nothing with it (♥J, then ♥AK, will draw his three remaining trumps). Or he can play low, in which case dummy's ♥J will win the trick, and only the fourth round of trumps is lost. (See also the figure on p. 143 of *need to know? Bridge.*) With no other losers, that's ten tricks and game made.

Note that if a trump to ♥J lost to East's ♥Q, then you will still survive providing the suit split three-two (the remaining cards falling under your ♥AK). Leading a low heart to ♥J, rather than cashing ♥A first, is only wrong when East holds a singleton ♥Q. West holding four trumps headed by the queen is four times more likely.

If you remember just one thing about ...

Bidding: Remember to use the Responder's Line, when bidding old suits or no-trumps.

Declaring: Lead from the opposite hand to the card you're trying to promote. You cannot promote such a card as ♥J by actually leading it – whichever opponent holds the higher card (here ♥Q) will cover it.

Defending: Selecting the best opening lead is a combination of (i) listening to the bidding, and deciding which suit should be attacked; and (ii) looking at your hand, and seeing which is the most alluring holding to lead. When both answers point in the same direction, you have an easy choice. (Here diamonds is the unbid suit; and king-queen-jack is the most alluring holding.)

Example J

Dealer South

	North	
	♠ J87	
	♥ 7	
West	♦ J642	East
♠ 2	♣ A9753	♠ K64
♥ AKJ84		♥ Q106
♦ K107		♦ Q83
♣ KJ102	South	♣ Q864
	♠ AQ10953	
	♥ 9532	
	♦ A95	
	♣ -	

The bidding:

South	West	North	East
1♠ (i)	2♥ (ii)	2♠ (iii)	3♥ (iv)
4♠ (v)	End		

(i) A Rule of 20 opener – and what a powerful shape.

(ii) Prefer to overcall a decent five-card major, to making a take-out double.

(iii) The single-major raise showing 6–9 points – perfectly admissible without the fourth trump.

(iv) Known heart fit. Two-level overcalls should be raised with three cards wherever possible, even at the risk of going one beyond the level of the fit.

(v) The key bid. South knows from the opposing heart bidding that North has at most one heart. Therefore ten of the opponents' points (♥AKQJ) are taking at most one trick. North-South will not remotely need as many as 25 points to make game, backed up by the knowledge of the nine+ card fit.

The play:

West cashes ♥A and, looking at dummy's ruffing value, switches to his trump (best). You as declarer try dummy's ♠J, in the hope that East will cover with ♠K. The wily East is not to be tempted – there is no hope of his promoting a lower trump by doing so.

Now you are in a bind. If you use up a second trump in dummy to finesse East for ♠K, you will lose a heart ruff in dummy; yet if you use dummy's trumps to ruff two more hearts, you

will be unable to finesse East for ♠K. Can you see a solution? You may find it easier to count potential winning tricks.

If you can score all your seven remaining trumps (in both hands), then the first round of trumps plus the two minor-suit aces will bring your trick total to ten. Although it is not normally correct to ruff in the long hand (unless setting up a suit), bridge has few hard-and-fast rules. Watch the elegance of the position that develops, as you ruff in both hands.

After winning ♠J, cash ♣A discarding (say) a heart. Then ruff a club, ruff a heart, ruff a club, ruff a heart, and ruff a club. Next cash ♦A (perhaps you should have cashed this card earlier), to bring about the following four card end-position:

	North	
	♠ -	
	♥ -	
West	♦ J64	East
♠ -	♣ 9	♠ K6
♥ KJ		♥ -
♦ K10		♦ Q8
♣ -	South	♣ -
	♠ AQ	
	♥ -	
	♦ 95	
	♣ -	

With the lead in your hand, you need two more tricks. Exit with a diamond, and watch the defence cash two tricks in the suit. Your last two cards are now ♠AQ, sitting prettily over East's ♠K6. It doesn't matter which opponent is leading, you play ♠Q on East's ♠6 (or ♠A on his ♠K), and must score the last two tricks.

You scored all six trumps in your hand, two ruffs in dummy, and the two minor-suit aces. Total: ten tricks; and with just sixteen partnership points!

If you remember just one thing about ...

Bidding: When you have heard support from partner, length with no wasted picture cards is ideal in a suit the opponents have bid and supported.

Declaring: When planning ahead, counting winners (not losers) is clear-cut in no-trump contracts. I think you will find counting winners a preferable approach in trump contracts too (after all, bridge is a game where the aim is to win tricks not lose them).

Defending: Do not cover an honour with an honour as a reflex. Only do so if you think that a lower card in the suit can be promoted (here East must not cover ♠J with ♠K).