

# LESSON 1

## *Making a Plan*



General Concepts

General Introduction



Group Activities

Sample Deals

Extra Deals

## **GENERAL CONCEPTS**

### **Play of the Hand**

#### **Making a PLAN**

1. *Pause to consider your objective*
2. *Look at your winners and losers*
3. *Analyze your alternatives*
4. *Now put it all together*

**Focus on steps one and two of the plan — counting winners and losers**

**Introduction of step three of the plan**

**Focus on step four when declarer has the tricks needed to make the contract — taking winners, drawing trumps**

### **Guideline for Defense**

**Choosing the suit and the card to lead against notrump contracts**

### **Bidding**

**Review of opening the bidding**

**Review of responses to opening bids of 1NT and one of a suit**

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

This is the first lesson of the second series. Although there may be students who met in the Bidding course classes, there are likely to be many new students who have had some experience with duplicate bridge. Take a few minutes to have the students give their names and tell something about themselves. This gives you a chance to get an idea of what they expect from the class.

After the introductions, an overview of the course can be given. You could say something like this:

“Have you ever played a hand of bridge and, a few minutes after the hand is over, realized you could have made the contract? Or have you found yourself looking at good tricks in one hand with no way to get to them? The best way to improve your play of the hand is to make a plan.

“Even world champions pause before starting to play a hand to consider their objectives, to see how close they are to reaching them, to analyze the resources they have if extra tricks need to be developed and to note how they are going to put all of this together when they play the hand. In the next eight weeks, you’ll develop skills that will make you a better player. The delightful thing about the play of the hand is that the skills are timeless. Bidding theory changes, but what you learn about the play of the hand will be as current now as it will be in a hundred years.

“We’re going to use a simple four-step PLAN to help remind us what to do each time we are declarer. The four steps are:

1. *Pause to consider your objective*
2. *Look at your winners and losers*
3. *Analyze your alternatives*
4. *Now put it all together*

“The letters ‘P’, ‘L’, ‘A’ and ‘N’ will help you remember the steps. We’re going to do some exercises to help familiarize ourselves with the first couple of steps and then declare some hands to see the entire PLAN in action.”

## GROUP ACTIVITIES

### EXERCISE ONE: The Objective

#### Introduction

This exercise takes only a moment. It reminds the students that the first step in the PLAN is to *Pause to consider your objective*.

“The first step in the PLAN is as easy as determining your objective. What do you need to do to fulfill your contract? It helps to focus on how many tricks you need to win to make the contract in notrump and how many tricks you can afford to lose and still make a trump contract.”

#### Instructions

You may want to put students to work in their groups, but since this exercise is so simple, it may be better to discuss it with the whole class.

“If you are in a contract of 3NT, the objective is to take nine tricks. It’s as simple as that. If you are in 2♣, the objective is to lose no more than five tricks.

“Look at each of the contracts in Exercise One and decide your objective — counting winners in notrump and losers in a trump contract:”

1) 3♣

2) 6NT

3) 4♠

4) 1NT

5) 2♦

4 losers

12 winners

3 losers

7 winners

5 losers

#### Follow-up

Have a member of one of the groups state the objective for each contract (if you have them working in groups).

#### Conclusion

“Although it might seem too simple, reminding yourself of your objective pays off. When you know how many tricks you have to take or how many losers you can afford, you can plan the play with this in mind.”

**EXERCISE TWO: Counting Winners****Introduction**

“You’ll love this exercise. We’re going to count winners so we can see how close we are to our objective. Winners are sure tricks, tricks you can take without giving up the lead to the opponents. Take out the spade suit only. As I name the cards, put them face-up on the table. When we are displaying the cards, North can represent the dummy and South the declarer.

N — A K Q  
S — 9 8 2

“The cards are evenly divided, three on each side of the table. Since you have the top three cards, you have three winners, cards that will take tricks without giving the lead to the opponents. Take the queen and give it to South, and take away the 2 and the 8.

N — A K  
S — Q 9

“There are only two cards on each side of the table, so although you have the top three cards in the suit, you have only two winners (you have to follow suit).

N — J 9  
S — A K Q 10 5

“You have the six top cards and five cards in the suit are on one side of the table. Look at your longest side to determine the number of winners. You have five sure tricks.

N — K Q 3  
S — J 8 7

“You have the potential to get extra tricks, but there aren’t any sure tricks. In order to enjoy a winner in this suit, you would have to give up the lead to the opponents.

N — A 8 7 6 2  
S — K Q 5 4 3

“You and your partner have 10 cards in the suit, but there are only three top cards. The opponents have only three cards in this suit. When you play your three top cards separately, all of their cards will be gone. There are five winners in the suit.”

## Instructions

Remind the students that winners are sure tricks — those you can take without giving up the lead to the opponents.

“Decide how many winners there are in each of the suit combinations in Exercise Two.”

DUMMY:	1) A K Q	2) A J	3) Q J 7 5	4) A 8 3 2	5) K Q
DECLARER:	4 2	K Q	A K 4 3 2	K 9 5	4 2
	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>

## Follow-up

Discuss the exercise with the students. Note that the third example illustrates that the fifth card in the suit, even though it's small, is a winner. The opponents have only four cards total in their hands.

## Conclusion

“Count winners by looking at the combined holdings in each suit. A winner is a card that will take a trick without giving up the lead to the opponents. The maximum number of winners you can count is the number of cards in the longer hand. If you have enough cards in the suit, so that the opponents won't have any left after your top cards are played, you don't need all of the honors.

“Counting winners in a notrump contract is the second part of our PLAN for playing the hand, *Look at your winners and losers*. We count our winners in a notrump contract. Now we'll take a look at how we count losers in a suit contract.”

## EXERCISE THREE: Counting Losers

### Introduction

Counting losers is generally more difficult for the students than counting winners.

“Counting losers may not seem as exciting as counting winners, but here’s the good news: we’re identifying the losers, so that we can turn some of them into winners.

“In a trump contract, the first step is also to **Pause to consider your objective**. This time, you consider the losers you can afford. If you’re in a contract of 4♠, you can afford three losers. In a contract of 6♥, you can afford only one loser.

“In the second step of your PLAN, you have to **Look at your (winners and) losers**. This means you must determine how many losers you actually have when playing in a suit contract.

“A loser is a card that the opponents are likely to take. It’s important to focus on declarer’s hand and to glance across the table to see if there’s any help in the dummy. Take only the heart suit and put these cards face-up on the table. The first two cards will be in the dummy and the next three in declarer’s hand.

N — K Q

S — A 4 3

“There are two losers in declarer’s hand. When declarer looks at the dummy, the king and queen are there to take care of these losers. The end result is that there aren’t any losers in the suit. Take away the ace from declarer. Take away the king and add the jack and 10 to the dummy.

N — Q J 10

S — 4 3

“There are two losers in declarer’s hand, and there isn’t any help in the dummy to take care of them. Remember that the focus is on declarer’s losers. Take away the jack and 10 from dummy and add the king.

N — K Q

S — 4 3

“There are two losers in declarer’s hand. When declarer looks at the dummy, the only missing high card is the ace, so count only one loser. Put five small hearts in the dummy and the ace and king in declarer’s hand.

N — x x x x x

S — A K

“Declarer doesn’t have any losers since the focus isn’t in the dummy where there are five losers. Change the hands so that the five small cards are in declarer’s hand and the ace and king are in the dummy.

N — A K

S — x x x x x

“This time there appears to be five losers in declarer’s hand. Dummy can help with two of these losers. The result ... there are three losers in declarer’s hand. What we do about these losers is a topic for another lesson. At the moment, let’s concentrate on identifying the losers. Put the king and a small card in the dummy and two small cards in declarer’s hand.

- N — K x  
S — x x
- “How many losers are there in this suit? There are two in declarer’s hand and it’s uncertain whether or not there is any help in the dummy. The king could lose to the ace. When you have a single honor that isn’t the ace, count it as a loser. Sometimes you’ll have some of the top cards, but not all of them. Put three small cards in the dummy and the ace, queen, jack in declarer’s hand.
- N — x x x  
S — A Q J
- “There is one loser, the king. It’s true, declarer might be able to capture the king, but until that happens, count one loser. Here is an example where you are missing more than one honor card.
- N — K J 10  
S — 8 7 2
- “You have three losers in declarer’s hand, and dummy has three honors, but is missing the ace and queen. Count two losers. Assume that the king is taken by the ace and the jack by the queen. That may seem a bit pessimistic, but in counting losers, consider what can go wrong. The next step in your PLAN will be to think about what can be done to eliminate some losers.”

### Instructions

“There are two types of losers, quick and slow. Quick losers are those that the opponents can take right away, if they have the lead. Slow losers are those that the opponents can’t take right away. They have to give you the lead back first.

“In Exercise Three, decide how many losers there are in each suit. These are the tricks you could lose to the opponents. Then decide if the losers are quick or slow.”

DUMMY:	1) K Q J 4	2) J 10 9 8	3) 9 8 6 2	4) A 5	5) K 6 4
DECLARER:	9 8	5 4 3 2	A 5	9 8 6 2	8 5
Losers:	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>
Quick/Slow:	<u>Quick</u>	<u>Quick</u>	<u>Slow</u>	<u>Slow</u>	<u>Quick</u>

DUMMY:	6) Q 4 2	7) K 7 6	8) 7 4 3 2	9) K Q 5	10) A J 10
DECLARER:	9 8 3	J 10 9 3	A K J	7 4 2	8 4 2
Losers:	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>
Quick/Slow:	<u>Quick</u>	<u>1 Quick;</u> <u>1 Slow</u>	<u>Slow</u>	<u>1 Quick;</u> <u>1 Slow</u>	<u>Slow</u>

## Follow-up

Briefly discuss the exercise with the students.

## Conclusion

“Losers are tricks that could be taken by the opponents. The number of losers in a suit other than the trump suit is never counted as more than the number of cards in declarer’s hand. With sequences, count losers as the number of missing high cards. If a high card is by itself and there are one or more higher cards in the opponents’ hands, count it as a loser.”

Now that the students can count winners and losers, it’s time to look at the third and fourth steps of the PLAN. Discuss the third step briefly. The students will be presented with deals in the first lesson where they have enough tricks to make the contract. They may have trouble actually taking those tricks, and that is where the fourth step comes in handy.

“Playing in a notrump contract, the first two steps of the PLAN remind you to determine how many winners you need and how many winners you have. Comparing the two numbers will tell you how many extra winners you require in order to make the contract. In a suit contract, you look at how many losers you can afford and how many losers you have. This will tell you how many losers you need to eliminate in order to make your contract.

“The third step in the PLAN is to *Analyze your alternatives*. In this step, you look at ways of developing the extra winners you need or of eliminating the extra losers. In this lesson, we’ll look at hands where you have all of the winners you need or you don’t have too many losers. This lets you skip to the fourth step, *Now put it all together*. In future lessons, we’ll be spending a lot of time on ways to develop extra winners or eliminate losers.

“Once you get to the fourth step, you need to put everything together. This usually involves the actual order in which you plan to do things. Which suit should you play first? We’ll see more of this in the practice hands. Here’s an exercise that will help you whenever you have the number of tricks you need, but may have trouble taking them.”

**EXERCISE FOUR: High Card from the Short Side****Introduction**

“I’m sure you’re going to find the next exercise useful. Have you ever been in the position where you wished you could call a taxi to get to the other side of the table?”

“If the cards in the dummy and declarer’s hand are unevenly divided, the order in which the cards are played is important. Take the diamonds and put these cards on the table representing the dummy’s and declarer’s hands.

N — A K J 3

S — Q 4 2

“In this example, there are more diamonds in the dummy than there are in declarer’s hand. Suppose that dummy has no high cards other than those in the diamond suit. Now suppose declarer plays the ace and king from the dummy first and then a small diamond to the queen. The jack in the dummy is a winner, but there is no way to get to it.

“For that reason, the best way to play the suit is to win the first trick with the queen. Then declarer plays small to the dummy’s winners and none of the cards are stranded. This can be put into a maxim — play the high card(s) from the short side first.

“In this example, the queen is the high card from the short side. That’s the card that should win the first trick. This guideline is effective when you want to take the number of tricks that are on the long side. In this example, you want to take four, not three tricks.

“Sometimes, the side on which you win the first trick is not important in terms of taking your winners. Put these cards face-up on the table.

N — K 4

S — A 6 3

“You expect to take only two tricks with the ace and the king, not three tricks, the number of cards in the longer side. Now it doesn’t make any difference whether you play the high card from the short side. There are other considerations before you decide whether you want to win the trick with the king or ace. These will be discussed in a later lesson on entries.”

**Instructions**

“What high card would you win the first trick with in each of the suit combinations in Exercise Four?”

DUMMY:      1) A Q J 10 3      2) A 4      3) A J 4      4) Q 5      5) K Q 6

DECLARER:      K 2                      K Q 5                      K Q 7 3                      A K J 7                      A J 9

	<i>Ace</i>			
<u>King</u>	<u>Ace</u>	<u>(Jack)</u>	<u>Queen</u>	<u>Any</u>

**Follow-up**

Discuss the exercise. In the third example, both the ace and the jack should be taken first. In the last example, the order of play is unimportant.

**Conclusion**

“When the suit is unevenly divided between the declarer and the dummy, if declarer wants to take the number of tricks that are in the long side, the first trick should be won by the high card from the short side. This play prevents declarer from finding there are winners in a hand that doesn’t have any entries.”

Before proceeding with the practice deals , there are some exercises on opening leads, opening bids and responses, so the students can review some of the material covered in the *Bidding in the 21st Century* text.

“Before we actually start playing some hands, we’re going to do a few quick exercises to remind us of some of the bidding concepts and how to choose an opening lead. Then we’ll be able to concentrate on playing the hands.”

## EXERCISE FIVE: Leading against a Notrump Contract

### Introduction

“You have to make the opening lead. What an important job. The opening lead gives the defense a good chance to try to develop the tricks needed to set the contract. Against a notrump contract, it’s a good idea to lead from your longest suit. If there is a sequence of three cards or more, lead the top of the sequence; if there isn’t a sequence, lead low.

“You might choose to lead the fourth best — that is, the fourth card down from the top. The reasons for this lead will be discussed in detail in the series on defense. For now, lead either any low card or your ‘fourth best’ if you don’t have a three-card or longer sequence.”

### Instructions

“Which card would you lead from each of the hands against a contract of 3NT in Exercise Five?”

1) ♠ J 6 3	2) ♠ 9 4	3) ♠ 10 8 6 5 2
♥ Q 7	♥ J 10 8 6	♥ A J 7
♦ K Q J 8 5	♦ Q J 10 8	♦ K 5
♣ 10 8 4	♣ A 7 3	♣ Q 5 2
<u>♦ K</u>	<u>♦ Q</u>	<u>♠ 5</u>

### Follow-up

Discuss the exercise.

### Conclusion

“In a notrump contract, once you have established winners in a suit, you can take them if you can get the lead. The defenders’ objective is to try to establish enough winners to defeat the contract. You probably don’t have enough high cards to do this. Your best chance is to make small cards into winners by playing a suit until the declarer doesn’t have any left. Lead your longest suit, either the top of a sequence or low.”

## EXERCISE SIX: Review of Opening Bids

### Introduction

This series of lessons focuses on the play of the hand. Now is your chance to show your mettle. It's very tempting to spend a lot of time reviewing the bidding. Instead, give a quick overview. The students can read independently or take the *Bidding* course if they need more on the bidding. You don't have time to cover past ground in detail and must keep the focus on the play.

"The opening bidder is the describer who wants to give the responder as clear a picture as possible of the hand. Opener needs about 13 or more points in order to consider opening the bidding. The most specific bid is 1NT because it falls within a three-point range from 15 to 17 HCP. After that, it's generally a good idea to open your longest suit if it's five cards or longer in length.

"If you don't have a five-card suit, then open your longer minor suit. With two four-card minor suits, open the higher ranking (1♦). With two three-card minor suits, open the lower ranking (1♣). (There are some variations: with three diamonds and three clubs, some players open their better minor.)

"If you've forgotten what to bid, try something. Let your instinct be your guide."

### Instructions

"Let's do Exercise Six together. You're the dealer. What would you bid with each of the hands in Exercise Six?"

1) ♠ K 9 7  
♥ J 4  
♦ Q J 9 8 4  
♣ K 7 3

Pass

2) ♠ A Q  
♥ K 10 5  
♦ K J 4  
♣ Q J 10 8 4

1NT

3) ♠ A K J 5  
♥ 3  
♦ Q 10 7 5 3  
♣ Q 9 4

1♦

4) ♠ Q 10 8 7 4  
♥ A K  
♦ A K 10 7 3  
♣ 6

1♠

5) ♠ A J 5 3  
♥ Q J 6  
♦ A 4  
♣ Q 9 6 2

1♣

6) ♠ K 8 4 2  
♥ 7  
♦ A Q J 5  
♣ A K Q 4

1♦

**Follow-up**

Discuss the answers and let the students' questions serve as a review. Help them add up the points on each hand to save time.

“The first hand has only 11 points, so pass. The second hand is a balanced hand of 17 HCP, so open 1NT. The third hand has 13 points. Open the longest suit, 1♦. The fourth hand has 18 points and two five-card suits. Open the higher-ranking of two five-card suits, 1♠. The fifth hand has 14 points. Playing five-card majors, open the minor suit, 1♣. The last hand has 19 points. With four diamonds and four clubs, open 1♦.”

**Conclusion**

“The opening bidder chooses a bid that best describes the hand. With fewer than 13 points, opener passes. With 15 to 17 HCP and a balanced hand, opener bids 1NT. With 13 to 21 points, opener bids the longest suit (if it's five-cards or longer in length). Without a five-card suit in the hand, opener bids the longer minor — 1♦ if opener has four cards in both minors and 1♣ if opener has only three cards in both minors.”

## EXERCISE SEVEN: Review of Responses to a 1NT Opening Bid

### Introduction

“Suppose you open the bidding 1NT. You’ve painted a very clear picture for your partner. You’ve shown a narrow range of 15 to 17 HCP and a balanced hand. Now you can sit back while your partner, the captain, makes the decisions about the level and strain of the final contract.

“If responder has 10 or more points, the partnership has the 25 points required to make game, even if opener has only 15 —  $15 + 10 = 25$ . Responder bids  $4\heartsuit$  or  $4\spadesuit$  with a six-card or longer major suit, bids  $3\heartsuit$  or  $3\spadesuit$  with a five-card suit, (forcing opener to choose between 3NT and four of the major), and otherwise bids 3NT. Responder prefers the Golden Game of 3NT to  $5\clubsuit$  or  $5\diamonds$ .

“If responder has 7 or fewer points, a game contract isn’t reasonable. Even if opener has a maximum of 17 HCP, there aren’t enough combined points for game —  $17 + 7 = 24$ . Responder bids  $2\diamonds$ ,  $2\heartsuit$  or  $2\spadesuit$  with a five-card or longer suit, otherwise passes. We’ll discuss a response of  $2\clubsuit$  in a later lesson.

“If responder has 8 or 9 points, responder can move toward a game by bidding 2NT.

“The key is for responder to divide the hand into one of three ranges:

0 to 7  
8 or 9  
10 or more”

### Instructions

“Your partner opens the bidding 1NT. What would you respond with each of the hands in Exercise Seven?”

1)  $\spadesuit$  J 8 4  
 $\heartsuit$  Q 6 2  
 $\diamonds$  10 8 5 3  
 $\clubsuit$  J 9 3

Pass

2)  $\spadesuit$  10 8 6 4 3 2  
 $\heartsuit$  J 5  
 $\diamonds$  9 6  
 $\clubsuit$  J 10 9

$2\spadesuit$

3)  $\spadesuit$  K 9  
 $\heartsuit$  Q J 8  
 $\diamonds$  J 10 8 3  
 $\clubsuit$  Q 8 6 3

2NT

4)  $\spadesuit$  A 5  
 $\heartsuit$  J 10 8 6 4 3  
 $\diamonds$  K Q 6  
 $\clubsuit$  5 2

$4\heartsuit$

5)  $\spadesuit$  K J 9 8 3  
 $\heartsuit$  A 4 2  
 $\diamonds$  7 2  
 $\clubsuit$  Q 10 3

$3\spadesuit$

6)  $\spadesuit$  7 2  
 $\heartsuit$  K 5  
 $\diamonds$  Q 10 9 7 5 2  
 $\clubsuit$  A 4 2

3NT

**Follow-up**

Discuss the exercise with the entire class. Ask for volunteers to suggest a response.

“With only 4 points and no five-card suit, responder passes with the first hand. The second hand also has 4 points, but with a six-card spade suit, responder bids 2♠. The third hand has 9 points, and responder invites game by bidding 2NT. (We’ll discuss other ways to invite game when we review the Stayman convention in Lesson Five.) The fourth hand is worth 12 points, enough for a game contract; with a six-card heart suit, responder bids 4♥. With 11 points in the fifth hand, responder knows there is enough combined strength for game, but isn’t sure of the denomination. Responder bids 3♠, telling opener to bid 4♠ with three or more spades, otherwise to bid 3NT. The final hand has 11 points, enough for game. Responder bids 3NT, not 5♦, since 3NT is a Golden Game.”

**Conclusion**

“When you’re the responder, divide your hand into one of three categories based on point-count range. Then decide whether the contract should be partscore, maybe game or game.”

## EXERCISE EIGHT: Review of Responses to a Suit Opening Bid

### Introduction

“When opener starts the bidding with a suit (as opposed to notrump) at the one level, opener paints a much broader picture of the hand. Opener could have anywhere from 13 to 21 points and the hand could be either balanced or unbalanced. After an opening bid of one in a suit, responder again puts the hand in categories before deciding on the first bid.

“With zero to 5 points, responder passes.

“With 6 to 9 points, responder has a minimum hand and wants to do something ‘minimumish’: either raise opener’s major only one level, bid a new suit if it’s at the one level or raise opener’s minor only one level. The first priority, is to raise opener’s major, if responder has support for that major (three or more). If responder can’t raise the major, then bidding a new suit takes priority over bidding 1NT. Remember, the best games are 4♥ or 4♠ if there is a Golden Fit, and the partnership is always looking for that fit.

“With 10 or 11 points, responder does something ‘mediumish’: raising opener’s major to the three level with support for the major or bidding a new suit at the one or two level, which is forcing, without support for the major.

“With 12 or more points, responder does something ‘maximumish’: bidding a new suit, even with support for partner’s suit. This support can be shown on responder’s rebid. With a balanced hand and no suit that can be bid at the one level, responder can jump to 2NT, also a forcing response.”

### Instructions

“Your partner opens the bidding 1♥. What would you respond with each of the hands in Exercise Eight?”

1) ♠ J 7 3  
♥ 9 4  
♦ Q 4 3  
♣ 10 8 7 6 2

Pass

4) ♠ Q J 10  
♥ 6 2  
♦ K 9 7 6 3  
♣ J 10 5

1NT

2) ♠ 8 2  
♥ Q J 5  
♦ J 9 6 4 2  
♣ K 8 3

2♥

5) ♠ 8 4  
♥ Q 6  
♦ A 8 3 2  
♣ K Q 10 6 2

2♣

3) ♠ Q 9 6 4  
♥ A 2  
♦ 7 4 3  
♣ Q 9 5 2

1♠

6) ♠ A K 4  
♥ K 10 6 5  
♦ 10 9 6 3  
♣ 8 7

3♥

## Follow-up

Very quickly go over the answers with the students. Remember that the focus of this series is the play of the hand. The bidding exercises only serve as a review.

“On the first hand, responder has 4 points, so there most likely isn't enough combined strength for game. Responder passes to avoid getting too high on the Bidding Scale. On the second hand, responder can support opener's major suit (five-card major). Counting 1 point for the doubleton, responder has 8 points, enough to raise to 2♥. On the third hand, responder has 8 points and, without support for opener's major, bids a new suit at the one level, 1♠.

“On the fourth hand, responder has 8 points. Without support for opener's major and without a suit that can be bid at the one level, responder bids 1NT. With fewer than 10 points, responder doesn't have enough to bid a new suit at the two level. On the fifth hand, responder has 12 points, enough to bid a new suit at the two level, 2♣. On the last hand, responder has 11 dummy points in support of opener's hearts. Playing limit raises, responder bids 3♥.”

## Conclusion

“When your partner opens the bidding one of a suit, you can't determine the final level and strain of the contract right away. Instead, you make a response, waiting to hear partner's rebid before making a final decision.”

## SAMPLE DEALS

### EXERCISE NINE: Counting Winners

#### Introduction

“When you play a hand of bridge, you put your PLAN to work. Let’s review the four steps of the PLAN:

1. *Pause to consider your objective*
2. *Look at your winners and losers*
3. *Analyze your alternatives*
4. *Now put it all together*

“We’ve looked at how simple considering your objective is: decide how many tricks you need in a notrump contract or how many losers you can afford in a trump contract. Then count the winners or losers. In all of the deals we’re going to look at, you have the number of tricks you need — all you have to do is take them. That means that we can leave analyzing your alternatives for getting extra tricks until later lessons. What needs to be considered in this lesson is how to put it all together and take what belongs to you.”

#### Instructions

“Take the first pre-dealt hand out of the board and place it face-up on the table. Since we’ll be looking at a lot of deals in this course, let’s talk about how to do this. Put your cards in tidy rows, ‘dummy style,’ right up against the edge of the table in front of you. It makes the cards so much easier to look at, if they don’t go too far into the middle of the table.

#### (E-Z Deal Cards: #1, Deal 1)

Dealer: North	♠ 7 5					
	♥ 7 3 2					
	♦ A Q 10 6 3					
	♣ A 9 2					
♠ K Q J 10 6	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; text-align: center; width: 40px; height: 40px;"> <tr><td>N</td></tr> <tr><td>W E</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ 9 4 3	
N						
W E						
S						
♥ A 10 6		♥ Q J 9 8 4				
♦ 9 7		♦ 2				
♣ 10 6 5		♣ J 8 7 4				
	♠ A 8 2					
	♥ K 5					
	♦ K J 8 5 4					
	♣ K Q 3					

“North is the dealer. Let’s talk about the bidding and then plan the play.”

## The Bidding

This is a course on the play of the hand. The bidding is only for review, and so we can't let it eat up too much of the time. Rather than asking what each player would bid, the process takes less time if you say something like:

“North and East pass and South has enough to open the bidding. South has a balanced hand with 16 HCP. What opening bid best describes South's hand? (1NT.)”

The leading questions are designed to save time and yet give some review of the bidding. The teacher can continue to guide the bidding like this:

“West passes. North is the captain and decides the level and strain of the final contract. With 11 total points and no interest in the major suits, what should North's decision be? (3NT.)

“How would the auction proceed from there? (Pass, pass, pass.) What would the final contract be? (3NT.) Who would be the declarer? (South.)”

## The Play

“Which player makes the opening lead? (West.) What would the opening lead be? (♠K, top of a sequence.)

“Declarer starts by making a PLAN. Let's go over the four steps:

1. *Pause to consider your objective (Nine tricks.)*
2. *Look at your winners and losers (Nine winners.)*
3. *Analyze your alternatives (Don't need any extra winners.)*
4. *Now put it all together (Take your nine winners.)*

“The key is that declarer has the number of tricks needed to make the contract. All that declarer has to do is take them.”

## Follow-up

Now have the students actually bid and play the deal.

## Conclusion

“When declarer has the number of tricks needed to make the contract, all declarer needs to do is take them.”



**The Play**

“Which player makes the opening lead? (North.) What would the opening lead be? (♥3 or any low heart.)

“Declarer makes the PLAN. What does declarer know after going through steps one and two? (There are enough winners to make the contract.)

“What does declarer have to do in order to take four club tricks? (Play the high card from the short side first.)”

**Follow-up**

Have the students bid and play the deal.

**Conclusion**

“The PLAN indicated that declarer had enough tricks to make the contract. All declarer had to do was take them. In order to get enough tricks in the club suit, declarer had to win the first club trick with the queen in the dummy. Otherwise, the good clubs in declarer’s hand would have been stranded.”

## EXERCISE ELEVEN: Counting Losers

### Introduction

“When you are in a suit contract, consider the number of losers you can afford and then count the number of losers you have. If you don’t have any more losers than you can afford, all you have to do is take the tricks you deserve. As we saw in the last hand, you might have to be careful about the order in which you play the cards in a suit, if there are more cards on one side of the table than the other.”

### Instructions

“Turn up all of the cards on the third pre-dealt hand. Put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player.”

*(E-Z Deal Cards: #1, Deal 3)*

Dealer: South ♠ K 9 7 4 3 ♥ 7 5 4 2 ♦ 10 6 ♣ K 8	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ 10 6 ♥ K J 10 8 6 3 ♦ K J 5 ♣ 6 2
N					
W E					
S					
♠ J 5 2 ♥ A Q 9 ♦ A Q 8 ♣ A 9 7 3	♠ A Q 8 ♥ — ♦ 9 7 4 3 2 ♣ Q J 10 5 4				

### The Bidding

“South doesn’t have enough to open the bidding. With 17 HCP and a balanced hand, what would West open? (1NT.)

“North passes. East is the captain. At what level does the partnership belong? (Game.) What should the strain of the final contract be? (Hearts.) East has 10 points including the 2 points for the length in the six-card heart suit. What would East choose for the final contract? (4♥.)

“How would the auction proceed from there? (Pass, pass, pass.) What would the final contract be? (4♥.) Who would be the declarer? (East.)”

**The Play**

“South leads. What’s a good choice? (♣Q, top of a sequence.)

“What does declarer know after considering the first two steps of the plan?  
(Declarer can afford three losers and has only three losers.)

“Whenever you’re playing in a suit contract, you have to decide when to draw trumps and how many rounds to play before you stop. How should the declarer handle the trump suit? (The trump suit should be played first.)”

**Follow-up**

Have the students bid and play the deal. Point out what would happen if declarer didn’t draw trumps before trying to take winners in the other suits.

**Conclusion**

“When there are no more losers than declarer can afford, the time is right to draw the trumps. You don’t want unexpected losers to develop by giving the opponents a chance to ruff one of your tricks.”



**The Play**

“The final contract is 2♠, and North is the declarer. East leads the ♣K.

“Why is declarer able to skip to the fourth question in the PLAN after answering the first two questions? (There are no more losers in the hand than declarer can afford.)

“Why might declarer be tempted to delay drawing the trumps and play another suit? (Because declarer will have to give up the lead to the opponents.) Why isn’t this a good idea? (The opponents may be able to ruff one of declarer’s winners.)”

**Follow-up**

Have the students bid and play the deal.

**Conclusion**

“When you have the losers you can afford, it’s best to draw the trumps, even if that means giving up the lead or using two of your trump cards to get only one of the opponents’. If you don’t draw trumps, the defenders may be able to ruff one of your winners, thereby creating a loser you can’t afford.”







