

# Cardiff Bridge Tutors

## **How to use Signals and Discards**

## What are they?

Most of us prefer to be Declarer than to defend and consequently spend more time studying our bidding and play.

We quite quickly realise that bidding is a conversation where we exchange information about point count and shape of our hands.

Generally we are less ready to acquire the same skills to exchange information when defending.

Strange when we will defend twice as often as we will be declarer!

Signals and Discards provide us with a method of sharing information about our hand with our Partner.

There are many different systems, varying in complexity, but we will start with a system which is easy to remember and use.

Using a simple system is better than either having no system or trying to use a complicated system that goes wrong.

Let's start by identifying when you use signals and when use discards.

**Signal** – every time Partner leads a new suit. Not just on the opening lead.

**Discards** – when you can't follow suit and are not going to ruff.

## Signals

Every time your Partner leads a new suit (and you can follow) then signal your **ATTITUDE** to that suit. (It is called an Attitude Signal)

### Like or Dislike

Like means that you have a chance of winning a trick (say an honour or length in No Trumps)

Dislike means that you have no chance of winning a trick in this suit. Change when you can.

You do this by playing:-

- a high(ish) card if you Like
- a low card if you Dislike

This system is known as **HELD**

### High Encouraging Low Discouraging

How high is high?

It has to be high enough to be recognised. So anything above a six should be considered high. Don't signal if you need to keep a high card as a potential winner.

What if I haven't got a high card?

Bridge systems aren't perfect and this may happen. Just play the highest card you can and if Partner leads the suit again play a lower one. An alert Partner will work it out!

Some examples:

We are defending a No Trump contract:-

Partner Leads	You hold:-	You play	Why?
♦ A	♦ Q 7 3 2	♦ 7	Your Queen might make play HIGH- ENCOURAGE
♦ K	♦ A 7	♦ A	Unblock. Your Partner has shown that they have the ♦ Q so play high and lead low back. They may have a long strong ♦ suit.
♦ J	♦ 7 3 2	♦ 2	Play LOW DISCOURAGE

## Summary of Signals

### High Encouraging Low Discouraging

is an

### Attitude Signal

## Discards

There are many Discard systems all with different advantages and disadvantages.

We are going to look at a very simple system so that it can be remembered easily.

Every time your Partner leads a suit and you can't follow and are not going to ruff you can show a **PREFERENCE** signal by saying whether you

**Like** the suit you are discarding  
or  
**Dislike** the suit you are discarding

Like means that you have a chance of winning a trick in the discarded suit

Dislike means that you have no chance of winning a trick in this suit. Choose another suit.

You do this by playing:-

- a high(ish) card if you Like
- a low card if you Dislike

So we are playing the same system of

### High Encouraging Low Discouraging

Some examples:

We are defending a suit contract:-

Partner Leads	You hold:-	You play	Why?
♠A	♦ Q 7 3 2	♦7	Your Queen might make play HIGH- ENCOURAGE
♠K	♦ A 7	♦7	Your Ace looks as if it will make HIGH- ENCOURAGE.
♠J	♦ 7 3 2	♦2	Play LOW DISCOURAGE

## Summary of Discards

### High Encouraging Low Discouraging

is an

**Preference Signal**