Poker IQ Test Study Guide

This study guide is designed to help you review and solidify your understanding of the poker concepts and strategies discussed in the provided text.

I. Pre-flop Strategy

A. Playing Against Different Player Types

* **Fish (Recreational Player):Definition:** Players with a "skill edge" over you, prone to making mistakes, under-4betting, and frequently allowing you to realize your equity.
* **Strategy:** Prioritize playing heads-up in position against them. Three-betting often isolates them and is generally an A+ situation.
* **Key Concept:** Maximize pots with players who will make the biggest mistakes.
* **Rag (Solid Player/Pro):Definition:** Capable, tighter players, less prone to large mistakes.
* **Strategy:Early Position Opens (e.g., Lowjack):** Play a **polarized range** (three-betting the very best hands for value, and calling with the middle and weaker hands of your continue range). The goal is to let fish into the pot rather than isolating the rag.
* **Later Position Opens (e.g., Cutoff):** Your three-betting range can be wider (both for value and bluffs). You're still incentivized to play a polarized range to let fish into the pot.
* **Three-betting Against:** Against aggressive rags who three-bet wide, **4-bet linear** out of position. Against rags who three-bet from the small blind when you are in position, **4-bet polar** (top of range and bluffs).

B. Positional Considerations

* **In Position (IP):** Highly advantageous. Allows for better equity realization, control of the pot, and the ability to act last.
* **Out of Position (OOP):** More challenging. Often requires playing a stronger range or employing different betting strategies (e.g., 4-betting linear vs. polar).

C. Specific Pre-flop Scenarios & Hand Categories

* **Pocket Sixes (Button vs. Cutoff Fish Open):** Three-bet to isolate the fish and play in position.
* **89 Suited (Hijack vs. Lowjack Passive Player with Limping Range, 5x Open):** Fold. A player with a limping range opening 5x from early position indicates an extremely strong hand, making 89 suited too weak to continue.
* **76 Suited (Big Blind vs. Lowjack Open & Multiple Field Callers):** Call. Too good to fold. Do not squeeze (three-bet) because it’s unlikely to get through and this hand doesn't fall into a linear squeezing range (good, better, best hands).
* **Pocket Tens (Hijack vs. Rag Lowjack Open, All Fish Behind):** Call. Focus on letting the fish into the pot, playing a polarized range against the rag.
* **Pocket Nines (Big Blind vs. Rag Open & Button Call):** Squeeze (three-bet). Once there's "dead money" in the pot from a caller, squeeze with a linear range (good, better, best hands).
* **Ace Queen of Diamonds (Cutoff Open vs. Aggressive Button Rag 3-bet):** 4-bet linear to $200. Against an aggressive rag who calls a lot when in position, Ace Queen suited is a strong linear 4-bet for value.
* **Pocket Jacks (Button Open vs. Small Blind Rag 3-bet):** Call. Against an OOP three-bet from a rag, play a polarized 4-betting range. Pocket Jacks are in the middle of your range and are better suited for a call to leverage your positional advantage.

II. Flop Strategy

A. Board Texture & Bet Sizing

* **Wet & Dynamic Boards (e.g., J92 with flush draw):Default C-bet (in position as pre-flop raiser):** Small size ($20). Aims to get opponents to raise strong hands and call with weak hands.
* **Middle Set (e.g., Q84 flop with Pocket Eights OOP):** Check your entire range against typical live opponents, as they overstep and telegraph hand strength.
* **Opponent big stab ($40):** Raise big ($300). Opponent is signaling strength and inelasticity, so pile in money.
* **Dry & Static Boards (e.g., A72):Default C-bet (in position as pre-flop raiser):** Overbet ($60) or check. Small bets are less effective as opponents are less likely to raise strong hands or float with weak hands. Overbetting maximizes value against inelastic Ace-X hands.
* **Middle Set (e.g., A92 rainbow with Pocket Nines IP, 400 effective):** Bet big ($50). Due to shallower stacks and dry board, can easily get money in with bet-bet-bet without needing to check-raise.
* **Checking Back (J10s on A82s):** Check back on these boards if your hand is not a very strong value hand or a strong bluffing hand with good blocking properties.

B. Multi-way Pots

* **General Strategy:** Be more selective with C-betting. C-bet only with thick value and strong draws (equity-driven portion of range).
* **Bet Sizing:** Choose smaller sizes (e.g., 1/3 pot) to entice calls from weak hands and raise from strong hands, as opponents are less likely to fast-play strong hands or call with weak hands when other players are still to act.
* **Example (QQ on J92, 4-way, checks to you):** Bet small ($30). Unlikely to get stabbed, and a smaller size maximizes calls.
* **Example (A9 on J92, 4-way, checks to you):** Check back. Showdown value hand, but not strong enough for a C-bet in a multi-way pot.

C. Stack Depth Considerations

* **Shallower Stacks (e.g., 400 effective):** Less need for check-raises to get money in; can often bet-bet-bet.
* **Deeper Stacks (e.g., 500 effective):** Check-raising with strong hands on wet boards can be beneficial to play a one or two-street game before bad cards come.

III. Turn Strategy

A. Opponent's Range Assessment

* **Capped Range:** When an opponent just calls a flop bet, their range is often "capped," meaning it doesn't contain the very strongest hands (which would have likely been raised on the flop).
* **Strategy:** Overbet ($120) with Bluffs or Value hands that want to extract money from inelastic one-pair hands.
* **Example (76d on Q84-2, small flop bet, opponent calls):** Overbet $120. Opponent capped, but still has inelastic hands like Queen-X.
* **Uncapped Range:** When an opponent has strong hands or picks up significant equity.
* **Strategy:** Bet small ($30) to encourage them to raise their strong stuff (especially when nuts change) and call with their weaker, drawing-dead hands.
* **Example (AQd on 983-4d, flush turn, opponent checks):** Bet small $30. Opponent now has flushes, will raise, and also calls with drawing-dead hands.

B. Double Barrel & Triple Barrel Tendencies

* **Live Players:** Tend to under-double barrel and under-triple barrel bluffs. Over-stab on the flop.
* **Folding to Aggression:** If an opponent chose a big size on the flop and then double-barrels a big size on the turn, they are likely strong. Fold marginal hands.
* **Example (A5h on 852-4, opponent big flop stab, big turn stab):** Fold. Opponent is screaming strength and under-bluffing.

C. Leading the Turn

* **Reasons to Lead:** When opponent's flop stab was small (indicating a weaker range) and you have a strong hand (e.g., trips). You don't expect them to double barrel frequently, and leading minimizes fold equity.
* **Example (87s on T73-7, opponent small flop stab):** Lead $80. Opponent's range is weak, won't double barrel often, will call with draws/weak pairs.

D. Full House Considerations

* **Paired Board (K93-9, Two Pair to Full House):Opponent Check-Raises Flop, Checks Turn:** Opponent's range is weighted towards two pair/sets. They might be trapping due to invulnerability.
* **Strategy:** Bet small ($70). Entice calls from draws and inelastic two pair/sets, as you'll get all the money from a boat anyway.

IV. River Strategy

A. Maximizing Value

* **Opponent's Range is Bricked Draws or Weak Pairs (e.g., Pocket Fives on Q84-2-Q, Full House):** Jam ($840). Opponent won't fold trips, and Queen-X is inelastic.
* **Opponent's Range has Strong, Inelastic Hands (e.g., Pocket Kings on 942-K-A, opponent calls two streets in 3-bet pot):** Jam ($810). Opponent has strong Aces or two pair that won't fold.
* **Opponent's Range is Capped and Elastic (e.g., AQ on Q42s-6-8, small flop/turn bets):** Bet small ($100). Opponent's range is weak (Queen-X, small pairs). A small bet gets more calls.

B. Bluffing & Bluff Catching

* **Bluffing with Range Fold Expectation (e.g., 76s on K95-2-2, opponent checked):** Jam ($840). Opponent's range is mostly one pair, likely to fold to a big bet.
* **Bluff Catching Against Rags (e.g., AJ on K J4-6-River Bet from Rag):** Call. Rags overbluff wide configurations and double Broadway boards, especially when money hasn't gone in on the river.
* **Turning Bluff Catcher into a Bluff (e.g., Aces on J72-4-T, opponent check-raised flop, barrelled turn, bet river, backdoor flush gets there):** Raise All-in. Opponent is likely not bluffing (under-triple barreling). Their value hands (sets, two pair) are unlikely to expect a raise here and will often fold to the perceived strength.
* **Value Counterpart (Ace Jack of Hearts in same spot):** Raise small ($350). Give opponent a good price to call with their weaker value hands.

C. Folding to Aggression

* **Recreational Player Big River Bet (e.g., AJc vs. Rec 3-bet, A92-turn-2, opponent all-in river):** Fold. Multiple context clues (3-bet, big flop/turn bets, big river bet) indicate strength. Recreational players under-bluff big.

Quiz: Pre-flop and Flop Concepts

**Instructions:** Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. You are on the button with Pocket Sixes, and a "fish" opens in the cutoff. What is the recommended pre-flop action and why?
2. Explain why you would fold 89 of Hearts in the hijack when a passive lowjack player with a limping range opens to 5x.
3. When a good "rag" opens from early position (Lowjack) and there are multiple "fish" behind, why is it generally recommended to play a polarized range rather than a linear range?
4. You are in the big blind with 76 of Spades. A lowjack player opens, and two other players call (cutoff, button). Should you call or three-bet squeeze, and what is the reasoning?
5. You open Pocket Nines on the button, and the big blind calls. The flop is Jack Nine Deuce. You are the pre-flop raiser. What C-bet size is recommended ($20 or $40) and why?
6. You open Pocket Eights from the cutoff, and the button calls. The flop is Queen Eight Four. You flop middle set. Should you check or bet, and why, specifically against a typical live opponent?
7. You open King Five of Diamonds on the button, and the big blind calls. The flop is Ace Nine Five. You are the pre-flop raiser. What is the recommended C-bet strategy on this board (check, small bet, or overbet) and why?
8. In a multi-way pot (four players) on a Jack Nine Deuce flop, you have Pocket Queens and it checks around to you. Should you bet $30 or $80, and what's the rationale for the chosen size?
9. You have Jack Ten of Spades and open on the button. The big blind calls, and the flop is Ace Eight Deuce with two spades. Your opponent checks. Should you check back, bet $20, or bet $60? Explain your reasoning.
10. You open Pocket Sevens in the cutoff, and your opponent calls on the button. The flop is Ten Seven Five (wet and dynamic). You flop middle set at 500 effective. Should you check or bet, and how does this differ from a drier board or shallower stacks?

Quiz Answer Key

1. **Three-bet to $60.** The reason is to isolate the fish and play a heads-up pot in position. Fish tend to under-4bet and allow you to realize equity, making this an A+ situation for you.
2. You should fold 89 of Hearts. This player's limping range means their opening range (especially a 5x open from up front) is extremely strong, consisting of only their very best hands. 89 suited is not strong enough to continue against such a tight range, and there's also a risk of players behind waking up with premium hands.
3. When a rag opens from early position with fish behind, playing a polarized range (three-betting only the very top and very bottom of your continue range, and calling with the middle) is recommended. This strategy is designed to let the fish into the pot, as they are more likely to make larger mistakes than the tight-opening rag.
4. You should **call** with 76 of Spades. This hand is considered too good to fold, but it does not fit the criteria for a linear squeezing range (good, better, best hands). When there are multiple callers, it's very likely to see a flop even if you three-bet, reducing the effectiveness of a squeeze with this hand.
5. **Bet $20.** This smaller size on a wet and dynamic board encourages your opponent to raise their strong hands (e.g., sets, two pair) and also call with their weaker hands (e.g., pocket sixes, Ace Queen) that would fold to a larger bet, maximizing value.
6. You should **check** your entire range. Against typical live opponents, especially on wet and dynamic boards, they tend to overstep and telegraph their hand strength through their bet sizing. Checking allows you to induce a bet and potentially raise later.
7. On this Ace Nine Five board, which is dry and static, the recommended strategy is to **overbet ($60) or check**. King Five of Diamonds has good blocking properties, making it a perfect hand for an overbet bluff. Opponents are less likely to fast-play strong hands or float with weak hands on such dry boards.
8. You should **bet $30.** In multi-way pots, players are less likely to fast-play their strong hands or call with their weak hands when other players are still to act. A smaller size entices both strong hands to raise and weak hands to call, ensuring you get action.
9. You should **check back.** On ace-high static boards, the general strategy is to overbet with very strong hands or strong bluffs with good blocking properties, and check back with others. Jack Ten of Spades, while having some equity, is not strong enough for an overbet and could be in a difficult spot if check-raised.
10. You should **check**. This board is wet and dynamic, and at 500 effective (deeper stacks), checking your entire range with middle set allows you to play a one or two-street game if your opponent stabs. This differs from a dry board or shallower stacks where a bet-bet-bet line might be preferred, as there's less risk of "bad" cards coming that would force your opponent to fold strong hands.

Essay Questions

1. Compare and contrast the pre-flop strategy against a "fish" versus a "rag." Discuss how player type influences your decision to fold, call, or three-bet, and elaborate on the concepts of "isolating" and "polarized vs. linear" ranges in these contexts.
2. Analyze the strategic considerations behind bet sizing on the flop for a pre-flop raiser. How do board texture (wet/dynamic vs. dry/static) and stack depth influence your choice of a small bet, large bet, overbet, or check? Provide specific examples from the text to support your points.
3. Discuss the importance of understanding an opponent's "capped" versus "uncapped" range on the turn. How does this assessment dictate your betting strategy (e.g., small bet, overbet, lead)? Provide examples of how these concepts are applied in different turn scenarios.
4. Explain the concept of turning a "bluff catcher into a bluff" on the river. In what specific situations, according to the text, is this a profitable play? Contrast this with situations where folding a bluff catcher or calling with it would be more appropriate, considering opponent type and board texture.
5. Multi-way pots introduce unique challenges in post-flop play. Discuss how C-betting strategy changes when playing multi-way compared to heads-up. What are the key factors to consider regarding hand strength, bet sizing, and the likelihood of getting action from opponents?

Glossary of Key Terms

* **4-bet:** A re-raise after a 3-bet.
* **Blockers/Blocking Properties:** Holding cards that reduce the probability of your opponent having certain strong hands, making your bluffs or value bets more effective. For example, holding an Ace can "block" your opponent from having Ace-King.
* **Boat:** Short for Full House.
* **Capped Range:** An opponent's range of hands that does not contain the strongest possible hands, usually because those hands would have been played more aggressively on a previous street (e.g., check-raised on the flop).
* **C-bet (Continuation Bet):** A bet made on the flop by the player who made the last raise pre-flop.
* **Cooler:** A situation in poker where one player has a very strong hand, and another player has an even stronger hand, leading to a large pot where the losing player often has little chance of folding.
* **Cutoff (CO):** The position directly to the right of the button.
* **Dead Money:** Money already in the pot from folded players or callers that is now available to be won by the active players.
* **Double Barrel:** Betting on both the flop and the turn.
* **Draws (Flush Draw, Straight Draw, Gutshot):** Hands that are not yet made but have the potential to improve to a strong hand if certain cards appear on future streets.
* **Dry/Static Board:** A board with low cards and no obvious straight or flush possibilities, making it less likely for hands to improve dramatically.
* **Effective Stack/Effective:** The smallest stack size among the players involved in a hand, which determines the maximum amount of money that can be won or lost in that hand.
* **Equity:** Your percentage chance of winning the pot.
* **Fish/Recreational Player (Rec):** A weaker, less experienced, or less skilled poker player who tends to make more mistakes.
* **Float:** Calling a bet with a weak hand, often with the intention of bluffing on a later street if the opponent shows weakness.
* **Fold Equity:** The amount of money you expect to win from your opponent folding to your bet or raise.
* **Gutter/Gutshot:** A straight draw where only one specific card can complete the straight (e.g., you have 5-6-8-9, and only a 7 can complete the straight).
* **Heads-up:** A pot involving only two players.
* **Inelastic:** When an opponent is unlikely to fold their hand regardless of the bet size, often because they have a very strong hand or a strong draw.
* **In Position (IP):** Acting last in a betting round, providing a strategic advantage.
* **ISO (Isolate):** To raise in an attempt to get heads-up against a specific player (often a weaker one) by forcing other players to fold.
* **Lead:** To be the first player to bet on a street.
* **Linear Range:** A betting or raising range composed of hands that are generally strong, from "good" to "better" to "best." Often used for value.
* **Limp Range:** A range of hands a player is willing to just call the big blind with pre-flop, rather than raising. This often indicates a weaker or middling part of their range.
* **Lowjack (LJ):** A position to the left of the Under The Gun (UTG) player, usually one of the earlier positions to act.
* **Middle Set:** Flopping a set where your pair is the middle card on the board (e.g., you have pocket 8s, and the board is Q-8-4).
* **Monkey Stab:** A colloquial term for a bet made without much thought or strategic reasoning, often with a weak hand or draw.
* **Multi-way Pot:** A pot involving three or more players.
* **Nuts/The Nuts:** The best possible hand in a given situation.
* **Overbet:** A bet larger than the current size of the pot.
* **Out of Position (OOP):** Acting first in a betting round, a strategic disadvantage.
* **Polarized Range:** A betting or raising range consisting of only very strong value hands and bluffs, excluding middle-strength hands which might be checked or called.
* **Pre-flop Razer:** The player who made the last raise before the flop.
* **Rag/Solid Player/Pro:** A capable, skilled, or professional poker player.
* **Rainbow:** A flop with three different suits, meaning no flush draw is possible.
* **Realize Equity:** To see enough future cards to allow your hand to improve or to get to showdown, ensuring you have a chance to win the pot based on your hand's true strength.
* **Showdown Value:** The strength of a hand that, while not strong enough to bet for value, might be strong enough to win if it goes to showdown without further betting.
* **Squeeze/Squeeze Play:** A three-bet (or later raise) pre-flop after there has been an open and at least one call, with the intention of folding out both the opener and the callers to win the "dead money" in the pot.
* **Stack Depth:** The amount of chips a player has in relation to the blinds or the pot size.
* **Stab:** To make a bet, often unexpectedly or to test an opponent.
* **Telegraph:** To unintentionally reveal the strength of your hand through your actions or bet sizing.
* **Thick Value:** A very strong hand that is highly likely to be the best and from which you want to extract maximum value.
* **Three-bet:** A re-raise after an open-raise (the second bet in a betting round).
* **Triple Barrel:** Betting on the flop, turn, and river.
* **Uncapped Range:** An opponent's range that *can* contain the strongest possible hands.
* **Value Bet:** A bet made with a strong hand, expecting to be called by a weaker hand.
* **Wet/Dynamic Board:** A board with high cards, possible straight draws, and/or flush draws, making it more likely for hands to improve dramatically.
* **Whale:** A very bad, high-stakes poker player who loses a lot of money.