CHESS

OPENINGS FOR BEGINNERS

THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO BECOMING A CHESS MASTER. LEARN THE WINNING MOVES AND MASTER THE MOST SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES.

ROBERT KING

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Robert King

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Introduction

Chess is a fascinating board game that has challenged the imagination, creativity, and analytical prowess of people for thousands of years. Once reserved for nobility, Chess is now enjoyed by millions of people all over the world. It is a classic game between two players who have one ultimate goal in mind: to threaten the opponent's King with a move that leads to an eventual capture. The road to victory, however, is usually paved with traps, decoys, and tricks. A player with adequate preparation, strategic skills, and mindset will have significant advantages over one who lacks a sound game plan and plays the game randomly.

Winning chess games consistently requires time, focus, and serious preparation. This book is designed for beginners and advanced chess players who want to improve their game and take their skills to the next level.

The Chessboard

Chess is played by two people using a chessboard with 64 squares of alternating colors – eight rows and 8 columns. Each player starts with sixteen chess pieces: 8 Pawns, 2 Knights, 2 Bishops, 2 Rooks, 1 Queen, and 1 King.

Here is how the chess pieces are arranged at startup:

The rows are called ranks while the columns are called files.

The Chess Pieces

- The Pawn

The Pawns are usually the first ones to go to battle. From its starting position, a pawn can move up to two squares forward. Away from its original square, it can only move one square ahead and can never go backward. It captures opposing pieces one square diagonally forward on its left or right side. The pawn may also capture the enemy's pawn using the "En Passant" (in passing) rule.

While it has many weaknesses, a Pawn is the only chessman that can be promoted. A pawn that has reached the back rank of the opponent can be exchanged for a Knight, Bishop, Rook, or Queen. There is no limit to how many Pawns may be promoted.

- The Knights

The Knight is the only piece that can jump over other pieces. This capability allows it to be the only other piece besides a pawn that can make the initial move in a chess game. The Knight moves or jumps in an L-shaped pattern - one square to its left or right and two squares forward/backward or two squares forward/backward and one square to the left or right.

- The Bishops

The Bishops move diagonally in any number of squares as long as it is not restricted by other pieces. Each side has two Bishops at the start. One controls the light-shaded squares while the other moves along with the dark-shaded ones. The Bishops cannot jump over other pieces like the Knight.

- The Rooks

A Rook moves on a straight line from left to right or forward and backward. It can go from one end of the board to the other in one move if there are no intervening pieces. It cannot jump over other pieces the way a knight does, however. Along with the King, the Rook takes part in a special chess move called “castling.”

- The Queen

The Queen has the most powerful attacking capabilities on the chessboard. Except for its inability to jump over other pieces, the Queen combines the attack moves of other chess pieces. It can move diagonally like the Bishops and horizontally or vertically like the Rooks.

- The King

Although it lacks the attacking prowess of the Queen, the King is the most important piece on the board. The player whose king is captured immediately loses the game. A capture happens when the king is attacked and could not make a legal move or could not be defended by other chess pieces.

A King has very limited movements. Unless it is castling, a King can only move one step away from its current position. It can capture Pawns and other stray pieces and can be used in the end game to strategically restrict the actions of the opposing King.

Basic Chess Terms

Attack	moving a piece to a square where it can capture an opponent
Double attack	an attack moves against two or more enemy pieces at the same time
Fianchetto	to develop a bishop on the square in front of the adjacent Knight
Minor pieces	bishops and knights
Major pieces	queens and rooks
Capture	to remove an opponent’s chessman through a legal move
Check	to attack or threaten the King
Chessman	all movable figures on the chessboard
Promotion	converting a pawn to a Queen, Bishop, Knight, or Rook after advancing to the eighth rank
Queenside	the a-d files
Kingside	the e-h files
Zugzwang	a situation where a player is forced to make a move that is detrimental to his position

Back rank	a player’s first rank

Chapter 1: Basics of Chess Openings

Chess Opening

Strategies

Openings appear to be psychologically challenging games or chess strategies that have been implemented to improve control of the actual center of the exact chessboard in the main starting game. This starting performance starts along with this primary phase. It ends at any time one participant has apparent control over the very center surface, which is right after around ten movements each. Sometimes the middle of any board is composed of four pieces immediately in the center of all chessboards. Management involved with the actual centerboard will make it a lot more difficult for the

challenger to attack and advance. As a consequence, treat involving your middle board would be a definite, remarkably valued advantage.

Since managing a specific centerboard, a well-finished, mentally stimulating starting game would certainly also allow your current main pieces to help you get out of this back row to be practiced for an approaching or even defensive reason. Also, the openings must protect concerning the king (like the castling king-side) as well as not holding a king in a very uncertain role.

There are a variety of tried and tested "principles" that should be kept to any time a good start is played actively. As follows:

Immediately advance your knights. Knights can approach many squares and are excellent for the defense of the middle board.

Don't develop chess pieces on one side only. This tends to encourage the competition to take advantage of the middle board. Sections of your board can be more of a profit.

Avoid attacks that are too serious. Keep in mind that there are opportunities in place to set up security placements.

Please start the backline. Let your essential pieces have room to breathe.

Typical openings include names like Sicilian Defense, British Beginning, Queens Gambit, 2 Knights Security, and more. All of these and other openings appear to be identified by a variety of opening outlets, magazines, and websites. When a player finds new opportunities, they will have a very welcoming weapon toolbox to set up against his or her opponent.

As a chess player, you tend to lose games from time to time — like other chess players.

The Bishop or the Knight (3 points) is worth three Pawns (3 points). When you give up the Knight and get three Pawns in return, you can make it more or less an even trade. When you lose a Knight (3 points) for only a Pawn (1 score), you have suffered material, and you should lose the game if you play against an expert.

When you win a Rook (5 points) for a Bishop or a Knight, you get (3 points), and you are said to have "won the Exchange." If you then lose a Rook (5 points) for a Bishop or a Knight (3 points), you have "lost the Exchange." The other important feature of reading a chess book is that you are familiar with chess notation and can count up to 8; this is not a question. You may have heard scare stories that make chess notation extremely difficult. This complexity of chess notation is a fallacy spread by people who are too lazy to learn how simple and logical it is.

There are a hundred words linked to Chess. When you, no doubt, live a hectic and busy life, having you to sit down and read every possible entry.

However, understanding the words will help you better understand this fascinating, 1400-year-old game. So, what we did was create a set of bite-sized collections of Chess Glossary terms.

Types of Openings

Openings can be divided into four types, depending on the pieces involved in your first few moves. These opening types are the following:

- King or Queen Pawn Openings – being the pieces at the front of each side during the start of the game, pawns are usually moved first. However, the most common would be moving the pawns directly in front of the Queen and/or the King. For White, their d and e pawns will be moving to the fourth row. Aside from providing an open space so that Bishops can be developed early on, the King or Queen opening enables the player to gain control of the center area.
- Gambit opening – a “gambit” in chess refers to a strategy wherein the player is offering “bait” (which is often an undefended pawn) to the opponent. This bait aims to entice the opponent into moving differently to gain a lead in developing the player’s pieces. A gambit opening can be Queen’s or King’s, depending on which side the bait originated. For example, if the opponent (who’s playing Black) matched your pawn to e4 move with a pawn to e5, you can move your King’s side pawn to f4, allowing Black to capture the pawn. If Black accepts the gambit, it will bring a development advantage to your side because you can now do a Queen Pawn opening to square d4 and further control the center. A gambit opening can also be used in combination with the other openings.
- Flank Openings – if, suppose you’re playing White, and your opening move doesn’t involve moving the King and Queen Pawns first, you are doing a flank opening. Pieces that are included in flank openings include moving any pawn on the side of Queen and King (squares a to c and f to h, respectively) or moving either of the two Knights.

- Irregular openings – opening moves that are rare and are not always observed in a game can be considered as an irregular opening. Mostly irregular openings involve the movement of the pawn that does not take advantage of the “two square moves” from their starting position.

By knowing the first moves of your opponent, you will have an idea as to the game plan that they are trying to accomplish to win the game.

White’s Opening Moves

White has the advantage of making the first move and being able to set the pace of the game. Thus, the right preparation must be made if they want to improve their chance of winning the game.

- Colle system

This opening strategy, which can also be called the Colle-Koltanowski system, was formulated by Edgar Colle during the 1920s and was improved by George Koltanowski.

The Colle system stemmed from the Queen Pawn opening and features the following moves (ignoring the moves of the opponent):

Move Queen’s pawn to d4

Kingside Knight moves to f3

King’s pawn to e3

Bishop on b1 moves to d3

Kingside castle

Castled rook moves to e1

C pawn moves to c3

Queenside Knight moves to d2

A pawn in e3 moves to e4

This image will help you to visualize what the board should look like when using the Colle system (before the pawn in e3 is moved to e4):

The order of the movements can be interchanged, as long as all pieces should be in place within 9 moves. The Colle system allows for a good way to develop your minor pieces (the Knight and the Bishop), gain some control of the center with the d4 pawn and a threat from the f3 horse on any piece that will occupy e5, open paths for your non-pawn pieces (especially the Queen), and move the King away from the center as early as possible.

- **Reti System**

Another opening system that was developed earlier than the Colle system but is still an effective opening method is the Reti system. Developed during the late 1800s by chess player Richard Reti, this opening only involves two moves for White.

White moves g1 Knight to f3 (Black will most likely move its Queenside pawn to d5)

White's C pawn moves to square c4.

In the Reti system, the board must look like this:

In this opening system, it is easy to observe that Reti applies the flank opening and combines it with a gambit, making use of the “wings” rather than a direct approach to control the center area. The movement of White’s Knight to f3 forces Black to avoid making the usual e5 pawn opening. If Black moves its Queenside pawn, the c4 pawn will be offered as a sacrifice to the opponent. Even with the early lead of Black in material (if it chooses to accept the bait), White will be provided with different opportunities. Since Black’s center control is gone due to the shift in the direction of its pawn, White can take control of the opponent’s half of the centerboard by simply advancing its pawns to d4 and e4 and no Black piece to immediately stop those moves. Another advantage would be that White can opt for an early check and a fork on the undefended pawn, forcing Black to make a move that does nothing to develop its other pieces.

Many other variations or defensive movements have stemmed from the Reti system, making it difficult for opponents to predict what you’ll be doing in your succeeding moves.

- **London system**

This opening system was named as such because it was mostly used during the 1922 tournament in London. This system makes use of the Queen's pawn opening but does not combine it with the Queen's gambit (which is a common opening move). The system shares similarities with the Reti system in the sense that it also develops the Knight early on, followed by the Queenside Bishop.

The variations of this system depend on the move of Black. However, if Black's movements are ignored, this opening system can be applied by making the following moves:

Advance Queen's pawn to d4

Knight in g1 moves to f3

Queenside Bishop moves to f4

This image shows what the board looks like if the system was successfully used:

The use of the London system presents early advantages on the side of White. First would be the obvious advantage of using the Queen's pawn opening, which leads to automatic protection to one of your pawns. Another is that the second and third move easily develops your Kingside Knight and Queenside Bishop, allowing you to check on other

pieces that Black would want to develop, making the opening system also usable by those who are looking to attack. The pawns on c2 and e2 can also be advanced one square as the game progresses, allowing you to bolster your defense in the center and protect the King (aside from castling) while giving you room to develop your remaining minor pieces and the Queen.

- **Stonewall attack**

To prevent your opponent from getting to your King, you will need to provide a good defense. If you are interested in a defense-based game plan, what you need is the Stonewall attack opening.

This system also utilizes the Queen's Pawn opening and doesn't utilize the Queen's Gambit. But along with the Queen's pawn, this system involves moving the other pawns in the center in such a way that they are protected, either by other pawns or the minor pieces. The pawn's position in the center also allows for open lanes so that White can also guard any attacks from the flank.

To execute this opening, the following moves must be followed:

Queen's pawn to d4

King's pawn to e3

Kingside Bishop to d3

C pawn to c3

F pawn to f4

If the moves are followed properly, the board must look like this:

Using the Stonewall attack allows White to guard whatever it is that will come to the center square with its pawns, allowing it to capture opponent pieces that will attempt to occupy the said area and provide the pieces with enough protection. This makes it difficult for Black to penetrate White with a direct approach. Unfortunately, flank attacks are also checked by White's long-range pieces. And even if Black does manage to start an attack on the King's side, it can easily be shut close by the pawns in columns g and h.

Chapter 2: Tricks for Successful Opening

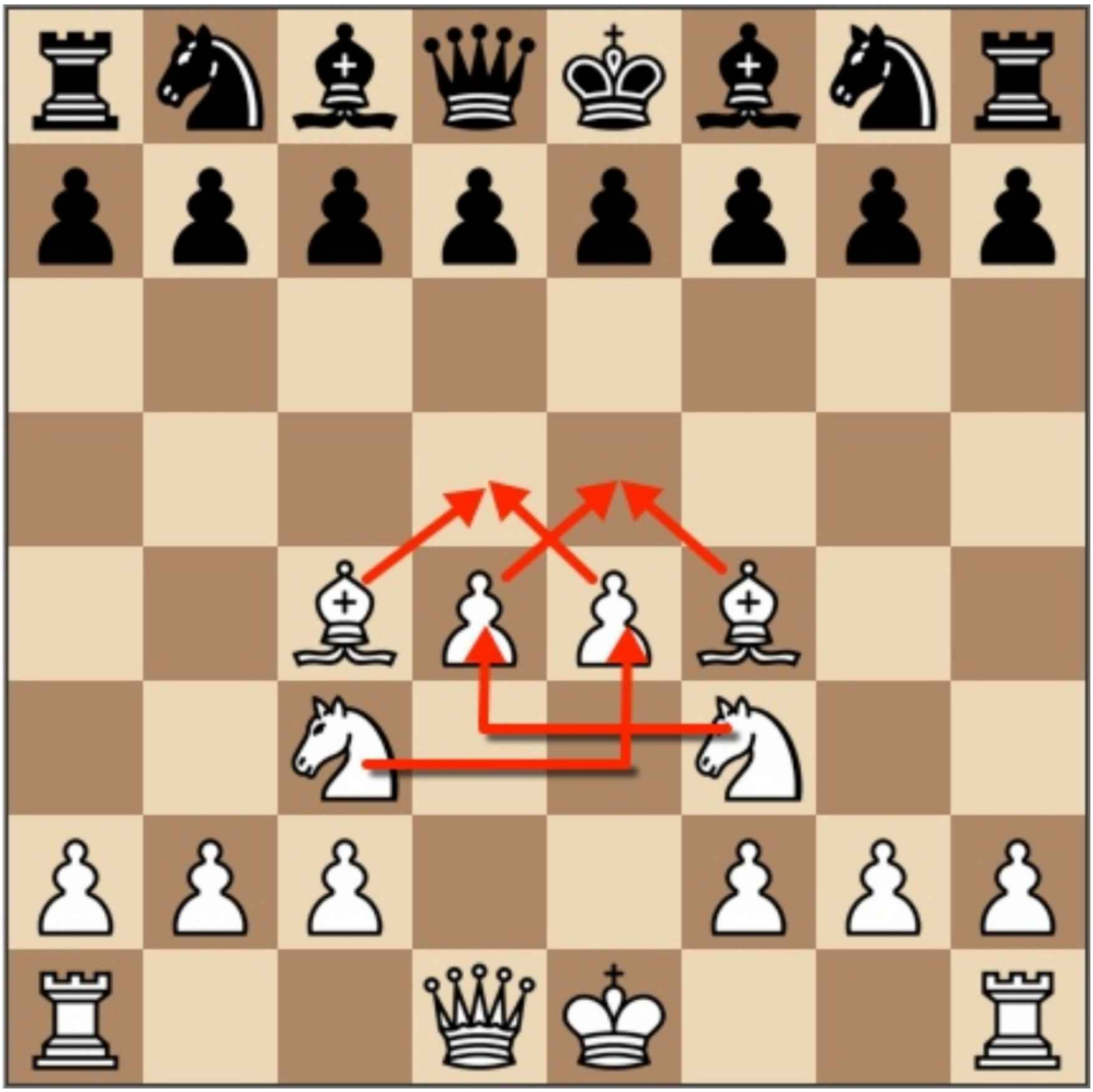
Control the Center

In the first five moves of the game, you're unlikely to take any of your opponent's pieces without losing one of your own. So, you want to fight for the next best thing: The Center. Whoever controls the center controls the game.

Just to refresh. What do I mean by the center? *In the picture below*, I've highlighted the four squares that make up the center.

At the beginning of the game, every move you make should fight to control those four squares. Most likely your first move will be one of those center Pawns followed by your Knights and your Bishops. *In the picture below*, I

show what your pieces would look like if they were developed to target those four squares.



Why is it so important to control the center?

Let’s use an analogy to another sport. In Soccer, have you ever seen a team fight to protect the sidelines? Have you ever seen a goalie stand in the corner of the goal while an opponent drives up the middle? I hope for your sports enjoyment’s sake you have not.

Here’s another analogy. In Football, your Pawns are like your Offensive line. If your Offensive line fails to control the center of the line of scrimmage, an opposing player is likely to run through and sack your Quarterback.

Center control is closely related to development. They’re two sides of one coin. If you control the center, it makes it hard for your opponent to develop his pieces past the center or move his good pieces toward your King. The center is the fastest and easiest place to damage your opponent from. So, the person who controls it has far more opportunities to attack.

The *image below* shows a real beginner game where Black has firm control of the center while White has not even tried. Notice that the four squares in the middle are either taken or protected by Black.

Now I'm going to show the effects Blacks' control of the center has over White.

In the *image above*, Black is dominating the center of the board. See the corresponding letters in the *image above* to get a visual of what I'm talking about:

Exhibit A: White's Knight would love to move down and gobble up Black's Pawn and Fork the Queen and Rook, but White would lose his Knight. If he had another piece to Protect his Knight (like a Bishop) he would fare much better. But since Black controls the center, White has no chance of bringing in a Bishop or any other piece.

Exhibit B: White's two Bishops *(Circled above)* are both stuck behind Pawns. White's Queenside Bishop could move down and attack Black's Bishop, but best-case scenario they would cancel each other out.

Exhibit C: White's Knight is pinned to the King, so it can't move. Again, not helping White's cause.

Exhibit D: White moves the Rook Pawns, presumably to make room for his Rook. But all it's really done is wasted precious opening moves. His Rook is still stuck.

In summary, when you control the center, you have more moves available to you. YOU make the choices about how the game proceeds, which you can convert into winning unequal trades.

Develop your Pieces

Developing your Pieces is moving your attacking pieces toward your enemy. In the Opening, the main pieces you want to develop are your Bishops and Knights. We develop these pieces first because they help to control the center and put pressure on the enemy camp at the same time.

Why not the Rook or the Queen? You don't want to develop your Rooks or your Queen in the Opening for two reasons: First, they're too valuable to develop first. If you move your Queen out or somehow manage to move your Rook out, you'll spend the Opening trying to defend them instead of developing your other pieces and controlling the center.

In the case of your Rooks, it simply takes too long to move the pieces out of the way to develop your Rook. So, you might as well develop your Bishops and Knights first. Then you can Castle and moving your Rook is a lot easier.

Here are some sub-principles of *Developing your Pieces.*

1. Avoid moving the same piece twice.

Within the first 5 moves, you don't want to move the same piece twice. Every time you move a piece twice you lose an opportunity to develop the rest of your pieces and your enemy has a chance to get closer.

The only time to move your piece twice is when you're going to lose the piece for no good reason. But the more you play, the less this happens.

2. Develop your Pieces to Protect your Other Pieces

In order to control the center, you'll want to protect the pieces that are in the Center. Remember the bullhead image I showed you in *Control the Center?* Those pieces are all protecting other pieces that are in the center and they are protected by other pieces. That's how you ensure your opponent can't take

your centerpieces. It's kind of like Jenga. If you leave too many pieces dangling unsupported, your whole structure is going to come down.

3. Stay on your Half of the Board

When I show you my top-secret opening, I'm going to show you how you can break this rule. But for now, just know that you want to stay on your own half of the board (the half closest to you) in the first five moves because that's how you're going to maintain control of the center and keep your King safe.

4. Don't block your own Pieces

It's important to know anyway. *Don't block your own pieces.*

For the same reason you need to control the center, you don't want to block your own pieces so you can develop as many pieces as possible. Of course, sometimes your opponent will FORCE you to block your own pieces. But you certainly shouldn't do it without a fight.

5. Develop your Knights Before your Bishops

This is a rule of thumb. This principle assumes Knights are more valuable than Bishops at the beginning of the game. Knights are great at the beginning of the game because they can jump over other pieces. Since there are more pieces to jump over in the beginning as opposed to the end, this makes them more valuable. Also, Knights tend to protect Bishops, and it doesn't usually work the other way around.

Castle Early, Castle Often

I go over this more in-depth in 8 Easy Principles, but I want to touch on it briefly here. You want to Castle as early as possible. This opens up your Rook, protects your King, and frees up your Queen. In general, you want to castle within the first ten moves.

Don’t Move your Queen

It’s important not to move your Queen. Not even one space unless you absolutely must. Moving your Queen sets you up for problems. Remember, your Queen protects your King and your other pieces.

Each of these principles is a guideline to keep you on track for taking control of the center and taking control of the game. There are always situations where following the guideline might not be the best thing for you. So, you must develop the experience to know when you should follow it and when you shouldn’t. I highly recommend that if you’re learning openings, start out by following the rules, so you know what it looks and feels like. Later, you’ll know when to sacrifice for the greater good.

Chapter 3: The Most Popular Openings

King's Pawn Opening / The Open Game

Known as the King's Pawn Opening, this is by far white's most popular choice historically and empirically. *1. e4* has proven a favorite opening move by some of the biggest names in chess. It is easy to see why the move accomplishes all of the main goals we set out for our opening. It controls the key central squares *d5* and *f5*, as well as allowing the development of two of our pieces, the bishop and the knight. It is for this reason that it should come as no surprise that three of our example openings are King's Pawn mainline variations. When black replies back with the move *1...e5*, this is called the Open Game.

King's Gambit (1. e4 e5 2. f4)

A historically very popular opening, especially around the 19***th*** century when this opening saw a lot of play. It has since fallen out of favor somewhat, but is still worth mentioning to beginners as it keeps to our core opening principles and has a lot of solid theory and evidence to support its success.

The mainline starts off:

1. e4e5

2. f4

Immediately white contests the center with the sharp pawn advance *f4*. A little bit of lingo here for this opening: *a gambit is a sacrifice for some other advantage*. In this position, black can simply capture the pawn on *f4* immediately if they so choose as white is not defending their *f4* pawn. There are two main variations to the King's Gambit depending on whether or not blacks accept this sacrifice. They are therefore named the *King's Gambit Accepted* if black chooses to take the pawn on *f4*, or the *King's*

Gambit Declined, should black instead choose to protect their now threatened *e5* pawn. Let's start off with the King's Gambit Accepted to try and learn why white would ever want to give a pawn away in the first place.

King's Gambit Accepted

With the moves:

1. e4e5

2. f4exf4

We have reached the first position in the King's Gambit Accepted. It is white’s turn to play now. If you remember back to our discussion about controlling the center, white was very happy to have pawns on both *d4* and *e4* as this gave them very excellent control of the middle of the board, as well as options for all of their minor pieces to develop naturally. We will cover what *d4* brings to the table in a lot more detail in the Queen's Gambit Opening. This is the most usual continuation for white, but sometimes white will instead elect to play *Nf3* followed by *Bc4* next turn to both stop black from advancing their *f4* pawn, as well as to prepare to castle immediately.

King's Gambit Declined

After:

1. e4e5

2. f4bc5

This is the King's Gambit Declined – Classical Defense. Black has developed his bishop, as well as interfered with white's attempt to castle – as you cannot castle through check. You may be wondering why white wouldn't simply capture the black *e5* pawn after black neglects to protect it. Let's take a look at what happens if white takes the pawn.

1. fxe5?? Qh4+

Suddenly white is in some real trouble. They are either going to lose the rook after:

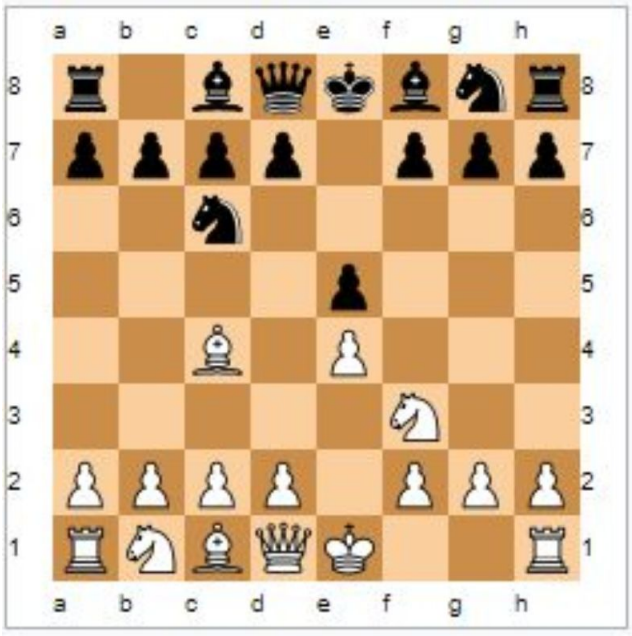
2. g3Qxe4+

Notice how both the King and the Rook are being attacked? This is a tactic called *a fork*. Because black has forked white's king and rook, black is going to have to move his king and lose the rook.

If instead, white tries to run, the game ends swiftly:

Ke2 Qxe4#

Italian Game (1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4)



A historic opening, containing over 500 years of recorded games, it has been studied by many of the biggest names in chess history. The characteristic move of this opening is the move:

1. e4e5
2. Nf3Nc6
3. Bc4

Sometimes referred to as the Italian Bishop. These games are very often sharp attacking games with white trying to focus on the poorly defended *f7* square (only the king defends it at the start of the game).

Also, note how white has started developing an attack while, at the same time, preparing to defend with a castle king-side at any moment. A hallmark of high-level chess is accomplishing several goals with just one move.

Black, on the other hand, will usually try a strong counterattack in order to try and prove white was overzealous in their efforts. While more modern variations such as the Ruy Lopez have gained popularity, it is still worth examining this opening as there are great attacking chances for both sides. The two main variations branch depending on how black decides to respond after white moves their bishop. After *3...Bc5* we reach a position known as the *Giuoco Piano,* and after *3...Nf6* we instead reach a position called the *Two Knights Defense*. We will be exploring each one separately.

Giuoco Piano

The Giuoco Piano mainline continues as follows:

1. e4e5

2. Nf3Nc6

3. Bc4Bc5- Giuoco Piano with Bc5

4. c3

White is playing *c3* in order to prepare the move *d4*, grabbing vital central spaces away from black. Black will usually try to either counterattack with the aggressive move *4...Nf6* or hold on to their central control with the move *4...Qe7*. Note that while this is a queen move in the early game, it doesn't violate our opening principles here, because the queen is being used far back on the 7***th*** rank, as a support for her more forward pieces. This is a great and safe way to activate your queen without putting her in immediate danger.

Two Knights Defense

The Two Knights Defense starts out with:

1. e4e5

2. Nf3Nc6

3. Bc4Nf6

The most obvious attacking continuation is to continue with move *4. Ng5*. White is increasing the pressure on that *f7* square and threatening to win a pawn by force, as well as messing up black's hopes of castling. The usual reply from black is:

4.4 Ng5d5

From this position, white has little option but to take on d5 as his bishop, and e4 pawn are both under attack. After this, there are several different variations we will discuss later on.

However, black can instead try the exciting move:

4. Ng5Bc5

This is a dangerous counterattack from black. He is ignoring the mounting pressure upon the *f7* square in favor of developing some counterattacking potential. White has three main variations: *5. d4*, *5. Bxf7+*, and *5. Nxf7*.

Ruy Lopez (1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5)

It can be said that the Ruy Lopez is the go-to option for many professional chess players when it comes to the Open Game (1 e4 e5). Unless black plays with perfection, it can be very tough for them to achieve equality. This is one of the key reasons why many black players choose to use the Sicilian Defense in response to *1. e4* instead.

After *3. Bb5*, let's take a moment to analyze the relationship between white's bishop and black's knight. Imagine for a moment that the pawn on *d7* didn't exist or had already moved to *d6 or d5*. If you notice, white's bishop would attack black's knight and have the king lined up right behind it. This maneuver is called *a pin*. Pinned pieces can't move, or they will expose a valuable piece of it (King, Queen, or Rook usually, but pawns can be pinned to other pieces too!) to danger. Black someday has hopes of making a break in the center with a move like *d5*, but with the white bishop

attacking the black knight, that is an issue for black to think about. Let's see how black typically like to respond:

1. e4e5

2. Nf3Nc6

3. *Bb5a6*-

Morphy Defense

Named after the great chess player Paul Morphy during the 1800s, this is the most popular response for white. This move forces white to clarify their intent with move *b5*. If he wishes to trade a bishop for a knight, black has taken no steps to prevent this exchange. If white retreats back to *c4*, black has won a tempo back from white by forcing him to move his bishop twice.

The most common line is called the *Closed Defense* and goes as follows:

4. Ba4Nf6

5. O-OBe7

Ba4 from white to retreat away from the attacking pawn. Note that black can still, at any time, kick the bishop away with the move b5. In some variations, the white bishop may find itself trapped in the corner, and care must be taken to allow room to escape a possible *b5* pawn thrust by black at any moment. *Nf6* increases black's central pressure by attacking the *e4* pawn, as well as supporting that *d5* move black has in the back of their mind. White castles away to safety and black develops his bishop and prepares for a king-side castle of his own.

Queen's Pawn Opening / Closed Game

White starts the game off with the great move *d4* and achieves several of our goals for the opening. White again occupies a central square with a pawn and attacks the two important central squares in *c5* and *e5*. Also, white can now look to develop their queen-side bishop as the pawn has moved to allow the bishop to move. It's a bit far away yet, but this move does also contribute to king safety in the sense that it is the first of several moves that white could use to facilitate a queen-side castle.

Although there are several good replies for black, very often black will choose to occupy his central space with a pawn on *d5*, and there the Close Game has been reached. All the same good things that applied for white apply to black as well, so black feels very comfortable in staking a claim in the center in this way. Next, we will explore a mainline called the Queen's Gambit. One of the oldest and most exciting chess openings, as it features exciting chances for both sides.

Queen's Gambit (1. d4 d5 2. c4)

The Queen's Gambit is one of the oldest studied openings with well over 500 years of written history to support it. Another gambit opening which, if you remember from the King's Gambit, means some kind of sacrifice in material for a positional advantage.

Play starts out:

1. d4d5
2. c4

Right away, white is telling black that he intends to fight for the middle seriously. He is offering an undefended wing pawn on *c4* in exchange for that ever-tempting double pawn center of *d4* and *e4*. The difference is, unlike the King's Gambit that takes place on the relatively undefended king's side, this gambit takes place on the queen's side, and that means the queen can get involved much more readily if the need arises. Because of this difference, it is not a true gambit, as black can't actually hold on to their

pawn on *c4* after the exchange, which we will cover below. Just like the King's Gambit, the Queen's Gambit has two mainline variations depending on whether or not the offer on *c4* is accepted by black, and they are called *Queen's Gambit Accepted* and *Queen's Gambit Declined*.

Chapter 4: Response to Opening Moves

Responding to the Opening Move: e4

The following openings all start with the most played opening move: e4.

The Sicilian Defense

The Sicilian defense is one of the most popular openings played by black in response to white's

White plays e4 to open the game. Black responds with c5, taking control of both the d4 and the b4 squares. Consequently, black has some control over the center of the board and limits white's mobility in that area.

White usually continues with the move Nf3, gaining control of the e5 and d4 squares (control of the center). Black then responds with d6 defending the c5 pawn and preparing Nf6 to attack white's e4 pawn.

White then plays d4, attacking black's c5 pawn in the center and giving black the option to play cxd4. This would temporarily double black's pawns on the d file and thus damages his pawn structure. After 3. d4 cxd4, the game could continue with 4. Nxd4, Nf6, 5. Nc3 and so on.

e4 move. The opening goes as follows:

Advantages (for black):

- Allows black to gain some control in the center of the board
- Limits white's mobility in the center
- Gives black good chances of attack

From black's perspective, the Sicilian defense is a good, offensive opening. It helps him play for a win.

Disadvantages (for black):

- White has numerous options to counterattack and win the game
- In many variations of this opening, white gets great attacking chances

Example: Boris Spassky VS Bobby Fischer, 1972

This game was played in Reykjavik, Iceland, in 1972. Spassky had white pieces, and Fischer had black pieces.

White (Spassky) opened the game with e4 and black (Fischer) responded with c5.

White then played Nf3 developing his knight. Black responded with d6 defending his c5 pawn.

White continued with d4 as expected, attacking black's c5 pawn. Black defended his pawn by playing cxd4 capturing white's attacking pawn and temporarily doubling his pawns on the d file.

White equalized materially by playing Nxd4, and black responded with Nf6 attacking white's d4 pawn.

So white played Nc3 defending his e4 pawn and developing his second knight. Black responded with a6 to prevent white from playing Nb5.

White continued with Bg5 developing his dark-squared bishop and attacking black's c6 knight. Black played e6 opening a door for his dark-squared bishop to come into the game. Note that black's knight is pinned (relative pin) as moving it would result in white capturing black's queen, which is his most powerful piece.

White then played c4 preparing to play e5 and attack black's f6 knight. Black responded with Qb6 attacking white's undefended b2 pawn. In this position, white has a few options to defend his pawn. He can play Qc1 or b3.

But white ignored black's threat and played Qd2 instead allowing black to capture his b2 pawn. Black played Qxb2 as expected, winning a pawn and attacking white's undefended rook on a1.

To defend his rook, white played Nb3 taking control of the a1 square. Black played queen a3, taking his queen out of the b file which white could attack next with Rb1.

Spassky won the game in 81 moves.

The French Defense

This is another very popular opening played by black in response to white's e4 move. It is named after an 1834 correspondence game between the cities of London and Paris during which this opening was used. It goes as follows:

White plays e4 to open the game. Black responds with e6, preparing to counter the e4 pawn with a d5 move.

White usually continues with d4, which black meets with d5.

White then plays Nc3, developing his knight and defending his e4 pawn.

Advantages (for black):

- Creates a sound structure with a solid pawn chain
- Creates possibilities for counter-attack

Disadvantages (for black):

- Gives black a space disadvantage
- Blocks black's light-squared bishop from reaching the center of the board

This is my personal favorite opening when playing with black. It is very safe and easy to remember.

Example: Alexander Alekhine VS Max Euwe, 1936

This game was played in Nottingham, England, in 1936. Alekhine had white pieces, and Euwe had black pieces.

White (Alekhine) opened the game by playing e4. Black (Euwe) responded with e6 preparing d5.

White then played d4 and black responded with d5 as planned, attacking white's e4 pawn.

White continued with e5 taking his pawn away from danger and keeping the center of the board closed. Black responded with c5 attacking white's d4 pawn. Max Euwe (Black) started aggressively.

White then played Nf3 defending his d4 pawn and developing his knight. Black played Nc6, developing his knight and adding one more attacker to white's d4 pawn. In this position, if white does not add a defender to his d4 pawn, he will lose it. A good defensive move could be c3.

However, Alekhine chose to ignore the threat and to sacrifice his d4 pawn for the sake of quick development. He played Bd3, developing his light-squared bishop and clearing the space on the first rank to castle king side. Black accepted white's sacrifice and captured his d4 pawn by playing cxd4. Black now has a 1-pawn material advantage over white, but has a temporarily damaged pawn structure with doubled pawns on the d file.

White castled king side as expected. Black continued with f6 attacking yet another one of white's pawns. Black's goal in this position is for white to play exf6 to which black would respond with Nxf6. This would put black in an excellent position as it would remove all of white's pawns from the center of the board and develop an additional piece (the knight) for black.

So, to avoid improving black's position, white played Bb5 instead, attacking black's c6 knight. Black responded with Bd7 developing his light-squared bishop.

White then went for a piece exchange and played bxc6, to which black responded with bxc6.

White finally decided to equalize materially and played Qxd4 developing his queen and capturing black's d4 pawn. Note that black no longer has doubled pawns on the d file but that material is now equal. Black continued with fxe5 attacking white's queen. White's next move will be to capture black's e5 pawn, which he can do by playing Qxe5 or Nxe5.

Euwe won the game in 81 moves.

The Caro-Kann Defense

This opening gets its name from Horatio Caro and Marcus Kann, who analyzed it in 1886. It goes as follows:

White plays e4 to open the game. Black responds with c6. This gives black the possibility to play d5 next.

White typically continues with d4, gaining space on the board and fighting for the control of the center. Black meets this move with d5, attacking white's e4 pawn and fighting back for the control of the center.

White then plays Nc3, developing his knight, defending his e4 pawn, and assisting his pawns in the fight for the control of the center.

Advantages (for black):

- Creates a neat pawn structure for black
- Frees up black's light square bishop for quicker development
- Helps black fight for the control of the center

Disadvantages (for black):

- Can lead to a space disadvantage for black
- Can allow white to develop faster

There are numerous ways to continue the game from this point, but this is usually how Caro-Kann games go in the beginning.

Example: Paul Keres VS Osmo Kaila, 1943

This game was played in Helsinki, Finland, in 1943. Keres had white pieces, and Kaila had black pieces.

White (Keres) opened the game by playing e4. Kaila (black) responded with c6.

White then played d4, gaining space on the board. Black responded with d5, attacking white's e4 pawn. In this position, white can defend his pawn by capturing black's attacking pawn, or by playing a defensive move like f3 or Nc3.

White chose Nc3, developing his knight and defending the e4 pawn. Black played dxe4, capturing white's pawn as expected.

White continued with Nxe4, centering his knight and recapturing black's pawn. Black responded with Bf5, attacking white's undefended e4 knight. Again, white has many options for defending the knight such as Qd3, Qe2, Bd3, or f3. He can also move his knight away from attacking by playing moves like Nc3 or Ng3.

White chose to play Ng3, taking his knight out of danger and attacking black's light-squared bishop on f5. Black had to move his bishop a second time to preserve it, so he played Bg6.

White continued with Ne2 developing his second knight. Black played Nf6, also developing his knight.

White then played Nf4, moving the same piece again but attacking black's light-squared bishop on g6. In this position, black runs the risk of damaging his pawn structure if white chooses to play Nxg6. Black ignored that risk and played e5, attacking both white's f4 knight and d4 pawn.

White played Nxg6 as expected. In this position, black has two options for capturing white's knight which are fxg6 and hxg6. Both options lead to a damaged pawn structure but one is better than the other. Black played the correct one, which is hxg6 doubling the pawns on the g file. This move is better than fxg6 because it is recommended to capture towards the center instead of capturing towards the edges of the board.

White continued with dxe5, attacking white's f6 knight. However, this move has a downside. It opened the d file for black's queen, who now has the option to capture white's queen while putting white's king in check. This is the move that black played (Qxd1), putting white's king in check. White's next move can only be Kxd1, which causes white to lose his castling rights and affects the safety of his king.

Keres won the game in 38 moves.

The Fried Liver Attack

This is a well-known variation of the Italian opening that all beginners should know about to avoid getting tricked. It goes as follows:

White starts the game with e4 and black responds with e5.

White then plays Nf3 and black responds with Nc6.

White continues with Bc4 and black plays Nf6. So far, we have the standard Italian opening.

The next move of the Fried Liver Attack is Ng5. Take a close look at this position. Note that black's f7 pawn is being attacked by two of white's pieces: his g5 knight and his c4 bishop. Furthermore, black cannot defend the pawn with his king as the king cannot move to a square controlled by an opposing piece. So, in this position, black must be very careful to prevent white from playing two dangerous winning moves.

For instance, if black is not careful and plays a random move like d6, white could play Nxf7 forking both black's queen and h8 rook. Again, black's king cannot capture on f7 as the square is controlled by white's c4 bishop. So black has no option to capture white's knight. This means that black will inevitably lose his queen or his rook depending on which piece he chooses to save.

Naturally, black saves his queen, as it is his most powerful piece and plays a move like Qd2. White then plays Nxh8 capturing black's rook and establishing a material advantage. From this position, the game usually goes downhill for black as white poses numerous threats such as Bf7, forcing black's king to move and lose castling rights.

Let us go back to this position. What if, instead of playing d6, black anticipated white's Nxf7 move and played Qe7, preventing the fork from white's knight?

Then after Qe7, white would play Bxf7 putting black's king in check. Black would then have two options for defending his king. He could play Qxf7, to which white would respond with Nxf7 capturing black's queen and establishing a significant material advantage.

Or, he could play a much more reasonable move which is Kd8, but he would lose his castling rights and affect the safety of his king for the rest of the game.

In other words, the Fried Liver Attack can be deadly and must be defended against carefully. The move played by Fischer in the game above (d5) is an excellent way to defend against it. The Fried Liver Attack can also be prevented from earlier moves by playing h6, for instance, to make the move Ng5 impossible.

The Sicilian Defense: Closed Variation

This is one of the many variations of the Sicilian defense.

White opens the game by playing e4. Black responds with c5.

White then plays Nc3, developing his knight, and black responds with Nc6.

White continues with g3, clearing the path for his light-squared bishop to come into the game. This is called a bishop "fianchetto," which we will go over shortly. Black responds with g6 preparing to fianchetto his dark-squared bishop.

Advantage (for white):

- Much simpler to play than the open Sicilian

Disadvantages (for white):

- Allows black to keep control over the d4 square
- Allows black to quickly and comfortably develop his pieces

Example: Anatoly Karpov VS Jan Smejkal, 1966

This game was played in Trinec, Czech Republic, in 1966. Karpov had white pieces, and Smejkal had black pieces.

White (Karpov) opened the game by playing e4. Black (Smejkal) responded with c5.

White continued with Nc3 and black played Nc6, both developing their knights.

White then played g3, preparing to fianchetto his light-squared bishop. Black played g6, preparing to fianchetto his dark-squared bishop.

White played Bg2, fianchettoing his bishop as planned. Black responded with Rb8, adding a defender to his b pawn and preparing to play b5.

White continued with d3, clearing the path for his dark-squared bishop to come into the game. Black played b5 as planned. Black is planning to play b6 attacking white's c3 knight.

White played Be3, developing his bishop as planned. Black responded with the expected b6 move attacking white's c3 knight. White now must get his knight away from danger.

White did so by playing Ne2. Black continued with Bg7, fianchettoing his dark-squared bishop as planned.

White then played Qc1, connecting his queen to his bishop on e3. The purpose of this move is to then play Bh6 and exchange dark-squared bishops. Generally, the dark-squared bishop is considered a more valuable piece to black than it is to white.

White continued with f4, fighting for the control of the center. This can also help open files later in the game.

Karpov won the game in 28 moves.

The Sicilian Defense: Alapin Variation

This is yet another variation of the Sicilian defense.

White plays e4 to open the game. Black responds with c5.

White then plays c4, clearing the path for his queen to come into the game and allowing himself to play d4 next. Black responds with Nf6, attacking white's e4 pawn and developing his knight.

To defend his e4 pawn, white pushes it to e5, attacking black's knight. Black now must take his knight out of danger, so he plays Nd5.

Advantages (for white):

- Forces black to move his knight twice in a row
- Can delay black's piece development

Disadvantages (for white):

- Blocks the c3 square, temporarily removing the option for the move Nc3
- Does not develop any piece in the beginning, leading to slow development

Example: Evgeny Sveshnikov VS Lev O Alburt, 1968

This game was played in Odessa, Ukraine, in 1968. Sveshnikov had white pieces, and Alburt had black pieces.

White (Sveshnikov) opened the game by playing e4. Black (Alburt) responded with c5.

White then played c3 and black responded with Nf6, attacking white's e4 pawn.

White defended his pawn by pushing it to e5, attacking black's f6 knight. Black responded with Nd5, taking his knight away from danger.

White continued with d4, attacking black's c5 pawn. Black responded with cxd4, capturing white's attacking pawn.

White recaptured black's pawn with cxd4. Black responded with d6 attacking white's e5 pawn.

White then played Nf3, developing his knight and adding an extra defender to his e5 pawn to prevent black from capturing it. Black responded with Nc6, adding an extra attacker to white's e5 pawn.

White continued with Nc3, developing his second knight which black captured immediately by playing Nxc3, attacking white's queen.

White played bxc3, recapturing black's knight. Black played e6, opening a door for his dark-squared bishop and thus adding a defender to his d6 pawn.

White then played Bf4, adding a defender to his e5 pawn and adding pressure to black's d6 pawn. Black responded with Qa5, threatening to play Qxc3 (check) and winning a pawn. This move also adds pressure to white's e5 pawn.

The game resulted in a draw after 61 moves.

The Scandinavian Defense

This is one of the oldest recorded openings and is believed to have been played in Spain during the 15th century.

White plays e4 to open the game. Black responds with d5, attacking white's e4 pawn.

White defends his e4 pawn by capturing black's attacking d5 pawn.

Black then recaptures white's d5 pawn with his queen by playing Qxd5. Typically, white continues with Nc3, attacking black's d5 queen and forcing black to move his queen for the second time in a row.

Advantages (for black):

- Attacks from the beginning
- Opens the game
- Typically clears the path for black's bishops to come into the game

Disadvantages (for black):

- Black must bring his queen out early in order to recapture on d5
- Recapturing slows down black's development

Example: Eduard Gufeld VS David Bronstein, 1975

This game was played in Kishinev, Moldova, in 1975. Gufeld had white pieces, and Bronstein had black pieces.

White (Gufeld) opened the game by playing e4. Black (Bronstein) responded with d5, attacking white's d4 pawn and challenging white to play exd5.

White accepted the challenge and played exd5. Black recaptured white's pawn by playing Qxd5.

White continued with Nc3, attacking black's d5 queen and forcing it to move again. Black moved his queen as expected by playing Qa5, losing tempo.

White continued with d4, clearing a path for his dark-squared bishop to come into the game. Black responded with Nf6, developing his knight.

White then played Nf3, also developing his knight. Black responded with Bg4, developing his light-squared bishop, attacking white's knight, and pinning it (with a relative pin). If white moves his f3 knight, he loses his queen.

So white played h3, attacking black's light-squared bishop. Black went for the piece exchange and played Bxf3, capturing white's knight and attacking his queen. White now has two options for capturing black's bishop. He can play gxf3 or Qxf3.

White played the better move, Qxf3, developing his queen and maintaining a neat pawn structure. Black responded with c6.

White then played Bd2, developing his dark-squared bishop and preparing to attack black's queen. This move also clears the space on the first rank for white to castle queenside. Black played Nd7, developing his second knight.

White castled queenside as planned and white played e6, clearing the path for his dark-squared bishop to come into the game.

Gufeld won the game in 38 moves.

The Pirc Defense

This opening is named after Slovenian Grandmaster Vasja Pirc.

White plays e4 to open the game. Black responds with d6, opening a door for his light-squared bishop.

White continues with d4, gaining space on the board and black responds with Nf6, developing his knight and attacking white's e4 pawn.

White then plays Nc3, developing his knight and defending his e4 pawn. Black typically continues with g6, preparing to fianchetto his dark-squared bishop.

Advantages (for black):

- A very active defense that limits white's attacking power in the beginning
- Good for setting up tricky attacks
- Good for piece development

Disadvantages (for black):

- Due to the popularity of the opening, white has many known ways to combat the Pirc's defense

Example: Anthony J. Miles VS Yasser Seirawan, 1986

This game was played in Linares, Spain, in 1986. Miles had white pieces, and Seirawan had black pieces.

White (Miles) opened the game by playing e4. Black (Seirawan) responded with d6, opening a space for his light-squared bishop.

White continued with d4, gaining space on the board, and black responded with Nf6, attacking white's e4 pawn.

White then played Nc3, defending his e4 pawn and developing his knight. Black played g6, preparing to fianchetto his dark-squared bishop.

White played Nf3, developing his second knight and defending his d4 pawn from future attacks. Black responded with Bg4, attacking white's knight and pining it (in a relative pin). If white moves his knight, he loses his queen. In other words, white's f3 knight can no longer defend his d4 pawn.

White continued with Be3, developing his dark-squared bishop and adding a defender to his d4 pawn. Black fianchettoed his bishop as planned, indirectly targeting white's d4 pawn. In this position, black is ready to castle kingside.

White played Be2, developing his light-squared bishop. At this point, white can also castle kingside. Black castled kingside as planned.

Instead of castling, white continued with Qd2, developing his queen first. In this position, white has cleared all the space on the first rank between his king and rooks. He can castle both kingside or queenside. Black played Nc6, developing his second knight and attacking white's d4 pawn.

White still did not castle and played h3 instead, attacking black's light-squared bishop. Black could have preserved his light-squared bishop by playing a move like Be6, but he decided to go for the piece exchange instead and captured white's f3 knight by playing Bxf3. Many chess players believe that a bishop pair is more valuable than a pair of knights, but Seirawan thought otherwise in this position.

White recaptured black's bishop as expected by playing Bxf3, maintaining a neat pawn structure (as opposed to playing gxf3 and doubling the pawns on the f file). Black responded with e5, adding another attacker to white's d4 pawn. This could also potentially open the d file in future moves.

Miles won the game in 33 moves.

The Alekhine Defense

This opening is named after chess grandmaster Alexander Alekhine. Alekhine was the fourth world chess champion.

White plays e4 to open the game. Black responds with Nf6, attacking white's e4 pawn.

To defend his e4 pawn, white plays e5, attacking black's f6 knight. Black now must defend his knight, so he moves it by playing Nd5.

White continues with d4, supporting his e5 pawn and gaining space on the board. Black responds with d3, attacking white's e5 pawn.

Advantages (for black):

- Very uncommon opening, which can make it harder to play against

Disadvantages (for black):

- Black must move the same knight multiple times.
- White can quickly gain significant space on the board.

Example: Michael F. Stean VS Jan H. Timman, 1970

This game was played in Islington, England, in 1970. Stean had white pieces, and Timman had black pieces.

White (Stean) opened the game by playing e4. Black (Timman) responded with Nf6, attacking white's e4 pawn. In this position, white has numerous ways to defend his e4 pawn. He could play defensive moves like Nc3, d3, or f3.

However, white chose to go for the attack and pushed his pawn to e5, attacking black's f6 knight. Black defended his knight by playing Nd5, moving the same piece twice in row to place it on a safer square.

White then played d4, defending his e5 pawn from future attacks. Black responded with d6, attacking white's e5 pawn.

Since his e5 pawn was already defended, white continued with c4, gaining space on the board and fighting for control in the center. Black then played Nb6 and attacking white's c4 pawn, which is defended by white's light-squared bishop on f1.

White played exd6 and black responded with cxd6 (capturing towards the center as recommended).

White continued with Nc3, developing his knight, and black responded with g6, preparing to fianchetto his dark-squared bishop.

White then played h3 to prevent black from playing Bg4 in the future. White was also preparing to develop his knight to f3 and did not want it to get pinned by black's light-squared bishop. Black fianchettoed his dark-squared bishop as planned. In this position, black is ready to castle kingside.

White then played Nf3 as expected, developing his second knight. Black castled kingside as planned.

White continued with Be2 developing his light-squared bishop and clearing the space on the first rank for his king to castle kingside. Black played Nc6, developing his second knight. Note that black now has two pieces attacking white's d4 pawn (knight and bishop), while white has 2 pieces defending it (knight and queen).

Timman won the game in 48 moves.

Responding to the Opening Move: d4

The Queen's Gambit: Accepted Variation

This is one of the most popular responses to the d4 opening.

White plays d4 to open the game and black responds with d5.

White continues with c4, sacrificing his c pawn and attacking white's d5 pawn. This is called the Queen's Gambit. Black can choose between capturing the pawn by playing dxc4 (Queen's Gambit accepted) or playing another move like Nf6 or c6 (Queen's Gambit declined).

Black typically accepts the gambit and plays dxc4, capturing white's pawn. White then plays Nf3, developing his knight and defending his d4 pawn. Later in the game, white can capture black's c4 pawn with his light-squared bishop.

Advantages (for white):

- Immediate fight for the control of the center
- Puts pressure on black early in the game
- Allows white to gain space on the board

Disadvantages (for white):

- If the gambit is accepted, it can take white a long time to equalize material
- Can reduce white's attack options against the black king

Example: Isaac Boleslavsky VS Alexander A. Kotov, 1953

This game was played in Zurich, Switzerland, in 1953. Boleslavsky had white pieces, and Kotov had black pieces.

White (Boleslavsky) opened the game by playing d4. Black (Kotov) played d5.

White then played c4, attacking black's d5 pawn and sacrificing his c pawn. This is the Queen's Gambit. Black accepted the gambit and played dxc4, gaining a 1-pawn material advantage.

White continued with Nf3 and black responded with Nf6, both developing their knights.

White then played e3, opening a door for his light-squared bishop to come into the game and capture black's c4 pawn. This move also adds a defender to white's d4 pawn in case of future attacks. Black responded with e6, preparing to develop his dark-squared bishop.

As expected, white played Bxc4, capturing black's pawn and equalizing material. In this position, white is ready to castle kingside. Black played c5, attacking white's d4 pawn. With this move, black is intending to open the c file.

White castled kingside as expected, and black played a6, preparing to attack white's light-squared bishop with b5.

White continued with Qe2, developing his queen and defending his light-squared bishop on c4. Black played cxd4, attacking white's e3 pawn and opening the c file as planned.

White responded with exd4, damaging his pawn structure (white's d file pawn is now isolated). Black played Be7, developing his dark-squared bishop and preparing to castle kingside.

White continued with Nc3 developing his second knight. Black finally decided to play b5 as planned a few moves before. White's bishop is now under attack and must be moved to a safe square.

Boleslavsky won the game in 42 moves.

The Slav Defense

The Slav defense was first analyzed during the 16th century. However, it is only around the 1920s that it became popular.

White plays d4 to open the game and black responds with d5.

White continues with c4, sacrificing his c pawn and attacking white's d5 pawn. This is also a Queen's Gambit. However, in this case, black declines the gambit and plays c6, defending his e5 pawn.

White typically continues with Nf3, developing his knight. Black responds by playing Nf6, also developing his knight.

Advantages (for black):

- Opens the door early for black's light-squared bishop to enter the game
- Gains space for black on the board
- Gains black some control in the center

Disadvantages (for black):

- Black's development is slower
- Black cannot play Nc6, because he has a pawn occupying the c6 square

Example: Anatoly Vaisser VS Evgeny Sveshnikov, 1973

This game was played in the USSR in 1973. Vaisser had white pieces, and Sveshnikov had black pieces.

White (Vaisser) opened the game by playing d4. Black (Sveshnikov) played d5.

White continued with c4, attacking black's d5 pawn. This is the Queen's Gambit. However, black declined the gambit and played c6 instead, defending his d5 pawn. This variation of the Queen's Gambit is known as the Slav defense.

White then played Nf3, developing his knight. Black responded with Nf6, also developing his knight.

White immediately developed his second knight by playing Nc3 and black played e6, opening a door for his dark-squared bishop to come into the game.

White played Bg5, attacking and pinning black's f6 knight (in a relative pin). If black moves his knight, he loses his queen. So black responded with h6, attacking white's dark-squared bishop. In this position, white can choose to preserve his bishop by moving it away from danger, or he can exchange it for black's f6 knight.

White went for the piece exchange and played Bxf6, capturing black's knight. Black responded with Qxf6 capturing white's light-squared bishop. In this position, black has a bishop pair, which many consider to be a great asset.

White played e3, opening a door for his light-squared bishop to come into the game. Black responded with Nd7, developing his remaining knight.

White finally decided to trade pawns and played cxd5, to which black responded with exd5.

White then played Bd3, developing his light-squared bishop. Black played Bd6, developing his dark-squared bishop.

Sveshnikov won the game in 54 moves.

The King’s Indian Defense

This opening was very unpopular until the mid-1930s, when it became frequently used by chess grandmasters Alexander Konstantinopolsky, Isaac Boleslavsky, and David Bronstein.

White plays d4 to open the game and black responds with Nf6, developing his knight.

White then plays c4 gaining space on the board. Black responds with g6, preparing to fianchetto his dark-squared bishop.

White continues with Nf3, developing his knight and defending his e4 pawn. Black responds with Bg7, fianchettoing his dark-squared bishop.

Advantages (for black):

- Often leads to unusual positions
- Often gets an early attack going again white’s king

Disadvantages (for black):

- White usually gets a space advantage
- White usually applies strong pressure on the queen side

Example: Semen Furman VS Lev A. Polugaevsky, 1959

This game was played in Tbilisi, Georgia, in 1959. Semen Furman had white pieces, and Lev A. Polugaevsky had black pieces.

White (Furman) opened the game by playing d4. Black (Polugaevsky) played Nf6, developing his knight.

White then played c4, gaining space on the board. Black played g6, preparing to fianchetto his dark-squared bishop.

White continued with Nf3, developing his knight and black played Bg7, fianchettoing his dark-squared bishop as expected. In this position, black is ready to castle kingside.

White then played g3, preparing to fianchetto his light-squared bishop. Black castled kingside as expected.

As planned, white fianchettoed his light-squared bishop by playing Bg2. In this position, white is ready to castle kingside. Black played d6, opening a door for his light-squared bishop to come into the game and preparing to play e5. This move also frees up the d7 square for black to develop his knight.

White played Nc3, developing his second knight and gaining control of the d5 square. Black played Nd7, developing his second knight as planned.

White castled kingside as expected. Black also played an expected move, e5, attacking white's d4 pawn.

Since white had a knight on f3 defending his d4 pawn, he did not move the pawn and played e4 instead, gaining more space and control over the center of the board. Black played c6, preparing to develop his queen.

White then played h3, to prevent black from playing Ng4. Black played Qa5, developing his queen as expected.

Polugaevsky won the game in 47 moves.

The Nimzo-Indian Defense

This opening was developed by Aron Nimzowitsch, who introduced it to the grandmaster level early in the 20th century.

White plays d4 to open the game and black responds with Nf6.

White then plays c4, gaining space on the board. Black responds with e6, opening a door for his dark-squared bishop to join the center of the board.

White continues with Nc3, developing his knight and fighting for the control of the center. Black responds with Bb4, developing his dark-squared bishop and pinning white's knight on c3.

Advantages (for black):

- Quickly develops black's pieces
- Limits white's control of the center

Disadvantages (for black):

- Gives white a good chance of getting a bishop pair advantage

Example: Paul Keres VS Alexander A. Kotov, 1940

This game was played in Moscow, Russia, in 1940. Keres had white pieces, and Kotov had black pieces.

White (Keres) opened the game by playing d4. Black (Kotov) played Nf6, developing his knight.

White continued with c4, gaining space on the board, while black played e6, opening a door for his bishop to come into the game.

White then played Nc3 developing his knight. This moves also defends white's king against check in case black plays Bb4. Black did play Bb4, developing his dark-squared bishop and pinning white's knight. If white had not played Nc3, black's Bb4 move would have put white's king in check. In this position, black is ready to castle kingside.

White played Qc2, developing his queen and defending his knight on c3. If black later chooses to play Bxc3, white can recapture black's dark-squared bishop without having to damage his pawn structure. Black played Nc6, developing his second knight.

White continued with e3, opening a door for his light-squared bishop to come into the game. Black responded with d5, attacking white's c4 pawn and opening a door for his light-squared bishop to come into the game.

White then played Nf3, developing his second knight. Black castled kingside as planned a few moves prior.

White decided to get rid of black's dark-squared bishop and played a3. This move forces black to move his bishop away or exchange it for white's knight. Black went for the exchange and played Bxc3. Note that many consider the dark-squared bishop to be more valuable to black than it is to white. Furthermore, having a bishop pair is also considered an advantage by many players and theoreticians.

As expected, white played Qxc3 recapturing black's bishop with his queen and maintaining a neat pawn structure. Black played Bd7, developing his light-squared bishop.

White also developed his light-squared bishop and played Bd3. Black responded with a5, gaining some space on the queen side and preventing white from playing b4 later in the game.

Keres won the game in 55 moves.

The Queen’s Indian Defense

This opening is very similar to the Nimzo-Indian defense, as it aims to limit white’s control of the center.

White plays d4 to open the game and black responds with Nf6.

White then plays c4, gaining space on the board. Black responds with e6, clearing the path for his dark-squared bishop to join the center of the board.

White continues with Nf3, developing his knight and supporting the fight for control in the center of the board. Black responds with b6, opening a door for his light-squared bishop to come into the game.

Advantages (for black):

- Quick development of black pieces
- Limits white’s control of the center

Disadvantages (for black):

- Often leads to draws
- Can allow white to establish and maintain a space advantage

Example: Rafael A. Vaganian vs Gennadi P. Kuzmin, 1971

This game was played in the USSR in 1971. Vaganian had white pieces, and Kuzmin had black pieces.

White (Vaganian) opened the game by playing d4. Black (Kuzmin) played Nf6, developing his knight.

White then played c4, gaining space on the board. Black played e6, opening a door for his dark-squared bishop to come into the game.

White continued with Nf3, developing his knight. Black played b6, opening a door for his light-squared bishop to come into the game.

White then played g3, preparing to fianchetto his light-squared bishop. Black responded with Ba6, developing his light-squared bishop as expected.

White played Nd2, developing his second knight and black played d5, attacking white's c4 pawn. Note that in this position, black has a pawn and a bishop attacking white's c4 pawn, while white only has his d2 knight to defend the pawn. In other words, unless black adds a defender to his c4 pawn, he runs the risk of losing it.

White ignored the material threat and played Bg2 instead, fianchettoing his light-squared bishop. White chose development over material. However, black did not capture the c4 pawn and played Be7 instead, developing his dark squared-bishop and preparing to castle kingside. This is a good developing move.

White played Qa4, developing his queen and putting black's king in check. Black defended his king by playing c6.

White finally chose to defend his c4 pawn by playing cxd5, capturing white's d5 pawn. Black responded with exd5.

White then played Ne5 bringing his knight closer to black's king and improving his control of the center. In this position, white is also threatening to win black's c6 pawn, which only has one defender (b8 knight) and two attackers (e5 knight and a4 queen). Black ignored the threat and castled kingside, prioritizing the safety of his king over material.

Vaganian won the game in 57 moves.

The Bogo-Indian Defense

This opening was named after chess grandmaster Efim Bogoljubov.

White plays d4 to open the game and black responds with Nf6.

White then plays c4, gaining space on the board. Black responds with e6, opening a door for his dark-squared bishop to join the center of the board.

White continues with Nf3, developing his knight and supporting the fight for control in the center of the board. Black responds with Bb4, putting white's king in check and forcing white to play a blocking move like Bd2 or Nc3 (which could later damage white's pawn structure).

Advantages (for black):

- Simple to memorize and play
- Quick development of black pieces

Disadvantages (for black):

- Gives white a good chance of getting a bishop pair advantage
- Can allow white to maintain a space advantage

Example: Semen Furman vs Lev A. Pologuaevsky, 1969

This game was played in Moscow, Russia, in 1969. Furman had white pieces, and Pologuaevsky had black pieces.

White (Furman) opened the game by playing d4. Black (Pologuaevsky) played Nf6 developing his knight.

White then played c4, gaining space on the board. Black played e6, opening a door for his dark-squared bishop to come into the game.

White continued with Nf3, developing his knight. Black developed his dark-squared bishop as expected by playing Bb4. This move also put white's king in check. Furthermore, in this position, black is ready to castle kingside.

White defended his king by playing Nd2, developing his knight. Black castled kingside as expected.

White continued with e3, opening a door for his light-squared bishop to come into the game. Black played b6, preparing to fianchetto his light-squared bishop.

White played Bd3, developing his light-squared bishop as planned and getting ready to castle kingside. Black also played the expected move, Bb7, fianchettoing his light-squared bishop.

White castled kingside as expected and black played d5, attacking white's c4 pawn and fighting for control of the center.

White continued with a3, attacking black's dark-squared bishop and giving black a choice between moving his bishop away from danger and capturing white's knight on d2. Black chose the former and played Be2, preserving his highly valued dark-squared bishop.

White kept attacking and played b4, targeting black's c5 pawn and trying to get more control of the board's center. Black joined the fight for the center by playing c5, attacking white's d4 pawn. In this position, both white and black have numerous pawns in the center and at some point, later in the game, they will be trading these pawns.

Furman won the game in 34 moves.

The Gruendfeld Defense

This opening was first played in May of 1855.

White plays d4 to open the game and black responds with Nf6, developing his knight.

White then plays c4, gaining space on the board. Black responds with g6, preparing to fianchetto his dark-squared bishop.

White continues with Nc3, developing his knight and allowing himself to play d5 next. Black responds with d5, taking the move away from white and attacking white's c4 pawn.

Advantages (for black):

- Very sound defensive opening

Disadvantages (for black):

- Gives white a good control in the center
- Gives white a space advantage

Example: Boris Spassky vs Viktor Korchnoi, 1955

This game was played in Moscow, Russia, in 1955. Spassky had white pieces, and Korchnoi had black pieces.

White (Spassky) opened the game by playing d4. Black (Korchnoi) played Nf6 developing his knight.

White then played c4, gaining space on the board and black responded with g6, preparing to fianchetto his dark-squared bishop.

White continued with Nc3, developing his knight. Black played d5, attacking white's c4 pawn. To defend his pawn, white can play moves like e3 or Nf3, adding defenders to the pawn.

Instead, white went for the pawn exchange and played cxd5. Black recaptured white's pawn by playing Nxd5. In this position, black's knight on d5 is attacking white's knight on c3.

White played e4, attacking white's d5 knight. So black decided to exchange knights and played Nxc3, capturing white's knight.

Naturally, white recaptured black's knight by playing bxc3. Black responded by playing c5, sacrificing a pawn to attack white's center.

However, white ignored black's pawn sacrifice and played Bc4 instead, to develop his bishop and gain tempo. Black finally decided to fianchetto his dark-squared bishop as planned a few moves prior. He played Bg7.

White continued with Ne2, developing his remaining knight and adding an attacker to black's d4 pawn. In this position, white has 3 pieces attacking black's e4 pawn (pawn on c3, knight on e2, and queen on d1) while black only has 2 pieces defending that same pawn (queen on d8 and bishop on g7).

So white captured black's e4 pawn as expected, equalizing materially and gaining space on the board. Black responded with Nc6, developing his remaining knight and attacking white's d4 pawn.

Spassky won the game in 41 moves.

The Dutch Defense

At a grandmaster level, this opening is no longer used as often as other d4 openings, but it was popular during the 20th century.

White plays d4 to open the game and black responds with f5.

White then plays Nf3 and black responds with Nf6, both developing their knights.

White continues with g3, preparing to fianchetto his light-squared bishop. Black responds with g6, preparing to fianchetto his dark-squared bishop.

Advantages (for black):

- Gives black control over e4 and great flexibility for his other pawns

Disadvantages (for black):

- Can weaken the defense around black's king
- Can damage black's pawn structure by leaving holes in the center of the board
- Can block the development of black's light-squared bishop

Example: Kiril Georgiev vs Lev Psakhis, 1984

This game was played in Lvov, Ukraine, in 1984. Georgiev had white pieces, and Psakhis had black pieces.

White (Georgiev) opened the game by playing d4. Black (Psakhis) played f5.

White then plays Nf3 and black responds with Nf6, both developing their knights.

White then played g3, preparing to fianchetto his light-squared bishop. Black responded with g6, preparing to fianchetto his dark-squared bishop.

White then played Bg2, fianchettoing his light-squared bishop as planned and preparing to castle kingside. Black played Bg7, fianchettoing his dark-squared bishop as planned, and preparing to castle kingside as well.

White castled kingside as expected and black did the same.

White then played b3, preparing to fianchetto his dark-squared bishop. Black responded with d6 to prevent white from playing Ne5.

White played Bb2, fianchettoing his dark-squared bishop as planned. Black played e6, making room for his queen to move to e5.

White continued with c4, gaining space on the board and preparing to attack black's e6 pawn with d5. Black played Qe5 as prepared with his previous move.

White then played Nc3, developing his second knight and black played Nc6, also developing his second knight.

The game resulted in a draw after 21 moves.

The Benko Gambit

This opening was very popular in the 1930s and can be regarded as a variation of the King's Indian opening.

White plays d4 to open the game and black responds with Nf6, developing his knight.

White then plays c4, gaining space on the board. Black responds with c5, sacrificing his c pawn. This is called the Benko Gambit. White has the option to play dxc5, winning a pawn, but this would double his pawns on the c file and thus damage his pawn structure.

To avoid damaging his pawn structure, white plays d5 instead, declining the gambit and gaining space on the board. Black typically responds with b5, sacrificing yet another pawn. Accepting black's sacrifice would lead to the same problem for white, a damaged pawn structure.

Advantages (for black):

- Can lead to unusual positions and is difficult for white to defend against

Disadvantages (for black):

- White has many options for declining the gambit

Example: Gennadi P. Kuzmin vs Lev O. Alburt, 1971

This game was played in the USSR in 1971. Kuzmin had white pieces, and Alburt had black pieces.

White (Kuzmin) opened the game by playing d4. Black (Alburt) played Nf6, developing his knight.

White continued with e4, gaining space on the board, and black responded with d5, sacrificing a pawn and attacking white's e4 pawn. This is the Benko Gambit. In this position, white can win a free pawn by playing dxc5. One downside of playing this move is that it doubles white's pawns on the c file.

So, white decided to decline the gambit and played e5 instead, getting his e pawn away from black's attack and gaining more space on the board. White also preserved a neat pawn structure. Black responded with b5, sacrificing another pawn and attacking white's c4 pawn.

This time, white accepted the sacrifice and played cxb5, doubling the pawns on the b file. Black responded with a4, attacking white's b5 pawn for the sake of quick development. Black's plan is for white to play dxa4 so that black can play Bxa4 and develop his light-squared bishop.

As expected, white played dxa4 and black played Bxa4, developing his light-squared bishop. In this position, black has good compensation for a sacrificed pawn. He is better developed than white and could start an attack sooner.

White continued with Nc3, developing his knight and adding a defender to his e5 pawn. Black played g6, preparing to fianchetto his dark-squared bishop.

White then played e4, adding yet another defender to his d5 pawn. This move opened the door for black's light-squared bishop to capture white's light-squared bishop on f1. Black spotted the opening and played Bxf1, capturing white's light-squared bishop, which some consider to be more valuable to white than it is to black. In this position, white's only option to recapture black's bishop is to play Kxf1, moving his king and losing castling rights.

So white played Kxf1. and lost his castling rights. Black responded with d6 to defend his c5 pawn.

White continued with g3, preparing to move his king to g2 and eventually have it placed on g1 where it would be much safer (as if white had castled). This would take two moves to complete and may affect white's tempo. Black played Bg7, fianchettoing his dark-squared bishop as planned a few moves prior.

Kuzmin won the game in 39 moves.

The London System

This opening became popular during the 1922 London tournament, hence the name “London System.”

White plays d4 to open the game and black responds with d5.

White then plays Nf3, developing his knight and black responds with Nf6, also developing his knight.

White typically continues with Bf4, developing his dark-squared bishop and placing it in the center of the board. The bishop is also aiming at black’s knight on b8. Black usually responds with c6.

Advantages (for white):

- Difficult for black to prevent white’s moves
- Makes it hard for black to take the initiative

Disadvantages (for white):

- Puts little immediate pressure on black at the beginning
- Exposes the bishop on f4 and makes it difficult to preserve throughout the game

Example: Vlatko Kovacevic vs Predrag Nikolic, 1979

This game was played in Bjelovar, Croatia, in 1979. Kovacevic had white pieces, and Nikolic had black pieces.

White (Kovacevic) opened the game by playing d4. Black (Nikolic) played d5.

White continued with Nf3, developing his knight. Black played Nf6, also developing his knight.

White then played Bf4, developing his dark-squared bishop and attacking black's knight on b8. In this position, white could trade his bishop for white's knight, but it would lead to white losing his bishop pair. Black responded with c6, preparing to develop his queen.

White played e3, adding protection to his d4 pawn and opening a door for his light-squared bishop to come into the game. Black played Qb6, developing his queen as planned. With this move, black also put white's b2 pawn under attack as it is no longer defended by white's dark-squared bishop. Allowing black to play Qxb2 would be very bad for white as it would lead to black freely capturing white's a1 rook after a few moves.

So, to avoid all this trouble, white played Qc1 defending his b2 pawn. Black kept the offense going and played Nh5, attacking white's dark-squared bishop. In this position, if white wants to preserve his bishop pair, he must move his dark-squared bishop.

So white played Be5, getting his bishop away from black's attacking knight. But black kept going after the bishop and played Nd7, developing his second knight and attacking white's dark-squared bishop again. In this position, white can no longer prevent black from capturing his dark-squared bishop as all the squares the bishop can move to are controlled by one of black's pieces. In other words, there is no longer a way for white to preserve his bishop pair if black decides to trade his knight for white's bishop.

So white left his dark-squared bishop on e5 and played Bd3, developing his light-squared bishop and preparing to castle kingside. Black responded with e6, preparing to develop his dark-squared bishop.

White continued with Nd2, developing his second knight. Black played another attacking move, f6, attacking white's dark-squared bishop. In this position, white is forced to move his bishop to avoid a material disadvantage. The only reasonable moves available to white are Bf4 and Bg3. However, both moves will lead to white damaging his pawn structure when black decides to trade his h5 knight for white's bishop.

White decided to play Bg3 to defend his bishop from black's f6 pawn. Black played the excepted move, Nxg3, capturing white's bishop and forcing white to damage his pawn structure to recapture black's knight. Indeed, both available moves fxG3 and hxg3 would lead to doubled pawns on the g file.

Nikolic won the game in 37 moves.

The Benoni Defense

This opening gets its name from a book by Aaron Reinganum, written in 1825, called **Ben oni,** which is Hebrew for “son of my sorrow.”

White plays d4 to open the game and black responds with Nf6, developing his knight.

White then plays c4, gaining space on the board. Black responds with c5, sacrificing his c pawn. This is like the Benko Gambit. Again, white has the option to play dxc5, winning a pawn but doubling his pawns on the c file. This would damage white’s pawn structure.

To avoid damaging his pawn structure, white plays d5 instead, declining the gambit and gaining space on the board. However, this time, black responds with e6, attacking white’s d5 pawn. This is also a good developing move as it opens a door for black’s dark-squared bishop to come into the game.

Advantages (for black):

- Good for challenging white’s control of the center.

Disadvantages (for black):

- Can lead black to losing tempo

Example: Mark E. Taimanov vs Nukhim N. Rashkovsky, 1975

This game was played in Kishinev, Moldova, in 1975. Taimanov had white pieces, and Rashkovsky had black pieces.

White (Taimanov) opened the game by playing d4. Black (Rashkovsky) played Nf6, developing his knight.

White continued with c4, gaining space on the board. Black responded with c5, sacrificing his c pawn, hoping to damage white's pawn structure. Indeed, in this position, if black played dxc5, he would double the pawns on the c file.

So, to maintain a neat pawn structure, white ignored black's pawn sacrifice and played d5 instead. Black played e6, attacking white's e5 pawn to reduce the space gained by white.

White then played Nc3, developing his knight and black played exd5 as planned, capturing white's d5 pawn.

As expected, white played cxd5, recapturing black's d5 pawn. Black responded with d6, preparing to develop his light-squared bishop.

White continued with Nf3, developing his second knight. Black played g6, preparing to fianchetto his dark-squared bishop.

White then played Bf4, developing his dark-squared bishop. Black played a6, preparing to play b5 to gain space on the queen side.

So white played a4 to prevent black from playing b5. Black responded with Bg7, fianchettoing his dark-squared bishop and preparing to castle kingside.

White then played e4, gaining some control in the center and potentially preparing to play e5. Black castled kingside as expected.

Taimanov won the game in 50 moves.

Chapter 5: Other Popular Openings

English Opening

1. c4

The English Opening is just ever so slightly off-beat, much like the English themselves. They foment a national image of stoicism, gentle self-deprecation, and keeping a stiff upper lip, yet beneath the surface are a people with a most idiosyncratic sense of humor.

1. c4 was pioneered by everybody's favorite mutton-chopped 19*th* century chess-playing Englishman, Howard Staunton. Staunton used the move six times when playing as White in his 1843 match against the Frenchman Saint-Amant at the Café de la Régence, although with mixed results. Staunton won the first two times he tried it, but Saint-Amant got better with experience, and Staunton could only draw two and lose two of the next four games where he started with *1. c4*.

Today, the English Opening is White's fourth most popular choice of the 20 possible first moves, but for many years it was given no respect at all. Ruy López noticed *1. c4* centuries ago and thought it so bad that no player of any

skill would use it. Staunton's peers in the 1800s thought it was a bit strange too, and it didn't catch on with others, despite Staunton's influence.

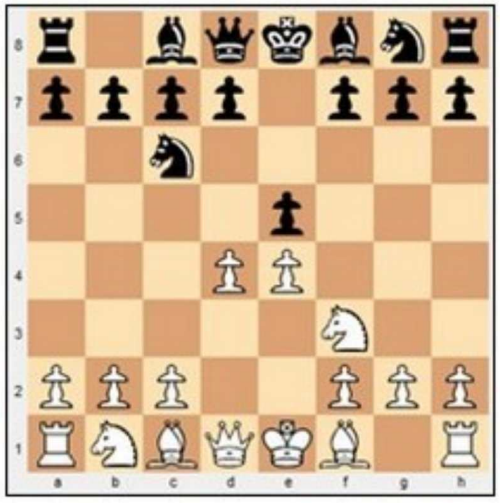
The hypermodern school of chess meant that interest in *1. c4* grew in the early 20*th* century. If flank attacks like the Sicilian Defense could work for Black, then why not for White? Another advantage of the English Opening lies in its flexibility – it has strong potential to transpose to other openings, depending on what Black does.

A chess game can last hours, and keeping one's concentration throughout this mental marathon has always been a key test of a player's mettle. However, some of Staunton's 19th-century compatriots took things to an extreme. In the days before chess clocks, each player could take as long as he liked to ponder their move before making it, leading to games of ten hours, twenty hours, or even more.

The Even More Complete Chess Addict recounts the encounters between Elijah Williams and James Mucklow at the 1851 London tournament where both players were on the verge of falling asleep, such was the lengthiness of their contemplation. It got so bad that one of the games needed to be adjourned for an evening so that everyone could go to bed.

Scotch Opening

1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. d4



Like the drink that bears its name, the Scotch is a rich, flavorsome way to play. It is an uncomplicated and direct opening, much like the stereotypical Scotsman.

The separate kingdoms of Scotland and England joined to form the United Kingdom in 1707. England has always been the dominant force within the union with the much larger population of the two. Still, the Scots maintain a distinct character of their own, and there is nothing they love more than beating the English.

In 1824, Edinburgh, the capital of Scotland, challenged London to a chess match. London was a little taken aback by the temerity of Edinburgh, for the upstart Scottish club had only been formed a couple of years prior. Yet here they were, throwing down the gauntlet to the most eminent players of Britain’s largest city. Nevertheless, the challenge was accepted. The match

took place by mail correspondence, a terribly slow business in those days, before inter-city rail transport and the invention of the telegraph. Each move needed to travel the hundreds of miles back and forth between London and Edinburgh by horse and carriage.

The clubs played five games between 1824 and 1828. The games were published in newspapers and keenly observed by the public like sports are today. Everybody expected a lopsided victory for London, but the Scots surprisingly prevailed. Three of the five games started with what we now call the Scotch Opening, including the decisive fifth game where Edinburgh played it as White and won. Their victory was sealed, two wins to one, and the opening came to be known as the Scotch.

During the second game, London controversially tried to retract a move after it had been mailed. The post office refused London's attempts to stop the letter's delivery. Then, Edinburgh refused to acquiesce when they received the original move and London's second letter pleading for an alteration. Edinburgh went on to win the game.

The Scotch Opening allows for easy piece development. The d4 pawn is pushed ahead boldly and normally provokes *3. …exd4* from Black. The center is cleared, and both sides are left with a great degree of freedom. As anyone familiar with the blockbuster film ***Braveheart*** will know, "freedom" was the clarion call of William Wallace in the 13th-century Scottish war of independence against England. Fitting, then, that it was another battle – of the chess kind – between the two that gave the Scotch Opening its name.

French Defense

1. e4 e6

France occupies a central place in chess history, and the French Defense is one of chess's most solid and resilient center pawn openings.

The French embraced the game like nowhere else in the 18*th* and early 19*th* centuries. Chess cafés were incredibly prolific there, and French players monopolized the mantle of world preeminence for generations: Legall de Kermeur, François-André Danican Philidor, Louis-Charles Mahé de La Bourdonnais, and Pierre Charles Fournier de Saint Amant all followed one another in succession until the 1840s. Today, the international chess federation is known as "FIDE," which is a French acronym for ***Fédération Internationale des Échecs.*** French words also appear in other parts of the game, such as the ***en passant*** pawn capture rule and ***j'adoube,*** said when adjusting a piece's position on a square without violating the touch-move rule.

The French Defense may seem that Black is too timid to push the pawn all the way to meet its opposite, but the next moves reveal more aggression.

White usually continues with *2. d4*, which Black may meet with *2. …d5*.

Position after 2. …d5.

What White does next can vary, but often Black will target White's d4 pawn by playing c5 at some point – just the kind of flank attack that the French general Napoleon Bonaparte was famous for in his early conquests through Europe.

Napoleon, the Emperor of the French from 1804 to 1814, had a deep love for chess. It is, after all, a game of war, and over the years, many battle commanders have turned to chess for inspiration. On the real battlefield, Napoleon had an uncanny knack for sensing the intentions of the enemy and controlling the course of the battle, but on the chessboard, he was mediocre

at best. Perhaps the fact a military commander's prowess does not transfer to ability at chess is unsurprising – a game with fixed rules played in silence by two equal forces on a square board is a long way removed from the chaos of actual combat.

The French Defense got its name from a correspondence match between the cities of London and Paris in 1834. Chamouillet, one of the players of the Parisian team, persuaded his team to play the (at the time) quite novel *1*. … *e6*, which proved to be the Londoner's undoing. For the Paris club, winning must have been particularly sweet given that France's defeat in the Napoleonic Wars was still fresh in the memory. At last, a French victory!

Dutch Defense

1. d4 f5

The Netherlands is a small northern European country known for its tulips, windmills, bicycles, canals, and wooden shoes. Strangely, the words for the country and for the people who come from there do not match up. We have Norwegians from Norway, Australians from Australia, and Japanese from Japan, but when it comes to "the Netherlands," we call them "Dutch." To confuse matters further, the word "Holland" is often bandied around. "Holland" (when properly used) refers to just two of the 12 provinces of the Netherlands: Noord-Holland and Zuid-Holland.

The Dutch Defense was originally named for Elias Stein, who wrote a 1789 book that recommended *1. …f5* as the best response to *1. d4*. Stein was actually born in France and published his book in French, but because he had settled in The Hague, it was the "Dutch Defense" name that the chess world picked up.

The only time that a Dutchman won the world chess title was when Max Euwe unexpectedly defeated Alexander Alekhine in 1935. The match took

place in the Netherlands, and the best-remembered game (the 26*th* of the match, commonly referred to as “The Pearl of Zandvoort,” after the town the game took place in) was appropriately a Dutch Defense, won by Euwe, the Dutchman.

The true linkage the Dutch Defense has with the real-life Dutch lies in their shared quirkiness. These people eat chocolate sprinkles for lunch, delight in wearing blackface around Christmas time, and hold a reputation for being highly conservative with money despite their seemingly contradictory relaxed attitude to sexuality and drug use.

The Dutch Defense is similarly esoteric. Throwing the f-pawn forward on move one is not for the faint of heart. Usually Black will castle kingside, which leaves the king with no pawn on f7, representing a significant hole in Black’s defensive dyke. The diagonal between c4 and g8 is often a weakness. But the Dutch have always been a nation of traders, and the compensation for Black is the opportunity to launch an immediate kingside assault. It is an exciting opening and can throw the White *1. d4* player off balance if he were expecting a symmetrical center pawn game.

Danish Gambit

1. e4 e5
2. d4 exd4
3. c3

The Danish Gambit is named for the nation of Denmark, not the delicious sweet Danish pastries. Although given White is inviting Black to gobble up a couple of pawns, perhaps a double entendre is at play.

The opening is most strongly associated with a Danish chess master, Martin Severin From. From was active as a player in the mid-to-late 19*th* century but is better remembered as an analyst and administrator. From wrote an essay on the sequence of moves now known as the "Danish Gambit" while playing in a very strong 1867 tournament in Paris. Perhaps he penned it as a ruse to distract attention from his own play, as he came equal last out of the thirteen entrants. In a way, this makes From's achievement in immortalizing the Danish Gambit even more remarkable – it's one thing to popularize an opening thanks to winning a tournament with it, but it is surely even more challenging if the player has performed poorly.

An interesting quirk of this 1867 tournament was that it used a different scoring system to the one today's players are most familiar with. Almost universally, present-day chess tournaments award 1 point for a win, both players get ½ a point for a draw and 0 points for a loss. Chess has been scored this way for such a long time that it's hard to imagine an alternative, but other scoring systems do exist. In Paris 1867, it was 1 point for a win, **0 points for a draw,** and 0 for a loss. Drawing a game was as bad as losing.

This system may hint at a solution to the scourge of modern chess; at the top level especially, there are far too many draws. When playing with the Black pieces, emerging with a draw is considered a fine result in contests between elite grandmasters, so they often try to lead the position towards a drawish end rather than play sharp lines and risk a loss. There's also the so-called "grandmaster draw" – a draw by agreement where, early in the game, both players simply agree to shake hands and share the point before things even get interesting. Such a safety-first approach is not great for the game's followers who want to see the danger, excitement, and decisive results.

Chapter 6: What to Do After Opening?

What is Next? We looked at the various significant openings that You could use in a game of chess. Now, let's have a fast discussion about what to do after those first crucial moves.

Build Your Pieces

The very first guidance would be to build pieces quickly. This Concept involves memorizing your distinct opening tactics literally by hub and understanding which place is advantageous to every piece. You should be ready using a game program if you would like to get a fantastic beginning to your game rather than going to it with no strategy.

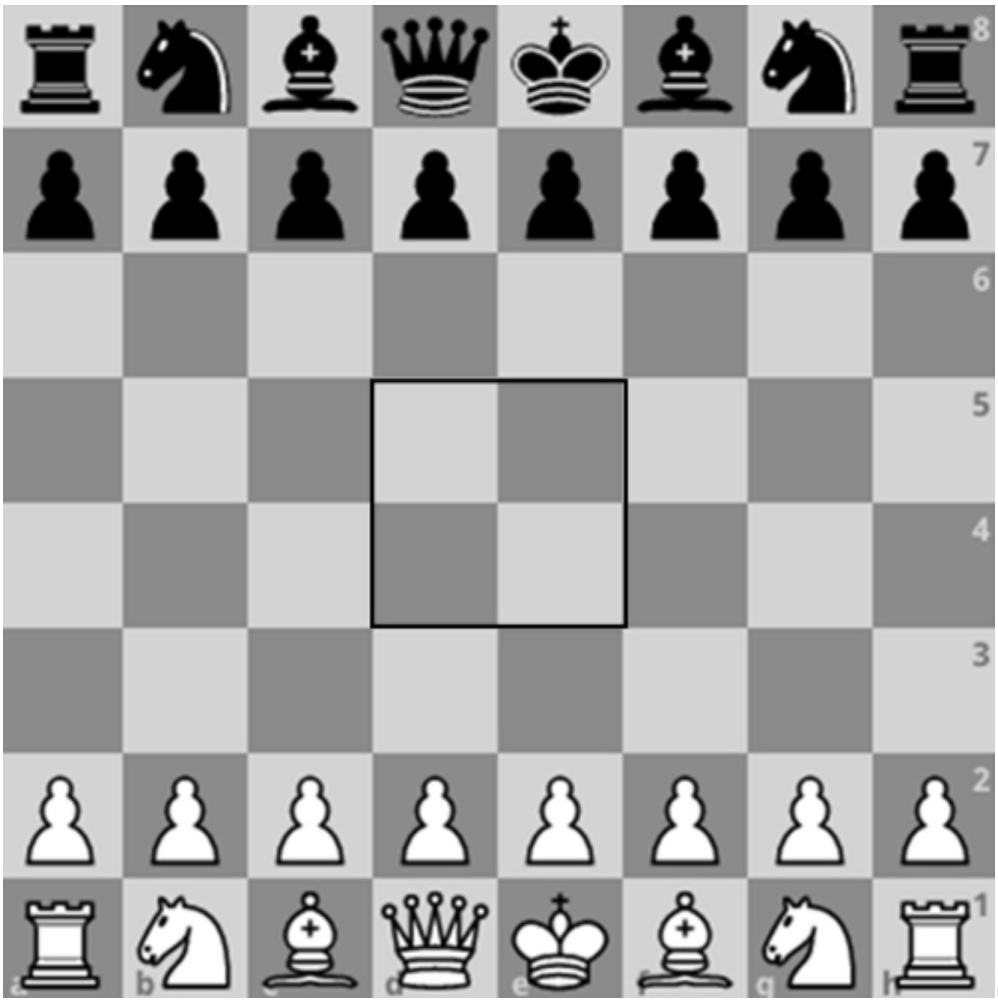
Control Your Center

The next thing to do would be to control the middle of the plank. You understand it's very important to balance the board in any way time. At no time in the game if you stay confused about your bits and their advancement. The best way to put your pieces in the middle of this board is what's going to determine the way your game will precede forward.

There are two types of scenarios that can arise if you want to garner control within the middle of your board. One is called the open center, and the other one is an obstructed center. The open center is just one at which you and your opponent both have an equal chance in controlling the middle, which means you've got to swiftly progress all your significant portions into the epicenter; this is going to make certain you get fantastic control over the plank.

The obstructed center is one at which the competitor has put all of her or his significant pieces, and it's hard for you to transfer any of your bits ahead. This isn't a good situation, and you must do your very best to prevent it by producing a puzzling situation for your competitor. You have to make these scenarios for your competitor, but if they do not come around, then you have to quickly re-strategize. Attempt to search for an opening and strategize ways to take charge of the center when possible.

Aside from these two, there’s another situation called the lively center. The lively center is just one where the 2 players are not certain of that actually hold the middle of the plank. In this circumstance, it's crucial to find out who has the faster route to acquire control of the middle, and you could do by visiting whose crucial pieces have a positional advantage.



Safe-Guard Your Own King

The next thing to do would be to quickly transfer your king to security. You understand, your king is the main part of the game. At no time should it be vulnerable or exposed. For this, you need to immediately move him into a secure location. But do not forget that the transfer ought to be significant. Do not only move him in this way that it threatens his place. If he's secure wherever he is, then let him stay there.

It pays to the castle early in the game as you can normally place your king in a secure place. For this, you have to purposely move all of the bits which lie between the king and the rook and exchange their rankings, which is just

another reason why theory Lopez" opening is really common. One other important concept is to ship an entourage with your king.

This means that you transfer a Couple of Security bits together with your own king in the event you would like to transfer him from the customary spot. Therefore, if you move the king ahead, your next move will be to put something in front of him. This way, you protect your troops and have the opportunity to help them stay secure. Even if your opponent kills the shield, your king could easily kill another person's part.

However, Make Certain you understand what You're doing because it might Be a snare. The competitor will purposely kill your shield to excite you to make a mistake, so think it through once you put a defensive bit before your king. Another benefit of a historical castle is growing your bits. This can allow you to move them around rather than getting them in their own place.

Many new players dread moving their large bits like bishop and knight believing they'll endanger those, but if they aren't transferred, then you are going to endanger your troops and slow down your offensive assault. This way recalls you should transfer them onto the board when possible; this can also be called developing them.

Focus on Quality

The upcoming important issue is to focus on bit quality. It follows that you concentrate on the worth of this item before transferring it on the board. Each bit has distinct values, so as you probably already know, and you need to set them on the board in this way in which the values have been spread on the plank rather than being lumped all together.

Do not fall to the pawn-moving snare early on. That is where most novices fail. They begin moving the lien around and do not recognize it is very important to precede the other bits too. Bear in mind that a bit that isn't active on the board is just as good as not getting the item in any way. You

have to steer clear of the error and begin moving your other bits early on. As was mentioned, you have to transfer your pawns into the Middle of the plank.

Chapter 7: Chess Notations

Learning chess notation is important because it helps you to easily decode and record the various moves that are being made in a particular game while it is still in progress. You would want to ask, “Why would anyone want to record the moves made during a particular chess game?”

Well, the answer is: when you record a game using chess notation, you can always refer to the record later for the purpose of practice. Additionally, you can easily identify where you made mistakes as well as the good moves you made in a game. With chess notation, you can relive a game and enjoy its most crucial moments.

You can do more with chess notation than just studying or looking at your past game. If you understand chess notation, you read through, enjoy and learn from games played by and annotated by the greatest chess players. A simple search on the internet will lead to repertoires of annotated chess games by the best players that you can study and learn from.

Having looked at the importance of chess notation, you will be learning and familiarizing yourself with chess notation. The signs used in annotating chess games are algebraic signs or notations, so they are quite universal. This means that learning and understanding chess notation shouldn’t be hard for you.

It is assumed that you are already familiar with the coordinate system used in identifying any position, square, or location on the chessboard. In learning chess notation, we will be making use of the coordinate system a lot more.

So, a recommended practice is that you should get yourself a chessboard. Then sit by the board, point to different squares on it, and represent each square using the coordinate system. This is highly necessary if you use a chessboard that the ranks and files are not labeled. Practicing and familiarizing yourself with the coordinate system will help you to understand how to annotate a chess game.

To do notation, you simply need to learn how to combine the coordinate system with algebraic notations, and you are good to go. In chess notation, algebraic symbols are used before coordinates to indicate a move. In other words, an algebraic symbol can be used in front of a coordinate to indicate which piece is moving to which location or square on the board.

Shorthand for Pieces

In chess notation, every piece is represented with either a letter or a figurine or symbol. In this book, we will be making use of letters to represent pieces because doing the symbolic representation of every piece at every mention of the piece will be a herculean task.

That being said, here is a table that shows the different pieces and their representation in symbols.

Piece	Letter	Symbol (figurine)
King	K	♔
Queen	Q	♕
Rook	R	♖
Bishop	B	♗
Knight	N	♘
Pawn	P	♙

In the table shown above, you can see the different letters and symbols that represent each chess piece. The lettering is quite straightforward and should not be hard for anyone to understand. As mentioned earlier, in this book, we will be using letters instead of figurines to represent the chess pieces. However, when you start annotating games, you can choose to use figurines, especially if you feel artistic.

With that being said, let’s get to business and start annotating chess moves. If you move the queen, for instance, to a4, you can annotate that move as Qa4. A bishop moved to b5 will be recorded as Bb5.

While you can use a letter to represent the movement of all other pieces, when moving a pawn, you don’t need to include a letter before the coordinate system. So, if you move a pawn from g4 to g5, you will simply record the move as g5 instead of Pg5.

More Symbols

Here is a table that shows more symbols used in annotating chess games.

Symbol	Meaning
+	Check
# (or mate)	Checkmate
x	Capture
0-0	Castles kingside
0-0-0	Castles queenside
...	Black move follows
!	Good move
!!	Excellent move
?	Bad move
??	Blunder
!?	Interesting move
?!	Dubious move

The above table shows some important chess symbols and their meanings. In the table, you will notice that a checkmate can be represented with a # or simply written out as mate. So, when you see “mate” and #, they basically mean the same thing.

Also, the last six symbols on the table are not used to annotate games – rather, you can use them to comment on the quality of a move. In other words, those symbols are an economical way of describing the quality of a chess move.

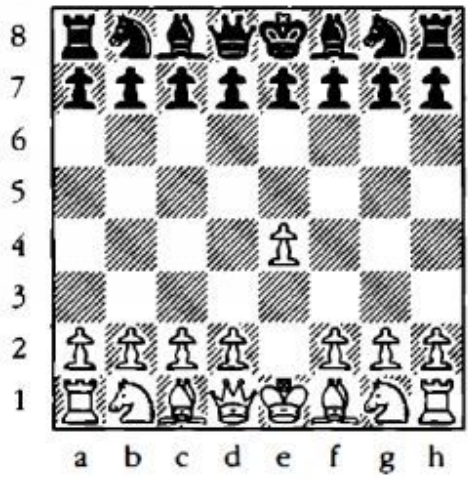
So, if you are reading a chess notation document and you come across a sign like Qg5!!, what it means is that the queen was moved to the g5-square and the person annotating the game believes it is an excellent move.

Chess Notation in Action

One of the best ways to understand and get familiar with chess notation is to review an annotated game. While doing so, don’t pay much attention to the quality of the moves. You should be more interested in understanding the game's notation.

That being said, let’s see notation in action.

1 e4



The above notation simply shows that White moved his pawn to the e4-square. Remember, when annotating pawn moves, you don’t precede the coordinate of the square where the piece is landing with a symbol of the piece. So, in the above move, we didn’t write Pe4; rather, we simply wrote e4.

Notice that there is a “1” before the move; it simply means that the move recorded is White’s first move in the game.

1…e5

The three horizontal dots mean this is Black’s first move, which follows White’s first move. The e5 in the annotation means that Black is moving his

pawn from e7 to e5.

2 Nf3 Nc6

This annotation paragraph means that the two players, White and Black, just moved their knights for the first time. In chess, this first knight move is referred to as “developing the knight.” The “2” that’s preceding the symbol shows you that the move is both White and Black’s second moves of the game. White moves his knight to f3 while Black moves his knight to c6.

See the image below.

3 Bb5 a6

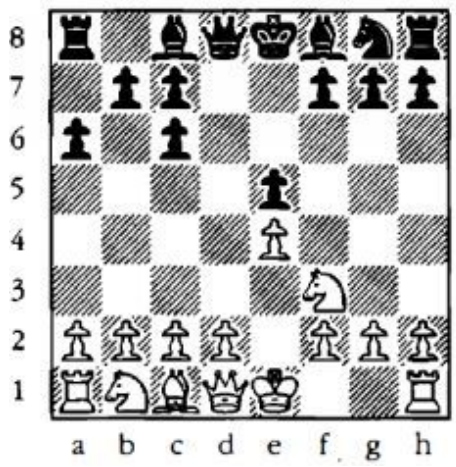
This paragraph shows that White moved his bishop from f1 to b5, while Black moves his pawn from a7 to a6. With Black’s move, his pawn on a6 is incidentally attacking the white bishop on b5. Again, the “3” preceding the move indicates that it’s White and Black’s third move of the game.

4 Nxc6

The knight on b5 captures the bishop on c6. Remember that the “x,” when used in annotation, depicts capture.

4…dxc6

The three horizontal dots (…) in the annotation shows that Black is moving a piece after White has done so. The above paragraph shows that Black captured White's bishop that is sitting on c6. We would have used d7 to represent the pawn that did the capturing, but since the pawn is already sitting on the seventh rank, we only needed to use only "d." For instance, if black had used the b7 pawn to recapture the bishop on c6, the annotation would have been "4…bxc6". The reason remains the same – the b7 pawn moved from the seventh rank.



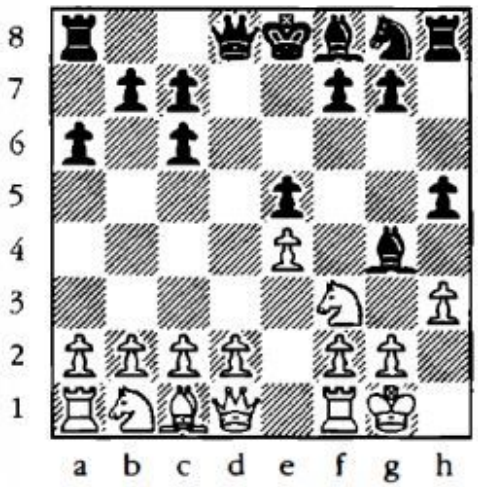
5 0-0

The above paragraph shows that White just made his 5th move. In this move, White performs a castle along the kingside. This move helps to keep White's king in relative safety.

5…Bg4

Following White's castling move, black develops his bishop – this means that he moved his bishop for the first time in the game from c8 to g4.

6 h3 h5!?



Remember, in notation, when a pawn is moved, you don’t include P or any symbol before the coordinate. So, in the above annotation paragraph, White pushed his h-pawn, which hasn’t made the first move to h3. Notice that in this new square, the h-pawn on h3 is attacking Black’s bishop that is sitting on g4.

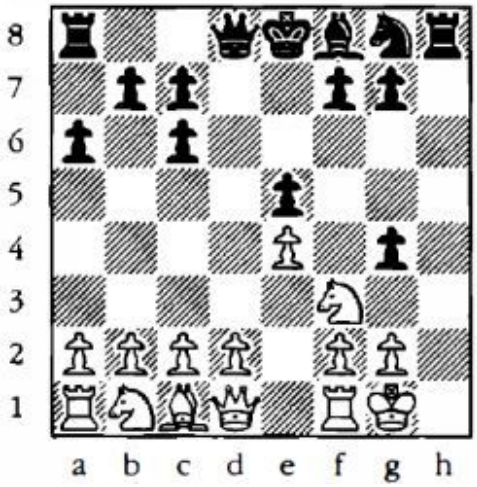
Now, it is Black’s turn, and he pushes his h-pawn two squares forward to h5. The other signs you see in the annotation means that Black’s move is an interesting one.

7 hxg4? hxg4

For his seventh move, White uses his h-pawn to capture Black’s bishop that is sitting on g4. The question mark you see in the notation means that the recorder is questioning that move. Black retaliates by using h-pawn to capture White’s pawn sitting on g4.

Now, the question mark in the notation means that White’s move is not particularly good because while capturing a bishop with a pawn is good, however, by doing so, White opened up his king to possible attack.

See the diagram below.

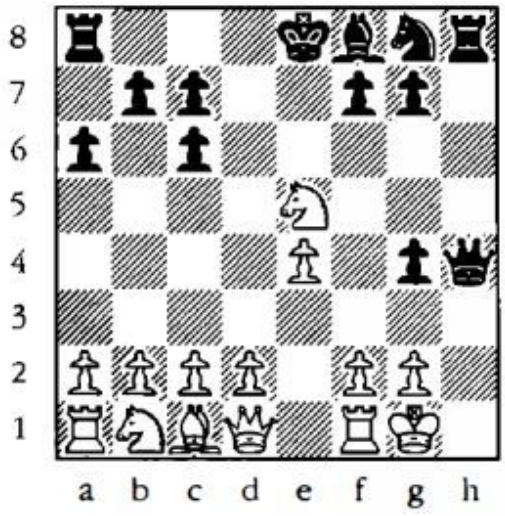


8 Kxe5 ??

For his eighth move, White uses his pawn on f3 to capture Black's pawn on e5. Notice that there is a double question mark on this move, meaning that White just committed a blunder. The blunder is that he just made it easy for Black to deliver a forced checkmate to his king.

8…Qh4 !

Black returns White's move by moving his queen to h4. The recorder comments, stating that the move is a good one. Notice that Black's queen and rook are now on the same h-file. On his next move, Black may possibly checkmate White's king.



9 f4

For his ninth move, White moves his f-pawn to f4, creating a small breathing space for his king.

9…g3!

Black responds to White's ninth move by moving his pawn on g4 to g3. The move is an interesting one, according to the comment.

10 Nf3

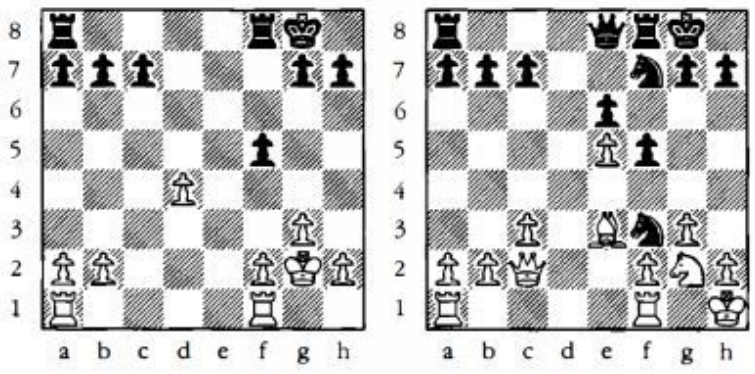
For his tenth move, White moves his knight from e5 to f3. It is now the turn of Black to make a move. If Black mistakenly moves his queen to h2-square, Black will capture the queen. But Black has another intention.

10…Qh1 mate

Responding to White's tenth move, Black moves his queen from h4 to h1, and that's checkmate. Can you notice that it is a checkmate? Look at White's king and see that he has no escape. If White's king tries to capture Black's queen on h1, then there is Black's rook sitting comfortably on h8 waiting – so there is no way out for White. The game is over for him.

This last move can also be written as 10…Qh1 #. The hash at the end of the statement is the same as "checkmate."

Notation for ambiguous chess moves



Which rook?

Which knight?

While the symbols and annotations we have used to depict chess, moves are correct and universal; sometimes, however, you might encounter some ambiguous moves, and you would need to amend your notation a bit to clarify things.

For instance, look at the first diagram above. If it is White's turn to make a move, and he shifts the rook on a1 to d1. The notation will look like, Rd1. Notice that on that same first rank, there are two different white rooks – so simply using Rd1 will not specify which of the white rooks was moved to d1. So, in such a situation, you could introduce another symbol to clear the ambiguity.

The best way to write such a notation would be Rad1. This notation simply means that it is the rook on the a-file that was moved to d1. If we now want to show that it is the rook on the f-file that was moved, the notation will look like, Rfd1.

Now, look at the second diagram, if Black decides to use his knight on f7 to capture the pawn on e5, the notation would be, …Nfxe5. If you look closely, you will see that this notation is still ambiguous. Why? Because Black has two knights on the file, and the notation doesn't specify which of the knights did the capture. The better way to record the move would be … N7xe5. As you can see, the three vertical dots show that Black is making a

move after White had made one. So, the “7” in the notation shows that it is the Black’s night on the seventh rank that did the capture.

Chapter 8: Tactical Themes on Playing Chess

A tactic is a recurring and themeable mechanism that is based on the fundamental properties of the pieces (an impossibility for the king to engage, ability for a piece to control several squares at the same time, the impossibility for certain pieces to cross an occupied square, etc.).

Tactics are part of the pitfalls, combinations, and sacrifices. Studying them allows you to progress yourself and better appreciate the play of others

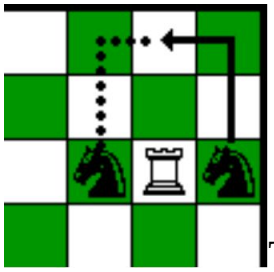
Here is the list of the most common tactical themes. It is not a question of remembering the position of the examples by heart, but of understanding the general idea behind it.

Mutual Assistance

Definition and example.

Reciprocal protection between two parts.

Example of mutual assistance

 The white tower simultaneously attacks two unprotected black horsemen.

By playing 1… Ch6-g8, the black knights manage to protect each other.

The black riders assist each other.

Analysis and complements.

There are eight theoretically possible cases of mutual assistance. We can count them as follows:

1. a Queen supported by another Queen (after promotion)
2. a Queen supported by a tower
3. a Queen supported by a madman
4. a queen supported by a pawn
5. a tower supported by another tower
6. a bishop supported by another bishop of the same color (after promotion)
7. a bishop supported by a pawn

8. a rider supported by another rider.

It will undoubtedly have been noticed that a king can never participate in a tactic of mutual assistance. This impossibility arises from the fact that a king cannot be left in the grip.

Indirect Mutual Assistance

Definition and example.

Indirect mutual assistance: Protection that two unprotected pawns ensure each other that the opposing king cannot capture one without letting the other go-to queen.

Example of indirect mutual assistance

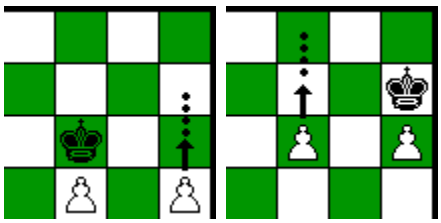


Image 1: The black king threatens to take the pawn in f5.

Playing 1. h5-h6, white protect this piece by threatening to go quickly to the Queen with the "h" pawn if the king takes f5.

Image 2: And after 1… Kf6-f7, a move from the white king, 2… Kf7-g8, 3. f5-f6, and 3… Kg8-h7, it is the turn of the pawn "f" to protect his friend by advancing from f6 to f7.

The pawns assist each other at a distance.

Analysis and complements.

While mutual assistance is based on a relationship of reciprocal protection between two pieces of the same camp, indirect mutual assistance is, in fact, based on the defensive and offensive limits of the opposing king.

To speak of indirect mutual assistance, it is necessary:

1. be in the presence of two past pawns and a stripped king

2. that the pawns are separated from each other by at least one column
3. that the pawns are both unprotected
4. that the king is not outside the promotion square of one of the two pawns.

This type of assistance then occurs in three specific cases:

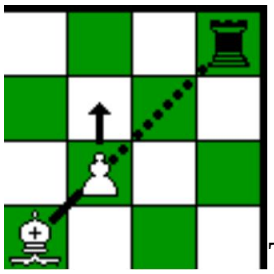
1. when the two past pawns are separated by a single column and the most advanced is not attacked by the opposing king
2. when the two past pawns located on their initial squares and the king is between them
3. When the two passed pawns are separated by three or more columns and the opposing king is on the same crossbar as them.

The Discovery Attack

Definition and example.

Discovery attack: Attack produced by the movement of a part which is found to unmask the action of another.

Example of a discovery attack

 The black tower is on the same diagonal as the white bishop but is not attacked by him due to the pawn, which obstructs the bishop's line of fire.

Playing 1. f6-f7, white releases the active power-mad and threatens to take the black rook on the next move.

They carried out a discovery attack.

Analysis and complements.

More general than discovery failure, discovery attack relies on the same mechanism: the movement of one part unmasks the action of another.

While the piece moved can be of any type, including a king, the piece whose action is unmasked can only be a long-range piece such as a queen, rook, or bishop.

There are four conditions required for a discovery attack to occur:

1. a vulnerable piece must be in the extension of the line of fire of an opponent's long-range piece

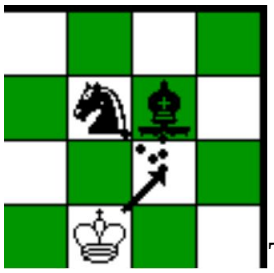
2. there should be only one piece between the target and the long-range piece
3. this piece must be on the same side as the long-range piece
4. this part must be able to move.

Double Attack

Definition and example.

Double attack: Simultaneous engagement of two unprotected opposing pieces unable to protect each other.

Double attack example

 The black fool and the black rider are in no way engaged.

By playing 1. Kf5-g6, white comes to attack both of them at the same time with the same piece.

White made a double attack.

Analysis and complements.

Essentially, the double attack relies on the property of one piece being able to control multiple squares at the same time. It can therefore be done with any piece, except a tower pawn, which only controls one square.

There is a simple way to distinguish the double attack from similar cases. In a double attack, there is only one attacker, while there are always two in the case of a double failure or in the case of a double threat.

In colloquial terms, the double attack made by a pawn or a knight is called a fork.

It should be noted that one cannot speak of the double attack when one of the two pieces is protected or when there is an adequate defense allowing to

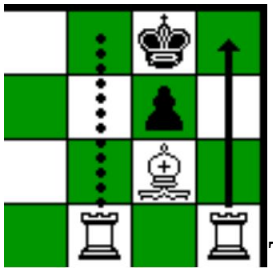
save them both.

The Attraction

Definition and example.

Attraction: Obligatory sacrifice by which a piece is forced to go to a square where it becomes vulnerable. *Note*: the attraction forces a piece to come and occupy a specific square, while the deviation, on the contrary, forces it to leave the square it occupies in order to go to any square.

Example of attraction

 The Black King cannot move, but there are no white pieces able to subdue him yet.

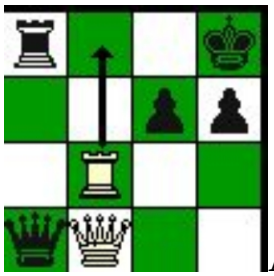
By playing 1. Th5-h8 +, White forces the king to win the corner by 1… Kxh8 then gives the final blow by 2. Tf5-f8 mat.

Before subduing the Black King, White lured him to the corner. Hence the name “attraction.”

Analysis and complements.

The attraction aims to attract a piece on a square to attack it. The deviation or the gap, on the contrary, aims to attract it to make it leave a defensive function.

Example of attraction

 After 1. Tf6-f8 +, black is forced to play 1 ... Te8xf8 to parry the mate.

In doing so, the black tower arrives on a square where it is no longer defended.

She becomes the prey of the white Queen who only has to rush on her to conclude the game. 2. Qf5xf8 checkmate follows.

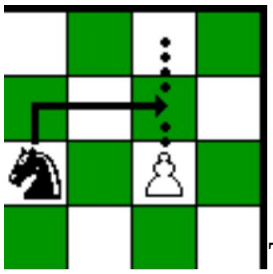
Before capturing the black tower, white drew it to a square where it was no longer defended. Hence the name “attraction.”

The Blocking

Definition and example.

Blocking: Blow by which one lodges a piece in front of a pawn to stop its march.

Example of blocking

 The white pawn threatens to surrender to the queen quickly enough if nothing is done to prevent it.

By playing 1… Ce6-g7, black posts their knight in front of the pawn to stop its march.

They made a blockage.

Analysis and complements.

Because it does not interfere with their activity, it is usually the bishops or the knights that are used to block the opposing pawns.

The Nailing

Definition and example.

Nailing: Total or partial immobilization of a pawn or a piece. Notes: Any nailing involves an attacker of one color, as well as a nailing unit and a hostage of the other color. The attacker is always a long-range piece. The hostage is always a piece of greater material value than the nailed unit. And the nailed unit is a pawn or a piece other than the king, which the attacker engages, and which cannot move without engaging the hostage.

Example of nailing

 The black rider still enjoys all his mobility.

But after 1. De5-g5, the knight cannot move without putting his own king in check.

The coup of the whites, therefore, will have had the effect of nailing the black rider to his king.

Analysis and complements.

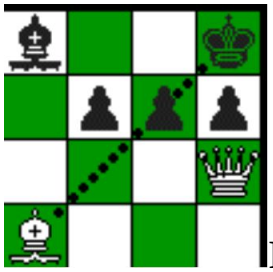
The nailing is absolute or relative, depending on whether the hostage is the king or another piece. And in the latter case, it is most of the time a Queen or a tower.

It should be noted that what nailing takes away from a part is its mobility and not its power of action. Thus, even when nailed, the knight in the

diagram above would prevent the white king, for example, from advancing to f5 or h5.

But with mobility lost, it is the ability to take hold that is also cut off. A nailed pawn thus becomes much less able to play its role of protector of the king, as the following example shows.

The weakening of a nailed pawn



Riveted to the protection of its king, the g7 pawn cannot take the queen in h6.

After 1… f7-f6 (failing which White mates by Qxg7), it follows 2. Bf5xf6 g7xf6 (if not Qxg7 mate again) and the knockout 3. Qh6-f8 mat.

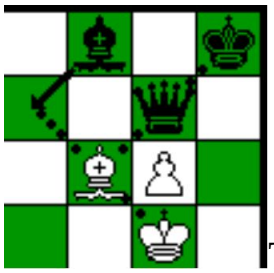
Finally, when the attacker is in his turn nailed, we are in front of a cross nailing.

Cross Nailing

Definition and example.

Cross nailing: blow by which the person responsible for a nailing is in turn nailed.

Example of cross nailing

 The white bishop nails the black Queen to her king and threatens to capture her on the next hit.

But by playing 1… Bf8-e7, black nails the white bishop to his king and puts an end to this threat.

By nailing the opponent's piece, which is nailing one of their own pieces, black has done a cross nailing.

Analysis and complements.

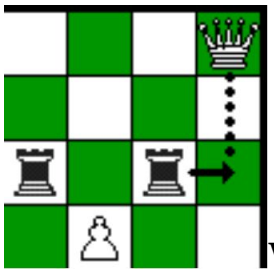
When the nailed piece proves more valuable than the attacker, the threat of capture makes the nailing even more awkward. But if the attacker gets nailed in turn, not only does the threat of capture he posed vanish, but he is now at risk of getting caught. So, this is why the cross nailing is not without making think of a form of counterattack.

The Counterattack

Definition and example.

Counterattack: Equally aggressive attack, if not more, that comes in response to another attack.

Example of counterattack

 White has just played 1. f4-f5, which takes both turn as a fork.

Replying with 1… Tg6-h6, black attacks the white queen without fearing for their turns, since 2. Dh8xh6 would be followed by 2… Te6xh6, and that b5xe6 would be followed by Th6xh8.

Responding to an attack with an even more serious attack, Black carried out a counterattack.

Analysis and complements.

Most of the time, the opponent is expected to resist an attack or threat by trying to find an adequate defense. But one rarely thinks that this defense could consist of an attack.

Yet this is what happens in a counterattack. Because by creating an emergency greater than that which weighed on him, the adversary finds himself out of the situation. At least for a while.

Much better, he happens to have reversed the roles: threatened, he, in turn, becomes threatening; pursued, here he becomes a pursuer. Whoever thought

to take is then taken. Hence the effect of surprise almost always accompanies a counterattack.

Chapter 9: Strategic Planning in Chess

Chess being a pure strategy game, it stands to reason that being able to have a really good plan is important. If you read our other book on openings (you really should if you haven't!), you already know how much planning has gone into just the first handful of moves in the game. Chess masters never stop their study of the opening to always approach games with a better *plan*.

We have already touched on all the vital points needed in order to start making smart chess plans. You have the tactical know-how to deliver punishing attacks to unsuspecting opponents. You have positional knowledge about controlling light and dark squares. We talked about good and bad bishops, as well as bishops being a vital part of controlling your weak squares. Technically speaking, we addressed the different principles to follow when playing ahead or when playing from behind. You have opened your mind to think about sacrifices a viable tactic or another tool in your tool-belt. Finally, we discussed how piece valuation and the evaluation of a position itself is not a static thing. The value of pieces changes dramatically throughout a game. The player that understands this best will be able to prepare accordingly.

The most effective way to begin forming a plan is by thinking about the imbalances in the game. Sometimes these can be positional, and other times they can be material imbalances. What's important is even very symmetrical positions often have small differences (even if it's the only tempo at the moment) that can be the difference between a draw and a win. When thinking about which move to make, choose a move that addresses multiple elements in the positions at once. Try to make moves that can improve your

position, while simultaneously limiting the options given to your opponent. These are the best moves that will have a meaningful purpose in your games.

Once you leave your knowledge of the opening game, the goal is to find not only a good move for the position but hopefully the *best* move. One really great way to practice finding the best move in any given position is to practice with chess puzzles. These compositions by other players are designed to challenge the player to find the best move or moves in the position. If you practice with this often, you will be able to look past other decent looking moves to make sure you have found the very best move possible. The best part of these puzzles is that they explain the reasoning behind each move, so even if you didn't find it for yourself, you still have the opportunity to learn and get familiar with the process.

Let's take a look at a puzzle now to give you an idea of how they work:

In this diagram, it is White’s turn to move. A lot is going on in this position, and if you play hastily, Black has a definite possibility for counter-play. Take a moment to review the position and think about what can do to press their advantage. Hint? White doesn't

have any time to lose, and they need to act now if they're going to capitalize.

Okay, let's go over the position together. A tempting move in this position might be the move *Rh3*, but black can punish us for playing slowly after *Qd1*. We can block with Bf1, but our king is too far away to help, *Qxf1#*. Another tempting idea might be to go after Black's queen with a move like *Rd3*. But after *g6,* our own queen is in trouble, and after the queens get traded, Black still has the back-rank mate option with their rook. Too slow again. Notice that our pawn on *f6* takes away the *g7* square from black. The king is hemmed in the corner with nowhere to go.

The winning move is *Qxh7+!* Black's king is under attack and must capture the queen to avoid checkmate – *Kxf7*. Then we can finish off the black king with the rook move *Rh3#*. The king has nowhere to run because of our crafty pawn on *f6*.

Let's check out another example. White’s turn to move. Here, your hint is that it is checkmate in 2 for White.

Okay, so in this position, the king cannot move and is nearly checkmated. We need only to deliver an attack, and the game will end. It may be

tempting to play *Rxh5*, and while this is a clear winning position, it isn't the *best* move. It allows Black to play *c3*, open up some room and see if they can generate a little counterplay with pawns on the queenside or to catch you making a mistake. In fact, it isn't the rook at all who is the star of this puzzle, but the bishop. The winning move is *Bh3!* If *Rxh3*, *Rg5#* wins, and if Black tries *Rxf2*, *Nxf2#*wins, and finally if black tries something else like *a3* or *c3*, then *Bf1#* delivers the finishing blow.

This one was a little more challenging and less decisive than the last example, but still, always think about playing the best possible move. No point in giving your opponent counter-play if you don't need to!

Here are some additional guidelines you can use to help you make informed plans for your future games. These are not hard rules that must always be obeyed, but in a general sense are usually good in a given position.

- Central pawn structure should determine your area of attack. If your pawn chain points into the enemy king-side, for example, you should consider attacking the king-side. Not only do you control that space already with your center pawns, but you can usually progress easier where your pawns open.
- There is a saying with passed pawns, and it goes: *'Passed pawns must be pushed.'* This rule applies to the endgame, and it refers to what you should do given several different options. Pushing a pawn on the 5***th*** or 6***th*** rank when it is one of several possible moves, is almost always going to be the best for a player. By getting ever closer to promotion, your opponent must give this lowly pawn considerable attention or lose outright to another queen on the board.
- Another point with passed pawns is: *'Rooks belong behind passed pawns.'* Whether it's your past pawn or the opponent's, it does not

matter, your rook ought to be behind it. Your rook is the escort that will control the file and pave the way to promotion or prevent that queen from doing anything dangerous should it come down to it. If the pawn is yours, anyone wanting to mess with the pawn will get picked up by the rook. Let your other minor pieces or the king pave the path ahead of minor pieces if need be. Rooks should be the ones behind.

- Have the bishop pair open up the position to give better scope to your bishops. This will help you coordinate your long-range pieces to start picking off key targets. In an open endgame, the bishop pair is considered to be a *decisive advantage* even if all other material is even. The potential range and combo of bishops are not to be undervalued in a wide-open position.
- If you have knights instead, keeping a closed position might favor you, especially if your opponent is the one with the bishop pair. Also, knights belong on outposts where pawns will never remove them from that square. When the board is tight and cramped, consider looking for a tactic called '*poisoned squares'* and get the most value from your knights.
- If the kings are castled on opposite sides of the board, games tend to be sharp offensive games with both sides aggressively attacking with pawns in what's known as a '*pawn storm*.' This tends to be a bit of a race to see who can checkmate the other first.
- A *'poisoned square'* is a square that would be detrimental for your opponent to occupy with one of their pieces. Maybe, it can allow a devastating knight fork by aligning the king and queen, or maybe it will pull aside the vital defender of the weakest point in the defense.

The point is to look for ways to force your opponent into moving there anyway. Often, sacrifices are very effective at forcing an opponent into a poisoned square.

- There is a saying with knights that is best to follow unless you have a specific reason to break it, and that is: *'Knights on the rim are dim.'* The meaning and reason behind this saying are that knights on the side of the board have half as many squares to move to compared to a knight in the center of the board. Even worse are knights in a corner that only have two possible squares they can maneuver to. Knights belong in the center unless they are fulfilling a very specific goal for you along the edge.
- A major theme in mid-game development is '*connecting the rooks.*' (Removing any pieces between the rooks on the back rank.) Not only does this let the rooks defend each other on open files, but also allows the possibility of '*doubling rooks'* on an open file to start a big attack. This is also sometimes called a '*rook battery*.'
- You can create '*batteries'* by connecting a queen and the bishops in the same manner, and it is a very common way to deliver a potential checkmating attack. Also, you can add a queen into a rook battery for more firepower and exchange potential.
- A rook on the 7***th*** rank that is supported by another rook is excellent at both cutting lines of defense from the opponent, as well as providing squares for your other pieces to combine for even more attacks!
- *'Doubled Rooks'* on the 7***th*** rank have a special nickname called '*swine*.' If you can get both your rooks on the enemy's 7***th*** rank, you

have all kinds of firepower at your disposal, and this is incredibly difficult to hold off defensively.

- When evaluating exchanges and considering how you will be left in the endgame, it is helpful to know that bishops of opposite colors tend to lead to draws, even in positions where one side is up a couple of pawns, as long as those pawns are close together. Bishops of the same color tend to lead to winning positions for one side or the other.
- Home in on the weak pawns and put pressure there: isolated pawns, backward pawns, or any tactic that can apply to the pawns. This gives you great places to start your planning.
- Look at the imbalances in the position. Quality of pieces and the status of how safe the king is and use those elements in your ideas. Make your moves count by trying to accomplish multiple goals in a single move. Try to think proactively against your opponent's likely plans while developing your own ideas.
- If your king is safely castled and your opponent is trapped in the middle of the board, maybe you can open up the position with a sacrifice before they have a chance to scurry away!

Chapter 10: Chess Rules You Need to Remember

Basic Rules

The game of chess is won when you force your opponent's king into checkmate, which means they have to be captured. Checkmate is a position in which the owner of the king cannot make any move whatsoever to get their king to safety, be it moving the king or moving another piece in to defend it. If a player makes a move against their opponent's king and leaves in such a way that the king can be captured on the next move, this is called check, and the opponent must save their king on their next move.

The king is never actually physically captured. It is the responsibility of both players to ensure that there are no available moves that will help stop the king from being captured or put into checkmate. When you place your opponent's king into check, you must say the word "check." This will warn the other player that their king is in danger. Likewise, if you place their king into checkmate, you must say, "checkmate" when you do it. One thing you must never do is expose your king in such a way that your opponent can place it in to check.

As you play the game, you must try to capture your opponent's pieces to get them out of the game. This clears the way for you to attack their king with the least amount of opposition. To capture a piece, you move onto the square that the piece occupies and replace it with your piece. You cannot capture your own, and you cannot have two of your pieces on the same square.

White always starts the game of chess and, from then on, each player takes turns to move a piece. You must make a move on every turn. There is no such thing as passing in a chess game unless you are castling. This is a

particular move made in which two pieces are moved in a bid to protect the king – this move will be explained in greater detail a little later.

Be aware that not every game will end in a win for someone. Some games end up as draws or ties. These are called stalemates, and it occurs when neither player has their king in check, but neither can make a legal move without placing their king into check. Remember, you cannot put yourself in check and, if your only move would let that happen, the game must end in a stalemate.

Special Moves

There are a couple of special moves and abilities that some pieces have in a game of chess, and you would do well to learn them and use them.

Promotion

This only applies to pawns. No other piece has this unique ability. If you can get one of your pawns successfully across the chessboard to the other side, it can be promoted into any other piece you desire. This means that you can promote it into any piece on the board. Most people choose to promote their pawns to queens as it gives them a distinct advantage. It is also not true that you can promote your pawn only to a piece that has already been captured by your opponent. If you are talented enough and plan your game carefully, you can end up having multiple queens on the board.

En Passant

This also applies only to pawns. En Passant means “in passing” in French and, in this move, if you move your pawn two squares out on its first move and that move puts you directly beside your opponent’s pawn, the opponent can use his pawn to capture yours. As a rule, pawns can only capture diagonally unless this situation arises. In a typical situation, your opponent can capture your pawn only if it is diagonal to his pawn. Using this method, your opponent can capture your pawn when you are next to his pawn. However, that pawn must be captured on the next move. Otherwise, it cannot be done. A player doesn’t necessarily have to capture his opponent’s pawn if he has a better move, but if this is the only legal move, then he must capture his opponent’s pawn. This is the only capture move where the piece that captures does not take the place of the captured piece.

Castling

This is the move that allows you to move two pieces in one go. First and foremost, it is a move designed to keep your king safe or to move it to safety if need be. Secondly, it also allows you to bring the rook away from the corner square and into play. When it is your turn, and you chose to make this move, you transfer your king two squares to the side - either side- then move the rook to the opposite side of the king. For example, move your king from E1 to G1 and then move the rook from H1 to F1. Some conditions must be true to the castle:

- This must be the very first move that your king makes
- It must also be the very first move that the rook makes
- Castling can’t be done if there are any pieces between the king and the rook
- The king cannot be in check or cannot pass through check

When you castle to the side that the king is nearest to, this is called castling kingside. When you castle to the side that the queen is on, this is called Castling queenside. Irrespective of which side you choose to go, you may still only move the king two squares.

Check and Checkmate

As I explained earlier, the purpose of a game of chess is to place your opponent's king into checkmate, a position whereby the king cannot be moved to safety and another piece cannot be brought in to play to defend it. There are just three ways in which an opponent can get their king out of check:

- Move to another position without castling
- Use another piece to block the checkmate
- Capture the piece that is threatening the checkmate

Draws

Sometimes a chess game will go to a tie or a draw. You need to know about these draws if you want to avoid them. If you remain unaware of them, your opponent could push a game that you could have won easily into a draw. Here are five reasons why that may happen:

- A stalemate is reached where neither person can move without putting their king into check (the king will NOT be in check at this point)

I am sure that you are aware of what a stalemate entails. While under a stalemate, the opponent's king isn't threatened in any way. However, your opponent has no legal moves left. Beginners usually opt for this method to end the game in a draw. Professionals know that the chances of players making silly mistakes to end up in a stalemate are very slim. Hence, they stay away from it. However, there have been instances where professional players end games in a stalemate.

- The two players can agree to draw and halt the game

This is one of the easiest ways to draw a game. According to this method, both players mutually agree to a draw. This happens only when both players feel that they have no chance of winning. Such a situation arises when a player feels that he can win only if his opponent messes it up. When you play on a professional platform, you know that the chances of your opponent making a silly mistake are highly unlikely. This is when you offer an option to draw the game. This way both of you end up with one point each. There are many instances where the players call it a draw because of the cash prize involved. Some tournaments offer both players' cash prize if the game ends in a draw. This is why a lot of tournaments end with a draw

because it benefits both players. However, the players are not allowed to call a draw even before the game begins.

- There are insufficient pieces left on the chessboard to force a checkmate.

This situation arises when both players are left with very few pieces. When both players have very few pieces, it becomes impossible for them to checkmate their opponent's king. Hence, due to the lack of pieces, the players can end in a draw. Some guidelines need to be met before a player can claim a draw through this method. This rule can be used only if it is not at all possible for the player to checkmate his opponent's king, even after some legal moves. It is tough for players to prove that they don't have enough pieces to checkmate their opponent. Hence this method of the draw isn't used very often.

- If the same position is declared three times, not necessarily in a row, a player may declare a draw.

This is a situation known as threefold repetition. When a player makes the same move thrice in a match, the opponent can claim a draw. The procedure to claim this draw is different from the others. However, the principle behind all the draws is the same. This rule cannot be used to claim a draw after three checks because a player usually checks his opponent sometimes throughout a match. However, if a player gives you a check in the same manner thrice in a row, then you can use this rule to declare a draw.

- 50 moves have been played consecutively without either player capturing a piece or moving a pawn.

Not many players know this rule, or even if they do, they do not understand how it works. According to this regulation, if in a specific game, the game

displays no sign of advancement for both players at the finish of fifty moves separately, then either one of the players can claim to end the game in a draw. When I say progress, it means the movement of a pawn or the loss of a piece. If the game doesn’t show any such signs of progress, then the game can end in a draw. However, this rarely happens because no professional player would make fifty useless moves. In a game between two beginners, such a situation could arise.

Chapter 11: Practical Chess Tips

By now, you can tell that there is a lot to learn about chess. Depending on your motivation, it'll take at least 1 to 2 years to become a reasonably good player (when I mean good, I mean a club level player ELO 1600 – 1800). If you're thinking of becoming a master level player, which is ELO 2300 and beyond, you will need to take chess seriously and spend at least 3 hours studying & playing chess every day.

However, there are certain things that good players always keep in mind, and this definitely helps you win more games, reduce your losses, and ultimately helps you improve faster.

(ELO – an international rating for chess. It indicates how strong of a player you are – the higher the number, the better you are theoretically)

Here are some practical tips for playing chess:

Play the Moves Out on A Board

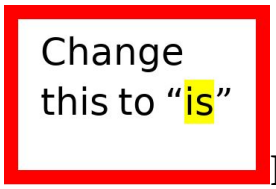
When you're just starting out, you're probably not going to be able to remember many moves in your head. It's a good idea to have a chess set with you, whether it's a physical chess set that you can touch or with a chess program because this will help you see the moves more clearly and understand the ideas behind certain combinations or plans.

Know At Least 1 Opening Very Well, Preferably A Lesser-Known Opening

Your opponents may eventually be able to predict your moves easier and prepare against you, but it’s better to play what you’re comfortable with. Also, you’re not likely to be playing against grandmasters, so you can afford to play sidelines and also get away with minor inaccuracies.

Watch the Clock

Some players simply take too much time on the clock and end up losing because of being “flagged” (another term for losing on time). You should play safe, sensible moves, instead of always trying to find some highly sophisticated tactical shot that will end the game in 16 moves by force, simply because you won’t have the time in the end. This is especially true in blitz games



Focus

If you’ve ever played in tournaments, you may see some players get out of their seats to watch other games. This is good for bodily circulation, as well as just relaxing your mind from the mental challenges posed in your game. However, it is very easy to lose focus and make a huge mistake when you return to your board, so be mindful when you find yourself relaxing too much!

Keep A Lookout for Intermediate (In-Between) Moves

Being able to use intermediate moves won’t necessarily win you the game, but it is often quite surprising to an opponent, simply because it’s a move they won’t really expect. These kinds of moves are great for setting up tactics or getting out of trouble. Due to its surprise element, it can give you a psychological edge since it disrupts the rhythm of your opponent. Just don’t go checking your opponent to death because it might lead to a perpetual.

Think About Move Order

Sometimes, certain tactics don’t work because you’ve calculated them in the wrong move order.

Plan, Plan, Plan

One of the most well-renowned world chess champions, Mikhail Botvinnik, taught his students to always plan, even in blitz games. It might be daunting at first to always have to think of so many options, but it will train you to be thinking on the right path, and eventually, this will become second nature to you to the point where you won't even have to consciously plan at all.

Above all else, the greatest advice I can give you is to practice playing chess with all kinds of people. If you're just a beginner, play against someone who is also a beginner or slightly better than you. Chess is after all a contest between 2 players, and simply reading books or even playing against the computer will only be so much. Humans play differently to computers, and you'll also be able to try out different openings and strategies with human players, more so than computers. Also, it will be nice to be able to talk during a friendly game, as opposing to staring into a voiceless computer screen.

Conclusion

Thank you for reaching the end of this book.

As a parting gift, I would like to leave you with these common mistakes that you need to avoid and additional tips. Hope these will help you in your journey in the world of chess.

Let’s face it – some chess matches will be grueling. The masters and grandmasters of this game don’t get fazed so easily if a match lasts for more than an hour or so. However, beginners may not have the same amount of patience as veterans have. So, most of the time, beginners and intermediate players will want to finish the game quickly.

However, in order to do that, you should be able to spot the mistakes your opponent has made and capitalize on them. Sometimes all it takes is just one or two wrong moves, and your opponent can be beaten really soon. You should be able to spot the mistakes your opponent makes and capitalize on them.

The other thing you need to learn is the different chess tactics that you can use to expose and take advantage of any weaknesses or mistakes your opponent makes. In short, you spot the mistakes or weaknesses, use them to your advantage, and then end the game as fast as you can.

The Most Common Mistakes that Newbies Make

The following are some of the most common mistakes that players usually make. These are the errors that you must learn to spot in other players.

Obviously, these are also the mistakes that you yourself should also avoid making.

Making Too Many Pawn Moves in the Opening

Starting your opening with a lot of pawn moves in the opening makes you lose momentum. An opponent that does this will lag behind. If you are playing black and your opponent develops too many pawns from the start, then you can take the momentum when you develop higher ranking pieces and take key positions on the board.

Making Random Pawn Moves in the Opening

If you are familiar with the well-known chess openings, then you will easily recognize if your opponent is just winging his pawn moves. Some players who don't know what to do just move a pawn (any pawn!) forward just to wait and see what you will move next.

The bad news is that they can't take that move back – pawns only move forward, remember? Moving too many random pawns forward will cramp their position. Note that pawns are strongest when they follow a structured link (think of them as your defensive wall). Any lone or stray pawn is free for the taking. If you see two pawns one in front of the other, then that is going to cramp the structure. That will create holes where your bishops and knights can go through.

Forgetting to Castle

Castling tucks your king away safely in one corner of the board – hopefully away from the action. Not castling when all the other pieces have been developed exposes your king to attack. It is a risky strategy, and you're making the king a really easy target. Remember that when the King is

checked, you must deal with it before making other moves – that typically foil plans and you're timing.

Bringing Out the Queen Too Early

Developing the queen too early in the opening will just make the usually powerful queen into a target. Ideally, you should first develop your bishops and knights first before developing the queen. When the queen becomes a target, you will be moving her around the board while your opponent gets the opportunity to develop his pieces and place them in strategic positions on the board.

The King on the Hunt

A king that goes out of the safety of the wall of pawns or is forced to leave the backside of the board is a prime moment in any game. The king is exposed, and the idea is to attack quickly and effectively. Keep checking as much as you need to just to force the enemy king into the right spot. Doing so will allow you to take a better position, capture more of your opponent's pieces, and perhaps get a checkmate.

Forgetting the King in the End Game

The king should come out during the end game. During the end game, most of the board will be cleared out. There will be fewer enemy pawns and other pieces that can attack your king. The remaining pieces will need some help to capture the opposing king, and your king should come out to help. If you fail to do so, then you fail to take advantage of an essential resource.

Making Blunders

The game of chess begins in perfect equilibrium – everything is balanced. White made the first move, but black will be able to equalize if he follows

through with the principles of the opening. The first player who strays from that will make blunders that can cost him the game.

Forgetting that a bishop or a knight is aiming at your queen is a mistake. Any player will exchange either of these pieces for a queen. Failing to notice a knight that can fork a king and other important chess pieces will mean that you may end up losing important chess pieces.

In case you’re the one who notices the blunders made by your opponent, then it is your chance to take advantage of the situation. During such situations, you can finish your opponent quickly by capturing enemy pieces, closing in on the enemy king, and if possible, go for a checkmate.

That will be all. Again, thank you, and good luck.