

CHESS OPENINGS FOR HEROES

RICHARD JAMES

First published version February 2020

Typeset using Georgia and Trebuchet.
Diagrams typeset using DiagramTTFritz, distributed by ChessBase.

Copyright Richard James © 2020

The right of Richard James to be identified as the author of this work has been asserted by him in accordance with the Copyright, Designs & Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out or otherwise circulated in any form without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

The author hereby grants the right for purchasers to make unlimited copies of the puzzle sheets in this book for private, non-commercial use.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	4
CHAPTER 1: Basic Opening Principles	10
CHAPTER 2: Opening Tactics	29
CHAPTER 3: Opening Strategies	71
CHAPTER 4: Open Games	93
CHAPTER 5: Positional Ideas	132
CHAPTER 6: Semi-Open Games	160
CHAPTER 7: Other Openings	186
Answers to Quiz Questions	213
Glossary	217

INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THIS BOOK

This is the third of a series of books written for children (or adults) who have mastered the basics of the game and would like to be able to take part in competitions.

It is not a book for young children to read on their own, though. Children need a lot of adult help to succeed at competitive chess. Giving them a book to learn from really won't help them at all. Chess is a complex game and information can easily be forgotten or taken out of context.

So who is this book for?

1. It's for parents working at home with their children who are looking for coaching resources and advice on how to help their children fulfil their potential.
2. It's for chess tutors working with individual students who can work through the text with them during lessons and give them puzzles to do at home.
3. It's for chess teachers working within centres of excellence who can use the book as a course to develop children's skills in this area.
4. It's for chess teachers working in school chess clubs who can use the simpler puzzles as worksheets or hand them out for children to complete once they've finished their tournament games.
5. It's for schoolteachers running school chess clubs who may have little knowledge of chess and are seeking guidance.
6. It's for teenagers who have learnt the basics at primary school, want to play competitively and have the ability and maturity to teach themselves.
7. It's for adults who might have played when they were younger and now want to start playing competitive chess.

Before starting this book you should know:

1. All the rules, including castling, pawn promotion and the *en passant* capture.
2. The values of the pieces, along with an understanding that superior force (usually) wins.
3. Knowledge of chess notation, which is outlined below.
4. A basic knowledge of chess tactics: understanding FORKS, PINS, DISCOVERED ATTACKS and other tactical devices along with the ability to think ahead.

The free *CHESS FOR HEROES* eBook (<http://chessheroes.uk/ChessHeroes2017.pdf>) is a good source of the knowledge you require. You should at least have started to read *CHESS TACTICS FOR HEROES* or another tactics book. *CHECKMATES FOR HEROES*, or another checkmate book, will also be useful.

A game of chess has three parts.

1. The **OPENING**: the start of the game when you decide where to put your pieces
2. The **MIDDLE GAME**: what happens once you've got your pieces out
3. The **ENDING** or **ENDGAME**: what happens at the end when there are only a few pieces left.

All games have an opening. Most games have a middle game. Some games have an ending.

You need to be good at all parts of the game.

Thousands of books have been written about chess openings. Some are, like this book, for less experienced players like you. Some are for experts.

Most books are written about what happens when very strong players play each other.

This book is different: it starts off by telling you about what happens when players with little experience play each other.

Most books give you a lot of moves that you might want to learn off by heart.

This book is different: it explains how you need to **CALCULATE** and **UNDERSTAND IDEAS**. There will be a few moves you can learn off by heart if you want, but only a few, and, if you don't like them you can avoid them.

When you're reading this book you'll need a chess set so that you can play through the moves yourself.

Join me now and find out all about the best ways to start a game of chess.

Before we go any further, you should also understand that, at the end of the game, an advantage of two or more points will usually be enough to win the game, and an advantage of just one point will often be enough. You'll be able to learn much more about this in *CHESS ENDINGS FOR HEROES*. So one of your most important jobs when you're playing chess is to win material (points) if you can do so safely and, unless you have a very good reason, avoid playing moves that lose material.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

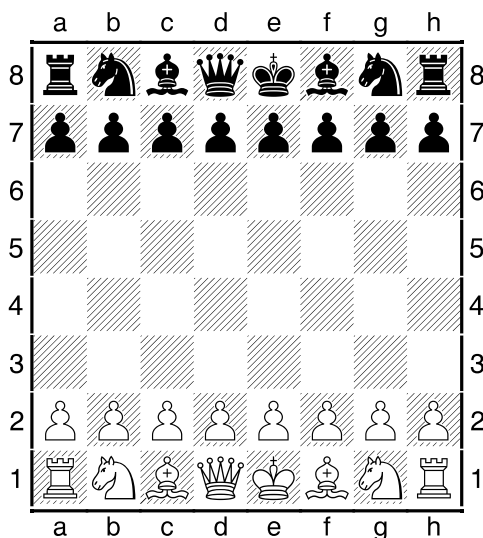
My thanks are due first and foremost to the incomparable and unforgettable Mike Fox (1933-2005), without whom Richmond Junior Chess Club wouldn't have existed, and without whom my life, and the lives of many others, would have been immeasurably poorer.

Secondly, my thanks to all the parents and children who supported Richmond Junior Chess Club between 1975 and 2006. Thank you all for coming, and for believing in what we were doing. You were, and are, the inspiration behind the Chess Heroes books.

My thanks also to all the coaches, simul givers and other helpers at Richmond Junior Club during that period, especially to IM Gavin Wall and Ray Cannon, who played an enormous role in making the club so successful. Ray also provided an invaluable service in checking through the analysis throughout the book.

CHESS NOTATION

This book uses CHESS NOTATION. Each square has a name based on the letter of the FILE followed by the number of the RANK.



Here's how it works:

1. e4 e5

If we move a pawn we just write down the name of the square it moves to. White moves a pawn to the e4 square and Black replies by moving a pawn to the e5 square.

2. Nf3 Nc6

If we move a piece other than a pawn we start by writing the code letter for the piece using a capital letter. N for (k)Night, B for Bishop, R for Rook, Q for Queen or K for King. Both players move a knight on their second move.

3. d4 exd4

We use the letter 'x' to show a capture. If we make a pawn capture we start by writing the letter of the file where our pawn starts. Here, White moves a pawn to d4. Black captures this pawn with the pawn on e5.

4. Nxd4 Nf6

We write a capture by a piece (other than a pawn) with the code letter of the piece, the letter 'x' and the name of the square where the capture takes place.

5. Nc3 Bb4

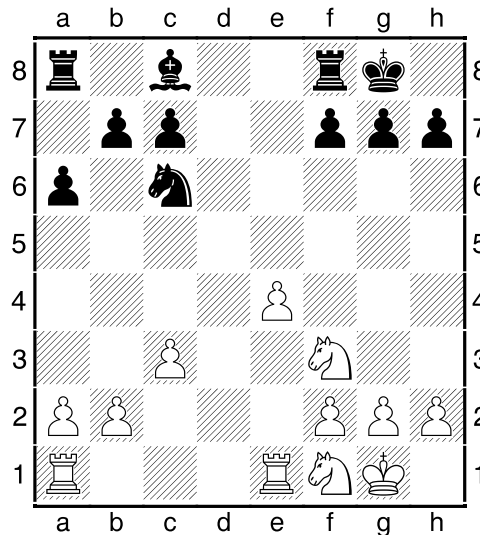
6. Nxc6 Bxc3+

If we play a check we write ‘+’ after the move. If it’s checkmate we write ‘#’ after the move.

7. bxc3 bxc6

8. Bd3 o–o

If we castle on the king side we write ‘o-o’. If we castle on the queen side we write ‘o-o’.



If more than one piece of the same type can move to the same square we have to say which one we’re moving.

If White moves a rook to d1 we write either ‘Rad1’ or ‘Red1’, using the letter of the file to show which rook is moving.

If White moves a knight to d2 we write either ‘N1d2’ or ‘N3d2’. As the knights are on the same file we use the number of the rank instead.

If we promote a pawn we write the letter of the new piece after the name of the square: for instance, “e8Q”.

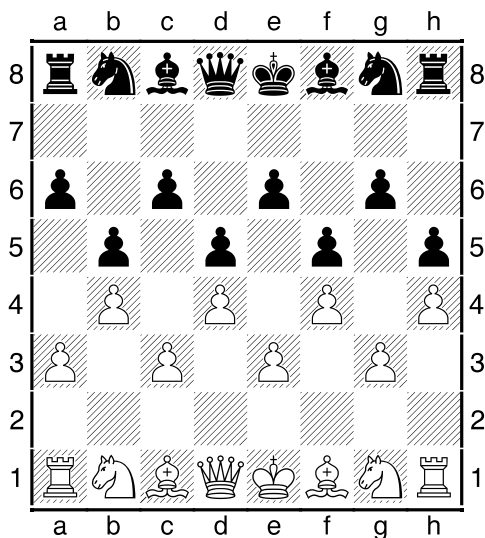
CHAPTER 1

BASIC OPENING PRINCIPLES

1. WHAT NOT TO DO

Let's start by looking at what not to do at the start of the game.

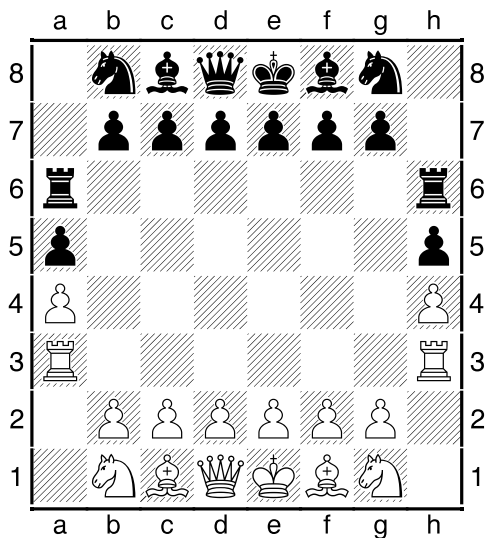
a) Don't make pretty patterns with your pieces.



This is really not a good idea. The idea of chess is to put pieces on good squares, not to make pretty pictures. If you want to make nice pictures take up painting, not chess.

b) Don't get your rooks out at the start of the game.

Some people feel sorry for their rooks, stuck there in the corner at the start of the game. So they start like this to get them into play quickly.



Again, this is one of the WORST ways to start a game of chess. Rooks are clumsy at the start of the game and if you bring them out like this they'll just get chased round by enemy pawns, knights and bishops. As you'll see later, rooks only come into their own once pawns have been exchanged.

c) DON'T MOVE YOUR LUCKY PAWN

Chess is a game of skill, not a game of luck.

Watch what happens if you try to move your lucky pawn. Get out your chess set and play through the moves on your board.

1. f3

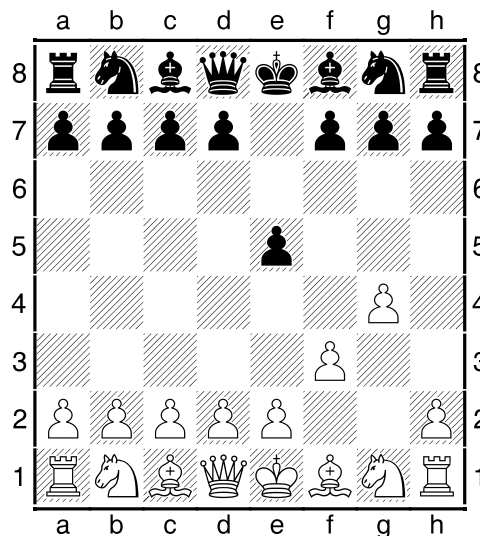
I'll move my lucky f-pawn.

1... e5

Black moves a pawn in the centre of the board, opening lines for the bishop on f8 and the queen on d8.

2. g4

Now I'll move my lucky g-pawn.



Here's the position. Can you work out what Black should play next?

Yes, Black can get CHECKMATE by playing:

2... Qh4#

Black has won the game in only two moves. This is called FOOL'S MATE because only a fool would play those moves with White. Moving your lucky pawns will only bring you bad luck. Every move must have a reason. If you just play random moves you'll lose very quickly.

2. THE THREE OPENING RULES

So if that's what you shouldn't do, what should you do instead?

You can learn them in 30 seconds.

But first you'll have to forget anything anyone else has told you.

1. **START BY PUTTING A PAWN IN THE MIDDLE OF THE BOARD.**
2. **GET YOUR KNIGHTS AND BISHOPS OUT AS QUICKLY AS YOU CAN.** We call this **DEVELOPMENT: DEVELOPING** your pieces. Don't move your queen out early unless you have a very good reason. Rooks are usually the last pieces to be **DEVELOPED**.
3. **CASTLE QUICKLY TO MAKE YOUR KING SAFE.**

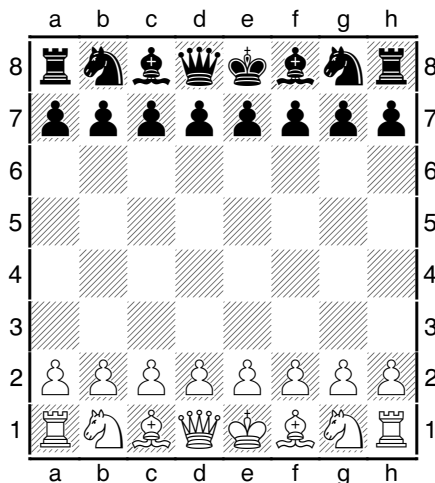
It's now time for a quiz to make sure you've understood what you've learnt about the openings so far.

In each question you'll be given three possible moves you might think about playing in the position on the board.

What you have to do is consider each option carefully and decide which of the three moves you prefer.

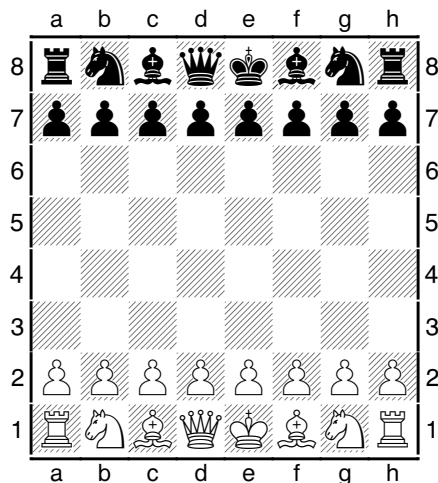
You can either circle or underline your answer.

When you're ready, turn over the page and start the quiz.



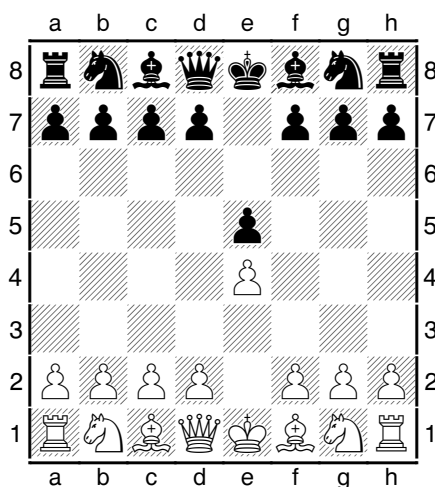
Q1. Choose a move for White

- a) e4 b) h4 c) Na3



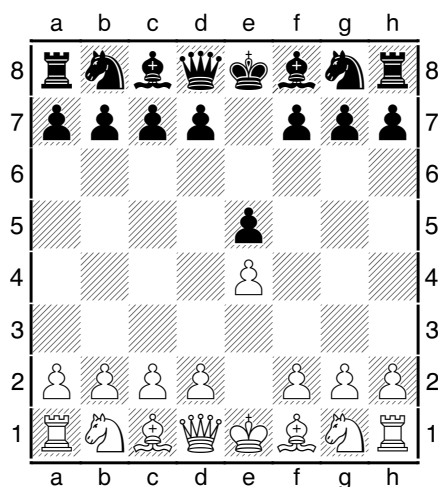
Q2. Choose a move for White

- a) a4 b) Nh3 c) d4



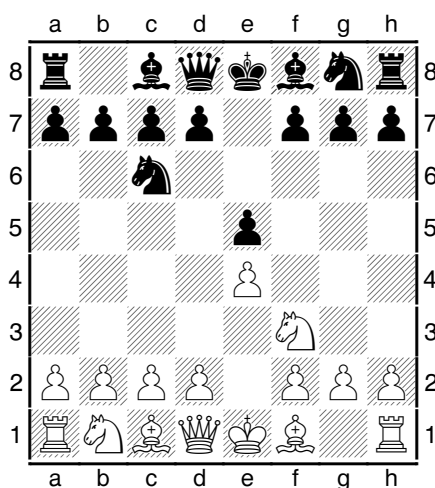
Q3. Choose a move for White

- a) a3 b) Nf3 c) Qg4



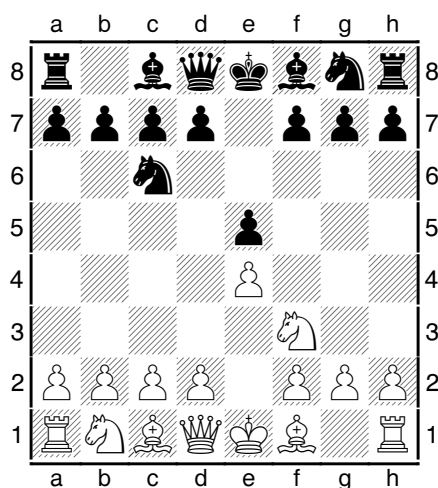
Q4. Choose a move for White

- a) Bc4 b) Na3 c) g4



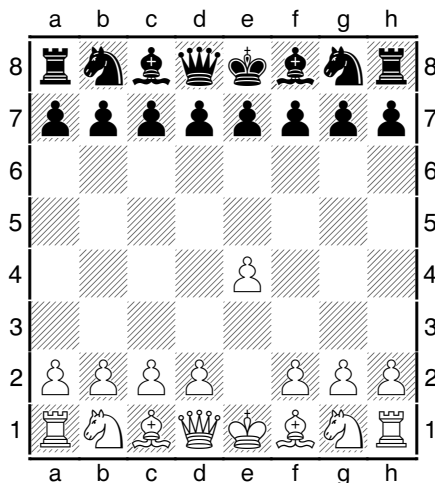
Q5. Choose a move for White

- a) Bb5 b) Ng1 c) a4



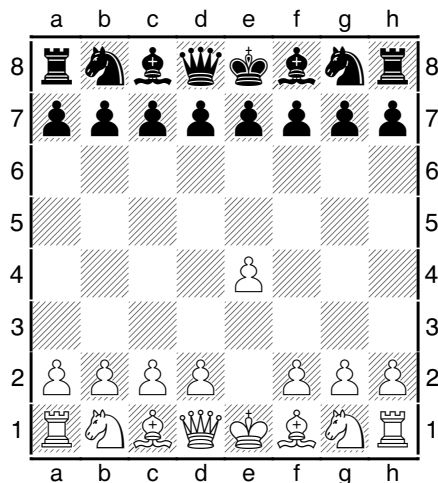
Q6. Choose a move for White

- a) Bd3 b) Nc3 c) h3



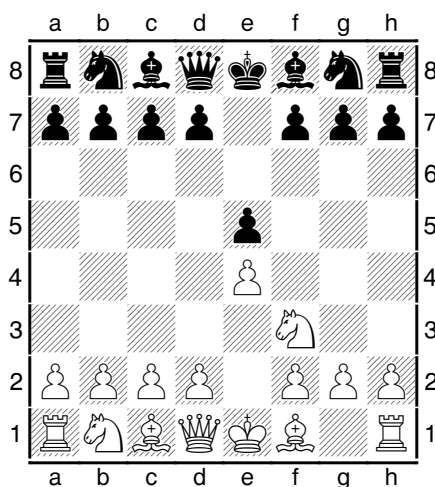
Q7. Choose a move for Black

- a) h5 b) e5 c) a5



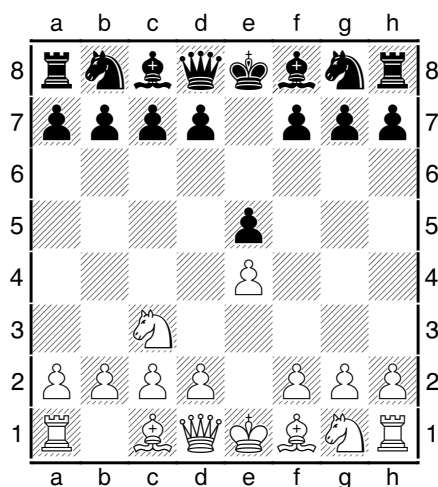
Q8. Choose a move for Black

- a) Nh6 b) c5 c) Na6



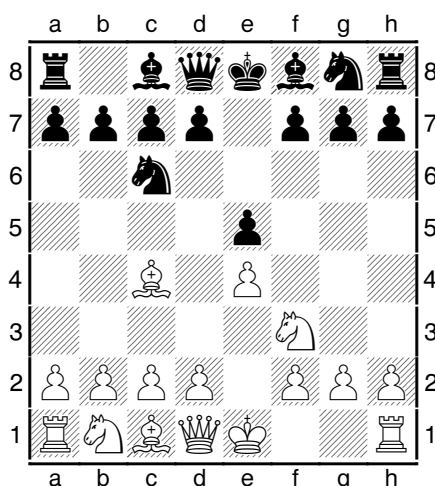
Q9. Choose a move for Black

- a) a6 b) g5 c) Nc6



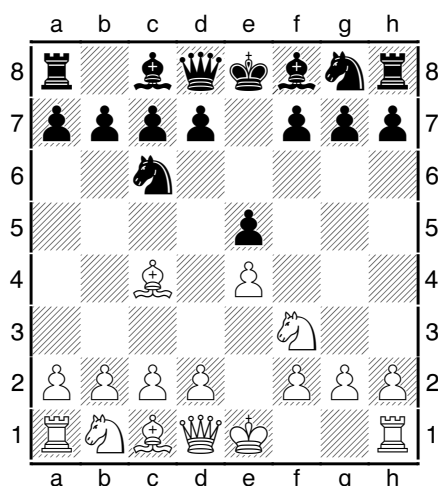
Q10. Choose a move for Black

- a) Nf6 b) h5 c) Qf6



Q11. Choose a move for Black

- a) Bc5 b) Qe7 c) Nh6



Q12. Choose a move for Black

- a) a6 b) Nb4 c) Nf6

2. SCHOLAR'S MATE

It's not so hard to understand those three rules, is it?

In this game Black follows our three rules. Let's see what happens.

1. e4

White starts off by moving the pawn in front of his king two squares. This is one of the best ways to start the game, and the easiest move for those who, like you, are just learning about the openings.

Why is it a good move?

- a) It gains SPACE. Space is very important in chess, especially at the start of the game. The more space you control the easier it will be to move your pieces round the board. So start by moving this pawn two squares, not one square.
- b) It helps control the CENTRE. Chess is like football: you need to control the midfield, not the wings. At the start of the game you should be playing moves that help you gain control of the middle of the board.
- c) It opens lines for your bishop on f1 and your queen to move out whenever they want to do so. You should be trying to get your knights and bishops off the back rank quickly.
- d) It leaves you one move nearer CASTLING by letting you DEVELOP your bishop on f1.

1... e5

Black copies White. Again, an excellent move, for exactly the same reasons as White's move was excellent.

2. Qh5

White brings the queen out along the diagonal, as far as she can go. I did say you should bring your queen out at the start of the game, though.

2... Nc6

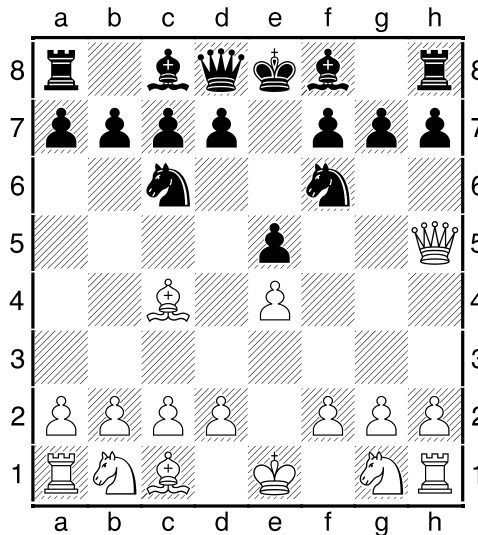
Black follows my advice and moves a knight towards the centre of the board.

3. Bc4

Now White gets the idea and moves the bishop from f1 to c4.

3... Nf6

Black again follows my advice and brings the other knight into the game. Better still, the white queen is now in danger.



Here's the position. What do you think White should play next? Stop and work out your answer before reading on.

4. Qxf7#

Oh dear! Something seems to have gone wrong. Black followed my advice, but White won the game by checkmate in just four moves.

This is called SCHOLAR'S MATE (or the FOUR MOVE CHECKMATE). A scholar is someone who goes to school, and this checkmate happens over and over again every week in school chess clubs.

So what happened? I forgot to tell you the most important rule of all. You have to remember this rule every move of every game you play, not just in the opening but in the middle game and ending as well.

That rule is that you must avoid playing moves that let your opponent checkmate you. You must also avoid playing moves that let your opponent win MATERIAL (points) unless you have a very good reason.

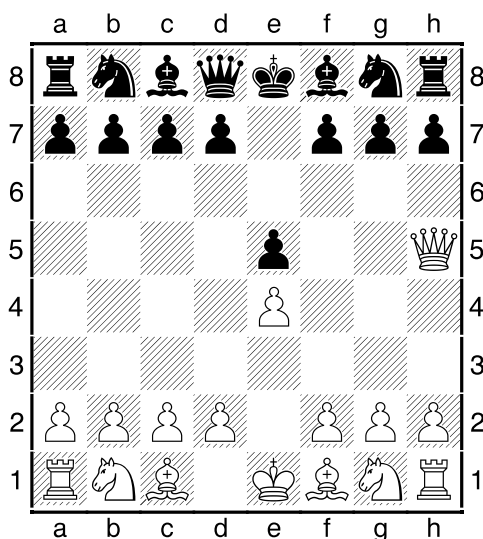
So you must look at your opponent's last move and work out whether there's a THREAT you have to meet. You also have to make sure every move you play is safe. The fourth rule, then, is MEET YOUR OPPONENT'S THREATS.

If you've started to read *CHESS TACTICS FOR HEROES*, and, if you haven't you should do so now, you'll know this already.

It's very easy to forget about this at the start of the game and just think about getting your pieces out.

Let's start the game again and try to find a better move for Black.

1. e4 e5
2. Qh5



White creates a **THREAT**: to capture the pawn on e5 for free. Now you have to be careful. If, for instance, you play 2... g6 to threaten the white queen, White will play 3. Qxe5+, which is now a **FORK**, giving check and also **THREATENING** the rook on h8. So you should **DEFEND** this pawn.

- 2... Nc6

This is the best way to defend the e-pawn. Black develops a knight towards the centre.

3. Bc4

The red flag is flying. The black king is in danger! Look at how the white bishop and queen are both targeting the pawn on f7. You have to stop and defend the pawn before doing anything else. You could **DEFEND** the pawn again, for example by Qe7 or Qf6, or you could block the queen's line of attack by playing:

- 3... g6

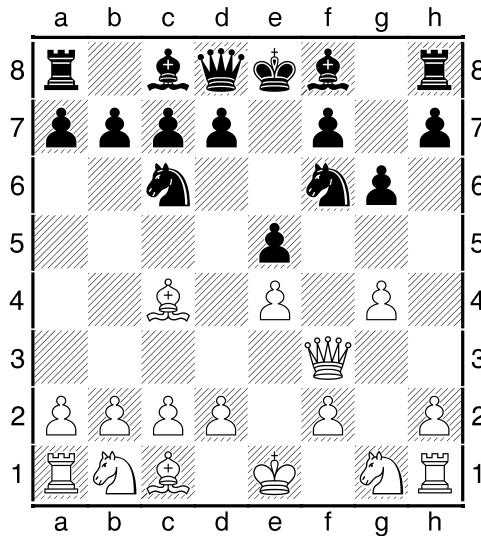
Let's see how the game might continue.

4. Qf3

The red flag is flying again. The black king is in danger again! The white queen is threatening **CHECKMATE** from a different direction. A good move is to block the queen again:

- 4... Nf6

5. g4



White has another sneaky plan: to play 6. g5, trying to drive the knight away. Black has to act fast! Let's threaten the white queen!

5... Nd4

A very strong move! It's now White who has to be very careful. Can you spot what Black could play after 6. Qe3? Yes, 6... Nxc2+ is a TRIPLE FORK, checking the white king as well as threatening both the queen on e3 and the rook on a1. So instead the white queen goes back home, her tail between her legs.

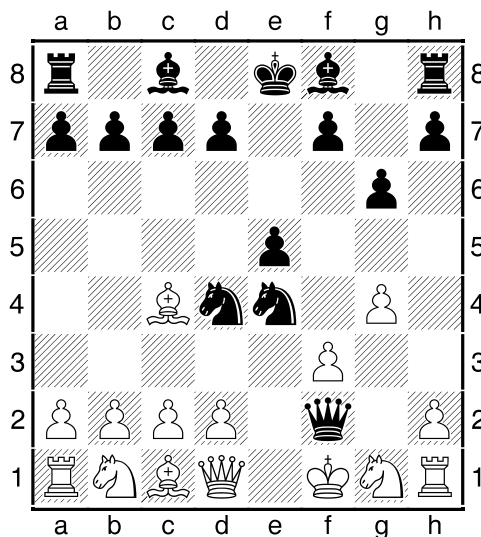
6. Qd1 Nxe4

Black now captures a pawn safely. White's next move is a mistake:

7. f3 Qh4+

White has opened the e1-h4 DIAGONAL. The black queen seizes her opportunity.

8. Kf1 Qf2#



It's CHECKMATE: Black has won the game in only 8 moves.

A lot of players get scared when they see their opponent bring the queen out early. There's no need to panic, though. If you're careful to watch the pawn on f7 you'll probably end up in a good position.

You might also meet 2. Qf3, heading for f7 in a different direction. This is easy. There's no threat to meet so just play 2... Nf6. 2. Bc4 is a good move for White, but again you should play 2... Nf6 in reply. Now if the white queen goes to f3 she'll just be blocked, and if she goes to h5 you'll be very happy to capture her.

You might be tempted to play for Scholar's Mate yourself if you're white. You'll probably win a few quick games against careless opponents, but I still wouldn't recommend it.

So we're not going to go for checkmate in four moves. We're going to remember the four opening rules and try to do better next time. While we're at it we're going to add a fifth rule which also applies throughout the game.

1. CONTROL THE CENTRE
2. DEVELOP OUR KNIGHTS AND BISHOPS
3. CASTLE TO MAKE OUR KING SAFE
4. MEET YOUR OPPONENT'S THREATS
5. MAKE SURE YOUR MOVE IS SAFE BEFORE YOU PLAY IT

Now we have five opening rules, and before we look at another game, it's time for some more quiz questions.

In the first set of questions you have to find a good move: a move that wins something (even just a pawn is worth having) or gets CHECKMATE.

To solve these puzzles look for CHECKS and CAPTURES.

First, look for CHECKS to see if you can find a CHECKMATE.

Then look for CAPTURES to see if you can take an enemy piece for free, or take a stronger piece with a weaker piece.

In the rest of the questions you'll have three moves to choose from. The most important thing of all in these questions is to make sure you don't lose points or get CHECKMATED.

So your first job is to look at the board and see if your opponent has a THREAT. If so, you'll have to choose wisely. Select a move which meets your opponent's threat.

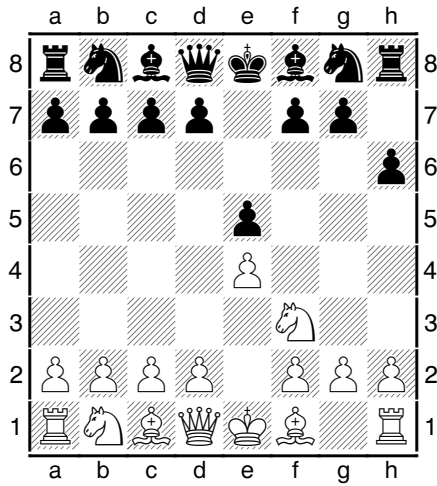
If your opponent doesn't have a THREAT you'll have more choice. But you'll still have to be careful. You'll have to make sure that you're not playing a move that isn't safe.

You might have the chance to play a move that WINS POINTS safely. If so, you should play this move.

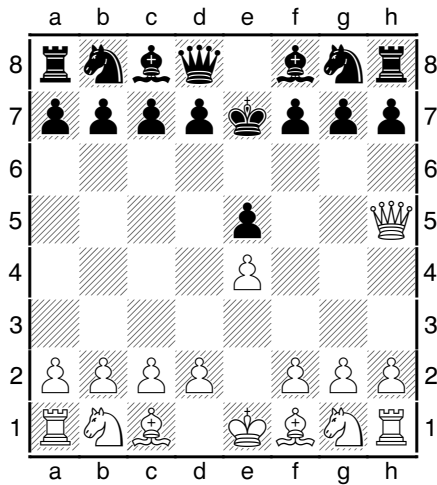
If you can't win something and you have more than one move that doesn't lose anything, then you consider the first three rules above and select the move that is best for controlling the centre, developing your knights and bishops to good squares, and getting ready to castle.

You'll also learn some more ideas about what makes a good opening move from these questions. If you don't always find the best moves, don't worry. Look at the answers and you'll learn a lot.

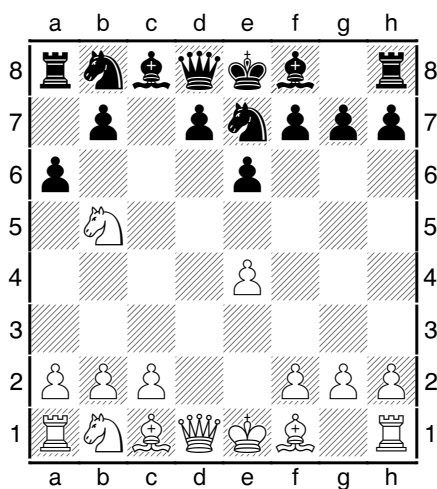
When you're ready, turn over the page.



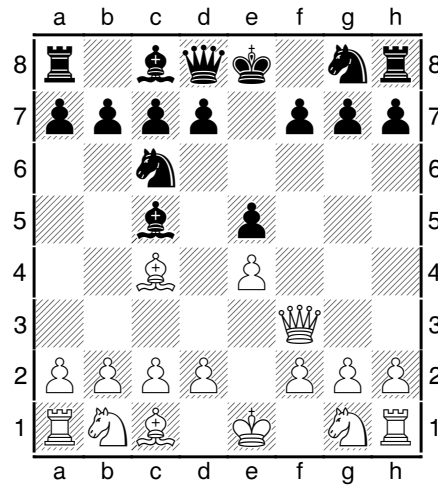
Q13. Choose a move for White



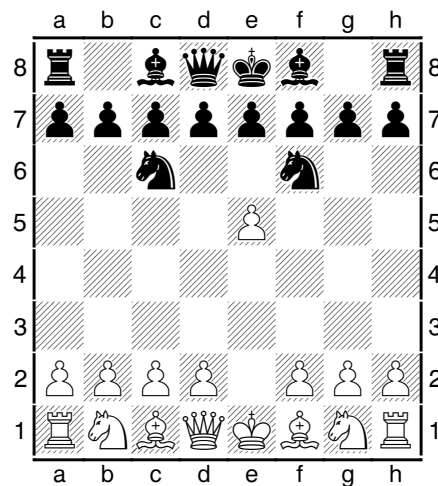
Q15. Choose a move for White



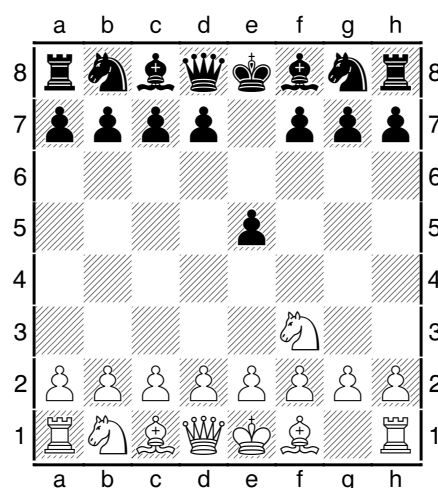
Q17. Choose a move for White



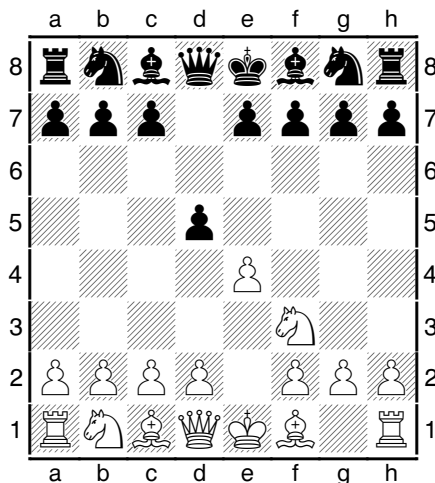
Q14. Choose a move for White



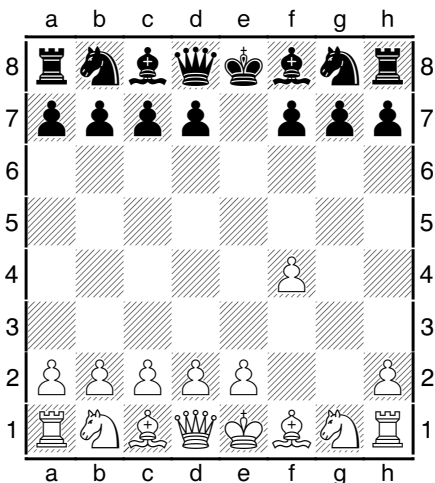
Q16. Choose a move for White



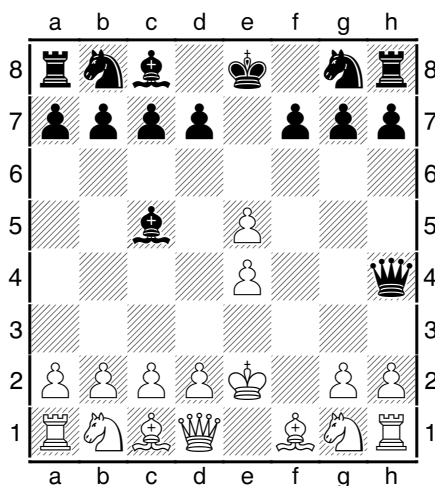
Q18. Choose a move for White



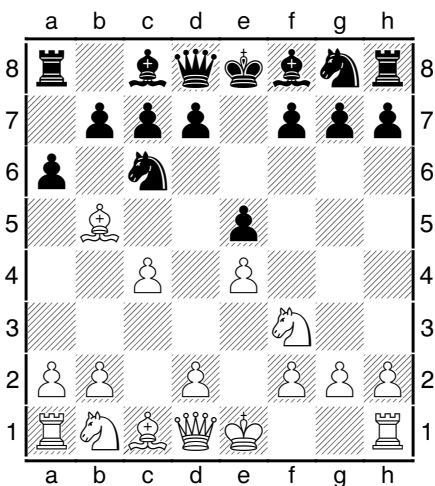
Q19. Choose a move for Black



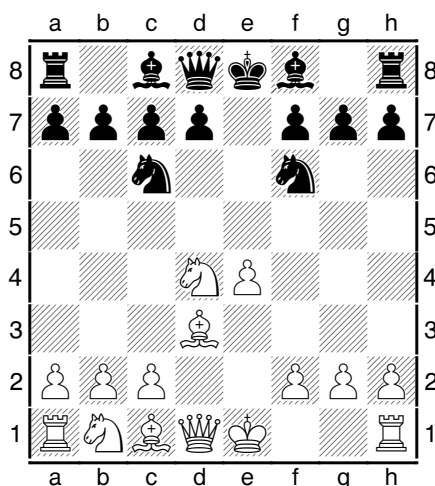
Q20. Choose a move for Black



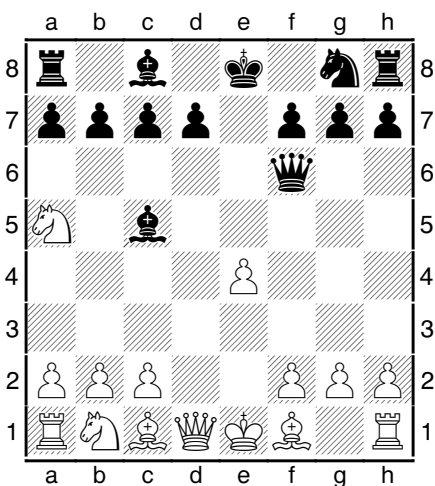
Q21. Choose a move for Black



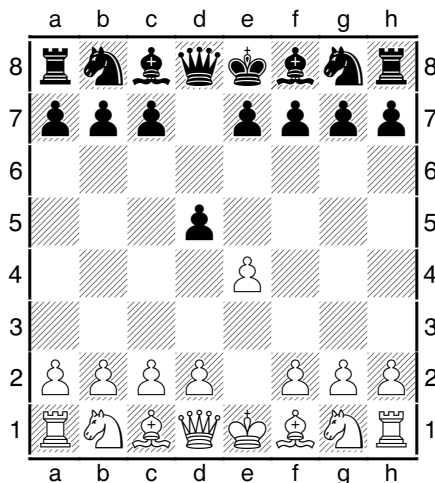
Q22. Choose a move for Black



Q23. Choose a move for Black

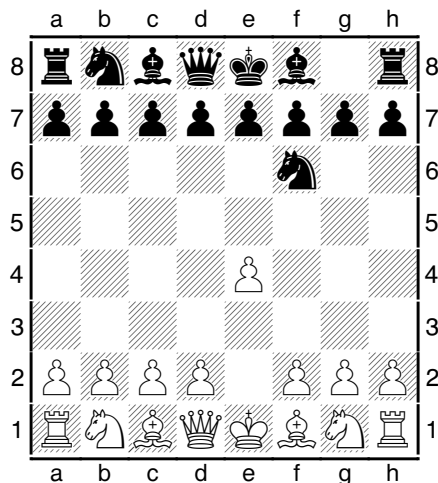


Q24. Choose a move for Black



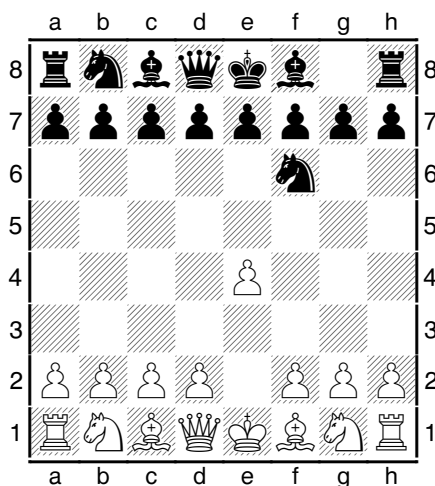
Q25. Choose a move for White

- a) Nf3 b) Bc4 c) exd5



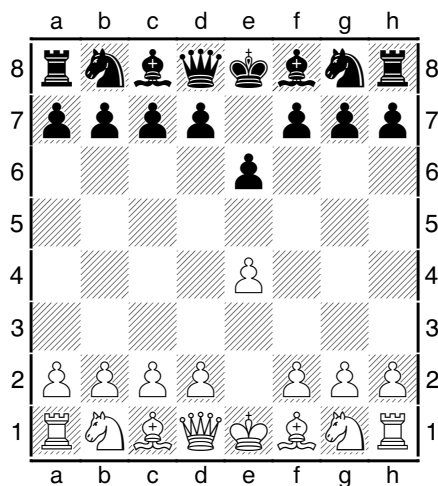
Q26. Choose a move for White

- a) Nc3 b) Nf3 c) Bb5



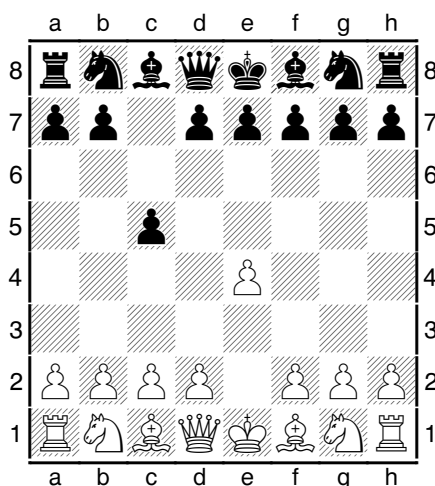
Q27. Choose a move for White

- a) e5 b) d4 c) f4



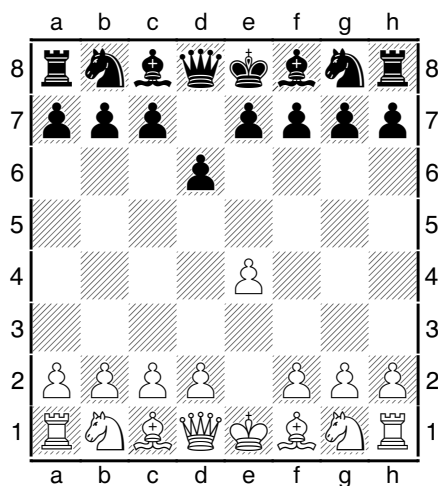
Q28. Choose a move for White

- a) f3 b) Bc4 c) d4



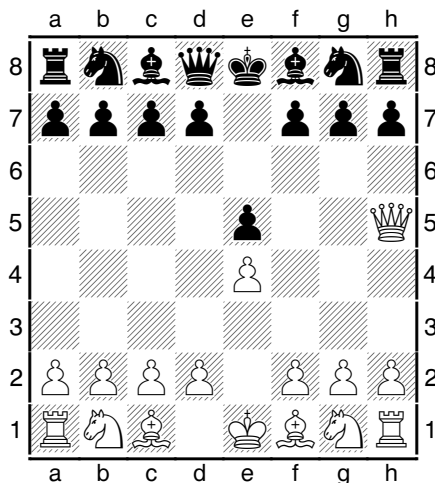
Q29. Choose a move for White

- a) Nh3 b) Nf3 c) Qh5



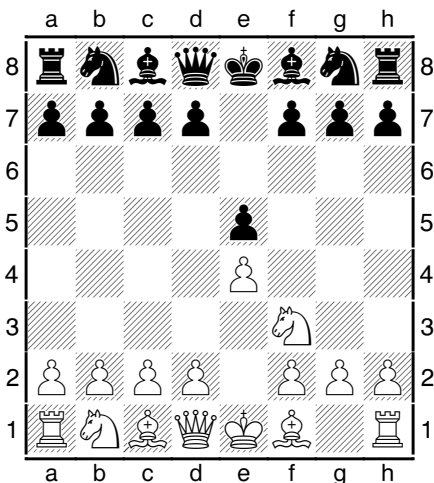
Q30. Choose a move for White

- a) d4 b) Bb5+ c) Qg4



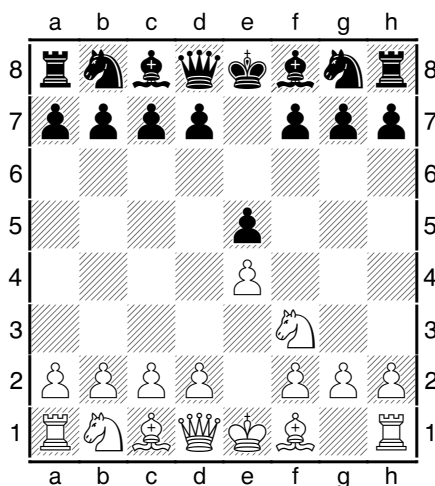
Q31. Choose a move for Black

- a) g6 b) Nc6 c) Bc5



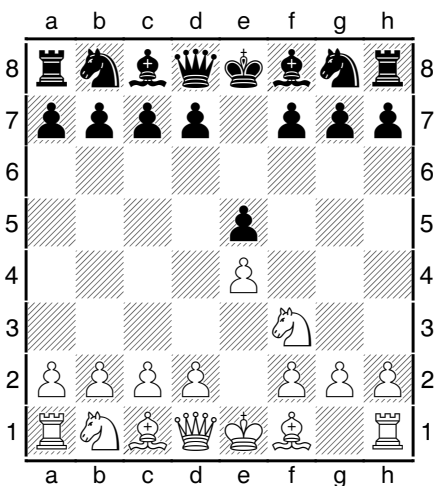
Q32. Choose a move for Black

- a) g6 b) Nc6 c) Bc5



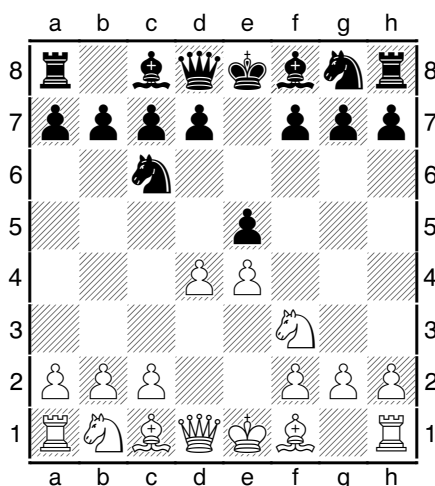
Q33. Choose a move for Black

- a) Nf6 b) Ne7 c) Nh6



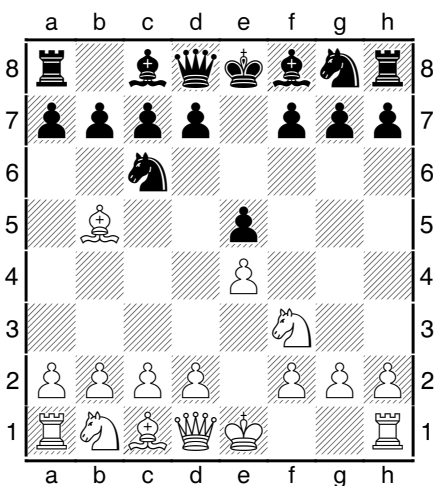
Q34. Choose a move for Black

- a) Qh4 b) Qf6 c) d6



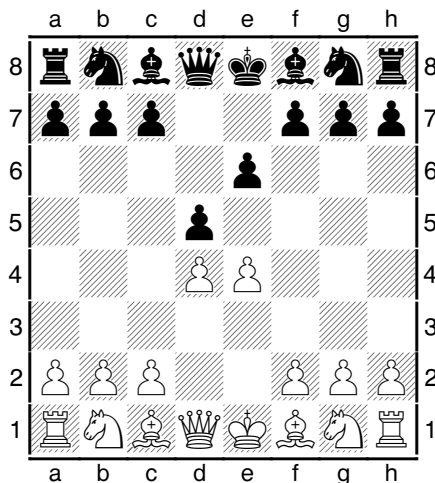
Q35. Choose a move for Black

- a) Bb4+ b) a6 c) exd4



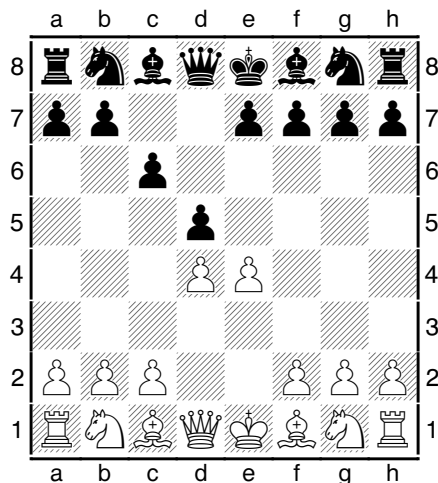
Q36. Choose a move for Black

- a) a6 b) Nb4 c) Nb8



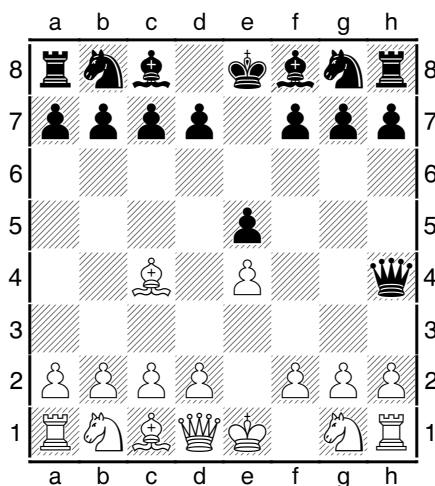
Q37. Choose a move for White

- a) Nc3 b) Nf3 c) Bb5+



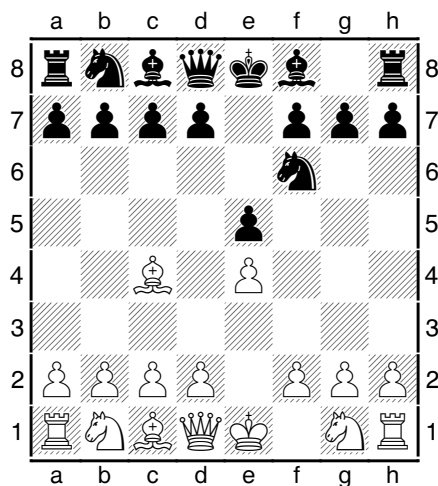
Q38. Choose a move for White

- a) Qh5 b) Bg5 c) e5



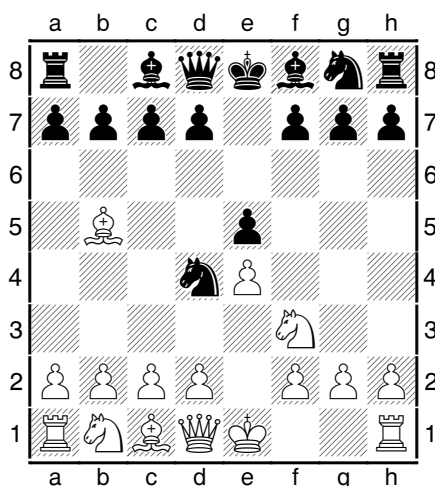
Q39. Choose a move for White

- a) g3 b) d3 c) c3



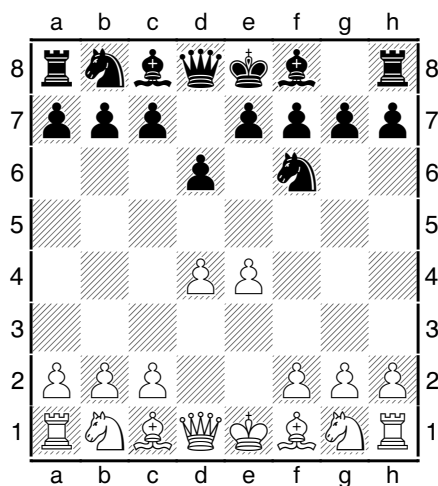
Q40. Choose a move for White

- a) Qh5 b) f3 c) Nc3



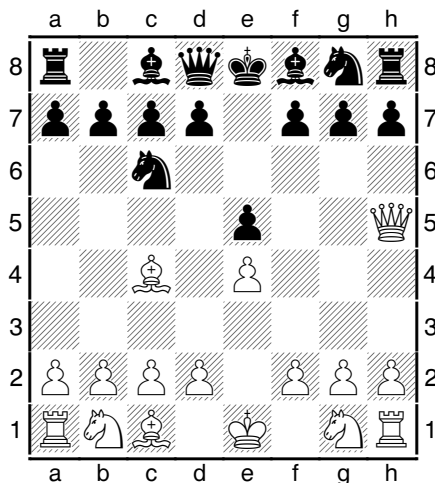
Q41. Choose a move for White

- a) 0-0 b) Nxd4 c) d3



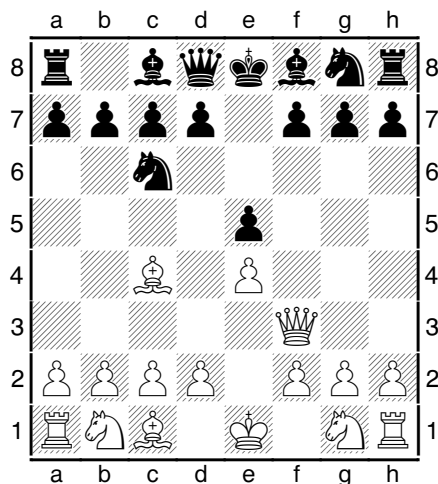
Q42. Choose a move for White

- a) Nc3 b) e5 c) Bg5



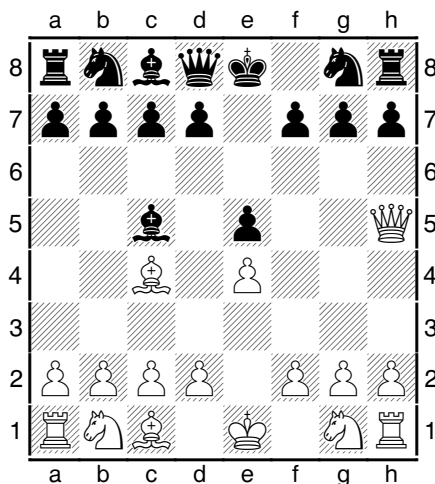
Q43. Choose a move for Black

- a) Nf6 b) Nd4 c) g6



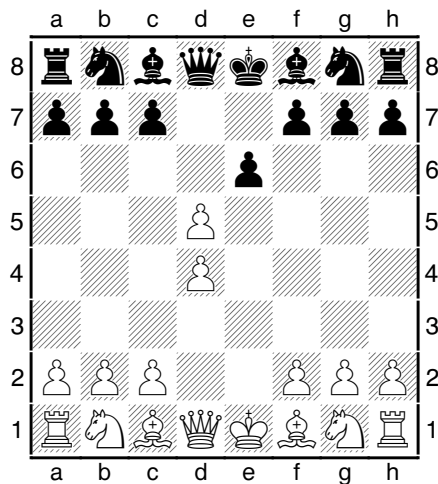
Q44. Choose a move for Black

- a) Nf6 b) Nd4 c) g6



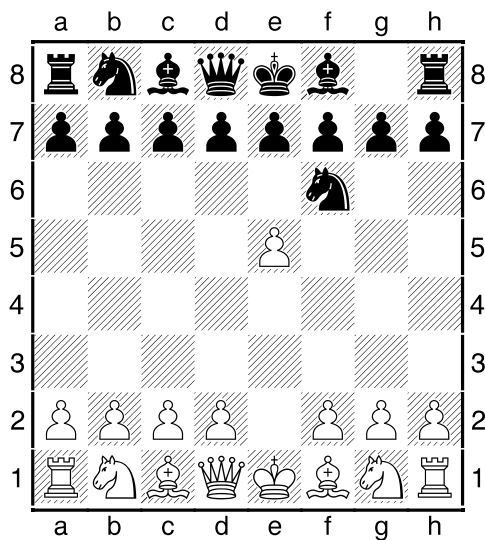
Q45. Choose a move for Black

- a) Nf6 b) Qe7 c) g6



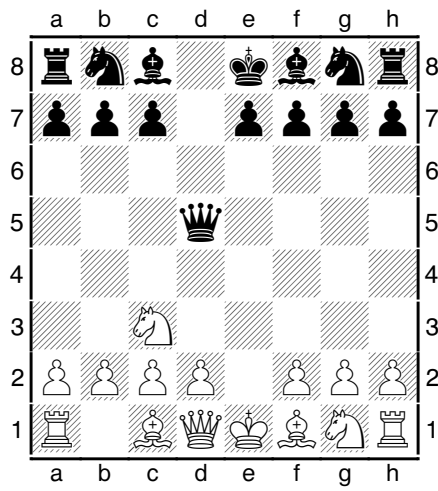
Q46. Choose a move for Black

- a) exd5 b) Nc6 c) Nf6



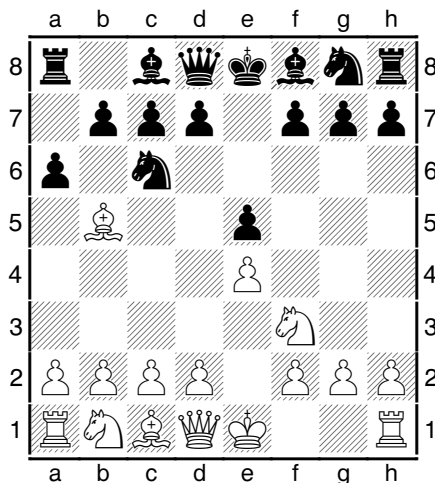
Q47. Choose a move for Black

- a) d6 b) Nd5 c) Ng4



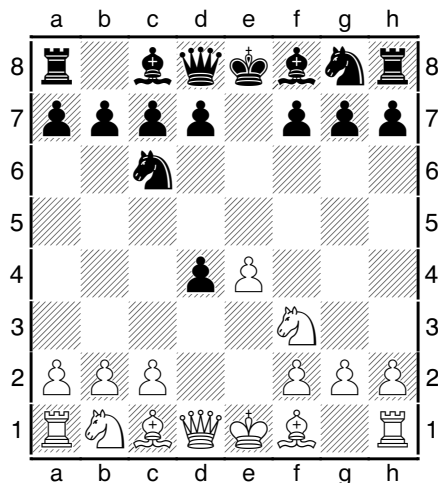
Q48. Choose a move for Black

- a) Nf6 b) Qe4+ c) Qa5



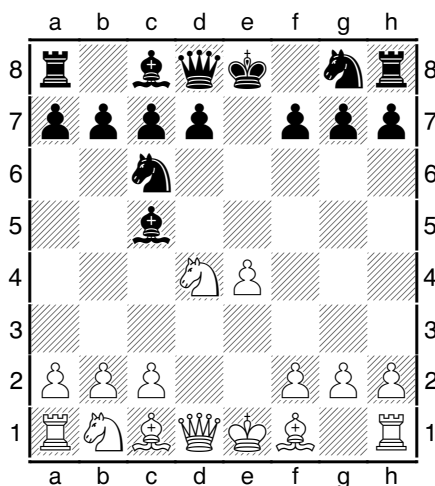
Q49. Choose a move for White

- a) 0-0 b) Nc3 c) Ba4



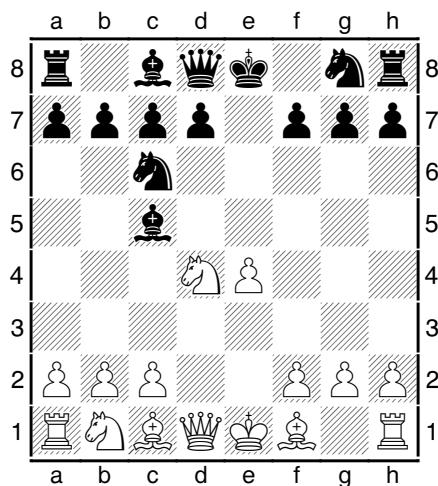
Q50. Choose a move for White

- a) Nxd4 b) Nc3 c) Bg5



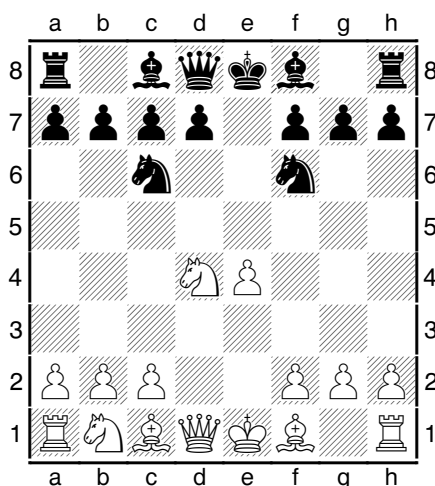
Q51. Choose a move for White

- a) Nc3 b) Be3 c) Bc4



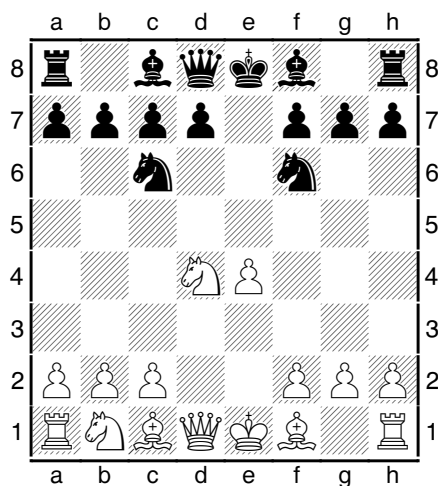
Q52. Choose a move for White

- a) Nb3 b) Ne6 c) Qh5



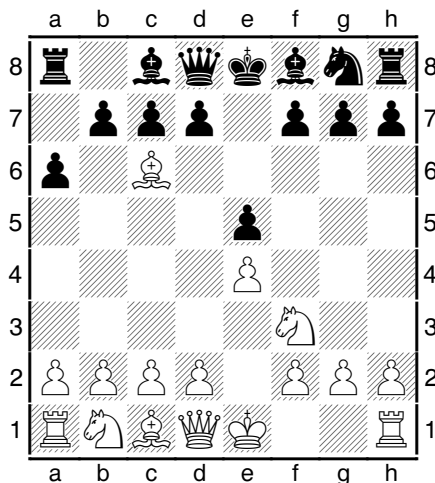
Q53. Choose a move for White

- a) Nc3 b) Bd3 c) Qf3



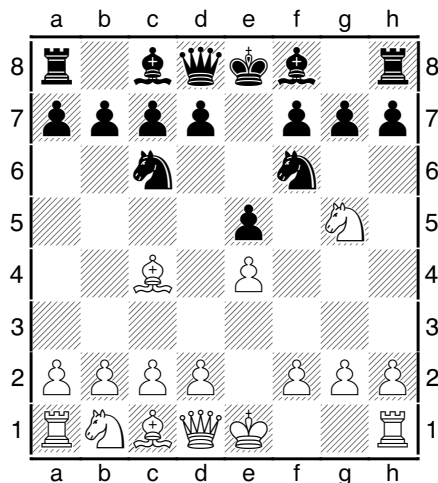
Q54. Choose a move for White

- a) e5 b) Bb5 c) Nxc6



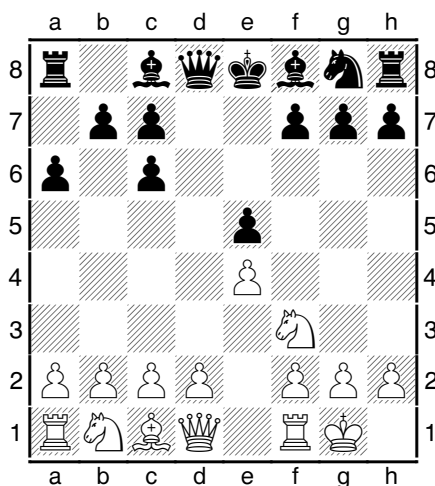
Q55. Choose a move for Black

- a) Nf6 b) Bc5 c) dxc6



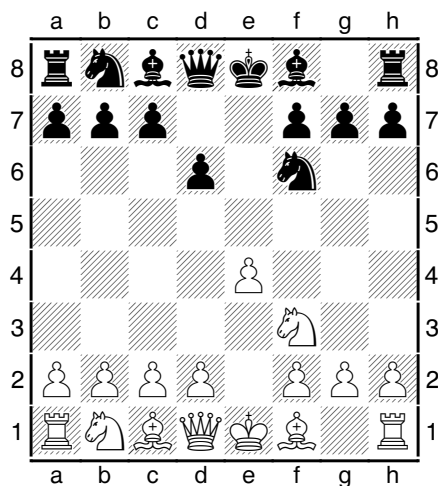
Q56. Choose a move for Black

- a) d6 b) d5 c) Qe7



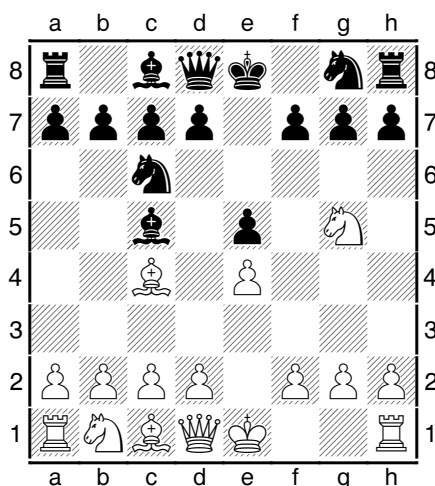
Q57. Choose a move for Black

- a) Nf6 b) Bd6 c) Qg5



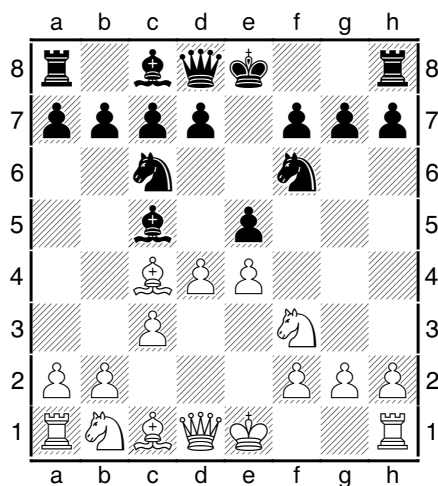
Q58. Choose a move for Black

- a) Nxe4 b) Nc6 c) Bg4



Q59. Choose a move for Black

- a) Qxg5 b) d5 c) h6



Q60. Choose a move for Black

- a) d6 b) Nxe4 c) exd4

CHAPTER 2

OPENING TACTICS

Many people think chess is about learning moves off by heart. Some of it is, but most of it is about learning and understanding ideas.

There are some tactical ideas which happen over and over again at the start of the game. If you know them you'll be able to win games quickly. If you don't know them you'll lose a lot of games quickly.

You have to think about getting your pieces out quickly in the opening, but you also have to think about TACTICS and CHECKMATES all the time.

If you've read *CHESS TACTICS FOR HEROES* and *CHECKMATES FOR HEROES* you'll have learnt about the types of moves you'll meet here already. If you haven't read them, you really should! You have to be good at TACTICS to play the opening well.

If you understand these ideas you'll find it much easier to understand what's happening in the opening and why the moves are played.

Read on to learn about some really important TACTICAL IDEAS in the OPENING.

TACTICAL IDEA 1: THE FATAL DIAGONAL

You've already seen how you can win quickly and easily against opponents who move their king-side pawns early on. FOOLS MATE is the simplest example of this.

Here are some more examples. Play through these games on your board to see how they work.

Putting your pawn on f6 and your knight on h6 is a really bad idea. The knight should go to f6, not the pawn. This is what might happen if you get it wrong.

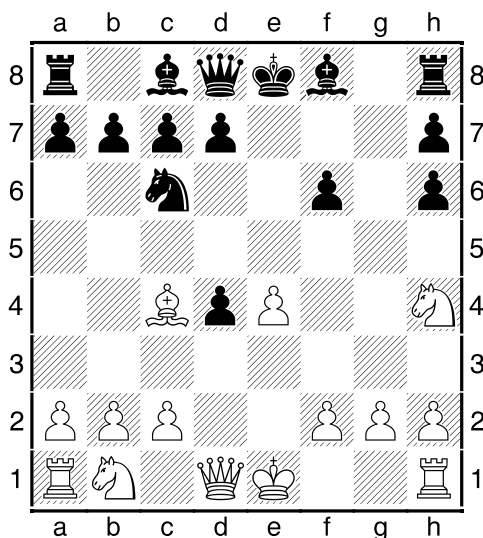
1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. d4

This is called the SCOTCH GAME. Black's best reply is to capture the pawn on d4.

- 3... f6
4. Bc4 Nh6
5. Bxh6 gxh6
6. Nh4

Breaking two rules: moving a piece twice and putting a knight on the side, but it's still a good move. White wants to open a line for the queen.

- 6... exd4



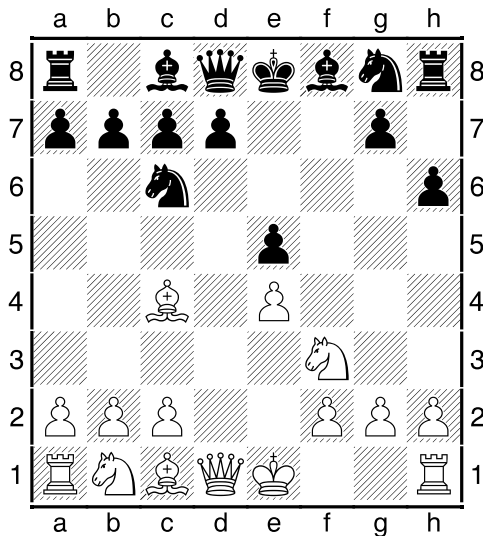
7. Qh5+ Ke7
8. Nf5#

Playing Nh4 in this sort of position is not always the best move, but it sets a few traps. Here's a very similar game that has happened on several occasions.

1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 f6
3. Bc4 Nc6
4. Nh4 g5
5. Qh5+ Ke7
6. Nf5#

In the next game, 3... h6 is a bad move (you'll learn some better moves later in this book) and 4... f6 is even worse. You have to LOOK AHEAD a couple of moves to find the knight SACRIFICE on move 6.

1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Bc4 h6
4. d4 f6
5. dxe5 fxe5



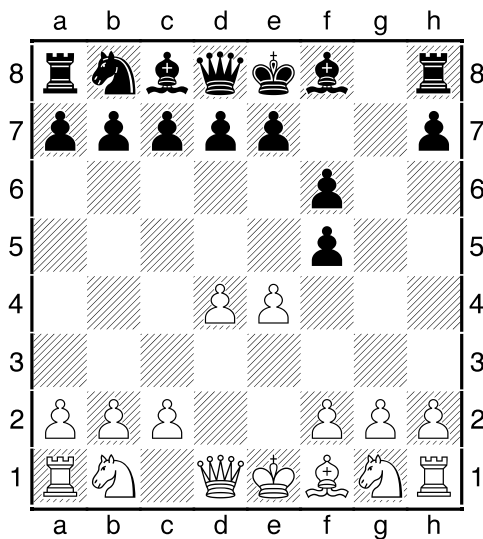
6. Nxe5 d6

(If 6... Nxe5, 7. Qh5+ g6 8. Qxe5+ Qe7 9. Qxh8. White plays a FORK on move 7 and another FORK on move 8.)

7. Qh5+ Ke7
8. Qf7#

In this game Black has a nasty surprise. White's 4th move sets up a DISCOVERED ATTACK on the h5 square and he doesn't see it coming.

1. d4 f5
2. Bg5 Nf6
3. Bxf6 gxf6
4. e4



- 4... fxe4
5. Qh5#

This game uses a similar idea:

1. d4 f5
2. Bg5 h6
3. Bh4 g5
4. Bg3 f4

Black's TRAPPED the white bishop, but White has some sneaky ideas in mind.

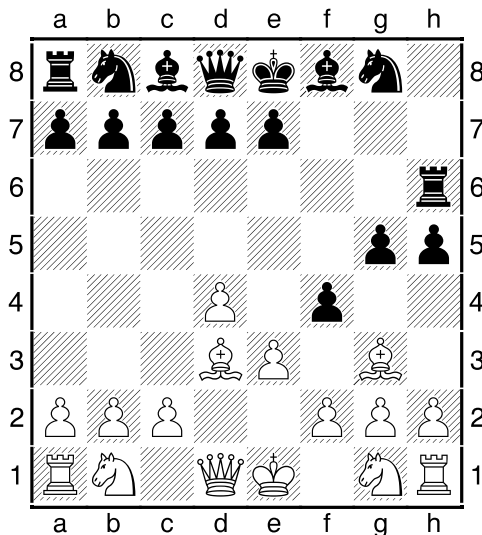
5. e3

Planning Qh5#, which Black prevents by playing...

- 5... h5
6. Bd3

Now planning Bg6#, which Black prevents by playing...

- 6... Rh6

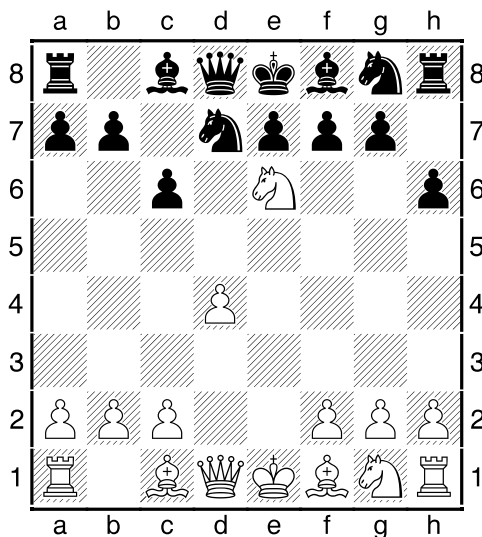


The black rook on h6 is an **OVERWORKED PIECE**. White now plays a **QUEEN SACRIFICE** to force the rook to capture on h5 and **DEFLECT** it from defending g6.

7. Qxh5+ Rxh5
8. Bg6#

In the next game, White sets a clever trap on move 6. Black falls headlong into the trap: he should play 6... Qa5+ or Qb6 instead.

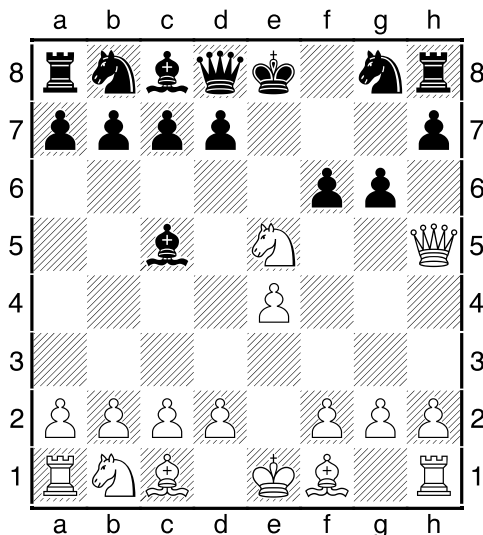
1. e4 c6
2. d4 d5
3. Nc3 dxe4
4. Nxe4 Nd7
5. Ng5 h6
6. Ne6



- 6... fxe6
7. Qh5+ g6
8. Qxg6#

Here's another idea based on the FATAL DIAGONAL which is well worth remembering. Black's 2nd and 3rd moves are both poor choices. White's 5th move is EXPLOITING THE PIN on the h-file: if 5... hxg6 then 6. Qxh8.

1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Bc5
3. Nxe5 f6
4. Qh5+ g6

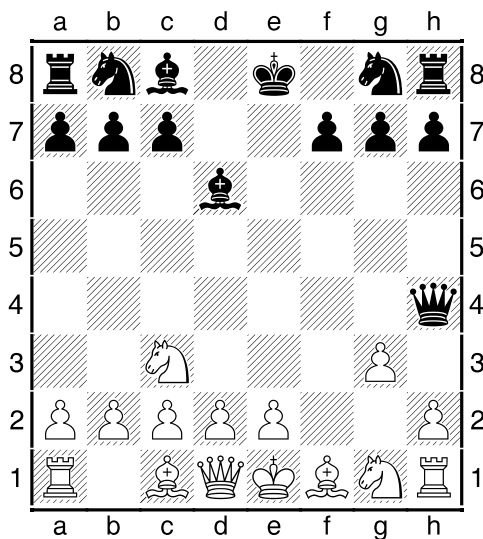


5. Nxg6 and whatever Black does next, White will win the rook on h8.

Now for some games where Black does the same sort of thing.

Black's first move is a GAMBIT, giving up a pawn to get a quick attack. It works well here: White moves the wrong knight on move 4. Black then plays a QUEEN SACRIFICE to get checkmate.

1. f4 e5
2. fxe5 d6
3. exd6 Bxd6
4. Nc3 Qh4+
5. g3



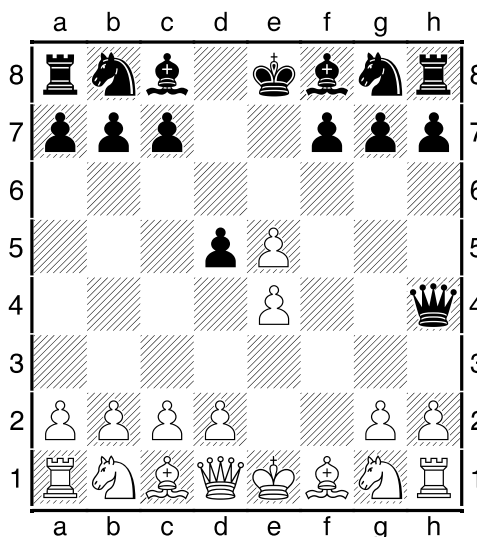
- 5... Qxg3+ (Bxg3+ will work just as well, but it's always good to SACRIFICE your queen.)
6. hxg3 Bxg3#

In this game the same GAMBIT led to an even quicker CHECKMATE.

1. f4 e5
2. g3 exf4
3. gxf4 Qh4#

You'll learn more about the KING'S GAMBIT (1. e4 e5 2. f4) later in the book. It's a very exciting opening in which White often gets a strong attack, but you also have to be careful.

1. e4 e5
2. f4 d5
3. fxe5 Qh4+



After only three moves White is in a lot of trouble.

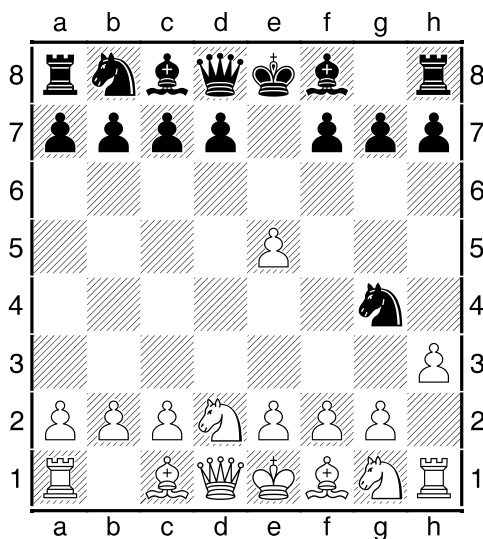
After 4. g3 Qxe4+ (FORK) Black will win the rook on h1.

And after 4. Ke2 Qxe4+ 5. Kf2 Bc5+ White will have to give up the queen to avoid mate.

Instead White should play the other pawn capture: 3. exd5, when, after 3... Qh4+ (now not the best move) you can just play 4. g3 safely.

Finally, here's a game you'll find in a lot of books, although it probably didn't happen quite like this.

1. d4 Nf6
2. Nd2 e5
3. dxe5 Ng4
4. h3



4... Ne3

This move traps the white queen, but, you may ask, why can't White play 5. fxe3. The answer of course, is that the FATAL DIAGONAL is now open for Black to play 5... Qh4+ 6. g3 Qxg3#

TACTICAL IDEA 2: QUEEN FORKS

If you've read *CHESS TACTICS FOR HEROES* you'll know what a FORK is, and you'll be very good at spotting them. You'll also have solved some puzzles in which you will have found some QUEEN FORKS in the opening. You'll learn much more about this here.

Just to remind you, a FORK is a move which creates two (or more) THREATS in different directions with the same piece.

At the start of the game your queen is ideally placed to make FORKS in different ways. First, you have to open lines for her by moving your pawns.

You've just seen how you can use your queen to get a quick CHECKMATE if your opponent's f-pawn moves early in the game. You can also use your queen to make a FORK, moving to h5 to CHECK the enemy king while also THREATENING an enemy piece on the 5th rank.

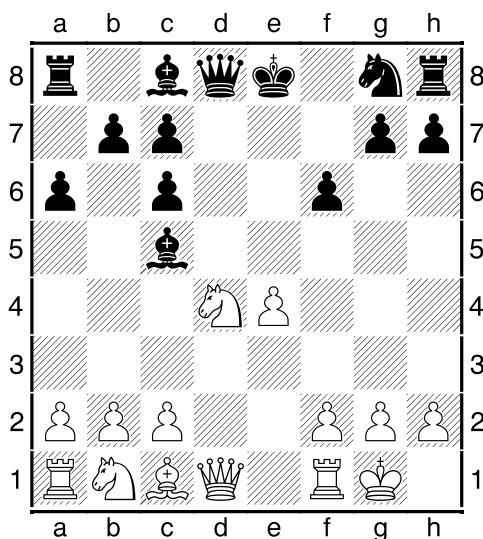
You've already met several QUEEN FORKS. You'll remember the game that started 1. e4 e5 2. f4 d5 3. fxex5 Qh4+. Here are two more examples.

Look at this game, playing the moves out on your board.

1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Bb5 a6
4. Bxc6 bxc6
5. o-o f6
6. d4 exd4
7. Nxd4

All these moves are fine and have been played thousands of times. You'll learn more about the opening later in the book. Now Black usually plays c5 to drive the white knight back, but it's very easy to play a natural move which both DEVELOPS and creates a THREAT.

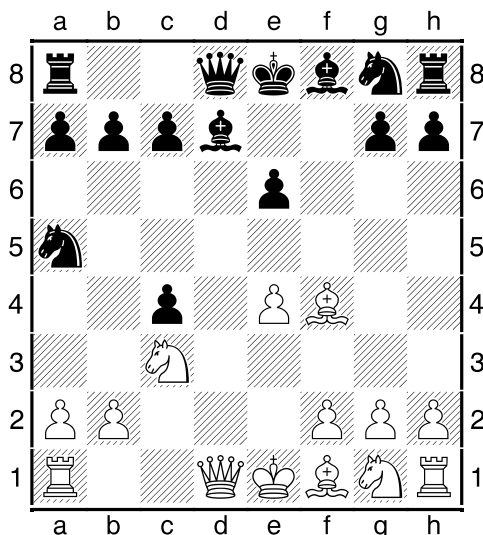
7... Bc5



Can you see how White can play a QUEEN FORK here? If you know what you're looking for it's easy. White's move is 8. Qh5+, winning the bishop on c5.

Here's another example, played over a century ago between two of the world's strongest players. It's a different opening from what you're used to – again you'll learn more about other ways to start the game later in this book.

1. d4 d5
2. c4 Nc6
3. Nc3 dxc4
4. d5 Na5
5. Bf4 Bd7
6. e4 e6
7. dxe6 fxe6



Black's last move was a bad mistake. He should have captured with the bishop instead. You don't need me to tell you White's next move:

8. Qh5+

This time the QUEEN FORK picks up the knight on a5.

You might think it's only a knight: one piece doesn't matter too much. But if you read *CHESS ENDINGS FOR HEROES* you'll find out how easy it is to win if you have an extra piece.

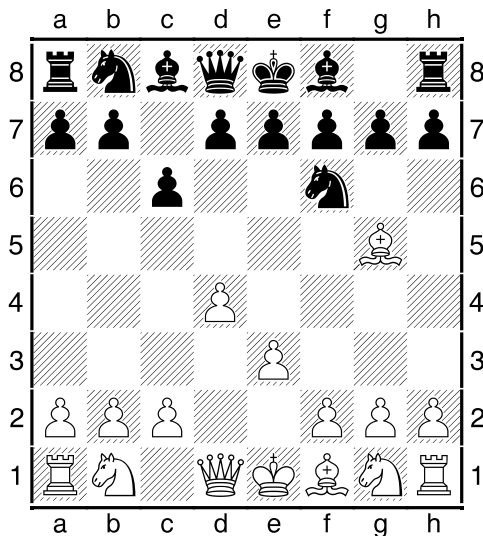
The most common square for a QUEEN FORK in the opening is a4 if you're White, or a5 if you're Black.

One important thing you'll learn much more about later in this book is how to use your c-pawn. You already know about using your e-pawn and d-pawn in the opening, but in many openings you'll also use your c-pawn to fight for the centre.

One advantage of this is that, just like moving your e-pawn, it opens a diagonal for your queen.

In our first example, Black manages to play a QUEEN FORK on only the third move.

1. d4 Nf6
2. Bg5 c6
3. e3

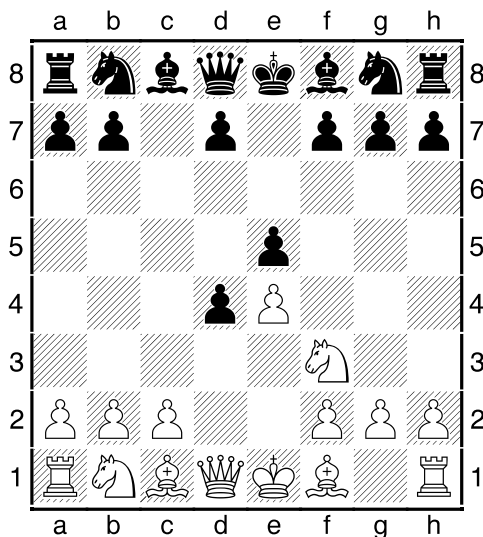


3... Qa5+

Black is winning the undefended bishop on g5. This only happened because White's 3rd move, e3, closed the diagonal between c1 and g5.

Here's another example. Black's first move is the SICILIAN DEFENCE, a very popular reply to 1. e4. Again, you'll learn much more about this later.

1. e4 c5
2. d4 cxd4
3. Nf3 e5



Black sets a trap. White snatches at the bait.

4. Nxe5

And this time Black picks up the stray knight:

4... Qa5+

Here's one way White can try for the same thing:

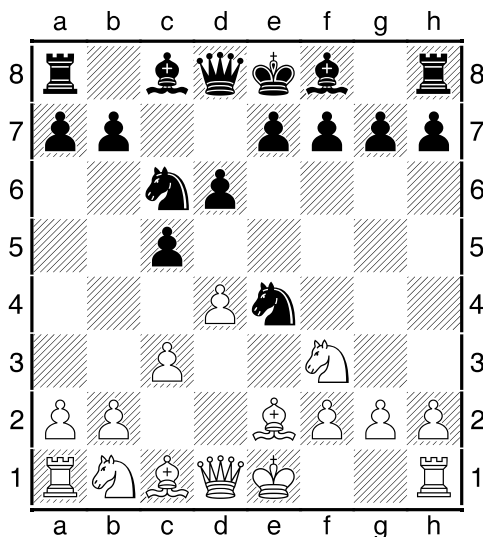
1. e4 c5
2. Nf3 d6
3. Be2 Nf6
4. c3

Baiting the first trap. Black spots that after 4... Nxe4 White will play 5. Qa4+ so plays instead...

- 4... Nc6
5. d4

Now it looks safe for Black to capture on e4...

5... Nxe4



Can you find White's next move here?

The pawn on d4 is in the way so White can play...

6. d5

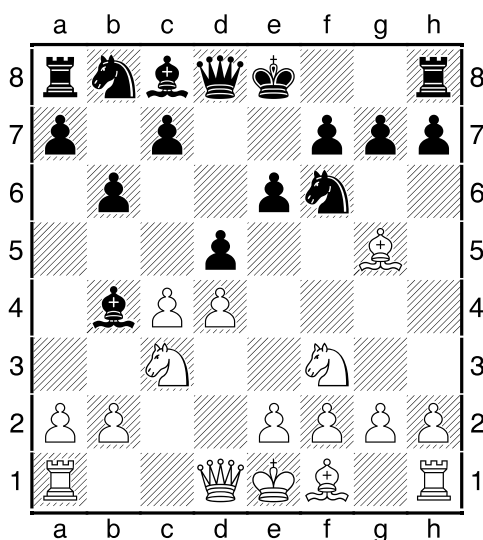
White will win one of Black's knights. If the knight on c6 doesn't move White will take it off. And if it does move, then White will use a FORK to win a piece.

Two more examples. This time White opens with the d-pawn and chooses a very popular and strong opening called the QUEEN'S GAMBIT.

1. d4 d5
2. c4 e6
3. Nc3 Nf6
4. Bg5 Bb4

At this point White could play 5. Qa4+ but Black would get out of the FORK by playing Nc6. So White decides to wait.

5. Nf3 b6

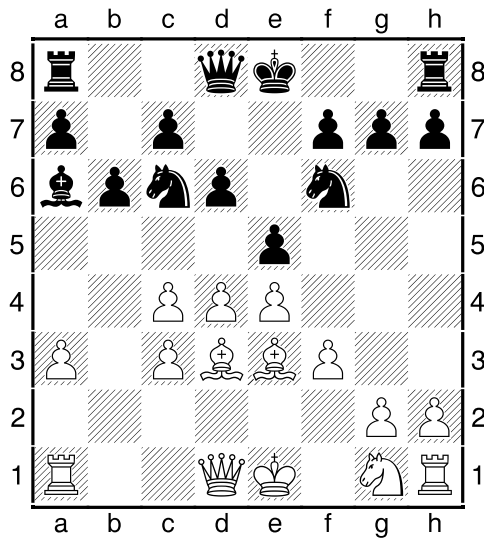


This time the FORK works. 6. Qa4+ will win either a bishop or a knight as after 6... Nc6 White plays 7. Qxc6+.

The idea can sometimes be extended. Your opponent can get out of the FORK by blocking and defending at the same time, but you can then THREATEN THE PINNED PIECE, which you will have learnt about in *CHESS TACTICS FOR HEROES*.

Even the greatest players in the world fall for this idea from time to time. José Raúl Capablanca, who was world champion between 1921 and 1927, was one of the hardest players to beat in the history of chess. Here's the start of a game he lost in 1929 because of a QUEEN FORK on a4.

1. d4 Nf6
2. c4 e6
3. Nc3 Bb4
4. a3 Bxc3+
5. bxc3 d6
6. f3 e5
7. e4 Nc6
8. Be3 b6
9. Bd3 Ba6



Here's the position.

10. Qa4

This time it's not a CHECK but it's both a FORK and a PIN. Black can get out of the FORK by playing...

10... Bb7

Moving one THREATENED piece to defend the other one. But now White can play...

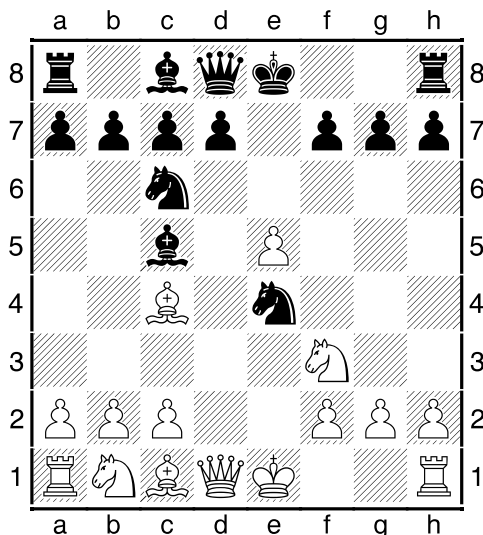
11. d5. THREATENING THE PINNED PIECE.

White won a piece, and, after 62 moves, he also won the game.

QUEEN FORKS on d5 (for White) or d4 (for Black) are also very common.

Take a look at this.

1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Bc4 Nf6
4. d4 Nxe4
5. dxe5 Bc5



Black's THREATENING a KNIGHT FORK on f2. Even Bxf2+ would stop White castling. But White can ignore the attack on f2 and play...

6. Qd5

White is FORKING e4 and f7 - you'll see that Qxf7 is CHECKMATE. If Black plays Nd6, White will play exd6. If Black plays Ng5, White will play Bxg5. If Black plays o-o, White will play Qxe4. If Black plays Nxf2, White will play Qxf7#. If Black plays Bxf2+ White will play Kf1 or Ke2, and Black will still have the same problem, Whatever Black plays you will win at least a piece.

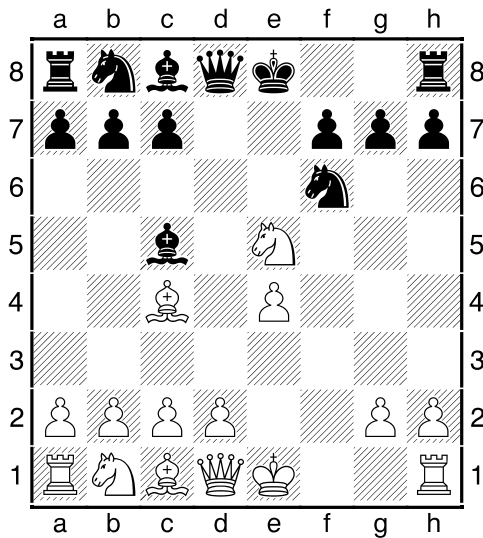
Black can also use the same idea.

1. e4 e5
2. f4 Bc5
3. Nf3 d6
4. Bc4 Nf6
5. fxe5 dxe5

And now...

6. Nxe5

...is a mistake. You know why.



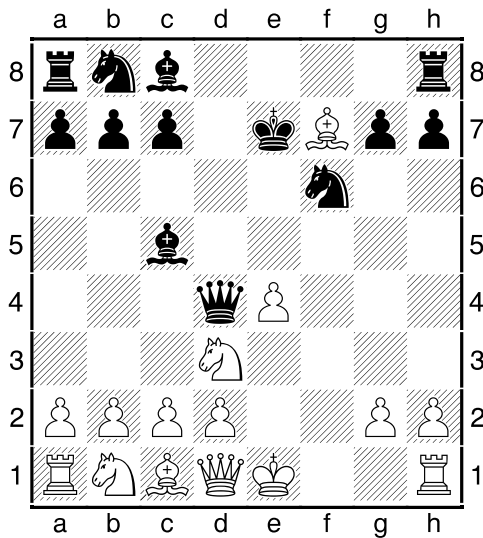
Black plays...

6... Qd4

FORKING e5 and f2 (yes, it's still a sort of FORK even though you're THREATENING CHECKMATE rather than a piece on f2).

Now if White plays Nd3 you can play Qxc4. So White might try...

- 7. Bxf7+ Ke7
- 8. Nd3



And now Black can TRAP the white queen (another idea you might have learnt in *CHESS TACTICS FOR HEROES*):

8... Bg4

Finally in this section, another look at a very strong and popular opening.

1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Bb5

This is the RUY LOPEZ or SPANISH OPENING – you saw another example a few pages ago. On move 2 White THREATENS the black pawn on e5 and Black DEFENDS it. On move 3 White attacks the knight defending the pawn, hoping to be able to trade bishop for knight and then capture on e5. But is it really a THREAT? Let's see.

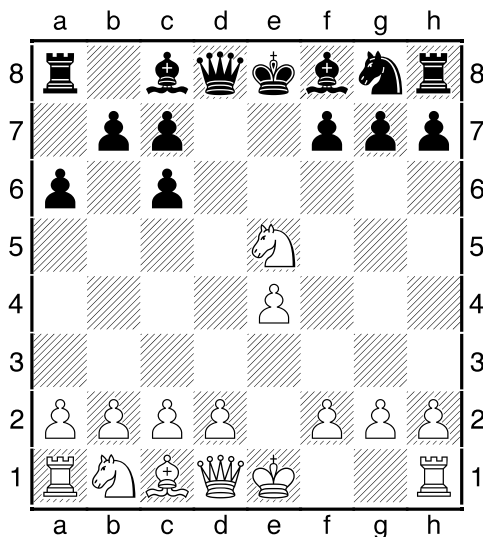
3... a6

This is the most popular move, but you might think it's a mistake. As it happens 4. Ba4 is usually played here, but trading on c6 is also fine.

4. Bxc6 dxc6

Now the most popular move is o-o. Look at what might happen if White takes the pawn.

5. Nxe5



We'll look at this position in more detail in a later chapter. Black has several ways to win the pawn back, the simplest of which is to play Qd4, FORKING the knight on e5 and the pawn on e4.

TACTICAL IDEA 3: TACTICS ON THE e-FILE

Imagine a position where the two e-pawns have disappeared. The enemy king is now a target. If you can get a queen, or, even better, a rook onto the e-file, then if there's an enemy piece in the way it's PINNED. If one of your own pieces is in the way you can play a DISCOVERED CHECK.

Let's look at a few examples and see how this works.

1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nf6

Instead of defending the e-pawn, Black creates an EQUAL THREAT against the white e-pawn. This is a good move, but you have to avoid a few traps.

3. Nxe5 Nxe4

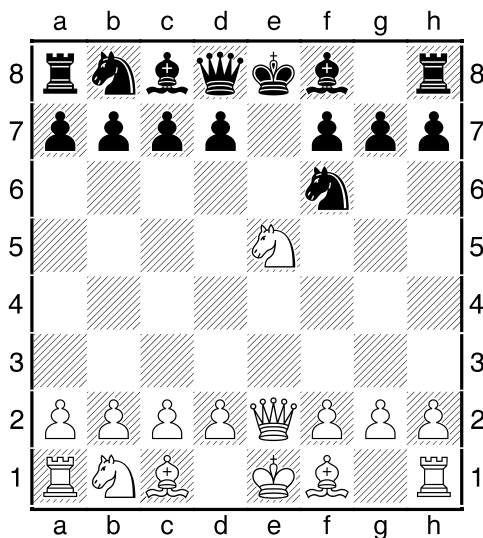
Not the best move, although not quite as bad as some people think.

Now White's best move is...

4. Qe2

Threatening the black knight. Let's suppose it moves to a safe square.

- 4... Nf6



It's White's move. What would you play here?

If you move your knight on e5 anywhere it will be DISCOVERED CHECK. So you look for the square where it will do the most damage without being captured by the black king.

5. Ng6+ THREATENS the rook on h8, but better still is 5. Nc6+, THREATENING the black queen. Of course Black can't capture the knight because the king is in check.

Black could instead have copied White for one more move, playing 4... Qe7. After 5. Qxe4 d6 Black THREATENS the white knight which is now PINNED.

Black does better to play 3... d6, capturing the pawn on e4 next move. But you still have to be careful.

1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nf6
3. Nxe5 d6
4. Nf3 Nxe4
5. Nc3

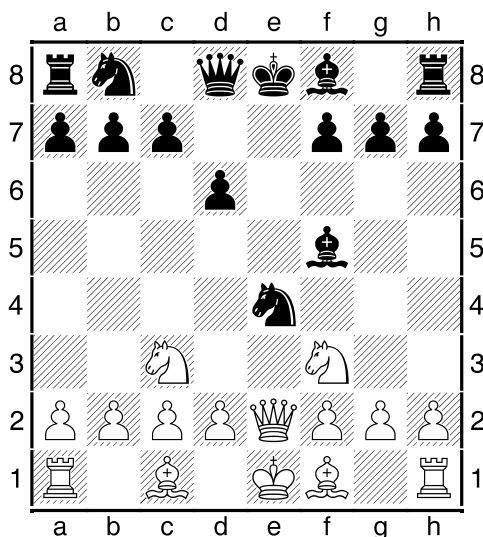
The most popular move here is 5. d4. If White plays 5. Qe2 to PIN the black knight, Black has to UNPIN by playing Qe7.

Black should now play Nxc3, but it looks natural to develop a piece and DEFEND the knight.

5... Bf5

It's a mistake, though. White can win a piece by playing...

6. Qe2



Black's knight is THREATENED and PINNED. 6... d5 is met by 7. d3, attacking the pinned piece. Alternatively, 6... Qe7 is met by 7. Nd5, DEFLECTING the queen. Then 7... Qe6 runs into the FORK 8. Nxc7+.

Let's look at a different opening. You've seen the first few moves before.

1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Bb5 a6
4. Bxc6 dxc6
5. O-O

This is much better than Nxe5, which we looked at a few pages ago.

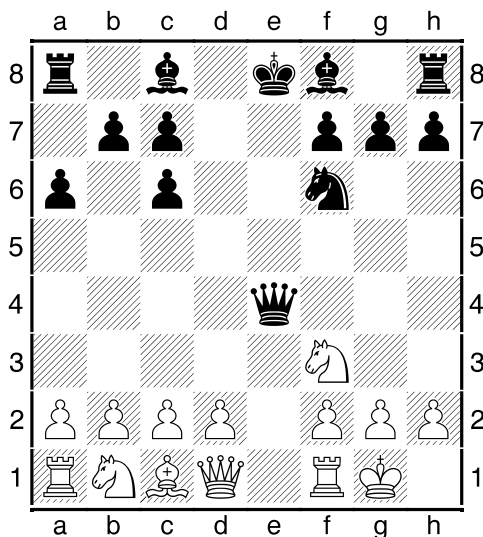
Now Black should do something about defending the e-pawn. It's easy to run into trouble by playing natural developing moves without thinking about what's going to happen next. 5... f6 (another move you saw a few pages ago) is fine, as is 5... Bg4 (PIN!), which we'll come back to later.

Now we're going to look at a move which is not so good.

5... Nf6
6. Nxe5

Now, unlike last move, taking the pawn is excellent. Black might try the QUEEN FORK we looked at earlier:

6... Qd4
7. Nf3 Qxe4



This time it's very different because White has already castled.

White can play...

8. Re1

PINNING and winning the queen.

Let's go back a couple of moves. This time, after the moves

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 a6 4. Bxc6 dxc6 5. o-o Nf6 6. Nxe5

Black decides to take the pawn on e4 straight away.

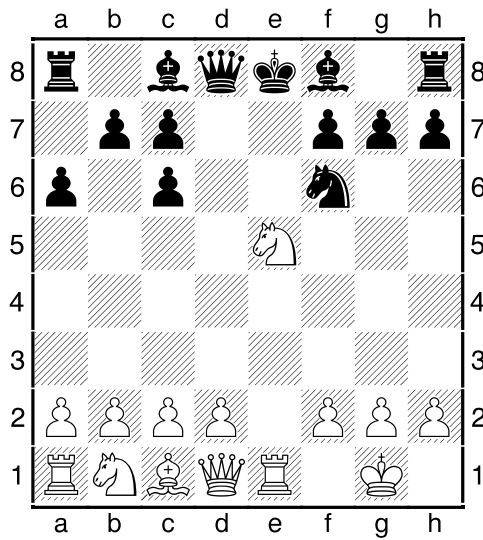
6... Nxe4

Again we move the rook into the action:

7. Re1

If Black decides to move the knight to safety:

7... Nf6



You know what happens next: White can use a DISCOVERED CHECK to win the black queen:

8. Nxc6+

And if Black decides to defend the knight by playing 7... Bf5 we can play 8. d3 and we're going to win a piece of some sort.

TACTICAL IDEA 4: ATTACKS ON f7/f2

You've already seen that f7 is Black's weak point at the start of the game, and that you can sometimes win quickly by going for SCHOLAR'S MATE. You've also seen that if your opponent knows what to do you may well end up in trouble.

There are other ways you can win quickly by using the weakness on f7. There are several reasons why you might want to SACRIFICE a piece on f7. You might also be able to SACRIFICE a piece at the other end of the board in order to capture on f7 and CHECKMATE your opponent.

Some of the tactics are quite complicated, but if you've read through to the end of *CHECKMATES FOR HEROES* and *CHES TACTICS FOR HEROES* you'll be able to understand them. If you're not ready yet, you can always return to this section later.

Let's look at a few examples.

1. e4 c5

Black chooses the very popular SICILIAN DEFENCE. White decides to give up a pawn for rapid development.

2. d4 cxd4

3. c3 dxc3

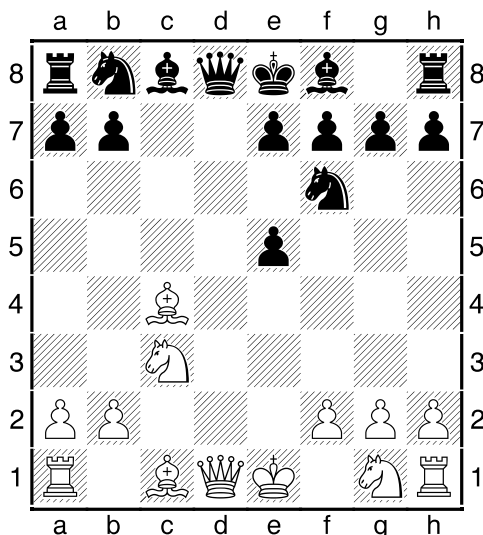
4. Nxc3 d6

5. Bc4 Nf6

6. e5

White sets a trap, and Black falls right into it. The best move now is 6... Nfd7

6... dxe5

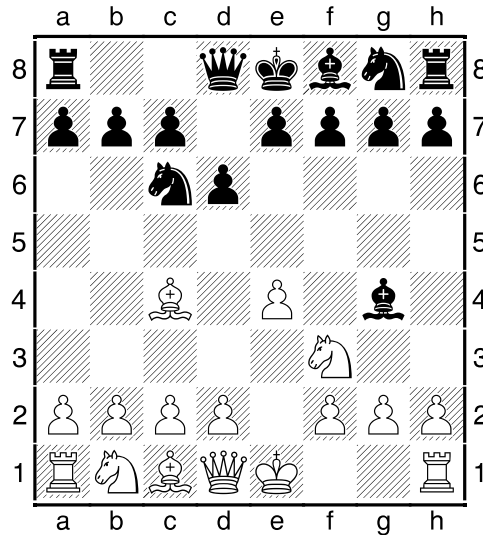


7. Bxf7+

A simple DEFLECTION. The black king is an OVERWORKED PIECE and White's bishop forces him away from defending the queen. Black's only move now is 7... Kxf7 when White just plays 8. Qxd8.

1. e4 Nc6
2. Nf3 d6
3. Bc4 Bg4

Black PINS the white knight, but it's a mistake.



White can play a SACRIFICE on f7 to DECOY the black king.

4. Bxf7+ Kxf7

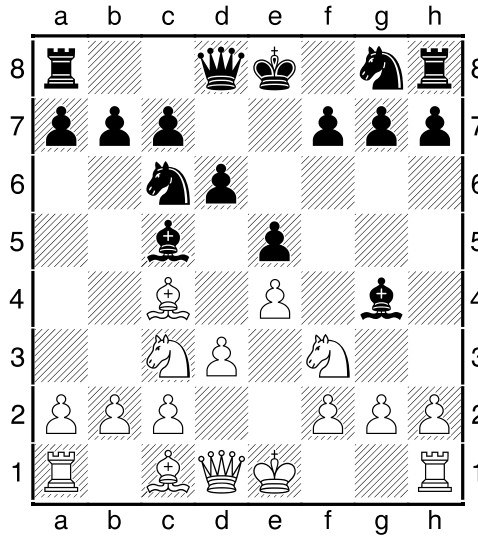
Now White can move the PINNED knight with CHECK, opening up a DISCOVERED ATTACK.

5. Ng5+ Ke8
6. Qxg4

White's won a pawn and also stopped Black from castling. If you think "It's only a pawn: pawns aren't very important" you'll need to read *CHESS ENDINGS FOR HEROES* where you'll learn that you can often win the game even with just one extra pawn.

You have to be careful with this one, though. It doesn't always work. Look at this.

1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Bc4 Bc5
4. d3 d6
5. Nc3 Bg4



You've seen this sort of thing before. The bishop SACRIFICE is just a blunder in this position:

- 6. Bxf7+ Kxf7
- 7. Ng5+ Qxg5
- 8. Bxg5 Bxd1
- 9. Rxd1

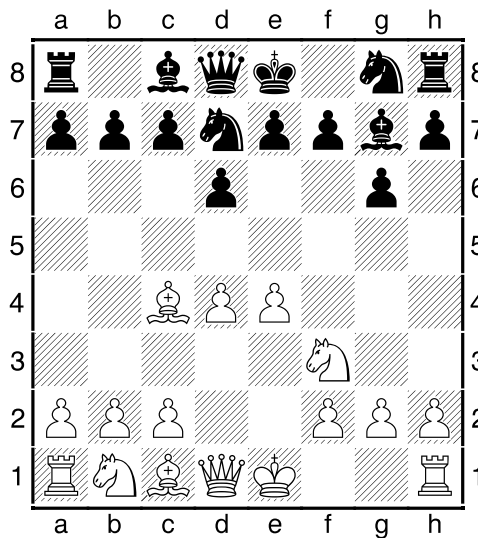
And Black is a knight for a pawn ahead.

- 1. e4 g6
- 2. d4 Bg7
- 3. Nf3 d6

This opening is quite popular, but better suited to more advanced players.

- 4. Bc4 Nd7

There were better moves, for instance Nf6.



Now White can SACRIFICE a bishop.

5. Bxf7+

Again, playing a DECOY SACRIFICE to enable a knight check. Black's best bet is to play Kf8, but it's tempting to capture the bishop and see what happens.

5... Kxf7

6. Ng5+

Now Black has three options, each of which is met by a different TACTIC.

If 6... Kf8, 7. Ne6+ is a FORK.

If 6... Ke8, 7. Ne6 TRAPS the queen.

Finally, if 6... Kf6, 7. Qf3# is CHECKMATE.

Of course you have to see all three variations before playing 5. Bxf7+.

Now for a different idea. Here's how you can play a QUEEN SACRIFICE to give you time to capture on f7 and get a quick CHECKMATE. Look at this game.

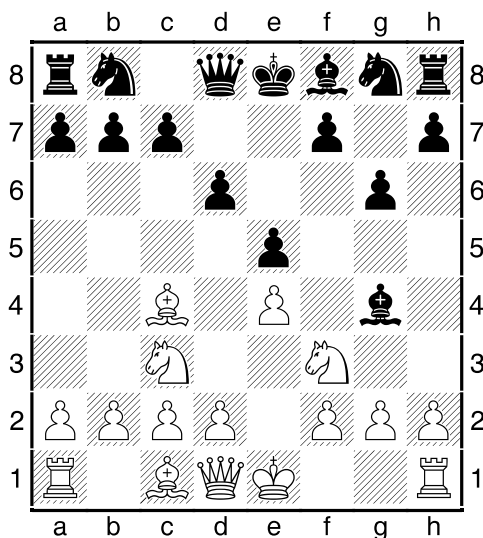
1. e4 e5

2. Nf3 d6

3. Bc4 Bg4

4. Nc3 g6

Black wants to play Bg7 next move, but this is a mistake. White has a stunning reply.



5. Nxe5

It looks like White's made a bad mistake, moving the PINNED bishop. Now Black could play 5... dxe5 6. Qxg4, when White is a pawn ahead. Instead, thinking White has blundered, Black grabs the queen.

5... Bxd1

6. Bxf7+ Ke7

7. Nd5#

This is called LÉGAL'S MATE, after a French player from the 18th century.

When you play something like this you have to be really certain of two things. Firstly, you have to be sure that you really do have a mate if your opponent takes the queen. If there's no mate there you'll just have lost your queen for no reason. Secondly, you have to work out what happens if your opponent takes the knight rather than the queen.

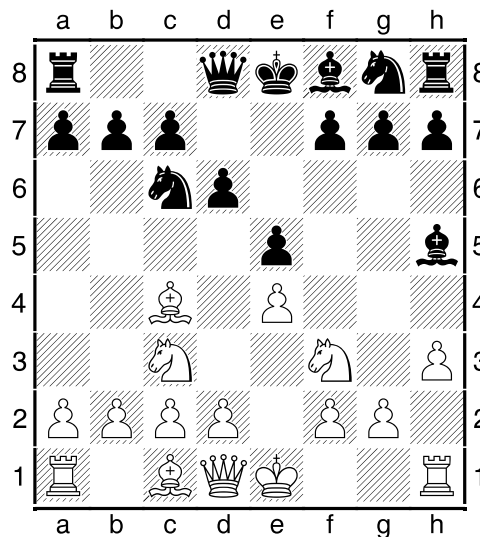
1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 d6
3. Bc4 Nc6
4. Nc3 Bg4

If White plays 5. Nxe5 here, there's the same checkmate after 5... Bxd1, but instead Black should play 5... Nxe5, when White's just lost a knight for a pawn.

So instead White tries to persuade the black bishop to move to a square where it's not defended.

5. h3 Bh5

This is the mistake.



6. Nxe5

Again, 6... Bxd1 runs into mate in 2, while 6... dxe5 leaves Black a pawn behind after 7. Qxh5. So again Black tries...

- 6... Nxe5
7. Qxh5

Now White can capture the bishop.

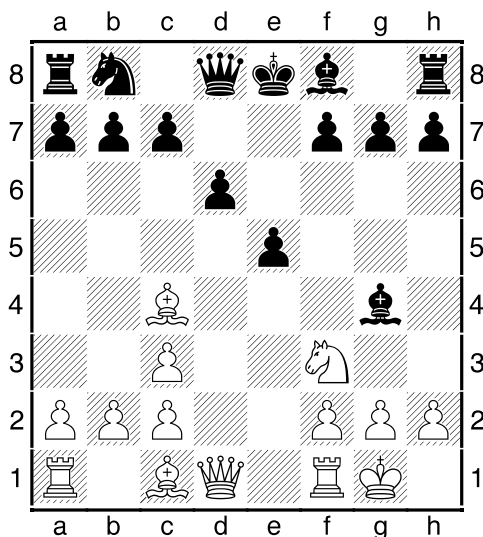
- 7... Nxc4

But Black can capture a bishop in return. Has White made a mistake?

8. Qb5+

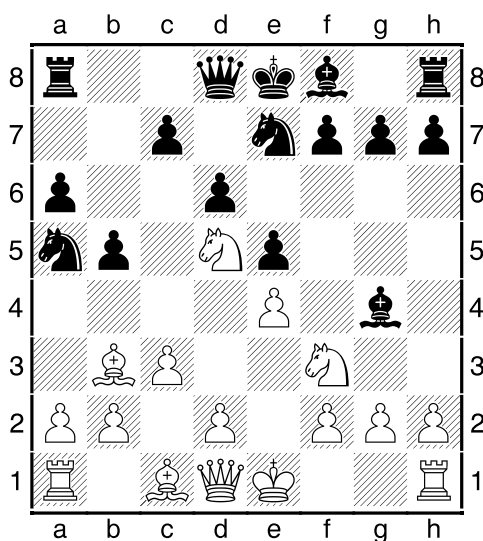
No – White wins the piece back again by using a QUEEN FORK and finishes up a pawn ahead.

There are also some slightly different CHECKMATES which use the same idea.

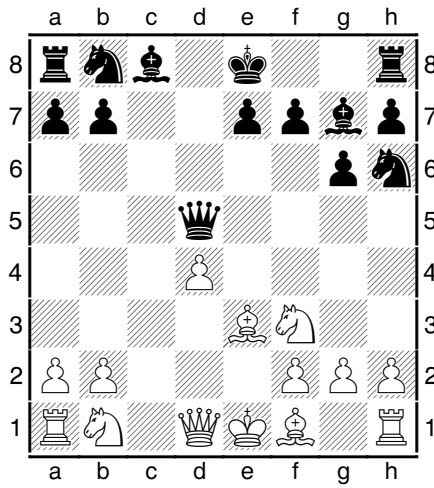


In this position, it's the bishop, not the knight that plays the checkmate. White can play 1. Nxe5 hoping for 1... Bxd1 2. Bxf7+ Ke7 3. Bg5#.

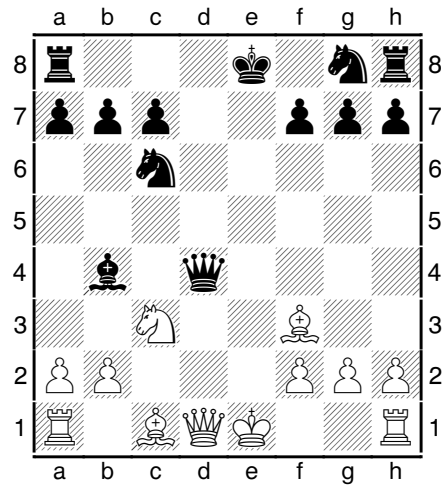
Another good move for White in this position is 1. Bxf7+ Kxf7 2. Nxe5+ when the d-pawn is PINNED. White DECOYS the king onto a square where the white knight can play a FORK EXPLOITING A PIN.



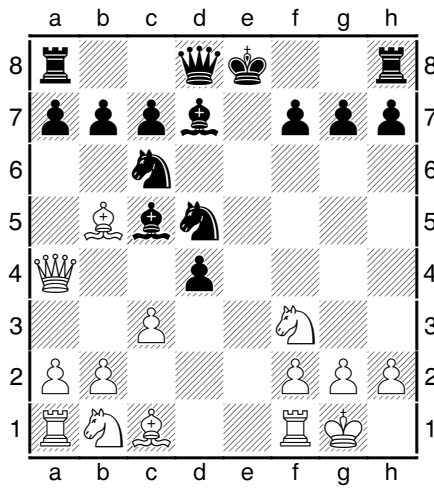
In this position if White plays 1. Nxe5 Bxd1 it looks like there's no mate. But White can play a CLEARANCE SACRIFICE to get rid of the knight on d5: 2. Nf6+ gxf6 3. Bxf7#. Instead after 1... dxe5 Black would still be in the game.



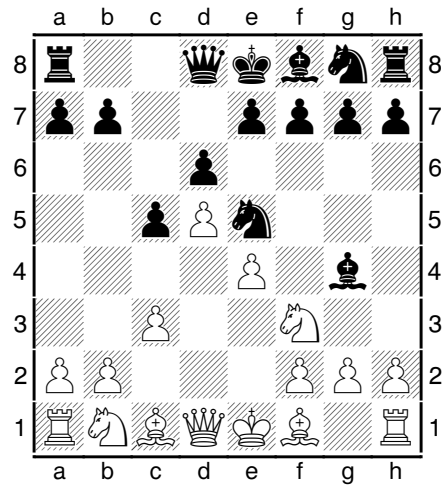
Q61. Find the best move for White



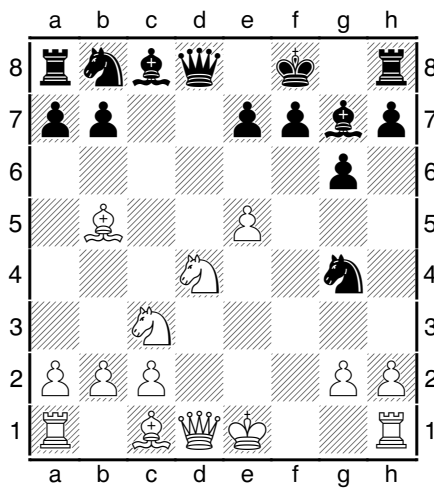
Q62. Find the best move for White



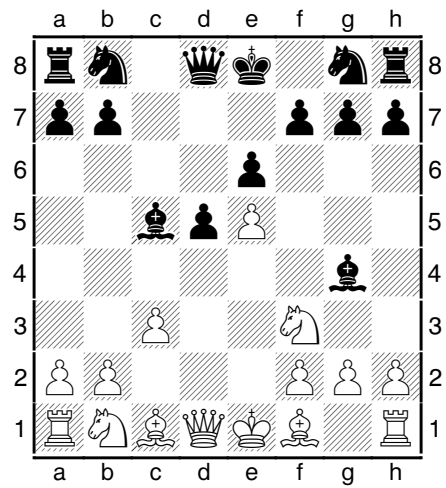
Q63. Find the best move for White



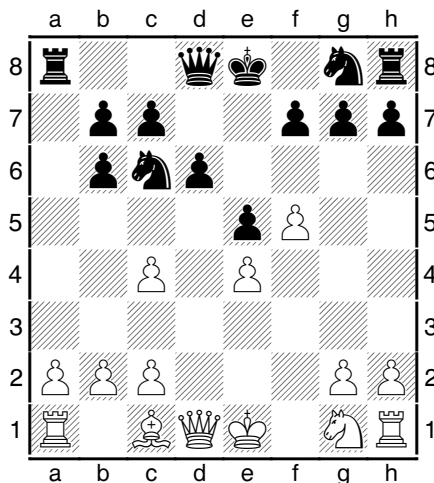
Q64. Find the best move for White



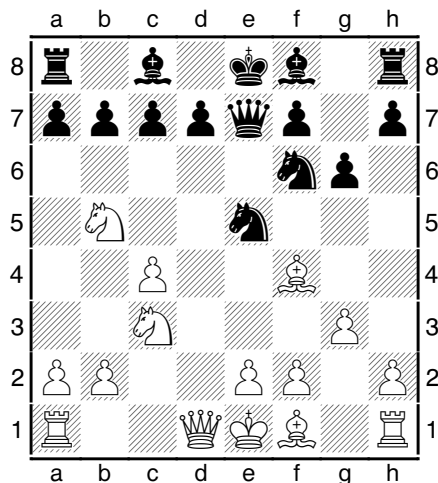
Q65. Find the best move for White



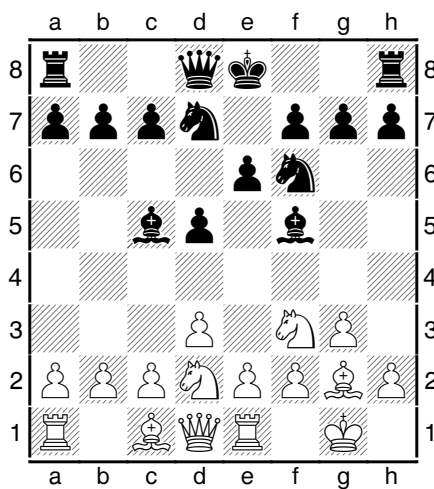
Q66. Find the best move for White



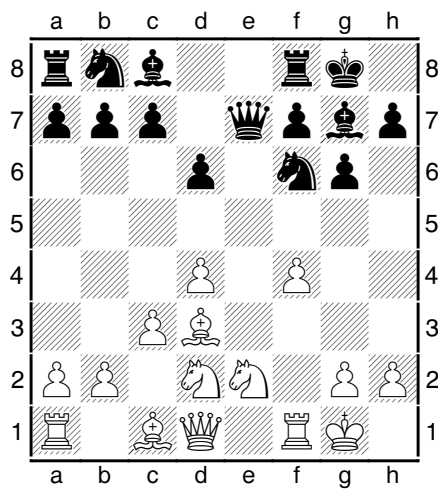
Q67. Find the best move for Black



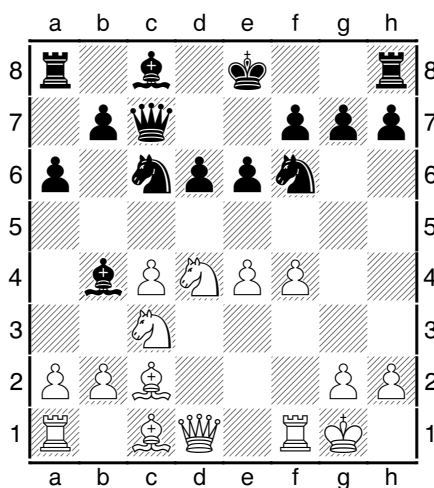
Q68. Find the best move for Black



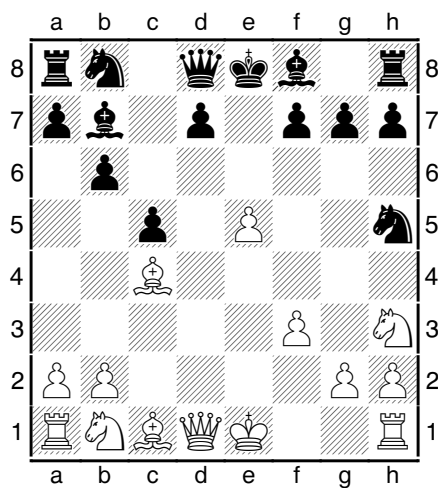
Q69. Find the best move for Black



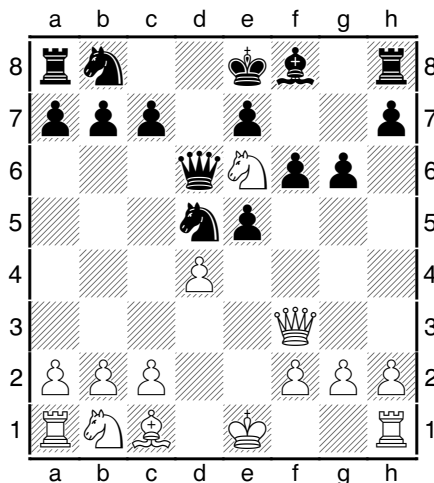
Q70. Find the best move for Black



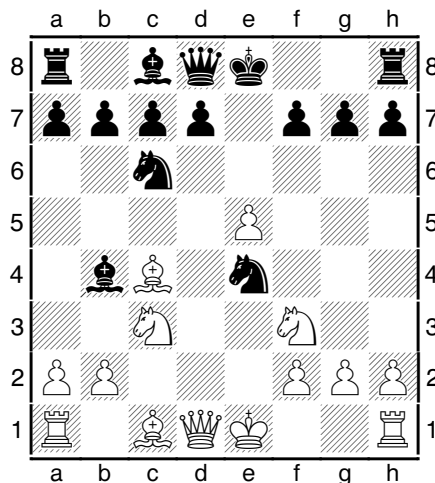
Q71. Find the best move for Black



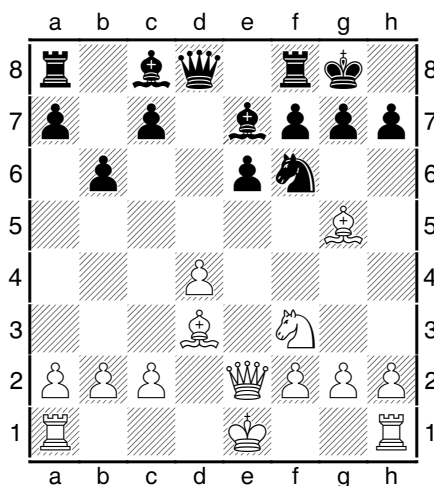
Q72. Find the best move for Black



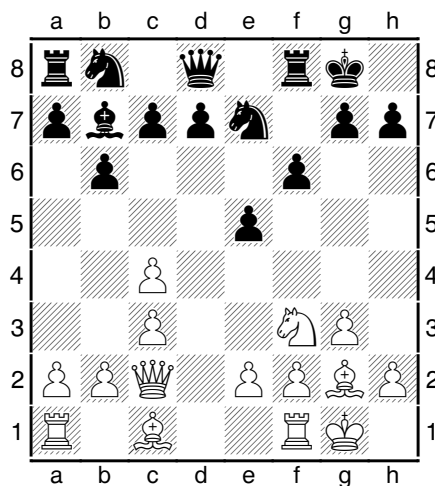
Q73. Find the best move for White



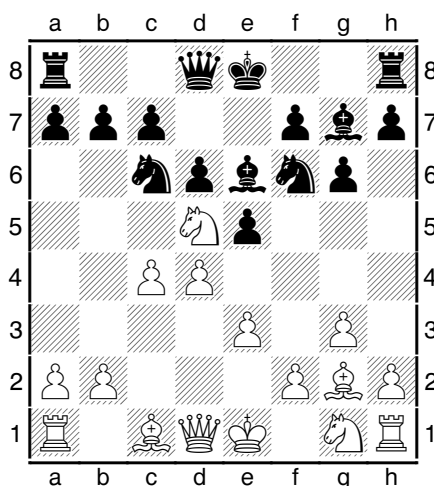
Q74. Find the best move for White



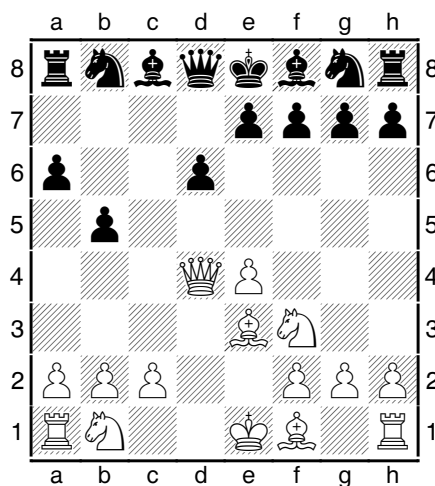
Q75. Find the best move for White



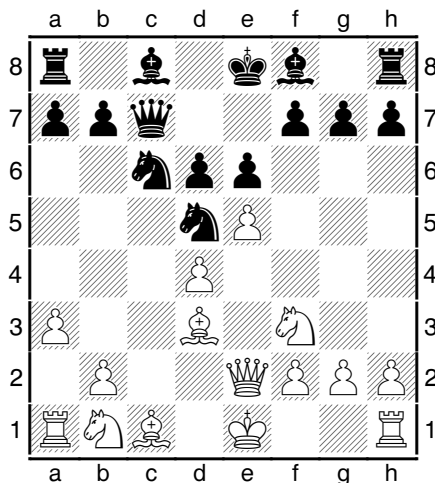
Q76. Find the best move for White



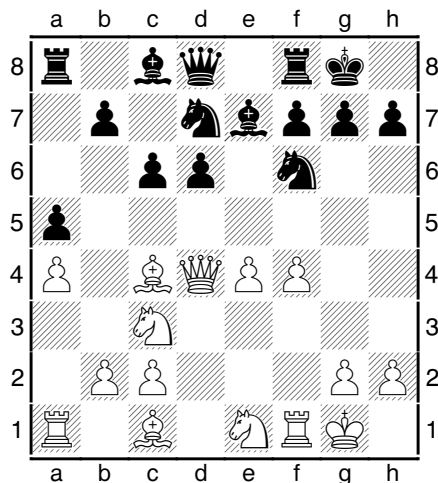
Q77. Find the best move for White



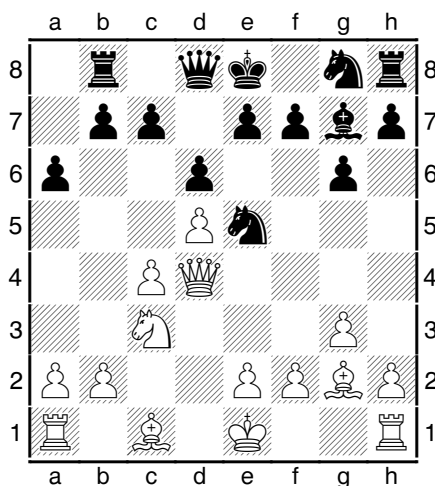
Q78. Find the best move for White



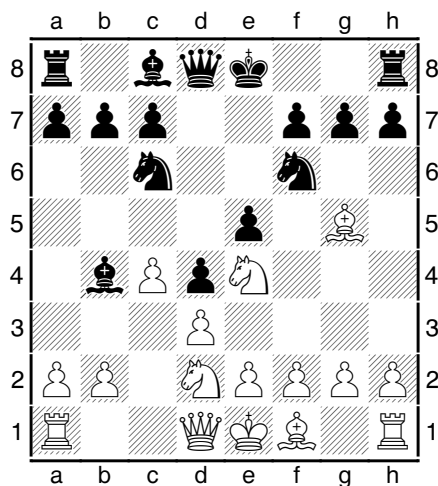
Q79. Find the best move for Black



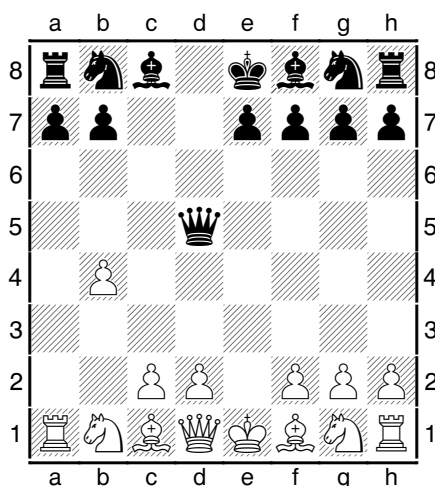
Q80. Find the best move for Black



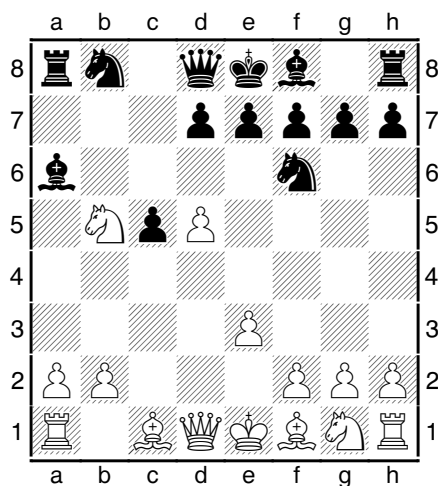
Q81. Find the best move for Black



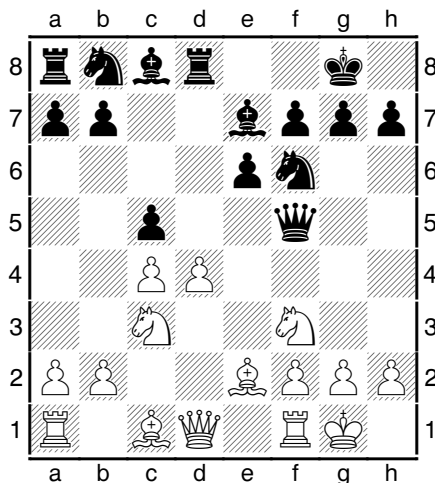
Q82. Find the best move for Black



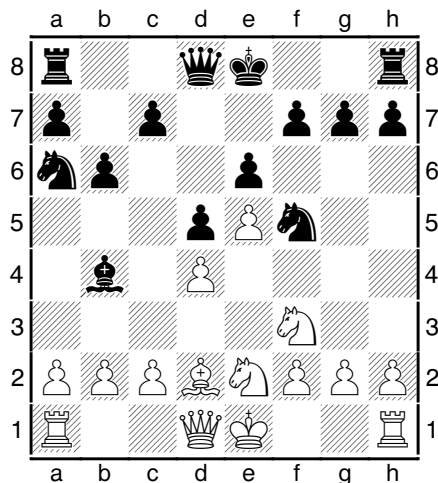
Q83. Find the best move for Black



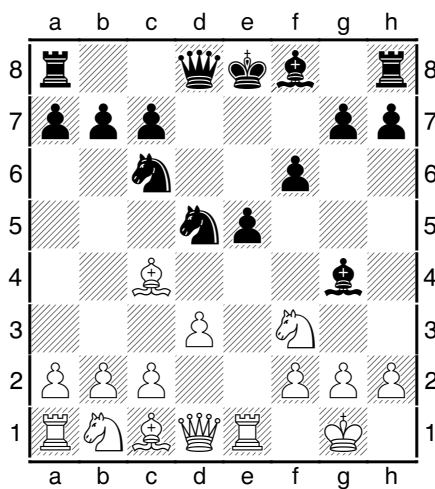
Q84. Find the best move for Black



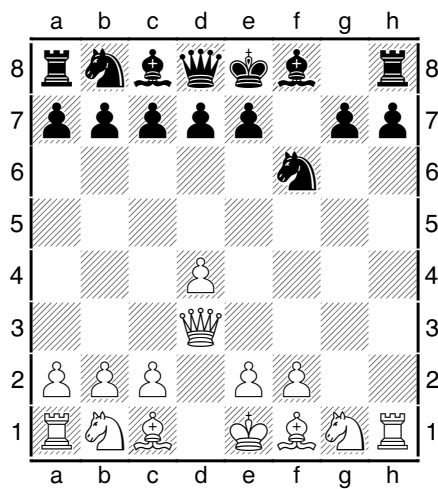
Q85. Find the best move for White



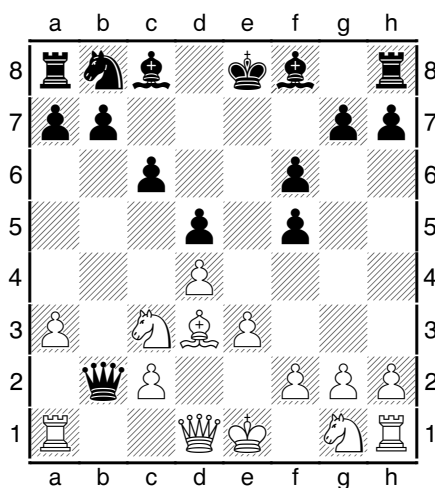
Q86. Find the best move for White



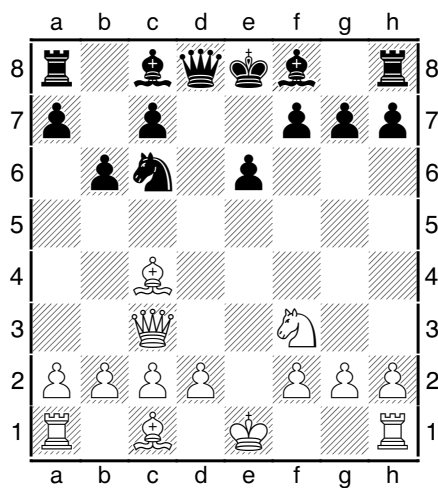
Q87. Find the best move for White



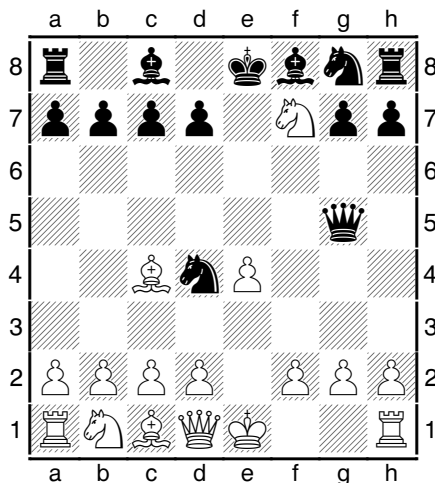
Q88. Find the best move for White



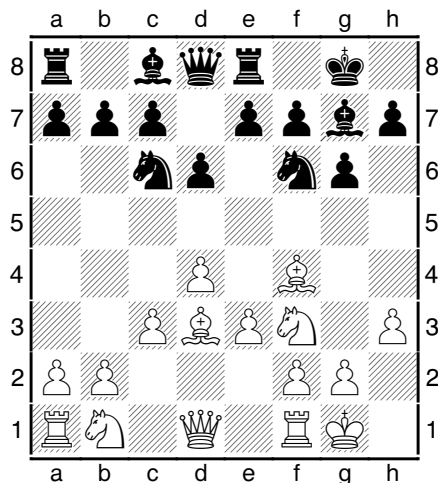
Q89. Find the best move for White



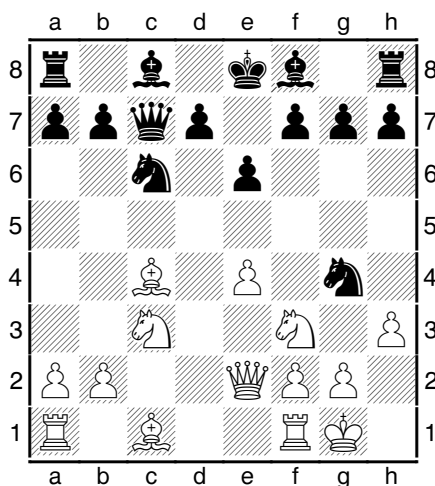
Q90. Find the best move for White



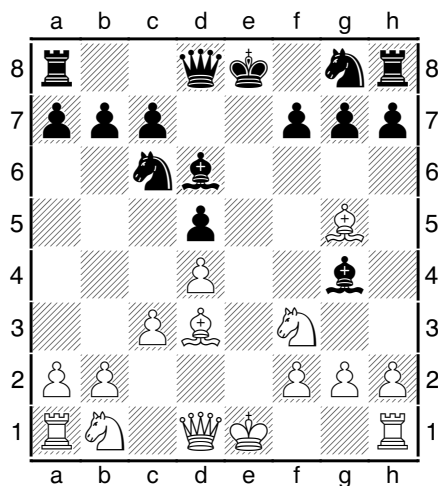
Q91. Find the best move for Black



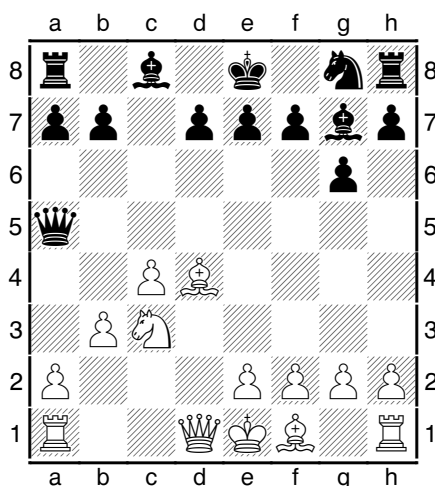
Q92. Find the best move for Black



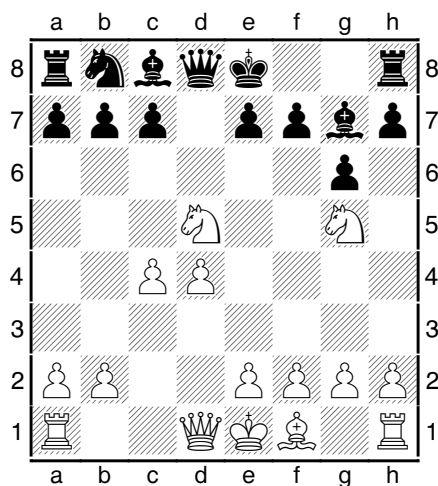
Q93. Find the best move for Black



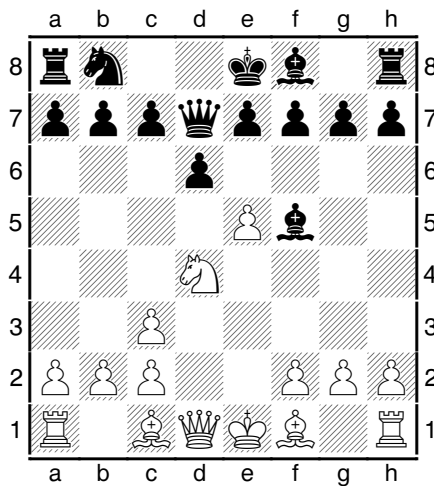
Q94. Find the best move for Black



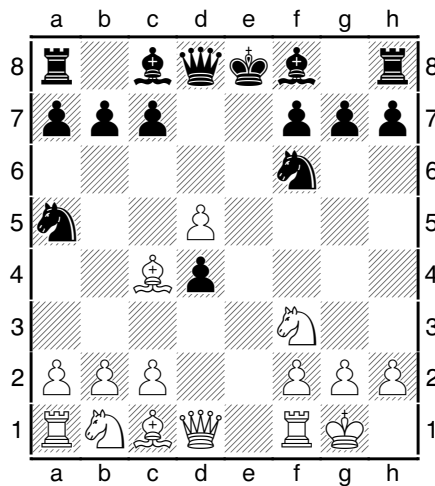
Q95. Find the best move for Black



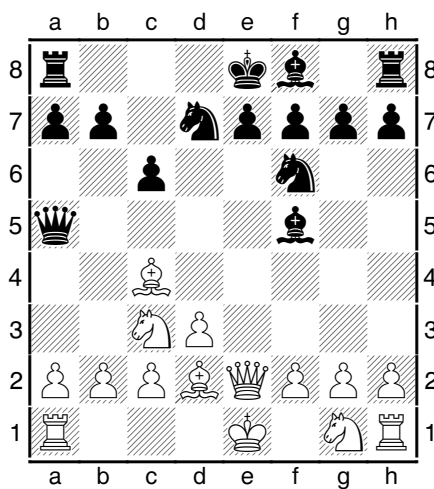
Q96. Find the best move for Black



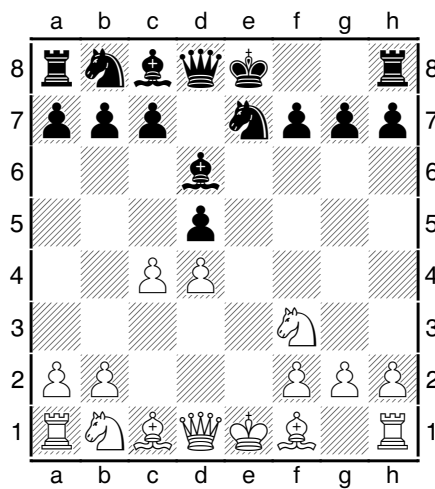
Q97. Find the best move for White



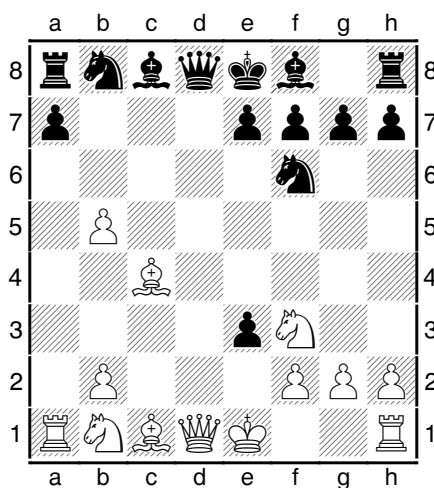
Q98. Find the best move for White



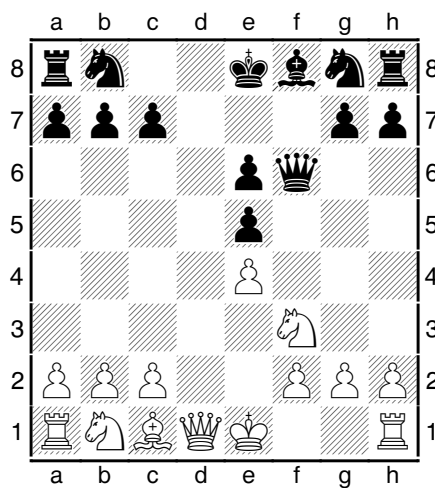
Q99. Find the best move for White



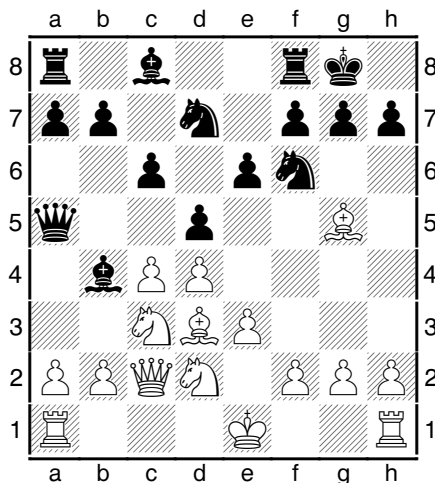
Q100. Find the best move for White



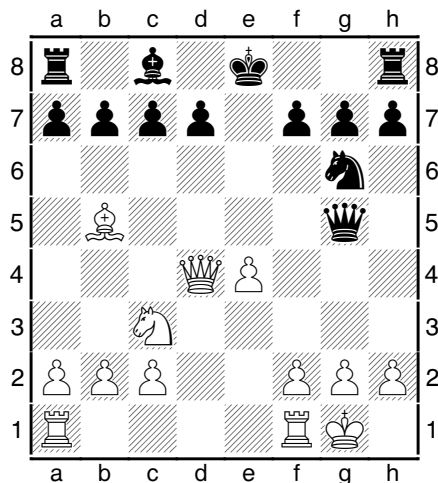
Q101. Find the best move for White



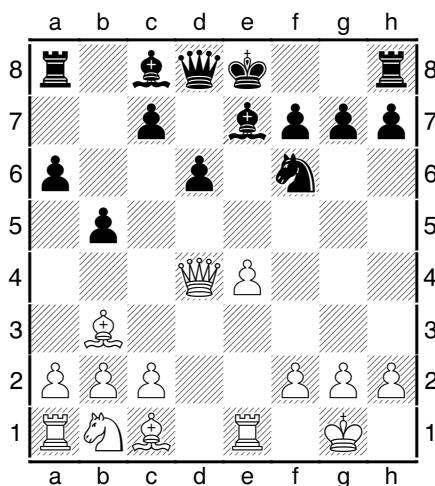
Q102. Find the best move for White



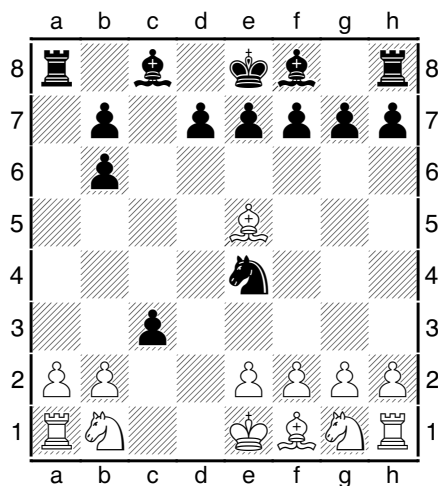
Q103. Find the best move for Black



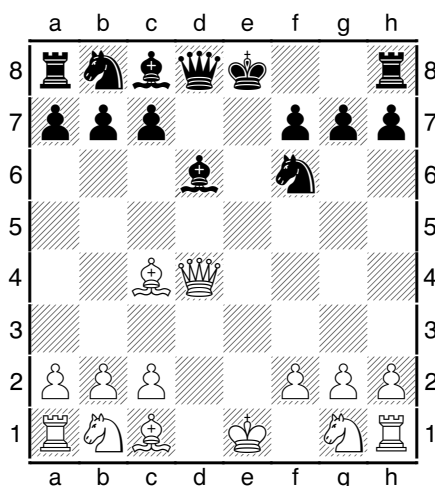
Q104. Find the best move for Black



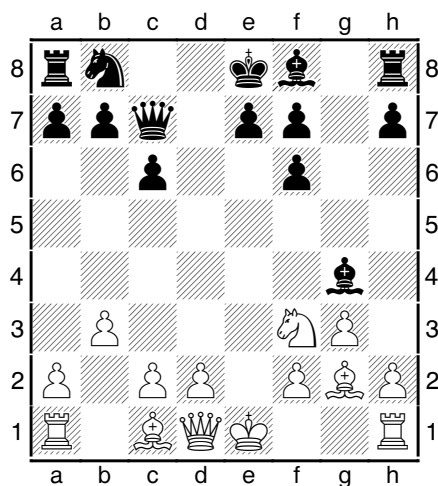
Q105. Find the best move for Black



Q106. Find the best move for Black



Q107. Find the best move for Black



Q108. Find the best move for Black

Now you should be very good at spotting ways to win pieces using TACTICS in the opening.

Making sure you don't play bad moves is just as important as spotting when you can play good moves.

In the next set of puzzles you'll be given three choices. Two of the moves are mistakes which will lose pieces or get checkmated. Only one of the three choices is safe. Your job is to find the safe choice.

Here's how you might go about solving these puzzles.

1. Look carefully at the position. Make sure you know where every piece is – both your pieces and your opponent's pieces.
2. Look carefully to see whether your opponent has a THREAT. Is one of your pieces in danger? Is there a chance of CHECKMATE?
3. If there's a THREAT your job will be to see which of the three choices meets the THREAT, while at the same time being safe.
4. If there is no THREAT you'll have to make sure that you're not moving a piece to an unsafe square.
5. You'll also have to make sure that you're not moving a DEFENDER and leaving another piece open to capture.
6. Again, you'll have to make sure that your move does not let your opponent play a FORK or a PIN.
7. And that your opponent cannot CAPTURE, DECOY or DEFLECT a defending piece.
8. And that your move doesn't allow CHECKMATE.

If you're not familiar with all these ideas you'll learn about them in *CHESS TACTICS FOR HEROES*.

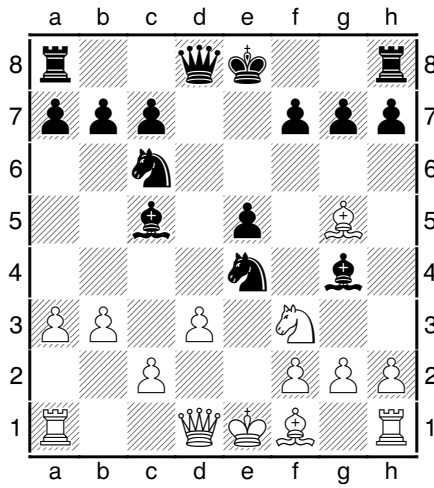
To do all this you have to ask yourself the MAGIC QUESTION:

IF I PLAY THAT MOVE, WHAT WILL MY OPPONENT DO NEXT?

In order to play good chess you have to ask yourself that question every move of every game you play.

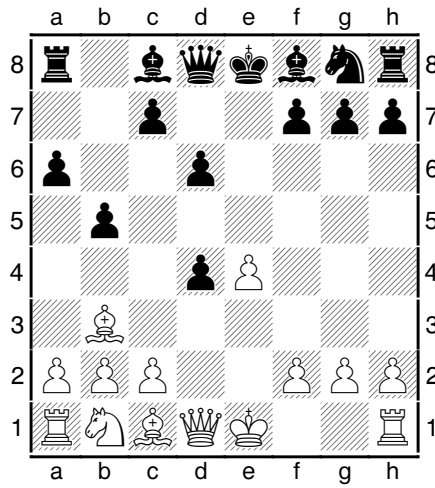
When you're up for the next challenge turn over the page and see if you can steer clear of the losing moves in these puzzles.

Warning: these puzzles are much harder than anything you've done before: defence is much harder than attack. You might need some help, or you might want to come back to them again later.



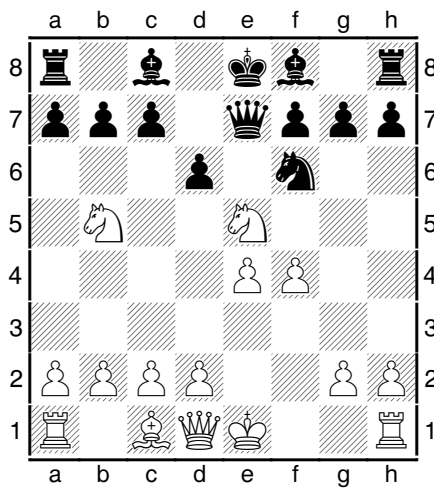
Q109. Which move would you choose for White?

- a) d4 b) dxe4 c) Bxd8



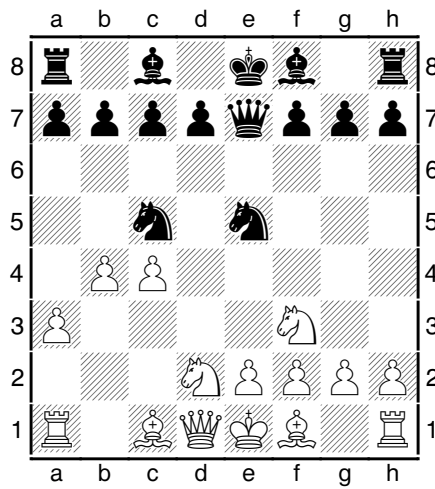
Q110. Which move would you choose for White?

- a) Bd5 b) Qxd4 c) Bxf7+



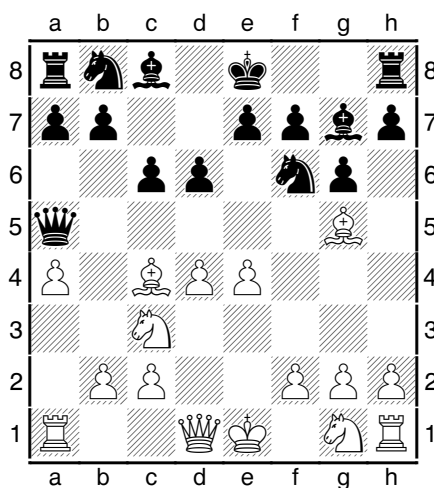
Q111. Which move would you choose for White?

- a) Nc4 b) Nd3 c) Nf3



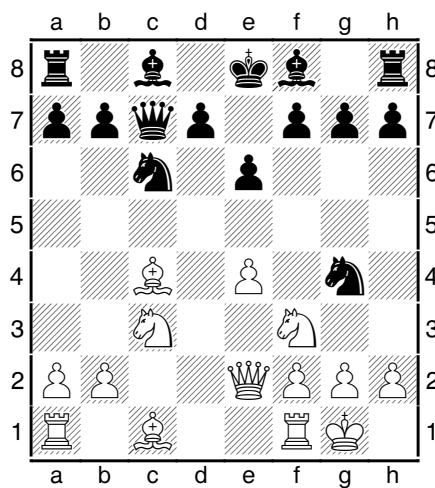
Q112. Which move would you choose for White?

- a) Nb3 b) bxc5 c) e3



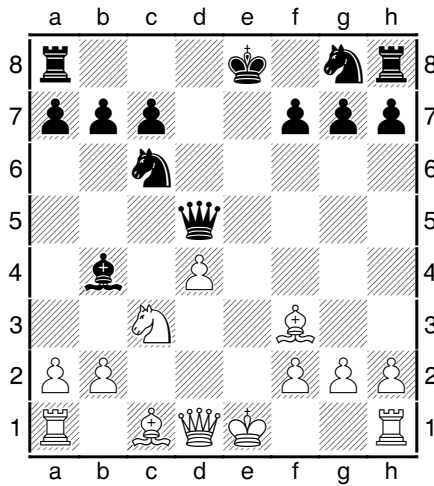
Q113. Which move would you choose for White?

- a) Qd2 b) f3 c) Nf3



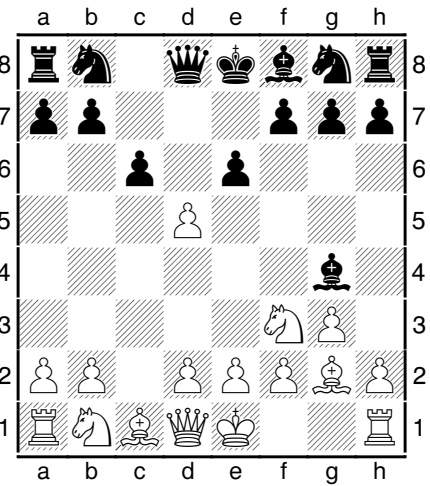
Q114. Which move would you choose for White?

- a) Bb3 b) g3 c) h3



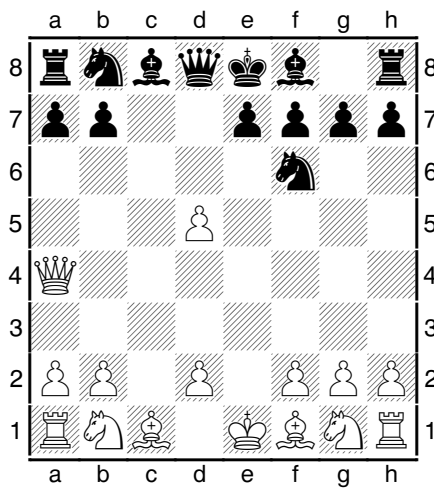
Q115. Which move would you choose for Black?

- a) Qa5 b) Nxd4 c) Qxd4



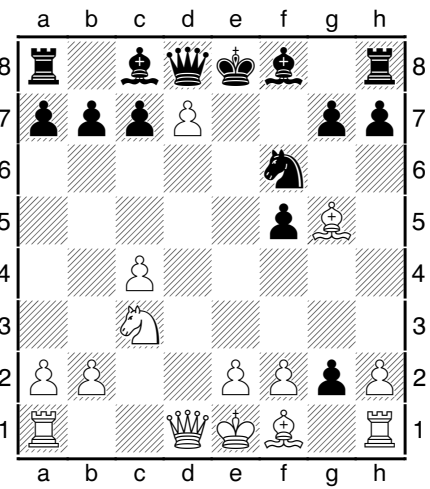
Q116. Which move would you choose for Black?

- a) cxd5 b) exd5 c) Nf6



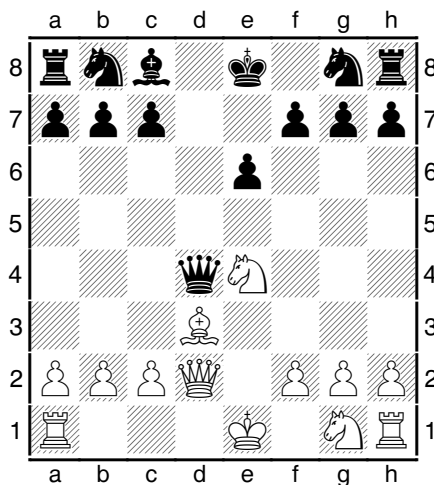
Q117. Which move would you choose for Black?

- a) Nc6 b) Qd7 c) Nbd7



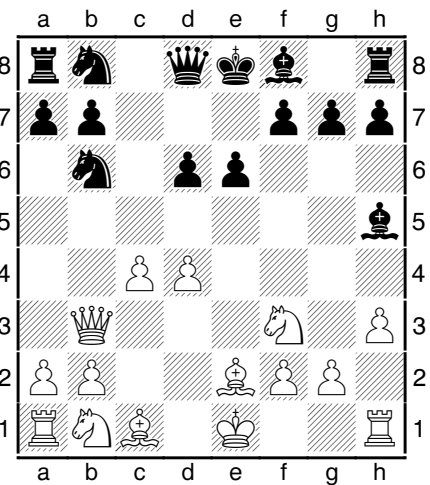
Q118. Which move would you choose for Black?

- a) Bxd7 b) Qxd7 c) Nxd7



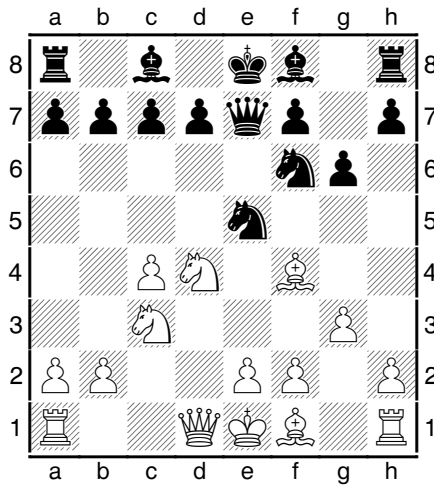
Q119. Which move would you choose for Black?

- a) Nd7 b) Ne7 c) Nf6



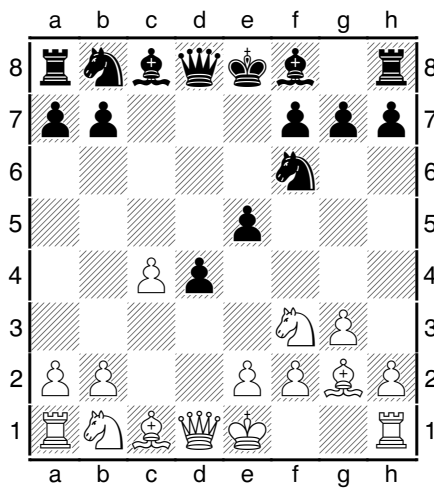
Q120. Which move would you choose for Black?

- a) Nc6 b) Qc7 c) Be7



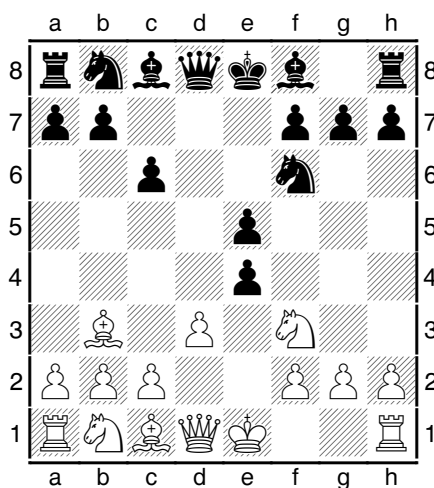
Q121. Which move would you choose for White?

- a) Ncb5 b) Ndb5 c) Bd2



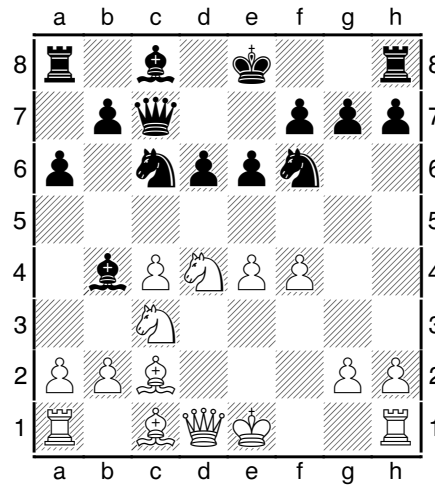
Q123. Which move would you choose for White?

- a) Nxd4 b) Nxe5 c) 0-0



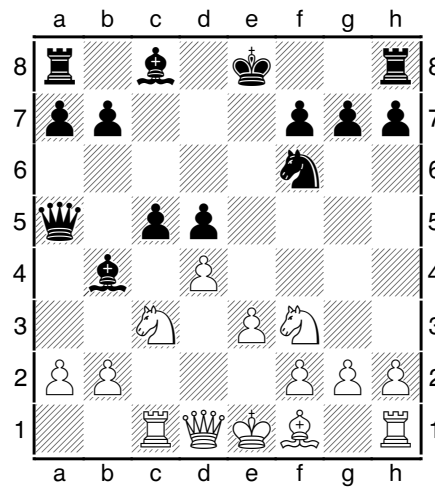
Q125. Which move would you choose for White?

- a) Nxe5 b) Bxf7+ c) Ng5



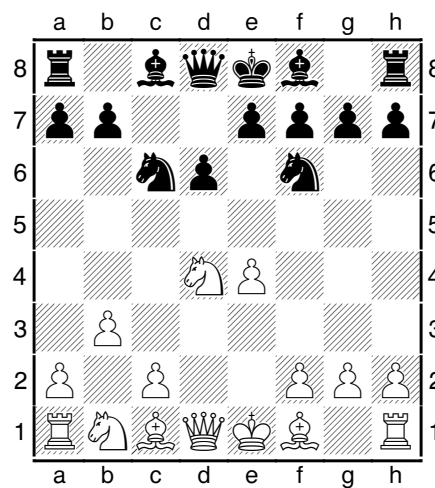
Q122. Which move would you choose for White?

- a) Nxc6 b) Qf3 c) 0-0



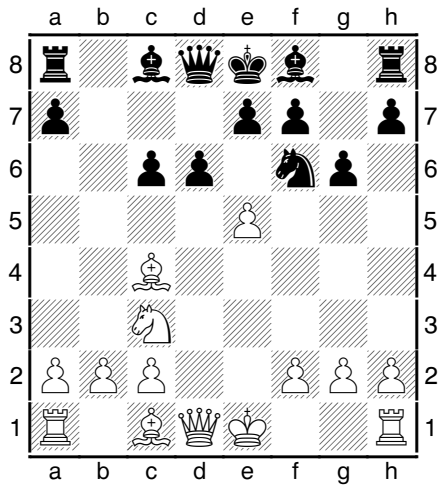
Q124. Which move would you choose for White?

- a) Qa4+ b) Bb5+ c) dxc5



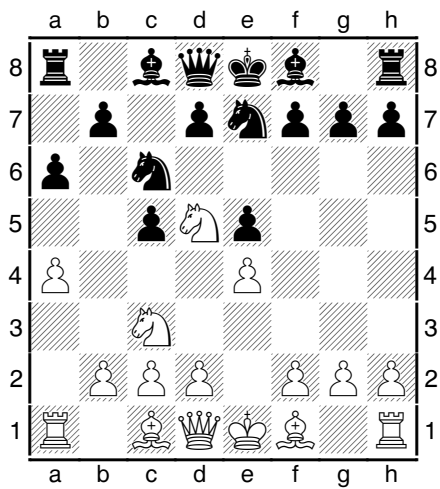
Q126. Which move would you choose for White?

- a) Bb5 b) Bd3 c) Qf3



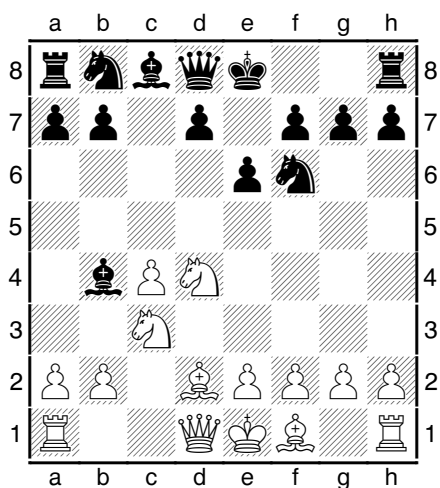
Q127. Which move would you choose for Black?

- a) Nd5 b) dxe5 c) Ng4



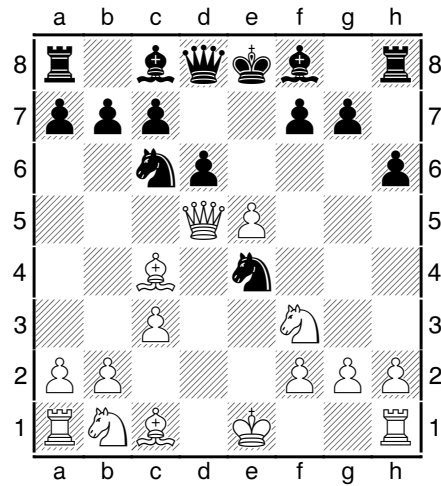
Q129. Which move would you choose for Black?

- a) b5 b) d6 c) g6



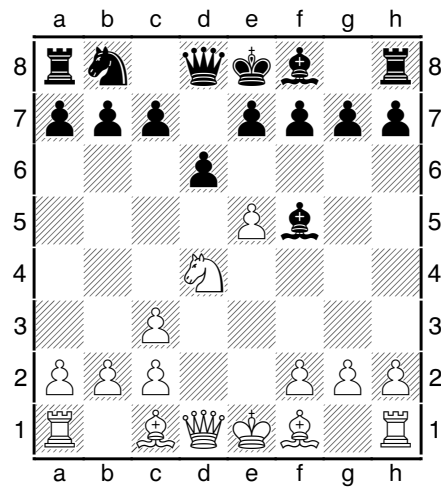
Q131. Which move would you choose for Black?

- a) Nc6 b) d5 c) d6



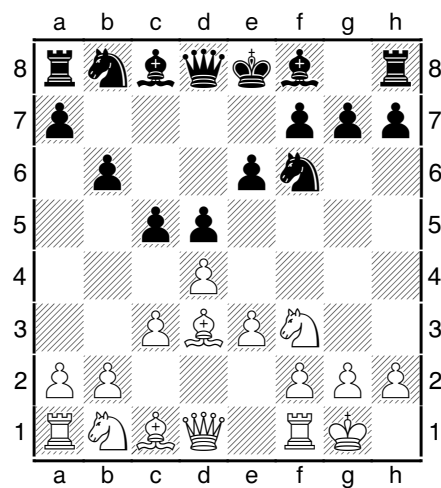
Q128. Which move would you choose for Black?

- a) Nc5 b) Be6 c) Qe7



Q130. Which move would you choose for Black?

- a) Qc8 b) Qd7 c) dxe5



Q132. Which move would you choose for Black?

- a) Na6 b) Ba6 c) Bb7

CHAPTER 3

OPENING STRATEGIES

Now you've learnt five really important opening rules. You're also good at spotting opening tactics. It's time to look at another game.

In this game White does everything right, following all five rules and not making any obvious tactical mistakes. Play through the game yourself and watch what happens.

1. e4 e5

Excellent moves, as we've seen.

2. Nf3

Another excellent move. White DEVELOPS the king's knight towards the centre and THREATENS to capture the pawn on e5.

2... Nc6

Black doesn't want to lose a pawn for nothing so uses the queen's knight to DEFEND the THREATENED pawn.

3. Bc4

Another great move. White DEVELOPS the king's bishop onto a good diagonal, pointing at the black f-pawn. White is also getting ready to CASTLE, which is how you usually make your king safe from attack.

3... Bc5

Black does the same thing: again a great move.

4. d3

White moves the d-pawn one square, getting ready to DEVELOP the other bishop.

4... d6

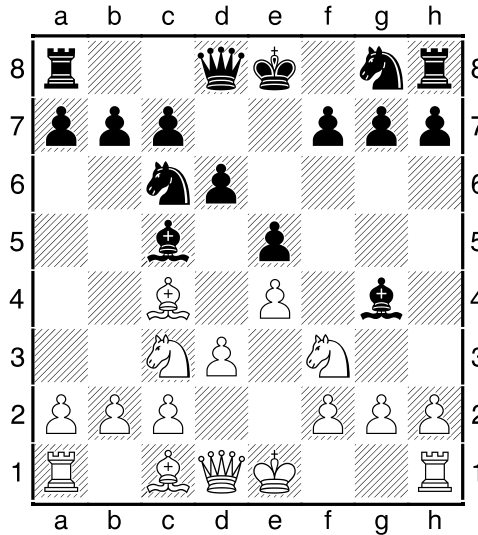
Black does the same thing, for the same reason.

5. Nc3

White now DEVELOPS the other knight towards the centre: a very sensible move.

5... Bg4

Black DEVELOPS the queen's bishop. This is a good square because it PINS the knight on f3. White might now think "I don't want Black to capture my knight so I'll move it away". But in that case Black will be very happy to capture the white queen. Look carefully at how the bishop on g4 is on the same diagonal as the queen on d1.



6. 0-0

White now castles, hoping to make the king safe from attack.

6... Nd4

A very strong move. Black ATTACKS the PINNED knight on f3. Now if White plays Nxd4 Black will take the queen on d1 before recapturing the knight.

7. Be3

White DEVELOPS the last MINOR PIECE. You should try to get your knights and bishops out as quickly as possible. You should also move each MINOR PIECE just once unless you have a very good reason.

7... Nxf3+

Black captures the knight on f3, saying 'check' at the same time.

8. gxf3

White doesn't want to lose a piece so takes the knight back with the pawn. Black would have captured the queen after 8. Qxf3.

8... Bh3

Black's bishop on g4 is now THREATENED so it moves away to h3 where it THREATENS the white rook on f1.

9. Re1

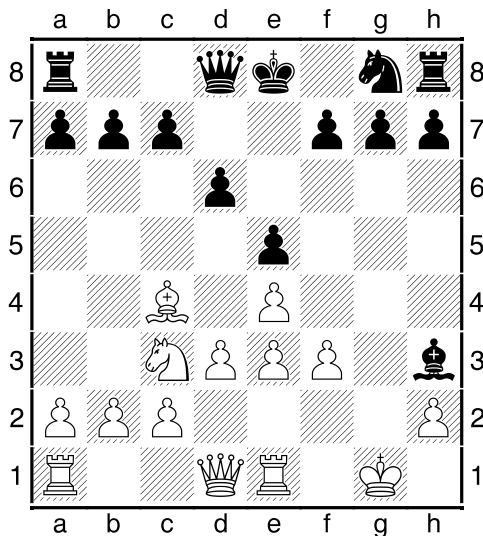
White remembers that a rook is more valuable than a bishop so moves the THREATENED rook to its only possible square.

9... Bxe3

Black makes another TRADE, CAPTURING THE DEFENDER on e3 and allowing the queen to get CHECKMATE.

10. fxe3

White again doesn't want to lose a piece, so takes the bishop back with the pawn. (Taking with the rook instead would have made no difference.)



Here's the position. Can you work out what Black should play next?

If you want a clue, look for checks.

10... Qg5+

Note that Black had to trade bishops before playing this check. Now White has two moves. It doesn't matter which: Black's reply will be the same either way.

11. Kf2 Qg2#

It's CHECKMATE!

Black has won in just 11 moves.

But White followed all our rules and didn't make any obvious mistakes.

So what went wrong?

The answer is that chess is much harder than you think.

Some people think that learning openings is just about learning moves off by heart. It isn't: it's mostly about understanding ideas and plans. You might win a few quick games by memorising without understanding, but, in the long run, it really won't help you become a strong player.

We're going to look at some important ideas that come up over and over again in openings starting 1. e4 e5.

OPENING STRATEGY 1: THE PIN ATTACK

You've just seen a game in which White followed all five opening rules perfectly, didn't make any tactical oversights, but was CHECKMATED in only 11 moves.

Here are the moves again.

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.d3 d6 5.Nc3 Bg4 6.o-o Nd4 7.Be3 Nxf3+ 8.gxf3 Bh3 9.Re1 Bxe3 10.fxe3 Qg5+ 11.Kf2 Qg2#

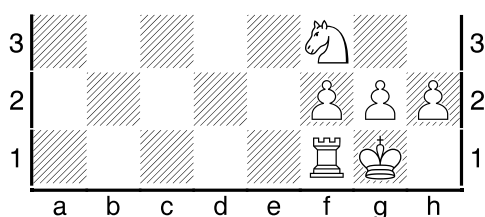
Let's work out what went wrong.

Chess is about TACTICS and STRATEGY. TACTICS are what you've learnt in *CHECKMATES FOR HEROES* and *CHESS TACTICS FOR HEROES*. STRATEGY is about forming plans and deciding where to put your pieces.

In this game Black used a TACTIC, not to win a piece but with a STRATEGIC idea in mind.

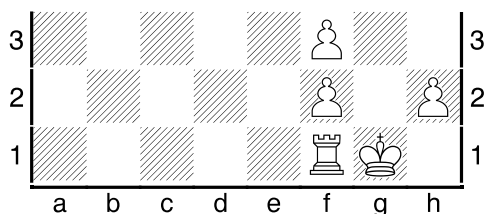
On move 5 Black set up a PIN. On move 6 Black ATTACKED THE PINNED PIECE. You will have read about this idea in *CHESS TACTICS FOR HEROES*. Black was not, in this case, trying to win material, but instead just wanted to get a STRATEGIC ADVANTAGE which would give him the better position.

Look at this.



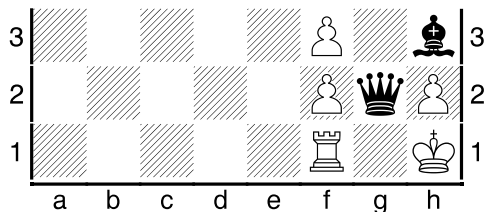
In most openings, especially those starting with 1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6, you're going to set up THIS defensive position for your king. Every time you move a pawn it will provide a target for your opponent. Sometimes it's a good idea to play h3 to drive an enemy piece from g4, or to stop an enemy piece from landing on g4, but sometimes it's a bad idea. Chess is hard: you'll need a lot of experience to work out which is which.

Now look at this.

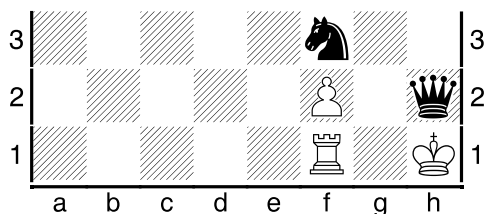


White's knight has been traded off and there are DOUBLED f-pawns. The white king is open to attack down the g-file. If Black has a queen within reach White will have problems defending the king.

With a queen and a bishop near the king, Black might be able to get CHECKMATE like this:



or with a queen and a knight, like this:



If you've read *CHECKMATES FOR HEROES* you'll recognise these checkmate patterns, with the queen on the next square to the enemy king and being protected by a friendly piece: a bishop in the first diagram and a knight in the second diagram.

Black won this game quickly by combining TACTICS and STRATEGY.

In the game above, after 6... Nd4 White's pieces are on the wrong squares and there's no way to prevent Black trading pieces on f3 and doubling the white pawns in front of the king.

Here are some more games for you to play through where Black scores a quick checkmate in this way.

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 Bc5 4. o-o d6 5. d3 Bg4 6. Nc3 Nd4 7. h3 Nxf3+ 8. gxf3 Bxh3 9. Re1 Qf6 10. Nd5 Qg6+ 11. Kh2 Qg2#

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Nc3 Nf6 4. Bc4 Bc5 5. o-o d6 6. d3 Bg4 7. Bg5 Nd4 8. Bxf6 Qxf6 9. Nd5 Qd8 10. c3 Nxf3+ 11. gxf3 Bh3 12. Re1 Qg5+ 13. Kh1 Qg2#

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Nc3 Bc5 4. Bc4 d6 5. d3 Bg4 6. o-o Nd4 7. h3 Nxf3+ 8. gxf3 Bxh3 9. Nd5 c6 10. Nc3 Qh4 11. Qe1 Qg3+ 12. Kh1 (White can't play 12. fxc3 because the f-pawn is PINNED by the bishop on c5.) Qg2#

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 Bc5 4. d3 Nf6 5. o-o d6 6. Nc3 Bg4 7. Bg5 Nd4 8. h3 Nxf3+ 9. gxf3 Bxh3 10. Re1 h6 11. Be3 Nd7 12. Kh2 Qh4 13. Rg1 Bf1#

1. e4 e5 2. Bc4 Nf6 3. Nc3 Bc5 4. Nf3 Nc6 5. d3 d6 6. Bg5 Bg4 7. o-o Nd4 8. Be3 Nxf3+ 9. gxf3 Bh3 10. Re1 Nh5 (Moving the knight out of the way to make way for the queen.) 11. Bxc5 (Giving the queen access to g5 and allowing mate in 2) Qg5+ 12. Kh1 Qg2#

Having seen these games you might think two things.

You might think that it's a bad idea to castle early in the game. Children often tell me they used to castle in their games but stopped doing it because when they castled they got mated. In this particular opening the player who castles first often loses – but in most openings you really should castle quickly, as you'll find out later in the book.

You might also think that it's better to be Black than White because you can copy moves until your opponent makes a mistake. Again, not true. In my database White scores 54%, so you might think that White has a slight advantage at the start of the game. If you read on you'll learn some much better ways to play the opening with white.

As this opening is symmetrical you can try to use the same plan if you have the white pieces.

Here's the best way to do it.

It's easy to remember. PAWN KNIGHT BISHOP then PAWN KNIGHT BISHOP. In that order. Your first three moves are with your king side pieces. Your next three moves are with your queen side pieces.

Let's see how it works.

1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Bc4

In this position Black usually plays either 3... Bc5 or 3... Nf6. They can, as you'll see later, lead to very different positions, but if you're playing d3 next move it usually leads to the same thing.

3... Bc5
4. d3

Now we start on the queen side. If you move the pawn two square Black will be able to take it, so we just move it one square.

4... Nf6
5. Nc3 d6

And now...

6. Bg5

Hoping that Black will now castle (or will already have castled).

If Black continues with:

6... o-o

We continue with:

7. Nd5 with the same idea again.

Some more games for you to look at:

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 Bc5 4. d3 Nf6 5. Nc3 d6 6. Bg5 o-o 7. Nd5 Be6 8. Nxf6+ gxf6 9. Bh6 Re8 10. Nh4 Qe7 11. Nf5 Bxf5 12. exf5 Qd7 13. Qg4+ Kh8 14. Qg7#

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 Bc5 4. Nc3 Nf6 5. d3 o-o 6. Bg5 Na5 7. Nd5 h6 8. Nxf6+ gxf6 9. Bxh6 Re8 10. Nh4 Bf8 11. Qg4+ Kh8 12. Bxf8 Rxf8 13. Nf5 Rg8 14. Qh5#

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 Bc5 4. d3 Nf6 5. Bg5 d6 6. Nc3 Bg4 7. h3 Bd7 8. Qd2 o-o 9. Nd5 Bb4 10. c3 Ba5 11. Bxf6 gxf6 12. Qh6 Ne7 13. Nxf6+ Kh8 14. Qxh7#

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 Nf6 4. d3 Bc5 5. Nc3 o-o 6. Bg5 d6 7. Nd5 Bg4 8. c3 Qc8 9. Nxf6+ gxf6 10. Bxf6 Na5 11. Qd2 Nxc4 12. Qg5#

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 Nf6 4. d3 Bc5 5. Nc3 o-o 6. Bg5 d6 7. Nd5 Bg4 8. Qc1 Bh5 9. Bxf6 gxf6 10. Qh6 Bg6 11. h4 Kh8 12. h5 Rg8 13. hxg6 Rxd6 14. Qxh7#

After 6... o-o White scores 74% in my database.

Instead the most popular move, 6... h6, scores only 47% for White, and 6... Na5, preferred by some strong players, scores just 46% for White.

If you play this opening with white you'll score some easy wins against opponents who move the pinned knight, or who castle too soon. But, against players who know what to do you'll find it hard to get a good position.

Try this idea out in a few games, but be prepared to move on and try out some more interesting opening plans. If you always play the same openings you'll find it hard to make much progress at chess.

OPENING STRATEGY 2: THE FORK TRICK

This idea isn't something that is likely to lead to a quick win, but it will very often give you a slightly better position. If you use it at the wrong time, though, you'll end up losing a piece.

Let's start with these moves:

1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Bc4

You've seen these before. Now there are two popular moves for Black here: Bc5, which you've just seen, and...

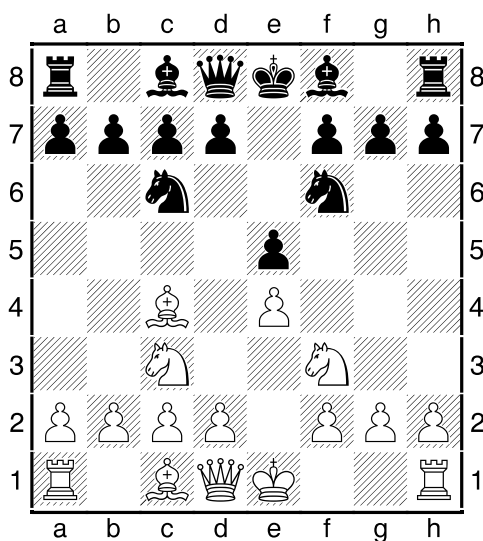
- 3... Nf6

If you want to go for the PIN ATTACK you might think it doesn't matter much whether you play Nc3 or d3 here, but it does. There's a reason why we play PAWN KNIGHT BISHOP PAWN KNIGHT BISHOP.

If we play instead:

4. Nc3

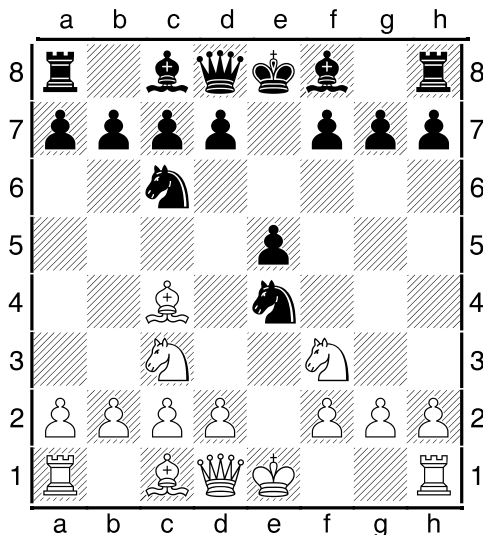
We reach this position (which you'll often get if White plays Nc3 on move 3 and Bc4 on move 4).



Playing 4... Bc5 here is fine, but Black has an interesting and surprising alternative:

- 4... Nxe4

Another diagram:



A shocking move if you haven't seen it before. Black is DECOYING the white knight onto a square where it can be FORKED.

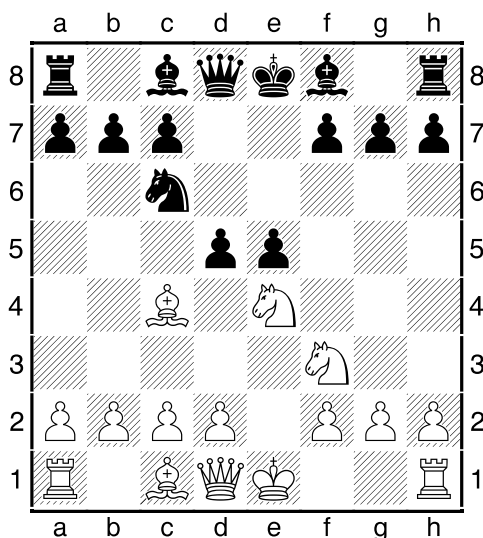
In this position Black scores a whopping 71% - although if White does the right thing here and on the next move the position is about equal. But if your opponent doesn't know what to do you'll end up with a good position.

The obvious (and probably best) move for White is:

5. Nxe4

And now you continue with your plan:

5... d5 (FORK!)



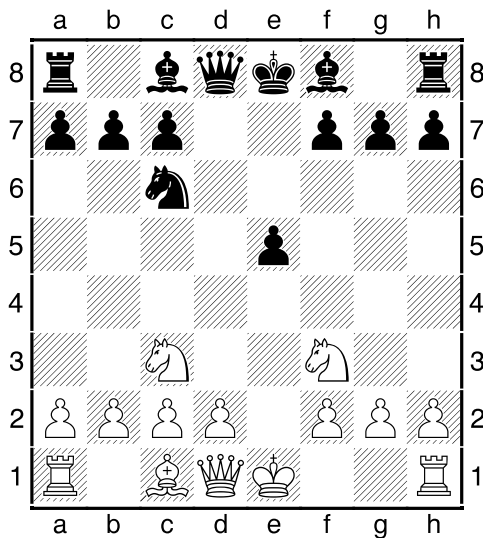
White has to decide which piece to save. There's only one good move.

White might try:

6. Bxd5 Qxd5

And then maybe

7. Nc3 Qd8



Black is a bit better in this position. Why? Black has MORE SPACE IN THE CENTRE. Black also has BISHOP AGAINST KNIGHT. You'll learn a lot more about bishops and knights later but for the moment let's just say that in OPEN POSITIONS like this where there have been pawn exchanges in the centre bishops are usually better than knights. Black scores 72% from this position in my database.

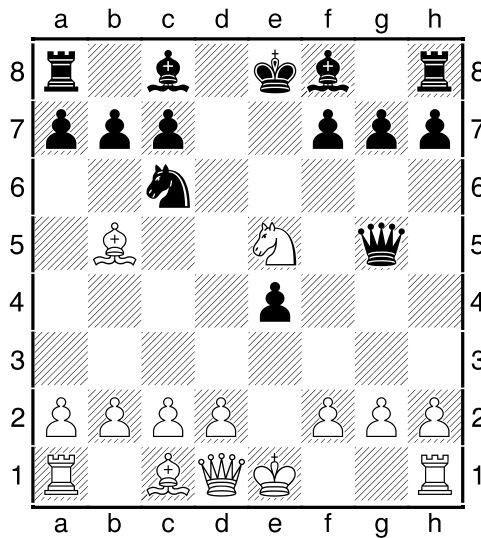
White might also try:

6. Bb5 dxe4

7. Nxe5

USING A PIN to make a capture, but in reply Black has a QUEEN FORK:

7... Qg5 (Qd5 is also quite good)

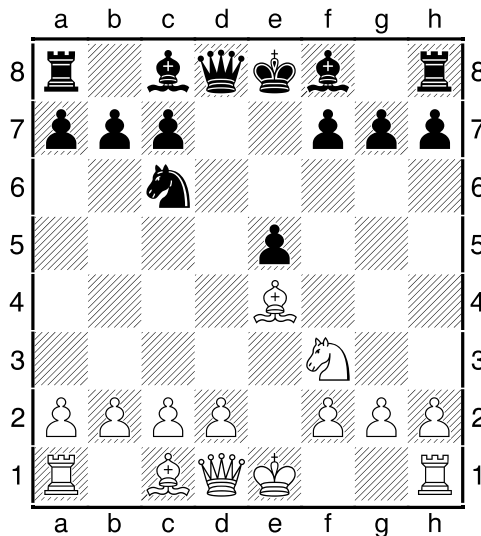


The queen FORKS the knight on e5 and the pawn on g2. There's also a SKEWER along the rank. If White tries 8. Nxc6 Black will play 8... Qxb5 9. Nd4 Qg5, hitting g2 again.

Black has a big advantage – and an 82% score - in this position, but you'll have to stop and think to find the best moves.

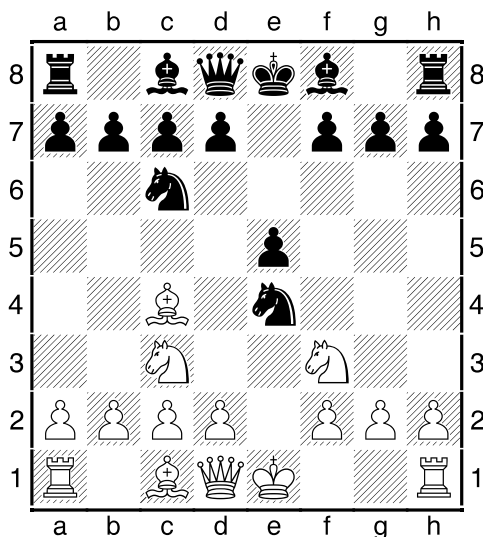
So White's best move, going back to move 6, is...

- 6. Bd3 dxe4
- 7. Bxe4



White is threatening to capture on c6 and then on e5 so Black usually plays Bd6 here. This is about equal, but Black scores 62% on my database, mainly because this position tends to be reached by stronger players playing Black against weaker players.

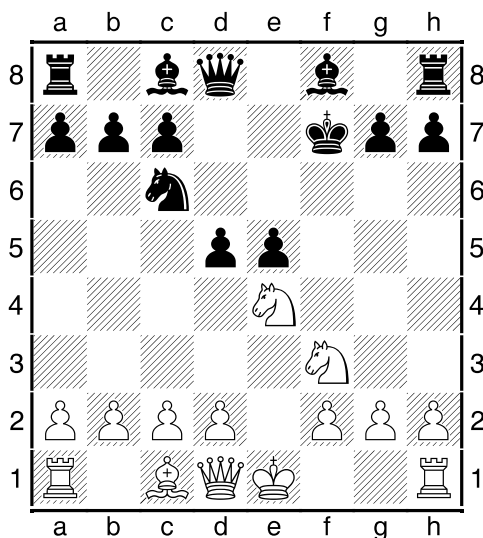
Going back to this position:



White might be tempted to try:

5. Bxf7+ Kxf7
6. Nxe4 d5

... because it seems like a good idea to stop Black castling.

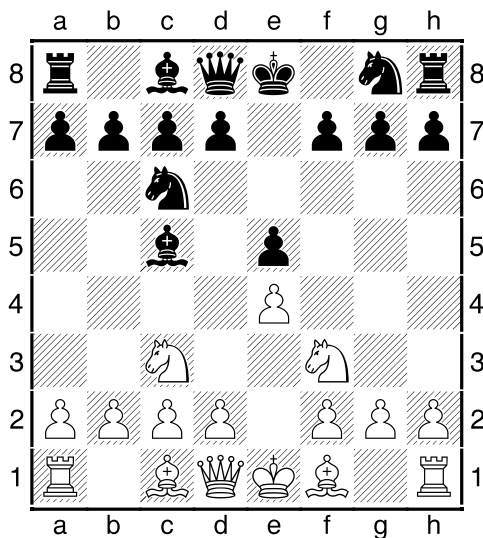


But it's not. Black is a lot better here. Firstly, Black has two pawns in the centre of the board. Secondly, Black has bishop for knight in an open position. Thirdly, Black can develop quickly and has time to make the king safe by playing Kg8, h6 and Kh7 if necessary. In my database, Black scores 70% so if you choose this for White you're backing a loser!

If White now tries Neg5+ you can play Kg8 followed by h6 and the white knights will be in a terrible tangle.

White can also use the same idea.

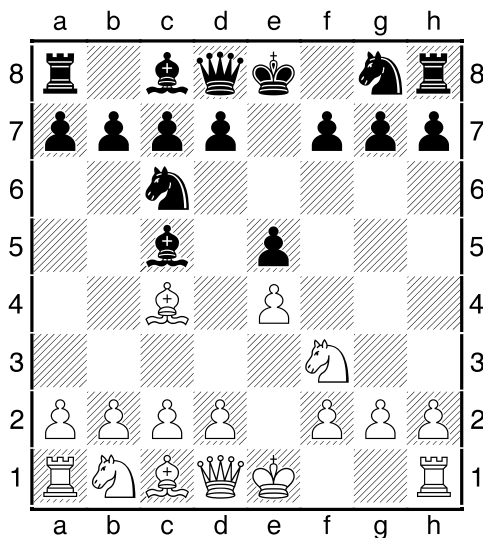
1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Nc3 Bc5 (it's better to play Nf6 here)



In this position White can play Nxe5 with the same ideas as in the previous variations.

You have to be careful, though. You always have to be careful when you're playing chess.

1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Bc4 Bc5



You **SHOULDN'T** play Nxe5 here (although a lot of people do!). The reason is that you have a bishop on c4.

So after:

4. Nxe5 Nxe5
5. d4

Black can play 5... Nxc4 and you'll end up behind by a knight for a pawn.

OPENING STRATEGY 3: THE KNIGHT AND BISHOP ATTACK

If you play your knight to f3 and your bishop to c4 at the start of the game you'll often have the chance to go for a quick attack on f7 by moving your knight to g5.

Is it a good idea or a bad idea? The answer is that it all depends.

Going back to these moves:

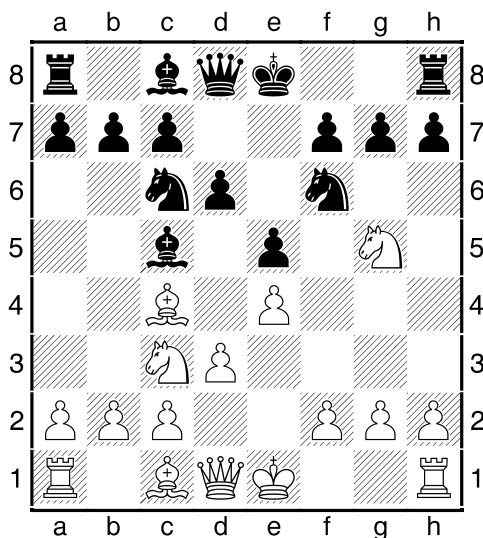
1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Bc4 Bc5
4. d3 Nf6
5. Nc3 d6

You'll remember we looked at Bg5 here. You might have asked yourself why we didn't play...

6. Ng5

... instead.

Here's the position.



It looks tempting, doesn't it? You're threatening Nxf7 with a FORK which, if your opponent doesn't notice, will win a rook.

But playing for traps like this isn't a good idea. You must always assume that your opponent is going to find the best reply. Here, it's easy for Black to stop White's threat comfortably.

The best move is...

- 6... O-O

You'll remember that this was not a good move after 6. Bg5. But against Ng5 it's the only good move!

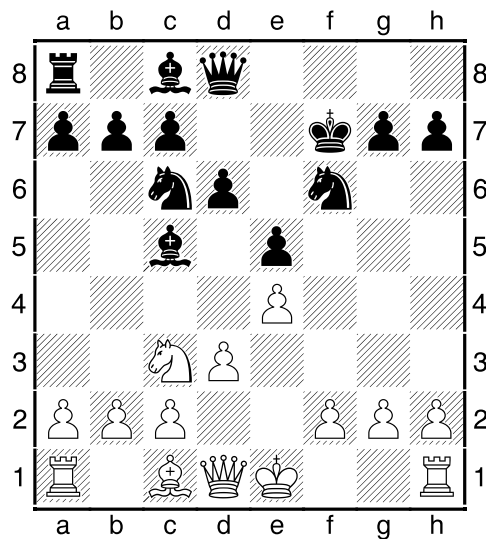
Chess is hard. Even a very slight difference in the position can make a very big difference to the best move.

If you're White you might be tempted to continue with...

7. Bxf7+ Rxf7

8. Nxf7 Kxf7

... reaching this position:



Now you might think this is good for White because Black's king seems to be in trouble. This is not the case, though. In fact, Black has the better position (and scores 77% on my database).

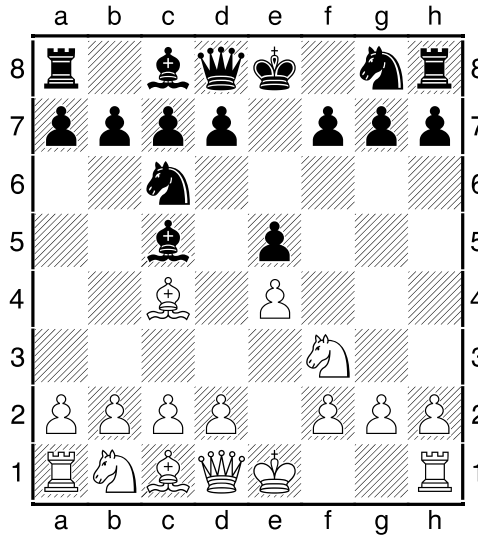
Here's why:

1. Black has a lead in development, with three pieces developed to White's one piece, and the king will have plenty of time to get back to safety.
2. If you count the points it's equal but bishops are actually worth, on average, a bit more than 3 points, so Black's slightly ahead (you'll learn more about this later in the book).
3. Rooks are often not so useful in the early part of the game, especially in this position where you have no open files for them.

So I'd advise you not to play this sort of thing yourself. If you're Black and your opponent plays like this you should be feeling very happy about your position.

Let's look at some more positions where White might think about playing Ng5.

We'll go back to the start.



In this position (after 1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 Bc5) it's clearly a bad mistake to play...

4. Ng5 Qxg5

Although if you're Black you have to spot that your queen is in line with the white bishop on c1 so White can play a DISCOVERED ATTACK:

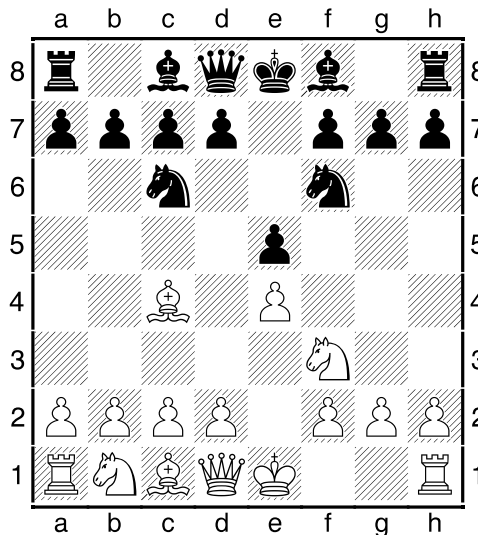
5. d4

... and instead of taking the pawn play ...

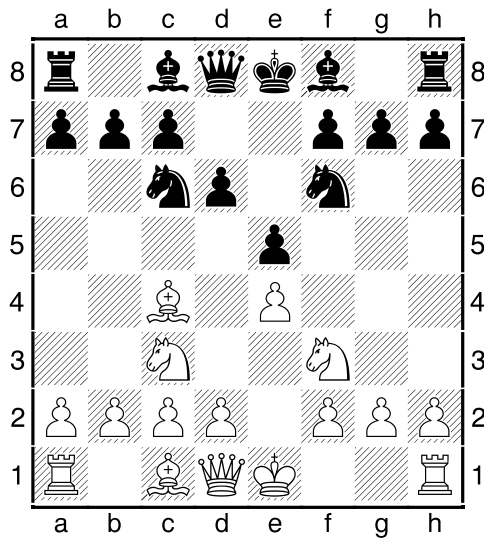
5... Qxg2

... you'll have a winning advantage.

Black can also play 3... Nf6:



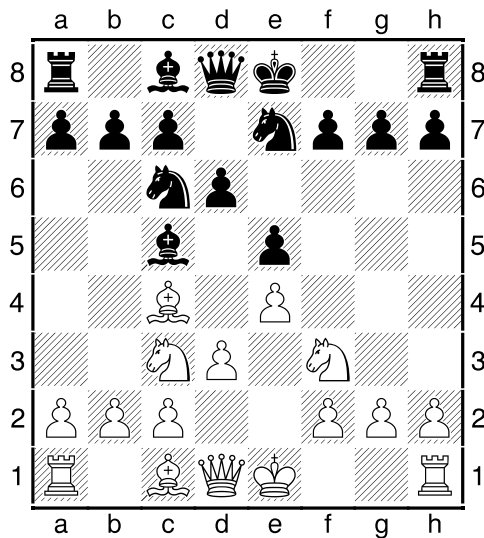
In this position 4. Ng5 is a very interesting move: you'll learn much more about this in the next chapter. You can play it if you like, but playing 4. d3, for example, is equally good. It depends which sort of position you want to play.



In this position (after, for example, 1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 d6 4. Nc3 Nf6) ...

5. Ng5

... is a very strong move, giving you a big advantage. After either 5... d5 or 5... Be6 White will win a pawn.



This is very similar to what you've seen before. The big difference is that the black knight is on e7, not f6.

In this position ...

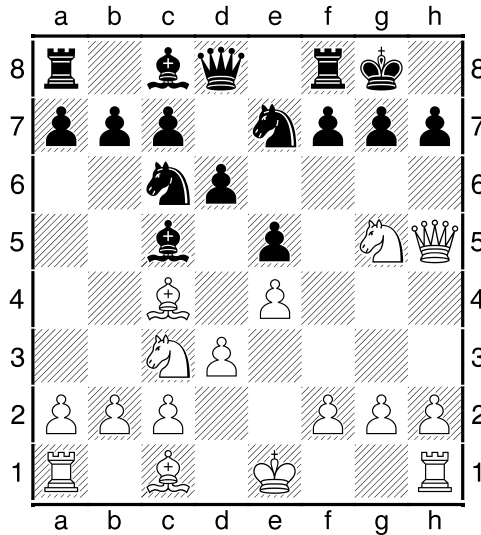
6. Ng5

... is again a very strong move. With the knight on f6, as you know, Black's best move is 6... o-o, but here ...

6... o-o

... is met by ...

7. Qh5



... when White has a winning advantage.

You have TWO THREATS: Qxh7# and Nxf7.

Black has little choice but to play ...

7... h6
8. Nxf7

... when the game might finish with ...

8... Qe8
9. Nxh6+ Kh7
10. Nf7+ Kg8
11. Qh8#

OPENING STRATEGY 4: GAMBITS

This section is a bit different from the other opening ideas you've just read about.

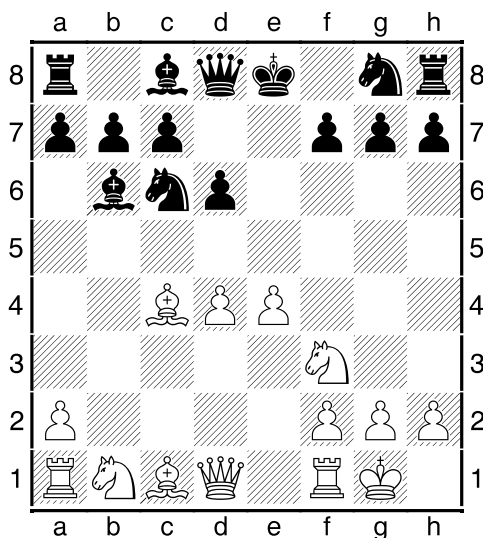
Instead of learning a tactical idea you're going to learn a new word or two.

A **GAMBIT** is an opening in which one player, usually White, gives up material, usually a pawn, sometimes more, to get a good position.

The word **GAMBIT** comes from an Italian word meaning to trip someone up by the legs. You might think it's a sort of trick but really it's a bit more than that.

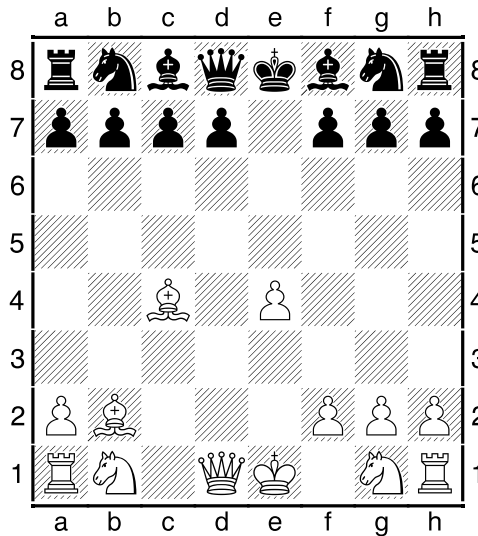
What do we mean by a good position? It might mean you get **CONTROL OF THE CENTRE**. It might mean that you **DEVELOP QUICKLY**. It might mean that you get a quick attack.

The openings starting 1. e4 e5 can lead to a lot of different **GAMBITS**. You'll learn more about them in the next chapter. First, though, let's look at a few positions so that you can see what might happen if you play a **GAMBIT**.



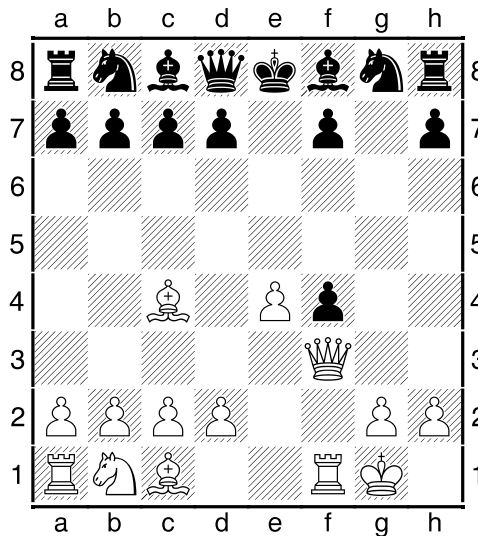
Here's a position from an opening called the **EVANS GAMBIT**, with White to move. White has a strong centre and a lead in development. Black has an extra pawn. Who stands better? Nobody knows for certain.

Would you rather play White or Black here?



This position comes from the DANISH GAMBIT. It's Black's move. This time White has a lead in development, a pawn in the centre and two very powerful bishops. But Black has two extra pawns.

White's position looks even better than the last position, but Black has a bigger advantage in material. Again, it's a very interesting position. Who do you think will win, White or Black?



It's also Black's move in this position, from the KING'S GAMBIT. This particular variation is called the MUZIO GAMBIT.

White's position is better still. White has a big lead in development, a pawn in the centre and a strong attack down the f-file. Black will have to be careful not to get checkmated. But Black has a big lead in material: a whole extra knight. Try playing out this position against a friend and see who wins.

In all these positions White has an excellent position but Black has a stronger army. We say that White has COMPENSATION for Black's advantage in material.

Is it enough COMPENSATION? In each case, no one knows for certain.

White may well end up getting CHECKMATE or winning some pieces. But if all the pieces are traded off Black will certainly win the ending in the second and third positions, and may well win the ending in the first position. (*CHESS ENDINGS FOR HEROES* will teach you how to win endings with an extra pawn or an extra piece.) So if you're playing White you have to act fast. If you're playing Black you need to try to catch up on development, challenge White's centre and trade off as many pieces as you can.

These openings are all very exciting and interesting to play. They're much more fun than the openings you probably play at the moment.

They were very popular amongst the strongest players in the world back in the 19th century. Grandmasters don't very often play them now because players who've studied chess a lot have learnt how to avoid or defend against them.

They're risky for both sides. If you enjoy taking risks they're great openings for you to play to practise and sharpen your tactics and attacking skills. They're also good to play for Black to improve your defensive skills.

CHAPTER 4

OPEN GAMES

INTRODUCTION TO OPEN GAMES

Now you've learnt some important opening ideas it's time at last to learn some real openings.

A few points:

- Chess has been played in its current form for more than 500 years.
- During that time the best players – some of the smartest people in the world – have worked out the best ways to start a game.
- There are thousands of books, not to mention videos, DVDs, websites, which will give you advice on how to start a game.
- I have on my computer a database currently containing more than 8 million games going back more than 400 years, some played by the strongest players in the world, some by children like you, and many by players in between. Strong players will buy a database like this along with software to help them use it.
- If you try to make things up yourself you probably won't last very long against someone who's studied the openings.
- Some people think studying openings is about learning moves off by heart. In a few openings this is true but it's mostly about learning and understanding ideas.
- Some people think studying openings is about learning traps. It's not (although you have to learn how to avoid traps): it's learning about how to put your pieces on good squares.
- Some people think you should play the same openings as the world champions. The strongest players in the world play very complicated openings: it's best to start with simpler openings that are easier to understand.
- The best openings have names: some are named after people who played or wrote about them, some after places where they were played, and others have names which describe them in some way.

A few statistics:

In my database:

1. e4 is played in 51% of games.
1. d4 is played in 32% of games.
1. Nf3 is played in 8% of games.
1. c4 is played in 7% of games.

This only leaves 2% for the other 16 (count them!) possible first moves for White.

1. e4 is the move whose ideas are easiest to understand so it's, quite rightly, the move usually played by children. So we'll be looking at this move for most of the rest of this book.

After 1. e4 there's a lot more variety in Black's replies:

- 1... c5 is played in 40% of games.
- 1... e5 is played in 24½% of games.
- 1... e6 is played in 13% of games.
- 1... c6 is played in 7% of games.
- 1... d6 is played in 4½% of games.
- 1... d5 is played in 4% of games.
- 1... g6 is played in 3% of games.
- 1... Nf6 is played in 2½% of games.

And that leaves 1½% for the other 12 moves put together.

Although 1... c5 is the most popular move, 1... e5 is usually played in games between children. Quite rightly so again, because it's the easiest move to understand. 1... c5 is a particularly difficult move to understand, which is why it's popular with stronger players who want a more challenging game.

For the moment, we'll look at what might happen when the game starts with the moves 1. e4 e5. We call these openings OPEN GAMES. An OPEN position is one where pawns have been exchanged in the centre of the board so that the position's OPEN rather than CLOSED. In fact the position after 1. e4 e5 will quite often be CLOSED while other openings can easily become OPEN.

In this position White usually plays 2. Nf3 (85% of games). Other moves you might meet are 2. Nc3 (4½%), 2. Bc4 (4%), 2. f4 (4%) and 2. d4 (2%). These five moves add up to 99½% of all games starting 1. e4 e5.

We'll start by looking at 2. Nf3. This move creates a THREAT. Black must either DEFEND the pawn on e5 or THREATEN the pawn on e4.

Black usually defends the pawn with 2... Nc6 (83½%). The other popular moves are 2... Nf6 (10½%) and 2... d6 (5%). These three moves add up to 99% of all games starting 1. e4 e5 2. Nf3.

We'll start by looking at the most popular openings starting 1. e4 e5 in more detail.

After the moves:

- 1. e4 e5
- 2. Nf3 Nc6

there are four popular moves for White.

The most popular move is 3. Bb5 (47½% of games from this position).

This called the RUY LOPEZ, the SPANISH OPENING or the SPANISH GAME.

Ruy Lopez was a Spanish priest (he later became a bishop) who lived in the 16th century. In 1561 he wrote a very famous chess book in which he recommended this opening.

This is the opening usually chosen by most strong players. If you understand this opening you'll understand a lot about chess. It's quite hard but worth the effort. You've already seen a bit of this opening but we'll look at it in more detail very shortly.

The second most popular move is 3. Bc4 (27% of games)

You've already seen this move, which is called the ITALIAN GAME. It was very popular in Italy in the 16th and 17th centuries and is still often played today, especially in junior competitions.

Black usually plays either 3... Bc5 (49½% of ITALIAN GAMES), which is the GIUOCO PIANO (this means 'Quiet game' in Italian) or 3... Nf6 (39%), the TWO KNIGHTS' DEFENCE (Black defends with both knights). This opening can lead to quiet positions, but there are also ways in which White can play for a quick attack. If you're Black you'll have to know what to do. 3... Be7 (6%), the HUNGARIAN DEFENCE, is fairly safe but not very exciting.

The third most popular move is 3. d4 (15% of games)

This is the SCOTCH OPENING or SCOTCH GAME. It was played in a match between Edinburgh and London in 1824. Strong players sometimes use it as a surprise weapon instead of the Ruy Lopez. It scores well in junior chess: if you haven't studied the opening you might well get the next two moves wrong and end up in a bad position.

The fourth most popular move is 3. Nc3 (9% of games)

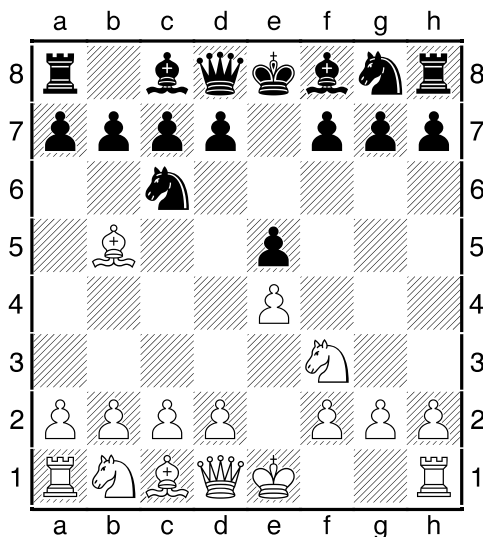
This is called, for obvious reasons, the FOUR KNIGHTS OPENING or FOUR KNIGHTS GAME. It's often played by beginners who have been taught to get their knights out quickly, and is also sometimes used by stronger players to surprise their opponents. Although there's nothing wrong with the move I'd advise you to stop playing it NOW and learn the other openings instead.

These four moves together account for 98½% of games starting with 1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6. So at the moment you don't need to bother about anything else – and there's no reason at all for you to play anything else yourself.

THE RUY LOPEZ (SPANISH OPENING)

Let's now take a look at the SPANISH OPENING.

1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Bb5



Why should you play this move?

- The big idea of this opening is to put more pressure on the black pawn on e5 by attacking the knight that's defending the pawn. Sometimes you'll be able to win a pawn for free.
- You're usually going to play your pawn to d4 at some point to try to get rid of the pawn on e5. Sometimes you'll play d4 straight away, sometimes you'll play c3 and then d4 so that you can take back with a pawn and keep two strong pawns in the centre. Which one you choose will depend on how Black develops.
- You're usually going to castle very quickly in this opening to make your king safe and get your rook into play.
- Black will probably play Nf6 fairly early on to attack your e-pawn. You have to think about whether and how to defend the pawn. You'll often choose Re1 (which is one reason why you castle quickly) rather than d3 or Nc3.
- Imagine the e-pawns have disappeared, you have a rook (or a queen) on the e-file and your opponent has a king on e8. If your opponent has a piece in the way you have a PIN: maybe you can attack the pinned piece again with a pawn and win it. If you have a piece in the way, you can play a DISCOVERED CHECK and perhaps win an enemy queen or rook.
- Watch out for QUEEN FORKS. Queens are very good at doing forks and a lot of games are decided by QUEEN FORKS in the opening. White can often get QUEEN FORKS on d5, h5 or f3 in this opening.

Let's play a few more moves and see what happens. Black's most popular 3rd move is:

3... a6

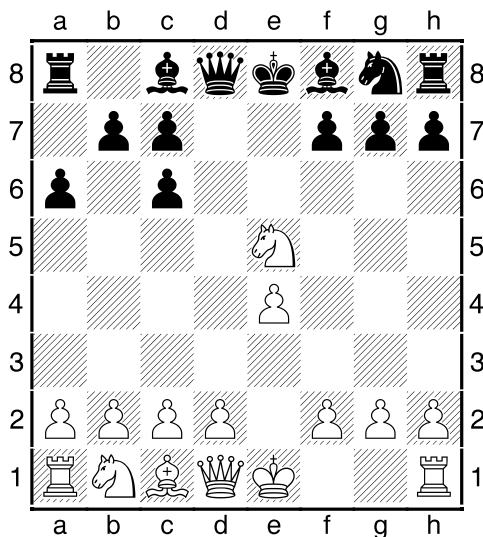
This looks like it loses a pawn, doesn't it? So why does everyone play it? You've seen this before but there's no harm in seeing it again.

4. Bxc6 dxc6

It's best for Black to take this way, opening lines for the queen and bishop.

5. Nxe5

So White's won a pawn, but you might remember that Black has several ways to win the pawn back.



5... Qd4

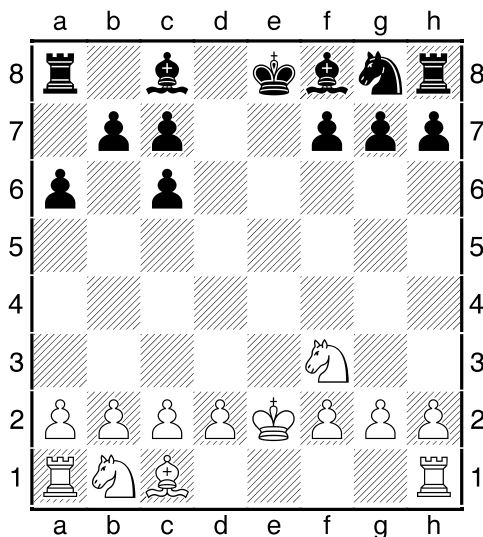
This move FORKS the knight on e5 and the pawn on e4. Other possible moves are 5... Qg5, FORKING the knight on e5 and the pawn on g2, and 5... Qe7, SKEWERING the knight on e5 and the pawn on e4.

Yes, you've been told not to bring your queen out too soon, but if you can win something without losing too much time then you SHOULD bring your queen out. Black scores 77% from this position on my database. White has to do something about the knight and the game might continue:

6. Nf3 Qxe4+

7. Qe2 Qxe2+

8. Kxe2



This position is better for Black. Black has a bishop against a knight and White will have to waste time getting the king back. If you play like this with White you're backing a loser.

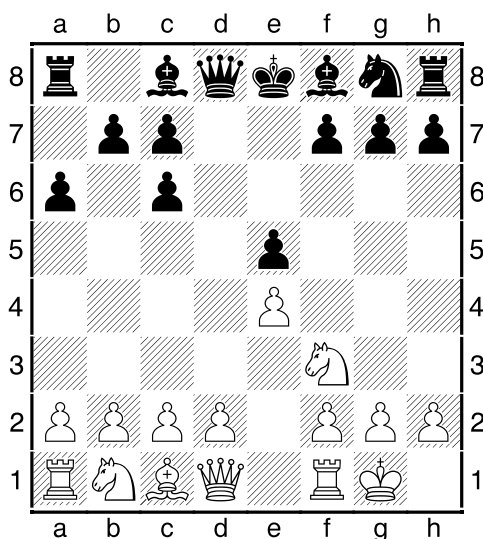
So let's go back and try something different for White.

5. Nc3, 5. d3 and 5. d4 are all possible, but the most popular move, and the move I'd recommend for you is:

5. O-O

In the last opening we looked at, it wasn't so good for White to castle quickly, but here it's the best move. Chess is hard, which is why reading a book like this will give you a big advantage.

It's Black's move. What could be more natural or obvious than to develop a knight?



You've already seen when you learnt about tactics on the e-file that playing 5... Nf6, while natural, is not good. Black needs to do something about the threatened e-pawn. The third and fourth most popular moves are 5... Bd6 and 5... Qd6. The most popular move is 5... f6. In most openings this is a bad move for two reasons. It weakens the king's defences and takes away the knight's best square. But in this position it's a good move. White no longer has a white squared bishop so can't take advantage of the king's weakness while the black knight will come out via e7. Chess is hard.

Another move which you might like to try yourself is the second most popular move here:

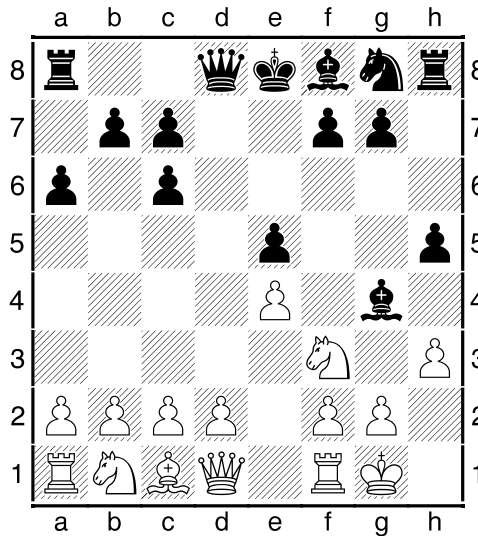
5... Bg4

Black defends by PINNING the white knight. You'd be delighted now if White played Nxe5. The main point of this move, though, is that you can set a nasty trap.

6. h3

A natural move, and probably also the best move, hitting the bishop. Now is your chance to give White a shock. Instead of moving the bishop you play:

6... h5



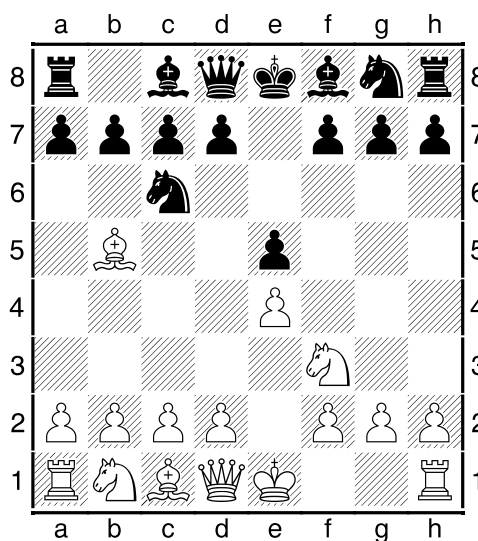
And now if White tries to win a piece you're going to score a quick CHECKMATE:

7. hxg4 hxg4
8. Nxe5 Qh4
9. f4 g3

Checkmate will follow on either h1 or h2.

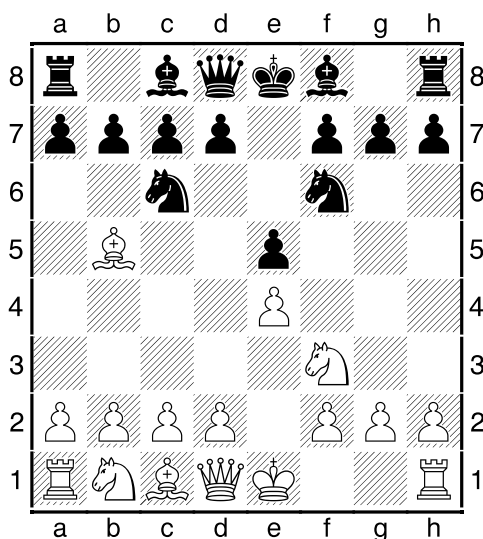
Instead White should ignore the bishop and play 7. d3, when the game goes on. Black should play 7... Qf6 when White can continue developing with either 8. Nbd2 or 8. Be3. Every move both players will have to calculate whether or not White can capture the bishop safely. At some point Black will be forced to trade on f3.

Let's go back to the position after 3. Bb5 (here it is again) and look at some numbers.



3... a6 is played in about 68% of all games here. But other moves are also popular, particularly at your level.

The second most popular move (12% of games) is 3... Nf6, the BERLIN variation. This move is very popular with grandmasters at the moment, and, because it's a natural developing move you'll often meet it yourself.

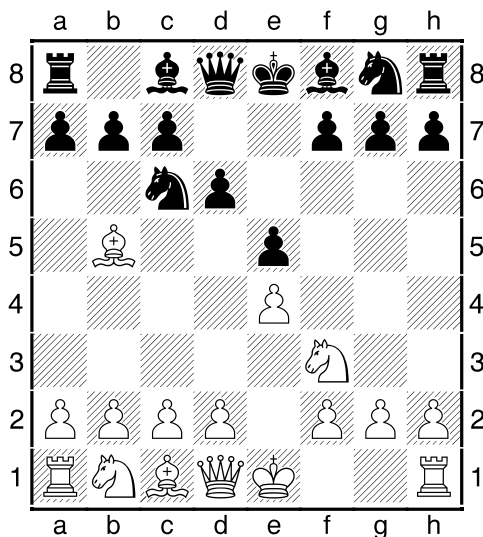


We could defend the pawn on e4 by Nc3 (now it's a FOUR KNIGHTS GAME) or d3, but instead we're going to play:

4. 0-0

Again, simply castling. If Black plays 4... Nxe4 the most popular move is 5. d4, but you might prefer a simpler alternative: 5. Re1.

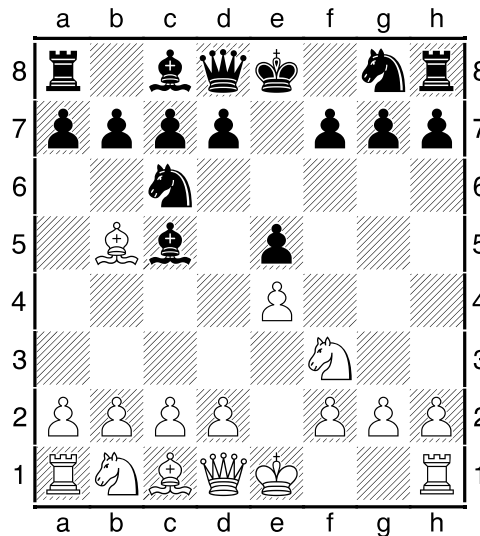
The third most popular move on my database is 3... d6 (5%) – the STEINITZ DEFENCE, named after Wilhelm Steinitz, the first official world champion. This is rarely played by stronger players but often played at lower levels.



Players who don't know the opening sometimes decide they need to defend the pawn again in this way. It's not a bad move, but does block in the bishop on f8. White can take advantage of this by playing the immediate 4. d4.

The next move is 3... f5 (4.6%), a daring GAMBIT (the SCHLIEMANN DEFENCE, named after a 19th century German player) which is not much played by beginners so you're unlikely to meet it very often. It's also not played very often by grandmasters, but is quite popular at adult club level, where it scores well for Black. It's something you might want to learn yourself as a surprise weapon. A safe reply for White is to play 4. d3.

The final move we'll look at now is 3... Bc5 (4.5%), another natural developing move often played by beginners.



Again, not a bad move but the bishop might be a target when White plays d4. Again we're going to play 4. 0-0 in reply. We can then choose between two plans. We can either play c3 followed by d4 or we can play the FORK TRICK:

4. 0-0 Nf6
5. Nxe5

And if 5... Nxe5 we'll get the piece back by playing the PAWN FORK 6. d4. You've seen this idea before so you should remember it. If you prefer you could also play 4. c3 or 4. Nxe5 instead of 4. 0-0. All three moves are fine.

Finally, let's return to the most popular variation.

1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Bb5 a6
4. Ba4

This is much more popular (85%) than Bxc6 (the EXCHANGE VARIATION). It gives Black more problems but is also harder to understand. If you want to play Bxc6 yourself for the moment, that's fine.

- 4... Nf6

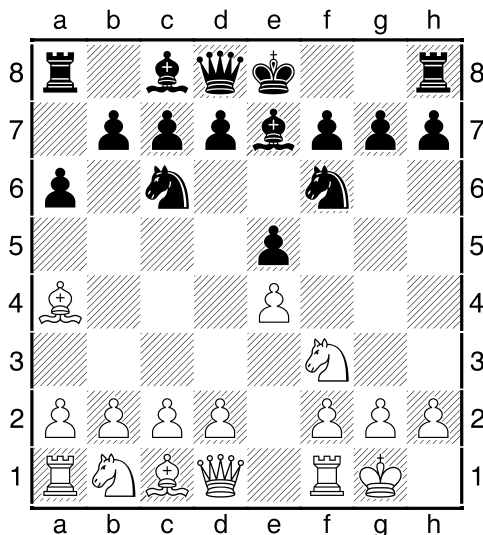
The most popular move, developing a piece and attacking the pawn on e4.

5. 0-0

White doesn't yet need to defend the pawn. There's nothing wrong with d3, or, for that matter, with Nc3, which is rather like a FOUR KNIGHTS GAME.

5... Be7

Black could also play Nxe4, when White, as in the BERLIN VARIATION, can play the more popular 6. d4 or the simpler 6. Re1.



6. Re1

Now the e-file is closed Black really does want to capture on e4 so White has to defend the pawn. As White's plan is to play c3 and d4 this move is usually chosen rather than d3 or Nc3.

6... b5

White is now THREATENING to win a pawn safely by playing Bxc6 followed by Nxe5 so 6... o-o, for example, would be a mistake.

7. Bb3

No choice. White must save the bishop.

7... d6

A natural move, preparing to develop the bishop on c8. 7... o-o is also fine, and may reach the same position.

8. c3

White starts the plan of playing c3 followed by d4.

8... o-o

Another natural developing move.

9. h3

This looks strange, but if 9. d4 Black can play Bg4, putting the white centre under some pressure. So White usually prefers to stop Bg4 first. It slightly weakens White's king, but this doesn't matter as Black isn't planning a king-side attack in this opening.

9... Na5

Other moves are possible, but this is the most popular. Black wants to chase the white bishop back and advance the c-pawn.

10. Bc2

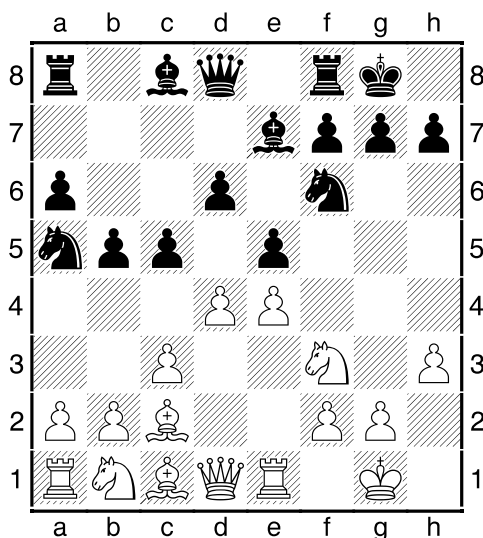
White doesn't want to trade off the bishop so moves it back to safety.

10... c5

Black gains space on the queen-side and challenges White's pawn centre.

11. d4

At last White's opening plan is complete: there are two pawns together in the centre of the board.



At the moment you don't need to remember all these moves.

The most important thing in this opening is to understand the ideas. You always have to think whether or not it's a good idea for White to capture the pawn on e5, or for Black to capture the pawn on e4.

When the pawns disappear and the centre is open there will be lots of chances for TACTICS: PINS, DISCOVERED CHECKS, FORKS.

This is an opening which all chess players should learn and practise playing with both colours.

THE ITALIAN GAME

Now we'll look at the Italian Game: 1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4.

Why should you play this move?

- a) The big idea of this opening is to go for a quick attack on the f7 pawn, which is only defended by the black king.
- b) You can also play this opening quietly, perhaps using some of the ideas you've already seen, but it's much more fun to go for the quick attack.
- c) This is one opening where you have to learn some of the moves off by heart. The positions are very complicated and have been studied for more than 400 years. You won't be able to work out all the right moves for yourself.
- d) Bear in mind that Black has two popular replies. They might look similar but your attacking plan against each move will be very different. Be careful not to get them confused.

As you'll remember, Black's most popular replies are 3... Bc5 (this is called the GIUOCO PIANO, which means Quiet Game in Italian) and 3... Nf6 (the TWO KNIGHTS DEFENCE).

A word of warning: this is one of the few openings where you will need to remember the moves as well as understanding the ideas behind them. The variations we're going to look at are complicated and it's unlikely that you (or your opponents) will find the best moves unless you've studied them. If you know them and your opponent doesn't you'll probably win a lot of games very quickly! But if you try to make them up as you go along you'll almost certainly lose.

First, here's an exciting way to play if your opponent makes it a GIUOCO PIANO. We're going to play c3 and then d4.

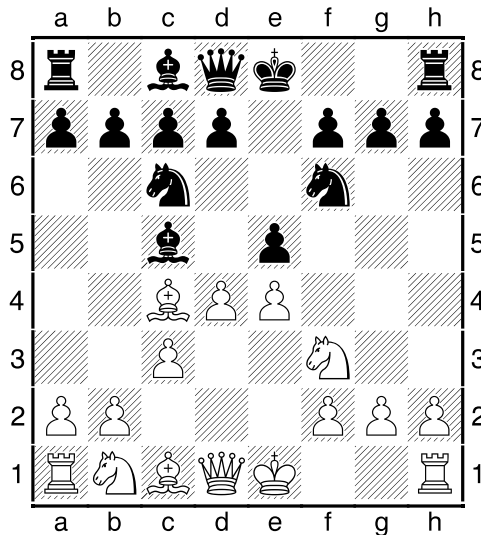
- 1. e4 e5
- 2. Nf3 Nc6
- 3. Bc4 Bc5
- 4. c3

You might think this move looks a bit strange. You're moving a pawn instead of a piece, and, what's more, putting it on what seems to be the best square for the knight on b1. What's the idea? White is preparing to play d2-d4 next move to get two pawns together in the middle of the board. In *CHESS GAMES FOR HEROES* you'll see some games which show you just how strong those pawns can be.

4... Nf6

The most natural move, attacking the pawn on e4.

5. d4



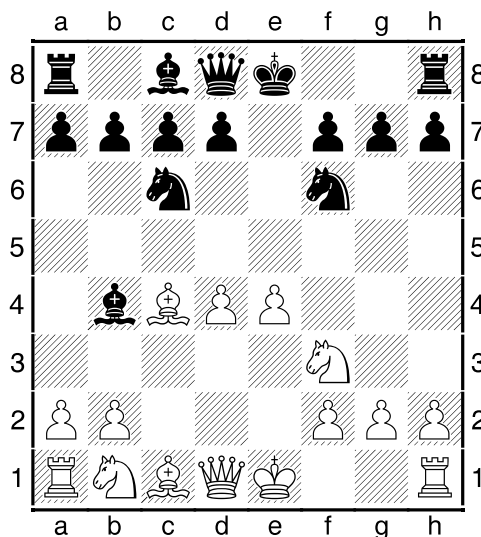
White's last move is a FORK, attacking both the bishop on c5 and the pawn on e5. Black's best move is to capture the pawn.

5... exd4

6. cxd4

Where should Black move the bishop? If you play Bb6 the white pawns will advance and create havoc among the black cavalry. Black needs time to attack the white pawn centre, so plays a check.

6... Bb4+



Now White has to decide how to get out of check. The most exciting option now is 7. Nc3, which is a PAWN SACRIFICE as the knight on c3 is PINNED. The safer move is 7. Bd2, when, if Black tries 7... Nxe4 White can regain the pawn by playing 8. Bxb4 Nxb4 9. Bxf7+ Kxf7 10. Qb3+ (a TACTIC on f7 setting up a QUEEN FORK).

Let's play on a few moves:

7. Nc3 Nxe4

Capturing the pawn is the best move here. White wants to UNPIN so plays...

8. o-o

Now White is THREATENING Nxe4. Black has to decide which way to capture on c3. Because bishops prefer open positions while knights prefer closed positions you might expect Nxc3 to be better.

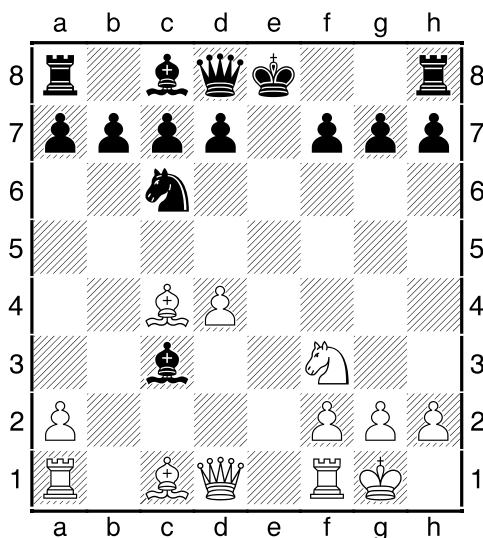
In fact Bxc3 is the better move: you'll see some games with this move in *CHESS GAMES FOR HEROES*. Again it's one of those things you just have to know. For now we'll look at...

8... Nxc3

9. bxc3

Now Black's best move is 9... d5, but it looks obvious to capture another pawn and THREATEN the rook on a1:

9... Bxb3



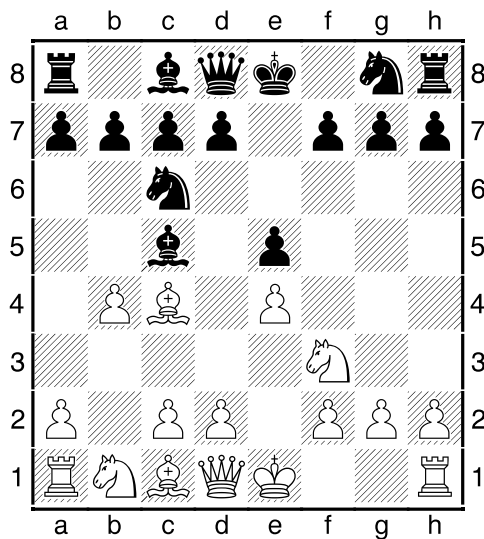
A very interesting position. You might expect White to play Rb1 here but there a lot of better choices. Instead you can SACRIFICE the rook for a quick attack.

One strong move is 10. Qb3, when 10... Bxa1 11. Re1+ will win the black queen (do you see how?), but instead Black can defend with 10... d5.

An even stronger move is 10. Ba3, controlling the f8 square so that Black can't castle. Again 10... Bxa1 loses to 11. Re1+, 10... d6 is met by 11. Rc1, while 10... d5 11. Bb5 Bxa1 12. Re1+ Be6 13. Qc2 Bd7 14. Ne5 gives White a very powerful position.

There's another idea you might want to try on move 4.

1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Bc4 Bc5
4. b4



This is the EVANS GAMBIT, named after William Evans, a 19th century Welsh sea captain, who invented this move. White plans to gain time to set up the pawn centre more quickly by SACRIFICING a pawn.

Black could play Bb6 instead, but there's nothing wrong with taking the pawn.

- 4... Bxb4
5. c3 Bc5

Black can also play 5... Ba5, when after 6. d4 exd4, White can't take back with the pawn because of the PIN. So instead White plays 7. o-o, offering Black a second pawn but gaining more time. 5... Be7 is another, and perhaps safer, option.

Now we can reach the position you've seen in the GAMBITS chapter:

6. d4 exd4
7. cxd4 Bb6

7... Bb4+ is an alternative.

8. o-o d6

In this opening the white queen will often go to b3 and the queen's bishop will sometimes go to a3.

After the moves:

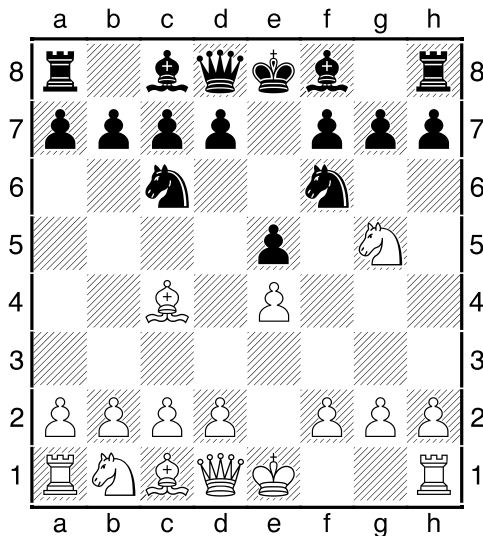
1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Bc4

Black can also play

- 3... Nf6.

The TWO KNIGHTS DEFENCE. Now White has to think of a different plan as Black is threatening to take the e-pawn. If you want to be safe but boring you can play 4. d3 but there are more interesting and exciting moves you can choose. One of them is 4. d4, and another, which we'll look at here, is...

4. Ng5



Breaking one of our opening rules by moving a piece a second time, but defending the e-pawn and THREATENING a FORK on f7.

You can win lots of games with this move if you learn it well.

Black has only one good way to defend f7:

- 4... d5

when you play

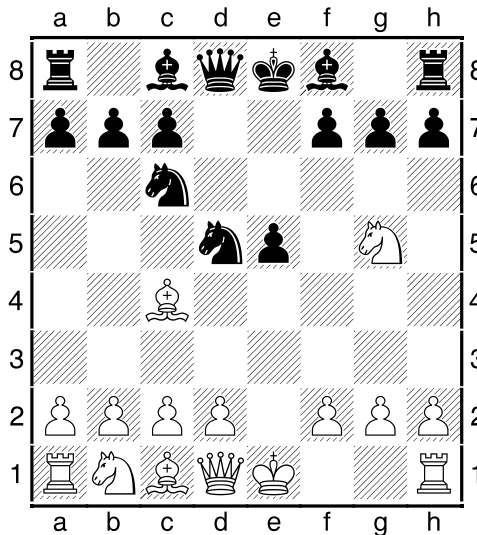
5. exd5

The obvious move for Black here is to recapture:

- 5... Nxd5

As it happens, though, it's not the best move. This again is something you have to learn if you want to play this opening with either colour.

Now White can play the famous FRIED LIVER ATTACK. White SACRIFICES a knight to drive Black's king out into the open.



6. Nxf7

Another very strong move for White here is 6. d4. In my database Nxf7 scores 80% for White and d4 scores 77%.

This is a FORK so Black has little choice:

6... Kxf7

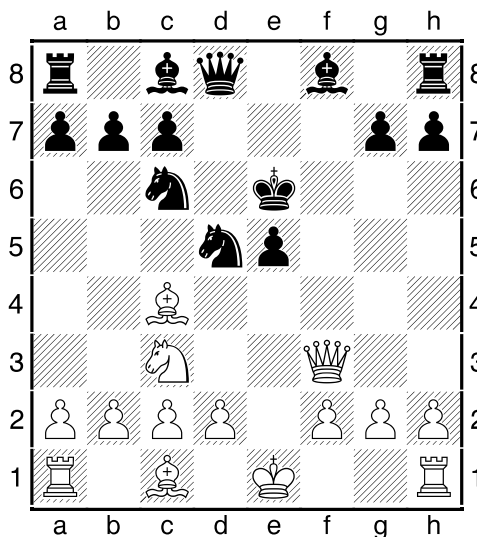
Now we play:

7. Qf3+

This is another FORK. Black has only one move to avoid losing the extra piece and ending up a pawn down:

7... Ke6

8. Nc3

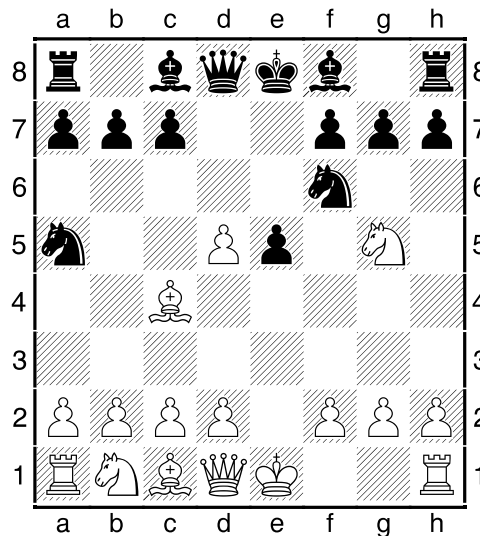


We attack the PINNED knight again. Now Black can choose between Ncb4 (the better option) and Nce7.

Black is up by a knight for a pawn, but White has a strong attack against the king in the centre of the board.

Let's now go back and look at a better move for Black:

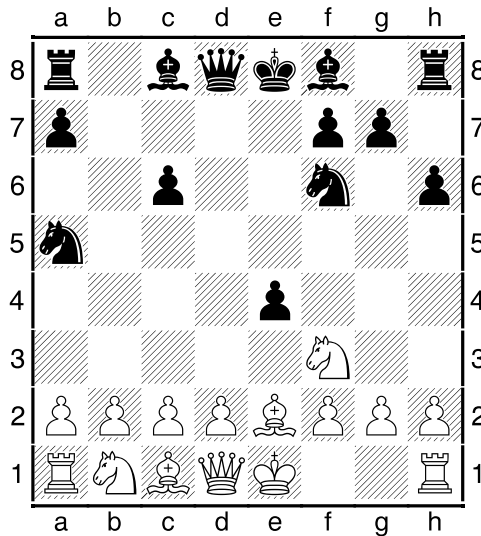
1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Bc4 Nf6
4. Ng5 d5
5. exd5 Na5



Black moves a knight to the side of the board instead of recapturing and moving a knight to the centre – but it's a much better move than Nxd5. It's just something you have to learn and remember, as well as understanding the reasons for the moves. Black has two other interesting moves here: 5... Nd4 and 5... b5.

White has to do something about the bishop. Play might continue:

6. Bb5+ c6
7. dxc6 bxc6
8. Be2 h6
9. Nf3 e4



Black has gained time by chasing the white knight and bishop round the board.

This time White has an extra pawn but Black has a lead in development.

I think you'll agree that playing positions like these is much more fun than playing safe and boring openings where there are no pawn exchanges and the two armies never come into contact with each other.

If you read *CHESS GAMES FOR HEROES* you'll get the chance to see some complete games played with these opening variations.

You'll learn that it's very easy for you to win quickly with this opening if your opponent hasn't studied it.

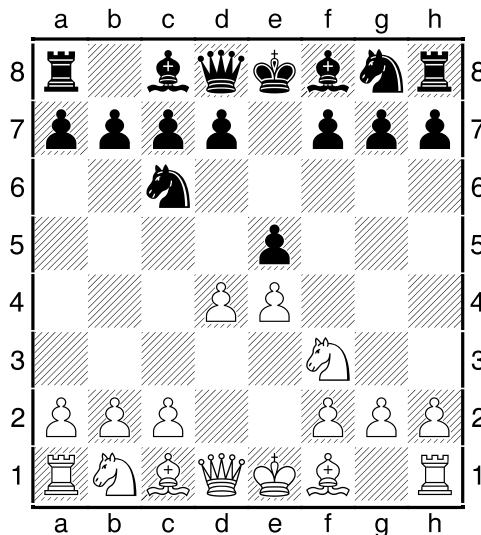
What I'd advise you to do is to play lots of games with both 3. Bb5 and 3. Bc4 and see which you like best.

There's another move you might like to try as well, though.

THE SCOTCH GAME

You'll remember the first moves:

1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. d4



Why should you play this move?

- a) It's an excellent move, attacking the e5 pawn again. You'll see that it's safe: the d4 square is defended twice: by the knight on f3 and the queen.
- b) Black only has one good reply: anything else will give you at least a slight advantage. Players who don't know the opening often fail to get the next move right.
- c) It leads to an open position which will give you plenty of chances to practise your tactics.

If Black plays 3... d6 you have a choice. There's nothing wrong with developing: 4. Bb5 is the STEINITZ DEFENCE to the SPANISH, which you've seen before. 4. Bc4 is fine as well. You can also play 4. dxe5, with the idea of trading queens and stopping Black castling.

If Black plays 3... Nf6 you play 4. dxe5 Nxe4 5. Bc4 and you're threatening to play the QUEEN FORK Qd5 next move – an idea you've seen before.

If Black plays 3... Bb4+ you just play 4. c3 and drive the bishop away. You can then take on e5 next move.

So the best move for Black is to take the pawn:

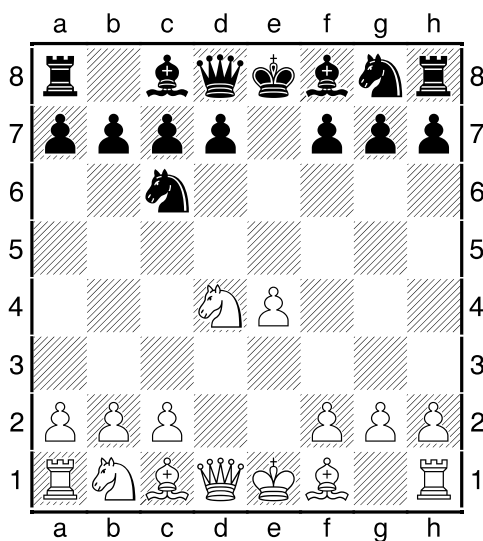
3... exd4

Now you have three choices.

If you want to play a GAMBIT you can play 4. c3, the GÖRING GAMBIT, named after a 19th century German player. This is a bit like the DANISH GAMBIT, which you'll learn more about shortly. You can also play 4. Bc4, the SCOTCH GAMBIT, which can also arise from the TWO KNIGHTS DEFENCE.

The most popular move is to take the pawn back:

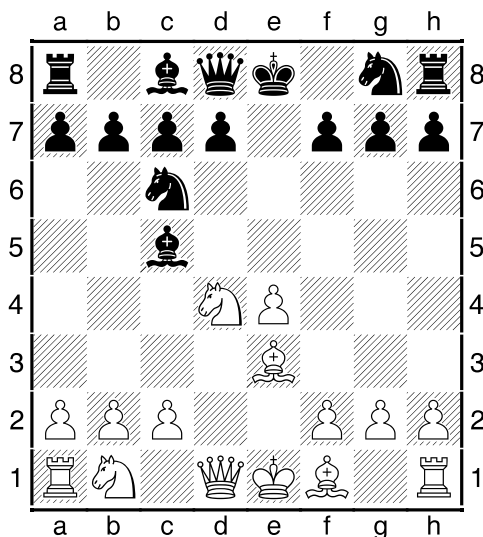
4. Nxd4



You'll probably find many of your opponents play 4... Nxd4 here. After 5. Qxd4 your queen will be strong in the centre of the board as Black can't use a developing move to drive her away.

Black has two better moves, both of which develop a piece and create a threat.

The most popular move is 4... Bc5. Now you can play 5. Be3, threatening to win a piece by a **DISCOVERED ATTACK**: Nxc6 followed by Bxc5.



Your opponent may well not notice and play a move like Nf6 here. Instead, the usual move for Black is 5... Qf6.

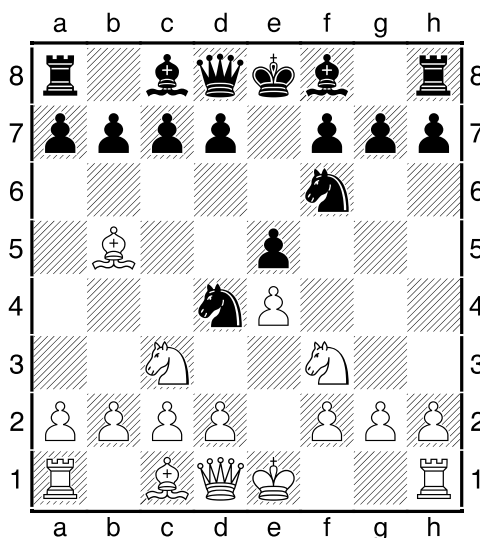
Going back to the previous diagram, an equally good move for Black is 4... Nf6, a position which could also arise from the **FOUR KNIGHTS GAME**. Now the game might continue 5. Nc3 Bb4, **PINNING** the knight and threatening Nxe4 again. White should then play 6. Nxc6 bxc6 7. Bd3 with a level position.

THE FOUR KNIGHTS GAME

If you play this with White I'd advise you to stop now. There's nothing wrong with the opening. It's just that there are other openings to choose which are more interesting and exciting to play. At this stage in your chess career you should be trying out lots of different ideas rather than playing the same thing all the time. You'll find a lot of your opponents will play it against you, though. Here's how to play it with Black.

1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Nc3 Nf6
4. Bb5

After this move (the SPANISH FOUR KNIGHTS) we're going to play 4... Nd4. White has several choices:



5. Nxd4 exd4 when you'll meet 6. Ne2 with Nxe4 and 6. Nd5 with either Nxd5 or c6. Or 6. e5 dxc3 7. exf6 Qxf6 is also fine for Black.

5. Nxe5 is also possible: your best move (not easy to find: you have to know this) is 5... Qe7 when there are lots of tactics on the e-file coming up. You've already learnt a lot about this.

5. Ba4 is the hardest move to meet, and the most popular move with more experienced players, but you probably won't meet it so often. You could play 5... Nxf3+ and then try to catch up with your development.

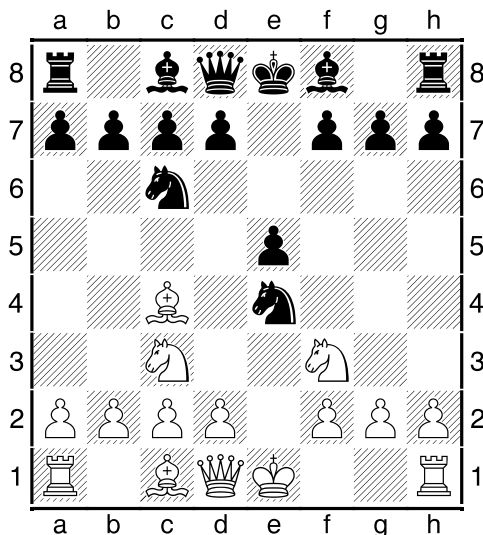
5. Bc4 is also possible: your simplest reply is 5... d6.

Going back:

1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Nc3 Nf6
4. Bc4

After this move – the ITALIAN FOUR KNIGHTS and the move you'll probably meet most often, we're going to play the FORK TRICK – which you've read about earlier in the book.

4... Nxe4



This will come as a surprise unless your opponent has read this book. You already know that after 5. Nxe4 you can play a FORK to win the piece back: 5... d5.

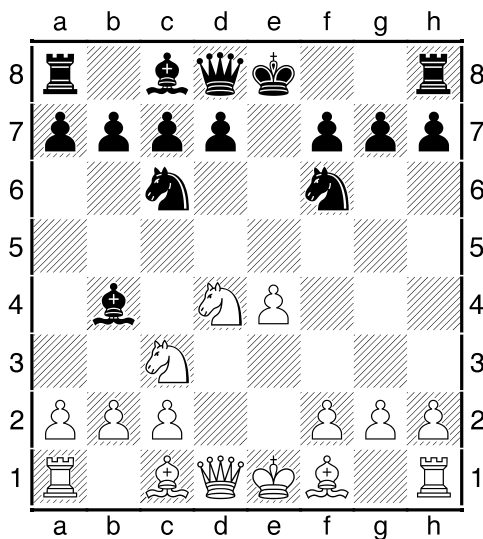
Going back again:

1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Nc3 Nf6
4. d4

This is the SCOTCH FOUR KNIGHTS which you reached by a different route in the last section. You can play:

- 4... exd4
5. Nxd4 Bb4

PINNING the knight and threatening the pawn on e4 again.



THE PETROFF DEFENCE

If you want to play Black after the moves:

1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6

... there's quite a lot to learn. Your opponent might play the RU Y LOPEZ, the ITALIAN, the SCOTCH or even the FOUR KNIGHTS. You have to know how to play all of them with Black.

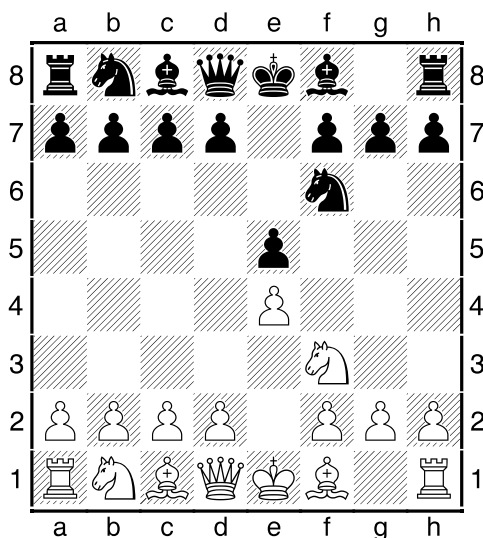
Although this is one of the best ways to meet 1. e4, and quite possibly, THE best way, it's not the only way.

As you've seen, there are two other fairly popular second moves for Black. One of them, the PETROFF DEFENCE (named after a 19th century Russian player: sometimes also called the RUSSIAN DEFENCE) might be a good choice for you if you want something a bit simpler and easier. The disadvantage is that it's less fun to play and can often lead to rather boring positions.

It's your choice!

It starts like this:

1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nf6



Some people play this move because they think it's a good idea to copy their opponent's moves. In that case you may well win the game very quickly if you're white.

Other people play it because they know what they're doing.

It's worth learning a bit about this opening from both sides of the board. You'll sometimes meet it when you're white and you might want to play it when you're black.

If you're white I'd suggest you take the pawn:

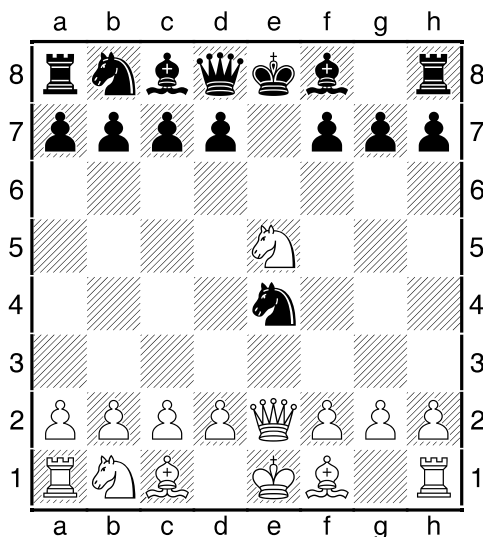
3. Nxe5

Now, if Black's playing copycat chess you'll be faced with:

3... Nxe4

Your next move is:

4. Qe2



What will probably happen next is that Black will move the knight away, and, if you remember the chapter about tactics on the e-file you'll play Nc6+, a DISCOVERED CHECK winning the queen.

In this position Black does better to copy White for one more move:

4... Qe7

5. Qxe4 d6

6. d4

Black's winning the piece back by attacking a pinned piece but you'll still come out a pawn ahead.

There's a better way for Black to play this opening, though.

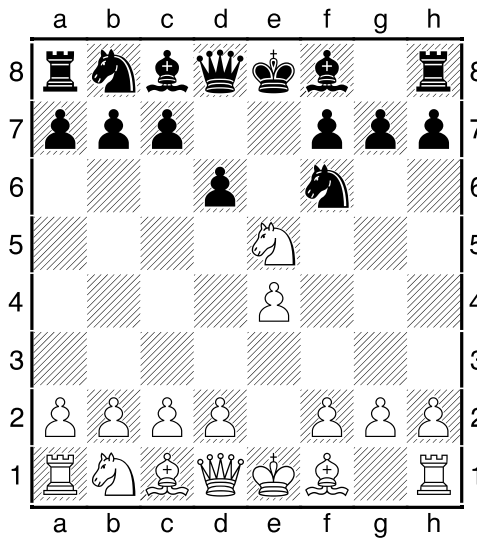
Let's start again:

1. e4 e5

2. Nf3 Nf6

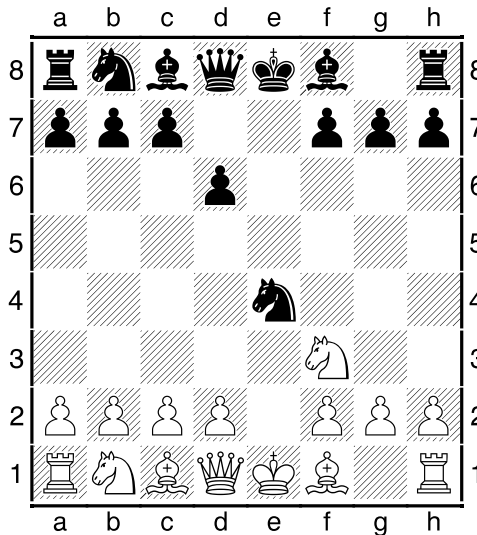
3. Nxe5 d6

We're going to chase the knight back first before recapturing the pawn. This makes a big difference.



Now the white knight will retreat, probably to f3, and then you take the pawn.

4. Nf3 Nxe4



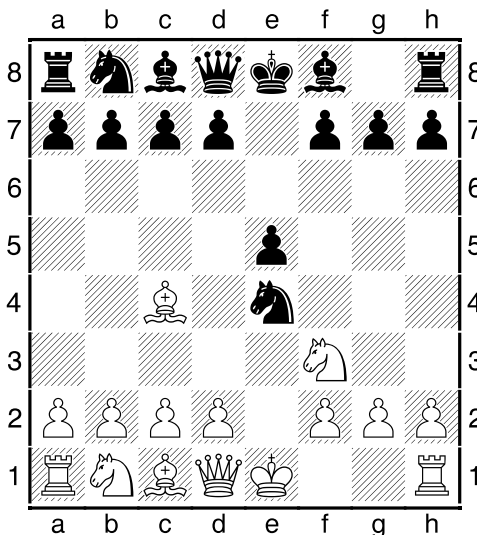
Now White might play 5. Qe2, threatening and PINNING your knight. You have to UNPIN by playing 5... Qe7 to avoid losing a piece. One of the problems with this opening is that it sometimes leads to boring positions like this where the queens will probably be exchanged.

The most popular moves for White here are 5. d4, followed by 5. Nc3. If you're white here and think your opponent is good enough to play 5... Qe7 in answer to Qe2 you should choose one of these moves instead.

Another good third move for White is 3. d4, when Black can reply with Nxe4. But at your level it's more likely that your opponent will play a developing move, or perhaps exd4, which you meet with 4. e5.

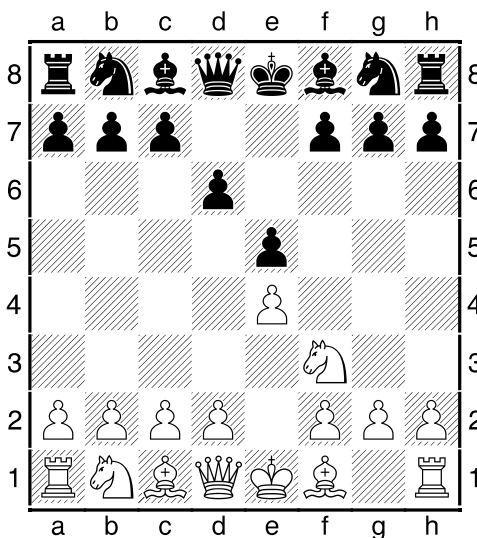
So, if you're black and your opponent plays 3. Nc3 you can simply play 3... Nc6 in reply, with a FOUR KNIGHTS GAME which you read about in the last chapter. 3... Bb4 is also fine, but 3... Bc5 is not so good as White can play a FORK TRICK: 4. Nxe5.

If your opponent plays 3. Bc4 you can capture on e4: 3... Nxe4



Now if White plays 4. Nxe5 you have a strong reply: 4... d5. White can also play 4. Nc3, which is the BODEN-KIESERITZKY GAMBIT. Instead of accepting it by trading knights it's safer to play 4... Nc6, when you're in the FORK TRICK variation of the ITALIAN FOUR KNIGHTS.

There's one other second move you might meet: the PHILIDOR DEFENCE, named after a Frenchman who was the strongest player of the 18th century (and was also a famous composer). We'll take a quick look here so that you know what to do if you meet it.



This is not a bad move, but it's not so easy to play as there are a lot of traps you might fall into. I wouldn't recommend it for you at the moment.

If you're White in this position you have two good moves.

The most popular move is 3. d4 but 3. Bc4 is also good and might give you the chance to play LÉGAL'S MATE.

THE DANISH GAMBIT

All chess players should be really good at playing the openings starting with 1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6.

There are other second moves you might like to try out as well, especially if you like the idea of playing GAMBITS.

The DANISH GAMBIT is a great opening for developing your attacking skills.

It starts like this:

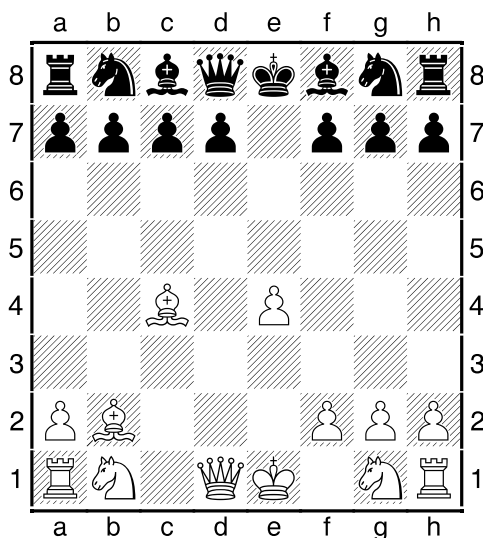
1. e4 e5
2. d4 exd4

This is Black's best move. Now 3. Qxd4 is the CENTRE GAME when Black can play 3... Nc6 and force the white queen to move again. We're going to play something different.

3. c3 dxc3

Now White can play 4. Nxc3 giving up one pawn for a small lead in development, or instead...

4. Bc4 cxb2
5. Bxb2



You've seen this position before. White can easily get a very quick and strong attack. Just look at those bishops pointing at the black king-side. Two bishops together on adjacent diagonals can be very powerful. You'll need to get the rest of your pieces out as quickly as you can, though, if you want your attack to be successful. Don't worry if you lose a few more pawns in the process. Note that if Black now plays, for example, Bc5, you can reply with Bxg7, TRAPPING the rook on h8.

If you read *CHESS GAMES FOR HEROES* you'll be able to play through some games starting with this position and try to find the best moves.

What should you do if you're Black and someone plays the DANISH GAMBIT against you? If you ask a computer it will advise you to hold onto the pawns and try to defend against the attack. If you can trade off all the pieces your extra pawns will give you an easy win in the ending.

You might want to play like this, and it will help you improve your defensive skills if you do so. But attacking is usually easier than defending, as well as being more fun. There are two ways for Black to avoid trouble in this opening. We'll look at the harder one first, because it starts from this position. It uses some important tactical ideas which you've already met.

Starting from the previous diagram we're going to play:

- 5... d5
- 6. Bxd5

This is better than exd5, which blocks in the bishop.

- 6... Nf6
- 7. Bxf7+

It looks like Black's made a mistake. White plays a tactic to deflect the black king and win the queen.

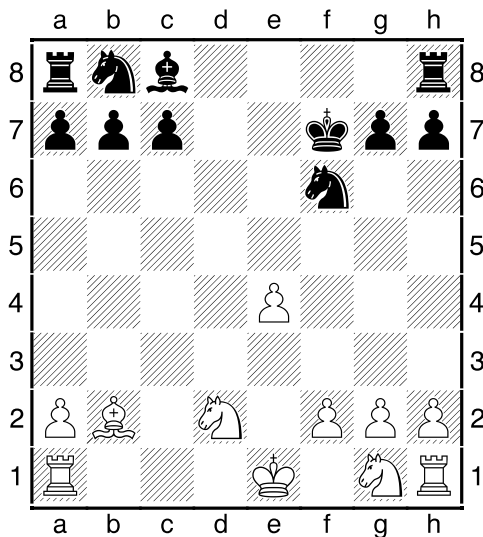
- 7... Kxf7
- 8. Qxd8 Bb4+

Black had it all worked out. A DISCOVERED ATTACK now wins back the queen.

- 9. Qd2

Otherwise White will be a piece down.

- 9... Bxd2+
- 10. Nxd2



What's happened is that Black has returned the two extra pawns to trade queens (in a rather unusual way). The position is now about equal.

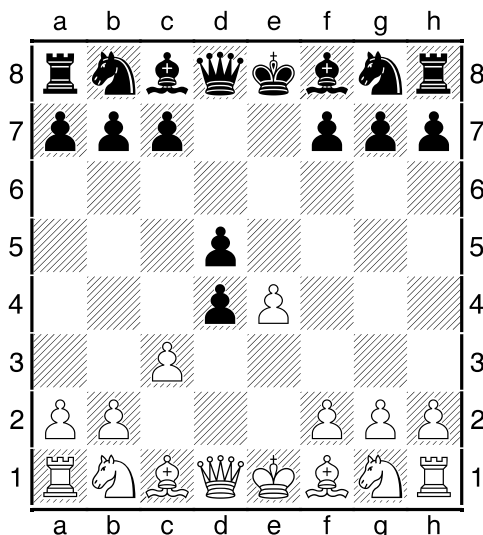
This might be quite hard for you to remember, and White has other moves as well, but there's a simpler option for Black which I'd also recommend for you.

Let's go back to the start of the game.

1. e4 e5
2. d4 exd4
3. c3

This time we're not going to take the pawn. Instead, we're going to play...

3... d5



This is a good move for Black in many gambit openings. This is a good time for d5 as the white pawn is on c3. So if your queen recaptures on d5 White won't have the immediate Nc3 driving your queen away.

If you play this move you're not trying to keep an extra pawn or two. Instead you just want to challenge White in the centre and get your minor pieces out as quickly as you can.

Let's journey down the main line of this variation for a few moves.

4. exd5 Qxd5
5. cxd4 Nc6

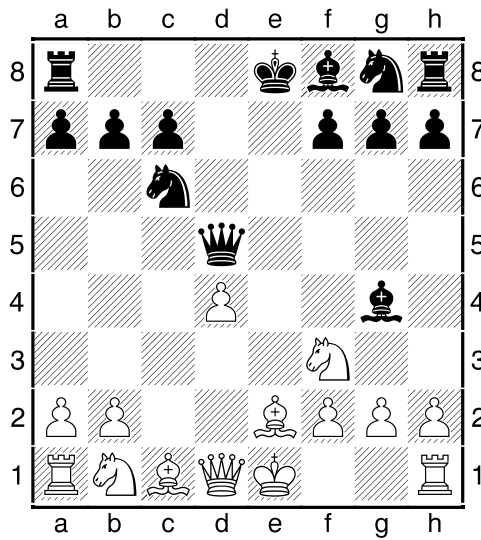
Black threatens the pawn on d4.

6. Nf3 Bg4

White defends the pawn and Black PINS the knight.

7. Be2

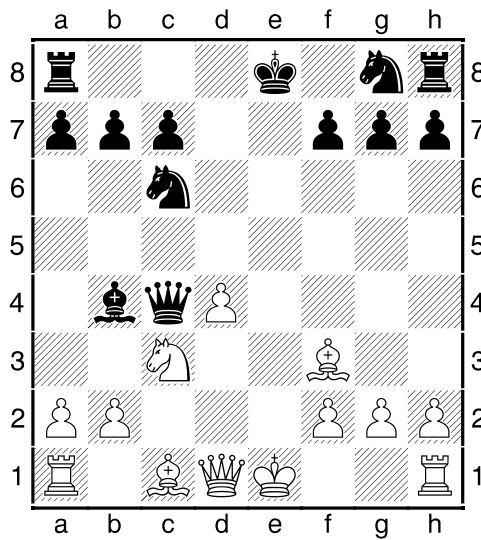
White UNPINS the knight and sets a trap. Now 7... Bxf3 8. Bxf3 Qxd4 would be a bad mistake. White would reply with 9. Bxc6+ and capture the black queen next move. So instead Black plays...



- 7... Bb4+
- 8. Nc3

The knight is PINNED so the black queen isn't in immediate danger.

- 8... Bxf3
- 9. Bxf3 Qc4



Again, 9... Qxd4 would lose the queen.

Qc4 is an excellent move, controlling the f1 square and therefore preventing o-o. Black might also want to play Nxd4 next move.

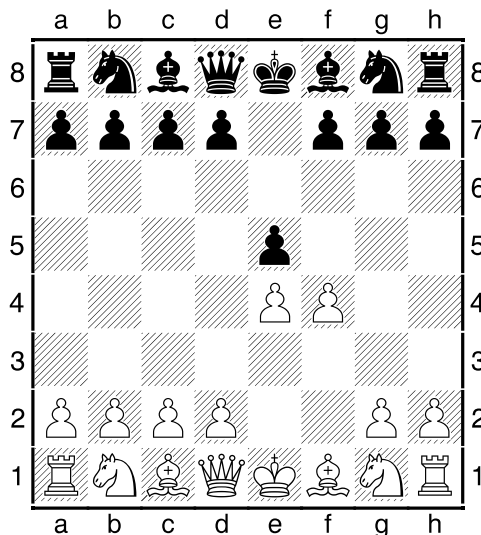
THE KING'S GAMBIT

This is another gambit you might like to try out in your games.

There are several good ways for Black to play against it, but if your opponent hasn't studied it and just plays random developing moves you'll probably end up with a very good position.

We start like this:

1. e4 e5
2. f4



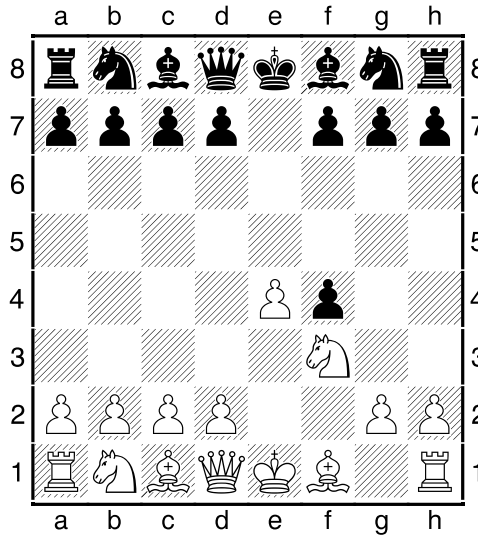
White's plan is to deflect the black pawn on e5 from the centre of the board, gain control of the centre and target the pawn on f7.

Let's start by seeing what might happen if Black takes the pawn, which, as it happens, is the most popular move.

- 2... exf4

Now you have to be aware that the King's Gambit is a bit dangerous because you're weakening your own king's defences by moving the f-pawn. If you play a move like 3. d4 Black can reply 3... Qh4+, which leaves your king in some trouble. For this reason, the most popular move for White now is:

3. Nf3



In this position Black has a wide choice of moves. If you're playing White there are several moves you might meet which are not very good.

For example 3... Bc5 is a poor move: you can just play 4. d4 and force the bishop to move again. 3... Nc6 is not very good either: you can play 4. d4 and control the centre. 3... Nf6 is a good move, which you can meet with 4. e5. Now if Black plays Ne4 or Nd5 you can drive it round the board. The only good fourth move for Black is 4... Nh5 to defend the f-pawn: but players who've been taught not to put their knight on the side won't find it.

You always have to have a plan in the opening. White's plan in the King's Gambit is to play Nf3, d4, Bc4, Bxf4, o-o, Nc3 in some order, then attack in the centre and along the f-file.

If you're Black you have two possible ways to disrupt White's plan. You can either try to defend your pawn on f4 or you can hit back at the centre by playing d5 at a suitable time. You'll remember how playing d5 was also a good way to fight against the Danish Gambit.

The most popular move for Black here is 3... g5, which might look rather strange if you haven't seen it before. Black's idea is to play g4 followed by Qh4+. White can either play 4. h4, or ignore the threat with Bc4 (the second most popular move here), d4 or Nc3

If you read *CHESS GAMES FOR HEROES* you'll be able to study and play through some games with these variations.

I wouldn't recommend 3... g5 for you at the moment, though, as it's not easy to play well. Instead I'd suggest you play:

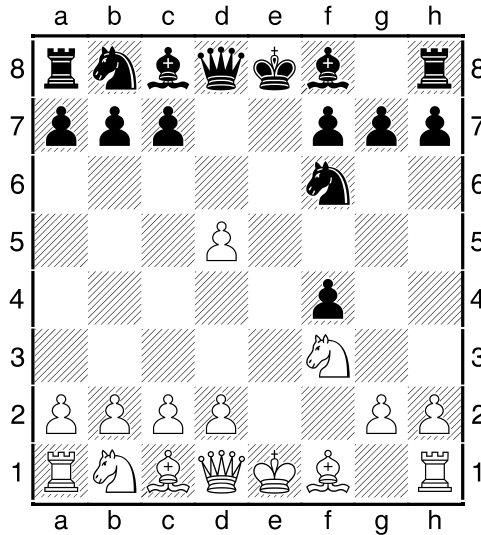
3... d5

White will usually reply with:

4. exd5

Now you're not going to take back with the queen because White will gain time with Nc3. Instead you're going to play:

4... Nf6

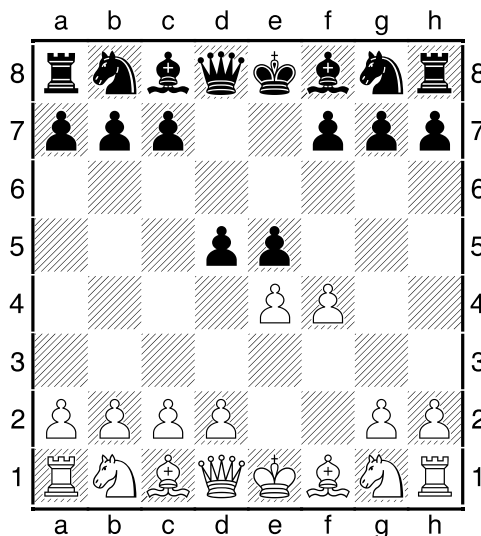


Your plan is to play $Nxd5$ next move if possible. You're going to meet either $5. c4$ or $5. Bb5+$ with $5... c6$. Your bishop on $f8$ will probably move to $d6$ to defend the $f4$ pawn. The plan is simple: get your pieces out as quickly as possible and castle quickly.

There are other good ways to play against the King's Gambit.

You can play a similar idea:

1. $e4 e5$
2. $f4 d5$



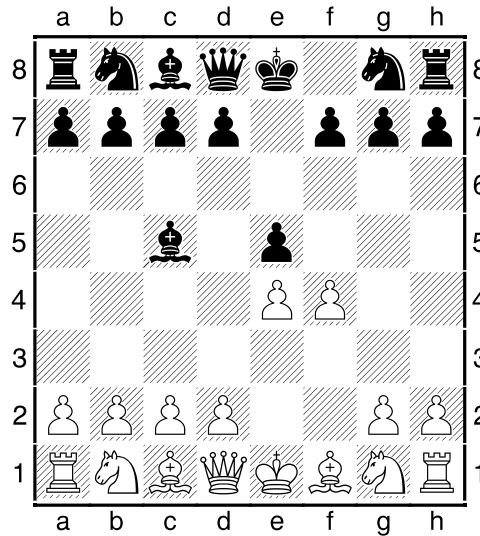
Now if White chooses the wrong pawn capture you'll gain a winning advantage.

After $3. fxe5$ you play $Qh4+$ followed by $Qe4+$.

Instead, White should play $3. exd5$. Then your simplest reply is to play $3... exf4$, which will probably lead to the same position as the variation we just looked at.

Another good second move for Black is:

1. e4 e5
2. f4 Bc5



Now White certainly shouldn't capture on e5. You know why by now. Instead, White usually plays 3. Nf3 with complicated play.

The KING'S GAMBIT is another great opening to play if you want to practise your attacking skills. If your opponents haven't read this book they probably won't know what to do.

If you're Black in this opening the simplest option is either to play 1. e4 e5 2. f4 exf4 3. Nf3 d5, or, perhaps even simpler, 1. e4 e5 2. f4 d5, when White might make the wrong pawn capture and lose at once.

THE VIENNA GAME AND THE BISHOP'S OPENING

There's another opening that you might like to try with White. It's called the VIENNA GAME and it starts like this:

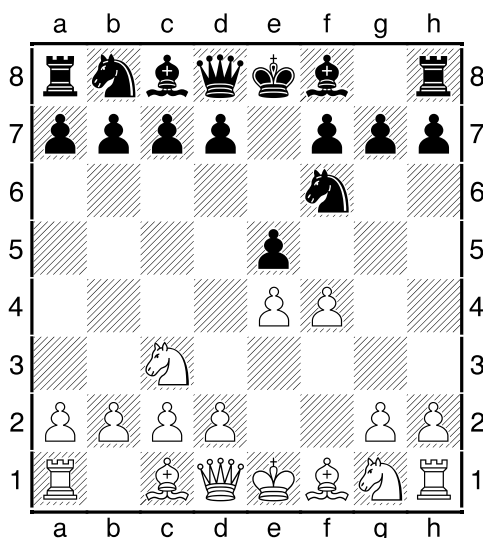
1. e4 e5
2. Nc3

Now Black will probably bring out a knight, most likely...

- 2... Nf6

You can, of course, head for a FOUR KNIGHTS GAME if you want to but instead I'd recommend playing...

3. f4



This is very much like the KING'S GAMBIT, but the development of the two knights makes a big difference.

Taking the pawn in the KING'S GAMBIT is good, but here if Black plays...

- 3... exf4

You reply:

4. e5

And the knight can only go back home to g8.

Black could also play 3... d6, when White plays Nf3 with more space and quick development.

The only really good move for Black in the above diagram – and this may not surprise you – is 3... d5. White usually replies 4. fxe5 Nxe4 5. Nf3 which is about equal.

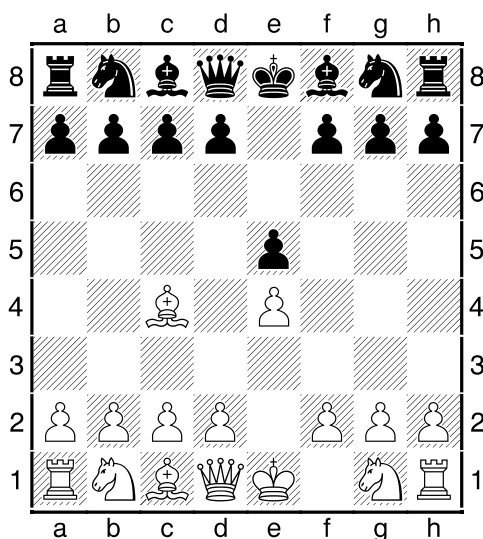
Going back to the start:

1. e4 e5
2. Nc3 Nc6

Now 3. f4 is a lot more complicated. You might prefer to play Bc4 or Nf3, although they're not so exciting.

The other popular second move for White is the BISHOP'S OPENING:

1. e4 e5
2. Bc4



This is often played by people hoping to get SCHOLAR'S MATE. It might also lead to a TWO KNIGHTS DEFENCE or FOUR KNIGHTS GAME.

The easiest and best reply is:

- 2... Nf6

Now if White plays 3. Qh5 you know what to do. If White plays 3. Qf3 there's not going to be a mate on f7 unless you move the knight again. If White plays 3. Nf3 you reach a position you've seen before: you play 3... Nxe4. If White plays 3. Nc3 or 3. d3 you can play 3... Bc5 or 3... Nc6, probably reaching another position you've seen before.

You've now learnt something about the most important openings starting 1. e4 e5.

There are a lot more openings you can play, which will lead to very different types of position from what you know. They're a lot harder to understand than what you've learnt so far.

I could show you the moves now, but a lot of them wouldn't make much sense to you. There's no point just learning moves off by heart. You have to understand them as well.

In chess we often talk about TACTICS and STRATEGY. Tactics is about winning material and getting CHECKMATE. The openings starting 1. e4 e5 are mainly TACTICAL openings.

STRATEGY is about forming plans, putting pieces on good squares, foiling your opponent's plans, taking good squares away from your opponent's pieces.

We're going to look at all the pieces in turn and learn how to use them at the start of the game.

The piece we're going to look at most might surprise you.

Way back in 1749, Philidor, the man who gave his name to the PHILIDOR DEFENCE, wrote this about pawns:

"... they are the soul of chess: it is they alone that determine the attack and the defence, and the winning or losing of the game depends entirely on their good or bad arrangement."

He was quite right, as well. You might think of pawns as little guys who aren't worth very much. Up to a point, that's correct, but, as you'll see, what you do with your pawns will make a big difference to how well your more powerful pieces perform.

You always have to think about your PAWN FORMATION to decide the best squares for your pieces and what your plan should be in the MIDDLE GAME.

Let's have a look at some ideas about how to use pawns in the opening. We'll then look at how to find good squares for your knights, bishops, rooks and queen.

CHAPTER 5

POSITIONAL IDEAS

INTRODUCTION TO POSITIONAL CHESS

Chess is about both TACTICS and STRATEGY. TACTICS, as you know by now, is about winning MATERIAL and getting CHECKMATE. It's also about not losing MATERIAL and not getting CHECKMATED. So – it's about ATTACK and DEFENCE.

STRATEGY is about forming plans over several moves: working out where you want your pieces and what you're going to do with your pawns.

We can also describe moves as being TACTICAL or POSITIONAL. A TACTICAL move is one that wins MATERIAL, creates a THREAT, defends against a THREAT or leads to CHECKMATE. A POSITIONAL move is one which puts a piece on a better square, or prevents your opponent putting a piece on a better square.

So: 1. e4 e5 sees both players making POSITIONAL moves. Now 2. Nf3 is an excellent move, both POSITIONALLY (putting a piece on a better square) and TACTICALLY (creating a THREAT). Instead, 2. Qh5 is also a good TACTICAL move, but not a very good POSITIONAL move as h5 is not a safe square for the queen.

A good square is one which is both STRONG and SAFE. So POSITIONAL moves are those which aim to find STRONG and SAFE squares for your pieces, or those which try to stop your opponent putting pieces on STRONG and SAFE squares.

At your level, players are usually quite good at using their bigger pieces, but not so good at using their pawns.

OPEN GAMES (those you've looked at already, starting 1. e4 e5) are more TACTICAL. When you start to play other openings you'll soon learn that STRATEGY and playing strong POSITIONAL moves are equally important.

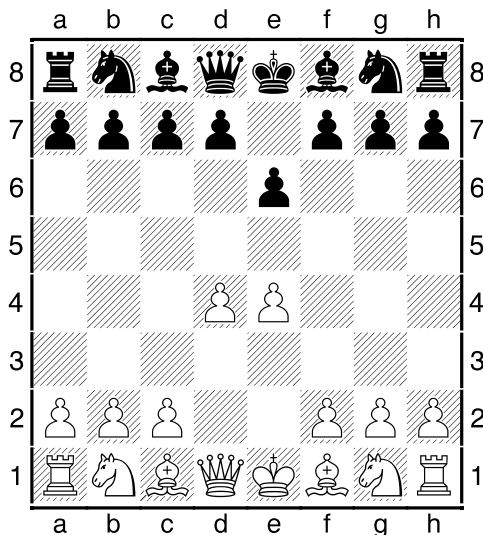
In this chapter we look at how to make the most of all your pieces at the start of the game.

We start by looking at PAWNS: about how best to use your pawns and how to create a strong PAWN FORMATION.

PAWN IDEA 1: THE PAWN CENTRE

If you're White you should aim to get two pawns together in the centre of the board. In openings starting with 1. e4 this will usually be the e-pawn and d-pawn. In other openings it will often be the d-pawn and c-pawn.

If you start 1. e4 and your opponent plays any move which lets you play 2. d4 safely, you should do so.



In this position Black replied to 1. e4 with 1... e6, the FRENCH DEFENCE. White, quite correctly, grabbed the centre by playing 2. d4.

Look at the board. If Black places a pawn on c5, d5, e5 or f5 at any point, you can, if you wish, capture it. If Black places a more valuable piece on one of those squares, you'll almost certainly want to take it off with your pawn.

Pawns are very useful for gaining space, especially in the opening. The more space you have, the more room your pieces will have to move round the board and create threats.

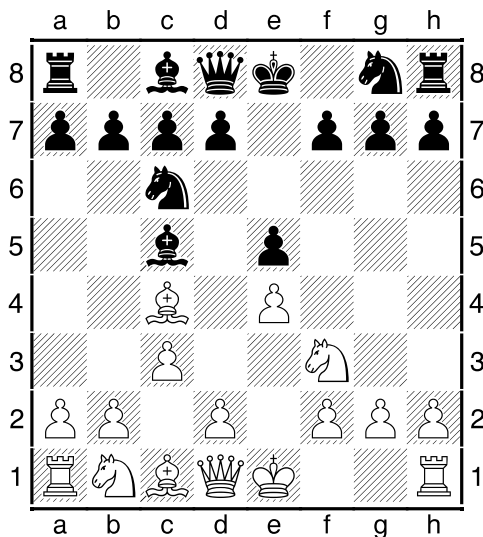
Likewise, if you're Black and your opponent chooses not to occupy the centre, you should do so yourself.

PAWN IDEA 2: THE c-PAWN

You've already seen some opening lines where White uses the c-pawn to prepare d4.

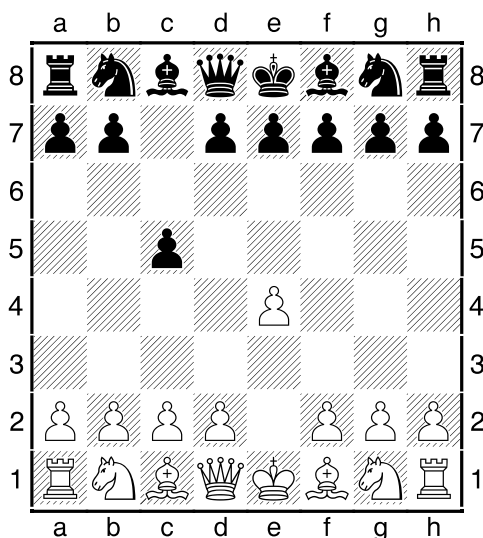
You'll remember:

1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Bc4 Bc5
4. c3

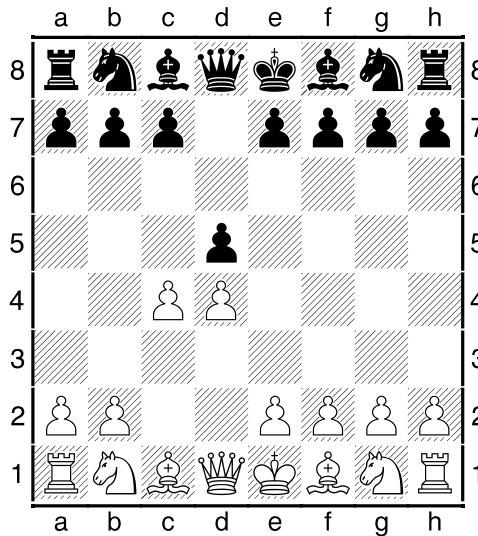


Here's the position again. White's planning to take control of the centre by playing d4.

There are many very popular openings in which one player moves the c-pawn two squares. You'll learn a lot more about them later.

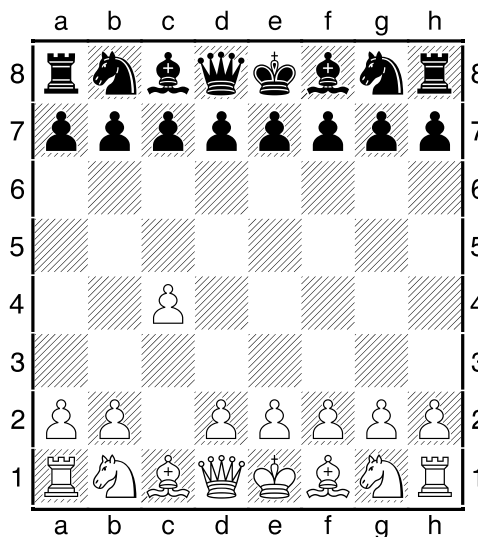


This is the SICILIAN DEFENCE, Black's most popular reply to 1. e4. It might look strange if you haven't seen it before. It's a really hard opening to understand, but you'll learn more about it very soon.



This is the QUEEN'S GAMBIT, a very popular opening starting 1. d4 d5 2. c4. It looks like a left-handed KING'S GAMBIT but the aims, as you'll find out, are very different.

Black can also play 1. d4 Nf6 to prevent 2. e4. Again, White will usually play 2. c4 here.



This is the ENGLISH OPENING, another popular first move for White. If Black plays 1... e5 it looks like a reversed SICILIAN DEFENCE.

As you'll see later, one important idea is to try to trade off your c-pawn for your opponent's d-pawn so that you will have a 2-1 advantage in the centre. Once you understand how you can use your pawns to help you fight for central control you'll find it a lot easier to know what's happening at the start of the game.

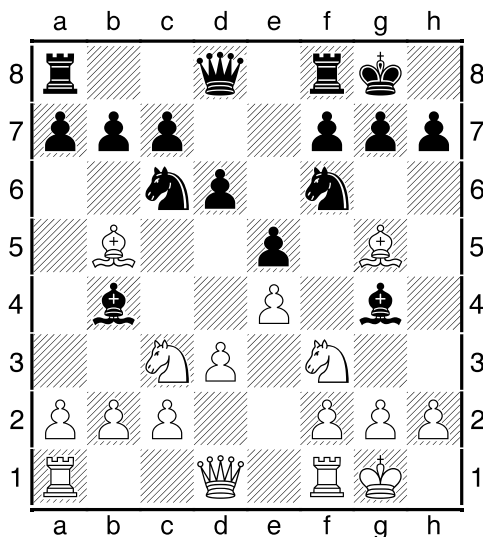
PAWN IDEA 3: THE PAWN BREAK

This is a really important idea which will let you open up the position and make more room for your pieces.

Suppose there are two pawns which can't move, for example a white pawn on e4 and a black pawn on e5. Now if White moves a pawn to d4 or f4, so that a pawn exchange cannot be avoided, this is a **PAWN BREAK**, sometimes also called a **PAWN LEVER**.

You've already seen the idea in several openings. For example the **SCOTCH GAME**, which, you'll remember, starts 1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. d4. Pawn exchanges open up the position so that the more powerful pieces have more room to move. This will usually lead to more exciting positions with more **TACTICS**. Of course you're also making more room for your opponent's pieces so you have to work out whose pieces will be better placed after the exchange.

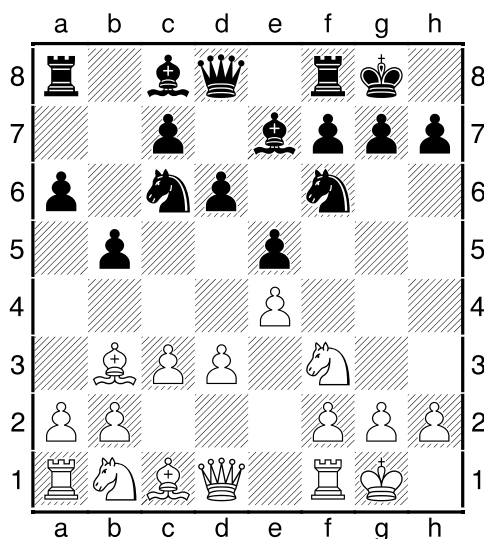
Now look at this position. You've seen positions like this before, and probably had very similar positions in your games.



There's nothing wrong with this position, or with any of the moves leading up to it. Beginners like to play like this because the moves are easy to learn and you avoid getting into trouble.

The problem is that, although the opening is easy enough, the middle game won't be so easy because it's very hard for either side to make a **PAWN BREAK** and open the position up.

Here's another position for you to look at.



Here, White has played c3 rather than Nc3. This is a much more interesting position. It will be easier for White to make the pawn break d4. But it will also be easier for Black to play d5. The position is more likely to be opened up and the game will be much more interesting as a result.

PAWN BREAKS are vital in positions where the two players have interlocking PAWN CHAINS (a PAWN CHAIN is a diagonal formation of pawns defending each other). In this sort of position, both players will be looking for PAWN BREAKS to open up the position in their favour. The general rule is to use a pawn to attack the base (the pawn furthest back) of a PAWN CHAIN. You'll see this in action later on when you learn about the FRENCH DEFENCE and the KING'S INDIAN DEFENCE.

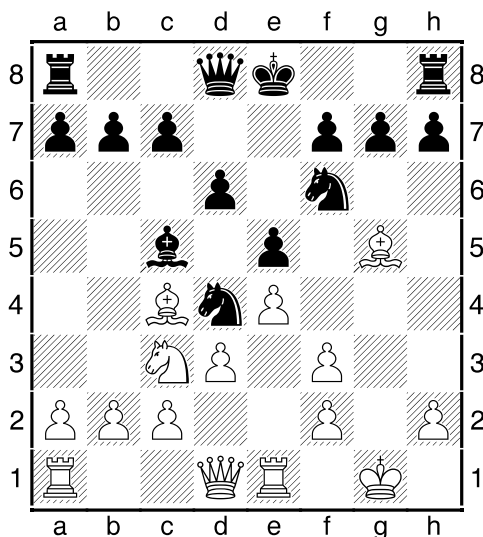
Make sure you know and understand the idea. PAWN BREAKS play an important part in every game: not just in the opening but in the middle game and ending as well.

PAWN IDEA 4: DOUBLED PAWNS

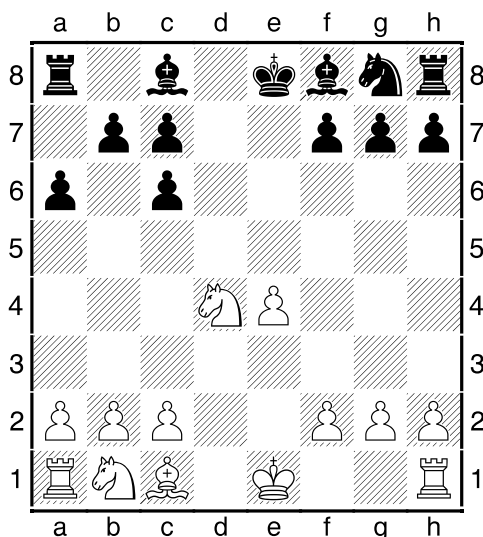
If two of your pawns are on the same file they're called **DOUBLED PAWNS**. Likewise, although it doesn't happen very often, three pawns of the same colour on the same file are **TRIPLED PAWNS**.

DOUBLED PAWNS are, more often than not, weak, but sometimes the opposite is true.

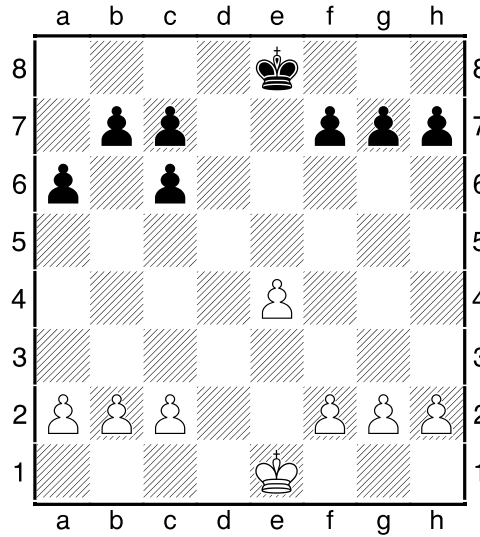
You've already seen positions like this:



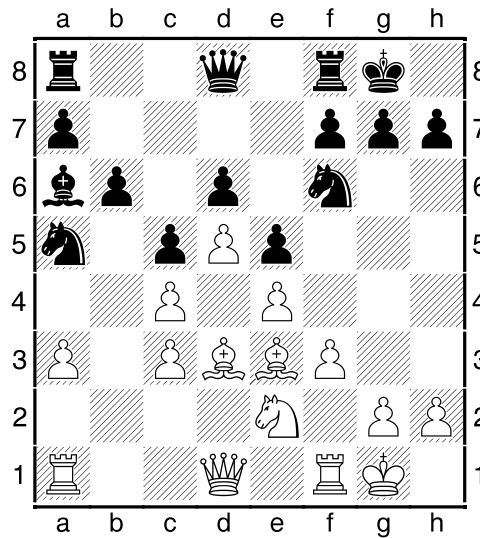
In this position White's **DOUBLED PAWNS** are weak. The reason is that the white king is not very well defended and open to attack.



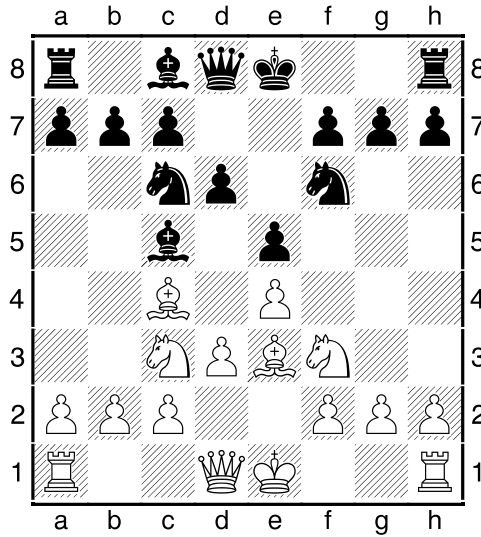
You've also seen something like this before. Here, Black's **DOUBLED PAWNS** aren't very weak at the moment. But suppose everything except the kings and pawns disappeared from the board, leaving this position.



In this position (this is really an endgame lesson: you'll learn a lot more about this in *CHESS ENDINGS FOR HEROES*) White is winning. The reason is that White can create a PASSED PAWN on the king-side but can, with care, stop Black creating a PASSED PAWN on the queen-side. So this is another reason why DOUBLED PAWNS can be a disadvantage.



This position comes from an opening with a strange name: the NIMZO-INDIAN DEFENCE. You can see here another disadvantage of doubled pawns: they can't defend each other. Here, Black's attacking the pawn on c4 with two pieces: White will have a problem defending it.



Now look at this position. You've seen the white bishop on g5 here, but e3 is also a good square for it. Now White will be quite happy for Black to play Bxe3. After fxe3 the pawn on e3 will stop a black piece landing on d4 or f4, and may also prepare a future PAWN BREAK with d4. When White plays o-o the rook on f1 will be well placed looking down the HALF-OPEN f-file. So Black may play Bb6 instead. Now if White trades bishops on b6 Black won't mind at all. After axb6 the pawn will be slightly nearer the centre, and the rook on a8 will suddenly find itself on a HALF-OPEN FILE.

So there are positions where DOUBLED PAWNS can be helpful, but more often they're not. As you gain more experience you'll be able to work out which is which.

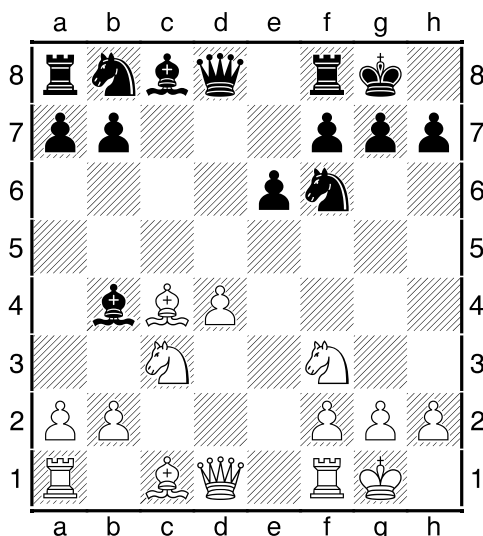
PAWN IDEA 5: ISOLATED PAWNS

An ISOLATED PAWN is a pawn with no friendly pawns on the files either side of it.

ISOLATED PAWNS are often weak because they can only be defended by pieces, not by pawns. The square in front of an ISOLATED PAWN can also be used as an OUTPOST (you'll learn more about this very soon) for enemy pieces, especially knights.

On the other hand, an ISOLATED PAWN in the centre of the board can also give you more space for your pieces, which in turn will give you more chances of setting up an attack.

Look at this position (Black to play).



This is a very common type of position which can arise from a lot of different openings.

The good news for White: more space and the chance to start an attack in the centre, perhaps by playing d5 at some point, or against the black king.

The good news for Black: the ISOLATED PAWN might become weak, especially in the ending. The black pieces might be able to use the d5 square.

It's an interesting position with chances for both sides. Black will be trying to trade pieces and reach the ending while White will be trying to keep the pieces on the board.

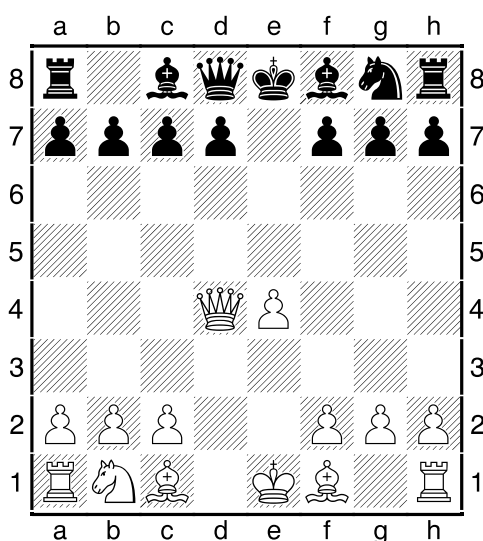
In general you should try to avoid ISOLATED PAWNS but in positions like this White's advantage in space is useful.

PAWN IDEA 6: BACKWARD PAWNS

A **BACKWARD PAWN** is a pawn which has no friendly pawns behind it to defend it.

A **BACKWARD PAWN** on a **HALF-OPEN FILE** (a file with only pawns of one colour) is usually a disadvantage, for two reasons. It can be attacked by enemy pieces and cannot be defended by pawns. The square in front of the pawn can also be used by enemy pieces, particularly knights. You'll learn more about this very soon.

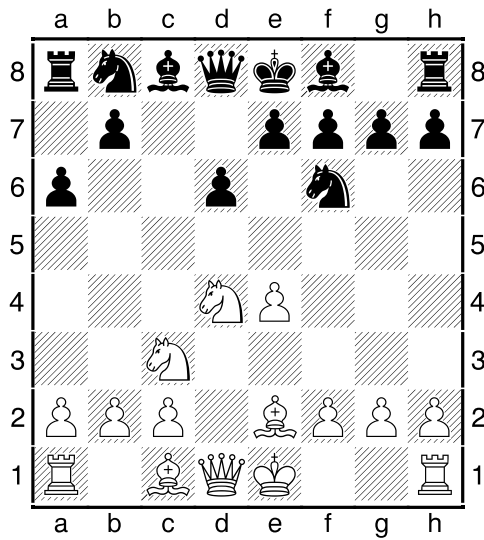
Very often there's a battle for the square in front of the pawn. The player with the **BACKWARD PAWN** is trying to control this square and advance the pawn. The opponent of the player with the **BACKWARD PAWN** is trying to use this square as a springboard.



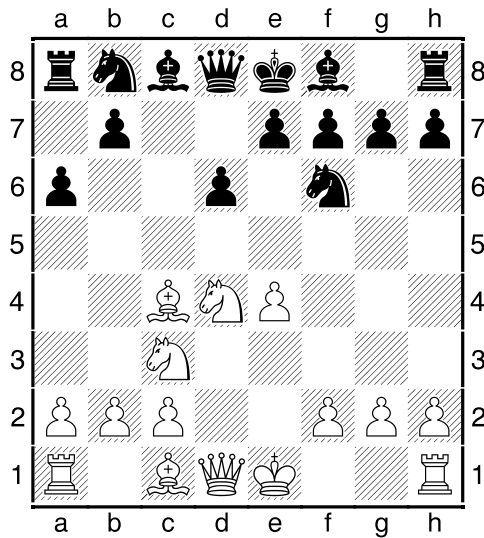
Look at this position from the **SCOTCH GAME**.

It's Black's move. You might be tempted to play c5 to drive the white queen away, but it wouldn't be a very good move. Black will be left with a **BACKWARD PAWN** on the d-file and White will have an **OUTPOST** on d5. If you're White you'll be able to reach a good position by playing moves which help you control the d5 square.

An **OUTPOST** (or **SUPPORT POINT**) is a square, usually in enemy territory, which is defended by a friendly pawn and cannot be attacked by an enemy pawn.



In this position from the SICILIAN DEFENCE it's Black's move. Here, e5 is a popular move for Black (although there are good alternatives). With best play Black will be able to fight for control of the d5 square and get an equal position.



In this position, however, e5 is not such a good move because White has more control over the d5 square. Again, you'll learn more about this later.

KNIGHT IDEA 1: KNIGHTS IN THE CENTRE

What you're doing with our knights, bishops, rooks and queen is trying to find **STRONG** and **SAFE SQUARES**.

What makes a strong square?

A strong square might be a square from which your piece can move to lots of other squares. The more squares you control the harder it will be for your opponent's pieces to find strong and safe squares, and the easier it will be for your opponent to make tactical errors.

A strong square might also be a square where your piece creates a **THREAT** or an **ATTACK**.

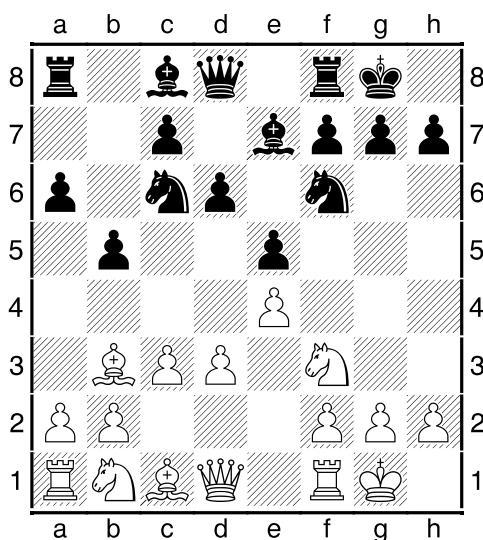
Put a knight in the corner of an empty board. How many squares can it move to? Only two. Now put the knight on one of the centre squares. How many square now? That's right: eight.

So your knights are usually going to head towards the centre of the board. We often say that **A KNIGHT ON THE RIM IS DIM**.

Your king's knight will almost always go to f3/f6 in the opening. On f3 the knight is controlling two important centre squares: d4 and e5. It will also be an important defender as you're usually going to castle on the king side.

Your queen's knight will sometimes go to c3/c6, but in many openings it will take a different route, often via d2/d7. One reason for this is that, as you've seen, in many openings your c-pawn will play an important part in the battle for the centre. You don't want to block it if you can help it.

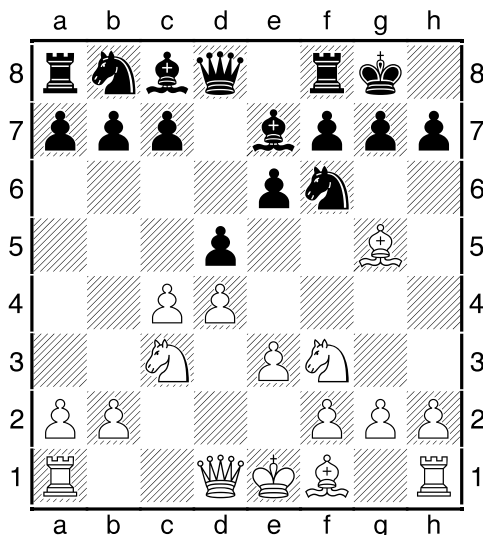
Take another look at a position you saw a few pages ago.



If you're White here, what are you going to do with your queen's knight? What you do with knights is think first about where you'd like them, and then work out how you can get there. Here you should be looking at the d5 and f5 squares.

You might play Re1, which is a useful move anyway, and then play your knight from b1 to d2 and then f1. From f1 it might move to e3, from where it can go either to d5 or f5. Or it might move to g3, where it defends e4, which might help you play d4, as well as being able to jump into the f5 square.

Another possible knight route would be from b1 to a3, then to c2, and then to e3, followed by d5 or f5.



Here's another example. In this position from the QUEEN'S GAMBIT, with Black to move, it's much better to move the knight from b8 to d7 rather than to c6. You really don't want to block your c-pawn here.

So remember this: your king's knight will usually go to f3/f6. Your queen's knight will sometimes go to c3/c6 but sometimes also to d2/d7. It all depends on what you want to do with your c-pawn.

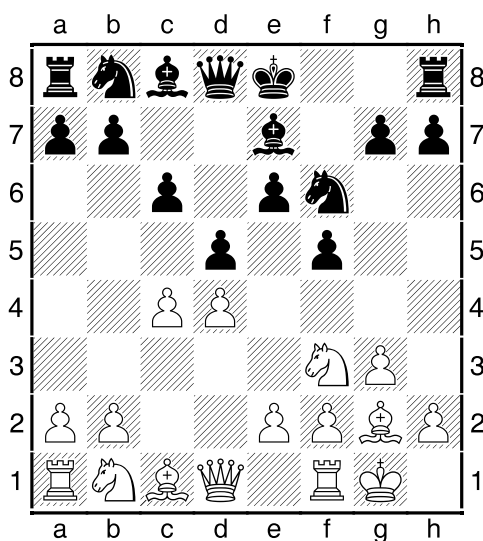
KNIGHT IDEA 2: OUTPOSTS

You learnt about OUTPOSTS (SUPPORT POINTS) a few pages back when we talked about BACKWARD PAWNS.

If there's one thing knights like better than anything else in the world (with the possible exception of FORKS and SMOTHERED MATES) it's OUTPOSTS.

We looked at a couple of positions where Black had a BACKWARD PAWN on d6. If you're White in this sort of position your knights should be heading towards the d5 square. If you can establish a knight on an OUTPOST and your opponent can't trade it off you'll have a strong position.

Here's another type of position.



If you're White in this position you want to establish a knight on the e5 square. You might think about a plan involving Nd2, Ne5 and possibly then Ndf3. Black's pawn formation here, the STONEWALL, has its advantages, but also its disadvantages. If you can get a knight to e5 safely you'll be giving Black a few problems.

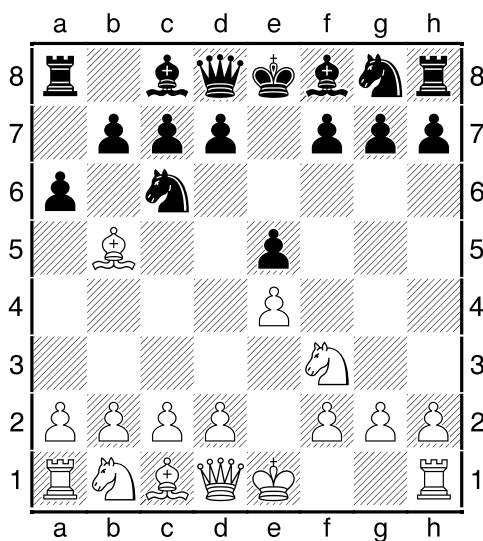
KNIGHT IDEA 3: KNIGHTS AND BISHOPS

One reason why chess is such an interesting game is that you have two types of piece of about equal value but very different abilities: knights and bishops.

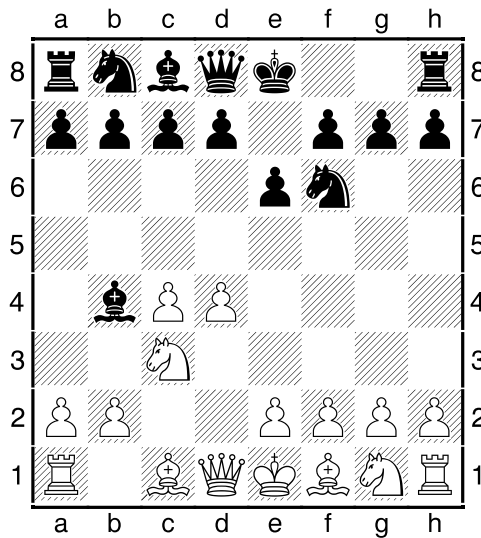
Sometimes a knight is better than a bishop: sometimes it's the other way round. It really depends where they are in relation to the pawns.

As a general rule, bishops like open positions where pawns have been exchanged so they will be able to find long and strong open diagonals. Knights prefer closed positions where they can jump in and out while the bishops are hampered by their pawns.

On average, though, bishops are very slightly better than knights. Unless you have a very good reason (for example giving your opponent a weaker pawn formation or gaining time) you should avoid trading your bishops for enemy knights.

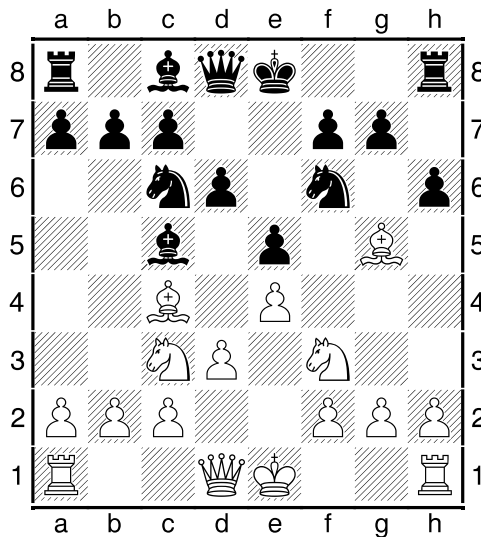


You've seen this position before. You can, if you like, play Bxc6 because it gives Black **DOUBLED PAWNS** but most players prefer to avoid the trade by playing Ba4.



This is the position after Black's 3rd move in the NIMZO-INDIAN DEFENCE.

White sometimes plays a3 here, when Black will trade bishop for knight to gain time and double White's c-pawns. But if White plays another move instead Black will probably play a developing move, not trading until White puts the question to the bishop.



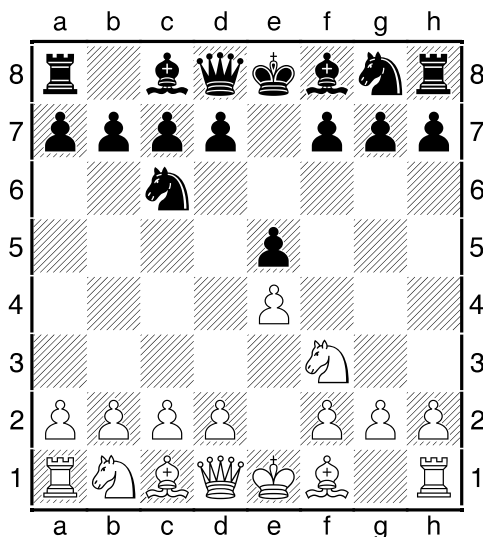
Here's another position you've seen before. Here White will often play Bxf6 because after Qxf6, Nd5 will gain time by forcing the queen back to d8 (to defend c7) and allow c3 followed by d4.

When you're playing the opening, then, think of bishops as a bit better than knights. Don't trade off a bishop for an enemy knight unless you have a good reason. Trading off your knights for enemy bishops, though, is often a good idea.

BISHOP IDEA 1: FINDING THE BEST SQUARE

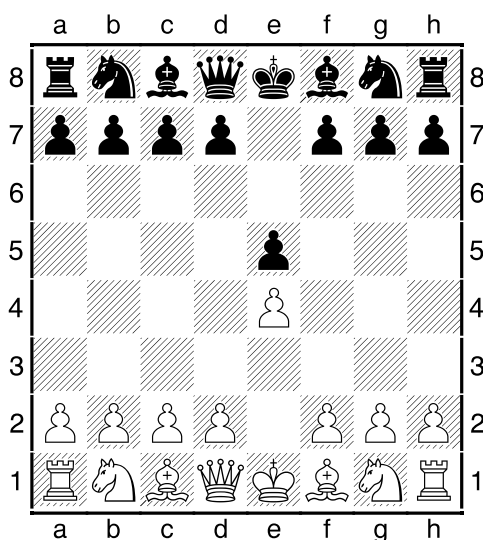
It's very easy to think 'I like putting my bishop on c4' and therefore playing Bc4 whatever your opponent does. This isn't the best way to think about bishops, though. If you want to find the best square for your bishop you have to look at the whole board, and, most of all, look at the pawns.

Let's look at a few positions.



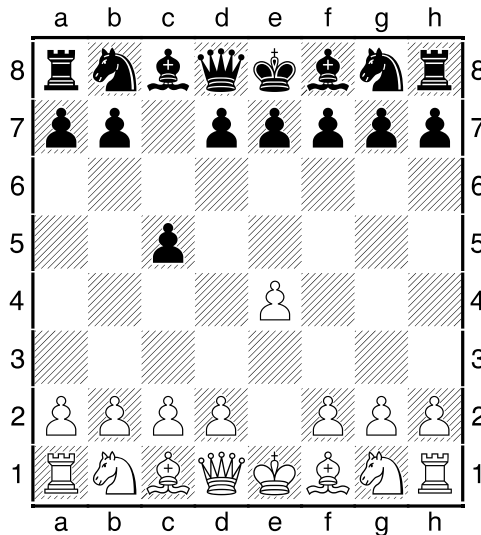
You already know that, in this position, c4 and b5 are both excellent squares for your bishop. Bc4 is on an open diagonal targeting f7. Bb5 carries a potential (but not immediate) threat of Bxc6 followed by Nxe5.

Going back a move:



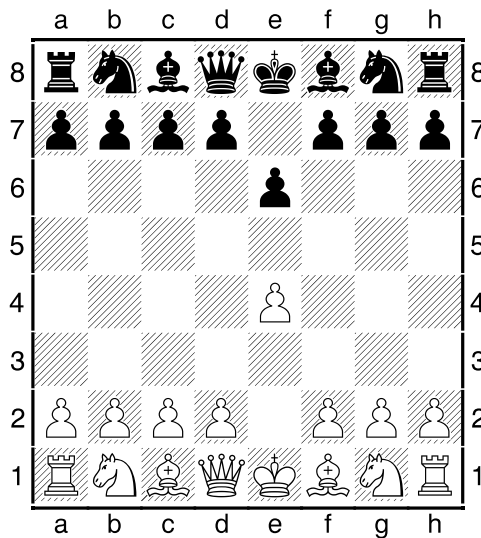
In this position, the only bishop move that makes sense is Bc4. There's no point in playing Bb5 without a black knight on c6. But there's no real reason why you shouldn't play Nf3 first.

Now look at the SICILIAN DEFENCE:



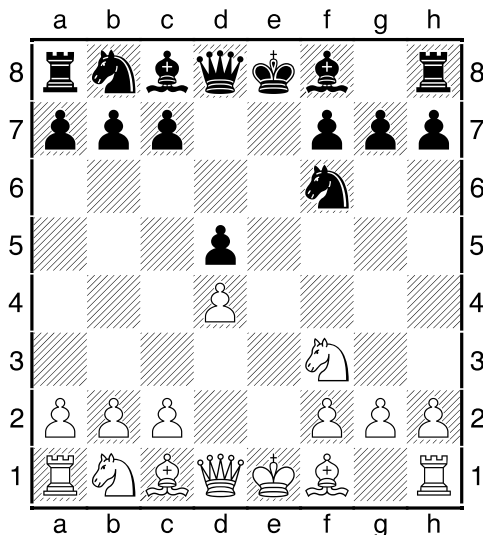
In this position there's no reason at all to move your bishop yet. Bc4 is not a bad move but has less point than after 1. e4 e5 because Black can play e6 to block the bishop off. If you play 2. Bb5 here your bishop will get TRAPPED if you're not careful: 2... a6 3. Ba4 b5 4. Bb3 c4.

Here's the FRENCH DEFENCE



This time Bc4 is a poor move: Black can reply with d5 and force the bishop to move again.

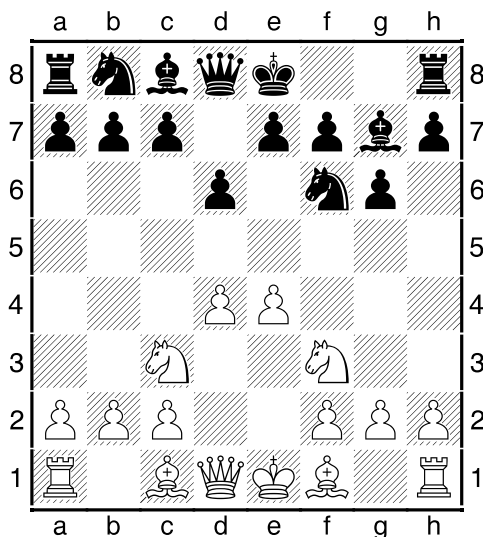
A few moves later, and you might reach this position:



Now, with the e-file open, it's time to bring your bishop out and castle quickly. Where should you move the bishop?

Again, there's little point in playing Bb5+. The best bishop move here is clearly Bd3, placing it on an open diagonal, pointing at Black's king side. In positions with pawns on d4 and d5 the best square for the king's bishop is often d3/d6.

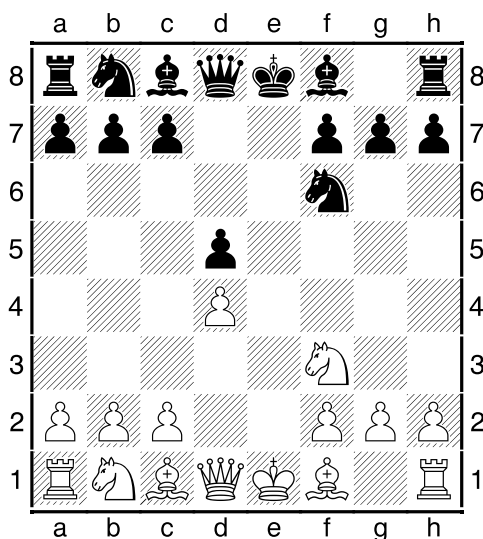
If you already control the centre it's sometimes best to develop your bishops behind the pawns. Look at this position:



This is from a difficult opening called the PIRC DEFENCE. If you want to move your king's bishop here, most strong players would prefer Be2. One reason is that you don't want your knight to be PINNED if Black plays Bg4.

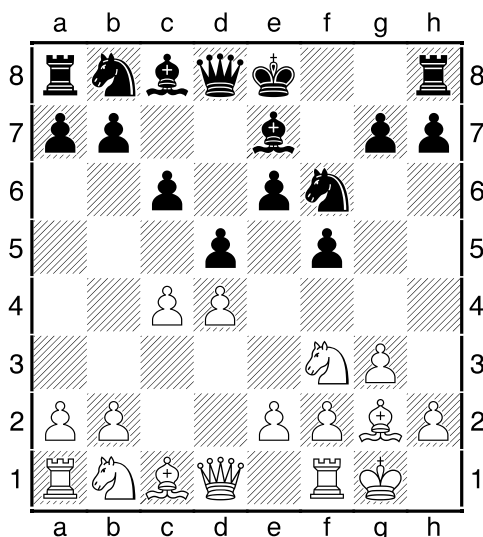
BISHOP IDEA 2: GOOD AND BAD BISHOPS

As you gain more experience you'll realise that 3 points is only an average for knights and bishops. They can be more or less valuable, depending on where they are in relation to the pawns.



Go back to this position again. Here the two king's bishops are slightly stronger than the two queen's bishops. Why? Because White has a central pawn stuck on a black square while Black has a central pawn stuck on a white square. So the queen's bishops will find it harder to get across the board than the king's bishops. If you're White you might want to trade off the dark squared bishops, while if you're Black you might want to trade off the light squared bishops.

Now look at another position you've seen before.



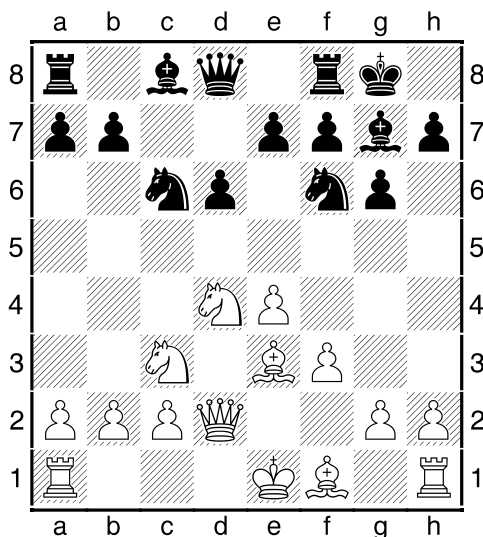
Here, Black's queen's bishop is not a lot of use at the moment because it's stuck behind the pawns. We call a bishop stuck behind friendly pawns of the same colour a **BAD BISHOP**, while a bishop with lots of squares to move to is a **GOOD BISHOP**.

If you only have one bishop you should usually try to keep your pawns on squares of the other colour so that your bishop has more room to move.

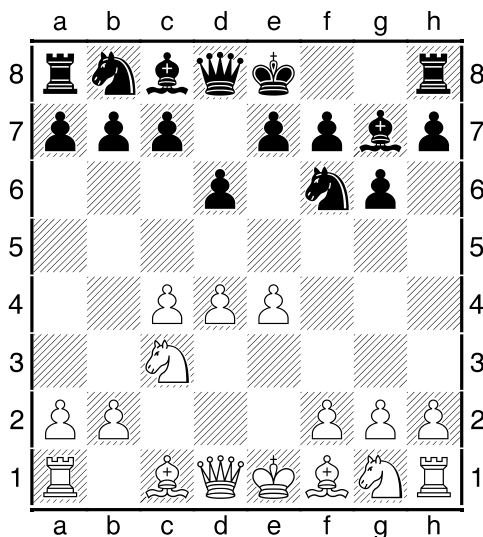
BISHOP IDEA 3: THE FIANCHETTO

Look at the last diagram again. You'll see that White has played g3 and Bg2. This type of bishop development is called a FIANCHETTO (Italian for 'little flank') and happens in many openings.

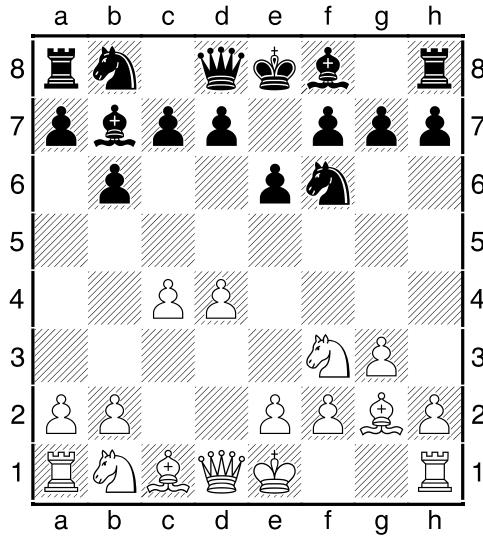
There are several reasons for playing a FIANCHETTO. One is that it provides an extra defender for your king. The long diagonal might also get opened up, when the bishop will become very strong. Let's look at a few more openings where one player chooses a FIANCHETTO.



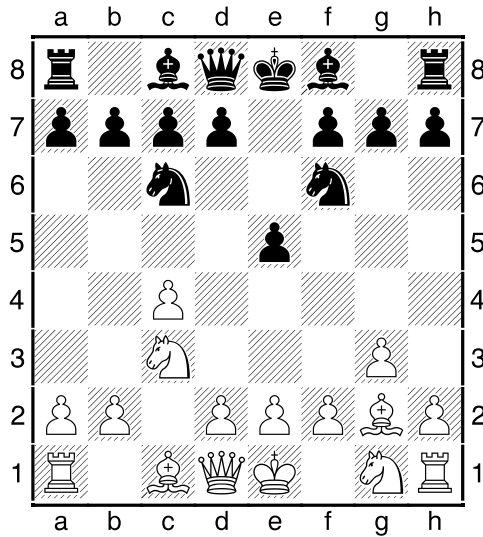
Here's a position from the DRAGON VARIATION of the SICILIAN DEFENCE. Black's king's bishop is FIANCHETTOED. White plans to play Bh6 at some point (but not yet: do you see why?) to try to trade it off.



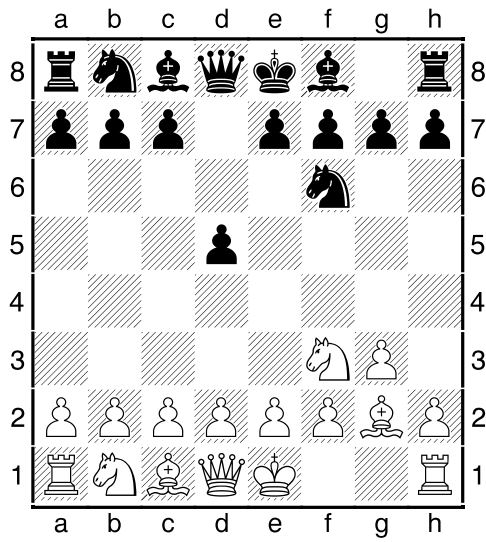
This is the KING'S INDIAN DEFENCE. Black plans to attack the white pawn centre by playing either e5 or c5 at some point.



Here's a position from the QUEEN'S INDIAN DEFENCE. Black is aiming to control the e4 square. In this variation White has replied by playing a FIANCHETTO of the king's bishop.



In the ENGLISH OPENING White often plays a FIANCHETTO: the plan is to control the d5 square.



Likewise, in the RÉTI OPENING White often plays a FIANCHETTO, planning to attack the centre later with either c4 or e4.

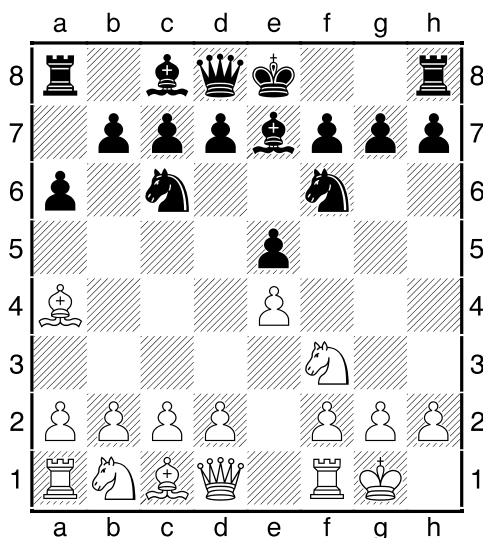
ROOK IDEAS

Your rooks are usually the last pieces to move at the start of the game. There's one important exception, though, which involves the king as well as the rook.

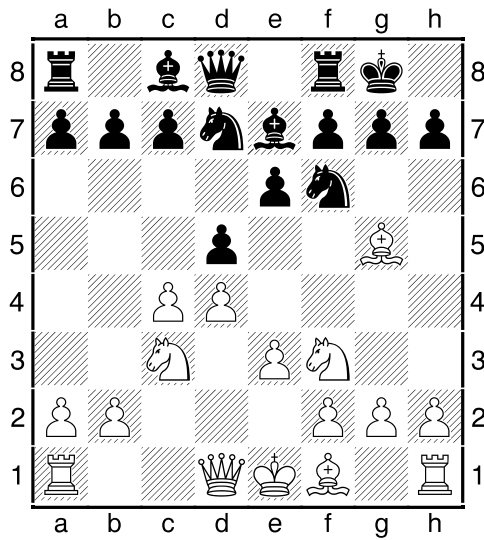
You should usually castle quickly, usually on the king-side where the king will be safer nearer the corner. The one thing you have to remember is to be careful you're not allowing the PIN ATTACK by castling too soon.

What rooks like best is OPEN FILES (where there are no pawns) and HALF-OPEN FILES (where you have no pawns) so you're probably going to wait until some pawns have been traded off before deciding where you want your rooks.

There are some openings, though, where you'll use your rooks early on.



You've seen this position before. White wants to defend the e-pawn, and also wants to play c3 followed by d4 at some point fairly soon. The queen is happy on d1 so the most popular move here is Re1. White also has the idea of playing Nb1-d2-f1-g3 or e3, a manoeuvre you've seen before, so wants to vacate the f1 square. Having said that, d3 followed by c3 is also very popular at the moment, and there's nothing much wrong with either Nc3 or Qe2.



In this position from the QUEEN'S GAMBIT White's most popular move is Rc1. White sees that at some point the c4 and d5 pawns will be traded off leaving a HALF-OPEN c-file. You could play Bd3 at once but you might prefer to wait a move: if Black takes on c4 before you move the bishop you'll gain time

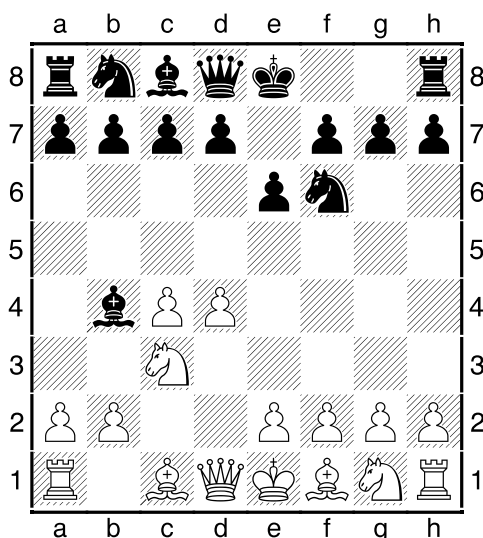
QUEEN IDEAS

You've already learnt a lot about QUEEN FORKS in the opening and seen that early queen moves can sometimes be very powerful.

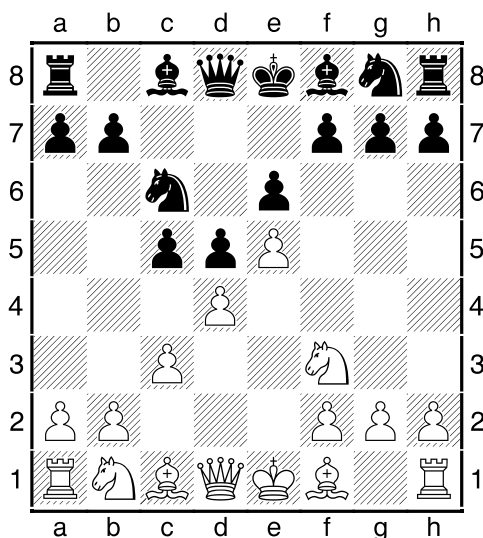
But usually you'll keep the queen behind early on because you don't want her to be chased round the board by enemy bishops, knights and pawns.

Sometimes she'll move up one square, to c2/c7, d2/d7 or e2/e7.

Let's look at a couple of positions where the queen might make an early move.



Here's the NIMZO-INDIAN DEFENCE again. There are lots of possible moves for White, but if you don't want your opponent to give you DOUBLED PAWNS then Qc2 is a good – and very popular – move.



In this position from the FRENCH DEFENCE Black's most popular move is Qb6. This move serves two purposes: it attacks d4 again as well as attacking the pawn on b2. You can see from these openings how moving the c-pawn can help your queen.

CHAPTER 6

SEMI-OPEN GAMES

Now you have some idea about what's happening in the opening, about how to use your pawns and where to put your pieces, it's time to learn some more openings.

We're going to start by looking at other moves Black might play in reply to 1. e4. Openings where White plays 1. e4 and Black replies with something other than 1... e5 are known as SEMI-OPEN GAMES.

Let's look at some statistics from my database. You've seen the figures before but now we'll add some names.

The SICILIAN DEFENCE, 1... c5 is played in 40% of games.

1... e5 is played in 24½% of games.

The FRENCH DEFENCE, 1... e6, is played in 13% of games.

The CARO-KANN DEFENCE, 1... c6, is played in 7% of games.

The PIRC DEFENCE, 1... d6, is played in 4½% of games.

The SCANDINAVIAN DEFENCE, 1... d5, is played in 4% of games.

The MODERN DEFENCE, 1... g6, is played in 3% of games.

The ALEKHINE DEFENCE, 1... Nf6, is played in 2½% of games.

As it happens, the SICILIAN DEFENCE scores best for Black, while 1... e5 scores best for White. This doesn't mean 1... e5 is bad, though. The chess computer program AlphaZero seems to think it's actually Black's best move. The top grandmasters usually play the SICILIAN DEFENCE if they're prepared to take risks trying to win or 1... e5 if they're happy to play safe and draw.

As you get stronger and meet stronger opponents you're more likely to meet players who play these openings and know them well. So you have to know what to do if you meet them.

You should also try playing some of them yourself. If you always play the same openings you won't make much progress. At this stage of your chess career it's good to try out lots of different openings. Later on you might decide you want to play your favourite opening all the time, or you might want to switch between several different openings.

As the SICILIAN DEFENCE is quite hard to understand we'll start with three related defences which involve using the move d5 to attack the white pawn on e4.

THE FRENCH DEFENCE

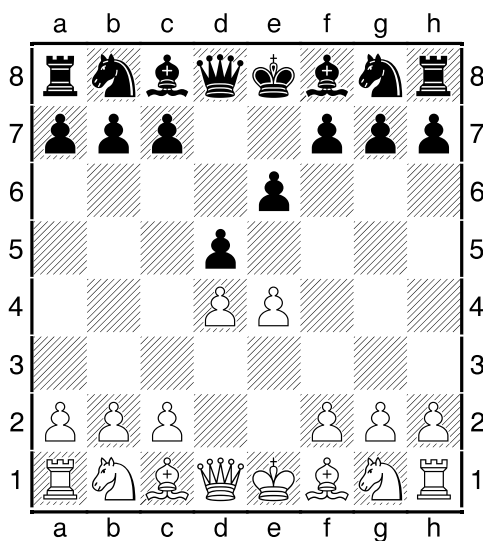
In these three openings, the FRENCH DEFENCE, the CARO-KANN DEFENCE and the SCANDINAVIAN DEFENCE, White will have a choice of capturing, defending or advancing when Black plays d5. If White chooses to defend, Black will in turn have to decide whether or not to play dxe4.

The FRENCH DEFENCE starts with the moves:

1. e4 e6

As you already know, if you play 1. e4 and your opponent plays any move which lets you play 2. d4 safely, you should do so. There's no real reason to do anything else. You should know by now how strong two centre pawns can be.

2. d4 d5



This is the starting position for the FRENCH DEFENCE. If White plays e5 at some point Black will have less space and a BAD BISHOP on c8, but two potential PAWN BREAKS: c5 and f6. The game will be a battle for control of the central dark squares.

White usually prefers to defend here. Let's look at the stats.

3. Nc3 is played in 41% of games from this position.

3. Nd2 (the TARRASCH VARIATION, named after a German who was one of the world's leading players in the late 19th and early 20th centuries) is played in 28% of games.

3. e5 (the ADVANCE VARIATION) is played in 17% of games.

3. exd5 (the EXCHANGE VARIATION) is played in 14% of games.

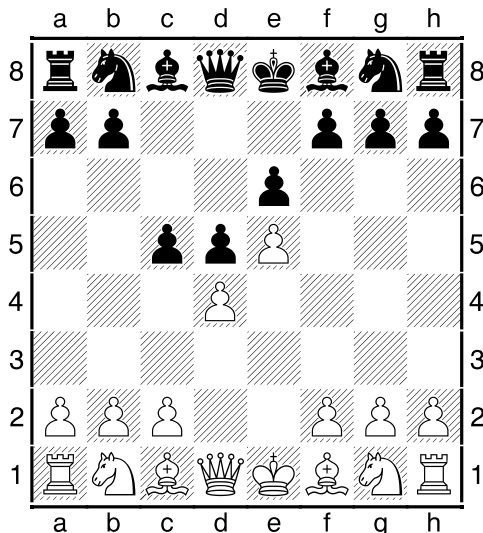
The first two moves also score better, although when you start playing this opening you're more likely to meet 3. e5 or exd5.

You might think 3. Nd2 looks strange as it blocks in the queen and bishop. This is true, and Black can try to take advantage of this, but on the other hand it doesn't block the c-pawn. We've already seen how important the c-pawn is in many openings.

The EXCHANGE VARIATION is solid but leads to a symmetrical position. You'll learn a lot more from playing other lines.

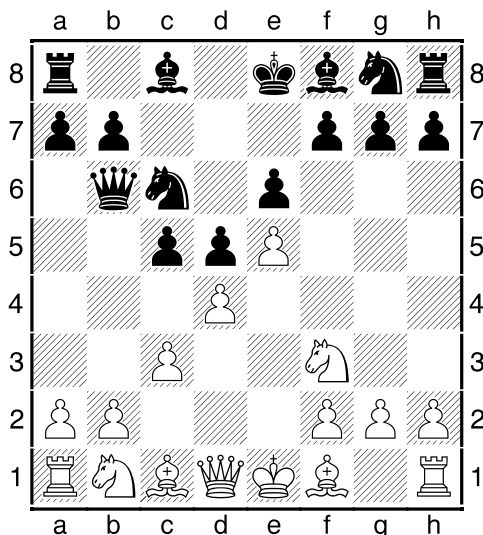
Let's play a few moves of the ADVANCE VARIATION.

1. e4 e6
2. d4 d5
3. e5 c5



This is the key move in the FRENCH DEFENCE. When White plays e5 Black should reply with c5 as soon as it's safe to do so. White sets up a PAWN CHAIN which Black will attack with the PAWN BREAKS c5 and, perhaps later, f6. White wants to keep his pawn on d4, and Black wants to attack it again, so the game often continues:

4. c3 Nc6
5. Nf3 Qb6



In this position White can play Be2, Bd3 (if Black captures three times on d4 you'll play Bb5+ with a DISCOVERED ATTACK on the queen) or a3, hoping to play b4. Play some games from this position and see how you get on.

Now we'll move on to White's most popular 3rd move: Nc3.

Now Black has a choice: you can put more pressure on White's centre or trade on e4.

3... Bb4 (the WINAWER VARIATION, named after a 19th century Polish player) is played in 47½% of game from this position.

3... Nf6 is played in 38% of games.

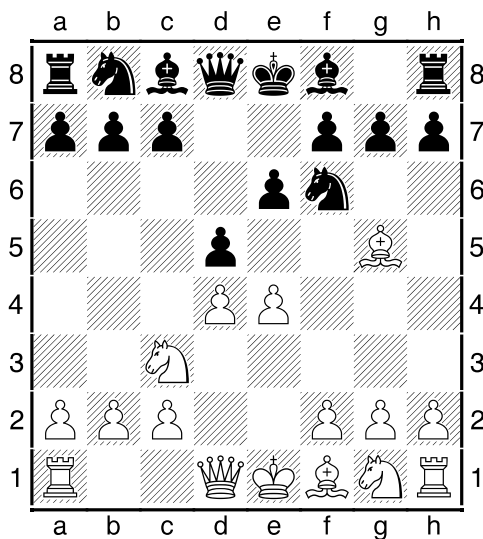
3... dxe4 (the RUBINSTEIN VARIATION, named after a Polish player who was one of the strongest in the world in the early 20th century) is played in 11% of games.

The first two moves are both very interesting so we'll show you a few variations.

This is the CLASSICAL VARIATION.

1. e4 e6
2. d4 d5
3. Nc3 Nf6
4. Bg5

White decides to PIN the black knight on f6.



4... Be7

Black has an interesting alternative here: 4... Bb4, which is the McCUTCHEON VARIATION, named after a 19th century American player. You have to see that 5. e5 doesn't quite win a piece as Black can reply with 5... h6. Black can also capture on e4 in this position: the BURN VARIATION, named after a strong English player from the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

5. e5 Nfd7
6. Bxe7 Qxe7

Trading off Black's stronger bishop for White's less strong bishop.

7. f4

Securing the centre and gaining space on the king-side. As the centre is closed White's not in so much of a hurry to develop.

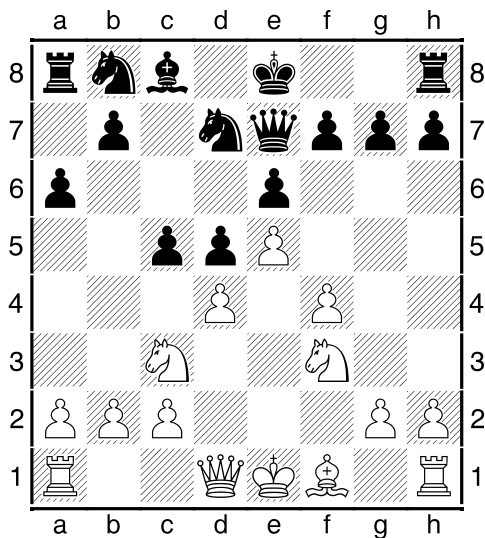
Now Black would like to play c5 but White could play Nb5 in reply, threatening a FORK which would also TRAP the rook on a8 as well as looking at the very strong OUTPOST on d6.

So instead Black usually plays:

7... a6

8. Nf3 c5

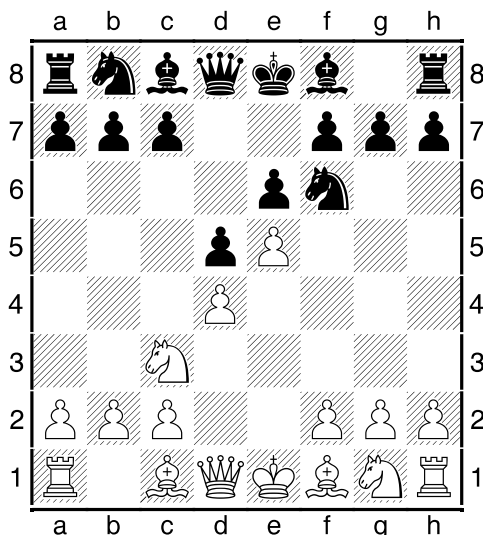
Finally Black gets to play this important PAWN BREAK.



White has another option on move 4: the STEINITZ VARIATION, named after the first official world champion. Again we'll look at the most popular moves for both sides.

1. e4 e6
2. d4 d5
3. Nc3 Nf6
4. e5

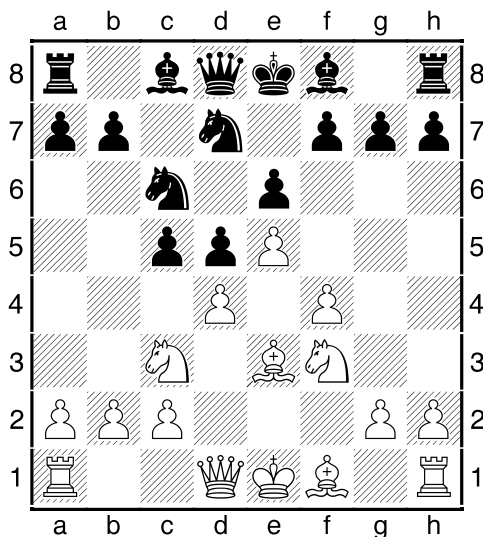
If your opponent has less space than you it's usually a good idea to avoid trading pieces (and if your opponent has more space than you it's likewise usually good to trade pieces). So in this line White prefers not to trade the dark squared bishops.



- 4... Nfd7
5. f4

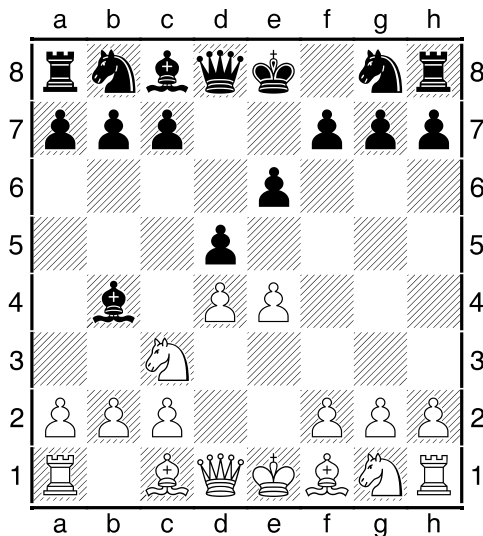
Again this important move gains space. White might also be able to play a PAWN BREAK with f5 at some point. Black replies with an immediate PAWN BREAK.

- 5... c5
6. Nf3 Nc6
7. Be3



Next, the very complicated WINAWER VARIATION.

1. e4 e6
2. d4 d5
3. Nc3 Bb4

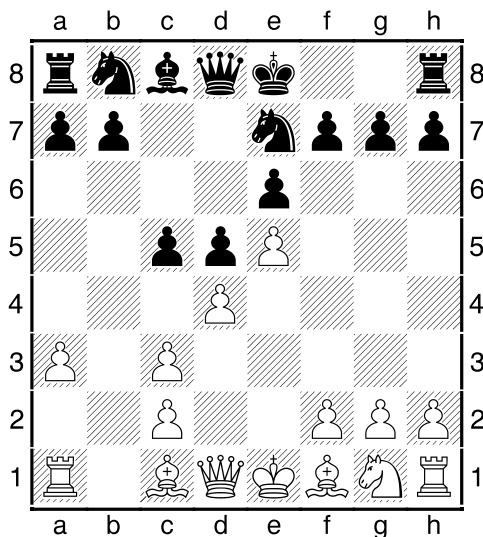


Black PINS the white knight, putting more pressure on the e4 pawn. So White usually decides to push here.

4. e5 c5

Black plays his PAWN BREAK and now White usually asks the black bishop a question.

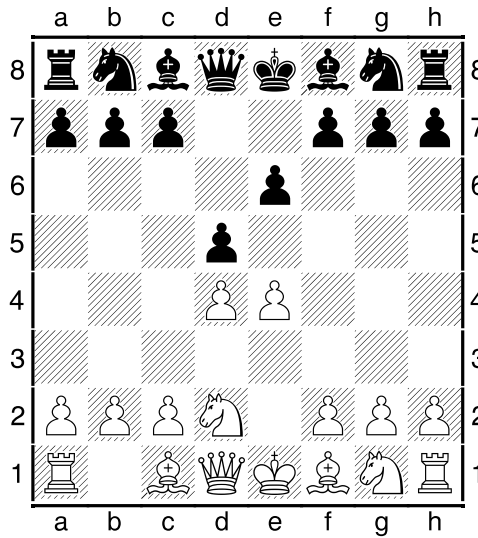
5. a3 Bxc3+
6. bxc3 Ne7



In this very difficult and complicated position White's most popular move is Qg4, threatening g7 and starting a king-side attack. If you prefer, you could play more quietly with Nf3.

Now let's look at the TARRASCH VARIATION.

1. e4 e6
2. d4 d5
3. Nd2



Black's most popular move here is:

- 3... Nf6
4. e5 Nfd7

Now the main line (there are plenty of alternatives for both players) runs:

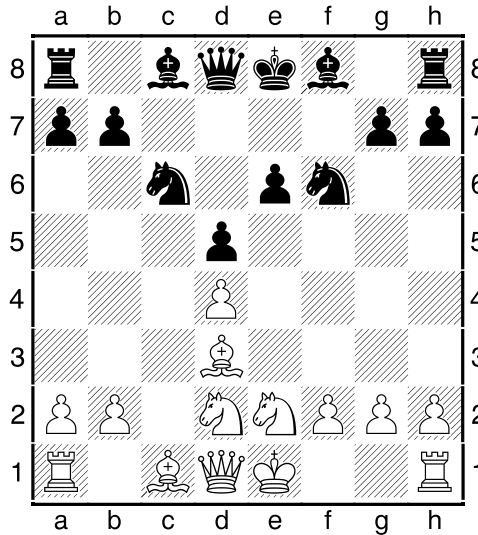
5. Bd3 c5
6. c3 Nc6
7. Ne2

This might look strange, but White's planning to bring the other knight to f3 to make sure the d4 pawn is well defended.

- 7... cxd4
8. cxd4 f6

Black plays another PAWN BREAK.

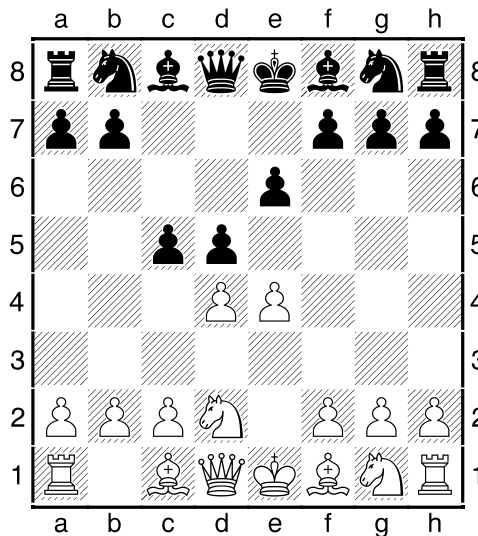
9. exf6 Nxf6



Black has a BACKWARD PAWN on e6 while White has an ISOLATED PAWN on d4. The battle for the centre squares, particularly e5, continues. White will continue with Nf3 and o-o while Black will play Bd6 and perhaps a queen move.

There's another way Black can play against the TARRASCH VARIATION. Because White's pieces are hemmed in you can consider an immediate PAWN BREAK.

1. e4 e6
2. d4 d5
3. Nd2 c5



White usually plays exd5 here (you don't want to play dxc5 yet as it will develop the black bishop) when Black can equally well capture with the pawn or the queen. This leads to a very different type of position from the lines where White plays e5. As the centre is open both players will aim to develop quickly and castle.

The FRENCH DEFENCE is a great opening to play at this level, and one that will teach you a lot about playing with PAWN CHAINS.

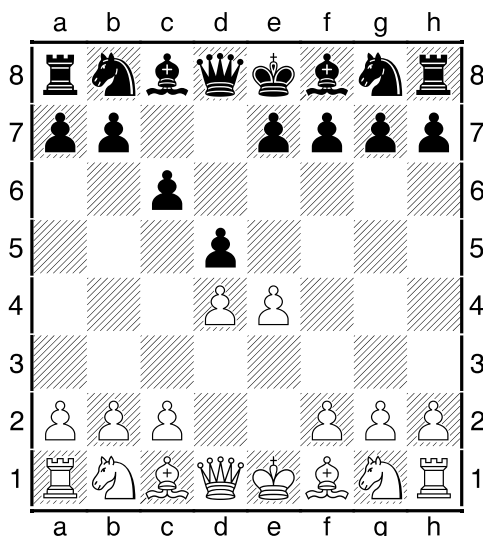
THE CARO-KANN DEFENCE

The CARO-KANN DEFENCE might look like the FRENCH DEFENCE, but in fact it's a bit different in that if White defends the pawn on move 3 Black will almost always capture on e4 rather than attack it again. It was named after Anglo-German and Austrian players from the early 20th century.

It's not always the most exciting opening, but it's a fairly safe choice.

Just as in the FRENCH DEFENCE, there's no reason not to play d4 on move 2.

1. e4 c6
2. d4 d5



Here White has the same choice as in the FRENCH DEFENCE but the stats are a bit different.

In this position 3. Nc3 is played in 32½% of games

3. exd5 is played in 28½% of games.

3. e5 is played in 26% of games.

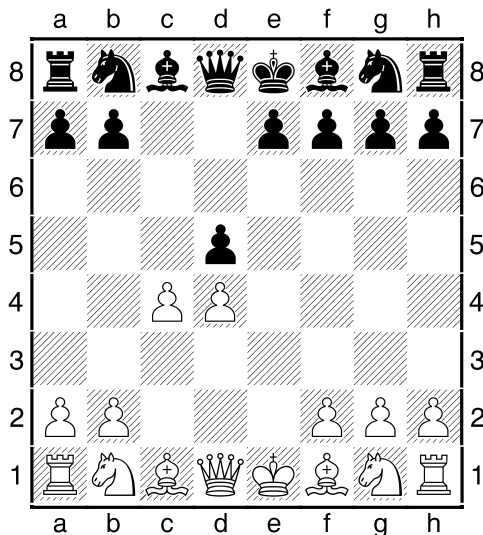
3. Nd2 is played in 11% of games.

As Black will usually take if White plays either Nc3 or Nd2 you might want to add the percentages together.

The ADVANCE VARIATION of the CARO-KANN is a bit different from the FRENCH ADVANCE. Black will usually play Bf5 to get the BAD BISHOP outside the pawn chain. You will have to be careful not to get it trapped, though.

The EXCHANGE VARIATION is much more popular than in the FRENCH DEFENCE. Very often White will play the PANOV-BOTVINNIK ATTACK, named after two players from the Soviet Union, one of whom, Mikhail Botvinnik, was a great world champion:

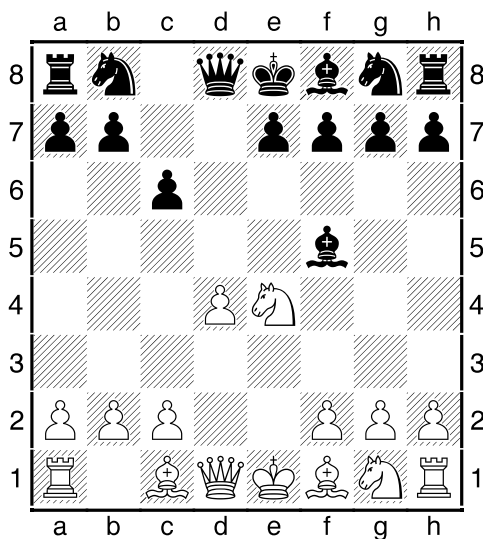
1. e4 c6
2. d4 d5
3. exd5 cxd5
4. c4



This will often end up with White having an ISOLATED d-PAWN. You've already seen this sort of position.

Now have a look at the main line:

1. e4 c6
2. d4 d5
3. Nc3 dxe4
4. Nxe4 Bf5



Black might also choose Nd7 or Nf6, but this is the most popular move as well as being the simplest to learn.

5. Ng3

White gains time by hitting the bishop.

- 5... Bg6

6. h4

White threatens to TRAP the bishop so Black has to make room.

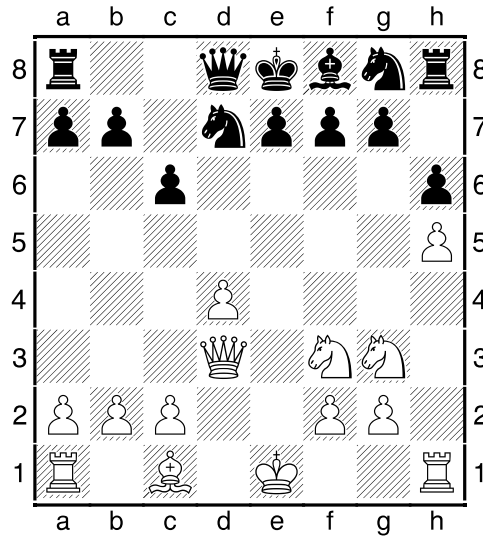
6... h6

7. Nf3 Nd7

8. h5 Bh7

9. Bd3 Bxd3

10. Qxd3



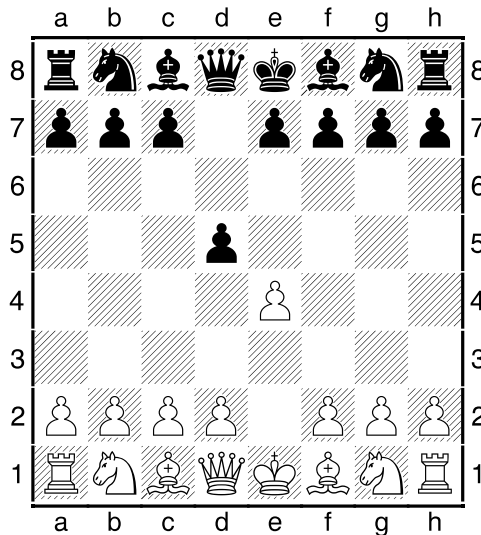
Black is slightly behind in development but has a very solid position. This variation is unusual in the both players often castle on the queen side.

THE SCANDINAVIAN DEFENCE

In this opening Black plays an immediate d5 to attack the pawn on e4. The disadvantage is that you lose some time with your queen.

We start like this:

1. e4 d5



This time it's certainly best for White to capture rather than pushing or defending. So you should choose:

2. exd5 Qxd5

2... Nf6 is another possible move, planning to capture with the knight rather than the queen on d5. If White plays 3. c4 Black will play 3... c6, offering a GAMBIT which will give a lead in development for the pawn.

3. Nc3 Qa5

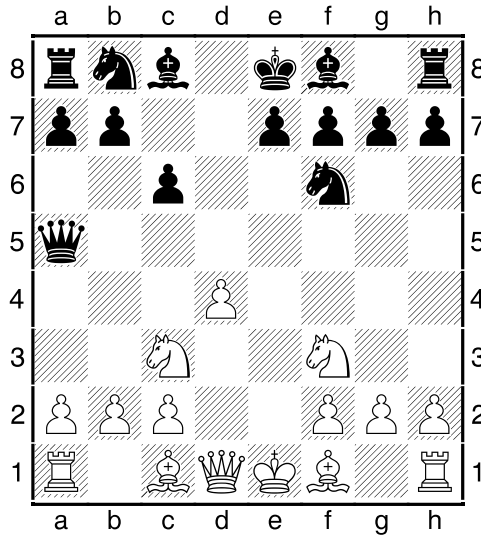
This is the most popular move, although Qd6 and Qd8 are sometimes played. White's knight on c3 will be PINNED once the d-pawn moves.

Play might continue:

4. d4 Nf6

5. Nf3 c6

This is an important move. The queen will often retreat to c7, especially if White plays Bd2 to UNPIN and threaten a DISCOVERED ATTACK.



Black will follow up by moving the queen's bishop to either g4 or f5, playing e6, moving the king's bishop to e7, d6 or b4, depending on what White plays, and then playing Nbd7. Black has easy development but White also has chances of setting up a quick attack before Black's development is complete.

All these openings are great for you to try out instead of 1... e5. You'll learn a lot about chess by playing different types of position rather than just playing the same openings all the time. You'll also meet opponents who play these openings against you, so you'll need to know what to do against them.

But now it's time to move onto Black's most popular reply to 1. e4: the SICILIAN DEFENCE.

THE SICILIAN DEFENCE

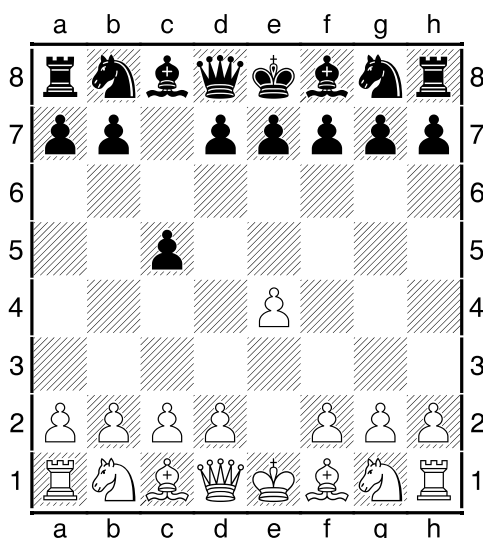
You might think it strange that 1. e4 c5 is so popular. It seems less good than 1... e5 for developing your pieces, controlling the centre and preparing to castle. Unlike 1... e5, though, it doesn't give White a target for attack. It also contains the idea of trading your c-pawn for the enemy d-pawn. You should understand by now why the c-pawn is so important in so many openings.

First of all, if you're playing the SICILIAN DEFENCE at a lower level many of your opponents won't have studied it and will just develop their pieces without a plan. In that case you'll probably get a good position. One idea will be to play e6 followed, at some point, by d5.

The main lines of the SICILIAN DEFENCE see White playing 2. Nf3 followed by 3. d4. But these lines are hard for both players, so you'll find that, even if your opponents have studied the opening, a lot of them will play what we call ANTI-SICILIAN systems where White chooses a different plan.

Let's look at some numbers from my database.

Here's the starting position of the SICILIAN DEFENCE after 1. e4 c5.



2. Nf3 is played in 73½% of games.

2. Nc3 is played in 11½% of games.

2. c3 is played in 8% of games.

2. d4 is played in 2% of games.

You'll probably get moves other than 2. Nf3 more often than this, though. Most players at lower levels are scared of the main lines.

The other moves are easier to play (but not stronger). Don't forget that openings that are easier for you will also be easier for your opponents. If you choose an opening that's harder to learn it will be harder for your opponent as well. The most popular moves are most popular for a reason. Likewise, unpopular moves are usually unpopular for a reason.

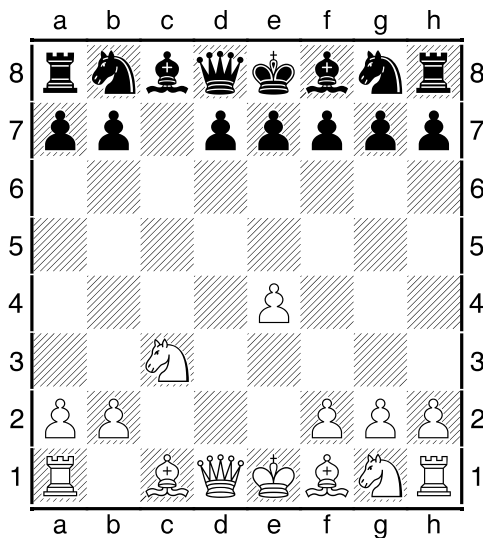
If you like playing GAMBITS you might like to play 2. d4, the MORRA GAMBIT.

1. e4 c5
2. d4 cxd4
3. c3

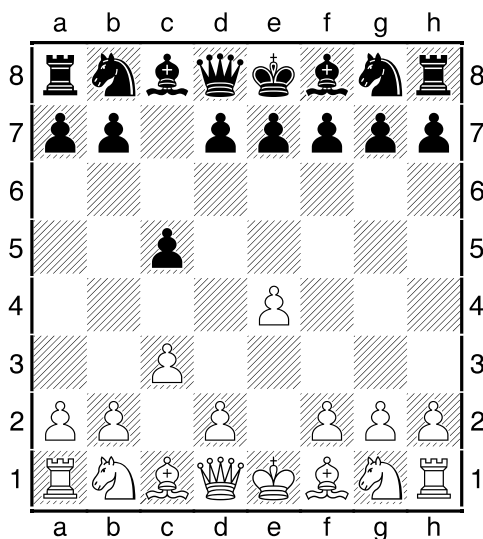
This looks a bit like the DANISH GAMBIT. Black could, just as in the DANISH, hit back in the centre with 3... d5 or take the pawn.

- 3... dxc3
4. Nxc3

We're only going to GAMBIT one pawn here.



If you don't want to give up a pawn, a good choice is to play 2. c3, planning to follow up with d4.



Black has two good moves which try to stop White getting two strong pawns in the centre.

One idea is 2... d5, when White will play 3. exd5 Qxd5 4. d4.

The other idea is 2... Nf6, when White will play 3. e5 Nd5 4. d4. Black will later attack the white centre by playing d6.

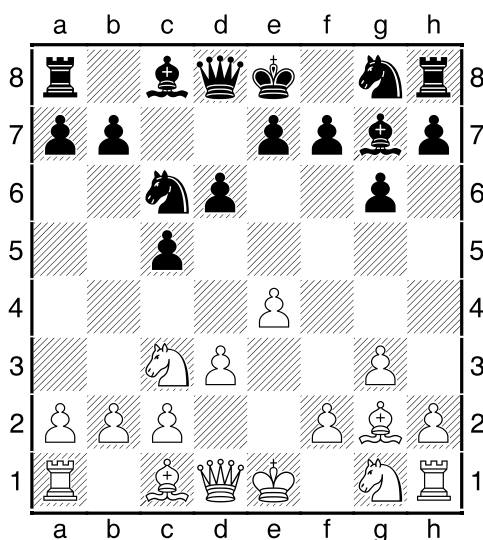
White's second most popular move is 2. Nc3, a variation called the CLOSED SICILIAN. Here, White plans to play f4 rather than d4 and then start an attack on the king side.

Let's play a few moves.

1. e4 c5
2. Nc3 Nc6
3. g3 g6
4. Bg2 Bg7

Both sides FIANCHETTO their king's bishops. Black's bishop enjoys being on the long diagonal while White's bishop will help protect the king when the pawns advance.

5. d3 d6



Now White has two plans. The first plan is to play Be3, Qd2 and Nge2. The second plan is to play f4 and Nf3.

We'll follow the second plan for a few moves to explain an important idea.

You've been taught that when you castle on the king side you shouldn't advance the pawns in front of your king. That's true for many openings, but there are also some openings where you not only can but should do just that. It often happens, for instance, in the SICILIAN DEFENCE.

Let's see what might happen here.

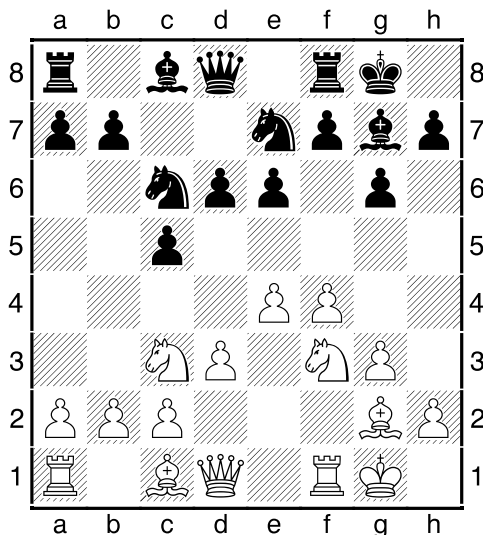
6. f4

White starts a king side PAWN STORM.

6... e6

You've also been taught that your king's knight belongs on f6, not on e7. Here, though, the opposite is true. A knight on f6 might be a target for White's pawns.

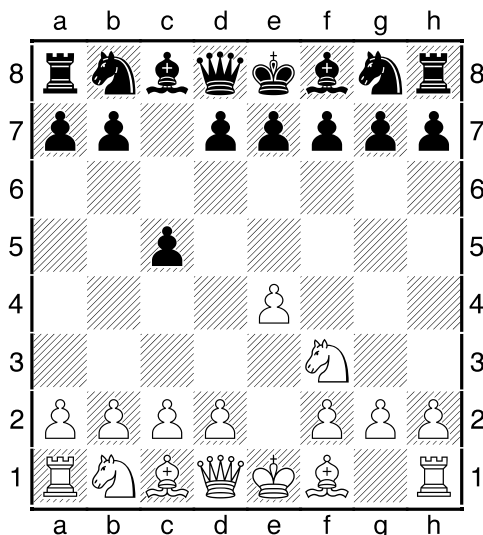
- 7. Nf3 Nge7
- 8. 0-0 0-0



Black is ready to block a white pawn attack by playing f5, so White usually continues developing here by playing Be3.

Now let's move back to 2. Nf3.

- 1. e4 c5
- 2. Nf3



Some more statistics. Here, Black has three popular moves.

2... d6 is played in 40½% of the games in my database.

2... Nc6 is played in 31% of games.

2... e6 is played in 23% of games.

Black might well play all three of these moves in the opening, but each move gives both players different possibilities. Yes, it's hard and confusing.

If Black plays either d6 or Nc6 White can choose Bb5(+) which is another ANTI-SICILIAN line. White will often follow up with c3 and d4. But the most popular lines with stronger players start with 3. d4. Black will capture – one of the main points of the SICILIAN DEFENCE is to get an advantage of two pawns to one in the centre. White will play for a king-side attack while Black will attack on the queen side. Both players will also be fighting for the centre.

Let's play a few more moves.

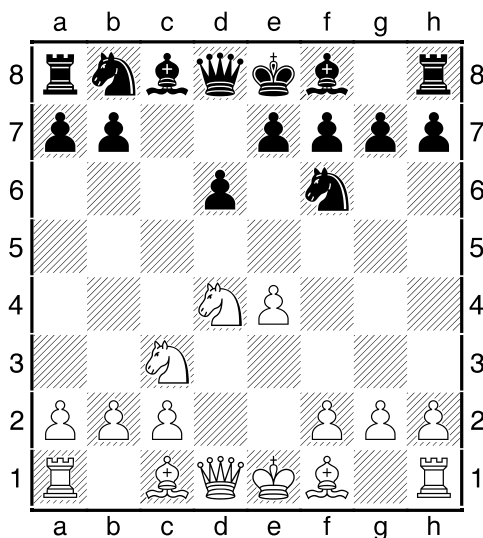
1. e4 c5
2. Nf3 d6
3. d4 cxd4
4. Nxd4 Nf6

There's no reason not to play this obvious developing move.

5. Nc3

Now we reach the crossroads.

If you don't know the answer you probably won't be able to guess Black's most popular move here.



5... a6 is played in 47½% of games from this position.

5... Nc6 is played in 22% of games.

5... g6 is played in 19½% of games.

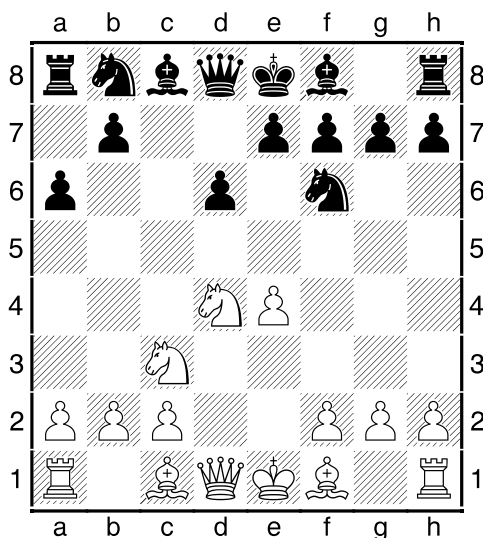
5... e6 is played in 10% of games.

This again looks very strange, doesn't it? What's 5... a6 all about, then? It seems like exactly the sort of move you've been taught not to play. A useless looking pawn move at the side of the board. It doesn't help your development. It doesn't seem to help you to fight for control of the centre. Why is it so popular, especially with stronger players?

Partly it's a waiting move. Black might want to play e6 or e5. It might depend on where the white bishops are going. Or perhaps Black is planning to play e6 anyway and wants to keep White guessing. The black knight on b8 might want to go to c6 or d7 – it might depend on whether or not the white bishop moves to g5. So Black is going to wait for a bishop move before deciding which plan to choose.

Meanwhile, a6 is actually quite a useful move here. Black's plan in this opening is often to attack on the queen side by playing a6 and, if White allows it, b5, followed perhaps by b4 to drive the knight from c3. It also stops White putting a minor piece (more likely a knight than a bishop, as it happens) on b5.

5... a6 is called the NAJDORF VARIATION of the SICILIAN DEFENCE. It's named after an Argentinian (originally Polish) grandmaster. As Black might possibly play Nc6 and/or e6 in future we won't look separately at these moves. 5... g6 is the start of a very different plan. We'll look at this later.



Here, then, is the starting position of the SICILIAN NAJDORF.

Some more statistics:

The four most popular moves for White here are all bishop moves:

- 6. Bg5 is played in 22½% of games
- 6. Be2 is played in 21% of games
- 6. Be3 is played in 20½% of games
- 6. Bc4 is played in 12½% of games

White can choose to place the bishops solidly to support the centre, or more aggressively. After Be2 or Be3, Black might play either e6 or e5. After Bg5 or Bc4, though, Black will probably play e6: e5 wouldn't be so good as Bg5 and Bc4 are both designed to give White more control of d5.

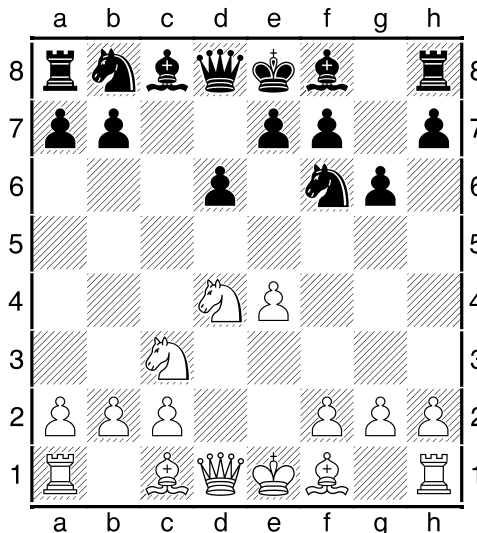
The next five moves are all pawn moves:

- 6. f3 – to secure e4 and prepare Be3 without fearing Ng4 in reply
- 6. f4 – to gain space in the centre and on the king side
- 6. h3 – again to prevent Ng4 and perhaps to start a pawn attack with g4
- 6. g3 – to play a FIANCHETTO: Bg2
- 6. a4 – to stop Black playing b5

The moves and plans are very different from the openings starting 1. e4 e5, aren't they? They're also much harder to understand.

Finally, let's go back and take a quick look at the DRAGON VARIATION.

- 1. e4 c5
- 2. Nf3 d6
- 3. d4 cxd4
- 4. Nxd4 Nf6
- 5. Nc3 g6



This is an opening which a lot of people have learnt off by heart. If you want to play it with either colour it will help if you do your homework. Here's how the most popular variation starts:

6. Be3 Bg7

Here, 6... Ng4 would lose material: after 7. Bb5+ Bd7 8. Qxg4 the bishop on d7 is PINNED.

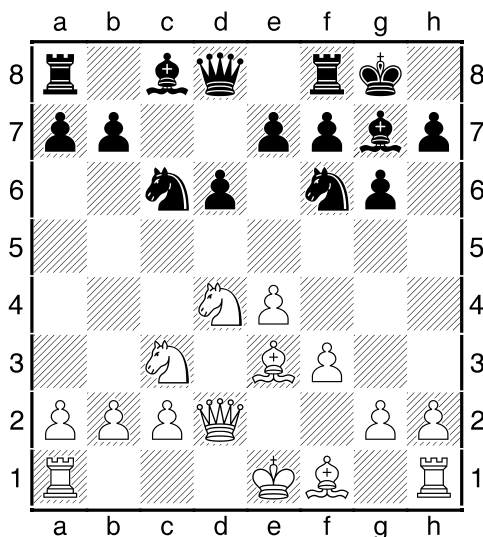
7. f3

Now White wants to prevent Ng4.

7... O-O

8. Qd2 Nc6

We've now reached a position you've seen before when you learnt about FIANCHETTOS.



In this position White usually plays either Bc4 or O-O-O. Two points for White: although your idea is to play Bh6 at some point, you have to be careful. Here it would be a bad mistake, losing a piece because the queen is OVERWORKED. It's usually not a good idea in this sort of position to play Nxc6 – Black will be very pleased to have another pawn in the centre of the board. And a point for Black: in this variation it's usually NOT a good idea to play e5 which blocks in the bishop on g7 as well as leaving the d-pawn BACKWARD and hard to defend.

THE PIRC AND MODERN DEFENCES

These openings often reach the same position so we can deal with them together. The MODERN DEFENCE might also turn into a KING'S INDIAN DEFENCE, an opening you'll learn more about in a few pages time.

They're not played so much at your level so you don't need to learn too much about them at the moment.

The PIRC DEFENCE, named after a Yugoslavian grandmaster, usually starts like this:

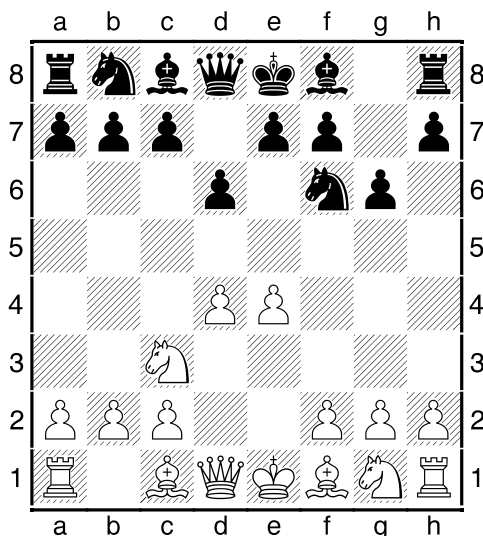
1. e4 d6
2. d4 Nf6

White wants to defend the e-pawn so usually plays...

3. Nc3

Now Black's most popular plan is to FIANCHETTO the king's bishop:

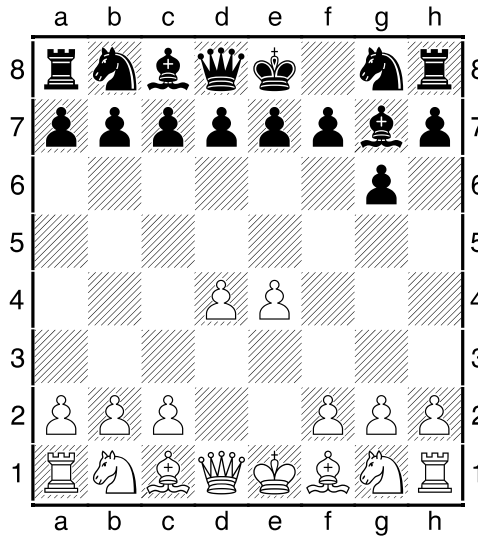
- 3... g6



In this position White's two most popular moves are Nf3, a simple developing move, and f4, gaining more space and perhaps planning to play e5 at some point. Be3 and Bg5 are also good moves for White.

The MODERN DEFENCE starts like this:

1. e4 g6
2. d4 Bg7

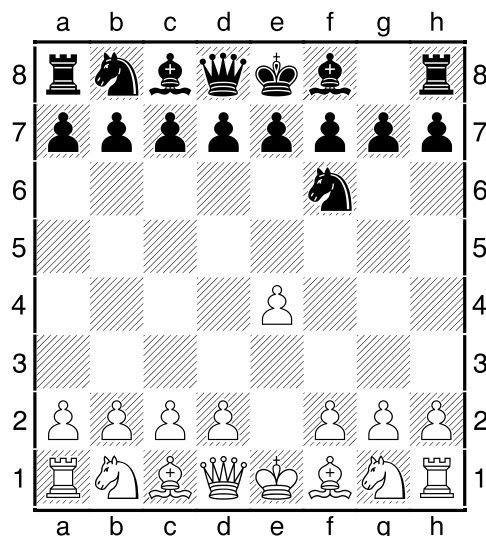


The game might well continue 3. Nc3 d6 followed by Nf6, leading to a PIRC DEFENCE, but both sides can consider other ideas.

THE ALEKHINE DEFENCE

In this opening, named after Alexander Alekhine, a great Russian-born world champion, Black again attacks the e4 pawn, but uses the knight rather than the d-pawn.

1. e4 Nf6



You have a choice: defend or push.

If you play 2. Nc3 Black can play 2... e5 (d5 is also possible) with a VIENNA GAME or a boring FOUR KNIGHTS. So the most interesting move, and probably the best, is to push. White will gain time and space pushing the knight round the board, but Black will be able to target the white centre. Another very interesting opening.

2. e5 Nd5
3. d4 d6

Now White has a choice: quiet development with 4. Nf3 or chasing the knight away with 4. c4 Nb6.

That's as far as we'll take 1. e4 for now. It's a good idea to try out some of these ideas for Black in your own games. When you've decided which one you like best you'll probably want to study it further using books, videos or DVDs.

If you read *CHESS GAMES FOR HEROES* you'll be able to take both sides in games with some of these openings and try to guess the moves.

Now it's time to see what might happen if White starts 1. d4.

CHAPTER 7

OTHER OPENINGS

QUEEN'S PAWN OPENINGS

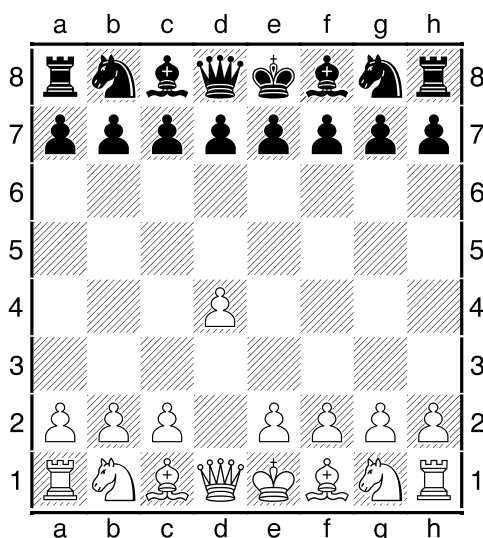
Queen's pawn openings are not just left-handed king's pawn openings. As you'll soon see, they're totally different.

As you know, after the moves 1. e4 e5, the usual second move for White is 2. Nf3. This makes a lot of sense. You develop a piece towards the centre, THREATEN a pawn and get one step closer to CASTLING. But after 1. d4 d5, the move 2. Nc3 makes a lot less sense: it blocks the c-pawn and creates no threat.

So one big difference is that the pawns on d4 and d5 are already protected by their queens. Another big difference is that after 1. e4 e5 it's easy to play d4: for instance 1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. d4 – the SCOTCH GAME. But after 1. d4 d5 it's much harder to play e4 – unless you want to play a GAMBIT.

In QUEEN'S PAWN OPENINGS both players will usually use their c-pawn (yes, it's that pawn again) either moving it two squares to attack the centre or moving it one square to support the d-pawn.

Let's start, as usual, by looking at some numbers.



In this position:

1... Nf6 is played in 53½% of the games in my database (more than half)

1... d5 is played in 30% of the games

1... e6 is played in 4½% of the games

1... f5 is played in 3½% of the games

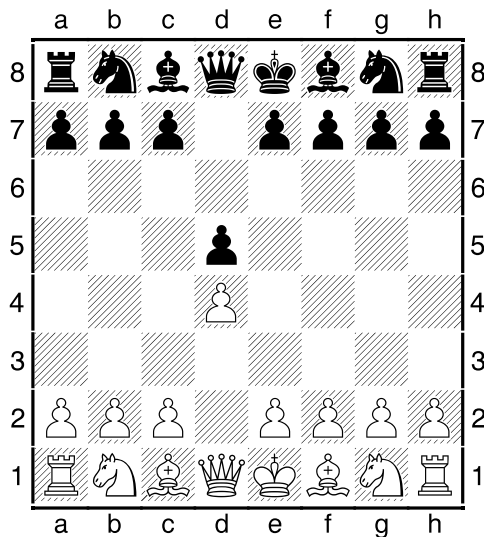
1... g6 is played in 3% of the games

1... d6 is played in 2½% of the games

1... c5 is played in 1½% of the games

You'll see that Nf6 and d5 both control the important e4 square as does f5.

We'll start off by looking at what might happen after 1. d4 d5.



Again there are two very popular choices.

2. c4 is played in 64% of games

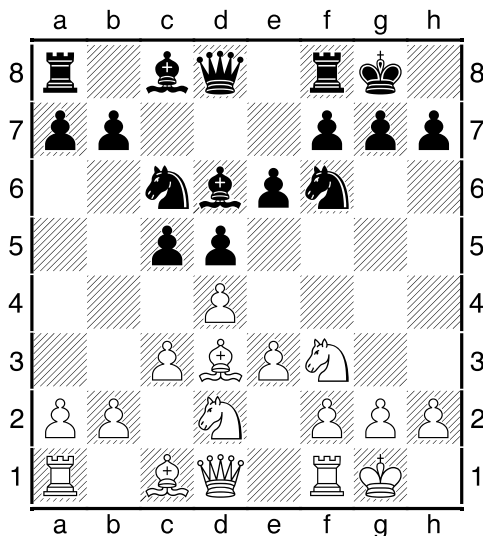
2. Nf3 is played in 33½% of games

White has a choice: the usual choice is to play c4, either now or later, while the alternative is to play c3 at some point.

Let's see what might happen if White doesn't play c4.

THE TRIANGLE SYSTEMS

In these openings White sets up a pawn triangle in the centre: pawns on c3, d4 and e3. The knights will go to f3 and d2, and the king's bishop usually to d3. You will usually set up something like this:



This isn't the world's most exciting or dangerous opening, but it's safe and solid.

White's main idea here is to play e4 at some point. But, depending on where the black pieces are developed, you might also play c4. You might play your knight to e5 (not possible in this exact position) and play for a KING-SIDE ATTACK, perhaps playing your pawn to f4 and then advancing your other king-side pawns. You might also play to gain space on the queen-side by playing b4 at some point.

This opening is called the COLLE SYSTEM, named after a Belgian player from the 1920s.

There are two other TRIANGLE SYSTEMS where the white queen's bishop moves out first rather than being stuck behind the pawns.

If you put your bishop on f4 before setting up the TRIANGLE this is the LONDON SYSTEM. This opening is quite popular with some of the strongest players in the world at the moment. It's a very flexible opening where you might start an attack in the centre or on either side of the board.

If you put your bishop on g5 instead, this is the TORRE ATTACK, named after a Mexican player from the 1920s. Again you have the same choice of plans.

Try these out yourself and see how you get on.

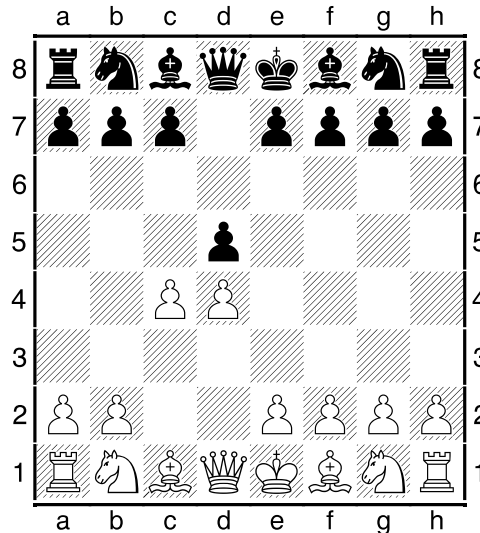
But the most popular opening after 1. d4 d5 is the QUEEN'S GAMBIT. We'll look at that next.

THE QUEEN'S GAMBIT

Just as the RUY LOPEZ is considered White's strongest opening after 1. e4 e5, the QUEEN'S GAMBIT is considered the strongest opening after 1. d4 d5.

It looks like a left-handed KING'S GAMBIT, but, while the KING'S GAMBIT is considered exciting but risky, the QUEEN'S GAMBIT is a pretty safe opening.

1. d4 d5
2. c4



White's plan is to trade a side pawn for a centre pawn – an idea you've seen before. Black usually chooses to keep a pawn in the centre (the QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED), but ACCEPTING the GAMBIT is also good as long as you know what you're doing.

2... e6 is played 44½% of the time here

2... c6 is played 42% of the time

2... dxc4 is played 10½% of the time

The next most popular move is 2... Nf6, which is mostly played by less experienced players, so you may well meet it. What you do is just take on d5: if Black takes with the knight you can chase it away with e4 at some point, and if Black takes with the queen you can attack her with Nc3.

Let's play a few moves and see what happens.

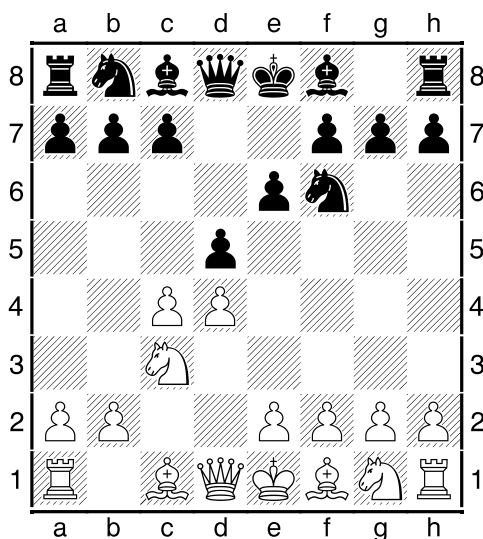
1. d4 d5
2. c4 e6

This is the **QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED**. Black doesn't commit the c-pawn yet: you might play c6 later on, setting up a **TRIANGLE SYSTEM** with Black, or you might want to hit the centre with c5. What you're not going to do is play Nc6, blocking the c-pawn. The disadvantage of 2... e6 is that you're blocking in your queen's bishop and might, if you're not careful, end up with a **BAD BISHOP**.

Time for White to bring a knight out. It's usual to continue your attack on d5:

3. Nc3 Nf6

Black decides to defend d5 again. It's also possible to play 3... c5 (the **TARRASCH DEFENCE**) here.



Now White has a choice. You can capture on d5 (the **EXCHANGE VARIATION**, gaining a 2-1 advantage in the centre but releasing the black bishop on c8). You can bring your other knight out (Nf3) or you can continue to attack d5 by **PINNING** the knight on f6.

Let's look at this line: there's a trap coming up that you need to know.

4. Bg5

First of all, White has a **POSITIONAL THREAT**. For example, if Black plays 4... h6 White will play 5. Bxf6 when Qxf6 will lose a pawn on d5 while gxf6 will leave the king-side defences shattered.

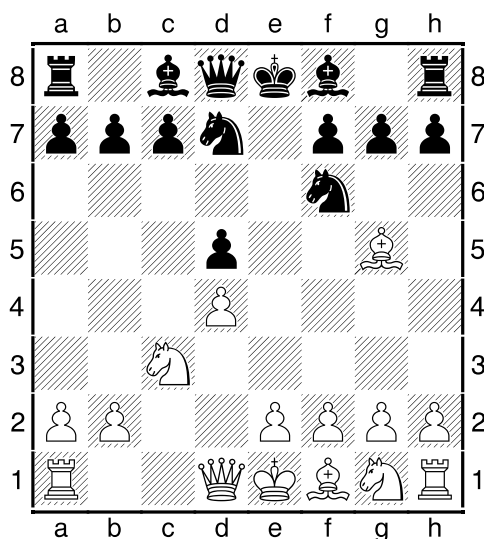
Black has to do something about this. Setting up the **TRIANGLE** with 4... c6 is OK, but the most popular move is to **BREAK** the PIN by playing 4... Be7. The second most popular move is to support the knight by playing...

- 4... Nbd7

You might think this looks like a mistake. White could play 5. Nf3 or 5. e3 here, both of which are fine. But White can also play...

5. cxd5 exd5

Reaching this position.



You might like to stop for a minute and work out whether or not it's a good idea for White to play $Nxd5$ (EXPLOITING THE PIN) here.

The answer is that it's not a good idea.

6. $Nxd5 Nxd5$

Has Black blundered?

7. $Bxd8 Bb4+$

No – White has only one legal move:

8. $Qd2 Bxd2+$

9. $Kxd2 Kxd8$

Black is ahead by a knight to a pawn.

Thousands of chess players have fallen for this trap over the years. Make sure you don't add your name to the list. You might like to try playing these moves for Black: your opponents might fall into it themselves.

White can, of course, avoid the trap, but if you're Black you can still make it difficult.

Here's another example:

1. $d4 d5$

2. $c4 e6$

3. $Nc3 Nf6$

4. $Bg5 Nbd7$

5. $Nf3 c6$

Black sets up the TRIANGLE SYSTEM.

6. $e3 Qa5$

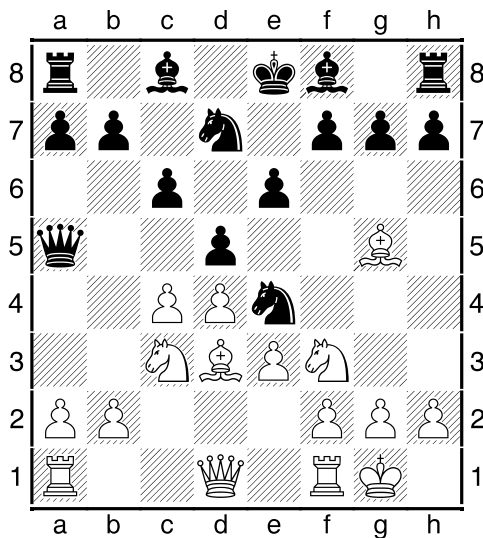
This variation is called the **CAMBRIDGE SPRINGS VARIATION** of the **QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED**. It's named after a town in American which hosted a tournament in 1904. This move sets up a **PIN**. Your plan now is to attack the pinned piece with moves like **Bb4** and **Ne4**.

Most strong players like to play **7. Nd2** here for White. The idea is to **UNPIN** the other knight and perhaps later drive the black queen away. If you don't know it, it's not an easy move to find, though.

More likely your opponent will play a natural developing move:

- 7. **Bd3** **Ne4**
- 8. **o-o**

Another obvious move, but it's a mistake. Can you see how Black can win a piece here?



Here's how you do it:

- 8... **Nxg5**
- 9. **Nxg5 dxc4**

This is a **DISCOVERED ATTACK**. Black is threatening both **cxd3** and **Qxg5**.

Let's move on to a different second move for Black.

1. d4 d5
2. c4 c6

This is the SLAV DEFENCE in the QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED.

The advantage over the ORTHODOX DEFENCE is that you don't block in your queen's bishop. The disadvantage is that you can't play c5 in one move. Another idea for Black is to capture on c4 and try to hold onto the pawn by playing b5.

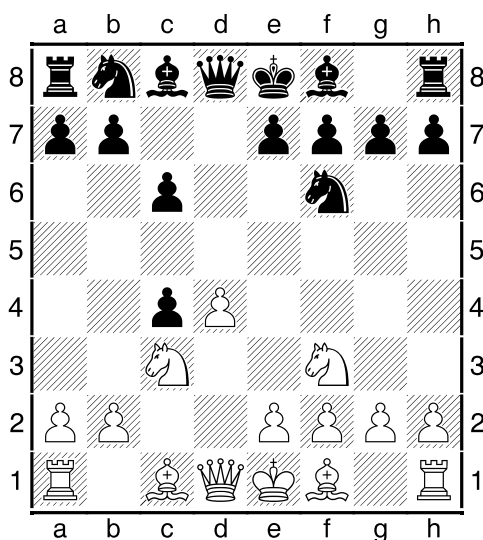
One important point about the QUEEN'S GAMBIT is that it's often dangerous for Black to move the queen's bishop early because White might reply with Qb3, hitting both b7 and d5. The move c6 will give Black several possible ways to defend against that idea.

White usually develops a knight: more often the king's knight to gain more control over e5.

3. Nf3 Nf6
4. Nc3

Black can now set up the TRIANGLE by playing e6. Let's look at a different idea.

- 4... dxc4



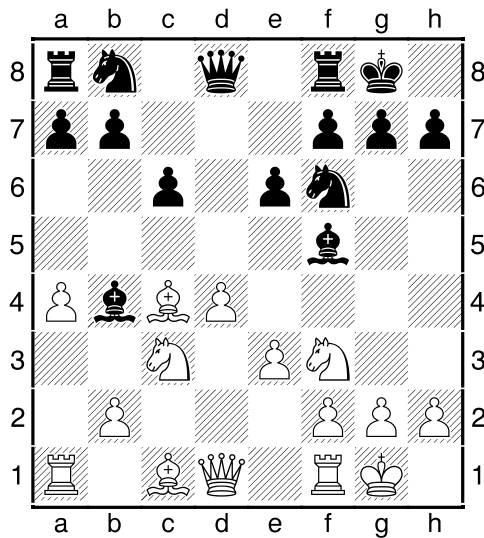
The most popular move for White here might surprise you.

5. a4

Black's plan is to meet e3 or e4 with b5, so White prevents that move before regaining the pawn.

We'll play a few more moves:

- 5... Bf5
6. e3 e6
7. Bxc4 Bb4
8. O-O O-O

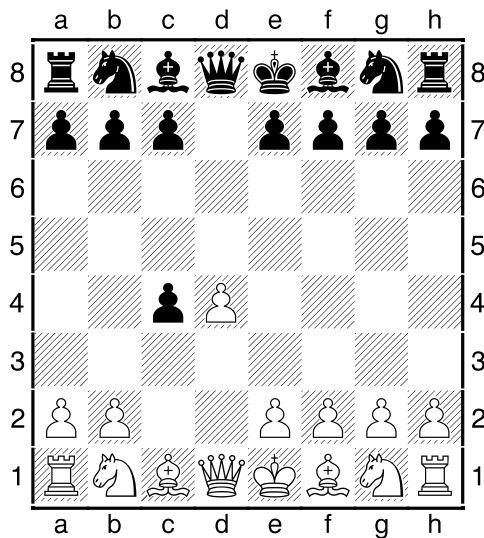


Black has easy development but White has a strong centre and will try to prepare e4.

The position is about equal.

Now let's see what might happen if Black decides to capture the pawn on move 2.

1. d4 d5
2. c4 dxc4



This is the QUEEN'S GAMBIT ACCEPTED.

White usually plans to regain the pawn by playing Bxc4, and might decide to play either e3 or e4. Black's plan will be to hit back in the centre as soon as possible by playing either c5 or e5.

The most popular move here is 3. Nf3. White decides to gain more control over e5 before winning the pawn back. 3. e4 is a more ambitious choice, setting up a powerful centre, but one that might be open to attack. 3. e3 has the same idea as Nf3, but also sets a trap. Let's have a look.

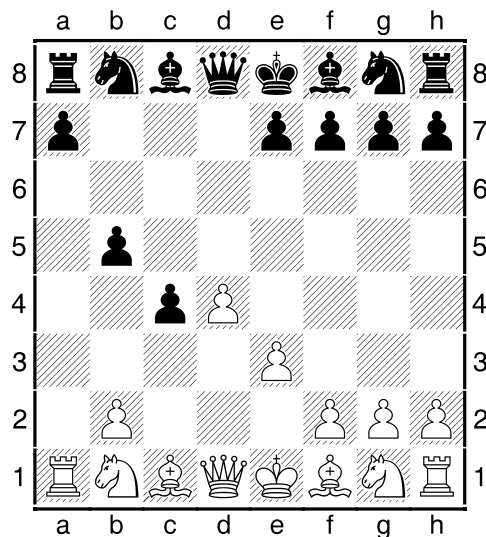
3. e3 b5

3... Nf6 would be the usual move here, but 3... e5 is also possible. Greedily trying to hang on to the gambit pawn is not a good idea.

4. a4 c6

5. axb5 cxb5

Now White has a move to win a piece. Can you find it?



The winning move is 6. Qf3, TRAPPING A PIECE.

Black's rook has no moves. White will win, depending on what Black's next move is, a bishop, a knight or a rook.

The QUEEN'S GAMBIT is a very important – and very strong opening.

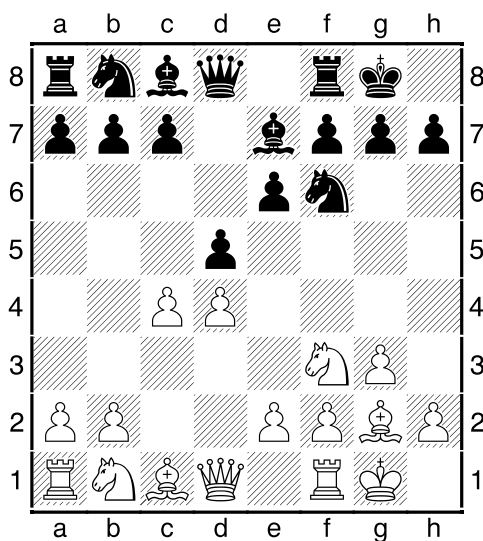
There's a lot more to learn than this. *CHESS GAMES FOR HEROES* will give you the chance to play some games with both colours.

Before we move on, there's one more opening to look at: the CATALAN SYSTEM.

This is a QUEEN'S GAMBIT where white plays a king-side FIANCHETTO.

There are a lot of possible move orders, but it might start like this:

1. d4 d5
2. c4 e6
3. Nf3 Nf6
4. g3 Be7
5. Bg2 O-O
6. O-O



In this position Black can choose to open the position by playing 6... dxc4 or to keep the position closed by playing 6... c6, setting up the TRIANGLE.

INDIAN DEFENCES

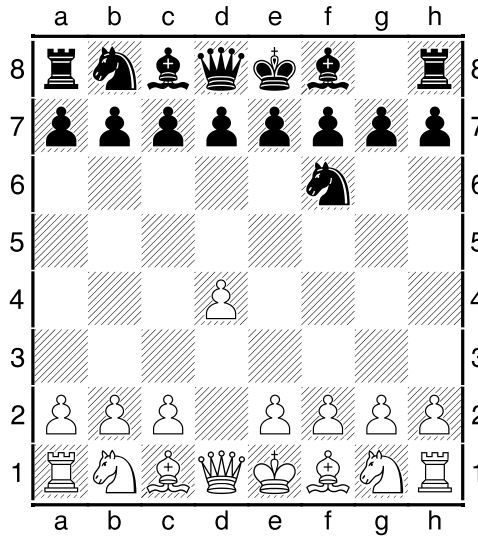
You might remember that Black's most popular reply to 1. d4 is not d5, but Nf6.

Openings starting with these moves are known as INDIAN DEFENCES.

Most of them fall into two families.

In the first family Black will play for control of the e4 square, starting with 2... e6.

In the second family Black will play a king-side FIANCHETTO, then attack on the dark squares, playing either c5 or e5 to challenge White's centre.



Just as after 1. d4 d5, White usually plays 2. c4, although 2. Nf3 is also popular, possibly heading for a TRIANGLE formation.

- 2. c4 is played in 64½% of games
- 2. Nf3 is played in 29% of games
- 2. Bg5 is played in 4½% of games

Let's look at the most popular openings after 2. c4.

THE NIMZO-INDIAN FAMILY

In these openings Black is trying to control the e4 square using bishops and knights.

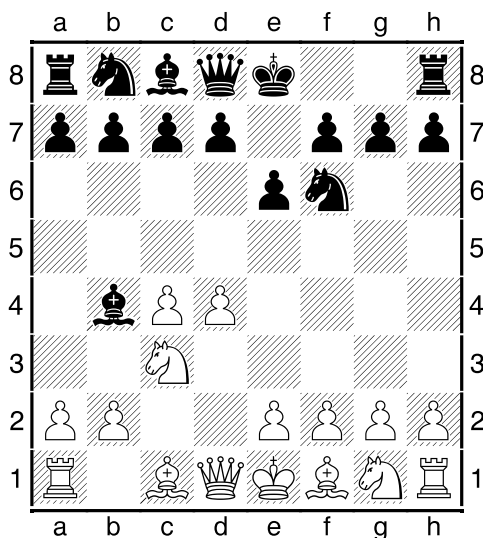
We start:

1. d4 Nf6
2. c4 e6

Now there's no reason for White to do anything other than develop a knight. 3. Nc3 and 3. Nf3 are almost equally popular.

You might think 3. Nc3 is the most logical move here as it controls e4. Given the chance, White might well play 4. e4. In this opening family Black prevents this. Of course Black could make it a QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED by playing 3... d5 but there's another very strong option:

3. Nc3 Bb4



This has a strange name: the NIMZO-INDIAN DEFENCE, named after Aron Nimzowitsch, one of the strongest players in the world in the 1920s.

Black continues the fight for e4 by PINNING the white knight.

This is a very strong opening, but quite complicated to learn. You'll remember that looking at the PAWN FORMATION will help you decide on your plan. Lots of things can happen in the centre. Black will often, but not always, play c5. Sometimes Black plays d5, sometimes d6. There will be a lot of possible exchanging sequences which will lead to different PAWN FORMATIONS. Once the PAWN FORMATION is set up, both players have to choose their middle game plans.

As so often, the most popular moves might surprise you.

4. e3 is played in 36% of games from this position
4. Qc2 is played in 32% of games from this position
4. Nf3 is played in 9% of games from this position
4. f3 is played in 6½% of games from this position
4. Bg5 is played in 5½% of games from this position
4. a3 is played in 5% of games from this position

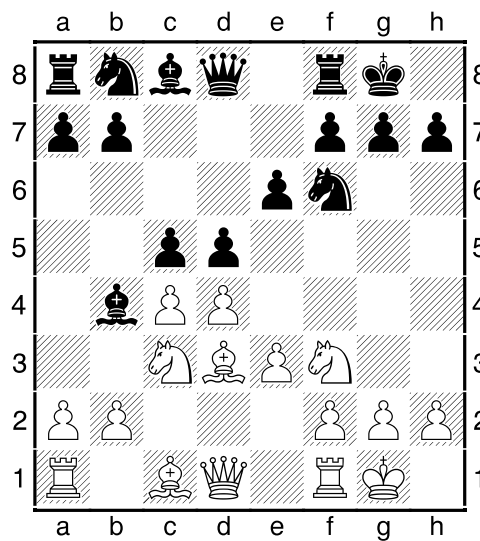
If Black captures on c3 White will have bishop for knight – a slight advantage, but will also have doubled pawns – a slight disadvantage.

Your choice of move will depend on how strongly you feel about this.

If you really don't want to have doubled pawns the move to play is 4. Qc2, so that you can recapture with the queen on c3. Otherwise, you'll probably want to play 4. e3. Unlike in the QUEEN'S GAMBIT, White usually prefers to keep the queen's bishop at home for the time being.

Let's look at one of the most popular variations to give you some idea of what might happen.

4. e3 O-O
5. Bd3 d5
6. Nf3 c5
7. O-O

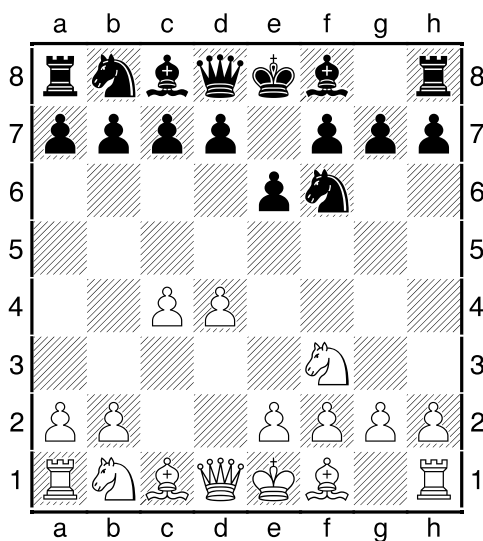


Black has a choice here. You can play either pawn capture or develop with Nc6, waiting to see what White does next. White could, for example, play a3, when Black will probably trade on c3.

Note that if Black makes both pawn captures you'll probably end up in a position where White has an ISOLATED QUEEN'S PAWN. You've seen this sort of position before.

If White doesn't want a PINNED knight, then 3. Nf3 is the move.

Let's look at what might happen then.



Black has a choice:

3... d5 will make it a QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED

3... b6 is the QUEEN'S INDIAN DEFENCE. Black plans a queen-side FIANCHETTO to continue the fight for e4. White often replies with 4. g3, going for a king-side FIANCHETTO.

There's also nothing wrong with 3... Bb4+, which has another strange name: the BOGO-INDIAN DEFENCE, named after Efim Bogoljubov, another strong player from the 1920s and 1930s.

THE KING'S INDIAN FAMILY

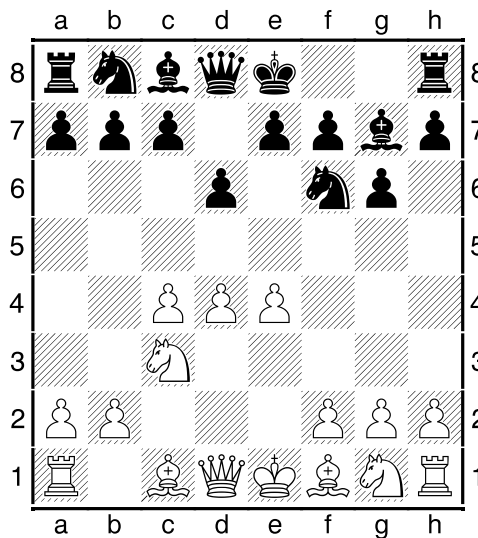
In these openings Black plays a king-side FIANCHETTO.

The most important opening in this family is the KING'S INDIAN DEFENCE, which starts like this:

1. d4 Nf6
2. c4 g6
3. Nc3 Bg7
4. e4

White usually plays this move to set up a big pawn centre, which Black will aim to undermine later. Of course there are other ways to play, but they give Black fewer problems. This opening is closely related to the PIRC DEFENCE and the MODERN DEFENCE against 1. e4.

4... d6



Now White has to make a decision about the f-pawn.

The fourth most popular move here is 5. f4, an ambitious move setting up a big centre which Black can attack with c5.

The third most popular move is 5. Be2, waiting to see what Black will do next.

The second most popular move is 5. f3, a solid move supporting the centre again. White might also be planning to play Be3, Qd2 and Bh6 to trade off the FIANCHETTOED bishop, very much like in the DRAGON VARIATION of the SICILIAN DEFENCE.

The most popular move is a simple developing move, Nf3. Let's play a few more moves.

5. Nf3 O-O
6. Be2 e5

Black hits back in the centre. You have to see that White can't win a pawn here. After 7. dxe5 dxe5 8. Qxd8 Rxd8 9. Nxe5 Black can play 9... Nxe4 (DISCOVERED ATTACK) 10. Nxe4 Bxe5.

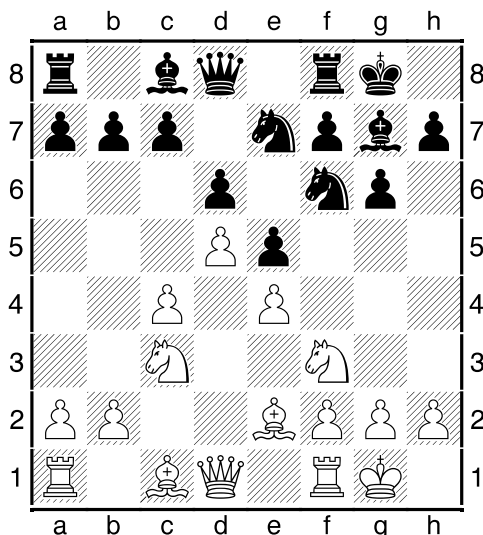
As usual in this sort of position, White can trade, push or wait. Both $dxe5$ and $d5$ are played, but more often White decides to wait one more move.

7. 0-0

Now Black could take on $d4$, but usually decides to develop the queen's knight instead. All three squares are possible, but the most popular choice is...

8... $Nc6$

9. $d5$ $Ne7$



A very interesting position. Rather like a FRENCH DEFENCE on the other side of the board, both players have PAWN CHAINS. In this sort of position both players have to find their PAWN BREAKS.

White wants to play $c5$ fairly soon, while Black will move the knight from $f6$ and play $f5$ as soon as possible. This opening is unusual in that Black castles on the king-side and then advances all the pawns in front of the king.

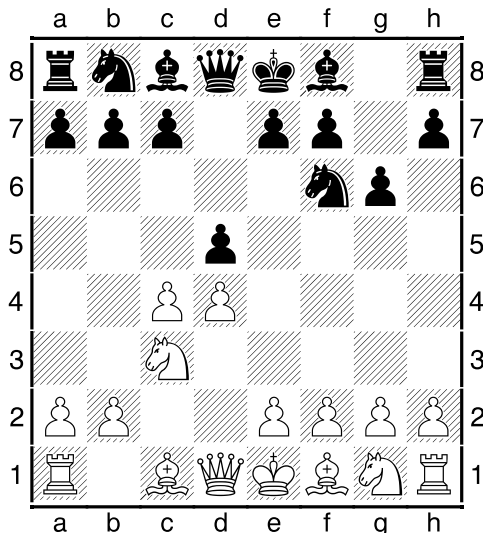
White's most popular move here is $Ne1$, which might look rather strange. The knight might be going to $d3$ to support the PAWN BREAK $c5$. White also wants to play $f3$ to support $e4$ when Black plays $f5$.

Try playing this position yourself with both colours and see how you get on.

Another popular opening is the GRÜNFIELD DEFENCE, named after an Austrian player active in the 1920s and 1930s.

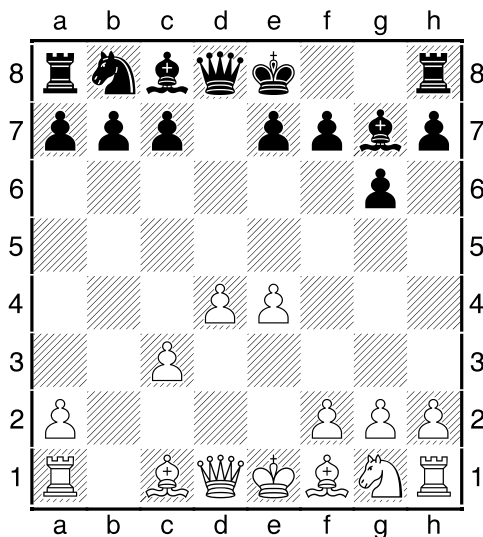
It starts like this.

1. d4 Nf6
2. c4 g6
3. Nc3 d5



Black changes tack and decides to play d5 rather than d6. You might think this isn't a very good move because White can build up a strong pawn centre by playing...

4. cxd5 Nxd5
5. e4 Nxc3
6. bxc3 Bg7



White's certainly happy to have such a good centre, but Black plans to attack it by playing c5 next move. White usually chooses either Nf3 or Bc4 (followed by Ne2) in this position.

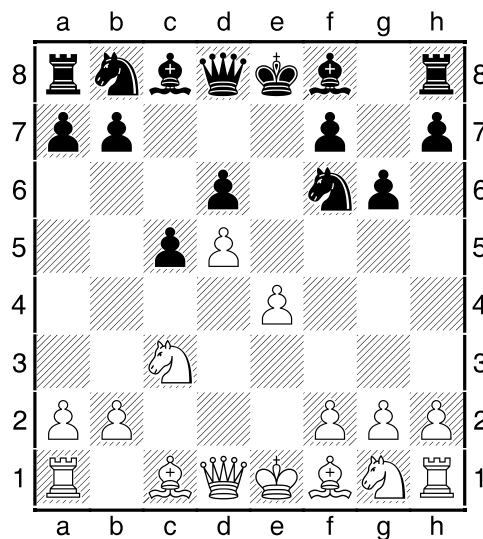
It's another interesting position with lots of chances for both sides.

There are also several openings including the word BENONI in their names. In these openings Black plays an early c5. The most important is the MODERN BENONI. There are several possible move orders, which have, as usual, advantages and disadvantages.

1. d4 Nf6
2. c4 c5

Yes, another PAWN BREAK. As usual, White can push, trade or defend. The most interesting plan here is to push.

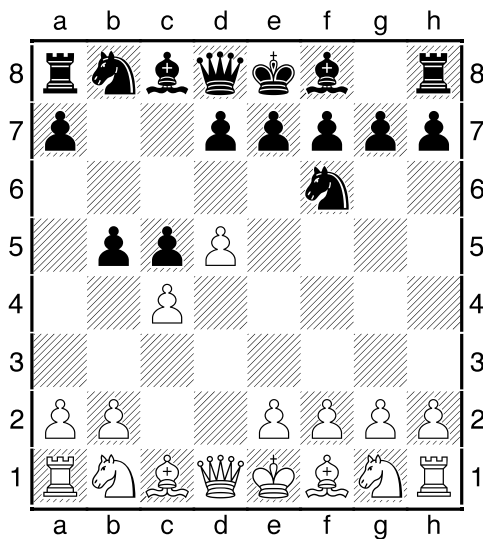
3. d5 e6
4. Nc3 exd5
5. cxd5 d6
6. e4 g6



Another very exciting position. White has a strong position in the centre but Black will have a powerful bishop on g7, and will attack on the queen-side and down the e-file.

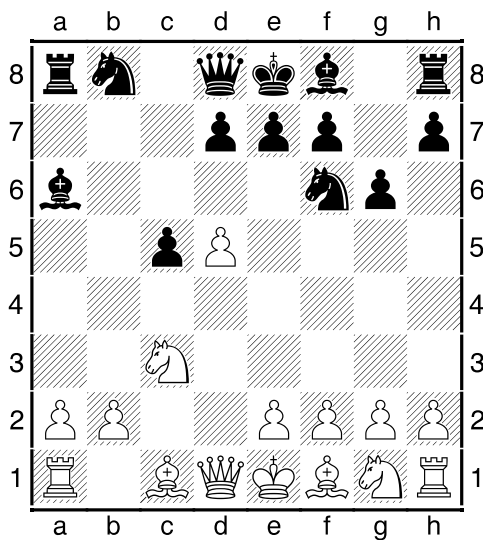
Black has an alternative on move 3: the **BENKO GAMBIT**, named after a Hungarian born American grandmaster.

1. d4 Nf6
2. c4 c5
3. d5 b5



Black plays a **PAWN SACRIFICE** for quick development and a queen-side attack.

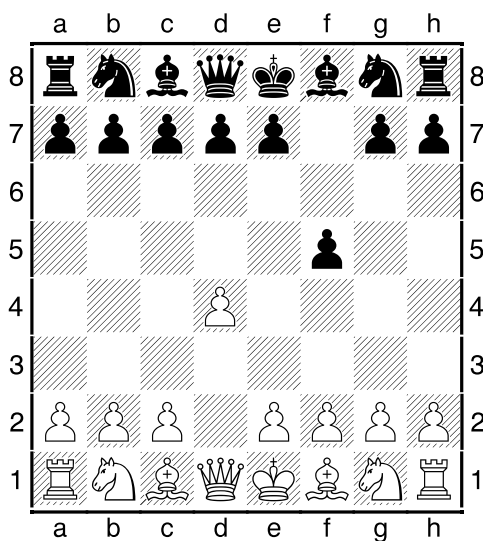
4. cxb5 a6
5. bxa6 Bxa6
6. Nc3 g6



Another fascinating position which you might want to try out yourself. If the white e-pawn moves Black will trade on f1 to prevent castling.

There's one other QUEEN'S PAWN OPENING it's worth looking at quickly: the DUTCH DEFENCE.

1. d4 f5



A left-handed SICILIAN DEFENCE. Black starts to set up an attack on the king side.

White has three equally popular replies here: 2. c4, 2. Nf3 and 2. g3. The KING SIDE FIANCHETTO is often played against the DUTCH DEFENCE to try to block Black's attack.

Black has several possible plans in this opening.

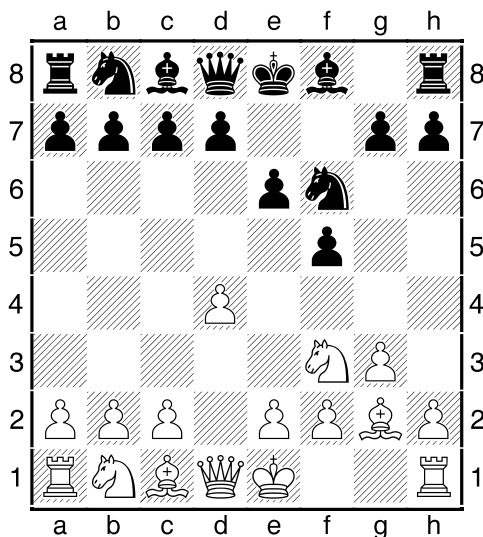
A few more moves:

2. Nf3 Nf6

3. g3 e6

Another good move for Black here is 3... g6, planning Bg7, 0-0, d6 and perhaps e5.

4. Bg2



Black has another choice of plans here. You can set up a STONEWALL formation, playing d5 and c6. This is a sort of TRIANGLE formation with the extra move f5. White has an OUTPOST on e5 and Black has a BAD BISHOP on c8, but chances of a king-side attack. Or you can play Be7, d6 and o-o, perhaps again aiming for a later e5.

You can see that queen's pawn openings lead to very different positions from what you're probably used to if most of your games start 1. e4 e5. As well as being very different from the FOUR KNIGHTS which you learnt about at the start of this book, they're also very different from each other.

The better you get at chess, and the more you learn about chess, the more you'll realise what an interesting and exciting game it can be.

Don't be afraid to try out these openings in your own games.

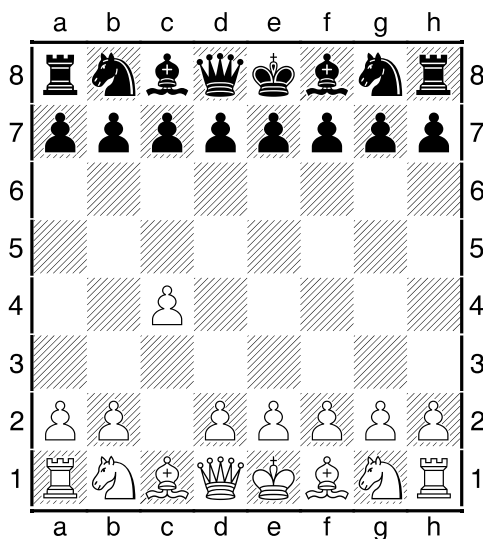
But 1. e4 and 1. d4 are not the only good first moves for White.

You might remember that 1. Nf3 is the third most popular move, and 1. c4 is the fourth most popular move.

Let's move on and consider these moves.

OTHER FIRST MOVES

We'll start by looking at 1. c4: the ENGLISH OPENING.



White's usual plan when playing this move is to fight for control of the d5 square. You'll usually continue with Nc3, g3 and Bg2.

Black has, as always, a wide choice of replies. 1... d5 is not a very good move: after 2. cxd5 Qxd5 3. Nc3 White gains time and also gets an advantage in the centre.

1... e5, 1... Nf6 and 1... c5 are all excellent replies, though.

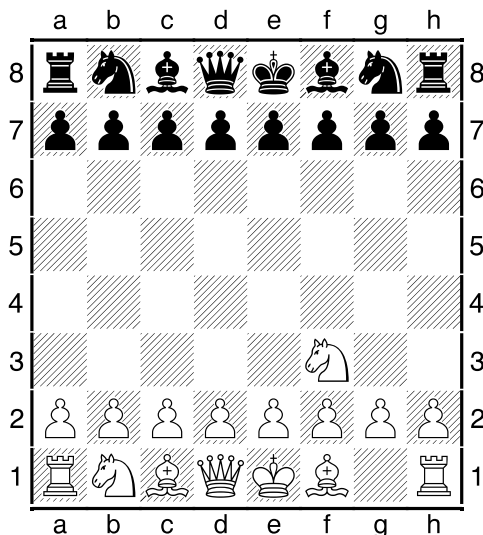
If you look at the position after 1. c4 e5 you'll see that it's a reversed SICILIAN DEFENCE. White will usually play the sort of moves Black plays in that opening.

After 1. c4 Nf6 you can change your mind and play 2. d4 if you want, or you can continue with your plan of controlling d5.

After 1. c4 c5 you might consider playing Nf3 to prepare the PAWN BREAK d4 at some point.

Again, both sides have plenty of choices and plenty of ways to create an interesting position.

1. c4 is, you might remember, the fourth most popular first move. The third most popular move is 1. Nf3.



This is sometimes called the RÉTI OPENING, although that really only applies where Black plays d5 and White attacks the centre with c4. It's named after Richard Réti, a Czech player from the 1920s, the decade in which many of these openings were developed.

White might have several ideas in mind when playing this move. Sometimes White will follow up with d4 fairly soon, making it a QUEEN'S PAWN OPENING of some sort. Sometimes White will use a KING SIDE FIANCHETTO and play the moves Black would play in the KING'S INDIAN DEFENCE: we call this the KING'S INDIAN ATTACK. Sometimes White will prefer a QUEEN SIDE FIANCHETTO, a reversed QUEEN'S INDIAN DEFENCE sometimes called the NIMZO-LARSEN ATTACK.

What might Black play in reply? It would be a mistake to play 1... e5, which just loses a pawn, so you'll consider 1... Nf6, 1... d5 or 1... c5.

After 1... Nf6 White can play 2. d4 with a QUEEN'S PAWN OPENING, 2. c4 with an ENGLISH OPENING, 2. g3 or 2. b3.

After 1... d5 White has the same choice. Here, 2. c4 is the original RÉTI OPENING.

If you play 1... c5 you have to know the SICILIAN DEFENCE because White might decide to play 2. e4. Of course, 2. c4, 2. g3 or 2. b3 are also good moves. It depends which system you want to play.

Nearly all games played by strong players start with one of the first four moves you've already seen.

Let's end this book by having a look at a few other moves you might meet.

1. f4 is BIRD'S OPENING, named after a 19th century English player. Black usually replies with 1... d5, which is a reversed DUTCH DEFENCE.

1. g3 will become a reversed KING'S INDIAN DEFENCE (KING'S INDIAN ATTACK) or perhaps a reversed MODERN DEFENCE.

1. b3 will probably end up like 1. Nf3 followed by 2. b3 – a NIMZO-LARSEN ATTACK.

These three moves are not played a lot at your level, but are quite popular at adult club level, where a lot of players like to avoid the most popular openings.

Then there's another big gap.

1. Nc3 is a reasonable developing move, but gives Black a free choice. After 1... e5 White might play 2. e4 with a VIENNA GAME, and after 1... d5 White might also play 2. e4, which is a variation of the SCANDINAVIAN DEFENCE.

1. b4 has the idea of 2. Bb2. One line goes: 1. b4 e5 2. Bb2 Bxb4 3. Bxe5 Nf6.

Other moves are very rare, although they're sometimes played by inexperienced players who haven't studied the opening. They're either not very good or will lead back to another opening.

If you meet something unusual, if you follow the basic principles you learnt at the start of the book you won't go far wrong:

Control the centre

Develop your MINOR PIECES (knights and bishops) quickly

Make your king safe

Calculate all CHECKS, CAPTURES and THREATS as far as you can.

FINAL WORDS

You've now learnt a lot about what's going on at the start of the game. You've also learnt a bit, but not very much, about the most popular openings.

What should you do next?

You're at the stage in your chess development where you should be trying out a lot of new ideas. Don't be afraid if something goes wrong: that's how you learn.

You should certainly play some games with both the FRENCH DEFENCE (to learn about PAWN CHAINS) and the SICILIAN DEFENCE (because it's very popular, and also very strong).

You should also spend some time playing 1. d4 with White, in particular using the QUEEN'S GAMBIT if your opponent plays 1... d5.

You should also read *CHESS GAMES FOR HEROES*, in which you'll be able to play through some games with these openings and try to guess the moves.

Write down the moves of your games and try to go through them with a stronger player, who will be able to help you work out where you could have improved. The best way to improve is to analyse your own games.

Watching videos is good – but beware. There are a lot of good videos out there, but there are also a lot of videos advising you to play bad openings or to set pointless traps. The most popular openings are most popular for a good reason – they're the best openings. Don't waste time studying unpopular openings. Decide first which opening you want to study before looking for videos online, rather than just watching random videos.

Playing all the most important openings with both colours will give you a better idea of which sorts of position you enjoy playing, which openings you like, which give you good results.

The next step will then be to choose a few openings you like and find out as much as you can about them. But that is beyond the scope of this book.

ANSWERS TO QUIZ QUESTIONS

Q1. a) e4
Q2. c) d4
Q3. b) Nf3
Q4. a) Bc4
Q5. a) Bb5
Q6. b) Nc3

Q7. b) e5
Q8. b) c5
Q9. c) Nc6
Q10. a) Nf6
Q11. a) Bc5
Q12. c) Nf6

Q13. Nxe5 (capturing a free pawn)
Q14. Qxf7# (CHECKMATE)
Q15. Qxe5# (CHECKMATE again)
Q16. exf6 (winning a knight for a pawn)
Q17. Nd6# (SMOTHERED MATE)
Q18. Nxe5 (capturing a free pawn)

Q19. dxe5 (capturing a free pawn)
Q20. Qh4# (CHECKMATE)
Q21. Qxe4# (CHECKMATE again)
Q22. axb5 (winning a bishop for a pawn)
Q23. Nxd4 (capturing a free knight)
Q24. Qxf2# (another CHECKMATE)

Q25. c) exd5 (meeting Black's threat)
Q26. a) Nc3 (meeting Black's threat)
Q27. a) e5 (meeting Black's threat)
Q28. c) d4 (pawn in the centre)
Q29. b) Nf3 (developing a knight)
Q30. a) d4 (pawn in the centre)

Q31. a) Nc6 (meeting White's threat)
Q32. b) Nc6 (meeting White's threat)
Q33. a) Nf6 (creating an equal threat)
Q34. c) d6 (meeting White's threat)
Q35. c) exd4 (meeting White's threat)
Q36. a) a6 (not allowing Nxe5)

Q37. a) Nc3 (meeting Black's threat)
Q38. c) e5 (meeting Black's threat)
Q39. b) d3 (meeting Black's threat)
Q40. c) Nc3 (meeting Black's threat)
Q41. b) Nxd4 (meeting Black's threat)
Q42. a) Nc3 (meeting Black's threat)

Q43. c) g6 (meeting White's threat)
Q44. a) Nf6 (meeting White's threat)
Q45. b) Qe7 (meeting both White's threats)
Q46. a) exd5 (recapturing a pawn)
Q47. b) Nd5 (meeting White's threat)
Q48. c) Qa5 (meeting White's threat)

Q49. c) Ba4 (meeting Black's threat)
Q50. a) Nxd4 (recapturing a pawn)
Q51. b) Be3 (meeting Black's threat)
Q52. a) Nb3 (meeting Black's threat)
Q53. a) Nc3 (meeting Black's threat)
Q54. c) Nxc6 (not losing material)

Q55. c) dxc6 (recapturing a piece)
Q56. b) d5 (meeting White's threat)
Q57. b) Bd6 (meeting White's threat)
Q58. a) Nxe4 (recapturing a pawn)
Q59. a) Qxg5 (capturing a free knight)
Q60. c) exd4 (meeting White's threats)

Q61. Qc1 (DOUBLE THREAT: Qxc8+ and Bxh6)
Q62. Bxc6+ (CAPTURING THE DEFENDER)
Q63. Qc4 (FORK: c5 and d5)
Q64. Nxe5 (UNPIN tactic: 1... Bxd1 2. Bb5+ wins a piece)
Q65. Ne6+ (FORK + DISCOVERED ATTACK)
Q66. Qa4+ (QUEEN FORK)

Q67. Qh4+ (QUEEN FORK)
Q68. Nf3# (CHECKMATE, EXPLOITING THE PIN)
Q69. Bxf2+ (FORK, and if 2. Kxf2, Ng4+ with a FORK or TRAPPING THE QUEEN to follow)
Q70. Qe3+ (QUEEN FORK)
Q71. Nxd4 (if 2. Qxd4, Bc5 is a PIN)
Q72. Qh4+ (QUEEN FORK)

Q73. Qxd5 (DECOY: 1... Qxd5 Nxc7+ is a FORK)
Q74. Qd5 (QUEEN FORK threatening Qxe4 and Qxf7#)
Q75. Bxf6 (if Black recaptures, Qe4 FORKS h7 and a8)
Q76. Ng5 (DISCOVERED ATTACK: 1... fxg5 2. Bxb7 TRAPS the rook)
Q77. Nxf6+ (followed by 2. d5 will be a PAWN FORK)
Q78. Qd5 (TRAPPING the rook on a8 and winning material)

Q79. Nxd4 (DISCOVERED ATTACK)
Q80. d5 (threatening dxc4 and Bc5 (PIN))
Q81. Nf3+ (DISCOVERED ATTACK)
Q82. Nxe4 (UNPIN tactic: 2. Bxd8 Bxd2+ wins a piece)
Q83. Qe5+ (QUEEN FORK: Qxa1 will follow)
Q84. Bxb5 (2. Bxb5 Qa5+ is a QUEEN FORK)

- Q85. Nh4 (TRAPPING the queen)
- Q86. c3 (if 1... Be7, Qa4+ is a QUEEN FORK, and if 1... Ba5, 2. b4 TRAPS the bishop)
- Q87. Nxe5 (if 1... Bxd1, 2. Nxc6+ is a DISCOVERED CHECK winning back the queen, and if 1... Nxe5, 2. Qxg4 EXPLOITS THE PIN)
- Q88. Rxh7 (CAPTURING THE DEFENDER to threaten Qg6#)
- Q89. Na4 (TRAPPING the queen)
- Q90. Bb5 (PIN and DISCOVERED ATTACK winning the knight)
- Q91. Qxg2 (2. Rf1 Qxe4+ 3. Bxe2 Nf3# is a PIN MATE)
- Q92. e5 (followed by e4 with a PAWN FORK)
- Q93. Nd4 (DEFLECTING the knight: 2. Nxd4 allows Qh2#)
- Q94. Bxf3 (CAPTURING THE DEFENDER and winning a piece)
- Q95. Qxc3+ (2. Bxc3 Bxc3+ 3. Qd2 Bxd2+ will leave Black a piece up)
- Q96. e6 (DISCOVERED ATTACK: White can't save both knights)
- Q97. Qf3 (QUEEN FORK hitting f5 and b7)
- Q98. Qe1+ (QUEEN FORK hitting a5)
- Q99. Nb5 (DISCOVERED ATTACK – if 1... Qd8, Nd6# is a PIN MATE and 1... Qb6, Nd6+ is a FORK)
- Q100. c5 (TRAPPING the bishop)
- Q101. Bxf7+ (DEFLECTION to win the queen)
- Q102. Bg5 (1... Qf7 2. Qd8# or 1... Qg6 2. Qd8+ Kf7 3. Nxe5 is a FORK)
- Q103. dxc4 (DISCOVERED ATTACK: 2. Bxf6 is met by cxd3)
- Q104. Nh4 (threatening Qxg2#: after 2. g3, Nf3+ is a KNIGHT FORK)
- Q105. c5 (after the queen moves, c4 TRAPS the bishop on b3)
- Q106. Rxa2 (after 2. Rxa2, c2 and the pawn PROMOTES)
- Q107. Bb4+ (a DISCOVERED ATTACK: 2. c3 Qxd4 as the c-pawn is PINNED)
- Q108. Bxf3 (after White recaptures, Qe5+ is a QUEEN FORK hitting a1)
- Q109. b) dxe4 (It's mate in 2 (a PIN MATE) after Bxd8, and d4 will leave White behind on material)
- Q110. a) Bxd5 (Qxd4 loses a piece after c5 when Qd5 is met by Be6, while Bxf7+ is an unsound sacrifice)
- Q111. c) Nf3 (the other moves allow Bg4, TRAPPING the white queen)
- Q112. c) e3 (bxc5 allows Nd3# (a PIN MATE) while Nb3 allows a check on d3 followed by a capture on f2)
- Q113. a) Qd2 (f3 allows Qxg5 and Nf3 allows Nxe4, EXPLOITING THE PIN)
- Q114. b) g3 (Black is threatening Nd4, followed by Nxf3 and Qxh2#)
- Q115. a) Qa5 (Nxd4 loses the queen, and Qxd4 also loses the queen after Bxc6+ (CAPTURING THE DEFENDER))
- Q116. b) exd5 (cxd5 allows a QUEEN FORK: Qa4+ while Nf6 fails to recapture the pawn)
- Q117. c) Nbd7 (Nc6 gives up a knight for no reason, and Qd7 also loses a knight after Bb5 (PIN))
- Q118. c) Nxd7 (The other two captures allow Bxg2 but after Nxd7, Bxg2 is met by Qxg5 while Bxd8 allows gxh1Q)
- Q119. a) Nd7 (Black has to prevent the DISCOVERED ATTACK Bb5+ winning the queen)
- Q120. a) Nc6 (Black has to prevent the QUEEN FORK Qb5+)

- Q121. a) Ncb5 (Ndb5 allows Nf3# and Bd2 allows Nd3#)
- Q122. a) Nxc6 (Qf3 allows Nxd4 and o-o allows a PIN: Nxd4 followed by Bc5)
- Q123. c) o-o (Nxd4 is an unsound sacrifice and Nxe5 allows a QUEEN FORK: Qa5+)
- Q124. c) dxc5 (the knight on c3 is PINNED so Qa4+ loses a queen for nothing and Bb5+ loses a bishop for nothing)
- Q125. c) Ng5 (Nxe5 allows a QUEEN FORK: Qa5+ and dxe4 loses a pawn after the queen exchange)
- Q126. a) Bb5 (Bd3 and Qf3 both allow Nxd4 giving Black a free knight)
- Q127. c) Ng4 (dxe5 loses the queen after Bxf7+ (DEFLECTION) and after Nxd5 White captures twice on d5 with a very strong position)
- Q128. b) Be6 (Nc5 allows checkmate and Qe7 loses a knight, but after 1... Be6 2. Qxe4, d5 wins the piece back using a PAWN FORK)
- Q129. b) d6 (g6 allows Nf6# and b5 can just be taken)
- Q130. a) Qc8 (dxe5 doesn't meet White's threat, and Qd7 allows a QUEEN FORK: Qf3 hitting f5 and b7)
- Q131. a) Nc6 (d6 and d5 both allow the QUEEN FORK Qa4+)
- Q132. c) Bb7 (Ba6 and Na6 both allow Bxa6 followed by the QUEEN FORK Qa4+)

GLOSSARY

ATTACK

If we say that a piece **ATTACKS** an enemy piece we mean that it could capture it next move. After the moves 1. e4 e5 2. Qh5 the white queen **ATTACKS** three pawns. An **ATTACK** is not the same as a **THREAT**.

BACK RANK MATE

A **CHECKMATE** with a rook or queen on the **BACK RANK**, most typically when the king's potential escape squares are blocked by his own pawns.

BACKWARD PAWN

A pawn which is behind pawns of the same colour on the adjacent files and cannot easily advance. A **BACKWARD PAWN** on a **HALF-OPEN FILE** can often be very weak.

BAD BISHOP

A bishop blocked in by its own pawns.

BLUNDER

A mistake, in particular a bad mistake which loses **MATERIAL** or allows **CHECKMATE**.

CASTLING

A special move with the king and the rook. To **CASTLE** you move your king two squares towards the rook and your rook over the top to the next square. If you're White and you **CASTLE** on the **KING SIDE** your king will end up on g1 and your rook on f1. If you castle on the **QUEEN SIDE** your king will end up on c1 and your rook on d1. You can only **CASTLE** if a) neither your king nor rook has moved b) there are no pieces between the king and the rook c) you are not in **CHECK** at the moment d) you do not move into **CHECK** and e) the square crossed by your king is not **CONTROLLED** by an enemy piece.

CHECK

A move which **THREATENS** the enemy king. If you are **IN CHECK** you have to get out of check immediately. You are not allowed to play a move that leaves your king **IN CHECK**, but if your opponent does this you **CANNOT** win the game by capturing the enemy king: instead you must ask your opponent to retract the move and play a legal move instead, if possible moving the piece that was touched.

CHECKMATE

A situation in which one player is IN CHECK but CANNOT get out of CHECK, either by moving the king to a safe square, blocking the CHECK or capturing the piece giving CHECK. If you CHECKMATE your opponent you win the game.

COMBINATION

A series of moves, often involving a SACRIFICE, using a combination of TACTICAL ideas to gain an advantage or possibly to reduce a disadvantage.

CONTROL

A piece is said to CONTROL a square when it could capture an enemy piece landing on that square. For example, a white pawn on e4 CONTROLS the d5 and f5 squares.

DECOY

A move, sometimes a SACRIFICE, designed to force an enemy piece onto an unfavourable square, for instance, a square where it might be FORKED or PINNED.

DEFEND/DEFENCE

A piece which is DEFENDING another piece, or sometimes a square, is a piece which would capture an enemy piece. For example, after the moves 1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 the black knight on c6 is DEFENDING the pawn on e5 which is ATTACKED by the white knight on f3.

DEFLECTION

A move, sometimes a SACRIFICE, designed to force an enemy piece away from a square where it is carrying out an important defensive function.

DEVELOPMENT

At the start of the game we DEVELOP our pieces: we get them off the back RANK and into the game. Usually we develop our MINOR PIECES quickly. Queens and rooks usually stay at home early on. CASTLING is also a DEVELOPING move which we usually aim to play quickly.

DISCOVERED ATTACK

A move which, by another piece moving out of the way, opens up an attack from a LINE PIECE on an enemy target. If the attack from the LINE PIECE is a CHECK this move is a DISCOVERED CHECK.

DISCOVERED MATE

A DISCOVERED CHECK which is also CHECKMATE.

DOUBLE CHECK

A DISCOVERED CHECK where the piece moving away also gives CHECK so that the enemy king is in CHECK from two pieces at the same time. The only way to meet a DOUBLE CHECK is with a king move.

DOUBLED PAWNS

Two pawns of the same colour on the same file. DOUBLED PAWNS are often, but not always, a weakness. Three pawns of the same colour on the same file are TRIPLED PAWNS.

DRAW

There are several ways to DRAW a game of chess. You can draw by STALEMATE. You can draw by reaching a position where neither side can possibly get CHECKMATE: for example king against king, king and bishop against king or king and knight against king (sometimes called INSUFFICIENT MATERIAL). You can draw by AGREEMENT: one player proposes a draw and the other player accepts the proposal. In tournaments you can claim a draw by REPETITION if exactly the same position has been reached three times with the same player to move (note that it's REPETITION OF POSITION, not of moves) or by the 50 MOVE RULE if both players have played 50 moves without a pawn move or capture taking place.

EN PASSANT

A special pawn capture. If your pawn is on your FIFTH RANK and your opponent moves a pawn on an adjacent FILE TWO SQUARES you can if you choose CAPTURE the pawn EN PASSANT: as if it had moved only one square. If you have a white pawn on e5 and black moves the pawn from d7 to d5 you can, but only on your next move, capture it while it's passing the d6 square so your pawn ends up on d6.

EXCHANGE

The word EXCHANGE has two meanings in chess. It can mean a trade, particularly an equal trade, a trade of like for like. We might exchange queens, or pawns. It also means the advantage of rook for MINOR PIECE. So we might deliberately trade a rook for an enemy knight: we SACRIFICE the EXCHANGE or play an EXCHANGE SACRIFICE. We might also win the EXCHANGE or BLUNDER the EXCHANGE.

FIANCHETTO

A bishop development to g2/g7 or b2/b7 after moving the knight's pawn (usually) one square.

FILE

A vertical line of squares on a chessboard. We name the file based on its letter: the a-file through to the h-file.

FORK

A move which creates TWO THREATS at the same time with the same piece in different directions.

GAMBIT

An opening in which one player SACRIFICES MATERIAL to gain an advantage in, for example, development, centre control or king safety.

GOOD BISHOP

A bishop not blocked in by its own pawns.

ISOLATED PAWN

A pawn which has no pawns of the same colour on the adjacent files. An ISOLATED PAWN can often be a weakness.

KING SIDE

The side of the board on which the kings start: the e-, f-, g- and h-FILES.

LÉGAL'S MATE

A checkmate in which you move a PINNED knight, SACRIFICING your queen to get a CHECKMATE with your MINOR PIECES

LINE PIECE

A piece which moves along a straight line: a queen, rook or bishop.

MAJOR PIECE

Your MAJOR PIECES are your queen and rooks.

MATE

Another word for CHECKMATE, just as phone is another word for telephone.

MATE IN 2

A MATE IN 2 puzzle is a puzzle in which you have to find a move which FORCES MATE in two moves whatever your opponent plays in between. You play a move, and, no matter what I do next, you will CHECKMATE me the following move. There's no way for me to prevent it. Likewise, MATE IN 3, MATE IN 4, MATE IN 5 and so on.

MATERIAL

The words MATERIAL and POINTS are used in relation to the values of the pieces (according to the most popular, but not the most accurate, scale of values, a queen is worth 9 points, a rook 5 points, a bishop or a knight 3 points each, a pawn 1 point). We might play a move which wins MATERIAL or POINTS, or make a mistake which loses MATERIAL or POINTS.

MINOR PIECE

Your MINOR PIECES are your knights and bishops.

NOTATION

Chess NOTATION is a way of writing down chess moves. This book uses STANDARD (ALGEBRAIC) notation, using the names of the squares from the FILES and RANKS. You might have been taught DESCRIPTIVE NOTATION (P-K4 rather than e4) if you learned chess a long time ago, or come across it in old books.

OUTPOST

A square in or near enemy territory which is protected by a friendly pawn and cannot be attacked by an enemy pawn. Knights on OUTPOSTS are often very strong. Sometimes also called a SUPPORT POINT.

OVERWORKED PIECE

A piece carrying out two defensive duties at the same time which can be DEFLECTED away from one of its jobs.

PASSED PAWN

A pawn which can potentially reach the end of the board without being blocked or captured by an enemy pawn.

PAWN BREAK

A pawn move attacking a blocked enemy pawn, allowing or forcing a pawn exchange to open up the position. Sometimes also called a PAWN LEVER.

PHILIDOR'S LEGACY

A form of SMOTHERED MATE involving a DOUBLE CHECK followed by a QUEEN SACRIFICE.

PIN

A situation in which a piece CANNOT or SHOULD NOT move because it would expose another piece to capture along a line. Only LINE PIECES can PIN enemy pieces. A PIN against a king is an ABSOLUTE PIN: the pinned piece is not allowed to move. If a piece is PINNED against a queen, it CAN move but will allow the queen to be captured. A piece may also be PINNED against a square, typically a MATING square.

PIN MATE

A form of CHECKMATE in which it at first appears that another piece can capture or block the checking piece, but it cannot in fact do so because it is PINNED against the king.

POINTS

The values of the pieces (see MATERIAL). The POINTS you might score in a chess tournament are not the same thing at all.

PROMOTION

When your pawn reaches the BACK RANK it is PROMOTED. You exchange the pawn for another piece of your choice: a queen, rook, bishop or knight. As the queen is the most powerful piece you will usually choose a queen. You're allowed to have more than one queen on the board at the same time (and also more than two rooks, bishops or knights, should you choose).

QUEEN SIDE

The side of the board on which the queen starts: the a-, b-, c-, and d-FILES.

RANK

A horizontal line of squares on a chessboard, indicated by a number. Confusingly, we usually refer to ranks from our own perspective. If we talk about White's SEVENTH RANK, for example, we mean the RANK numbered 7, but if we talk about Black's SEVENTH RANK we mean the RANK numbered 2.

SACRIFICE

A move that deliberately loses material in order to gain an advantage. You might play a SACRIFICE because you've LOOKED AHEAD and seen that you can get CHECKMATE, or because you can win the material back, maybe with interest. If you accidentally lose a piece because of an oversight it's a BLUNDER, not a SACRIFICE.

SCHOLAR'S MATE

A CHECKMATE on the f7/f2 square at the start of the game, with the queen supported by a bishop. For example: 1. e4 e5 2. Qh5 Nc6 3. Bc4 Nf6 4. Qxf7#. Black's 4th move was a BLUNDER. Because this typically happens in four moves it's sometimes also called the FOUR MOVE MATE.

SKEWER

A move by a LINE PIECE which THEATENS two enemy pieces in the same direction. The front piece has to move out of the way, allowing the rear piece to be captured.

SMOTHERED MATE

A knight CHECKMATE in which the enemy king is surrounded by his own pieces, with the knight jumping over them to CHECK the king.

STALEMATE

A position in which the player whose turn it is to move is NOT IN CHECK but can make no legal moves. The result of the game is a DRAW. Note that STALEMATE is not another word for DRAW: it's just one type of DRAW.

STRATEGY

STRATEGY in chess involves long-term planning. This means thinking about how you can get your pieces onto good squares, and keep your opponent's pieces off good squares. It's often said that TACTICS is what you do when there's something to do, while STRATEGY is what you do when there's nothing to do.

TACTICS

TACTICS in chess is a loose term involving ATTACKING and DEFENDING, TACTICAL DEVICES such as FORKS, PINS and DISCOVERED ATTACKS, COMBINATIONS and CHECKMATES. Books on TACTICS will include puzzles based on some or all of these themes.

TEAM ATTACK

A situation in which an enemy target is attacked by more than one piece. It may well also be defended by several pieces. For example, 1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. d4 creates a TEAM ATTACK on e5. Although this happens in almost every game of chess there's no generally accepted term so you probably won't come across the term TEAM ATTACK elsewhere.

THREAT

A THREAT is something you WANT to do next move: usually a move which wins MATERIAL or gets CHECKMATE. After 1. e4 e5 2. Qh5 the white queen is ATTACKING three pawns but is only THREATENING one pawn:

ZUGZWANG

A position in which, if it's your move, you have to play a move which makes your position worse. ZUGZWANG positions often occur in PAWN ENDINGS.

ZWISCHENZUG

An 'in-between' move: for example if, instead of making a recapturing you play another move first which your opponent has to deal with, only making the recapture later.

OPENING NAMES

FOUR KNIGHTS GAME/OPENING

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Nc3 Nf6

SPANISH GAME/OPENING (RUY LOPEZ)

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5

GIUOCO PIANO

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 Bc5

TWO KNIGHTS DEFENCE

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 Nf6

SCOTCH GAME/OPENING

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. d4

PETROFF DEFENCE

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6

PHILIDOR DEFENCE

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 d6

KING'S GAMBIT

1. e4 e5 2. f4

DANISH GAMBIT

1. e4 e5 2. d4 exd4 2. c3

VIENNA GAME

1. e4 e5 2. Nc3

BISHOP'S OPENING

1. e4 e5 2. Bc4

SICILIAN DEFENCE

1. e4 c5

FRENCH DEFENCE

1. e4 e6

CARO-KANN DEFENCE

1. e4 c6

SCANDINAVIAN (CENTRE COUNTER) DEFENCE

1. e4 d5

ALEKHINE DEFENCE

1. e4 Nf6

PIRC DEFENCE

1. e4 d6 2. d4 Nf6

MODERN DEFENCE

1. e4 g6

COLLE SYSTEM

1. d4 d5 2. Nf3 Nf6 3. e3

LONDON SYSTEM

1. d4 d5 2. Nf3 Nf6 3. Bf4

TORRE ATTACK

1. d4 d5 2. Nf3 Nf6 3. Bg5

QUEEN'S GAMBIT ACCEPTED

1. d4 d5 2. c4 dxc4

QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED

1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6

QUEEN'S GAMBIT SLAV DEFENCE

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6

TROMPOWSKY ATTACK

1. d4 Nf6 2. Bg5

NIMZO-INDIAN DEFENCE

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 Bb4

QUEEN'S INDIAN DEFENCE

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nf3 b6

BOGO-INDIAN DEFENCE

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nf3 Bb4+

KING'S INDIAN DEFENCE

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 Bg7

GRÜNFIELD DEFENCE

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 d5

MODERN BENONI

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 c5 3. d5 e6

BENKO GAMBIT

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 c5 3. d5 b5

OLD INDIAN DEFENCE

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 d6 3. Nc3 Nbd7

DUTCH DEFENCE

1. d4 f5

ENGLISH OPENING

1. c4

RÉTI OPENING

1. Nf3

BIRD'S OPENING

1. f4

NIMZO-LARSEN ATTACK

1. b3

SOKOLSKY OPENING

1. b4