

Lesson 25: Chess Openings I

The Start of a Game



Back in Lesson 10 we learned three key principles for the start of a game of chess:

1. Occupy the central squares with pawns.
2. Attack the centre with knights and bishops.
3. Place your king in safety by castling.

These are important ideas to remember but you'll also have to adapt your play depending on your opponent's moves. Before they ever sit down at the board, top chess players spend

a lot of time studying the opening moves, trying to predict what their opponents might do and working out the strongest replies.

The best sequences of moves to start the game are called **OPENINGS**. Many have been given names, after a country, a chess player, and even an animal!

King's Pawn Openings

Do you have a favourite first move? One of the most popular ways to begin a game is 1. e4. This places a pawn in the important central squares. Black may copy this idea with 1...e5. A good move now is 2. Nf3, attacking the Black pawn, to which Black may reply 2...Nc6. We have reached the diagram above.

White now has several choices, each leading to its own opening:

3. Nc3 Nf6

The Four Knights



3. Bb5

The Spanish/Ruy Lopez



3. d4

The Scotch Game



The Giuoco Piano



Another possibility for White is 3. Bc4, the Italian Game, attacking the weak-spot on f7. If Black replies with 3...Bc5 we reach the position on the left, the Guicco Piano.

There are a huge number of possibilities even here. White can try to build a mass of central pawns by 4. c3 and 5. d4 which can lead to the Moeller Attack. White can sacrifice by 4. b4, the famous Evan's Gambit. If Black captures with the bishop, White plays

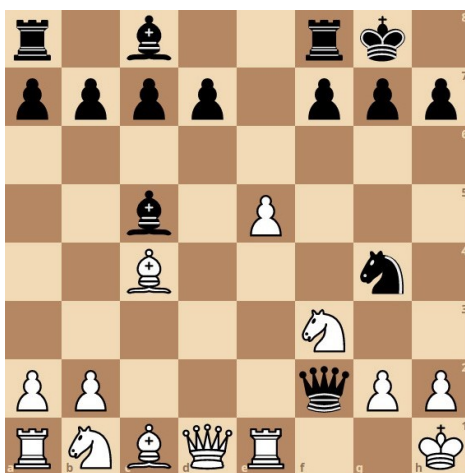
5. c3. This gains a move while the bishop retreats, leaving White to play 6. d4. Is that move worth a pawn? That depends on what both sides do next.

White can also play more carefully, with 4. d3 Nf6 5. Nc3 d6 6. Bg5. This is the Canal Variation of the Giuoco Piano and is a great starting point for new players. White's pieces are all in the game. White is one move away from castling to put their king safe. They have a dangerous pin on the Black knight on f6 and can increase the pressure by moving the knight from c3 to d5. Why not try the Canal Variation in your next game and see how you get on?



Endless Possibilities

There's a huge number of chess openings to study. Instead of playing 1...e5, Black might have played 1...c5 (Sicilian Defence), 1...e6 (French Defence), 1...c6 (Caro-Kann Defence), or many others. The next worksheet will look at alternatives to 1. e4 - a whole new story!



Black now has a move that forces a quick checkmate. Can you find it?

Grandmaster Test

One of the oldest known games of chess, played in 1620, began as a Giuoco Piano (left). The opening has gone badly wrong for White and



Jumbo Wordsearch

Now you know a little about King's Pawn Openings, it's time to try our Jumbo Wordsearch. All the openings can begin with 1. e4.



E	E	F	K	L	B	C	M	O	D	E	R	N	D	E	F	E	N	C	E
E	C	N	E	F	E	D	S	R	O	D	I	L	I	H	P	P	D	H	Q
A	N	N	Q	W	E	C	N	E	F	E	D	E	G	R	O	E	G	T	S
E	E	L	A	L	E	K	H	I	N	E	S	D	E	F	E	N	C	E	K
V	F	Z	Q	R	Y	O	K	W	E	U	M	N	X	P	I	O	T	P	L
M	E	E	F	K	L	T	I	B	M	A	G	S	N	A	V	E	T	E	E
I	D	W	F	J	L	V	C	A	T	C	N	M	O	R	U	V	E	T	C
L	N	W	N	L	K	U	T	R	I	Y	K	G	H	D	S	A	C	R	N
F	A	D	T	K	O	O	W	G	B	J	L	E	Q	O	P	K	N	O	E
E	I	W	F	H	P	N	V	J	M	Y	Q	M	P	W	L	K	E	V	F
E	V	S	V	O	E	W	R	H	A	A	Q	A	N	E	B	Z	F	S	E
M	A	D	P	E	L	P	O	I	G	U	X	G	V	N	V	C	E	D	D
A	N	P	E	R	K	L	T	S	T	R	F	N	B	S	N	M	D	E	N
G	I	S	U	O	I	P	Y	K	N	B	N	A	M	D	S	F	H	F	N
H	D	D	K	I	N	G	S	G	A	M	B	I	T	E	J	K	C	E	A
C	N	F	F	Q	E	E	T	U	H	R	G	L	B	F	H	J	N	N	K
T	A	H	R	V	P	R	G	H	P	E	S	A	T	E	T	Y	E	C	O
O	C	J	D	I	G	F	E	R	E	N	L	T	K	N	I	O	R	E	R
C	S	K	R	W	D	F	G	H	L	E	F	I	Q	C	A	Z	F	J	A
S	I	C	I	L	I	A	N	D	E	F	E	N	C	E	C	V	B	J	C

Alekhine's Defence

Caro-Kann Defence

Elephant Gambit

Evan's Gambit

French Defence

Hippopotamus

Italian Game

King's Gambit

Modern Defence

Owen's Defence

Petrov Defence

Philidors Defence

Pirc

Scandinavian

Scotch Game

Sicilian Defence

St George Defence