



**LAMC Chess Week 1
6/18/19**

Opening Principles and Strategies

A chess game is generally divided into three parts: the *opening*, *middlegame*, and *endgame*. In this lecture we will focus on the first stage, the opening.

Generally speaking, the opening stage of a game lasts 10-15 moves. During this time, both players are focused on bringing out their pieces and preparing them for a middlegame battle. Today we will discuss several opening strategies that can improve our own play.

- **Develop your pieces.** In a war, the army with more soldiers attacking is more likely to win the battle. So it is in chess: it is critically important to **bring out your pieces** and **ready them for confrontation**.
- **Centralize your pieces.** The center of the chessboard is located on the squares $d4$, $e4$, $d5$, and $e5$, as shown in the first diagram. While it is important to develop your pieces, it is also vital to **place them effectively**. A knight on the square $a1$ controls two squares; a knight placed in the center (for example, on the square $e4$) controls eight (see diagram 2).

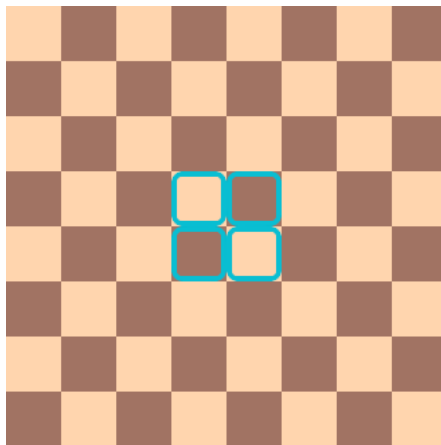


Diagram 1

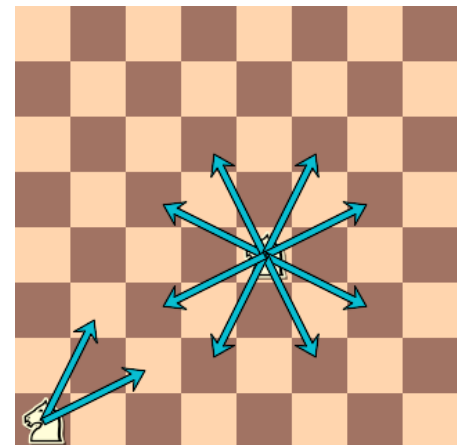
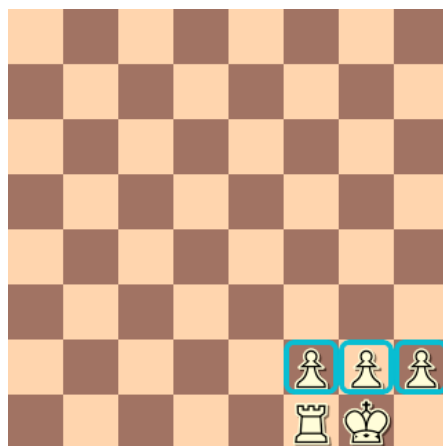


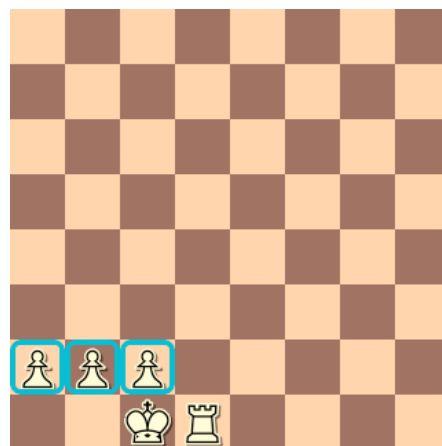
Diagram 2

- **Bring your pieces out in order of weakest to strongest.** Strong pieces are easy to attack and will have to move, thereby wasting time. Thus, bring out **knight** before **bishops** and **bring out your queen last**.

- **Castle early.** The king is the weakest piece on the chessboard -- if you take it, you win the game. Therefore, it is important to safeguard your king. This is best done by castling -- then the king is protected by three pawns in front of it, as seen in diagrams 3 and 4.



Kingside Castling



Queenside Castling

- **Don't make too many pawn moves in the opening.** Pawn moves are not considered developing moves; they can just help develop the other pieces. It is best to stick to moving the e- and d- pawns and only moving the other pawns when **absolutely necessary**.
- **Don't move the same piece twice.** If a piece is already developed, it is not necessary to move it again.

Ideal Opening Position

Let's assume that white would get 10 moves in a row from the starting position. An ideal sequence of moves, which follows the opening principles listed above, is:

1. e4; 2. d4; 3. Nf3; 4. Nc3; 5. Bc4; 6. Bf4; 7. 0-0; 8. Qe2; 9. Rad1; 10. Rfe1



Ideal Opening Setup

Example Game:

Note how white followed all the opening principles listed above, while black broke almost all of them. Moves that violate an opening principle are marked with a number indicating which principle the move broke.

Paul Morphy vs. Duke Carl and Count Isouard Paris, 1858

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 d6 3. d4 Bg4 (3) 4. dxe5 Bxf3 (6) 5. Qxf3 dxe5 6.Bc4 Nf6 7. Qb3 Qe7 (3)
8. Nc3 c6 (5) 9. Bg5 b5 (5) 10. Nxb5 cxb5 11. Bxb5+ Nbd7 12. 0-0-0 Rd8 13. Rxd7
13...Rxd7 14. Rd1 Qe6 15. Bxd7+ Nxd7 16. Qb8+ Nxb8 17. Rd8#

A very powerful game. Note how black never had time to castle.