My Chess Family

Why start a chess game with e4?

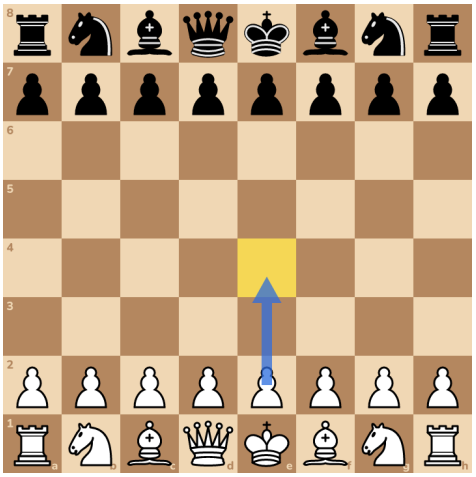
Try each question on a real board, then check the answers at the end of the sheet.

Why e4?

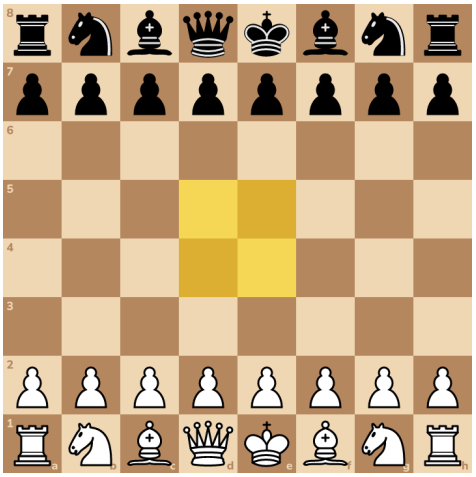
Your first move matters. A good first move helps your pieces come out and join the game. Let's look at one of the best, e4.



Try it 1. Push your e-pawn two squares, into the centre. That's the pawn on the e column, in front of your king.



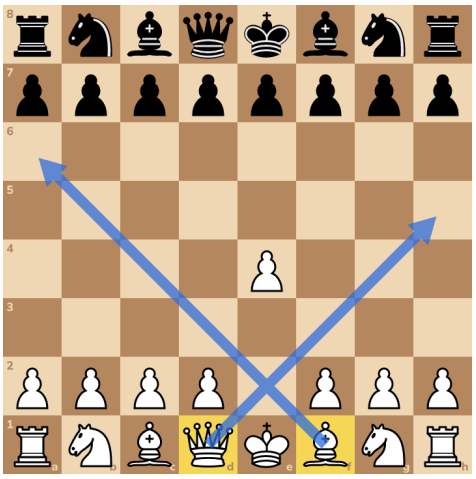
Remember the centre from Level 2? These four squares. Pieces in the centre reach more squares, like a knight with eight jumps instead of four.



Good one. Your pawn is in the centre now. It guards two squares in front of it, d5 and f5. Black's pieces can't stand there safely.



And just like you learned, it opens doors. Your bishop on f1 and your queen can both come out now.

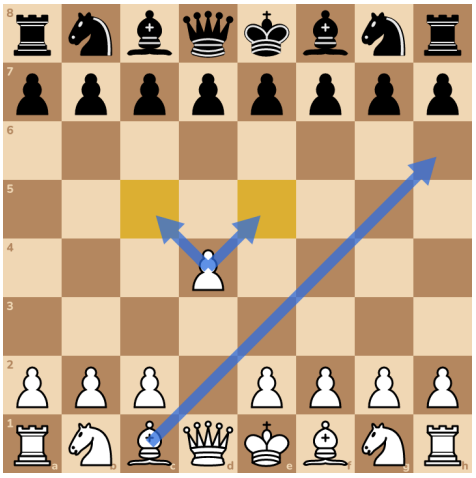


Try it 2. Which two pieces can come out now, because you played e4?

A: Bishop and queen **B: Rook and king**

C: Two rooks

Here's another good first move, d4. It guards c5 and e5, and opens a door for the other bishop. Both e4 and d4 are great ways to start.



What about a move on the edge, like a4? It guards just one square, b5, on the edge. It doesn't help a knight, a bishop or the queen come out.

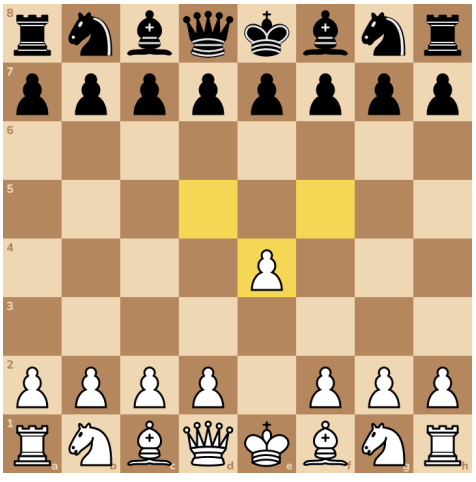


Try it 3. Which first move helps you most?

A: e4 **B: a4** **C: h4**



So e4 does three good things. It takes a square in the centre. It guards squares Black wants. And it lets your bishop and queen come out.



Answers

1. e4



2. A: Bishop and queen

Is there a bad side? Yes, a small one. The pawn on e4 can be attacked, and pawns can never move back. You'll need to look after it.



3. A: e4