My Chess Family

You play d4, they play Nf6: a plan for beginners

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

You play d4, they play Nf6

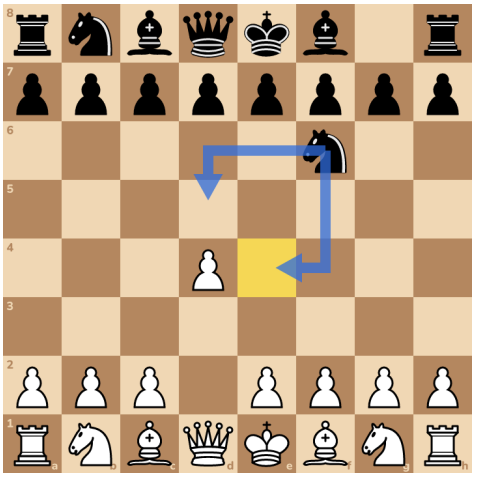
You played d4. Black answered with a knight, Nf6. It isn't a pawn, but it still fights for the centre.



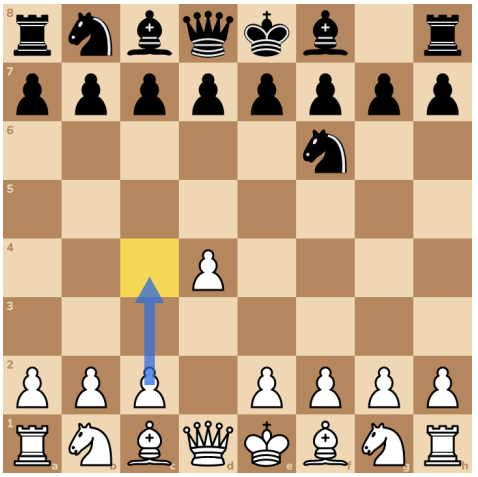
Try it 1. If you push your pawn to e4 now, what happens?

A: The knight takes it **B: It's safe**

The knight guards e4 and d5. It's there to stop you pushing your e-pawn to e4.



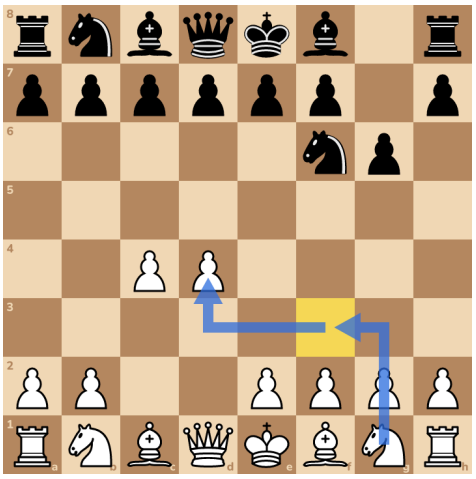
Try it 2. Push your c-pawn two squares.



Your pawns on c4 and d4 stand side by side. The c4 pawn guards d5, one of the squares Black's knight wanted. The bad side? Nothing guards the c4 pawn yet.



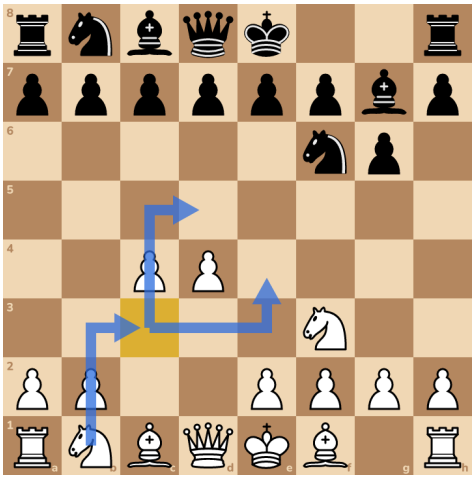
Black pushed g6, to make room for a bishop on g7. Now bring out your knights. First the one on g1. On f3 it guards your d4 pawn.



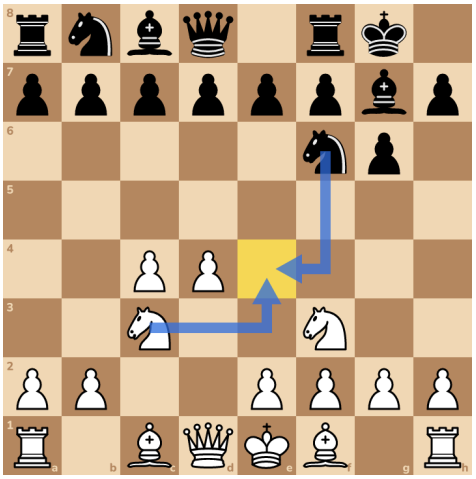
Try it 3. Bring your knight out to f3.



Try it 4. Now your other knight, to c3. It guards e4 and d5.



Count on e4 now. Black's knight attacks it once. Your knight on c3 guards it once. If Black's knight took a pawn there, your knight would take back.



Two pawns in the centre, on d4 and e4, and one beside them on c4! And your e4 push opened a door for your bishop on f1.



Try it 5. So e4 is safe now. Push your e-pawn two squares.



Try it 6. Bring your bishop to e2, to get ready to castle.



Look what Black just did. The pawn on e5 attacks your pawn on d4. Count. One attacker. Your knight and your queen guard it. So d4 is safe.



Well done. Black's knight stopped e4, so you took space with c4. You brought out your knights, and pushed e4 once it was guarded.

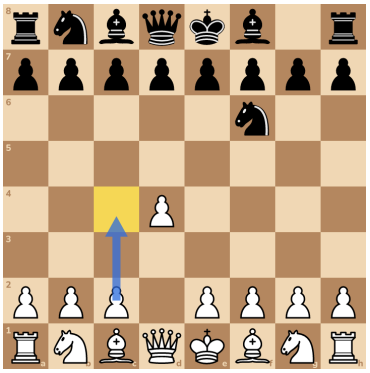
Try it 7. Castle!



Answers

1. A: The knight takes it

Right. Nothing guards e4 yet. So here's a good plan for this position. Take more space with a pawn on c4 first, then bring out your knights.



2. c4



3. Nf3



4. Nc3



5. e4



6. Be2



7. O-O

