My Chess Family

You play e4, they play e5: a plan for beginners

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

You play e4, they play e5

You played e4. Black answered with e5, a pawn in the centre too. Now the two pawns block each other.



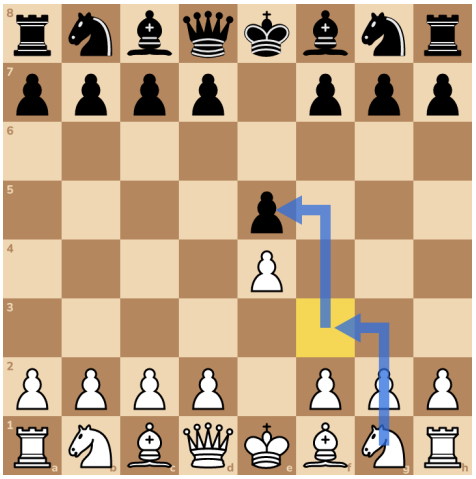
What should you do now? There isn't one right move. Here's a good plan for this position, with the ideas behind each move.



Black's pawn guards d4 and f4. Black wants a share of the centre, just like you.



Idea one. Bring out a piece that does a job. A knight on f3 would come towards the centre and attack Black's pawn on e5.



Try it 1. Bring your knight out to f3.



Could your knight take the pawn on e5 now? Count. One of your pieces attacks it, and one of Black's guards it.



Try it 3. Bring the bishop to c4.



Black had to look after the pawn. The knight on c6 guards it. That's a good move too. It comes out and does a job at the same time.



Try it 2. If your knight takes on e5, Black's knight takes it back. Is that a good trade for you?

A: Yes **B: No**

From c4, your bishop looks at f7, next to Black's king. Only the king guards f7, so it's a weak spot.



Black did the same thing. The bishop on c5 looks at f2, your weak spot next to your king. Keep an eye on it.



Try it 4. Castle! Move your king two squares towards the rook.



Try it 5. What should you do first?

A: Guard the pawn **B: Ignore it**

C: Move the king again

Idea three. Get your king safe. Your knight and bishop have moved, so the squares between your king and rook are empty.



Your king is tucked away behind its pawns now. But look! Black's new knight on f6 attacks your pawn on e4.



Try it 6. Guard your pawn on e4. A pawn on d3 or a knight on c3 would do it.



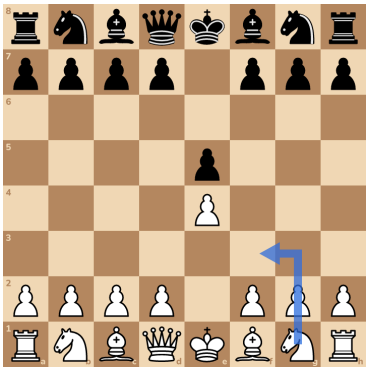
Well done. You followed three ideas. Take a share of the centre, bring out your pieces, and make your king safe. And you looked after your pawn.

The ideas stay the same in every game. The moves change. Always look at what the other player just did. Did they attack something? Did they leave something unguarded?



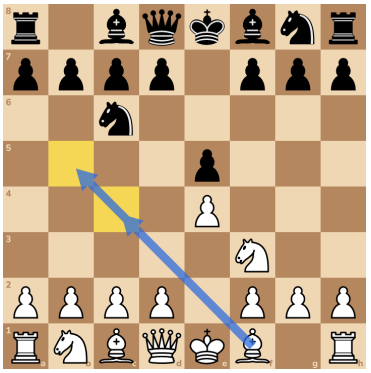
Answers

1. Nf3



2. B: No

Right, so leave the pawn alone. Idea two. Bring out another piece. Your bishop has two good squares, c4 and b5.



3. Bc4



4. O-O



5. A: Guard the pawn

6. d3 or Nc3

