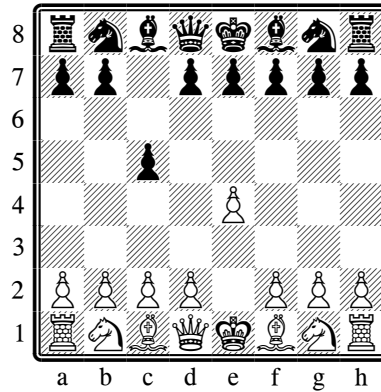


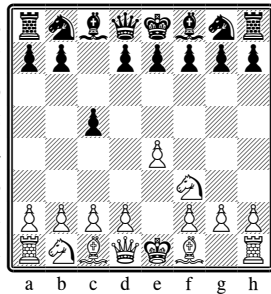
# CHESS OPENING THEORY

## The Sicilian Defense



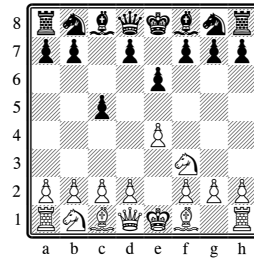
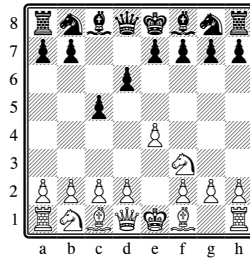
White plays for an open game, but Black avoids symmetry while still fighting for the center. The Sicilian Defense is positionally well-justified since Black threatens to trade a bishop pawn (slightly off center) for a center pawn, if White plays d4. The trouble is that Black has difficulty establishing his own center, and often submits to a “backward center” with pawns at d6 and e6, or a backward queen's pawn (with a pawn at e5). In any case, the defense leads to exciting, double-edged games with subtle maneuvering that can explode tactically at any moment.

In an Open Sicilian, White prepares first with Nf3, then plays d4 (with cxd4 and Nxd4):



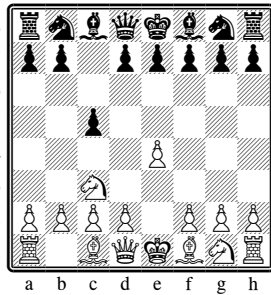
Another idea for White is to prepare d4 with c3, in order to capture back with a pawn, but Black can play 2 d5 right away.

Black's main choice is d6, leaving Another popular choice is e6, open many options, including a controlling the d5 square: kingside fianchetto.



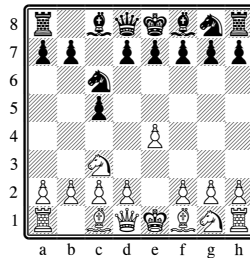
The most natural choice, Nc6, is good also.

If White does not play d4 at some point, it is a Closed Sicilian. White often aims to play f4.



White can also attack with f4 right away if she wants to shake things up!

Black can play the natural Nc6 to further restrict White's queen pawn. With e6, Black can try to play the “equalizing move” d5 early on.



Black often follows this with g6 and a kingside fianchetto.

