

Chapter 1

In General

The 'rules of thumb' which guide every chess player who has been taught the basics of chess should mostly be applied throughout every game but a player must, above all else, remain flexible. There are occasions when even the strongest of players abandons one or more of the well-known basic principles but **there should be a sound reason for doing so**. Take an unsound decision or, even, *deliberately make an unsound decision*, to cast aside these principles and your chickens (or your opponent's pawns) may well come home to roost!

Mastering openings is something that bedevils the weaker player. I shall assume in this book that the reader has access to a book on openings and already has adopted certain openings for his or her use. I will come to openings later and we will have a wider look at which ones may be more appropriate to your style of play. But, this book is not intended to go 'in depth' on this phase of the game and the reader will soon become aware that the author has used a fairly limited range of openings, at least for any prolonged period.

What are these basic principles, mentioned in the first paragraph above, which should steer every chess player through his game you ask? There are quite a few but, to start us on our way and get the reader quickly into a game, I would list the main ones as follows:

1. From move one **remember at each move to try to see the reason behind your opponent's move** and then react accordingly. Forget to do this and blithely carry on with your own plan or, simply, waste time on an inappropriate move and you will surely come a cropper.
2. During the opening phase – approximately the first ten moves – develop as many pieces as possible but, allied to this, do not let them block each other in any lasting manner. Remember that 'developing a piece' does not necessarily mean *moving* it: but it does mean opening up its pathways.
3. The freeing movement of pieces during the opening should be co-ordinated with a plan to gain control over the centre squares of the chessboard.
4. It is usually the best policy to castle at the earliest moment!
5. Do **not** waste a move. You should know what a tempo is ... it is the single time period used up in moving a piece. Each one is very important and if you move a piece out and then back again *without good reason* you have thrown away two tempi (in effect handed your opponent two free moves)!
6. Although pawns are by far the weakest pieces at the start of a game, because of their potential to 'queen' and also to be used as blockers or shields they must be handled carefully according to their own list of does and don'ts.....
 - a) Try to avoid a lone 'isolated' pawn. Without a companion pawn to, perhaps, defend it, it is a weakness.
 - b) A 'backward' pawn – the least advanced of a pair or chain of pawns – is a similar weakness, especially if it is permanently prevented from advance.
 - c) The pawns in front of your castled king should remain on their starting squares and used as a shield through the earlier part of a game. The exceptions to this are where a player moves the centre of three pawns up one square, usually to make room for the bishop on a long diagonal (fianchettoing the bishop) or moving the h-pawn up one square, often to prevent a knight advance or to drive away a bishop. This latter move also has the added merit of providing a bolt hole for the king should it be threatened along the back rank.

- d) The gambit is an opening where a pawn may be sacrificed to speed up development. *But beware of using this type of opening.* A pawn should normally not be given up easily and it takes a good player to capitalise on his pawn sacrifice!
 - e) Lastly: a passed pawn is one that has somehow got past the opposing pawns on either side. It can only be stopped by a piece. **It is a huge asset; a match winner** so, if you can get one, get it down the board - *but carefully.*
7. It should go without saying, assuming the reader is a fairly well-practised player, that the value of each piece is known **and respected**. Defend each pawn and piece as much as it is attacked. Later we will look at the respective strengths and values of knights and bishops but, since these are normally valued equally at three units (or three pawns), they may be exchanged one for the other. But do not exchange away your rook for an opponent's knight or bishop as you are two units down, the rook being valued at five units. The rules on exchanging pieces are quite complex, however, so look upon equal exchanges as being a generality In some of the illustrative games to follow, the reader will see examples where an unequal exchange has been made but, perhaps, the positional compensation outweighs the loss of material.
 8. If one of your pawns or pieces is being attacked (is *en prise*), beware that it may be a weakness but, conversely, look for your opponent's weaknesses and probe his defence by threatening *his* pieces.

Assuming you have carried through these few basic principles, which we will explore in the following games, you should arrive safely at an equal position (at least) for the decisive middle-game phase. Then, still holding to these vital elements of play, you may be able to gain the upper hand in the ensuing struggle and, hopefully, to force a win. The middle game is often the hardest part of a game to proceed with and fight your way through but we will look at middle game strategies in more detail in later chapters. We will also add to the list of basic principles to be followed as we proceed. But, you will not need reminding that fate is very fickle and there will be games where you will have followed all the correct procedures only to make a miscalculation, an error of judgement then all your fine schemes will crash about you. We will find some of those games included too!

Principle 1. What's your opponent up to?

Even during the opening phase of a game, it may not be totally apparent just what your opponent's game plan is. Some opponents will have a slow, methodical build-up. Can you see what their plan of action is? If they are hanging back with their pawns, should you push yours up the board to gain territory? Why *are* they hanging back? This will be dealt with in more detail in the chapter on opening play.

Towards the end of the opening phase, into and through the middle game, your opponent may make a move which is not a direct threat he may move a pawn forward for no clear reason or start manoeuvring, say, a knight (these clumsy brutes can take a bit of round-about manoeuvring sometimes). Because there is no obvious reason *do not write it off*. He must have some reason for the move! Very rarely is it a purposeless move simply because he can't think of anything better to doso, try to work out what he is up to.

If he has a deeper cunning he may well be trying to conceal his true intentions, of course, so do not take *every* move at 'first look' face value. And, provided your opponent gives you the chance, can *you* partially conceal *your own* intentions? Remember that this section **applies to all phases of the game**. Intentions can be

hidden away right from move one as well as throughout the middle game. The end-game is usually clearer as to what your opponent's plan is and what you should be doing, in a general sense that is – but none the easier for that on many occasions. The comments, which I make later, in the section on opening play, show how we all agonise over which openings to adopt. When, many years ago, I realised that the Dutch Defence, Stonewall Variation, which I had then adopted, had merits if played with the white pieces, I played it with an early f4 move. Later, I began to seek methods of *concealing my true intent*. I tried to cloak my plan by playing the opening moves out of sequence. This not only hid my strategy but allowed me some flexibility too. Even though this opening was not to be found in my Chess Openings book during the seventies (much to my great delight), if I played an immediate or early f4 my opponent would know straight away what I was up to. The following two games, illustrate the thoughts behind this first section. The first is the 'obvious to anyone' game plan. Then we will look at the concealment strategy.

Game 1. Leicestershire County Championship, 1977/78.
 Author v C Cordel. Opening: Stonewall Attack.

1	f4	d5	
2	e3	Nf6	
3	Nf3	e6	
4	d4	Ne4	This move, maybe later in the game and supported by ..f5, can be a very strong response by Black. Here, he withdraws the knight when it is attacked, disastrously losing tempi. Can you see why a strong player would do this? Would you?
5	Bd3	Nd6?	
6	Nbd2	Nc6	
7	c3	a5	Premature and not relevant to the immediate issues i.e. the battle for the centre and Black's undeveloped K-side.

For those readers not already familiar with the 'stonewall' principle, it is to build a barrier (a wall) of pawns across the long diagonal – often at the expense of a backward pawn on e3 – which, if Black castles on the K-side, act as a funnel for White's attacking pieces and a barrier to some of Black's defenders. (It can be played in like manner for Black with the Dutch Defence). Golombek's *Encyclopedia of Chess* dismisses this system, used with white or black pieces, fairly casually because it concedes control of certain central squares. However, the reader may note that it served the author quite well in many games included herein. Here, Black has kindly shuffled a well-placed knight away behind that barrier with his Q-side pieces.

8	Ne5	Ne7	
9	0-0	f6	
10	Qh5+	g6	
11	Nxg6	Nxg6	
12	Bxg6+	Kd7	A disastrous start for Black!
13	f5		White hits at Black's position, while it is still in chaos, to create further weaknesses.
	.....	Kc6	

14	fxe6	Bxe6	
15	Bd3	Be7	
16	c4?		White stumbles. Perhaps the lure of opening up the c-file for a rook attack swayed the decision but e4 may have led to a better attack.
	.....	Nxc4	
17	Nxc4	dx4	
18	Be4+	Bd5?	I rather think that this was not best for Black as it allows White to seize the initiative again.
19	Bxd5+	Qxd5	
20	Rf5	Qe4	
21	Bd2	b6	Black is wise to provide a bolt-hole for his king before proceeding with the penetrative Qc2.
22	Rc1		White's suspect 16 th move may be about to pay off at last.
	.....	Rag8	
23	Rxc4+	Kb7	
24	Qf3		Having regained his pawn advantage, White goes for a simple end-game and, also, for negating Black's threats.
	.....	Qxf3	
25	Rxf3	Rg4	
26	Rc2	Rag8	
27	Bc3		White has his eye on the isolated and, therefore, weak f-pawn (as per the earlier note regarding principle 6a).
	.....	R(8)g6	
28	Rcf2	Re4	
29	Kf1	Re6	
30	a3	Kc6	
31	Ke2	Kb5	
32	Kd3		It looks as though the kings are heading for a personal head-to-head!
	.....	c5	
33	b3	cx4	
34	a4+	Kc6	
35	Bxd4	h5	
36	Rf5	Rg5	
37	h4!		White does not want to make it easy for Black to 'uncork' his bishop with an ..f5 move.
	.....	Rg4	Black does 'uncork' the bishop but, at the cost of a valuable further pawn loss.
38	Rxh5	f5	
39	Rhxf5	Rxh4	Annotation by a GM here might say, "The game is won for White. It is only a matter of technique." Sometimes the technique can let the medium strength players down but, here, White does not go wrong.
40	Rc2+		(Forcing the king back)
	.....	Kb7	
41	Re5!		Doubled rooks can always be a danger so, White forces an exchange while he can to lessen the weight of the opposing

			army.
	.....	Rxe5	
42	Bxe5	Bc5	
43	Rc4		Trying to force a second exchange, even with same-colour-square bishops, was not so good ... but Black declines, anyway.
	.....	Rh5	
44	Bd4	Bb4	
45	Rc1	Rg5	
46	Rc2		Although wasting a tempo with his last move, White decides that this places the rook on a better square (than the restrictive g1).
	.....	Rh5	
47	g4	Rg5	The end-game follows the classic pattern whereby one should push forward a passed pawn and the opponent should try to block its path.
48	Rg2	Kc6	
49	e4	Be7	
50	Be3	Rg6	
51	g5	Rd6+	
52	Ke2	Rg6	
53	Kf3	Bc5?	
54	Bxc5	Kxc5	
55	Kf4		The added misjudgement (on top of swapping off a defender) of Black's 53 rd move is that it puts the king further out of play - with no hope of capturing the pawn on b3, of course.
	.....	Kd6	
56	Kf5	Rg8	
57	e5+	Ke7	
58	g6	Rf8+	
59	Ke4	Rg8	
60	Rg3	Ke6	
61	Rc3	Kd7	
62	Kf5	Rf8+	
63	Kg5	Ke6	
64	g7	Rb8	
65	Rc7	Kxe5	
66	Rf7	Rg8	
67	Kg6	Ke6	
68	Rf8	Rxg7+	
69	Kxg7		And Black resigned.

In the above game, Black knew what sort of game plan White was adopting right from the first few moves. He even made a good counter move with the knight (which often gives White a sticky time), but then, for some unaccountable reason, he took it back! In the second game, White briefly conceals his intentions and Black commits to a strange and irrelevant move and seems to be, strangely, thrown out of his stride.

Game 2. Leicestershire League game, 1982.

Author v A Morley

Andrew Morley, a young Wigston Club player, was the current East Midlands Champion. I was playing for the Melton Club and used my now-favourite Stonewall Attack.

1	d4	b5	An unusual reply
2	e3		So far not showing the intended opening
	.....	Bb7	
3	f4	e6	
4	Nf3	a6	
5	c3	Nf6	
6	Bd3	c5	
7	0-0	Nc6	
8	Nbd2	Qb6	
9	Qe2	Be7	
10	Kh1		Removing the king from the Black queen's attacking diagonal
	.....	0-0	
11	Ng5	D5	I thought this not the strongest reply as it blocks the b7 bishop. Obviously though, Black wants to contest the e4 square
12	Rf3	h6	
13	Rh3		Bold attacking play against a player of Andrew Morley's calibre but this is what the Stonewall Attack is all about and, hxN would put Black in enormous trouble.
	.....	cxd4	
14	exd4	Qc7	
15	Ndf3	Rac8?	This move is irrelevant to the defence of the king. Moving the f-rook is probably better to allow escape squares for the king.
16	Bd2	Bd6	
17	Ne5	Nd8	
18	Rf1	Nd7	Black is belatedly clearing his ranks ... it is now or never for White ...
19	Rxh6!!	gxf6	
20	Qh5	Kg7	
21	Ngxf7	Rxf7	
22	f5!!!		White needs the black-squared bishop in the attack
	.....	Nxe5	
23	Bxh6+	Kg8	
24	dxe5	Bxe5	How can white clinch victory?
25	f6!!	Bxf6	
26	Rxf6		Black's rook cannot re-take, of course, because of the winning Qe8
	.....	Bc6	But now it can!
27	Qg6+	Rg7	
28	Qh7+	Rxh7	
29	Rf8		The king of finish one usually only dreams about.

	mate		
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Principle 2. Developing pieces in the opening.

This principle is firmly in most players' minds but, like any other, can all too often be forgotten in the heat of combat. The reasons, however, can be many ... getting caught up in early play wherein piece development is neglected; inconsistency in the opening plan; etc., etc. The following game is an example of the former

Game 3. Leicestershire County Championship, 1974/75.

Author v M Whall

Black starts strongly and very aggressively with his (delayed by one move) Centre Counter

1	e4	Nc6	
2	Nf3	d5	As White I usually enjoyed this opening because, if one is careful of the tactical threats, you can push the opposing queen around for a move or two!
3	exd5	Qxd5	
4	Nc3	Qa5	The queen cannot very well retreat to d8 or Black has handed White two tempi. The alternative is to risk exposure of the queen to the threats of minor pieces (theoretically bad!)
5	d4	Bg4	
6	Bb5		White catches the 'aggression bug'
	.....	0-0-0	This really leaves White with no logical response other than the text move below but, in any case, he likes the holes it will create in front of the Black king as well as the bad pawns (an isolated a-pawn and doubled isolated c-pawns)
7	Bxc6	bxc6	
8	h3	Qh5	
9	Be3	e5	White must be careful when facing such an energetic thrust but Black, in addition to his Q-side weaknesses, is attacking without having developed his K-side. Will he be made to pay for this?
10	Qe2		White also wants to castle Q-side and, imperatively, get the queen off the d8 rook's path
	.....	Bxf3	Bb4 looks stronger, threatening to advance the e-pawn
11	gxf3		Black may have thought that his aggression is about to pay off for he threatens to fork N and B
	.....	exd4	
12	Qa6+	Kb8	
13	0-0-0		Due to Black's lack of development (plus his battered Q-side pawns), White is able to turn the tables. It will now be Black who has to look to his defence.
	.....	Qh4	This again allows the capture of the N or B because the d8 rook is defended. Has Black triumphed after all?
14	Qa4		The d-pawn was pinned against the rook ... now it is pinned against the queen – and attacked by three pieces!
	.....	Bc5	Black defends with the bishop rather than the c-pawn, of

			course, because he can slip the bishop back onto the strongly defending b6 square. Unfortunately
15	Ne4	Bb6	The bishop slips back onto its destined square but Black misses the real point of White's last move.
16	Bg5	Qh5	
17	Bxd8	Qxf3	
18	Rhe1	f6	
19	Nd2	Qxh3	
20	Re8		A nasty threat. Think about the difference for Black if only he had developed his K-side first! Will the g-knight or the rook it shuts in ever get a chance to join the fray?
	.....	Qd7	
21	Rde1	Kb7	
22	Nb3	Qd5	
23	Qb4	c5	
24	Qb5	a6	
25	Na5+	Ka7	
26	Nc6+	Kb7	White feels that he is within an ace of a clever sacrificial combination but it just won't come so, he retreats – after all, he is material ahead in a winning position: why take risks?
27	Na5+	Ka7	
28	Qb3	Qg5+	
29	Kb1	Bxa5	
30	Bxf6!!	Resigns	(And, no, as we have seen, Black never did complete his K-side development).

Principle 3. Control of the centre.

Why is control of the centre so important? The reader may already have played games wherein a thunderous attack down one side against, say, a weak king has won the game despite the centre being 'a mess'. This may be so but it is the exception to the rule. Pieces, especially the short-ranging knight are only at their maximum theoretical strength

near the centre of the board – on the side squares their value is halved. Your pieces may not need to *occupy* those vital four central squares but, *they should threaten or control them*.

If the reader is a beginner and not aware of how pieces are valued, it is mostly to do with the number of squares they threaten. Take all other pieces off the board and, in turn, count up the number of squares threatened by each piece but try this in different positions on the board.

The key to winning, however, is often *where* players place their pieces. The more experienced but weak player may still not have grasped the importance of placing pieces on squares where they achieve their maximum fire-power and where they are 'directed at the action'. As chess is a war game we can equate this to the following a soldier places a machine gun down in the bottom of a small valley: his foe places his similar weapon on a ridge overlooking the valley. Whose machine gun should be the most effective? The following game illustrates this.

Game 4. Leicestershire County Championship, 1977.

Author v D Gould. Opening: Alekhine's Defence.

This is an opening which has one similarity with that of the previous game – and which I liked playing against for that reason White is able to push his opponent's piece around thereby gaining tempi (and space). This time it is a knight that is pushed about, not the queen.

1	e4	Nf6	Remember reader, this defence was developed in the hands (and brain) of one of the most brilliant chess players ever. He was well equipped to follow through with Black's strategy – to lure White's pawns up the board and then to counter-attack them. But, are you equipped to handle its down side (misplaced pieces and a cramped position)? Here, a very capable 'county regular' struggled.
2	e5	Nd5	
3	c4	Nb6	
4	d4		White could not want for more freedom!
	.....	d6	
5	exd6	exd6	
6	Bd3	Nc6	
7	Ne2	Bg4	
8	f3	Bh5	
9	0-0	Bg6	It is a strange situation when you think about it! Black's K-knight has used three moves up and is on the 'wrong' side of the board: his white-squared bishop has also used up three moves to get to the 'wrong' side. Surely this cannot be theoretically correct?
10	Re1	Be7	
11	a3	Qd7	
12	Nbc3	0-0-0	Remembering the theme of this section's principle ... Black has, at last, got most of his pieces onto squares where their fire-power is good. It seems to me a more artificial placing, however The strong queen/rook combination is on the 'wrong' file at the moment, blocked by the d6-pawn. The e7-bishop is blocked in one direction by the same pawn. And, one knight at least is, perhaps, not ideally placed. The difference in the methods of placement, and harking back to our machine guns analogy, is that White hiked <i>his</i> machine guns directly up the hill: Black hiked both of his around a couple of mountains first. Whatever the rights and wrongs of this opening for each side, the proof will now be in the middle-game pudding ... how should White proceed to capitalise on any advantage he has gained?
13	Nd5!?		White's thinking behind this move is that it will provoke an exchange of pieces on d5 which, after the re-take with the c-pawn, will further block the already misplaced queen, d8-rook and e7-bishop. Also, importantly, it will partly open the file to the black king. These good principles will, hopefully, outweigh the bad one of doubling the pawns.
	.....	Nxd5	

14	cxd5	Nb8	
15	Bf4	Bxd3	Black assesses the threats and takes out one possible attacker.
16	Qxd3	Rde8	Black commences a laborious but good defence of his king's position – and with counter-chances!
17	Rec1	Bd8	
18	Rc2	b6	
19	Nc3	Kb7	
20	Rac1	Re7	
21	Nb5	Na6	
22	Rc6		The weak backward pawn on c7 must be 'nailed down'.
	.....	Rhe8	Black, correctly, gives himself counter-attacking chances. He has set up a strong defence already and can do no more just yet.
23	Kf2?		White loses a tempo here. Kf1 was correct
	.....	Re2+	
24	Kf1	Rxb2	An obvious move for Black but, there is a shock in store....
25	Bxd6!!	Ree2	(If Black had replied ..cxd6, he would have lost quickly to 26. Nxd6+ followed by 27. Qxa6)
26	Bg3	Qxd5	
27	Nxc7		A stronger player would have calculated the following continuation. Here, White instinctively 'feels' the strength of this move!
	.....	Nxc7	
28	Rxc7+	Bxc7	
29	Rxc7+	Ka8	
30	Qa6		At the time control, White risks that Black may possibly get a perpetual check and a draw in order to tighten the clamp of a double-threat mate
	.....	Rb1	
31	Kxe2	Qa2+	The game was adjourned here with White having sealed 32. Ke3 but Black resigned without resumption. Possible play would have been, 32. ..Rb3+ 33. Kf4 and the king heads for h3 and safety.

Principle 4. Castle early.

The reasons for delaying castling are many and varied. If the central cover for the king is reasonable and you are not sure which way your opponent is heading and *if the back row has been cleared ready for an instant castling* then delaying it can be excused. However, it is so easy to get caught up in the immediacy of play that the time taken to castle (even where it is just a single tempo) just doesn't seem to arrive. The other benefit of castling, of course, is the doubled rooks on the back rank. But, to the sluggards – " Oh, that exposed and fragile-looking king!"

Game 5. Leicestershire League game, 1976.

I Downie v Author.

A very rare use of the French Defence by the author, White playing the Exchange Variation.

1	e4	e6	
2	d4	d5	
3	exd5	exd5	
4	Nf3	Nf6	
5	Nc3	Be7	
6	Bf4	0-0	Black loses no time in tucking his king away but this neglect of the vulnerable c7 square prompts a quick response from White.
7	Nb5		Black can defend the square (and thus the Q-side rook) with Na6, perhaps the favoured method, but this puts the knight on a bad square. Bd6 is just about playable. Black chooses neither.
	.....	Re8!?	The threat here to White, incredibly, is Mate ... if Nxc7, then Bb4+. But, what if White doesn't, as he shouldn't, fall for the sucker punch?
8	Be2	Bb4+	
9	Nc3		White gives up his threat on c7. The reader may wonder, why not 9.c3 The Black bishop would retreat, still defending c7, and White's knight would be deprived of its best retreat square. Now, the opening has swung in Black's favour <i>because of White's neglect to castle and the temptation of a probe that was too premature.</i> Black's own knight now steps up into the action. The intention is to create a weakness by doubling the c-pawns
	.....	Ne4	
10	0-0???		Now, fatally, too late
	.....	Bxc3	
11	bxc3	Nxc3	Winning a piece and White resigned

Game 6. Leicestershire County Championship, 1972/3.
 Author v S I Ashley. Opening: Sicilian Defence

1	e4	c5	
2	f4	e6	
3	Nf3	d6	The Sicilian is noted for being a counter-attacking defence and this move is, perhaps, too timid. d5 seems better
4	Be2	h6	This move achieves nothing at this stage of the game
5	0-0	Nc6	
6	a3	a6	Once again Black wastes a chance to develop his K-side.
7	c3	b5	White's move should signal an intention to play d4; if Black's reply was to consolidate a pawn move on to c4 then this seems a poor response given his lack of K-side development.
8	d4	Qc7	
9	Be3	Bb7	
10	Nbd2	Nf6	If one studies the position now, it may look reasonably balanced - beyond the second ranks that is. Both players have some grip on the centre. Both

			have freed all their pieces. The difference is that Black is not ready for action yet because he has not castled! White begins his attack
11	dxc5	dxc5	
12	b4	c4	
13	a4	Na7	
14	Bxa7	Rxa7	
15	axb5	Qb6+	
16	Nd4	axb5	
17	Rxa7	Qxa7	
18	Kh1	Nxe4	
19	Nxe4	Bxe4	
20	Bf3	Bxf3	
21	Qxf3		Although Black is a pawn up, he is faced with plenty of problems
	.....	Qa6	
22	f5		If White opens the f-file the threats will be overwhelming
	.....	e5	
23	Re1	Bd6	Has Black solved his problems?
24	f6!	g6	
25	Qh3		White stops Black from castling and his queen sits on a deadly diagonal
	.....	Bc7	Black is stuck for a good move
26	Nc6!		The Black queen cannot take because of Qc8+
	.....	Kf8	The king tries to run for cover
27	Qd7		A powerful and decisive move
	.....	Kg8	
28	Qe8+	Kh7	
29	Qxf7 mate		

Game 7. Leicestershire County Championship, 1974.
J A Oliver v Author. Opening: English Opening.

1	c4	Nf6	
2	d3	g6	It looks as though White is leaving the long, black-squared diagonal weak so, Black intends to place his bishop on this. This is the (King's) Indian Defence system.
3	a3		It is hard to see a useful purpose in this move so; it is violating principle 5 (wasting a move).
	.....	Bg7	
4	Nf3	c6	
5	h3		Again principle 5 is abandoned
	.....	0-0	
6	Nc3		Although White <i>has</i> developed his knights and has a grip on the centre, it is Black who is ready to start the battle!
	.....	d5	

7	cx d5	Nx d5	
8	Bd2	Nd7	
9	e3	b6	
10	Qc2	Bb7	
11	b4?		After playing several good developing moves White changes his plan. Be2 and 0-0 were called for. Now he has aided Black by presenting a target for attack.
	.....	Rc8	
12	Be2		(too late!)
	.....	c5	
13	bxc5		This allows Black a winning combination.
	.....	Bxc3!	
14	Bxc3	Rxc5	
15	d4		White is lost but 0-0 would have been better.
	.....	Rxc3	
16	Qd2	Qc7	
17	e4		Black has a little resource which saves the knight from a retreat.
	.....	Rc2	
18	Qh6		Normally it would be correct for White to seek counter-chances – perhaps he had visions of 19. Ng5 and if ... Nf6, 20. e5 but all this is too late.
	.....	Qc3+	
19	Kd1	Qxa1+	
20	Kxc2	Rc8+	
21	Kb3	Rc3+	and White resigned.

Black did nothing clever in this game, it was simply that White ignored those fundamental principles!

Game 8. Leicestershire League game, 1972.

Dr A Ansell v Author. Opening: English Opening.

In this English Opening, White, normally a very strong player, played very quickly and carelessly – as well as throwing overboard several principles.

1	c4	Nf6	
2	nf3	g6	Although I consider the English one of the strongest theoretical openings for white* the (slight) weakness which Black will attempt to exploit is that the move c4 gives away some control of the black squares. *[Ruy Lopez – initiator of another very strong opening – once said that the English move 1. c4 was so bad that no player of any skill would use it. Not only is it now widely used but, some of those players 'of any skill' who have used it often have been former world champions Botvinnik and Smyslov]
3	b4		An over-ambitious plan which does little for W's development
	.....	Bg7	
4	Bb2	0-0	

5	d3	c6	Preparing for ...d5 and a strong centre
6	g3	a5!	Be flexible! Black has as strong a grip on the centre as White so, he hits at White's weakness before that player can settle
7	b5		If White had captured on a5, Black could have delayed the re-capture and proceeded with d5. The text move <i>does</i> make Black's Q-knight less easy to develop but White is getting sucked into early complications with his king still sitting uneasily on his throne in the middle of the board.
	.....	Qb6	Under the guise of attacking the weak b-pawn, Black has his eye on the weakest square on the board, f2!
8	a4	Ng4	Black springs his trap although this can be easily refuted by d4 when Black is then, however, well-placed to hit at White's centre. In the event White blunders horribly and uncharacteristically Is this a violation of principle 1 or simply playing too quickly?
9	Bxg7??	Qxf2+	
10	Kd2	Qe3+	
11	Kc2	Kxg7	Black has set up the deadly ..Nf7 first, now he calmly recovers his lost material.
12	Qe1		Here the reader may wonder how Black should best consolidate his advantage, a pawn up and the White king in no-man's land? The method is to quickly open up lines to the white king.
	.....	d5	
13	Nbd2	dxc4	
14	Nxc4	Qc5	
15	Qc3+	f6	
16	d4?		This move, although perhaps tempting, opens up a diagonal for Black's bishop to attack.
	.....	Qxc4+!	Although this only leads to an equal swap off of material, to simplify when material up is usually good policy.
17	Qxc4	Ne3+	
18	Kc3	Nxc4	
19	Kxc4	Be6+	
20	Kc3	cxb5	
21	axb5	Nd7	
22	e4	Rfc8+	
23	Kb2	a4	
24	Bd3	a3+	And White resigned. (If 25. Rxa3, Rxa3 with to follow Rc3+ winning a piece. If 25. Kb1, Rc3 and Raa4 threaten "nasties").

Now for the sort of game which, perhaps, illustrates why some players may *delay* castlingfear of an all-out attack on the committed position of the king.

Game 9. Leicestershire League game, 1975.
M Cowley v Author. Opening: Pirc Defence

1	e4	d6	
2	d4	Nf6	
3	Nc3	g6	
4	f4		These pawns mean business!
	.....	Bg7	
5	e5!?		Theoretically premature yet a strong, tactical player – as White is – can cause plenty of problems given an open board.
	.....	dxe5	
6	fxe5	Nd5	
7	Bc4	Be6!?	This is a two-edged defensive move. Black hopes that the risks involved will be compensated for by causing embarrassment for White later on. Also, if the e-pawn was used to defend the knight, it could not later support the freeing ..f6 move
8	Qf3	c6	
9	Nge2	0-0	
10	Ne4	Nd7	With development uppermost in his mind (facing the gathering momentum of White's attack) Black misses the counter-punch, ..Nb4.
11	Ng5	N(7)b6	
12	Bb3	Nc7	
13	h4		With Black's knights now across on the 'wrong' side of the board and with most of White's artillery aiming at the opposing king's position, all seems set for the assault to get under way.
	.....	Bxb3	
14	Qxb3	h6	
15	Qh3		White can take some chances and even lose some material in such a strong position.
	.....	Qd7	As with the exchange of bishops, Black seeks to swap off the main attacking pieces and so draw the teeth of White's attack. With the White king still in the centre, however, ..f5 was another possibility. That move would have the added attraction of leaving a bolt-hole for the king on f7.
16	g4	f6	
17	h5	fxg5	Black has calculated that he can still hold the attack if he takes the material offered.
18	Bxg5		Premature or the final breakthrough?
	.....	gxh5!	
19	Bxh6		White counts on Black's two knights and the Q-rook being out of play and the non-existent shield in front of the king. Very precise play is now called for by Black.
	.....	Bxh6	
20	Qxh6	Qe6	
21	g5	Rf5	
22	Qxh6		22.Nf4 looks better, with the attack still on and an open file

			after ..Rxf4, 23. gxh6. White is still perhaps a vital move behind, though, ...0-0-0.
	.....	Qxh6	Black breathes a sigh of relief as the queens go. And, he should have an easily won ending.... ?

The last half of this game illustrates the power of passed pawns, however, and although Black undoubtedly played some ill-judged defensive moves, the reader should note the still-aggressive play with which White saves his game.

23	gxh6	Kh7	
24	0-0-0	Rg8	
25	Rh2	Ne6	
26	b3	Nd5	
27	c4	Nf4	
28	d5!!	Nxe2+	The logical result of Black's last move and his strategy of swapping off material but, the chancier ..Rxe5 might have been stronger looking ahead.
29	Rxe2	cxd5	
30	cxd5	Rc8+	
31	Kb1	Rd8	With the follow-up of ..Nf4 threatened
32	d6!!	exd6	
33	exd6		A tricky moment for Black. He can stop the d-pawn by moving the knight but does not want the e2-rook to pick up his b-pawn. He chooses to keep the blocking knight in place.
	.....	Rf6	
34	d7	Kxh6??	A blunder which White snatches at. ..Rxh6 or a knight move is possible but Black would still need to be careful
35	Rd6	Kg7	
36	Rdx6	Rxe6	
37	Rxe6	Rxd7	Draw agreed

Having looked at several games earlier in this section where dire threats were allowed because of a *reluctance* to castle, let us now look at two games where one player is *stopped* from performing this recommended action ...even, in the first game, by offering a free rook.

Game 10. This is one of the earliest games used. It is taken from when the author was 'on the way up' and was one of his victories on the way to winning the Leicestershire County Minor Section in 1970. It has a lot to thank, though, for a game by a 15-year-old called Saverymuttu published in *Chess* magazine! [Not for anyone of a weak disposition].

Author v G Hutchinson Opening: Giuoco Piano

1	e4	e5	
2	Nf3	Nf6	
3	Bc4	Bc5	
4	c3	Nf6	
5	d4	exd4	
6	cxd4	Bb4+	
7	Nc3	Nxe4	

8	0-0	Nxc3	
9	bxc3	Bxc3	So far this is following known lines and Black is doing rather well for all his tardy development.
10	Ba3!		The author tries out the Saverymuttu line. Will Black find the answers?
	.....	d5	
11	Rc1	Bxd4	
12	Bb5	Bb6	(..Bf6 is better)
13	Rxc6!	bxc6	
14	Bxc6+	Bd7	
15	Re1+	Qe7	
16	Rxe7+	Kd8	
17	Rxd7+	Kc8	
18	Bxa8	Kxd7	(Black is too stunned to resign!)
19	Qxd5+	Kc8	
20	Ne5	c6	
21	Qxc6+	Bc7	
22	Bb7+		And Black resigns.

In fairness to Black (in view of the above butchery) ... Greg Hutchinson was quite a strong club player who played many games for Leicestershire County Seconds and the Saverymuttu game, featured in *Chess*, did introduce the sort of innovative move which can catch anyone unawares. We usually had a very equal tussle.

Another game to illustrate the same point of stopping your opponent from castling

.....

Game 11. Leicestershire League game, 1977.

P A Thomas v Author. Opening: King's Gambit Accepted.

1	e4	e5	
2	f4	exf4	
3	Nf3	Be7	A two-edged move designed to attack the White king and make it hard for a normal castling procedure.
4	Bc4	Bh4+	
5	Kf1		Mission accomplished!
	.....	d6	
6	d4	Be6	Black tries to provoke an exchange which will lead to the f-file becoming open in front of the White king.
7	Bd3		This gives back the tempo that White gained with his opening gambit. Although, perhaps, correct not to play Bxe6, White had several other alternatives which would have improved his development
	.....	Nd7	
8	Bxf4	h6	
9	h3		Although this move does not fall into the "phobia" classification mentioned in the notes prefacing the next section, since there are two possible reasons for making it (1. To allow a nice 'bunker' for the bishop on f4 to fall back to, or possibly, 2. Looking ahead to his next move?),

			Nbd2 looks a more natural move to me.
	.....	Nb6	Of course, a third possibility, White may have been simply setting out to trap the bishop on e6 by playing 10. d5.
10	nxh4?		Although the bishop on h4 was a minor irritation, this exchange leads to a much better position for Black and one of White's staunchest defenders has gone!
	.....	Qxh4	
11	Qf3	0-0-0	
12	Nd2		If it wasn't for the terrible plight of his king, White would now be holding a good position.
	.....	Rf8	
13	Qg3		White does not like his queen being on the same file as the opposing rook and to seek an exchange which will 'draw the sharpest of Black's teeth' may not be such a bad idea. However, for White (having first move) to be worrying about the Black attack after only thirteen moves says little for his choice of moves so far
	.....	Qxg3	
14	Bxg3	Ne7	
15	Nf3	f5	
16	exf5		White really has no good alternative
	.....	Nxf5	
17	Bf2	Nd5	Black could also seek to double his rooks on the f-file here.
18	Re1	Kd7	
19	Ke2		White's king is off! He doesn't like the gathering war clouds.
	.....	nf4+	
20	Kd2	g5	If Black had played the tempting Nxc2 then the possibility of White getting a counter-attack started with Rg1 was there - although the position then would have complications. With the text move, Black's threats are still maintained ... with extra backing!
21	g4?		White tries to remove the threat and push away one of the attacking knights in one move but, his position is fatally weakened...
	.....	nxd3	
22	Kxd3		22. gxf5 is no better after ..Rxf5
	.....	Ne7	
23	Re3	Nd5	
24	Rhe1	Nxe3	
25	Rxe3	Bd5	
26	Ke2	Bxf3	Black does not need to be clever here, he simply exchanges down to a rook v bishop ending where the power of the rook is easily demonstrated in the following moves.
27	Rxf3	Rxf3	
28	Kxf3	d5	This move blocks the e4 route for the White king into Black's territory but, more importantly, it shuts in the bishop, limiting it's power
29	b3	b5	

30	a3	Re8	This is not a particularly forcing move, in fact it is almost a waiting move. True, it prevents the White king from walking across to the Q-side but Black does not fear that – he has the position well 'stoppered'.
31	Bg3		As Black had hoped, an inaccuracy by White helps him to bring the game to a rapid conclusion.
	.....	Re6	
32	c3		White makes one target safe but there is a second!
	.....	Ra6	
33	a4	bxa4	
34	bxa4	Rxa4	and White resigned

Principle 5. Wasting moves and time.

Although a previous game, used to illustrate the dangers of delaying castling, also illustrated this section, the two factors sometimes go together.

A move sometimes wasting a tempo in the opening is the over-use of the preventative h3 (or h6 with black) and a3 (with its black converse) *before it becomes truly necessary*. The reason often lies in a what is almost a phobia by some players about not having their knights pinned against king or queen. Often, a better remedy is to interpose one's bishop if a knight is pinned – which may be a developing move anyway.

If ever a game shows how to waste moves it is the next one from the early days in my chess career but, many weaker players can be guilty of this type of aimless manoeuvring. Although it is an early game, I blush to play through the moves, even though my opponent was as careless with tempi as I was!

Game 12. AEI Ltd (Leicester) Works Club Championship, 1960.
E Keywood v Author. Opening: Semi-Slav Defence

1	d4	d5	
2	c4	c6	
3	c5		This move, although apparently gaining space and cramping Black, is too premature. It gives Black a target. Stronger players would keep the tension in the centre by playing, instead, 3. Nc3 or any of several other developing moves
	.....	Nf6	
4	Nf3	Nbd7	
5	a3		This move may have been to support a b4 move if Black hits at the c-pawn with ..b6. However, what does White do then after ..a5?
	.....	Qc7	The freeing move Black has in mind, though, is ..e5.
6	b4		White has set up a blocking wedge of pawns in black territory. What will their effect be?
	.....	e5	
7	e3	Be7	
8	Be2	Ng4?	Here begins the first move in a major squandering of time What did this 'lone ranger' hope to achieve against White's well-organised defence?
9	Nc3	0-0	

10	Nd2	Ndf6	
11	Nf3?		What has this knight returned to f3 for? Why not play 11. h3 or 0-0?
	.....	e4	
12	Ng5		Wow! A risky advance into Black's territory
	.....	Nh6	
13	g3		A weird move! This advance covers the wrong squares and even makes an immediate retreat of the knight to h3 impossible. It can only signal a quick h4.
	.....	Ne8	
14	h4	Nf6	Yet another change of plan.
15	a4		And, apparently, one by White!
	.....	Nfg4	
16	Nh3		Have you been counting up the number of knight moves? An incredible <i>fourteen</i> so far. Should I contact Guinness?
	.....	Bd7	
17	Bd2	Qc8	
18	Nf4		Spotting the concealed threat to the knight
	.....	Kh8	
19	a5	Ng8	A great deal of manoeuvring has taken place to no purpose. What would the reader suggest is required?
20	b5		At last! A positive attempt at a breakthrough This sort of move was required of both players
	.....	f6	A very strange counter by Black. What on earth does this move do?
21	b6		Due to purposeless play by Black, White now has a very strong grip on the Q-side. Has Black dug his own grave with these time-wasters?
	.....	axb6	(The first take, at last!)
22	axb6	f5	Perhaps Black meant to do that on move 20 and his hand slipped
23	f3!?		With his king still on its throne, this could be a double-edged move by White.
	.....	exf3	
24	Bxf3	N(1)f6	
25	Nce2	Rxa1	
26	Qxa1	Qa8	
27	Qxa8?		Surrendering the open file.
	.....	Rxa8	
28	0-0	g6	
29	Nh3	Bf8	
30	Nef4	Ne4	
31	Bxe4	fxe4	
32	Ng5	Bh6?	
33	Nf7+	Kg7	
34	Nd6	Rb8	
35	Kg2	Nf6	
36	Ra1	Ne8	Desperate defence now for Black!

37	Nxe8	Rxe8	
38	Ra7	Rb8	
39	g4??		What is White thinking of?
	.....	Bxg4	
40	Kg3	Bd7	
41	h5	g5	
42	Ng2	Kf6	
43	Ne1	Kf5	
44	Nc2	Be8	Looking at the game now, we can see how a very likely win for White has <i>slid</i> into a probable loss. The deadlocked pawns, despite the weak b7-pawn and the dangerous vicinity of White's b-pawn to the queening square, have proved an annoying barrier across the board for white pieces to manoeuvre around. White should have <i>co-ordinated his pieces</i> but, instead he has his rook right out of play
45	Nb4	Bf8	Black is wary of Nxc6 if he takes the h-pawn, White threatening to force the b6-pawn through.
46	Na6!?		White tries a different way to achieve the same end
	.....	bxa6	
47	Rxa6		Rxh7 may have been better, threatening h8 and with two passed pawns.
	.....	Be7!	
48	Ra7	Ke6	
49	Ba5		Manoeuvring the bishop to g3 seems stronger ....It can only be used on its present square by committing the pawn to b7 – but the black king can then move across to defend.
	.....	Bxh5	Black grabs his chance to take the last vital K-side pawn
50	b7	Kd7	
51	Bb6		Although this is virtually a wasted move as the game is played, what else can White do? In choosing the wrong direction for his bishop he is now committed to keeping the black king off c7 or Black captures the queen-elect. However, ..Bd8 for Black will resolve this issue anyway. White's last hope would be to cut his losses and swing the rook over to the K-side with Ra1 or a2, etc. However, Black, a piece up and with the bishop pair must now win
	.....	Be2??	Black has presented White with the ideal opportunity to do just that manoeuvre to the K-side! However.....
52	Ba5?	h5	
53	Bb6?	h4+	
54	Kf2	Bf3	
55	Ba5	g4	
56	Be1		Much too late!
	.....	g3+	
57	Kg1	Bd8	
58	Ba5	Bxa5	
59	Rxa5	h3	

60	Ra8	Kc7	Missing the simple winning ..h2+ and ..h1=Q mate
61	Ra2	Rxb7	And White resigned

Principle 6. Arranging your 'foot soldiers' and looking after them.

The poor old pawn! He has given his name to "*Only* a pawn in the game" and yet how many players have gratefully or gleefully seen their little chap slog on down the board (or even *up* the board) to metamorphasise into an all-powerful queen! These foot soldiers certainly have a variety of tasks to do. They can block off squares from your opponent's pieces; they can punch a hole through to your opponent's king; they can be the shield and defender of the king; and they can reward themselves and you, their master, with sudden additional firepower after those six steps to the far rank. Look after them well. Use them.

Game 13. The Leicester Atkins Congress, 1974: Major Section.
 Author v M F Redmond of London. Opening: Caro-Kann

1	e4	c6	
2	d4	d5	
3	e5	Bf5	A part of the Caro-Kann strategy is to get this bishop out
4	Bd3	Bxd3	
5	Qxd3	e6	This early position is quite strong for White. His central pawns control squares in Black's territory and will be hard to dislodge as they can be supported by their flanking comrades on the c and f files
6	Nf3		e2 seems a better square for this knight as it now restricts the f-pawn's advance.
	.....	Ne7	
7	Bf4	Qb6	We are about to see another and very serious principle affect the game ... <i>complacency leading to careless play!</i> This by White.
8	Qc3?	Nf5	Threatening, of course, to pin and win White's queen with the king's bishop.
9	a3	Nd7	
10	g4	Ne7	
11	Nbd2	c5?	Earlier this would have been a sensible, powerful move but, as the game sits, it hands back the initiative to White
12	dx5	Nxc5	
13	Be3	Nc6	
14	b4	Na4	
15	Qb3	Qb5	
16	c4	dx4	
17	Nxc4	Rd8	
18	0-0		Somewhat belated but it is two steps ahead of Black.
	.....	Be7	
19	Rfd1	Rxd1?	Why concede the d-file to White? 0-0 is better
20	Rxd1	0-0	
21	Nd4	Nxd4	
22	Rxd4	h6	

23	Nd6	Qxe4!?	(The author had completely missed this move but has a material- winning resource.)
24	f4!	Nc5!	A clever try. If you are going to lose a piece, look to sell it off dearly.
25	bxc5	Qxc5	
26	Rd3	Qc7	
27	Nb5	Qa5	
28	Kf1	Rc8	
29	Nd6	Bxd6	
30	Rxd6	Rc3	
31	Rd8+	Kh7	
32	Qb1+	g6	
33	Qb2	Qxd8	
34	Qxc3	Qd1+	
35	Kf2	Qxg4	Although a piece up, White has got into a sticky position due to Black's active play. Theoretically there is a material balance (Black having enough extra pawns to compensate for the piece) but White now saves the game with a few telling moves.
36	Qf6!	Qf5	(Virtually forced by White's move.)
37	Qxf5	gxf5	exf5 would keep the pawns in one block but the g6 square is immediately blocked for the Black king
38	Bxa7	Kg6	
39	h4		White foresees that his f-pawn may be exchanged and seeks to hold the g5 square.
	.....	f6	
40	Bd4	Kf7	At the time control this was adjudicated a win for White. The plan would be for White to hold the K-side with his bishop (first playing the blocking 41. h5) and, perhaps, take his king over to the Q-side to win the b-pawn

The next game is all about pawns in that it revolves around their strengths and weaknesses; about them coming under attack and being held or lost; and, finally, about – once a passed pawn has been achieved – advancing it to win the game. This is a very recent game, played by the author while the book was being compiled.

Game 14. Nottinghamshire League game, 2004.
B Hobson v Author. Opening: Sicilian Defence.

1	e4	c5	
2	Nf3	d6	
3	d4	cxd4	
4	Qxd4?		This re-take using the queen has to be bad. The queen is too exposed this early in the game and can be forced to retreat with the gain of a tempo for Black. White, as will be seen, is quite a good tactical player and may have been hoping for an early slip-up by his opponent - for there can often be threats when the big Q is roaming about ... but, one shouldn't play poor moves under such hopes!
	.....	Bd7	If the black knight comes immediately to c6 to threaten the

			queen it may be pinned and exchanged off. The text move holds back the Q-side knight
5	bc4	Nc6	
6	Qd1		Any other square has its down side but Qh5 is, maybe, a possibility, threatening a K-side attack?
	.....	e6	
7	Nc3	a6	
8	a3	h6	Neither player wants their knights to be pinned. Also, for White, a useful 'hole' for his white-squared bishop
9	Bf4	e5	A move not usually played by the author as it commits to leaving the d-pawn backward and weak but, it seems to played quite a lot these days.
10	Be3		This bishop is now on one of the biggest 'nuisance' squares from Black's point of view ... if co-ordinated with the c-knight it is a powerful force against Black's Q-side. Black takes steps to stop that co-ordination though, as we shall see, not too successfully....
	.....	b5	
11	Ba2	Nf6	
12	Nd5		Now, if Black takes the knight to prevent the aforementioned co-ordination of bishop and knight, either re-taking by exd5 or Qxd5 presents Black with more problems. He decides to 'bite the bullet' and try a different solution
	.....	Rb8	
13	Nxf6?		Again, I cannot see the logic of White removing his own strongly posted knight.
	.....	Qxf6	
14	Qd2	Be7	
15	Bd5	0-0	White's move is either very devious – or, irrelevant to the plan of attacking Black's greatest weakness, his d6-pawn. It simply gives Black the chance to complete his development.
16	Rad1	Rfc8	
17	h3		Perhaps, in accord with principle 1, reading Black's mind ... with the knight defended by the rook, Black was looking towards ..Bg4 and ..Bxf3 to tear open White's K-side pawns.
	.....	Be6	(It is time to eliminate this nuisance).
18	Bxe6	Qxe6	
19	0-0	Rd8	Although reluctant to take the rook off the semi-open c-file, Black is looking to a possible (eventual) freeing ..d5 though to do this he needs the support of the knight, ideally on e7 – but what to do with the bishop? A risky alternative may have been ..Qa2!/? but, after 20. b3, if ..Qxa3 21. Ra1 looks strong for White. Perhaps White feared both
20	Qd5	Qc8	Black does not want to swap off queens in this position so, he now re-positions it on a better square.
21	Qd3	Qb7	The struggle for pawns (not yet entirely obvious) is becoming two-sided. Here, Black has half an eye on the

			weak e4-pawn.
22	c3		Here, Black thought long over his next move. This is a critical phase of the game. Black can either sit back to a protracted defensive struggle or, as he now does with the text move, seek counter-play
	.....	a5	
23	b4		The correct response: Black must not be allowed to play ..b4
	.....	Rdc8	
24	Rc1	axb4	
25	cxb4		Both sides have weak target pawns. Play now revolves on who will gain the ascendancy.
	.....	Ra8	
26	Rc3		This not only defends the a-pawn but, worse for Black, threatens to control the now open c-file with doubled rooks. Black has to put aside for the moment his ideas of winning the a-pawn and to contest the c-file. His particular weakness could be the c7 square so, after much thought, he decides to re-site his knight with the plan of doing just that.
	.....	Nd8	
27	Rfc1	Rxc3	
28	Rxc3	ne6	
29	Qc2		White is making all the right moves now and Black is on a knife edge. He fears Rc6 and then Rb6. He decides he needs another piece to help out with the defence!....
	.....	Kf8!?	This allows the immediate 30. Rc6 where ..Ra6 is virtually forced. If then Rc8+, ..Bd8 looks dodgy but how can White follow up?
30	Nd2	Ke8	
31	Qc1	Kd7	
32	Nb3	Bd8	
33	Rd3		White, though desperately short of time, has lined up a trap for Black Black sees what is coming but believes it is flawed.....
	.....	Qxe4	One pawn down!
34	Qd1	Bc7	
35	Nc5+	Nxc5	At the time control there was no choice over this move. Now there is fifteen minutes each to complete the game with Black having an extra five minutes on his clock.
36	bxc5	Qc6	Other moves discarded were ..Ra6 and ..Qg6.
37	cxd6	Bxd6	
38	Rd5	Ke7	Black saw the trap of 39. Rxe5 but ruled out the tempting ..Ke6 (even though this would force the white rook to withdraw) because the king is then on a square highly vulnerable to attack from the white queen
39	Qf3!		As both players have little time (White being the worse off), White is right to set traps Here he threatens Rxe5+ winning the queen
	.....	Ra6	

40	Qd1	Rxa3	Two down.... But is this a safe capture?
41	Bc5		Another fiendish attempt but Black judges that he can take the bishop. Will White's ingenuity prevail?
	.....	Bxc5	
42	Rxe5+	Kf6	Forced, of course
43	Qh5!!		One too many for the author ... I had not seen this coming. Now, White threatens mate or, if ..g6 to prevent that, 44. Rxc5. After some thought, Black sees the saving resource
	.....	Bxf2+!	
44	Kxf2	Ra2+	
45	Re2		With this move goes, not only the mating threat, but, realistically, White's last chance of saving the game. But what else? King moves onto the e-file will lose the rook to a queen check.
	.....	Rxe2+	
46	Qxe2	Qc5+	
47	Kf3	Qe5	Not just to proffer an exchange of queens but to cover the diagonal to the black king.
48	Qa2	g5	
49	Qa6+	Kg7	
50	Qb7	Qf4+	
51	Ke2	Qc4+	
52	Kd2	b4	
53	Qe7	Qc3+	
54	Kd1	b3	Note how the black queen is shepherding the pawn through yet preventing a check along the diagonal. Simultaneously, Black will look to an exchange of queens which White, short of time, must avoid at all costs.
55	Qe4	Qa1+	Perhaps a slight inaccuracy but soon retrieved
56	Kd2	Qf6	
57	Kc1?	Qf4+	And White resigned. This was the enforced swap off of queens but, before making his last move, Black calculated that his king would arrive at the white pawns before the white king could eliminate the b-pawn and then get back to defend them. As we will see in the chapter on end-games, this calculation is often essential

Principle 7. A bad exchange.

There are many examples in chess play where an apparently equal exchange of material can swing a game towards one player or the other simply because, although theoretically of the same value, one of the exchanged pieces was doing a good job whereas the other had less obvious advantages. Sometimes this occurs during the opening with the well-used pin of a knight early in the game by a bishop, either against a queen or king. When the bishop is threatened, should it retreat or take the knight? Much depends on the immediate position on the board but, quite often, the bishop is better used if it withdraws and manoeuvres onto a better square. An opening featuring this is the Ruy Lopez. If it simply retreats back along the developing

diagonal, it may be losing tempi. There are games in this book where the bishop retreats but others where it captures the knight. This latter is a feature of the French Defence, Winawer Variation and is used to double white's pawns (a weakness for white already covered).

Of course, the merits of 'equal exchanges' may occur at any stage in a game. Try to avoid knight v bishop prejudices: be flexible and judge each case on its merits.

Game 15. AEI (Blackbird Road, Leicester) Club Championship, 1960.
 Author v D Rushin Opening: Giuoco Piano

This is another of my earliest games. There are plenty of mistakes by both players typical of weaker players and, to illustrate the theme, there is an abundance of 'equal swap-offs'!

1	e4	e5	
2	Nf3	Nc6	
3	Bc4	f6	An unusual continuation – but is it unsound?
4	c3	Bc5	
5	d4	exd4	
6	Nxd4		More usual, of course, would be cxd4 to gain a strong pawn centre
	.....	Qe7	Depriving the knight of its best developing square
7	0-0	d6	
8	Re1	Bd2	
9	Nf5	Bxf5?	The first exchange. Is this good or bad? The knight certainly looks threatening and Black simply doesn't want to move that queen (onto f8) but the text move leads to the opening up of a wicked-looking file with the queen in front of the king
10	exf5	Ne5	
11	Kf1		Ready to attack and win the knight
	.....	0-0-0	
12	f4	d5	In retrospect now we see that if White had played 12. Bxg8 he would have won the knight without any hassle, a move easily missed
13	Bxd5		Missing Black's riposte. Bb3 was sufficient
	.....	Qd6	
14	Be6+		14. Bxb7+ is better
	.....	Nd7	
15	Qxd6		Another 'equal swap-off' but white is surrendering his initiative. Qg4 or other attacking moves are preferable
	.....	Bxd6	
16	Be3	Kb8	
17	Bd4	c5	An energetic move to shut off the bishop on f4!
18	Be3	Nh6	
19	h3	g6	
20	fxg6	hxg6	
21	Nd2	Nf5	
22	Bxf5		The third equal swap-off – good or bad? I would say

			emphatically <i>good</i> . Although the forward advance of the taken knight could have been well contained with 22. Bf2, the chance cannot be missed of doubling Black's pawns
	.....	gxf5	
23	Rad1	Rhe8	
24	Nc4	Bf8	
25	Bf2	Nb6	
26	Rxe8		White realises that with the K-side pawns as they are he has a potentially won endgame so, he starts to simplify
	.....	Rxe8	
27	Nxb6		This has the added merit of doubling Black's pawns yet again
	.....	axb6	
28	Rd5	c4?	I cannot see Black's thinking here
29	Bxb6	Kc8	
30	Rxf5	Re6	
31	Rb5?		This is as bewildering as Black's move 28. (31. Bd4 surely)
	.....	Bd6	
32	Rd5		With a concealed mating threat if, for example, 32 .. Bxf4
	.....	Kd7	
33	f5	Re4??	..Re5, a forlorn hope, was required
34	Bc5	Kc6	
35	Rxd6+	Kxc5	
36	Rxf6	b5	
37	g4	b4	
38	Kf2		A quiet little restraining move ... preventing the black rook from going to e3
	.....	bxc3	
39	bxc3	Re8	
40	Ra6	Kb5	
41	Ra7	Rd8	
42	a4+		This is a waste ... The king and his pawns should begin their advance
	.....	Kb6	Exactly! The rook is now forced off the a-file. Fortunately, White has an easy win whatever
43	Re7	Rd3	
44	Re3	Rd1	
45	Re5		What is White playing about at? The pawns should be marching
	.....	Kc6	
46	f6		At last!
	.....	Kd6	
47	Re2	Rb1	
48	g5	Rb8	
49	h4	Rb3	
50	f7	Rb8	
51	g6		(51. Re8)
	.....	Rf8	
52	Re8		Black resigns

Principle 8. Weaknesses and strengths.

The reader is probably already all too aware, not only of the theoretical potential strength of each piece, but which files or diagonals to use them on in order to gain that extra 'fire-power'. For example, it is usually better to have a bishop on a long diagonal (but open up that diagonal for it); to have your knights around the central squares; to have your rook, or better still, both (double fire-power) on an open file. But, what to do with the most powerful of all your pieces, the queen? It is recommended here, as in most books, as another principle, to keep your queen on safe squares while most of your opponent's minor pieces are still around. **Do not rashly send your queen into the thicket of your opponent's territory without being constantly aware of its vulnerability.**

The queen, while having great fire-power is just as 'thinly armoured' as any other piece. I think of the queen as being akin to the German pocket battleships of world war two. Those that were sent out to sea reaped some reward but ultimately paid the price: the biggest, the Tirpitz, was well protected in harbour for most of the war, the threat of sending it out being a worrying factor though. The two games below show just how vulnerable a queen can be.

Game 16. Leicestershire League game, 1976.
 D G Allen v Author. Opening: Dutch Defence.

1	d4	f5	
2	c4	c6	
3	Nc3	Nf6	
4	Bg5		So far both sides are playing correctly. With one of the main objectives of the Dutch to control the e4 square, Black's next move is an error in that it allows White the attacking e4 move. (The author had only recently 'discovered' the Dutch - and often played it like a novice around this time)
	.....	e6	(An immediate d5 was called for)
5	e3		White fails to grasp his chance
	.....	Be7	
6	Bxf6	Bxf6	When White was better placed to take the knight, he didn't; now, in doing so, he puts Black's bishop on a powerful diagonal
7	Qh5+?		What were White's intentions behind this move? I know that a World Champion once said, "Never miss a check; it might be mate!" but, with no supporting pieces, the queen move looks extremely premature. Temporarily, after the queen moves, it prevents Black from castling ...but the cost will be enormous
	.....	g6	
8	Qh6	Qe7	
9	Nf3	d6	
10	Bd3	Na6	
11	Be2		A lost tempo. If White was worried about Nb4, why not play his next move here?

	.....	Bd7	
12	a3	Nc7	
13	0-0	0-0-0	Black has been patiently manoeuvring on the Q-side, aware of what White seems blissfully unaware of – the vulnerability of his queen
14	Rac1	g5	Springs the trap
15	Nd2		To leave more escape room
	.....	Rdg8	
16	Qh3	g4	
17	Qg3	Bh4	
18	Qf4	e5	
19	dxe5	dxe5	
20	Qh6	Bg5	
21	Qh5	Be8	The queen is finally pinned down
22	Bxg4	Bxh5	
23	Bxh5	Qg7	Perhaps still suffering from shock, White blunders finally....
24	e4??	Bxd2	And White resigned

In this second game where trap-the-queen is the theme, the opponent's major piece managed to escape....

Game 17. Leicestershire County Championship, 1975/76.
W Osborne v Author. Opening: Dutch Defence, unorthodox.

1	d4	f5	
2	e4		In this variation, the Staunton Gambit, White goes head-to-head with one of the main themes of the Dutch – to prevent or slow down the move e4. White has 'gambitted' a pawn
	.....	Nf6?	Black, still in his 'early Dutch days' was maybe a little shocked by the gambit. The logic of his reply, though, is difficult to see. After 3. e5, the knight will have to move to poor squares and although, in this respect, similar to Alekhine's Defence, the difference here is that the Black king is exposed
3	Nc3		Inexplicably, White does not seize his chance
	.....	fxe4	Black wakes up!
4	Bg5	c6	Or does he? He surrenders the pawn tamely when ..d5 was crying out to be played
5	Bxf6	exf6	
6	Nxe4	d5	
7	Ng3	Bd6	
8	Nf3	0-0	
9	Be2	Nd7	
10	0-0	f5	
11	Bd3	g6	
12	Qd2	Qc7	After a weird opening the game has settled into normality for the start of the middle phase. Only White's having both knights across on the K-side is unusual. Black will have to

			watch this
13	c4		The obvious opening thrust
	.....	Nf6	
14	cxd5	Nxd5	
15	Bc4		(Notice how this bishop has inched his way along the diagonal... e2, d3, c4!)
	.....	Kg7	
16	Bxd5	cxd5	
17	Rac1	Qb6	
18	Qg5	Kh8	
19	h4		A likely-looking move but ...as in the previous game, White fails to realise just how vulnerable his queen is!
	.....	f4	
20	Ne5		If the g3-knight moves back Nh1 or Ne2, ..Rf5 and the queen is lost.
	.....	Qxd4	(The obvious-looking ..fxg3 would allow 21. Nxc6+ and White has a draw by perpetual check.)
21	Nxc6+		White still 'goes for broke'
	.....	hxc6	
22	Qh6+	Kg8	
23	Qxc6+	Qg7	
24	Qxd6	fxg3	
25	Rc7	Qg4	
26	Qxd5+	Be6	
27	Qg5+??		White has made a sturdy attempt at counter-play till now but Black will have clearly the better prospects after an exchange of queens. 27. Qc5 was, perhaps, a better try
	.....	Qxc5	
28	hxc5	gxf2+	
29	Rxf2	Rxf2	
30	Kxf2	Rf8+	
31	Ke3	Rf7	
32	Rc3		The game was adjourned here and White resigned