Four opening systems to start with

A repertoire for young players from 8 to 80.

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[Summary Version].

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**Introduction**

This booklet gives you a repertoire to play when you are starting out in chess. It also gives you some alternatives if for some reason you don't like my first choice.

The core of the repertoire is to play as White the Scotch Gambit. We’re going to play the Italian Game, like the eighteenth-century players of Modena, del Rio, Ponziani, and Lolli, aiming at fast development and a quick attack. They were a bit fed up with Philidor telling people to stodge about. No stodge here!

When Black doesn’t play 1...e5, you can steer for Isolated Queen’s Pawn positions. These occur quite often in chess, so it’s good to know how to play these.
As Black against 1.e4, I think you should play the French Defence.

If you're not keen on the French, by all means play the Two Knights' Defence against the Italian-style systems. You'll also need a system to play against the Ruy Lopez and other openings.

As Black against 1.d4, I think you can get a good game by playing the Tarrasch Defence, which often leads to IQP positions.

I have selected these systems with some key ideas in mind, of which this is the most important:

You will notice that I recommend the French Defence for Black, which Réti says to avoid! But not everyone likes to play risky lines of the Italian Game (like the Two Knights') as Black. And I happen to think that the French Defence is easier to play for Black than for White. That's my second big idea: the systems should be easy for you to understand.

"A knowledge of tactics is the foundation of positional play. This is a rule that has stood its test in chess history and one which we cannot impress forcibly enough upon the young chess player.

"A beginner should avoid the Queen's Gambit and French Defence and play open games instead! While he may not win as many games at first, he will in the long run be amply compensated by acquiring a thorough knowledge of the game."

- Richard Réti, Masters of the Chessboard
There are five key ideas:

- (1) Fast development.

Stein – Langeweg Plovdiv Echt [C55] 1983
1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4 4.Bc4 Bc5 5.c3
Nf6 6.0-0 Nxe4 7.cxd4 Be7 8.d5 Nb8 9.Re1
Nd6 10.Bd3 0-0 11.Nc3 Ne8
The Bxh7 sacrifice suggests itself, but
White first uses a blockading sacrifice of
a pawn.
12.d6 cxd6 (DIAGRAM)
The White pieces now have the d5 point for launching, while Black will
find it very hard to unravel even if the attack falters 13.Bxh7+ usually this
is impossible when the bB is on e7 13...Kxh7 14.Rxe7 Qxe7 15.Nd5 1-0

- (2) Control of the centre.

Morphy-Cunningham [C54] London, 1859
1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4 4.Bc4 Bc5 5.c3
Nf6 6.e5 Qe7 7.0-0 Ng8 8.cxd4 Bb6 9.d5 Qc5
axb6 14Nb5 Kd8 15.Rac1
15...d6 16.exd6 cxd6 17.Qe3 Ra6 18.Nc7 Qe7
Nf6 23.Rc8+ 1-0

- (3) Early castling and bringing the
Rook into play.

Wong-Mathewson [C55] Sunnyvale, 1978
1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4 4.Bc4 Bc5 5.0-0
Nf6 6.e5 Ne4 7.Bd5 f5 8.exf6 Nxf6 9.Bg5 h6
10.Re1+
10...Be7 11.Bxf6 gxf6 12.Nxd4 Nxd4 13.Qh5+
1-0
(4) Hope to catch Black's King in the middle.

Romero Holmes, A-Estremera Panos, S [C54] Leon, 1989

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4 4.Bc4 Bc5 5.c3
Nf6 6.b4 Bb6 7.e5 d5 8.exf6 dxc4 9.b5 Na5
10.Qe2+ Be6 11.fxg7 Rg8 12.Nxd4 Bxd4 13.cxd4
Qxd4 14.Bb2 Qd3 15.Bf6 Qg6 16.Qf3 Rxg7
17.Nd2 Qxg2 18.Qa3 1-0

(5) Look out for tactics:

Koltanowski, G – Hutchason, C [C55]
San Francisco, 1960

Bc5 6.e5 d5 7.exf6 dxc4 8.Re1+ Be6 9.Ng5 Qxf6

10.Nxe6 fxe6 11.Qh5+ 1-0

More tactics...

Think for both sides!

Breivik, T-Valeinis, J [C56] NOR U18 1998

Be6

10.Nxd4?? Nxd4 0-1

(11.Qxd4 Qxe1#)

Instead, 10.Bd2 and 11.Neg5 is better.

So, that's what you're after as White. Your pieces come to the same sorts of squares in each game and Black must be very careful not to get into trouble.
Scotch Gambit

White develops as fast as possible and tempts Black to be greedy.

1.e4 e5
2.Nf3 Nc6
3.d4 exd4
4.Bc4

In the main line White gets a chance to win the pawn back straight away.

4...Bc5
5.c3! dxc3
6.Bxf7+ This is probably the best move.

Example game next page!

Or play a real gambit where the roof can fall in on Black but White is playing a riskier game too.

4...Bc5
5.c3! dxc3
6.Nxc3

6.0-0 angles for a Danish Gambit but probably transposes after 6...d6.

Example Game next page!
Harding,TD – Dashkevich,V [C44] EU/M/GT/360 corr, 1992

White has an attack but I don't know why Black resigned so early!

4...Bb4+ is probably a mistake, but not as bad as this game makes it seem!

Staunton,H-Brodie [C44] London, 1851

Black can avoid all this: 4...Nf6 leads to the Two Knights' and 5...Nf6 leads to the Italian Game
**Italian Game**  
*Giuoco Piano*

1. e4 e5  
2. Nf3 Nc6  
3. Bc4 Bc5

White develops quickly and prepares to castle.

Young players often play Nc3 and d3 here, but I think that's terrible old stodge. How are you going to get your Rooks into the game?

White does best to put pressure on the centre with 4.c3 to avoid the game getting stodgy.

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Bolchazy – Scitovsky [C54] USSR 1933

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 Bc5 4. c3  
4... Nf6 5. d4 exd4 *(this is where we come in from the Scotch Gambit)* 6. cxd4 Bb6?  
7. e5 Ng4 8. h3 Nh6 9. d5 Ne7 10. d6 Ng6  
11. Bg5 f6 12. exf6 gxf6 13. Qe2+ Kf8  
14. Bxh6# 1-0

Black should play a check on move 6 when you can play 7. Nc3 or 7. Bd2. The line with 7. Bd2 Bxd2 is a nice IQP position for White:

---

Littlewood-Paish [C54] Italian, 1993

9. exd5 Nxd5 10. Qb3 Nce7 11. 0-0 0-0 12. Rfe1  
c6 13. a4 Qa5 14. Ne4 Rd8 15. Ne5 Nf5  
16. Qd3 Be6 17. Ng5 g6 18. Qh3 Nd6 19. Qxh7+  

White played this game blindfold!
But Black can equalise with 10...Na5 11.Qa4+ Nc6 12.Qb3 Na5... maybe 12.Bb5!? or may do even better with 7...Nxe4.

Coleman, D-Parker, J [C55] Isle of Man, 1999
8.Bxb4 Nxb4 9.Qb3+ Kf8! ...
...0-1

7.Nc3 may also be better for Black but he has to know it!

Rodriguez-Gillon [C54] IECG, Cat-M 1995

Hmm... you have to hope Black doesn’t know these ideas... and you should never play chess where your best plan is to hope Black won't play the best move! So you need something else...

White can try.
1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.c3 Nf6 5.d4 exd4 (this is where we come in from the Scotch Gambit) 6.O-O!?,

or 1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.c3 Nf6 5.d4 exd4 6.e5!?
[There are example games in these lines at the start of the book.]

or 1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.c3 Nf6 5.b4!? (see example game)

You can try 4.d4...
4...Nxd4 5.Nxe5 is fine for White, 4...exd4 gets into lines we have seen already, so what do you think about 4...Bxd4 5.Nxd4 Nxd4 6.0-0 d6 7.f4...? (Koltanowski Attack). Here's a game:

Muller-N.N. [C50] Vienna, 1927
Two Knights' Defence

1.e4 e5
2.Nf3 Nc6
3.Bc4 Nf6

This fine defence can and should be played by both sides. Sometimes White will attack f7, maybe hoping to sacrifice after 4.Ng5 d5 5.exd5 Nxd5 6.Nxf7, and otherwise can win a pawn -- but that's really what Black wants! Black gets an active game after variations like.

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.Ng5 d5! 5.exd5 b5!

The Two Knights' Defence is a nice system for Black to play; I recommend it if you don't like the French. But you will also have to learn a defence to the Ruy Lopez, Kings' Gambit, Vienna Game...

In the Two Knights', instead of 4.Ng5, White does better to play 4.d4, when there is a choice for both sides. The Modern Variation with 4...exd4 5.e5 is still being worked out, but might be the easiest line to play for White.
Alternatives for Black include 5..Ng4 and 5...Ne4.

There’s a long main line after 5.0-0 Bc5, which is full of dangers for Black, but, if Black knows their theory, White might be happy to draw in the end.

White can move with 7.Bb5 into the Modern Variation, Black can dodge with 7...Bg4.

There’s more safety for both sides after 5...Nxe4, although there’s a tricky bit early on:

Liuboshitz - Shushkta [C56] USSR, 1958
Evans’ Gambit

White plays actively for the initiative.

1.e4 e5
2.Nf3 Nc6
3.Bc4 Bc5
4.b4!?

In the Giuoco Piano, White plays c3 then d4. Evans' Gambit gives up a pawn so that you can play that plan with an extra move.

4...Bxb4 5.c3 Bc5 6.d4

It can all go wrong for Black very quickly:


Especially if Black is greedy:

Fischer – Fine [C52] Skittles, 1963

6.0-0 after 5...Ba5 is designed to avoid 7...dxc3 (as if that's a problem) but lets Black set up the Lasker Defence.


5...Be7 doesn't solve Black's problems either.

Fischer,R – Celle,O [C51] Davis sim, 1964

5...Bc5 is a bit wet. It was seen in the very first game we have with this opening by its inventor:

Evans,-MacDonnell [C51] London, 1829

Declining is not very good for Black: an easy system to play is from my favourite player, Tartakower:

Tartakower – Prokofiev [C51] Paris, 1934

Nigel Short likes 7.Qb3, which avoids Black’s best defence with 7...Nge7 and 8...d5.

Short, N-Nielsen, P [C52] Samba Cup 1st Skanderborg (8), 2003
Petroff Defence

1.e4 e5
2.Nf3 Nf6

What is Black’s idea?

“I won’t defend, but counterattack White’s e-pawn!”

What should White do?

As usual, I think White should put pressure on the centre with.

3.d4

If Black goes for.

3...exd4
4.e5 Ne4
5.Qxd4

you have a nice easy position to play
Better is...

3...Nxe4
4.Bd3
After.
4...d5
5.Nxe5 Nd7
6.Nc3
... Black has still got to show how the pieces are getting sorted out.

To be honest, the Petroff has a very solid reputation and is regularly used by top players to draw with Black. In fact, I used to recommend it as a way of avoiding White's pet opening.

As you get better and find that players know more book lines, you may need to dig deeper into the theory. Until then, there are all sorts of ways to liven things up: how about the Cochrane Gambit, an avalanche of pawns against the uncastled King?

3.Nxe5 d6 4.Nxf7!? You can steer for familiar Two Knights' territory after 3.d4 Nxe4 4.Bc4! or 3.Bc4 (3...Nc6! 4.d4!), when some new gambit options turn up like the Urusoff Gambit:


You can even try to avoid the Petroff with the move order.

1.e4 e5 2.d4!? exd4 3.Nf3!!
Latvian Gambit

1.e4 e5
2.Nf3 f5

“I’ll offer my f-pawn to get some open lines and control of the centre.”

What should White do? Don’t be greedy, follow the idea below to make sure you get better control over the centre.

3.Nxe5 Qf6

[3...fxe4?? 4.Qh5+]

4.Nc4 fxe4

5.Nc3

5. Be2 is another idea, stopping Black’s next move. (Can you see why?).

5...Qg6

6.d3! Undermining the Black centre.

6...Bb4

7.Bd2 Bxc3

8.Bxc3 exd3

9.Bxd3 Now, Black can’t take the g-pawn because of the big check on h5, when Black is in big trouble.
Elephant Gambit  
1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 d5

“I’ll offer my d-pawn to get some open lines and fast development.”

What should White do?

Well, as Steinitz thought, it’s often worth taking a centre pawn, but don’t be afraid to give it back if you start getting stuck.

3.exd5 Bd6

3...e4 4.Qe2 Nf6 5.d3 is better for White

4.d4 e4 5.Ne5 Nf6

6.Nc3 Nbd7

7.Bf4 Qe7

8.Bb5 0-0

9.Bxd7 Bxd7

10.Nxd7 Nxd7

11.Bxd6 Qxd6

12.O-O

And White is a pawn up for nothing.
Philidor Defence
1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 d6

“I’m going to just play very solidly now and look for my chances later in the game”

Oh dear, Black is trying to play stodge... This is exactly what the Modenese were complaining about...

What should White do?

Developing naturally gives you a decent game, and there are some terrible traps for Black to avoid... But as long as Black plays 3...Nf6, most of the traps are avoided.

I think you can give your opponent more problems by playing:

3.d4 Nf6
4.dxe5! Nxe4
5.Qd5! Nc5
6.Bg5!

That’s too slow for you? Well, White has recently been playing a gambit, due to Shirov:

1.e4 d6 2.d4 Nf6 3.Nc3 e5 4.Nf3 Nbd7 5.g4
Nnxg4 6.Rg1 Ng6 7.Bc4 h6 8.Be3 c6 9.dxe5
dxe5 10.Qd3 Qc7 11.Bxf7+ Kxf7 12.Qc4+ Ke7
16.Nxh8 g5 17.Ng6 Bc5 18.0-0-0 1-0

This one is still being worked out! So you can have your own ideas...
Playing White with 1.e4 and Black avoids 1...e5

As you get better you will meet more people who do not reply to your 1.e4 with 1...e5. There are several of these "half-open" defences, but we can make life a bit easier by trying to get into the same type of positions – those with an isolated Queen’s Pawn (IQP).

IQP positions

These common positions can and should be played by both sides – know how to win with and against the IQP!

If you have the IQP:

- you have more space.
- therefore, you should avoid exchanges.
- you are able to move about the board more easily.
- you are able to attack
- you have a support point on e5 for a Knight
- you have a pawn break with d4-d5 (or ...d5-d4)

If your opponent has the IQP:

- you should restrain or blockade the pawn in case it advances.
- you have a target to aim at.
- you have less space and should seek exchanges.
- the weakness of the IQP will get worse in the endgame, so you should seek exchanges

This is Keene-Miles, 1975; White won by a King’s-side attack

This is Kortchnoi-Karpov 1981; Black won by creating more weaknesses
**Sicilian Defence**

This is the best defence for masters, but tricky to handle for the rest of us!

I think White can play for a small edge and an IQP game with 2.c3 (or 2.Nf3 and 3.c3).

**Variation with 2... d5:**

1.e4 c5 2.c3 d5
7.cxd4 e6 8.0-0 Be7 9.Nc3 Qd6 10.Qb3 0-0
11.Rd1 b6

White has more space thanks to the d-pawn, but the pawn might become weak in an endgame. Black is well-developed and has good control of d5.

Both King’s Bishops (e2,e7) are a little quiet at the moment, so, as well as getting the rest of the pieces out, both sides will want to get those bishops doing a bit more work. Chances are about equal.

**Variation with 2... Nf6:**

1.e4 c5 2.c3 Nf6
3.e5 Nd5 4.d4 cxd4 5.Nf3 Nc6 6.cxd4 d6
7.Bc4 Nb6 8.Bb5 Bd7 9.exd6 e6 10.0-0

This position also has a single d-pawn for White, The King’s Bishops have each found a better home, but it’s early days yet for the middlegame.
A wonderfully logical game.


This position can arise from all sorts of openings, including the c3 Sicilian and the system we recommend against the Caro-Kann.


13.Bc2 Re8 14.Qd3 [Sometimes it is White to move in this position!]


Harley–Roberts [B22] British Ch, 1993

Caro Kann Defence

1.e4 c6  
Black thinks to attack the undefended pawn on e4. It's better than the French, because the Bc8 can get out, and it's worse than the French, because the Nb8 can't go to c6.

As White, play the Panov-Botvinnik Attack and steer for an IQP position.

1.e4 c6  
2.d4 d5  
3.exd5 cxd5  
4.c4

You often get an IQP attacking positions.

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.c4 Nf6 5.Nc3  


Black has an alternative in 5...g6 When White should play like this:

To avoid this, there is a sharp gambit idea:

Also, White can be sneaky with the move order.
1.e4 c6 2.c4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.cxd5 Nf6 5.Nc3 Nxd5 6.Bc4, delaying d2-d4 until we see 6...Be7 played...

Then Black started being sneaky, playing moves like.
2...e5!?

See what you think!
Alekhin’s Defence

1.e4 Nf6

“I’m going to tempt White to make lots of Pawn moves and then White’s centre will be a big hollow target for me!”

How to respond?

Surely chase the knight and set up a nice centre, which you should be doing in the opening anyway, but don’t get distracted from developing and castling, which you must do as well.

“...I’ll grab only as much space as I am sure I can hang on to.”

2.e5 Nd5 3.c4 Nb6 4.d4 d6
5.exd6 exd6 (5... cxd6 can be played; use the same scheme of development.)

6.Nc3 Be7
7.Bd3 Nc6
8.Nge2

White just plays to keep the advantage in the centre.

8...O-O
9.b3!

The idea is, if 9...Nb4, 10.Bb1

[Alekhin or Alekhine? Alekhine is a French spelling of a Russian name. Pronounce it Al-yekh-in, with the kh sounding like a Scottish loch, and the stress on the middle syllable. Think: “I got a checkin’ from Alekhin”.]
Scandinavian Defence

1.e4 d5

“I can hit back straight away and play my sort of game!”

What should White do?

“I’ll take the Pawn on d5 and try and set up a decent centre around the d-Pawn.”

2.exd5 and Black has a choice:

2...Qxd5


White is looking good but Black has no weaknesses and is not behind in development. Black normally plays moves like ...Bf5, ...c6, and ...e6; White can try to gain time for improving the position of the Nc3 by playing Bd2 and Ne4.

If Black plays ...Bf5 you can play b2-b4, with the idea ...Qxb4 Rb1 and Rxb7

Instead.

2...Nf6

3.c4!

and now.

3...e6 or 3...c6 and 4.d4

will turn into the lines we recommend against the French and Caro-Kann.
Pirc, Czech and Modern defences

1.e4 d6 2.d4 Nf6 3.Nc3 g6
1.e4 d6 2.d4 Nf6 3.Nc3 c6;
1.e4 g6

“I'm going to hold back for a while and hit back later once White has set things in the centre.”

If Black is going to let you occupy the centre, then do it! Then put your pieces on nice flexible squares in the centre.

4.Be3

... is a sound way to play, keeping your options open.

You might get a chance to play the clockwork attack down the h-file.


**Weird Wonders**

There's no way I can tell you about every move that Black can play. For example, there are at least four other defences that I have had played against me:

1. e4 b6 (Owen's Defence)
2. e4 a6 2.d4 b5 (St.George's Defence)
3. e5 g5 2.d4 h6 (Basman's Defence)
4. e4 Nc6 (Nimzowitsch Defence)

I could give you a line against each, but you're better off learning more about the moves that actually are played against you.

The question is: what do I do when someone plays something I haven't seen before?

Maybe they just made it up there and then, maybe they read it in a book, but either way, there is an idea behind it, and that idea might bite you.

The main things are:

- try and play your normal game
- put your pieces on the squares you usually like to see them on
- don’t assume it's a mistake
- don’t try and win any faster than your position deserves!
**French Defence**

1.e4 e6

Black intends to hit back at the undefended e4 point. Often we get blocked positions with pawns on d4 and e5 (second diagram).

It’s better than the Caro-Kann, because the Bc8 can’t get out, and it’s worse than the CK, because the Nb8 can go to c6, and you can attack with ...c5 in one move.

This is a good defence for Black I think; although it is quite closed it’s not stodgy, and the same sorts of positions usually turn up and the ideas are easy enough to understand.

- White has more space but:
- Black can attack the advanced pawns.
- Black has a poor Bc8. Although
endgames are generally good for Black, Black must not swap off everything else leaving just this duff piece.

You might find that White swaps off this Bishop for you: I often see in junior games 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.Bb5+ Bd7 5. Bxd7+ Qxd7 when.

Black has got rid of the biggest problem in the position! You also see 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 Nc6 6.Bb5 Bd7 7. Nf3 7...Nx e5! winning a pawn and maybe swapping off the Bishop.
Black has two systems in the Advance Variation to swap off this poor piece:

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 b6 4.c3 Qd7!

Not 4...Ba6? 5.Bxa6 Nxa6 6.Qa4+

5.Nf3 Ba6

The other idea is:

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 Qb6 5.Nf3 Bd7

with the idea of 6...Bb5.

White can make a mess by c2-c4 so Black sometimes plays.

6.a3 cxd4 7.cxd4 Bb5

I don’t know if you should play either of these lines but you should remember the ideas.

Black can attack the white pawn centre by ...c5 or ...f6 or both – sometimes you even see ...g5.

After ...f6, there is a trick that White can play with a Bishop on d3 – White plays Ng5! threatening Qh5+ g6 Bxg6+.

So, if you move the Queen first, your King can slide across to d8.

Hellers,F - Jacobson [C04] Sweden, 1985

Black wants to threaten and win the d-Pawn, but there is a trap you must know:

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 Nc6 5.Nf3 Qb6 6.Bd3? 

White has cut off the defence of the d-Pawn by the White Queen. But Black should not take the d-Pawn: 6...cxd4 7. cxd4 Nxd4? 8. Nxd4 Qxd4??.

White now has a deadly discovery: 9. Bb5+ and Black loses the Queen....

It's not obvious how White should defend d4.

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 Nc6 5.Nf3 Qb6 6.b3? 

White hopes to take the pressure off the b-Pawn and support d4 with a Bishop on b2, but....

6...cxd4 7.cxd4 Bb4+ 8.Bd2 Nxd4

and White had lost the d-Pawn and was struggling to hang on to the e-Pawn.

Try again: 6.Be2 cxd4 7.cxd4 Nh6

When the Black Knight comes to h6, White might want to take it.

The Knight will be strong when it comes to f5, and the White Bishop on c1 is always going to be blocked in by the White Pawns. So why not take it? White will get a surprise!

8. Bxh6 Qxb2! 

Black is winning.

Don’t castle into White’s King’s-side attack. With a closed centre, Black’s King is sometimes safer in the centre.

Black resigned! Can you follow why?

Here’s a Black win now.

Lebedev - Petrosian,T [C02] Moscow Torpedo-Spartak m, 1958
If White pushes forward with e4-e5 on move 3 (Advance Variation), you can play very logical moves to attack d4:

White might push on move 4 (Steinitz Variation), when it gains time:
Black’s last move is not the sort I usually recommend but White might be tempted to castle Queen’s-side, and that is pretty risky when Black can play ...b5 so quickly.
Same idea if White plays the sneaky 3.Nd2 (Tarrasch Variation: the idea is to play c3, and get the Knight over to the King's-side)...


And if White pushes on move 5 (Classical Variation), you play the same sorts of moves.


Your Bishop is pretty bad so swap it off like this: 12.0-0-0 b4 13.Ne2 a5 14.Kb1 Ba6

One day you must promise yourself you will try the exciting SuperMac variation (the MacCutcheon):


Sometimes White swaps off on d5 on move 3 (Exchange Variation), which is not bad for Black, as it releases the Bc8.

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 exd5

If White just stodges about, you can still get some play:

4.Bd3 Nc6 5.c3 Bd6


Winter – Alekhin Nottingham 1936 (...0-1)
Playing White against the French:

As White, go for our usual IQP attacking position with.

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 exd5 4.c4

I don't think this variation has a name!
You should steer for the attack as we have seen before.

Here's a game of mine!

Regis-Evans [C01] East Devon (1), 2000

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 exd5 4.Nf3 Nf6 5.c4 Be7
10.Bb3 h6 11.Re1 Bg4 12.h3 Bxf3 13.Qxf3 c6
14.Bf4 a5 15.a3 a4 16.Bc2 Ra5 17.Rad1 Bd6
18.Be5 Be7 19.Qd3 g6 20.Re3 Kh7 21.Rg3 Rg8
22.Qf3 Kg7 23.Rg4 Rf8

and now I should have played 24.Qf5!

Black usually takes on c4 as soon as you move your Bishop from f1 (if Black takes earlier, you gain a move). If Black doesn't take but defends the pawn, it's hard to see how Black can play for a win; White should have a nice space advantage and can play on both sides of the board.

It's one time when you might think about playing a Dreadful Rook Pawn

Move (DRPM) – not because you are frightened of the pin, but you want to leave Black with as many pieces as possible, including that rubbish Bishop on c8.
**Playing Black against 1.d4**

**Tarrasch Defence**

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 c5

I like this opening for Black; your pieces come to very natural squares. You usually get an IQP position, which you need to play a bit more slowly and carefully because White can set up a good attacking position against your pawn.

You can play it against 1.d4, 1.c4, 1.Nf3, 1.g3...

Vadasz L-Nunn J [D34] Budapest 1978


White has set up strong pressure against d5, but Black can equalise.


It’s more important to have active pieces than tidy pawns; Black went on to win this Grandmaster game. But pawns do matter: if you have untidy pawns and only so-so pieces, then you will probably lose!

Tal-Keres, Yugoslavia, 1959
Marshall,-Capablanca [D33] NY m23, 1909
Here Black won by advancing the Queen's-side majority. White has a King's-side majority, but he didn’t do anything with it!

If White doesn’t play the Bishop to g2 (and I think most beginners will not), just put your pieces on natural squares and look to make some sort of advantage on one side of the board.

White can’t really expect to get a good game by attacking the d-pawn straight away: you can make it into an exciting double-pawn Gambit.

Plath,B - Petzold,V [D32] corr, 1989

White's pawns are not really important yet!
von Hennig-Schara Gambit

There's a terrific little gambit that you can play in the Tarrasch:

1. d4 d5
2. c4 e6
3. Nc3 c5
4. cxd5 cxd4?

The main line goes:

1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 c5 4. cxd5 cxd4
12. 0-0 g5

The theory position ends up with opposite-side castling, where Black's King is probably less safe than White's. But can White last that long?

[Actually 11...0-0 may be as good]

Example game:

1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 c5 4. cxd5 cxd4
5. Qxd4
5...Nc6 6. Qd1 exd5 7. Qxd5

[Glikshtein-Shkurovich, Hazin 1970]

when Black should have played 17... Rxf3!! winning
1.\textit{d4 without 2.c4: the Colle/Stonewall/London systems}

1.\textit{d4 d5 and...}
2.\textit{Nf3 \& 3.e3 (Colle)}
2.\textit{Nf3 \& 3.Bf4 (London)}
2.\textit{e3 \& 3.Bd3 \& 4.f4 (Stonewall)}

I often say that you have to put pressure on the centre with pawns, and White is not doing this, so these systems tend to be a bit flat.

How should you play these systems as White or Black? Black often develops their Bishops on f5 and d6. Because White is going to take a few moves to play Bf1-d3, Black may play ...Bc8-f5 first, and the light-squared Bishops come off. Also, Black will often challenge the Bc1-f4 with ...Bf8-d6, and then the dark-squared Bishops also come off. We then have a slow game with Knights and Queens.

The first thing to do if you get into this sort of position (whether you are White or Black) is to \textbf{open up a file for your Rooks}. As Black, you may not be able to achieve ...e7-e5 very quickly, but it is likely that you can play ...c7-c5. So one Golden Rule for playing Black in these openings is for you to play ...c7-c5 at some point. This means that your Queen's Knight should not be placed straightaway at c6 in front of the c-Pawn, but instead go to c6 only after ...c7-c5. Another idea is to play ...Nb8-d7, which actually supports the ...c7-c5 break.

Also, \textbf{don't castle too early}: with a closed centre, your King will be fine uncastled for a while. Castle too early, and White will be able to rush pieces over to attack while your pieces might be slow to get over because the centre is closed.
Playing Black against the Colle

1.d4 d5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.e3
Just play.
3...Bf5
White will have to play 4.c4 to get anything out of the opening. You won’t be able to play your Tarrasch but you will get a more interesting game than the Colle.

Playing Black against the Stonewall

1.d4 d5 2.e3 Nf6 3.Bd3
Black can break the Golden Rule of Queen’s Pawn positions and play the Queen’s Knight in front of the c-pawn.
3...Nc6 with two ideas:
4.c3 e5!
White’s position doesn’t make any sense without control of e5.
White’s position doesn’t make any sense without a Bishop on d3

Playing Black against the London

1.d4 d5
2.Nf3 Nf6
3.Bf4
Now very sensible is:
3...c5, 4...Nc6 and 5...Bf5
This is fine for Black, if a bit dull.
Purdy calls it the All-purpose System: just put your pieces on the same squares! You can play it against 1.d4, 1.c4, 1.Nf3, 1.g3...

Black often can’t find a good home for the Bc8; in this line we place it on the long diagonal, where it is very well placed.

There are some special moves you need to remember to play in the main line Queen’s Gambit (Tartakower Variation):

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Be7 4.Nf3 Nf6 5.Bg5 0-0 6.e3 h6!

That’s important: sometimes White can play Qc2 with a double attack on c7 and h7, so pay it when it doesn’t lose time.


Now this Bishop is better in the centre. Here’s a great game:


Playing Black against 1.d4 – a third system

**Dutch Stonewall**

The Stonewall for Black:

1.\(d4\) \(f5\)
2.\(Nf3\) \(e6\)
3.\(g3\) \(Nf6\)
4.\(Bg2\) \(d5\)
5.\(0-0\)

and now \(...\)Bd6 is more fashionable than \(...\)Be7.

At its crudest, Black is playing for a King’s-side attack.

This system is easier for Black to play than for White, I often think. You know where you’re heading and your pieces often come to the same squares. In fact, the biggest problem is getting to play it – lots of White 1.d4 players will avoid the main lines of the Dutch with some wretched gambit or other.

Black used to get the bad Bishop around to h4 by Bd7-e8-h4... These days, we often park it on b7, thinking that the Bg2 also has no squares to speak of.
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### Scotch Gambit

#### Scotch Gambit

1. e4 Nf3 d4 Bc4 c3 $\rightarrow$ Italian #7
2. e5 Nc6 exd4 Bc5 dxc3
3. Bxf7+ e5 Nc6 exd4 Bc5 d3
4. Nxc3 d3 $\rightarrow$ Italian Game #7
5. e4 Nf3 d4 Bc4 c3 $\rightarrow$ 2 Knights #13
6. e5 Nc6 exd4 Bb4+ Nf6
7. e4 Nf3 Bc4 c3 d4 c4 xdx4 Bd2 Bd2
8. e5 Nc6 Bc5 Nf6 exd4 Bb4+ Bxd2
9. e4 Nf3 Bc4 c3 d4 e5
10. e5 Nc6 Bc5 Nf6 exd4
11. e4 Nf3 Bc4 c3 b4
12. e5 Nf6

### Italian Game

#### Italian Game

1. e4 Nf3 Bc4 c3 d4 cxd4 Bd2
2. e5 Nc6 Bc5 Nf6 exd4 Bb4+ Bxd2
3. e4 Nf3 Bc4 c3 d4 cxd4 Bd2
4. e5 Nc6 Bc5 Nf6 exd4 Bb4+ Nxe4!
5. e4 Nf3 Bc4 c3 d4 e5
6. e5 Nc6 Bc5 Nf6 exd4
7. e4 Nf3 Bc4 c3 d4 0-0
8. e5 Nc6 Bc5 Nf6 exd4
9. e4 Nf3 Bc4 c3 b4
10. e5 Nc6 Bc5 Nf6

### Two Knights'

#### Two Knights'

1. e4 Nf3 Bc4 Ng5 exd5
2. e5 Nc6 Nf6 d5 b5
3. e4 Nf3 Bc4 c3 d4 0-0
4. e5 Nc6 Bc5 Nf6 exd4
5. e4 Nf3 Bc4 c3 b4
13 e4 Nf3 Bc4 d4 e5 exd4
14 e4 Nf3 Bc4 d4 O-O e5 exf6 Bc5 d5
15 e4 Nf3 Bc4 d4 0-0 e5 Bb5
16 e4 Nf3 Bc4 d4 0-0 Re1 Bxd5

Evans Gambit

17 e4 Nf3 Bc4 b4 c3 d4 Qb3
18 e4 Nf3 Bc4 b4 c3 d4 Qb3 exd4
19 e4 Nf3 Bc4 b4 c3 d4 Bb6
20 e4 Nf3 Bc4 b4 c3 Bb6
21 e4 Nf3 Bc4 b4 Bb6

Petroff’s Defence

22 e4 Nf3 d4 e5 Qxd4 exd4 Ne4
23 e4 Nf3 d4 Bd3 Nxe4
24 e4 Nf3 Nxe5 Nxf7
25 e4 Nf3 Bc4 d4 Qxd4 Nxe4 exd4
26 e4 Nf3 Bc4 Nc3 dxc3 Nxe4 Nxc3
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
27 e4 Nf3 Bc4 Nc3 
e5 Nf6 Nxe4 Nc6

Philidor's Defence
28 e4 Nf3 d4 dxe5 Qd5 Bg5 
e5 d6 Nf6 Nxe4 Nc5

Latvian Gambit
29 e4 Nf3 Nxe5 Nc4 
e5 f5 Qf6

Elephant Gambit
30 e4 Nf3 exd5 d4 
e5 d5 Bd6
31 e4 Nf3 exd5 Qe2 
e5 d5 e4

Sicilian Defence
32 e4 c3 exd5 d4 
c5 d5 Qxd5
33 e4 c3 e5 d4 
c5 Nf6 Nd5

Caro-Kann Defence
34 e4 d4 exd5 c4 
c6 d5 cxd5
35 e4 c4 exd5 cxd5 
c6 d5 cxd5
36 e4 c4 
c6 e5

Pirc Defence
37 e4 d4 Nc3 Be3 
d6 Nf6 g6
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Alekhin's Defence

- 45 -
38  e4    d4    c4    exd6  
    Nf6    Nd5    d6    Nb6

**Scandinavian Defence**

39  e4    exd5    Nc3    d4  
    d5    Qxd5    Qa5

40  e4    exd5    c4    d4  
    d5    Nf6    e6/c6

**French Defence**

41  e4    d4    **e5**    c3    Nf6  
    e6    d5    c5    Nc6    Qb6

42  e4    d4    Nc3    **e5**    f4    Nf3    Be3  
    e6    d5    Nf6    Nfd7    c5    Nc6    a6

43  e4    d4    Nc3    Bg5    **e5**
    e6    d5    Nf6    Be7

44  e4    d4    Nc3    Bg5    e5    Bd2    bxc3  
    e6    d5    Nf6    Bb4    h6    Bxc3    Ne4

45  e4    d4    exd5    Bd3  
    e6    d5    exd5    Nc6

46  e4    d4    exd5    **c4**
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**Tarrasch Defence**

47 d4 c4 Nc3 cxd5
   d5 e6 c5 exd5

**von Hennig-Schara Gambit**

48 d4 c4 Nc3 cxd5
   d5 e6 c5 cxd4

**Colle System**

49 d4 Nf3 e3
   d5 Nf6 Bf5

**London System**

50 d4 Nf3 Bf4
   d5 Nf6 c5

**Stonewall Attack**

51 d4 e3 Bd3 f4
   d5 Nf6 Nc6 Nb4

52 d4 e3 Bd3 c3
   d5 Nf6 Nc6 e5

**All-purpose System**

53 d5 e6 Nf6 Be7 b6 Bb7 c5

54 d4 c4 Nc3 Bg5 e3 Nf3 Bh4
   d5 e6 Nf6 Be7 0-0 h6 b6

**Dutch Stonewall**

55 d4 g3 Nf3 Bg2 0-0
   f5 e6 Nf6 d5
There's a lot more to these openings than I've been able to explain here. For example, where I've given just a double-page spread to an opening, you can sometimes find a whole book on just one variation. But until you regularly meet opponents who are beating you because they know more book lines, don't worry about it. If you worry, try these:

**Playing Italian-style as White**

Free website reading: HARDING The Kibitzer Columns at Chess Café www.chesscafe.com Nos.69-70 (Giuloco Piano), Nos.114-115,148 (Two Knights') Nos.89-90,119 (Evans' Gambit) and Nos.74-75 (Scotch Gambit).

EMMS Playing the Open Game as Black (Two Knights' Defence etc., nothing on the Ruy Lopez) [Gambit].

MULLER & VOIGHT Danish Dynamite! (Scotch Gambit) [Russell].

GUFELD & STESKO Giuloco Piano & Evans' Gambit [Batsford].

BAKER A startling chess opening repertoire (Max Lange, Koltanowski, Cochrane Gambit) [Everyman].

**Playing against half-open defences**

McDONALD Starting Out 1.e4 (Everynan).

EMMS Attacking with 1.e4 (Scandinavian, Panov-Botvinnik against the Caro-Kann and lots of other ideas!) [Everyman].

AAGAARD Panov-Botvinnik Attack [Batsford].

**Defending against 1.e4**

McDONALD Starting out: Defending against 1.e4 (French Defence for Black) [Everyman].

JACOBS Starting Out – The French [Everyman].

WATSON Play the French [Batsford].

**Defending against 1.d4**

AAGAARD & LUND Defending against 1.d4 [Everyman].

PURDY Action Chess [Thinker’s Press].

SADLER Queen’s Gambit Declined [Everyman].

McDONALD Starting Out: Dutch Defence (Everynan).

AAGAARD Dutch Stonewall [Everyman].
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