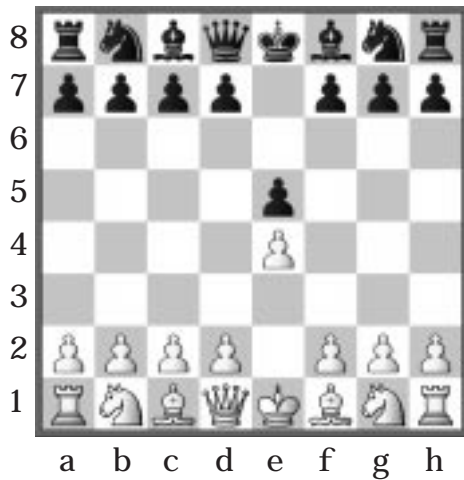


# Chapter 6a

## Two Knights Defense, Part 1



The Two Knights Defense is one of the first openings played at all levels. We recommend this strategy for the scholastic player. It is good for both Black and White. Usually, this is an *open game*: pawns trade in the center, leaving open and half-open files for rapid movement of pieces and exciting attacks.

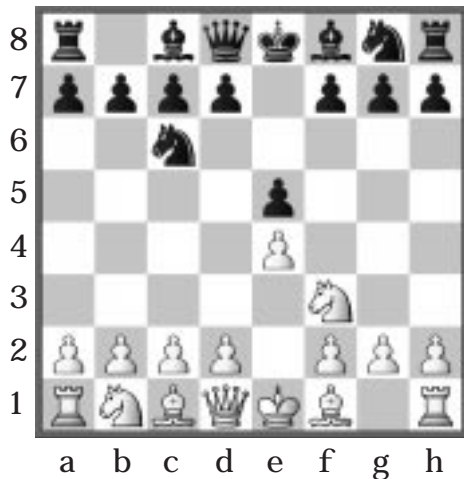


1. e4

e5

The most powerful opening for the beginning scholastic player is e4 for White and e5 in response.

With this move, both Black and White compete for control of the center. Players prepare for rapid development of pieces that will allow them to castle early.



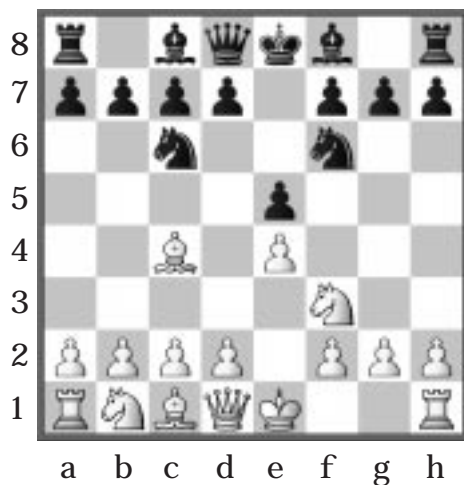
2. Nf3

Nc6

White's second move — Knight to f3, attacking Black's Pawn at e5 — makes this opening very similar to the Queen's Raid, where the Queen comes out attacking e5.

Black's response is the same as in the Queen's Raid: Knight to c6. This develops a piece and protects the Pawn at e5.





### 3. Bc4

### Nf6

White's third move, Bishop to c4, indicates that White is playing a style of opening called the Italian Game. This move helps White maintain the opening advantage, keeping Black on the defensive. The move also helps White control the center by preventing Black's Pawn from moving to d5. White also attacks the f7 Pawn, protected only by the King.

For Black to continue to follow the 3 principles of openings, Black must either develop the Kingside Bishop or Knight. In the Two Knight's Defense, Black brings out the Knight to f6, attacking White's unprotected Pawn at e4. The Two Knights Defense could be called the "Two Knights Attack."

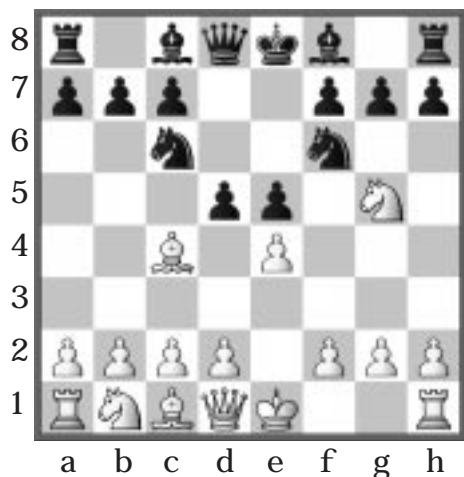


### 4. Ng5

The move Ng5, similar to the Queen's Raid, creates a "double attack" on the Pawn at f7, while protecting the Pawn at e4. Unlike the Queen's Raid, White's Queen is still in a safe position. White has developed minor pieces rather than risk the Queen.

(Castling is another good move here for White.)

**Note:** Move each piece only once in the opening to develop pieces rapidly and fight for control of the center. But, in this case, to get the double attack on f7, we had to move our Knight twice.

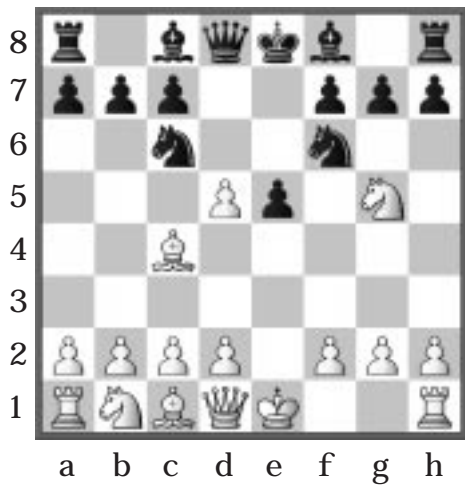


### 4. ...

### d5

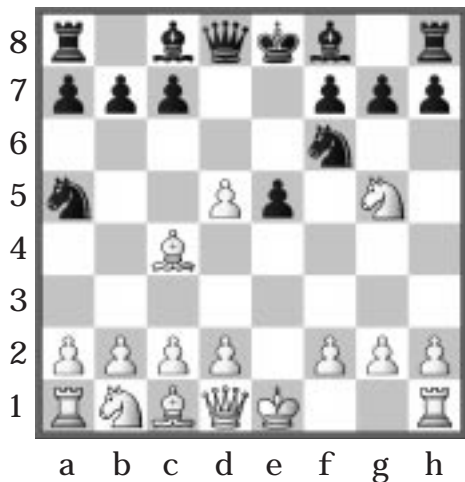
Black can't protect the Pawn at f7 but can block the attack. Black can't block the Knight because it can jump; but, by moving the Pawn to d5, Black blocks the White Bishop's attack.

This move also allows Black to develop the Queenside Bishop that is often blocked at c8.



### 5. ed (PxP)

Pawn takes Pawn keeps White's attack going. If Bishop takes Pawn, half of White's attack will be ended because Black's Knight will take the Bishop.



### 5. ...

### Na5

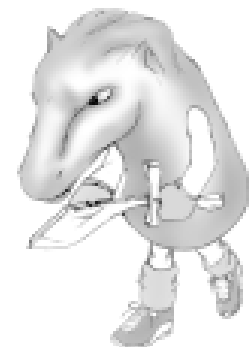
Black does not capture the Pawn d5 — that would *pin* the Knight. If the Knight were to move, the double attack on f7 by the White Bishop and Knight would be restored.

So, if the Knight at f6 doesn't capture the Pawn, the Knight at c6 must move or be captured. Black's plan to move the Knight to a5, attacking White's Bishop, is to force the Bishop off the diagonal a2 to f7 and stop the double attack.

**Note:** Often, players say, "Knights on the rim are grim." Here, it's so important to stop the attack that we recommend the move to a5, even though it puts the Knight on the rim and is its second move in the opening.

White has an extra Pawn here, but Black has greater development and is now attacking. Therefore, the position is considered even.

This is not the end of the opening. There are 9 more moves to be covered in the next chapter.



Work through the following activities and puzzles to practice the beginning of the Two Knights Defense. →

