

Name _____

Opposite Side Castling

In most grandmaster chess games, both White and Black castle on the King's side. When the players castle on opposite sides, however, an exciting battle often ensues, with both sides trying to get to their opponent's King first. In general, then, it pays to remember this rule: **If you and your opponent castle on opposite sides, the faster attack usually wins.**

Perhaps the most dramatic illustration of this concept occurs in the Sicilian Defense – Dragon Variation, which begins 1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 g6 6. Be2 Bg7 7. f3 Nc6 8. Qd2 O-O, reaching the position in diagram 1:

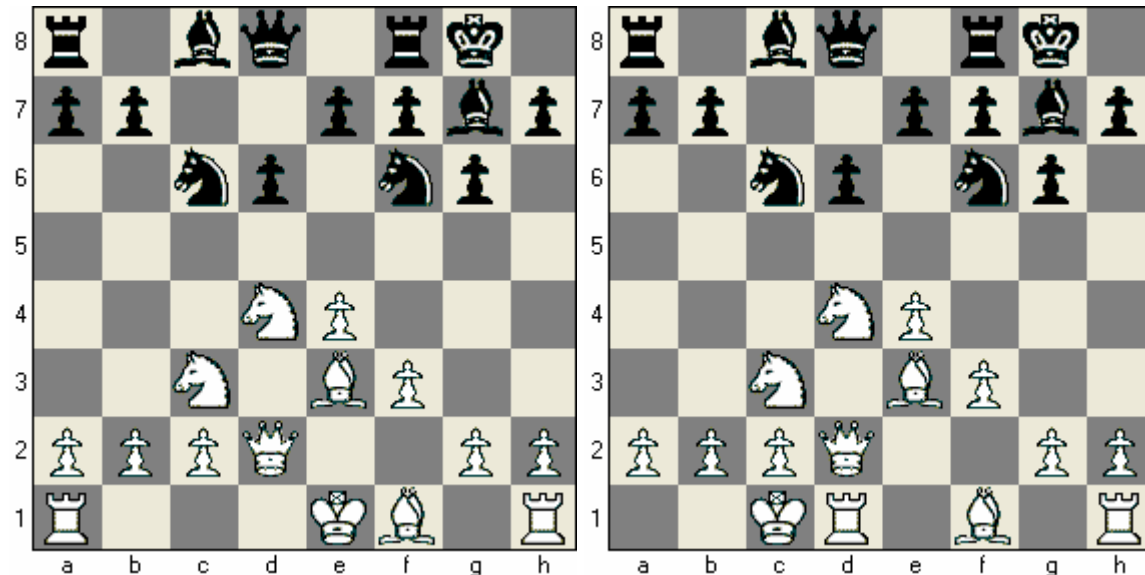


Diagram 1 – White's perspective: Black has just castled on the Kings side. If White intends to pursue an attack against the Black King, what is the target square? _____

Right now, Black has three Pawns around his King, and White wants to break down those defenses. Which two Pawns should White push to open up the Pawns around the Black King? _____ and _____

Black's strongest piece is his "Dragon" Bishop on g7. What move can White make that would exchange off the dark-square Bishop? _____

Finally, if White intends to storm the Black King with his own King-side Pawns, on which side should White Castle? _____

Diagram 2 – Black's perspective: White has just played 9. O-O-O. Black needs to counterattack quickly before his own King gets checkmated! Paying attention to the position of White's King, which file should Black use to place his Rooks (and possibly his Queen as well)? _____

Which Black piece has the potential to strike at targets on d4, c3, and b2? _____

Ideally, where would Black like to place his light-squared Bishop, and why? _____