Imbalances

Minor pieces	Pawn structure
Space	Material
Files & Squares	Development
Initiative	

Pawn Structure

Doubled pawns

- 👎 Reduces their flexibility and one or both can be vulnerable to attack
- 👍 Leads to extra open files and increased squares control

Isolated pawns

- 👎 Cannot be defended by other pawn and very vulnerable in an open file
- 👍 It's creation my allow its owner to create a half-open file
- 👎 To beat an insolated pawn
- ✔ Control the weak square in front, so it cannot move
- ✔ Trade all minor pieces (ends all attacking chances of the pawn owner)
- ✔ Keep the queen (stops enemy king of taking part on defense)
- ✔ and one or two rooks to double them against the pawn
- ✔ Use a friendly pawn to attack the pinned isolated target
- 👍 The owner of d4-d5 isolated pawn has plenty of space. Keep the pieces and play dinamically. If your opponent manages to trade all minor pieces, trade both rooks as final defense

Pawn Structure (cont)

Backward pawns

- 👎 It's only weak if it's on an open file and unable to advance. To play against fight to control the square in front of the pawn (exchanging square defenders for example)
- 👍 It deffends an advanced pawn which can be important, and the backward one is not bad if the square in front is well defended

Hanging pawns

- 👎 Can be weak if the other side is able to avoid any dynamic advance of the pair
- 👍 c4-d4 hanging pair control many important squares, give territory advantage and offer play on half-open b and e files

Passed pawns

- 👎 If the square in front of the pawn is controlled by the other side it's not strong
- 👍 It is very strong if its owner has play elsewhere, or if the squares in front are cleared

Many imbalances, one board

Most games will contain several different types of imbalances. Often it's not clear which imbalance will triumph, but the first player who stops trying to make use of his positive imbalances will allow the opponent to dominate.
You should be aware that when strengthening one imbalance you could be negating another. When contemplating imbalances you have and imbalances that you like to create try to make sure they complement each other.

Curse of mindless knight hunter

If center is locked you should play in the direction your pawns point because it is there where you territory lies

If center is locked you should try to attack with pawns. This gives you extra space and allows rooks to come into play

You play on the wings when the center is closed, but otherwise the center is the most important area to concentrate on

You only play where you have a favorable imbalance or the possibility of creating a favorable imbalance

You may also start a King-hunt if you have a large lead in development and think you can land a knockout blow before he can recover

Minor Pieces

Bishops & Knights are both worth three points. It's up to you to make your piece more valuable

Bishops are best in open positions

Bishops are very strong in endgames where both sides have passed pawns dashing to queening

A 'bad' bishop is one on same color as your center pawns. You'll want to do three things:

- ✔ Trade it
- ✔ Get the pawns off the bishop's color
- ✔ Get the bishop outside the pawn chain

A bishop weakness is that it is stuck on one color. Thus the force of the bishop pair

Knights love closed positions with locked pawns

Knights stand better in the center of the board. A knight on the rim controls less squares and needs more time to reach the other side of the board



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Minor Pieces (cont)

Knights need advanced support points to be effective

Knights are superior to bishops in an endgame where all pawns are on one side of the board

Steinitz rule: best way to beat knights is to deprive them of advanced support points

Material

Material beats initiative if you can neutralize opponent's plusses and equalize the game

Material gives extra unit of force. Make the unit to participate and outnumber your opponent

Material edges like exchange are only useful if you can give the rook an open file

When you win material you may find your pieces out of balance. This is because you need a new goal. Don't rush, bring your pieces together and prepare a new plan: material is a long-term advantage

How to play the opening

The real purpose of openings is not midlessly develop your pieces. As in the rest of the game, the real purpose is trying to create favorable imbalances (or imbalances that can eventually become favorable) and develop our pieces and pawns around the differences.
Once an imbalance is created, every developing move we make, every pawn we push, must address this imbalance in some way.

Which side of the board should play

The center is the board area you would like to control the most

If center is locked you should play in the direction your pawns point because it is there where you territory lies

The best reaction to an attack on the wing is a counterattack in the center

Center

A full pawn center gives its owner territory and control over key squares

Once you create a full pawn center you **must** make it indestructible

Don't advance the center too early! Every pawn move leaves a weak square in its wake

If your opponent has created a full pawn center you **must** attack it. For him it's strong, for you a target

If center pawns get traded, then open files exists for your rooks

If center becomes locked play switches to the wings

With a closed center you know which wing to play by noting the direction pointed by your pawns

A wide open center allows attack with pieces. A closed center means you must attack with pawns

Space

When you have more space it's better to avoid exchanges

When you have less space it's better to exchange

A spatial plus is a long-term advantage. Do not hurry

Development

A lead in development means that you must start some aggresive act

A lead in development means the most in open positions

If enemy king is in the center and you have a lead in development start an immediate attack

A closed position often nullifies a lead in development

The goal doesn't have to be mate! Win material, or get the two bishops in open position, or leave the opponent with weak pawns, etc will do

Initiative

Who has the control of the game is said to possess the initiative. It can be based on static (ex. you're attacking a weak pawn) or dynamic factors (ex. you have a lead in development).
You should look upon the initiative. The questions are:

- ✔ Will you able to retain it?
- ✔ What was the price to pay to acquire it?

Using the rooks

Use your pawns to blast open files

Don't open a file if the opponet can take it away from you

If creation of an open file has nothing to do with your other positive imbalances, don't waste your time in doing it

At times you can allow the opponent to dominate an open file as long as you make sure no penetration points exists along it



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Mental thoughtness

Always expect the opponent to see your threat and make the best reply

Play to win

If you find a plan that conforms the position, follow through with it

Play with confidence

If you find yourself lost, tighten everything up. Play the move that you would hate to see in opponent's situation

If your opponent is in time preassure never try to move quickly and push him over the clock



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