

The Opposition

Chess

The king manoeuvre that decides pawn endgames.

Kings facing each other with an odd number of squares between them. Whoever is NOT to move holds the opposition and can force the other king backwards.

DIRECT
1 square

DISTANT
3 or 5

HOLDER
not to move

- Direct opposition: one square between, same file.
- Distant opposition: three or five squares between.
- Diagonal opposition: the same idea on a diagonal.
- The side not to move holds it.
- Triangulation loses a tempo deliberately to gain it.
- It is the mechanism behind almost every king-and-pawn win.

LOOK FOR IT

Kings on e4 and e6, Black to move: White holds the opposition and Black must give way.

Triangulation: your king walks a three-square triangle to reach the same position with the opponent to move.