

## Study Brief: 1500–2000

### What this stage is about

You're past the point where a bigger opening repertoire alone moves your rating. What matters now is genuine theoretical depth in the lines you actually play, sharper calculation under realistic pressure, and turning your own games into a real feedback loop rather than an afterthought.

### Weekly plan

- **2 sessions on Tactics and Tactic or Not combined**, on the harder pools.
- **2–3 sessions deepening your main Sicilian defence (as Black) and your main anti-Sicilian (as White)** — this is the pairing that will come up most often at this level.
- **1 session on Woodpecker Method**, specifically on hard pools you've solved before — speed and pattern recall matter as much as fresh solving now.
- **1 session reviewing a recent game** through My Games, using the Elo sweep to see exactly where a mistake stops being one.
- **Spar against Maia** at the 1600–2000 preset, at least once a week.

### Recommended packs

**As Black, pick one main Sicilian and study it in real depth:**

- Sicilian Najdorf, Sicilian Dragon, or Sicilian Sveshnikov — any of the three rewards serious study at this level; Scheveningen, Classical, and Taimanov/Kan are worth knowing well enough to defend against, even if they're not your main weapon.

**As White, against the Sicilian, now at full depth:**

- Whichever anti-Sicilian you chose earlier (Alapin, Rossolimo/Moscow, or Grand Prix) deserves a proper second pass here — the lines go deeper than the earlier brief covered, and you now have the tactical base to handle them.

**As Black, against 1.d4, at full depth:**

- Grünfeld Defence — a genuinely dynamic, theory-heavy system worth adding if your King's Indian or Nimzo-Indian from the previous stage feels solid.
- Modern Benoni and Benko Gambit — both reward players comfortable giving up material or structure for long-term activity; good additions once your calculation is reliable enough to justify the risk.

**As White:**

- Ruy Lopez and Italian Game — revisit both at their full theoretical depth now, rather than the simplified lines from earlier briefs.

- Queen's Gambit Accepted — worth adding as a flexible, slightly less heavily analysed alternative to your main 1.d4 systems.

### **Which Train modes to lean on**

Woodpecker Method on hard pools is where real speed comes from at this level — don't neglect it in favour of only fresh material. My Games reviews should now routinely use the move-explanation engine and the Elo sweep on your losses; knowing at which rating a mistake stops looking like one tells you exactly how far you still have to calculate. Maia sparring at 1600–2000 is the closest the app gets to realistic tournament resistance — use it for serious games, not just casual ones.

### **When you're ready to move up**

Move to the 2000+ brief once your main Sicilian (both sides of the board) and your main 1.d4 defence are both genuinely deep rather than memorised to a fixed depth, and your own-game reviews are mostly surfacing subtle positional misjudgements rather than missed tactics or opening-stage errors.