

CHESS FOR HEROES

RICHARD JAMES

A chess course for novices

Version 1.02 May 2022

© 2021-2022 Richard James
(richard@chessheroes.uk)

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. This book contains material protected under International and Federal Copyright Laws and Treaties. Any unauthorised reprint or use of this material is prohibited. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system without express written permission from the author.

CONTENTS

Introduction	3
The Rules of Chess	6
Chess Notation	19
Module 1	21
Module 2	64
Module 3	93
Conclusion	130

INTRODUCTION

This is one of four beginners' chess books offered by **Chess Heroes**.

Minichess Activities is written for parents and teachers who want to use strategy games to improve young children's cognitive skills. This includes a wide variety of chess-based games and activities designed to help children's development in many ways while also providing them with the knowledge and skills to play a good game of chess should they wish to do so. It is suitable for children of junior school age: 7 to 11, but some activities may also be appropriate for younger children.

Junior Chess Heroes is a worksheet based course for children working on chess at home with their parents, but it could also be used in schools. You might want to see it as a chess equivalent of something like Kumon Maths. It's designed mainly for younger children (in principle 7+, but slightly younger children might also benefit as long as proactive parental support is available), but, if the format appeals, it could also be used by older learners.

Journey Through Chess is an older book pitched between Junior Chess Heroes and Chess for Heroes, offering a mix of worksheet and activity based instruction. Again, it's written for parents and teachers, not for children.

Chess for Heroes, the book you're reading now, is an activity based course using active learning techniques suitable for learners aged 9 to 90 (or above). It could also be used by primary schools as a second year course for children who have completed the *Minichess Activities* and would like to play competitive chess, or by secondary schools as a starter course.

Choose the course that you think will work best for you, or, if you prefer, mix and match. It's your choice.

We also offer stand-alone guides to the rules of chess, and to chess notation (incorporated in this book in case you need them).

It's very tempting, when you've learnt the moves, to dive straight in and start playing right away. Although learning how the pieces move is easy enough for young children, learning to play a proficient game is a totally different matter.

This book teaches chess using cumulative learning: you learn one thing at a time, gradually adding to and building up your chess skills.

It also uses active learning: in each chapter I give you something to do: you go away and do it.

For most people, slow learning is, in the long term, better than fast learning: the tortoise beats the hare, slow and steady wins the race, you shouldn't learn to run before you can walk. In general, the longer you spend getting the basics right the faster you'll improve later on.

This book aims to give you a general understanding of what's happening in a game of chess, so that, at any stage of the game, you'll have some idea of what you're supposed to be doing.

It's not going to make you a very good player. You'll need the more detailed *Chess Heroes* books for that. But it will enable you to play an enjoyable and reasonably competent game while giving you the understanding to take the game much further if you wish to do so.

The book comprises three modules with ten lessons in each module, so that it can be used as a course in schools, one module per term.

The first module explains that, in a game of chess, superior force usually wins. You'll find out exactly what you need at the end of the game to win, and you'll be able to practise the winning techniques yourself.

The second module shows you how to win your opponent's pieces so that you'll be able to win in the end. You can beat beginners who will overlook your threats, but to beat stronger players you'll need to do things like creating two threats at once and looking ahead.

The third module teaches you how to start the game by putting your pieces on good squares, making it easier for you to win your opponents' pieces or even score quick checkmates. It does this by inviting you to guess the moves in some short games. The better your guesses the more points you'll score and the more your play will improve.

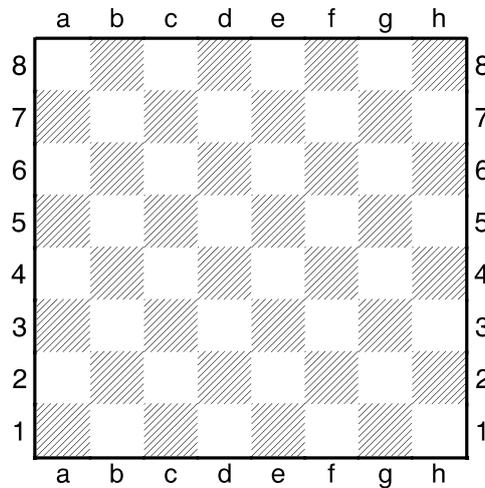
Ideally, you'll need a training partner to work with to play out the positions and work together to solve the puzzles, and perhaps to challenge them to see who makes the best score in the third module. Some people will prefer to work on their own, but for most learners it's both more enjoyable and more instructive to work with someone else.

This might be:

- A family member
- A friend
- A chess teacher
- A computer

If you're a teacher running the course in a school, it would be a good idea to pair the children up to work together.

THE RULES OF CHESS

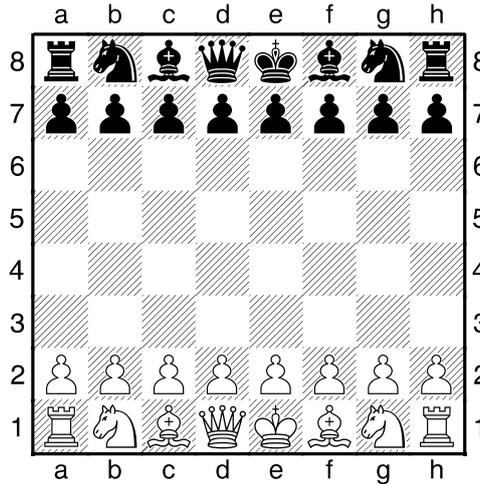


A chess board has eight rows (ranks) and eight columns (files) with eight squares in each. That makes 64 squares in total, alternating light ('white') and dark ('black').

When you set up a chess board make sure you have a white square on your right.

Each square has a name comprising the letter of its file followed by the number of its rank: for instance a1, h8, e4. If you're using a chess board with coordinates, set up the white pieces on rows 1 and 2 and the black pieces on rows 7 and 8.

The a-d files are, collectively, the queenside, and the e-h files, collectively, the kingside.



This is how you set up the pieces to start the game.

Each player has:

One king: ♔ ♚

One queen: ♑ ♒

Two rooks: ♖ ♗ ♘ ♙

Two bishops: ♜ ♝ ♞ ♟

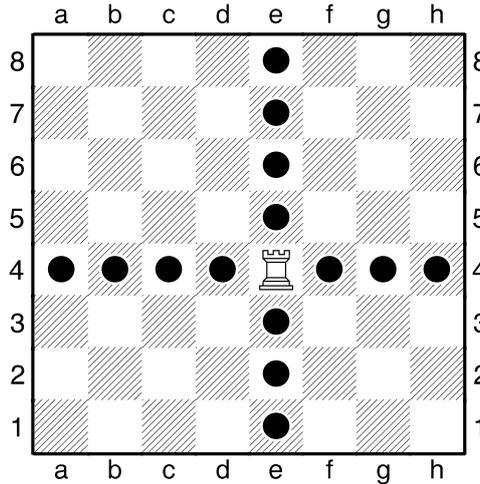
Two knights: ♠ ♡ ♢ ♣

Eight pawns: ♙ ♚ ♛ ♜ ♝ ♞ ♟ ♠

The rooks start in the corners, the knights go next to the rooks and the bishops next to the knights.

The queens start on the d-file: the white queen starts on a white square and the black queen on a black square. Likewise, the kings start on the e-file.

In a game of chess the players take it in turns to play a move. White always makes the first move.



Rooks move vertically and horizontally as far as they like as long as their path is not blocked.

In this diagram the white rook can move to any square marked with a black circle.

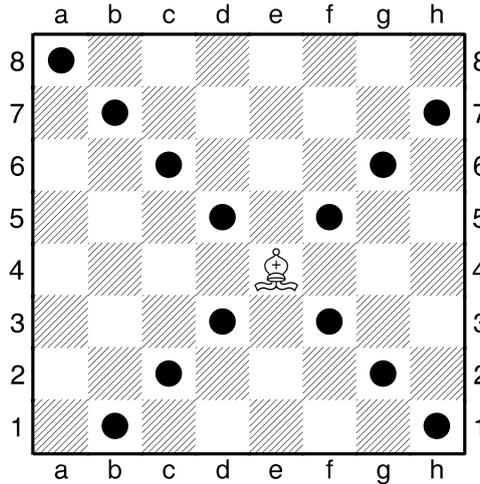
Rooks can't jump over other pieces: if there was, for example, a white pawn on e2, the rook would be unable to move to e1.

A rook captures, like all chess pieces, by moving to a square occupied by an enemy piece and taking it off the board.

If Black had a pawn on c4 White would be able to capture it with the rook but wouldn't be able to jump over it to reach b4 or a4.

(Rooks are often informally referred to as castles, but 'rook' is the correct word: you should get used to this.)

As a rough guide for novices, we say that a rook is worth 5 points.



The bishop move is similar to the rook move, but along diagonals rather than ranks and files.

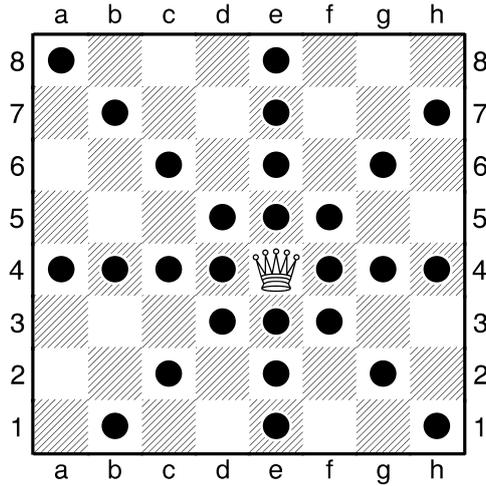
A bishop that starts on a white square will stay on white squares throughout the game.

Like the rook, the bishop cannot jump over another piece.

Like the rook, the bishop captures by moving to a square occupied by an enemy piece and taking it off the board.

The bishop is not as powerful as the rook because it can only stay on one colour square.

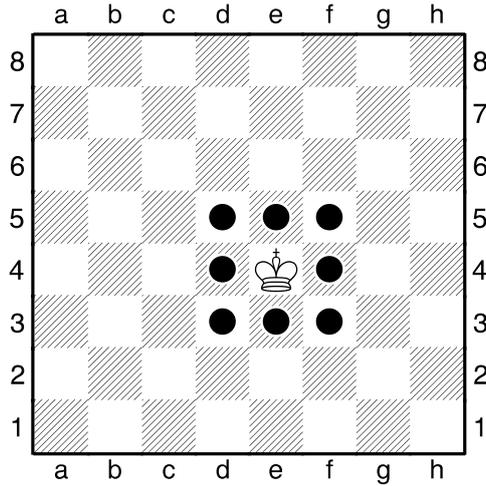
Again, as a rough guide, we say that a bishop is worth 3 points



The queen combines the moves of the rook and the bishop.
Like rooks and bishops, the queen cannot jump over other pieces.

Like the rook and the bishop, the queen captures by moving to a square occupied by an enemy piece and taking it off the board.

The queen is the most powerful piece on the board, and is worth about 9 points.



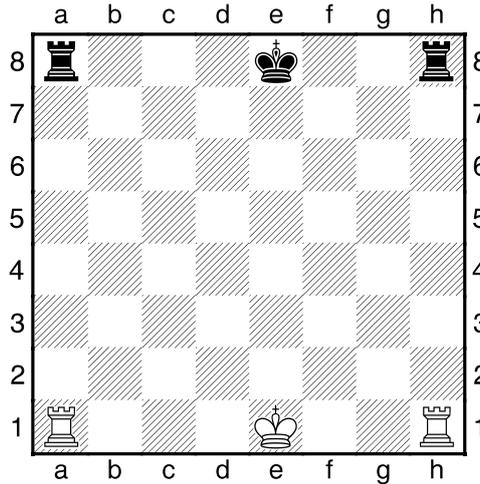
The king looks like the easiest piece of all to learn: it just moves, or captures, one square at a time in any direction.

But there's a complication. The kings are never captured: both kings are always on the board all through the game.

You are not allowed to play a move that leaves your king exposed to a possible capture. If you do so by mistake, you must retract the move and play something else instead.

If black had a rook on d8 white would not be allowed to move the king to d3, d4 or d5.

As kings can never be captured we don't give the king a value.



There is an important special rule concerning the king and rook called 'castling'.

If your king and rook haven't moved and there is no piece standing between them you can castle.

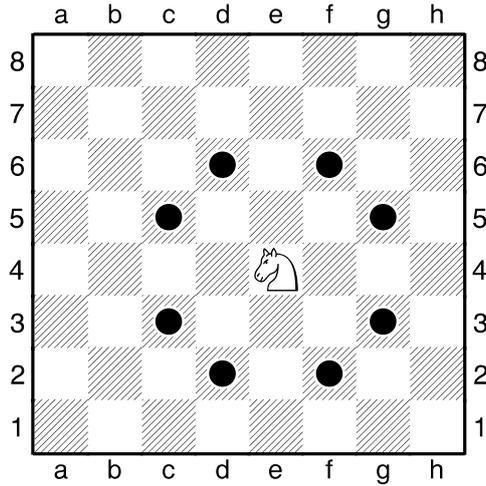
You can castle on the kingside by moving your king two squares towards the rook (to g1 or g8) and, in the same move, jumping your rook over the king (to f1 or f8).

You can castle on the queenside by moving your king two squares towards the rook (to c1 or c8) and jumping your rook over the king (to d1 or d8).

You cannot castle if you are in check. (It doesn't matter if you've been check as long as you didn't move your king.)

You cannot castle if your move will leave you in check.

You cannot castle if the square your king crosses (f1 or f8, d1 or d8) is attacked (controlled) by an enemy piece.

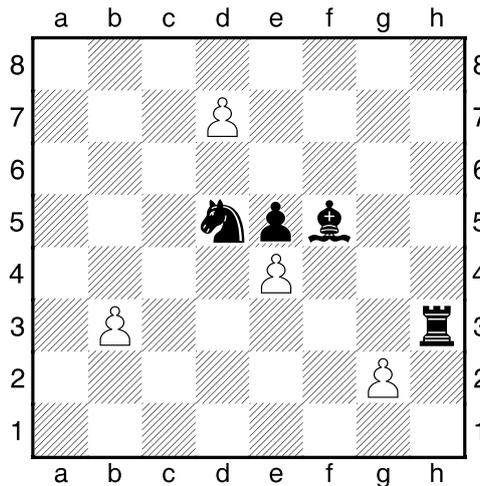


The knight's move is tricky to learn. It moves two squares vertically or horizontally, then one square round the corner.

The knight always moves to a different colour square every move. Here the knight is on a white square. All the squares it can move to are black squares.

The knight is the only piece that can jump. It can jump over pieces of either colour. If you put a white pawn on e3 and a black pawn on f3 the knight can still move to f2. It captures the same way as it moves, just like the other pieces you've seen so far.

A knight is about as powerful as a bishop, so worth about 3 points.



The pawn move differs in several ways from the moves of the other pieces.

On its first move a pawn can move forward either one or two squares. The pawn on g2 can move to either g3 or g4.

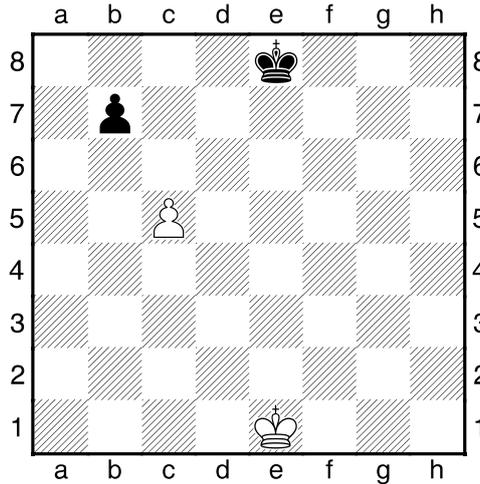
A pawn that has already moved can only move one square forwards. The pawn on b3 can only move to b4.

Unlike the other pieces, the pawn doesn't capture in the same way that it move. Instead, it captures by moving one square diagonally forwards. The pawn on g2 can capture the rook on h3. The pawn on e4 can capture the knight on d5 or the bishop on f5 but not the pawn on e5.

When a pawn reaches the end of the board you can exchange it for a queen, a rook, a bishop or a knight. White can move the pawn from d7 to d8, take it off the board and put a queen (rook, bishop or knight) there instead. As the queen is the most powerful piece you'll usually choose a queen.

Note that you are allowed more than one queen on the board at the same time.

The pawn is your least powerful piece, and worth just 1 point.

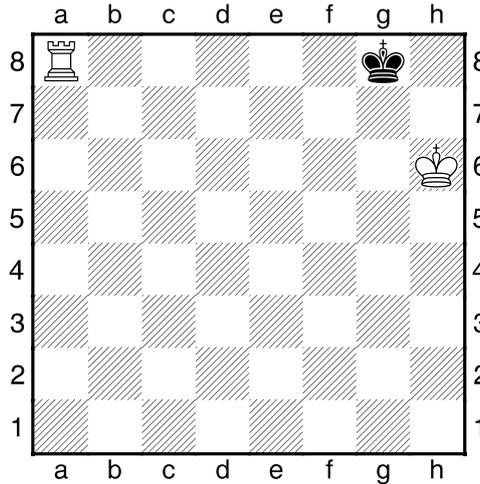


There's another pawn rule you need to know. It's called *en passant* (French for 'while passing'). This is a special sort of pawn capture. It's rather hard to understand, and because it doesn't happen very often, requires repetition and reinforcement.

Suppose you have a pawn on your fifth rank: like white's pawn on c5. Now suppose your opponent has a pawn on the second (your seventh) rank on the next file to your pawn.

If your opponent moves the pawn two squares you can capture it as if it had moved only one square: while it's passing the first square.

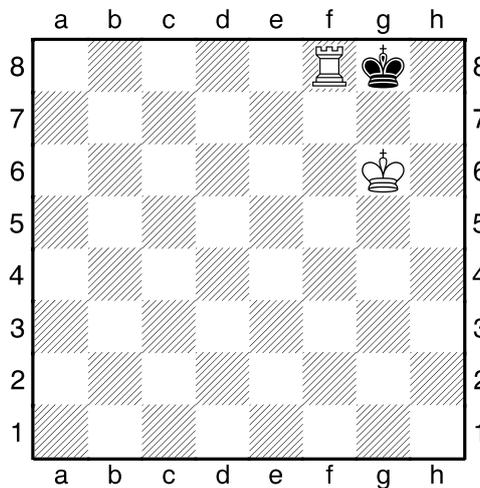
If Black moves the pawn from b7 to b5 white can capture it - only on the next move - by moving the pawn to b6 and taking the black pawn off the board.



If you make a move which attacks (threatens to take) your opponent's king this is called 'check'. It's a good idea for beginners to warn their opponents by saying the word "check". You are never allowed to play any move that leaves your king open to a potential capture.

Black therefore cannot move the king to h8 or f8, where the white rook would be able to take it, or move it to h7 or g7 where the white king would be able to take it.

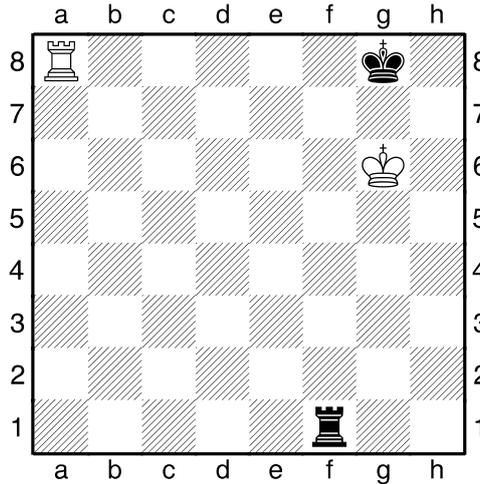
But black can - and must - move the king to f7 where it is not attacked by either the rook or the king.



In this position white has just moved the rook to f8 and announced "check".

Black cannot move the king to h8 where the white rook would still be able to capture it, or to g7 or h7 where the white king would be able to capture it. Black cannot move the king to f7 where the white rook and the white king would both be able to capture it.

Black can - and must - capture the rook on f8, leaving only two kings on the board - which is a draw.



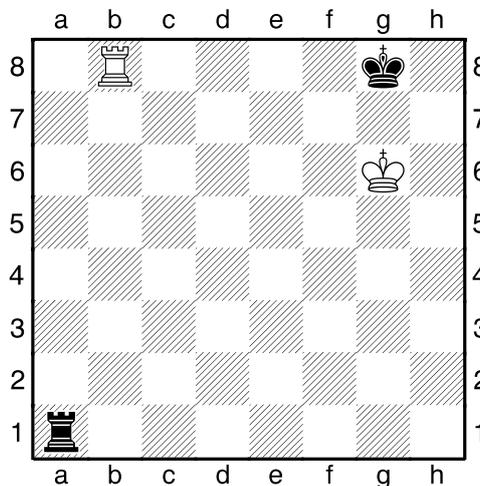
In this position White has moved the rook to a8 and announced "check".

Black cannot move the king to f8 or h8: the white rook would be able to capture. Nor can the king move to f7, g7 or h7: the white king would be able to capture.

Black cannot capture the white rook.

But Black can - and must - block the check by moving the rook from f1 to f8.

There are, then, three ways of getting out of check: 1. Avoid by moving the king Away, 2. Block and 3. Capture. You might like to teach this as being as easy as ABC.



Here, White has just moved the rook to b8 and announced "check".

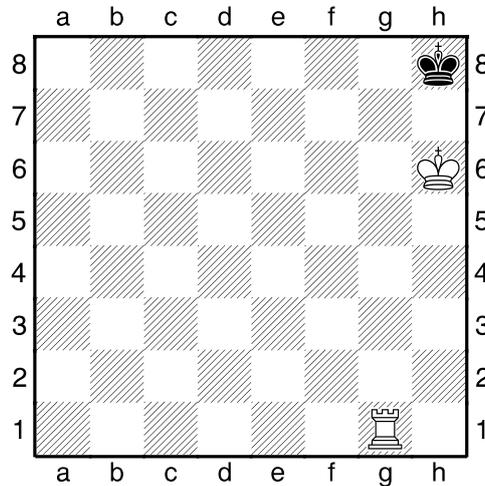
Black cannot move the king to a safe square, cannot capture the white rook and cannot block the check.

Note that two kings can never stand next to each other.

The ultimate aim of chess is to reach a position like this where you're attacking your opponent's king, and your opponent has no way of parrying the attack. This is called checkmate.

Observe that you're trapping the king: you never capture the king in chess so the game stops here.

Understanding this concept underpins the whole of the game of chess.



In this position it's Black's move.

The king cannot move to h7: it would be next to the white king. It cannot move to g8: it would be attacked by the rook. It cannot move to g7 - for two reasons.

Black is not in check but cannot move anywhere. This is 'stalemate': one way to draw a game of chess.

If you reach a position where the player whose turn it is to move cannot make any legal moves with any piece, that's the end of the game.

If the king is under attack it's checkmate and the player who delivered checkmate wins.

If the king isn't under attack it's stalemate and the game is a draw.

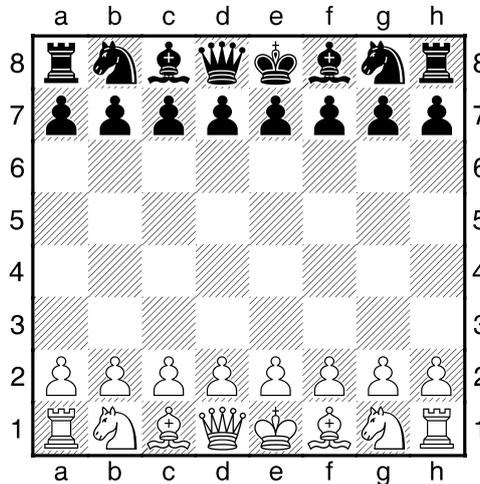
You might reach a position in which both players only have a king left. It's not possible for either player to get checkmate so the result is a draw.

It's also a draw if you end up with king and knight against king or king and bishop against king where again it's not possible to get checkmate.

You might also want to agree a draw if you and your opponent both think it's not possible to win.

CHESS NOTATION

Most chess books use notation to record the moves. Each square has a name based on the letter of the file followed by the number of the rank.



There are two versions: long and short notation. In long notation you write the squares on which the move starts and finishes. In short notation you only write the finishing square of each move. In this book we use long notation, which is easier for less experienced players to follow. The later Chess Heroes books use short notation.

Play through these moves to see for yourself how it works:

1. e2-e4 e7-e5

If we move a pawn we just write down the name of the square it moves to. White moves a pawn to the e4 square and Black replies by moving a pawn to the e5 square.

2. Ng1-f3 Nb8-c6

If we move a piece other than a pawn we start by writing the code letter for the piece using a capital letter. N for (k)Night, B for Bishop, R for Rook, Q for Queen or K for King. Both players move a knight on their second move.

3. d2-d4 e5xd4

We use the letter 'x' to show a capture. If we make a pawn capture we start by writing the letter of the file where our pawn starts. Here, White moves a pawn to d4. Black captures this pawn with the pawn on e5.

4. Nf3xd4 Ng8-f6

We write a capture by a piece (other than a pawn) with the code letter of the piece, the letter 'x' and the name of the square where the capture takes place.

5. Nb1-c3 Bf8-b4

6. Nd4xc6 Bb4xc3+

If we play a check we write '+' after the move. If it's checkmate we write '#' after the move.

7. b2xc3 b7xc6

8. Bf1-d3 o-o

If we castle on the kingside we write 'o-o'. If we castle on the queenside we write 'o-o-o'.

If we promote a pawn we write the letter of the new piece after the name of the square: for instance, 'e8Q' or, if you prefer, 'e8=Q'.

MODULE 1

The basic principle of chess is that (other things being equal) SUPERIOR FORCE WINS.

In general, in a game between evenly matched and experienced players, if you have an advantage of two or more points, you can usually expect to win the game. With an advantage of just one point (one pawn, for example) you can often win.

This module starts by showing you what you need at the end of the game.

A game of chess can have three phases. All chess games have an opening. Most have a middle game and some have an ending (endgame).

You might think it logical to start at the beginning, but this course starts at the end.

Two reasons: 1) positions with few pieces on the board are easier to understand than positions with many pieces on the board, and 2) you can't understand the middle game until you understand the ending, and you can't understand the opening until you understand the middle game.

LESSON 1

Find two rooks of one colour and one king of the opposite colour.

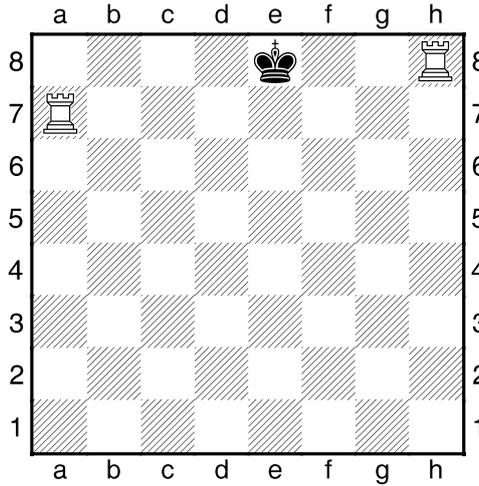
Place them on the board in a position where the rooks work together to checkmate the king.

See how many different types of checkmate you can find with these pieces.

When you've done this, place the pieces on the board so that the rooks stalemate the king: the king is not in check, but has no possible moves.

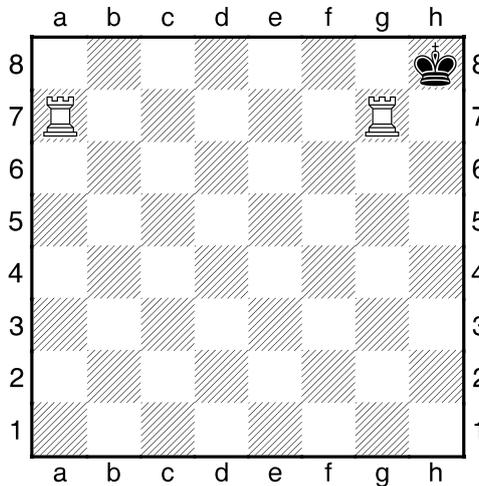
Again, see how many different types of stalemate you can find with these pieces.

Turn over the page to see my answers.



Here's my checkmate answer.

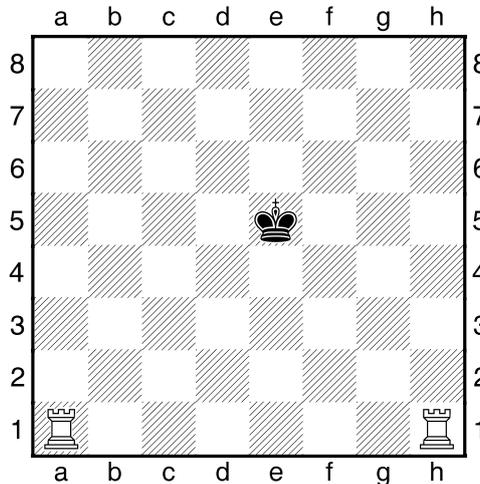
The king has to be on the edge of the board. One rook checks the king and the other rook stops the king escaping. All checkmate positions with two rooks against a king will look something like this.



Here's my stalemate answer.

Again, the king has to be on the edge of the board. In this position the rook on g7 controls the possible escape squares and is defended by the other rook. There are other types of stalemate position as well. How many did you find?

Now what I want you to do is place the three pieces on random squares on the board. Then play the position against your partner and see how long it takes you to checkmate the king.



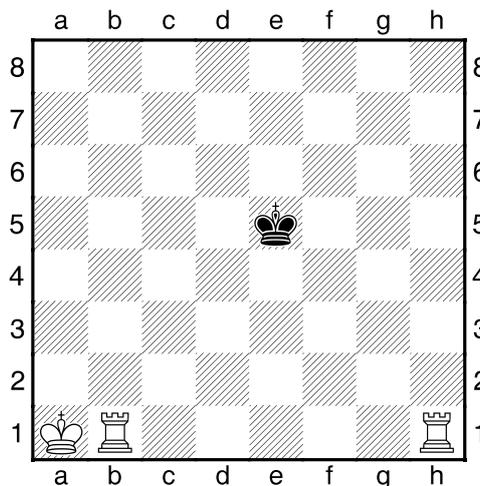
You might want to start from a position like this.

You'll need to think of a plan to drive the king to the side of the board. Just playing random checks won't help you.

Then think what might happen if the king tries to approach one of the rooks.

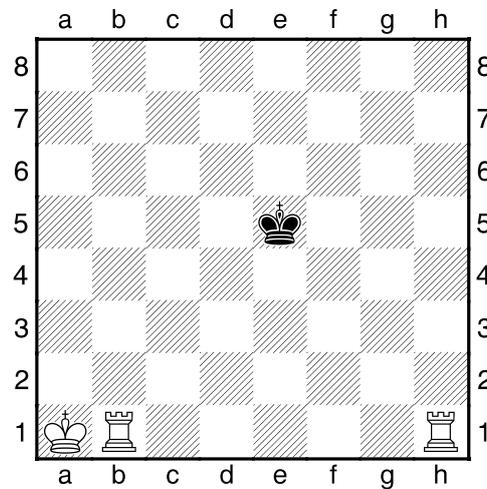
What you could do is take it in turns to play the rooks. Count the number of moves it takes to get checkmate. See which of you can do it more quickly.

If you're playing against an engine, it will probably expect two kings on the board. So you might want to start with this sort of position and avoid moving the king.



If you get stuck and want some help, turn over the page and see how I did it.

Here's how I beat the computer from this position:



1. Rh1-h4

Setting up a barrier to stop the king moving down the board.

1... Ke5-f5

2. Rb1-b5+

Checking the king and forcing him back. I'm planning to deliver checkmate on the 8th rank.

2... Kf5-g6

Now I have to be careful: if I play Rh4-h6+ the king will capture my rook.

3. Rh4-a4

I want to find a square which is as far as possible away from the king, but not in the way of the other rook. Another good plan was Rh4-h5, so that the rooks are defending each other.

3... Kg6-f6

4. Ra4-a6+

Now I can continue with my plan of forcing the king back up the board. The other rook stops him escaping.

4... Kf6-e7

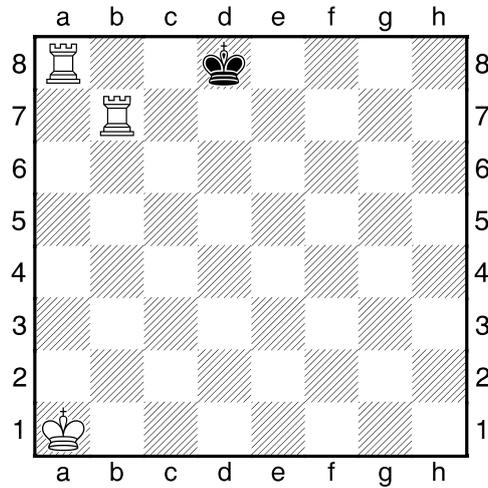
5. Rb5-b7+

Now I'm forcing the king back to the edge of the board, just where I want him.

5... Ke7-d8

6. Ra6-a8#

It's checkmate. Here's the position.



The rook on a8 checks the king while the rook on b7 stops him escaping.

Practise this over and over again until you're really good at doing it quickly every time.

LESSON 2

Now, I want you to take two kings and a rook.

Place the three pieces on the board so that the king and rook of one colour checkmate the king of the other colour.

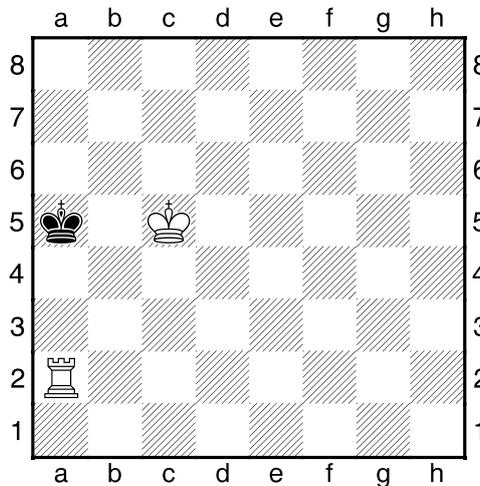
How many different checkmates can you find?

When you've done that, place the three pieces on the board so that the king and rook of one colour stalemate the king of the other colour.

How many different stalemates can you find?

Turn over the page for my solutions.

Your checkmate position should look something like this.

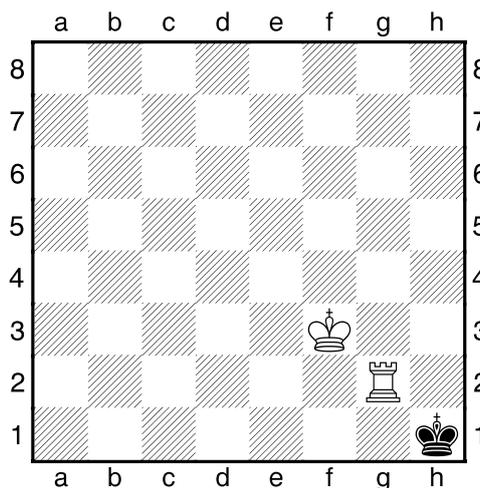


The defending king is on the side of the board.

The rook checks along the side and the other king prevents an escape.

Remember that two kings can never stand on adjacent squares.

Your stalemate position ought to look something like this.



The defending king has to be in the corner, where he only has three possible squares.

The rook is on the diagonally adjacent square.

The attacking side's king can be on any square that defends the rook: here, f1, f2, f3, g3 or h3.

Now, I want you to replace the rook with a queen.

Because a queen can move like a rook, your rook checkmate positions will also work with a queen.

Are there any checkmates with king and queen against king which wouldn't work with a rook?

Have a look and see what you can find.

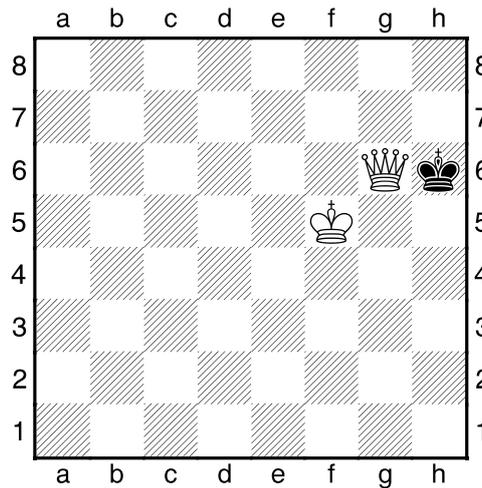
When you've done that, try to find some stalemate positions with king and queen against king.

How many different types of stalemate position can you find?

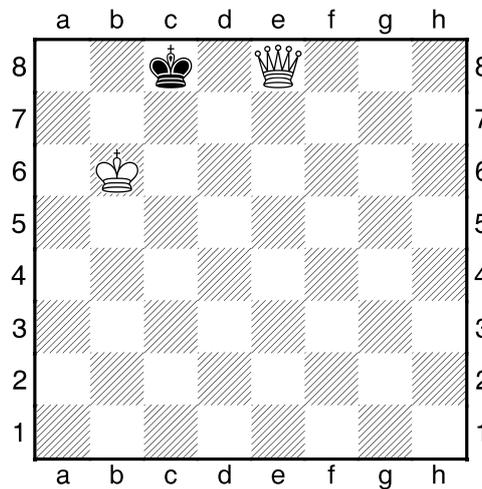
When you think you've found them all, turn over the page and look at my answers.

The first thing to note is that the king and rook stalemate position would be checkmate if you replaced the rook with a queen.

A similar king and queen checkmate, with the king next to the queen, will look like this.

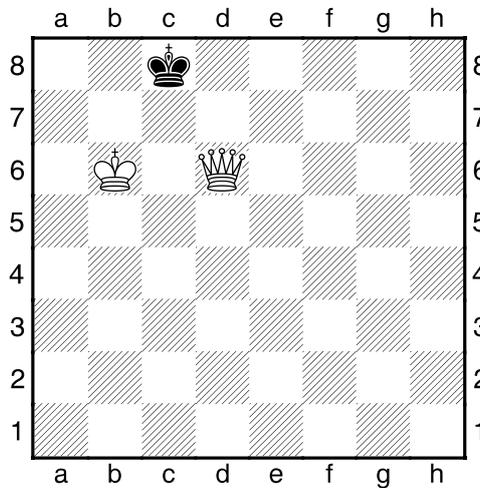


This would also be checkmate if the white king was on f6 or g6.



This position is also checkmate. The queen stops the king escaping to d7 as well as b8 and d8.

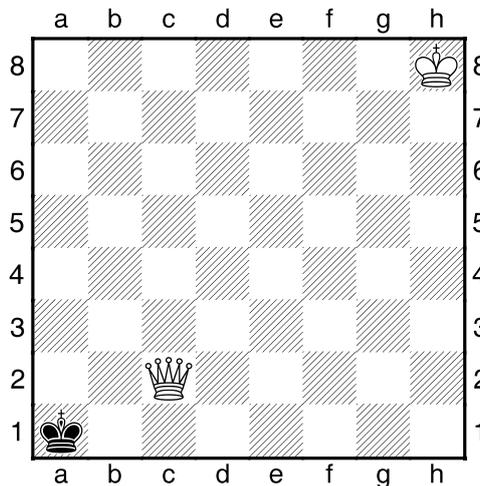
If you move the queen to a different square you'll get a stalemate position.



The queen stops the king moving to b8, d8, c7 and d7.

The white king here could be on any square controlling b7.

A queen can stalemate a king in the corner on her own. Did you find a position like this?



The white king could be anywhere on the board. It would still be stalemate.

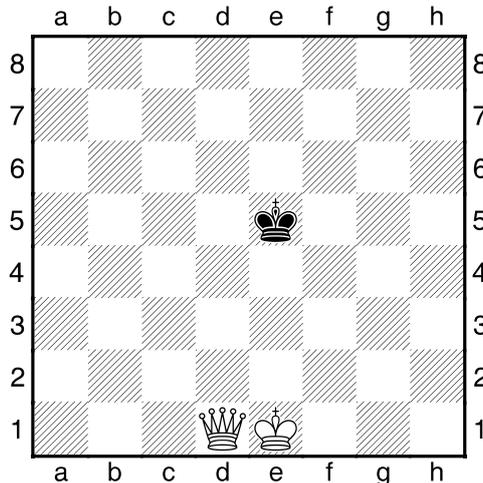
Make sure you remember these checkmate and stalemate positions.

They'll come in very useful in the next lessons.

LESSON 4

Again, take two kings and a queen, and place them on the board.

You might want to start with a position like this.



You can start them somewhere else if you prefer. It's up to you.

Your task is simply this: to play the position out against your training partner and see if, and how quickly, you can force checkmate.

Take it in turns and count White's moves: the player who takes the fewer number of moves wins.

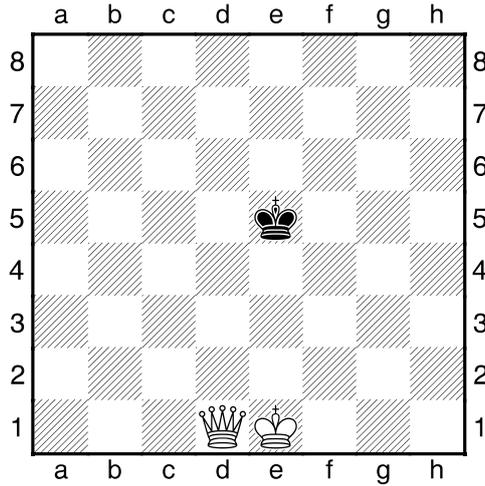
If you lose your queen, or if you stalemate your opponent the game is a draw - and, as long as your opponent gets checkmate you've lost the competition.

The checkmate and stalemate positions you saw in the last lesson will help you.

You've seen that you have to force the enemy king to the edge of the board. Just playing random checks, as always, won't help you: your opponent will just keep the king in the centre. You need to use your queen and king together. Once the enemy king is on the side you just have to make sure you avoid the stalemate positions.

Keep on practising this until you're really good at doing it quickly and confidently.

If you get stuck, turn over the page to see how I'd do it. It's not quite the quickest way, but it's easy to learn. There are many other ways as well.



1. Qd1-g4

I start by cutting the king off: the queen makes an electric fence that the black king can't cross.

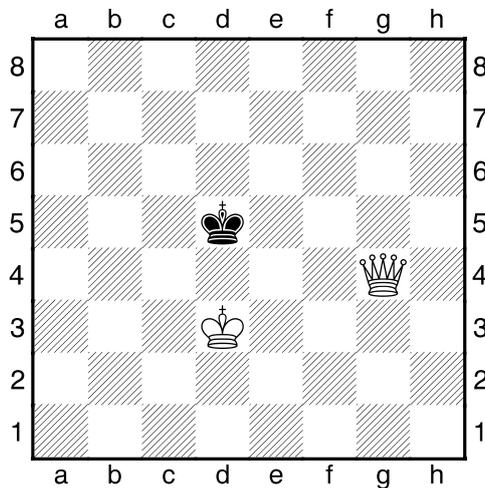
1... Ke5-d5

2. Ke1-d2

Now I want to bring up my king to help force the king back.

2... Kd5-e5

3. Kd2-d3 Ke5-d5



4. Qg4-f5+

Now a check forces the king back to the 6th rank. Qg4-d4+ was also good.

4... Kd5-c6

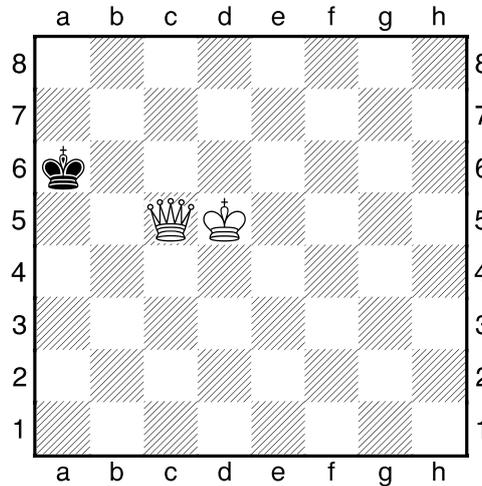
5. Kd3-d4 Kc6-b6

6. Qf5-c5+

Another check pushes the king towards the corner.

6... Kb6-b7

7. Kd4-d5 Kb7-a6



Be careful! Black's setting a sneaky trap! If I bring my king in again with Kd5-c6 it will be stalemate! I need to find a different plan.

8. Qc5-b4

This is a very important idea. When your opponent's king reaches the edge of the board, place your king on the next row. This serves two purposes: it stops him escaping and avoids stalemates.

8... Ka6-a7

9. Kd5-c6

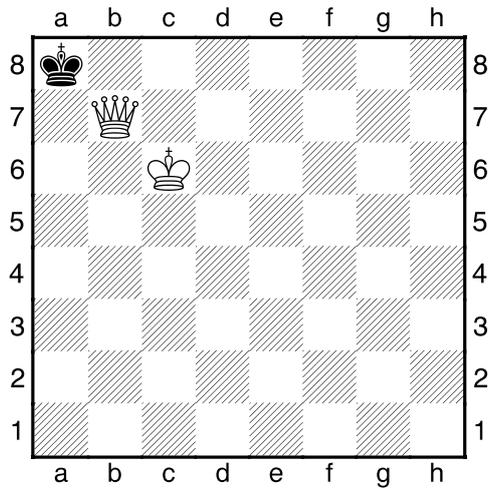
Now my king can move in safely.

9... Ka7-a8

If the king moved to a6 instead I'd have had a choice of three mates: moving the queen to a3, a4 or b6. Note the two different types of checkmate. Instead, Black sets a final stalemate trap.

10. Qb4-b6 would be stalemate, but I'd rather win than draw, thank you very much, so I'm going to play:

10. Qb4-b7#



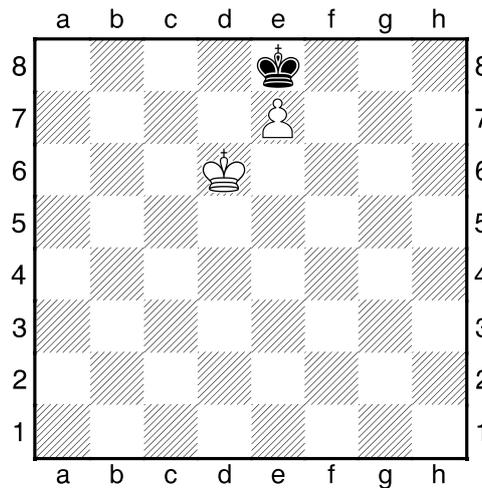
LESSON 5

You now know how to force checkmate with king and queen against king.

This usually comes about from positions with king and pawn against king where you get your pawn to the end of the board safely.

It's also important to know when and how you can get your last pawn to the end of the board.

Let's look at a few positions.



Start with this position.

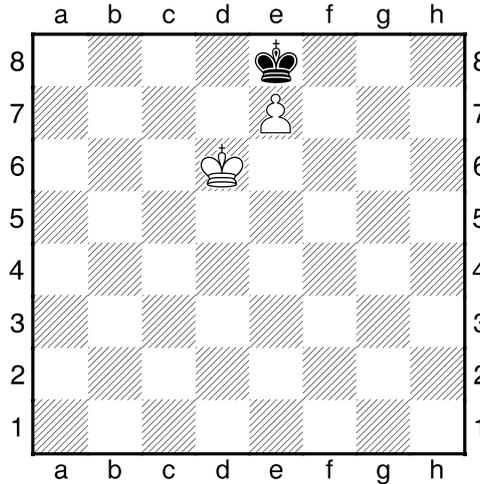
Go away, look at it and answer two questions.

If it's White's move, what will happen? Will the pawn promote safely?

Then tell me what will happen if it's Black's move? Does it make any difference or is your answer still the same?

Play the games out until you reach either checkmate, stalemate or king against king.

Then turn over the page and check your answers.



If it's White's move the game is drawn straight away.

If you play Kd6-e6 it's stalemate - remember this position.

If you move your king anywhere else Black will be able to capture the pawn in reply, leaving king against king.

If it's Black's move it's very different.

There's only one move:

1... Ke8-f7

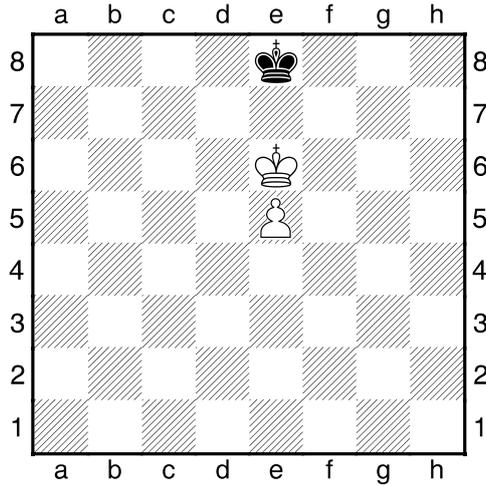
Now White can play

2. Kd6-d7, and, whatever Black plays, the pawn will promote safely. You should then play the position out to checkmate.

Usually it's best if it's your move, but there are some endgame positions, like this, where the opposite is true. If it's White's move it's only a draw, but if it's Black's move White wins.

Remember this position: you'll need it for the next question.

There's a German word we sometimes use for this sort of position: ZUGZWANG. You're forced to play a move that makes your position worse.



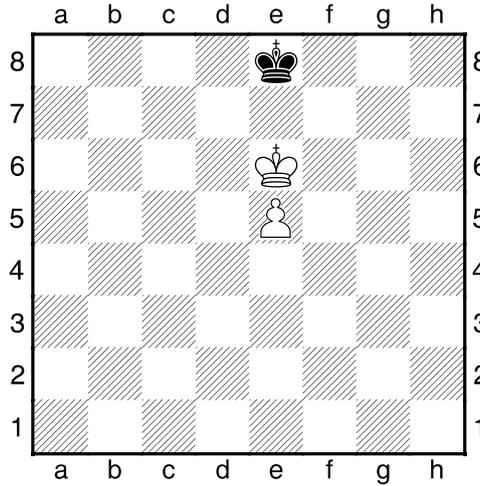
Here's your next task.

The same questions as last time.

If it's White's move, what will happen? Play the position out to a finish. The previous question will help you.

If it's Black's move, what will happen? Again, play the position out to a finish.

When you've worked out what's happening, turn over the page and check your answers.



If it's White's move play might go:

1. Ke6-d6 Ke8-d8
2. e5-e6 Kd8-e8
3. e6-e7

You've now reached the previous position with Black to move, which, you remember, is a win for White.

If it's Black's move:

- 1... Ke8-d8

Now you have a clever move: did you find it?

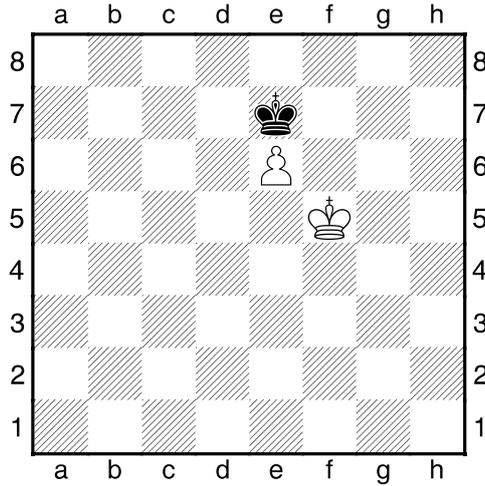
2. Ke6-f7

This move controls the three squares in front of the pawn. Your next three moves will be e5-e6, e6-e7 and e7-e8Q.

The same thing happens if the black king goes the other way:

- 1... Ke8-f8
2. Ke6-d7 and the pawn again promotes in three moves time.

So White can win this position no matter who moves first.



Finally for this lesson, look at this position.

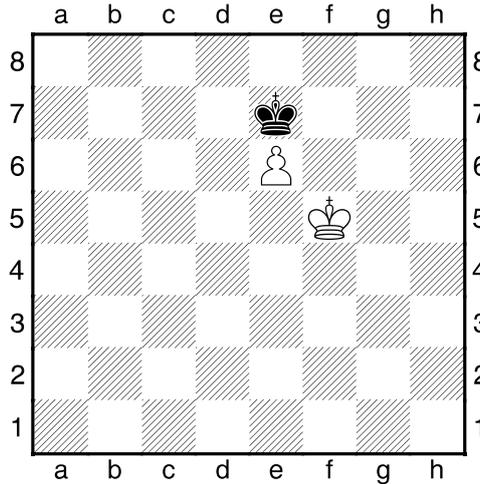
This time I'll tell you that it's Black's move.

You have four possible moves: your king could move to d6, d8, e8 or f8.

Which moves, if any, draw? Which moves, if any, lose?

Play each move out in turn to find out.

Again, turn over the page when you think you've answered the questions.



Let's start with 1... Ke7-d6.

White plays 2. Kf5-f6, and you should understand from the previous position that you can follow up with Kf6-f7, e6-e7 and e7-e8Q.

Now, 1... Ke7-d8

2. Kf5-f6 Kd8-e8

3. e6-e7 and you reach the first position with Black to move, which, you remember, is a win for White.

Try again: 1... Ke7-e8

2. Kf5-f6 Ke8-f8 (2... Ke8-d8 loses to 3. Kf6-f7

3. e6-e7+ Kf8-e8 and you reach the first position with White to move, which, you remember, is a draw.

Finally, 1... Ke7-f8

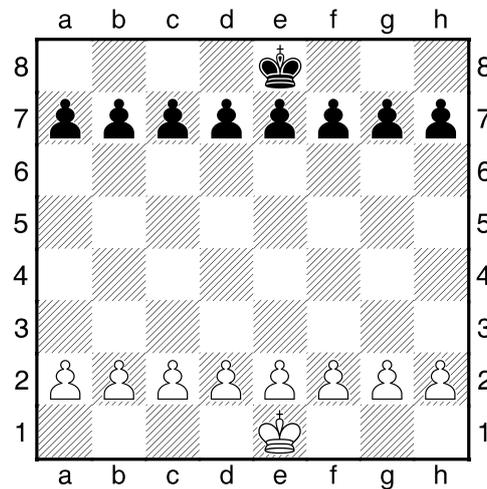
2. Kf5-f6 Kf8-e8

3. e6-e7 and you reach the first position with Black to move, which, you remember, is a win for White.

So, in answer to my question, 1... Ke7-e8 should draw but the other three moves should lose.

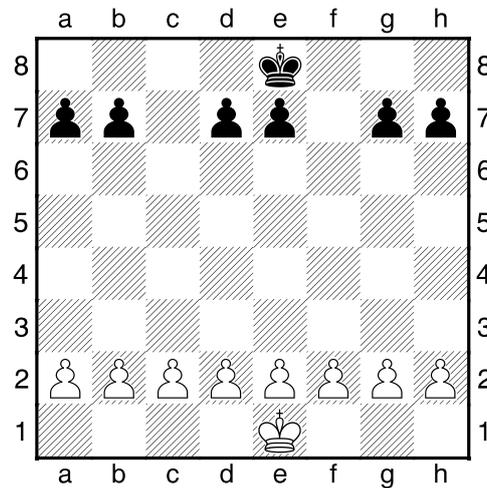
LESSON 6

It's time to play some games.



Play a game from this position with your training partner or friends.

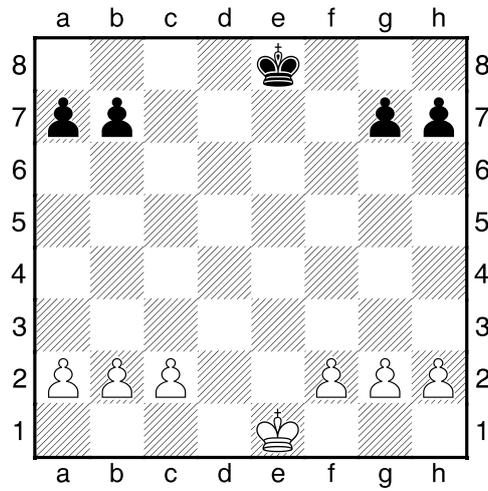
Play it out to a finish: checkmate, stalemate or king against king.



Here's a position you can play with White against a strong opponent: a computer or your chess teacher.

See how you get on.

If you want some hints, turn over the page.



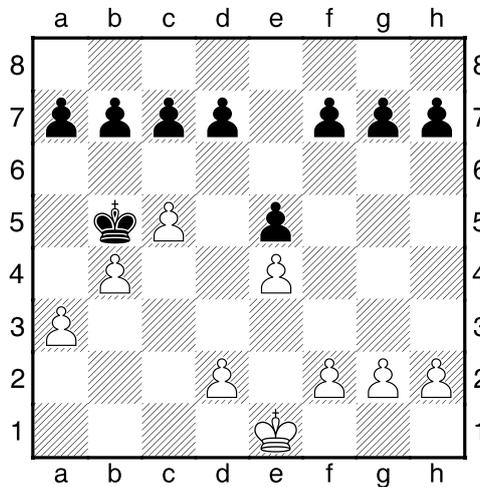
If you prefer you could use this position instead - or, better still, play them both out.

If these positions are too easy for you, see if you can win with an advantage of just one pawn.

Hints for pawn endings.

1. Use your king actively. If you leave your king at home and just advance your pawns, your opponent's king will just capture them.

Advance your king and pawns together.

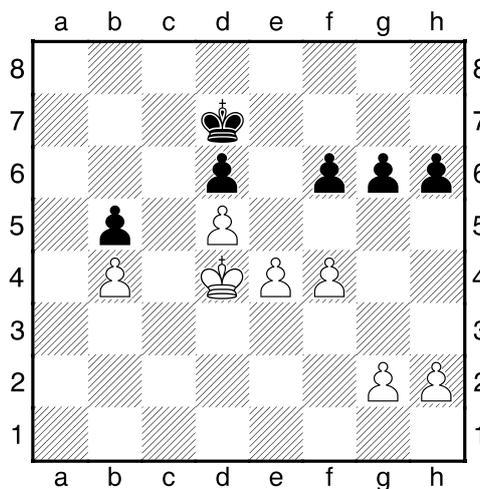


In this position White's queen-side pawns will soon be captured by the black king. Making good use of your king is vital in winning any ending.

2. A passed pawn is a pawn which can reach the end of the board without being blocked or captured by an enemy pawn.

If you want to win a pawn ending the first thing you have to do is create a passed pawn.

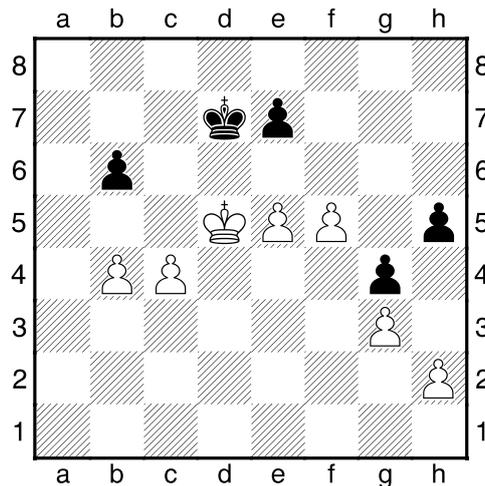
Look for pawn moves which will help you create a passed pawn, and avoid pawn moves which will make it harder for you to create a passed pawn.



In this position White can break through with e4-e5, which will eventually lead to a passed pawn on the d-file.

But if White played f4-f5 instead, Black could reply with g6-g5, when White will have no way of making progress and the game would eventually be drawn.

3. Whatever you do, don't forget the *en passant* rule!

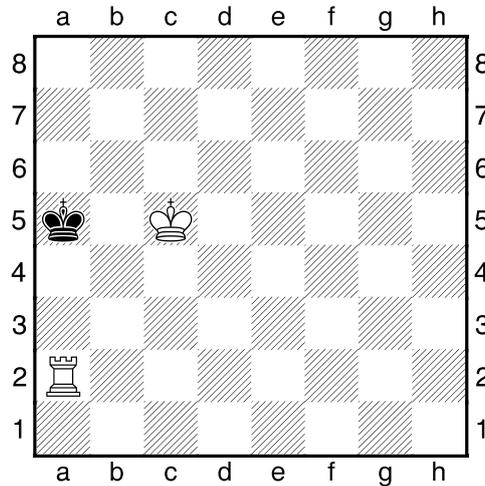


In this position White's winning easily, but if you played h2-h4 here, Black would be able to turn the tables by capturing *en passant* and promoting on h1 two moves later.

Don't let this happen to you!

LESSON 7

You will remember what a king and rook checkmate looks like.



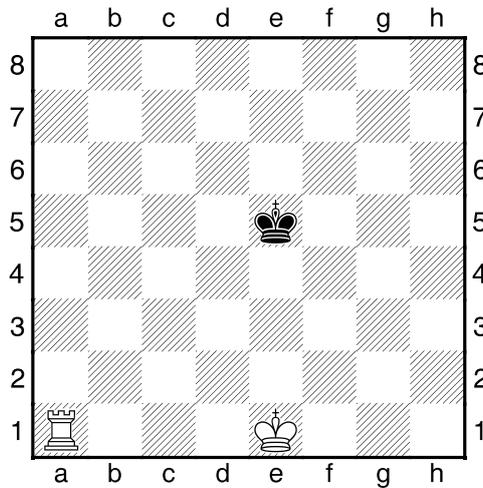
The defending king is on the edge of the board. The rook checks the king and the other king controls the escape squares.

You also know how to force checkmate with king and queen against king.

Now you're going to have to do it with king and rook against king.

You'll have to use your king and rook together to force the enemy king to the side. The hard bit is finishing off: getting your pieces in the right position to deliver checkmate. It needs a bit of practice to become good at it.

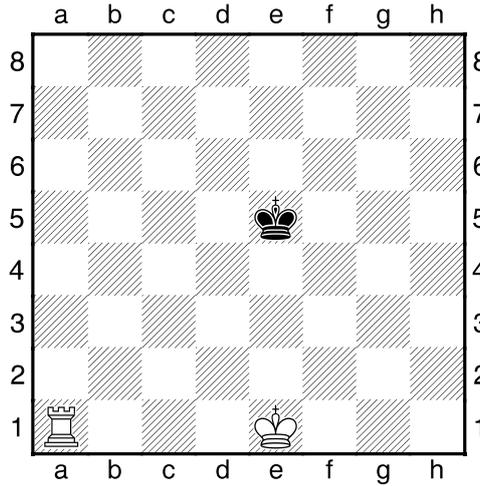
You might want to start with a position like this:



Take it in turns to play it against your training partner and see who can do it more quickly.

You could also play it out against your teacher, or against a computer.

If you're finding it hard to win, turn over the page to see how I did it.



Here's how I did it against the computer.

1. Ra1-a4

The first thing I do is use my rook to set up a barrier and confine the king to the top half of the board.

1... Ke5-d5

2. Ke1-e2

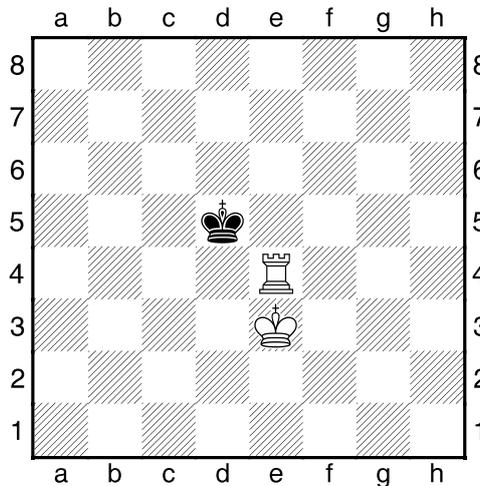
The next thing I do is advance my king to help the rook force the black king towards the corner.

2... Kd5-e5

3. Ke2-e3 Ke5-d5

4. Ra4-e4

Now the rook and king together set up a box. The king is confined to the northwest quarter of the board.



Now my plan is to make the box smaller by using my rook whenever I can. If I can't make the box smaller I'll bring my king nearer instead.

4... Kd5-c5

After this move I can make the box smaller. If the computer had played Kd5-d6 instead I'd have played Ke3-d4.

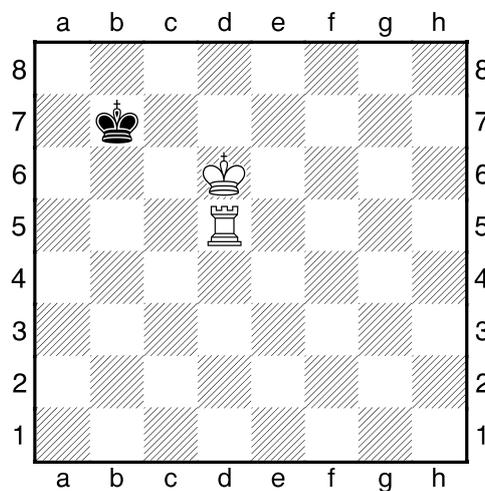
5. Re4-d4 Kc5-c6

6. Ke3-e4 Kc6-c5

7. Ke4-e5 Kc5-c6

8. Rd4-d5 Kc6-b6

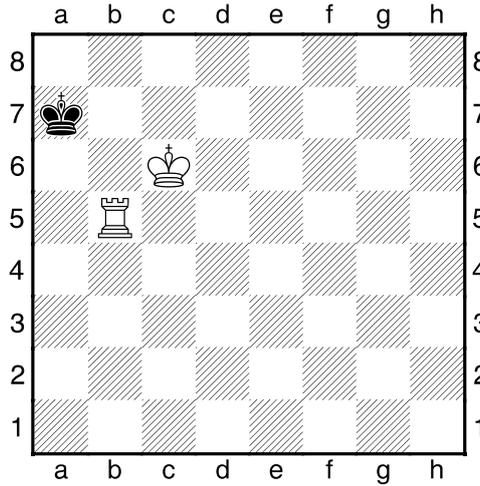
9. Ke5-d6 Kb6-b7



Now I've seen how I can force a quick checkmate. I could play Rd5-c5 to make the box smaller, but it's quicker to play a check which forces the black king to the edge of the board.

10. Rd5-b5+ Kb7-a6

11. Kd6-c6 Ka6-a7



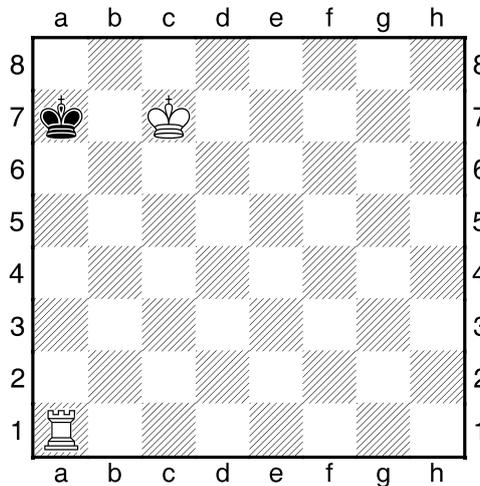
Now I want to force the black king to move opposite my king, so I play a waiting move.

12. Rb5-b1 Ka7-a8

After 12... Ka7-a6 I would have played Rb1-a1#. Now Black is setting a final trap. If I play Rb1-b7 it will be stalemate. I'm not going to fall for that one so instead I move my king towards him.

13. Kc6-c7 Ka8-a7

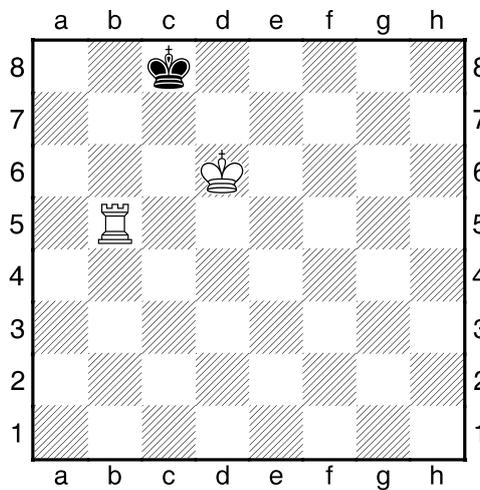
14. Rb1-a1#



So that's how you do it. Go away and keep on practising it until it becomes automatic.

I have a few more questions for you.

If the black king had moved to c8 on move 10 we'd have reached this position.

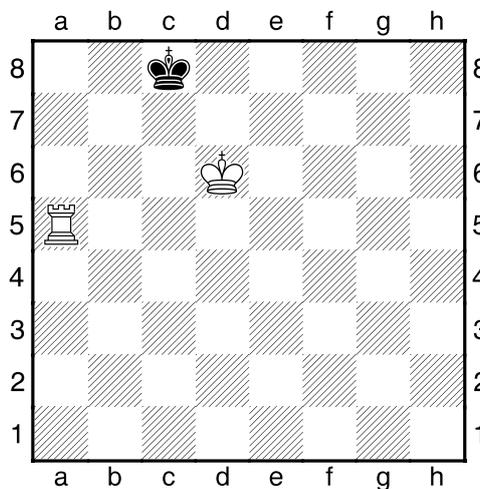


Can you see how I could get checkmate in two moves time in this position?

You'll have to think ahead to solve this puzzle. I go there, you go there, I go there. Thinking like this is the single most important skill in chess.

I could checkmate in two moves by moving my rook to any safe square on the b-file: b1, b2, b3, b4 or b6. Then Black would have to play Kc8-d8, and my rook would checkmate on b8.

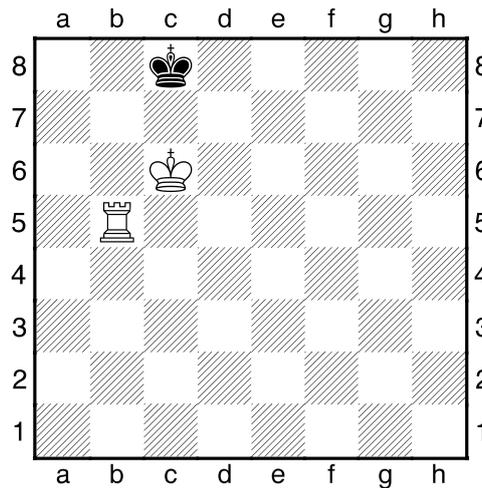
We can change the position slightly.



It should now be easy to see how White can checkmate Black in two moves from this position.

All you do is play $Ra5-b5$, again forcing $Kc8-d8$.

And a final position.



This might be a bit harder to see, but the idea is exactly the same.

You have to use your king rather than your rook, though.

You play $Kc6-d6$, when, yet again, Black is forced to play $Kc8-d8$ and again your rook will checkmate on b8.

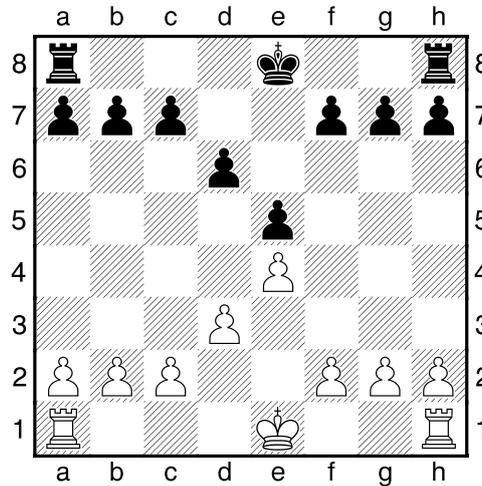
Learning the king and rook checkmate is really important.

Rooks are, as you'll learn later, usually the last pieces to join in the game, and are at their best in endings.

For this reason they are often the last pieces left on the board apart from kings and pawns. Rook endings are more common than any other sort of ending.

LESSON 8

Now you have a chance to practise some rook and pawn endings yourself.



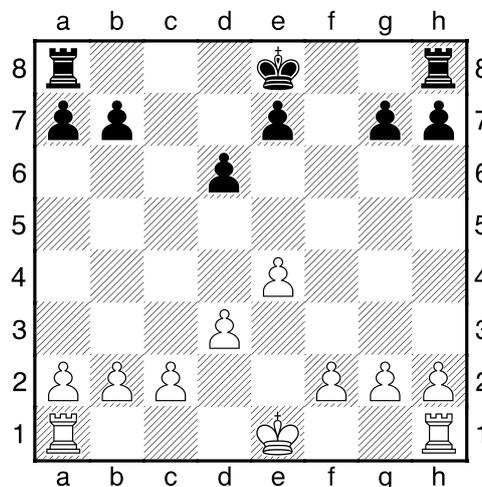
You might want to start with a position something like this. This position will also give you the chance to remember the castling rule!

You could also play with one rook each.

Play this position out against your training partner and see what happens.

If you play on a screen using a website with an engine you could get a computer analysis after the game to find out how well you played.

You should also try to win positions with more pawns against a strong opponent: your chess teacher or a computer.



You might want to start with a position like this - again with either one or two rooks each.

Once you can beat your teacher - or your computer - with two extra pawns, try it with just one extra pawn and see how you get on.

You could also try making up your own positions with the pieces on different squares.

If you want some hints, turn over the page.

What you've already learnt about pawns is still important.

You'll eventually win by creating a passed pawn.

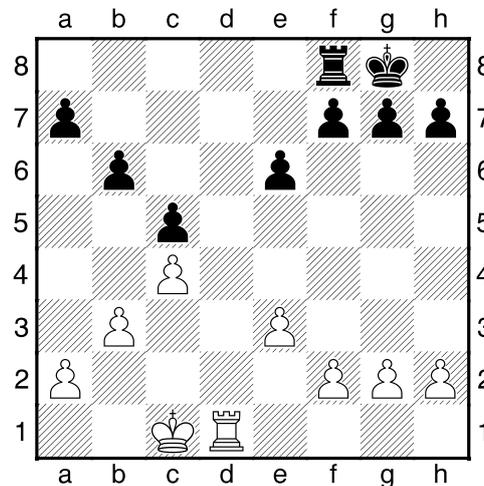
Oh, and don't forget the *en passant* rule!

What you've learnt about kings is also still important.

You need to use your king actively but make sure you don't get checkmated!

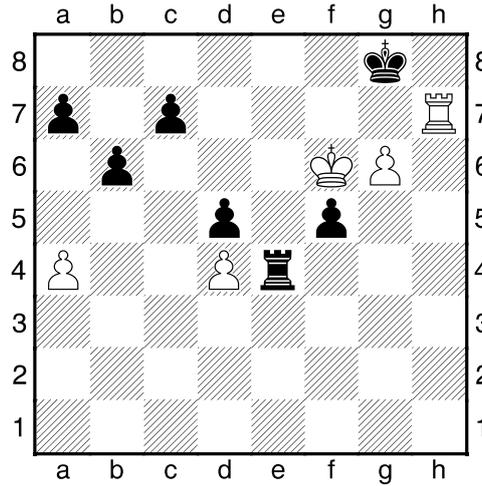
Here's how you use your rooks.

1. Use your rooks actively, to attack rather than defend whenever possible.
2. Rooks like open files (files with no pawns of either colour) best of all. They can use open files to invade the enemy position.
3. Rooks also like half-open files (files where your opponent has a pawn but you don't) where they can attack enemy pawns.
4. So you need to trade pawns to make use of your rooks - but you need to be careful how you do this. The player who controls the open files will often be the one who wins the game.
5. Rooks belong behind passed pawns!



This position is almost symmetrical but White, to move, has a very large advantage because the white rook controls the open file.

You might play Rd1-d7 when the black rook will be tied down to defending the queen-side pawns.



It's White to move in this position from a famous game played at New York in 1924 between Capablanca and Tartakower.

Black is two pawns ahead, but White has a winning advantage. White has used his king actively and has threats of checkmate as well as promoting the g-pawn.

You might, if you have time, like to play out these two positions - and any other rook endings you can find.

LESSON 9

It's now time to look at the minor pieces (knights and bishops) and see how they can get checkmate in the ending.

Endings with bishops and knights are less common than rook endings but still important.

King and knight against king is a draw: it's not possible to get checkmate. If you reach this position you stop the game.

King and bishop against king is also a draw: again it's not possible to get checkmate. If you reach this position you also stop the game.

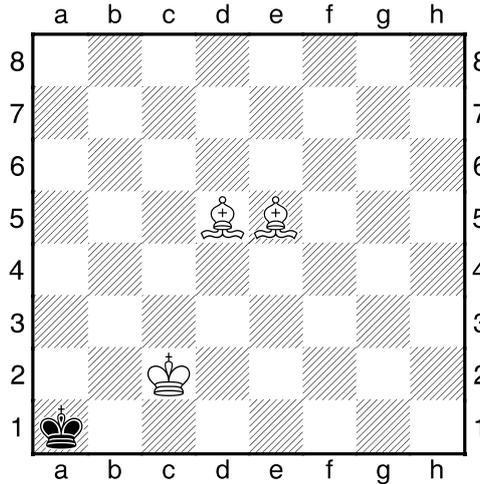
What about two minor pieces?

Take a king and two bishops of one colour and a king of the other colour. See how many checkmate and stalemate positions you can find.

Then take a king, bishop and knight of one colour and a king of the other colour and do the same thing again.

Finally, repeat the process with a king and two knights of one colour, and a king of the other colour.

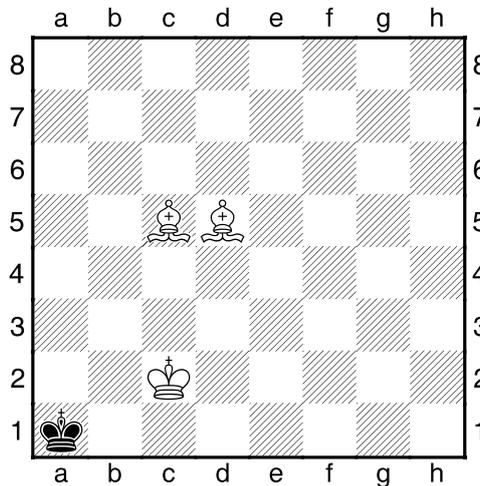
When you've done all these, turn over the page and look at my answers.



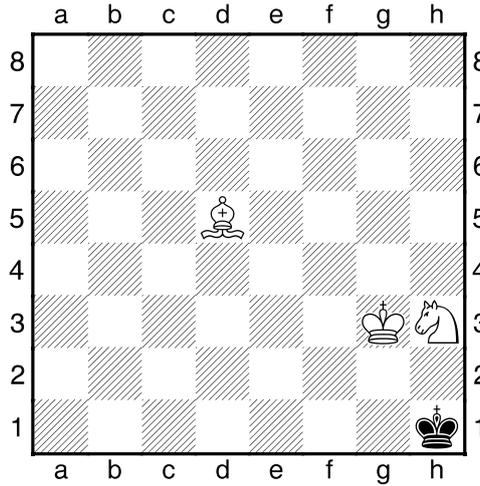
You should know by now that the best place to look for checkmates and stalemates is in the corner.

This is how you checkmate the king in the corner: your king is a knight move away, one bishop controls the other escape square while the other bishop delivers checkmate.

It's possible to construct a checkmate with two bishops on the side of the board (did you manage to find one?) but not possible to force it.



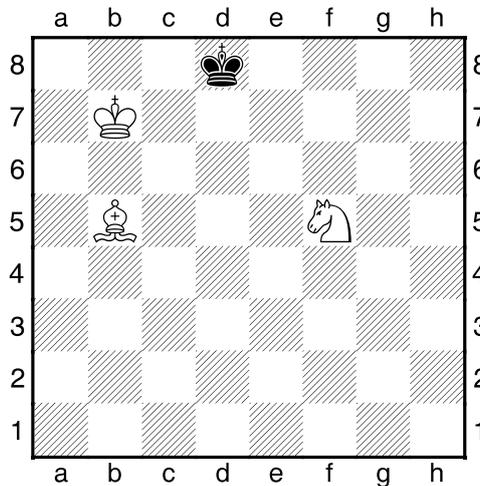
You can stalemate a king with only one bishop if you really want to do so. The dark squared bishop could be anywhere off the a1-h8 diagonal - or off the board.



It's easy to get from there to a bishop and knight checkmate.

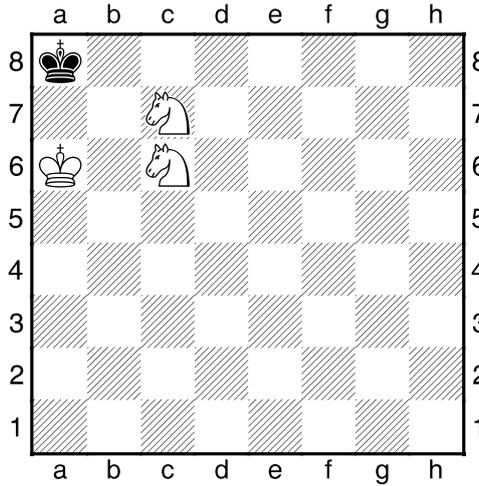
This time it's the knight that controls the escape square while the bishop checkmates the king.

There are lots of other bishop and knight checkmates which you might have found, but if you want to force checkmate against the best defence you have to drive the king to the same colour square as your bishop.

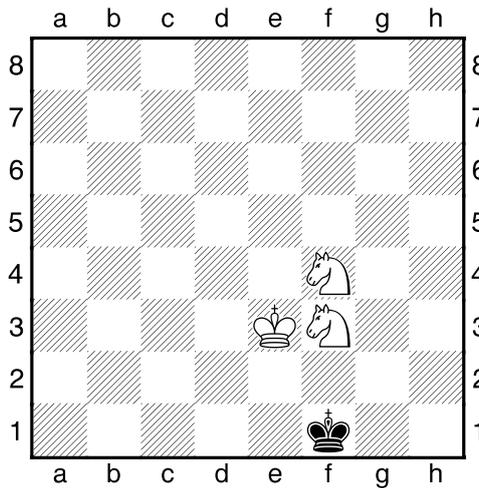


There are also a lot of possible stalemates with bishop and knight.

Here's one on the side of the board.



A checkmate with two knights will look something like this.



Here's a stalemate position with two knights against a king. Again, there are lots of ways to answer this question. How many different types of stalemate did you find?

If you end up with king and two bishops against king you can force checkmate, but it's not that easy. It's certainly harder than the king and rook checkmate.

It doesn't happen all that often so you don't need to know it yet, but, if you want to practise it, go ahead and have a go!

If you end up with king, bishop and knight against king you can again force checkmate, but it's a lot harder than king and two bishops.

Again, it doesn't happen very often so it's something you can learn later on if you want to.

If you end up with king and two knights against king you can only win if your opponent makes a mistake. If you happen to reach this ending it's a good idea to agree a draw!

If you want to try it out for yourself, feel free!

LESSON 10

To sum up what you've learnt about endings:

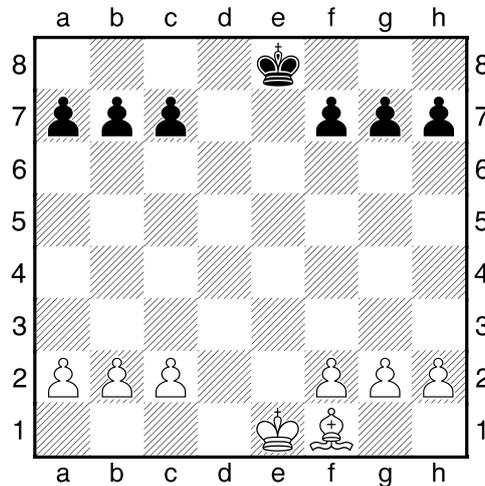
An advantage of two or more points usually wins, and an advantage of one point sometimes wins.

If you have more major pieces (queens and rooks) than your opponent you can win by checkmate.

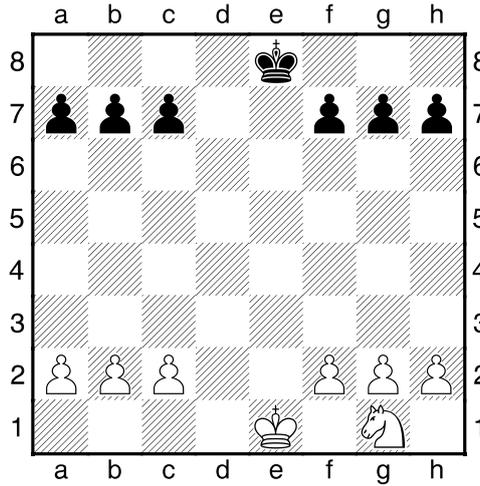
If you have more pawns than your opponent you can win by promoting them and then winning by checkmate.

If you have more minor pieces (bishops and knights) than your opponent you can win by capturing your opponent's pawns and then promoting your pawns.

You might like to play out some positions with an extra minor piece against your teacher or computer to make sure you know how to win them. Or try them against your training partner, taking it in turns to play with the extra piece.



You might want to try something like this to see if you can win with an extra bishop.



Here's a position you can play out to practise winning with an extra knight.

When you can win these positions, take off one of the white pawns and see if you can still win. If you can win with an advantage of a minor piece for a pawn, then take off another pawn and try again.

Why not make up your own positions where you have an extra minor piece? Or perhaps you can find some elsewhere. You'll find some examples in *Chess Endings for Heroes*.

MODULE 2

The first module taught you that, when and how superior force wins in the ending.

So you need to try to win your opponents' pieces and make sure that your opponents can't win your piece.

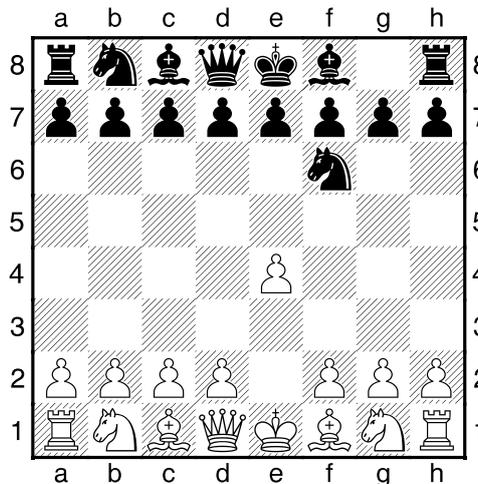
This module teaches you how to win your opponents' pieces so that you will have superior force. And, just as importantly, how not to lose your pieces and give your opponents superior force.

You'll learn about attacking and defending, and about creating threats. If you're playing novices they will sometimes overlook your threats or make unsafe moves so you'll just be able to take their pieces and win your games.

If you want to beat stronger players you'll find they won't (very often) give away your pieces like that. You'll have to do clever things like creating two threats at the same time and looking ahead to see what will happen next.

This module teaches you how to do all these things.

LESSON 11



Each player has played one move. It's now White's move. What would you play?

Black has created a threat.

A threat can be, for example:

- An attack on an unprotected piece
- An attack on a more valuable piece by a less valuable piece
- A move that prepares checkmate

Look at your opponent's last move. If it makes a threat you have to do something about it.

If you played something like Ng1-f3 Black will capture your pawn on e4. That extra pawn might well make all the difference if you reach an ending.

So you have to do something. You could, for example, defend the pawn by playing a move like Nb1-c3. Or you could move your pawn forward by playing e4-e5, when you're creating your own threat.

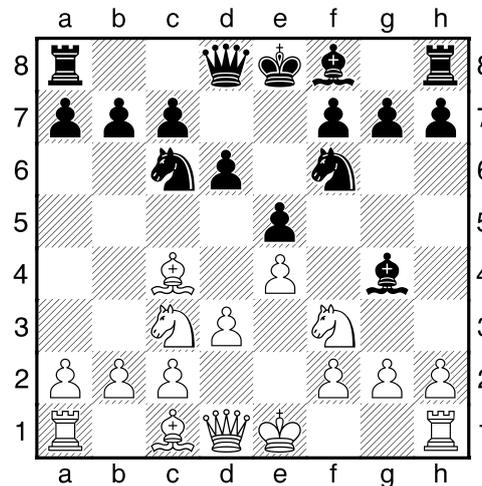
The first tip, then, is this:

Always look at your opponent's last move. If it creates a threat you have to do something about it.

It certainly wouldn't be a good idea, though, to defend the pawn by playing Qd1-g4. Your opponent would just take the queen and win the game easily.

The second tip:

When you've thought of a move, always check that it's safe before playing it.



Here's another opening position, with White to move.

You might be tempted to play Nf3-g5 here. It looks safe and creates a threat on f7. Do you see what's wrong with it?

Yes, Black can play Bg4xd1, capturing your queen.

This is a pin: you'll learn more about them in a later lesson. It's very easy to make this sort of mistake if you're not used to the idea.

Be very careful not to move pinned pieces.

Let's play a few moves out from the beginning of the game. You'll probably want to get a board out to do this.

1. e2-e4 e7-e5

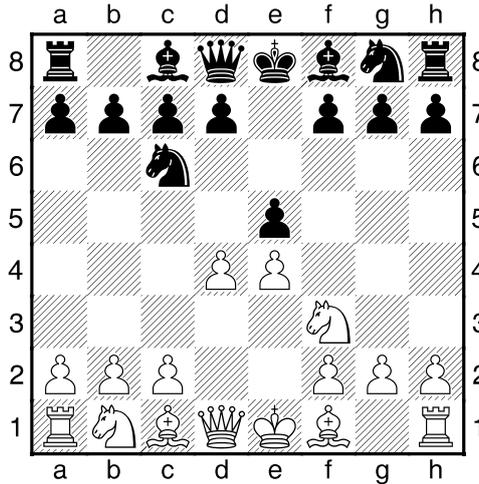
2. Ng1-f3

White threatens a pawn.

2... Nb8-c6

Black meets the threat by defending the pawn.

3. d2-d4



You have to be very careful before you play this move.

Black has two pieces controlling the d4 square. But you have two pieces defending it as well.

3... e5xd4

Black decides to trade pawns.

4. Nf3xd4

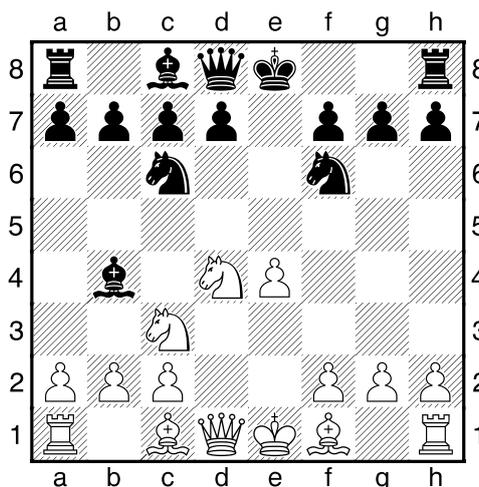
White takes back with the knight - obviously not with the queen.

Black could trade knights now but instead plays:

4... Ng8-f6

Threatening Nf6xe4, so White defends the pawn.

5. Nb1-c3 Bf8-b4



Now things get complicated. Black's last move pinned the knight on c3. Black is threatening to play Bb4xc3 followed by Nf6xe4, or even the immediate Nf6xe4.

White has to defend the pawn on e4.

It would be a mistake to play Qd1-f3, because then the queen would no longer defend the knight on d4. Likewise it would be a mistake to play Bf1-d3, because the bishop would block the queen's defence of d4. (White usually plays Nd4xc6 in this position.)

It's again very easy for you (or your opponents) to make this sort of mistake if you haven't seen it before.

Be aware of which of your pieces are performing defensive tasks and be careful not to move or block them. Most games at your level are decided by elementary mistakes of this nature. All you have to do to take your game to the next level is to avoid them!

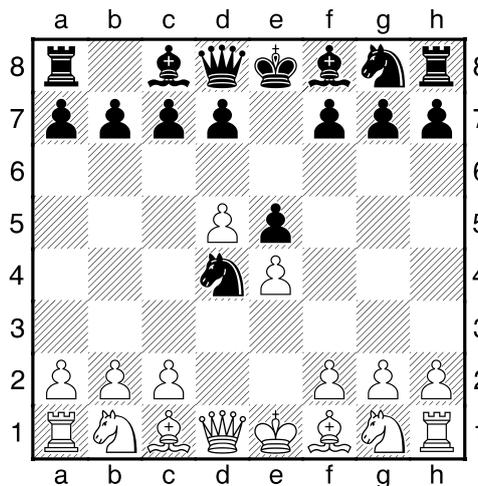
LESSON 12

Once you've learnt these ideas you can beat inexperienced players easily by taking the pieces they lose through making the sort of mistakes you saw in the previous lesson.

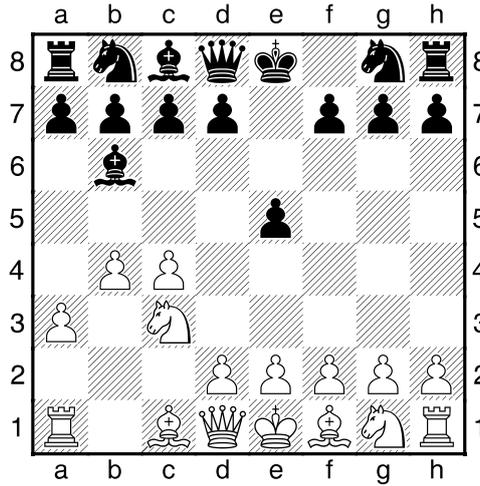
When you start playing you'll make these simple mistakes all the time, but with experience and practice they'll disappear from your games. Not completely, of course: most players make basic errors if they have little time on the clock, or if they're in a difficult position.

If you want to beat stronger players you'll have to do something else.

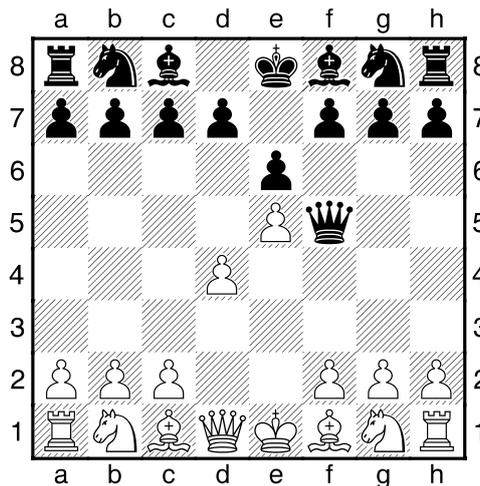
One thing you can do is make a threat which your opponent can't meet.



In this position, White can play c2-c3, threatening the knight. If you look carefully you can see that the knight has nowhere safe to go.



In this position, White can play c4-c5, threatening the bishop: it's easy to see that it has no safe moves. This happens quite often at the start of the game: it's well worth remembering it.



In this position, White can trap the queen by playing Bf1-d3. You'll need to check very carefully to make sure that the queen has nowhere safe to go.

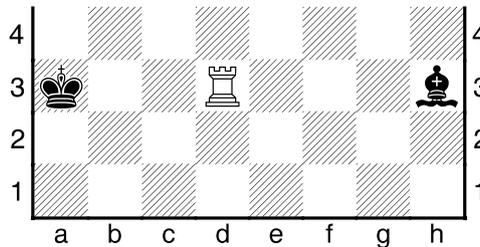
This is why it's often dangerous to bring your queen out at the start of the game. It might be your most powerful piece, but it can still get trapped.

Can you make up some positions yourself in which you can trap a piece in this way? Place a piece of one colour on the board. Then place a piece to threaten it and other pieces to stop it escaping.

LESSON 13

The most important way of winning pieces is to create two threats at the same time.

Look at this diagram.

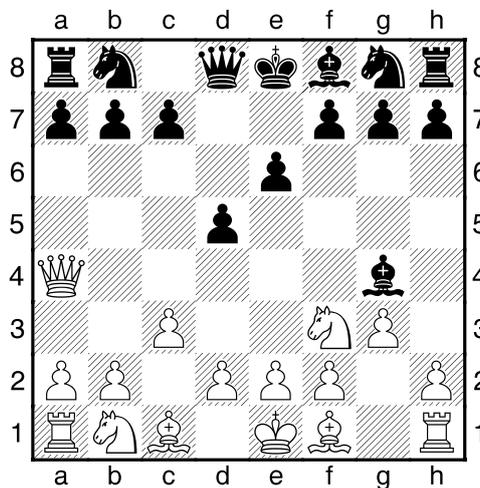


The white rook checks the black king and also threatens the bishop.

This is a fork: a double threat made by the same piece in different directions.

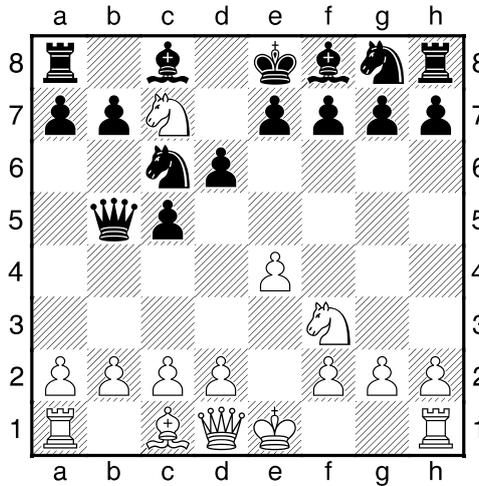
Black will have to get out of check, and then White will capture the bishop.

All pieces can do forks, but the pieces best at doing forks are queens and knights, because they both move in eight directions. Pawn forks are also very common in the opening.



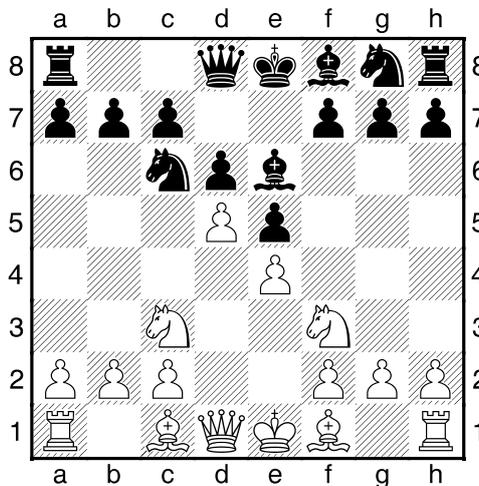
Here's a queen fork in the opening. The white queen checks the black king and also threatens the bishop on g4. Because the pawn on e6 is in the way, Black can't save the bishop.

One reason queens are so powerful is that they can very easily fork unprotected enemy pieces. Because they're usually long-range moves they're not always easy to spot.



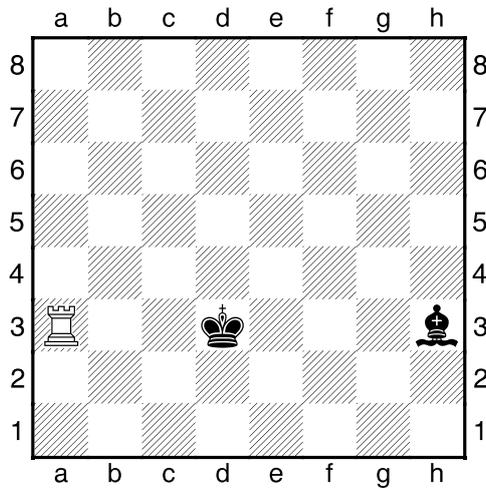
Here's a knight fork in the opening. The white knight forks three pieces: the king, the queen and the rook on a8.

This is a triple fork, with three threats.



Here's a pawn fork in the opening. This happens quite often, so it's well worth remembering.

Next time you play a game, look out for forks. You could also try to make up some fork puzzles.



A skewer is like a fork, but the two threats are in the same direction. The more valuable piece has to move out of the way, leaving the less valuable piece to be taken.

Here, the white rook checks the black king. When the king moves away, the bishop will be captured.

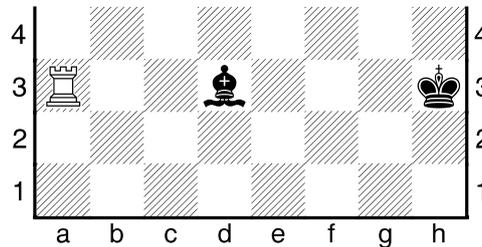
Skewers are a lot less common than forks, and happen most often in the ending, where the king is exposed to checks.

If you swap the king and the bishop in the diagram above, you'll get a pin, which you'll read about in the next chapter.

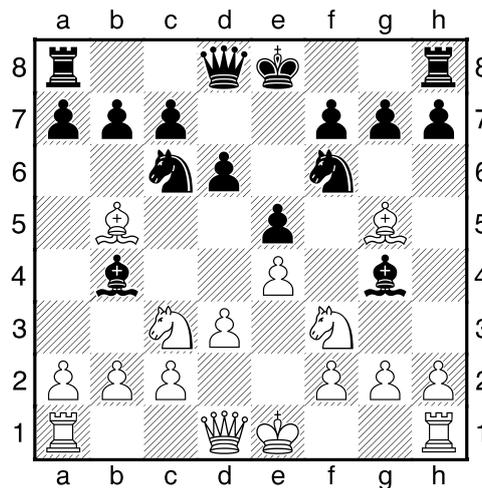
While all pieces can fork, only bishops, rooks and queens can play pins and skewers.

LESSON 14

After forks we have pins. These are quite complicated to explain.

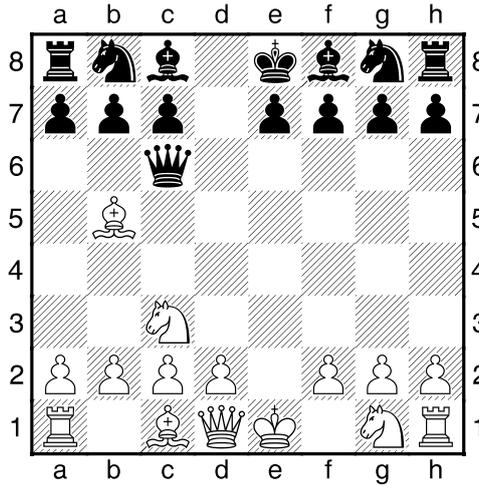


Here's a pin. The rook attacks two enemy pieces in the same direction. The piece in the middle can't move away. Here, the black bishop is pinned against the king so is unable to move. White will be able to capture it next move.



Positions like this often happen at the start of the game. All four bishops are pinning enemy knights. The knights on c3 and c6 are not allowed to move because they're pinned against the king. The knights on f3 and f6 can move, but shouldn't do so because they're pinned against the queen.

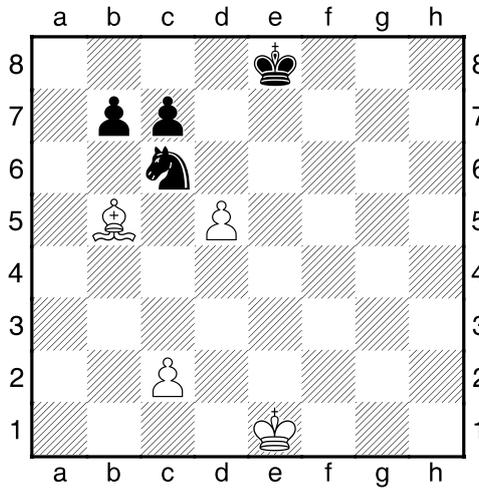
Many pins are harmless, but some are not.



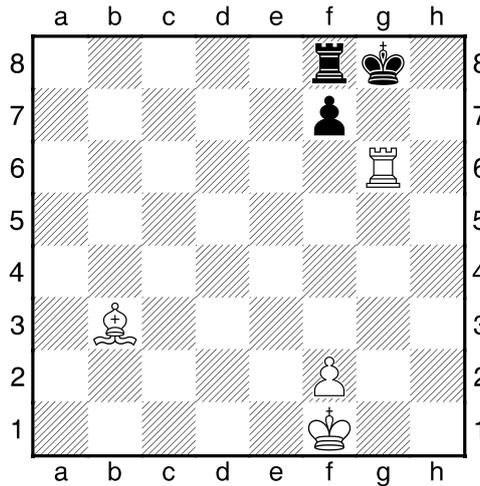
In this position White will win the black queen because the pinning piece (the bishop) is less valuable than the pinned piece (the queen).

There are a few other things you can do with pins.

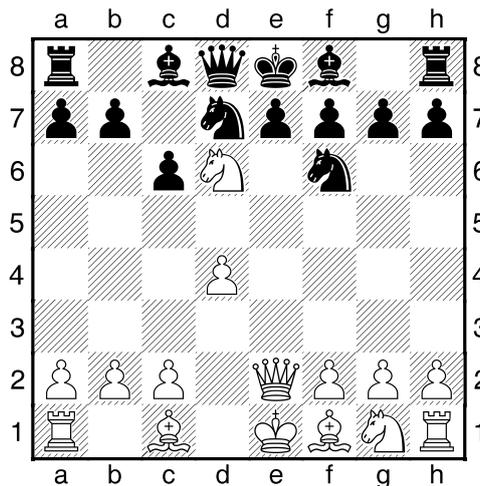
One is to attack the pinned piece with something else.



In this position the white pawn is threatening the black knight, which cannot move away because it's pinned by the bishop.



In this position the white rook has just captured a piece on g6. Black can't recapture because the pawn on f7 is pinned by the white bishop. It's not so easy to see this sort of move as you have to be aware of how five pieces are interacting.



You can sometimes use a pin to get checkmate. Here, Black has fallen for a trap. It's checkmate because the black pawn on e7 is pinned by the white queen on e2.

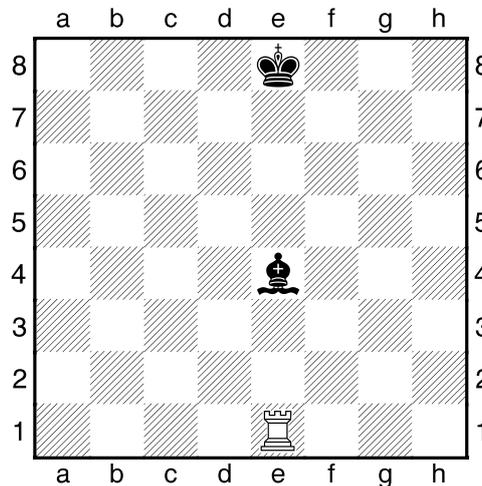
Once you know how to look for them, you'll find pins on the board in almost every game.

It's very often a good idea to line up your line pieces (bishops, rooks and queen) against enemy targets - more valuable or unprotected piece. If one of your opponent's pieces is in the way it's a pin.

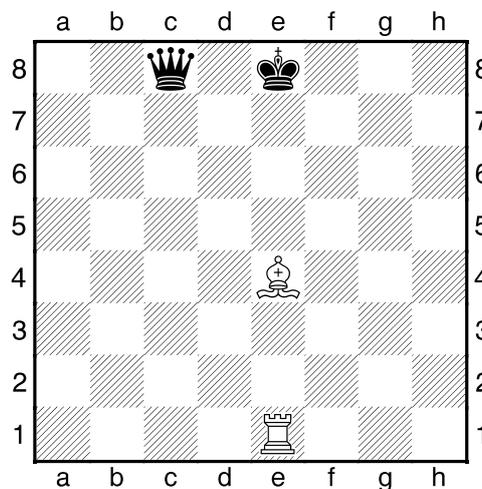
LESSON 15

You can win pieces by creating two threats at the same time with the same piece. You can also win pieces by creating two threats at the same time with different pieces.

The most common way of doing this is by opening lines.



This, as you know, is a pin.



This time there's a white bishop rather than a black bishop between the white rook and the black king.

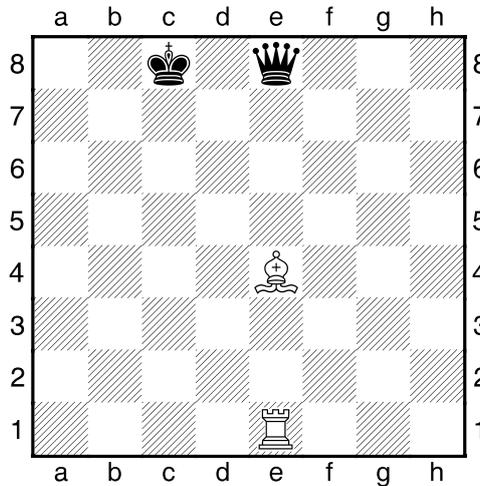
Any move by the bishop will leave the black king in check. This is a discovered check - another piece moves out of the way to open up a check.

Sometimes you can make a capture with the piece moving out of the way.

Sometimes you can move the piece in the middle out of the way and create another threat at the same time.

In this position White could play either $Be4-b7+$ or $Be4-f5+$, in both cases threatening the black queen as well as checking the black rook. White could also play

Be4-c6+ or Be4-g6+, both of which are double checks, leaving the black king in check from two pieces at the same time.

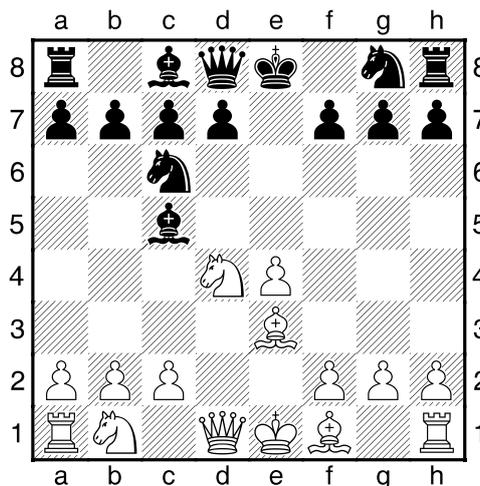


In this position the black king and queen are the other way round.

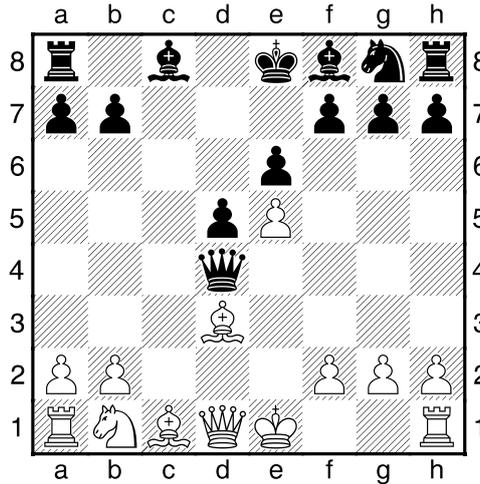
White can play either Be4-f5+ or Be4-b7+. After either move the bishop will check the black king while opening up an attack by the white rook on the black queen.

It's very easy to miss your opponent's discovered attacks if you only look at the piece your opponent just moved. You need to be aware of all the relationships between all the pieces on the board, and to look at the whole board every move.

Likewise, if you try to set up discovered attacks you'll find your opponents often miss them, allowing you to win pieces.



In this position White can win a piece by a discovered attack: you play Nd4xc6, and then you can take the bishop on c5 next move.



Here, Black has again fallen for an opening trap. White can win the black queen by playing Bd3-b5+, followed by Qd1xd4.

It's often a good idea to line up bishops against enemy rooks, queens and kings, rooks against enemy kings and queens, and queens against enemy kings.

If an enemy piece is in the way, you have a pin. If one of your pieces is in the way you might be able to play a discovered attack or a discovered check.

Always look along the lines of bishops, rooks and queens. Your opponent's as well as your own.

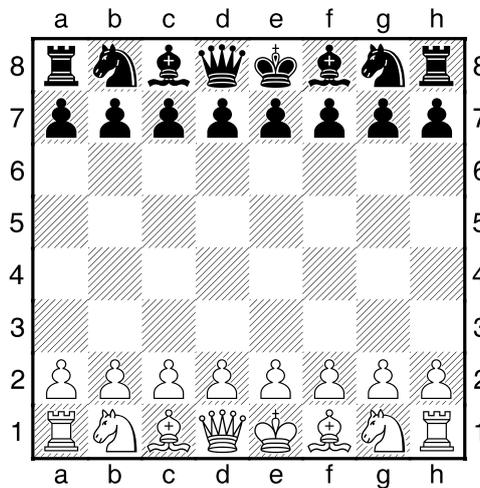
LESSON 16

You can often use enemy pawns as targets for your pieces.

Sometimes you can attack them with more pieces than your opponent can defend them.

Even if you can't win them attacking pawns many help you. Your opponent's pieces will be tied down to defending them, leaving your pieces free to attack somewhere else.

Sometimes it's hard to see that a pawn is being attacked by several pieces. You have to look at every piece on the board every move, not just the last piece your opponent moved.

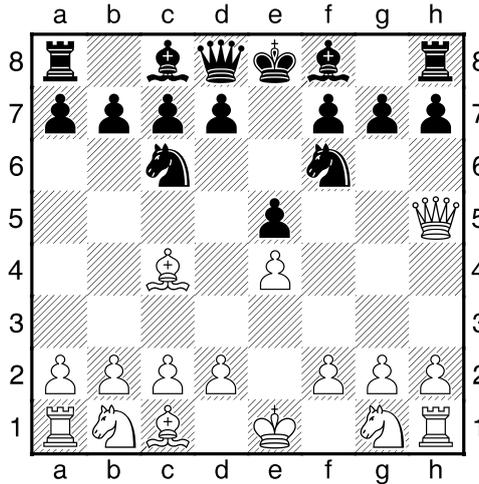


Here's the board at the start of the game. Look at the squares in front of the kings.

The d2/d7 and e2/e7 squares are each defended four times: king, queen, bishop and knight. So they're safe from attack.

The f2 and f7 squares, though, are only defended by the king.

You can sometimes win games quickly by attacking these squares with two (or more) pieces. If your opponents aren't looking at all the pieces over the whole board they won't see it coming.

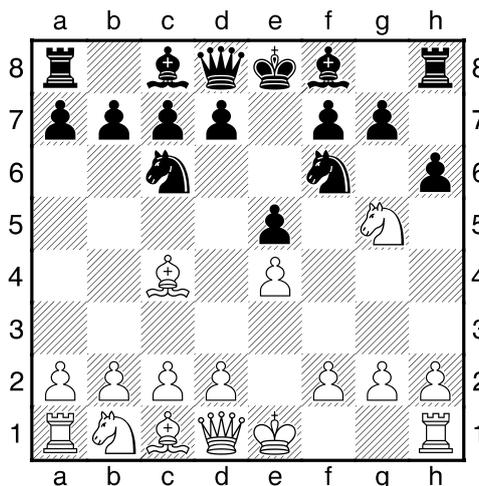


This is the position after the moves:

1. e2-e4 e7-e5
2. Qd1-h5 Nb8-c6
3. Bf1-c5 Ng8-f6

Black didn't see that the pawn on f7 was in danger. Now White can checkmate Black by playing Qh5xf7#. The queen is defended by the bishop on c4 so is safe from capture by the black king.

Can you suggest a better 3rd move for Black?



This position occurred after the moves:

1. e2-e4 e7-e5
2. Ng1-f3 Nb8-c6

3. Bf1-c4 Ng8-f6

4. Nf3-g5 h7-h6

Now White has the chance to play a fork: Ng5xf7, threatening both the black queen and the black rook on h8.

Can you suggest a better 4th move for Black?

There are three things to learn from this lesson.

1. It's often a good idea to attack an enemy pawn with several pieces.
2. You have to watch out for your opponent attacking one of your pawns with several pieces.
3. You have to be very careful about the f2/f7 square at the start of the game.

LESSON 17

Leaving your king in the centre of the board can be very dangerous, especially when some centre pawns have been traded and the queens are still on the board.

As you've seen, it's in danger of getting checkmated, and also a target for forks, pins and discovered attacks.

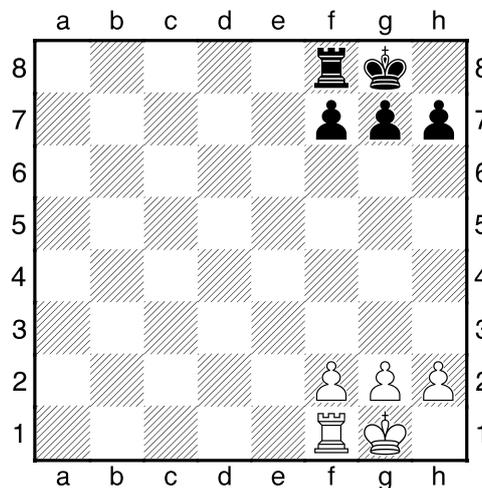
So, in most games you'll want to castle fairly early, usually on the king-side, where it's nearer the corner.

This has several advantages:

1. It makes your king safer.
2. It brings your rook into play.
3. It helps your army work together.

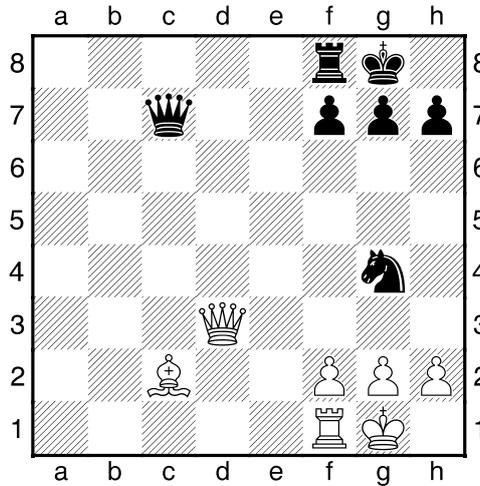
But you'll still need to keep your king well defended, by pawns as well as other pieces, and look out for checkmates. Like football, chess has attackers, midfield players and defenders.

It's good to learn some typical ways to checkmate the castled king.



Here, both players have castled. You'll often want to keep a rook nearby: it's very common to forget about this, when your opponent can bring a queen or rook down the board for a sudden checkmate.

Look at the squares in front of the king. The f2/f7 pawns are both defended twice but the g2/g7 and h2/h7 pawns are only defended by the king.

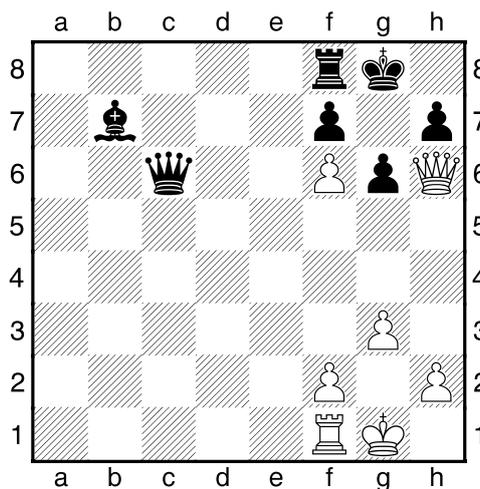


In this position both players can checkmate the enemy king.

White could play $Qd3xh7\#$ - note the bishop hiding behind the queen and providing support.

Black could play $Qc7xh2\#$ - this time the queen is supported by the knight.

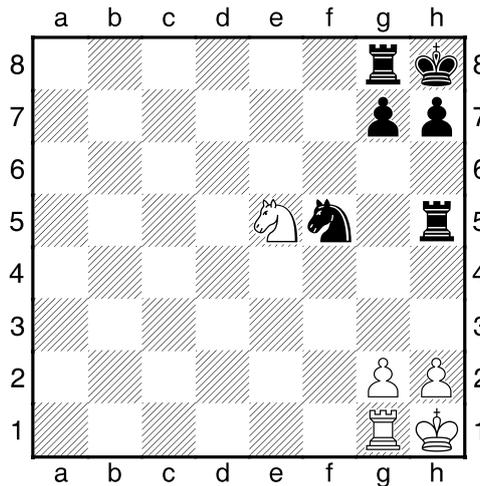
If you have a knight on $f3/f6$ you'll avoid an immediate checkmate in this way.



This is another very common sort of checkmate. It happens if the g-pawn has moved or been captured.

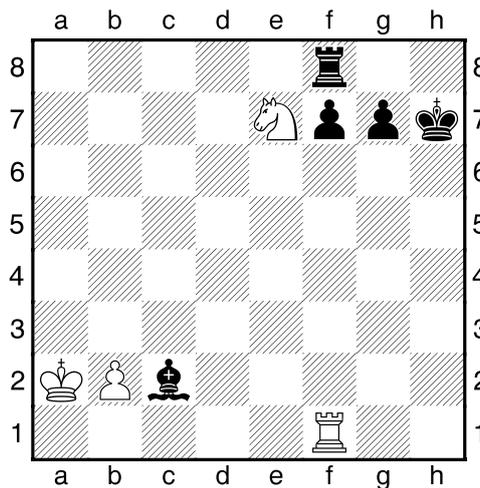
White has occupied the holes on f6 and h6 with a pawn and a queen, so could now play Qh6-g7#

Black has lined up the queen and bishop on the long diagonal and could checkmate the white king in two ways: by playing Qc6-g2# or Qc6-h1#



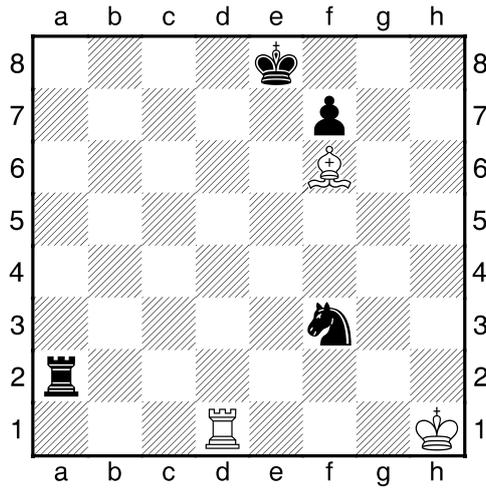
In this position White can play Ne5-f7#, where the black king is surrounded by his own pieces. This is known as a smothered mate.

Black can also play a smothered mate: Nf5-g3#, because the h-pawn is pinned by the rook on h5.



Here, again, both players have a checkmate. White can play Rf1-h1# because the knight on e7 stops the black king escaping.

Likewise, Black can play Rf8-a8# because the bishop on c2 stops the white king escaping.



This diagram has a rook checkmate for White: $Rd1-d8\#$, where the bishop supports the rook. This sort of checkmate sometimes happens early on in the game, against an uncastled king.

Black also has a rook checkmate here: $Ra2-h2\#$, with the knight supporting the rook. This checkmate in the corner is called the Arabian Mate and sometimes happens in the ending.

See how many more checkmates you can find. Practise setting some checkmates up with different pieces yourself.

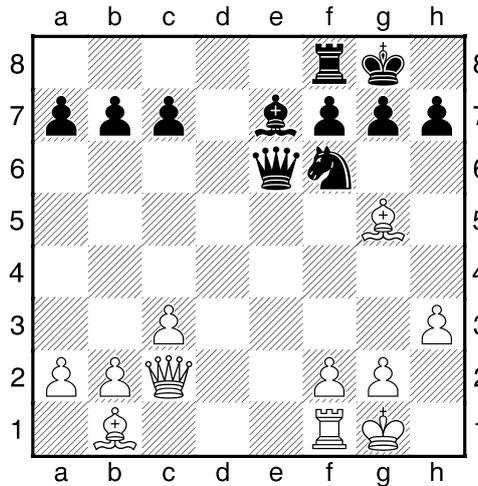
LESSON 18

The most important skill in chess is the ability to think ahead. To think ‘I go there, then you go there, then I go there, then you go there, then I go there’.

Of course you don’t always know what I’m going to do next, but if you play a forcing move: a check, a capture or a threat, then you’ll have a pretty good idea.

If you check me I’m going to get out of check. If you start an exchange I’m probably going to recapture. If you threaten my queen I’m probably going to move it to a safe square. If you threaten my pawn I’m probably going to defend it.

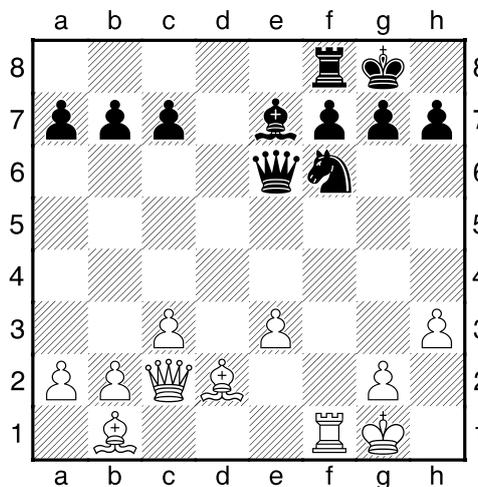
Once you understand this you can start to think ahead, to look into the future.



Look at this position. White could play Bg5xf6, which looks like just an equal trade, but if you look ahead you’ll see that if Black recaptures, White will be able to play Qc2xh7#. So Bg5xf6 wins a knight for free.

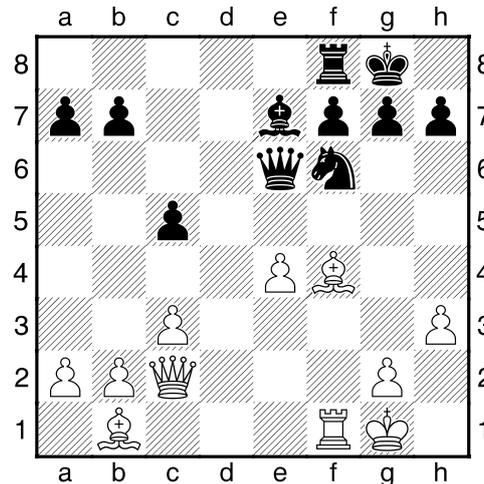
Here, White is capturing a defending piece in order to carry out a threat next move.

Let’s change the position slightly.

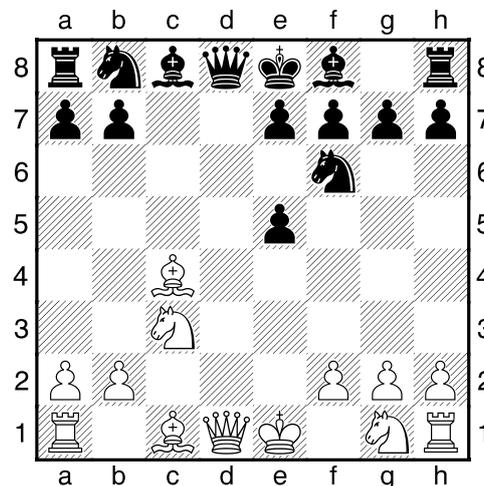


This time you can win the knight by playing Rf1xf6. If you're not looking ahead you'll think this move is a mistake, giving up a more valuable piece for a less valuable piece. But, with the magic of looking ahead, you'll see that it's actually a clever move, either winning a knight for free or winning the game by checkmate.

This is also a simple example of a sacrifice: you give up a piece (here a rook) in order to gain an advantage (checkmate).



In this position White can win the knight in a slightly different way. Instead of capturing the defending piece you can attack it by playing e4-e5. If the knight moves, again you checkmate the black king. And if it doesn't move you just capture it next move.



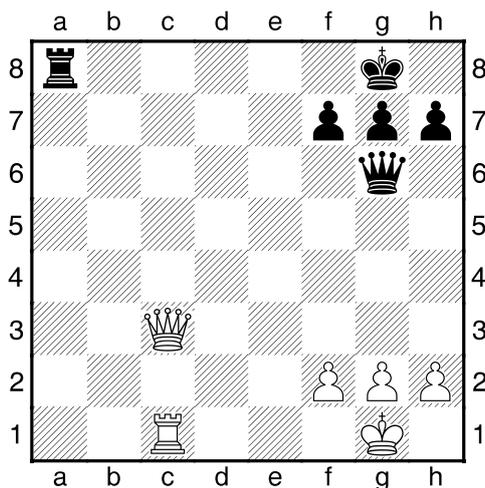
This is another sort of position which happens quite often. Black's fallen for an opening trap here. White can sacrifice a bishop: Bc4xf7+. Black has to take the bishop, and the king has been lured away from defending the queen. Next move White will play Qd1xd8, losing a bishop, but winning a queen.

Try to make up some positions like this yourself, and look out for the chance to play moves like this in your games.

LESSON 19

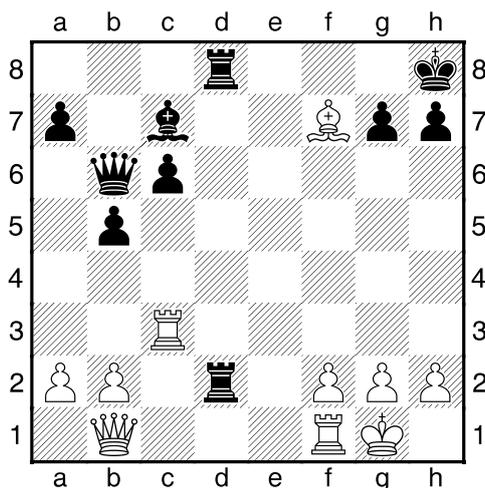
Once you know how to look ahead you'll find opportunities to play sacrifices to checkmate your opponents.

They don't happen all that often, but there's nothing more exciting in chess than winning a game with a brilliant sacrifice, so it's well worth looking out for them and learning some typical positions.

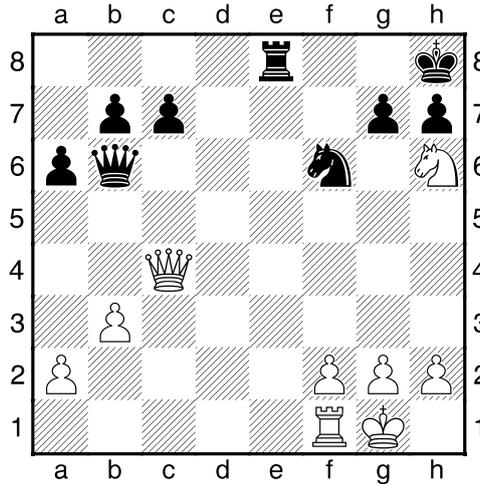


Your first queen sacrifice may well look something like this.

White plays $Qc3-c8+$. Black has to capture with the rook. You take the rook back saying 'checkmate'. These mates on the back rank will quickly become very familiar to you.

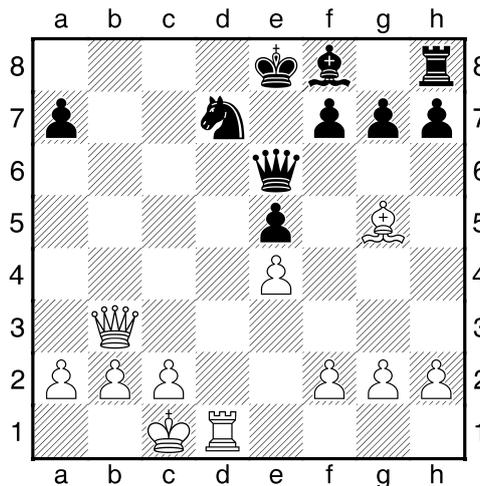


In this position White can again play a queen sacrifice. The spectacular $Qb1xh7+$ forces checkmate next move with $Rc3-h3$. If you replace the bishop on f7 with a white knight on e7 you can again win in the same way.



Here, White can play $Qc4-g8+$ and, whichever way Black captures the queen, $Nh6-f7$ will be checkmate. This is known as a Smothered Mate.

You always have to be very careful when you're playing chess. If you move the black rook from e8 to f8 the sacrifice doesn't work. If Black plays $Nf6xg8$ there's no checkmate and you've just lost your queen for nothing.



This is the end of one of the most famous games ever played. Can you see how White, the American player Paul Morphy, forced checkmate in two moves here?

The answer is that he played $Qb3-b8+$. You might take a quick look and think it's checkmate. You might look a bit further, see that Black can play $Nd7xb8$, and think it's a mistake. If you look further still you'll find that White can then play $Rd1-d8\#$, because the knight has cleared the rook's path. You might remember this checkmate from an earlier lesson. Remembering patterns like this is important for chess improvement.

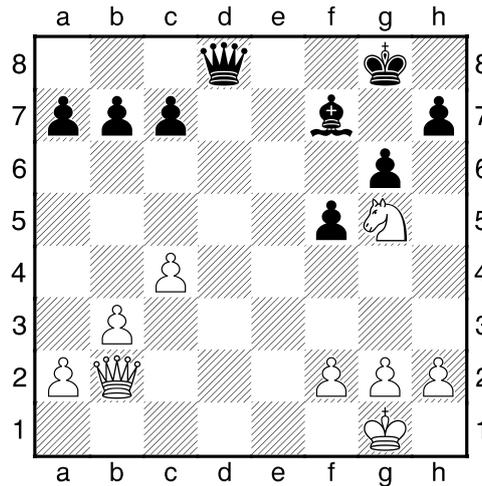
It's well worth spending time practising solving checkmate puzzles. There are several websites where you can do this for free, and also a lot of books, including *Checkmates for Heroes*, which will provide hundreds of puzzles for you.

LESSON 20

Not all sacrifices are to do with checkmate.

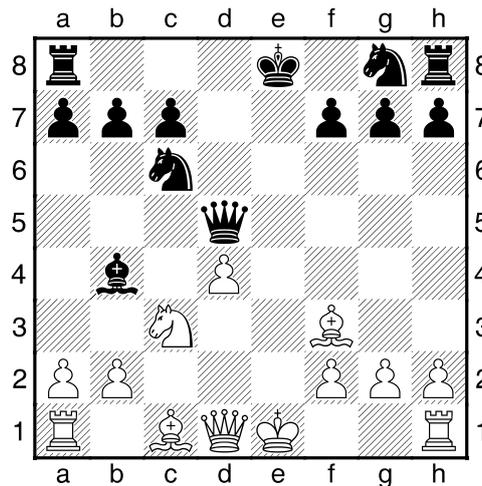
You can also sacrifice in order to win the material back with interest. Again, you have to think ahead to be able to do this.

Look at this position.



White can gain a winning advantage by playing a queen sacrifice here. You play Qb2-h8+, which, if you're not thinking ahead, looks crazy. Black has to capture, but White then plays Ng5xf7+, a knight fork, followed by Nf7xd8, with an extra piece in the ending.

You see the power of thinking ahead.



You can also use thinking ahead to set traps for your opponent, and to avoid falling into your opponents' traps yourself.

MODULE 3

In this module you get the chance to put into practice what you've learnt in Module 2, and also to learn something about the best way to start a game of chess.

What you're going to do in each lesson is look at a short game of chess and try to guess some of the moves. You score points for finding good moves and, at the end, you'll be able to check your score and see how well you performed.

In the first module you learnt what you need to be able to win in the ending.

In the second module you learnt how to win the extra pieces you need to win the ending, and also how to get checkmate in the middlegame.

This module teaches you how to start the game by putting your pieces on good squares. If you put your pieces on better squares than your opponent at the start of the game you'll have more chances to win pieces, and also more chances to get checkmate.

Of course every game has an opening, so you might think this is the most important part of the game to get right. On the other hand, you can't understand the opening until you understand the middlegame, and you can't understand the middlegame until you understand the ending.

There are three things you should be trying to do at the start of the game. You'll need to bear these in mind when you're answering the questions in this module.

1. The most important part of the board is the centre. It's good to start by placing a pawn (or two if you can) in the centre of the board.
2. Then you need to develop your knights and bishops (move them off the back rank) quickly to squares where they can help you fight for the centre.
3. You'll also want to make your king safe. The centre often gets opened up quickly so it's not a safe place for your king. So you will almost always castle fairly early on, usually on the kingside, and you'll make sure your king is well defended by both pawns and pieces.

Above and beyond all that, you'll have to make sure you don't make mistakes that lose pieces. Watch for your opponents' threats and always check that your move is safe before playing it. And see if you can take advantage of your opponents' mistakes by capturing their pieces or even checkmating their king.

GAME 1

In this game you have the black pieces.

Play the moves on the board and try to guess Black's next move.

In each case you have three choices.

1. e2-e4

Choose a move for Black:

a) Nb8-a6

b) e7-e5

c) h7-h5

1... e7-e5

Score 5 points for this move, occupying the centre and opening lines for your queen and bishop. No points for Nb8-a6 (knights should move towards the centre at the start of the game). No points for h7-h5 (another poor move: often played by beginners who want to develop a rook, but rooks should stay at the back at the start of the game.)

2. Qd1-h5

Choose a move for Black:

a) Nb8-c6

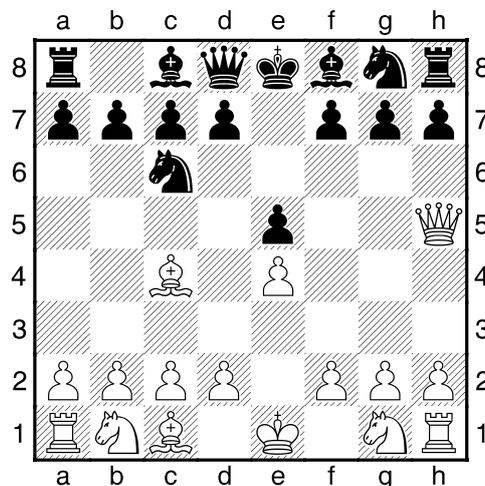
b) Ng8-f6

c) g7-g6

2... Nb8-c6

Score 5 points for this move, defending the pawn on e5 and developing a piece. 2 points for Ng8-f6, which doesn't defend the pawn but you'll gain time later by chasing the queen round the board. No points for g7-g6, when White can play a fork: Qh5xe5+ followed by Qe5xh8.

3. Bf1-c4



Choose a move for Black:

- a) Bf8-c5
- b) Ng8-f6
- c) g7-g6

3... g7-g6

Score 5 points for this move, preventing checkmate and threatening the white queen. Qd8-e7 and Qd8-f6 would also have been good moves. No points for Bf8-c5 or Ng8-f6: both are good developing moves but will be met by an immediate checkmate: Qh5-f7#

4. Qh5-f3

Choose a move for Black:

- a) Nc6-d4
- b) Bf8-c5
- c) Ng8-f6

Score 5 points for Ng8-f6, developing a piece and again preventing checkmate. Can you find other ways of stopping White's threat? No points for Nc6-d4 or Bf8-c5: both moves would only be good if White didn't reply Qf3xf7#. You have to see that White's last move renewed the checkmate threat from a different direction.

4... Ng8-f6

5. Qf3-b3

Choose a move for Black:

- a) Nc6-d4
- b) Nc6-e7
- c) Qd8-e7

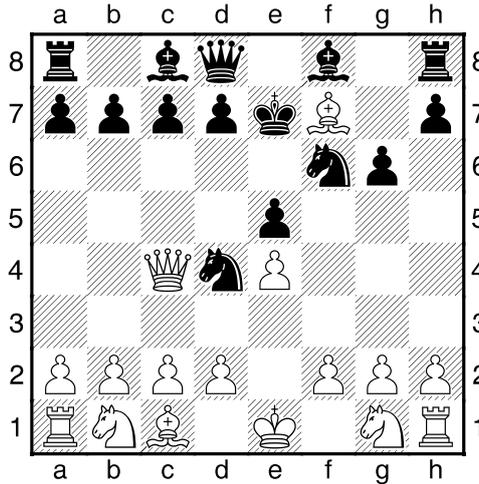
Score 5 points for Nc6-d4. You don't have to be worried about f7 now as you have a lot of strong threats yourself. Score 3 points for Qd8-e7, a sensible move defending f7 again. No points for Nc6-e7, the worst move on the board, blocking the king's escape square so that Bc4xf7 will be checkmate.

5... Nc6-d4

6. Bc4xf7+ Ke8-e7

The only move, so no points here.

7. Qb3-c4



Choose a move for Black:

- a) b7-b5
- b) Nd4xc2
- c) Nf6xe4

Score 5 points for b7-b5, driving away the white queen which is defending both the bishop on f7 and the pawn on c2. 2 points for Nf6xe4, not a bad move but White can escape by playing Bf7-d5. No points for Nd4xc2: not a safe move as the queen can capture it.

- 7... b7-b5
- 8. Qc4-b4+

Choose a move for Black:

- a) c7-c5
- b) d7-d6
- c) Ke7xf7

Score 5 points for Ke7xf7: there's no reason not to take the bishop (simple moves are usually best). 2 points for c7-c5 and 1 point for d7-d6 as both these moves still give you a winning advantage.

- 8... Ke7xf7
- 9. Qb4-c3

Choose a move for Black:

- a) b5-b4
- b) Bf8-b4
- c) Nf6xe4

You've played the opening so well that almost everything wins. Score 5 points for Bf8-b4, which doesn't look safe, but if you look ahead you'll see Black's clever idea. You also score 5 points for either of the other two moves, b5-b4 and Nf6xe4, both of which are sensible and strong.

9... Bf8-b4
10. Qc3xb4

Choose a move for Black:

- a) a7-a5
- b) Nd4xc2+
- c) Nf6xe4

Score 5 points for Nd4xc2+: this fork was the point of the last move. 2 points for Nf6xe4 and 1 point for a7-a5. They both win easily, but there's no reason not to choose the knight fork.

10...Nd4xc2+
11. Ke1-d1

Choose a move for Black:

- a) Nc2xa1
- b) Nc2xb4
- c) Nf6xe4

Score 5 points for Nc2xb4, capturing the queen. 2 points for Nc2xa1: the rook is less valuable than the queen. No points for Nf6xe4: White will play Qb4xe4 and you'll probably lose the game.

11... Nc2xb4

White resigns: you win the game.

Now add up your points.

41-50: master

31-40: expert

21-30: average

11-20: could do better

0-10: better luck next time

GAME 2

In this game you have the white pieces.

Play the moves on the board and try to guess White's next move, starting at move 3.

In each case you have three choices.

1. e2-e4 e7-e5
2. Ng1-f3 Nb8-c6

Choose a move for White:

- a) Bf1-b5
- b) Bf1-c4
- c) Bf1-d3

Score 5 points for Bf1-c4, an excellent move developing the bishop to a strong square, attacking the pawn on f7. 5 points also for Bf1-b5, another excellent move, attacking the knight which is defending the pawn on e5. Only 1 point for Bf1-d3, not a very good square for the bishop.

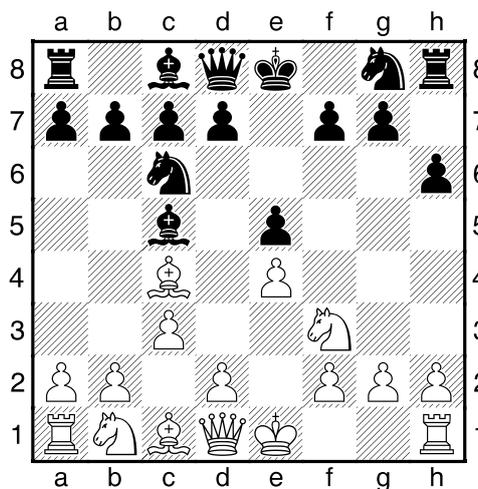
3. Bf1-c4 h7-h6

Choose a move for White:

- a) c2-c3
- b) d2-d4
- c) d2-d3

Score 5 points for c2-c3: the idea is to play d2-d4, putting two pawns in the centre. 5 points again for d2-d4, which is also a very strong move. 3 points for d2-d3, not a bad move but as Black's last move didn't develop a piece you really want to open up the centre.

4. c2-c3 Bf8-c5



Choose a move for White:

- a) d2-d3
- b) d2-d4
- c) o-o

Score 5 points for d2-d4, putting two pawns in the centre and attacking the bishop. 4 points for o-o, which is also strong: you can play d2-d4 next move. 3 points for d2-d3, for the same reason as last move.

5. d2-d4 e5xd4

Choose a move for White:

- a) c3xd4
- b) Qd1xd4
- c) Nf3xd4

Score 5 points for c3xd4: you now have two strong and safe pawns in the centre. There are 2 points for Nf3xd4, not bad but missing the point, and no points for Qd1xd4, which loses the queen.

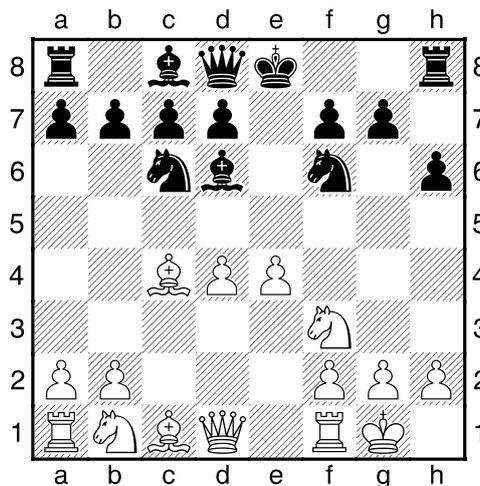
6. c3xd4 Bc5-d6

Choose a move for White:

- a) Nb1-c3
- b) e4-e5
- c) o-o

Score 5 points for o-o: making the king safe from checks and developing the rook. White already has a very strong position as Black's 3rd, 4th and 6th moves were poor. 4 points for Nb1-c3 and 3 points for e4-e5, when Black can gain time with Bd6-b4+.

7. o-o Ng8-f6



Choose a move for White:

- a) Nb1-c3
- b) d4-d5
- c) e4-e5

Score 5 points for e4-e5, a pawn fork winning a piece. Score 3 points for Nb1-c3 and 2 points for d4-d5. Black's last move was a mistake in a bad position.

8. e4-e5 Nf6-g4

Choose a move for White:

- a) Nb1-c3
- b) Bc1-f4
- c) e5xd6

Score 5 points for e5xd6: there's no reason not to capture the bishop. There are 3 points for Nb1-c3 and 2 points for Bc1-f4 - both good developing moves.

9. e5xd6 c7xd6

Choose a move for White:

- a) Nb1-c3
- b) Bc1xf7+
- c) Rf1-e1+

Score 5 points for Rf1-e1+, bringing the rook into play powerfully. 4 points for Nb1-c3: sensible development can't be bad. No points for Bc1xf7+: no need to give up the bishop as there's no immediate win.

10. Rf1-e1+ Nc6-e7

Choose a move for White:

- a) Nb1-c3
- b) Qd1-e2
- c) h2-h3

Score 5 points for Qd1-e2, putting more pressure on the pinned knight. 4 points are available for Nb1-c3 and h2-h3, both good enough to win easily.

11. Qd1-e2 o-o

Choose a move for White:

- a) Nb1-c3
- b) Qe2xe7
- c) h2-h3

Score 5 points for Qe2xe7, the easiest way to win. Don't be afraid to trade queens, especially if you're ahead on pieces. Score 4 points for h2-h3 and 3 points for Nb1-c3, both of which should also win easily.

12. Qe2xe7

Black resigns: you win the game.

Now add up your points.

41-50: master

31-40: expert

21-30: average

11-20: could do better

0-10: better luck next time

GAME 3

In this game you have the white pieces.

Play the moves on the board and try to guess White's next move, starting at move 3.

In each case you have three choices.

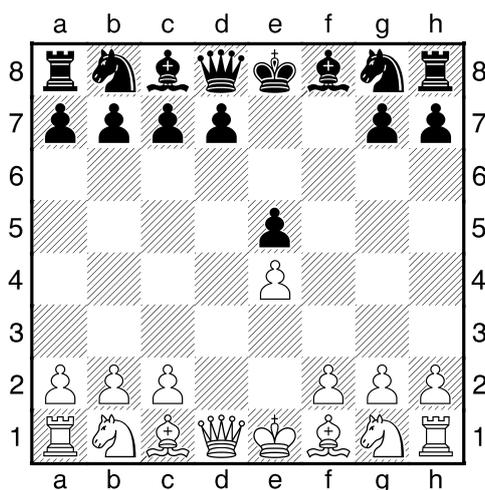
1. e2-e4 e7-e5
2. d2-d4 f7-f6

Choose a move for White:

- a) Qd1-h5+
- b) d4xe5
- c) Bf1-c4

Score 5 points for d4xe5: Black's last move weakened the king's defences so White wants to open some lines. Score 5 points also for Bf1-c4, another excellent move. Only 1 point for Qd1-h5+: Black will reply g7-g6 and drive the queen back again.

3. d4xe5 f6xe5



Choose a move for White:

- a) Qd1-h5+
- b) Bf1-c4
- c) Ng1-f3

Score 5 points for Qd1-h5+: now it's very different because you can meet g7-g6 with Qh5xe5+, so this move already gives White a winning advantage. 2 points for Bf1-c4 and Ng1-f1: two good developing moves, but nowhere near as good.

4. Qd1-h5+ Ke8-e7

Choose a move for White:

- a) Bf1-c4
- b) Ng1-f3
- c) Qh5xe5+

Score 5 points for Qh5xe5+, capturing a pawn with check and giving the black king even more problems. There are 3 points for Bf1-c4 (planning Qh5-f7+) and 2 points for Ng1-f3 (which can be met by d7-d6) this time.

5. Qh5xe5+ Ke7-f7

Choose a move for White:

- a) Qe5-f5+
- b) Qe5-h5+
- c) Bf1-c4+

Score 5 points for Bf1-c4+, bringing another piece into the attack, and meeting Kf7-g6 with Qe5-f5#. 2 points for Qe5-h5+, met with g7-g6 and 1 point for Qe5-f5+, met with Ng8-f6.

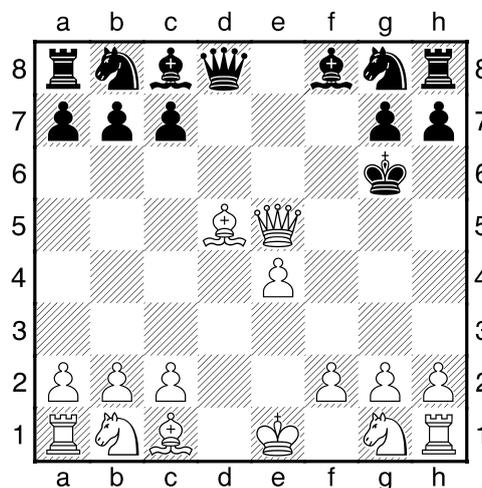
6. Bf1-c4+ d7-d5

Choose a move for White:

- a) Bc4xd5+
- b) e4xd5
- c) Qe4xd5+

Score 5 points for Bc4xd5+, continuing the attack and playing for checkmate. Give yourself 2 points for Qe4xd5+, not bad but allowing Black to trade queens, and 1 point for e4xd5, when Bf8-d6 will drive your queen back.

7. Bc4xd5+ Kf7-g6



Choose a move for White:

- a) Qe5-f5+
- b) Qe5-g3+
- c) Qe5-g5+

Score 5 points for Qd5-g3+, forcing the black king up the board. You have to be careful: only 1 point for Qd5-g5+: Black can play Qd8xg5, and no points for Qe5-f5: it's not mate now because of Bc8xf5.

8. Qe5-g3+ Kg6-h5

Choose a move for White:

- a) Bd5-f7+
- b) Qg3-e5+
- c) Qg3-g5+

Score 5 points for Bd5-f7+, the quickest way to win. 3 points for Qg3-e5+, which takes longer but still wins, but no points for Qg3-g5+, which again allows Qd8xg5 so isn't mate.

9. Bd5-f7+ g7-g6

Choose a move for White:

- a) Qg3-e5+
- b) Qg3-f3+
- c) Qg3-h3+

5 points for Qg3-e5+, leading to a quick checkmate. 3 points for Qg3-f3+ which also wins, but no points for Qg3-h3+, allowing Bc8xh3.

10. Qg3-e5+ Kh5-h4

Choose a move for White:

- a) Bc1-g5+
- b) Ng1-f3+
- c) g2-g3+

5 points for g2-g3+, which wins at once, and also 5 points for Ng1-f3+. 3 points for Bc1-g5+ which still wins quickly, meeting Qd8xg5 with Ng1-f3+.

11. g2-g3+ Kh4-g4

Choose a move for White:

- a) Bf7-e6+
- b) Qe5-g5+
- c) h2-h3+

5 points for h2-h3# - it's checkmate as is f2-f3. There are 4 points for Bf7-e6+: you can still checkmate next move. No points, though, for Qe5-g5+, throwing away the win after Qd8xg5.

12. h2-h3#

Now add up your points.

41-50: master

31-40: expert

21-30: average

11-20: could do better

0-10: better luck next time

GAME 4

In this game you have the black pieces.

Play the moves on the board and try to guess White's next move, starting at move 3.

In each case you have three choices.

1. e2-e4 e7-e5

2. Ng1-f3

Choose a move for Black:

a) Nb8-c6

b) d7-d6

c) Bf8-c5

Score 5 points for Nb8-c6, developing a piece and defending the pawn on e5. You get 4 points for d7-d6, also a good move, but no points for Bf8-c5, when White can capture the pawn safely.

2... Nb8-c6

3. Bf1-c4

Choose a move for Black:

a) a7-a6

b) Bf8-c5

c) Ng8-f6

Score 5 points for Bf8-c5, and also for Ng8-f6: both excellent moves developing pieces and helping you to control the centre. Only 1 point for a7-a6, which is just a waste of time.

3... Bf8-c5

4. Nb1-c3

Choose a move for Black:

a) Nc6-a5

b) d7-d6

c) Ng8-f6

Score 5 points for d7-d6, or for Ng8-f6: again both very strong moves. No points for Nc6-a5 when White can either play Nf3xe5 or go for an attack with Bc4xf7+;

4... d7-d6

5. 0-0

Choose a move for Black:

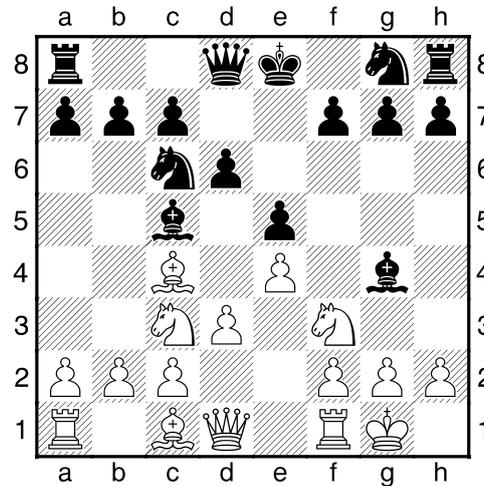
a) Bc8-g4

b) Qd8-h4

c) Ng8-f6

Score 5 points for Bc8-g4, setting up a pin, or Ng8-f6, an excellent developing move.
No points for Qd8-h4, carelessly losing the queen.

- 5... Bf8-g4
6. d2-d3



Choose a move for Black:

- a) Nc6-d4
b) Bc5xf2+
c) Ng8-f6

Score 5 points for Nc6-d4, a very strong move attacking the pinned knight on f3 again. Note that if White played Nf3xd4 now you could play Bg4xd1. There are 3 points for Ng8-f6, sensibly developing a piece, but no points for Bc5xf2, giving up a bishop for no reason.

- 6... Nc6-d4
7. h2-h3

Choose a move for Black:

- a) Nd4xf3+
b) Bg4xh3
c) Bg4-h5

5 points for Nd4xf3+, smashing up the white king's defences. You can have 3 points for Bg4xf3 with the same idea and 1 point for Bg4-h5.

- 7... Nd4xf3+
8. g2xf3

Choose a move for Black:

- a) Bg4xf3
b) Bg4xh3
c) Bg4-h5

5 points for Bg4xh3, capturing a pawn and threatening the rook on f1. Just 2 points for Bg4-h5, and no points for Bg4xf3, which isn't a safe capture.

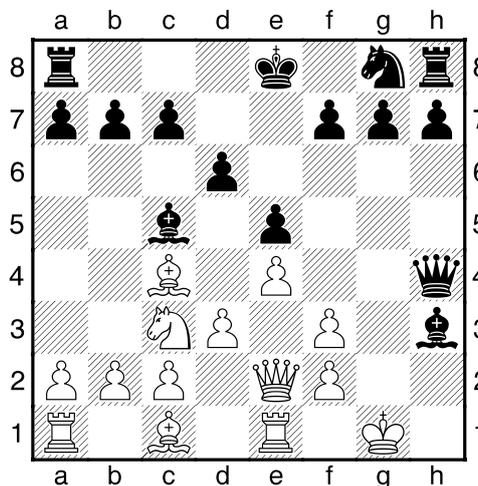
- 8... Bg4xh3
9. Rf1-e1

Choose a move for Black:

- a) Qd8-f6
b) Qd8-g5+
c) Qd8-h4

5 points for Qd8-h4, or for Qd8-f6, both very strong attacking moves using your most powerful piece. Don't rush into playing Qd8-g5, though: it loses the queen and scores no points.

- 9... Qd8-h4
10. Qd1-e2



Choose a move for Black:

- a) Qh4-g3+
b) Qh4-g4+
c) Qh4-g5+

5 points for Qh4-g3+: it may not look safe but it is: your bishop on c5 pins the pawn on f2, so White can't play f2xg3. No points for Qh4-g4+ or Qh4-g5+, though: both those moves really are unsafe.

- 10... Qh4-g3+
11. Kg1-h1

Select a move for Black:

- a) Bc5xf2
b) Bf3-g2+
c) Qg3-g2+

5 points for Qg3-g2#: an easy checkmate to spot. 3 points for Bf3-g2+ which mates in 3 moves, and 2 points for Bc5xf2, which wins easily, but there's no reason not to play the checkmate.

11... Qg3-g2#

Now add up your points.

41-50: master

31-40: expert

21-30: average

11-20: could do better

0-10: better luck next time

GAME 5

In this game you have to guess some of the moves.

In each case you have three choices.

1. e2-e4 e7-e5

Choose a move for White:

- a) Ng1-e2
- b) Ng1-f3
- c) Ng1-h3

Score 5 points for Ng1-f3. This is the best square for the knight, attacking the pawn on e5. 2 points for Ng1-e2, which gets in the way of your queen and bishop, and 1 point for Ng1-h3: it's usually not best to develop your knight on the edge of the board.

2. Ng1-f3

Choose a move for Black:

- a) Nb8-c6
- b) Bf8-c5
- c) f7-f6

Score 5 points for Nb8-c6, protecting the pawn and developing a knight in the centre. 1 point for f7-f6 which weakens your king and takes the f6 square away from the knight on g8. 1 point also for Bf8-c5, which doesn't defend the pawn on e5.

2... Nb8-c6

Choose a move for White:

- a) Nb1- c3
- b) d2-d3
- c) d2-d4

Score 5 points for d2-d4, an excellent move striking the centre, but you have to see that it's safe. There are also 5 points for Nb1-c3, a solid developing move, and 3 points for d2-d3, not bad but blocking in your bishop on f1.

3. d2-d4

Choose a move for Black:

- a) Qd8-e7
- b) e5xd4
- c) Bf8-d6

Score 5 points for e5xd4: this simple capture is the best move here. Only 2 points for Bf8-d6, blocking your d-pawn or Qd8-e7, blocking your bishop, even though they both defend the e5 pawn again.

3... e5xd4

Choose a move for White:

- a) Nb1-c3
- b) Qd1xd4
- c) Nf3xd4

Score 5 points for Nf3xd4, taking the pawn back: it's safe because the queen defends the knight. You don't score anything for Nb1-c3, which loses the knight, or Qd1xd4, which loses the queen.

4. Nf3xd4

Choose a move for Black:

- a) Qd8-h4
- b) Nc6xd4
- c) Ng8-f6

Score 5 points for Ng8-f6, a simple and strong developing move (Bf8-c5 is also an excellent move here). You score 3 points for Qd8-h4, the move played in the game, after which Black has to be very careful, or for Nc6xd4, when Qd1xd4 will put the white queen on a strong square in the centre of the board.

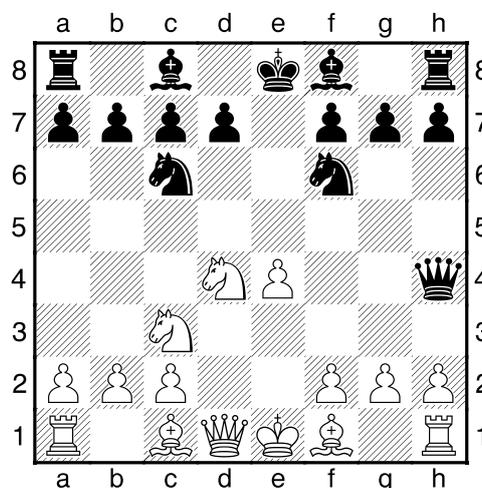
4... Qd8-h4

Choose a move for White:

- a) Nb1-c3
- b) Qd1-f3
- c) Bf1-d3

Score 5 points for Nb1-c3, simple development again while protecting the pawn on e4. No points for either Qd1-f3 or Bf1-d3, both of which allow Nc6xd4, winning a free knight. Black should now try Bf8-b4 but instead makes a mistake.

5. Nb1-c3 Ng8-f6



Choose a move for White:

- a) Nd4xc6
- b) Nd4-f3
- c) Nd4-f5

Score 5 points for Nd4-f5, when the black queen will be in trouble. 2 points for Nd4xc6 or Nd4-f3: not bad moves, but missing the chance to play an excellent move.

6. Nd4-f5 Qh4-h5

Choose a move for White:

- a) Qd1xh5
- b) Bf1-e2
- c) Nf5xg7+

5 points for Bf1-e2, giving the black queen even more problems. 2 points for Qd1xh5, which is just a queen trade, and no points for Nf5xg7+, which is met by Bf8xg7.

7. Bf1-e2 Qh5-g6

Choose a move for White:

- a) o-o
- b) Nf5-g3
- c) Nf5-h4

Score 5 points for Nf5-h4: here it's good to put the knight on the side. If you look closely you'll see that the black queen has no safe squares. 2 points for o-o or Nf5-g3, not bad moves but they don't win the queen.

8. Nf5-h4

Black resigned here.

Now add up your points.

41-50: master

31-40: expert

21-30: average

11-20: could do better

0-10: better luck next time

GAME 6

In this game you have the white pieces.

Play the moves on the board and try to guess White's next move, starting at move 2.

In each case you have three choices.

1. e2-e4 e7-e5

Choose a move for White:

- a) a2-a4
- b) f2-f3
- c) Ng1-f3

5 points for Ng1-f3, the usual move here. No points for a2-a4 or f2-f3, neither of which help you develop your pieces.

2. Ng1-f3 d7-d6

Choose a move for White:

- a) Nb1-c3
- b) Bf1-c4
- c) d2-d4

5 points for d2-d4, the best reply to Black's 2nd move, or for Bf1-c4, also a strong move. 4 points for Nb1-c3, a good developing move but it's better to attack than to defend.

3. d2-d4 Nb8-d7

Choose a move for White:

- a) Bf1-b5
- b) Bf1-c4
- c) Bf1-d3

5 points for Bf1-c4, the best square for the bishop in this position. Score 3 points for Bf1-d3, not bad but defending rather than attacking, and 2 points for Bf1-b5, when Black can reply with c7-c6, driving the bishop back again.

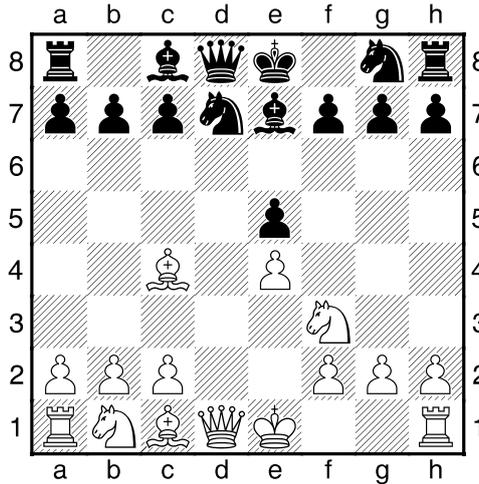
4. Bf1-c4 Bf8-e7

Choose a move for White:

- a) Nb1-c3
- b) d4xe5
- c) o-o

5 points for d4xe5: White has a cunning plan in mind. There are 4 points for either Nb1-c3 or o-o, both very sensible developing moves. Now if Black plays 5... Nd7xe5, White can continue 6. Nf3xe5 d6xe5 7. Qd1-h5, forking f7 and e5.

5. d4xe5 d6xe5



Choose a move for White:

- a) Nb1-c3
- b) Qd1-d5
- c) o-o

5 points for Qd1-d5. This was White's idea, threatening checkmate on f7: if Black now plays Ng8-h6, White can just reply with Bc1xh6. You can have 3 points for Nb1-c3 or o-o: nothing wrong with them but there's something much better.

6. Qd1-d5 Be7-b4+

Choose a move for White:

- a) Nb1-c3
- b) c2-c3
- c) Bc1-d2

5 points for c2-c3, threatening the bishop. Only 1 point for Nb1-c3 or Bc1-d2, which give Black time to defend f7 safely.

7. c2-c3 Qd8-e7

Choose a move for White:

- a) c3xb4
- b) Qd5xf7+
- c) Qd5xe5

5 points for c3xb4, winning a bishop. There's 1 point for Qd5xf7+, but nothing for Qd5xe5, losing the queen to Nd7xe5.

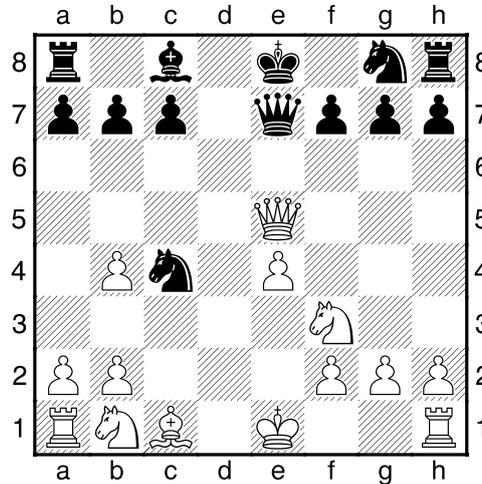
8. c3xb4 Nd7-b6

Choose a move for White:

- a) Qd5xe5
- b) Qd5xf7+
- c) Nf3xe5

5 points for Qd5xe5 when White will end up a piece ahead. You can have 4 points for Qd5xf7+ when White will end up two pawns ahead. No points, though, for Nf3xe5, losing the queen to Nb6xd5.

9. Qd5xe5 Nb6xc4



Choose a move for White:

- a) Qe5-b5+
- b) Qe5xe7+
- c) Qe5xg7

5 points for Qe5-b5+: this fork will ensure White remains a piece ahead. 2 points for Qe5xe7+, leaving White a pawn ahead. 1 point for Qe5xg7 when you might win the rook but Qe7xe4+ will give Black a strong attack against your king in the centre.

10. Qe5-b5+ Bc8-d7

Choose a move for White:

- a) Qb5xb7
- b) Qb5xc4
- c) o-o

Score 5 points for Qb5xc4, capturing a piece. There are 2 points for Qb5xb7: it's better to capture a knight than a pawn, and no points for o-o, which loses the queen.

11. Qb5xc4

Black resigned here.

Now add up your points.

- 41-50: master
- 31-40: expert
- 21-30: average
- 11-20: could do better
- 0-10: better luck next time

GAME 7

In this game you have to guess some of the moves. Both players make some mistakes: can you do better?

In each case you have three choices.

1. e2-e4 e7-e5
2. Ng1-f3 d7-d5

Choose a move for White:

- a) d2-d3
- b) e4xd5
- c) Nf3xe5

Score 5 points for e4xd5, and also for Nf3xe5. These are both good replies to Black's unusual second move. Score 2 points for d2-d3, it's better to capture here than to defend.

3. e4xd5 Qd8xd5

Choose a move for White:

- a) Nb1-c3
- b) d2-d3
- c) Qd1-e2

Score 5 points for Nb1-c3, a strong move developing a piece and creating a threat. 2 points for d2-d3 or Qd1-e2, both of which block in your bishop.

4. Nb1-c3

Choose a move for Black:

- a) Qd5-c6
- b) Qd5-e6
- c) e5-e4

Score 5 points for Qd5-e6, moving the queen to a safe square. There are no points for Qd5-c6, which loses the queen to a pin: Bf1-b5, or for e5-e4, which also loses the queen.

- 4... Qd5-e6

Choose a move for White:

- a) Bf1-b5+
- b) Bf1-c4
- c) d2-d4

Score 5 points for Bf1-b5+: after c7-c6 you can play Bb5-a4 and then Ba4-b3, attacking the queen. In the game White played d2-d4, which scores only 1 point. Nothing for Bf1-c4, which isn't a safe move.

5. d2-d4

Choose a move for Black:

- a) Nb8-c6
- b) e5xd4+
- c) e5-e4

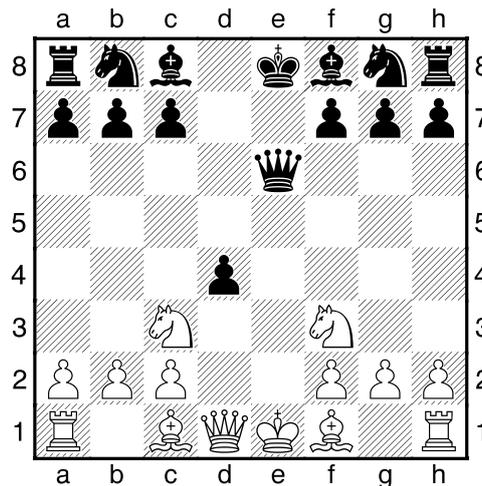
Score 5 points for e5xd4+: this is a discovered check, which is why White's last move wasn't best. Only 1 point for e5-e4, when Nf3-e5 is a strong reply, and no points for Nb8-c6, which allows White a pawn fork: d4-d5.

5... e5xd4+

Choose a move for White:

- a) Nc3-e2
- b) Nc3-e4
- c) Qd1-e2

Score 5 points for Nc3-e2, the only move to avoid losing a piece. No points for either Nc3-e4 or Qd1-e2, both of which let Black capture your knight.



6. Nc3-e2

Choose a move for Black:

- a) Nb8-c6
- b) c7-c5
- c) d4-d3

Score 5 points for c7-c5, keeping the extra pawn. There are 3 points for Nb8-c6, developing a piece, and just 1 point for Black's choice of d4-d3.

6... d4-d3

Choose a move for White:

- a) Bc1-g5
- b) c2xd3
- c) Qd1xd3

Score 5 points for Qd1xd3, capturing a pawn and playing a developing move. Award yourself 2 points for c2xd3, and no points for White's choice of Bc1-g5, which, although it sets a trap, is a bad move.

7. Bc1-g5

Choose a move for Black:

- a) d3xe2
- b) Bf8-b4+
- c) h7-h6

Score 5 points for h7-h6: play might continue 8. Bg5-h4 g7-g5 9. Bh4-g3 d3xe2 and Black wins a piece safely. Score 2 points for Bf8-b4+ which should lead to an equal position. There's no credit for d3xe2, falling into White's trap.

7... d3xe2

Choose a move for White:

- a) Qd1-d8+
- b) Qd1xe2
- c) Bf1xe2

Score 5 points for Qd1-d8+ - it's checkmate! No points for Qd1xe2 or Bf1xe2, both of which leave White a knight behind with a lost position.

8. Qd1-d8#

Now add up your points.

41-50: master

31-40: expert

21-30: average

11-20: could do better

0-10: better luck next time

GAME 8

In this game you have the white pieces.

Play the moves on the board and try to guess White's next move, starting at move 2.

In each case you have three choices.

1. d2-d4 d7-d5
2. Bc1-g5 Bc8-f5

Although most novices prefer to start with e2-e4, White's first move, d2-d4, is just as good. White's second move, Bc1-g5 is rarely played: the usual moves are c2-c4 and Ng1-f3.

Choose a move for White:

- a) Nb1-c3
- b) c2-c4
- c) Ng1-f3

Score 5 points for Ng1-f3, or for c2-c4, both excellent moves. 3 points for Nb1-c3, it's best not to block your c-pawn in games starting with d2-d4.

3. Ng1-f3 Ng8-f6

Choose a move for White:

- a) Nb1-c3
- b) c2-c4
- c) e2-e3

Score 5 points for e2-e3, or for c2-c4, again both strong moves. Again, just 3 points for Nb1-c3, blocking your c-pawn.

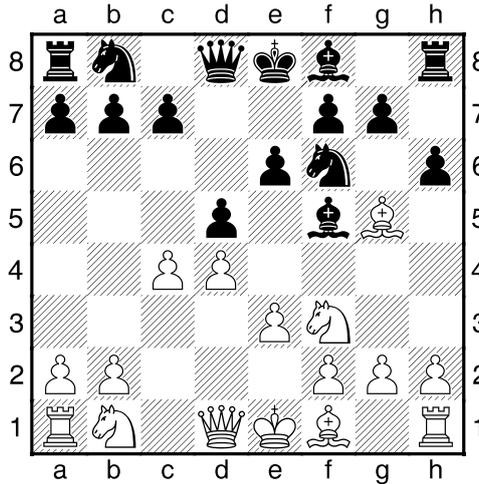
4. e2-e3 e7-e6

Choose a move for White:

- a) c2-c4
- b) Bf1-d3
- c) Bf1-b5+

Score 5 points for c2-c4, still a powerful move. Score 4 points for Bf1-d3, and 3 points for Bf1-b5+, which doesn't have much point here as Black can reply c7-c6.

5. c2-c4 h7-h6



Choose a move for White:

- a) Bg5-f4
- b) Bg5xf6
- c) Bg5-h4

Score 5 points for Bg5xf6: White has a good move coming up next. Score 4 points for Bg5-h4, the usual move in this sort of position, and 3 points for Bg5-f4.

6. Bg5xf6 Qd8xf6

Choose a move for White:

- a) Nb1-c3
- b) Qd1-b3
- c) Bf1-d3

Score 5 points for Qd1-b3, threatening to capture on both d5 and b7. There are 3 points for Nb1-c3 and Bf1-d3, not bad, but not as strong as the move White chose.

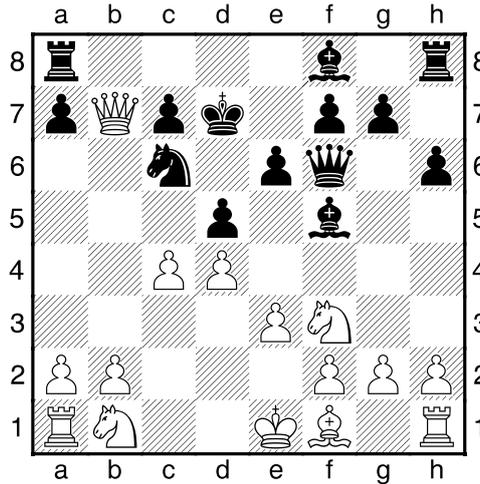
7. Qd1-b3 Nb8-c6

Choose a move for White:

- a) Nb1-c3
- b) Qb3xb7
- c) c4xd5

Score 5 points for Qb3xb7, capturing a pawn and threatening the rook on a8 and the knight on c6. 3 points for c4xd5, a good move but White's choice was much better, and 1 point for Nb1-c3.

8. Qb3xb7 Ke8-d7



Choose a move for White:

- a) Qb7xa8
- b) c4xd5
- c) Nb1-c3

Score 5 points for c4xd5: this is the next step in White's winning plan. You can have 3 points for Nb1-c3, also a strong move. No points, though, for Qb7xa8, falling into Black's trap and losing the queen to a discovered attack: Bf8-b4+.

9. c4xd5 e6xd5

Choose a move for White:

- a) Qb7xa8
- b) Nb1-c3
- c) Bf1-b5

Score 5 points for Bf1-b5, setting up a powerful pin and winning the game. Still 3 points for Nb1-c3, which should also win, and still no points for Qb7xa8, allowing Bf8-b4+.

10. Bf1-b5 Ra8-b8

Choose a move for White:

- a) Bb5xc6+
- b) Qb7xa7
- c) Qb7xc6+

Score 5 points for Bc5xc6+, which wins the game very quickly. Qb7xc6+ is also winning if you get the next move right, so scores 4 points. Nothing for Qb7xa7: Black can't take the queen because of the pin, but can play Rb8xb5, turning the tables.

11. Bb5xc6+ Qf6xc6

Choose a move for White:

- a) Qb7xb8
- b) Qb7xc6+
- c) Nf3-e5+

Score 5 points for Nf3-e5+, a knight fork winning the queen. There are 2 points for Qb7xc6+, which is still good, but no points for Qb7xb8, when Black can draw: 12... Qc6-c1+ 13. Ke1-e2 Qc1-c4+ and White can't avoid the checks.

12. Nf3-e5+

Black resigned here.

You might think he played badly, but 16 years later Dutchman Max Euwe became world chess champion. So don't give up if you didn't do so well in this test.

Now add up your points.

41-50: master

31-40: expert

21-30: average

11-20: could do better

0-10: better luck next time

GAME 9

In this game you have the white pieces.

Play the moves on the board and try to guess White's next move, starting at move 4.

In each case you have three choices.

1. e2-e4 e7-e5
2. Ng1-f3 Nb8-c6
3. Bf1-b5 Bf8-c5

Choose a move for White:

- a) Nb1-c3
- b) d2-d3
- c) o-o

Score 5 points for o-o, keeping White's options open in the centre. Score 3 points for Nb1-c3 or d2-d3: there's nothing wrong with either move but White has other ideas which give Black more problems.

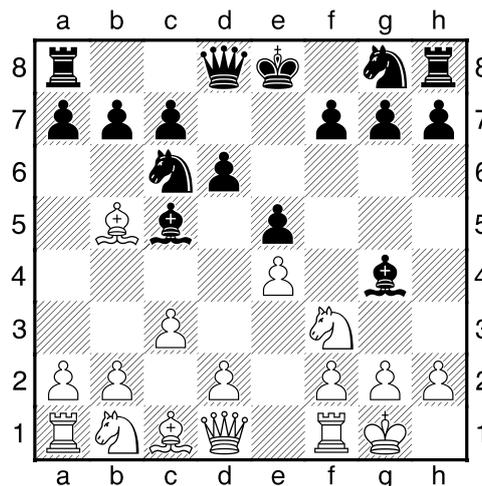
4. o-o d7-d6

Choose a move for White:

- a) Nb1-c3
- b) c2-c3
- c) d2-d3

Score 5 points for c2-c3: White is planning to put two pawns in the centre of the board. The other two options, Nb1-c3 and d2-d3 again score 3 points.

5. c2-c3 Bc8-g4



Choose a move for White:

- a) b2-b4
- b) d2-d4
- c) h2-h3

Score 5 points for d2-d4, which is already a winning move: Black's last move was a mistake. Only 2 points for b2-b4 or h2-h3, not bad in themselves but missing the point.

6. d2-d4 e5xd4

Choose a move for White:

- a) Bb5xc6+
- b) c3xd4
- c) Nf3xd4

Score 5 points for c3xd4, when the black bishop on c5 and knight on c6 are both in trouble, Bc5-b6, for instance, would be met by d4-d5, attacking the pinned knight. You can have 2 points for Bb5xc6+ but nothing for Nf3xd4, moving a pinned piece and losing your queen.

7. c3xd4 Bc5xd4

Choose a move for White:

- a) Bb5xc6+
- b) Qd1xd4
- c) Nf3xd4

Score 5 points for Qd1xd4, which is safe because the knight on c6 is pinned. You also deserve 5 points for Bb5xc6+, which again wins a piece. Nothing, though, for Nf3xd4, which still loses your queen to Bg4xd1.

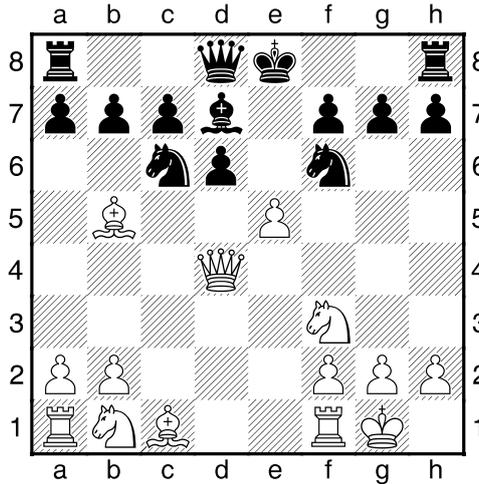
8. Qd1xd4 Ng8-f6

Choose a move for White:

- a) Nb1-c3
- b) Bc1-g5
- c) e4-e5

Score 5 points for e4-e5, an excellent move opening up the position with Black's king still stuck in the centre. Nb1-c3 and Bc1-g5 are both also strong and each score 4 points.

9. e4-e5 Bg4-d7



Choose a move for White:

- a) Bb5xc6
- b) Qd4-c3
- c) e5xf6

Score 5 points for Bb5xc6, winning another piece. You can have 3 points for Qd4-c3, moving the queen to a safe square, but no points for e5xf6, losing the queen as Black's last move unpinned the knight.

10. Bb5xc6 Bd7xc6

Choose a move for White:

- a) Bc1-g5
- b) e5xf6
- c) Rf1-e1

Score 5 points for e5xf6, capturing a knight. There's no reason to play anything else, but Bc1-g5 and Rf1-e1 are both good moves earning 3 points each.

11. e5xf6 g7xf6

Choose a move for White:

- a) Nb1-c3
- b) Bc1-g5
- c) Rf1-e1+

Score 5 points for Rf1-e1+: this check will lead to a quick victory. 4 points for Nb1-c3 or Bc1-g5, which are also strong moves.

12. Rf1-e1+ Ke8-d7

Choose a move for White:

- a) Qd4-e4
- b) Qd4xf6
- c) Qd4-g4+

Score 5 points for Qd4-g4, which will be checkmate next move. No points for Qd4-e4 or Qd4xf6, both careless mistakes losing the queen.

13. Qd4-g4+ f6-f5

14. Qg4xf5#

Now add up your points.

41-50: master

31-40: expert

21-30: average

11-20: could do better

0-10: better luck next time

GAME 10

In this game you have the black pieces.

Play the moves on the board and try to guess Black's next move, starting at move 1.

In each case you have three choices.

1. Nb1-c3

Choose a move for Black:

- a) Nb8-c6
- b) d7-d5
- c) e7-e5

Score 5 points for d7-d5: White has chosen an unusual first move which lets Black put a pawn in the centre. e7-e5 is also excellent and also scores 5 points. 4 points for Nb8-c6 - not bad but there's no reason not to occupy the centre with a pawn.

- 1... d7-d5
- 2. e2-e3

Choose a move for Black:

- a) c7-c5
- b) e7-e5
- c) Ng8-f6

Score 5 points for e7-e5, placing a second pawn in the middle. The other two moves, c7-c5 and Ng8-f6, are equally good and also score 5 points, so you can't go wrong on this question.

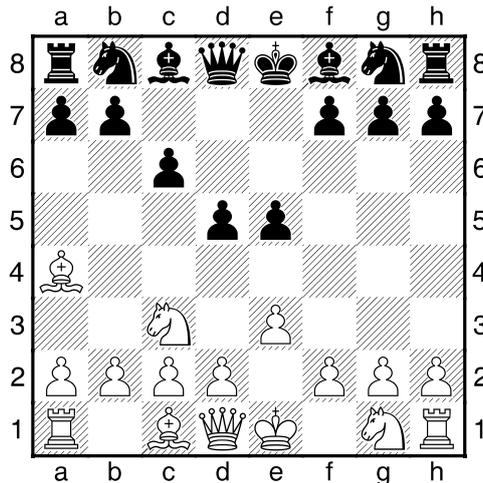
- 2... e7-e5
- 3. Bf1-b5+

Choose a move for Black:

- a) Nb8-c6
- b) c7-c6
- c) Bc8-d7

5 points for c7-c6, forcing White to move the bishop again. Black already has the better position. 3 points for Nb8-c6 or Bc8-d7, both sensible moves.

- 3...c7-c6
- 4. Bb5-a4



Choose a move for Black:

- a) b7-b5
- b) d5-d4
- c) Ng8-f6

Score 5 points for Ng8-f6, an excellent developing move. There are 4 points for b7-b5, hitting the bishop again, and 3 points for d5-d4, not bad but it's better to keep the pawns together at the moment.

- 4...Ng8-f6
- 5. Ng1-f3

Choose a move for Black:

- a) Bc8-g4
- b) e5-e4
- c) Bf8-d6

Score 4 points for Bf8-d6, the move played in the game, another good developing move. Perhaps even stronger was e5-e4, scoring 5 points. Bc8-g4 scores 3 points: White can drive the bishop away with h2-h3.

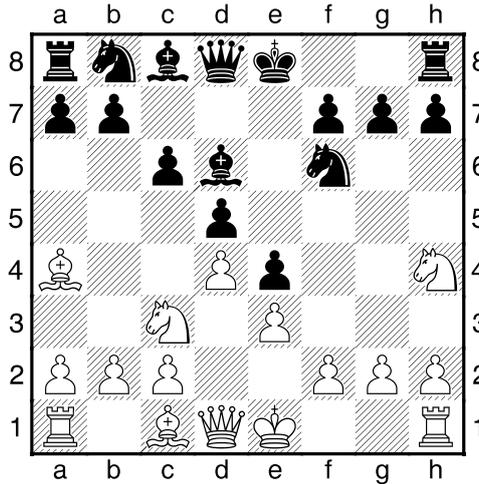
- 5... Bf8-d6
- 6. d2-d4

Choose a move for Black:

- a) e5xd4
- b) e5-e4
- c) 0-0

Score 5 points for e5-e4, gaining space and driving the knight away. There are 2 points for e5xd4, taking the pressure off White's position, but no points for 0-0, losing a piece to d4xe5 with a pawn fork.

- 6... e5-e4
- 7. Nf3-h4



Choose a move for Black:

- a) 0-0
- b) Nf6-g4
- c) g7-g5

Black already has a winning position with many good moves. Score 5 points for g7-g5, which traps the knight and shows that White's last move was a mistake. Score 4 points for 0-0, simple and strong, and 3 points for the move played in the game, Nf6-g4, when White could have defended with g2-g3.

- 7... Nf6-g4
- 8. 0-0

Choose a move for Black:

- a) Bd6xh2+
- b) Qd8-h4
- c) 0-0

Score 5 points for Bd6xh2+, which is the quickest way to win, meeting Kg1-h1 with Qd8xh4 followed by a discovered check. The move played in the game was Qd8xh4, which also wins easily and scores 4 points. You can have 3 points for 0-0, which is still winning but fails to capture the knight.

- 8... Qd8xh4
- 9. Rf1-e1

Choose a move for Black:

- a) Bd6xh2+
- b) Qh4xf2+
- c) Qh4xh2+

Score 5 points for Bd6xh2+, the quickest way to force checkmate. 4 points for Qh4xf2+ which takes a few moves longer to get checkmate, and 3 points for Qh4xh2+, which allows the white king to escape.

9... Bd6xh2+
10. Kg1-h1

Choose a move for Black:

- a) Ng4xf2+
- b) Qh4xf2
- c) Bh2-d6+

Score 5 points for Ng4xf2+: nothing can beat a checkmate. Bh2-d6+ is a discovered check leading to a quick checkmate and worth 4 points. There are 2 points for Qh4xf2: still winning but not forcing checkmate.

10... Ng4xf2#

Now add up your points.

41-50: master

31-40: expert

21-30: average

11-20: could do better

0-10: better luck next time

CONCLUSION

Understanding everything in this book won't make you a strong player, but it will give you a basic understanding of chess which will enable you to enjoy games much more than if you were just playing random moves.

Young children who understand everything here will be able to join and do well in primary school chess clubs and take part successfully in chess competitions against children of their own age.

You may well decide you've learnt as much as you want: you're happy to be able to play games against your family and friends. That's absolutely fine, but if you want to become a competitive player, to be able to join an external chess club, to play in matches against other clubs, to take part in adult level tournaments, or just to make new friends through chess, you'll need to do a lot more.

If you want to take the game further, you'll need to read the next four Chess Heroes books. There's a certain amount of duplication at the start of each book, because some readers haven't studied this course first. Each volume is based on cumulative learning, so you need to start at the beginning, but the four books are best read in parallel.

Checkmates for Heroes teaches you how to be really good at spotting checkmates in your games. There are many puzzles to solve, starting easy and gradually getting harder.

Chess Tactics for Heroes is about how to win your opponents' pieces, using the ideas you've seen in the second module and taking them further. Again, there are many puzzles for you to solve, increasing in difficulty as the book progresses.

Chess Openings for Heroes shows you the best way to start your games: how to find good squares for your pieces at the start of the game, and how to spot tactical opportunities right at the start of the game. You'll then learn a bit about some of the most popular openings.

Chess Endings for Heroes will instruct you about how to finish your game successfully when there are few pieces on the board. You learnt some of this in the first module of this book, but there's a lot more to endings than that.

Completing these books will make you a pretty strong player, but there are two further books as well to take you even further.

Chess Puzzles for Heroes is a puzzle book enabling readers to use the ideas from the previous volumes as well as learning different styles of thinking required to achieve higher level chess success.

Chess Games for Heroes (scheduled for publication later in 2022) uses the concept of the third module here, but with longer and more complicated games, as well as questions where you have a free choice of moves rather than a multiple choice question.

Further volumes of both books may appear in due course.