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**THE ENGLISH CHESS
FEDERATION CERTIFICATE OF
MERIT**

Level One





This booklet serves as a basic introduction to chess. Keep as your guide and ready reference. The topics are listed in the contents along with their appropriate page number.

All diagrams assume that the person with the white pieces is at the bottom of the diagrammed board. Black is at the top.

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C O N T E N T

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ONCE UPON A TIME THESE WORLD CHESS CHAMPIONS WERE BEGINNERS!



Emanuel Lasker (L) and Wilhelm Steinitz, world champions between 1886 and 1921!

Boris Spassky (1969) talking to Mikhail Tal (1960), world champions with Candidate Challenger Lajos Portisch in the background.



Bobby Fischer, a champion who rose to the top and who beat all his challengers without the aid of a computer or a team of analysts.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to this booklet, which introduces the basic rules of chess.

We will try to make it as easy as possible for you to learn the rules, so that you can start playing and enjoying chess.

The ECF Certificate of Excellence has been designed to help you become a good and then excellent player. This booklet covers the Merit Level One Syllabus.

At the end of the booklet we will take you through a sample exam. You should try to do this on your own before checking the answers which we will supply. You will then be ready to take and pass the actual exam and move on to Level Two, which will be covered separately.

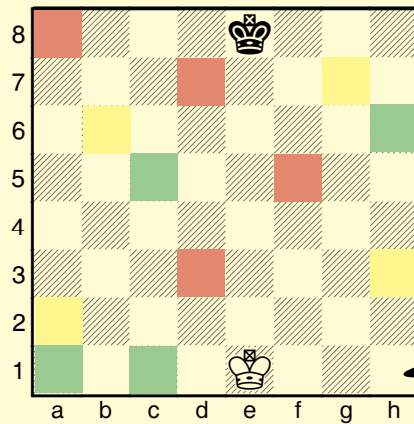
Best of luck and remember that chess is a fun game!

Andrew Martin
ECF Manager of Coaching
International Master



Your understanding of chess will become clear as crystal by the time you have finished reading this booklet.

THE CHESSBOARD



Here we see the chessboard. The chessboard has 64 squares, 32 of which are 'light' and 32 of which are 'dark.'

Note that a white corner square should always lie on White's RIGHT HAND. Hence the saying: 'White on the right!'

Each square has a number and a letter attached to it. This helps us when we want to read chess books or magazines and when we want to record our own games! The system is meant to be as easy as possible to understand.

Thus the green coloured squares are, in turn: a1, c1, c5 and h6.

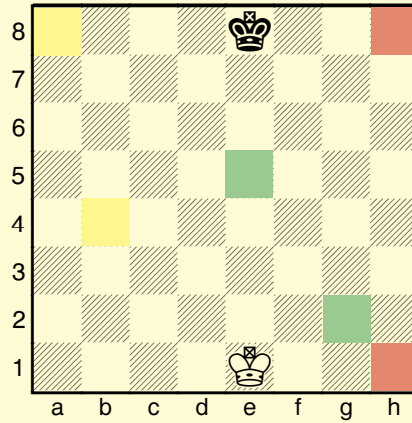
The yellow-coloured squares are: a2, b6, g7 and h3.

Finally the red squares in the above example are: a8, d3, d7 and f5.

We need some practice recognizing squares before we go on.

COLOUR QUIZ

Can you name the coloured squares?



QUIZ Question:

Answer:

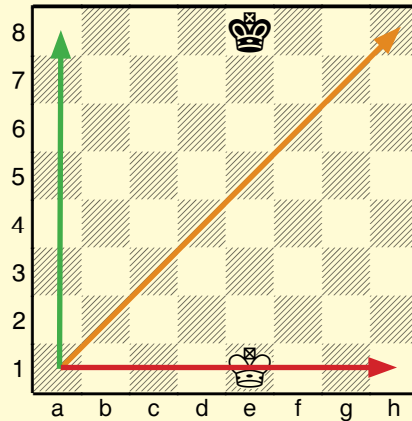
Yellow a8 ,b4

Green e5, g2

Red h1, h8

If you are not sure about this, have another go until you have mastered the idea. I'm sure you will pick it up quickly.

CHESSBOARD COORDINATES



The chessboard is made up out of:

RANKS

FILES

DIAGONALS

Ranks run HORIZONTALLY and an example is marked by the RED arrow.

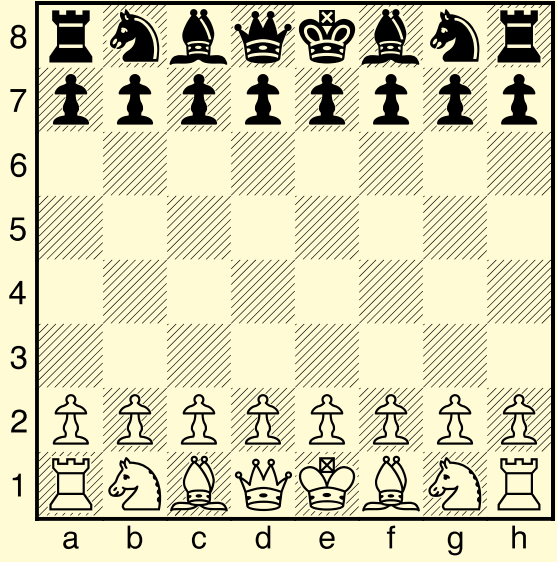
FILES run VERTICALLY and an example is marked by the GREEN arrow.

DIAGONALS run diagonally and an example is marked by the ORANGE arrow.

We talk about files using the letters so you can have an 'a' file, a 'b' file, etc.

We talk about ranks using numbers and so each player has a first, second, third rank etc.

THE PIECES AND THEIR MOVES

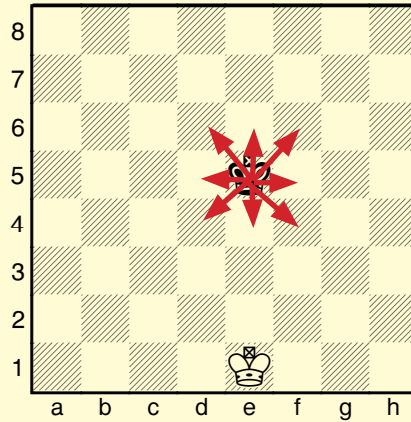


You may feel lost in a thicket of explanations and moves like our friend above, but study the diagrams and carefully read the text and it will make sense. Really.



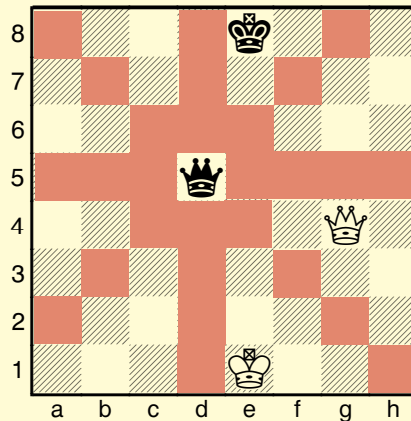
The King and Queen.

THE KING



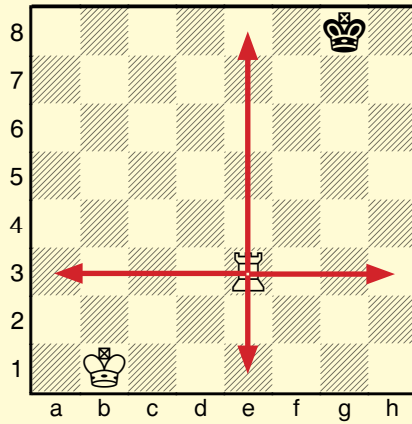
The King moves one square in any direction. The King is a slow-moving piece. **The King may not move into check.** Check is a direct attack by an enemy piece on the King. The King is your MOST IMPORTANT PIECE. The moves of the King are illustrated in the diagram.

THE QUEEN



The Queen is your STRONGEST PIECE. The Queen moves any number of squares forward, backward, sideways, and diagonally. The Queen cannot jump over other pieces. The Queen is an awesome, attacking piece. The possible squares that the black Queen can move to are illustrated in the diagram. From the centre of the board, she can move almost anywhere!

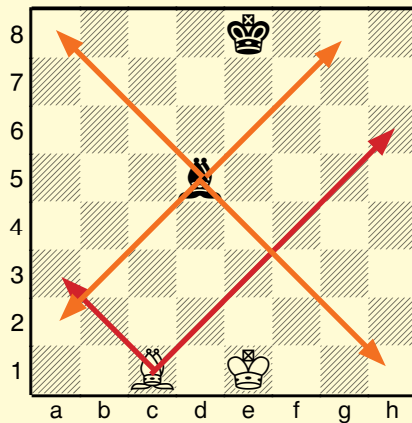
THE ROOK



The second most powerful piece on the board is the Rook.

The Rook is the second strongest chess piece. The Rook moves in straight lines, horizontally and vertically any number of squares. The Rook cannot jump over other pieces and dislikes obstacles in his way. The squares that the Rook can move to in the current position are marked by red arrows.

THE BISHOP



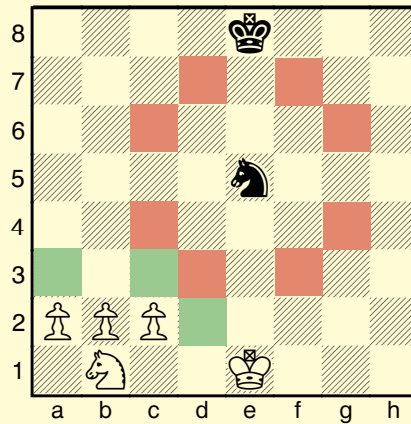
The Bishop only moves diagonally.

The Bishop moves **DIAGONALLY**. Each player has two Bishops. One patrols the light squares and the other the dark squares. The Bishop stays on its own colour square throughout the game. The Bishop is a mobile piece but cannot jump over the other pieces. The Bishop does not like to be obstructed. Bishop moves in the current position are clearly marked.

THE KNIGHT



The Knight's manoeuvre's may look eccentric—don't let that fool you.

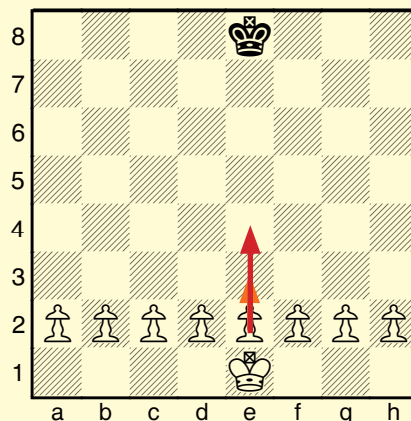


The Knight moves in an L-shape. The Knight can move in any direction. The Knight changes colour squares as he moves. Keep in mind the numbers one and two or two and one. These are the number of squares that he moves. **The Knight is the only chess piece that can jump over other pieces.** Thus the moves of the white Knight are marked in the diagram. As you can see, he can jump over the pawns. The Knight is excellent in the centre of the board, less good on the side. As you can see the black Knight controls and can move to eight different squares.



Pawns, the foot soldiers of chess, are valuable. Don't pitch them away for nothing.

THE PAWN

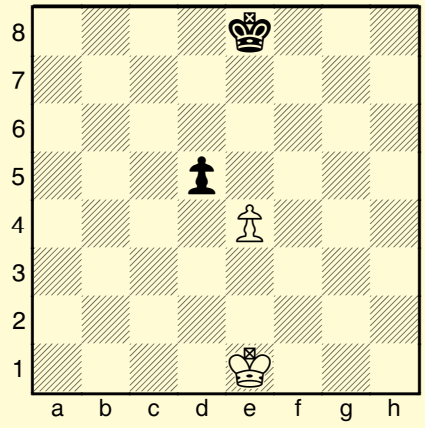


The pawn is the humble footsoldier of chess and yet he has a most important role to play.

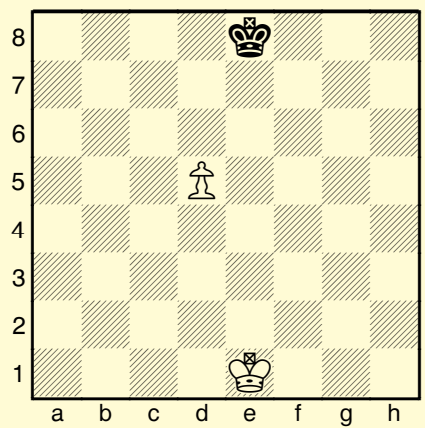
Rules for the pawn: The pawn can move one or two squares on the first move ONLY. After the first move the pawn only moves one square forward at a time. **The pawn only moves forward.** The pawn captures DIAGONALLY.

SPECIAL RULES

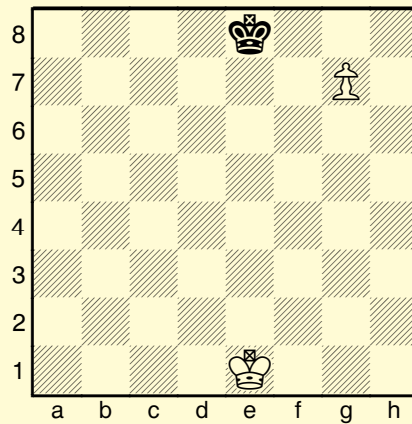
THE PAWN CAPTURE



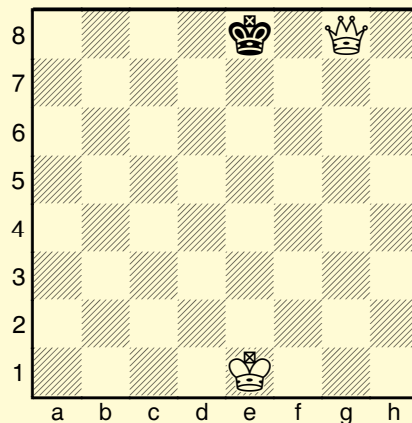
If it is White to move he can capture the black pawn. **1.exd5**



PAWN PROMOTION 1



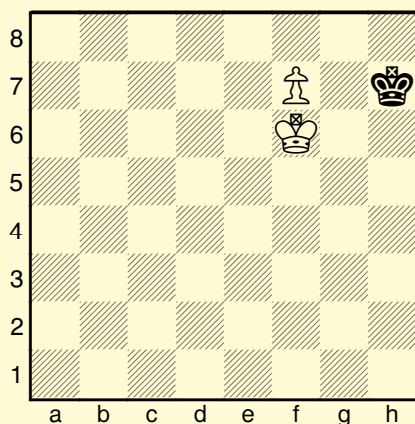
When a pawn reaches the other end of the board it changes shape and form. The pawn PROMOTES into a piece of one's choice. Normally one would take a new Queen: **1.g8Q+**



It's quite difficult to get a pawn all the way up the board without getting taken, but sometimes you will be able to do that. You can have more than one Queen on the board as pawns begin to "queen."

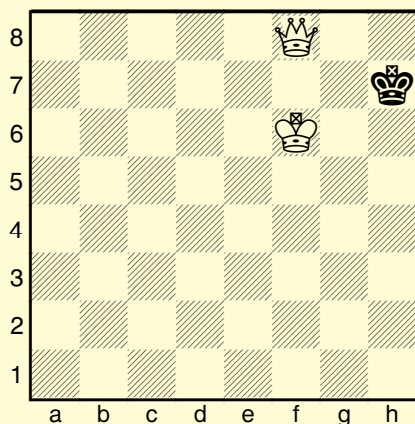
In fact, you could make the "queened pawn" a Rook, Bishop, or Knight of your colour.

PAWN PROMOTION 2



Sometimes it's important not to take a Queen. Look what happens here!
1.f8Q??

Checkmates quickly: **1...Kh6 2.Rh8#**

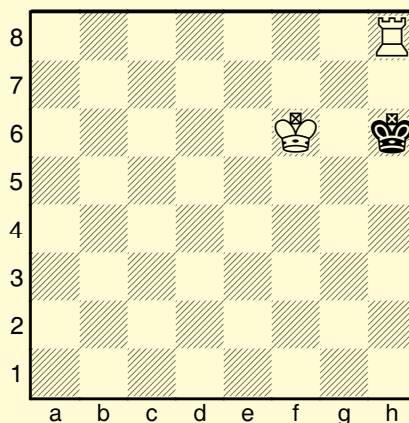


STALEMATE!

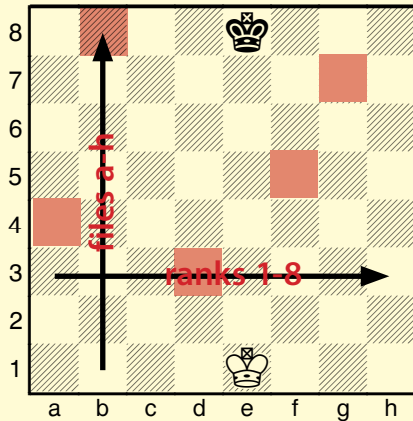
Don't let this happen to you.

Instead **1.f8R!**

See next diagram.



CHESS NOTATION



ranks (horizontal: 1-8)

files (vertical: a-h)

diagonals (45° angle)

Every square has a name on the chessboard. The Ranks are HORIZONTAL and numbered 1 to 8. The Files are VERTICAL and given the letters "a" to "h."

In order to find the name of each square, join the letter and number together. Thus the red squares marked are, in order: a4, b8, d3, f5, g7.

The pieces are identified by their first letter:

K = King

Q = Queen

R = Rook

B = Bishop

N = Knight (can't use "K" again!)

For pawn moves we **only** use the name of the square the pawn goes to.

Other symbols used are:

0-0 = Castles Kingside

0-0-0 = Castles Queenside.

e.p. = en passant

+ = Check

= Checkmate

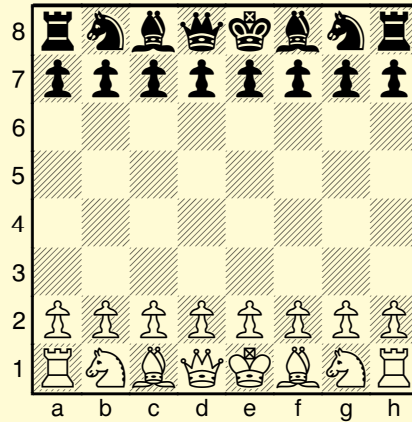
x = Capture

!/? = Good/Bad move

!!/?? = Brilliant/Horrible move.

Now get your chessboard out and try to follow this simple game.

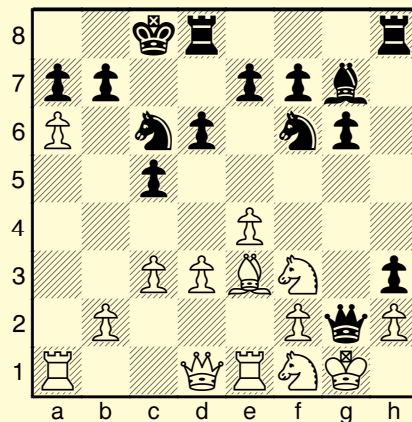
EXAMPLE



- 1.e4 We could also write e2-e4.
- 1...c5 and ...c7-c5.
- 2.Nf3 or Ng1-f3.
- 2...d6 ...d7-d6
- 3.Bb5+ Bf1-b5+
- 3...Bd7 Bc8-d7 and so on.

The second form of notation is called LONG ALGEBRAIC NOTATION. usually we try to shorten the notation as much as possible, so as to make the actual writing of the game simple.

- 4.Bxd7+ Qxd7 5.0-0 Nf6 6.d3 g6
- 7.Re1 Bg7 8.c3 Nc6 9.Nbd2 0-0-0 10.a4 h5
- 11.Nf1 h4 12.a5 Qg4 13.Be3 h3 14.a6 Qxg2#



How did you get on? The finishing position on your board should be the same as the diagram.

CHECK AND CHECKMATE

The term 'check' describes a direct attack on the King. The average chess game usually contains many 'checking' moves.

If the King is attacked, the King must get OUT OF CHECK. There are three ways to get out of check.

1) The King simply moves to another square where he is not in check.

2) The piece that is giving check is TAKEN.

3) The check may be BLOCKED.

If the King cannot move out of check, it is CHECKMATE , the end of the game!

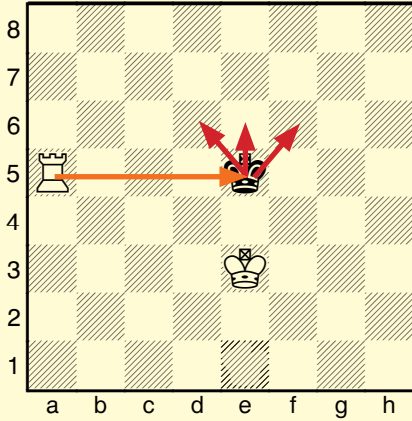
CHECKMATE is the ultimate aim of the game of chess.

CHECKMATE is the most important idea a young player can learn about. Let us examine the ideas of check and checkmate in a bit more detail.



If you aren't careful you could end in a fragile position, like the glass King pictured. Learn the checkmates and watch for them.

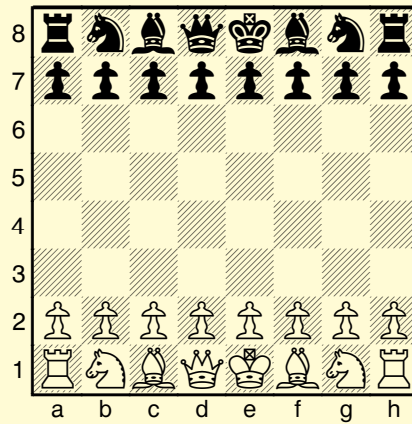
CHECK ONE



In the following diagram the black King is in CHECK from the white Rook. This is not dangerous as yet because the black King can move out of check, as indicated.

CHECK TWO

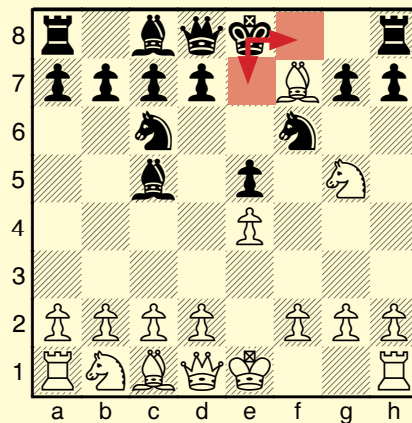
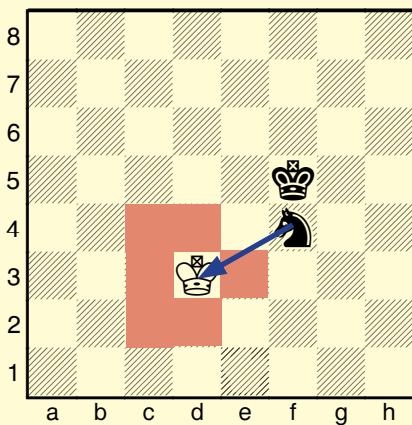
A game begins:



1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.Ng5 Bc5 5.Bxf7+

CHECK THREE

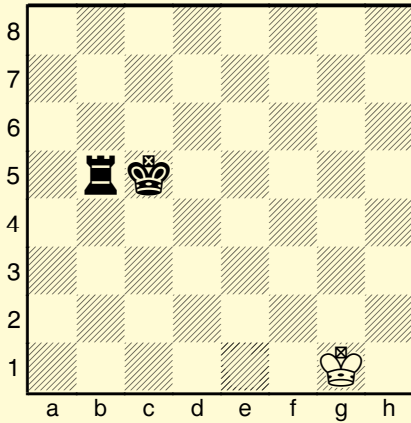
White is being checked by the black Knight. White's King MUST MOVE OUT OF CHECK.



Black is in check from White's Bishop. He is a little uncomfortable here and only has two squares to move to.

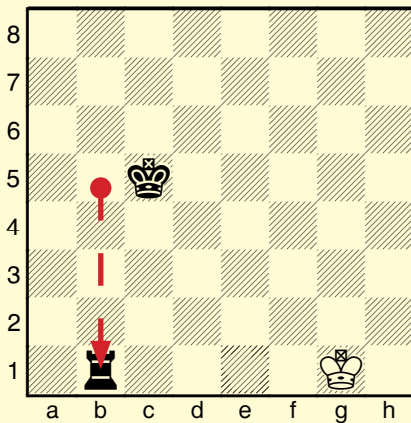
CHECKING PRACTICE

CHECK PRACTICE ONE



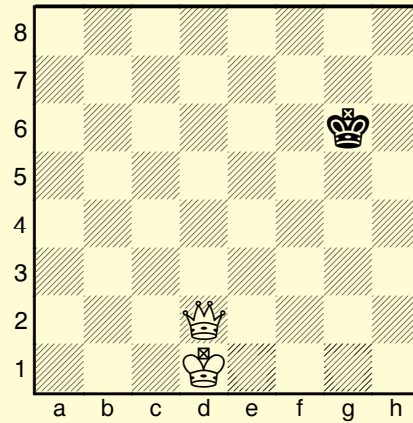
Now I would like you to find a move for Black which puts White in check.

1...Rb1+!



I hope you found this excellent move by Black's Rook.

CHECK PRACTICE TWO



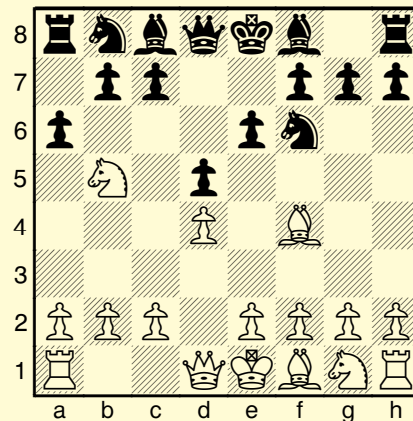
Find at least three different ways for the white Queen to check the black King.

Your Answer:

- A.
- B.
- C.

CHECK PRACTICE THREE

1.d4 Nf6 2.Bf4 d5 3.Nc3 e6 4.Nb5 a6



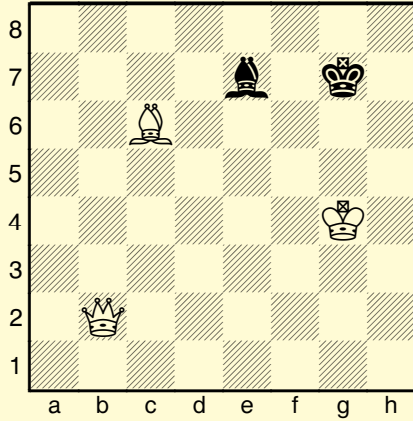
The white Knight can check Black's King. How many times?

5.Nxc7+

5.Nd6+ TWICE is the correct answer.

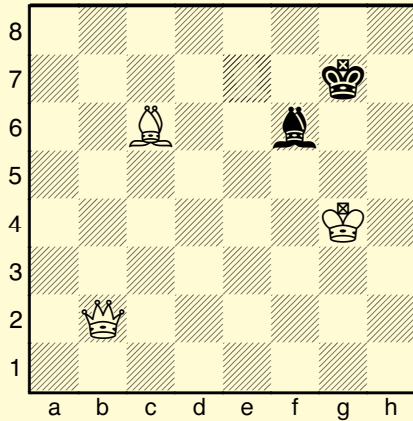
GETTING OUT OF CHECK

BLOCKING THE CHECK



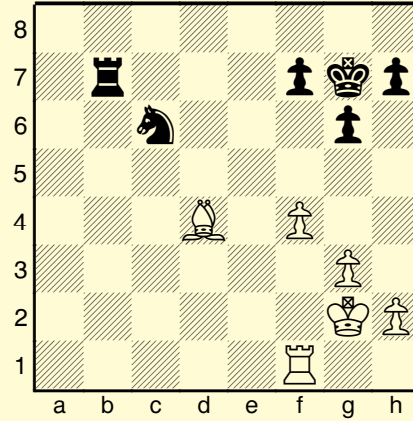
Black is in check from the white Queen. He **BLOCKS** the check.

1...Bf6



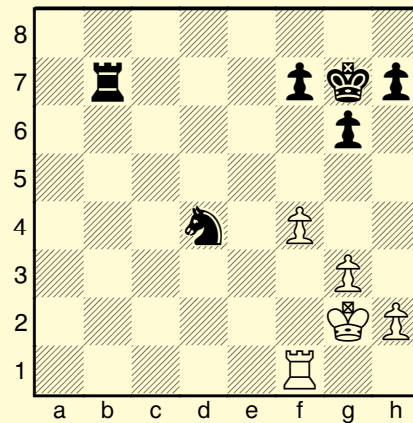
The game continues.

CAPTURING THE CHECKING PIECE



White has just put Black in check using his Bishop. This is no big deal. Black just **CAPTURES** the Bishop: **1...Nxd4!**

Look out for **CAPTURES** in your own games, particularly when you are in check.

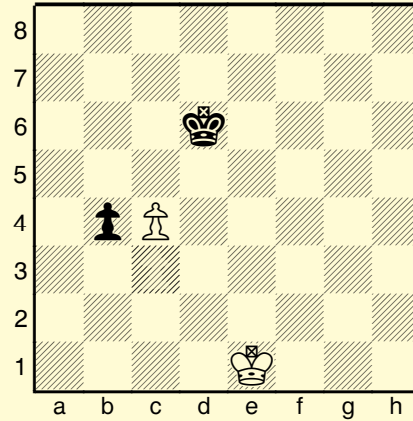


SPECIAL MOVES

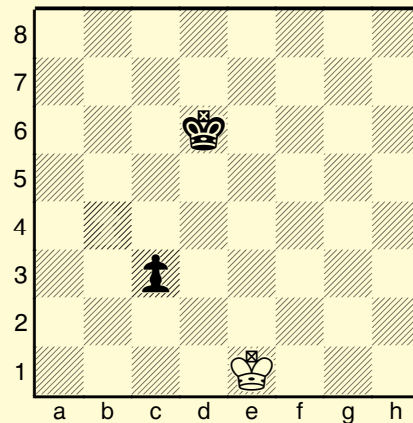
EN PASSANT

This is a special move involving pawns. In the earliest form of chess the pawns could only move one square at a time and so to speed the game up the rule of two squares forward on the first move was introduced. However, in order that a pawn should not be able to avoid an enemy pawn by means of the double move, 'en passant' was also introduced.

En passant describes a situation where a pawn moves forward two squares from the initial position, past an enemy pawn on the fifth rank. The enemy pawn may then choose whether to capture "en passant" (pronounced: on pah-san) or not. And, can only capture ON THAT MOVE, AT THAT TIME. Let's illustrate.

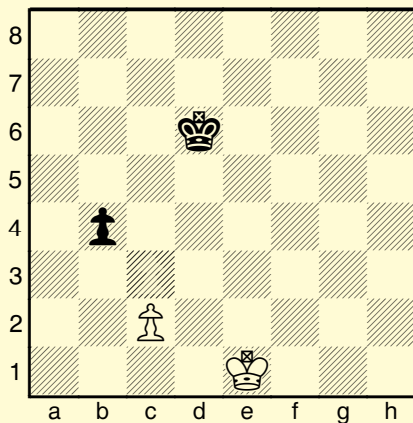


Black may capture en passant:
1...bxc3



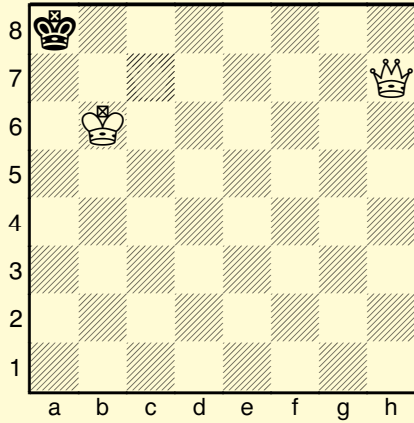
Like this. Note that a pawn can only be captured en passant by another pawn and not by a piece.

Note also that Black had a choice: HE DID NOT HAVE TO TAKE EN PASSANT IF HE DID NOT WISH TO.



Suppose in the diagram White plays.
 1.c4.

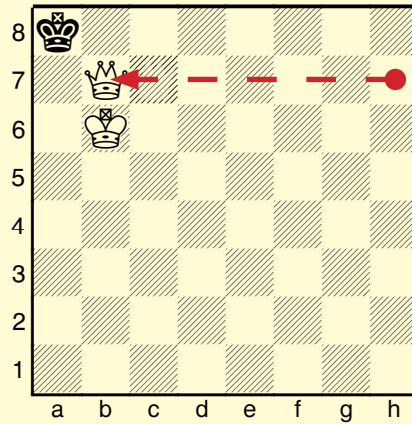
STALEMATE



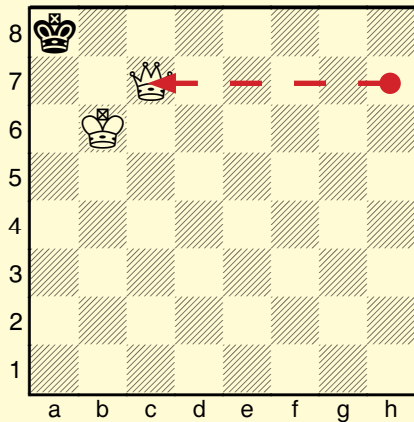
Stalemate is where the player TO MOVE has no legal moves left. Here White is winning easily but if he plays **1.Qc7??** Black's King is stalemated.

Stalemate means that the game ends in a draw. $\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}$

Instead **1.Qb7#** would have been CHECKMATE, a big difference.



CHECKMATE INSTEAD!

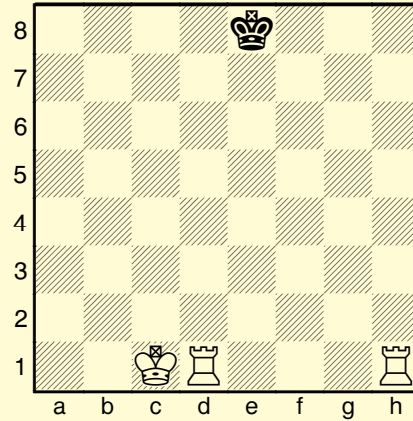
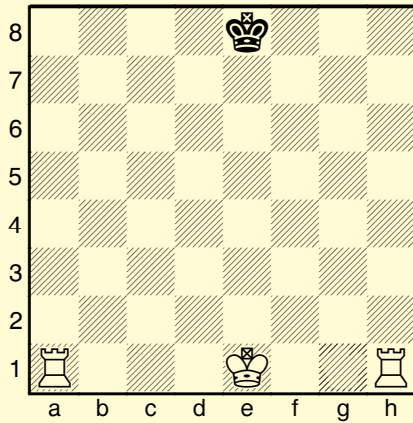


In this position, any move by the black King would put his King in check.

Stalemate crops up all the time in games between beginners through simply overlooking that the possibility exists.

MORE SPECIAL MOVES

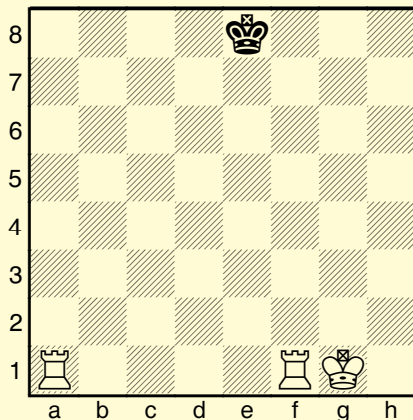
CASTLING



Castling is a special move which each player can play ONCE in a game. Castling brings the King to safety and introduces a Rook into the game.

The King always goes TWO SQUARES to the right or left and the Rook JUMPS OVER the King.

1.0-0



White castled on the King's side. The "Kingside" is so described due to the starting position of the King. IF

1.0-0-0

then White is said to have castled on the Queen's side. The "Queenside" is the side of the board where the Queen stands at the beginning of the game.

RULES FOR CASTLING

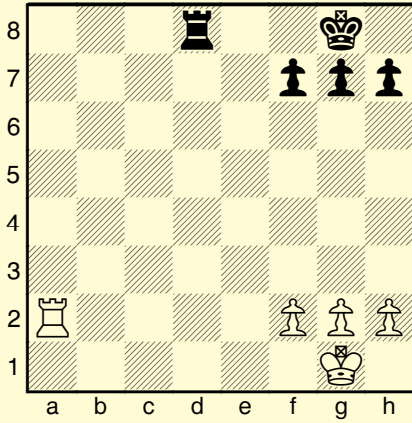
Here are the important things you should know about castling:

- 1) Only the King and a Rook are involved;
- 2) There must be no other pieces between them on the first (for White) or eighth rank (for Black);
- 3) Neither the King nor Rook should have moved beforehand;
- 4) The King cannot castle INTO CHECK.
- 5) The King cannot castle THROUGH CHECK;
- 6) The King cannot castle OUT OF CHECK.

It sounds complicated but you will soon get used to it. All good players castle in their games, giving their King added protection.

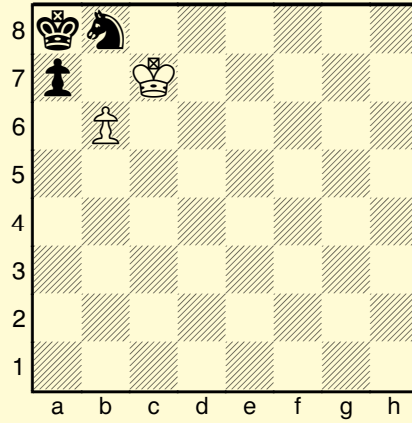
DIFFERENT FORMS OF CHECKMATE

BACK RANK MATE

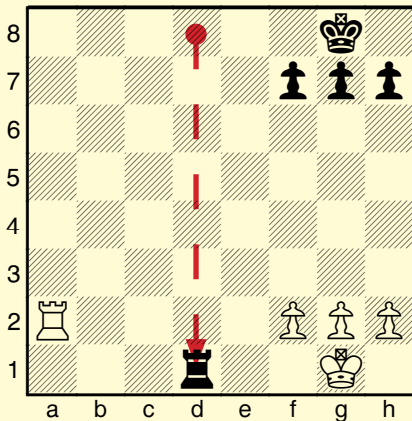


Black plays and checkmates White in one move. **1...Rd1#**

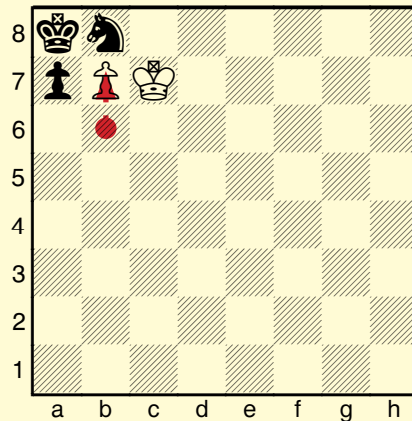
PAWN CHECKMATE



White checkmates in one move with the humble pawn. **1.b7#**



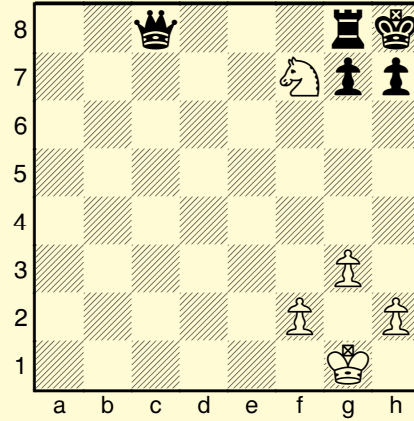
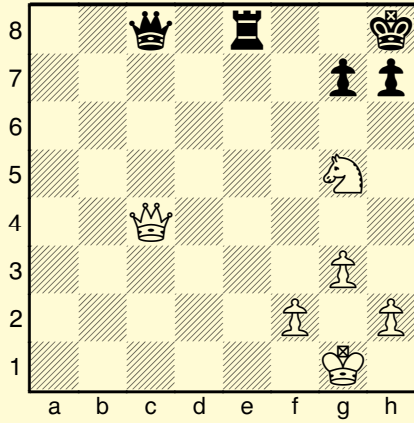
This is called a BACK-RANK MATE. It is very common.



From this example we see that any piece or pawn on the board can deliver checkmate, with the exception of the King.

DIFFERENT CHECKMATES CONTINUED

SMOTHERED MATE



Once experienced, never forgotten.

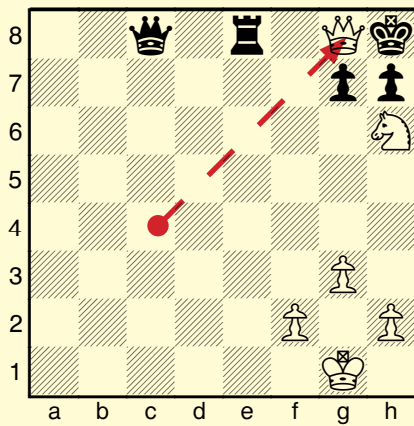
Here White has a chance to execute a beautiful 'smothered' mate: **1.Nf7+ Kg8**
2.Nh6+

Double Check. Very strong.

2...Kh8

If 2...Kf8 3.Qf7# is already checkmate.

3.Qg8+!!

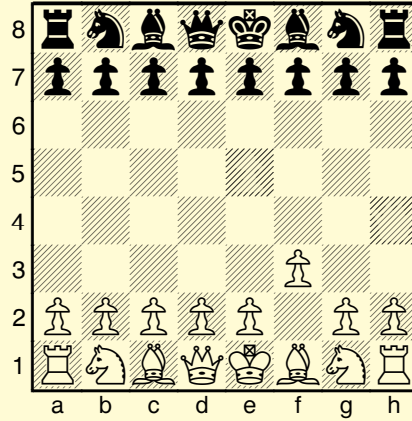


A superb move. Black must take the Queen. **3...Rxf8 4.Nf7#**

SNAP MATE IN THE OPENING

FOOL'S MATE

There now follows the shortest game of chess possible.



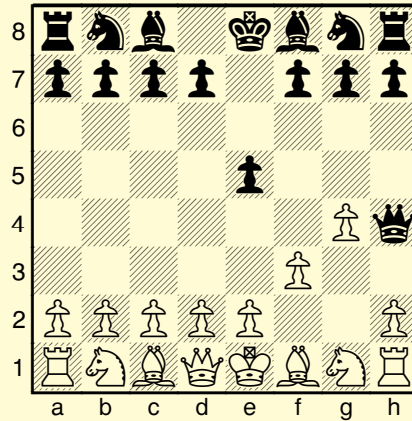
1.f3

An awful move. White blocks in his Knight and weakens his King position.

1...e5 2.g4??

Even worse.

2...Qh4#



CHECKMATE!



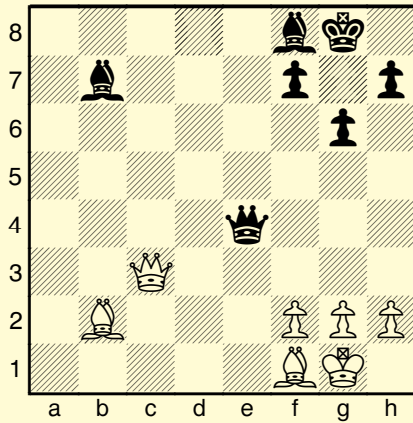
Don't let this happen to you!

Don't weaken your Kingside in the opening!

Checkmate Quiz

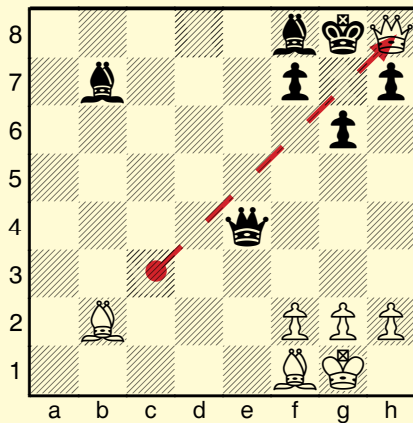
Now it's your turn. Find the mating moves.

QUIZ ONE



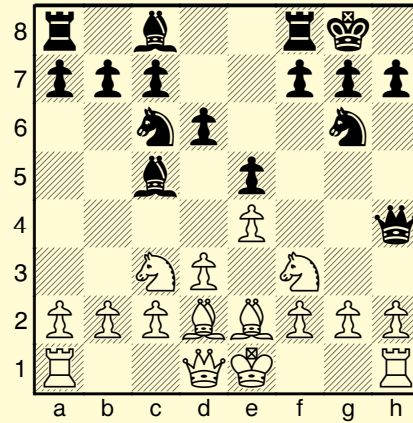
White to play and mate in one.

1.Qh8#



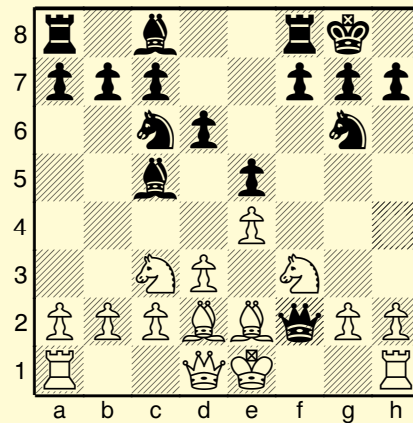
The Queen on h8 cannot be captured because it is protected by the Bishop on b2. Note that 1.Qg7 would NOT be checkmate, as Black could then TAKE the white Queen with his Bishop on f8.

QUIZ TWO

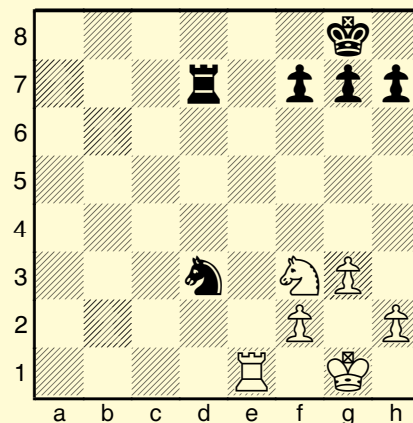


Black to play and mate in one.

1...Qxf2#



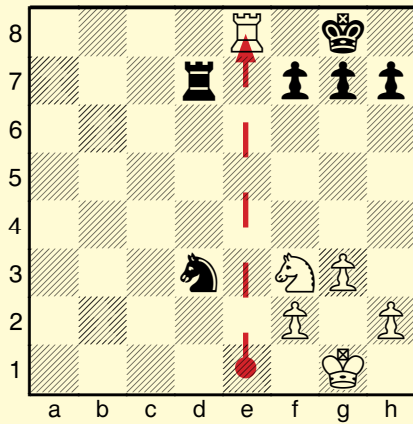
QUIZ THREE



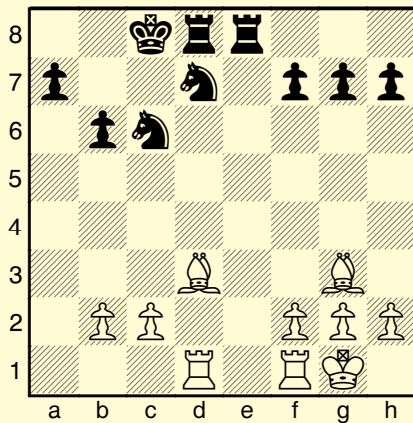
(continued from page 28)

White to play and mate in one.

1.Re8#

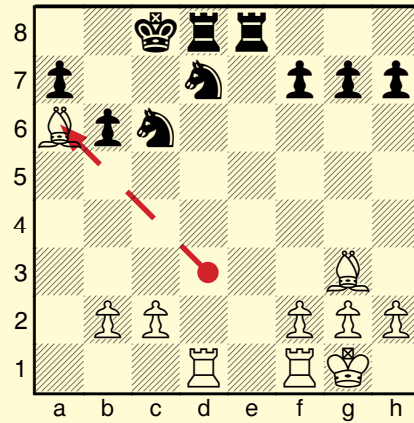


QUIZ FOUR

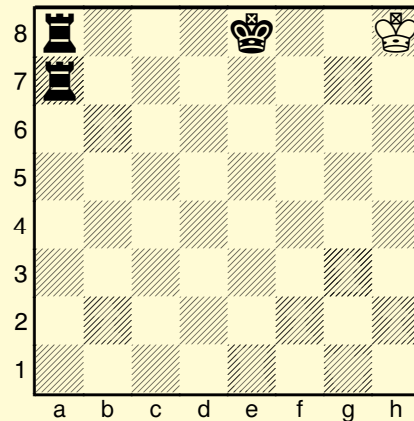


White plays and mates in one move.

1.Ba6#



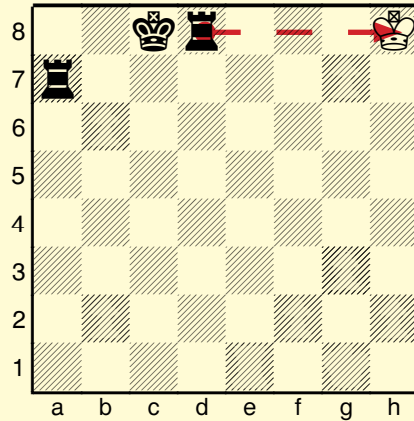
QUIZ FIVE



A tricky position. Black to play and mate in one.

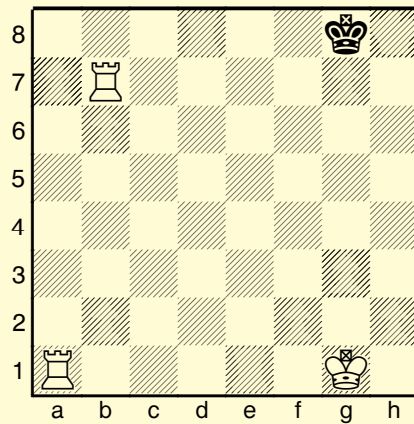
1...0-0-0#

See final diagram of Quiz 5 on next page.



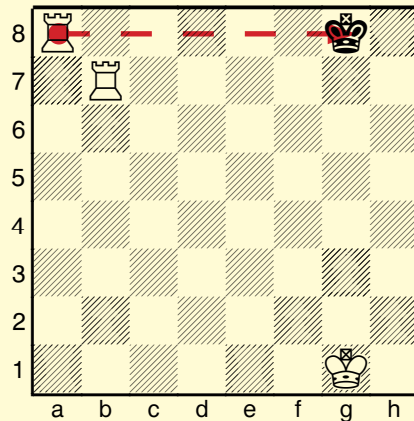
Consider yourself an expert solver if you got that one!

QUIZ SIX

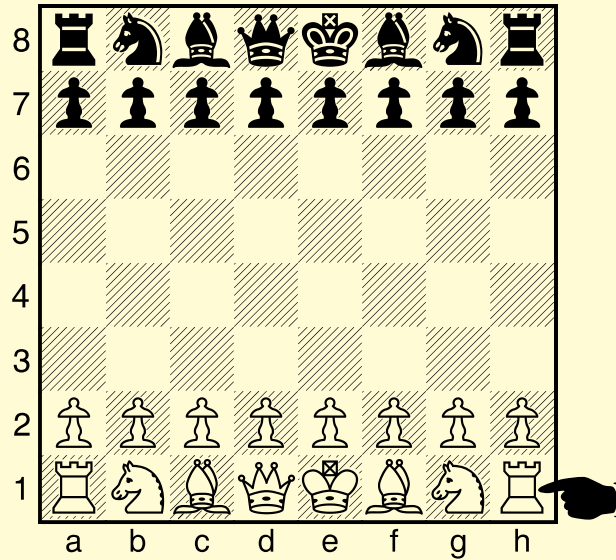


This is a very useful example as it features a mate which crops up time and again. White plays and mates in one.

1.Ra8#



STARTING POSITION



Here is the starting position for a game of chess. Note the white square h1 on White's RIGHT HAND.' White on the right! The Queen "sits" on her own colour square.



Everyone is busy at the beginning!

ENDING THE GAME

OTHER WAYS IN WHICH A GAME CAN END

We've already seen that a chess game can end in CHECKMATE or STALEMATE.

There are other ways too:

1) One or other player RESIGNS the game and loses immediately. Your position should be hopeless before you resign. In general, all young players should fight on until checkmate, however strong players resign in totally lost positions in order to show respect to the opponent.

2) A game can be DRAWN. This can happen in several ways:

2a) The two players AGREE to draw the game.

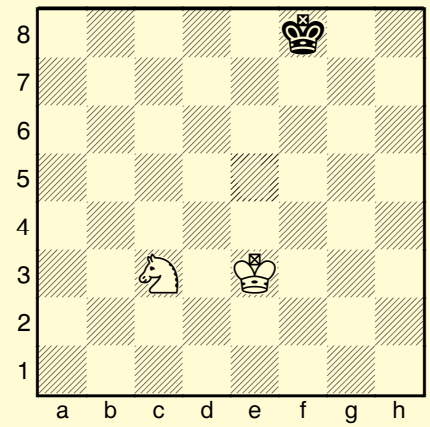
2b) Neither player has enough MATERIAL left to checkmate.

2c) Fifty moves have gone by without a PAWN BEING MOVED or a PIECE BEING TAKEN. This is very rare.

3) If the players are using a chess clock, a LOSS ON TIME can occur. In a timed game, both players have a set number of moves to make in a set amount of time. If they don't make those moves, they LOSE ON TIME.

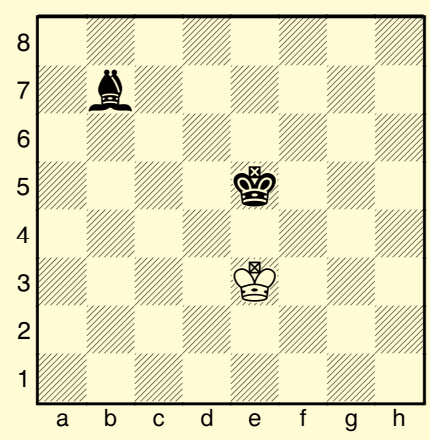
DRAWS

GAME ONE



The game is drawn. White cannot checkmate with a lone Knight.

GAME TWO



Another drawn position. Black cannot checkmate with only a Bishop. The white King simply stays on the dark squares, keeping out of range

SPECIMEN TEST

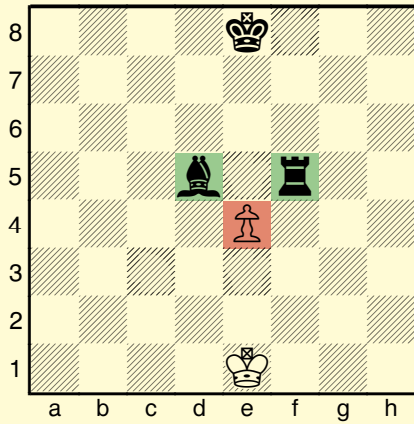
Let's now take a test and see what you have learned so far. Check your answers at the end and see if you passed. You need to get 18 out of the 20 questions right to pass.

The quizzes begin on page 35.



A little focused concentration and you will do well on this "specimen test."

Q1

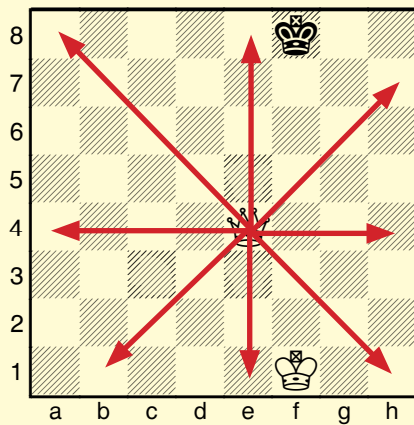


It's White to move. How many Black pieces are under attack from the White pawn?

Q1 ANSWER

Two. The Rook on f5 and the Bishop on d5.

Q2

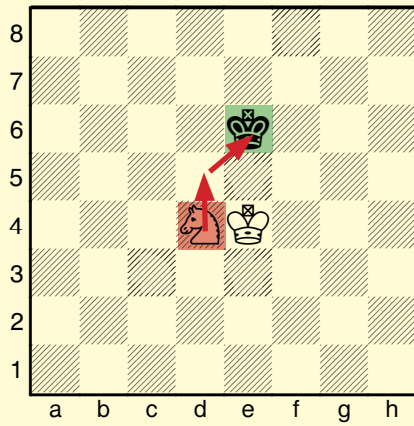


How many squares is the white Queen controlling?

Q2 ANSWER

27 and they are all marked in RED.

Q3

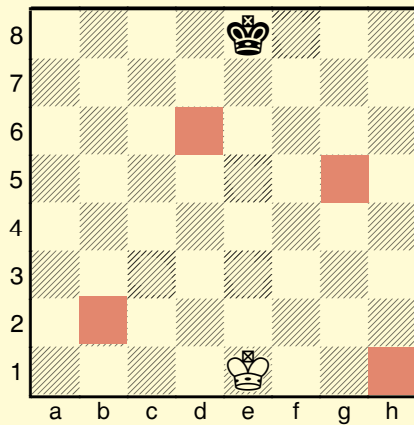


Is the black King in check?

Q3 ANSWER

Yes, by the N on d4.

Q4

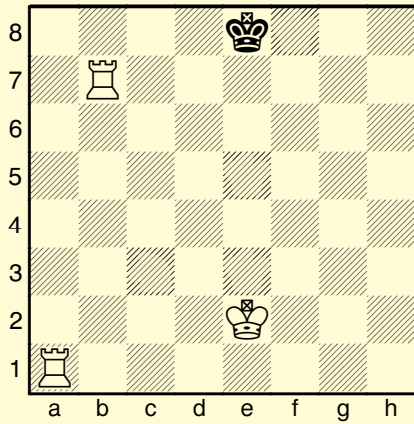


The squares marked in RED are b2, d6, g5 and h1. True or False?

Q4 ANSWER

True.

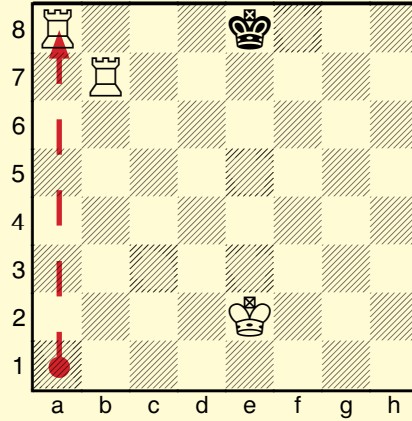
Q5



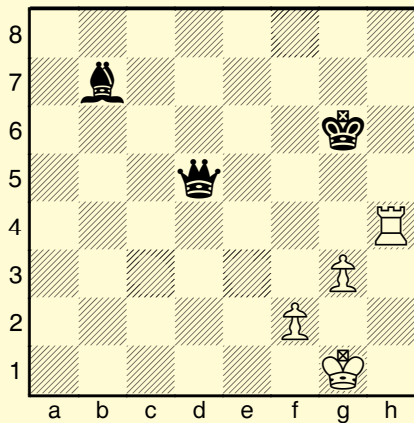
White to play and mate in one move.

Q5 ANSWER

1.Ra8#!



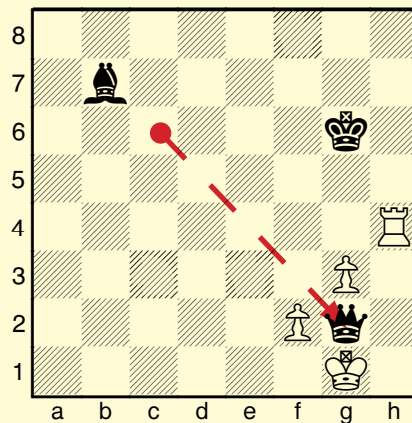
Q6



Black to play and checkmate White in ONE move.

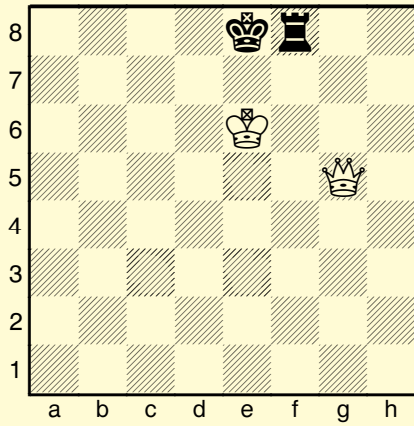
Q6 ANSWER

1...Qg2#



A neat checkmate where the black Queen was PROTECTED by the Bishop on b7.

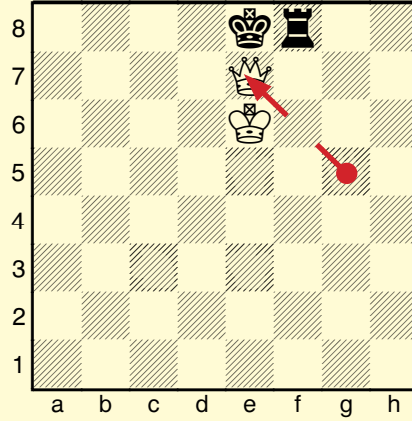
Q7



White to play and checkmate in one move.

Q7 ANSWER

1.Qe7#



Q8

Which is the most powerful piece on the chessboard?

Q8 ANSWER

The QUEEN.

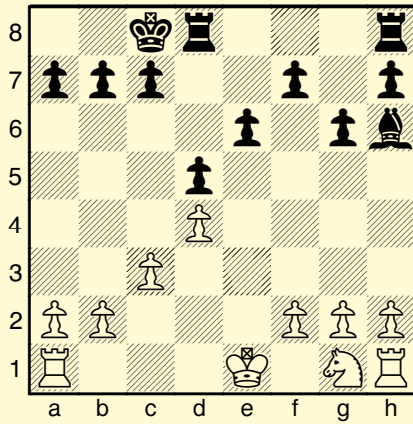
Q9

Which is the most important piece on the chessboard?

Q9

The KING. Don't forget the King CANNOT BE TAKEN, but if he is CHECKMATED, the game is over.

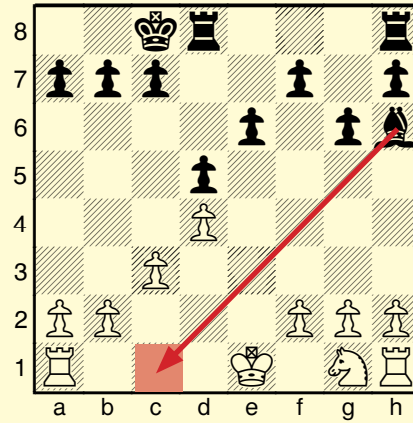
Q10



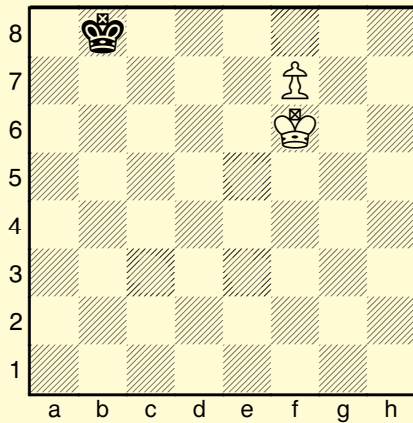
Can White CASTLE QUEENSIDE in this position?

Q10 ANSWER

NO! His King would move into CHECK on c1 from the Black Bishop on h6.



Q11

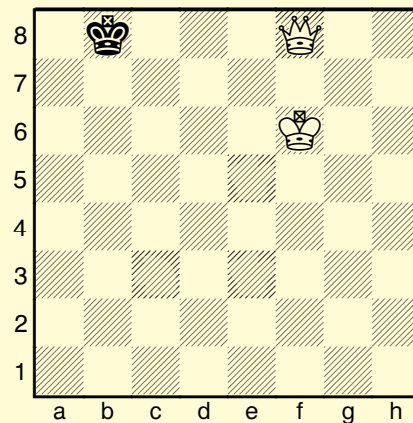


A pawn PROMOTES when it reaches the other end of the board . Which piece should the pawn normally promote to?

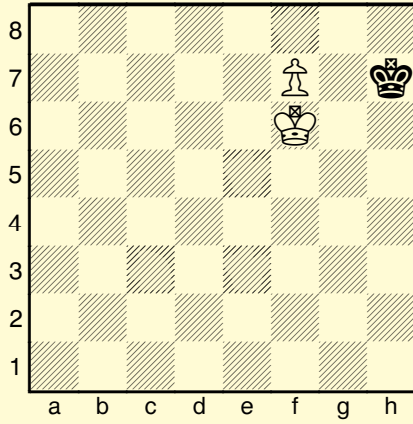
Q11 ANSWER

The QUEEN in 99 cases out of 100. Why not get an extra Queen, which can help you to win the game quickly and easily?

1.f8Q+

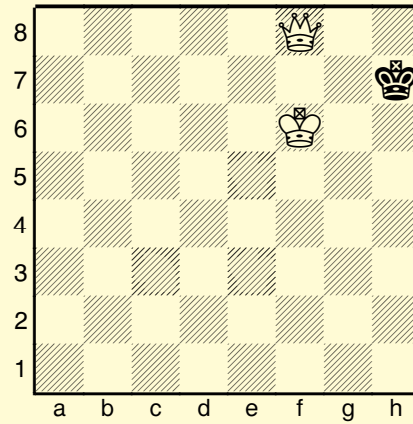


Q12



What happens if White promotes to a Queen?

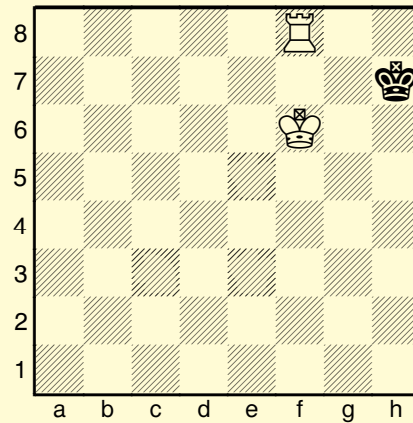
Q12 ANSWER



1.f8Q??

A terrible mistake, when the game would end in STALEMATE, which means the game is drawn.

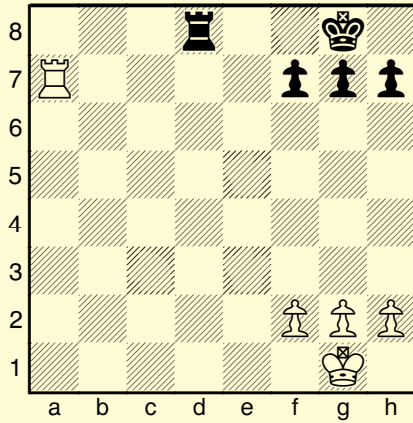
Instead, if White played **1.f8R!**



it's checkmate next move. After **1... Kh6** then **2.Rh8#**. What a difference!

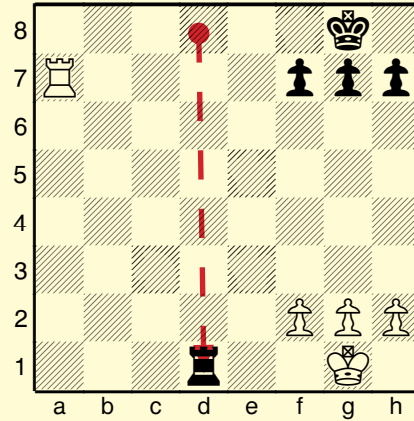
Q13

It's Black's move. How can he win immediately?



Q13 ANSWER

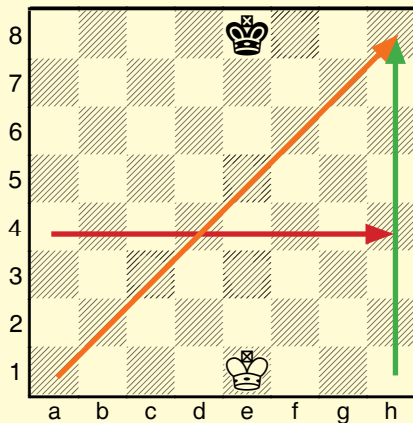
In this position Black plays 1...Rd1#



What do we call this kind of checkmate?
 A) A BACK RANK mate? B) A SMOTHERED MATE? C) a fool's mate?

Answer: (A)

Q14

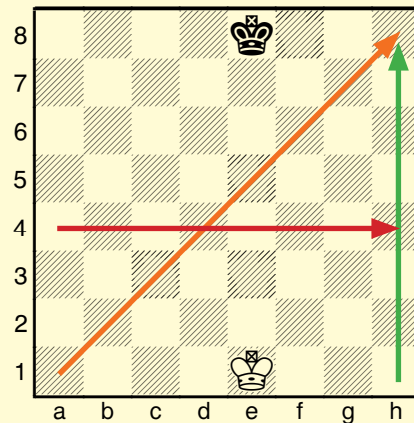


The chessboard is made up of RANKS, FILES and DIAGONALS.

In the Diagram you see red, green and orange arrows. Which coloured arrows represent:

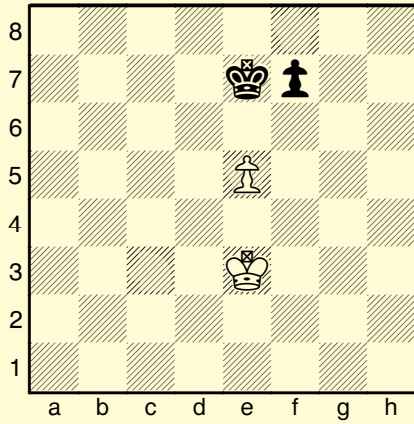
- a) RANKS
- b) FILES
- c) DIAGONALS

Q14 ANSWER



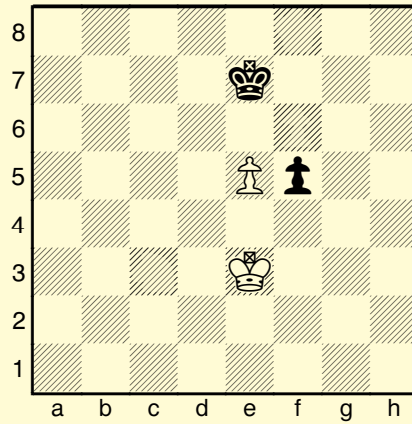
- a) RANKS = GREEN
- b) FILES = RED
- c) DIAGONALS = ORANGE

Q15

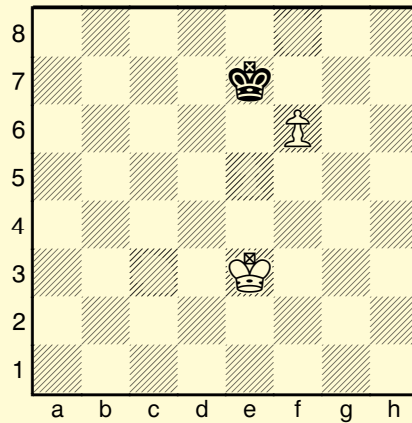


Black plays **1...f5**. Can White capture en passant with **2.exf6+** ?

Q15 ANSWER

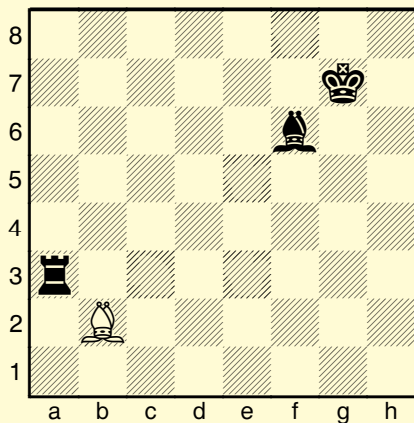


After **1...f5**.



After **3.exf6+**

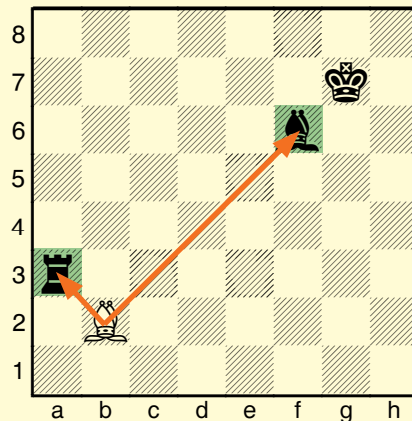
Q16



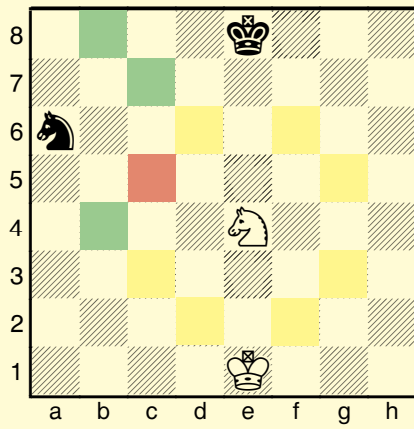
How many pieces is the white Bishop attacking?

Q16 ANSWER

Two! The black Rook on a3 and the black Bishop on f6.



Q17



How many squares does:
 a) the white Knight CONTROL?
 b) the black Knight CONTROL ?

Q17 ANSWER

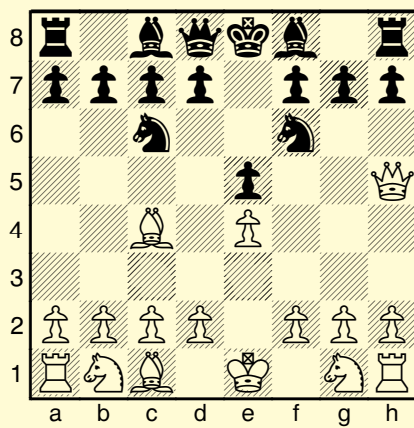
a) The white Knight controls 8 squares
 b) The black Knight controls 4 squares.
 Thus the white Knight is twice as powerful as the black Knight, simply by being in the middle of the board.
 Both Knights control the square c5, marked in red..

Q18

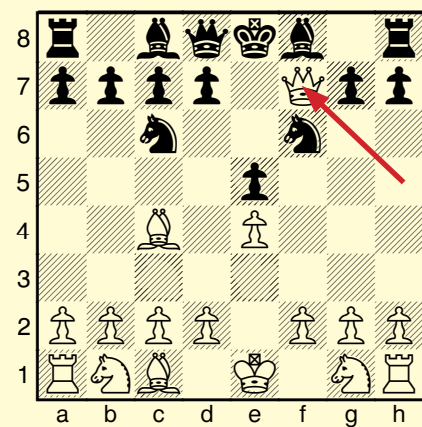
The game begins: **1.e4 e5 2.Bc4 Nc6 3.Qh5 Nf6.**

Q18 ANSWER

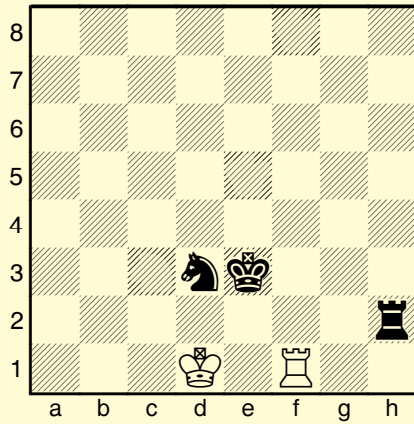
4.Qxf7#



White to play and checkmate in ONE.



Q19

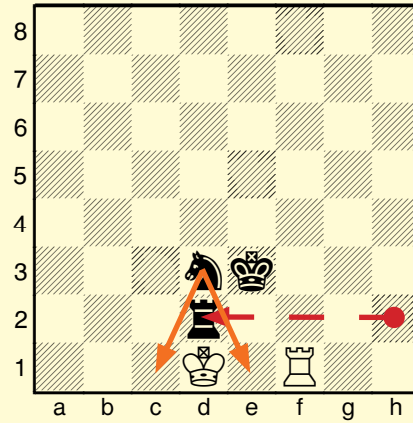


Black to play and mate White in one move. Which is the right move?:

- a) 1...Ra2
- b) 1...Rd2+
- c) 1...Nb2+

Q19 ANSWER

b) 1...Rd2#



Q 20

In chess notation, what is the symbol for CHECK? Is it:

- a) "+" or
- b) "x"?

What is the symbol for CAPTURE? Is it:

- a) "+" or
- b) "x"

Q 20 ANSWER

CHECK is "+"

CAPTURE is "x"



Hard work allows us to master our subjects, such as chess.
Chess is fun — when we learn how to win it is even more fun!

SUMMARY

I hope you got all the answers right.
If not its time to read the booklet again!
Don't skip this lesson; read and re-read
the contents until you have thoroughly
absorbed the contents. Hard work brings
mastery which is the greatest reward in



Sometimes just thinking or reading about chess makes us want to play, inside or outdoors!

CONCLUSION

We've reached the end of the Merit Level One and now it's time for you to take the actual test, pass, and then move up. You are getting stronger at chess already!