

# AN INTRODUCTION TO CHESS



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## BOOKLET ONE - NEWCOMERS

IM Andrew Martin

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Sponsored by St Catherine's School, Bramley and the English Chess Federation

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Sponsored by:



St Catherine's School  
BRAMLEY

St Catherine's, Bramley has been the proud host and sponsor of the national girls' schools chess tournament since it began in 2013. Over the years, we have seen record breaking numbers of girls of all levels participate in the annual tournaments here which have always been fun and friendly occasions.

Sadly, this year due to Covid-19 we have not been able to welcome players for the event. Instead, with the recent rise in interest in the game during lockdown, we were pleased to work in partnership with the ECF and support this publication designed to assist those encouraging beginners.

St Catherine's has a thriving chess club from beginners in Year 3 to those who attend a weekly masterclass with Andrew Martin, our resident chess master and coach.

The benefits of playing chess for young minds are well documented and we see clear benefits in terms of developing strategic and creative thinking, focus and mental agility. We hope that parents, teachers and anyone working with their son or daughter to help in their early engagement with chess will find this publication useful.

Alice Phillips and Naomi Bartholomew

**Headmistresses**

St Catherine's School, Bramley and St Catherine's Preparatory School, Bramley

# CONTENTS

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.

Andrew Martin - Editor

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Once upon a time these World Chess Champions were beginners!



Emanuel Lasker (L) & 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 the second edition of this booklet, fully updated and modernized, which introduces the basic rules of chess.

We will help you to start playing and enjoying chess as quickly and as simply as possible.

Chess is a great game for everyone to learn at any age.

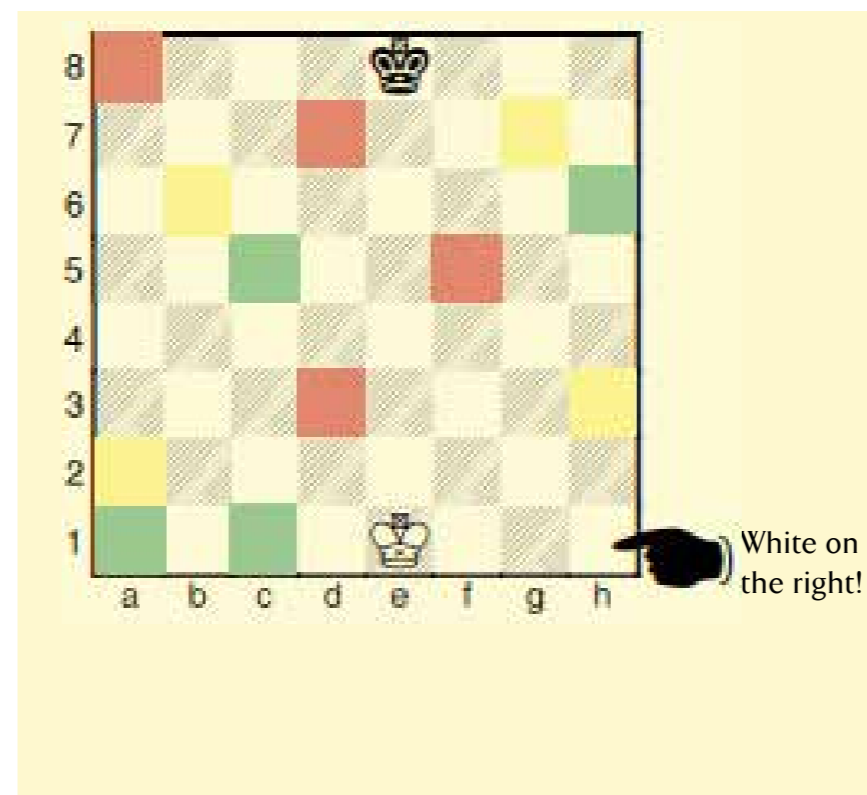
We hope that this short course will encourage a new generation of players to come forward and begin a rewarding journey towards chess mastery.

Andrew Martin, February 2021



Your understanding of chess will become crystal clear 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.'

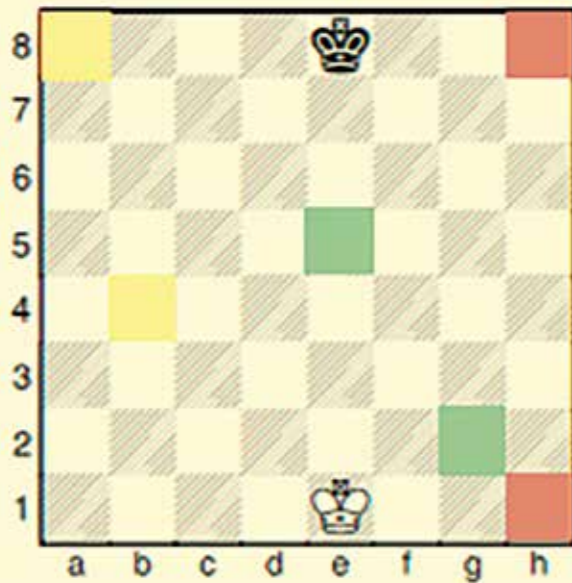
Note that a white corner square should always lie on White's RIGHT HAND. Hence the saying: 'White on the right!'

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



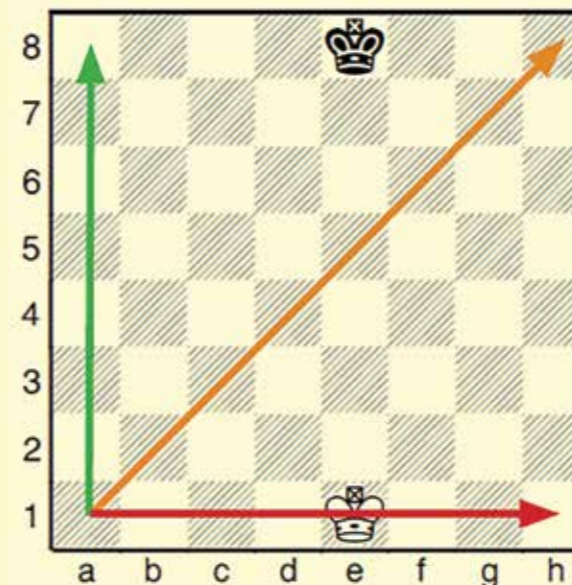
Q. Can you name the coloured squares?

ANSWERS:

- Green: e5, g2
- Yellow: a8, b4
- 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



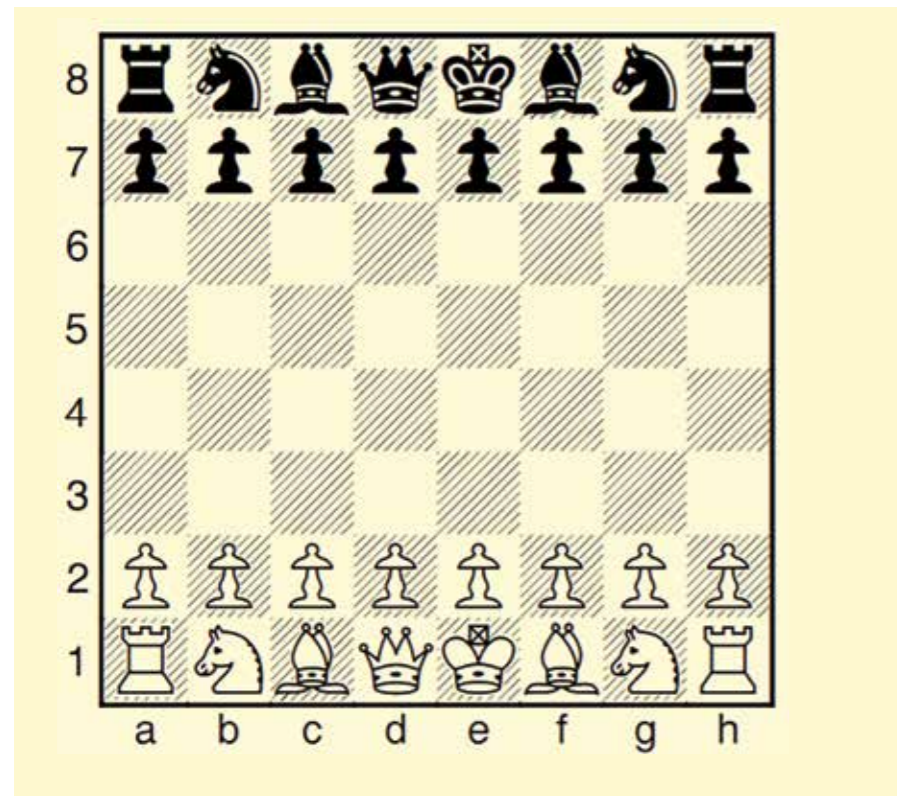
The chessboard is made up out of:

- **RANKS**  
Ranks run **HORIZONTALLY** and an example is marked by the **RED** arrow.
- ↑ **FILES**  
Files run **VERTICALLY** and an example is marked by the **GREEN** arrow.
- ↗ **DIAGONALS**  
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



“

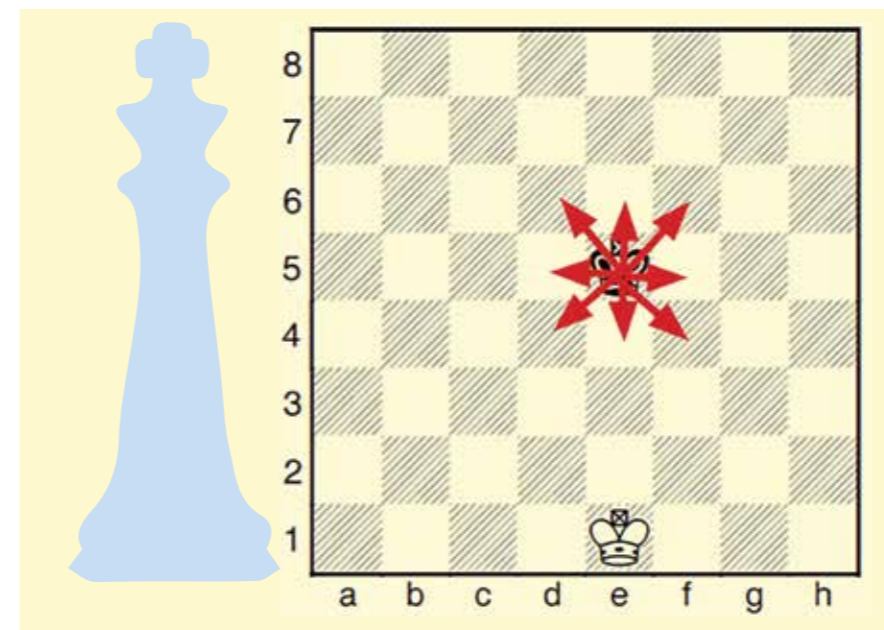
You may feel lost in a thicket of explanations, but study the diagrams, carefully read the text and it will make sense. Really.

”



Grandmaster Boris Spassky

## THE KING



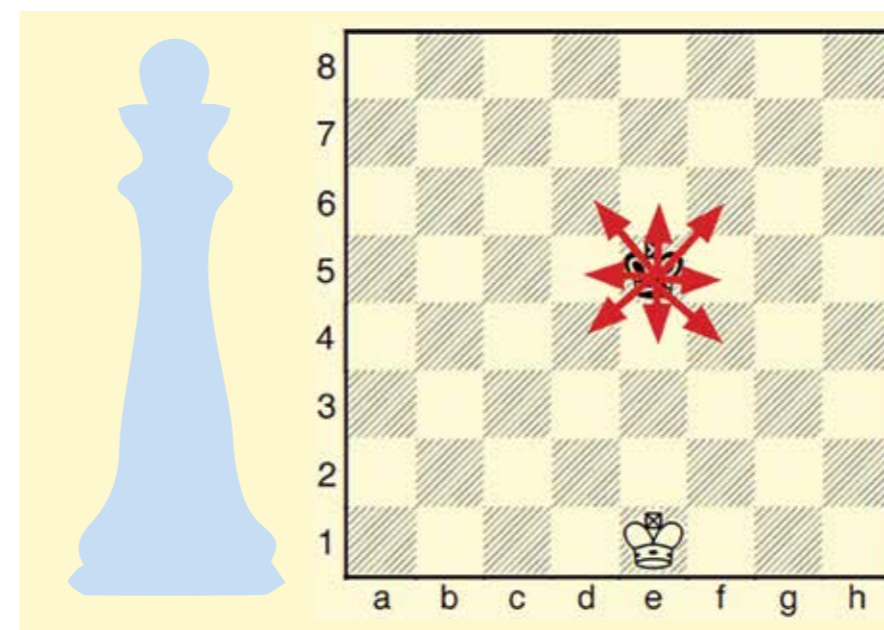
The King moves one square in any direction. The King is a slow-moving piece. **The King may not move into check.** Check is a direct attack by an enemy piece on the King. The King is your **MOST IMPORTANT PIECE**. The moves of the King are illustrated in the diagram

“

The King is the **MOST IMPORTANT PIECE**.

”

## THE QUEEN



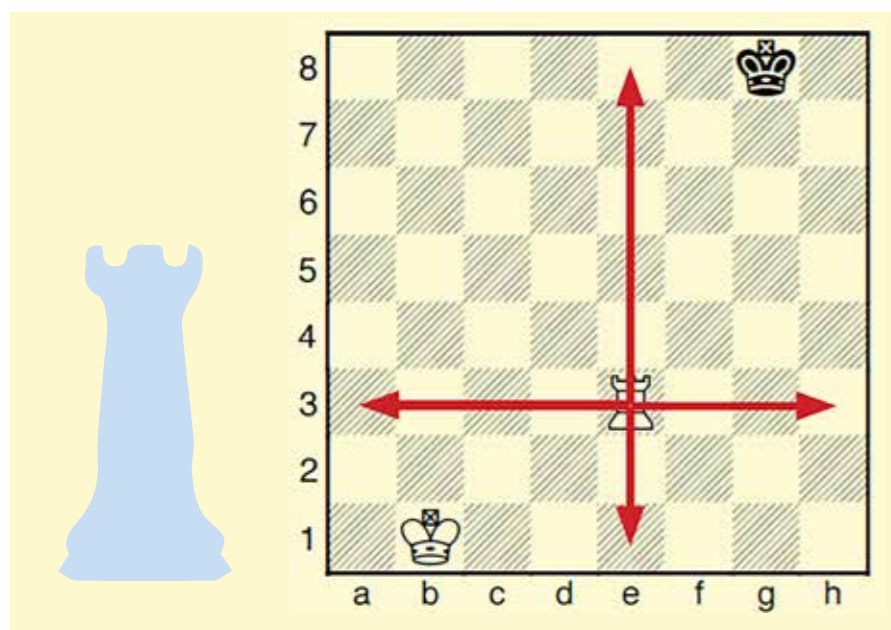
The **QUEEN** is your **STRONGEST PIECE**. The Queen moves any number of squares forward, backward, sideways, and diagonally. The Queen cannot jump over other pieces. The Queen is an awesome, attacking piece. The possible squares that the black Queen can move to are illustrated in the diagram. From the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

“

The Queen is your strongest piece.

”

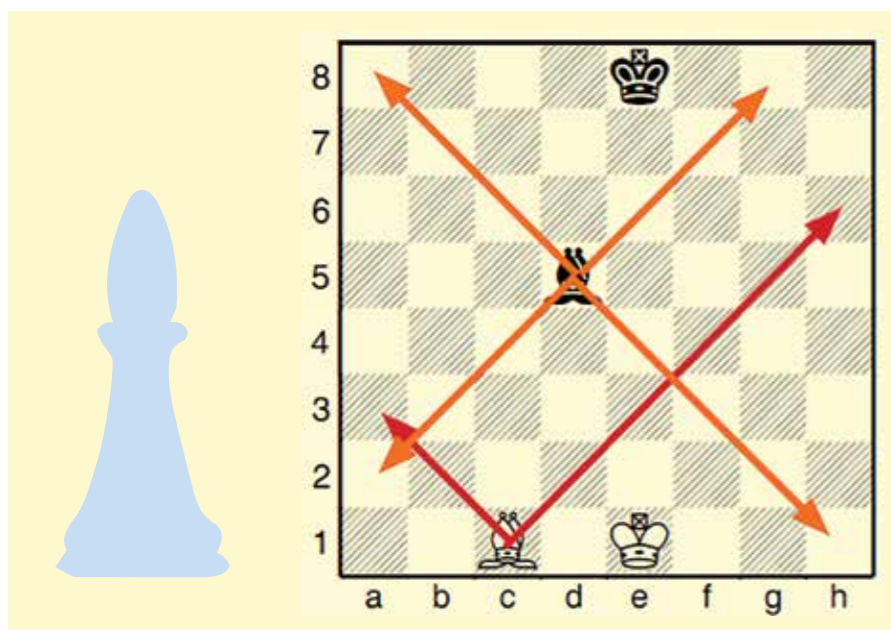
# THE ROOK



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

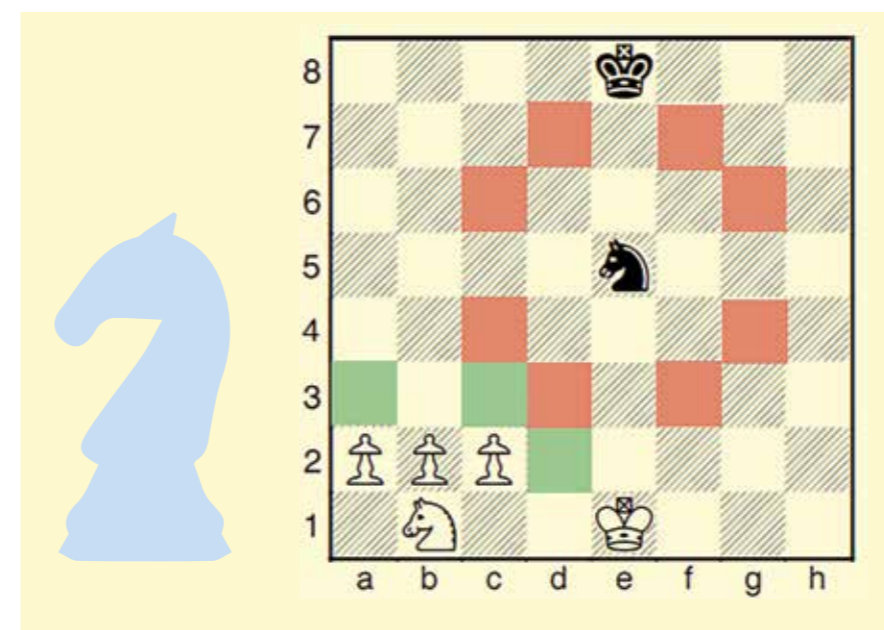
# THE BISHOP



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 Bishop only moves diagonally.  
”

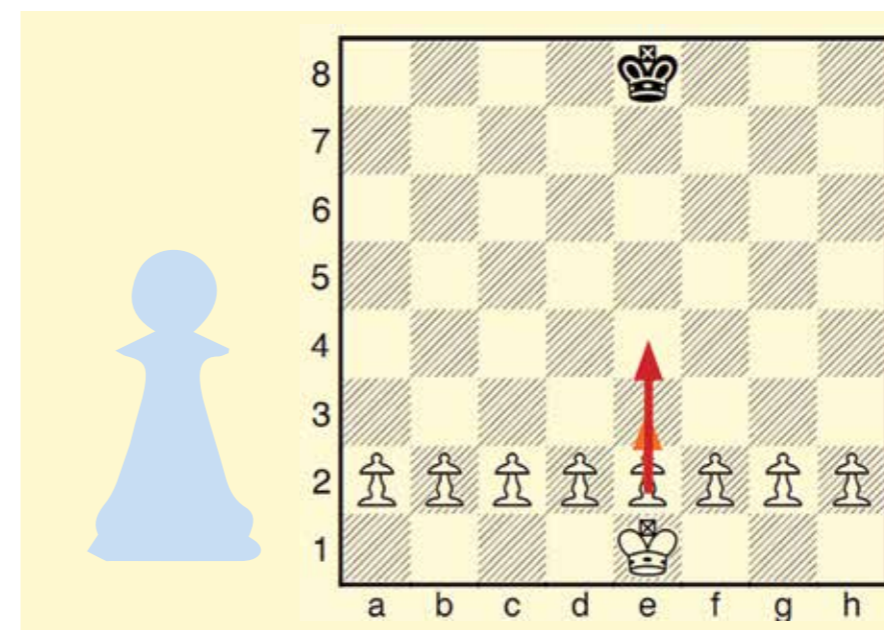
# THE KNIGHT



The Knight moves in an L-shape. The Knight can move in any direction. The Knight 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.

“  
The Knight’s manoeuvres may look eccentric— don’t let that fool you.  
”

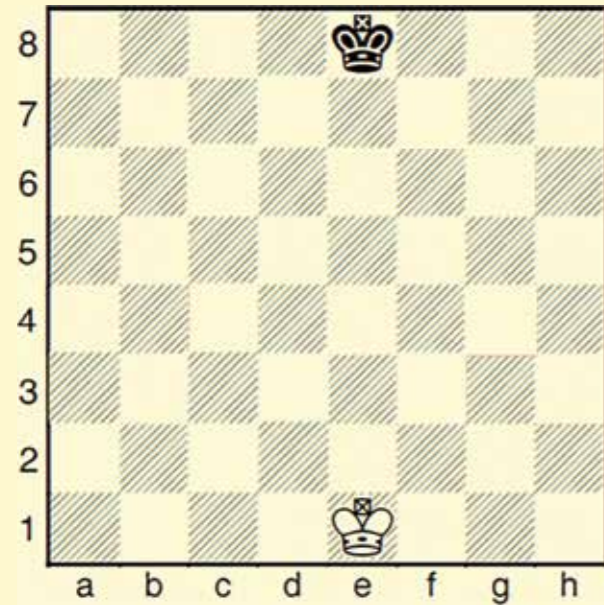
# THE PAWN



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.

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

# 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!)

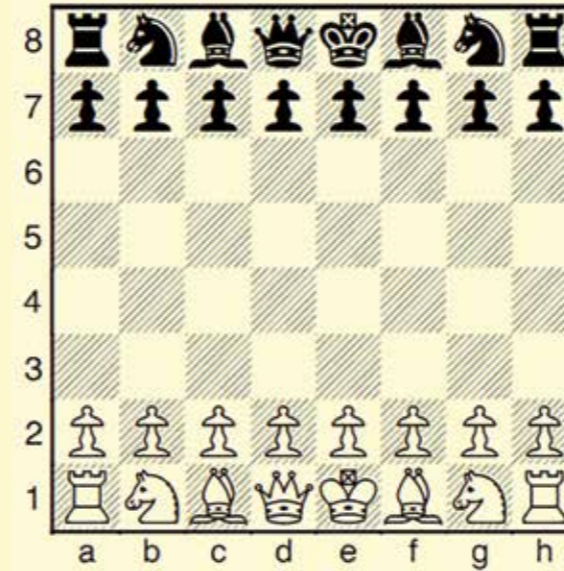
For pawn moves we only use the name of the square the pawn goes to.

Other symbols used are:

- O-O = Castles Kingside
- O-O-O = 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

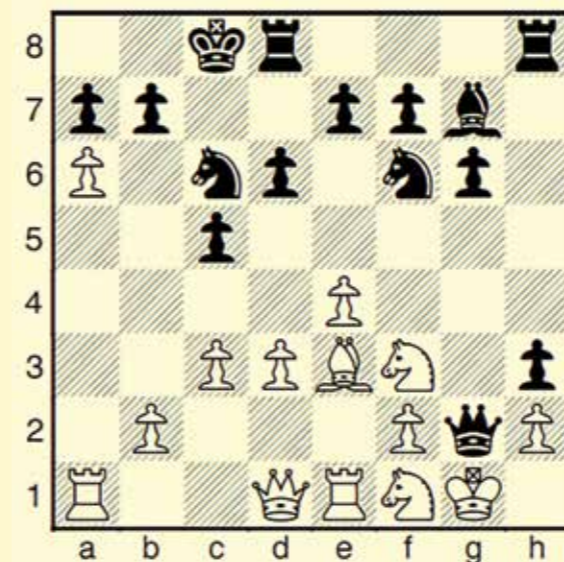


- 1.e4 We could also write e2-e4.
- 1...c5 and ...c7-c5.
- 2.Nf3 or Ng1-f3.
- 2...d6 ...d7-d6
- 3.Bb5+ Bf1-b5+
- 3...Bd7 Bc8-d7 and so on.

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.

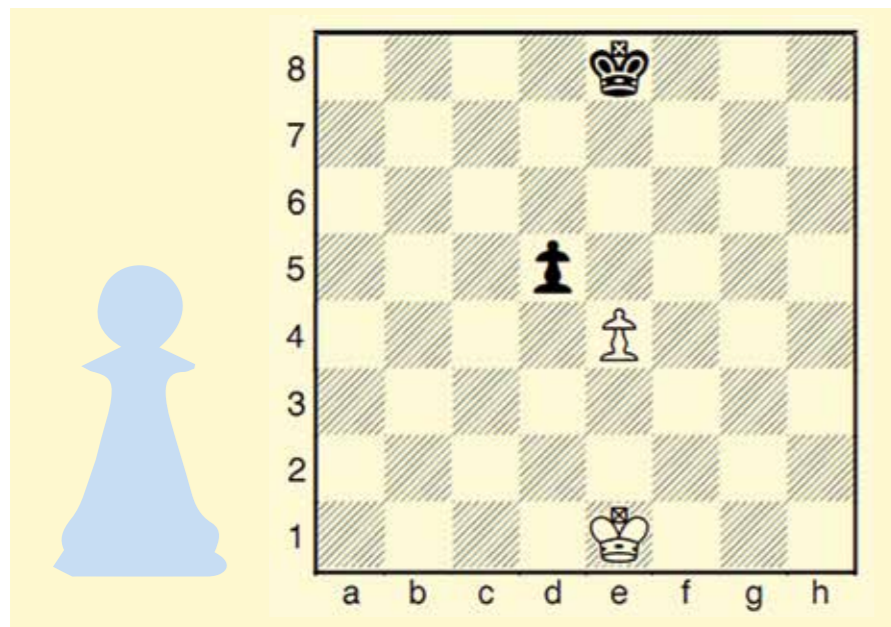
- 4.Bxd7+ Qxd7 5.O-O Nf6 6.d3 g6 7.Re1 Bg7 8.c3 Nc6 9.Nbd2 O-O-O
- 10.a4 h5 11.Nf1 h4 12.a5 Qg4 13.Be3 h3 14.a6 Qxg2#

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

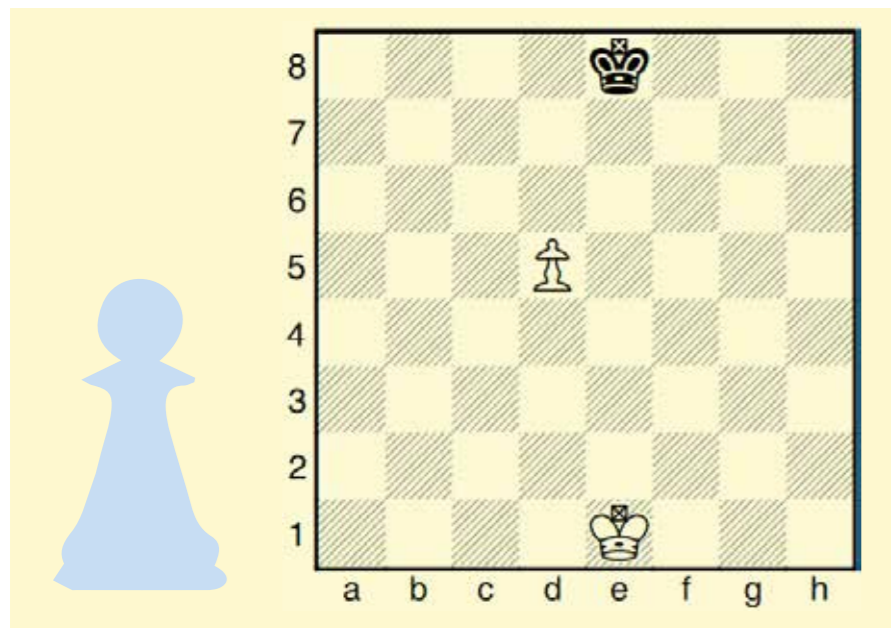


## SPECIAL RULES

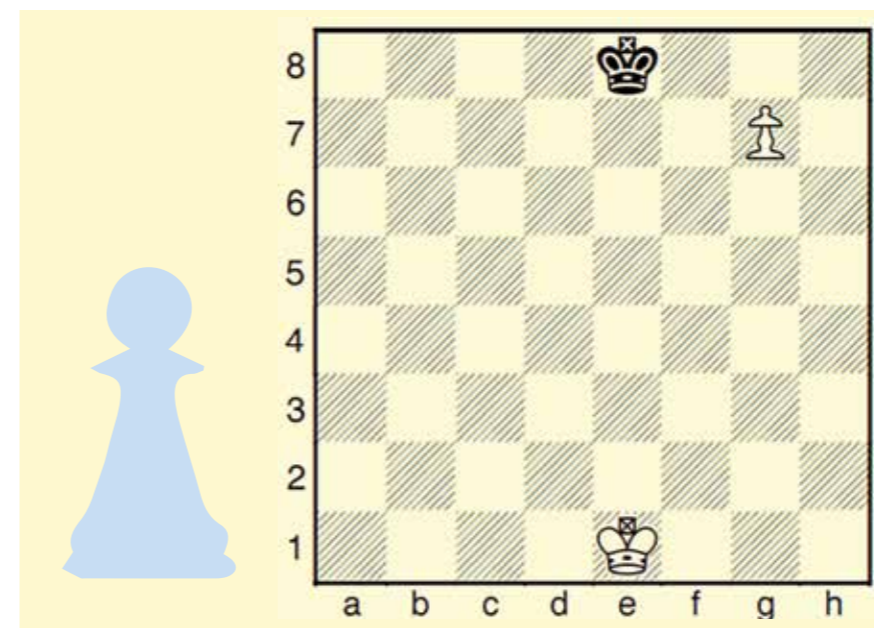
## THE PAWN CAPTURE



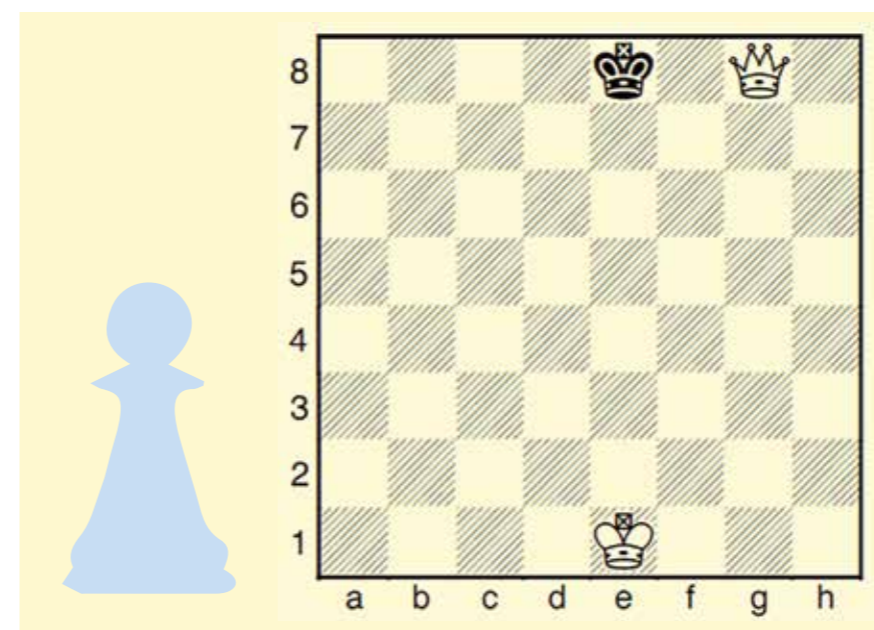
If it is White to move he can capture the black pawn. 1.exd5



## PAWN PROMOTION 1



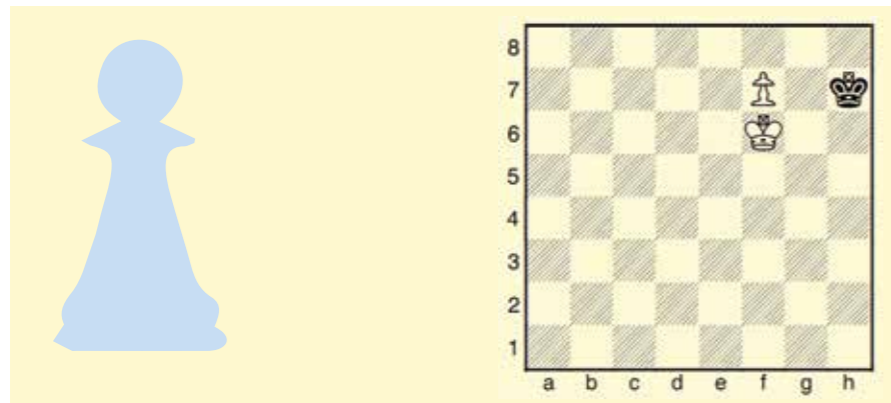
When a pawn reaches the other end of the board it changes shape and form. The pawn **PROMOTES** into a piece of one's choice. Normally one would take a new **Queen**: 1.g8Q=+



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.

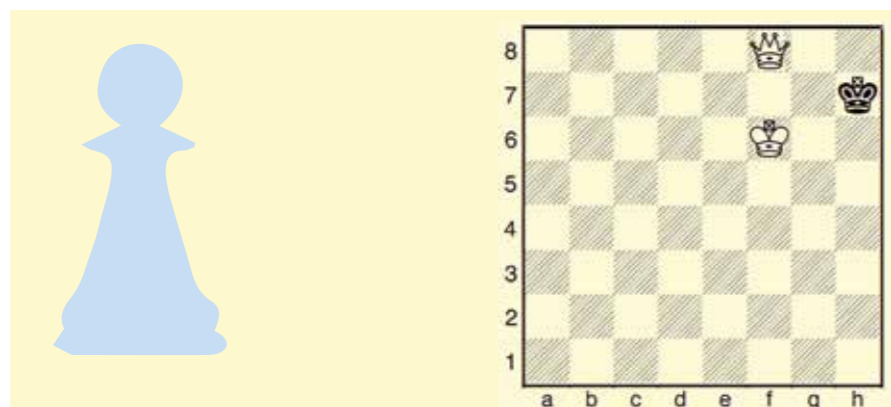


## PAWN PROMOTION 2

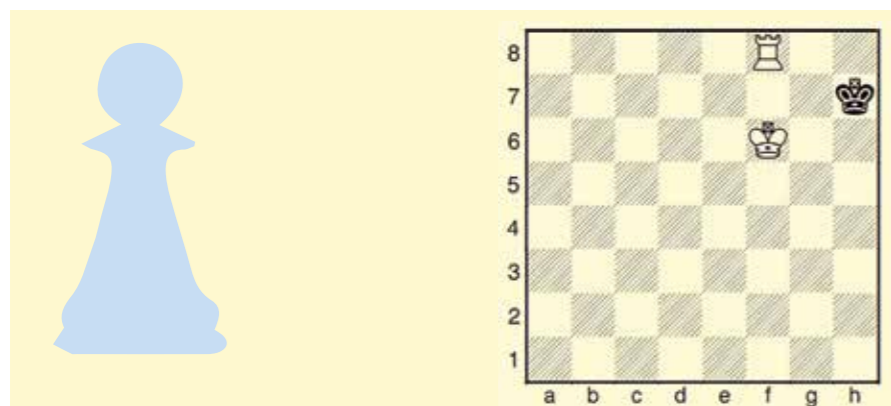


Sometimes it's important not to take a Queen. Look what happens here!

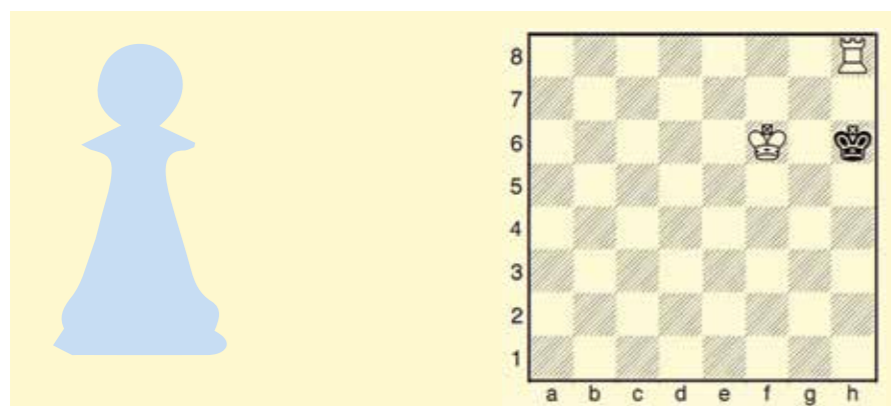
1.f8=Q



**STALEMATE!** Don't let this happen to you.



Instead 1.f8=R! See next diagram.



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

## CHECK &amp; 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 piece that is giving check is TAKEN.
- 2) The King simply moves to another square where he is not in check.
- 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.

”

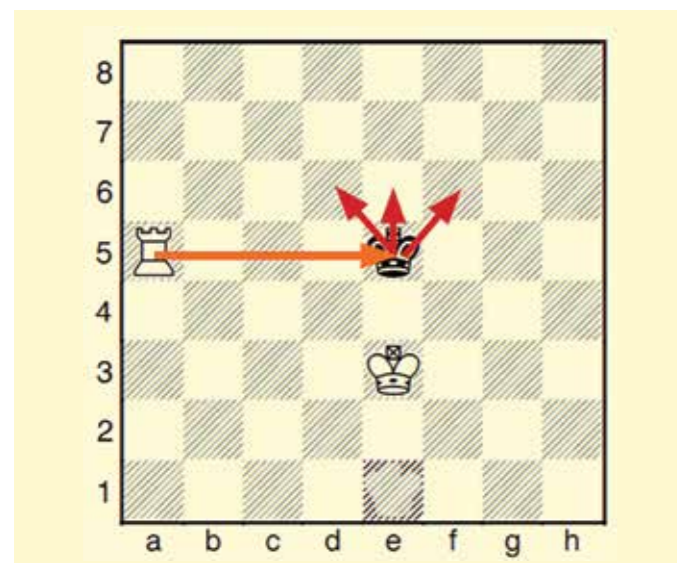
CHECKMATE is the most important idea a young player can learn about. Let us examine the ideas of check and checkmate in a bit more detail.



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

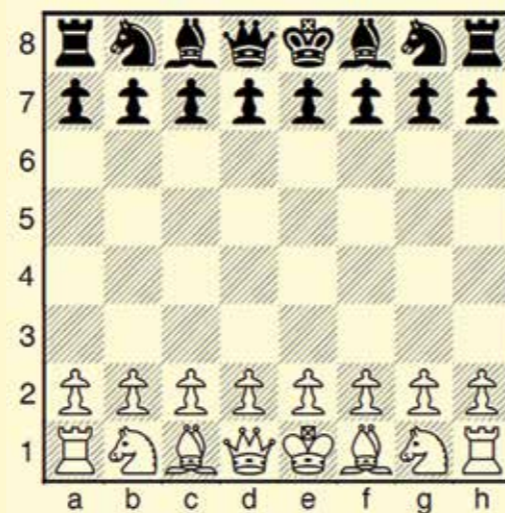
## CHECK ONE

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.

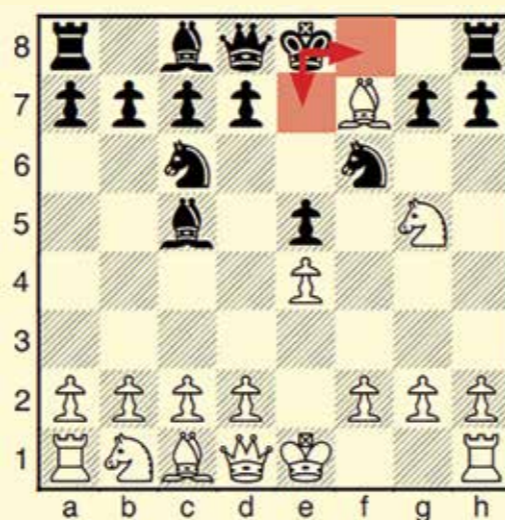


## CHECK TWO

A game begins:



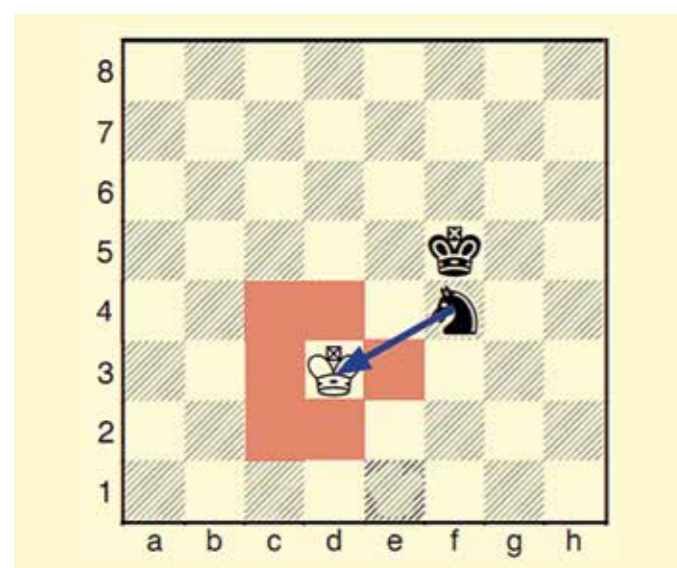
1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.Ng5 Bc5 5.Bxf7+



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

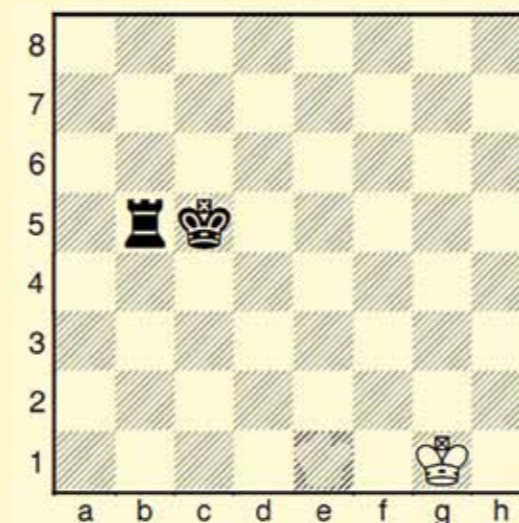
## CHECK THREE

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

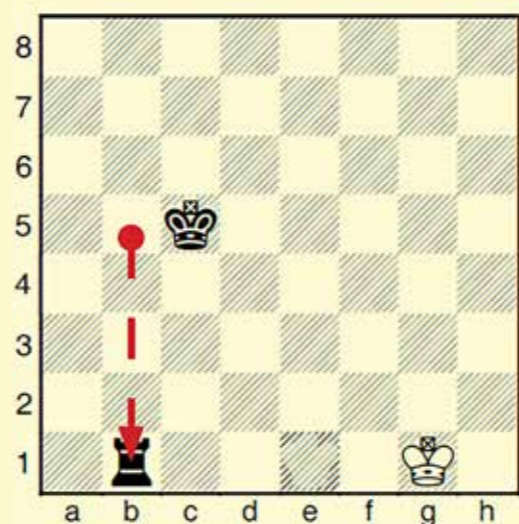


## CHECKING PRACTICE

## CHECK PRACTICE ONE



Now I would like you to find a move for Black which puts White in check. 1...Rb1+!

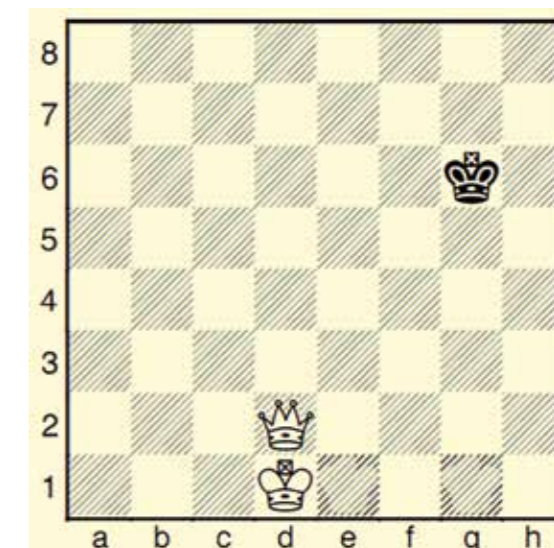


I hope you found this excellent move by Black's Rook.

## CHECK PRACTICE TWO

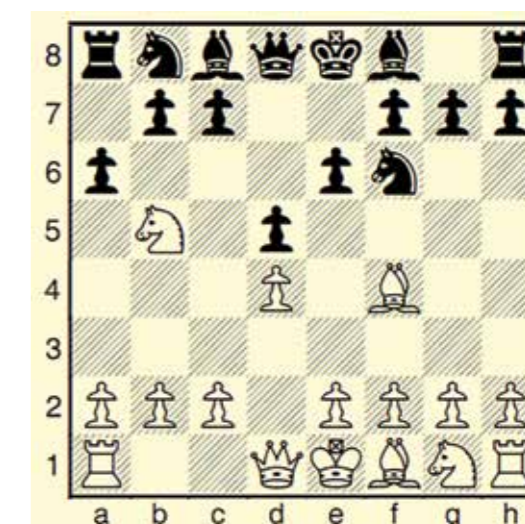
Find at least three different ways for the white Queen to check the black King safely

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)



## CHECK PRACTICE THREE

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

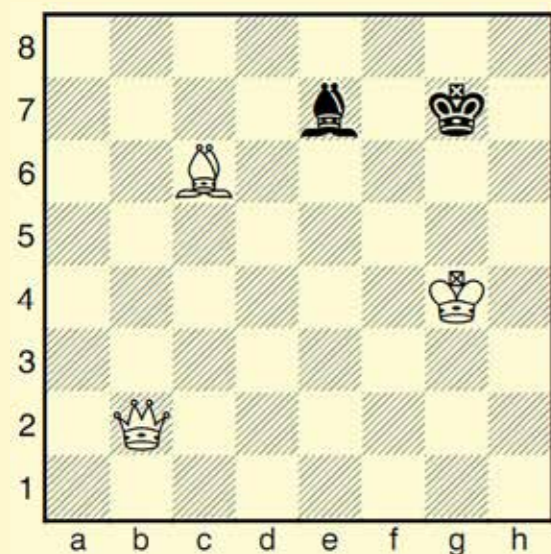


The white Knight can check Black's King. How many times?

5.Nxc7+  
5.Nd6+ TWICE is the correct answer.

# GETTING OUT OF CHECK

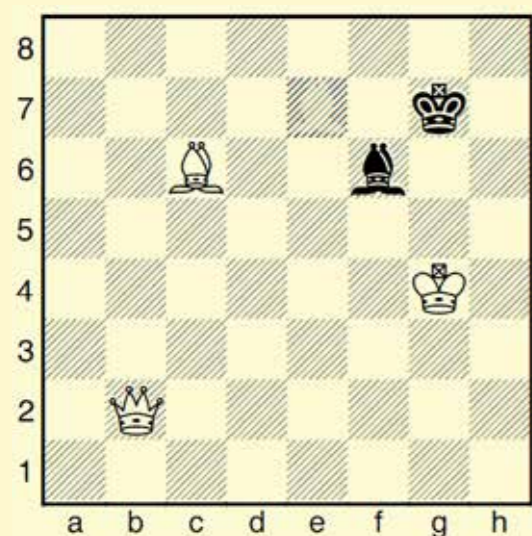
## BLOCKING THE CHECK



Black is in check from the white Queen.

He BLOCKS the check.

1...Bf6

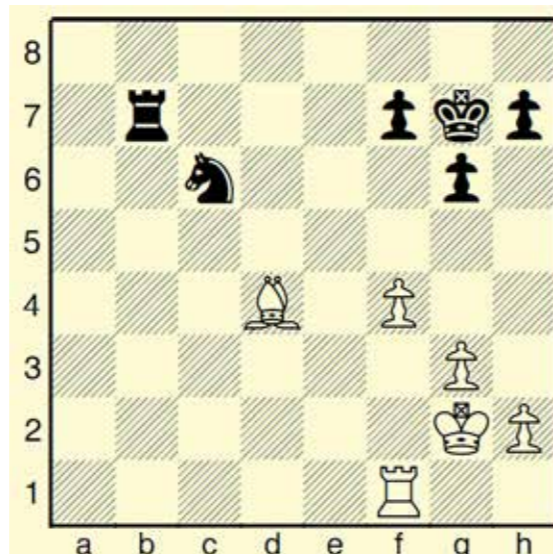


The game continues.

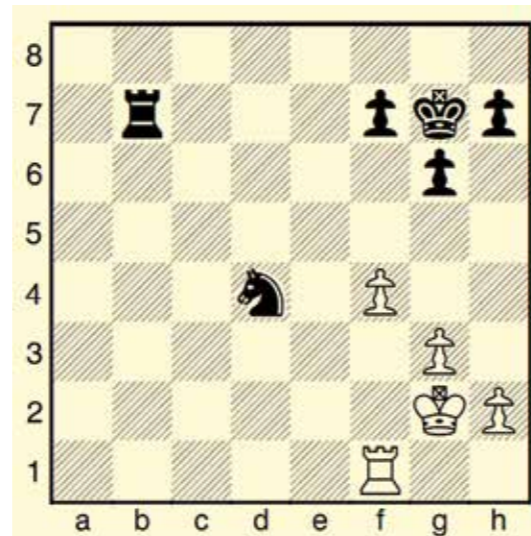
## CAPTURING THE CHECKING PIECE

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.



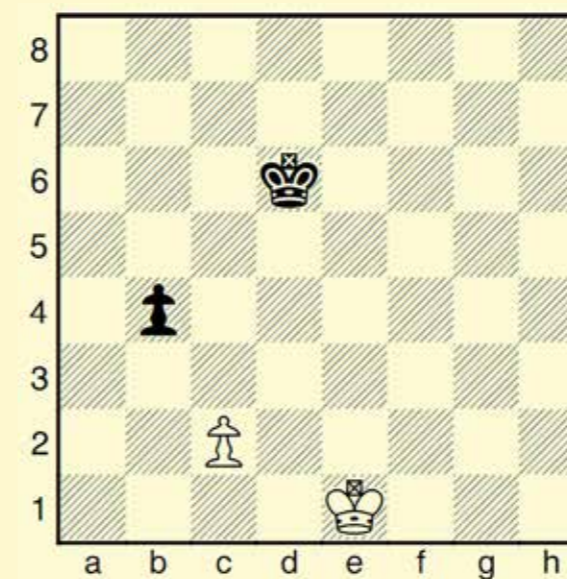
# SPECIAL MOVES

## 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.

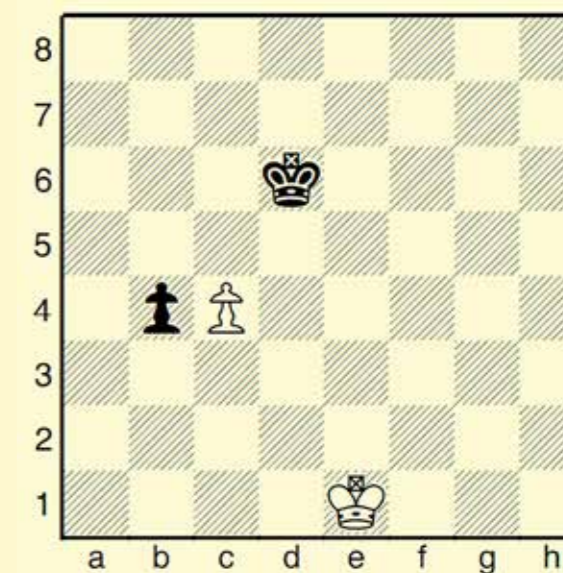
En passant describes a situation where a pawn moves forward two squares from the initial position, past an enemy pawn on the fifth rank. The enemy pawn may then choose whether to capture 'en passant' (pronounced: *on pah-san*) or not. And, can only capture ON THAT MOVE, AT THAT TIME.

Let's illustrate.



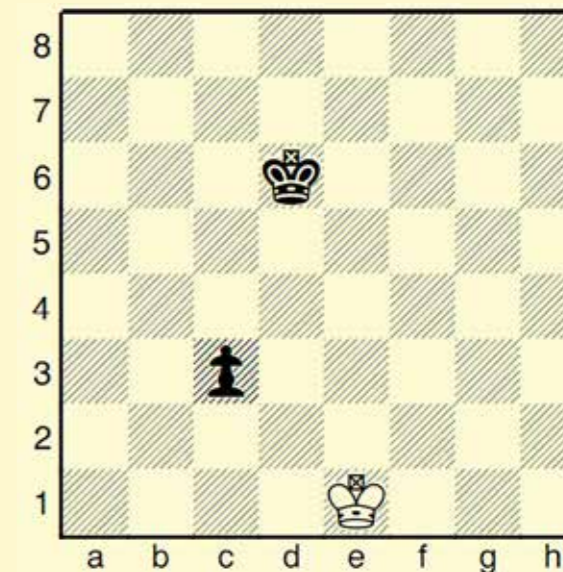
Suppose in the diagram White plays.

1.c4+



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.

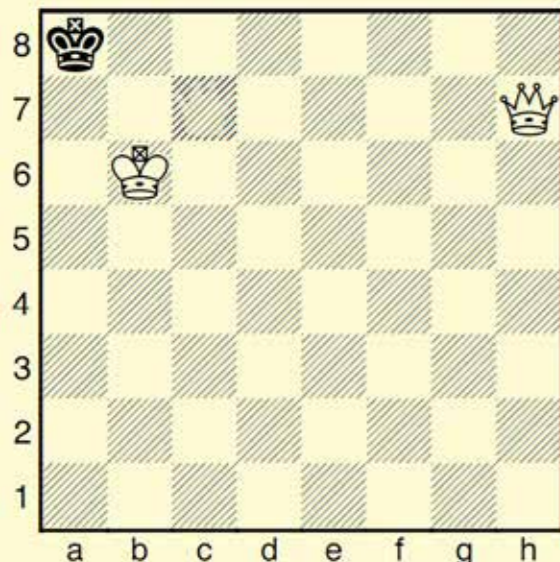
Note also that Black had a choice: HE DID NOT HAVE TO TAKE EN PASSANT IF HE DID NOT WISH TO.

“ The enemy pawn may then choose whether to capture 'en passant' or not, and can only capture ON THAT MOVE, AT THAT TIME. ”

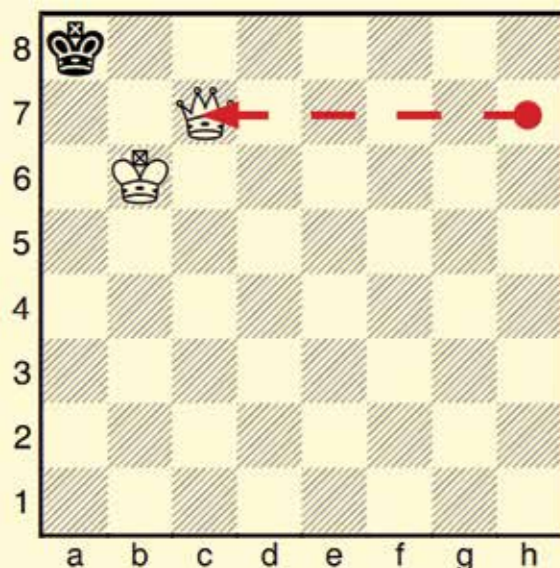
# STALEMATE

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.

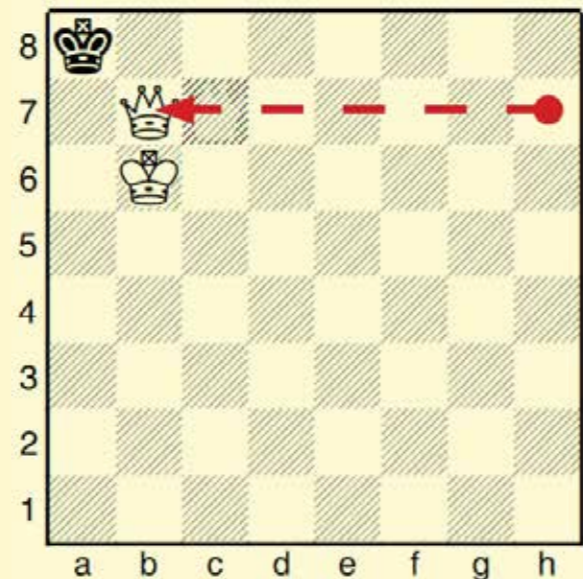


In this position, any move by the black King would put his King in check.



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.

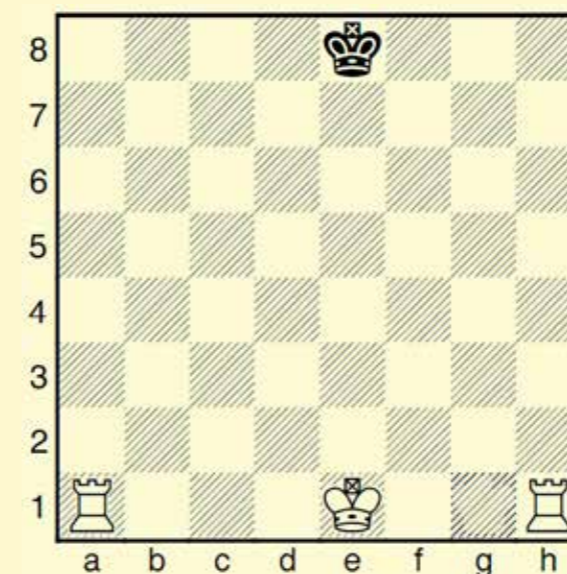
Stalemate means that the game ends in a draw.  $\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}$



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

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

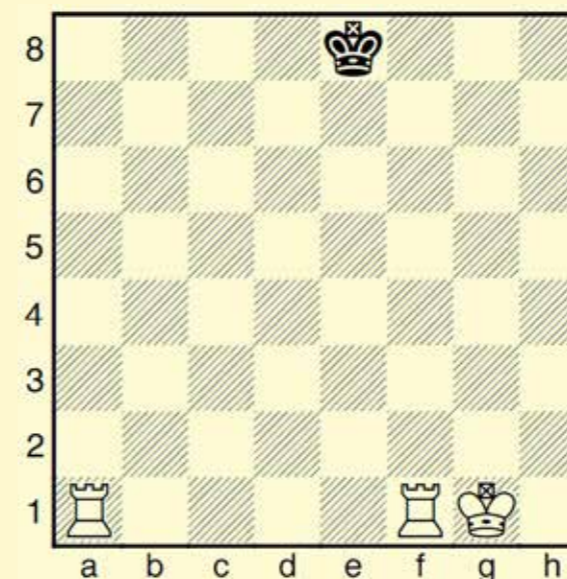
# CASTLING



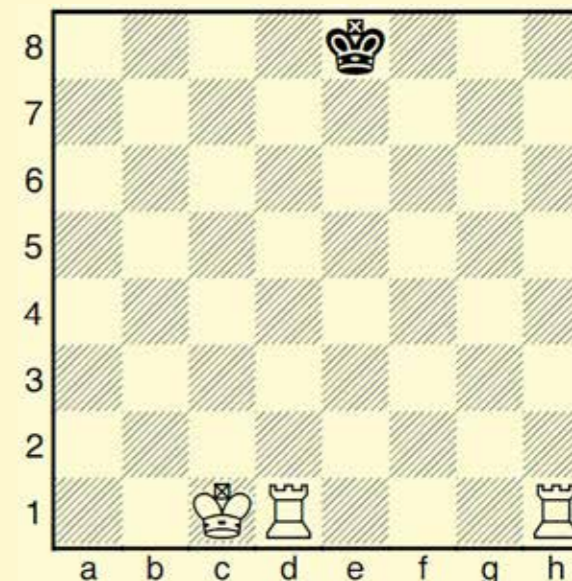
Castling is a special move which each player can play ONCE in a game. Castling brings the King to safety and introduces a Rook into the game.

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** 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.

“  
Castling is a special move which each player can play ONCE in a game.  
”

## RULES FOR CASTLING

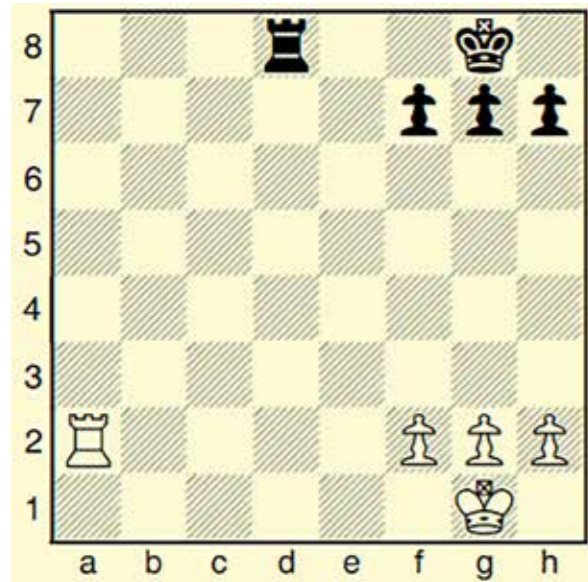
Here are the important things you should know about castling:

- 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.

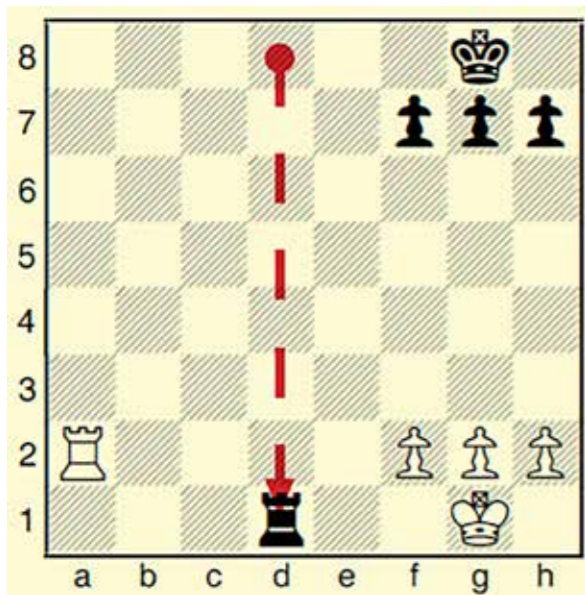
# DIFFERENT CHECKMATES

## BACK RANK MATE



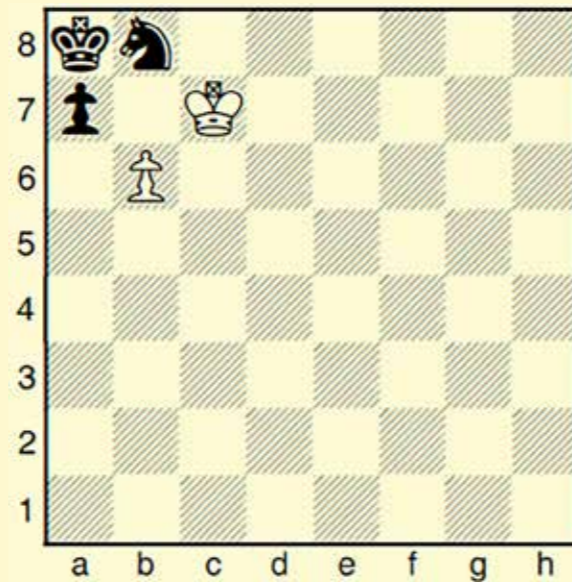
Black plays and checkmates White in one move.

**1...Rd1#**



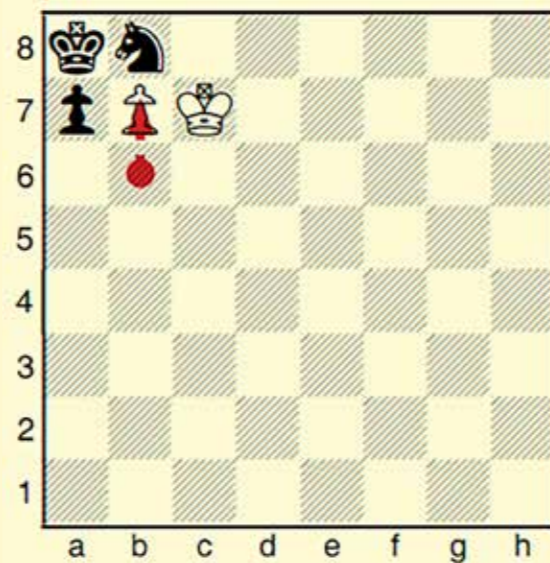
This is called a BACK-RANK MATE. It is very common.

## PAWN CHECKMATE



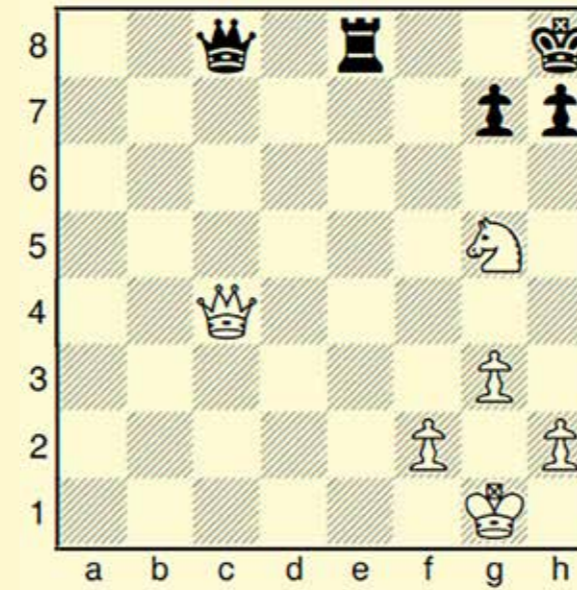
White checkmates in one move with the humble pawn.

**1.b7#**



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

## SMOTHERED MATE



Here White has a chance to execute a beautiful 'smothered' mate:

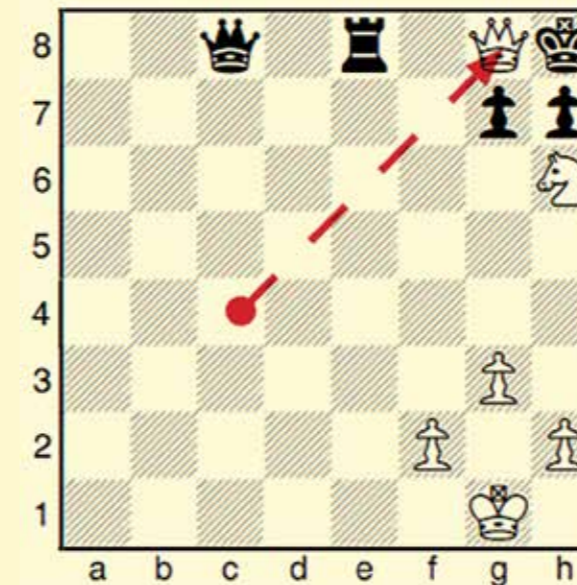
**1.Nf7+ Kg8**

**2...Nh6**

Double Check. Very strong.

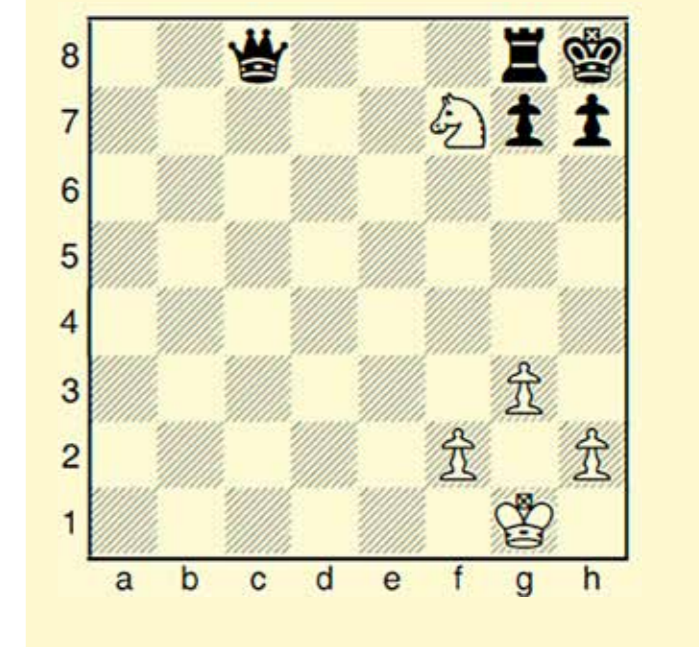
If 2...Kf8 3.Qg8+ is already checkmate.

**3.Qg8!!**



A superb move. Black must take the Queen.

**3...Rxc4 4.Nf7#**



“

Once experienced, never forgotten.

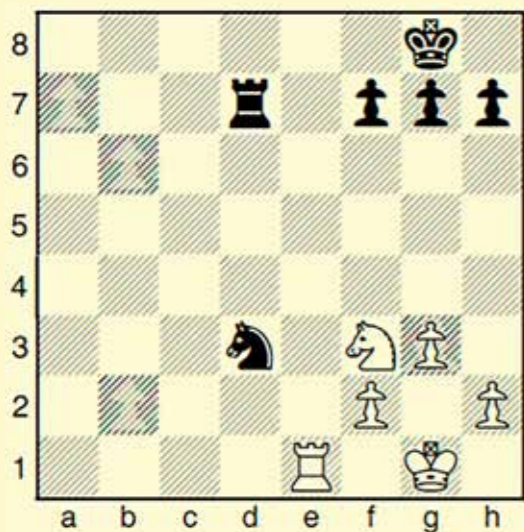
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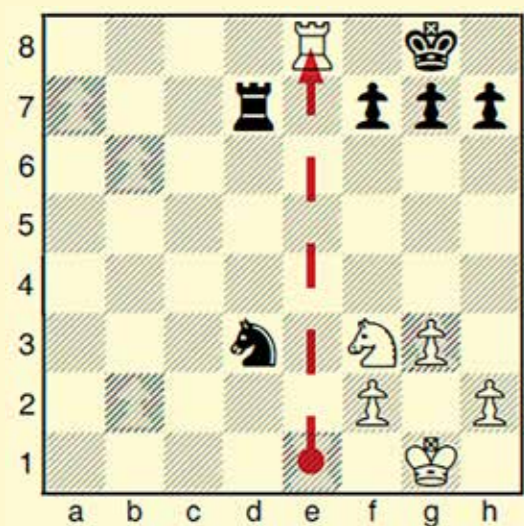
# CHECKMATE QUIZ

## QUIZ THREE



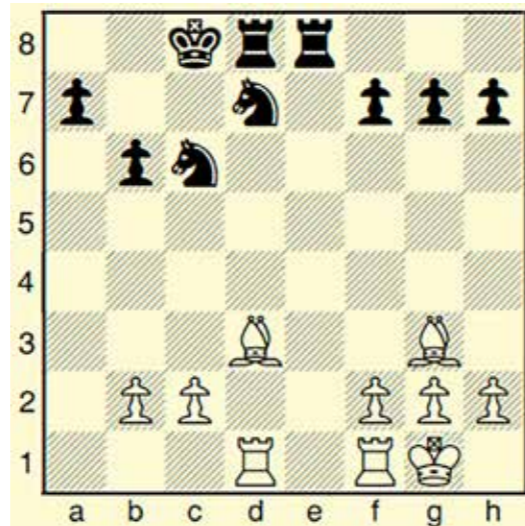
White to play and mate in one.

**1.Re8#**



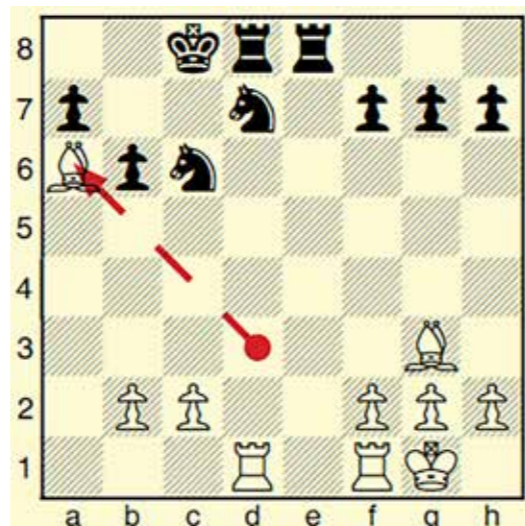
Now it's your turn. Find the mating moves.

## QUIZ FOUR



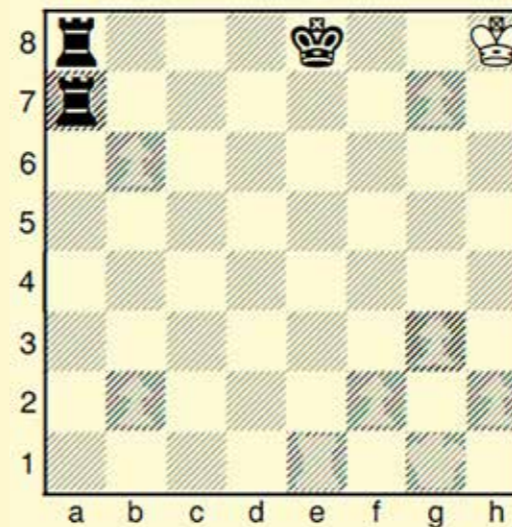
White plays and mates in one move.

**1.Ba6#**



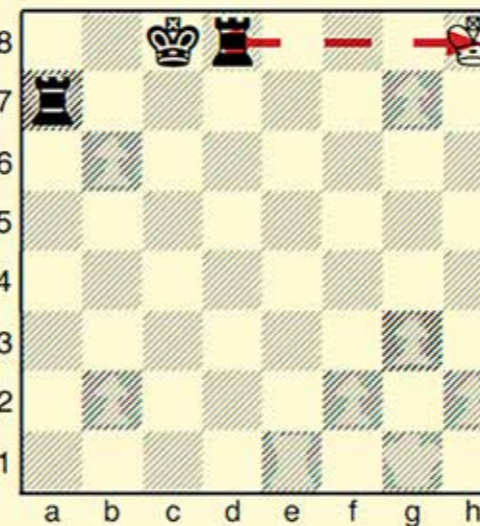
# CHECKMATE QUIZ

## QUIZ FIVE



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

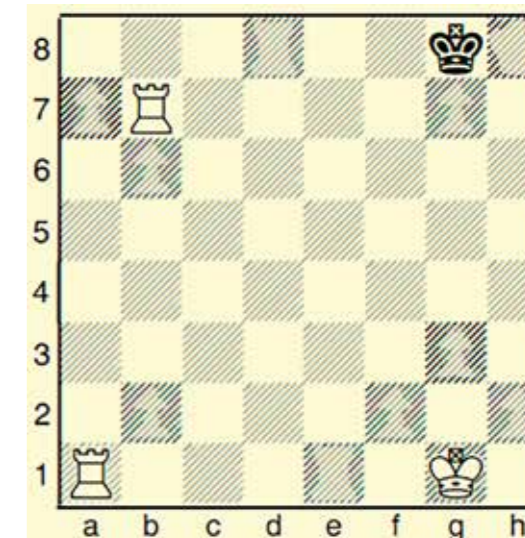
**1...0-0-0#**



Consider yourself an expert solver if you got that one!

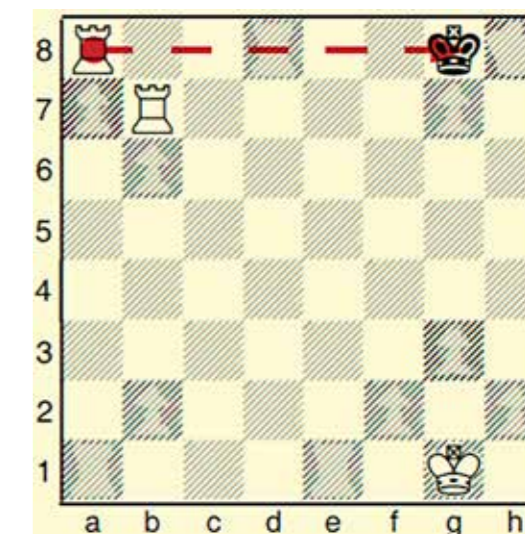
Now it's your turn. Find the mating moves.

## 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 checkmate**





Grandmaster Mikhail Botvinnik

## ENDING THE GAME

### OTHER WAYS IN WHICH THE GAME CAN END

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

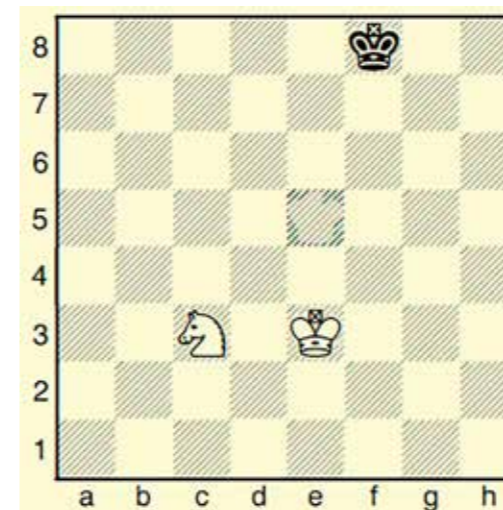
There are other ways too:

- 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.



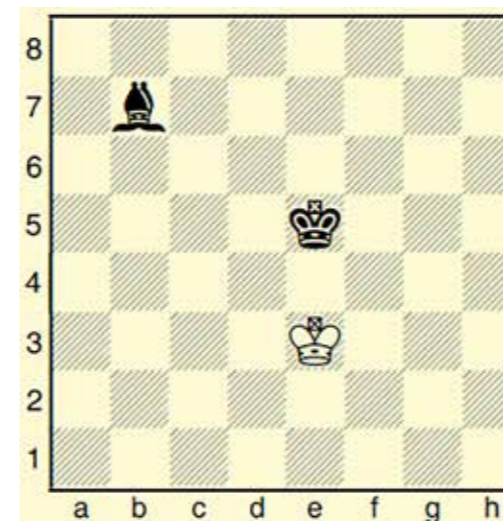
## DRAWS

### 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.





# KNOWLEDGE TEST

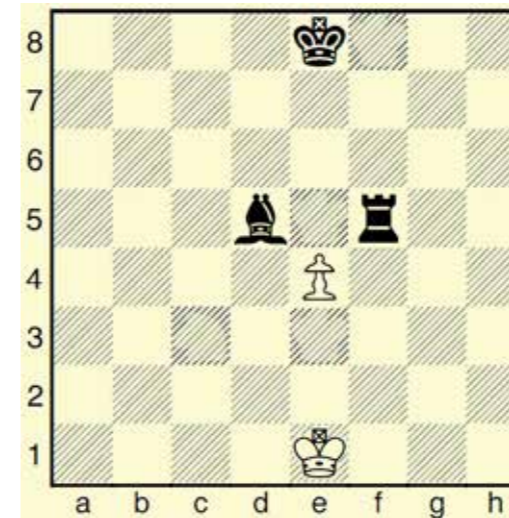
It is now time for a test to see what you have learned so far. The answers lie alongside the problems, although do try hard to solve the puzzles before consulting the answers.

Fifteen correct answers is a good score and anything over eighteen is an excellent score.



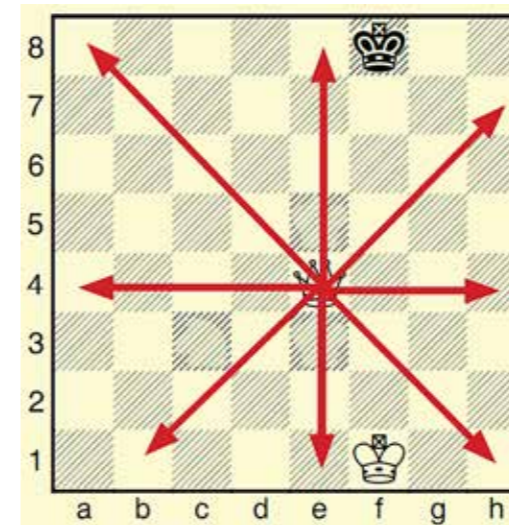
Grandmaster Mikhail Tal

**Q1** It's White to move. How many Black pieces are under attack from the White pawn?



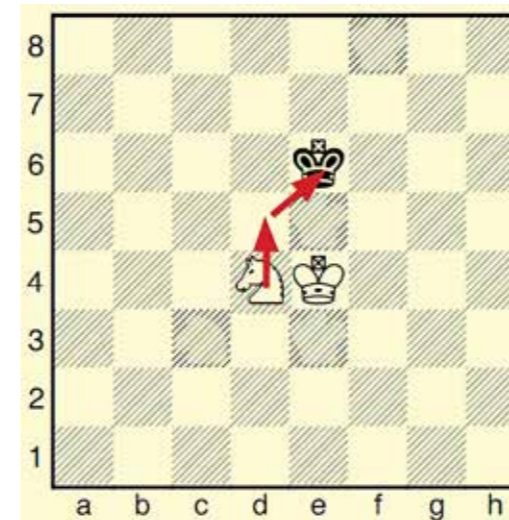
ANSWER:  
**Two.** The Rook on f5 and the Bishop on d5.

**Q2** How many squares is the white Queen controlling?



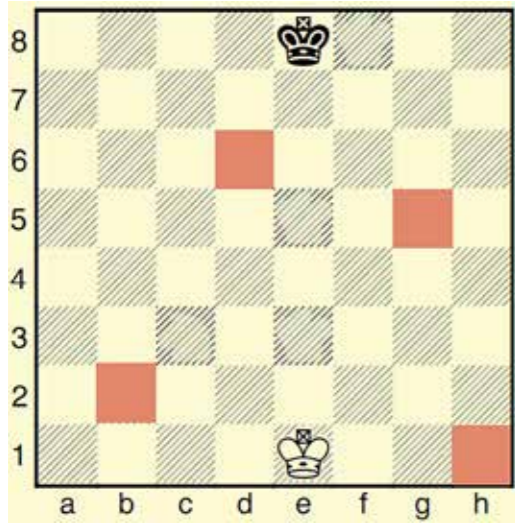
ANSWER:  
**27**

**Q3** Is the black King in check?



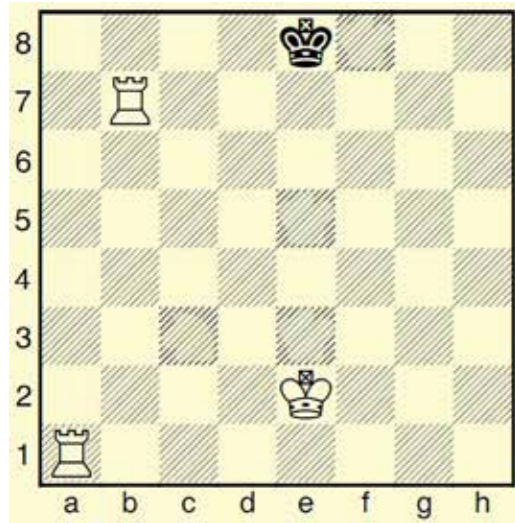
ANSWER:  
**Yes, by the N on d4.**

**Q4** The squares marked in RED are b2, d6, g5 and h1.  
True or False?



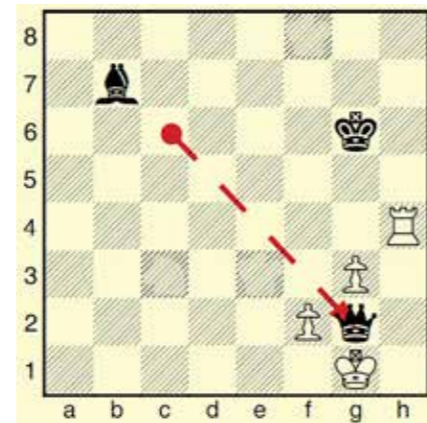
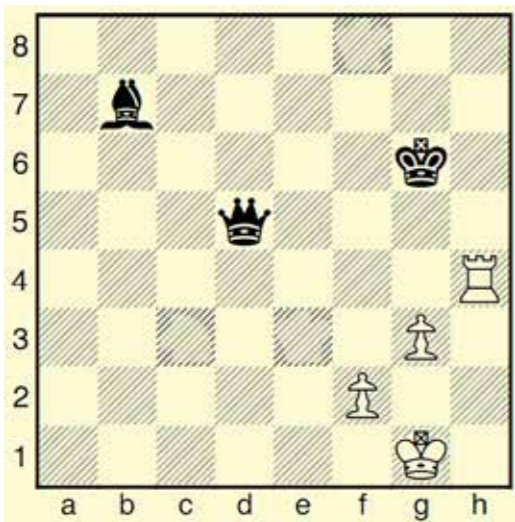
ANSWER:  
True.

**Q5** White to play and mate in one move.



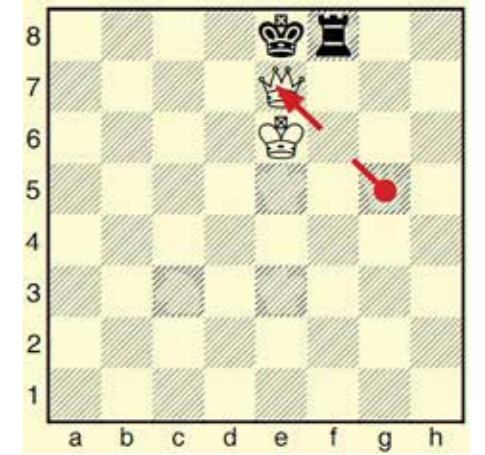
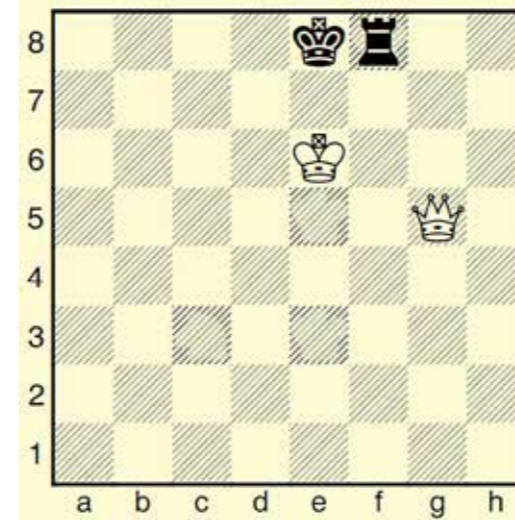
ANSWER:  
1. Ra8#

**Q6** Black to play and checkmate White in ONE move.



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.



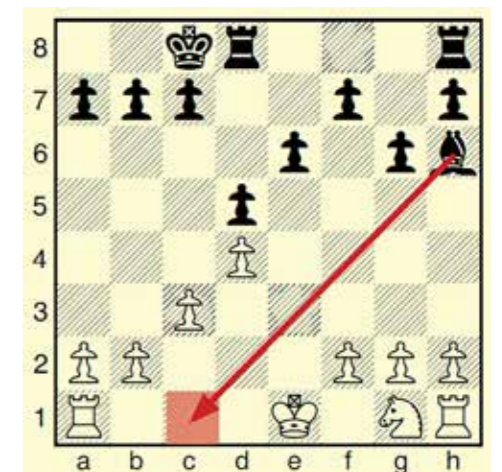
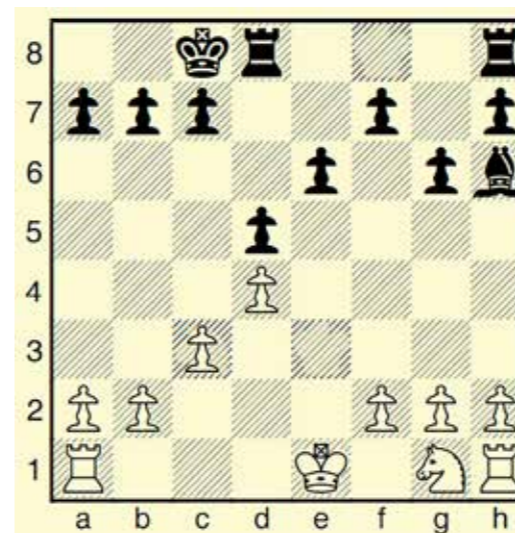
ANSWER:  
1. Qe7#

**Q8** Which is the most powerful piece on the chessboard?

**Q9** Which is the most important piece on the chessboard?

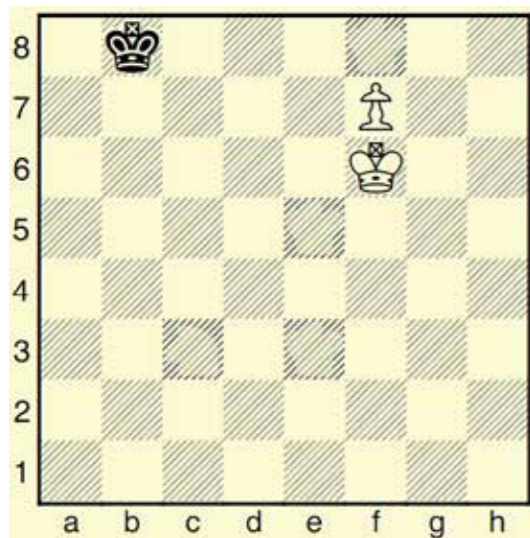
ANSWERS:  
8) The QUEEN.  
9) The KING. Don't forget the King CANNOT BE TAKEN, but if he is CHECKMATED, the game is over.

**Q10** Can White CASTLE QUEENSIDE in this position?

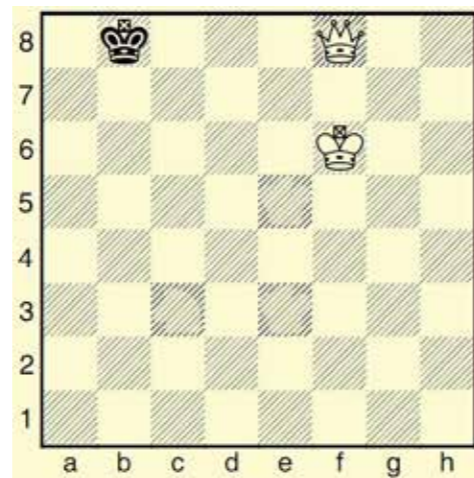
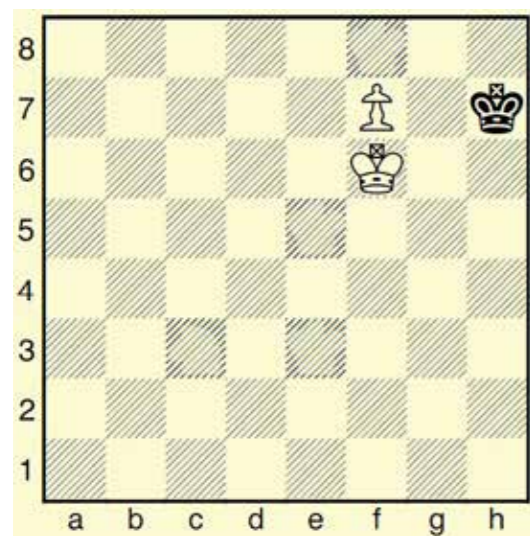


ANSWER:  
NO! His King would move into CHECK on c1 from the Black Bishop on h6.

**Q11** A Pawn PROMOTES when it reaches the other end of the board . Which piece should the pawn normally promote to?

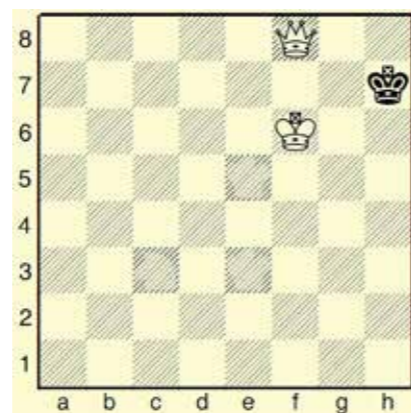


**Q12** What happens if White promotes to a Queen?



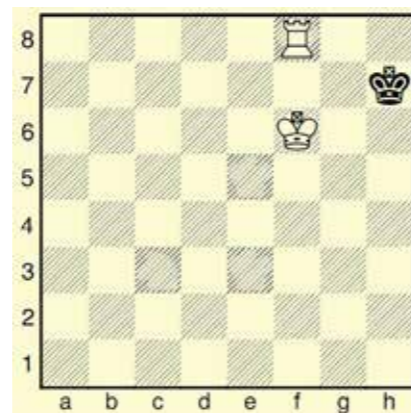
**ANSWER:**  
The QUEEN in 99 cases out of 100. Why not get an extra Queen, which can help you to win the game quickly and easily?

**1.f8=Q**



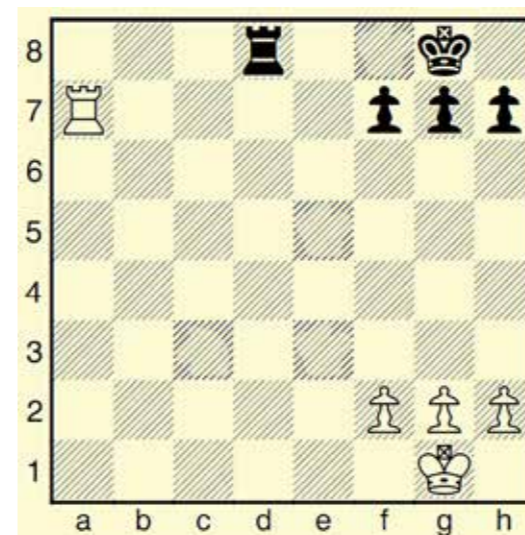
**ANSWER:**  
**1.f8=Q** A terrible mistake, when the game would end in STALEMATE, which means the game is drawn.

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

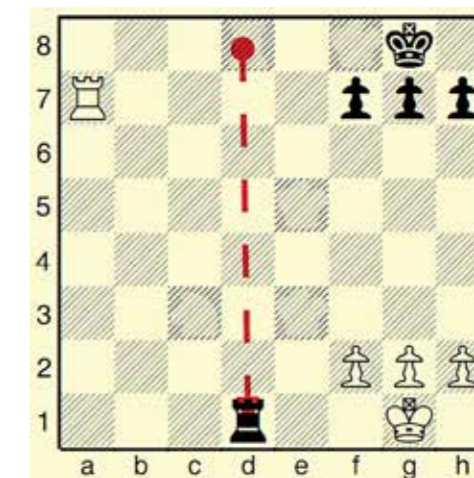


it's checkmate next move. After **1... Kh6** then **2.Rh8#**.  
What a difference!

**Q13** It's Black's move. How can he win immediately?



**Answer:** In this position Black plays **1...Rd1#**



**QUESTION:** What do we call this kind of checkmate?

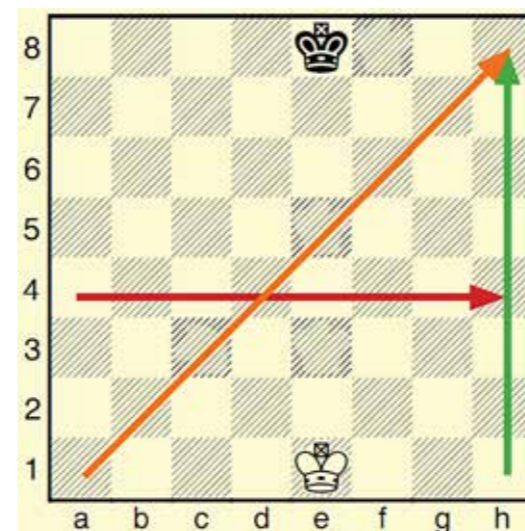
- A) A BACK RANK mate?
- B) A SMOTHERED MATE?
- C) A FOOL'S MATE?

**Answer:** (A)

**Q14** The chessboard is made up of RANKS, FILES and DIAGONALS.

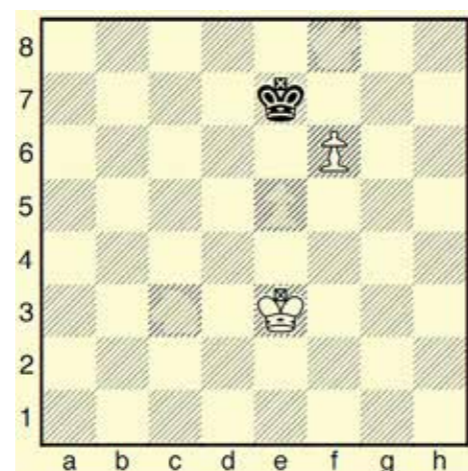
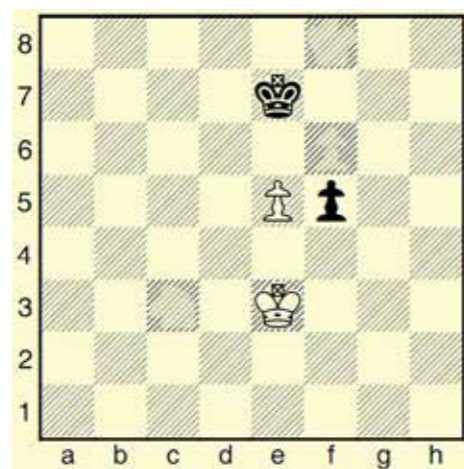
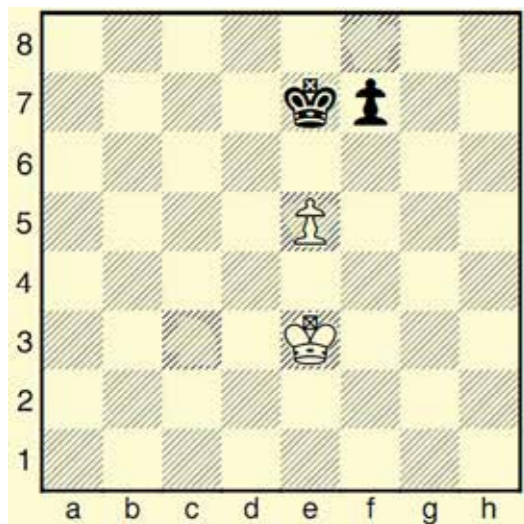
In the Diagram you see red, green and orange arrows. Which coloured arrows represent:

- A) RANKS
- B) FILES
- C) DIAGONALS



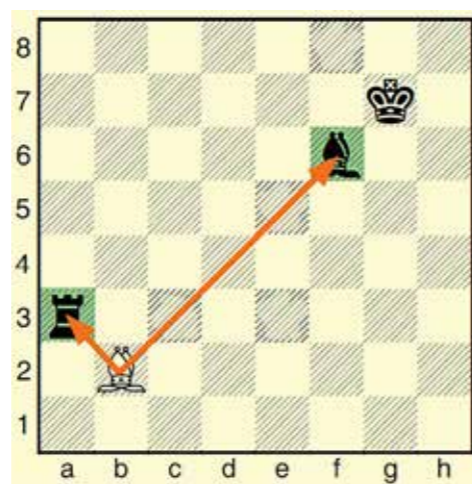
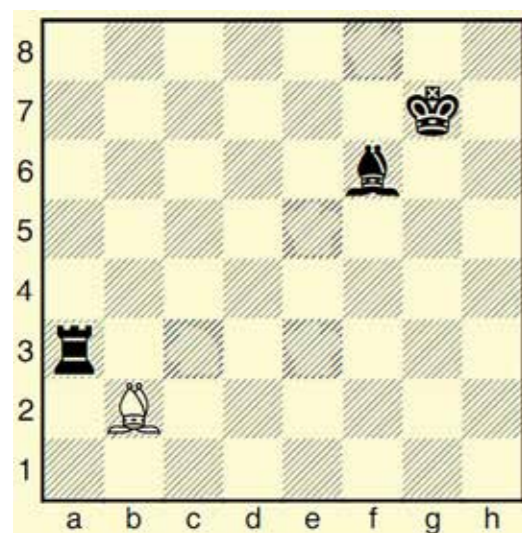
**Answer:**  
A) RANKS = RED  
B) FILES = GREEN  
C) DIAGONALS = ORANGE

**Q15** Black plays 1...f5. Can White capture en passant with 2.exf6+ ?



Answer: Yes! 2. exf6+

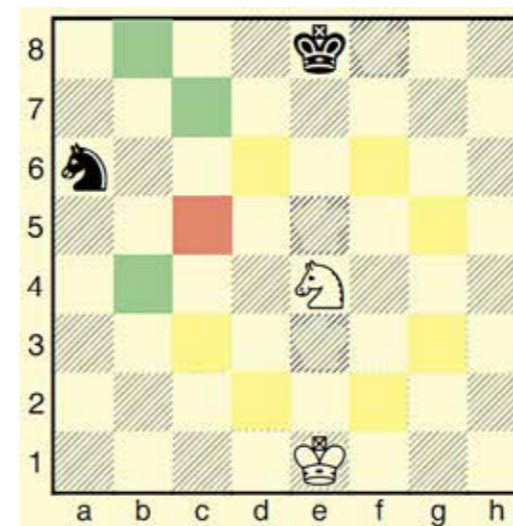
**Q16** How many pieces is the white Bishop attacking?



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



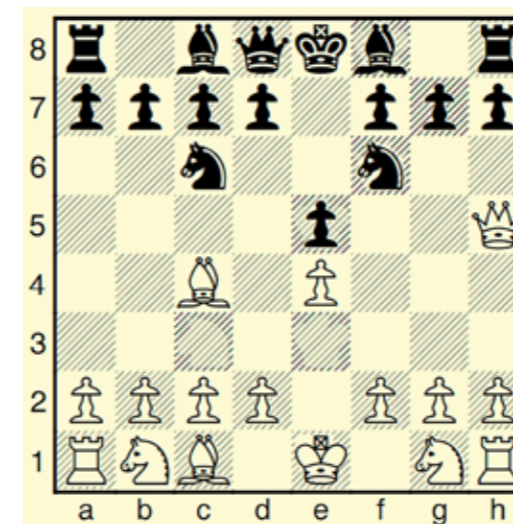
**Q17** How many squares does:  
A) the white Knight CONTROL?  
B) the black Knight CONTROL ?



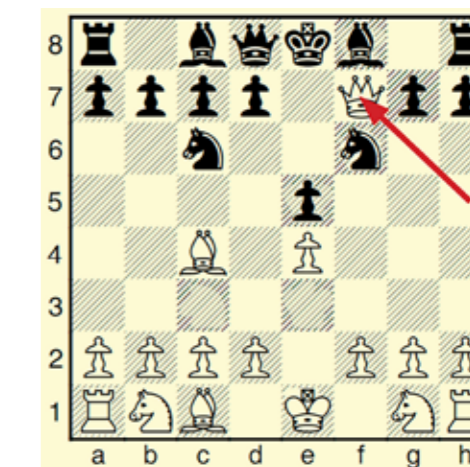
- A) The white Knight controls 8 squares
- B) The black Knight controls 4 squares.

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.



White to play and checkmate in ONE.

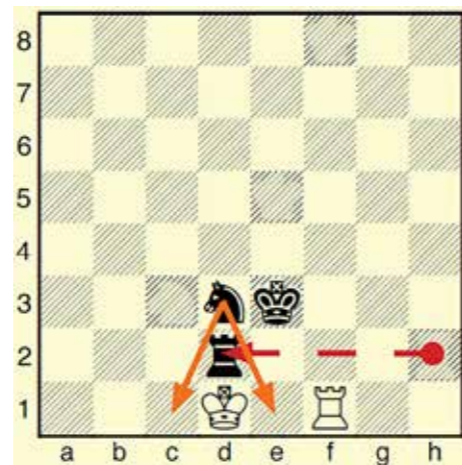
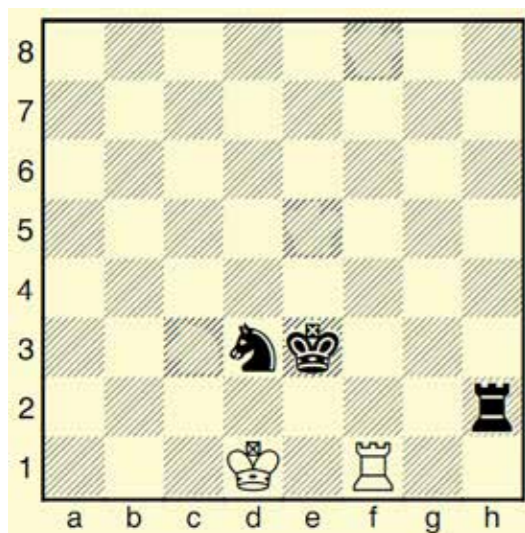


Answer:  
4 Qxf7 checkmate!



**Q19** Black to play and mate White in one move. Which is the right move?:

- A) 1...Ra2
- B) 1...Rd2+
- C) 1...Nb2+



**B) 1...Rd2 checkmate!**

**Q20** 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"



Answer:  
CHECK is "+"  
CAPTURE is "x"



## PHOTOGRAPHY & DESIGN CREDITS

John Upham is photographer and founder of Britishchessnews.com and an accredited chess coach and writer.

Some of the photographs used in this publication were either taken by John or sourced by John from historical archives.



Laura Hiron, School Photographer at St Catherine's School, Bramley, took the photographs of St Catherine's students featured in this booklet.



This booklet has been designed by Hannah Walsh, Graphic Designer at St Catherine's School, Bramley.



# SUMMARY

I hope you did well in the quiz and got all the answers right. If not, please re-read the booklet until you have thoroughly absorbed the contents. Hard work will allow the secrets of chess to gradually reveal themselves to you.

“

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!

”

We have now reached the end of Booklet One. Time to move on to Booklet Two, which will increase our knowledge and understanding of chess.

Andrew Martin, February 2021



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