ChessDepth Academy

FREE STARTER PACK

Chess from Zero

Everything an absolute beginner needs: the board, how every piece moves, check and checkmate, the special moves, your first checkmates and how to start a game

- The board
- How the pieces move
- Capturing
- Check & checkmate
- Special moves
- First checkmates
- How to start a game
- 62 exercises

For complete beginners, children and adults · no rating needed

chessdepth.in

How to use this pack

This pack takes you from "I have never played" to playing a full game of chess. Each chapter teaches one idea in plain words with diagrams, then gives you exercises to try. All the answers are at the back.

1 One chapter at a time

Read a chapter, set up the diagrams on a real board if you have one, then do its exercises.

2 Write your answers

Each exercise has a line for your answer. Write it down before you look at the back.

3 Check every answer

Read the explanation even when you were right: it tells you why, which is what you will remember.

4 Play as you learn

After chapter 3 you can already play. Play slow games with a friend or online and use the plan on the last pages.

What's inside

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2 **Setting up the pieces** p. 4
3 **How the pieces move** p. 5
4 **Capturing and piece values** p. 8
5 **Check, checkmate and stalemate** p. 10
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Reading the diagrams

In the puzzles, the side to move is at the **bottom**.

Yellow squares show the **last move** played.

○ White to move · ● Black to move

+ check · **#** checkmate · **x** capture · **!** strong move · **?** mistake

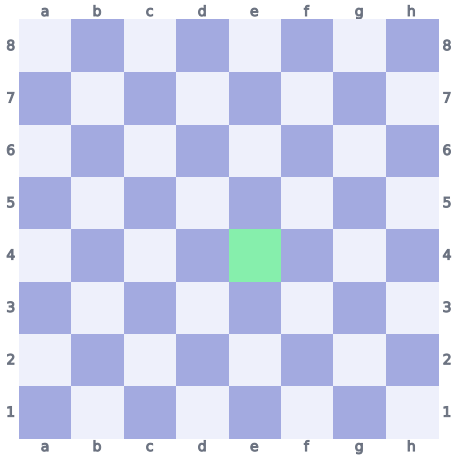
New to the notation? Chapter 1 explains square names like **e4**, and chapter 2 the letters for the pieces.

1 The chessboard

Sixty-four squares, and every one has a name.

A chessboard has **64 squares** in 8 rows and 8 columns, coloured light and dark in turn. Put the board so that each player has a **light square in the right-hand corner**. Remember: *"light on the right"*.

The columns are called **files** and are named with letters, **a** to **h**, from White's left to right. The rows are called **ranks** and are numbered **1** to **8**, starting from White's side. A square's name is its file and then its rank: **e4** is on the e-file and the 4th rank. The lines that run corner to corner in one colour are **diagonals**.



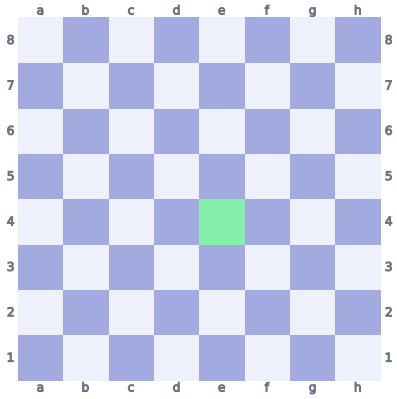
The marked square is **e4**: file e, rank 4.

Why names matter

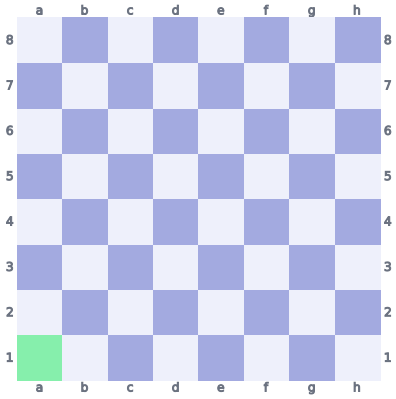
With square names you can write down a whole game, read chess books, and follow a coach. White always starts at the bottom of a diagram, on ranks 1 and 2.

- Light square in the **right-hand corner**.
- **Files** go up and down: a to h.
- **Ranks** go across: 1 to 8.
- Name a square by **file first**, then rank.

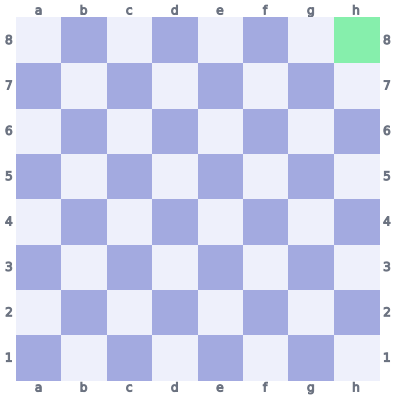
EXERCISE A: NAME THE GREEN SQUARE ON EACH BOARD



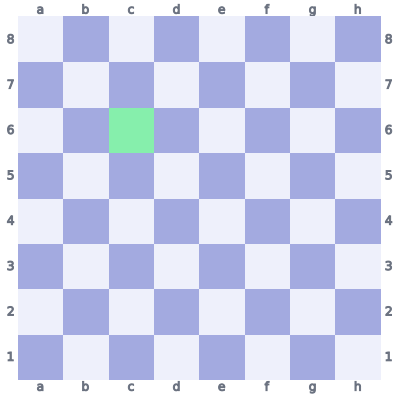
Square 1: _____



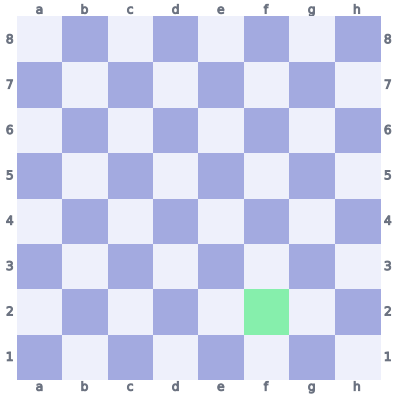
Square 2: _____



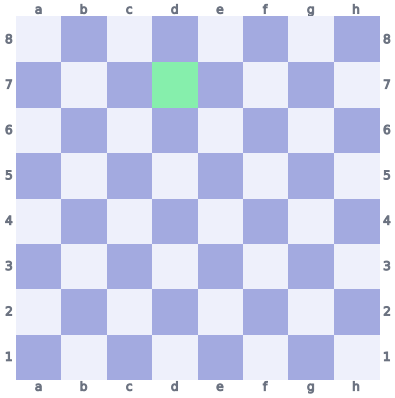
Square 3: _____



Square 4: _____



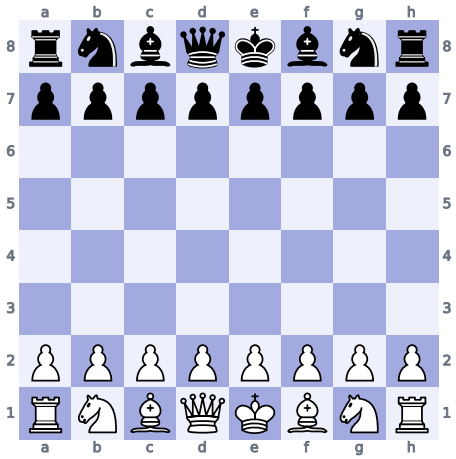
Square 5: _____



Square 6: _____

2 Setting up the pieces

Each side starts with 16 pieces: one king, one queen, two rooks, two bishops, two knights and eight pawns.



The starting position. White moves first.

Set up in four steps

1. **Rooks** in the corners, **knights** next to them, then **bishops**.
2. The **queen on her own colour**: the white queen on the light square d1, the black queen on the dark square d8.
3. The **king** on the last square in the middle: e1 and e8.
4. **Pawns** fill the whole second row in front.

The two kings face each other on the e-file, and so do the two queens on the d-file.

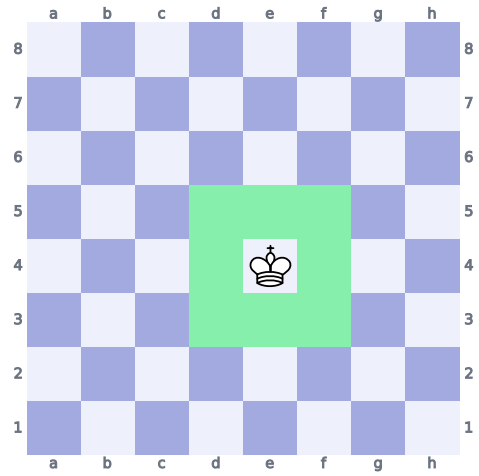
The pieces and their letters

Piece	Letter	White starts on	Value in points
♔ King	K	e1	priceless: if it is trapped you lose
♕ Queen	Q	d1	9
♖ Rook	R	a1 and h1	5
♗ Bishop	B	c1 and f1	3
♘ Knight	N (K is taken by the king)	b1 and g1	3
♙ Pawn	no letter	a2 to h2	1

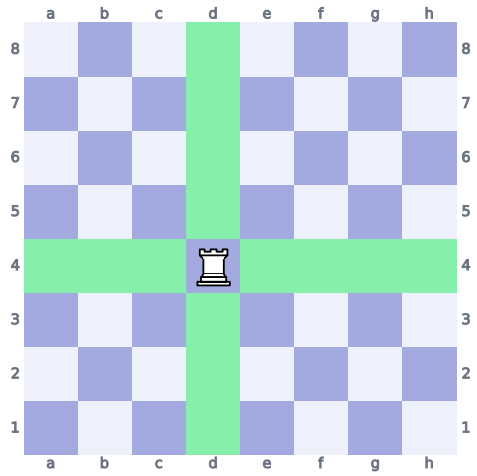
A move is written as the piece's letter and the square it goes to: **Nf3** means "knight to f3". Pawn moves are just the square: **e4**. An **x** means a capture (**Bxc6**), **+** means check and **#** means checkmate.

3 How the pieces move (1)

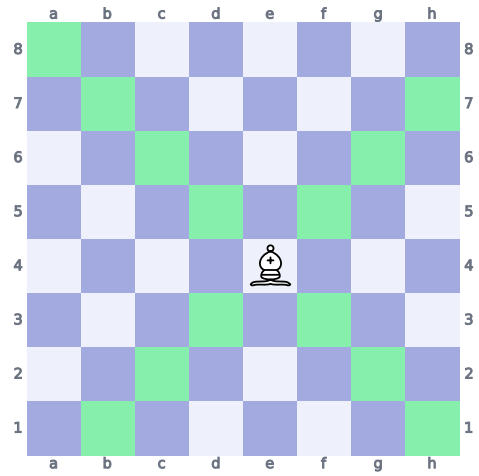
The king, the rook, the bishop and the queen. Green squares show where the piece can go.



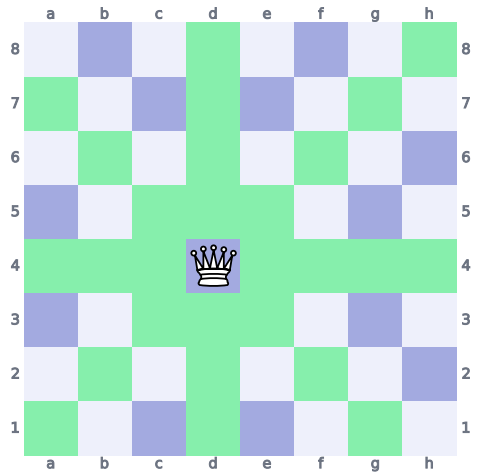
King: one square in any direction.



Rook: any distance along its file or rank.



Bishop: any distance along a diagonal. It stays on one colour all game.

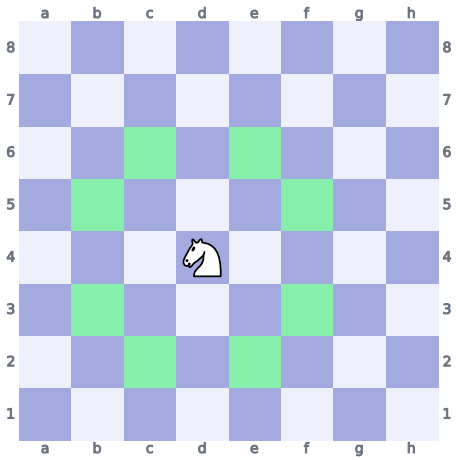


Queen: rook and bishop together, in all eight directions.

> Rooks, bishops and the queen can't jump: a piece in the way blocks them. They can **capture** the first enemy piece in their path by moving onto its square, but never one of their own.

3 How the pieces move (2)

The knight jumps, and the pawn is the only piece that captures differently from how it moves.

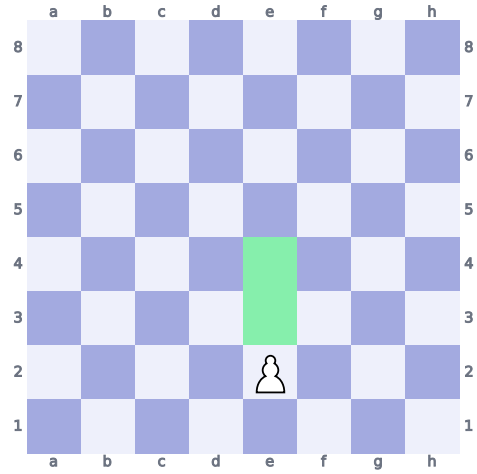


Knight: an "L" shape, two squares one way and one square to the side.

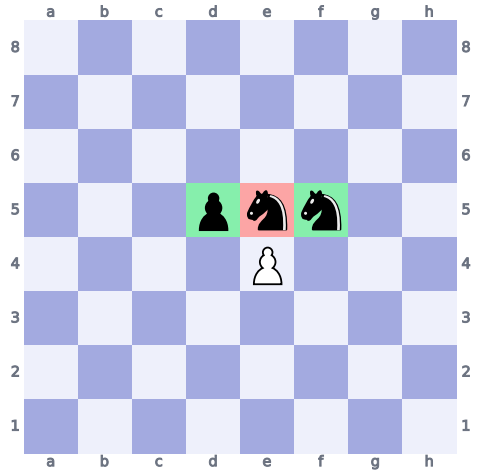
The knight

The knight is the only piece that can **jump over** other pieces. From the middle of the board it reaches eight squares; from a corner only two. A knight always lands on the **other colour**: from a light square to a dark one, and back.

Count it as "two and one": two squares straight, then one to the side. In the centre a knight is strong; on the edge it is weak.



Pawn: one square straight forward, or two on its very first move.



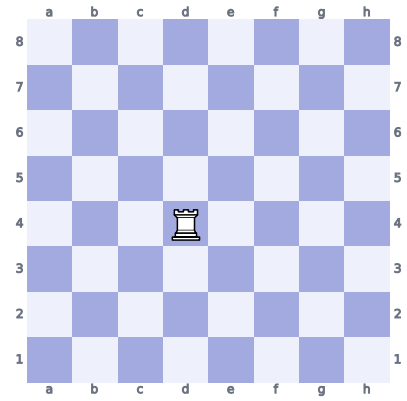
Pawns capture diagonally: exd5 or exf5. The knight on e5 blocks the way forward.

- Pawns never move backwards, and never sideways.
- A pawn moves straight but **captures diagonally**. A piece right in front of it blocks it.
- A pawn that reaches the last rank **promotes**: chapter 6 explains.

3 Exercise B: how many squares?

Count every square the white piece can move to (captures count too). The black pieces are only there to block or be captured.

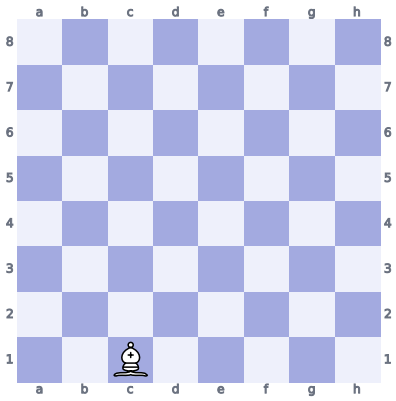
1 How many squares?



Rook on d4, empty board

Your answer:

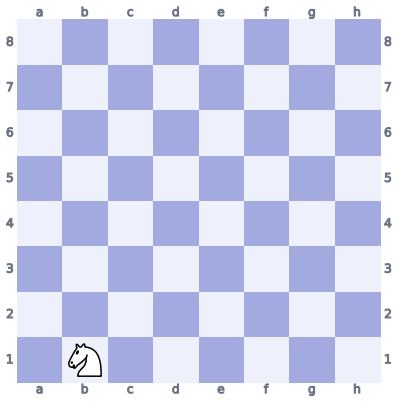
2 How many squares?



Bishop on c1

Your answer:

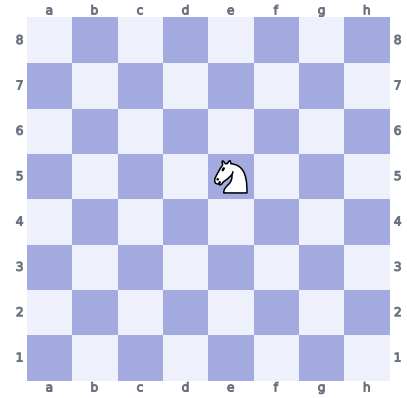
3 How many squares?



Knight on b1

Your answer:

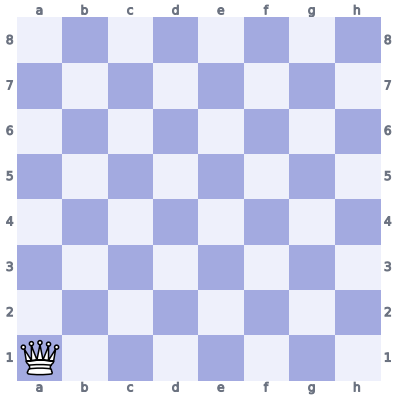
4 How many squares?



Knight on e5

Your answer:

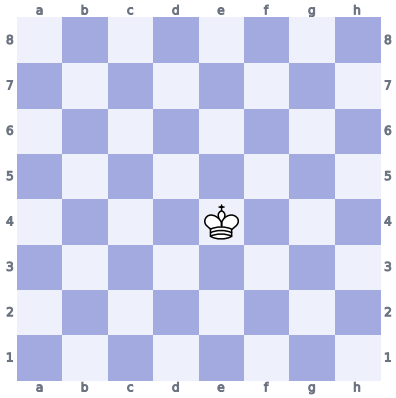
5 How many squares?



Queen on a1

Your answer:

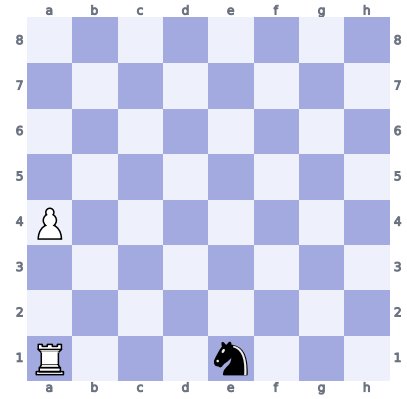
6 How many squares?



King on e4

Your answer:

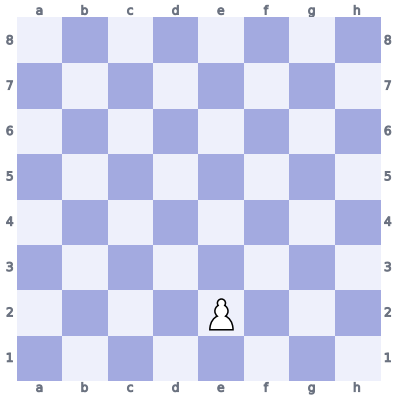
7 How many squares?



Rook on a1: your pawn on a4, a black knight on e1

Your answer:

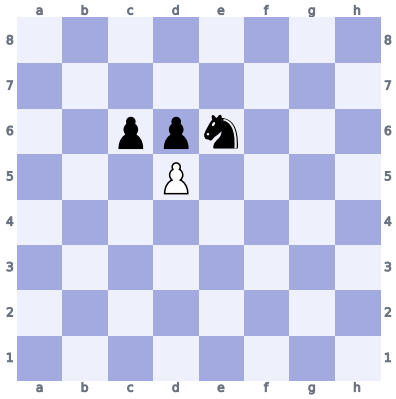
8 How many squares?



Pawn on e2, its first move

Your answer:

9 How many squares?



Pawn on d5: black pawns on c6 and d6, black knight on e6

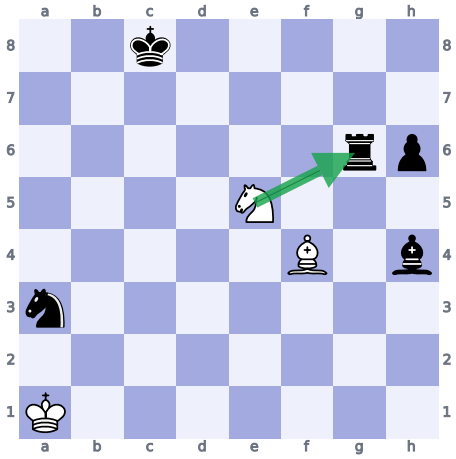
Your answer:

4 Capturing and piece values

Win more than you lose. Points help you decide which trades are good.

You capture by moving onto an enemy piece's square and taking it off the board. Captures are never forced in chess (except to get out of check), so before you take, ask: **can it be taken back?**

Queen	Rook	Bishop	Knight	Pawn
9	5	3	3	1



White to move. Which capture wins a piece for free?

Free pieces and fair trades

A piece that is attacked and **not defended** is called a **free** (or "hanging") piece: you take it and lose nothing. Here **Nxg6** wins the rook on g6, because no black piece can take back.

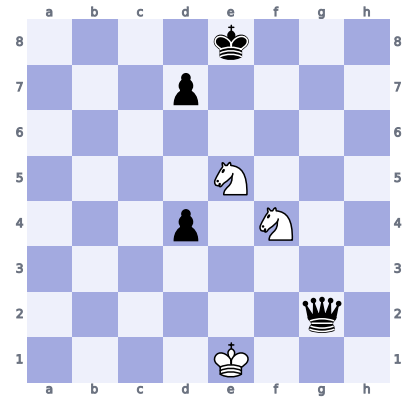
Taking a **defended** piece is a **trade**. Trading a knight (3) for a bishop (3) is fair. Taking a pawn (1) with your queen (9) when the pawn is defended loses 8 points.

> Before every capture, count: **what do I take, and what can they take back?** And before every move, check that **your** pieces are not left free.

4 Exercise C: find the free piece

White to move. One capture wins a black piece for nothing. The other capture looks tempting but loses material.

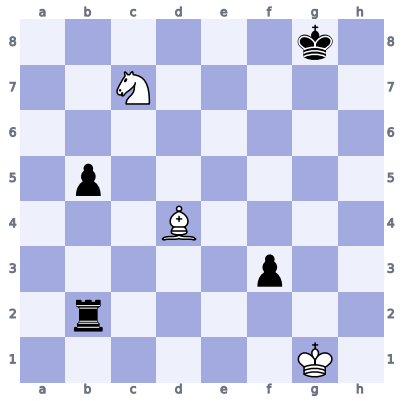
1 Find the free piece



White to move

Your answer:

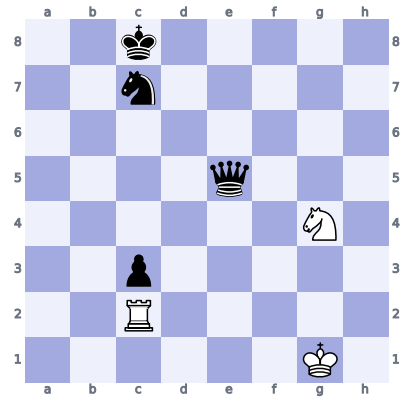
2 Find the free piece



White to move

Your answer:

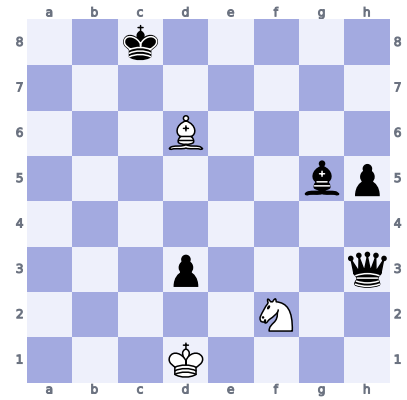
3 Find the free piece



White to move

Your answer:

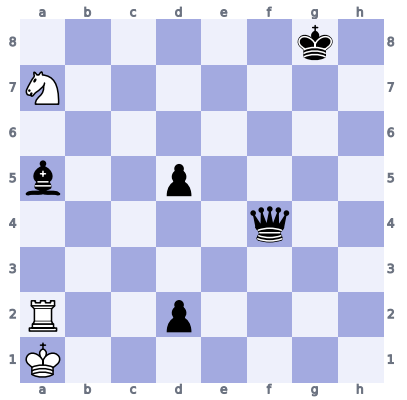
4 Find the free piece



White to move

Your answer:

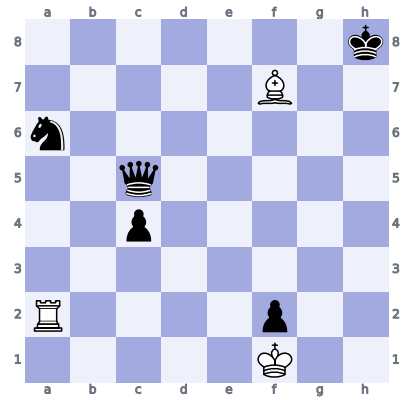
5 Find the free piece



White to move

Your answer:

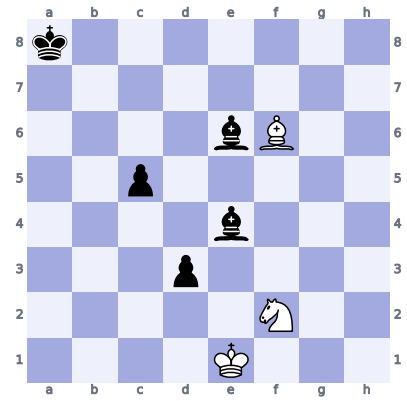
6 Find the free piece



White to move

Your answer:

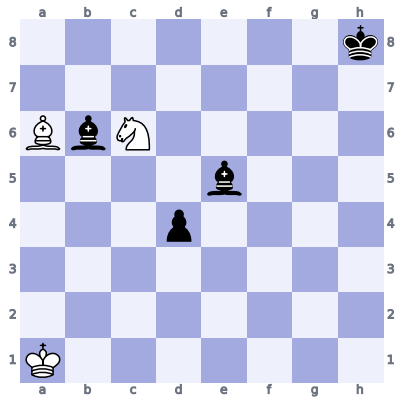
7 Find the free piece



White to move

Your answer:

8 Find the free piece



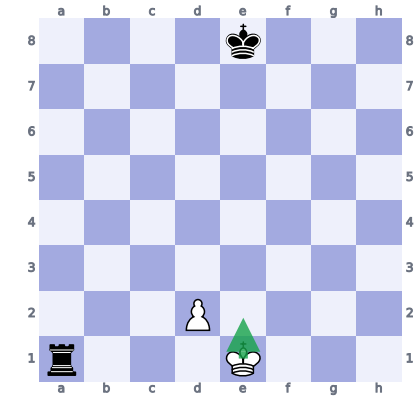
White to move

Your answer:

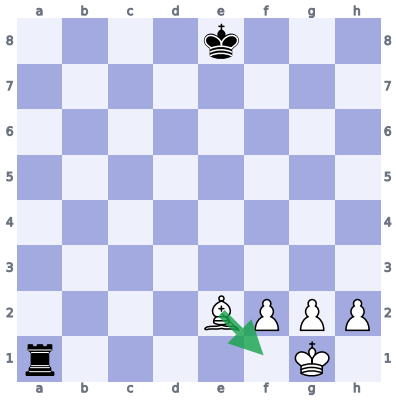
5 Check, checkmate and stalemate

The whole game is about the king. Trap it and you win.

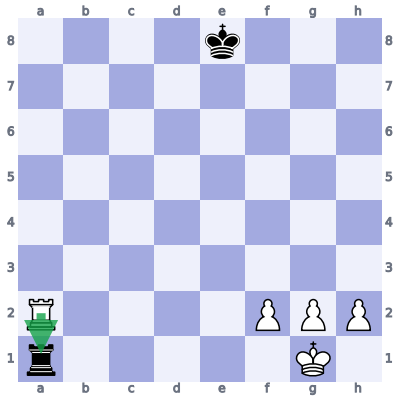
A king that is attacked is **in check**. You must get out of check at once, and you may never make a move that puts or leaves your own king in check. There are exactly **three ways out**:



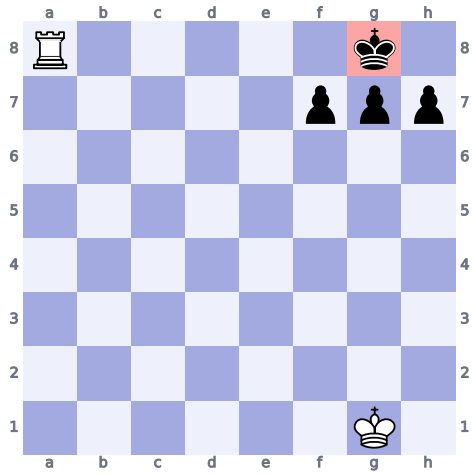
1. Move the king to a safe square: Ke2 or Kf2.



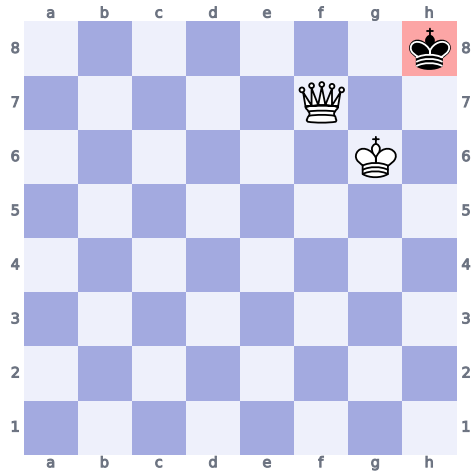
2. Block the check: Bf1 puts the bishop in the way.



3. Capture the checking piece: Rxa1.



Checkmate: the king is in check and none of the three ways works. The game is over: White wins.



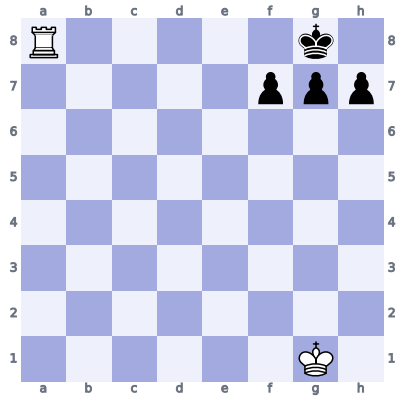
Stalemate: Black to move is not in check but has no legal move. The game is a draw!

> Stalemate is the beginner's most painful mistake: you are winning easily, and you take away every move from the enemy king without giving check. Always leave the lone king a square until you can give mate.

5 Exercise D: check, checkmate, stalemate or none?

It is Black's turn in every diagram. Write which one it is: check, checkmate, stalemate, or none of these.

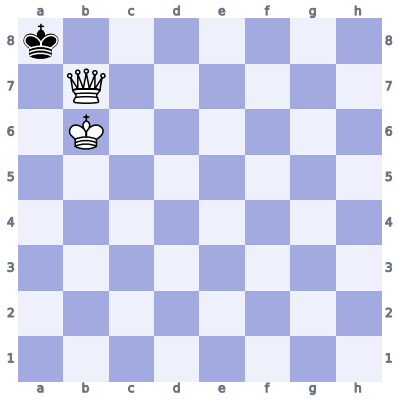
1 **Which one?**



Black to move

Your answer:

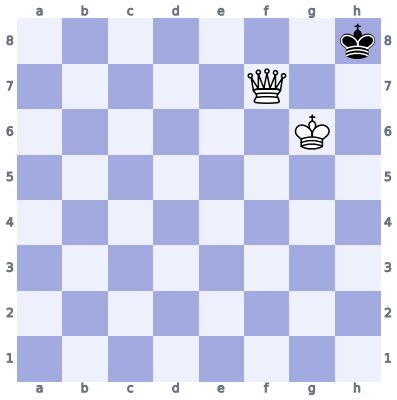
2 **Which one?**



Black to move

Your answer:

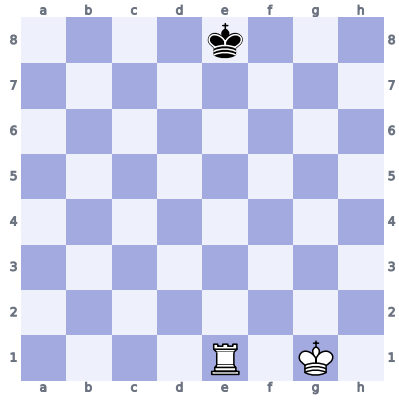
3 **Which one?**



Black to move

Your answer:

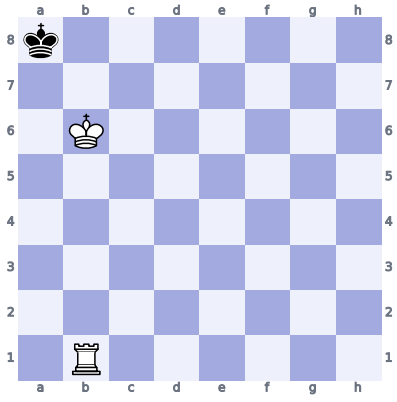
4 **Which one?**



Black to move

Your answer:

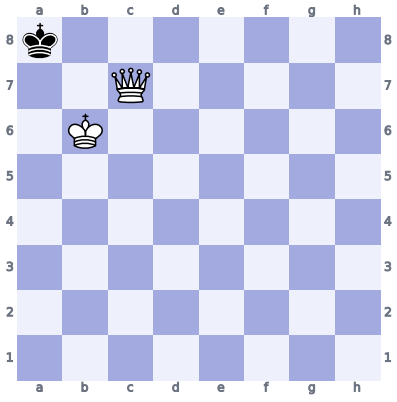
5 **Which one?**



Black to move

Your answer:

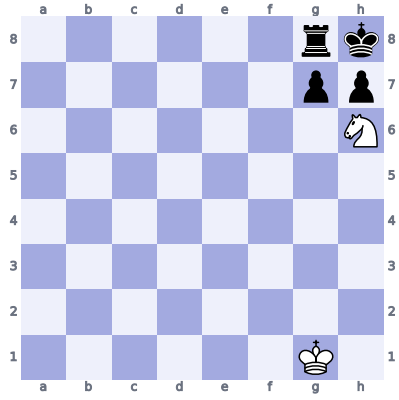
6 **Which one?**



Black to move

Your answer:

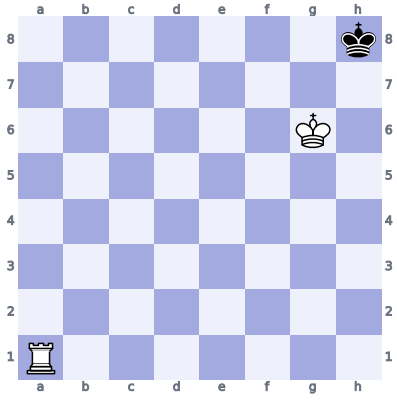
7 **Which one?**



Black to move

Your answer:

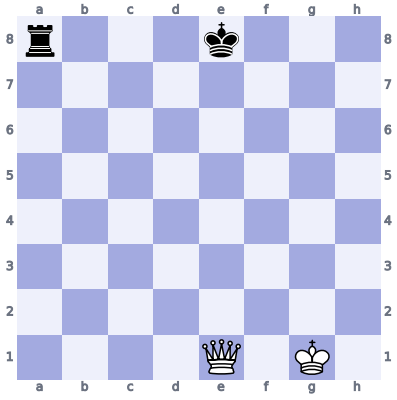
8 **Which one?**



Black to move

Your answer:

9 **Which one?**

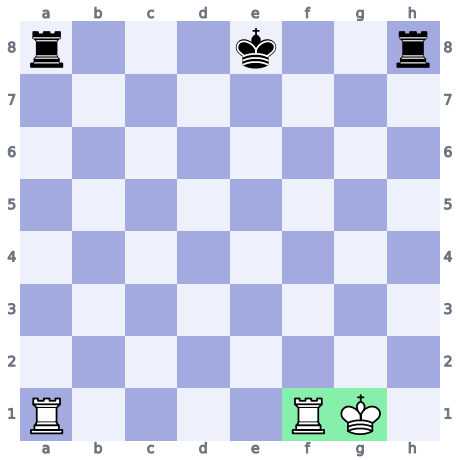


Black to move

Your answer:

6 The special moves

Castling, promotion and en passant. Three rules every player must know.

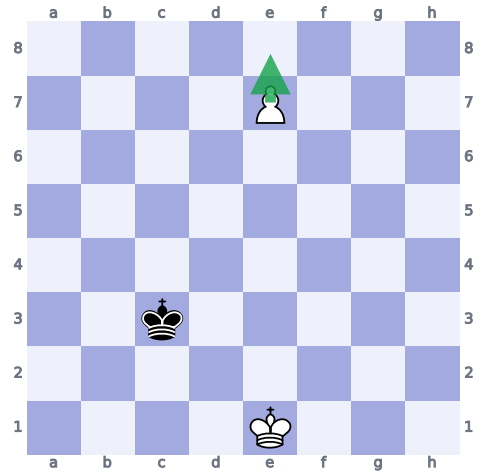


Castling kingside: the king goes two squares towards the rook (e1-g1), and the rook jumps over to f1.

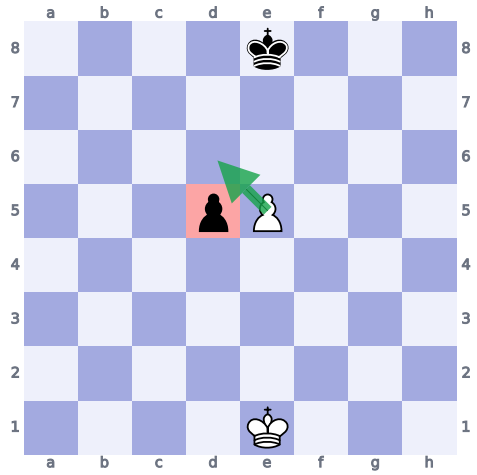
Castling

Castling is the only move with two pieces at once. It puts your king in safety and brings a rook into play. Write it **O-O** (kingside) or **O-O-O** (queenside, king to c1 and rook to d1). You may castle only if:

- The king and that rook have **never moved**.
- There are **no pieces between** them.
- The king is **not in check** right now.
- The king does not **pass through or land on** an attacked square.



Promotion: a pawn that reaches the last rank becomes a queen, rook, bishop or knight. Almost always a queen: e8=Q.



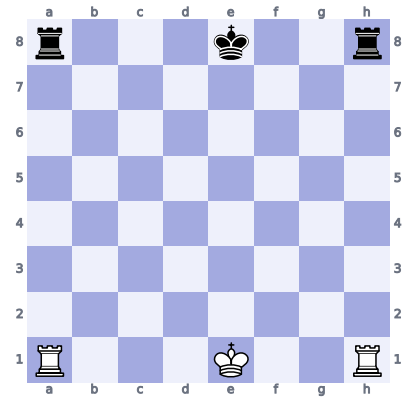
En passant: Black's pawn went d7-d5 in one go, passing d6. White's pawn on e5 may take it as if it had moved one square: exd6.

> En passant is only possible on the **very next move** after the two-square pawn move. Wait one move and the chance is gone.

6 Exercise E: can White castle kingside?

The white king and rooks have not moved yet. Can White play O-O right now? Use the four rules on the page before.

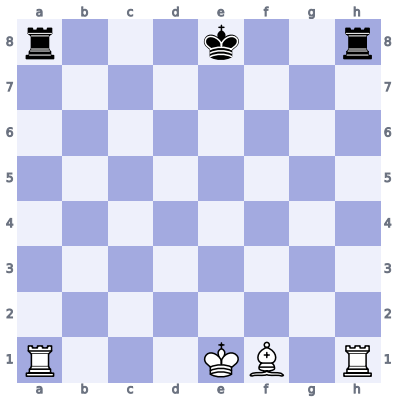
1 **Can White play O-O?**



Yes or no, and why?

Your answer:

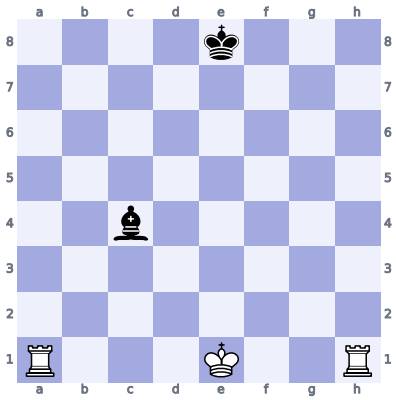
2 **Can White play O-O?**



Yes or no, and why?

Your answer:

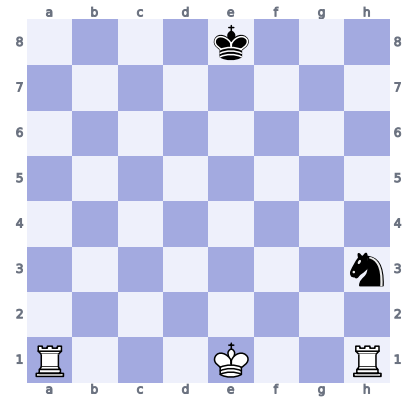
3 **Can White play O-O?**



Yes or no, and why?

Your answer:

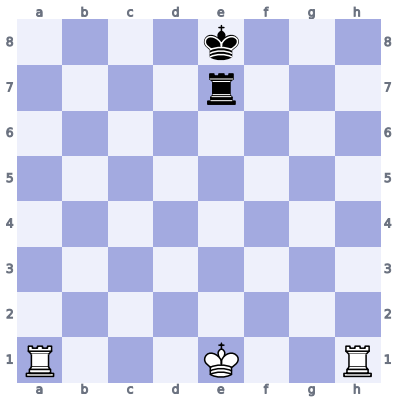
4 **Can White play O-O?**



Yes or no, and why?

Your answer:

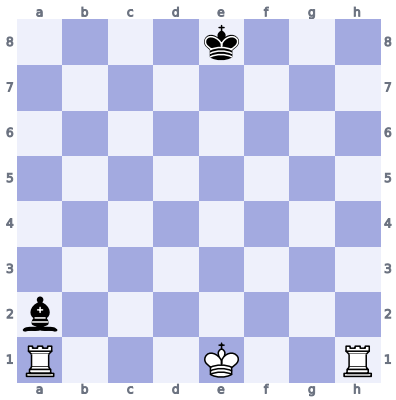
5 **Can White play O-O?**



Yes or no, and why?

Your answer:

6 **Can White play O-O?**



Yes or no, and why?

Your answer:

7 How a game ends

Win, lose or draw, and a few good manners.

Result	How it happens
Win by checkmate	The enemy king is in check and can't escape.
Win by resignation	The opponent gives up because they are losing badly.
Win on time	With a chess clock, the opponent runs out of time (unless you have too little left to ever mate).
Draw by stalemate	The player to move is not in check but has no legal move.
Draw, not enough pieces	Neither side can ever give mate, for example king against king, or king and bishop against king.
Draw by repetition	The same position appears three times with the same player to move.
Draw by the 50-move rule	Fifty moves by each side without a capture or a pawn move.
Draw by agreement	Both players agree to a draw.

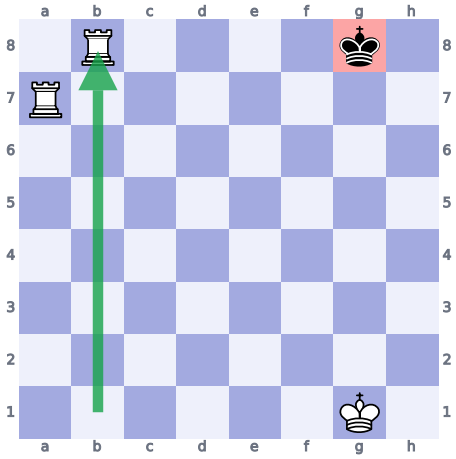
Good habits from day one

- **Touch-move:** in a real game, a piece you touch must be moved, and a piece you let go of stays there.
- Shake hands before and after the game, and say "good game", win or lose.
- Don't talk or help during a game. Say "check" if you like, but you don't have to.
- After the game, look at it again: where did it go wrong, and why?

8 Your first checkmates

With a big extra piece you must be able to finish the game. These three mates come up again and again.

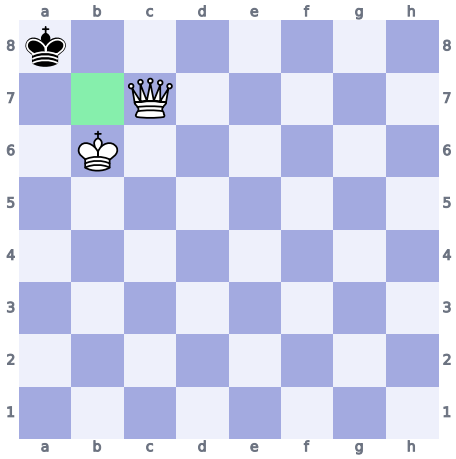
1. Two rooks: the ladder



Ladder mate: one rook checks on the edge, the other guards the row in front.

The two rooks take turns: one cuts the king off along a rank, the other gives check on the next rank. Step by step, like climbing a ladder, the king is pushed to the edge, and the last check is mate. Keep your rooks **far away** from the enemy king so it can't attack them.

2. King and queen



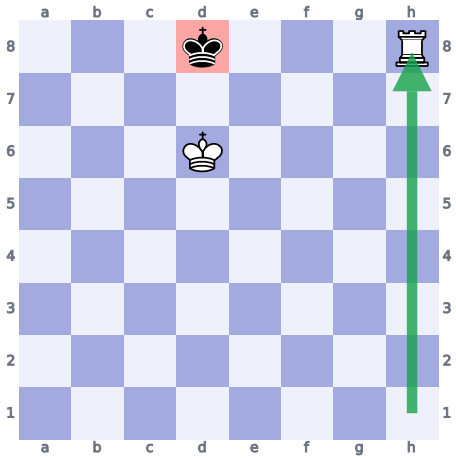
The queen on c7 has boxed the king into the corner. Careful: Qb6?? or any waiting move that takes away a7 and b8 without check is stalemate. Here Qb7# finishes.

Use the queen to make a **box** around the enemy king, a knight's move away, and shrink the box move by move. When the king is on the edge, bring **your king** close, then give mate with the queen next to the enemy king, protected by your king. Every time, check that the enemy king still has a move (no stalemate!).

8 Your first checkmates (continued)

The king and rook mate needs teamwork between your king and your rook.

3. King and rook



King and rook mate: the kings face each other, and the rook checks along the edge.

The rook alone can't do it: you need your king. Push the enemy king to the edge with the rook, bring your king in front of it, and give check along the edge when the kings stand **face to face**.

If the enemy king steps away from the face-to-face position, make a **waiting move** with the rook along its file or rank, far from the king, and wait for it to come back.

Practise until it is automatic

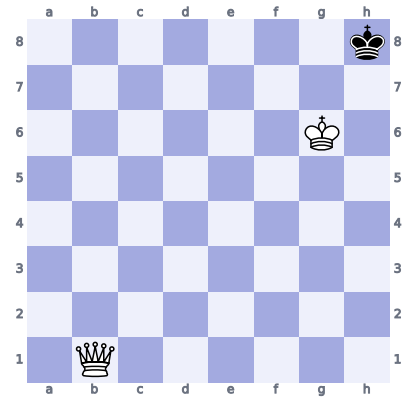
- Set up king and queen against king on a board, or play them against a computer, until you mate every time in under 10 moves.
- Then the two-rook ladder, then king and rook.
- Before every move, ask: **does the enemy king still have a legal move?** If not, and it is not in check, you have stalemated it.
- Keep your queen or rook **out of reach** of the enemy king, or protected by your king.

> The exercises on the next page are all mate in one with a queen or a rook. Find the check that leaves the king no square.

8 Exercise F: mate in one with the queen or rook

White to move and give checkmate in one move. Watch out for stalemate!

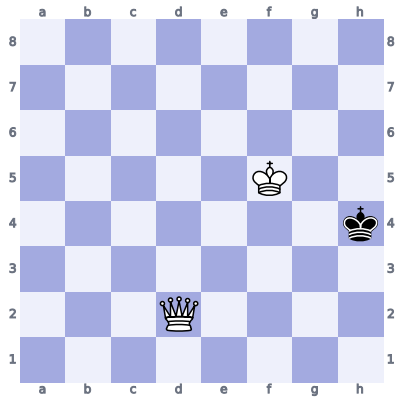
1 ○ White mates in one



White to move

Your answer:

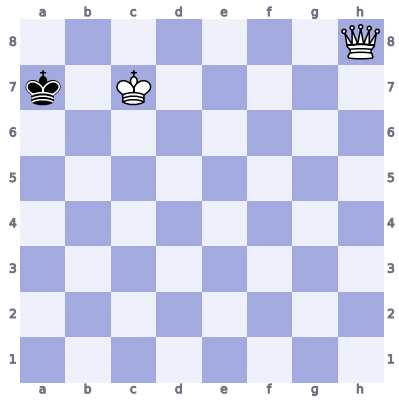
2 ○ White mates in one



White to move

Your answer:

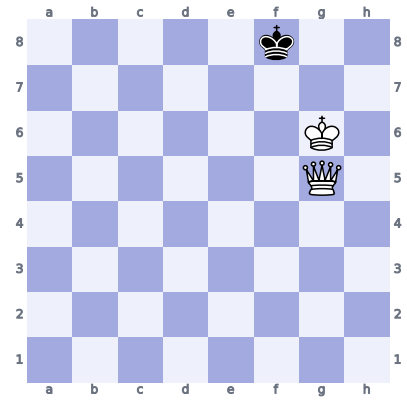
3 ○ White mates in one



White to move

Your answer:

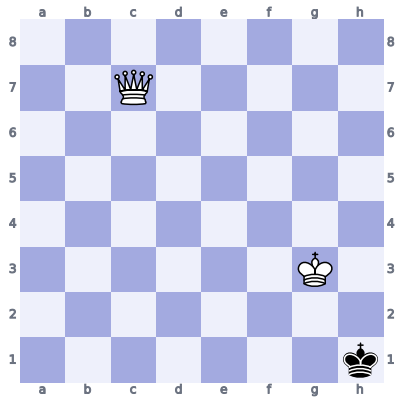
4 ○ White mates in one



White to move

Your answer:

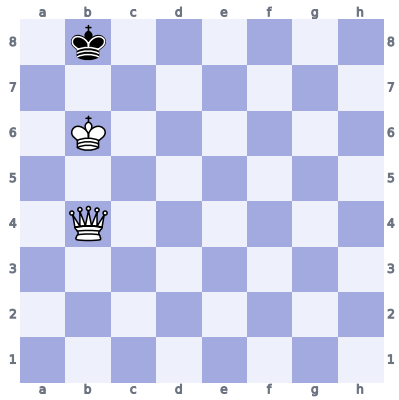
5 ○ White mates in one



White to move

Your answer:

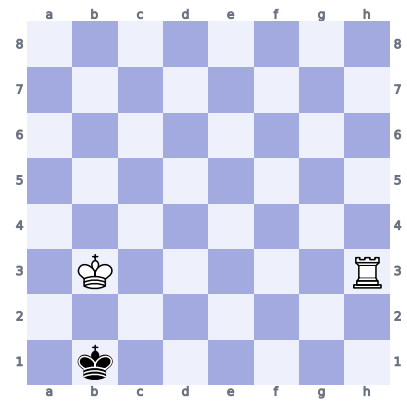
6 ○ White mates in one



White to move

Your answer:

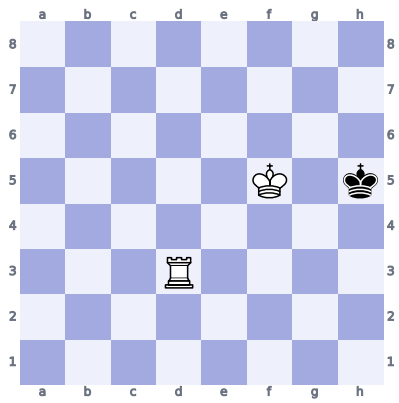
7 ○ White mates in one



White to move

Your answer:

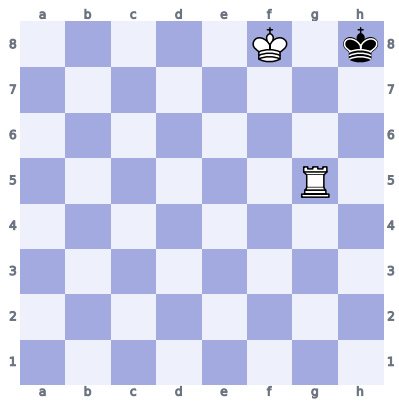
8 ○ White mates in one



White to move

Your answer:

9 ○ White mates in one

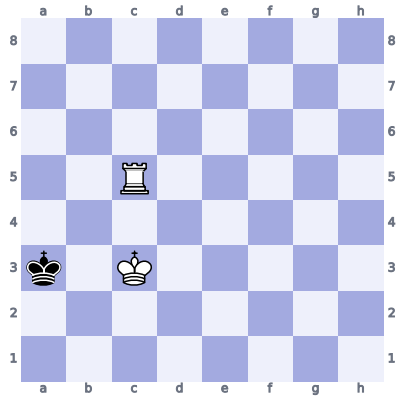


White to move

Your answer:

8 Exercise F: mate in one with the queen or rook (continued)

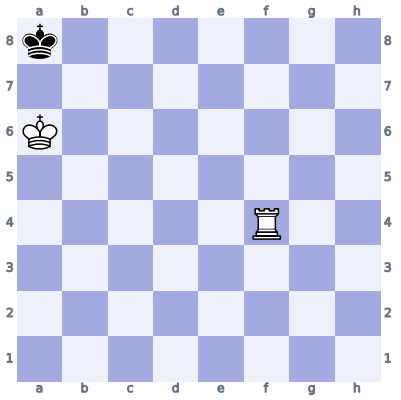
10 ○ White mates in one



White to move

Your answer:

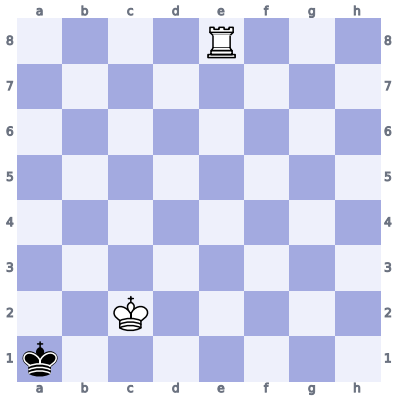
11 ○ White mates in one



White to move

Your answer:

12 ○ White mates in one

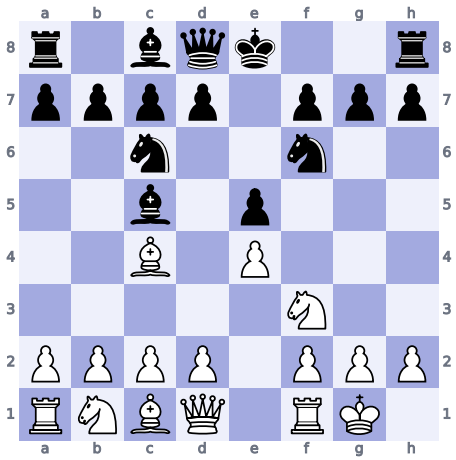


White to move

Your answer:

9 How to start a game

The first ten moves have one job: get your pieces out and your king safe.

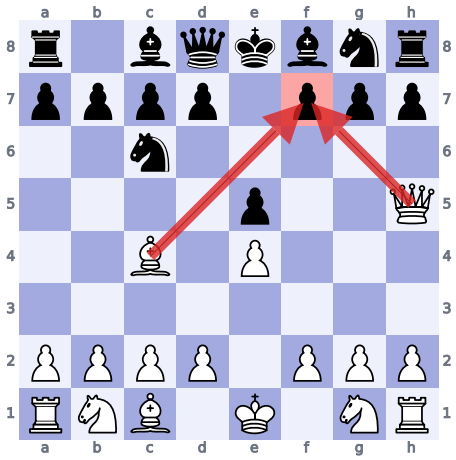


A healthy start: 1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.O-O Nf6. Pawns in the centre, knights and bishops out, king castled.

Three golden rules

1. **Take the centre.** Move a centre pawn (e4 or d4) first, to open lines for your bishops and queen.
2. **Bring out your pieces.** Knights and bishops first, each one once, towards the centre. Don't move the same piece twice without a reason.
3. **Castle early.** Put your king safe in the corner and connect your rooks.

And don't bring the queen out too early: the opponent will chase it with pieces they need to develop anyway.



Danger! White threatens Qxf7, mate, supported by the bishop on c4. Defend with 3...g6 (attacking the queen) or 3...Qe7.

The four-move checkmate

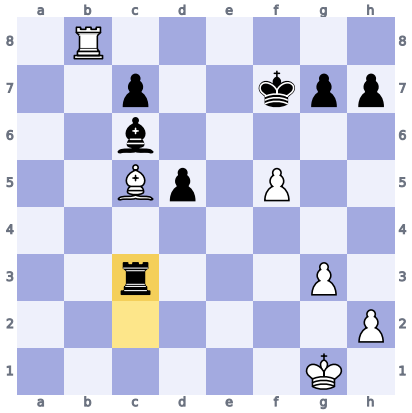
Every beginner meets it: 1.e4 e5 2.Bc4 Nc6 3.Qh5, and if Black plays the natural 3...Nf6?? then 4.Qxf7 is checkmate. The f7-square is weak because only the king defends it.

The defence is easy once you know it: **3...g6** chases the queen away, and **3...Qe7** also guards f7. Always ask: *what does my opponent's last move threaten?*

10 Exercise G: mate in one from real games

Positions from real games played online. The side to move is at the bottom. Find the move that gives checkmate. The yellow squares show the opponent's last move.

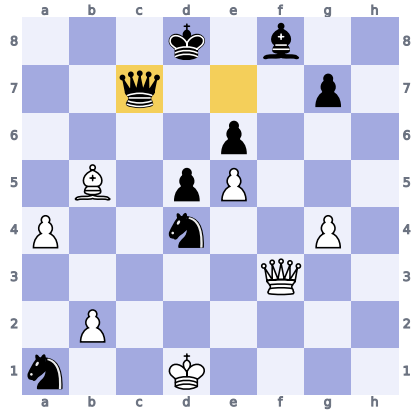
1 ○ White mates in one



Hint: Try every check.

Your answer:

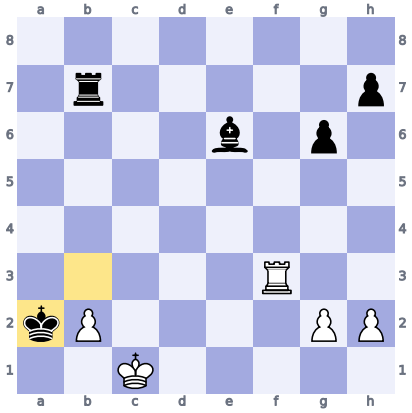
2 ○ White mates in one



Hint: Try every check.

Your answer:

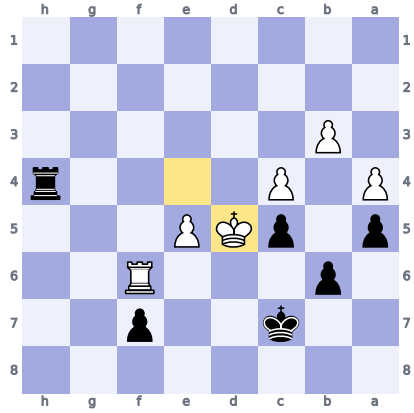
3 ○ White mates in one



Hint: Try every check.

Your answer:

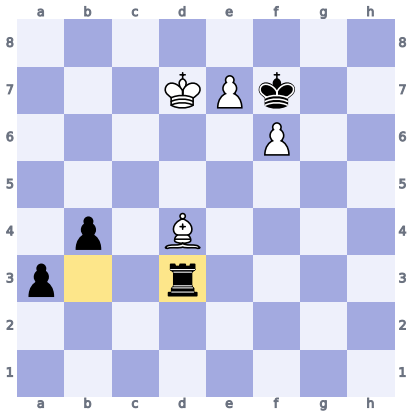
4 ● Black mates in one



Hint: Try every check.

Your answer:

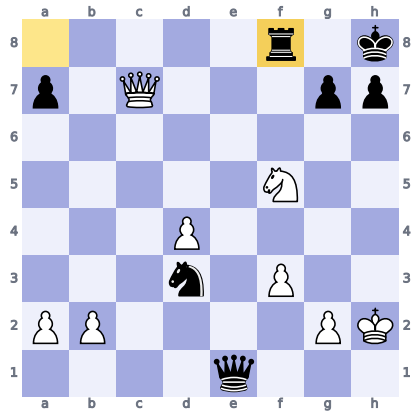
5 ○ White mates in one



Hint: Try every check.

Your answer:

6 ○ White mates in one

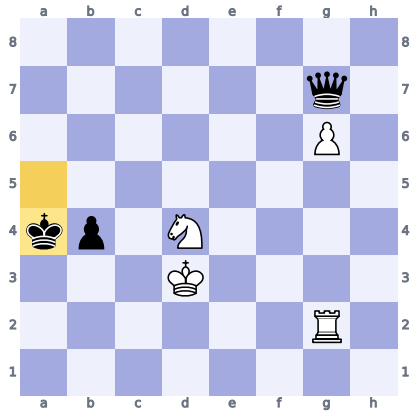


Hint: Try every check.

Your answer:

10 Exercise G: mate in one from real games (continued)

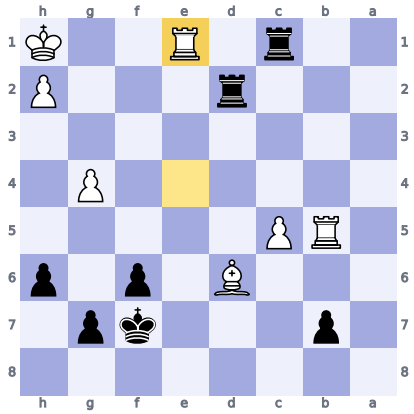
7 ○ White mates in one



Hint: Try every check.

Your answer:

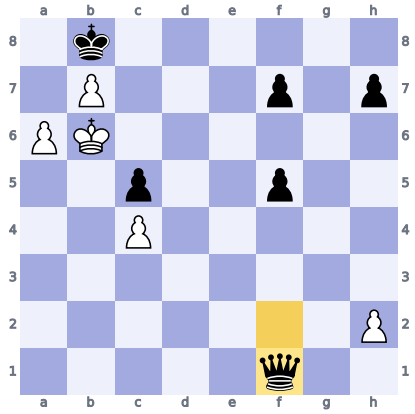
8 ● Black mates in one



Hint: Try every check.

Your answer:

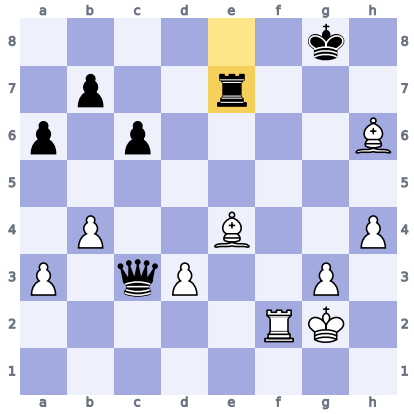
9 ○ White mates in one



Hint: Try every check.

Your answer:

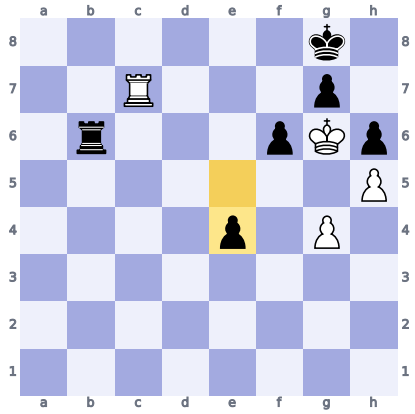
10 ○ White mates in one



Hint: Try every check.

Your answer:

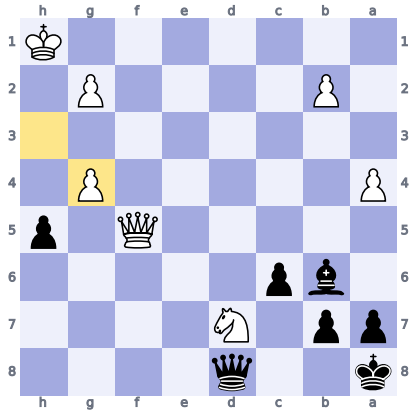
11 ○ White mates in one



Hint: Try every check.

Your answer:

12 ● Black mates in one



Hint: Try every check.

Your answer:

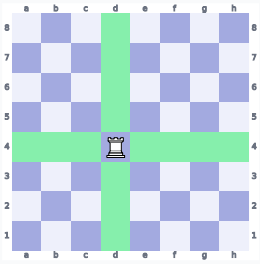
ANSWERS

Exercise A: name the square

1. e4 **2.** a1 **3.** h8 **4.** c6 **5.** f2 **6.** d7

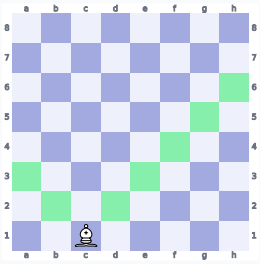
Tip: count from White's side. The file letter comes first, then the rank number. From Black's side of the board the names stay the same, so a8 is always in the corner on White's left at the far end.

Exercise B: how many squares?



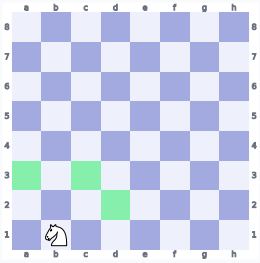
1

14 squares (rook on d4, empty board): d1, d2, d3, a4, b4, c4, e4, f4, g4, h4, d5, d6, d7, d8.



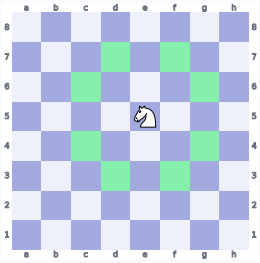
2

7 squares (bishop on c1): b2, d2, a3, e3, f4, g5, h6.



3

3 squares (knight on b1): d2, a3, c3.

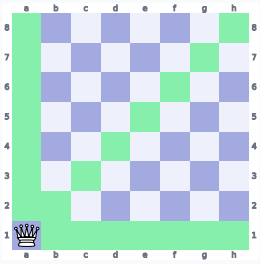


4

8 squares (knight on e5): d3, f3, c4, g4, c6, g6, d7, f7.

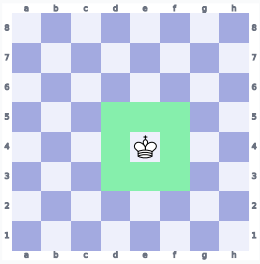
ANSWERS

Exercise B: how many squares?



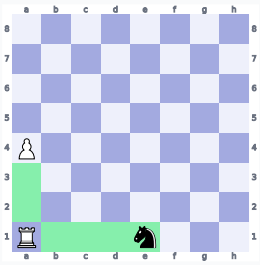
5

21 squares (queen on a1): b1, c1, d1, e1, f1, g1, h1, a2, b2, a3, c3, a4, d4, a5, e5, a6, f6, a7, g7, a8, h8.



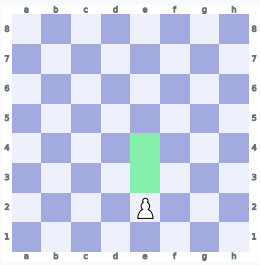
6

8 squares (king on e4): d3, e3, f3, d4, f4, d5, e5, f5.



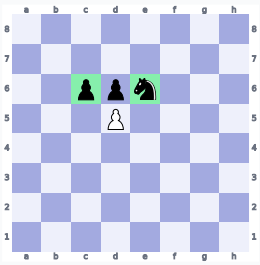
7

6 squares (rook on a1: your pawn on a4, a black knight on e1): b1, c1, d1, e1, a2, a3.



8

2 squares (pawn on e2, its first move): e3, e4.

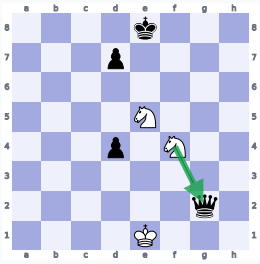


9

2 squares (pawn on d5: black pawns on c6 and d6, black knight on e6): c6, e6.

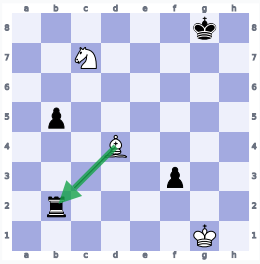
ANSWERS

Exercise C: find the free piece



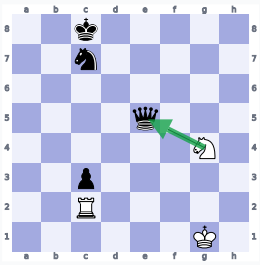
1

Nxg2 wins the queen on g2: no black piece can take back. Not Nxd7: the pawn on d7 is defended, so you would lose your piece for it.



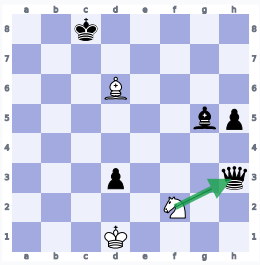
2

Bxb2 wins the rook on b2: no black piece can take back. Not Nxb5: the pawn on b5 is defended, so you would lose your piece for it.



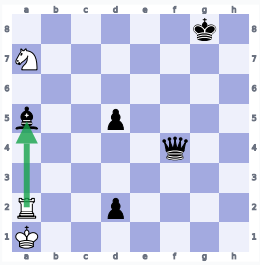
3

Nxe5 wins the queen on e5: no black piece can take back. Not Rxc3: the pawn on c3 is defended, so you would lose your piece for it.



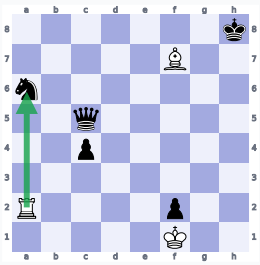
4

Nxh3 wins the queen on h3: no black piece can take back. Not Nxd3: the pawn on d3 is defended, so you would lose your piece for it.



5

Rxa5 wins the bishop on a5: no black piece can take back. Not Rxd2: the pawn on d2 is defended, so you would lose your piece for it.

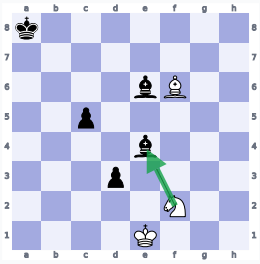


6

Rxa6 wins the knight on a6: no black piece can take back. Not Bxc4: the pawn on c4 is defended, so you would lose your piece for it. Not Rxf2: the pawn on f2 is defended, so you would lose your piece for it.

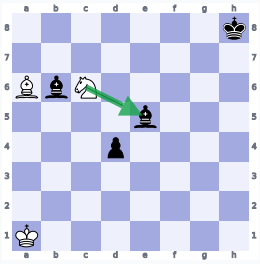
ANSWERS

Exercise C: find the free piece (continued)



7

Nxe4 wins the bishop on e4: no black piece can take back. Not Nxd3: the pawn on d3 is defended, so you would lose your piece for it.

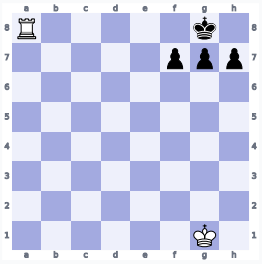


8

Nxe5 wins the bishop on e5: no black piece can take back. Not Nxd4: the pawn on d4 is defended, so you would lose your piece for it.

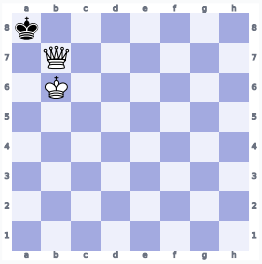
ANSWERS

Exercise D: check, checkmate, stalemate or none?



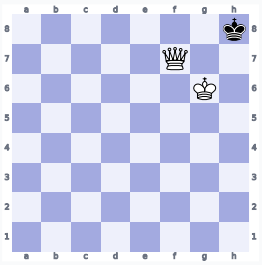
1

Checkmate. The rook on a8 checks along the back rank, and the king's own pawns on f7, g7 and h7 take away every escape square.



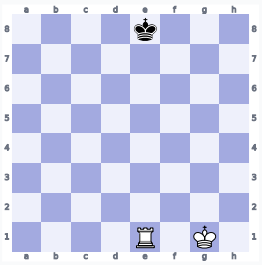
2

Checkmate. The queen on b7 gives check and is protected by the king on b6, so Black can't take it, and every square around the king is covered.



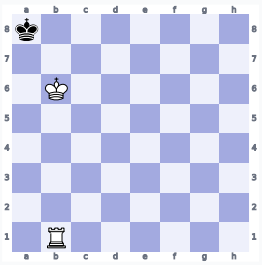
3

Stalemate. Black is not in check, but the king on h8 has no legal move: the queen covers g8 and g7, and h7 is covered by the queen and the white king. Draw.



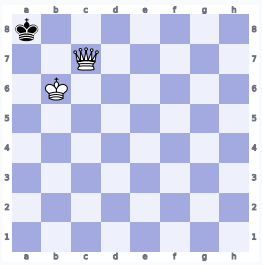
4

Check. The rook on e1 attacks the king along the e-file. Black gets out by moving the king to d7, d8, f7 or f8.



5

None of these. The king is not attacked and can go to b8 (the white king blocks the rook's file). Careful: Rb8? would be a bad check, but Ra1 next move would be checkmate.

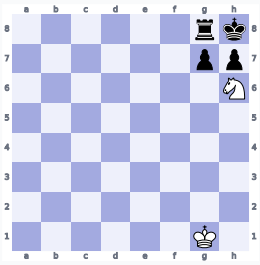


6

Stalemate. The king on a8 is not in check, but a7, b7 and b8 are all covered by the queen and the king. Draw: White should have checkmated instead.

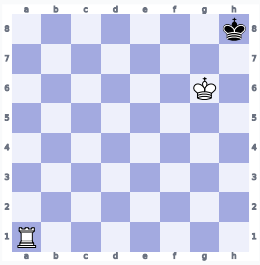
ANSWERS

Exercise D: check, checkmate, stalemate or none? (continued)



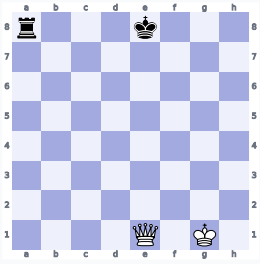
7

None of these. The knight on h6 attacks g8 and f7, but not h8. If it jumped to f7 it would be checkmate (a "smothered mate").



8

None of these. The king can step to g8. White's next move Ra8 would be checkmate.

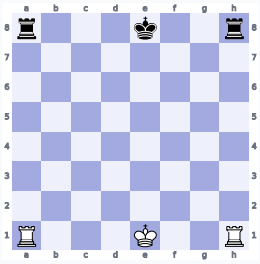


9

Check. The queen on e1 attacks the king along the e-file. The rook can't block, so Black must move the king: Kd7, Kd8, Kf7 or Kf8.

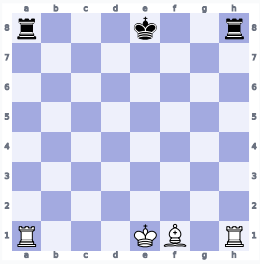
ANSWERS

Exercise E: can White castle kingside?



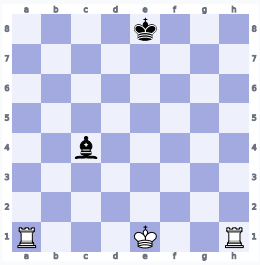
1

Yes. The king and rook have not moved, nothing is between them, and no black piece attacks e1, f1 or g1.



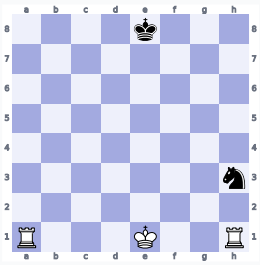
2

No. The bishop on f1 is in the way. Move it first.



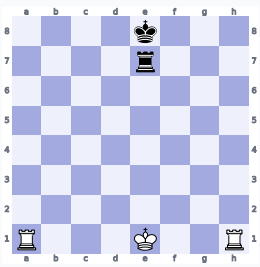
3

No. The black bishop on c4 attacks f1, and the king may not pass through an attacked square.



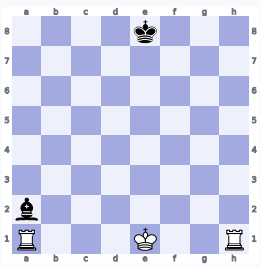
4

No. The black knight on h3 attacks g1, and the king may not castle into check.



5

No. The king is in check from the rook on e7, and you can't castle out of check.

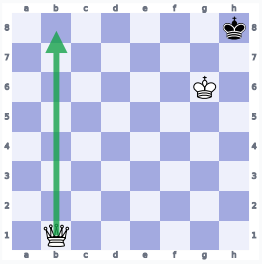


6

Yes. The bishop on a2 attacks b1, but that only matters for castling queenside. Kingside is safe.

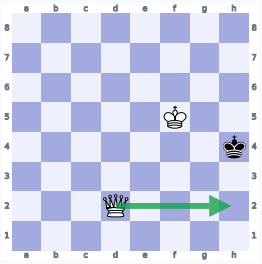
ANSWERS

Exercise F: mate in one with the queen or rook



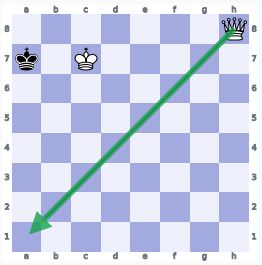
1

Qb8# is checkmate: the king is attacked and every square around it is covered.



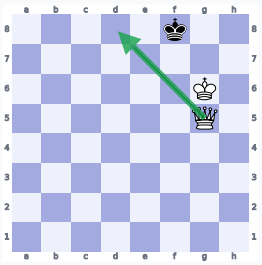
2

Qh2# is checkmate: the king is attacked and every square around it is covered.



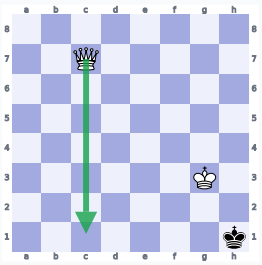
3

Qa1# is checkmate: the king is attacked and every square around it is covered.



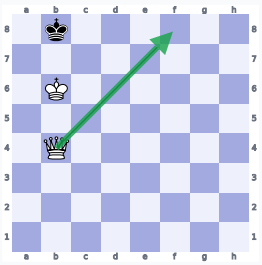
4

Qd8# is checkmate: the king is attacked and every square around it is covered.



5

Qc1# is checkmate: the king is attacked and every square around it is covered.

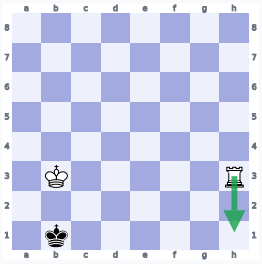


6

Qf8# is checkmate: the king is attacked and every square around it is covered.

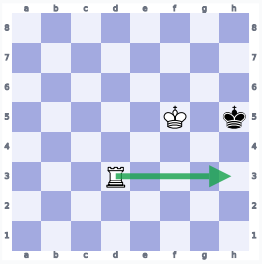
ANSWERS

Exercise F: mate in one with the queen or rook (continued)



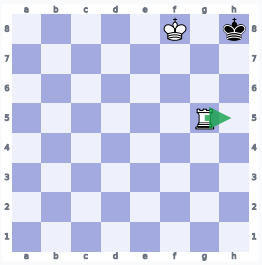
7

Rh1# is checkmate: the king is attacked and every square around it is covered.



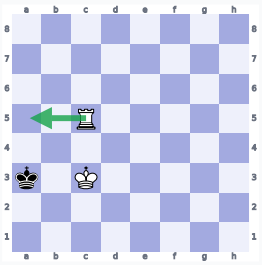
8

Rh3# is checkmate: the king is attacked and every square around it is covered.



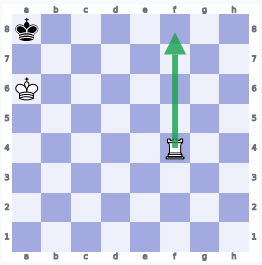
9

Rh5# is checkmate: the king is attacked and every square around it is covered.



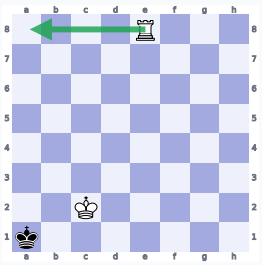
10

Ra5# is checkmate: the king is attacked and every square around it is covered.



11

Rf8# is checkmate: the king is attacked and every square around it is covered.

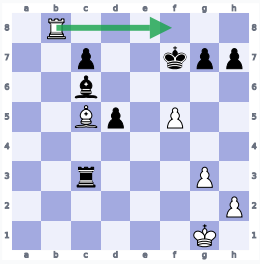


12

Ra8# is checkmate: the king is attacked and every square around it is covered.

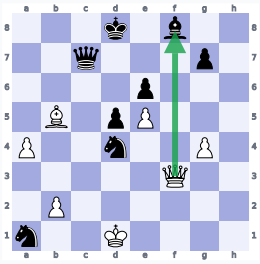
ANSWERS

Puzzles 1–6



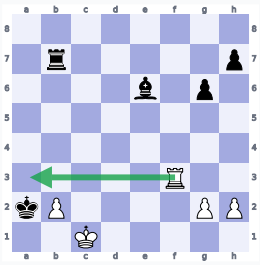
1 **Mate in one · White to move** Puzzle rating 454

38.Rf8#. The rook on f8 gives check, protected by the bishop on c5. The king is blocked by its own pieces on g7. Escape squares: the pawn on f5 covers e6 and g6 and the bishop on c5 covers e7.



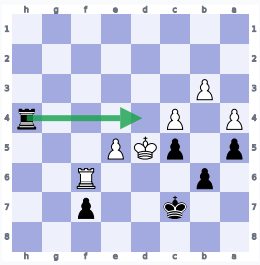
2 **Mate in one · White to move** Puzzle rating 488

29.Qxf8#. The queen on f8 gives check. The king is blocked by its own pieces on c7. Escape squares: the bishop on b5 covers d7 and e8.



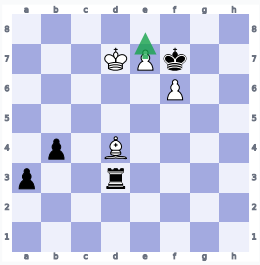
3 **Mate in one · White to move** Puzzle rating 565

47.Ra3#. The rook on a3 gives check, protected by the pawn on b2. Escape squares: the king on c1 covers b1 and b2.



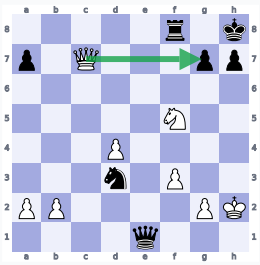
4 **Mate in one · Black to move** Puzzle rating 575

46...Rd4#. The rook on d4 gives check, protected by the pawn on c5. The king is blocked by its own pieces on c4 and e5. Escape squares: the pawn on b6 covers c5, the king on c7 covers c6 and d6 and the pawn on f7 covers e6.



5 **Mate in one · White to move** Puzzle rating 590

77.e8=Q#. The queen on e8 gives check, protected by the king on d7. Escape squares: the king on d7 covers e6 and e7, the bishop on d4 covers f6 and the pawn on f6 covers e7 and g7.

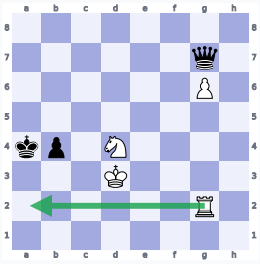


6 **Mate in one · White to move** Puzzle rating 590

37.Qxg7#. The queen on g7 gives check, protected by the knight on f5. The king is blocked by its own pieces on h7.

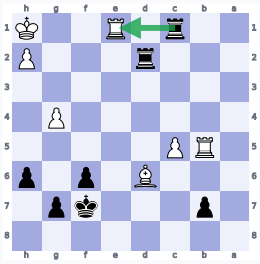
ANSWERS

Puzzles 7–12



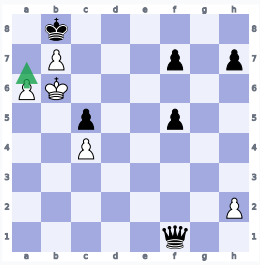
7 **Mate in one · White to move** Puzzle rating 592

63.Ra2#. The rook on a2 gives check. The king is blocked by its own pieces on b4. Escape squares: the knight on d4 covers b3 and b5.



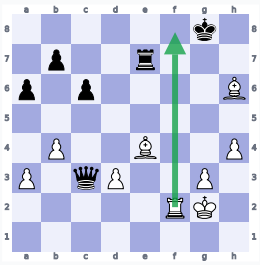
8 **Mate in one · Black to move** Puzzle rating 620

34...Rxe1#. The rook on e1 gives check. The king is blocked by its own pieces on h2. Escape squares: the rook on d2 covers g2.



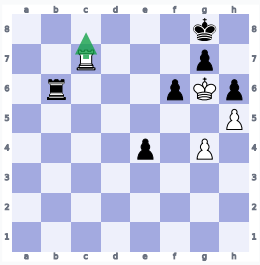
9 **Mate in one · White to move** Puzzle rating 652

41.a7#. The pawn on a7 gives check, protected by the king on b6. Escape squares: the king on b6 covers b7 and c7 and the pawn on b7 covers a8 and c8.



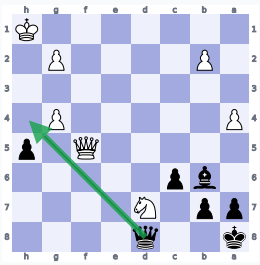
10 **Mate in one · White to move** Puzzle rating 689

41.Rf8#. The rook on f8 gives check, protected by the bishop on h6. Escape squares: the bishop on h6 covers g7 and the bishop on e4 covers h7.



11 **Mate in one · White to move** Puzzle rating 692

49.Rc8#. The rook on c8 gives check. The king is blocked by its own pieces on g7. Escape squares: the king on g6 covers f7 and h7.



12 **Mate in one · Black to move** Puzzle rating 695

39...Qh4#. The queen on h4 gives check. The king is blocked by its own pieces on g2. Escape squares: the bishop on b6 covers g1.

Your first 30 days

Fifteen to thirty minutes a day is plenty. Tick each step when you have done it.

When	What to do	Done
Days 1–3	Chapters 1–3. Set up the board from memory. Exercises A and B.	
Days 4–6	Chapter 4. Play "capture games" with a friend using only pawns. Exercise C.	
Days 7–9	Chapter 5. Exercise D. Play your first full games, slowly.	
Days 10–12	Chapter 6 and 7. Exercise E. Practise castling in every game.	
Days 13–17	Chapter 8. Practise the queen mate and the ladder against a friend or the computer until you can do them every time.	
Days 18–20	Chapter 9. Exercises F and G.	
Days 21–30	Play one or two slow games a day (at least 15 minutes each). After each game, find one move you would change. Then move on to the free Beginner's Complete Pack.	

Little chess dictionary

Check	the king is attacked
Checkmate	check with no way out: game over
Stalemate	no legal move and not in check: draw
Capture	taking an enemy piece
Develop	bring a piece out from its starting square
Castle	the king-and-rook move that makes the king safe
Promote	a pawn on the last rank becomes another piece
En passant	a pawn captures a pawn that just jumped two squares past it
File / rank	column / row of the board
Fork	one piece attacks two at once
Free (hanging) piece	a piece that is not defended
Resign	give up the game

What next?

A little practice every day beats a long session once a week. Here is how ChessDepth can help you keep going.

Chess Lab

Thousands of rated puzzles that adapt to your level, Puzzle Streak, opening courses and a progress dashboard, all in your browser.

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Free training tools

A new puzzle every day, a blindfold trainer with ten drills, and free worksheet packs.

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Real-game positions from the free Lichess puzzle database (lichess.org, CC0); every answer checked with python-chess and Stockfish. Written by the coaches of ChessDepth Academy.

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