ChessDepth Academy



FREE TRAINING PACK

Tactics Starter Pack

30 hand-picked puzzles with full solutions and explanations

- Mate in one
- Mate in two
- Forks
- Pins & skewers
- Discovered attacks

For players rated roughly 600–1400 · Beginners to club players

chessdepth.in

How to use this pack

Tactics decide most games below 1800. The good news: tactical patterns can be learned. Solve these 30 puzzles carefully and you will start to see the same ideas in your own games.

1 Solve from the diagram

Try to work out the whole solution in your head before you touch a board. Calculating without moving the pieces is the skill you are training.

2 Checks, captures, threats

In every position, look at all checks first, then all captures, then moves that threaten something. The answer is almost always among them.

3 Write your answer down

Write the move (and the reply you expect) on the line under each puzzle. Then compare with the answers at the back of the pack.

4 Understand, don't just check

Read the explanation even when you were right. Knowing *why* a move works is what makes you spot it next time.

Reading the diagrams

The side to move is always at the **bottom** of the diagram.

Yellow squares show your opponent's **last move**.

○ White to move · ● Black to move

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

What's inside

1	**Mate in one**	Puzzles 1–6
2	**Mate in two**	Puzzles 7–12
3	**Forks**	Puzzles 13–18
4	**Pins and skewers**	Puzzles 19–24
5	**Discovered attacks and deflection**	Puzzles 25–30

Answers and explanations start on page 8.

Your score

Give yourself 1 point for each puzzle you solve completely without help.

26–30
Excellent: you're ready for harder puzzles.

18–25
Good: repeat the ones you missed in a week.

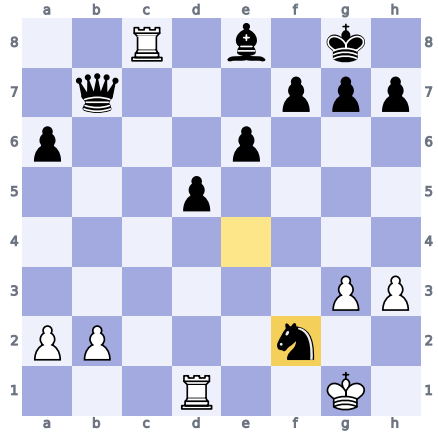
0–17
Keep going: re-read the explanations and try again.

1 Mate in one

Find the move that checkmates straight away. Look for checks first, then ask: can the king escape, block or capture?

1

○ White to move



Hint: Look at Black's back rank.

Your answer:

2

○ White to move

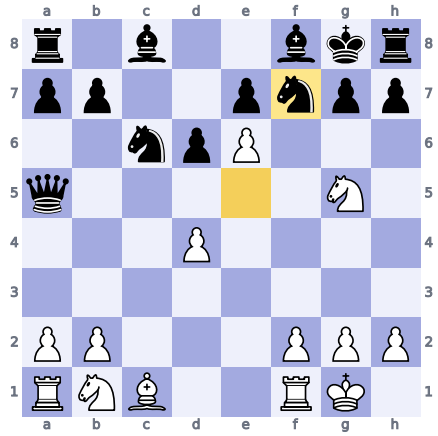


Hint: Black has just taken your queen. Look at f7.

Your answer:

3

○ White to move

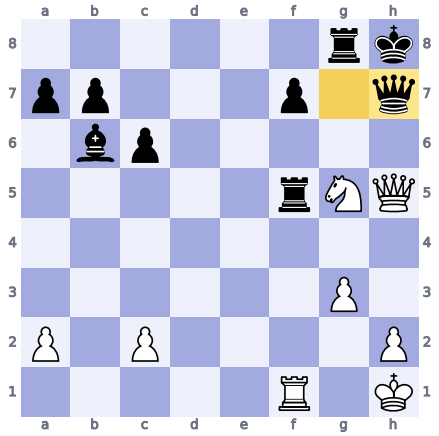


Hint: Even a pawn can give checkmate.

Your answer:

4

○ White to move

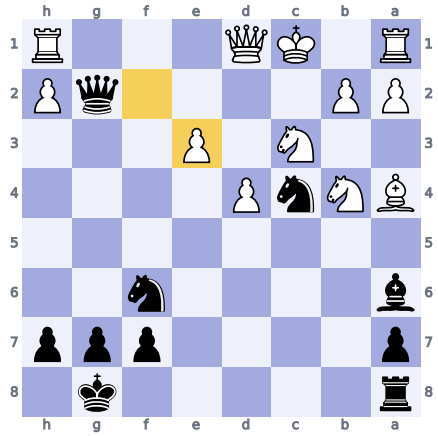


Hint: Which piece protects h7?

Your answer:

5

● Black to move

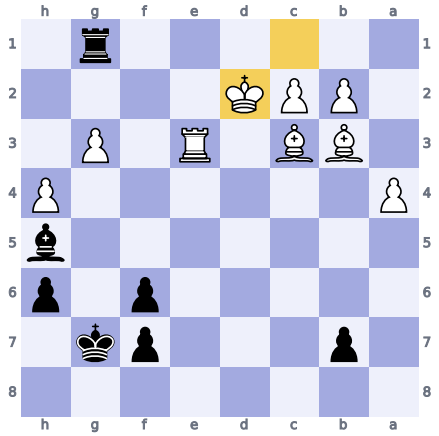


Hint: Find a protected square next to White's king.

Your answer:

6

● Black to move



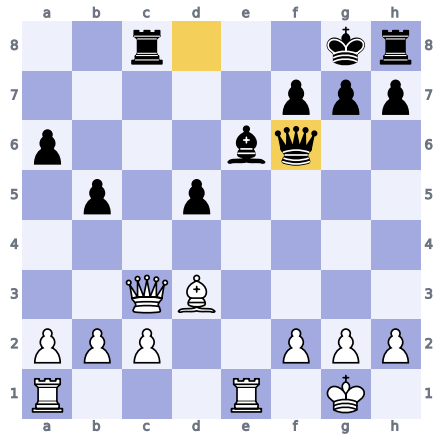
Hint: Your bishop on h5 is already helping.

Your answer:

2 Mate in two

Your first move is usually a check or a sacrifice that forces the reply. Then deliver mate on the next move.

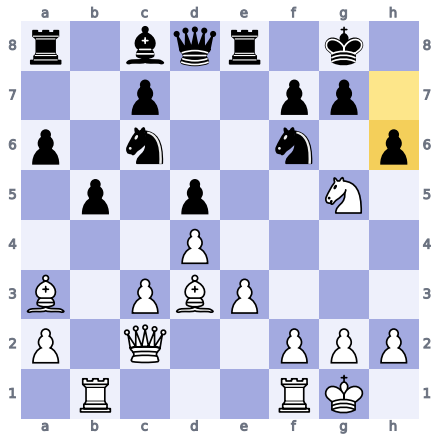
7 ○ White to move



Hint: Which black piece is the only defender of the back rank?

Your answer:

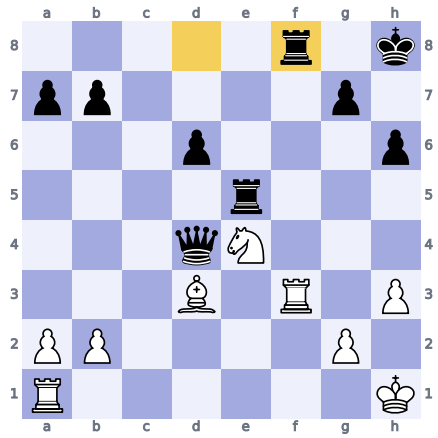
8 ○ White to move



Hint: Remove the defender of h7.

Your answer:

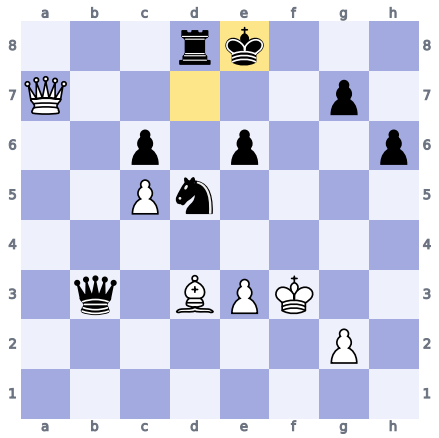
9 ○ White to move



Hint: Capture first, then use a double check.

Your answer:

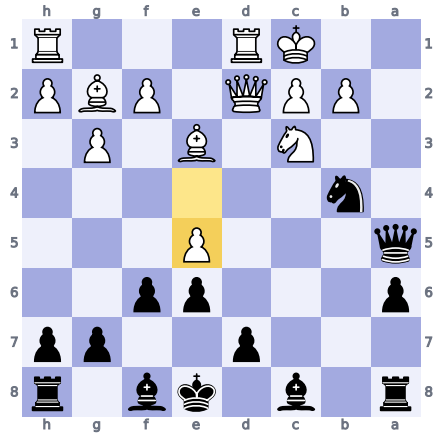
10 ○ White to move



Hint: Check with the bishop first.

Your answer:

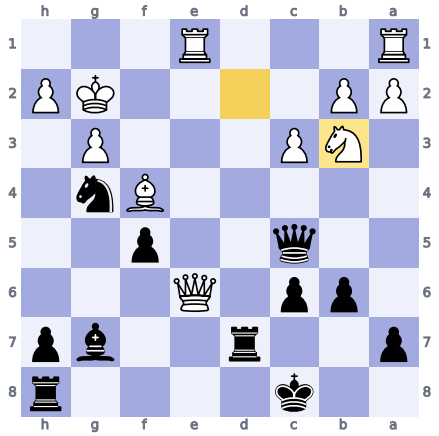
11 ● Black to move



Hint: Look for a smothered mate.

Your answer:

12 ● Black to move



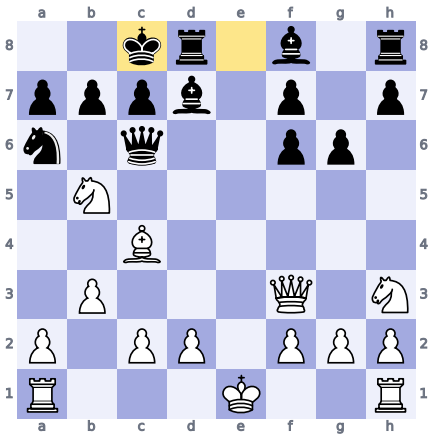
Hint: Your knight on g4 controls f2 and h2.

Your answer:

3 Forks

One piece attacks two targets at the same time. Your opponent can only save one of them.

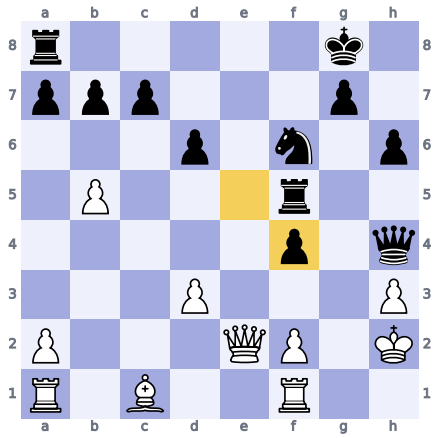
13 ○ White to move



Hint: A knight check can hit two pieces at once.

Your answer:

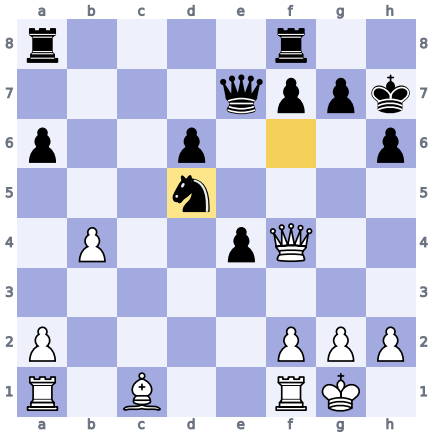
14 ○ White to move



Hint: Which square attacks the king and the rook together?

Your answer:

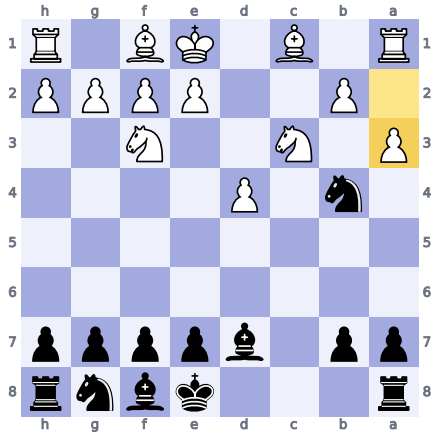
15 ○ White to move



Hint: The knight on d5 is undefended.

Your answer:

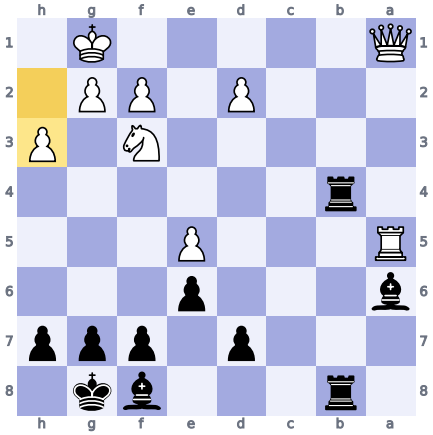
16 ● Black to move



Hint: The famous knight check on c2.

Your answer:

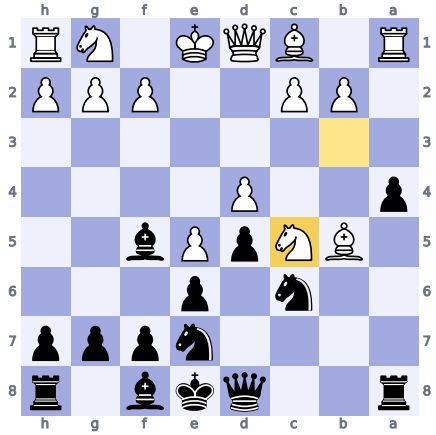
17 ● Black to move



Hint: A rook can fork too.

Your answer:

18 ● Black to move



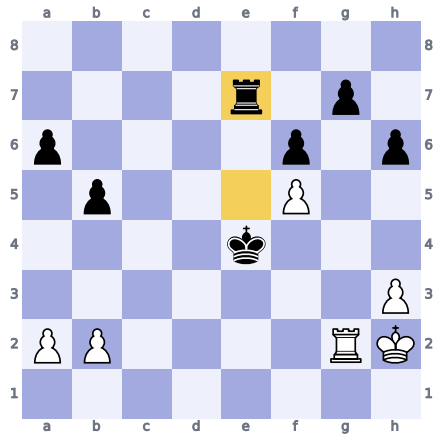
Hint: Check the king and hit the bishop on b5.

Your answer:

4 Pins and skewers

Two enemy pieces stand on the same line. Attack the front one: if it moves, you win the piece behind it.

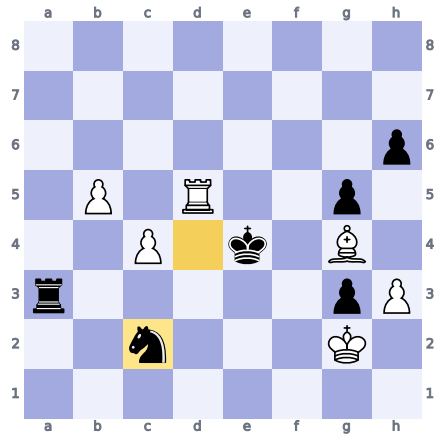
19 ○ White to move



Hint: Check the king and look behind it.

Your answer:

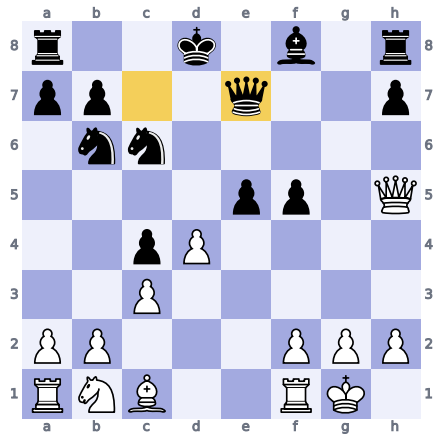
20 ○ White to move



Hint: The king and the knight stand on the same diagonal.

Your answer:

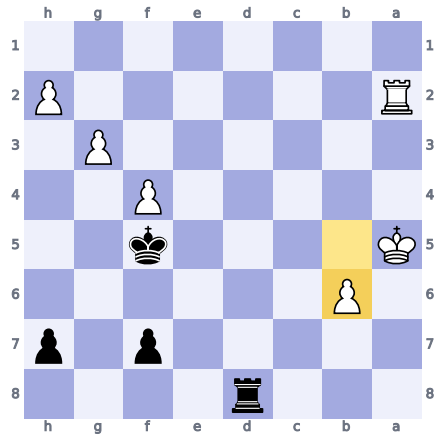
21 ○ White to move



Hint: The queen and the king are on the same diagonal.

Your answer:

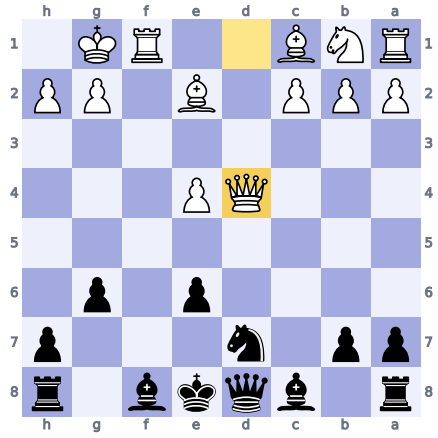
22 ● Black to move



Hint: Check from behind on the a-file.

Your answer:

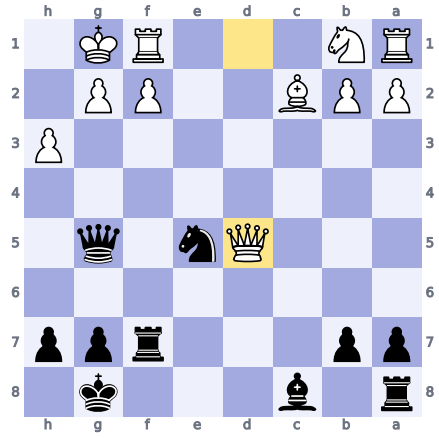
23 ● Black to move



Hint: White's queen and king share a diagonal.

Your answer:

24 ● Black to move



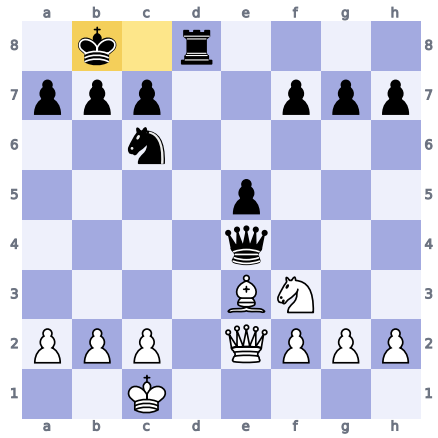
Hint: The pawn on g2 is pinned.

Your answer:

5 Discovered attacks and deflection

Move one piece out of the way to unleash another, or force a defender to leave its post.

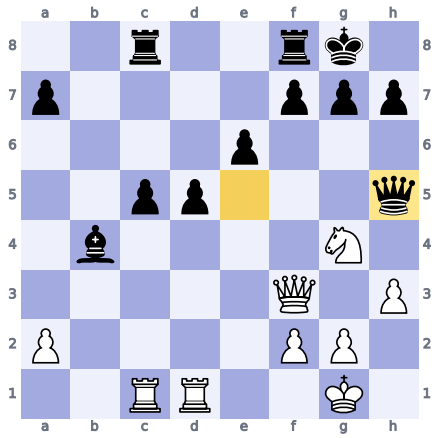
25 ○ White to move



Hint: Move the bishop with check and open the e-file.

Your answer:

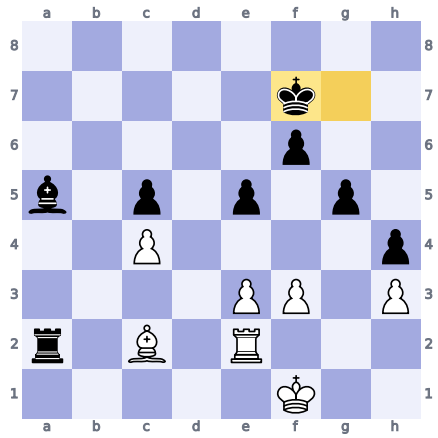
26 ○ White to move



Hint: Your queen on f3 is blocked by your own knight.

Your answer:

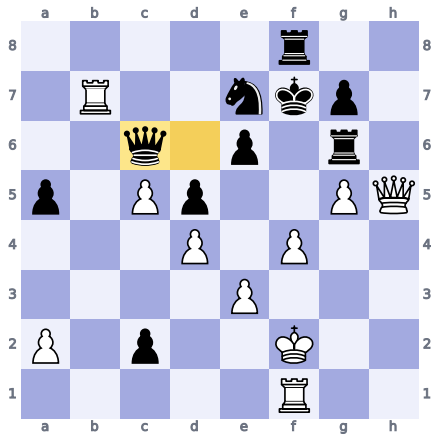
27 ○ White to move



Hint: A check that also opens the second rank.

Your answer:

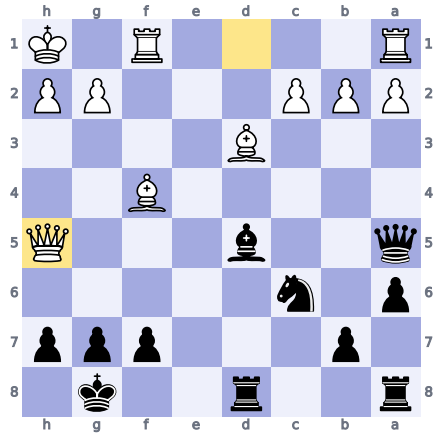
28 ○ White to move



Hint: Who defends the rook on g6?

Your answer:

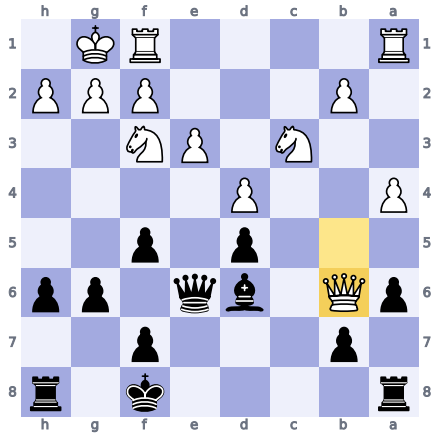
29 ● Black to move



Hint: Your queen on a5 is looking along the fifth rank.

Your answer:

30 ● Black to move

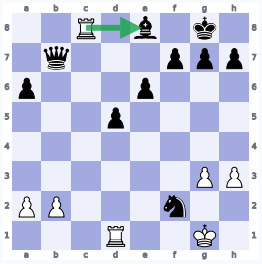


Hint: Move the bishop with check.

Your answer:

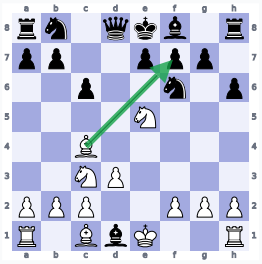
ANSWERS

1. Mate in one



1 **White to move** Puzzle rating 782

Rxe8#. The bishop on e8 is the only piece guarding Black's back rank. The rook takes it with check, and the king is boxed in by its own pawns on f7, g7 and h7. This is the classic *back-rank mate*.



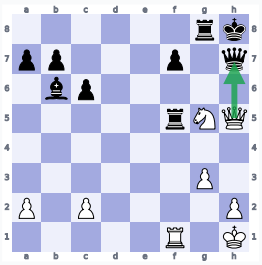
2 **White to move** Puzzle rating 955

Bxf7#. Black has just won the queen on d1, but it is too late. The bishop takes on f7 with check, protected by the knight on e5. The king cannot go to d7 because the knight covers it, and Black's own pieces block d8, e7 and f8.



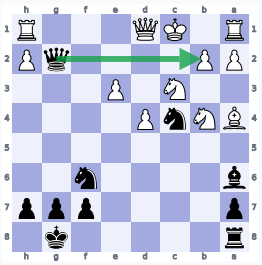
3 **White to move** Puzzle rating 957

exf7#. The pawn captures the knight and checks the king on g8. The knight on g5 protects the pawn, so the king cannot take it, and Black's own bishop, rook and pawns fill every escape square.



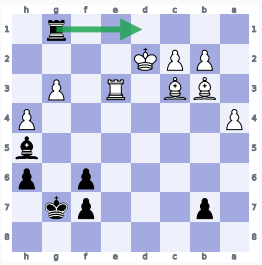
4 **White to move** Puzzle rating 956

Qxh7#. The queen captures Black's queen on h7 with check. The knight on g5 protects it, so the king cannot take; the queen also covers g7, and Black's own rook blocks g8.



5 **Black to move** Puzzle rating 961

...Qxb2#. The queen captures on b2 with check. The knight on c4 protects the queen, so the king cannot take it. The queen and knight cover b1, c2 and d2, and White's own queen blocks d1.

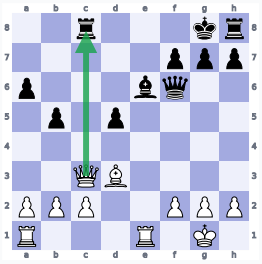


6 **Black to move** Puzzle rating 874

...Rd1#. The rook checks along the d-file, and the bishop on h5 protects it, so the king cannot capture. The rook also controls c1 and e1, the bishop covers e2, and White's own bishop and rook block c3 and e3.

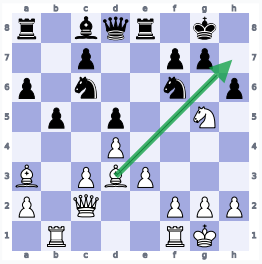
ANSWERS

2. Mate in two



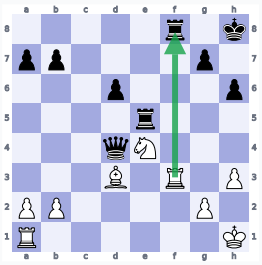
7 **White to move** Puzzle rating 833

1.Qxc8+! Bxc8 2.Re8#. The queen sacrifice forces the bishop on e6 to capture, and that opens the e-file. The rook reaches e8, and the king is trapped by its own pawns and the rook on h8. (If 1...Qd8, then 2.Qxd8#.)



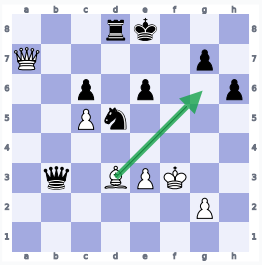
8 **White to move** Puzzle rating 910

1.Bh7+! Nxh7 2.Qxh7#. The bishop check pulls the knight away from f6, where it was guarding h7. Then the queen takes on h7, protected by the knight on g5, while the bishop on a3 covers f8. (If 1...Kh8, then 2.Nxf7# is mate.)



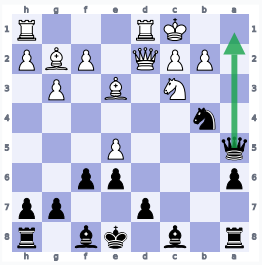
9 **White to move** Puzzle rating 874

1.Rxf8+ Kh7 2.Ng5#. After the rook takes on f8, the knight jumps to g5 and gives *double check*: from the knight and from the bishop on d3. In a double check, only the king can move, and every square is covered. (2.Nf6# also mates.)



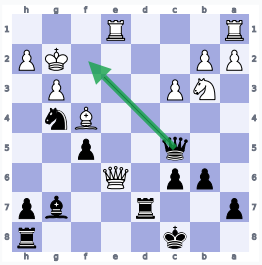
10 **White to move** Puzzle rating 971

1.Bg6+ Kf8 2.Qf7#. The bishop check forces the king to f8, and then the queen lands on f7, protected by the bishop. The king has no square left.



11 **Black to move** Puzzle rating 1153

1...Qa1+ 2.Nb1 Na2#. The queen check forces White to block with the knight. Then ...Na2 is mate: White's king on c1 is *smothered*, completely surrounded by its own pieces.



12 **Black to move** Puzzle rating 956

1...Qf2+ 2.Kh3 Qxh2#. The queen checks from f2, protected by the knight on g4. Wherever the king goes, ...Qxh2 is mate, again protected by the knight. (2.Kh1 Qxh2# is the same.)

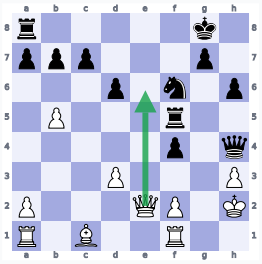
ANSWERS

3. Forks



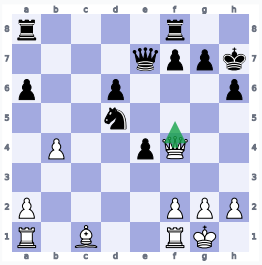
13 **White to move** Puzzle rating 1125

1.Nxa7+ Kb8 2.Nxc6+. The knight captures on a7 with check and at the same time attacks the queen on c6. After the king moves, White wins the queen. This double attack is a *fork*.



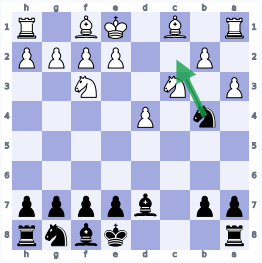
14 **White to move** Puzzle rating 977

1.Qe6+ Kf8 2.Qxf5. The queen checks the king and attacks the loose rook on f5. Black must get out of check, and then White wins the rook.



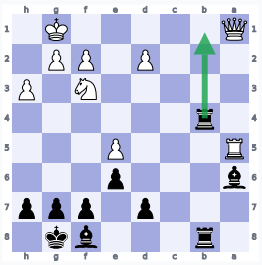
15 **White to move** Puzzle rating 1169

1.Qf5+ Kg8 2.Qxd5. From f5 the queen checks the king on h7 and attacks the undefended knight on d5. Whatever Black does about the check, the knight falls.



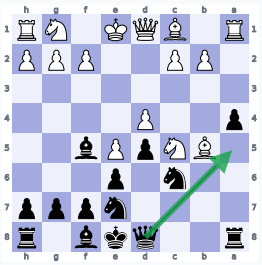
16 **Black to move** Puzzle rating 887

1...Nc2+ 2.Kd1 Nxa1. The knight checks the king on e1 and attacks the rook on a1. Wherever the king goes, the rook falls. This is one of the most common forks in chess.



17 **Black to move** Puzzle rating 773

1...Rb1+ 2.Kh2 Rxa1. The rook checks along the first rank and attacks the queen on a1. It is protected by the other rook on b8, so 2.Qxb1 Rxb1+ doesn't help White. Black wins the queen.

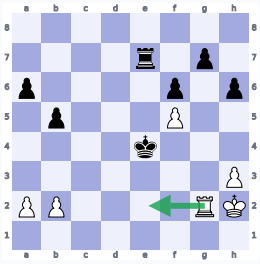


18 **Black to move** Puzzle rating 920

1...Qa5+ 2.c3 Qxb5. The queen checks the king on e1 along the diagonal and attacks the bishop on b5 along the rank. Whether White blocks or moves the king, Black wins the bishop.

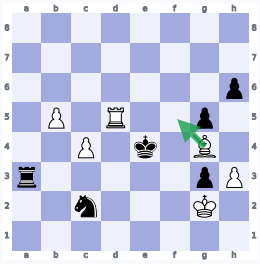
ANSWERS

4. Pins and skewers



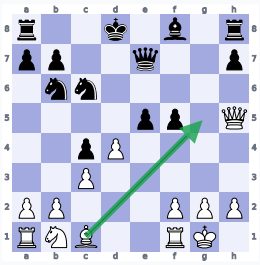
19 **White to move** Puzzle rating 949

1.Re2+ Kxf5 2.Rxe7. The rook checks the king on e4. The king has to move off the e-file, and then the rook behind it on e7 is lost. Attacking a valuable piece with a less valuable one behind it is a *skewer*.



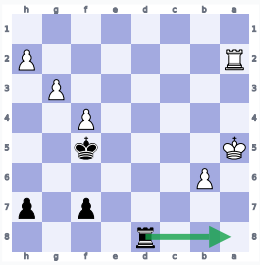
20 **White to move** Puzzle rating 1395

1.Bf5+ Kf4 2.Bxc2. The bishop checks the king on e4. When the king steps aside, the bishop captures the knight on c2, which was standing behind it on the same diagonal.



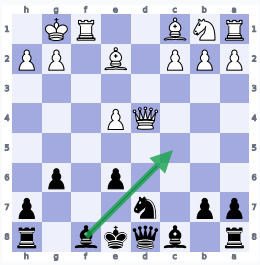
21 **White to move** Puzzle rating 945

1.Bg5! The bishop *pins* the queen on e7 to the king on d8, so the queen is not allowed to move away. Taking the bishop with 1...Qxg5 loses the queen to 2.Qxg5+. White wins the queen for a bishop, e.g. **1...Kc7 2.Bxe7**.



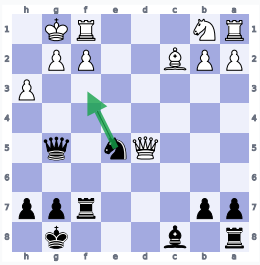
22 **Black to move** Puzzle rating 1164

1...Ra8+ 2.Kb5 Rxa2. The rook checks the king on a5. The king must leave the a-file, and the rook captures White's rook on a2. A rook-endgame skewer worth remembering.



23 **Black to move** Puzzle rating 867

1...Bc5! The bishop pins White's queen on d4 to the king on g1. Defending the queen with **2.Be3** does not help: after **2...Bxd4 3.Bxd4** Black has won the queen for a bishop.

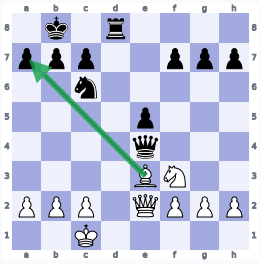


24 **Black to move** Puzzle rating 928

1...Nf3+! The g2 pawn cannot capture, because Black's queen on g5 pins it to the king. The knight move also opens the fifth rank, so the queen now attacks White's queen on d5. After **2.Qxf3 Rxf3**, Black has won the queen for a knight.

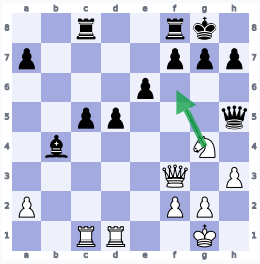
ANSWERS

5. Discovered attacks and deflection



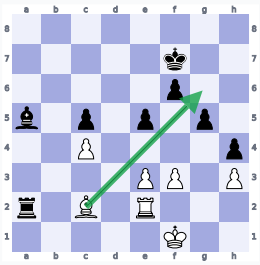
25 **White to move** Puzzle rating 961

1.Bxa7+ Kxa7 2.Qxe4. The bishop captures with check, and moving it opens the e-file, so White's queen on e2 now attacks Black's queen on e4. Black has to deal with the check first, and the queen is lost. This is a *discovered attack*.



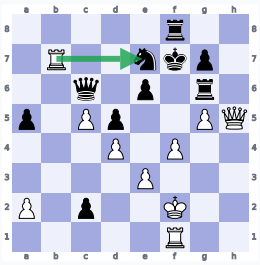
26 **White to move** Puzzle rating 1001

1.Nf6+ gxf6 2.Qxh5. The knight gives check and gets out of the queen's way, so the queen on f3 now attacks Black's queen on h5. Black must answer the check, and White wins the queen for a knight.



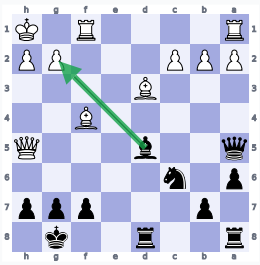
27 **White to move** Puzzle rating 830

1.Bg6+ Kxg6 2.Rxa2. The bishop checks the king and uncovers White's rook on e2, which now attacks the black rook on a2. Black takes the bishop, but White takes the rook and wins material.



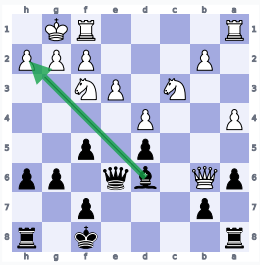
28 **White to move** Puzzle rating 978

1.Rxe7+! Kxe7 2.Qxg6. The rook on g6 is defended twice, by the king and by the knight. The rook takes the knight with check, and after 1...Kxe7 the king has left g6 too, so the queen wins the rook. Removing the defenders like this is called *deflection*. (If 1...Kg8, 2.Qxg6 wins even more.)



29 **Black to move** Puzzle rating 989

1...Bxg2+ 2.Kxg2 Qxh5. The bishop takes on g2 with check and clears the fifth rank, so the queen on a5 now attacks White's queen on h5. White has to deal with the check, and Black wins the queen.



30 **Black to move** Puzzle rating 964

1...Bxh2+ 2.Kxh2 Qxb6. The bishop takes on h2 with check, which opens the sixth rank between Black's queen on e6 and White's queen on b6. After White takes the bishop, Black takes the queen.

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