

"Learning Chess"

Getting Acquainted

(The starting position.)

(March 04, 2001. - I just bought like 6 beginner books, and also reviewed several different computer programs that teach chess; just to make sure that I get several **different viewpoints** on teaching the game. I also have read literally DOZENS of beginners books in my life. I am currently **44**, and have been playing chess since I was **four**. As a youngster, I taught my brother and sisters the game of chess. I taught all the kids in my neighborhood that wanted to learn. I have taught the game to **HUNDREDS** of people.

[During one local <"fun"> event, I taught dozens - if not hundreds of people to play chess - in like 5 - 10 minutes. {I used flashcards I made out of poster board.} Many have come up to me years later and said that they learned chess ... **and remembered it!** ... during one of these events.]

I think this gives me a very unique perspective on what should and should not be taught in learning the game of chess.)

It has always been my thought that the first steps in chess - the actual learning of the game for the very first time - **is much too painful**. Most teachers and writers make it way too complicated.

(Usually you are given **TOO MUCH** information, - or worse yet! - **not enough** information to properly learn the game.)

I have always thought it was possible to teach the basics of chess **in around five minutes**. **And I have done this many times!** (A rather simplified version of what you will learn here.) When this is finished, I will take you through the game, step-by-step. You will learn chess the correct way, with **emphasis** on **proven teaching techniques** and the

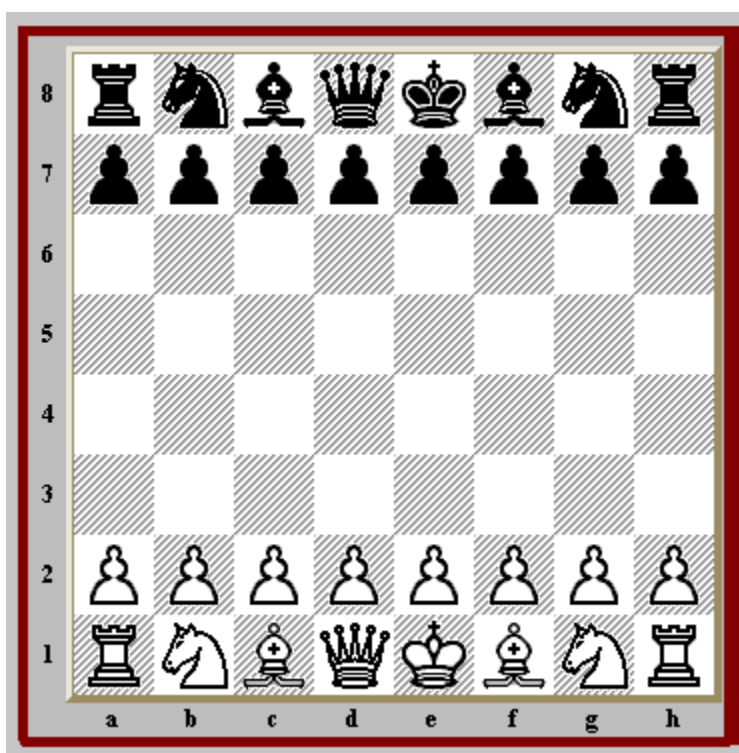
*** **actual** (only 3 to 5) **ways** that scientist's have proven **how humans learn!!** ***

Sit back, relax. This is simple, easy and totally painless. **Take your time.** You may go through this as slowly (Or Quickly!!) as you like.

If I have done my job, you should learn the basic mechanics of the game of chess fairly quickly. From experience, the average adult should be able to complete all the pages and **remember ALL** of this material in approximately **30 minutes**.

I also advise you to try this with a **real chess set.** *It will make things **MUCH** easier!*

*(**BUT** ... Its **NOT** absolutely necessary.)*

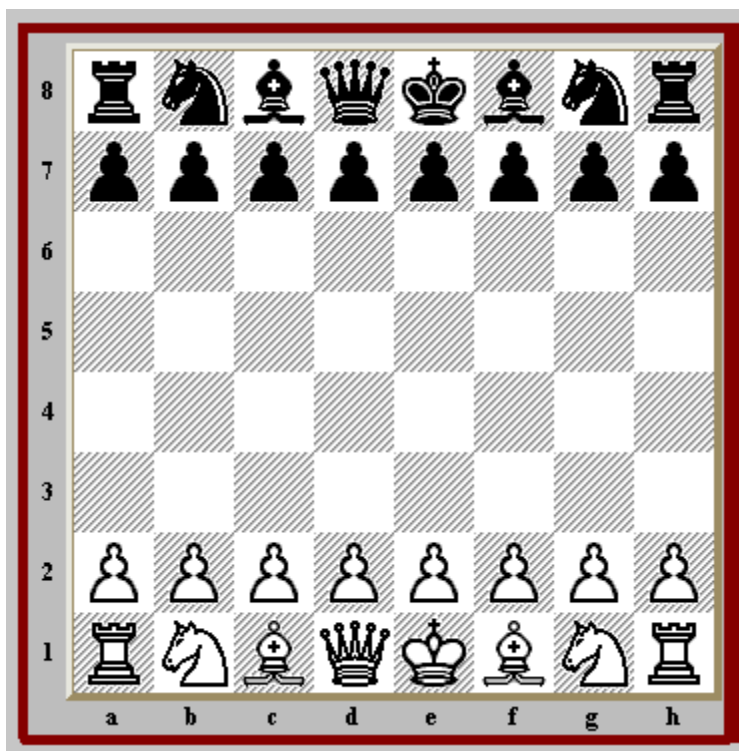


Chess is a very old game, thought to be at least 1,500 years old. The game probably originated in Persia, although no one knows for sure.

Chess is an extremely fun game - but also a very complex one. Mathematicians tell us there are more possible moves in one game of chess than there are stars, (Or even molecules!!); in the universe!!

Take a close look at the diagram above. This is a picture - nothing more than a representation - of a Staunton-style chess set.

The pieces are set up in the standard, starting position!



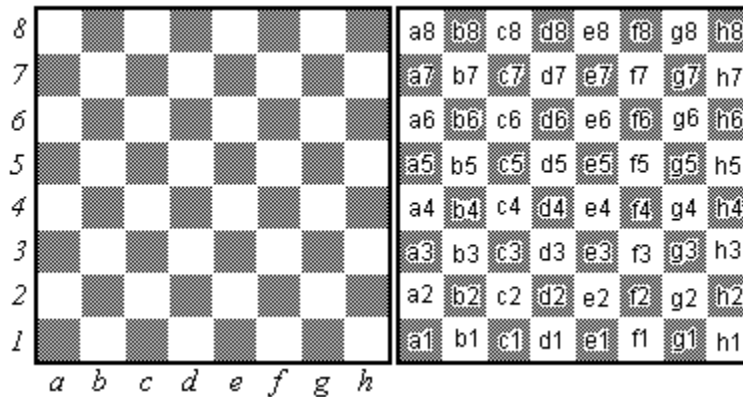
***This is the beginning position of every chess game!!
Try to remember it.***

(Notice the squares on the chess board. The White King always sits on the e1-square at the start of the game. Find the a5-square before you move on. Is it a light-colored square or a dark-colored square?)

<< Notice there is a (very simple) grid system. The White King starts on e1 every game. If you push your pawn in front of your King two squares to start the game, this is recorded as e2 - e4, or simply 1. e4.

I have taught 3 and 4 year-old children to record a game of chess, so its not something I am going to spend a lot of time on.

(The little picture below shows how each square is nothing but a grid co-ordinate.)



[With this grid system, its **very** easy to record a game of chess. Let's say you had a Bishop on the e1-square. If you moved it to the d2-square, that would be recorded as: "B/e1-d2," {Long notation}; or simply "Bd2." If you CAPTURED another piece on the d2 square, this would be recorded as: "Bxd2." {The little "x" means that a **capture** was involved.}]

(If you would like more information on this, I'd advise you to consult any beginners' chess book.) >>

[See also some of the sites I have links to at the top of the page. I found one which has some very simple exercises for learning chess notation.]

You have two armies in chess. One is called White, one is called Black. **No** racism is involved. Think of it as a struggle between Good and Evil, the forces of Lightness and Dark, two neighboring countries ... whatever. Chess **IS** a **board game**, and one that is a representation of **classical warfare**.

(You will hear me draw **many analogies** between **chess** and **battle** if you ever hear me teach in person.)

So many of the principles that apply to warfare, apply to chess!

The first thing to learn is how to set up the board and the pieces. Two things to **MEMORIZE** first are:

1.) A **LIGHT**-colored square **always** goes on the **right-hand corner**. (**Light** and **right**, it **rhymes** and is easy to remember.)

2.) The **Queen** holds her own!
(That is the Queen of the White pieces goes on a light-colored square, and the Queen of the Black pieces goes on a dark-colored square.)

The next thing to learn is that the King and Queen go in the center. Since the Queen, "Holds her own," there is only one square left for the King. The next thing you should notice is a King **always** faces a King, a Queen always faces a Queen, ... (On the other side of the chess-board.); a Bishop faces a Bishop, and so on.

Your pieces **always** go on your **first row**. The Pawns, (there are 8 of them); always go on your second row. These are your infantry, the foot-soldiers of chess.

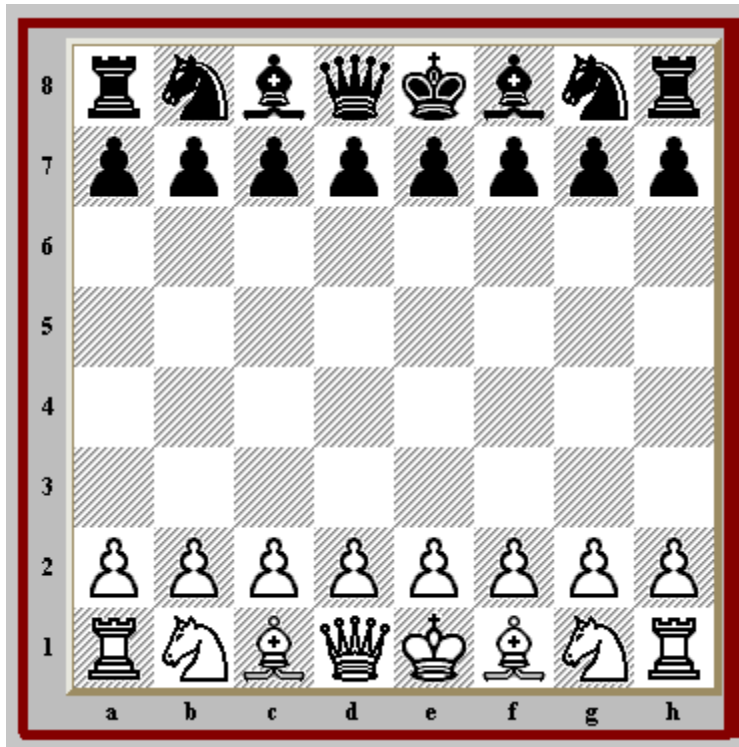
There are sixteen total men for each side, a total of 32 men (or units), altogether. You have two of the Rooks, Bishops and Knights, One King, and one Queen.
(To start off with.)

White ALWAYS moves first.

The basic idea of the game is to beat the other army into submission. You can capture a lot of your opponent's pieces, leading to an overwhelming material advantage. Or, the easiest way to do this is to checkmate the enemy King. [You can also quit, (OR "Resign."); at any time that you feel your position to be hopeless.]
(More on this subject later.)

You should also learn the basic 'lines' of the chessboard!

(This will make the learning of the rest of the pieces **MUCH** easier!)



There are a grand total of 64 squares. 32 light-colored squares, and 32 dark-colored squares. The straight rows of squares, (connected by the sides); that go **"up - and - down,"**

(From the top of the chess-board to the bottom of the chessboard, or vertically.); are called **files.**

The straight rows of squares, (connected by the sides); that go from **side-to-side** or **right to left**; (Horizontally.) are called **ranks.**

A row of squares, in a **straight line**, that are connected **ONLY** by the corners; are called **diagonals.**

(An example of a **diagonal** is the line of squares from the first rank to the sixth rank. [From the squares, c1 to h6.] Find this row of squares before proceeding any further.)

During the game, you may **move** ANY piece to ANY empty square, as long as you move that piece in the correct manner, or the way you are taught here is the **correct movement pattern** for that piece.

OR: You may **CAPTURE** any of your opponent's pieces by moving **YOUR** piece to the square occupied by an enemy piece, completely removing that piece from the board, and placing your piece on the square that was just occupied by your opponent's piece.

{Again, the piece moved must be moved in the correct movement pattern that you will learn here.}

That's it. This completes your introduction to chess. So now you know how to set up the position, the basics of the board, and a little history.

Pretty easy so far, huh?

"The Pawn(s)" In Chess

The Soul of the Game

(Or, "Life in the Infantry")

The **Pawn** is the "**Ground-Pounder**" of the chess-board.

He is the most basic unit. His movement and capturing power can be traced directly to the lowest ranked soldiers of the armies of the 15th and 16th centuries.

He is the unit of lowest-value, and normally the most expendable.

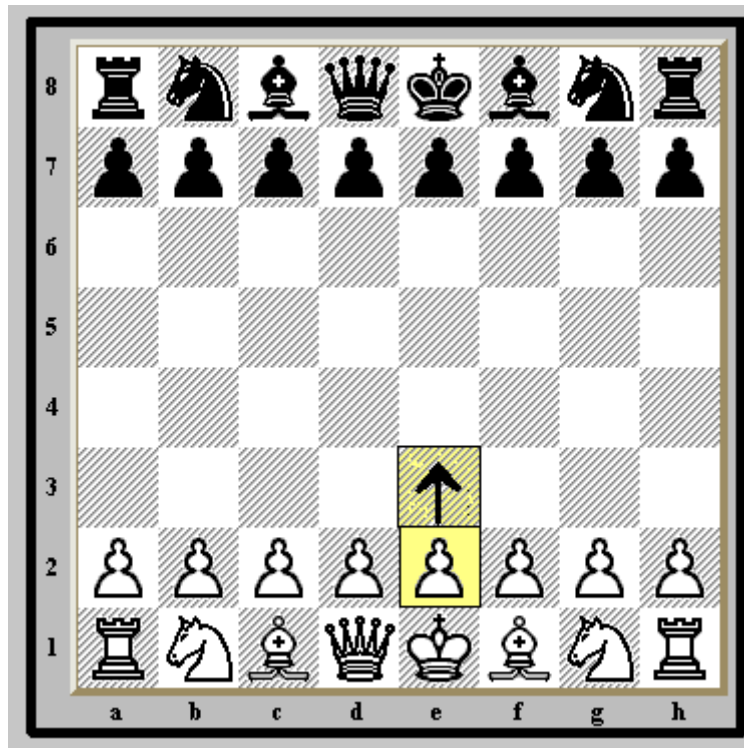
His worth increases as he travels up the board, because a pawn that reaches the other side of the chessboard gets to promote!

In the **middlegame**, or during "**The Big Brawl**," the pawns often just get in the way of the other pieces.

In the endgame, sometimes having just one extra pawn can make all the difference.

Grand-Master's (The highest, and most exalted class of chess-players.); know that how you stage and array your pawns {i.e. Pawn Structure} is very critical to the game. Masters will generally win by taking a pawn from you in the early stages of the game, then beating you with that one point difference!!

(Take a close look at the picture/diagram below.)



(In the diagram above, The Pawn on e2 may advance one square to the e3-square. This possibility is shown above.)

The pawn is the simple foot - soldier of the chessboard. The pawn moves **straight ahead** his whole life, **mostly moving one square at a time**. A pawn **NEVER** moves backward.

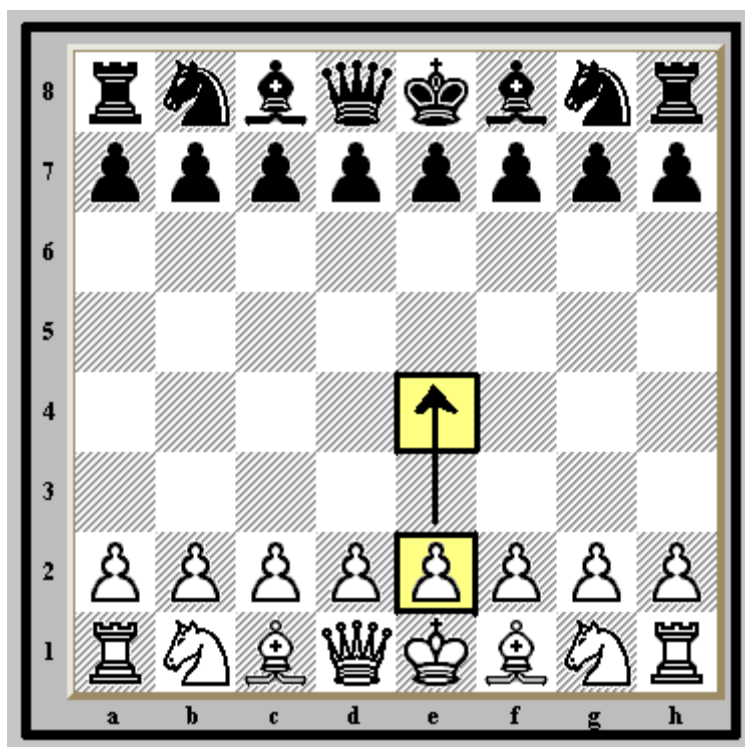
(The fact that the Pawn cannot move backwards makes it unlike any of the other pieces in Chess. The King, Queen, Rook, Knight, or Bishop can all move forward, backwards or sideways; as long as they conform to the correct movement-pattern for that piece.)

The pawn begins his life on your second row, and you will always have eight Pawns on your second row when you begin the game. You may move a pawn/ any pawn that you wish on your first move. (You may also move one of your Knights to any one of the **open** squares which are available to them.)

It is a very unique and strange thing, but the pawn is the ... **ONLY PIECE that moves one way, and then captures another!!** This is very important to remember, and you must bear this in mind at all times!

Pawns capture one square ahead, to the right or left; in the same general direction as their movement. ---> I.e., a pawn on e4 could capture any piece on d5 or f5.

(First Move Option.)

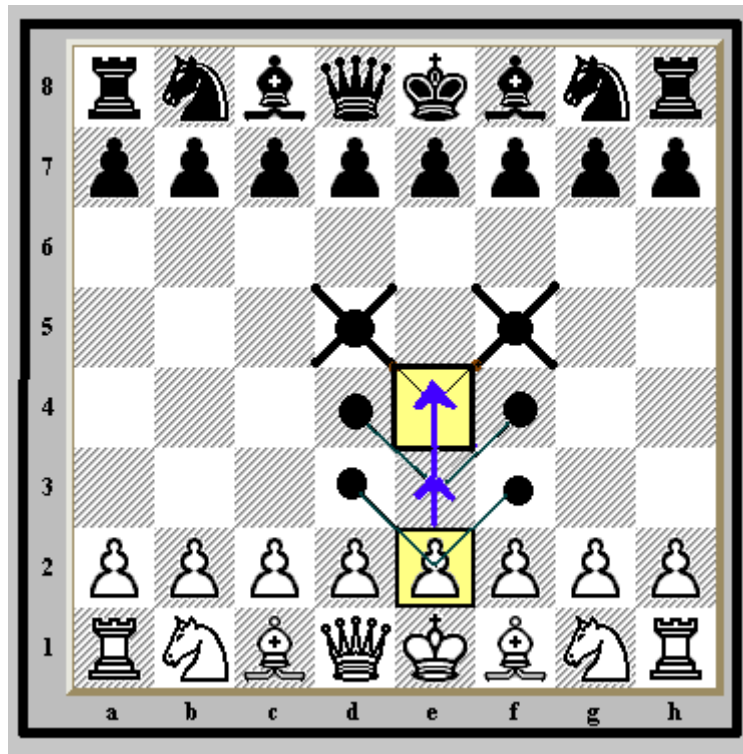


(The above diagram shows that White has the choice of moving his pawn on e2 to the e4-square.)

The Pawn also has the option of moving forward **TWO** squares, on the first move only! This is an **OPTION**. This means you do NOT have to make this move, unless you want to!

A Pawn, any pawn, may move forward ... **TWO SQUARES** on its **FIRST MOVE ONLY!!** After a pawn has moved on its first move, it then moves one square at a time, (Moving straight ahead, or capturing one square to the right or left.); **for THE REST OF THE GAME!**

(Movement and capturing with a Pawn.)



The above picture shows the possible movement of the e2-Pawn on its first move. It may move to e3, or to e4. Once it arrives on e4, it could capture any enemy piece that landed on the d5 or f5 squares.

(Capture squares [for a pawn on e4] marked by the large, bold, black X's.)

Additionally, if the e2-pawn is not moved on your first move, it could capture any piece that happened to land on the d3 or f3 squares.

(Potential movement of the e-pawn, is designated by the blue arrows.)

[Or if the pawn on e2 moved to e3, it then could capture any piece that then was moved to the d4 or f4 squares.]

These (potential capture) squares of the e-pawn (on e2, e3 or e4) ... are marked by the large, black dots.]

One other thing to remember about the Pawn is that if it makes its way **all the way** to the other side of the board, then it may be **PROMOTED** to any piece of your choosing. (Except a King.) That is it may [must] be **instantly (!)** replaced by a **Queen, Rook, Knight, or Bishop**. This is a **permanent** solution.

Once the Pawn reaches the Promotion Square, it then assumes the movement power of that piece and NO LONGER moves like a Pawn!

This about does it for the discussion of the Pawn. There is one special move, (Pawn X Pawn, en passant.); and this will be covered in a separate section on Special Moves.

Properties of the Pawn

Having said a little about the Pawn, we should probably outline some of the basic properties of this particular unit of the chess-board.

1.) Since Pawns **CANNOT** move **backwards**, you should be very, very sure you want to push a Pawn before advancing it. Think twice before moving a Pawn!

2.) The way the Pawns are arranged on the board is essential. **Great** care and thought should be given to the way you are going to use your Pawns. The 'holes' or gaps in the Pawn structure will determine how much activity your pieces have. Look for these **open lines** for your pieces to occupy.
---> Open files are critical for Rooks. Open diagonals are critical for the Bishops.

3.) The further Pawns move up the board, the stronger they become! This is a very simple axiom that is often over-looked even by the most experienced chess-player. A pawn that is only a few moves from reaching its "promotion square" should be constantly watched. Combinations involving this motif are especially tricky!

4.) A weakness in the **Pawn Structure** can often bring about the loss of the game. Learn what a 'doubled' pawn is, what an 'isolated' pawn is, what a 'backward' pawn is. *Make it second nature to avoid these weaknesses at all costs.*

That's it! Now you know almost everything about the pawn. NOT all that bad, yes?

"The King" In Chess

(Or "It's good to be King!!!")

The King is the most **important** piece on the chess-board! ***

If you lose your King, (i.e., get "Checkmated."); the game is **OVER!!** No second chances!

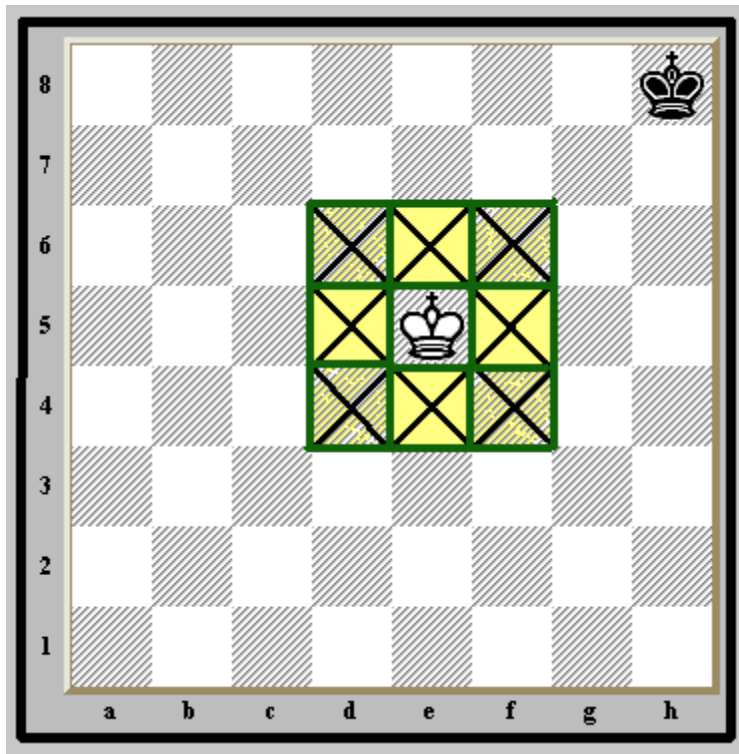
Some of the basic properties of the King are:

- You must guard and protect your King constantly and always be aware your opponent will do anything ... even give away great quantities of material ... to mate your King and win the game.
- The King can become a powerful piece, especially in the endgame.
- An active King in the endgame can be nearly as dangerous as an enemy Rook.
- But you still have to be on guard against a surprise check-mate.
- King safety is of **paramount importance**. Many consider it a basic element of the game.

Most of the time, especially when there are a lot of pieces on the board, your King should be safely **tucked away in the corner**.

Its only when a lot of the pieces come off or are exchanged, that the King becomes a weapon in his own right.

Look carefully at the diagram below. It shows, very graphically, the movement ability of the White (or Black) King.



In the picture/diagram above, The White King, (or the Black King;) can move one square in any direction.

The King is the captain [leader/supreme ruler] of the army. The **King** is a very simple piece to remember. It may move **ONE SQUARE** *in any direction.*

(Note the similarity to the White Queen. She moves also **in any direction**, but moves **as many squares as she likes** in a **straight line.**)

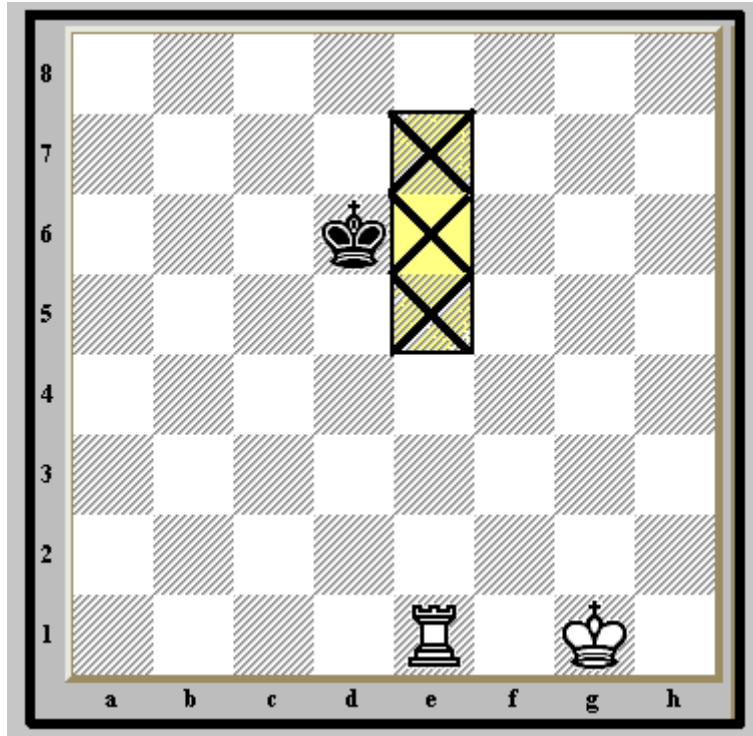
Think of the King as a "mini-Queen." Their movement powers are very broad and unfettered, (Royal Power); although the Queen is **clearly** the more powerful of the two pieces!

[Remember: The King and Queen stand in the middle of the board at the start of the game.]

The above diagram shows the potential movement of the White King. The King may move to any of the squares marked by an "X," and highlighted in yellow. The King could also capture **any** piece that landed on any of those squares. (As long as it was not protected by any other piece.)

(I use a Rook in the examples below. A Rook moves in a straight line, up and down, or back and forth.)

Now look at the diagram below. The Black King is cut off by the White Rook.



(Glance at the above diagram again, and fix it firmly in your mind.)

The King can **NEVER** move into check. This is to say that the King can **never** move into a square that is [threatened/controlled] by the **CAPTURING POWER** of an **enemy piece**.

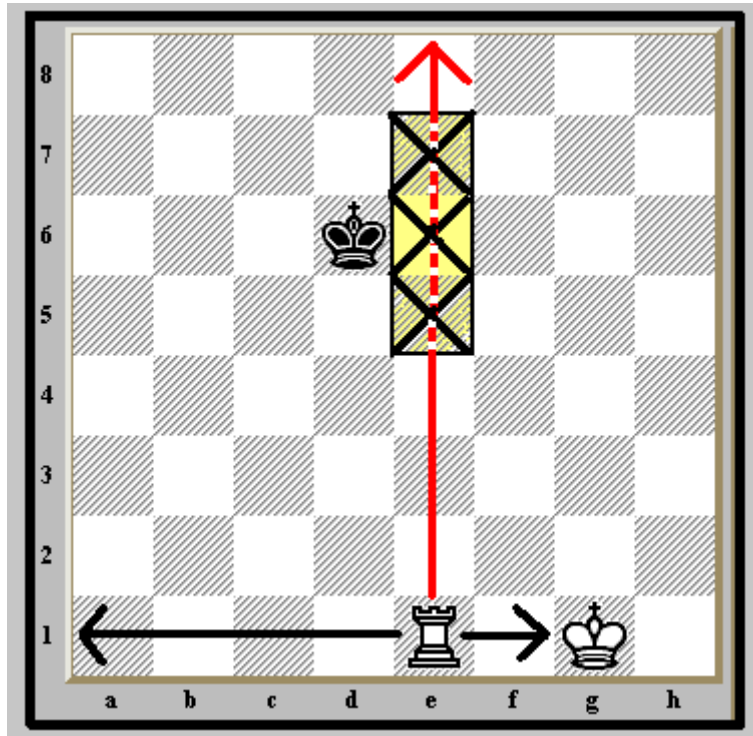
In the above picture, the Black King (on d6) may not move into the capturing power of the White Rook, (on e1). These squares, that the Black King cannot touch, are marked by the large "X's."

Think of the White Rook as projecting a force field down the board, from e1 to e8. The King may not (willingly) touch the squares under any circumstances. Like an electrified fence, as soon as the King touches one of these squares ... **HE DIES!!**

(Moving to a square controlled by an enemy piece is known as, "Moving into **CHECK**, and is an **ILLEGAL** move." **Illegal** = **not** allowed by the rules of chess. Many chess servers and chess programs will not allow you to make an illegal move. If your chess program does not allow a move, check it. It may be you are trying to make an illegal move.)

Any square that is controlled by an enemy piece is off-limits to your King.

(As long as the piece controls a certain square, your King cannot move there. But if the piece **moves away** and no longer control a certain square, then your King could feel free to travel to that square, perhaps on the next move.)



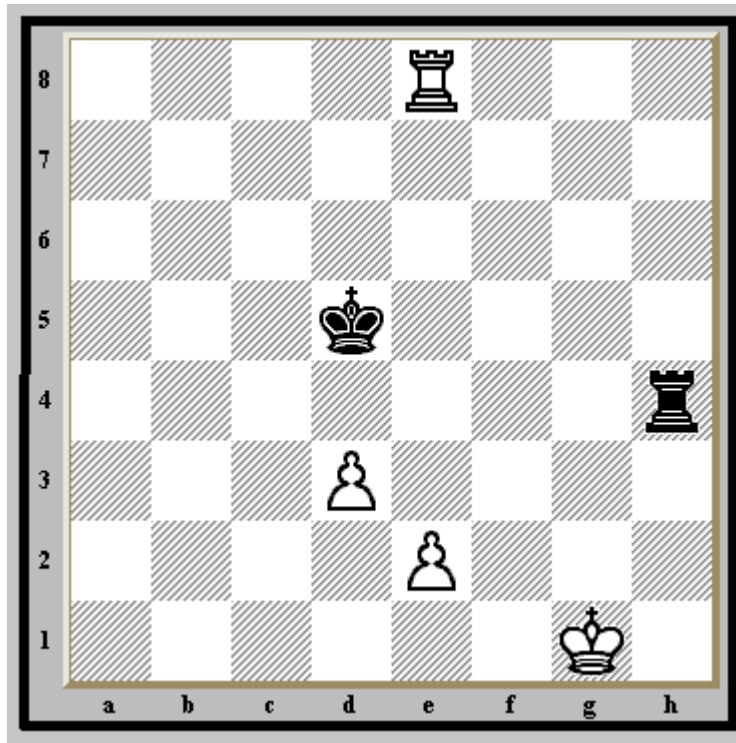
Take a good look at the above diagram. I have added some arrows to the diagram that preceded this one, to demonstrate the movement power of the White Rook on e1.

The Rook could move to any of the squares marked by the arrows.

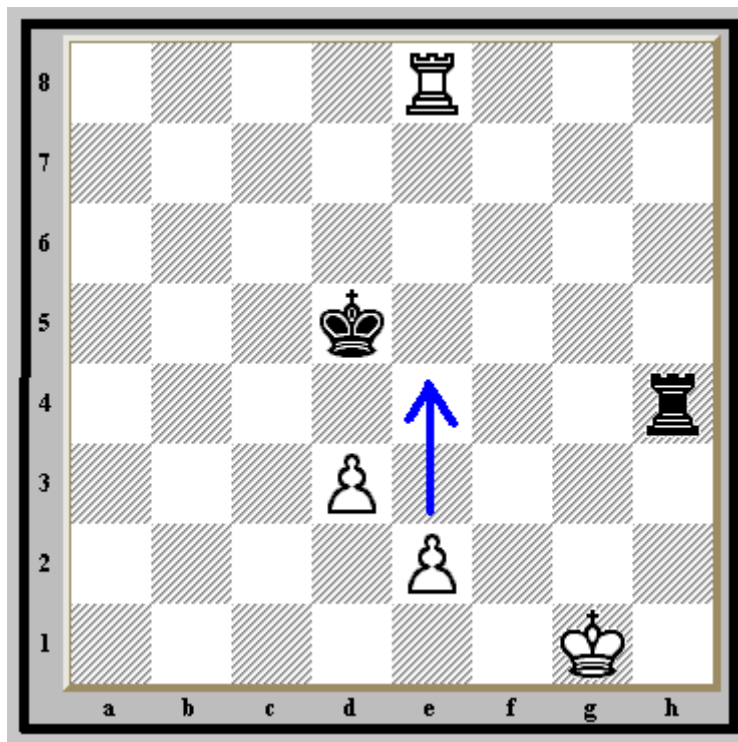
(The Rook could **NOT** go to g1. This square is already occupied by the White King. And no, you may **not** capture your own piece. The White Rook on e1 also **MAY NOT** move to the h1-square. The **ONLY** piece that can "jump over" other pieces is the Knight.)

To summarize, The King may move or capture any piece one square ... **IN ANY DIRECTION.**

The King may **NEVER** move into check, i.e., a square that is controlled by an enemy piece.



Take a good look at the above picture or diagram. It is White to move.



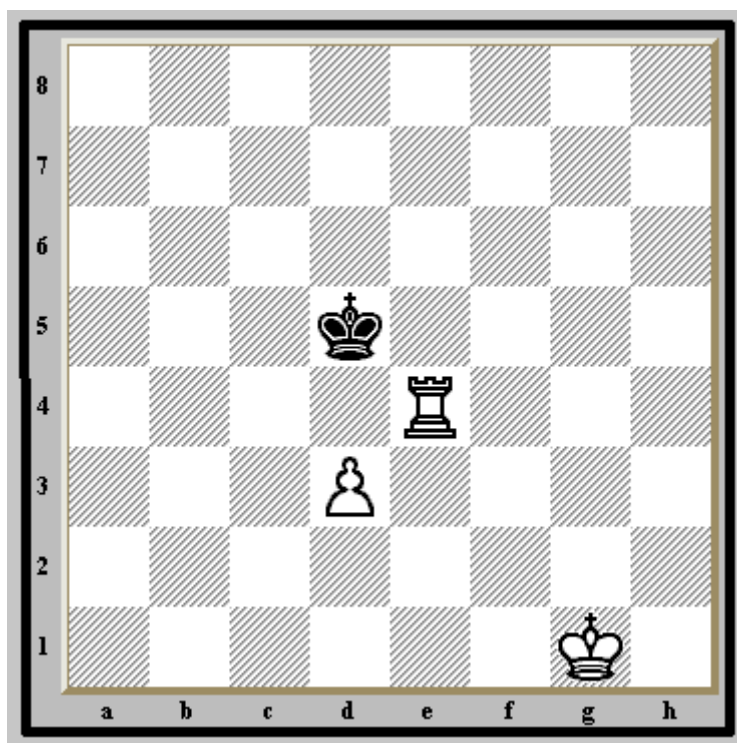
Now look at the diagram again. It is White's turn to move. He plays 1. e2-e4+. (Notice the blue arrow that I have added.) This is to say that he moves the Pawn at e2 to the square, e4. It is check to the Black King on d5, as he is now in the capturing power of the pawn on e4.

(It is customary, but NOT required, to announce check, by saying, "Check!")

Black plays 1...Rxe4. (??) This is a mistake that many beginners make. White responds 2. RxR/e4.

(The White Rook on e8 captures the Black Rook on e4.)

This leaves us with the position below.



Black CAN NOT legally capture the Rook on e4, as he would then be in check from the pawn on d3.

Since White has a Rook and a pawn more than his opponent, he would win easily.

This concludes our basic beginner's lesson on how the King moves.

(See the top of the page for the basic properties of the KING.)

"The Queen" in Chess

(Or "The Hawk swoops down!")

The Queen is the terror of the chessboard. She comes out of nowhere, and rips an opponent to shreds. The Queen is the most valuable of all the pieces, usually the loss of one's Queen without any compensation, can prompt even the most battle-hardened veteran to throw in the towel.

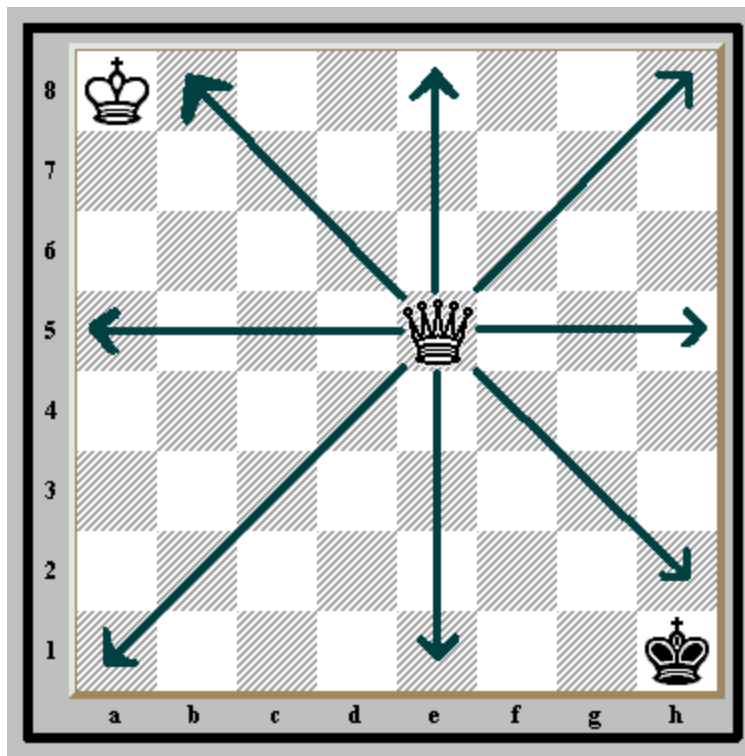
The Queen is easily the most powerful piece on the Board, moving suddenly to the Four Corners of the chessboard, storming any bastion.

The Queen can move in a straight line as far as she wants to go. This makes her "The Star" of the chessboard.

(*A star being a good way to remember the total movement power of the queen.)

The Queen was originally one of the weakest pieces on the Chess-Board. But when the game was imported to Europe from the Middle-East during the "Middle Ages," the Queen's power was increased. This was probably a reflection of the social value of the increased power of the Royal female leaders of many nations of that period. This sped up the game, and made it more exciting. This also probably contributed to the tremendous rise in popularity of the game during that time.

Having said all this, let's take a look at the Queen in action!



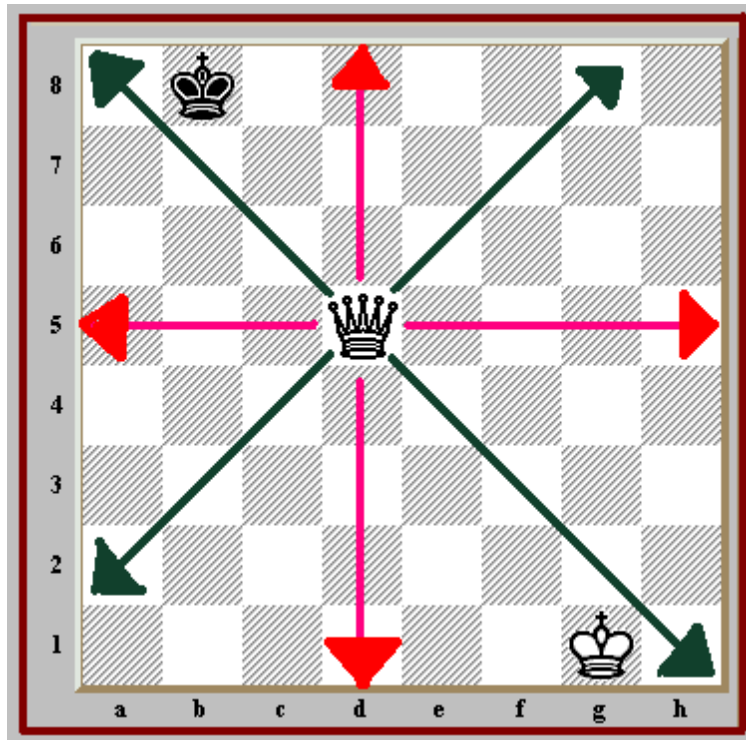
(Take a good, long look at the diagram above.)

In the picture/ diagram above, we can clearly see the extra-ordinary power that the Queen exerts in the game of chess. The arrows represent the movement powers of the Queen. The Queen, on the e5-square; can move to any of the squares along the path marked by the arrows.

The Queen, from the center of the board, can move to a grand total of 27 squares. This represents nearly 45% of the total chessboard!!

Now lets look at that power again.

(Look carefully at the diagram below.)



The red/orange lines & arrows represent the vertical and horizontal power of the Queen.

(The Rook moves vertically and horizontally, also.)

The dark green lines & arrows represent the DIAGONAL power of the Queen.

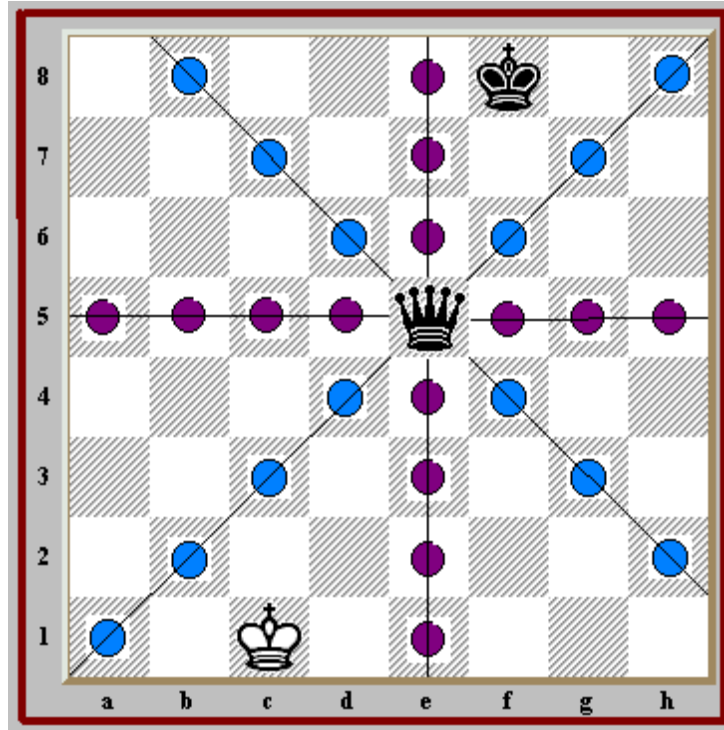
(The Bishop also moves ONLY on the diagonals.)

So the Queen is actually the combination of the combined movement powers of both The Rook AND the Bishop!!!

Study the above two pictures/diagrams for just a moment more. Remember that the Queen moves in a STRAIGHT LINE **AS FAR AS SHE WANTS TO GO!**

(But she can't "jump over" other pieces. This power - and honor – is reserved for the Knight only!)

(Look carefully at the diagram below.)



Take a moment and follow, with your eyes, the **eight different lines of force** of the Black Queen who is operating on the open board.

Again, the dots and the lines represent the grand total mobility potential of the Queen.

(Also notice that I have assigned a different color dot for the lateral and vertical powers of the Queen, compared to the diagonal powers of the Queen.)

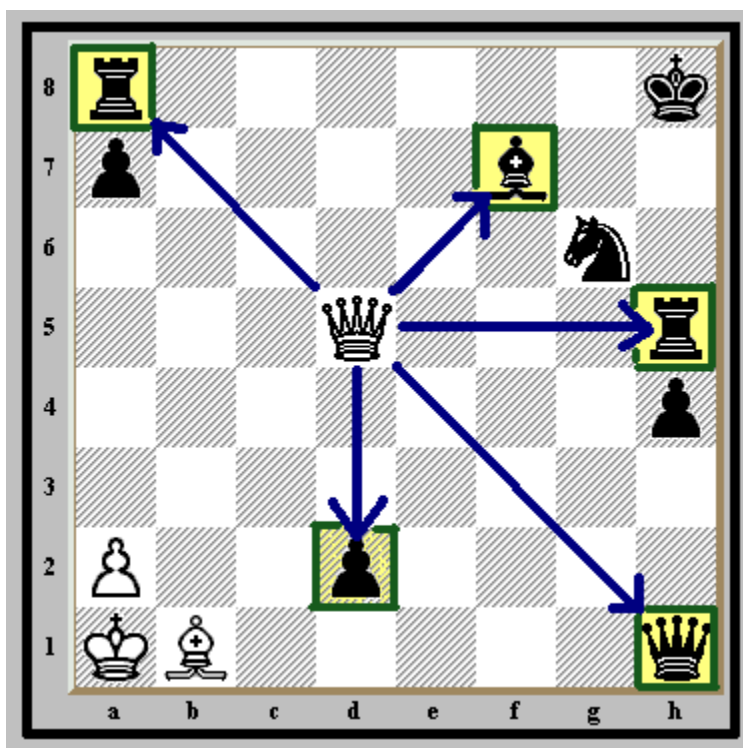
The Black Queen, from its home on the e5-square, could move to, or capture any White piece, on any of the squares marked by the colored dots.

Properties of the Queen

Having fixed firmly the movement power of the Queen in our minds, a few observations are now in order:

- # 1.) The Queen can sit on one side of the board, and easily attack a piece or square on the opposite side of the board.
- # 2.) The Queen is capable of hitting MULTIPLE targets at once.
- # 3.) The Queen needs long, open lines to make her influence felt.

(Now look carefully at the diagram below.)



Notice the White Queen sitting on the d5-square.
The fire-lady is attacking 5 (**FIVE!**) pieces at once.

(The White Queen is attacking the following pieces: The Black Rook in the corner on the a8-square; the Black Pawn on the d2-square; the Black Bishop on the c6-square; the Black Rook on the h5-square;

and her counterpart ... the Black Queen in the **OTHER** corner, on the h1-square!)

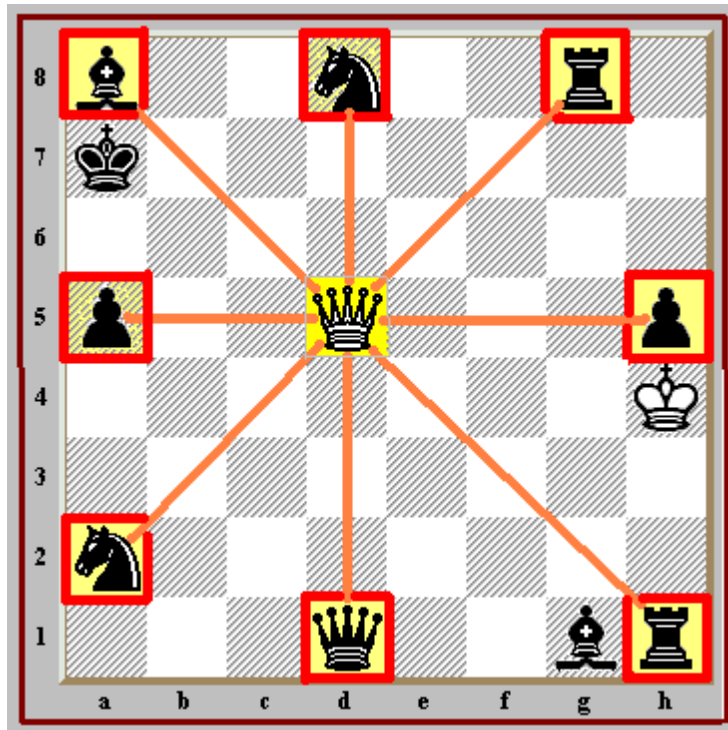
I have high-lighted in yellow, all of these squares, AND given these squares a bold, green border; to make it more readily apparent to the eye the amazing effect of the Queen can have in the open field.

This multiple attack and capture has beaten even the greatest chess players in the history of chess. EVERY SINGLE MASTER who ever lived, (at least if he were honest enough to admit it); would tell you that he had overlooked an unexpected Queen attack – which won the game for his opponent – at some point in his career.

This is one of the reasons, when I play SLOW tournament chess, (and I still have enough time left on the clock!); that I will literally MAP my opponent's Queen. What this means is that I will, after **EVERY SINGLE MOVE, try to picture in my mind's eye, my opponent's Queen moving to every single square that is legally available to that most powerful of pieces. I have been doing this for nearly 15 years now, and it helps me to spot those tricky and unexpected Queen sorties.**

Let's do that just [one more time](#).

(Look very carefully at the diagram below.)



The White Queen on d5 is attacking **EIGHT DIFFERENT TARGETS AT ONCE!!!**

<< Need I say more? >>

That does it for your basic, beginning lesson on the Queen. By now, you should have the Queen's movement fixed very firmly in your mind. And you should be ready to put this very powerful piece to work in your own games!

"The Rook" in Chess

(Or "A Real Straight-Shooter.")

The Rook is probably representative of the "Elephant" in warfare. (If you have studied classical warfare, then you would know that Hannibal of Carthage terrorized the Romans with his elephants. They mounted towers on the back of these animals, and would place archers - or other personnel who utilized projectile weapons - into these movable fortifications.)

The Rook is the board equivalent of the classical battlefield Cannon. It is definitely a **LONG-RANGE** weapon!

Today, the Rook is the equivalent of **"The Tank"** of the modern battlefield.

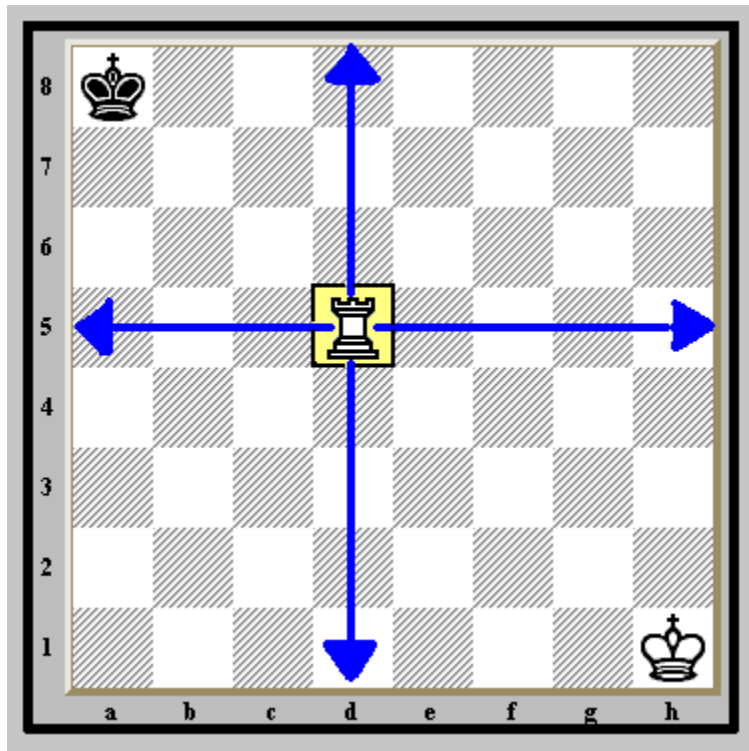
Large, thick- skinned, and sometimes very hard to stop.

---> GM Maurice Ashley likens the Rook to, "A hungry Rhino on the charge!" <---

The Rook is the chess piece, at least when you are using the "Staunton Style" [standard] chess men, that looks like a tower. (Or an fence-post with an ashtray on top, according to one of my students. Some younger students have also commented that it looks like a cannon when you lay it on its side.)

The Rook moves straight up and down, and back and forth across the chessboard ... in a straight line. It moves as many squares as it wants to without hopping over another piece. (The Knight is the only piece that can hop over other pieces.)

Now for a little picture:



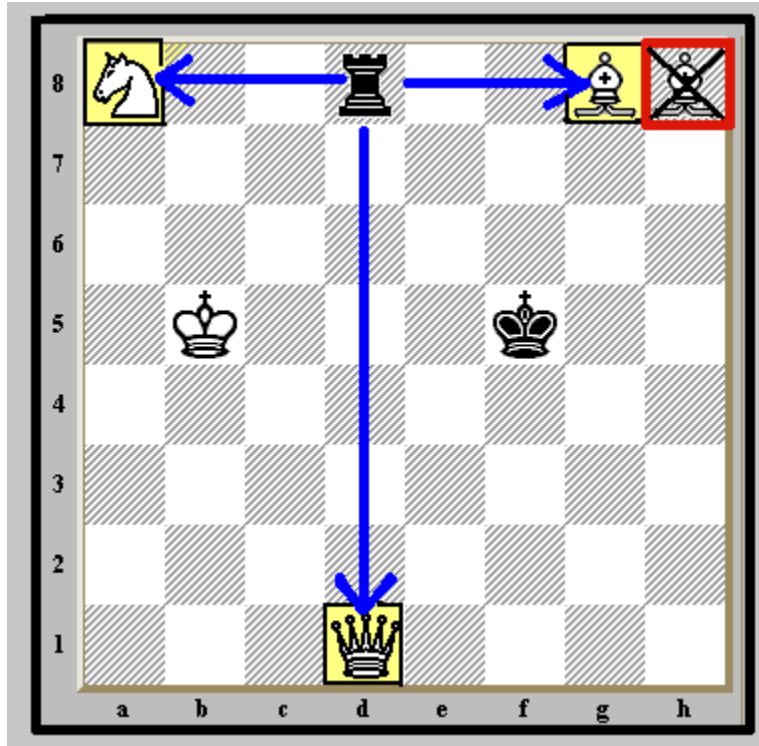
Take a good look at the picture/diagram above.

This shows exactly the movement of a Rook. (Notice the blue arrows.)

Notice that the Rook controls 14 of the 64 squares. This is 22% of the entire playing field. This makes the Rook one of the more powerful pieces on the chess-board.

Remember, the Rook – like all other chess pieces, (except for the pawn) – moves exactly the same way that it captures.

Think of a cannon and straight lines, and you have the way that the Rook will move on the chessboard.



Take a look at the above picture/diagram carefully. (Again, notice the blue arrows. This shows the basic movement and capturing powers of the Rook.)

The Black Rook on d8 can capture any of the following pieces:

- #1.) The White Knight on a8;**
- #2.) The White Queen on d1;**
- #3.) Or the White Bishop on g8.**

(Notice I have high-lighted these squares in yellow.)

NOTE: The Black Rook can NOT capture the White Bishop on h8, (on this move, anyway); as this would mean that The Black Rook had JUMPED OVER the White Bishop on g8. (Notice the red "X" overlaying the square.)

IF the Black Rook on d8 captured the White Bishop on g8 on the first move; then (and only then) would it be able to capture the White Bishop on h8 on the second move!

(That is also to assume that White does not move the Bishop on h8 in the interim!)

Properties of the Rook

(Just read this. Don't worry too much about remembering it right now. It's enough that it will be buried in your subconscious.)

1.) The Rook is immobile at the start of the game. It is often sacrificed for tempo in an attack. It takes many moves before the Rook can really make its presence felt in a chess game.

2.) The Rook needs open files (lines) to be effective. The Rook is also dangerous in a position where the Rook can be transferred (called a 'Rook Luft') from one side of the board to the other side of the board on an open rank. (Even GM's occasionally miss this type of move!)

3.) The Rook LOVES to go down and eat up all of his opponent's pawns on the opponent's second row. This is why a Rook, eating too much, is sometimes known as a, "Pig on the Seventh Rank."

4.) The Rook is probably "Public Enemy, Number # 1" to the opposing King. One of the most common checkmates an unwary or very inexperienced player will fall into is letting a piece mate him on his (or her) first row when the player's own pawns block the escape of the King. This is known as a "Back-Rank Mate," and is probably the most common mating pattern!! And The Rook is the most likely culprit!

5.) The Rook is most effective when it is BEHIND a pawn. (Behind your own pawns and also behind your opponents pawns. This way, no matter how far down the board an enemy pawn gets, your Rook will always be attacking it. Just simple, common sense.)

6.) The **Rook** is normally **GREATLY superior** to a single Knight or **Bishop**. (This is because a Rook covers so many more squares than these other two pieces do individually. This is why a Rook is worth more than a Knight or a Bishop on "The Table of Material Value.") The Rook can often be superior to TWO minor pieces in situations where the primary emphasis is on mobility. Yet normally, The Rook (+ 1 Pawn) is VASTLY inferior to a Knight AND a Bishop. (Even though the 'Points Scale' is the same!) This is because of the simple military truth that TWO fighting units are nearly always superior to ONE! (Simple common sense would tell you that.) Yet the beginner and Novice will often make this trade without a thought to how they have disturbed the basic balances of the game.

7.) The Rook is a clumsy piece in positions where there are few usable open lines available to it. In these situations, A Rook may be vastly inferior to a well-placed Knight or Bishop.

8.) The Rook works best in cooperation with other pieces. [This maybe true of all the pieces. :)] Two of the most effective Rook combinations are a Rook

on an open file, working WITH a Bishop on an open diagonal; and two Rooks pushing down the same file TOGETHER. (This is known as a "battery.")

The Rook is a pretty simple piece. Straight lines. Files and Ranks. Up and down, back and forth, right to left, left to right. It captures just like it moves. And that's pretty much it for the Rook.

"The Bishop" in Chess

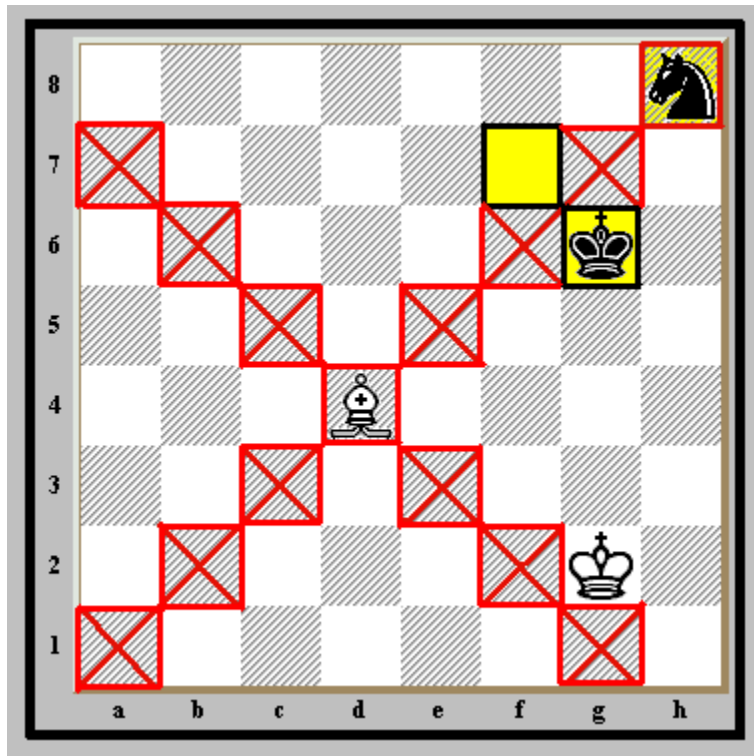
(Or "*The Cardinals' of the Chessboard.*
& '*Treachery and intrigue in the Royal Court*")

The Bishop is the equivalent or the representative of the church officers in the Medieval Royal Court.

They used to wield tremendous power and exerted great influence in the scheme of things. Of course this was in many countries in Europe during the Middle Ages.

Some have commented that the Bishop moves obliquely to mimic its counterpart in the Royal circles. While this is an interesting observation, its not historically correct.

Look at the diagram below. It shows The Movement (and Capturing) powers of the Bishop at a glance.



Looking at the above diagram, **ALL** the potential moves of the White Bishop on d4 are all marked by the **red "X's"** on **all** the squares that the Bishop could possibly move to. The White Bishop could also **capture** any Black piece that landed on one of the **squares** marked by the **red "X"**.

(They say a picture is worth a thousand words, and here that is true.)
The first thing to remember is that a Bishop moves in a straight line.

The Bishop is always confined to a **diagonal**, that is to say a **straight line of squares connected only by the corners**.

In the picture above, the Bishop may move to **any** of the **squares** marked by a large "X."

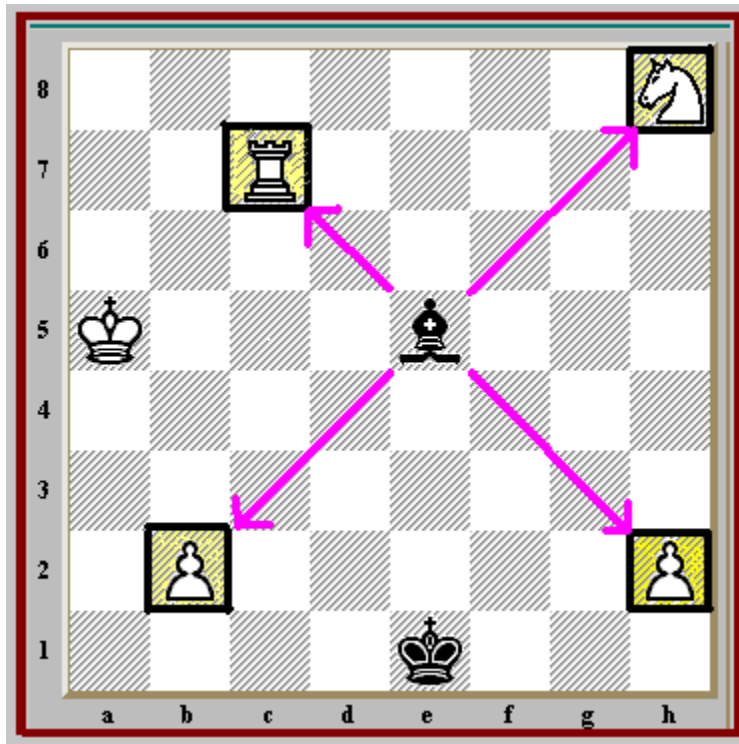
If an enemy piece were sitting on any of these squares, the Bishop could capture it.

The other thing to note here is the superiority of The Bishop vs. The Knight, at least in the above diagram. The Bishop is controlling 13 squares, reaching from the center to both sides of the chess-board. **The Knight only has one square**, because he may **not** capture his own piece. (The Black King.)

The two potential squares for the Black Knight are high-lighted in yellow.

{So The Bishop **ALWAYS** moves in a straight line and ALWAYS moves on its diagonal!}

(Take a close look at the diagram below.)



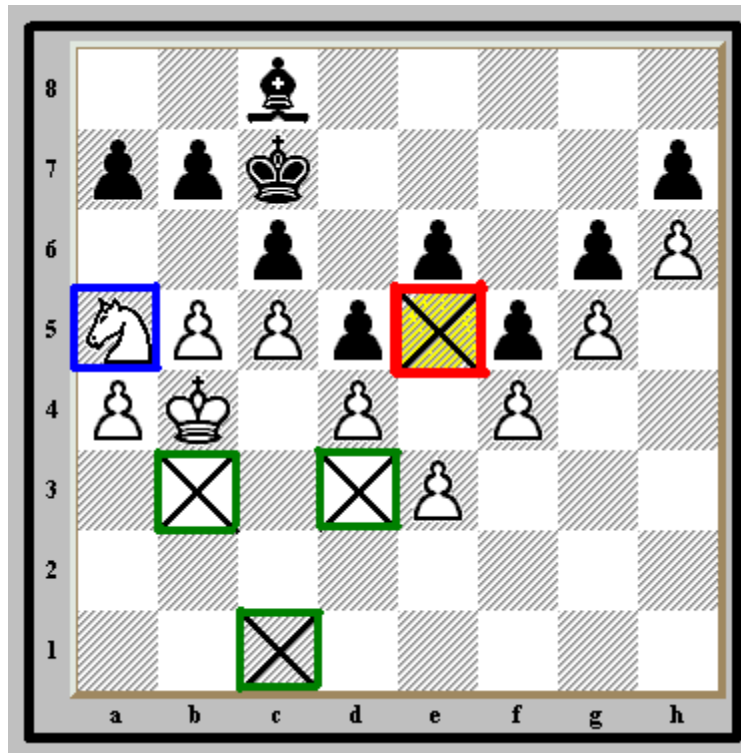
In the picture above, The Black Bishop on the e5-square could capture FOUR different pieces. The Bishop could capture either of the White Pawns on b2 or h2, the Bishop could capture the White Rook on c7; and the Bishop could also capture the White Knight on h8.

(Notice I have given all the possible capture squares a bold, black border; and high-lighted them with yellow.)

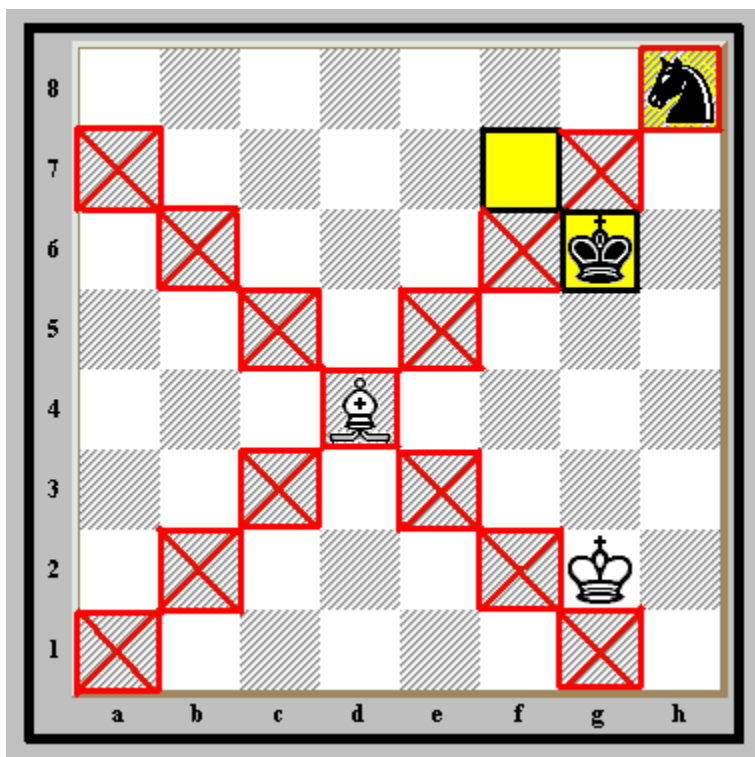
Notice that the Black Bishop is still moving on the DIAGONALS.
The Black Bishop could also **MOVE** to any of the **empty squares** along the path of the colored arrows.

This is **not** to say that the Bishop is always superior to the Knight.
There are often situations where the Knight is vastly superior to the Bishop.
The picture below is such a case.

How would you get the Knight to its ideal square?



The series of "X's" show the most likely route that the Knight might take in trying to reach its ideal square.



Look at the above picture one more time.

A few observations are now in order:

Properties of the Bishop

#1.) The Bishop moves obliquely along the diagonals. The Bishop also captures exactly the way it moves. (Remember: **ONLY** The Knight can jump over other pieces.)

2.) The Bishop is a **LONG - RANGE** piece. It can move all the way across the board in one move.

3.) The Bishop needs **OPEN LINES** along the intended diagonal(s) to be effective!

4.) The Bishop is not effective when hemmed in by its own pawns.

That's it for **The Bishop**. All you have to remember for this piece is that it moves and captures on a diagonal. You have **two** Bishops at the start of each game. One is for the light squares and one is for the dark squares.

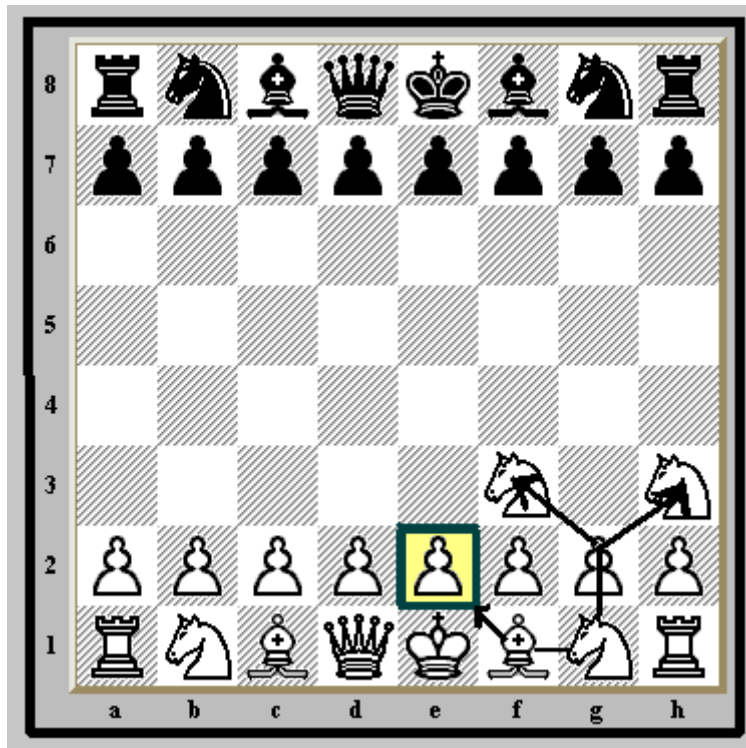
And that's all for The Bishop.

"The Knight" in Chess

(Or "Life in the Calvary")

The Knight represents The Cavalry, (Mounted soldiers on Horse back.); in chess. The Knight, like its counterpart in war, can **leap over obstacles**. The Knight can surprise the enemy with its sudden attacks, change of directions, and its ability to improvise. The Knight is an 'in-fighter' meaning that this piece must get close to do its dirty work. (Unlike its counterpart, The Bishop, which can inflict damage from a great distance.)

Now take a very close look at the diagram below.



The Knight is the piece that looks like a Horse's head in the above diagram. At the beginning of the game, you have **TWO** Knights and your opponent will have two Knights, regardless of the color army you will be commanding at the beginning of the game. **The Knight moves like an "L,"** which is to say it moves straight two squares in any direction, (North, South, East, or West.); then one square to the immediate right or left.

In the above diagram, The White Knight on g1 can move to h3 or f3. White cannot move his Knight to e2, at least not right at this moment.

(Notice - in the above diagram - I have given the square, e2 a bold, green border. It is also high-lighted in yellow.)

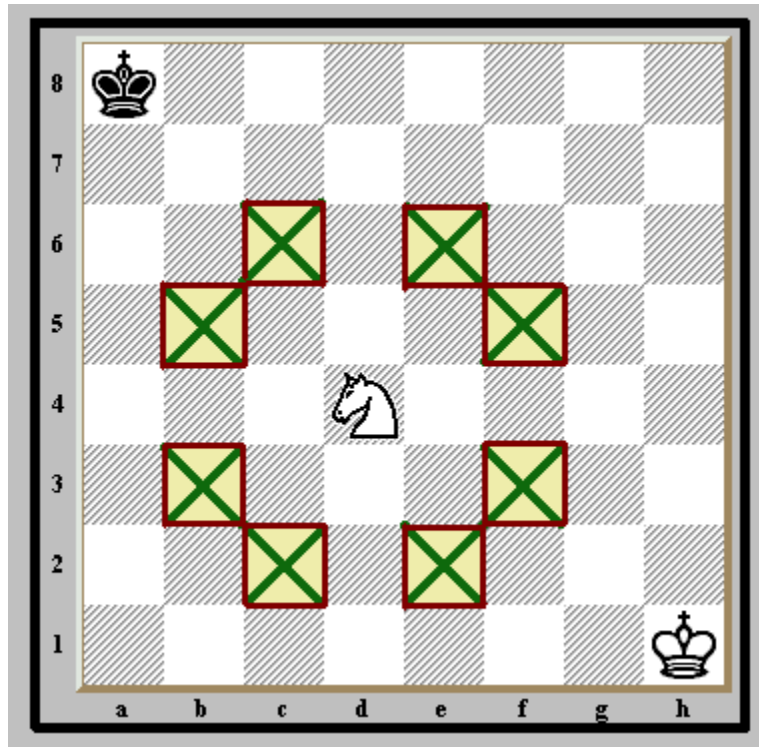
You may **NOT** capture your own pieces! (It would be disadvantageous to do so, and would be helping your opponent.)

If, at a **later** time in the game, **after** White has moved his pawn on e2, then he could go to the e2-square, as long as that square was empty.

The Knight has many different properties. One thing to remember is that the Knight ***is the only piece*** that can "jump over" other pieces! The Knight always moves and captures in exactly the same pattern. For instance, imagine that the above board had no pieces on it except for a White Knight on d4. This Knight could move to e2, f3, f5, e6, c6, b5, b3, and c2. Imagine that the Knight above is still sitting on d4 on the empty board.

Imagine again that the Knight is sitting on a completely empty board, except for a White Knight on d4. Now picture (pretend/imagine in your head) that there is a Black Rook sitting on the f5 square. You may capture that piece by raising your Knight in the air, then removing the Black Rook from the chessboard. Now finish the move by placing the White Knight on the f5-square. Congratulations! You have just completed your first capture with the Knight.

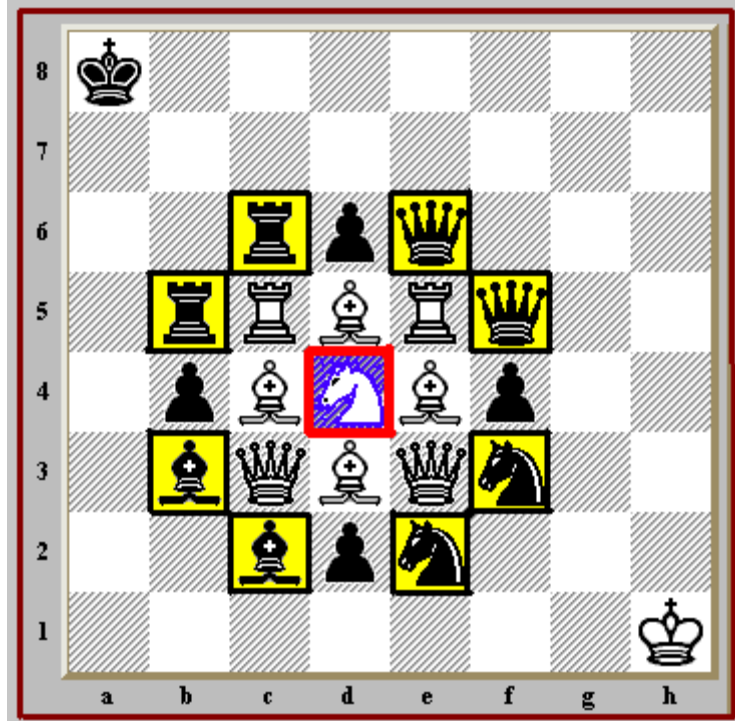
Another important property of the Knight is that if it begins a move on a DARK square, it will finish on a light square. (And visa-versa.)



(The above diagram shows the hypothetical position that we discussed in detail, above. The Knight on d4 can move to any of the squares marked with a green "X" and high-lighted in yellow.)

Take a good look at the picture above, a Knight sitting on d4 may go to any of the squares marked by one of the "X's". This very clearly shows how much ***the Knight is circular in its total range***; even though the ***individual move*** looks like an **"L."**

The Knight also could **capture** any piece that landed on any of the squares marked with an "X".



(Take a very good look at this diagram.
If you have a chessboard, set this position up.)

See the *White Knight* on the *d4-square*?

(Notice I have given the d4 - square a broad, bold, red border.
I also have high-lighted that square in blue.)

- The Knight on d4 can capture either of the two Black Rooks on b5 and c6.
- The Knight (on d4) can capture either of the two Black Queens on e6 and f5.
- The White Knight (on d4) can capture either of the two Black Knights at e2 or f3.
- And the White Knight (on d4) can capture either one of the two Black Bishops on c2 or f3.

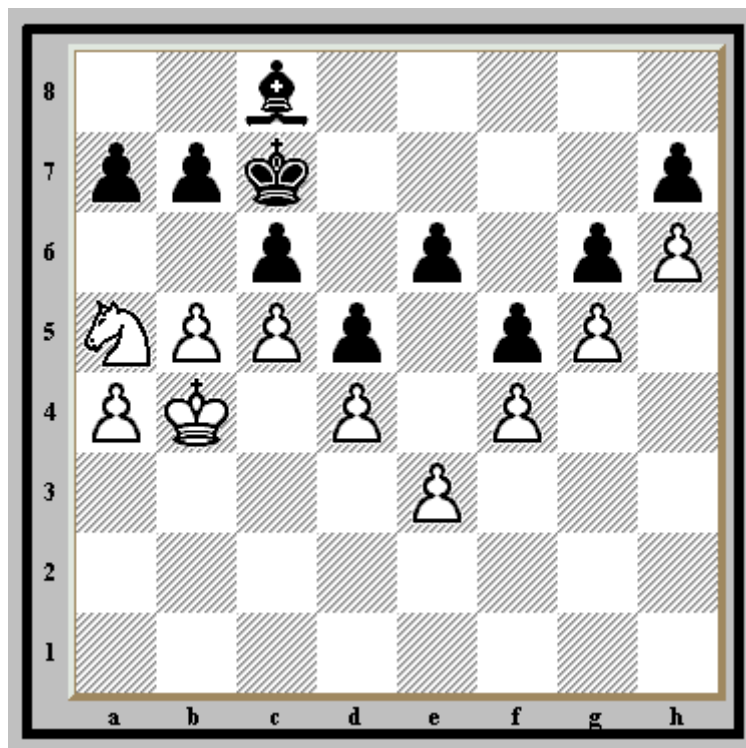
(Notice I have given all the possible "capture" squares a bold, black border, and have high-lighted these squares in yellow.

Again, the possible capture squares represent a "Knight-Wheel."
(Another way to think of it is as a "Circular Pattern.")

Let me also say the above position is EXTREMELY improbable. I simply set it up to demonstrate, **in a very extreme setting**, the Knight's ability to 'Leap over' its own (or enemy) pieces. Study the above example very carefully. It is very instructive and demonstrates quite clearly the ability of the Knight.

Knight vs. Bishop

Now we have already seen the section below on the page that dealt with the Bishop. But its good to review it again. And we shall deal with it in more detail, as it goes to the very heart of the basic differences between the Bishop and the Knight.

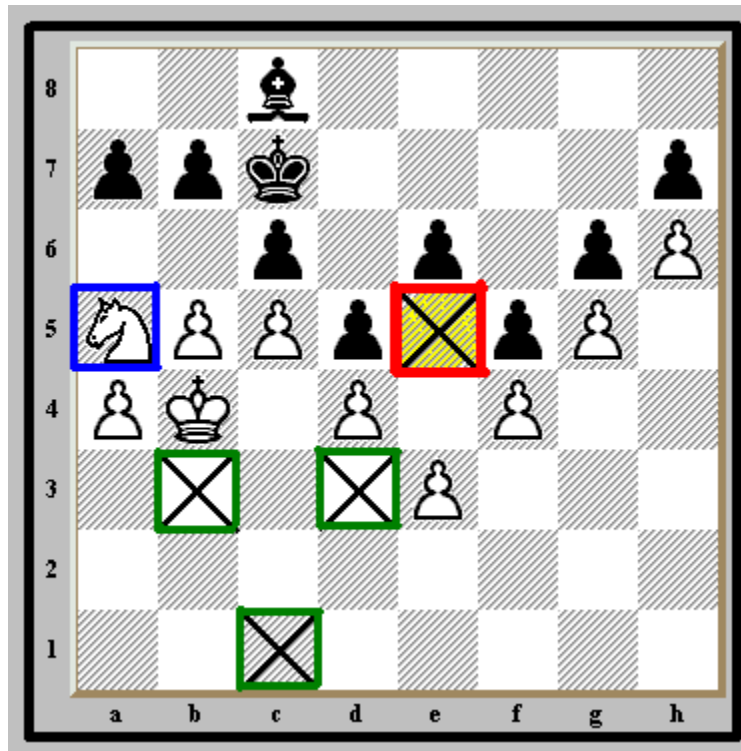


Take a very careful look at the above diagram.

Here , in this particular example, The Knight is the vastly superior piece to its counterpart, The Bishop.

Why? Because the Bishop is hemmed in by its own pawns, which is a very common occurrence.

How would you get the Knight to its ideal square?



The series of "X's" show the most likely route that the Knight might take in trying to reach its ideal square. The Knight starts on the square that it is sitting on. (The square a5, marked by the blue border.)

The Knight's "Ideal Square" is the square, e5. (Marked by the bold, red border.)

(The squares in between the a5 and e5-squares, are marked with a green border.)

Note that if the Knight were already at e5 in the above diagram, and it was White's turn to move; he would play 1. Nxc6! [The Knight on e5 moves and occupies the square at c6, and removes the Black Pawn that was on c6 and takes it off the board.] This move, (In our hypothetical position.) {1. Nxc6,} would win the game for White.

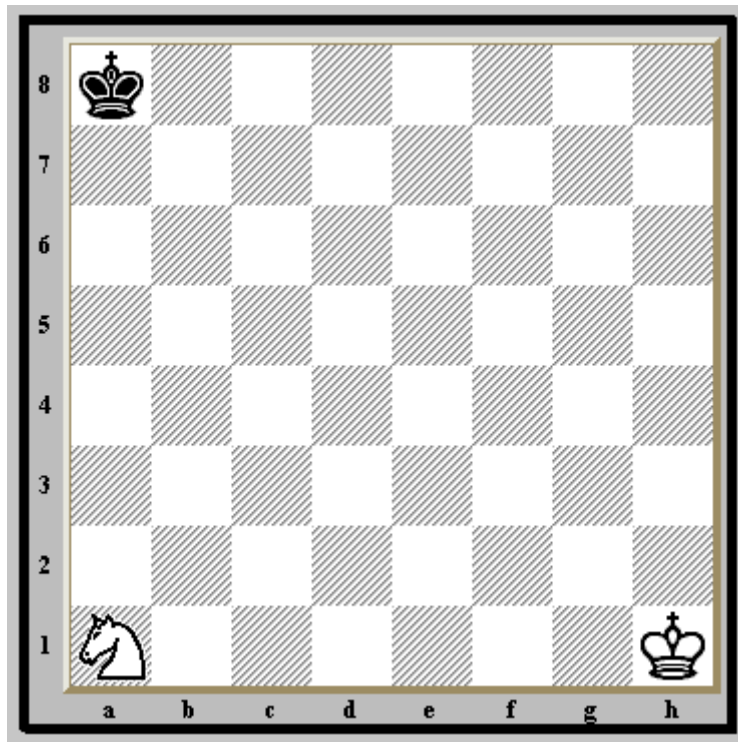
(Black would not be able to recapture because White would push his h-pawn in to promote to a new Queen. More on this, later.)

This is an extremely good exercise for **ANY** player to do. You should be **continually** seeing squares on the board and be thinking, "How many moves will it take to get my Knight to **that** square!!!"

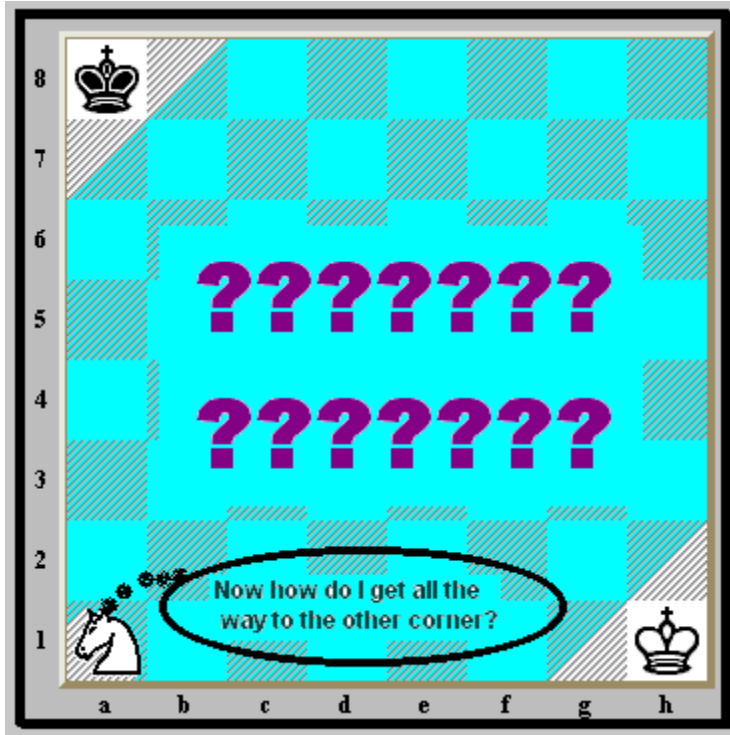
- A good exercise to learn the Knight's movement pattern is to get all 8 pawns. Then place the White Knight on a1. Put Black pawns on c2, e3, etc. (Building a "Knight-Chain.")

- Then, after you have built your chain of pawns for your Knight, **capture** all of them **in sequence**. Repeat this exercise, **varying the position of the Black Pawns in the Knight-Chain as much as possible!** This will help firmly fix The Knight, **and** its somewhat peculiar movement-pattern, firmly in your mind.

Another exercise for learning the Knight's unusual movement pattern is to put a Knight in one corner, and then figure out how many moves, (In a row.); it takes to get the Knight to the **opposite** corner.

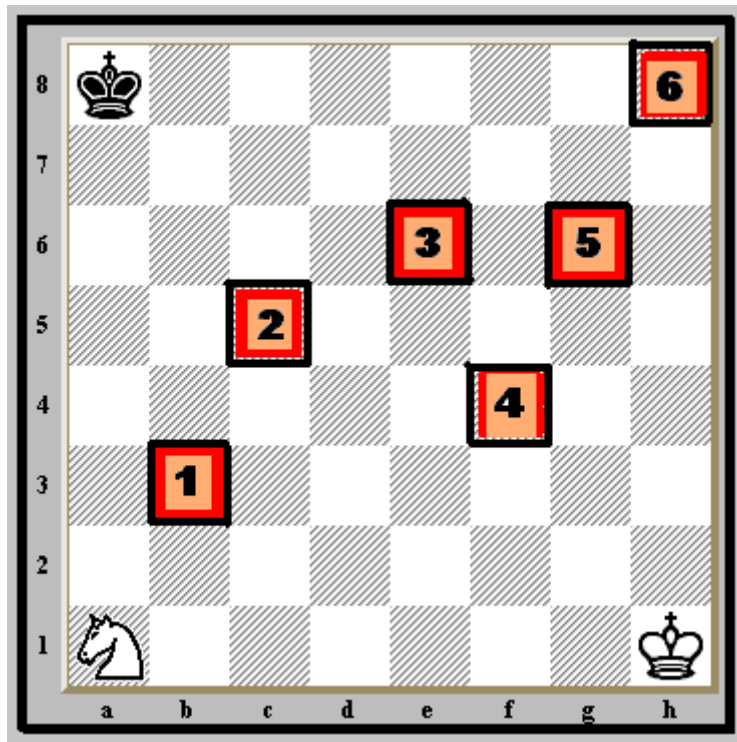


See the diagram above? How many moves does it take to get the Knight from the a1-square to the h8-square? Use the shortest route!



The Knight needs some assistance. Can you help him?

Well, here is one method.



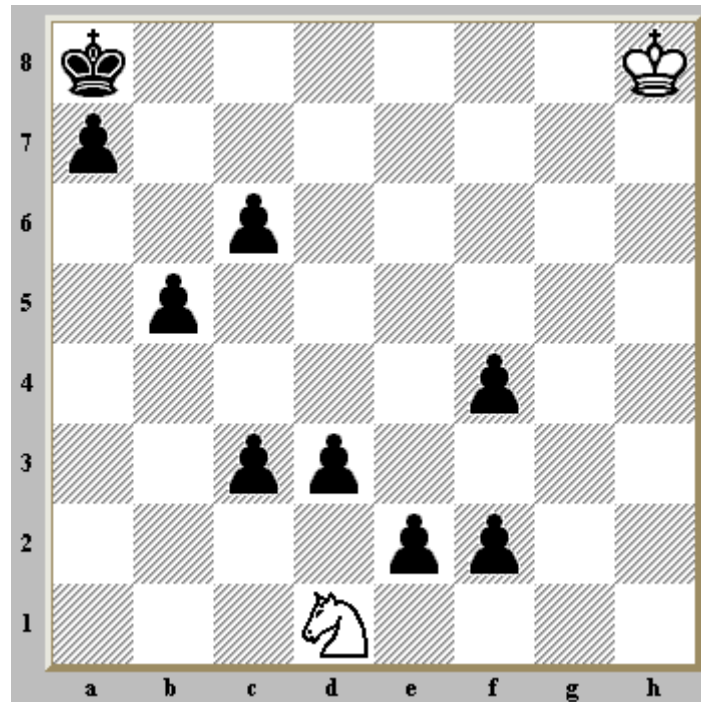
The final diagram shows just one of the correct routes.
(There are many right answers. For example: N/a1-c2-e3 to f5; etc.
OR N/a1-b3-a5-c6-e7, etc.)

NOW MANY DIFFERENT ROUTES CAN YOU FIND?

You can vary this exercise too. Keep playing around with the Knight, until you are completely comfortable with its rather eccentric movement pattern.

For the true die-hard, the following exercise is a lot of fun. (It can also entertain kids on a rainy day!) Get 64 pennies. (Use the pennies to mark the squares that the Knight has already landed on.) Start the Knight on one square, any square. See how many squares you can cover with the Knight WITHOUT going to the SAME square more than once! If you get really good, you can cover ALL the squares of the chess-board WITHOUT ever visiting the same square twice!!

Look carefully at the diagram below.



Moving in sequence, (Without letting Black take a move, or being concerned if he can capture your Knight.); how many moves will it take you to **capture ALL 8 pawns**. The trick is to **CAPTURE WITH EVERY MOVE!!** Can you do it?

Properties of the Knight

- # 1.) The Knight always moves in an **"L" - shaped pattern !!!**
- # 2.) The Knight's TOTAL movement capability is nearly circular.
- # 3.) The Knight is primarily a "SHORT - RANGE" piece!
(As in contrast to the Bishop, which can be a long-range piece.)
- # 4.) Because of its range, the Knight is an excellent **"in-fighter."**
(This means the Knight often excels in slightly cramped or partially blocked environments where other pieces do poorly.)

Also because of its range, the Knight will usually be found lacking in a "two-front" operation. (The Knight may be unable to return quickly from one wing to assist in an attack or a defense on the opposite wing.)

- # 5.) The Knight is a "multi-directional," and will often surprise even the most experienced player with the speed and suddenness of its attacks. The Knight also "changes direction" very suddenly.

NEVER assume you think you know where the Knight is headed!
Always try to look at every legal square that is available to this piece!

6.) The Knight covers both the light and dark squares **equally well!**
(Unlike its counterpart, The Bishop.) The Knight **ALWAYS** will start on one color-square, (say a light square) and end up on an **OPPOSITE-**colored square than the one it originated from. (Say a dark-colored square.)

For this reason, in an ending where **ALL** the pawns are on the **same side** of the board, a KNIGHT may be preferable to the Bishop!!

7.) The Knight usually performs **poorly** **from a corner** or **near the edge** of the board. For this reason, the Knight should be kept away from these areas, if you want the optimum performance from this piece. (Because of this, The Knight will often have great difficulty stopping an opponent from advancing his or her Rook Pawn's.)

And that is pretty much it for the Knight. Its movement pattern must be firmly fixed in your mind. It **ALWAYS** moves and captures in exactly the same way. The beginner will **often** have trouble with the Knight, because it is very different from just about all the other pieces.

(This is because **ALL** the other pieces are basically *linear* in movement, whereas the Knight is **NOT**.)

"The Final Blow" in Chess

Checkmate In Chess

(Or "*The Hammer Falls*")

In this section we will look closely at just a few checkmates. The idea here is **not** to turn you into a tactical wizard overnight, but simply to make you able to understand thoroughly the concept of mate, and being able to recognize it when the possibility of it occurs in your own game.

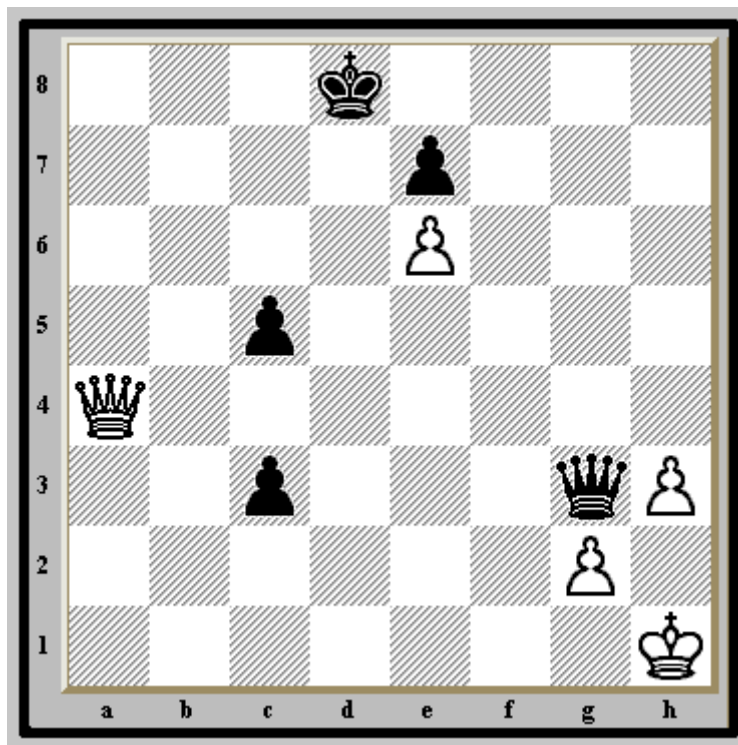
CHECKMATE

Checkmate occurs whenever the King is in check, and has no legal move to get out of check.

If you are mated, it is the end of the game.

Just so that you will understand it, we will look carefully at a few examples of a Check-Mate - or simply "mate" as many chess-players refer to it.

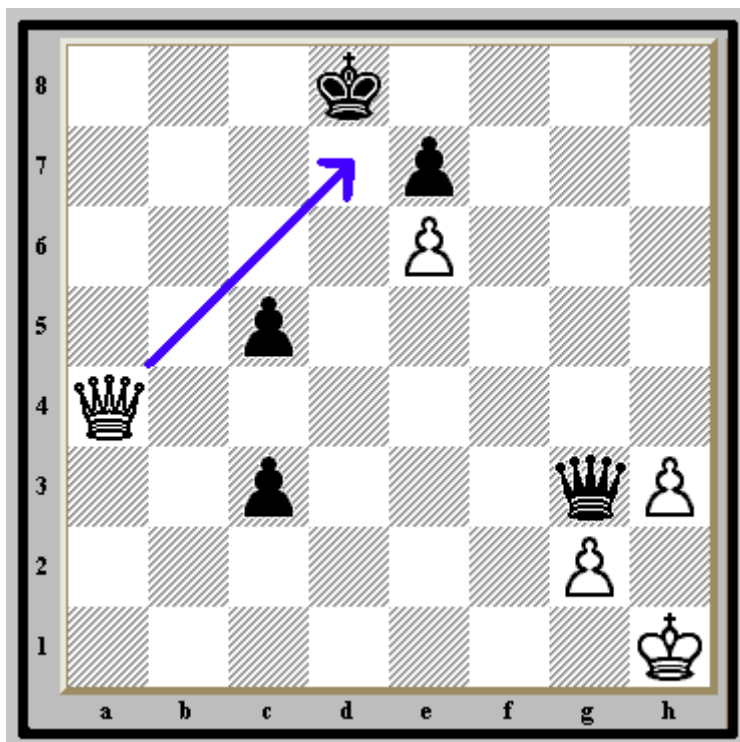
Take a look at the graphic below.



Let us pretend, or stipulate that it is White's move in this diagram.

What would you play? Take a couple of minutes to study the board.

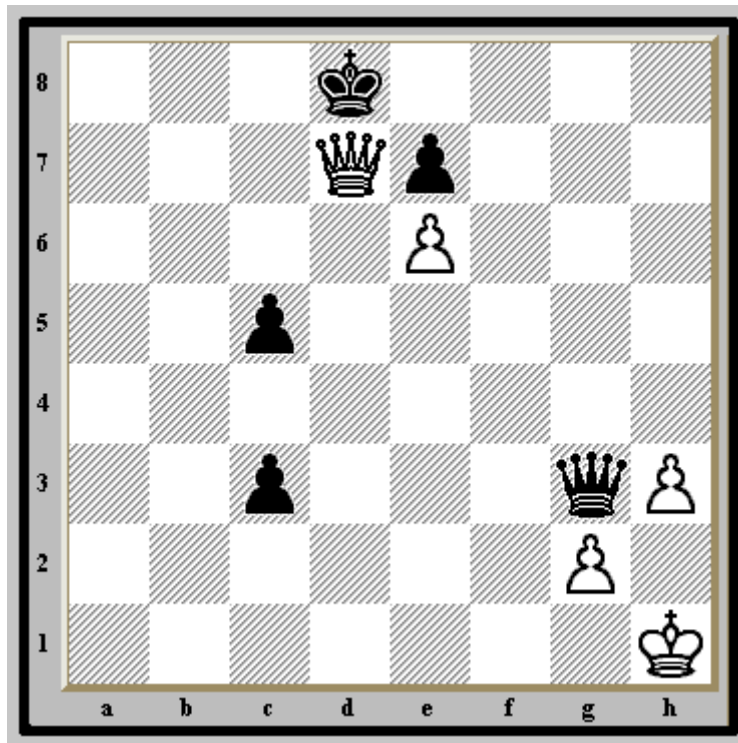
After thinking a few minutes, White says, "Whoa!, I think I see something."
White thinks he sees a mate in one move!



White decides to move his Queen along the line indicated by the blue arrow.
This would be written as 1. Q/a4-d7, or 1. Qd7

(The White Queen on a4 moves to the empty d7-square.)

The diagram below shows what the new position would look like.



And that's it!! Its a checkmate!

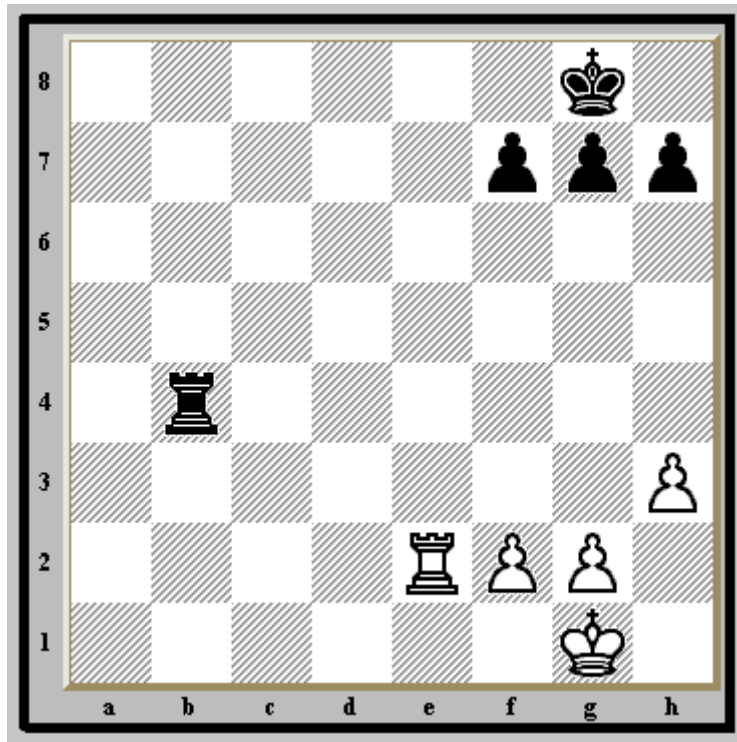
Black **cannot** recapture with his King, because of the White pawn on e6. (He would be moving his King into the capturing power of the White Pawn. This is an **ILLEGAL MOVE**, and is known as "moving into check." This is **NOT** allowed by the rules of chess.)

The Queen, because of her extraordinary movement powers, ***covers all the other squares that the Black King could move to.***

The game is over. Give yourself a pat on the back of you saw this without too much trouble.

Let's look at another example of a relatively simple checkmate.

Take a close look at the graphic below.



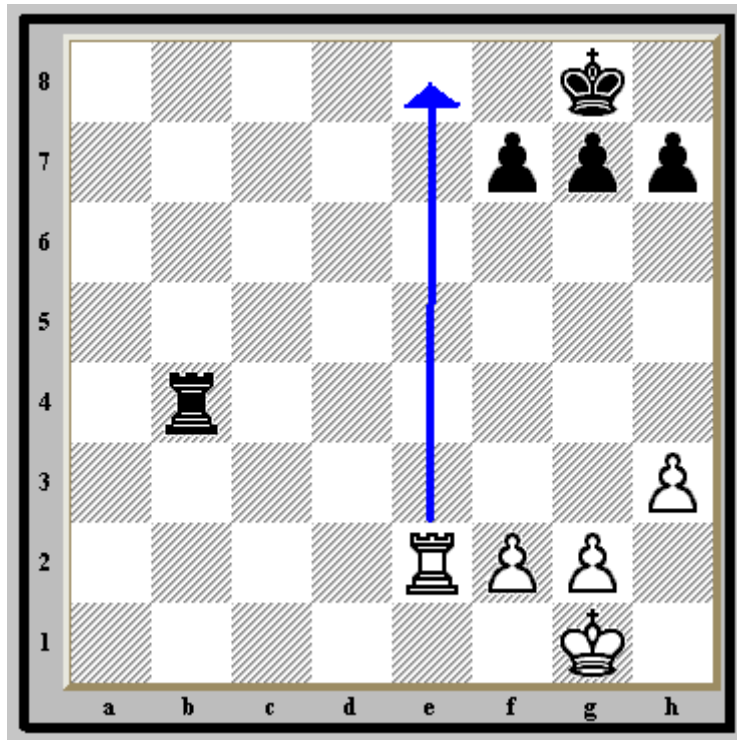
OK, pretend you are White here, and its your move.

What move would you play?

You may want to take a few minutes and try to guess what the correct move is:

(Hint # 1: Its a mate in one.)

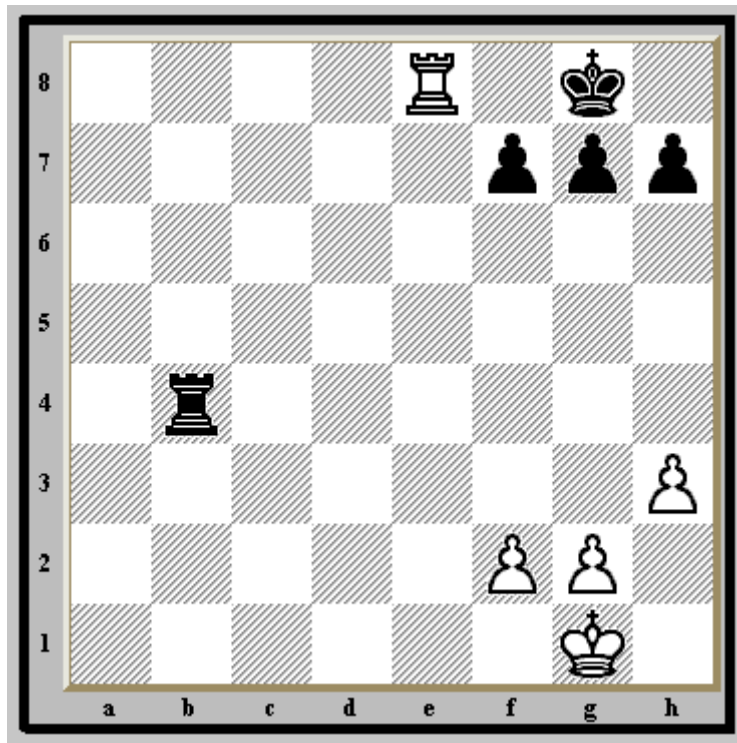
(Hint # 2: Its a Rook move.)



White decides to move the Rook along the path indicated by the blue arrow.

Was this the move that you predicted?

Now look carefully at the diagram below.



Boom! That's it!!

Its a **checkmate**. The Black King on g8 is under fire from the White Rook on e8.

(Remember that the Rook can move **UP & DOWN** **AND** from **SIDE TO SIDE**.)

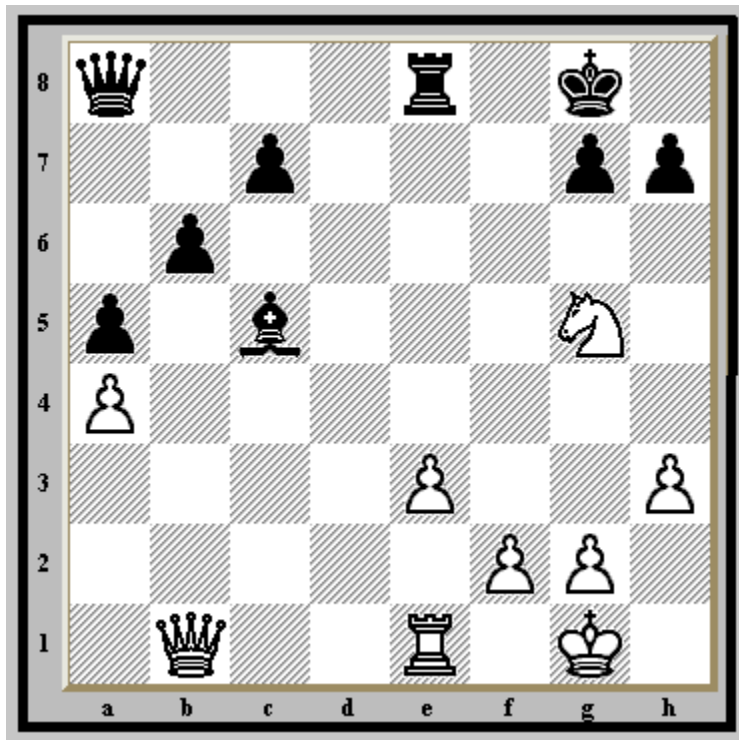
The Black King is in **check**, and has **no move** to get **out** of check. (Reminder: You may NEVER capture your own pieces.)

This type of mate, where you are hemmed in on your first row by your own pawns is known as a **"Back-Rank" Mate**. It is **very common** in chess.)

Now those two mates were relatively easy. Are you ready for something a little tougher?

Take a close look at the diagram below. If you have a chess set, you are definitely going to want to set this one up!!

(If you don't have a chess board right now, don't worry about it. Follow along as best you can. If you get a chess board in the near future, you can come back to this example and study it. This little gem is simply meant to show you just a small portion of the tremendous and complex possibilities that could occur in a mating attack. If you don't think you can follow the action without a chess board, you may simply skip to the last diagram.)



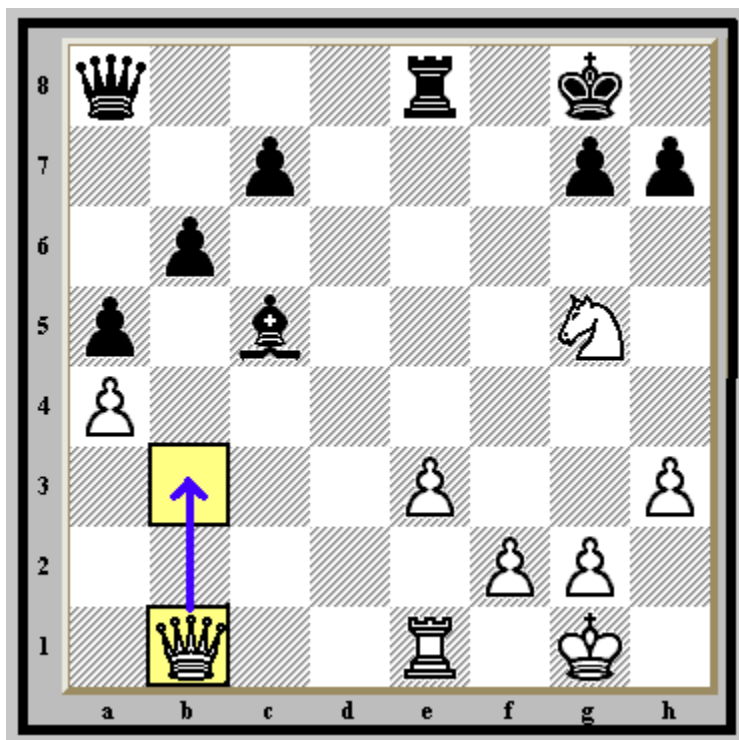
Take a few minutes and study this one, if you like.

You are White in this position. What move would you play?

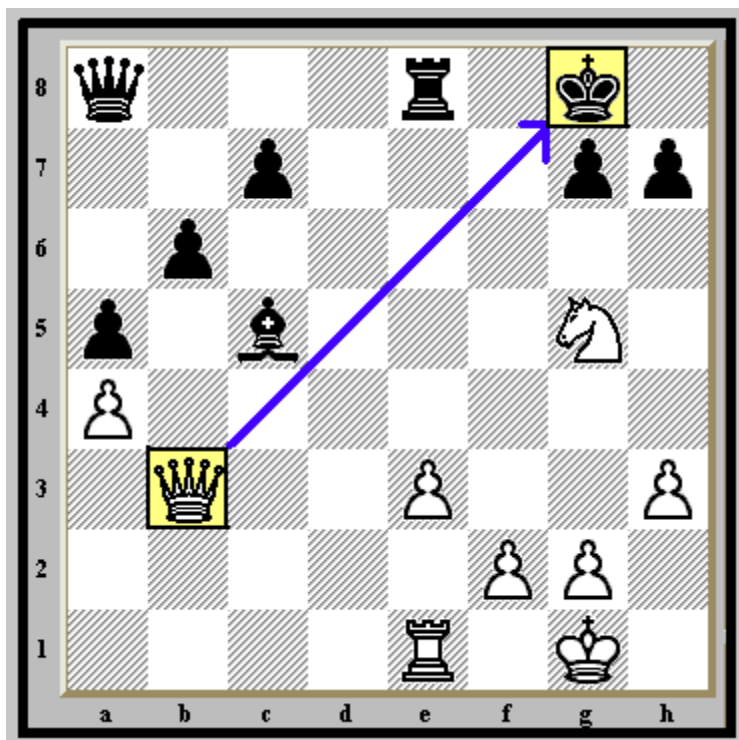
I will give you another hint. The first move is **NOT** Queen captures the Pawn on the h7-square, (WITH CHECK.). This would win for White.

I.e. 1. Qxh7+, Kf8; 2. Qh8+, Ke7; 3. QxP/g7+, etc. This would definitely win for White. He has won two pawns, and flushed the Black King out into the open. This is good, but White has something **MUCH BETTER!!**

Give up? What move did you pick?



The correct move is to move the White Queen from b1 to the b3-square.



Notice that the Black King is in the "field of fire" or in the sphere of the capturing influence of the White Queen. (Remember: The Queen moves in a straight line, as far as she likes.)

The Black King is now said to be in, "**Check.**" (Notice the high-lighted squares and the blue arrow.)

(It is customary to announce check, although there is **NO** rule that **REQUIRES** this.)

So this first move is to move the White Queen from b1 to b3, giving check to the Black King. (This is written, or recorded as: 1. Q/b1-b3+. Or **1. Qb3+!**.)

Now you will definitely need a chess board to follow the next few moves!
(If you don't have a chess board, try to just visualize this combination. Close your eyes, and see the moves in your head, if you can.)

The Black King can't go to the f7-square as that square is covered by both the Queen AND the White Knight.

If Black played, "King to the f8-square," (1...Kf8?;), White would respond by moving, "Queen to f7-square, CHECKMATE." (2. Qf7#)

So the only good move for Black is to put his King in the corner. ("King to the h8-square, or **1...Kh8.**)

Now White has a series of clever Knight checks:

(The next few moves are forced, Black has no moves but the ones given. REMEMBER: Any time Black plays his King to the f8-square, White has Queen to f7, mate.)

So play proceeds:

"The Knight goes the f7-square, giving check to the Black King in the corner." (**2.Nf7+,**)

Black plays the only legal move he has, "King to the g8-square." (**2...Kg8;**)

Now White plays: "Third move [in the combination], Knight to the h6-square, giving check to the Black King" (**3. Nh6+,**)

Notice that the King is now in check from **BOTH** the White Queen ... AND the White Knight. This is known as a **double-check!**

Black responds by playing his King back into the corner. (**3...Kh8;**)
Black thinks: "Well if he just keeps going back and forth, its a draw!!!"

Now White plays a real stunner of a move. "Queen to the g8-square, with **CHECK!**" (**4. Qg8+!!**)

Black can NOT take with his King, as that would be moving into check from the White Knight on h6. His **only** legal move is to capture the White Queen with his Rook. (**4...RxQ/g8; or just 4...Rxg8.**)

Now Black thinks:

"Has White lost his mind? What does that do?"

Now White smiles.

>> He grabs his Knight. <<

Black thinks, "He is going to take my Rook. What good will that do?"

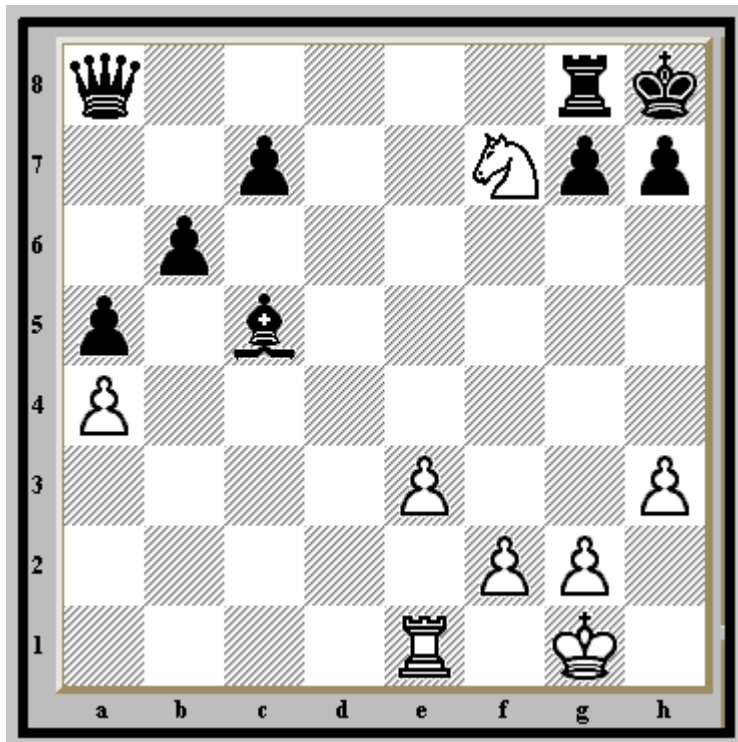
Then White moves his **Knight** from the **h6-square**, to the **f7-square**.

He smiles again. Very softly ... very calmly he says: (With a twinkle in his eye.)

"Now that, my friend, is Checkmate!"

(White just played **5. Nf7#**.)

Take a close look at the diagram below.



This is the final position in our little combination.

The Black King is in **check** from the Knight. He has **NOWHERE** to run to! (Remember: You may **NEVER** capture your own pieces!)

It is checkmate!

This mate with the Knight, reaching into the burrow which Black has buried himself into, is known as a "**SMOTHERED MATE.**" (Note how the Black King has perished, completely surrounded by his own pieces.) It is not as common as a "**Back-Rank Mate,**" but it does occur fairly often in chess.

Remember: Check-Mate is said to occur when the King is in check, and cannot get out of check. Remember also: The Knight is said to be able to "jump over" other pieces ... even to give check.

Hopefully now you know what a checkmate is. You should be able to recognize one if it happens in your own game. And maybe, just maybe, I have even sparked your imagination and intellect with our little combination.

That concludes our study on "The Final Blow," or Checkmate.

"Special Moves" in Chess

Pawn Promotion, Castling, and
Pawn captures Pawn "En Passant."

(All the special moves in chess.)

These moves are not absolutely critical to your chess knowledge. You **WILL** see these moves being made, and to understand them, you will have to **complete** this section!

You already have **all** the basic information to start playing chess.

You can actually skip this, and just start playing; if you like.

(I do **NOT** recommend this, but I leave it up to you.)

You will basically then learn the three rules below "as you go." (Or as you play the game.)

Here I will explain very simply all the special rules of chess.

There are only 3, (**THREE**); at least until you decide to play in a tournament.

(Then you'll get acquainted with all the many rules that govern pairings, a chess clock, The "Touch Move" Rule, the rules that govern recording a chess game in a tournament, etc.)

Most of this stuff you don't need to sweat too much.

Castling is used for King protection, and should be used right away. Pawn promotion, (If you get a Pawn ***all the way down*** to the **opposite side** of the **Board**, **{8th Rank}**; you can get a new/another Queen. - **or** any piece that you want.); may not occur right away for the beginner, at least not for his first few games. (Although your opponent may do it to you!!) Pawn capturing a pawn "in passing" (or "En Passant"), does not happen all that much, and really is not that important. You need to learn it, but once you have been playing chess for a while - you will be more than comfortable with this move. But don't get too excited about it, especially if you can't remember what it is and how to apply it. When you have been playing chess for a while, you will do it naturally. Its **not** really all that critical, except maybe in certain King and Pawn endings.

Now let's look at each one of these special moves in detail.

The Castling Rule

1.) Castling is a "King-safety" move. It gets the King OUT of the middle - where he is less likely to be MATED - and activates a **Rook**; getting the poor fellow **out** of the corner.

2.) You **can't** castle out of check, over check or into check. This means your King **cannot** be leaving, passing over, **or** landing on a check. You **CAN NOT** have already moved the Rook, **or** your King.

(If you have moved one Rook, but **not** the other, you may try to castle with the Rook that **has not moved yet**.)

Once you move your King you lose the right (permanently!) to castle for the entire game.

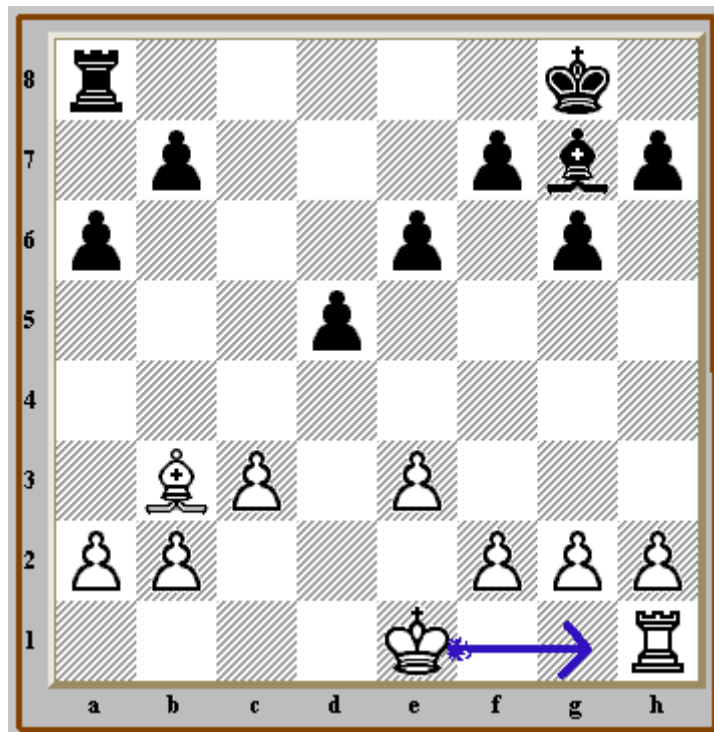
(You will have to start a new game before you will be able to castle again.)

3.) All the pieces have got to be "out of the way." (Already moved.) If your King has not yet moved, you **[ALWAYS]** castle by moving the King **TWO** squares towards the Rook, and placing the Rook on the square that the King just "hopped over."

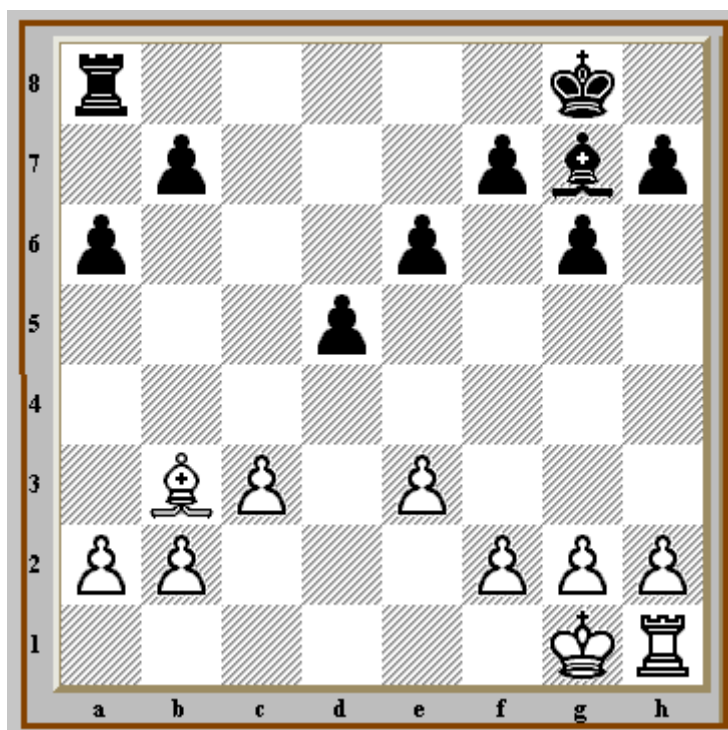
I should also point out you can castle on either side.
(As long you meet the criteria set forth here.)

4.) You get to **castle ONLY ONCE** per game!!
(And its a good idea [generally] to do so as early as possible.)

So let's look at the actual move of castling.



The blue arrow indicates the King move, the first half of castling.

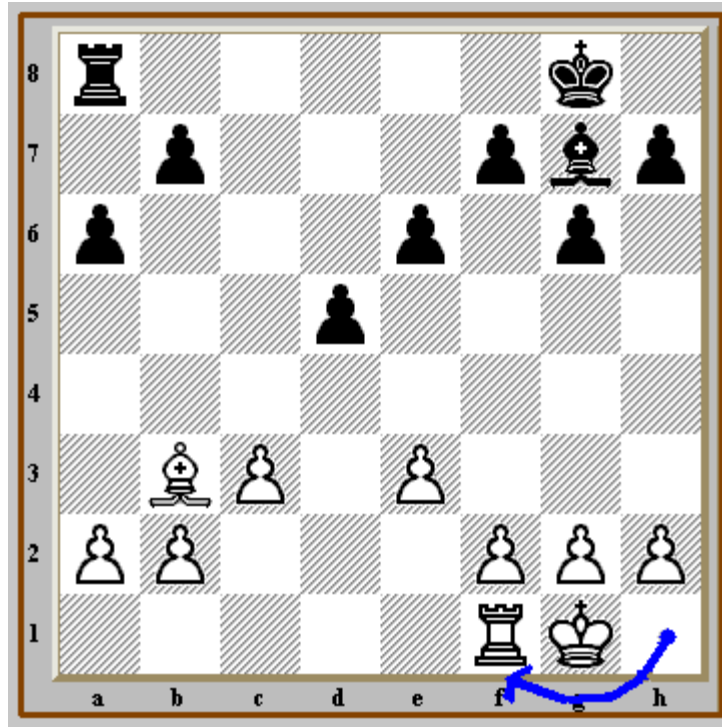


The above position shows that White has just moved his King two squares.

This would be an *ILLEGAL* move *IF we stopped now*, but I just wanted to show you the actual process, *step-by-step*.

Now we continue looking at the rest of the "Castling" move.

(See the diagram below.)

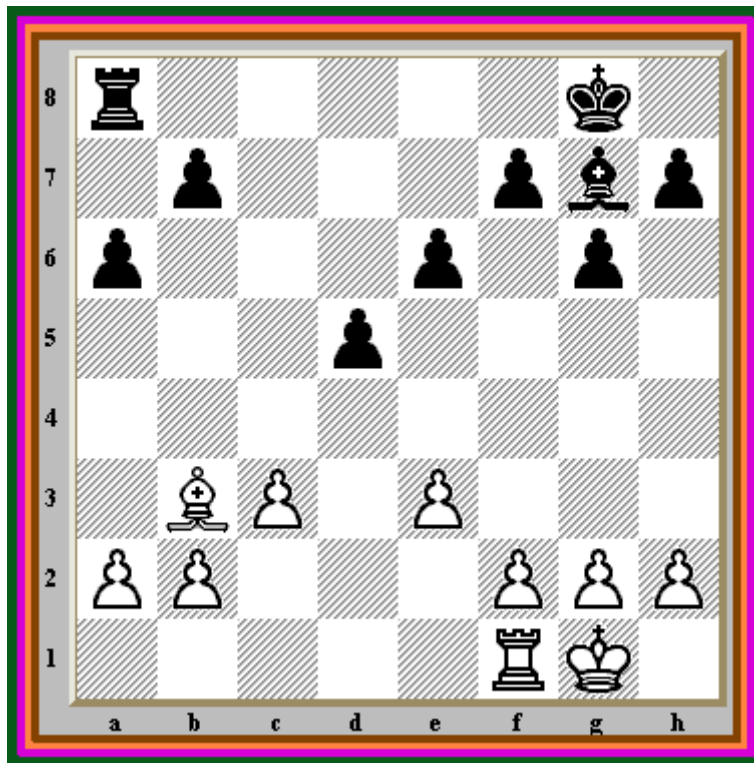


The Blue Arrow indicates that White 'completes' the Castling maneuver by moving his Rook.

REMEMBER: The King (White OR Black) always moves **TWO** squares in castling.

AND: The Rook (White OR Black) that you are castling with always goes on the square that the King just "hopped over."

Look at the diagram below.



The White King (and Rook) have finished Castling.

This is what it will always look like, (**JUST** the White King and Rook - at any rate.); when White castles.

The King has been made a little safer. The Rook has been brought out of the corner.

Castling usually occurs somewhere between move FIVE (5) and move FIFTEEN. (15.)

And that's about all for castling!

Pawn captures Pawn, "En Passant."

(En passant is French, and means "In passing.")

1.) Only a **pawn** captures another **pawn** this way!

2.) Its an option, BUT the move must be played IMMEDIATELY, or you lose the right to capture that **pawn** "en-passant" (In passing.) permanently.

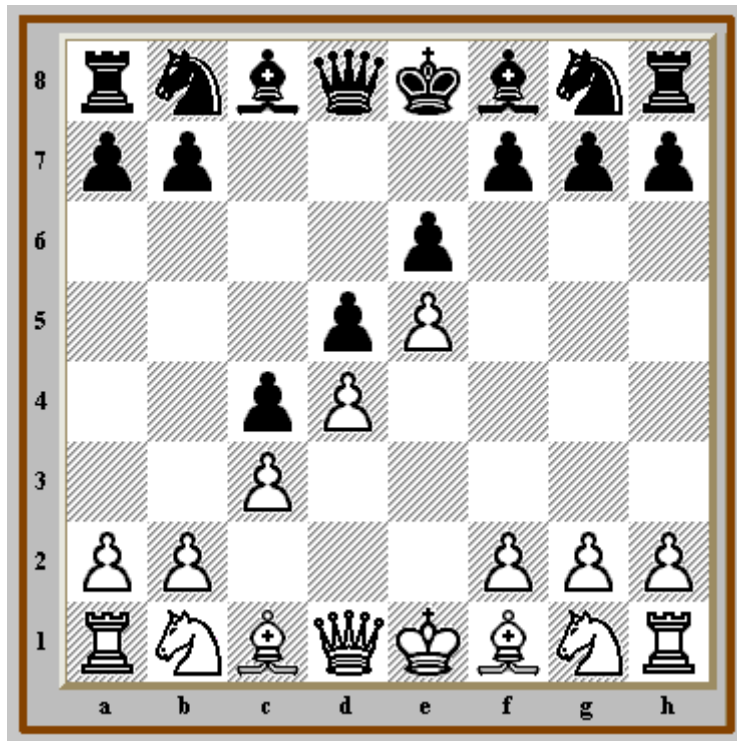
[This is the ONLY move like this in all of chess. ANY OTHER MOVE may be made - basically - any time you feel like it. (As long as it conforms to the laws of chess.) In other words, you can castle any time you want to AND have fulfilled the requirements for that rule. **The same goes for any other move in chess, EXCEPT FOR THIS RULE!!**]

3.) The pawn doing the capturing must be on its 5th row out. (3 squares from the square it started on.) The enemy pawn must have just moved - for the very first time - and have exercised the OPTION of moving **two** squares instead of one. This enemy pawn must be on the file to the immediate right or left of the pawn that is going to be doing the capturing. (I.e., they must be 'neighbors.')

4.) You have the OPTION for **this move - AND THIS MOVE ONLY** - of placing your pawn on the square that the opposing pawn "jumped over" and removing the enemy pawn from the board.

5.) Either side can capture in passing, as long as they meet the above criteria.

(Once again, if you have your own set, play along.
The following sequence will be much easier to follow.)



(Look carefully at the above diagram.)

This position has occurred after the moves:

1. e4, e6; 2. d4, d5, 3. e5, c5; 4. c3,

Thus far all the moves are correct. Black has played a French Defense.
(1...e6; in answer to White's e4.)

White played "The Advance Variation." (3. e5.) This is also a legitimate
"book" opening.

Black had just played **4...c4?!** This is a bad move, at least dubious in
concept. We will allow Black to do this so that we may study the "En
Passant" capture.

Look again at the above diagram. It shows the position after Black's
move, 4...c4.

Now while the following moves are not really all that good, we will just follow
along so that we understand this rule.

Let's pretend that White plays the move Pawn from b2 to the b4-square; or **5. b4!?**.

The White Pawn has just moved for the very first time. Black's pawn is on Black's Fifth Rank. Black could capture the pawn by taking White's Pawn off the board, and then placing his pawn on the b3-square. BUT ... **IF BLACK DESIRES TO CAPTURE "EN PASSANT," HE MUST DO IT NOW or LOSE THE ABILITY or RIGHT TO DO SO!!**

Let us pretend further that Black decides to capture en passant. This is written as "Pawn takes Pawn, en passant;" or this is written as **5. ... axb3, e.p.** Black makes this move by first moving his Black Pawn from the c4-square to the b3-square. Black then removes White's b4-pawn OFF the chess-board. And if this were a tourney, Black would then press his clock and write down the move.

(The three dots preceding Black's move is a common convention. Any time you see three dots preceding a move it is generally assumed that this is a move by the player marshalling the Black pieces.)

Let us assume further that White recaptures the Black Pawn -in the normal fashion - with his Rook Pawn. This is "Pawn captures Pawn on b3," and is written as : **6. axb3.** (White takes his a2-Pawn and removes Black's Pawn on the b3-square off the board. White will then place his pawn - that was previously on a2 - onto the b3-square.)

(The lower-case "**x**" denotes a capture. In recording pawn moves in Algebraic Notation, a pawn move is always given as the square, without a "P" in front. Any other move or capture by any other piece is always given as the Piece symbol, and then the square. For example: If White captured any Black piece on the f6-square, with a White Knight on his tenth move, this would be written or recorded as: **10. Nxf6.** Any other move is just given as the piece, and then the square it moved to. For example: **22...Rd6;** means Black just moved his Rook to the d6-square.)

Now let us carry on this hypothetical continuation just a bit further.

Let's say, for the sake of argument, that play proceeds with Black advancing his f-Pawn **TWO** squares. This would be "Pawn to f5," or written as just : **6...f5.**

Now White has the option of playing the "In Passing" Pawn Capture.

White's Pawn is on its fifth row, and the enemy pawn has just moved TWO SQUARES instead of one.

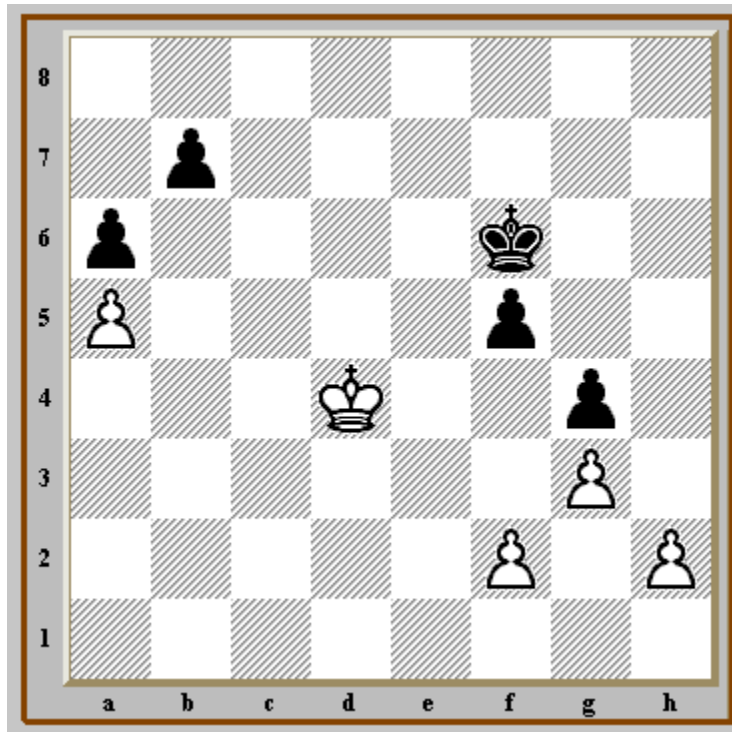
So White decides to take, "In Passing." White plays PxP en passant. This is recorded as: **7. exf6, e.p.** (This is accomplished by White first picking up the White Pawn on e5. The first player then removes Black's Pawn of f6 from the chess board. White finishes this move by placing his White pawn ... that was on the e5-square ... onto the f6-square.)

That's only 7 moves, and both sides have already captured an opposing pawn using the "en passant" rule!!

This one of the shortest sequences I could come up with, from the starting position, that shows both sides getting the opportunity to capture **"En Passant."**

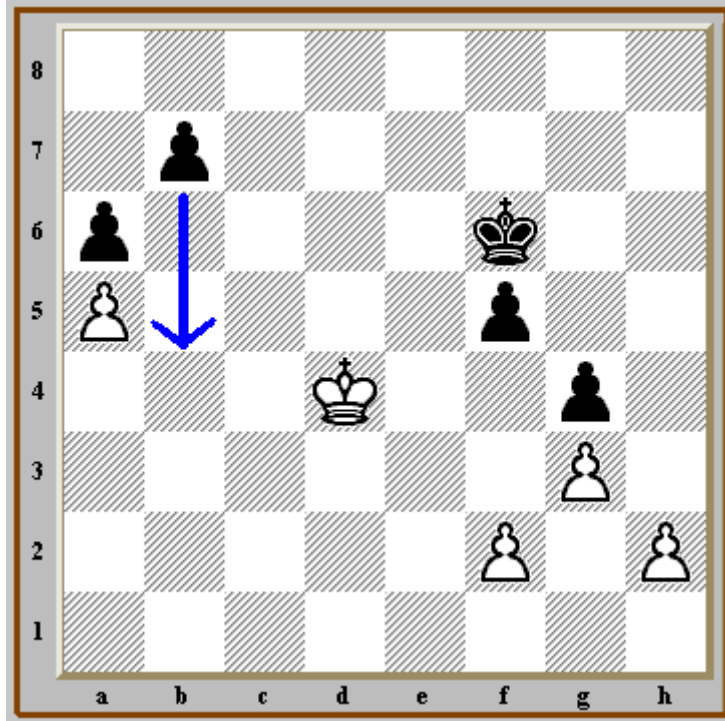
Now for just a few more examples of "En Passant" capture.

Take a good look at the diagram below.



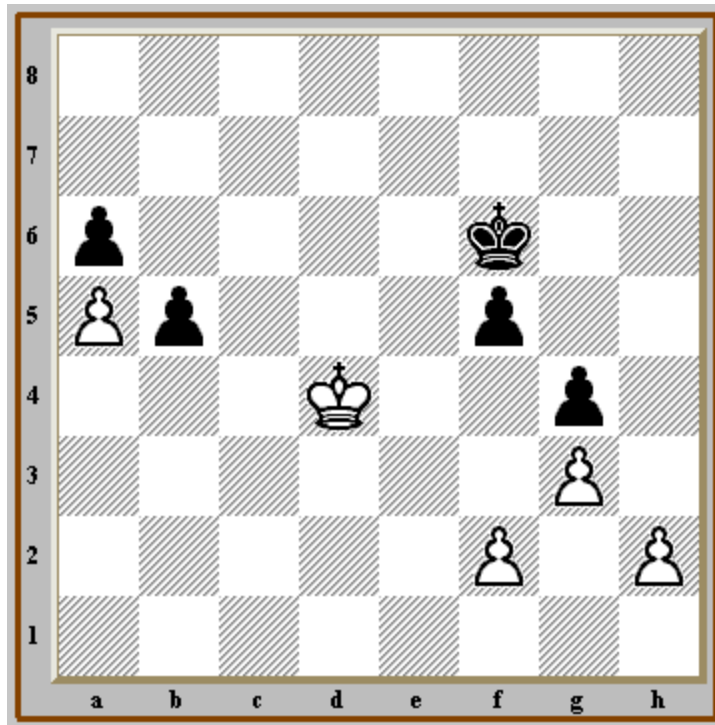
(Let's pretend it is Black's turn to move.)

Black decides to play his b-pawn forward two squares.
(This is a mistake, but let's just carry on so to learn and understand this rule.)



Black advances his pawn two squares.
(The blue arrow shows the intended advance of Black's Pawn.)

Now look at the diagram below.

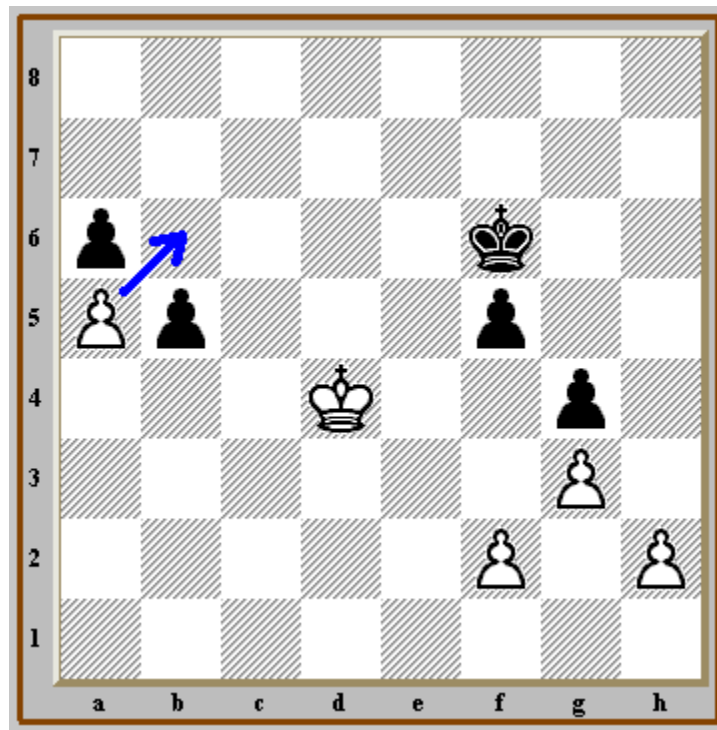


Black just pushed his b-pawn 'up' two squares.
(This is written/recorded as: **1...b5.**)

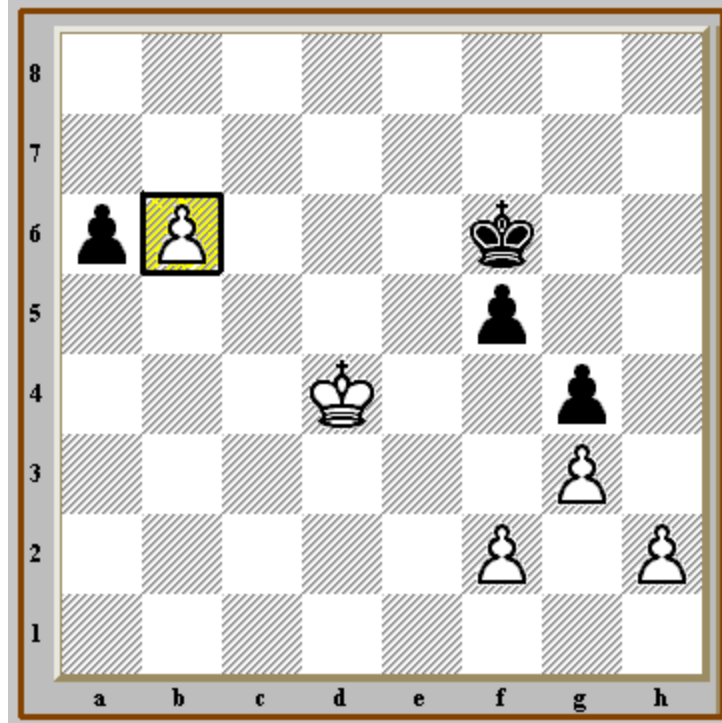
ALL the prerequisites have been met for the "En Passant" rule.

White's Pawn is on its fifth row out. A neighboring Black Pawn on an adjacent file has just advanced two squares, exercising the option of moving TWO squares instead of one. Now White has the OPTION of capturing in passing. BUT ... if he is going to do so, he must do so **NOW**, or forget about it!!

Now its White's turn to move.



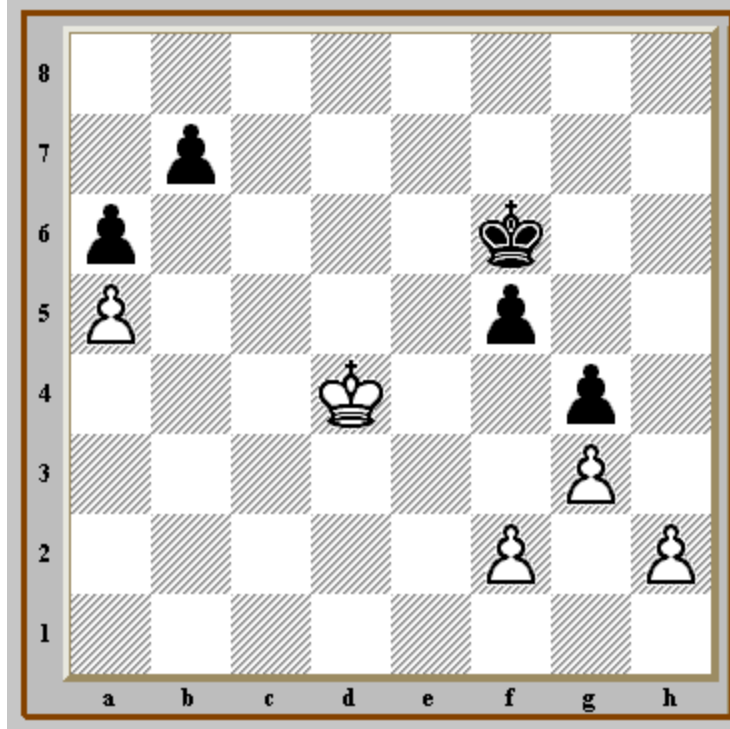
The blue arrow shows the intended capture, "In Passing."



Our final position shows that White has played 1. Pawn takes Pawn on b6, "En Passant." The White Pawn is sitting on the b6-square, and the Black Pawn that was on b5 has been removed from the board.)

(I have given the b6-square a bold, black border and high-lighted that square in yellow.)

This move is written/recorded as **2. axb6, e.p.**



Now pretend that it is **WHITE's** move in this position. If White were to play 1. Pawn from h2 to h4, Black could respond by playing 1...PxP/h3, "en passant."

(In fact, if White advanced **either** his h-pawn **OR** his f-pawn in the above position, Black could - if he wished to do so - capture in passing with his g-pawn. All the requirements have been met for this rule.)

And that is all for the "En Passant" rule.

I went into a lot of detail. But it was fairly necessary as the rule is quite complicated and very often misunderstood. By now you should understand it, and be able to use it in your own games.

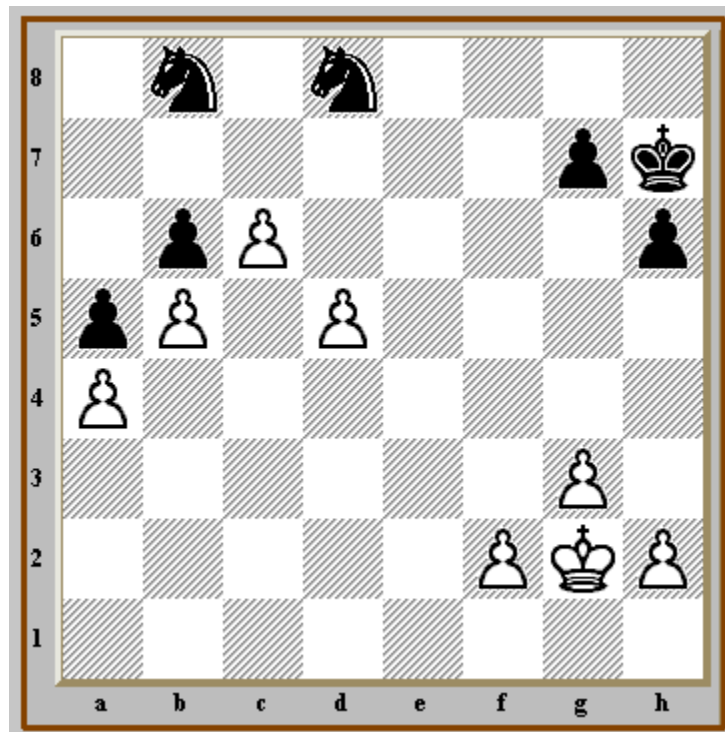
Pawn Promotion

Pawn Promotion is pretty simple. Get a pawn from your second row to the eighth row - **all the way down the Board;** and you get to "**PROMOTE.**" What this means is you can get any piece you want: a Knight, a Bishop, a Rook, or a Queen.

(The promotion is **automatic** and **instantaneous**, although the player promoting gets to choose which piece he wants.)

99% of the time, A Queen is chosen because this is the most **powerful** piece. Usually when a pawn promotes, this is a decisive moment in the game.

Lets take a look at this move in an actual case.



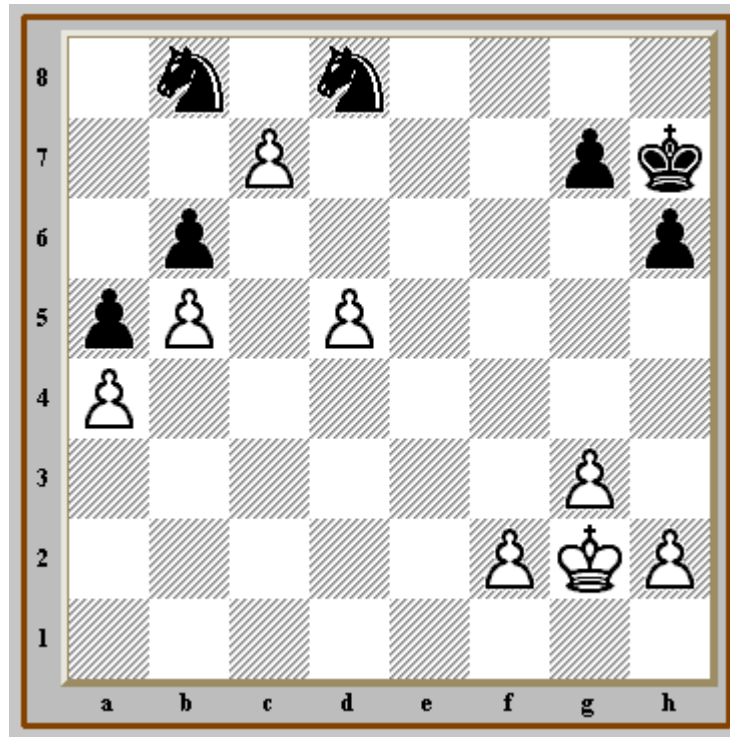
White to move.

(This position, as near as I can recall - - - is an ACTUAL tournament game that I watched **many** years ago. I do not remember who the two actual players were.)

(Now Black is actually up a lot of material. **If** White's Pawns were not so far advanced up the board, Black would have a **WON** game!!)

White's first move, in this position, is to advance his c-pawn one square.

This is written or recorded simply as **1. c7.**



Look carefully at the diagram above.

Its a testament to how the power of the pawn increases as it travels down the board. (The Pawn on c7 is said to be "Forking" the Two Knights.)

White threatens to **PROMOTE THREE** different ways. (Pushing through to the c8-square and making a new White Queen. White also threatens to capture either Knight. This too would result **immediately** in a new Queen - as soon as the Pawn touches the Eighth {8th} Rank.)

In this position, **Black RESIGNED!!** (Resign means to throw in the towel or quit.)

Why? Well let's go through a few of the possibilities...

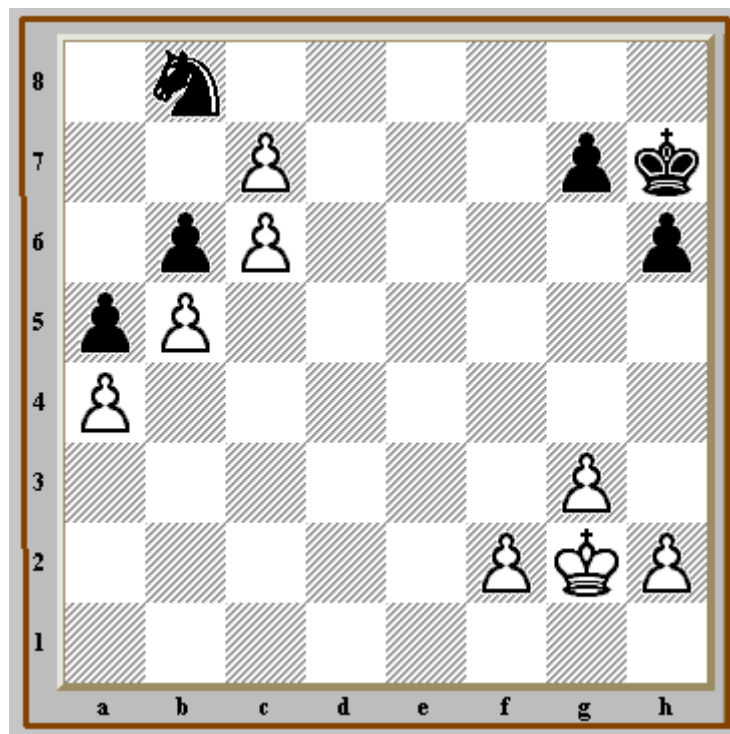
If Black plays his Knight on d8 to the f7-square, trying to save it; **(1...Nf7)** White responds by playing "Pawn captures the Black Knight on b8, **AND** promotes to a new White Queen." (Recorded as **2. cxb8=Q.**) This would give White an overwhelming advantage, a Queen being much superior to a Knight on an open field.

Lets say instead that Black responds to White advancing his Pawn to the c7-square by playing his Knight on the d8-square, to the c6-square. (This is recorded as **1...N/d8-c6**.) (The idea being if White played Pawn captures Knight and makes a new Queen, Black would respond by playing Knight captures Queen.)

White responds to **1...N/d8-c6**; by playing "The Pawn on the d5-square captures the Black Knight on the c6-square." (This is written and recorded as: **2. dxc6!**)

<< The exclamation point means White just made a very good or exceptional move. >>

(The diagram below shows the **position** we have reached in our **analysis**.)



The poor Black Knight on c6 is trapped. Any square that he moves to, he will be captured by a White Pawn. In addition, the Pawn on the c7-square is unstoppable, and cannot be prevented from reaching the last row and becoming a new Queen. This is why Black surrendered.

And that is all for Pawn Promotion!!

And that concludes our study of **all** the special moves in chess.
And you are almost done!!

How to make a Draw (Basic Ways)

There are several different ways to make a draw.

1.) Just **agree** that the position is drawn and shake hands.
(You can offer a draw at any time.)

2.) A Draw by "Perpetual Check."
(You keep checking the other guy's King until he gets sick of it and decides to accept your draw offer.)

3.) A Draw by Three-fold repetition of the position.
(Forget about this one. You will never use it unless you play in a tournament. Basically the game is drawn if the SAME position - with the same player - is repeated three times. It does NOT have to be repeated three times in a row. For instance, I once had a game where the position was repeated on move 52 or 53, again on move 56, and then again around move 64. My opponent ... who was a MASTER, and had been playing tournament chess for something like 10 {or more} years ... did NOT believe I was correct. I had to stop the clocks, call the TD and claim that I was about to make a move which repeated the exact, SAME position for the third time. The Tournament Director agreed with me and the game was declared drawn.)

4.) A Draw by "The Fifty Move Rule."
I like to call this one, "The **NO**-Progress Rule."
(If you make 50 moves without certain preconditions having been met the game is drawn. Another rule you probably need not worry about until you compete in your first tournament. Basically it is 50 moves ... with NO captures made, and NO pawn moves.)

6.) Stalemate.
(**NO** legal moves and the King is **NOT** in check.)

7.) Insufficient mating material.
(You trade down to where all you have is a Knight and a King and your opponent only has his King. But then you realize you **DON'T** have enough material to deliver a checkmate.)(There are a few others. But unless you play tournament chess, you will never need to learn about them. Consult the USCF rulebook for more details.)

Some simple "chess basics."

Some advice to help you play.

(A few quick and simple tips to help you on the road to better chess.)

You are almost done.

This is just some simple and quick advice to help you play better.

- The basic building blocks of the chess board are the squares, time or tempo, and the pieces themselves.
- Every winning combination is an equation involving these simple factors.

In chess, it is a struggle to control **SQUARES**, especially **key squares**. (Key squares = in the center, or near your opponent's King. Also another example of a key square is an OUTPOST.)

In chess, we also try to impose our will on our opponent.

Former World Champion Emanuel Lasker said that chess is nothing more than a fight or a brawl. It is all mental, but the point is well taken.

"Chess is Martial Arts for the Mind!" USCF **LIFE-Master** A.J. Goldsby I

The first thing you must do to get better is to **master** tactics.

"TACTICS - is the language through which chess is spoken."
USCF **LIFE-Master** A.J. Goldsby I

A good definition of **tactics** would be the **interplay** and the **interaction** of the different pieces and units **with each other**. This interchange will often highlight the properties of the predominant pieces in a **combination**.

A combination is a series of moves, involving tactics, linked together by a common idea or ideas.

GM Larry Evans says until you are close to **Expert**, *"Your first name should be tactics, your middle name should be tactics, and your last name should be tactics."*

(GM Evans has won the U.S. Championship more than once. He has had literally hundreds of students. So you should listen to him.)

(I don't consider the Pawn a true piece. He is a foot-soldier. The Pawn is also a unit of value, however.)

I can heartily recommend three books now for you, **if** you are interested. (You MUST read them in this order.)

1.) "Bobby Fischer Teaches Chess." by GM Robert J. **Fischer**.

This is a simple little book.

(Actually two books in one.) But it has plenty of diagrams. You won't need a chess set, as there are plenty of diagrams. You can read it on a bus, subway, train, plane, boat, etc. It will reinforce **all** the lessons that you have learned here.

2.) "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Chess." by GM Patrick Wolff.

A great book that you could spend months learning from.

3.) "The Complete Chess-Player." by Fred Reinfeld.

This is my chess bible. I teach all my students out of it. I have designed a real curriculum for schools out of this book. I studied it myself many times.

You could spend two or three years studying this one book. Do what I did. Study it once, after you have completed the above books. Then study again in six months. Then again in a year. You will be surprised at how much you learn in each **repeated** study **of this book**.

*This is because experience is the **BEST** teacher!*

After you have been playing for six months to a year is when your mind will be the most open!!

Enough "pearls of wisdom" and general stuff.

Let's get down to brass tacks.

There are **THREE** phases of the game -

The **OPENING**, The **MIDDLEGAME**, and The **ENDGAME**.

In the **Opening** your job is actual pretty simple. Get your pieces off the back row, onto good squares; ready for the middlegame battle to come.

In the **OPENING**:

*** Try to move a piece only once in the opening.

*** Put it on a good square and leave it there.

*** Mass towards the middle of the board, and **castle early!**

In the **Middlegame**, your basic goal is to checkmate your opponent. You try to create weaknesses and outflank your opponent. You also try to win material to use in the endgame. The primary emphasis in the Middlegame is **TACTICS**. It is also generally good to have a PLAN!! (Strategy.)

In the **Endgame**, you normally try to convert a material advantage into a win. The main emphasis in the endgame is to Shepard a Pawn to the last row to promote.

My advice to you is to use the "Three - Time" rule. (This was taught a lot when I was a kid.) Imagine what the piece will look on that square BEFORE you move it. VISUALIZE the piece on that square. Look at every move **3 times** 'in your head' **BEFORE** you move it!!

*** **Try to take a few minutes before every move.** ***

("Sit on your hands.")

(This is what many chess coaches have advised their students.)

- **Check all checks** and check all captures. Pretend you are your opponent.
- What would **YOU** do if you had his position right now?
- What move could he make that might cause the greatest damage to your position?
- **ALWAYS** try to figure out a reason for your opponent's move.
- Try to **guess** his or her intentions. (Get inside your opponent's head.)

(This will be very difficult at first, but will get easier as you progress.)

Another good thing to learn is the "Points Value" of the pieces!!

"The Table of Material Value"

A Pawn =	One (1) point
A Knight =	Three (3) points
A Bishop =	Three (3) points
A Rook =	Five (5) points
A Queen =	Nine (9) points

This is a good way to keep track of the pieces and how you are doing.

Try to swap (exchange) a Knight for a Knight, A Bishop for a Bishop, A Knight for a Bishop and visa-versa; A Rook for a Rook, etc. This is not always possible, however. So always try to keep the points level. If you lose a Rook, try to get a Knight or Bishop and two Pawns. (5 points for 5 points.) If you lose a Queen, try to get a Rook, Knight and at least one Pawn in return. You should also notice another relationship, the higher the point value of the piece, the more powerful (powerful=greater movement capability) that piece is.

**If you discover you enjoy chess, you should play!!
The more you play, the more you will enjoy it!**

Go to the **U.S. Chess Federation's [web-site](#)**.
Buy a good book. Get a chess set. ***Find a club in your area.***

Go to **www.Chess.Net** and download their software.
Start playing chess on your PC, if you have one.

That's it!! Go play some chess now!!!!

CONGRATULATIONS!!

*You have now finished and graduated from my,
"Chess Course for Beginners." You should now have more
than enough knowledge to play your first game of chess.*

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AS A BONUS for completing the chess course, you should go to the following web-site:

www.I-Am-Coach.com, (The official web site of IM Igor Khmelnitsky.) –

Here you can get lots of on-line help. (For a fee.) You can also take his free test and see how strong you really are. Lots of other stuff too, plus games to look at on a really nice board. A lot of good stuff here, so you should definitely check it out.

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Visit us at www.WorldChessAcademy.com/