How to Play Chess

A Guide for Beginners

John Gray

Preface

Many beginners learn the rules of chess and then encounter a problem: they understand concepts, like *check*, but struggle to determine whether or not a given king is actually *in check*. The problem is that you can only follow the rules if you can see which pieces can move to which squares. Most new players aren't able to do this very well until they have played many games of chess.

This book teaches the rules of chess from the beginning. It has a lot of exercises in it, partly to make sure you really understand the rules as you learn them, but also partly to help you start building the ability to see what the pieces can do. For this reason, the exercises in this book are even more important than the instructional parts. Don't skip the exercises! Like any chess book with exercises in it, you will benefit from doing the exercises more than once. Try going through the book multiple times and seeing how quickly you can solve the exercises after a few times through the book.

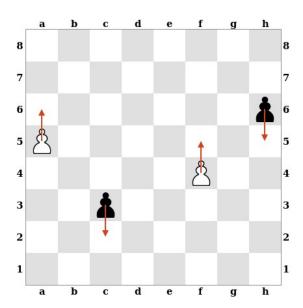
When you are comfortable with the contents of this book you are ready for books of simple tactics puzzles and introductory books on strategy.

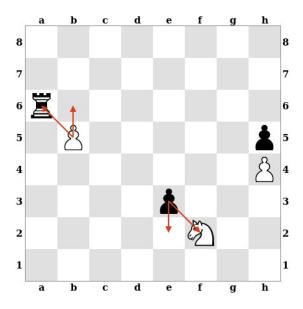
Contents

1 - Pawns	1
2 - Rooks	7
3 - Bishops	10
4 - Knights	13
5 - Queens and Kings	16
6 - Check	32
7 - Getting Out of Check	37
8 - Checkmate	43
9 - Stalemate	48
10 - Pins and Double Checks	53
11 - Pawn Promotion	58
12- Castling	60
13 - En Passant	62
14 - Finding Checkmates	63
Solutions	70

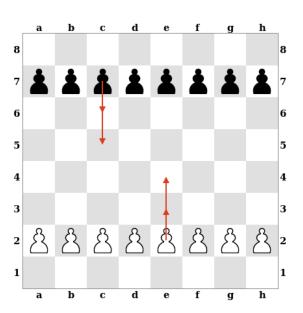
1 - Pawns

Pawns normally move forward one square at a time. In the diagram White might play 1.a6 or 1.f5. Black might play 1...c2 or 1...h5.

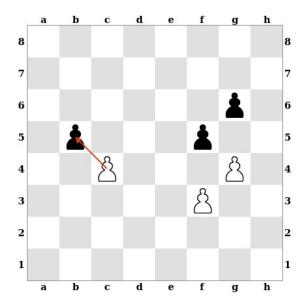




Pawns capture things by going diagonal-forward. In the diagram White might play 1.bxa6 or 1.b6, while Black might play 1...exf2 or 1...e2. The pawns on h4 and h5 can't move at all. Both players begin the game with eight pawns. When a pawn is still on its initial square it can move forward either one or two squares.

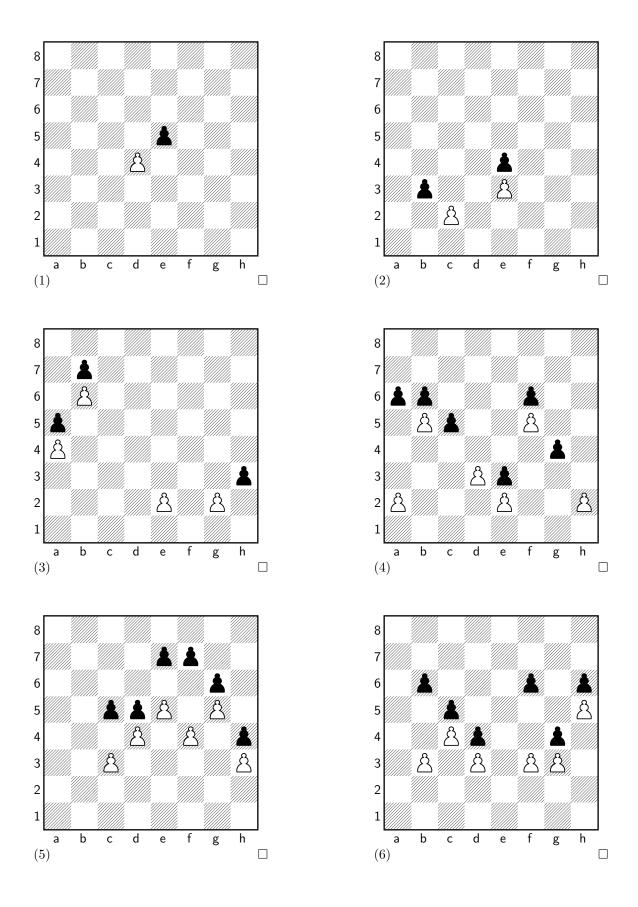


En Prise

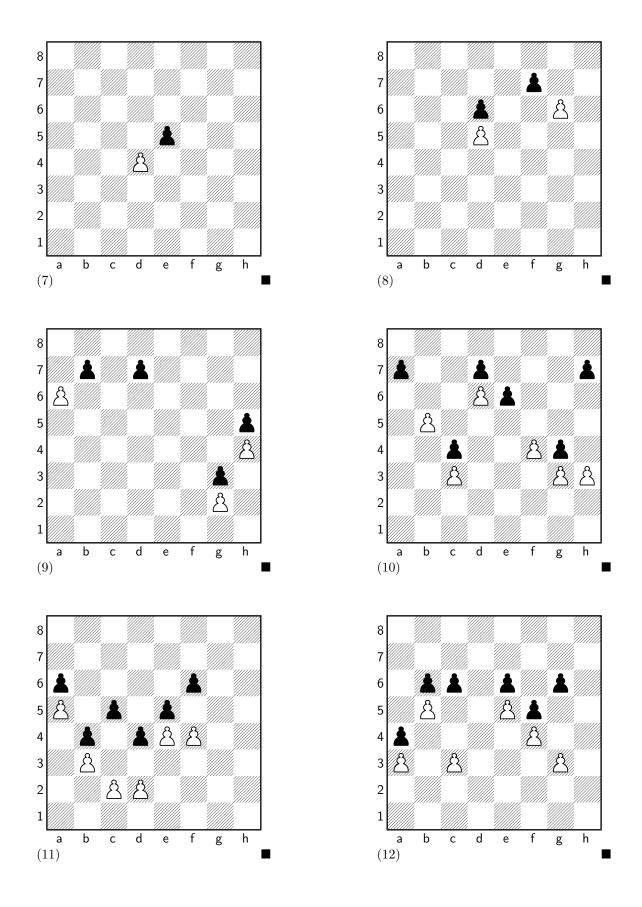


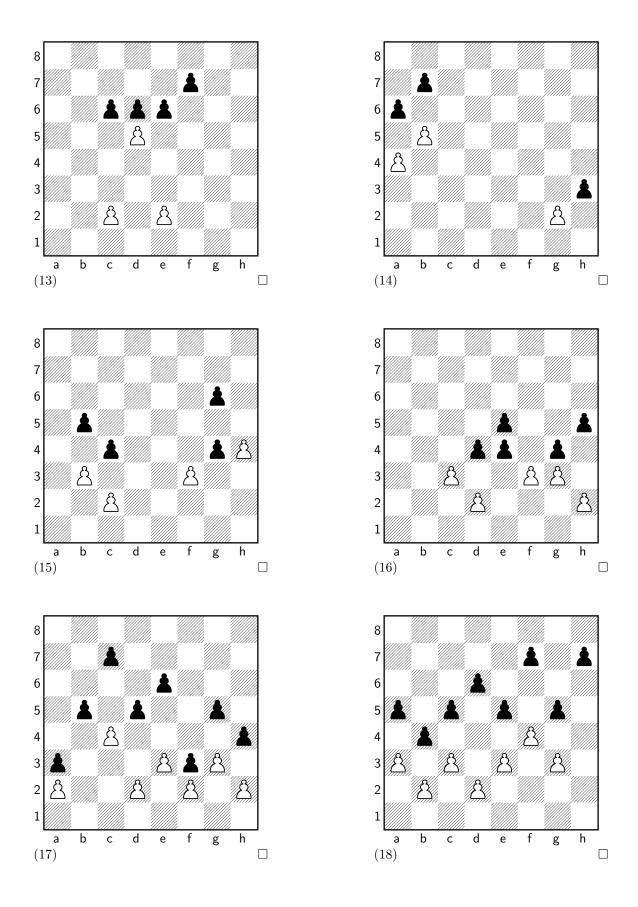
Black's pawn on f5 is *attacked*, since White can capture with 1.gxf5. However, it is also *guarded*, since Black can recapture with 1...gxf5. White's pawn on g4 is also attacked and guarded. However, Black's pawn on b5 is *en prise* (attacked and unguarded). White can win it with 1.cxb5.

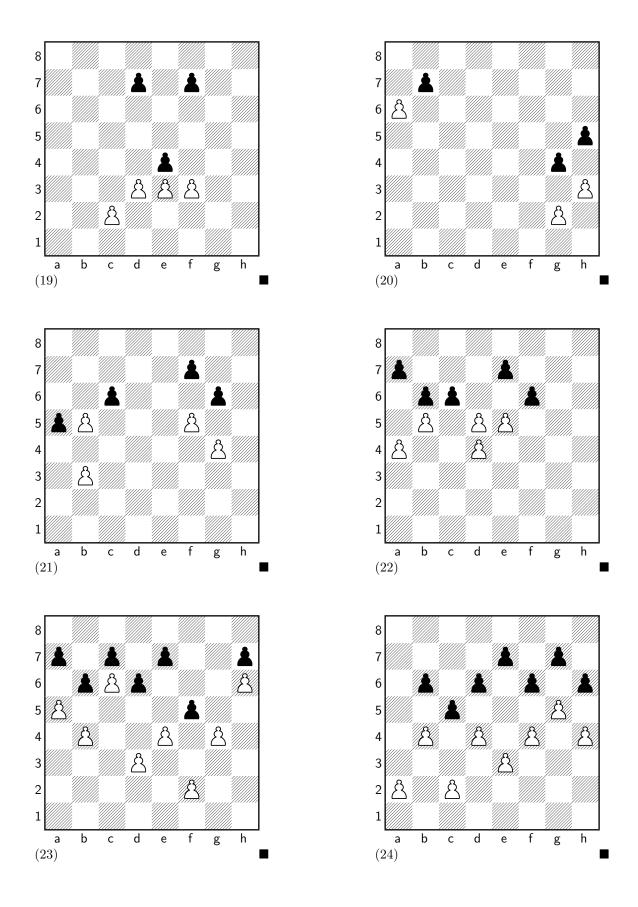
In the following exercises you need to win a pawn that is en prise.



3

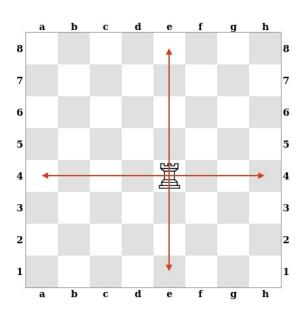


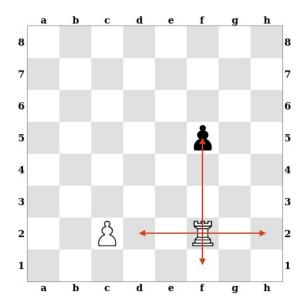




2 - Rooks

Rooks move up, down, left, and right, as many or as few squares as desired. Here White could play 1.Ra4 or 1.Re8, but also 1.Rd4 or 1.Re5. In fact, he has 14 rook moves available on his first turn here.

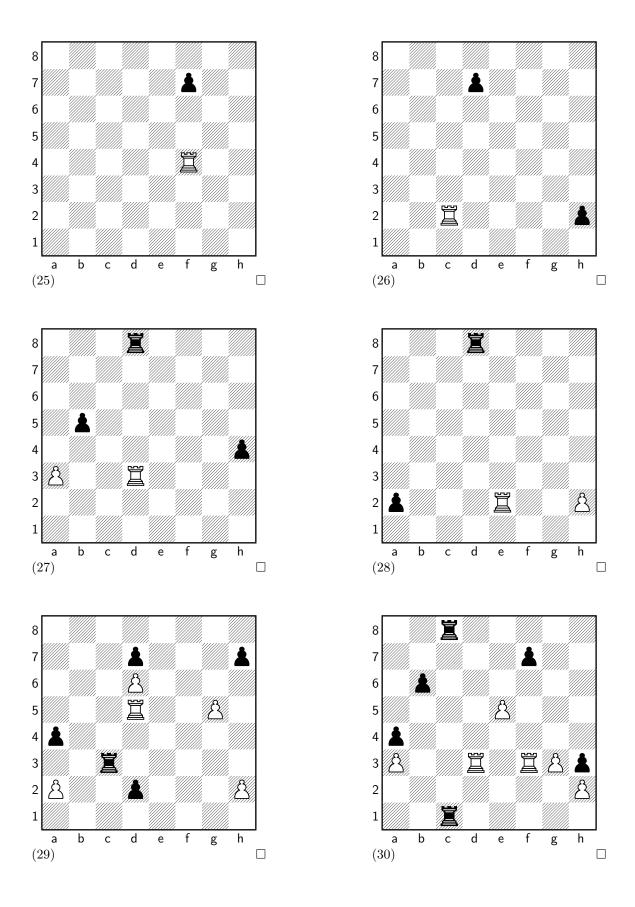


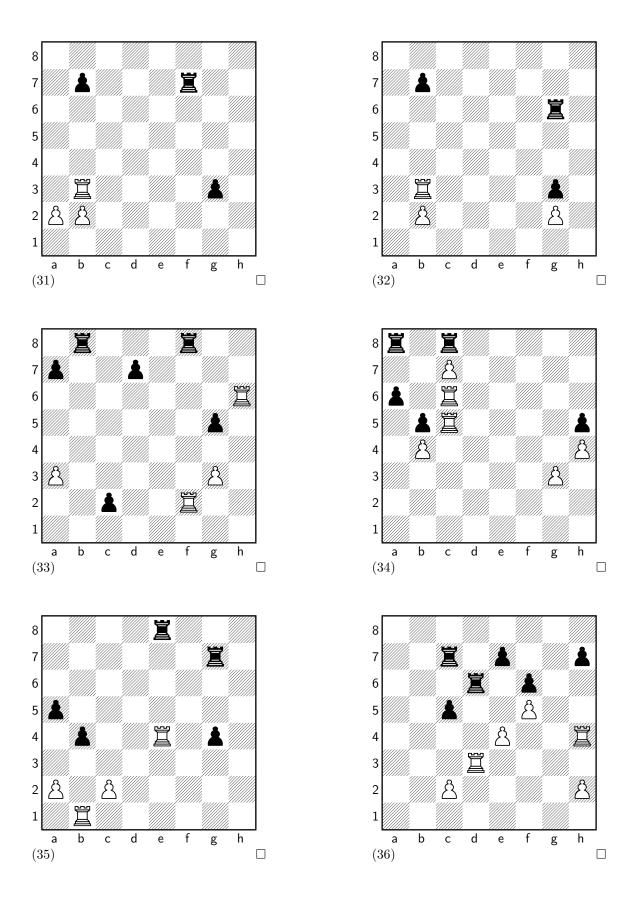


A rook must end its move on a square when it captures; it can't keep going. In fact, this is true for all chess pieces. White could play 1.Rxf5 here but could not play "1.Rxf5-f8."

Rooks also can't jump over things. This is true for all pieces except the knight, which can jump. White could play 1.Rd2 here, but not 1.Rb2 or 1.Rf6. He has eight rook moves available in total here.

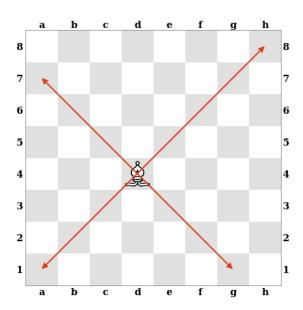
Now try some en prise problems featuring rooks.

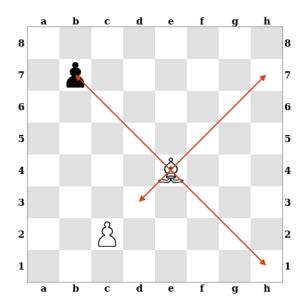




3 - Bishops

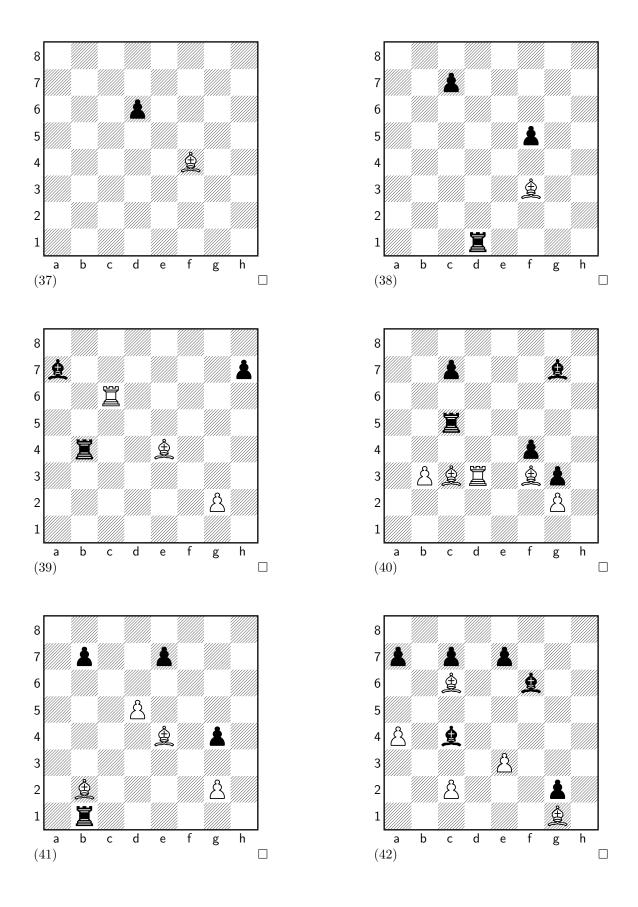
Bishops move on diagonals. Like rooks they can move one or many squares in a single turn. Here White could play 1.Ba1, 1.Bc3 or many other moves. Because a bishop only moves on diagonals, it spends the whole game on squares of a single color. No matter how many moves it makes, this bishop will never reach any light square on the board.

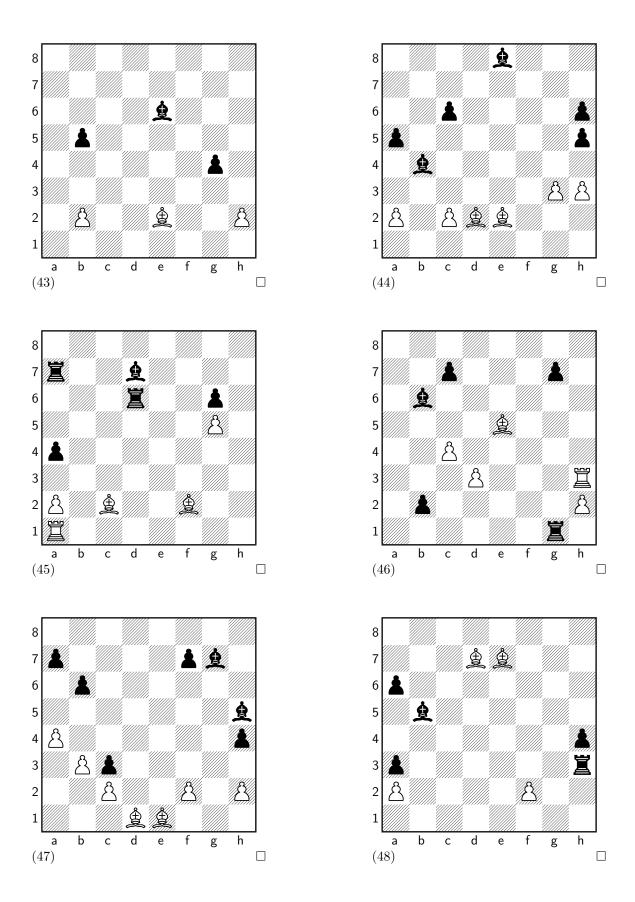




Like rooks, bishops can't move past the square of a capture on the same turn and can't jump over other pieces.

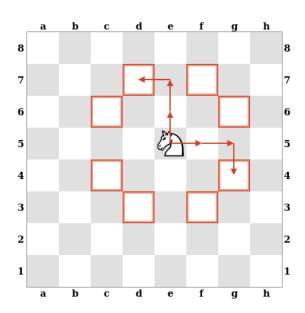
Time for some more en prise problems.

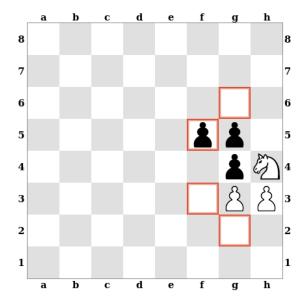




4 - Knights

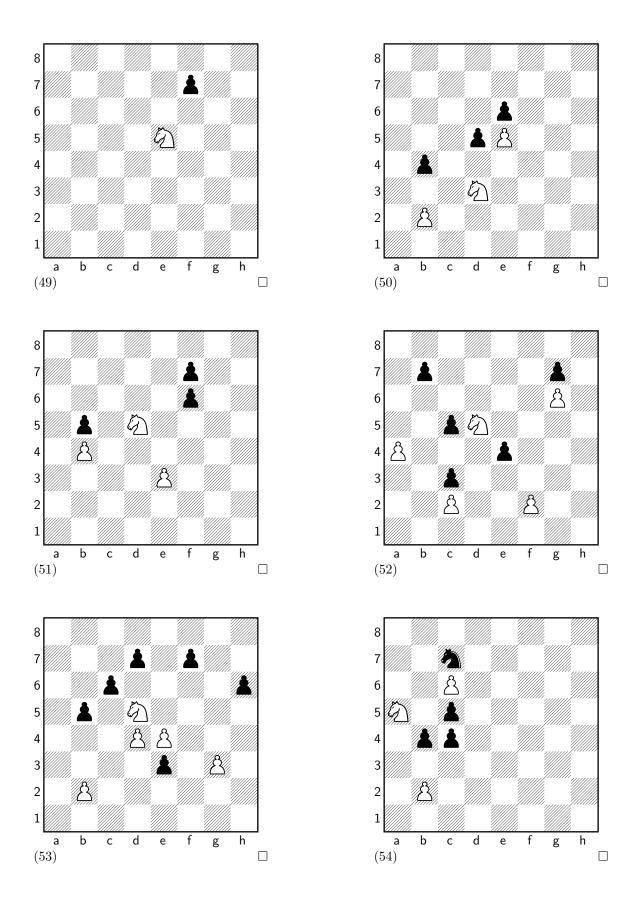
The knight moves two squares like a rook, and turns for one more square ("one-two-turn"), all in one move. You could also say it moves in an "L" shape. This knight can go to any of eight squares on its first move. For example, White could play 1.Nd7 or 1.Ng4 here.

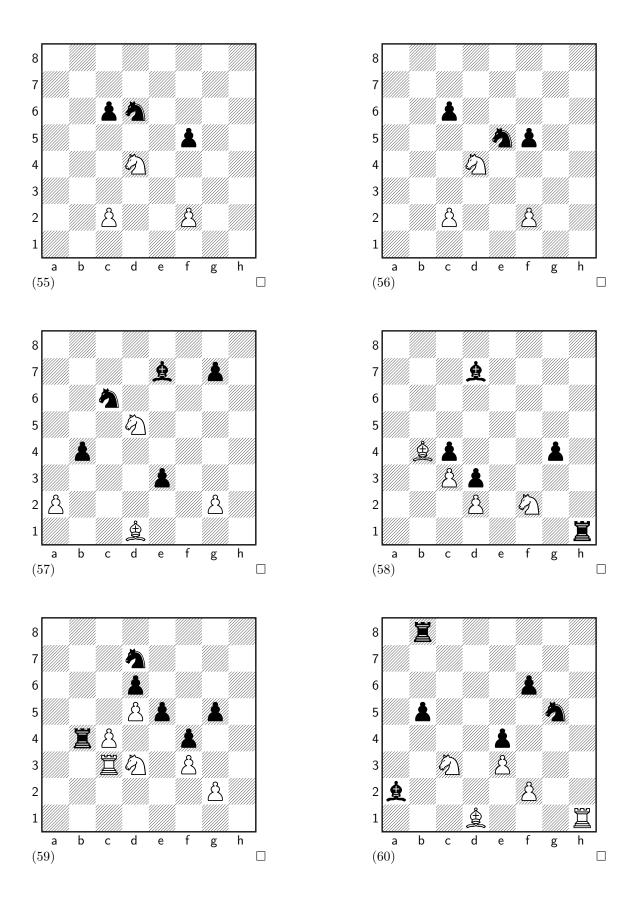




Knights are the only pieces that can jump over other pieces (both friendly and enemy pieces). Knights capture what they land on, but not what they jump over. Here White can play 1.Nxf5 along with three noncapture moves. The knight can't currently capture the black pawns on g4 or g5.

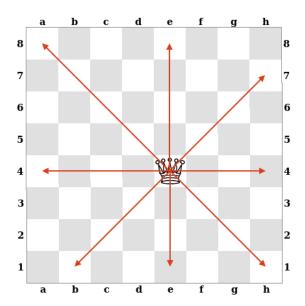
How about some nice en prise problems?

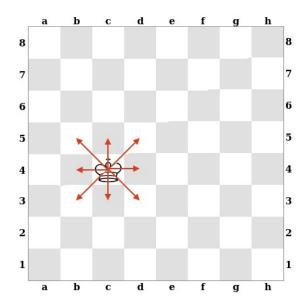




5 - Queens and Kings

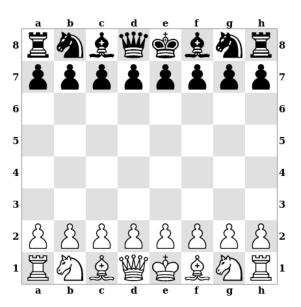
Queens move both like rooks and like bishops. In other words, they move as far as you want on any straight line including diagonals. White could play many moves here, like 1.Qa8 or 1.Qe3.



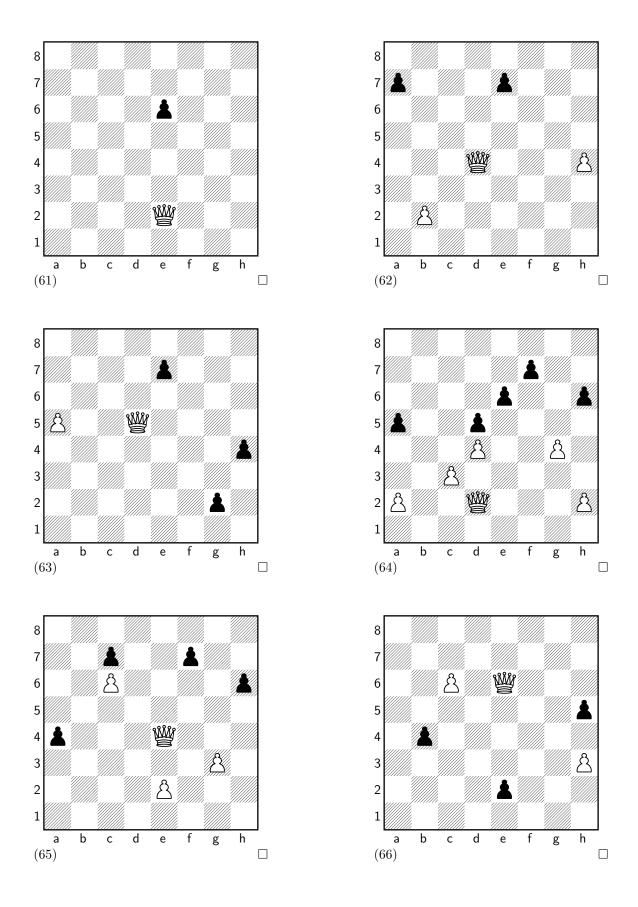


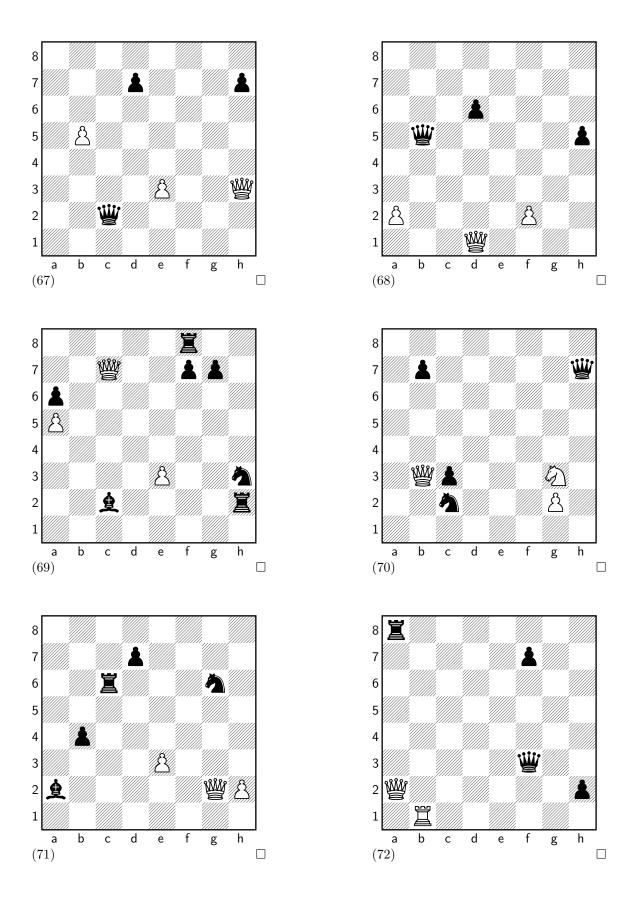
Kings move like queens but only one square per turn. You could also say that a king moves one square in any direction.

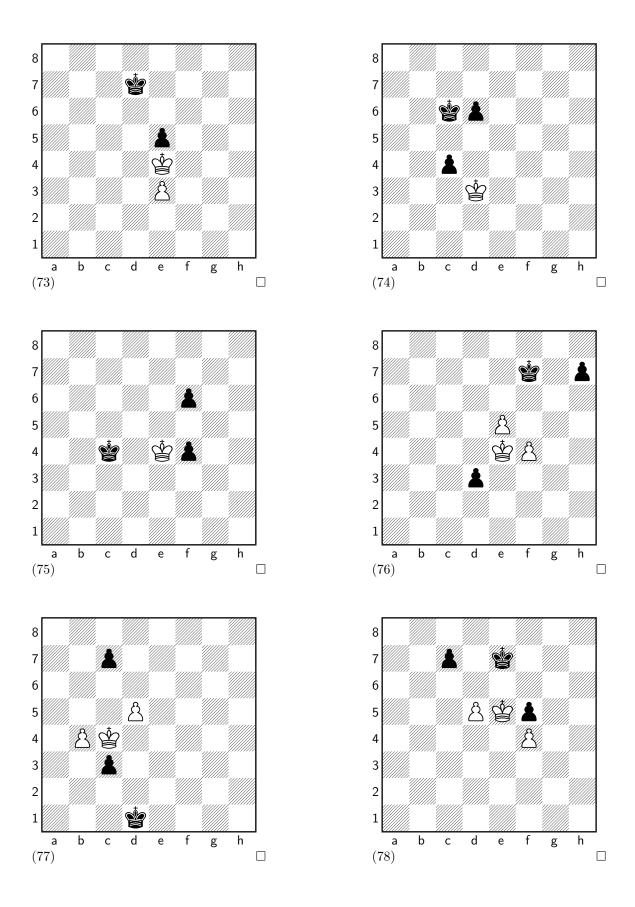
The starting position in a chess game looks like this. Each player has a white square on his right side ("white on right"). The white queen is on a white square and the black queen on a black square ("queen on her own color").

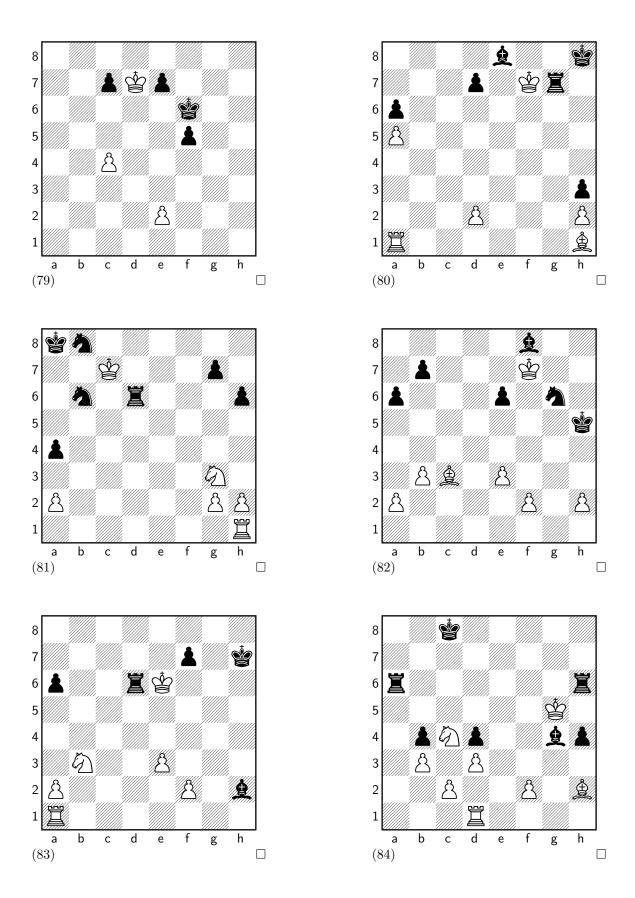


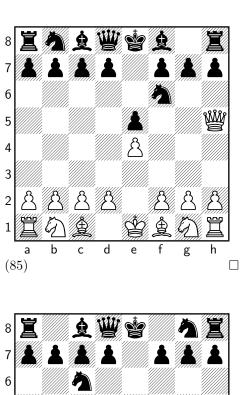
Unsurprisingly, we now have some en prise problems for queens and kings. These are followed by a number of en prise problems featuring all sorts of pieces in positions from actual games.

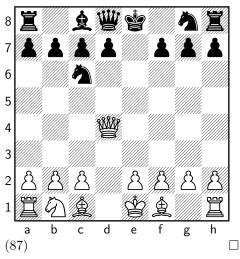


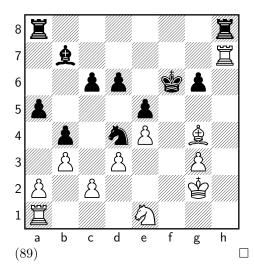


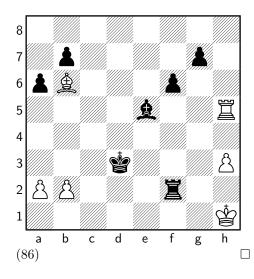


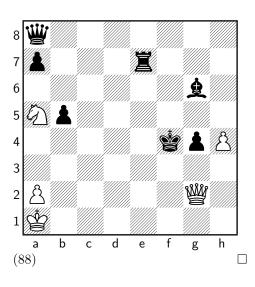


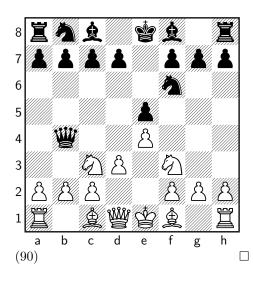


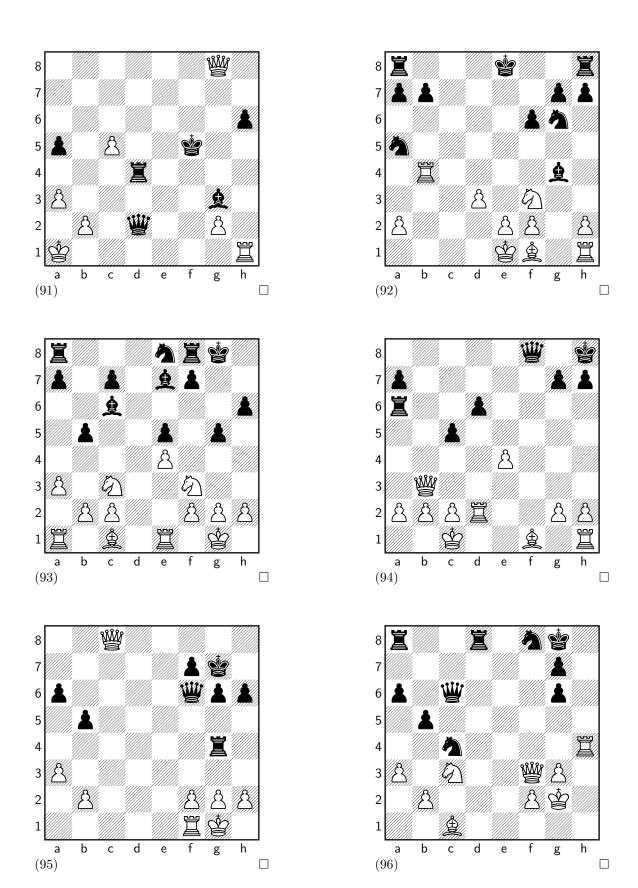


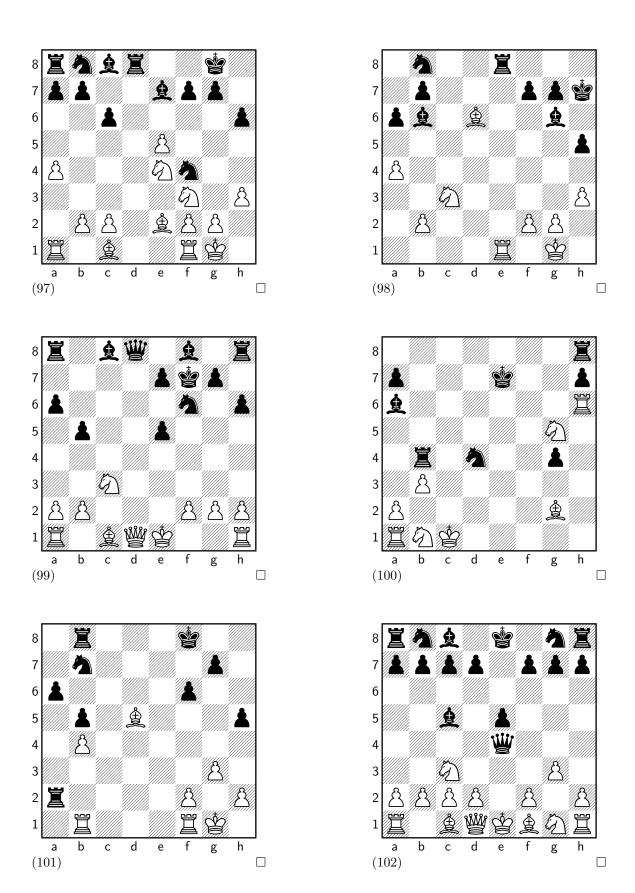


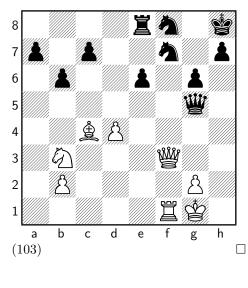


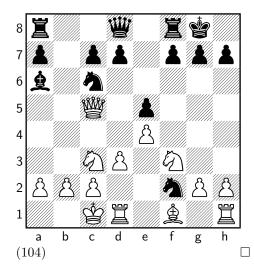


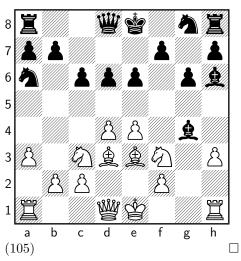


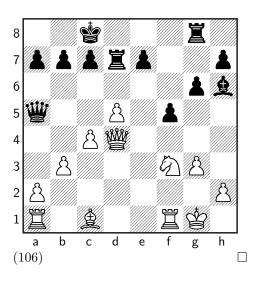


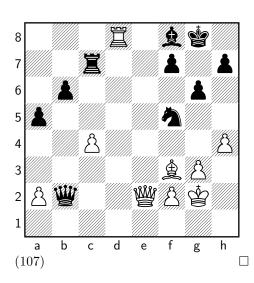


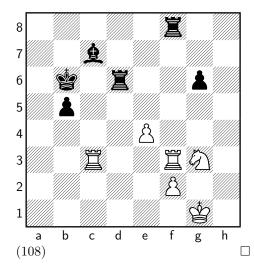


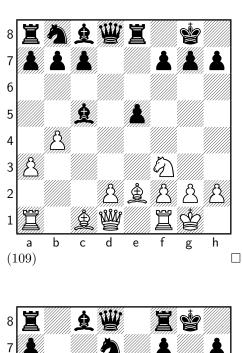


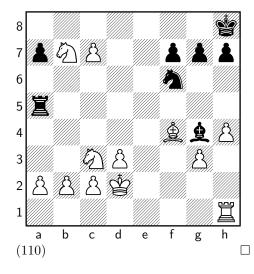


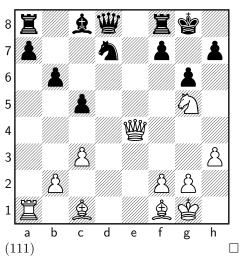


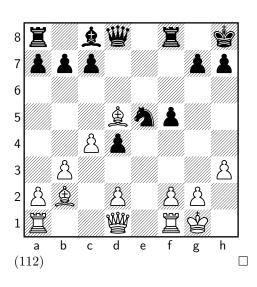


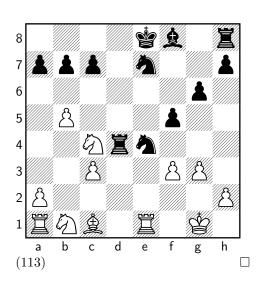


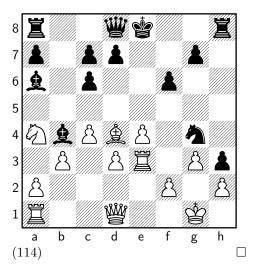


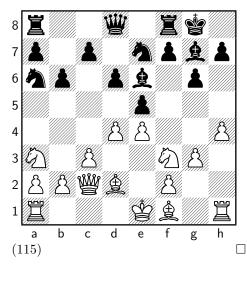


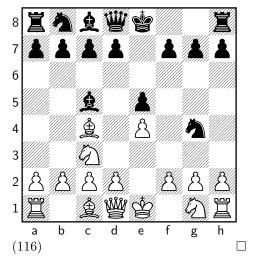


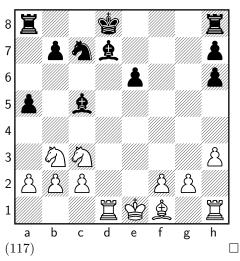


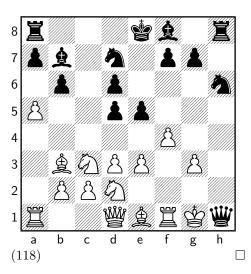


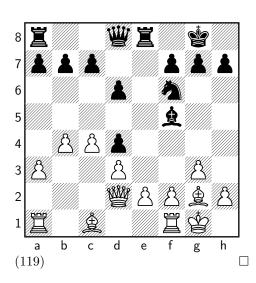


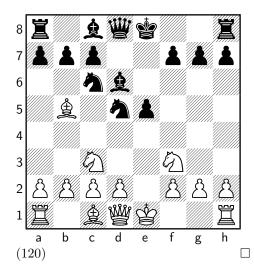


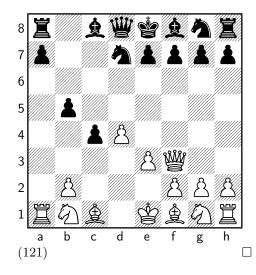


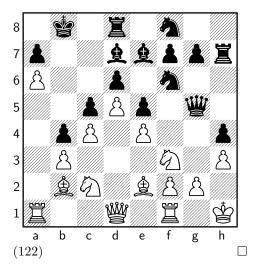


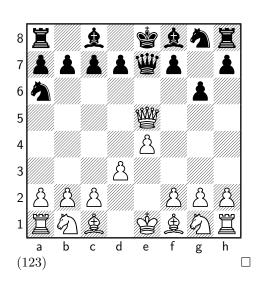


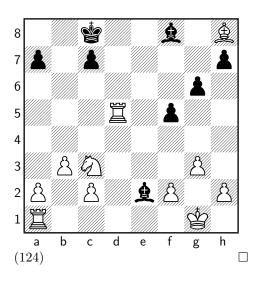


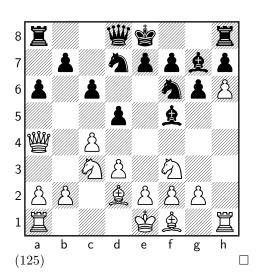


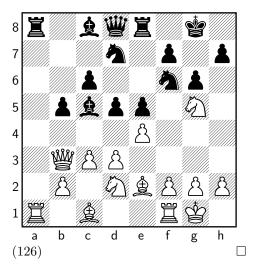


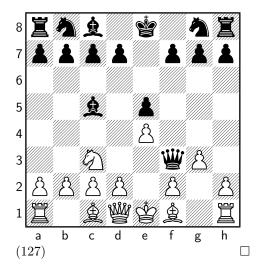


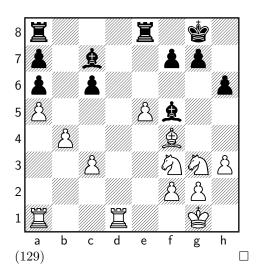


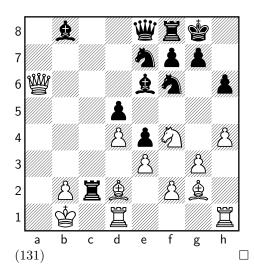


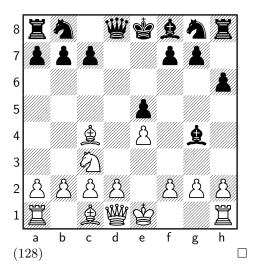


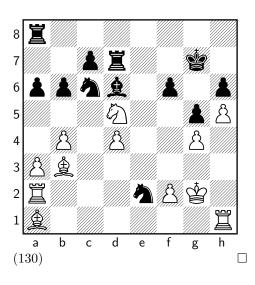


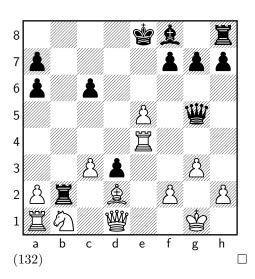


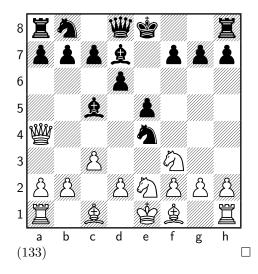


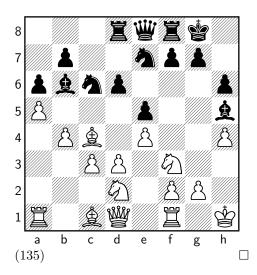


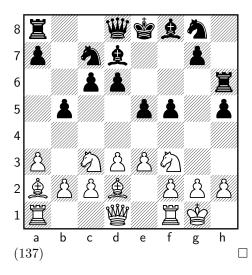


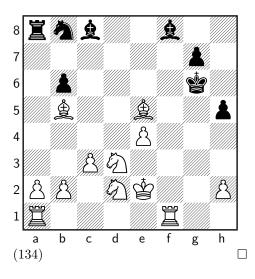


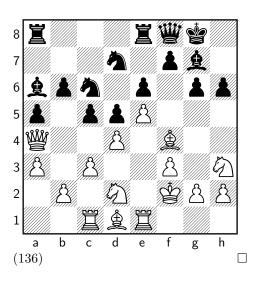


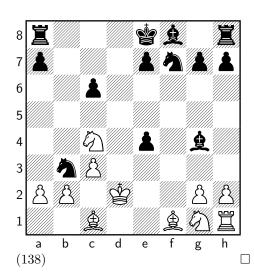


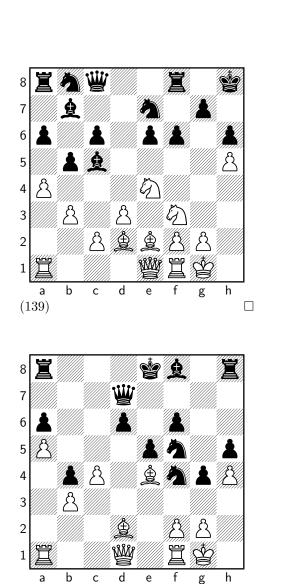


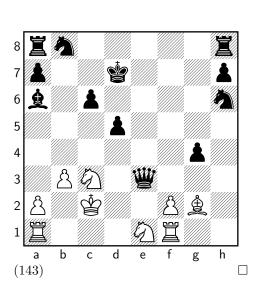




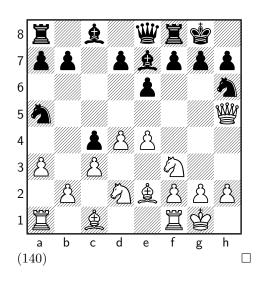


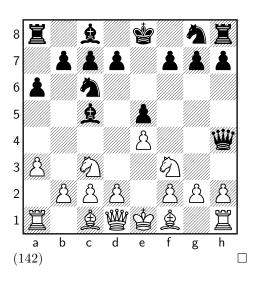


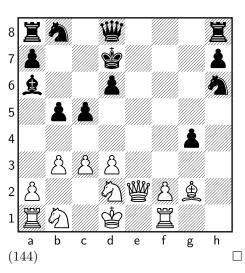




(141)

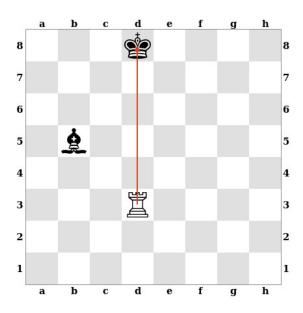


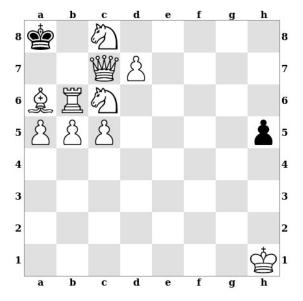




6 - Check

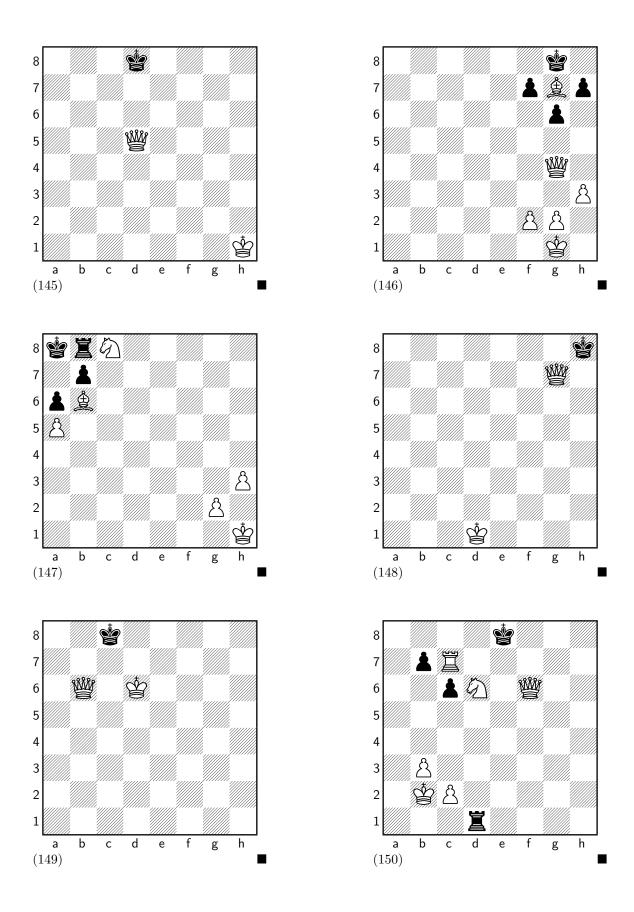
When a piece threatens to capture the king in one move it is called *check*. Here Black's king is in check from White's rook.

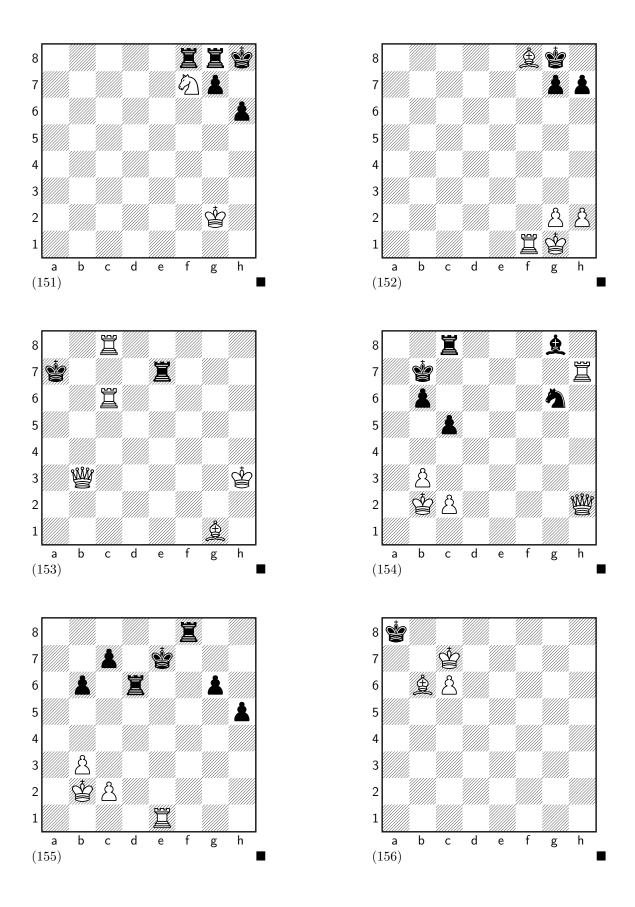


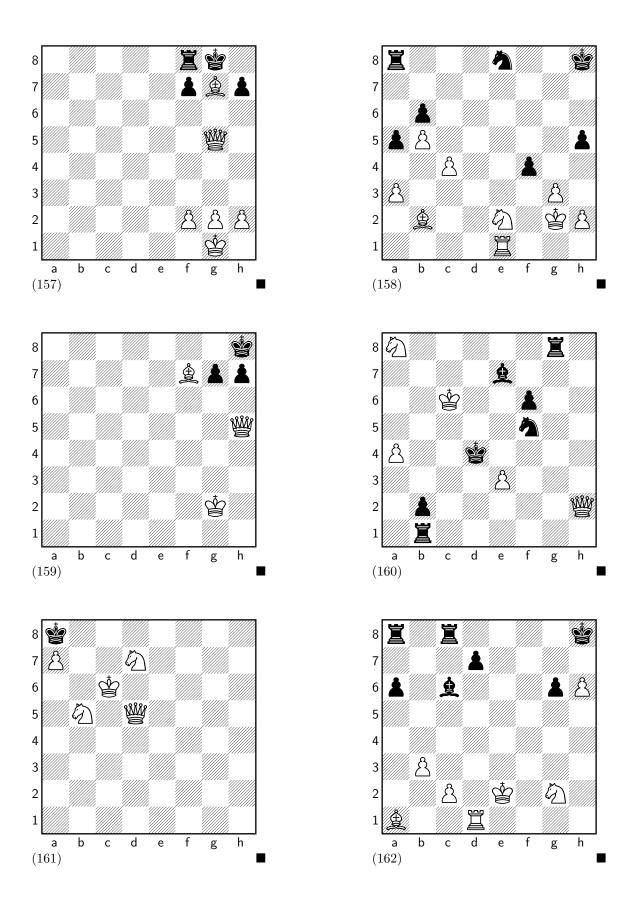


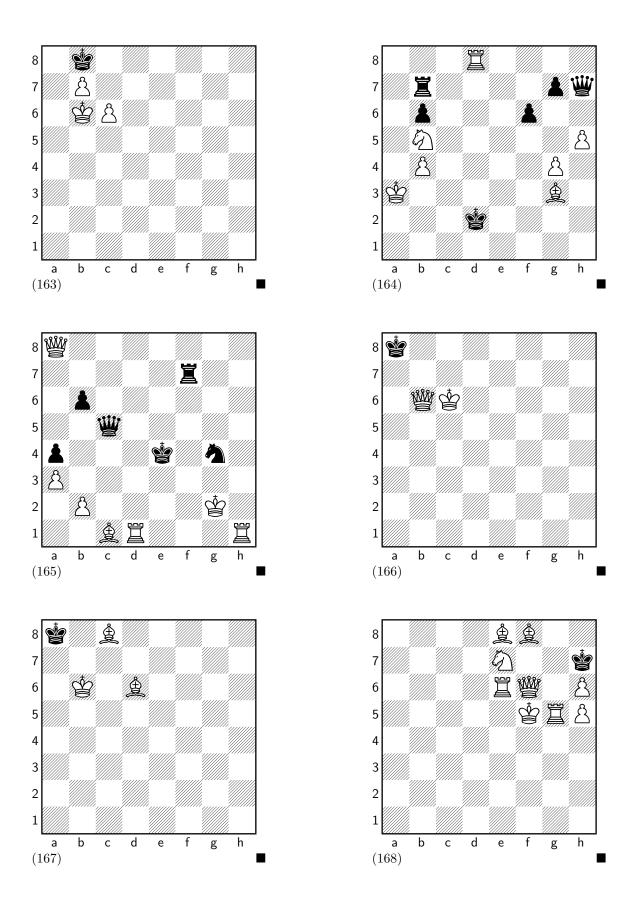
Surprisingly, Black's king is **not** in check here. True, he can't move anywhere, he is surrounded by white pieces, and he is in very serious trouble; none of that means that he is in check right now. In order for Black's king to be in check, there would need to be a white piece that could move to a8 in one move, which there isn't.

The next set of exercises ask you to determine if Black's king is currently in check or not.



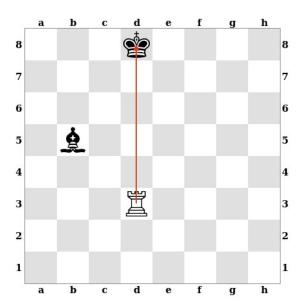


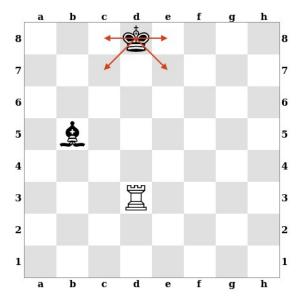




7 - Getting Out of Check

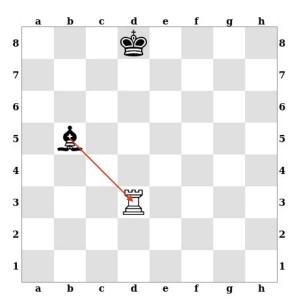
The rules of chess say that you are **not allowed** to leave your king in check at the end of your move. It's not just that this wouldn't be a good idea; any move that leaves your king in check is against the rules and cannot be played at all. Here White has used his rook to put Black's king in check. According to the rules, Black's next move must get his king out of check.

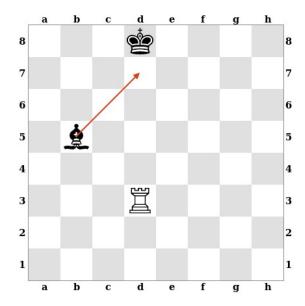




There are three ways to get a king out of check. The first way is to just move the king. Black can escape this check by playing 1.Ke8, 1.Ke7, 1.Kc8, or 1.Kc7.

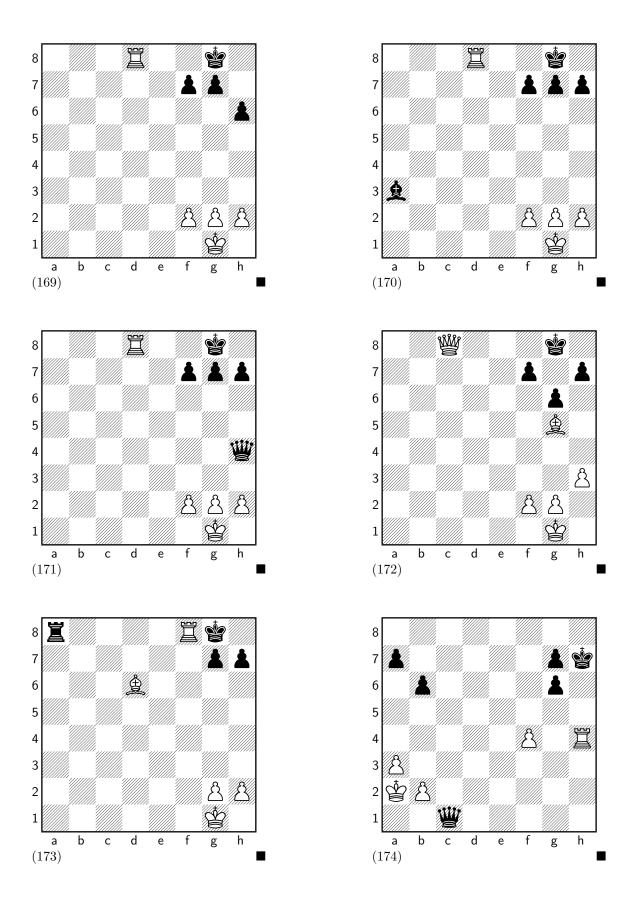
The second way out of check is to capture the checking piece. Black could also escape from the same check by playing 1...Bxd3.

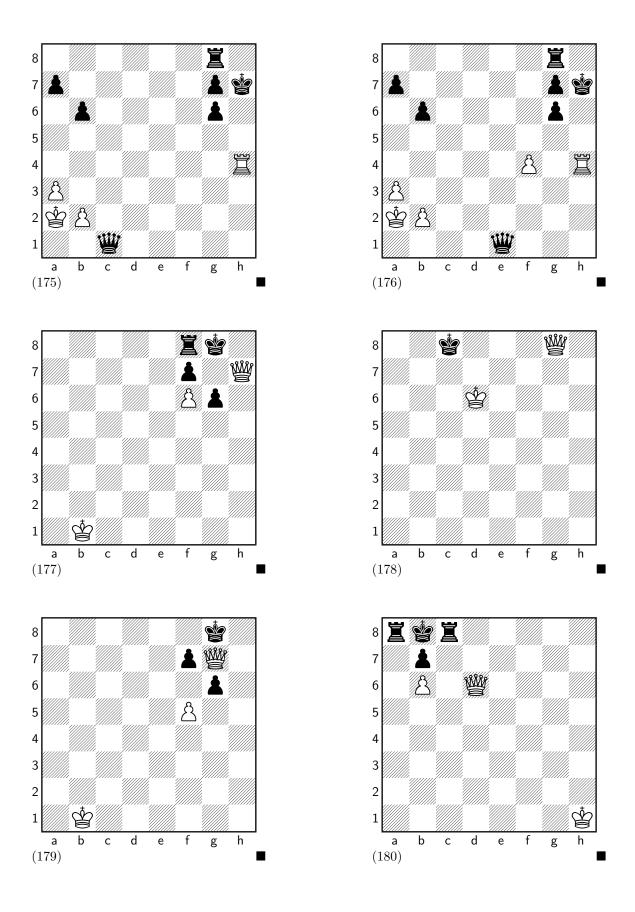


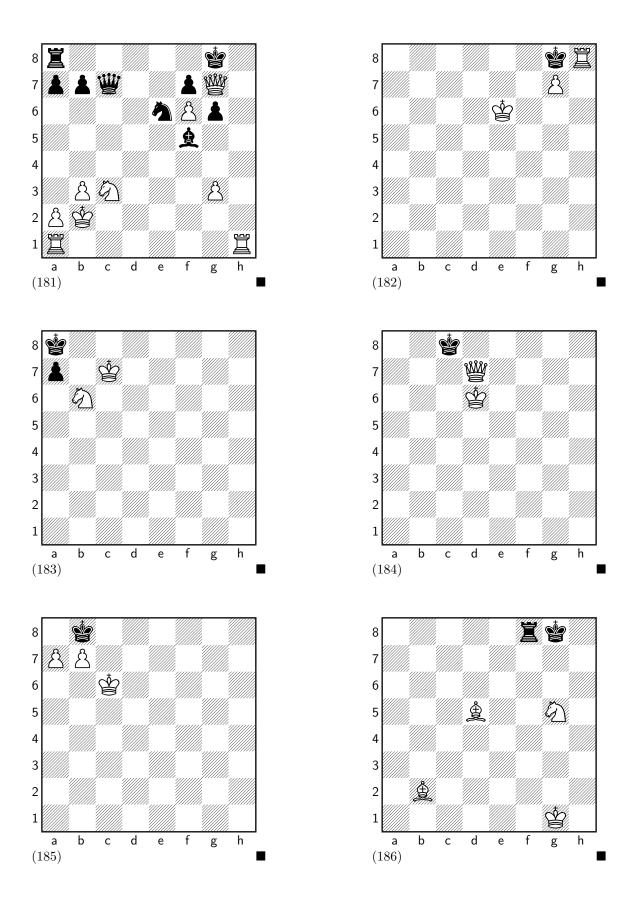


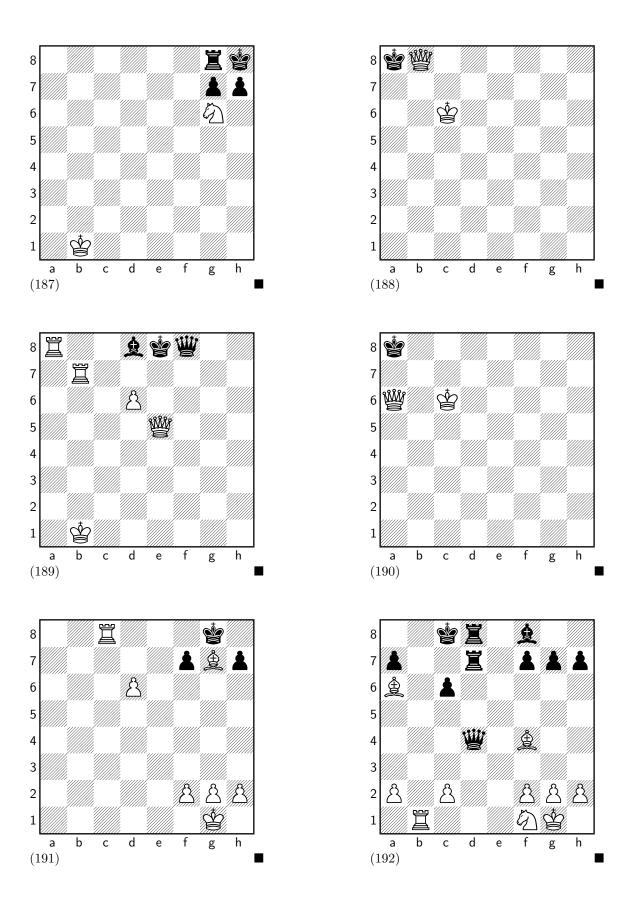
The final way to get out of check is to block the check. Black can also get out of this check by playing 1...Bd7. Note that you can never block a check from a knight.

The next exercises ask you to find a move for Black to save his king from check.



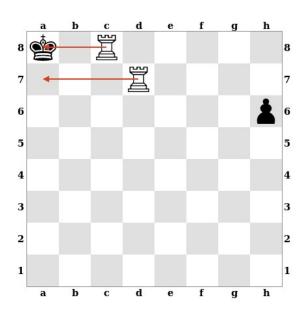


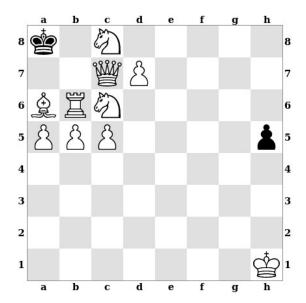




8 - Checkmate

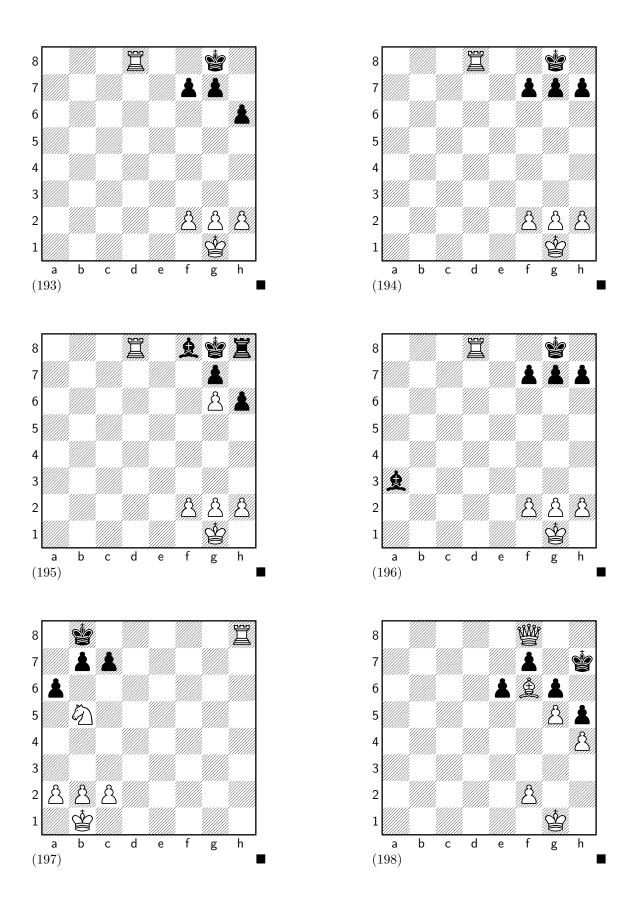
Checkmate occurs when a king is in check and there is no way to save him. Checkmate ends the game and the player who checkmated his opponent wins the game. Here White has checkmated Black, so White wins.

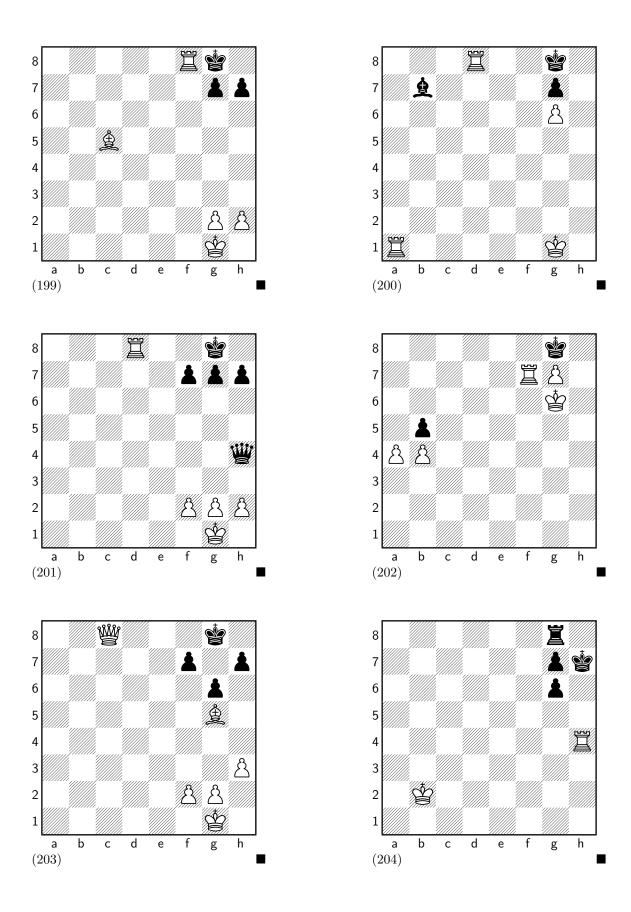


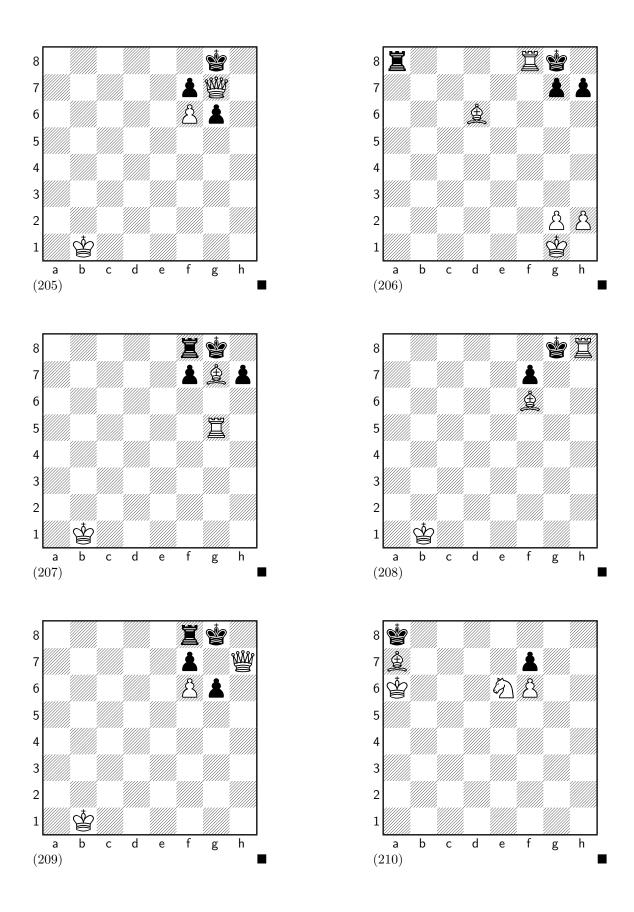


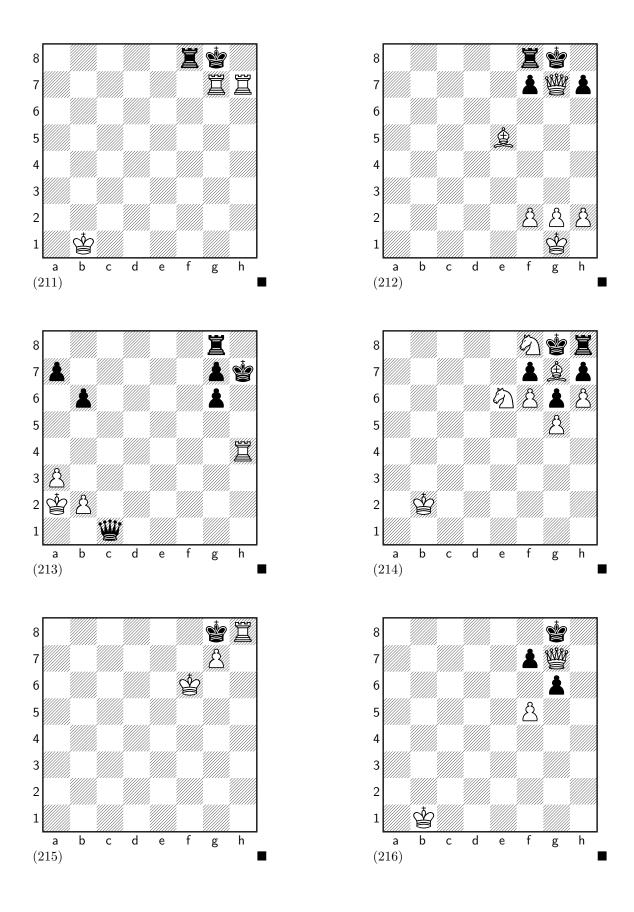
Checkmate is only possible when the king is in check. Black's king isn't in check in this position, so he isn't in checkmate either. You can't have checkmate without check.

The following exercises ask you to determine if Black's king is check (but not checkmate), checkmate, or neither of the two.





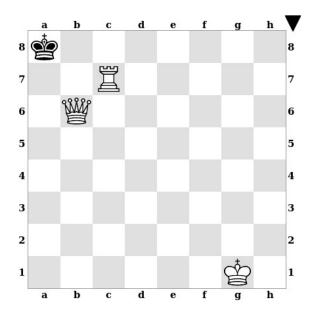


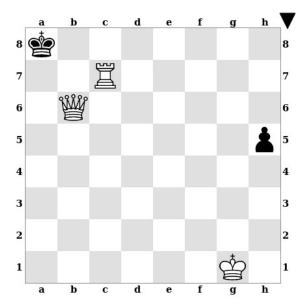


9 - Stalemate

Here Black's king is not in check, but it is Black's turn and he has no legal moves to play. The game can't continue, but White hasn't checkmated. What happens?

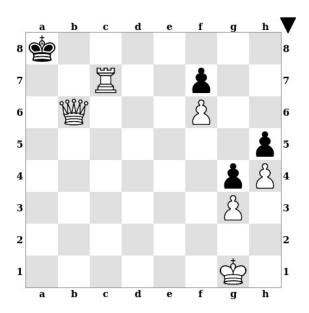
This is a *stalemate*, a type of *draw* (meaning that the game ends but no one wins or loses). Stalemate occurs when the player whose turn it is can't make any legal move but isn't in check.

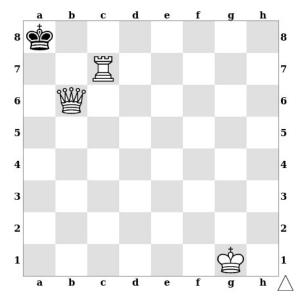




This isn't stalemate since Black can move his pawn. Stalemate doesn't just mean that the king can't move; it means that the player whose turn it is has no move **with any piece** (and is not in check). Black must play 1...h4 and the game continues.

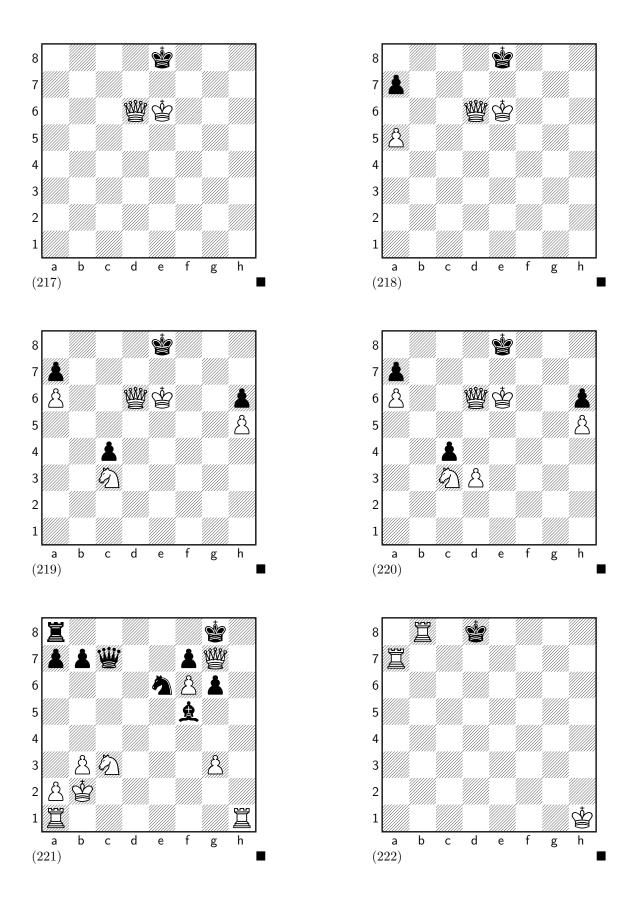
Here Black has a number of pawns in addition to his king, but neither the king nor the pawns have any legal moves. Since it is Black's turn and he isn't in check, this is another stalemate.

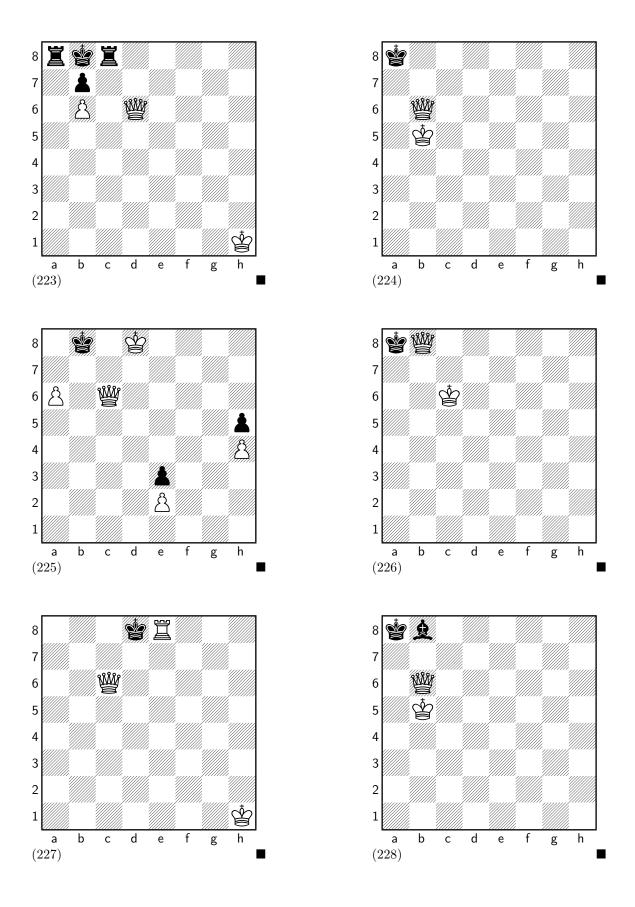


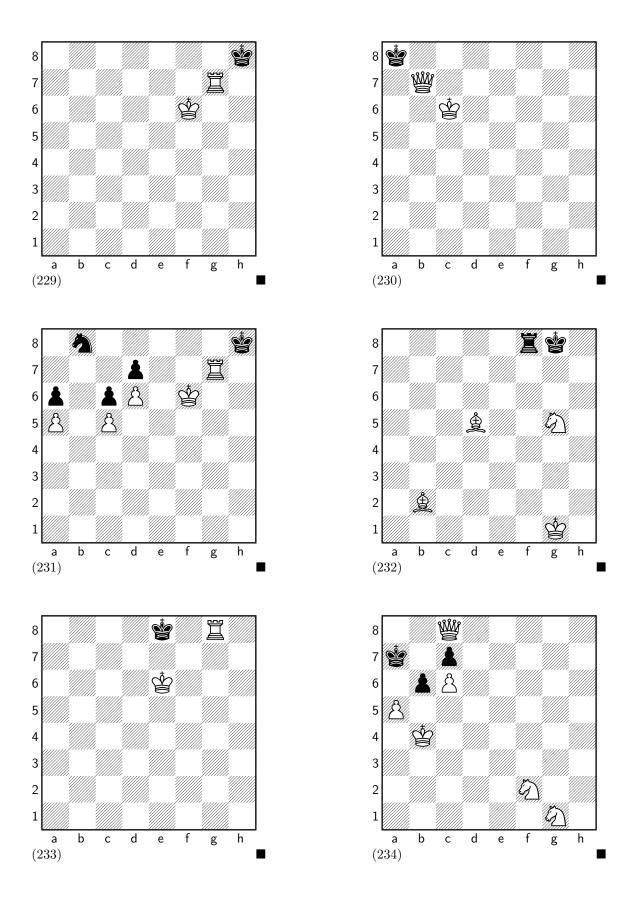


This position is the same as the first stalemate above, but it is White's turn here. This isn't stalemate (yet) because even though Black has no moves, it isn't his turn.

The next exercises ask you to decide if Black's king is in check (but not checkmate), checkmate, stalemate, or none of the above.



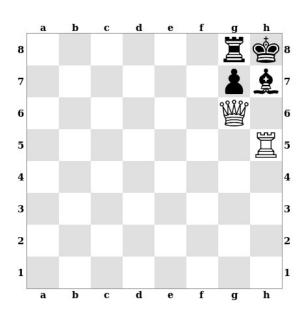


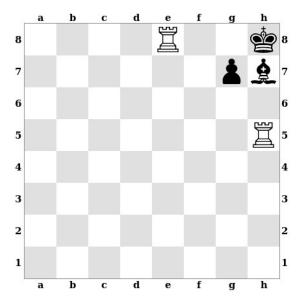


10 - Pins and Double Check

Pins

If Black is to move here he might want to capture White's queen with his bishop. However, the move 1...Bxg6 would leave Black's king in check from the white rook, so it is an illegal move. His bishop is *pinned* to the king and can't move.

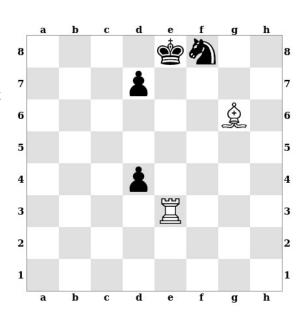


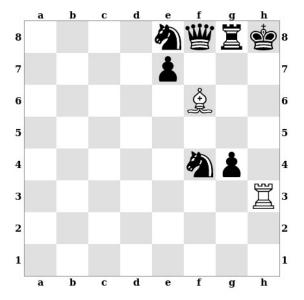


Some checkmates involve pins. Without the white rook on h5 here, Black could escape from check with 1...Bg8; but with the rook on h5 the bishop is pinned and can't legally move. Black is in checkmate.

Double Check

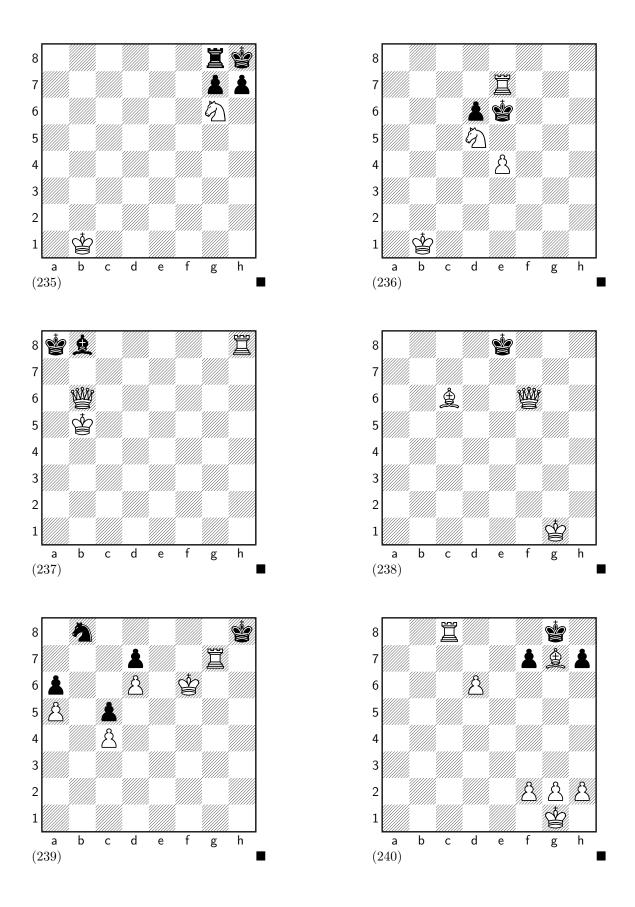
Here it seems Black has a number of ways to get out of check. He might like to capture something or block with his knight. However, Black is actually in *double check*: he is in check from two different pieces at the same time. Capturing or blocking would leave Black's king in check from whichever piece wasn't captured or blocked. The only way to escape from a double check is to move the king. Black will have to play 1...Kd8.

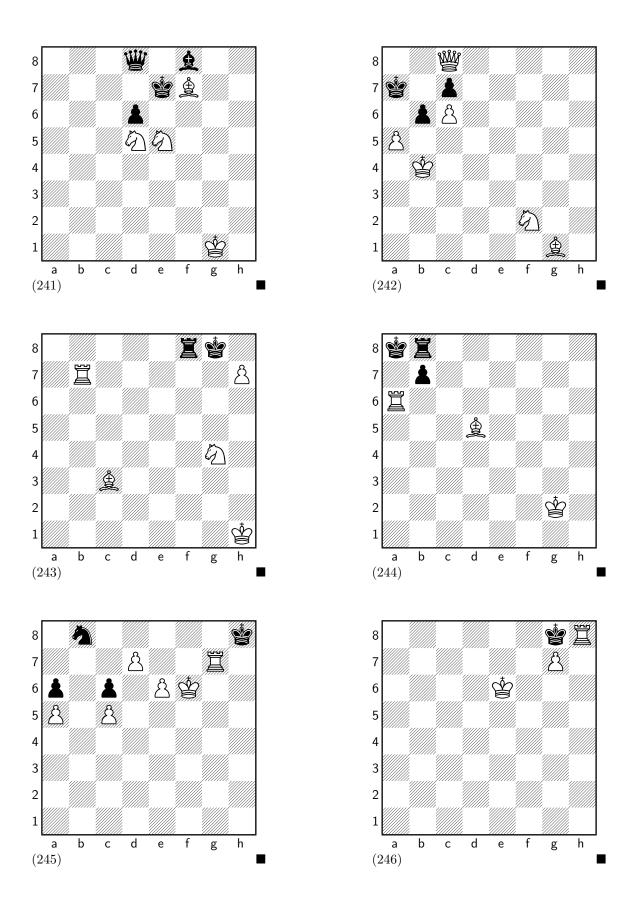


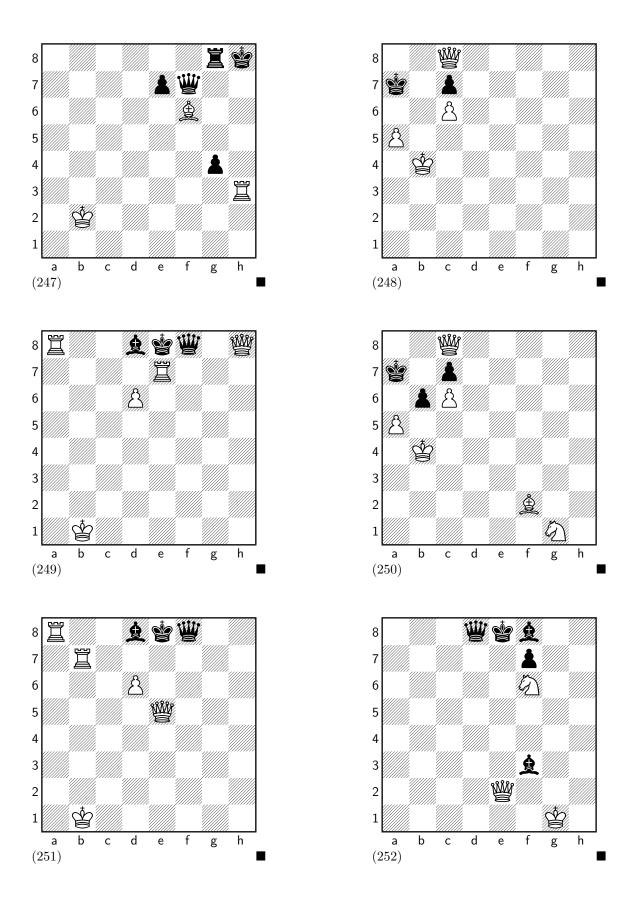


Black's king is in double check here, so he will have to move his king if he is going to escape from check. 1...Kh7 leaves the king in check from the rook, while 1...Kg7 leaves him in check from the bishop. This is checkmate.

With these new ideas in mind we can now solve a few more "check, checkmate, stalemate, or none?" exercises.

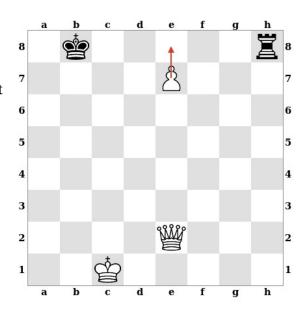


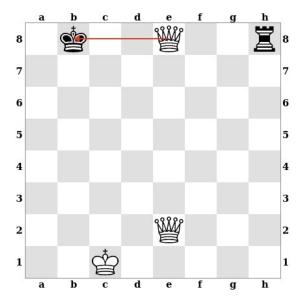




11 - Pawn Promotion

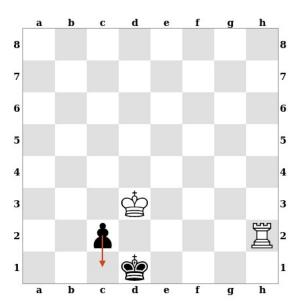
When a pawn gets all the way across the board it is replaced with a different kind of piece of the player's choice. It cannot stay as a pawn and it cannot become a king. However, it may become anything else, including some kind of piece that the player already has. Here White plays 1.e8=Q and gets a second queen.

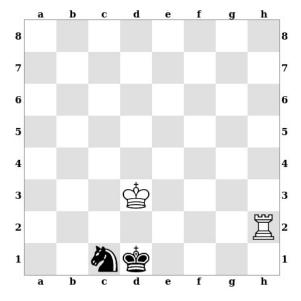




The new piece goes where the pawn was and immediately affects the position. Here White's new queen puts Black in check. The new piece is also immediately vulnerable. Black can capture White's new queen before it has a chance to move with 1...Rxe8.

A pawn may be promoted to something other than a queen; occasionally this serves a purpose. Here White would meet 1...c1=Q with 2.Rh1# (checkmate). Instead, Black plays 1...c1=N+.

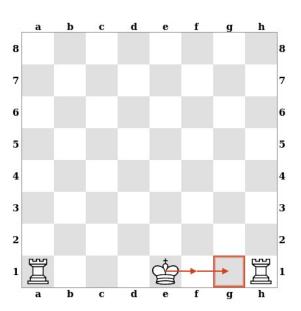


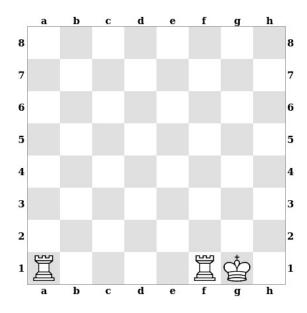


The new knight immediately puts White's king in check. He must move his king and doesn't have time to checkmate Black right away. Luckily for Black, the endgame rook vs. knight is normally drawn with best play. (The reasons for this are tricky and you shouldn't worry about them for now).

12 - Castling

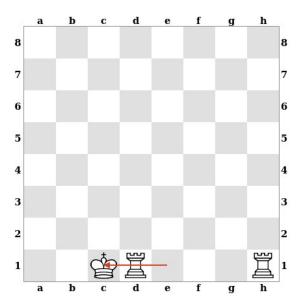
Castling is a special move in which the king and rook both move. The king moves two squares toward the rook and the rook jumps over to the other side of the king.





All of this is done as a single move. Here White has "castled short" or "castled kingside."

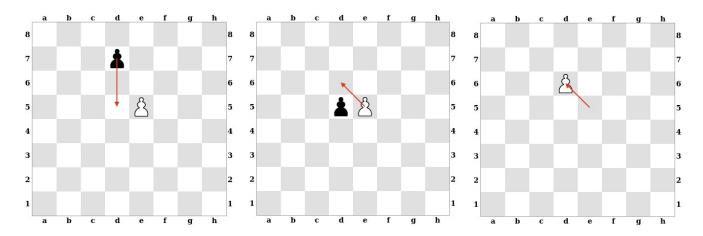
You can also castle with the other rook, which is called "castling long" or "castling queenside." The king always moves two squares toward the rook no matter which way you are castling.



There are a number of rules about when you can and cannot castle in chess:

- 1. There must be no pieces (friendly or enemy) between the king and the participating rook
- 2. Castling must be the king's first move of the game
- 3. Castling must be the participating rook's first move of the game
- 4. You cannot castle as a way of escaping check ("castling out of check")
- 5. You cannot castle if the square the king passes over is attacked ("castling through check")
- 6. You cannot castle if it would leave the king in check ("castling into check")

13 - En Passant

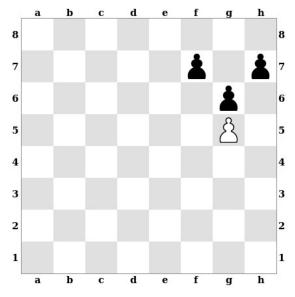


The en passant capture is a special type of pawn capture that is possible only in very specific circumstances. It is a strange move and takes some effort to understand. In the first position above, Black plays 1...d5, moving his pawn forward two squares (possible because Black's pawn was on its initial square). The en passant rule now allows White to play 2.exd6, moving his own pawn to d6 (not d5) and capturing Black's pawn in the process. Black's pawn is captured as though Black had played 1...d6.

The en passant capture is only allowed between two pawns and only when both of two things are true:

- 1. the two pawns stand side-by-side
- 2. the pawn that will be captured en passant moved two squares on the last move of the game

In the second diagram above both of these things are true: the two pawns are side-by-side and Black's pawn moved two squares on the previous move of the game. Therefore White can make an en passant capture.

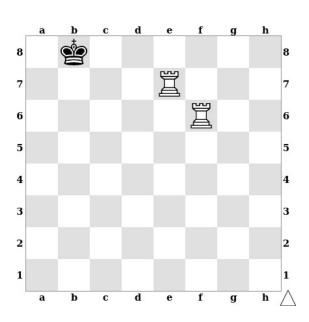


This rule has important consequences. In this position, a single White pawn effectively holds back three Black pawns. If Black plays 1...f6 or 1...h6 then White responds 2.gxf6 or 2.gxh6. In either case White wins a pawn and will promote before Black can. But what if Black plays 1...f5 or 1...h5? The en passant rule ensures that White can still play 2.gxf6 or 2.gxh6.

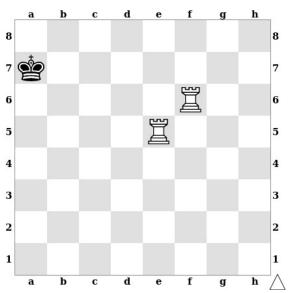
14 - Finding Checkmate

Mate in One Move

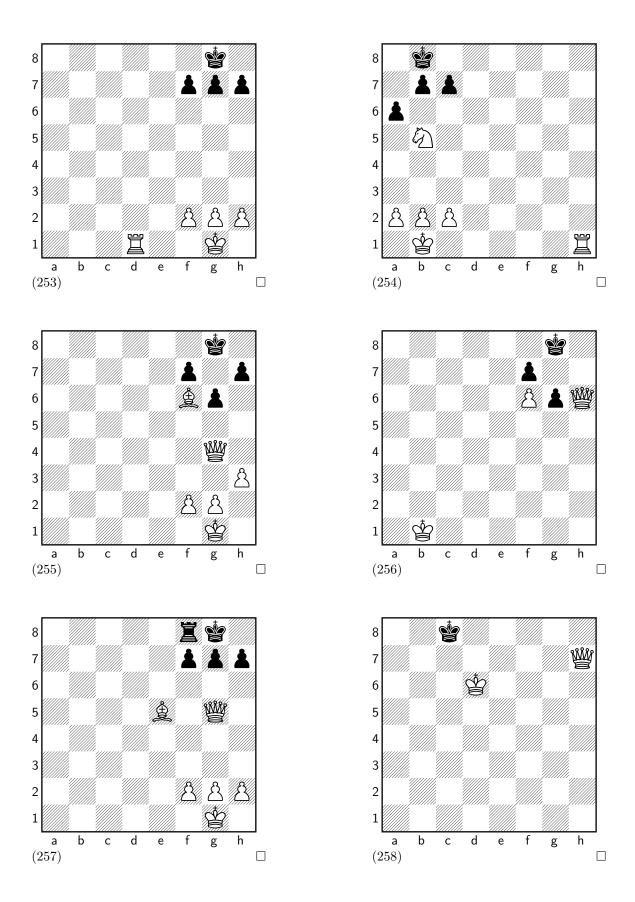
The remaining exercises in this book ask you to find a way to checkmate Black. In this position White can achieve checkmate in one move by playing 1.Rf8#. White has other moves that are check, and some may lead to checkmate eventually, but this is the only move that achieves checkmate in one move.

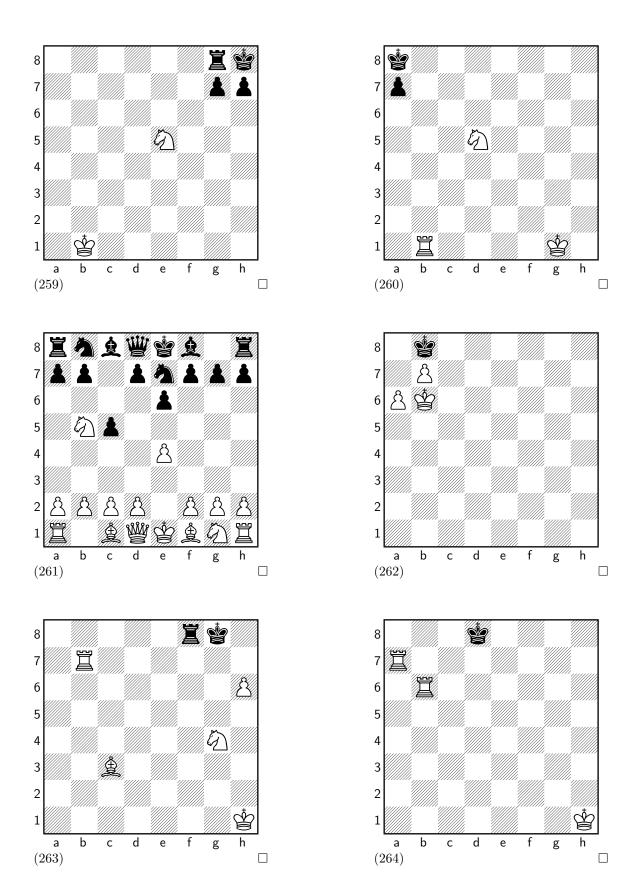


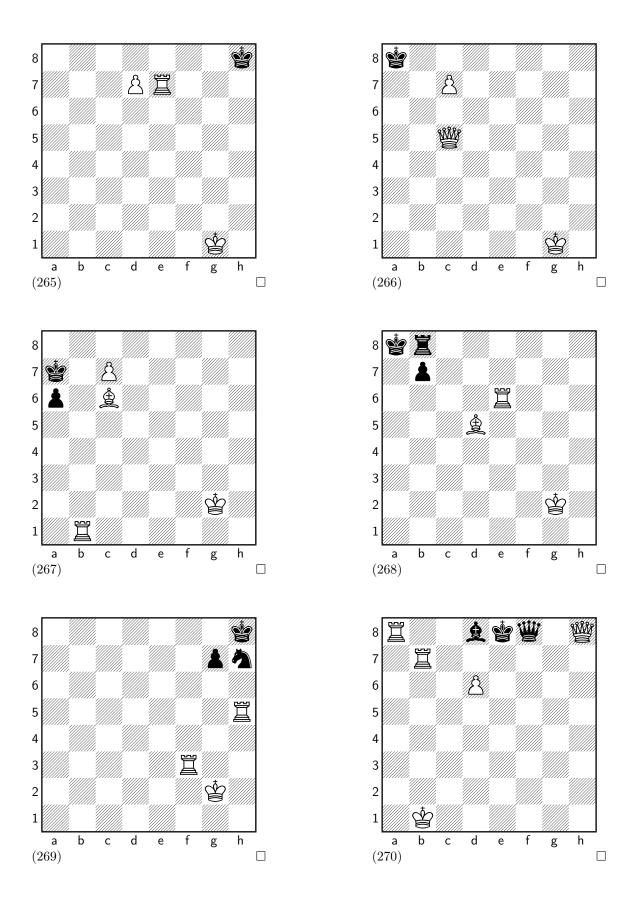
Mate in Two or More Moves

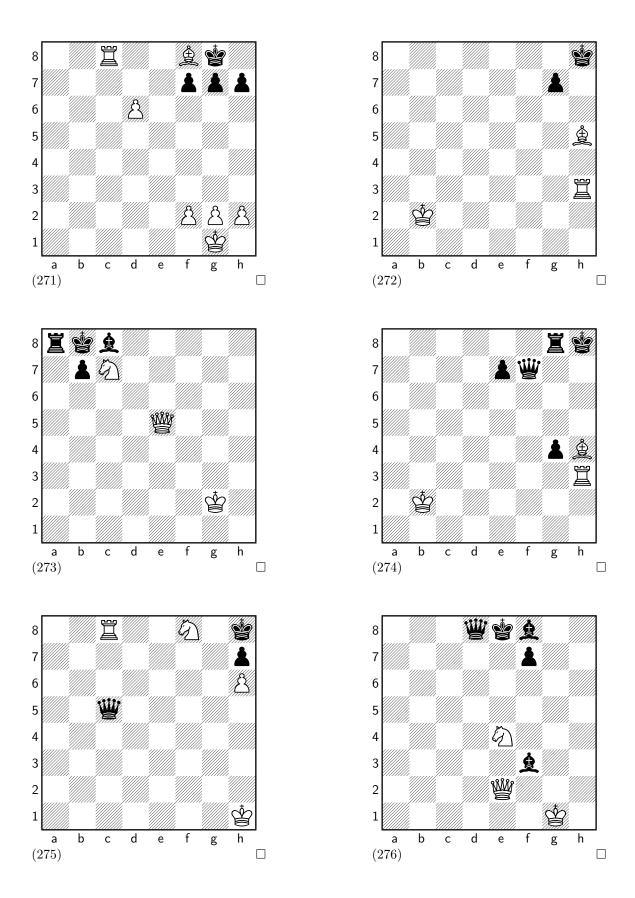


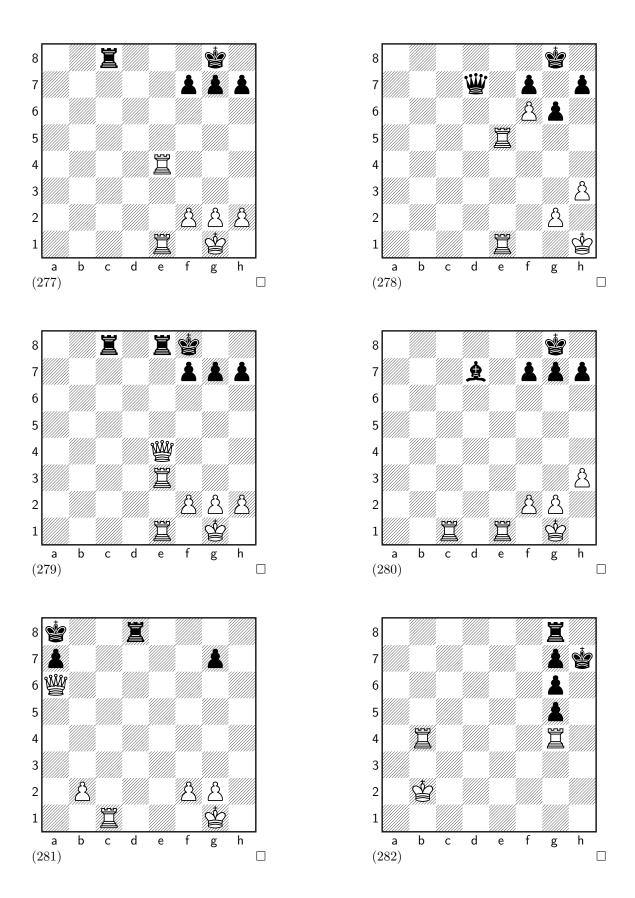
In this position White has no way to checkmate in just one move. However, he can force checkmate in two moves, starting with 1.Re7+. Black can respond with either 1...Ka8 or 1...Kb8, but in either case White can checkmate next move with 2.Rf8#. The solution to a "mate in two" problem must work against any possible response from the opponent in order to be correct.

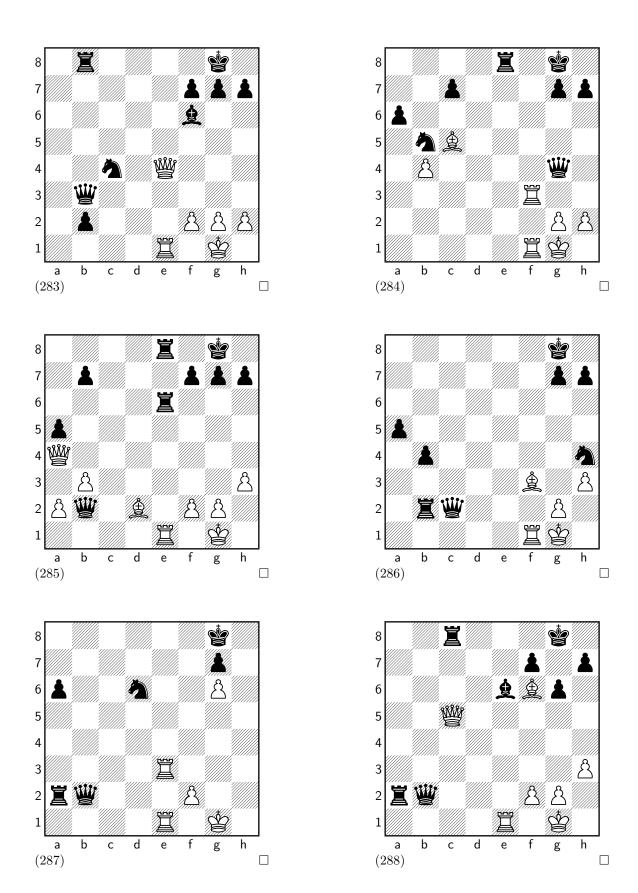












Solutions

 1.dxe5 1.cxb3 1.gxh3 1.bxa6 1.dxc5 1.fxg4 1...exd4 1...fxg6 1...bxa6 1...gxh3 1...exf4 1...cxb5 1.dxc6 1.gxh3 1.fxg4 1.fxe4 1.cxb5 1.fxg5 1...exf3 1...bxa6

1...cxb5

1...cxd5

- 1...fxg4
- 1...cxb4
- 1.Rxf7
- 1.Rxh2
- 1.Rxd8
- 1.Rxa2
- 1.Rxd2
- 1.Rxf7
- 1.Rxg3
- 1.Rxb7
- 1.Rxc2
- 1.Rxh5
- 1.Rxe8
- 1.Rxh7
- 1.Bxd6
- 1.Bxd1
- 1.Bxh7
- 1.Bxg7
- 1.Bxb1
- 1.Bxg2
- 1.Bxb5
- 1.Bxh6
- 1.Bxa7
- 1.Bxb2

- 1.Bxh5
- 1.Bxh3
- 1.Nxf7
- 1.Nxb4
- 1.Nxf6
- 1.Nxc3
- 1.Nxe3
- 1.Nxc4
- 1.Nxc6
- 1.Nxf5
- 1.Nxe3
- 1.Nxh1
- 1.Nxb4
- 1.Nxa2
- 1.Qxe6
- 1.Qxa7
- 1.Qxg2
- 1.Qxh6
- 1.Qxa4
- 1.Qxe2
- 1.Qxd7
- 1.Qxd6
- 1.Qxh2

- 1.Qxc3
- 1.Qxa2
- 1.Qxh2
- 1.Kxe5
- 1.Kxc4
- 1.Kxf4
- 1.Kxd3
- 1.Kxc3
- 1.Kxf5
- 1.Kxc7
- 1.Kxe8
- 1.Kxd6
- 1.Kxe6
- 1.Kxf7
- 1.Kxg4
- 1.Qxe5+
- 1.Bxf2
- 1.Qxg7
- 1.Qxa8
- 1.Rxb7
- 1.Nxe5
- 1.Qxg3
- 1.Rxg4
- 1.Nxe5

- 1.Bxa6
- 1.Qxg4
- 1.Qxc6
- 1.Bxf4
- 1.Rxe8
- 1.Qxd8
- 1.Rxa6
- 1.Bxa2
- 1.Nxe4
- 1.Qxf7
- 1.Qxf2
- 1.hxg4
- 1.Bxh6
- 1.Qxb2
- 1.Rxf8
- 1.bxc5
- 1.Nxa5
- 1.Qxa8
- 1.Bxd4
- 1.cxd4
- 1.Qxg4
- 1.Bxa6
- 1.Qxg4

- 1.Nxc5
- 1.Kxh1
- 1.Bxb7
- 1.Nxd5
- 1.Qxa8
- 1.Nxg5
- 1.Qxh8
- 1.Nxe2
- 1.hxg7
- 1.Rxa8
- 1.Qxf3
- 1.Qxg4
- 1.Nxf5
- 1.Rxe2
- 1.Kxc2
- 1.Bxg5
- 1.Qxe4
- 1.Rxf8
- 1.axb6
- 1.Qxc6
- 1.Bxg8
- 1.axb3
- 1.Nxc5
- 1.Qxa5

- 1.Bxa8
- 1.Nxh4
- 1.fxe3
- 1.Bxa8
- Yes, from the queen on d5
- No, Black's king is not in check.
- No
- Yes, from the queen on g7
- No
- Yes, from the knight on d6
- Yes, from the knight on f7
- No
- Yes, from the bishop on g1
- Yes, from the rook on h7
- Yes, from the rook on e1
- No
- No
- Yes, from the bishop on b2
- No
- Yes, from the pawn on e3
- No
- Yes, from the bishop on a1
- No

- Yes, from the rook on d8
- Yes, from the queen on a8
- No
- No
- No
- 1...Kh7
- 1...Bf8
- 1...Qxd8
- 1...Kg7
- 1...Rxf8
- 1...Kg8
- 1...Qh6
- 1...Qxh4
- 1...Kxh7
- 1...Kb7
- 1...Kxg7
- 1...Rc7
- 1...Nxg7
- 1...Kxg7
- 1...axb6
- 1...Kb8
- 1...Kxa7
- 1...Rf7
- 1...hxg6

188 1...Kxb8

1...Qe7

190 1...Kb8

1...Kxg7

1...Rb7

Check from the rook on d8 1...Kh7

Checkmate from the rook on d8

Neither - just a normal position

Check from the rook on d8 1...Bf8

197 Checkmate from the rook on h8

Neither - just a normal position

Checkmate from the rook on f8

200 Checkmate from the rook on d8

Check from the rook on d8 1...Qxd8

Neither

Check from the queen on c8 1...Kg7

204 Checkmate from the rook on h4

Checkmate from the queen on g7

Check from the rook on f8 1...Rxf8

Neither

208 Checkmate from the rook on h8

Check from the queen on h7 1...Kxh7

210 Neither

Checkmate from the rook on g7

Checkmate from the queen on g7

Check from the rook on h4 1...Qh6

214 Neither

Checkmate from the rook on h8

Check from the queen on g7 1...Kxg7

217 Stalemate

None - just a normal position 1...a6

219 Stalemate

None - just a normal position 1...cxd3

Check from the queen on g7 1...Nxg7

222 Checkmate from the rook on b8

Check from the queen on d6 1...Rc7

Stalemate

None 1...Ka7

Check from the queen on b8 1...Kxb8

227 Checkmate from the rook on e8

228 None 1...Bg3 **229** Stalemate **230** Checkmate from the queen on b7 231 Stalemate 232 Check from the bishop on d5 1...Rf7 **233** Checkmate from the rook on g8 **234** None 1...bxa5+ 235 Check from the knight on g6 1...hxg6 **236** Checkmate from the rook on e7 **237** Stalemate. Black's bishop is pinned. **238** Checkmate from the bishop on c6 **239** None 1...Nc6 240 Check from the rook on c8 1...Kxg7 **241** Checkmate from the knight on d5 **242** None 1...bxa5+ **243** Checkmate from the pawn on h7 **244** Checkmate from the rook on a6. Black's pawn is pinned. **245** None 1...Nxd7+ 246 Check from the rook on h8

1...Kxg7

- Checkmate from the rook on h3 and the bishop on f6
- Stalemate
- **249** Checkmate from the rook on e7. Black's bishop and queen are both pinned.
- Stalemate. Black's pawn on b6 is pinned.
- Check from the queen on e5
- 1...Qe7
- 252 Checkmate from the queen on e2 and the knight on f6
- 1.Rd8#
- 254 1.Rh8#
- 1.Qc8#
- 1.Qg7#
- 1.Qxg7#
- 1.Qc7#
- 1.Nf7#
- 1.Nc7#
- 1.Nd6#
- **262** 1.a7#
- **263** 1.h7#
- 1.Rb8#
- 1.d8=Q# (1.d8=R#)
- 1.c8=Q#
- 1.c8=N#
- 268 1.Ra6#
- 1.Rf8#

- 1.Re7#
- 1.Be7#
- 1.Bf7#
- 1.Nb5#
- 1.Bf6#
- 1.Ng6#
- 1.Nf6#
- 1.Re8+ Rxe8 2.Rxe8#
- 1.Re8+ Qxe8 2.Rxe8#
- 1.Qxe8+ Rxe8 2.Rxe8#
- 1.Rc8+ Bxc8 2.Re8#
- 1.Rc8+ Rxc8 2.Qxc8#
- 1.Rh4+ gxh4 2.Rxh4#
- 1.Qe8+ Rxe8 2.Rxe8#
- 1.Rf8+ Rxf8 2.Rxf8#
- 1.Qxe8+ Rxe8 2.Rxe8#
- 1.Bd5+ Kh8 2.Rf8#
- 1.Re8+ Nxe8 2.Rxe8#
- 1.Qxc8+ Bxc8 2.Re8#