

Lesson 4 – Special chess moves and other rules you should know

By the time you reach this lesson you will already know all the basic rules and moves but there are a few special moves and rules that you should know. Some of these moves and rules are often misunderstood by those who never learnt the official rules of the game. Mastery of this lesson will give you confidence in your knowledge of the proper rules of the game, including all special moves and many of the lesser known rules.

Below the video is a transcript (with diagrams).

Lesson 4 // Special moves and ...

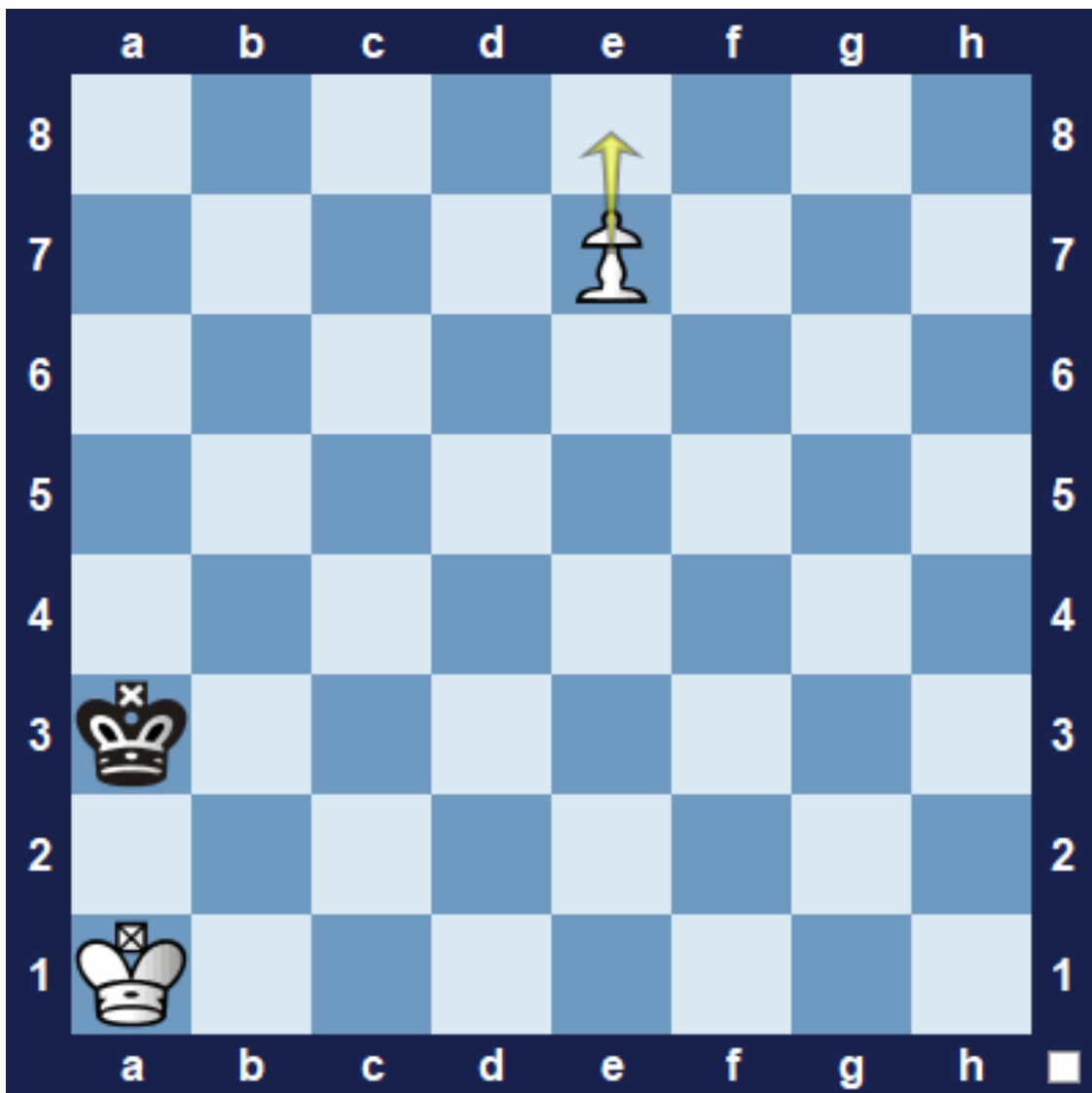


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Special moves and other rules you should know

There are three special moves in chess. The first one you already know. Promotion.

Special Move #1 Promotion



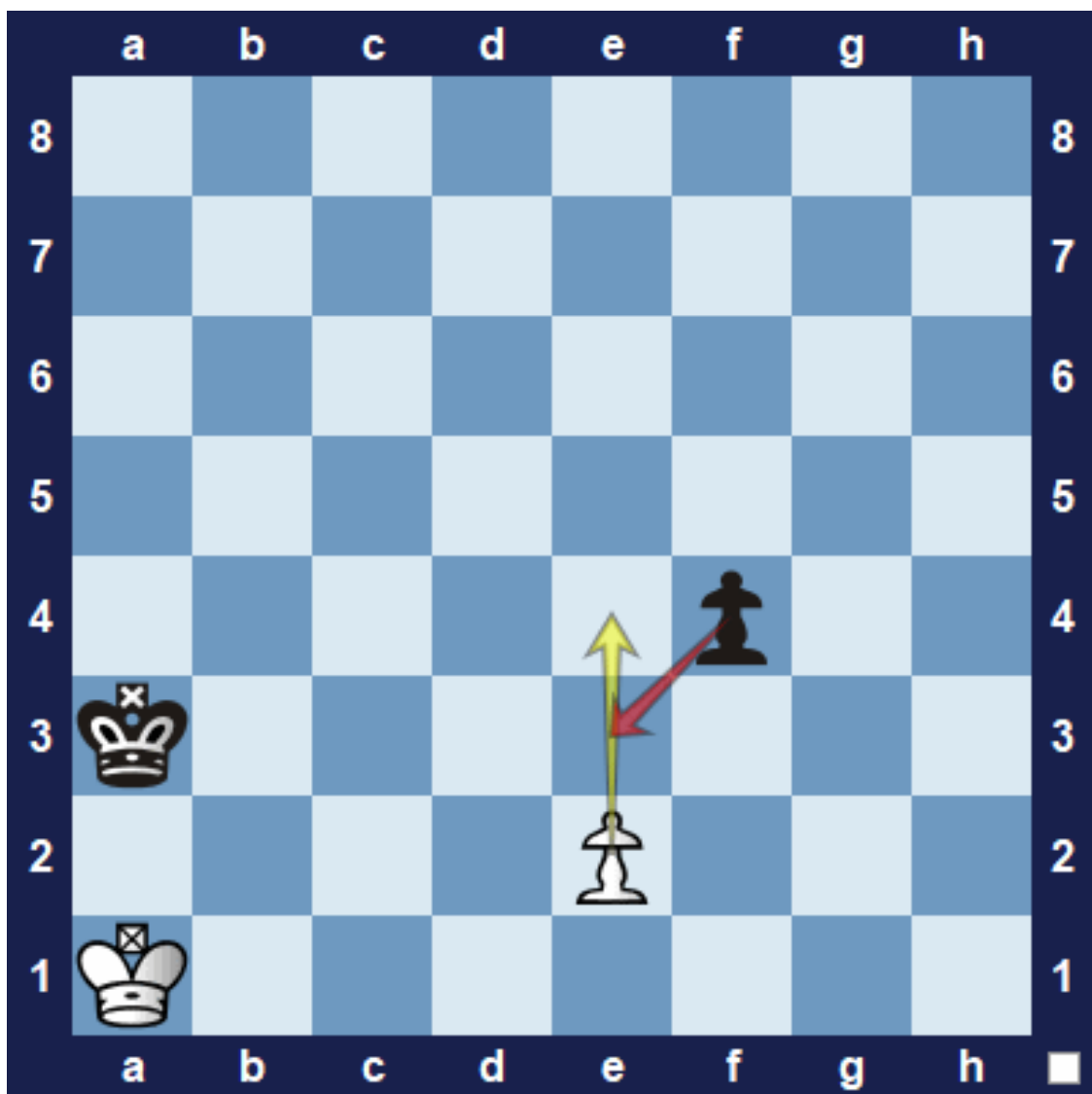
Special moves: Promotion

If a pawn reaches the last rank on the other side of the board, then that pawn may promote to one of the big pieces. He can choose to become any piece except a king. You should also take

note that you are allowed to have more than 1 queen. Every time a pawn reaches the other side of the board, then that pawn may become a queen, even if your other queen is still in the game.

Special Move #2 Passant

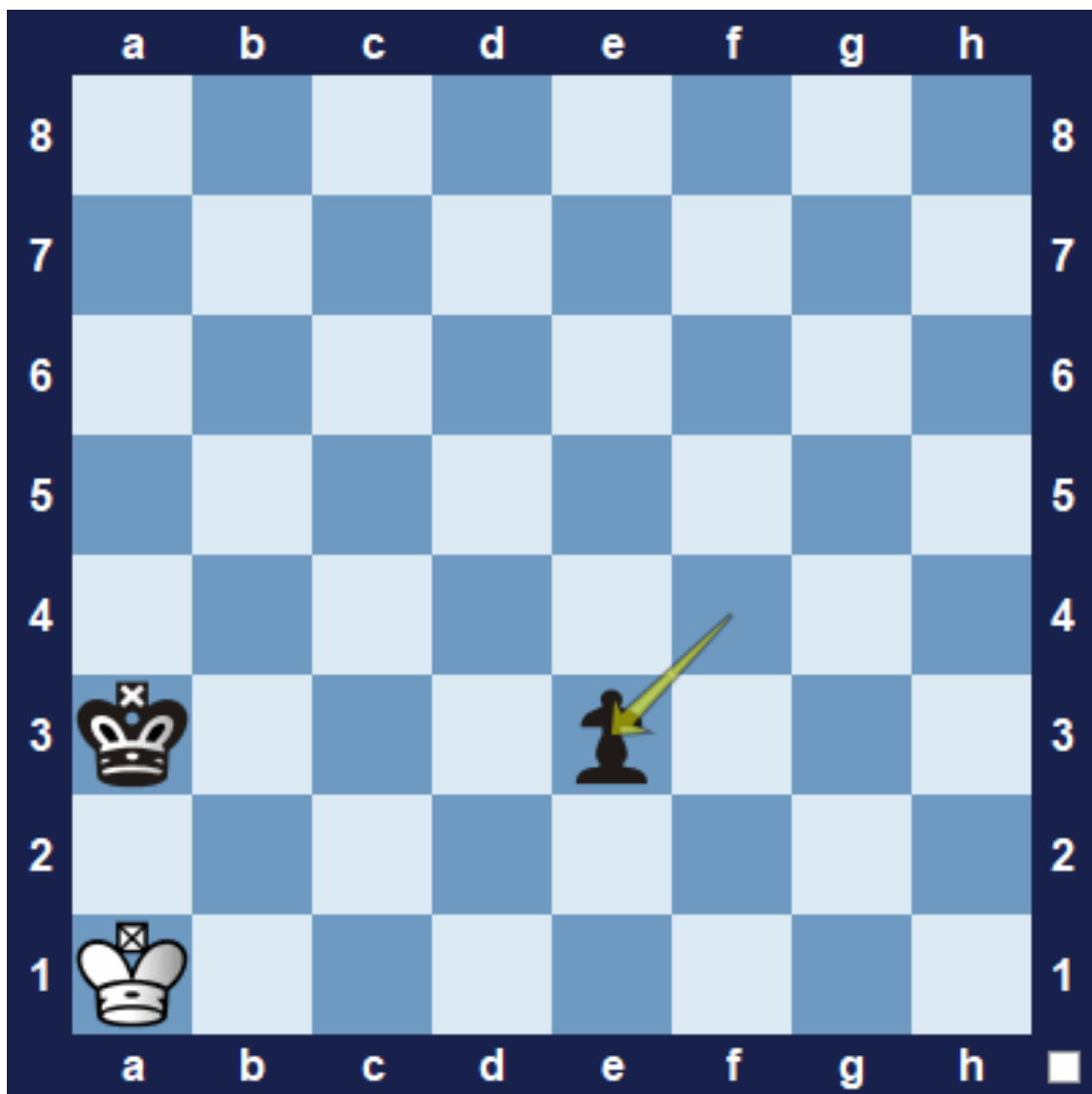
The second special move you should know is known as “en passant” En passant is a French term and it means “in passing”. I’ll use this example to show you how it works.



If the white pawn now moves two squares, black can capture it as if it moved only one square.

It is white's turn to move. You will remember that the white pawns move in this direction and the black pawns move in this direction. White sees that if he moves this pawn one square then black could capture him. So instead, he decides to move two squares so that he can pass over this square. But, if a pawn does this, in other words, if a pawn moves two squares and passes over a square where another pawn could capture it, then you may in fact capture that pawn as if it moved only one square.

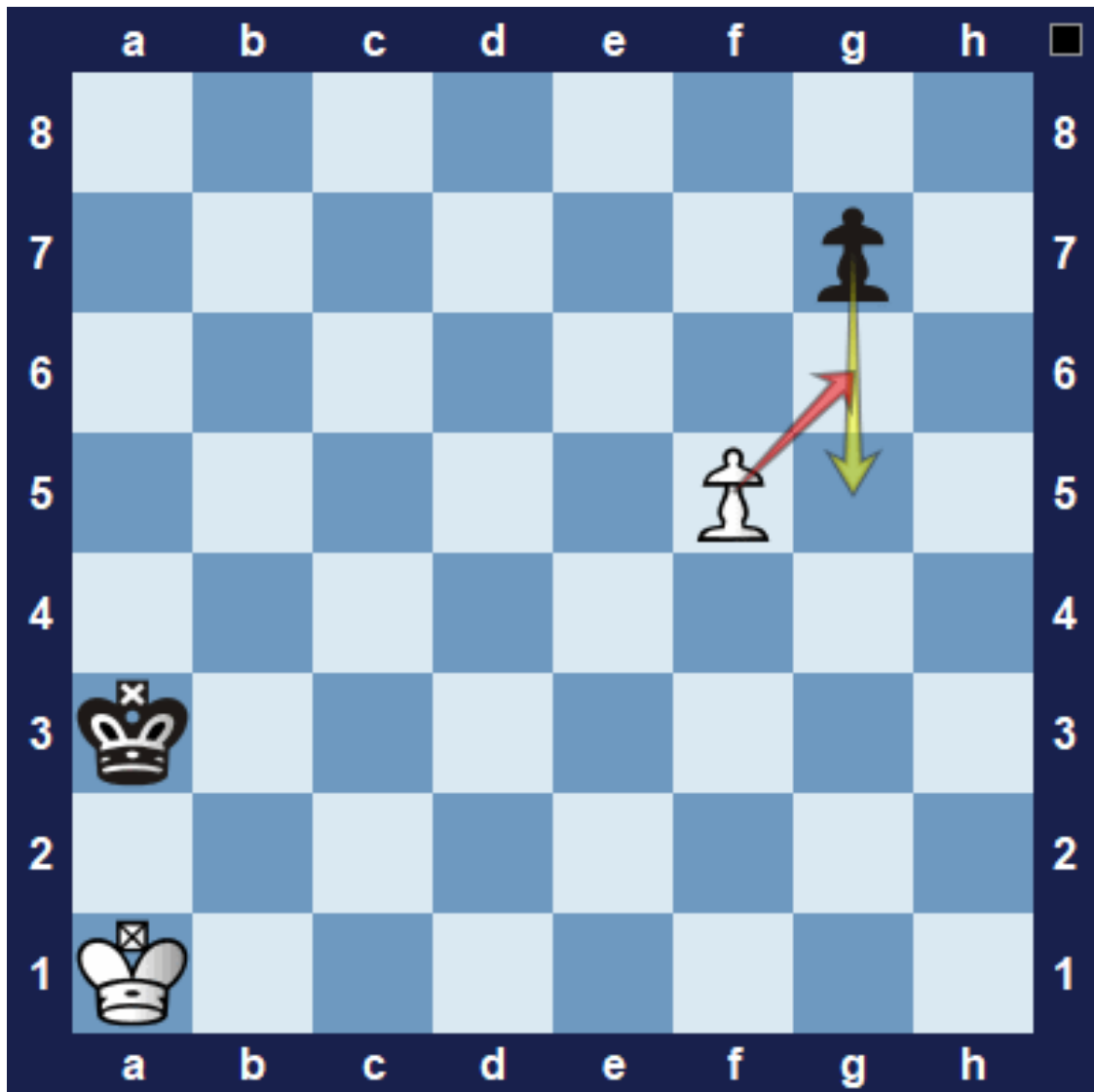
This is what it would look like once black captured “en passant”:



Black captures “en passant”

White moves the pawn two squares and black captures him as if he moved only one square.

Here's another example. In this case it is black's turn.



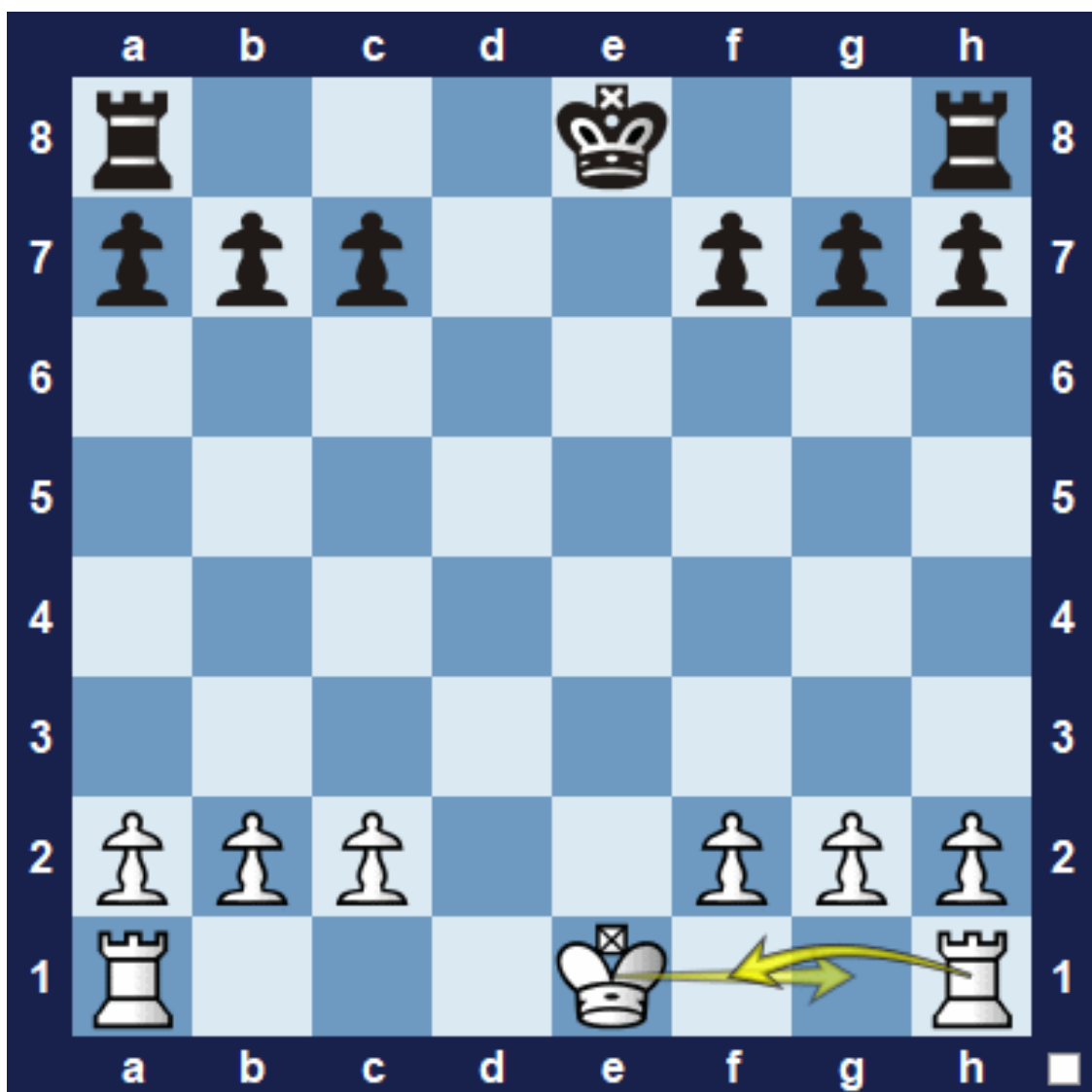
If the black pawn moves two squares, white can capture it, “en passant”.

Black moves their pawn two squares and white captures him as if he moved only one square. You can see why the move is called en passant. It is because you capture a pawn that passed over a square where your pawn could capture it. But note that you can only en passant a pawn that moved two squares. In other words,

if the pawn was on g6, and moved one square to g5, you wouldn't be allowed to en passant because this pawn moved only one square, not two. It is also important to know that if you can capture a pawn through en passant, then you must do it on the next move. If you don't take your chance right away, then you may not en passant that pawn anymore at a later stage. So now you know how en passant works. Next, I'll show you the third special move you must know. It's known as castling.

Special Move #3 Castling

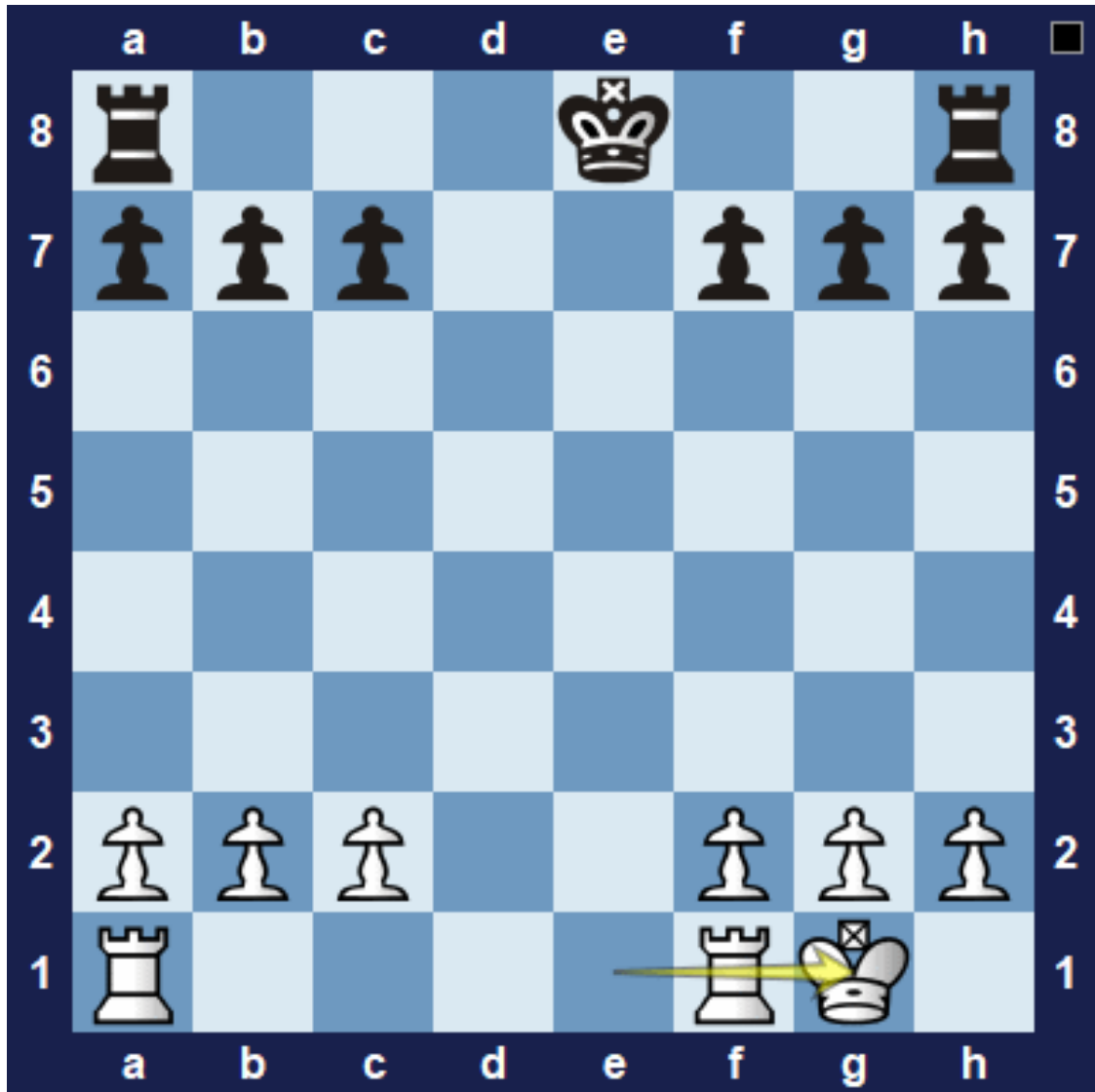
Here's how castling works:



Castling. The king moves two squares towards the rook, and the rook

jumps over the king.

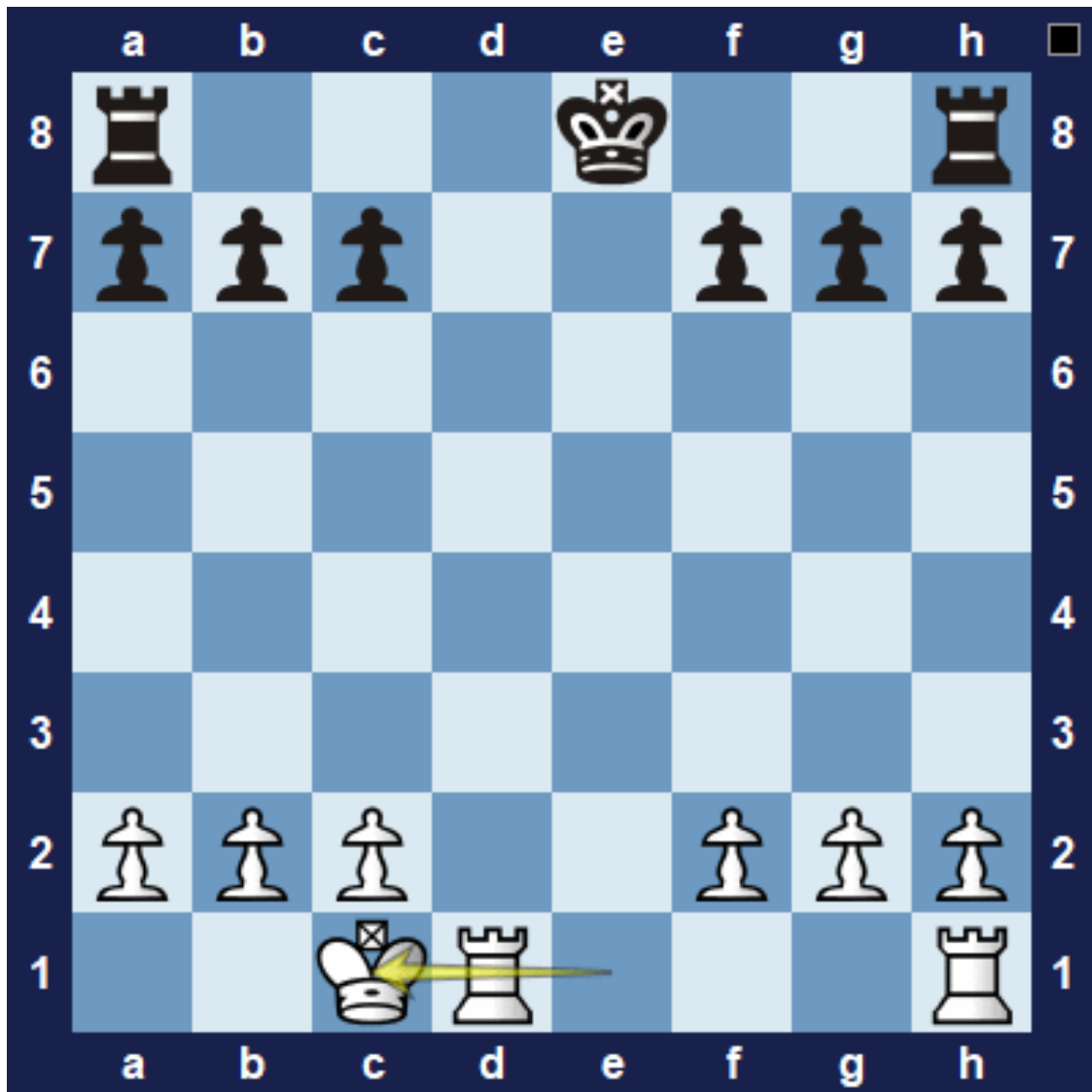
When there is an open space between your king and rook, then you can do the castling move and you do it by moving your king two squares in the direction of the rook, and then the rook jumps over him.



Castling move completed.

This is the only time in chess that you're allowed to move two pieces in one move and it is also the only time in chess that your rook may jump over another piece. Notice that you should always

move the king first, and then the rook. You could also do the castling move to the other side, it works in the same way:



Castling queen-side.

If there is an open space between the king and this rook, then you can move your king two square and the rook hops over. If you do the castling move on the king-side, then it's called king-side or short-side castling. If you castle on the queen-side, then it's known as queen-side or long-side castling.

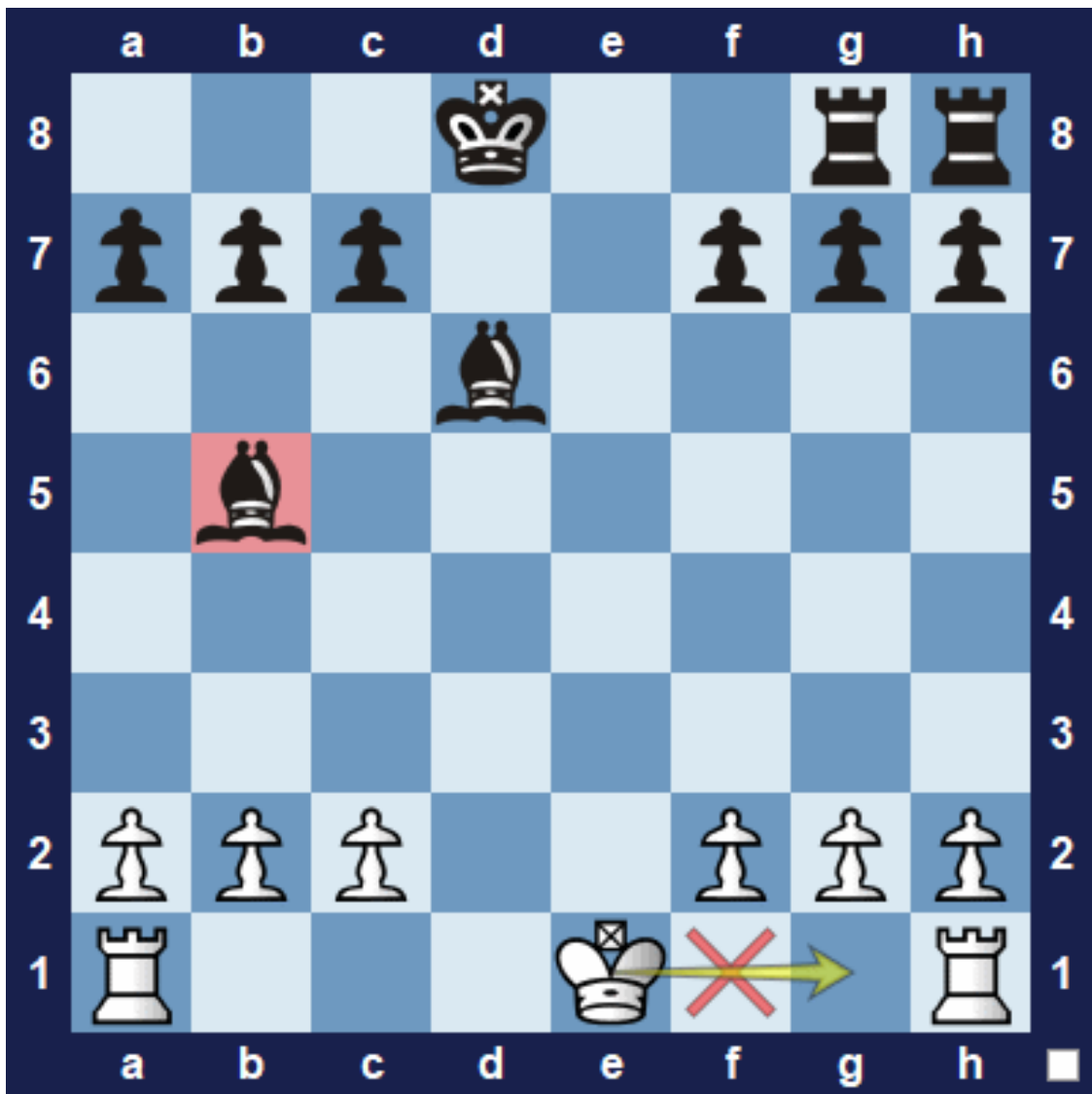
There are two reasons why castling is a good move. The first reason is that it helps your rook get out of the corner and get

closer to the middle of the board where there is usually more action happening. The second reason is that it helps your king to be in a safer position and move away from the middle of the board. And for this very reason, castling is also sometimes referred to as “building a castle”. So now you know how the castling move works, but you also need to know all the conditions that allow you to castle.

The first condition is that you may only castle if all the squares between the king and rook are open. Secondly, you may only castle if your king, and the rook you want to castle with, have not moved since the start of the game. If this rook already moved earlier on in the game, then you are not allowed to make the castling move with it, but you could still do the move with this rook, provided it hasn't moved as yet. If your king has already moved, then you can't do the move anymore. Even if he went here and later moved back, he may still not do the move since he has already moved.

The third condition is that you may not do the move if your king is in check. However, if you didn't move the king when you were in check, for example if you blocked the check with a piece, then you would still be allowed to do the castling move later on.

There is one more condition: You may not do this move if your king moves over a square where he would be in check. That means, if black had a bishop here...



White may not castle king-side here because your king may not move over a square that would be check.

then you may not castle to the king-side, because you would be moving your king over a square where he would be in check. He may castle to the queen-side though. And of course, this move works the same for black. If there is an open space between the king and rook, and you obey all the conditions, then you may do the move.

So now you know the three special moves in chess:

The first one is called promotion – when a pawn reaches the other side of the board then that pawn may become one of the big pieces.

The second special move is called en passant. If a pawn moves two squares and passes over a square where your pawn could capture them as if they moved only one square, then you may capture that pawn as if it moved only one square.

And the third special move is known as castling. You can do this move when there is an open space between your king and rook, you obey all the conditions, and then your king moves two squares in the direction of the rook and the rook jumps over.

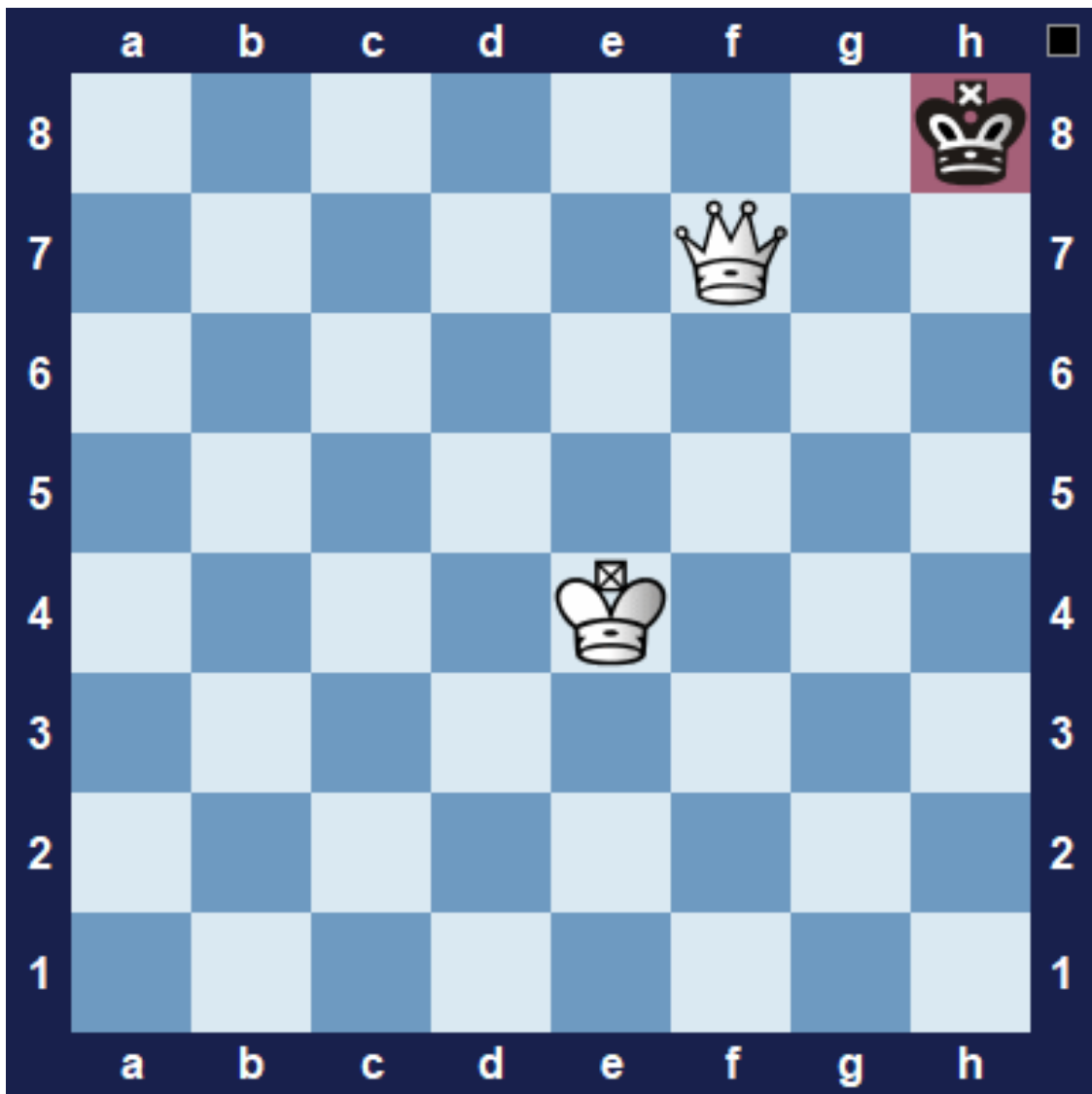
So now you know the three special moves in chess. However, there are also a few special rules that you need to know and in the rest of this lesson I'll tell you about these special rules. The first special rule you need to know, is the touch-move rule. Touch-move means that if you touched one of your pieces, then you must move it. And as soon as your hand left the piece then your move is complete and you may not take it back whilst it's your opponent's turn. Also, if you touched one of your opponent's pieces, then you must capture it, if you can. If you touched a piece and you then realise that piece can't move then you may, of course, move something else.

Occasionally one of the pieces will not be placed neatly in the middle of the square and you may want to adjust it. That is fine, you may adjust it. But before you touch it, you must say "I

adjust”. In that case you can adjust the piece to place it neatly on the middle of the square and you won’t be forced to move it. Of course, you must say I adjust before you touch the piece, because if you say it only after touching the piece then your opponent may insist that you move it. It is also possible that you accidentally bump a piece whilst moving your hand near the pieces. If you accidentally bump a piece, then you should immediately apologize and say “I adjust” before you place it back on its square. The lesson here is that you shouldn’t touch any of your pieces until you know exactly what you will do with it. Otherwise, you may be forced to move a piece that you didn’t actually want to move.

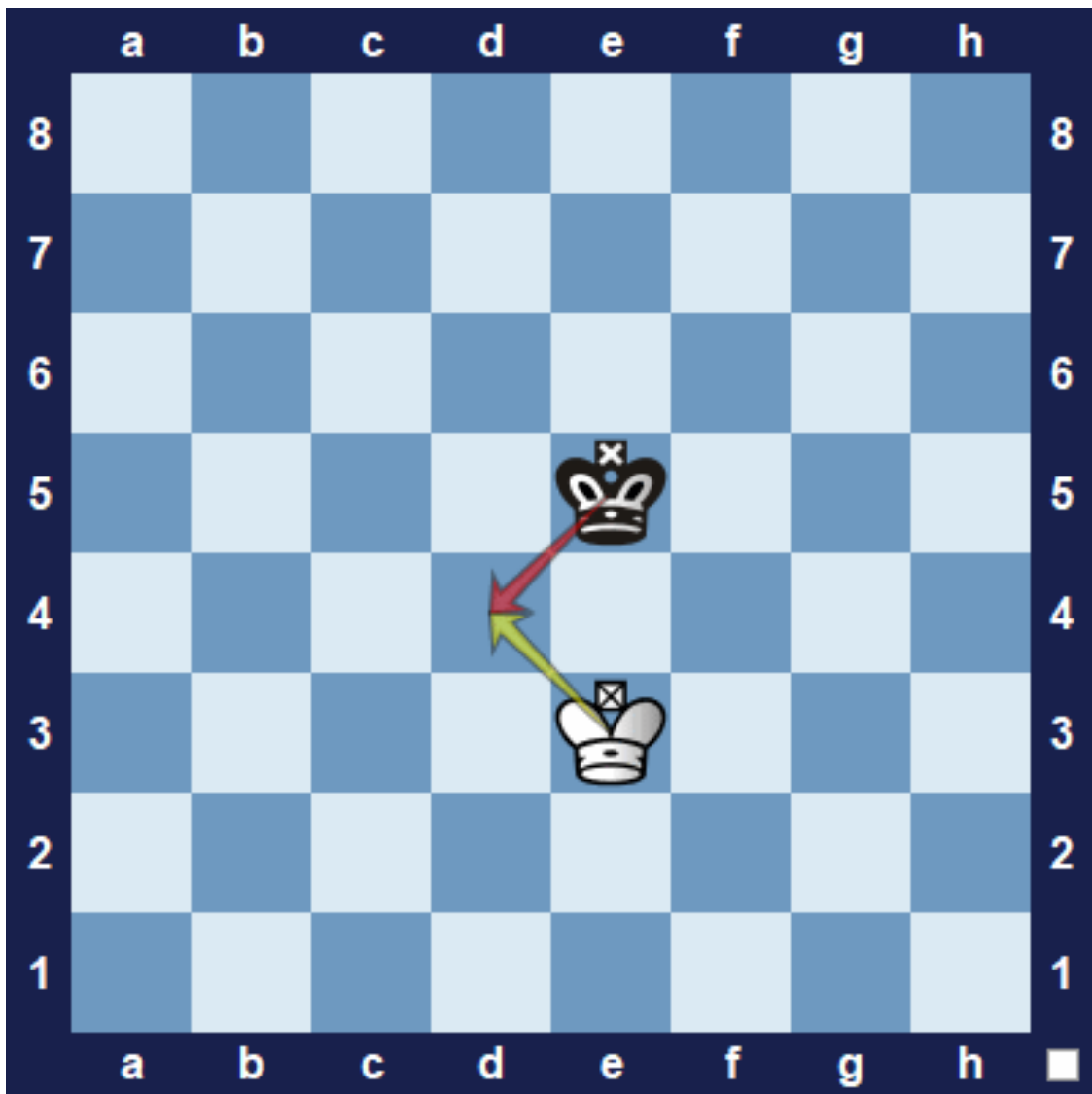
Another very important rule in chess is that you are not allowed to interfere with someone else playing. It could easily happen that you watch them play and then you suddenly get the urge to mention something you saw. Don’t do it. Don’t interfere with someone else’s game. Be careful not to make any gestures or sounds that could affect the other players. In official tournaments you will be disqualified if you interfere with other players.

Next up we are going to look at a few ways how a game could end in a draw. In other words, there isn’t a winner. You already know about stalemate. If one of the players can’t move at all and their king is not in check, then the game ends in a draw.



It's black's turn. They can't move anything and they are not in check.
Stalemate. Draw.

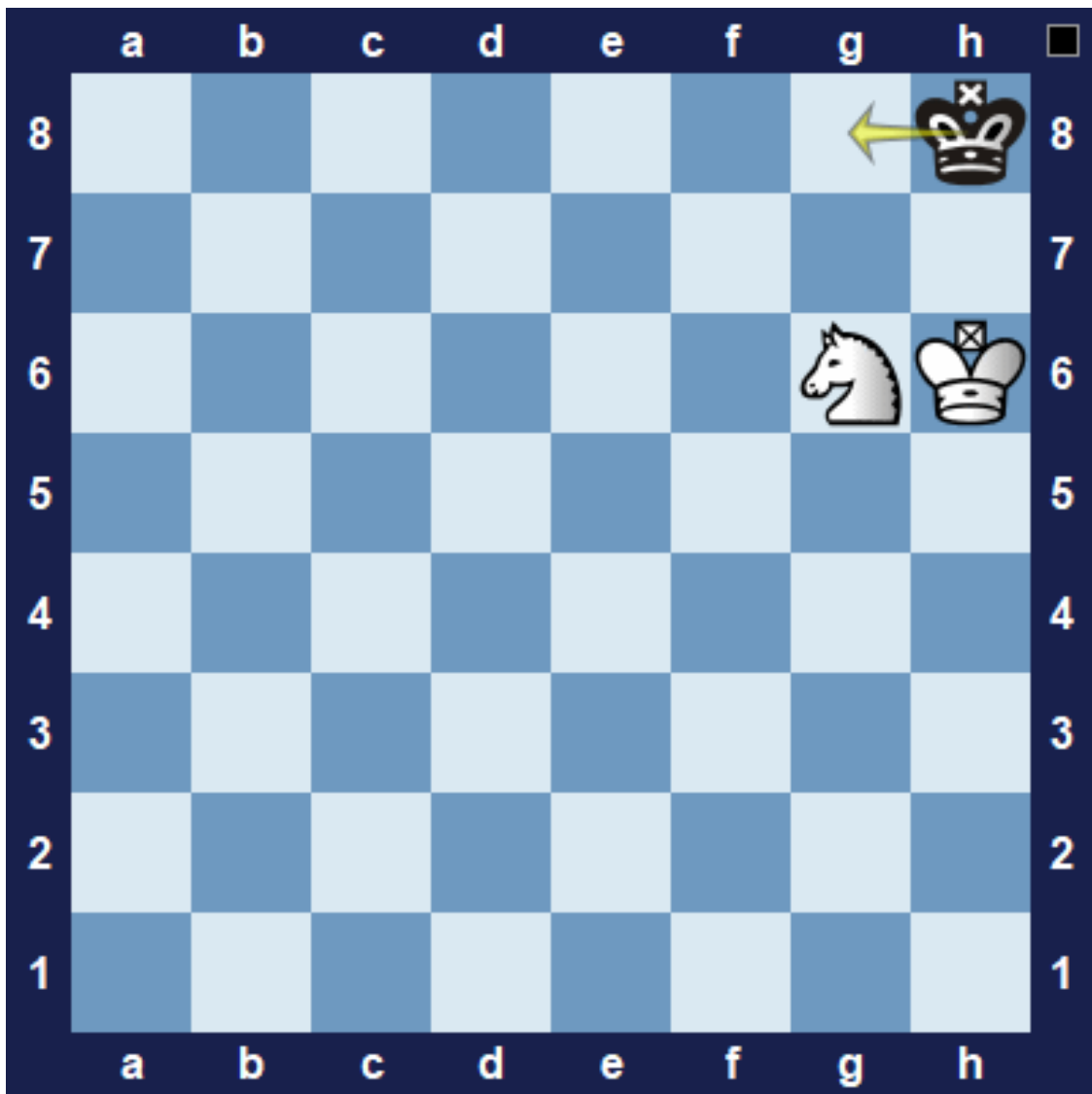
As in this example, it is black's turn but he can't move at all and he also isn't in check. Stalemate. It's a draw. There are a few other ways how a game could end in a draw. For example, if all the pieces and pawns were captured and only the two kings remain, then this is a draw:



When there is only 2 kings left, the game ends in a draw.

In fact, you can't even check the other king because the moment you place your king on the square immediately next to theirs, your own king would be in check. So, when there is only two kings left on the board, the game is a draw.

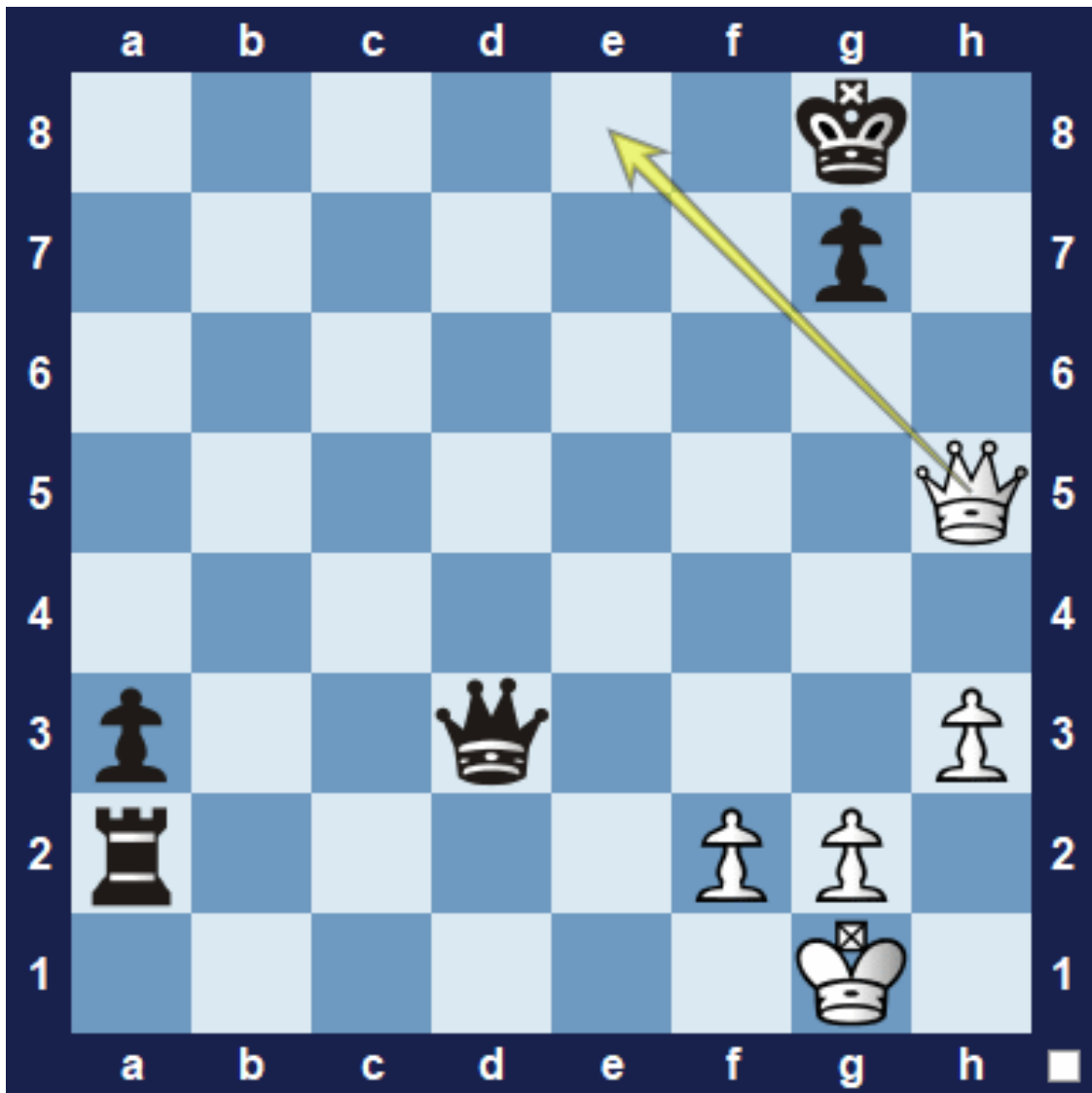
It is also possible to reach a situation where you don't have enough pieces to checkmate your opponent's king. For example:



White does not have enough mating material. Draw.

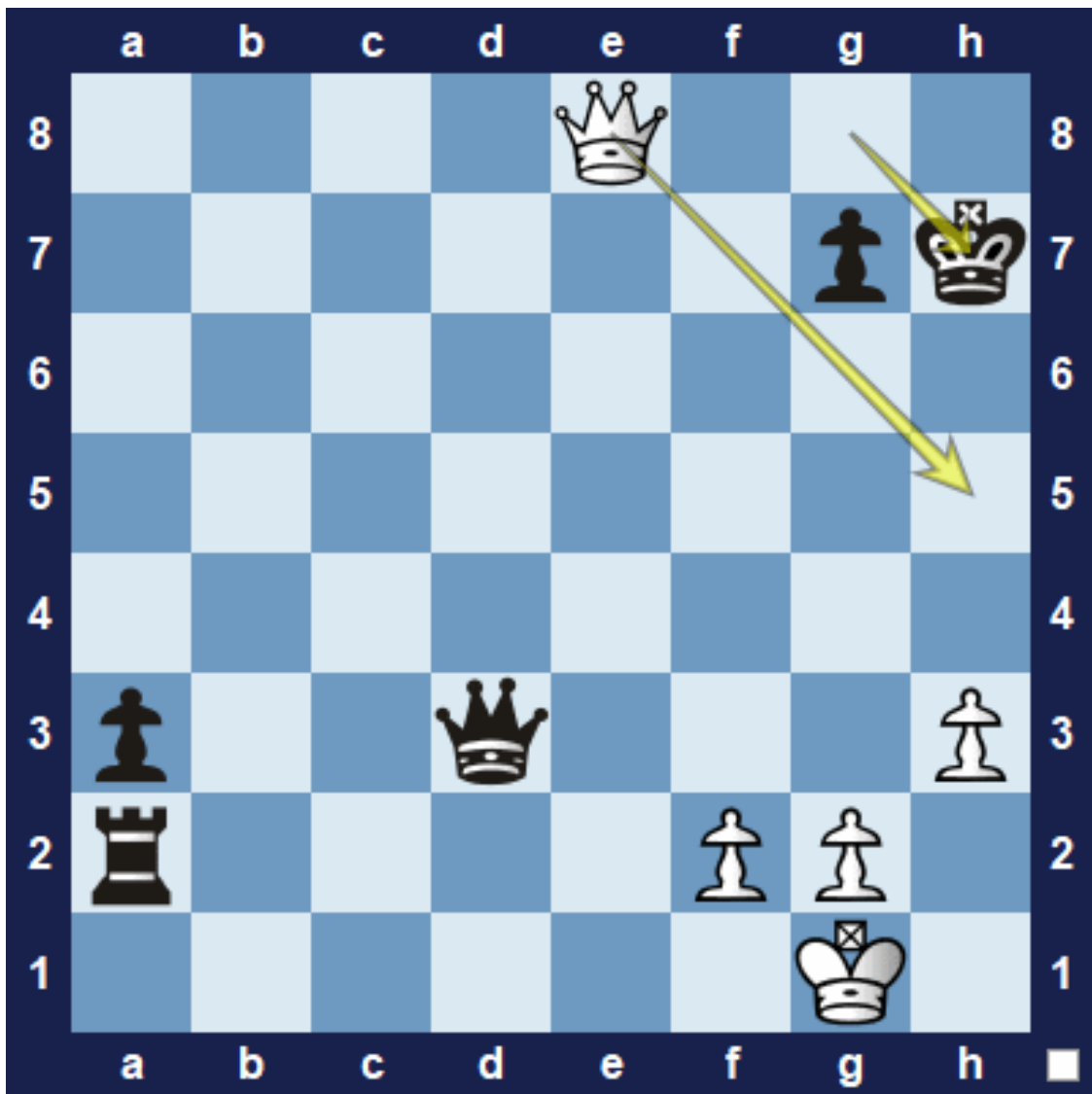
If you had a king and knight (or bishop) and your opponent had a king, then this would be a draw since it is impossible to checkmate him with only your king and knight (or bishop). Let me prove it to you. Even if you could manage to force their king into a corner, there will always be an open square to which their king can still move. That is why the game ends and it's a draw. In chess this situation is known as insufficient checkmate material. So, this is when one side has only a king and a bishop, or a king and a knight. You won't then be able to checkmate your opponent and the game ends in a draw due to insufficient checkmate material.

A game could also end in a draw through a situation known as the 3-times repeat rule. Here's an example:



White can force a draw by continually repeating the position.

In this position black is in the lead because he has more points in material, but, unfortunately for black, white found a way to keep checking black's king. If black goes to h7, white will again check him from h5:



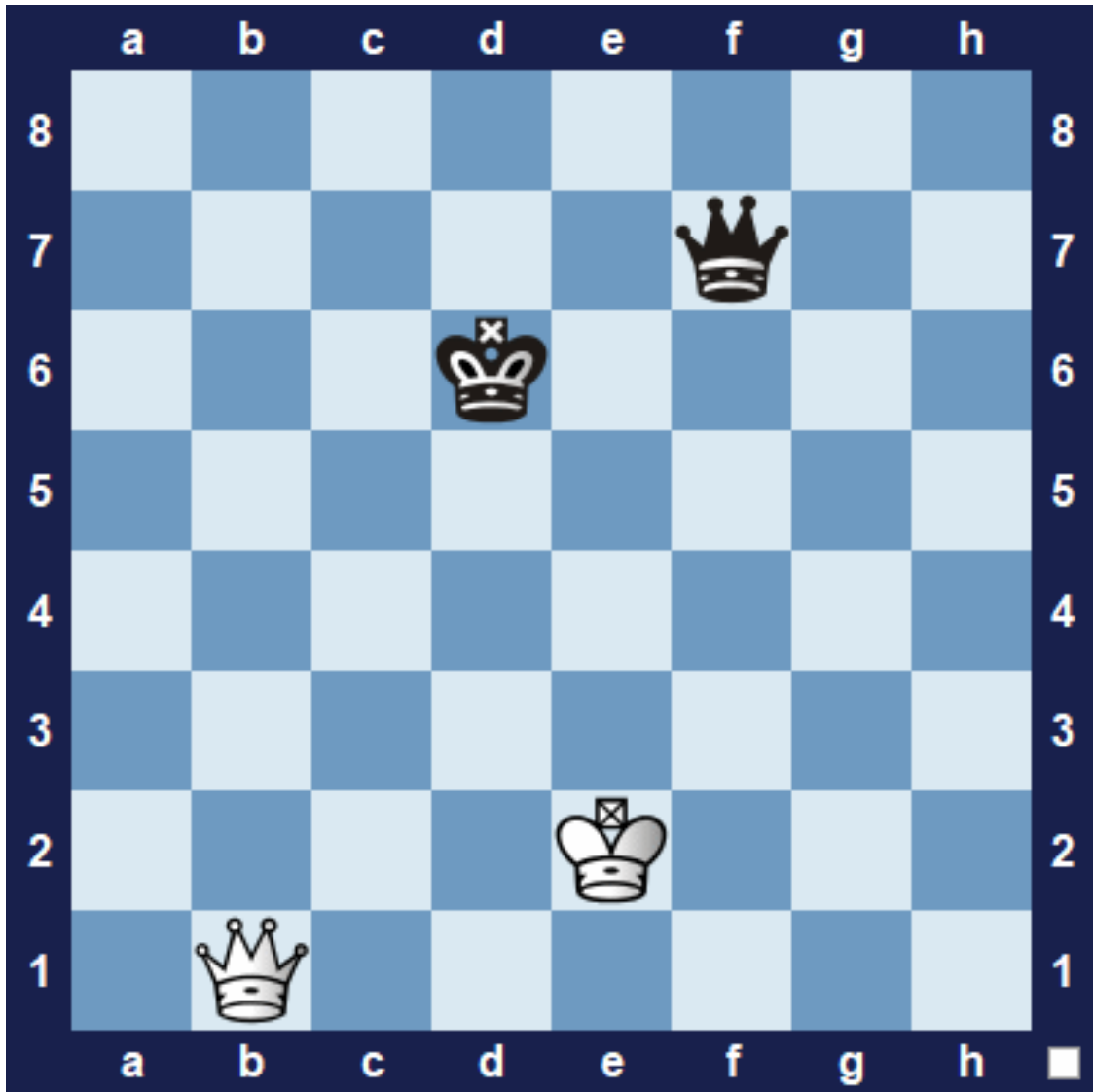
White will repeat the checks from the e8 and h5 squares.

And once the exact same position repeats 3 times, then one of the players may claim a draw.

A game can also end in a draw if for 50 moves no pieces were captured and no pawns moved. You can imagine that if no pawns were moved and no pieces were captured for 50 moves, it is pretty clear that neither side is making progress and that is why the game then ends in a draw.

Before I continue, I want to explain the meaning of a theoretical draw. A theoretical draw means you can only win the game if

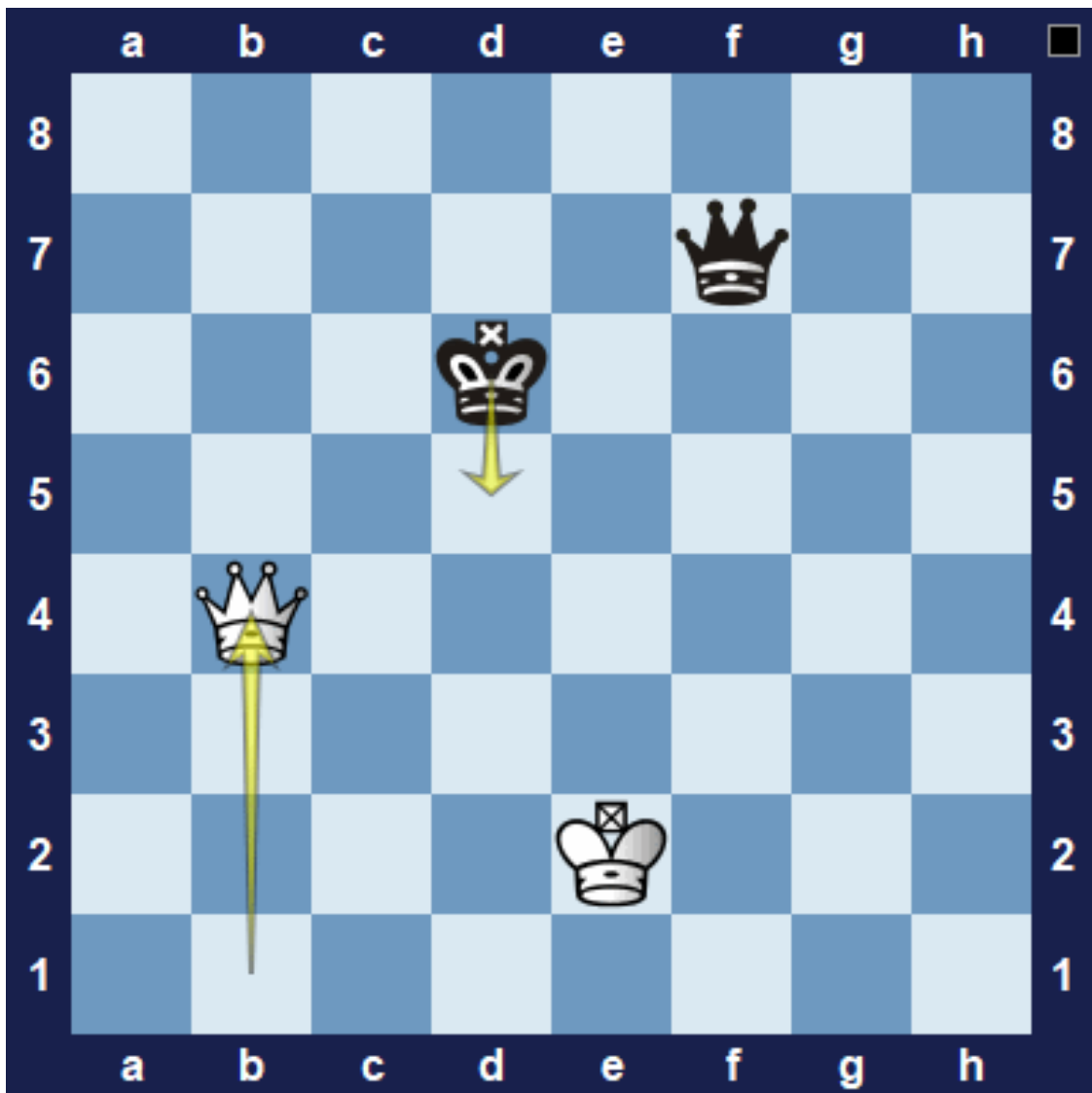
your opponent makes a huge mistake. Here is an example:



Theoretical draw. The game should end in a draw unless one of the players make a serious mistake.

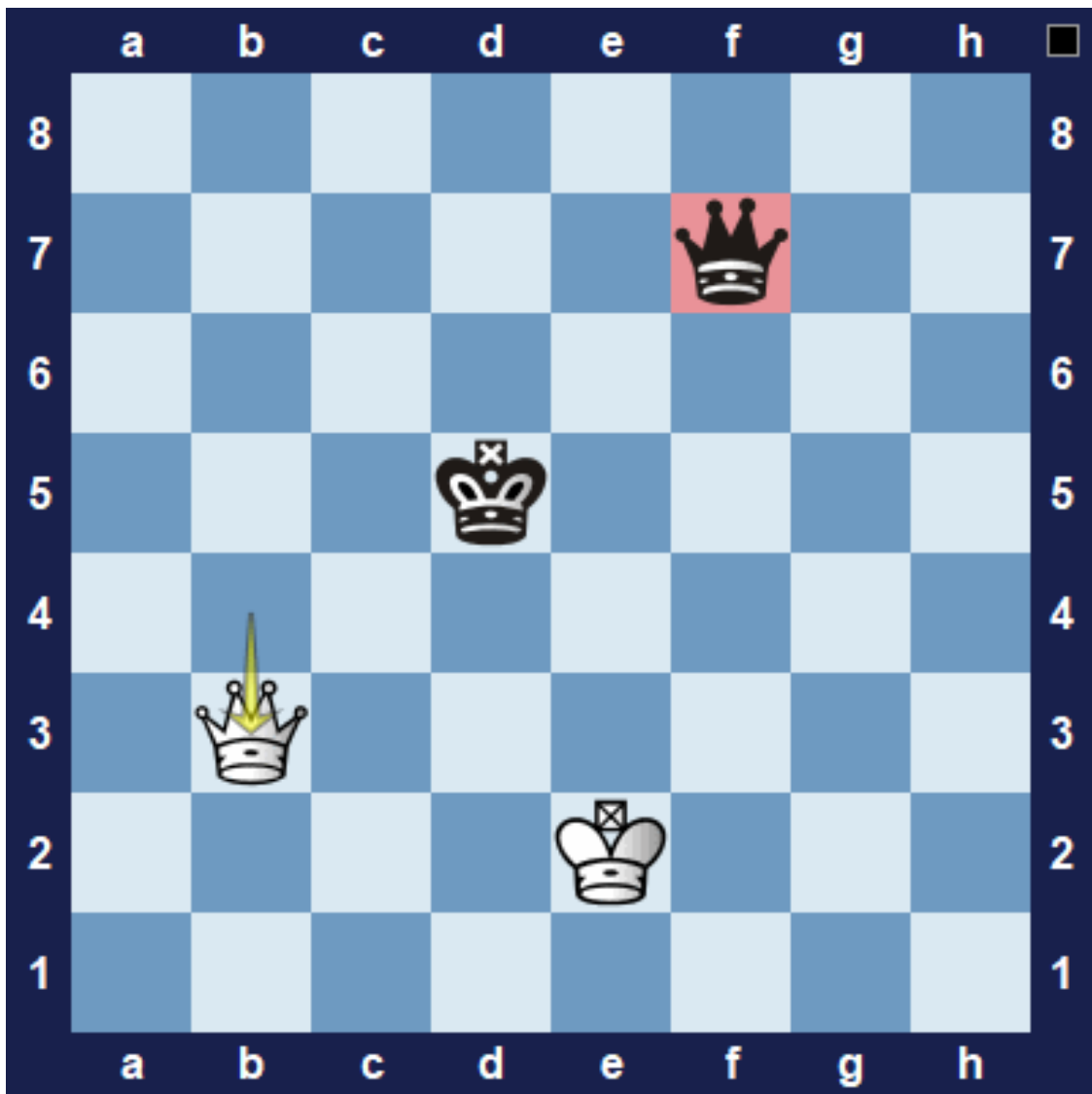
Both players have a king and queen. And from the previous lesson you will know that if you want to checkmate with a king and a queen, then you need to trap the enemy king on the side of the board. But in this case, you will never be able to do that, because your opponent can at any time simply start checking your king and eventually claim a draw by perpetual check. So, nobody can make any progress here and that is why it is called a theoretical draw. However, if one of the players make a big

mistake, then they could lose. For example, in this case, if white checks the black king and black makes a mistake by moving here...



Black makes a big mistake!

then white could win the game by checking from b3:



Black's king must move and on the next move white will capture the black queen.

The black king must move out of check and then white will capture the black queen. But if black was careful and if neither side makes a mistake later on, then the players will eventually agree that the game is drawn. And that is another special rule you must know – the players may agree on a draw. You may offer a draw to your opponent when it is their turn to move and they may decide to either accept or decline your offer. You may not retract your offer whilst your opponent is still thinking about your offer. But once they make a move, then the draw offer is automatically cancelled, and the game continues.

You may also resign a game. If you feel that your situation is hopeless, then you may resign. You do this by knocking over your king or by simply telling your opponent that you resign. But let me give you some important advice. It is generally not a good idea to resign because if you rather try to fight back, then there is still a chance that your opponent might make a mistake that gives you the chance to come back. Or, even if you have only a king left, there is the possibility that your opponent could stalemate you and then you would get away with a draw.

At this stage I want to make a few comments on how a chess clock works. There are actually 2 clocks on a chess clock which chess players use in matches. Before the game, the players will agree on how much time they get. For example, they could agree that either player gets 30 minutes on their clock. Or sometimes the amount of time each player gets is determined by the rules of the match or the tournament.

When you are thinking about your move, your time will be ticking, but as soon as you make your move, you will press the button on your side of the clock. This will cause your time to stop ticking, and it will start on your opponent's side. And once they make their move and press their button, then their clock will stop and yours will start ticking again. You must checkmate your opponent before your time runs out, otherwise you lose the game, on the condition that your opponent still has sufficient checkmate material, otherwise the game ends in a draw. The trick when it comes to the chess clock is that you must not become too

hasty to make mistakes. Instead, learn to make proper use of your time and think before you move.

Also, remember that as in any other game or sport, it is important to show respect and good sportsmanship towards your opponent. At the start of the game you can shake their hand and wish them good luck and at the end of the game you can shake their hand again and say something like “thank you for the game you played well”. Maintain good manners even if you lost the game.

That is the end of this lesson. You now know about the special moves and special rules and if you want to further improve your game then it is very important that you play the game as much as possible. And enjoy playing it. In the following lessons I will teach you many more tactics and strategies that you can use in your game. In the next lesson, specifically, I’ll tell you more about the opening stage of the game and how to make good moves in the opening.

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End of Lesson 4 – Special moves and other rules you should know