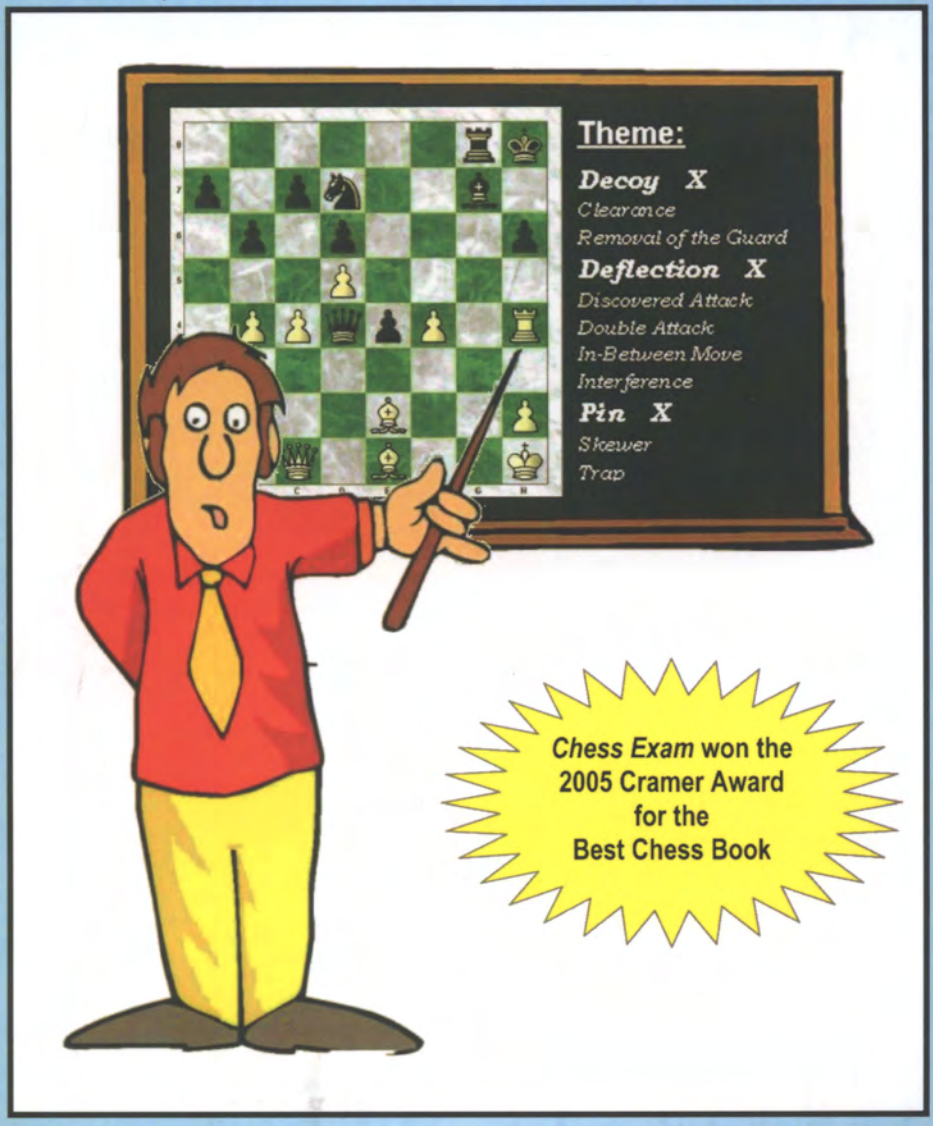
Chess Exam

and Training Guide:

TACTICS

Rate yourself and learn how to improve!



Igor Khmelnitsky, International Chess Master

What others have said about the first *Chess Exam and Training Guide*:

"Western players, even those who become quite strong, often have holes in their game because they didn't develop systematically. Exactly how to fix these problems and build a strong foundation isn't so easy. Until now there was no diagnostic tool, but **IM Igor Khmelnitsky**, who learned the fundamentals in his native Ukraine, has filled this gap with his new book *Chess Exam and Training Guide*. I believe this book will prove helpful for students and teachers who want to get an objective idea of their strengths and weaknesses and how to correct them." – **John Donaldson**, International Master, director of Mechanics' Institute Chess Club

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"I have often met **Igor Khmelnitsky** over the chess board throughout the last decade. He always impressed me with his understanding of the fine intricacies of the game. Now the **secret is revealed**. Read this book and learn how the different aspects of the game - strategy and tactics and knowledge of the endgame - come together to make a good all-around player. With patience and dedication you can travel down the same road." – **Alex Yermolinsky**, Grandmaster, former US champion and a member of the US Olympic team.

"...I am happy to add my endorsement ... there is a huge demand for this type of thing and Khmelnitsky meets it much better than most" – **Jonathan Rowson**, Grandmaster, *New in Chess*

"... is a delightful surprise" – **Lubomir Kavalek**, Grandmaster, *Washington Post*

".... In addition to showing my weaker areas, also very helpful was a list of specific books and software products to use to help me improve. I highly recommend taking the test."– **Paul Clift,** Class A

"...*Chess Exam and Training Guide* offers you an exciting opportunity to accurately check your chess level using an amazing collection of classical and modern examples. Great explanations help you to improve your tactic and strategic understanding while your work your way through the *Test part* of the book. The *Training Guide part* is your golden opportunity of getting the most useful and practical advices...training and book recommendations" – **Boris Alterman**, Grandmaster, former advisor to **Garry Kasparov**, 13th World Chess Champion, advisor to **DeepJunior** program.

"**Igor Khmelnitsky** has a unique ability to take complex chess positions and make them easy to understand" – **Joseph Casey Jr.**, Class C.

"If you are in the under-2200 category and would like to know how to economize your limited training time, then *Chess Exam and Training Guide* is for you. It's simply one of the best instructional books I've read in years. It's a labor of love, so don't let this one pass you by." – **Baldomero Garcia**, *ChessCafe.com*

"This test is the next best thing to having your personal chess coach!" – **Dr. Ivan Misner**, founder and CEO of BNI International, best-selling author, co-author of *Masters of Success*

"What sets this book apart from other chess quiz books or multiple choice books is both the varied level of difficulty of the positions and also the informative statistics showing the distribution of answers by players at all levels. With this data you can immediately spot if a student does not have the required knowledge that others at his level (or the level above!) do. Also, many of the problems are what I would call "indicative" problems, which represent some special piece of chess knowledge, and not just "play and win" or "play and draw" situations. In that sense **Igor's** book is comparable to **Lev Alburt's** excellent *Chess Training Pocket Book*." – **Dan Heisman**, Master, Coach, Author of *A Parent's Guide to Chess*, host of *The Renaissance Man* on Chess.fm

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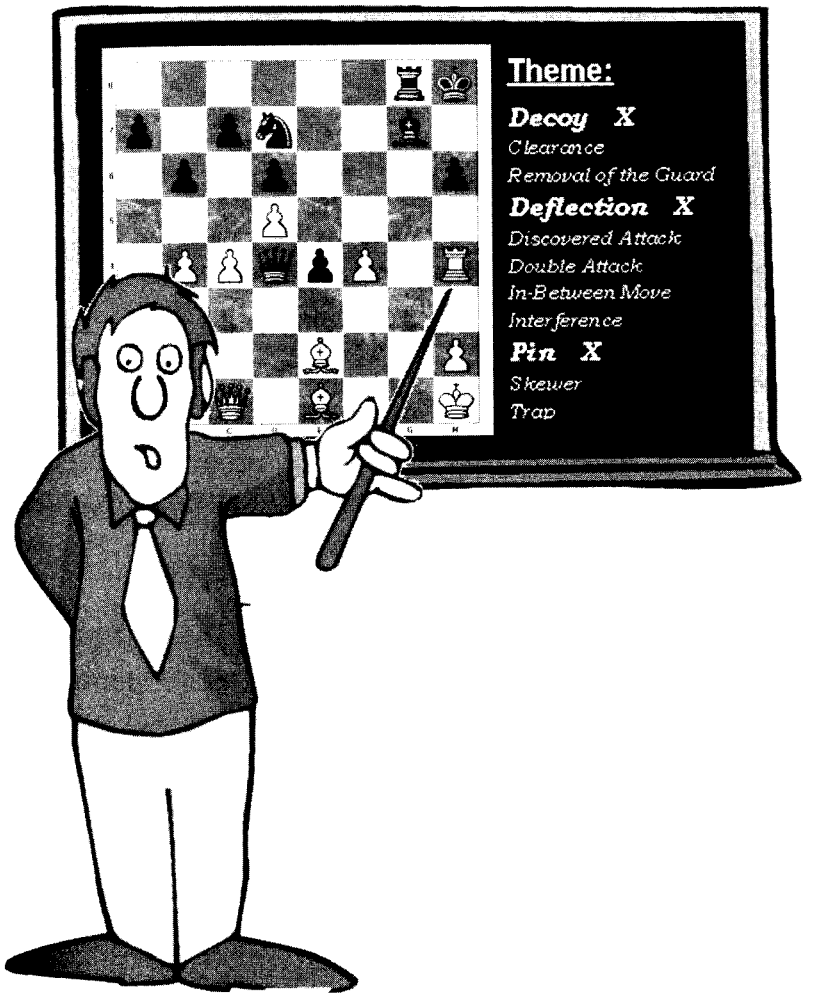

Igor Khmelnitsky, International Chess Master

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Contents

Dedicated with love to my wife Svetlana and our children Alec and Nikki. You are my true inspiration!

About the Author

Igor Khmelnitsky earned the title of International Chess Master in 1990 after a convincing victory in the 1st Leonid Stein Memorial in L'viv, Ukraine.

Khmelnitsky is a winner of many national and international tournaments in Ukraine, Russia, Germany, Yugoslavia, Croatia, Bulgaria, and the United States. At various points during his career, he has defeated many of the game's best players - including Lev Alburt, Boris Alterman, Viorel Bologan, Roman Dzindzichashvili, Vasily Ivanchuk, Alexander Ivanov, Oleg Romanishin, Alexander Shabalov, Evgeniy Sveshnikov, Patrick Wolff, and Alex Yermolinsky. Overall, Khmelnitsky has defeated over 30 different Grandmasters. He has participated in the Ukrainian National Championship; he has also played three times in the U.S. National Championship.

Khmelnitsky is also a very experienced coach. His first high profile coaching experience was in 1986, when he served as a coaching assistant for the Ukrainian national junior team. Several members of that team went on to become successful Grandmasters (Vassily Ivanchuk, Boris Alterman, Mikhail Brodsky, Andrey Maksimenko and others...). Later Khmelnitsky assisted various leading Ukrainian players, including Yury Kruppa (now Grandmaster) and Women

Grandmaster Lidia Semenova, a challenger for the World Championship Title.

Since moving to the United States in 1991, Khmelnitsky has been coaching in the Philadelphia area. His students include players of all levels, ranging from novices to masters.

Khmelnitsky has published comments, annotated games, and articles in various chess publications, including the most prestigious periodicals: *Chess Informant*, *New in Chess*, *ChessBase*, *64*, *Chess Life*, and *Chess Today*. He is also the founder and publisher of the two popular chess websites www.IamCoach.com and www.ChessExam.com.

Khmelnitsky is a contributing author to the best-seller *Masters of Success* by Ivan Mizner, Ph.D. (© 2004, Entrepreneur Press).

Khmelnitsky's first book – *Chess Exam and Training Guide* (© 2004, IamCoach Press) was extremely well received by readers and reviewers alike. The book won the prestigious Cramer award for Best Chess Book from the Cramer Committee and the Chess Journalists of America. It is now in its second printing and also has been translated into French and Russian.

Khmelnitsky is one of the three coauthors of *Teaching Chess Step by Step*, the 3-volume school curriculum published in 2006 by Garry Kasparov's Chess Foundation.

Khmelnitsky holds a Bachelor Degree in Business Administration from Temple University (Philadelphia). He is an actuary at Aetna Inc., the leader in the health insurance industry.

Igor Khmelnitsky shares his success with wife Svetlana, son Alec and daughter Nikki.

Preface – Note to the Reader

Successful chess training begins with a careful self-evaluation to determine the areas that you need to work on. Then you must apply appropriate tools and use suitable techniques to improve the identified areas. This resembles a visit to a doctor's office. In fact, the idea of my original book, **Chess Exam and Training Guide**, occurred to me during an annual visit to my family doctor!

The original Exam helps readers estimate their ratings overall and in the following 12 sub-categories:

- **Stage:** *Opening* vs. *Middlegame* vs. *Endgame*
- **Static vs. Dynamic:** *Tactics* vs. *Strategy* vs. *Calculation*
- **Situation:** *Attack* vs. *Defense* vs. *Counterattack*
- **Miscellaneous:** *Sacrifice, Threat Recognition,* and *Standard Endgame Positions.*

Then I provide a brief review of each sub-category, along with some high-level training recommendations.

I have received hundreds of letters and e-mails from satisfied readers who 'bought' into my approach and were looking for the next step. Specifically, they needed more help improving their weak areas.

This book is designed to help with that next step. Its sole focus is on the most important sub-category – ***Tactics.***

There are hundreds of chess books written on this subject and there is a good reason for that – no matter how well one plays the game, one tactical shot can instantly turn the situation 180 degrees.

How do you improve your Tactical ability? The best way is by improving your understanding of tactical ideas and solving tactical positions.

My typical recommendation on improving tactical skills is to focus on solving tactical exercises from books and training software. The goal of the training is to improve: **1. Pattern recognition**; **2. Ability to calculate**; **3. Ability to assess the final position**.

This method works well in the long run, but could be improved significantly if we knew what sub-area of tactics the student should be focusing on. In other words – where do you start and when do you stop?

In this book, I will attempt to help you to assess your tactical skills and also give you plenty of training recommendations. And I will utilize the approach familiar to the readers of my first book.

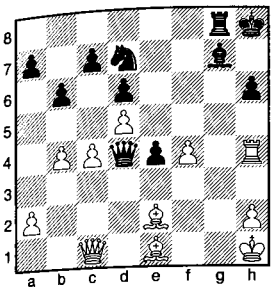
For this exam, I first came up with 6 major categories and then broke them further down into multiple sub-categories. Then I selected 60 tactical positions that I thought were interesting, varied in complexity and distributed among the sub-categories according to the likelihood of their occurrence. Every position has two questions with each having four possible answers for you to choose from.

Your tactical skills will be rated overall and evaluated in these specific sub-categories:

- **Motive:** *Misplaced Piece*, *Advanced Pawn*, *Lack of Protection*, *Back Rank Mate*, *Mating Net*, *Simplification*.
- **Theme:** *In-Between Move*, *Decoy*, *Interference*, *Clearance*, *Deflection*, *Discovered Attack*, *Double Attack*, *Removal of the Guard*, *Pin*, *Skewer*, *Trap*.
- **Objective:** *Checkmate*, *Force a Draw*, *Win Material*, *Pawn Promotion*, *Reaching Standard Endgame*.
- **Stage:** *Opening* vs. *Middlegame* vs. *Endgame*
- **Situation:** *Attack* vs. *Defense*
- **Result:** *Win* vs. *Draw*

As you can see, we have a very ambitious task ahead, but the good news is that you will accomplish all of the above by going through only 60 positions. They are the strength of this book – time tested in my personal training as well as of hundreds of my students. I hope you like them.

Here is an example that didn't make into the actual Exam:



Blokh,M. Training Position

Question #0

1. White to Move. What is the Best Move?

A. **1.♙f4–f5**
B. **1.♖h4×h6+**
C. **1.♗e1–c3**
D. **1.♗e1–g3**

2. Black to Move. Evaluate the position.

A. Black can force a checkmate
B. Black has advantage
C. The position is nearly equal
D. White has advantage

For each major category, with the exception of the **Theme**, each question only contributes points into a single sub-category.

If **Question #0** were included in the test, then your score for **#0-1** would contribute points to your evaluation reports on *Win*, *Middlegame*, *Defense*, *Misplaced Piece*, *Win Material*, and **Themes:** *Decoy*, *Deflection*, *Pin*. At the same time, your score for **#0-2** would contribute points to your evaluation reports on *Win*, *Middlegame*, *Attack*, *Mating Net*, and **Themes:** *Decoy*, *Discovered Attack*.

In addition to providing you with the correct answers and explanations, I have some data that you may be interested in – the results of other players grouped by their ratings.

Let say your choice for **Question #0-1** was <**B**> and **#0-2** was <**A**>. So you can check and see how you did:

Question #0	Choice	Score	Distribution of Answers by Rating					
			Under 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400+
1	A	-1	12%	4%				
	B	1	45%	37%	34%	20%	6%	
	C	5	37%	59%	66%	80%	94%	100%
	D		6%					
2	A	5	40%	58%	85%	94%	100%	100%
	B	1	21%	17%	7%	6%		
	C		18%	6%	3%			
	D		21%	19%	5%			

Choice <B> earns you 1 point for the question #0-1. Your idea is a good one – **1.♖×h6+ ♗×h6 2.♗c3** winning the ♕. However, Black has a nice counterstrike – **2...♖g1+** forcing the ♕ to leave the ♗c3. After **3.♕×g1 ♕×c3**, Black is winning. The proper way to execute this idea was via **1.♗c3!** (5 points for <C>). White is planning ♖×h6# if the Black ♕ leaves the diagonal a1-h8. After **1...♕×c3 2.♖×h6+ ♗×h6 3.♕×c3+**, White has a substantial material advantage. Looking at the statistics you can see that your choice was the second best choice and even some masters picked it, missing Black's defensive strike.

For the question #0-2, you picked <A>, which is the best choice. Black has a mate in 3 after **1...♕g1+! 2.♔×g1 ♗d4++ 3.♔h1**(f1) **♖g1#**. Looking at the statistics, we see that the majority of people also answered this one correctly.

Once you complete the entire test, the points you earned for each question will be subtotaled overall and by 29(!) sub-categories, generating 30 rating reports. I have found 120 to be the optimal number of questions that could provide a thorough and statistically significant evaluation without being overwhelming (60 diagrams).

Please note that all of the above mentioned reports offer a varying degree of training benefits.

Reports on **Motives** and **Themes** are extremely important as, once you evaluate your results and identify your weak areas, you can easily find specific chapters or sections to study in the training books and software packages. For example, combinations for a *back-rank mate* (**motive**) or a *deflection* (**theme**) can be found in separate sections in the *CT-Art* software.

The next very helpful category is a **Stage**, where, once again based on your results, you can find recommendations to go directly to books such as *Encyclopedia of Opening Errors* (Matsukevich) or *Endgame Tactics* (Van Perlo) to get some helpful advice.

The categories **Result, Objective,** and **Situation** are a bit trickier. Evaluating your results in these categories won't necessarily send you directly to any books, but will tell you something about your thinking process. Such as – *are you giving up too soon,* or *are you diligent when searching for possible counter strikes from the opponent who is seemingly on his back*, etc...

In the Exam you will find the following types of questions:

a) Find the *best* move – a common way of testing.
b) Find the *worst* move – a helpful skill often used in the process of elimination.
c) Evaluate the position after the move – ability to visualize the change.
d) Evaluate the position with a minor change – helps in determining how carefully you are studying the nuances of the position. Even a seemingly innocent change can have a dramatic impact on the result.

I envision you using the book in one of the following ways:

a) Follow the layout – do the tests, review your score, study the training guide, get additional materials, and work your way through them.
b) Start with the training guide, then do all of the tests, review your score, study the training guide again, get additional materials and work your way through them.
c) Casually go through the tests treating each position as a mini-lecture. Then continue to the training guide.

If you are a competitive player rated over 1600, I suggest you choose (a). If your rating is below 1600, you may want to pick (b) or (c).

Whichever way you choose, to get valid test results you must not move any pieces, nor get any help, nor give yourself any undeserved credit. You don't have to use a chessboard with this book. I encourage you to spend 5-20 minutes per position. For an **extra challenge**, when possible, try not to look at the 4 choices until you come up with your own solution.

The answers are placed immediately after each puzzle. I break each position down to its essential elements and share with you my thinking process. You are encouraged to review each position thoroughly, comparing your ideas with mine. I guarantee that mastering the thinking process and learning standard patterns will improve your tactical vision tremendously.

Finally, I recommend spending no more than one hour per session on the test. After every 12 questions I offer you a chance to get a preliminary assessment to satisfy your curiosity and to allow you to take a break from the Exam.

Igor Khmelnitsky
Philadelphia, 2006

Warning: Disclaimer

This book is designed to provide information on understanding tactical ideas and evaluating tactical skills, as well as various training methods.

Please remember that you are taking a test, not reading yet another puzzle book. You will face positions of varying degrees of difficulty. Some of them may be familiar to you, while others might offer a serious challenge. The more experienced you are, the greater is the number of ideas or complete positions you will recognize. And this is OK, since I am testing your knowledge base as well as the skills you use to apply it. A combination of well-known and new positions gives you the best chance to identify the areas you need to focus on in your training.

While answering, be on the alert and do not make any presumptions. The order of the questions (i.e. level of difficulty and type) was purposely randomized. Thus you may see an easy endgame position, being followed by a very difficult one from the opening. This makes "home" testing a bit more realistic by actually resembling a game situation, where you never know what to expect.

Statistical analysis is only as good as the data used. I am relying on the data collected over the years by offering the same set of positions to players of all levels – from beginners to Grandmasters. The data showing the level of test-takers' knowledge is expected to have discrepancies due to various intangible factors. Among these factors would be: the time spent on each question, the seriousness of effort, and different rating scales, just to name a few. Additionally, some people perform better or worse than their official rating would show in a real game environment vs. doing the test at home. Finally, a 1790 rating (for example) can mean a very different strength level when comparing a club player in a rural area with a "professional" World Open participant trying to win $10,000 in the Under-1800 section.

Every effort has been made to make this book as complete and as accurate as possible. However, you may find mistakes, both typographical and in substance. I have tried my best to thoroughly check the diagrams, game analysis, and names of participants and authors. Should you find any errors in this book, I would greatly appreciate your corrections.

None of the books or software recommendations was sponsored by a particular publisher.

This text should be used only as a general guide and not as an ultimate source of chess training information.

The statistical tables and training material references are current as of the printing date and may be revised somewhat in the future. To keep up with new developments, please register at **www.ChessExam.com**

CHESS Symbols:

♔	King
♕	Queen
♖	Rook
♗	Bishop
♘	Knight
♙	Pawn
0–0	♔-side Castle
0–0–0	♕-side Castle

+	Check
++	Double Check
#	Checkmate
!!	Brilliant Move
!	Good Move
!?	Interesting Move
?!	Dubious Move
?	Bad Move
??	Blunder
=	Equal Position

Acknowledgments

This book has depended on the help, suggestions and encouragement of the many readers of my first *Chess Exam*. They made it into a bestseller and provided me with extensive feedback.

Materials used in this book were accumulated during the 25+ years of my chess career as a player and a coach. While many examples I use come from various sources, I did all of the annotations myself. Additionally, many of the Exam positions were modified by me to enhance various training points.

I would like to mention the following publications as my favorite sources:

Chess Training Pocketbook by Lev Alburt
Combinative Motifs by Maxim Blokh
Combinacii v Shahmatah by Alexiy Kosikov
Encyclopedia of Opening Errors by Anatoly Matsukevich
Shahmatniy Practicum 1 and 2 by Iakov Neishatd
Can you be a Tactical Chess Genius by James Plaskett
Uroki Shahmatnoi Tactiki by Alexander Volchok
Chess Today – editor Alex Baburin (www.ChessToday.net)
ChessBase 9.0, Megabase 2006 (www.ChessBase.com)

Images used with permission from *JupiterImages*, a division of *Jupitermedia* Corporation (www.ClipArt.com)

Diagrams were created using *ChessBase 8.0* (www.ChessBase.com).

A number of individuals directly assisted me in shaping the final version of this book. Many of my students and website visitors volunteered to become testers. They tried my test positions and contributed their selections, scores and comments. Several titled players (Masters and Grandmasters) offered their selections and comments on individual questions that were included in the Exam. All of that helped to improve the quality of the Exam as well as production of statistically significant analysis.

As I got to the always challenging editing stage, I reached out to a number of my friends asking for their help. I would like to offer special gratitude to the people who helped me during this final stretch.

Here they are: FM Matthew Bengston, Joe Casey, Paul Clift, Mark Donlan, Patrick Flynn, IM Igor Foygel, Juan Gonzales, Daniel Lucas, Dr. Ira Lee Riddle.

They did it all: proofreading, editing, reviewing some of my teaching concepts, checking the variations and accuracy of diagrams, general comments, etc…

To helpers named and unnamed, I am grateful.

Final Comments: How to Take the Exam

Do not be overly concerned if you can't do a particular problem. You must, however, give your full effort on every question.

Please read the questions carefully since, in some cases, there might be more than one good answer. The difference in points awarded for the best answer and a good answer is quite significant.

Spend no more than 20 minutes on each diagram. Use a chessboard or work directly from the book. When using the board, do not move the pieces. Avoid guessing; calculate thoroughly.

When you need to evaluate a tactical (dynamic) position, the correct answer depends on finding the best move, and properly assessing the outcome. In many positions where there is no clear victory for either side, the evaluation can be very subjective. To make the best selection, I suggest that you ask yourself the following: "Whose side would I rather be on?" If you don't really care, choose "*Nearly Equal.*" If you have a small preference, select "... *is Slightly Better*". If you definitely favor one side, pick "... *is Better*" or "... *is Significantly Better.*"

Once you have made up your mind on a given diagram, turn the page and carefully review the answers. Take your time in going through them before moving to the next problem. In some cases, the points you earned (as listed in the tables) may be adjusted based on your reasoning. Read the answers carefully in order not to miss this tweaking.

Any position that is not a "clear-cut" win/draw should be bookmarked for future analysis and practicing.

Create a score sheet and record your points earned for every question. You can get a complimentary one from my site www.ChessExam.com.

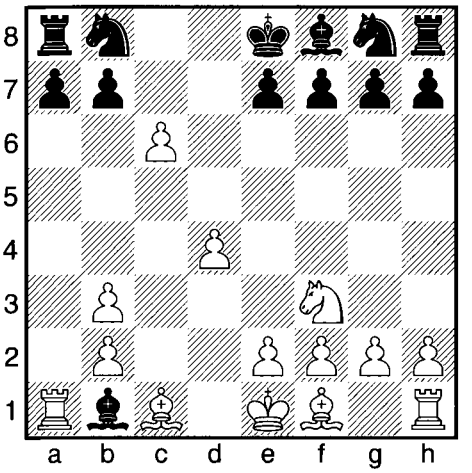
I would strongly encourage you to take the test in several sittings. You can get preliminary assessments after every set of 12 diagrams.

When you finish the test, you will see instructions on how to use the tables and reports.

Finally, if you are anxious to find out my training suggestions, you can always go directly to the ***Training Tips and Recommendations*** section and complete the entire Exam later.

Now, let the EXAM begin!

Question #1



Black to Move

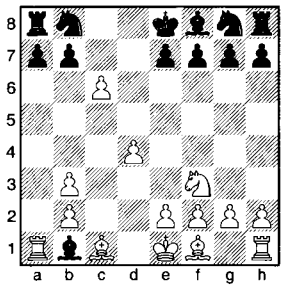
1 - 1 After 1...♗b1–f5, ...

A	Black is winning
B	Black is better
C	The position is nearly equal
D	White is winning

1 - 2 After 1...♗b1–e4, ...

A	Black is winning
B	Black is better
C	The position is nearly equal
D	White is winning

(1) Horvath, P – Hicker, H *Finkenstein Op, 1997*



Black to Move

		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A		26%	13%	3%	3%		
	B							
	C				4%			
	D	5	74%	87%	93%	97%	100%	100%

2	A	1	13%	37%	4%	15%		
	B		38%	38%	18%	6%		
	C		36%					
	D	5	13%	25%	78%	79%	100%	100%

1-1 Currently, Black has an extra ♘, but White has two very serious threats - ♙×b7 and ♖×b1.

1...♗f5?? addresses only the latter. After **2.♙×b7**, the Black ♖ is trapped on a8 and Black has nothing better than **2...♗e4**. White is winning – **3.♙×a8♕ ♗×a8 4.♖×a7**.

5 points for <D>.

1-2 It seems that **1...♗e4** (that was played in the game), addressed both threats that White had, allowing Black to keep an extra ♘. In dealing with the dangerous White ♙ on c6, Black was relying on the key defenders - the ♗ (in the case of 2.♙×b7 ♗×b7) and the ♖ (in the case of 2.♙c7 ♘c6). White couldn't get rid of the ♗, but the Black ♖ was a different story...

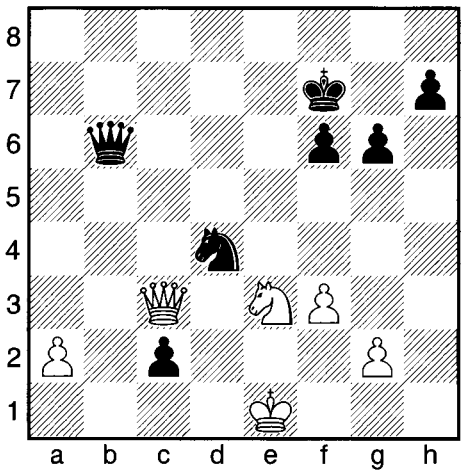
White produced a shocking blow – **2.♖×a7!!** (*deflection*). After **2...♖×a7 3.♙c7** Black couldn't stop the ♙ promotion. In the end, Black's ♖ + ♘ was no match for White's ♕ + 2 ♙s.

Not better option is **2...♘×c6**. After **3.♖×a8+ ♘d8 4.♘e5**, Black's position is hopeless.

The position in the diagram first occurred in the game Schlechter – Perlis *(Karlsbad, 1911)*. Black played 1...♘×c6 conceding a ♙ after 2.♖×b1 ♙e6, but avoiding the immediate disaster.

Although it rarely occurs, given the opportunity, a ♙ can be promoted even early in the opening.

Question #2



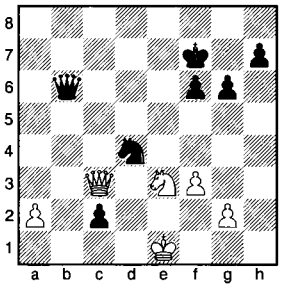
2 - 1 Black to Move. Which is the *best* move?

A	1...♕b6–a5
B	1...♕b6–b4
C	1...♕b6–b1+
D	1...♕b6–e6

2 - 2 White to Move. After 1.♘e3×c2, ...

A	Black is winning
B	Black is better
C	The position is nearly equal
D	White is better

(2) Zukertort, J – Englisch, B *London 1883 (modified)*



		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A		27%	13%	7%	5%		
	B	5	13%	25%	57%	86%	100%	100%
	C	1	48%	35%	29%	3%		
	D		12%	27%	7%	6%		

2	A	5	25%	49%	64%	79%	100%	100%
	B	1	25%	23%	10%	12%		
	C		25%	15%	18%	9%		
	D		25%	13%	8%			

2-1 Black's trump is the ♙c2, but there is no obvious way to get through. The White ♕ is guarding the square of promotion and the White ♔ is also ready to help. White has his three pieces in the area of the c♙ and Black has only two.

Black finds a way to break the coordination of the White pieces by using the White ♔'s open position. First, Black *deflects* the White ♕ from guarding c1, then *decoys* the ♔ to e3 and finally caps it all with the ♘ *fork*. Here is what happened - **1...♕b4! 2.♕×b4** (else 2...♙c1♕) **♙c1♕+ 3.♔f2** (3.♘d1 ♘c2+) **3...♕×e3+ 4.♔×e3 ♘c2+** and **5...♘×b4** reaching a winning endgame. 5 points for <B>.

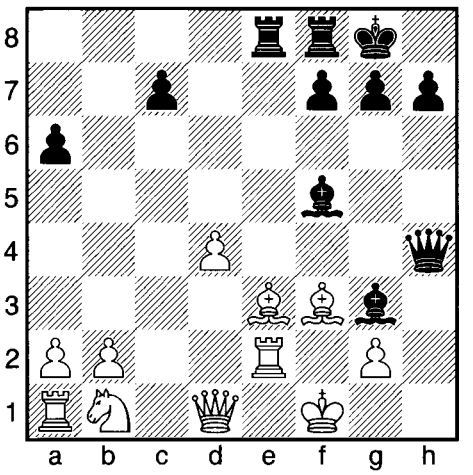
You get 1 extra point for <C> if you saw **1...♕b1+ 2.♔d2 ♙c1♕+ 3.♕×c1 ♕×a2+**, and thought that Black had winning chances.

Never let the number of defenders prevent you from considering a strike against a target. Quantity doesn't always translate into quality.

2-2 The direct **1.♘×c2** immediately allows Black to *simplify* into a won ♙-endgame (5 points for <A>). After **1...♘×c2+** (did you notice how this move clears the path for the Black ♕ to g1?) **2.♕×c2 ♕g1+ 3.♔d2 ♕×g2+** (*skewer*) **4.♔d1 ♕×c2+** (also winning is 4...♕×f3+) **♔×c2 ♔e6**, the Black ♔ goes to the ♕-side, wins the a♙ and then comes back to help his ♔-side ♙s. The White ♔ can't seriously threaten the protected passed h♙, but must stay nearby to prevent it from being promoted. Practice both positions (after 4...♕×c2+ and 4...♕×f3+) with a friend or computer and see which one was simpler to win.

1 point if you thought that Black was only better (<B>).

Question #3



Black to Move

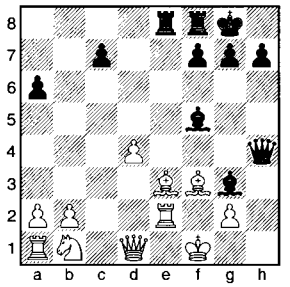
3 - 1 After 1...♖e8×e3, ...

A	Black is winning
B	The position is dynamically balanced
C	White is better
D	White is winning

3 - 2 After 1...♕h4–h1+ 2.♗e3–g1, the *best* move is

A	1...♗g3–h2
B	1...♖e8×e2
C	1...♗f5–d3
D	1...♗f5–c2

(3) Seibert, S. – Zalsky, P. *correspondence*



Black to Move

		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A	5	25%	45%	49%	66%	83%	100%
	B		25%	30%	18%	15%	17%	
	C		37%	14%	7%	9%		
	D		13%	11%	26%	10%		

2	A	1	29%	52%	41%	34%	22%	9%
	B	5	27%	25%	21%	24%	44%	78%
	C	1	28%	11%	20%	21%	28%	9%
	D		16%	12%	18%	21%	16%	4%

3-1 Black sacrificed a ♘ and has the White ♔ exposed and on the run. Several White pieces are eager to defend their ♔ either by blocking the checks or by shielding his escape route. Black's main objective is to neutralize these defenders.

To accomplish that, he must find a short but precise winning line – **1...♖×e3** (*removal of the guard*) **2.♖×e3 ♗d3+** (*deflection*) **3.♕×d3** (3.♖×d3 ♖e8 cutting the escape path (*interference*) and creating the unstoppable threat of 4...♕h1#) **♕h1+ 4.♔e2 ♕e1#.**

5 points for <A>, but deduct 3 points if you didn't plan **2...♗d3+.**

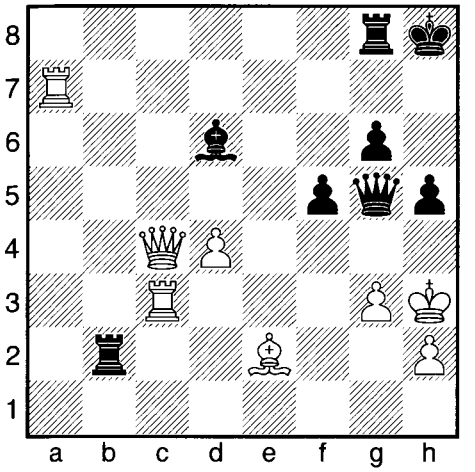
3-2 While **1...♕h1+ 2.♗g1 ♗h2** (*pin*) or **2...♗d3** (*deflection*) look promising, Black can't achieve more than unclear, but dynamically balanced positions. For example, **2...♗h2** (<A>) **3.♔f2 ♗×g1+ 4.♕×g1 ♕h4+ 5.♔f1** (5.♙g3? ♕×d4+) **♗d3 5.♘c3** or **2...♗d3** (<C>) **3.♕×d3 ♗h2 4.♔e1 ♕×g1+ 5.♔d2 ♗f4+ 6.♔c3.**

Another *deflection* **2...♗c2** (<D>) is less successful. Instead of giving Black a strong attack after **3.♕×c2 ♗h2**, White can put the fire out by giving up his ♕ – **3.♖×c2 ♖e1+ 4.♕×e1 ♗×e1 5.♘c3**; White is better.

The best choice is **2...♖×e2 3.♗×e2** (3.♕×e2 ♗h2 4.♕f2 [or 4.♕e3] ♗d3+) **♗f4!** with a very strong attack. 5 points for <B>, but deduct 3 points if you didn't plan **3...♗f4.**

Practice with a friend or computer.

Question #4



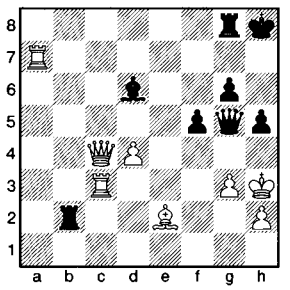
4 - 1 White to Move. Which is the *best* move?

A	1.♕c4–f7
B	1.♕c4×g8+
C	1.♖a7–h7+
D	1.♖a7–a2

4 - 2 Black to Move. Which is the *best* move?

A	1...♖b2×e2
B	1...♙h5–h4
C	1...♙f5–f4
D	1...♕g5–g4+

(4) Training Position



		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A		37%	28%	14%	9%		
	B	5	44%	59%	82%	91%	100%	100%
	C		13%					
	D		6%	13%	4%			

2	A		21%	23%	18%	6%		
	B		13%	15%				
	C		19%	13%	4%	3%		
	D	5	47%	49%	78%	91%	100%	100%

4-1 Both ♔s are in great danger. Black is planning a nasty tactical shot (see 4-2) and White has no time for slow preparatory moves.

Fortunately, White has the explosive **1.♕×g8+!!**, *removing the defender* of the *back-rank* and *clearing* the c4 square for the ♗. After the forced **1...♔×g8 2.♖c8+ ♗f8 3.♗c4+ ♔h8 4.♖×f8#**, the Black ♔ is mated. 5 points for <B>.

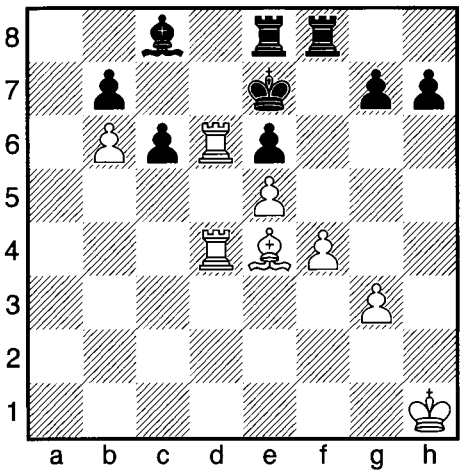
4-2 With his turn to move, Black can win after a shocking **1...♕g4+!!** (*deflection / decoy*). Taking the ♕ – **2.♗×g4**, leads to a checkmate after **2...♙h×g4+!** (a big mistake is 2...♙f×g4+ as the White ♔ escapes – 3.♔h4 ♙g5+ 4.♔×h5 ♖×h2+ 5.♔×g4) **3.♔h4 ♙g5+ 4.♔h5 ♖×h2#**.

To avoid the checkmate, White must play **2.♔g2**, leaving the ♗e2 unprotected. By playing **2...♖×e2+**, Black gains a significant material advantage, preserves a deadly attack and eliminates White's threat (see 4-1) for which the ♗ was an integral part.

5 points for <D>. Subtract 3 points if you were planning 2...♙f×g4+ instead of 2...♙h×g4+. Subtract 1 point if you planned the solid, but timid 2...♕×e2+ instead of the crushing 2...♖×e2+. See below.

It is often more beneficial to be aggressive, and to try to finish off your opponent on the spot even if it requires some extra calculations and presents some risk, rather than simplifying into a won endgame. By doing so, you would gain valuable combative experience. Also, finishing the game sooner would preserve your energy for the next round. The one exception – when the game you are playing is an extremely important one. Then, the 'no rush' principle applies.

Question #5



White to Move

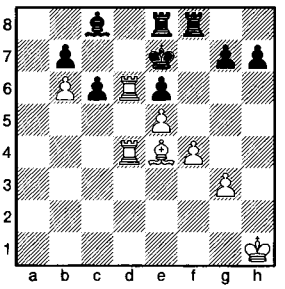
5-1 After 1.♗e4×h7, ...

A	Black is winning
B	The position is nearly equal
C	White is a little better
D	White is significantly better

5-2 After 1.♗e4×c6, ...

A	Black is winning
B	The position is nearly equal
C	White is a little better
D	White is significantly better

(5) Zelinsky,P - Cook,B *Chicago Open, 2001 (modified)*



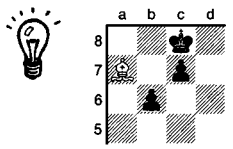
White to Move

		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A	5	52%	62%	93%	100%	100%	100%
	B		23%	10%				
	C		18%	22%	7%			
	D		7%	6%				

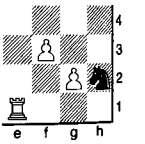
2	A		10%	5%				
	B		24%	11%	11%			
	C	3	36%	39%	34%	23%	18%	
	D	5	30%	45%	55%	77%	82%	100%

5-1 Taking the "poisoned" ♙h7 in the diagram, leads to an immediate loss after **1...♖h8**. The ♗ can't leave (*absolute pin*) and can't be protected.

5 points for <A>.



The ♙s a7(a2) and h7(h2) are often 'poisoned' for a minor piece attacking them. Trapping is a common way to punish a 'greedy' ♗ or a ♘. Note, that winning the trapped piece is not always an easy task.

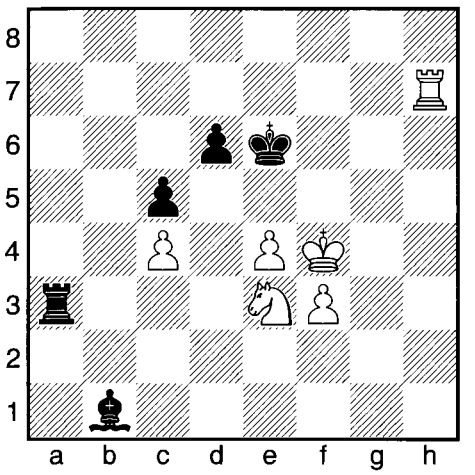


5-2 The Black ♔ is an active defender, although he is probably a little uncomfortable on e7. The idea of **1.♗×c6** is to give the White ♖ access to d7. White is executing a double *deflection* in order to drive the key defender (the ♗c8), away. For example, **1.♗×c6 ♙×c6? 2.♙b7 ♗×b7 3.♖d7#**.

Even after the best – **1...♖d8! 2.♖×d8 ♖×d8 3.♖×d8 ♔×d8 4.♗e4**, White still has a dominating position. With the White ♗ attacking the ♙b7, the Black ♗ can't leave c8. Also, the Black ♔ can't get out past the 7th rank. You get 5 points for <D> and 3 points for <C>. Practice this endgame against a friend or computer. (Hint: after ♙g3–g4, don't rush with ♙f4–f5 (unfavorable simplification) or ♙g4–g5 (locking up the ♔-side))

When analyzing the effect of a possible sacrifice of material, always consider if rejection is a reasonable possibility and plan accordingly.

Question #6



White to Move

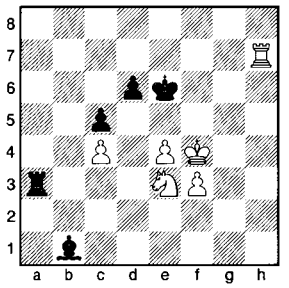
6 - 1 After 1.♘e3–f5, ...

A	White is a little better
B	White has excellent winning chances
C	White is winning due to the checkmate threat
D	Black can equalize

6 - 2 After 1.♘e3–d5, ...

A	White is a little better
B	White has excellent winning chances
C	White is winning due to the checkmate threat
D	Black can equalize

(6) Lasker,E - Janowsky,D *Paris, 1909 (modified)*



White to Move

		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A		13%	13%	19%	23%		
	B	5	74%	55%	63%	71%	83%	95%
	C		13%	10%				
	D		14%	22%	18%	6%	17%	5%
2	A	2	13%			3%		
	B			25%	14%	12%		
	C	1	62%	62%	29%	15%	17%	
	D	5	25%	13%	57%	70%	83%	100%

6-1 After **1.♘f5**, White avoids Black's trap (see part 2) and should win soon. Among White's threats are the direct ♖h6+ winning the ♙d6 and a subtle ♔g5 with a deadly follow-up ♖e7#. The latter Black can stop (1...♔f6 or 1...♖a2), thus <C> is wrong. 5 points for <B>

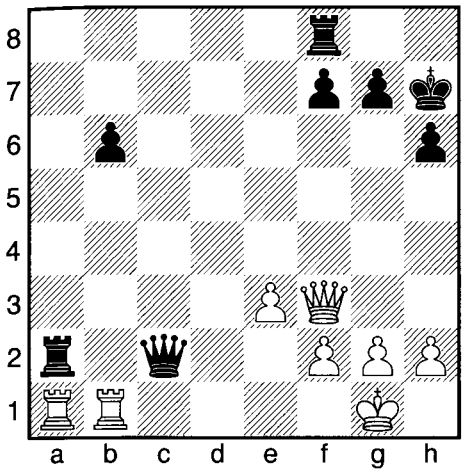
6-2 Wouldn't it be nice to mate your opponent right away? **1.♘d5** seems to do just that (1 point for <C>). To stop **2.♖e7#**, Black must give up his ♖ – **1...♖×f3+**. But playing without the ♖ is no fun, thus, after **2.♔×f3**, Black might as well give up his ♗ – **2...♗×e4+ 3.♔×e4** and now... Oops, Black has no moves! Stalemate.

Can White avoid a draw after **1.♘d5**? Let's start with the final position (stalemate) and work backwards through the variation to check if White has any improvements. Not good is **3.♔e3? ♗×h7** and Black is better. One more step back, White can try **2.♔g4** maintaining the threat of checkmate and also taking the ♖. Now Black must find the only move - **2...♖f7**, solving his problems. The position is approximately equal - 5 points for <D>. However, if you saw this position as a best option for White to keep fighting for a win and assessed it as 'White is a little better', give yourself 2 points for (<A>).

In the actual game, Black resigned instead of advancing his ♙ from c7 to c5 and reaching the position in the diagram. Thus he missed the possibility of a beautiful escape in case of his opponent's mistake.

Deep into the endgame, be wary of the situations when one player has no moves for the ♔ and ♙s. Drawing combination leading to Stalemate often is a possibility.

Question #7



Black to Move

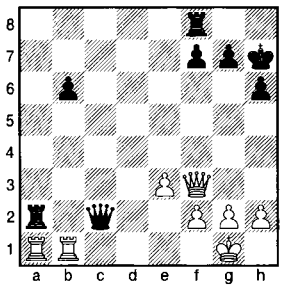
7 - 1 What is the *best* move?

A	1...♖a2×a1
B	1...♖f8–a8
C	1...♖f8–c8
D	1...♕c2–b2

7 - 2 Shift the Black ♔ to g8. What is the *best* move?

A	1...♖a2×a1
B	1...♖f8–a8
C	1...♖f8–c8
D	1...♕c2–b2

(7) Fushter – Balogh *Hungary, 1964 (modified)*



Black to Move

		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A		6%					
	B	5	54%	62%	82%	88%	100%	100%
	C		38%	7%	11%			
	D	1	2%	31%	7%	12%		

2	A			11%		3%		
	B		20%	15%	14%	11%	6%	4%
	C		13%	13%	6%	5%	11%	3%
	D	5	67%	61%	80%	81%	83%	93%

7-1 Let's survey the battlefield. White has some trouble with his *back-rank*, despite having two ♖s covering it at the moment. The ♖s are also stuck defending each other. The White ♕ must defend the f♙, since capturing it by the Black ♕ would also lead to a checkmate.

Black's task is to increase the pressure on the ♖a1, which must defend the ♖b1 and has no moves along the 1st rank. After **1...♖fa8!**, White loses the ♖ or gets mated if he tries to save it (5 points for <B>). For example, 2.♖×a2 ♕×b1+; 2.♕×a8 ♖×a8 3.♖×a8 ♕×b1# ; 2.♕d1 ♕×f2+ 3.♔h1 ♕×g2#.

The cute *deflection* via **1...♕b2?!** (1 point for <D>) fails to win due to **2.♕e4+** (*in-between move;* also sufficient is 2.♕f5+) **♙f5 3.♖×a2**. The White ♕ now defends the ♖b1 thus freeing the ♖a1 to leave the 1st rank.

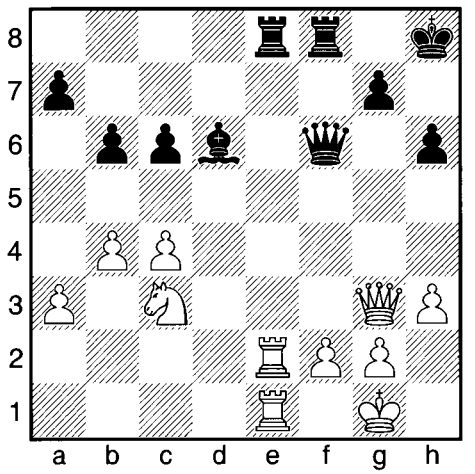
An overworked piece makes an excellent target.

7-2 The same idea as in 7-1, but a different execution. Now, the same *deflection* **1...♕b2!** does win the ♖ and the game. All attempts to save the ♖ result in a checkmate. For example, 2.♖×a2 ♕×b1+; 2.♖×b2 ♖×a1+; 2.♕d1 ♕×f2+ 3.♔h1 ♕×g2#. 5 points for <D>.

The direct **1...♖fa8** wins nothing after **2.♕×a8+ ♖×a8 3.♖×a8+**. Due to the check, Black doesn't have time to take the ♖b1. After **3...♔h7 4.♖aa1 ♕c6 5.♖b4** and **6.♖ab1**, White will have little trouble winning the b♙ and has better chances in the resulting ♕ vs. ♖+♖ endgame.

Having a check available makes a huge difference in many tactical situations, so always take it into account when analyzing variations.

Question #8



White to Move

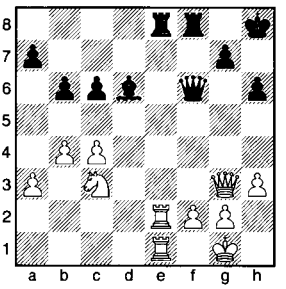
8 - 1 Which is the *worst* move?

A	1.♕g3–d3
B	1.♕g3–g4
C	1.♕g3–f3
D	1.♘c3–e4

8 - 2 Shift the ♖e8 to d8. Which is the *worst* move?

A	1.♕g3–d3
B	1.♕g3–g4
C	1.♕g3–f3
D	1.♘c3–e4

(8) Hernandez,G - Hernandez,A *Cuba, 1977 (modified)*



White to Move

		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A		19%	13%		6%		
	B	5	25%	38%	46%	55%	76%	93%
	C		14%	13%	4%	3%		
	D	1	42%	36%	50%	36%	24%	7%
2	A	5	51%	64%	67%	79%	100%	100%
	B		25%	15%	25%	12%		
	C		13%	13%	4%			
	D		11%	8%	4%	9%		

8-1 Black is down a ♙, but all Black pieces are very aggressively placed. The potential targets – the White ♕, the ♘, the ♖e2 and the ♙f2 are all under attack. The threat to the ♕ must be addressed immediately and White must be extremely careful when selecting his move.

Depending on which of the four given options White plays, he can lose a piece, an exchange, or even get mated. The latter happens after **1.♕g4? ♕×f2+!!** (*deflection*) **2. ♖×f2** (2.♔h1 ♕f1+ 3.♖×f1 ♖×f1#) **♖×e1+ 3.♖f1 ♖1×f1#**. If you saw 1...♕×f2+, you get 5 points for picking 1.♕g4 as the worst move (<B>). Subtract 1 point (you get 4 points) if you were planning 1...♖×e2!, winning material after 2.♘×e2 ♕×f2+ or 2.♕(♖)×e2 ♕×c3. Subtract 4 points for planning 1...♕×c3?, Black leaves the ♖e8 in harm's way.

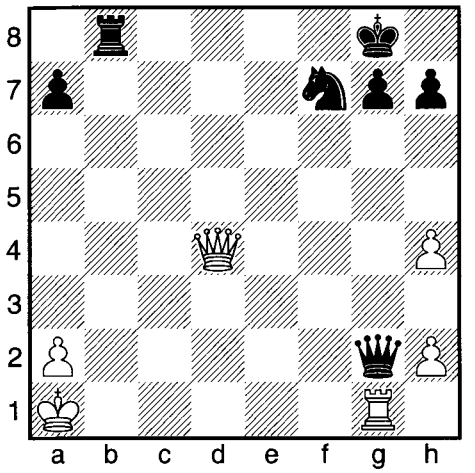
Other bad moves are 1.♘e4 due to ♖×e4 and 1.♕d3 due to ♕×f2+ 2.♖×f2 (2.♔h1 ♕f1+) ♖×e1+ 3.♕f1! ♗h2+ 4.♔×h2 ♖×f1.

The 'ugly' looking 1.♕f3 is the best choice in this difficult position.

8-2 Shifting the Black ♖ to d8, relieves the pressure from the e-file, so White does not need to worry anymore about ♕×f2+. For example, he can now play **1.♕g4**. However, the ♖ on d8 sets up a deadly *discovery* along the d-file. Placing the ♕ there is suicidal – **1.♕d3??** (the worst move!) **♗h2+** and **2...♖×d3**. 5 points for <A>.

Accurately identifying various threats should be one the first steps in the move selection process. Finding and eliminating bad moves will help you to find the best move, even if it is not an intuitive one.

Question #9



Black to Move

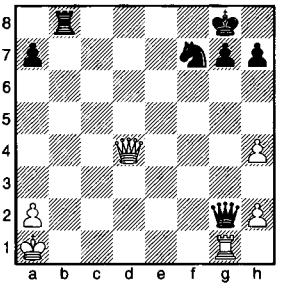
9 - 1 After 1...♖b8–d8, ...

A	Black is winning
B	Black is better
C	Draw is likely
D	White is winning

9 - 2 After 1...♖b8–b4, ...

A	Black is winning
B	Black is better
C	Draw is likely
D	White is winning

(9) Ullrich – Spengler *Berlin, 1948*



Black to Move

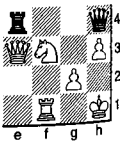
		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A		13%	16%	11%	8%	4%	
	B		13%	5%	4%			
	C		25%	10%	7%	3%		
	D	5	49%	69%	78%	89%	96%	100%

2	A	1	23%	49%	61%	73%	33%	19%
	B		46%	26%	25%	3%		
	C	5	15%	12%	7%	24%	67%	81%
	D		16%	13%	7%			

9-1 The Black ♕ can't leave the g-file because of ♕×g7#. Black can give up the ♕ for the ♖, especially since he is currently up by a ♘. I think White would still have excellent winning chances. The other way out for Black would be a counterstrike against the White ♕.

Thus, we have **1...♖d8**, trying to force the White ♕ away from either attacking the ♙g7 or defending the ♖g1. It almost works, but after **2.♕×d8+** (*in-between move*) **♘×d8 3.♖×g2**, White is exchange up and should win easily. 5 points for <D>.

When pieces of opposite color and of a similar value are simultaneously under attack, consider all aggressive moves by the attacked piece. Here is an extreme example – the ♕ is capturing a ♙ that is securely defended by another ♙. After 1... ♕×h3+ 2.♙×h3 ♖×e3, Black gains a ♙. This temporary sacrifice is also called 'desperado'.

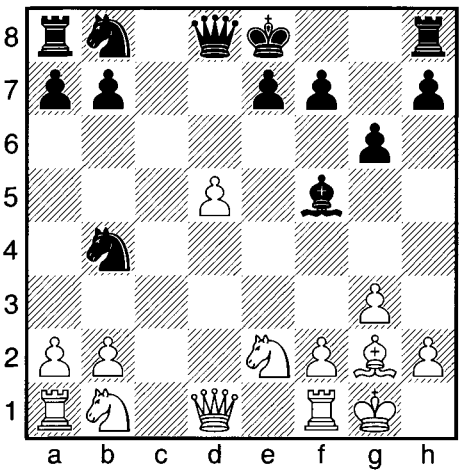


9-2 A much more dangerous way to execute Black's counterattacking idea is via **1...♖b4** (*deflection*). All of a sudden it is White who is on the brink of a loss. The White ♕ has no *in-between* checks, trading the ♖s or the ♕s leads to a hopeless endgame. Yet, you get only 1 point for <A>.

Fortunately, White has his own counterstrike **2.♖e1!**, leaving the ♕ under attack, but threatening *back-rank* checkmate. And it is Black's turn to solve the problem – how to stop 3.♖e8# and defend the ♖b4? The only response is **2...♖b8**, and, after **3.♖g1**, neither side can make progress. **3...♖b4 4.♖e1** and a draw! 5 points for <C>.

An in-between move doesn't have to be a check or a capture.

Question #10



Black to Move

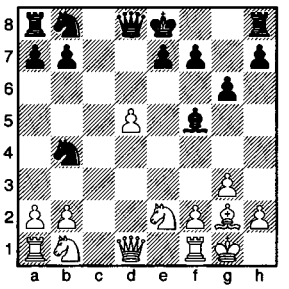
10 - 1 After 1...♗f5–c2, ...

A	Black is winning
B	Black is better
C	White is better
D	White is winning

10 - 2 After 1...♘b4–c2, ...

A	Black is winning
B	Black is better
C	White is better
D	White is winning

(10) Kalandadze, G - Karbelashvilli, G *Georgia, 2000*



Black to Move

		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A		13%					
	B		17%	14%				
	C		51%	48%	18%	3%		
	D	5	19%	38%	82%	97%	100%	100%

2	A		13%	20%	14%	9%		
	B		54%	50%	47%	28%	17%	
	C	5	25%	16%	25%	51%	50%	86%
	D	2	8%	14%	14%	12%	33%	14%

10-1 Not a pretty situation for Black. First of all, Black is behind in development. Moreover, Black's pieces that are developed (the ♘ and the ♗) are placed rather poorly. White is planning ♕a4+ or ♕d4 (*double attack*) winning the ♘b4. **1...♗c2** addresses only one of the White's threats (♕a4+). After **2.♕d4**, White is attacking simultaneously the ♘ and the ♖ and is winning material. 5 points for <D>.

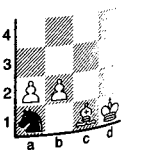
Aim to open the position when ahead in development. This significantly enhances attacking opportunities.

10-2 Black's poor piece placement is a temporary disadvantage. He is hoping to win an exchange after **1...♘c2**, thus gaining a decent material compensation.

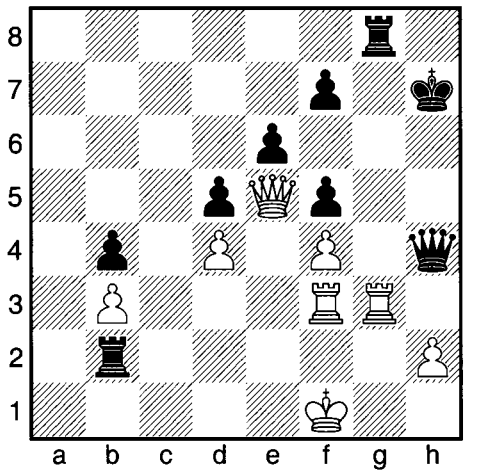
It is, however, a wishful thinking, since White can attack the ♘'s defender via **2.♙g4!!** (*deflection*). Black has nothing better than take the ♖ – **2...♘×a1**, allowing White to win the ♗f5. The ♘ is *trapped* on a1 and, eventually, will be lost too. White has the advantage, but Black is still in the game. 5 points for <C> and 2 points for <D>.

Practice the final position against a friend or computer.

When a ♘ wins a ♖ on its starting position (a1,h1,a8,h8) it almost always gets trapped in the corner and is ultimately lost.



Question #11



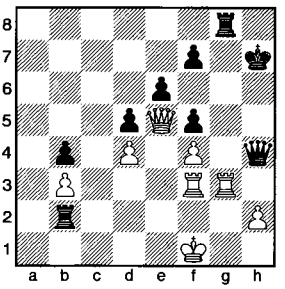
11 - 1 Black to Move. What is the *best* move?

A	1...♖b2–b1+
B	1...♖b2×h2
C	1...♖g8–g4
D	1...♖g8×g3

11 - 2 White to Move. What is the *best* move?

A	1.♖g3–h3
B	1.♖g3×g8
C	1.♖f3–f2
D	1.♕e5–e1

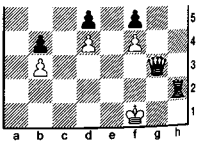
(11) Taimanov, M – Geller, E *Moscow, 1951*



		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A	1	8%	13%	51%	19%	8%	
	B	1	13%	13%	21%	40%	28%	21%
	C	5	25%	13%	14%	36%	47%	79%
	D		54%	61%	14%	5%	17%	
2	A		50%	43%	25%	15%	17%	7%
	B	5	25%	45%	53%	67%	83%	93%
	C		9%	7%	4%			
	D		16%	5%	18%	18%		

11-1 Black certainly should be looking for a direct attack against the exposed White ♔. At the same time, he must consider White's attacking ideas too. For example, 1.♖×g8 ♔×g8 2.♖g3+ or 1.♖h3.

It appears that the natural **1...♖×h2** neutralizes White's threats at once, while maintaining the pressure on the White ♔. Note however, if White's major pieces suddenly disappear, the White ♔ and the ♙s have no moves. Thus arises a stalemate idea, which, amazingly, White can bring to life. After **2.♖×g8 ♔×g8** (2...♖h1+? 3.♖g1) **3.♖g3+! ♕×g3** (3...♔f8? 4.♕d6+ ♕e7 (or ♔e8) 5.♖g8+!; 3... ♔h7? 4.♕g7#) **4.♕b8+ ♔h7 5.♕h8+ ♔g6 6.♕g7+ ♔×g7**, White's major pieces are gone and he is stalemated (diagram).



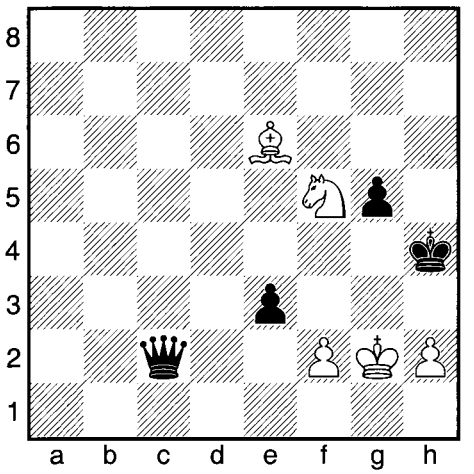
After **1...♖b1+ 2.♔g2** Black has nothing better than repeat **2...♖b2+**. Also, nothing special can be said about **1...♖×g3**. After **2.♖×g3 ♕h6 3.♕b8 ♖b1+ 4.♔g2 ♖b2+ 5.♔f1**, Black should repeat the position.

That brings us to the final option – **1...♖g4!!**, which eliminates the threat of ♖×g8 and continues the strong attack. What about the *pin* – **2.♖h3** you may ask. Well, actually, it fails due to **2...♖b1+ 3.♔e2 ♖g2+** and a mate after ♖×b3. 5 points for <C>.

11-2 The attempt to win the Black ♕ via a *pin* after **1. ♖h3** fails due to **1...♖b1+ 2.♔e2 ♖g2+** as shown above. Also disastrous are **1.♖f2 ♖×f2+ 2.♔×f2 ♕×h2+** and **1.♕e1 ♖×h2**.

The best is **1.♖×g8!**, planning 1...♔×g8 2.♖g3+ with a winning attack. Now Black must force a draw via a *perpetual check* – **1...♖b1+ 2.♔g2** (2.♔e2? ♕e1+ 3.♔d3 ♖d1+ 4.♔c2 ♕d2#) **♖b2+ 3.♔f1 ♖b1+**, etc.

Question #12



Black to Move

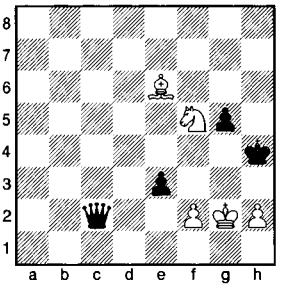
12 - 1 After 1...♕c2×f5, ...

A	Black is winning
B	Black is better
C	Draw can be forced
D	White is winning

12 - 2 After 1...♔h4–h5, ...

A	Black is winning
B	Black is better
C	Draw can be forced
D	White is winning

(12) Chekhover, V *1954 (modified)*



Black to Move

		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A	1	69%	75%	79%	72%	22%	16%
	B	1	14%	16%				
	C	5	5%	9%	21%	28%	78%	84%
	D		12%					

2	A		13%					
	B		19%	7%	5%	6%		
	C		6%	13%	11%	6%	17%	6%
	D	5	62%	80%	84%	88%	83%	94%

12-1 Black has a material advantage and is getting ready to welcome the second ♕. However, the Black ♔ is in a "jam" at the moment. Black's idea is to give up his ♕ right away to eliminate all of White's threats and buy valuable time to get the new ♕ on the board. After **1...♕×f5! 2.♗×f5 ♙e2**, the e♙ can't be stopped and it looks like White is lost.

However, amazingly the game is not over as White can build a *fortress* by trapping the Black ♔. After **3.♗g4!! ♙e1♕** (3...♔×g4 4.♙f3+ ♔f4 5.♔f2=) **4.♙h3**, the Black ♔ is out of the game. Black can't make any progress without his ♔, nor can he put White in *zugzwang* forcing the ♗ or the ♙f2 to move. The result is a draw – 5 points for <C>!

Seeing the drawing idea but not executing it correctly is not acceptable. Reduce your points by 2 if you wanted to play **3.♙h3** as Black can play the *in-between* **3...♙g4** freeing the ♔ before promoting the e♙. Subtract another 1 point if you were going to play **4.♙f3** (or 2 points for 3.♙f3, which after 3...♙e1♕ 4.♗g4 gets you to the same position as 4.♙f3). Without the ♙ on f2, Black can create a *zugzwang* situation forcing White to break the *fortress*. For example, **4...♕d2+ 5.♔g1 ♕e2**, and the *fortress* is collapsing.

Practice the starting position against a friend or computer.

The mighty ♕ needs help while battling a minor piece when there are no easy ♙ targets. Thus, trapping the ♔ could lead to a miracle escape.

12-2 Taking the check lightly brings Black nothing but trouble. After **1...♔h5?**, Black loses instantly. **2.♗f7+ ♔g4 3.♘×e3+** and **4.♘×c2** eliminating both Black's weapons – the ♕ and the e♙. 5 points for <D>.

Interim Report: Questions 1 - 12

I strongly encourage you to complete the test in several attempts and to take your time in answering each question. I am including the interim reports so that you can see your relative strength prior to completing the entire test. This should satisfy and encourage you not to hurry through the test questions.

Also, if you choose to take the test again in the future, you can quickly compare your old and new results to see if you are making progress.

From **Table 1-1**, get your rating by matching your score. If your score happens to be between the points in the table, approximate your rating by "eyeballing" or by using basic interpolation.

Table 1-1 *Score to Rating Conversion*

Score	Rating	Score	Rating
6	594	**66**	1420
12	744	**72**	1586
18	776	**78**	1684
24	839	**84**	1799
30	902	**90**	1949
36	968	**96**	2100
42	1025	**102**	2229
48	1100	**108**	2312
54	1230	**114**	2497
60	1334	**120**	2542

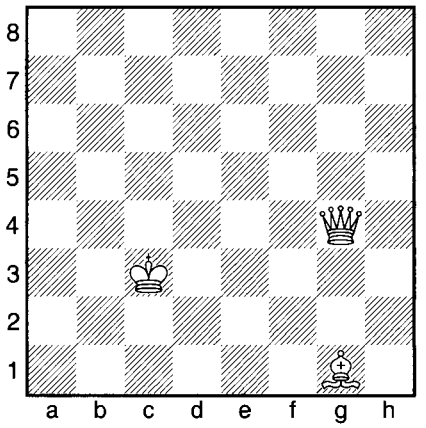
Example 1: User's Score is **54**; User's Rating is estimated at **1230.**

Example 2: User's Score is **80**; User Rating is approximately **1730**, or, using interpolation, is estimated at **1722**

Interpolation: 1684 + (1799 – 1684) * (80 – 78) / (84 – 78) = **1722**

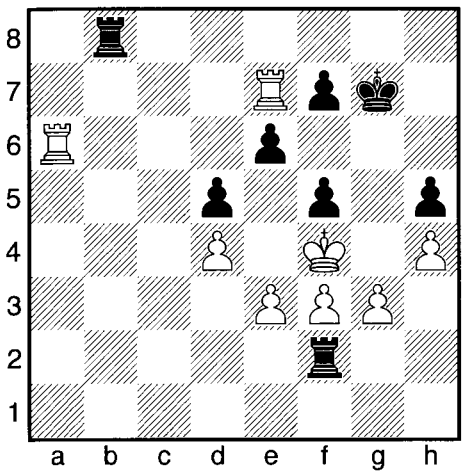
Let's Take a Break:

Q: Find a place for the Black ♔ such that:
1. The Black ♔ is checkmated.
2. The Black ♔ is stalemated (with Black to move)
3. The Black ♔ can be checkmated in one move (with White to move)



A: 1. The Black ♔ is checkmated on e3;
2. The Black ♔ is stalemated on h1;
3. The Black ♔ on a8 can be checkmated in one move - 1.♕c8#.

Question #13



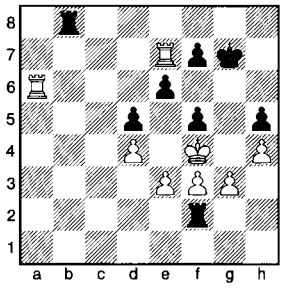
13 - 1 If White to move, then he should play ...

A	1.♖a6–a7
B	1.♖a6×e6
C	Either move can be played
D	Neither move should be played

13 - 2 After 1...♔g7–f6, White should play ...

A	2.♖a6–a7
B	2.♖e7–d7
C	Either move can be played
D	Neither move should be played

(13) Miles, A – Hort V, *Amsterdam, 1982 (modified)*



		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A	1	13%	15%	11%	24%	20%	
	B	1	61%	62%	50%	30%	17%	7%
	C	5	20%	23%	39%	46%	63%	93%
	D		6%					

2	A	5	31%	37%	42%	46%	78%	83%
	B		28%	13%	36%	27%	12%	6%
	C	1	16%	25%	18%	24%	7%	5%
	D		25%	25%	4%	3%	3%	6%

13-1 The White ♖s are dominating the 6th and 7th ranks, putting the Black ♙s on e6 and f7 under some serious assault. While Black can protect the ♙f7, the ♙e6 becomes a casualty due to the *pin*. After **1.♖a×e6**, Black can't use the awkward placement of the White ♖s – **1...♔f8** (1...♖b1 2.♖d7 ♖f1 3.♔g5)**2.♖e5 ♙f6 3.♖5e6** etc... White can also play **1.♖aa7 ♖f8** (1...♖b1 2.♔g5) **2.♖×e6**. In either case, White wins the critical ♙ and that should lead to the collapse of the Black's entire ♙-structure. 5 points for <C>.

13-2 With Black to move, he should play **1...♔f6**. The ♙f7 is no longer *pinned*; thus, Black would have no worries about the safety of the ♙e6. Also, from f6, the Black ♔ would severely restrict the White's ♔ mobility, forcing White to exercise some caution.

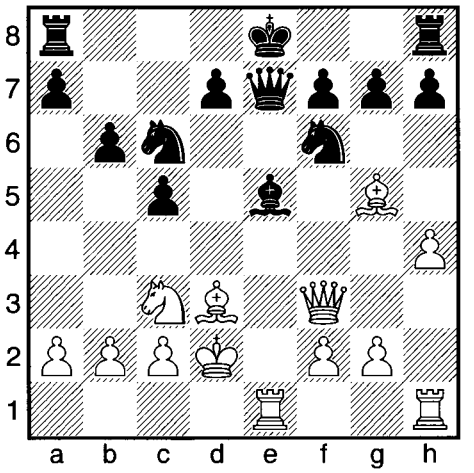
After **2.♖aa7 ♖f8**, neither side can make any progress, making a draw a very likely outcome.

Tricky is **2.♖d7**, attacking the ♙d5 since the ♙e6 is now *pinned*. Unfortunately for White, this runs into a shocking **2...♖g8!!**. Another benefit of 1...♔f6 was *clearing* the g-file, and now White can't stop 3...♖g4# (the ♙f3 is *pinned*) without giving up virtually all of his ♙s (3.♙e4 ♙d×e4 4.♔e3 ♖×f3+ etc...)

Thus, the correct choice is <A> – 5 points.

Never stop monitoring the ♔'s escape routes.

Question #14



Black to Move

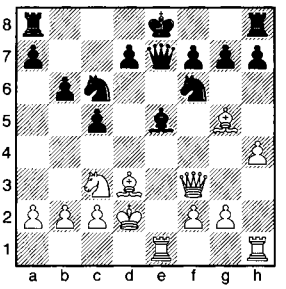
14 - 1 How many different threats does White have?

A	No threats
B	1 threat
C	2 threats
D	3 threats

14 - 2 After 1...0-0-0, what is the *winning* move?

A	2.♖e1×e5
B	2.♗d3–a6+
C	Both A and B are winning
D	Something other than A and B

(14) Diaz,J - Burnett,R *Minneapolis, 2005*



Black to Move

		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A		13%	13%	5%	3%		
	B	1	25%	38%	28%	9%	15%	
	C	2	38%	26%	27%	43%	27%	18%
	D	5	24%	23%	40%	45%	58%	82%

2	A	1	32%	25%	21%	9%	4%	
	B	1	26%	25%	29%	15%	6%	
	C	5	28%	33%	46%	76%	90%	100%
	D		14%	17%	1%			

14-1 The Black ♔ is in serious danger on the open e-file. White is threatening the direct **1.♖×e5**. After **1...♕×e5** (1...♘×e5 2.♕×a8+) **2.♖e1**, White gains a significant material advantage. Another dangerous move is **1.♘d5** attacking the ♕ and also the ♘f6 (which is *pinned*) for a third time. Even though the ♘f6 also has three defenders, it is not enough because one of them (♗e5) is also *pinned*. For example, **1...♕d6 2.♘×f6+ ♙×f6 3.♗×f6** and Black's position falls apart.

White has other attractive possibilities, and one of them – **1.♗f4**, is as dangerous as the two above. For example, **1...0–0** (1...♗×f4+ 2.♕×f4 and Black loses the ♕) **2.♗×e5 ♘×e5 3.♕f5** (threatening 4.♘d5 and the mate on h7) **♖e8 4.♙f4** winning the pinned ♘.

So, you get 5 points for <D>. Subtract 1 point for each of your threats that didn't match the three listed above. For example, promising, but not immediately winning – **1.♗×f6 ♙×f6 2.♘d5 ♕d6** and **1.♖e2 ♔f8**.

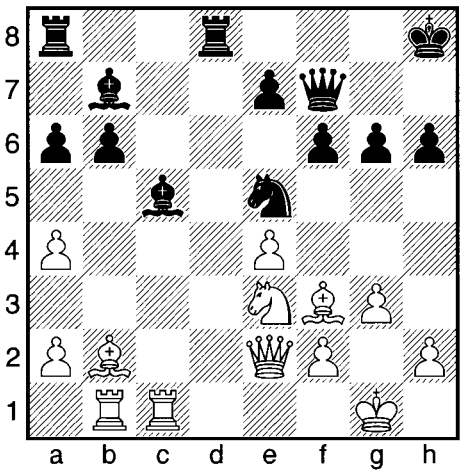
14-2 After **1...0–0–0 2.♖×e5**, Black loses material. For example, **2...♕×e5 3.♗a6+! ♔b8** (c7) **4.♗f4** winning the ♕. Or **2...♘×e5 3.♕a8+ ♔c7 4.♘b5#**. 1 point for <A>.

Starting a successfully assault with **2.♗a6+** is also possible. After **2...♔c7** (2...♔b8 3.♖×e5 ♕×e5 [3...♘×e5 4.♕b7#] 4.♗f4) **3.♗×f6 ♗×c3+** (otherwise 4.♘d5+ winning the ♕) **4.♗×c3**, White is winning. 1 point for <B>.

If you recognized that both moves lead to White's victory and picked <C>, you get 5 points.

With the 'holes' on the light squares and no ♗ to protect them, the ♕-side castle provided no safe haven for the Black ♔.

Question #15



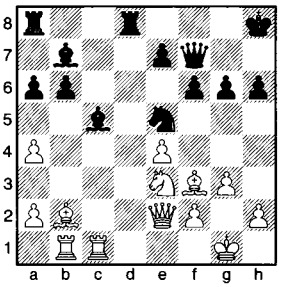
15 - 1 White to Move. What is the *best* move?

A	1.♗f3–g2
B	1.♗b2×e5
C	1.♖c1×c5
D	1.♙a4–a5

15 - 2 Black to Move. What is the *best* move?

A	1...♗c5×e3
B	1...♘e5×f3+
C	1...♘e5–d3
D	1...♖d8–d2

(15) Training Position



		Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1	A		37%	13%	21%	9%		
	B	5	35%	62%	72%	85%	95%	100%
	C		24%	25%	7%	6%	5%	
	D		4%					

2	A		8%					
	B		9%	13%	4%	6%		
	C		13%	6%	11%	3%		
	D	5	70%	81%	85%	91%	100%	100%

15-1 If you recognized that the ♖b1 has a chance to clobber the ♗b7, then removing the "walls" (the ♗b2 and the ♙b6) was probably not that difficult.

White clears the path via a timely trade – **1.♗×e5**. After **1...♙×e5 2.♖×c5 ♙×c5 3.♖×b7**, White has a dominating position. Not saving Black is an *in-between* move **1...♗×e3**. After **2.♕×e3 ♙×e5 3.♕×h6+**, Black's position is terrible. 5 points for <B>.

Changing the order of moves and starting with **1.♖×c5?** won't work. Black has an *in-between* move **1...♘×f3+!** After **2.♕×f3 ♙×c5**, the ♗b2 is in the way, preventing ♖×b7.

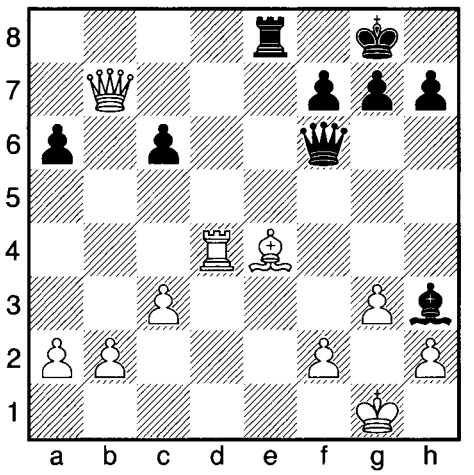
To master the 'X-ray' vision in chess, you don't need to be Superman. Just pay attention to the placement of the long-ranged pieces (♕, ♖ and ♗). Any piece that is on the same file, rank, or diagonal as the opponent's long-ranged piece can potentially be at risk, even when there are pieces between the attacker and the target.

15-2 The ♗f3 is placed somewhat awkwardly With his turn to move, Black can put more than enough heat on the White ♕, which is the sole defender the ♗. After **1...♖d2 2.♕×d2** ♘**×f3+** and **3...♘×d2**, Black wins. Other attempts on move 2 would not save White from losing a lot of material.

5 points for <D>.

With the ♙-structure ♙f2–♙g3–♙h2, the ♗ usually belongs on g2.

Question #16



Black to Move

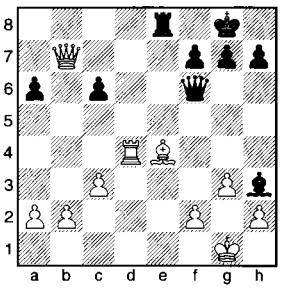
16 - 1 After 1...♕f6–f3, ...

A	Black is winning
B	Black is better
C	The position is nearly equal
D	White is winning

16 - 2 After 1...♙g7–g6 2.♙a2–a3 ♕f6–f3, ...

A	Black is winning
B	Black is better
C	The position is nearly equal
D	White is winning

(16) Training Position



Black to Move

		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A		29%	25%	29%	24%		
	B		7%	6%				
	C		13%	16%	7%	6%		
	D	5	38%	53%	64%	70%	100%	100%

2	A	1	43%	42%	61%	75%	48%	17%
	B		24%	13%	7%	3%		
	C	5	20%	20%	18%	16%	52%	83%
	D		13%	25%	14%	6%		

16-1 White has a lot to be concerned about – the *back-rank* checkmate, the *pin* along the e-file, the 'holes' in the ♙-structure that is protecting his ♔, and his ♕ being far away and not defending the ♔.

Considering all of the above, it is not a surprise that **1...♕f3** looks very scary. But, before we start panicking too much, let's see what the exact threats are. The first threat is 2...♕g2+ (*deflection*) 3.♗×g2 ♖e1+ 4.♗f1 ♖×f1#. The second threat is ... well, there is none! The ♗e4 is untouchable because Black has his own problem with the *back-rank*. So, Black is not perfect either! Can White utilize that? Yes indeed! White has a decisive blow **2.♕e7!!** (*deflection* and *interference* against the ♖e8) and Black is lost. Black can't save the ♖ without losing the ♕ since the ♗e4 is no longer *pinned*.

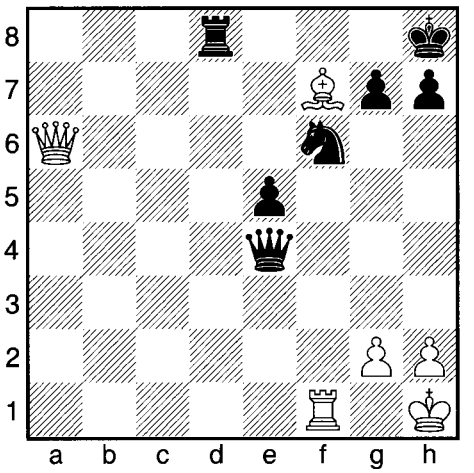
All of the positional disadvantages can be overcome by a cool tactical defense! Just keep on looking!

16-2 Black played **1...♙g6**, addressing his *back-rank* problem. After **2...♕f3**, he is not only threatening 3...♕g2+ but also 3...♖×e4. Since 3.♕e7 is not an option anymore (3...♖×e7), is White lost?

No! In fact, there is a way out via an incredible **3.♕c8!!** attacking the ♖, the ♗ and the ♕ (indirectly, since the *pinned* ♖e8 wouldn't be able to deliver checkmate after ♗×f3). The best that Black has is **3...♕×e4** and, after **4.♕×h3 ♕b1+ 5.♔g2 ♕×b2** (5...♖e1 is too risky), the position is dynamically balanced.

Defense via pin is often forgotten in the tactical calculations.

Question #17



White to Move

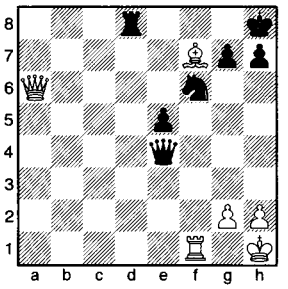
17 - 1 After 1.♖f1×f6, ...

A	Black is winning
B	Draw is likely
C	White is better
D	White is winning

17 - 2 After 1.♗f7–a2 ♖d8–a8 2.♖f1×f6, ...

A	Black is winning
B	Draw is likely
C	White is better
D	White is winning

(17) Training Position



White to Move

		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A	5	26%	25%	50%	58%	86%	94%
	B		7%	10%	18%	3%		
	C		18%	6%	7%	13%	7%	
	D	1	49%	59%	25%	26%	7%	6%

2	A	1	13%	25%	4%	12%	17%	
	B	5	14%	18%	7%	15%	66%	100%
	C		13%	10%	7%			
	D	1	60%	47%	82%	73%	17%	

17-1 Black has an extra ♙ in the endgame and must be pretty happy about his chances. However, the immediate blow **1.♖×f6**, looks to 'rain on Black's parade'. Bad is 1...♙×f6?? 2.♕×f6#. Not strong enough is a shot at White's weak *back-rank* via 1...♖d1+. The White ♕ and ♖ show nice coordination in defense with 2.♖f1 and Black must tone down his attack due to his own *back-rank* problems. What else is left for Black to try? Any regular, non-aggressive move allows White to safely pull his ♖ back to f1, preserving an extra ♗.

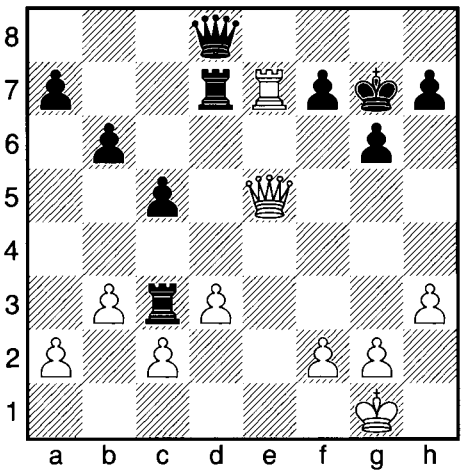
What if Black tries to break the coordination of the White's major pieces by going after the ♕? There are several ways this idea can be executed (1...♖a8 and 1...♕b7 come to mind first), but White always seems to have at least 2.♕f1 at his disposal maintaining the protection of the *back-rank* and the ♖f6. That is until you see an astonishing double *deflection* – **1...♕c6!!** White is lost – 5 points for <A>, if you saw it.

17-2 The situation is a lot more complex after the preliminary **1.♗a2 ♖a8**. White strikes again - **2.♖×f6**. Taking the ♖ (2...♙×f6? 3.♕×f6#), or taking the ♕ (2...♖×a6? 3.♖f8#) or checking the ♔ (2...♕e1+ 3.♕f1!) are all bad for Black. Instead, Black needs to address his *back-rank* problem first, to have any hope of getting some material back.

Thus the simple advance of the h♙ – **2...♙h5** (or 2...♙h6) puts serious pressure on the ineptly placed White pieces. With all of his pieces in danger, White is actually lucky to find a way out by forcing draw with **3.♖h6+ ♙×h6 4.♕f6+! ♔h7 5.♕f7+ ♔h8 6.♕f6+**, etc...

The mere threat of capturing may work better than the actual capturing.

Question #18



Black to Move

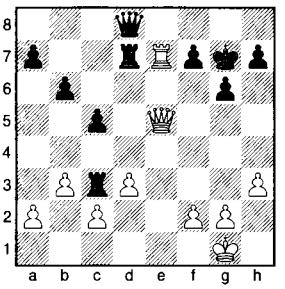
18 - 1 What result do you expect?

A	Black is winning
B	Draw is likely
C	White has small winning chances
D	White is winning

18 - 2 Add a Black ♙ on d4. Now ...

A	Black is winning
B	Draw is likely
C	White has small winning chances
D	White is winning

(18) Kviletsky – Reslitsky *Poland, 1963*



Black to Move

		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A		13%					
	B		49%	38%	40%	26%	6%	5%
	C	1	25%	20%	17%	16%	11%	
	D	5	13%	42%	43%	58%	83%	95%

2	A		25%	51%	32%	21%	4%	7%
	B	5	25%	13%	49%	54%	80%	76%
	C		37%	11%	12%	7%	6%	17%
	D		13%	25%	7%	18%	10%	

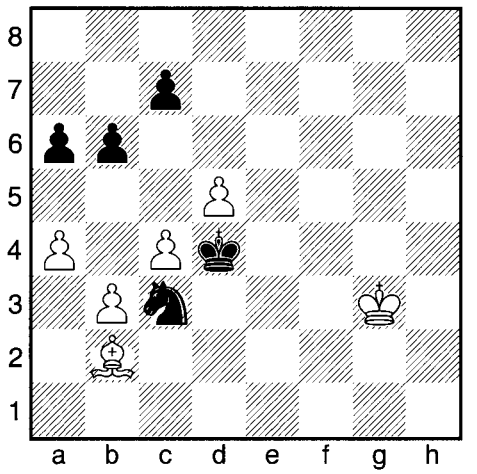
18-1 Once the Black ♔ moves out of the check, White can easily obtain a better endgame (♕+♙s vs. ♕+♙s with an extra ♙) after **2.♖×d7 ♕×d7 3.♕×c3**. Since ♕-endgames tend to be drawish, the best matching choice would be <C>. If this is what you picked, you only get 1 point as you stopped too soon.

Instead, let's see where the Black ♔ will actually go. There are not many safe options. In fact, there is not a single one! After the most appealing - **1...♔f8** (1...♔g8 2.♖e8+ ♕×e8 3.♕×e8+ ♔g7 4.♕×d7 or 1...♔h6 2.♕f4+ ♔g7 [2...♙g5 3.♕f6+ ♔h5 4.♙g4+ ♔h4 5.♕h6#; 2...♔h5 3.♙g4+ ♔h4 4.♕h6#] 3.♕×f7+ etc.), White has a quiet but deadly **2.♕f6!** Black can't take the ♖ due to 3.♕h8#. The only way to stop 3.♕×f7# would cost him dearly – **2...♕e8 3.♖×e8+ ♔×e8 4.♕×c3**. Give yourself 5 points for choice <D> if you saw the above lines. 2 points if you picked <D>, but were planning to trade the ♖s and go into the ♕-endgame with an extra ♙.

18-2 Addition of a ♙ on d4 is very critical for Black's defense because it secures the position of the ♖ on c3. First of all, it eliminates the easy transition into the favorable ♕-endgame that White had (see 18-1). And secondly, since the ♖c3 is not in danger anymore, it makes it sufficient for Black to give up the ♕ for the ♖ to get a good endgame (♖+♖ for the ♕). Thus, after **1...♔f8! 2.♕f6! ♕e8!**, it is White who should force a draw after **3.♕h8+! ♔×e7 4.♕e5+ ♔d8 5.♕b8+ ♔e7 6.♕e5+** ...

If you disagree that White should force a draw here, practice this ♖+♖ vs. ♕ endgame against a friend or computer.

Question #19



White to Move

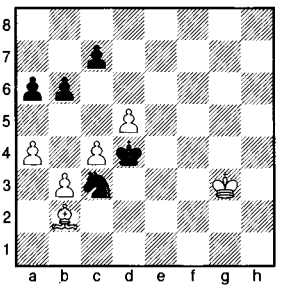
19 - 1 Which of the below is the *worst* move?

A	1.♗b2–a3
B	1.♗b2–c1
C	1.♗b2–a1
D	1.♙d5–d6

19 - 2 After 1.♗b2×c3+, ...

A	Black is winning
B	Draw is likely
C	White is better
D	White is winning

(19) Carroll,W - Lynch,R *USA, 2002 (modified)*



White to Move

		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A		13%					
	B	5	56%	79%	85%	88%	100%	100%
	C		8%	8%	4%	3%		
	D		23%	13%	11%	9%		

2	A	1	37%	38%	24%	21%	11%	7%
	B		26%	7%				
	C		24%					
	D	5	13%	55%	76%	79%	89%	93%

19-1 Late in the endgame, the ♔ becomes one of the strongest and most important players. Here, the White ♔ is far away from the battlefield, giving Black a significant strategic advantage. Essentially, two Black pieces are battling the lonely ♗ and the prize is a bunch of White ♙s.

1.♗c1?? is the worst move here, since it allows the *fork* – **1...♘e2+**. White loses the ♗ without any compensation. 5 points for <B>.

19-2 Looks like **1.♗×c3+** could have been the worst move in 19-1, but it wasn't and for a good reason. It is actually ... a winning move! After **1...♔×c3 2.♙a5!**, Black can't stop the pawn breakthrough. For example, **2...♙×a5 3.♙c5 ♔×b3 4.♙d6 ♙×d6 5.♙×d6 ♙a4 6.♙d7 ♙a3 7.♙d8♕ ♙a2 8.♕d4**, etc...

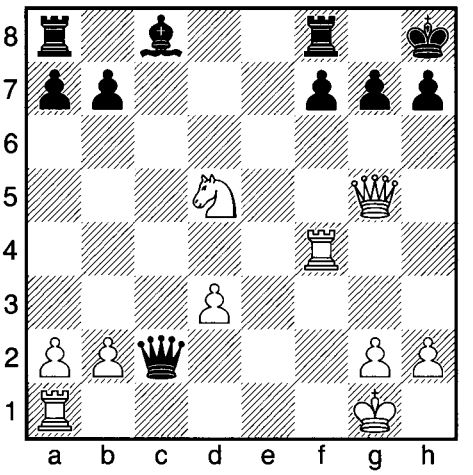
Practice against a friend or a computer if you are uncertain how White wins in this ♕ vs. ♙s endgame.

Bad is **2.♔f4?** due to **2...♙a5**. Black freezes the White ♙s and wins thanks to the dominating position of his ♔. Practice against a friend or a computer if you are uncertain how White wins in this ♙-endgame.

To get the full 5 points for selecting <D>, you should have found **2.♙a5**. Only 2 points for planning **2.♔f4**. Extra 1 point credit (for a total of 6 points) for seeing both – the win for White after **2.♙a5** and the loss for White after **2.♔f4**.

When sending your ♔ into the enemy territory, always keep an eye on possible ♙ breaks.

Question #20



White to Move

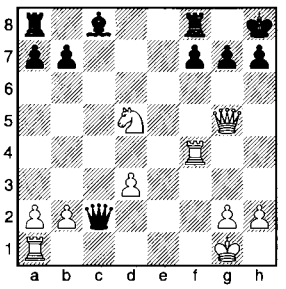
20 - 1 After 1.♖f4×f7, ...

A	Black is winning
B	Black is better
C	White is better
D	White is winning

20 - 2 Which is the *worst* move?

A	1.♘d5–f6
B	1.♖f4–d4
C	1.♖f4–g4
D	B and C are both very bad

(20) Vorobiov,E – Belukhin,I *Pardubice, 2002*



White to Move

		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A	1	24%	25%	29%	12%	8%	3%
	B	2	18%	14%	4%	9%	2%	
	C		13%	12%	14%	6%	7%	
	D	5	45%	49%	53%	73%	83%	97%

2	A		10%	4%				
	B	1	52%	34%	36%	36%	28%	9%
	C	1	25%	25%	32%	27%	5%	8%
	D	5	13%	37%	32%	37%	67%	83%

20-1 A quick overview – Black is behind in development; he is facing a *back-rank* problem; his ♕ is somewhat misplaced. White already has three of his pieces in attack and the ♖a1 can join at any moment.

White can exploit his advantages via a tactical solution – **1.♖×f7**. The ♖ can't be taken **1...♖×f7? 2.♕d8+**. After **1...♖g8 2.♘e7**, Black has no way to deal with the direct ♘×g8 and sneaky ♘g6+. But if you stopped here, you only get 1 point, even if you selected <D>.

How were you planning to save the ♖f7 if Black played **1...♕c5+**? The ♕ defends the f8-square, allowing Black to play ♖×f7 on the next move. If you saw the check, prepared **2.♙d4! ♕×d4+ 3.♔h1** and evaluated the position in favor of Black (<B>), you did good and earned 2 points!

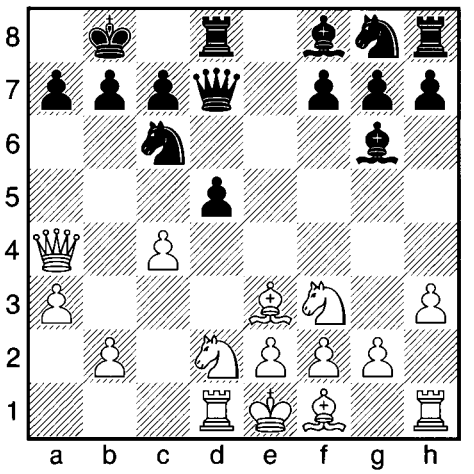
To get the 5 points for <D>, you must have uncovered the stunning **2.♘e3!!** In this picturesque position Black can't stop the mate threats on f8 and g7 unless he gives up his ♕. After **2...♖×f7 3.♕×c5**, Black is lost.

20-2 White loses a ♖ after **1.♖d4??** (<B>) **♕×b2** attacking both ♖s. He also loses a ♖ after **1.♖g4??** (<C>) **♗×g4 2.♕×g4 ♕c5+** and **3...♕×d5**. Thus the correct answer is <D> – 5 points.

Selecting either <B> or <C> earns you 1 point. The only exception, if you saw how Black wins the ♖ in either line, but picked <B> because of the additional ♙b2 that Black wins along the way. In such a case, change your answer to <D> and award yourself 5 points.

Quickly identifying the bad moves and eliminating them from the list of candidate moves improves the decision making process.

Question #21



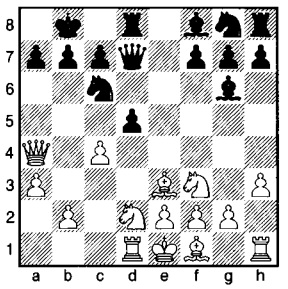
21 - 1 White to Move. Evaluate the position.

A	Black is better
B	The position is nearly equal
C	White is better
D	White has significant advantage

21 - 2 Black to Move. What is the *best* move?

A	1...♘c6–b4
B	1...♘c6–d4
C	1...♙d5–d4
D	1...♙a7–a6

(21) Anishik,N – Kalugin,J *Russia, 1996*



		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A		13%	13%	7%	15%	17%	6%
	B		11%	13%	21%			
	C		53%	25%	11%	18%		
	D	5	23%	49%	61%	67%	83%	94%

2	A		14%	13%	4%	3%	8%	
	B	5	25%	49%	71%	85%	92%	100%
	C	1	13%	13%	14%	12%		
	D		48%	25%	11%			

21-1 White is behind in development, yet he is attempting to generate an attack with only the ♕ and a ♗. The Black ♔ has his ♙ coverage intact and several of the pieces in defense. There is however one 'soft' spot. I am talking about the ♙a7, which is guarding the 'door' to the Black ♔'s palace. It is currently attacked twice and defended twice.

In fact, with his move, White can disturb this balance via **1.♘e5!** (*deflection*). Taking the ♘ leads to a checkmate – **1...♘×e5? 2.♕×a7+ ♔c8 3.♕a8#**. After the Black ♕ moves, White wins the ♙ with no compensation – **1...♕d6 2.♘×c6+ ♕×c6 3.♕×a7+ ♔c8 4.♙×d5**.

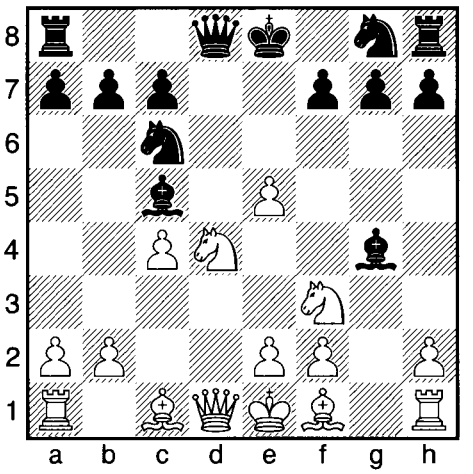
5 points for <D>. 2 points for <C> if you saw the whole line up to **3.♕×a7+**, but didn't feel that White was more than a little better.

This type of combinations is fairly common on the ♔-side. The removal (or deflection) of the ♘f3(f6) that protects the ♙h2(h7) often leads to successful attack that involves only minimal forces (♕+♗ or ♕+♘).

21-2 I hope you have spotted the smothered position of the White ♔ and a neat idea of pulling the ♘ 'out of the air' and plugging it into the c2-square! Well, the tricks like this won't give you much, except a serious warning from the tournament director. However, **1...♘d4!!** (<B>) will earn you 5 points. The ♘ is aiming at c2, while blocking the ♙a7 from the ♗e3. At the same time, the ♕d7 is attacking the ♕a4 (*discovered attack*). White can't stop these threats and is lost!

1...♘b4? (<A>) has a very similar idea but earns no credits. The ♘ doesn't block the ♗e3 thus allowing checkmate after **2.♕×a7+**.

Question #22



White to Move

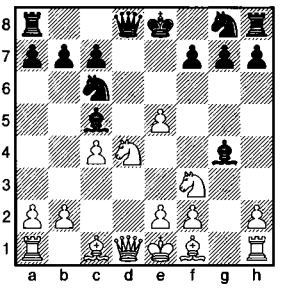
22 - 1 After 1.♘d4×c6, ...

A	Black is winning
B	The position is nearly equal
C	White is better
D	White is winning

22 - 2 After 1.♗c1–g5, ...

A	Black is winning
B	The position is nearly equal
C	White is better
D	White is winning

(22) Dietz,H – Kadas,G *Hungary, 1987 (modified)*

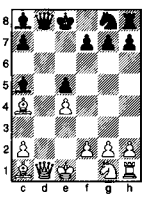


White to Move

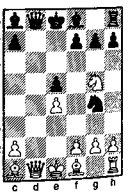
		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A	5	48%	62%	89%	94%	100%	100%
	B		24%	25%	11%	6%		
	C		15%	13%				
	D		13%					

2	A	5	37%	51%	53%	63%	78%	84%
	B	1	35%	33%	36%	19%	12%	16%
	C		21%	13%	11%	18%	10%	
	D		7%	3%				

22-1 White is behind in development and his ♔ is stuck in the center. Note that potential ♕d1–♕d8 face-off often allows a possibility for a typical combination around the square f2(f7). Considering these issues, White must be extra careful, especially when making aggressive moves or opening the position. The direct **1.♘×c6** opens the lines for the Black ♕ and ♗ just enough to allow the following strike - **1...♗×f2+!** After **2.♔×f2 ♕×d1**, Black wins the ♕ and the game. 5 points for <A>.



Early on, when there is a possibility of a trade of ♕-s, the ♔ is often the only defender of the ♕. When the ♔ also has to defend the weak f2(f7) square, it may become overloaded. Seek the deflection ideas such as 1.♗×f7+ or 1.♕×d8+ ♔×d8 2.♘×f7+. Black can execute the same ideas if it his turn to move.

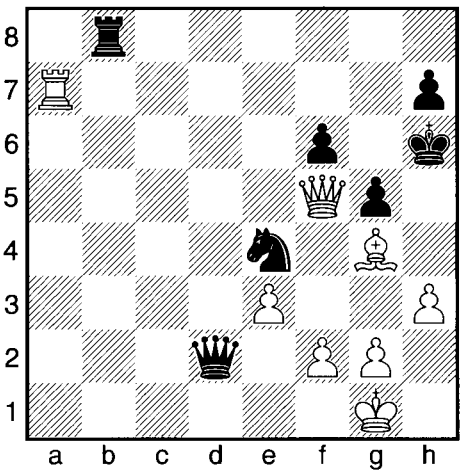


22-2 The game should not continue much longer after the "optimistic" **1.♗g5**. The Black ♗ strikes against the White ♔ once again, but this time from the other side! After **1...♕×g5! 2.♘×g5 ♗b4+ 3.♕d2 ♗×d2+ 4.♔×d2 ♘×d4**, Black comes out with an extra ♘. The in-between **2.♘×c6** also can't save White due to **2...♗×f3 3.♙×f3 ♙×c6**.

5 points for <A> if you were planning a deadly **1...♕×g5**. 1 point for a dull **1...♗b4+ 2.♗d2** and 2 points for an exciting **1...♘×d4 2.♗×d8 ♗×f3** (practice this unbalanced position against a friend or computer).

It is astonishing how quickly active moves (1.♘×c6, 1.♗g5) can lead to self-destruction, especially when your ♔ is not well protected.

Question #23



Black to Move

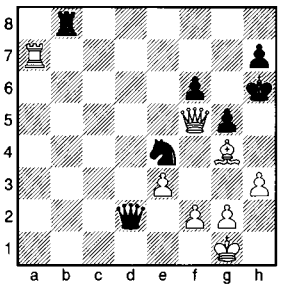
23 - 1 What result do you expect?

A	Black is winning
B	Draw
C	White is winning
D	White has an unstoppable checkmate

23 - 2 Which modification is *good* for White?

A	Transferring the Black ♕ from d2 to c2
B	Transferring the White ♖ from a7 to c7
C	Transferring the White ♖ from a7 to e7
D	None of the above

(23) Ormos,G. – Betaski,I. *Budapest, 1951 (modified)*



Black to Move

		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A		25%	15%	4%	3%		
	B	2	25%	39%	53%	45%	16%	11%
	C	5	13%	30%	32%	42%	84%	89%
	D		37%	16%	11%	10%		

2	A		15%	15%	21%	26%	5%	3%
	B		13%	14%	5%	3%	3%	
	C		27%	18%	19%	18%	7%	4%
	D	5	45%	54%	55%	53%	85%	93%

23-1 White has an extra ♙, safer ♔ position, and is threatening 1.♕(♖)×h7# and 1.♕×e4. With his back pressed to the wall, Black is looking for an all out attack or … a stalemate!

Black could find the following forced line – **1...♖b1+ 2.♔h2 ♖h1+!** (after 2...♕d6+ 3.♙g3, the checks and the attack expire) **3.♔×h1 ♘g3+ 4.♙×g3 ♕×g2+ 5.♔×g2** – a draw! Well … not so fast! How about **4.♔h2** (instead of 4.♙×g3)? After **4...♘×f5** (4...♘f1+ 5.♔g1) **5.♗×f5 ♕d6+ 6.♙g3 ♙g4 7.♙h4**, Black can't stop ♖h7#. White wins!

Discovering the stalemate idea and selecting <B>, earns you 2 points. Finding and then overcoming the stalemate and selecting <C>, earns you 5 points. If you selected <C>, but missed the 'excitement' described above, you get 1 point.

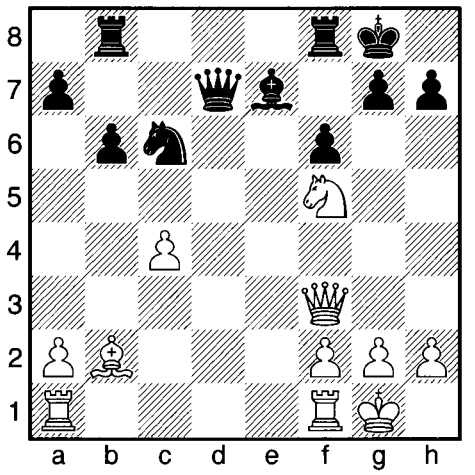
23-2 Black almost escaped in 23-1, but White overcame the stalemate defense and won thanks to a nifty ♕ sacrifice. Let's review the proposed changes and see what, if any, effect they may have on the outcome.

With the Black ♕ on c2 (<A>), after **4.♔h2 ♘×f5 5.♗×f5** (in the variation in 23-1), Black has **5...♕×f5**, winning the game. Thus White can't allow Black to take his ♕ and would be forced to play **4.♙×g3** leading to a stalemate. Not good for White!

Shifting the White ♖ to c7 (<B>) or e7 (<C>) puts it in harm's way after **1...♖b1+ 2.♔h2 ♕d6+**. Not good for White!

So, none of the 3 proposed changes is good for White. 5 points for <D>.

Question #24



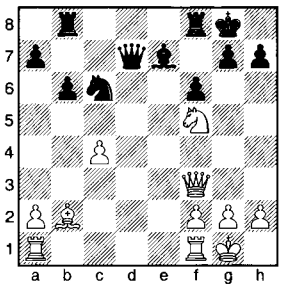
24 - 1 If White to Move, what is the *best* move?

A	1.♕f3–g4
B	1.♕f3–d5+
C	1.♕f3×c6
D	All three of the above are nearly equally good

24 - 2 After 1...♘e5, White should play ...

A	2.♕f3–g4
B	2.♕f3–d5+
C	2.♗b2×e5
D	2.♘f5×e7+

(24) Miles,A – Timman,J *Amsterdam, 1985 (modified)*



		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A	5	26%	33%	53%	85%	96%	100%
	B	1	38%	13%	14%	3%		
	C		23%	41%	15%	9%	4%	
	D		13%	13%	18%	3%		

2	A	-1	11%	7%				
	B	1	29%	29%	29%	35%	14%	
	C	5	33%	39%	60%	65%	86%	100%
	D		37%	25%	11%			

24-1 After **1.♕g4**, Black is facing a dilemma with no good solution – to allow the checkmate on g7 or to lose the ♕ (after the *discovered attack* 2.♘h6+). Black has no way out! 5 points for <A>.

Other alternatives are not that convincing as, in each case, Black can escape practically unharmed. For example, **1.♕×c6 ♕×f5!** (but not 1...♕×c6 2.♘e7+ and 3.♘×c6). More promising, but still not very successful is **1.♕d5+ ♕×d5 2.♙×d5**. The Black ♘ is under direct assault and can't leave because it is guarding the ♗e7. However, Black has a way out via a counterattack **2...♙g6!** After **3.♘h6+ ♔g7** or **3.♙×c6 ♙×f5**, Black's position is worse, but manageable.

The ♕+♘ tandem works very efficiently in attack.

24-2 With **1.♕g4** being out of the question (due to 1...♘×g4!), White should focus on executing the ♕d5+ idea (described in 24-1). But, this time, the ♗e7 is no longer defended and, after Black captures ♕×d5, White would play ♘×e7+ and ♘×d5 getting the ♕ back and pocketing the ♗ in the process.

The idea is great, but it works only with the correct move order! After **1.♕d5+?**, Black has **1...♖f7!** defending the ♗. Whereas after **1.♗×e5 ♙×e5** (what else?) **2.♕d5+**, the Black ♕ is en prise. Black must play **2...♕×d5** allowing **3.♘×e7+** and **4.♘×d5**. 5 points for <C>.

The easiest and safest way to get rid of the key defender is via a trade.

Interim Report: Questions 13 – 24

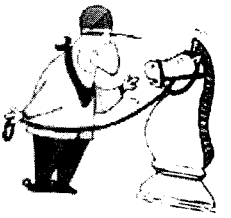
If you want to review the instructions on how to use the Interim Report table, please turn to page 43.

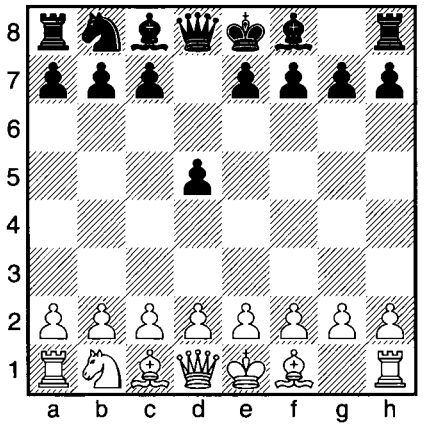
Table 1-2 *Score to Rating Conversion*

Score	Rating	Score	Rating
6	647	**66**	1449
12	810	**72**	1615
18	870	**78**	1754
24	914	**84**	1949
30	967	**90**	2079
36	1020	**96**	2165
42	1064	**102**	2254
48	1179	**108**	2343
54	1278	**114**	2473
60	1405	**120**	2567

Let's Take a Break:

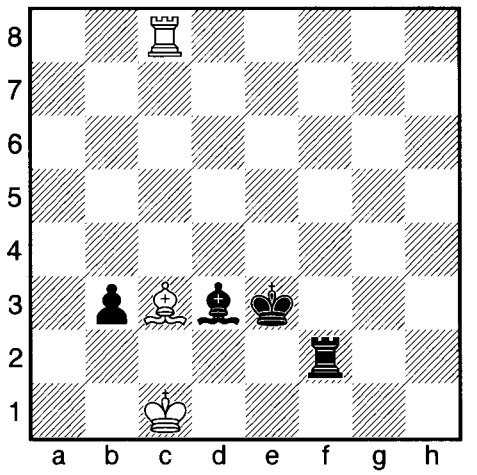
Q: How the following position can be reached after 4 moves?





A: Don't add this variation to your opening arsenal - 1.♘f3 ♙d5 2.♘e5 ♘f6 3.♘c6 ♘d7 4.♘×b8 ♘×b8 and we reach the position in the diagram.

Question #25



White to Move

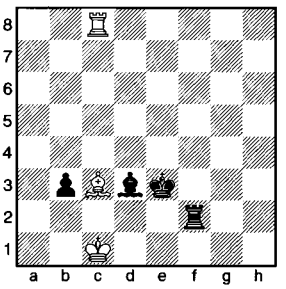
25 - 1 After 1.♗c3–d2+, ...

A	Black is winning
B	Black is a little better
C	Draw is likely
D	White is winning

25 - 2 After 1.♗c3–e5, ...

A	Black is winning
B	Black is a little better
C	Draw is likely
D	White is winning

(25) Zhang Zhong - Bologan,V *Poikovsky, 2004*



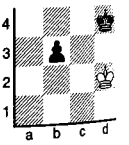
White to Move

		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A	5	21%	25%	34%	42%	44%	86%
	B	1	36%	26%	14%	29%	33%	7%
	C		38%	49%	52%	29%	23%	7%
	D	-1	5%					

2	A	5	23%	45%	62%	77%	92%	100%
	B	1	28%	38%	20%	13%	8%	
	C		46%	17%	18%	10%		
	D	-1	3%					

25-1 Knowledge of basic endgames, specifically the ♙-endgames, should help you to get a full credit for this position since **1.♗d2+** can lead to elimination of all pieces, except for the b♙.

When the dust settles after **1...♖×d2 2.♖e8+ ♗e4 3.♖×e4+! ♔×e4 5.♔×d2 ♔d4**, Black finds himself in one such position (diagram below). Make sure you commit it to memory. Black wins no matter whose move it is. This is because the Black ♙ is on the 6th rank and White can't get the *opposition.*



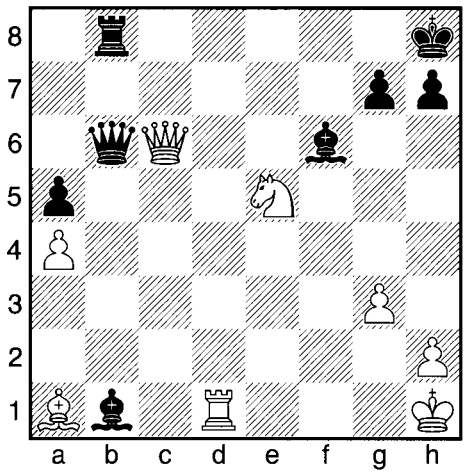
For example, **6.♔d1** (6.♔c1 ♔c3) **♔d3** (maintaining the *opposition*) **7.♔c1 ♔c3 8.♔b1 ♙b2** and Black is winning. With Black to move, he can make a waiting move ♔c4, forcing the White ♔ to step back. Next, Black regains the *opposition* and wins as described above

Note that Black shouldn't take the♗d2 unless he is certain that the ♙-endgame is won. This is because with the ♖s and the ♗s still present, Black could continue playing for a victory. This is something you can't realistically do in a theoretically drawn ♔+♙ vs. ♔ endgame.

25-2 White definitely knew his ♙ endgames, thus he played **1.♗e5**, instead of 1.♗d2+. Unfortunately for him, this way the game was even shorter. After **1...♙b2+**, White resigned in view of **2.♗×b2 ♖f1#**

What do you think was White's only practical chance in the starting position? Try 1.♖e8+!? ♗e4 2.♖×e4+! Black has a winning position, but can you win it against a friend or computer?

Question #26



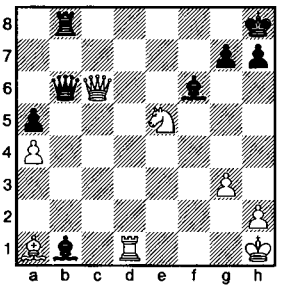
26 - 1 Black to Move. What is the *best* move?

A	1...♕b6×c6+
B	1...♕b6–b3
C	1...♗f6×e5
D	1...♙h7–h6

26 - 2 White to Move. Which is the most accurate?

A	White has a forced checkmate
B	White is winning
C	If the White ♕ were on e6, White has a checkmate
D	Both B and C are correct

(26) Training Position



		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A	5	62%	72%	96%	97%	100%	100%
	B		13%	13%	4%	3%		
	C		16%	15%				
	D		9%					

2	A		4%	14%				
	B	1	26%	19%	7%	3%	17%	
	C	1	30%	35%	47%	51%	26%	23%
	D	5	40%	42%	46%	46%	57%	77%

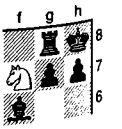
26-1 In this rather wild position the ♔s are vulnerable and several of the pieces are misplaced. However, the resolution comes quickly after the direct **1...♕×c6+**. Black simplifies the position and wins a piece, thanks to *double attack*! After **2.♘×c6 ♗e4+ 3.♔g1 ♗×c6**, Black is winning. 5 points for <A>.

26-2 The Black pieces are placed very poorly. White should focus on the ♖, which is defending simultaneously the ♕ and the weak *back-rank*.

White's simple threats are either not strong enough (1.♕×b6 ♖×b6 and the ♗f6 prevents 2.♖d8+; 1.♘f7+ ♔g8) or just can't be executed because the 8th rank is protected (1.♕c8+, 1.♕e8+, 1.♖d8+). Thus White needs to find a sneaky way to break down Black's defense.

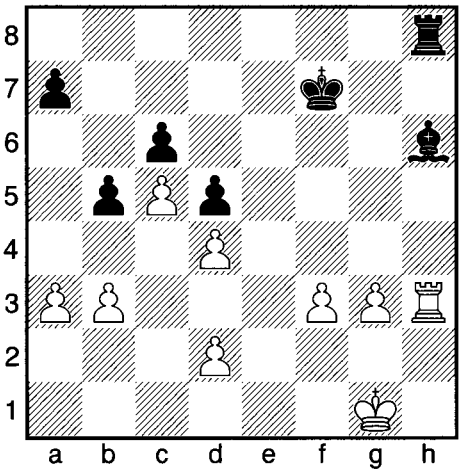
And he does just that via **1.♖d8+!** While the ♖ can be captured in three different ways, this move nevertheless makes Black's defense collapse. Black is facing an unfortunate dilemma – to give up the ♕, or be checkmated. After **1...♕×d8** (1...♖×d8? ♕×b6; 1...♗×d8?? 2.♕e8#) **2.♘f7+ ♔g8 3.♘×d8 ♖×d8** (3...♗×a1 4.♕e6+) **4.♗×f6**, White is winning. So, the choice <B> is correct – 1 point.

With his ♕ on e6, White has the famous "smothered" checkmate after **1.♘f7+ ♔g8 2.♘h6++ ♔h8** (2...♔f8 3.♕f7#) **3.♕g8+ ♖×g8 4.♘f7#** (diagram). Thus the choice <C> is also correct – 1 point.



The best choice is <D> – 5 points.

Question #27



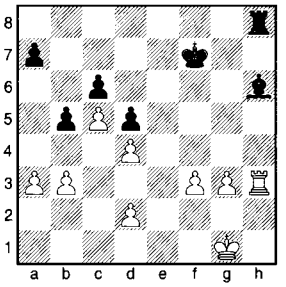
27 - 1 Black to move. What is the *best* move?

A	1...♔f7–g6
B	1...♗h6–g7
C	1...♗h6–e3+
D	Both B and C are winning for Black

27 - 2 White to move. What is the *best* move?

A	1.♔g1–f2
B	1.♙f3–f4
C	1.♖h3–h4
D	1.♖h3×h6

(27) Chekhover, V *1947* (modified)



		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A		12%	15%	8%			
	B	2	18%	20%	33%	27%	29%	23%
	C	1	30%	23%	28%	9%		
	D	5	30%	42%	31%	64%	71%	77%

2	A		37%	13%	6%	3%		
	B		23%	52%	33%	9%		
	C	1	25%	20%	24%	50%	23%	7%
	D	5	15%	15%	37%	38%	77%	93%

27-1 White has three ♙s for the ♗, but his position is nearly lost because his ♕-side ♙s are very weak. After **1...♗g7 2.♖×h8 ♗×h8** (2...♗×d4+ is OK too, but there is no need to rush), the ♗ will gobble up the White ♙s, giving Black an easy victory. 2 points for <B>.

1...♗e3+ looks like a slam-dunk as Black gains an extra ♖ after **2.♙×e3 ♖×h3**. However, note that after **3.♔g2**, the ♖ has trouble penetrating White's position. Fortunately, Black can break White's resistance by forcing him to advance the ♔-side ♙s and then the Black ♖ slips to h1. For example, **3...♖h8 4.♔g1 ♖e8 5.♔f2 ♔f6** (White is in *zugzwang* and his *fortress* cracks) **6.♙f4** (6.♔e2 ♖h8; 6.♙g4 ♔g5) **♔f5 7.♔f3 ♖g8** or **4.♙g4 ♔f6 5.♙f4 ♖h4 6.♔g3 ♖h1** etc. 1 point for <C>.

The best choice is <D> – 5 points. Subtract 1 point if you missed the defensive idea of *fortress*.

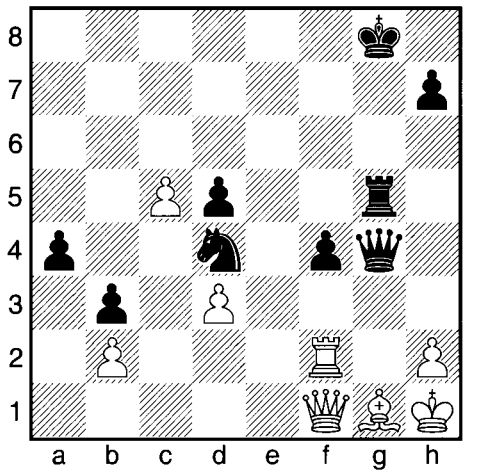
27-2 In 27-1 you saw how difficult it was for Black to win without the ♗. Thus White should play **1. ♖×h6!**, eliminating the 'monster' at once.

Since the White ♙ remains on d2 (vs. e3 after 1...♗e3+ 2.♙×e3 in 27-1), the White ♔ has two squares to shuttle back and forth no matter on which file (e or h) the Black ♖ is trying to sneak in. When the Black ♖ is on e8, White plays ♔f2–♔f1; and when the ♖ is on h8, White has ♔g2–♔g1. This allows White to keep the ♙s on f3 and g3, preventing Black from making any progress with the ♔! Draw!

The only other move that worth a credit is **1.♖h4** as it addresses both Black threats – ♗g7 and ♗e3+. 1 point for <C>.

Think of a fortress as a defensive option when you see a locked ♙-structure.

Question #28



White to Move

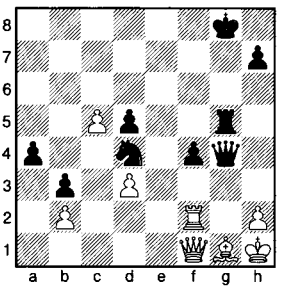
28 - 1 After 1.♖f2×f4, ...

A	Black is winning
B	The position is nearly equal
C	White is better
D	White is winning

28 - 2 After 1.♖f2–g2, ...

A	Black is winning
B	If Black ♔ were on g7, then White would be winning
C	Both A and B are correct
D	Neither A nor B are correct

(28) Bykhovsky,A – Kuznetsov,I *Moscow, 1958 (modified)*



White to Move

		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A	5	37%	33%	82%	97%	100%	100%
	B		15%	12%	4%	3%		
	C		10%	14%				
	D		38%	41%	14%			

2	A	1	35%	35%	18%	13%	17%	
	B	1	38%	25%	25%	12%		
	C	5	14%	33%	53%	75%	83%	100%
	D		13%	7%	4%			

28-1 This is a very dynamic situation. In addition to the various threats on the ♔-side, both sides have dangerous ♙s on the ♕-side that must be accounted for as well.

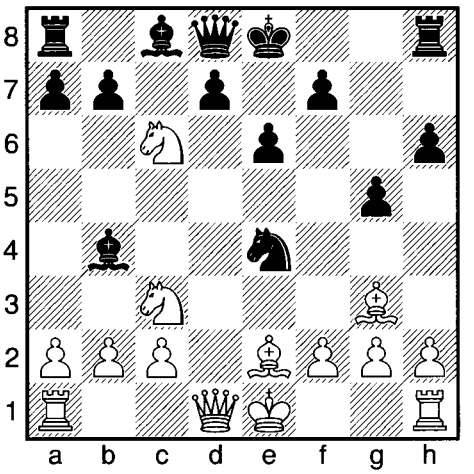
1.♖×f4 attacking the ♕ and the ♘ looks very damaging, but Black has a combination – **1...♕×g1+** (or 1...♕×f4 2.♕×f4 ♖×g1+) **2.♕×g1 ♖×g1+ 3.♔×g1 ♘e2+** and **4...♘×f4** winning a piece (5 points for <A>). I hope you also spotted that the ♘ is ready to catch the c♙ after **5.♙c6 ♘e6**. If you completely ignored the c♙ in your analysis, you only get 3 points for <A>.

28-2 The Black ♙s on the ♕-side play a major role in the analysis of **1.♖g2**. Black is winning once again (<A> is correct – 1 point), but this time the idea is different. Following simplifications on the ♔-side, Black breaks through with his ♙s on the ♕-side. After **1...♕×g2+ 2.♕×g2 ♖×g2 3.♔×g2 ♘c6** (or 3...♘e6; 3...♙a3 is OK too, but there is no need to rush) and White can't stop **4...♙a3** after which Black gets a new ♕.

Having the Black ♔ on g7 makes a huge difference. For example, in the variation above, White would play **3.♗×d4+** with check, gaining a crucial tempo and only then - **4.♔×g2**. Black's **4...♙a3** does not work anymore as after **5.♙×a3** the ♗ from d4 controls the b2 square. Black doesn't have any other options to save the ♘ after **1.♖g2**. Thus <B> is correct too – 1 point. And the best answer – <C> earns you 5 points.

When planning a combination that wins material in the endgame, always account for the potential advance of passed ♙s.

Question #29



Black to Move

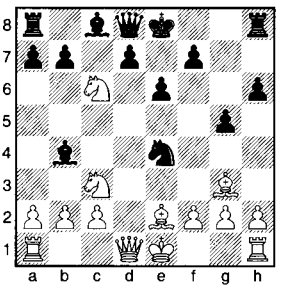
29 - 1 After 1...♙d7×c6, ...

A	The position is nearly equal
B	White is slightly better
C	White is significantly better
D	White is winning

29 - 2 After 1...♙b7×c6, ...

A	The position is nearly equal
B	White is slightly better
C	White is significantly better
D	White is winning

(29) Fernandes, A – Rattier, G *France, 1993*



Black to Move

		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A		28%	12%	9%	3%		
	B		13%	12%	7%			
	C	2	21%	14%	17%			
	D	5	38%	61%	67%	97%	100%	100%

2	A		29%	17%	8%	6%		
	B		30%	23%	36%	25%	7%	
	C	5	20%	25%	24%	27%	47%	81%
	D	2	21%	35%	32%	42%	46%	19%

29-1 The first observation about **1...♙d×c6** is that White can force Black to lose the right to castle via **2.♕×d8+**. Often, being unable to castle after ♕s are traded is not a bad thing. In fact, having the ♔ closer to the center is generally recommended in a typical endgame.

However, in this position, the Black ♔ ends up in the wrong place at the wrong time. After **2...♔×d8**, White plays **3.0–0–0+!** simultaneously attacking the ♔ and the ♘e4 (the ♘c3 is no longer *pinned*). Black must attend to the check and he loses the ♘. 5 points for <D>.

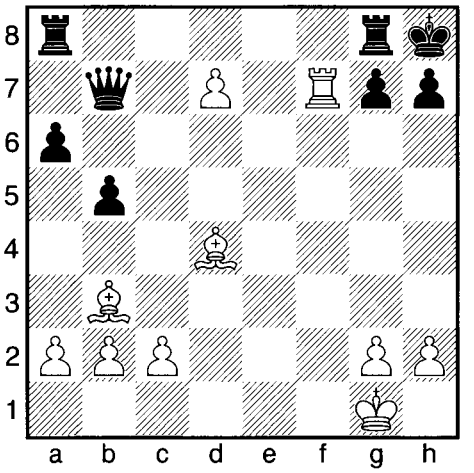
1 bonus point for spotting the following idea for Black – **3...♔e7 4.♘×e4 ♙f5**, hoping to trap the ♗g3 after ♙f4. White has various ways to solve it, for example – **5.♗d6+** or **5.♗e5**.

29-2 Capturing the ♘ on c6 with the other ♙ will also bring trouble for Black. This time, however, he is not losing immediately, thanks to some crafty defense.

After **1...♙b×c6 2.♕d4 ♗×c3+ 3.♙×c3 ♘f6** (3...♕f6 4.♗e5; 3...0–0 4.♕×e4 ♙f5 5.♕d3) **4.♗e5**, it looks like White is winning the 'poor' ♘ once again. However, Black has **4...♙c5** and, after **5.♕×c5 ♖g8**, Black still has good chances for survival. For example, **6.♗f3 ♙d5 7.♗×f6 ♕×f6 7.♕c6+ ♔e7** and White can't win the ♖ because of **8...♕×c3+**. If interested, analyze the variation in greater detail with a friend or computer.

Black should have played an in-between move 1...♗×c3+ in the starting position. After 2.♙×c3 ♙d×c6, Black has an advantage due to an extra ♙ and a better ♙-structure.

Question #30



White to Move

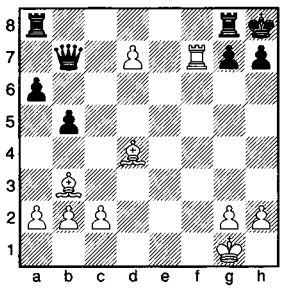
30 - 1 After 1.♙d7–d8♕, ...

A	Black is better
B	The position is nearly equal
C	White is better
D	White is winning

30 - 2 After 1.♙d7–d8♘, ...

A	Black is better
B	The position is nearly equal
C	White is better
D	White is winning

(30) Golubev, M. – Kruppa, Y. *Kiev, 1995 (analysis)*



White to Move

		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A	5	40%	49%	68%	76%	83%	96%
	B	1	21%	13%	18%	15%	9%	4%
	C		30%	21%	14%	9%	8%	
	D		9%	17%				

2	A		25%	13%	8%	3%		
	B	1	24%	32%	36%	27%	23%	3%
	C	5	21%	30%	33%	54%	60%	95%
	D	1	30%	25%	23%	16%	17%	2%

30-1 This wild position nearly happened in the game. Down so much in material, White is anxious to use the opportunity and restore the balance.

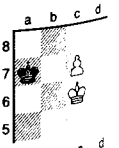
However, promoting the ♙ into the ♕ would give Black a better endgame with good winning chances and no risk at all. After **1.♙d8♕? ♕×f7!** (worse is 2...♖a×d8? See 30-2) **2.♕×a8 ♕×b3!**, Black is up an *exchange* and should feel comfortable in the resulting endgame.

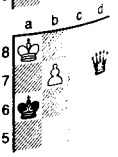
Practice the resulting ♖ vs. ♗ endgame against a friend or computer.

30-2 A completely different story develops after **1.♙d8♘!** The Black ♕ is under attack and doesn't have time to escape because of the threat of checkmate – **2.♗×g7+ ♖×g7 3.♖f8+** and **4.♖×g8#**.

This time **1...♕×f7** is not an option due to **2.♘×f7#**. Instead, Black plays **1...♖a×d8** (1...♖g×d8? 2.♗×g7+ and 3.♖×b7+) **2.♖×b7 ♖×d4 3.♗×g8 ♔×g8**, leaving White a healthy extra ♙. Due to the active ♖, Black has good drawing chances. Practice against a friend or computer.

There are two main reasons for an <u>underpromotion</u> (promoting a ♙ into something other than a ♕) – (1) avoidance of a stalemate defense (promote into a ♖, a ♗, or a ♘) when trying to win and (2) doing something that the ♕ can't do (promote into a ♘) in a dynamic situation when trying to win or to survive.

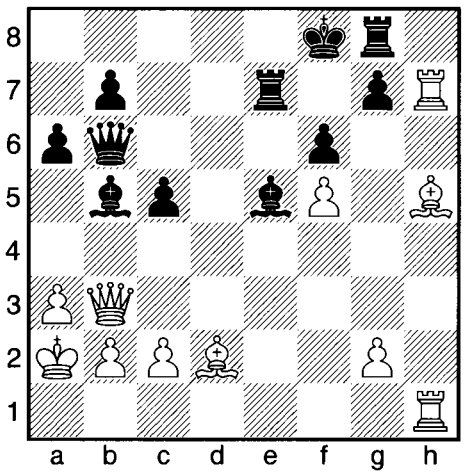
A> 

B> 

A> 1.♙c8♖ (1.♙c8♕? a stalemate) ♔a6 2.♖a8#

B> 1.♙b8♘+ (1.♙b8♕? ♕c6+ 2.♕b7+ ♕×b7#) ♔b5 2.♘×d7=

Question #31



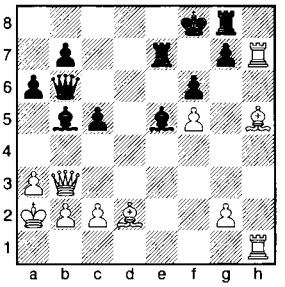
31 - 1 **White to Move. What is the *best* move?**

A	1.♙a3–a4
B	1.♗h5–e2
C	1.♗d2–h6
D	1.♕b3×g8+

31 - 2 **Black to Move. What is the *worst* move?**

A	1...♙c5–c4
B	1...♗b5–c4
C	1...♖e7–d7
D	1...♕b6–d6

(31) Training Position



		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A		13%	19%	7%	6%	4%	
	B		25%	11%				
	C		29%	17%	4%			
	D	5	33%	53%	89%	94%	96%	100%

2	A		13%					
	B		25%	38%				
	C	5	25%	37%	43%	67%	83%	95%
	D	1	37%	25%	57%	33%	17%	5%

31-1 The Black ♔ must be feeling very uncomfortable in the diagrammed position. All of White's pieces are directly or indirectly aiming at his already weakened position. In fact, White has a forced checkmate using a mixture of several tactical themes after **1.♕×g8+** (*removal of the guard*) **♔×g8 2.♖h8+** (*decoy*) **♔×h8 3.♗f7+** (*discovered check*) **♗h2** (what else?) **4.♖×h2#**.

5 points for <D>.

31-2 Considering that White is threatening checkmate after 1.♕×g8+ (see 31-1), Black's moves **1...♕d6** and **1...♖d7** seem to be good candidates for "the worst move award."

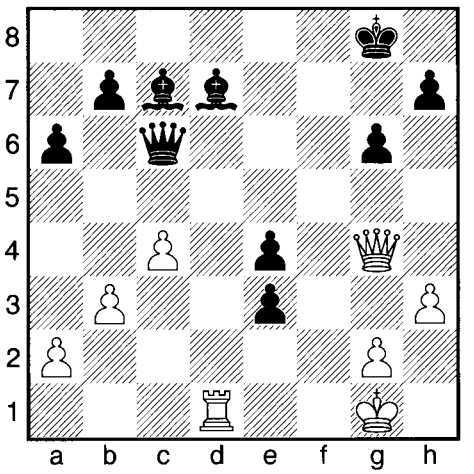
After **1...♖d7? 2.♕×g8+ ♔e7**, Black is down a ♖ and is losing, but there is no immediate checkmate.

What about **1...♕d6**? Upon closer examination, you should see that the ♕ on d6 is doing a lot more than just providing "moral support" to the ♗e5. For example, it is a big mistake now to play **2.♕×g8+??** since after **2...♔×g8 3.♖h8+ ♔×h8 4.♗f7+ ♗h2 5.♖×h2+**, there is no checkmate due to **5...♕×h2**. White is left with only 2 ♗s against Black's ♕, ♖ and ♗.

Thus, **1...♖d7** is the worst move, 5 points for <C>.

What is Black's best move? The neat 1...♗c4 not only stops ♕×g8+, but also wins the ♕, since 2.♕×c4 allows checkmate with 2...♕×b2#

Question #32



White to Move

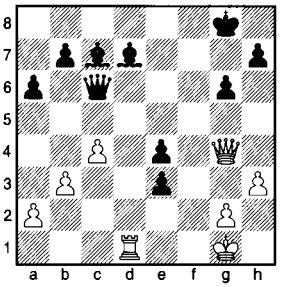
32 - 1 After 1.♕×d7, the *best* response is ...

A	1...♕c6×d7
B	1...♙e3–e2
C	1...♗c7–b6
D	1...♗c7–h2+

32 - 2 After 1.♖×d7, the *worst* response is ...

A	1...♙h7–h5
B	1...♙e3–e2
C	1...♗c7–b6
D	All of the above are equally bad

(32) NN – Richter *Berlin, 1931 (modified)*



White to Move

		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A		21%	30%	4%	6%		
	B		24%	21%	50%	49%	13%	
	C	1	25%	11%	7%	3%		
	D	5	30%	38%	39%	42%	87%	100%

2	A	5	52%	56%	62%	68%	86%	100%
	B		13%	19%	14%	12%	14%	
	C		25%	11%	6%	3%		
	D		10%	14%	18%	17%		

32-1 White is up by an *exchange* and seems to have the situation under control. Black's hope, the ♙e3, is securely guarded by the ♖ and the ♔.

After **1.♕×d7**, White is threatening the Black ♔ and also offering a favorable simplification – trading the ♕s. After either **1...♕×d7 2.♖×d7 ♙e2** (2...♗h2+!? 3.♔f1!) **3.♔f2** or **1...♙e2? 2.♕c8+ ♔g7 3.♖d7+** Black is in big trouble. Sneaky **1...♗b6** leads to an equal ♕-endgame after **2.♕×c6 ♙e2+ 3.♕×b6 ♙×d1♕+ 4.♔h2**.

However, by starting with **1...♗h2+!!**, Black keeps his options open. He would trade the ♕s after **2.♔×h2**. For example, **2...♕×d7 3.♖×d7 ♙e2** and the White can't stop the ♙. Black would keep the ♕s and go after the White ♔ in the case of **2.♔f1**. For example, **2...♕f6+ 3.♔e2 ♕f2#**.

Before giving up on a variation, consider switching the order of moves or injecting an intermediate move.

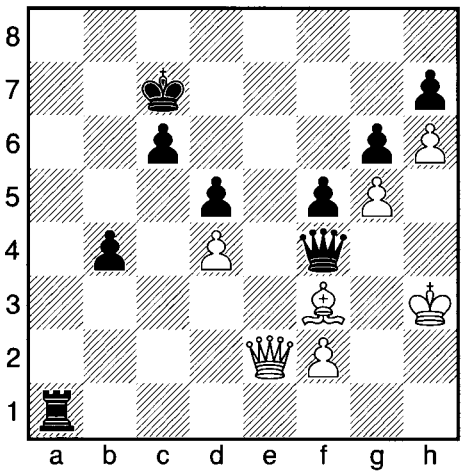
32-2 Two of the three options give Black a good game. **1...♙e2** can't be too bad, especially since Black is winning. After **2.♔f2 ♙h5**, White must give up the ♖, since the *in-between* **3.♖×c7** fails due to **3...♕f6+**

After **1...♗b6 2.♙c5! ♙e2 3.♕×e2 ♗×c5+ 4.♔h1 ♕×d7 5.♕c4+ ♔g7 6.♕×c5**, Black has winning chances.

The only bad choice is **1...♙h5**, as it allows an intermediate **2.♖×c7!** Facing the threat ♕c8#, Black's choices are bleak – a bad ♕-endgame after **2...♕×c7 3.♕×g6+**, or a bad ♙-endgame after **2...♙×g4 3.♖×c6 ♙×c6 4.♔f1**. 5 points for <A>

Practice some of the resulting endgames against a friend or computer.

Question #33



Black to Move

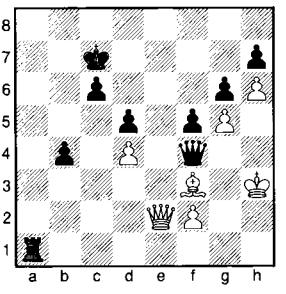
33 - 1 After 1...♖a1–a3, ...

A	Black is winning
B	Black is better
C	Draw is likely
D	White is winning

33 - 2 After 1...♕f4×f3+, ...

A	Black is winning
B	Black is better
C	Draw is likely
D	White is winning

(33) Horowitz,I - Pavey,M, *USA-Ch New York 1951*



Black to Move

		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A		49%	25%	12%	11%	14%	
	B		13%	13%	5%	3%		
	C	5	23%	58%	83%	86%	86%	100%
	D		15%	4%				

2	A	1	56%	70%	67%	57%	20%	
	B		18%					
	C	5	13%	30%	33%	43%	80%	100%
	D	-1	13%					

33-1 Black has a huge advantage in this position. He is ahead in material (a ♖ + 2 ♙s against a ♗) and his pieces are very aggressively placed. It feels like the game should be over very soon. And indeed it was, but unfortunately for Black, not the way he expected it.

No, Black didn't play **1...♖a3?** If he did, White would have had a perpetual check. After **2.♕e7+ ♔c8 3.♕f8+!! ♔c7** (3...♔b7?? 4.♕×b4+ and 5.♕×a3) **4.♕e7+** etc... Black should accept a draw.

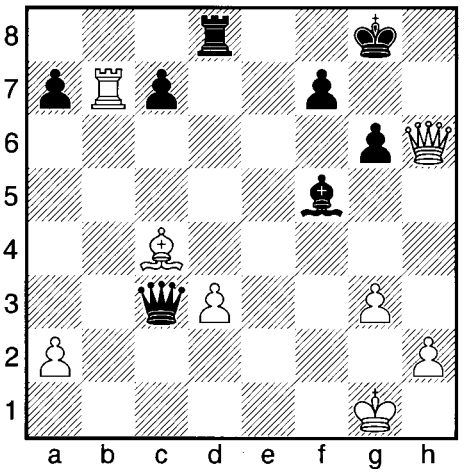
If you spot a vulnerability of your opponent's ♔, then even limited attacking power can generate a perpetual check

33-2 Instead Black played **1...♕×f3+ 2.♕×f3 ♖a3**, aiming to finish the game via a simplifying combination. If you saw this far and picked <A>, you get 1 point.

However, White found another game-saving resource, stalemate! After a calm **3.♔h4**, Black's cute tactic was busted. With only the ♖ and 2 ♙s for the ♕, Black didn't have any choice but to play **3...♖×f3** and White was stalemated. Draw!

Perpetual check and stalemate defenses will supersede any material deficiency, so be vigilant no matter what the material balance is.

Question #34



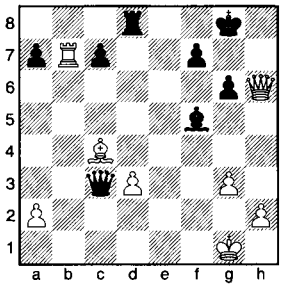
34 - 1 White to Move. Evaluate the position.

A	Black is winning
B	The position is nearly equal
C	White is better
D	White is winning

34 - 2 Black to Move. Evaluate the position.

A	Black is winning
B	The position is nearly equal
C	White is better
D	White is winning

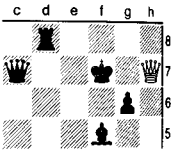
(34) Mecking,H – Tan Lian Ann, *Petropolis, 1973*



		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A		10%	7%	4%			
	B		54%	31%	29%	24%		
	C	1	23%	37%	18%	12%	17%	
	D	5	13%	25%	49%	64%	83%	100%

2	A	5	23%	62%	60%	82%	83%	100%
	B	1	32%	29%	37%	18%	17%	
	C		25%	9%	3%			
	D		10%					

34-1 When both ♔s are out in the open and under the assault of several pieces, including the ♕, it surely is nice to have your turn to move. White is winning – 5 points for <D>.



White starts with **1.♗×f7+,** pulling the ♔ out in the open (*decoy*). After **1...♔×f7**, another *decoy* – **2.♖×c7+ ♕×c7**, creates a perfect setup for a *skewer* – **3.♕h7+** (diagram) and **4.♕×c7**. The ♕ and 2 ♙s will dominate the ♖ and the ♗. If you saw this variation but picked <C>, you get 2 points. Practice the resulting endgame against a friend or computer.

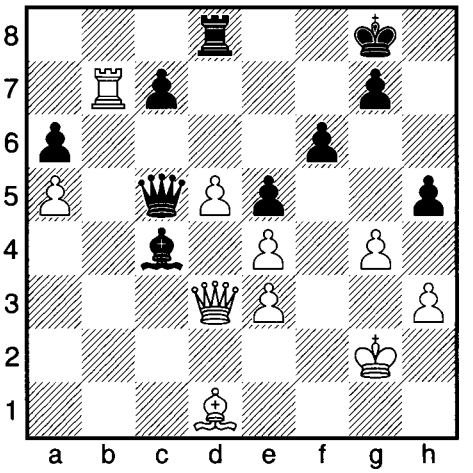
34-2 With Black to move, he gets his chance to throw a "knockout punch" first. After **1...♕d4+**, none of the squares that the White ♔ can go to proves to be safe. Black wins by combining an attack against the weak ♔ and the unprotected ♖ on b7. 5 points for <A>.

For example, **2.♔f1 ♗×d3+ 3.♗×d3 ♕×d3+** and the White ♔ has no place to hide from the ♕ and the ♖. A little better is **2.♔g2**. Black should continue his attack – **2...♗×d3 3.♗×d3 ♕d5+** and **4...♕×b7**.

Not as accurate is **2...♗e4+** (deduct 1 point). After **3.♙×e4 ♕×e4 4.♔h3**, Black can't take the ♖ (4...♕×b7? 5.♕×g6+ ♔h8 6.♕f6+). Still Black is way ahead after **4...♕×c4**. Also deduct 1 point if you picked <A>, but were planning **1...♕e1+**. After **2.♔g2 ♗e4+** (2...♕e2+ 3.♔g1 ♗e4 4.♗×f7+ is too messy) **3.♙×e4** (3.♔h3 ♕f1+) **♕×e4+** and **4...♕×c4**, we reach the same position as above.

Do not let small material gains distract you from a mating attack.

Question #35



White to Move

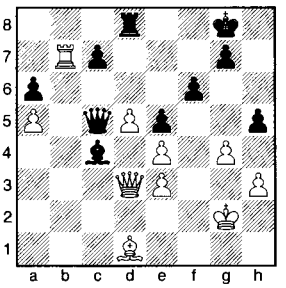
35 - 1 After 1.♕d3–c2, ...

A	Black is winning
B	Black is better
C	The position is nearly equal
D	White is winning

35 - 2 After 1.♕d3–c3, ...

A	Black is winning
B	Black is better
C	The position is nearly equal
D	White is winning

(35) De Firmian,N - Beliavsky,A *Sweden, 2004*



White to Move

		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A		45%	48%	4%			
	B		25%	24%	32%	30%	19%	17%
	C		19%	13%	18%	18%	5%	
	D	5	11%	15%	46%	52%	76%	83%
2	A	5	49%	74%	84%	86%	88%	96%
	B		15%	13%	6%	11%	5%	
	C		13%	8%	3%			
	D		23%	5%	7%	3%	7%	4%

35-1 Black was probably very happy with his position; that is until he realized that the awkward placement of the ♗c4 can't be resolved. Even though the White ♔ is not well protected and the White pieces are somewhat uncoordinated, Black can't prevent ♗e2 leading to a loss of the *pinned* ♗c4.

The best attempt might be **1...♙c6**, but after **2.♙d6! ♖×d6 3.♗e2**, White wins the ♗. 5 points for <D>.

If you saw that the *pin* on c-file could net you a ♗, but picked <C> because you were concerned about the White ♔'s safety after **3...♕×e3**, award yourself 2 points. After **4.♕×c4+ ♔h7 5.♖b8**, White should be winning. Practice the resulting position against a friend or a computer.

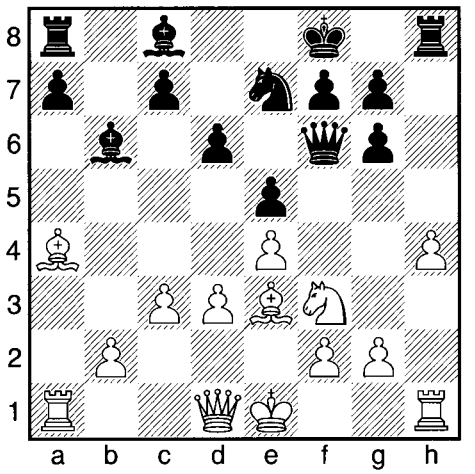
One piece stands badly, the whole position is bad. (Tarrasch, Z.)

35-2 Even though **1.♕c3** is made with the same intentions as 1.♕c2 (as discussed above), unfortunately for White, it leads to the opposite outcome. 5 points for <A>.

Black wins at once after **1...♗f1+!** (*discovered attack*) **2.♔×f1 ♕×c3**. Unlike in the 35-1, where the White ♕ was defended by the ♗d1, here the unprotected ♕ fell a victim of the counter combination.

Whenever you see a relative pin (when the pinned piece is shielding something other than the ♔), you must keep in mind the opposite tactical theme – a discovered attack, in case the pinned piece moves.

Question #36



Black to Move

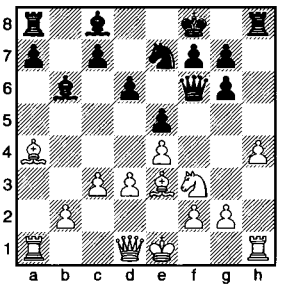
36 - 1 After 1...♗c8–e6, ...

A	Black is better
B	The position is nearly equal
C	White is better
D	White is winning

36 - 2 After 1...♗c8–g4, ...

A	Black is better
B	The position is nearly equal
C	White is better
D	White is winning

(36) Short,N - Kupreichik,V *Hastings, 1981 (modified)*



Black to Move

		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A		46%	13%	6%	6%		
	B		18%	36%				
	C		12%	25%	7%	3%		
	D	5	24%	26%	87%	91%	100%	100%

2	A		13%	19%	4%	9%		
	B		20%	13%	33%	29%	14%	3%
	C	5	29%	30%	43%	46%	73%	88%
	D		38%	38%	20%	16%	13%	9%

36-1 The Black ♕ is somewhat awkwardly placed. In fact, the ♕ has only one square available to go to. Placing another Black piece there is like cementing the sole emergency exit.

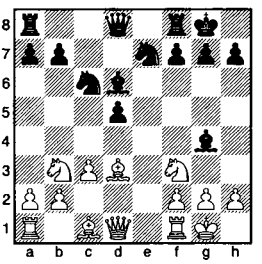
After **1...♗e6?? 2.♗g5**, Black loses the ♕. 5 points for <D>.

Continuously monitor the pieces (both yours and your opponent's) that can be attacked to see if they have escape routes.

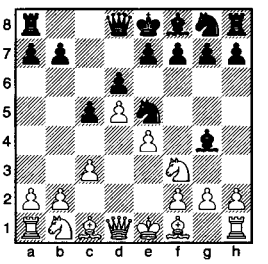
36-2 The poor placement of the Black ♕, is also a major reason why *pinning* the ♘ by **1...♗g4** is not good for Black.

White has a surprising strike – **2.♘×e5!** After **2...♗×d1 3.♘d7+ ♔g8 4.♘×f6+**, White will capture the ♗d1 and have an extra ♙ and a very good position. Black's best play is to accept the loss of a ♙ but keep the ♕s after **2...♕×e5 3.♕×g4**. White is better – 5 points for <C>. 2 points if you saw **2.♘×e5**, but picked <D>.

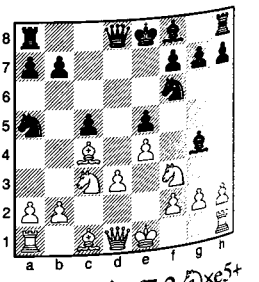
The pin of the ♘f3(f6) occurs frequently and occasionally allows an opportunity for a counterstrike. Examples with White to move:



1.♗×h7+ ♔×h7 2.♘g5+



1.♘×e5 ♗×d1 2.♗b5+



1.♗×f7+ ♔×f7 2.♘×e5+

Interim Report: Questions 25 – 36

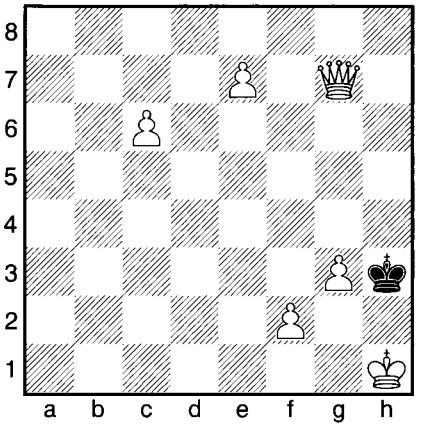
If you want to review the instructions on how to use the Interim Report table, please turn to page 43.

Table 1-3 *Score to Rating Conversion*

Score	Rating	Score	Rating
6	653	**66**	1537
12	819	**72**	1700
18	870	**78**	1776
24	891	**84**	1960
30	933	**90**	2134
36	1062	**96**	2204
42	1141	**102**	2287
48	1265	**108**	2390
54	1348	**114**	2490
60	1449	**120**	2590

Let's Take a Break:

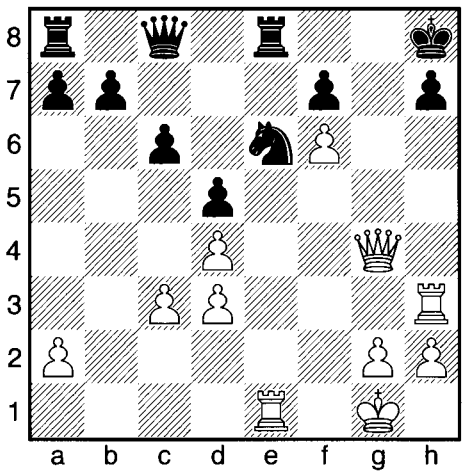
Q: How can White promote the e♙ and announce checkmate on the next move?
Hint: the ♙ can be promoted into any chess piece. I mean ***any*** *chess piece*!



White to move

A: Since each 'regular' promotion of the c♙ leads to a stalemate, White plays 1.♙e8♘ (Black). Now, Black has only one move 1...♔d8 and after 2.♕d7# both Black ♘s are checkmated at once.

Question #37



Black to Move

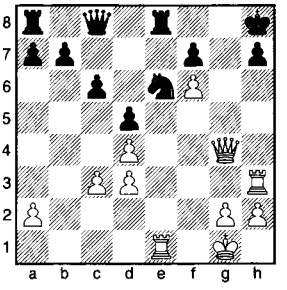
37 - 1 White is threatening to win after ...

A	1.♖h3×h7+
B	1.♖e1×e6
C	1.♖e1–e5
D	All of the above are winning moves

37 - 2 After 1...♘e6–g5, White should play ...

A	2.♖h3×h7+
B	2.♖e1×e8+
C	Either of the above is winning
D	Something other than A and B

(37) Ciccovany – Aufman *1952*



Black to Move

		Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1	A	1	13%	16%	9%	4%		
	B	1	17%	19%	7%	5%		
	C	1	20%	5%	4%			
	D	5	50%	60%	80%	91%	100%	100%

2	A	2	39%	28%	11%	6%	3%	
	B	1	20%	29%	4%			
	C	5	23%	30%	81%	94%	97%	100%
	D		18%	13%	4%			

37-1 White is dominating the ♔-side and can, with his move, finish the game in several different ways.

One is **1.♖×e6**, eliminating the defender of the key g7-square. Black can't avoid the checkmate – **1...♖g8** (else ♕×g7#) **2.♖×h7+ ♔×h7 3.♕h5#**. Another way to win is **1.♖×h7+ ♔×h7 2.♖e5** (threatening ♖h5#; if you were planning 2.♖×e6 and didn't see 2...♔h6!, subtract 1 point. White must not panic and find 3.♕f4+ with a forced checkmate 3...♔g6 4.♙h4; 3...♔h7 4.♕g5; 3...♔h5 4.♕f5+ ♔h6 5.♙g4) **2...♘g5 3.♕h5+ ♔g8 4.♕×g5+** and **5.♕g7#**. Even the calm **1.♖e5** leaves Black helpless against **2.♖×h7+** and **3.♖h5#**.

Each move leads to victory and the best choice is <D> – 5 points.

37-2 Even when given an opportunity to move, Black can't save his ♔. A nice try is **1...♘g5**, hoping for 2.♕×g5? ♖×e1+ 3.♔f2 ♕g8.

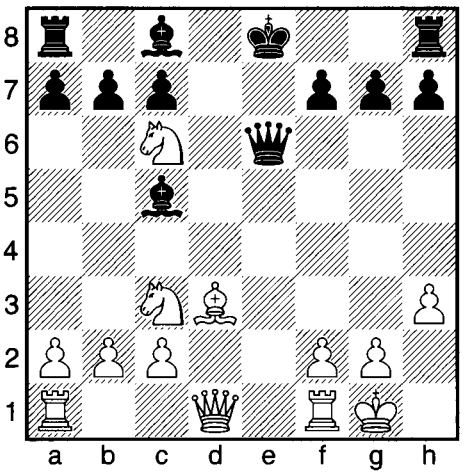
However, White can avoid this and produce a checkmate – **2.♖×h7+!! ♔×h7** (2...♘×h7 3.♕g7#) **3.♕h5+ ♔g8 4.♕×g5+** and **5.♕g7#.**

While **2.♖×e8+**, doesn't add anything to White's effort, it certainly doesn't create any problems. After **2...♕×e8 3.♖×h7+!**, White executes the above-mentioned checkmate.

Thus the best choice is <C> – 5 points.

When the number of attackers significantly exceeds the number of defenders, seek to open the ♔'s position at any cost.

Question #38



Black to Move

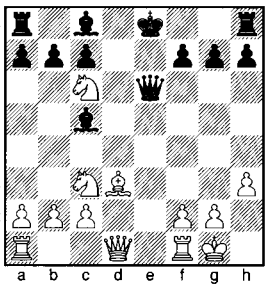
38 - 1 After 1...♕e6×c6, ...

A	Black is winning
B	The position is nearly equal
C	White is better
D	White is winning

38 - 2 After 1...♙b7×c6, ...

A	Black is winning
B	The position is nearly equal
C	White is better
D	White is winning

(38) Training Position



Black to Move

		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A	-1	5%					
	B		7%	8%				
	C		33%	20%	9%	3%		
	D	5	55%	72%	91%	97%	100%	100%

2	A	-1	2%					
	B		7%	8%				
	C		24%	13%				
	D	5	67%	79%	100%	100%	100%	100%

38-1 The Black ♔ should be feeling very uncomfortable hanging out in the middle of the open board.

After **1...♕×c6 2.♗b5**, White wins the ♕ due to the *pin*.

5 points for <D>.

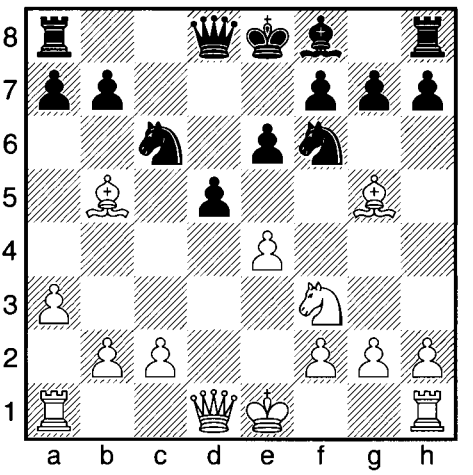
38-2 Life is not much easier for Black after **1...♙×c6**. White *pins* the ♕ again, this time on the open e-file after **2.♖e1**.

After **2...0–0 3.♖×e6 ♗×e6**, White enjoys a dominating advantage in material – the ♕ vs. the ♖.

5 points for <D>.

When the center is open and most of the pieces are still on the board, prompt castling is virtually mandatory.

Question #39



White to Move

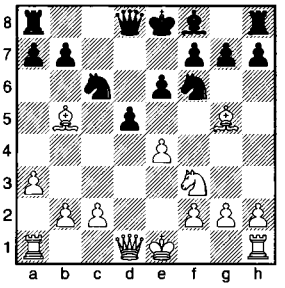
39 - 1 After 1.♙e4–e5, ...

A	White gains an extra piece
B	Black gains an extra piece
C	Both sides keep the same number of pieces
D	White wins a ♕

39 - 2 After 1.♗b5×c6+ ♙b7×c6 2.♙e4–e5, ...

A	White gains an extra piece
B	Black gains an extra piece
C	Both sides keep the same number of pieces
D	White wins a ♕

(39) Training Position



White to Move

		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A		27%	16%	5%	3%		
	B		35%	23%	9%	3%		
	C	5	23%	61%	86%	94%	100%	100%
	D	-1	5%					

2	A		46%	36%	24%	22%	17%	
	B		27%	15%	4%			
	C	5	27%	49%	72%	78%	83%	100%
	D	-1						

39-1 White's threat looks pretty convincing – the ♙e5 attacks the Black ♘, which is *pinned* against his ♕ and shouldn't move. However, in reality, Black can try several options to solve this problem.

At the minimum, Black has **1...♕a5+** attacking the White ♔ and the ♗ on b5 (*double attack*). Black wins the ♗b5 and White wins the ♘f6. Thus, the best answer is <C> – 5 points.

1 point penalty for picking <D> – White can't realistically win the Black ♕, unless Black makes a huge mistake and moves the ♘f6.

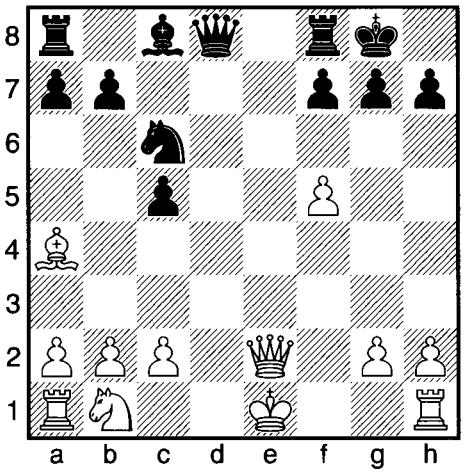
39-2 By trading the ♗b5 prior to advancing the e♙, White reduces Black's options. Unlike in 39-1, here **2...♕a5+** is not good since there is no ♗ to take. Using the check solely to get the ♕ out and enable the ♘f6 to run, fails. White has **3.♗d2** (or 3.♙b4) attacking the ♕, while the ♘f6 remains under attack.

Instead, Black can utilize a different idea – attacking the ♗g5 that is pinning the ♘. After **2...♙h6 3.♗h4 ♙g5**, White can mess up Black's ♔-side pawns, maybe even win a ♙, but the position will be just about equal and the number of pieces will definitely remain the same.

5 points for <C> if you planned **2...♙h6**, and 2 points for **2...♕a5+**.

From my experience, moves like 1.♙e5 (1...♙e4) seldom result in winning the pinned ♘. Look for the ♕ to move out with threats to various possible targets, the pinned ♘ to move attacking the ♔ or the ♕, or the h♙ to move attacking the ♗.

Question #40



Black to Move

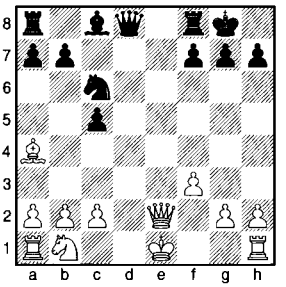
40 - 1 Which move *does not* win material?

A	1...♖f8–e8
B	1...♕d8–a5+
C	1...♕d8–h4+
D	None of the above fails to win material

40 - 2 If White to move, which is the *best* move?

A	1.0–0
B	1.♕e2–d2
C	1.♙c2–c4
D	1.♗a4×c6

(40) Training Position



Black to Move

		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A		19%	5%				
	B	5	35%	59%	71%	91%	100%	100%
	C		15%	13%	4%			
	D	1	31%	23%	25%	9%		

2	A		38%	39%	22%	3%		
	B		20%	25%	10%	7%		
	C		13%	3%				
	D	5	29%	33%	68%	90%	100%	100%

40-1 Once again we have the ♔ in the middle of the open board and, once again, the threats will be coming from all sides.

Black has a *pin* via **1...♖e8**, winning the ♕ for the ♖. He also has *double attack* on the ♔ and the ♗a4 via **1...♕a5+** (<B>) or **1...♕h4+** (<C>). Of the three assaults, just one would be met with a sigh of relief from White.

White is definitely losing material following **1...♖e8** (<A> is false) and **1...♕h4+** (<C> is false). But after **1...♕a5+**, White has **2.♘c3!** stopping the check and defending the ♗a4 at once. Thus <B> is true and earns you 5 points. You get 1 point for <D>.

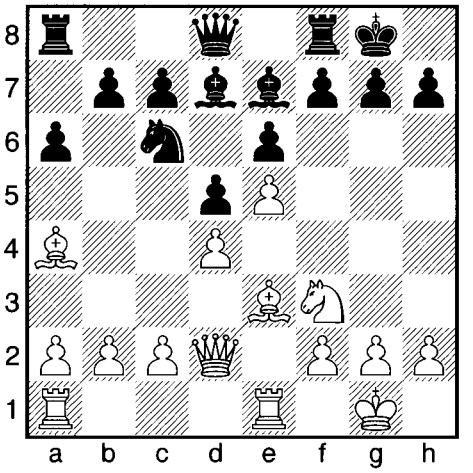
Picking from several winning moves is pleasant, but not an easy task. Stay focused!

40-2 Considering the seriousness of Black's threats, White must react quickly to address both – the *pin* as well as the *double attack*.

The only move that does that is **1.♗×c6**. After **1...♙×c6 2.0–0**, White's position is playable. 5 points for <D>.

Trying to hide the ♔ right away **1.0–0?** addresses the pin, but fails to save the ♗a4. After **1...♕d4+**, the "poor" ♗ is lost again.

Question #41



Black to Move

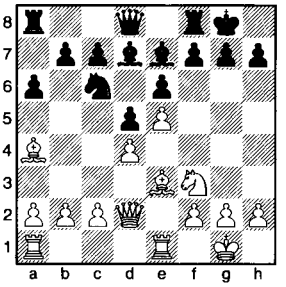
41 - 1 What is the *best* move?

A	1...♗e7–b4
B	1...♘c6×e5
C	1...♘c6×d4
D	1...♙b7–b5

41 - 2 Shift the ♙c7 to c5. What is the *best* move?

A	1...♙c5–c4
B	1...♘c6×e5
C	1...♘c6×d4
D	1...♙b7–b5

(41) Training Position



Black to Move

		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A		19%	13%	8%	3%		
	B	5	18%	35%	75%	85%	97%	100%
	C	1	28%	19%	17%	12%	3%	
	D		35%	33%				

2	A		13%	4%	4%			
	B	1	14%	14%	6%	10%	4%	
	C	1	19%	27%	11%	3%		
	D	5	54%	55%	79%	87%	96%	100%

41-1 White has a very solid position. He has a strong center and almost all of his pieces are very well placed. And "almost" didn't count the ♖a1, as it can join the game at will. The only piece that is vulnerable at the moment is the ♗a4. It is not protected and has limited mobility.

In fact, Black has an immediate opportunity to strike against the ♗ via *discovered attack*. After **1...♘×e5** or **1...♘×d4**, the ♗d7 is attacking the ♗a4. If **2.♗×d7**, then **2...♘×f3+ 3.♙×f3 ♕×d7**. The net gain in all variations is an extra ♙ for Black.

The possible problem with Black's idea might happen if the Black ♘ can be taken with an attack on something or with a defense of the 'lonely' ♗a4. That is why **1...♘×d4** fails. After **2.♕×d4 ♙c5 3.♕g4**, the ♕ defends the ♗ and White has the advantage. Selecting **1...♘×e5!** (<B>), earns you 5 points.

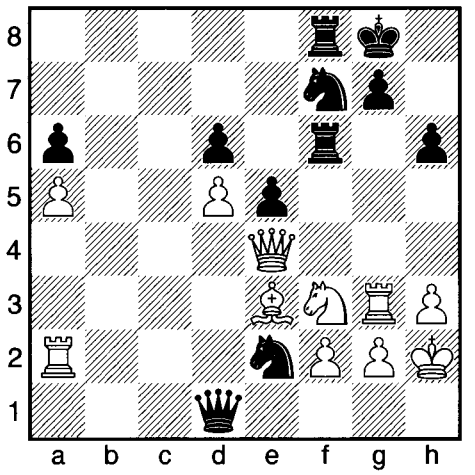
Note that **1...♘×e5** works even without the intermediate check 2...♘×f3+. After 2.♗×d7, Black also has 2...♘×d7.

41-2 Having the Black ♙ on c5 instead of c7 doesn't hinder the **1...♘×e5** idea and even makes **1...♘×d4** a viable option too (no more 2.♕×d4 defending the ♗). You get 1 point for picking <B> or <C>.

However, winning a ♙ is not the optimal result in this position. We have already discussed that the ♗a4 has limited mobility, and, with the Black ♙ on c5, it can be trapped. After **1...♙b5 2.♗b3 ♙c4**, Black traps and wins the ♗. 5 points for <D>.

A piece that is not sufficiently protected and has limited mobility makes an excellent target.

Question #42



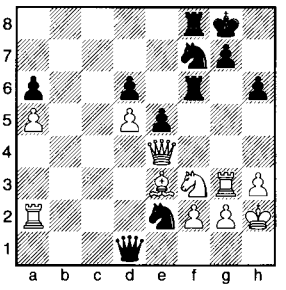
42 - 1 **Black to Move. What is the *best* move?**

A	1...♘e2–c3
B	1...♘e2×g3
C	1...♖f6×f3
D	1...♘f7–g5

42 - 2 **White to Move. What is the *best* move?**

A	1.♖a2×e2
B	1.♖a2–d2
C	1.♗e3×h6
D	1.♖g3–g4

(42) Kramnik,V – Kozlov,V *URS, 1989 (modified)*



		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A		23%	32%	11%	3%	7%	4%
	B	5	24%	33%	58%	64%	73%	88%
	C		25%	22%	23%	27%	20%	8%
	D		28%	13%	8%	6%		

2	A	5	52%	55%	67%	76%	100%	100%
	B		14%	12%				
	C		15%	17%	4%	12%		
	D	1	19%	16%	29%	12%		

42-1 This is a very dynamic position. Both sides have actively placed pieces and various targets to go after.

With his turn to move, Black should not look for anything fancy and just grab the *exchange* after **1...♘×g3** (5 points for <B>).

Other aggressive attempts achieve nothing spectacular. The ♘-fork – **1...♘c3** fails to win an exchange due to **2.♕c2**. An attempt to remove the defender of g1 via **1...♖×f3** also proves to be fruitless. After **2.♙×f3**, the ♖g3 prevents 3...♕g1#.

42-2 With his turn to move, White needs to account for Black's threats in his plans. Thus we can eliminate 1.♖d2 and 1.♗×h6, both allowing 1...♘×g3.

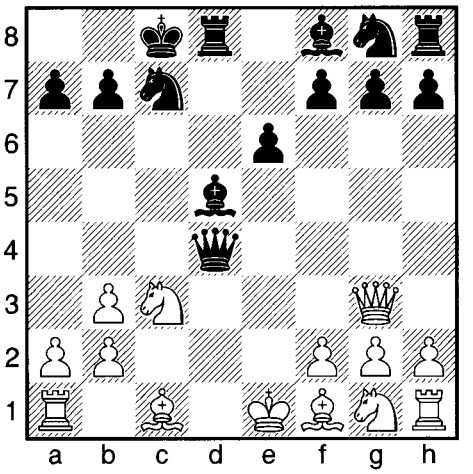
Note that the annoying ♘e2 is also a little vulnerable. While it is defended at the moment, if the ♗e3 would disappear, the ♕ would attack the ♘ or anything else occupying the e2-square.

The ♗e3 can't really disappear, but a move with a threat, a check perhaps, would do some magic for White. Thus comes the nice combination based on *decoy* and *discovered attack*.

After **1.♖×e2! ♕×e2 2.♖×g7+ ♔×g7** (the "gift" must be accepted – 3...♔h8? 4.♕h7#) **3.♗×h6+** and **4.♕×e2**, White was able to get rid of both dangerous Black pieces (the ♕ and the ♘). The outcome – a very comfortable endgame where the White ♕ is much stronger than the pair of ♖s. 5 points for <A> if you saw **2.♖×g7+**, otherwise only 2 points.

Practice the resulting endgame against a friend or computer.

Question #43



Black to Move

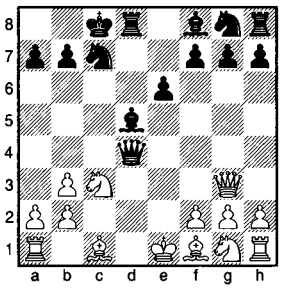
43 - 1 After 1...♗f8–b4 2.♘g1–e2, ...

A	Black is Winning
B	Black is Better
C	The position is nearly equal
D	White is Winning

43 - 2 Which is the *worst* move?

A	1...♗f8–b4
B	1...♗f8–d6
C	1...♘g8–f6
D	1...♙a7–a6

(43) Training Position



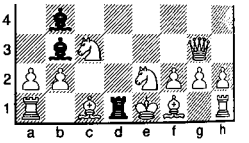
Black to Move

		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A	5	27%	33%	57%	79%	87%	94%
	B		37%	23%	28%	18%	13%	6%
	C		23%	35%	11%			
	D		13%	9%	4%	3%		

2	A		27%	19%				
	B		13%	23%	11%			
	C	5	25%	33%	60%	85%	92%	94%
	D		35%	25%	29%	15%	8%	6%

43-1 The ♕–♗–♖ setup on the d-file looks threatening. Black is aiming at the d1-square. After the initial **1...♗b4 2.♘e2**, the usual formula for discovered attack – "the ♗d5 moves and attacks something," won't work, since the Black ♕ is under attack from the ♘e2.

Instead, Black has a spectacular mate in 3 moves! It all starts with the *decoy* followed by the *discovered double check* and finally – checkmate. Enjoy – **2...♕d1+! 3.♔×d1 ♗×b3++ 4.♔e1 ♖d1#**.



A regular check may be responded to in up to 3 different ways – by capturing, blocking, or running away. A double check allows only one possible response – running away.

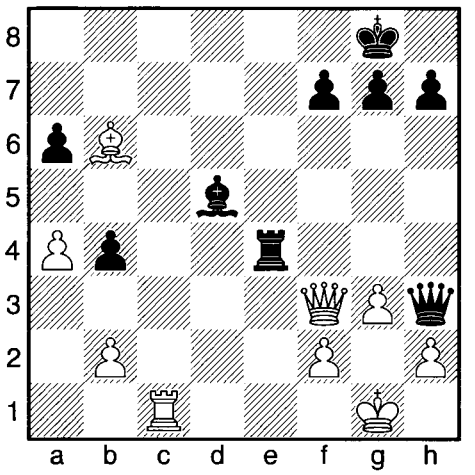
43-2 To make the biggest mistake, Black need not do anything special to aid White, but simply miss White's threat.

Indeed, White is planning a temporary ♕ sacrifice to set up a ♘-fork. After **1.♕×c7+ ♔×c7 2.♘b5+**, White gets back the ♕ and gains the ♘ in the process.

Of the four options listed, the only move that doesn't prevent this from happening is **1...♘f6**. Thus, it gets the dubious "honors" of being the worst move. 5 points for <C>.

A simple tactic can easily destroy an excellent strategic position.

Question #44



Black to Move

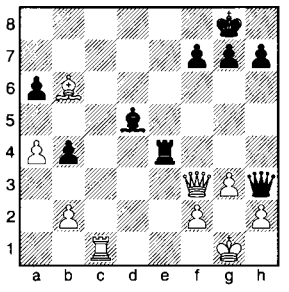
44 - 1 White is planning to play ...

A	1.♖c1–c8+
B	1.♕f3–h5
C	1.♕f3–g2
D	None of the above

44 - 2 What is the most accurate statement?

A	After 1...♖e4–e5 Black is winning
B	After 1...♖e4–e5 Black is significantly better
C	After 1...♖e4–e5 White is winning
D	After 1...♖e4–e1+ Black is winning

(44) Luchkovsky – Gridnev *correspondence, 1976*



Black to Move

		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A		6%	5%				
	B		38%	28%	24%	15%	6%	
	C		13%	5%				
	D	5	43%	62%	76%	85%	94%	100%

2	A	1	34%	38%	54%	46%	38%	9%
	B		13%	16%	21%	24%	38%	21%
	C	5	19%	22%	21%	30%	44%	70%
	D		34%	24%	4%			

44-1 Both sides are balancing on a thin rope here. White's problems are the huge "holes" near his ♔ and the Black ♕, which is ready to penetrate to g2 with the support of the ♗d5. Black's Achilles' heel is his *back-rank.*

At the moment, White can't be planning to play **1.♖c8+?? ♕×c8** or **1.♕g2** (or 1.♕h5) **♖e1+ 2.♖×e1 ♕×g2#**. Thus the correct choice is <D> – 5 points.

White's only way to continue defending is **1.♖d1**.

44-2 Black should be aggressive, but also vigilant, remembering his "soft" spot. For example, bad is **1...♖e1+?? 2.♖×e1 ♗×f3**, as White gets the last laugh after **3.♖e8#**.

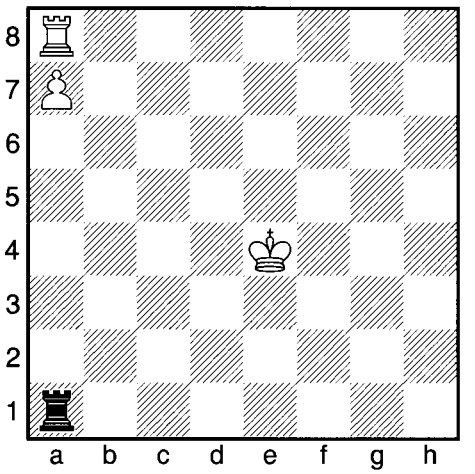
1...♖e5 is a very attractive option that seem strong enough to finish the game at once. Everything appears to be like clockwork for Black:

- the ♗d5 is defended,
- the Black ♕ prevents ♖c8+,
- the e-file is still under Black's control – no worries about ♖e8+,
- and the White ♕ can't leave due to ♕g2#.

Not a pretty picture as far as White is concerned, isn't it? Yet you only get 1 point for choosing <A>. White has a fantastic **2.♙g4!!**, making the 'clock' malfunction. Suddenly, Black is lost since, to stop 3.♖c8#, he would have to give up the ♕.

Watch your back ... rank!

Question #45



Black to Move

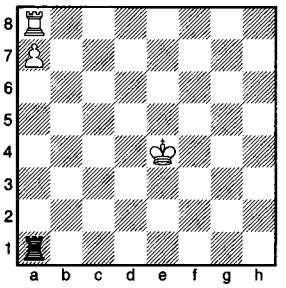
45 - 1 What is the *worst* place for the Black ♔ to be?

A	♔ on d6
B	♔ on e6
C	♔ on f6
D	All of the above should lead to the same result

45 - 2 Which is the most accurate statement?

A	With the Black ♔ on f2, Black can Draw
B	With the Black ♔ on a5, Black can Draw
C	With the Black ♔ on g4, Black can Draw
D	Both A and B are correct

(45) Training Position



Black to Move

		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A		12%	24%	7%			
	B	5	13%	19%	52%	76%	100%	100%
	C		27%	18%				
	D		48%	39%	41%	24%		

2	A		22%	14%				
	B	5	23%	56%	71%	73%	84%	91%
	C		12%	9%				
	D	2	43%	21%	29%	27%	16%	9%

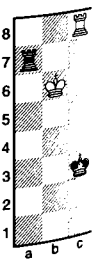
45-1 The White ♖ is stuck on a8 and desperately trying to get out. The White ♔ can't free it. Whenever the White ♔ reaches either the b6 or b7-squares and protects the ♙, Black will drive him away with ♖ checks.

The only other way to free the ♖ is by attacking the Black ♔. From the d6-square, Black can play **1...♔c7** and from the f6-square – **1...♔g7**, reaching the safe areas. The e6-square is the worst spot (5 points for <B>). White is threatening ♖e8+ and ♙a8♕. Even with his move, Black can't escape. After **1...♔f7** (e7, d7), White doesn't have a check, but can play **2.♖h8 ♖×a7 3.♖h7+**, winning the ♖ with a *skewer*. Checks by the Black ♖ (instead of 2...♖×a7) would just postpone the inevitable.

45-2 The Black ♔ on g4 is like a sitting duck, with no place to hide from the check by the White ♖. At the same time, having the ♔ on a5 gives Black an easy draw after **1...♔b6 2.♖b8+** (nothing better) **♔×a7**. Thus <B> is true and <C> is false.

The most complex option is <A>, with the Black ♔ on f2. From there, he can try to hide from the checks behind his adversary, after **1...♔e2!**

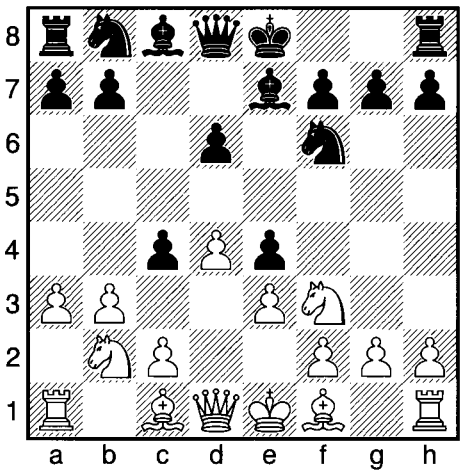
This clever idea almost works. White still wins by setting up a *discovered check*. After **2.♔d4 ♔d2 3.♔c5 ♔c3 4.♖c8 ♖×a7 5.♔b6+** (diagram), White wins the ♖.



White also wins after **3...♖a5+ 4.♔b6**, or **3...♖c1+ 4.♔b4 ♖b1+ 5.♔a3** etc... 5 points for choice <B>.

Practice the various endgame setups discussed above against a friend or computer.

Question #46



White to Move

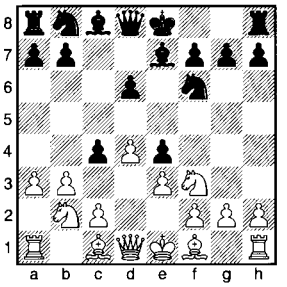
46 - 1 Which is the *best* move?

A	1.♘f3–g5
B	1.♘f3–h4
C	1.♘f3–g1
D	1.♘f3–d2

46 - 2 Shift the ♘b2 to c3. Which is the *best* move?

A	1.♘f3–g5
B	1.♘f3–h4
C	1.♘f3–g1
D	1.♘f3–d2

(46) Training Position



White to Move

		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A		25%	8%	11%	5%		
	B		14%	13%				
	C	5	43%	72%	83%	95%	100%	100%
	D		18%	7%	6%			

2	A		25%	3%	4%	4%		
	B		13%	8%				
	C	3	27%	18%	14%			
	D	5	35%	71%	82%	91%	100%	100%

46-1 There is no safer place than home! Indeed, the g1-square is the only safe spot for the attacked ♘f3. 5 points for <C>.

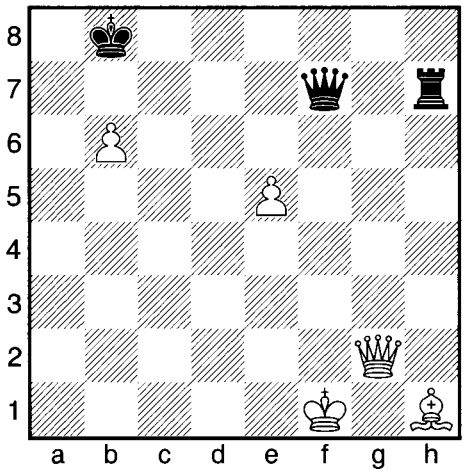
Other moves with the ♘ lead to disaster. For example, **1.♘g5? ♕a5+** (*double attack*) and **2...♕×g5**. In the case of **1.♘h4 ♙g5**, the ♘ is *trapped*. Finally, after **1.♘d2? ♙c3**, both White ♘s are under attack and one of them will be lost once again.

46-2 With his ♘ shifted from b2 to c3, White has a perfectly safe option – **1.♘d2**. This also happens to be a 'natural' place for the ♘ in positions with the ♙-structure similar to the one in the diagram. 5 points for <D>.

The squares g5 and h4 continue to be unsafe for the ♘ – **1.♘g5? ♕a5** (*double attack;* 2.♘g×e4 ♘×e4 3.♙b4 ♘×c3 or 3...♕f5) and **1.♘h4? ♙g5** (*trapping*). Finally, the square g1 is still safe, but you should not bring the ♘ back voluntarily.

Sometimes you must retreat to address a threat. Under normal circumstances you should not be moving your pieces back to their starting positions.

Question #47



White to Move

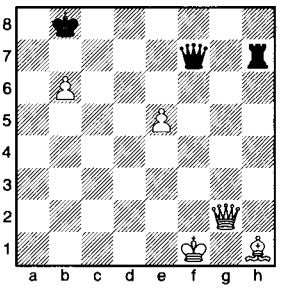
47 - 1 Which is the *best* move?

A	1.♔f1–e1
B	1.♔f1–e2
C	1.♔f1–g1
D	All of the above moves will lead to the same result

47 - 2 After 1.♕g2–f3, which is the *best* move?

A	1...♖h7×h1+
B	1...♕f7×f3+
C	1...♔b8–c8
D	All of the above moves will lead to the same result

(47) Kubbel, L. *Study, 1925 (modified)*



White to Move

		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A	2	27%	71%	79%	73%	66%	53%
	B		28%	6%				
	C		30%	5%				
	D	5	15%	18%	21%	27%	34%	47%

2	A	5	68%	87%	93%	97%	100%	100%
	B		7%					
	C		12%					
	D		13%	13%	7%	3%		

47-1 Neither ♔ is enjoying this endgame. The threat 1.♕a8# appears to be very tough to handle, but first White needs to get out from check.

It looks like the following two options can be eliminated first – **1.♔g1** ♖**g7!** (Black wins) and **1.♔e2** ♕**c4+!** (or 1...♕a2+, and Black has at least a draw). At the same time, **1.♔e1!** appears to eliminate checks and force Black to play **1...♖×h1+** to stop ♕a8#. After **2.♕×h1**, White has winning chances in the resulting ♕-endgame. If this was the thought process that led you to selecting <A>, you get 2 well-deserved points.

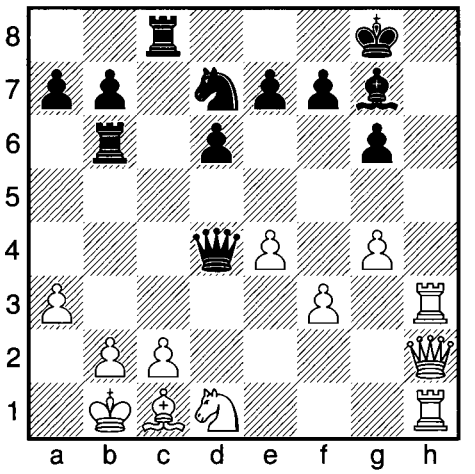
To get more, you must find the shocking **1...♕a2!!** The checkmate is stopped and the ♕ is safe – **2.♕×a2** ♖**×h1+ 3.♔d2** ♖**h2+** (*skewer*) and **4...♖×a2**. Also, Black has strong threats of his own – 2...♖×h1+ 3.♕×h1 ♕a1+ and 2...♕a1+ 3.♔f2 ♕×h1, which White can't stop.

Once you have determined that it is Black who is winning after **1.♔e1**, you must comeback and study **1.♔e2** more seriously. Perhaps Black doesn't have anything better than a draw. However, armed with the idea of a *skewer*, Black has **1...♖h2!** winning after **2.♕×h2** ♕**a2+**.

Thus all three White moves lead to the same outcome – win for Black! 5 points for <D>. You get 1 extra point if you saw **1.♔e2** ♖**h2!**

47-2 Playing **1.♕f3** won't help White to save the game. Since the White ♕ is shielding the White ♔, it can't move (*absolute pin*), leaving the White ♗ en prise. After **1...♖×h1+** Black wins not only the ♗, but the White ♕ as well – **2.♔g2** ♖**g1+ 3.♔f2** ♖**f1+** etc... 5 points for <A>.

Question #48



White to Move

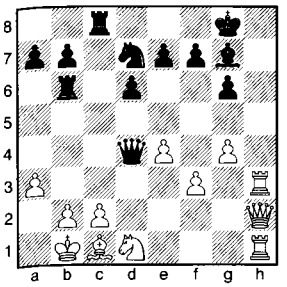
48 - 1 After 1.♗c1–e3, ...

A	Black is winning
B	The position is nearly equal
C	White is better
D	White is winning

48 - 2 After 1.♖h3–h8+, ...

A	Black is winning
B	The position is nearly equal
C	White is better
D	White is winning

(48) Kosteniuk,A – Pogonina,N *Rus-Ch(w), 2005 (modified)*



White to Move

		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A	5	17%	33%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	B		31%	13%				
	C		13%					
	D		39%	54%				

2	A		28%	25%	14%			
	B		20%	13%				
	C		14%					
	D	5	38%	62%	86%	100%	100%	100%

48-1 White's 'softest' spot is the b♙, with three attackers and three defenders creating a shaky balance. Moving one of the defenders away, even for a noble cause of winning *an exchange,* proves unwise.

After **1.♗e3? ♖×b2+**, White is checkmated in all lines. For example, **2.♘×b2 ♕×b2#**, or **2.♔c1**(a1) **♖b1+ 3.♔×b1 ♕a1#**.

5 points for <A>.

48-2 At the same time, Black's weakest link is the h8-square. White has all of his major pieces zeroing in on it. Black balances that with the three defenders – the ♗, ♕ and ♔. Somewhat unexpectedly, the presence of the unprotected ♖ on c8 disturbs this equilibrium.

After **1.♖h8+! ♗×h8 2.♕h7+ ♔f8 3.♕×h8+ ♕×h8 4.♖×h8+ ♔g7 5.♖×c8**, White gains a piece without any compensation.

5 points for <D>

When brutal force against a single target fails, find another target and try to combine the threats.

Interim Report: Questions 37 – 48

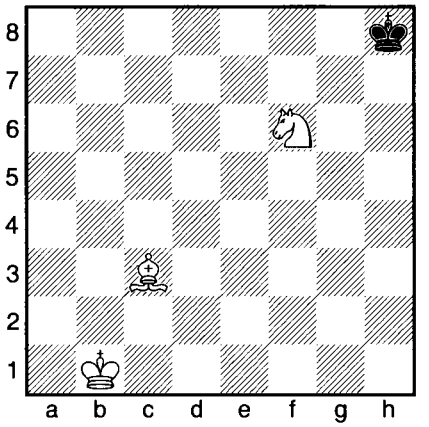
If you want to review the instructions on how to use the Interim Report table, please turn to pages 43.

Table 1-4 *Score to Rating Conversion*

Score	Rating	Score	Rating
6	590	**66**	1420
12	739	**72**	1590
18	768	**78**	1645
24	817	**84**	1716
30	971	**90**	1906
36	1054	**96**	2005
42	1117	**102**	2133
48	1204	**108**	2287
54	1280	**114**	2380
60	1333	**120**	2501

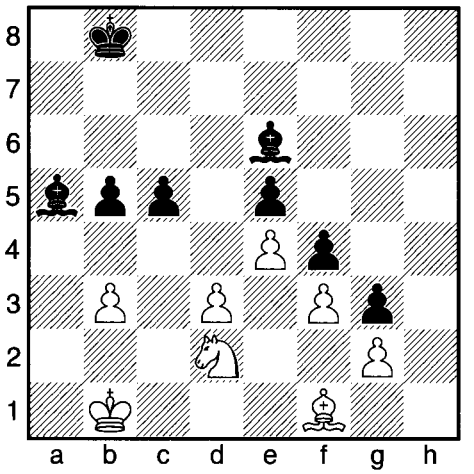
Let's Take a Break:

Q: In the following position find how White can make a checkmate in ½ of a move.



A: Checkmate is accomplished by lifting the ♘, but not yet placing it somewhere else on the board. Hence the ½ move.

Question #49



White to Move

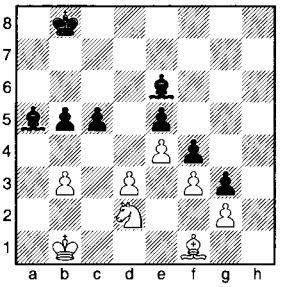
49 - 1 What result do you expect?

A	Black *definitely* wins
B	Black is *likely* to win
C	Draw is *likely*
D	*Definite* Draw

49 - 2 If you replace the ♗ on f1 with a ♘, then ...

A	Black *definitely* wins
B	Black is *likely* to win
C	Draw is *likely*
D	*Definite* Draw

(49) Paulic – Vaisovich, *1976 (modified)*



White to Move

		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A	1	23%	32%	38%	57%	20%	11%
	B	1	29%	13%	14%	6%		
	C	2	23%	33%	23%	9%	17%	19%
	D	5	25%	22%	25%	28%	63%	70%

2	A	5	21%	25%	32%	52%	67%	83%
	B	1	25%	24%	7%	21%		
	C		32%	23%	29%	6%		
	D		22%	28%	32%	21%	33%	17%

49-1 It looks like White is in big trouble here. The b♙ is very valuable, and its defender is under attack. Black seems destined to win the ♙ and reach a won ♗-endgame. Yet, you get only 1 point for <A> or <B>. That is because White has another remarkable resource.

This is a rare example when a ♙ is more valuable than a ♘ in a defensive situation. After **1.♘c4! ♙×c4 2.♙d×c4**, White builds a *fortress*. The two typical ways to overcome the *fortress* (brutal force and *zugzwang*) fail here. The White ♔ will stay on c2 and the ♗ will shuttle between f1-e2-d3 (no *zugzwang*!). The Black ♔ can't get past a2, the dark-squared ♗ has no targets and the light-squared ♗'s threats (♗×c4, ♗×e4, ♗×f3 or ♗h3) can be controlled by a careful play of the White ♗. Declining the ♘ on the 1st move doesn't make any difference since White can just leave it on c4. White has a definite draw.

5 points for <D>. Subtract 3 points if you were planning **2.♙b×c4**. Black's light-squared ♗ could break-in via a4, leading to the eventual collapse of White's *fortress*. The only way you don't get any points is if you picked <C> or <D>, but didn't see 1.♘c4 and the *fortress*.

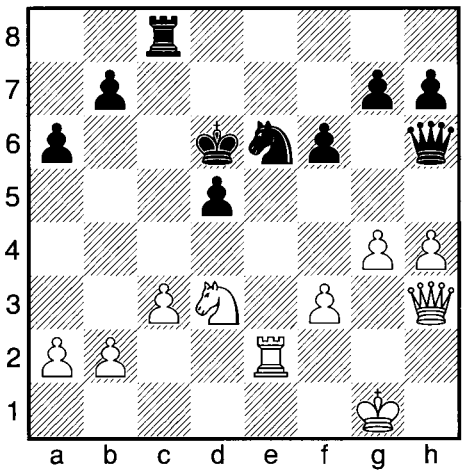
A true fortress is a passive but unbreakable defensive setup.

49-2 Having the ♘ on f1 instead of the ♗ solidifies the position of the ♘d2. And … that is where the positive ends.

Both ♘s are 'gasping for air' with no good squares available to them. Black has an immediate tactical threat – **1...♗h3!!** Even with his turn to move, White can't stop it. 5 points for <A>.

A closed position doesn't always imply that the ♘ is better than the ♗

Question #50



White to Move

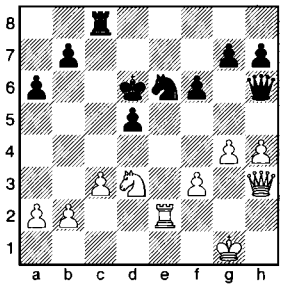
50 - 1 What is the *best* move?

A	1.♕h3–h2+
B	1.♙g4–g5
C	1.♖e2×e6+
D	1.♙f3–f4

50 - 2 After 1.♕h3–g3+, ...

A	Black is better
B	The position is nearly equal
C	White is better
D	White is winning

(50) Ruotonen – Gerhard *corr., 1974*



White to Move

		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A		7%					
	B		28%	26%				
	C	5	47%	74%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	D		18%					

2	A		11%	15%				
	B		39%	25%	44%	20%		
	C		23%	23%	21%	23%	11%	8%
	D	5	27%	37%	35%	57%	89%	92%

50-1 Black's position is not attractive at all. The Black ♔ is stuck in the middle of the board with very little protection. The Black ♕ is facing a possible assault from the White ♙s and has only one square available to go to. All the White pieces are ready to attack, including the ♕, which is only temporarily blocked by the ♙s.

White wins at once after **1.♖×e6+**. For example, **1...♔×e6 2.♙g5+** *(discovered attack)* winning the ♕, or **1...♔d7 2.♙g5**, or **1...♔c7 2.♕g3+** with checkmate on the next move.

Changing the order of moves and starting with **1.♙g5** won't work. After **1...♙×g5**, the Black ♕ defends the ♘ preventing 2.♕(♖)×e6+.

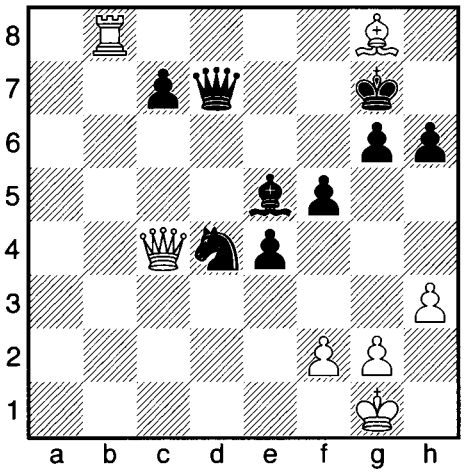
5 points for <C>.

50-2 White is also winning after **1.♕g3+**. His ultimate target remains the same – the Black ♕, however the tactical idea is slightly different now. Instead of winning the ♕ via a *discovered attack*, White is planning to *trap* her first and then win with a ♘*-fork.*

After the Black ♔ moves away from the check, White plays **2.♖×e6** ♔**×e6** (otherwise White has an extra ♘ and a winning position) **3.♙g5** ♙**×g5 4.♙×g5** ♕**g6**(h5). And then comes the ♘-fork – **5.♘f4+**, winning the Black ♕. Black only has the ♖ to show for it and is lost.

5 points for <D>

Question #51



White to Move

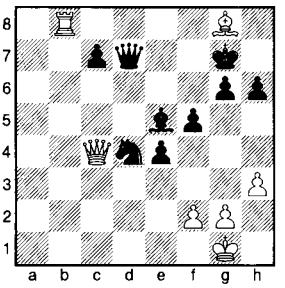
51 - 1 After 1.♗g8–h7, ...

A	Black is winning
B	The position is dynamically balanced
C	White is significantly better
D	White is winning

51 - 2 After 1.♖b8–d8, ...

A	Black is winning
B	The position is dynamically balanced
C	White is significantly better
D	White is winning

(51) Garcia Albarracin,F - Ramirez Diaz,J *Spain 2004*



White to Move

		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A	5	27%	30%	57%	71%	78%	86%
	B		19%	21%	23%	9%	10%	4%
	C		21%	19%	11%	12%	12%	10%
	D		33%	30%	9%	8%		

2	A		15%	19%	7%	18%		
	B	5	25%	38%	43%	67%	100%	100%
	C		13%	30%	14%	6%		
	D		47%	13%	36%	9%		

51-1 Let's start with a quick overview of the position. Material is approximately equal (♘ + 2 ♙s vs. ♖), White is attacking the Black ♔, the White pieces are somewhat misplaced, and White's *back-rank* is weak.

In fact, the latter point is the most important one here. Disregarding it could cost White the game. For example, after the cute **1.♗h7**.

White is ready to occupy the g8-square with some serious threats to the Black ♔, but it is Black who gets a head start. After **1...♘f3+! 2.♙×f3 ♕d1+ 3.♕f1** (3.♔g2 ♙×f3#) **♗h2+ 4.♔g2** (4.♔×h2 ♕×f1) **♙×f3+**, Black wins the ♕ and the game. 5 points for <A>.

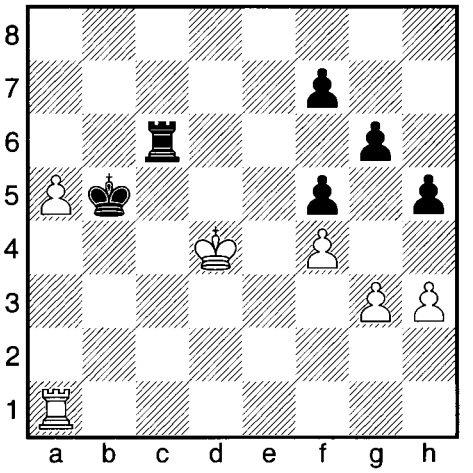
51-2 Once White recognizes the Black's threat, he should definitely consider **1.♖d8!**

The ♖ is untouchable there as Black gets checkmated after the careless – **1...♕×d8?? 2.♕f7+ ♔h8 3.♕h7#**.

Instead, the accurate **1...♕e7** leads to a dynamically balanced position where both sides have decent chances to succeed.

5 points for <B>.

Question #52



Black to Move

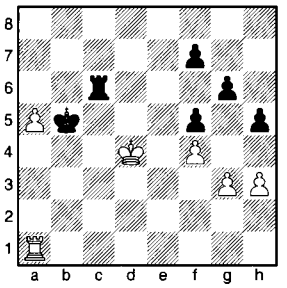
52 - 1 After 1...♖c6–a6 2.♖a1–b1+, ...

A	White is winning
B	White is significantly better
C	White is better
D	Black can equalize

52 - 2 After 1...♖c6–e6 2.♙a5–a6, ...

A	White is winning
B	White is significantly better
C	White is better
D	Black can equalize

(52) Meins,G - Reschke,S *Germany, 1997 (modified)*



Black to Move

		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A	5	28%	57%	60%	91%	93%	100%
	B	1	22%	25%	23%	9%	7%	
	C		27%	13%	6%			
	D		23%	5%	11%			

2	A	1	49%	68%	53%	52%	33%	17%
	B		25%	13%	26%	18%		
	C		13%					
	D	5	13%	19%	21%	30%	67%	83%

52-1 White virtually has an extra ♙ in this endgame. He has a passed ♙ on the ♕-side and Black can't create any actions of his own on the ♔-side. Black does have his ♔ and ♖ defending against the a♙. White wants to use the a♙ as bait to keep the Black ♔ away from his ♙s and to force a trade of the ♖s. Then the White ♔ goes after the ♙f7, winning the game.

After **1...♖a6 2.♖b1+**, Black has 3 moves to choose from, but none could save him. After **2...♔c6 3.♖b6+** or **2...♔×a5 3.♖a1+ ♔b5 4.♖×a6** and **5.♔e5**, White's plan comes to fruition. Even worse is **2...♔a4** due to **3.♔c5** (threatening ♖a1+ and ♔b5) **♖×a5+ 4.♔c4**. To stop the mate Black must give up the ♖ after **4...♔a3 5.♖a1+** (*skewer*). White wins in all lines. 5 points for <A>.

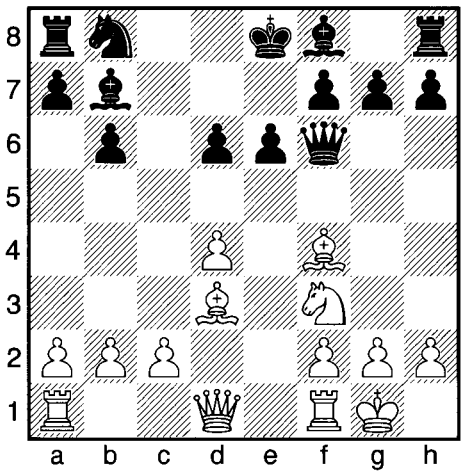
52-2 By advancing the a♙, White is hoping to force a transition into a very favorable ♙-endgame. But if that was the reason you picked <A>, you get just 1 point. You didn't uncover Black's amazing defensive idea.

What if Black plays **2...♖d6+**? Looks quite innocent; White has **3.♔e5** and after **3...♖e6+ 4.♔d5** Black is out of options. But wait a minute...! In fact, after **3.♔e5**, it is Black who wins the game!! After **3...♔c6!**, the White ♔ is stuck in the mating net. White can't stop ♙f6#.

Thus, the White ♔ is forced to retreat on the 3rd move. Black can continue checking until, in order to avoid a draw, White hides the ♔ on b3 or f3. Then Black can safely capture the ♙a6 and his ♔ can get back to defend the ♙f7 just in time.

Instead of playing a ♙ down White should accept repetition after **3.♔e3 ♖e6+ 4.♔d4 ♖d6+ 5.♔e3** ... Draw. 5 points for <D>.

Question #53



White to Move

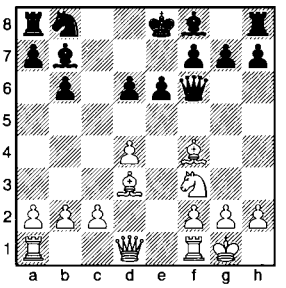
53 - 1 After 1.♗f4–g5, ...

A	Black is winning
B	The position is nearly equal
C	White is better
D	White is winning

53 - 2 Shift the ♙ from c2 to e3. After 1.♗f4–g5, ...

A	Black is winning
B	The position is nearly equal
C	White is better
D	White is winning

(53) Training Position



White to Move

		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A		13%	17%	31%	9%		
	B	1	35%	16%	22%	46%	33%	17%
	C		21%	37%	18%	15%		
	D	5	31%	30%	29%	30%	67%	83%

2	A		43%	61%	35%	14%	20%	11%
	B		23%	13%	18%	12%		
	C	1	21%	19%	29%	19%	13%	6%
	D	5	13%	7%	18%	55%	67%	83%

53-1 With the White ♗s controlling the 'airspace' on the ♔-side, the Black ♕ should feel very uncomfortable there. After **1.♗g5**, the ♕ is attacked and has nowhere to go. However, it seems like Black should not be concerned, to say the least, about this move, since it allowed him to strike back via the *in-between move* **1...♗×f3**. After **2.♕×f3 ♕×f3**, Black would have a better position thanks to White's damaged ♙-structure. If you saw this line and picked <B>, you get 1 point.

While the White ♕ didn't have any aggressive in-between moves, what Black missed was a quiet but deadly **2.♕d2!!** After **2...♕×d4** (the only ♕ move) **3.♗b5+ ♗c6 4.♕×d4 ♗×b5 5.♖fe1**, White wins the ♕ for two minor pieces and a ♙, which is not sufficient compensation.

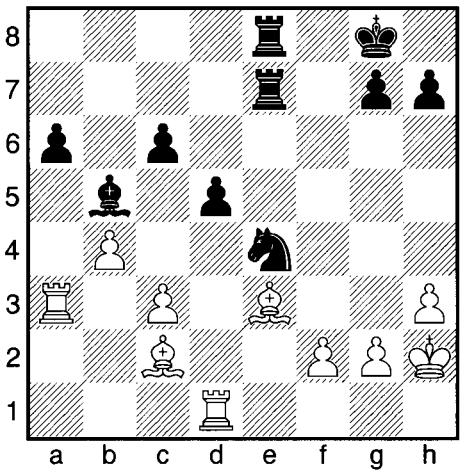
5 points for <D>. Deduct 4 points if you missed Black's **1...♗×f3** defense or if you didn't plan **2.♕d2**. You get 1 point for <C>, but only if you saw **1...♗×f3 2.♕d2** and thought that White was only better.

53-2 Having the ♙c2 shifted to e3 eliminates the possibility of 2.♕d2 in the variation given in 53-1. However, White has a different idea now.

After **1.♗g5 ♗×f3**, White moves the ♕ out of harm's way with the check **2.♕a4+** (Prior to the ♙ shift, the ♙c2 was blocking the path.) **2...♗c6** (what else?) **3.♗b5! ♕×g5** (3.♗×b5 4.♕×b5+ and 5.♗×f6) **4.♗×c6+** winning the ♖a8. After the dust settles, White will be up by an *exchange* with no compensation. 5 points for <D>. Only 1 point if you missed **1...♗×f3** or **2...♗c6**. You get 1 point for <C>, but only if you saw **1...♗×f3 2.♕a4+ ♗c6** and thought that White was only better.

When planning to leave your own ♕ under attack and go after your opponent's ♕, carefully check all possible ♕ moves – aggressive attacks, especially checks, and quiet retreats aiming to trap.

Question #54



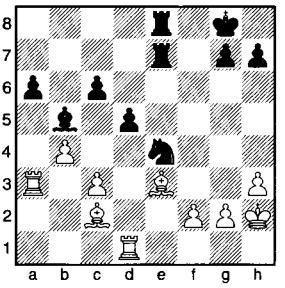
54 - 1 White to Move. What is the *worst* move?

A	1.♙f2–f3
B	1.♗e3–c5
C	1.♗c2–a4
D	1.♙c3–c4

54 - 2 Black to Move. 1...♘e4×f2 is actually ...

A	a win of a free ♙ on f2
B	a blunder – the ♙f2 is defended
C	a tactic involving a temporary sacrifice
D	an erroneous tactic involving a temporary sacrifice

(54) Shirov,A – Kortschnoj,V *Eu-ChT, Bulgaria, 2003*



		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A		12%	4%	10%	3%		
	B		6%	4%	2%	3%		
	C	5	31%	61%	81%	90%	100%	100%
	D		51%	31%	7%	4%		

2	A		13%					
	B		38%	4%				
	C	1	23%	60%	58%	49%	17%	11%
	D	5	26%	36%	42%	51%	83%	89%

54-1 Several of the candidate moves listed as White's choices are dubious, but the worst one is definitely **1.♗a4??** This move gives away an *exchange* and a ♙, all at once. After **1...♗×a4 2.♖×a4 ♘×c3**, White is lost.

5 points for <C>.

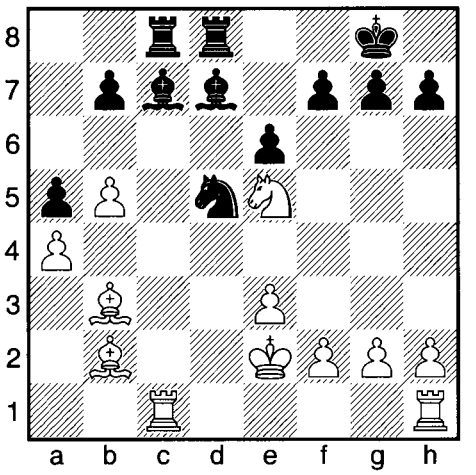
54-2 Black was hoping to gain some winning chances after a temporary sacrifice of material (the ♘ for the ♙). He probably was expecting to get the ♗ back right away after **1...♘×f2 2.♗×f2 ♖e2** (*double attack*) **3.♗×h7+ ♔×h7** (1 point for <C>). The material balance is restored and Black's position is preferable.

Unfortunately for Black, the reality was not pleasant. After White played a calm **3.♖a2** (instead of 3.♗×h7+), Black realized that he wouldn't be getting the sacrificed material back.

Recapturing the piece came with a hefty price. After **3...♖×f2** (3...♗c4 4.♖b2) **4.♗×h7+ ♔×h7 5.♖×f2**, White ended up with an extra *exchange* and a winning position.

5 points for <D> if you saw all the way through **3.♖a2!**

Question #55



White to Move

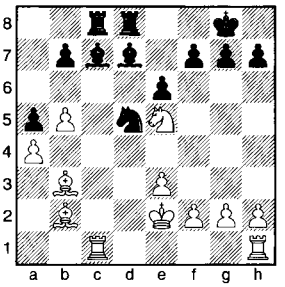
55 - 1 What is White's prime target?

A	♘d5
B	♗c7
C	♗d7
D	♔g8

55 - 2 What is the *best* move?

A	1.♘e5×d7
B	1.♗b3×d5
C	1.♙e3–e4
D	1.♖h1–d1

(55) Training Position



White to Move

		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A		23%	25%	7%	6%		
	B	5	27%	43%	72%	82%	100%	100%
	C	1	25%	10%	13%	9%		
	D		25%	22%	8%	3%		

2	A	5	42%	48%	65%	88%	93%	100%
	B		34%	31%	14%	6%	7%	
	C		13%	8%				
	D		11%	13%	21%	6%		

55-1 This is nearly picture-perfect situation for White. All of his pieces are placed superbly. The ♖ is on the open file, the ♘ is centralized, the ♗s have an unobstructed view, and even the ♔ is on the optimal spot – close to the action, yet well protected. The ♖ on h1 can join the action in one move.

White has a chance of taking or attacking several of the Black pieces, but the simple threats won't score any material gains. If you noticed the awkward placement of the Black ♗s, you will get some points. Not only do they have limited mobility, but there is also potential for a *pin*. This is especially true about the ♗ on c7. 5 points for <B>.

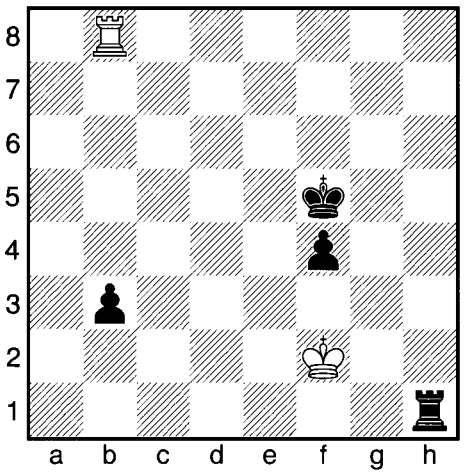
A favorable setup is a temporary advantage and may gradually disappear if you can't find a good target to go after.

55-2 In fact, White can win the ♗c7 after a series of two trades. First goes the other ♗, after **1.♘×d7 ♖×d7**. Next goes the ♘ – **2.♗×d5 ♖×d5** (or 2...♙×d5). Finally, after **3.♙b6**, the ♗c7 is lost due to the *pin*.

Changing the move order wouldn't work. After **1.♗×d5**, Black has in-between **1...♗×e5** saving the ♗.

You get points only if you saw a *pin* and planned to eliminate the key defenders. The ♗d7 was defending the ♖c8 and the ♘d5 was defending both – the ♗c7 and the b6-square. You get 5 points for picking <A> if you saw the entire variation. 1 point for picking <B> if you saw the entire variation but missed the in-between move 1...♗×e5.

Question #56



Black to Move

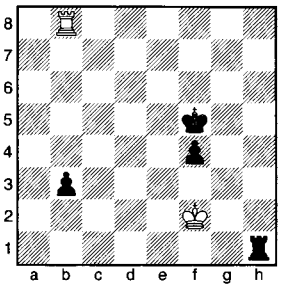
56 - I **Which is *not* a good move?**

A	1...♖h1–b1
B	1...♖h1–h2+
C	1...♖h1–h3
D	1...♙b3–b2

56 - II **After 1...♖h1–b1 2.♖b8–b4, the simplest way to win is ...**

A	2...♔f5–e5
B	2...♔f5–g4
C	2...♙b3–b2
D	2...♙f4–f3

(56) Bernstein,O – Smyslov,V *Groningen, 1946 (modified)*



Black to Move

		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A		23%	13%	25%	3%	8%	2%
	B		27%	49%	36%	9%		
	C		21%	13%	7%	24%		
	D	5	24%	25%	32%	64%	92%	98%

2	A	2	30%	16%	21%	16%	17%	
	B	2	13%	44%	36%	39%	37%	11%
	C	5	32%	26%	43%	45%	46%	89%
	D		25%	14%				

56-1 The two extra ♙s provide Black with several winning plans. White is hoping that Black discovers a 'winning tactic' via a *skewer* and plays **1...♙b2**. While usually the *skewer* is very effective in ♖-endgames, here White can take the ♙ – **2.♖×b2**, with a smile on his face. In the case of the planned **2...♖h2+ 3.♔f3 ♖×b2**, the White ♔ has no moves! Stalemate! Admitting the mistake and playing **2...♔g4** is better, but, with only one ♙ left, White can get a draw with accurate defense.

5 points for <D>. But if you didn't see the *skewer*, you get only 2 points.

The golden rule in the endgame is "no rush!" It only takes one mistake to downgrade a technically won position to a virtually guaranteed draw.

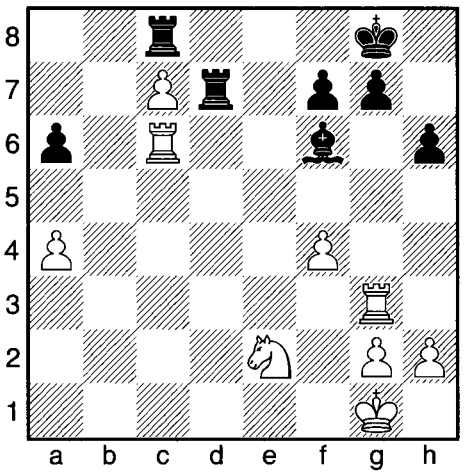
56-2 Black can win by **2...♔g4** planning ♖b2+ and ♔f3(g3). Another good option is **2...♔e5**, sending the ♔ to the ♕-side to support the b♙.

However, the easiest winning plan doesn't involve the Black ♔ at all. By advancing the b♙, Black severely restricts the mobility of White's pieces. After **2...♙b2!** (5 points for <C>), the White ♖ must remain on the b-file and the White ♔ is stuck shuttling between the g2 and h2-squares.

Next, the advancement of the f♙ disturbs White's defense. For example, **3.♖b8 ♙f3** (3...♖h1? 4.♖×b2 = see 56-1) **4.♔×f3 ♖f1+** and **5...♙b1♕**; or **3.♖b3 ♔e4** and next ♙f3; or **3.♔g2 ♙f3+ 4.♔h2** (4.♔f2 ♖h1 5.♖×b2 ♖h2+ and 6...♖×b2) **♙f2**. Black wins!

After **2...♙b2**, what result do you expect if the Black ♙f4 were instead on (a) g4; (b) h4; (c) removed from the board? Check a basic endgame reference book if you are not sure about the answers.

Question #57



Black to Move

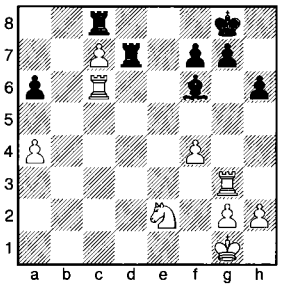
57 - 1 Black needs to immediately address ...

A	defending the ♙a6
B	winning the ♙c7
C	defending the ♗f6
D	activating the ♖c8

57 - 2 What is the *best* move?

A	1...♖d7–d1+
B	1...♖c8×c7
C	1...♖d7×c7
D	1...♗f6–h4

(57) Training Position



Black to Move

		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A		13%	2%				
	B		35%	21%	7%	2%		
	C	5	37%	74%	93%	98%	100%	100%
	D		15%	3%				
2	A	5	49%	62%	75%	79%	100%	100%
	B		26%	6%				
	C		13%	4%				
	D		12%	28%	25%	21%		

57-1 At the moment, the White ♖s are placed very aggressively. The main threat in the position is to win the ♗ after **1.♖×f6** since the ♙g7 is *pinned.*

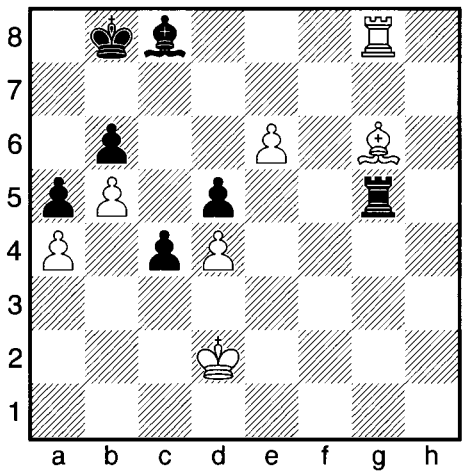
5 points for <C>.

57-2 Have you noticed the somewhat awkward placement of the White ♖g3? Combine that with the weak *back rank* that White has, and all of a sudden Black has a nice tactical opportunity. After **1...♖d1+ 2.♔f2 ♗h4**, Black wins an *exchange* turning the situation around 180 degrees. White doesn't have any tactical strikes utilizing the advanced position of the c♙ and needs to fight for a draw. 5 points for <A>; deduct 4 points if you didn't plan to play **2...♗h4**.

Changing the move order won't work. After **1...♗h4**, White has **2.♖f3** preparing to block the check on d1 with the ♖. Still, if you saw the right idea, you get 1 point (<D>).

The presence of a far advanced passed ♙ requires special attention when calculating a variation. For example, if the White ♖c6 were on b6, or the White ♘e2 were on c4, Black's idea 1...♖d1+ 2.♔f2 ♗h4 would fail. Do you see why?

Question #58



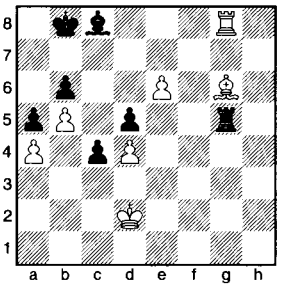
58 - 1 Black could force a Draw after ...

A	1.♖g8×c8+
B	1.♙e6–e7
C	1.♗g6–f7
D	None of the above allows Draw

58 - 2 After 1...♔b8–b7, the correct statement is ...

A	after 2.♖g8×c8, White should win
B	after 2.♙e6–e7, Black should get a draw
C	after 2.♗g6–f7, Black should get a draw
D	None of the above is correct

(58) Ruderfer,M – Dvoretzky,M *Odessa, 1972*



		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A		19%	6%				
	B		11%	6%	4%			
	C	1	27%	33%	29%	26%	23%	18%
	D	5	43%	55%	67%	74%	77%	82%

2	A	1	31%	63%	63%	71%	18%	11%
	B		29%	11%	14%	3%	7%	8%
	C		37%	12%	8%	11%	6%	4%
	D	5	13%	14%	15%	15%	69%	77%

58-1 White's position is great. His pieces are well placed and the passed e♙ seems destined for promotion. At the same time, the Black pieces are scattered on the board with no coordination.

All three of White's candidate moves win by force. The ♙ is unstoppable after **1.♙e7**, or **1.♖×c8+ ♔×c8 2.♙e7**.

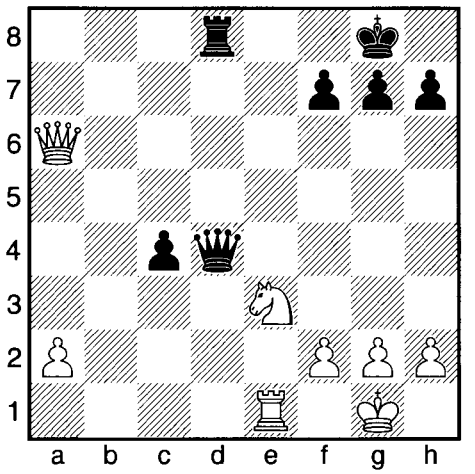
It is a little harder to win after **1.♗f7 ♖×g8 2.♗×g8**, since the Black ♔ can try to stop the dangerous ♙. However, after **2...♔c7 3.♙e7 ♔d7** (3...♗d7 4.♗f7), White has **4.♗e6+!** (*deflection* and *skewer*) winning the ♗. The resulting endgame should be easily won. White can keep the ♗ on h7 controlling the c♙ and send the ♔ to g5-f6. The White ♔ will always be able to drive the Black ♔ away via *zugzwang*. Practice this against a friend or computer.

58-2 After **1...♔b7**, White wins – **2.♙e7 ♗d7 3.♖d8**. White also wins after **2.♗f7**, as described in 58-1.

This time however **2.♖×c8** fails. While Black loses after either **2...♔×c8 3.♙e7** or **2...♖×g6 3.♙e7**, inserting a series of checks makes a big difference. After **2...♖g2+!**, Black will continue checking until either:
(a) the White ♔ have steps on the e-file and Black can safely play ♖×g6. For example, **3.♔e3 ♖×g6 4.♖c6** (4.♙e7?? ♖e6+ and 4...♔×c8) **♖g4** and **5...♖e4** with a draw, or
(b) the White ♗ retreats to block the check and Black can safely play ♔×c8. For example, **3.♔c3 ♖g3+ 4.♔b2 ♖g2+ 5.♗c2?? ♔×c8** and Black wins.

None of the three choices is correct. 5 points for <D>.

Question #59



Black to Move

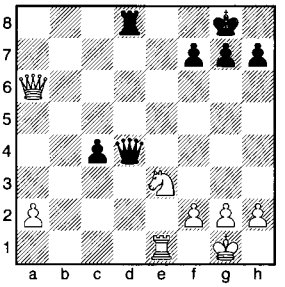
59 - 1 After 1...♙c4–c3 2.♖e1–d1, ...

A	Black is winning
B	Black is better
C	White is better
D	White is winning

59 - 2 After 1...♙c4–c3 2.♙g2–g3 ♙g7–g6 3.♖e1–d1, ...

A	Black is winning
B	Black is better
C	White is better
D	White is winning

(59) Tchistyakov – Vaksberg *Moscow, 1938 (modified)*



Black to Move

		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A	5	25%	38%	71%	78%	81%	98%
	B		15%					
	C		13%	18%				
	D		47%	44%	29%	22%	19%	2%

2	A		25%	22%	14%	27%	27%	
	B	5	19%	19%	14%	17%	47%	83%
	C		21%	20%	29%	13%		
	D		23%	39%	43%	43%	26%	17%

59-1 White has an extra ♘ and should have no problems converting his advantage. He just needs to monitor the two elements of the position that give Black some hope – the Black c♙ and White's weak *back rank.*

Increasing the material advantage by winning the Black ♖ via a *skewer* after **2.♖d1** would be nice, but the plan backfires big time. After **2...♕×d1+ 3.♘×d1** (3.♕f1 ♙c2) **♖×d1+** (or 3...♙c2) **4.♕f1 ♙c2** (or 4...♖×f1+ 5.♔f1 ♙c2), White is helpless. 5 points for <A>.

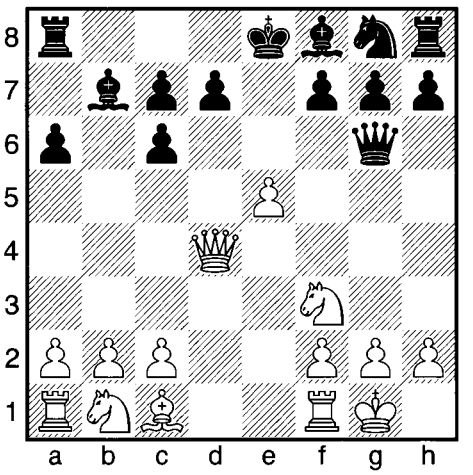
59-2 Having an escape square for the ♔ will make White's life easier, but won't make the ♖d1 idea a winner. Once again, the c♙ is the major factor here. This time, however, Black unloads a different trick.

After **3...♕×d1+ 4.♘×d1 ♙c2!!**, White can't prevent a new Black ♕ from appearing on the board. White's best response is **5.♘e3**, with a good chance of getting a draw in the resulting endgame. 5 points for <B>. 2 points if you saw the line and picked <A>. Practice the resulting endgame against a friend or computer.

Reduce your points to 1, if you were planning the overly optimistic **4...♖×d1+**. After **5.♔g2 ♙c2 6.♕c8+ ♔g7 7.♕×c2**, Black is lost.

Remain extra vigilant no matter what the material balance is. Having a decent material advantage often allows you to be less aggressive and focus on prophylactics rather than chasing additional material gains.

Question #60



White to Move

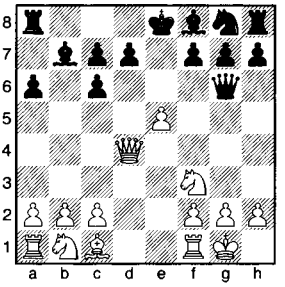
60 - 1 After 1.♙e5–e6 ♕g6×e6, ...

A	Black is better
B	The position is nearly equal
C	White is better
D	White is winning

60 - 2 After 1.♙e5–e6 ♙f7×e6, ...

A	Black is better
B	The position is nearly equal
C	White is better
D	White is winning

(60) Knox,V – Hilton,C *BCF-ch, 1968*



White to Move

		Score	0 - 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800
1	A		7%					
	B		3%					
	C		25%	5%	4%			
	D	5	65%	95%	96%	100%	100%	100%

2	A	5	18%	25%	37%	27%	63%	89%
	B	2	13%	19%	30%	12%		
	C		16%	21%	2%	3%		
	D	1	53%	35%	31%	58%	37%	11%

60-1 After **1.♙e6 ♕×e6?? 2.♖e1!**, White wins the ♕ for the ♖. 5 points for <D>.

Whenever you see the ♔ on the open e-file, try to get your ♖ there. It may disturb your opponent's pieces, prevent him from castling, or win material due to a pin.

60-2 When White sacrificed the e♙, he was likely expecting **1...♙f×e6** and not 1...♕×e6. White's intention was to strike **2.♘e5**, threatening ♕×d7# and ♘×g6. If you saw this and thought that Black is doomed (choice <D>), you get 1 point.

In reality, Black had prepared a nice counterstrike where the "sleepy" ♗b7 would come alive in a big way. After **2...♕×g2+! 3.♔×g2 ♙c5+**, Black would have won the ♕ back and ended up with 2 extra ♙s and a great position. Noticing this superb idea, probably at the last minute, White played **2.♖d1**, instead of 2.♘e5. That left him with some compensation for the sacrificed e♙. Black is better – 5 points for <A>. If you saw the tactic and picked <B>, you get 2 points.

You have completed the Exam!

Tables and Charts

Introduction

In this section, your results will be stored, summarized, and evaluated. You will find out your:

- *Percent of Success* ratio;
- Estimated *Rating* – Overall and by 29 sub-categories;
- Estimated *Title* – Overall and by 29 sub-categories.

Each of the 60 diagrams had 2 questions. Each of the 120 questions was classified into multiple categories.

The first thing you need to do is record the number of points (maximum of 5) you scored for each of the 120 questions and then total them – all in **Table 1** (pages 150-155).

Next, store your results into the **Exam Report Card** (p. 149) and calculate your *Percent of Success Ratio*.

After that, estimate your ratings using **Table 2** (pp. 156-160).

Table 3 (p. 161) has the Rating to Title conversion.

Finally, back to the **Exam Report Card** (p. 149), that brings it all together. Please take your time when recording your points and doing the calculations. Check your work a couple of times.

To simplify the process of filling out these tables, especially completing **Table 1**, I have various forms and worksheets available. You can get all of them and much more on my website http://www.ChessExam.com

Instructions: How to Use the Tables

1. Proceed to **Table 1** (p. 150) and record the scores you have earned for each of the 120 exam questions into the column labeled *Pts*. Next, for each question copy your score into every column not marked by [X].

Example:
Let's assume that you got **5** points for Diagram #1, Question #1. Go to page 150. You would record **5** points into the *Pts.* column next to D#1, Q#1. Then you would copy the same **5** points into the columns 1, 8, 12 in the same row. Then you would turn to the next page and record **5** points into the *Pts.* column next to D#1, Q#1 and copy the same **5** points into the columns 25, 26, 28 in the same row. All other cells for D#1, Q#1 are [X]

2. When you finish recording your scores for all 120 questions, subtotal your points in each column and record the results in the row labeled **Total**, just below D#60, Q#2. I suggest checking the totals a couple of times to ensure accuracy.

3. Proceed to the **Exam Report Card** (p. 149) and record the total scores you have gotten from **Table 1** into the *Your Score* column. Calculate your *% of Success* by dividing *Your Score* by the *Maximum Score*.

> **Example:**
> Let's assume your total score in **Table 1**, column 1 is equal to 35. You enter **35** into the **Exam Report Card** (p. 149), report #1 (*Advanced Pawn*), column *Your Score*. Next you calculate the ratio **35** / **55** (*Maximum Score* for *Advanced Pawn*) = **0.6363** or **64%**. Store this value into the column *% Success*. Always round it up to the nearest 1%.

4. Proceed to **Table 2** (pp. 156-160) where your will convert your *% of Success* values from the **Exam Report Card** (for each of the 29 sub-categories and overall) into ratings. If your score falls between the points in the table, use approximation or basic interpolation. Record your ratings in the **Exam Report Card**, column *Rating*.

> **Example:**
> Let's assume your *% of Success* for 1 is **64%** (**Exam Report Card**). Now you go to **Table 2**, locate the closest % value in the column *Advanced Pawn* and identify the corresponding rating, which happens to be approximately **1670** (between 1628 for 63% and 1760 for 66%). Or, by interpolating, **1672** = (1628+(1760-1628)*(64-63)/(66-63))

5. Using the ratings you calculated in **Table 2**, get your titles for each category and overall from **Table 3** (p. 161). This table is an estimate of the conversion table used in the United States, and it very closely resembles the FIDE International format. Record your titles in the **Exam Report Card**, column *Title*.

> **Example:**
> Let's assume your Score for *Advanced Pawn* is 35 and you calculated 1670 to be your rating, then your title is **Class (B)** (from **Table 3**). Store this into the column *Title*, row *Advanced Pawn* in the **Exam Report Card.**

6. Upon completion of **Exam Report Card**, take a look at your results. Identify your overall level, and then see what your strengths and weaknesses are by comparing ratings for the 29 sub-categories.

Then you will be ready to proceed to the next chapter – ***Training Tips and Recommendations***, where you will find out how to improve.

The Exam Report Card

Report #	Report Name	Maximum Score	Your Score	% Success	Rating	Title
PTS	Overall	600				
1	Advanced Pawn	55				
2	Back Rank Mate	70				
3	Mating net	95				
4	Misplaced Piece	190				
5	Simplification	85				
6	Lack of Protection	105				
7	Checkmate	125				
8	Promote Pawn	70				
9	Win Material	295				
10	Reaching Standard Endgame	35				
11	Forcing Draw	75				
12	Opening	120				
13	Middlegame	260				
14	Endgame	220				
15	Decoy	160				
16	Clearance	90				
17	Removal of the Guard	85				
18	Deflection	225				
19	Discovered Attack	125				
20	Double Attack	155				
21	In-Between Move	240				
22	Interference	80				
23	Pin	160				
24	Skewer	80				
25	Trap	70				
26	Win	515				
27	Draw	85				
28	Attack	330				
29	Defense	270				

Table 1

D#	Q#	Pts.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1	1			X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X
1	2			X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X
2	1			X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	
2	2		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	
3	1		X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X
3	2		X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X
4	1		X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X
4	2		X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X
5	1		X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	
5	2		X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	
6	1		X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	
6	2		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
7	1		X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X
7	2		X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X
8	1		X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X
8	2		X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X
9	1		X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X
9	2		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X
10	1		X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X		X	X
10	2		X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X
11	1		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X		X
11	2		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X		X
12	1		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
12	2		X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	
13	1		X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X	
13	2		X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	
14	1		X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X		X	X
14	2		X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X		X	X
15	1		X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X		X
15	2		X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X		X
16	1		X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X
16	2		X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X
17	1		X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	
17	2		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
18	1		X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X
18	2		X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X
19	1		X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X	
19	2		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	
20	1		X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X
20	2		X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X		X

Table 1 (cont.)

D#	Q#	Pts	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
1	1		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X		X
1	2		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X
2	1			X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X		X		X
2	2		X		X	X	X		X	X	X		X		X		X
3	1		X	X			X	X	X		X	X	X		X		X
3	2		X	X	X		X	X	X			X	X	X		X	
4	1		X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X
4	2			X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X
5	1		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X		X
5	2		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X
6	1		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X		X		X
6	2			X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X		X	
7	1		X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X			X		X
7	2		X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X			X		X
8	1		X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	
8	2		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
9	1		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X		X		X
9	2		X	X	X		X	X		X	X		X	X		X	
10	1		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X		X
10	2		X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X			X	X	
11	1		X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X		X	
11	2		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	
12	1		X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X		X	
12	2		X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X		X		X
13	1		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X		X
13	2		X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X		X
14	1		X	X	X		X		X	X		X	X		X	X	
14	2			X	X		X	X		X		X	X		X		X
15	1		X		X		X	X		X	X	X	X		X		X
15	2		X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X		X		X
16	1		X		X		X	X	X		X	X	X		X		X
16	2		X		X		X	X		X		X	X		X	X	
17	1		X	X			X	X			X	X	X		X	X	
17	2		X				X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X	
18	1			X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X		X		X
18	2			X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X		X	
19	1		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
19	2		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X
20	1		X	X	X			X		X	X	X	X		X		X
20	2		X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	

Table 1 (cont.)

D#	Q#	Pts	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
21	1		X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X
21	2		X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X		X	X
22	1		X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X		X	X
22	2		X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X
23	1		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
23	2		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
24	1		X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X		X
24	2		X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X		X
25	1		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	
25	2		X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	
26	1		X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X
26	2		X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X
27	1		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	
27	2		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
28	1		X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	
28	2		X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X	X	
29	1		X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X
29	2		X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X		X	X
30	1		X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X	
30	2		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	
31	1		X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X
31	2		X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X
32	1			X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X
32	2			X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X
33	1		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	
33	2		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
34	1		X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X
34	2		X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X
35	1		X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X		X
35	2		X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X
36	1		X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X
36	2		X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X
37	1		X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X
37	2		X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X
38	1		X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X
38	2		X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X
39	1		X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X
39	2		X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X
40	1		X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X
40	2		X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X		X

Table 1 (cont.)

D#	Q#	Pts	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
21	1		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X
21	2		X		X		X	X		X		X	X		X		X
22	1		X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	
22	2		X	X			X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	
23	1		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X	
23	2		X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X		X	
24	1		X	X	X					X	X	X	X		X		X
24	2			X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X		X		X
25	1		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X
25	2			X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X		X
26	1		X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X		X		X
26	2			X	X			X	X		X	X	X		X		X
27	1		X	X	X	X		X		X		X	X		X		X
27	2		X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X		X	
28	1			X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X		X
28	2		X	X	X			X		X	X	X	X		X	X	
29	1			X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X		X		X
29	2		X	X	X		X			X		X	X		X	X	
30	1		X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X		X	X	
30	2		X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X		X		X
31	1			X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X
31	2			X	X			X	X		X	X	X		X	X	
32	1		X	X	X			X		X	X	X	X		X		X
32	2		X	X	X					X	X	X	X		X		X
33	1		X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X		X	
33	2			X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	
34	1			X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X		X
34	2		X	X		X	X			X	X	X	X		X		X
35	1		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
35	2		X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X		X	X	
36	1		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X			X		X
36	2		X	X	X	X				X		X	X		X	X	
37	1			X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X
37	2		X	X			X	X		X	X	X	X		X		X
38	1		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X		X
38	2		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X		X
39	1		X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X		X	X	
39	2		X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X		X	X	
40	1		X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X		X		X
40	2		X	X	X	X	X			X		X	X		X	X	

Table 1 (cont.)

D#	Q#	Pts	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
41	1		X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X		X	X
41	2		X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X
42	1		X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X
42	2		X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X		X
43	1		X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X
43	2		X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X
44	1		X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X
44	2		X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X
45	1			X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	
45	2			X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	
46	1		X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X
46	2		X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X
47	1		X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	
47	2		X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X	
48	1		X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X
48	2		X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X		X
49	1		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
49	2			X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	
50	1		X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X
50	2		X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X
51	1		X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X
51	2		X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X
52	1		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	
52	2		X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
53	1		X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X
53	2		X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X
54	1		X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	
54	2		X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	
55	1		X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X		X
55	2		X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X		X
56	1		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
56	2			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	
57	1		X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	
57	2		X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	
58	1			X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	
58	2		X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X	X	
59	1		X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	
59	2			X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	
60	1		X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X
60	2		X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X		X	X
Total																

Table 1 (cont.)

D#	Q#	Pts	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
41	1		X	X	X	X		X		X	X				X	X	
41	2		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X			X		X
42	1		X			X	X			X	X	X	X		X	X	
42	2			X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X
43	1			X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X		X		X
43	2			X	X	X	X		X			X	X		X	X	
44	1		X		X			X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
44	2		X	X	X			X			X	X	X		X	X	
45	1		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	
45	2		X		X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
46	1		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X			X	X	
46	2		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X			X	X	
47	1			X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X		X	X	
47	2		X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X		X		X
48	1		X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X
48	2		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X		X
49	1		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	
49	2		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X
50	1				X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X
50	2			X		X	X		X	X	X	X			X		X
51	1		X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
51	2		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
52	1			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X		X
52	2			X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X		X	
53	1		X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X			X		X
53	2		X	X		X	X			X	X	X			X		X
54	1			X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
54	2				X	X			X	X	X	X	X		X		X
55	1		X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X		X		X
55	2		X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X		X		X
56	1			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	
56	2			X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X		X		X
57	1		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	
57	2			X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X		X
58	1			X			X	X	X	X	X		X		X		X
58	2		X	X			X	X		X	X		X	X		X	
59	1		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	
59	2			X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X		X	X	
60	1		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X		X
60	2			X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X		X	X	
Total																	

Table 2

%	Overall	Decoy	Clearance	Removal of the Guard	Deflection	Discovered Attack
3%	580	580	580	580	580	580
6%	700	700	700	700	700	700
9%	820	820	820	820	820	820
12%	842	842	842	842	842	842
15%	870	870	850	862	850	842
18%	870	870	882	904	870	870
21%	902	890	924	970	902	890
24%	914	902	972	1006	938	902
27%	948	948	1066	1074	938	938
30%	972	1012	1118	1132	988	984
33%	1038	1110	1130	1234	1028	1106
36%	1122	1200	1178	1254	1062	1118
39%	1132	1234	1244	1290	1142	1174
42%	1280	1296	1324	1296	1204	1258
45%	1348	1368	1372	1408	1302	1312
48%	1348	1456	1444	1432	1358	1332
51%	1396	1480	1464	1496	1432	1464
54%	1480	1560	1504	1548	1452	1524
57%	1528	1588	1540	1636	1524	1588
60%	1592	1620	1652	1714	1572	1680
63%	1676	1700	1668	1744	1632	1720
66%	1724	1720	1784	1876	1764	1808
69%	1852	1760	1908	1888	1856	1876
72%	1928	1832	1944	2022	2032	1964
75%	2052	1954	1988	2058	2076	2064
78%	2108	2036	2016	2134	2118	2128
81%	2160	2104	2120	2134	2160	2178
84%	2240	2160	2156	2208	2364	2264
87%	2400	2334	2200	2254	2378	2364
90%	2410	2398	2298	2354	2442	2410
93%	2508	2484	2372	2402	2518	2518
96%	2554	2542	2462	2600	2554	2554
99%	2600	2600	2500	2600	2600	2578

Table 2 (cont.)

%	Double Attack	In-Between Move	Interfe-rence	Pin	Skewer	Trap
3%	580	580	588	580	580	580
6%	700	700	719	700	700	700
9%	820	820	850	820	820	820
12%	842	842	902	862	842	842
15%	870	870	948	894	894	862
18%	870	870	964	894	904	894
21%	902	902	1002	924	924	914
24%	938	902	1042	982	964	948
27%	1014	938	1054	1014	992	1008
30%	1122	1028	1108	1086	1038	1076
33%	1134	1074	1146	1122	1074	1096
36%	1164	1122	1208	1152	1108	1174
39%	1208	1220	1280	1198	1166	1222
42%	1240	1326	1344	1280	1226	1258
45%	1344	1362	1368	1324	1256	1328
48%	1480	1412	1492	1372	1300	1328
51%	1480	1500	1520	1500	1320	1348
54%	1524	1524	1648	1500	1456	1368
57%	1524	1612	1648	1548	1548	1412
60%	1548	1700	1764	1548	1628	1516
63%	1656	1792	1776	1620	1704	1516
66%	1760	1828	1920	1656	1768	1720
69%	1808	1896	2024	1760	1894	1808
72%	1896	2016	2106	1896	1952	1856
75%	1944	2088	2168	2046	2116	1918
78%	1992	2128	2286	2110	2202	1976
81%	2040	2160	2358	2216	2308	2088
84%	2128	2286	2406	2310	2348	2134
87%	2302	2354	2452	2344	2360	2190
90%	2412	2434	2526	2378	2510	2250
93%	2454	2474	2554	2420	2582	2440
96%	2542	2508	2600	2450	2600	2494
99%	2578	2578	2600	2542	2600	2544

Table 2 (cont.)

%	Advanced Pawn	Back Rank Mate	Mating net	Misplaced Piece	Simplification	Lack of Protection
3%	580	583	580	580	580	580
6%	700	708	700	700	700	700
9%	820	832	820	820	820	820
12%	842	862	842	842	842	842
15%	862	862	902	850	850	842
18%	870	882	926	870	894	870
21%	890	914	958	902	924	934
24%	926	914	974	914	992	962
27%	948	938	1008	948	1022	1008
30%	1012	988	1106	982	1086	1052
33%	1038	1028	1210	1038	1142	1086
36%	1050	1058	1220	1120	1186	1098
39%	1162	1150	1280	1188	1238	1130
42%	1220	1250	1304	1256	1300	1198
45%	1254	1286	1348	1304	1348	1326
48%	1324	1386	1392	1376	1416	1368
51%	1392	1442	1456	1440	1460	1428
54%	1428	1516	1480	1464	1516	1452
57%	1516	1716	1544	1500	1560	1528
60%	1628	1764	1608	1544	1644	1620
63%	1628	1832	1664	1588	1740	1680
66%	1760	1904	1716	1620	1760	1724
69%	1824	1982	1824	1748	1852	1812
72%	1852	2048	1944	1896	1928	1876
75%	2056	2126	2012	1944	2066	1988
78%	2102	2198	2074	2022	2158	2034
81%	2170	2264	2084	2032	2238	2100
84%	2320	2328	2140	2096	2282	2184
87%	2328	2438	2240	2250	2344	2272
90%	2400	2450	2340	2338	2402	2338
93%	2564	2530	2440	2406	2464	2464
96%	2564	2564	2564	2518	2500	2476
99%	2590	2590	2590	2578	2508	2500

Table 2 (cont.)

%	Checkmate	Pawn Promotion	Win Material	Reaching Standard Endgame	Forcing Draw
3%	580	580	580	583	580
6%	700	700	700	708	700
9%	820	820	820	832	820
12%	842	842	842	850	842
15%	850	862	870	882	882
18%	882	894	870	926	882
21%	914	924	902	978	914
24%	968	948	914	1014	948
27%	1008	994	948	1038	1062
30%	1144	1006	982	1092	1118
33%	1174	1046	1074	1204	1138
36%	1198	1098	1132	1316	1262
39%	1234	1122	1166	1376	1302
42%	1244	1164	1210	1432	1354
45%	1314	1188	1280	1522	1412
48%	1348	1188	1328	1564	1554
51%	1432	1256	1376	1620	1634
54%	1476	1320	1476	1620	1732
57%	1476	1432	1500	1660	1780
60%	1544	1588	1524	1800	1992
63%	1612	1676	1568	1834	2016
66%	1716	1764	1636	1876	2052
69%	1812	1884	1724	1896	2084
72%	1964	1948	1772	1908	2158
75%	2046	2046	1896	2100	2170
78%	2126	2102	1988	2194	2250
81%	2162	2300	2050	2214	2296
84%	2210	2320	2130	2214	2432
87%	2254	2458	2204	2270	2450
90%	2400	2484	2340	2394	2484
93%	2518	2530	2450	2428	2508
96%	2600	2600	2484	2470	2530
99%	2600	2600	2578	2546	2554

Table 2 (cont.)

%	Opening	Middle-game	End-game	Attack	Defense	Win	Draw
3%	591	580	580	580	580	580	580
6%	726	700	700	700	700	700	700
9%	862	820	820	820	820	820	820
12%	884	842	842	842	842	842	850
15%	920	862	870	842	850	850	862
18%	928	870	870	870	882	870	894
21%	958	890	902	890	924	890	924
24%	958	926	914	902	940	902	984
27%	1006	926	938	948	982	948	1002
30%	1042	1028	992	948	1026	992	1070
33%	1082	1076	1014	1004	1122	1062	1130
36%	1116	1106	1062	1076	1158	1122	1242
39%	1188	1166	1130	1186	1188	1166	1320
42%	1236	1258	1254	1258	1236	1216	1378
45%	1256	1376	1324	1326	1276	1328	1458
48%	1280	1396	1368	1372	1324	1376	1572
51%	1324	1440	1456	1376	1456	1376	1644
54%	1348	1504	1524	1440	1480	1420	1764
57%	1464	1548	1612	1548	1548	1504	1852
60%	1484	1628	1740	1592	1672	1560	1952
63%	1500	1700	1824	1640	1736	1600	1984
66%	1548	1744	1948	1680	1808	1656	2036
69%	1588	1832	2036	1724	1896	1768	2118
72%	1656	1944	2036	1856	1924	1876	2202
75%	1744	2064	2084	2002	2100	1964	2246
78%	1856	2094	2178	2084	2160	2064	2330
81%	1938	2162	2328	2128	2264	2128	2402
84%	1992	2198	2380	2160	2322	2160	2432
87%	2124	2264	2400	2218	2400	2354	2450
90%	2184	2450	2474	2400	2474	2420	2484
93%	2264	2530	2508	2462	2518	2450	2508
96%	2388	2564	2578	2564	2542	2564	2530
99%	2474	2600	2600	2600	2578	2600	2554

Table 3

Title	Rating
NOVICE	800 – 999
CLASS (E)	1000 – 1199
CLASS (D)	1200 – 1399
CLASS (C)	1400 – 1599
CLASS (B)	1600 – 1799
CLASS (A)	1800 – 1999
EXPERT	2000 – 2199
MASTER	2200 – 2299
FIDE MASTER	2300 – 2399
INTERNATIONAL MASTER	2400 – 2489
GRANDMASTER	2490 +

Training Guide: Tips and Recommendations

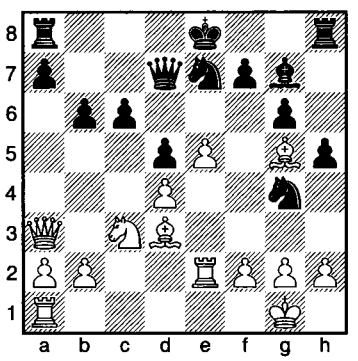
Introduction

Everyone gets excited about the chance to execute a beautiful tactic, because we are creating something memorable, which others will find aesthetically pleasing or even amazing. There are also practical benefits as it is usually the fastest way to achieve the best result in a given position.

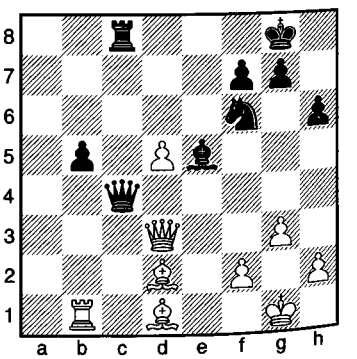
What is a Tactic? There are various definitions; essentially, it is a short variation that always involves threats and often contains pseudo-sacrifices. A tactic usually changes the situation on the board dramatically.

Good strategic play can often steer the game into a situation that allows for a favorable tactical operation. However, tactics can also occur spontaneously because of a mistake from one's opponent.

Consider the following two positions. (*In the **Training Guide** section of the book, rather than just giving the caption [i.e. "White to move"] under each diagram, I will provide you with the last move played [whenever it is possible]. I hope this will enrich your experience and understanding as you can see how the combination came about.*)



#1 After **17...♙b7–b6**



#2 After **28...♕c7–c4**

#1 White is much better developed and has a large space advantage. However, the lack of the open files and the absence of direct targets

hinder the attack. The solution comes via a tactic. After **18.♙e6 ♙f×e6 19.♘×d5,** the ♘ is en prise to four of Black's pieces, but it can't be captured by any of them. For example: 19...♘×d5 20.♗×g6#; 19...♕×d5 20.♕×e7#; 19...♙c×d5 20.♗b5 ♕×b5 21.♕×e7#; 19...♙e×d5 20. ♖×e7+. Black played **19...♘f5** and resigned after **20.♗×f5** in view of 20...♙g×f5 21.♖×e6+ ♕×e6 22.♘c7+ winning a ton of material. *Penrose,J – Blau,M, Hastings 1957*

#2 In a nearly equal position, Black's last move (28...♕c4) unexpectedly allowed a small but devastating tactical operation. White left the ♕ en prise by **29.♖c1!** White's devious idea was 29...♕×d3 30.♖×c8+ ♔h7 (30...♘e8!? 31.♗c2!) 31.♗c2 *pinning* the ♕ and winning the exchange in the process. Instead, Black entered a very difficult ♕ vs. ♖+♗ endgame by **29...♕×c1 30.♗×c1 ♖×c1**. White won effortlessly just 5 moves later by combining a threat to the ♙f7 and the advancement of the d♙. *Polgar,J – Aronian,L, Hoogeveen Essent Crown Hoogeveen 2003*

There are three necessary components to a successful tactical operation:

1. Recognizing the opportunity;
2. Calculating the variations;
3. Evaluating the outcome.

In order to be successful, you must work on improving your skills in each of these areas.

In the exam your results were rated as a whole as well as in 29 different sub-categories all belonging to the following major categories: **Motive**, **Theme**, **Objective**, **Stage of the Game**, **Situation**, and **Result**.

This section of the book will provide an overview of each of the sub-categories and offer training recommendations.

Motives

At the heart of every combination there is a **Motive** or the reason for its occurrence. If both sides played nearly perfect chess, tactics would be extremely rare, if happening at all. However, chess players do make mistakes and these errors are often punished by tactical operations.

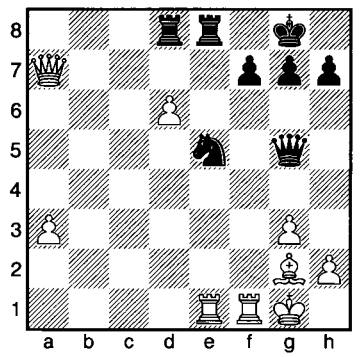
Ask yourself these questions:

- Is the ♔ susceptible to an attack?
- Are there any vulnerable pieces or pawns?
- Are there any pawns close to promotion?
- Do I want to trade down (simplify)?

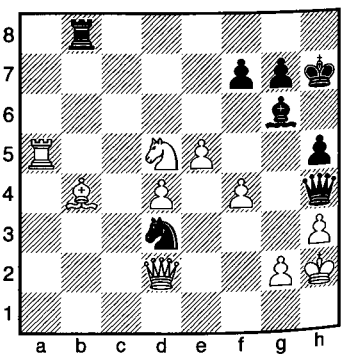
If you answer "yes" to any of these questions, then you are likely to have at least one of the following **Motives**: *Advanced Pawn, Back-rank Mate, Lack of Protection, Mating Net, Misplaced Piece, and Simplification.*

Answer: Yes	Motive
Bad ♔	Back-rank Mate, Lack of Protection, Mating Net
Bad Piece or Pawn	Misplaced Piece, Lack of Protection
Possible Promotion	Advanced Pawn
Trading Down	Simplification

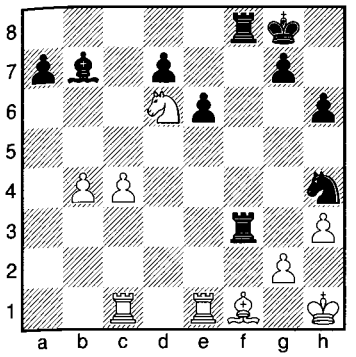
Let's take a quick look at the following four diagrams. What are the **motives** for each side? Notice, that at this point, we should not be concerned **whose move it is**. Spend no more than two minutes on each.



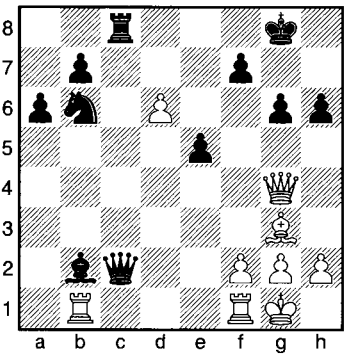
#3



#4



#5



#6

Let's review the available **Motives** and see what happened in the actual games:

#3 White – *Back-rank Mate* (after ♕×f7+, at the right moment), *Simplification* (White is up by one ♙), *Advanced Pawn* (the ♙d6). **Black** – *Lack of Protection* (the ♔g1 could be checked along the g1-a7 diagonal or by the ♘. The latter may result in the threat to the ♖e1).

White's last move was **35.♕c5×a7.** Black responded – **35...♖e6?** (35...♖×d6? 36.♕×f7+ ♘×f7 37.♖×e8#; better was 35...♙f6) and resigned after **36.♖×e5**. Recapturing on e5 allows ♕×f7+ and ♕f8+ with the checkmate. *Huzman,A – Bluvshtein,M Montreal, 2005.*

#4 White – *Misplaced Piece* (the Black ♕ and ♗ could be trapped), *Simplification* (White is up by two ♙s). **Black** – *Lack of Protection* (the ♔h2 is slightly weak, especially if White is considering ♙g2–g3; the ♗b4 requires attention as well).

White's last move was **50.♙f2–f4.** After Black played **50...♘×b4?!**, White uncorked **51.♘f6+!** (51.♘×b4 allows perpetual after 51...♖×b4 52.♕×b4 ♕×f4+ due to *Lack of Protection* of the White ♔) **♙×f6 52.♙g3** and soon won. *Bologan,V – Sasikiran,K, Skanderborg 2003*

#5 White – *Misplaced Pieces* (the Black ♖ and ♗ are under attack) **Black** – *Lack of Protection* (the ♔h1 is under attack), *Simplification* (Black is up by one ♙)

After White recaptured the Black ♕ via **29.♘e4×d6**, Black found a nice simplifying combination – **29...♖×f1+ 30.♖×f1 ♗×g2+ 31.♔g1 ♗×f1**

32.♖×f1 ♖×f1+ 33.♔×f1 ♘f5. The resulting ♘-ending, as is the ♙-ending, are lost for White. *Khismatullin,D – Romanov,E EU-ch Warsaw 2005.*

#6 White – *Advanced Pawn* (the ♙d6), *Lack of Protection* (the ♖c8, the ♗b2). **Black** – *Simplification* (good chances in the Endgame).

Black's last move was **27...♘d7–b6** and White found a really neat way to finish the game. After **27.♖×b2! ♕×b2 28.♕×c8+! ♘×c8 29.♙d7**, Black resigned. *Engels,L – Maroczy,G, Dresden 1936*

Even though a position may offer some **Motives** (and many do!), it doesn't guarantee the possibility of a successful tactical operation. Just consider if Black played the passive **35...♙f6** in diagram **#3** – White's tactics would be neutralized. Or if Black played the sneaky **50...♖×b4** in diagram **#4**, the tactics (51.♘f6+ ♙×f6 52.♙g3), would actually backfire as Black has a devious idea: **52...♖b1! 53.♙×h4 ♗e4** and the White ♔ can't avoid perpetual check.

Being aware of the **Motives** present in a position and including them in your strategic planning should increase your chances of finding and executing a successful tactical operation. This could come as a result of your skilled play ("building your case") or, as is more frequent, from your opponent's mistakes ("losing ground").

Threats

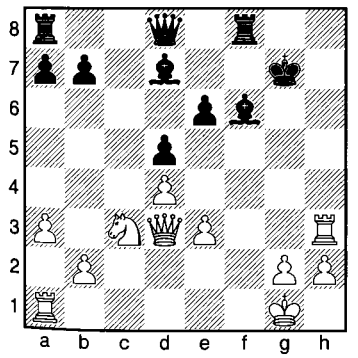
How do we get from recognizing the **Motives** to carrying out tactics? With the help of **Threats**. If **Motive** is the opportunity to execute a successful tactical operation, then a **Threat** is the intent to exploit that opportunity.

Threats can be classified into the following three categories:

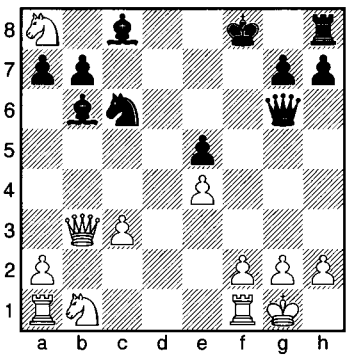
(1) *The Final Execution* – when there is an attack and no defense.
(2) *A Simple Threat* – a move that creates a possibility for (1).
(3) *A Complex Threat* – a move that creates a possibility for (1) or (2). It often involves multiple targets, thus making it hard to deal with.

Sometimes, you accomplish a successful outcome with an instant *execution* or a creation of *a simple threat* that can't be defended. These are simple tactical operations that are not too difficult to find.

Let's look at the following examples. Start with searching for **Motives**, then look for ways to exploit them.



#7 After **21...♔g8×g7**



#8 After **16.♘c7×a8**

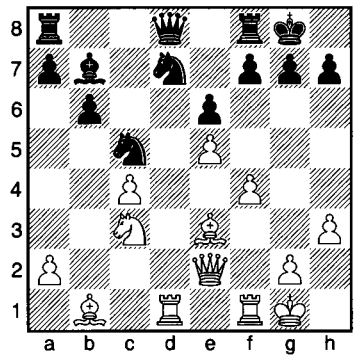
#7 The Black ♔ is exposed and is an easy target for the White ♕ and ♖. White finished the "hunt" immediately – **22.♕h7#** *Kuzubov,Y – Wademark,H, Monarch Assurance 14th Port Erin, 2005.*

#8 Here we also see a *mating net* – the White ♔, looks well-protected behind a wall of ♙s, but he is under pressure from the Black ♕ and the ♗b6. The other ♗ joined the party in a hurry by **16...♗h3!** (a *simple threat* – ♕×g2#) **17.♙g3 ♕×e4!**, again threatening ♕g2#, but this time

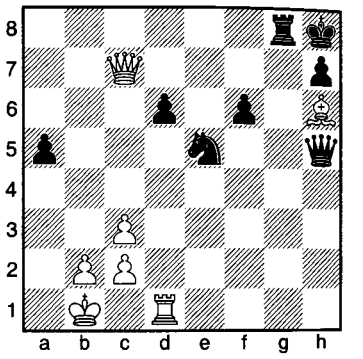
there is no defense. White resigned after **18.♕a3+ ♘e7.** *Kogan,A – Anand,V, Venaco 2005*

As you progress through the rankings, you will see a shift in the complexity of **Threats**. Beginners and inexperienced players are more likely to blunder by overlooking *simple threats*, resulting in instant *executions*. However, more experienced players will recognized these threats and prevent their implementation. Hence comes the third category – *A Complex Threat.*

Let's a look at the following examples:



#9 White to Move



#10 After **35...♕f5–h5**

#9 White's threats can be directed against the Black ♔ (specifically the ♙h7) as well as against the *pinned* ♘d7. Separately, these threats would have been easily defused, i.e. 1.♕h5(c2) ♙g6 or 1.♕d2 ♕c7. Instead, after an introductory trade that eliminates one of the ♘'s defenders, White attacks both targets simultaneously and wins material – **1.♗×c5 ♙×c5 2.♕d3!** *A training position.*

#10 The Black ♕ is attacking two of White's pieces and there is no way to save them both. However, notice that the Black ♔ is not well protected. White wants to get to the ♙f6. To jumpstart his attack, White gave up the ♗ – **36.♗g7+!** This is a multi-purpose move – it prevents ♕×d1+, deflects the ♖ from the 8th rank and blocks the ♔'s escape to g7. After **36...♖×g7 37.♕d8+ ♖g8 38.♕×f6+ ♖g7**, White has a draw via a *perpetual check. Kogan,A – Golod,V Montreal, 2005.*

Your objective should be to improve your ability to recognize *complex threats.*

Themes

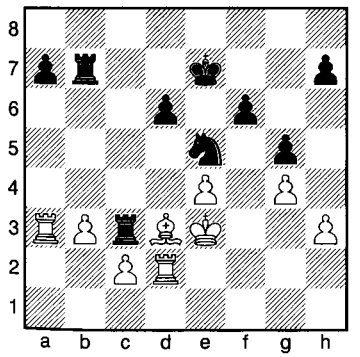
How do you find and execute *Complex Threats*? They are based on various ideas or **Themes**. In the Exam, I tested you on the eleven different **Themes** which I consider to be the most important.

I am splitting **Themes** further into the following two categories – *Decisive* and *Preparatory*.

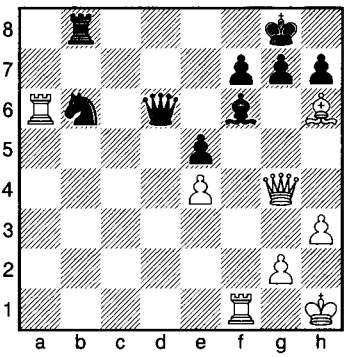
(3a) *Decisive Themes:* typically lead directly to *Execution* (1) or to a *Simple Threat* (2). These include *Discovered Attack*, *Double Attack*, *Pin* and *Skewer*.

(3b) *Preparatory Themes*: may lead to (1) or (2), but also often lead to (3a). They are: *Decoy*, *Clearance*, *Removal of the Guard*, *Deflection*, *In-Between Move*, *Interference* and *Trap*.

Let's look at the following examples. Start with searching for the **Motives**. Next, seek ways to exploit them – first via simple threats and then by means of complex threats.



#11 After **37.♖a1×a3**



#12 After **28...♕e7–d6**

#11 White pieces are misplaced (**Motive**) and Black uses a combination involving two *Decisive Themes* – *double attack* and *pin*. After **37...♘c4+**, White resigned because he loses at least an *exchange* after 38.♙×c4 ♖×a3. Even worse is 38.♔d4 ♘×a3 39.♔×c3 ♘b1+ (one more *double attack*) and Black is winning a ♖. *Santalla,A – Shabalov,A Foxwoods, USA, 2006.*

#12 White is already ahead in material, but the advantage is minimal (♖ vs. ♘+♙) and the endgame will likely result in a draw. Fortunately,

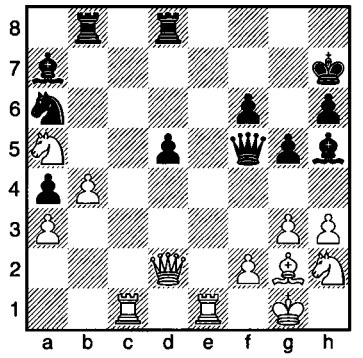
White has **Motives**, such as pressure on the ♔ via the ♙g7 (that lacks firm protection), as well as the possibility of a *back-rank* mate. A chain of explosions on the 6th rank did the damage. Black resigned after **29.♖×f6!** (*removal of the guard*) not waiting for the second blow 29...♕×f6 30.♖×b6! (*deflection*) ♖×b6 (30...♕×b6 31.♕×g7#) 31.♕c8+ ♕d8 32.♕×d8#. A couple of *Preparatory Themes* led to the successful result. *Haba,P – Lechtynsky,J Karlovy Vary, 2005.*

Now let's review the eleven tactical **Themes** highlighted in the Exam.

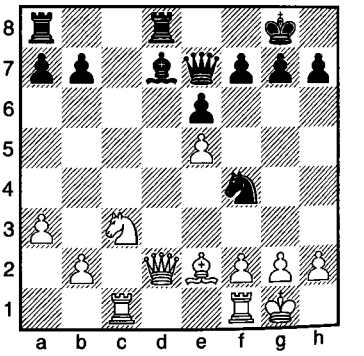
We will start with the *Decisive Themes*.

Double Attack: a piece or a pawn moves and creates two or more distinct threats. Usually, the **Objective** is to *Win Material* and the **Motives** are *Misplaced Piece* and *Lack of Protection.*

How many favorable *double attacks* can White execute in diagram #13? How can Black finish the game with a *double attack* in diagram #14?



#13 White to Move



#14 After **18.♕d1–d2**

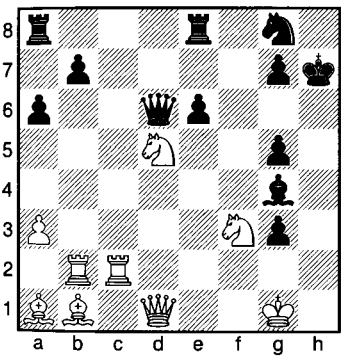
#13 White has four different ways to carry out a *Double Attack* – **1.♖e7+** (a check and 2.♖×a7); **1.♘c6** (2.♘×b8, 2.♘×d8, 2.♘×a7); **1.♙g4** (2.♙×f5, 2.♙×h5); **1.♗f1** (2.♗d3 *pin* on the Black ♕, 2.♗×a6). *A training position.*

#14 Black played **18...♕g5!** threatening 19...♕×g2# and 19...♘h3+. After **20.♗f3 ♘h3+**, White resigned as he is losing the ♕. *Vafeas,A – Stefansson,H Greece, 1993*

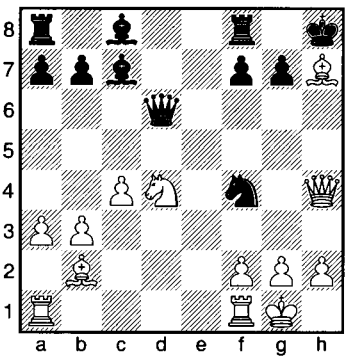
Discovered Attack: involves two pieces of the same color (an attacker and an obstructor) and a target (a piece or a critical square) that are on the same line (diagonal, file or rank). Moving the obstructer instantly creates a threat to the target. And, if the obstructer also attacks the same target, or creates a separate threat, the situation is often unbearable. *Discovered check* and *Double Check* are also examples of *Discovered Attack*. The attacker must be a long-range piece – a ♕, ♖ or ♗. The obstructer can be any piece.

The common **Objectives** are to *Win Material* and to *Checkmate* and the **Motives** are *Misplaced Piece* and *Lack of Protection*.

Find various successful *discovered attacks* that White can execute in diagram #15. What is White's threat and how should Black respond in diagram #16?



#15 White to Move



#16 Black to Move

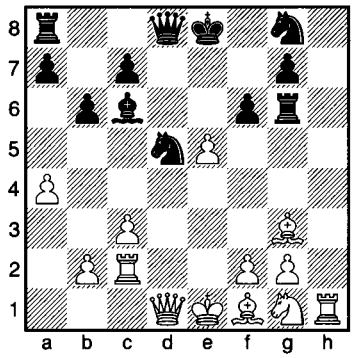
#15 White has several different ways to carry out a *discovered attack* – **1.♖h2#** (A *double check* only allows one possible defense – running away. Black has no place to run here, thus it is a checkmate!); **1.♖c6+** (and 2.♖×d6 winning the ♕); **1.♘f6+** (and 2.♕×d6 winning the ♕); **1.♘g5+** (and 2.♕×g4 winning the ♗); **1.♖×b7** (the ♖ and the ♗ are threatening the ♙g7). *A training position.*

#16 White is planning a nasty discovered check **1.♗g6+** leading to a forced checkmate after 1...♔g8 2.♕h7#. However, Black struck first with **20...♘h3+**. This opened the diagonal for the ♕d6/♗c7 battery directed at the ♙h2. White must give up the ♕ after **21.♕×h3** ♗**×h3**, to stop the checkmate on h2. *Shereshevski,M – Kupreichik,V Minsk, 1976*

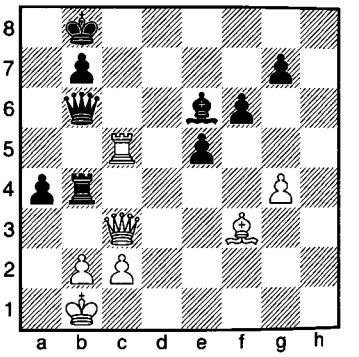
Pin: a piece is *Pinned* when it is shielding another piece or a critical square from an attack by an enemy piece. A *Pin* can happen along a rank, file, or diagonal with the threat always coming from a long-range piece, such as a ♕, ♖ or ♗. There are two types of *pins* – *Absolute* and *Relative*. An *Absolute pin* is when the *pinned* piece shields his ♔. Its mobility is severely restricted; moreover, it often has no legal moves at all. All other *pins* fall into the other category – *Relative* pin, where while the *pinned* piece is discouraged to move, it has no legal restriction on its moves.

Usually, the **Objective** is to *Win Material* and the **Motive** is *Misplaced Piece*.

Find the various *pins* that White can execute in diagram #17 and identify if they are *Absolute* or *Relative*. How did Black finish the game immediately in diagram #18?



#17 White to Move



#18 After **41.♕e3–c3**

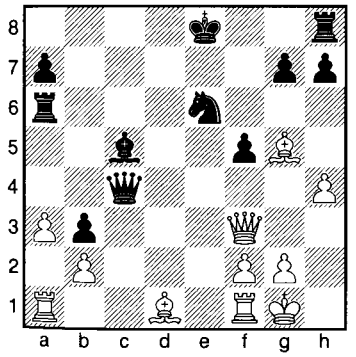
#17 White can *pin* several Black pieces: **1.♖d2** (the ♘d5 is pinned to the Black ♕; the *pin* is relative as the ♘ can make a legal move); **1.♕h5** (♖g6–♔e8, absolute); **1.♗c4** (♘d5–♘g8, relative); **1.♗b5** (♗c6–♔e8, absolute, note that the pinned ♗c6 has two legal moves – ♗×b5 and ♗d7); **1.♖h8** (♘g8–♔e8, absolute); **1.♕f3** (♘d5–♗c6, relative); **1.♗h4** (♙f6–♕d8, relative). *A training position.*

#18 White has a weak *back-rank* (**Motive**). The ♖c5 prevents the Black ♕ from reaching g1, thus it can't move (*pinned*). Black attacked the ♖ a second time by **41...♖b5** and White resigned. The White ♖ can't be defended and 42.♖×b5 allows checkmate after 42...♕g1+. *Topalov,V – Anand,V Sofia, 2004*

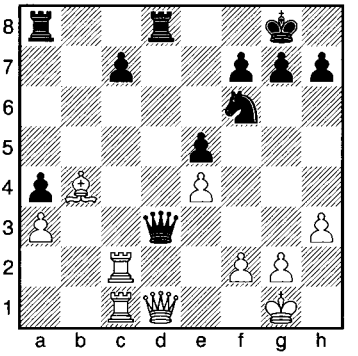
Skewer: this is similar to a *pin* in that it involves three pieces along the same line – an attacker, and two of the opponent's pieces (the first one is an immediate target and the second one is a potential target that is being shielded by the first one). However, there are certain conditions for a successful *skewer* – (1) the attacker must be less valuable than the front piece, making the trade or the defense of a front piece an unfavorable option; (2) the second piece is less valuable than the first one; (3) if the second piece isn't of a greater value than the attacker, it may not be defended via retreating the first piece. Thus the most common victim of the *skewer* is the second piece.

Usually, the **Objective** is to *Win Material* and the **Motive** is *Misplaced Piece*.

Find the various *skewers* that White can execute in diagram #19. How did White finish the game immediately in diagram #20?



#19 White to Move



#20 After **25...♕d6×♙d3**

#19 White can carry out a *skewer* in several different ways: **1.♕a8+** (the ♔ and the ♖h8); **1.♗e2** (♕–♖a6); **1.♗×b3** (♕–♘e6); **1.♖c1** (♕–♗c5). *A training position.*

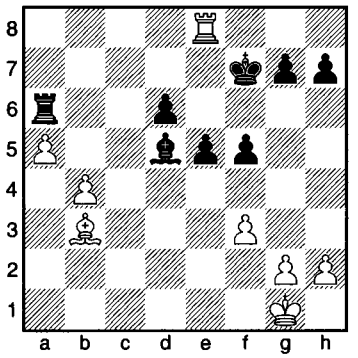
#20 The Black ♕ and ♖ are dangerously lined up on the d-file. Therefore White played **26.♖d2**, forcing Black to give up his ♕. After **26...♕×d2** (not 26...♕×e4? 27.♖×d8+) **27.♗×d2 ♘×e4 28.♖c2**, Black resigned. *Short,N – Karpov,A Linares, 1992*

Now, let's look at the *Preparatory Themes*

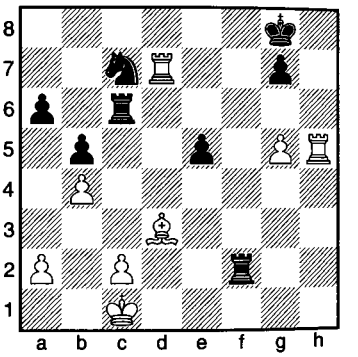
Decoy: – enticing (and often forcing) an enemy piece to go to a specific square by sacrificing material on that square. The goal is to create further tactical opportunities either against that piece or against another piece whose escape route may have been blocked as a result of capture. The value of the sacrificed material must be weighed against the expected outcome of the attack.

The common **Objectives** are *Winning Material* and *Checkmate* and the typical **Motives** are *Misplaced Piece* and *Mating Net.*

How can White not only get out of trouble, but even win on the spot in diagram #21? What is White's quickest way to victory in diagram #22?



#21 After **33...♔g8–f7**



#22 After **30...♙e6–e5**

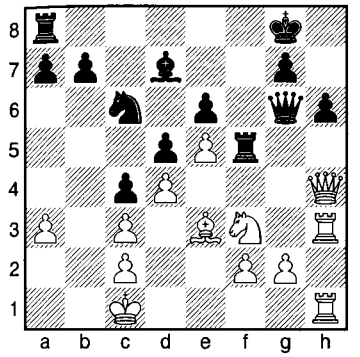
#21 The White ♖ and ♗ are both under attack, but White played the decisive **35.♖a8!!** and Black immediately resigned. Capturing either of White's unprotected pieces leads to a hopeless endgame – 35...♗×b3 36.♖×a6 or 35...♖×a8 36.♗×d5+ (*double attack*) and 37.♗×a8+.
Karjakin,S – Kosteniuk,A Brissago, 2003

#22 White has a very strong initiative and many promising moves, but the best move is **31.♖h8+!** The idea is to lure the Black ♔ into the corner with no escape route. Black resigned, not waiting for checkmate after 31...♔×h8 32.♖d8+ ♘e8 33.♖×e8 ♖f8 34.♖×f8#. *Akopian,V – Jobava,B WchT Beersheba, 2005*

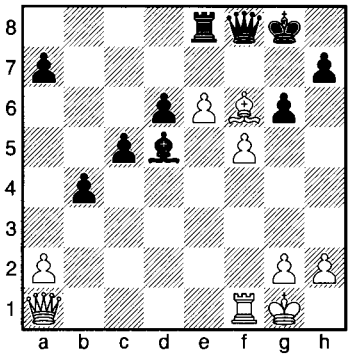
Clearance: arranging for a line to open or for a square to be vacated, thus enabling or enhancing a subsequent attack using the freed space.

The common **Objectives** are *Checkmate* and *Winning Material* and the typical **Motives** are *Back Rank Mate*, *Lack of Protection* and *Misplaced Piece*.

Whose attack is likely to succeed first in diagram #23? How can White get his dangerous ♙s rolling in diagram #24?



#23 After **20.♖h2–h3**



#24 After **26...♗b7×♙d5**

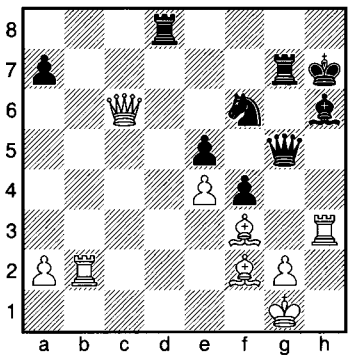
#23 White is building up the pressure on the ♔-side targeting the Black ♔. At the same time, his own ♔ seems relatively safe as Black's pieces are nowhere near him. However, everything can change in a snap if you notice how vulnerable the ♙ on c2 might be, if attacked. Black played **20...♖×f3!**, clearing the path for the Black ♕ to the ♙c2 and also eliminating its potential defender (via ♘f3–e1). After **21.♖×f3**, Black fired the second shot – **21...♘b4!**, now clearing the path for the "bad" Black ♗ to join the attack. White resigned not waiting for 22.♙a×b4 (or 22.♙c×b4) ♗a4, and he couldn't stop a forced checkmate. *Mortensen,E – Karlsson,L Esbjerg, 1988*

#24 White has a fantastic way to get his advanced ♙s rolling. **27.♗g7!!** clears the path for the f♙. Whether Black accepts or declines the ♗ sacrifice, the White f♙ will advance to f6 and then f7 with a *double attack* against the Black ♔ and ♖, forcing Black to give up material. For example, 27...♕e7 (27...♕×g7 28.♙f6) 28.♙f6 ♕×e6 29.♙f7+ ♕×f7 30.♖×f7 ♗×f7 31.♗h8! *A possible variation from Azmaiparashvili,Z – Anand,V Dubai, 2002*

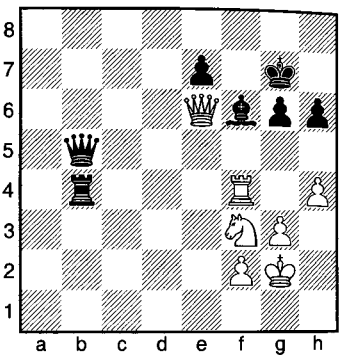
Deflection: enticing (and often forcing) an enemy piece to abandon its duty of defending another piece or a critical square, thus enabling a subsequent operation directed against that piece or square.

The common **Objectives** are *Checkmate, Winning Material* and *Pawn Promotion* and the typical **Motives** are *Mating Net, Back Rank Mate, Lack of Protection* and *Advanced Pawn.*

Identify Black's target and deal with its key defender in diagram #25. The Black ♔ is weak and his defenders are overloaded in diagram #26. Make use of it!



#25 After **41.♗c5–f2**



#26 After **42...♖b2×♙b4**

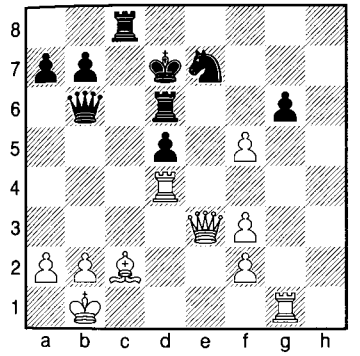
#25 Black is zeroing in on the ♙ on g2, and the ♗f3 is its only defender. Since the ♗ can't leave its post, Black played **41...♖d1+!** Luckily, this *deflection* could be ignored and White replied **42.♔h2**. But now, the ♗f3 got another duty – stopping ♘g4#. Thus came another *deflection* – **42...♕×g2+**. This one couldn't be ignored. White resigned not waiting for checkmate after 43.♗×g2 ♘g4#. *Donaldson-Akhmilovskaya,E – Wang Pin Shanghai, 2002*

#26 The Black ♕ is defending the ♖, while the Black ♗ is defending the ♙ on e7 and also covering the f-file. Thus, White played **43.♘e5** with the threat of 44.♕f7+ ♔h8 45.♘×g6#. Black had no choice but to accept a very difficult endgame after **43...♕×e5** (43...♗×e5 44.♕×e7+ and 45.♖f8#) **44.♕×e5 ♗×e5 45.♖×b4**. White converted his advantage twelve moves later. *Kazakov,P – Khairullin,I RUS-ch U20, 2001*

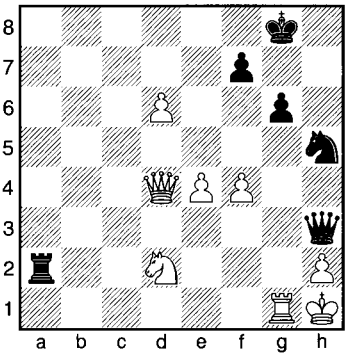
Removal of the Guard: physically removing via trade or sacrifice an enemy piece that has a duty of defending another piece or a critical square, thus enabling a subsequent operation directed against that piece or square.

The common **Objectives** are *Checkmate, Winning Material* and *Pawn Promotion* and the typical **Motives** are *Mating Net, Back Rank Mate, Lack of Protection* and *Advanced Pawn.*

How can Black make use of the peculiar position of White's pieces in diagram #27? How can Black, who is down two ♙s, continue to fight in diagram #28?



#27 After **30.♕c3–e3**



#28 After **42.♙d5–d6**

#27 Black's position is a suspect due to his "centralized" ♔, but the odd placement of the White ♕ and ♖d4 present Black with a sudden opportunity. The Black ♘ is ready to go to f5 with a fork (*double attack*), winning the ♖, if not for the ♗ on c2. Thus came **30...♖×c2**, *removing the guard* of the f5-square. By temporarily sacrificing the exchange on c2, Black was guaranteed to get the ♖ back, gaining a ♗ in the end. *Dambacher,M – Bellini,F Amsterdam 2005*

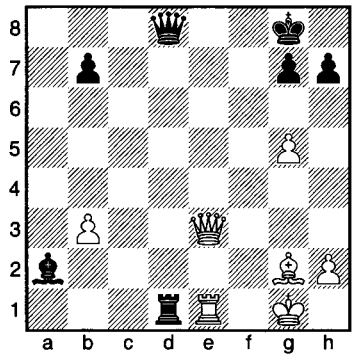
#28 White just advanced his d♙, confident in his defensive setup. However, Black found a way to jumpstart his attack and eventually force a perpetual check by *removing one of the guards* – the White ♘. After **42...♖×d2! 43.♕×d2 ♕f3+ 44.♕g2**, Black sacrificed his ♘ forcing draw – **44...♘g3+! 45.♙×g3 ♕h5+ 46.♕h2 ♕f3+ 47.♖g2 ♕d1+! 48.♕g1 ♕h5+** etc... *Portisch,L – Kasparov,G Moscow 1981*

Interference (Obstruction, Interception, Blocking): typically involves reaching one of the following goals –

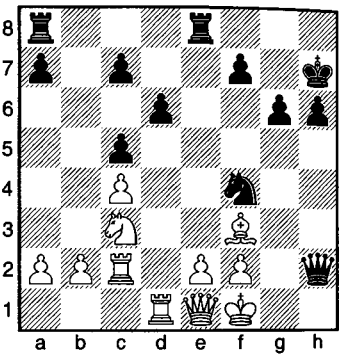
- Breaking the connection between a target (a piece or a square) and its defender,
- Obstructing the escape route of a target, often the ♔.

The common **Objectives** are *Checkmate* and *Winning Material* and the typical **Motives** are *Mating Net*, *Lack of Protection* and *Misplaced Piece*.

Find the winning idea for White in diagram #29. What should Black do about the White ♔'s immediate future in diagram #30?



#29 After **29...♖d7–d1**



#30 After **26.♖c1–c2**

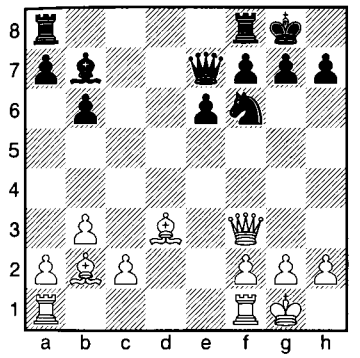
#29 Black's position is a mess. The Black ♔ is exposed to various attacks. The Black ♕ is overloaded, splitting her duties between defending the vulnerable *back-rank* and the Black ♖. The Black ♗ is temporarily out of the game. White found a way to break the balance via **30.♗d5+!**. Black resigned, as rejecting the ♗ sacrifice allows 31.♖×d1, while capturing the ♗ leads to a checkmate – 30...♖×d5 (30...♕×d5 31.♕e8#) 31.♕e6+ ♔f8 (31...♔h8 32.♕e8+) 32.♖f1+ etc. *Van Wely,L – Brunner,L Biel, 1993*

#30 Black is eager to play a direct 30...♘h3, threatening ♕g1#. However, after an effortless 31.♙e3, the White ♔ escapes to the ♕-side unharmed. Thus Black shut the emergency exit with **30...♖e3!!** and also created another threat – 31...♖×f3. White resigned as he is facing inevitable checkmate in three moves. For example, 31.♙×e3 (otherwise, 31...♖×f3 32.♙×f3 ♕h1#) ♘h3 32.♕g3 ♕×g3 and 33...♕g1# *Friedman,S – Thornblom,N Stockholm, 1973*

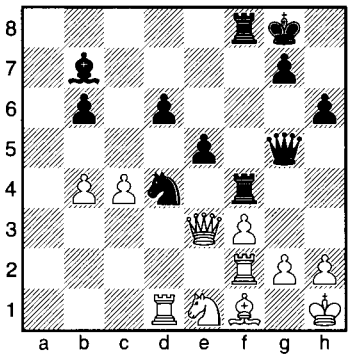
Intermediate Move (In-between Move, Zwischenzug (German)): inserting a surprise move (usually a threat, such as check) rather than making an obvious capture, defensive or attacking response. Frequently, when the threat is addressed, the game goes back into the 'normal' mode, which, however, has been affected in a way that was beneficial to the side that made the *Intermediate Move.*

The common **Objectives** are *Winning Material* and *Forcing Draw* and the typical **Motives** are *Lack of Protection* and *Misplaced Piece.*

How should White address the threat to his ♕ in diagram #31? How did Black use the superior position of his pieces in diagram #32?



#31 After **14...♗c8–b7**



#32 After **31.♔g1–h1**

#31 White is building pressure on the ♔-side. With his last move, the Black ♗ attacked the White ♕. Rather than to play a direct 15.♕g3 or 15.♕h3, White found a way to ignore Black's threat, if only for a moment, and played the *intermediate move* **15.♗×f6!**. Because his own ♕ was under attack, Black didn't have time to capture the White ♕ and instead played **15...♙×f6** (15...♗×f3 16.♗×e7; 15...♕×f6 16.♕×b7). Now, it was the time for the White ♕ to leave, and she did it very gracefully – **16.♕g4+!** White is planning to attack the ♙h7 and this *in-between check* forces the Black ♔ to h8, while allowing the White ♕ to get to h4. After, **16...♔h8 17.♕h4**, Black resigned. The ♙f6 is *pinned* and Black can't stop the checkmate on h7 without giving up his ♕ (17...♙f5 18.♕×e7). *Atlas,V – Tomezack,S ECU club, Austria, 2006*

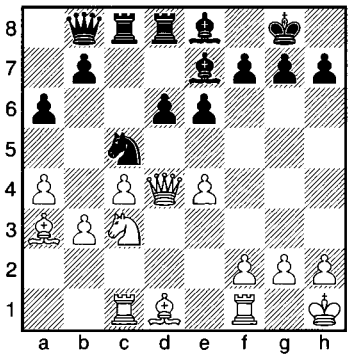
#32 Black was able to demolish White's position after **31...♖×f3**. His idea was based on the *back rank mate* in the case of 32.♕×g5, when, instead of recapturing, Black has the *intermediate move* 32...♖×f2

threatening ♖×f1#. White must give up the ♕ in order to stop the checkmate, and Black ends up with an extra ♖. No better is 32.♖×f3 ♕×e3, as 33.♖×e3 allows 33...♖×f1#. So White resigned rather than playing a hopeless position after 32.♕×f3 ♘×f3. *Stahlberg,G – Alekhine,A Hamburg (Ol), 1930*

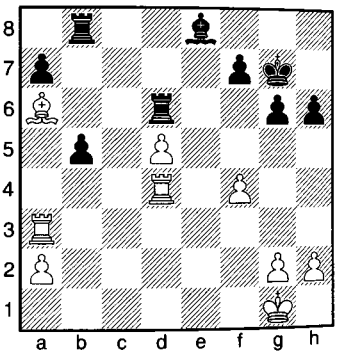
Trap: limiting the ability of a piece to move with an idea of subsequently attacking it and winning material.

The common **Objective** is *Winning Material* and the typical **Motive** is *Misplaced Piece.*

How did Black turn around his seemingly passive position in diagram #33? What is wrong with White's position in diagram #34 and how to take advantage of it?



#33 After **19.♗e2–d1**



#34 After **31.♖f3–a3**

#33 The centralized White ♕ suddenly became a target. Black played **19...♗g5!**, attacking the White ♖ and cutting off the ♕'s escape route. Not sensing the danger, White merely moved the ♖ away by **20.♖b1**. After **20...♙e5! 21.♕d5 ♗c6**, the White ♕ was *trapped*, so White resigned. A better choice for White was 20.♙f4 ♗×f4 21.♖×f4 ♙e5, when Black is up by an *exchange*, but White is still in the game. *Lallemand,R – Kosintseva,T EU-chT (Women), Gothenburg, 2005*

#34 The White ♗ on a6 looks like a mouse in a *trap*. However, rushing to win the ♗ with 31...♖bb6 allows it to escape after 32.♗c8. Instead Black played **31...♗d7**, effectively shutting down the exit and thus making 32...♖bb6 a lethal threat. White couldn't do anything to save the ♗ and the game. *Lautier,J – Bauer,C France (Ch), 2006*

In the exam, I tested you on eleven different themes, the ones I consider the most common and important to know. In this chapter, I classified them into two sub-categories – *Decisive* and *Preparatory* and showed you some illustrative examples from recent games.

Once you are familiar with these **Themes** and are comfortable looking for **Motives** you have excellent chances of recognizing tactical opportunities and executing them. You will also be able to prevent or defuse your opponent's threats. Moreover, you will be able to set him up for a failure when he executes "promising" tactics.

Therefore, the reports on **Motives** and **Themes** are the most critical in the entire exam. By focusing your training on the areas where your sub-category rating is below your overall rating you will improve your results.

I am also providing you with other statistics in other categories related to your tactical skills. Examine them carefully, as they all provide insight into your current level and suggestions on what to work on for improvement.

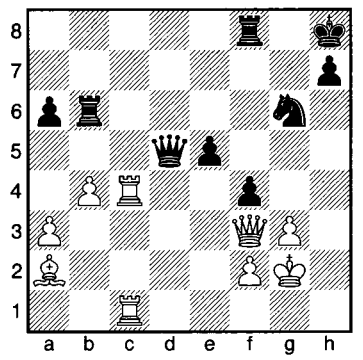
Objectives

What do you want to accomplish with a tactical operation? I identified five major **objectives** – *Checkmate*, *Forcing Draw*, *Pawn Promotion*, *Reaching Standard Endgame*, and *Winning Material*.

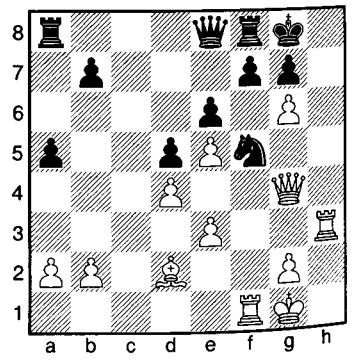
Your **Objective** is closely tied to the **Motive** you uncover in the position. Here is a table with the common **Objectives** for a given **Motive**.

Motive	Objective
Advanced Pawn	• Pawn Promotion • Reaching Standard Endgame
Back Rank Mate	• Checkmate • Winning Material
Lack of Protection	• Checkmate • Winning Material
Mating net	• Checkmate
Misplaced Piece	• Winning Material
Simplification	• Forcing Draw • Reaching Standard Endgame • Winning Material

Take a look at the following four examples. Start with searching for **Motives**. Next, consider what should be possible **Objectives** for tactical operations. Finally, see if you can find a combination.



#35 After **36.♕g4–f3**

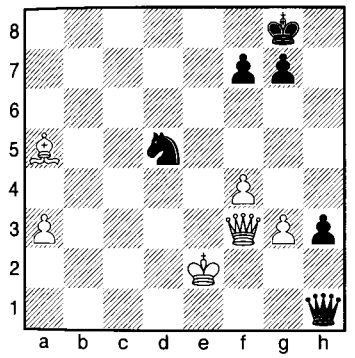


#36 After **27...♕d7–e8**

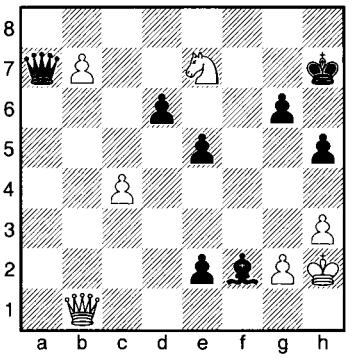
#35 The White ♔ is in danger and the White ♕ is peculiarly placed (**motive**). Black's **objective** here is to *win material*, specifically the

White ♕. He accomplished this at once via **36...♘h4+!** (*deflection, double attack*). White resigned since, after 37.♙×h4 ♖g6+, he loses the ♕. *Leko,P – Grischuk,A Cap d'Agde, 2003*

#36 The Black ♔ is in a *mating net* (**motive**) and is facing deadly threats along the h-file. Black's hopes lie with the key defender, the ♘f5, and also with a possible ♔'s escape via f7 or f8. White's **objective** is checkmate, which he accomplished with two powerful strikes that destroyed Black's hopes. First went down the Black's key defender after **28.♖×f5** (*removal of the guard*) **♙×f5**, and then the Black ♔ was forced to go towards his demise via *decoy* after **29.♖h8+**. Black resigned here not waiting for the White ♕ to deliver checkmate after 29...♔×h8 30.♕h4+ ♔g8 31.♕h7#. *Eljanov,P – Wang Yue Aeroflot op-A, Moscow, 2005*



#37 After **37.♕f2–f3**



#38 After **44.♘d5–e7**

#37 Black has high expectations for his advanced passed h♙ (**motive**). White is relying on having his ♔ nearby to stop the ♙ after the ♕s are traded. Black's possible **objectives** here are to *promote* the h♙ or to *win* one of the White pieces. Black found a neat way to accomplish the former by **38...♕×f3+ 39.♔×f3 ♘e3** (*deflection, interference*). The promotion couldn't be stopped, so White resigned. *Medina Garcia,A – Tal,M Palma de Mallorca, 1966*

#38 Both sides are in a very similar predicament – the ♔s are poorly protected and under attack and the ♙s are ready to be promoted (**motives**). The key difference is that White is threatening checkmate via ♕×g6+, which forces Black to seek immediate escape. Since Black has no way to defend the ♙g6, one of his **objectives** is to force a draw. Black managed to pull off a *perpetual check* here. After **44...♗g3+!**, a draw

was agreed as White couldn't avoid the perpetual check or he would lose. 45.♔×g3 (45.♔h1? ♙e1♕+) ♕e3+ 46.♔h2 (46.♔h4?? ♕f2+ 47.♙g3 ♕f6# or 47.♔g5 ♕f4#) ♕f4+ 47.♔g1 (47.♔h1?? ♕f1+) ♕e3+ etc... *Anand,V – Kasparov,G Linares, 2005*

Having a specific **objective** will help you calculate better. Often, your goal is *checkmate* and "the end justifies the means" is fully applicable in such instances, as it doesn't matter how much material you need to sacrifice in order to accomplish your objective. When you are trying to win material or promote a ♙, you must consider the cost, both in material (permanent) and in time (temporary, like initiative). When your **objective** is to *simplify* into a standard endgame, you should make sure that you are assessing that final position correctly. Finally, when your **objective** is to *force a draw*, there are several possibilities available to you – *perpetual check* (or *perpetual attack*), *stalemate*, and *fortress*. See the section Result (page 194) for further information.

Stages of the Game

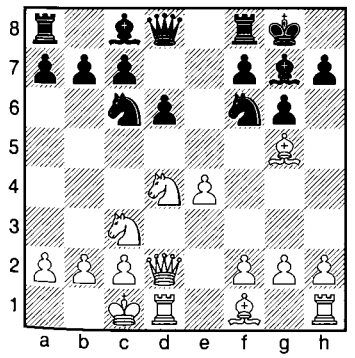
Tactical operations occur in each stage of the game – *Opening*, *Middlegame* and *Endgame*. Review your exam results for each stage.

While during each stage of the game we can see all or nearly all of the **objectives, motives** and **themes** covered in this book, some are more common than others. In this chapter, I will highlight the associations within each of the stages – *Opening*, *Middlegame* and *Endgame*.

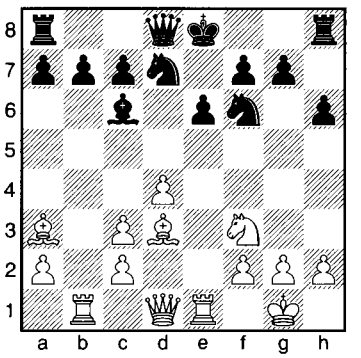
Opening: the strategy in the *opening* is based on the following: controlling the center, developing pieces and keeping the ♔ safe. Ignoring any of these principles will often result in exposing yourself to various tactical ideas.

The most common **objective** is *Winning Material*. *Checkmate* and *pawn promotion* are very rare. There are also certain opening variations, where a draw can be forced by repetition, usually when the ♕ is trapped.

The most common **motives** are *Lack of Protection* and *Misplaced Piece*, often the ♔.



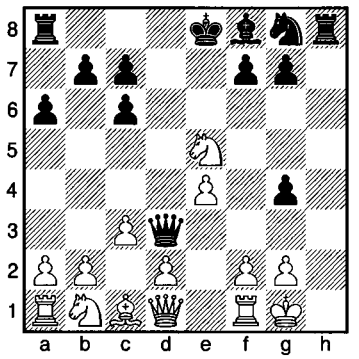
#39 After **8...♘b8–c6**



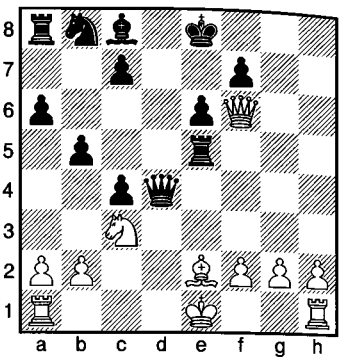
#40 After **11...♘b8–d7**

#39 White is a little ahead in development and has a space advantage in the center. The **motive** for tactics here is a *misplaced piece*, the **objective** is to *win material* (the target is the ♘f6) and the **theme** is *pin*. After **9.♘×c6 ♙×c6 10.♙e5**, White increased the pressure on the pinned ♘, thanks to a new *pin* along the d-file. Black lost the ♘f6 and the game.
Bobras,P – Hedke,F Bad Wiessee, 2005

#40 White is way ahead in development, while the Black ♔ is stuck in the center on the half-open e-file. The **motive** is *mating net*, the **objective** is *checkmate* and the **theme** is *deflection*. Black was mated after **12.♖×e6+ ♙×e6 21.♗g6#** *Kornev,A – Soloviov,M Russia, 2002*



#41 After **9.♘f3×e5**



#42 After **14...♖h5×e5**

#41 Black sacrificed a ♗ in hopes of exploiting the weak h-file. With his last move White attacked the Black ♕ and opened a path for his own ♕ to the ♔-side. Facing a possible loss of his initiative, Black found a clever way to secure a draw. His **motive** is *lack of protection*, the **objective** is to *force a draw* and the **theme** is *pin*. After **9...♗d6! 10.♘×d3** (10.♘×g4?! ♘f6 with an unclear position) **♗h2+ 11.♔h1 ♗d6+**, Black had a *perpetual check*. *Guseinov,G – Ghaem Maghami,E Lahijan, 2005*

#42 This is a wild position, both ♔s are very insecure and both sides have tactical **motives** related to *misplaced piece / lack of protection*. The **objective** is *to win material* and the **themes** are *skewer* (for White) and *discovered attack* (for Black). White won the ♗c8 and the game after **15.♕h8+**. Black resigned, since the only attempt to save the ♗ via 15...♔d7 loses to 16.♖d1. Black's tactical idea could have come to life had White been careless by 15.♖d1?, which appears to win the Black ♕ (if the ♕ leaves the d-file, White has a checkmate on d8). But Black had prepared the nasty discovered attack 15...♖×e2+ and 16...♕×f6 winning at once. *Eljanov,P – Sorokin,M Moscow, 2005*

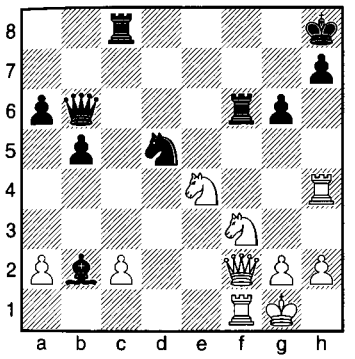
When preparing your openings pay attention to the common tactical ideas in the variations you play. During the game, follow your home preparation and basic opening strategy. Always be on the lookout for tactical opportunities. Pay attention to an uncastled ♔, and all pieces and

♙s that are unprotected, or are limited in mobility, or have important defensive duties.

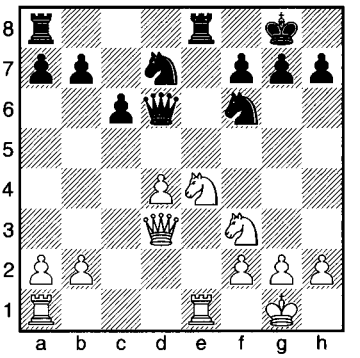
Middlegame: the most complex stage of the game presents all sorts of tactical opportunities.

The most common **objectives** are *Winning Material* and, to a lesser extent, *Checkmate. A draw* is usually accomplished by *Perpetual Check. Pawn Promotion* is seen only a little more frequent than in the *Opening.*

The common **motives** are *Lack of Protection, Misplaced Piece, Mating Net* and *Back-rank Mate.*



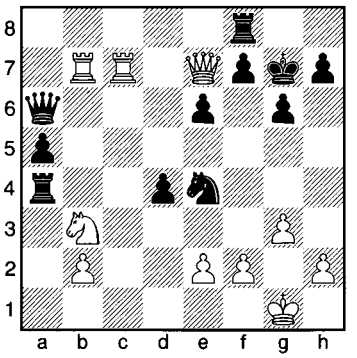
#43 After **27.♘c5–e4**



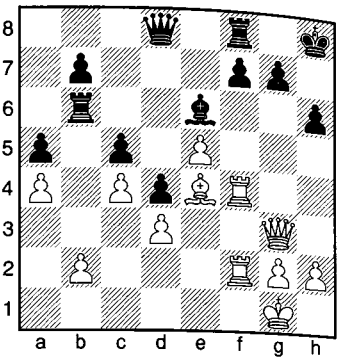
#44 After **14.♘c3×e4**

#43 In this unbalanced position, the tactical opportunity was the result of an error. White underestimated the danger of having his ♔ and ♕ on the same diagonal. The **motive** here is a *misplaced piece* (the ♔ and the ♕), the **objective** is *to win material* (the White ♕) and the **themes** are *pin, removal of the guard* and *intermediate move.* Black played **27... ♖×f3** and White resigned, since he loses at least a piece. Taking the ♖ fails to a *pin* – 28.♙×f3 ♗d4 (the *guard* – ♘f3, was *removed*). Intermediate 28.♕×b6 doesn't save White due to 28...♖×f1+ (*intermediate move*) 29.♔×f1 ♘×b6 and Black emerges a piece ahead. *Ashley,M – Goldin,A US Masters, 2000*

#44 The **motive** here is *lack of protection* (the ♕d3 and the ♘e4). The **objective** is a *to win material* (the ♘e4). The **themes** are *decoy, double attack* and *pin.* Black played **14...♖×e4** – a temporary exchange sacrifice in order to lure the White ♖ to e4. And after **15.♖×e4 ♘c5**, Black emerged a piece ahead. *Bolduc,S – Lesiege,A Montreal, 2001*



#45 After **27...♕a8–a6**



#46 After **26...♙h7–h6**

#45 White is down by a ♙, but has a strong initiative. The ♙f7 is the critical point of this position. The ♖f8 is its only defender, although the ♘e4 is also nearby and ready to help (the **motives** are *mating net*, *lack of protection*). Unsure how to get the most out of his attack and worrying that Black will launch a counterattack against his lonely ♔, White set his objective to *force a draw* via *perpetual check* using the **theme** *removal of the guard*. The game ended in a draw after **28.♕×f8+ ♔×f8 29. ♖×f7+**. *Votava,J – Krasenkow,M Germany, 2004*. White missed that by targeting the defender ♖f8 in a different way, he could have achieved the **objective** *checkmate* via two *deflections* (**theme**). After 28.♘c5! (the immediate 28.♖b8 fails due to 28...♕d6) ♘×c5 29.♖b8 ♖×b8 30.♕×f7+ ♔h6 31.♕×h7+ ♔g5 32.♕h4+ ♔f5 33.♕f4#

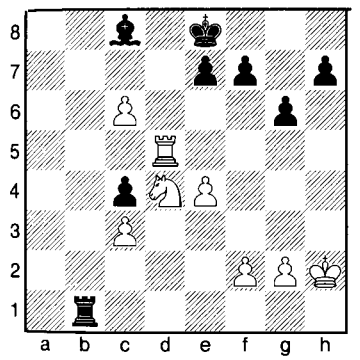
#46 White's pressure on the ♔-side might be hinting at a *mating net*. However, Black pieces are defending the ♔ fairly well, so White was forced to look for something else. And he did find **27.♕g6!** (**theme** – *deflection*), threatening checkmate and forcing Black to trade down into the endgame where the White pieces are dominant (**motive** – *simplification*). After **27...♙×g6 28.♖×f8+ ♕×f8 29.♖×f8+ ♔h7 30.♗d5**, the Black pieces were so awkwardly placed that his defense collapsed only four moves later. *Ehlvest,J – Neverov,V Moscow , 2005*

In the middlegame, pay greater attention to the ♔'s position, ♙-structure, and piece placement. Your play in the early middlegame should be influenced by your opening preparation. During the late middlegame a transition to a favorable endgame is often a possible objective.

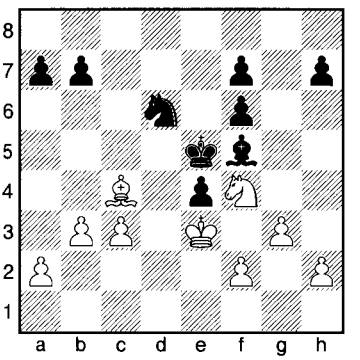
Endgame: Having only a few pieces left on the board doesn't mean that there are a lot fewer tactical opportunities than in the earlier stages. ♙-structure and the ♔'s position often play a major role in finding tactics. Many tactical ideas are closely connected with certain standard positions and must be memorized.

The following **objectives** are equally likely to occur – *Winning material*, *Reaching Standard Endgame* and *Pawn Promotion*. In the endgame there are some additional possibilities to *force a draw* – a *Stalemate* and a *Fortress*. *Checkmate* can happen either due to an overwhelming material advantage or if the ♔, which usually becomes active at that stage, walks into a *Mating net*.

The most common **motives** are *Simplification*, *Misplaced Piece* and *Advanced Pawn*. A *Mating net* is rare, but always deadly!



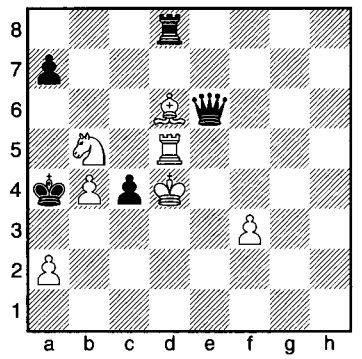
#47 After **31...♔f8–e8**



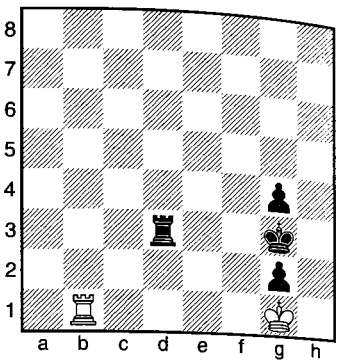
#48 After **29...♘c8–d6**

#47 White's far *advanced passed* c♙, supported by the ♖ and the ♘, is the main factor here (**motive**). Other key factors are – the Black pieces lack coordination and the Black ♔ is somewhat precariously placed. After the initial **32.♙c7 ♗d7,** White executed a *deflection* – **33.♘c6**. Black resigned as he can't stop 34.♘b8 or 34.♙c8♕+ (another *deflection*) ♗×c8 35.♖d8# *Bareev,E – Van Wely,L Corus Wijk aan Zee, 2002*

#48 Black was hoping that his active ♔ would be more than enough to offset his bad ♗ and the defects in his ♙-structure. Unfortunately, his strategy backfired when his ♘ inadvertently blocked the "fire escape" and the Black ♔ ended up in a *mating net* (**motive**). White found the way to get his ♙ to f4 via **30.♘d3+** (**themes**: *clearance* and *deflection*) **♙×d3 31.♙f4#** *Baramidze,D – Klamp,C, Hamburg 2005*



#49 After **41.♔e3–d4**



#50 After **74...♙h3×♙g2**

#49 White has some compensation for the ♕ with a ♘+♗+♙ as well as an attack against the Black ♔. However, Black found a nice way to *simplify* (**motive**) via **41...♕×d5+** (**themes**: *removal of the guard* and *pin*). White resigned, not waiting for 2.♔×d5 ♔×b5, and the White ♔ can't simultaneously defend the *pinned* ♗ and challenge the passed ♙c4. In the case of 3.♔e6, the simplest is 3...♖×d6+ 4.♔×d6 ♙c3, and the Black c♙ advances uncontested *Zhang Pengxian – Jobava China, 2006*

#50 This game had a surprising finish – White played **75.♖b3** trying to *force a draw* via *stalemate* (**objective**) by exploiting Black's *misplaced pieces* (**motive**). And Black erroneously complied after **75...♖×b3**. *Tomazini,Z – Schnegg,D EUnion-ch U12 Mureck 2005.* Instead, Black had a forced win by declining the offer and *simplifying* into a won ♙-endgame: 75...♖f3 76.♖×f3 (76.♖b1 ♖f1+ 77.♖×f1 ♙×f1♕+ 78.♔×f1 ♔h2) ♔×f3! 77.♔h2 ♙g1♕+! 78.♔×g1 ♔g3 etc. Note that nothing could save White in the starting position, as any ♖ move on the 1st rank would be met with the same *simplification* – ♖f3–♖f1+. For example, 75.♖a1 (75.♖b2 ♖d1#) ♖f3 76.♖a3 (else 76...♖f1+) ♔h3! winning for Black.

When studying the endgame, pay great attention to standard positions and memorize those that have tactical motifs and themes. During the game, advance your ♔ with care, watch out for passed ♙s. When ahead in material, aim carefully for favorable *simplifications* and watch out for *stalemate* and *fortress* ideas.

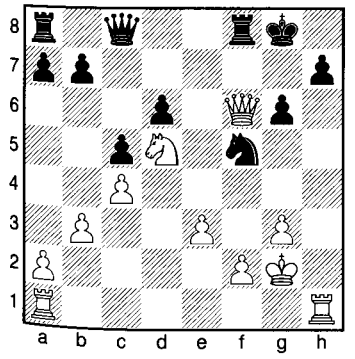
Situation

The assessment of a position helps to identify the particular pluses and minuses for both sides, as well as who has the overall advantage. The subsequent strategic objectives are to increase your advantages (attack) and to minimize those of your opponent (defense). No matter what your immediate strategy is, tactics can always be used once you identity the **motives** present in the position and find **themes** that can be implemented.

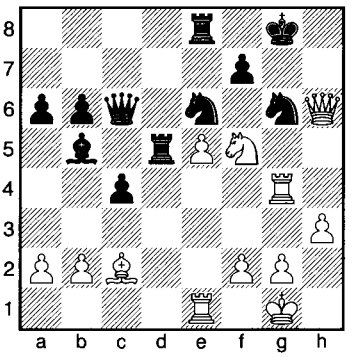
Attack: when you are attacking, tactics usually provide you with the means to convert strategic advantages into a material gain or even a checkmate. This is done by either blasting apart an inadequate defense or by utilizing some crafty moves to create a favorable imbalance.

The most common **objectives** are *Winning Material* and *Checkmate*. Occasionally, when material was sacrificed but the attack failed, *a draw* via *perpetual check* is a game-saving option. The common **motives** are *Lack of Protection, Misplaced Piece* and *Mating Net*. When dealing with defenders, the **themes** *Removal of the Guard* and *Deflection* are best employed.

How did White carry out his attack in diagram #51? Find a couple of different ideas that could ruin Black's hope for a successful defense in diagram #52?



#51 After **23...♖e8–f8**



#52 After **31...♖d8–d5**

#51 Having his ♕ under attack didn't stop White from playing **24.♖×h7!** His thought process was something like: "if Black takes the ♕, then I get his ♕ and gain a ♙ after 24...♖×f6 25.♘×f6+ ♔f8 26.♖h8+ and 27.♖×c8. If he takes the ♖, I'll win the ♘ and continue

my attack." The game went – **24...♔×h7 25.♖h1+ ♘h6** (25...♔g8 26.♖h8#) **26.♕e7+ ♔g8** (26...♖f7? 27.♕×f7+) **27.♖×h6**. Desperate, Black tried **27...♖×f2+**, hoping for a *perpetual check*, but resigned after **28.♔×f2 ♕f5+ 29.♔g2**, as the White ♔ will be able to hide from the checks. *Arbakov,V – Uwira,O Germany, 1997*

#52 Four White pieces surround the Black ♔, whose key defender is the ♘g6. White has a few options, but the most attractive (and common in general) are *removal of the guard* (32.♖×g6+) and *deflection* (32.♖h4). White chose **32.♖h4!** and Black resigned, as he will be checkmated after 32...♘×h4 (otherwise 33.♕h7+ ♔f8 34.♕h8+ and 35.♖×h8#) 33.♘e7+ (*clearance*) ♖×e7 34.♕h7+ ♔f8 35.♕h8#. The other option – 32.♖×g6+, would also lead to checkmate after 32...♙×g6 33.♕×g6+ ♔h8 (33...♔f8 34.♕f6+ ♔g8 35.♘h6#) 34.♕f6+ ♔h7 35.♘e7+ ♖d3 36.♕g6+ ♔h8 37.♕h6# *Nunn,J – Smeets,J Amsterdam, 2006*

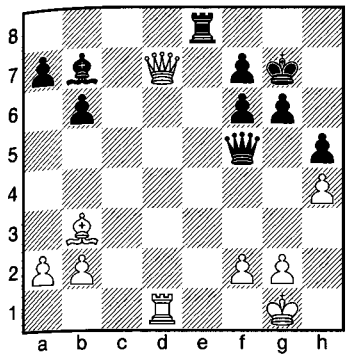
It's often difficult to foresee the result of a sacrifice that may be required for your attack to progress. Having a minimalist approach will make your decision much easier. Specifically, consider cutting your analysis short with reasoning like – "at least I get an important ♙", or "I will definitely get my ♗ back, and continue my attack", or "There must be a checkmate there, but at worst, I can force a *perpetual check*."

Defense: you must always be on the lookout for tactical opportunities, both for yourself and your opponent. When defending, the former sometimes might be your last chance to escape or even turn the game around. The latter is also extremely important since, when you consistently find your opponent's threats, not only can you frustrate him with a resilient defense based on prophylactics, but you can also set some devious traps.

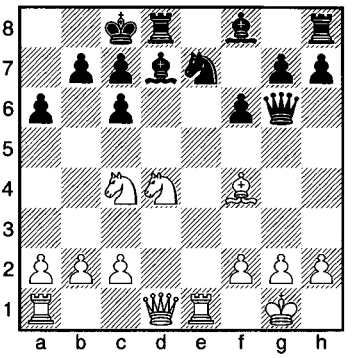
The most common **objectives** are *Winning Material* and *Forcing Draw*. The common **motives** are *Lack of Protection, Misplaced Piece* and *Simplification*.

When dealing with your opponent's threats, seek the following possibilities that are often overlooked – eliminating the attacker at once (even if it costs some material), and ignoring the threat. The latter can be justified by creating a counter threat, or crafting a setup that allows a counter strike if the opponent executes his threat, or finding an in-between move that disrupts the threat.

How should Black deal with the White's threats in diagram #53? The game continued – **13.♘b6+ ♙×b6 14.♘b5**, in diagram #54. What is White's idea and is it correct?



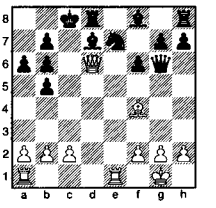
#53 After **25.♕d4–d7**



#54 After **12...0–0–0**

#53 The White ♕ creates havoc in Black's camp by attacking four different targets. Trading the ♕s doesn't bring Black any relief, as the presence of the White ♖ on the 7th rank would be no less destructive. Instead, noticing that the White ♖ is overloaded defending both, the ♕ and the *back-rank*, Black played **25...♖e1+!** (*deflection*). After the forced **26.♔h2 ♕f4+ 27.♔h3**, Black capped his counterattack with the elegant pullback **27...♖e7!** (another *deflection*) and White resigned. The ♖ protects the ♙f7 and the ♗b7, while creating unstoppable threats. For example, 28.♕×e7 ♕g4+ 29.♔h2 ♕×g2#; 28.♕d4 ♖e4; 28.♖d4 ♕×f2; 28.♙g3 ♕×f2+. *Lyell,M – Speelman,J BCF-chT, 2005*

#54 White had a brilliant idea – to clear a way for his ♕ to d6 where, supported by the ♗f4, it would create deadly mating threats to the Black ♔. After **13.♘b6+ ♙×b6** (13...♔b8? 14.♘e6! – *pin*) **14.♘b5** (threatening 15.♘a7# and 15.♕d6), he was sure to get his wish. Yet, Black found a miracle defense – **14...♙c×b5! 15.♕d6**, and now – (see diagram 54b) **15...♕×g2+!!** This temporary ♕ sacrifice allows Black to save his ♔ and reach a strategically won endgame after **16.♔×g2 ♗c6+** (if Black played 14...♙a×b5?, he would have to give up the ♗ after 16...♗h3+ in order to get the ♕ back) **17.♔f1 ♖×d6 18.♗×d6 ♘g6**. White resigned ten moves later. *Filipovic,B– Teofilovic,V Bosnjaci, 2004*



#54b

The tactics to *force a draw* are covered extensively in the next section.

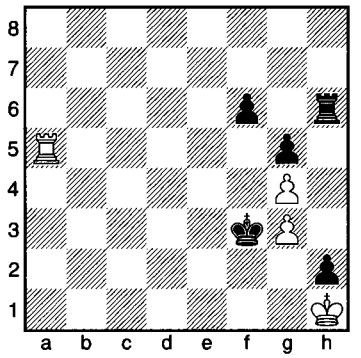
Result

While a majority of combinations ultimately lead to victory, there is a special subset – combinations leading to an immediate draw. These can be classified into the following sub-categories:

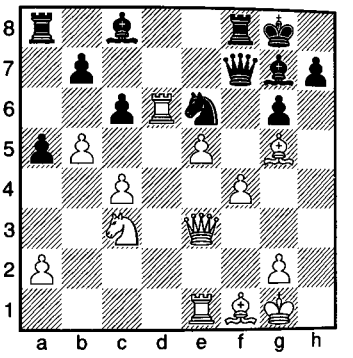
- simplification into a theoretical endgame,
- stalemate,
- perpetual check or attack,
- fortress or blockade.

No matter how difficult your position is, in the right circumstances, one of the above ideas may help you save a ½ point.

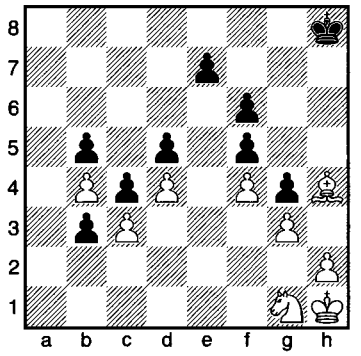
In each of the following four examples find a way to force a draw.



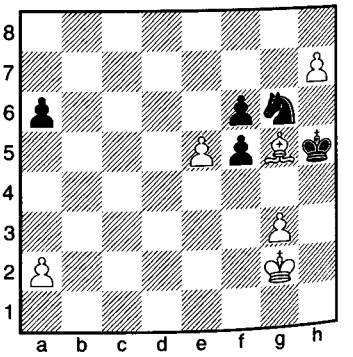
#55 After **59...♔e2–f3**



#56 After **25.♙e4–e5**



#57 White to Move



#58 After **48.♙f4×♙e5**

#55 White is trying to save this ♖-endgame. Noticing that without his ♖ he would be stalemated, White played **60.♖×g5!** After **60...♔×g3** (60...♙×g5– *stalemate*; 60...♖h8 61.♖f5+ and 62.♖×f6 with an easy

draw) **61.♖h5! ♖g6** (61...♖×h5?? 62.♙×h5) **62.♖g5 ♖h6 63.♖h5**, Black had to accept a draw. *Huschenbeth,N – Hebbinghaus,H Hamburg, 2005*

#56 White has the advantage thanks to an extra ♙ and better-placed pieces. But Black found a tactical way to solve all his problems. After **25...♘×g5 26.♙×g5 ♗×e5!**, White's extra ♙ was gone and he correctly played **27.♕×e5** accepting a draw due to *perpetual* – 27...♕f2+ 28.♔h1 ♕h4+ 29.♔g1 (29.♕h2? ♕×e1) *Fish,G – Kindermann,S Germany, 2005*

#57 The Black b♙ is destined for promotion. White's only hope is to build a *fortress*, thanks in part to the locked ♙-structure. The basic setup, with the ♘ on e2 defending the ♙s and the nearby ♔ defending the ♘, looks very solid. When building a fortress, the future stability of the defense must be considered. Specifically, you should neutralize any possible breaks and eliminate the possibility of *zugzwang* (a situation where any move you make worsens your position). Therefore, White's play must be precise – **1.♗×f6+ ♙×f6** (eliminating a potential break via ♙e7–e5; the ♗ was never part of the defense anyway). **2.♙h4!! ♙b2** (2...♙×h3 e.p.? 3.♘f3 and 4.♘d2 stopping the b♙) **3.♔g2 ♙b1♕ 4.♔f2 ♕c1 5.♘e2 ♕h1 6.♔e3 ♕e1!** If White's h♙ were still on h2, White would lose after 7.♙h4 ♙×h3 e.p. Now, White has **7.♙h5** and, when he runs out of moves with the h♙, Black will be forced to move the ♕ from e1 to avoid stalemate. Then White's ♔ will be able to move around the ♘ maintaining the *fortress*. *Composed by Simhovich,F, 1923*

#58 The situation looks grim for Black. Capturing the ♗ gives a green light to the e♙. Also, after **48...♙×e5 49.♗f6**, White was sure to win the ♘ for a ♙. Usually, this is enough to win the game; however, this situation is different – one of the two remaining White ♙s is on the a-file and the ♗ doesn't control the a8 square. Black executed a simple plan to reach a draw: (1) to eliminate the g♙ at any cost, (2) to force White to promote the h♙ in order to eliminate it, (3) to rush with his ♔ towards a8. White couldn't stop this plan and accepted a draw after **49...♙f4 50.♗×e5 ♙×g3 51.♔×g3 ♔h6 52.♙h8♕+ ♘×h8 53.♗×h8 ♔g5** *Aronian,L – Smirnov,P FIDE-Wch k.o. Tripoli, 2004*

Saving a bad position, especially via a combination, often gives you a good emotional boost and can even help turn around your entire tournament. In the middlegame, do not give up if you sacrificed material, but your attack has failed; keep in mind the possibility of a *perpetual check*. In the endgame, being familiar with the various drawing motifs may help you save a half-point and even help create something really amazing.

Reviewing Your Own Games

Preserve each game you play by keeping a score. This tip is for beginners and players who are mainly playing friendly games. For anyone rated 1000 or higher, I suggest getting a database management programs such as *ChessBase* (ChessBase, Inc.) or *Chess Assistant* (Convekta, Inc.)

As soon as you finish the game, quickly go over it with your opponent, and exchange ideas. Then store your thoughts and ideas with the game. The scoresheets given at the tournaments don't have room for adding notes, thus use a 3-rings binder (or something similar) to stay organized. If you use a computer, enter the game in the database right away, along with quick notes. Do a more detailed review a few days later.

I already discussed the great importance of reviewing your own games and how to do it in my original *Chess Exam*. In this book I will focus on reviewing the Tactics in your games.

1. Identify the situations where each tactic was available for you as well as for your opponent. Write down whether you found it during the game or in post-mortem. Identify if you missed it completely, or saw it after you made a move, or were expecting it and prepared a countermeasure. In the latter case, write how successful it was.

2. Use training software such as *Fritz* (or something similar) that can help you review the games. *Fritz* has a feature called "Blunder-check" which will point out all tactics played or missed. If Fritz uncovers any missed opportunities for you (or your opponent), then make note of these situations. Set up a separate database with the tactical examples from your own games and review these examples occasionally.

3. For every tactical situation in 1 and 2 above, list the **motives**, **objectives** and **themes** involved. Use my **Exam Report Card** on page 149 to classify the tactics from your own games and calculate your personal percent of success ratio.

4. Lastly, review your results, determine the problem areas and summarize how you will be addressing them.

This should be a combination of practice at home (with an emphasis on these areas), and greater diligence during the games, looking for tactical patterns, and being thorough in calculations.

Khmelnitsky's Ten Tips for Tactical Training

To improve tactical skills, one must work on each of the three key components – recognition, calculation of short variations, and assessment of the final position.

This training should consist of improving the thinking process, learning the theory of combinations and practicing by solving problems. Having one of each – a puzzle book, a theory book and a software package (if you like using a computer), is all you need in order to set up a good training process. The subject of Tactics is covered extensively in chess literature. In Appendix 1, I have provided a number of books and software products that I have used in my personal training and feel confident in recommending. There are also many other products that you can use. What is important is to find the ones you like and stick with them.

Here are the ten tips for your tactical training, sorted in the order they should be implemented.

1. Start by adjusting your thinking habits during the game.

a. Each your opponent's moves must be evaluated in terms of the threats it generates as well as the opportunities it may present.

- Threats may come directly from the piece that just moved or from another pieces (or pieces) that had its attacking range increased because of the move (*discovery*).
- Opportunities can be directed against the piece that just moved or against a piece or a square that was left vulnerable because of the move.

b. When you are facing a threat, get into the habit of thinking like "*Can I sacrifice something?*" and "*How can I not defend what he is attacking?*" Realizing and implementing the latter is especially important. Running away is just one of the several defensive options and I suggest you place it last on your list of candidate moves. While not often possible, if you do find another reasonable way to respond to a threat (i.e. counterattack, or *pin* etc...), there is a good chance it will surprise your opponent and throw him off-balance.

c. Before making every move, check that you are not presenting your opponent with any opportunities as described in 1a. above.

d. Give your opponent credit when planning your assaults. Avoid making simple threats and traps that, if recognized, are easily averted. At least they will raise his general alert level; in some cases, they may even force your opponent to improve his own position in answering your threat. One good reason for executing a threat or a trap, even if it is likely to be avoided, is when the move you make is a part of your overall plan anyway. This way, the tactic is not an objective, but rather an added bonus.

These (1a.–1d.) are mainly self-control issues and must be monitored by you or your coach. Review your games and analyze your thinking process whenever a combination presents itself. Make sure you are working hard in every position and that you are open-minded about possible sacrifices, ignoring your opponent's threats and seeking complex threats.

Once you know that you do that, the next step would be to see what **motives** you are having trouble with and what **themes** you are missing during your thought process. Practicing them will increase your knowledge base.

2. Learn some basic threats – checkmate, winning material etc...
Use basic puzzle books like Reinfeld's *1001 ways to Checkmate* or Ivashenko's *Manual of Chess Combinations – Ia/Ib*, or software such as *Chess Tactics for Beginners* by Convekta, Inc.

3. Learn basic tactical motifs – what elements in the position allow for tactics to arise? Add some of the following materials to your study list – *How to Beat your Dad in Chess* by Chandler, *Chess Tactics* by Littlewood, *Combinative Motifs* by Blokh, and software *Chess Tactics for Intermediate Players* and *Ct-ART* by Convekta, Inc

4. Learn basic tactical themes – while practicing, focus on the basic ideas of each theme – the typical setups, the motives that trigger them, the sacrifices that are required and, last but non the least, the possible defensive resources that must be considered. The same materials as in **2.** above.

5. Learn the typical tactics in each opening you play – as part of your overall opening preparation, it is necessary to learn the common tactical ideas that are likely to occur in the variations you play. Here are a few possible ideas for your research and training:

- Review a classic collection *Win in the Opening! Opening Mistakes and How to Punish Them* by Neishtadt.
- Get a well-annotated book about your opening. Most likely the author will educate you about any possible tactical pitfalls.
- Do a fun research using a game database (like *ChessBase*). You can search for games in a specific opening and set the conditions so that one side won and the game lasted under 15 moves. Scanning through these short games will be fun and educational, and will likely show you a tactical trick or two.
- Or, you can get the "mammoth" book (it weighs over 3 lbs) called *Encyclopedia of Opening Errors*, by Matsukevich. Each of the 4,000 games (all under 13 moves) is grouped by opening and has a diagram at the critical moment, making it easier and more fun to study (no need to have a chessboard!). Convekta, Inc. publishes the software version of this book.
- Check out the series of books from the *New In Chess* publishers called *Tactics in the Opening* that cover various openings. This is especially advisable for experienced players.

6. Learn typical endgame tactics – they have some similarities to those in the other stages of the game and also have some unique *Motives* and *Objectives*. As a part of your general endgame training, you must study basic endgames and become familiar with the most fundamental positions – their expected outcome and the way to achieve it. Reaching a position that you know is won or drawn may be preferred to gaining a material advantage.

Some books on Tactics have chapters dedicated to endgame combinations. One recent book that is devoted exclusively to endgame combinations is *Endgame Tactics: A Comprehensive Guide to the Sunny Side of Chess Endgames* by Van Perlo.

More complex, multi-piece endgames are sort of a transition between the middlegame and the endgame. These endgames are more likely to have tactics that are similar to those in the middlegame.

Players rated above 1700 should include studies (composed positions with clear definitive outcomes) in their training. They offer exposure to various tactical themes and require accurate calculations. Many general endgame books have studies mixed in with examples from real games.

Convekta, Inc., has a software program called *Studies*. My favorite authors are Kubbel and Rinck.

7. Learn tactics that force a draw – combining a proper attitude in difficult situations with knowledge of typical drawing combinations will save you points.

Many books and software programs have chapters devoted exclusively to the combinations that force a draw.

8. Understand the relationship between tactics and strategy. Tactical opportunities can occur at any moment when your opponent makes a mistake, so you always need to be vigilant. However, for tactics to happen when your opponent plays well or even plays the best moves, the position must have certain strategic aspects. In fact, tactics are often viewed as a reward for a good strategy. As you raise your general level of play and improve your understanding of various positions, you will be able to recognize the situations that offer tactical opportunities. When you are reviewing a game that features a combination, try to discern the strategic elements that created the tactical opportunity.

9. Train to utilize more complex tactics – practice solving exercises that involve multiple motives and themes and that require deeper calculation. I use the puzzle books *Manual of Chess Combinations 2* by Ivashenko, *Manual of Chess Combinations 3* by Mazja, *Combinative Motifs* by Bloch (problems that were assigned four or more points), as well as software *Chess Tactics for Intermediate Players* and *CT-ART* by Convekta, Inc. To get some general suggestions and help with improving technique and understanding use *How to Calculate Chess Tactics* by Beim,V., and *Secrets of Chess Tactics* by Dvoretsky,M.

10. Setup regular training sessions – preferably every day. Each session should last 30-60 minutes. Try utilizing a variety of tools, but don't mix using a computer and a book during the same session. Use a reference book if, while solving puzzles, you find a problem area and need more explanations. As you gain more experience in solving tactics, focus on the puzzle collections with mixed tactics that are sorted by the level of difficulty rather than the motive of the theme. For example, Bloch's *Combinative Motifs,* and many of software programs by Convetkta Inc., do just that. Use a regular board and pieces for complex problems and studies. Do not review the answer until you have exhausted your analysis of the position.

Afterword: What is the Next Step?

Congratulations! You have completed the test, calculated your ratings and corresponding titles, identified your strengths and weaknesses and even learned some training ideas. What is the next step on the road to improvement?

A successful training plan should consist of various components:

- Thorough evaluation via testing and reviewing of your games (at least a few times a year).
- Regular tournament participation (at least monthly).
- Simultaneous studying of books on tactics and endgames (regularly).
- Going over well-annotated modern and classical games (regularly).
- Expanding or refreshing your *Opening* preparation (periodically).
- Training with a computer – doing opening preparation; practicing against computer opening positions and general training positions; solving puzzles; storing and annotating your own games (regularly).

Since there are so many training opportunities and so little time, it is extremely important to plan your training sessions so you get the most out of them.

I hope that you enjoyed the test and I value your feedback. Please visit my website http://www.ChessExam.com and submit your comments and results.

Best of luck!

Igor Khmelnitsky

Appendix 1

Recommended Chess Training Tools: Software, Books and Periodicals

Below is the list of training materials that were recommended throughout this book. I frequently get the chance to review newly released products, check my website periodically for updates: www.ChessExam.com.

Chess Software:

Some of the programs listed below may have newer versions available. In parentheses, you can find the latest version I am using. Check my website for additional information.

ChessBase family (by ChessBase - www.chessbase.com)
ChessBase (9) – Database management program for experienced players;
Fritz (10) – playing software for experienced players;
Fritz & Chester – teaching & playing software for children (novice level).
Available for the PC & Mac (only *Fritz & Chester*) platforms.

Chessmaster (by UBI Soft. – www.ubi.com)
Chessmaster (10K) – teaching & playing software for all ages & levels.
Available for PC & Mac platforms.

ChessAssistant family (by Convekta, Ltd., www.Convekta.com) – standalone training tools for PC only – *Advanced Chess School, Chess Endgame Training, Chess tactics for Beginners, Chess tactics for Intermediate Players, CT-ART (3.0), Strategy, Studies (2.0)*, and others.

Chess Books:

1001 Brilliant Ways to Checkmate by Reinfeld,F.
1001 Winning Chess Sacrifices and Combinations by Reinfeld,F.
303 Tricky Chess Tactics by Wilson,F., Albertson,B. **(Children)**
Art of Attack in Chess by Vukovich,V.
Blunders and How to Avoid Them by Dunnington,A.
Chess : 5334 Problems, Combinations, and Games by Polgar,L.
Chess Exam And Training Guide: Rate Yourself And Learn How To Improve by Khmelnitsky,I.
Chess Tactics by Littlewood,P.
Chess Tactics for Champions by Polgar,S. **(also Children)**
Chess Tactics for Kids by Chandler,M. **(Children)**

Chess Tactics for the Tournament Player by Alburt,L., Palatnik,S.
The ChessCafe Puzzle Book by Muller,K.
Chess Training Pocket Book: 300 Most Important Positions and Ideas by Alburt,L.
Combination Challenge by Hays,L., Hall,J.
Combinative Motifs by Blokh,M.
Endgame Tactics: A Comprehensive Guide to the Sunny Side of Chess Endgames by Van Perlo.
Encyclopedia of Errors in Openings by Matsukevitch,A.
Excelling at Combinational Play: Learn to Identify and Exploit Tactical Chances by Aagaard,J.
How to Beat Your Dad at Chess by Chandler,C. **(Children)**
King in Jeopardy by Alburt,L. and Palatnik,S.
Looking for Trouble by Heisman,D.
Manual of Chess Combinations 1a/1b by Ivashenko,S. **(also Children)**
Manual of Chess Combinations 2 by Ivashenko,S.
Manual of Chess Combinations 3 by Mazja,A.
Sharpen Your Tactics by Lein,A., Archangelsky,M.
Secrets of Chess Tactics by Dvoretsky,M.
Understanding the Sacrifice by Dunnington,A.
Winning Chess Tactics for Juniors by Hays,L.
Winning Chess Tactics by Seirawan,Y.

* **Also Children** – adult will benefit; children can study without adult's help.
* **Children** – children can study without adult's help; minimal benefit for adult.

Chess Periodicals: Magazines and Websites:

What should you expect from a quality chess magazine or website? In my view – accurate and timely chess news, commentaries by leading players and organizers, quality articles, annotated games, as well as tournament schedules. Here are a few of my favorite sources:

Magazines:
ChessToday – (daily via e-mail) www.ChessToday.net
Chess Informant – www.Sahovski.com
New in Chess – www.NewInChess.com
Chess Life – www.USchess.org
64 – (in Russian) www.64.ru

Websites:
ChessBase: www.ChessBase.com
ChessCafe: www.ChessCafe.com
ChessAssistant: www.Convekta.com
ChessCenter: www.ChessCenter.com

Appendix 2

Players and Composers

Players and Composers (cont.):

Players and Composers (cont.):

How good are your Tactics? Take this comprehensive self-evaluation!

The original best-selling ***Chess Exam and Training Guide*** (IamCoach Press, 2004) scored rave reviews from readers and experts alike. It won the very prestigious Cramer Best Book award from the CJA (Chess Journalists of America) and has been translated into French and Russian.

Lev Alburt, grandmaster, former U.S. Champion, best-selling author, and renowned coach, said about it: "***Chess Exam*** is an ideal book for chess players of all levels. Those who like the serious and scientific approach will focus on evaluating their skills via special testing. Others who prefer the lighter approach to studying chess will enjoy the no-nonsense explanations and excellent selection of problems. I am strongly recommending this book to my students."

In this sequel, the focus is exclusively on **Tactics**. Whether you are a beginner or a seasoned master, this book will help you to evaluate your current level, identify your weaknesses, and get training advice.

You will discover:

- 60 diagrams with 120 multiple-choice questions of varied complexity.
- Comprehensive answers with diagrams to make reviewing easier.
- Distributions of answers and other statistical reports by rating.
- Results are evaluated and ratings are assigned **Overall** and by 29(!) distinct sub-categories.
- Comprehensive reports on each of the categories with examples, training recommendations and training material suggestions.

International Master **Igor Khmelnitsky** is a 3-time participant in the exclusive U.S. Chess Championship, a winner of numerous tournaments in Europe and the United States. He is a very experienced chess coach and works with all levels of students.

Khmelnitsky is the author of ***Chess Exam Training Guide*** (IamCoach Press, 2004), coauthor of the curriculum ***Teaching Chess Step by Step*** (Kasparov Chess Foundation, 2006), and a contributor to the Wall Street Journal best-seller ***Masters of Success*** (Entrepreneur Press, 2004). He is the founder of the popular websites www.IamCoach.com and www.ChessExam.com

Thousands of players of all levels have tried Igor's puzzles, quizzes and exercises. Many have taken and raved about his exams. What are you waiting for?

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