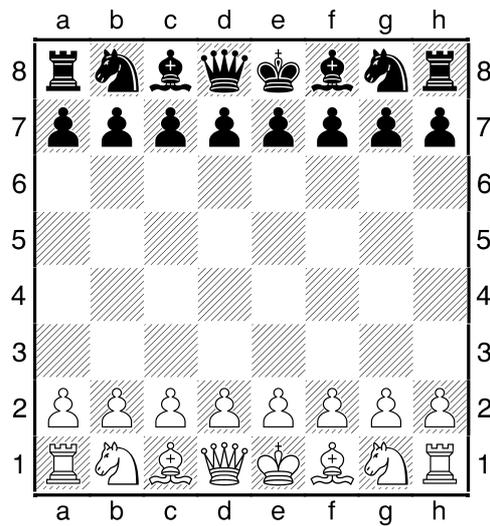


0 - 1200

A Coaching Manual



Ron Cummins

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0-1200

A Chess Coaching Course

Beginners - Improvers

Preface

This book is designed to help anyone get from a rating of zero (being unable to play) to a rating of 1200 (being eligible to play in most Majors).

It will also give new coaches or teachers, a framework to use, and be a guide for teaching chess.

Up to lesson five it is a coaching manual and assumes that the coach / teacher knows how to play themselves, otherwise they wouldn't be teaching.

It also presumes that most of your students will be primary school age, though this course can be used to teach almost anyone of almost any age.

Lessons 6-12 are aimed, and written for the player who wants to go further and play competitive chess in club or weekend tournaments.

The big milestones, being able to play, getting a rating of 1000, and getting a rating of 1200, are all obtainable using this book.

In my twelve years of coaching I have managed to get many players to 1200 and they, with serious study and good coaching from others, have gone a lot further.

Most of my remarks and comments (chapters 1-5) are aimed at the coach, though much could be used verbatim to students, or modulated to your own teaching style.

One thing to remember is you don't have to be a great player to be a great teacher.

I once took a Hungarian player who has a Fide Rating around 2300 (I won't mention his name) to one of my beginners classes. He gave up after about ten minutes. It was nothing I was doing let me assure you. He just got frustrated trying to explain why the horsey could jump over everything, but the Castles couldn't, why the Queen was stronger than the King and “why can't the pawns go backward?”.

At his level, teaching 1600+ players was easy, but trying to control twenty, 8-12 year olds was much too hard.

So remember it's not about chess knowledge, its about communications.

Your students may be part of a small class, a large group or a chess club, its all the same.

Communicate your points clearly and reinforce them constantly.

Essential equipment for yourself (besides this book) is a standard size Staunton chess set and board numbered and lettered. Sometimes a display board will come in handy to explain things to a larger class.

Discourage students from using special sets like glass or Lord of the rings, Simpsons, etc. It won't help them understand space or recognize patterns.

Always remember that you are teaching a game and like all games, it must be fun to learn and fun to play.

In general if your students are children, don't expect them to sit in enraptured silence listening to your words of wisdom. You will have to engage them in the game. You may find at times you are coach, entertainer and baby-sitter all in one go.

I try to teach in one hour blocks, this you may find is just enough time to get across your points while still keeping your audience's attention, and your sanity.

After **chapter five**, the time spent on the lesson will be up to the student. Reading everything once through will not be enough. You must understand what is being taught not just read it.

The best way of doing this is practice. Read the lessons, get out a board go through the diagrams step by step , memorise where you can but don't expect to understand it all at once. Repetition is the key, come back to the book especially lessons 6-12, several times and you will notice that you are understanding more and more as you do and put it into practice. Play for the endings you have learnt, play for the positions that are becoming familiar and play the openings that you are comfortable with, the ones that suit your style.

If you are coming to this book already able to play, I would still suggest that you at least read through the first five chapters. There will be pointers in them that you may not have seen before and lessons that can be learnt or reinforced and exercises that will only improve your game.

Don't be a chess snob! Be prepared to learn from anyone of any level.

Each lesson will follow on from the last, teaching salient points and reinforcing points already learnt. It comes about after finding many books too complex or not level friendly enough for my pupils, and as the popularity of chess in schools and youth clubs increases, more people are being thrust into the role of coach.

Following this book you will, I hope , feel that you as coach have covered everything that is needed to allow your students to walk away being able to play and enjoy a decent game of chess. And as a student you will feel you are getting closer to your milestones.

1200 is not the end but it is the end of the beginning and I hope you go further and look back fondly on this book as maybe your starting point on your chess journey.

Beginners

Lesson One

The Board, Naming the pieces, The King The Rook

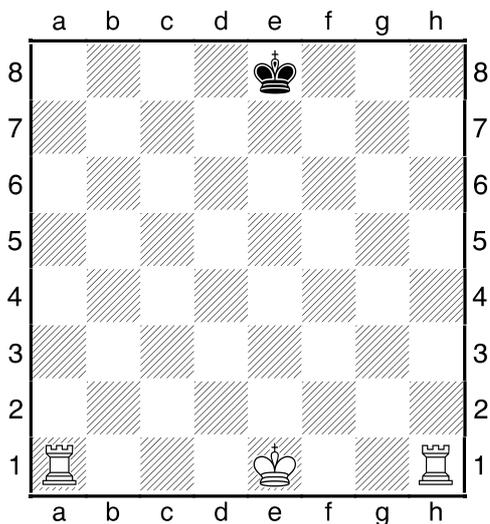
The origins of the game of Chess are lost in the mists of time. Its creation had been claimed by the Chinese, the Indians, and the Europeans. But all agree its a game of war.

The board is the battlefield on which the war is fought.

Most modern boards are numbered and lettered for easier notation with **A** to **H** at the bottom from left to right (the **Rank**) and numbered from **1** to **8** from bottom to top, (the **File**).

So every square has a designated number and letter with **a1** being the first square on the bottom left hand side.

Lets start by putting the two Kings in the centre one square gap away from each other . This is known as opposition. Show all the squares that either King can move to. I sometimes explain that the King has a force-field around him that won't allow him to come closer to the other King, so there must always be one square between them. A King can never capture a King, so if there is only two Kings left on the board at the end of the game it is a **draw**. Not enough material to win No winner no loser.



(Diag.1)

Put the King in its starting position note that its on a square of its opposite colour.

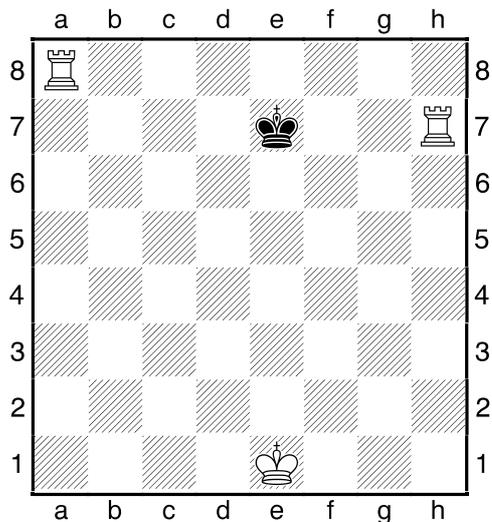
Put white two Rooks on the board in their starting position .(See diagram 1 above)

I like to use Rooks first because they work best on an empty board, needing ranks and

files to show off their power. Indicate all the squares the Rooks can move to and show how much space they cover.

Bring one Rook to the eighth rank, show that the black King is now in **Check**. Explain being “**In check**” means that you must do something, either capture the piece that is threatening you, block the piece that is threatening you or move away to a square that is not controlled by your opponent. The King cannot move to a square that is being attacked as he would be moving into check and this is considered an illegal move.

Move the black King forward one square out of check. Now move the second Rook up to check the King, note that the King cannot move backwards as the first Rook controls the 8th rank and the King would be moving “into check” so he must move forward.



(diag. 2)

Move the King forward one square.

Now move the first Rook down and put the King into check again, the King must move forward.

Repeat this “roller” until the King reaches the 3rd row. Now when the Rook moves down to check the King it (the black King) cannot move back, cannot stay on the row and because of the white King in opposition and controlling the squares directly opposite it, the black King cannot move forward either.

This is **Checkmate** ie. (the King is being attacked but has no legal moves) the game is over.

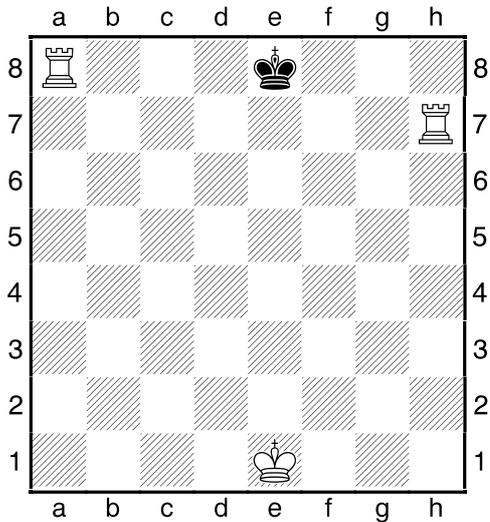
Indicate that the King never gets taken, you win the move before that would happen.

Reset the original position (Kings on original squares two white Rooks on original squares) and let your students try to achieve the same win. Some will get it straight away but some will not. When white wins let them swap colours until everyone has understood the concept.

Now ask them to count how many moves it took (6) and ask can they beat that score give them about five minutes of trying.

Show that after the first move everybody knew that the black King was going to move forward. So if you can predict, or can force your opponent to move somewhere your own moves become easier.

Move either Rook to the seventh rank, we know where the black King is moving (sideways) and the second Rook goes to the eighth rank **checking** and **mating** (2 moves). Let them try this out for themselves.



(diag.3)

Now back to the starting position. Now move the black King to e5 and see who can mate in the least amount of moves (4). Of course Black may not be so helpful and it should take longer.

Keep an eye out for illegal moves and demonstrate that that King can take the Rook if it is unguarded.

Once they get the hang of this, reset and remove one Rook ask them to try to get checkmate now.

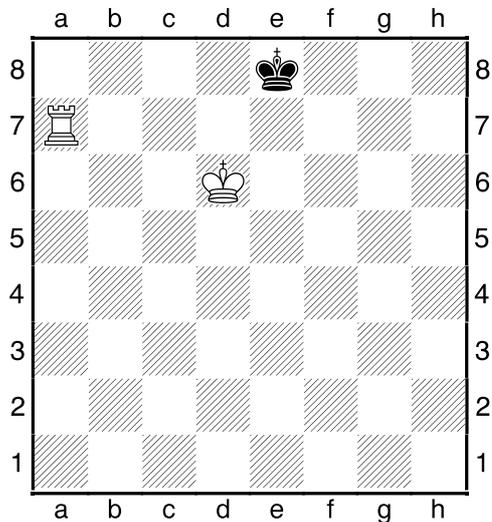
Nearly always the Rook ends up chasing the King all over the board. If someone does manage to checkmate their opponent in nine please take note of them, they are probably the next **Bobby Fischer**. (a child prodigy who was a Grandmaster at fifteen years old and went on to become world champion)

Reset the board. The question to ask is “What did you do when you had two Rooks, and why.?”

Move the Rook to the seventh rank then start to move the white King forwards. Explain the King is a weapon too, When the King is in opposition where it controls three forward squares doing the job of the Rook, the Rook is free to move to the eighth rank and checkmate.

Let them try this for themselves swapping colours on a win or a loss.

Next show the key position: White King a knight move away from the black King with the Rook on the Kings side. This will not make much sense yet , but you are putting a key idea into their heads.



(diag. 4)

Check your watch, where has that hour gone!

What was taught;

1. The **Board** starting position,
2. The idea of **Notation** using numbered and lettered squares,
3. Starting position of **King**
4. Starting position of **Rooks**.
5. Kings moves, the King as a weapon,
6. **Opposition** of Kings,
7. Rook moves , Rook endings the **Rook roller**,
8. Introduced the idea of **Draws, Check** and **Checkmate**,
9. **Illegal moves**,
10. The three ways out of check in order of preference,
11. Pieces working together,
12. control of space and squares,
13. anticipating your opponents moves, forcing moves
14. **Stalemate, (draw by insufficient material)**
15. the students also got to win games and lose games.

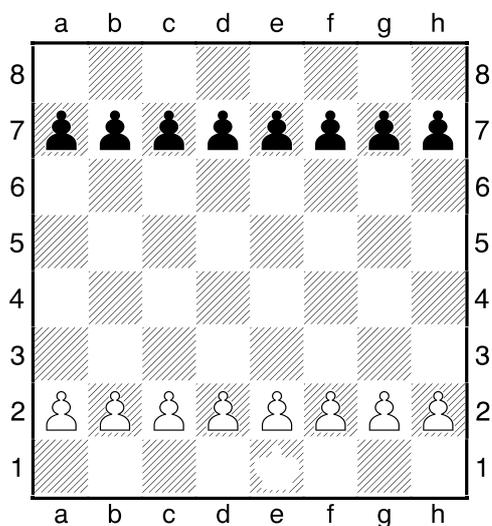
Lesson 2

Pawns

After the excitement and perhaps bewildering amount of information of lesson one, lesson two only deals with one piece, the **Pawn**

Reiterate what the students have learnt at the beginning of each lesson, this will reinforce the main ideas and let them know that although they may feel a little confused and overwhelmed, they are gaining knowledge.

Set the board up with just the Pawns on both sides (diag.5)



These are the foot soldiers of the army.

Their main job is to protect the King.

Their second job is to try to get to the enemy base at the eighth rank, where, like all good soldiers, they get a promotion.

Imagine that each Pawn/soldier is carrying a large shield. He walks forward until he bumps into someone, then he must stop. But if anyone comes into his line of sight diagonally to left or right, he can thrust his sword into it and take over that square. That is his way through the enemy ranks.

Let the students have a go at trying to get their Pawns through to the enemy base. You may be surprised at the amount of Pawns that actually make it.

Now tell them to use their King as well (the King is a weapon), who ever gets through gets a Rook for his Pawn. Tell them to try to get checkmate. If two Pawns make it they get two Rooks if three, three Rooks etc.

Pawns are the lowest pieces so have a value of **one**. Everything else is measured by how much more they are worth than the pawn. So the **Rook** is worth **five** Pawns .

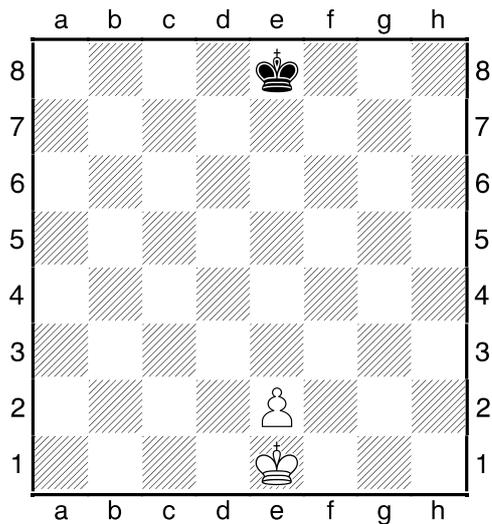
Get them to try to justify this for themselves.

Put a King and five Pawns on the black side and a King and one Rook on the white side, let them try to win. Change colours every few minutes so everyone gets a chance.

Things to know about Pawns:

Pawns move one square at a time forward, they can never retreat and never go backwards. They take diagonally and earn promotion when they reach the eighth rank. They have a special first move which allows them to get straight into the action, moving quickly from their starting square on the second row they can rush ahead to the fourth row, providing there is nothing in their way. Each Pawn can do this once in the game.

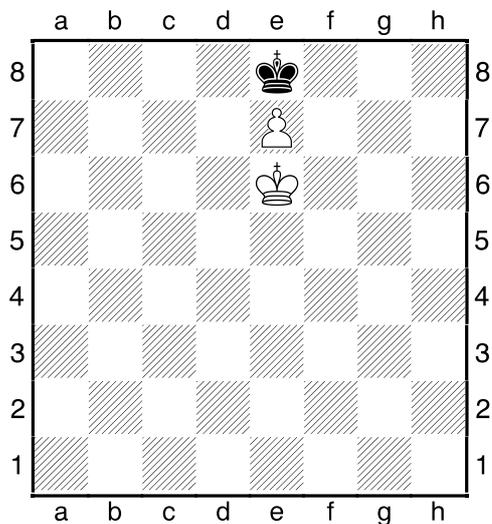
Now set the board up as in the next diagram two Kings on their starting squares and white has a Pawn on **e2**.



(diag.6)

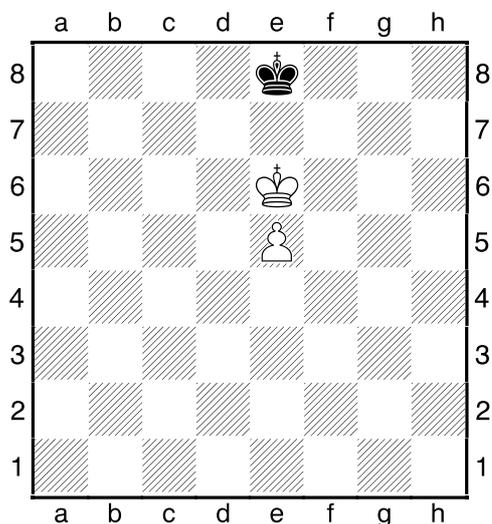
Ask white to try to get his lone Pawn to the end earn promotion to a Rook and get checkmate.

The first round most kids will forget their King and only march their Pawn forward to have it taken on move five. Then they will realise they need their King and it will follow the pawn up the board until it puts black in a stalemate position. Diag.7



Explain about illegal moves again and draws.
 This is a good result for black but not for white.

Set up next diagram; (diag.8)



Explain the **Queening square**, which is the square that the Pawn wants to get on to to become a Queen (or Rook or Knight or Bishop). In this position, with black to move, it is always a win for white.

This is because whichever way the black King moves, the white King moves in the opposite direction, for instance if black King to **d8** then white King to **f7** controlling the Queening square so that the black King cannot get back to it, then white simply walks the Pawn forwards to the square, promotes to a Rook (for the purpose of this lesson) and then gets checkmate as they learnt in lesson one.

Show that it matters not at all if the black King moved to **f8** as the white King would move to **d7** with the same result.

Now reset to diag.8 and get the students to try to get to diag.6 and win.

This may take some time.

What was taught:

1. Starting position of **Pawn**, Pawn moves and Pawn **promotion**.
2. **Numerical value of Rook** (5 pawns)
3. Reinforced King and Rook verse King **endings**.
4. **Queening square**,
5. King and Pawn verse King **endings**,
6. Draws by **stalemate**, (no legal moves)

Lesson 3

Knights

The **knights** are probably the hardest for beginners to master as they move a little differently from the others .

The main point to remember is that they move in an L shape jumping from a dark square to a light square, and a light square to a dark.

Jumping is the operative word here as they only attack things (squares or people) that they land on.

The Knight is given a nominal starting value of **three Pawns**;

The reason we give values for the pieces is that later, when the students are playing for real there will be times when they have a chance to exchange pieces off. It is important to know whether it is good value to exchange one particular piece for another, one way of judging this is their starting value.

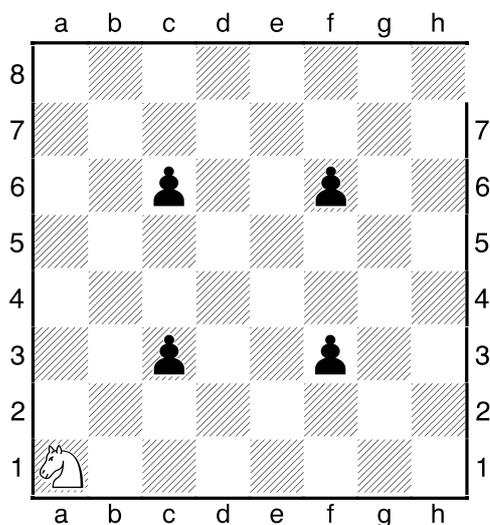
So if you know that a Knight is worth three Pawns and a Rook is worth five Pawns and you exchange Knight for Rook in general we would say you have won the exchange.

As you get better, other things will be taken into consideration, not just the starting value. Things like Space, Tempi, (being a move ahead) or mating chances, will all play a part in your valuing of the exchange, but we have to start somewhere.

If we set up the four Knights on the board in their starting opposition and count the number of squares they can reach, we will find that each Knight can reach three squares, they have the ability to jump over their own (or their opponents) pieces to get to the squares . Now move a Knight to the centre squares and ask how many squares it can reach, point out that they can now reach eight squares, more than twice the original number.

This puts the idea of central control into the students head.

Set up the next diagram, (diag.9)



Get the students to move their Knight from the square **a1** to **b1** using only legal Knight moves, with the proviso that they cannot take the Pawns nor can they move into a position that the Pawns could take them.

Allow the students to practice this until they can do it with ease.

Now get them to try from **b1-c1**. This is a bit harder, indeed many may not be able to do it. Remind them they are looking for an L shape, but this shape can be reversed or sideways and that they are moving from a black square to a white, then a white to a black. The lesson continues trying to get to the next square then the next until they reach **h1** if any manage to do this let them try from **a2-c2-f2-h2**.

We will return to this diagram in **Improvers one** where the object is to get from **a1** to **h8** timed. With practice they may be able to do this in under ten minutes, GM level is three minutes with strong club level under six.

This may seem like a short lesson but it is vital.

What was taught:

1. Starting position of **knight**, knight moves. static value of knight
2. The beginnings of **combinations** and **calculations**
3. Control of space and control of **the centre**,
4. The idea of time being important

Lesson 4

The Queen & The Bishop

The Queen is the most powerful piece on the board, with a starting value of nine pawns. You begin the game with one of them, yet it is theoretically possible to have nine of them.

But before we get to her, let's look at the Bishop. The Bishop, like the Knight has a starting value of **three** pawns.

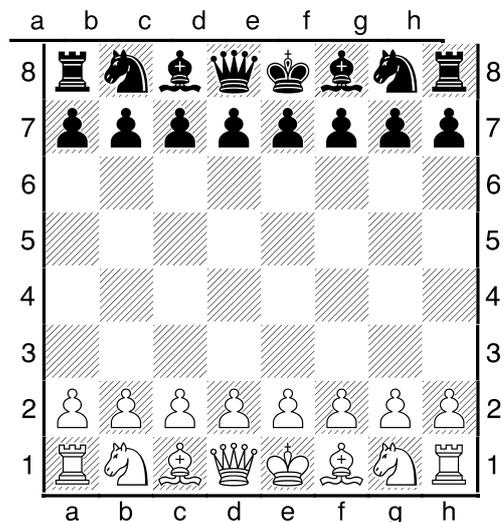
Place the Bishops on their starting squares and note that one is on a white square and one is on a black square. They always stay on the coloured square they started on, the only way to do this is for them to move diagonally.

Move the Bishop to the centre squares and note all the squares it can reach, going from corner to corner one can reach from **a1** to **h8** another from **a8** to **h1** these are called the long diagonals. The Bishop can move along these diagonals until they reach another piece (either their own or their opponents) where upon they can either stop on the square or take their opponents piece.

The Bishops are considered more powerful in an "open" game where they have control over squares from a distance and are particularly strong when there are still two of them and lots of space (as opposed to the Knights who like cramped positions in which their moves are harder to see).

Now put the Queen on the centre square and show all the squares that are controlled by it. The Queen moves like a Bishop, diagonally and like a Rook up and down, left and right, as many squares as she likes. This is what makes her so powerful.

In general it is the piece that pawns want to be promoted to, but not always. Sometimes it would be a mistake to promote to a Queen. The Queen always starts on its own colour and the King on its opposite colour. Place them on the board, now add the Rooks, the Knights and the Bishops. Lastly add the Pawns and the board should look like the next diagram (diag.11)



Now just because your students know where all the pieces start, how they move and even the value of each piece, this doesn't mean they know how to play yet.

You must emphasise that each piece has a role to play, each piece has strengths and weaknesses.

Some pieces like a cluttered board, so they can hop in and out of enemy lines. Some like to attack from afar. Some like to roll like tanks and some may have to be sacrificed to get another piece to the enemy king.

Both sides start off equal, but if it stayed like this for long it would be a boring game indeed.

White with the first move gets to start his attack and black must, at least in the beginning, try to keep up. the opening is a dangerous place full of traps and tricks on both sides. But before we get there, we must learn a couple of special moves.

The first is called “**en passant**”- a French term meaning **in passing**.

Lets look at this.

When one of our Pawns moves forward, it controls squares to its left and right diagonally. When we get to the fifth rank, we are controlling squares on the sixth rank near our enemy and attacking his defensive Pawns. Your opponent may not wish to take this pawn because it might open him up to bigger guns like the bishop or rooks.

Yet if he decides to jump past, as he is entitled to do on his first move, he unfortunately has to pass through a square that your pawn controls and “in passing” he can be killed. Then your pawn moves over as if the defender had stopped for a moment. This is the attackers choice, he may take it or not as he pleases but only on his next move.

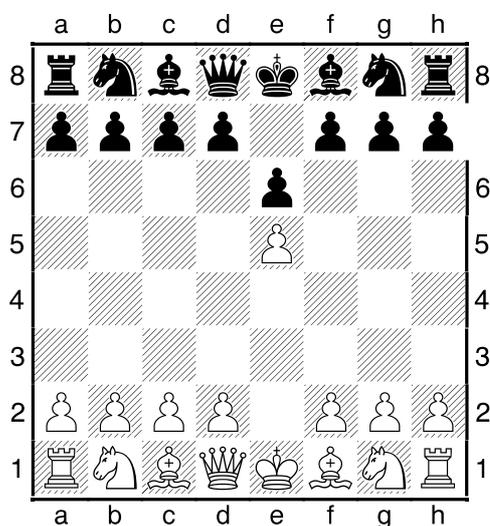


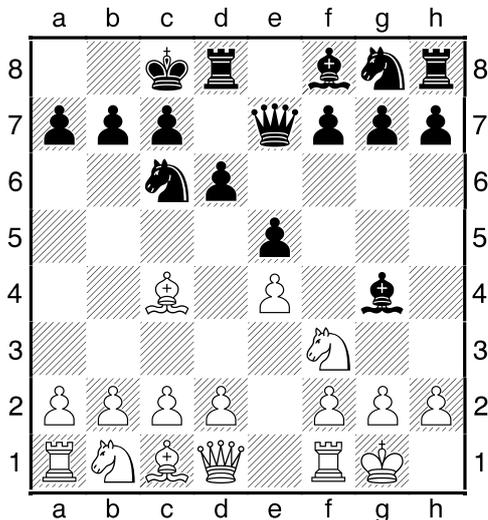
diagram 12 above shows the position with black to move.

If he moves either the Pawn on **f7** to **f5**, or **d7** to **d5** the white Pawn may take it and move to **f6** or **d6**. Or indeed, he may decide to stay there like a thorn in his opponent's side.

The other special move is called **Castling**.

Castling is written as **O-O** or **O-O-O** depending on which side it is performed.

In the following diagram white has castled Kingside (**O-O**) and black has castled Queenside (**O-O-O**).



(diag.13)

To Castle you pick up your King and jump it over one square ie. Move it two squares, to the right or left (depending on which side your castling) then move your Rook around your King and put it on the square beside it.

You may only castle once in the game to either side and only if you have neither moved your King nor the Rook on the side you wish to castle.

Also you may not castle into or through check. Or when you are in check.

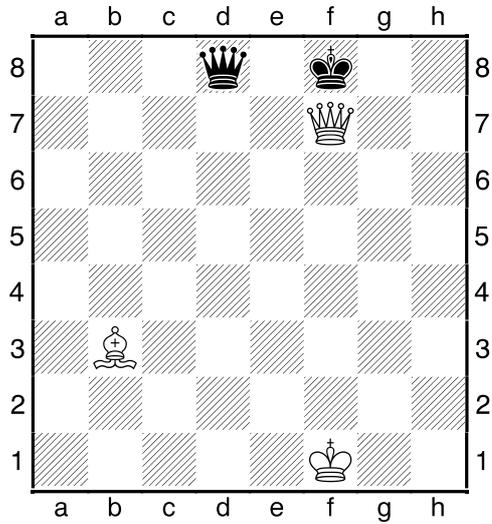
This may sound very complex but in an actual game, it is a good habit to get into.

As can be seen from diag.13 the King ends up behind a wall of Pawns fairly safe from attack.

These special moves were introduced to speed the game up not make it harder and once the students get the hang of them they will improve their game.

As I've already said two Bishops are considered to be quite strong in the end game as they can control both colored squares, one controlling white one controlling black.

The Bishop and Queen combinations are also very powerful as the Queen backed up by a Bishop can achieve what a Queen would find hard to do on its own.



(diag 14)

The diagram above shows Queen and Bishop working together to achieve checkmate. Note that the King cannot move away to a safe square, cannot block the Queen, and lastly cannot take the Queen because he would be moving into check from the Bishop.

What was taught:

1. Starting position of **Queen and Bishop**.
2. Starting value of Queen and Bishop . Moves for Queen and Bishops,
3. Check mate using **Queen and Bishop Combination** ,
4. Special moves **en passant, Castling**.
5. Reinforced notation,
6. Reinforced ideas of control of space, control of opponents squares
7. Attacking weak squares.

Lesson 5

The Three Parts of the Game

The game of chess is broken down into three parts; **The Opening**, **The Middle game** and **The End Game**. Why? Because each part of the game has its own idiosyncrasies, some things you do make sense in the opening but would not be appropriate in the end game, and things you do in the middle will lead to a better ending (or worse).

Remember you have an army of different men for different jobs but only one goal: to capture the enemy king.

How you do this is up to you. You may try to take as many pieces off your enemy as you can, thereby weakening his defences. You may try to make him weaken his position so you can sneak in and get the King. Or you may just pound on his door (a weak square) until he collapses.

As with all games there are certain rules and regulations that must be followed to make it a fair competition. One such rule in chess is the “**Touch and Move**” rule. Which basically says that if you touch a piece, thereby indicating that you intend to move it, you must move it!. Of course, as will happen a lot in the beginning, you will suddenly see that the square that you thought was so good is not that great after all and you don't want to move there really. You can't just put your piece down and move something else instead. You must move the original piece, thought not necessarily to the originally planned square, you may move it to any square that is legal.

One exception to this is if your piece is not sitting on its square correctly or to your liking, you may fix it. But before you touch it you must inform your opponent that all you are doing **is** fixing it. So you must tell him “Jadube” or in English “Adjusting”.

So to the opening the start of the campaign. what do we do?.

First have a **plan**. It doesn't have to be a great plan, it can be a plan of only two moves, or a general idea.

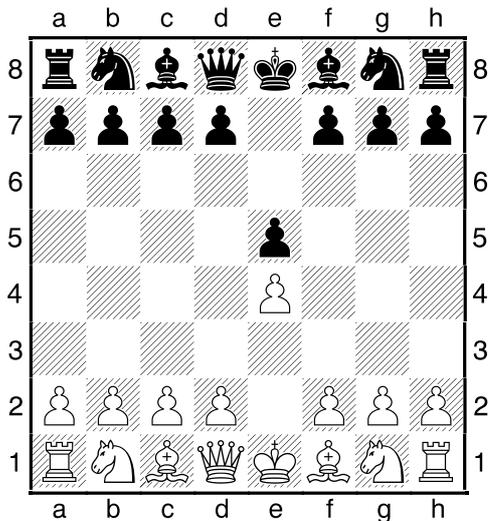
Things to Remember in the opening, Don't move any piece without a reason, try not to move any piece twice. Develop your pieces (Knights & Bishops) to the best squares at once, then get your King safe (castled).

Games can be won and lost in the opening. Lets have an example. This is called “**Scholars mate**” and versions of it have caught out many a beginner.

Before we can do this we must look at how we know where to move.

When a game, or moves, are written down we use special notation to let everybody know what is going where. If we remember from lesson one how the board is set up with numbers and letters telling us which square is which, all we need now is to know which piece is moving. So modern notation uses a capital letter of the name of the piece, for example the Bishop is B the King K the Rook R, but the Knight is N (so as not to confuse it with the King) and the Pawns don't get a letter, just where they are going. So if we see **1.e4 e5**.

We know that a Pawn was moved on the first go from the square **e2** to the square **e4** and that black also made his first move, moving a pawn from **e7** to **e5**.



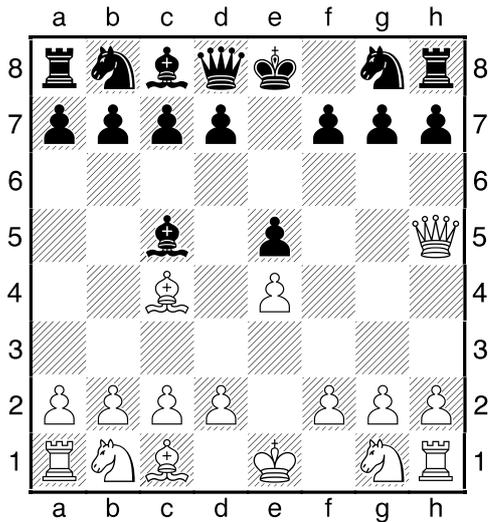
(Diag 15)

Lets see it work with **Scholars mate**. And at the same time we will explain why we're moving each piece.

- 1.e4 white's first move gets a Pawn into the game attacking two squares in the enemy camp . It allows white to get his Bishop into the game and his Queen can get into the game. This is a good move .
- 1 e5. Black's move stops the white Pawn from going any further, attacks two squares in his enemies camp allows his Bishop and Queen to get in the game, this is also a good move.
- 2.B-c4 white's second move, he brings out (**develops**) his Bishop and moves it to the square **c4** where it attack through the centre and aims at a weak white square (**f7**)

(Examine each of the squares the Bishop could have gone to and see why this is the strongest.) This is a good move.

- 2.....B-c5 black's second move also brings out (**develops**) his Bishop, puts it on a good square attacking through the centre aiming at white's weakest square(**f2**). {**F2** and **f7** are considered weak because they only have one piece defending them, and this is the King} Blacks second move is not as good as white's, it is not a good idea to copy your opponents moves especially if you are black as white will always be one move ahead of you.
- 3.Q-h5 white's third move develops his Queen into the game and attacks a weak square (**f7**) this leads us to the diagram 16. below;



(Diag 16)

Note that black cannot now copy whites last move as he would lose the Queen.

In general it is a bad idea to bring out your heavy pieces like your Queen or Rooks early. Because they are worth so much, your opponent will chase them with his weaker pieces trying to catch them.

Lets look at some moves black can make and what will happen if he does, this is called planning.

3.N-f6 moving the Knight out, developing a piece and attacking the white Queen, might look good but white is moving the Queen anyway. In fact he is going to play

4.Qxf7+ . This means that the Queen has taken something(**X**) a Pawn, on the square **f7** and placed the King in check. Now its up to black to get out of check. Well he cannot **move** as the Queen controls the two squares the King could move to. He cannot **block** the Queen because its right beside him and he cannot **take** the Queen as it is protected by the Bishop and the King cannot move into check.

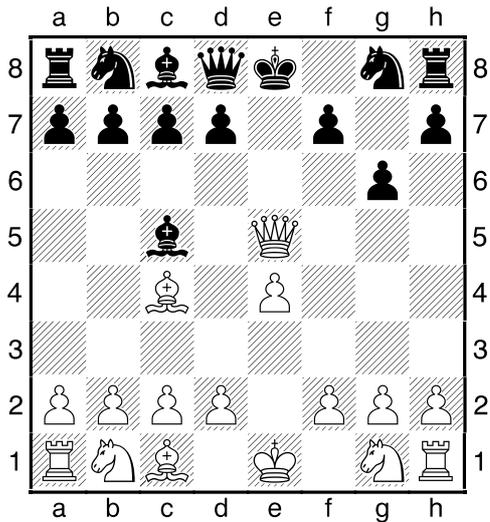
This is **checkmate** and the end of the game.

So is there anything else black could have done on move three? ,

Lets look at ;

3....g6, moving the Pawn forward one square to attack the Queen. This time the Queen cannot get to the **f7** square it cannot take the **g6** pawn as it would be taken by the pawn on either side, so he plays

4.Qxe5+ taking the Pawn in the center giving check but not mate.



(diag 17)

Now black has a choice of moves he can move his Bishop which is being attacked back in front of the King blocking the check , he can move his Queen in front of the King blocking the check or he can move his King away to **f8** and forfeit the right to castle and lose his Bishop.

Lets look at **4... Be7**. Bringing his Bishop back.

He is no longer in check what does white play? Take a minute to try to figure it out. Remember that the Queen moves like a Rook but also like a Bishop. Some students will have seen **5.Qxh8**, gaining a Rook and threatening to take the Knight. If black tries to defend the Knight (**5.....k-f8**) white will take the **h** Pawn and attack the **f7** sq. again. Remember that although you are gaining pieces the object of the game is to capture the King so everything white is doing is about attacking the weak sq. **f7** and getting checkmate.

This may at first seem very difficult, trying to guess what your opponent is doing while trying to figure out what your doing. But lets look at the whole checkmate again in reality it only took four moves. White had a **plan** to develop his Bishop and Queen and to attack the weakest square. Every move he made was with this in mind, if it works he gets checkmate in four moves, if black figures out the plan and makes efforts to stop it, he must be careful not to lose too much of his army.

From blacks point of view he must also play the opening with a plan. He must do things his own way and not what white wants him to do

Still using “**Scholars mate**” as an example what should black do after **2,B-c4** .

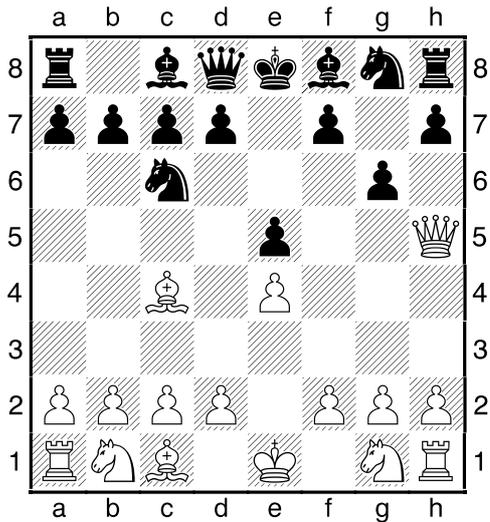
Well the first thing is to get out of the habit of copying your opponent.

Development is important, and for beginners, Coaches would always say Knights before Bishops, so blacks second move should be either of the Knights.

Let's look at one variation, after that you can start thinking things up for yourselves.

2.....N-c6. Develops the Knight to a good square defends the Pawn on e5.

So now if white continues his attack with **3.Q-h5**. black can now play **3.....g6** attacking the Queen and it no longer has the resource of taking the central pawn with check and must retreat. (remember as black, if we get white to go backwards he is losing the time advantage he started with the **Tempi**) So where does the white Queen go?



(diag 18)

Take the time to look at all the squares available. Don't treat your Queen like a big Rook and forget that it moves diagonally. For instance if white moves backwards

4.Q - h3, it is for the moment perfectly safe, but now black has the move advantage **4....d5!**

This move is like a magicians trick. It makes you look one way when the trick is going on in another direction. Firstly white will look at his Pawn and Bishop which now are being attacked. He may correctly assume that he can easily take blacks Pawn with either his Pawn or Bishop and this piece would be safe as they protect each other and let me assure you many a beginner has done this, taking the Pawn with his Bishop, thinking he is keeping the attack going on **f7** only to notice the big grin on blacks face as he plays **5....B x Q!** And even if white spots this move and moves his Queen on move five then the Pawn on **d5** takes the Bishop, (**5....dxc4**)

What you should remember is that there is always chances to attack and counter attack in the opening.

If you are white, try to keep that **tempo** going. Make every move count whether it is in developing or attacking, Don't always play the obvious move, or the one that your opponent is expecting. Do your own developing and attacking.

Sometimes in the opening, black has to be a bit patient waiting for white to show his hand as it were. Knowing what your opponent is trying to do, makes your job, either defending or counter-attacking, easier.

Now get the students to practice this opening trying to work out each combination trying different moves to get out of **scholars mate**;

Top ten tips for beginners:

- 1: Don't touch your pieces until you are sure of where you're moving them.**
- 2: Always look at your opponents last move before moving yourself.**
- 3: Ask yourself “What will they do next?”**
- 4: Know the value of each of the pieces**
- 5: Develop your pieces quickly**
- 6: Get Your king safe**
- 7: Control the centre**
- 8: Take your Time**
- 9: Remember everybody makes mistakes. But don't make the same mistake twice.**
- 10: Relax and enjoy the game!**

What was taught;

- 1. Notation,**
- 2. Development.**
- 3. The opening; Scholars Mate .**
- 4. Reinforced, weak squares,**
- 5. Forward planning, Calculation , Tempi.**
- 6. Touch & move rule**

Improvers

Lesson 6

Tactics/Strategy

Lets start by changing our focus, the next few lessons are aimed at the Student rather than the coaches.

If the coach is still teaching this, then he may use what he thinks is appropriate to the conditions and varying abilities of his students.

For students who are now getting past the beginners stage, the delineation between opening and middle is probably the hardest to make.

The **end game** is easy enough to guess at. As soon as you get down to only a few pieces or Pawns on the board you can safely assume your in the end game and start thinking appropriately.

In general, I would say that the Opening ends (for most at this level) after about ten moves . The position would be considered complex enough to switch your thinking onto middle game strategies and tactics.

Which leads us to **What are Middle Game Strategies and tactics?**

First lets look at **Tactics** (useless fact; Tactics are named after the Roman general Tacticus who was supposedly the first to use them in warfare) Tactics are short goals, capturing a piece, weakening a square, making your opponent move away.

The purpose of these tactics are to gain an immediate advantage or even to get Checkmate.

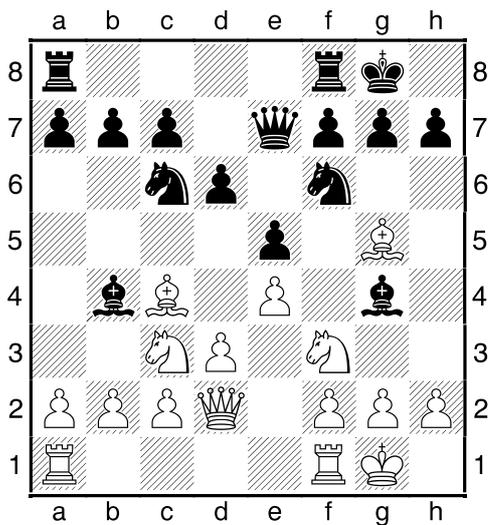
Some players are pure tacticians, whose whole game consists of combinations of tactics piled on top of each other until they win.

Strategy is more the planning of long term advantages or goals.

Like control over space, open lines or the centre, aiming not to win in short sharp bursts but to get an advantage that will see you through to the end game.

If our goal in the Opening is **Development** (to get out both Bishops, both Knights and get our King safe) then the middle game is about finding a target to attack, either finding a weakness or making one in our enemy's camp.

The position on the next page is a good example.



(diag 19)

This particular opening could be said to be over.

Whoever attacks first will probably get a lead or an advantage, it is time for some tactics.

It would appear at first glance that things are completely equal Both sides have developed their pieces, nothing has been taken yet, white is getting ready to attack . He would like to play his Knight to **d5** attacking the black Queen, but the pin on his Knight at **c3** would seem to be stopping this.

He may be able to calculate a tactical combination such as:

1. **Nd5 Bxd2.**
2. **Nxe7+ Nxe7**
3. **Nxd2 h6**
4. **Bxf6 gxf6**

And white has a **strategic** advantage of the open **g** file.

This may be asking too much , so lets look at a simpler tactical move

1.a3 this Pawn move attacks the Bishop that has the Knight pinned down, asking the question of black “what do you want to do?”

He can move it away only to be attacked again with **b4** or he can attack white first with :

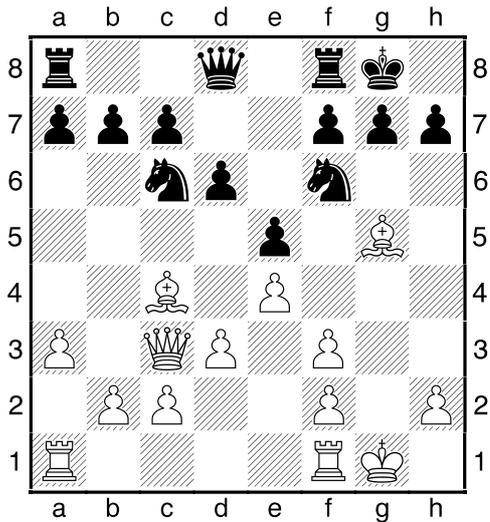
1...Bxc3. Now white has a choice to take back with pawn or Queen.

2.bxc3 is generally considered slightly weak strategically as it **doubles** the pawns on the **c** file, meaning that the backward pawn cannot move without his brother in front moving first, so he is always a target. But

2.Qxc3 Bxf3

3.gxf (forced)

and it is black who has a strategic plus, an open file to attack.



(diag 20)

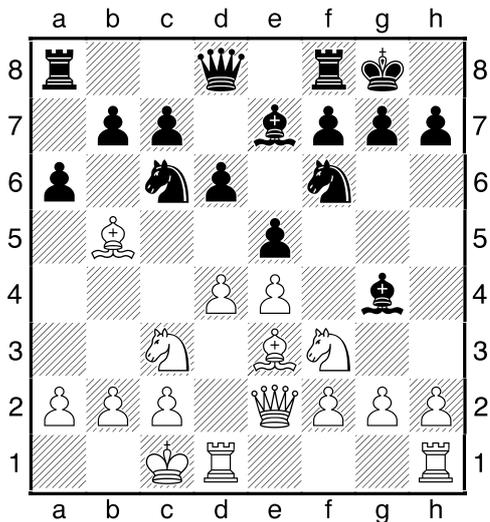
Remember the purpose of castling is to get you King safe behind a wall of soldiers but if that wall is opened the King is not as safe as it could be.

In the opening, assuming your trying to develop all your pieces, you should also have a target in mind, a strategy.

For instance white could be aiming for the weak square **f7** and black aiming for **f2**.

After castling these squares are not so weak (see **diag.13**) as they are now protected by a Rook and King at least.

But other squares are weaker so our focus should change.



The above diagram (21) Shows a different opening.

Again, we are now into the middle game and our focus should be where to attack and how to get an advantage.

Take a few minutes to study the position and look for weaknesses or potential weaknesses.

As we said previously, with the kings castled the focus of attack changes, so white should be aiming for the weak squares **g7, h7, d5, d6**, and the Queen on **d8**.

Notice they are not very weak at the moment, but the king is hiding behind them. Black's targets are **a2, b2, c2, d2**, queen on **e2** and the rook on **e1**, again white can defend these squares easily at the moment, but these are our strategic targets.

More immediate tactical targets are for white and the Knight on **c6**, the Pawn on **e5**, and the square **d5**. Black should be looking at : the Bishop on **b5** the Knight on **f3** the Pawn on **d4**.

It's white to move. There is a lot to take in and this is what makes the middle game so dangerous and so full of pitfalls. It's easy to make a mistake here trying to be too clever or falling for easy traps. If you can combine tactics and strategy in your thinking it will make it easier. Firstly slow down. Do you have a plan? Let's look from one side at a time.

White: Wants to start attacking the kingside, getting that black Bishop to go away, push his Pawns forward and get his Queen and Rooks attacking the weak squares, but before he can do that he must deal with the tactical threats of black. He could just take the Knight a three for three points swap. But where does black want to be going and if you take the Knight does it help or hinder black's plan?

It would help black as it opens the **b** file for an attack. So we (white) must move the Bishop but where? **A4, c4, d3**,-, each of these will have their own tactical problems. But think strategically, Where do you want your Bishop to end up and why. Remember your initial evaluation. so Bishop to **a4** then to **b3** where it's attacking through the center at **d5** and defending **a2** and **c2**. Giving you a chance to move your Knight to **d5**. And start your attack on the Bishop on **g4** by Pawn to **h3**.

Black: so we are attacking his Bishop but he's going to move it and as we have seen in the above analysis it will probably end up on **b3**, that is after we play **b4**, then what do we do. We should keep our attack going we don't want to give white time to get his attack flowing. So tactically we could play **2...N-a5**. Attacking his Bishop again. Would we need to worry immediately if white plays **3.h3**. What tactics would you employ?

Black can play **3.Nxb3+**. Remembering that check supersedes all other considerations white must get out of check. If either **a x b** or **c x b** black can move his Bishop to **d7** and escape having opened up white's position.

This may not be a winning attack there is still lots of play in the position with both sides having chances.

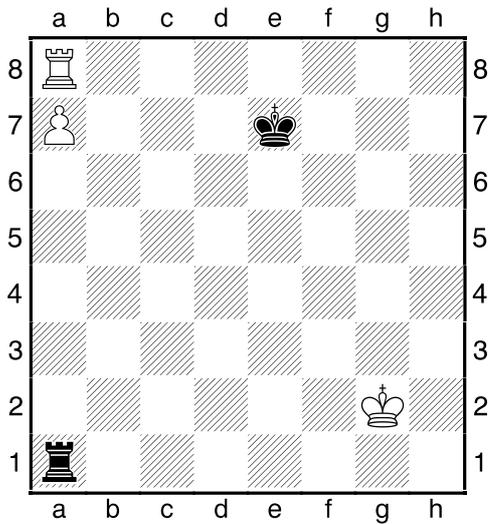
Let's go further into a game and look at the **end game**.

There are many times where tactics have taken you to a winning position, you just have to learn to recognise it as such.

Such positions are called a "**won Game**" but as someone pointed out "a **Won Game** is often the hardest to win."

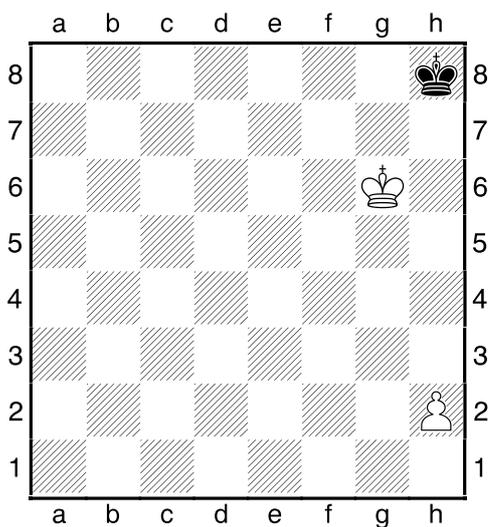
If we go back to lesson one, where a King and Rook versus a King (**Diag. 2**) is shown. Even average players would consider this a won game, as no matter where the pieces start off, it is only a matter of time and technique before white wins.

Lets look at some other positions. in the following diagram.



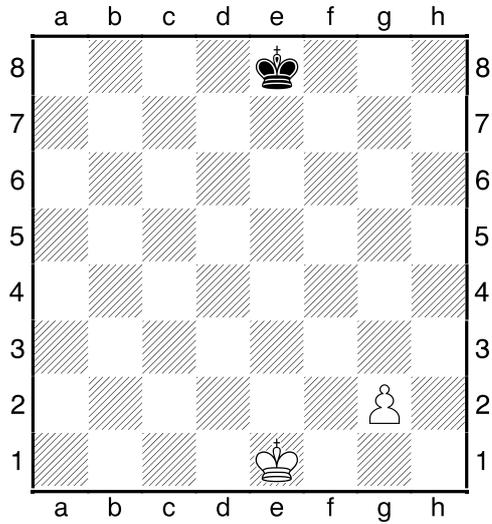
(diag 22)

Whites Rook is blocking him from getting his Pawn to the Queening square. It seems that if he moves it black will take the pawn and will get a draw fairly easily. But what if white plays **1.R-h8** . This is a waiting move. The obvious **1...Rxa7** loses to **2. R-h7+** skewering the King and Rook so that when the black King moves white will take the black Rook and end up in a winning position. A lot of energy is spent on calculation in the end game. Knowing how many moves it will take you to get to the end of the board and on what square, may make all the difference to you winning or losing. In the next position you must calculate what the outcome will be (win, lose or draw).



Diag 23)

Does it make any difference if it is blacks move or whites (**tempo**)? The answer is: **No** it will always be a draw Black can always get to the queening square and hold it.



(diag.24)

But what about the above diagram

This time remember back to lesson 2 (diag.5).

So this will, with proper play, always be a win for white. As he can force black off the queening square and get his Pawn onto it.

Considering **tempo (the use of move order)** look at the next diagram and decide what move to play next.

Also take into consideration the following:

It is white to move.

What should you be looking for?

Firstly you have a one Pawn advantage.

You can't stop the black Pawn from queening.

You have check your next move.

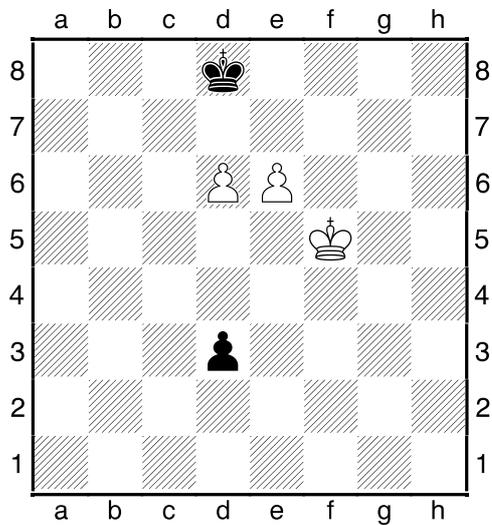
Black is controlling you queening square.

You are fairly sure of blacks next move.

It will take black two moves to get a Queen.

Controlling the Queening square is important.

Skewers are good tactics.



(diag25)

The answer is 1.e7+

lets see why.

You have two potential queening squares After **1.e7+** black could play **1...Ke8** blocking one of them but then **2.Ke6** forces him to move his Pawn, then white plays Pawn to **d7#** is mate.

If **1...Kd7 2.Kf6** (controlling squares) **d2 3.K-f7 Kxd6 4.e8=Q d1=Q 5.Q-d8+** Skewering the Queen and winning.

What was taught:

1. Tactics, Strategy.
2. Combinations, Planning.
3. Weak squares control.
4. Tempi.
5. End game control of the Queening square.
6. Skewers. pins

Lesson 7

Draws

If You Cannot Win Try Not To loose.

There are many ways to get a draw. We have looked a some already.

Insufficient material (not having enough pieces on the board to get checkmate)

Stalemate. (King having no legal moves, but not in check)

Threefold Repetition (there are different ways of getting this. You can repeat check again and again. Repeat a move again and again or a complete position)

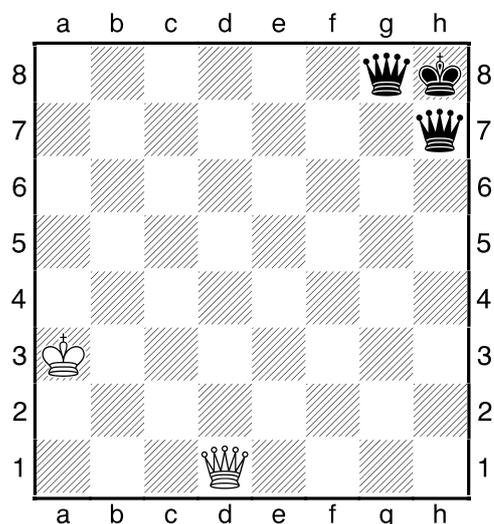
Draw by agreement (if you and your opponent both want a draw)

50 move rule (where fifty moves have been made without a ;Pawn move or a check).

What's the point.?

In competition you get one point (1-0) for a win nothing for a loss (0-1) and half a point for a draw ($\frac{1}{2} - \frac{1}{2}$) . Also if it is a draw, rating points are received if your opponent is rated higher than you are. Remember Rating points are the reason you're playing competitions. The goal of this book is to get you up to 1200. rating points are the system that is used to grade you as a player, something that shows you (and the rest of the chess world) just how good you are . The more you win the more points you get the higher your rating goes so every draw counts.

the next diag (26) shows a problem.



It is white to move, consider your options.

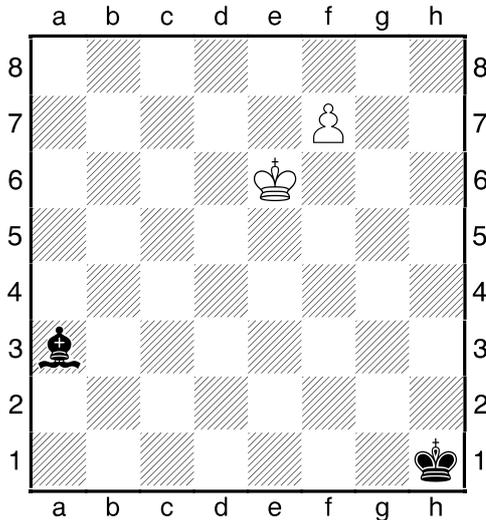
Black has two Queens to your one. So if he gets the chance he will swap off one of his and then win.

So what is the best result you can hope for.?

A draw.

White can play **1.Q-d4+** black must get out of check. He can play either of the Queens to block white but then white can check him again and again until the position is repeated. Try it for yourself.

This next position(Diag.27) is also a draw why?



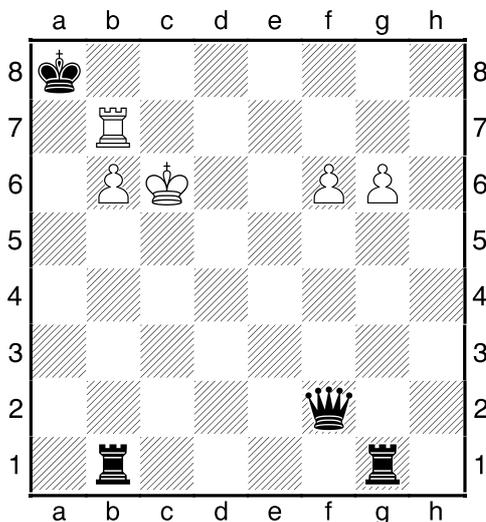
Insufficient material;

Although white has a Pawn and the ability to make a Queen, the Bishop is covering the Queening square and he will take the Queen as soon as its made giving up his Bishop in the process and getting a draw.

White can never catch the Bishop as he can move along the **a3 -f8** diagonal

With beginners this type of draw and **stalemate** are the two most common and will be seen a lot, the student should familiarise themselves with such ideas.

Though the next diagram(28) is a little less likely to happen the idea behind it should become familiar.



Its white to move, what should he do?

Your first consideration should be that you (white) are seriously behind in material.

If it was blacks move you would be dead in minutes.

If you had two moves you could play **k-c7** then **R-b8+** MATE.

But Black would never let you play that, so you must find a forcing move, that is a move that forces your opponent to go where you want.

The answer ; **R-a7+**. Once you see this the next **26** moves are easy.

Draw by repetition in the end. (**R-b7, R-c7. R-d7 etc.**).

In tournament play at all levels, draws are quite common and can be agreed upon for many reasons. At Grandmaster level its usually because the position, either now, or in several moves, will be drawn. That is neither player will be able to make his opponent make a mistake.

At lower levels draws are agreed for such things as, if neither player can see a way through and doesn't want to risk losing. If you feel you're in a losing position you can always offer a draw and hope that the better player sees something in the position that you can't and agrees with you. At the very least he will have to take time to evaluate the position as a win for him , and then prove it.

Sometimes a draw would make no difference to you or your opponent's final standings in a competition and a draw may be agreed to save you having to play another three hours.

My own opinion is that you should always fight on, right to the very last move.

Make your opponent earn the win off you.

At this stage of your chess development it is more important that you learn by doing.

Every mistake every battle will only make you stronger as a player.

At the very least you will learn about endgame technique.

What was taught:

1. The importance of **Draws. By insufficient material, stalemate, repetition, by agreement**
2. . Reinforced, **calculation, anticipation**

Lesson 8

Time, Space & Force.

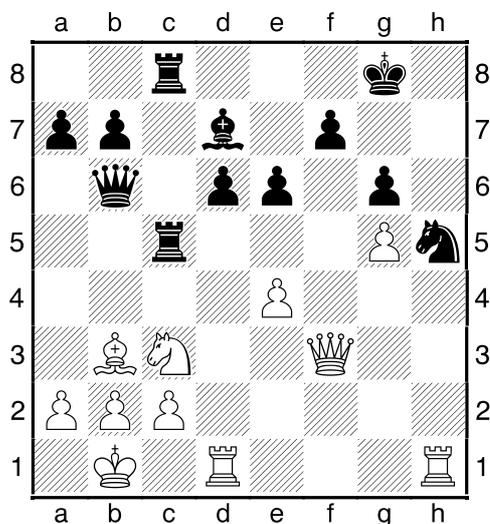
The student who is using these lessons should study the diagrams and take note of the themes and specific positions that come up.

These will only improve your game.

We have said already that the game is broken down into three parts, **Opening, Middle and Endgame**, But there are other considerations that must be made in our evaluation of the game and these are **Time, Space & Force**.

Lets look at each one in turn.

Force: Is probably the easiest to understand as it relates to who has the most material on the board at any time. But the correct use of the forces available is a little harder to quantify. We have seen in earlier chapters that each piece is given a numerical value in terms of Pawns and that this value can be changed by the situation of space ie the two Bishops' being slightly more valuable in the ending where there is an open board. But other things come into consideration when contemplating exchanges. in the following diagram **Fischer** to play as white against **Gligorich** (1959) finds a startling move .



(diag29)

See can you find it;

With **26.R x h5** Fischer opens up an attacking line on the black King and wins six moves later. **26...gxh5 27.Qxh5 Be8 28.Qh6 Rxc3 29.bxc3 Rxc3 30.g6 fxg6 31.Rh1 Qd4 32.Qh7+ Resigns**

As he says himself :”I've made this sacrifice so often, I feel like applying for a patent!”

Most players under 1200 probably wouldn't play such a move because we have been told to count the value of the pieces, but space and time can be just as valuable as force. Fischer was also very fond of sacrificing his Queen for two Rooks figuring that in the end game two Rooks were more of a threat. This is not universally accepted and depends a lot on playing style and ability. **Force** is really potential. The potential to

crash into and damage your opponent and get checkmates. It is generally accepted that getting rid of (exchanging) Queens and Rooks early will most times, lead to a drawn game if both players play equally and don't blunder.

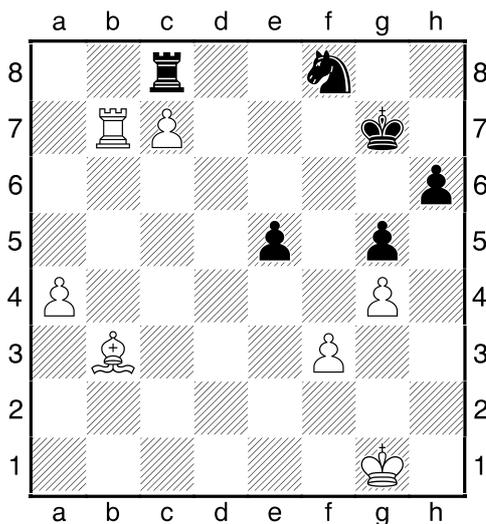
Time: As has been said White starts off with the first move and is therefore ahead in time or as its known in the chess world a tempi, We would consider three tempi to be worth a Pawn. this first tempi at lower levels is not much of a hindrance but if it is left to accumulate it can make the difference between having that winning move or not.

Blacks job is to try to get that tempi off the board and indeed get a tempi of his own. He can do this by making white go backwards, by making white move the same piece twice, or have him make a defensive move he hadn't planned on.

Another term associated with time is **Zugzwang** .

A person in Zunzwang doesn't want to move because any move he would make will worsen his position.

Lets look at a diagram(30) that explains this better.



In the above diagram. It is black to move but in this game (Fisher - Rossetto 1959) no matter what black plays he will lose.

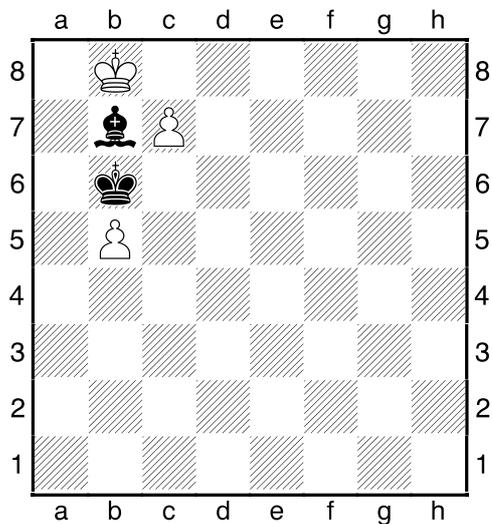
I know this will be hard to see for a beginner, but if your approaching a rating of 1000 you should be try to see why.

Think, if I was black what would I do?

To help with your analysis we will look at Blacks tries;
 on 37...Kf6 38.Rb8. Wins a piece. On 37...Ng6 38.Be6 wins. On any Rook move 38.c8=Q+

So Rossetto resigned not having any move that would improve his game or lead to a

win or draw.



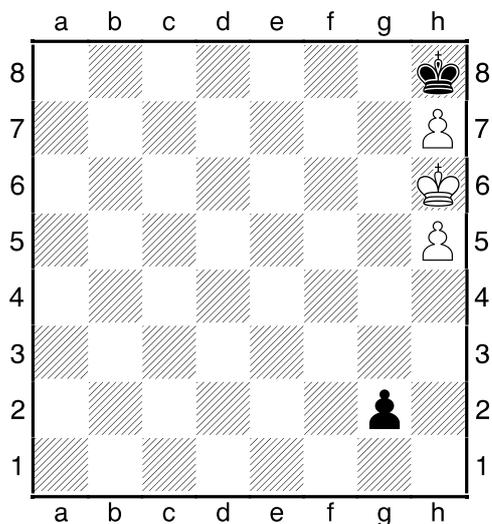
(diag31)

In the above position what is the outcome - with white to move and then with black to move.

Its: with White to move : **A draw**. And with black to move : **A loss**.

If it is white's move he can only play his Pawn to **c8** getting a Q on indeed any other piece and black will take it, then after white has recaptured Black's king will gobble up the last Pawn and a draw by insufficient material occurs.

But if it is blacks move he can either play his King which will move away from its protection of the Bishop allowing white to capture it and Queen his Pawn with impunity. Or He can move his Bishop. But if he relinquishes his hold of the **c8** square White will Queen and he should be able to beat a Bishop with a Queen.



Again, in this position.(Diag32)

Work out the outcome for both players if its their move.

Answer; White to move is ; A loss. Black to move is ; a draw.

Play it out with both sides to prove it.

So what is the point of knowing about **Zugzwang**? Well to see that such potential is on he board will make you be aware of it and perhaps look out for it. So you may at least get a draw and not force a bad move on yourself where being too aggressive would lose you the game.

Zugzwang positions can't readily be memorised but the idea behind them should.

Another use of **Time** is of course the **clock**.

In all competition play clocks are invariably used and many a game has been lost by not paying attention to your or your opponents clock.

The three main time controls are 5-10mn (speed chess) 15-20mn (rapid play)

1 ½ - 1 ¾hrs (long play), anything more than this you don't need this book as your probably playing a Grandmaster.

In each of these type of games good use of time is important. Knowing when to spend time calculation and when to move rapidly could make all the difference between having an easy or pressurised game.

So how do we save time. In **Long play**: One way is to know your opening well enough to play it fast, if you get to move 10-12 and are fifteen minutes up on your opponent it gives you a little more time to calculate tactical positions later on. But just knowing the first twelve moves of an opening is not enough you must **know** the opening. That is, why are the pieces going to the squares in this opening. what is the strategical plan what are the things to look out for both as black and white, if your opponent moves "**out of book**" (a term that means a move not standard or normally played in that position.) does this make your position better or worse, and can you capitalize on it.

As your game progresses you will have to get practice on not calculating. This may seem strange but there are positions when the move is obvious and probably the first thing you saw. But you then wasted ten minutes looking into variations that went nowhere, then played the original move. This is just fear getting a grip of you, your not playing your own game, you're being intimidated by your opponent.

Check for blunders, check for a trap, then play your move. Save the time for when there really are several variations or moves that could be played and use your time there.

Learn the endgame patterns, how to win with the Rook, the Queen, Rook+Knight. Queen +Knight, two Bishops. and the single Pawn. Then when you get there you will not waste time calculating every move, you will know where you need to go and how.

Rapid Play: Opening theory is even more crucial and an odd, unusual opening with a good plan can win you the game. you may even get away with a mistake or two. Knowing your mating patterns will be of great use here . Knowing where you are trying to go and with what pieces, knowing what to give up to open the position.

Later we will look at a couple of main- line openings and see what we should be looking for.

Really good rapid players rely a lot on knowing the positions. they dont spend much time calculating each move, but in general feel their way along waiting for a blunder

or an opening.

Speed chess: I feel is just played for fun. Oh it can be taken very seriously by the players but in the great scheme of trying to improve your overall rating or even your game I don't think it will make a great difference. That is not to say you shouldn't play speed chess as I said it's fun, it's a game of blunders and mistakes, of instantly calculating the next move, it is also good practice in case you do have to get into a time scramble in a long game. Being able to move rapidly without calculation can be an asset. The best use of time here depends in who is the stronger player. If you have more time and you seriously want to win, play an opening that is **closed** as opposed to an **open** game against a stronger player and win on time as he struggles to get at you. Conversely you want an open game if you're white and are the stronger player.

Space: At 1000 some things about space will be confusing and hard to see the point of. Most players at this level want to attack and go for the win as soon as they can. But remember you may be playing someone a hundred or two hundred points ahead of you, who may want to take their time and grind out a win, not relying on flash tactics but sound strategies.

The term **Space** means the amount of squares you control or that is controlled by your opponent. Controlling the squares and of course the potential to use these squares for your own advantage is what makes space important.

There is no set time when space is more important than another. As compared with force, which in the endgame can be much more decisive. Space is just as important in the opening, the middle as the endgame.

As your game improves you will see the value of space more and more and it may become the underlying theme of your game. In the chapter on openings we will see how the fight to control space is the paramount idea behind most openings.

In the middle game it often decides who will get the attack going and where, or who is cramped and frustrated.

In the endgame it may be the deciding factor on whether to hold onto your Bishop pair or rely on your Knights for victory.

But some space is more important than others.

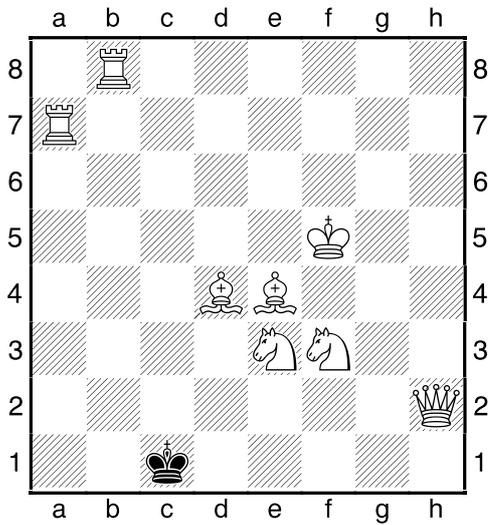
The centre is the key. He who controls the centre controls the game.

As I said about the previous diagram, just sitting on a square doesn't mean you control it. You may have a pawn on d5 but the control of that square could be in your opponent's hands as he can take your pawn with impunity.

Now for a test of what you have learnt about the pieces and how they can control space

Before you look at the next diagram,(33) set up a blank board. Now try to arrange the White pieces, minus the pawns, so that you **control** as many squares as possible. Remember you don't necessarily control a square you're sitting on.

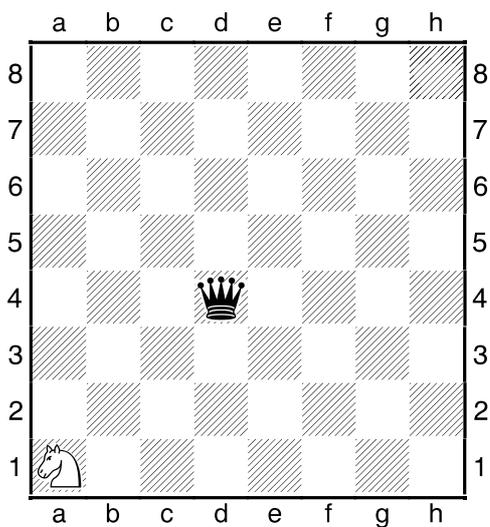
If your right, there will be one square that the Black king can go to, but no more.
 Time yourself to add a little pressure and only give yourself five minutes.



(Dia33)

Try this test again in about a month and see how fast you can remember the position. Notice that the four “minor” pieces are close to the centre where they control as much space as possible, the Knights control 8 squares each the Bishops 13 squares each the Rooks 14 squares each the Queen 20 and the King 8 a total of 98 (obviously with only 64 squares on the board some are covered more than once). In reality 63 squares are covered.

Try this next test the object of which is to move the Knight from **a1-g8** stopping at all the squares it can legally visit that is **b1,c1,e1,f1,h1** etc. time yourself then try to cut your time down on subsequent tries.



diag 34

Lesson 9

Analysis

Game analysis is an important part on your road to improvement. It helps you find your mistakes, spot your weaknesses and discover your style.

So how do we do it ?

The first thing is obviously to write your games down, and especially after each tournament go through each game and mark it as you see it.

In most books on analysis you will find that the only games that gets analysed are Grandmaster games. This is all well and good, the theory behind it is if you analyse the best players it will help you get better. But between 800 and 1200 your ability to analysis is so much weaker than say a 2500+ player, that there is no way that you could possibly understand the problems being set for another 2500+ player . The ideas and complications are so far ahead of you in chess terms, that if you were to find even one move it will probably be the most obvious but not necessarily for the right reason. This may seem a little controversial but lets look at it logically.

When you first start to analyse your games it is the obvious blunders that will probably jump out at you. In fact during the game you may have had reservations about making the move in the first place. So your first analysis of the game should be simple. Do a blunder check. Then you should go over the game with your coach or a better player, but not someone so far ahead of you as to make the analysis useless. Your (or their) analysis should be constructive and honest, it should deal with the game in its parts and as a whole.

Start by looking at the opening . When did you go out of book and why?, Is it because you didn't know the next move or did your opponent play something that led you this way. The reason that “book” is important is that people a lot better than you have spent the time finding the best moves, game after game and the reasons why, so you dont have to.

But chess is not about just memorising lots of opening moves. Its about understanding why you move here or there. So in the opening did you have a plan? How far did you get with your plan and why did it change. Next, the middle of the game. Try to spot the good and bad moves , not just of yourself but of your opponent too. This will help next time you play this opening so you will have a better idea of what to expect your opponents to aim for.

Then the endgame when did you realise you were losing/winning. Try to find ways out of the problem position now that you have more time. This is a lot of work both for you and possibly your coach, but it doesn't end here, keep your game with all the notes and analysis, then in three month periods go over the same game and analyse it afresh. You may be surprised at what you see now that you didn't then. This is because as you get better so does your understanding of the game and of course your analysis gets better, so your game gets better, its a vicious circle.

To help reinforce this point I have included a couple of games annotated by the players. These games were played when they were at a lower rating and then analysed later. All players were, or are under 1400 so they are not so far ahead of you that you will not understand what they thought.

White : John Healy (1345)
Black : Steven Dixon (1215)
Result : 1-0

The following is annotated almost wholly by **John Healy** looking back to 1999 his rating at the time of the annotation is **1700**.

The opening is The Caro- Khan

1.e4 c6

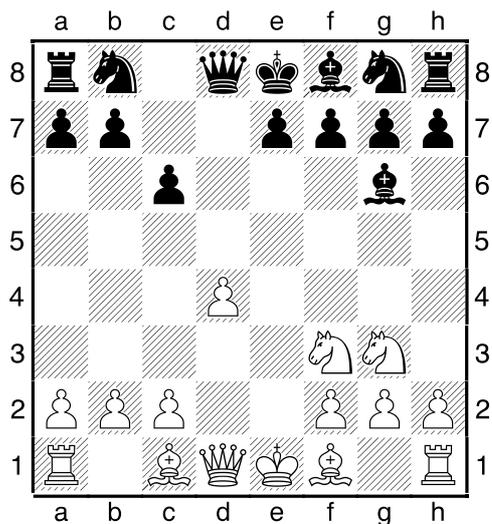
2.d4 d5

3.Nc3 d x e4

4.Nxe4 Bf5

6.Ng3 Bg6

7. Nf3 (So far we've followed opening theory. This is the classical main line)
 (Diag 35)



6.....Nf6 (this isn't great as Black loses control of the e5 square. The main line runs:
 6...Nd7 7.h4 h6 8.h5 Bh7 9.Bd3 Bxd3 10.Qxd3 Qc7. to prevent
 Bf4 where the Bishop would control that diagonal, 11.O-O-O e6
 13.c4 O-O-O 14.Bc3: White has lots of space and has the d4 Pawn well
 protected. Black for his part has no weaknesses and will play a restraining
 game)

7. Ne5 Nbd7

8.f4 (An alternative is 8.Nxg6 hxg6)

8..... Nxe5 (Black can't really afford to let that strong Knight stay put)

9. fxe5 (the old rule of thumb is take towards the centre. Besides going the

other way lets him exchange off Queens)

9 **Ne4** (I'm not sure about this move. General principles say that Black should try to swap off some pieces here because it frees up room and because its harder for White to attack with less pieces . In this case though with a slightly cramped position Black should probably keep his Knight because it's good in tight spaces)

10. **Nxe4 Bxe4**

11. **Be3** (I'd like to play Bd3, bu need to reinforce d4 first)

11..... **e6**

12. **Qd2** (I have to cover the g2 pawn to play Bd3)

12..... **Be7**

13. **O-O-O O-O** (I don't like this move. Castling long would have put an extra Rook defending the important d5 square and more importantly Black's pieces are not well placed to come to their monarchs aid should he get into trouble, while White has lots of nice lines to attack the kingside along)

14. **c4** (in his earlier analysis John says: This takes the d5 square away from the black Bishop, making it easier to trade off. Also it may support a d5 break at somme stage. *Then in later analysis:* Unfortunately generalisations like this come crashing down with concrete analysis. - **c4** is an error as it allows **b5** a move that breaks open the queenside to Blacks' advantage. Probably best is 14. Bd3 Bxd3 15. Qxd3)

14 **Qd7**

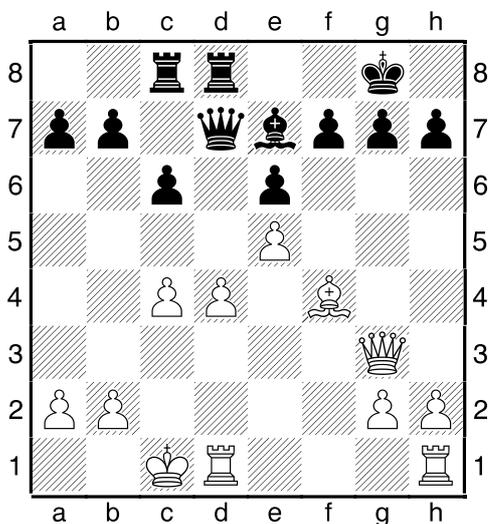
15. **Bd3 Bxd3**

16. **Qxd3 Rac8** (16....b5 is still the best move)

17. **Bf4** (lets my Queen over onto the Kingside)

17..... **Rfd8**

18. **Qg3**



(diag.36)

..... Bf8 (if; 18... b5 19.Bh6 Bf8 20. Bg5, is still the best that black can do, but its a little late now – White is in control)

19. h4 (19.Bg5 Re8. {Or 19....Be7 20. Bf6 Bxf6 21 exf6 g6 22. Qg5} 20.Rhf1 b5 21. c5 Qd5 22.Kb1 with advantage to Black)

19.... Rc7

20.Bg5 Re8

21. h5 g6

(making a weakness, it's good practice to avoid moving the pawns in front of your King, unless you have to .)

22. Bf6 Be7 (*John now gives several variations of moves he has analysed after the game;* if 22....c5 23.hxg6 hxg6 24. Rh8 mate , or 23....fxg6 24Rh4 cxd4 25.Rdxd4 Qf7. { 25.Rdh1 Rxc4+ 26.kb1 Rec8 27. Qxg6+ hxg6 28. Rh8+ Kf7 29.R1h7+ Ke8 30.Rxf8+ Kxf8 31. Rh8+ Kf7 32. Rh7+ is a draw by perpetual}

23.hxg6 fxg6

24. Rxh7 resigns

(in view of 24.....Kxh7 25. Rh1 Kg8 26. Qxg6+ Kf8 27Qg8 mate)

1-0

The analysis may not be perfect, but is a good indicator of progressive thinking. In other words learning from your mistakes and applying the new knowledge to your game. John has given us his thoughts at the time and his evaluation of the positions as he played them This is very instructive for other player who may get bogged down in generalisations when applying new information.

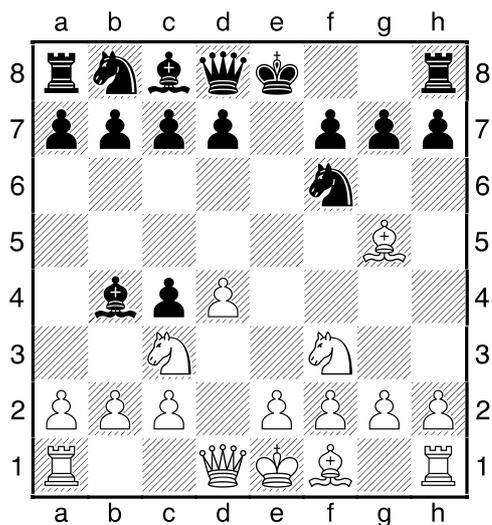
Notice how most of his original variations are towards the endgame where the calculations need to be done, but his opening is almost un-evaluated, until the first move out of book. This shows (at even 1345) that a good knowledge of opening theory is a must.

Depending on your level, you may have seen all the variations, some, or none. It doesn't matter what I am trying to get you to do is get used to analysis by seeing other people do it at roughly your level. Only to indicate some things you could be thinking about. You will get better at it as you go through your own games.

The next game shows a d4 opening with the white player Shane Fell doing most of the annotating. Some of the evaluations are mine added to Shanes to give you a different perspective of the game.

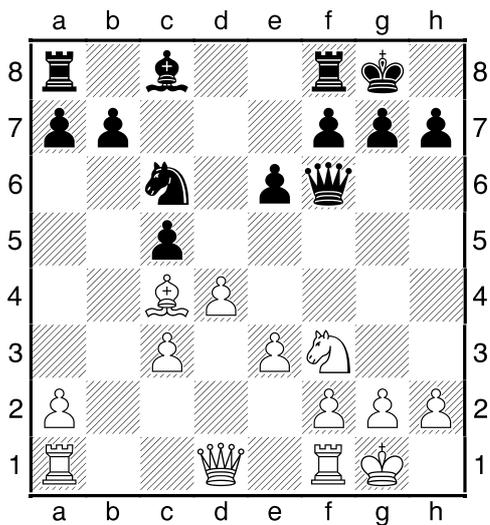
White: Shane Fell (1039)
Black: William Gill (1399)
Result: 1-0

1 d4 Nf6
 2 Nf3 e6
 3 Bg5 d5
 4 c4 Bb4+
 5 Nc3 dxc4(?) (Black can gain a tempo by delaying this capture until White plays e3 and Bd3. By taking now White ends up with the perfect square for the Bishop on recapture.)



(Diag.37)

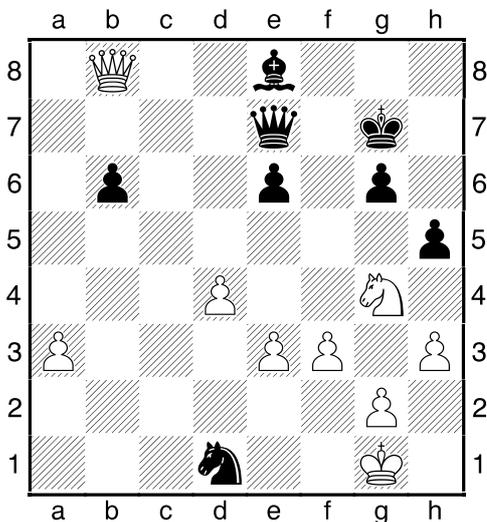
6e3 c5 {6.e4 is probably better;Ron}
 7 Bxf6? (I decided to take the Knight now, as I felt that the Black Queen would come to a5 , the Knight landing on e4 with pressure on c3)
 7.... Qxf6
 8Bxc4 O-O
 9 O-O Bxc3 (Black evens up the Bishop for Knight score. I felt that I was ahead in development at this stage and I strove to exploit this.)
 10 bxc3 Nc6



(Diag38)

11. Bd3 Rd8 (Here I felt that b6 with a view to developing the bishop was better)
12. Qc2 h6 { 11 *e5 is almost equal; Ron* }
 (A slight weakening of the Kingside pawns?)
 {*Yet h6 is the best of a bad lot; Ron*}
13. Rfd1 cxd4
14. cxd4 Bd7
15. a3 Rac8
16. Qb2 (I felt I had to get the Queen out of the firing line as Nxd4 looked uncomfortable)
16. b6
- 17 Rac1 Ne7
18. Rxc8 Rxc8 (I was happy to exchange as I felt my pieces were better placed)
19. Ne5 Be8 (maybe Rc7 was better here for Black, tempting White to exchange a good Knight for a passive Bishop ?) { *I don't think so, white has too many options and wouldn't swap off; Ron*}
20. Rc1 Rxc1(??)
21. Qxc1 g6 (black has become tangled up. Now maybe Ba4 b5 and a6 may preserve Blacks Queenside pawns)
22. Qc7 Kg7(?)
23. Qxa7 Nd5
24. Bxg6 (Black obviously overlooked the pin when he moved the Knight)
24. Nc3
25. Bh5 Qf5 (This is the move I should have been looking out for, it threatens mate on b1 and will protect the b pawn)
26. Bg6 (A strange looking move but I couldn't find anything else)
 {*It is the best move; Ron*}
26. Qf6
27. Qb8 Nd1 (now I was starting to get nervous and tangled up myself)

- 28.f3 Qe7
 29.h3?? (A blunder. I forgot that my piece was now en prise)
 { *a term meaning that the piece can be taken for nothing: Ron* }
 29 . fxg6 (- +) (Here my heart sank as I felt up to this I was winning. In retrospect this “sac” opened up Blacks position)
 30.Ng4 (I decided not to pick off the potentially dangerous b pawn as this would allow Qxa3 and perhaps Qxe3. It also prepares my following move)
 30. h5
 31. Qe5 Kf7(??) { *Black could have played :31 Kg8 32 Nh6+ Kf8 33 Nxf8 Qxf8 which is about equal :Ron* }
 32. Nh6+ resigns (in light of Kf8 33 Qh8 Mate)
 1-0



(diag 39)

I'm sure Shane won't mind me saying, its not his best game ever.

It is replete with mistakes and several blunders on both sides. Misreading of the position and strategical mistakes abound. But it is fun.

It is equal for most of the opening with white having a slight advantage, black makes a mistake and Shane fails to capitalize on it. White then makes several weak moves giving the advantage to black. But he in turns blunders at the death and hands the game back to White.

If we were to evaluate the position in the above diagram knowing that White is going to play **Qe5+** I would still say it was equal.

Neither player is looking to the endgame but is trying to get checkmate now. If Black could only swap off the Queens and Bishop for Knight he would have the advantage in the endgame. But through panicking ,Perhaps through time pressure, or just the good tactical pressure Shane was putting him under, he made the final mistake and lost.

This is what chess is about at this level.

No one is going to get through a whole game without making any errors, and He who makes the last error loses.

In this modern day of technical wizardry it is easy to just put your game into an engine like Fritz and read off the best moves. But Honestly what did you learn.

By trying to work out the positions yourself you are reinforcing good practice. Someone telling you that **5....a6** is a great move in the Sicilian, is not the same as you **not** playing it and getting into trouble, then analysing your game and seeing that this would have saved you.

You'll never make that mistake again.

You will have got better!.

That is not to say that getting the best analysis of your game is not good. Of course it is and when you use Fritz, try to see why the move is better than you own (Assuming it is) what line was the computer suggesting and would you have been able to follow it in a game.

As some one once said "Im losing games, but I'm winning the analysis".

Lesson 10

Openings

And so we come to the openings.

Why have we left it to last you may well ask?

A Russian Grandmaster once said "If you learn openings you will know openings, but if you learn endings you will know Chess" and indeed he may be right. If you want to be a Grandmaster you will never get there unless you have a sound understanding of the endings, but for the club player under 1300 knowing your openings will get you a lot further. The chance to catch your opponent unawares with a well practiced opening is very real at this level. To get yourself into all kinds of cramped positions and lost games is also there, because you followed what you assumed was the best (most obvious) move. One of my students came to me after winning in a weekend competition. Someone had played a particular opening against him and for a couple of minutes he was stuck, until he remembered that I had shown him this very opening and had suggested what the continuation should be. He played the best move with confidence, getting himself into a better position and eventually won. Grandmaster games would never be that easy.

The scope of this book is such that I cannot go into every opening in minute detail, but just give you a flavour of some openings with the hope that one or two might interest you and get you to look further at a book specialising in it.

So what openings should you learn and why?

There are more books on Chess openings than any other sport in the world. Which should go some way in telling you of the complexity of what you're studying. But many of these are too complex for beginners and as I have said, you need to understand an opening, not just memorise the moves. Assuming your getting close to the 1000 mark, you will already have some opening knowledge. This may be gleaned purely from playing the same moves as White over and over again or getting the same moves played against you when Black. You may not even think you know any openings at all but you probably do. Openings are based on playing the best moves in a given situation and even if you don't know what its called you're probably playing something.

If you look at a large book on openings like the ECO or Batsford Modern Chess Openings, it may at first be bewildering in its complexity and diversity. So how do you pick one.? Ask yourself what style of player am I.? Do you like fast open games based on tactics or do you like to wait for your opponent to make mistakes building up slowly with complex positions.? Do you play aggressive or defensive chess.? If you don't know, don't worry about it. The very best players are neither one or the other; they are a combination of both. People who can switch their game, depending on what is played in front of them . If you are going to play in competitions then you need a répertoire.

In most weekends you will play three games as White and three games as Black , so you need to be able to play both sides of an opening. This is where understanding the opening is much better than just knowing the moves, if you play the same opening as black, then when your opponent makes a move that is weak or downright wrong you will be in a positon to see this and capitalise on it.

I normally recommend that beginners stick with **1.e4** as their main opening thrust,

but should know a **d4** opening as back up and to prepare them to be able to play against it.

So as **White** have one e4 opening (we will give you a few choices later in the chapter), you are going to play this three times against three different opponents in a single competition (so its unlikely you will get the exact same game each time). Then depending on your results, you might want to play your second prepared opening at the next competition until you find the one that works best for you. But just knowing one opening as e4 might not be enough you have to take into consideration what your opponent is going to play back at you. So you should have your favourite opening planned, but be ready for all the different things that he can play back at you like: **e5** or **c5**, **c6**, **e6** and even **d5**. These are the first moves in the **Sicilian**, **Caro-Khan**, **The French**, and the **Centre counter gambit**. I am not suggesting that you know these to the nth degree but at least know the first six to ten moves. Remember the point of the opening is to get you to a comfortable middle game where you have a slight advantage, either of time force or space. You are not trying to win it here (but you just might).

As **Black**, you need to be able to play against e4 or d4 as these are the two most common opening moves, but as Black, you in some ways get to dictate the opening, knowing that your opponent has his opening prepared (as you would have) it is up to you to disrupt him in some way. You can never guarantee that he doesn't know the opening you will throw at him and indeed the higher up you go the less chance of him being very badly prepared occurs. Some people go to extraordinary lengths to surprise their opponent, playing novelties like the Orangutang, or Latvian gambit but if your relying on tricks you'll never get better. When dealing with a complete novelty just play steady good chess and wait for your opportunity.

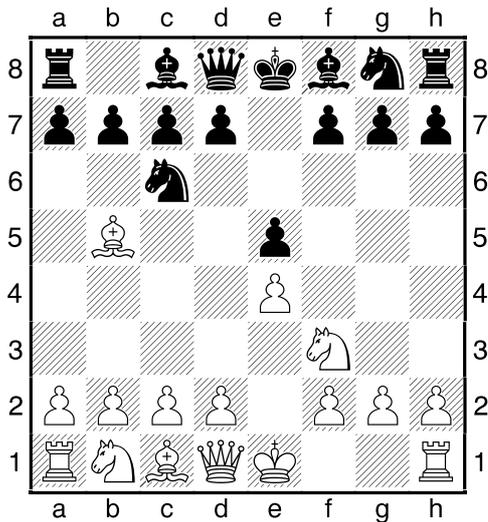
Playing Black against **e4**, you can play **e5** and wait to see what he has in store. (**Ruy Lopez**, **Giucoco piano**, **Scotch**, **Vienna**) or you can play **c5** (**The Sicilian**) the most common reply to **e5** in major competition. The only other reply I would recommend at this level is the **French**, because its easy to remember, is fairly safe and gives good opportunity to counter attack. In friendly games or practice games play both sides of the openings and look out for key moves.

Lets look at some very common openings and see what they are trying to achieve. By common I don't mean weak, just because a lot of people use an opening doesn't make it bad. In fact it's probably the opposite and that's why people are using it. In the Batsford Modern Chess Openings one opening stands out above all the rest

The Ruy Lopez. Despite being an old opening dating from the 1500's is still fresh and modern in its ability to surprise. The reason for its popularity is it does what it says on the tin. It embodies the maxims of chess opening theory. Development and attacking play on both sides, but conversely this leads also to blunders and tactical mistakes. It also leads to both players knowing a lot of moves, (when doing my research for this I looked at Fischers:" My 60 memorable games" and the first two I checked were exactly the same up to move 22).

THE RUY LOPEZ

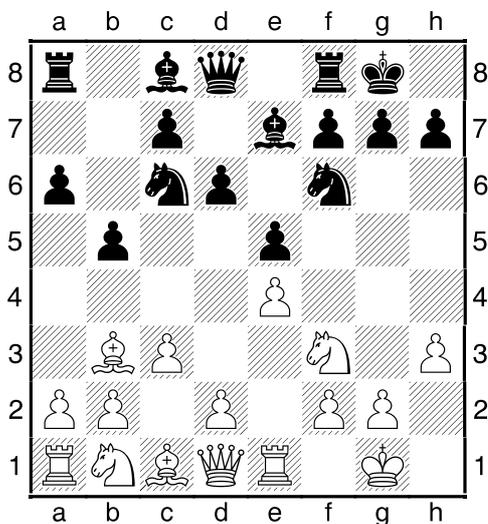
1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nf6
3. Bb5



(Diag.40)

As can be seen from the diagram, White's third move keeps with the idea of development and attack, he has the option of exchanging the Knight for Bishop or just disrupting the Queenside and getting to a good square **b3** with his Bishop.

3.a6
4. Ba4 Nf6
5. O-O Be7
6. Re1 b5
7. Bb3 d6
8. c3 O-O
9. h3



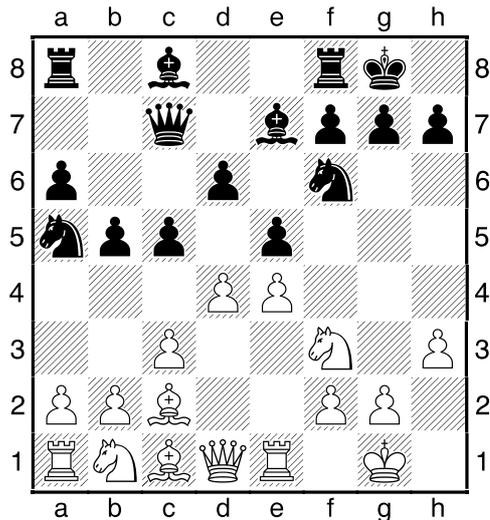
(Diag.41)

White's last two moves may seem strange, especially if you have been told not to make unnecessary Pawn moves, they don't appear to help in development and are not attacking anything. These are prophylactic moves, anticipating your opponent's moves before he makes them. Black would like to swap off that well placed Bishop for his Knight and also bring down his other Knight to **g4**, or his Bishop to **g4** at some stage. White's moves ease these problems before they start.

9. Na5

10.Bc2 c5

11.d4 Qc7



(Diag.42) we need not go any further in the opening to explain what's happening

As you can see Black is expanding on the Queenside and White is nearly ready to attack the Kingside. Both players have targets, strategies and upcoming tactical flurries will ensue. This, remember, is only one variation of the well known opening. After **3.Bb5**, neither player is compelled to play the next set of moves and as white you have to look out for other moves such as **3...Bc5**. **3...d6**. **3...g6** and even if they play **3...a6** they may play **4...b5** **4...Be7** **4...Nf6**. Of course you are not obliged to move your Bishop away and could play **4 Bxc6** then pick up that Pawn on **e5** but that may be risky.

But in practice games you need to try everything, for only by making mistakes do you learn.

Back in the chapter when we looked at Scholars mate, we saw that after **1.e4** if we wanted to move the Bishop, there were really only two squares that were any good - **Bb5** and the other was **Bc4** so there must be an opening using that. There is and it's :

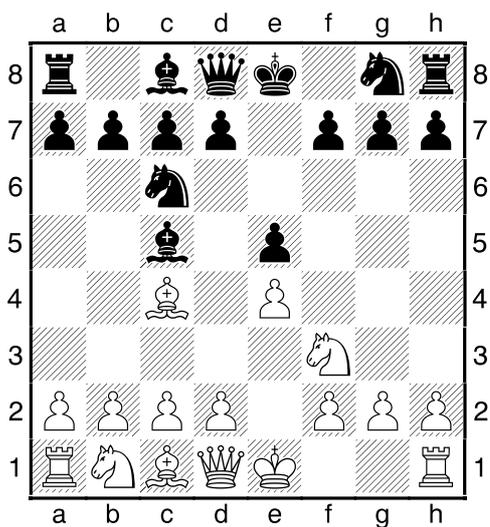
The Giuoco Piano or Italian game. **Giuoco piano** means literally the quiet game in Italian. But this doesn't have to be quiet in any real sense of the word. It was used to mean quiet as opposed to something like the **Kings Gambit**.

It can lead to closed games or open and tactical games depending on the white players

temperament.

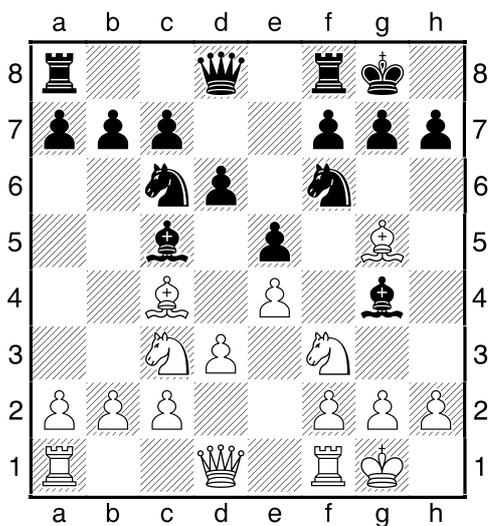
The Giuoco Piano

- 1.e4 e5
- 2.Nf3 Nc6
- 3.Bc4 Bc5



(Diag.43) As you can see both sides are attacking the centre, both sides are developing and attacking weak squares (f2,f7). What happens next is about who is the most aggressive. White could play :

- 4Nc3 Nf6
- 5d3 D6
- 6Bg5 Bg4
- 7O-O O-O



(Diag.44) This is the Pianissimo (the very Quiet game) and is not a very exciting

game. Yes both players have developed all their pieces, they have castled, but there is nowhere to attack. Either side may struggle to get going. I'm sure you looked at **8.Nd5** but Black can play **8...Nd4** and after the exchanges and backward moves, its equal again.

On the positive side, it's fairly safe, you won't get killed early and you can wait it out until Black (or White) makes a mistake.

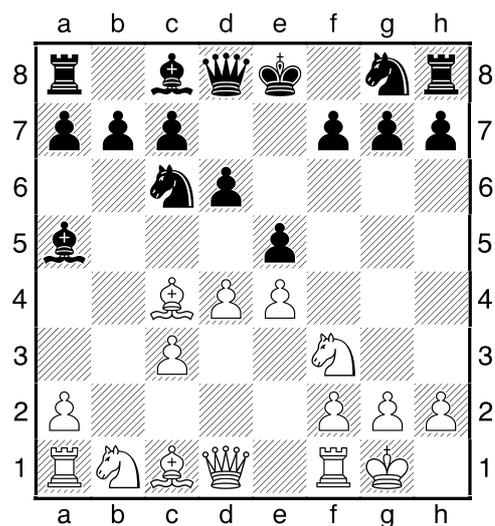
Or you could try something like the **Evan's gambit**.

4 b4. This gambit trades off the **c** Pawn for a central attack and quick development.

It can go like this:

Evan's gambit.

- 1 e4 e5
- 2 Nf3 Nc6
- 3 Bc4 Bc5
- 4 b4 Bxb4
- 5 c3 Ba5
- 6 O-O d6
- 7d4

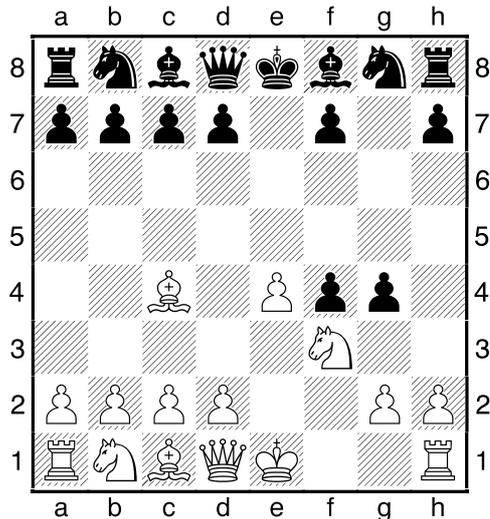


(Diag.45) Which leads to a more open game and attacking chances for both sides. White's space advantage is compensation for the pawn.

Another opening that white should have in his repertoire if only for it's combative nature is the **kings Gambit**. It is not now played in top competition as much as some the others but there was a time it was the most played opening of all, when gambits were all the rage and gentlemen never refused a gambit. Knowing the Kings gambit will give you an understanding of aggressive no holds barred chess where sacrifices abound. From this opening it is only a short step to the Vienna or the Scotch .

The kings gambit (accepted)

1. e4 e5
2. f4 exf4
3. Nf3 g4
4. Bc4 g5



(Diag.46) As you can see from the above position, white has given up a Pawn but has developed two pieces. Black is attacking in the hope of making White go backwards losing tempo and giving black a chance to catch up in development.

(I would not recommend this type of play in long serious games where rating points are at stake, but in rapid play why not?.)

5 Bxf7+ Kxf7

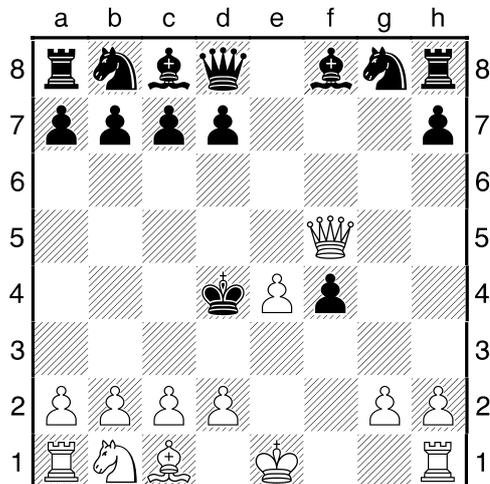
6 Ne5+ Ke6

7 Qg4+ Kxe5

8 Qf5+ Kd4??

(diag.47)

And with white to move what would you play?

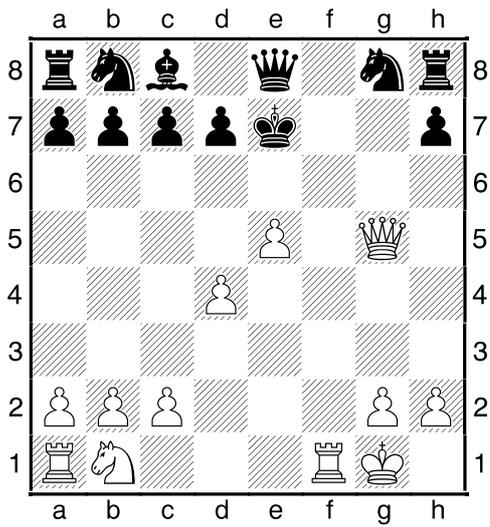


a b c d e f g h

8.Qd5#

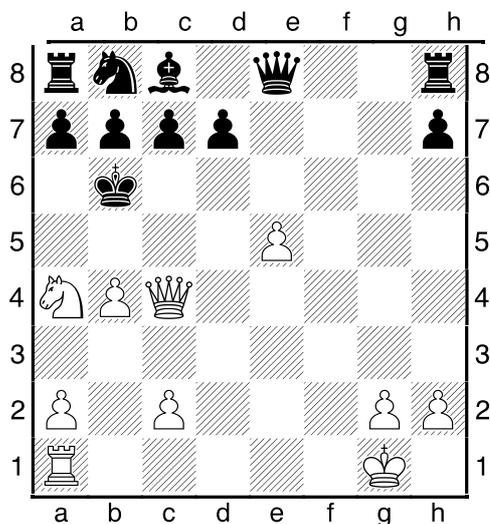
of course black could prolong the agony by playing

8..... Kd6
 9.d4 Bg7
 10. Bxf4+ Ke7
 11. Bg5+ Bf6
 12.e5 bxc5
 13.Qxc5+ Ke8
 14.Qh5+ Ke7
 15.O-O Qe8
 16Qg5+



(diag 48)

16 Ke6
 17 Rf6+ Nxf6
 18 Qxf6+ Kd5
 19Nc3+ Kxd4
 20Qf4+ Kc5
 21b4+ Kc6
 22Qc4 Kb6
 23.Na4#



(diag 49)

At last the King can retire.

This variation is called, fittingly “**Chase the King**” What's interesting about this opening is that White never stops for breath. He attacks from the off and continues on to the end, sacrificing pieces at will to get the King to go where he wants. It is an example of very tactical play from white, with no long term goals, except to mate. The down side of this type of play, is that if you miss calculate you're in big trouble. The up side of this attack is that if you have gone through this opening several times and can see what was happening all the time, then when you play it at speed, your opponent will have to do a lot of calculating, tactically working out many variations for each move.

I am not really suggesting that you memorise all 23 moves in this attack, but rather you see some of the themes of it. The Bishop sacrifice for instance, is used in several openings, the Knight check, opening up lines for the Queen to get out, is another.

Try to see how all of the white pieces were used to either open lines, or get the Black King to go where white wanted him to go.

Now for an opening using **1.d4** as your starting point.

As I have said before I would not recommend **1.d4** for anyone under a 1000 rating. The main reason being; it is better to understand the key areas of time, force and space, development and tactics, which are more readily noticed in the **e4** openings, before going onto Queenside play, which can be more about strategical advantages.

But this is not written in stone, lots of things have to be considered. I believe that if you're playing competitions, then you will need to know at least one **d4** opening if only to know how to play against it as Black. For anyone over a 1000 knowing some **d4** openings will become essential to your improvement.

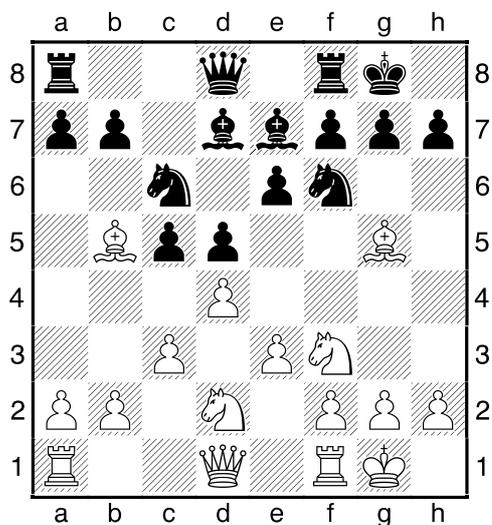
Even if you never play them you should have a basic knowledge of their ideas and themes.

The Queens openings strike at the centre but this time attacking the **e4** square. A lot of times the central attack is delayed until white has developed his pieces or cramped blacks position enough.

The opening we will look at first is the **Torre**, it is classed under the label “**Bg5 attack**” and there are several ways to reach this or similar positions with the same theme in mind.

The Torre Attack

1. **d4 d5**
2. **.Nf3 Nf6**
3. **Bg5 e6**
4. **e3 Be7**
5. **c3 c5**
6. **Nbd2 Nc6**
7. **Bb5 O-O**
8. **O-O Bd7**



(diag 50)

With good attacking chances for both sides.

A lot of times white will delay his castling to see where Black has gone and then castle long. Usually with **Bd3** being played. This system is versatile and has the added bonus of being easy to remember without much chance of anything going too badly wrong in the opening. This should give you a chance to get into the middle game with a bit of confidence.

Probably more aggressive and certainly more widely used is our next Queenside

opening the **Queens Gambit**.

As with all Gambits one player sacrifices a Pawn for better, or faster development. In this instance white pushes his **c** Pawn on move two, allowing Black to capture it. Remember we are trying to learn openings here, so one piece of advice I would encourage you with is; if someone offers you a gambit, the best way to refute it is to take the Pawn and make them prove the opening is sound.

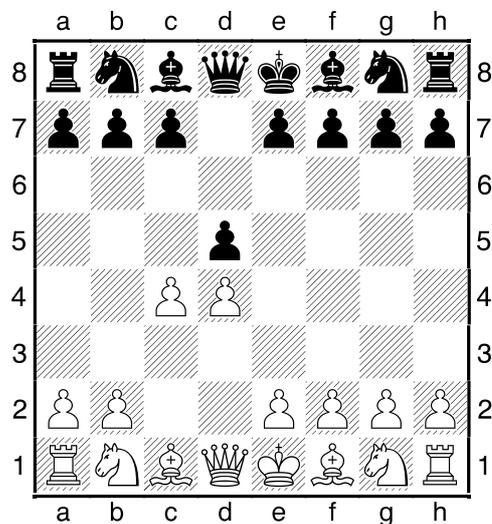
When you have more experience of playing these opening many times you will have a better idea of when to accept and when to refuse. On the positive side for black, you are a Pawn up.

Lets see what White is up to

The Queens Gambit Accepted

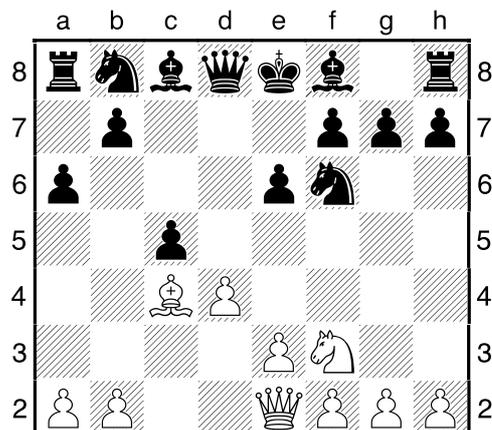
1d4 d5

2c4



(diag 51)

..... **dxc4**
 3.Nf3 Nf6
 4.e3 e6
 5.Bxc4 c5
 6.O-O a6
 7.Qe2





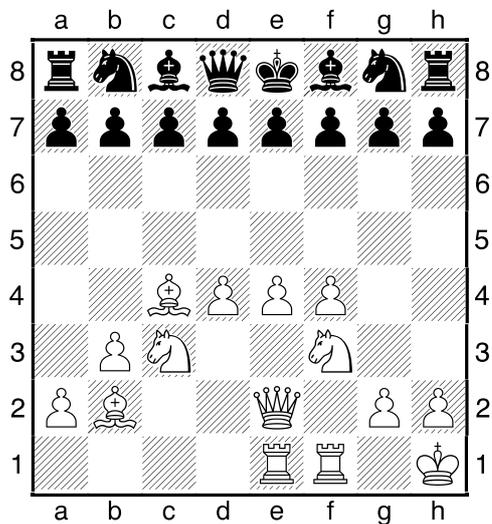
(diag 52)

what happened so far?

For Black's part he has gotten a Pawn, developed his Knight and made another attack on the centre with his c Pawn. White has Castled, developed his Knight and Bishop, recovered his Pawn, got his Queen out of danger and onto a good square indirectly attacking the King.

Both Black and White have good attacking chances.

Yet in practice it is white who normally comes out in front with this opening. The next diag is a indication of white's formation idea behind this opening



(diag 53)

This is of course imaginary, but I show it to you to give an indication of what you could be aiming for. Note the alignment of the pieces. Pawns controlling squares in the centre Knights controlling squares in the centre and getting ready to leap into action, Bishops shooting through the centre and aiming at weak squares. For you to get this position your opponent would have to be very obliging but it can happen and will only happen if you try for it.

Black openings:

The difference with the black pieces is that you are a tempo behind and initially must wait and see what your opponent is planning. But you don't have to go along with his plans! Far from it you can dictate what happens in the opening as much, If not more than white. It's a matter of attitude. A lot of beginners fear being Black because of whites initial onslaught. But lets look at it differently. When white declares his hand by playing either **e4** or **d4** (or indeed any other move) he tells you (Black) what he is

trying to do. If you think you know the opening better than he does then you can play along with him until he makes a mistake (goes out of book) or you can disrupt him from the start by playing a variation that you think he may not know. Or you can immediately take the opening into one that you know well.

Lets look at some options. The first thing to know is the opening from white's perspective. So that if he plays any of the openings we have covered (the most common) then we will know how to meet it. This is of course assuming that you haven't just learnt this one variation from me. My job is not to show you every variation possible, but to indicate what is out there for you to look at. No one should rely on one book to get them through the very difficult world of chess. Your own notation and analysis, plus this book and others on openings that you like, is the key. Again the first thing you will come across is (as Black) **1.e4**.

Now you have an almost empty board but white has made his first foray into your territory. How you deal with it will determine how the game goes. Psychology plays an important part in chess openings. How you feel about an opening will determine it's use and your success with it. Obviously you can play the black side of any of the opening we have discussed as white. All are playable and may meet with success indeed all should be played at one time or another, just to get you used to what black could do. But you have alternatives and we are going to look at some of them . I don't mean to suggest that these are the best only that they are options that you should have at your disposal. The more knowledge you have, the more understanding you will have, the more enjoyment you will get out of the game, because you are getting a better game of it.

Our first sojourn into the murky world of black is **1...c5**

The Sicilians

1e4 c5

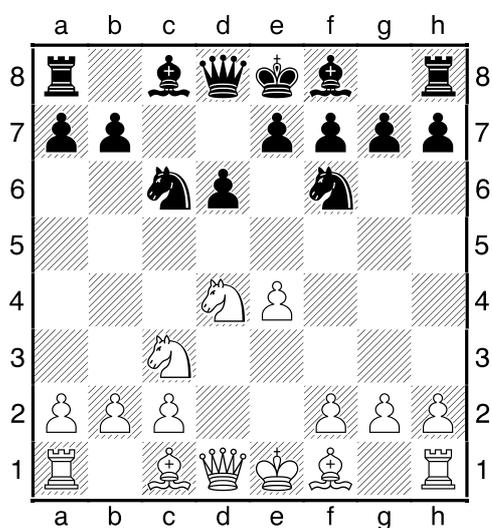
Why on earth would you play **c5**? What does it do that **e5** doesn't. How can you get an advantage from this flank attack.?

Nearly every beginner's book, mine included, will tell you that you must control and attack the centre to have any chance of a lasting advantage into the middle game.

With **1.... C5** we attack the centre square **d4** with the idea of giving up the **c** Pawn for a **d** Pawn, thereby weakening the **d** file for White. So that we can attack it and have an avenue to the white King. The Sicilian's are possibly the most analysed openings in the whole Batsford Modern chess Openings book. In the majors competition it is easily the most played opening for Black. Its popularity is based on a high percentage of wins for the second player. Its disruptive nature and winning chances make it a must for any aggressive players out there. If anything the fact that it is so well analysed may make it difficult as a surprise weapon, but on the other hand it has so many variations that the chances of anyone at your level knowing all the variations is next to nil. Anyway it is so good a weapon that just knowing the Classical and the Dragon may possibly be enough to see you through for quite a while.

The Sicilian (classical)

1.e4 c5
2.Nf3 d6
3.d4 cxd4
4.Nxd4 Nf6
5.Nc3 Nc6



(diag.54)

This is called the Classical because black develops his Knights in a classical fashion as opposed to other lines where he plays 5...g7 Dragon 5...a6 Najdorf 5...e6 Scheveningen.

For White the next move will determine what variation he wants to play. The most common are

6. Bg5 6.Bc4 6.Be2 6.g3 6.f3 6.f4.

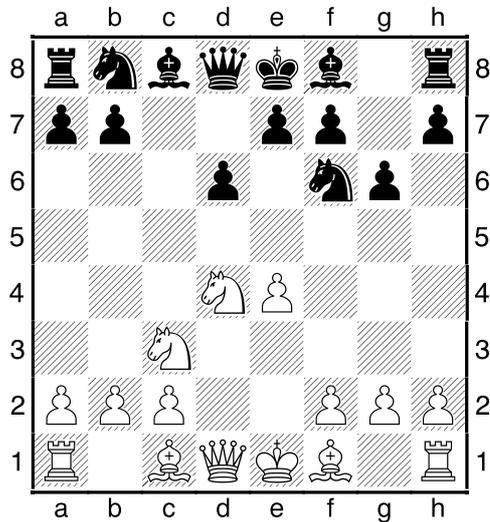
All have their adherents and champions.

But the great joy of the Sicilian is that you don't have to be afraid of any of them, if you play steadily and wait for your chance to counter attack it is difficult for white to get at you. The freedom to transpose from one line to another is another key factor in playing the Sicilians. It is quite easy to move into the dragon against most of the above moves. Or your Queen can go to **b6** with pressure along the diagonal and on **b2**. The Bishop can go to **d7** or **b7** again building up pressure.

The Dragon

1.e4 c5

2.Nf3 d6
 3.d4 cxd4
 4.Nxd4 Nf6
 5.Nc3 g6



(diag.55)

One of the main continuations is

6.Be2 Bg7

7.Be3 Nc6

With both sides developing apace, both are able to castle and have attacking opportunities. This is a great opening not just for Black but it gives white many chances too and that's the fun of the game.

Remember there is no one opening that is so superior either as white or black that it cannot be defended against.

The ideas behind all good openings is development and attacking chances. Some hyper-modern openings depend on waiting longer than others before attacking but they all, in the end, have to start going after the king or run into inertia.

As we go further in the book and look at positions my evaluations may be "good for both sides", or "about equal chances". This may seem strange to a beginner who might think "Well what's the point of learning this if I'm not getting an advantage?" Some times just getting even is as good as it gets. But sometimes your understanding of the opening is improved and you know why it is equal. Which means you can notice when it's not equal and you have an advantage.

Let's continue and look at The French.

The French

The opening moves of the French may at first seem a little strange.

Black concedes space delaying his attack until he sees what White is doing. If you play the the classical French you must be prepared to give yourself cramped positons and hide for awhile. Though some variations like our first, the Mc'Cutchins take counter-attacking seriously.

The Mc'Cutchins

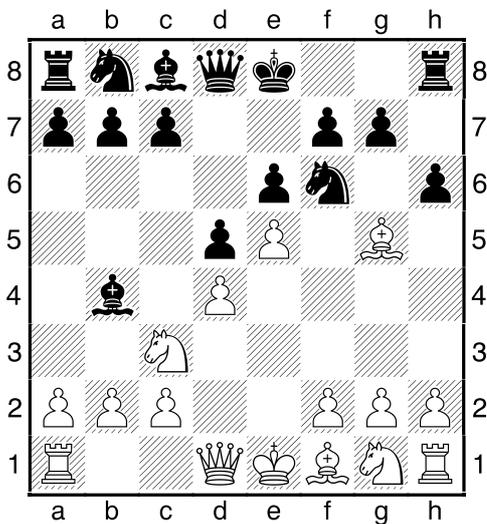
1.e4 e6

2.d4 d5

3.Nc3 Nf6

4.Bg5 Bb4

5.e5 h6



(diag.56)

Black's last move is one of calm and coolness. He is saying "go ahead I don't mind opening up the kingside. My attack will work ."

For after;

6.exf6 Bxc3+

7.bxc3 hxg5

8.fxg7 Rg8

9Qf4 Qf6

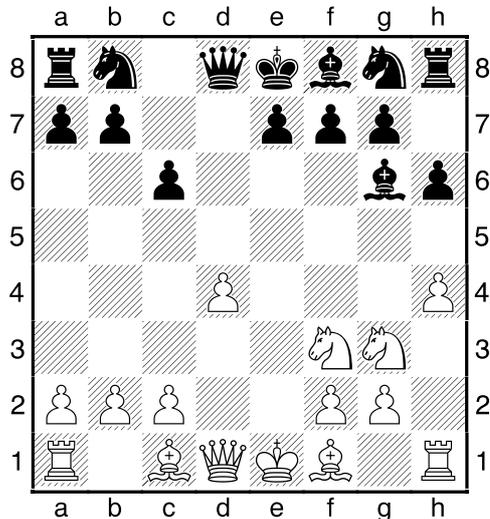
Black has no problems. He can castle Queenside and continue his attack Kingside. Generally though White would play

6.Bd2 or 6.Be3 and Black can still take the Knight on **c3** with the idea of getting his own Knight onto **e4**.

The **Caro Khan** is another opening that attacks the centre slightly differently. Black is hoping to get a space advantage in the middle game. It starts.:

Caro Khan

- 1.e4 c6
- 2.d4 d5
- 3.Nc3 dxe4
- 4.Nxe4 Bf5
- 5.Ng3 Bg6
- 6.h4 h6
- 7.Nf3



(diag.57) This is only one variation, there are lots of different ways for Black to play this opening. Here white is trying to swap off the active black Bishop gaining time and space. But Caro Khan players generally don't mind this kind of play as they don't feel there is any rush. As long as they watch out for some traps they will get a good middle game that leads to a better strategical ending.

The Nimzo-Indian.

Is not really an Indian at all, in that it doesn't fianchetto the Bishop. But it is a opening that black players who want to play for a win should know.

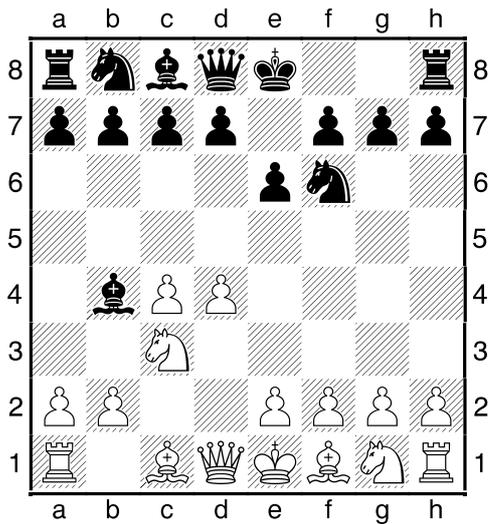
It is an attacking aggressive opening against **d4** that at the least aims to get weaknesses in the white camp that have a strategical point but it is also a very tactical weapon and may suit a tactical player.

The Nimzo-Indian.

1.d4 Nf6

2.c4 e6

3.Nc3 Bb4



(diag 58)

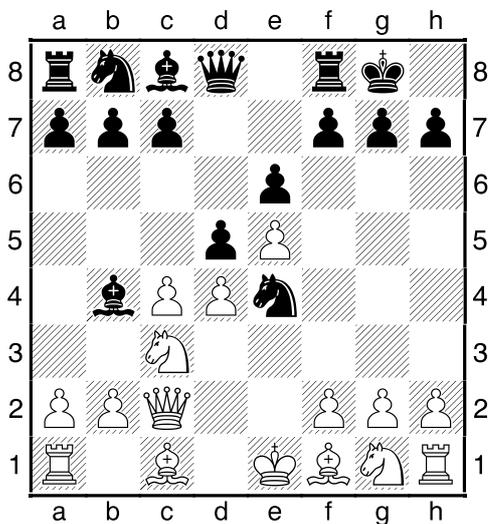
White must play carefully here.

Black's first idea is simply to double up the **c** pawns by taking the Knight on **c3**. Doubled pawns are considered a weakness as I've said before. The second threat is that Knight coming to **e4**.

4.Qc2 O-O

5. e4 d5

6. e5 Ne4



(diag.59)

White's most common moves next are either **a3** or **Bd3**.

The centre is about to get ripped apart, but that does not lead to Black having it all his own way. White has many moves at his disposal after the initial exchanges. But I prefer Black's position, with the idea of **c5**, **Qa5** or **f6**, **Qxf6**.

Good opening play is the mainstay of aspiring chess greats.

Modern masters like GM Alexander Barburin are well known for their knowledge of opening theory and this makes it difficult for people to adequately prepare to play them. You will never surprise them in the opening and can only hope to get an advantage in the middle or endgame. I am not suggesting that you have to know your openings that well. What I am suggesting is, that you know some openings well enough to make you comfortable playing them.

A happy chess player is a better chess player.

The Stress of competition play cannot be underestimated and the fear that you are being outplayed from the start will permeate into your middle game, making you doubt your own abilities, your strategies and tactics.

But knowing that your opening is sound will go along way to getting you playing your best chess.

The openings in this chapter are only a sample of what's available to you. I would suggest that you look at the **Scotch**, the **Vienna**. The **Queens gambit**. Also for people who like to wait and see, the **Closed Sicilian**, The **Closed French**. And **kings Indian**. As you progress along your chess path you may discard some, or indeed all of these, finding new ones that suit you better. This is good, for every chess player is an individual and must ultimately find his or her own way.

Lesson 11

Tricks and Traps

What's the point of learning tricks and traps in the opening?

Well for one thing, if you know they're there it won't come as a big surprise when your opponent tries to pull one over on you. Another reason for learning them is that they show potential weak spots in the opening that you may exploit. Not necessarily going straight for the trap, but variations of them. There is a certain enjoyment gained from seeing one of your pet traps working.

I doubt these are ever tried at Grandmaster level but we're not at Grandmaster level so we don't care.

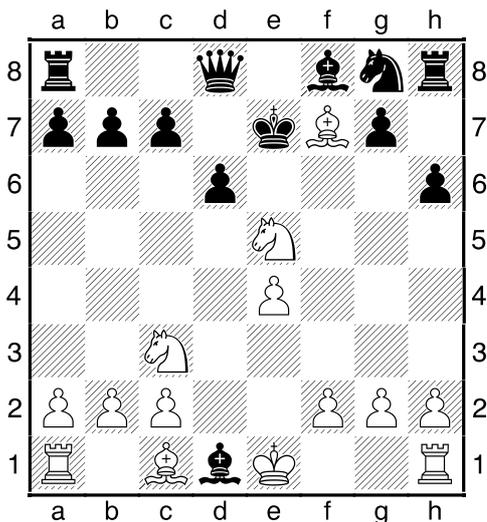
The best way to see these is to set up a board and follow each move.

Legal's mate.

Perhaps the most famous of our traps and variations of it crop up in all sorts of openings.

- 1.e4 e5
- 2.Nf3 Nf6
- 3.Bc4 h6
- 4.d4 d6
- 5.Nc3 Bg4
- 6.dxe5 Nxe5
- 7.Nxe5! Bxd1
- 8.Bxf7+ Ke7

Black plays this thinking you can't possibly take back and he greedily scoops up your Queen



(diag 60)

9. Nd5#

Trap in the;

Ruy Lopez

1.e4 e5

2.Nf3 Nc6

3.Bb5 Bc5

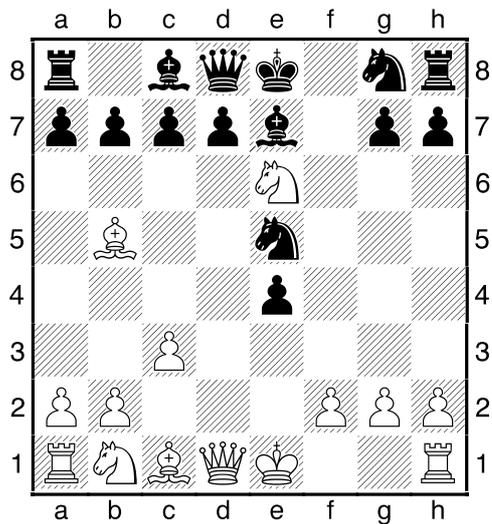
4.c3 f5 The reasoning behind this move is to break open the middle from the side

5.d4 fxe4

6.Ng5 Be7

7.dxe5 Nxe5

8.Ne6



(diag 61)

And its good-bye to the Queen.

Another trap in;

The Ruy Lopez

1.e4 e5

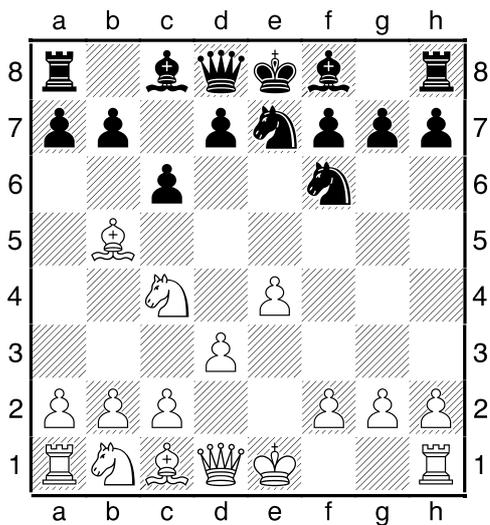
2.Nf3 Nc6

3.Bb5 Nf6

4.d3 Ne7

5.Nxe5 c6

6.Nc4



(diag 62)

6..cxb5 7.Nd6#

Smothered mate.

You should always be wary of your opponent gifting you a piece. Don't assume they have just made a mistake always be prepared for a trap.

The Oh My God

(supposedly what the first person to have this used against them said)

1.e4 e5

2.Nf3 Nc6

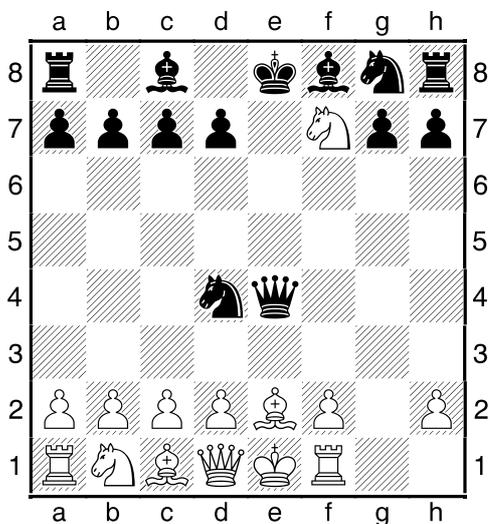
3.Bc4 Nd4 (that Knight was doing a job, protecting the e Pawn)

4.Nxe5 Qg5 (Black moves from the potential fork on f7 to another one)

5.Nxf7 Qxg2

6.Rf1 Qxe4+

7.Be2



(diag 63)

.7..... Nf3#

Another smothered mate.

The Kings gambit

1.e4 e5

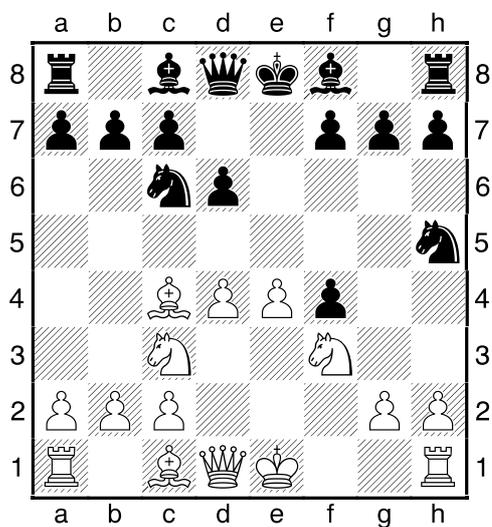
2.f4 exf

3.Nf3 d6

4.Bc4 Nc6

5.d4 Nf6

6.Nc3 Nh5 Black starts a promising attack



(diag 64)

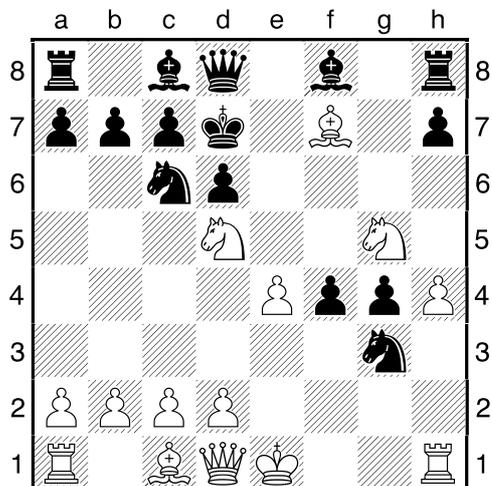
7.g3 g5

8.h4 g4

9.Ng5 Nxf3

10.Bxf7 Ke7

11.Nd5+ Kd7



a b c d e f g h

(diag 65)

We have seen this type of position before so the next moves should come naturally.

12.Qxg4 Nf5

13.Qxf5#

Reminiscent of Legals mate.

The Vienna gambit

(is a little like the kings gambit)

1.e4 e5

2.Nc3 Nf6

3.f4 exf4

4.e5! This always comes as a surprise. Now what to do?. It goes against the natural instinct to bring the knight back home.

4..... Qe7

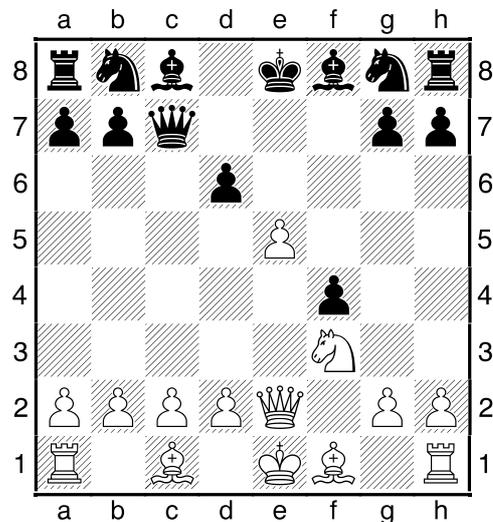
5.Qe2 now the Knight has no choice

5..... Ng8

6.Nf3 d6

7.Nd5 Qd7 to protect the c7 square

8.Nxc7+! Qxc7



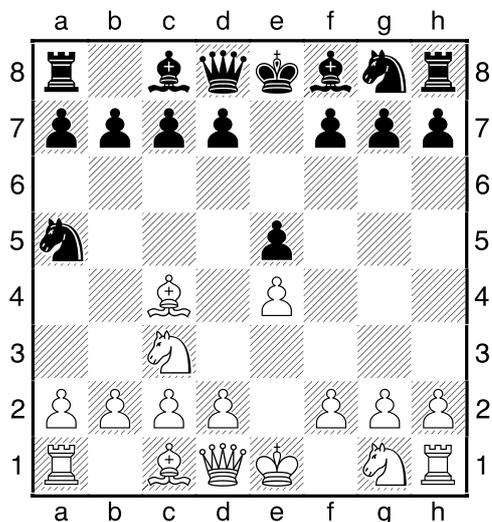
(diag 66)

9.exd6+

And good-bye to the Queen.

The Vienna game

- 1.e4 e5
- 2.Nc3 Nc6
- 3.Bc4 Na5? (This is not a great idea)



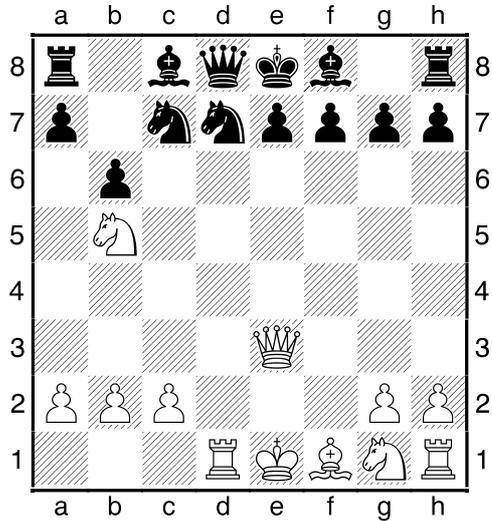
(diag 67)

- 4.Bxf7+ Kxf7
- 5.Qh5+ g6
- 6.Qxe5 Bg7 (or he loses the Rook)
- 7.Qxa5 b6?
- 8.Qd5+ Ke8
- 9.Qxa8 (and you emerge a Rook ahead)

Now for some **d4** openings

The Blackmar -Deimar

- 1.d4 d5
- 2.e4 dxe4 (The point of this opening is to disrupt your opponents plans from the start)
- 3.Nc3 Nf6
- 4.f3 exf3
- 5.Qxf3 Qxd4
- 6.Nb5 Qd8 (this is played to stop White getting that c7 pawn)
- 7.Bf4 Na6
- 8.Rd1 Nd7
- 9.Qe3 b6
- 10Bxc7 Nxc7



(diag 68)

11.Nd6#

Another smothered mate.

Notice how the same themes keep getting repeated in different openings and attacking plans.

Here's another with the same opening.

Blackmar-Deimar

1.d4 d5

2.e4 exd4

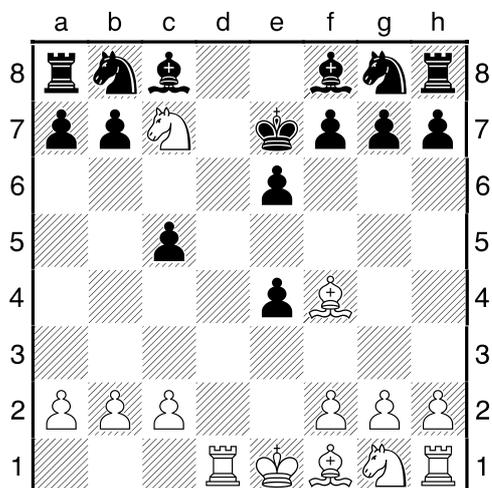
3.Nc3 c5

4.Bf4 Qxd4

5.Nd5 Qxd1+

6.Rxd1 e6

7.Nc7 Ke7



a b c d e f g h

(diag 69)

And White has numerous ways to win.

He can simply just take the Rook, he could use his Bishop to check the King get the Black Bishop then the Pawn on g7 then the other Rook.

Spoilt for choice.

The next type of “Trick” happens regularly in the Queens Gambit opening so you should look out for it.

Queens Gambit Declined

1.d4 d5

2.c4 e6

3.Nc3 Nf6

4.Bg5 Nbd7

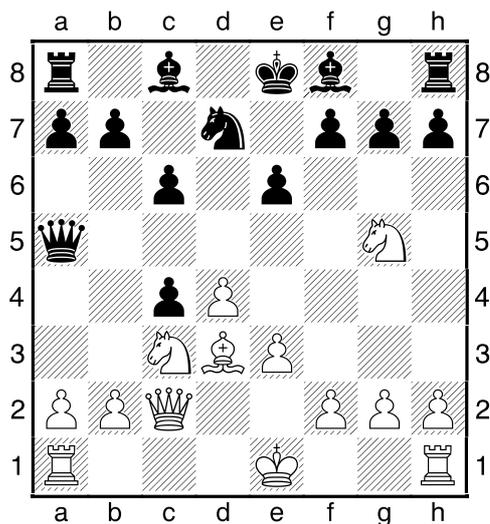
5.e3 c6

6.Nf3 Qa5 (The real start of the attack)

7.Bd3 Ne4 (forcing white to defend again)

8.Qc2 Nxc3

9.Nxc3 dxc4!



(Diag 70)

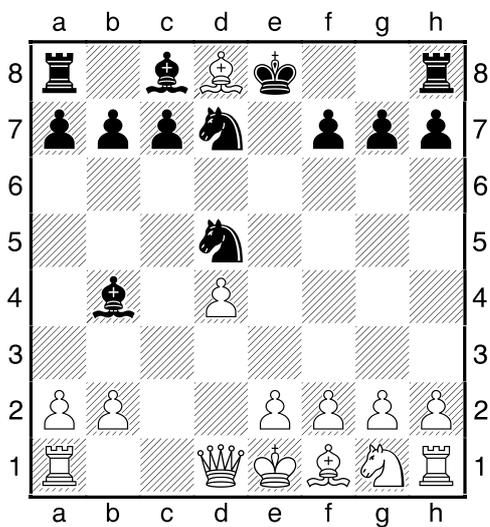
And now no matter what White moves he loses a piece.

Sometimes that's all that is needed to win, getting one piece ahead. Of course it's not

won yet, you still have to play on.
 Lets look at another;

Queens Gambit Declined

- 1.d4 d5
- 2.c4 e6
- 3.Nc3 Nf6
- 4.Bg4 Nbd7 (so far so good , but now white sees the chance to get a pawn and perhaps more)
- 5.cxd5 exd5
- 6.Nxd5 Nxd5 (I keep saying beware Trojan horses)
- 7.Bxd8 Bb4+



(diag 71)

- 8.Qd2 Bxd2+
- 9.Kxd2 Kxd8

Now the dust has cleared and we count up our losses. Suddenly black is a Bishop ahead.

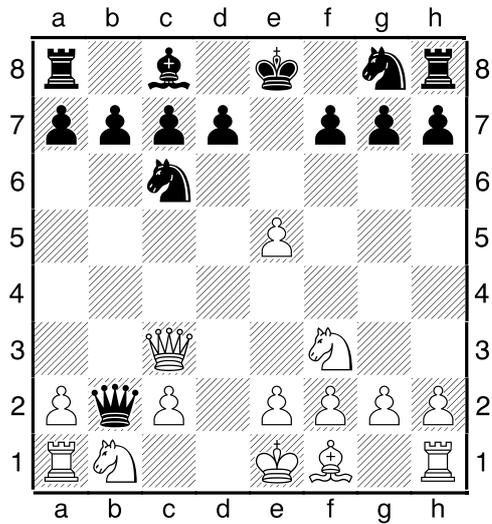
Sometimes not doing the obvious and actually thinking through each move can be a great benefit. So it is with our next trap Black gambits a Pawn and White struggles to keep it only to find he has walked into something nasty.

The Englund gambit

- 1.d4 e5
- 2.dxe5 Nc6
- 3.Nf3 Qe7
- 4.Bf4 Qb4+ (This comes as a nasty surprise, a check and attacking the Bishop)
- 5.Bd2 Qxb2
- 6.Bc3 Bb4 (A sneaky pin. Whites next move seems like the best idea)

7.Qd2 Bxc3

8.Qxc3 (White is hoping to trade off Queens then he won't be so bad)



(diag 72)

8.... Qc1#

6.Nc3 (of course White could have played . But then Black can play)

..... N b4

7. Rb1 Nxc2+

8.Qxc2 Qxc2

And Black is a Queen up.

Lest we forget people who play other openings.

The Caro Khan

1.e4 c6

2.d4 d5

3.Nc3 dx4

4.Nxe4 Nf6

5.Qd3 e5

6.dxe5 (White has to have nerves of steel, or be willing to swap Queens)

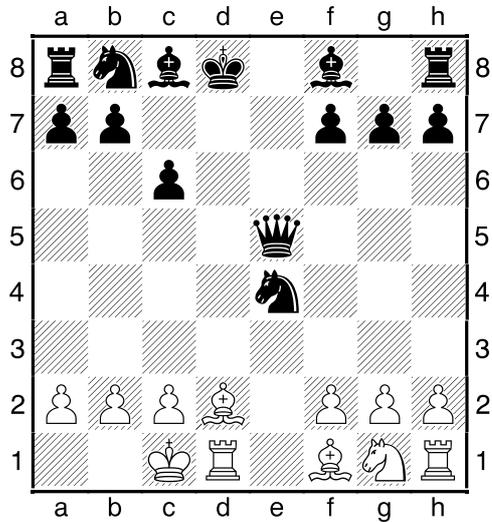
.... Qa5+

7.Bd2 Qxe5

8.O-O-O (looks like white is trying to hide)

..... Nxe4

9.Qd8+ Kxd8



(diag 73)

10.Bg5#

a wonderful use of space and discovered checkmate.

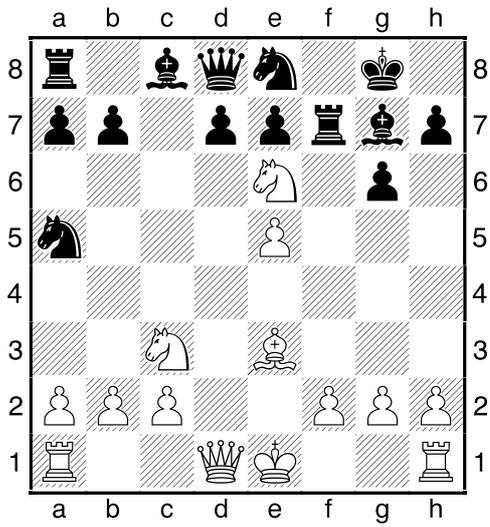
Putting the Bishop on a square attacked by two of your enemies pieces and knowing that it is invulnerable.

The Sicilian

(accelerated Dragon)

The idea of the accelerated Dragon is that it gives black an immediate, attack wasting no time in getting going. But you still have to watch your opponents moves.

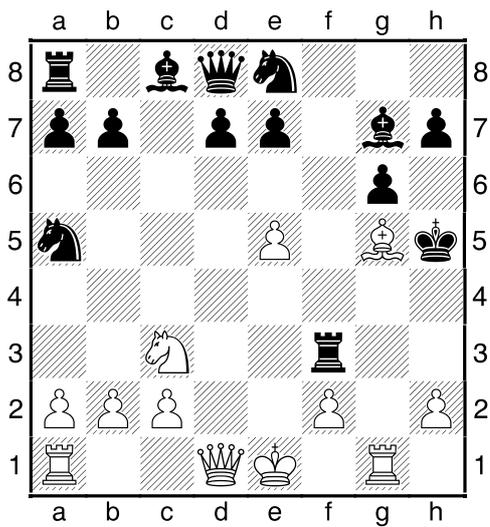
1.e5 c5
2.Nf3 Nc6
3.d4 cxd
4.Nxd4 g6
Nc3 Bg7
6.Be3 Nf6
7.Bc4 O-O
8.Bb3 Na5
9.e5 Ne8
10.Bxf7+ Rxf7
11.Ne6



(diag 74)

of course if black spots this on move ten and tries to save his queen by taking with his King, the next sequence of moves are forced like so:

- 10. Bxf7 Kxf7
- 11. Ne6 Kxe6
- 12. Qd5+ Kf5
- 13. g4+ Kxg4
- 14. Rg1 Kh4
- 15. Bg5+ Kh5
- 16. Qd1+ Rf3



(diag 75)

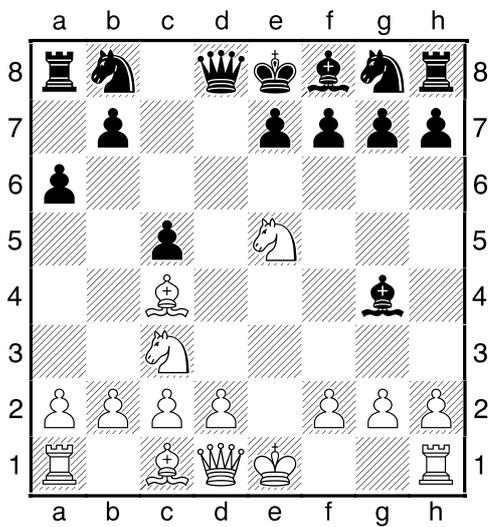
17. Qxf3#

a good example of attacking before your ready and what can happen.

Yet sometimes you can leave it to late. Playing the opening on automatic .
Like this next **Sicilian**

- 1.e4 c5
- 2.Nf3 d6
- 3.Bc4 Bg4
- 4.Nc3 a6
- 5.e5 dxe5

6.Nxe5 (This position should give you pause, did you opponent just make a mistake ?)



(diag 76)

6.....Bxd1

7.Bxf7# (Guess not!)

This is not really good play by white just bad play from black.

But these are things that your opponent at around 1000 will do, so its worth your while knowing there are positional traps in each of the openings that you can try to exploit.

If you like this sort of thing, there are a few good books about blunders and quick victories on the market that you should get.

Lesson 12

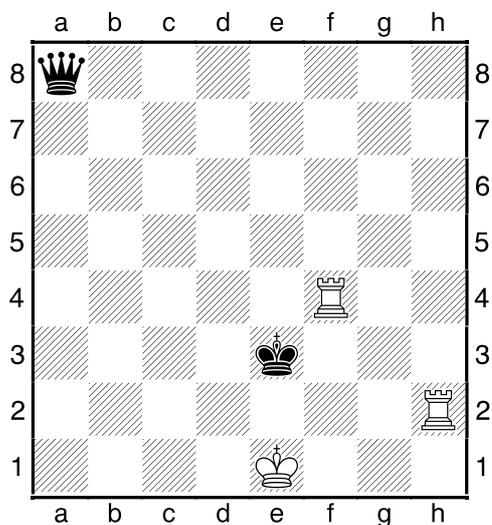
Problem solving

The reason behind doing problem solving, beside the sheer fun of it, is that it encourages our brain to see and remember positions or ideas that will occur in actual chess games. By repeating the positions here, we don't have to spend time analysing useless combinations that end nowhere in a game. You will instinctively feel that there is, or should be a winning combination in front of you.

It might be something as simple as gaining that extra tempo, or extra piece in the endgame. Or it might be that there is a checkmate to be found. If you're Approaching these problems for the first time they may seem very hard, but really they're not. In every problem you should look for key, forcing moves. A forcing move is one where your opponent has no choice but to do something. The simplest type would be check. Your opponent is forced to get out of check before he can do anything else. So look for the forcing moves. Next look at all the squares that the opponents King can move to. This generally will be a good indicator of weaknesses. Anticipate your opponents moves, look for the best moves he can make and always assume your opponent will make the best move. In a game this is vital, just because he has made a terrible move don't expect him to make another one.

The following problems deal with many of the things that you have learnt up to now, such as pins forks skewers, space checkmate positions and won games. So several problems will not end in checkmate but a winning position. You would still have to fight on and win, but this would be an easy task provided you played normally (without mistakes). To train your brain don't move the piece around, figure out each problem in your head then when you are sure, make your moves.

I will explain a little about each problem as we go along. To point you in the right direction, hopefully.

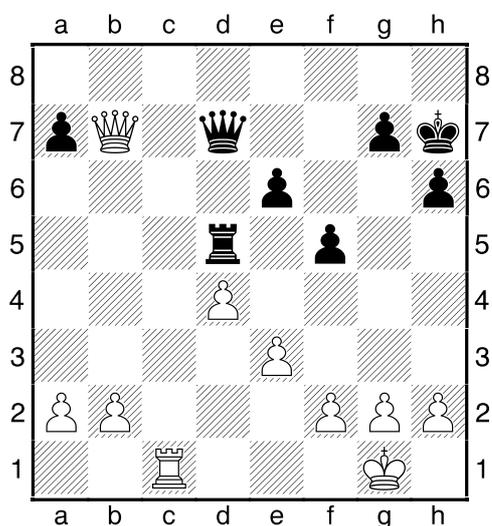


(diag 77)

Our first problem above deals with **skewers**. If it was black to move it would be all over as I'm sure you can see **1...Q a1#**. But it is white to move and he, using a skewer will get a serious advantage. Remember first see the obvious, then look for the alternatives before you move.

The answer is **1.Ra4 Qxa4 2.Rh3+ K moves 3. Rxa4** with a won game as per lesson one. But did you look for alternative Queen moves? What if the Queen doesn't take? say she moves to c8 anticipating your next move, Knowing any other square lets you play **Rh3#** you still play **2.Rh3+ Qxh3 3.Ra3+ K moves 4.Rxh3** with a won position.

The next problem deals with doing the obvious and its consequences.



(diag 78)

In the above diagram what is wrong with playing **Rc7**?

At first glance it seems to give white an overwhelming attack on the weak **g7** Pawn with mate in 3. But what do you think Black will play ?

So the problem is; you are Black and White has now played 1.Rc7, what do you do?

Did you find a forcing move, did you look at the squares that the White King can go to. Did you find;

Answer.1.Rc7 Rc5!

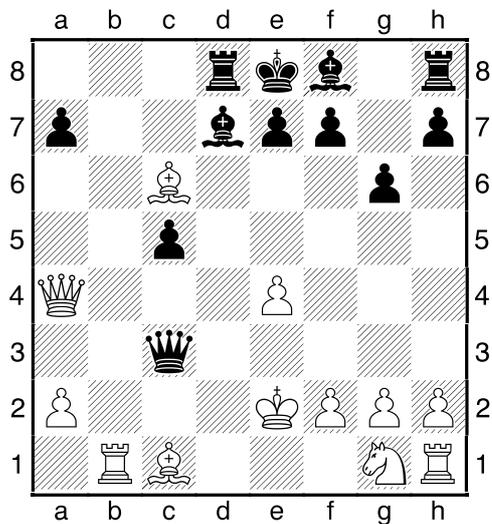
At first glance this may seem like suicide, can't the Rook just take you Queen?.

But look again, if it did it would allow **R c1#** and of course **Rxc5** allows **Qxb7**. Or even if White plays **dx5** then your Queen plays **Qd1#**.

Sometimes you can get carried away with you own attack and forget your opponent is trying to attack as well.

The best time to attack is when your opponent expects you to defend.

On this theme hangs the next problem.



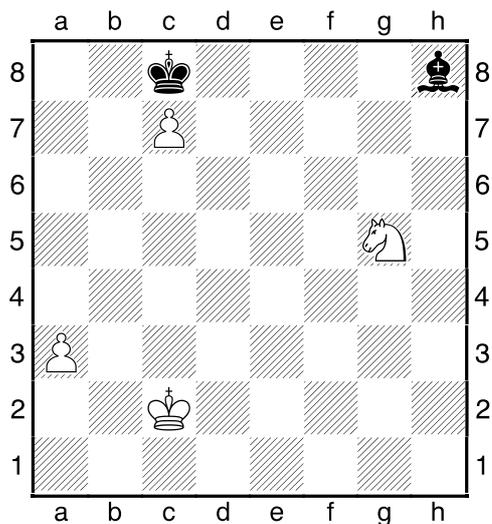
(diag 79)

White would appear to have an overwhelming position with mate in 2 so you as Black must find a way to save yourself. Drastic measures are called for. Think about forcing moves.

Answer **1...Qd3+ 2.Kxd3 Bxc6+ 3.K moves Bxa4**
 you get a Q + B for a Queen and you live to fight on.

In the endgame perhaps the most underrated piece is the Knight, it is automatically supposed that the Bishop is superior, especially in an open game. So let's look at the power of the Knight.

In the next position black must be fairly confident of a draw he can get the Pawn on c7 and can block the Pawn on the a file. You are white to move what do you play?.



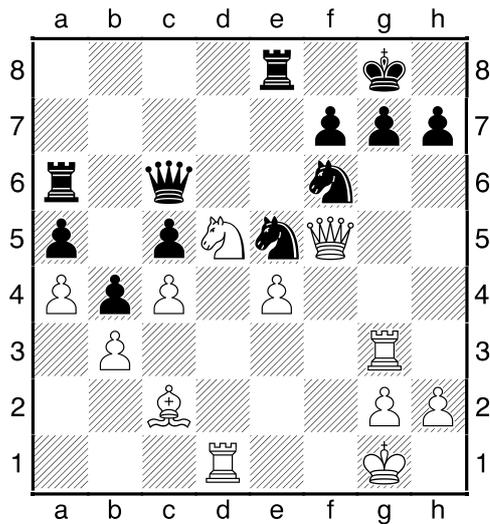
(diag 80)

The theme here is forks and forcing moves. If you get that Bishop your Knight will help the a pawn to Queen.

Answer; After 1.Nf6 the bishop has only one square that is safe to go to (try all the others with the fork move in mind) **Ba1 2.Kb1 Bd3 3.Nd6+ Kxc7 4.Nb5+** forks the King and Bishop Try putting the Bishop on each of the squares on the long diagonal and finding the fork.

Our next few problems are about **Overloading** and **Deflection**.

That is giving the defender too much to do, or making him move away from the square he is defending.



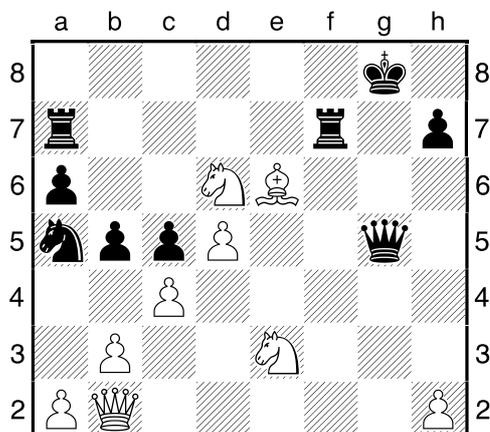
(diag 81)

As you can tell from the next diagram above we can't possibly play **Nxf6+** because the subsequent exchanges will favour Black as he doesn't have to worry about the pin on the **g7** pawn.

So you are **White to move** : Find the forcing moves, open lines and deflect your opponent.

Answer; 1.Ne7+ (this forcing move puts Black into check, attacks the Queen and opens up the **d** file) **1.....Rxe7 2.Qxf6 Qxf6 3.Rd8+ Re8 4.Rxe8#**

We have spoken about force and the numerical value of pieces. Our next problem shows how they can influence our thinking.





(diag 82)

The above problem initially looks bad for white. If we count up the value of pieces Black is up two Rooks for a Knight, Bishop and pawn. But if white could exchange everything his passed pawn would be the decisive factor. In other words he would have a better endgame.

You are **White to move**, remember forcing moves, and look for a second move that is not so obvious.

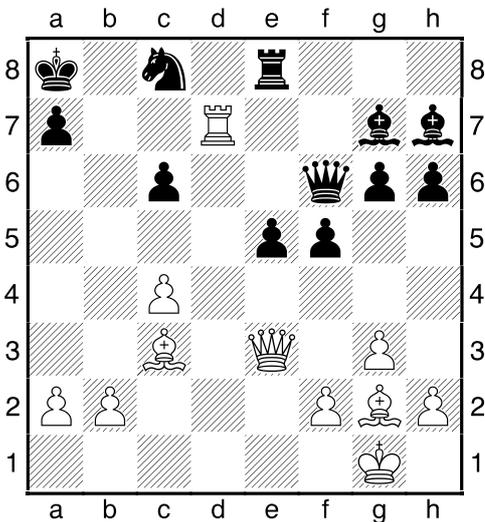
Answer : 1.Bxf7+ Rxf7 2. Qh8+ (this is a little hard to see, the King is forced to take and in so doing move to h8) Kxh8 3.Nxf7+! Kg7 4.Nxg5
and now its just a matter of playing out the endgame with a passed Pawn.

The adage goes “if you're ahead in pieces swap Pawns, if ahead in Pawns swap pieces”. The idea being you will have an advantage in the endgame where either your extra Pawns or pieces will tell the difference.

Adages are all well and good, but they should not be learnt at the exclusion of actual over the board thinking.

Look at the diagram below. We (**white to move**) are behind by a whole piece, we know where we would like to go but Black is covering everything.

We are going to have to deflect him.



(diag 83)

Find the tactical continuation

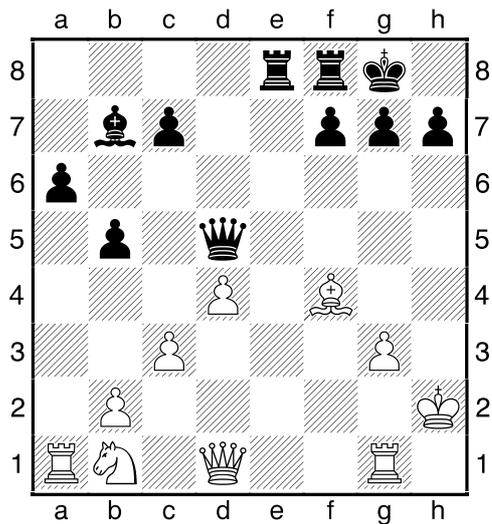
Answer: 1.Bxe5! Rxe5 2.Qxe5! Qxe5 (and now the point) 3.Bxc6+ Kb7 4.Rb7+ Ka8 5.Rxg7+ kb8 6.Rb7+ Ka8 7.Rxh7+ Kb7 8.Rb7+ Ka8 9.Re7+ Kb7 10.Rxe5.

With a decisive advantage.

Our next problem is a good example of **overloading**.

You are **Black to move**.

To help, first figure out why the Rook can't move then why the Queen can't move.



(diag 84)

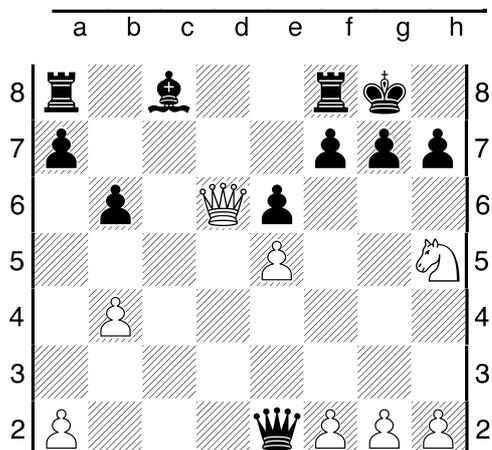
I'm sure you found the key move;

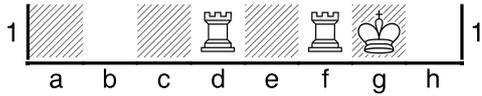
answer; 1...Re1 whereupon the Queen must move away from its protection of the **h5** square or the Rook moves off the protection of the **g2** square.

Of course you may have found **2.Qg4** but this just delays the inevitable as **Rxg1** with **Qg2** mate to follow.

Now a couple of problems to do with tactics.

Knowing where to go can be half the battle, the other half is figuring out how to get there. A castled King is fairly safe, after all that is why we castle in the first place. But it is also a static target that can be breached. In the following diagram **white to move** must use drastic measures to get at the King.





(diag 85)

This takes a bit of calculating

Answer; 1.Nf6+ (a forcing move. The King cannot move because of QxR# so) gxf6
 2.exf6 (and this Pawn becomes so powerful it wins the game) on Qg4
 3.Qxf8+ Kxf8 4. Rd8#

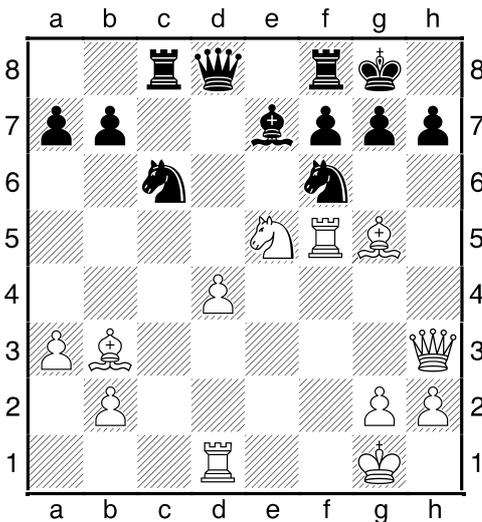
Now that you have see how this works try the next one.

This looks like a fairly standard middle game where tactics abound.

First find the weak square, clear off a few pieces in your mind then find a mating position with the Rook .

Remember forcing moves and pins.

White to move



(diag 86)

This is psychologically a little harder to see because it involves a Queen sacrifice, but remember the Queen is only a piece and it will quite happily throw itself on its sword to get checkmate.

The square to be attacking is h7, but it is protected by the Knight. Our own Bishop is blocking our Rook from getting over to the h file and we have a pin on f7. This should lead you to;

Answer;

1.Bxf6 Bxf6

2.Qxh7+ Kxh7

3.Rh5+ Kg8

4.Ng6!....with 5.Rh8# to follow.

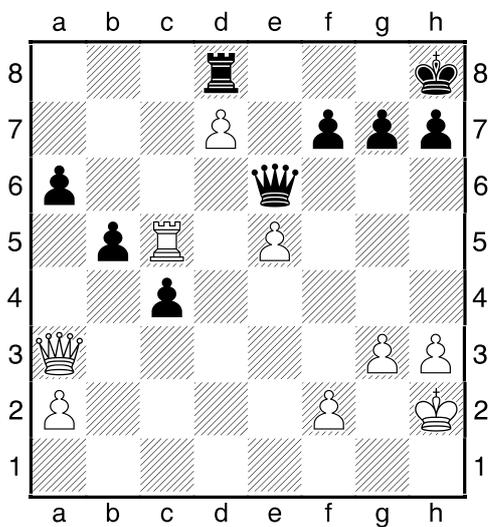
You might also have seen

1. Bxf6 gxf6
2. Nd7 Re8
3. Qh5 Qxd7
4. Qxf7+ Kh8
5. Rh5 with mate to follow.

In the next diagram black is not too worried about his position as he knows he can swap off the Rook and get the Pawn. He might even feel he can win this game, but white has a deflection move in his armoury and that black King doesn't safe to me.

White to move

your first thoughts should be about that Pawn on the 7th its almost a Queen.



(diag 87)

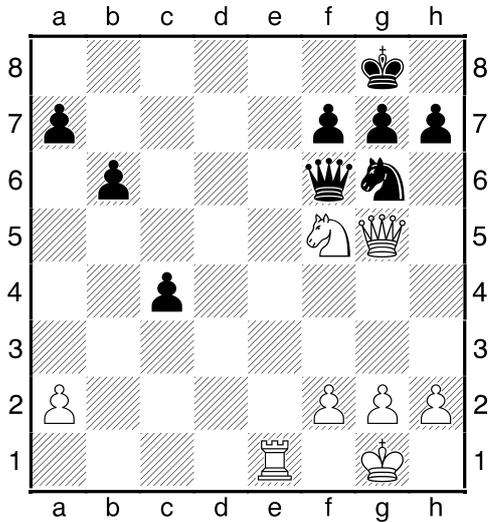
Answer: 1.Rc8 Rxc8 2.Qe7!

This surprising move wins.(Not the obvious **2.dxc8**.) As now if the Rook moves you Queen on **d8** and if the Queen takes, you Queen on **c8** with check.

By now you should be grasping the idea of deflection. I'm going on about it a lot because it is a major part of tactical play and will get you to think about attacking while defending.

In our next problem white's first move may seem obvious as indeed will be blacks but it is the continuation, with the deflection that is hard to see.

After the first move and its reply think about where you would like to be.
 Now make black get out of your way.



(diag 88)

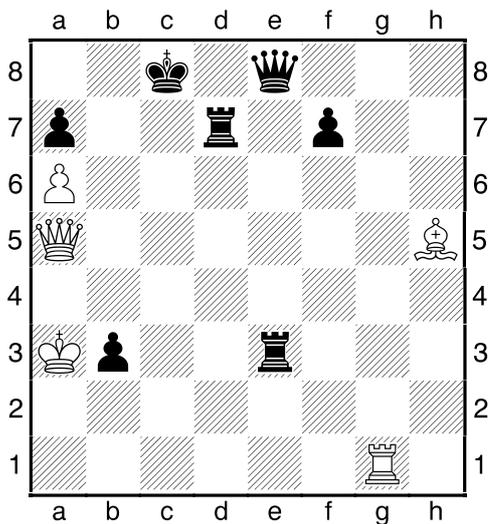
The **answer:**

1.Re8+ Nf8 2.Nh6+! Qxh6 3.Rxf8+ Kxf8 4.Qd8#

Our next problem (**White to move**) really takes deflection to heart.

Remember you don't need a lot of pieces to get checkmate you just need your opponents King in the right place.

We have no time for subtlety here it's attack, attack, sac, sac, kill.



(diag 89)

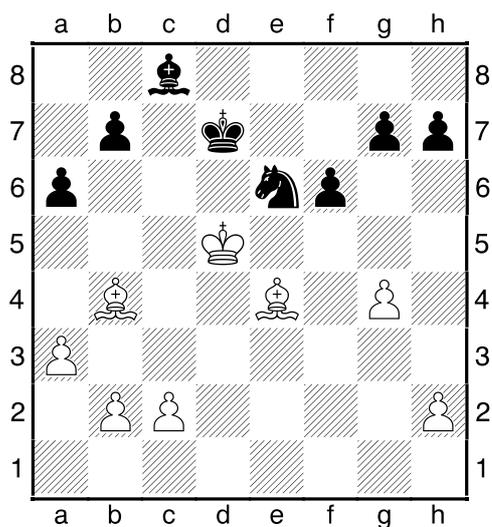
I particularly like this problem because I can see this in a game where you have almost given up in despair. You can virtually feel black gloating, until in desperation you play.

1.Rc1+ Kb8 2.Qb4!+ Ka8 (right got him where I want him) 3.Bf3+ Rxf3

4.Qe4+ Qxe4 5.Rc8#.

The next problem changes the emphasis slightly and is more about space and control. We are always told to activate the King in the endgame and get our Bishops in front of our Pawns. White has done this but is he getting too greedy. He has just played **Kd5** stopping the black King from getting any space. Black has a “bad” Bishop and could drop another Pawn.

It is **Black to move**.



(diag 90)

Keep calm. If you have time on the clock in a game, now is the place to use it. Sometimes its not all about sacrifices and deflection.

Answer: 1....b5 now no matter what White plays black plays

2.....Bb7#

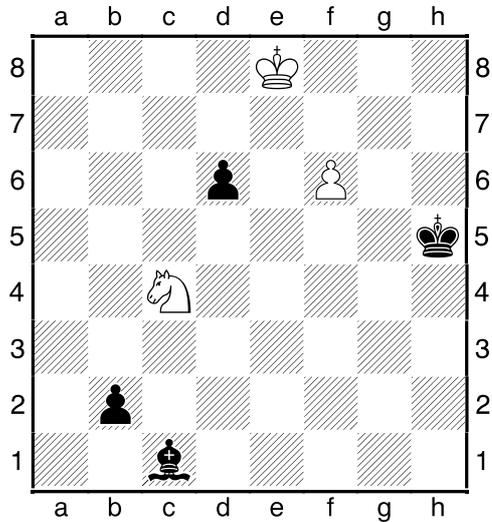
sometimes you can over-extend yourself getting carried away with you attack and miss moves like this.

As we have said the end game is where you really need to do the calculating. It can make the difference between you knowing you can win or knowing you have lost. King and Pawn endings especially are about counting the moves and knowing your square of the King.

In our last problem you have to calculate several possibilities. Can we capture both of blacks Pawns before he gets one to Queen and wins?.

Can we get our own Pawn to Queen?.

Or is a draw our best option.?



(diag 91)

Take your time. This is probably the hardest test. Don't give in too easily you have a lot of things to work out

I won't give all the possibilities but lets look at one false trail.

1.f7 b1=Q

2.f8=Q Qb5+

3.Kf7 Qxc4+ and that should be sufficient for black to win.

So the **answer is : A draw**. Which you can get by exploiting a tempo.

1.Nxb2 Bxb2

2.Kd7 d5

3.Kc6 d4

4.f7 Ba3

5.Kb5 d3 (now white attacks the Bishop to gain a tempo)

6.Ka4 Bf8

7.Kb3 Bg7

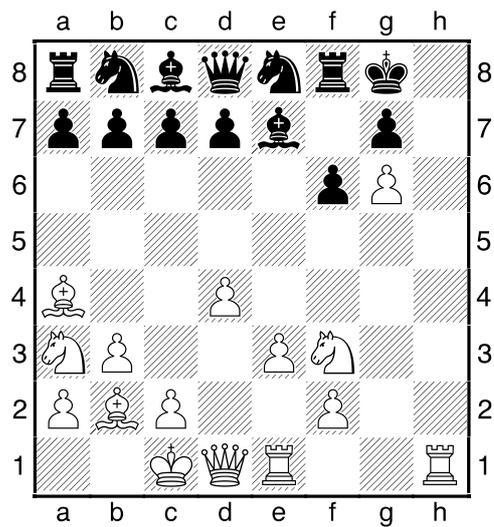
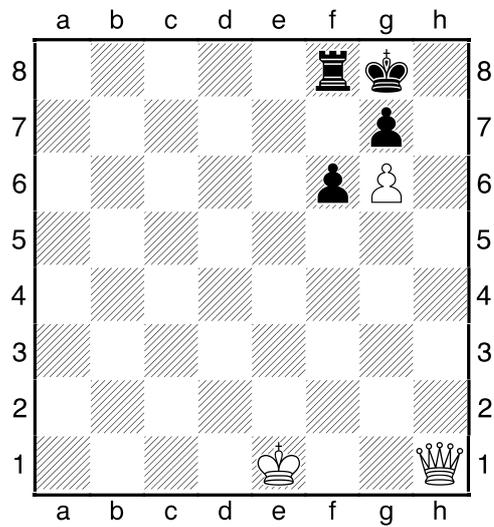
8.f8=Q Bxf8

9.Kc3 and black cannot stop you from taking the pawn leading to a draw by insufficient material.

You can get many good books on problems from checkmates in one, to very complex positional tests. These are handy to have. You will be surprised how many times variations of the problems you have just done come up. Maybe not the exact position but ones that are analogous with it.

To finish let me give an example.

Try to solve the following two positions.



The first one you probably found in seconds, its a standard checkmating pattern.

But did the second one cause you any problems.

Just because there are more pieces on the board and you have to make 5 moves instead on one, you should not have been daunted. Its the same mating pattern and all moves are forced.

1.Rh8+ Kxh8

2.Rh1+ Kg8

3.Rh8+ Kxh8

4.Qh1+ Kg8

5.Qh7#

Once you know where you have to go it becomes relatively easy.
After a while you begin to see the patterns.

Now that you have come to the end of the book if you are not yet 1200+ don't be too disappointed. It will take time and most of all, work. Practice as much as you can , what you have learned from me and others. Play as many good games as you can fit in . If you're not in a club, find your nearest and go along. Don't feel intimidated. Chess is probably the most egalitarian of all sports. We do not care about race, creed, age, size, colour, or gender. As long as you can play the game, you will find someone of equal or better strength willing to play you.

A friend of mine, on winning his local club tournament said “In some of the games I was really lucky to win.”

But as the Grandmaster Ed Lasker said “**The more I practice the luckier I get.**”

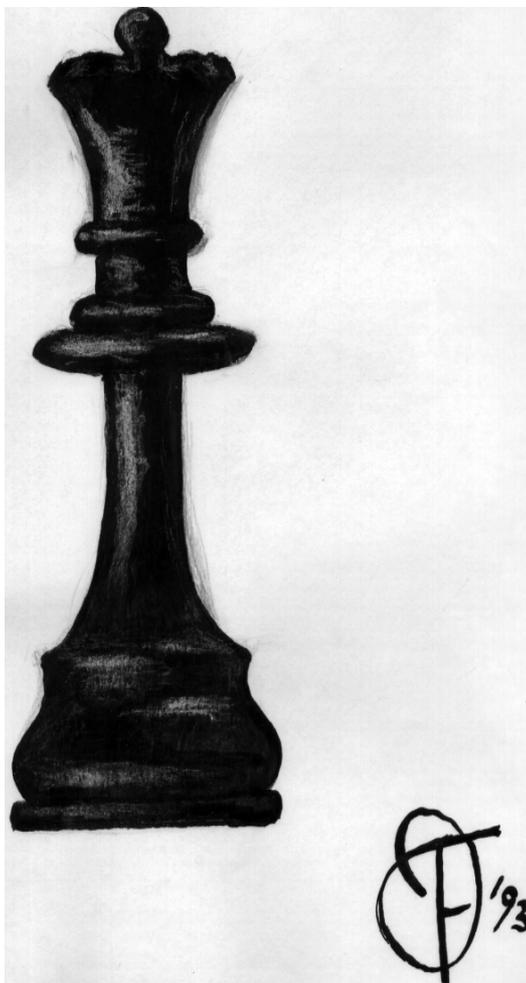
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2009

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