

JOURNEY THROUGH CHESS

PART 1

A CHESS COURSE FOR CHILDREN

based on the chessKIDS academy website (www.chesskids.org.uk)

The official chess course of Richmond Junior Chess Club

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Introduction

First, a bit of background. I've been teaching chess for forty years. It became apparent to me some years ago that most children in this country were not getting a good experience of chess. So I stopped most of my chess teaching, studied child development and looked at the very different experiences that children received in other countries.

If you just want to treat chess as a parlour game, teach your children the moves, then go ahead and play. They'll get some benefit just as they will from playing any other board game, but they won't become good players. If you're reading this now I'm assuming, and hoping, that you want your children to take chess seriously, either because you want them to have the opportunity to become serious competitive players should they wish to do so, or because of the unique educational benefits that chess, if it's taught correctly, has to offer.

Whereas here in the UK children are taught the moves at home so that they can join a chess club, in other countries children join a chess club so that they can be taught correctly right from the start. Very often children learn the moves slowly, taking a year or more to learn all the moves, while at the same time learning how to look at a chess board, and understanding the underlying logic of the game. Without these skills, children will do little more than play random moves.

My belief is that there are, for most children, few advantages and many disadvantages in starting chess very young. Most children enjoy board games, but many of them would be better off playing simpler games with fewer options and only moving onto chess when they are ready. Playing chess, even at a low level, involves the sort of logical skills that children typically develop around the age of 7 or 8, and playing competitive chess involves the more complex skills that children typically develop around the age of 11 or 12. Many children who learn the moves at 7 or 8 start well, but get stuck after 18 months or so, get frustrated because they're not making progress and eventually give up. Some exceptional children, under exceptional circumstances, can develop the appropriate skills earlier, sometimes, much earlier.

It seems there are two approaches you could take if you want your children to learn chess. (If you're reading this you probably do want your children to learn, and so you should, because, in my opinion, chess is the best game in the world.) If you want your children to develop naturally it's best to start at about 9 or 10, so that, after a couple of years, when they need more complex thinking skills to improve, those skills are available to them. If, however, you want to use chess as a learning tool, and use the game as a means of accelerating your children's cognitive development, then you could start at 7 or 8. In principle, older children will pick up the fundamental logic of the game much more quickly than younger children, and will be less likely to get 'stuck' when things become too hard for them.

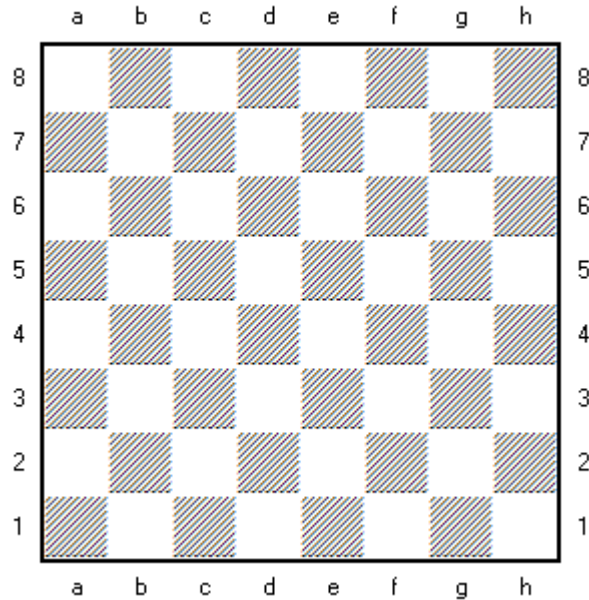
The younger children start, the more help they will need from their parents. We recommend that chess should be treated in the same way as learning a musical instrument, with, at first, 10 or 15 minutes practice a day. This will involve solving puzzles and playing games, and, at least at first, children will need a lot of support from their parents to ensure that they have mastered each concept before moving on to the next one. As complex thinking skills are best taught with a few pieces we introduce the different men one at a time, gradually increasing the complexity of the positions and tasks. Playing once a week at the school chess club and doing nothing in between is arguably worse than useless.

If you're reading this in the UK or in the United States, you might find these methods strange, but they are very much standard across much of Europe, from the Netherlands to Russia. I believe this is the right way for your children to learn chess.

Before you start, it will help very much if you have a copy of *The Right Way to Teach Kids Chess* (Right Way Books) and access to the course website. Your children will also enjoy reading *Chess for Kids* (Right Way Books). You will also need a full size Staunton Pattern chess set and a board with the coordinates (a-h, 1-8) on the side.

CHAPTER 1

THE CHESS BOARD

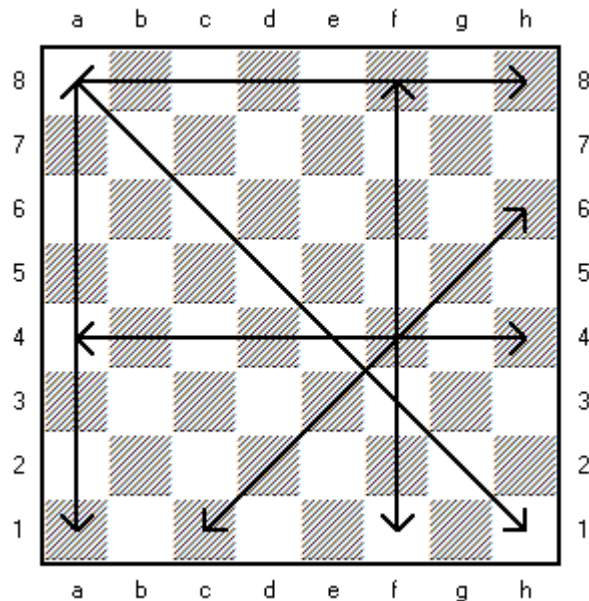


We start by introducing the chess board. Demonstrate that there are 8 squares on each side alternating light and dark: 64 squares in total.

The light squares are sometimes known as 'white' squares and the dark squares 'black' regardless of the actual colour.

Ensure (it's important that this is reinforced every lesson) that there's a white square in your right hand corner. We always start with the white pieces on the ranks numbered 1 and 2 and the black pieces on the ranks numbered 7 and 8.

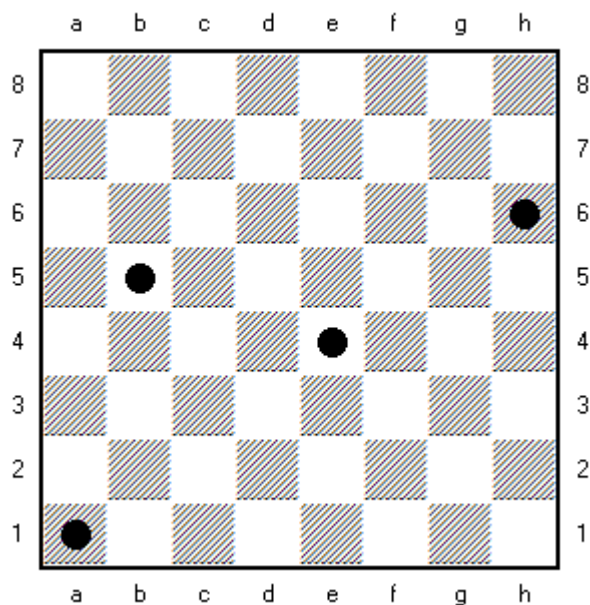
We call the vertical rows 'files' and the horizontal rows 'ranks'.



Here we see some ranks, files and diagonals.

Young children often have problems following straight lines on the chessboard, especially diagonals. Get your children to demonstrate these lines to you by moving a finger or a piece along them, from beginning to end.

Now explain that the each file has a letter and each square a number. We talk about, for instance, the b-file or the e-file. (Ranks are a bit more confusing as we often refer to them from the perspective of the player: so White's seventh rank is numbered 7 but Black's seventh rank is numbered 2. But when naming squares they're always numbered as on the diagram.)



Each square has a name comprising the letter of the file followed by the number of the rank. In this position the squares a1, b5, e4 and h6 have been indicated.

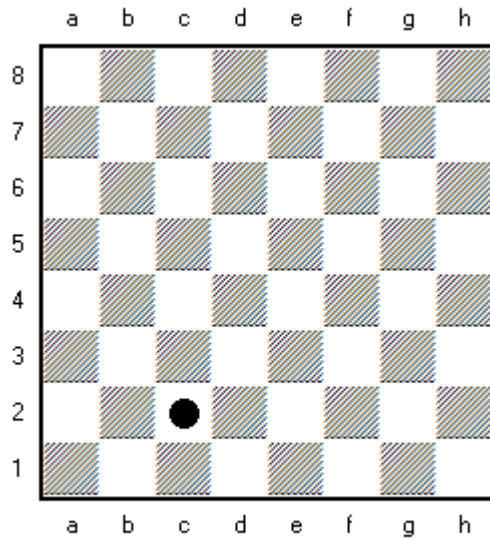
The following worksheets give children the opportunity to find and identify squares. They can also practise this interactively at <http://www.chesskids.org.uk/newcourse/findbomb.htm>.

Most children of this age will have little difficulty with this task but if it's a problem you could leave it and return to it later.

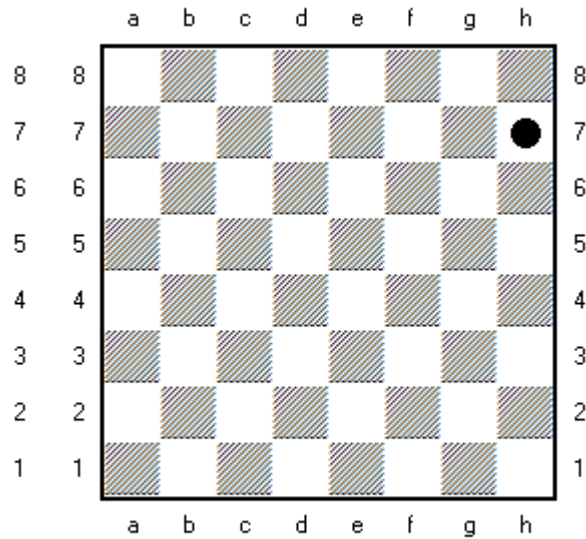
A great way to make sure that children have really understood the concept is to ask them to set some puzzles themselves. If you can do some, perhaps make some (deliberate) mistakes, and get your children to mark them, you'll have more idea as to whether or not the lesson has been absorbed.

If children are familiar with the names of the squares it makes it much easier to talk about a game. It also opens up the whole world of chess literature. This specific lesson also teaches children about the concept of squares and straight lines, about the use of coordinates, and starts to teach them how to use the symbolic language of chess notation.

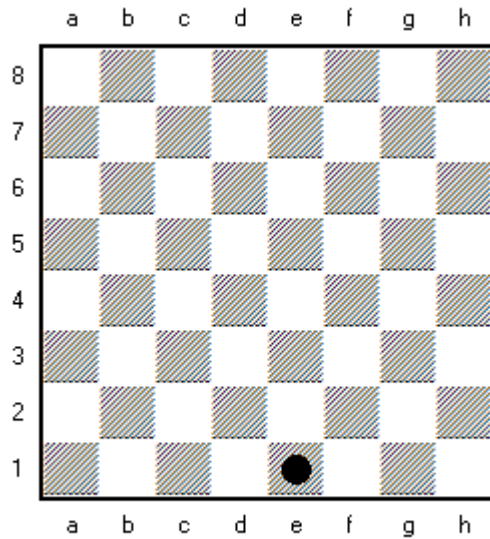
If you like, you can introduce the pieces at this point, but there's no need to do so. The danger is that children might want to play complete games before they're ready.



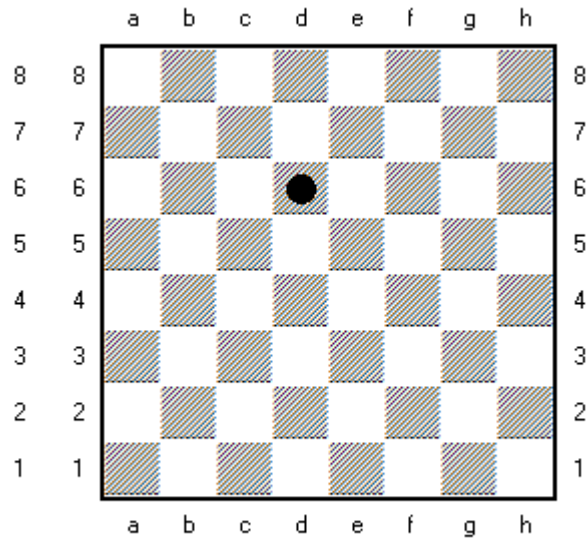
Q1. Name the square



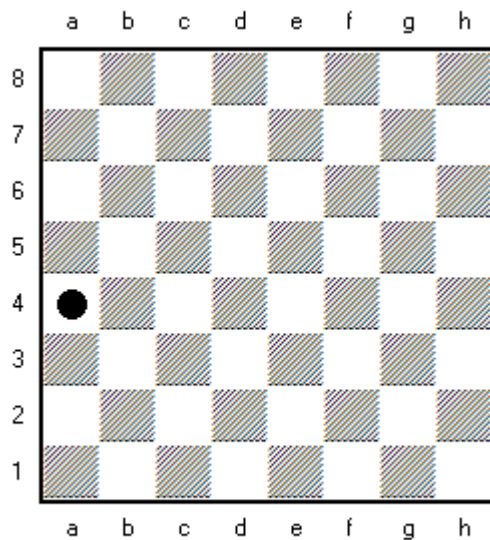
Q2. Name the square



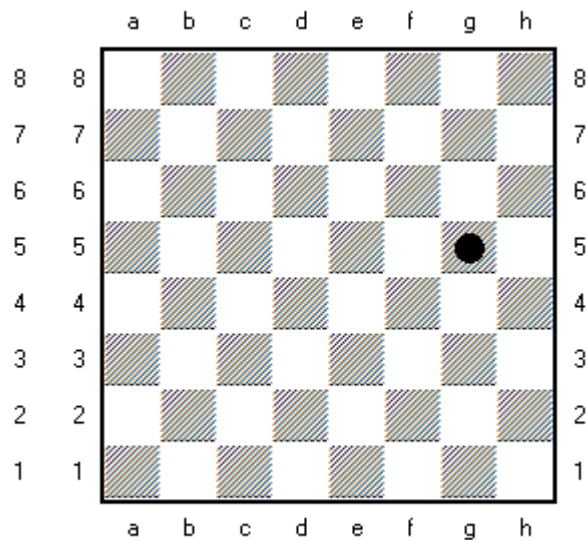
Q3. Name the square



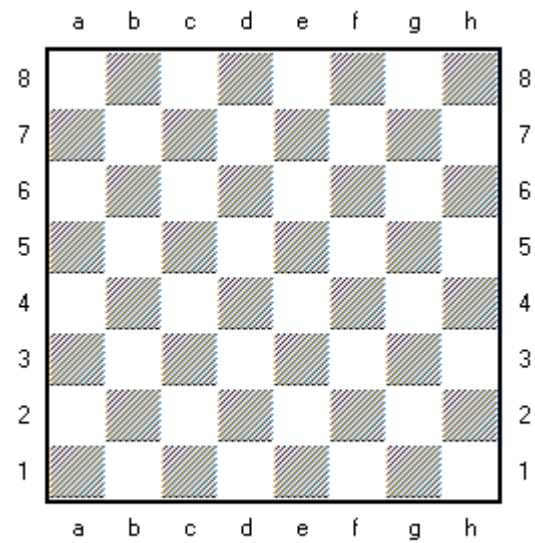
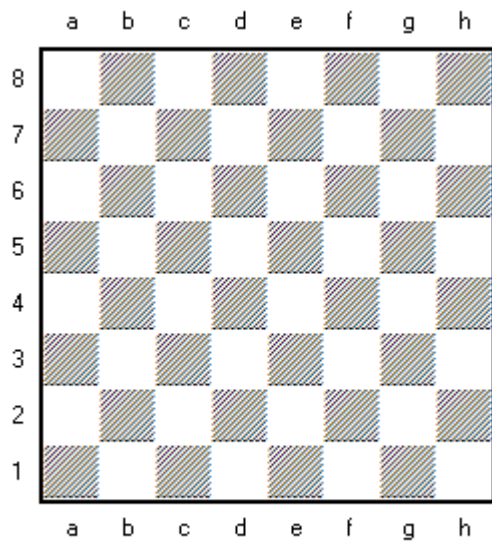
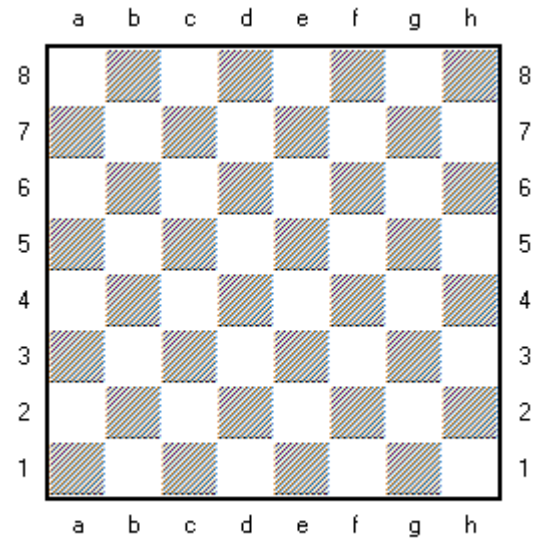
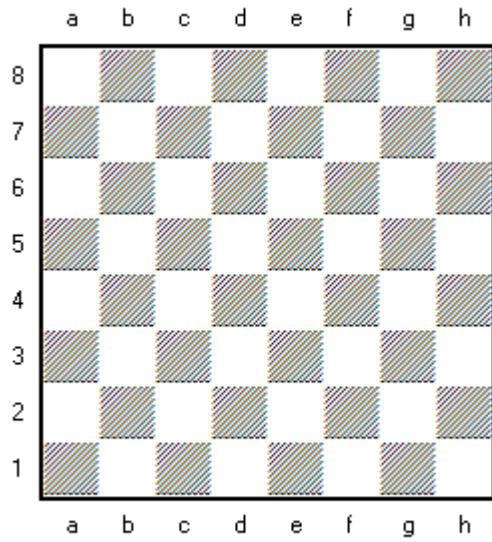
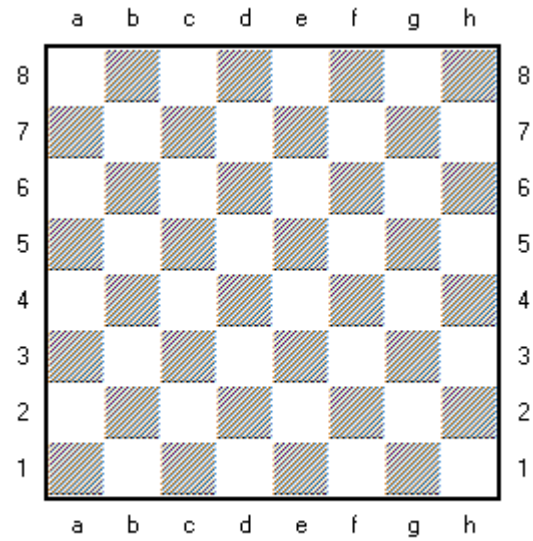
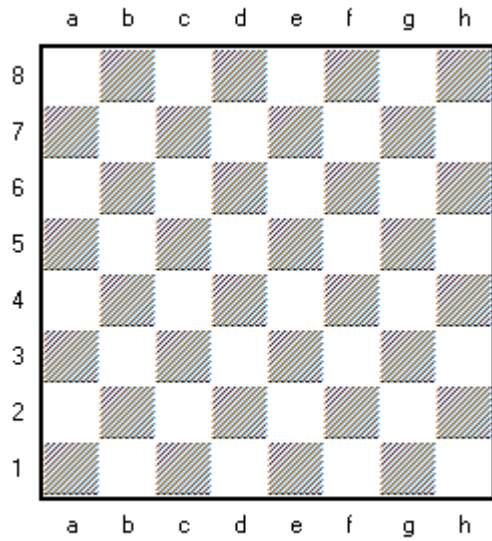
Q4. Name the square



Q5. Name the square



Q6. Name the square

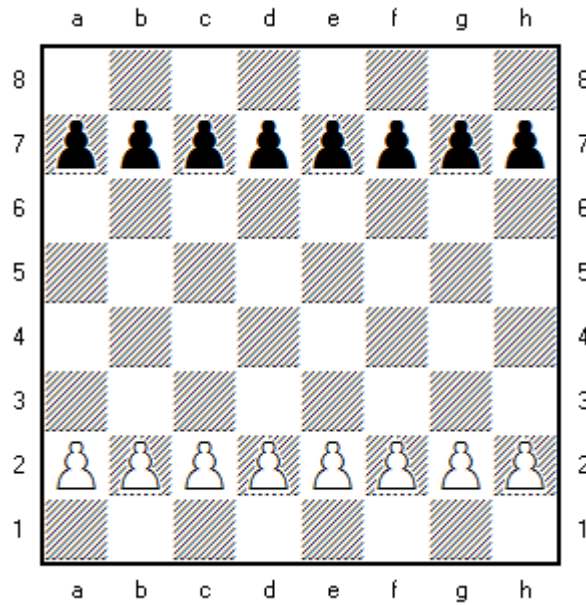


CHAPTER 2

THE PAWN

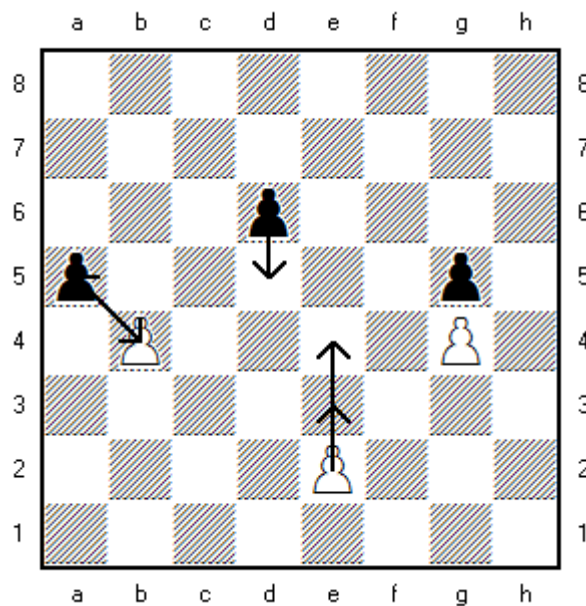
Identify the pawns in the chess set and count how many there are of each colour. The pawns are the footsoldiers in the army. Demonstrate where they start, then get your children to do the same thing.

Explain that the eight white pawns start on the rank numbered 2 and the eight black pawns on the rank numbered 7.



The pawns move one square forward. On their first move, however, they can choose between moving one or two squares forward. (Note: this means on the pawn's first move, not just on the first move of the game.)

Unlike other pieces, pawns do not capture in the same way that they move. Instead they capture one square diagonally forwards. When making a capture you remove the enemy piece from the board and replace it with your piece. You don't jump over as in draughts (checkers). Young children sometimes find this physically difficult and end up with the captured piece somewhere on the board. Practise this with your children until they get used to it.



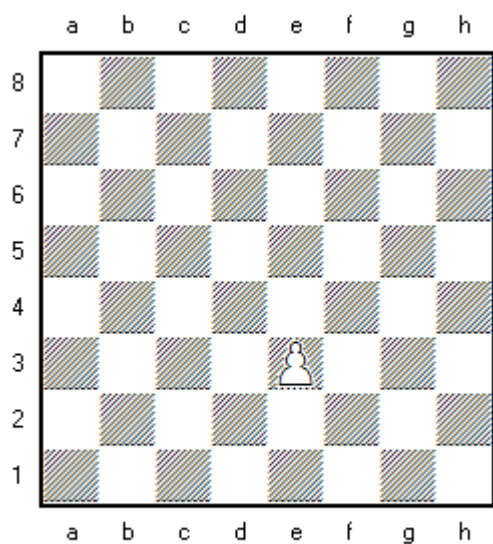
In this position the white pawn on e2 can move to either e3 or e4. The black pawn on d6 can only move to d5. The pawns on g4 and g5 are stuck: they cannot move at all.

Practise the pawn moves until you are confident that you remember and understand them, and that you can correctly make captures with your pawn finishing on the correct square and the enemy pawn being removed from the board.

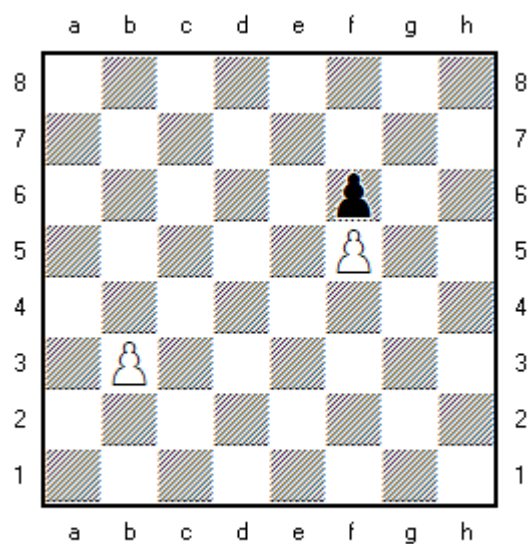
The next three pages of worksheets are designed to reinforce knowledge of the pawn move. They should not cause any problems to anyone who has mastered the pawn move.

Children can use arrows to indicate the move, or, if they prefer, write down the name of the square to which they are moving. It's not a bad idea to encourage use of notation for children who are old enough to do this easily.

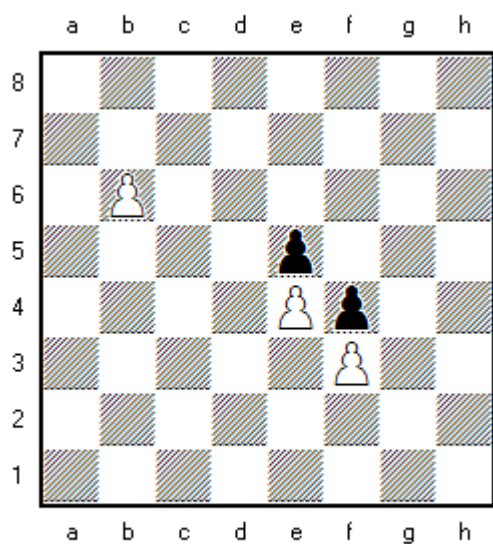
Note that we write a move down (in this volume we're using the long version of standard chess notation) using a dash (-) to separate the starting and finishing squares of the move. If the move is a capture we replace the '-' with 'x'.



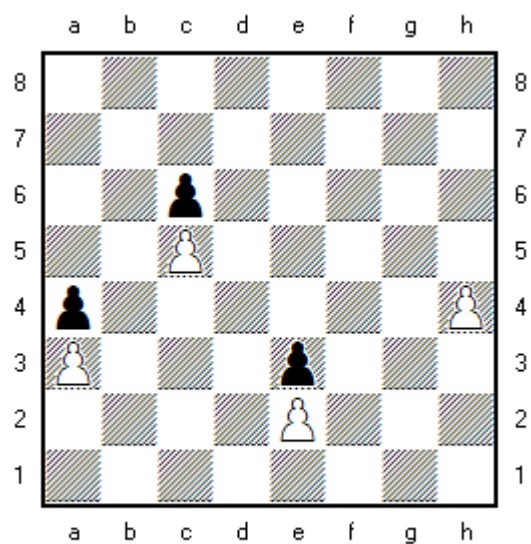
Q1. Move a pawn one square



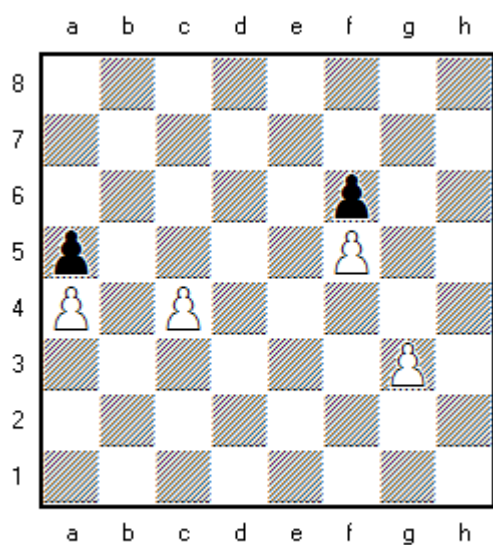
Q2. Move a pawn one square



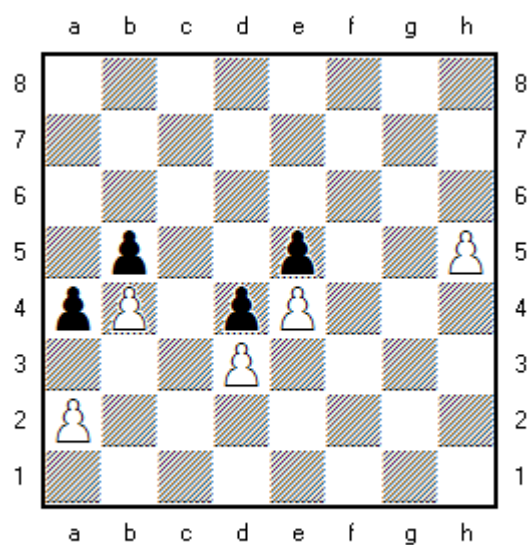
Q3. Move a pawn one square



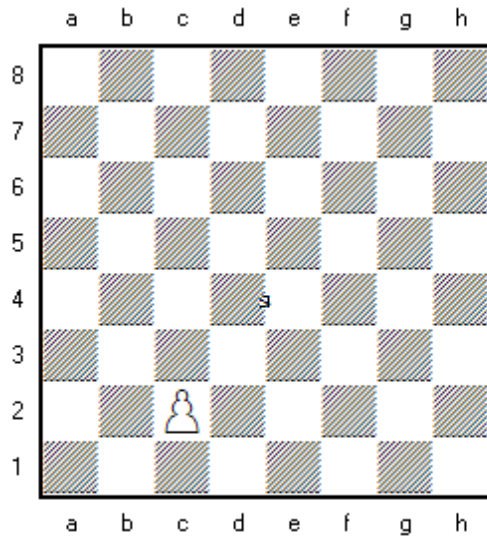
Q4. Move a pawn one square



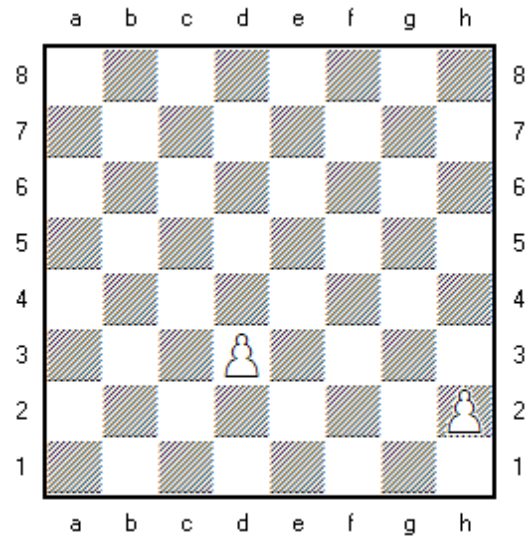
Q5. Move a pawn one square
Give two answers



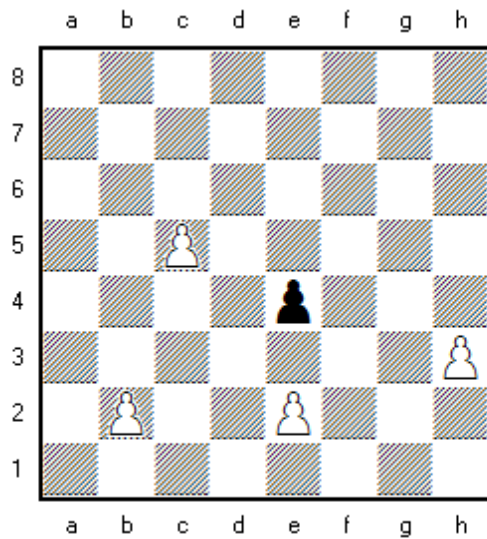
Q6. Move a pawn one square
Give two answers



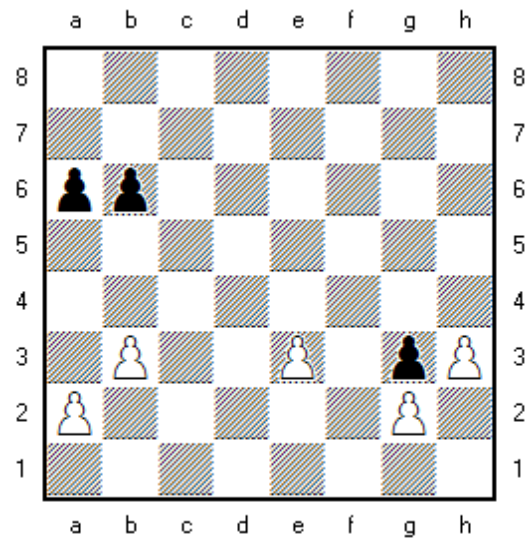
Q1. Move a pawn two squares



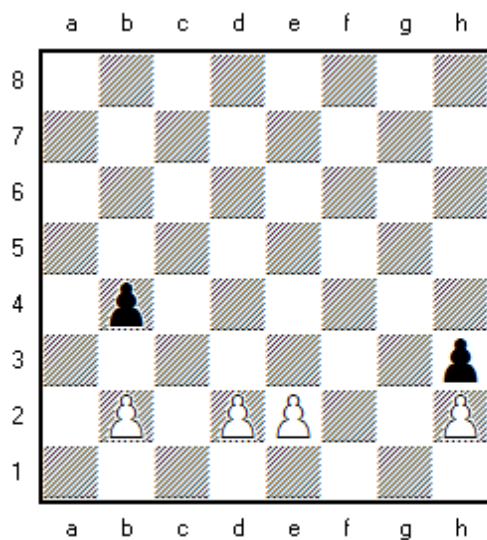
Q2. Move a pawn two squares



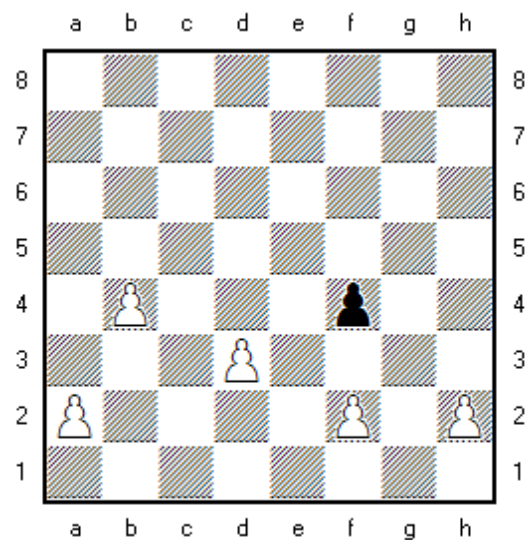
Q3. Move a pawn two squares



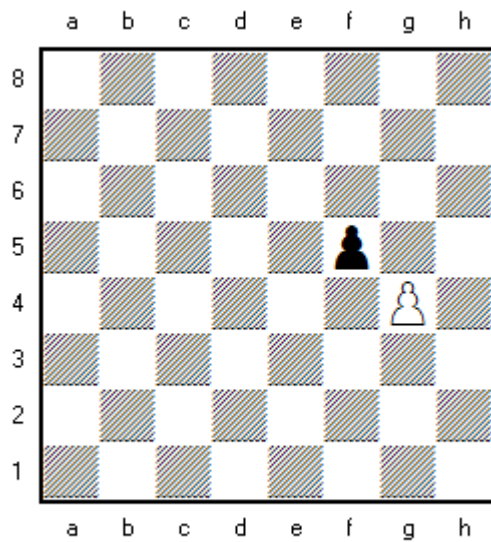
Q4. Move a pawn two squares



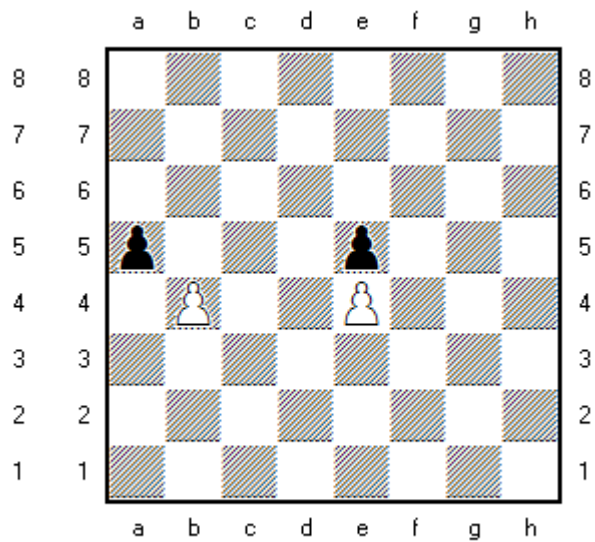
Q5. Move a pawn two squares
Give two answers



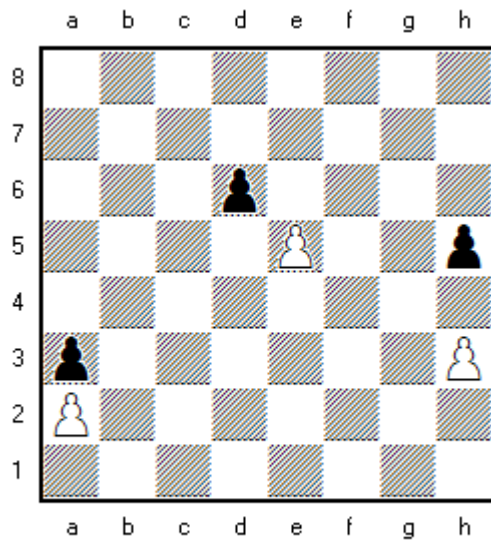
Q6. Move a pawn two squares
Give two answers



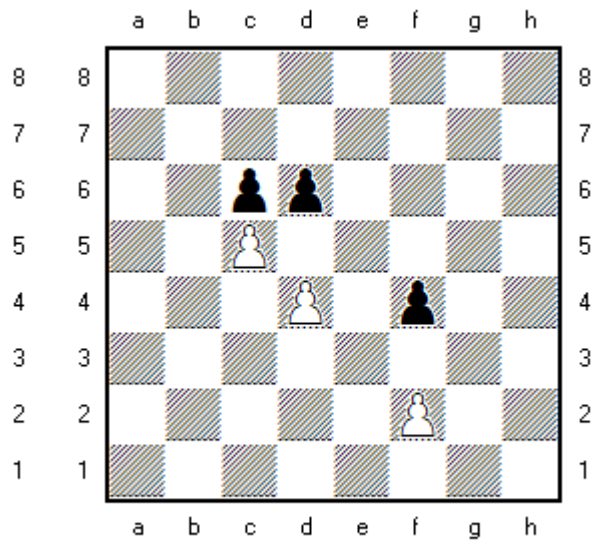
Q1. Capture a pawn



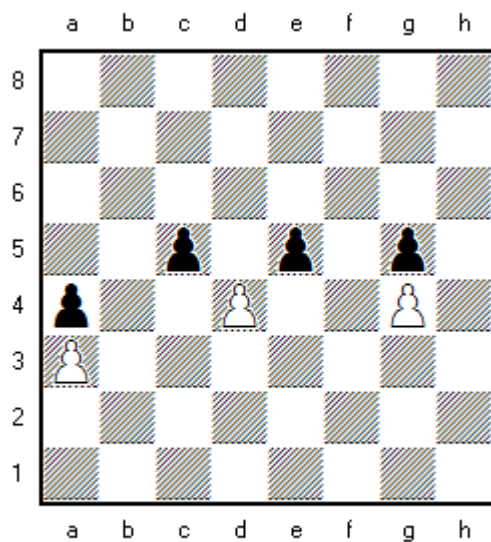
Q2. Capture a pawn



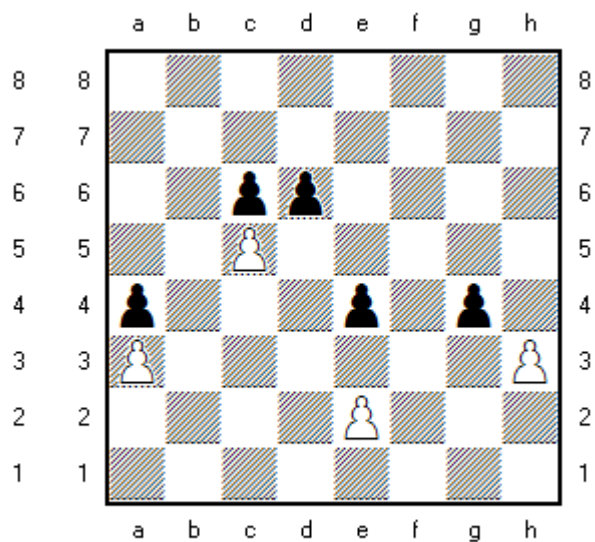
Q3. Capture a pawn



Q4. Capture a pawn



Q5. Capture a pawn
Give two answers



Q6. Capture a pawn
Give two answers

Now we're going to play some games.

In games of chess the players take it in turns to move a piece, with White making the first move.

Some games are games of luck: winning or losing depends on the throw of a dice or the drawing of a card. Some games are partly games of luck and partly games of skill. Other games are games of pure skill. The most skilful player, the player who makes the best decisions and plays the best moves will win.

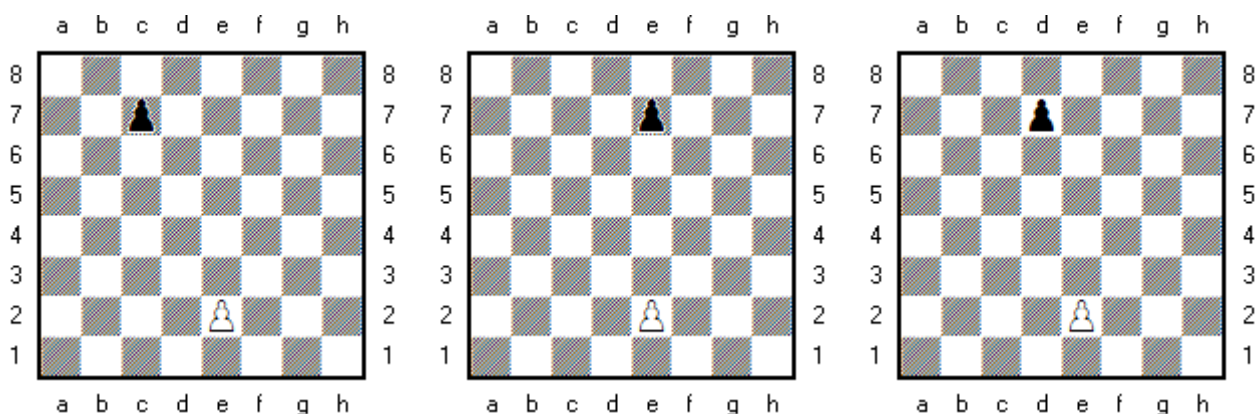
Chess is a game of pure skill. This is why it's not enough just to know how the pieces move. In any position there may be some moves that win, some moves that draw and some moves that lose. To be a good player you have to know why some moves are better than others, and learn how to make good decisions when you make a move.

We're going to play some games under the rules we call CAPTURE THE FLAG. Chess is a war game: a battle between two armies, the white army and the black army. The chessboard is the battlefield. Imagine that there's a flag at the other end of the board. The first player to capture the flag wins.

In CAPTURE THE FLAG games with pawns there are three ways to win:

- 1) You win the game by getting a pawn to the other end of the board before your opponent (to CAPTURE THE FLAG)
- 2) You win the game by capturing all your opponent's pieces
- 3) You win the game if it's your opponent's move and he/she cannot make any legal move.

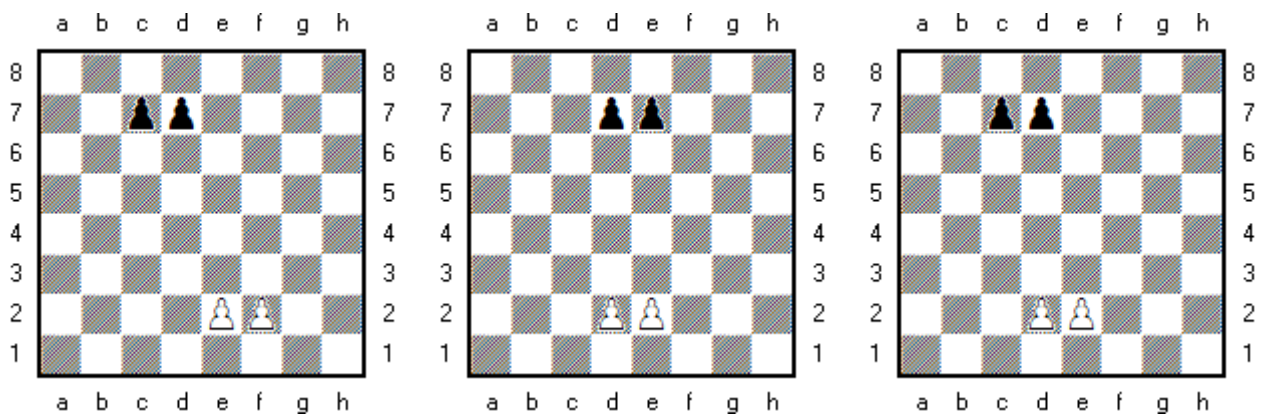
We start by playing very simple games with one pawn each. If you're given the choice would you play White or Black? Why? Can you describe the strategy you'd use to win the game? Young children will very often give an illogical response to questions like this, based on emotion or impulse rather than stopping to think and work out which moves would be best.



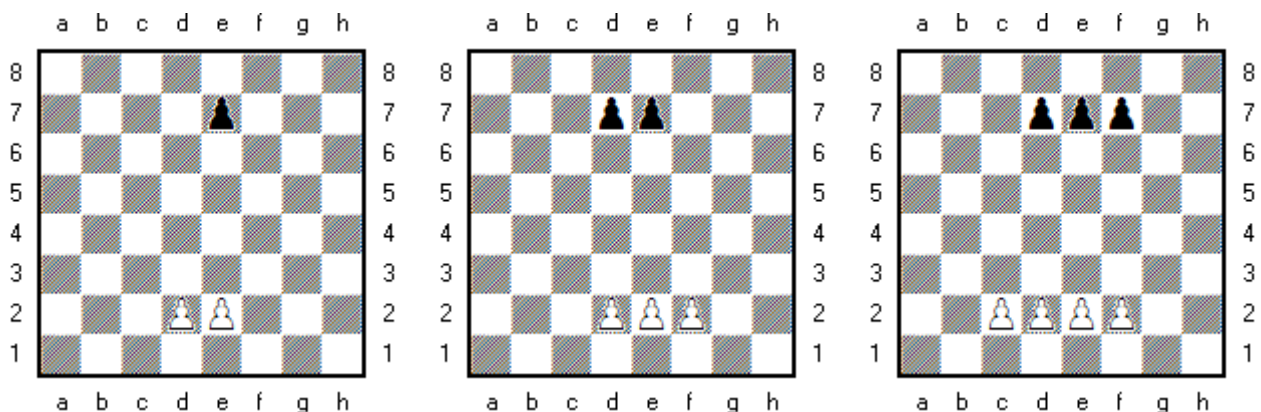
You can play these games online against a computer at <http://www.chesskids.org.uk/newcourse/sincomb.htm>.

By playing these games children are learning important lessons: how to use logic rather than emotion to make decisions; how to control your impulses; how to make predictions; how to look ahead and work out what's going to happen next; the importance of assuming your opponent's going to play the best move, rather than the move you want him/her to make. All these skills are vital: reinforce and praise at every opportunity. Look at how you can use these skills away from the chessboard.

When you've mastered these games you can move onto games with two pawns: you can take on the computer at <http://www.chesskids.org.uk/newcourse/doubcomb.htm>, or, better still, play against a human.



Next, you can try games in which one player starts with more pawns, for example:

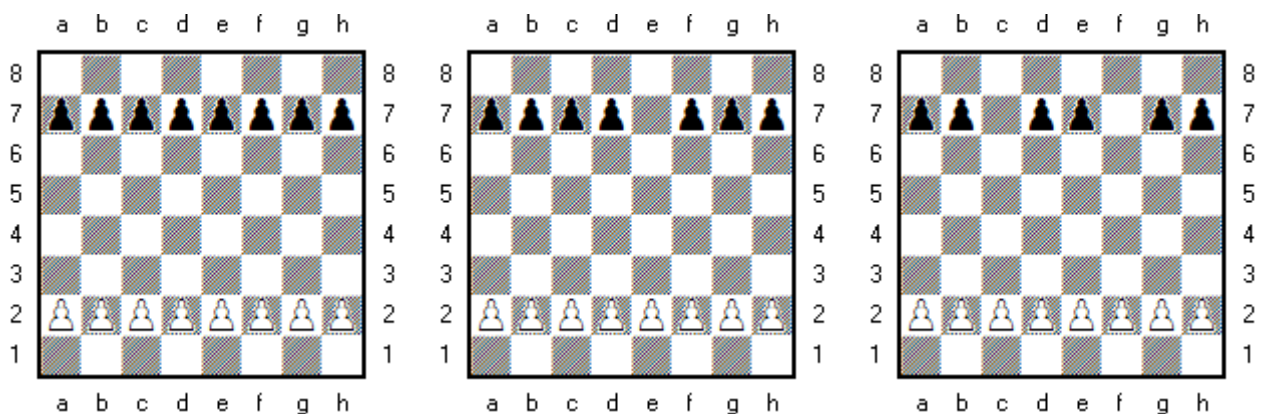


You should find these positions easy for the player with the extra pawn to win. This brings us to the underlying principle of chess: that SUPERIOR FORCE (usually) WINS.

This means (for the moment) three things: in principle you should take a free pawn if you can, if your opponent is trying to take a pawn for nothing you should do something about it, and you should avoid playing moves that give your opponent a free pawn (unless you've looked ahead and worked out that you can win by doing so).

These three principles: ATTACK, DEFENCE and SAFETY underpin everything that follows in this course.

We can now move onto the complete CAPTURE THE FLAG pawn game. If you're an experienced player you might want to start by giving odds to your children. (If you're a beginner and your children are picking it up more quickly than you they might want to give you odds!) If you like you can challenge the computer at <http://www.chesskids.org.uk/newcourse/ppawnrace.htm>.



There are two strategies you can use to win a complete CAPTURE THE FLAG pawn game.

The first strategy is to run your opponent out of good moves and reach a position where he/she can only play moves that lose a pawn. Very often you will be in a position towards the end of the game where you have a choice between making an exchange and advancing a pawn. One will win and one will lose – but you have to look ahead. It's usually (but not always) correct to advance in this situation, but children will be tempted to exchange because they like the idea of taking an enemy piece and hope they won't get taken back.

The second strategy is to use asymmetric exchanges to create a PASSED PAWN. A passed pawn is a pawn which is free to reach the end of the board without being blocked or captured by an enemy pawn. If you have a passed pawn you should advance it at every opportunity. (When you're ready to play a full game of chess you'll find that passed pawns are often very useful there as well.)

Our next set of worksheets reinforces the skills you need to play the pawn CAPTURE THE FLAG game successfully.

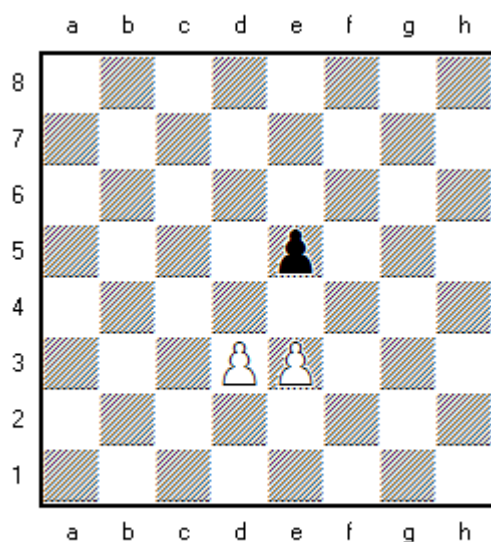
When solving these it's a good idea, especially for younger children, to set the pieces up and play through the moves on the board together with your children to work out the answer rather than just expecting them to solve the puzzles from the diagrams.

First we have to find moves which offer a pawn exchange. Many children are very wary of playing moves which offer an exchange because they don't want to lose one of their pieces. Because young children have difficulty seeing situations from someone else's perspective, or perhaps because they're not looking ahead, they are very reluctant to play a move which loses something, even if they get something else in return. You will see that in some of these questions the exchange will create a passed pawn – can you identify which questions these are?

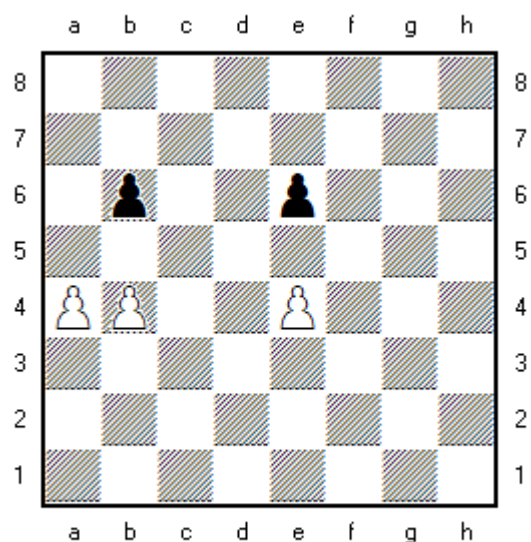
On the other hand, many children are driven by their lack of impulse control to play a move before they've checked whether or not it's safe – whether or not their opponent will be able to take it for nothing. You have to train yourself to stop and check that the move you've thought of is safe before playing it, just as you have to check that it's safe before you cross the road.

Before you do the next sheet, it will help if you learn more about notation: how to write down your move. In this part of the course we use long algebraic (standard) notation. When we move a pawn we write the starting square, then a dash/minus sign (-), then the finishing square, for instance a2-a4. For a capture we use a multiplication/times sign (x) instead of the dash: for instance e6xd7. In real chess, when we get a pawn to the end we can choose to exchange it for a knight, a bishop, a rook or a queen. At the moment we're in effect choosing a queen so when we reach the end we add a Q after the move: for instance g7-g8Q. This might be too hard for younger children: if so, you can skip it and use arrows, and help them with the notation on the following page.

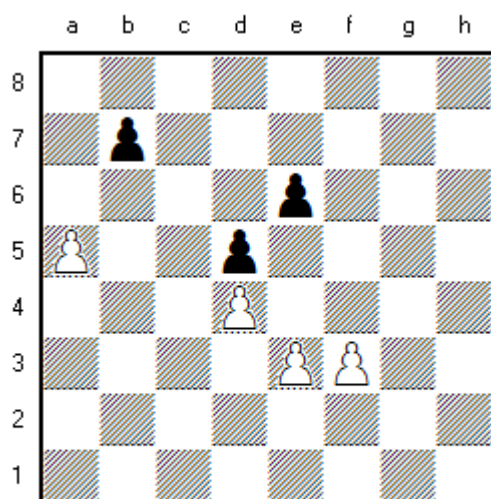
Finally, an exercise in decision making. You're given two moves: your job is to decide which of those two moves you'd play. At one level you can consider chess to be the art of decision making. Here, the first part of the job, considering your options, has been done for you. You just have to make the choice, which you do by looking ahead. Thinking in this way is alien to many young children, which is why they often find this type of task very difficult. Younger children will need your help, along with a set and board, for this. Consider, too, when you have to make decisions in real life. Give your children a choice and ask them what they think would happen next with each option.



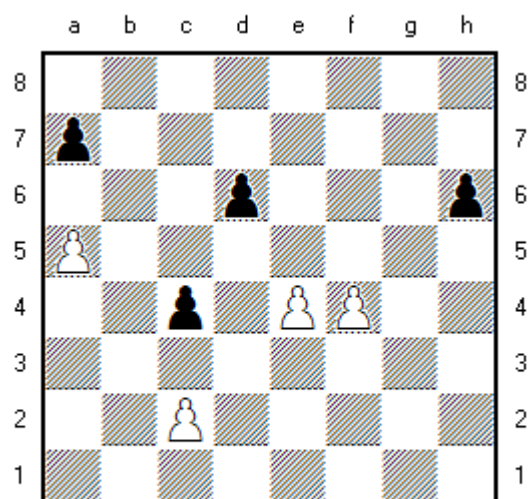
Q1. Offer a pawn exchange



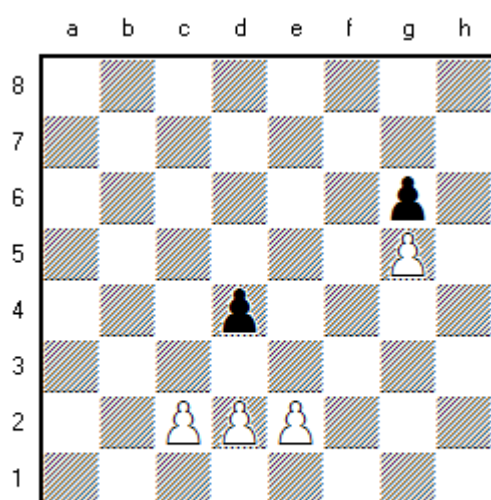
Q2. Offer a pawn exchange



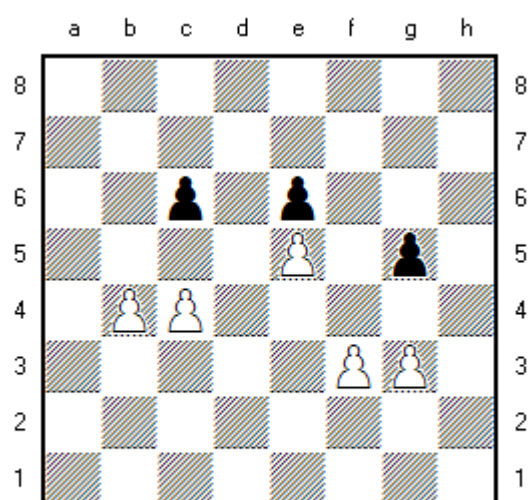
Q3. Offer a pawn exchange



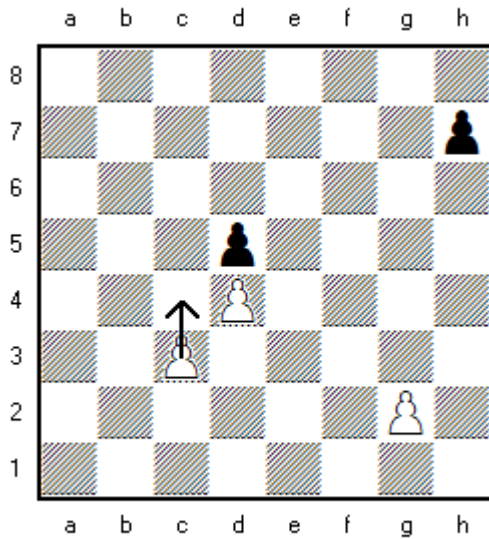
Q4. Offer a pawn exchange



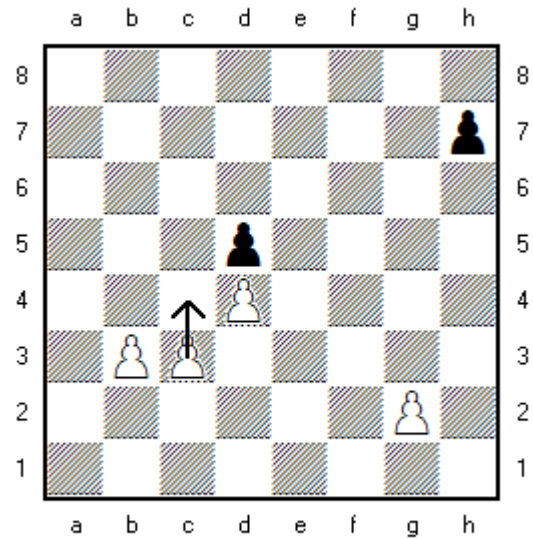
Q5. Offer a pawn exchange
Give two answers



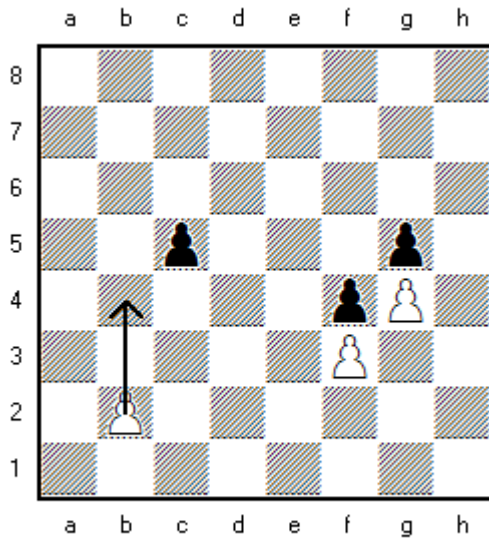
Q6. Offer a pawn exchange
Give two answers



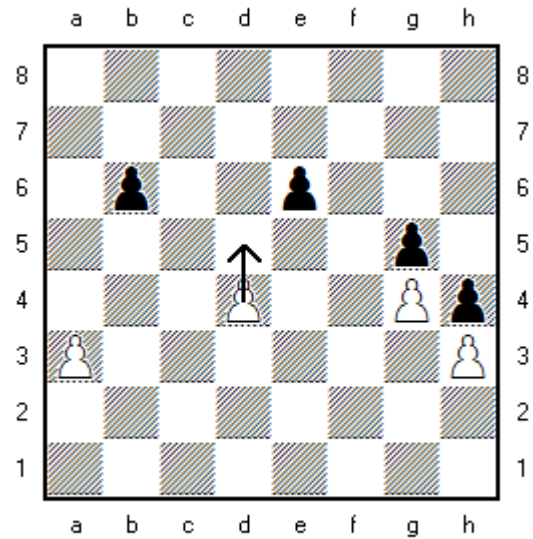
Q1. Is this move safe?
Yes/No



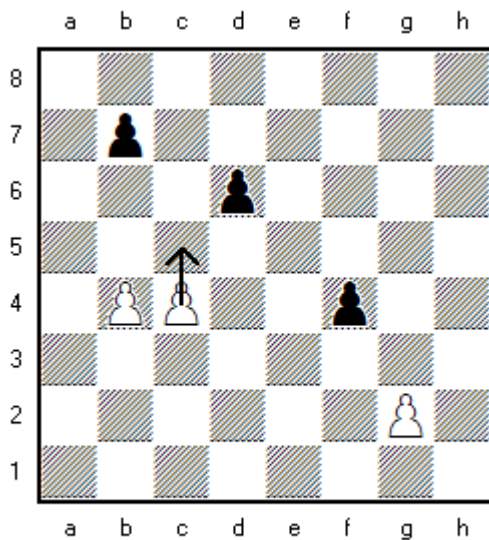
Q2. Is this move safe?
Yes/No



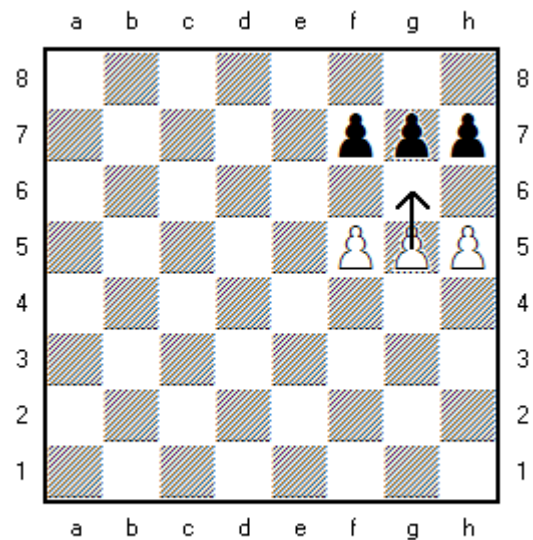
Q3. Is this move safe?
Yes/No



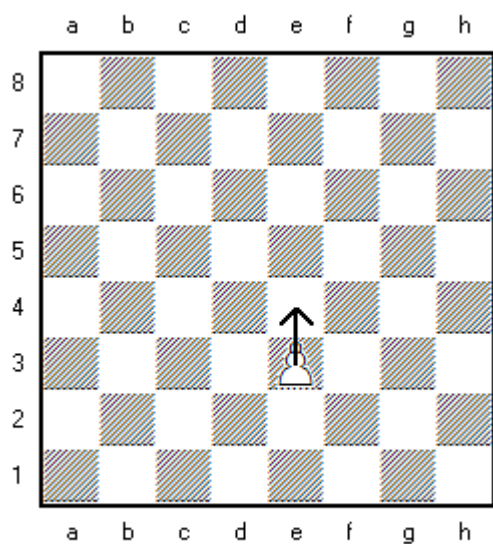
Q4. Is this move safe?
Yes/No



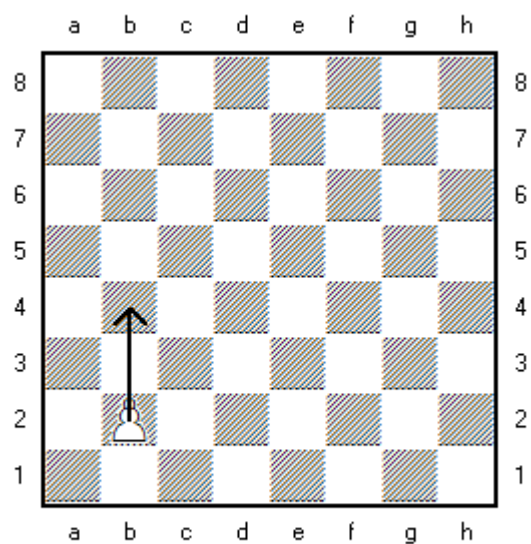
Q5. Is this move safe?
Yes/No



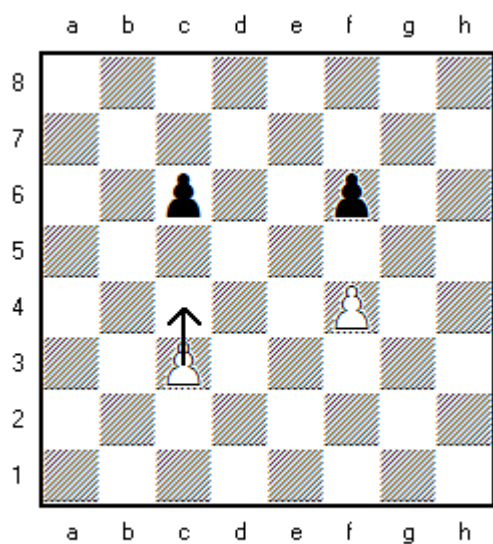
Q6. Is this move safe?
Yes/No



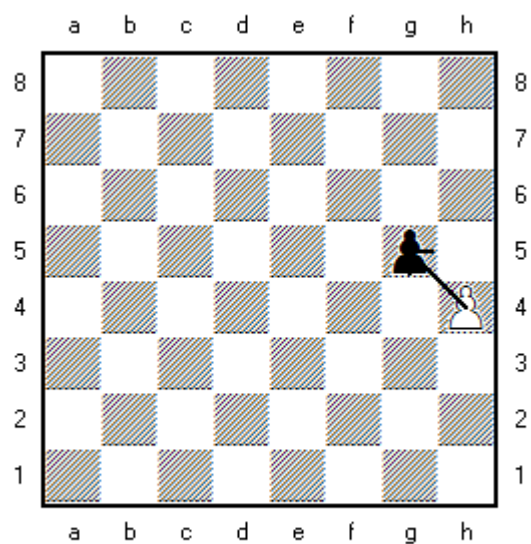
Q1. Write this move in notation



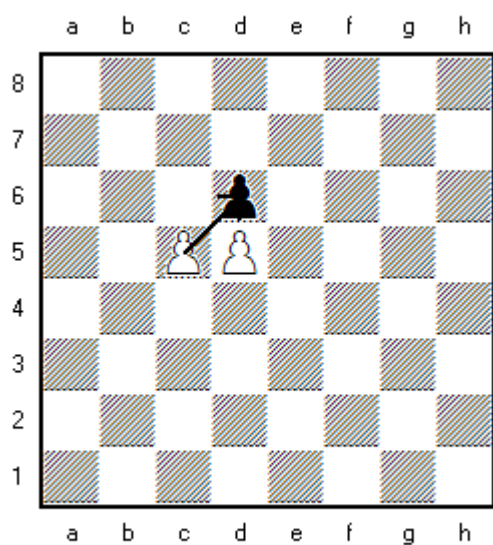
Q2. Write this move in notation



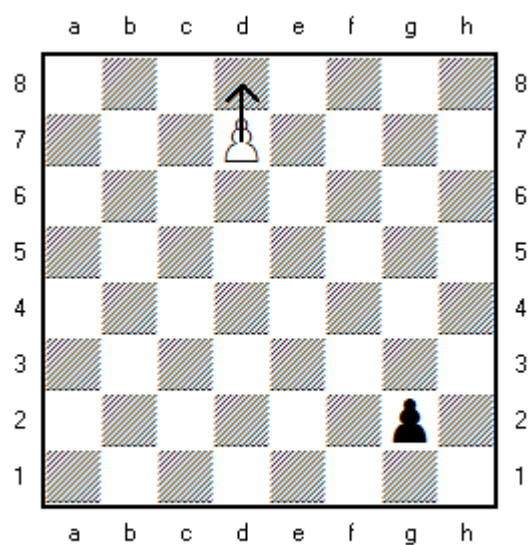
Q3. Write this move in notation



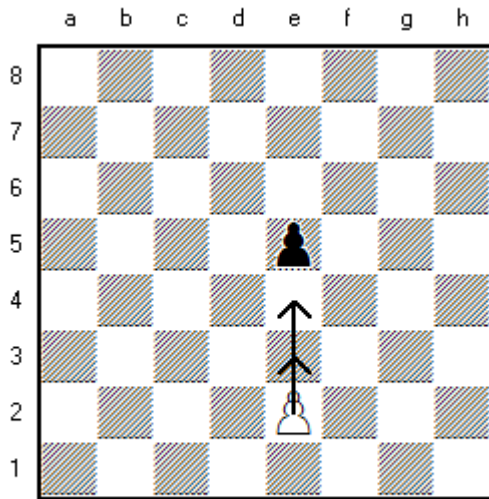
Q4. Write this move in notation



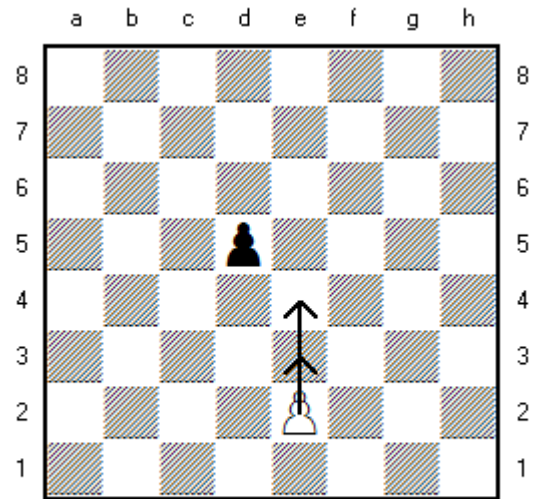
Q5. Write this move in notation



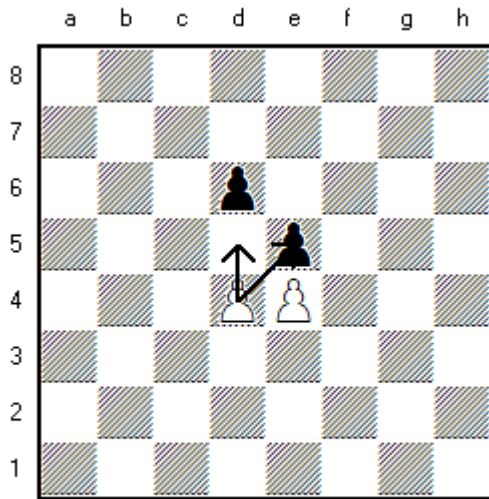
Q6. Write this move in notation



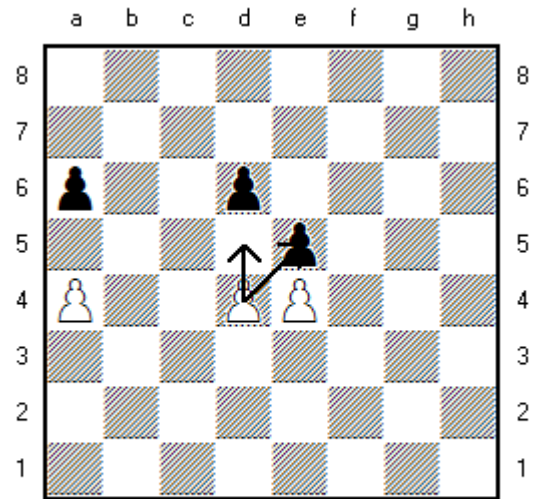
Q1. Capture the Flag: choose a move
a) e2-e3 b) e2-e4



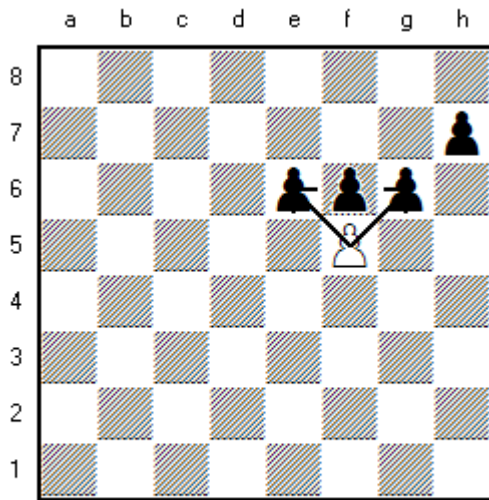
Q2. Capture the Flag: choose a move
a) e2-e3 b) e2-e4



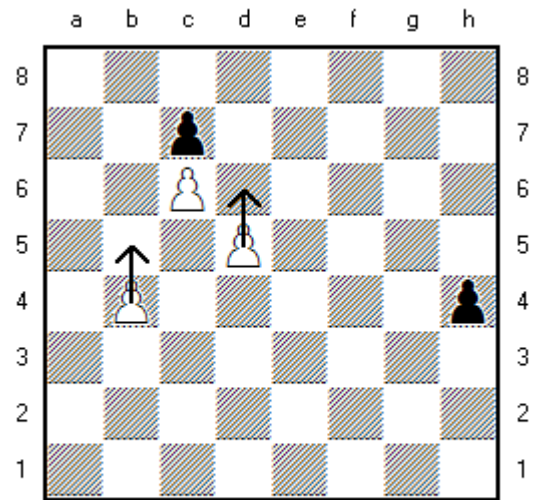
Q3. Capture the Flag: choose a move
a) d4-d5 b) d4xe5



Q4. Capture the Flag: choose a move
a) d4-d5 b) d4xe5



Q5. Capture the Flag: choose a move
a) f5xe6 b) f5xg6



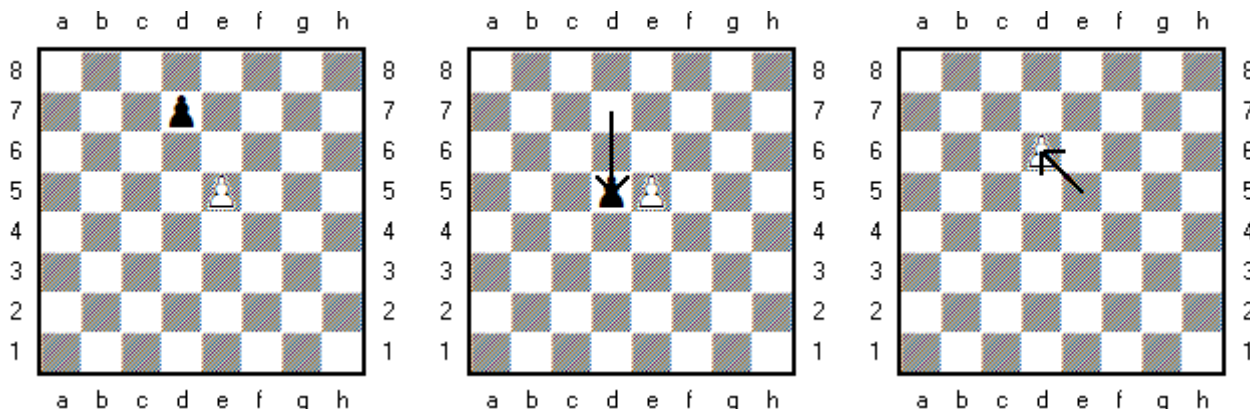
Q6. Capture the Flag: choose a move
a) b4-b5 b) d5-d6

There's one more pawn move that needs to be learnt at some point: the EN PASSANT capture.

Many young children find this difficult to understand so it doesn't matter too much if they don't get it first time, but they will need to know it before joining a chess club.

The EN PASSANT capture works like this: you have a pawn on your fifth rank (number 5 for White, number 4 for Black). Your opponent moves a pawn on the next file two squares, so that it finishes up alongside your pawn. You may then, on your next move and ONLY on your next move, capture it as if it had moved just one square.

Observe the diagrams below.



In the first diagram it's Black's move. He chooses to move his pawn two squares. The second diagram shows the position after this move. White now chooses to capture this pawn EN PASSANT (while it's passing the d6 square). The third diagram shows the position after the EN PASSANT capture. White's pawn is now on d6 and the black pawn has been removed from the board.

Once your children understand the idea, you might want to reinforce it on a regular basis to ensure they remember it. It doesn't come up very often but knowing or not knowing it can make the difference between winning and losing the game.

If your children have problems with any particular type of question, feel free to set them some more questions until they understand. If something's really too hard you can always come back to it later.

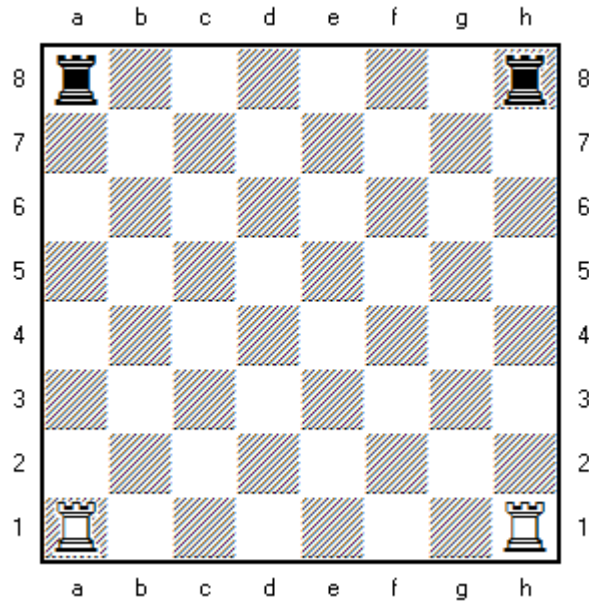
Encourage your children to set some puzzles for you to solve. If you like, make some mistakes and see if they notice. This will ensure that they really understand the concept behind each page.

Continue to play Capture the Flag pawn games with your children until you feel they're ready to move on. Some children may be ready more or less straight away. Other children might be happy playing these games for weeks or even months. This is absolutely fine. There's no hurry, especially for younger children. If you wait too long it doesn't matter: they'll soon catch up. But if you introduce something too soon you could put them off for life.

CHAPTER 3

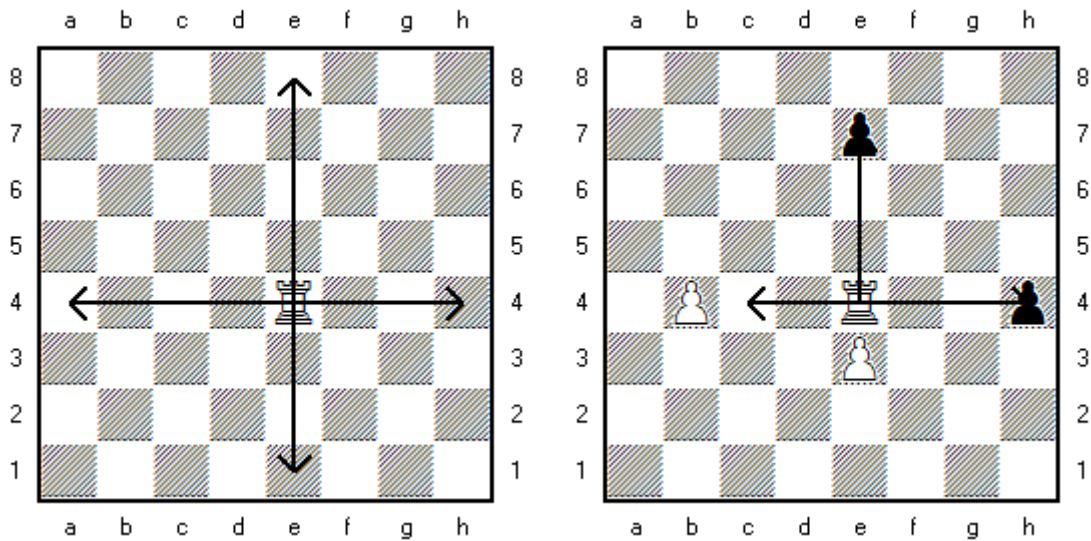
THE ROOK

Find the rooks in your chess set and set them up for the start of the game as in the diagram below. Note that the correct name is ROOK, not castle. Many casual players still call it a castle but if you do so in a chess club or tournament you'll be laughed out of court. The name comes from a Persian word for 'chariot' and they were originally the chariots in the army. In many Western European countries they're known as the tower. Ensure that you use the correct name yourself (you might occasionally call it a castle to see if your children notice) and that your children also use the correct name.



Ensure that your children can identify the rooks and place them on their correct starting squares.

The rook can move horizontally or vertically as many squares as it likes, as in the diagram on the left:



Unlike the pawn, but like all other pieces, it captures the same way that it moves. It can capture an enemy piece in its path and is blocked by a friendly piece in its path. It cannot jump over other pieces or capture more than one piece at a time. In the diagram on the right the rook can capture either black pawn.

Now we know about rooks and pawns we can move onto the important subject of attacking and defending.

First, some definitions to avoid confusion.

If we move a piece to a square where it could take another piece next move it's an ATTACK.

If we move a piece to a square where it WANTS TO take another piece next move it's a THREAT.

Rooks are, self-evidently, more valuable than pawns. We assign a value of 1 point to a pawn and a value of 5 points to a rook. Children need to learn, memorise and understand the significance of this.

If we have a piece which is protecting our piece so that we can take back if an enemy piece takes it, this is a DEFENDER.

If we attack an enemy piece which is not defended this is a THREAT. If our opponent THREATENS one of our pieces we can do several things:

- a) we can move it to a safe square
- b) we can defend it with another piece
- c) we can capture the attacking piece
- d) we can block the attack by putting a piece in the way

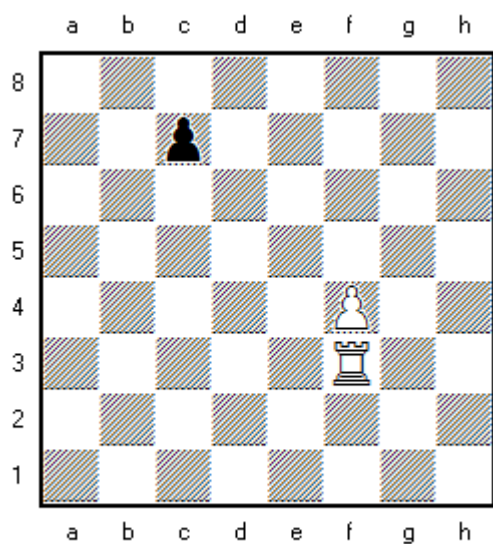
If we attack a more valuable piece (a rook) with a less valuable piece it's automatically a THREAT, even if the more valuable piece is defended. We should be very happy to lose a pawn (or two) if we get a rook in exchange. Young children often have problems with this concept: they will say that they don't want to lose their pawn even if they have the chance to capture a rook. If your children have a problem with this you need to reinforce it at every opportunity.

On the other hand we don't want to win a pawn (or two) if we're going to lose a rook in the process. So, if an enemy pawn threatens our rook we need to move out of the way, but if an enemy rook threatens our pawn we'd probably be happy to defend it.

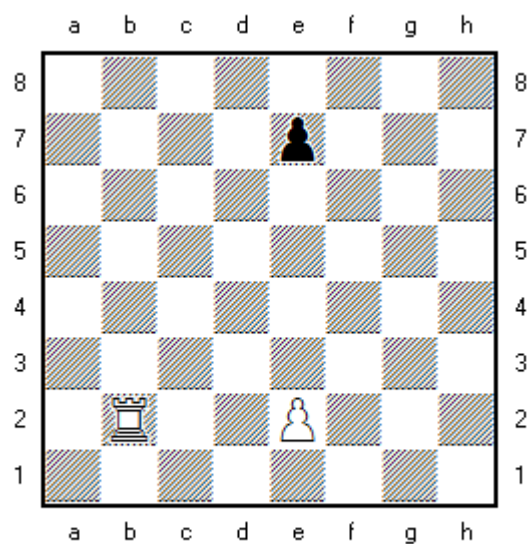
Even better than threatening one piece is threatening two pieces. If your opponent meets one threat you may still be able to carry out the other threat and win a piece by doing so.

The next set of worksheets deals with the ideas of creating threats and defending pieces which are threatened.

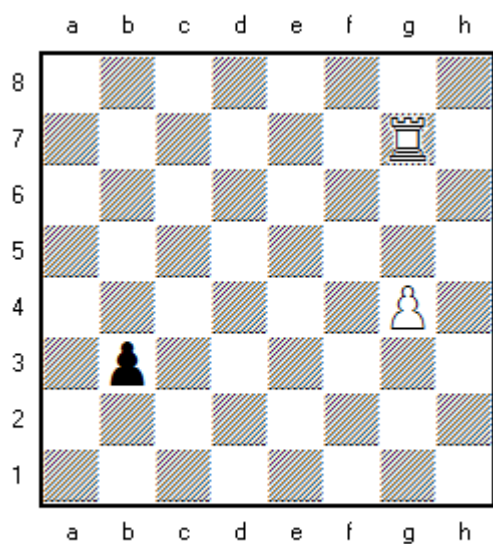
Children who have understood the rook move and the concepts of attack and defence will not find these difficult. A few younger children might struggle with moving rooks along straight lines: if so provide more practice in making rook moves across or up and down the board. These worksheets are also designed to improve chessboard vision and teach the geometry of chess. You might like to point out that a rook can threaten an enemy pawn in two ways: consider that the rook and the pawn are on opposite corners of a rectangle: the rook can threaten the pawn by moving to either of the other two corners.



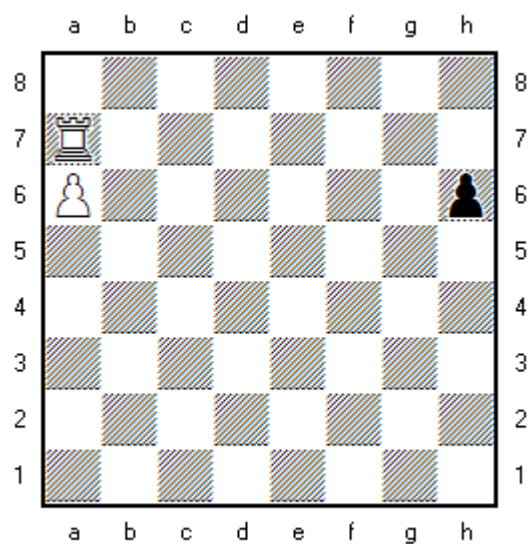
Q1. Threaten a pawn



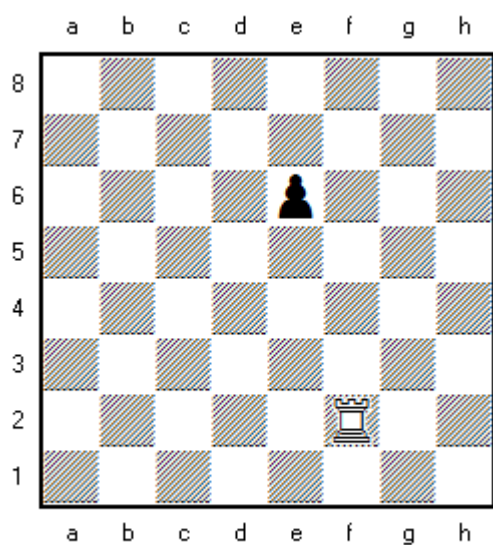
Q2. Threaten a pawn



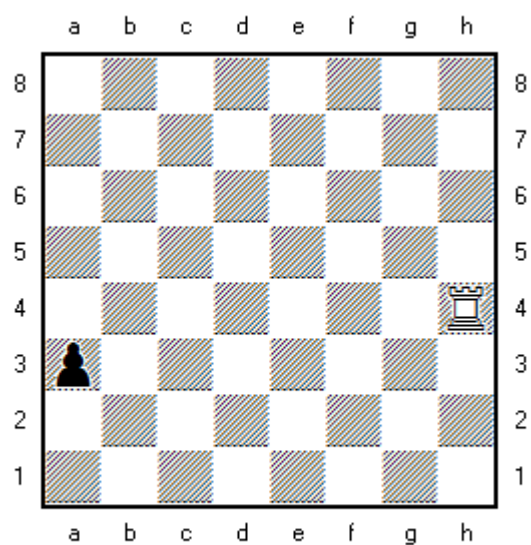
Q3. Threaten a pawn



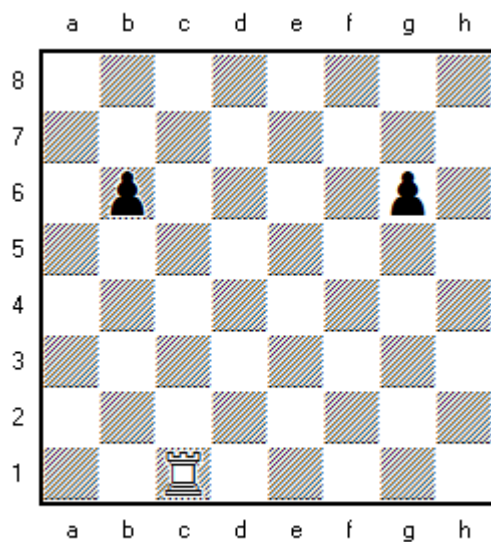
Q4. Threaten a pawn



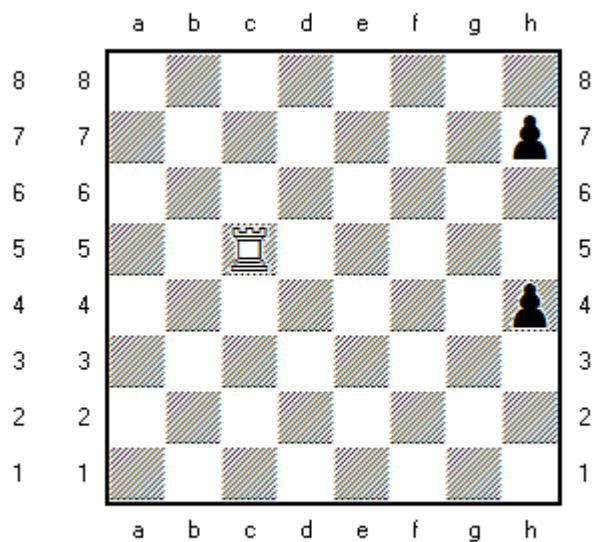
Q5. Threaten a pawn
Give two answers



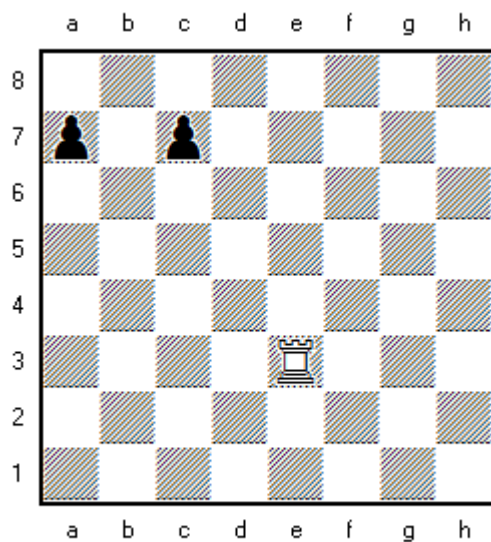
Q6. Threaten a pawn
Give two answers



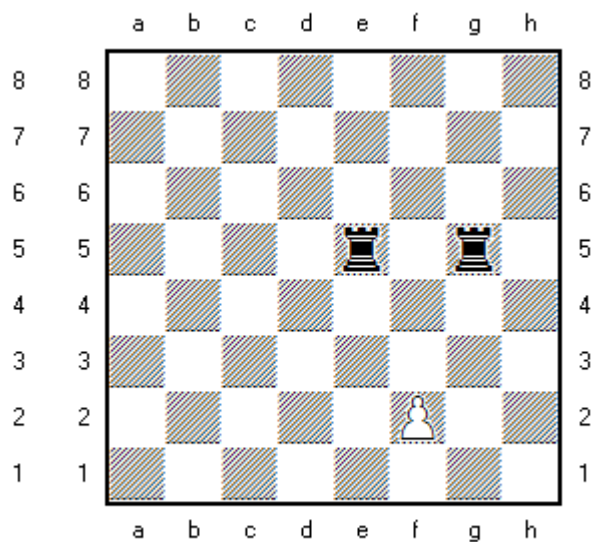
Q1. Threaten two pawns



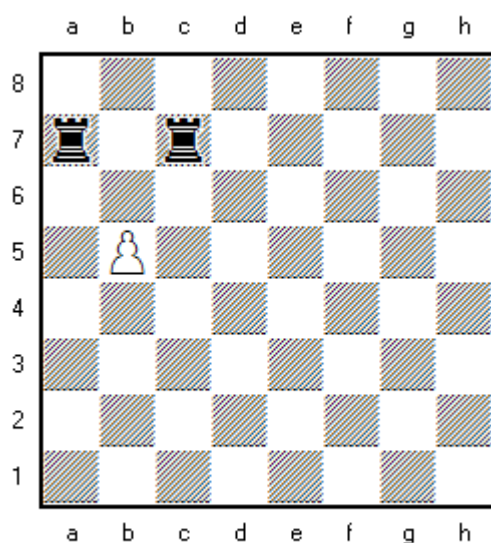
Q2. Threaten two pawns



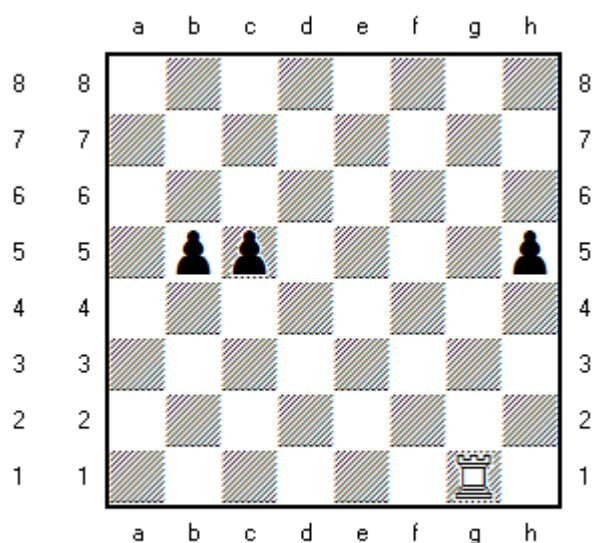
Q3. Threaten two pawns



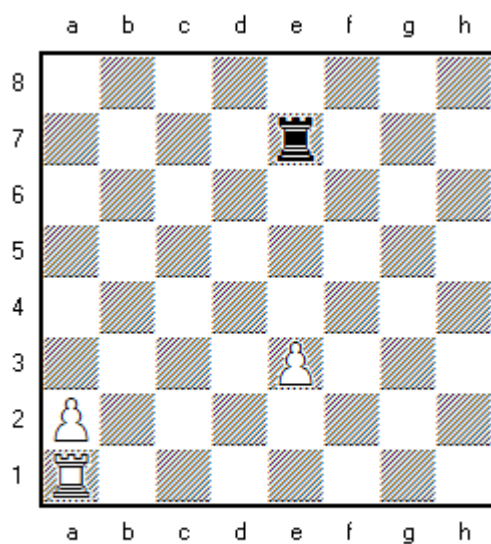
Q4. Threaten two rooks



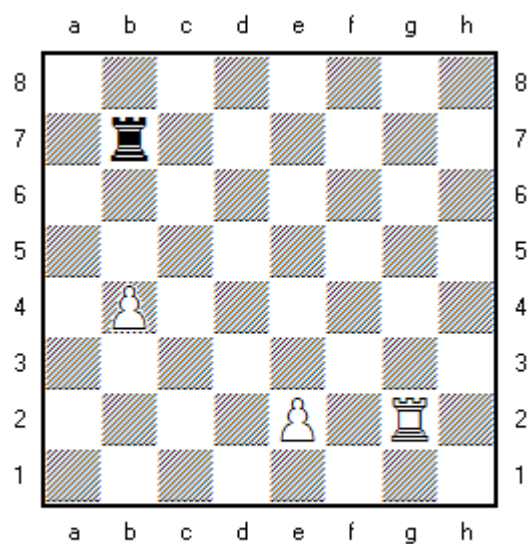
Q5. Threaten two rooks



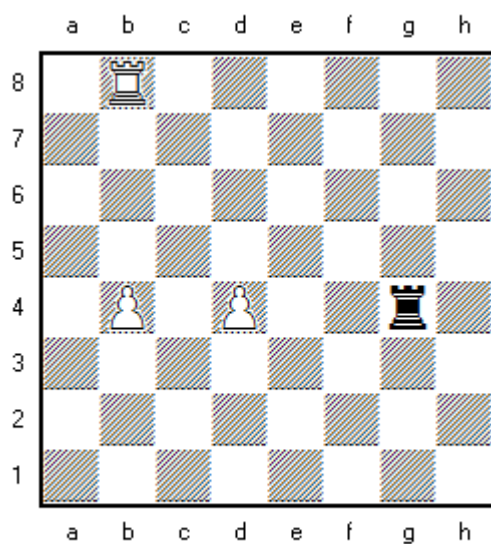
Q6. Threaten three pawns



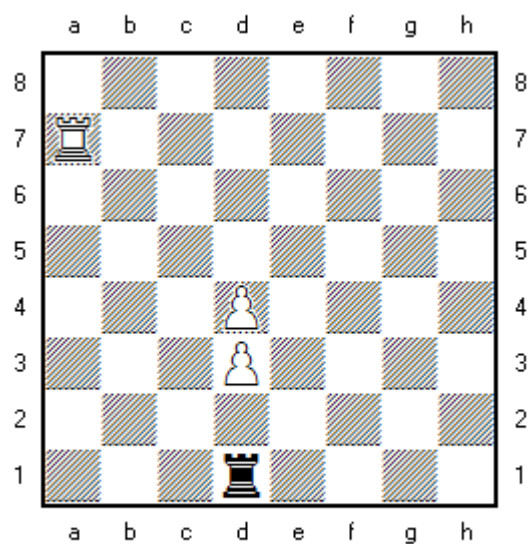
Q1. Use a rook to defend a pawn



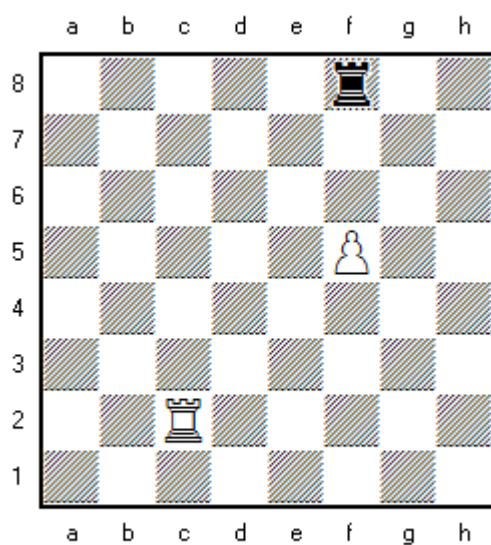
Q2. Use a rook to defend a pawn



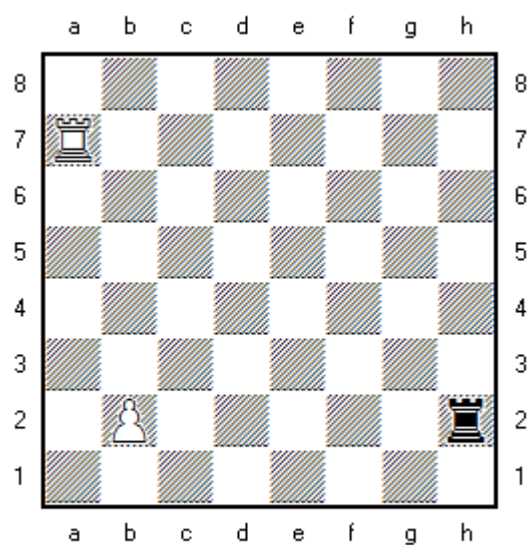
Q3. Use a rook to defend a pawn



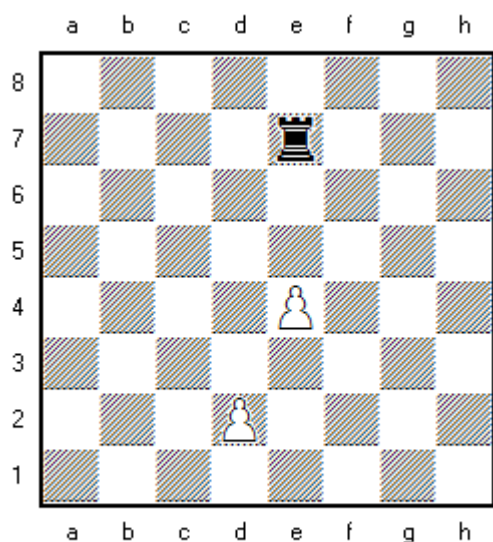
Q4. Use a rook to defend a pawn



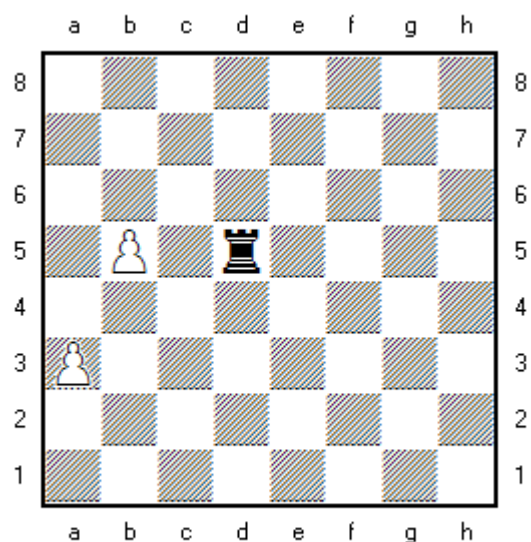
Q5. Use a rook to defend a pawn
Give two answers



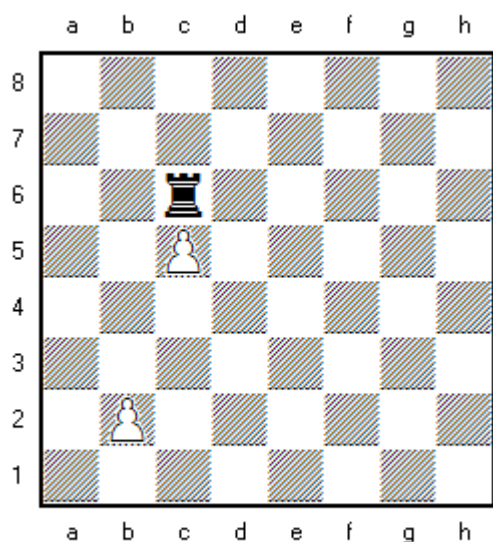
Q6. Use a rook to defend a pawn
Give two answers



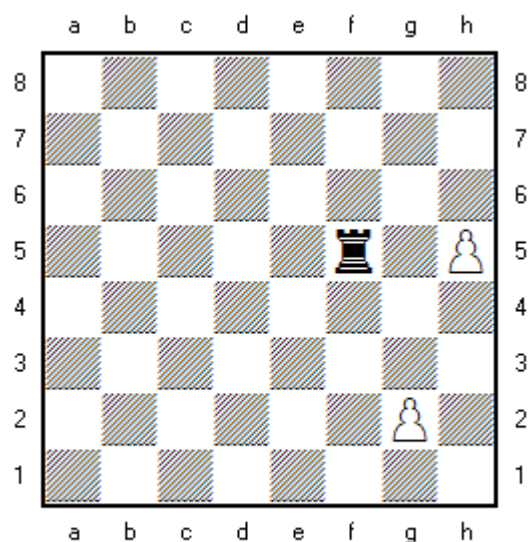
Q1. Use a pawn to defend a pawn



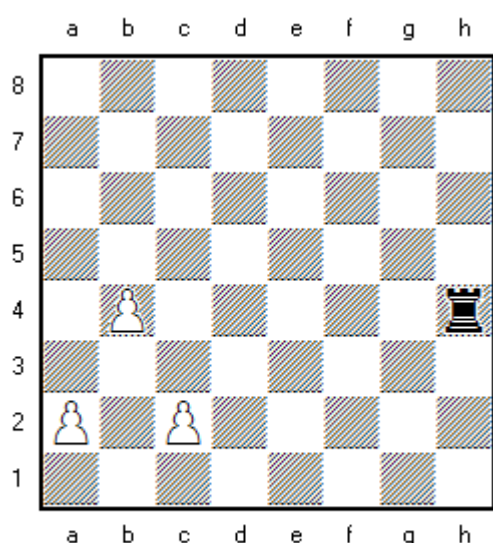
Q2. Use a pawn to defend a pawn



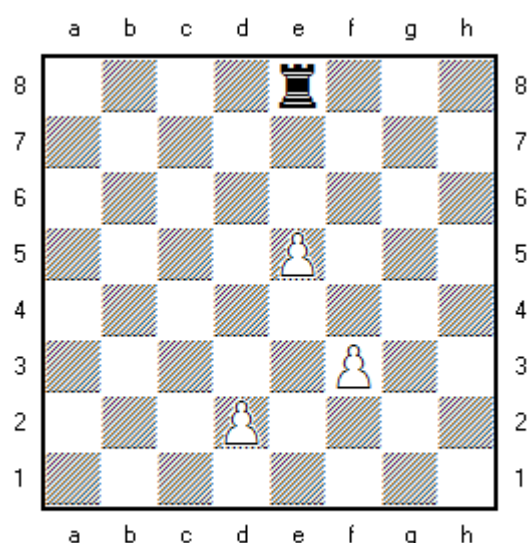
Q3. Use a pawn to defend a pawn



Q4. Use a pawn to defend a pawn



Q5. Use a pawn to defend a pawn
Give two answers



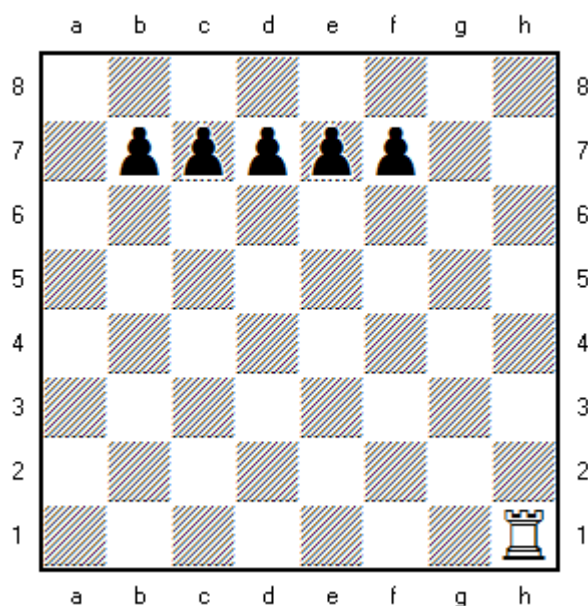
Q6. Use a pawn to defend a pawn
Give two answers

Before we move onto some games with rooks, we're going to make a slight modification to the CAPTURE THE FLAG rules.

If you get a pawn to the end of the board you PROMOTE it into another piece: in rook games we use a queen. Your opponent then has one move in which to capture the queen if he can. You win the game by playing a move with the promoted piece. (Note: the queen moves like a rook, and also diagonally.)

We're going to start by playing some games in which a rook battles against an army of pawns. With young children, you might start by getting them to use a rook to stop one pawn. You'll see that this is easy: the rook can win by occupying the same file as the enemy pawn and then capturing it next move. If, on the other hand, you threaten the pawn along the rank, the pawn will just advance. Another winning strategy, though, is to place the rook along the next rank to the enemy pawn, so that you can capture it when it advances.

Then continue adding pawns, moving on when your children are confident, until you reach rook against five pawns: for instance the diagram below.



You can win this game with White as long as you give a bit of thought to each move. It's a good idea to start by moving Rh1-h7 (note that we add a capital R at the front when recording rook moves) which threatens, directly or indirectly, all the black pawns.

White's strategy should be to capture as many black pawns as possible, as long as it's safe to do so, while watching to see if an enemy pawn is approaching the end of the board.

You can play rook against four, five or six pawns against the computer at <http://www.chesskids.org.uk/newcourse/rookcomb.htm>. If you want to take the side of the pawns instead (and it's good to play all these games from both sides) click on the You Start button: the computer will turn the board round and make a move. The computer doesn't play the rook very well, though, so you may well be able to win with the pawns.

Encourage your children to make up their own games as well. How far advanced do two pawns have to be to win against a rook? What about three pawns? Or four pawns? Making up new games and puzzles based on what they already know is a great way to encourage your children's creativity as well as reinforcing their knowledge.

Our next worksheets look at captures, exchanges and safety within the context of rooks and pawns.

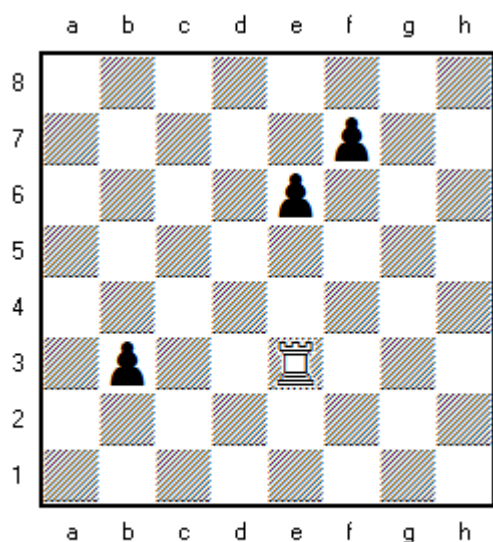
The first set of questions invites the student to capture pawns safely: in other words without losing your rook. All players need to look for captures every move and check every move they play is safe.

Then we consider trading pieces: will an exchange be good, equal or bad? For the purposes of this and similar worksheets, an exchange of pieces of equal value (here, rook for rook or pawn for pawn) is considered an equal exchange, an exchange of a weaker piece for a stronger enemy piece is considered a good capture, and an exchange of a stronger piece for a weaker enemy piece is considered a bad capture. In some of the positions you have two pieces that can capture the same enemy piece so you have to look further ahead and count all the points once all the captures have been exhausted. (Remember: pawn=1 point, rook=5 points.)

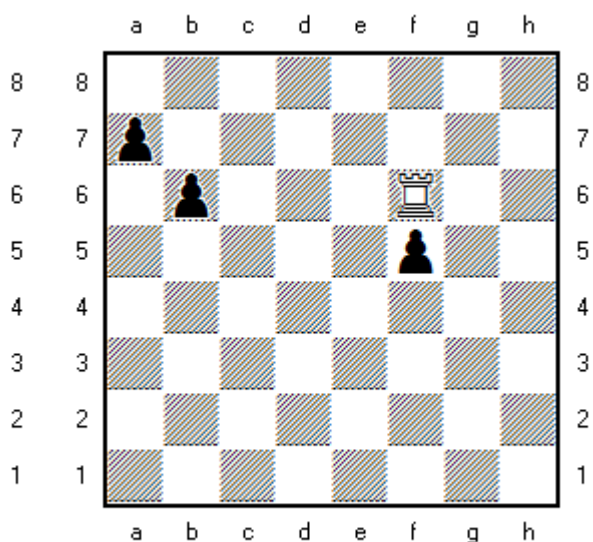
The next sheet again focuses on safety: is the indicated move safe? If you play that move, will your opponent be able to win points by capturing it? Again, don't forget to look for recaptures on the same square.

Finally, some positions where you have to make a decision between two moves. You'll probably need to set up the board and work through both moves in order to solve these puzzles successfully.

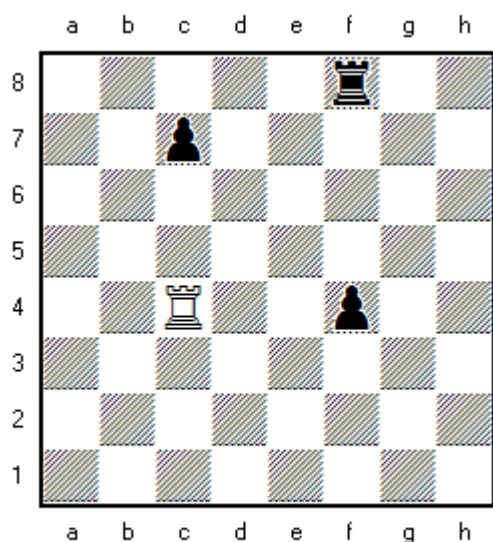
If your children are having difficulties with any of these question types you could make up your own questions to give them more practice. Again, you could ask them to set their own questions if you like.



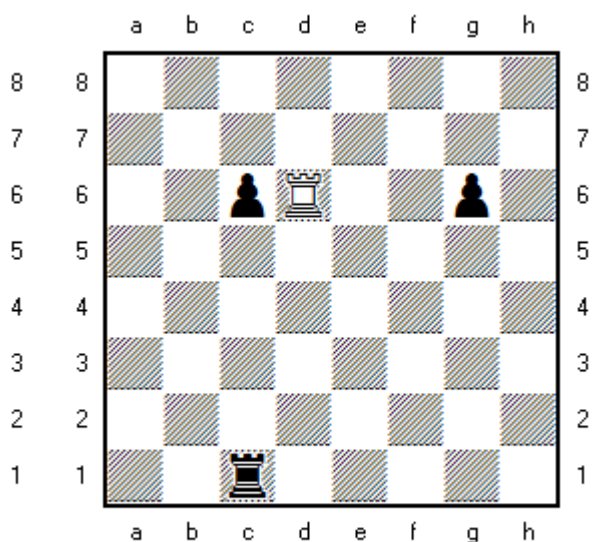
Q1. Capture a pawn safely



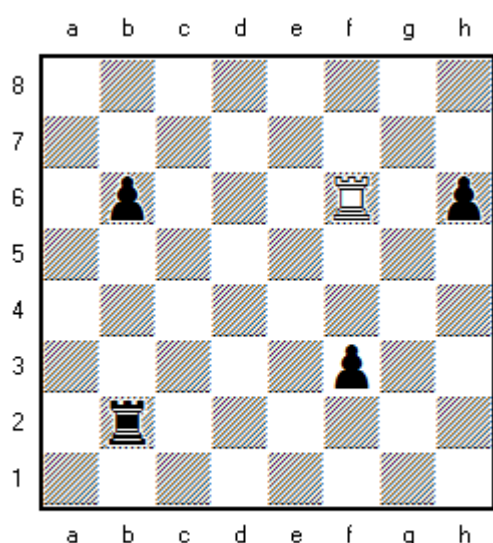
Q2. Capture a pawn safely



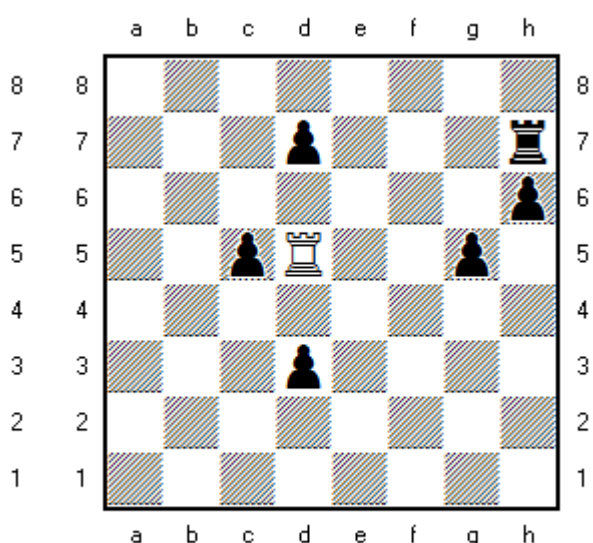
Q3. Capture a pawn safely



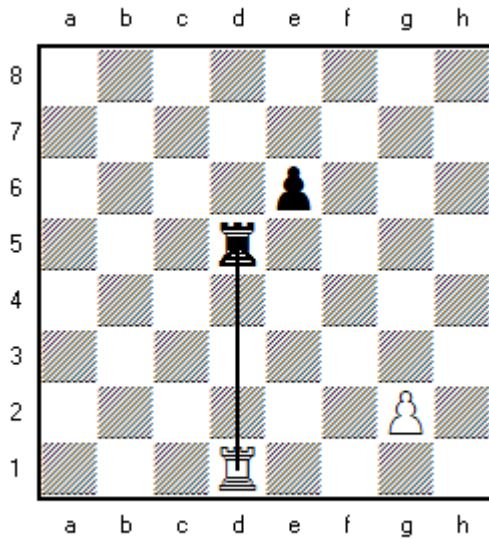
Q4. Capture a pawn safely



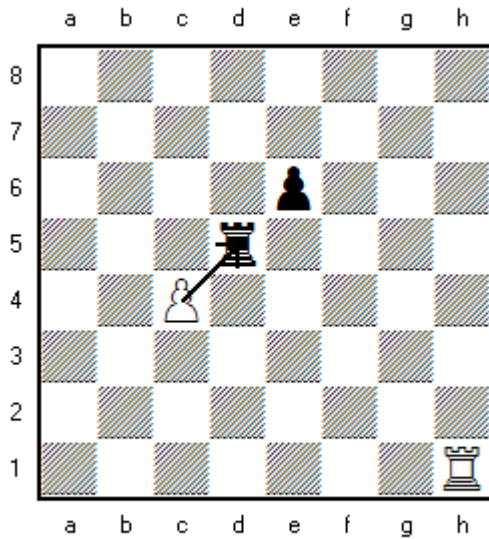
Q5. Capture a pawn safely
Give two answers



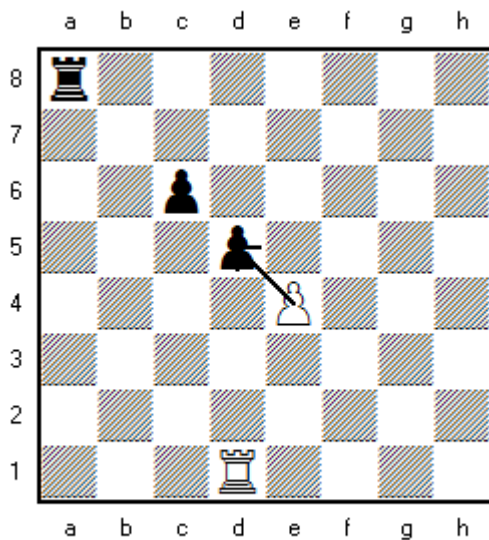
Q6. Capture a pawn safely
Give two answers



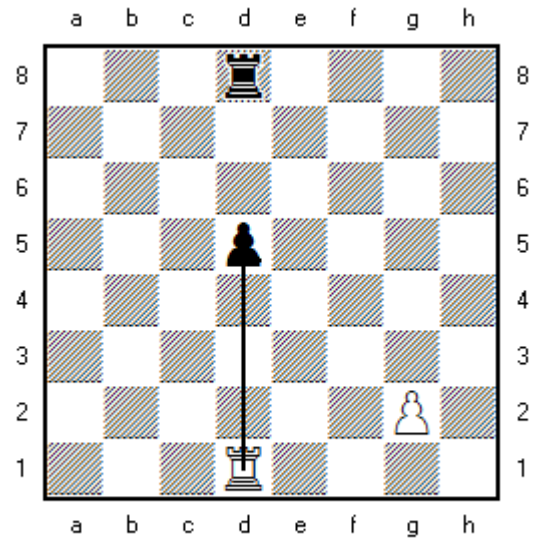
Q1. Is this capture
a) good b) equal c) bad?



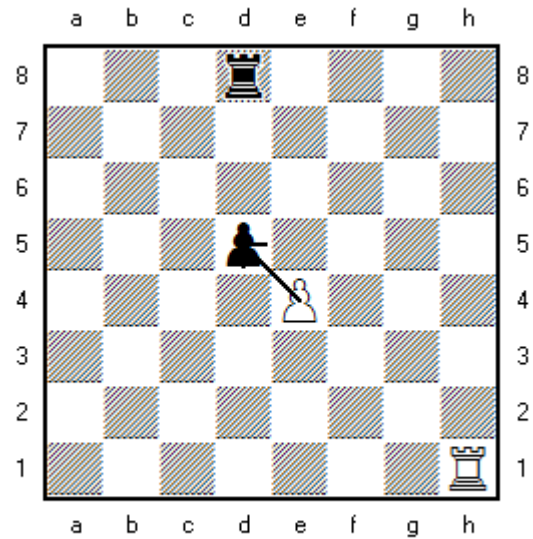
Q3. Is this capture
a) good b) equal c) bad?



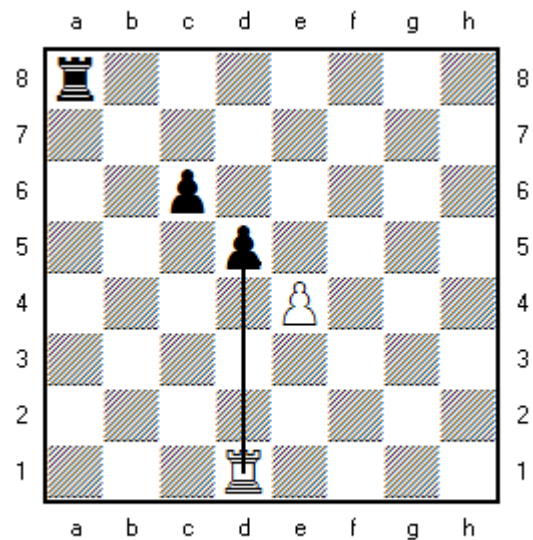
Q5. Is this capture
a) good b) equal c) bad?



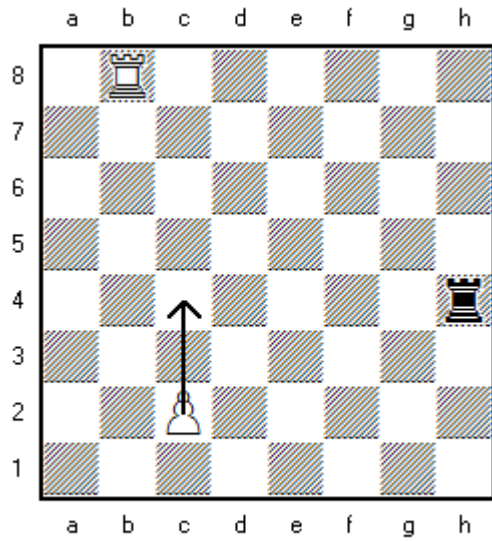
Q2. Is this capture
a) good b) equal c) bad?



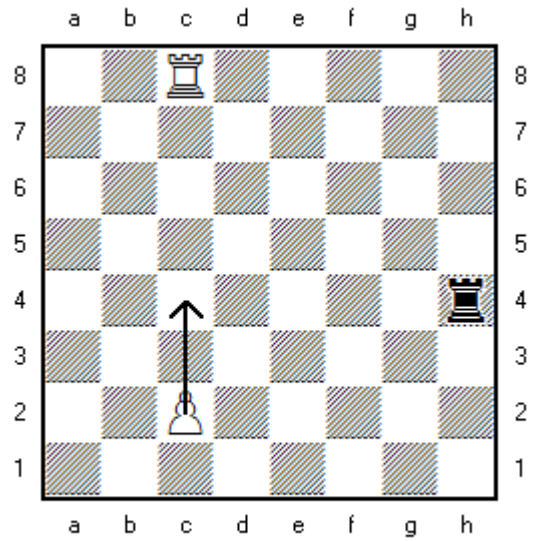
Q4. Is this capture
a) good b) equal c) bad?



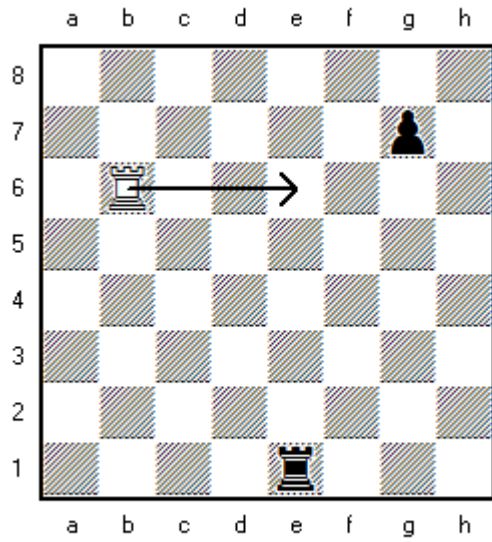
Q6. Is this capture
a) good b) equal c) bad?



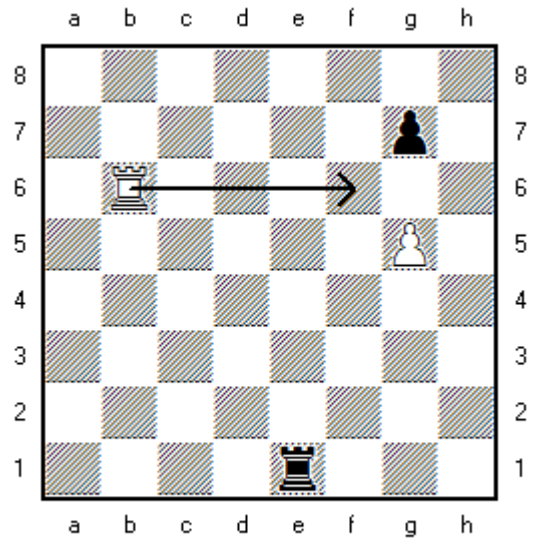
Q1. Is this move safe?



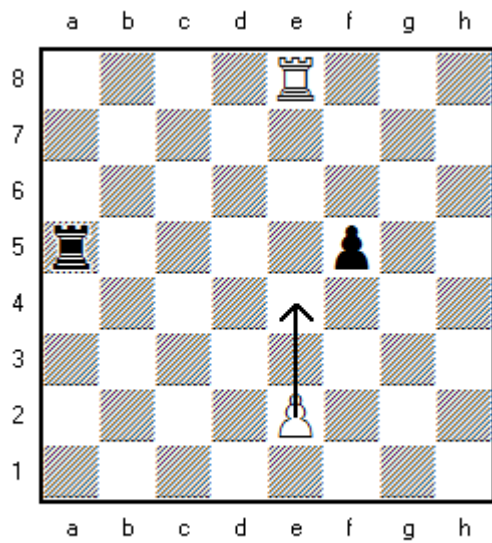
Q2. Is this move safe?



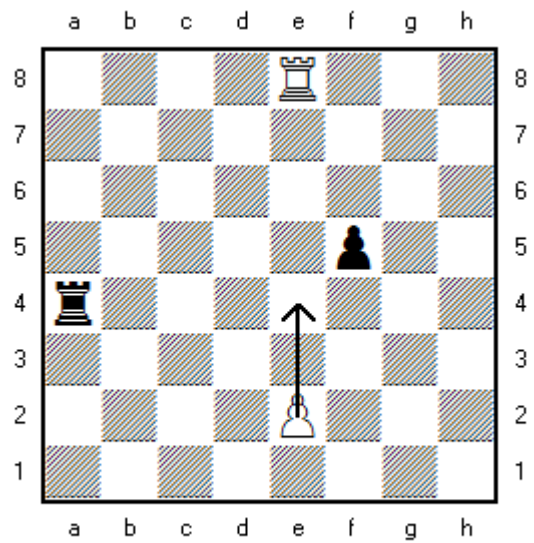
Q3. Is this move safe?



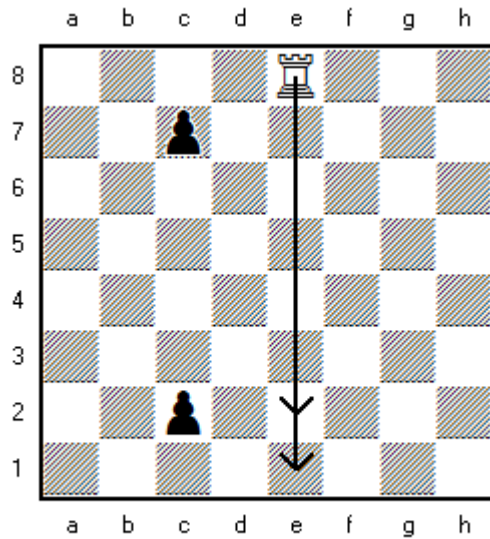
Q4. Is this move safe?



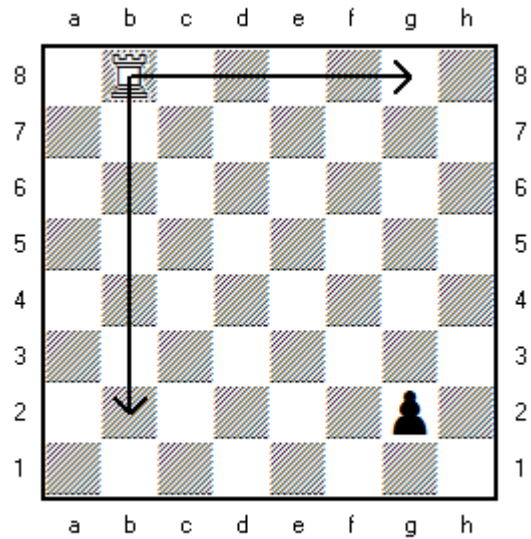
Q5. Is this move safe?



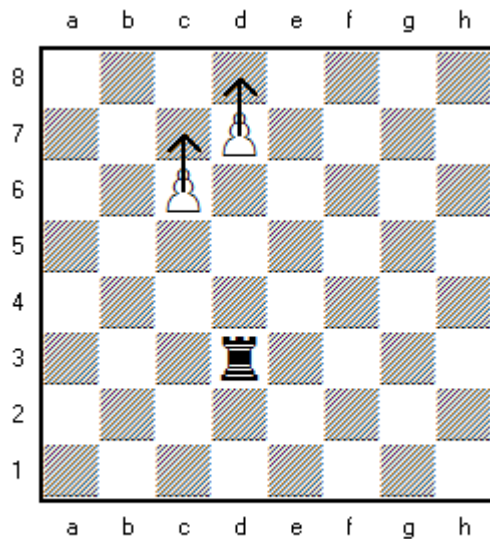
Q6. Is this move safe?



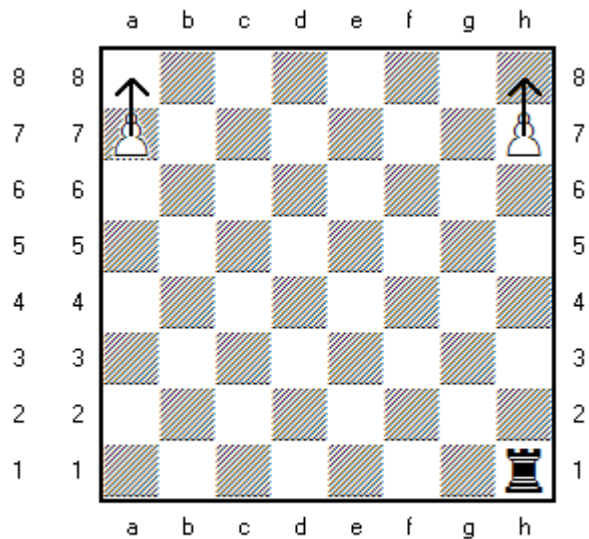
Q1. Capture the Flag: choose a move
a) Re8-e2 b) Re8-e1



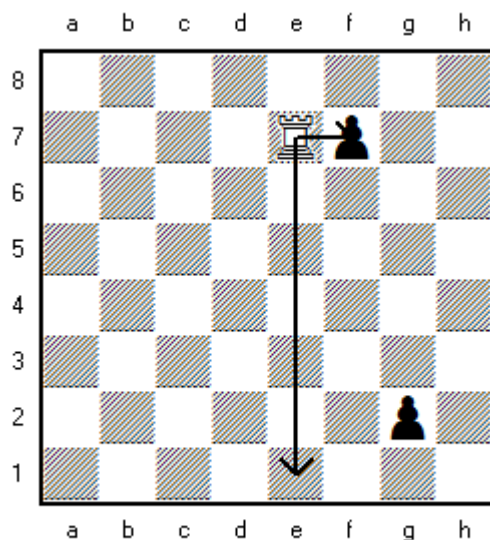
Q2. Capture the Flag: choose a move
a) Rb8-b2 b) Rb8-g8



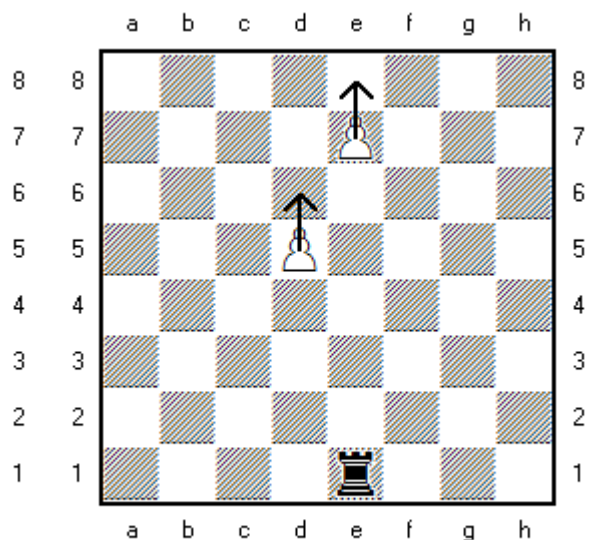
Q3. Capture the Flag: choose a move
a) c6-c7 b) d7-d8Q



Q4. Capture the Flag: choose a move
a) a7-a8Q b) h7-h8Q

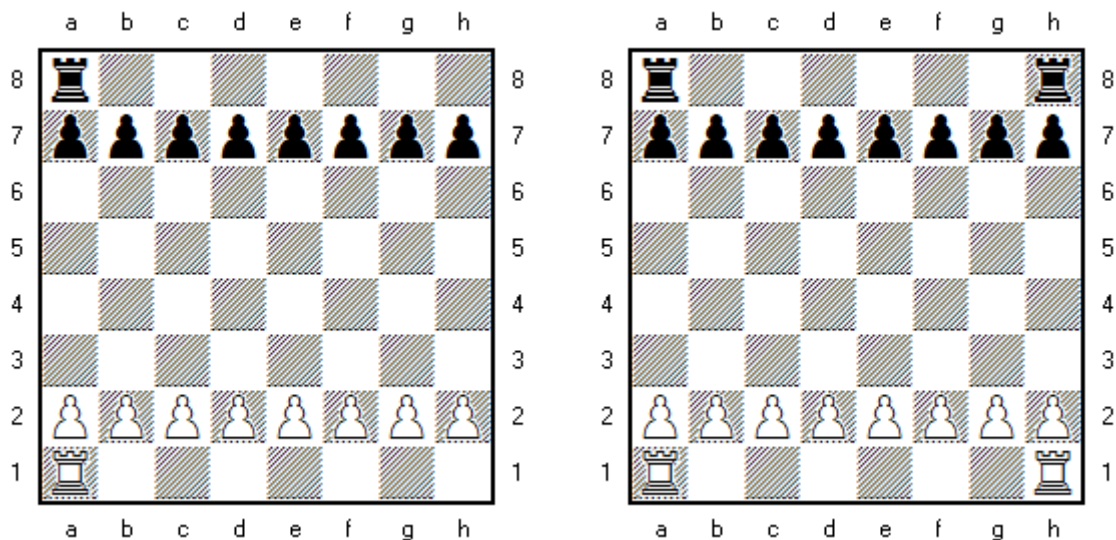


Q5. Capture the Flag: choose a move
a) Re7-e1 b) Re7x7



Q6. Capture the Flag: choose a move
a) d5-d6 b) e7-e8Q

Our Capture the Flag rook games give you the opportunity to practise rook moves, and also to learn the best strategies for using rooks. These will come in useful once you start to play complete games of chess.



Start if you like with just one rook each. If your children are lacking confidence, you could start without your rook or without a few of your pawns. Alternatively you could start with two rooks against one.

The best strategy for using rooks is to place them on OPEN FILES. An OPEN FILE is a file with no pawns on it. If a file has an enemy pawn but not one of your pawns it's a HALF-OPEN FILE. These can also be good for rooks.

Play through these moves from the position on your left (note how we use move numbers): 1. e2-e4 e7-e6 2. d2-d4 d7-d5 3. e4xd5 e6xd5 (a symmetrical pawn exchange) 4. Ra1-e1. White already has a winning advantage: next move he will play Re1-e7, attacking a lot of black pawns.

Now play these moves again from the position on your right. Black has to challenge White on the open file by moving one of his rooks to e8. If White trades rooks he will be in trouble so he needs to maintain the tension.

You can play some of these games against the computer at <http://www.chesskids.org.uk/newcourse/prookrace.htm>.

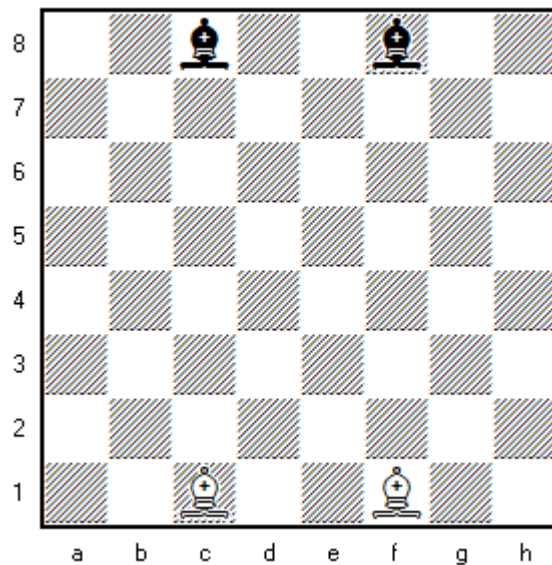
You will see that the computer keeps score of the game (on the right of your screen). You can print off the moves and go through them with your children. Did they play any moves that lost pieces? Was it because they didn't see the computer's threat or because they played an unsafe move? In some ways rook captures are easier to 'see' than pawn captures, because they capture the same way as they move, but they can also be harder to see because they happen over long distances.

If your children are enjoying these games you can carry on playing them. Younger children may be happy to stop here for a few months, but older children, once they've mastered the rook move, learnt to 'see' rook moves and captures, and understood the strategy, will be keen to move onto the next piece, the bishop.

CHAPTER 4

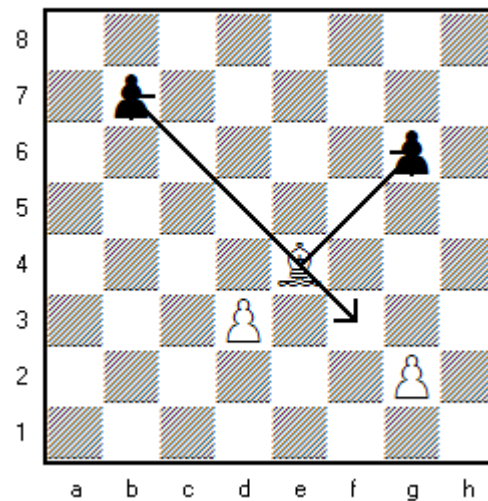
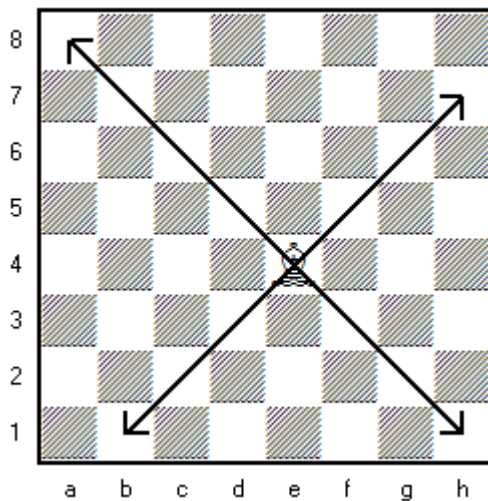
THE BISHOP

Find the bishops in your chess set and set them up for the start of the game as in the diagram below. The shape of the piece represents the bishop's headdress (mitre). The bishops were originally the elephants in the Indian army.



Ensure that your children can identify the bishops and place them on their correct starting squares.

The bishop can move diagonally as many squares as it likes, as in the diagram on the left:



Like the rook, it captures the same way that it moves. It can capture an enemy piece in its path and is blocked by a friendly piece in its path. It cannot jump over other pieces or capture more than one piece at a time. In the diagram on the right the bishop can capture either black pawn.

Ask your children to play some bishop moves on the board. Many young children find it difficult to follow diagonals. If this is a problem give them more opportunity to practise this before continuing.

We now know about three pieces: the pawn, the rook and the bishop. It's important to understand that some pieces are more powerful than others so that we know when we should trade pieces off and when we should keep pieces on the board.

Ask your children which piece they think is stronger: the rook or the bishop. Make sure they give a reason for their choice.

It should be clear that a rook is more powerful than a bishop. A good answer would be that in some positions it can go to more squares. The best answer would be that a bishop can only visit half the squares on the board. Demonstrate that a bishop starting on a white square can never reach a black square. Demonstrate also that a rook in the corner of an empty board has 14 possible moves while a bishop in the same corner has only 7 moves. In the centre, a rook still has 14 moves and a bishop 13 moves.

So we have a hierarchy of pieces. It's helpful for beginners to assign values to each piece. Typically, and very crudely, the pieces we've learnt so far have these values (slightly undervaluing the bishop and over valuing the rook):

Pawn: 1 point

Bishop: 3 points

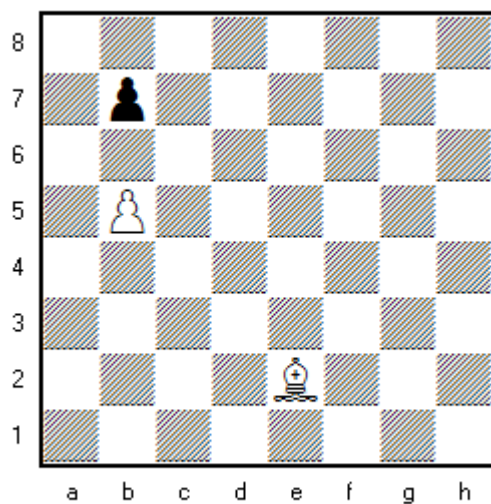
Rook: 5 points

Emphasize that it's important to look for moves that win points, and to avoid, unless we have a very good reason, playing moves that lose points. We would be very happy to trade off our bishop for an enemy rook but would not want to trade off our rook for an enemy bishop. Likewise, we'd like to win a bishop for a pawn but would rather not take a pawn in exchange for a bishop.

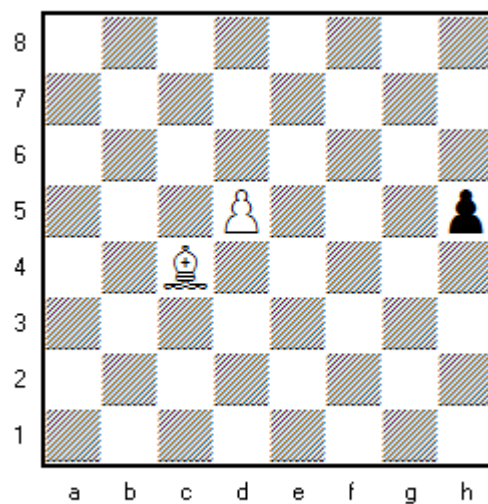
Young children often find this concept difficult. They don't want to lose one of their pieces even if they get a stronger enemy piece in return.

We can now extend our understanding of attacks and threats. If a bishop attacks a rook it is automatically a threat. If a rook attacks a bishop it's only a threat if the bishop is not defended. We may be able to meet the threat by defending our bishop as we'd be very happy to get a rook in exchange for it. But if our rook is attacked by a bishop, defending it with another piece would be no good. We need to move it to a safe square or perhaps block the attack instead.

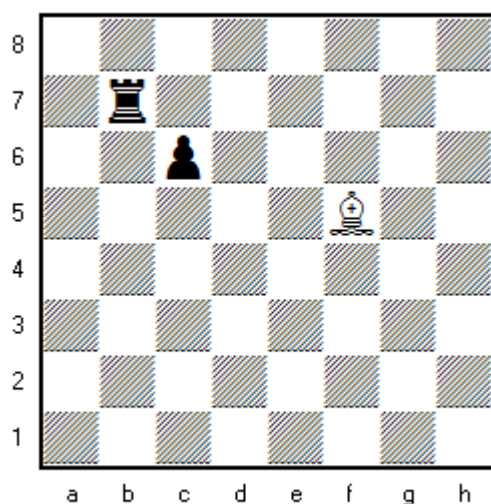
The next set of worksheets reinforces the bishop move and the concepts of threats and safety as they apply to bishops.



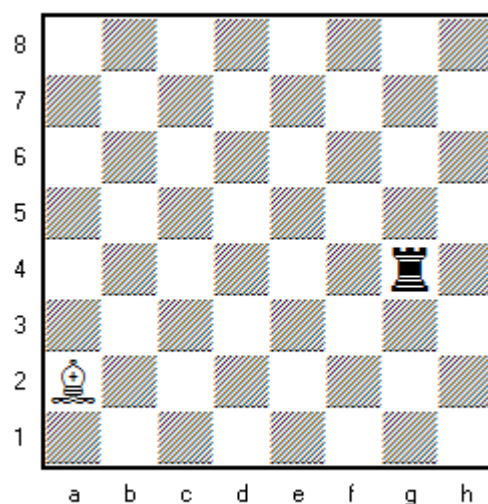
Q1. Threaten a pawn



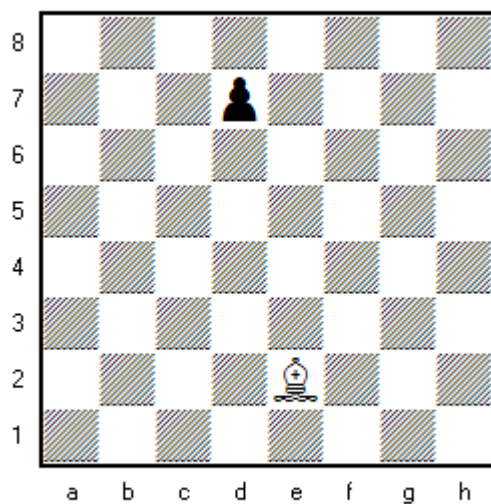
Q2. Threaten a pawn



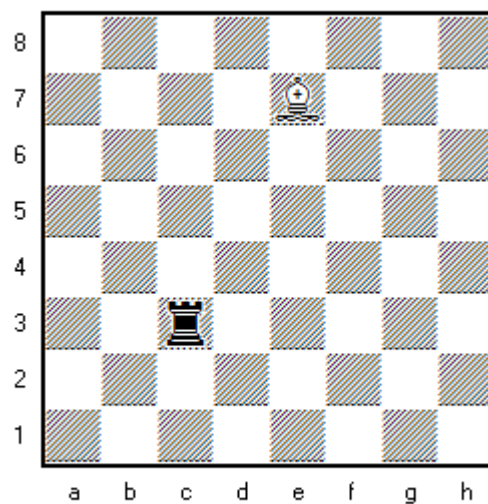
Q3. Threaten a rook



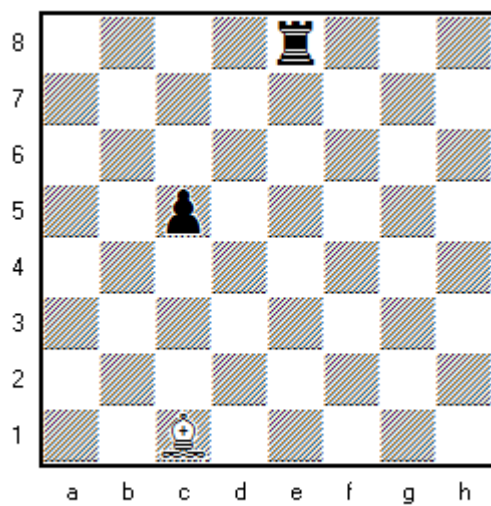
Q4. Threaten a rook



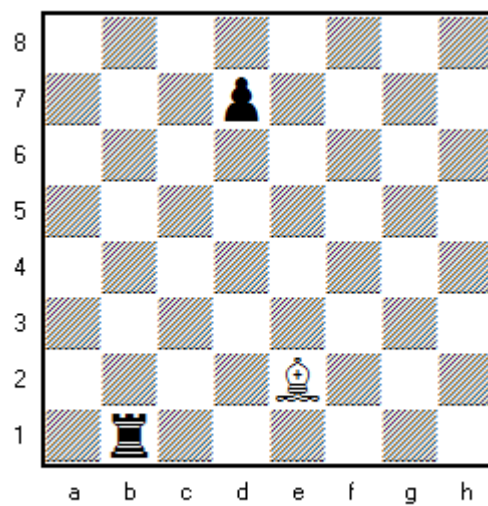
Q5. Threaten a pawn
Give two answers



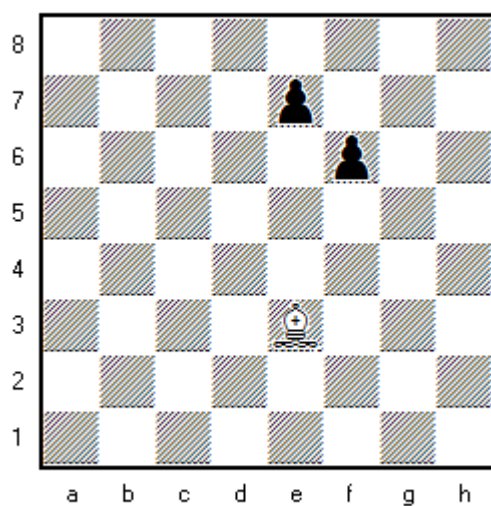
Q6. Threaten a rook
Give two answers



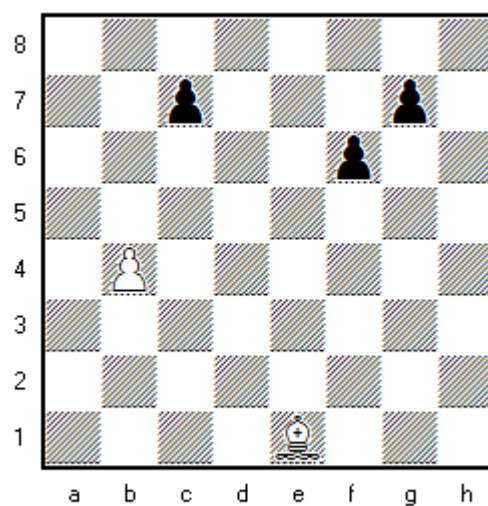
Q1. Threaten a pawn safely



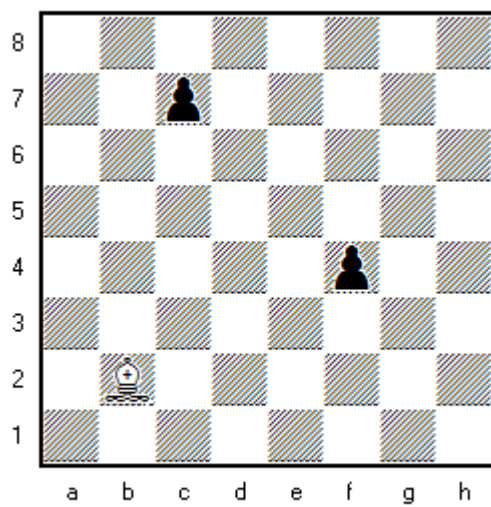
Q2. Threaten a pawn safely



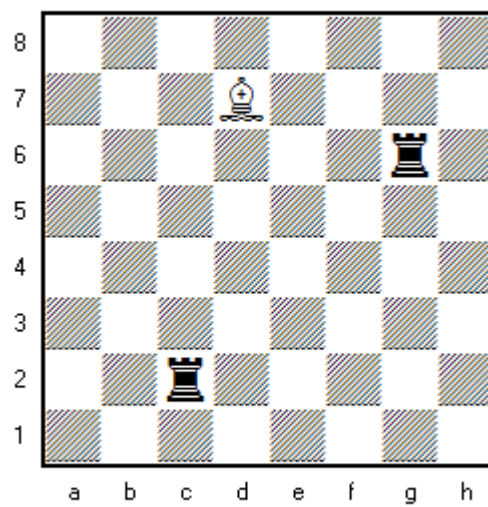
Q3. Threaten an undefended pawn



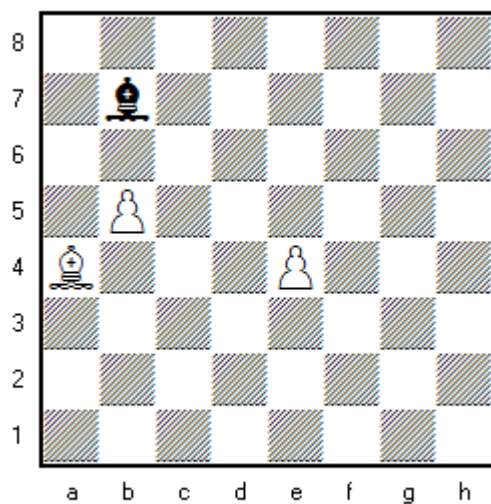
Q4. Threaten an undefended pawn



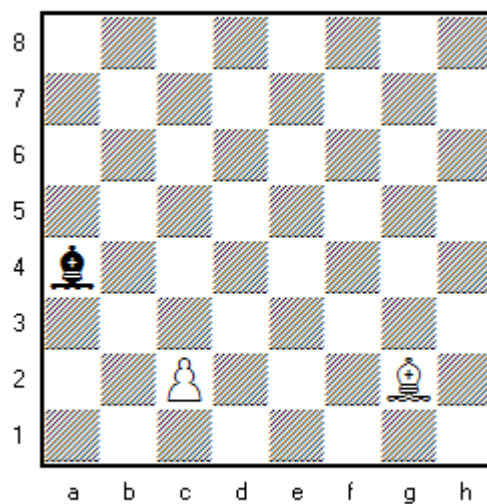
Q5. Threaten two pawns



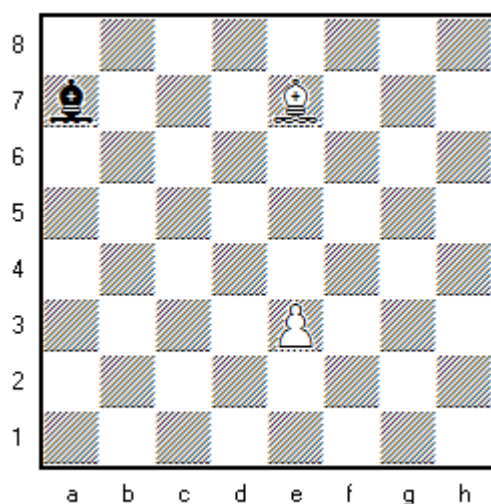
Q6. Threaten two rooks



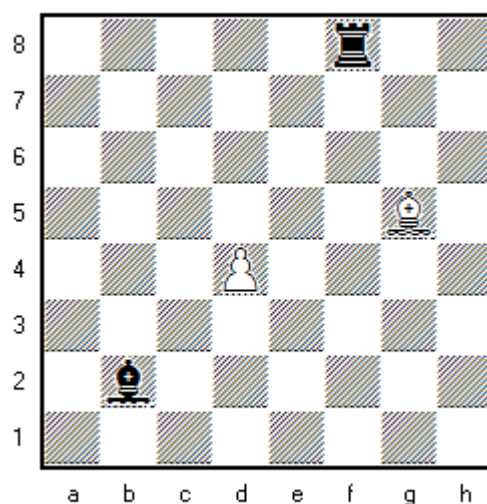
Q1. Use a bishop to defend a pawn



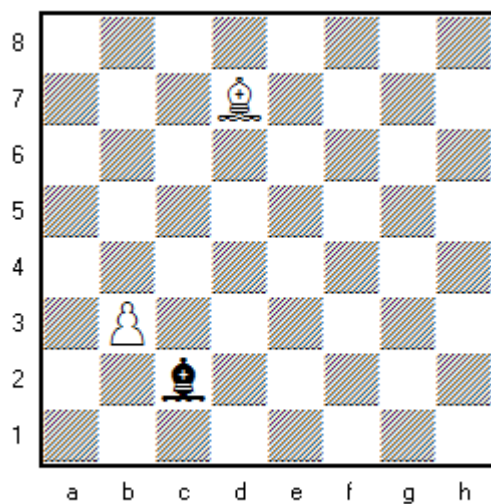
Q2. Use a bishop to defend a pawn



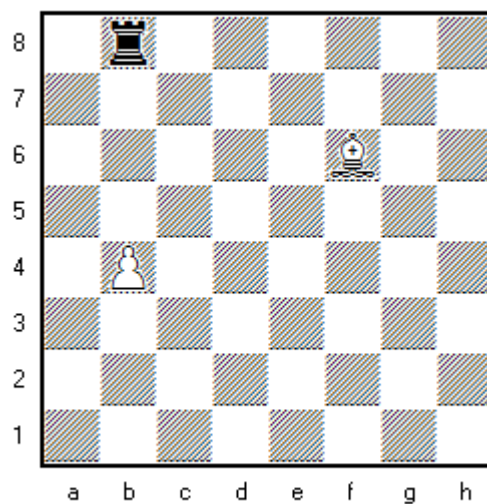
Q3. Use a bishop to defend a pawn safely



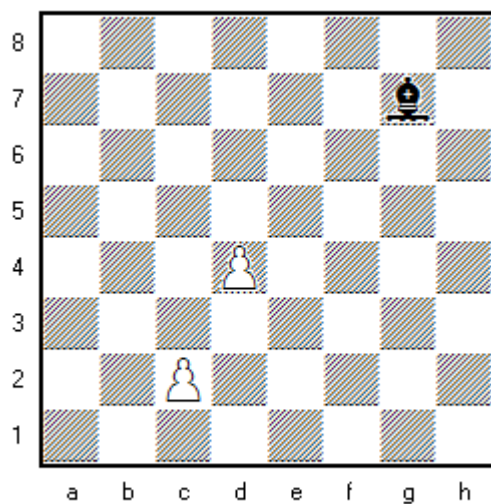
Q4. Use a bishop to defend a pawn safely



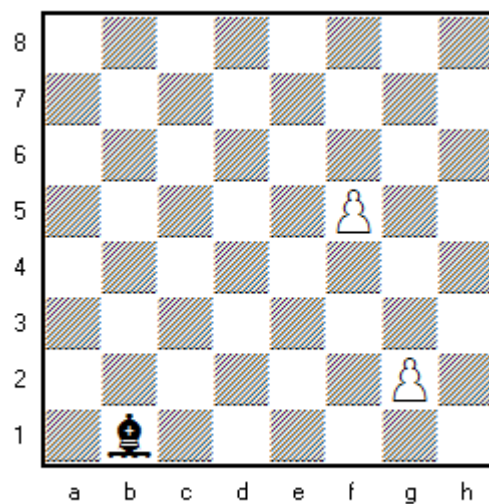
Q5. Use a bishop to defend a pawn
Give two answers



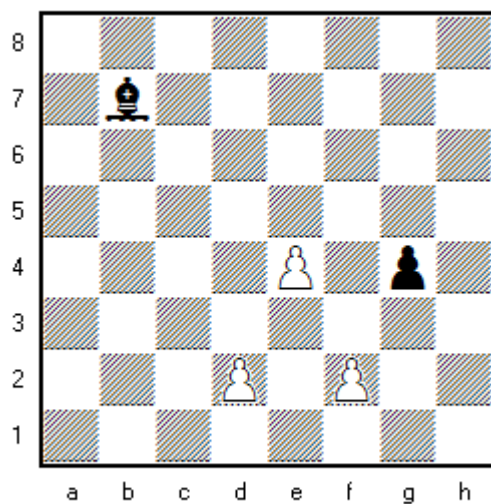
Q6. Use a bishop to defend a pawn
Give two answers



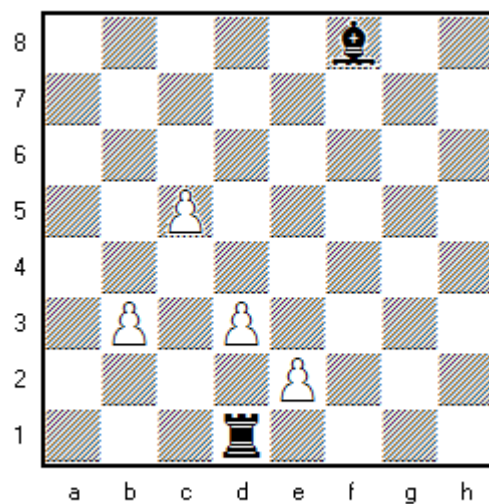
Q1. Use a pawn to defend a pawn



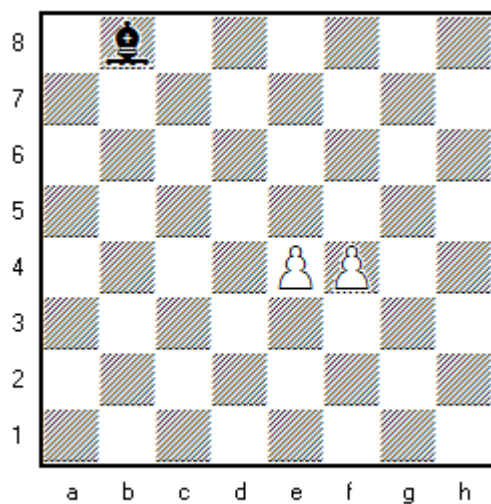
Q2. Use a pawn to defend a pawn



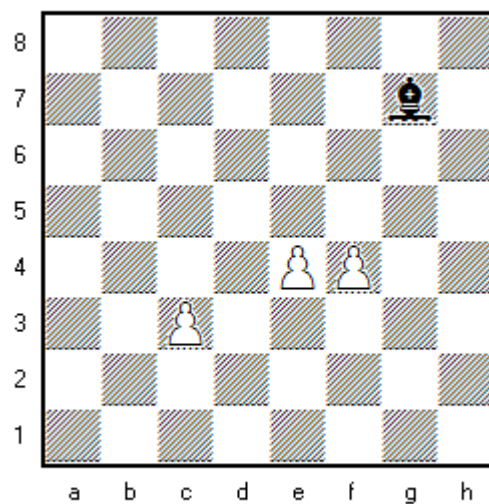
Q3. Use a pawn to defend a pawn safely



Q4. Use a pawn to defend a pawn safely



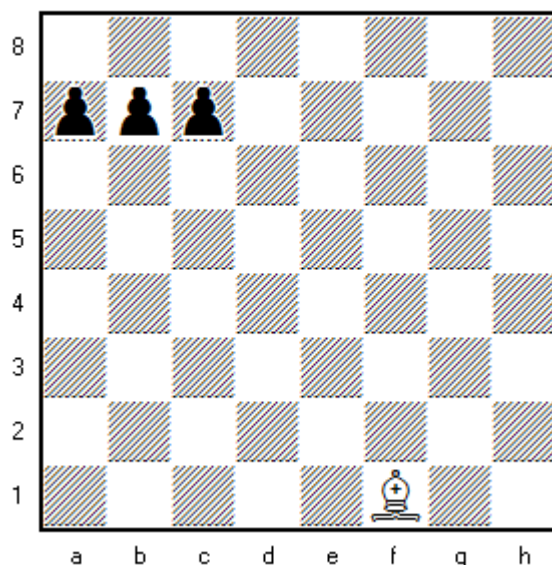
Q5. Defend a pawn by blocking



Q6. Defend a pawn by blocking

We're now going to play some games in which a bishop battles against an army of pawns. With young children, you might start by getting them to use a bishop to stop one pawn. What you have to do is to control the square in front of the pawn so that you can capture it when it advances. This may not be obvious to young children, though. Then you can move onto a bishop against two pawns. Try this with pawns on different files. How far apart must the pawns be to beat the bishop? If the pawns are on adjacent files, how far up the board must they start in order to win? If you like, test these with your children and see if you can work out the answers.

The game below, with bishop against three pawns on adjacent files, is an interesting exercise, and not easy to play well.



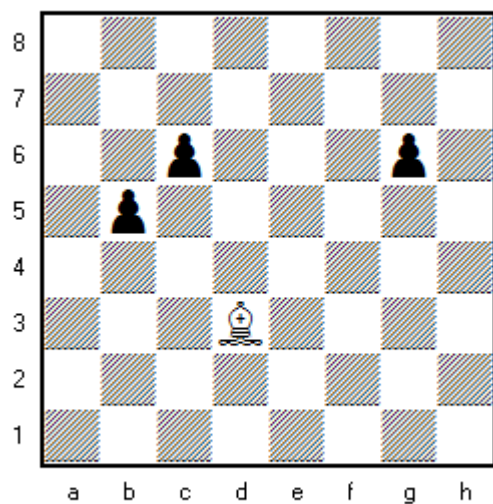
Black can win with best play but the best strategy may seem counter-intuitive. If White starts by moving his bishop to g2, he must play c6 rather than b6. You need to advance on the same colour square as the enemy bishop when it's safe to do so. If you advance on the same colour square the bishop will eventually occupy the diagonal in front of your pawns so that you'll lose whichever pawn you advance.

You can play bishop against two, three or four pawns against the computer at <http://www.chesskids.org.uk/newcourse/bishopcomb.htm>. The computer plays this position very badly, though, so you may well find you can win all three games with either colour.

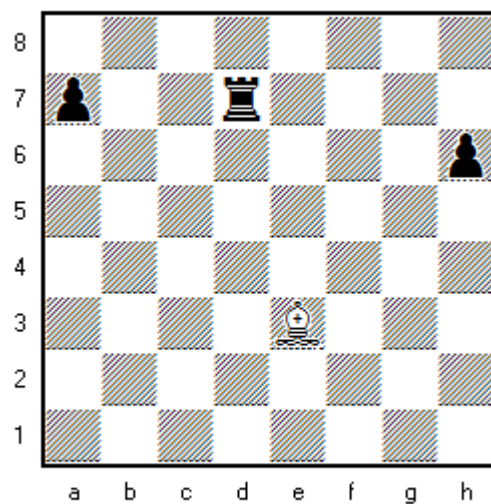
Try making up different games and puzzles with both rooks and bishops as well as pawns. As you add more pieces, and more powerful pieces, the games get more difficult because there are more choices for both players.

The next set of worksheets includes puzzles involving bishop captures, safety and making choices in 'Capture the Flag' games. They are similar to the rook puzzles from the previous chapter. If those have been solved and understood, most of the puzzles involving bishops should not be too difficult. The two issues which are most likely to come up are failing to check moves are safe before playing them, and failing to appreciate the nature of the decision making in the 'Capture the Flag' questions. The 'Capture the Flag' questions in particular may prove troublesome because they involve looking several moves ahead and understanding that your opponent is going to try to play the best move rather than what you want him to do. This is a 'theory of mind' issue that many young children find hard to appreciate.

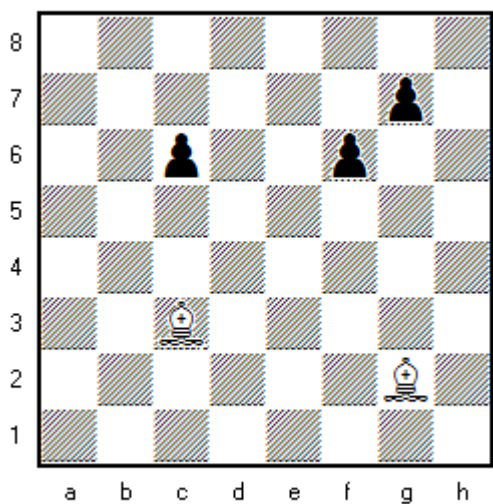
Again, if any particular question type proves difficult be prepared to come back to it again later. Feel free to set some more puzzles yourself, or to encourage your children to set puzzles on the same themes. You can also reinforce the more difficult concepts by appropriate questioning while playing games with your children.



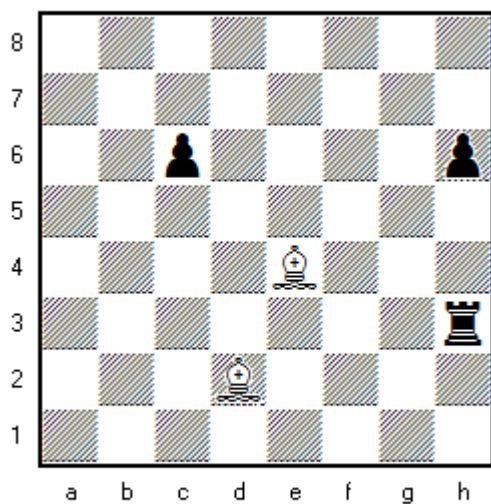
Q1. Capture a pawn safely



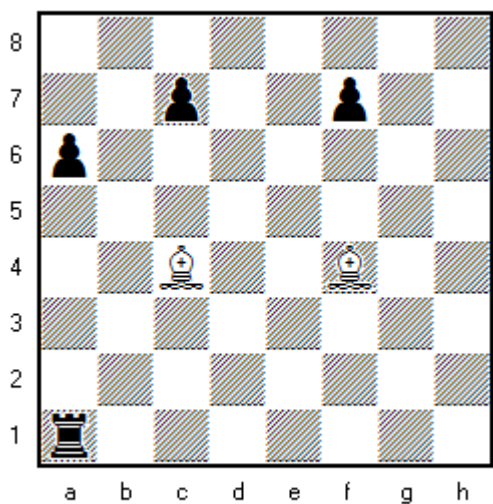
Q2. Capture a pawn safely



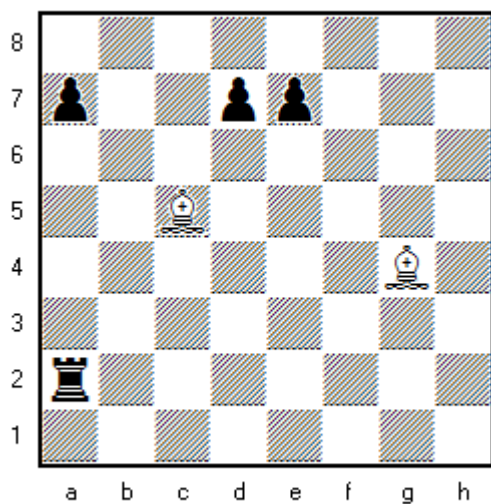
Q3. Capture a pawn safely



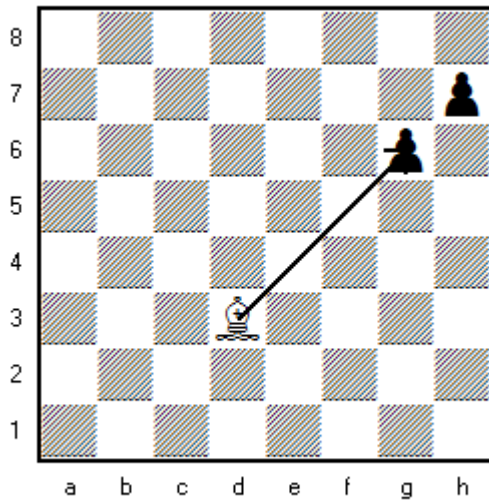
Q4. Capture a pawn safely



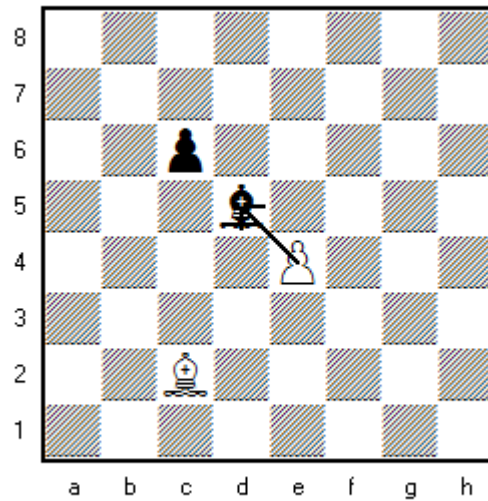
Q5. Capture a pawn safely
Give two answers



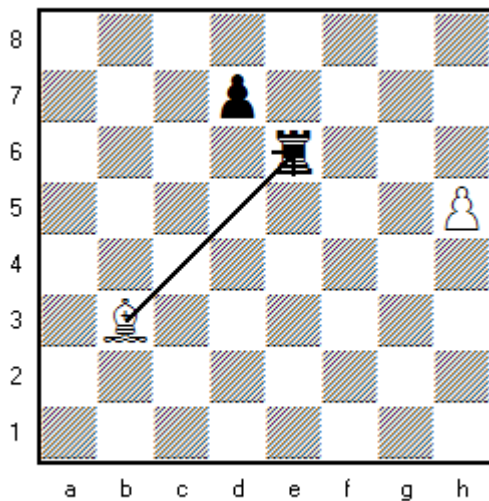
Q6. Capture a pawn safely
Give two answers



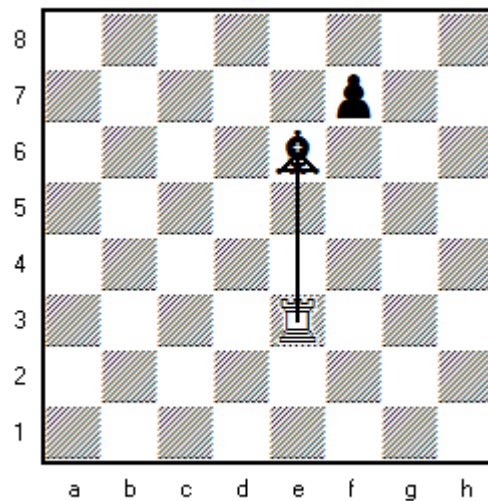
Q1. Is this capture
a) good b) equal c) bad?



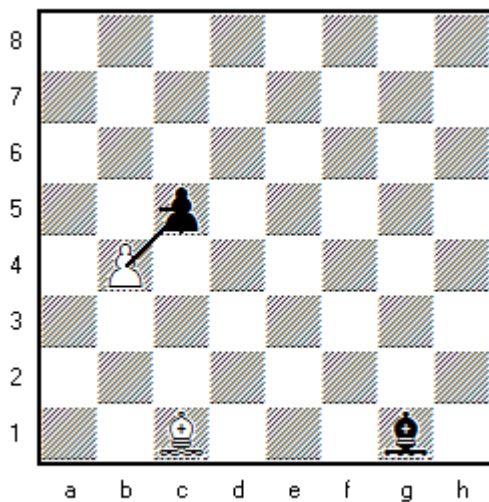
Q2. Is this capture
a) good b) equal c) bad?



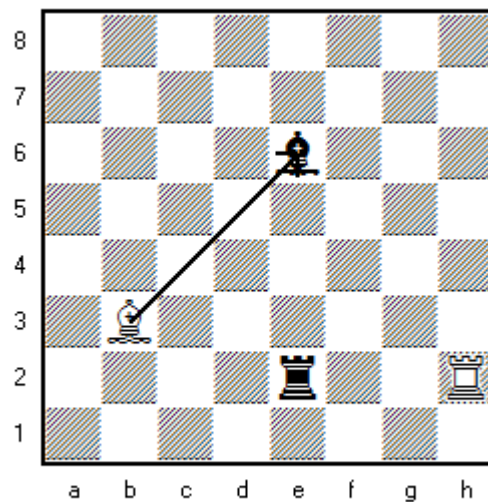
Q3. Is this capture
a) good b) equal c) bad?



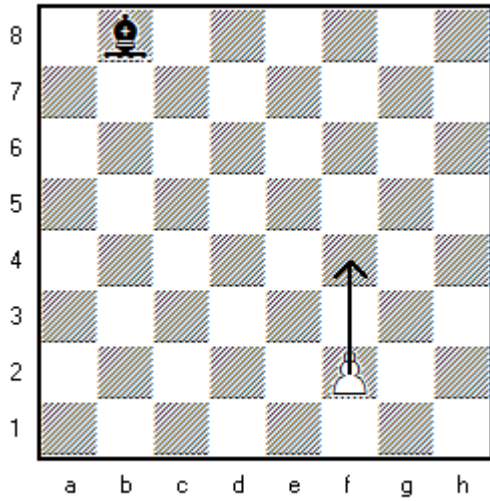
Q4. Is this capture
a) good b) equal c) bad?



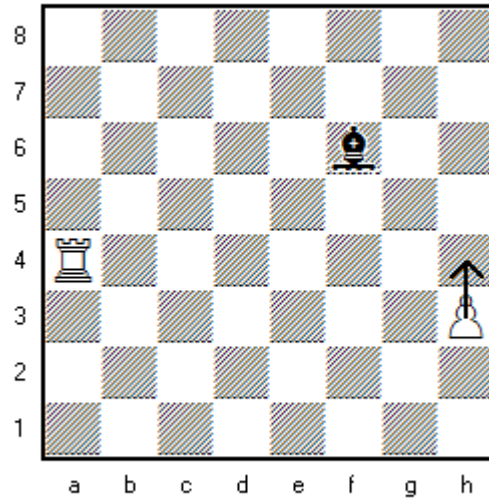
Q5. Is this capture
a) good b) equal c) bad?



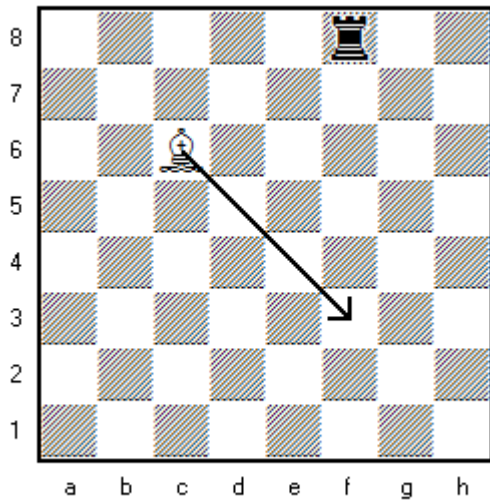
Q6. Is this capture
a) good b) equal c) bad?



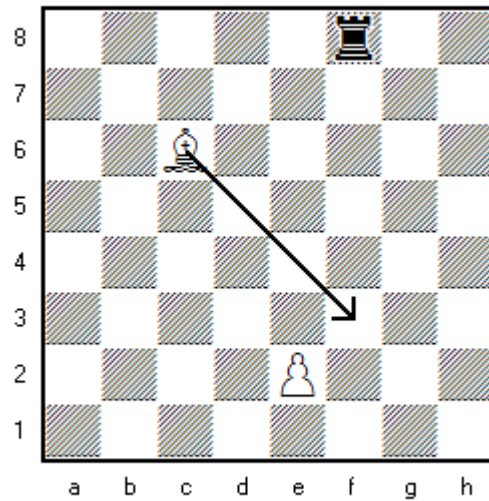
Q1. Is this move safe?



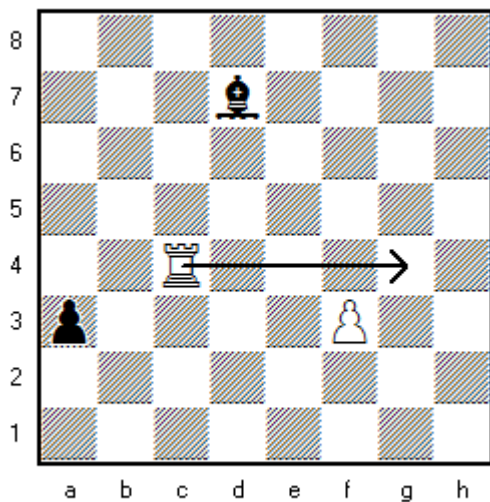
Q2. Is this move safe?



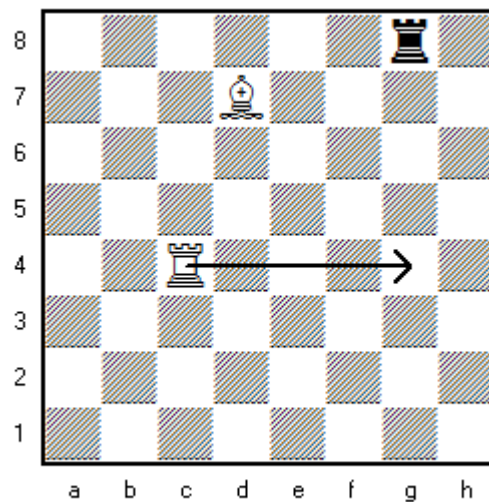
Q3. Is this move safe?



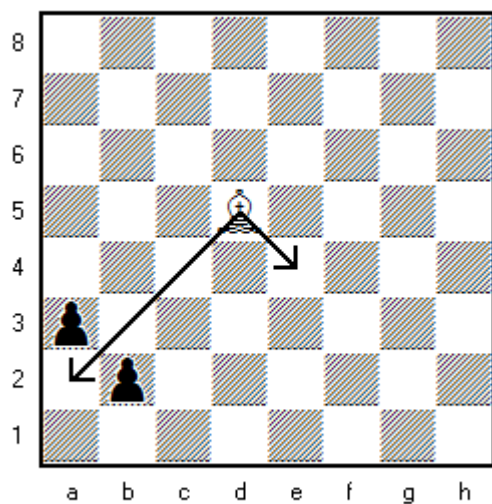
Q4. Is this move safe?



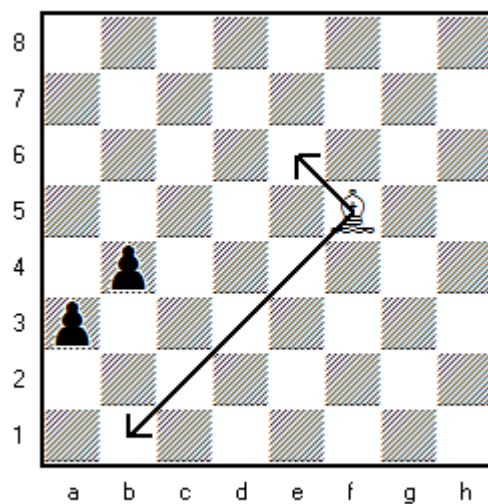
Q5. Is this move safe?



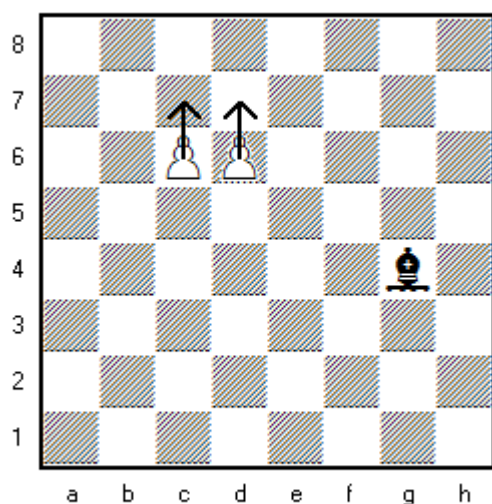
Q6. Is this move safe?



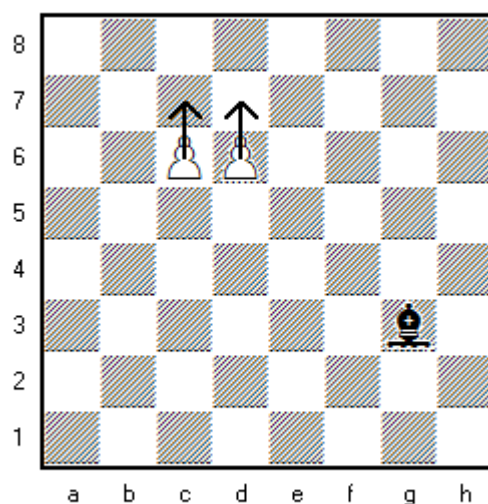
Q1. Capture the Flag: choose a move
a) Bd5-a2 b) Bd5-e4



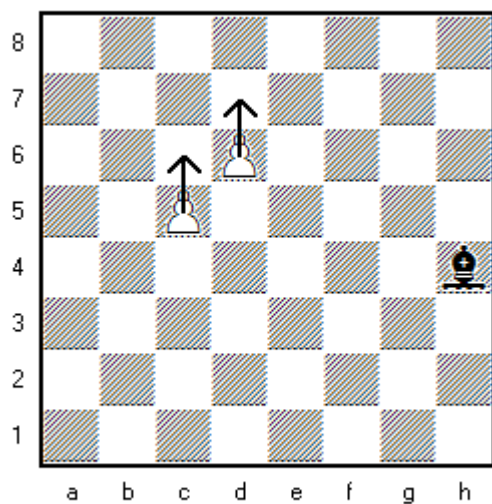
Q2. Capture the Flag: choose a move
a) Bf5-b1 b) Bf5-e6



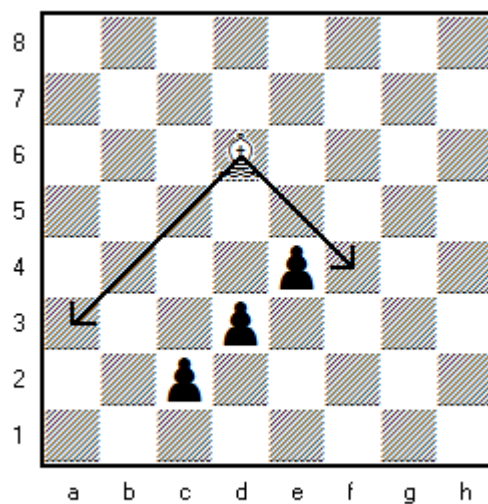
Q3. Capture the Flag: choose a move
a) c6-c7 b) d6-d7



Q4. Capture the Flag: choose a move
a) c6-c7 b) d6-d7

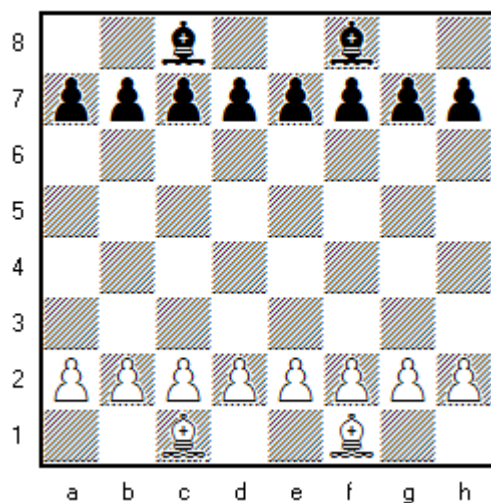
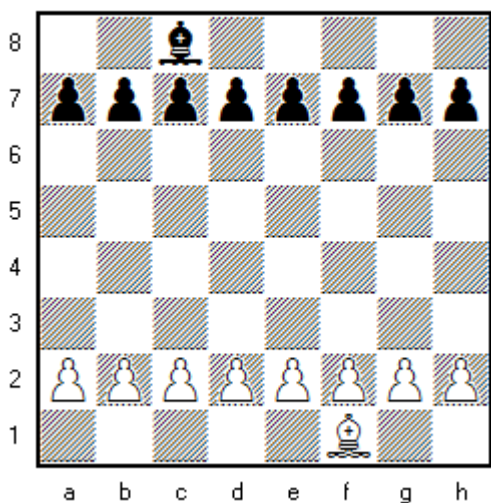


Q5. Capture the Flag: choose a move
a) c5-c6 b) d6-d7



Q6. Capture the Flag: choose a move
a) Bd6-a3 b) Bd6-f4

You can also familiarise yourself with the bishop move by playing these Capture the Flag games.

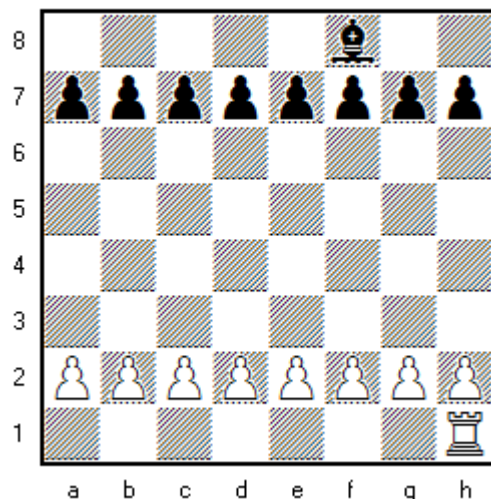
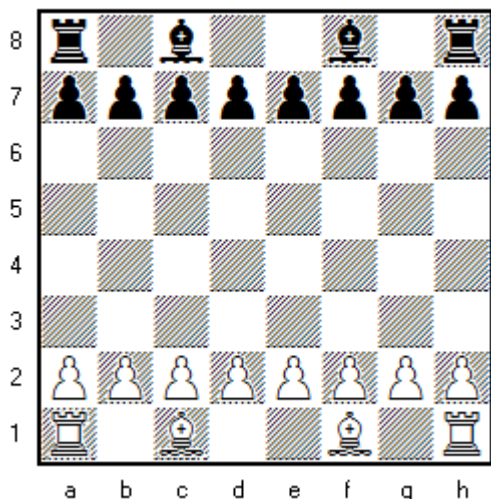


Again, you could start with just one bishop each, and give odds if your children are lacking in confidence.

Note that if you start with one bishop each on f1 and f8, they will start on different coloured squares so a direct exchange will not be possible.

You can play some of these games against the computer at <http://www.chesskids.org.uk/newcourse/pbishoprace.htm>.

Once your children are confident, they can try playing games with both rooks and bishops. You could use all of them, as in the diagram on your left below, or start with just one rook and bishop each.

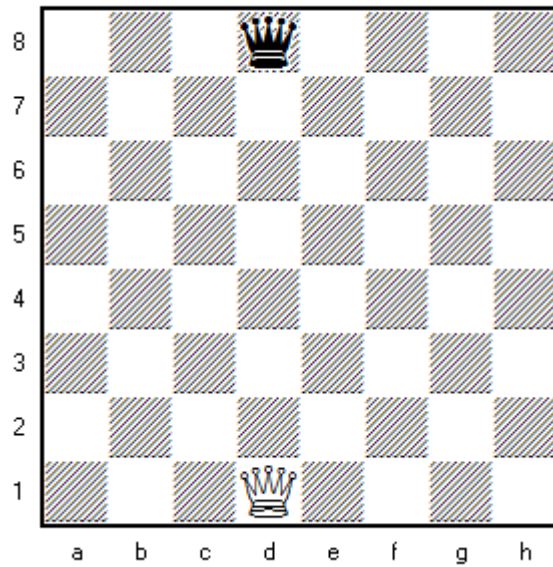


An excellent exercise especially for less confident players is to let them play with a rook against a bishop, as in the diagram on the right above. The rook should win easily as long as you follow the strategy outlined in the previous chapter about exchanging pawns to open files for your rook. Once your rook can make inroads into Black's position it should be easy to pick off the enemy pawns and shepherd a pawn through to the end yourself. Of course you also have to be careful not to lose your rook! It's a question of disciplining yourself to check that your intended move is safe before playing it: and this should be done every move, not just when you happen to remember.

CHAPTER 5

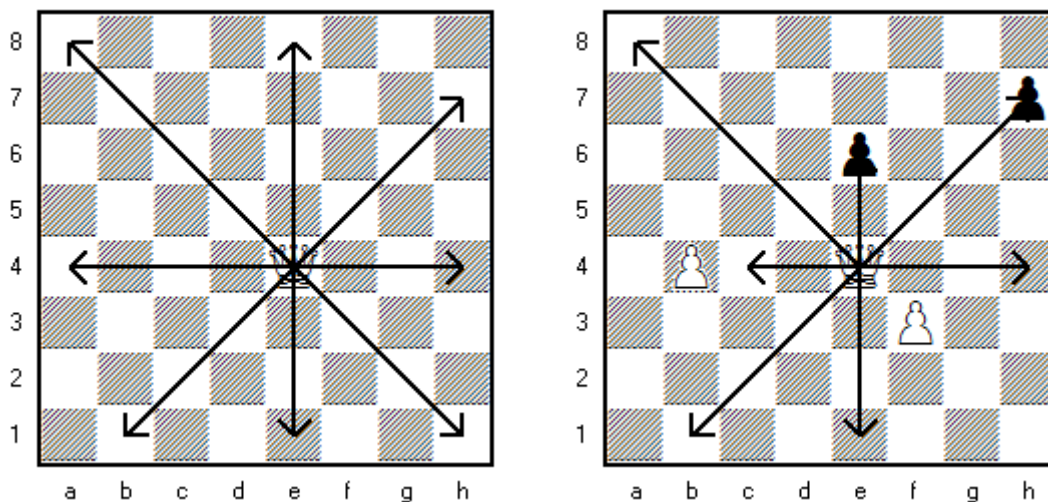
THE QUEEN

Find the queens in your chess set and set them up for the start of the game as in the diagram below. The queen is the large piece that doesn't have a cross on top. Note that both queens start on the square of their own colour: the white queen on d1 and the black queen on d8. Beginners often get confused about the starting positions of the king and queen so this needs to be reinforced. The queen was originally one of the weakest pieces in the army, but in the late 15th century its move changed and it became the strongest piece.



Ensure that your children can identify the queens and place them on their correct starting squares.

The queen combines the moves of the rook (vertically and horizontally) and the bishop (diagonally), as in the diagram on the left:



Like the rook and the bishop, it captures the same way that it moves. It can capture an enemy piece in its path and is blocked by a friendly piece in its path. It cannot jump over other pieces or capture more than one piece at a time. In the diagram on the right the queen can capture either black pawn.

Ask your children to play some queen moves on the board. If they have mastered the rook and bishop moves this shouldn't present a problem.

We now know about four pieces: the pawn, the rook, the bishop and the queen.

Ask your children which piece they think is the strongest of these pieces. It should be clear to them that the queen is more powerful than either the rook or the bishop.

We can demonstrate that a queen in the middle of an empty board can move to any of 27 squares: almost half the board. In the corner it can move to 21 squares.

In our hierarchy of pieces we give the queen a value of 9 points. (Actually this slightly undervalues the queen: 9½ points would be nearer the mark, but 9 will serve for our current purpose, and will be the basis of the puzzles in this book. So now we have:

Pawn: 1 point

Bishop: 3 points

Rook: 5 points

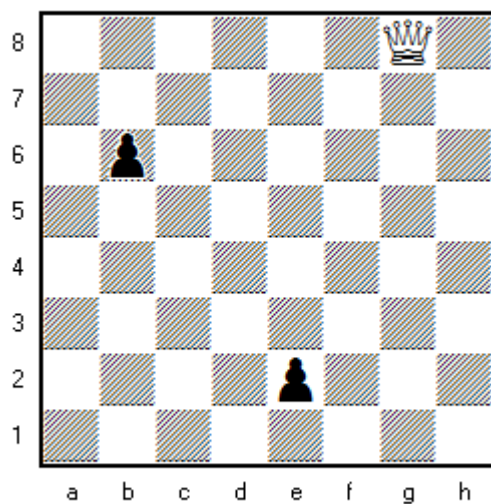
Queen: 9 points

It should be clear, then, that the queen is a very powerful piece and you have to be very careful not to lose it.

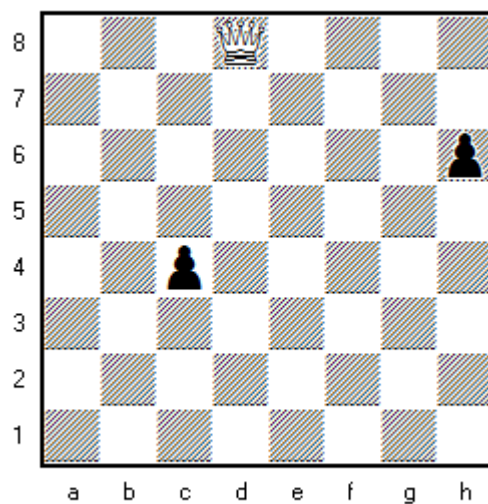
At this point we return to the topic of double threats. Because the queen can move in eight directions it is very good at making double threats. If we move the queen to threaten two pawns (remember that they must be undefended to make the moves threats rather than just attacks) we are creating a FORK. If our opponent moves or defends one of the pawns we'll probably be able to capture the other target pawn safely.

Children should be encouraged to look for queen forks of this nature during their games.

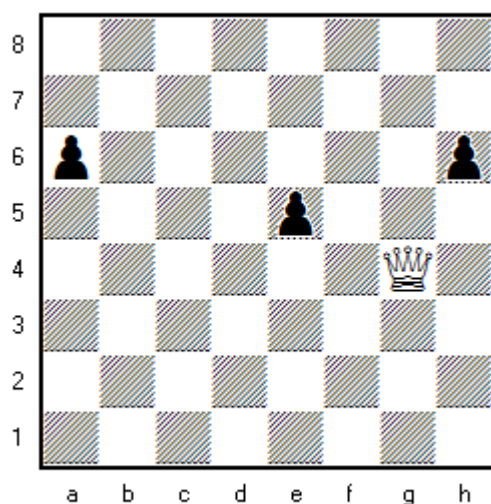
The next set of worksheets reinforces the queen move and the concept of safety as applied to the queen as well as providing exercises based on finding double (and triple) threats. Some of these might be quite challenging for younger children. Although the queen move is easy to learn, it's a difficult piece to handle well simply because it has so many possible moves to choose from. When there are many choices a certain amount of trial and error is involved. If they don't get the answer quickly, children will often lose patience and either give up or make random guesses. Note that, to fork a rook and a bishop safely your queen will need to be on the same diagonal as the rook and the same rank or file as the bishop. We also look further at the idea of defending by blocking: interposing a piece safely between the attacker and the target.



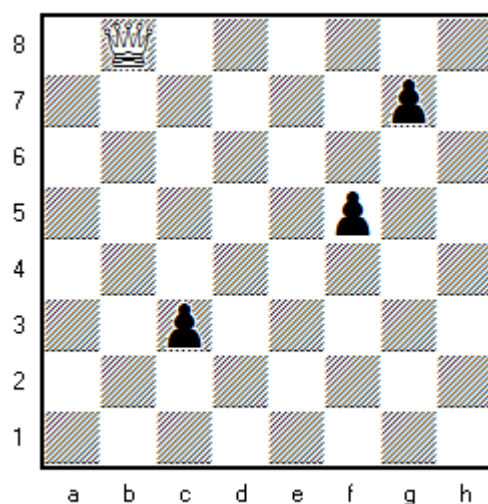
Q1. Threaten two pawns



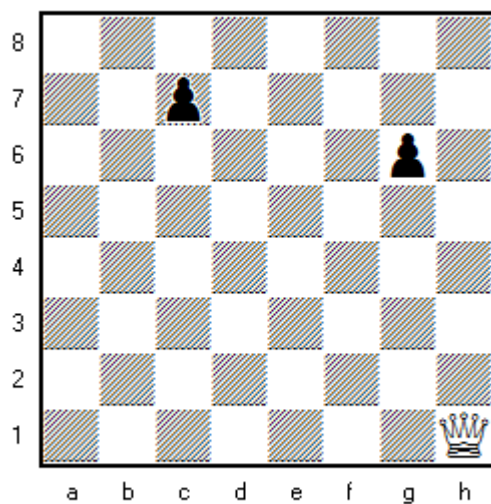
Q2. Threaten two pawns



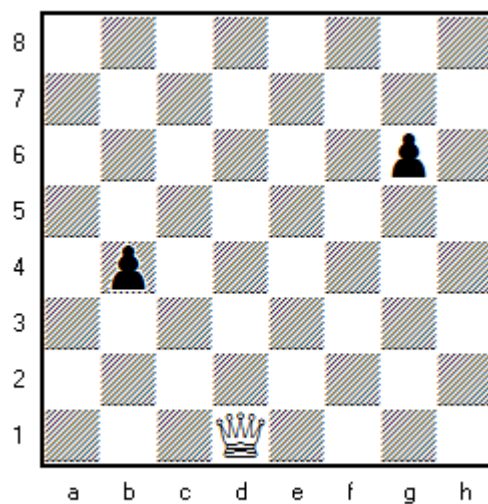
Q3. Threaten three pawns



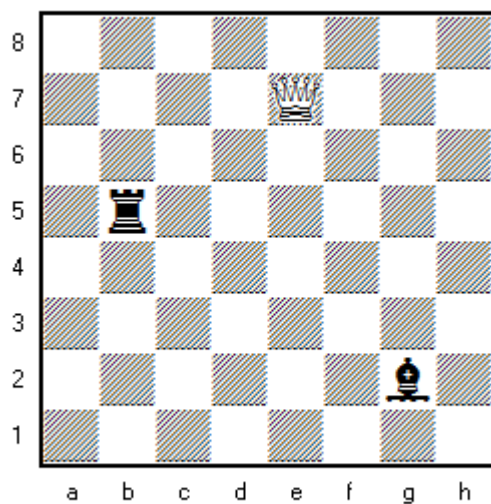
Q4. Threaten three pawns



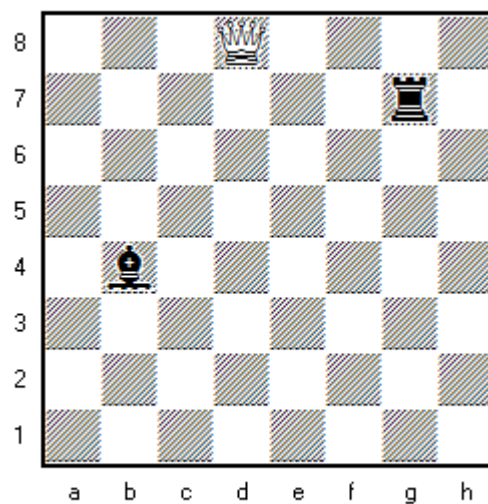
Q5. Threaten two pawns
Give two answers



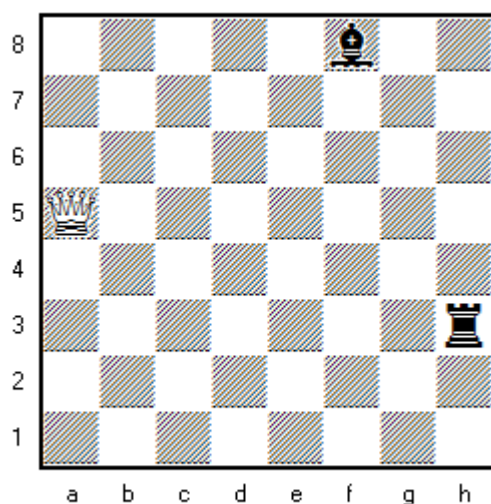
Q6. Threaten two pawns
Give three answers



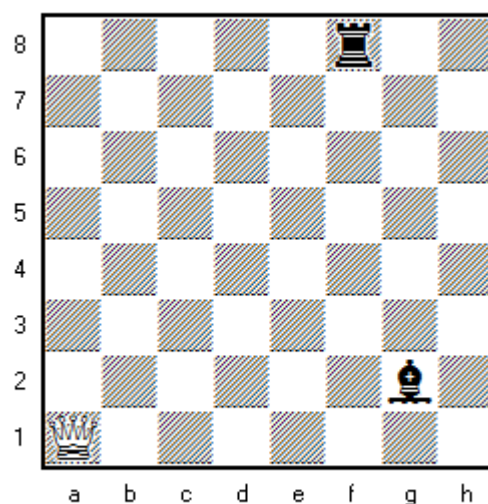
Q1. Threaten two pieces safely



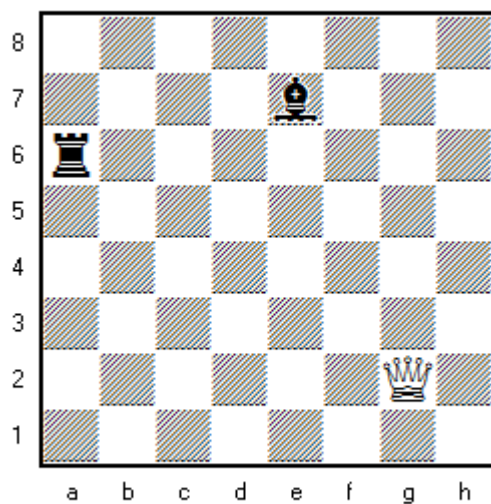
Q2. Threaten two pieces safely



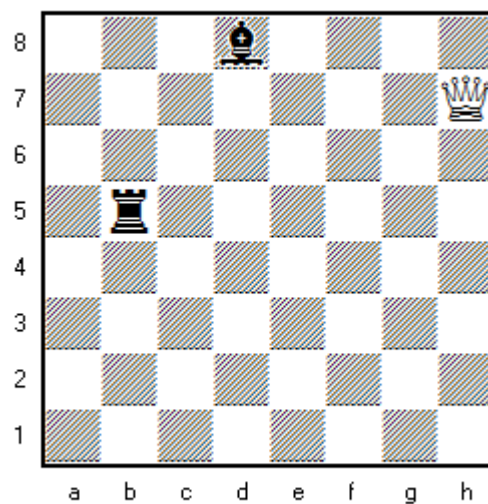
Q3. Threaten two pieces safely



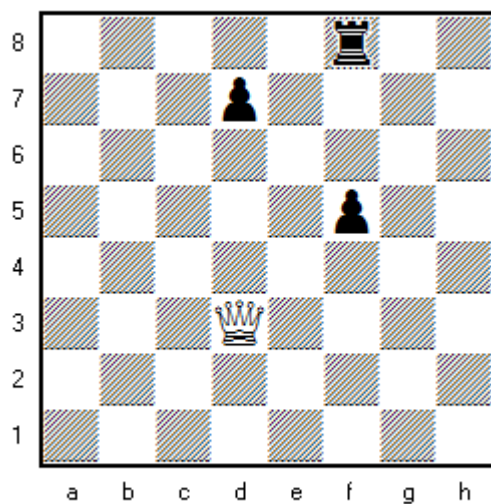
Q4. Threaten two pieces safely



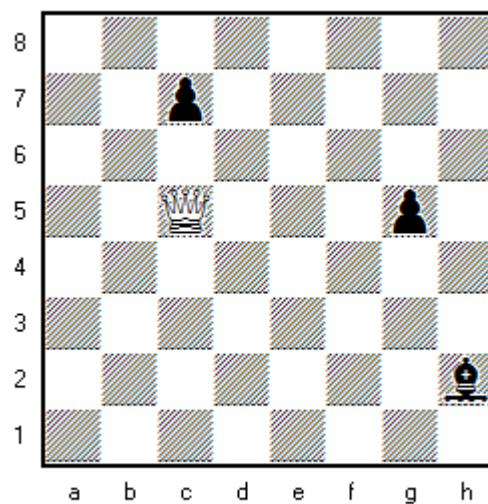
Q5. Threaten two pieces safely
Give two answers



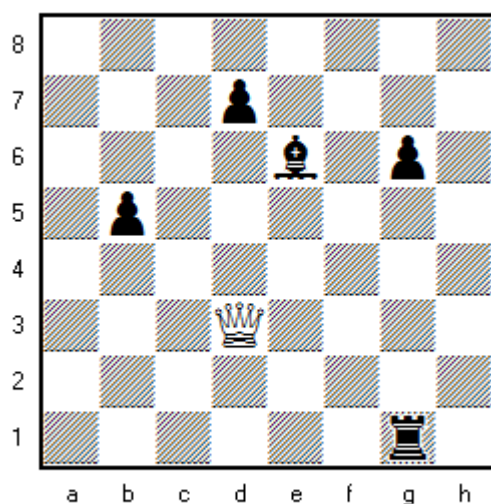
Q6. Threaten two pieces safely
Give two answers



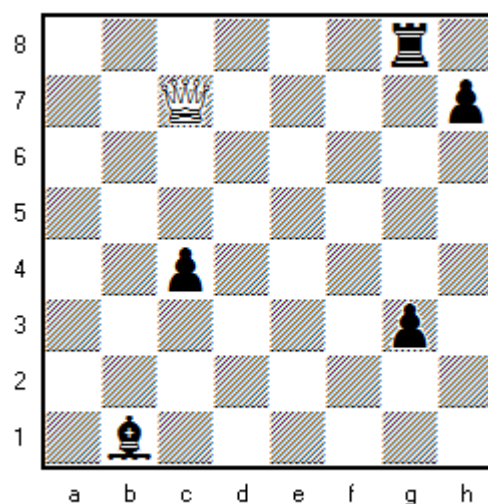
Q1. Capture a pawn safely



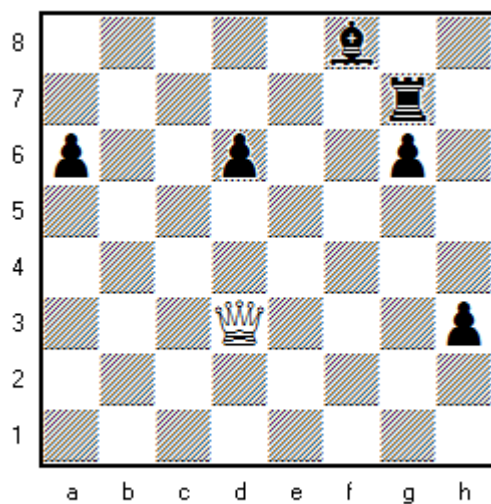
Q2. Capture a pawn safely



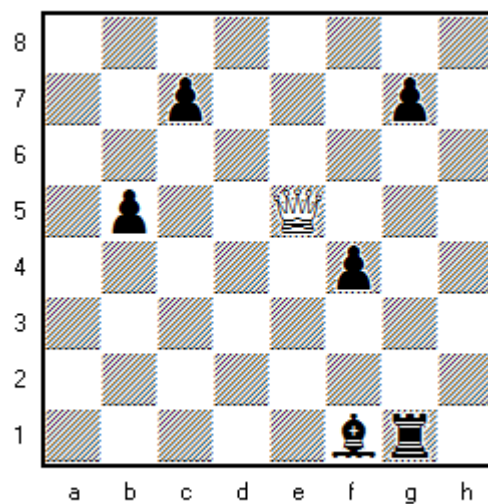
Q3. Capture a pawn safely



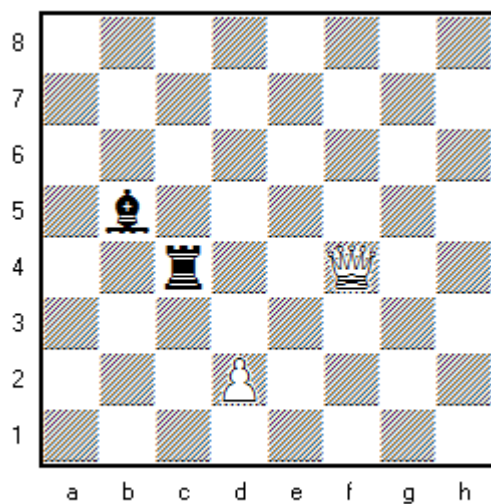
Q4. Capture a pawn safely



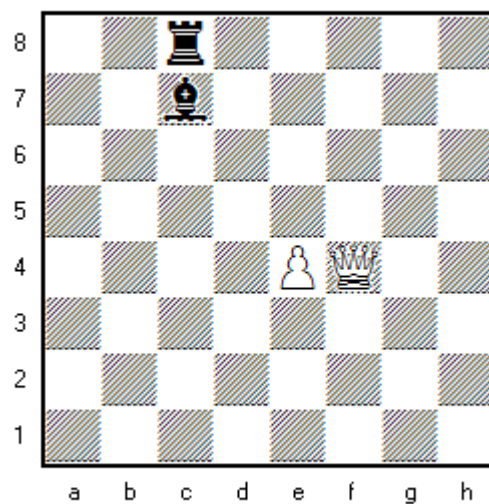
Q5. Capture a pawn safely
Give two answers



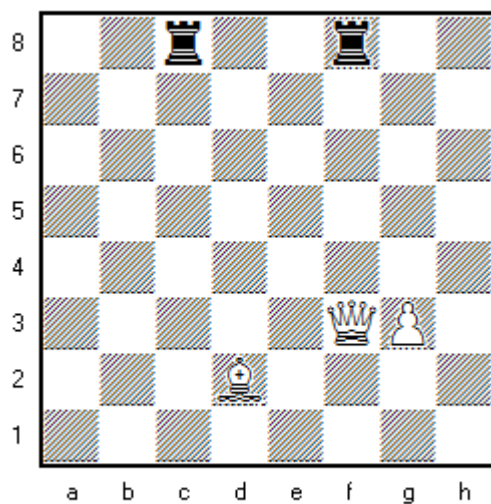
Q6. Capture a pawn safely
Give two answers



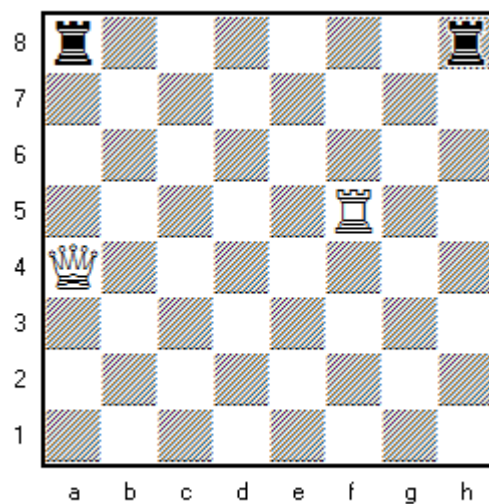
Q1. Defend the queen by blocking



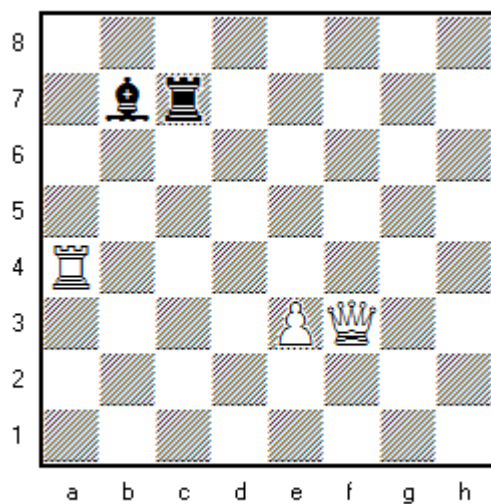
Q2. Defend the queen by blocking



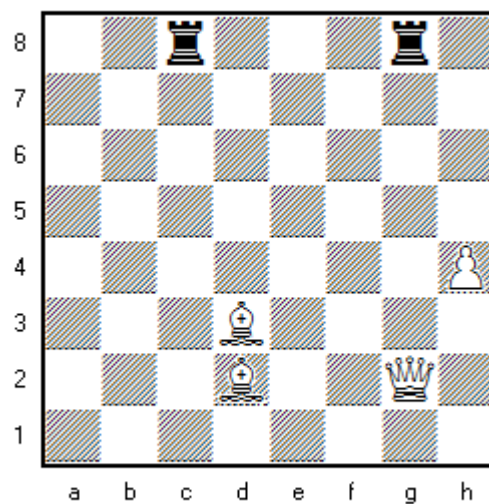
Q3. Defend the queen by blocking



Q4. Defend the queen by blocking

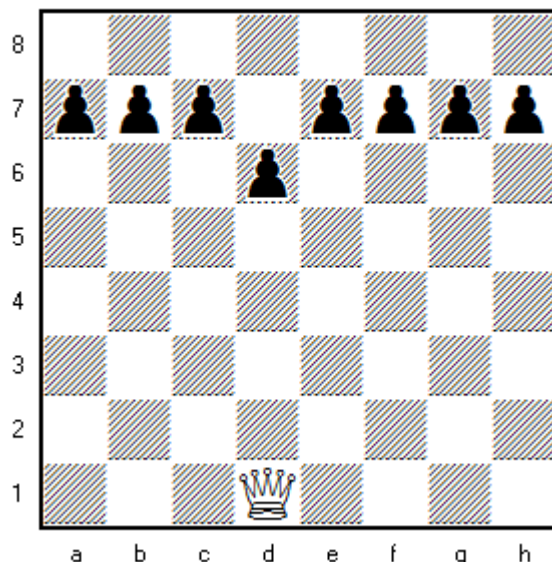


Q5. Defend the queen safely by blocking



Q6. Defend the queen safely by blocking

We're now going to play some games in which a queen battles against an army of pawns. Start, if you like, with just four or five pawns, then build up to the game below. Queen against eight pawns should be fairly easy to win, but young children often find it difficult. We start with the pawn on d6 rather than d7 so that White cannot capture a pawn on his first move. The trick is to use forks to win enemy pawns while at the same time watching carefully for any pawn approaching the end of the board. White has several first moves which fork two pawns: how many can you find? The problem that many children have is that they panic and try to stop a runaway pawn before they need to do so and fail to win enough pawns themselves. If too many enemy pawns start advancing towards the end at the same time you could be in trouble.



Once you're confident of winning this position with White you could add an extra pawn on d7 and try again. If you don't have a spare black pawn you could use a white pawn instead. Again, White should win but this time it's not so easy.

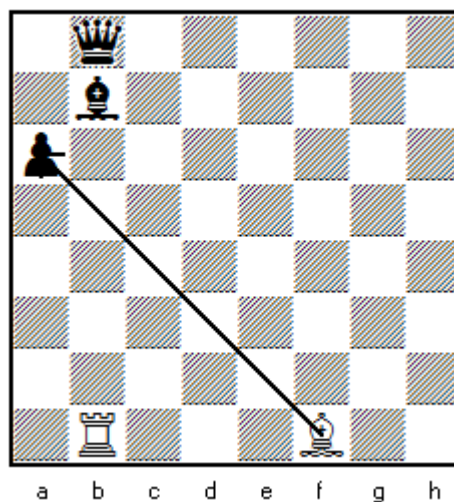
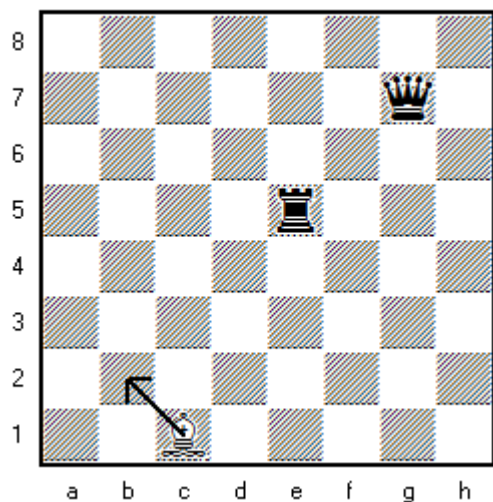
You can play queen against six, seven or eight pawns against the computer at <http://www.chesskids.org.uk/newcourse/queencomb.htm>. Note that when a pawn is promoted in these games it turns into a rook, not a queen. If you're playing black you claim a win by moving your promoted rook.

As always, feel free to make up games using any combination of the pieces you've learnt about so far.

The next set of worksheets includes puzzles identifying whether captures are good, bad or equal, and deciding whether moves are safe. When you're solving the capture puzzles remember to continue to the end of the sequence of captures. Don't just look at White's move but at what White will be able to do after Black's recapture. You'll need to add up all the points to determine whether a capture is good, equal or bad. There's also a worksheet involving finding a safe square for a queen which is being threatened. This may prove much harder. There are a lot of choices for the queen but only one answer so a certain amount of perseverance will be required.

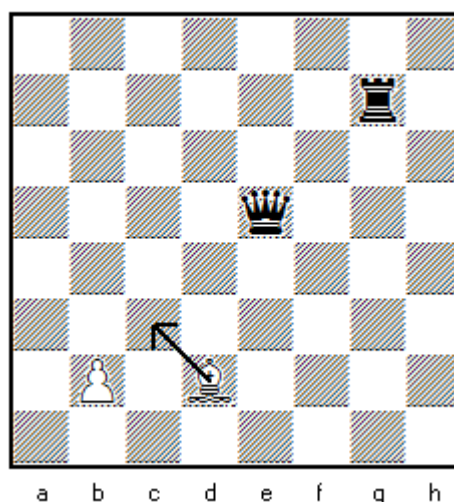
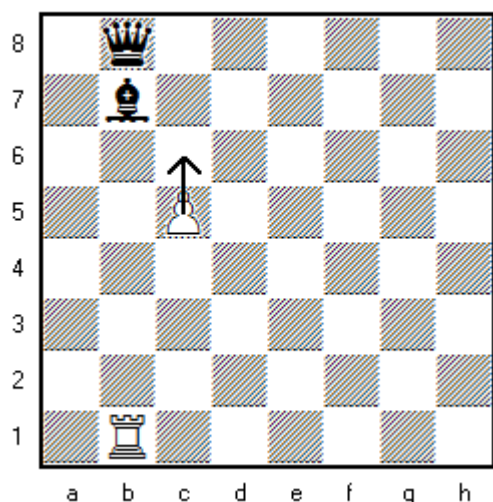
If this, or any other question type proves difficult be prepared to come back to it again later. Feel free to set some more puzzles yourself, or to encourage your children to set puzzles on the same themes. You can also reinforce the more difficult concepts by appropriate questioning while playing games with your children.

We also introduce two new types of double threat. We already know about forks: where one piece threatens two enemy pieces in different directions. Here, we look at moves which threaten two enemy pieces in the same direction.



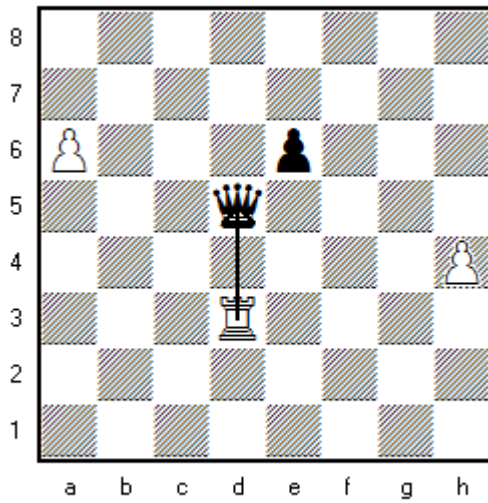
In the position on the left, the black rook and queen are on the same diagonal. If White moves his bishop to b2 he's threatening the black rook. If the rook moves out of the way to escape capture, the bishop will be able to capture the queen instead. This situation is called a PIN. We say that the bishop is PINNING the rook to the queen. When you come to play a full game of chess you'll find that this is a very important concept.

In the position on the right, the white rook is pinning the black bishop to the queen. Because the rook is more valuable than the bishop this doesn't win anything in itself, but it's still useful. White can capture the pawn on a6 with his bishop safely. It only looks as if it's defended because the black bishop is pinned to the queen. Remember that a pinned piece is not really a defender.

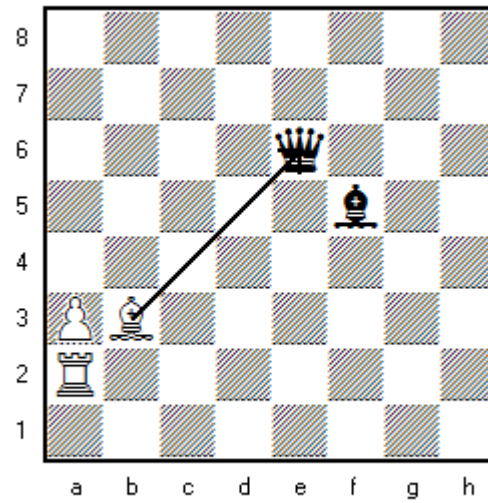


On the left you see another way to use a pin. Here White can advance his pawn to c6 to threaten the black bishop. Black cannot move the bishop without losing his queen. Attacking a pinned piece in this way is another common way of winning pieces.

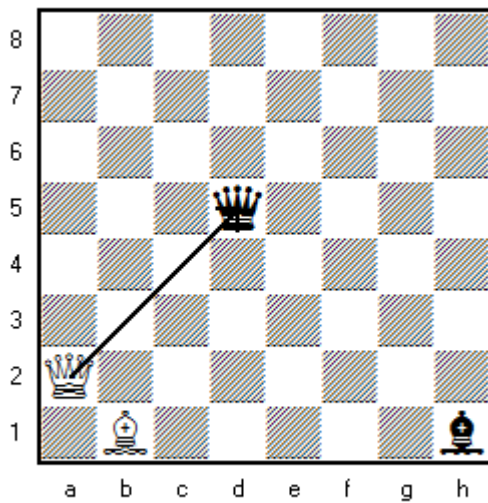
In the position on the right the black queen is in front of the rook. White moves his bishop to c3, threatening the queen. When Black moves his queen to safety, White will be able to capture the rook on g7. When the pieces are this way round, with the more valuable piece being threatened directly, it's known as a SKEWER. White is SKEWERING the black queen and rook.



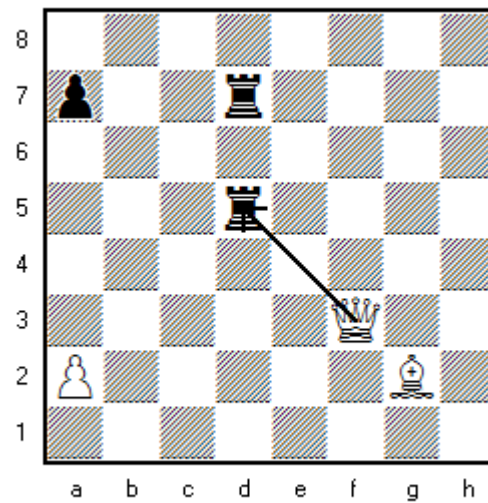
Q1. Is this capture
a) good b) equal c) bad?



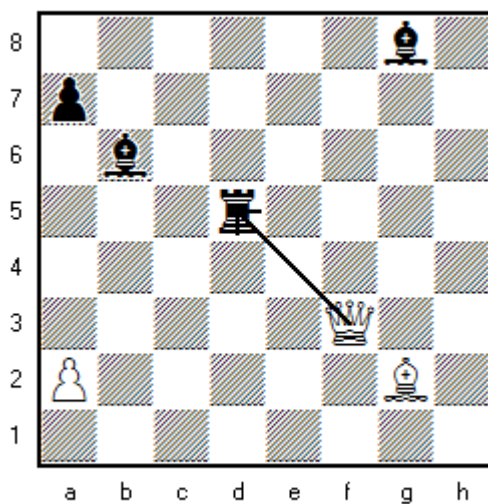
Q2. Is this capture
a) good b) equal c) bad?



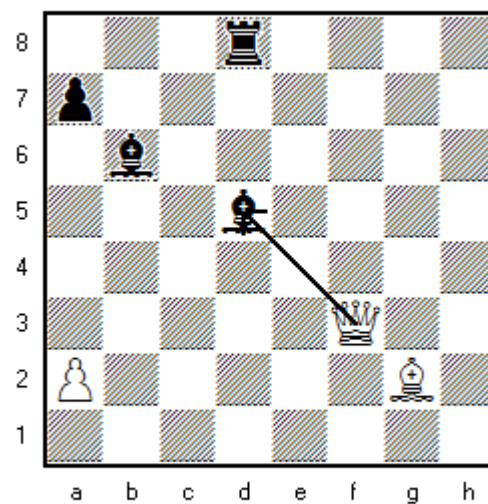
Q3. Is this capture
a) good b) equal c) bad?



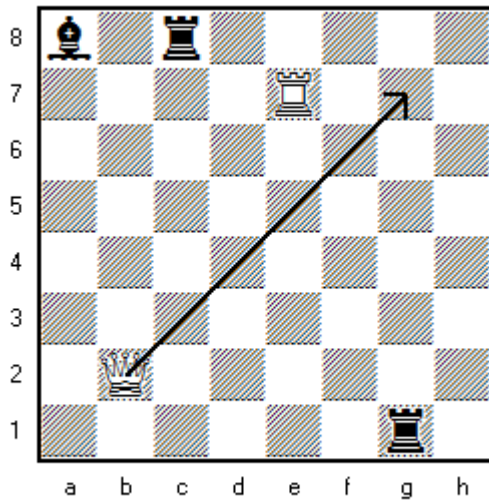
Q4. Is this capture
a) good b) equal c) bad?



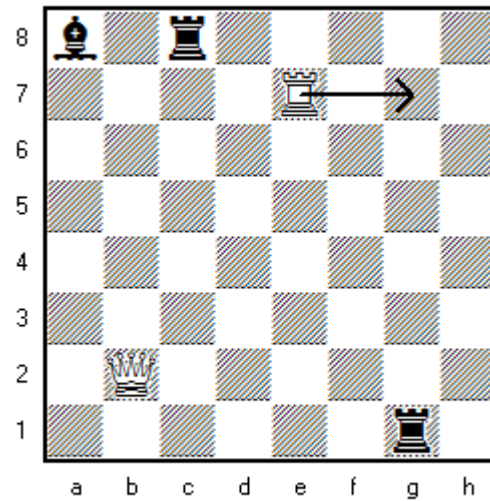
Q5. Is this capture
a) good b) equal c) bad?



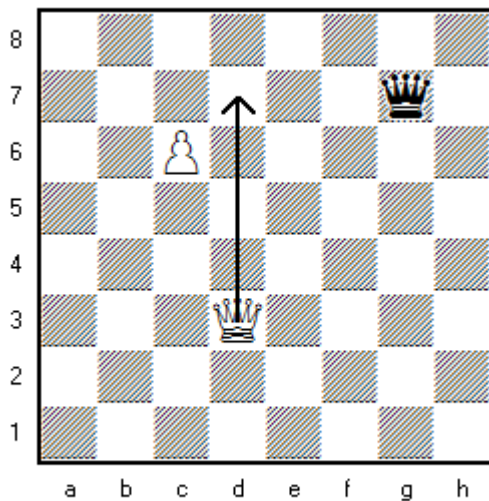
Q6. Is this capture
a) good b) equal c) bad?



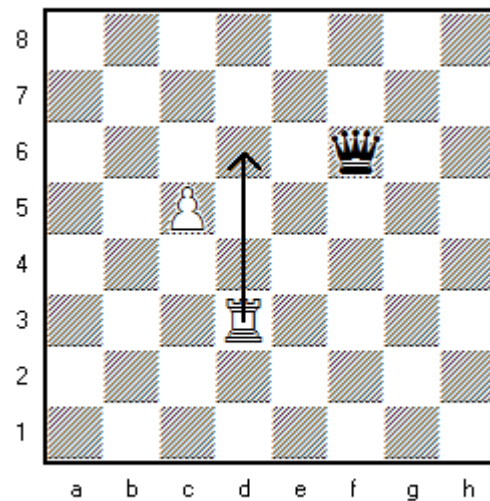
Q1. Is this move safe?
Yes/No



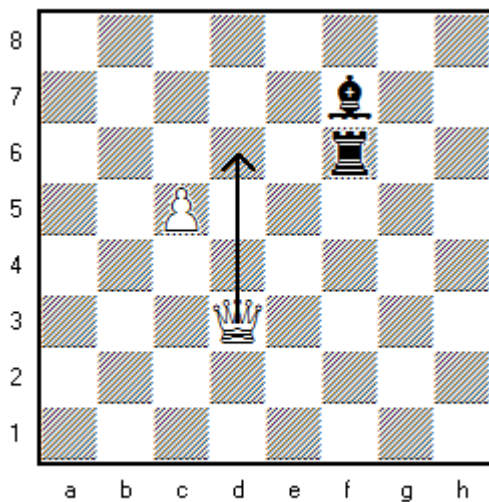
Q2. Is this move safe?
Yes/No



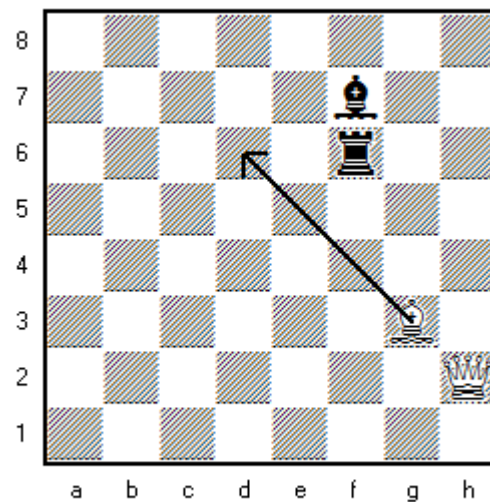
Q3. Is this move safe?
Yes/No



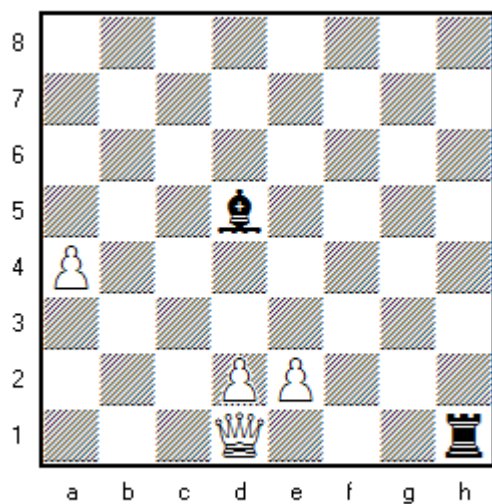
Q4. Is this move safe?
Yes/No



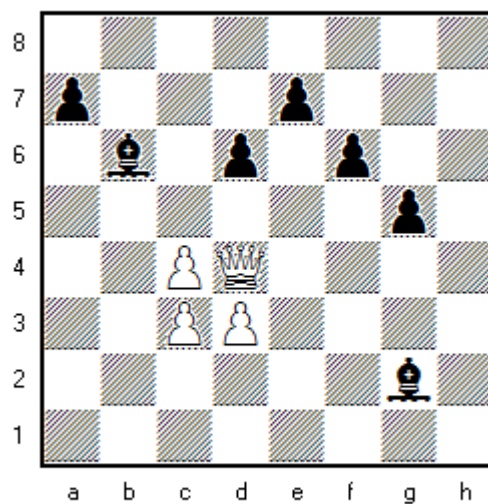
Q5. Is this move safe?
Yes/No



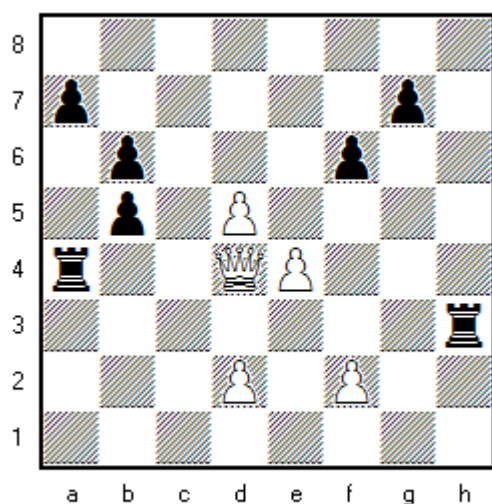
Q6. Is this move safe?
Yes/No



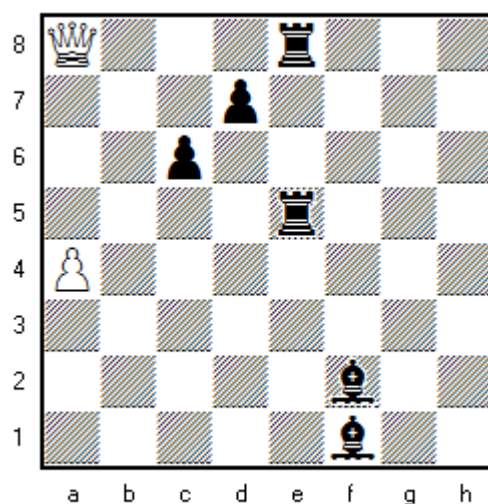
Q1. Move the queen to a safe square



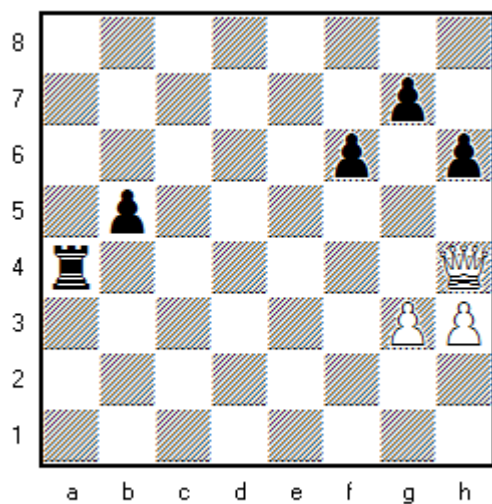
Q2. Move the queen to a safe square



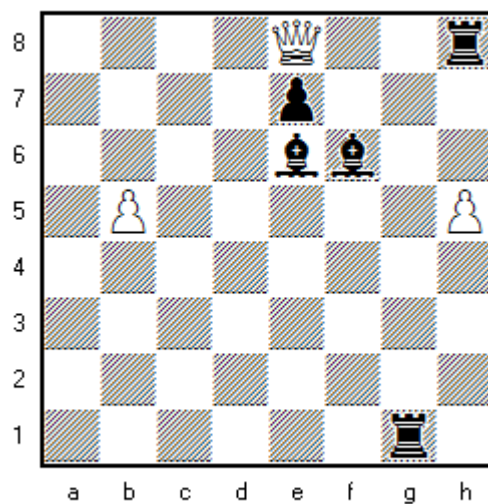
Q3. Move the queen to a safe square



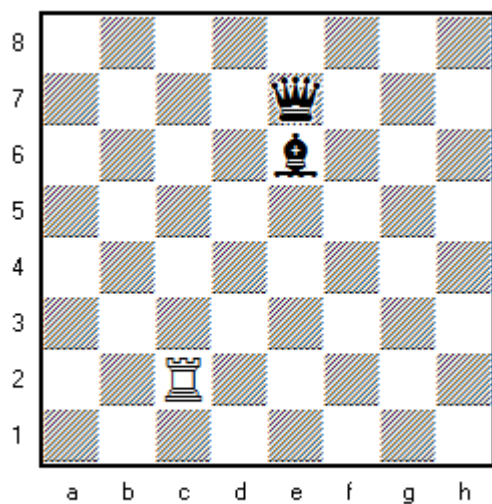
Q4. Move the queen to a safe square



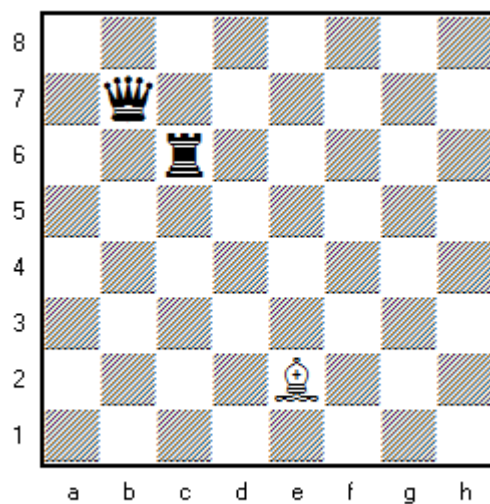
Q5. Move the queen to a safe square



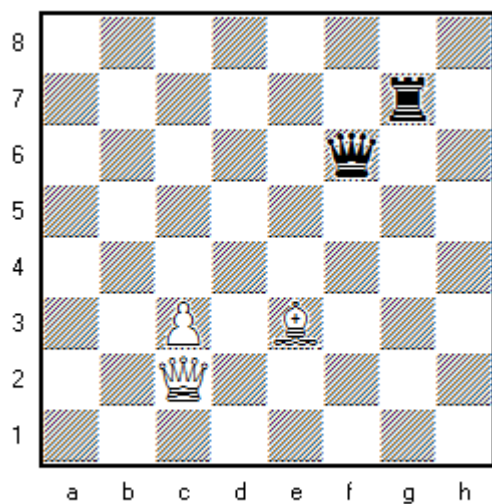
Q6. Move the queen to a safe square



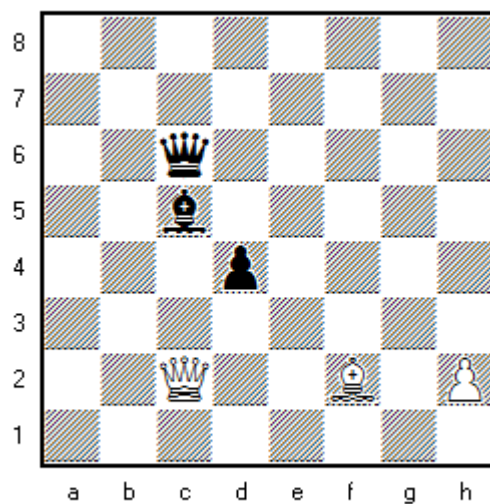
Q1. Pin the black bishop to the queen



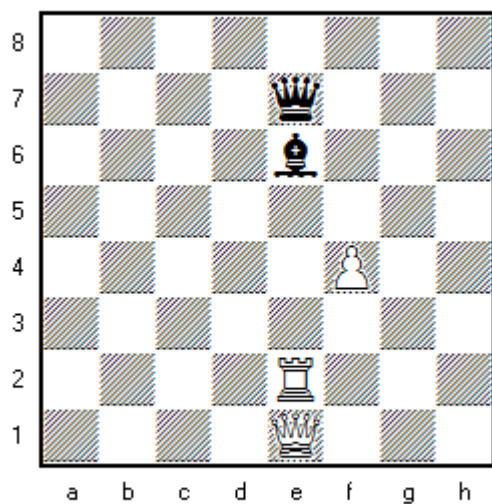
Q2. Pin the black rook to the queen



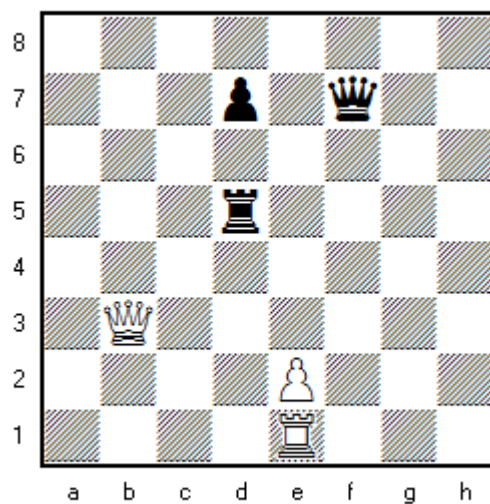
Q3. Skewer the black queen and rook



Q4. Capture a pawn safely

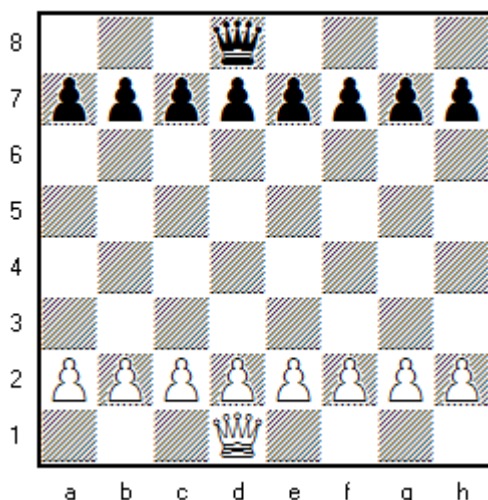


Q5. Threaten a pinned piece



Q6. Threaten a pinned piece

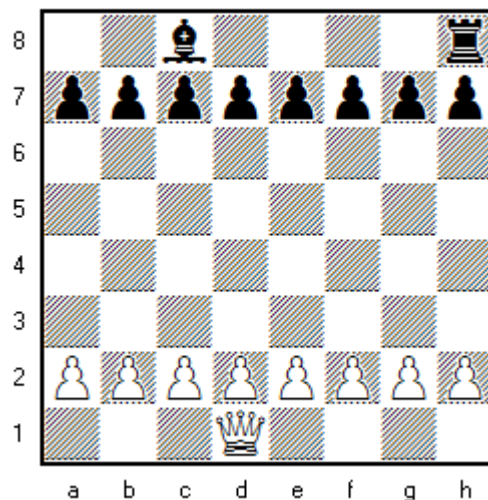
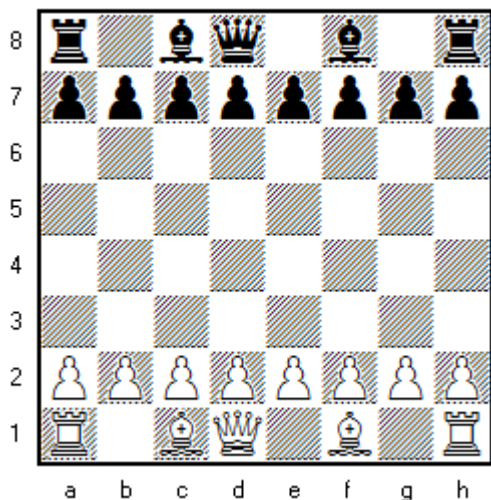
You can also familiarise yourself with the queen move by playing some Capture the Flag queen games.



As usual, children who are lacking confidence could be given a few pawns start.

You can play this game against the computer at <http://www.chesskids.org.uk/newcourse/pqueenrace.htm>.

Once your children are confident, they can try playing games with queens, rooks and bishops. You could use all of them, as in the diagram on your left below, or start with just one rook and bishop each along with the queen.

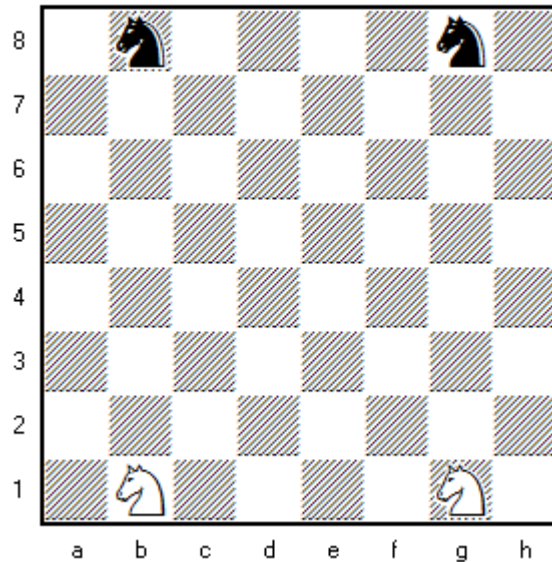


You could also play a handicap game where you have a rook against a queen if your children are not confident about using their queen. This will be easy to win as long as they're careful not to use their strongest piece. You could also try queen and 8 pawns against rook, bishop and 8 pawns, as in the diagram on the right, which will not be so easy to win, and will provide excellent practice in using the queen efficiently.

CHAPTER 6

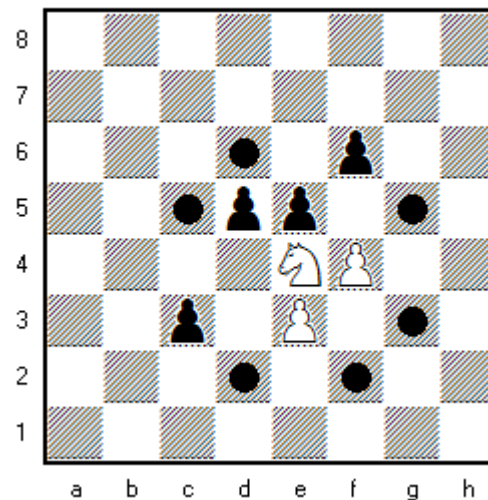
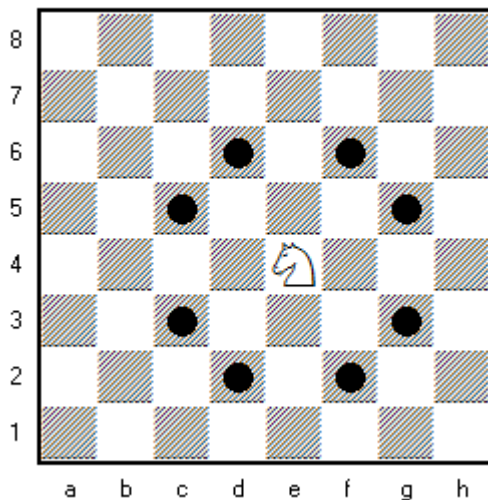
THE KNIGHT

Find the knights in your chess set and set them up for the start of the game as in the diagram below. The knights were originally the cavalry in the army, so are represented by horses' heads.



Ensure that your children can identify the knights and place them on their correct starting squares.

The knight move is quite unlike that of the other pieces. Young children usually learn it best by thinking of it as moving in the shape of a letter L: two squares in a straight line, then one round the corner. You can also see the knight as moving to the opposite corner of a 3x2 rectangle or to the nearest non-adjacent opposite coloured squares.



Unlike the other pieces, the knight can jump over any piece in its way, both friendly and enemy pieces. Like the other pieces (except pawns) it captures in the same way that it moves. In the diagram on your right above it can move to any of the marked squares or capture the pawn on c3 or the pawn on f6.

Ask your children to play some knight moves on the board. Set the knight up on a random square and ask your children to indicate its possible moves by using pawns or counters. It's a useful exercise to work out how many possible moves the knight has from different squares on the board. This will demonstrate the importance of using the knight in the centre of the board.

We now know about four pieces: the pawn, the rook, the bishop, the queen and the knight.

Ask your children how the knight compares in strength to the other pieces? Is it stronger or weaker than a rook? What about a bishop? Why do they say that?

In fact the knight is worth 3 points, making it about the same strength as the bishop. One of the main reasons chess is such a fascinating game is that there are two pieces, the knight and the bishop, of very similar worth but with very different powers. We refer to the bishops and knights as 'minor pieces' and the rooks and queen as 'major pieces'. On average, a bishop is worth fractionally more than a knight, especially when you have two bishops working together, but for the moment we can consider the two minor pieces as equals.

So our piece values now look like this:

Pawn: 1 point

Knight: 3 points

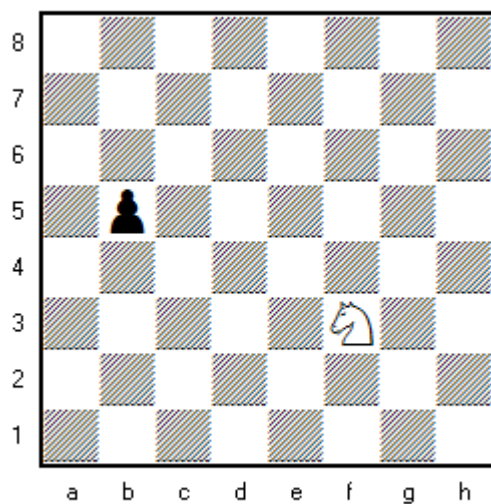
Bishop: 3 points

Rook: 5 points

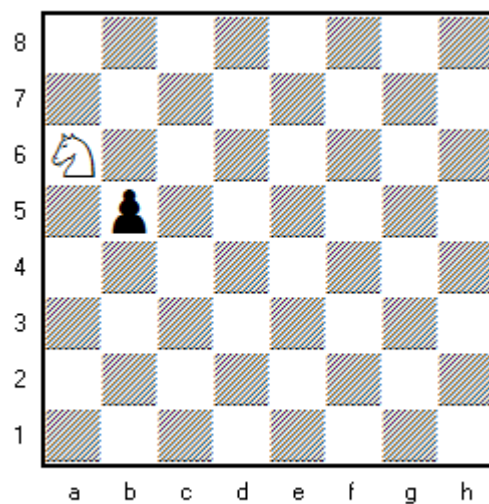
Queen: 9 points

A trade of a bishop for a knight, or a knight for a bishop can (at this point) be considered an equal exchange, just as we would consider a trade of knight for knight to be an equal exchange.

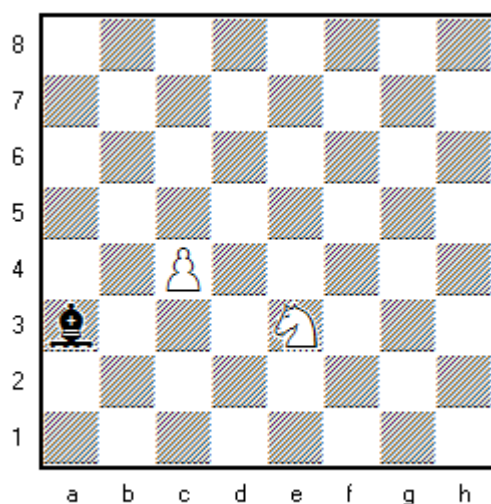
The next set of worksheets reinforces the knight move and the concept of safety as applied to the knight as well as providing exercises based on finding double threats. Like queens, knights are very good at doing forks because they can move in eight directions. Because the knight move is, compared with that of other pieces, hard to 'see' it's very easy to miss the opportunity for knight forks, and to fail to see them coming. Once the knight move has been fully mastered, though, these worksheets should pose few problems.



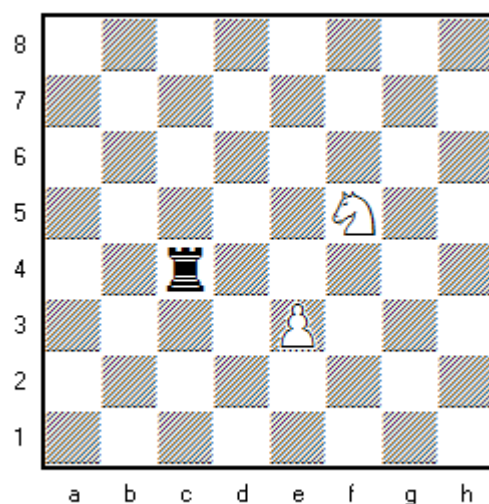
Q1. Threaten a pawn



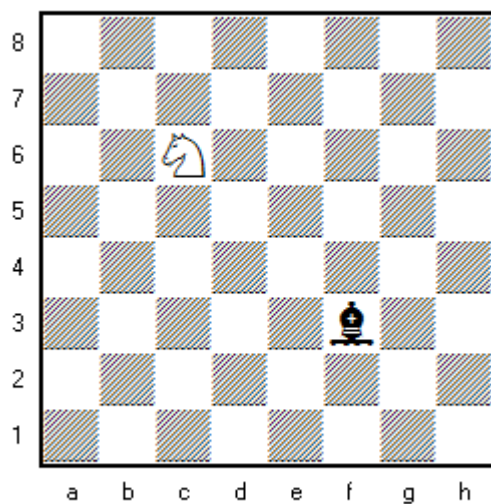
Q2. Threaten a pawn



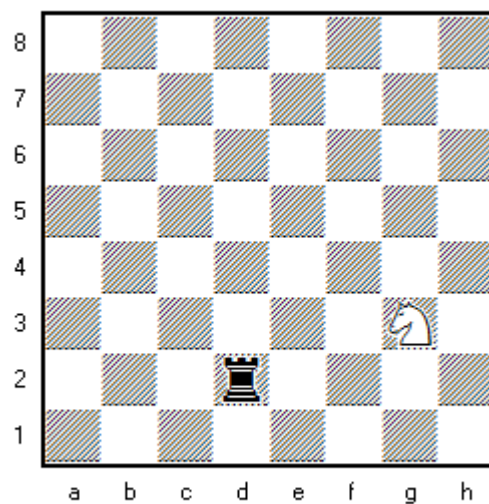
Q3. Threaten a bishop



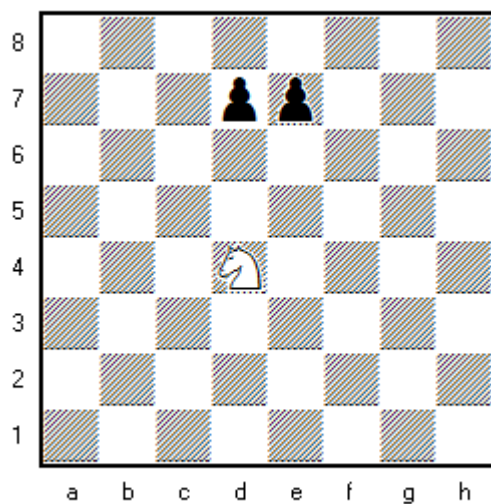
Q4. Threaten a rook



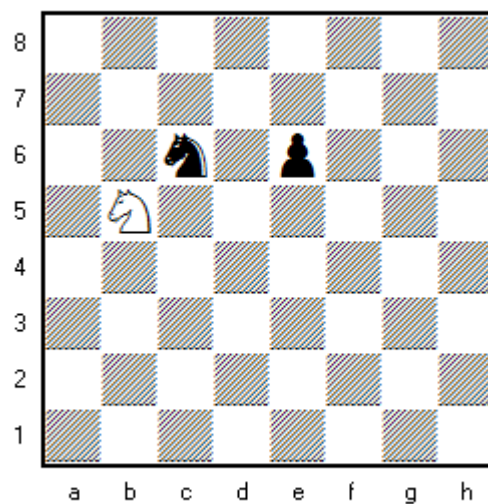
Q5. Threaten a bishop
Give two answers



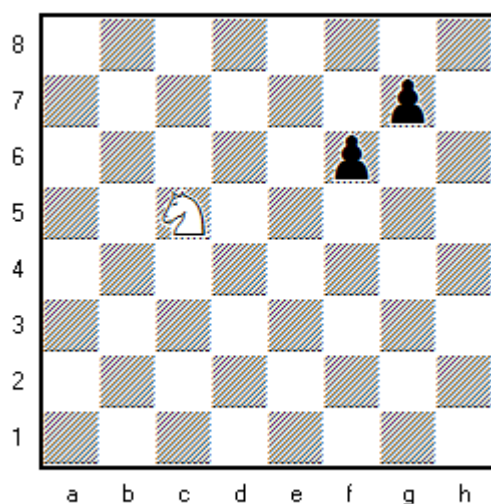
Q6. Threaten a rook
Give two answers



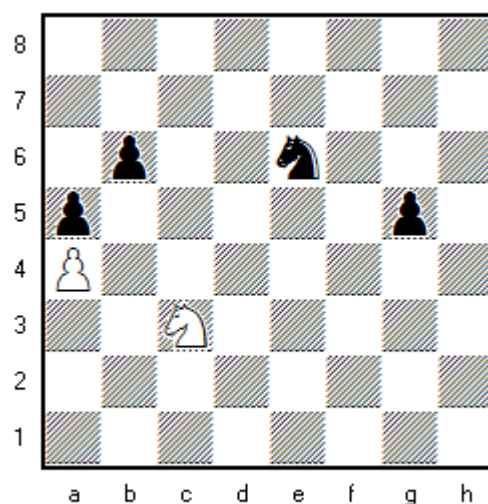
Q1. Threaten a pawn safely



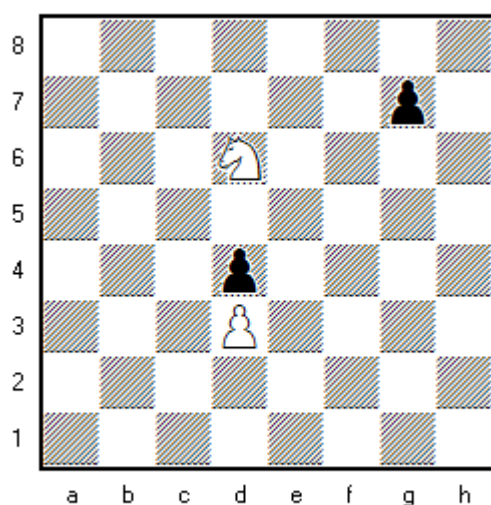
Q2. Threaten a pawn safely



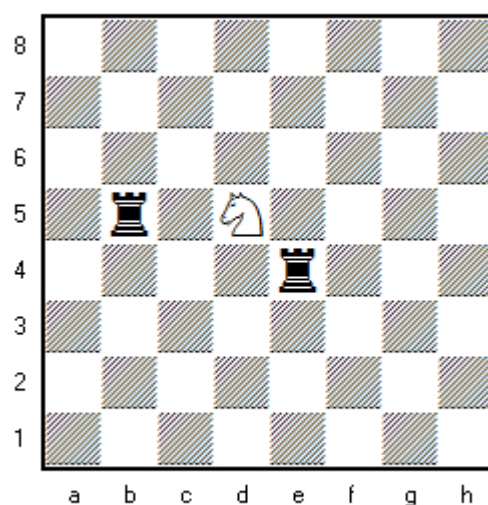
Q3. Threaten an undefended pawn



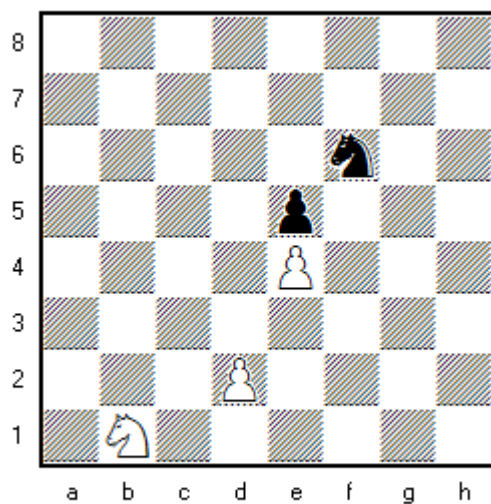
Q4. Threaten an undefended pawn



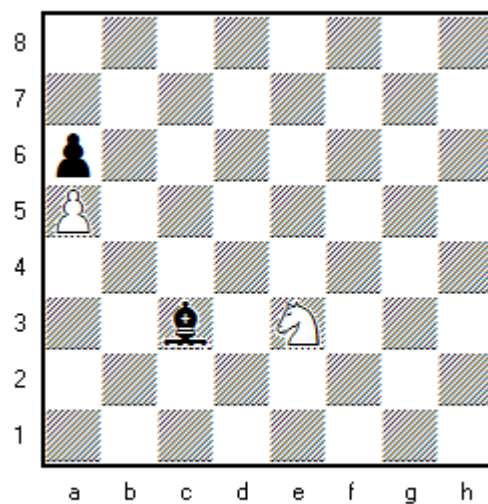
Q5. Threaten two pawns



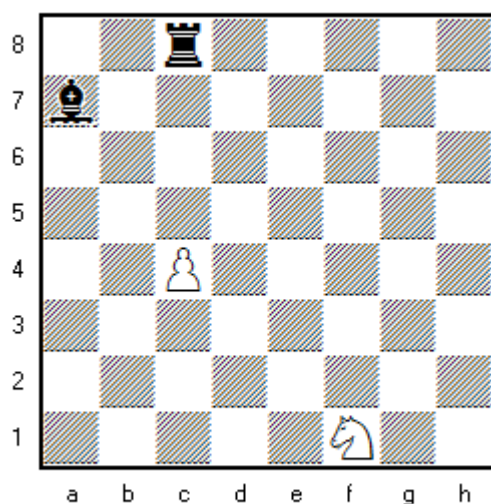
Q6. Threaten two rooks



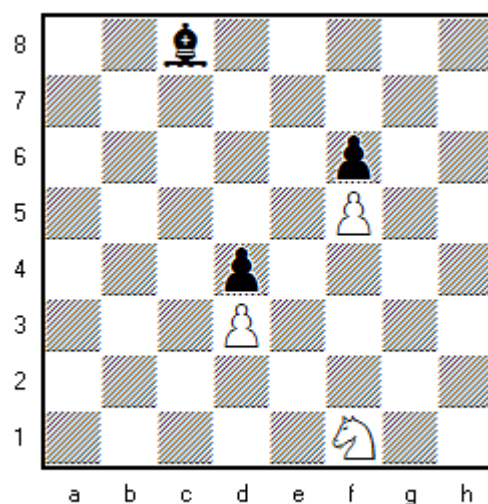
Q1. Defend a pawn with a knight



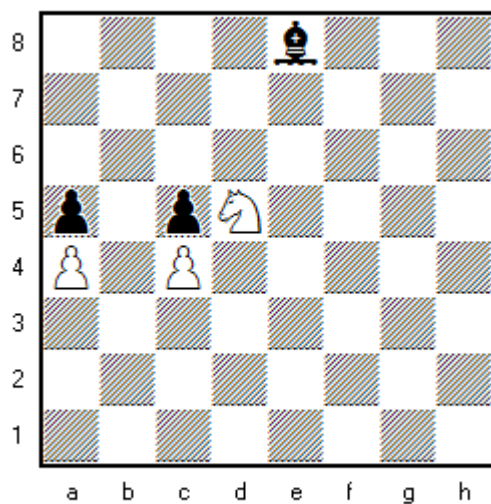
Q2. Defend a pawn with a knight



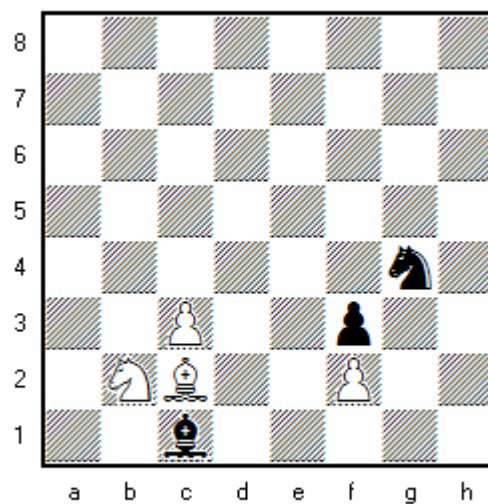
Q3. Defend a pawn with a knight safely



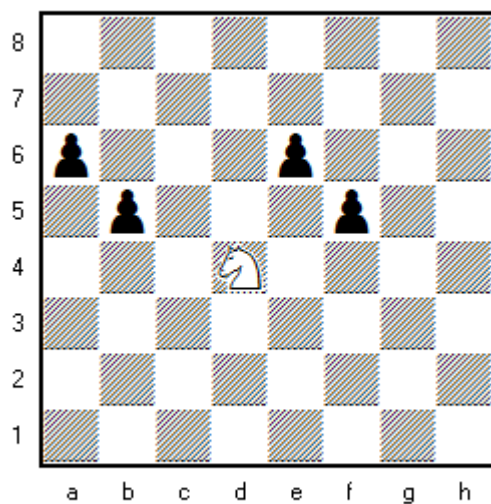
Q4. Defend a pawn with a knight safely



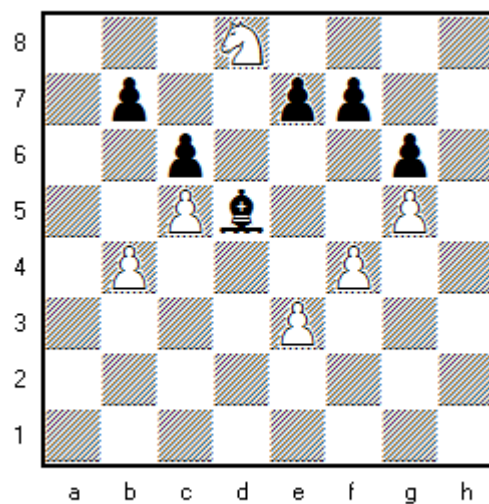
Q5. Defend a pawn with a knight
Give two answers



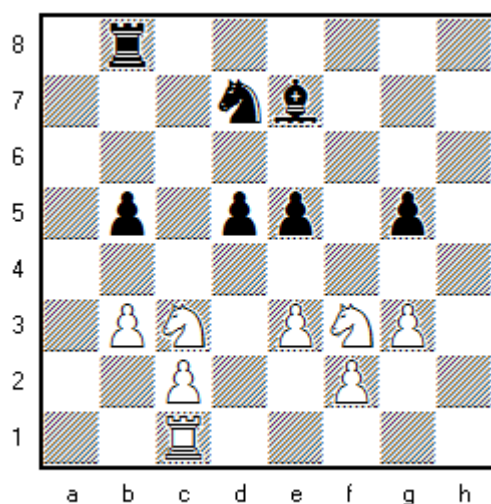
Q6. Defend a pawn with a knight
Give two answers



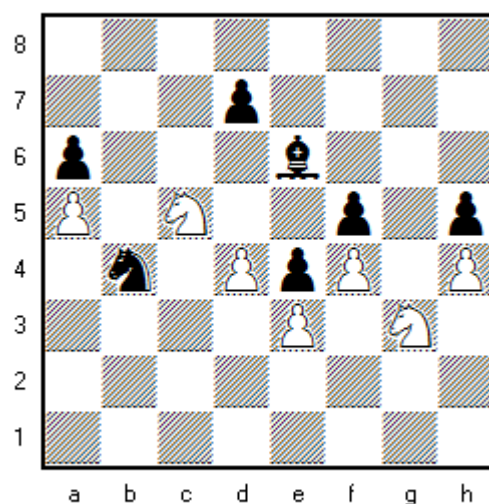
Q1. Capture a pawn safely



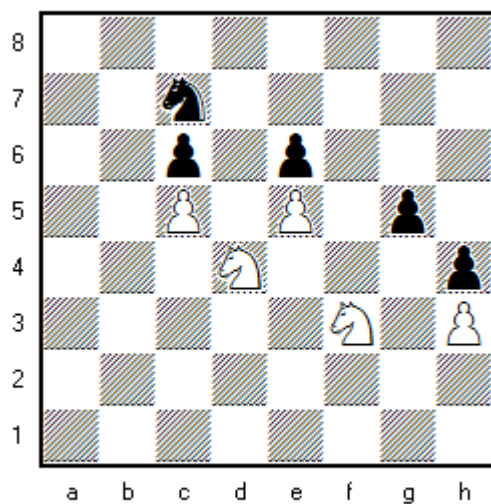
Q2. Capture a pawn safely



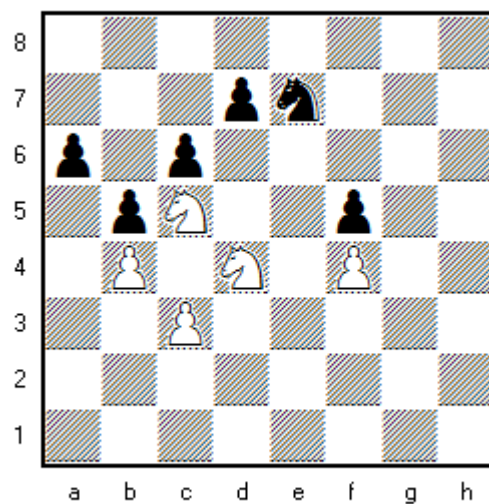
Q3. Capture a pawn safely



Q4. Capture a pawn safely

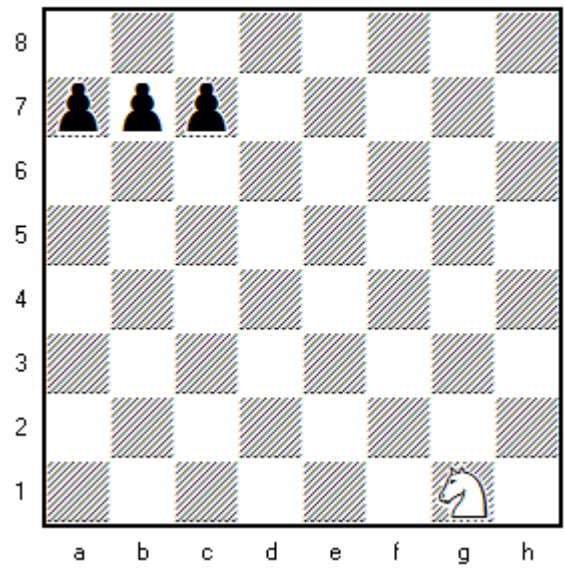


Q5. Capture a pawn safely
Give two answers



Q6. Capture a pawn safely
Give two answers

The knight against pawn games are perhaps not quite as interesting as some of the others but they're still a useful exercise in handling the knights. A knight will have little problem stopping two pawns on adjacent files but will lose against three pawns (as in the diagram below) with careful play.



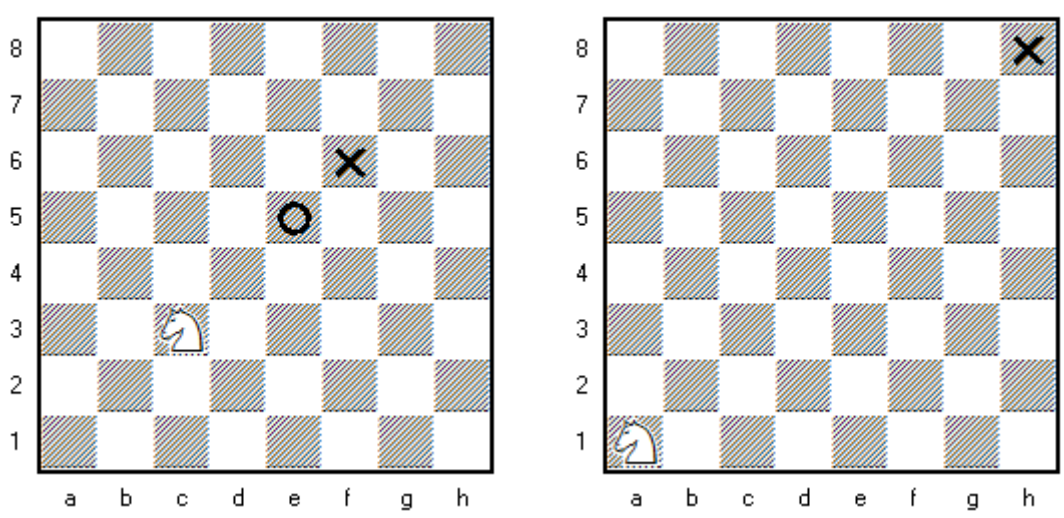
You can play knight against two, three or four pawns against the computer at <http://www.chesskids.org.uk/newcourse/knightcomb.htm>.

An interesting exercise, just as it is with the bishop, is to work out how far apart two pawns have to be to triumph against a knight.

The knight is the most intriguing of all the chess pieces and as such lends itself to a wide variety of puzzles.

See how far you can get with the Knight Tour. In this puzzle the knight has to visit every square on the board once only. Try this out for yourself, using counters to mark the squares you've already visited. Completing the knight tour is possible but very difficult. You'll probably end up with four or five unvisited squares. A quick internet search will uncover a number of sites with further information and solutions.

Another interesting exercise is to work out how many moves it takes for a knight to travel from one square to another.



On the left, is the knight nearer the nought or the cross. In fact the knight is twice as near the cross (2 moves compared to four moves). On the right, how many moves does it take the knight to reach the opposite corner? You should be able to do it in 6 moves. Can you do it in 7 moves? If not, why not? What about 8, 9 or 10 moves?

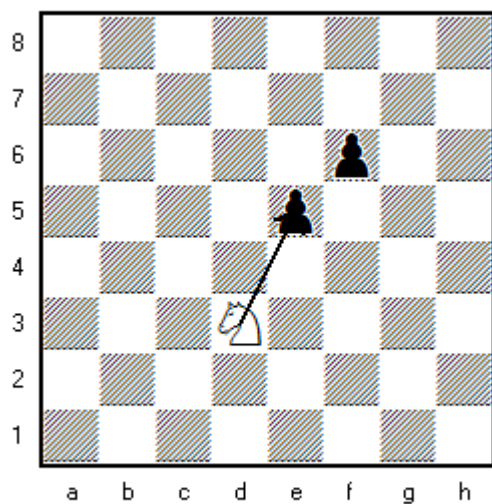
The correct answer, which it usually takes young children some time to understand, is that you can reach h8 from a1 in 6 moves, 8 moves, 10 moves or any higher even number of moves, but not in any odd number of moves. The reason is that a knight moves to a different coloured square every move, so a knight starting on a black square such as a1 will always land on a white square on odd numbered moves and on a black square on even numbered moves. So it can only reach h8, a black square, in an even number of moves.

Take any square on the board and construct a grid indicating the number of moves it would take the knight to reach each square from the starting square.

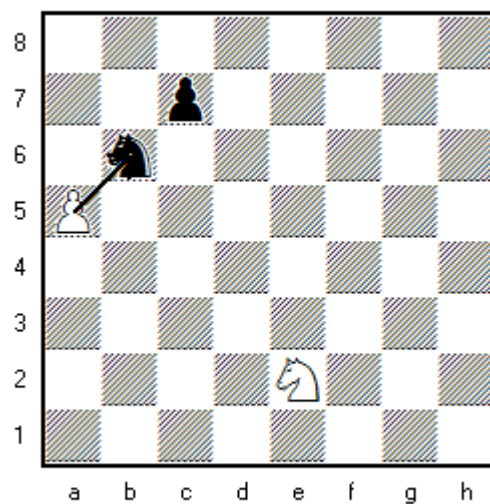
Again, there are worksheets inviting students to find safe squares for a threatened knight, along with questions involving identifying whether exchanges involving knights are favourable, unfavourable or equal, and whether knight moves are safe. We're now adding more pieces to some of these positions, and you also have to remember the moves of the other pieces. There's also a worksheet in which you have to work out the number of moves it will take the knight to reach the target square.

The safe square worksheet, just as with the queen, might pose problems. As before, perseverance will be required along with a certain amount of trial and error. Young children sometimes get impatient in any activity in which these skills are required. The knight journey worksheet also involves stopping and spending a few minutes on each question to work out the answer. Young children who require instant gratification may well have a problem with this.

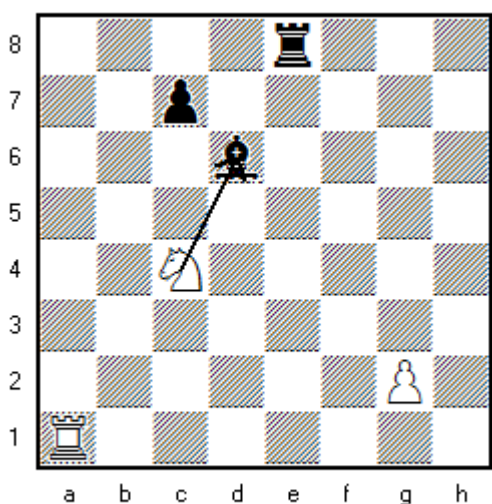
As always, if any particular question type is too difficult at the moment you can always come back to it later. But your children will need to be familiar with the knight move as well as all the other pieces before moving onto the next chapter.



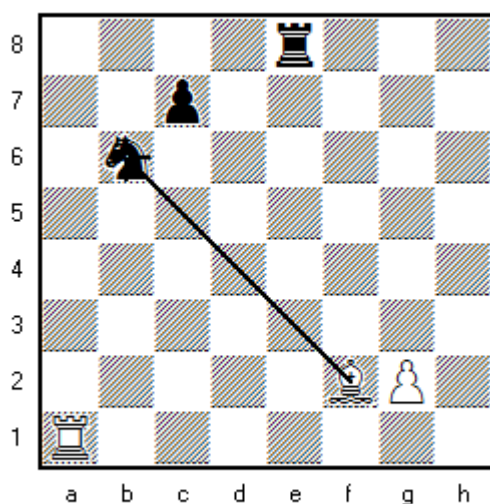
Q1. Is this capture
a) good b) equal c) bad?



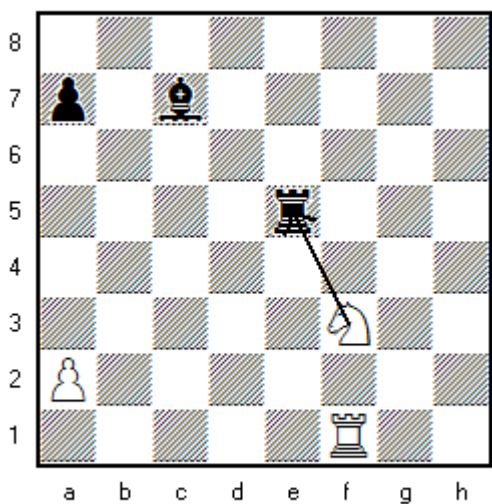
Q2. Is this capture
a) good b) equal c) bad?



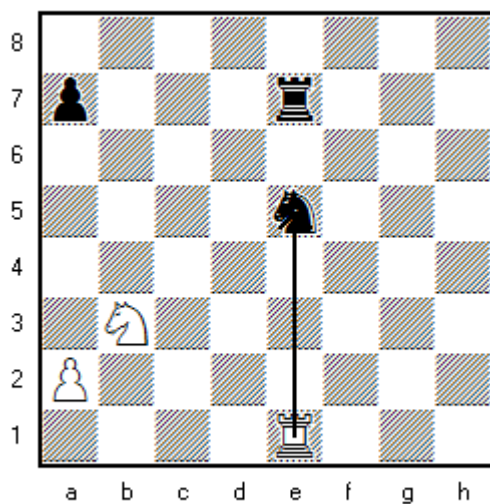
Q3. Is this capture
a) good b) equal c) bad?



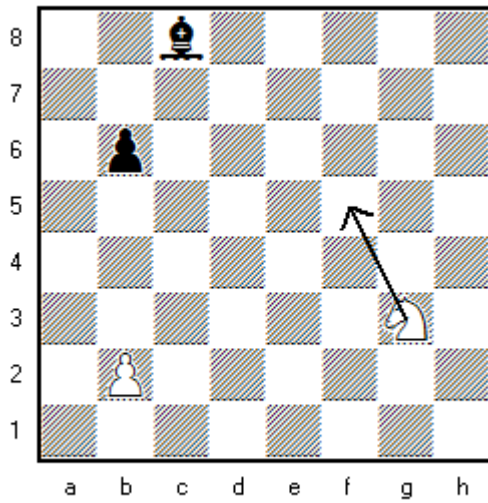
Q4. Is this capture
a) good b) equal c) bad?



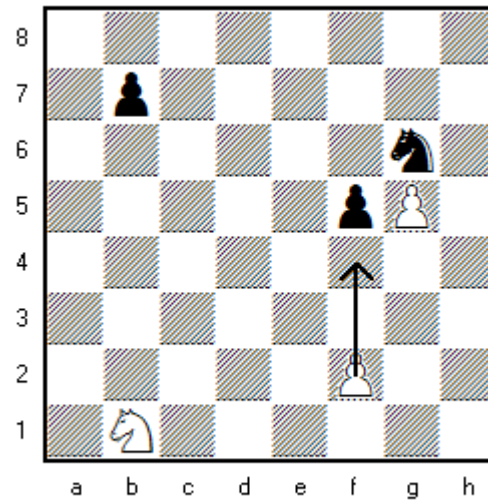
Q5. Is this capture
a) good b) equal c) bad?



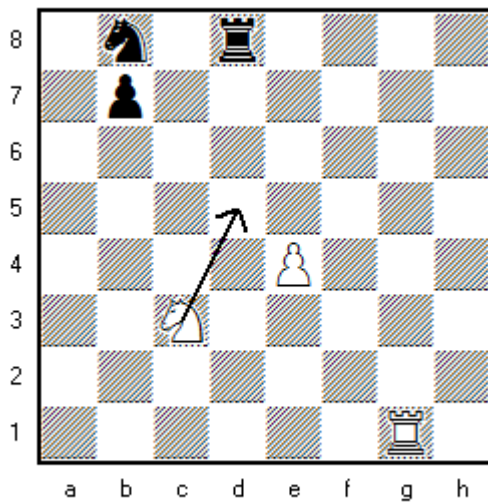
Q6. Is this capture
a) good b) equal c) bad?



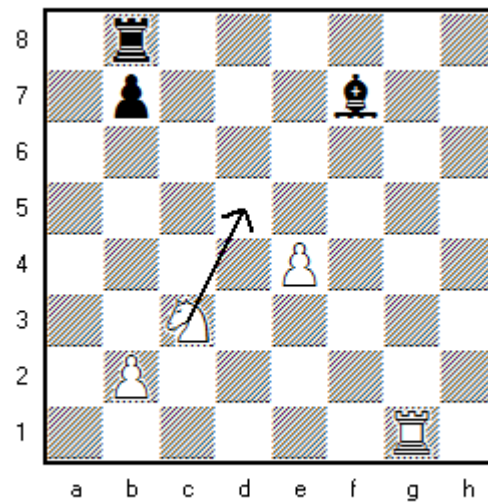
Q1. Is this move safe?
Yes/No



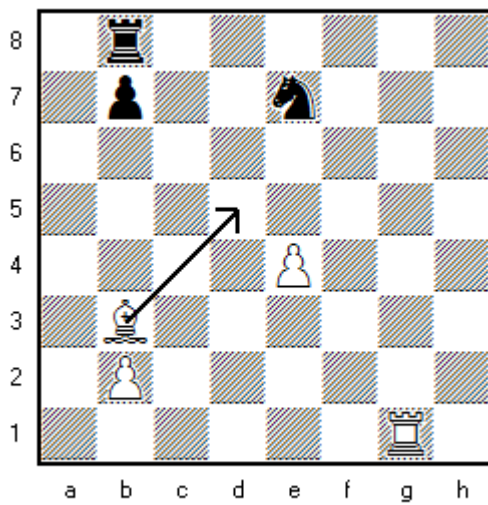
Q2. Is this move safe?
Yes/No



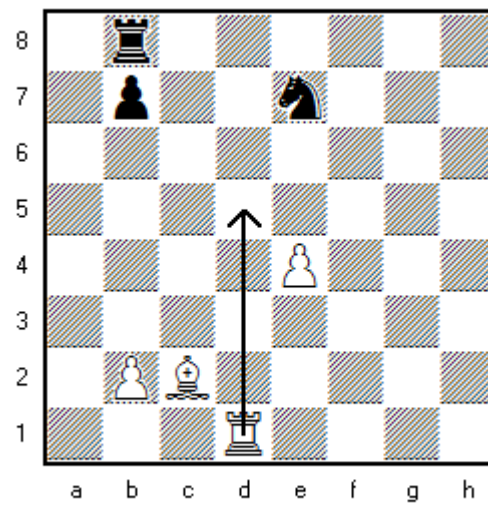
Q3. Is this move safe?
Yes/No



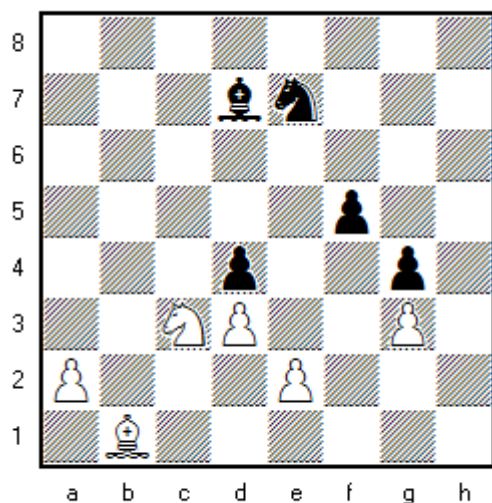
Q4. Is this move safe?
Yes/No



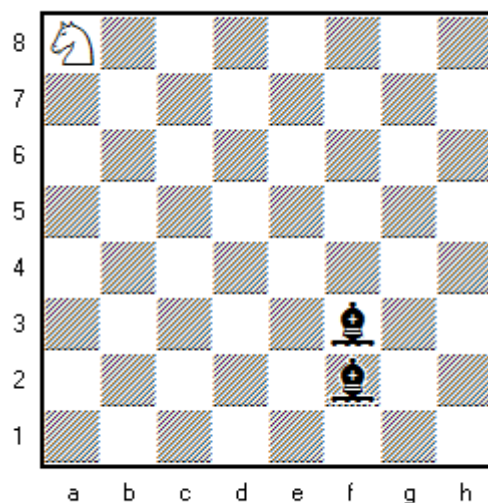
Q5. Is this move safe?
Yes/No



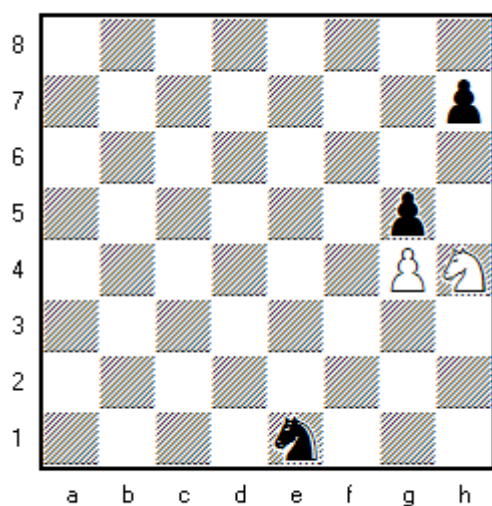
Q6. Is this move safe?
Yes/No



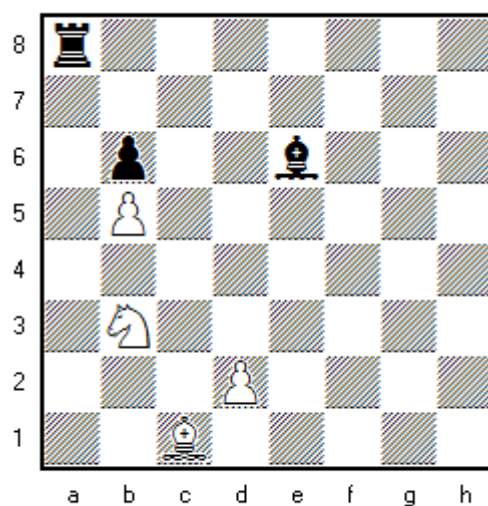
Q1. Move the knight to a safe square



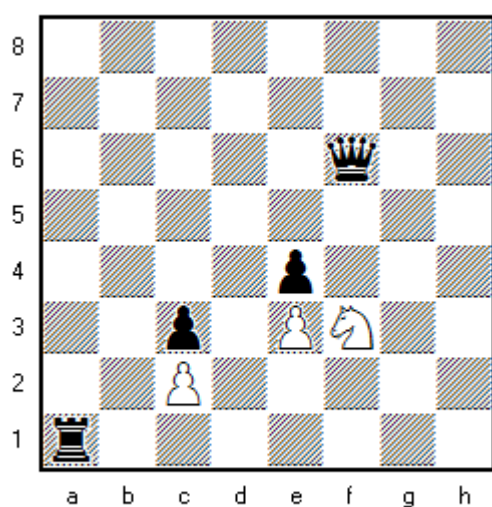
Q2. Move the knight to a safe square



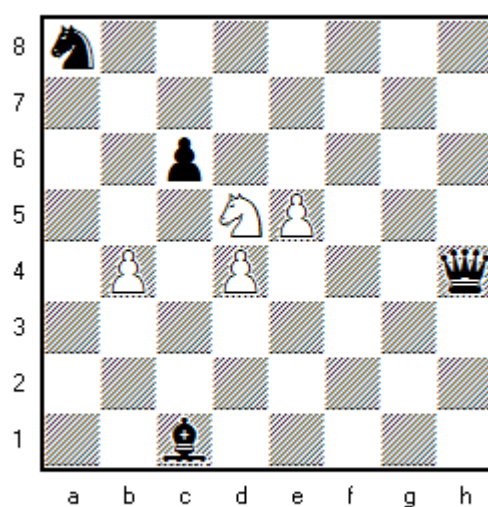
Q3. Move the knight to a safe square



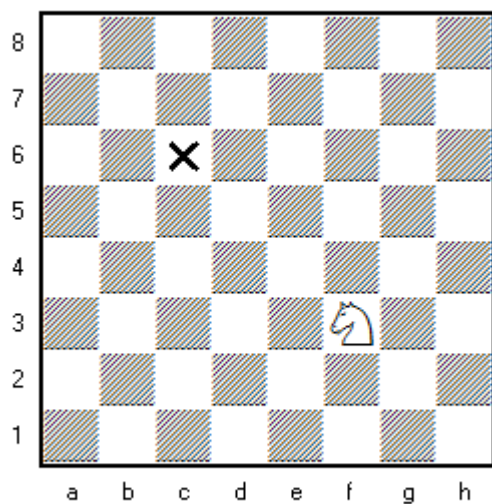
Q4. Move the knight to a safe square



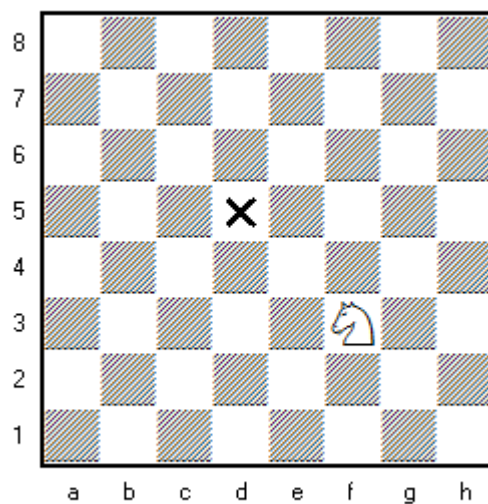
Q5. Move the knight to a safe square
Give two answers



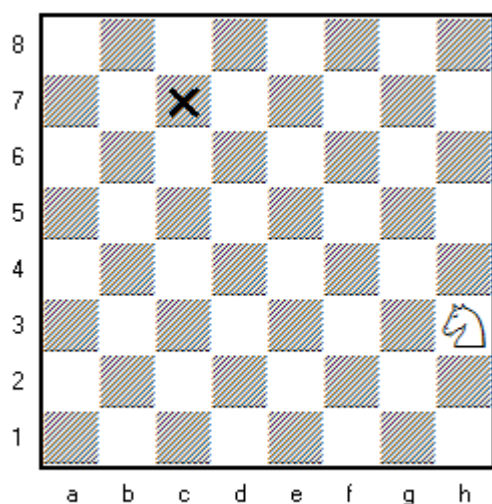
Q6. Move the knight to a safe square
Give two answers



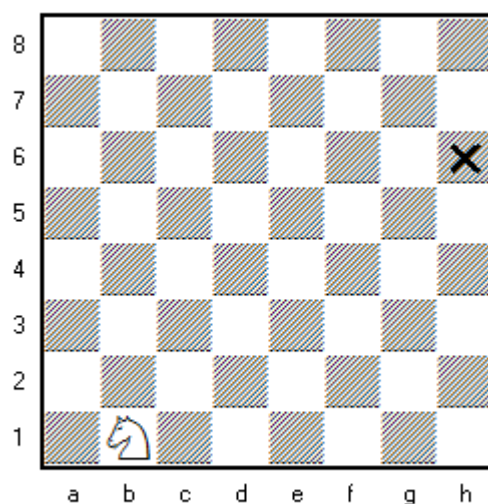
Q1. How many moves will it take the knight to reach the target square?



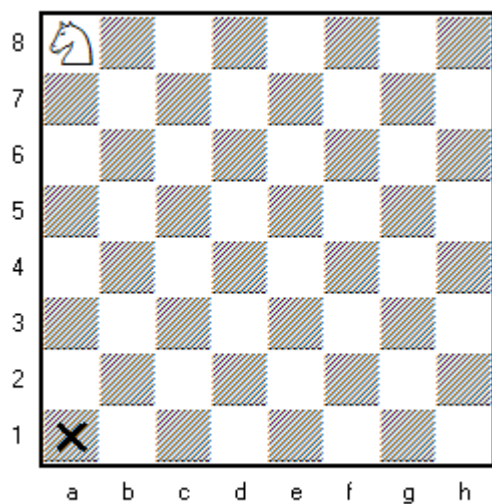
Q2. How many moves will it take the knight to reach the target square?



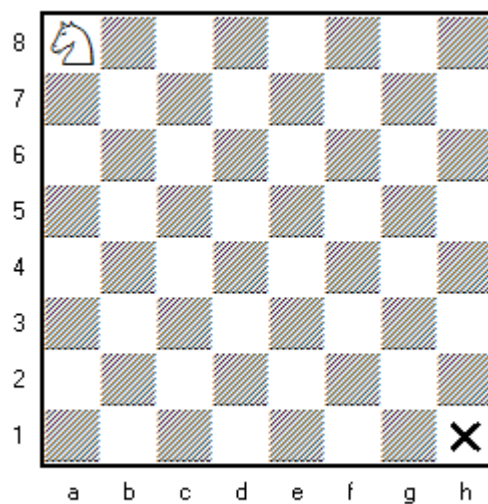
Q3. How many moves will it take the knight to reach the target square?



Q4. How many moves will it take the knight to reach the target square?

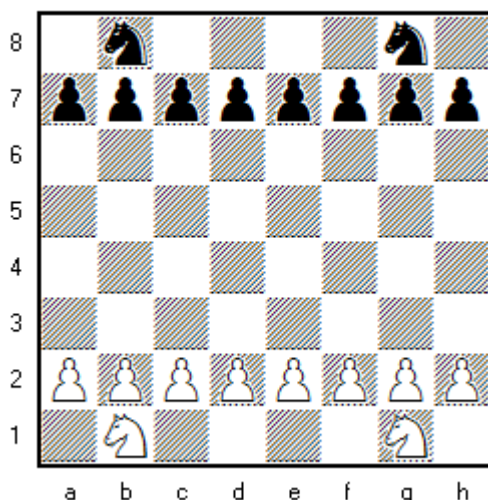


Q5. How many moves will it take the knight to reach the target square?



Q6. How many moves will it take the knight to reach the target square?

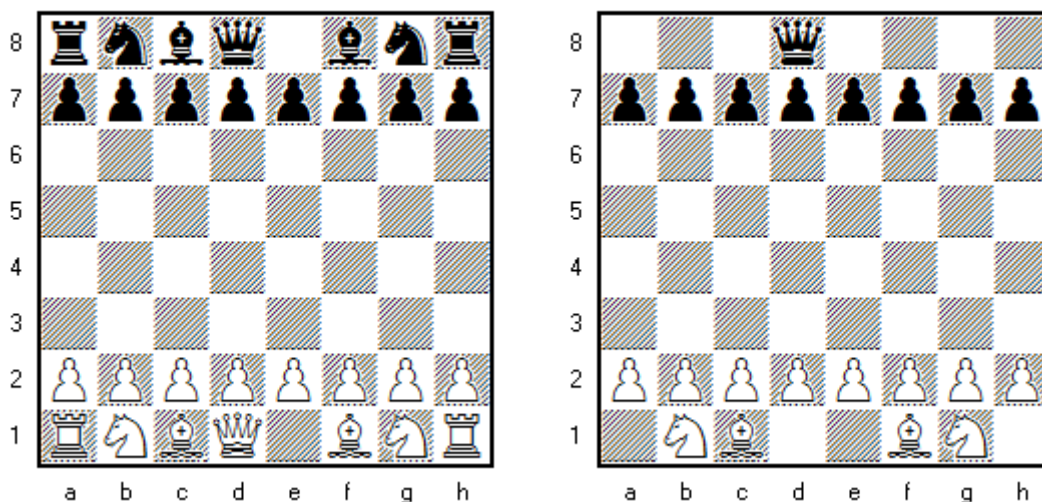
You can also familiarise yourself with the knight move by playing some Capture the Flag knight games.



As usual, children who are lacking confidence could be given a knight or a few pawns start.

You can play this game against the computer at <http://www.chesskids.org.uk/newcourse/pknighttrace.htm>.

Once your children are confident, they can try playing games with queens, rooks, bishops and knights. You could use all of them, as in the diagram on your left below, or start perhaps with just the pieces on the queen side.



You could also test your skill with minor pieces by playing with knights and bishops against a queen, as in the position on your right above. Four minor pieces should win but three minor pieces against a queen (9 points each) will be close.

Encourage your children to use their creativity and imagination to set up and try out different positions. The point count (queen: 9, rook: 5, bishop and knight: 3 each, pawn: 1) will give you a good idea as to who is likely to have the better chances.

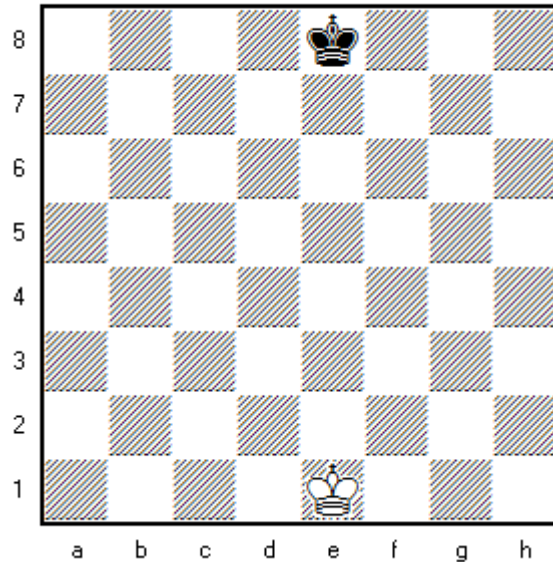
Emphasize repeatedly the importance of points and the idea that chess is a game of skill, not a game of luck. The basic skill is ensuring that you have a bigger and stronger army (in other words, more points) than your opponent. This means that you should win points if you have the chance and avoid losing points by meeting your opponent's threats and making sure your moves are safe.

It takes time to develop perfect chessboard vision, but this is what you're going to need when you meet the king. If you can't see everything on the board, you're going to end up confused. But this is all for the next chapter.

CHAPTER 7

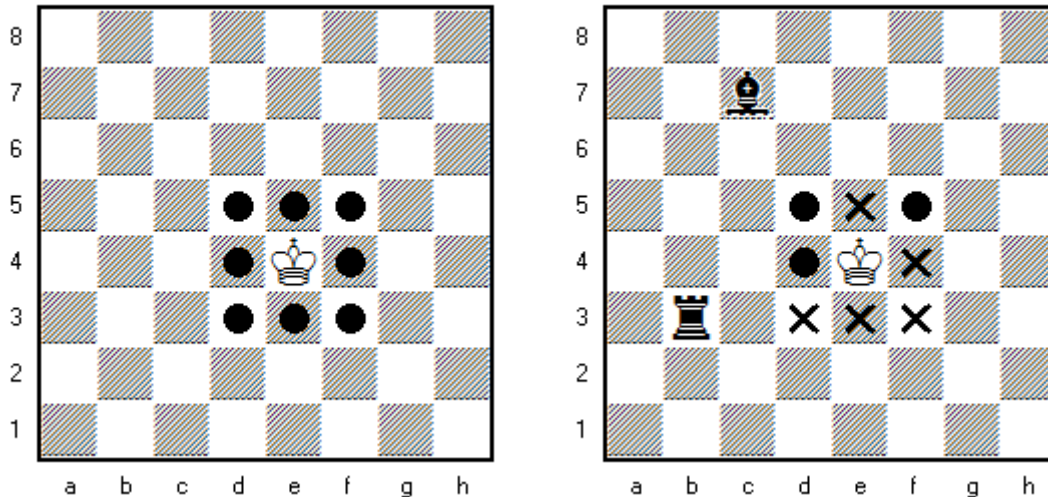
THE KING

Now you've identified the pieces the king will cause no trouble. It's the other large piece in your set, the one with the cross on top. The kings start next to the queens, on the e-file and on the opposite colour: white king on black square, black king on white square.



Ensure that your children can identify the kings and place them on their correct starting squares.

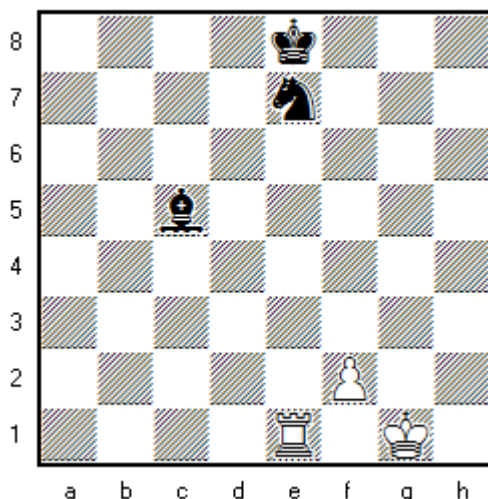
Superficially, the king move is the easiest of all the pieces to understand. It moves just one square at a time in any direction, and captures the same way that it moves.



But there's a catch. The king cannot move to any square which is controlled (attacked) by an enemy piece. In the diagram on your right above the king can only move to the three squares marked with a black circle. It cannot move to d3, e3 or f3 because those squares are controlled by the black rook. It cannot move to e5 or f4 because those squares are controlled by the black bishop.

If your opponent moves his king to a square controlled by one of your pieces you are NOT ALLOWED TO CAPTURE IT. Instead, you must ask your opponent to take his move back and play another move instead. (In competitive play, under the 'touch and move' rule, he'd have to play another move with his king if he was able to do so.)

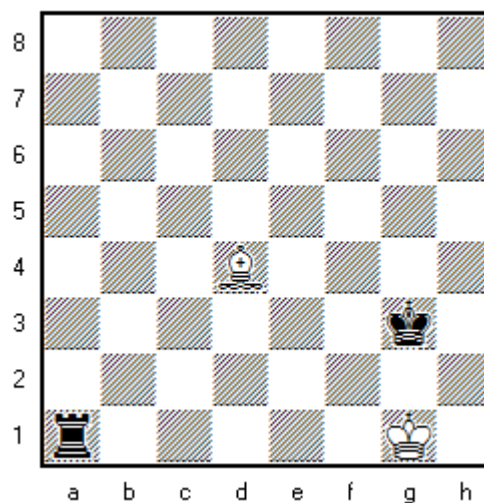
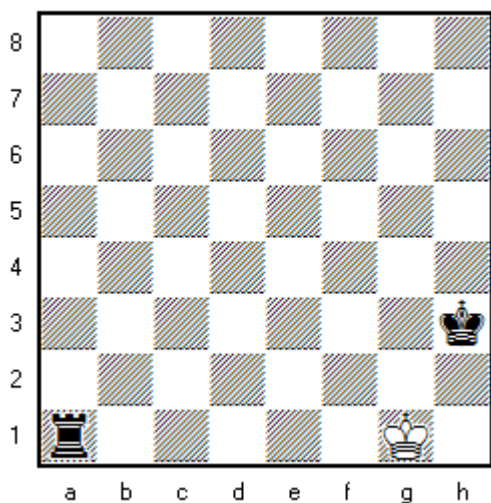
This is a concept many young children find hard to understand. They often think they've won a game by taking their opponent's king. Not only have they not won the game, they've played an illegal move (in response to their opponent's illegal move).

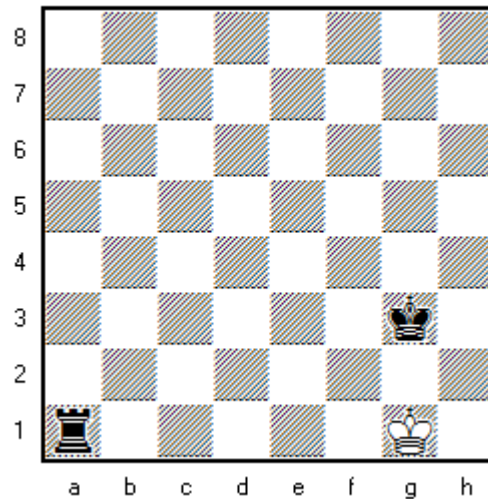
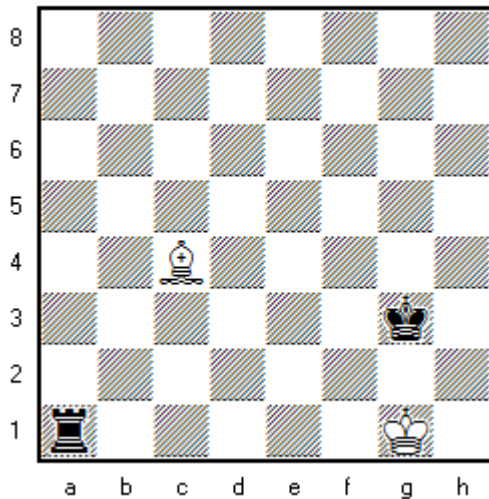


In this position White cannot move his pawn because it would expose his king to attack from the black bishop. Likewise, Black cannot move his knight because it would expose his king to attack from the white rook. We say that the pawn and the knight are both PINNED. In the chapter on the queen we looked at another type of pin. You can move a piece pinned against a queen but if you do so your queen. You CANNOT move a piece pinned against a king.

The next few examples are very important: please make sure your children have a full understanding of this.

If your opponent plays a move that attacks your king, you MUST do something about it. In the diagram on your left below Black has just moved his rook to a1. You will see that this move attacks the white king. If you play a move that attacks your opponent's king you should warn him by saying 'check'. We say that Black has CHECKED the white king: the white king is IN CHECK. In this position White has no choice: he must move his king to f2 which, as you will see is his only safe square. In the position on the right White has no safe squares for his king but he's lucky: his bishop can (and must) capture the black rook.





In the position on the left above White has no safe squares for his king and cannot capture the rook. But he can (and must) block the check by moving his bishop to f1.

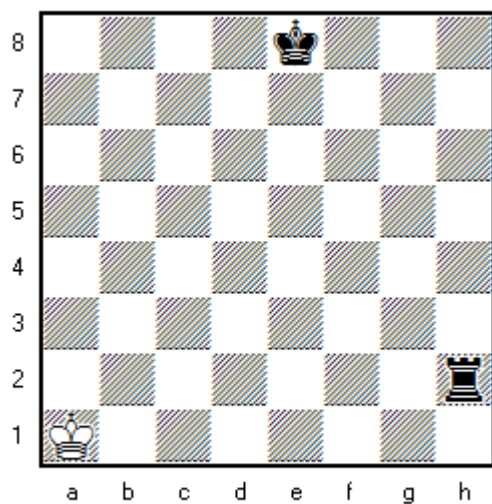
There are three ways to get out of check, move the king to a safe square, capture the piece that's checking you, or block the check. You cannot block a check from a knight or a pawn: ask your children why. You can remember the three ways by using the mnemonic ABC (Avoid (or move Away), Block, Capture).

If you are unable to get out of check it's CHECKMATE. In the position on the right above White has been CHECKMATED. Black has won the game.

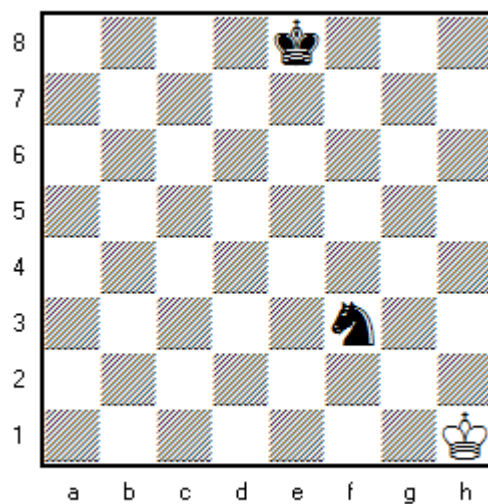
This, then, is how you win a proper game of chess. From now on we'll be playing real chess, although you can still return to Capture the Flag rules whenever you wish.

Our next set of worksheets reinforce the king move and the concepts of CHECK and CHECKMATE. Note two extra notation symbols: '+' after a move indicates a check and '#' after a move indicates checkmate.

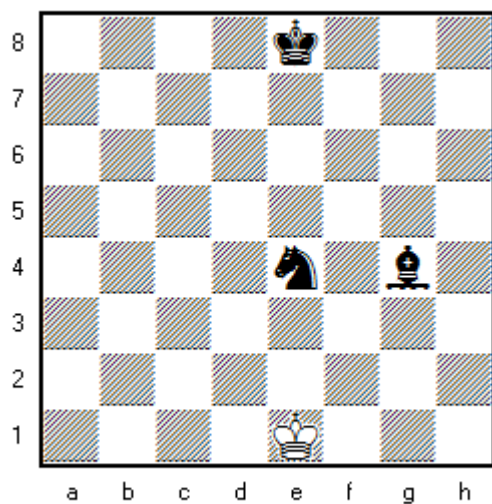
You'll need to make very sure your children understand these ideas before moving on. They are fundamental to their understanding of chess. Feel free to set your own questions to reinforce any concepts with which your children are not confident.



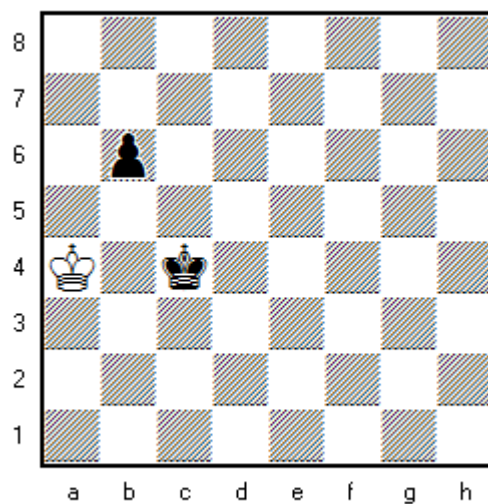
Q1. Play a king move



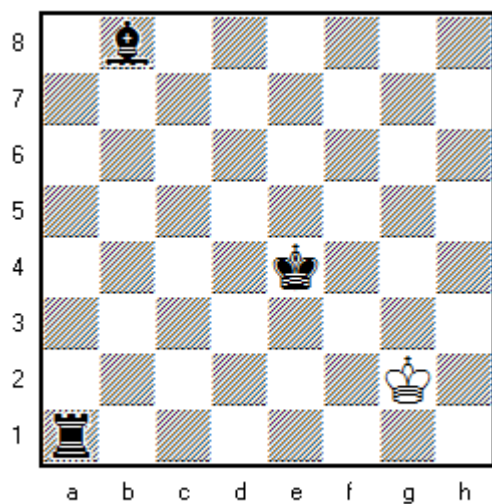
Q2. Play a king move



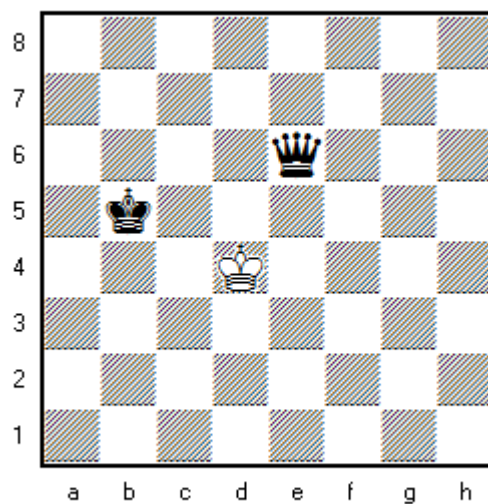
Q3. Play a king move



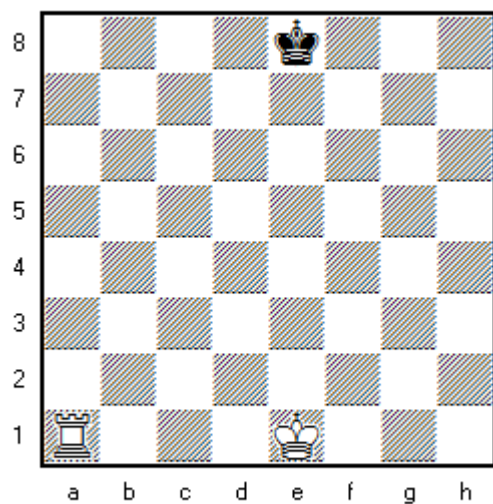
Q4. Play a king move



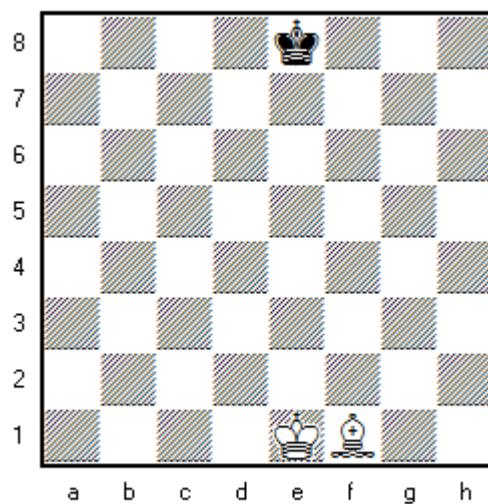
Q5. Play a king move
Give two answers



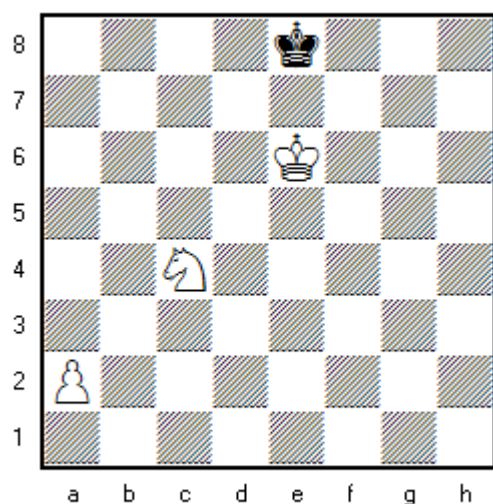
Q6. Play a king move
Give two answers



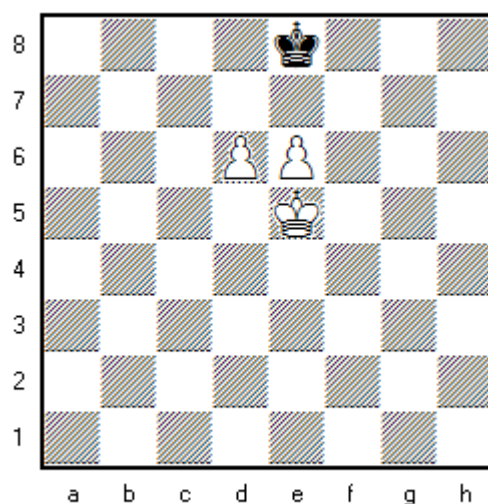
Q1. Play a check



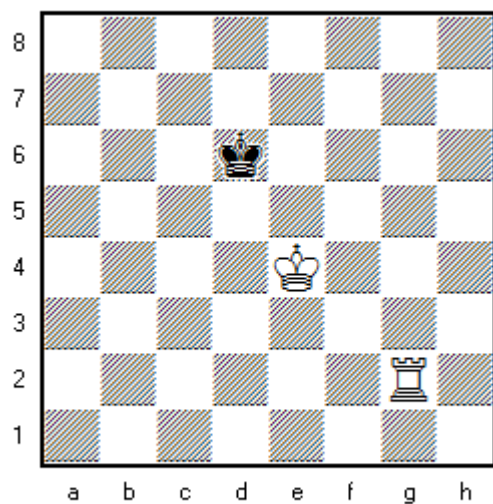
Q2. Play a check



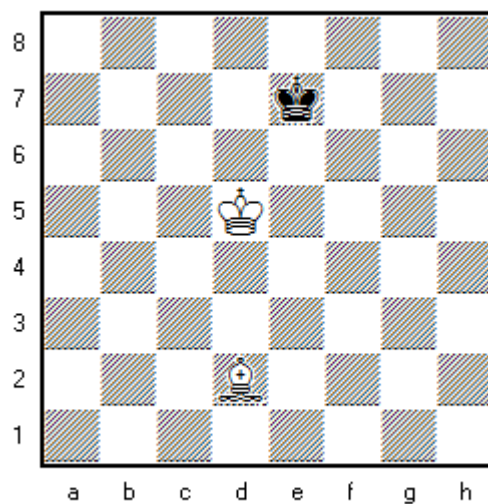
Q3. Play a check



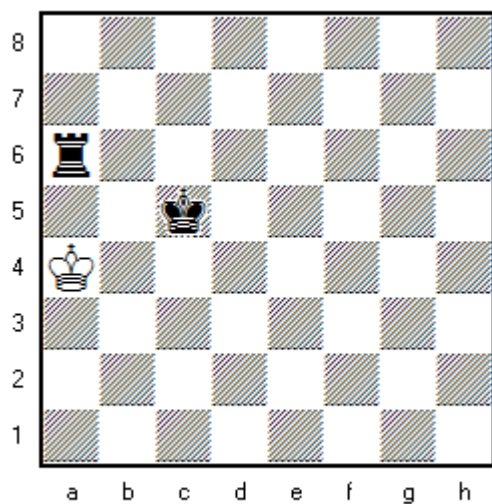
Q4. Play a check



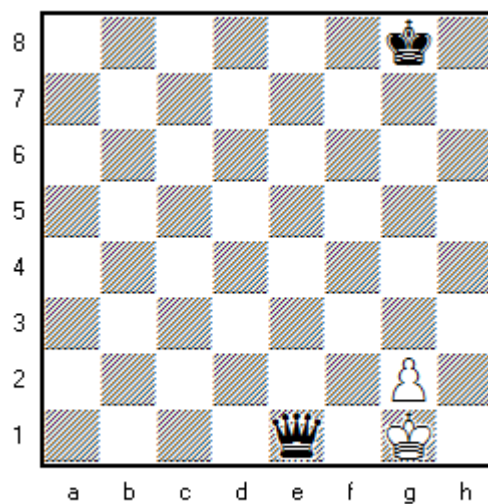
Q5. Play a check
Give two answers



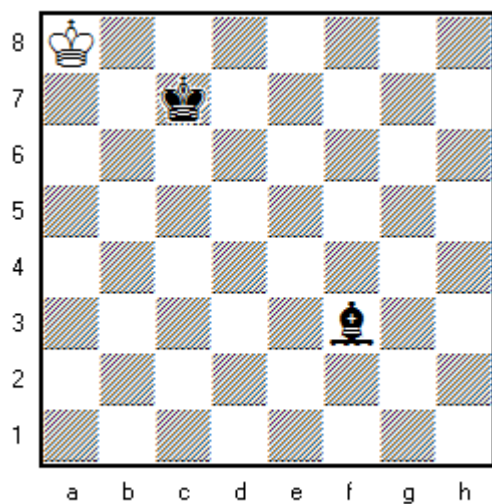
Q6. Play a check
Give two answers



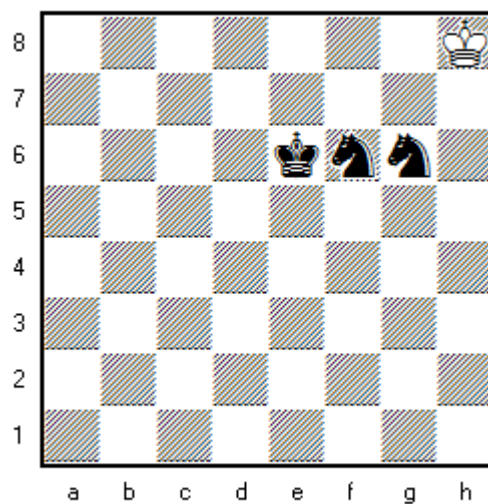
Q1. Move your king to get out of check



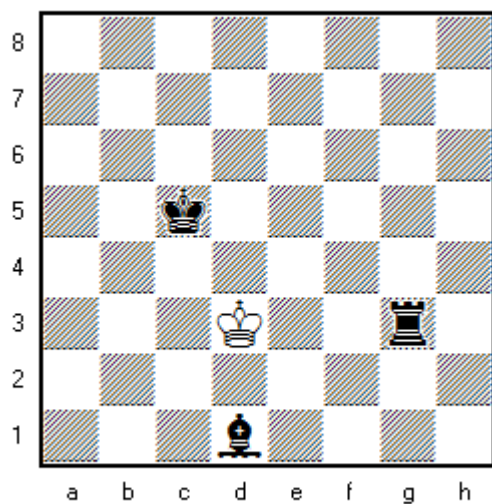
Q2. Move your king to get out of check



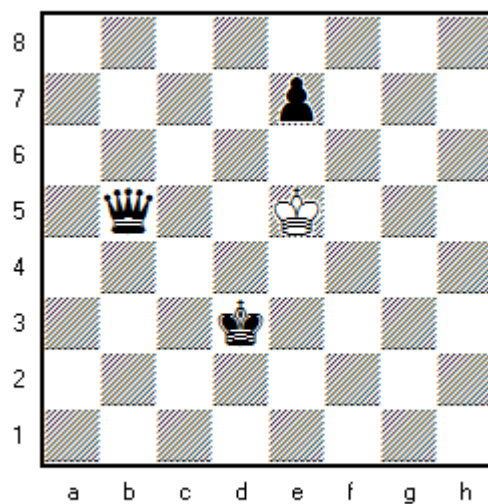
Q3. Move your king to get out of check



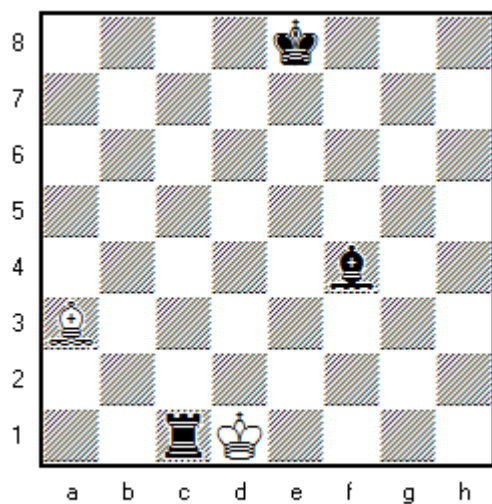
Q4. Move your king to get out of check



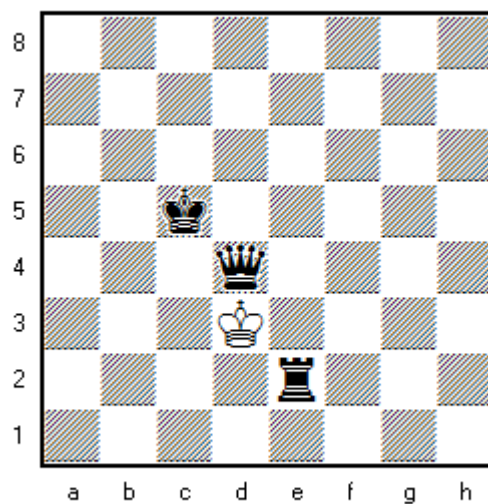
Q5. Move your king to get out of check
Give two answers



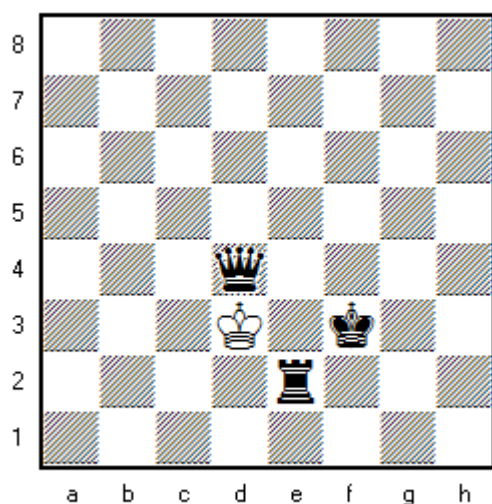
Q6. Move your king to get out of check
Give two answers



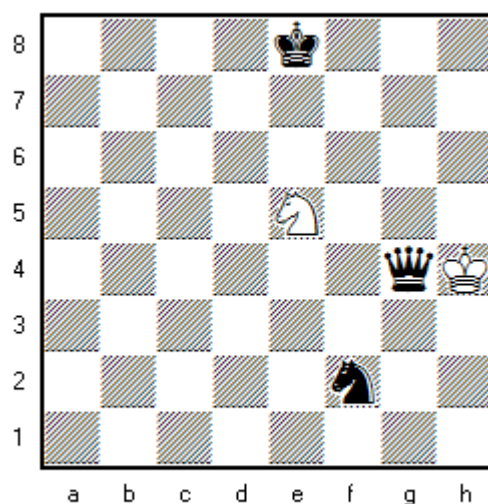
Q1. Get out of check by capturing



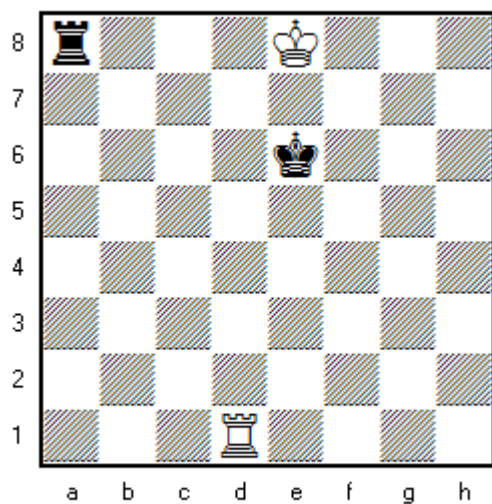
Q2. Get out of check by capturing



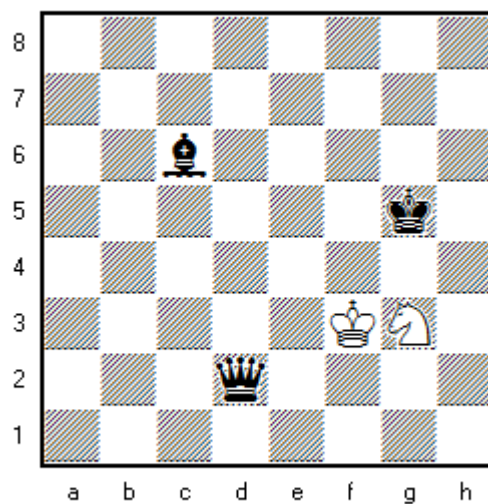
Q3. Get out of check by capturing



Q4. Get out of check by capturing



Q5. Get out of check by blocking



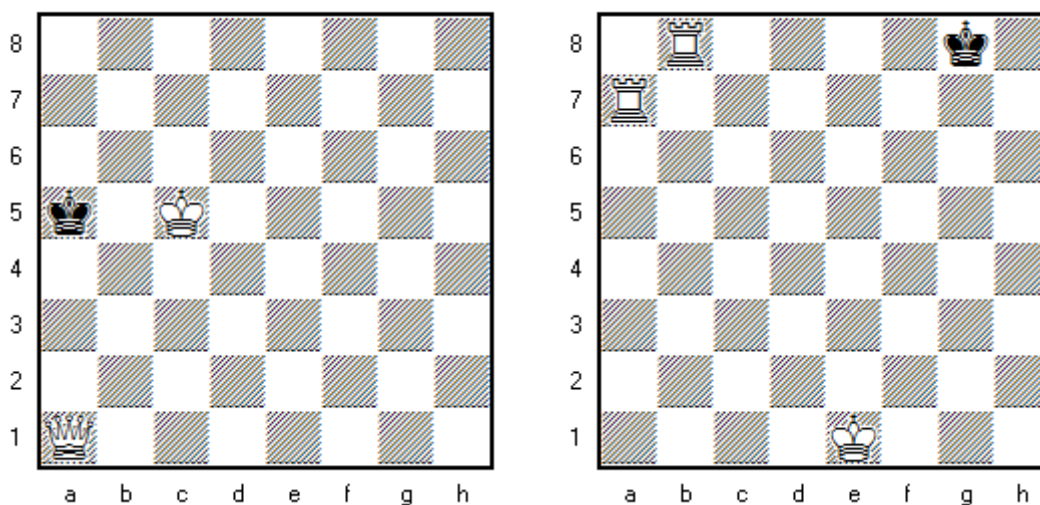
Q6. Get out of check by blocking

From this point on, understanding checkmates will be very important. We recommend that children who want to make progress and take part in competitions should spend time every day solving checkmate puzzles. There will be a few in the next set of worksheets. We'll also be producing sets of graded checkmate puzzles and recommending sources for additional material.

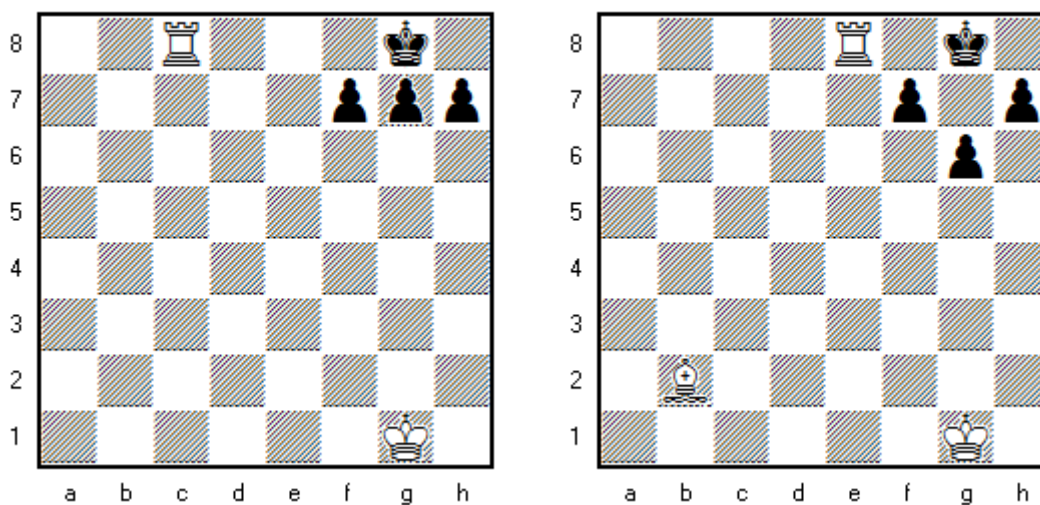
There are several reasons for the importance of checkmate puzzles. Most obviously, you win games by checkmating your opponent so learning the most common checkmate patterns will help you win your games. You'll also improve your chessboard vision, develop your thinking skills and learn how pieces work together by solving checkmate puzzles.

We'll take a quick look here at the two most important mating ideas. (Note that 'checkmate' and 'mate' mean the same thing, just like, for instance, 'telephone' and 'phone'. So we talk about 'mate in 2 moves' or 'checkmate in two moves': they mean exactly the same thing.)

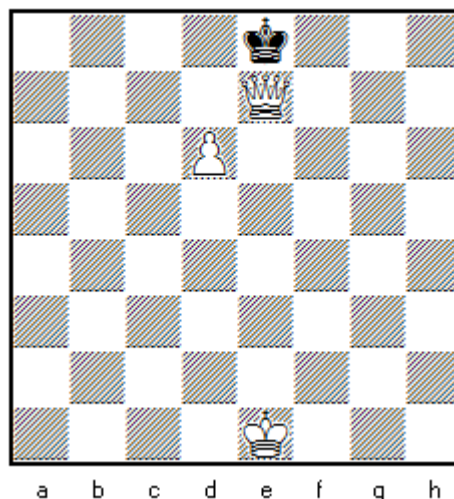
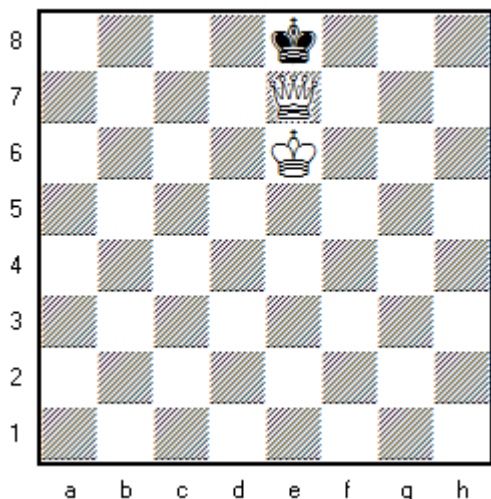
The first mate we look at is when the king is checked along the edge of the board by a rook or a queen. In the diagram on the left below the white king is preventing the black king's escape. Don't forget that two kings can never stand next to each other. On the right, the rook on b8 delivers mate while the rook on a7 controls the possible escape squares. Again, this is a very important mating pattern.



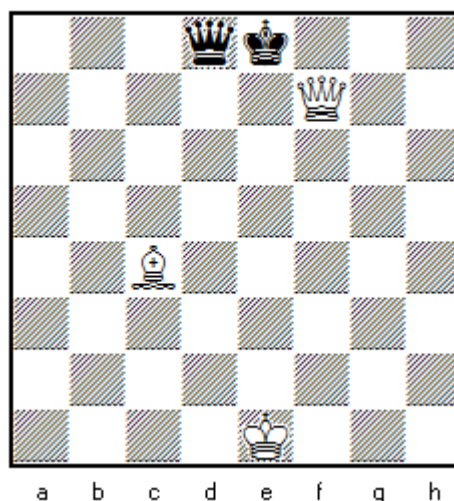
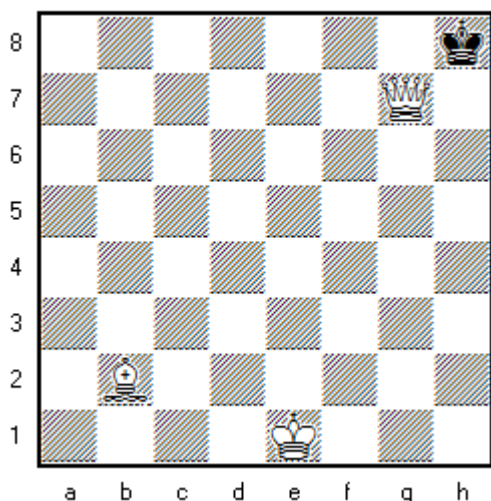
In the diagram on the left below the black king's escape squares are blocked by his own pawns. This is known as a BACK RANK MATE and when you read the next chapter you'll understand why it happens a lot. Sometimes, some of the squares are occupied by friendly pieces and others are controlled by enemy pieces, as in the diagram on the right below. Observe that the black king cannot move to g7 because of the bishop on b2. Ask your children to set up other similar checkmate positions to ensure they understand the concept.



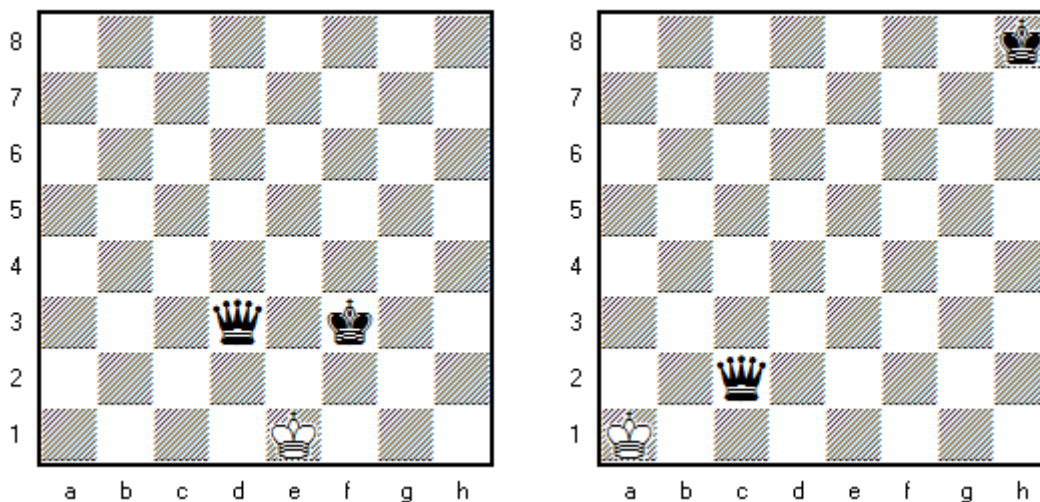
The other sort of checkmate we'll look at here again involves a king on the edge of the board. This time the king is checked by the enemy queen one square vertically or horizontally in towards the centre of the board. Consider the position on the left below. Observe how the queen controls all the squares surrounding the black king. Note also that the white king is defending the queen so Black cannot capture. If you move the white king to d6 or f6 it's still mate. But if the king was somewhere else, for example, e5, Black would be able to capture the white queen. If the queen was on d7 instead of e7 it wouldn't be mate because the king would be able to move to f8. Demonstrate these points by moving the pieces on the board if necessary. Of course the queen could equally well be defended by a different piece. On the right below, it's the pawn who has that task. Encourage your children to set up other positions where the queen is defended by different pieces and where the black king is on a different side of the board.



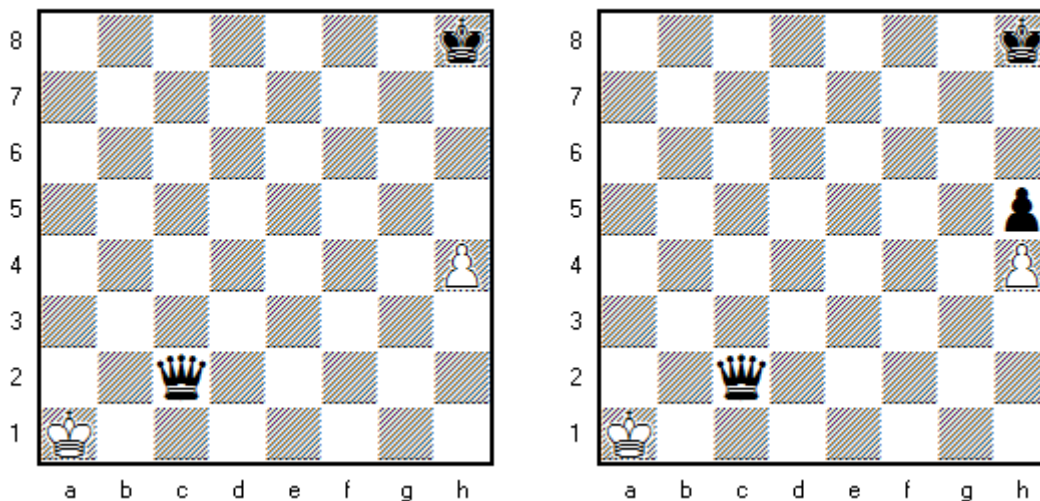
If the enemy king is in the corner it's still mate if the (protected) queen is one square diagonally in towards the centre, as you can see in the diagram on the left below, where the bishop supports the queen along the long diagonal. The bishop is also defending the queen in the diagram on the right below. You'll see that although the white queen is one square diagonally away from the black king it's still mate because the potential escape square is blocked by the black queen. This is another very important checkmate pattern which needs to be learnt. You'll find out why later on in the course. Again, encourage your children to set up their own checkmate positions or even checkmate puzzles to reinforce both the concept of checkmate and the most important mating patterns.



Now consider the position on your left below. It's White's move. He's not in check but has no possible moves. This is very important and may be hard for your children to understand. We call a situation like this, where the player whose turn it is to move is not in check but cannot play any moves, **STALEMATE**. The result of the game is a **DRAW** (unlike in our Capture the Flag games where you win if your opponent has no moves). Note that it would still be stalemate if the black king was on e3, g3, g2 or g1. (The queen controls all the squares in the king's field apart from f2, which is controlled by the king.). There's another **STALEMATE** position on your right below, demonstrating that a queen can stalemate a king in the corner on her own. These positions have great practical value as well as demonstrating the stalemate rule.



The position on your left below is **NOT** stalemate, though. It's true that the white king can't move but he has a pawn over the other side of the board which can (and must) move. On the other hand the position on the right (with White to move) **IS** stalemate because neither the white king nor the pawn can make a legal move.



To clear up some popular misconceptions: **STALEMATE** is a position where the player whose turn it is to move has no possible moves with any of his pieces (not just his king). It's a draw, not a win for the player who stalemates his opponent. Finally, **STALEMATE** is not just another word for a draw. It's only a word for this specific type of draw. You'll find out in the next chapter that there are several other ways to draw a game of chess.

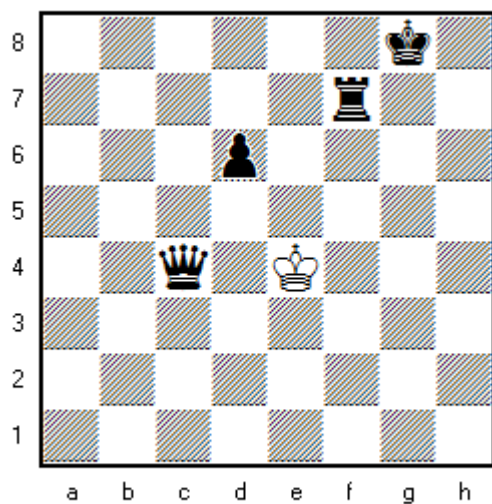
Again, reinforce the concept of stalemate by asking your children to set up stalemate positions on the board. Try using different pieces: finding stalemate positions using two rooks or a rook and a king, for example. Tasks like this will also improve their chessboard vision.

Our last set of worksheets in this part of the course tests your children's understanding of check, checkmate and stalemate. It's vital that children have a full understanding of these concepts before joining a club and playing in competitions, quite simply because checkmate is the aim of the game. Without this knowledge children will be confused about the result of the game and fail to understand why they've won, lost or drawn.

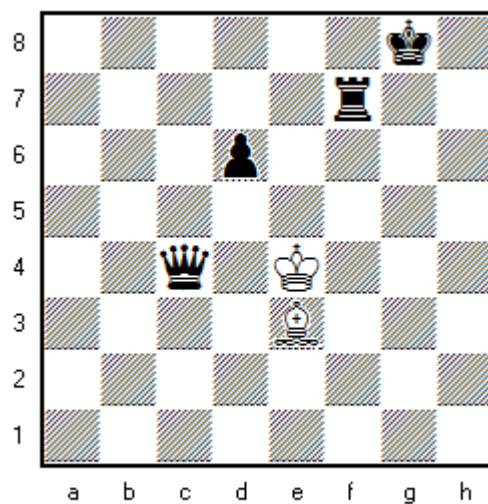
Once these are understood children can move onto our graded checkmate worksheets which form one element of the next part of the course.

Meanwhile, continue to reinforce any ideas which are not fully understood. For most children taking up chess, slow learning is best. There's no hurry: ensuring that your children have grasped each concept before moving on will make subsequent progress much easier. They will soon overtake children who were impatient to move on before they were ready to do so.

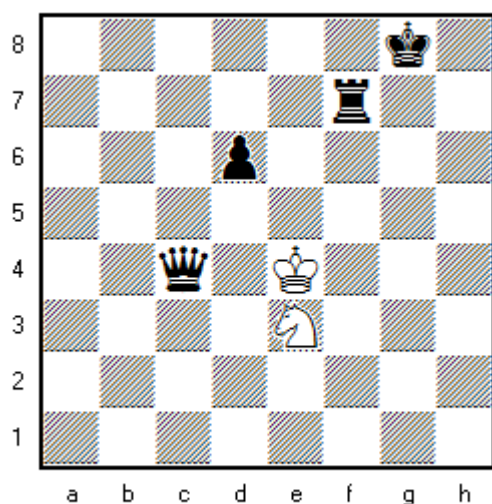
As always, feel free to set extra questions yourself to give your children extra practice at any question type in which they lack confidence. Encourage children to set their own questions for you (or their friends) to solve: this will reinforce their understanding and develop their creativity and imagination.



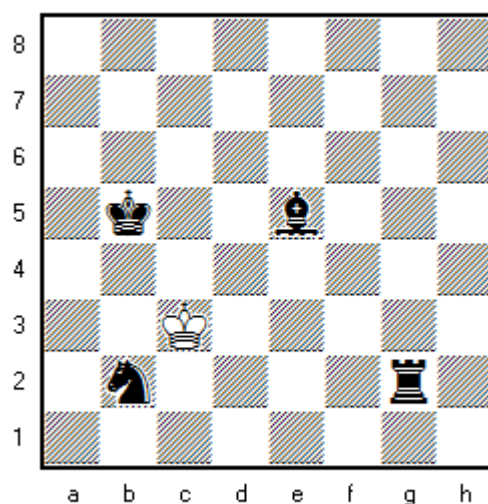
Q1. Get out of check



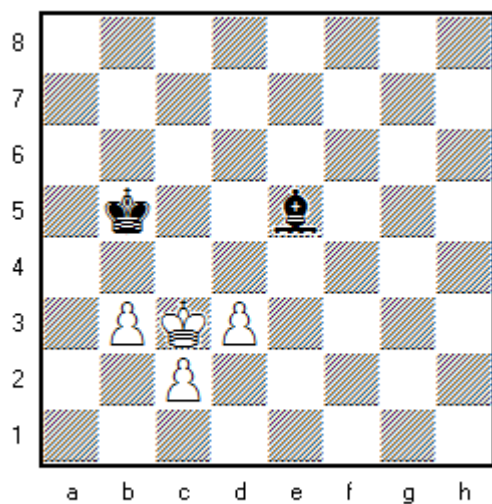
Q2. Get out of check



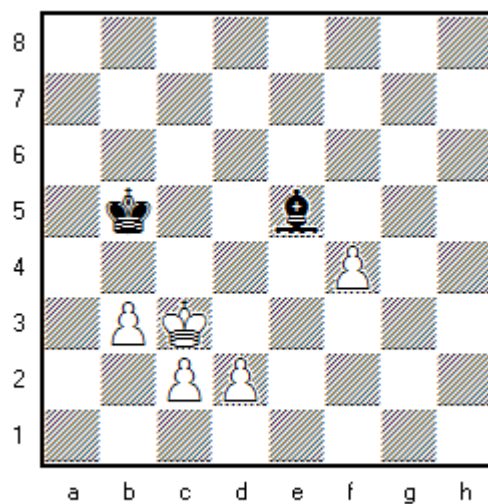
Q3. Get out of check



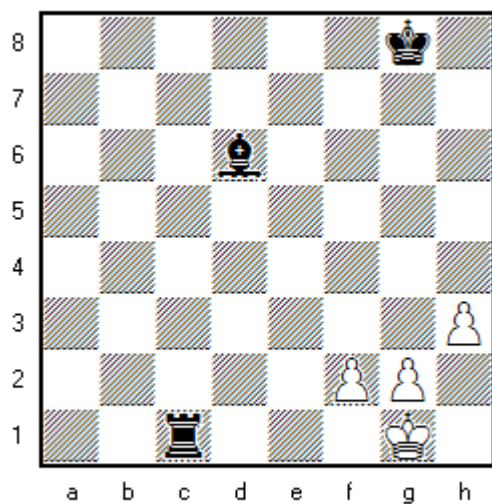
Q4. Get out of check



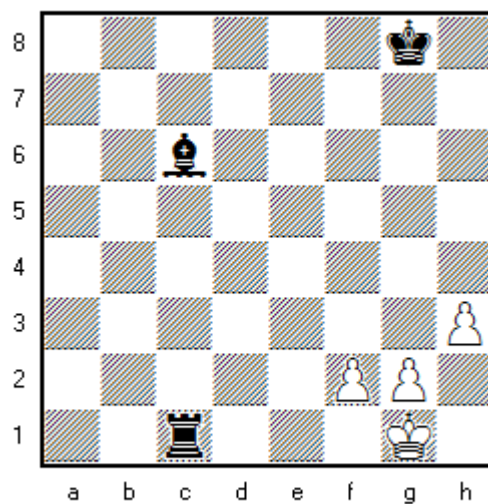
Q5. Get out of check
Give two answers



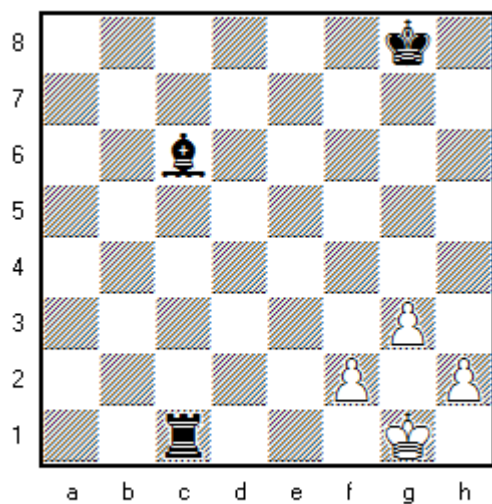
Q6. Get out of check
Give two answers



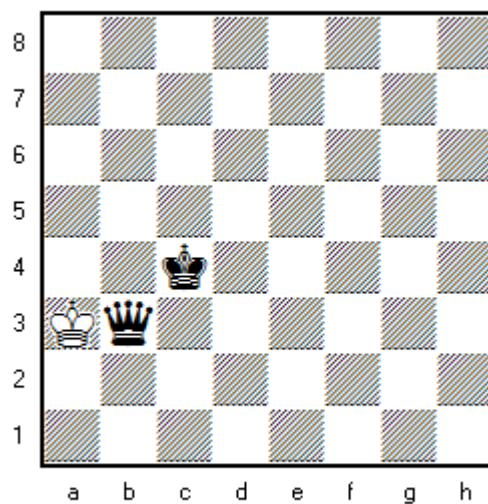
Q1. Is this checkmate?
Yes/No



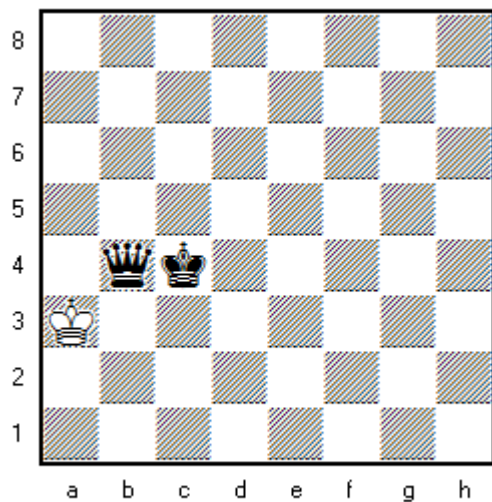
Q2. Is this checkmate?
Yes/No



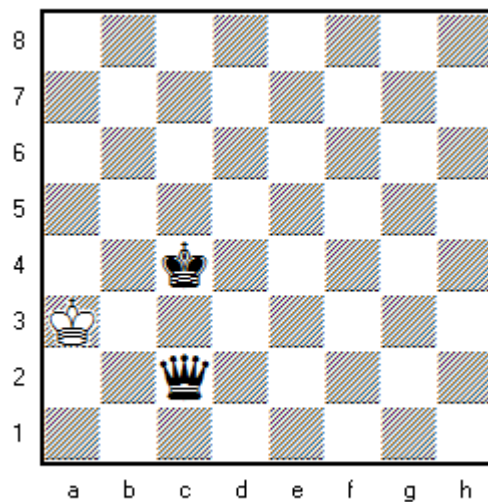
Q3. Is this checkmate?
Yes/No



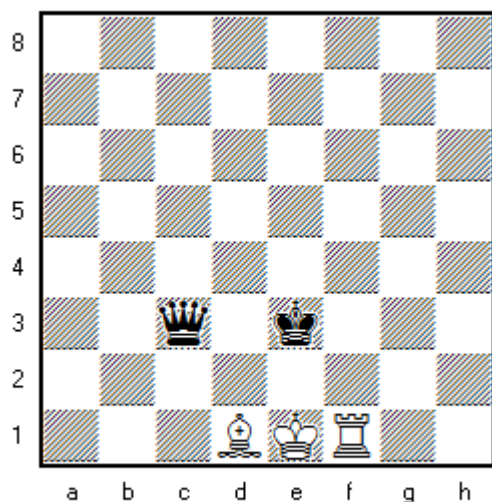
Q4. Is this checkmate?
Yes/No



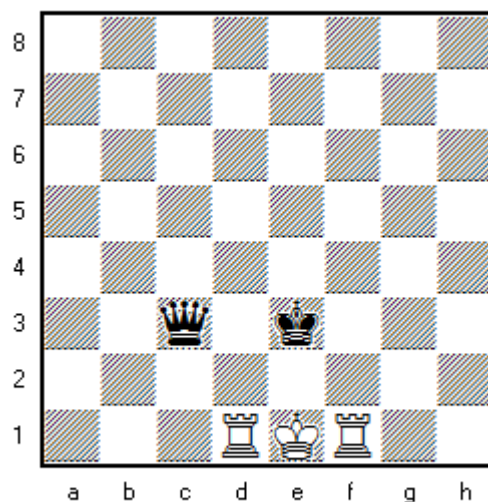
Q5. Is this checkmate?
Yes/No



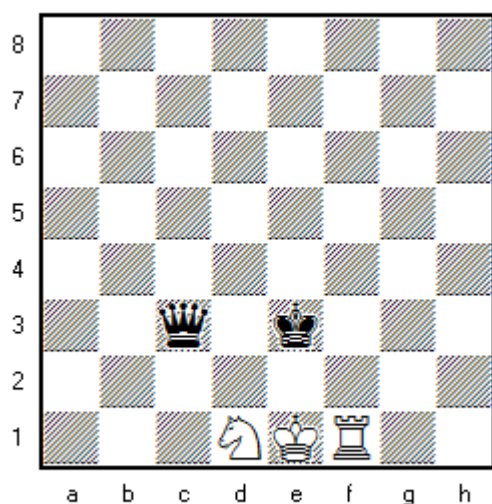
Q6. Is this checkmate?
Yes/No



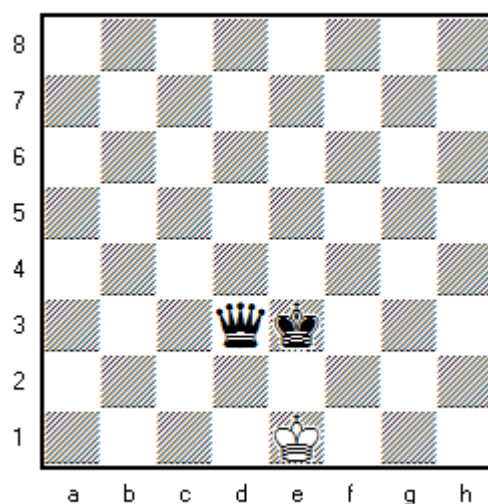
Q1. White to move: is this Check/Checkmate/Stalemate?



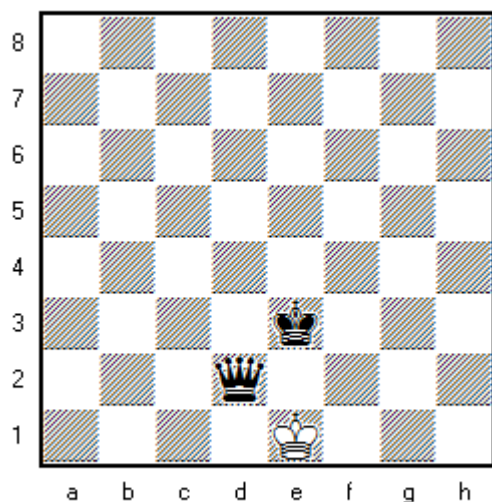
Q2. White to move: is this Check/Checkmate/Stalemate?



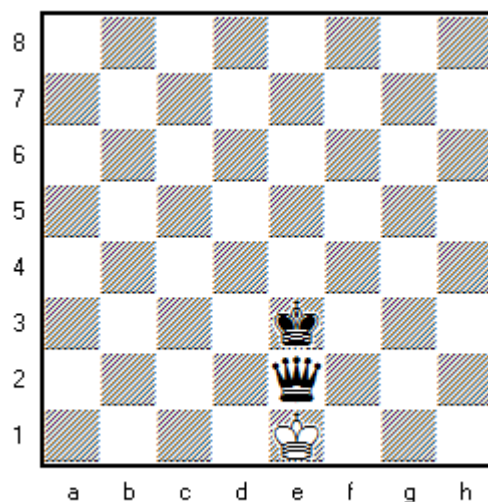
Q3. White to move: is this Check/Checkmate/Stalemate?



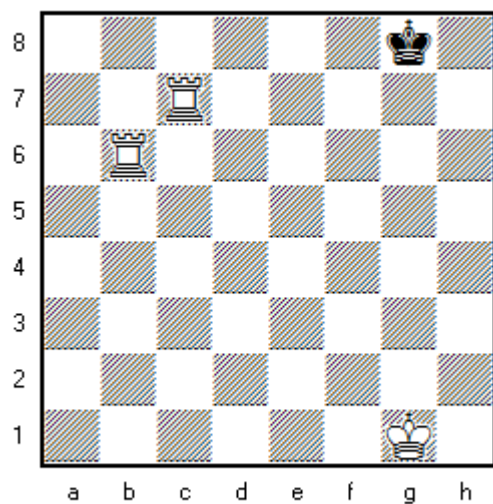
Q4. White to move: is this Check/Checkmate/Stalemate?



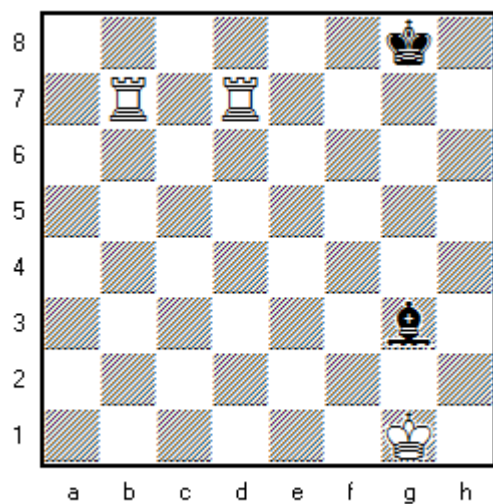
Q5. White to move: is this Check/Checkmate/Stalemate?



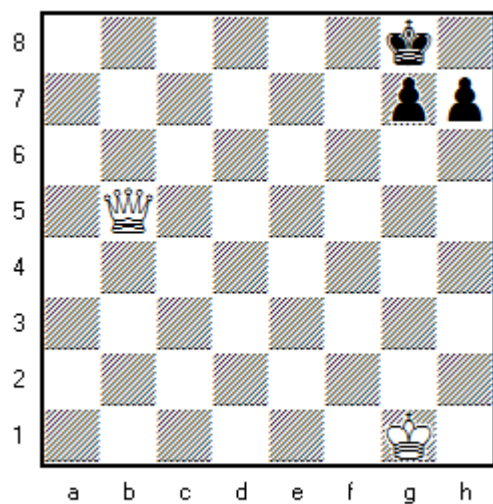
Q6. White to move: is this Check/Checkmate/Stalemate?



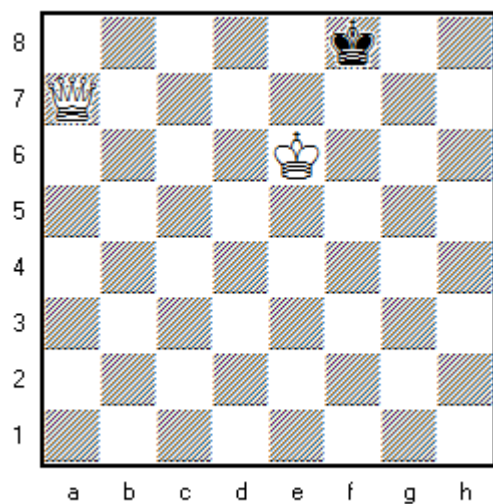
Q1. Play a move to checkmate Black



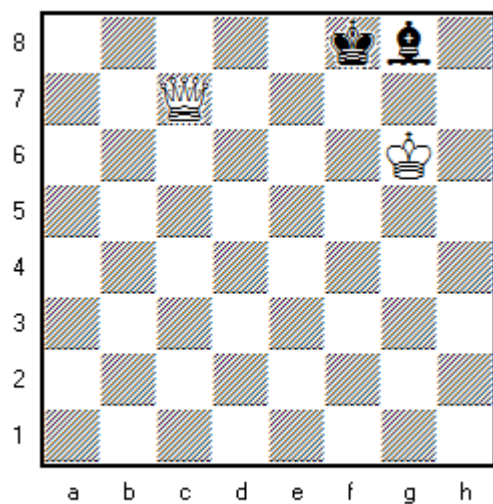
Q2. Play a move to checkmate Black



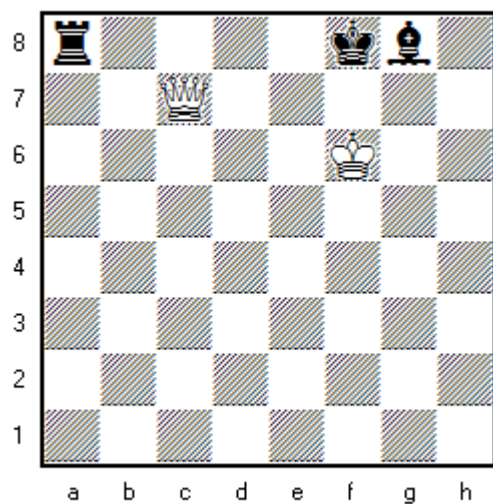
Q3. Play a move to checkmate Black



Q4. Play a move to checkmate Black



Q5. Play a move to checkmate Black



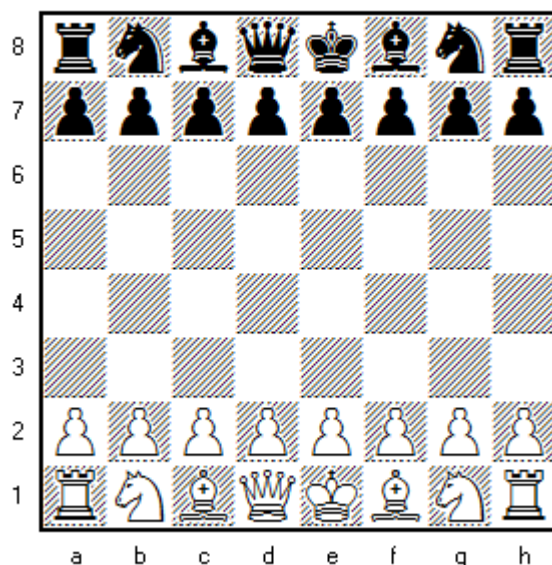
Q6. Play a move to checkmate Black

You now know almost enough to play a complete game of chess. In fact, although there are a few more rules to learn you could start now. You can play against a choice of three computers at different levels at <http://www.chesskids.org.uk/newcourse/myfirstgames.htm>.

In the next chapter you'll learn the remaining rules of chess so that you'll be able to join a chess club at school or elsewhere and eventually start to play in tournaments and other competitions.

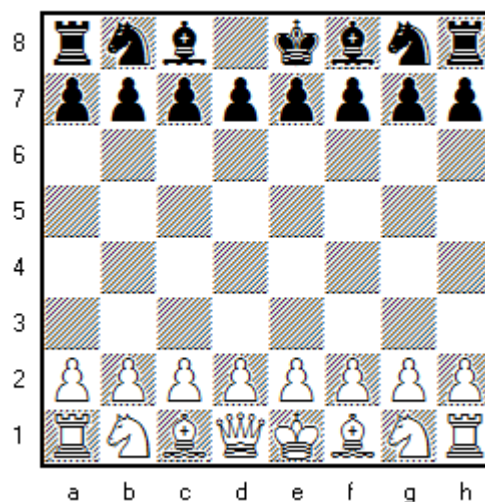
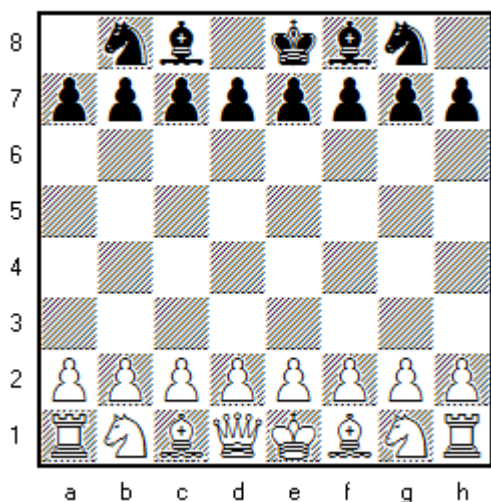
The final chapter of the book will give you some guidance on the best way to start a game and some tips on basic strategy as well as a reminder about the fundamental logic of the game.

Here, to remind you, is the starting position for a complete game of chess:



For children who are lacking confidence, or if you are an experienced player, you might want to start by giving odds so that your children stand a chance.

A good place to start against beginners is to play without your queen and rooks as in the diagram on the left below. If that's too easy, try playing without your queen, as on the right.



Another excellent way of helping children gain confidence by winning games against you is to allow them to turn the board round when you reach an easily winning position and see if they can beat you from the other side.

There's a lot more about playing chess against your children in the accompanying book to this course: *The Right Way to Teach Chess to Kids* (Right Way Books 2013).

CHAPTER 8

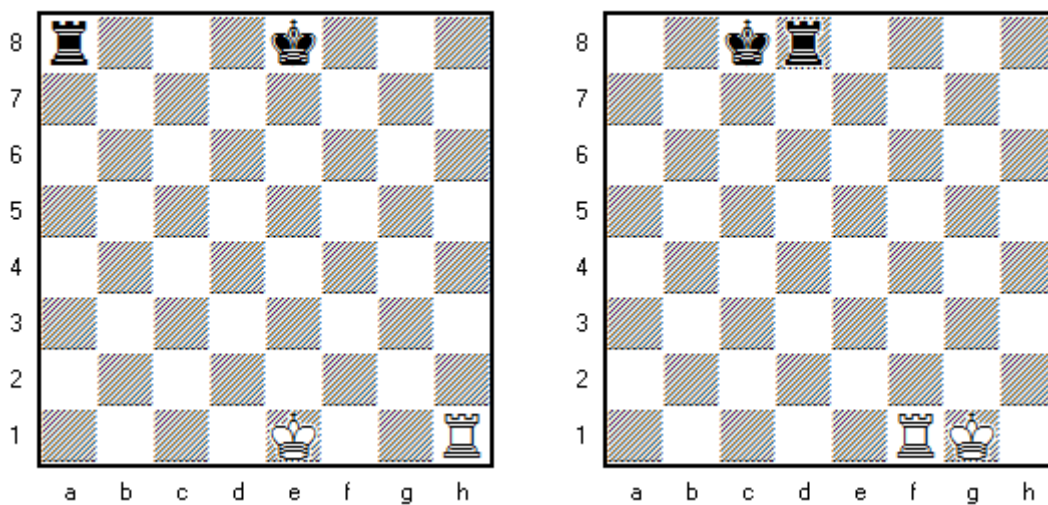
OTHER RULES

There are a few more rules you need to know before you can call yourself a real chess player. We'll also recap some of the other rules which can cause trouble.

(i) CASTLING

This is the most important rule we'll be looking at in this chapter.

This is a special move in which you move the king two squares towards the rook, and, as part of the same move, jump the rook over the king to the next square. You can do this on either side of the board.

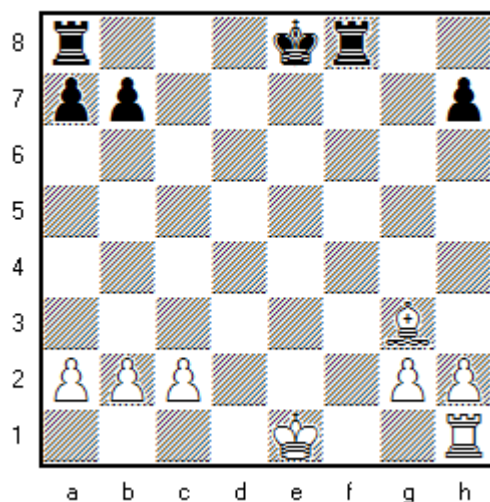


The diagram on the left shows the kings and rooks on their starting squares. The diagram on the right shows the position after White has CASTLED on the KING SIDE and Black has CASTLED on the QUEEN SIDE. You'll see that the white king is nearer the corner and the black king is nearer than the centre.

Note that the pieces move exactly like this. Many people think the king and rook swap squares – not true! Many people think that if you castle on the queen side your king ends up on the b-file and your rook on the c-file – again not true!

There are a number of restrictions concerning when you can castle:

- You CANNOT castle if either your king or your rook has previously moved. In particular, you CANNOT move either piece, move it back to its starting square, and then castle.
- You CANNOT castle if you are in check. However, you CAN still castle if you've been in check (but not moved your king).
- You CANNOT castle THROUGH check: (if the square the king crosses is controlled by an enemy piece). This is the restriction that many people either don't know or don't understand. However, you CAN castle if your rook crosses a square controlled by an enemy piece.
- You CANNOT castle INTO CHECK (obviously, as you're not allowed to play any move that leaves your king in check).



In this position White CANNOT castle on the king side because the black rook on f8 is controlling f1, the square the white king must cross.

Black CAN castle on the queen side even though the white bishop on g3 is controlling d8, the square the black rook must cross.

In notation we write 0-0 for king side castling and 0-0-0 for queen side castling.

(ii) EN PASSANT

If your children didn't learn the EN PASSANT rule at the time turn back to page 18. This is the point when they will need to know this rule. Some children will pick this up straight away, but others will find it hard to learn and understand. If this is the case it may be a good idea to repeat it every day, demonstrating the move on the board, until they get it.

To recap: if you have a pawn on your fifth rank and your opponent moves a pawn on an adjacent file two squares, you can on your next move, and only on your next move, capture it as if it had moved one square. For example, white pawn on e5, black pawn moves from d7 to d5, White can capture it as it passes the d6 square.

(iii) PAWN PROMOTION

This is a bit different from what happens in CAPTURE THE FLAG games. When a pawn reaches the end of the board you can PROMOTE it to your choice of a queen, a rook, a bishop or a knight. Usually, you will choose a queen as it's the most powerful piece, but there might be occasions where you make a different choice, perhaps because promoting to a queen would be stalemate, or because promoting to a knight will be checkmate or fork the enemy king and queen.

Many people think, mistakenly, that you can only choose a piece that has already been captured by your opponent. This is not correct. In theory you could have nine queens on the board (eight promoted pawns along with the one you started with), although two is usually more than enough. You could also, in theory, have ten rooks, bishops or knights on the board.

Note that the promoted piece replaces the pawn on the promotion square, rather than starting on the back rank.

(iv) DRAW BY INSUFFICIENT MATERIAL

In the last chapter we looked at STALEMATE, a position where the player whose turn it is to move is not in check but has no legal moves. There are also other ways to draw.

If you reach a position with king against king it's obviously a draw: there's no point in playing on. It's also an automatic draw if you reach a position with king and bishop against king or king and knight against king as no checkmate is possible (try it out for yourself). Likewise, king and bishop against king and bishop is a draw as long as the bishops are on the same colour squares.

Children often reach a position like this and tell me it's STALEMATE. No, it isn't. This is known as a DRAW BY INSUFFICIENT MATERIAL.

You should also agree a draw in other positions with king and minor piece each, even though it's possible to construct a checkmate position.

You can win with king and queen against king or king and rook against king (both fairly easy: you'll learn them in the next stage of the course). King and two bishops against king is slightly harder, and king, bishop and knight against king much harder but still possible with best play. King and two knights against king is a draw with best play: the defending side will only lose by making a mistake. King and pawn against king is very important: some positions are won because you can promote the pawn: others are drawn because the king can stop the pawn. Again, there will be a lot about this in the next stage.

(v) DRAW BY REPETITION

This rule is frequently misunderstood and misapplied. To keep it simple (in competitive play the procedure to claim the draw is more complicated), this rule states that you can claim a draw if your next move will produce a position which has occurred three times with the same player to move. Note that it's repetition of POSITION, not repetition of MOVES. The position may be repeated three times because both players are repeating moves, or it may not. Children who are losing often play the same move three times and try to claim a draw – no, certainly not!

If both players are repeating moves and one player's moves are all checks this is often known informally as PERPETUAL CHECK. Contrary to what many people think, and what some books will tell you, there's no such rule as 'perpetual check' but such a situation will eventually lead to a draw by repetition.

(vi) DRAW BY THE 50 MOVE RULE

Another rule which is frequently misunderstood and misapplied. You don't really need to know this until you start playing in tournaments but we'll include it here anyway.

This rule states that you can claim a draw if, after your next move, neither player has moved a pawn or made a capture within the last 50 moves for each side. (In chess we, rather confusingly, refer to a 'move' as a move by White followed by a move by Black. If we say a game lasted 40 moves we mean that White played 40 moves and Black played either 39 or 40 moves.) Many people mistakenly think that this rule only applies if you only have a king left. It doesn't: it can happen at any point in the game, although its practical application, at least at low levels, is in situations such as one player trying to mate with king and pawn against king. Many people also think that it's 25 moves each: no, it's 50 moves each. Many people also don't understand that you start counting again when one player moves a pawn or makes a capture.

(vii) DRAW BY AGREEMENT

At any point the players can agree a draw if they think the position is level or that neither player has a chance to win. It's a good idea not to do this at the moment: you'll learn more by playing the game through to the end, even if you lose. It's bad manners (and distracting to your opponent), by the way, to offer a draw in a position where you are clearly losing, or to keep on offering a draw every few moves.

(viii) J'ADOUBE, TOUCH AND MOVE

If you're playing competitive chess there is a very strict rule that if you touch a piece with the intention of moving it you have to do so. Likewise, if you touch an enemy piece, with your hand or your piece, with the intention of capturing it, again you must make the capture if you can do so legally. (You don't have to move a piece if you knock it accidentally while reaching for another piece.)

There is also a rule that states that, if you want to adjust a piece which is, for example, not in the centre of the square, you may do so if you first warn your opponent by saying "J'adoube" (French for 'I dub'). You can also, if you prefer, say "Adjust" in English. What you CANNOT do is touch or pick up a piece, decide you don't want to move it, say "adjust" (or even "it was a joke") and move another piece instead. Many children misunderstand the rules and try to do this in tournaments. While you might not want to enforce the 'touch and move' rule in games between beginners or in

training games at home', children really need to get used to playing under these conditions before taking part in competitive chess.

It's probably a good idea to discourage the use of 'j'adoube' at all as it can easily lead to misunderstandings and to ensure that your children are careful to place the piece they move in the centre of the square.

(ix) CHESS CLOCKS

Just a note here: if you take part in serious competitions you'll have to use a chess clock. Typically, each player will have 30 minutes for all the moves. The correct procedure is to make your move and press your clock to start your opponent's clock going. You have to make your move and press your clock with the same hand: practise doing this in the same movement. If you run out of time you lose the game as long as your opponent has enough material to checkmate you. Likewise, if your opponent runs out of time, you win. In this sort of event it's your responsibility to watch the clock and claim the win if this happens.

It's important to get plenty of practice with a chess clock before you take part in a competition where you'll be expected to use one.

CHAPTER 9

PLAYING THE GAME

Now you've learnt all the rules you can finally play a complete game of chess. Because you've spent a long time ensuring you're fluent with all the pieces and that you understand the underlying logic of chess (that SUPERIOR FORCE WINS) it won't take you too long to be able to play a reasonable game.

We can divide a game of chess into three stages: the opening (which we'll look at shortly) when we move our pieces off the back rank, the middle game, when there are still lots of pieces on the board, and the ending (or endgame) when there are only a few of the larger pieces left on the board. All games have an opening, most have a middle-game but many are decided in the middle game. However, the ending is still important, as you'll find out later.

We can also divide chess into tactics and strategy. Tactics is about winning pieces and getting checkmate: short-term ideas. Strategy is about finding good squares for your pieces and formulating plans: long-term ideas.

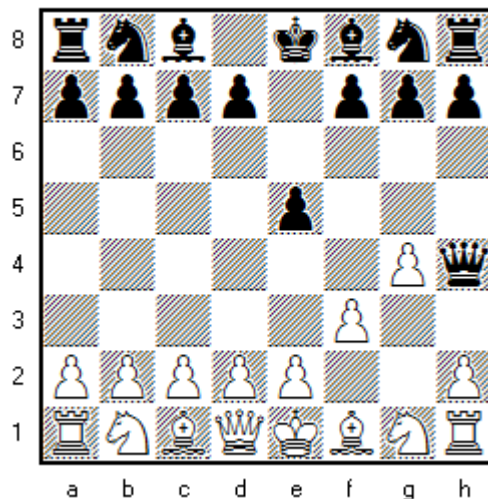
Let's begin with some general principles about how to start the game.

The best ways to start the game have been analysed in increasing depth for more than 400 years. At present you don't need to know too much about this, though.

White has 20 possible moves at the start of the game: 16 pawns moves and 4 knight moves. None of them are bad enough to lose you the game and (of course) none of them will win you the game either. Some are better than others, though.

Children enjoy seeing this demonstration of what might happen if you choose random moves at the start of the game.

White starts by playing f2-f3 (a poor move for several reasons) and Black replies with e7-e5 (an excellent move for several reasons). White's second move is g2-g4, and now Black can win the game immediately with Qd8-h4#. Check for yourself that none of White's pieces can block the check.



This is called FOOL'S MATE and is the shortest possible checkmate. Can your children work out why it's not possible for White to checkmate Black in two moves?

You will have gained some idea about the best way to use each piece from your Capture the Flag games, but we'll briefly look at how we use each piece at the start of the game here:

(i) The King

As the object of the game is to checkmate the king we need to keep him safe from attack. The way we usually do this is to castle (from the last chapter, remember) early on in the game, normally on the king-side because, as you'll soon see, the centre often gets opened up.

(ii) The Queen

Because the queen is our most powerful piece we have to take good care of it. We understand that stronger pieces can get chased round the board by weaker pieces because they have to move away rather than defend themselves. For this reason it's usually not a good idea to try to do too much with the queen early on. We don't want to hide it away, though, but keep it on a square from where it will have possibilities to enter the game under favourable circumstances.

(iii) The Rooks

We know from playing Capture the Flag games with rooks, that they like open files. Because they are powerful pieces they also, like the queen, will get chased around by enemy bishops, knights and pawns if they come out too soon. What we do is trade pawns to make room for our rooks, and move our rooks across to open files (without pawns), half-open files (with an enemy pawn but not a friendly pawn) or files which could be opened by future pawn exchanges. Many beginners feel sorry for their rooks stuck in the corner so start their games by advancing their a-pawn and/or h-pawn two squares followed by bringing their rooks up to the third rank. Don't ever do this! It's just about the worst way to start a game!

(iv) The Bishops

We're usually going to bring the bishops out early on. We're looking for open diagonals, squares where they attack enemy pieces or squares where they control the centre. What we're not going to do is put our bishops directly in front of unmoved central pawns.

(v) The Knights

The knights also come out early, for the same reason as the bishops. You'll understand that knights are usually better in the centre of the board, from where they control more squares. So the king's knights will usually go to f3/f6 where they control some central squares as well as providing defence for the castled king, the queen's knights often to c3/c6 but sometimes to d2/d7.

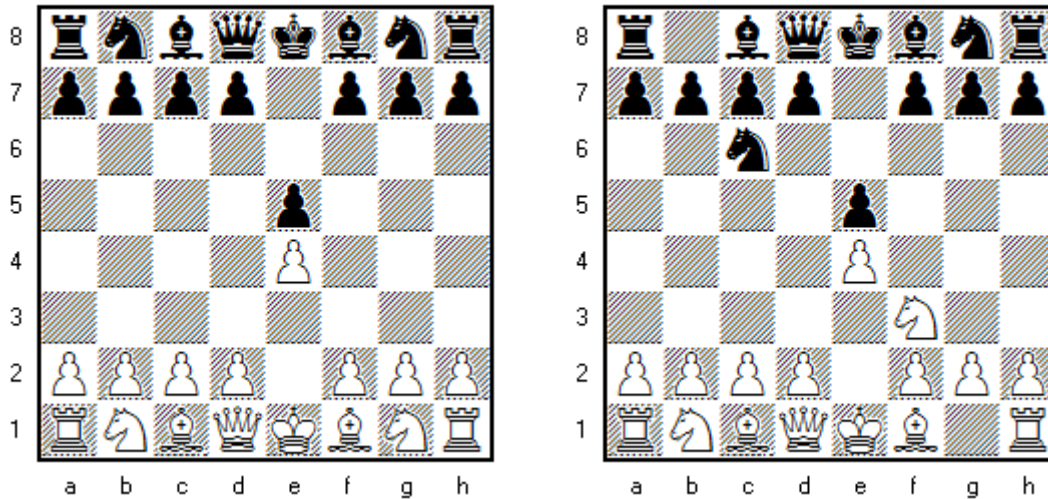
(vi) The Pawns

We're going to use our e- and d-pawns, and very often our c-pawn as well to gain space and fight for the centre at the start of the game. We're usually going to keep our f-, g- and h-pawns at home in order to defend our castled king. We're probably not going to do a lot with our a- and b-pawns early on: it's more important to get our bigger pieces into place as quickly as we can. We call this process DEVELOPMENT: we try to develop our knights and bishops at the start of the game.

So we're going to start by moving a pawn into the centre of the board. Both e2-e4 and d2-d4 are excellent moves but it's best to start by using the former move as it's rather easier to understand. Then we're going to get our knights and bishops out quickly and probably castle to make our king safe.

1.e2-e4 has several advantages. It controls the centre – the most important part of the board. It opens lines for the bishop and queen. It's also the first step on the road to castling. Another advantage is that, because we have our queen behind our d-pawn it's easy for us to play d2-d4 at some point and get another pawn into the centre.

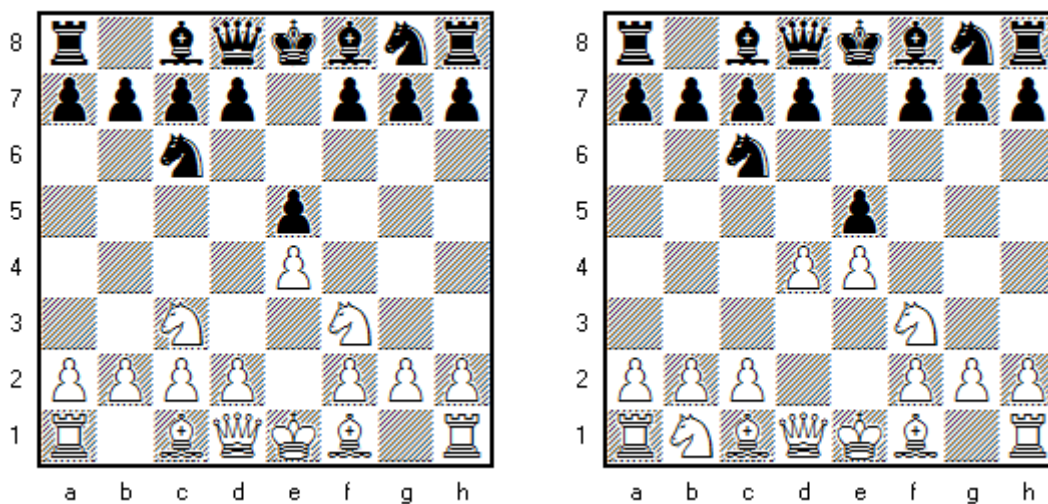
Black does the same thing: 1...e7-e5, although there are a number of popular alternatives. But we'll start with this move again because it's the easiest move to understand. The position is on your left below.



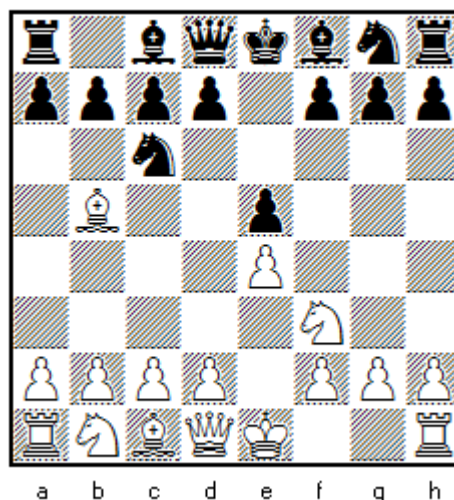
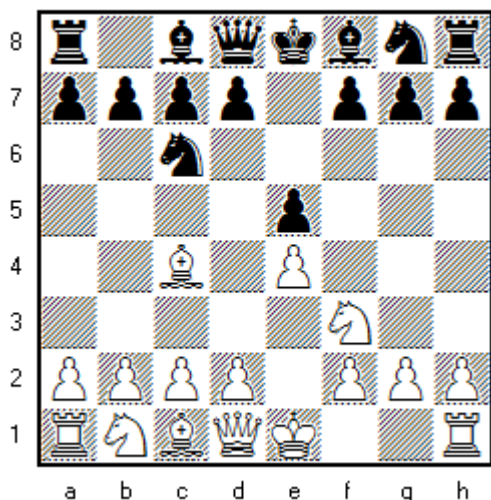
White's usual second move is to move his knight from g1 to f3. Again, this move has several advantages. It develops a knight: we want to bring our knights out at the start of the game. It helps control the centre. It brings us one step nearer to being able to castle. It also threatens the black pawn on e5. Now we understand that we don't want to lose points, so Black needs to do something about this. His most natural (and most popular) move is to defend the threatened pawn by moving his knight from b8 to c6, giving the position on the right above.

White now has a choice of four moves which further his aims of developing his knights and bishops, increasing his control of the centre and castling.

The simplest move is to develop the other knight to c3 (on your left below). If Black then develops his other knight to f6 this is called the FOUR KNIGHTS GAME. Another good move is to advance the other centre pawn: d2-d4 (on your right below). You can verify that this is safe as it is defended by both the knight on f3 and the queen on d1. This is called the SCOTCH GAME.

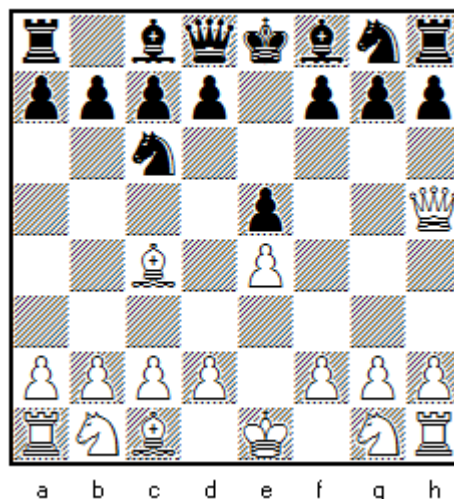
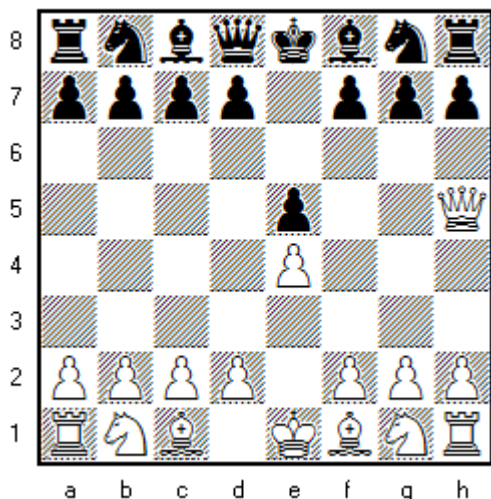


White can also develop his bishop. A strong move very popular in junior tournaments is 3. Bf1-c4, targeting the f7 pawn (below left). This is known as the ITALIAN GAME. Black's usual replies are 3... Bf8-c5 (the GIUOCO PIANO (Italian for Quiet Game)) and 3... Ng8-f6 (the TWO KNIGHTS DEFENCE). The most popular choice amongst strong players is 3. Bf1-b5, attacking the knight which is defending the pawn on e5. This is known as the RUY LOPEZ (after a 16th century Spanish priest) or the SPANISH GAME.

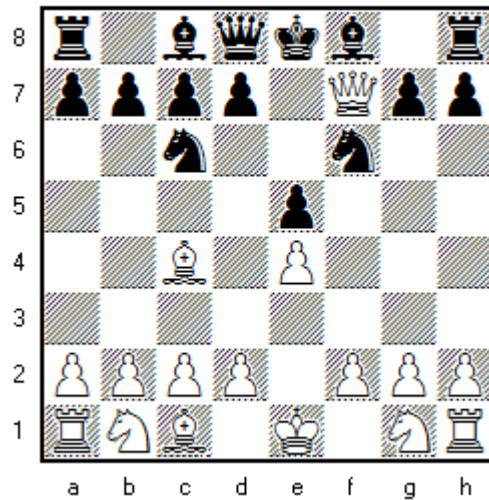


You don't need to know much more than this at the moment. By all means find out more about these openings if you like (you'll find lessons on them on the Intermediate page of chessKIDS academy) but beware of memorising moves without understanding them. However, getting off to a good start in your games is always useful. Many children make no progress because they just play random moves at the start of the game.

One thing you do need to know, because many children learn it and try to bring it off in their games, is SCHOLAR'S MATE. This forms the basis of the story in *Chess for Kids*. After 1. e2-e4 e7-e5 White plays 2. Qd1-h5 (below left). Now this isn't a very good move, but it sets some traps. If Black knows what he's doing he'll be able to chase the queen round the board and probably get an advantage. First, Black should see that White is (as after 2. Ng1-f3) threatening the e-pawn. Again, the best way to defend the pawn is to play Nb8-c6. White now moves his bishop from f1 to c4 (below right). Now he has two pieces, queen and bishop, attacking the f7 pawn which is only defended by the black king. If Black doesn't know (or forgets) what's going to happen he might play a move like Ng8-f6, to develop a piece and threaten the white queen.



In that case he's in for a nasty shock. White carries out his threat and captures the pawn on f7 with his queen (below). It's CHECKMATE: Black cannot capture because the queen is defended by the bishop. You might recognise this checkmate from Chapter 7.



Going back to the previous diagram, Black has several better moves: he can defend the pawn again with Qd8-e7 or Qd8-f6, or he can block the attack and threaten the queen by playing g7-g6.

We don't encourage you to play like this: if Black meets the early threats the white queen is likely to end up in trouble. But it's worth knowing for several reasons, most importantly that if you join a club or start playing in tournaments you're going to meet opponents who try it out against you so you need to be able to recognize it and know how to defend.

It's also good to encourage children to learn and remember short games like this in order to develop their chess memory.

Finally, it emphasizes one of the three most important things to remember when you play chess: always look for your opponent's threats.

IN SUMMARY

The most important lesson you should have learnt from the Capture the Flag games is that (other things being equal) SUPERIOR FORCE (usually) WINS. Using the point count Queen=9, Rook=5, Bishop=Knight=3, Pawn=1, an experienced player would expect to win almost all the time with a two point advantage and more often than not with a one pawn advantage. So we have to learn to play our games without losing points (and, as in the example above, not getting mated).

This means that you have to do three things:

1. Checkmate your opponent or play a move that wins points if you can do so safely.
2. Look to see if your opponent is trying to win points or get checkmate and, if so, prevent him from doing so.
3. When you've thought of a move, and before you play it, make sure that the move you want to play does not allow your opponent to checkmate you or win points.

The chess skills you need to do this are, at the moment, not all that great. You need to develop your chessboard vision so that you can see at a glance what every piece can do. As you get stronger you'll need to develop your depth of vision: learning how to look further ahead.

But most important, and this is something very hard for young children, you need to learn self-discipline and self-control. You need to stop and check everything before you make your move, and, in particular, when you've thought of a move, stop and ask yourself "Is it safe?" before you play it. This is something very difficult for many young children, and the main reason why many children who start young make little progress.

The material in this course is available elsewhere in other formats.

chessKIDS academy (www.chesskids.org.uk): the lessons accessible from the front page cover the same material in the form of interactive online lessons, along with videos, computers set up to play some of the Capture the Flag games as well as complete games and other activities.

Chess for Kids (Right Way Books) covers much of the same material in the form of a humorous story.

The Right Way to Teach Chess to Kids (Right Way Books, publication June 2013) covers the course in an abbreviated form along with a lot of background information about teaching chess to young children. We recommend this book to all parents and teachers using this course.

For more advanced material, click on the "Intermediate Lessons" tab on www.chesskids.org.uk for a series of interactive lessons and other activities to take children through to the point where they will be able to play adult competitive chess successfully. There are also free downloadable books available: click on "Books" under the "Resources" tab on the top menu.

Over the next few years we plan to develop a series of coaching materials designed for children to use at home or in a chess club:

1. A graded series of checkmate puzzles, starting with simple checkmates in one move, then moving on to mates in 2 moves, 3 moves and more.
2. A graded series of tactics puzzles where your aim is to win material, starting with one move puzzles, then moving onto puzzles where you have to look 2 or 3 moves ahead.
3. A graded series of multiple choice questions dealing with subjects such as endings, defending and avoiding mistakes.
4. A series of graded 'Find the Move' games where students play through a game, guessing the next move and gaining points if they find the move played or an equally good moves. These will feature a combination of open-ended and multiple choice questions.

Richard James

1 January 2013

ANSWERS

Page 5:

1. c2
2. h7
3. e1
4. d6
5. a4
6. g5

Page 9:

1. e3-e4
2. b3-b4
3. c6-c7
4. h4-h5
5. c4-c5, g3-g4
6. a2-a3, h6-h7

Page 10:

1. c2-c4
2. h2-h4
3. b2-b4
4. a2-a4
5. e2-e4, f2-f4
6. a2-a4, h2-h4

Page 11:

1. g4xf5
2. b4xa5
3. e5xd6
4. c5xd6
5. d4xc5, d4xe5
6. c5xd6, h3xg4

Page 15:

1. d3-d4
2. a4-a5
3. e3-e4
4. e4-e5
5. c2-c3, e2-e3
6. b4-b5, f3-f4

Page 16:

1. No
2. Yes
3. No
4. No
5. Yes
6. Yes

Page 17:

1. e3-e4
2. b2-b4
3. c3-c4
4. h4xg5
5. c6xd7
6. d7-d8Q

Page 18:

1. b) e2-e4
2. a) e2-e3
3. a) d4-d5
4. b) d4xe5
5. a) f5xe6
6. b) d5-d6

Page 22:

1. Rf3-c3
2. Rb2-b7
3. Rg7-b7
4. Ra7-h7
5. Rf2-e2, Rf2-f6
6. Rh4-a4, Rh4-h3

Page 23:

1. Rc1-c6
2. Rc5-h5
3. Re3-e7
4. f2-f4
5. b5-b6
6. Rg1-g5

Page 24:

1. Ra1-e1
2. Rg2-g4
3. Rb8-d8
4. Ra7-a3
5. Rc2-c5, Rc2-f2
6. Ra7-b7, Ra7-a2

Page 25:

1. d2-d3
2. a3-a4
3. b2-b4
4. g2-g4
5. a2-a3, c2-c3
6. d2-d4, f3-f4

Page 28:

1. Re3xb3
2. Rf6xf5
3. Rc4xc7
4. Rd6xg6
5. Rf6xf3, Rf6xh6
6. Rd5xc5, Rf5xd3

Page 29:

1. Equal
2. Bad
3. Good
4. Equal
5. Good
6. Bad

Page 30:

1. No
2. Yes
3. No
4. No
5. Yes
6. No

Page 31:

1. b) Re8-e1
2. b) Rb8-g8
3. a) c6-c7
4. a) a7-a8Q
5. a) Re7-e1
6. a) d5-d6

Page 35:

1. Be2-f3
2. Bc4-e2
3. Bf5-c8
4. Ba2-e6
5. Be2-b5, Be2-g4
6. Be7-b4, Be7-f6

Page 36:

1. Bc1-a3
2. Be2-g4
3. Be3-c5
4. Be1-g3
5. Bb2-e5
6. Bd7-f5

Page 37:

1. Ba4-c2
2. Bg2-e4
3. Be7-g5
4. Bg5-e3
5. Bd7-e4, Bd7-e6
6. Bf6-c3, Bf6-e7

Page 38:

1. c2-c3
2. g2-g4
3. d2-d3
4. b3-b4
5. e4-e5
6. e4-e5

Page 40:

1. Bd3xg6
2. Be3xh6
3. Bg2xc6
4. Be4xc6
5. Bc4xf7, Bf4xc7
6. Bc5xe7, Bg4xd7

Page 41:

1. Bad
2. Good
3. Good
4. Bad
5. Equal
6. Equal

Page 42:

1. No
2. Yes
3. No
4. Yes
5. No
6. Yes

Page 43:

1. a) Bd5-a2
2. b) Bf5-e6
3. b) d6-d7
4. a) c6-c7
5. a) c5-c6
6. b) Bd6-f4

Page 47:

Page 47:

1. Qg8-e6
2. Qd8-h4
3. Qg4-e6
4. Qb8-e5
5. Qh1-c6, Qh1-h7
6. Qd1-b1, Qd1-d6, Qd1-g4

Page 48:

1. Qe7-e2
2. Qd8-d4
3. Qa5-f5
4. Qa1-g7
5. Qg2-b7, Qg2-e2
6. Qh7-d3, Qh7-d7

Page 49:

1. Qd4xd7
2. Qc5xg5
3. Qd3xb5
4. Qc7xc4
5. Qd3xa6, Qd3xh3
6. Qe5xc7, Qe5xf4

Page 50:

1. d2-d4
2. e4-e5
3. Bd2-f4
4. Rf5-a5
5. e3-e4
6. Bd2-g5

Page 53:

1. Good
2. Good
3. Equal
4. Good
5. Bad
6. Bad

Page 54:

1. No
2. Yes
3. Yes
4. Yes
5. No
6. Yes

Page 55:

Page 55:

1. Qd1-c2
2. Qg4-d4
3. Qd4-b2
4. Qa8-b7
5. Qh4-h5
6. Qe8-c6

Page 56:

1. Rc2-e2
2. Be2-f3
3. Be3-f4
4. Bf2xd4
5. f4-f5
6. e2-e4

Page 60:

1. Nf3-d4
2. Na6-c7
3. Ne3-c2
4. Nf5-d6
5. Nc6-d4, Nc6-e5
6. Ng3-e4, Ng3-f1

Page 61:

1. Nd4-f5
2. Nb5-c7
3. Nc5-e6
4. Nc3-d5
5. Nd6-f5
6. Nd5-c7

Page 62:

1. Nb1-c3
2. Ne3-c4
3. Nf1-d2
4. Nf1-g3
5. Nd5-b6, Nd5-c3
6. Nb2-d1, Nb2-d3

Page 63:

1. Nd4xe6
2. Nd8xb7
3. Nc3xd5
4. Ng3xh5
5. Nd4xc6, Nf3xg5
6. Nc5xa6, Nc5xd7

Page 66:

1. Bad
2. Good
3. Equal
4. Equal
5. Good
6. Bad

Page 67:

1. No
2. No
3. Yes
4. Yes
5. Yes
6. No

Page 68:

1. Nc3-d1
2. Na8-c7
3. Nh4-c5
4. Nb3-d4
5. Nf3-d4, Nf3-h2
6. Nd5-c3, Nd5-f6

Page 69:

1. Two moves
2. Four moves
3. Three moves
4. Five moves
5. Five moves
6. Six moves

Page 74:

1. Ka1-b2
2. Kh1-g2
3. Ke1-f1
4. Ka4-a3
5. Kg2-f3, Kg2-h3
6. Kd4-c3, Kd4-d3

Page 75:

1. Ra1-a8+
2. Bf1-b5+
3. Nc4-d6+
4. d6-d7+
5. Rg2-d2+, Rg2-g6+
6. Bd2-b4+, Bd2-g5+

Page 76:

Page 76:

1. Ka4-b3
2. Kg1-h2
3. Ka8-a7
4. Kh8-g7
5. Kd3-d2, Kd3-e4
6. Ke5-e6, Ke5-f4

Page 77:

1. Ba3xc1
2. Kd3xe2
3. Kd3xd4
4. Ne5xg4
5. Rd1-d8
6. Ng3-e4

Page 82:

1. Ke4-e3
2. Be3-d4
3. Ne3xc4
4. Kc3-b3
5. Kc3-d2, d3-d4
6. Kc3-d3, d2-d4

Page 83:

1. Yes
2. No
3. Yes
4. Yes
5. No
6. No

Page 84:

1. Checkmate
2. Check
3. Check
4. Stalemate
5. Check
6. Checkmate

Page 85:

1. Rb6-b8#
2. Rd7-d8#
3. Qb5-e8#
4. Qa7-f7#
5. Qc7-d8#
6. Qc7-e7#

