

Chess Practice 101

Chess Tactics: The Art of Attack in Chess.

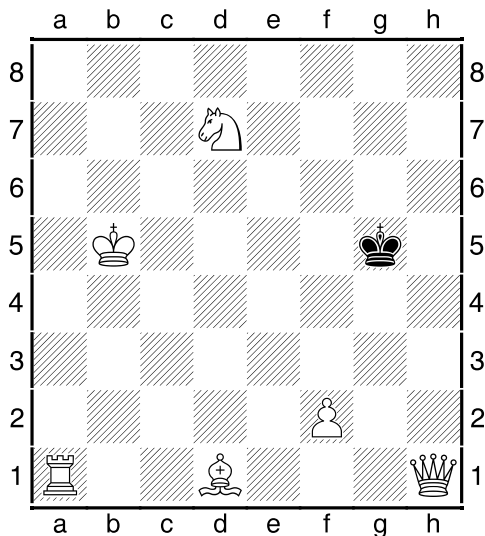
Written by Michael Angelo Purcell
Developed exclusively for TC4K Chess Classes.
by Think Chess Inc. © 2004

Lesson 2: Geometry of Movement

Geometry was the one subject I really hated in high school. I had a terribly boring teacher who had no clue how to make something fun or interesting. I tell my Kindergarten students that chess has a little math and a lot of geometry. The kids only know how to count and recognize just simple shapes in geometry. They are too young to hate math yet. I have tried the same line on Junior High students and got a lot of moans. So to remedy this I simply state that in chess you only have to know how to count to 9 and know the difference between a straight line and one with a bend in it. That's all the math you need to know.

Any more and they would run out of time and never finish a game. There are so many possibilities in the game of chess. The number is estimated at 10 with 75 zeros after it. WOW! That's a lot!

So do you have to know all those possibilities? Nope besides you would not have enough time in a trillion lifetimes to look at them even if you looked at them at a rate of a trillion per second. The number is just way too large. So how do Grandmasters find the right move almost every time? They recognize the patterns of the game then make sure it follows the well tested basics of good positional play. In other words they put their pieces on the best squares to do the best job. It's simple and yet because of the possibilities there are always many right ways to move and so no two games have to be alike. The simple yet complex game of chess is one oxymoron I can live with. Ok back to the Geometry. In chess there are straight lines in three directions only. Up and down, across left and right, and diagonally. The only pieces that move in a straight line are the Rook, Queen and Bishop.



In the diagram above notice the squares that each of those pieces can move to. Each destination square is a straight line away. The only piece that doesn't move in a straight line is the Knight. The Knight's "L" shaped move is actually an aerial move that only effects the destination square. All the other pieces have to have the line between square A and square B clear of any other pieces in order to move to that square. Naturally the destination square has to be free of Kings or pieces of the same color as your piece. All of this makes those pieces very strong when

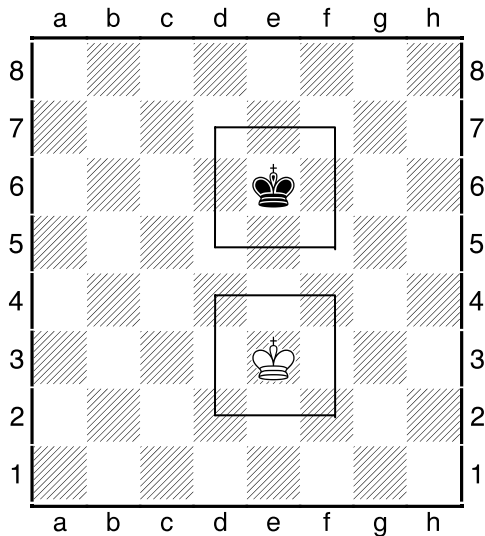
there are a lot of squares open for them to move around. The more crowded the board the weaker the pieces. One thing you will soon learn is that the law in geometry that states the shortest distance between two points is a straight line does not always work for Kings.

Remember the ordinary check? Any Queen, Rook or Bishop more than one square away from the enemy King is looking along a straight line in order to have that King in check. The Knight check is the "L" shaped look at the King. The pawn only can perform an in your face check. Poor guy. So we can now say that Chess breaks down in to two basic moves; straight lines, and the "L". A pawn move is actually a straight line move since it only attacks in the in your face manner.

The last pattern I want you to discover is the square

doughnut. These are the squares immediately surrounding the King. Kings can be quite powerful especially in the endgame. In beginning scholastic chess they have been known to perform feats of super human strength. Many scholastic games have seen the King boldly going where no sane King has gone before.

Around every King is a square he claims to be his own. If it is safe he can move to one of those squares he chooses.



Each King's doughnut is marked by a square. You might say it is an invisible shield allowing the King some breathing room from the

other King or any piece from attempting to sit on a square next to the King without protection. You could even call it a bumper that surrounds your King helping it to stay safe. The King always carries his doughnut. The world of chess boils down to simple shapes and lines. You just learn to recognize them. Just like in life you can see patterns every day. Some of them dictate the direction of your life. Drive on the right side of the road and stay in your lane. Failure to do so and you might get killed. Chess is not that drastic. Whew!

Lesson 3: Tactics

Chess is 90% tactics and 10 % strategy. So goes the saying. Most coaches breakdown the tactics into tricks done by the pieces or pawns to gain material or a winning position. Before we cover the conventional tactics that were discovered hundreds of years ago, we are going to look at some new tactical ideas I came up with to help the beginners understand check and mate.

Part One: Types of Checks

The Force Be With You!

Chess leaves little room for error. The quickest way to pressure an opponent towards a mistake is to use force. In life, force is the most uncomfortable to those being forced. So it is in chess. Force in chess has many levels. But the most common and effective is one that makes your opponent follow the rules of the game. For instance a pawn cannot go

three squares. A force of the rules is at work here. It prevents a piece from doing something because the rules won't allow it. A force of the rules in life is known as the law. You know you can't break the law. The chess laws prevents a pawn from taking a pawn or piece directly in front of it. The law forces a King to get out of check. And so on.

Check! The ultimate law:

The King cannot be captured. It is forced by law to escape check or the game ends with that King's side losing if he can't escape check. Because of this we will examine the many types of checks and the levels of force they exert. Each check has a category rating like tornados.

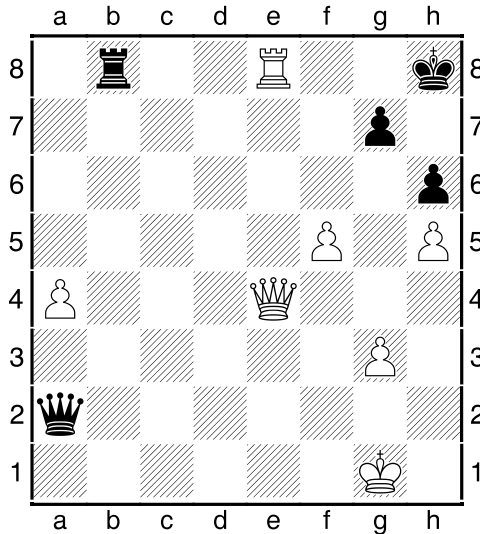
1. The Ordinary Check
2. The Knight Check
3. The Discovered Check
4. The In Your Face Check
5. The Double Check

1. The Ordinary Check

This is a category 1 check. It is the only check where the King alone is under attack and has all three options to escape check.

- A. Attack
- B. Block
- C. Chicken run away!

This check is always performed by a Bishop, Rook or Queen. Pawns and Knights cannot perform this type of check because they have to be up close.



The White Rook just moved to e8. He sees the Black King on h7 therefore it is check. Since there is more than one square between them it is an

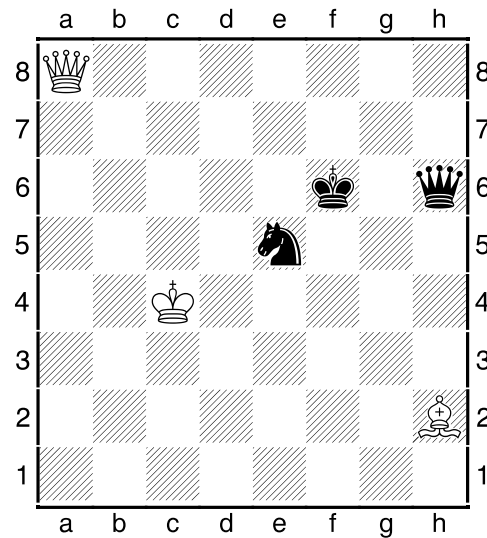
Ordinary Check. The Black King has all three options.

- A. Attack Rxe8!
- B. Block Qg8??
- C. Chicken run away to Kh7??

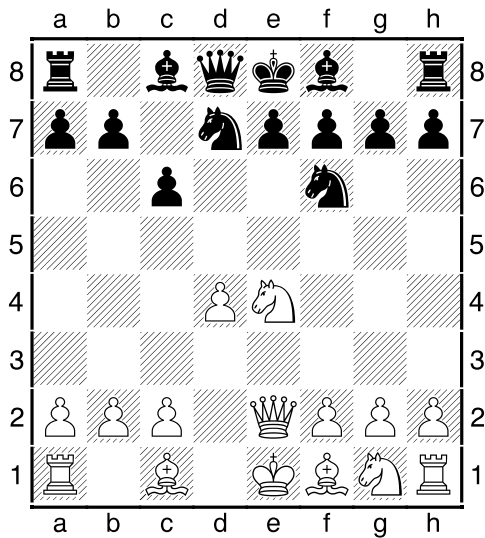
Only 1...Rxe8 makes sense. 1...Qg8 loses the Queen to 2. Rxe8 and 1...Kh7 loses to 2. f6+ and mate in one.

2. The Knight Check

This is a category 2 check. The reason this check usually is bad is because of the nature of how a Knight moves and the simple fact that a Knight check cannot be blocked. They can only be attacked or run away from.



Black's Knight moved to e5 which is an "L" shape away from the White King, check. White can capture the Knight with his Bishop or run away to any square except d3. The White Queen is helpless. Knights are notorious forkers. Because of this they can fly in and devastate the material count in a single blow. Knights also spring some beautiful discovered checks.



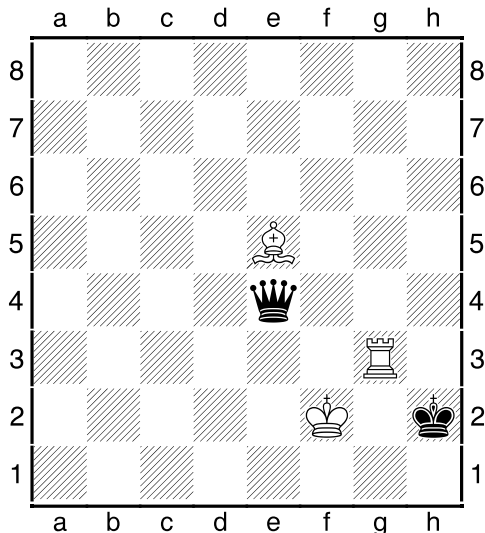
This is a very famous mate in one problem from an actual game. Grandmaster Paul Keres of Estonia sprung this one on move 6 in a game he played in 1952. I'll respectfully leave out his victim's name. Keres moved his Knight to d6! Wham! The poor Black King is

mated. It is called a Smothered Mate. He is surrounded by his own pieces and only the pawn on e7 is in a position to capture on d6. However the poor guy is pinned to his King by the White Queen on e2. The White Knight discovered the x-ray attack by the Queen when he moved to d6. An X-ray attack is when a piece is looking at another piece that is behind one or more pieces which are blocking the view. In this case the Queen is looking through the White Knight on e4 and the Black pawn on e7 right at the Black King.

3. The Discovered Check

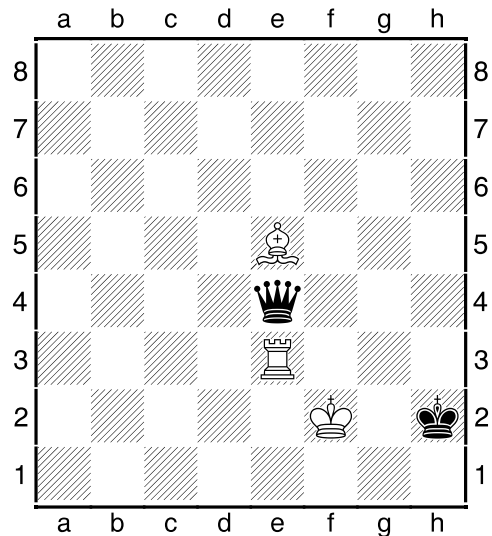
This is a category 3 check. Any piece can cause a discovered check but only a Bishop, Rook or Queen can actually deliver the check. Confusing? You bet! Definition: Discovered Check. When a piece moves and by doing so, opens up a line allowing the piece behind it to see and check the enemy King. All discovered checks involve

an X-ray attack. The moving piece usually moves off to attack something very valuable since the enemy King will now be busy getting out of check. I call this tactic Dive Bomber Chess! The moving piece is the airplane and the checking piece, (Since it can't move.) is the bomb. Wow! The storm is getting stronger.



Look carefully at the White pieces. A Bishop is trying to look at the Black King but the Rook is in the way. When the Rook moves the Black King will have to get out of check. The Rook then has a wonderful opportunity. Move to the best possible square and attack something big. The bigger the

better. In this position Black's Queen is the likely target. Is this attack going to work? Let's see how the discovered check is delivered.



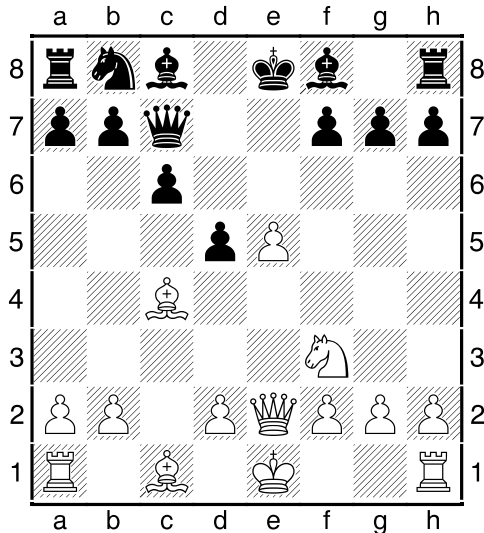
The rook moves to e3!!
Attacking the Black Queen and the Black King is discovered to be in check by the White Bishop. Black's King has all three options. All are bad.

- A. Attack 1...Qxe5??
- B. Block 1...Qf4??
- C. Chicken 1...Kh1!

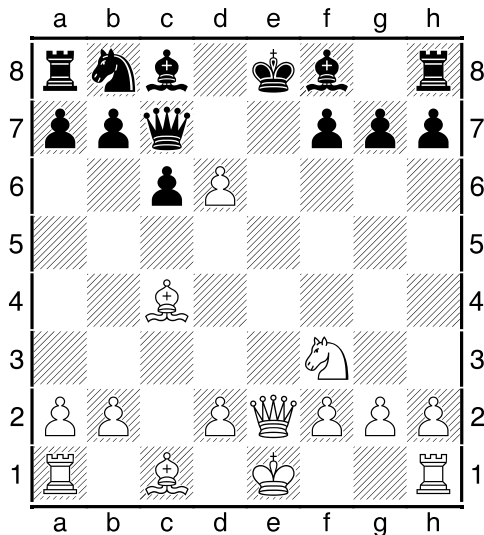
- 1...Qe5
- 2. RxQ
- 1...Qf4
- 2. BxQ
- 1...Kh1

2. Rh3#

If White takes the Queen??
Stalemate!



Here is a great example.
Remember the law! Black just
played 1...d7 d5? What
discovered check is now
available to White.



Yes! 2. e5xd6 en passant

CHECK! The little White pawn
clears the e-file for his
Queen to deliver a powerful
discovered check. Black's King
does not have all three
options. Only two and both
are bad. No one can take the
White Queen so A. Attack is
out of the question.

B. Block 1... Be6, Be7,
Qe7

C. Chicken 1...Kh8

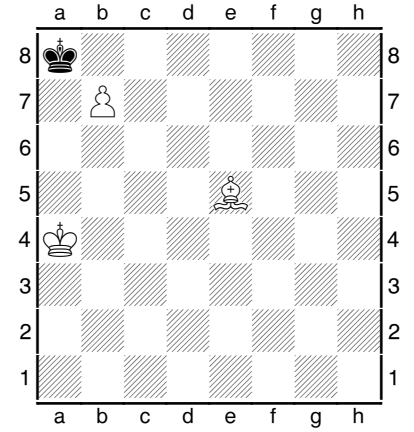
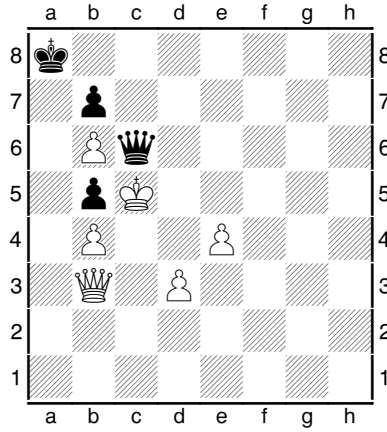
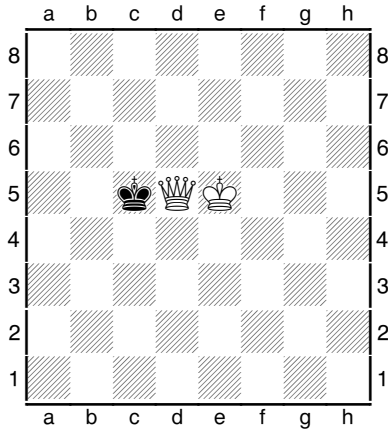
In every option White simply
plays 2. d6xQ.

Wow! Discovered checks,
really cool.

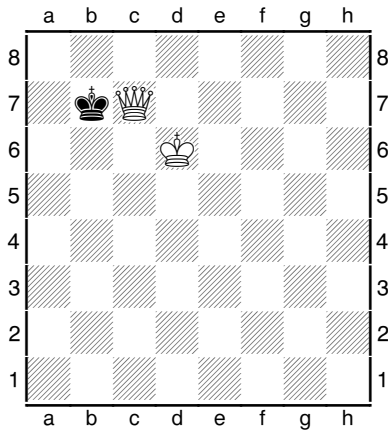
4. The In Your Face Check
This is a category 4 check.
This check is one of the most
common and forceful. Like the
Knight Check it cannot be
blocked. Ironically only the
Knight is unable to deliver
this check. Everyone else can.
When you get hit by an in
your face check it can easily
be mate if a Queen is doing
the dirty work. This is
because she also attacks so
many of the escape squares
around the King.

In Your Face Checks!

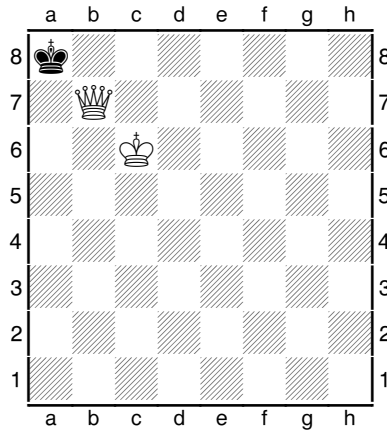
Examples:



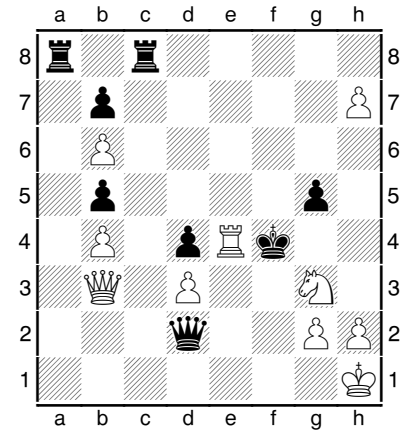
The Classical Check



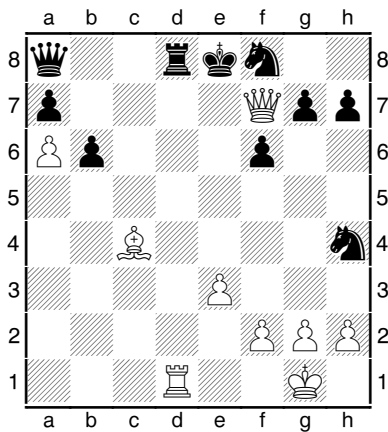
The Classical Check



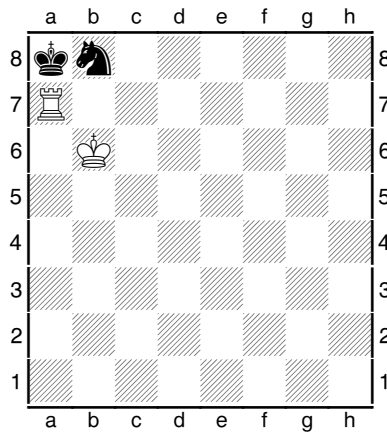
Pawn Kiss on the check.



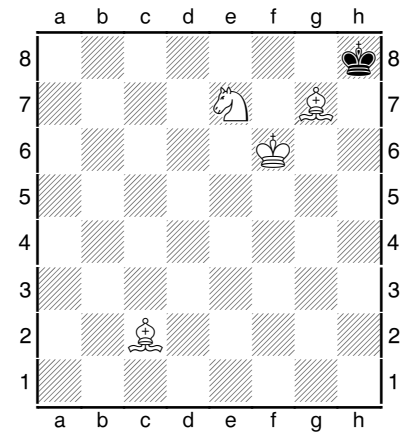
The Classical Check



The Cornered Mate



The Brick in the Face



The Peck on the Cheek

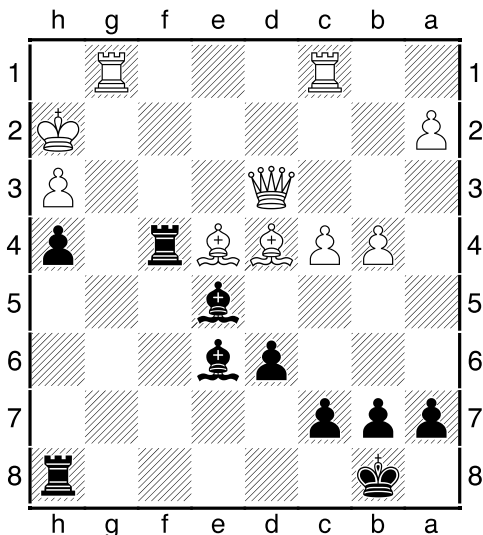
The Brick in the Face

The Pope's Blessing

5. The Double Check

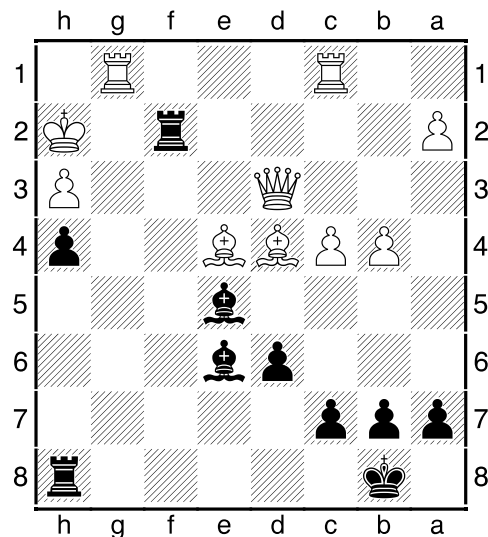
This is a category 5 check.

Finally we come upon the rarest and most powerful of checks. The thing that makes this check more deadly than all the others is the fact that the opposing King will have only one way to get out. He must use Chicken Run Away. There is no time to Attack one check because the other is still on. And blocking also falls to the rule you can only make one move at a time.



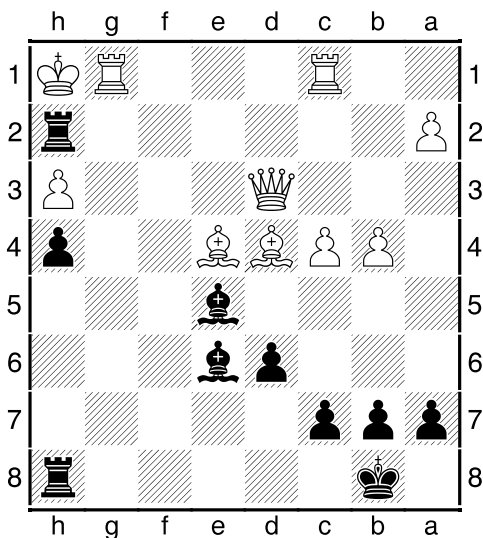
This position shows Black ready to let lose a powerful category 5 check. Notice the Bishop on e5 aiming at the White King. In the way his own Rook. We know this allows a discovered check and the Rook is free to attack whom ever he wants. For instance Rook

f3 would win the White Queen. But is the Queen all you want. Look at the White King. Poor guy is in check and winning the Queen loses both a Rook and a Bishop for the Queen. But if the Rook goes just one square further to f2 then the storm begins.



Wham! The White King has to absorb two checks at once. His only legal move is Kh1. White can't take out the Rook with his Bishop on d4 because the Black Bishop would still be checking the White King. White, for the same reason, cannot block the Black Rook with his own Rook going to g2. He cannot take the Black Bishop on e5 either because the Black Rook is checking his King. So White moves

Kh1. And the Black Rook slides over to checkmate.



You now have seen the power of the double check. There is an old saying in chess. "Always check it might be mate." This basically means before you move look further at the checks you have just in case you have a chance to end the game right away. In the above problem Black did just that. He chose not to just attack the White Queen but deliver a second check on the Black King to deliver a mate.

Part Two: Basic Tactics and Pattern Recognition.

Chess is loaded with tactics yet there are a limited number of types. Above we talked about the five types of checks. To perform a type of

check you first have to see it. To see it and to recognize it. For instance the ordinary category 1 check. All you need to see is the straight line between a square and the other King. Move your Queen, Rook or Bishop to that square and that's it. Check. The line is a pattern. A geometric pattern. In lesson three you learned that chess has many geometric patterns to see. As you play the game over and over you begin to see these patterns. Soon you can even see the patterns a move or two in the future. This is called pattern recognition. All of chess is pattern recognition. From the first move to the last. You can't escape this fact. In order to become good at this game you must be good at pattern recognition. Tactical or positional it does not matter. There is only one thing you need to win at chess. Great pattern recognition.

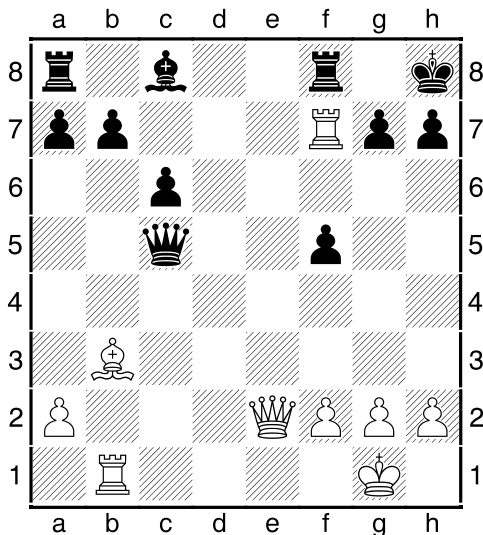
Chess games are divided into three parts. Opening, Middle Game and the End Game. Pattern recognition is involved in all three phases. We will now examine the Tactical Tricks involved in all three phases but mostly found in the middle game.

Middle Game Tactics: The Heart of Chess Magic

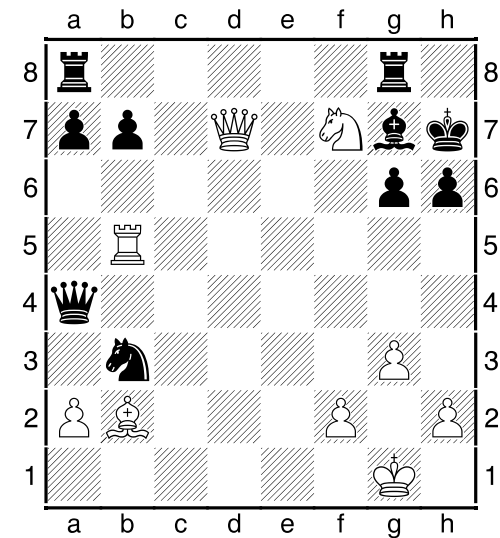
Chess tactics discussed here will be easy and get harder as the lesson progresses. There will be the top 4 traditional tactics and 12 of what I call secondary tactics. Along the way there will be a series of descriptions that fit multiple tactics. Study each tactic until you are thoroughly familiar with the pattern involved.

01 The Double Attack or Fork:

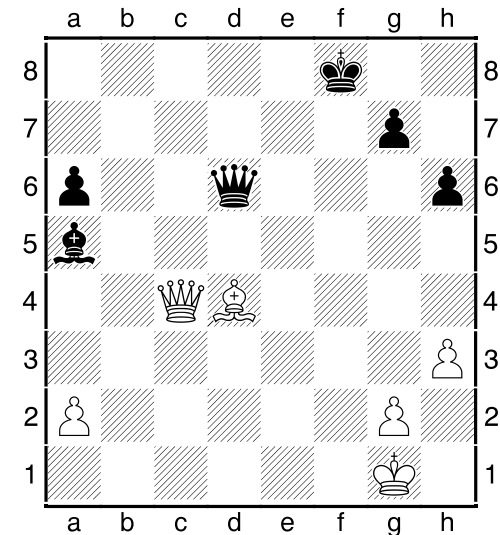
This is the most common tactic in Chess.



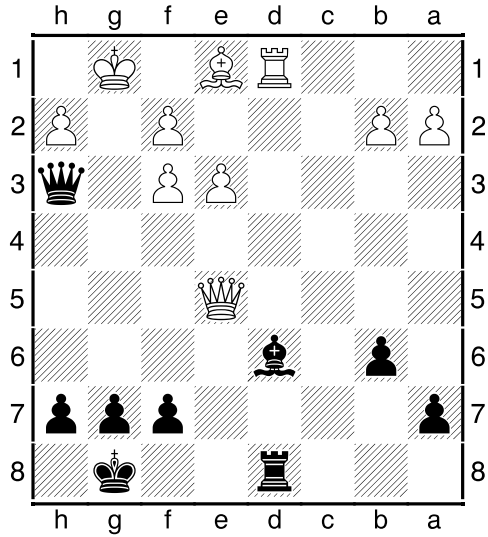
02 The Discovered Attack: The dive bombers of chess.



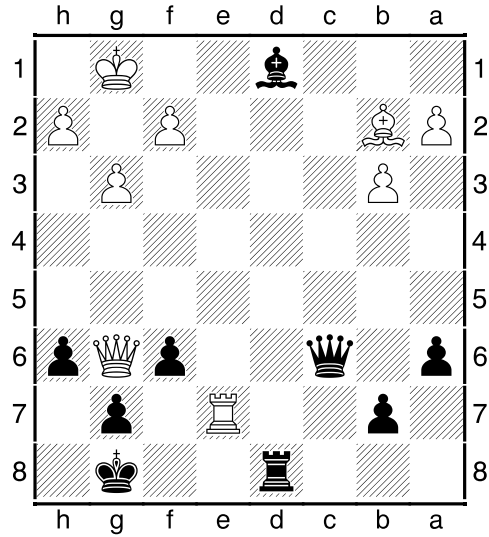
03 The Pin



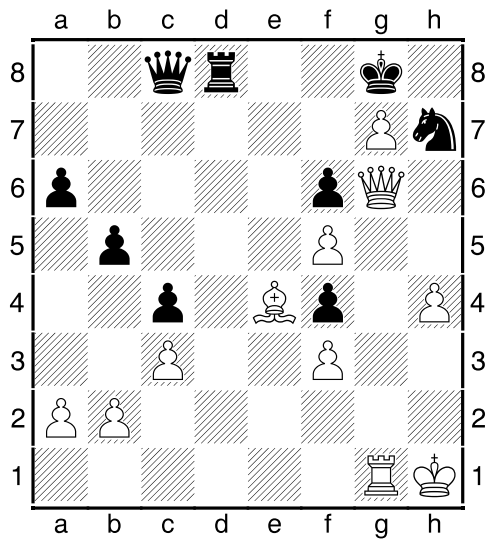
04 The Skewer or X-ray Attack:



06 Decoying



05 Deflection



07 Interception:

