

Step 2 mix

In Step 2, you learnt various methods for mating or gaining material. It's not that complicated — just find some targets! Consider your opponent's weaknesses and how you are going to exploit them.

Search strategy

- vulnerable king → mate or double attack
- unprotected pieces → double attack
- insufficiently protected pieces → double attack (helper needed)
- protected pieces with high value → double attack (♖ ♗ ♘ ♙)
- piece fulfilling a defensive task → eliminate the defender
- opposing pieces on the same line → pin or X-ray attack
- pinned piece → attack it again / take advantage of a poor defender
- piece with restricted mobility → trap it

Possible solution?

All involve the three targets:

- the king
- material
- square

You will quickly find the first two positions. Kings are vulnerable if they can easily be attacked. The severity of this vulnerability varies from position to position. It is often possible to give check. Material is also easily visible. Look for unprotected or insufficiently protected pieces, or pieces of higher value if protected. It is harder to see a square on which you can execute a threat.

Therefore, the search strategy focuses mainly on the opponent's vulnerabilities. If it's possible, we then consider which piece is needed. That always works!

We don't just pick a piece at random and see if we can do something useful with it. That sometimes works, but not always.

Some weapons rely more on one's own activity than on the opponent's vulnerability.

Search strategy

- own pieces on one line (battery) → discovered check or attack
- cashing in on a passed pawn → helping or eliminating defenders

Possible solution?

Double attack

Find two targets and attack them both at the same time. Which piece can do that? Any piece can deliver a double attack. Where can the piece give check? Which pieces are unprotected? Where can you give mate?

The pin

Identify your opponent's pieces on the same line (file, rank or diagonal). Make sure you consider the king's position. Which piece is unprotected? Can you pin it?

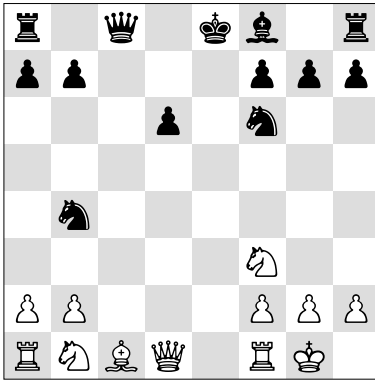
If there are no unprotected pieces, look for important pieces, such as the queen or rook.

Eliminating of the defence

Ask yourself the following questions: Which protected pieces are under attack? Why does capturing a piece yield nothing? Who is defending those pieces? Can you capture, chase away or lure the defender away?

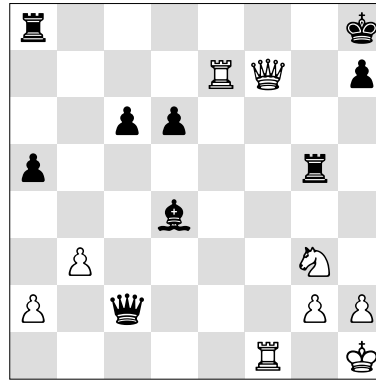
Discovered attack

Find a battery! You need a queen and a rook or a bishop as a back piece. Is there a target for the front piece?



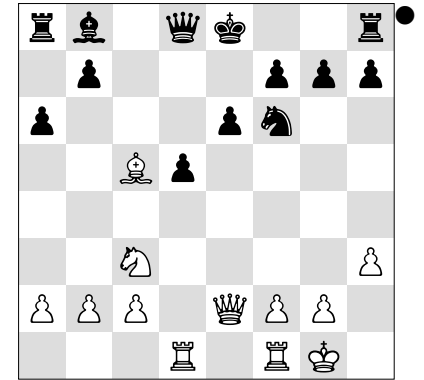
Double attack: queen

The king on e8 is vulnerable. Unprotected piece: Nb4. So give check and attack the knight. In the opening, this is often 1. Qa4+, but 1. ... Nc6 saves. The queen should move to e1: **1. Qe1+**. With a black bishop on b4, Qa4+ is preferable to Qe1+.



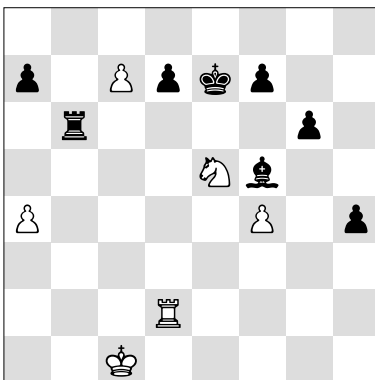
Double attack: queen

The king on h8 is vulnerable. Unprotected pieces: Bd4, Rg5, Ra8. Although the black king is under attack, there are plenty of defenders and no safe check. However, attacking material is possible: **1. Qf4** wins a piece.



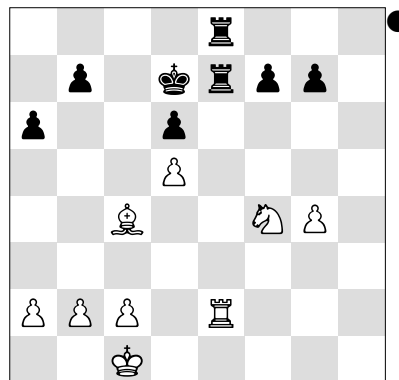
Double attack: queen

Unprotected piece: Bc5, b.2 The white king is safe, but since Bc5 is unprotected, Black can exploit this with **1. ... Qc7**, threatening mate. Remember the mating pattern involving a queen and bishop. It is common.



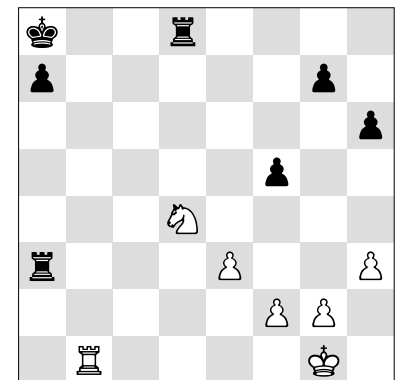
Double attack: knight

Black is threatening mate on b1, so there is no time to promote to a queen. Black's next move is d6. White can gain time with **1. c8N+**. This is a double attack, even though the rook is protected. White wins material.



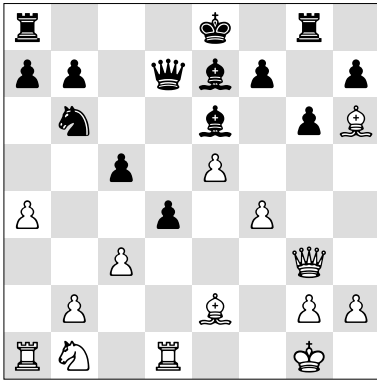
Double attack: rook

White has two unprotected pieces. The move **1. ... Re4** wins a piece. White can capture the rook, but there is a second rook ready to finish the job: **2. Rxe4 Rxe4**.



Double attack: 2 pieces

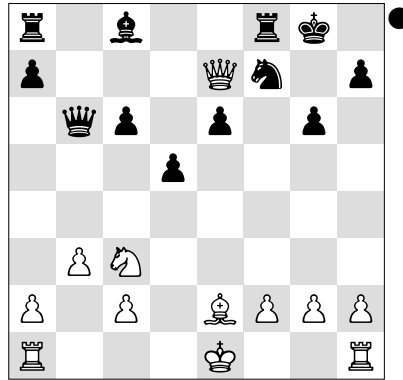
A check with the knight on c7 would be mate. Seeing if that is possible is more important than simply capturing on f5. 1. Ne6 Rd7 is not a good move. A better move is **1. Nb5**, which attacks both a3 and c7. Due to the threat to the rook, the king's additional breathing space is irrelevant.



The pin

The black king and queen are on the same diagonal. If you look for it, you can see that. The solution is then even easier. The bishop pins the queen with **1. Bb5**.

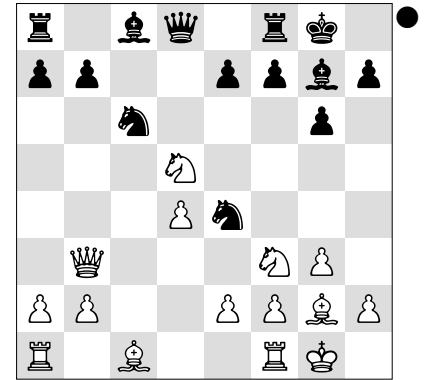
Don't overlook pins to the king.



The pin

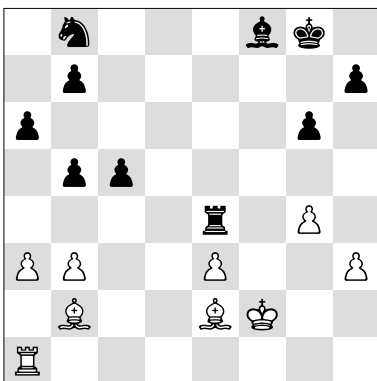
The pin to the king with **1. ... Qa5** does not work because White can play **2. b4**.

Now the knight on c3 is the front piece because the rook on a1 is also a target. After **1. ... Qd4**, white loses his knight. That is a pin to material.



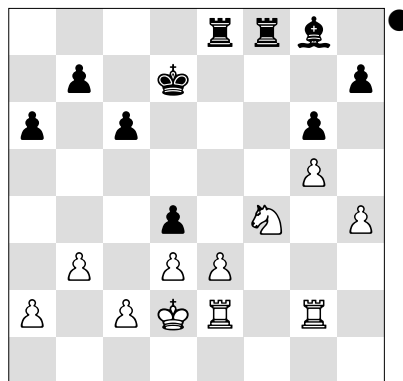
The pin

None of the white pieces are unprotected. The queen and knight are on the same diagonal. Black can pin the knight on d5 with **1. ... Be6**. The knight is now under attack from two sides, but is only defended once. Black wins a piece.



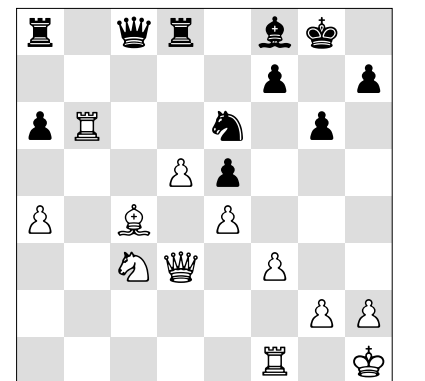
The pin

The pin to a square becomes visible when the enemy king is almost mated. Which piece can deliver the final blow and on which square? Here, it is d5 for the bishop. The move **1. Bf3** pins the rook.



Elimination of the defence

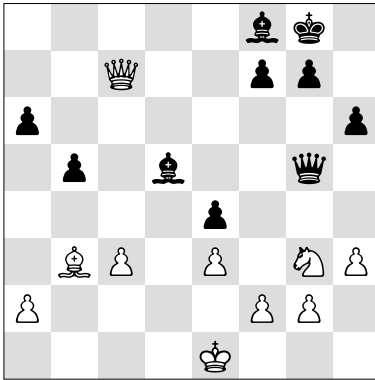
The knight on f4 has been attacked and protected once. This is why it is always important to check whether the defender can be eliminated. This can be achieved by making a simple capture: **1. ... dxe3+ 2. Rxe3 Rxf4** (capturing + material).



Elimination of the defence

The bishop on c4 is both under attack and protected. Black can now chase away the protecting piece. After **1. ... Nf4**, the queen can no longer safely protect the bishop.

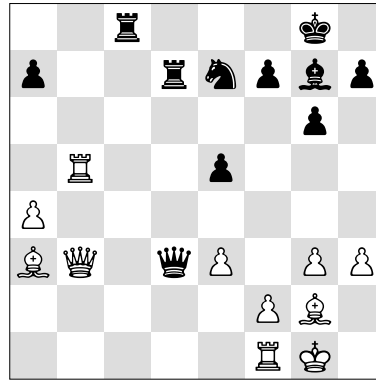
(chasing away + material)



Elimination of the defence

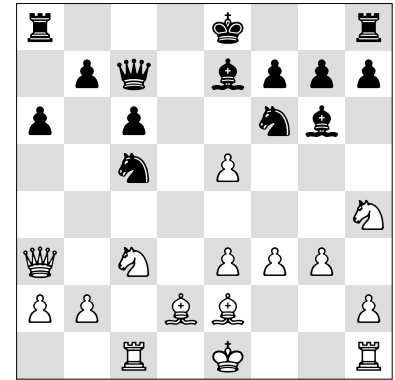
The bishop on d5 is still well protected. This is an indication to try to eliminate the protecting piece. This can be done with **1. h4**.

This loses a pawn after **1. ... Qxh4**, but after **2. Bxd5**, White gains more material. (luring away + material).



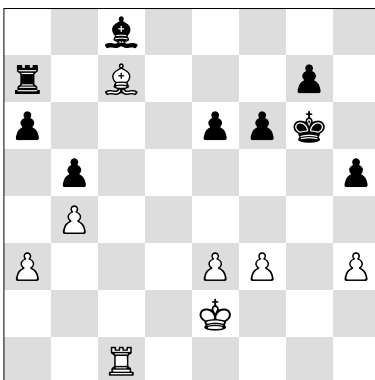
Elimination of the defence

Luring away can also be done with a capture. The rook protects Black's queen and knight. However, the rook cannot protect both pieces simultaneously. White lures it away: **1. Qxd3 Rxd3** **2. Bxe7**. Luring with a capture is called **overloading**.



Discovered attack

The first thing that stands out is that the knight on f6 is hanging. Should you play **1. ... Qxe5**? No! There is a battery ready on the a3/f8 diagonal. The front piece gives check and the back piece takes the queen: **1. ... Nd3+** **2. Bxd3 Bxa3**.

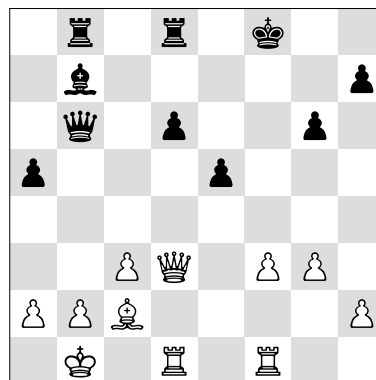


Discovered attack

The battery on the c-file is aimed at the unprotected bishop on c8. White must correctly attack the black rook with his bishop.

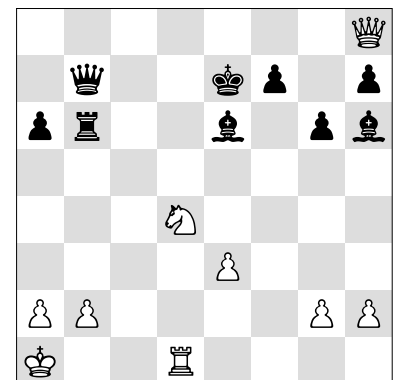
The correct move is **1. Bb8 Rb7** and **2. Rxc8** protects the bishop.

The wrong move is **1. Bb6 Rb7**.



Discovered attack

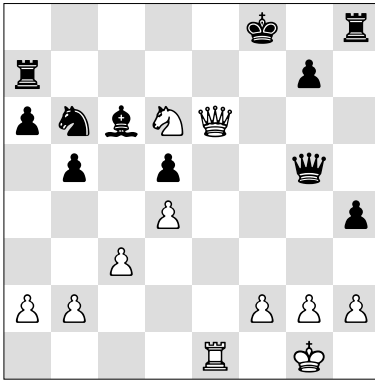
The battery is ready on the b-file. The bishop must be played away by attacking the queen. The correct move is **1. ... Ba6**, resulting in either mate or the loss of the queen. **1. ... Be4** seems to give the same result. Unfortunately, **2. fxe4+** is check.



Discovered attack

The battery is on the d-file. Without the knight, White can mate with **Qd8#**. The front piece must be removed with tempo. **1. Nxe6 Kxe6** and **1. Nf5+ Bxf5** are not good moves. In both cases, the square e6 is freed for the king.

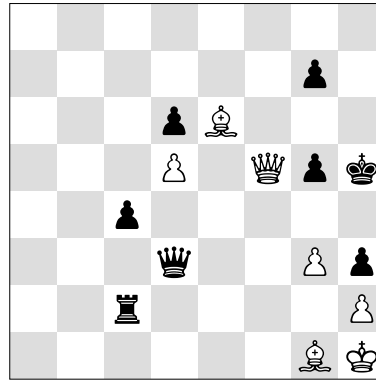
Therefore, **1. Nc6+** is best.



Mate in two

The black king cannot move. All the white pieces are attacking, but there are also quite a few defenders. White attacks square e8 three times and because the white knight is guarding f7, the queen can be sacrificed.

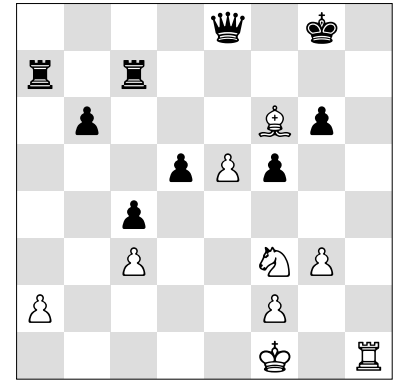
Thanks to a twofold attack on e8, White can give mate:
1. Qe8+ Bxe8 2. Rxe8+.



Mate in two

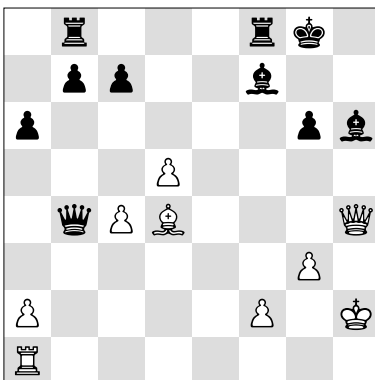
The black king is in a vulnerable position, but White few attacking pieces. Furthermore, the black queen is aiding the defence.

After **1. g4+ Kh6**, White no longer has a safe check. The same applies to **1. Qxh3+ Kg6**. First, guarding g6 with the bishop works well:
1. Bf7+ Kh6 2. Qxh3#.



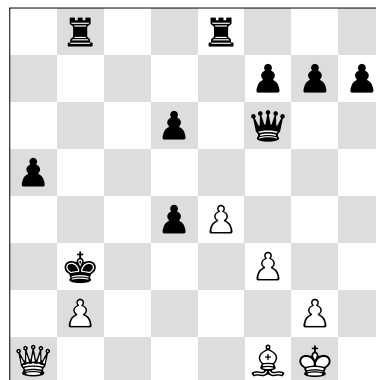
Mate in two

The black king can still move to squares on the f-file. White must act quickly, as Black can eliminate an important attacker with **Rh7**. Chasing the king in order to bring a new attacker into the attack with check will lead to mate. **1. Rh8+ Kh7 2. Ng5#.** The knight guards e6.



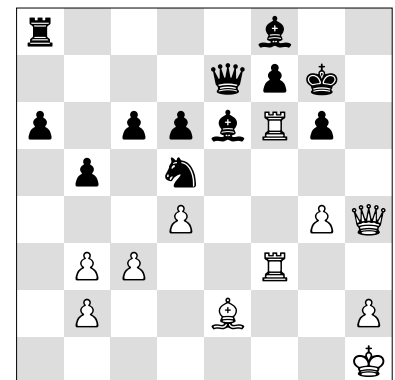
Bring in the chaser

Black has just captured a white knight on h6. White now has the choice of playing either **1. Qxh6** and **1. Qf6**. In both cases, mate is threatened. Is there a difference? Certainly. After **1. Qf6**, Black can protect the king by moving away: **1. ... Kh7**. The winning move is to take back on h6: **1. Qxh6.**



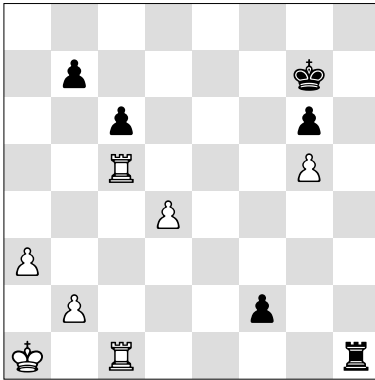
Bring in the guard

After **1. Qa3+ Kc2**, the black king gains new flight squares. Own pawns on the 2nd rank still take squares away and can protect the piece giving check, but they cannot give check themselves. It is better to play **1. Bd3** first and only then **2. Qa3#.**



Bring in the helper.

The queen must give mate, that much is clear. Bringing in extra pieces is the right approach when there are not enough attackers. White brings the helper for the queen into play with **1. Rh3**. Now mate on h8 threatens (**2. Qh7+ Kxf6**). After **1. ... Nxf6** follows **2. Qh8#.**

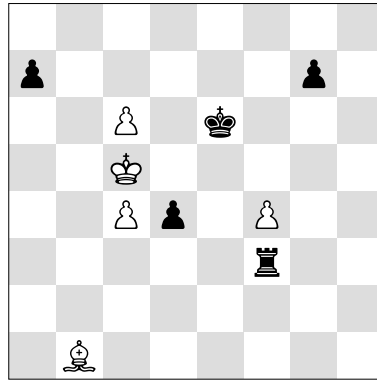


Cashing in on a passed pawn

Immediate promotion earns 4 points, but because Black is down a rook, this is only enough for a draw.

Remember how Black keeps the new queen alive:

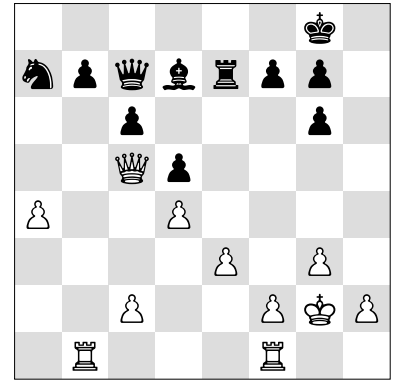
1. ... Re1!



Cashing in on a passed pawn

The king can still stop the c-pawn, the rook needs two moves. By playing **1. Bf5+**, White can lure the king away (1. ... Kxf5 2. c7 or cuts off the king's access to the pawn.

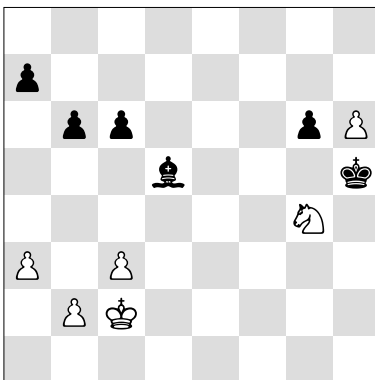
(1. ... Ke7 2. c7).



Choose the right capture

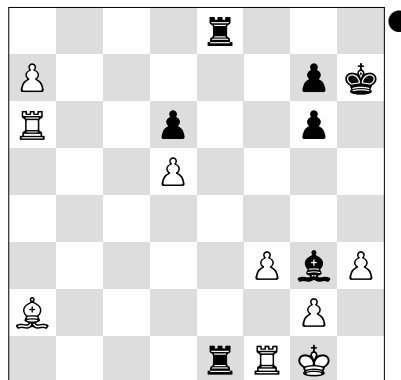
The queen must decide whether to capture capture the rook or the knight. The rook is worth more, but unfortunately, after 1. Qxe7, the queen is in a battery and

1. ... Bh3+ wins. Be satisfied with a three-point win: **1. Qxa7.**



Defend against a passed pawn

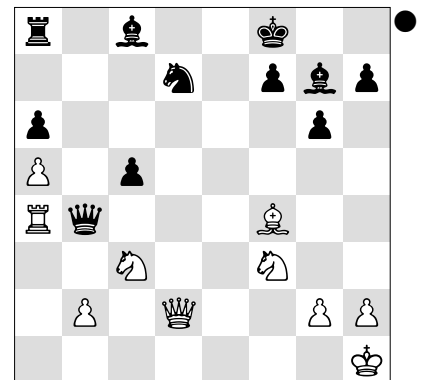
The bishop must stop the h-pawn. This cannot be achieved with 1. ... Bg8 because 2. Nf6+ follows. Also 1. ... Be4+ 2. Kd2 g5 fails due to a knight fork: 3. Nf6+. However, 1. ... g5 does work, as after 2. Kd2, Kg6 can follow.



Defend against mate

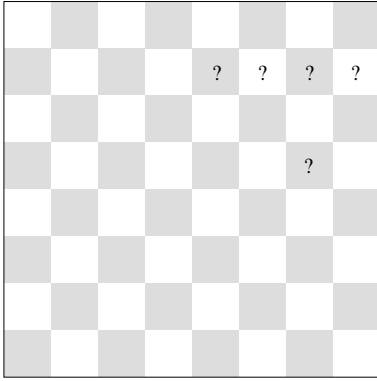
Mate is threatened in two moves: 1. ... Rxf1+ 2. Kxf1 Re1#. Therefore, promotion to a queen does not work (the black king is not on h8!). The only move that prevents mate is **1. Bc4**. The bishop protects the rook:

1. ... Rxf1+ 2. Bxf1.



Defend or attack?

In this position, defending is correct. 1. ... Bxc3 (capture + material) is tempting. White does not cooperate and plays 2. Qd6+ and 3. Rxb4. See also further on, with the intermediate move. Moving away with **1. ... Qb3** is good.

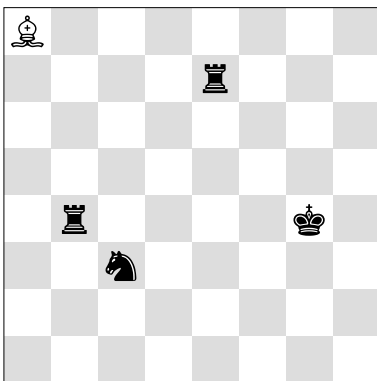


Finding mate

♔ = _____ ♖ = _____ ♘ = _____
 ♚ = _____ ♜ = _____

We have to turn the question marks into pieces. Black must be mate. Try to solve it from memory (good for visualisation), otherwise use a board. The solution:

♔ = e7 ♖ = g5 ♘ = f7
 ♚ = g7 ♜ = h7

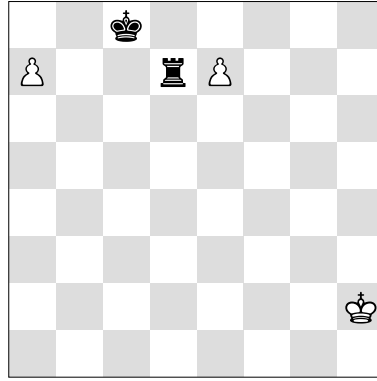


Route planner: give check

Rules:

- Only White may move.
- Check as quickly as possible.
- Play only safe moves.
- White is not allowed to capture.

Ba8-g2-f1-a6-c8+

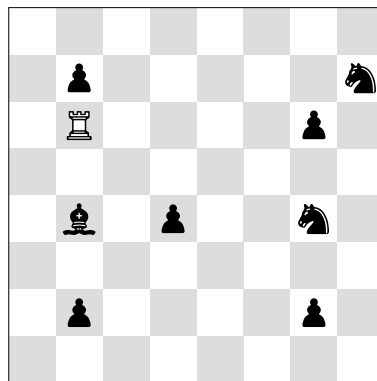


Mate in two moves

Rules of the game:

Only White plays. Black does not play, but a legal move must be possible. So no check on the first move and no stalemate.

White must give check and control 3 squares. Immediately 1. a8Q+ is check, but is definitely the second move. Only 1. e8N controls square c7. Now it is mate after 2. a8Q#.

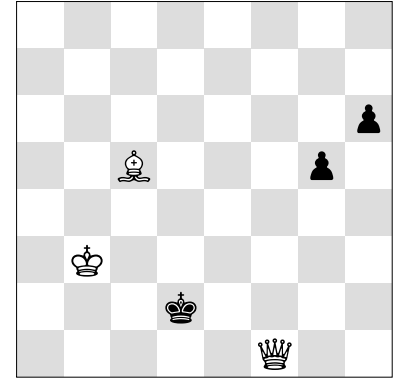


Route planner: capture

Rules:

- Only White may move.
- Capture all the black pieces.
- Capture only unprotected pieces.

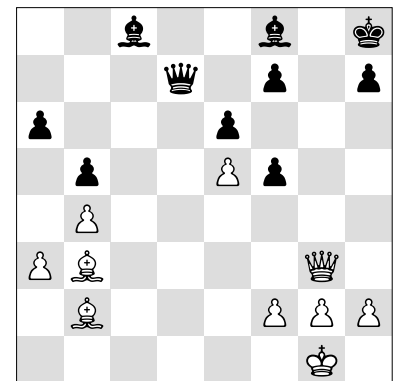
Rb4xd4xg4xg6xg2xb2xb7xh7



Mate in two moves

Some hints on how to solve these exercises. Since Black does not play, you can use the pieces available to come up with a mating pattern. Found it? Then just check whether that position can be achieved according to the rules.

The mating pattern is a bit tricky, but the moves are not:
1. Ba3 en 2. Bc1#.



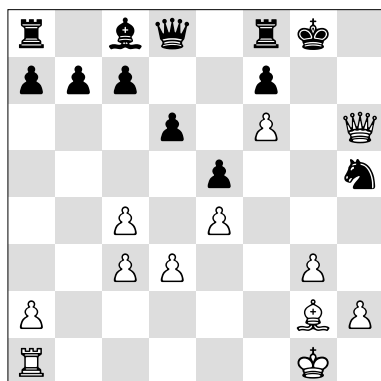
1. ... ♔d2 2. ____ #

In positions with a move below the diagram, the answer must be filled in. This is an exercise in defence.

Mate and the loss of a bishop are threatened, but 2. Qc3 protects square e1 with X-ray protection and the bishop.

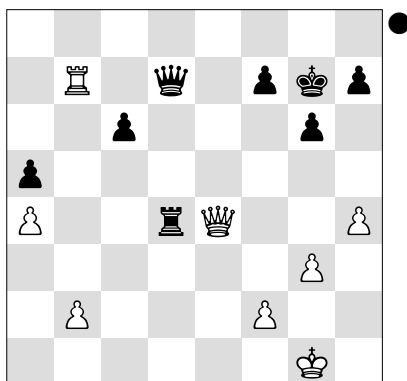
The in-between move

The answers contain the word intermediate move 40 times. Some attention is warranted here. Taking a piece back or defending yourself against a threat is not always necessary. Sometimes a clever intermediate move is possible. Here are a few examples.



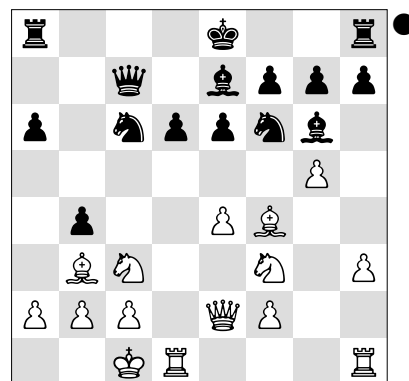
Capturing with check

The move 1. Qxh5 does not win, as 1. ... Qxf6 follows. A clever check wins the knight with tempo: **1. Qg5+ Kh7 2. Qxh5+ Kg7 3. Qg5+** and mate on g7.



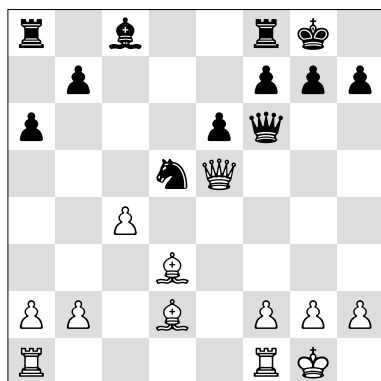
Check

Both queens are attacked. 1. ... Rxe4 2. Rxd7 and 1. ... Qxb7 2. Qxd4+ yield nothing. Black first plays **1. ... Rd1+** and only then captures the rook. With White to move, **1. Qe5+ f6 2. Rxd7+** wins a queen.



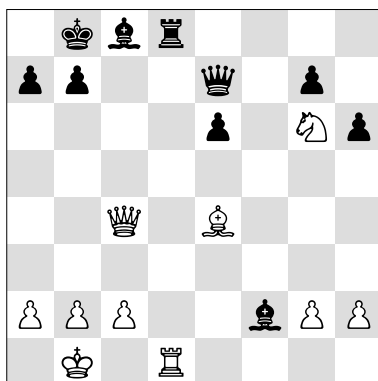
Attack on material

Both knights are attacked. Immediately 1. ... bxc3 2. gxf6 is not much. The intermediate move **1. ... Nh5** attacks the bishop: creating a winning double attack on the board. There are now two targets under attack.



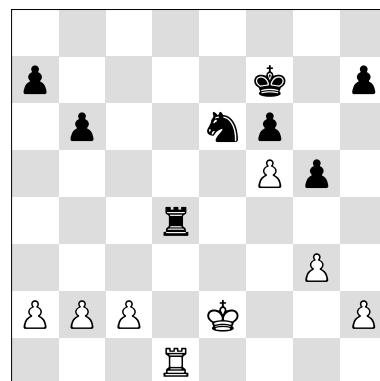
Mating threat

Both White and Black have a piece attacked. After the exchange on f6, Black captures with his knight. After **1. Qe4**, mate on h7 is threatened, leaving the knight on d5 hanging. The second target is square h7. Black cannot resolve both threats in one move. This is possible after 1. Qh5? with 1. ... g6.



Capturing

The black queen is still safe. On 1. Nxe7, Black can mate with 1. ... Rxd1#. With the surprising move **1. Qxc8+**, material is won. The king is lured to c8, after which **2. Nxe7+** is check. Alternatively, he can lure the rook away from d8, after which he can safely play **2. Nxe7**.



Defending

The black knight is under attack. It must also protect the rook, so it cannot move away. After 1. ... Rxd1 the intermediate move 2. fxe6+ follows. Black defends with **1. ... Re4+ 2. Kf3 Nc5**.