

Step 1 mix

In Step 1, you learned all the rules of the game. You know how to win material, how to mate and how to defend yourself against an attack.

The exercises in the Step 1 mix workbook are mixed together. You have to find the theme yourself based on the characteristics of the position. There are also exercises with themes from Step 1 plus although you will hardly encounter these in the first part of the book.

We assume that you have attended lessons and have worked through the workbooks. Solving mixed exercises is quite difficult. You need to sit down and concentrate. Take your time and use it wisely. It is better to spend more time on them than to rush through and make lots of unnecessary mistakes. In chess, it's important to know when to attack and when to defend. You attack your opponent's weak points. Most of these are easy to recognise. However, you do need to **look** for them first. What does your opponent want, and what is the threat? Can you checkmate them or win material? What do you need to watch out for?

Mate

The enemy king is in a difficult position and has limited options. He has few defenders nearby and many enemies. He is vulnerable and therefore an easy target. All of these factors indicate that you can mate.

Winning material

Can I safely capture a piece?

Search for:

- an unprotected piece
- a piece with a higher value
- an insufficiently protected piece

Solution:

- capture the piece
- exchange profitably
- capture the piece under twofold attack

Defending

You may also have weaknesses in your own position. Don't lose material or allow yourself to be mated.

Search for:

- Is a piece in danger?
- Is the king in check?
- Is mate threatened?
- Is a promotion threatening?

Solution:

} capture, move away,
protect, interpose

There are many possibilities, see the examples below..

Passed pawn

One way to win material is to cash in on a passed pawn. Promotion earns you more points. Helpers can either control the promotion square or prevent enemy pieces from controlling it.

See the examples for exercises involving **creating mates**, **route planners** and **multiple choice questions**.

Control!

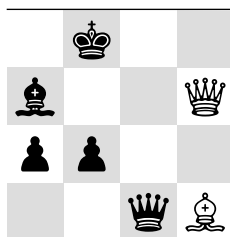
Have you found a solution? That's great, but make sure the answer is correct. The type of question you can ask depends on the exercise. Is it really mate? Is the piece I am going to capture truly unprotected? Am I giving away a piece?

Have you finished a page? Don't check the answers straight away! Go through all the exercises again first. How many exercises are you sure you got right? How many are you unsure about? The better you can estimate this, the more you will learn.

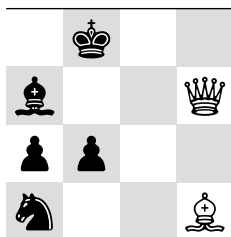
Mate in one and create mate

Taking the opponent into account

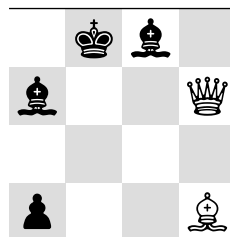
Don't just give check. Which squares can the king still move to? Take possible defences into account. Avoid the mistakes made in the first four examples (the moves indicated by a question mark).



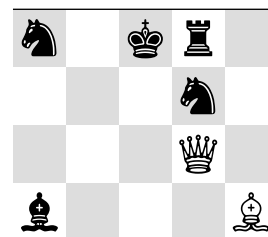
1. Qf7#
1. Qh8+? Qg8
(interpose)



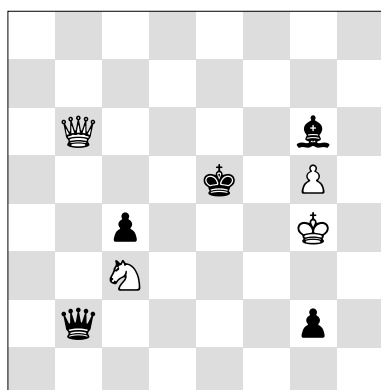
1. Qh8#
1. Qf7+? Nxf7
(capture chaser)



1. Qh6#
1. Qf5+? Kg7
(move away)



1. Qd6#
1. Qf7+? Bxf7
1. Qe8+? Nxe8
1. Qf6+? Nf7

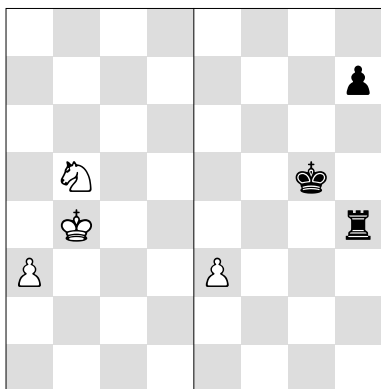


Chasing and guarding

The black king cannot move to any of the available squares. One check is enough. Note that the chaser (here, the queen) also acts as a guard, and that a check does not provide the king with any escape routes. Therefore, 1. Qe3+ Kd6 and 1. Qc5+ Ke6 are not good moves.

1. Qf6# is good. The black king cannot move to d4 due to X-ray protection by the queen.

If you don't think carefully about this position, you might play 1. Qxb2, which is not a mating move (1. ... g1Q+).

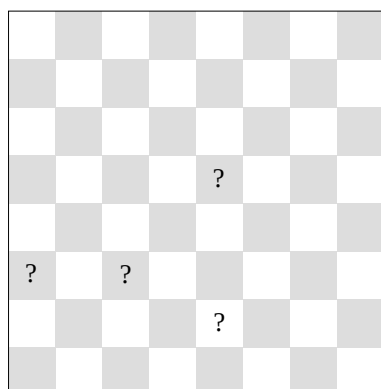


Create a mate with queen and knight

On the left are the black queen and knight, on the right the white ones.

The queen takes the most squares away from the king on a knight's move distance: 5 squares. So, the queen must go to c2. The knight checks the king on c6 and also guards the last flight square a5.

On the right, the knight moves from g3 to guard the squares f5 and h5. The queen gives check on g7 and guards the squares f6, g6 and h6.



Where is each piece?

Where should the black king go? It cannot go to the edge. The queen can only check from c3. The most logical square is c3. The white pieces will then surround the king. The queen is a knight's move away from the king, guarding five squares. Therefore, it is on e2. The bishop must then give check on e5. The king moves to a3 to guard b4 and b3.

It's not important, but it's interesting that square b2 is guarded three times.



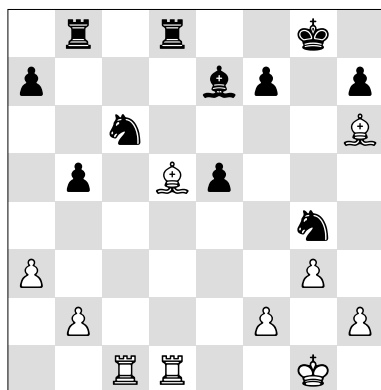
Winning material

Can I win material?

You can win material by:

- capture an unprotected piece
- a profitable exchange
- a twofold attack

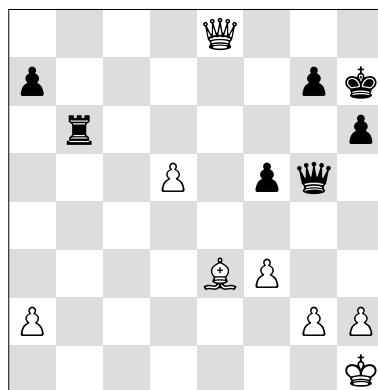
Look out for unprotected pieces, high-value pieces, or pieces that are insufficiently protected. Here are some examples in which you can choose between two captures. What should you pay attention to?



Capture: remain function

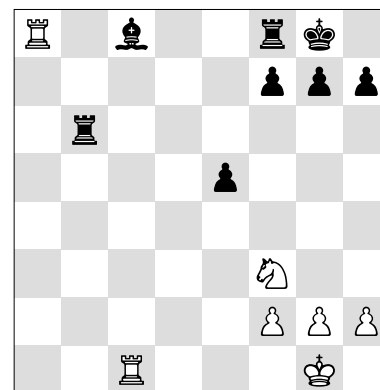
White can capture Nc6 in two ways. Don't just consider your own options. Black also threatens to capture an unprotected piece: 1. ... Nxh6.

So **1. Rxc6** is correct. The rook protects the bishop.



Profitable exchange

Of course, you would rather capture the queen than the rook. Unfortunately, after 1. Bxg5, 1. ... Rb1+ is very annoying. After **1. Bxb6**, the check on the back rank is not a problem: 1. ... Qc1+ 2. Bg1. Better is **1. ... axb6**.

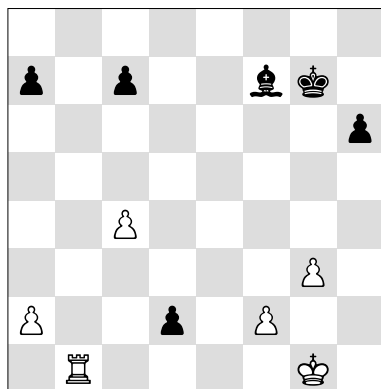


Twofold attack

If you only consider the white options; 1. Rxc8 is a strong move. Black then loses a rook. It's a pity that Black also takes part in this with 1. ... Rb1+. White must be satisfied with winning a piece: **1. Raxc8**.

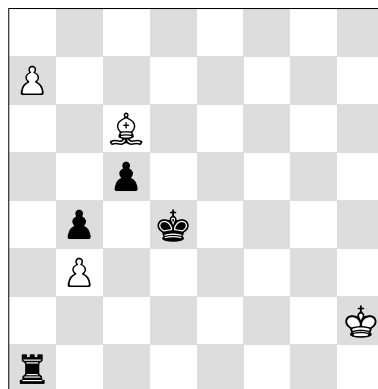
Cashing in a passed pawn

You can win material without capturing! Pawns can promote, and when promoted to queen, you win 8 points in the best case. Only capturing an unprotected queen yields more.



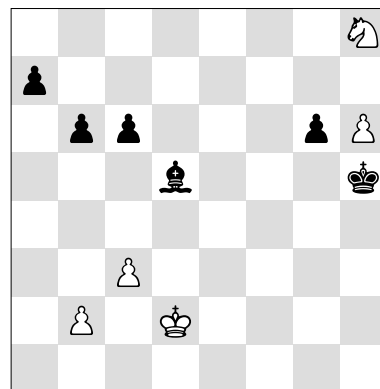
Control promotion square

Black cannot promote immediately, but after **1. ... Bh5**, he can do so on the next move. Black wins 4 points.



Interposing

Directly 1. a8Q Rxa8 2. Bxa8 wins 4 points, but after **1. Ba4** the win will be 8 points.



Square clearing

Again, don't move the pawn immediately: 1. h7 Kh6. The knight is in the way, so **1. Nf7 Bxf7 2. h7**.

Defending

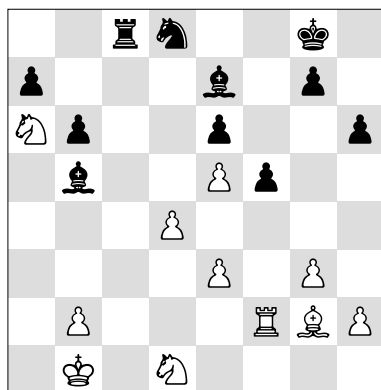
Defending may be less fun than attacking, but it is important.

Search for:

- Is a piece in danger?
- Is the king in check?
- Is mate threatened?
- Is a promotion threatening?

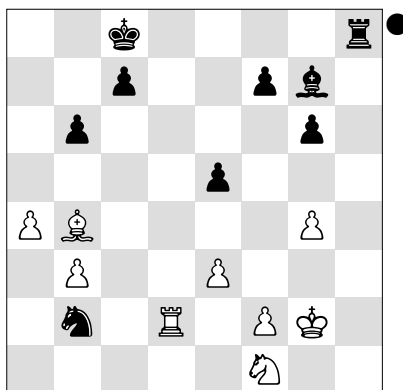
Solution:

capture, move away,
protect, interpose



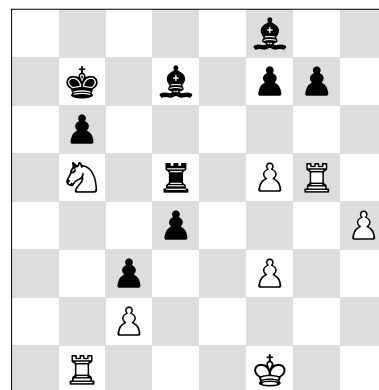
Protect: X-ray protection

The knight on a6 is in danger. White can protect it with 1. Bb7; not very clever, because 1. ... Nxb7 is a simple refutation. A better move is the X-ray protection with **1. Bf1**. The bishop cannot move to a6 immediately, but it can if Black plays 1. ... Bxa6 2. Bxa6. That is also the intention.



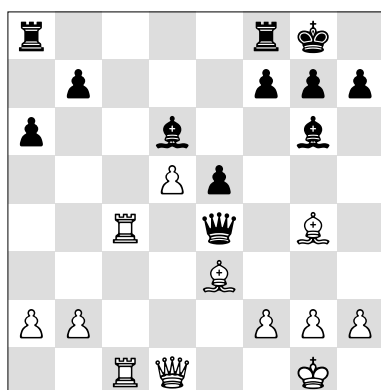
Protecting: line clearing

The knight on b2 is under attack and cannot move. Black can protect it with **1. ... e4**. This pawn does not protect the knight itself, but it was in the way of the bishop on g7. By clearing the line, Black solves this problem. After **2. Ba3 Nd3**, the knight can move to a protected square.



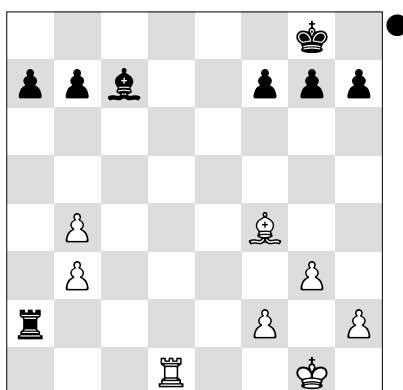
It could be even more fun! Once again, a white knight is in danger. This time, White must use all the tools from the previous diagrams together.

By playing **1. f6**, White clears the 5th rank for the rook, which suddenly adequately protects Nb5.



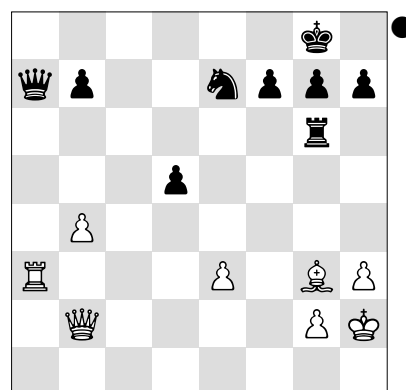
Move away to a safe square

The black queen is in danger. She can only move to d3. This square is under attack from the white queen, but Bg6 protects the queen. Although the black queen can be captured, the exchange costs Black no points.



Remain the protection

Black can save the bishop on c7 by capturing f4. The attacker is gone, so the problem is solved. Unfortunately, this fails on 2. Rd8#. The bishop must therefore play **1. ... Bb6**, which is safe and protects d8.



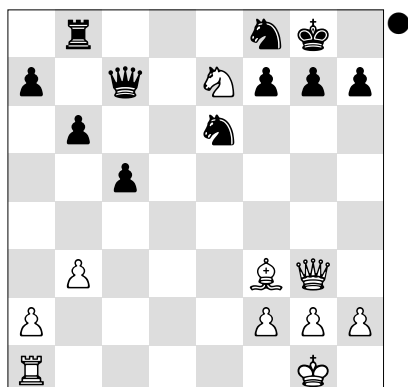
Interpose

The queen under attack can move to b6, but White will then naturally play 2. Ra8+, quickly mating Black. Fortunately, Black can resolve the danger with **1. ... Ra6**. Don't move a piece under attack without thinking!

Defence

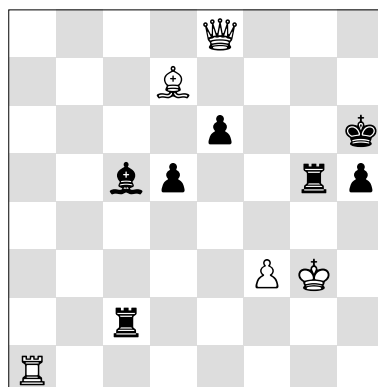
Getting out of check

Are you in check? If so, don't just move the king away. Consider your options: capture, move or interpose.



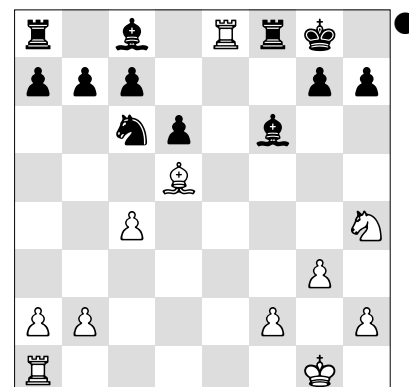
Caution: loss of material

The knight gives check and the queen can capture it. This is obvious, but not a good move. If Black plays 1. ... Qxe7, the rook on b8 is suddenly hanging: 2. Qxb8. So 1. ... **Kh8** is the move.



Be careful: mate

The only option is to move away. Look at all the potential moves and cross out the ones that are not possible. 1. Kh4 Rh2# is straightforward. Can the king move to the centre? No: 1. Kf4 Rc4#. So 1. **Kh3** is the only move.

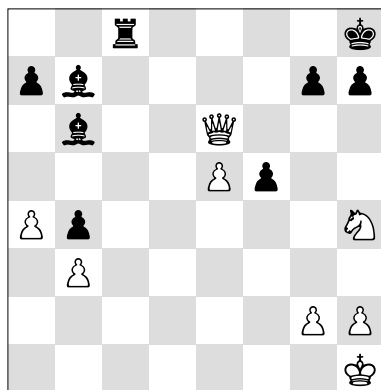


Material loss or mate?

It quickly becomes clear that Black is mated after 1. ... Kh8 2. Rxf8# mate. The only other legal move is 1. ... **Be6**. This move loses material, but it is better than being mated. Black retains more material after 2. **Bxe6+ Kh8**.

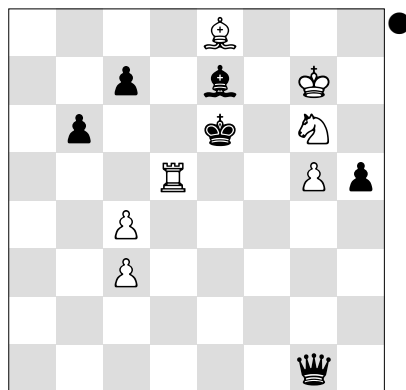
Defend against mate

Your opponent threatens mate. You can save yourself by capturing, protecting, moving away or interposing.



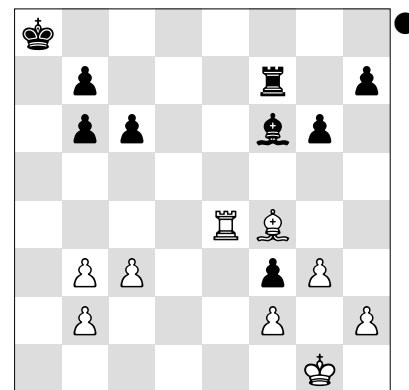
Moving away

Black threatens mate on c1. If White had more material, an emergency move such as 1. Qxc8+ would be good option. But not here. Creating a flight square for the king is sufficient: 1. **h3**. This is also known as 'making a hole'.



Interposing + moving away

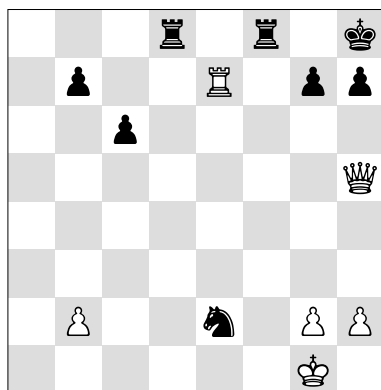
White threatens mate in two ways: Bd7# and Bf7#. The rook on d5 is needed for the first move. It protects d7. Black can play 1. ... **Bd6**. Now 2. Bd7+ is no longer possible and after 2. Bf7+ the king can safely move to d7.



Protecting

White threatens mate on a4. 1. ... Ka7 makes no sense. The king has no new flight square. The simple solution is to protect square a4 with the b-pawn: 1. ... **b5**.

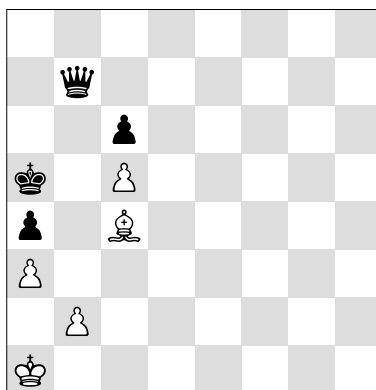
Other exercises



☐ Kh1 ☐ Qxe2 ☐ Rxe2

Select the correct move and fill in the circle. Then explain why the other moves are incorrect.

1. Kh1? Rf1# or 1. ... Rd1#;
1. Rxe2? Rc1+



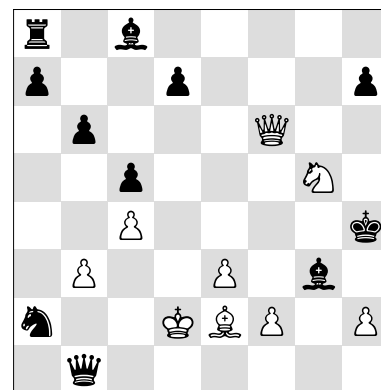
1. b4+ ____ #

What should you play after the move under the board?

Black is almost mated.

There are two legal moves:

1. ... Qxb4 (if you don't remember the 'en passant' rule), or the correct move
1. ... axb3.

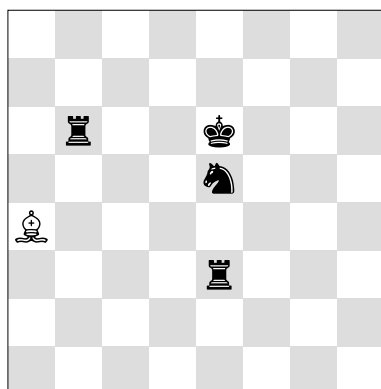


2x 3x 4x

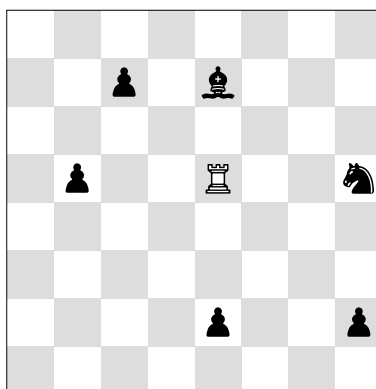
How many times can you mate in a single move? 3x is right: **1. Qh6#**, **1. fxe3#** and **1. hxe3#**.

After 1. Nf3+, the king has three possible moves, of which 1. ... Kh3 is the best.

Route planners



☐ a4 - ____ - ____ - ____ +



☐ e5 x ____ x ____ x ____ x ____

Give check

Rules:

- Only White plays.
- Check in three moves.
- You cannot be captured.

Solution:

Ba4-c2-h7-g8+

Capture all black pieces

Rules:

- Only White plays.
- Capture one piece or pawn per move.
- Only capture unprotected pieces.
- Play safely!

Solution:

Re5xb5xh5xh2xe2xe7xc7