

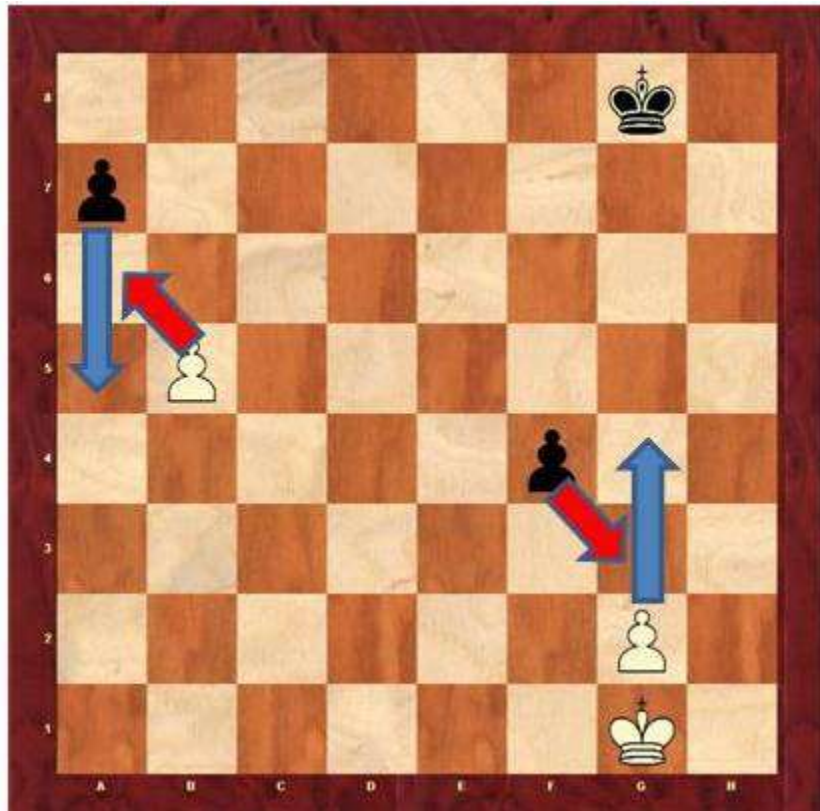
How well do you know the Laws of Chess?

This month's teaser : **En passant**

1. En passant (abbreviated in chess notation as e.p.) is an optional move when a pawn of one player is on the 5th rank (so has moved 3 squares from the start) and the opponent moves the pawn from the second rank of an adjacent file for the first time by two squares (so the 2 pawns would be alongside each other). The first player can (as an option) take the other pawn as if it had only moved 1 square. See Figure 1. Please note this move must be played straight away.

So if White to move and plays
1. g4 then Black can play
in reply
1.... fxg3 e.p

If Black to play tries
1.a5 then White can reply
1.....bxf6 e.p



En passant problems

Look at the adjacent board position

Black to plays moves

a) 1.... a5 can White take this pawn en passant (so bxa6 e.p.)?

If instead Black tries

1.... c5 can White play

b) 2.bxc6 e.p. or

c) 2. dxc6 e.p.

If instead White to play and tries

d) 1. h4 can Black play gxh3 e.p.?

If instead White tries

1. f4 can Black reply

e).... exf3 e.p.? or

f)' ... gxf3 e.p.



[ANSWERS can be found here](#)

For Beginners!



Many beginners often obtain a winning position e.g. a Q ahead but do not know how to give checkmate. The first thing to remember is that you cannot checkmate with just a Q versus a K, you need to use your K and Q together. The second point is you need to drive ('squeeze') the opponent's K to the edge of the board (use the Q to prevent the K from coming away from the edge and then try and move the K to the position shown above.

With White to move there are 4 checkmates possible - can you find them all?

Answer

The checkmates are

1. Qc2#

1. Qh1#

1. Qg1#

1. Qf1#

Note the last 3 are very similar in idea

TIP: when your opponent can only move his/her K be careful to avoid a position where he/her is not in check but his/her only moves would be into check. If you only have a K left this is a trick worth trying as you may convert a loss to a draw!

As with the example on the left when you checkmate with K and R versus a lone K then the K and R must work together to first drive the enemy K to the edge of the board and then use the R to pin the K to the edge and move your own K to the position shown. Sometimes you have to 'lose' move e.g. by moving the R a few squares to drive the opponent's K to move opposite your K.

So with Black to move there is just one move to deliver checkmate.

Answer

The only checkmate is

1. Rh2#

You will see this is a similar situation to the last 3 checkmates shown for the Q in the position on the left.

TIP: Practice giving these checks - start by putting the other K on the middle of the board and then driving it to the edge and setting up the right position to give checkmate. This is important as there is nothing worse than winning against your opponent but not being able to give checkmate and having to agree a draw!

This month's problems - Novice

Problem N7



N7) White to play - what is the winning move?

Answer

1. Qh8+ Nxh8
2. Rxh8#

N7) If it were Black to move how would he/she win the game?

Answer

1. ... Nxh4 followed by Kf8 to avoid back rank mate

This month's problems - Intermediate

Problem I7

Problem N8



N8) Black is winning easily here - but what is the quickest move to finish the game?

Answer

1. ... f1(=N)#
promote to a N and mate!

Problem I8



17) Black has just played the R from c6 to c5, thinking he will win either the Q or B with the pin. White finds a stunning reply that wins within a few moves – what did White play?

Answer

1. ... Bxg7!

if then 1. ... Rxd5

2. Bf6 and mate by Rh8 can be delayed but not prevented.

and if instead 1. ... Kxg7

2. Qd4+ Re5 (mate by Rh8+ followed by Qf6# was threatened) then either

3. f4 or 3. Qxe5 wins a R3.



18) How does Black win?

Answer

1. ... Kf2

with the unstoppable threat of Rc3# to follow

Solution to last month's problems - Novice

Problem N5

Problem N6



N5a. Black to play what is the best move?

1....f4+
 then
 2 gxf4 exf4+
 3 Kxf4 draw as K+N alone cannot
 checkmate a lone K!

N5b. White to play and win!

1. Kf3 so that if plays tries the
 reply
 1..... f4
 White replies
 2. g4 and the combination of K and
 N can then capture the Black
 pawns and shepherd the g pawn to
 promotion as a Q or R.



N6a. Black to play what is the winning move?

1....h4 as this pawn reaches h1
 (and becomes a Q) just before the
 White pawn reaches a8 with this
 square then covered by the new
 Black Q which will take the
 promoted pawn.
 This is a case of counting squares
 (to promotion) and checking what
 squares are attacked on promotion.

N6a. White to move and win

1.a5 as this pawn reaches a8 (and
 becomes a Q) just before the Black
 pawn reaches h1 with this square
 then covered by the new White Q
 which will take the promoted pawn.
**TIP: LEARN TO COUNT SQUARES IN
 THE ENDGAME WHEN PAWNS ARE
 RACING TO PROMOTE.**

Answer to last month's problems - Intermediate

Problem 15



15a. A closely fought game with each side down to one P each. So it is White to play – is 1. a6 the best move? If not what should White play?

1. a6 is not the best move because although the a pawn is promoted (to a Q) first when the Black pawn reaches h1 the new Black Q will give check in a skewer and then win the new White Q and the game!

White K can reach g2 and take the Black pawn when it promotes. Black cannot catch the white pawn. So

1. Ke4 wins - if Black pushes the h pawn the White K moves to f3 (and g2 if necessary). If Black moves the K instead then the a pawn is just advanced.

15b. If Black to play first can he/she draw or win the game?

Problem 16



16a. What is Black's killer move?

1.....Rxc3+
If
2. fxc3 f2#
While
2. Ng2 Qxc2#

1....h3 wins for Black as the skewer along the h1-a8 diagonal following promotion to a Q will cover a8 and prevent White from gaining (or keeping) a Q

Answers to **En Passant Problems**

- a) No - the Black a pawn was not on its original square so has not moved forward 2 squares in one move.
- b) Yes
- c) Yes
- d) No - although en passant could normally be played this would leave the Black K in check
- e) Yes
- f) No - again an en passant take would put the Black K in check.

Remember: You do not have to take en passant. If you do it must be the very next move after your opponent moves his/her pawn forward 2 spaces.