Chess Visualization

**for the visually impaired
and blind**
by
Rodolfo Pardi

Gatteria
Milano IT

Afoot and light-hearted I take to the open road
Healthy, free, the world before me.
Not I not anyone else, can travel that road for you,
You must travel it for yourself.
Walt Whitman

Blind Barnabas saw like a natural man.
Gospel

This book is not for the faint of heart, it's for the brave who are willing to explore the unknown territory of their mind!

Author

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for the visually impaired

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Foreword

Welcome. This is the first chess ebook for the visually impaired written especially for a Kindle. To be heard using the embedded TTS. Or on any device where you can use a TTS, any version of Jaws and NVDA that is able to read a Kindle for PC or ipad or whatsoever.

According to Amazon, Text-to-Speech is available for the Kindle Fire HDX, Kindle Fire HD, Kindle Fire, Kindle Touch, Kindle Keyboard, Kindle (2nd generation), Kindle DX, Amazon Echo, Amazon Tap, and Echo Dot

A position is described with vocal FEN, where the pieces are written and heard in plain English, while the square is given in a phonetic way, such as Alfa eight, more common than Anna eight. When only a few pieces are on the board, only their position is given. Also the FEN is available for a player who likes (and is able to) reading letter by letter.

No necessity to click on links, therefore it can be useful for any degree of visual impairment. Enjoy.

>>> **I suggest you download the free preview** and check **whether it works on YOUR device**.

If you are visually impaired and you bought the book and are not able to use it, just write me at the address at the end of the book and I will send you the HTML without images, that works everywhere on any device, with any TTS, even old.

I must thank my two blind students who gave me this idea and allowed me to use their software to produce a matrix from a visual board. And the help received by members of the British Braille Chess Association.

The price will remain promotional until I will receive a sufficient number of comments by email, to allow me to have it perfectly working. Thanks for your feedback.

To increase readability by TTS, the visual notation is modified, using the standard phonetic words used in visually impaired over-the-board and postal games as a substitute for the letters. However instead of using Anna, Bella, Cesar, the more common Alfa, Bravo, Charlie (Nato phonetic alphabet) will be used.

Below there's what you will meet, check if you can read it (and use it!):

Eighth rank: black Rook, black Knight, black Bishop, black Queen, black King, black Bishop, empty square, black Rook, slash.
Seventh rank: two black Pawns, empty square, five black Pawns,slash.
Sixth rank: two empty squares, black Pawn, two black Pawns, black Knight, two black Pawns, slash.
Fifth rank: six empty squares, white Bishop, empty square, slash.
Fourth rank: three empty squares, white Pawn, four empty squares, slash.
Third rank: four empty squares, white Pawn, three empty squares, slash.
Second rank: three white Pawns, two empty squares, three white Pawns, slash.
First rank: white Rook, white Knight, empty square, white Queen, white King, white Bishop, white Knight, white Rook, slash.

What you hear is a FEN translated vocally, with the slash at the end to mark the end of the rank. To make identification easier, the number of the rank is given at the initial position.
Think of this like a rudimentary audiobook, where you only need to start and stop, no links, no reading letter by letter nor word by word.
A suggestion I received is to scan two lines of this FEN at a time, retain in your mind the position of pieces, search them and place them on the special board. The resulting time was less than two minutes. Of course it depends on personal skill.

Sample diagram
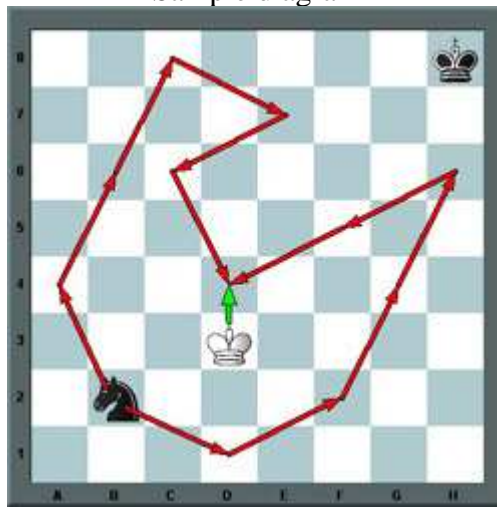
black Knight on Bravo 2, white King goes to Delta 4, black King on Hotel 8.

Knight Delta 1, Knight Foxtrot 2, Knight Golf 4, Knight Hotel 6, Knight Foxtrot 5 check.

Now, the content: Warning: this book is very boring, it is not a leisure book to simply read, but it contains a series of exercises that must be done in the sequence shown.

Are you able to see blindfold the path of a Knight located in Bravo 2 to check opponent's King in Delta 4 without passing through the squares where it could be captured by the King?

Are you able to replay the game you just played without looking at your score sheet?

A Candidate Master does that immediately, an expert can do it slowly, most intermediate players have great difficulties, a novice does not see anything.

Knowledge and skill are not synonymous, even if the first is usually an assumption to the second, but is not enough: if you still leave (or even put) a piece *en prise*, a 101st book beside the 100 you already have will not be very useful.

There's no limit to what's available to a Chess student today, you can find more than 500 Gbytes of books, in PDF or even Chessbase format, programs, hundreds of instruction movies, a jungle where the Chess student can go astray.

A large choice of chess books is available, each proposing some hundreds of sequences, and when you have finished reading them, may be you will recall three or four which struck your imagination: and over the board you will recall that in a similar position there's a winning sequence, but it does not come back to your mind. As when visiting an important Museum, at the end of your visit your mind will be confused, and you will remember just a couple of masterpieces.

Some book proposes visualization exercises without a board, some book is very easy, some is very difficult. In both cases probably you quit soon, for tedium and boredom.

Actually a correlation exists between vision and skill. The skilled player sees more and better. I remember that in the first tournament, analyzing the game with a stronger opponent, while I had problems in following the score sheet, he went on move after move without looking at his score sheet. And I already had lost some time in writing the moves, and some time wrong, so to make it difficult to replay the game. *Does this look familiar to you?*

Instead of proposing hundreds of quizzes, or of trying to have you reconstruct a position seen for a short time (I have seen a lesson where the poor student was not able to do that, while the merciless teacher did not proceed with the lesson), I will propose a progression starting from a few exercises on a real board, using a Knight; then color of squares; then the squares threatened in the opening by Knights and Bishops; some test moving a piece on an empty board; other tests where you are asked how would you move after a short initial sequence; proceeding with more difficult tasks, up to the limit of the ambitious target to play blindfold. For this latter I did not find a working method, if you do please let me know.

The question is in one page and the answer in the following.

This book is aimed to intermediate players up to class B, useful to experts only if the initial easy chapters are

skipped.

In a book by Cancellieri, 1815, he quotes Girolamo Saccheri who was able to play three games blindfold, winning, and then replay all the games, quoting that this game cannot be well played without skill and memory.
Two century ago this was a great success, later somebody was able to play dozens of game blindfold.

To do the following exercises before a tournament, means to train like a pianist doing scales before a concert.

Some link is given to do some test on Internet. They are not under our control and may become broken. Usually a Google search can help trace them.

Enjoy the book and your games.

Rodolfo Pardi, librarian, arbiter and instructor of Italian Chess Federation

This is my nineteenth chess book in English. *Please consider that this is a translation of the original version, therefore forgive the grammar and the orthography, and ask if you don't understand. But please write me about any wrong move and/or broken links, to help future readers.*

1 Preliminary exercises
knight jumps

BACK TO BASICS

This is what I teach verbally in the first lesson of my course for adults absolute beginners:
the Knight moves outwards to eight squares of different color
suppose it is on Charlie 3, a natural position
it can go to Bravo 1, Alfa 2, Alfa 4, Bravo 5, Delta 5, Echo 4, Echo 2, Delta 1.
When you are an experienced player you just see this.
the Knight moves could be seen in four different ways, chose the one that better suits you
1 Traditional, in form of an L: Charlie 3 to Delta 3 to Echo 3 to Echo 4. Three squares to visualize. Too many.
2 Outward four diagonals for one square, then horizontal or vertical. My preferred way. The easiest. Charlie 3 to Delta 4 to Echo 4.
3 Outward horizontal OR vertical one square, then diagonal one square. Charlie 3 to Delta 3 to Echo 4.
4 According to Fide laws of chess after 1 July 2014 3.6: The knight may move to one of the squares nearest to that on which it stands but not on the same rank, file or diagonal. The diagram shows the above positions.
https://www.fide.com/fide/handbook.html?id=171&view=article
Now you increase your efficiency by choosing the method that better suits you and makes you not waste precious thinking time.
Try them, and find what's the best for you. Check with your friends, people are not aware they can see (in their mind) many different ways to go to the destination square.

After choosing your method, please try the complete Knight tour in the following pages.

Diagram 1.1 Knight jump
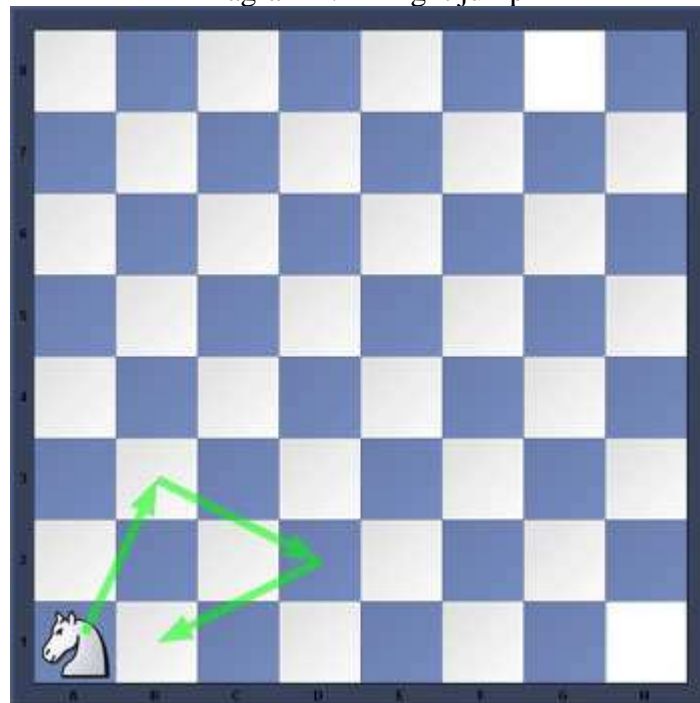
Initial Knight position is Alfa 1.

On an empty chessboard (it could be the above diagram on your Kindle), put a Knight on Alfa 1. Move the Knight to go to Bravo 1.

Solution is Knight Alfa 1, Knight Bravo 3, Knight Delta 2, Knight Bravo 1.

An additional example in the following page.

Diagram 1.2 Night jump

Initial Knight position is Alfa 1.

Solution is Knight Alfa 1, Knight Charlie 2, Knight Alfa 3, Knight Bravo 1.

Knight tour

Try the following with the help of a friend who moves the pieces, and corrects your possible mistakes. This will be a reference to compare with what you will be able to do after the visualization course. You will be surprised.

A blind person might save time by making a tape recording of his voice announcing the sequences of squares (so don't bother with a board at all and not necessary for a sighted person to make moves) we then check whether the blind player has made any mistakes by replaying the recording.

Now, bringing back the Knight to Alfa 1 each time, go to all the squares, counterclockwise and spiral wise. That is
Like this: Knight from Alfa 1 to Bravo 1, Knight from Alfa 1 to Charlie 1, Knight from Alfa 1 to Delta 1 and so on, reaching all external square up to Knight from Alfa 1 to Alfa 3, Knight from Alfa 1 to Alfa 2.
Next you walk all internal squares: Knight from Alfa 1 to Bravo 2, Knight from Alfa 1 to Charlie 2, and so on until you covered all the squares, up to the central squares.
Do not try to find all the possible ways to reach a square, one is enough.
Note your TIME, using the features of your Kindle to create a note, for comparison next time.

To an absolute beginner it takes more than one hour, after some exercise one reaches 15 minutes, after a couple of months it could take you 5 minutes. Below this you have to be well trained.

You should aim to do the complete tour in less than three minutes.
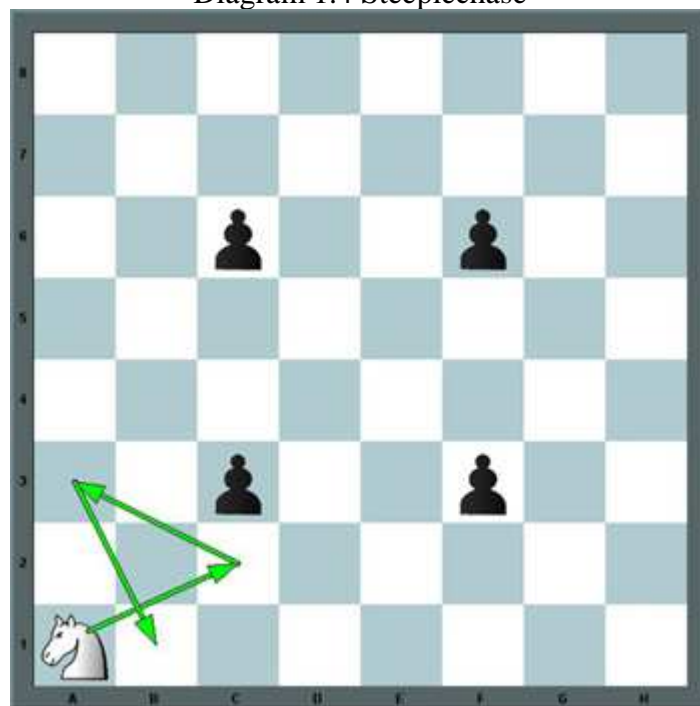
Diagram 1.3 Steeplechase
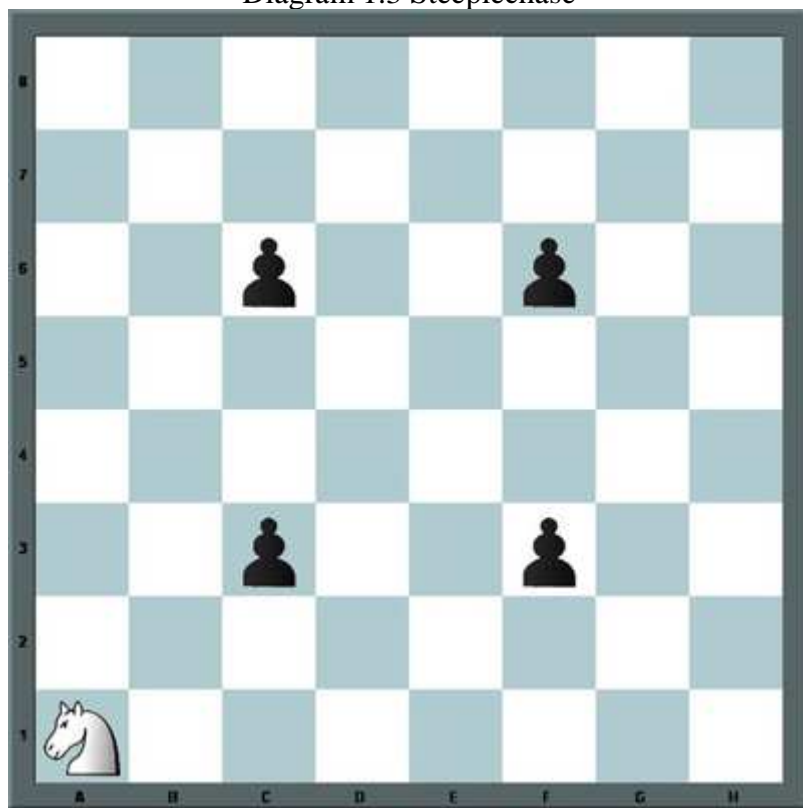
White Knight on Alfa 1 and black Pawns on Charlie 3, Charlie 6, Foxtrot 3, Foxtrot 6.

Next, put on the board four Black's pawns as shown, which forbid access to 8 threatened squares. Do again the Knight's tour, avoiding landing on the squares where you would be captured (and also avoid to capture a pawn, like a student did).
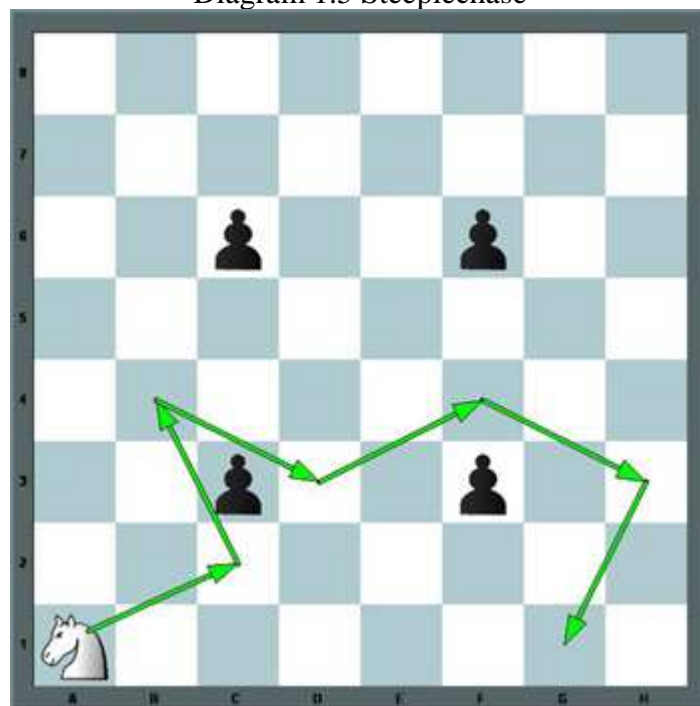
Note your TIME. Examples in the following page.

Diagram 1.4 Steeplechase

Knight Alfa 1 must go to Bravo 1

Solution is Knight Alfa 1, Knight Charlie 2, Knight Alfa 3, Knight Bravo 1.

Diagram 1.5 Steeplechase

Knight Alfa 1 must go to Golf 1

Solution is Knight Alfa 1, Knight Charlie 2, Knight Bravo4, Knight Delta 3, Knight Foxtrot 4, Knight Hotel 3, Knight Golf 1.

   In the last example, it might help to know that you must reach Hotel 3 before Golf 1.
If you feel like, try blind, without a board, a CM is able to do that.

2 Color of squares

Now put the board aside, and try to guess the color of squares.

In the past, you cut 64 cardboards, like a deck of playing cards, identifying one side with the coordinate and the other side with the color. Shuffle, take card, name the color, and turn to verify.
Nowadays an Internet site is proposing the exercise also noting the time: **Chess Colors Speed Quiz**
https://www.chessvideos.tv/chess-visualizer-square-colors.php
Another: **Guess the Square Quiz - Hard** http://chessagora.com/squarequiz. You have 60 seconds to guess correctly the color of as many squares as you can.

No Internet connection? Try the following: Bravo 7, Foxtrot 2, Hotel 5, Alfa 4, Foxtrot 6. Note your time.

The diagram on next page will aid in checking the solution.

A hint to make that faster and rank better: think of numbers when considering files, Alfa, Charlie, Echo, Golf are odd while Bravo, Delta, Foxtrot, Hotel are even. If the sum of rank and file is even, the square is black, so for Foxtrot 4: 6 + 2 = 8, then black.

But this is not the purpose of the exercise, you should reach a better visualization, you should SEE the square. So for example look to the Queen's Bishop, Charlie 1, black square. So is Delta 2, unpinning Knight on Charlie 3. So is Echo 3, opening position. So is Foxtrot 4, London opening, aiming at Charlie 7. Black. Try to see that.

3 Evaluation test

Over the board you need to evaluate candidate moves without taking notes. The capability to visualize the positions is of the greatest importance, and it can be increased with proper exercises.

TEST A

Note your answers to the following questions:

1, Color of Bravo 6?
2, Color of Golf 6?
3, How can a Knight reach Bravo 6 starting from Golf 4?
4, All the shortest routes to move a Knight from Delta 4 to Alfa 8.
Answers on the following page.

1 black
2 white
3 it cannot
4 1 Knight Delta 4 - Echo 6 - Charlie 7 - Alfa 8 2 Knight Delta 4 - Bravo 5 - Charlie 7 - Alfa 8
If you did not correctly answer all 4 questions, your level is beginner. Otherwise do the next test.

1
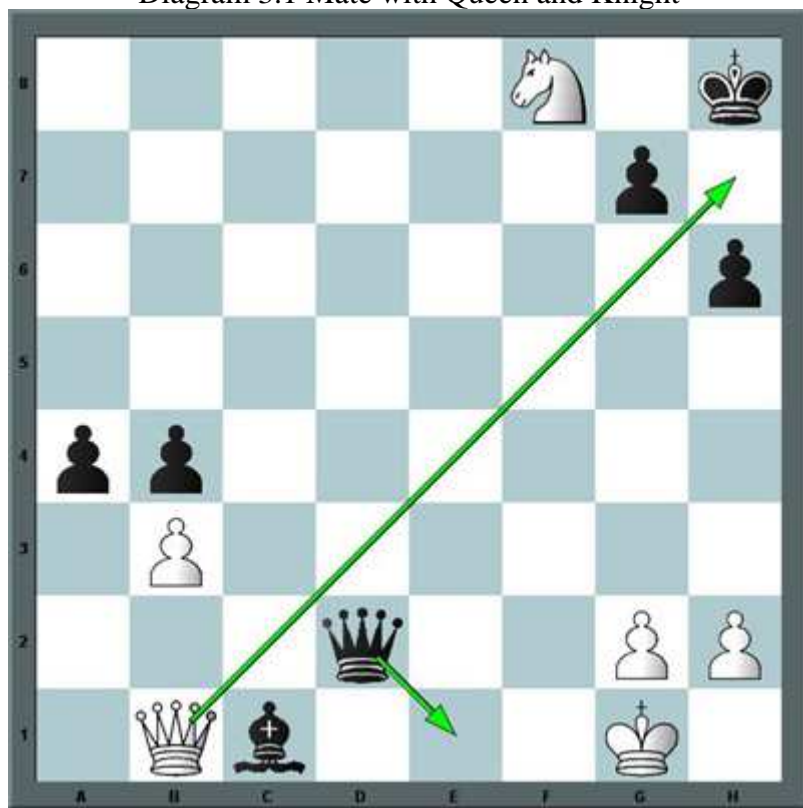White: King Golf 1, Queen Bravo 1, Knight Foxtrot 8, Pawns: Bravo 3, Golf 2, Hotel 2,
Black: King Hotel8, Queen Delta 2, Bishop Charlie 1, Pawns: Alfa 4, Bravo4, Golf 7, Hotel 6,
White to move
Alternative test, Black to move
Solution next page.

Diagram 3.1 Mate with Queen and Knight

FEN: 5N1k / 6p1 / 7p / 8 / pp6 / 1P6 / 3q2PP / 1Qb3K1 /

Eighth rank: five empty squares, white Knight, empty square, black King, slash.
Seventh rank: six empty squares, black Pawn, empty square, slash.
Sixth rank: seven empty squares, black Pawn, slash.
Fifth rank: eight empty squares, slash.
Fourth rank: two black Pawns, six empty squares, slash
Third rank: empty square, white pawn, six empty squares, slash.
Second rank: three empty squares, black Queen, two empty squares, two white Pawns, slash.
First rank: empty squares, white Queen, black Bishop, three empty squares, white King, empty square, slash.

If White to move: Queen h7 mate .
If Black to move: Queen e1 mate .

Initial position. After 1. Echo 4 Charlie 6, 2. Delta 4 Delta 5, 3. Knight Charlie 3 Delta takes Echo e4, 4. Knight takes Echo 4 Knight Delta 7, 5. Queen Echo 2 Knight Golf Foxtrot 6

Best move for White.

Solution next page.

Diagram 3.2 Smothered mate

FEN: r1bqkb1r / pp1npppp / 2p2n2 / 8 / 3PN3 / 8 / PPP1QPPP / R1B1KBNR /

Eighth rank: black Rook, empty square, black Bishop, black Queen, black King, black Bishop, empty square, black Rook, slash

Seventh rank: two black Pawns, empty square, black Knight, four black Pawns, slash.

Sixth rank: two empty squares, black Pawn, two empty squares, black Knight, two empty squares, slash.

Fifth rank: eight empty squares, slash.

Fourth rank: three empty squares, white Pawn, white Knight, three empty squares, slash.

Third rank: eight empty squares, slash.

Second rank: three white Pawns, empty square, white Queen, three white Pawns, slash.

First rank: white Rook, empty square, white Bishop, empty square, white King, white Bishop, white Knight, white Rook, slash.

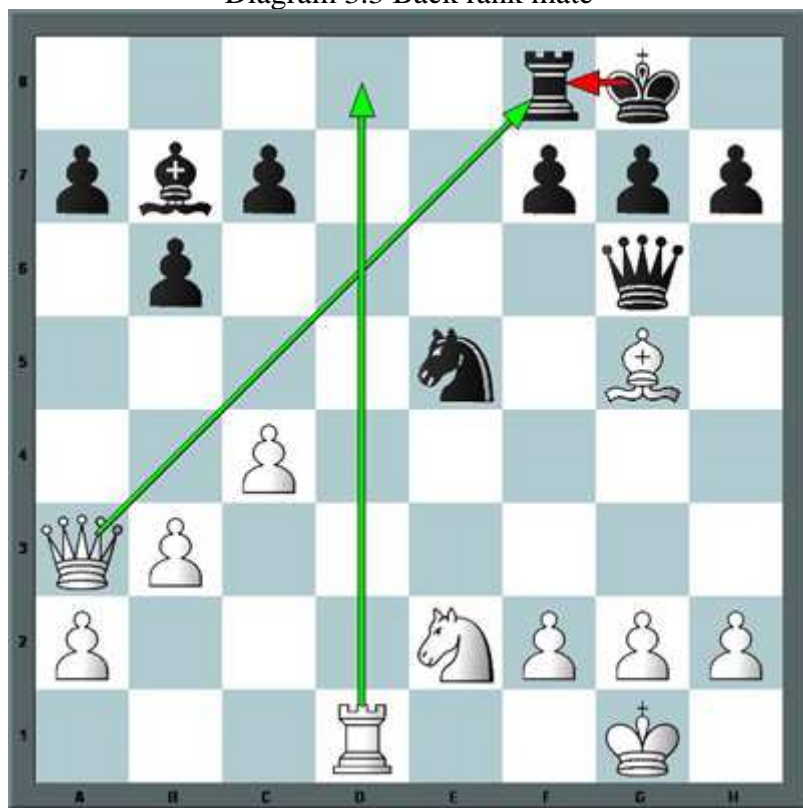Knight d6 mate (Smothered mate)

3

White: King Golf 1, Queen Alfa 3, Rook Delta 1, Bishop Golf 5, Knight Echo 2, Pawns: Alfa 2, Bravo 3, Charlie 4, Foxtrot 2, Golf 2, Hotel 2

Black: King Golf 8, Queen Golf 6, Rook f8, Bishop Bravo 7, Knight Echo 5 Pawns: Alfa 7, Bravo 6, Charlie 7, Foxtrot 7, Golf 7, Hotel 7

White to move. What?

Solution next page.

Diagram 3.3 Back rank mate

FEN: 5rk1 / pbp2ppp / 1p4q1 / 4n1B1 / 2P5 / QP6 / P3NPPP / 3R2K1 /

Eighth rank: five empty squares, black Rook, black King, empty square, slash.
Seventh rank: black Pawn, black Bishop, black Pawn, two empty squares, three black Pawns, slash.
Sixth rank: empty square, black Pawn, four empty squares, black Queen, empty square, slash.
Fifth rank: four empty squares, black Knight, empty square, white Bishop, empty square, slash.
Fourth rank: two empty squares, white Pawn, five empty squares, slash.
Third rank: white Queen, white Pawn, six empty squares, slash.
Second rank: white Pawn,three empty squares, white Knight, three white Pawns, slash.
First rank: three empty squares, white Rook, two empty squares, white King, empty square, slash.

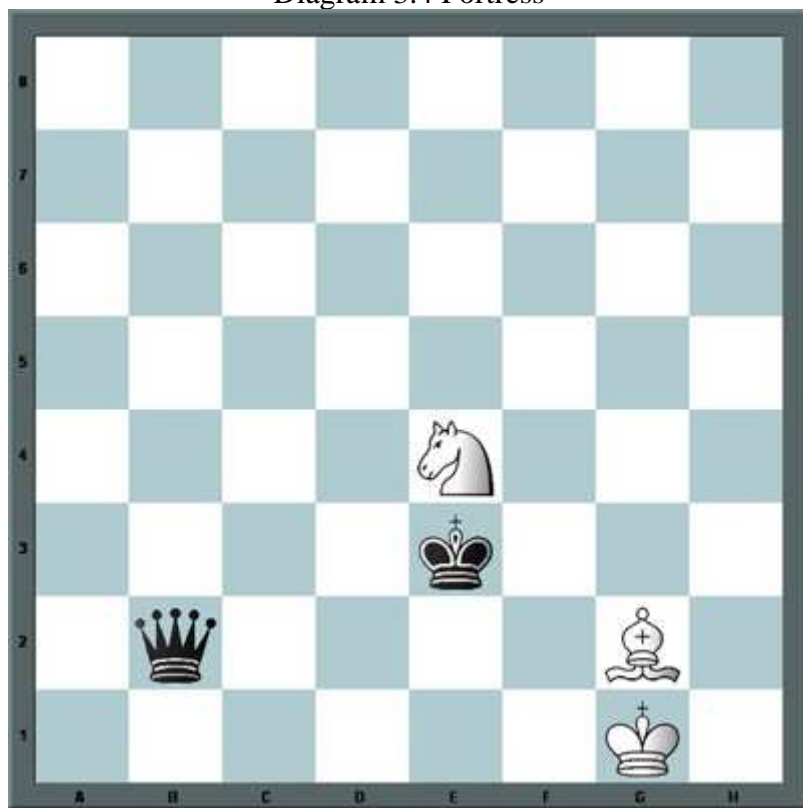Queen Foxtrot 8 check, King takes Foxtrot 8, Rook Delta 8 mate.

4
White: King Golf 1, Bishop g2, Knight Echo 4
Black: King Echo 3, Queen Bravo 2
Black to move. Can he win? Which way?

Diagram 3.4 Fortress

White King on Golf 1, Bishop on g2, Knight on Echo 4 / Black Queen on Bravo 2, King on Echo 3

Black cannot win, as his King is not able to enter in the corner to help his Queen. White simply moves his King to the corner. A typical pattern, a fortress.

If you did not answer all the questions your level is intermediate, and should begin a visualization training.

    If you did answer all the questions, your visualization capability is good, and you could improve your skill with advanced exercises.
- Take books about tactics. Look sometime at a diagram to memorize the position. Solve then the combination for all candidate moves and opponent's replies.
- Go through a game without looking at the board.
- Play a game with a friend. If he's weaker than you, he should play at the board naming his moves, and you should reply without looking at the board.
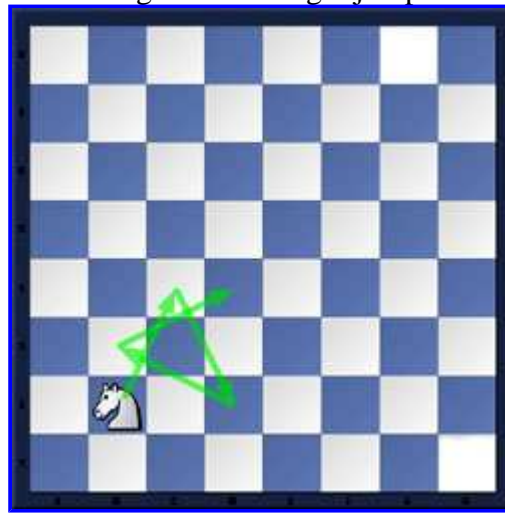
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4 Knight jumps

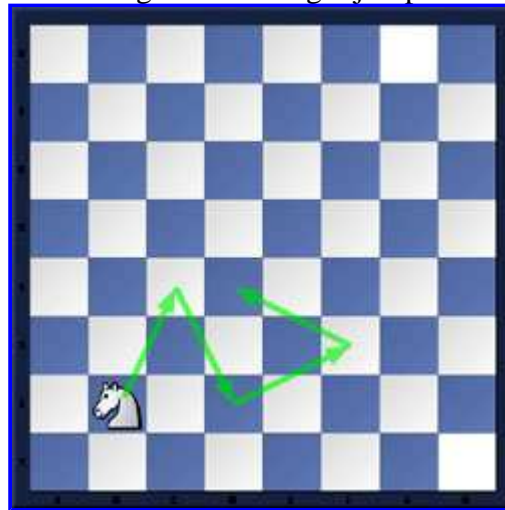Knight in Bravo 2 must go to Delta 4. All the ways. Note the time.
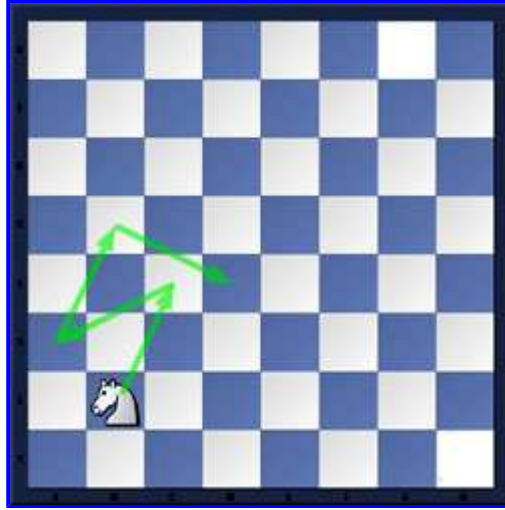
Diagram 4.1 Knight jumps
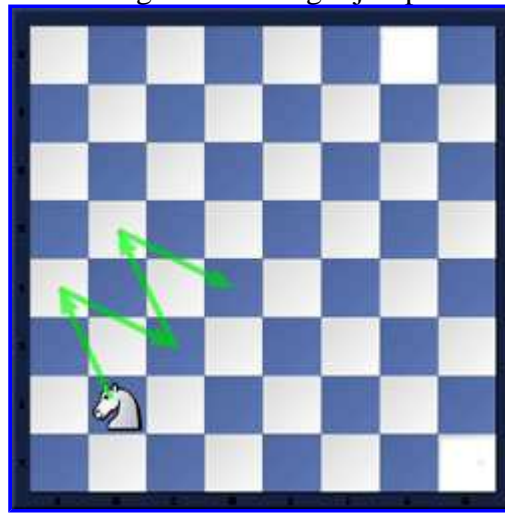
Knight Bravo 2, Knight Alfa 4, Knight Charlie 3, Knight Bravo 5, Knight Echo 4

Diagram 4.2 Knight jumps

Knight Bravo 2, Knight Charlie 4, Knight Delta 2, Knight Bravo 3, Knight Echo 4

Diagram 4.3 Knight jumps

Knight Bravo 2, Knight Charlie 4, Knight Delta 2, Knight Foxtrot 3, Knight Echo 4

Diagram 4.4 Knight jumps

Knight Bravo 2, Knight Charlie 4, Knight Alfa 3, Knight Bravo 5, Knight Alfa 8, Knight Charlie 6, Knight Bravo 5, These diagrams show how the Knight on Bravo 2 can reach Echo e4

Steeplechase. Knight still in Bravo 2, must check opponent's King in Delta 4, without passing near the King where he would be captured. At least two paths..
Note the time

Diagram 4.5 Solution

White Knight on Bravo 2, black King on Delta 4, white King on Hotel 1

Knight Bravo 2, Knight Delta 1, Knight f2, Knight h3, Knight f4, Knight Echo 6 check

Knight Bravo 2, Knight Alfa 4, Knight Bravo 6, Knight Alfa 8, Knight Charlie 6, Knight Bravo 5 check

Besides an increase of visualization capability, remembering this pattern, Knight vs. King, where the Knight must make 5 moves to check, can help you in an endgame to properly place your King, to gain many precious tempi.

5 Training

The sequence is: seeing the board, the pieces placement, and the solution of simple positions, by reading the position only. It will take a long time, but few minutes a week are enough.

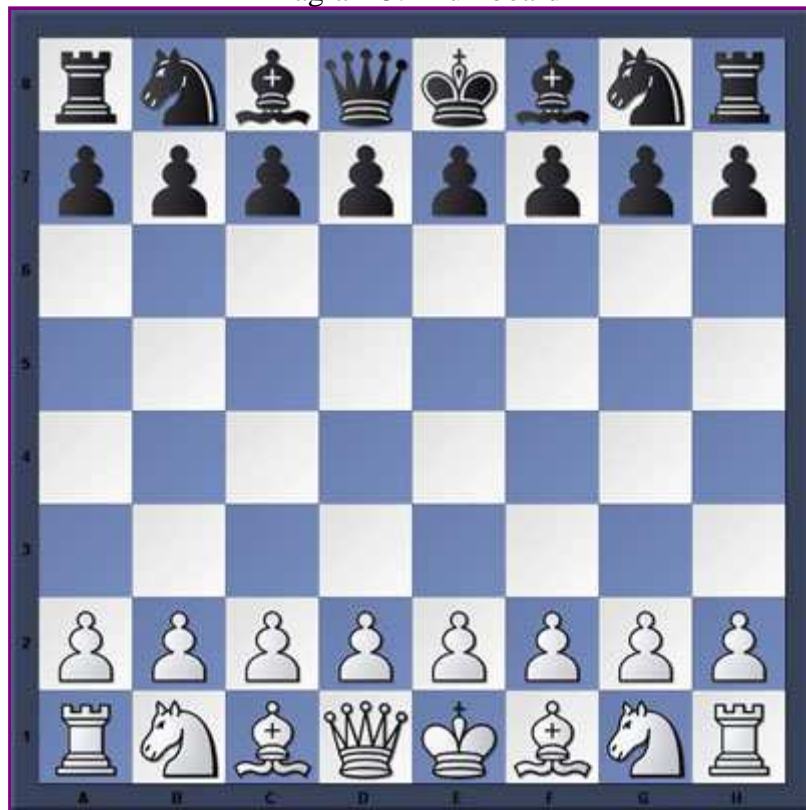It's not possible to accelerate the process, as the mind must be accustomed.

Training could be three or four sessions a week, each 5-10 minutes long.

Note your answers, and at he end of the session check them looking at the chessboard.

It's no use to accelerate, as the mind needs time to see the board, piece movement, and tactical cooperation among pieces.

Diagram 5.1 Full board

FEN: rnbqkbnr / pppppppp / 8 / 8 / 8 / 8/ PPPPPPPP / RNBQKBNR<

Eighth rank: black Rook, black Knight, black Bishop, black Queen, black King, black Bishop, black Knight, black Rook, slash.
Seventh rank: eight black Pawns,slash.
Sixth rank: eight empty squares, slash.
Fifth rank: eight empty squares, slash.
Fourth rank: eight empty squares, slash.
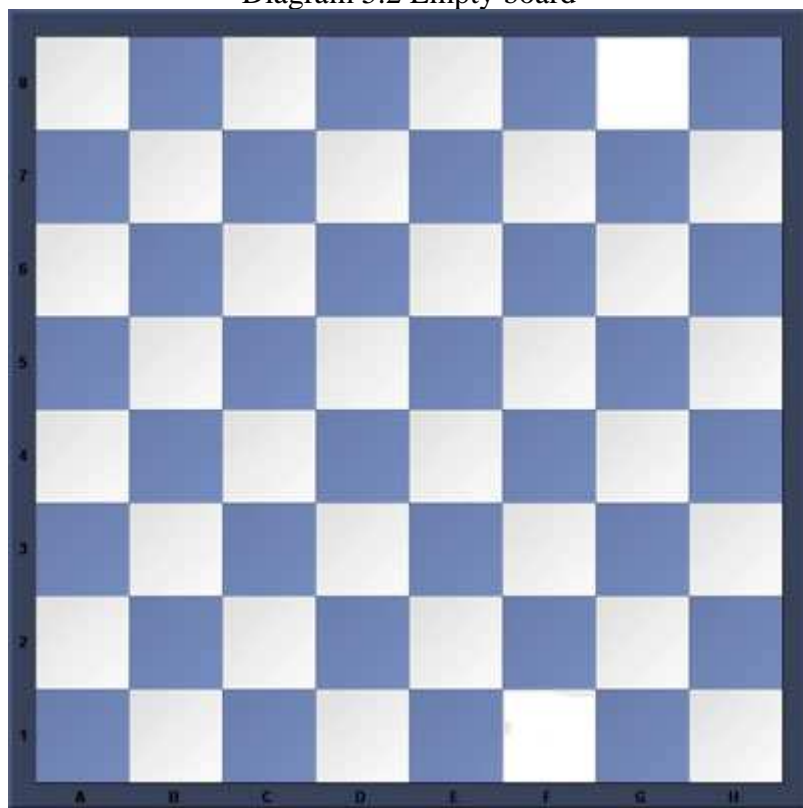Third rank: eight empty squares, slash.
Second rank: eight white Pawns, slash.
First rank: white Rook, white Knight, white Bishop, white Queen, white King, white Bishop, white Knight, white Rook, slash.

Initial position on the board, look at the normal development squares without moving the pieces:
- Charlie 3 and Foxtrot 3 are for White's Knights
- Charlie 6 and Foxtrot 6 are for Black's Knights
- Echo 2, Delta 3, Charlie 4, Bravo 5 are for White's white Bishop
- Golf 2, Bravo 2, Golf 7, Bravo 7 are for fianchetto Bishops
- Golf 1 is the destination square of White's King when castling on the Kingside. Look later at the square when castling on the Queenside, later for Black's King. Look the at the destination squares of Rooks after castling.

Diagram 5.2 Empty board

FEN: 8 / 8 / 8 / 8 / 8 / 8/ 8 / 8/

Eighth rank: eight empty squares, slash.
Seventh rank: eight empty squares, slash.
Sixth rank: eight empty squares, slash.
Fifth rank: eight empty squares, slash.
Fourth rank: eight empty squares, slash.
Third rank: eight empty squares, slash.
Second rank: eight empty squares, slash.
First rank: eight empty squares, slash.

Now take away all the pieces from the board, and try to visualize again the development squares looking simply at the empty board.

Now complete the exercise without looking at a board, naming all the development squares, Knights, Bishops, castling, fianchetto.
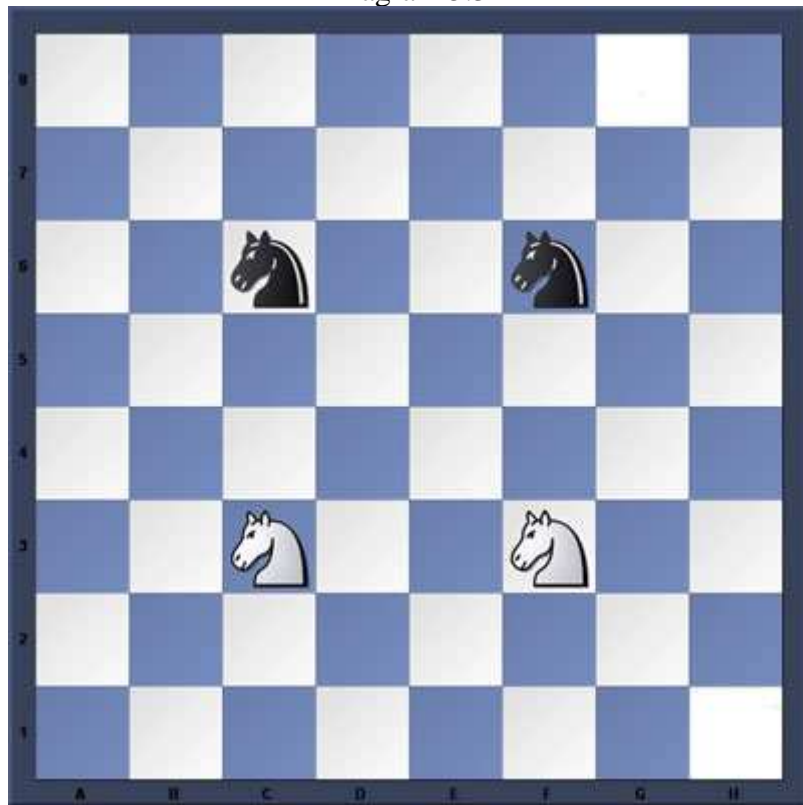
Without looking at a board:
- name the squares of Kings and Rooks after castling.
- name the normal developing squares of Bishops
- name the normal developing squares of Bishops
- name the four developing squares of fianchettoing Bishops.

Diagram 5.3

White Knights on Charlie 3 and Foxtrot 3, black Knights on Charlie 6 and Foxtrot 6

Looking at the chessboard, look at all the squares controlled by:
- Knight on Foxtrot 3
- Knight on Charlie 3
- Knight on Foxtrot 6
- Knight on Charlie 6

After that, without looking at the chessboard, name all the squares controlled by the four Knights in the diagram above (8 squares each).

To help you remember, a Knight controls 8 squares of different color.

A hint, in case of Knight f3 (white square) look for typical moves to black squares:
Knight Foxtrot 3 Golf 1 back to initial square
Knight Foxtrot 3 Hotel 2 to protect the pawn after castling.
Knight Foxtrot 3 Hotel 4 Knight on the rim
Knight Foxtrot 3 Golf 5 attacking Hotel 7 in Greek gift
Knight Foxtrot 3 Echo 5 capture pawn in Petroff
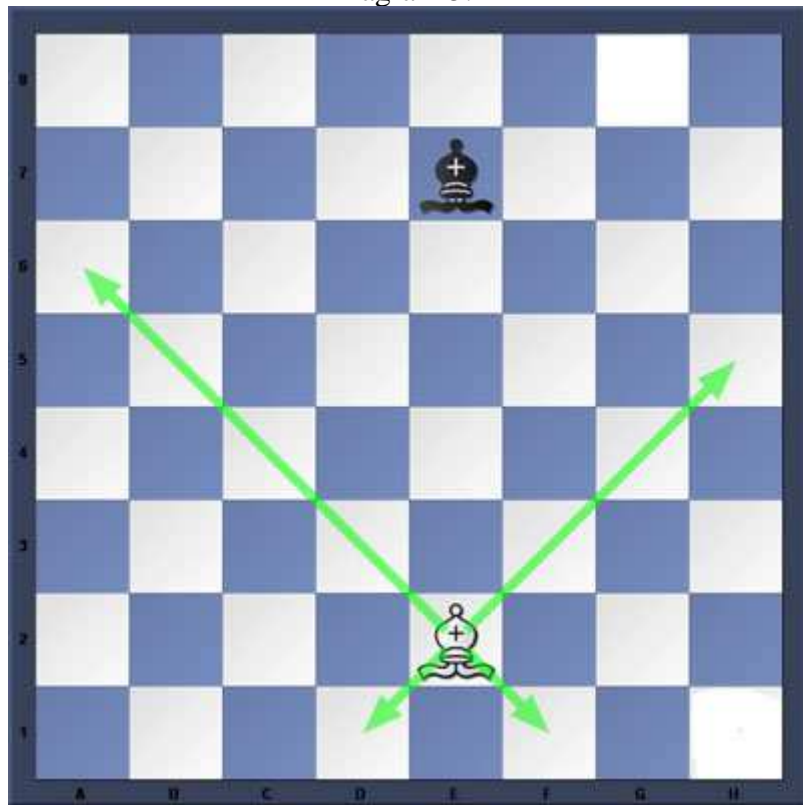Knight Foxtrot 3 Delta 4
Knight Foxtrot 3 Delta 2
Knight Foxtrot 3 Echo 1 protect back rank

The same for the other Knights

Diagram 5.4

White Bishop on Echo 2, black Bishop on Echo 7
What is Bishop Echo 2 controlling?

Looking at the chessboard, look at all the squares controlled by:
- Bishop on Echo 2
- Bishop on Delta 3, Charlie 4, Bravo 5
- Bishop on Echo 7
- Bishop on Delta 6, Charlie 5, Bravo 4
- the same for the remaining Bishops

Without looking at the chessboard, name all the squares controlled by the four Bishops, developed as before, at a distance of 1, 2, 3and 4 squares from initial positions.

Fifth series
squares controlled by Bishops

All the following exercises without chessboard.

Look at all the squares controlled by:
- Bishop on Golf 7
First consider the diagonal Alfa 1 - Hotel 8, then the other diagonal Foxtrot 8 - Hotel 6, imagine a board in your mind, and move theoretically the Bishop *seeing* the destination squares. Repeat this technique for all exercises with a Bishop.
- Bishop on Golf 2
- Bishop on Charlie 4
- Bishop on Echo 5
- Bishop on Charlie 3
- Bishop on Bravo 7

Sixth series
squares controlled by Bishops

Look at all the squares controlled by:
- Bishop on Bravo 7
- Bishop on Bravo 2
- Bishop on Hotel5
- Bishop on Alfa 4
- Bishop on Foxtrot 4
- Bishop on Delta 4

Somewhat harder, look at all the squares controlled by:
- Knight on Charlie3
Use your common method to make a Knight move: if you first move diagonally, see it going up to Bravo 4, and then horizontally to a4 (one file less and the same rank) and then vertically to Bravo 5 (same file and one additional rank)
If you move first horizontally, see it going laterally to Bravo 3, and then diagonally to Alfa 2 (one file less and one rank less) and the to Alfa 4 (one file less and one rank more). Repeat this technique for all exercises with a Knight.
- Knight on Echo 4
- Knight on Foxtrot 6
- Knight on Delta 2

Eighth series
squares controlled by Knights

Look at all the squares controlled by:
- Knight on Foxtrot 3
- Knight on Charlie 6
- Knight on Charlie 5
- Knight on Bravo 2
- Knight on Hotel 7

Ninth series
squares controlled by Knights and Bishops

Look at all the squares controlled by:
- Knight on Charlie 6 and Bishop on Golf 3
- Knight on Foxtrot 3 and Bishop on Golf 2
- Knight on Delta 7 and Bishop on Delta 2
- two Knights on Foxtrot Foxtrot 6 and Golf 6

Look at all the squares controlled by:
- Knight on Charlie 6 and Bishop on Golf 3
- Knight on Foxtrot 3 and Bishop on Golf 2
- Knight on Delta 7 and Bishop on Delta 2
- two Knights on Foxtrot Foxtrot 6 and Golf 6

Without looking at the chessboards, tell:
- how a White's Rook on Charlie 1 can threaten a Knight on Foxtrot 6 (both ways)
- how a Black's Rook on Hotel 8 can threaten a White's Knight on Foxtrot 3
- how a White's Rook on Golf5 can defend a White's Knight on Hotel 6
- how a Black's Rook on Charlie 8 can defend a Black's Bishop on Golf 7
- how a White's Rook on Delta 1 can check Black's King on Golf 8
- how a Black's Rook on Echo 5 can defend a Black's Queen on Charlie 4
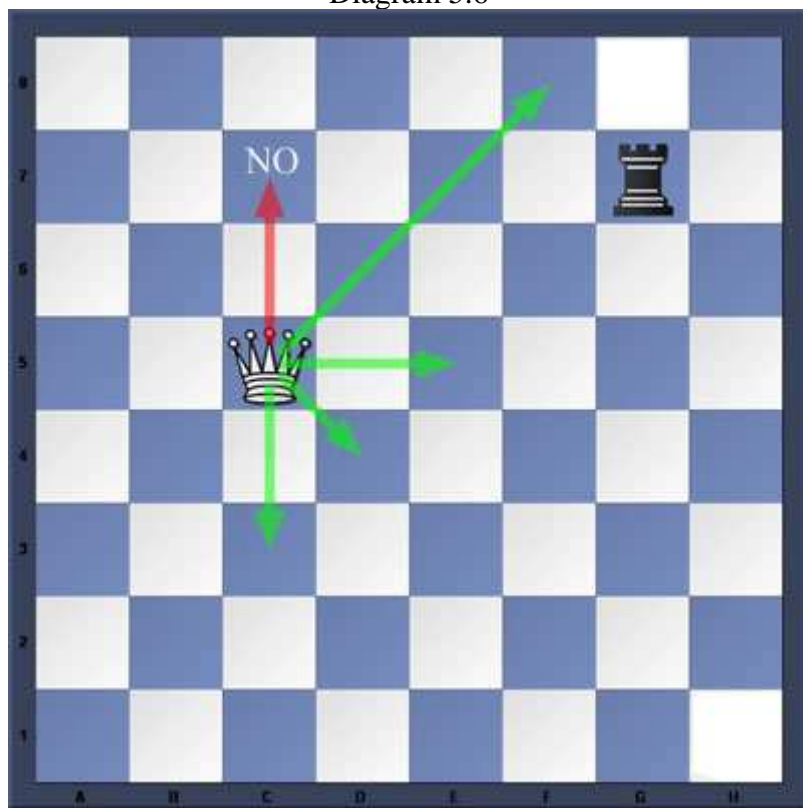
Diagram 5.5
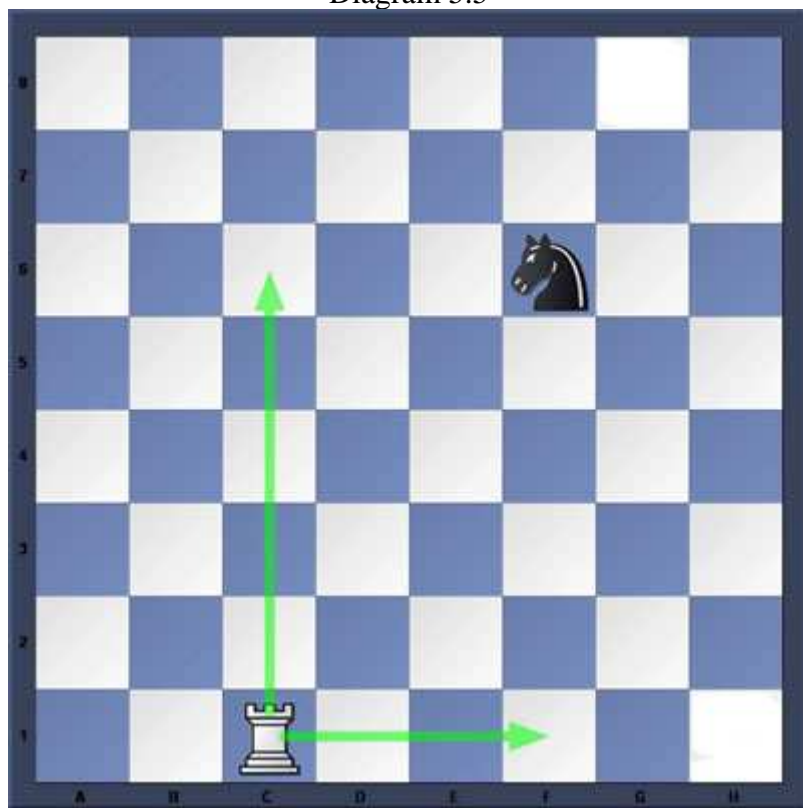
White Rook on Charlie 1, black Knight on f6, Rook attacks Charlie 6 and f3

In all the following exercises, the attacking piece must move without being captured:
Which way White's Queen on Charlie 5 can attack a Rook on Golf 7? All the ways!

Diagram 5.6

White Queen on Charlie 5, black Rook on g7

Answer: Charlie 3, Delta 4, Echo 5, f8. Squares controlled by Black's Rook must be avoided, Charlie 7 for example.

- How can White's Queen on Delta 1 attack Black's Rook on Golf 7
- How can Black's Queen on Charlie 3 attack White's Rook on Foxtrot 1
- How can White's Queen on Delta 3 attack Black's Rook on Echo 8
- How can White's Queen in initial position attack a Black's Rook on Alfa 8, and later on Hotel 8

Twelfth series
attacks by the Queen

- How can White's Queen on Delta 1 attack Black's Bishop on Golf 7
- How can Black's Queen on Delta 4 attack White's Bishop on Bravo 7
- How can Black's Queen on Bravo 6 attack White's Bishop on Golf 2
- How can White's Queen on Charlie 2 attack Black's Bishop on Hotel 6
- How can White's Queen on Bravo 1 attack Black's Bishop on Foxtrot 3
- How can Black's Queen on Golf 6 attack White's Bishop on Bravo 5
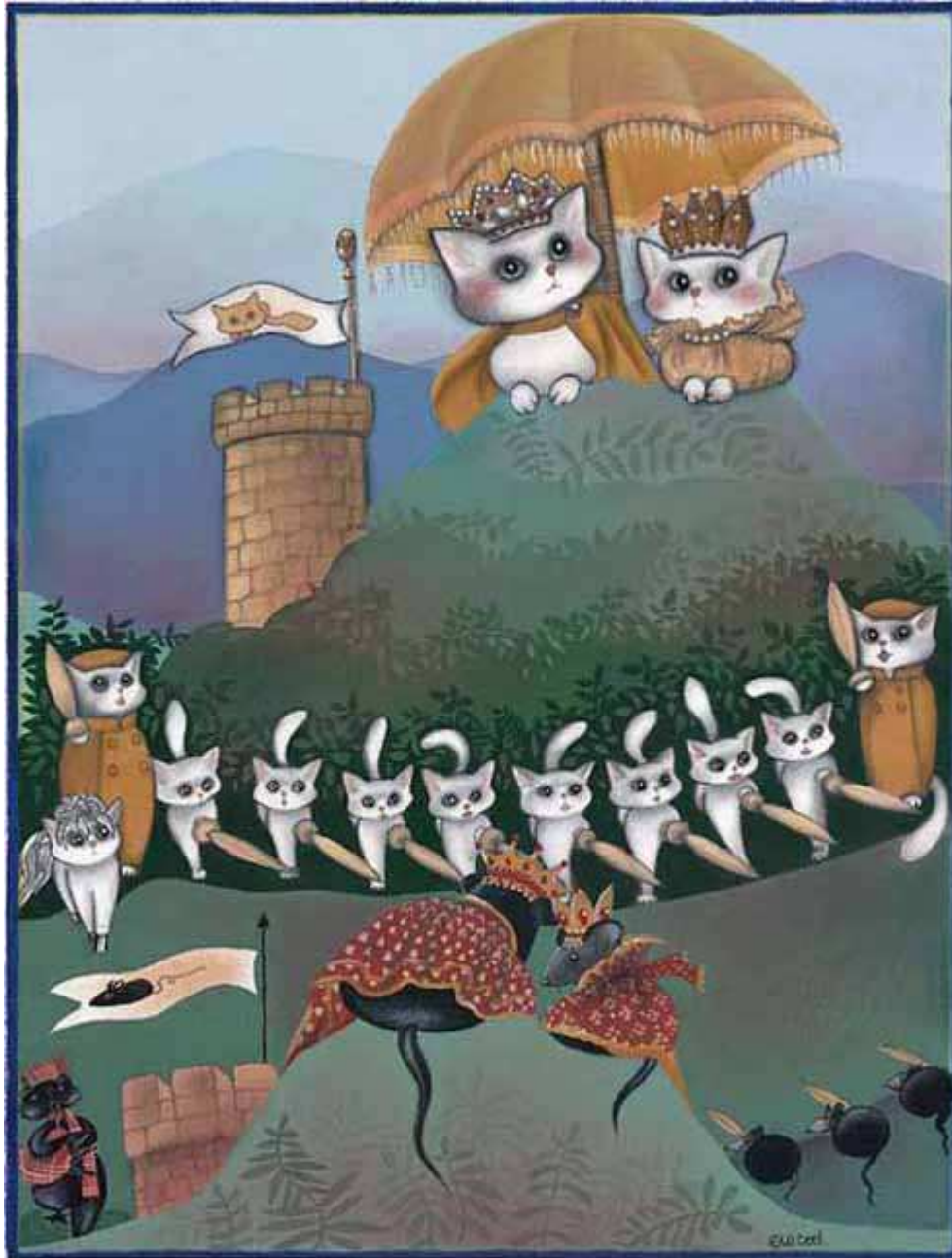
6 Blindfold

Here we stop. If you had the constancy to reach here, you should have got a better visualization capability: repeat the initial exercises of Knight jumps starting from Alfa 1, with and without obstacles, and compare the time you annotated. In a tournament, writing the moves on your score sheet should be faster and nearly error free.
You should be capable to play some move blindfold.

Searching books and Internet I did not find a valid method to play blindfold, however the training of these chapters should help to better naturally your capacity. Are you aware of the methods to have a better memory using associations, that let you repeat long series of numbers in the correct sequence? Completely artificial methods, they work, but just tricks, of no use here.

Diagram 6.1
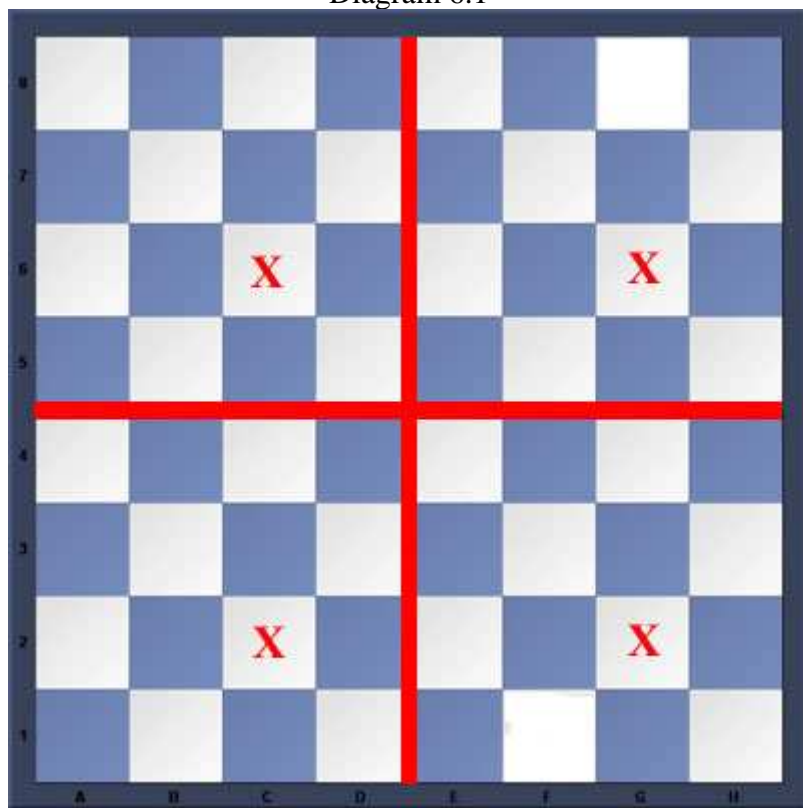
In our case instead, the identification of squares color might be made easier by dividing the board in four parts, and considering that the four 4 x 4 groups are equals, so if we consider Charlie 2, white, then Charlie 6, Golf 2, Golf 6 will have the same color.

Personally to train I do prefer a more complete vision, and identify diagonals: squares from Alfa 1 to Hotel 8 are all black (Alfa 1, Bravo 2, Charlie 3, Delta 4, Echo 5, Foxtrot6, Golf 7, Hotel 8). Upper (Alfa 2 - Golf 8) and below (Bravo 1 - Hotel 7 diagonals are obviously white.

Considering the crossing diagonal, Alfa 8 - Hotel 1, all the squares are white (Alfa 8, Bravo 7, Charlie 6, Delta 5, Echo 4, Foxtrot3, Golf 2, Hotel 1).
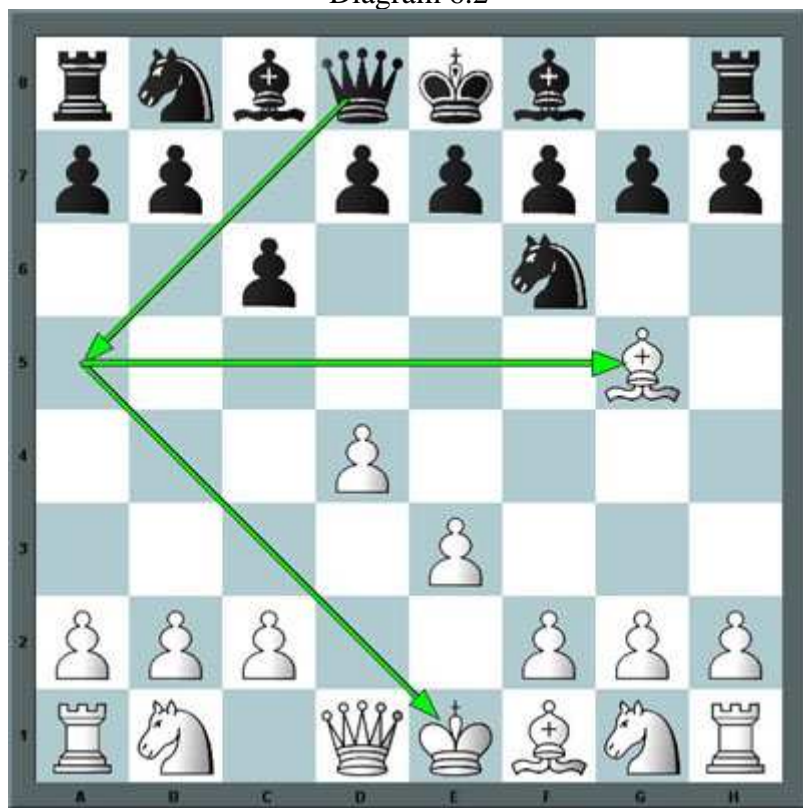
Then get fixed references for moves that occur frequently, Echo 4 white, Echo 5 black (opponent's reply), f7 white (target of White's light square Bishop). Obviously Echo 1 (White's King initial position) is black, and near Bishop on Foxtrot 1 is white (going to attack Foxtrot 7 white) and will fianchetto on Golf 2, obviously white.

I would try to localize mentally piece position, not to simply remember mechanically squares color, like tables.

An exercise:
1. Delta 4 Knight Foxtrot6, 2. Bishop Golf 5 (Trompowsky) **Charlie 6** (similar to Charlie 3 Ponziani) **3. Echo 3?**. What is your move? obviously without a board.

Diagram 6.2

FEN: rnbqka1r / pp1ppppp / 2p2n2 / 6B1 / 3P4 / 4P3 / PPP2PPP / RN1QKBNR

Eighth rank: black Rook, black Knight, black Bishop, black Queen, black King, black Bishop, empty square, black Rook, slash.
Seventh rank: two black Pawns, empty square, five black Pawns,slash.
Sixth rank: two empty squares, black Pawn, two black Pawns, black Knight, two black Pawns, slash.
Fifth rank: six empty squares, white Bishop, empty square, slash.
Fourth rank: three empty squares, white Pawn, four empty squares, slash.
Third rank: four empty squares, white Pawn, three empty squares, slash.
Second rank: three white Pawns, two empty squares, three white Pawns, slash.
First rank: white Rook, white Knight, empty square, white Queen, white King, white Bishop, white Knight, white Rook, slash.

Queen Alfa 5 check , double attack, gaining the Bishop. Do not try it, it's simply an opening trap.

7 With chessboard

By the word "Visualization" we intend two different things: the vision of actual positions **without** the help of a chessboard, blindfold, what covered till now, and the vision of future positions **with** a chessboard, for example by analyzing variants or sequences, obviously without moving the pieces.

The latter is a skill to improve, otherwise in difficult and complex positions you will not be sure of the best move among the candidate moves.

Everybody has a limit concerning the number of plies that he has the capability to see, let's say that 4 is an absolute minimum to play and enjoy a chess game, and a greater number is necessary to progress.

For the student who really wants to get better, with perseverance and constancy, I suggest the two dedicated books by Jan Andersen (reference in Bibliography), with thousands of commented exercises from real games, organized according to ply number, from a few to really many.

Some example follows.

Move mentally, considering which pieces are on the board, their position, and the material balance (difference between white and black pieces) Visualize the final position, and the answer the questions (White to move). Write down the answer. Indicate also how clearly you see the position (1 if clearly, 2 if you see most of details, 3 if you don't see it at all).

There's a barrier in the number of plies you can see, if exceeded you are not able to correctly visualize the final position.
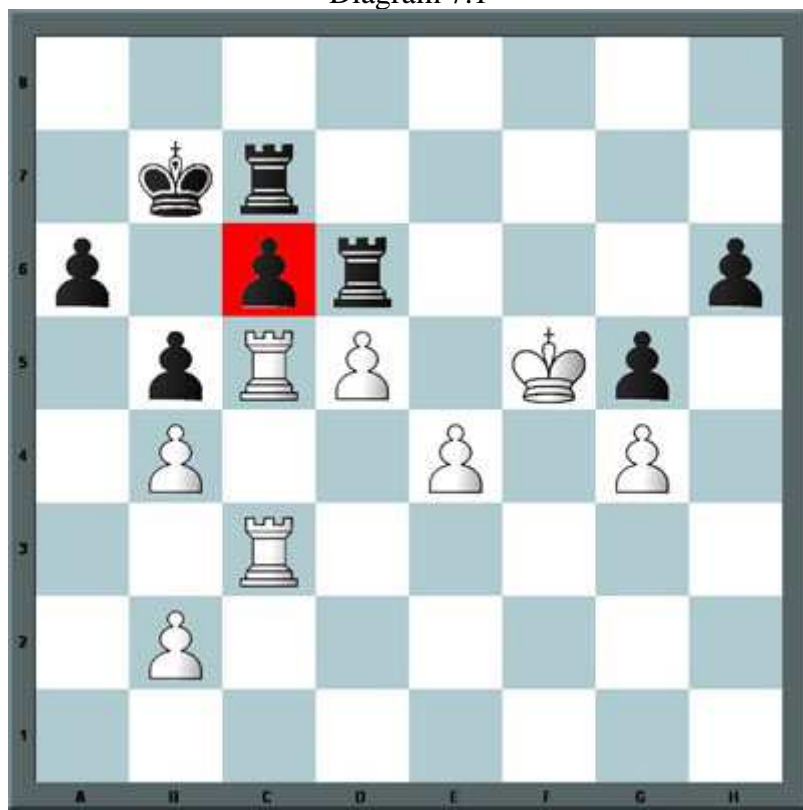
There are three methods to get better:
Brute force: exercises of the same length as the barrier
Consolidation: exercises slightly shorter then the barrier
Stretching: exercises slightly longer then the barrier.

Diagram 7.1

FEN: 8 / 1kr5 / p1pr3p / 1pRP1Kp1 / 1P2P12P1 / 2R5 / 1P6 / 8 /

Eighth rank: eight empty squares, slash.

Seventh rank: empty square, black King, black Rook, five empty squares, slash.

Sixth rank: black Pawn, empty square, black Pawn, black Rook, three empty squares, black Pawn, slash.

Fifth rank: empty square, black Pawn, white Rook, white Pawn, empty square, white King, black Pawn, empty square, slash.

Fourth rank: empty square, white Pawn, two empty squares, white Pawn, empty square, white Pawn, empty square, slash.

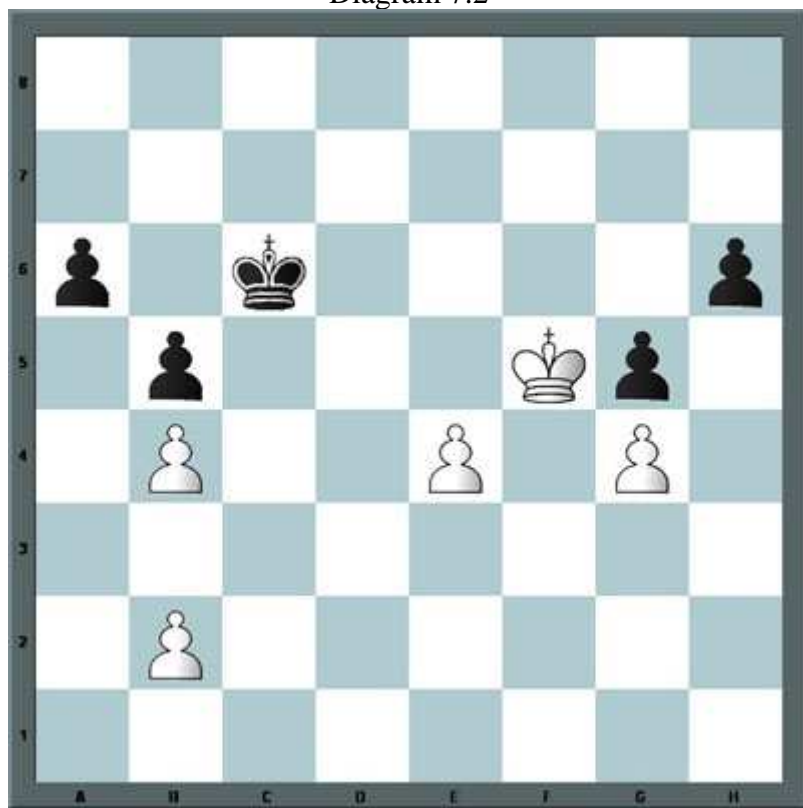Third rank: two empty squares, white Rook, five empty squares, slash.

Second rank: empty square, white Pawn, six empty squares, slash.

First rank: eight empty squares, slash.

An easy exercise (Capablanca - Farrugia, 1933), 6 plies, captures on the same square (c5):

Visualize position after **1. Rook takes Charlie 6 Rook takes Charlie 6, 2. Rook takes Charlie 6 Rook takes Charlie 6, 3. Delta takes Charlie 6 check King takes Charlie 6**. What's the material unbalance?

Diagram 7.2

FEN: 8 / 8 / p1k4p / 1p3Kp1 / 1P2P1P1 / 8 / 1P6 / 8 /

Eighth rank: eight empty squares, slash.
Seventh rank: eight empty squares, slash.
Sixth rank: black Pawn, empty square, black King, four empty squares, black Pawn, slash.
Fifth rank: empty square, black Pawn, three empty squares, white King, black Pawn, empty square, slash.
Fourth rank: empty square, white Pawn, two empty squares, white Pawn, empty square, white Pawn, empty square, slash.
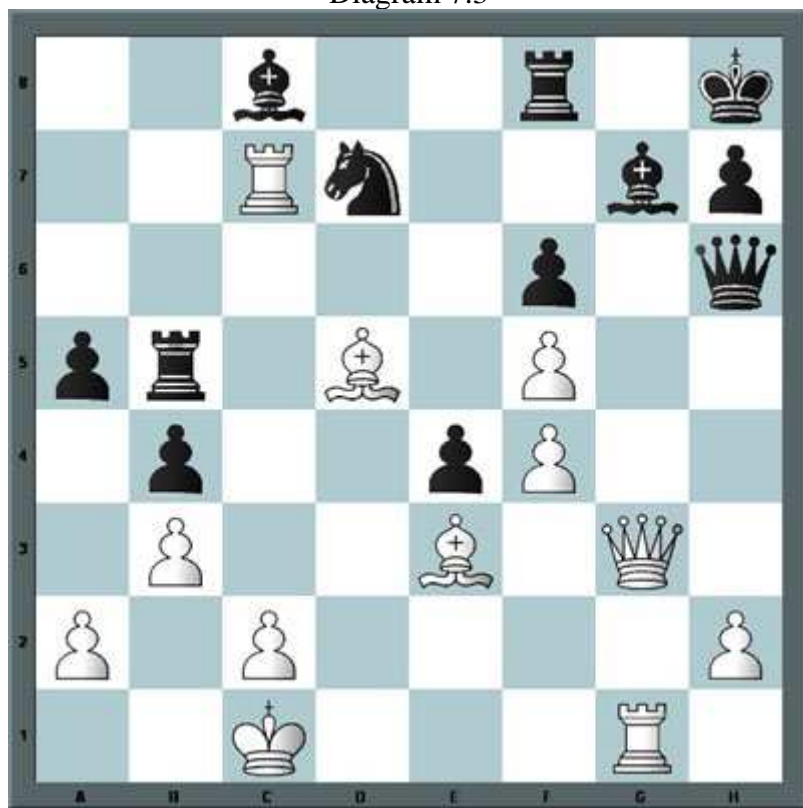Third rank: eight empty squares, slash.
Second rank: empty square, white Pawn, six empty squares, slash.
First rank: eight empty squares, slash.
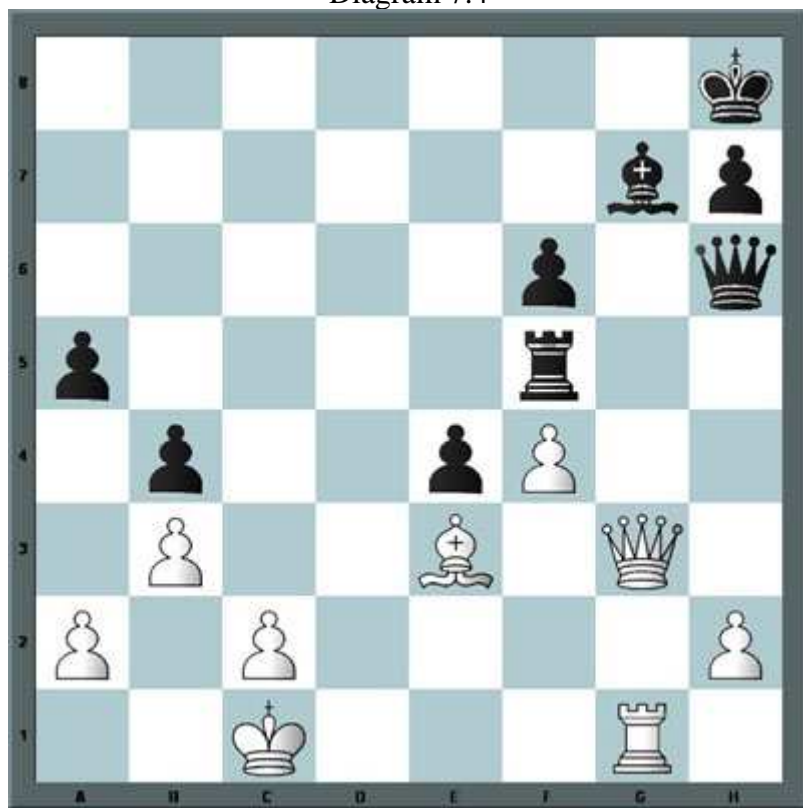
Material is even.

Diagram 7.3

FEN: 2b2r1k / 2Rn2bp / 5p1q / pr1B1P2 / 1p2pP2 / 1P2B1Q1 / P1P4P / 2K3R1 /

Eighth rank: two empty squares, black Bishop, two empty squares, black Rook, empty square, black King, slash.
Seventh rank: two empty squares, white Rook, black Knight, two empty squares, black Bishop, black Pawn, slash.
Sixth rank: five empty squares, black Pawn, empty square, black Queen, slash.
Fifth rank: black Pawn, black Rook, empty square, white Bishop, empty square, white Pawn, two empty squares, slash.
Fourth rank: empty square, black Pawn, two empty squares, black Pawn, white Pawn, two empty squares, slash.
Third rank: empty square, white Pawn, two empty squares, white Bishop, empty square, white Queen, empty square, slash.
Second rank: white Pawn, empty square, white Pawn, four empty squares, white Pawn, slash.
First rank: two empty squares, white King, three empty squares, white Rook, empty square, slash.

Slightly harder (Polgar - Anand, 1999), 8 plies, captures on different squares:

Visualize position after **1. Bishop Charlie 6 Rook takes Foxtrot 5, 2. Rook takes Charlie 8 Rook takes Charlie 8, 3. Bishop takes Delta 7 Rook Charlie 5, 4. Bishop takes Foxtrot 5 Rook takes Foxtrot 5**. What's the material unbalance?

Diagram 7.4

FEN: 7r / 6bp / 5p1q / p4r2 / 1p2pP2 / 1P2B1Q1 / P1P4P / 2K3R1 /

Eighth rank: seven empty squares, black King, slash.

Seventh rank: six empty squares, black Bishop, black Pawn, slash.

Sixth rank: five empty squares, black Pawn, empty square, black Queen, slash.

Fifth rank: black Pawn, four empty squares, black Rook, two empty squares, slash.

Fourth rank: empty square, black Pawn, two empty squares, black Pawn, white Pawn, two empty squares, slash.

Third rank: empty square, white Pawn, two empty squares, white Bishop, empty square, white Queen, empty square, slash.

Second rank: white Pawn, empty square, white Pawn, four empty squares, white Pawn, slash.

First rank: two empty squares, white King, three empty squares, white Rook, empty square, slash.

Material is even.

Diagram 7.5 Greek gift

FEN: r2q2k1 / 1ppb1ppp / p1np3 / 3nP3 / 1b1P4 / 2NB1N2 / PP3PPP / R1BQ1RK1 /

Eighth rank: black Rook, two empty square, black Queen, two empty squares, black King, empty square, slash.
Seventh rank: empty square, two black Pawns, black Bishop, empty square, three black Pawns, slash.
Sixth rank: black Pawn, empty square, black Knight, empty square, black Pawn, three empty squares, slash.
Fifth rank: three empty squares, black Knight, white Pawn, three empty squares, slash.
Fourth rank: empty square, black Bishop, empty square, white Pawn, four empty squares, slash.
Third rank: two empty squares, white Knight, white Bishop, empty square, white Knight, two empty squares, slash.
Second rank: two white Pawns, three empty squares, three white Pawns, slash.
First rank: white Rook, empty square, white Bishop, white Queen, empty square, white Rook, white King, empty square, slash.

A classic 15 plies long:
1. Bishop takes h7 King takes h7, 2. Knight Golf 5 King Golf 8, 3. Queen h5 Rook Echo 8, 4. Queen takes Foxtrot 7 check King h8, 5. Queen Hotel 5 check King Golf 8, 6. Queen Hotel 7 check King Foxtrot 8, 7. Queen Hotel 8 check King Echo 7

White to move?

Diagram 7.6 Epaulette mate

FEN: r2qr2Q /1ppbk3 / p1n1p3 / 3nP1N1 / 1b1P4 / 2N5 /PP3PPP / R1B2RK1 /

Eighth rank: black Rook, two empty squares, black Queen, black Rook, two empty squares, white Queen, slash.
Seventh rank: empty square, two black Pawn, black Bishop, black King, three empty squares, slash.
Sixth rank: black Pawn, empty square, black Knight, empty square, black Pawn, three empty squares, slash.
Fifth rank: three empty squares, black Knight, white Pawn, empty square, white Knight, empty square, slash.
Fourth rank: empty square, black Bishop, empty square, white Pawn, four empty squares, slash.
Third rank: two empty square, white Knight, five empty squares, slash.
Second rank: two white Pawns, three empty squares, three white Pawns, slash.
First rank: white Rook, empty square, white Bishop, two empty squares, white Rook, white King, empty square, slash.

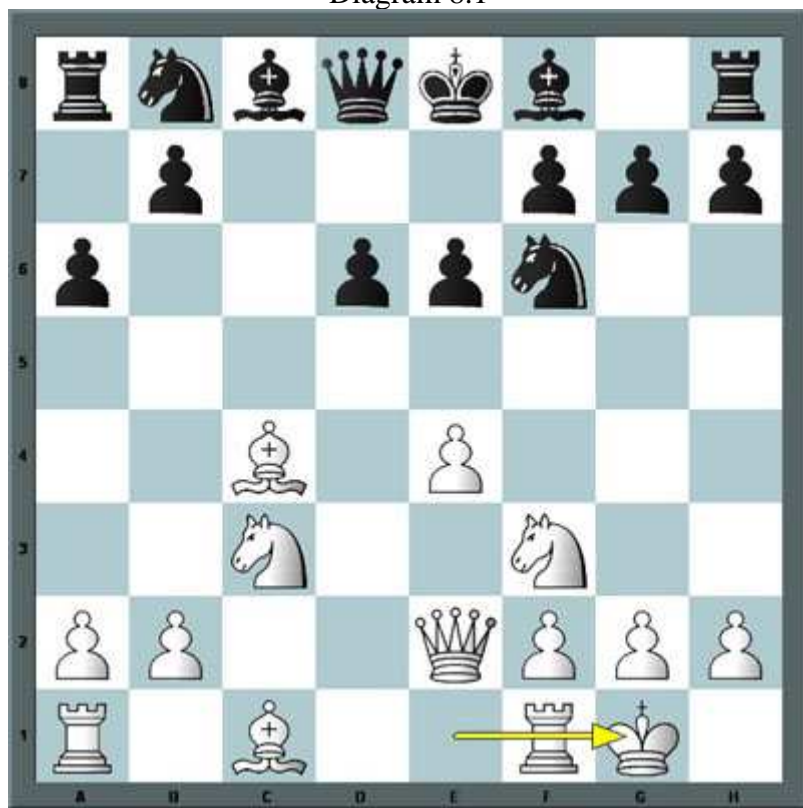Queen takes Golf 7 mate

8 Memorization

An additional method to develop visualization consists in observing a position for a short time, and then (try to) rebuild the position blindfold. I know about an instructor who insists with the student till he is successful. While this method develops memory, personally I doubt it also makes visualization better.

Then a preliminary exercise:
1. Echo 4 Charlie 5
2. Delta 4 Charlie takes Delta 4
3. Charlie 3 Delta takes Charlie 3
4. Knight takes Charlie 3 Delta 6
5. Knight Foxtrot 3 Echo 6
6. Bishop Charlie 4 Knight f6
7. Queen Echo 2 Alfa 6
8. castle

Is this position clear? Write this down, and turn the page to verify

Diagram 8.1

FEN: rnbqkb1r / 1p3ppp / p2ppn2 / 8 / 2B1P3 / 2N2N2 / PP2Q3 / R1B2RK1 /

Eighth rank: black Rook, black Knight, black Bishop, black Queen, black King, black Bishop, empty square, black Rook, slash.
Seventh rank: empty square, black Pawn, three empty squares, three black Pawns, slash.
Sixth rank: black Pawn, two empty squares, two black Pawns, black Knight, two empty squares, slash.
Fifth rank: eight empty squares, slash.
Fourth rank: two empty squares, white Bishop, empty square, white Pawn, three empty squares, slash.
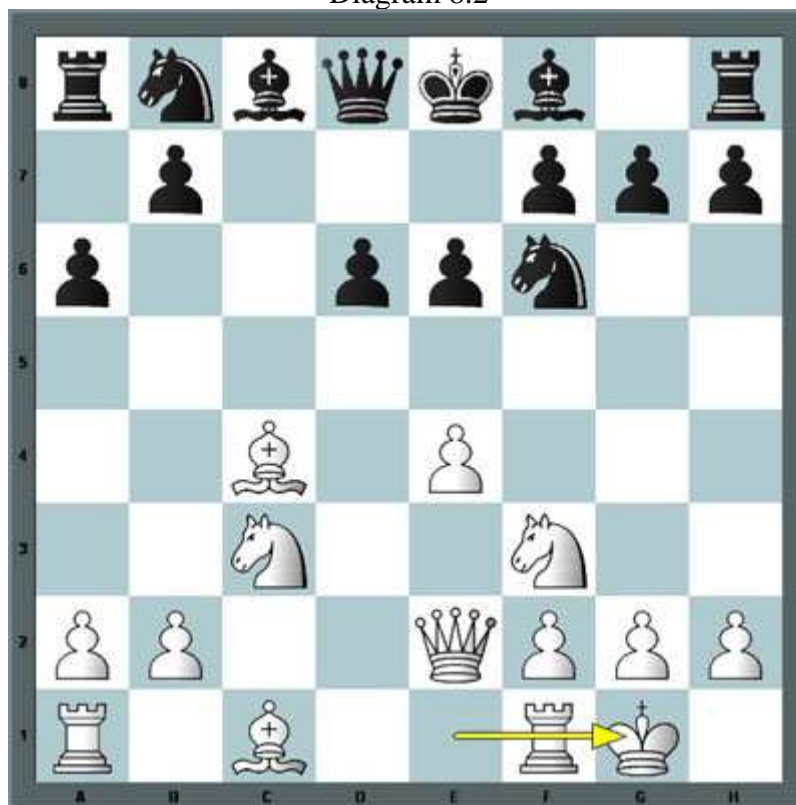Third rank: two empty squares, white Knight, two empty squares, white Knight, two empty squares, slash.
Second rank: two white Pawns, two empty squares, white Queen, three white Pawns, slash.
First rank: white Rook, empty square, white Bishop, two1 empty squares, white Rook, white King, empty square, slash.

Is this the position you wrote? Good. Not corresponding? Look at the position for two minutes, then turn the page..

Write down the position of all the pieces, white and black, and turn the page to verify.

Diagram 8.2

FEN: rnbqkb1r / 1p3ppp / p2ppn2 / 8 / 2B1P3 / 2N2N2 / PP2Q3 / R1B2RK1 /

Eighth rank: black Rook, black Knight, black Bishop, black Queen, black King, black Bishop, empty square, black Rook, slash.

Seventh rank: empty square, black Pawn, three empty squares, three black Pawns, slash.

Sixth rank: black Pawn, two empty squares, two black Pawns, black Knight, two empty squares, slash.

Fifth rank: eight empty squares, slash.

Fourth rank: two empty squares, white Bishop, empty square, white Pawn, three empty squares, slash.

Third rank: two empty squares, white Knight, two empty squares, white Knight, two empty squares, slash.

Second rank: two white Pawns, two empty squares, white Queen, three white Pawns, slash.

First rank: white Rook, empty square, white Bishop, two1 empty squares, white Rook, white King, empty square, slash.

9 Conclusion

You load sixteen tons
and what do you get?
Merle Travis

This monograph contains tests and techniques to improve visualization without a chessboard by means of visual perception.

For considerations concerning blindfold play, I suggest the book by Binet (see Bibliography). His conclusions indicate that there are two kinds of players, those with less skill that imagine a physical board before them, and those with more skill, who employ an abstract scheme.
I hope to have piqued your curiosity.

Seeking the truth

I still remember after fifty years the foreword of a book dealing with [statistical inference](#). The following example was given:
Analysis of data about population of cities, shows that there is a strong correlation between the number of churches and the amount of murders. What do you infer by this?

Solution on next page.

One could infer that religion brings evil.
NO! Both items, religious buildings and murders are proportional to the city population.

Correlation does not necessarily imply a cause-effect relationship.

The famous book "The invisible gorilla" by Chabris and Simons covers this in detail.

This is to say that, to my dismay, I found no concrete evidence that improving one's visualization skills can make one a better player.

Surely, if you followed all the exercises, you can do the Knight tour in less than 5 minutes, and you can see a greater number of plies ahead than you could before, but if you were a class D player, chances are you are still a class D player. When deciding your move, you still have the same plan, the same arsenal of weapons, and the same approach.

The cause-effect relationship works up down, a Master sees many plies, repeats a whole game without a scoresheet and is able to play blind. But if you learn all these things only, they will not make a Master out of you.

However, I am not convinced that visualization practice doesn't help. I think it is still an important part of any serious training program. It reduces thinking time, improves pattern recognition, and is a very helpful skill when reading books or solving chess problems without a board.

Think of it this way: if you only studied openings or only studied endgames, you would not get stronger either. However, as part of a more complete program of study, these things are essential to improvement.

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Addenda
Online training

This chapter is meant for the sighted player who helps the visually impaired, as to perform online training you should actually see the diagram. If you try any of the links and find a way to use the tests, please let me know.

Please note that after sometime the links might become broken, free material it's not there to stay forever.

You can check Dan Heisman page http://danheisman.com.temp.realssl.com/Events_Books/Links.html for additional links to Online Exercises, and interactive Training.

Forks and skewers
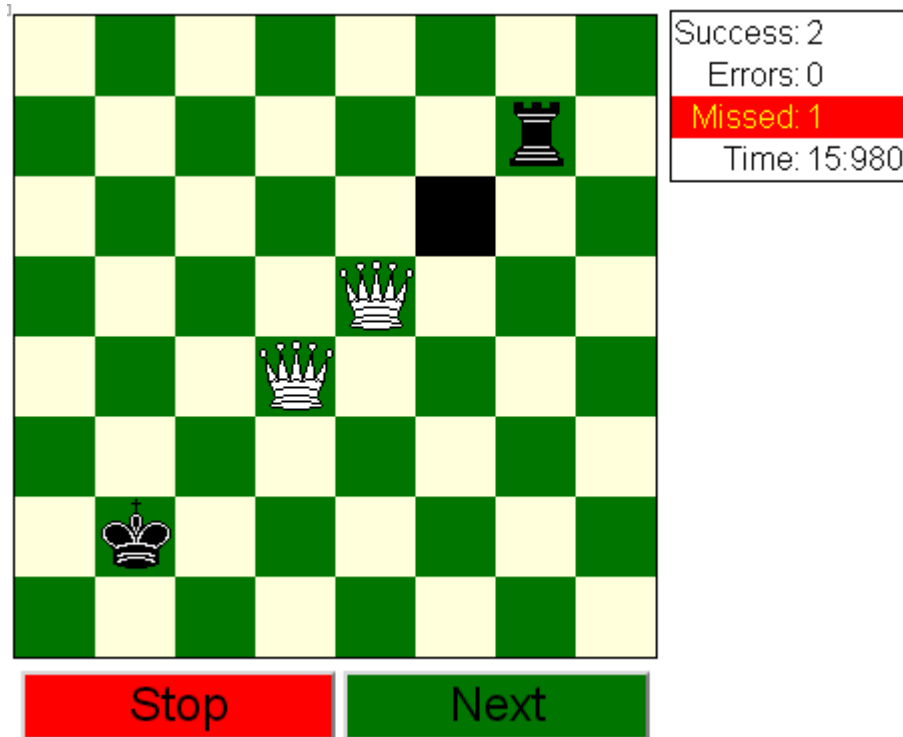
screenshot (missed f6)

Chess Forks Trainer [Chess Forks Trainer](#) http://cft.muttsoft.com/CftMain.html

The program was inspired by the Chess Vision Drill in Michael de la Maza's book Rapid Chess Improvement.
The goal for each board is to click on each square where the selected attacking piece can fork (and optionally skewer) the King and target piece where the attacking piece would not be captured on the next move.
More options available on http://cft.muttsoft.com/
The result may be success, error or missed.
This project's goal is to create a tool to improve chess vision in terms of forks and skewers.

Overall a great training tool.
I used to give as homework a similar drilling activity, Queen vs. King + Rook, or a real chessboard.

Chess Vision exercises

My preferred training tool. It helps apply CCT, a method devised by Dan Heisman, which should be used at EVERY move. CCT stands for Checks, Captures and Threats. What one has to do to avoid fatal blunders. As people are generally lazy, this online tool obliges you to train in a real game!

Click on a *black* chessman that could make a capture or give check.
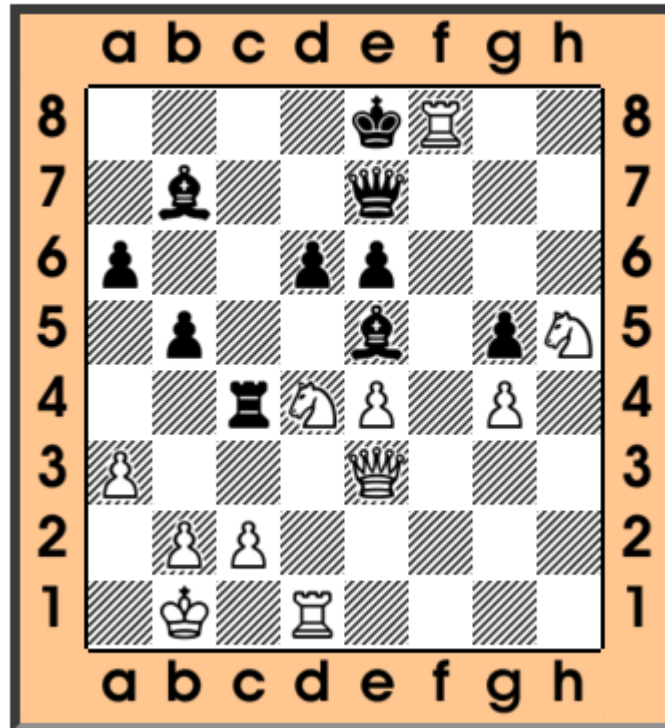

White just played Rxf8+.

screenshot

- Level 1 Find captures and checks possible on the next move. Two minutes are provided for each turn.
- Level 2 Look ahead one turn and find all captures and checks within three minutes.
- Level 3 Visualize the position three turns into the future, and find all captures and checks within five minutes.
- Blitz There's no looking ahead (study the board as shown), but be quick -- you'll have only 25 seconds.

A detailed summary of results is given.
The drill helps to achieve a better visualization, but mainly trains in applying CCT, fundamental.

Color of squares

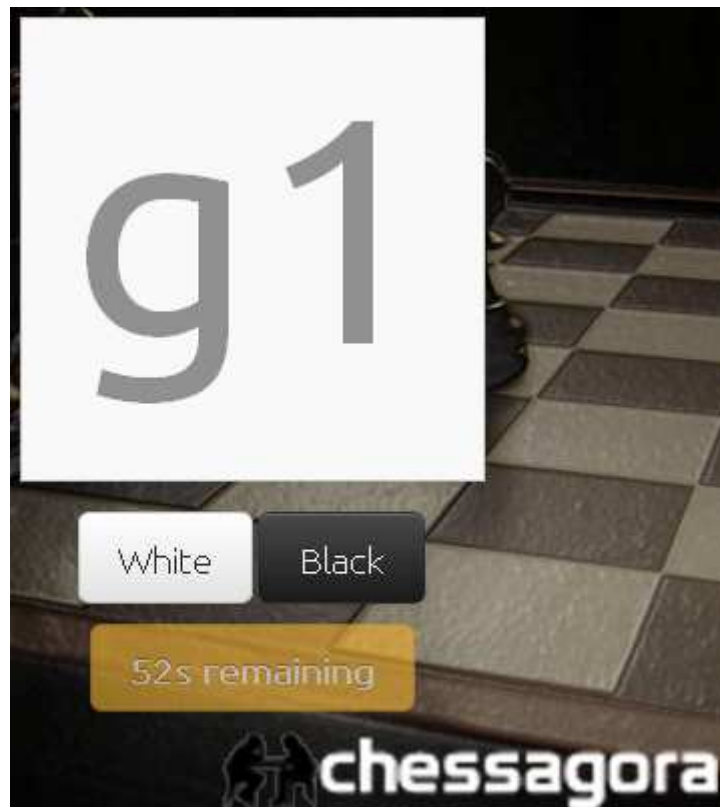## Chess Colors Speed Quiz

Square: a5
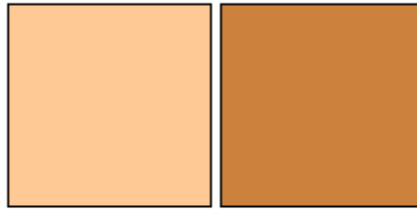
0/25

Time: 6.3

screenshot

Nowadays an Internet site is proposing the exercise also noting the time: **Chess Colors Speed Quiz**
https://www.chessvideos.tv/chess-visualizer-square-colors.php

screenshot

Another: **Guess the Square Quiz - Hard** http://chessagora.com/squarequiz. You have 60 seconds to guess correctly the color of as many squares as you can.

In 2015, I found a site where you are shown an empty chessboard, where all the 64 squares have no color. A square is indicated, and you must tell the color, when viewed from black side! More difficult.
I am unable to locate the page. Should you be able to, please mail me to info@vecchilibri.eu so that I can add it here.

Knight Moves Speed Quiz

Route: b3 to b7

0/8

Time: 3.2

screenshot

Nowadays an Internet site is proposing an exercise also noting the time: **Knight Moves Speed Quiz** http://www.chessvideos.tv/chess-visualizer-knight-moves.php. The locations of 2 squares are going to be shown, i.e. "a1 to a3" You provide the shortest path that a knight would take to travel that path.

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Suggested readings

Documentation about visualization is really scarce, and normally not adequate, either too easy or too difficult, or too boring. This book aims to help you to improve, and you can check this by confrontation of the time needed to solve the exercises. Something that must be done with continuity and which can make your vision better, and your rating as consequence.

Andersen, Ian - Chess Visualization. Two volumes 325 + 564 pages. To improve.

Binet, Alfred - Psychologie des grands Calculateurs et Joueurs d'Echecs, Paris Hachette, 1894.
He was the first one to prove, by means of observing in lab players without a chessboard, that experience, imagination and memory are needed at Master level, in contrast that the visual-space component, that denotes the visual perception of spacial relations among objects, be the main aspect of a chess player. Binet concludes that there are two kinds of players, those that during the game see plastically before them the pieces and the board and those, more skilled, who have an abstract scheme.

Blindfold Chess Quiz. Online test. www.chessvideos.tv/blinfold-chess-quiz-php?diff=easy . 10 questions concerning a few opening moves, how proceed?

Cancellieri, Francesco - Dissertazione intorno agli uomini dotati di gran memoria e a quelli divenuti smemorati, con un'appendice sopra gli eruditi precoci, la memoria artificiale, l'arte di trascegliere e notare, ed il giuoco degli scacchi. Roma 1815.

Corvi, Marco - An Italian mental visualization course, www. scuola di scacchi.com . Very difficult.

Database - Mega Database 2010, compiled by Lubomir Ftacnic and Rainer Knaak.

De La Maza, Michael - Rapid Chess Improvement. Method for adult players, where visualization is the presumption of the following activity of tactics solving. He suggests Knight jumps exercises and other movements of Queen and Rook, before a tournament.

Pollini, Ivano - Scacchi: dalla Psicologia alle Scienze Cognitive. In chapter 2 he compares different beliefs about blindfold play, in chapter 3 he illustrates games by famous blindfold players.

Symbols

```
 + check
++ double check
 # mate
 x capture
 ? weak move
?! dubious move
?? blunder
 ! strong move
!? interesting move
!! winning move
```

♔ King (K) Re (R) Roi

♕ Queen (Q) Donna (D) Dame

♖ Rook (R) Torre (T) Tour

♗ Bishop (B) Alfiere (A) Fou (F)

♘ Knight (N) Cavallo (C) Cavalier

Files are identified by letters from a to h, left to right.
Ranks are identified by numbers from 1 to 8, bottom to top.

Notation is algebraic, with figurines in place of Capital letters, first symbol identifies the piece moved, second group identifies destination square.

Capitals are used when Black and White are nouns, as in "Black moves to e5", lower case letters are used when black and white are colors, as "the black pawn moves to e5".
So "Black's King" and "the black King" mean the same thing.

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Definitions

The Chess jargon uses foreign words, German, Italian and French.

Blindfold To play without looking at a chessboard

Opposition Has the opposition the King who is not to move, separated one square from the opponent's King (near opposition). May be horizontal, vertical, or diagonal. Distant opposition if the Kings are separated by an odd number of squares (3 or 5 or 7).
Taking the opposition means to occupy a square that is distant an odd number of squares from opponent's King, who has to move, putting him in zugzwang.
Opposition is rectangular, when the Kings are placed at two corners of a rectangle, where all the four corners have the same color.

Pattern A strong player sees a position divided in many parts, "chunks", composed by a set of configurations of pieces and tactical and strategic elements, and recovers from memory an appropriate procedure. This set is called "pattern". A GM of medium high force knows some tens of thousands. A CM some hundreds.
To obtain this knowledge, time, method and application are needed.

Ply Half move.

Tempo is the gain of one move by a player, usually attacking an opponent piece, causing his retreat. The fist player is to move again, gaining therefore one move with regard to the original position. From Italian "time". Plural is **tempi**

Trébuchet Mutual zugzwang, who is to move, loses. From French.

Zeitnot Time trouble, a short time available to move. From German "time danger"

Zugzwang German word (literally "obligation to move"), applies where who is to move gets a worse result than if the move was his opponent's.
An important feature of endgames. In his book " Common Sense in Chess ", Lasker describes the three elements characterizing an endgame: offensive power of King, passed pawn, and zugzwang.

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Conclusion

This book ...

is based on personal experience, and on a choice from the huge material available on this subject, there's nothing new under the sun but the approach is original.

It's part of a series of short monographs, by me and by other Instructors of Scacchistica Milanese, an Italian Chess Club, who present rarely treated matters, that we think useful to the novice and club player, and essential to a good preparation.

Additional books

If you liked this book, you may also like my other books on chess, up till now the following books have been published, notation is with figurines and they are full of diagrams, up to the 3 Mbytes limit to keep price at 0.99 $. By clicking the title you go to Amazon description page, where you can also buy the book.

- *FCP. Fundamental Chess patterns 1-50*, in English, Italian and French, presents 50 patterns, ranging from mate patterns to King forks. *Sampler #16 Stalemate*
- *FCP. Fundamental Chess patterns 51-100*, in English, presents 50 additional patterns.
- *Fundamental Chess patterns, enhanced edition*, composed by FCP, full analysis of Opposition, smothered mate, Illusory pin, Attack to the castled King, and many illustrative games, only in English.
- *The most important chess pattern:* opposition and critical squares. Pattern #29 of FCP. Available in English and Italian.
  How could you play with 32 pieces, when you are not comfortable with three? *Sample*

- *Blackburne Shilling*, an easy and deadly trap, available in English and Italian.
  The name of this trap is associated to Joseph Henry Blackburne (1841-1924), surname Black Death, who according to the legend earned his life by playing a shilling a game (an old English coin = 5 pence), at least 100 thousands players. Remember when in New York thirty years ago the bet was one dollar a game. *Sample*
- *Fork*, a common chess pattern, only in English.
  Illustrating all kinds of forks, Knight, pawn, King, Bishop, Rook and Queen. *Sample*
- A selection of *additional Chess patterns*, fully illustrating 3 categories of patterns: illusory pin, smothered mate, attack to the castled king. Available in English and Italian. *Sample*
- Chess Visualization, a series of exercises to develop visualization, to reduce errors, and to play faster. Available in English and Italian.
- Chess repertoire, four openings, and the method to build a repertoire. Available in English and Italian.
- Defensive Chess Patterns, Playing from an inferior position. Available in English.
- Lined up pieces, Pins, Skewers and the like. Available in English.
- ECP 2, Encyclopedia of Chess Patterns part 2.
  Forks + Lined up pieces + Defensive Chess Patterns. Available in English.
- Strategic Chess Patterns, Positional Patterns, Rules and Guidelines.
  Available in English.
- Influence of mindfulness on chess, a survey. Can meditation increase your rating?
  Available in English.
- Chess course, for adult beginners. Available in English and Italian.
- Of fatal Blunders and Traps, how to avoid them. Available in English.
- A poor and wandering Rook basic Rook Endgames.

The following books are available in Italian only:

Chess Strategy, initial 4 lessons of a basic course. By Andrea Gori

Chess Strategy part 2, lessons 5 to 10. By Andrea Gori

Chess Strategy part 3, lessons 11 to 18. By Andrea Gori

Gocce di saggezza, many guidelines, mainly text, of no use to English speaking players.

Scacco gatto in due mosse, two short novels and many cat illustrations by Evelyne Nicod.

The authors

Rodolfo Pardi is an author, librarian, classified chess player, instructor and arbiter of Italian Chess Federation.

His website: http://scacchi.vecchilibri.eu/

http://www.facebook.com/IstruttoreDiScacchi

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Author page: http://www.amazon.com/-/e/B009AX8XAM/

Evelyne Nicod is a painter, illustrator and engraver.

Her website: http://www.gatteria.it/

http://www.facebook.com/gatteria

info@gatteria.it

Any question?

If any of the considerations were not clear, feel free to ask. Email [Rodolfo](#) at info@vecchilibri.eu
And please report any broken link, there was none at the time of publication, but you all know well how things go.

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Before you leave ...

Thank you for purchasing this handbook, which is an attempt to let you learn a rather unknown technique, which could improve your games. While no book can guarantee you success, the author has made every attempt to bring you useful information, condensed in a sequence of visualization exercises.
If you find the contents helpful, please consider taking a few moments to leave a review on Amazon, your comments will help other readers decide if this book may be useful to them. You can go directly to the review page by [clicking here](#).

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Please help us to chose which book to write next with this anonymous [poll](#) vecchilibri.eu/scacchi/survey.htm

Thanks so much and enjoy the reading and your games, easy and Zen helps.

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16 Stalemate
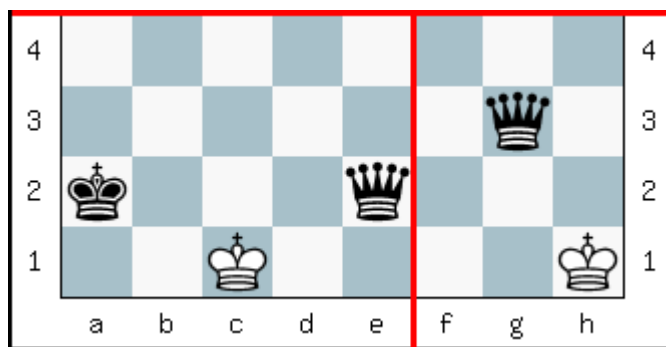
Right, a familiar Knight's jump position (the Queen and the King at a Knight's distance from each other). It's a draw, the King is not under check and has no square to go, stalemate. If you have only the King left, do not resign, but try to reach this position. Do not lose hope because when your competitor is in time trouble, the game may result in a stalemate. I've already seen this happen.

Left, a possible position of stalemate, where the King is not in check, but it has no legal moves. This position can be reached by novice players, where the simple way of mating with Queen and King is not well known, and/or the meaning of stalemate is not fully understood.
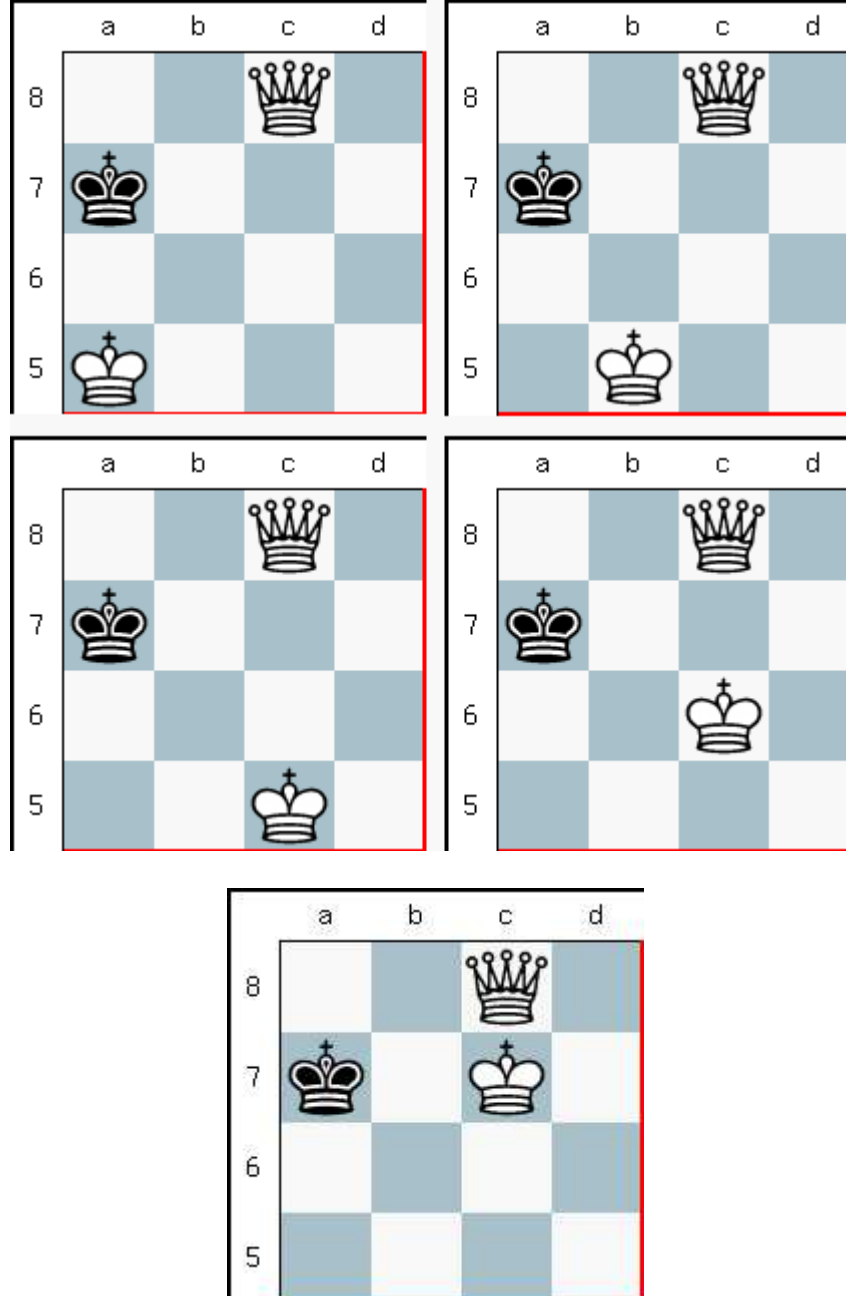
A series of 5 patterns, each looks different, but all White's Kings control b6, the Black's King has no legal moves, stalemate. Any of these stalemates may occur while moving the King or the Queen, so, be careful!

Sample games can be seen here: **Stalemate** http://scacchi.vecchilibri.eu/partite/stalemate.html

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# 5 How to proceed
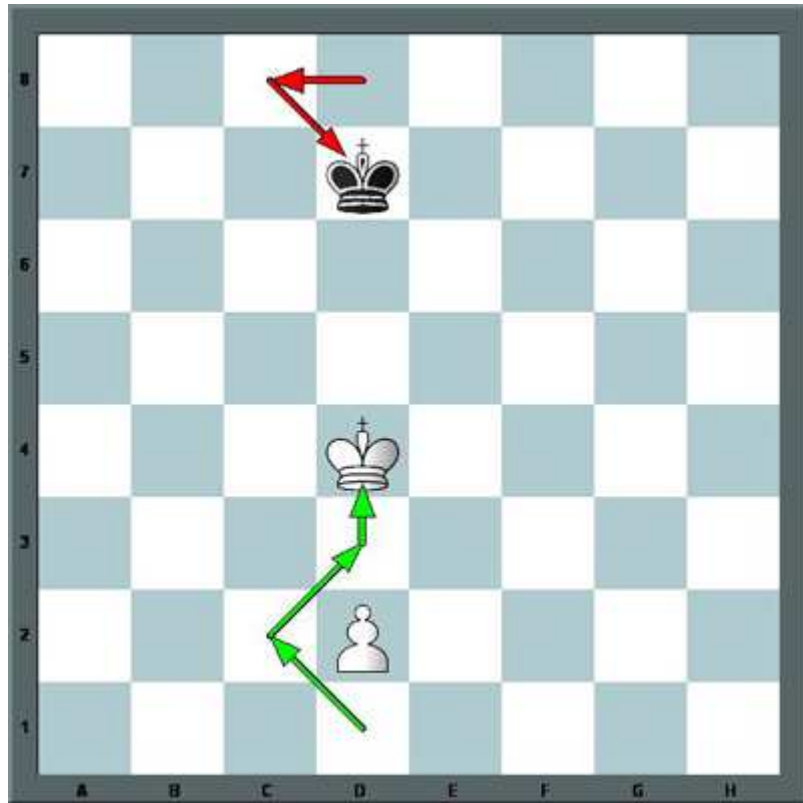
1. Kc2! Kc8 2. Kd3 Kd7 3. Kd4

White was able to reach a critical square, and with proper play is able to promote.

Easy up to here, isn't it? And would you have been able to do it? And would you have known the reason?

A possible continuation:
3. ... Kd6 4. d3 takes back one tempo Kc6 5. Ke5 Kd7 6. Kd5 Kc7 7. Ke6 Kd8 8. d4 Ke8 9. d5 Kd8 10. Kd6 Ke8 11 Kc7 Kf7 12. d6 Kf6 13. d7 Ke5 14. d8Q 1-0
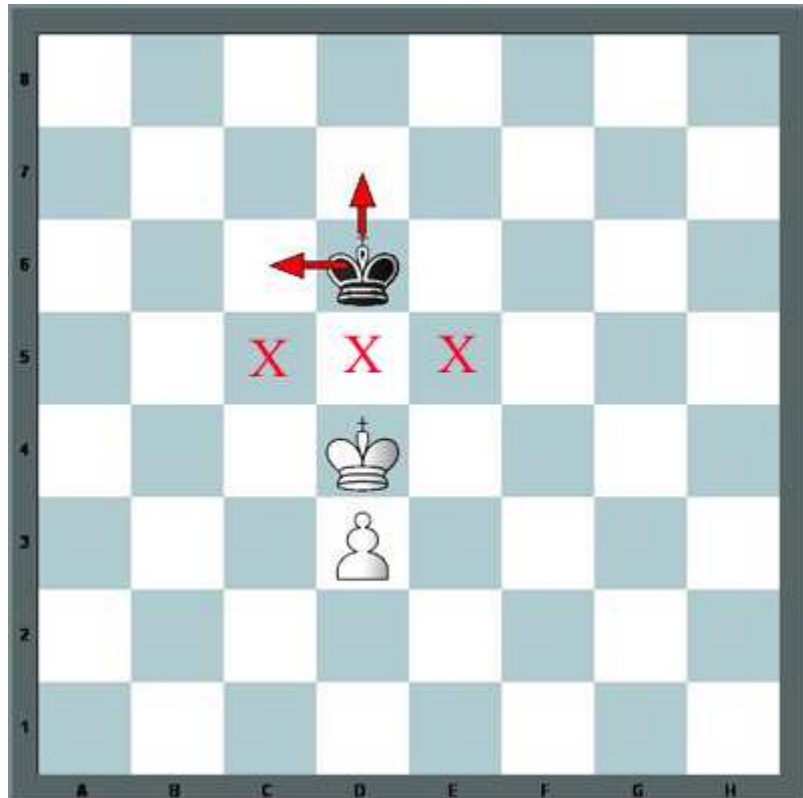
6 Opposition
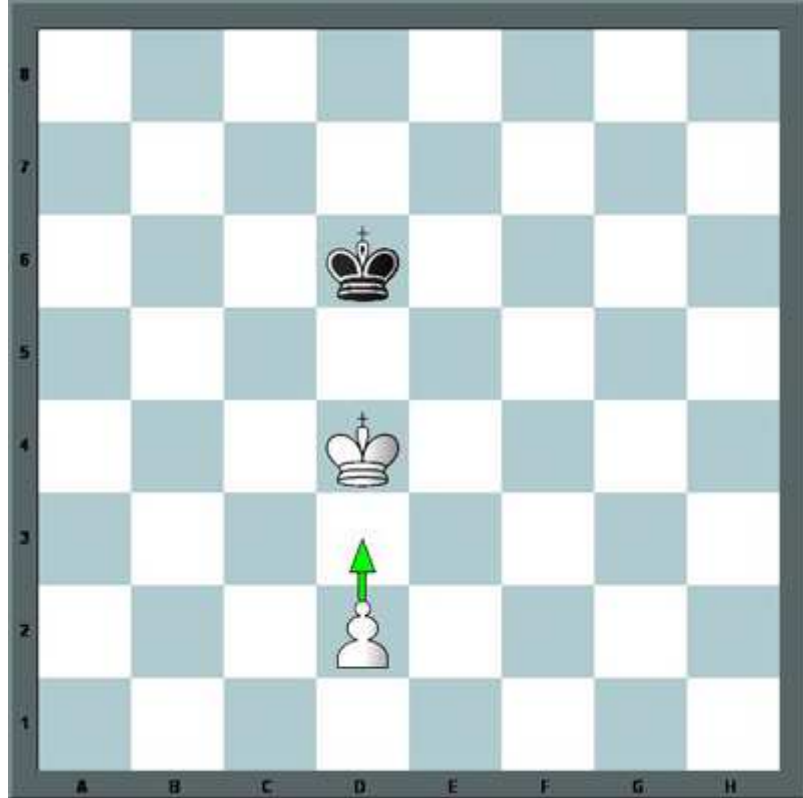
Second concept to understand, or at least remember, is Opposition.

When Kings are on squares of the same color, with only one square among them, the King which is **NOT** to move has the opposition. IF it's the only piece that can move, the King must move away.

But in above diagram, Black, even if not to move after Kd6, has NOT the opposition, as White can make the intermediate move **3. ... Kd6 4. d3** taking back one tempo.

Now it's White which has a real opposition, as Black is to move, ant it can only step back.

Black lost any hope, he can only step aside, and be pushed out, or step back, and White then steps forward, occupies again a critical square at two square distance from the pawn, and conquers the opposition again.

Opening

Opening develops in three moves, and can be considered an independent opening: it begins as an Italian game (C50), and might lead to the Fried Liver or to other variants.

1. e4 e5 2. ♘f3 ♘c6 3. ♗c4 ♘d4!?

Black move ♘d4 is weak, leaving unprotected pawn e5, the bait.

You could play this opening against:

- players of your level: if the bait is not swallowed, you will play a slightly weaker game, with no material disadvantage, as with any opening which you do not know.
- against much stronger players. You would lose anyway against them, here at least you have a chance.

My personal experience, proven: I classified as 3N (the lower level in Italian federation, but a success anyway) due to three games played this way in the tournament. And in three friendly games with CM, two ended in 7 moves, and in the third I won a piece.

How can this happen? the aim of the winning black sequence is the capture of pawn e5 with the Queen, difficult to see so in advance. Besides, the stronger player will under-evaluate you, and will not do long analysis at the fourth move!

A last suggestion, even if you should usually play the board and not the player; anyway wait for a couple of minutes before making your third move.

This opening it's also called "Oh my God opening" by the exclamation of Black after the move, but that's considered an unfair trick!

4. ♘xe5?

A really strong player (not so many), does not swallow the bait and does not capture e5, but simply develops, the three best moves will be shown later. His reasoning is that your move is weak, or by mistake, and he judges he will win anyway, or willingly, and suspecting a trap, he does not see any reason to fall in the trap and lose time in finding out what this is about.

The majority of players (nearly all) captures the pawn, even if Fritz rank of this move is the 17^{nth}.

I try often to test a player, stating that this is a trap, and I ask players of all levels what the next black move could be: the answers are random, trying everything, not one gives the right (and only) answer. What would you move as black?

4. ... ♛g5!

When you move, I suggest you wait for a couple of minutes, not to show you know what you are doing. The result is a double attack, to the Knight in e5 and to the pawn in g2. The final aim of this move can hardly be detected, but the risk is high.

Many different replies are possible, resulting in losing one piece or even checkmate, should White not repent. The possible replies will be shown in order of danger and frequency.

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8 King fork
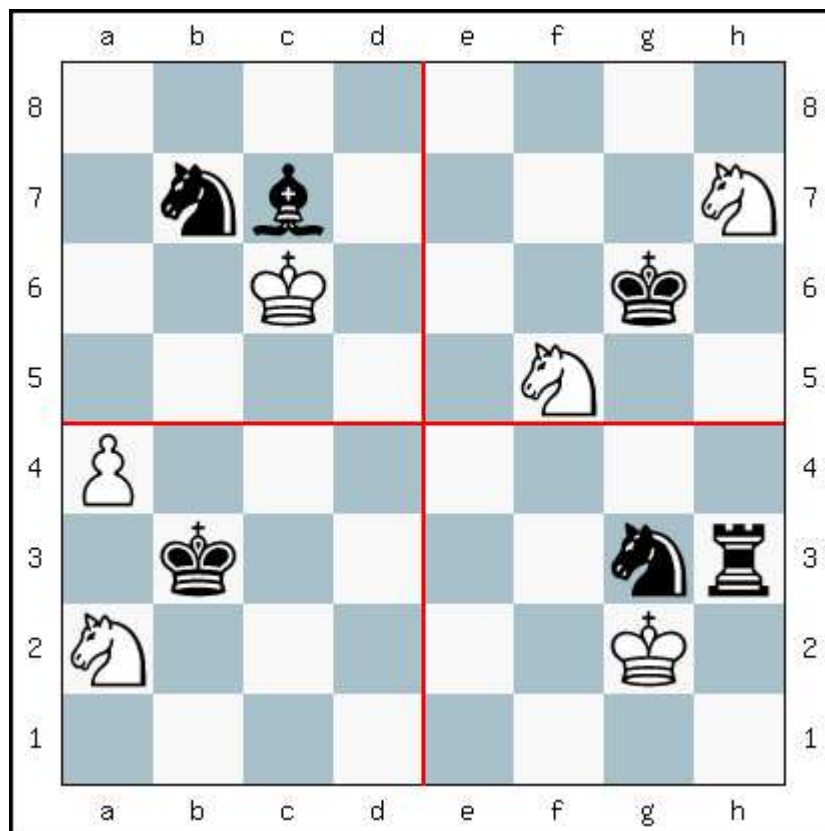
Simple basic patterns to be found in an endgame.

King attacks two unguarded pieces close together. Neither can move away and guard the other at the same time.

Upper right, same result if Knight in f5 is replaced by a Rook, and if King is replaced by a Bishop. Rook cannot go to f7 nor to h5 to protect the Knight, as it would be captured..

1 Illusory pin

Also known as Phantom Pin. This definition covers several Patterns, which have in common the pin which is not real: the pinned piece is able to unpin, and often with a material gain, or can prepare a trap, where loss of material can be awesome. In the former case, many times the player is not aware of the error done, while the opponent is not aware that he can get an advantage. In the latter case instead, the trap is prepared, and even if the opponent does not fall in it, the resulting position is favorable.
Unpinning starts the sequence.
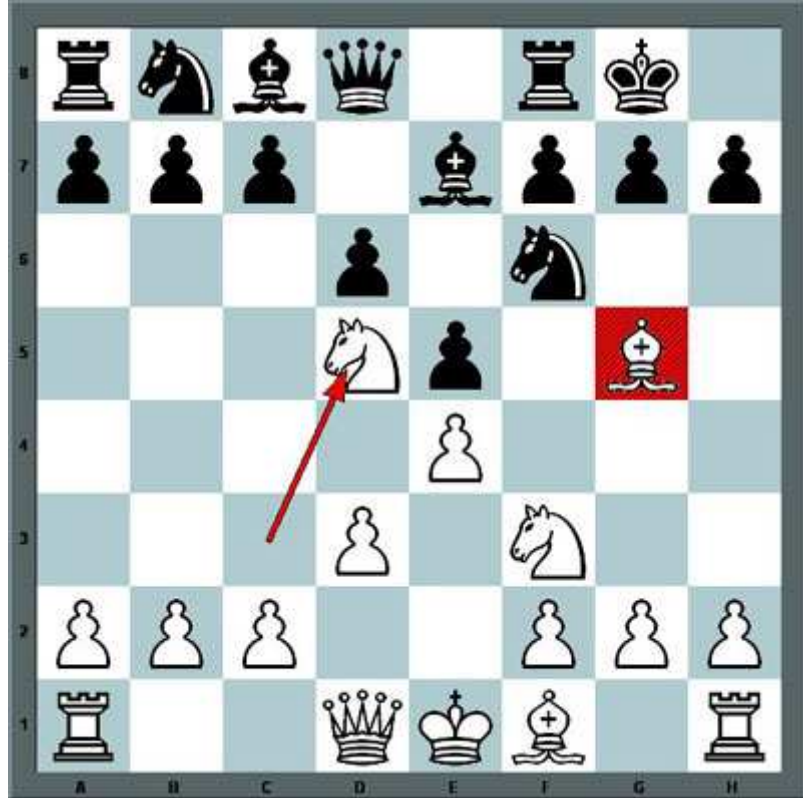
C42 Petroff defense
1. e4 e5 2. ♘f3 ♘f6 3. ♘c3 d6 4. d3 ♗e7 5. ♗g5 ? O-O 6. ♘d5 ?

Actually, after ♗g5 Knight ♘f6 in not pinned, as it can move freely with no consequence.

And Bishop ♗g5 is in a dangerous position, as it is only apparently protected (once), while it is attacked twice (x ray) through the Knight ♘f6: it can be one target of a double attack.

Move ♘d5 is a mistake, it could be an outpost if black pawn were in c5 instead than in c7, and the light-squared Bishops were exchanged, here it could be driven away by the pawn or the Bishop. The threat of a series of exchanges on f6 is meaningless.
White is going to lose one piece.

Viewed the other side around, from Black side

Clear? Isn't it?.

Black can without danger play Knight ♘f6, with a well timed double attack. And anyway he can take advantageously and without any danger anything located on d5: a strategic square, as it also defends e7, where he can go back if the Bishop is captured.

♘**xd5!** A possible continuation:

♗**xe7** ♘**xe7** ending a full Knight up.

exd5 ♗**xd5** that cannot be recaptured, ending a full Bishop up.

Obviously avoid in this second case the error of recapturing with the Queen ♕**xe7??**, as **exd5** will follow, giving back the Knight.

It's wise to always chose the right captures sequences, it's not mandatory to recapture with the piece directly threatened. A frequent evaluation error (named "counting error" by Heisman).

C00 French opening

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. e5 c5 4. c3 ♘c6 5. ♗b5 ♗d7 6. ♘f3 ?

A similar error happens frequently in this variant of French opening, and many black players are not even aware of the possibility of gaining a pawn. Knight ♘f3 is not protecting anything.

And again Bishop b5 is not protected, and he is attacked once through the Knight (X ray). Who, capturing on e5, can go back to d7 if necessary.

Now seen from the black side

Clear? Isn't it?

Black can without danger move his Knight ♞c6, with an advantageous double attack. And anyway take advantageously and without any danger anything located on e5: it is a strategic square, as it is in the meantime defending square d7, where it can go back if the Bishop is captured.

♞**xe5!** A possible continuation:

♝**xd7** ♞**xd7** ending one full pawn up.

Remember to always choose the right sequence of captures: it's not mandatory to recapture with the piece threatened. A very frequent evaluation error.

♞**xe5** ♝**xb5** ending one full pawn up.

These positions are not even to be considered as traps, they are just unintentional errors, the cause being to have not recognized this typical Pattern.

The Pattern to remember.

Diagrams

Sample diagram

Knight on Bravo 2, white King goes to Delta 4, black King on Hotel 8

Eighth rank: seven empty squares, Hotel 8 black King, slash.
Seventh rank: eight empty squares, slash.
Sixth rank: eight empty squares, slash.
Fifth rank: eight empty squares, slash.
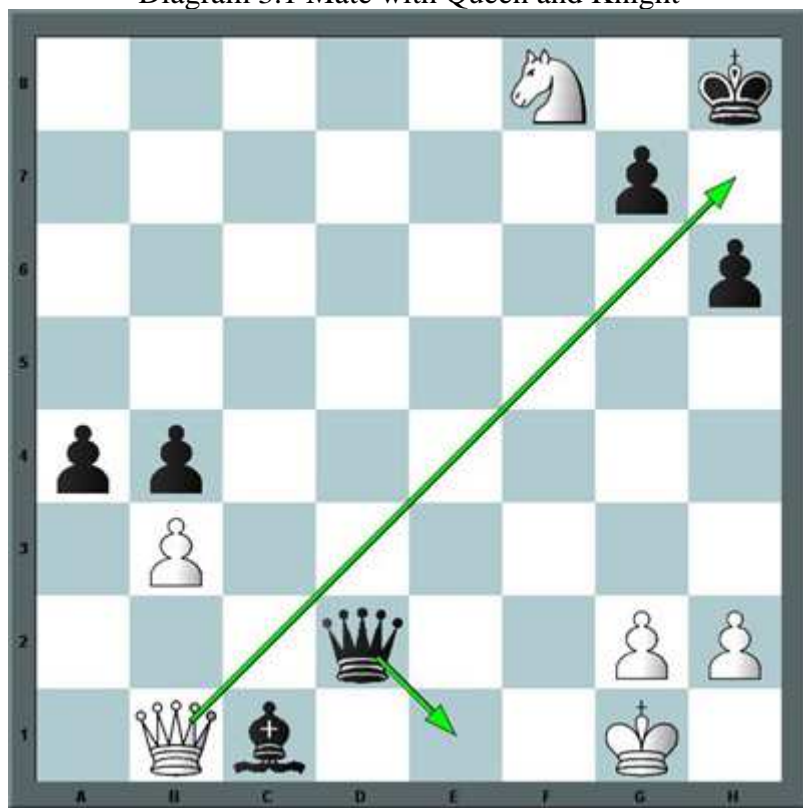Fourth rank: three empty squares, white King, four empty squares, slash
Third rank: eight empty squares, slash.
Second rank: one empty square, black Knight, slash.
First rank: eight empty squares, slash.

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Diagram 3.1 Mate with Queen and Knight

FEN: 5N1k / 6p1 / 7p / 8 / pp6 / 1P6 / 3q2PP / 1Qb3K1

Eighth rank: five empty squares, white Knight, empty square, black King, slash.
Seventh rank: six empty squares, black Pawn, empty square, slash.
Sixth rank: seven empty squares, black Pawn, slash.
Fifth rank: eight empty squares, slash.
Fourth rank: two black Pawns, six empty squares, slash
Third rank: empty square, white pawn, six empty squares, slash.
Second rank: three empty squares, black Queen, two empty squares, two white Pawns, slash.
First rank: empty squares, white Queen, black Bishop, three empty squares, white King, empty square, slash.

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Diagram 3.2 Smothered mate

FEN: r1bqkb1r / pp1npppp / 2p2n2 / 8 / 3PN3 / 8 / PPP1QPPP / R1B1KBNR /

Eighth rank: black Rook, empty square, black Bishop, black Queen, black King, black Bishop, empty square, black Rook, slash

Seventh rank: two black Pawns, empty square, black Knight, four black Pawns, slash.

Sixth rank: two empty squares, black Pawn, two empty squares, black Knight, two empty squares, slash.

Fifth rank: eight empty squares, slash.

Fourth rank: three empty squares, white Pawn, white Knight, three empty squares, slash.
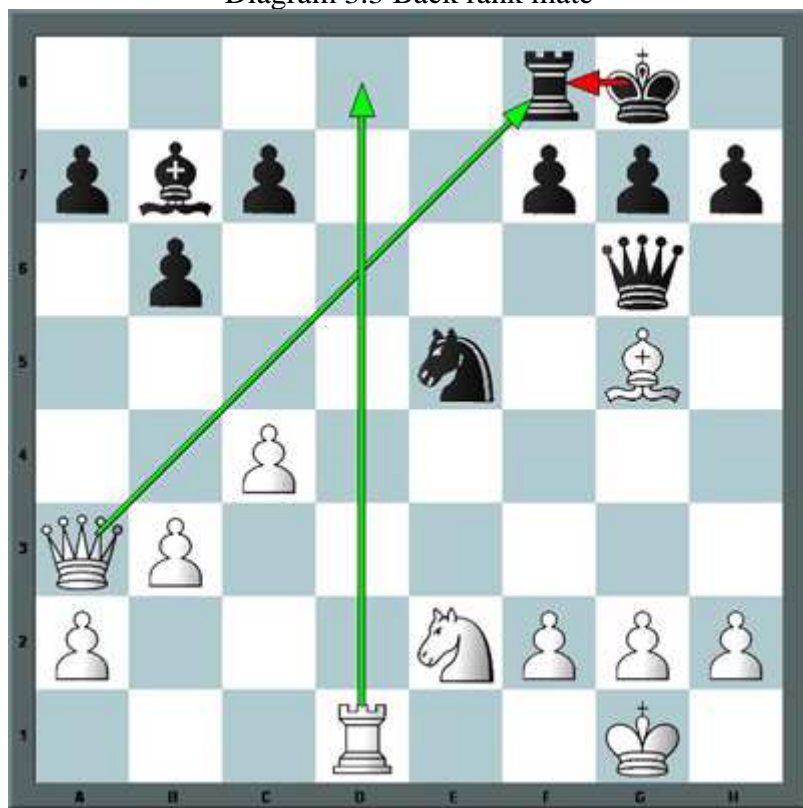
Third rank: eight empty squares, slash.

Second rank: three white Pawns, empty square, white Queen, three white Pawns, slash.

First rank: white Rook, empty square, white Bishop, empty square, white King, white Bishop, white Knight, white Rook, slash.

Diagram 3.3 Back rank mate

FEN: 5rk1 / pbp2ppp / 1p4q1 / 4n1B1 / 2P5 / QP6 / P3NPPP / 3R2K1 /

Eighth rank: five empty squares, black Rook, black King, empty square, slash.
Seventh rank: black Pawn, black Bishop, black Pawn, two empty squares, three black Pawns, slash.
Sixth rank: empty square, black Pawn, four empty squares, black Queen, empty square, slash.
Fifth rank: four empty squares, black Knight, empty square, white Bishop, empty square, slash.
Fourth rank: two empty squares, white Pawn, five empty squares, slash.
Third rank: white Queen, white Pawn, six empty squares, slash.
Second rank: white Pawn,three empty squares, white Knight, three white Pawns, slash.
First rank: three empty squares, white Rook, two empty squares, white King, empty square, slash.

Diagram 4.5 Solution

White Knight on Bravo 2, black King on Delta 4, white King on Hotel 1

Eighth rank: eight empty squares, slash.
Seventh rank: eight empty squares, slash.
Sixth rank: eight empty squares, slash.
Fifth rank: eight empty squares, slash.
Fourth rank: three empty squares, black King, four empty squares, slash
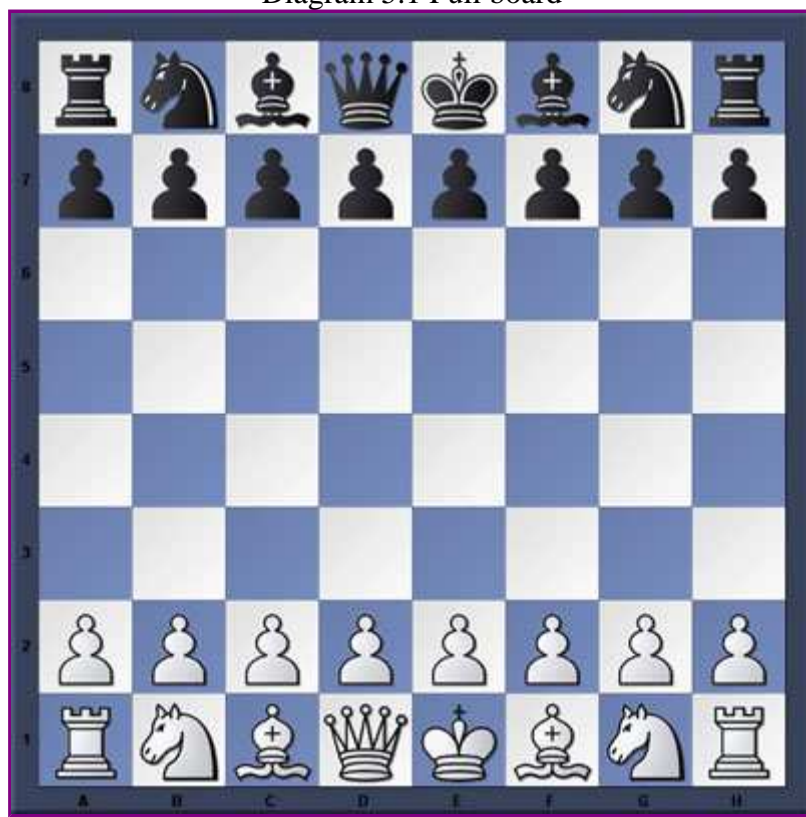Third rank: eight empty squares, slash.
Second rank: one empty square, white Knight, six empty squares, slash.
First rank: seven empty squares, white King, slash.

Diagram 5.1 Full board

FEN: rnbqkbnr / pppppppp / 8 / 8 / 8 / 8/ PPPPPPPP / RNBQKBNR/

Eighth rank: black Rook, black Knight, black Bishop, black Queen, black King, black Bishop, black Knight, black Rook, slash.
Seventh rank: eight black Pawns,slash.
Sixth rank: eight empty squares, slash.
Fifth rank: eight empty squares, slash.
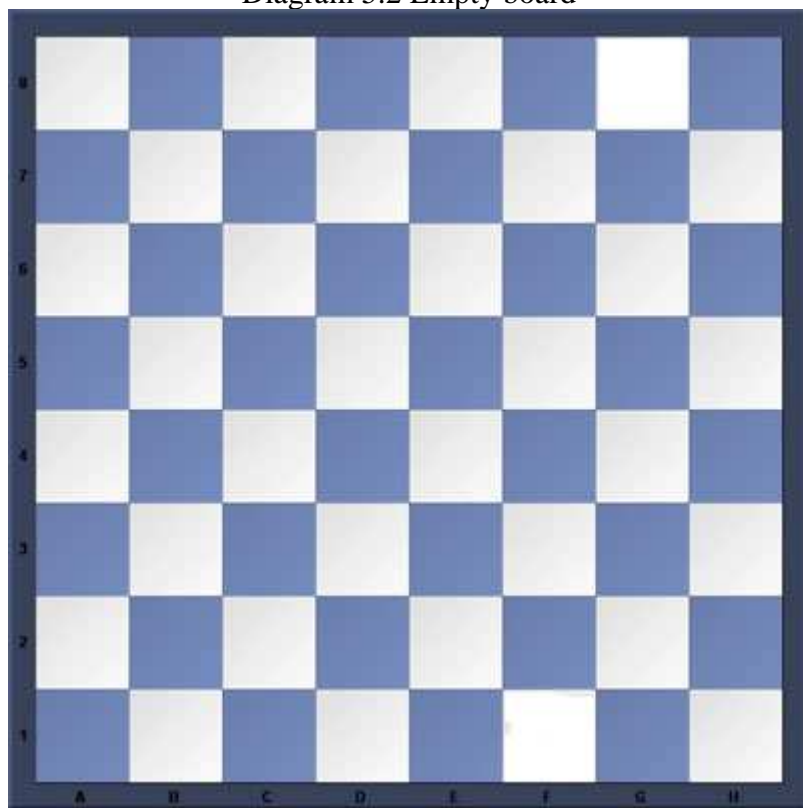Fourth rank: eight empty squares, slash.
Third rank: eight empty squares, slash.
Second rank: eight white Pawns, slash.
First rank: white Rook, white Knight, white Bishop, white Queen, white King, white Bishop, white Knight, white Rook, slash.
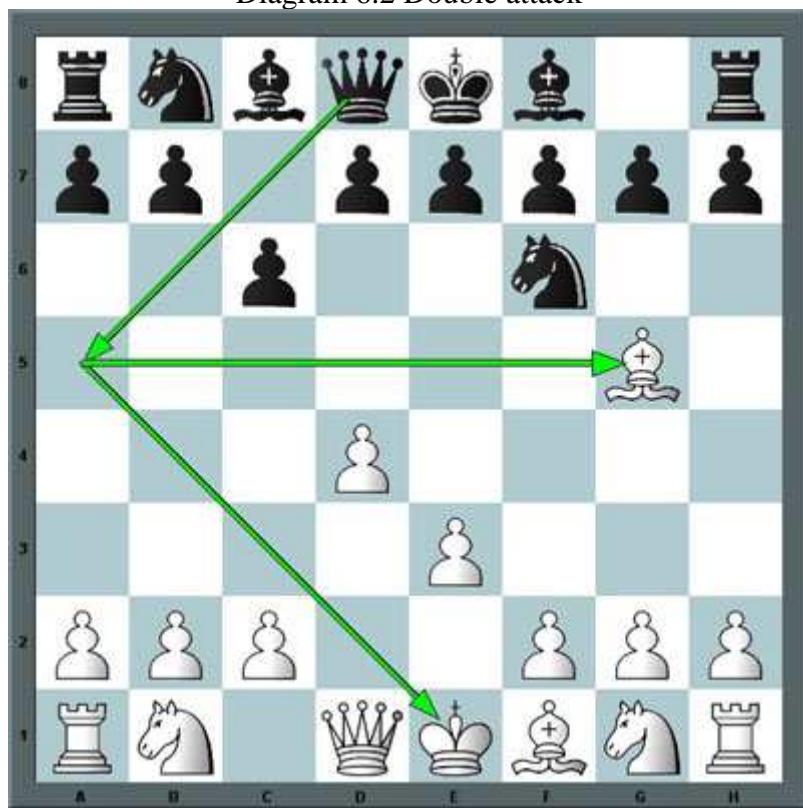
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Diagram 5.2 Empty board

FEN: 8 / 8 / 8 / 8 / 8 / 8/ 8 / 8/

Eighth rank: eight empty squares, slash.
Seventh rank: eight empty squares, slash.
Sixth rank: eight empty squares, slash.
Fifth rank: eight empty squares, slash.
Fourth rank: eight empty squares, slash.
Third rank: eight empty squares, slash.
Second rank: eight empty squares, slash.
First rank: eight empty squares, slash.

Diagram 6.2 Double attack

FEN: rnbqka1r / pp1ppppp / 2p2n2 / 6B1 / 3P4 / 4P3 / PPP2PPP / RN1QKBNR

Eighth rank: black Rook, black Knight, black Bishop, black Queen, black King, black Bishop, empty square, black Rook, slash.

Seventh rank: two black Pawns, empty square, five black Pawns,slash.

Sixth rank: two empty squares, black Pawn, two black Pawns, black Knight, two black Pawns, slash.

Fifth rank: six empty squares, white Bishop, empty square, slash.

Fourth rank: three empty squares, white Pawn, four empty squares, slash.
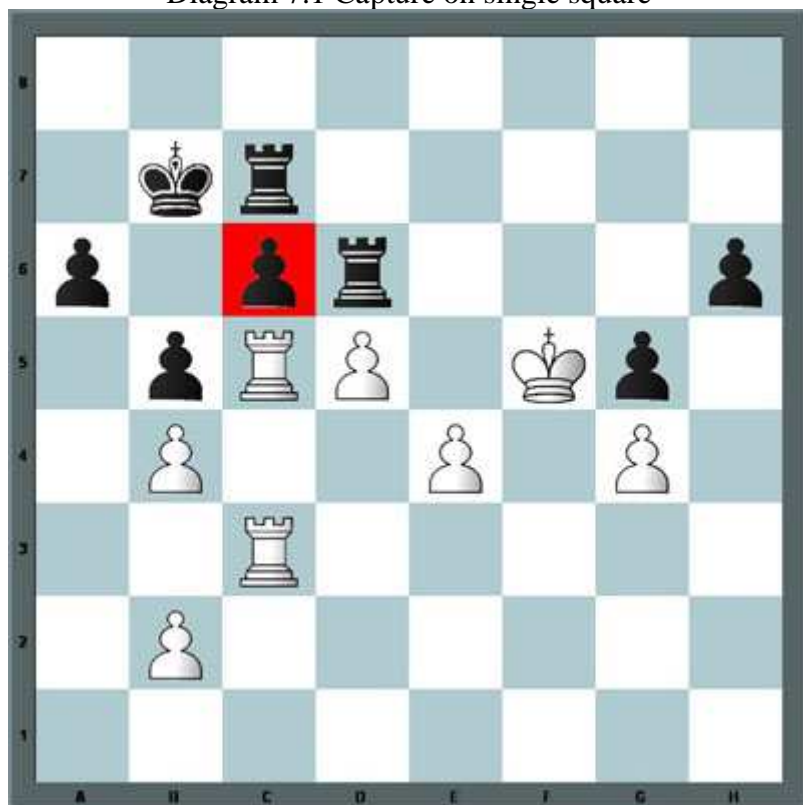
Third rank: four empty squares, white Pawn, three empty squares, slash.

Second rank: three white Pawns, two empty sqyares, three white Pawns, slash.

First rank: white Rook, white Knight, empty square, white Queen, white King, white Bishop, white Knight, white Rook, slash.

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Diagram 7.1 Capture on single square

FEN: 8 / 1kr5 / p1pr3p / 1pRP1Kp1 / 1P2P12P1 / 2R5 / 1P6 / 8 /

Eighth rank: eight empty squares, slash.

Seventh rank: empty square, black King, black Rook, five empty squares, slash.

Sixth rank: black Pawn, empty square, black Pawn, black Rook, three empty squares, black Pawn, slash.

Fifth rank: empty square, black Pawn, white Rook, white Pawn, empty square, white King, black Pawn, empty square, slash.

Fourth rank: empty square, white Pawn, two empty squares, white Pawn, empty square, white Pawn, empty square, slash.
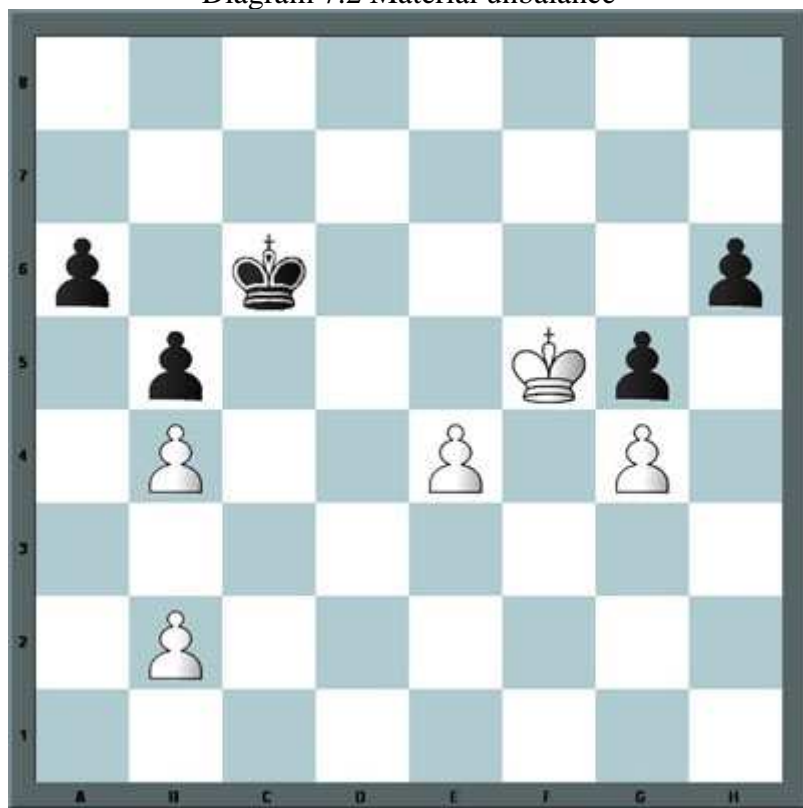
Third rank: two empty squares, white Rook, five empty squares, slash.

Second rank: empty square, white Pawn, six empty squares, slash.

First rank: eight empty squares, slash.

Diagram 7.2 Material unbalance

FEN: 8 / 8 / p1k4p / 1p3Kp1 / 1P2P1P1 / 8 / 1P6 / 8 /

Eighth rank: eight empty squares, slash.

Seventh rank: eight empty squares, slash.

Sixth rank: black Pawn, empty square, black King, four empty squares, black Pawn, slash.

Fifth rank: empty square, black Pawn, three empty squares, white King, black Pawn, empty square, slash.

Fourth rank: empty square, white Pawn, two empty squares, white Pawn, empty square, white Pawn, empty square, slash.
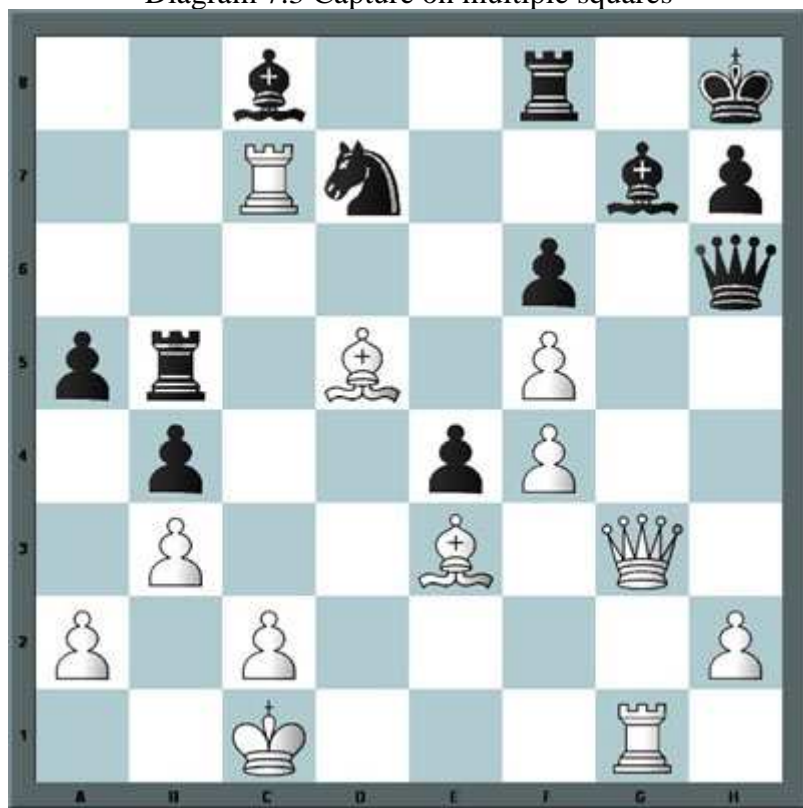
Third rank: eight empty squares, slash.

Second rank: empty square, white Pawn, six empty squares, slash.

First rank: eight empty squares, slash.
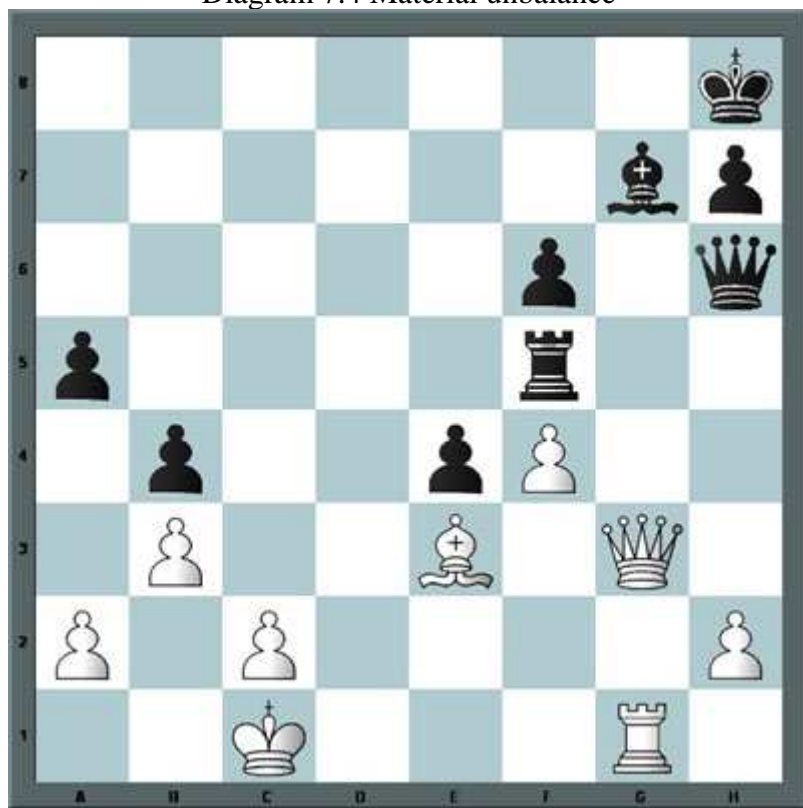
Diagram 7.3 Capture on multiple squares

FEN: 2b2r1k / 2Rn2bp / 5p1q / pr1B1P2 / 1p2pP2 / 1P2B1Q1 / P1P4P / 2K3R1 /

Eighth rank: two empty squares, black Bishop, two empty squares, black Rook, empty square, black King, slash.
Seventh rank: two empty squares, white Rook, black Knight, two empty squares, black Bishop, black Pawn, slash.
Sixth rank: five empty squares, black Pawn, empty square, black Queen, slash.
Fifth rank: black Pawn, black Rook, empty square, white Bishop, empty square, white Pawn, two empty squares, slash.
Fourth rank: empty square, black Pawn, two empty squares, black Pawn, white Pawn, two empty squares, slash.
Third rank: empty square, white Pawn, two empty squares, white Bishop, empty square, white Queen, empty square, slash.
Second rank: white Pawn, empty square, white Pawn, four empty squares, white Pawn, slash.
First rank: two empty squares, white King, three empty squares, white Rook, empty square, slash.

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Diagram 7.4 Material unbalance

FEN: 7r / 6bp / 5p1q / p4r2 / 1p2pP2 / 1P2B1Q1 / P1P4P / 2K3R1 /

Eighth rank: seven empty squares, black King, slash.
Seventh rank: six empty squares, black Bishop, black Pawn, slash.
Sixth rank: five empty squares, black Pawn, empty square, black Queen, slash.
Fifth rank: black Pawn, four empty squares, black Rook, two empty squares, slash.
Fourth rank: empty square, black Pawn, two empty squares, black Pawn, white Pawn, two empty squares, slash.
Third rank: empty square, white Pawn, two empty squares, white Bishop, empty square, white Queen, empty square, slash.
Second rank: white Pawn, empty square, white Pawn, four empty squares, white Pawn, slash.
First rank: two empty squares, white King, three empty squares, white Rook, empty square, slash.

Diagram 7.5 Greek gift

FEN: r2q2k1 / 1ppb1ppp / p1np3 / 3nP3 / 1b1P4 / 2NB1N2 / PP3PPP / R1BQ1RK1 /

Eighth rank: black Rook, two empty square, black Queen, two empty squares, black King, empty square, slash.
Seventh rank: empty square, two black Pawns, black Bishop, empty square, three black Pawns, slash.
Sixth rank: black Pawn, empty square, black Knight, empty square, black Pawn, three empty squares, slash.
Fifth rank: three empty squares, black Knight, white Pawn, three empty squares, slash.
Fourth rank: empty square, black Bishop, empty square, white Pawn, four empty squares, slash.
Third rank: two empty squares, white Knight, white Bishop, empty square, white Knight, two empty squares, slash.
Second rank: two white Pawns, three empty squares, three white Pawns, slash.
First rank: white Rook, empty square, white Bishop, white Queen, empty square, white Rook, white King, empty square, slash.

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Diagram 7.6 Epaulette mate

FEN: r2qr2Q /1ppbk3 / p1n1p3 / 3nP1N1 / 1b1P4 / 2N5 /PP3PPP / R1B2RK1 /

Eighth rank: black Rook, two empty squares, black Queen, black Rook, two empty squares, white Queen, slash.
Seventh rank: empty square, two black Pawn, black Bishop, black King, three empty squares, slash.
Sixth rank: black Pawn, empty square, black Knight, empty square, black Pawn, three empty squares, slash.
Fifth rank: three empty squares, black Knight, white Pawn, empty square, white Knight, empty square, slash.
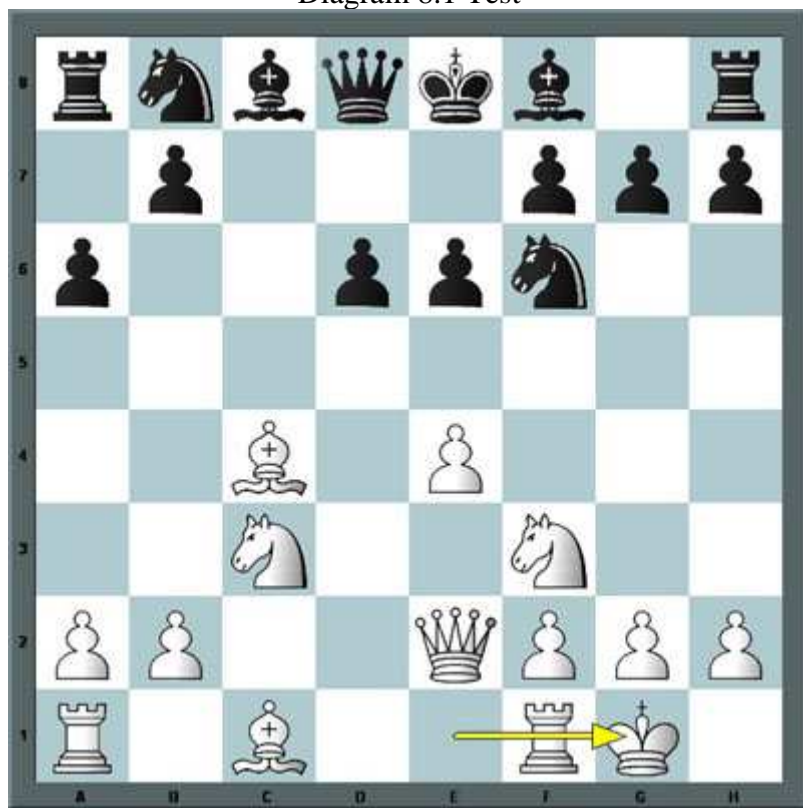Fourth rank: empty square, black Bishop, empty square, white Pawn, four empty squares, slash.
Third rank: two empty square, white Knight, five empty squares, slash.
Second rank: two white Pawns, three empty squares, three white Pawns, slash.
First rank: white Rook, empty square, white Bishop, two empty squares, white Rook, white King, empty square, slash.

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Diagram 8.1 Test

FEN: rnbqkb1r / 1p3ppp / p2ppn2 / 8 / 2B1P3 / 2N2N2 / PP2Q3 / R1B2RK1 /

Eighth rank: black Rook, black Knight, black Bishop, black Queen, black King, black Bishop, empty square, black Rook, slash.
Seventh rank: empty square, black Pawn, three empty squares, three black Pawns, slash.
Sixth rank: black Pawn, two empty squares, two black Pawns, black Knight, two empty squares, slash.
Fifth rank: eight empty squares, slash.
Fourth rank: two empty squares, white Bishop, empty square, white Pawn, three empty squares, slash.
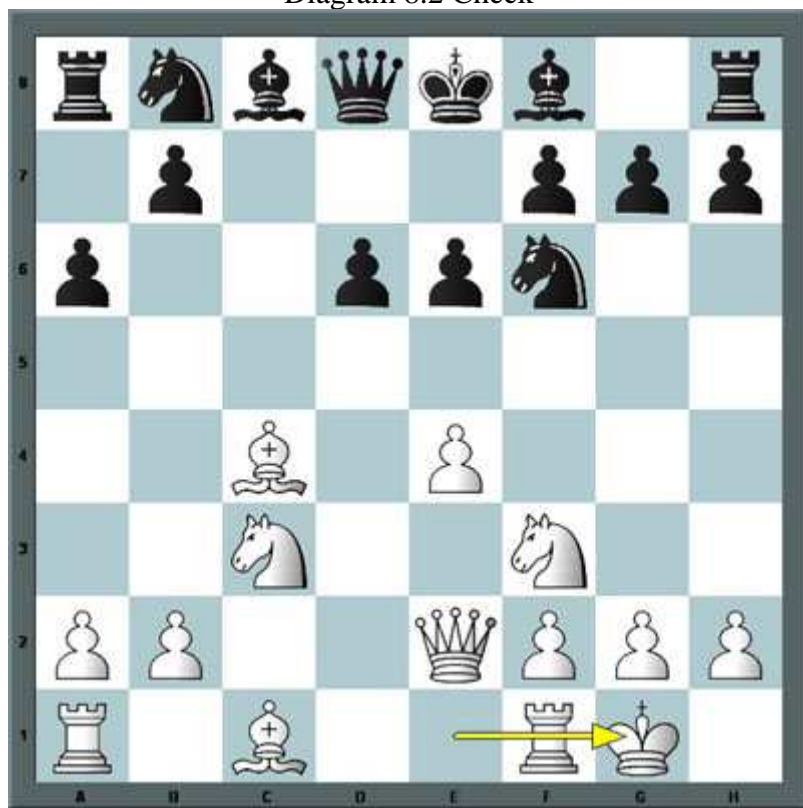Third rank: two empty squares, white Knight, two empty squares, white Knight, two empty squares, slash.
Second rank: two white Pawns, two empty squares, white Queen, three white Pawns, slash.
First rank: white Rook, empty square, white Bishop, two1 empty squares, white Rook, white King, empty square, slash.

Diagram 8.2 Check

FEN: rnbqkb1r / 1p3ppp / p2ppn2 / 8 / 2B1P3 / 2N2N2 / PP2Q3 / R1B2RK1 /

Eighth rank: black Rook, black Knight, black Bishop, black Queen, black King, black Bishop, empty square, black Rook, slash.
Seventh rank: empty square, black Pawn, three empty squares, three black Pawns, slash.
Sixth rank: black Pawn, two empty squares, two black Pawns, black Knight, two empty squares, slash.
Fifth rank: eight empty squares, slash.
Fourth rank: two empty squares, white Bishop, empty square, white Pawn, three empty squares, slash.
Third rank: two empty squares, white Knight, two empty squares, white Knight, two empty squares, slash.
Second rank: two white Pawns, two empty squares, white Queen, three white Pawns, slash.
First rank: white Rook, empty square, white Bishop, two1 empty squares, white Rook, white King, empty square, slash.