

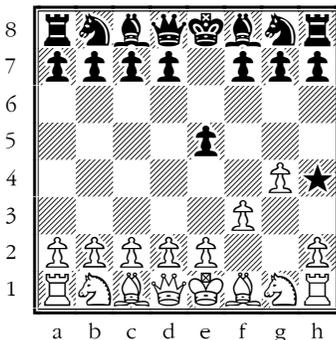
The “Quick” Mates & Other Basic Checkmates

Part 1: “Fools” Rush In, the “Fidgety King”, the “Knight's Dream”, “Scholar's” and the Other Four Move Checkmate

Concepts:

- The Fool's Mate (a.k.a. the “Two Move Mate”)!
- The Fidgety King and the Knight's Dream (a.k.a. the “Three Move Mates”)!
- The Scholar's Mate and the other Four Move Checkmate!
- The “Weakest Square(s)” on a chessboard: f7 and f2!

The Fastest Way to Lose a Chess Game: The Fool's Mate!

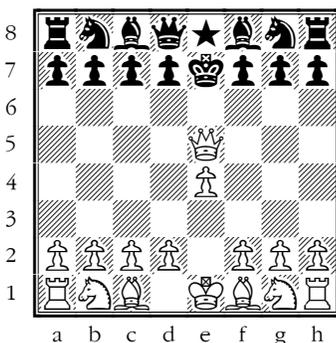


*The “Fool's” Mate:
Black plays 2...Qh4#*

In order for any of the “quick mates” to work, several fundamental principles of the Opening (Lessons 6 and 8) must be broken, as you can clearly see with the first and quickest checkmate on our list: *The Fool's Mate*, or checkmate in two moves. Only white can lose so quickly, and only by playing horrific starting moves.

White must start by moving either the f-pawn (1.f3 or 1.f4) or g-pawn (1.g4). Black then opens the Queen's diagonal (d8-h4) with either 1...e6 or 1...e5. White then follows with a second blunder (assuming 1.f3? was played, white then follows with 2.g4??) and black delivers checkmate on h4!

The First Checkmate in Three Moves: The Fidgety King!

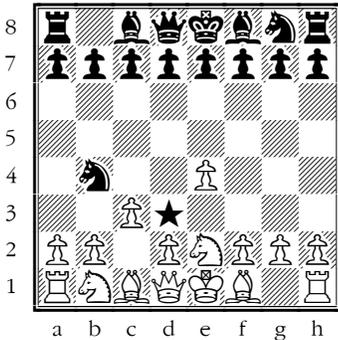


*1.e4 e5 2.Qh5 and
2...Ke8-e7?? 3.Qxh5#*

As we learned from the Fools Mate, your opponent must cooperate in order for checkmate to be achieved so quickly (any checkmate within four moves needs “help”). Because your opponent needs to assist you in some way, these “quick mates” might also be known as “help mates”.

The “Fidgety King”, a checkmate in three moves, is no exception. Your opponent's King must be “jumpy” or at least have a “crazy itch” in order to voluntarily leave the e8-square, walking directly into checkmate on e7. The moves used to reach the position are listed beneath the diagram.

Checkmate in Three Moves: The Knight's Dream!

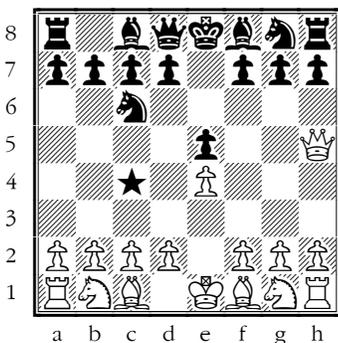


1.e4 Nc6 2.Ne2 Nb4
3.c3?? Nd3#

The second checkmate in three moves is slightly more logical in terms of development and Opening principles, though not by much. White does at least start with a great move, 1.e4; however, when white meets 1...Nc6 by black with the terrible 2.Ne2?! – blocking his own King, Queen and Bishop - disaster is bound to strike!

Black can then follow up with 2...Nb4 (noted should be that 2...Ne5 can also reach the d3-square in three moves, though it doesn't “tempt” white into the horrific blunder on move three) and when white can't help but attack the b4-Knight with 3.c3?? - black delivers mate with 3...Nd3#

The Scholar's Mate, Step 1: White Develops the Queen Early for Tricks!

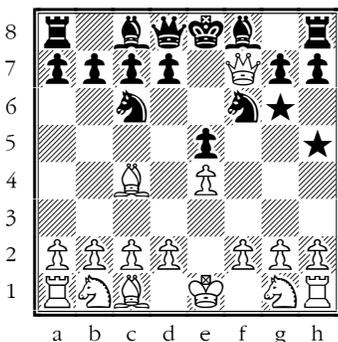


When white develops
2.Qh5, the natural 2...Nc6
defends the e5-pawn...

The “weakest square(s)” in chess are f7 and f2, as these squares are defended by the Kings alone. The plan 1.e4 e5 2.Qh5 targets the f7-square, but also attacks the e5-pawn. So unlike any of the previous three “quick mates”, the Scholar's Mate can not totally be classified as a “help mate”. If black is to develop 2...Nf6 for example, white would then play 3.Qxe5+ – winning a pawn.

Black's best move, 2...Nc6, defends the e5-pawn but leaves the door open for a trap. Once white develops the f1-Bishop to the c4-square, black must not focus solely on the development of his kingside or on attacking white's Queen, black must remember the weakness on f7...

The Scholar's Mate, Step 2: Black Falls Into White's Trap, Checkmate on f7!

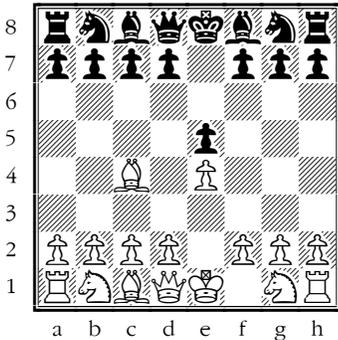


After 3.Bc4, it is easy for
black to blunder 3...Nf6,
attacking the Queen

After the natural, yet terrible blunder, 3...Nf6?? – white uses the h5-e8 diagonal to “slip around” the f6-knight and capture the f7-pawn, delivering checkmate and leaving the black King stunned as to why his army did not come to his defense! Note white's Queen is defended by the c4-Bishop.

Black did indeed have multiple ways to defend this tricky threat of checkmate. 3...Qe7, 3...Qf6, 3...Nh6 and the best move, 3...g6. 3...g6 chases the white Queen from h5, and after 4..Nf6 and 5...Bg7, black has completed development and is ready to castle and bring safety to the King.

The “Helpers” Four-Move Checkmate, Step 1: Develop and Hope for Help!

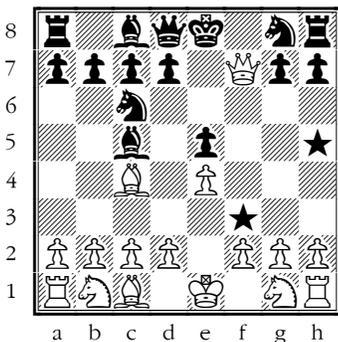


The natural 2...Nf6 would both attack the e4-pawn and prevent checkmate...

There is another common way beginners will try for a “quick mate”. The Bishop's Opening – defined as 1.e4 e5 2.Bc4 – is not a bad approach from white as it does attack the weakest square; however, it should be met by 2...Nf6, attacking the e4-pawn and closing off access to his weak f7-square – as the f6-Knight blocks the f-file and guards h5.

After 2...Nf6 white would likely defend the e4-pawn with either 3.d3 or 3.Nc3. Both players would then focus on completing their development as they prepare to castle their Kings and battle in the Middlegame. However, if black is in a “helpful” mood, he might choose a less aggressive path and allow white to increase the pressure on f7.

The “Helpers” Four-Move Checkmate, Step 2: Help is On the Way!



Black would need to blunder on move 3, allowing 4.Qxf7#

If black instead chose a second move such as 2...Nc6, white could then continue with either 3.Qh5 (similar to Scholar's) or 3.Qf3. Both moves threaten to capture f7, and when another “neglectful” developing move such as 3...Bc5?? is made – white can end the game with 4.Qxf7#

This second four move checkmate is referred to as the “helpers” mate because black's moves were dubious and “helped” white's plan to attack f7. Black ignored defense of the weakest square. If black had chosen more logical moves (either 2...Nf6 or a move to defend f7 on move 3) there would have been no checkmate in four moves.

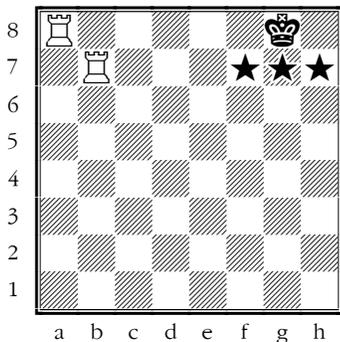
The “Quick” Mates & Other Basic Checkmates

Part 2: Other Basic Checkmate Ideas and Patterns

Concepts:

- The Back Rank Checkmate
- The Smothered Checkmate
- Simple “Support Mates” and Basic Checkmate Strategy!

Back Rank Checkmate, Example 1: The “Rook Roller” Pattern!

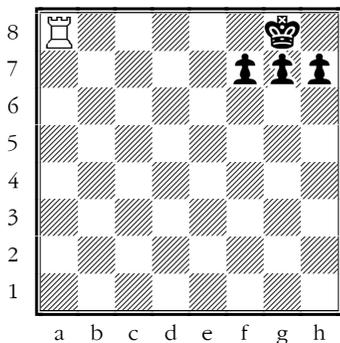


Black's King is trapped against the back rank...

Now that we have learned the “quick mates” and the most basic checkmates that can occur in the Opening stage of the game, in Part 2 we take a look at several fundamental checkmate ideas and patterns that can occur in a chess game and that every beginning chess player should know.

The “Back Rank Mate” is simply defined as a checkmate where the enemy King is trapped against his own back rank. Here we see an example familiar with the pattern we learned in Lesson 4, Part 2...

Back Rank Checkmate, Example 2: The King is Trapped by His Own Army!

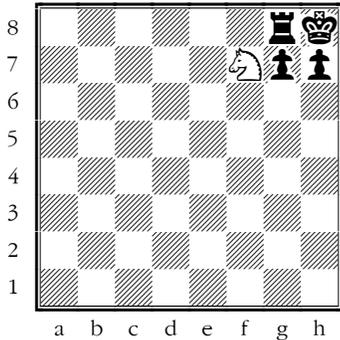


Black's King is trapped against the back rank... by his OWN Pawns!

Perhaps the most commonly reached version of a Back Rank Mate is one where the enemy King finds himself trapped along the back row (either 8th or 1st rank) by his **own** pawns. Notice that black's pawns “replace” all the squares the white rook on b7 guarded in Example 1.

In some cases, a player may move one of the pawns forward – imagine the black h-pawn on h6 rather than h7, thus providing the h7 square as an “escape route” for the otherwise trapped King – in order to create some “breathing room” for the King. This is a common defensive idea, preventing a Back Rank Mate tactic from taking place...

The Smothered Checkmate: The King Created His Own Prison!

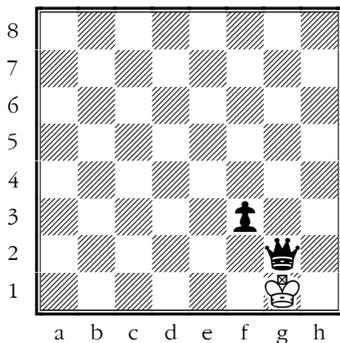


White has just delivered the final blow: 1.Nf7 mate!

Here we have a “Smothered Checkmate.” Only a Knight can deliver a Smothered Mate, as by definition the King must be directly surrounded by his own pieces, and only the Knight can deliver a check through without directly facing the King on an open diagonal or file.

This checkmate is called "smothered" because the King is squeezed in by its own pieces and cannot breathe. There are many beautiful combinations that climax in a smothered checkmate position. The notorious “Venus Fly Trap” named after the deadly flower, can be seen in action in both ChessKid.com videos as well as articles.

A “Support” Checkmate, Example 1

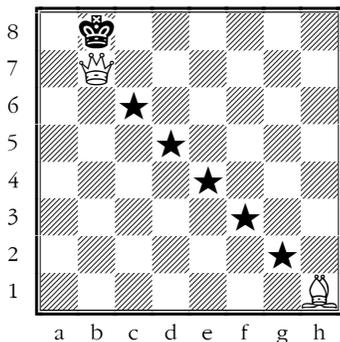


The black Queen is defended by the f3-pawn!

The final basic checkmate pattern all beginning chess players should know is a “Support Mate”. Unlike the Back Rank or Smothered Mate, a Support Mate requires the help of another piece. This “teammate” or “helper” must provide protection for the Queen as she delivers the final blow.

Here we see the most common example for the term “Support” Mate. The black Queen on g2, checkmating the white King on g1, is protected by the Pawn on f3. This pattern can occur on any edge of the board: The 1st or 8th ranks, or the a or h files...

A “Support” Checkmate, Example 2



The distant Bishop covers the checkmating Queen!

A Support Mate occurs when the Queen gives checkmate and is protected by either a Pawn or Minor piece. However, the protecting piece is not required to be right next to the Queen and can “protect Big Momma” from afar. In many cases, the Queen is guarded by a Knight or Bishop.

With white's last move being 1.Qb7 checkmate, we see the trapped black King with no safe square. Black cannot capture the enemy “First Lady” because of the h1-Bishop's long range protection. Like the King and Queen vs King checkmate in Lesson 4, Part 1 – The Queen can chase and corner an enemy King, but she needs help to finish the job!



The “Quick” Mates & Other Basic Checkmates

Instructor's Guide

Learning the “Quick Mates” (Part 1) can be fun and one of the most crucial lessons for a beginning chess player; it provides the first examples of a complete game. However impractical that game may be, a coach should use this opportunity to help each student understand that winning material and capturing all of their opponent's pieces is **not always necessary** to achieve checkmate. The goal of Chess is not the same goal as Checkers! Remind each student of the importance of defending their “weakest square” (f7 or f2); understanding this principle is essential for every chess player's growth.

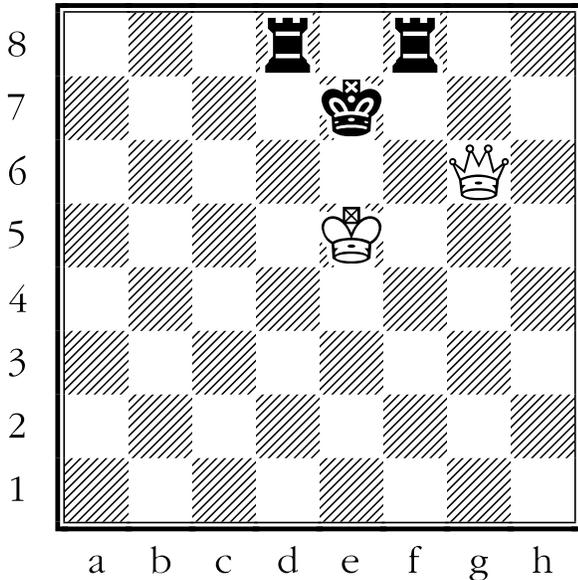
The three “Basic Checkmate Patterns” we chose for Part 2 were selected because of their practical value. Back Rank combinations, Smothered Checkmates, and the other basic “Support” mating patterns occur with the most frequency in tournament play; however, we recommend placing just as much emphasis on the importance of memorizing the other checkmate patterns included in the “Famous Checkmates” worksheets.

Practical Notes and Advice – Lesson 7:

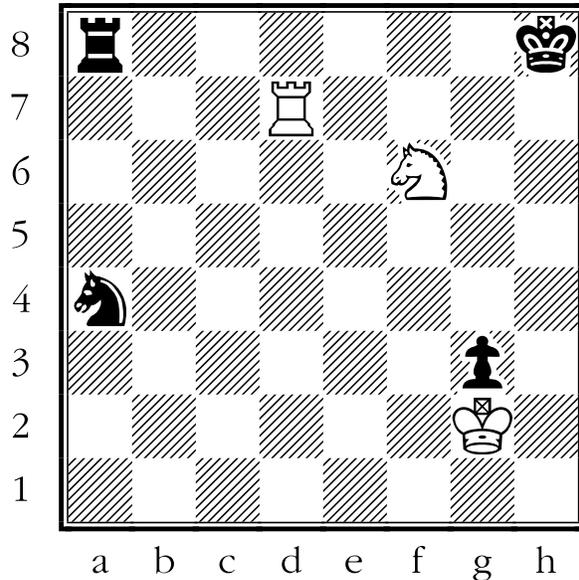
- Use the “Guarding f2 and f7” worksheet as an opportunity to remind the student(s) that while knowing the “Quick Mates” is important, it is not always good to try for a checkmate so early in the game, as this will likely lead to a loss of time and risk of the Queen to be attacked by the Minor Pieces.
- Though not every position included in the “Famous Checkmates” worksheets will occur on a regular basis during practical play, all of them display an important checkmate pattern that should be memorized. To help these ideas become concrete in every child/students' mind, we recommend:
 1. When instructing large groups, set up the positions in the “Famous Checkmates” worksheets on a demo board for group discussion before asking the students to solve them on their own.
 2. Associate each checkmate pattern's ***original name*** with the diagram, as this will further cement the idea, and by making the positions “personal” a coach will increase each child's mental imprint of the checkmate pattern.

Lesson 7: Famous Checkmates

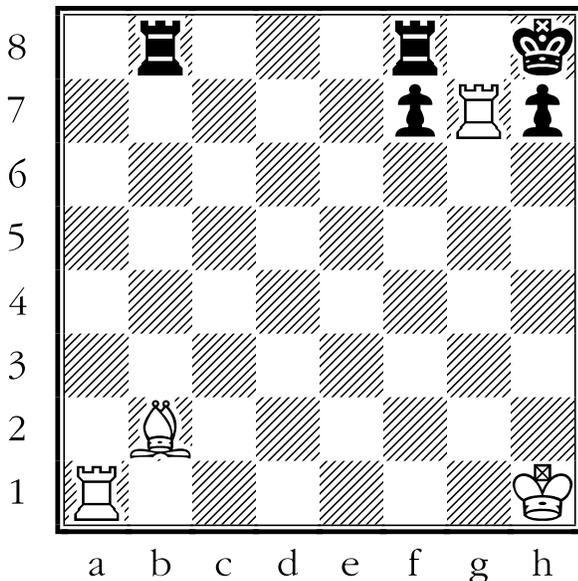
The following diagrams are checkmate in either one or two moves. These “famous” patterns should be memorized by all beginning chess players.



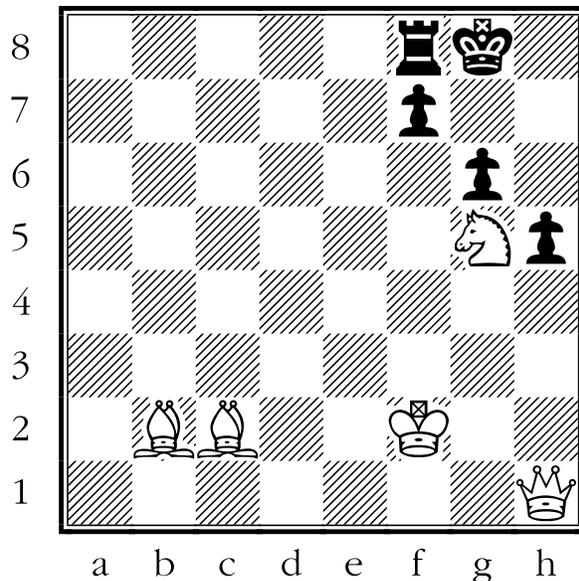
The “Swallow’s Tail” Mate:
White to play, checkmate in one move



The “Arabian” Mate:
White to play, checkmate in one move



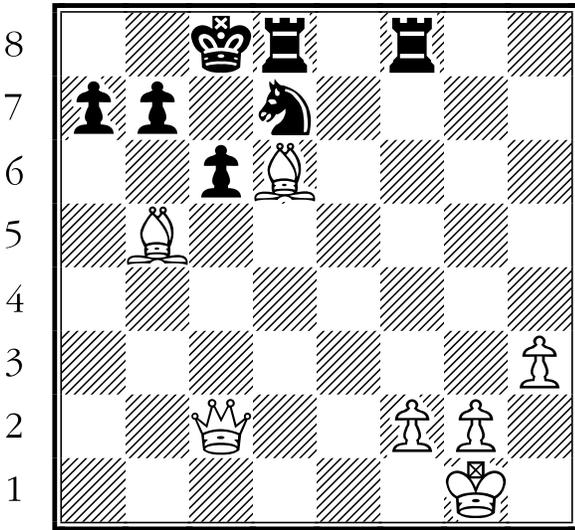
“Pillsbury’s” Mate:
White to play, checkmate in two moves



“Blackburne’s” Mate:
White to play, checkmate in two moves

Lesson 7: Famous Checkmates

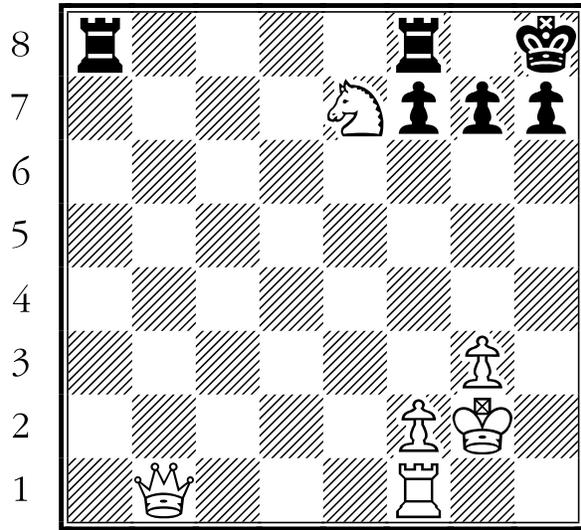
The following diagrams are checkmate in either one or two moves. These “famous” patterns should be memorized by all beginning chess players. Further descriptions with answer key.



a b c d e f g h

“Boden's or Criss-Cross” Mate:

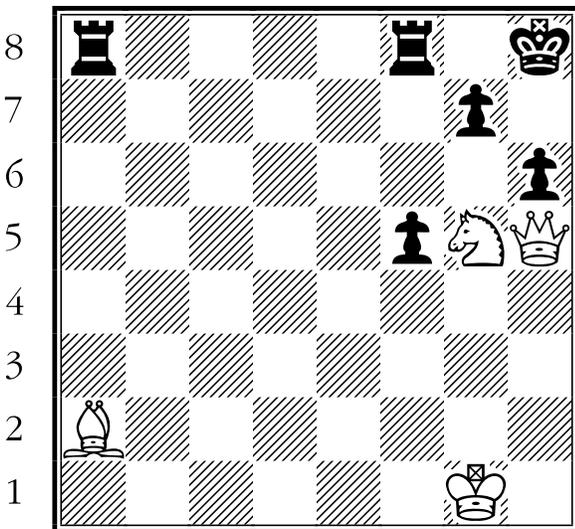
White to play, checkmate in two moves



a b c d e f g h

“Anastasia's” Mate:

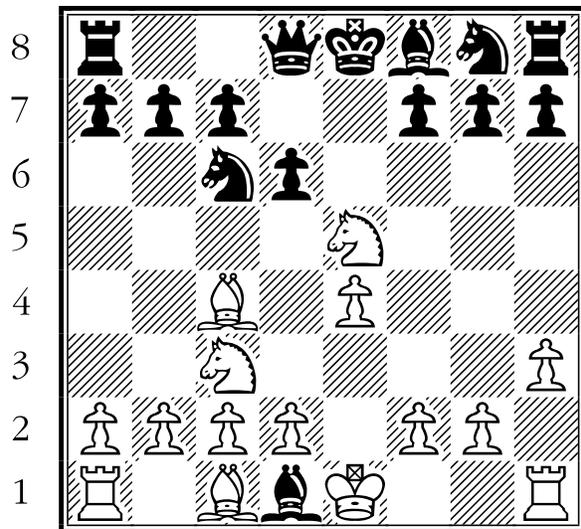
White to play, checkmate in two moves



a b c d e f g h

“Greco's” Mate:

White to play, checkmate in two moves



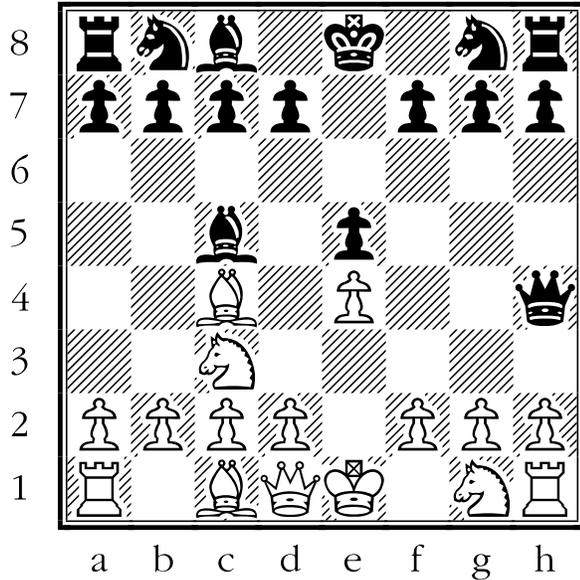
a b c d e f g h

“Legal's” Mate:

White to play, checkmate in two moves

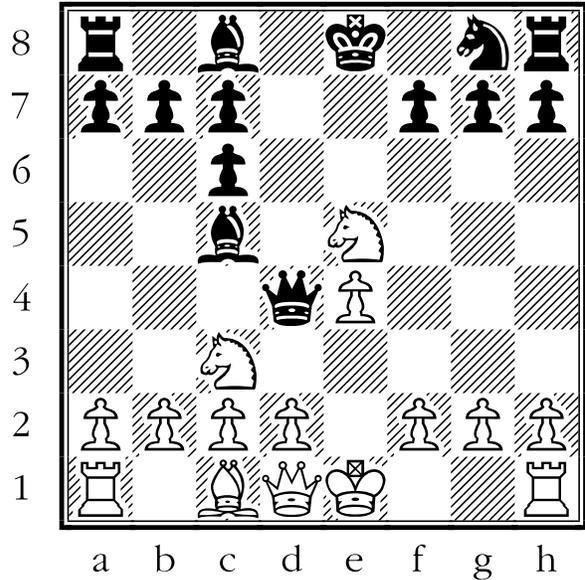
Lesson 7: Guarding f2 and f7

In the following diagrams there is a threat of either checkmate or the win of material on the f2 or f7 square. Find the best way to guard the “weakest squares” against threats! Circle your favorite piece that can protect, and for bonus points, write your move below each diagram.



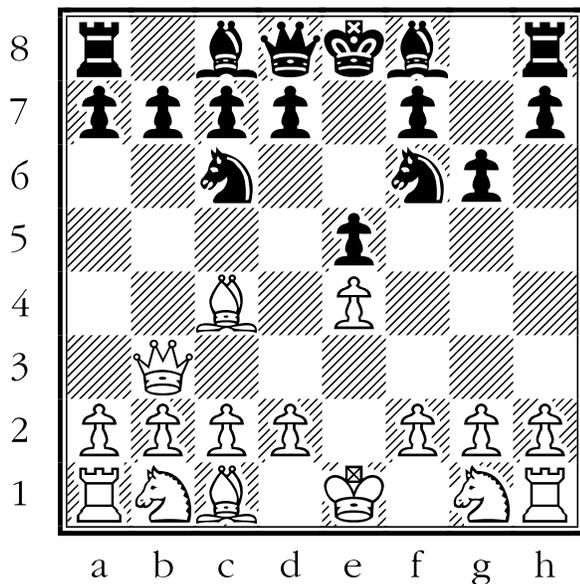
How can white protect f2?

White to play: _____



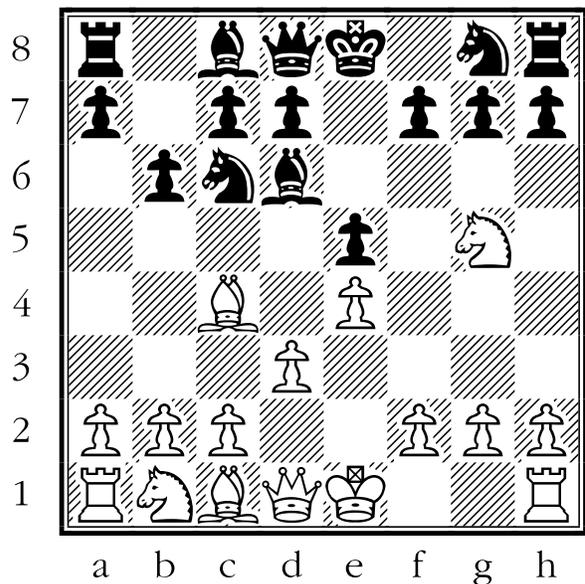
How can white protect f2?

White to play: _____



How can black protect f7?

Black to play: _____



How can black protect f7?

Black to play: _____

The “Quick” Mates & Other Basic Checkmates

Answer Key

“Famous Checkmates” Worksheet Page 1:

Diagram #1 – 1.Qe6#

Diagram #2 – 1.Rg8!! Kxg8 2.Rg1#

Diagram #3 – 1.Rh7#

Diagram #4 – 1.Qxh5 gxh5 (1...f8-R anywhere, Qh8# and 1...f6 or 1...f5 2.Qh7#) 2.Bh7#

“Famous Checkmates” Worksheet Page 2:

Diagram #1 – 1.Qxc6+! bxc6 2.Ba6#

Diagram #2 – 1.Qg6! hxg5 (any other move 2.Qh7#) 2.Qh5#

Diagram #3 – 1.Qxh7+! Kxh7 2.Rh1#

Diagram #4 – 1.Bxf7+! Ke7 2.Nd5#

“Guarding f2 and f7” – Worksheet Page:

Diagram #1 – 1.Qe2, 1.Qf3, 1.d4 and 1.Nh3 are correct. 1.Qe2 is best followed by developing the g1-Knight to f3.

Diagram #2 – 1...Qe7, 1...d5 and 1...Nd5 are correct. 1...Qe7 is best as both of the other options lose material for black.

Diagram #3 – 1.Qe2, 1.Qf3, 1.0-0, 1.Ng4 and 1.Nd3 are correct. 1.Nd3 is best as it is the only move that guards f2 and protects the e5-Knight.

Diagram #4 – 1...Nh6, 1...Qe7 and 1...Qf6 are correct. 1...Nh6 is best.