

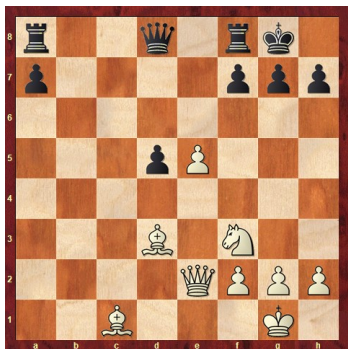
A Greek Gift

Thanks to Mark who runs the chess club at Isis for these puzzles. Number 6 has an interesting twist.

A Greek Gift sacrifice is when white attacks the castled king starting with Bxh7+ and following with moves like Ng5+, Qh5 and h4. It is very dangerous and often leads to a quick win. It is equally powerful for black to play Bxh2+ and follow up with Ng4+, Qh4 and h5. Here are eight puzzles that illustrate the main ideas. No prizes for guessing the first moves but see if you can see the follow-ups.

1 White to play

White has all the ingredients for a Greek Gift sacrifice: B on d3, N on f3 and Q on e2 and B on c1. The white pawn on e5 and lack of black knight on f6 also helps. How did white win?



5 White to play

This looks like a classic set up but black can try to defend with Re8 and run away with the king. How does white prevent this?



2 White to play

White does not have a bishop on c1. Does the bishop sacrifice still win?



6 Black to play

Black has no pawn on e4. Does the Greek Gift sacrifice still work?

3 White to play

White has all the ingredients for a Greek Gift sacrifice: B on c2, N on f3, Q on d1, B on c1 and pawn on e5. But white also has a pawn on g5 stopping Ng5. Does the bishop sacrifice still work?



7 Black to play

Black seems to have everything in place. Does the bishop sacrifice work?



8 White to play

This is unusual because the black pawn is on f6. How should white proceed?



4 White to play

Everything looks set for a Greek Gift sacrifice. How should white continue?



1 Here is how the Greek Gift sacrifice works

[#] 1.♔xh7+ ♖xh7 2.♕g5+ ♖g8
two main move Kg8 or Kg6
[2...♔h6 loses the queen to 3.♕xf7+]
[2...♔h8 loses to 3.♖h5+ ♖g8 4.♖h7#
checkmate]
[2...♔g6 also loses but white has to hunt
the king 3.♖c2+ f5 best 4.exf6+ ♖xf6
5.♖c6+ ♖e5 (5...♔e7 6.♖e6#) 6.f4+
the black king is in the open and will
eventually run out of squares ♔d4 7.♔b2+
♔e3 8.♖c3+ ♔e2 9.♖c2+ ♔e3 10.♔c1+
♔d4 11.♕f3#]
3.♖h5 ♖e8 4.♖xf7+
[4.♖h7+ is just as good after ♔f8
5.♔a3+]
4...♔h8 5.♖h5+ ♖g8 6.♖h7+ ♔f8
7.♖h8+ ♔e7 8.♖xg7# checkmate

2 White can force the black king into the open

[#] 19.♔xh7+ ♖xh7 20.♕g5+ ♖g6
[20...♔g8 21.♖h4 and black has to give up
the queen to stop checkmate]
21.h4 ♖c4 22.♖d4 ♖xd4 23.♖xd4
♕c4 24.♖d3+ ♔h5 25.♖h7+ ♖g4
26.♕e6 fxe6
[after 26...g6 white can go for checkmate
with 27.f3+ or take the queen]
27.♖g6+ ♖xh4 28.g3+ ♔h3 29.♖xe6+
♖f5 30.♖xf5# checkmate

3 White gives up the g5 pawn to make way for the knight

[#] 1.♔xh7+ ♖xh7 2.g6+ ♖g8
[2...fxg6 3.♕g5+ ♖g8 4.♖f3 is the same
as the main line]
[2...♔xg6 3.♖d3+ f5 4.exf6+ ♖xf6
(4...♔f7 5.♕g5+ ♖xf6 6.♖f3+ ♖g6
7.♖f7+ wins) 5.♕g5+ wins the queen]
3.♕g5 fxg6 4.♖f3 ♖a7 5.♖h3
and black can only stop Qh7 checkmate by
giving up the queen

4 A classic Greek Gift sacrifice

[#] 1.♔xh7+ ♖xh7 2.♕g5+ ♖g6
[2...♔g8 3.♖h5 leads to checkmate]
3.h4 ♖f6 4.h5+ ♖h6 5.exf6 gxf6
6.♕xe6+ wins the queen

5 White plays Qxf7+ if black moves the f8 rook

[#] 1.♔xh7+ ♖xh7 2.♕g5+ ♖g8
[2...♔g6 3.h4 f5 4.h5+ ♖h6 5.♕xe6+
wins the queen]
3.♖h5 ♖e8 4.♖xf7+ ♔h8 5.♖h5+
♖g8 6.♖h7+ ♔f8 Now it becomes clear
why the f7 pawn was captured 7.♖h8+
♔e7 8.♖xg7# checkmate

6 The rook on e8 makes up for having no e4 pawn

[#] 1...♔xh2+ 2.♔xh2 ♕g4+ 3.♔g3
[3.♔g1 ♖h5 and white cannot prevent
checkmate]
3...♖g5 4.♖xg4 it looks as though white is
wriggling out but black has a spectacular
reply 4...♕f5+ 5.♔f3 Kh3 and Kh2 lose
the queen 5...♖e3+ 6.fxe3 ♖xe3#
checkmate

7 The sacrifice does not work because black does not control e4

[#] 1...♔xh2+ 2.♔xh2 ♕g4+ 3.♔g3
♖g5
[Or 3...♖d6+ 4.f4 exf3+ 5.♔xf3 ♕h2+
6.♔e2 ♕xf1 7.♔xf1 and white can
defend]
4.♕dx4 ♖g6 5.♔f3 ♕h2+ 6.♔e2
♕xf1 7.♔xf1 and the white king is safe

8 the pawn on f6 makes white change move order

[#] 1.♕g5 fxg5 Black should have played
f5 but after g4 white is still on top
2.♔xh7+ ♖xh7 3.hxg5+ ♖g6
[3...♔g8 4.♖h8+ ♖xh8 5.♖h5+ ♖g8 6.g6
and black cannot prevent checkmate]
4.♖h5+ and checkmate cannot be avoided
after 4... Kf5 5 Rh3

Puzzles from HMP Leeds

Thanks to Stephen who runs the chess club at Leeds for these puzzles. The first one is a spectacular finish.

1 White to play

White has a quick win here. Can you see it? .



5 White to play

This time black played g6 and Bg7 before castling. Now the bishop has been exchanged and the black king is vulnerable. How did white take advantage of this?



2 White to play

The queen and knight work well together in attack. This puzzle is a good example. White's first move sets up the kill. How did the game end?



6 White to play ...

A third example when black played g6 and Bg7 before castling. Now the bishop has been exchanged and the black king is vulnerable. How did white use this weakness to win material?

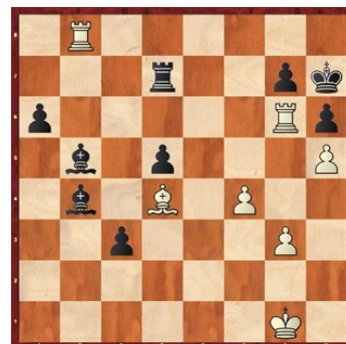
3 White to play

The white knight on g6 cannot be attacked by a black pawn. This makes g6 an outpost. White used this outpost for a quick win. Can you see how?



7 Black to play ...

The black king has no squares. How did white use this to score a quick win?



4 Black to play

White often plays the pawn to g3 and bishop to g2 before castling. This is a strong set up but can become weak if the bishop moves away. How did Black exploit white's weakened king?



8 Black to play

Both sides are attacking but it is black to move first. Can you see a quick win?

Answers

1

1 Qc6 creates the winning threat 2 Ra6+. This leads to checkmate. Black can take the queen with 1 ... bxc6 but then white can play 2 Ra6 checkmate

2

White can set up a fork between the black king and queen by playing 1 Nc7+. Then 1 ... Ke7 allows 2 Qxd8+ Kxd8 3 Ne6+ and 4 Nxg7 when White has an extra piece

3

1 Ne7+ Qxe7 lures the black queen to an unfortunate square and now 2 Qxf5 leaves white with a winning material advantage after 2 ... exf5 3 Rxe7 fxg4 4 Rxc7

4

1 ... Qe1+ leads to a beautiful checkmate after 2 Rxe1 Rxe1+ 3 Kg2 Bf1+ 4 Kf3 (4 Kg1 Bh3 checkmate) 4 ... g4+ 5 Kf4 Bh6 checkmate

5

1 f6+ Kh8 2 Qh6 threatens checkmate and forces 2 ... Rg8. Now white can attack along the h-file. After 3 Rf4 Bxd3 (the only way to prevent an immediate checkmate is 3 ... Qf8 but then 4 Qxf8 and 5 Rxe4 leaves White a piece up) the immediate 4 Rh4 is parried by 4 ... g5 but white can play 4 Qxh7+ Kxh7 5 Rh4 checkmate

6

5.Nf5+ Kg8 6.Nxd4 winning. The solution is quite simple but can be difficult to find because so many pieces are attacked

7

1.Rxh6 gxh6 (Kxh6 is met the same way) 2.Rh8 checkmate

8

1 ... Qxe1+ 2 Rxe1 c1Q is decisive as 3 Rxc1 Rxc1+ 4 Kg2 R8c2+ will lead to a winning advantage after either 5 Kf3 Rf1+ 6 Kg3 Rg1+ or 5 Kh3 Rh1+ 6 Kg3 Rg1+ as the white queen is lost in both cases.

Inside Chess Club 28

The Queens Gambit

The Queens Gambit is one of the most popular openings for white. It has been played by every World Champion. White usually gets more space and black looks to counterattack. Here is an example when it all goes right. We also look at an alternative idea where white attacks on the flank.

1 d4 d5
2 c4 e6



The starting position for the Queens Gambit. 2 c4 tempts black to take the pawn. Then white would take the centre with e4 and Nf3. This is playable for black but white usually gets more space and more attacking chances.

3 Nc3 Nf6
4 Bg5 Be7
5 e3 0-0
6 Nf3 Nbd7
7 Rc1 Re8
8 Bd3 c6



A typical Queens Gambit position. White has more space and actively placed pieces. Black's main problem is to find a good square for the queen's bishop. The most common plan is to strike back in the centre with ... c5 or ... e5.

9 0-0 dxc4
10 Bxc4 Nd5
11 Bxe7 Qxe7
12 Ne4 Ndf6
13 Ng3 c5

Black offers exchanges on moves 10 and 12 but white chooses to build up on the kingside.



Black finally strikes back in the centre but it proves to be a bit late.

14 e4 Rd8
15 e5 Ne8
16 Re1 cxd4
17 Nf5

This is a fantastic move that opens up the black position. The bishop on c4 is aiming directly at the black king and becomes very powerful.



17 exf5

Black can try 17 ... Qf8 but 18 Qxd4 Nc7 19 Qh4 leaves white with a promising attack.

18 e6 Kh8

18 ... fxe6 would be a disaster after 19 Rxe6 and the black queen cannot move. If, for example, 19 ... Qb4 20 Rxe8 checkmate

19 exf7 Qf8
20 Ng5 resigns

White is in complete control. Play might continue 20 ... Nef6 21 Ne6 Qe7 22 Qxd4 Rf8 23 Nc7 Ne5 24 Nxa8 and it's grim for black.

An Alternative to the Queens Gambit

The Queens Gambit is a fine opening and I hope you give it a try. If it has a drawback it is that many games end in draws. The World's best players have worked out how to play against it and we can follow their ideas.

I am experimenting with an alternative which I think of as the Queens Gambit without d4. This sounds like a contradiction but it sets black unusual problems similar to the Chaos on Board ideas we saw in Inside Chess 25. Here is an example.

1 Nf3 Nf6 2 c4 c5 3 Nc3 d5 4 cxd5 Nxd5 5 e3 Nxc3 6 bxc3 g6 7 h4



Up until this move white played the Queens Gambit moves except for d4. Now white throws in a surprise with h4. It is no better than d4 but it sets black different problems.

7 ... Bg7 8 h5 Nc6 9 Ba3 Qa5 10 Rh4 I love this move. It sets black unusual problems, breaks all the rules and defends the bishop on a3. If 10... Qxa3 11 Ra4 Qb2 12 Rb1 wins the queen.

10 ... Bd7 11 Qb3 0-0 12 hxg6 hxg6 13 Qxb7 Rfd8 14 Qa6 Bxc3

This looks clever because white cannot play 15 dxc3 Qxc3+ and the rook on a1 is lost. However, 14 ... Bf6 was better.

15 Qxa5 Bxa5 16 Bxc5 Be6 17 Bb5 Ne5

Black is fighting. 18 Nxe5 fails to 18 ... Bxd2+ 19 Kf1 Bc3.

18 Nd4 Rd5 19 Bxe7 Kg7 20 f4 Nd7 21 f5 Bxf5 22 Bc6 Re5 23 Nxf5+ gxf5 24 Bg5 Kg6 25 Bf4 and white is winning.

This is an example of Chaos on Board. White set black difficult problems with h4 and Rh4. By avoiding d4 white has less control over the centre but deprives black of a point to attack and allows the attack on the h file. Try the Queens Gambit and maybe try similar set ups without d4.

Put rooks on open files

Thanks to Mark who runs the chess club at Isis for these puzzles. Numbers 7 and 8 are difficult to spot

Rooks are more powerful when they do not have pawns in front of them because then they control more squares. We looked at this theme a few weeks ago but Mark has found eight more examples. In every case a powerful rook helps to win the game. See if you can find the answers.

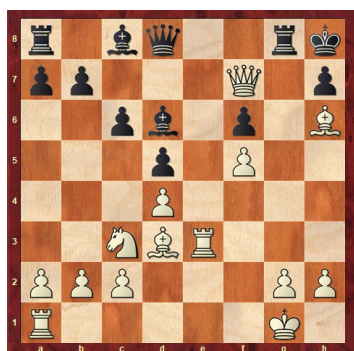
1 White to play

White has both rooks on the e file and a rook on the seventh rank. That is about as good as it gets. Can you find the winning move for white?



5 Black to play

We saw a similar idea last week. Black can use the h file to devastating effect. Can you see how?



2 White to play

White's queen is on a dangerous square but black seems to have everything defended. Can you see a move for white that cuts through black's defences?



6 Black to play

The black king is in check. Is it safe for it to move to c5? The only real difference between the two sides is that the white rook is more powerful than the black rook.

3 White to play

White has a queen and bishop attacking f7 and two rooks on the open h file. How can white use the rooks to deliver checkmate?



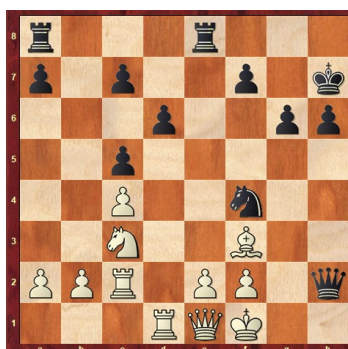
7 Black to play

Black has a rook on the open h file and this looks similar to the previous puzzle but there is an extra twist. Can you follow it through?



4 White to play

The key to this position is to cut off the black king's escape. It is easy enough to force a check or two but harder to work out how to stop the king running away.



8 Black to play

Black has the king cornered and Qh6+ is probably good enough. But can you see a more decisive win?

Answers

1 White has a quick checkmate by giving up the rook

[#] 1.♖f7+ ♜xf7 2.♚e7# **checkmate**

2 White uses the rook on an open file to overload black's defences. Black cannot keep defending the rook on g8 and the pawn on f6

[#] 1.♖e8 Now black cannot defend the queen, the rook and the f pawn all at once. If 1...♜xe8 [1...♚xe8 2.♚xf6+ ♜g7 3.♚xg7# **checkmate**] 2.♚g7# **checkmate**

3 White sacrifices the queen to get the rooks into play

[#] 1.♚xg8+ ♜xg8 2.♖h8+ ♜xh8 3.♙f7# **checkmate**

4 The white rooks do not move but the rook on e1 plays a key role in cutting off the king's escape

[#] 1.♙h5 ♙xh5 2.♚h7+ ♜f8 3.♙d5 [This is a great move cutting off the king's escape and forcing black to give up the queen 3.♚h8+ ♜e7 4.♙d5+ ♜d6 5.♙xc7 ♜xh8 6.♙xa8 ♜xa8 is good for black] If 3...exd5 4.♚h8#

5 Black gives up both rooks to bring the queen into play

[#] 1...♙g3+ 2.hxg3 hxg3+ 3.♜g1 If you ever get a position like this enjoy it. Black gives up both rooks to allow the queen to give checkmate 3...♜h1+ 4.♜xh1 ♜h8+ 5.♜g1 ♜h1+ 6.♜xh1 ♚h8+ 7.♜g1 ♚h2+ 8.♜f1 ♚h1# **checkmate**

6 Kc5 is a mistake. White can threaten checkmate on c6 to create a mating net

6...♜c5 7.♖d6 ♙xd6 8.♙e3# **checkmate**

7 Well done if you saw this one. It is quite an elaborate checkmate

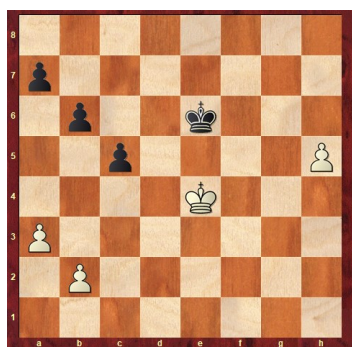
[#] 1...♜h1+ black gives up a rook to get the queen into the attack 2.♜xh1 ♚h7+ 3.♜g1 ♚h2+ 4.♜xh2 ♙f3+ 5.♜h3 ♜h8# **checkmate**

8 White can use the rook on the e file to disrupt white's defences

[#] 1...♖e3 smashing open the king's defences 2.fxe3 [2.♙d5 white can try ♜xf3 but 3.♙f6+ ♜h8 4.exf3 ♚h1# is checkmate] 2...♙h3 3.♚g3 the only way to prevent immediate checkmate 3...♚xg3 4.♙xa8 ♚g1# **checkmate**

Puzzles from HMP Isis

Thanks to Mark who runs the chess club at Isis for these puzzles. They are all endgames and often involve the threat of queening a pawn.

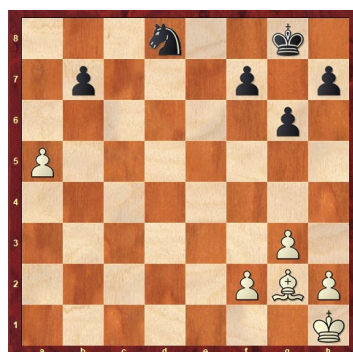


1 White to play and win

A passed pawn is a big advantage in an endgame.

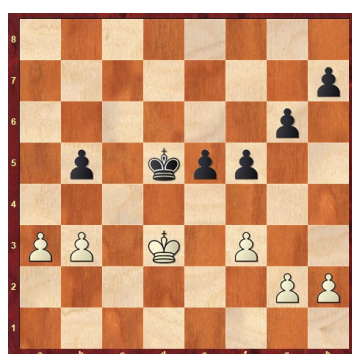
The plan is to push the passed pawn. Your opponent's king has to chase it leaving your king free to take lots of pawns.

Try this plan here.



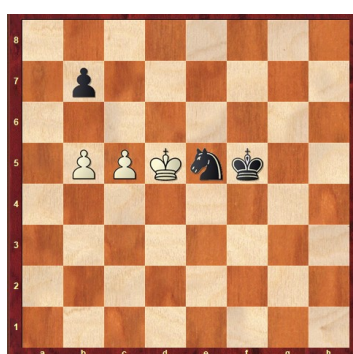
5 White to play and win

Material is equal. Can white queen a pawn?



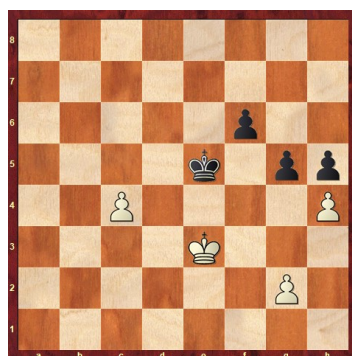
2 White to play and win

This is a bit more complicated but white wins by adopting the same plan. Push the passed pawn, force the king to chase it and take as many pawns as you can.



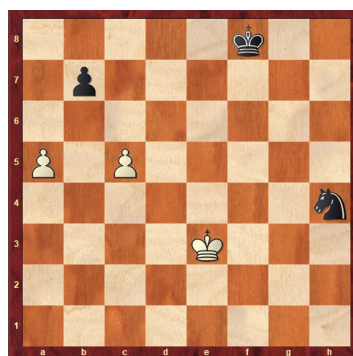
6 Black to play and draw

White is threatening to play Kd6, Kc7 and Kxb7. What can black do to disrupt this?



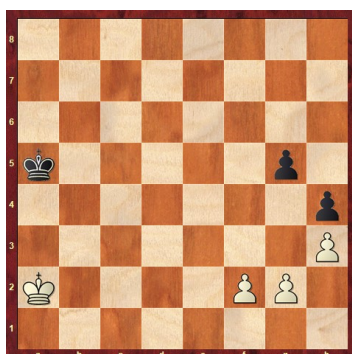
3 White to play and win

The white pawn is not far enough away from the other pawns for our previous plan to work here. 1 c5 Kd5 is a draw. Can you see another way for white to win?



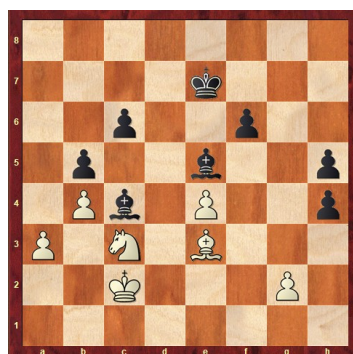
7 White to play and win

White needs to act quickly before the black king runs across and blocks the white pawns. The key decision is on move 2 White has moves that win. Lose and draw.



4 White to play and win

The pawns are on the same side this time. Should white move the king or move a pawn?



8 Black to play and win

This position was reached in a recent game by Mark, who runs the chess club at HMP Isis. He solved it, can you?

Hint. One line continues the theme of a knight trying to stop a pawn.

1 White wins by pushing the passed pawn immediately

. 1.h6 ♖f6 2.♔d5 ♖g6 3.♖c6 ♖xh6 4.a4 ♖g6 5.♖b7 ♖f5 6.♖xa7 ♖e5 7.♖xb6 ♚ and white wins.

2 The same plan works here

1.h4 h6 2.a4 b4
[2...bxa4 3.bxa4 g5 4.hxg5 hxg5 5.a5 ♖c5 6.g4 f4 7.♖e4 ♖d6 8.a6 and white wins the black pawns.]
3.a5 ♖c5 4.a6 ♖b6 5.♖c4 ♖xa6 6.♔d5 e4 7.fxe4 fxe4 8.♖xe4 ♖b6 9.♔d4 ♖b5 10.♔d5 and white wins the black pawns.

3 This is spectacular. Not many players would see this

[#] Unbelievable but 1.g4 simply wins, White will get a passed pawn that queens. If 1...hxg4
[1...gxh4 2.gxh5 h3 3.♖f3 h2 4.♖g2 and one of the white pawns queens.]
2.h5 ♖e6 3.h6 ♖f7 4.c5 and one of the white pawns queens.

4 The threat of pawns promoting to queens is often present in endgames

[#] 1.g3 is a massive mistake.
[After 1.♖b3 ♖b5 2.♖c3 ♖c5 3.♔d3 ♖d5 4.♖e3 ♖e5 5.g4 hxg3 6.fxg3 ♖f5 7.♔d4 ♖f6 8.♖e4 ♖e6 9.g4 white should win.]
1...g4 Black breaks through and one of his pawns promotes to a queen. Whichever pawn white takes, black queens first.

5 Knights are not good at defending against pawns. You can see this in the next four puzzles.

[#] 1.♙xb7 ♜xb7 2.a6 and black cannot stop the white pawn from queening.

6 It is tough to defend these types of endings when the pawns are rushing forward

3...♞f7 is a big mistake.
[3...♖f6 4.♔d6 ♞f7+ leads to a draw. For example. 5.♖c7 ♖e6 6.♖xb7 ♔d5 7.c6 ♞d6+ 8.♖b6 ♞c4+ 9.♖a6 ♖c5 10.c7 ♞b6 11.♖b7 ♖xb5]
4.c6 bxc6+ 5.bxc6 and black cannot stop the pawn.

7 White has to try pushing the pawns. It turns out that only Kf2 on move 2 wins

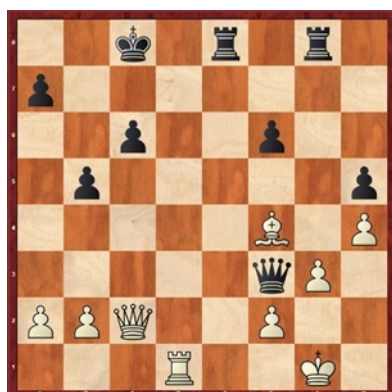
[#] 1.c6 If Black plays ... 1...♞f5+ White has to be careful 2.♖f2
[2.♖f4 ♞d6 3.cxb7 ♞xb7 4.a6 ♞c5 5.a7 ♞e6+ ♚ 6.♖e5 ♞c7 7.♔d6 ♞b5+ and black draws.]
[2.♖f3 ♞d4+ 3.♖e4 ♞xc6 and white loses.]
2...bxc6
[2...♞d6 3.cxb7 ♞xb7 4.a6 and black cannot stop the pawn.]
3.a6 and black cannot stop the pawn from queening.

8 Black sacrifices a bishop to queen a pawn

[#] 41.♞d1
[41.♙f2 ♙g3 42.♙xg3 hxg3 43.♞d1 h4 44.♞e3 ♖e6 45.♔d2 ♖e5 and black wins the pawn.]
41...♙f1 42.♙c5+ ♖e6 43.♞e3
[43.♙f2 ♙xg2 44.♙xh4 ♙xe4+ 45.♔d2 ♙f4+ 46.♖e2 ♙c1 and black should win.]
43...♙xg2 and white cannot stop the pawn queening.

Puzzles from HMP Leeds

Thanks to Stephen who runs the chess club at Leeds for these puzzles.



1 White to play ...



5 White to play ...

How did White
break through
Black's defence?



2 White to play ...

White has a
breakthrough that
requires seeing
some clever tacti-
cal points. Can you
spot the key move
and the follow-
up? .



6 White to play ...

How did White
manoeuvre into a
winning position
here?

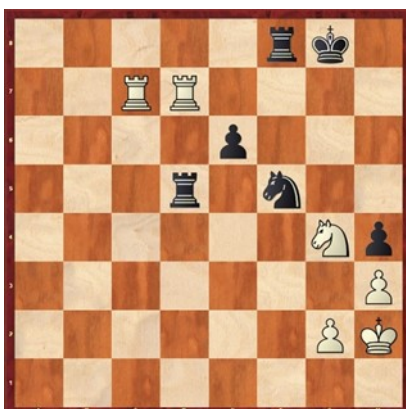


3 White to play ...

Which powerful
tactic caught
Black by surprise?



7 Black to play ...



4 White to play ...

How did White
exploit the power
of the doubled
rooks on the sev-
enth rank?



8 White to play ...

White's rook is
attacked by the
Black king. What
is the best move
for White?

Answers

1

1 Qf5+ Kb7 2 Rd7+ Ka8 (2 ... Ka6 is met the same way) 3 Rxa7+! Kxa7 4 Bb8+ Kxb8 5 Qxf3 with a winning material advantage

2

1 Rxh7+ Kxh7 2 Rh1+ Kg7 and now the quiet move 3 Qh4 leads to a decisive attack, eg 3 ... Rf7 (the only reasonable way to prevent 4 Qh8 mate) 4 Qh8+ Kf8 5 Bxf7 Qxf7 6 Rh7 Qe6 7 Qg7+ Ke8 and now White finishes off with 8 Nd6+ Qxd6 9 Qf7+ Kd8 10 Qxg8+ mating

3

1.Qh6+ Kxh6 (Forced) 2.Nf5+ winning the queen.

4

1.Nh6+ Nxh6 2.Rg7+ Kh8 3.Rh7 Kg8 4.Rcg7# checkmate

5

1.Qxd7 Rxd7 2.Re8+ Kh7 3.Be4+ g6 4.Rxd7+ Ba6 5.Bxc6 Qxc6 6.Rxf7# checkmate

6

1 Qc2 will win the pinned black knight unless black plays 1 ... Na7 but this runs into 2 Qxc8+ Nxc8 (better is 2 ... Qxc8 but 3 Rxc8+ Nxc8 4 Bc6+ Kf8 5 Bb7 is very good for White) 3 Bc6 with a winning material advantage.

7

1 ... Bxh3 is a winning breakthrough, eg 2 gxh3 (2 Qg7+ Ke8 doesn't change anything) and now either 2 ... Rxf3+ 3 Kxf3 Qxh3+ 4 Ke4 Qd3 or the flashy 2 ... Qxh3+ 3 Kxh3 Rxf3+ 4 Kh4 Rh2+ 5 Kg5 Rg3 are both checkmate

8

1 .Rf8+ (if 1...Ke6 Qe4+ Kd7 Qe8# checkmate) Kxf8 2.Qh8+ Kf7 (forced) Qxh7+ winning the Queen.

Attacking with the f pawn

Alpha Zero, the strongest chess engine on the planet, likes attacking with the h pawn but attacks with the f pawn can also be very dangerous. We look at examples where white plays f5 and sacrifices the pawn for an attack. The key idea is that white loses the pawn but gains attacking squares for the pieces. The bishop, knight and queen can move to f4, g5 and h6.

White sets up an attack

1 e4	c5
2 Nc3	d6
3 f4	g6
4 Nf3	Bg7
5 Bc4	Nc6
6 d3	e6
7 0-0	Nge7
8 Qe1	0-0
9 f5	



White has pieces on attacking squares, the bishop on c4 aiming at f7, the rook on f1 in support and the knight on f3 ready to move to g5 and harass the king. The key move to unlock this attack is f5 which opens up the bishop on c1.

Black responds with ... exf5

9	exf5
10 Qh4	

This idea of Qe1-h4 makes white's attack more dangerous.

10	a6
11 Bg5	

This is possible because the f pawn was sacrificed.

11	Qc7
12 Bh6	

Another square opened up by sacrificing the f pawn.

12	b5
----	----

Black desperately tries to attack on the queenside.

13 Nd5	Nxd5
14 Bxd5	Rb8
15 Ng5	Bxb2



White was threatening 14 Bxg7 Kxg7 15 Qxh7+ of 15 exf5. The computer prefers 13 ... Bd4+ but white is still better. All but one of white's pieces is pointing towards the king.

16 Bxf8	Kxf8
17 Qh6+	Bg7

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18 Nxh7+ Kg8
19 Qxg6 Nb4

Black cannot take the queen with 17 ... fxg6 because the f pawn is pinned.

20 Nf6+ Kf8
21 Qxg7+ Kxg7
22 Ne8+ resigns

White wins the queen. A great win for white made possible by f5 opening up g5 and h6 for the white pieces.

Black responds with ... d5

9 d5
10 Bb3 d4
11 f6

If black will not take the pawn on f5 then white pushes it further.

11 Bxf6
12 e5 Bg7
13 Ne4



The computer thinks this is about level but it is easier to play for white with pieces soon to land on g5 and f6.

13 Nxe5
14 Nxe5 Bxe5
15 Bg5 Qc7
16 Nf6+ Kg7

The computer wants to play 16 ... Bxf6 17 Bxf6 h5 but it looks very dangerous. If the white queen gets to h6 it's all over.

17 Bh6 Kh8

17 ... Kxh6 loses to 18 Qh4+ Kg7 19 Qxh7 checkmate.

18 Qh4 Rg8

If 18 ... Nf5 19 Rxf5 exf5 20 Bxf8 h5 21 Bg7+ Kxg7 22 Ne8+ wins the queen.

19 Bf8 h5
20 Qg5 resigns



Black cannot stop Qh6 next move.

Summary

The key idea is that it is sometimes worth sacrificing a pawn to get extra squares for your pieces. In these examples white gives up the f pawn in return for getting pieces on g5 and h6. Another advantage of sacrificing a pawn is that it sets your opponent difficult problems, such as whether or not to take the pawn. Also, it is easier to attack than defend.

Both of these examples are in the Sicilian defence but this is not about the opening, it is about sacrificing a pawn to gain squares for your pieces.

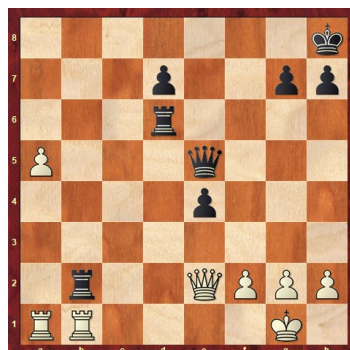
Puzzles from HMP Isis

Thanks to Mark who runs the chess club at Isis for these puzzles. Number 4 is my favourite.



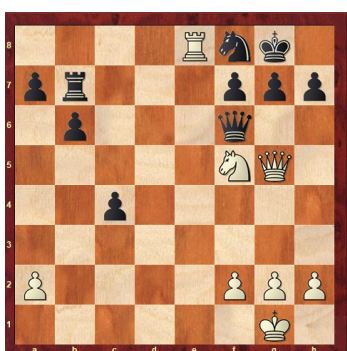
1 White to play and win

White is attacking but the queen is attacked. Can you see a quick win for white?



5 Black to play

Black cannot take the queen because of Rb8 checkmate. However black can attack with Rdd2. Would you play this move or is it a mistake?



2 White to play and win

White would like to play Qxg7 checkmate but the queen on f6 defends. Is there another way through?



6 White to play and win

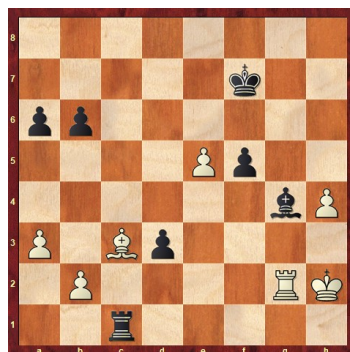
White has more space and black's pieces have hardly any squares. This is an advantage and white showed how to win.

White was Jose Capablanca a Cuban, one of the strongest chess-players in history.



3 White to play and win

Black's queen is in the corner and White has four pieces ready to attack the king. Can you see a quick win?



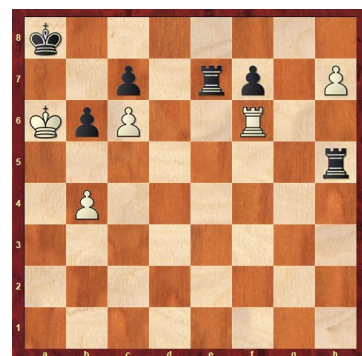
7 Black to play and win

White seems to have the black pawn under control with both the rook and bishop stopping it moving forward. Can you find a way through for black?



4 Black to play and win

Black played an amazing move here. The idea only really becomes clear nine moves later. This is a game played in 1948 by Ted Mason, one of Lewisham Chess Club's strongest players.



8 White to play and draw

Frank Marshall, a great American chess player, was playing white. He had a reputation as a swindler but he was simply very clever at tactics. Can you see how he manages to draw even though he is a rook down?

1 The white pawn on d6 is key. It blocks the queen and stops the king running to the f-file

1.♔g6+ ♕xg6 2.♖xg5+ ♕h7 3.♖h5#
checkmate

2 White can force a back rank checkmate

[#] 1.♖h6+ ♖xh6 2.♖xf8+ ♕xf8 3.♖d8#

3 White wins with a direct attack on the king

[#] 1.♔xf7+ ♕xf7 2.♖g5+ ♕g8 3.♖e6#

4 Many players would spot Nhg3+ but to see that Bb5 needs to be played first is exceptional

[#] 1...♗b5 This is an amazing move. It only becomes clear why nine moves later.
[1...♖hg3+ also wins but white can limp on with 2.hxg3 ♖xg3+ 3.♖xg3 hxg3+ 4.♕g1 ♖h2 5.♖e3 ♗c6 6.♖f3]
2. axb5
[Given what happens white could play 2.♖f3 but after ♖hg3+ 3.♕g1 ♗e2 4.♖f2 ♗xf1 white's position is grim.]
2...♖hg3+ This begins a long forcing sequence. 3.hxg3 ♖xg3+ 4.♖xg3 hxg3+ 5.♕g1 ♖h1+ 6.♕xh1 ♖h8+ 7.♕g1 ♗c5+ 8.♖xc5 ♖h1+ 9.♕xh1 ♖h8+
This move is possible only because black played Bb5+ nine moves earlier. Black must have realised this to play Bb5+. 10.♕g1 ♖h2# checkmate

5 Black seems to have a strong attack but white's threat of a back rank checkmate is stronger

34...♖dd2 is a mistake and allows white to threaten checkmate with Rb8.
[Better is ♖34...♖xb1+ 35.♖xb1 h6 36.a6 which is better for white but black is still fighting.]
35.♖xd2 ♖xd2 36.a6 ♖d4
[36...♖f4 37.♖f1 is better but white is still winning because black cannot stop the pawn.]
37.♖b8# checkmate

6 The pawns are blocked so white has to sacrifice to break through

1.♖a5 ♖d8 2.♗a6 bxa6 3.♖xd7 ♖e7
4.♖xd8+ ♖xd8 5.♖xc6

7 Black uses the bishop to block the white rook and queen the pawn

[#] 1...♖xc3
[1...♖c2 is a mistake because white can stop the pawn from queening.
2.♖xc2 dxc2 3.♗d2 and white should be able to draw.]
2. bxc3 ♗e2 now white will not be able to stop the pawn from queening. 3.h5 d2
4.♖xe2 d1♖ and white wins.

8 White makes use of the fact that the king is blocked in

1.♖h6 ♖xh6 2.h8♖+ ♖xh8 3.b5 and it's drawn by stalemate because White the white king cannot legally move whatever black plays.

Puzzles from HMP Leeds

Thanks to Stephen who runs the chess club at Leeds for these puzzles. My favourite is puzzle 4. I do not think I would have seen this in a game.

1 White to play...

Can you spot White's quick win? .



5 White to play ...

Black has taken a pawn on c5 and it appears fine. However, black has a tactical weakness known as overloading. Which black piece or pieces are overloaded and how does White exploit this?



2 White to play...

How did White respond to the threat against the queen in this puzzle?



6 White to play ...

White holds a clear advantage. What is the most efficient way to convert this into a full point?

3 White to play...

What is the best move for white to make progress here?



7 Black to play ...

Which powerful move breaks White's defences?



8 White to play ...

White seems to be under pressure. Can you see a powerful move to win the game?



4 White to play...

The pawn on c7 is very dangerous but the queening square is guarded by the queen & bishop. How can white overcome this?



Answers

1

1 Nf6+! exploits the pin along the h3-c8 diagonal. After 1 ... Rxf6 2 Qxd7 the black queen is lost

2

White responded to the threat by ignoring it with 1 hxg6! as 1 ... fxg3 2 gxf7+ Kh8 3 fxe8Q+ Qxe8 4 Rf8+ will leave White a piece ahead.

Black tried 1 ... hxg6 2 Qg4 but White, again with an extra piece, won quickly. Note that 1 Qg4 is parried by 1 ... Qh4

3

1.Qg4 now there are 3 pieces attacking the Bishop on d6 and the greedy ...Bxg4 fails to 2.Rg7+ Kh5 3.hxg4 kh4 4.g3# checkmate

4

1.Bd5 threatens Qxf7+ leading to checkmate and forces 1 ...Qxd5. Now 2.Qd8+ threatens the unguarded black queen and forces black to swap queens with 2 ... Qxd8. White replied with 3 cxd8+ and come out a queen ahead.

5

1.Rxa6 Rxa6 2.Re8+ Qxe8 3.Qxe8#checkmate

The black queen and rook are overloaded because they are defending against checkmate and defending the bishop on a6.

6

1.Qh8+ Ke7 2.Qe8+ winning if 1 ... Rxh8 2.Rxf7+ Kg8 3.Rf8+ Kg7 4.R1f7+ Kh6 Rxh8# checkmate

7

1...Rxa2 2.Rxa2 Rxa2 3.Qxa2 Qxd1+ winning the Knight.

8

1.Qxc5 Qxc5 2.Rxc5 Rd8 (not 2...Rxc5 3.Re8# checkmate) 3.Rxa5 winning the Bishop

Chaos on Board

Most chess coaches will tell you to control the centre, develop your pieces, gain space and attack any weaknesses that appear. There is nothing wrong with this. Many strong players play like this. But there are other ways of playing. One alternative is to create chaos. Break the rules, confuse your opponent and create imbalances. One champion of this approach is Swedish GrandMaster Tiger Hillarp Persson. He seems to enjoy chaos. This is how Tiger does it playing black.

Black cedes white the centre

1 e4	g6
2 d4	Bg7
3 Nc3	d6
4 f4	a6
5 Nf3	b5
6 Bd3	Nd7



White seems to have done everything right, taking control of the centre with pawns and moving pieces towards the centre.

Black seems to have ignored the rules, making mainly pawn moves and ignoring the centre.

Tiger knows the rules as well as anyone. He has a different plan. He allows white to establish a centre and then he smashes it up.

7 e5

White decides to punish black for ignoring the centre.

Black hits back in the centre

7 c5

Black finally hits back in the centre.

8 Ng5 cxd4
9 e6



This looks very strong for white. The threats include exd7+, exf7+ and Nxf7. 9 ... fxe6 Nxe6 looks grim for black. What can black play? The answer astounded me.

Black creates mayhem

9 f5

What a move! Black offers a piece. But if 10 exd7 Bxd7 11 Ne2 e5 and black now has the big centre and plenty of compensation for the piece. Just the chaos Tiger seeks. Notice how quickly white's centre is smashed.

10 Nd5 Nc5
11 Nf7



Another grim looking position for black. The only move to save the queen is 11 ... Qa5+ but 12 Bd2 leaves the queen with very few squares. Black found an astounding move, giving up the queen.

11	Bxe6
12	Nxd8
13	0-0



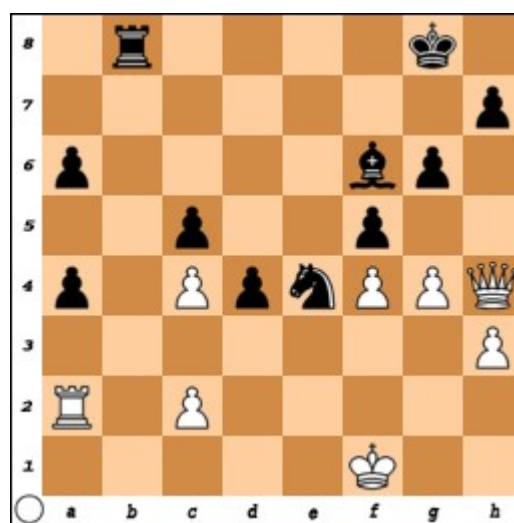
Black has only two pieces for the queen but has a big centre and an unbalanced position. Just look at how white's centre has collapsed. A computer might well win for white but Tiger doesn't really care about that. He has created a position that is very difficult to play for white.

14	b3
	Nh6

15	Qe1	0-0
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Black keeps up the provocation by offering a pawn. The computer thinks white could improve around here so you could say Tiger was lucky but I would say he has put such pressure on his opponent that few players would find the best moves in such positions.

Play continued 16 a4 bxa4 17 Bc4 Bxc4 18 bxc4 Ng4 19 h3 Nf6 20 Qxe7 Nfe4 21 Bb2 Rd7 22 Qh4 Rb7 23 Ra2 Rfb8 24 Ba3 Rb1 25 Bxc5 Rxf1+ 26 Kxf1 dxc5 27 g4 Bf6



Now white. After 28 g5 Rb1+ the position is about equal.

28 Qe1 Rb1 29 Rxa4 (If 29 Qxb1 Nd2+ 30 Ke2 Nxb1 wins the queen) Rxe1+ 30 Kxe1 Bh4+ 31 Kf1 Bg3 white resigns

Chaos on Board

Tiger doesn't go for safe, boring positions. He wants to create chaos, mayhem and havoc and watch his opponents struggle. The idea of allowing white to occupy the centre and then to smash it up is one we can copy.

This is really a question of taste. Would you prefer to be black or white in the first diagram? I suspect most players would choose white but give me black every time!