A TO Z CHESS TACTICS
Every chess move explained

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BATSFORD CHESS
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Introduction

The following remarkable game features a variety of spectacular attacking motifs. It was won by former world champion Garry Kasparov and illustrates how tactics can arise in a chess game and how they can be exploited.

It was played at the Wijk aan Zee tournament in 1999. Kasparov had the white pieces against Topalov, who adopted the Pirc Defence.

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.e3 g6 4.g7 ♘d2 c6 5.f3 b5 6.NETge2 b7

Both sides are already staking out their strategic plans. Black intends to operate on the queenside. White’s actions are aimed at the centre and on the kingside.

8.b6

Black’s king is ready to castle but this would not be advisable now as White would advance the g- and h-pawn can opener and storm the kingside.

8...xh6 9.xh6 b7

So Black adjusts the strategy, preparing to secure the king on the queenside instead.

10.a3

This is a restraining move. In chess such an action is known as prophylaxis. It is intended to delay or discourage Black from an immediate advance of the b-pawn.

10...e5

Before castling queenside Black decides to reduce the central tension.

11.0-0-0 e7 12.b1

White has repositioned the knight from e2 to b3 where it supports d4 and can later consider moving to a5.
14...exd4

Black releases the central tension. With Black castled on the queen’s flank White’s queen is temporarily misplaced, while the remaining bishop on f1 is still undeveloped. Black might be able to generate activity on the d- and e-files by opening the centre.

15 ♖xd4 c5 16 ♖d1 ♖b6 17 g3

This move allows White to develop the bishop to h3, where it will be actively placed.

17...♔b8

In the same fashion as White’s prophylactic twelfth move, Black moves the king to a safer square prior to playing an eventual d6-d5.

18 ♗a5 ♗a8

Black wants to retain this bishop, keeping it on the a8-h1 diagonal to support an eventual central break by d6-d5. The loss of this bishop would strengthen White’s grip on the contested d5 square.

19 ♗h3 d5

Black has finally achieved the desired advance of the d-pawn. However here White can use this opportunity to bring the queen back into play with tempo, as Black’s king is clearly less secure now and will soon come under attack.

20 ♗f4+ ♔a7 21 ♖e1 d4?!

Now the tactical fireworks begin in earnest. Black’s king is not secure. This provides the justification for White’s use of aggressive tactics. After 21...dxe4 22 fxe4 White would contest the d5 square and the white pieces would take up more active positions.

22 ♗d5! ♖xd5

If 22...♖xd5? 23 exd5 ♕d6 then 24 ♕e7+ ♗a8 25 ♗c6++. Or 22...♗fxd5? 23 exd5 and Black is overloaded, enabling White to obtain a winning position after 23...♗d6 24 ♕xf7+ ♗b8 25 ♗e6 ♗c7 26 ♗e7.

23 exd5 ♕d6
24 ♖xd4!

This speculative rook sacrifice blasts the centre wide open. Black’s king will now be subjected to a strong attack.

24...cxd4

As tempting as this was, the rook should not have been taken. Black cannot recover after this so 24...♔b6 or 24...♕xd5 were better choices for Black.

25 ♖e7+

25 ♖xd4+? would have been a mistake. Black would have come out ahead after 25...♖b6 26 ♖e7+ ♔d7=. White has now infiltrated with the rook and Black cannot capture it since 25...♕xe7? loses quickly to 26 ♖xd4+ ♖b8 27 ♖b6+ ♖b7 28 ♖c6+ ♖a8 29 ♖a7#.

25...♖b6

26 ♖xd4+!

White is prepared to sacrifice the knight in order to draw Black’s king further up the board. A classic king hunt is now under way.

26...♕xa5

26...♕c5 does not hold. After 27 ♖xf6+ ♖d6 White has the beautiful 28 ♖e6. The point is that if Black now continues 28...♕xd5 then after 29 b4 ♖a8 or 29...♖c6 White has 30 ♖xf7 with mating possibilities developing along the seventh rank.

27 b4+ ♖a4 28 ♖c3

Computers are quick to point out that White also had the elegant winning move 28 ♖a7!.

28...♖xd5

Black captures an important central pawn and guards against ♖b3#. White’s rook is still taboo: 28...♕xe7? 29 ♖b3#.

29 ♖a7

Mate is now threatened on the a-file, so Black must respond accordingly.

29...♗b7 30 ♖xb7

The rook remains immune from capture. Black’s ♖b7 gives up the bishop but allows a rook to reach a8 to defend against the mate threat. 29...♖d6? would have enabled White to play 30 ♖b2+, with the threat of 31 ♖b3+ ♖xb3 32 ♖xb3#.

On the other hand 30...♖c7? would have allowed a swindle, giving Black a draw by perpetual check. 30...♖d1+ 31 ♖b2 ♖d4+.

30...♖c4

Simplification by a trade of queens would help Black to relieve the pressure. White resists the offer in favour of snatching the loose knight on f6. Here computers prefer 30...♖he8 for Black.

31 ♖xf6
31...\(\textit{\text{xa3}}\)

Black’s best chance would have been to continue 31...
\(\textit{\text{d1+}}\) after which White would be able to reach a difficult but technically advantageous endgame. Then 32 \(\textit{\text{b2 \text{a8}}}\) 33 \(\textit{\text{b6}}\) threatens mate, so Black would need to simplify with 33...
\(\textit{\text{d4+}}\) 34 \(\textit{\text{x}}\text{d4 \text{xd4}}\) 35 \(\textit{\text{xf7 \text{d6}}}\) 36 \(\textit{\text{d7! \text{f6}}}\). Black dare not take the rook by 36...
\(\textit{\text{xd7?}}\) because of the clincher 37 \(\textit{\text{e6!}}\) when the bishop mates on b3.

32 \(\textit{\text{xa6+ \text{b4}}}\)

Now White maintains the initiative and sustains the attack.

33 \(\textit{\text{c3+!}}\)

The pawn sacrifice gives White even more lines of attack.

33...\(\textit{\text{xc3}}\)

Capturing with the king is necessary as 33...
\(\textit{\text{xc3?}}\) would allow White to mate in three moves: 34 \(\textit{\text{xb5+ \text{a3}}}\) 35 \(\textit{\text{a7+ \text{a5}}}\) 36 \(\textit{\text{xa5#}}\).

34 \(\textit{\text{a1+ \text{d2}}}\)

The king hunt continues as Black’s king endures its long march up the board. Disastrous would be either 34...
\(\textit{\text{b3 \text{b2+}}}\) checkmating, or 34...
\(\textit{\text{d3 \text{f1+}}}\) skewering the queen.

35 \(\textit{\text{b2+ \text{d1}}}\)

This is a sensational position. Black’s king has travelled from e8, its initial square, to d1. It will end its journey on e1. The king has been forced to take a march towards the scaffold.

36 \(\textit{\text{f1!}}\)

Remarkably this sauntering bishop is safe from capture: 36...
\(\textit{\text{xf1 \text{c2+ \text{e1}}}}\) 37 \(\textit{\text{e7+ \text{e2}}}\) 38 \(\textit{\text{xe2#}}\).

If Black moves the queen to a safe square White has a mating attack. For example, White would mate with either 36...
\(\textit{\text{c6 \text{e2#}}}\) or 36...
\(\textit{\text{e6 \text{c1#}}}\).

36...\(\textit{\text{d2}}\)

White makes one exquisite move after another. This partial pin forces a favourable exchange for White, simplifying the position.

37 \(\textit{\text{d7!}}\)

White makes one exquisite move after another. This partial pin forces a favourable exchange for White, simplifying the position.
37...exd7 38 axc4 bxc4 39 xh8 d3
40 a8 c3

The advanced c-pawn is Black’s slim and only remaining hope.

41 a4+ e1

42 f4

This is the final finesse. It removes any hope of establishing a defensive fortress. The remaining kingside pawns will eventually decide the outcome.

42...f5 43 c1

The king provides a blockade, preventing the advance of the c-pawn.

43...d2 44 a7 1-0

Black is unable to play 44...xh2? because of 45 g1+ when the double attack snags Black’s rook.

White will now begin to liquidate some of Black’s remaining pawns, with further simplification to a won endgame: 44...h5 45 g1+ e2 46 b6+-.

This is a beautiful chess game. A wide variety of tactical motifs were used at one point or another. Many of these same motifs are described in more detail throughout this book.

Some of the tactical motifs that occurred or might have possibly arisen in this game included pawn storms, prophylaxis, a central pawn break, checking the king, vacating a square, opening the centre, piece development, gain of tempo, rook sacrifice, clearance sacrifice, infiltration, weaknesses on the flank, knight sacrifice, hunting the king, jostling the king, perpetual check, maintaining the initiative, pawn sacrifice, overloading, simplification, hanging pieces, forced moves, skewers, pins, mating attacks and blockades.

A to Z of Chess Tactics provides an alphabetical reference of tactics, a careful study of which will most certainly help readers become stronger chess players. Then from time to time these topics can be referred to again and again as necessary.

The tactical exercises can be used for practice and for tournament preparation. It is recommended that a few exercises should be attempted daily. It is also recommended to set up these positions on a chess board and make a real effort to solve them.

Cognitive neuroscience addresses the importance of retrieving recognised patterns from memory. Incoming sensory stimuli are compared with stored templates. Acquiring those stored templates in long-term memory requires dedicated study and practice. There are no shortcuts here. No one gets admitted for free. Even child chess prodigies need to study seriously if they aspire to compete at the highest levels.

The exercises are intentionally given without any indication as to what tactics are involved. The reason for this is to more realistically simulate what happens in real games! One needs to acquire a sense of tactical intuition.

Depending on one’s level of proficiency, the amount of time required to solve these exercises will vary. A timer may be used to allow as much time as is deemed to be necessary. Studying the exercises under time constraints simulates the additional psychological pressure of playing with a clock.

Should one wish to practice tactics thematically, a cross-reference of the exercises by theme is provided in the Appendix.

The tactical exercises become progressively more difficult, extending for more moves and
often including several possible variations, each of which should be given due consideration.

Here are a few suggestions for improving tactical awareness.

■ **Practice.**

There is no substitute for this. Regular practice is essential. Practice daily if possible. Work with a higher-rated training partner, a trainer, or a chess coach. If you have no one you can approach in your area there are always chess trainers available on the Internet.

■ **Use a chessboard when training.**

This has to do with the importance of developing a recognition of those important tactical templates that are stored in memory. Most players would agree that this approach is much better than working only with diagrams on paper or on a computer display.

■ **Examine every position carefully.**

Consider all combinations. Look closely at any move that involves a check on the king. Be aware of possible sacrifices on the board. These dynamics change from move to move. Reconsider them on every turn.

■ **Develop tactical awareness.**

Be able to recognise situations where the main tactical themes are likely to arise. Study tactics and remember the first point listed here – practice! That really is the key to success. In any creative endeavour, practice, training and hard work are required. There are no substitutes. This applies equally well to dilettantes and experts.

Enjoy the book. Hopefully it will serve you well.

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**Attraction**

Attraction is a tactical motif that lures or forces an opponent’s piece to a square on which it can be exploited in some way. A sacrifice is often used. For example, in the following hypothetical position, White uses an attraction tactic to secure a winning advantage.

![Chessboard](attachment:image.png)

Material is equal but White’s pieces are much better placed. White’s rook controls the open f-file, the knight is well centralised and supported by a passed pawn, and the queen is well placed for both attack and defence.

1 **♗f8+!**

White exploits the back rank weakness.

1... **♕xf8**

White forces this capture, thereby drawing the black king to the f8 square. This illustrates the key idea behind an attraction tactic. The king has been obliged to relocate to a vulnerable square on which it will be subjected to a knight fork, winning Black’s queen.

2 **♘d7+**

After Black moves the king – 2... **♔g8** is probably best but the position is still resignable – White plays 3 **♗xb6** with a winning advantage.

Another example, also involving a rook sacrifice, is seen in the next position.

![Chessboard](attachment:image.png)

Black’s first move, 1... **♖xg2+!** forces White’s reply, 2 **♗xg2**. Black has thereby...
exploited the pin on White’s queen so it is the
king that must capture the rook on g2.

Using the attraction motif, Black has
repositioned White’s king by only one square to
g2, but this is all that is needed to allow a quick
mating finish.

2...♕h2#

Another attraction motif involving sacrifices
occurred in the game Wahls – Bjarnason,
Malmö, 1986.

The open a-file provides an infiltration route
for White. Close attention should be paid to the
knight on d4 and the bishop on e3. They will
play a key role in the attack, which will feature
an important double check later on.

1 ♖a8+

Black must accept the rook sacrifice, but this
attraction has placed the king on the open a-file.

1...♕xa8 2 ♔a1+ ♔b8

White has gained a tempo, bringing the
queen into the attack with a check.

3 ♔a7+! ♔xa7

The queen sacrifice has to be accepted
otherwise Black will get mated on the next
move: 3...♖c8 4 ♔a8#. Notice that the queen
check on a7 sets up the crucial double check
that follows on the next move.

4 ♔c6+ ♔a8

If 4...♔a6 then 5 ♔a1+ and Black will be
mated.

5 ♔a1+ 1-0

Checkmate is unavoidable in two more
moves at most.

A beautiful example of the attraction motif
occurred in the next game Spraggett – Delva,
Columbus, 1977.

White’s first move, a rook sacrifice based on
an attraction tactic, must have come as quite a
surprise.

1 ♖f7!

White threatens mate with 2 ♕xh7# thus
forcing Black’s reply.

1...♕xf7

Black’s king has been relocated to f7 where it
no longer protects the h7 pawn. This gives
White the opportunity to infiltrate with the
queen and a bishop.

2 ♕xh7+ ♕e8 3 ♕xg6+ ♕f8 4 ♕h6#

Had Black tried 2...♕f8 instead, then White
would have been able to play 3 ♕h6+ ♕e8 4
♕xg6#.

Sometimes attraction is also referred to as a
deflection. The tactic attracts a piece to a key
square, or diverts the piece away from a better
square, so one could conceptualise this motif in
either way.
In the game Ornstein – Schneider, Sweden, 1985, Black uses a pawn sacrifice followed by a knight sacrifice to draw the opponent’s king into a mating net.

1...f3+!

Black’s pawn acts like a magnet, attracting White’s king into the open. The h3 square is unavailable because of the bishop on e6. A retreat is not advisable because of the weakness of the back rank: 2 ♔f1 ♖d1+ 3 ♖xd1 ♖xd1#. The advanced pawn on f3 controls the e2 and g2 flight squares.

2 ♕xf3 ♘h4+ 0-1

Checkmate cannot be avoided, whether or not the knight sacrifice is accepted. If the sacrifice is refused the game will finish 3 ♕e3 ♖d3+ 4 ♕e4 ♕f5+ 5 ♕xe5 ♖f6+ 6 ♕f4 ♖xf2#. Accepting the sacrifice is also fatal: 3 gxh4 ♖d3+ 4 ♕e4 (4 ♕g2 ♖h3+ 5 ♕g1 ♖d1+ 6 ♖xd1 ♖xd1#) 4...f5+ 5 ♕xe5 ♕e2+ 6 ♕f4 ♕e4#.

The attraction tactic can disrupt a defender’s position completely. One further example, from Piredda – Joksić, Milan, 1980, shows just how quickly a position can collapse from the timely use of this tactic.

3...♖xb3+ 4 ♘c3 ♕g2 5 h4 ♕xe5+

This diversion forcefully relocates the queen, Black’s best defender on the board.

6 ♕xe5 ♔f3+ 7 ♕d2

After 7 ♕e3 Black could finish with a swallow’s tail mate: 7...♖xd1+ 8 ♕d2 ♕xc3+ 9 ♕xc3 ♔b3#.

7...♖b2+ 0-1
It is mate in one after 8 ♕c1 ♕xc3# or 8 ♕e1 ♕f2#.

Here is an enchanting example of the attraction motif, taken from the game Caruana – Ponomariov, Dortmund, 2014.

1 ♖e7!

White exploits the weakness of the c-pawn, threatening ♖xc7+.

1...♕xe7

The point of the sacrifice was to relocate Black’s queen so that it is no longer protecting the back rank. Other options are also bad for Black: 1...♖e8 2 ♕xe8 ♕xe8 3 ♕xe8+--; 1...♗b8 2 ♕xc7+ ♕xc7 3 ♕xc7+ ♕a8 4 ♕a6++; 1...♗b8 2 ♕a6+-.

Now all is revealed.

2 ♕a6!

Mate is threatened on b7. Black must capture the bishop.

2...♕xa6 3 ♕a8#

This is indeed a dazzling display of chess artistry!

Another nice example of the attraction motif comes from the game Urkedal – Illingworth, Baku, 2016.

1 ♕c7!

This is only a temporary rook sacrifice. The diversion weakens the back rank so White’s queen is able to infiltrate on d8, gaining a tempo with check, capturing Black’s rook, and driving Black’s king into the open. White’s queen and bishop pair will then be able to hunt Black’s exposed king.

1...♕xc7

White would still have the upper hand with 1...♖e6 after 2 ♕b7 ♕xc7 3 ♕xa6 ♕xa6 4 ♕d6. Allowing White’s rook to remain on the seventh rank by playing 1...♖e8?! might lead to 2 ♕h5 ♕b8 3 ♕f7 ♕h6 4 ♕g8+ ♕xg8 5 hxg8♕#.

2 ♕d8+ ♕xh7 3 ♕g8+!

This is an important zwischenzug and much better than checking with the queen on g8. It drives Black’s king into the open with tempo.
Black’s king cannot go back to h8 as then a discovered check would lead to mate: 3...♔h8?! 4 ♔f7+ ♔f8 5 ♕xf8+ ♔h7 6 ♔g8+ ♔h6 7 ♕d2#.

3...♔g6 4 ♕xc7

Even though White’s king is exposed as well, Black has no good way of attacking it. Without counterplay Black is completely on the defensive.

4...♖f6

The point of this move is to discourage White from playing ♕f7+ which would mate quickly. However, White still has another way to check Black’s king.

5 ♕g3+

6...♔g6

Black’s king goes to the only available white square. Instead 6...♔g5 would give White an extra tempo to bring in the other bishop: 7 ♕d2+ ♔g6 8 ♕h7#.

7 ♕h7+ ♔g5

Black’s king has been forced to a dark square.

8 ♕d2+ ♔g4 9 ♕h3#

The attraction tactic, starting with the move 1 ♖c7!, gave White the initiative. It was the winning move in this game.

In the game J. Polgar – Berkes, Budapest, 2003, White used an attraction tactic to create a mating attack on the h-file.

White has already sacrificed a minor piece. To sustain the attack, immediate action is
required. Black cannot be given the time needed to reverse the trend.

1  ♖h7+!

Here again the attraction motif is used advantageously. White obtains the necessary time to set up a battery on the h-file.

1... hxh7

Refusing the rook by 1...♕g8 still allows White to develop a mating attack by playing 2 ♖dh1, since Black has no adequate means of defence.

2 ♖h2+

This is the point of the attraction tactic. White gets control of the h-file, gaining a tempo with check.

2... ♔xh7

Black has an open h-file and a beautiful pair of raking bishops.

2... ♖h1+

The sacrificed rook must be captured by the knight. This will deprive White's king of the h1 square.

White's king would have been dragged to the h-file with this beautiful bishop sacrifice.

3 ♖xh2 ♖h8+

Now the king would have been drawn further up the board into a mating net. White cannot play 4 ♕g1 because of 4... ♖xh1#.

4 ♕g3 ♖f5+ 5 ♔f4 ♖h4#

In the game Schiffers – Chigorin, St. Petersburg, 1897, Black missed a chance to use the attraction motif to draw the white king into a mating net.

Black has an open h-file and a beautiful pair of raking bishops.

2... ♕xg5+ 3 ♖xg5 ♖xg5+ 5 f4

Black's position has deteriorated.

5... ♖xf4+ 6 ♖xf4 ♗xe4 7 ♖xe4

White has an endgame advantage. The game has entered a technical phase with White clearly ahead.

In the game Schiffers – Chigorin, St. Petersburg, 1897, Black missed a chance to use the attraction motif to draw the white king into a mating net.

The basic motif of a back rank mate follows important patterns that should be studied thoroughly. Avoiding the threat of a back rank

**Back Rank Mate**

The basic motif of a back rank mate follows important patterns that should be studied thoroughly. Avoiding the threat of a back rank
mate requires foresight, in order to prevent situations in which the king is unable to move off the back rank. Even chess masters fall victim to back rank mates.

A rook or queen can deliver a back rank mate against a king that is unable to evade the check because there are pawns or other pieces in front of the king, preventing it from leaving the back rank.

1  ♖a8#

Black’s king is prevented from leaving the back rank by its own pawns.

Imagination is sometimes required to create a position where a back rank mate is possible, as can be seen in the following diagram.

1  ♖c8+  ♘xc8 2  ♕d8#

Black’s knight has been diverted, allowing the queen to mate on d8. The queen cuts off the e7 flight square. Black’s pawns also prevent the king from leaving the back rank.

In the next example White’s pawns on f2, g2, and h2 prevent White’s king from leaving the back rank. If it were Black’s move the game would end quickly after 1... ♖d1+ 2  ♒e1  ♘xe1#.

Other tactical elements frequently come into play to produce back rank mate threats. Consider the following situation with White to move.

The g7 square is controlled by the white bishop on h6. Black has a kingside weakness on the dark squares. This can be thought of as a weakened or ‘broken’ fianchettoed position; Black’s lack of a dark-squared bishop severely compromises the position, as it eliminates the possibility of using g7 as a flight square. The consequent back rank weakness can be exploited by White who can win by creating a diversion to get the black queen off the back rank.

1  ♕xc5!

This is the decisive move. White wins the rook outright since Black cannot recapture with the queen because the back rank would be left unprotected.
A few examples from actual play will now be examined. Note the moves leading up to the back rank mates. The first is a back rank mate preceded by a sacrifice and other tactical motifs. It occurred in the game Ivanchuk – Anand, Reggio Emilia, 1988.

White has now just played 1 f3 attacking two minor pieces with a pawn fork. Black’s knight on e4 and bishop on g4 are both threatened. In this position the tactics become frenzied. Black ignores the threats against these two minor pieces and continues the attack.

The attack is justified. White is behind in development and the rooks on the first rank are not yet connected, leaving the potential of creating back rank mating threats. The rook on e1 is also unprotected.

1...♗h4!

This move attacks the hanging rook on e1. If White captures one of the minor pieces forked by the pawn, Black can capture the rook, winning the exchange.

2♗f1

On 2 fxe4 Black simply wins the exchange with 2...♗xe1. Even worse for White would have been 2 fxg4 ♗f2+ 3♗f1 ♗xh2 and Black would have a winning attack. Instead, if White plays 3 ♗h1 then 3...♗g3+ 4 hxg3 ♗h6# would provide Black with a nice finish.

2...♗h3!
White moves the king from the g-file, relieving the pin on the g2 pawn. This allows for the possibility of playing gxh3 if the opportunity should arise. However, moving the king to h1 has the undesired consequence of creating the conditions for a back rank mate.

6...♘f2+ 7 ♖xf2

The diversion of the rook leads to mate. Had White played 7 ♔g1 instead, then 7...♕xg2# checkmates immediately.

7...♗xg2+! 0-1

White resigned because if 8 ♖xg2 is played then 8...♗e1+ and White mates in two more moves, exploiting the back rank weakness: 9 ♖f1 ♖xf1+ 10 ♔g1 ♖xg1# or 10...♖xg1#. Nor can White escape by playing 8 ♔g1, because of 8...♗e1+ 9 ♖f1 ♖xf1+ 10 ♖xf1 ♗xf3+ 11 ♗g2 ♖xg2#.

Examples such as this show that back rank mate threats often occur even among grandmasters. In fact, most of the games presented in this book were played by very highly rated players, some of whom were even world chess champions.

The following game between Bernstein, playing White against Capablanca in Moscow, 1914, included a back rank mate threat, created by means of a diversion.

1...♖xc3 2♖xc3 ♕b2! 0-1

White resigned because Black has successfully created a position where White's queen is diverted from its protection of the d1 square, making possible the threat of a back rank mate.

3♕xb2 ♖d1#

If White tries 3 ♕e1 then Black can play 3...♖xc3 winning the rook. Black cannot retake the queen on c3 because of the back rank mate that would follow: 4 ♖xc3 ♖d1+ 5 ♔e1 ♖xe1#.

Also 3 ♗c2 loses a rook at once after 3...♗b1+ 4 ♔f1 ♖xc2 and Black further threatens to play the rook to d1.
Notice that an immediate 5...\textsc{d}d1? fails to 6 \textsc{c}c8+ and the tables are turned, with White suddenly winning because of the mate on the other back rank.

Here is a related example based on the same motif, using a diversion to exploit a back rank weakness. It is taken from the game \textbf{Doroshkevich – Fedorov}, USSR, 1981.

![Chessboard diagram]

White’s mistake allowed Black to conjure up a winning tactical combination, starting with a rook sacrifice.

1...\textsc{r}xf3! 0-1

The reason why White resigned so suddenly was due to the tactical threats arising from the weakness of the back rank. In his notes to the game, Alekhine wrote that he considered White’s best defence to be 1 \textsc{q}d2, after which he intended to continue 1...\textsc{a}xf3 2 \textsc{a}xf3 \textsc{a}xf3+ 3 \textsc{c}c3 \textsc{c}c3 4 \textsc{e}xe3 \textsc{e}xe3 5 \textsc{i}xf1 h\textsc{x}g5 6 \textsc{h}h4 e\textsc{e}5 7 \textsc{b}b3 \textsc{b}b3 8 \textsc{c}c2 \textsc{c}c2 9 \textsc{c}c2 \textsc{c}c2 10 \textsc{c}c2 \textsc{c}c2 11 \textsc{c}c2 \textsc{c}c2 12 \textsc{c}c2. White is also winning after 1...\textsc{a}c6 2 \textsc{b}b3 \textsc{c}c3 3 \textsc{c}c6 \textsc{d}d1+ 4 \textsc{b}b1 \textsc{b}b1 5 \textsc{c}c8+.

1...\textsc{c}c7 2 \textsc{a}c8+ \textsc{c}c8

Black would have not done any better with 2...\textsc{a}xe8 3 ...\textsc{b}b8+ \textsc{d}d8 4 \textsc{c}c6 \textsc{d}d1+ 5 \textsc{b}b1 \textsc{b}b1 6 \textsc{c}c7 \textsc{c}c7 7 \textsc{b}b3. White is also winning after 1...\textsc{c}c6 2 \textsc{b}b3 \textsc{c}c3 3 \textsc{c}c6 \textsc{d}d1+ 4 \textsc{b}b1 \textsc{b}b1 5 \textsc{c}c8+.

3 \textsc{c}c7 1-0

Black is completely overloaded, as the following lines show: 3...\textsc{a}xe8 4 \textsc{c}c7; 3...\textsc{c}c7 4 \textsc{e}xe8#; 3...\textsc{e}e7 4 \textsc{c}c7 \textsc{c}c7 5 \textsc{c}c7 \textsc{c}c7 6 \textsc{c}c7 \textsc{c}c7 7 \textsc{c}c7 8...\textsc{a}xe8.

The threat of a back rank mate occurs frequently in tournament play. Sometimes just the threat of a back rank mate is sufficient to cause immediate resignation, without the threat ever being carried out.

The following position arose in the game \textbf{Ståhlberg – Alekhine}, Hamburg, 1930. White had just blundered by playing 1 \textsc{h}h1?
1 ♕xd7+!

White’s bishop controls the d8 and e7 squares. Black’s replies to this queen sacrifice are forced.

1... ♖xd7 2 ♘c7+

This knight check diverts Black’s rook from the d-file, allowing White’s rook to deliver the mate.

2... ♕xe7 3 ♖d8#

Here is a nice mate delivered in a famous game played at the opera in Paris 1858 by Morphy, with White against the Duke of Brunswick and Count Isouard.

1 ♖xd7!

Black is behind in development and this exchange sacrifice increases the pressure on the beleaguered position. White’s other rook will next go to d1 to exploit the pinned pieces. Black is essentially playing without the kingside bishop and rook.

1... ♖xd7 2 ♖d1

White’s bishops are both showing the power of the pin.

2... ♕e6

Black breaks one of the pins. On 2... ♕b4 White would still exert pressure after 3 ♖xf6 gxf6 (3... ♕b3 4 ♖xd7#) 4 ♖xd7+ ♖d8 5 ♖xf7+.

3 ♖xd7+

Other choices for Black were no better:

3... ♖xd7? 4 ♕b8+ ♕e7 5 ♕xe5+ ♕d8 (5... ♕e6 6 ♕c7+ ♕d7 [6... ♕e8 7 ♕d8#] 7 ♖xd7#) 6 ♖xf6+ gxf6 7 ♖xf6+ ♕c7 8 ♖d1+ ++.

No improvement was 3... ♕e7? 4 ♕b4+ ♕d8 (4... ♕d6 5 ♖xd6+ ♕d8 6 ♕b8+ ♕e7 7 ♕e8#) 5 ♕b8+ ♕e7 6 ♕e8#.

4 ♕b8+! ♕xb8 5 ♕d8#

Another example of exploiting a back rank weakness by a queen sacrifice comes from a game Tisdall – J. Polgar, Reykjavik, 1988.
1...♖h3 2 ♕e2 ♕a4+!

White’s king is weak on the flank as well as on the back rank.

3 ♖xa4 ♖xa4+ 4 ♔b1 ♖h1+ 0-1

It is checkmate in two moves.

The back rank weakness has many of the same characteristics as a back rank mate. The threatened side can only avert mate on the back rank by making serious concessions which can then be exploited. Sometimes a threatened mate on the back rank forces the defending side to give up material to stop mate or to allow other weaknesses to develop in the position, which might then be exploited in a variety of ways.

In Larsen – Ljubojević, Milan, 1975, the game was decided as a consequence of the threats directed against Black’s weakened back rank. The entire game is given as it shows how the back rank weakness arose in actual play, and how various tactical motifs emerged at different stages of the game.

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♜c3 c5 4 d5 exd5 5 cxd5 g6 6 ♜f3 ♘g7 7 e4 d6 8 ♕e2 0-0 9 ♘d2 ♖e8

This opening is the Classical Benoni. Black endeavours to gain space on the queenside, while White will castle on the kingside and aim for f2-f4, putting pressure on e5 and intending an eventual breakthrough by an advance of the e-pawn.

10 0-0 ♘bd7 11 a4 a6 12 ♔h1

White duly prepares the advance of the f-pawn with this precautionary move, removing the king from any potential checks along the a7-g1 diagonal.

12...♖b8 13 f4 c4?!

Black’s idea is to place the knight on c5, increasing pressure on White’s e4 pawn. A slower but better idea would have been to play 13...♗c7, creating more tactical chances after the c5-c4 advance.

14 e5
Annotations by Unzicker suggest that Black might stand slightly better after 14 ♗xc4. He gives 14...♗c5 15 ♕f3 (15 e5 dxe5 16 fxe5 ♕xe5 17 ♗f3) 15...♗g4 16 ♗g3 ♕b5 17 axb5 axb5 18 ♕xb5 (18 e5!) 18...♗xe4! 19 ♑dxe4 ♑xe4 20 ♑xf4 ♕xf4! 21 ♑xe4 (21 ♕xb5? ♘f2+ 22 ♕xf2 ♘e1+ 23 ♕f1 ♕xf1#) 21...♕xe4+.

14...dxe5 15 ♘xc4 b5 16 axb5 axb5

Better for White was 17 ♗d6! ♘e7 18 ♘xc8 ♕xc8 19 ♕xb5.

17...♗b4! 18 ♕b5

Black had offered a tempting sacrifice which White either missed or purposely declined. A very interesting continuation would have arisen after 18 ♕e6 bxc3 19 ♕xd8 cxb2 20 ♕xb2 ♕xb2 21 ♗f3 ♕d8 reaching an unclear position with chances for both sides.

18...♕xe5 19 fxe5 ♕xe5 20 ♗f4 ♑xd5

Black would have had a winning advantage after 23 ♗d4?! ♘e3! 24 ♑xe6 ♘h4 25 g3 ♕xc4.

21 ♘c4

White’s knight would be badly misplaced after 21 ♕xe5 ♕xe5 22 ♘c4 ♘h4 23 h3 ♘xc4+.
24 ♗xe5?

Much better for White was 24 g3 as both g2 and h2 are very weak. 24 g3 would give the king an escape square from the back rank on g2 and provide some protection against possible threats along the b8-h2 diagonal. However it would also expose White’s king to attack along the a8-h1 diagonal. Such is chess, where positional compromises are sometimes required.

White is now in serious trouble. This is a critical point in the game. It is important for players to sense situations where tactics are emerging on the board.

24... ♗xd5

White is overloaded as both the weak g2 square and the knight on b5 must be guarded. 25 ♖ae1? would allow Black to create a diversion by playing 25... ♖xb5 when White’s queen would be unable to recapture the rook because of 26 ♖xb5 ♖xg2#.

One possible try was 25 ♖f2 ♖xb5 26 ♖xb5 ♖h5 27 h3 ♖xh3+ 28 ♕g1 when after the cunning 28... ♖h5 White must watch out for the trap 29 ♖xd5 ♕h2+ losing the queen to a discovered check. Instead White could play 29 ♖d3, and would still be winning after 29... ♖h2+ 30 ♕f1 ♕h1+ 31 ♕e2 ♕xa1 32 ♖xd5 ♖xb2+ 33 ♕e3 ♕c3+.

25 ♕c8 26 ♕a7 ♕h4!

27 ♕xe5

Black’s last move involved some very interesting tactics. It might appear as if the bishop on e5 was left unprotected by accident. Players should be particularly wary of such ‘gifts’ as they might contain venom.

After 27 h3 mate would have followed with 27... ♕h3+ 28 ♕g1 ♕d4+ 29 ♖f2 ♕xg2#.

Now the back rank weakness is evident and Black exploits this by means of a diversion.

27... ♕f2! 28 ♕g1

It appears as if White has managed to defend successfully. Capturing White’s queen would have been a mistake, allowing a back rank mate: 28 ♕xf2 ♕c1+ 29 ♕e1 ♕xe1+ 30 ♕f1 ♕xf1#.
The queen sacrifice has proved decisive. White’s rook is pinned by the bishop and mate follows on the back rank after 30 ♕e1 ♕xe1#. Notice the unfortunate placement of White’s rook and knight on the a-file, away from where the critical action took place on the board. White’s defeat was ultimately determined by the inability of these pieces to participate fully in either attack or defence.

Another example of using a diversion to exploit a back rank weakness is illustrated by a game of Pillsbury, playing White against an unknown player in St. Petersburg, 1896.

Notice how Black’s queen is tied down, having to protect the e8 square in order to prevent mate by the white rook. White played 1 ♕f5! upon which Black resigned at once, because 1...♕xf5 allows 2 ♖e8# exploiting the weak back rank.

Attempting to prevent the mate leads to a crushing loss of material after a line such as 1...♕e6 2 ♖xe6 fxe6 3 ♕xe6+ ♔f8 4 ♕f5+ ♕g8 5 ♕d7 ♔f6 6 ♖xc7.

A famous example of a diversion used to exploit a back rank weakness occurred in the alleged game Adams – Torre, New Orleans, 1920.

In the following position White has pressure along the e-file due to the rook battery. Notice that if it were not for Black’s queen offering support, White would have back rank mating possibilities. What now follows is an almost surreal hunt to divert Black’s queen from its protection of e8.

1 ♕g4!

This move must have come as a surprise. White’s queen cannot be taken because of the back rank mate: 1...♕xg4 2 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 3 ♘xc7.
Also the queen cannot go back to d8 because of the loss of material: 1...d8 2 xc8! xe2 3 xd8+ xd8 4 xe2 and White is a whole rook ahead. Notice as well that after 1...xe2 2 xd7 xe1+ 3 xe1 d8 4 xb7 White is winning. Black's only remaining option is to move the queen along the a4-e8 diagonal, maintaining protection of the e8 square.

1...b5 2 c4!

Again Black cannot take the queen either way without leaving the back rank unprotected. If 2...xc4 3 xe8+ xe8 4 xe8# or 2...xc4 3 xe8+ xe8 4 xe8#.

2...d7 3 e7!

There is humour in the sheer logic of chess. White is doing everything possible to give away the queen but Black must continue to reject its capture. White continues to pursue a similar theme for the next few moves, until Black's queen runs out of places to hide. Either 3...xc7 or 3...xc7 allow White to mate with 4 xe8+.

3...b5 4 a4 xa4 5 e4

White now offers a rook to exploit the opponent's overloaded pieces. Neither White's queen nor rook may be taken: 5...xe4 6 xc8+ with a back rank mate to follow: 5...xe4 6 xe4 f8 7 xa5+; or 5...xc7 6 xe8+ also mating next move on the back rank.

5...b5 6 xb7 1-0

There is nothing left for Black to do to save the game. If 6...xb7 (or 6...a4 7 xa4 xe1+ 8 xe1+) then White checkmates by 7 xe8+ xe8 8 xe8#.

The game Gheorghiu – Kinnmark, played in The Hague, 1961, shows White using a diversionary tactic involving a sacrifice of the exchange to exploit a back rank weakness.
The weakness on the back rank is due to the action of the rook on the e-file and the white bishop on f5, which denies Black's king access to the flight square on h7. Black's undeveloped bishop on c8 also prevents the rook on a8 from co-operating with its counterpart on f8 to protect the back rank. An exchange sacrifice now gets things started.

1 ♖xd6 ♕xd6 2 ♜xf7+

This knight fork is the real point of diverting the queen first. The knight check on f7 now practically forces Black to capture the knight with the rook due to the fork on the king and queen.

2...♗xf7

Black's back rank is now critically weakened.

3 ♖e8+

If Black responds by blocking this check with the rook, White has another diversionary tactic.

3...♕f8

Alternatively, Black could have tried to bring the queen back, but the position would be hopeless: 3...♕f8 4 ♖xf8+ ♕xf8 5 ♕d2 ♕g8 but not 5...♗xf5? because White would have 6 ♖h6+ mating next move.

4 ♕d2!

Black's queen is overloaded.

4...♖xd2 allows the back rank mate: 5 ♖xf8#.

Black cannot guard the rook with 4...♖f6 because of 5 ♖xf6.

An interesting example of a back rank weakness occurred in Esbjerg, 1979, in the game Castro Rojas – Sigurjonsson.

1 ♕xd8+! ♖xd8

Black's last move ♖xb4? launched a discovered attack on White's queen along the d-file. Black had hoped to capitalise on this tactic but soon realised it was a mistake that would cost the game.
Recapturing with the queen would lose material because of the hanging knight on b4.
1...\(\text{♕}x\text{d8}\) 2 \(\text{♖}x\text{d8+}\) \(\text{♗}x\text{d8}\) 2 \(\text{AXB4+}\).

2 \(\text{♗xb7}\) 1-0

White’s bishop pair is very strong. Black must give up the queen to avoid being mated by the rook on the back rank. White would then be a rook up.

One way of analysing a position is to strip away everything except the kings and pawns. Compare the following hypothetical king positions and relative king safety, momentarily disregarding what else may be on the board.

This example highlights the importance of noting important structural elements in a position, such as king safety and pawn formation, as these may play an important part in tactics or combinations. As seen here, by narrowing down the situation to just these elements, one might be able to gather important insights.

By examining only this pattern on part of the board, one can see that in situations with other material present White might be able to find a way to exploit Black’s back rank weakness.

Then, by adding the rest of the material on the board, a position from the game Najdorf – Timman, Buenos Aires, 1980, can be shown. Notice the similarities in kingside pawn structure to the previous diagram.

White noticed and exploited the back rank weakness to win material.
1 \(\text{♗d6! \text{♔g8}\) 2 \(\text{e8 1-0}\)

Black resigned because after 2...\(\text{♔f7}\) 3 \(\text{xf8+ \text{♔e6}\) 4 \(\text{xc5}\) White holds on to the extra minor piece.

Here is another example, starting with only the kings and pawn formations, in which potential regions of strength and weaknesses can be identified. It is taken from the game Rubinstein – Hirschbein, Lodz, 1927.

Judging by the pawn structure, White may have a potential back rank weakness. The f2 and h2 squares may also be potentially weak. Otherwise, this is one of the safest kingside formations available after White has castled kingside.
White is a pawn down. A minority attack might be a longer term strategy for White to pursue, trading off two queenside pawns then attacking the remaining one.

Black’s kingside pawn structure also shows potential weaknesses. The h6 pawn may be particularly weak and might eventually have to be advanced to h5.

The f7 pawn may be a potential weakness as well. The f6 square is a hole that might allow an enemy infiltration on the kingside.

There may be a potential weakness for Black along the a1-h8 diagonal, as the protective dark-squared bishop has been exchanged.

The d5 square is a potential outpost for Black. White could possibly undermine that outpost by advancing the e-pawn to e4.

On the queenside Black might be able to obtain a passed pawn by exchanging or eliminating the two white queenside pawns.

It appears that Black is safer against back rank threats, but this is an illusion, particularly if White controls the a1-h8 diagonal with the queen or bishop.

Having gleaned all of this information from the pawn structure and the relative king safety, consider the further elements that become noticeable when the other pieces are added to the board.

controlling the dark squares, Black has a weak dark square complex, particularly on the kingside.

White’s queen and rook serve as a battery on the c-file. The rook on d1 is very active on the open d-file. The exchange sacrifice on d7 is a potentially serious tactical threat and indeed White began with 1 ♖xd7!.

Now Black cannot recapture with the queen because of a family check: 1...♛xd7? 2 ♖f6+ ♗f8 3 ♖xd7+ ♖xd7 4 ♖xg6! when Black is in serious trouble, e.g. 4...fxg6?! 5 ♖f6+ ♗g8 6 ♖xg6+ ♗f8 7 ♖f6+ ♘g8 8 ♗c4+-.

1...♗xd7

2 ♖f6+

The exchange sacrifice has removed one of the defenders of the f6 square, thereby enabling this knight check. The key point to note is that Black’s king will be diverted to f8, creating a back rank weakness.

2...♗f8

The king was forced to move to f8 because of the discovered check: 2...♕h8? 3 ♖d5+ e5 4 ♖xe7 ♖xe7 5 ♖b4+- or the deadly double check after 2...♕g7? 3 ♖xe8+ ♗g8 (3...♗f8 4 ♗h8#) 4 ♖g7#.

White now concludes the game abruptly.

3 ♖d5! 1-0
Black resigned because of 3...e5 4 ♘xe7 winning the queen, while 3...exd5 or 3...cxd5 expose the back rank weakness by 4 ♙h8#.

Here’s another beautiful example of how a back rank weakness can be exploited.

In Capablanca – Rossolimo, Paris, 1938, the following position was reached.

White has just played the bishop from a6 to d3, denying the black king the flight square on h7 and introducing a discovered attack on the rook at a8.

The back rank weakness is paralysing. Black will have to lose a piece to avoid the threatened mate.

1...♖d8 2 ♖xe5 1–0

If Black had tried 1...♗e8 then White could have still played 2 ♖xe5 with impunity. Black could not recapture the rook because of the back rank weakness. 2...♕xe5 3 ♙a8+ leads to mate.

Alternative defences were equally inadequate. 1...♕ab8 2 ♖xe5 and 1...♕bb8 2 ♕xa8 ♕xa8 3 ♖xe5 both lose the knight on e5.

Battery

A battery involves tactical formations that allow two or more pieces to operate on a file, rank, or diagonal. Line acting pieces – queens, rooks and bishops – are typically involved. The strength and synergy of the mutually protective action of the pieces involved in a battery allows for tactical possibilities.

For example, in the next position from David – Seitan, Romania, 1956, White has two active batteries.

The rooks act together, forming a battery on the f-file. The bishop and queen also form a battery along the b1–h7 diagonal.

Note that in this second battery, if the queen is in front of the bishop on the diagonal, different tactical chances arise compared to having the bishop in front of the queen.

In the present position, the tactical opportunities existing along the b1–h7 diagonal offer exciting winning prospects. Black’s queen is currently preventing mate on h7 so diverting this piece would allow the mate to be delivered.

1 ♖f6

The move serves two important purposes – to weaken Black’s king position and to divert Black's queen.

1...gxf6

Had Black chosen to move the queen, the following possibility may have arisen: 1...♖h5 (The queen must remain on the h-file since 1...♗g5? 2 ♖h7#.) 2 ♕xg7+ ♕xg7 3 ♕g6+ ♕h8 (3...♗f8 4 ♕f2+ ♕e7 5 ♕g7+ ♕f7 6 ♕xf7#) 4 ♕d2 threatening 5 ♕h6+.

White next uses the power of the battery to divert the queen from the h-file.
Now the battery is unleashed with the offer of a rook sacrifice.  

3 ♕h8+ 
Black declines the offered rook in an effort to prolong the game. 3...♔xh8 allows an immediate mate by 4 ♕h7#. 

3...♗f7 
White’s queen now infiltrates. 

4 ♕h7+ 1-0 
Exploiting the tactical power of the battery was the key to winning. The game might have continued 4...♕g7 5 ♖g6+ ♔e7 6 ♖xg7#. 

Tactics can be used to undermine a battery, reducing its power. A rook battery proved to be just such a liability in Johannessen – Voudis, Athens, 2003.
White has suddenly activated the rook battery on the a-file and the advanced pawn, now on b6, has potentially become very dangerous. Black cannot recapture that pawn on the next move because of the battery on the a-file.

Black now has the opportunity to undermine White’s rook battery.

3...♖xg2+ 0-1

White does not have an adequate response. Capturing the rook with the king leads to a quick mate: 4♔xg2 ♖g8+ 5♔f1 ♕h1+ 6♔e2 ♖g2#.

Capturing with the rook results in a loss of material: 4♖xg2 ♖xa1+ and the queen has to return to f1 to block the check. After 5♔f1 ♖xf1+ 6♖xf1 ♕h1+ 7♖f2 cxb6= Black’s d-pawn is very weak but that alone will not be sufficient for White to trigger a central pawn roller. Black’s bishop is bad but for the time being it will serve an important defensive role until the position has been simplified.

A very powerful type of battery, dubbed ‘Alekhine’s gun’, became well known after a game between Alekhine and Nimzowitsch in San Remo, 1930. The formation involves placing the queen behind a rook battery, forming a type of battering ram.

White played 1♕c1 producing the Alekhine’s gun battery formation. The knight on c6 is pinned. Moving the knight would expose the queen to attack by the bishop and the c7 rook to the battery along the c-file. All of Black’s pieces are tied down to the defence of the knight on c6, so Black attempts to increase the protection of this piece.

1...♖bc8

White is attacking the knight on c6 four times, while Black is defending that square the same number of times. Therefore no combination to win material is yet playable here. Such an opportunity may arise in certain cases, e.g. where a sequence of captures allows the attacking side to exploit tactics and win material. Instead, White plays a move that threatens a pawn advance to b5.

2♗a4

With the white pawn on b5 and the bishop behind it on a4, White would be able to
introduce one more attacker against the knight on the c-file. Black tries to stop this threat.

2...b5

Continuing logically, White will now capture the pawn and then proceed to restore the threat.

3 ♗xb5

White threatens to play the bishop back to a4 and advance the b-pawn to b5.

Black’s last hope is to bring up the king in order to support the defence.

3...♔e8

Now a critical situation has been reached.

4 ♗a4 ♔d8 5 h4 h5 6 ♔h2 g6

7 g3 1-0

Black is in zugzwang. Any move for Black will only make the situation worse. 8 b5 is coming. There is nothing that Black can do to prevent the loss of material. The pin on the c6 knight has proved to be decisive. Instead of rushing ahead with the attack, White has prepared it slowly and deliberately, building up the pressure until Black was completely tied up and unable to do anything useful to free up the position.

**Bind**

A bind is a strong grip on a position, usually created by one or more advanced pawns. It is also sometimes called a squeeze or a clamp. It can claim an advantage in space or have a restricting effect, tying the opponent down. A bind can have both short term tactical consequences and longer term strategic implications. Sometimes a bind can be established early in the opening. One well known example is the Maróczy Bind, named after the Hungarian player Géza Maróczy. The idea for White is to advance both the c- and e-pawns to gain a strong grip on d5.

This bind can be created in several different openings. Most commonly, but not exclusively, it arises in some variations of the Sicilian Defence. Here is an example of the Maróczy Bind against the Taimanov Variation.

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘c6

5 ♘b5 d6 6 c4

The bind discourages Black from playing the freeing move d6-d5 in the near future, thereby creating tension in the centre. Based on results in actual play, statistically both sides have roughly equal winning chances from this position. What is important is that players should assess how comfortable they would feel playing this position from either side of the board and whether they should try steering the game toward or away from it.

Binds can be used with other tactical motifs. Here is an example from the Sicilian Defence, as played in a game Adams – Williams, Canterbury, 2010.
1 e4 c5 2 ∇f3 d6 3 ∇b5+ ∇d7 4 ∇xd7+ ∇xd7 5 c4

White has established the Maróczy Bind very early, even before the usual d4 pawn push, and it will take several moves for Black to prepare the d6-d5 counter punch.

This gives White the necessary time to develop and generate other threats.

5... ∇f6 6 ∇c3 g6 7 d4 cxd4 8 ∇xd4 ∇g7 9 f3 0-0 10 ∇e3 ∇c8 11 b3 e6

This move prepares the d6-d5 push. White has still not castled so king safety must be given priority. However, it would be a serious mistake for White to decide on queenside castling. In this case Black’s rook on the semi-open c-file, fianchettoed bishop and possible a5-a4 pawn can opener to soften up White’s queenside pawns, supported by the a8 rook, would all contribute to giving Black a strong attack.

12 ∇e1 d5

Black has finally achieved the objective of advancing the d-pawn.

13 e5!

This is a very nice approach. Opening the centre with 13 exd5?! would be bad for White because the king is not yet in a safe place. Black can then exert pressure by 13...exd5 14 ∇xd5 ∇xd5 15 cxd5 ∇e8 and suddenly it is White who must start to defend. 13 cxd5 exd5 14 e5 would transpose to the game but White’s e4-e5 advance maintains the initiative and pushes back Black’s knight.

13... ∇e8 14 cxd5 exd5 15 f4 ∇c6 16 0-0

White only has a very slight edge due primarily to the supported pawn on e5.

16... ∇c7 17 ∇xc6 bxc6

It looks as if White has done the opponent a favour as Black’s d-pawn is no longer isolated. Nevertheless White’s move does have a tactical purpose.

18 ∇e4

Here is the point. The knight can reposition itself this way because of the pin on the d-file – Black’s queen would be hanging if the knight were captured.

18... ∇e8 19 ∇c5

White gains a tempo by chasing away the black queen.

19... ∇e7 20 ∇d3 ∇e6 21 ∇f3 a5 22 ∇c5
White’s knight has a strong outpost on c5. It blockades the backward c-pawn. Black’s pieces – the queen and knight in particular – cannot seem to find good squares. The bind on the d5 square no longer exists but White’s supported e-pawn continues to have a restricting effect on Black’s position.

22...♕e7 23 ♗f2 ♖ab8 24 ♗h3 f5?!

Black should have refrained from playing this move so as to keep open the option of playing an eventual ...f6, contesting White’s grip on e5. After the move played, Black just gave White a passed d-pawn.

25 ♗c3 ♖a8 26 ♗a4 ♖a6 27 ♗d3 1-0

27...aa8 loses the exchange to 28 ♖b6, while after 27...c7 28 ♖b6 ♖b8 29 ♖xc6 the entire house of cards starts to collapse.

Black’s resignation may be slightly premature. Though White enjoys a clear advantage Black did not have to give up quite just yet. As the celebrated American football player and coach Vince Lombardy used to say, “Winners never quit and quitters never win.”

Binds can also develop suddenly in latter stages of a game rather than quickly in the opening. Here is an example of a bind established in a game between Ivanchuk, controlling the white pieces, and Yusupov, in Brussels, 1991.

It was a tense game, played at a critical point of their match. The opening, by transposition, a King’s Indian Defence, proceeded as follows:

1 c4 e5 2 g3 d6 3 ♗g2 g6 4 d4 ♗d7 5 ♘c3 ♗g7 6 ♗f3 ♗g6 7 0-0 0-0 8 ♘e2 ♗e8 9 ♗d1 c6 10 b3 ♗e7 11 ♗a3 e4 12 ♗g5

Black now advanced the e-pawn, backed up by the queen and rook battery.

Capturing the e-pawn would cost a piece: 13 fxe3 ♗xe3+ 14 ♔h1 ♗xg5.

13 f4?!

It would have been much more prudent to play 13 f3. The pawn on e3 gives Black a powerful bind. The pawn restricts White’s e-pawn and places a big clamp on the position. White’s mobility is thereby reduced while the kingside is seriously compromised.

13...♗f8 14 b4 ♗f5 15 ♘b3 h6 16 ♘f3 ♗g4 17 b5 g5 18 bxc6 bxc6 19 ♘e5

White exploits the pin on the d6 pawn. However Black will give up the c- and d-pawns in order to maintain the attack.

19...gx+f4 20 ♗xc6 ♗g5 21 ♗xd6 ♗g6 22 ♘d5 ♗h5 23 h4
Black next uses a knight sacrifice to soften up White’s kingside.

23...♘xh4! 24 gxh4 ♕xh4

Now Black sacrifices additional material, continuing to press the attack.

25 ♦de7+ ♧h8 26 ♦xf5 ♦h2+ 27 ♦f1 ♦e6

The rook is heading for the g-file.

28 ♦b7 ♦g6!

The remaining moves again show the tactical possibilities resulting from the bind created by the advanced e-pawn.

33 ♦xg7 ♦f2! 34 ♦xf4 ♦xf4 35 ♦e6 ♦h2 36 ♦db1 ♦h3 37 ♦b7+ ♧h8 38 ♦b8+ ♦xb8 39 ♦xh3 ♦g3 0-1
Mate on f2 is unavoidable. The bind provided winning opportunities for Black right up to the end of this impressive game.

Another example of a bind created by an advanced pawn can be seen in the game Andres – Alvarez, Cuba, 1988. Some very interesting tactics arise in this position.

The pawn on f6 creates a powerful bind. It confines Black’s king to the back rank, prevents the advance of Black’s f-pawn, and disrupts the coordination of the black rooks. It also prevents Black’s queen from moving horizontally along the sixth rank, to get to g6 or h6 if necessary. White is a minor piece down but the tactical opportunities provide more than adequate compensation.

1  $\text{e7}$

Also strong would have been 1 $\text{xe8+ xe8}$ 2 $\text{a8 g8} 3 \text{d8!}$. Now 3...$\text{xd8?}$ would allow 4 $\text{b4+}$ winning for White, while 3...$\text{g4?!}$ is met by 4 $\text{e3 xd8 5 h6+ g8} 6 \text{hxg4+-}$.

1... $\text{d8}$

Capturing the rook is not advisable: 1... $\text{xe7}$ 2 $\text{xe7+ xe7}$ 3 $\text{xh8}$ with advantage for White.

2 $\text{exd7}$

This gives White access to the weak back rank.

2... $\text{xd7} 3 \text{a8+ d8}$

4 $\text{b4! 1-0}$

This beautiful diversion amply demonstrates Black’s helplessness. The bind created by the pawn on f6 traps Black’s king on the back rank.

Now 4...$\text{xb4}$ is met with 5 $\text{xd8}$ and 4...$\text{xa8}$ with 5 $\text{xd6+ g8}$ (5...$\text{e8 6 e7#}$) 6 $\text{g3+ f8} 7 \text{g7+ e8} 8 \text{hxh8+ d7} 9 \text{xa8}$ is brutal.

Another example of a bind created by an advanced f-pawn occurred in Bartel – Nepomniachtchi, Jerusalem, 2015.

The situation is critical. The pin on White’s rook on f3 and the exposed position of White’s king could lead to the game going either way. However, White has the move and seizes the initiative, using a double check to set up a bind.
1 gxf6+ ♘xf6

If Black plays 1...♘f8 White wins with 2 ♙b8+ in a manner similar to that which happens later in the game.

2 ♙h4+ ♘g7 3 f6+

The bind has been established on f6.

3...♘g8

Advancing the king with 3...♘g6 would enable White to win by means of some subtle manoeuvring: 3...♘g6 4 ♙g4+ ♘h6 5 ♙g7+ ♘h5 6 ♙xf7+ ♘g4 7 ♙g7+ ♘h4 8 ♙h7+ ♙g5 9 ♙f5+ ♘h4 (9...♘h6 10 f7+-) 10 ♙f2!+-. Breaking the pin on the rook gives White fatal control of h3.

4 ♙g3+ ♘f8

Not 4...♘h8? because of the retort 5 ♙g7#.

5 ♙b8+ ♘e8

Black's rook has run out of useful checks. The bind provides White with the irrefutable threat of ♙h8# exploiting the weakness of Black's back rank.

C Castling

Castling does not often serve as a tactical motif. It usually has more long-term strategic importance. However, castling can be an important tactic in certain situations. There are games where one or both sides do not castle for the entire game, but in most openings players will try to castle early in order to complete the development of their pieces.

Castling serves several important purposes. It can provide a safe haven for the monarch and also helps to connect the rooks, allowing them to work together. In some situations castling can activate a rook on an open file. If the f-file is open, kingside castling accomplishes this, while castling on the queenside can immediately activate a rook on an open d-file.

An important tempo might be gained in such situations, e.g. where castling is accompanied by a check to the opposing king or an attack on an undefended piece.

Here is an example from the correspondence game Gurvich – Pampin, played in 1976.

White's knight is pinned, the bishop is hanging and the queen attacked by the rook. There is an advanced passed pawn on the b-file but this does not seem to present any real danger.

At first glance it appears that here White's game is on the verge of collapse.

However, Black's queen would be in jeopardy if it were not for the pin on the knight. White is able to exploit this circumstance and
gain a decisive advantage with a tactic involving castling.

1 ♕xd8+ ♕xd8

Black’s king has been diverted to the open d-file. If Black had tried 1...♔f7 instead, then the pawn, which seemed only a moment ago to have no future, would be able to promote on the b-file by 2 b8♕. At this critical moment White is able to gain an important tempo, break the pin, and secure the king by castling queenside.

2 0-0-0+

Now White’s knight is no longer pinned and therefore Black’s king and queen are simultaneously under attack. Black has no satisfactory way of dealing with both these threats.

2...♔e7

No better is 2...♖d7 3 b8♕+ ♕e7 4 ♖xb4+ ♖e8 5 ♖xd7 and Black will soon be mated.

3 ♖xb5 1-0

Castling was also used as a tactical device to win a rook in the game Feuer – O’Kelly, Belgium, 1934.

1 ♗e3

In reply to this developing move, Black now makes a dubious capture.

1...♖xb2?!

It would have been better to continue 1...exd4 as now White clears the d-file with a knight sacrifice.

2 dxe5 fxe5 3 ♖xe5

Black replies with a blunder.

3...dxe5?

Black’s last chance was to play 3...♖b8. After 4 ♖d1 ♗e6 13 ♘f3 White would still have the edge. Instead Black blundered with 3...dxe5? allowing White a winning shot delivered by the tactical motif of castling.

4 ♕xd8+ ♕xd8 5 0-0-0+ 1-0

By castling with check, White gained a valuable tempo. Now the unprotected rook on b2 can be captured with the king and White emerges the exchange ahead. In addition Black’s queenside pawns are weak and will eventually fall like ripe fruit from the vine.

Castling is the only move that allows a king to move two squares laterally in one move and it is for this reason that the unprotected rook on b2 was vulnerable to attack. Black was caught in an unusual double attack after White castled queenside with check. The rook ended up on d1, checking Black’s king, while simultaneously White’s king went to c1, striking Black’s errant rook.

The following exciting finish from the game Ed. Lasker – Thomas, London, 1912, features a checkmate by castling at the end of a long and successful king hunt.
White jostles the black king with a queen sacrifice.

1 ♕xh7+!

The f7 square is under White’s control, so Black is obliged to accept the queen sacrifice.

1...♔xh7

Another beautiful tactic follows at once. White springs a discovered attack. It also happens to be a double check. Perhaps this extremely powerful type of move might be called a discovered double check!

2 ♘f6+

Black’s king is under siege. The king has no choice but to begin its agonising journey up the board. Retreating with 2...♔h8 is punished at once by 3 ♘g6#.

2...♔h6 3 ♘eg4+

White’s pieces are marvellously well coordinated.

3...♕g5 4 h4+

White had another mating line by 4 f4+ ♘h4 5 g3+ ♘h3 6 ♗f1+ ♗g2 7 ♗f2#.

The end is near. Black’s king has been dragged up the board.

5 g3+ ♗f3 6 ♗e2+ ♗g2 7 ♗h2+ ♗g1

5...♗f3

White chose to conclude the attack by playing 8 ♗d2#.

A checkmate could also have been delivered by 8 0-0-0#. Either way this is a classic game which has endured through the ages.

Checking the King

Checking the king is an important tactic, so obvious that sometimes it is not even mentioned in chess sources when discussing tactical play.

There are several reasons why a check is an important motif. It is a move that cannot be ignored. The opponent must deal with it in one of three ways – by blocking the check, by removing the attacking piece, or by moving the king.

A check can also gain a tempo. This allows the attacker to pile on additional threats. The
defender is not given the chance to make moves other than those that are necessary to deal with the check.

Multiple threats can occur with tactics such as discovered checks, double checks and even discovered double checks, as we have just seen in the above example. When a check is a forcing move, the attacker can calculate the opponent’s response and plan the continuation of the attack several moves ahead.

A check may or may not be the best move. The results of a check should be analysed carefully, whenever the possibility of a check arises on the board.

A check or a series of checks in succession might lead to zugzwang or a draw by perpetual check.

A check should not be given for its own sake, without consideration of its consequences. A careful appraisal of the demands of the position is required.

Here is an example where the attacking side can make progress and win by making a series of checks.

It is taken from Damjanović – Lutikov, Sarajevo, 1969.

![Chessboard](image)

*White's advanced pawn on h6 serves an important tactical role, creating a bind by controlling the g7 square.*

White uses a series of checks to gradually improve the position, which leads to an eventual win. This process is a type of staircase manoeuvre, although the queen is taking bigger zig-zag jumps than in a typical staircase manoeuvre.

1 ♕g3+ ♔h8

Black had to reply this way because the pawn on h6 prevents Black from blocking the check on g7 with the rook or the queen.

Now White’s queen works its way further up the board with a few more checks. Notice how the mobility of the queen allows it to reposition itself to a more favourable location by giving a series of purposeful checks.

2 ♕e5+ ♔g8 3 ♕g5+ ♔h8

![Chessboard](image)

*White's queen is now properly positioned to infiltrate on d8 after an exchange of rooks. This allows simplification to a winning position.*

4 ♖xf7 ♕xf7 5 ♕d8+

![Chessboard](image)

*Checkmate now follows.*

5...♕g8 6 ♔f6+ ♕g7 7 ♕xg7#

A saying sometimes heard in chess clubs, “Check – It might be mate!” is often greeted with howls by onlookers. However there is a grain of truth in it. Checks should always be analysed carefully as a forced sequence of moves might then be worked out to achieve a winning attack.

Consider this example from the game Delannoy – Morphy, Paris, 1858. Morphy
began with a rook exchange, diverting the enemy king and allowing infiltration with a series of winning checks.

White chooses to recapture the rook with the king. 2 \texttt{♕g5} would have given Black a winning attack by 2... \texttt{♖ee2}.

The rest is typical Paul Morphy, sacrificing a rook with an attraction motif and then following up with a mating attack.

Refusing the offered rook would quickly lead to mate. 3 \texttt{g1 \texttt{♖xg2#}}; 3 \texttt{g3 \texttt{♖xg2+ 4 h4 (4 f4 \texttt{g4#}) 4...g4#}}.

3 \texttt{xe2 \texttt{xe2+ 4 e1 \texttt{g1+}}

The next position was reached in the game between \textbf{Mecking}, playing White, and \textbf{Tan}, at the 1973 Petropolis Interzonal tournament.

White has a check available.

1 \texttt{xf7+}

This turns out to be the winning move. It results in a skewer.

1... \texttt{xf7 2 x7+ x7 3 h7+}
Black tried to hold on for a few moves, but resigned shortly.

3...♕e6 4 ♕xc7 ♕xd3 5 ♕xa7 ♕d1+ 6 ♕f2 ♕d2+ 7 ♕f3 ♕d3+ 8 ♕f4 ♕f6 9 ♕a6+ 1-0

The a-pawn will work its way up the board to decide the outcome.

A checking tactic was employed successfully in the game Horváth – Jacobsen, Copenhagen, 1988.

White is making progress.

3 ♕a3+! ♕g8
Instead 3...♕e8 would allow 4 ♕e7#.

4 ♕g3+ ♕f8 5 ♕b8#

White has exploited the back rank weakness and delivered checkmate by giving a series of checks with the queen. Notice the powerful bind created by the advanced pawn on f6.

Checking the king enabled White to reach an advantageous position, which culminated in a discovered attack, in the game Kieninger – Herrmann, Bad Oeynhausen, 1940.

Black must reply 1...♕e8 because of the mate on g7 after 1...♕g8 2 ♕g7#.

2 ♕e3+
Black’s reply is forced.

2...♕f8
Black would get mated after 2...♕d8 3 ♕e7+ ♕c8 4 ♕c7#.
White's queen is able to infiltrate.

1 ♕c7+

This forces the king to the back rank.

1...♔e8

Mate would have followed at once after 1...♔f8? 2 ♕d8#. Now White continues to use the checking motif.

2 ♕c8+

Once again Black’s reply is forced.

2...♔e7

White now finds a beautiful move.

3 ♖xd5! 1-0

White threatens 4 ♖d7#. If Black tries 3...♕f1+ White can play 4 ♖d1 and mate is still threatened. Black has now run out of useful moves. Preventing the mate with 3...exd5 loses the queen to 4 ♖xh3. White was able to attack Black’s queen on the c8-h3 diagonal due to its unfortunate placement on h3.

Here is an example of how a check can be used to serve a secondary tactical purpose. It comes from the game Dorfman – Romanishin, Cienfuegos, 1977.

Black begins with a powerful move that wins by force.

1...♗xf3+

This bishop sacrifice gains a tempo and forces White’s reply. There is another underlying reason for the check on the king that will be seen on Black’s next move.

2 ♖xf3

White has no choice as 2 ♔g1 results in an immediate mate by 2...♕g4#.

2...♗e5 0-1

The point of Black’s first move is now clear. Not only did it result in a gain of a tempo but also introduced an interference motif. With White’s bishop now diverted to f3, White’s f-pawn has been obstructed. White is unable to advance the f-pawn to f4 to prevent the dangerous attack on the b8-h2 diagonal.

There is no way to prevent mate. 3 h3 fails to 3...♕xh3+ 4 ♔g1 ♕h2#.

This is a nice example of how a check on the opponent’s king serves specific tactical objectives.

Classic Bishop Sacrifice

The classic bishop sacrifice is a well known way of jostling the king. It involves a sacrifice of White’s king’s bishop on h7 or Black’s king’s bishop on h2, when either side castles on the kingside. It is also called the ‘Greek Gift’ sacrifice.

The defending side has several possible responses. The attacking and defending motifs
depend on the specific characteristics of the position. This tactical motif occurs fairly frequently and needs careful attention.

For example, in the following game **Filtshev – Padevsky**, Sofia, 1952, Black used the classic bishop sacrifice for a quick mating attack. In the majority of cases, it is White, not Black, who is able to initiate this type of sacrifice more quickly because of the slight advantage of having the first move in the game.

For example, in the following game **Filtshev – Padevsky**, Sofia, 1952, Black used the classic bishop sacrifice for a quick mating attack. In the majority of cases, it is White, not Black, who is able to initiate this type of sacrifice more quickly because of the slight advantage of having the first move in the game.

![Chessboard diagram]

Black's pawn on e4 creates a strong bind. White's queen bishop has little scope and the rooks are not yet connected.

The white knight has a good outpost on d4, but its lack of immediate access to f3 or e2 means that it does not have an easy way of getting back quickly to protect the kingside.

Black begins with the signature move of the classic bishop sacrifice.

1...♗xh2+

White chooses to accept the offered bishop.

2♔xh2

White also had to consider the possibility of refusing the sacrifice with 2♔h1. In that case Black could have saved the bishop by retreating it to c7 and then potentially set up a battery with the queen on d6.

Once the bishop sacrifice has been accepted, Black has to contend with a knight check.

2...♘g4+

3♗g3

Had White played 3♗g1 Black would have replied with 3...♕h4 threatening mate on h2. The bind in the position prevents White's knight from returning to f3 to protect h2. White's king is caught between a rock and a hard place. A king hunt will now ensue.

3...d6+ 4f4♕h6

Black threatens to mate on h2. White's rooks are not yet connected. This unfortunate lag in development denies White the option of defending by 5♖h1.

5f5

White cuts off the knight's defender, the bishop on c8. Black decides to sacrifice the knight to drive White's king forward to its doom.

5...h2+ 6♔xg4h5+
Advancing the h-pawn is a typical way of sustaining the attack after a classic bishop sacrifice.

7 ♕g5 ♕g3+ 8 ♕xh5 g6+ 9 fxg6 ♕g7!

Mate cannot be avoided: 10 gxf7 ♖h8#.

Even though Black’s bishop has not yet been developed, it still managed to play a role to the end, as seen in the variation 10 ♖xf7+ ♖xf7 11 ♖xf7 ♖h2+ 12 ♕g5 ♖h6#.

Here is another example of the classic bishop sacrifice, this time with White striking first. It comes from a game by Kots, playing White, against Riskin, in Sverdlovsk, 1963.

1 ♕xh7+

The bishop sacrifice is justified. White’s two bishops are targeting Black’s kingside, the rooks are ideally placed, the knight is well posted, and the queen is ready to head for h5 if necessary.

Black chose the reply 1...♕xh7.

After 1...♕xh7 White would also have a strong attack: 2 ♖d7 ♖b8 3 ♖xf7 ♖e7 4 ♖xe7 ♖xe7 5 ♖g6 ♖d6 6 ♖d1±.

2 ♖d7!

The point of this rook sacrifice is to divert the key defensive knight from f6.

2...♕xd7

Now White brings up the queen with check, gaining a tempo.

3 ♕h5+ ♕g8

4 ♕xf7+ ♕h7 5 ♕xd7 1-0

The discovered attack on g7 is fatal: 5...♕f8 6 ♕f6+ ♕h8 or 6...♕h6 7 ♕h5#.
Another line is 5...g8 6 x6 x2+ 7 h1 xg2+ 8 xg2 b7+ 9 xf2 and Black will soon be mated.

The classic bishop sacrifice can occur fairly quickly in the opening. For example, in the French Defence it can occur as early as move seven.

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 c3 c6 4 e5 cfd7 5 f3 b4 6 b3 0-0?

7 xh7+ xh7

Black now has to decide between accepting the sacrifice or playing 7...h8.

In this position 7...h8 would also lead to a losing position for Black, i.e. 8 g5 g6 9 d3 (9 g4 e7 10 h3+) 9 e7 10 h3 g7 11 e4 f6 12 h6+ f7 13 xf6 x6 14 g5+ e8 15 xg6+ d8 16 xf8 xf8+.

After 7...xh7 White gains a tempo by continuing the attack with 8 g5+, reaching the critical position that both sides needed to assess carefully. Black has various ways to defend.

One key line is 8...g8. Then White brings up the queen with 9 h5. There is an immediate mate threat on h7. Black must give up the queen, leading to a lost position after 9...xg5.

If instead Black tries to provide the king with a flight square by playing 9...e8, White mates by 10 xf7+ h8 11 h5+ g8 12 h7+ f8 13 h8+ e7 14 xg7.

In this position other lines after White’s 8 g5+ also win for White.

For example: 8...h8 9 h5+ g8 10 h7#; 8...g6 9 h4 f5 10 h5+ h6 11 xe6+ h7 12 xd8--; 8...h6 9 xf7+ h7 10 xd8+.

Occasionally an opportunity arises to deliver a double bishop sacrifice in order to lay bare the opponent’s king. Here is an example from the game Kuzmin – Sveshnikov, USSR, 1973.

Black has just captured White’s knight on b6. White has a beautiful bishop pair, targeting g7 and h7, so instead of playing 1 cxb6 it is time to pounce.

1 xh7+ xh7

1...h8 would be met forcefully with 2 h5+. Then a paralysing discovered check would follow.

2 h5+ g8
The knight will now be able to occupy the f7 square. White has a powerful battery operating on the a2-f7 diagonal. If Black captures the rook with the bishop by 1...♗xf8 then this battery takes effect: 2 ♕g8#. Black's only other option is to capture the rook with a rook.

1...♗xf8

White now sacrifices the queen and sets up a smothered mate.

2 ♕g8+ ♆xg8 3 ♖f7#

The line clearing move 1 ♖f8+ was the winning tactic that made this smothered mate possible.

Here is an example taken from a De La Bourdonnais – McDonnell match game, London, 1834.

If White's rook could vacate the g5 square White's queen would be able to deliver mate immediately with ♕g5#.

1 ♖h5+

This is the clearance sacrifice. White has removed the rook from the g5 square, gaining a tempo by putting Black's king in check. Black has no adequate way of responding to the threat since 1...♕g6 would allow 2 ♕g5# and 1...♖h5 does not help because it too allows 2 ♕g5#.

An example from the game Hort – Portisch, Madrid, 1973 also features a clearance sacrifice.
1 ♖g4+!
Black has no choice but to accept the sacrifice.

1...fxg4
The point of the sacrifice is to open the b1-h7 diagonal so that White's bishop on d3 can participate decisively in the kingside attack.

2 ♕g5 ♔h8 3 ♕h6 1-0
White has two ways of delivering checkmate and Black cannot defend against both of them. White threatens 4 ♕xf8# and 4 ♕xh7#. Playing 3...f5 to protect h7 prevents one of the mates but allows the second one: 4 ♕xf8#.

In the game Stolberg – Botvinnik, USSR, 1940, a clearance sacrifice secured a quick victory.

The future world champion began with a strong move that left White defenceless.

1...♖xh3+!
Black will win whether or not the rook is captured. If White tries 2 ♔g1 Black has another forceful retort in 2...♖xg2+. The mating continuation would be 3 ♖xg2 ♕e2+ 4 ♖h3 ♖g4+ 5 ♖h2 ♖f3+ 6 ♖h1 ♖h3#.

2 gxh3
White decides to capture the rook. Black responds with a gentle move that carries a big punch.

2...d4! 0-1
There is no good reply to this quiet line clearing move. White threatens 3...♖d5+ 4 ♔g1 ♖g2#.

Another example comes from the game Predojević – Carlsen, Sarajevo, 2006.
1...c2+

The passed pawn is extremely dangerous. White must endeavour to blockade the pawn with the king.

2 ♔c1

Either 2 ♔a1 or 2 ♔a2 allows Black to check with the rook on the a-file and exploit the battery on the a1-h8 diagonal: 2...♖a8+ 3 ♖a4 ♖xb2#.

2...♕f4+ 3 ♖d2

Black now makes a very strong clearance sacrifice to lift the blockade on the c1 square.

3...♗xb2+! 0-1

White's doubled c-pawns and Black's pawn on c5 are typical of the French Defence, Winawer Variation. White had previously played the pawn to a3 to put the question to Black's king bishop on b4. Black replied by capturing the knight on c3 with the bishop, doubling White's pawns on the c-file.

Typically the pawn structure arises after the following moves: 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘c3 ♖b4 4 e5 c5 5 a3 ♗xc3+ 6 bxc3. This type of centre can open up quickly or remain closed if Black decides to push the pawn with ...c4 or if White captures the c5 pawn.

In the diagram position, White takes advantage of Black's weakly protected knight on f5 to create additional central tension by means of a tactical blow.

1 ♘xd5+ ♖d8

White has won a pawn. More importantly the d-file is now half opened, giving White further tactical opportunities.

If Black had played 1...exd5 then White would continue 2 ♕xf5 ♖c6 3 ♖xh6 and have pressure on the f-file as well as a menacing passed h-pawn.

2 ♖e3

Black needs to trade a pair of knights to avoid losing a pawn. This strengthens White's threats on the f-file.

2...♗xe3 3 ♖xe3 ♕c7

Black uses the rook to provide more support to the weak f7 square.

4 dxc5 ♖xc5
Black's knight had previously been poorly placed but it is now in a better position.

5 ♖d1+

White could have also played 5 0-0-0+ to bring the rook to the d-file with tempo. This would have been an equally strong move and a good example of how castling can be used both to attack and defend.

5...♔e7

The king could not find shelter at c8 because of 5...♗c8 6 ♕a8#. 5...♘d7 would allow 6 ♖xf7. White would also capture the f7 pawn with sustained pressure after 5...♗c5 6 ♔xc5 ♖bxc5 7 ♖xf7.

6 ♕xc5+ ♖xc5

6...♕xc5 would not have prevented White's next move. Removing the knight on c5 was much stronger than going after Black's h-pawn, as this piece was supporting e6.

The clearance sacrifice brings down Black immediately. White's queen now has access to f6, so that if Black replies 7...fxe6 then White

1 ♖h7+ ♔xh7

Capturing the bishop with the king, 1...♗xh7 would be met by the discovered check 2 ♘f5+ when the double attack wins the black queen: 2...♕g8 3 ♕xd6. 1...♕h8 would have succumbed to a quick mate: 2 ♖xf8+ ♘g8 (2...♕xf8 3 ♘g6#) 3 ♘g6+ ♕xg6 4 ♕xg6#.

Now White will advance the g-pawn to create a powerful bind, thereby establishing a back rank weakness.

2 g6 ♘f8

Playing 2...♗f6 would have allowed White an exchange sacrifice to create a mate threat on the h-file: 3 ♕xf6 gxf6 4 ♕h6 ♕d7 (4...♗e7 5 ♕f5+~) 5 ♕f5+~.

3 ♕g5 ♘d7 4 ♕f5 ♗xf5 5 ♕xf5
Black’s position is resignable. White threatens to mate along the h-file starting with 6 ♕h5.

5...♕e6

There wasn’t much that Black could do. White’s next move makes use of a rook sacrifice for the purposes of both attraction and line clearance.

6 ♖h8+

This is the start of the final mating combination. Black’s replies are forced.

6...♔xh8

Next White removes the key defender, the knight on f8, with an exchange sacrifice.

7 ♖xf8+ 1-0

It would have been mate in two more moves after 7...♖xf8 8 ♕h4+ ♕g8 9 ♕h7#. The attraction motif and line clearance sacrifice 6 ♖h8+ gave White an extra tempo, making it possible to play 8 ♕h4+ followed by mate on h7. Notice how White’s tactical strikes were all logically directed towards the ultimate goal of checkmating the opponent’s king.

A central line clearance sacrifice activated Black’s powerful raking bishops in the game Goldin – Arbakov, USSR, 1978.

1...♗xe5! 2 fxe5 ♖g4+ 3 ♔h1 ♔xe5

White has a very weak h2 square. The white king is also exposed and will soon find itself in the crosshairs of Black’s c8-bishop on the a8-h1 diagonal. Compare this position to that which was on the board three moves ago. White’s centre has been compromised and the king is under attack.

4 ♕d2

White chooses this method to add support to h2. 4 ♕e2 was a very good alternative as it would have been unclear whether Black had the advantage after 4 ♕e2 ♖xd5 5 ♖xd5 ♗b7 6 ♖xc5 ♖c4∞.

The main drawback of 4 ♕d2 is that White’s queen will become overloaded. Black will be
able to use a very strong interference tactic to gain control of d5.

Black’s attack would also have succeeded after 4 h3 ♖g3 5 ♖d2 ♖xh3 6 ♖xh3 ♖xh3+ 7 ♖g1 ♖h1+ 8 ♖f2 ♖h4+ 9 ♖f2 ♖h2+ 10 ♖f1 ♖g3+ 11 ♖f1 ♖f3+ 12 ♖f2 ♖h1#.

4...♘xd5!

This second line clearance sacrifice opens up the long diagonal. Black’s second bishop will now be able to exert itself aggressively.

5 ♖xd5 ♖b7 6 ♖e2

6 h3 would have also allowed an interference tactic to control the long diagonal: 6...♖g3 7 ♖e2 ♖d4!.

The central line clearance sacrifices with a rook then a knight were the key moves that allowed the queen and the pair of bishops to decide the final outcome.

**Counter Pin**

A counter pin is an unusual tactic. The pinned player counters with another pin to defeat the opponent. Although this tactic is rare, it can be beautiful when it occurs.

Here is a hypothetical example.

White’s rook is pinned on the first rank. A counter pin is used to win material.

1 ♖h5+

The check creates a double attack against Black’s queen. The pin on Black’s queen is decisive.

1...♖e7 2 ♖xf3+-

White has used a counter pin to win Black’s queen.

Irving Chernev coined the term counter-counter pin, based on the analysis of a variation from the game Boleslavsky – Bisguier, Helsinki, 1952.
The game actually finished with 1 ♕c7 ♖g8 2 h3 ♕b2 3 ♕d7 ♕b1+ 4 ♕h2 g5 5 ♖e5 ♕f8 6 ♕e7 ♕g8 7 f7 1-0 Black is getting mated.

However, an interesting variation might have occurred in the following way: 1 ♕xg6 ♖g8. Here is the first pin, preventing White’s queen from leaving the g-file.

2 ♖d8. This is the counter pin. White pins Black’s rook which is pinning White’s queen.

2...♕b1+. Finally here is the third pin – the counter-counter pin. Black’s queen inflicts the damage. After 3 ♕g2 ♕xg6+ Black wins White’s queen. Fanciful though this may seem, things like this do occur in chess, albeit very infrequently.

**Cross Check**

A cross check occurs when a player in check replies with a move that delivers a check as well.

The cross check can be effected by using a blocking move or by moving the king and revealing a discovered check.

As an example, consider the following position where Black has just played ...♕a4+.

White replies with the cross check 1 ♕b3+ mating in at most three moves. The cross check was delivered by means of a discovered check.

In the next example from a queen endgame between Botvinnik, playing White, against Minev in Amsterdam, 1954, White uses a cross check to decide the outcome of the game. Black has just played ...♕h2+.

White’s dangerous passed pawn on g7 is about to promote. Ideally Black would like to create a double attack, checking the king and simultaneously attacking the pawn on g7. If Black is able to capture the g-pawn the game would most likely end in a draw.

But after 1 ♕c5 Black cannot avoid a cross check, forcing a trade of queens and leaving the g-pawn free to promote, so Black resigned.

1...♕f2+ or 1...♕g1+ are followed by 2 ♕d4+ while 1...♕c2+ is met with 2 ♕c4+ and 1...♕c7+ allows 2 ♕c6+. All of these cross checks result in forcing a queen exchange, after which White will be able to promote the g-pawn.
Cross checks do not occur very frequently in actual play, other than in queen endgames such as that in the Botvinnik – Minev game.

**Desperado**

Sometimes loss of material is inevitable when a piece or a pawn is threatened and is about to be captured. Often there is no safe move for the attacked piece.

A desperado move is an attempt to make the best out of an undesirable situation by at least getting something back in return. This reduces the damage or even offers some form of compensation, however slight that might be.

A desperado move is made out of desperation. It sometimes brings about positive results, such as the capture of a pawn, which may prove to be very significant in later phases of the game.

Significant gains can arise from weakening the opponent’s pawn structure, jostling the king’s position, diverting an important piece to a less advantageous square, and so on.

Here is a typical example.

1...♘xb3 2 axb3

Black was going to lose the knight anyway. Using the knight to make the desperado move 1...♘xb3 enabled Black to capture a pawn, giving better chances in the endgame.
Black appears to be lost. White’s queen is immune from capture because if 2...♕xe6 then 3 ♕h7#.

2...♕xf6 3 ♕xf6 ♕h2+! ½-½

The desperado move 3...♕h2+! leads to a draw. Black can give up both rooks by making desperado checks. Black will have no legal moves if the second rook is captured. White cannot evade the repeated rook checks. If the second rook is not captured there is a perpetual check. Either way it is a draw.

For example, 4 ♕xh2 ♕g2+ 5 ♕h1 ♕g1+ 6 ♕xg1. Now Black is stalemated regardless of whether the second rook is captured by the king or the rook. Instead of capturing the second rook, White could try to move the king up and down the h-file. Black would continue checking with the rook along the g-file until the game is drawn by a threefold repetition.

This is a very clever tactic. It allows a player to obtain a draw in what would otherwise be a lost game.

Here is another such example from a study by Ponziani in 1782.

Black can achieve a stalemate by a desperado sacrifice of the rook.

1...♖h7+ 2 ♕g6 ♕g7+ 3 ♕h6 ♕h7+ ½-½

Capturing the rook with 4 ♕xh7 results in a stalemate. White cannot evade the rook checks without pinning the queen: 4 ♕g6 ♕g7+ 5 ♕f6 (5 ♕f5 ♕f7+ 6 ♕e5 ♕e7=) 5...♕g6+ 6 ♕xg6=; 4 ♕g5 ♕g7+ 5 ♕f5 ♕f7+ 6 ♕e5 ♕e7=.

More desperado tactics can be found in the Swindles section.

**Discovered Attack**

A discovered attack occurs when one piece moves out of the way of another, often creating multiple threats that cannot all be met at once. A discovered check is one type of discovered attack. Material can sometimes be won by exploiting discovered attacks. Discovered attacks can also result in the gain of an important tempo or they can be used to create mating threats. Here is an example from the game Gutu – Wechsler, Bucharest, 1923.

White breaks in with 1 ♕b8+ ♕d7 2 ♕d8+! This sets up the discovered attack on Black’s queen.
2...♘xd8 (2...c7 3 ♗b6+; 2...e6 3 ♦d6#) 3 ♗b6+ 0-1

Then after 3...♔e8 4 ♕xh2 the discovered attack wins Black’s queen. Black’s h-pawn is under control and Black does not have enough compensation for the loss of material.

White can bring the king back to watch the dangerous passed pawn, then allow the queen, bishop and passed a-pawn to prevail.

White also had a winning line that did not involve the discovered attack: 2 ♕b7+ ♔c8 3 ♖xe7 ♕xf4+ 4 ♔e3 ♕a4 5 ♔a7 ♕b5 6 ♕xb5 cxb5 7 e6 ♕b8 8 exf7 ♕xf7 9 ♕xf7+ or 8...♖h8 9 ♕e7+.

A discovered attack led to a quick resignation in the game Gilg – Alekhine, Prague, 1932.

Black commences with 1...♗f3+ intending to weaken White’s kingside. White replied with 2 gxf3.

White would lose a significant amount of material had the knight sacrifice been refused with 2 ♖h1 due to the unfortunate placement of White’s rook on d4 and queen on c2. For example, 2...♖xd4 3 exd4 ♖xd4 4 ♔b2 ♖g3+ 5 hxg3 (5 ♔g1 ♖d2+ 6 ♖xe2 ♖xe2+ 7 ♔h1 ♖xb2+) 5...♖h6+ 6 ♔g1 ♖xc2+. 2...♖g6+
Here is the main point. Black’s queen is now aligned with White’s queen along the b1-h7 diagonal. The discovered attack will be unleashed once Black checks with the knight.

3 ♕h1 ♘g3+ 4 hxg3 ♕xc2 0-1

White gains a tempo by clearing the b1-h7 diagonal with this check. Black’s h7 square is overloaded.

1... ♗xe7 2 ♗xh7+ ♘xh7 3 ♕xh7+ ♕f8 4 ♕h8#

White wins in other lines as well: 1... ♘xe7 2 ♗h8+ ♗g8 4 ♕h8#; 1... ♗e7 2 ♗h7+ ♗g8 4 ♗g8 4 ♕h8#; 1... ♕f8 2 ♗h7+ ♗h7 3 ♗h7#.

Clearing the diagonal was the key idea here, so this tactic might also be regarded as a line clearing sacrifice.

Polugaevsky unleashed a lethal discovered attack, playing White against Antoshin in the USSR, 1955, leading to a quick win.

1 g6

This move serves a dual purpose. It interferes with Black’s defence of h7. It also exposes the rook on d8 to attack by White’s queen.

1... ♗xg6+

This removes the mating threat on h7 but Black cannot defend against both of the threats.

2 ♗g3 ♗d3

Now a discovered attack finishes things.

3 ♗g5 1-0
The rook on d8 is being attacked by a battery of bishop and queen on the h4-d8 diagonal. Simultaneously, Black's queen faces a discovered attack from the rook on g3. Black must lose material.

In the game Portisch – Hübner, Bugojno, 1978, Black unleashed a venomous discovered attack.

It is very interesting to notice how quickly Black's attack materialises. The key piece is the rook on f7 which enters the fray quickly. It does not seem to have an active role in the attack, but all this changes as soon as the f-file opens.

1...♘e4+!

The knight sacrifice opens the f-file.

2 fxe4

White wants to be shown. Objectively 2 ♕e1 would have been best, although Black still maintains an advantage after 2...♖xg3 3 ♕d3 ♖h2 4 ♗d1 ♕d8 as the repositioned queen is heading for h4.

Now Black’s rook on f7 enters the fray with a discovered check.

2...f xe4+ 3 ♕e1

3...♗g2 is immediately fatal, allowing 3...♗xg3#

The queen sacrifice leads to mate in three more moves. 4 ♔d1 would allow 4...♕xg1+ 5 ♔e1 ♖d5+ and White is completely tied up.

4 ♖xg3

White's king has nowhere to run.

4...♖h1+ 5 ♔f1 ♖xf1+ 6 ♔e2 ♖7f2#

**Discovered Check**

A discovered check is a forceful type of discovered attack. More examples of discovered and double attacks can be found in the dedicated sections.

A piece is moved, revealing another piece that exposes the opponent's king to a check. The moved piece can introduce other threats, making this type of attack very dangerous. The check may result in the gain of a tempo, thereby further exacerbating the defending side.

The first example shown is from the game Schulten – Horwitz, London, 1846.
Black commences with a queen sacrifice.

1... ♕f1+

White’s reply is forced.

2 ♔xf1

Now a discovered double check is used with devastating effect.

2... ♗d3+

Black mates next move.

3 ♔e1 ♕f1#

The bishop not only got out of the way to allow the discovered check, but it moved in such a way as to give check and cover the f1 square, enabling a checkmate with the rook on f1.

Another example of an attack using discovered checks also started with a queen sacrifice in the game Alekhine – Fletcher, London, 1928.

Black’s king is boxed in. Now all Black can do is tack back and forth with the king while the discovered check motif plays itself out.

2... ♔h8 3 ♗g6+ ♔h7 4 ♘xf8+ ♔h8 5 ♘g6+ ♔h7 6 ♕e5+ ♔h8 7 ♗f7#

The attacking knight was able to remove the defending rook on f8 with tempo and reposition itself eventually to f7 and deliver mate.

The threat of a discovered check was enough to force resignation in the game Gluzman – Bareev, Moscow, 2001.

Black began with a beautiful move.

1... ♕e4!

White has little choice but to capture the rook, otherwise it will go to h4 and mate.

2 ♘xe4 ♕xe4 0-1

The discovered check has not yet been played, however the threat of this was enough to force resignation.

3 ♕e2 would lose the queen to the knight fork 3... ♕g3+. Other queen moves allow the deadly discovered check. For instance, 3 ♕c2
White’s resignation prior to the discovered check supports what Aron Nimzowitsch once said – “A threat is stronger than its execution.”

The next example shows how a discovered check can be used to exploit opened central files. It was played in Philadelphia in 2006 between Nakamura, playing White against Sarkar.

White now opens the e-file with an elegant display of tactics.

1 ♖xd5!

Black’s knight on f5 is not well protected. 1...exd5 would allow 2 ♖xf5 when suddenly White would have a double attack on the rooks on c8 and h7, as well as the pawn on f7.

1...♖xh2 2 ♖xe7 ♖xe7

The latent threat on the e-file now enables a winning discovered check.

3 ♖xf5!

This decisive combination opens the e-file, enabling White to win Black’s queen in return by means of a discovered check.

5...b6

White gets a strong passed pawn after 5...♖xf2 6 d5 b6 7 ♖c6±.

6 ♖b7 ♖xc4?!

This is a mistake, but the game cannot be saved. Black needs a flight square for the king but on 6...g5 follows 7 ♖d6 ♖d8 8 c5.

7 ♖d6 1-0

The rook is attacked and White has the additional threat of ♖e8#. Moreover the rook cannot return to c8 to prevent the mate threat without being captured: 7...♖c8 8 ♖xc8+-.

Black is hopelessly lost. 7...g5 8 ♖xc4 (7...g6 still allows 8 ♖e8#) or 7...♖xd4 8 ♖e8# are not very attractive alternatives.

**Diversion**

When a piece playing an important role is diverted to a different square, it is no longer capable of performing its original duties. This is
called a diversion, or a deflection. It can lead to some splendid attacking opportunities.

Here is an example from the game Marin – Fernandez, Spain, 1981.

1 ♕e8+

Black only has one way to defend – by blocking the check. White’s bishop on d3 creates a back rank weakness as it denies Black’s king access to the flight square on h7.

1... ♕f8

Now White uses a diversion.

2 ♖h7+

The king has to move, leaving the queen unprotected.

2... ♕xh7 3 ♖xf8 1-0

The bishop sacrifice has won Black’s queen.

Rubinstein’s immortal game Rotlewi – Rubinstein, Lodz, 1907, is a great example of this theme.

The game opened with the Queen’s Pawn Game.

1 d4 d5 2 ♘f3 e6 3 e3 c5 4 c4 ♘c6 5 ♘c3 ♘f6 6 dxc5 ♘xc5 7 a3?! a6 8 b4 ♘d6 9 ♘b2 0-0 10 ♘d2?! ♗e7 11 ♘d3 dxc4 12 ♘xc4 b5 13 ♘d3 ♗d8 14 ♘e2 ♘b7 15 0-0 ♘e5 16 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 17 f4?! ♘c7 18 e4 ♘ac8 19 e5

19... ♗b6+!

This is a nice intermezzo. Instead of moving the attacked knight at once, Black takes the opportunity to seize the a7-g1 diagonal with tempo. The move also gives the rook on c8 freedom to move, perhaps with later tactical possibilities of exploiting an exchange sacrifice on c3.

The power of Black’s pair of raking bishops is extremely strong. These are sometimes called Horwitz bishops.

20 ♖h1 ♗g4!

21 ♘e4

This is White’s best try, although things are already getting very uncomfortable. 21 ♖xg4 would divert the queen away from protecting the bishop on d3, allowing 21... ♘xd3 22 ♘ad1 ♘xc3! (22... dxc3 23 ♘xc3 ♘xc3) 23 ♘xc3 ♘xc3 and Black will win material, obtaining two extremely powerful bishops for the rook.

21... ♗h4

Black now threatens mate with 22... ♗xh2#.

22 g3
After 22 h³ there might have followed 22...♖xc³ 23 ♖xc³ ♖xe⁴ 24 ♗xg⁴ ♗xg⁴ 25 hxg⁴ ♘d³ and Black is winning.

22...♖xc³!

Black continues the attack with a queen sacrifice.

23 gxh⁴ ♖d²!

This is a brilliant diversion. Taking the rook will leave the white bishop on e⁴ unguarded. Black’s bishops then control two key long diagonals.

24 ♕xd²

After 24 ♖xg⁴ ♖xe⁴+ the raking bishops are totally in control; 25 ♗f³ ♖xf³! and the discovered attack on White’s king is crushing. 26 ♗g¹ ♖f¹#.

24...♗xe⁴+

Black’s powerful bishops deny the white king any flight squares. The check must be blocked.

25 ♗g² ♗h³!

Black shows no mercy and now threatens mate on h².

26 ♗d⁴

Black cannot break the pin on the queen: 26 ♖xe⁴ ♖xh²#. White’s heavy pieces, the queen and both rooks, are not positioned well to assist the beleaguered king.

26...♖xd⁴ 27 ♖f² ♖xf² 0-1

This is a magnificent finish. There is no way to save the game: 28 ♖xe⁴ ♖xh²# or 28 ♗g¹ ♖xh²#. The pin prevents White from capturing the rook with the queen.

Another example of a diversion is from the game Gopal – Howell, Gibraltar, 2016.

White has a strong attack. Black’s king position is not secure and the knight on f⁸ is pinned. Also the queen has been relegated to the unenviable role of defending the pinned knight, since the black king cannot get any closer to it.

White now played an unexpected and very strong move.

1 ♗c¹!

The black queen is overloaded and unable to meet all threats. The first move 1 ♗c¹ is intended to divert Black’s queen from its
protection of the pinned knight on f8, thereby enabling White to conclude with a mating attack.

1...♕xc1 2 ♕xf8+ ♦h7 3 ♖xf7+ ♦h8

Had Black tried 3...♕h6 then it would have been all over after 4 ♦g8#.

4 ♦xg6+ ♦g8 5 ♦g7#

Having diverted Black's queen with 1 ♕c1! White's rook and knight, with the support of the very strong pawns on f6 and h4, were all poised to deliver the coup de grâce, whereas Black's rook, having gained the seventh rank, was totally out of play.

Black was completely helpless against the diversionary tactic. Other defences, such as 1...g5 would have only delayed matters: 2 ♦xg5 ♦h7 3 ♖xf8+ ♦g8 4 ♦h6#. Mate would also have followed after 1...♕h7 2 ♖h6+ ♦xh6 3 ♖xf8.

A diversionary sacrifice was also offered in the game Kamsky – Basin, Minsk, 1988, in order to target Black's weak f7 square. Black refused the offer.

Black's position is about to crumble. White offers an exchange sacrifice to undermine the defence of f7.

1 ♖d7 ♦h6

Black strengthens the f7 point instead of accepting the diversion, which would lead either to a mating attack or a powerful windmill tactic: 1...♖xd7 2 ♖xf7+ ♦g8 3 ♖xd7+ ♦f8 (3...♕h8 4 ♖xg4 hxg4 5 ♖f7+ +- 4 ♖f7+ ♦g8 (4...♕e8 5 ♖d7+ ♦d8 6 ♖e6#) 5 ♖xb7+ ♦f8 6 ♖f7+ ♦g8 7 ♖xa7+ ♦f8 8 ♖f7+ ♦g8 9 ♖xa4+.

2 ♖xb7

White has the upper hand. Pressure is still exerted on the f7 square and White's rook on the seventh rank is very strong.

Play might have continued 2...♖c7 3 ♖xc7 ♖xc7 4 ♖xf7 ♖xf7 5 ♖e6+ ♦e7 6 ♖xc7 with a significant advantage going into the next phase of the game.

A diversion was used in a mating attack delivered in Dzindzichashvili – Zaitsev, Tbilisi, 1965.

1 ♖f7+ ♖xf7

Black cannot recapture 1...♖xf7 because of 2 ♖h8#. The diversion has left Black's queen unprotected.

2 ♖xe8
White now mates. 2... ♖g7 3 ♕f8 ♖g8 4 ♕e7+ ♖f7 5 ♕xf7+ ♖g7 6 ♕xg7#.

In the next example White wins the queen with a diversion.

This position is from the game Dzindzichashvili – Kalandazichvili, Georgia, 1967.

1 ♕f8+

Diverting the black rook wins the queen.

1... ♖xf8 2 ♕xe5

Notice that diverting the king instead of the rook would also win the queen with a knight fork. 1... ♖xf8 2 ♕xd7+ followed by 3 ♕xe5. A possible smothered mate might have followed as well: 1... ♖xf8 2 ♕xd7+ ♖g8 3 ♕xe5 c5 4 ♕e1! d4 (4... ♖e6 5 ♖xc5+-) 5 ♖c4+ ♖h8 6 ♖f7+ ♖g8 7 ♖h6+ ♖h8 8 ♖g8+ ♖xg8 9 ♖f7#.

In the game Adorjan – Miles, Linares, 1985, a diversion was used in a mating attack.

Black now played a remarkable move.

1... ♖d7!

At first glance this looks like a blunder; Black is giving away the bishop. However the point behind the move is to divert White’s bishop from the a8–h1 diagonal, giving the black queen access to the killer check on f3. Black’s bishop also delivers an unusual type of relative pin on White’s bishop, discouraging the white bishop from returning to g2 to defend the kingside, because then it would leave the queen under attack.

2 ♖xd7 ♕f3+ 3 ♕g1 ♖xg3+ 0-1

Checkmate would follow after 4 hxg3 ♕xg3+ 5 ♖h1 ♖h3+ 6 ♕g1 ♕g8+ 7 ♕g5 ♕xg5#

The diversion 1... ♖d7! made all this possible, enabling a mating combination to begin with the queen check on f3 on the following move.

Another diversion was used in the game Kasparov – Browne, Banja Luka, 1979.
White saw a nice combination, exploiting a diversion and then an absolute pin.

1 ♔h7+! ♔xh7

The bishop had to be taken because of the mate threat on the back rank: 2...♔f8 3 ♕h8#.

2 ♕xe6 1-0

Now White’s threatened rook check on f6 on the next move requires Black to give up the queen for a rook in order to prevent an immediate mate.

2...♕e8 3 ♖xf7+ ♔xf7

Otherwise 3...♕h8 4 ♕h6+ ♔g8 5 ♕g7#. White now pays attention to the menacing passed pawn, resulting in a winning endgame.

4 ♕xf7+ ♕h8 5 bxc3 bxc3 6 ♕c7+-.

The remaining passed pawn on the c-file will be liquidated by the queen, while White’s passed d-pawn is a juggernaut.

The 1979 Stockholm game Sjöberg – Ekström, featured a lovely diversion, exploiting a back rank weakness.

1 g6

This creates a powerful bind. Black’s king is now trapped on the back rank. The e7 and f7 squares are controlled by White’s d6 and g6 pawns. White also controls the h-file. White now threatens 2 ♖h8# which forces Black’s reply.

1...♔f8

The point here is that if White now plays 2 ♖h8+ Black has 2...♕g8 preventing an immediate mate.

2 ♖xf5+!

This beautiful diversion wins the game. Black must take the queen or otherwise mate follows by 2...♕e8 3 ♕xe6+ ♔f8 4 ♕h8#.

2...♕xf5 3 ♕h8#

The diversion prevented the queen from blocking the check on g8, as it would have been able to do after 2 ♖h8+. Notice the critically important role of White’s two advanced pawns in keeping Black’s king hemmed in on the back rank.

In a position that looks more like a composed problem than an actual game, White used a rook sacrifice as a diversion in Bogoljubow – Sultan Khan, Prague, 1931, to deliver a checkmate.
1 ♖d5+!

The point of this surprising move will become clear on the next turn. White would have a beautiful mating attack if Black refuses to accept this rook sacrifice: 1...♔a6 2 ♖c8+ ♖b7 3 ♖d6+ ♖b5 (3...a5 4 ♖c5+ ♖b5 5 ♖a6#) 4 ♖d7+ ♖a5 5 ♖c5+ ♖b5 6 ♖xb5#.

1...♘xd5 2 ♖e2+

This was the idea of diverting the knight with the rook sacrifice. The bishop's relocation to the f1-a6 diagonal is crushing. Black's replies are now all forced.

2...♗g2+ 1-0

When used in conjunction with other tactics, a diversion can be overwhelming, as was the case in the game Chandler – Hartung, Denmark, 1992.

Play continued:
1...♖g2+! 2 ♖xg2

Diverting the rook to g2 instead of the king, by 2 ♖xg2, would box in the king on the back rank. Black then mates with 2...♕f1+ 3 ♖g1 ♕xg1#.

After 2 ♖xg2 Black uses a knight fork to win the queen:

2...♕e1+ 1-0

Next 3...♖xc2 would be played, leaving Black with a massive material advantage.

A diversion on the back rank led to checkmate in the game Metchkarov – Kaikamjdosov, Bulgaria, 1969.

1...♕f3 2 ♕f1

White's reply is an attempt to prevent the checkmate on g2. Black's queen could not be captured because of the back rank weakness: 2 ♖xf3? ♖a1+ etc.

2...♖a1 0-1

The pin of the queen on the back rank allows Black to mate on g2 after White gives
everything away to try to prevent it: 3 b1xb1 e1xe1 5 xe1 g2#

In the 1954 Amsterdam Olympiad game **Najdorf – Porath**, diverting a defending piece led to an immediate resignation.

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White plays a beautiful move: 1 ♖e7! 1-0

The knight move has a dual purpose. It threatens 2 ♕g8#. The knight now also attacks Black’s queen. Capturing the knight with 1...♗xe7 diverts the bishop from f6, allowing White to mate by 2 ♕h8#.

Trying to prolong the suffering after 1...♗e5 also leads to mate after 2 ♖xc6 ♖xd3 3 ♖xe5 ♔e7 (3...♕e8 4 ♕xf7+ ♖d8 5 ♖c6+ ♖xc6 6 ♔e8#) 4 ♕xf7+ ♖d6 5 ♖d7+ ♔c5 6 b4#.

In the game **Tseshkovsky – Gufeld**, Vilnius, 1975, a rook sacrifice was used as a diversion to disorganise Black’s defence.

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White’s move, 1 ♖f8+! diverts the rook from the e-file. Black replied 1...♗xf8 avoiding the mate that would follow after 1...♔g7 2 ♖g8+ ♖h6 3 ♖e3+ ♖h5 4 ♖xh7+ ♕g4 5 ♖h3#. Interposing with 3...♖f4 would only delay the mate by one more move.

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The game concluded:

2 ♖xe5+ ♖f6 3 ♖xb8 1-0

The bishop is on its way back to e5, with a passed pawn ready to promote on the b-file. Black does not have any adequate defence. Diversion can be an extremely powerful tactical motif indeed.

A brilliant and famous example of a diversion occurred in the game **Botvinnik – Capablanca**, Avro, 1938.

Here White sacrifices the horrible bishop on b2, diverting Black’s queen away from the protection of the e-pawn.

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1 ♖a3! ♖xa3

Instead 1...♕e8 2 ♕c7+ ♖g8 3 ♖e7 revives White’s bishop. Then 3...♖g7 4 ♖xf6+ ♖xf6 5 ♖e5+ ♖e7 6 ♖e2+-.

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White now opens up things further with a knight sacrifice.

2 ♖h5+! gxh5

Moving the king allows White a mating attack: 2...♖g8 3 ♖xf6+ ♕f8 4 ♖xd5 ♕c1+ 5 ♖f2 ♖d2+ 6 ♖g3 ♖d3+ 7 ♖h4 g5+ 8 ♖g4 h5+
9 ♕xg5 ♕d2+ 10 ♕xh5 ♕d1+ 11 g4+; 2...♕f8 3 ♕xf6+ ♕e8 4 ♕f7+ ♕d8 5 ♕d7#; 2...♕h8 3 ♕xf6+ ♕g8 4 ♕g7#.

3 ♕g5+ ♕h8 4 ♕xf6+ ♕g8 5 e7

Black’s queen cannot get back in time to stop the passed pawn. Black tried for a perpetual check, but ran out of checks.

5...♕c1+ 6 ♕f2 ♕c2+ 7 ♕g3 ♕d3+ 8 ♕h4 ♕e4+ 9 ♕xh5 ♕e2+ 10 ♕h4 ♕e4+ 11 ♕g4 ♕e1+ 12 ♕h5 1-0

Botvinnik also used a diversion against Keres at the USSR team championship in 1966.

1 ♕h7+ ♕f8 2 ♕h8#

Diverting a queen with a sacrifice to mate the opponent’s king with a pawn is a very satisfying way of using a diversion, as in the game Georgiadis – Kuindzhi, Tbilisi, 1973.

Black begins by diverting the queen, which in turn breaks the pin on the rook.

1...♕f2+!

White’s reply is forced.

2 ♕xf2

Next Black sacrifices a rook to clear the g5 square.

2...♕h5+

Once again White’s reply is forced.

3 ♕xh5

Now Black mates with a pawn – a classic David and Goliath mate.

3...g5#

White’s flank weakness prevents any escape. Black’s king, in opposition, is assuming the role.
of an attacking piece, supporting the pawn that delivers the mate.

A diversion was used in the game Pelajez – De Dovitis, Havana, 1993.

1... ♖e2!

White's queen is overloaded. It is protecting c3 and also cannot leave the second rank without allowing a mate, i.e. 2 ♕d3? ♖xa2+ 3 ♔c1 ♕b2#.

2 ♕xe2

The rook sacrifice has removed an important defender. Nudging the queen over ever so slightly by two squares is enough to make an important difference.

2... ♖xb3+

The second rook is sacrificed. White must accept the sacrifice otherwise 3 ♖c2 ♖c3#; or 3 ♖c1 ♖c3+ 4 ♕c2 ♕b1+!. This attraction motif, nudging the king over just one square, would have been a very nice finish: 5 ♖xb1 ♕a1#.

3 axb3

Now the infiltration of Black's queen, supported by the bishop controlling the a1-h8 diagonal, is decisive.

There follows a mate with a nice staircase manoeuvre.

3... ♕a1+ 4 ♔c2 ♕b2+ 5 ♕d3 ♕c3#

In the game Valvo – Sherwin, USA, 1964, Black noticed that removing a pin on the rook on d6 would expose a back rank weakness in the opponent's camp.

1... ♕h4!

White cannot play 2 ♕xh4 as that would release the pin on the rook and allow 2... ♖xd1#.

1... ♖g4?! would not be as good. White could respond with 2 ♕a3 ♖a4 3 ♕c5 putting pressure on the c7 pawn.

2 ♕c5

2 ♕a3 is worth examining. After 2... ♕f2 3 ♕xf2 ♖xf2 4 ♕c1 White's whole position would be reduced to passivity.

2... ♕c4!

Black pursues the same theme, endeavouring to release the pin along the a3-f8 diagonal.

3 ♕xd6+
Unfortunately there isn’t anything much better. 3 ♖xd6 ♕xc5 4 ♗xg2 ♖xc2+ 5 ♕a1 (5 ♕c1? ♗d3+ ++) 5...cxd6 and Black is still in full control.

Similarly 3 ♘d3 is unsatisfactory. One possible continuation is 3...♕xc5 4 ♘xc5 ♗xc2+ 5 ♕c1 ♖xd1 6 ♖xd1 (If White tries 6 ♘xb7? Black has a pressing attack: 6...♖c2+ 7 ♕b1 ♖d2 8 ♖xd1 ♖xb2+ 9 ♕a1 ♖xa2+ 10 ♕b1 ♖b2+ 11 ♕c1 ♖xh2! 12 ♕b1 ♖h2+ 13 ♕c1 ♖xh7+) 6...♖xd1+ 7 ♕xd1 ♔c6 with a huge advantage.

3...cxd6 4 ♖xf5 ♕e2! 0-1

Black will simplify by trading a pair of rooks and further improve the position by undoubling the ♖-pawns: 5 ♕c1 ♖g5 6 ♖xg5 fxg5++. Hopeless is 5 ♕c1 ♖g1 winning the knight with a pin.

Sometimes all that is necessary is to use a diversion so as to be able to infiltrate on a weak square. In the game Magaraszvili – Ikitisvili, USSR, 1980, a bishop sacrifice followed by a diversion gave White access to the critically weak f6 square.

Black’s kingside pawn structure has been weakened. White’s queen has access to the g-file.

1 ♕g4+ ♕h8

At the expense of a bishop White removes the h-pawn, the only cover for Black’s king,

2 ♘xh7!

Instead, trying to protect the g8 square by playing 2...♗b5 allows 3 exf6 ♖xf6 4 ♖xf6 ♕f8 5 ♕h4 or 5 ♖g6 which will soon mate for White.

3 ♕h4+

White gains another tempo with check. The queen puts extra pressure on the weak f6 square.

3...♕g7

Now a diversion tactic causes Black’s position to collapse.
4 \( \text{b4!} \) 1-0

Black can no longer hold out. 4...\( \text{xa2} \) 5 \( \text{xe7} \) \( \text{xe7} \) 6 \( \text{exf6+} \) and the pawn fork is decisive. Another key line is 4...\( \text{xb4} \) after which follows 5 \( \text{exf6+} \) \( \text{g8} \) 6 \( \text{g4+} \) and no matter where Black's king moves, White's queen mates on g7 on the next move.

A rook sacrifice was followed by a winning diversion in the game Sik – Gorelov, Budapest, 1989.

\[
\begin{array}{c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c}
\hline
& a & b & c & d & e & f & g & h \\
\hline
1 & & & & & & & & \\
2 & & & & & & & & \\
3 & & & & & & & & \\
4 & & & & & & & & \\
5 & & & & & & & & \\
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8 & & & & & & & & \\
\hline
\end{array}
\]

1...\( \text{xh3+} \) 2 \( \text{gxh3} \)

Had 2 \( \text{g1} \) been tried, Black would still maintain the attack by 2...\( \text{g3} \) 3 \( \text{e2} \) (After 3 \( \text{d2} \) White is mated following the diversion 3...\( \text{c2!} \) 4 \( \text{xc2} \) \( \text{xd4+} \) 5 \( \text{f1} \) \( \text{h1+} \) 6 \( \text{e2} \) \( \text{f2+} \) 7 \( \text{d1} \) \( \text{xe1#} \) ) 3...\( \text{h2+} \) 4 \( \text{f1} \) \( \text{xf4+} \) 5 \( \text{g1} \) \( \text{h2+} \) 6 \( \text{f1} \) \( \text{d3=} \).

2...\( \text{xh3+} \) 3 \( \text{g1} \)

A diversion now proves to be decisive.

3...\( \text{c2!} \)

White must give up control of d4, in order to attend to the threat of ...\( \text{g2#} \).

\[
\begin{array}{c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c}
\hline
& a & b & c & d & e & f & g & h \\
\hline
1 & & & & & & & & \\
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\[
\begin{array}{c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c}
\hline
& a & b & c & d & e & f & g & h \\
\hline
1 & & & & & & & & \\
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6 & & & & & & & & \\
7 & & & & & & & & \\
8 & & & & & & & & \\
\hline
\end{array}
\]

4 \( \text{xc2} \) \( \text{xd4+} \) 5 \( \text{f2} \) \( \text{g3+} \) 0-1

After 6 \( \text{h1} \) \( \text{xf2} \) 7 \( \text{b3} \) \( \text{h4+} \) 8 \( \text{g2} \) \( \text{xe1} \) Black enjoys an overwhelming advantage.

A double diversion is rare but exquisite. Two (or more) pieces are diverted simultaneously.

Regardless of which piece is diverted, the attacker is able to exploit the situation advantageously.

For instance, the game Formanek – Griguric, Prague, 1926, features a double diversion.

\[
\begin{array}{c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c}
\hline
& a & b & c & d & e & f & g & h \\
\hline
1 & \text{e8!} & & & & & & & \\
2 & & & & & & & & \\
3 & & & & & & & & \\
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7 & & & & & & & & \\
8 & & & & & & & & \\
\hline
\end{array}
\]

1 \( \text{e8!} \) 1-0

White offers the rook to divert either of Black's major pieces on the back rank. In fact any capture of the rook would allow White to mate on g7. 1...\( \text{xe8} \) immediately gives up protection of g7, allowing 2 \( \text{g7#} \), while 1...\( \text{xe8} \) gives White control of f6, permitting 2 \( \text{xf6+} \) \( \text{g7} \) 3 \( \text{g7#} \).

A diversion of White's queen decided the outcome in the game Carlsen – Karjakin, New York, 2016.

\[
\begin{array}{c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c}
\hline
& a & b & c & d & e & f & g & h \\
\hline
1 & & & & & & & & \\
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8 & & & & & & & & \\
\hline
\end{array}
\]

Black's passed a-pawn is very dangerous. White's queen must take on the unenviable
defensive role of preventing that pawn from promoting. Black also has a very active knight compared to White's more defensively placed bishop, whose mobility is limited by the e-pawn blocking its path along the h1-a8 diagonal.

1...♕c5

This is the first attempt at diverting White's queen. Of course 2 ♕xc5? would be terrible, allowing the a-pawn to promote after 2...♖xe5 3 e5 a2-+.

2 ♕a6

White still manages to continue restraining the a-pawn.

2...♘e5

The black knight is very well centralised on this dark square. Blockading the e-pawn helps to restrict the scope of White's bishop.

3 ♕e6?!

White tries to guard the a2 square. In spite of the black king's exposed position, White does not have a good way of subjecting it to a perpetual check and thereby drawing the game.

3...h5!?

This appears to be a somewhat puzzling yet very well conceived move. The plan is to push the pawn on to h4. This pawn sacrifice would sufficiently weaken White’s kingside pawn structure as to expose the king to attack, as the variation below illustrates.

4 h4?!  

White was running out of options. This move leaves a hole on g4 for the knight to gain a tempo with a check. 4 ♕a6 would have allowed Black to infiltrate. One possible sequel might have been 4...♖c3 5 ♕a7+ ♕h6 6 ♕a6+ ♕g6 7 e5 h4 8 gxh4 ♕xe5+ 9 ♕g1 ♕a1+ 10 ♕f2 a2 11 ♕e4 ♕d4+ 12 ♕f3 ♕g1 13 ♕xa2 ♕xh4+ 14 ♕e2. Then comes the skewer 14...♕h2+ which would decide matters in Black’s favour.

4...a2! 0-1

Now the diversion proves to be decisive. The a-pawn must be captured, giving Black the time and space needed to secure the win: 5 ♕xa2 ♕g4+ 6 ♕h3 ♕g1 7 ♕f3 (7 ♕b2+ ♕g6+) 7...♕f2+ -+

**Double Attack**

A double attack poses two threats at once. The defending side is not able to respond to both threats simultaneously.

Double attacks can come in many different guises: knight forks, pawn forks, certain kinds of skewers, and double checks are all types of double attacks.

The mobility of the queen makes it a powerful weapon for creating double attacks.

Here is an example from the game Naftalin – Petrushin, Kishinev, 1985.
White now exploits the lack of co-ordination between Black’s minor pieces.

1 ♖xe8+

This diverts the queen.

1...♕xe8 2 g4 ♖xg4

The pawn fork diverts Black’s bishop. White’s last two moves have created a dynamic situation with tactical possibilities.

3 ♖xd6 ♖xd6 4 ♕f4

Here is the double attack. White’s queen attacks both the knight and bishop. Black remains with only one good defensive move.

4...♕d7

Now here comes the finishing touch.

5 ♕c5 1-0

One of the minor pieces will be lost. Black’s queen is overloaded. The queen is under attack and can no longer simultaneously protect both the knight and bishop. 5...♕e7 allows 6 ♕xg4 while 5...♕e7 results in the continuation 6 ♕e4 ♕d7 7 ♖xd6 ♕d8 when White has the desperado 8 ♖xb7 and if the knight is captured, Black’s bishop on g4 is left unprotected.

Even players at the highest level can fall victim to a double attack, as Karpov found out when playing Black against Christiansen in Wijk aan Zee, in 1993.

Here Karpov carelessly played 1...♗d6? and resigned immediately after the reply 2 ♕d1 1-0

The queen attacks both the bishop on d6 and the knight on h5. Black cannot make a move that defends both pieces or produces significant threats that would discourage White from capturing either piece.

Double attacks can involve a variety of pieces operating together in conjunction with several other tactical motifs. A very strong type of double attack occurs when one of the threats is checkmate. It must be prevented, of course, allowing the other threat to succeed.

For example, in Levenfish – Freeman, Leningrad, 1925, White made use of a bishop sacrifice and a line clearing manoeuvre to create a double attack.

1 ♖xh6 gxh6 2 ♖xh6+ ♧g7

A bishop sacrifice first opens the h-file for the rook.
Now White played a beautiful move: 3 ♗b7! and Black resigned.

Moving the bishop to clear the b1-h7 diagonal introduces the threat of 4 ♕g6#. The secondary threat is 4 ♗xa6. Black must deal with the mate threat but after 3...♔xh6 4 ♗xa6 White is left with a material advantage.

This double attack also demonstrates the tactic of vacating a square, more examples of which can be found in the section dedicated to this motif.

**Double Check**

When two pieces check the opponent’s king at the same time it is termed a double check. It is usually activated by means of a discovered check. The unique feature of a double check is that the only reply is a king move. It is not possible to block or capture both attacking pieces at once. This makes the double check a very powerful attacking motif. Here is a typical example.

A rook and bishop vs rook endgame can be very difficult to win.

White will endeavour to exploit a double check to win Black’s rook, thus leading to an easy win.

1 ♗d6+

The black king must move. Then White plays 2 ♗xb4 taking advantage of the bishop skewer to win Black’s rook.

A famous example of a double check was played in the game Réti – Tartakower, Vienna, 1910.

The opening was the Caro-Kann Defence.

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘c3 dxe4 4 ♘xe4 ♘f6 5 ♗d3 e5 6 dxe5 ♘a5+ 7 ♗d2 ♘xe5 8 0-0 0-0

Now comes a big surprise.

9 ♗d8+!

The queen sacrifice sets up a beautiful finish. Black’s reply is forced.

9...♘xd8 10 ♗g5+

The bishop and rook are both checking Black’s king. The double check is a unique type of discovered attack.

Black’s king now has two possible moves but each leads to mate:

10...♘c7 11 ♗d8#

Or 10...♗e8 11 ♗d8#.

Another famous example is from the Evergreen Game, Anderssen – Dufresne, Berlin, 1852.

It opened with the Evans Gambit.

1 e4 e5 2 ♗f3 ♘c6 3 ♘f3 ♘c5 4 b4 ♘xb4 5 c3 ♘a5 6 d4 exd4 7 0-0 ♘d3 8 ♘b3 ♗f6 9 e5 ♘g6 10 ♘e1 ♘h5 11 ♘a3 ♘b5 12 ♘xb5 ♘b8 13 ♘a4 ♘b6 14 ♘bd2 ♘b7 15
\[ e4 \, f5 \, 16 \, xd3 \, h5 \, 17 \, f6+ \, gxf6 \, 18 \, exf6 \, g8 \, 19 \, ad1 \, xf3? \]

20 \, xe7+! \, xe7

Black could have avoided falling victim to the following beautiful finish by playing 20...d8, but White still has a strong follow up:

21 \, xd7+ \, c8 \, 22 \, d8+! \, xd8 \, 23 \, f5+ \, x1d1+ \, 24 \, xd1+ \, d4 \, 25 \, h3 \, e8 \, 26 \, xd4.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, during the classical era of chess, bold sacrifices were nearly always accepted. Chess was regarded as a gentleman’s game. Accepting a sacrifice was considered to be the honourable response, even if refusing it might have been the better option.

21 \, xd7+!

Here the queen sacrifice should be accepted because if 21...f8 then 22 \, xe7#. Notice that after Black captures White’s queen there is a double check ready to be unleashed on the d-file.

21...\, xd7 \, 22 \, f5+ \, e8

No better is 22...\, c6 \, 23 \, d7#.

23 \, d7+ \, f8

Other finishes could have been 23...d8 \, 24 \, xe7# mating with the pawn or 24 \, xe7# mating with the bishop.

24 \, xe7#

The double check is a powerful tactic that often leads to multiple threats and mating attacks. In the game Kasparian – Manvelian, Erevan 1936, the following position arose with White to move. The double check motif leads to a nice finish.

[Diagram]

1 \, xc6+!

White begins an attacking sequence with a queen sacrifice.

1...\, xc6

Black has little choice but to accept the queen sacrifice. Any other king move by Black would be met by 2 \, d4 with a winning attack.

2 \, e5+

The double check leads to a king hunt. Black’s king is forced to make the only legal move – towards the white camp. This is often a sign that the king is ensnared in a mating net and the end is near.

2...\, c5 \, 3 \, d3+ \, d4 \, 4 \, d2! 1-0
White’s king takes the opposition. Black cannot prevent 5 c3#.

Another example of a preliminary queen sacrifice leading to a double check comes from the game Cramer – Zilverberg, Holland, 1992.

1 ♕xg7+!

The game now ends quickly after Black’s forced replies.

1... ♔xg7 2 ♙f5+ ♔g8 3 ♙h6#

Once the bishop on g7 was annihilated, Black’s broken kingside fianchettoed position was exploited beautifully with a powerful double check.

Double checks, combined with other tactics, can have a crushing effect. One must always be aware of their incredible power.

In the above position, Black uses a double check to win material.

1... ♙xf3+

Both the knight and the bishop are checking. Thus White is prohibited from recapturing the knight – again the only way to respond to a double check is to move the king.

2 ♔h1 ♙d2

The knight fork now attacks all of White’s major pieces. Black will win more material and have a commanding advantage.

Smothered mates can also arise from a double check.

Here is an example of a tactical workout delivered by Morphy, White, in Paris, 1859, against Schrufer in a Two Knights Defence.

1 e4 e5 2 ♙f3 ♙c6 3 ♙c4 ♙f6 4 d4 exd4 5 0-0 ♙xe4 6 ♙e1 d5 7 ♙xd5 ♙xd5 8 ♙c3 ♖h5 9 ♙e4
Paul Morphy was an exceptionally strong attacking player. Here White already is threatening a double check 10 ♘f6+ winning Black's queen.

9...♗e6 10 ♘g5 ♗b4 11 ♘xe6+!? 11 ♘xe6 was also quite good.

11...fxe6 12 ♘xe6 ♕f7 13 ♘f5 ♗e7 14 ♘e2 ♘d6 15 ♘xg7+ ♔d8

After 15...♔f8 there might have followed 16 ♘e6+ ♕f7 17 ♘h6 and White would have maintained a strong attack.

16 ♘g4+ ♘d8 17 ♘f7+

Also quite good was 17 ♘7e6+.

17...♕xf7 18 ♘g5+ ♕e7 19 ♘e6+ ♘c8 20 ♘c5+

A strong discovered check is used to further disrupt the harmony of the defender's pieces. Black's rook on a8 has not been able to get into play. 20...♘d8 21 ♘d7# would have ended it quickly.

Tactics can be dynamic and multifaceted, appearing then disappearing with every move. Often they are linked together by a series of threats and counter-threats. To be a good chess player, one must recognise and understand tactical opportunities that arise for both players on the chessboard.

Understanding chess tactics is not the only requirement for being a successful chess player, but it is certainly an absolutely essential one.

20...♘b8 21 ♘d7+ ♘c8

A position has been reached where the possibility of making use of a double check presents itself. Situations like these should be examined very carefully as they can often be used to bring about a decisive advantage.

22 ♘b6+! ♘b8

Also losing is 22...♘d8 23 ♘d7#.

23 ♘c8+! ♘xc8 24 ♘d7#
White ends it with a smothered mate. The section on smothered mates gives other examples of this tactical motif.

A queen sacrifice was followed by a double check in the game **Hoffmann – Langer**, Bezirk Karl-Marx-Stadt, 1988.

\[1 \text{♕xe7+ ♔xe7 2 ♖c5+} \]

Now a windmill attack wins back material.

\[2...\text{d8} 3 \text{♖e7+ ♔e8 4 ♖xb4+ 1-0} \]

After 4...\text{d8} 5 \text{xa5}, in addition to capturing the queen White pins the rook and wins the exchange.

White will then be a rook and two pawns up.

Here several different tactical motifs all came together to win the game – a queen sacrifice, a discovered check, a windmill attack and then an absolute pin winning the exchange.

The game **Bareev – Yakovich**, Tallinn, 1986, provides even further evidence of the power of the double check.

\[1 \text{♕h5} \]

White’s attention is directed to f7, Black's soft spot, protected only by the king. Black defends with 1...\text{g6}. This solves the immediate problem of the threat on f7, but it slightly weakens Black's position.

The alternative 1...\text{e5} would have not been much better, opening up the e-file in direct line of fire with the white rook on e1. For example 2 \text{dxe5} \text{g6} 3 \text{♖h4} \text{♕e7} 4 \text{e6!} \text{fxe6} 5 \text{♕xe6}! and White has a powerful knight fork with a discovered check, winning back the queen: 5...\text{xh4} 6 \text{♕xc7+ ♔f7} 7 \text{♕xd5 ♔f6} 8 \text{bxa6} with advantage for White.

\[2 \text{♕xe6!} \]

White sacrifices the queen to open the e-file. The double check that follows is crushing.

\[2...\text{♕h5} \]

Had Black played 2...\text{gxh5} then White would have mated the same way by means of a double check.

\[3 \text{♕g7+ ♖d8} 4 \text{♖e8#} \]

White's well centralised knights and the x-ray attack and battery along the b1-h7 diagonal are overwhelming.

The combination commences with a queen sacrifice.

1 ♕h7+! ♔xh7

The recapture was forced. Now a discovered check, which also happens to be a double check, ends things quickly. This is another example of a discovered double check.

2 ♘f6+ ♔h8 3 ♘g6#

In the following example, White won material by setting up a double check in **Mason – Winawer**, Vienna, 1882.

White begins with the diversion 1 ♖b7+. This was met by the reply:

1...♗xb7

1...♗xb7 would have given White the advantage after 2 ♕xg8.

2 ♗c8+ 1-0

The double check must be met by a king move. But after 2...♗xc8 (2...♔a8 3 ♕xg8 is also winning) 3 ♕xg8+ ♔c7 4 ♕g7+ White wins the rook on f6 and the game.

**Establishing a Fortress**

Establishing an impenetrable fortress is a drawing tactic in the endgame.

For example, here the stronger side is unable to make any further progress in spite of possessing extra material. This queen vs rook and pawn endgame is drawn.
If Black needs to make waiting moves the rook can shuffle between d6 and f6. This will prevent White’s king from advancing any further. The black king can meet any checks by moving between the seventh and eighth ranks, thereby maintaining its protection of the e-pawn. White cannot be allowed to capture the e7 pawn, otherwise the game will be lost for Black.

No further progress can be made by White. For example 1 ♕d5+ ♕d6 2 ♕b7+ ♕d8 3 ♕b8+ ♕d7 4 ♕b5+ ♕d8 5 ♕a5+ ♕d7 6 ♕a4+ ♕d8 7 ♕c4 ♕d7 and White is getting nowhere.

This does not work if the defender’s pawn is on the a- or h-file, because the rook can no longer shuffle on either side of the pawn. An exception to this generalisation, an endgame study by Grigoriev, is shown later.

Also, the pawn must be on the defender’s second rank. If it is any further advanced the attacker’s queen can infiltrate behind the enemy lines.

With a black pawn on a7 or h7 the fortress will usually collapse.

For a black pawn on a7 or h7 the fortress will usually collapse.

For example: 1 ♕d7 ♕a8 2 ♕c8+ ♕b8 3 ♕c6+ ♕b7 4 ♕d6 a5 (4...♕b8 5 ♕e8#) 5 ♕a6+ ♕b8 (5...♕a7 6 ♕c8#) 6 ♕xa5+–.

Moving the fortress up just one rank makes a difference. It may take some manoeuvring, but the stronger side will eventually prevail.

1 ♕g7+ ♕e8

This separates the king from the defence of the pawn. Alternatively, 1...♗f7 2 ♕g5+ ♕d7 3 ♕b5+ ♕e7 4 ♕b4+ ♕d7 5 ♕b7+ ♕e8 6 ♕c6+ ♕e7 7 ♕c7+ ♕e8 8 ♕d6 ♕f6 (8...♕e7 9 ♕e5 ♕d7 10 ♕c6+-) 9 ♕c6+ (not 9 ♕e5 ♕f5+ 10 ♕xe6 ♕f6+! 11 ♕xf6=) 9...♕f8 10 ♕d7 ♕g6 11 ♕e5 ♕h6 12 ♕b7 ♕g8 13 ♕e7 ♕g6 14 ♕f4 ♕h8 15 ♕f7+-.

2 ♕b7 ♕d8 3 ♕c6 ♕e7 4 ♕c7+ ♕e8 5 ♕d6 ♕f7 6 ♕d7+ ♕f6 7 ♕e8 ♕e5+ 8 ♕d4 ♕d5+ 9 ♕c4 ♕e5 10 ♕f8 ♕d7 11 ♕c5 ♕d5+

Now White’s king gets behind the rook on the sixth rank.

12 ♕c6 ♕d2

Once the rook has to leave, White continues to deliver queen checks until a double attack on the king and rook is achieved.

13 ♕h8+ ♕f5 14 ♕h3+ ♕e5 (14...♕f6 15 ♕h6+ ++) 15 ♕e3+ +–. Other lines are possible, but the eventual outcome will be the same.

For the fortress to hold, the stronger side’s king cannot be allowed to infiltrate.
1 ♕c8+ ♕d6 2 e8 ♕e6 3 ♕c7 ♕f4 4 ♕g8+ ♕e5 5 ♕g7+ ♕e6 6 ♕d8 ♕f7 7 ♕g6+ ♕f6 8 ♕e4+ ♕f7 9 ♕xe7+

By capturing the pawn White has simplified into a winning queen vs rook endgame.

Even if White has an extra pawn, as in the next situation, the black fortress will remain impenetrable.

The extra pawn poses no threat because it can only advance to d6, the shuffling square of the rook. Black simply proceeds as before, shuffling the rook from d6 to f6, while protecting the e7 pawn with the king.

The subtleties of chess can be seen if very slight changes are made to the drawing position. For example, the following fortress, as shown by Salvioli in 1896, leads to a draw, but the weaker side must nevertheless proceed with caution.

Black must play very cautiously. For example, White would be able to simplify to a won endgame after 3...♖d6? 4 ♕xd6+! cxd6+ 5 ♕b6 ♕d8 6 ♕e6+ ♕e7 7 ♕e8 8 ♕xd6 ♕d8 9 ♕c6 ♕e8 10 d6 ♕d8 11 d7+ and the pawn promotes.

Correct is 3...♕a6 4 ♕f5+ ♕d8 5 ♕f7 ♕b6 6 ♕f8+ ♕d7 7 ♕g7+ ♕d8= and White is not able to make any progress.

Note as well that in Salvioli's position, if Black's king were on c7 instead of d7 the position is lost because White has a discovered check, leading to a win since the d-pawn can advance.

Even simply swapping pawns will lead to a winning queen vs rook endgame.

Black gets mated after 2...♕d8 3 ♕f8+ ♕d7 4 ♕e7+ ♕c6 5 ♕xc7#.

3 ♕d5+ c6
Instead if Black tries 3...\(\text{b}8\) White’s pawn will promote: 4 d7 \(\text{d}6\) 5 \(\text{x}d6\) cxd6 6 d8\(\text{q}+\)++.

4 \(\text{g}8\) \(\text{b}5\)

4...\(\text{a}6\) 5 \(\text{a}8\); or 4...\(\text{a}6\) 5 \(\text{g}7+\) \(\text{b}8\) 6 \(\text{c}7+\) \(\text{a}8\) 7 d7+-.

5 d7++

If White’s pawn is on another file instead, such as the c-file, White also wins.

Here White has a winning position because the c5 pawn cannot be blockaded. It will be able to advance, causing the fortress to collapse.

For example White can proceed by playing 1 \(\text{b}5+\) after which Black has no good replies.

If Black plays 1...\(\text{c}7\) then 2 \(\text{e}8\) will win Black’s e-pawn and the game.

If Black tries to prevent White’s queen from penetrating to e8 by playing 1...\(\text{d}8\), then White’s passed pawn will be able to advance. It is mate after 2 c6 \(\text{c}7\) 3 \(\text{b}7+\) \(\text{d}8\) 4 \(\text{d}7\#.

Also, if Black tries to block the pawn with the rook by playing 1...\(\text{c}6\), then Black’s weak back rank results in mate. For example White can first exploit pins after 2 \(\text{b}7+\) \(\text{c}7\) 3 c6+ \(\text{d}8\), then continue with 4 \(\text{b}6\) \(\text{c}8\) 5 \(\text{e}6\) \(\text{d}8\) 6 \(\text{d}4+\) and White’s queen will deliver mate with 7 \(\text{h}8\#\) if Black plays either 6...\(\text{c}8\) or 6...\(\text{e}8\).

If Black’s fortress has an a-pawn (or an h-pawn by transposing the position) there is a drawing resource, as given by Grigoriev in 1917.

1 \(\text{c}5\) \(\text{e}4+\)

Instead of the usual shuffling manoeuvres, Black’s rook takes a more active role by checking White’s king. Note as well 1 \(\text{d}7\) \(\text{h}6\) 2 \(\text{d}4+\) \(\text{h}7\) 3 \(\text{f}4\) \(\text{g}7\) 4 \(\text{g}5\) \(\text{e}6\) 5 \(\text{d}4+\) \(\text{h}7\)=.

2 \(\text{f}5\) \(\text{e}6\) 3 \(\text{c}3+\) \(\text{g}8\) 4 \(\text{g}5\) \(\text{h}7\) 5 \(\text{d}3+\) \(\text{g}7\) 6 \(\text{d}4+\) \(\text{h}7\) 7 \(\text{d}7\) \(\text{g}7\) 8 \(\text{d}3\)

\(\text{e}5+\) 9 \(\text{g}4\) \(\text{e}6=\)

A variety of other types of fortresses exist in pawn or minor piece endgames.

The principal lesson to be learned from this section is that drawing tactics are sometimes
available in certain positions where a fortress can be constructed and held securely.

**Flank Weakness**

Occasionally a king located on the a- or h-files can be undermined in similar ways as those where it is situated on the back rank.

There is a paradox regarding king safety. Anywhere on the edge of the board the king's available flight squares are limited, yet before the endgame has arrived the king is far less exposed there than if it is situated closer to the centre of the board.

Here is an example of how a king on the edge, both literally and figuratively speaking, can be seriously undermined. It is taken from the game Hertel – Zschako, Brand-Erbisdorf, 1990.

Black begins by eliminating a key defender which will allow a stunning sacrifice.

1... ♗xd4 2 cxd4

The knight had occupied a strong outpost and was protecting the bishop on f3. It did not matter how White recaptured the bishop since if 2 ♖xd4 had been played instead, Black would have proceeded in a similar fashion. White's only defence was 2 ♕e2 but after 2... a6 White has no compensation for the lost knight. An attraction motif is now used to finish the game.

2... ♖h2+ 3 ♔xh2 ♕xf3 0-1

White has no defence against 4... ♖h8+ and 5... ♖h1#.

There are various kinds of flank weaknesses. Here those that closely resemble back rank weaknesses will be explored. They could be called flank mates, for want of a better term.

Consider this example of a flank weakness, from the game Evans – Karaklajić, Bognor Regis, 1962.

Note the unfortunate location of White's king on h4. This enables Black to create an attack along the h-file that in many ways resembles a back rank mating combination. A battery is first exploited on the d8-h4 diagonal.

1... ♕xg5+! 2 ♕xg5 ♕xg5+
3 ♕xg5?

The pin on the fourth rank prevents White from recapturing the bishop with the f-pawn. White’s best chance would have been to refuse the bishop sacrifice and play 3 ♕g3 instead. After 3...♖e7 Black would have still had better chances, with a good versus bad bishop and a passed h-pawn that Black would be in no hurry to advance until the situation on the queenside had been clarified.

3...h4 0–1

White’s king is trapped. There is nothing that can be done to prevent ...♖h5#. It is worth noting that Black’s king plays an important supportive role by protecting g6 and preventing White’s king from accessing the f6 square.

With White, Pillsbury exploited a flank weakness on the h-file against Tarrasch in Hastings, 1895.

Black’s connected passed pawns look ominous, but White strikes first with a very nice knight sacrifice.

1 ♕g3+!

Suddenly Black’s king finds itself in a dangerous situation, trapped on the flank.

1...♖xh6

Instead if Black tried to escape by playing 1...♕f8 White had 2 ♕g8+ ♔e7 3 ♕xb3+- winning the rook and holding off the connected passed pawns.

2 ♔h1

White is planning to put the rook on g1, threatening ♕h4#. The move 2 ♖f4 does not work because of 2...♖b1+ and White’s attack flounders.

2...♕d5

Black chooses a good way to defend, intending to put the queen on h5 to prevent ♖h4#.

3 ♖g1 ♕xf5 4 ♕h4+ ♔h5
Black’s defence is almost good enough, but ‘almost good enough’ is not quite good enough in chess.

5 ♕f4+

Black has no other choice now than to give up the queen.

5...♕g5 6 ♖xg5 fxg5

White now gains a tempo with a check that results in a double attack, thus picking up the unprotected knight.

7 ♕d6+ ♔h5

No better was 7...♔g7. White wins with 8 ♕xd7+ ♔f6 9 ♕d8+ ♕e6 (9...♕g7 10 ♕e7+ ♕g8 [10...♔h8? 11 ♕f8#] 11 ♕e6+ ++) 10 ♕g8+ and the rook gets picked off with a skewer.

8 ♕xd7 c2 9 ♕xh7#

Instead of 8...c2 Black had a much better chance with 8...♗b1+. After 9 ♕g2 ♗b2+ 10 ♕g3 ♗g6 11 ♕e6+ White has the upper hand. The white passed d-pawn will be the deciding factor although the analysis is quite complex.

One possibility would be 11...♕g7 12 ♕e7+ ♕g6 13 ♕xe4+ ♕g7 14 d5 and the d-pawn triumphs (14...c2? 15 ♕d4+ +-).

In late middlegame positions and in endgames the king needs to play an active role. In earlier phases of the game this is usually not desirable; bringing the king out too early will usually expose it to danger.

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**Forced Move**

Playing forcing moves allows a player to calculate far ahead in a position, analysing exactly what will happen. It also reduces the risk of any unpleasant surprises from an opponent. Forcing moves allow mating combinations, simplification to advantageous endings, or other tactical opportunities that might lead to an advantage. However small such an advantage might be, it may be just what is required to win.

Many of the other tactical elements shown in this book involve the use of forced moves, such as the Botvinnik – Keres game on here that used a diversion, the Gass – Taksis game on here which involved a double check, or the Costa – Bellon king hunt on here, and so on.

Here’s a typical example. In this position from the game Smirnov – Shubin, played in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, 1977, Black’s forcing moves finish off a mating attack.

Checking moves should always be evaluated carefully in every position. The main thing to notice here is that White’s replies are all very limited, which allows the attacking player to work things out fully in advance.

1...♖xh2+

The pin on the g2 rook forces White’s reply to the rook sacrifice.

2 ♕xh2

Black continues with another forcing move.

2...♔h5+

White has no other choice but to play 3 ♕g3.
This again is a forcing move, but White has two possible replies. Black has to work out what would happen in both lines, while analysing the soundness of the combination from the very beginning.

If White plays 4 ♔xf4 then Black mates with 4...♕f5#.

On the other hand 4 ♔h2 would allow Black to mate in two moves starting with a discovered check: 4...♗xf2+ 5 ♕h3 ♕xh3#.

Starting from the first move, the rook sacrifice 1...♖xd5+, Black had to look five moves ahead in two possible variations. With practice this becomes easier to do. The tactics exercises given at the end of this book provide additional practice in developing tactical awareness and tactical proficiency. Many of those examples include forced moves. Forcing lines of play allow an attacker to calculate an exact sequence of moves and the position that will arise at the end of the sequence.

Here's a nice example of this from the game Opočenský – Hromadka, Košice, 1931.

1 ♖xd5+

The exchange sacrifice requires Black to reply with a forced move.

1...exd5

The exchange sacrifice has removed a key defender and cleared the sixth rank, thereby giving White’s remaining rook control of those potential flight squares. Now there is another check which also forces a specific reply.

2 ♔d3+

Black must respond 2...exd3 after which White has two possible checks. One of those checks results in an immediate mate.

3 f4#

White has sacrificed the exchange and also a knight, creating forced responses with checks and mating with a pawn supported by the king. White’s rook on a6 cuts off Black’s escape route on the sixth rank.

Forced moves involving checking the king led to a mating attack in Carls – Bernstein, Bremen, 1901. The way Black utilises an advanced passed pawn and forced moves is noteworthy.
White has pressure on g7, albeit rather at the expense of a neglect of the queenside development. The undeveloped c1-bishop is locking in the equally undeveloped a1-rook and this provides Black with an opportunity to exploit the back rank weakness.

Generally one should bring all pieces into play before committing to an attack. This not only reduces the risk of counterplay from one’s opponent, it also strengthens the attack. One should not bring a knife to a gunfight.

Black begins the attack by taking advantage of the weakness of the back rank.

Every tempo counts in this situation due to White’s immediate mate threat.

1...♕d1+ 2♔g2

White’s reply was not yet a forced move. However the alternative also loses quickly: 2 ♔f2 fxg3+ 3 ♔g2 (3 ♔xg3 ♕g1+ 4 ♔h4 ♕xh2#) 3...♕f1+ 4 ♔xg3 ♕h3#.

2...♕f3+

Now White’s reply is forced.

3 ♔f2

A critical moment in the game has been reached. Black’s attack looks like it has run out of steam but a clever attraction tactic is next exploited to sustain the attack.

3...♕g1+!

This is an excellent tactical move. Black temporarily gives up the queen to advance the f-pawn closer to its promotion square.

4 ♖xg1 f2+ 5 ♕f1

White is not trying to block the black f-pawn. White must play this king move to f1 as either 5 ♔g2 or 5 ♔h1 would allow 5...f1♕#.

Sometimes a move can be considered to be forced not because it is the only move allowed, but because it is the only reasonable move that does not have immediately undesirable consequences.

When a check to the king is involved, the number of possible responses is limited and some of those responses will usually be preferable to others.

5...♕h3+

Black boots the king from the promotion square, forcing the reply.

6 ♕e2 f1♕+ 0-1

Black has accomplished much more that just recovering the sacrificed queen.

There are now two heavy pieces on the f-file. Black’s bishop is also in play. Black’s attack is unstoppable. White only has two moves, each of which allows a quick mate: 7 ♕d2 ♖f2+ 8 ♕e3 ♕e2#; or 7 ♕e3 ♖f2+ 8 ♕d3 ♖f1+ 9 ♕e2 ♕xe2#.
Gaining a Tempo

Gaining a tempo can be very useful when initiating an attack. In effect, this motif allows a player to make two attacking moves in a row. Gaining a tempo can also be helpful in defence or to win material in a combination. This tactic occurs quite frequently.

The first illustration is taken from the game Movseyan – Kuzmin, Leningrad, 1985.

White gains a tempo by giving check, sacrificing a rook for a mating attack.

White has a dangerous battery on the b1-h7 diagonal but an immediate 1 ♕h7+ allows Black to hold on, just barely, after 1...♔f8 2 ♖g1 f6. Black’s position still holds some promise and, most importantly, withstands any immediate threat of mate.

Instead White gains a tempo by playing 1 ♖h8+ after which Black cannot avert mate. 1...♗xh8 allows the immediate 2 ♕h7# and 1...♖xh8 permits mates in two moves: 2 ♕h7+ ♔f8 3 ♕h8#.

Gaining a tempo with 1 ♕h8+ was the winning tactic.

A similar example comes from the game N.N. – Richter, 1957.

Now an important tempo is won with the rook sacrifice 2...♖h1+!.

This gives Black the opportunity to bring up the queen with check, leading to a quick finish.

The rook sacrifice is also an example of a line clearing sacrifice, as it activates the bishop on the b8-h2 diagonal.

3 ♗xh1 ♕h4+ 4 ♗g1 ♕h2+ 5 ♗f1 ♕h1#

In the following combination played by Pietzsch against Rittner in Berlin, 1957, White gains a tempo with a check, and is thereby able to win a piece.
White could have also begun by playing 1 b4. In this specific situation, changing the move order of the first and second moves does not make any difference. That is not always the case, of course.

1...♗xf6 2 b4 ♕xb4

The pawn fork was a diversion, intended to relocate Black’s queen and make the following combination possible.

3 ♦d5!

White unleashes a double attack. The knight attacks the bishop on f6 and exposes Black’s unguarded queen.

3...♖xd2 4 ♦xf6+

Here White has gained a tempo, capturing Black’s bishop with check.

4...♔h8

Sadly, playing 4...♔g7? would have been even worse. White would gain another tempo by playing 5 ♦xe8+ ♔f8 6 ♦xd2 ♕xe8 and win a rook instead of just a minor piece.

5 ♦xd2

White’s pawn sacrifice, using a pawn fork, led to the win of a minor piece thanks to a gain of tempo and capture of a piece with check.

Here is another example of gaining a tempo by giving check

This position arose in the game Sziva – Cseh, Hungary, 1989.

White begins the combination by exchanging queens.

1 ♦xd8+ ♖xd8

Now White plays a zwischenzug, creating a discovered attack.

2 ♦b4! ♖xd1

Black has no other option: 2...♖xb4? allows 3 ♦xd8#.
3 \textit{\textipa{\textsc{b}xc5+}}

This check gains an important tempo, winning material.

3...\textit{\textipa{\textsc{g}8}} 4 \textit{\textipa{\textsc{x}d1}} 1-0

Trading rooks will give White an even greater advantage: 4...\textit{\textipa{\textsc{b}6}} 5 \textit{\textipa{\textsc{d}8+}} \textit{\textipa{\textsc{h}7}} 6 \textit{\textipa{\textsc{x}h8+}} \textit{\textipa{\textsc{x}h8}} 7 \textit{\textipa{\textsc{d}6+-}}.

Otherwise White will gain access to the seventh rank with devastating effect: 4...\textit{\textipa{\textsc{h}7}} 5 \textit{\textipa{\textsc{d}7}} \textit{\textipa{\textsc{e}8}} 6 \textit{\textipa{\textsc{x}f7}} and the bishop protects White’s king against a back rank swindle: 6...\textit{\textipa{\textsc{e}1+}} 7 \textit{\textipa{\textsc{g}1+}}.

\textbf{Hunting the King}

When the opponent’s king is exposed it can be subjected to a series of checks in a king hunt, where it will be forced to move around the board in an effort to find a safe haven. Sometimes the king will even be drawn across the board into enemy territory. The attacking side will try to maintain the initiative, checking the king and aiming for checkmate. When forcing moves can be employed, follow up replies can be worked out in advance.

Here is an example of a king hunt from the game \textit{Costa – Bellon}, Biel, 1988.

\textit{\textipa{\textsc{b}2xg5}} \textit{\textipa{\textsc{x}g5}} \textit{\textipa{\textsc{d}5+}} 3 \textit{\textipa{\textsc{f}4}} \textit{\textipa{\textsc{h}4+}}

White’s king is exposed but Black’s king is not particularly safe either. Black now sacrifices before White has a chance to develop a counterattack.

1...\textit{\textipa{\textsc{e}2+}}

The knight sacrifice is not forced but it draws White’s king out further. However, after 2 \textit{\textipa{\textsc{g}3}}, mate follows quickly by 2...\textit{\textipa{\textsc{d}6+}} 3 \textit{\textipa{\textsc{f}4}} \textit{\textipa{\textsc{e}4#}}. Note how the move 2...\textit{\textipa{\textsc{d}6+}} brings another attacker into play with gain of tempo by giving check. If 2 \textit{\textipa{\textsc{f}3}} \textit{\textipa{\textsc{x}f3}} White is all tied up and the king is surrounded by enemy pieces. It will not be much longer before White is mated.

White does not have any good moves. All of White’s pieces are poorly placed, unable to assist the beleaguered king. Black brings in the \textit{\textipa{\textsc{d}8}} rook, keeping up the pressure. Note that after this point White’s remaining moves are all forced, right up to the mate.

2 \textit{\textipa{\textsc{x}xg5}} \textit{\textipa{\textsc{x}g5}} 3 \textit{\textipa{\textsc{f}4}} \textit{\textipa{\textsc{h}4+}}

An exposed king fell to a barrage of tactics in the game \textit{Weinhold – Pryer}, England, 1975. When the variations are deep and complex, as in this game, they cannot always be analysed...
completely. Instead, a player should rely primarily on experience and instinct to relentlessly hunt down the king, without allowing the opponent any opportunity at all to reorganise and defend. Detailed analysis can always be played out later in the post mortem.

Black's king is far too exposed to survive very long in this position. White is the exchange down, but all of White’s pieces are well placed and able to assist in the attack. White’s f5 pawn is also particularly strong, as the following variations will show. The f5 pawn can, in some lines, capture the g6 pawn with a discovered attack, or press forward with forking and pawn promotion threats. White now pursues the attack hard with a rook sacrifice.

1 ♕h5+!

Now there are many possible winning lines and Black must use survival instincts to judge whether or not to accept the rook sacrifice, because of the sheer number of possible variations. If the sacrifice is refused there are a number of possibilities that might arise.

1...♗f6 2 ♦g4+

(a) 2...♗f7 3 ♞xh7+ ♞xh7 (3...♗g8 4 fxg6
(1) 4...♔xg6 5 ♕f7#; (2) 4...♗xh7 5 gxh7+
 ♞xh7 6 ♕f7+ ♔h8 7 ♕f6+) 4 fxg6+ ♕e8
(4...♕xg6 5 ♕f6#) 5 gxh7 ♕d8 6 h8♕+ ♕c7 7
 ♕g7+

(b) 2...♗g7 3 ♕f6+ ♕g8 4 fxe7 gxh5 5 ♕h6+
 ♕g7 6 ♕f7+ ♕xh6 7 ♕f6#.

Black decides instead to accept the rook sacrifice.

1...gxh5

Now the f5 pawn controls two important squares on its flanks – e6 and g6. This comes into play during the king hunt. White next plays several forcing moves.

2 ♞xh5+ ♕f6 3 ♗g4+ ♕g7 4 ♕g5+

Black can either try blocking or running from the check. The blocking move 4...♗g6 leads to mate in two: 5 ♕f6+ ♕g8 6 ♕h6#. Black instead decided to run.

4...♗f7

White now checks, maintaining the initiative.

5 ♕f6+

It is worth noting how the king hunt includes tactical opportunities that allow the attacking player to mop up a few loose pieces.

The move 5 ♕f6+ includes a double attack on the still not yet developed rook on h8. It can be picked up with tempo after Black’s forced reply 5...♗e8 since 5...♗g8 6 ♕h6# would end the game immediately.

6 ♕xh8+
What a miserable situation for Black! The king cannot get to the queenside. If it plays back out with 6...♕f7 then it is mate by 7 ♘h6#, so all Black can do is give up the knight.

6...♘g8

Even this desperate response does not succeed.

7 ♙xg8+ ♔e7

The humble pawn on the f-file delivers the final blow.

8 f6#

Being on the attacking side of this sort of hunt can be exhilarating. On the other hand, suffering on the defending side of such an attack can be an enduring misery. Not only does one lose the game, one’s ego gets badly bruised as well. Trying to find the best defence under this kind of pressure is very difficult. Once the king is out in the open and drawn closer to the attacker’s side of the board, it is only a matter of a few more moves before it will be mated.

In the game Bednarska – Winkler, Palavas-les-Flots, 1990, White made a queen sacrifice to draw the opponent's king into the open. Sacrificing material is a common tactical motif to expose the king and begin the hunt.

Notice how White’s use of forcing moves sends the king off on its perilous journey.

1 ♗a5+ ♔c6

This was Black’s best response otherwise it would be mate after 1...♔b8 2 ♙xd6+ ♔c7 3 ♙xc7#.

2 ♙xd5+!

The point is that Black must respond by accepting the queen sacrifice, drawing the king further out into the open where the king hunt can continue.

2...♕xd5

This is necessary because 2...♔b5 leads to mate after 3 ♙b3+ ♔c6 4 ♙a4+ ♔b5 5 ♙e4#.

After a few more forced moves the king hunt will end in checkmate.

3 ♗g2+ ♔d4 4 ♗c3+ ♕xd3
5 ♗f1+ ♔c2 6 ♕ec1+ ♔b3 7 ♖a3#

A dazzling example of a king hunt initiated by a queen sacrifice also occurred in Zurich, 1953, with Averbakh playing White against Kotov.

Black pushes White's king up the board with a superb display of tactical fireworks.

1...♕xh3+! 2 ♔xh3

White must accept the offered queen. 2 ♔g1 allows Black to continue with 2...♖h6 when White is besieged on the h-file.

2...♖h6+ 3 ♖g4 ♖f6+ 4 ♔f5

Black's knight manoeuvre, checking on f6, then moving to g8 with a discovered check and then returning to f6 might not seem to have accomplished anything. There are two important points here. First, if Black is unable to find a way to win, a draw by perpetual check is still available. More importantly, the moves were intended to buy Black some time. The position in the above diagram occurred on move 37 in the game. The time control most
likely had to be reached by move 40 so Black gained time on the clock to get closer to the time control. This is a practical strategy enabling a player to have more time left on the clock to figure out how to proceed with the attack.

9 ♗f5 ♘xd5+

Black picks up a pawn and resets the pawn position to avoid a threefold repetition of moves, otherwise White could claim a draw on the next move.

10 ♗g4 ♘f6+ 11 ♗f5 ♗g8+ 12 ♗g4 ♘f6+

Black is still banking on saving more time on the clock. An immediate ...♗xg5 was the quickest way to proceed and Black finds that on the next turn.

13 ♗f5 ♗g8+ 14 ♗g4 ♗xg5 15 ♘xg5

Black has removed White’s best defender. The king hunt continues. With three pieces attacking White’s king, checkmate should be achieved soon.

15...♖f7 16 ♖h4

White was threatening 16...♗g7+ 17 ♗f5 ♗f6#.

16...♗g6+ 17 ♖h5 ♖g7

White’s 16 ♖h4 prevents 17...♗f6#. Doubling rooks on the g-file creates the threat of 18...♖h6#.

18 ♗g5

Sadly, either this move or ♗xd6 are needed to prevent an immediate mate.

18...♖xg5+ 19 ♗h4 ♗f6

Another of the king’s defenders has been removed. Now Black threatens 20...♖h5#.

20 ♗g3 ♖xg3

To prevent mate on h5 White has to give up another piece.

21 ♗xd6

Unfortunately it is too late to muster any counterplay.

21...♗g6 22 ♖b8+ ♖g8 0-1

To prevent mate White must play 23 ♖xg8+ leaving Black a minor piece ahead going into the endgame.

The queen sacrifice and ruthless king hunt gave Black a memorable win. When the king is exposed and its defensive resources are inadequate, forceful tactics are often needed to cause everything to crumble for the defender.

Passive moves simply will not do. The game Zukertort – Blackburne, London, 1883, will illustrate this.
Black is in serious trouble. The king has no protective pawn cover. White’s rook on f1, controlling the f-file, prevents Black’s king from fleeing to the other side of the board. The rook on e3 is ready to join in the attack on either the g- or h-files. Black’s doubled pawns on the e-file are very weak. White’s bishop on b2 is also a serious threat on the a1-h8 diagonal. Black’s best defensive piece is the queen.

Taking all this into account, White uses a beautiful diversion to stretch Black’s defences to breaking point.

1 ♕b4!

This is more than Black can handle. The queen is seriously overloaded. Capturing White’s queen would allow White’s bishop to join in the attack decisively: 1...♕xb4 2 ♗xe5+ ♔xh7 3 ♕f8+ ♔g6 4 ♕g3+ ♔h6. If Black tries 4...♔h7 instead, then it’s mate by 5 ♕f7+ ♔h6 6 ♗f4+ ♔h5 7 ♕h7#. After 4...♔h6 White proceeds 5 ♕f6+ ♔h5 (5...♔h7 6 ♕f7+ ♔h6 7 ♗f4+ ♔h5 8 ♕h7#) 6 ♕f5+ ♔h6 (6...♔h4 7 ♗f4+ ♔h8 8 ♕h5#).

The brilliance of 1 ♕b4! is further evident in Black’s other replies. 1...♖c7 loses control of f8: 2 ♘xe5+! ♘xe5 (2...♘h7 3 ♘h3+ ♗g8 4 ♘h8#) 3 ♕f8+ ♘h7 4 ♘h3+ ♘h5 5 ♘h5+ ♘g6 6 ♘h6#. If Black tries 1...♘xh7 White replies with 2 ♕f8+! ♘g7 (2...♗xf8 3 ♘xf8+ ♘g8 4 ♘h3#) 3 ♘e7+ ♘g6 4 ♘g3+ ♘h6 (4...♘h5 5 ♘xh7#) 5 ♘h4#. Similarly, 1...♗g7 leads to 2 ♘g3 ♖c7 3 ♕f8+! ♗xf8 4 ♘xf8+ ♘xf8 5 ♘g8+ ♔h6 6 ♘h3#. Had Black tried 1...♗c7 then 2 ♕f8! wins the same way. This is all very convincing so Black chooses the only other reasonable defence.

1...♖c5

Black tries a blocking move. This allows Black’s queen to guard e5, preventing an immediate ♗xe5+, but the queen is overloaded which enables White to create a diversion.

2 ♕f8+!

White uses this diversion to hunt the king. Capturing the rook with 2...♗xf8 leads to mate in eight moves: 3 ♘xe5+ ♖xh7 4 ♘xe4+ ♖h6 5 ♘h4+ (or 5 ♘h3+ ♗g5 6 ♗g3+ ♘h5 7 ♘g6+ and mate on the next move) 5...♖g6 6 ♗g4+ ♘h7 (6...♗f7 7 ♘e6#) 7 ♘h3+ ♖h6 8 ♗g7#.

2...♘xh7

It can’t be good for Black to see a rook infiltrate on the back rank in this way. Now 2...♗g7 allows the pawn to promote with deadly consequences: 3 ♘h8+ ♗g6 4 ♘xe4+ ♗g5 when White can choose either 5 ♘g3# or 5 ♕h4#.

3 ♘xe4+ 1-0
The king hunt will lead to mate. There is no defence. White can make a beautiful rook sacrifice featuring an attraction tactic to finish off the game after 3...\( \text{\texttt{h6}} \) 4 \( \text{\texttt{h8+! \texttt{g7}}} \) (4...\( \text{\texttt{g5}} \) 5 \( \text{\texttt{g3+ \texttt{f6}}} \) 6 \( \text{\texttt{f3#}} \)) 5 \( \text{\texttt{h7+ \texttt{f6}}} \) 6 \( \text{\texttt{f3+ \texttt{g5}}} \) 7 \( \text{\texttt{f5#}} \) or 3...\( \text{\texttt{g7}} \) 4 \( \text{\texttt{g8+! \texttt{xg8}}} \) \( \text{\texttt{g6+ \texttt{g7}}} \) 6 \( \text{\texttt{e8+ \texttt{f8}}} \) 7 \( \text{\texttt{g3+ \texttt{h7}}} \) 8 \( \text{\texttt{g6+ \texttt{h8}}} \) 9 \( \text{\texttt{xe5+ \texttt{g7}}} \) 10 \( \text{\texttt{xg7#}} \). It is worth observing here how impotent Black’s rooks and bishop are, being completely unable to assist the beleaguered king.

\section{Infiltration}

Being able to infiltrate the enemy position can bring tremendous opportunities. Prior to beginning an attack strong players will usually first ensure the safety of their own king and prevent any infiltration of opposing forces. It might even be worth suspending an attack to make sure that enemy pieces cannot invade.

When the enemy queen infiltrates it can do great damage due to its extended range and mobility. This can cause a game to take a sudden turn, favouring the fortunes of the one who has managed to penetrate behind enemy lines. This can be devastating as shown in the game Goltsov – Moiseev, Kaluga, 1970.

Both sides have infiltrated into each other’s positions. Black has a powerful battery on the second rank. It looks like White is in trouble. White only has a queen on the seventh rank, but it is White to move.

White must act quickly, exploiting whatever possibilities the position has to offer to avoid losing the game. White takes advantage of the back rank weakness. As the saying goes, “Strike while the iron is hot.”

1 \( \text{\texttt{e8+ \texttt{h7}}} \)

White’s remaining pieces are well placed for the attack.

2 \( \text{\texttt{g5+ \texttt{hxg5}}} \)

White’s last move cleared the third rank for the rook. Black’s reply opens the h-file, allowing the rook to support the queen in the attack. Refusing the knight sacrifice also leads to mate: 2...\( \text{\texttt{gg6}} \) 3 \( \text{\texttt{xf7+ \texttt{xg5}}} \) 4 \( \text{\texttt{g3 \texttt{xf2}}} \) 5 \( \text{\texttt{h4#}} \). Now that the h-file has been opened White’s rook can infiltrate as well.

3 \( \text{\texttt{h3+ \texttt{g6}}} \)

White has to keep checking to avoid being mated, but what is there to do? White finds a beautiful move.
This is so very nice! The rook sacrifice breaks things wide open. Black’s reply is forced.

4...atasetsquare (h6)!

4...g6 would have led to 5 g8#. Nevertheless the game still finishes with a checkmate. 5 h8+ g6 6 h5#

White's pawns support the queen in the attack. Without the pawn on g4 and the pawn on e5 to cut off the f6 flight square, White would not have been able to finish off the game this way – with a checkmate delivered by an infiltrated queen. But in the game Black was never given an opportunity to respond with a counterattack.

The following game was played between Ivanov, playing White, and Sveshnikov, in Chelyabinsk, 1973.

Black begins with a diversion to enable the queen to infiltrate and attack White's king.

8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1

a b c d e f g h

8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1

a b c d e f g h

The rook sacrifice enables Black to infiltrate successfully.

2...e4+ 3 f4 g2+ 4 g5 xe5+

The king hunt has trapped White's king in a mating net.

5 g4 f5+ 6 h4 h3+
7 ♕g5 ♕h6+ 8 ♕g4 ♕f5#

White’s pieces were completely out of play, unable to provide any support at all. Don’t invite serpents into your house. Be constantly aware of the infiltration tactic. It should be used to your advantage and not be allowed to be used against you.

One of the most amazing examples of infiltration is from the game Short – Timman, Tilburg, 1991. It demonstrates a highly unorthodox way to break into the enemy camp. This is definitely something not seen very often.

White begins with 1 ♕h2. This is an example of prophylaxis in chess – quiet yet strong moves intended to strengthen one’s position, while limiting any opportunities for counterplay by the opponent. Moves like this are intended to secure the king, thereby discouraging any counterattack. If Black were to play 1...♖xa4 then Black would have a check on a1 available on the next move with White’s king still on the back rank. This prophylactic move comes under the theme of vacating the square, which is handled in the dedicated section.

Black replies by playing 1...♖c8!?. Perhaps Black might have been concerned that White would begin to advance the g-pawn. It is hard to say what else could have been the motivation for such a move. Better was 1...♖c8!, although White would still have a strong attack after 2 g4! according to analysis provided by Short. Now White continues the infiltration – with the king!

2 ♕g3 ♖ce8 3 ♕f4 ♖c8 4 ♕g5 1-0

White’s king is heading for h6 in order to mate with the queen on g7. If Black tries to prevent this by playing 4...♖h7 then, after 5 ♕xg6+ ♕h8 6 ♕h6+ ♕g8 7 ♕f6, mate with the queen on g7 cannot be stopped.

King forays like this to support a kingside mating attack are beautiful and rare. Brute force is sometimes used to infiltrate. Such a brutal sacrifice occurred in the game Karjakin – Caruana, Moscow, 2016.

Black has just moved the rook from e5 to e4, hoping to encourage a trade with 1 ♖xe4 ♖xe4 when Black would obtain a better placement of the bishop and look forward to exploiting the extra pawn in the endgame.
However, White manages to infiltrate Black’s position, attacking the king with a very powerful move.

1 ♖xd5!

This rook sacrifice rips the centre wide open. Black has little choice but to accept the sacrifice.

1...exd5

Now White responds with:

2 ♙xd5

...threatening 2 ♕d7#.

2...♕c7

Black reacts by preventing the immediate mate threat. White now plays a quiet move – the kind that is often difficult to find.

3 ♕f5!

This threatens to skewer Black with 4 ♕h7+, winning the queen. So Black attempts a manoeuvre designed to exchange queens.

3...♖f7 4 ♖xf7 ♕e5

Instead of trading queens, White sealed the deal with:

5 ♖d7+ ♔f8 6 ♖d8+ 1-0

Black has three possible moves, each of which leads to mate: 6...♔xf7 7 ♕h7+ ♔e6 8 ♖d7#; 6...♖e7 7 ♖d7#; and 6...♖g7 7 ♕g6#.

This win enabled Karjakin to take first place in the FIDE Candidates’ tournament, earning the right to challenge Magnus Carlsen for the World Championship.

**Interference**

Interference is a tactic involving blocking moves that obstruct lines of attack. When used in conjunction with other tactical motifs it can disrupt the coordination of the opposing forces.

Here is one such example from the game *Jensen – Borg*, Copenhagen, 1991. White used a blocking move to promote a passed pawn.

1 d7

Black will not be in time to catch the pawn with the king now that the pawn is one square ahead of it: 1...♔e6 2 d8♕+. Black instead tried an alternative way to stop the pawn.

1...♖d4

White now delivers a winning discovered check.

2 ♕d6+ 1-0

This knight move interferes with the action of the rook on the d-file.

After 2...♕xd6 3 d8♕+ White is clearly winning and will try to trade rooks to obtain a decisive advantage.
For example, 3...\( \text{c5} \) 4 \( \text{c8+ d5} \) 5 \( \text{e8} \) and Black runs out of checks after 5...\( \text{d1+} \) 6 \( \text{g2} \) and does not have any good continuation.

An interference motif was used successfully in the game **Carlsen vs The World** in 2010.

```
1 \( \text{b6} \)
```

This interference move wins in all variations. Play continued:

```
1...fxg3 2 \( \text{xb4} \) gxf2+ 3 \( \text{xf2} \) c8 4 \( \text{b3} \) axb6 5 \( \text{xb6} \) a7 6 a6 \( \text{f7} \) 7 \( \text{xa7} \) \( \text{xa7} \) 8 \( \text{b6} \)
```

Black’s d-pawn is weak and will soon be captured. The knight has no active participation in the game, and the bishop on c8 currently has very limited scope. White duly pressed home the advantage to win.

Another nice example of the interference motif comes from the game **Urzica – Honfi**, Bucharest, 1975.

```
White wins by playing a very sharp move 1 \( \text{e4+} \).
```

The simultaneous attack on the king and queen forces Black’s reply.

```
1...fxe4
```

The pawn on e4 now interferes with the black queen’s ability to contest the important white squares along the h1-a8 diagonal. The bishop sacrifice has cut off Black’s access to these important squares and White can exploit this to mate quickly.

```
2 \( \text{d5+ e8} \) 3 \( \text{c6#} \)
```

1...\( \text{xe4} \) would have prolonged the struggle but not changed the result of the game: 2 \( \text{a6+} \) (2 \( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{fxe4} \) 3 \( \text{xe4+} \) would also win) 2...\( \text{a8} \) 3 \( \text{xe4+} \).

Here is another example of an interference motif used to block a key diagonal. It comes from the game **Sämisch – Ahues**, played in Hamburg in 1946.

```
White wants to create a mating threat on g7 along the a1-h8 diagonal. This can be accomplished by blocking the defending bishop on c3.
```
Playing 1 f6? at once in order to block the defending bishop would let slip the opportunity of a quick win. Black could reply with 1...♕c5+ 2 ♕xc5 ♦xc5 when the main threat has been eliminated.

1...♖g8? would be a serious error, losing to 2 ♗g7+ ♖xg7 3 ♕xg7#.

White did not play 1 f6?. Instead the correct winning method was found.

1 ♖e5!

2 ♕g7# is now a lethal threat, against which Black has no adequate defence. Black tried 1...♗xe5 but resigned immediately after White’s reply.

2 f6 1-0

The mate cannot be avoided. Black no longer has the 2...♕c5+ defensive resource. Black’s bishop on e5 interferes with Black’s plan to trade queens along the fifth rank.

Interference and diversion motifs have some similarities. A diversion struck like a bolt from the blue in the game Katalimov – Kolpakov, Riga, 1975, where White took advantage of a back rank weakness.

The critical feature of this position is that White’s knight on c5 takes away Black’s important b7 flight square.

This enables White to play the remarkable move:

1 ♕g6!

This diverts Black’s queen away from its protection of the key h8 square.

1...♕xg6 2 ♗h8+

Now Black can only block this unmerciful check on h8 with each of the remaining pieces before being mated.

2...♖g8 3 ♖xg8+ ♖f8 4 ♖xf8+ ♘c8 5 ♖xc8#

It is indeed quite remarkable how often the outcome of a chess game can pivot so suddenly on a single move.

In the following position taken from the game Ivanović – Barreras, Plovdiv, 1976, White uses some clever rook manoeuvres and a diversion to gain a material advantage. White begins with a sharp pawn thrust.

1 f5!

Black’s reply opens the g-file.

1...♕xf5

Black had little choice. 1...♖xf5 would not be good as it leaves the rook on c8 unprotected.

If Black had played 1...♗xd8 White would have obtained a very strong pawn roller: 2 f6+ ♘h6 3 ♖xd8 ♘c6 or 3...♗f5 4 e6+-.
White next pushes the opponent’s king to the edge of the board.

2 ♕g3+ ♕h7 3 ♕d1

The threat is 4 ♕h1#. Black responds by blocking the g-file in order to provide an escape route for the king on g7.

3...♘g6

Next there follows 4 ♕h1+ ♕g7 5 ♕hg1 forming a battery on the g-file to attack the pinned knight.

Black needs another defender, so repositions a rook to protect the pinned knight.

5...♖c6

An interference move finally disrupts Black’s defence of the knight, forcing immediate resignation.

6 e6 1-0

The e6 pawn is protected by the bishop on c4 and blocks the rook from its defence of the knight on the sixth rank. White would therefore win the knight and hold on to the dangerous passed pawn on e6. Black is all tied up. The contrast in the activity of the white and black rooks is striking.

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**Jostling the King**

Jostling the king by some means or another disrupts the king’s defences and can lead to further vulnerabilities or even a quick checkmate. This is usually achieved by a sacrifice. Once the king’s fortress has been breached, it may be very difficult for the defender to reorganise and recover in time.

The game Poleyes – Kremenetsky, Moscow, 1973, is an example of this motif.

1...♕xb2+

Black exploits the b-file and the x-ray attack along the a1-h8 diagonal. The queen sacrifice must be accepted because 2 ♕d1 leads to an immediate 2...♕b1#. Notice how badly placed White’s rook is on d2 in this position.

2 ♕xb2

Black now exploits a double check, advancing the knight with gain of time to continue the attack.

2...♘d3+
White's king is dragged into open territory. A king hunt is now under way. White cannot play 3 ♕b1 because mate follows in two moves commencing with 3...♖b8+.

3 ♕a3

If White tries 3 ♕b3 instead, then Black has 3...♖b8+ 4 ♕a3 (4 ♕a4 ♖b4+ 5 ♕a3 ♖b2#; 4 ♕c4 ♖b2#) and after 4...♖b2+ the finish is similar to that which actually happens in the game.

3...♖b2+ 4 ♕a4

The king is drawn out even further – a sign that the end is likely to be near.

Black has achieved a winning position. However it can be quite challenging to find a move that will win a won game. Black has sacrificed material to reach this position and so aggressive tactics are needed to complete the attack.

4...♗xe4+!

If the rook is captured Black wins immediately: 5 ♖xe4 ♖c5#.

5 ♕c4 ♖xc4+

White's king is ravaged by Black's pieces, which are all very well coordinated. The grand finale is breathtakingly beautiful.

6 ♕b3

In the following game Reshevsky – Matsumoto, Siegen, 1970, White shows just how quickly an attack can materialise by jostling the king.

6...♖c3+ 7 ♕a4 ♖a3#

Both sides have castled kingside. Black's position looks quite secure but things change quickly after a piece sacrifice.

1 ♖f6+! ♗xf6

The knight has to be captured. Mate was threatened on h7. Black's reply breaks up the king's defensive pawn structure and h7 is still weak. Alternatively 1...♖xf6 would have resulted in the continuation 2 exf6 ♖xf6 3 ♗g5 ♖xb2 4 ♖xd7 when White would still maintain the advantage even though the attack has slowed down slightly.

2 exf6 ♖xf6 3 ♗e4
White gains a tempo with the threat of mate on h7.

3...♖e8 4♕xh7+♔f8

5♗g6!

This is a brilliant move! Black cannot play 5...fxg6 because of 6♗h6+♗g7 7♕xg7#. The move 5...♗e7 would also lead to a quick mate: 6♗h6+♗g7 7♕xg7#.

5...♗g7

The point of this move is to block White's queen, thereby preventing 6♕f7#.

White gains a tempo with the threat of mate on h7.

3...♖e8 4♕xh7+♗f8

6♗h6!

The bishop joins the attack. How quickly Black's position has been demolished! Black cannot play 6...♗xh6 because that would remove the guard and allow 7♕xf7#. If Black tries to run by 6...♗e7 that might lead to 7♕xg7♗d4 8♗f6+!♗d6 (8...♕xf6 9♕xf7#) 9♖xd8#.

6...♗f6

This allows White's rook to penetrate and pick up a loose piece at the same time. Black's position is desperate.

7♖xd7♗e7

White tries to bring in another defender to reinforce the position. Other tries were no better: 7...♗xh6 8♖xf7+♕xf7 9♕xf7#; 7...fxg6 8♖h8#.

Black's kingside is inundated with attacking pieces. The end is near.

8♗h8+♗g8 9♕xg7+♕xg7 10♕xf7#

This is such a beautiful finale! The pin on Black's queen renders it completely helpless to prevent the epaulette mate. Compare this to the
starting position ten moves earlier. It is a classic example of using tactics to annihilate an opponent’s king.

Here’s another example of this tactical theme. Notice how quickly Black’s position deteriorates after White’s first move.

![Chess Diagram]

**1 ♘xg7!**

Then kingside has been breached.

**1... ♗xc4**

Black had several continuations, none of which were particularly good.

On 1... ♗e7 White had 2 ♘xe6 fxe6 3 ♘h6 ♘xc4 4 ♘xf8 ♘xf8 5 ♘xc4 with a material advantage.

1... ♘xg7 would have led to a quick mate: 2 ♘f6+ ♕g8 3 ♘d2 ♘c8 4 ♘h6 ♘f8 5 ♘g5+ ♕g7 6 ♘xg7#

Also 1... ♘xc4 would have been insufficient because of the sequel 2 ♘f6 ♘e7 3 ♘f3 (3 ♘xe6+ ♘xf6 4 ♘xc7+-) 3... ♘xf6 4 ♘xf6 when Black is lost.

![Chess Diagram]

**2 ♗f6!**

White’s threats are very serious. If Black tries 2... ♘d7 White removes the defender with 3 ♘xd7!. Then if Black recaptures by 3... ♘xd7, mate follows quickly: 4 ♘f5+ ♕g8 5 ♘g4#.

**2... ♗e7**

Black has to deal with the threat of discovered check.

**3 ♘f3 ♘xf6 4 ♘xf6 ♘d7 5 ♘xd7! 1-0**

Removing this last defender leaves Black without any further hope. There are now two main threats – one attacking the queen and also the more deadly discovered check leading to mate. 5... ♘xd7 leads to mate in two by 6 ♘h5+ ♕g8 7 ♘g7#.

The following position arose in the correspondence game **Winde – Ruotanen**, played in 1971.
White is endeavouring to attack on the queenside. However, Black has several trump cards here – the rook on g4, the knight on g5, the bishop hitting g2 along the a8-h1 diagonal, and the queen poised to shift quickly to g6 or h5. Though White’s king position appears secure, Black’s tactical play will tear apart the kingside very convincingly.

1... ♘h3+

The pin on the g-file forces White to move the king.

2 ♔f1

Playing 2 ♔h1 offers no respite either:
2... ♖xg2 3 ♖xg2 ♖xg2+ 4 ♖xg2 ♕g6+ 5 ♕f1 (5 ♖xh3 ♕g4#; 5 ♕f3 ♕g4#) 5... ♕g1+ 6 ♕e2 ♕xf2#.

2... ♗xg2+

The bishop sacrifice disrupts the normally inviolable sanctity of the pawn fortress.

3 ♕xg2

On 3 ♕e2 Black can set up a discovered attack with 3... ♕h5. Then after 4 ♖d2 (4 ♖xg2

3... ♖xf3!

Black’s key asset is time! Even though there is no immediate knockout punch, it will take
Black fewer moves to complete the attack successfully than it will for White to reorganise the defence.

2 gxf3 d5!

Black needs to develop the bishop on c8 to bolster the attack.

3 cxd5

What else is there for White? If 3 fxe4? then 3...♕g4+ 4 ♔h1 ♕f3+ 5 ♕g1 ♕h3 and Black will mate on g2. Playing 3 ♕d1 has slightly more merit, but then 3...♕h3 4 ♕xd5+ ♔h8 5 ♔h1 (5 ♕d2 c6 6 ♕xe4 ♕g5+ 7 ♕g4 ♕xg4+) 5...♕xf1 6 ♕xe4 ♕xf2 7 ♕g4 ♕d6 with a huge advantage for Black because 8 f4 ♕e2 will paralyse White.

3...♗d6 4 f4

There isn’t anything else to prevent mate on h2.

4...♕g4+ 5 ♔h1 ♕f3+ 0–1

After 6 ♔g1 ♕h3 Black will be able to mate on the next move with 7...♕g2#. White can do absolutely nothing to prevent it.

In the next example, Tunik – Polyakov, USSR, 1979, White targets the weak f7 square, putting Black’s king in peril.

3...♖xd1
Accepting the bishop is not advisable: 3...\( \text{exe6} \) is met by 4 \( \text{fxe6} \) 5 \( \text{f5+} \) \( \text{f7} \) (5...\( \text{h6} \) 6 \( \text{exe6#} \)) 6 \( \text{xd7+} \) when Black is completely overrun.

4 \( \text{f7+!} \)

On the surface this appears to be a \textit{zwischenzug}, an intermediate move before recapturing Black's rook on d1.

However, White chooses to ignore Black's rook on d1 in pursuit of a much more lucrative prize.

4...\( \text{h6} \)

There is an immediate mate after 4...\( \text{h8} \) 5 \( \text{xf6#} \) due to the pin on the f6-knight. But now the king hunt continues relentlessly.

5 \( \text{f5+} \) \( \text{g5} \)

When a king is dragged across the board in this fashion, it is more often than not an indication of impending defeat.

6 \( \text{h4+} \) \( \text{f4} \) 7 \( \text{g3+} \) \( \text{f3} \) 8 \( \text{h5+} \) 1-0

In the next example, \textbf{Kasparov}, playing White against \textbf{Pigusov} in the USSR, 1977, demonstrates great tactical skill by jostling and undermining Black's kingside.

All of White's pieces are actively placed. The bishop controls key white squares on the b1-h7 diagonal. The rooks are actively positioned against Black's kingside. The queen is well centralised, able to exert threats against Black's king. Black, on the other hand, is slightly behind in development – the rook on a8 is not yet engaged. Black's d-pawn is weak. However the knight on e6, perhaps Black's best placed piece, is on a good blockading square and it plays an important defensive role. Black's positional weaknesses, no matter how slight they may appear, are now exploited beautifully by Kasparov.

1 \( \text{f6!} \)

This is an adept move that creates several threats, thereby exerting strong kingside pressure. The rook is immune from immediate capture as 1...\( \text{gxf6?} \) is refuted by an instant mate: 2 \( \text{h6#} \).

1...\( \text{g5} \) 2 \( \text{xg5!} \)

The knight was Black's key defensive piece so White sacrifices the exchange to eliminate it.

2...\( \text{hxg5} \)

2...\( \text{gxf6} \) would allow 3 \( \text{h5} \) after which White's infiltration would soon lead to checkmate. For instance: 3...\( \text{f8} \) 4 \( \text{xh6+} \) \( \text{g8} \) 5 \( \text{h7} \) and the attack will be decisive.

3 \( \text{xg5} \)

Black only has one move left. 8...\( \text{xh5} \) would have allowed White to finish with 9 \( \text{xh5#} \).
Black’s kingside is even less secure now than before as the h-pawn and the defending knight are no longer on the board.

3...♔g8

Black tries desperately to secure the king. Unfortunately the queen on e7 deprives the king of the important e7 flight square. White’s rook on f6 is still immune from capture for the same reason, since 3...gxf6 allows a mate in three by 4 ♕h6+ ♔g8 5 ♕h7+ ♔f8 6 ♕h8#.

4 ♕h4

White aims to infiltrate on the h7 square.

4...♕a3

By moving the queen White frees the e7 square for the king and seeks counterplay against the unsupported bishop on d3.

Black could have also considered clearing the e7 square for the king by playing 4...♕d8, although White would still stand better after 5 ♕h7+ ♔f8 6 ♕h8+ ♔e7 7 ♕xg7 ♕g8 8 ♕h6 ♕ac8 9 ♕d6±.

White now conjures up a different tactic.

5 ♕f3

The rook is repositioned, now protecting the bishop on d3 and threatening ♕h7+ winning Black’s queen with a discovered attack.

5...g6

This prevents ♕h7+ but still allows a discovered attack.

6 ♕xg6!

Black does not have time to save the queen. A move such as 6...♕b4 would allow White to win by 7 ♕h7+ ♔f8 8 ♕xf7+ ♔e8 9 ♕g8+ ♔f8 10 ♕xf8#. For that reason Black decides to give up the queen.

6...♕xf3

White now plays an important zwischenzug to secure the win.

7 ♕h7+! ♔f8 8 gxf3 1–0

Playing 7 gxf3 first would be an error as it allows Black to play 7...fxg6. The intermediate move 7 ♕h7+! prevents that move since 7...♔f8 8 gxf3 fxg6 enables White to capture the rook on the seventh rank: 9 ♕xc7+. This is an important finesse.

An example of how quickly this tactic can arise can be seen in the game Van Wely – Acs, Hoogeveen, 2002.

The following position arose as early as the tenth move.
White has just played h3, hoping to force Black's knight to retreat. Had White's knight been on f3 instead of e2 this would have likely been the case. However, with the white knight on e2, Black tries something creative.

1...♘h2 2♖e1 ♘f3+

Black jostles the king, sacrificing the knight to disrupt White's kingside pawn formation. This gives Black open lines on the g-file and an opportunity to infiltrate.

3 gxf3 ♕g5+

Black brings the queen into the attack with gain of tempo.

4♔h1 ♕h4 5♔f4

Capturing the bishop leads to mate: 6♗xh3 ♘xh3+ 7♕g1 ♕h2+ 8♕h1 ♗g3+ 9♕g1 ♕h2+ 10♕f1 ♕xf2#.

White would have been better off playing 6e4. Then Black would have had only a very slight advantage after 6...♕xf4 7♕xf4 ♗xf4 8♕g1 ♗h4 9♕g3 ♗c6 10♕h2 ♗f1+ 11♕g1 ♕xd3#.

6...♗e6!

This is an unusual way for Black to divert an important defender. If White does not capture the rook it can head to h6.

7♗xe6 ♗f5+

The discovered check gives Black a mating attack.

8♕g1 ♕h2+ 9♕f1 ♗g3! 0-1

Black develops another piece, whilst bringing it into the attack.

6♗cxd5

Capturing the bishop leads to mate: 6♗xh3 ♗xh3+ 7♕g1 ♕h2+ 8♕h1 ♗g3+ 9♕g1 ♕h2+ 10♕f1 ♕xf2#.

The open h-file and the attack on h6 provide the means by which White systematically breaks up the enemy king’s protective pawn cover.

1♖xh6! ♗e5

Black is aiming to bring the knight over to g6. This will help to cover the h8 square.
1...gxh6 would have led to the disastrous knight fork 2 ♘f6+++. Trying to give the king a way out with 1...f6 would allow 2 ♘xf6. The rook still cannot be taken because of the knight fork looming on f6. If Black tries for counterplay with 2...♕xg3 instead, then White could simplify to a superior endgame by 3 ♖e1 ♗xa3 4 ♖f7 ♘xb4+ 5 ♘xb4 ♘xb4+ 6 ♘xb4 ♘xb4 7 ♘xb7++. 

2 ♖e1 ♗g6

Black’s knight shores up the defence nicely. White needs to find a way to continue the attack.

3 ♖h7 ♕xe4?

Though it might appear that capturing the e-pawn undermines White’s outpost on d5, Black’s 3...♕xe4? is a grave mistake. White’s knight still has a potential check on f6, when the knight fork will pick up Black’s queen on e4.

Black could have put up much stiffer resistance with 3...♖f3!?, when the outcome of the game would still be in doubt.

4 ♖g7+

White maintains the initiative. Black would be mated quickly after 4...♕xg7 5 ♘h6+ ♗g8 6 ♘f6#.

4...♗f8

5 ♗g8+!

Now it becomes clear exactly why 3...♕xe4? was a mistake. White can ambush Black’s queen with a knight fork.

5...♕xg8 6 ♘f6+ ♗g7 7 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 8 ♘d3 1-0

Black will lose one of the rooks. After the desperado move 8...♖xb4+ White would achieve a winning advantage after 9 axb4 ♖g4 10 ♘f3 ♗g5 11 ♘f1 ♗f5 12 ♘xb7++.

Knight Fork

The unique way that knights move creates the possibility for a special type of tactic – the knight fork. The fork contains two or possibly more threats delivered simultaneously. Particularly dangerous is a knight fork where one of the threats is a check to the enemy king. Responding to that priority will leave the other threats unattended.

For example, consider the following hypothetical position with White to move.
White has a strong attack, starting with a so-called family check, a knight fork checking the king and attacking the queen simultaneously. This is sometimes also called a royal fork.

1 ♘c7+

Notice that the knight on d5 was on a white square and after 1 ♘c7+ it landed on a dark square. The knight is the only piece on the chessboard that must alternate from a square of one colour to one of the opposite colour on every move.

So when the knight lands on c7, a dark square, its next move will be to a white square, the same colour as that on which Black's king and queen are situated, each a knight move away from c7.

Black must now move the king to evade the check since the knight cannot be captured. No blocking move can ever be used to defend against a knight check.

1...♔e7

If 1...♔d7 then 2 ♕f7+ ♕c8 (2...♔d6 3 ♘d5#) 3 ♘xa6 ♕df8 4 ♕xb7+ ♕d8 5 ♘d7#.

2 ♕g7+!

Emanuel Lasker once said, “When you see a good move, look for a better one!” White could have played 2 ♘xa6 immediately with a winning advantage but 2 ♕g7+ is even better, trapping Black in a mating net. 2 ♕g7+ is what is known as a zwischenzug, an intermediate move that maintains the attack or achieves some other tactical advantage.

2...♗d6 3 ♕f6+ ♕c5 4 ♘xa6+

White gains a tempo by capturing the queen with check. This was made possible by White’s first move, the knight fork 1 ♘c6+.

White now continues the king hunt, forcing the enemy king to embark on a death march into White’s camp.

4...♔d4

There was nothing better. For example 4...♕c4 5 ♕xb7 ♕d2 6 ♕b4+ ♕d3 (6...♕d5 7 ♕d6#) 7 ♤f3+ ♕c2 (7...♕e2 8 ♕e4#) 8 ♕b3#.

Another line is 4...♕b5 5 ♕xb7+ ♕c4 (5...♕a4 6 ♕b4#) 6 ♕b3+ ♕d4 7 ♘d1+ ♕e4 8 ♘c5# (or 8 ♕f3#).

5 ♘d1+ ♕c3 6 ♕g3+ ♕d3 7 ♕xh3+ ♕b2 8 ♕b3#

8 ♕f2# was also available. The knight fork resulted in a win of material but more than that, in combination with White’s other moves it led to a king hunt and a mating net from which Black could not escape.

A knight fork resulted in a win for Petrosian against Spassky in game 10 of their World Championship match, Moscow, 1966.
This diversion paves the way for the knight fork. The game might have continued 2...♕xh8 3 ♖xf7+ ♕g7 4 ♖xg5+. White would have had an extra minor piece and a decisively won endgame.

2 ♖h8+! was much better than 2 ♖xf7 ♖xe3 3 ♖e5 since that would have left White with an insufficient advantage to guarantee the win.

Tactics have to be found and exploited when chances arise. Even top class players sometimes miss things. For instance in game 16 of the Alekhine – Euwe World Championship match, Rotterdam, 1937, Alekhine made a gross oversight.

1 a3?

When a tactical opportunity is presented, immediate and decisive action is required.

Here White missed a chance to secure a solid advantage by means of a diversion followed by a knight fork.

The winning shot was 1 ♖h8+! ♕xh8 2 ♖xf7+ ♕g8 3 ♖e5 and White is two pawns up. Moreover Black’s e- and g-pawns are now in a weakened state.

1...♗d6

White now does not get a second chance, since Black’s queen is no longer hanging, as it is protected by the bishop on d6 and so the above combination would now just lose a piece.

The game ended in a draw after a prolonged struggle.

In the next position, Petrosian, playing White, dealt two tactical blows before following up with a knight fork against Simagin in Moscow, 1956.

1 ♖xe5+!

White begins with a diversion. This makes the remainder of the combination possible. To keep from losing the queen Black replied 1...♕xe5.

Then came 2 ♖h8+!. This second diversion nudges Black’s king over one square into a deadly knight fork. If Black moves the king to g6 or h6 to evade the check then the skewer allows White to capture Black’s queen on the next move: 2...♕g6 3 ♕xe5+; 2...♕h6 3 ♖xf7+.

2...♕xh8

Two piece sacrifices have led to this winning position. White now simplifies to a winning endgame.

3 ♖xf7+ ♕g7 4 ♖e5 1-0

The game might have continued 4...♕f6 5 ♖d7+ ♕e6 6 ♖xe5+ ♖d6 7 ♖b3 when Black has to restrain the passed c-pawn. But then White’s king can pick up Black’s h-pawn and march over to support the advance of the c-pawn.
Double, simultaneous knight forks brought a sudden end to the game between Mamedyarov – Kamsky at the Tal Memorial tournament in Moscow, 2007. White resigned in the following position without waiting for Black’s move.

Black might have continued 1...♘a5+ with a powerful knight fork. If White replies with 2 ♖xa5 then another knight fork with the second knight wins the queen. 2...♖xd4+ followed by 3...♘xc6.

Black also had another winning line by playing 1...♖xd4+ 2 ♖xd4 ♔e7! (even stronger than 2...♘a5+) and White has no satisfactory reply to the threat of 3...♖a3#. For example, if Black tries 3 ♖c5 Black could respond with 3...♖e5!+-.

Knight forks can create other tactical opportunities.

For instance, in the game Hellers – Dukić, Malmö, 1989, the knight fork allows White to maintain the initiative and in some lines to open the a2-g8 diagonal.

1 ♖d5!

This is most likely a purely speculative sacrifice. The variations that result from either accepting or rejecting the knight run deep. The move was probably played out of a sense of chess intuition rather than after trying to work out all of the resulting lines.

1...exd5

Black chooses to accept the offered knight. It is worth examining what might have happened had Black decided to move the queen instead. The queen must stay on the seventh rank, as playing 1...♕a5 would have allowed a quick mate by 2 f7+ ♔g7 3 ♖f6#. The alternative 1...♗f7 would have been a slightly better but still insufficient defence. White could have proceeded with 2 ♖xb4 and then after 2...♖xb4 3 ♖xb7 ♖xc2+ 4 ♔b1 ♖b8 5 ♖e4, Black’s counterplay would have run out of steam. If Black plays 4...♖e8, instead of 4...♖b8, then play might continue 5 a3 ♖c7 6 ♖e4 ♖d5 7 ♖xd5 exd5 8 ♖xd5 ♖e6 9 ♖c5 ♖xc5 10 ♖xc5+ and White has an extra piece and strong positional pressure, reinforced by the powerful bishops, activity on the h-file, and a connected pawn pair.

2 ♖xd5+

Black’s kingside has been severely weakened.

2...♖h8 3 f7!
The interference motif cuts off Black’s queen from its protection of h7. Black will not be able to hold out much longer.

3...♕d6

Black tries desperately to support the harried king. On 3...♕e7 White would continue the attack in a similar way to the game: 4 ♖xh7+ ♘xh7 5 ♖h1+.

4 ♖xh7+! ♘xh7 5 ♖h1 ♗g7 6 ♖xh7+ 1-0

White soon mates: 6...♕xh7 7 ♗h1+ ♗g7 8 ♖h6#; 6...♗f8 7 ♗f6 ♘xf6 8 gxf6 ♖h8#. Instead of playing 6 ♖xh7+ White could have also won with 6 ♗f8+ ♘xf8 7 ♗xh7+ ♗h7 8 ♗h3+ ♗g7 9 ♗h6#.

Knight fork tactics occur in some openings, particularly against two specific weak points – Black’s c7 and f7 and White’s c2 and f2. Care must be taken to ensure that these points do not get attacked.

Here is an example from the game Suetin – Travniček, Olomouc, 1975. The opening was the Sicilian Defence.

5...♗e5?

This is a serious mistake. Black has fallen head first into a trap. It was necessary to play 5...♗b8 even though it might seem counter-intuitive to ‘undevelop’ the knight in this way by returning it to its original square.

6 ♗xe5!

The knight on f3 was restrained by Black’s bishop, but it can still move as it was in a relative pin, not an absolute pin.

6...♗xd1 7 ♗b5+ ♗d7 8 ♗xd7+ 1-0

The game ended abruptly!

After 8...♕d8 9 ♗xf7+ ♗xf7 10 ♗xd1 e6 11 ♗xh8 White wins a pawn and the exchange and would then try to extricate the knight from h8. If Black is able to trap the knight, say by playing ...♗e7, White would still have the better game.

One try for White, if necessary, would be to play the desperado move ♗g6. Black would then capture the knight with the h-pawn, thereby doubling his pawns on the g-file. If the knight cannot be salvaged, at least that way it
could still do something useful in securing an additional advantage, weakening Black’s pawn structure. For more examples of the desperado motif see the dedicated section.

The doubled black pawns on the g-file would be weakened and they would be easier to attack in a later phase of the game. In such a scenario, even though the knight might eventually be lost, White would still be able to gain some further compensation for it.

For Black, the drawback of playing ...♔e7 immediately is that it locks in the bishop. White might be able to open the f-file and protect f7 with a rook, allowing White’s knight to escape.

Another example of tactical play involving a knight fork in the opening occurs in the French Defence.

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 c5 4 c3 ♕b6 5 ♘f3 ♗d7 6 a3 c4 7 ♘bd2 ♘c6 8 ♗e2 ♘ge7?

Black’s last move 8...♘ge7? is a mistake, allowing White to obtain an advantage. It would have been better to play something else, such as 8...♘a5.

9 ♘xc4 dxc4

Black could still have minimised the damage with 9...♘a5 or possibly even 9...♘g6.

10 ♘xc4

It has now become clear why 8...♘ge7? was a mistake. White’s knight obtains a strong outpost on d6. Black’s king’s bishop, controlling the dark squares, is temporarily blocked and unable to challenge a white knight on d6.

10...♕a6 11 ♝d6+ ♗d8

By moving the king Black has lost the ability to castle. Even worse, the very weak f7 square is now left completely unprotected, allowing White to win the exchange.

12 ♖f7+ ♕c7 13 ♖xh8

Black is losing. 12...♖e8 13 ♖xh8 would have been even worse for Black. White’s queen then might have the ability to infiltrate on the white squares, either on f3 or h5, and Black would not have been able to hold out much longer.

In the game Kasparov vs The World, Internet match, 1999, Kasparov took advantage of a knight fork on the weak c7 square to secure an opening advantage. The opening was the Sicilian Defence.

1 e4 c5 2 ♖f3 d6 3 ♗b5+ ♕d7 4 ♖xd7+ ♕xd7 5 c4 ♗e6 6 ♕c3 ♖f6 7 0-0 ♗g6 8 d4 cxd4 9 ♖xd4 ♗g7 10 ♕de2 ♗e6
Black's last move has put pressure on the white c4 and e4 pawns.

11 ♖d5 ♕xe4

This is a risky line but Black does get some compensation for the loss of the exchange.

12 ♖c7+ ♔d7 13 ♖xa8 ♖xc4 14 ♖b6+ axb6

The knight would have been lost in any event. This desperado knight move forces a weakness, doubling Black's pawns on the b-file. Black has two pawns and a knight for the rook but has been saddled with a structural disadvantage in view of the doubled pawns. White went on to win on move 62.

The unique way in which the knight moves can create all sorts of problems in attacking positions. Here is a beautiful example from Hector – Nielsen, Denmark, 1991.

White begins a major onslaught with 1 ♖e6!. This is an extremely powerful move, threatening 2 ♖g7#.

The knight on e6 also attacks both rooks and the queen simultaneously. It cannot be taken because of 1...fxe6 2 ♖g7#. Black has nothing better than 1...♕e5, protecting the queen and guarding the g7 square.

White now replies with 2 ♖xf8 winning the exchange. Black's queen has been exposed to a discovered attack by the rook. There is also the threat of 3 ♖xh7+ ♕xf8 4 ♖xf7#. The haemorrhaging cannot be stopped with 2...♕g7 as after 3 ♖xg7+ ♕xg7 4 ♖xf7+ ♕g8 a discovered check does even more damage: 5 ♖d7+ ♖xf8 6 ♖xd8+ ++. Black resigned.

**Lead in Development**

Tactical chances can occur when one side has a lead in development. Sometimes exploiting this kind of positional advantage requires extreme measures such as a piece sacrifice. In practical play, when the opportunity arises it must be seized immediately. If the opponent is given the time to complete piece development – with even one extra move – the chance to strike might disappear.

To illustrate this idea, the next position arose in the game Ungure – Burkova, Pärnu, 1990.
White has a positional advantage due to a big lead in development. White's king has castled on the kingside and is secure. The rooks are connected with one rook acting on the open d-file and the other one eyeing the enemy king on the half open e-file. The bishop is well placed on f4, operating on two open diagonals. The knight is able to move to good squares such as d4, g5 or e5. The queen is aggressively placed, attacking Black's knight. White's queenside pawn majority contests the d5 square and is already well advanced and applying pressure on the light coloured squares.

Black, on the other hand, has not yet castled. The king bishop has not yet been developed and the rooks are disconnected. Effectively White is a rook up until such time as Black's rook on h8 can come into play. Black's knight on b6 is not well placed. Black's queen is assuming the menial role of guarding the knight, which limits its activity.

The time is right to strike. White should not make a quiet move in such a position, otherwise Black will have time to develop the bishop, most likely to e7, in order to prepare kingside castling. Indeed White did not give Black the opportunity to catch up in development.

1 d4

This move centralises the knight and attacks Black's queen. The queen must move but it still has to protect the knight. It does not have access to c7 or d6, so Black has little choice but to play 1...c5. Of course Black should try to exchange queens in this position in order to relieve the pressure.

Instead of swapping queens, which would not be to White's advantage, a move is found to continue the attack.

2 xe6!

This is a very strong move. It gains even more time and also opens the e-file, exploiting the vulnerable position of Black's king. The rook on e1 is now ready to attack with a discovered check if the knight moves, or to recapture on e6 if the knight is taken. Black is not able to capture White's queen, because 2...xa5 leads to an immediate checkmate by 3 c7#. Instead Black captures the knight.

2...fxe6

White can now continue the attack.

3 xe6+

Black replies prudently.

3...f7

3...e7 would have given White an even bigger advantage: 4 xc5 xc5 5 d6.

Notice that with the rook now on the sixth rank, Black's defence of the knight on b6 has been undermined. The deciding move is:

4 xb6 1-0

Black now would have little choice but to exchange queens with 4...xb6 5 xb6. Black's
b-pawn will drop, then the remaining a-pawn will be very weak and White will have a very strong queenside attack due to the connected passed pawns.

The lead in development was exploited beautifully by White to win the game. Moreover this example shows that tactics can be involved in achieving longer term strategic goals.

Tactics can be compared to the individual battles on the chessboard, while strategy involves the overall objectives required to win the game. To achieve strategic goals, tactical themes will often be required.

Bringing out the queen too early in the opening can cause a player to fall behind in development. Whenever the queen has to move to avoid threats, the opponent gains time to make normal developing moves, some of which can also create further threats to the prematurely advancing queen.

The game Peralta – Castineira, Barcelona, 2008, illustrates this idea. The opening was the Old Benoni Defence.

1 d4 e6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 exd5 4 cxd5 d6 5 e4 g6 6 ♘c3 ♗g7 7 f4 ♕h4+?

Black has brought out the queen after only seven moves. The move serves no real purpose. No threats have been created against White’s position. It would have been much better for Black to continue making developing moves. The natural 7...♘f6 would have been preferable.

8 g3

This is what can happen when the queen is brought out too early. Black now has to make another queen move.

8...♕e7

White now has a strong reply.

9 e5

White makes the decision to open the centre. Since Black is slightly behind in development, this strong central advance creates an advantage for White.

9...dxe5 10 d6

10...♘e6

This is the third queen move that Black has made.

11 ♗h3

White continues pursuing the same theme. The bishop is placed on an active diagonal while continuing to harass the black queen. There is only one square left for the queen to go, but playing 11...♗f6? would give White an immediate winning advantage by 12 ♘xc8. So Black needs to deal with the threat in another way.

11...♗f5 12 ♘f3

White has developed another piece. Black has a discovered check coming up but White has correctly assessed that it is not dangerous.

12...exf4+ 13 ♔f2 f×g3+ 14 hxg3

White has developed three minor pieces to Black’s one, the bishop on g7. With Black’s king
so exposed, there is now the deadly threat of 15 \( \text{\$e1} \) pinning Black’s queen.

14...\( \text{\$xc3} \) 15 bxc3 \( \text{\$f6} \) 16 \( \text{\$e1} \) \( \text{\$e4+} \)

An exchange sacrifice attacks Black’s queen once again.

17 \( \text{\$xe4} \)

Black’s f-pawn is pinned. Black must once again make another queen move.

17...\( \text{\$xe4} \)

Now White makes another attacking move and harasses Black’s queen.

18 \( \text{\$g5} \) \( \text{\$e5} \)

That’s the fifth queen move Black has made so far in the game. It should be very clear by now that Black’s difficulties have been caused by bringing the queen out too early.

19 \( \text{\$f4} \)

White again makes a developing move, creating another threat on Black’s queen, forcing it to move a sixth time.

19...\( \text{\$f6} \)

Black cannot be given time to consolidate the position.

An exchange sacrifice attacks Black’s queen once again.

17 \( \text{\$xe4} \)

Black’s f-pawn is pinned. Black must once again make another queen move.

17...\( \text{\$xe4} \)

Now White makes another attacking move and harasses Black’s queen.

18 \( \text{\$g5} \) \( \text{\$e5} \)

That’s the fifth queen move Black has made so far in the game. It should be very clear by now that Black’s difficulties have been caused by bringing the queen out too early.

19 \( \text{\$f4} \)

White again makes a developing move, creating another threat on Black’s queen, forcing it to move a sixth time.

19...\( \text{\$f6} \)

Black is hopelessly lost. White has just prevented Black from castling kingside and is now also ready to bring the rook into action along the e-file.

White is attacking with everything in the arsenal, including a well-advanced central passed pawn on the d-file.

Notice how helpless Black’s king looks. Black has nothing other than the queen in play. Both of the queenside minor pieces and the rooks are still on their original squares. White has an overwhelming lead in development.

20...\( \text{\$f8} \)

Black cannot bring out any pieces. It is so sad to have to leave the e-file like this but White’s rook is about to join the action. It hardly seems imaginable that the player managing the Black side of the board was rated 2504 when this game was played.

21 \( \text{\$e1} \) h6

White will now complete the infiltration with the rook. Black will not be able to hold out for very long.
22 ♖e7!

A knight sacrifice brings the position to its climax.

22...hxg5 23 ♖e5

Yet again Black’s queen is harassed but this time it has nowhere to go. The position is now resignable for Black.

23...♗e6

Clever but played more out of desperation than anything else.

24 ♕xe6 ♕f7 25 ♕f6

The queen is harassed one last time. There is no good reply.

25...♖h7 26 ♖xf7 ♖xf7 27 ♖f1

The bishop is being redirected to c4. This raises another important idea. When mounting an attack, it is always best to do so with all of the pieces. If necessary, reposition any pieces that are not effectively engaged until they eventually reach their optimal positions.

27...♖c6 28 ♖c4 ♖d8 29 ♖f6 1-0

Black’s knight is overloaded and 30 ♖xd8 is threatened.

White should be able to engineer a mate in a few more moves. This was a very instructive example which shows that bringing a queen out too early can cause a player to fall far behind in development with disastrous consequences.

**Line Clearance**

A line clearance manoeuvre removes a pawn, the king or another piece from some important file, diagonal or key square on the chessboard, making way for other threats. Here is a representative illustration of this theme from Skrobek – Kalinin, Warsaw, 1989.

1...♘e1!

This knight sacrifice clears the a6-f1 diagonal, allowing Black’s queen to infiltrate.

2 ♖xe1 ♕f1

Black now threatens ...♕g1#.

3 ♖xh4

This gives White access to the g3 flight square but it is not enough.
The next example, Stanishevsky – Nikonov, Moscow, 1981 is unusual. Two knights are sacrificed on the same square to achieve strategic advantages.

The position of Black’s king is weak, particularly the h6 square. White needs to exploit this by moving the rook from e3 to h3 but it will take time. What follows are two wonderful knight sacrifices, clearing the way for a mating finish.

1 ♖d7! ♕xd7

The knight was forking both rooks so it had to be eliminated.

2 e5 ♖d8

If Black had tried 2...c7 3 ♖h3 h5 4 gxh5 g5 then 5 ♖xg5 would have been decisive.

3 ♖d7!

This is simply amazing. White gives away both knights. Premature would be 3 ♖h3?! h5 4 gxh5 g5 5 ♖xg5 ♖xf6 when Black could still defend.

3...♗g1+ 4 ♖g3 ♕e1+ 5 ♦f3 ♕e3#

Now a queen sacrifice continues the attack.

8 ♕g7+! ♕xg7

Mate would follow after 8...♕xg7 9 hxg7+ ♕g8 10 ♖h8#. White next exploits a discovered check.

9 hxg7+ ♕h6

White would have mated on the back rank after 9...♕g8 10 ♖h8#.

Now for the final blow the pawn underpromotes to a knight with check.

10 gxf8♕+! ♕h8 11 ♖xf6#

It is worth mentioning here that when a variety of tactical motifs are used in connection with one another the results can often be overwhelming. Furthermore, tactics are not used for their own sake; they serve to achieve some important objectives.

In the previous example a mating attack against the opponent’s king was the prime objective. The tactics used were the means by which this was achieved. A desperado is often
used when a piece is about to be lost anyway. The knights in the last game were sacrificed to open important lines for a mating attack. This could also be thought of as the motif of vacating a square, handled in the dedicated section.

Here is another example showing how multiple tactical themes can interact to create an overwhelming advantage. It comes from the game Wheeler – Hall, played in England in 1964.

Here is another example showing how multiple tactical themes can interact to create an overwhelming advantage. It comes from the game Wheeler – Hall, played in England in 1964.

Black's pieces are all very active, hitting important targets. The star player in this lively position is the unassuming pawn on b3. The reason why it plays such an important role will become apparent in a few moves.

1...♖c1+!

Black begins with this diversion tactic. White must capture the rook, which will divert either the queen or the d1-rook. It doesn't matter which way White captures the rook – both responses are bad for White.

2 ♕xc1

Black will also mate after 2 ♕xc1, but must not play 2...♖xd2 first but instead make the zwischenzug 2...♖xa3+ which wins as follows: 3 bxa3 ♖xd4+ 4 ♕b1 ♖xd2+. Had White played 3 ♕b1 Black would have won the same way as in the game.

2...♖xa3+ 3 ♕b1

Here the line clearing motif is in play. 3 bxa3 would have led to the immediate 3...♕a2#. Notice once again the importance of the pawn on b3. The double rook sacrifice has led to a mating attack for Black.

3...♖a1+

Now the attraction motif takes the forefront. The double rook sacrifice has led to a mating attack for Black.

4 ♕xa1

The mobility of the queen now takes it from the second rank to the a-file, gaining a tempo with a check.

4...♕a8+ 5 ♕b1 ♕a2#

Various tactics acting together in sequence made all the difference. Black's queen finally infiltrated on the a-file and checkmated with the support of the pawn on b3.

This next example is from the game Butnoriis – Gutman, Riga, 1974.

The rooks on the e-file provide White with a powerful battery. Black's dark-squared bishop
has been exchanged, which has left the back rank weak due to the vacant fianchettoed position. White now makes a line clearing sacrifice to create a mating attack.

1 ♕h8+!

Black’s replies are all forced. This check gives White an extra tempo to deliver a discovered attack.

1...♕xh8 2 ♗f6+

White gains another tempo by checking the king. The rook battery on the e-file has been activated, preparing the back rank mate.

2...♖g8 3 ♕xe8#

It was fairly easy to calculate what would happen after 1 ♕h8+! as Black’s replies were all forced. There are no variations to complicate matters. As a general principle, if there is a forced line available that wins it should be played! Whenever possible, counterplay should be thwarted or at least discouraged.

Clearing an important square led to a quick mate in the game Edge – Tolhurst, Cotswolds, 1989.

Black plays 1...♖g3+! clearing the h3 square for the bishop. The check gains an important tempo, making it possible for the tactic to work. After 2 ♖xg3 ♖h3 Black can only delay the checkmate on g2 with a spite check: 3 ♕c8+ ♖xc8 4 ♖f1 ♖g4 5 ♕g1 ♖h3 and then 6...♖g2#. Had White tried either 2 fxg3 or 2 hxg3 then 2...♖h3 would also have followed with an unstoppable mate.

A line clearing pawn sacrifice was used in the game Anderssen – Nielsen, Vajle, 1989.

1 d4+

Black has to reply 1...cxd4. If instead Black’s king had moved, the rook on f6 would have been lost.

1...♗d5 2 ♖xf6++ or 1...♗e6 2 ♖a6++ are much like what actually followed in the game.

The pawn sacrifice has cleared the fifth rank which allows White to win a rook.

2 ♖a5+ ♖e6 3 ♖a6+

This will be followed by the capture of the rook on f6.

When a line clearing move produces a secondary threat, the attacking side can gain the necessary time to realise the main threat.

For example in Cramling – Franco, Seville, 1988, a line clearing sacrifice was used to attack the queen, thereby enabling White to carry out an assault on Black’s kingside.

The winning move is 1 ♖c7!

Black’s queen is attacked. The f-file has been cleared to strike the weak f7 point. The fourth rank has also been cleared to allow the rook to reach h4. White has made multiple threats with a single move and Black is unable to deal with
all of these at the same time. The line clearing move has also served as a discovered attack.

1...♕xc7 2 ♕xf7+ ♔h8 3 ♕h4 1-0

Playing 3...♕f8 to protect the h7 square would have allowed 4 ♕xc7.

After 3...h5 White would win with 4 ♕xg6 ♧f8 5 ♕xh5+ ♧g8 6 ♧c4+-.

A knight sacrifice was used to clear an important square in Vasiliev – Erofeev, Pushkin, 1985.

A tactical firestorm eventually led to a line clearing tactic in the game Bulat – Smederevac, Kranj, 1958.

White’s rooks exert great pressure on the kingside. Now a rook sacrifice is a strong candidate move to smash open and expose Black’s king.

Other positional advantages for White are the centralised knight, the manoeuvrability of the queen on the second rank, and the x-ray attack of the bishop along the a1-h8 diagonal.

White does indeed begin the attack with a rook sacrifice.

1 ♖xg7+

Black replies 1...♔xg7

Had Black played 1...♔h8 instead, White would finish with 2 ♖hxh7+ ♦xh7 3 ♔f7#.

2 ♕g2+ ♔f8

Black’s other choice 2...♔h8 would have been met by 3 ♖xh7+ ♦xh7 4 ♕g6+ ♔h8 5 ♔f7#.

3 ♕xh7 ♦xh7 4 ♦d7+ ♦xd7

If 4...♔f7 had been played White would mate with 5 ♕xd5+ ♔e6 6 ♕xe6#. White’s last move 4 ♕d7+ clears the long diagonal, activating the bishop.
White made a double rook sacrifice to clear the main lines that led to a mating attack. Opening lines is an important way to get to the enemy king.

Line clearing motifs can also justify the sacrifice of a queen. In the following striking example, Bum – Coleman, correspondence chess game, 1993, White sacrifices the queen to activate the tremendous power of a bishop pair.

Black is busted after 1 ♕xg6+! which leads to a win by force.

1...fxg6

The sacrifice must be accepted since 1...♔f8 leads to an immediate 2 ♖h8#.

2 ♗xe6+

Now the bishop pair, supported by the rooks, particularly the rook on the h-file, bring Black down.

2...♕g7 3 ♖h6+ ♔h8

3...♔h7 would lead to the same mate.

4 ♖f8+ ♔h4 5 ♕xh4#

In the process of carrying out a combination, it is critical to proceed using the right move order.

Changing the move order ever so slightly can have a dramatic effect, as in the game Casas – Piazzini, Buenos Aires, 1962.

White wins with 1 ♕xh7+!.

Black is forced to reply 1...♔xh7, then 2 hxg5+ clears the h-file for the rook. It’s mate after 2...♖g6 3 ♑e7#.

Had White changed the move order slightly by playing the misguided 1 hxg5? first, then Black could have played 1...b3+ 2 ♕c3 ♕xd5. Suddenly the mating attack has vanished. Playing the forcing move 1 ♕xh7+! first made all the difference in this position.

A rook sacrifice was used to make way for a queen infiltration in the game Kmoch – Rubinstein, Semmering, 1926.

In the following position Black’s control of the e-file, along with the pressure exerted by the bishop along the a8-h1 diagonal with an x-ray attack, will batter White’s king. If it were White to move it would be mate in two. Unfortunately for White it is Black who has the move.
1... f3+ 2 gxf3 e3+

3 g3

The king hunt is under way. White's king has two other places to run, both of which also lead to mate: 3 f1 xf3+ 4 g1 g3+ 5 g2 (5 f1 e1#) 5...xg2#; 3 g2 xf3+ 4 h2 xh1+ 5 g3 e3+ 6 f2 e1#.

3... xf3+ 4 h2

If White had played 4 h4 then 4...g4# would be available.

4... xh1+ 5 g3 e3+ 6 f2 e1#

It is worth noting how the poor coordination of White's queen and rooks prevented an adequate defence.

The next example, taken from the game Panov – Zagoryansky, Moscow, 1951, features a brilliant rook sacrifice to create a pawn roller.

Manoeuvring on the Staircase

The staircase manoeuvre is a unique tactic that exploits the alternating colour of the squares on the chessboard. It appears most often in queen vs passed pawn positions. It is a way of making incremental progress, sometimes using pins, through a series of moves until a desirable position arises. When possible, the king is also brought closer to assist the queen in the desired task.

Here is a fanciful example from a problem composed by B.S. Barrett in 1874.

Black is about to promote the b-pawn. White has a forced mate in twelve moves using the staircase manoeuvre.

The location of White's king, limiting Black's options for king moves, is a very important feature of this position. White's queen creates timely pins on the a1-h8 diagonal, forcing Black's king to shuffle between a1 and b1 as White's queen gets into the ideal position to strike.
White continues making progress in a similar way until the queen reaches the open h-file.

3 ♕d4 ♕b1 4 ♕e4+ ♕a1 5 ♕e5 ♕b1 6 ♕f5+ ♕a1 7 ♕f6 ♕b1 8 ♕g6+ ♕a1 9 ♕g7 ♕b1 10 ♕h7+ ♕a1 11 ♕h8

11...♕b1 12 ♕h1#

Here is another example. This time it is the king that uses the staircase manoeuvre.

1 ♕g2

If White’s king does not block the h1-a8 diagonal Black would not have any legal moves. The game would be a draw by stalemate.

1...♗d6 2 ♕f2+ ♕b7 3 ♕f3 ♕d6 4 ♕e3+ ♕b7 5 ♕e4 ♕d6+ 6 ♕d4+ ♕b7 7 ♕d5 ♕a5 8 ♕d6+ ♕b7+

White has made progress, bringing the king up closer. All Black can do is continue to tack.

9 ♕c6 ♕a5+

10 ♕c7+ ♕b7 11 ♕xb7#

In the next example it doesn’t matter if Black’s king stays near the back rank or moves up the board.
The black king must stay away from the a-file: 1...\( \text{a7} \) 2 \( \text{a1+} \) \( \text{a5} \) 3 \( \text{xa5#} \).

Other tries are no better: 2...\( \text{d7} \) 3 \( \text{d2+} \) skewers the queen. If Black tries to maintain the opposition then play might continue 2...\( \text{b7} \) 3 \( \text{c4+} \) 4 \( \text{b3+} \) 5 \( \text{c2+} \) 6 \( \text{c4} \) 6 \( \text{b1+} \) \( \text{+.} \)

3 \( \text{c4+} \) 4 \( \text{b3+} \) 5 \( \text{c2+} \) 6 \( \text{c8} \) 6 \( \text{b1+} \) 7 \( \text{d7} \) 7 \( \text{d2+} \)

Black's queen has been skewered. The endgame is an easy win for White after 7...\( \text{e8} \) 8 \( \text{xd8+} \) \( \text{xd8} \). White's king will march forward and assist the rook in checkmating the enemy king on the edge of the board.

The staircase manoeuvre is not very common in chess praxis. Here is an example of this tactic in the game Lowcki – Tartakower, Jurata, 1937.

White's weak back rank allows this manoeuvre to succeed.

1...\( \text{b6+} \) 2 \( \text{h1} \) \( \text{b5} \)

The threat is ...\( \text{f1+} \) winning the queen. White's king has to return to defend the \( \text{f1} \) square. White's rook is unable to assist.

3 \( \text{g1} \) \( \text{c5+} \) 4 \( \text{h1} \) \( \text{c4} \) 5 \( \text{g1} \) \( \text{d4+} \) 6 \( \text{h1} \)

Black is making progress. The queen has gradually infiltrated.

6...\( \text{e4} \)

The tactics suddenly change to exploit the weak back rank. White's queen cannot be captured: 7 \( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{f1#} \).

7 \( \text{c1} \)

The idea behind this move is to protect the rook on \( \text{g5} \). White's queen has to remain on the first rank.

7...\( \text{d3} \)

Once again Black's attention is directed to the \( \text{f1} \) square and the first rank weakness.

8 \( \text{g1} \) \( \text{d4+} \) 9 \( \text{h1} \) \( \text{d2} \) 0-1
An interesting finish. Black has a double attack along the c1-h6 diagonal. 10 ♕xd2 gives Black access to the back rank: 10...♖f1#. Another queen move such as 10 ♕g1 gives up the rook, 10...♕xg5+, or even threatens to win the queen with 10...♕e2 followed by ...♖f1.

An interesting example of a rook performing a staircase manoeuvre is seen in an analysis position from a 1922 Tarrasch – Alekhine game.

Black begins by taking advantage of the pin on the g-file.

1...♖f3! 2 ♕xe4

White’s kingside would be demolished after 2 g3 as Black would infiltrate by 2...♖xg3 3 ♙xg3 ♙xg3+ 4 fxg3 ♙xg3+ 5 ♙h1 ♙xh3+ 6 ♙g1 ♙g3+ 7 ♙h1 ♙g4 8 ♙xg7+ ♙g8!+.

2...♗d5 3 ♙d3

Black’s powerful bishop pair now supports the staircase manoeuvre.

3...♕xg2+!

The queen sacrifice rips White open, allowing the rook to zigzag along the staircase.

4 ♙xg2 ♙g3+ 5 ♙h2 ♙g2+ 6 ♙h1 ♙h2+ 7 ♙g1 ♙f1#.

The raking bishops operating on the long diagonals made all this possible. A series of discovered checks gave the rook the opportunity to reach the h1 mating square.

No Retreat

Trapping a piece is a tactic that wins material. It can lead to a decisive advantage and is a common winning tactic. It is important to avoid putting pieces at risk in places where they can be trapped.

Here is an example from the game Peresypkin – Chekhov, USSR, 1976.
Black’s rook on c7 has restricted movement. A clever trap snares the rook.

1 ♘d6!

One threat is 2 ♘e8+ as the knight fork will win the rook. Even if Black’s king moves to h7 the knight can still go to e8 without checking, trapping the rook. Taking the knight is equally devastating: 1...exd6 2 cxd6 and the attacked rook cannot escape capture. White would then reach an advantageous endgame after 2...♖d7 3 ♖xd7 ♖xa3 4 ♖b7 ♖xd6 5 ♖xa7±.

Sometimes a piece can become trapped early in the opening. One such example is in the Noah’s Ark trap. In the opening that follows, the Sicilian Defence, Rossolimo Variation, the trap can be set as early as on the third move. A blunder will result in the loss of a piece.

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♖b5 a6

White’s last move 4 ♖a4 is quite commonly played in this position. White wants to retain the bishop as it will establish a pin on the knight if Black plays the normal developing move d7-d6. The bishop can eventually return to b3 to influence White’s hold on d5 and to exert pressure on f7.

4...d6 5 d4?

White gets into trouble after this move. It would have been much better to play the preliminary 5 c3. This would serve to provide a safe return of the bishop to c2 and prepare d4 so that if Black chose to capture the d4 pawn with a pawn, White would have the option of being able to recapture it with either the knight or the c-pawn.

White could also play 5 ♖xc6 here to avoid the Noah’s Ark trap which we will see here. Had this been what White intended it would have made much more sense to make this capture on the fourth move rather than making the extra move to a4 with the bishop, thereby giving Black an extra tempo.

5...b5 6 ♖b3 ♖xd4 7 ♖xd4 exd4
8 ♕xd4?

This gets White into further trouble. Black will gain time by harassing White’s queen. Bringing the queen out too early in the opening is not usually a good idea.

White had a way of forcing a trade of bishops without losing material: 8 ♗d5 ♖b8 9 ♗c6+ ♗d7 10 ♘xd7+ ♘xd7 11 ♘xd4=.

8...c5! 9 ♕d5 ♗e6

Developing the bishop further harasses Black’s queen and provides the rook on a8 with some protection. It also eliminates the powerful battery aimed at f7.

10 ♗c6+ ♗d7 11 ♘d5 ♗e4 0-1

Inexplicably Fischer now played 1...♗xh2? and White replied by calmly playing 2 g3. Now there is no retreat for the trapped bishop, so White brought the king back to g2: 2...♗h5 3 ♘e2 ♗h4 4 ♗f3 ♘e7 5 ♗g2 hxg3 6 fxg3.

Had White’s king been one square further away from Black’s bishop this would have freed the bishop. Instead, all Black can do now is resort to a desperado.

6...♗xg3 7 ♘xg3

With this material advantage White went on to win in a few more moves.

It is particularly satisfying to trap the opponent’s queen and in the section on queen ambush, examples of that are presented.

0 Overloading

An overloaded piece has too many tasks that compete for its attention and it cannot attend to all of them at once.
The capability of an overloaded piece is limited. Opportunities arise when its mobility is reduced. A nice example comes from the game Mirković – Stefanovsky, Yugoslavia, 1990.

Black’s queen is offside and cannot assist in the defence. White has an incredibly powerful bishop pair and a double battery against the kingside. One battery is on the e-file, the other is on the a1-h8 diagonal. White forces Black to compromise the kingside by playing a powerful move to set up the double battery.

1 ♕e5

There is a double attack here. One battery on the a1-h8 diagonal threatens mate on g7. The second battery on the e-file also threatens a back rank mate. Black tries to attend to the mating threat.

1...f6

Unfortunately the weakness on the back rank prevents Black from defending with 1...♖xd4. The primary threat of ♕xg7# would be thwarted but the back rank mate would still succeed: 2 ♖e8+ ♕xe8 3 ♕xe8#. This shows that Black’s rook is overloaded.

Now White continues to exert even more pressure. Black’s last move, advancing the f-pawn, has introduced an additional weakness in the position on the a2-g8 diagonal.

2 ♖d5+ ♕h8

White’s bishop pair is extremely strong. Again Black’s rook cannot leave the back rank to defend as 2...♖xd5 would lead to a massacre: 3 ♖xd5+ ♕h8 (3...♕f8 4 ♖c5+ ♖xc5 5 ♕d8+ ♖f7 6 ♕e8#; 3...♕f7 4 ♖a8+ ++) 4 ♖a8+ ♖c8 5 ♖xc8+ ♖d8 6 ♖xd8+ ♖e8 7 ♕xe8#.

3 ♕xf6!

The raking bishops are extremely effective. 3...gxf6 would be met with 4 ♖xf6# so Black defends g7 with the rook.

3...♖g8

Now White overloads the rook once again.

4 ♕e7! 1-0

4...♖xd4 drops the queen to 5 ♖xa6. Alternative moves lead to mate, e.g. 4...♖c8 5 ♕xg7+ ♖xg7 6 ♖xg7#.

A diversion can be used to deflect an overloaded piece, thereby giving way to other tactical possibilities. Playing Black against Bouwmeester in Wageningen, 1958, Botvinnik diverted White’s queen from its protection of a critical square.
Black begins with a real doozie.

1... ♖b1!

This move diverts the queen from the key e3 square. The reason for this will soon become evident. After 2 ♕xb1 Black plays 2... ♘xe3+.

The check unleashes a latent attack on the f-file. White’s f-pawn is pinned, forcing White to move the king and leave the knight on f3 unprotected.

3 ♔g1

After 3 ♔h1 White mates with 3... ♕xf3+ 4 ♔g1 ♕g2#.

3... ♕xf3 0-1

Black threatens to play 4... ♕g2#. There is no way to prevent the checkmate: 4 fxe3 ♕g2#; 4 ♕xa2 ♕g2#

The next example from the game Portisch – Christiansen, London, 1982, also shows how a diversion, along with a back rank weakness, can overload the defender.

White’s advanced h-pawn creates a bind on the g7 square and a back rank weakness. If Black’s control of g7 can be further undermined, White’s queen could mate on g7. White’s queen might potentially also have a check on b8, exploiting the weakness there if Black’s queen can be diverted from the back rank.

1 ♖xc4 bxc4

Black is unable to defend the dark square weaknesses with 1... ♖g5 because then mate follows by 2 ♕xf7+ ♔h8 3 ♕g7#. 
White now unloads a beautiful diversionary tactic.

2 ♗a5!

Black must continue protecting the bishop on f6.

2...♕e7

The move 2...♕xa5? would have led to mate by 3 ♕xf6. There would not be an adequate defence against 4 ♕g7#.

The counterattack 2...g5 does not work as 3 ♖xd8 gxf4 4 ♖xf6 ♖xe4 5 ♔xc4 leaves White with a much better position.

White’s next beautiful move led Black to resign.

3 ♖d7! 1-0

Black is overloaded.

There is no adequate way to continue. 3...♖xd7 4 ♖xf6 and mate follows on g7; 3...♖xd4 4 ♖b8+ ♕f8 5 ♖xf8#; or 3...♖g5 4 ♖b8+ ♕d8 5 ♖xd8+-.

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**Pawn Fork**

A pawn is the only chess piece which can attack squares they are unable to occupy by making their normal moves. A pawn fork takes place when two enemy pieces are attacked simultaneously by the advance of a pawn.

One of the enemy pieces attacked may be the king. This special case is sometimes called an absolute pawn fork.

Pawn forks are a dangerous tactic that can result in a player obtaining a significant advantage. A well-timed pawn fork can lead to material gain, as in the following position.

Black is threatening to penetrate along the e-file with ...♕e3+, winning the bishop. White’s rooks are not well coordinated but, having the move, White still has a winning shot involving a king diversion.

1 ♖g6+

Black has no alternative but to make a forced reply.

1...♕xg6

White now delivers a powerful pawn fork.

2 f5+

This was the point of the bishop sacrifice.
Black’s available moves are all unfavourable. After 2...\textit{f7} 3 \textit{fxe6+} or 2...\textit{xf5+} 3 \textit{xf5} \textit{e4} 4 \textit{xd5} White would have an overwhelming endgame advantage with an extra rook.

Pawn forks are a common tactic that can arise in openings. In the game \textit{Liem – Mamedyarov}, Kolkata, 2009, White first sacrifices a knight, then wins back a bishop and gains the initiative with a pawn fork. The opening played was the Queen Pawn’s Opening.

\begin{center}
\begin{gameofchess}
1 \textit{d4} \textit{e6} 2 \textit{\textit{f3}} \textit{b5} 3 \textit{e4} \textit{b7} 4 \textit{bd2} \textit{a6} 5 \textit{a4} \textit{b4} 6 \textit{d3} \textit{c5} 7 \textit{dxc5} \textit{xc5} 8 \textit{0-0} \textit{d6} 9 \textit{b3} \textit{d7} 10 \textit{d2} \textit{gf6} 11 \textit{e1} \textit{a5} 12 \textit{c3} \textit{b6} 13 \textit{xa5!} \textit{xa5} (13...\textit{xa5} 14 \textit{xb4} \textit{b6} 15 \textit{bxc5} \textit{xe5} leaves White a pawn ahead.) 14 \textit{cxb4} \textit{a8} 15 \textit{bxc5} \textit{xc5} 16 \textit{e3} 0-0 17 \textit{b5} \textit{xe4} 18 \textit{b4} \textit{cd7} 19 \textit{xb6} \textit{xb6} 20 \textit{a5} \textit{bd5} 21 \textit{c6±} and eventually White won after 60 moves.
\end{gameofchess}
\end{center}

Here is an example of an opening trap involving a pawn fork in the English Opening. This tactic can arise when White develops a bishop on c4 or when Black plays a bishop to c5.

\begin{center}
\begin{gameofchess}
1 \textit{c4} \textit{e5} 2 \textit{f3} \textit{c6} 3 \textit{c4} \textit{f6} 4 \textit{c3}
\end{gameofchess}
\end{center}

Black’s last move is a mistake. It allows White to realise a pawn fork by placing a pawn on d5. Notice how Black’s minor pieces on c6 and e6 make this possible.

\begin{center}
7 \textit{d4}!
\end{center}

Black’s bishop on c5 is now attacked. This gives White the extra tempo needed to achieve the pawn fork.

\begin{center}
7...\textit{exd4} (7...\textit{xc4} 8 \textit{dxc5±}) 8 \textit{exd4} \textit{b4} 9 \textit{d5+–}
\end{center}

The pawn fork will cost Black a piece. Everyone who has ever played chess has fallen victim to this tactic at one time or another.

In the Two Knights Defence after 1 \textit{c4} \textit{e5} 2 \textit{f3} \textit{c6} 3 \textit{c4} \textit{f6} 4 \textit{c3}
...a pawn fork can occur early, upsetting the symmetrical tendency of this opening.

4...♘xe4 5 ♘xe4 d5 6 ♘xd5 ♘xd5=

Black has recovered the minor piece. White has reclaimed the pawn with the desperado 6 ♘xd5. The point was not to win material but to steer the game in a certain direction. Both sides are now left with good chances in the middle game.

Another example of an early pawn fork comes in the Réti Opening. Black fell into this trap in the game Zaichik – Sikharulidze, Tbilisi, 1976.

1 ♘f3 d5 2 c4 ♘f6 3 g3 ♗f5 4 cxd5 ♘xd5? 5 e4 1-0

After only five moves Black resigned. The pawn fork will cost Black one of the minor pieces. 5...♗xe4 would be followed by 6 ♘a4+ after which 7 ♘xe4 will snap up the piece.

In the endgame, a pawn fork can occasionally provide the necessary break to produce a winning passed pawn.

1 f5

Black has no defence against this move. White promotes first regardless of whether Black tries to advance a pawn or bring the king back. The black king is at least one square too far away to catch White’s passed pawn.

1...exf5 2 e6 f4 3 e7 f3 4 e8♕ +–.

Other lines are no better: 1...gxif5 2 g6; 1...♗b6 2 fxg6; or 1...exf5 2 e6 ♗b6 3 e7 ♗c7 4 e8♕. All of these are winning for White.

Black’s pressure on the queenside led to a nice pawn fork in the game Kottnauer – O’Kelly, Groningen, 1946.

1...c3 2 ♘xc3

White avoids 2 bxc3 which drops a piece after 2...♕xa3.

2...♗xc3 3 ♘xc3 b4 0-1

The pawn fork and the pin on the a-file tie up White completely: 4 ♘c4 ♘xa1+ 5 ♘e1 bxc3 6 ♘xe4 (6 ♗xb6 ♘xe1+ 7 ♘f1 cxb2+) 6...♕xe1+ 7 ♕g2 ♘xd4+. 
**Pawn Promotion**

It is ironic that the humble pawn, upon reaching the other side of the board, gains promotion to any piece other than a king. The threat posed by an unstoppable passed pawn can often decide the outcome of a game.

Sometimes the passed pawn can be nudged forward using a variety of tactical motifs.

1...♘g3+

At the very least Black will win the exchange and end up a knight ahead in the endgame.

After 2♔g1  ♘xf1 3xf1 ♘f8+ 4♕e1 ♘f7 Black stands much better.

However White should nevertheless go into this line because the alternative is devastating.

Capturing the knight creates a fatal discovered check on the h-file.

2 hxg3 hxg3+ 3♕g1 ♘f2

Black threatens 4...♖h1# forcing White to get rid of the knight.

4♖xf2 ♖h1+!

This diversion creates the passed pawn.

5♕xh1 gxf2+

The pawn promotion cannot be stopped.

Some interesting tactics resulted in a pawn promotion in the fourth game of the World Championship rematch, Alekhine – Bogoljubow, Germany, 1934.

After some exchanges and deliberate manoeuvring by both sides the following position was reached.

Alekhine, playing White, now has a splendid opportunity to pounce. Notice how the passed pawn on f5, which does not appear to be an immediate threat, will eventually decide the game.

White first uses a temporary exchange sacrifice to disrupt Black’s position, aligning both of the opponent’s rooks on a diagonal that can be attacked with a bishop skewer.

1♗xe7+ ♖xe7 2♗h4

White will recover the sacrificed material. However, the point of the exchange sacrifice was not to win material, but to create a positional weakness.

2...♗f7

Alternative moves also lose for Black. White can exploit a skewer or a pawn fork: 2...♖e8 3♖xd8  ♖xd8 4♗c7+; 2...♗e8 3f6+; or 2...♗d7 3♖xd8  ♖xd8 4♗c7+ all of which would be decisive for White.

3♖xe7 ♖xe7 4♗c7+ ♖d7

Black has been able to block the skewer, but now a lovely zwischenzug propels the pawn one square closer to promotion.
5 f6+! e8

Black cannot capture the pawn without losing the rook, so the king evades the check by moving to a square where it can still protect the rook. The other possible squares are not good either: 5...d6 or 5...d8 allow White to play the powerful 6 f7 and 5...e6 loses to 6 c4+ d6 7 f7.

6 g6+ d8 7 f7 xc7

Black cannot stop the passed pawn and has to settle for taking the rook instead. 7...xf7 8 xf7 is hopeless for Black. Note how beautifully a variety of tactics were used to promote the pawn. Also 7...xc7 leads to a long king hunt with a forced mate after snapping up Black's remaining pieces: 8 h8+ d7 9 f5+ c6 10 xh6+ d5 11 e6+ c5 12 b6+ d5 13 xc7 c6 (13 a8 14 d7+ c5 15 e7+ c6 16 e4+ d5 17 e5+ d5 18 xd5#) 14 f7+ d6 15 f6+ c7 16 e7+ b8 17 d8+ a7 18 c7+ a8 19 xc6+ a7 20 c7+ a8 21 e4#.

The game concluded:

8 f8+ f3 9 xb4 d6 10 d3 1-0

Black's two passed pawns are under control and White will in due course prevail with the superiority in material.

Black cannot construct a fortress around the exposed king which will thus be subjected to advantageous checks by White.

Here is another example from the game From – Hoi, Denmark, 1976, showing how tactics may be used to obtain a passed pawn.

White uses tactical methods to advance the h-pawn.

1 h8+ e7

Now an unexpected knight move is played.

2 f5+!

It's always nice to stir the pot.

Black replies 2...gxf5.

A queen swap will next drive Black's king one square further away from the h8 promotion square. Black's king will then be outside the
critical e5-h5-h8-e8 zone, which is where the king would need to be to have any chance of stopping the passed pawn.

3 ♕xd8+ ♕xd8 4 h6 1-0

How sweet it is! The king has been diverted too far away to catch the h-pawn. The bishop cannot stop it either because White’s knight sacrifice left a black pawn on f5, blocking the critical diagonal the bishop needed to stop the pawn.

Alekhine used a skewer in the 1934 World Championship match against Bogoljubow, to threaten a deadly pawn promotion.

White’s passed pawn on the a-file might eventually decide the outcome. For instance 11...d3 12 cxd3 ♕xc3 (or 12...b3 13 dxe4 b2 14 ♕b6+–) 13 ♕xh6 ♕d4 14 a6 ♕b5 15 ♕b6 ♕a7 16 ♕xb4+ ♕xd3 17 ♕b7+-.

The promotion of a pawn is a key winning strategy in endgame play. Sacrifices can be made to create a passed pawn.

To illustrate this, the following ending from the game Georgiev – Kaehmann, Dortmund, 1991, may be considered.
In the following endgame position, Averbakh, as White, versus Bebchuk, in Moscow, 1964, sacrificed several pawns to create a single but winning passed pawn.

```
1 e5 fxe5 2 g5 hxg5
If Black tries to bring the king back, White still wins: 2...d7 3 f6 e6 4 fxg7 f7 5 gxh6 b5 6 e4 b4 7 d3 stopping the passed pawns. Now Black will just have to watch White’s king snap up the two passed b- and e-pawns and then advance the king to promote a pawn.
3 f6 gxf6 4 h5
The h-pawn will promote before any of Black’s pawns can create a significant threat. i.e. 4...d5 5 h6 e4+ 6 e2 f5 7 h7 f4 8 h8 g4 9 g8+ and the queen can begin liquidating Black’s pawns.
3...f3!
There goes that little cockroach! White’s g-pawn is undermined.
4 gxf3 h3
The h-pawn will promote. 4 gxh4 fxg2 also wins for Black as White’s pawn roller can be stopped. For example, 5 fxg4 h2 6 f3 h1# 7 f4 h6+ 8 e4 g5 9 d4 e5+ and one by one White’s pawns will be picked off.
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There are a few important things to notice here. Both sides have the same number of pawns on the same side of the board, but the pawn formations are not symmetrical. Black’s pawns are further advanced and White’s king will not be able to return in time to stop Black creating a passed pawn. Black begins the breakthrough with a pawn sacrifice.

1...f4! 2 d5
White tries to save the game by bringing the king back, but it is too far advanced up the board to stop the pawns. Capturing the f-pawn either way would lead to a successful breakthrough for Black: 2 gxf4 h4 and the pawn will advance further on the h-file. Capturing the f-pawn the other way is no better: 2 exf4 h4! 3 gxh4 g3 4 fxg3 e3 and the e-pawn promotes.

2...h4 3 xe4
Capturing any way with a pawn will also lead to a breakthrough: 3 gxh4 g3 4 fxg3 f3 5 gxf3 exf3; 3 exf4 hxg3 4 fxg3 e3; or 3 gxh4 h3.

There are a few important things to notice here. Both sides have the same number of
Black’s passed pawn on h3 cannot be stopped.

1...♕xf3+ 2 ♔xf3 ♖e3! 0-1

White cannot prevent the pawn promotion. 3 ♖f2, 3 ♖d2 or 3 ♖xe3 are all met by 3...h2 and the pawn will be able to promote on the next move.

This is how a pawn promotion motif played out in the game Alekhine – Nestor, Trinidad, 1939.

It looks like Black has the white passed pawn on the d-file under control.

1 ♕c8 ♕xc8

But here White has a diversion, overloading Black’s queen.

2 ♕e7! 1-0

Outstanding! Black is now left helpless.

What follows is a beautiful example of the tactics leading up to a pawn promotion. It comes from the game Alekhine – Penn, Moscow, 1918.

White has a dangerous passed pawn on the d-file.

1 d7 ♕d8 2 ♕e8+ ♕f8

Black had to bring the other rook back to avoid a quick mate after 2...♕xe8? 3 dxe8♕+ ♕f8 4 ♕xf8#. But now White unleashes a surprise move.

3 ♕f7!

This is a remarkable resource indeed!

The rook on f8 is pinned, unable to capture the bishop. Black cannot capture White’s rook.
with either rook. 3... fx8 4 dxe8+ xe8 5 xe8 and White has an extra minor piece in the endgame.

Even worse is 3... dx8 4 xe8 and the pawn promotes no matter what Black does.

The game concluded after a few more moves.

3...g6 4 xf8+ xf8 5 e8 1-0

Black cannot prevent the passed pawn from promoting because of the blocking bishop move.

Pawn promotion was the winning tactical theme in the next game Hradeczky – Hardicsay, Hungary, 1980.

Black's bishop pair is very strong. Moreover a discovered check will activate the dangerous pawn on the e-file.

1...e3+ 2 f1

This diversion is the critical move. Instead it would be a mistake to play 2... c4+?. White would win after 3 xc4+ xc4 4 fx3 xe3 5 a6 d5 6 h6 xh6 7 a7 promoting one of the passed pawns.

After White plays 3 xg2 Black promotes with 3...e2. The pawn cannot be reached in time to stop it as the pawn on f2 obstructs White's king from approaching.

A queen sacrifice was employed in Kondratyev – Geller, Leningrad, 1957, to enable White to promote a pawn.

White plays an extraordinarily powerful move.

1 e8+!

The queen sacrifice unloads an x-ray attack along the b8-h2 diagonal. Ignoring the offered queen allows White to promote the pawn another way: 1... b7 2 xd7+ b8 3 e8+ a7 4 d7 c7 5 xc7 xc7 6 d8#. After Black captures White's queen with 1... xe8 the discovered check 2 d7+ enables White to play 3 dxe8# with a winning advantage.
A diversion enabled Black to promote a pawn in the next game between Shamshin – Polovodin, Voroshilovgrad, 1989.

![Chessboard diagram]

Black’s e-pawn is on the verge of queening but the promotion square is guarded by the rook on a1. White also has a passed pawn on a7, one move away from promotion. Black first played 1...♖h6+ after which White’s reply is practically forced: 2 ♔a5.

1...♖a2+ would also be winning for Black but changing the move order is not as advantageous for Black. That is because there is no extra tempo available by promoting the pawn with check: 1...a2+ 2 xa2 h6+ 3 b7 e1♕ 4 b2 (4 a8♕ b4+ 5 b5 xb5+ 6 c7 c5+ 7 b8 b6+ ++) 4...e4+ 5 b8 e6 6 a8♕ e8+ 7 c8 xc8+ 8 xc8 xa8+ ++.

2...♖a2+

This leads to the diversion of the rook on a1, which was preventing the pawn from promoting. Another point worth emphasising is that with White’s king on a5, along the e1-a5 diagonal, Black will be able to promote the pawn with check, thereby gaining an important tempo.

If White plays 3 ♖xa2 Black gains a tempo by promoting with check, 3...e1♕++. White will then be unable to promote the a-pawn after 4 ♖b5 b1+ 5 ♖c4 ♖xa2+ ++.

Had White tried 3 ♖b4 Black could have replied 3...xa1 4 e5 (4 a5 e1♕) 4...e6-+.

Pawn Roller

A pawn roller consists of two or more connected passed pawns which, by virtue of their mutual protection, can advance to the promotion square. Then there is the possibility of at least one of the pawns queening. Such positions are extremely difficult to defend, particularly if the pawns have advanced far up the board.

An example, from the game, Bone – Zuidema, Zurich, 1962, shows just how strong a pawn roller can be.

![Chessboard diagram]

White’s connected passed e- and f-pawns are the more dangerous pawn roller. Black also has a pair of connected passed pawns on a7 and b6 but they are not yet far advanced up the board.
The strength of a pawn roller increases by several orders of magnitude as it advances up the board. White begins with a simplifying move which at first appears to be a serious blunder.

1  ♕f3

This seems to lose a rook but in fact it activates the connected passed pawns.

1...  ♕xf3

White has to recapture with the pawn because of the pin on the rook. Black then snaps up the rook.

2  gxf3  ♖xf1+

Now the point becomes clear.

3  ♔g2 1-0

Black suddenly realises that there is nothing that can be done to stop at least one of the passed pawns from promoting.

For example 3...  ♖e1 4  f4 and White threatens to play 5  f7. Or 3...  ♖c1 4  f7  ♖c8 5  e6  ♖c7 6  e7  ♖d7 7  f8  ♖e8 8  h4!  ♖xe7 (8...  ♖xf8? 9  exf8  ♖+-) 9  h5  ♖e8 10  ♖f5+ followed by 11  h6 and the h-pawn will decide things quickly after it promotes.

A piece sacrifice may even be essential in some positions in order to trigger a pawn roller. An example of this can be seen in the game Ekberg – Martius, Copenhagen, 1962.

1  ♘b8+  ♔c7 2  ♔e6!  ♖xb8 3  ♖xd6

White is a pawn up, but it is not easy to see how this can be exploited without a piece sacrifice. The normal looking break, pushing the pawn to f4, is not good for White. Instead, White makes good use of a knight sacrifice in order to divert Black’s king, thereby allowing White’s king to attack the d-pawn.

1  ♘b8+  ♔c7 2  ♔e6!  ♖xb8 3  ♖xd6

Black’s e-pawn cannot be saved: 3...  ♖f6 4  ♖e6  ♖g7? 5  d6  ♖h6 6  ♖xe5 and White obtains a pawn roller. Notice how White’s king is able to exploit Black’s weakness on the white squares. If Black had tried 3...  ♖g3? instead, White could have responded with 4  ♖c6. Then trying to save the b-pawn with 4...  ♖a7?! would have allowed White to win by playing 5  ♖c7  ♖h4 6  d6  ♖g5 7  h7  ♖h4 8  d8  ♖xd8+ 9  ♖xd8  ♖b7 10  ♖d7+-.

4  ♖xe5  ♖c7 5  ♖e6  ♖g3 6  e5  ♖d8 7  d6  ♖e8 8  ♖d5  ♖d7 9  ♖e4 1-0
White will advance the f-pawn first, supported by the king. White will then have three connected pawns advancing towards their promotion squares. Even if Black sacrifices the bishop for one pawn, that will not be enough to stop the remaining pawns.

In a pawn race, the side having the more advanced pawn roller may well have the advantage, as illustrated by the game Gulko – Kjarner, Tallinn, 1977.

White begins with by exchanging a pair of rooks in order to simplify the position

1 ♖xb6 axb6

White’s queenside pawn mass is further advanced. Black’s king is too far away to be effective in stopping it. White will now sacrifice a pawn to activate the pawn roller.

Both sides will obtain pawn rollers. Several important points are worth mentioning. Black’s pawns on the c- and d-files are not as far advanced so White’s king is in a better position to slow them down. Furthermore, White can gain an important tempo by advancing a pawn one square further to b6, requiring Black to waste a move through having to deal with the attacked rook.

2 e5 bxc5

3 a4 d5 4 b6 ♖b7 5 a5 1-0

The benefit of having the further advanced pawn roller has become evident. Black resigned without waiting to be shown.

After 5...c4 6 ♔e3 ♔f5 7 ♖b1 ♖b8 8 a6+- White’s pawns prove to be unstoppable, whereas Black’s pawns are not far enough advanced to pose a comparable threat.

**Perpetual Check**

Perpetual check is an important way to draw a game. It is used as a tactical resource to save from losing in a desperate situation.

This is illustrated in the game Kratkovsky – Lapschis, USSR, 1982.
White is a piece down without sufficient compensation. In such a situation Black should try to trade pieces, thereby simplifying to a winning advantage. The extra minor piece will then have a very big influence on deciding the endgame where there will be fewer pieces on the board.

The player controlling the white pieces was most likely aware of this and played for a draw by perpetual check, making the best of the situation. A draw was achieved in the following way.

1 ♖xf8+ ♗xf8 2 ♙g8+

Forceful measures with a queen sacrifice are necessary.

2...♔xg8 3 ♙h6+ ♔h8 4 ♙f7+

White draws by perpetual check, continuing to check with the knight on h6 and f7 until the position has been repeated three times or sooner if the opponent agrees to the draw beforehand.

Perpetual check can lead to some nice swindles in losing positions as can also be seen in the dedicated section on this theme.

The next example is taken from the game Portisch – Kasparov, Moscow, 1981.

White’s central pawn mass is very dangerous. If Black tries to block the d-pawn’s advance with 1...♕d7?! White can respond with 2 ♙d5 ♙a7 3 f5 and Black’s position will begin to collapse.

Instead Black finds a way to draw by perpetual check.

1...♖xd2

This move allows Black’s queen to gain access to f3.

2 ♗xd2 ♕f3+ 3 ♕g2

White attempts to construct a fortress. Black has one last important resource.

3...♘g3+

White’s queen is pinned. The knight must be captured with the pawn.

4 hxg3

Now Black’s queen can keep checking until a threefold repetition of moves occurs.

4...♕h5+ 5 ♕h2 ♕f3+ 6 ♕g2 ♕d1+ ½-½
Both players agreed to a draw. White cannot get the king out of the corner to evade the checks.

Here is another example, taken from the game Andrianov – Kremenetsky, Moscow, 1982.

Here is another example, taken from the game Andrianov – Kremenetsky, Moscow, 1982.

Black is in very serious trouble. Without a way to draw by perpetual check the game would most likely be won by White. Black finds a nice way to save half a point.

1...f4!

Playing 1...♖b1+? loses to 2♔h2 ♖b2+ 3♔h3 ♖b1 4♖xf5+ ♖xe4 5♖g5+ when suddenly White’s position springs to life. The move 1...f4! sacrifices the bishop but avoids defeat.

2♖xe5

White does not fall into a very clever trap: 2gxf4? gives Black an unexpected win by 2...♖b1+ 3♔h2 ♖xf4+ 4♔h3 ♖h1#.

2...♖b1+ 3♔h2 ♖b2+ 4♔h3 ♖b1

Black threatens ...♖h1#. Black’s king now has the opposition. White’s king is on the edge and all it can do is shuffle back and forth.

5♔h2

Unfortunately White’s rooks are not in a position to assist. White cannot do anything else to prevent being mated.

5...♖b2+ ½-½

And so in spite of this material advantage, White has been unable to win.

Drawing in a desperate position can be regarded as a victory of sorts, especially if this can be achieved against a higher-rated opponent.

**Pin**

The pin is arguably the most important of all chess tactics. This is not only because of the powerful threats that can arise with pins but also because pins occur quite frequently in games. Pins lead to tactics that one sees frequently in many games. They are ubiquitous. Pins can occur in all phases of the game, from very early in the opening right up to the endgame.

Pins can be established quickly in openings. For example, in one variation of the Sicilian Defence, Black’s knight on c6 becomes pinned as follows:

1 e4 c5 2♗f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4♗xd4 ♖f6 5♗c3 ♖c6 6♗b5
White’s last move 6 ♖b5 has pinned the knight on c6. This type of pin is called an absolute pin. The knight may not move, under any circumstances, because doing so would expose Black’s king to a check by the bishop. In other words, any move by the knight on c6 in this position would be illegal. This type of pin exerts pressure because the pinned piece is not able to contribute to its full extent.

In the position shown, Black could relieve the pin by playing 6...♖d7. On the other hand, it would be an error to try to break the pin by playing 6...a6? as White would gain the advantage by 7 ♖xc6 ♗c7 8 ♖xe7+ axb5 9 ♖ed5+. Here White wins a pawn and weakens Black’s pawn structure on the queenside, creating doubled pawns on the b-file and an isolated d-pawn. These structural pawn defects might prove eventually to be liabilities during later phases of the game.

Into consideration comes the following opening position arising in the Queen’s Gambit Declined.

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♖c3 ♖f6 4 ♗g5

Black’s knight on f6 may move. This type of pin is a relative pin. Consider the knight on f6 as only being restrained. Moving the knight would be legal here but it would expose the queen, a more valuable piece, to attack.

Ordinarily in such situations the pinned piece should not move, since doing so would allow the opponent to win material.

Here Black could play 4...♗e7, breaking the pin on the knight and helping to support d5. In some circumstances, however, moving such a restrained piece may actually lead to an advantage on tactical grounds. Such tactical opportunities always need to be considered.

Recalling the game Suétin – Trávniček, shown previously on click here, releasing the relative pin indeed led to a tactical advantage.

The winning move here is 6 ♖xe5!. Moving the restrained knight from f3 exposes White’s queen to attack, but the tactical possibilities justify doing so in this situation.

6...♖xd1 7 ♗b5+ ♗d7 8 ♖xd7+ 1-0

A famous example of exploiting a relative pin is provided by Legal’s mate. The mating pattern is also called the Legal trap, the Blackburne trap, or the Legal pseudo-sacrifice. Blackburne reportedly sprang this trap many times against unsuspecting opponents. Paul Morphy also made good use of this tactic in blindfold exhibitions.

The following game Legal – Saint Brie, from 1700, was played at rook odds. White’s queen’s rook was removed at the start of the game. This was one way of giving a handicap to a weaker player. Giving odds was popular in the 1800’s, although it is not a common practice today. Typical odds would be giving a pawn, a pawn and a move, a minor piece with or without an extra move or, as in this case, a rook. Weaker opponents received the highest odds, such as a rook or a queen plus an extra move in the opening.

So note the intentional absence of the a1 rook in the starting position.

1 e4 e5 2 ♖f3 d6 3 ♖c4 ♗g4?! 4 ♖c3 g6
Here White set the trap with 5 \( \text{Nxe5!} \), exploiting the tactical opportunity this position provides. Black could still survive by refusing the offered queen. For example after 5...dxe5 6 \( \text{Qxg4 Nf6} \) Black still could play on because of the initial rook odds handicap. Apparently before making the move 5 \( \text{Nxe5!} \) Legal manufactured an intentional fingerfehler (inadvertently touching a piece as if to move it), touching the knight and releasing it without making the move.

Thinking that Legal had released the piece after it was noticed that moving the knight would allow Black to capture the queen, the opponent invoked the touch move rule, which requires that a player move a piece once it is has been touched. The player controlling the black pieces must have thought this was a lucky break, without realising that a clever trap had been set. In that era when a player offered a sacrifice the gentlemanly response was usually to accept it regardless of the consequences. Nowadays it is more common for good players to consider any sacrifice carefully before deciding whether or not to accept it.

5...\( \text{Bxd1?} \)

After this mistake mate is forced. Beware of ‘gifts’ like this – they may be cleverly laid traps.

6 \( \text{Nxf7+ Kd7 7 Qd5#} \)

Legal’s legacy has left chess with a very charming mating pattern involving the white minor pieces.

A pinned piece has restricted mobility and this can lead to other tactical possibilities.

Here is an example from the Sicilian Defence, Dragon Variation.

1 \( e4 c5 2 \text{Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6} \)

5 \( \text{c3 g6 6 Bg5} \)

...\( \text{Bf5} \) 2...\( \text{f3} \) d6 3...\( \text{d4} \) \( \text{exd4} \) \( \text{Bf6} \)

White can now win a piece.

7 \( \text{Bb5+ Nd7 8 Qxg4} \)

Black’s pinned bishop cannot take the queen. White has won material and would have a relatively easy game after 8...\( \text{Qc6} \) 9 \( \text{Qd1} \) or 8...\( \text{Bxb5} \) 9 \( \text{Qxb5} \).

The game \textit{Konc – Marković}, Odzaci, 1978 is another example.
Here the tactical opportunities offered by a relative pin can be seen.

The knight on f3 is restrained by a pin. White releases the pin to exploit weaknesses in Black’s position.

Black can draw this ending, e.g. 1...♗f7 2 ♗f3 ♗xf4+ 3 ♗xf4 (3 exf4 ♗f6=) 3...♗f6 4 ♗e4 ♗e6 ½-½

Black’s king has gained the opposition. This position can only be won for White if it is Black to move.

With Black to move, the king loses the opposition and White wins.

The win could be achieved as follows:

1...♗d6 2 ♗f5 ♗e7 3 ♗e5
White again has the opposition.

3...♗d7 4 ♗f6 ♗e8 (4...♗d6 5 ♗e4 ♗d7 6 ♗e5 ♗e8 7 ♗e6++) 5 ♗e6 ♗d8 6 ♗e4 ♗e8 7 ♗e5 ♗d8 8 ♗f7+–.

Now follow several examples to show how tactical opportunities can arise from pins. The first of these is taken from the game Nakamura – Ponomariov, San Sebastián, 2009.

1 ♗xe5!? This move exploits a line clearing motif. It can be thought of as a relative pin on Black’s f-pawn.

If 1...fxe5? then White mates quickly by 2 ♗h5+ ♗g6 3 ♗xg6#.

White also had 1 ♗h5+ ♗f8 2 ♗xe5 ♗g7 3 ♗h2 ♗g4 (3...♗xe4 4 hxg5 ♗g2 5 ♗c7+) 4 ♗xg4+–.

1...♗f7 2 ♗g3 ♗g4
If 2...gxh4 3 ♗xh4 ♗c5 4 ♗h5+ ♗f8 (4...♗g7 5 ♖d7 5 ♖xf6+.

3 ♗xg4 ♗c5 4 ♖xe6+ 1-0
White uses a diversionary check to finish things off.

There is also a double attack here. The bishop is delivering the check and the queen attacks the rook on g8. If 4...♖xe6 (4...♔f8 5 ♖xg8#) 5 ♖xg8+ ♔e5 6 ♕f5+ ♖xe4 7 ♖xc5 and White has a decisive material advantage.

Black exploited a back rank weakness and a pin to win in the following World Championship match game, Kramnik – Anand, Bonn, 2008.

1...♘f6!

Black's excellent move attacks White's queen and takes advantage of a weak back rank.

2 ♖xd4 ♖xg4 3 ♕d7+ ♔f6

4 ♖xb7?!

Taking the bishop was tempting but 4 ♖d1 was necessary in order to protect the back rank.

4...♖c1+ 5 ♔f1 ♔e3! 6 fxe3 ♖xe3 0-1

White has no defence against the threat of 7...e2.

The pin on the bishop is crippling. For example: 7 ♖c7 ♖xc7 8 g3 ♕c1 9 ♖g2 ♕c2+ 10 ♖f3 (10 ♔g1 e2) 10...♖f2+ 11 ♕xe3 ♔xf1.

A bishop pinning a rook can lead to some very strong tactical possibilities, as can be seen from the game Kaplan – Bronstein, Hastings, 1975/76.
The tactics that ensue exploit the pin by Black’s bishop along the c1-h6 diagonal.

1...♕xc3 2 bxc3 ♖xe2

Black has removed a key defender, the queen on c3, doubled White’s c-pawns and captured the bishop with the rook. The pressure of the pin on the knight on d2 still persists.

3 ♖d5 ♖xd2!

With this powerful exchange sacrifice, Black has discovered a winning strategy.

4 ♖xd2 ♖d8 5 ♖d1 c4! 0-1

This is the winning move. Advancing this pawn prevents White from moving the c3 and c2 pawns. In due course White will land in zugzwang. If White’s c2 pawn were able to move to c3 the king could release the pin by moving to c2. It cannot break the pin now by moving to b1 because the rook on d2 would be left insufficiently protected.

After 5...c4!, sooner or later White will exhaust all available remaining pawn moves. Eventually White will have to make a move either with the king or the rook on d1, allowing Black to win the rook on d2. This is a terrific example of a bind created by an absolute pin on a rook.

A rook and bishop vs rook ending is difficult to win without pawns on the board but not in this situation with so many pawns remaining, particularly White’s weak queenside pawns which Black will later be able to target. In some lines Black could generate a dangerous passed pawn on the f-file.

This illustrates another important tactical concept, that of simplifying to a winning endgame. When an opportunity exists to exchange pieces to simplify to a winning position, then it might well be the best course of action as it can limit counterplay.

Also, unpleasant swindles can be more difficult to unleash once more material has been eliminated.

A nice example of a pin, combined with other tactical motifs, hails from the game Rivero – Velez, Cuba, 1992.

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 g6 4 d4 exd4 5 ♗g5 ♗e7 6 ♘xe7 ♘xe7 7 0-0 ♘f6 8 ♘xc6 dxc6 9 ♘xd4 c5 10 ♘e5 ♘e6? 11 ♘c3 0-0-0

After these eleven moves in the Ruy Lopez opening, the following position is reached.

Only eleven moves have been played yet the position is full of potential. Each player has castled on opposite sides of the board. Black’s main asset is the control of the d-file. However, Black has misplayed the opening, having earlier placed the fianchettoed bishop on e7 where White exchanged it with the bishop. This has left weaknesses on the black squares, particularly on the a1-h8 diagonal, giving White’s queen a potential x-ray attack on the h8 rook.
Black’s bishop is pinned because of the undefended black queen. Black’s queen is overloaded, having to defend the knight on f6.

White’s next move creates several threats.

12 ♘d5! 1-0

The relative pin discourages the bishop from capturing the knight. After 12...♗xd5 13 ♙xe7 Black would have two minor pieces hanging, in addition to just having lost the queen.

Other lines would have also led to a serious loss of material: 12...♗xd5 13 exd5 ♗xd5 14 ♙xe7; 13...♖xd5 14 ♙xe7+; 13...f6 14 ♙xe6+.

Here is a nice example of a winning pin and a double attack in an endgame.

It has been taken from the game Rosenblatt – Wolk, Biel, 1977.

1 ♖b8! 1-0

Black’s bishop is pinned and is unable to capture White’s rook. Black’s rook is also experiencing a partial pin, unable to leave the back rank to guard the bishop.

This is an unusual double pin.

White gains a tempo by giving check, winning material. 1...♗xb8 2 ♕xe5+ ♖g8 3 ♖xb8 or 1...♖xd4 2 ♕xe8+ ♖g7 3 ♙xd4. Either line wins for White.

A similar motif occurred in the game Uhlmann – Larsen, Las Palmas, 1971.
This position involves a variety of tactics operating at once, including a rook sacrifice, an x-ray attack, an absolute pin, and the threat of a pawn promotion.

It only takes two moves to create a winning position.

1... ♖xg2 2 ♖xg2 f2 0-1

The pawn will promote after 3 ♔h2 f1♕ and White only has a few more spite checks left before being mated on g2.

Pins can often lead to remarkable artistry on the chessboard. A case in point can be seen from the game Olsen – Jacobsen, Aarhus, 1953.

Black cannot capture 1... ♗xc6 because of the back rank mate, 2 ♖xd8#. However there is a move that leads to an immediate win.

1... ♖xg2+!

An amazing turn of events has just occurred. Black now wins! The forced reply 2 ♖xg2 is followed by 2... ♗xc6 and the pin wins material. The endgame will be won for Black, who would be left a rook up after 3 ♔f1 ♖d5 4 ♖e2 ♖xd4 5 cxd4.

Black’s king might eventually occupy d5 after which the remaining rook will be activated with a superior endgame.

A pin on the a2-g8 diagonal provided White with other tactical opportunities the game Geller – Portisch, Moscow, 1963.

It may be observed how the white bishop on b3 plays a subtle but very important role in the ensuing tactics due to the pin on the f7 pawn. The bishop exerts a powerful influence. Players should pay attention to a piece like this, which operates from a distance. One must observe what is happening on the entire board.

1 ♗g5

White begins with a strong move to divert Black’s queen. Black must now be careful not to play 1... ♗xg5 because of mate in two: 2 ♕xf7+ ♔h7 3 ♕g8#.

1... ♖d7

This reply is necessary. 1...hxg5 would allow White to exploit the pin on the long diagonal immediately by 2 ♒g6 and Black cannot avoid getting mated on h8.

2 ♖ad1

This not only develops the rook on an open file with gain of tempo, it also diverts Black’s bishop which was playing an important defensive role on f8.

2... ♗d6

Black has to keep the queen on the seventh rank to guard the f7 square. After 2...c8, mate in two again follows by 3 ♗xf7+ ♔h7 4 ♗g8#. Here once more the importance of the white bishop on b3 can be seen.

3 ♗xh6!
With Black’s bishop diverted from f8 to d6, White now has an opportunity to jostle the king with this bishop sacrifice.

3...gxh6

Alternatively, if Black attempts to overcome the power of the bishop on b3 by playing 3...♘xb3, White’s attack will still prevail: 4 ♗xg7! ♕xg7 (4...c5 5 ♕h8#) 5 ♘f5+ and Black must give up the queen by 5...♗xf5 to avoid something worse like 5...♕g8 6 ♗g4+ ♕h8 7 ♗g7#.

4 ♗g6+

Once more the pin on the long diagonal shows the power of the bishop on b3. During this same era Bobby Fischer too was well known for using this tactic.

4...♗f8 5 ♗f6 1-0

Mate is inevitable. White threatens to make use of a new pin on the f-file by 6 ♗g6+ ♕g8 7 ♕h8#.

Winning the queen by ambushing it can lead to a quick victory or an immediate resignation by the opponent. Trapping the queen is an important motif utilised frequently in chess.

The object of the game, of course, is to checkmate the opponent’s king. Doing so is often made easier by gaining a large material advantage such as winning the opponent’s queen.

Here is a nice example of a queen ambush from the game Georgiev – Angelov, Bulgaria, 1981.

1 ♘e6+

If the knight is captured White can exploit the line clearing of the seventh rank. Black would also have a back rank weakness leading to a loss of the queen after 1...fxe6 2 ♕c7+ ♕g8 3 ♗a8+ ♗f8 4 ♗xf8+. Instead Black moves out of the knight check.

1...♕h7

Next White follows up with a pawn fork.

2 g5 ♗h5

White’s knight controls g7 and f8. This prevents the queen’s escape. It needs to stay on the h-file.

Black could not have played 2...♗h as that would have failed to 3 ♗c7+-.
Black's queen is trapped and cannot be saved.

Black exploited the cramped position of the white queen successfully in the following game, Kalinichev – Rashkovsky, Russia, 1992.

First the rook on e2 must be diverted to allow the knight to check on e1. Black accomplishes this by threatening to promote the a-pawn.

1...a2 2 ♖xa2 ♞e1+

The rest is easy.

3 ♔f1 ♞f3 0-1

The queen cannot evade the attack of the knight on f3.

Another example of a queen ambush arose in the following game Nezhmetdinov – Konstantinov, Rostov, 1936.

A trap has been set.

2...♕xa1?!

Black should have not taken the rook. Now Black's queen gets trapped in the corner.

3 ♖b1! 1-0
The queen cannot escape. White will be winning after 3...♘g6 4 ♖b2 ♕xb2 5 ♖xb2 ♖xf4 6 ♖b4 ♕g6 7 ♖xg6 hxg6 8 0-0+.

In the following game Popkov – Veresov, USSR, 1963, a queen ambush appears just as Black is endeavouring not to get mated.

1 ♖d5!

White’s winning shot exploits the pin on the e-pawn and the lead in development.

Black’s rooks are not yet connected and the queen is misplaced, allowing it to be ambushed.

1...♗h4

Therefore Black attempts an aggressive defence.

After 1...♗d8 2 ♕xe7 ♗xe7 3 ♖c7 ♖d7 4 ♖d3 ♖f7 5 ♖d2 Black is all tied up. A loss of material is unavoidable.

Also 1...exd5 leads to mate after a prolonged king hunt: 2 ♖xe7 ♖f7 (2...♗e6 3 ♖h6) 3 ♖e8+ ♕f8 4 ♖xg7+ ♖xg7 5 ♖h6+ ♖xh6 6 ♖xf8+ ♕h5 7 ♖f7+ ♕g5 8 ♕g7+ ♕h5 9 ♖xh7+ ♖g5 10 ♕g7+ ♕h5 11 ♕h8+ ♕g5 12 ♖h4+ ♤g6 (12...♗g4 13 ♖g7+ ♖xh4 14 ♖h6+ ♕g4 15 ♕f3+ ♕g3 16 ♕g5#) 13 ♖c6+ ♖e6 14 ♕xe6+ ♕f7 15 ♕f6+ ♕e7 16 ♕g7+ ♕d8 17 ♕f8#.

2 ♕c7

White shifts the focus, attacking Black’s vulnerable queen.

2...♗a2 3 ♕b4 1-0

3...♕xg3 4 ♕xa2 allows White to achieve a material advantage with no form of compensation for Black.

Here’s another example of how a vulnerable queen may be exploited, taken from the correspondence game Nelson – Huczek, played in 1985.

White’s queen is misplaced. Black takes advantage of this to launch a queen ambush.

1...♗g4 2 ♕h4 ♕g6 3 ♕xg6 fxg6 0-1
White is unable to prevent a substantial loss of material. There is no time for White to complete the queenside development and coordinate rooks by 4 ♘d2 because then 4...g5 is decisive.

Playing 4 f4 will also lead to a material advantage for Black after 4...g5 5 fxg5 ♕f5 6 ♘d2 (6 gxh6 ♕f2+ 7 ♔h1 ♗f3#) 6...hxg5 7 ♖xf1 gxh4 8 ♖xf5 ♗xf5−.

Sometimes a queen ambush can lead to the appearance of other tactical motifs as well. This occurred brilliantly in a game between Tal, playing White, against an unknown opponent in the USSR in 1964.

White's first move, an unexpected queen ambush, must have come as quite a surprise.

1 ♖b6!

The point here is not to win the queen outright, but to create a diversion, attracting the queen to a different location, thereby leading to a winning attack. The tactic could also be categorised under the motif of attraction.

1...♕xb6

The point of the diversion is twofold. If Black gives up the guard on d8 by playing 1...♕xb6, 1...♕a6 or 1...♕xa4, then White has 2 ♗d8#. By capturing the bishop on b6 Black's own bishop on b4 is now left undefended.

2 ♗h4+

This queen manoeuvre wins by force. Black cannot reply 2...f6 since White can meet this with 3 ♗h7+ mating on the next move: 3...♖g7 4 ♗xg7#. Notice that this double attack gains a tempo by checking the king. It also attacks the unprotected bishop on b4.

2...♗f6 3 ♗xb4+ 1–0

All Black can do is block the check with the queen. White then captures the queen and checkmates: 3...♕c5 4 ♗xc5#.

In the game Bernard – Filipowicz, Poland, 1979, a queen ambush was the key tactical motif that decided the outcome.

Black has pressure on the g-file. Nevertheless Black's king position is not very secure. White exploits some strong tactical opportunities on the e-file to ambush Black's queen.

1 ♗f5!

This is a beautiful tactical shot.
The move severely restricts the mobility of Black's queen. Black cannot take the bishop, as 1...♕xf5? allows White to win Black's queen with the knight fork 2 ♕d6+, because of the pin of the e7 pawn on the e-file.

1...♕g5

2 ♕xe7+!

The battle is being fought on two fronts. First Black's queen was threatened and now the king is under attack.

2...♔f8

Black cannot capture the rook. 2...♕xe7 would give White a mating attack: 3 ♕e2+ ♕d8 4 ♖d1+ and it will be checkmate in a few more moves.

3 ♖d6!

This is an extremely powerful move. It not only protects the rook but also prepares a treacherous discovered check. Black is desperate to provide the king with a flight square.

3...♗h6

4 f4

White now returns to the other front, resuming the queen ambush.

4...♕h4

4...♕xf5 wins the queen by the discovered check 5 ♖e5+.

5 ♕e3+

White exploits the discovered check, gaining a tempo to reposition the rook.

5...♕g7 6 ♖h3 1-0

The queen ambush has succeeded; Black's queen has been trapped.

Immobilising the opponent's queen and keeping it out of play was the winning tactical motif in the game Koch – Madl, St. Gervais, 1988.

The misplaced location of the black queen on a5 offers White tactical opportunities to gain an advantage.

1 ♖xd7

White begins with an exchange sacrifice. This weakens Black's control of e6 and d5 indirectly, as will be seen in what follows.
1...♕xd7

This puts Black’s king in an undesirable position. An attraction motif is in evidence. The alternative was 1...♖xd7 which would have enabled the queen ambush to succeed in several ways: 2 ♘xe6 ♙e8 3 ♘d5 ♙b7 (3...♘xe6 4 ♙b6++) 4 ♙d4 ♙g7 (5...♖xd4 6 ♙xe4 ♙c3++) 6 ♙b3 ♙a3 7 ♙c1+.

2 ♘xe6!

This knight sacrifice draws Black’s king further into the open. Equally importantly, the piece sacrifice gives the remaining white knight a splendid outpost on d5.

2...♔xe6 3 ♘d5

Black must now guard against a possible 4 ♗b6. Notice as well that Black’s queen is cut off; it has no way to rejoin the fight.

Black’s out of play queen is in fact the most significant defect in the position. Also Black’s king has been nudged forward two ranks and it will be more easily attacked on its new location on the e6 square. Black’s remaining knight is also poorly positioned on the h-file.

The sacrifice of the exchange and the knight has left White a rook down. However, White’s knight has a beautiful outpost on d5, the queen is poised to infiltrate via g4 and the remaining rook also has a means of entry along the f-file, should the need arise.

3...♖b8

This appears to discourage White from playing an immediate 4 ♗b6, winning the queen. 3...♗b4 would still allow White to pick up the black queen with a family check: 4 ♗b6 ♗b5 5 ♗c7+ ++.

4 ♗g4+ ♗f7 5 ♗b6!

5...♗xb6

The bishop sacrifice has left Black hamstrung. An interference motif is now employed with great effect. 5...♗xb6 was worth considering as White would have had less of an advantage after 6 ♘xb6 ♘xb6 7 ♗f1+ ♗f4 8 ♗xf4+ ♗xf4 9 ♗xf4 ♗g8 (9...♗e7 10 ♗e3 ±) 10 ♗d2±.

6 ♗b4 ♗a4

There is no way for Black’s queen to get back into the game. White can now exploit the open f-file. Had the queen been left on a5 Black might have been able to reposition the rook away from b6, then bring the queen into play by way of d8. That option has now disappeared.

7 ♗f1+

White continues the process of simplification in order to increase the advantage.

7...♗f4

Black could get two minor pieces for the rook but the remaining heavy pieces would be left poorly coordinated. After 7...♗f6 8 ♗xf6 White has a mating attack as the pawn on g5
creates a powerful bind: 8...♘xf6 9 ♖xf6+ ♔g7 10 ♝d7+ ♞g8 11 ♝e6+ ♞g7 12 ♝f7+ ♝f7 13 ♝xf7+ ♞h8 14 ♞f8#.

8 ♝xf4+ ♜xf4 9 ♞d7+!

This is even stronger than 9 ♝xf4+ ♞g7, when Black would have a few moves available to adjust and get back into the game, because it would be more difficult for White’s queen to infiltrate. Therefore it is better for White to maintain the initiative as Black’s remaining choices are limited.

9...♗g8 10 ♝f6+ ♝xf6

The knight had to be liquidated: 10...♔h8? 11 ♝xh7#.

11 gxf6 ♗h6

Black tries to prevent the mate on g7 but to no avail. Despite Black’s substantial material advantage, defeat is inevitable.

12 ♝e6+ 1-0

There is nothing at all that Black can do: 12...♔h8 13 ♝c8+ ♕f8 14 ♝xf8#; 12...♕f8 13 ♝e7+ ♝g8 14 ♝f7+ ♝h8 15 ♝f6+ ♝g7 16 ♝f8#.

Removing the Defender

Removing a key defender, with a sacrifice if necessary, can achieve other important objectives. For example, resulting weaknesses can then frequently be exploited.

Here is an example of what happens when an important defender is removed. It is taken from the game Pillsbury – N.N., Toronto, 1899.

Black is unable to castle due to the control of the a3-f8 diagonal by White’s bishop on a3. Castling over an attacked square, in this case f8, is illegal. This renders the rook on h8 virtually useless for the time being. White is also applying pressure on the e-file which includes an absolute pin on the e6 knight. White could play the immediate 1 d5 winning material, but there is an even stronger move available which forces checkmate.

1 ♝xe6+! 1-0

Now there is no adequate defence. The exchange sacrifice removes the key defender and allows White to exploit the enormous power of the bishop pair and the weaknesses in Black’s position.

White could meet 1...fxe6 with 2 ♝g6+ hxg6 3 ♝xg6# or adopt the equally effective 2 ♝g6+ hxg6 3 ♝xg6#.

Even giving up the queen does not save Black: 1...♘e7 2 ♝xe7+ ♞f8 (2... ♞d8 3 ♝xh7+ ♝xd7 4 ♝d6+ ♝e8 5 ♝e1#) 3 ♝f3 ♝f6 4 ♝e7+ ♝g8 (4... ♝e8 5 ♝xe8+ ♝d7 6 ♝f5#) 5 ♝xc8+ ♝e8 6 ♝xe8#.

Smashing open the king’s position by removing the key defender, in this case the
knight on e6, was the principal motif in winning the game. As the variations above show, other tactics such as exploiting the weakness of the back rank and delivering a discovered check, were also utilised successfully to win the game.

Another example of what can happen when the key defender is removed was very much in evidence in the game Kamsky – Gurevich, USSR, 1988.

Here Black’s f7 square is a weak point. Black is defending it three times – with the king and both knights. White is attacking f7 three times as well, with the queen, the e7 rook and knight. Removing one of the defenders would cause the king’s fortress to collapse. The related theme of jostling the king plays out nicely here.

1 ♖1xe5!
The exchange sacrifice removes one of the key defenders of the f7 square.

1...♗xe5 2 ♖xf7!
Another exchange sacrifice results in the complete collapse of Black’s position. White has a devastating discovered check available and there is no means by which Black can prevent a significant loss of material.

2...♔g7
Three alternatives are:
(a) 2...♕xf7 3 ♕h8+ ♔h7#;
(b) 2...♕c7 3 ♕xc7+ ♔h8 4 ♕h7#;
(c) 2...♕h8 3 ♕h7#.

3 ♖xd4 ♒e1+
3...♕xf7 4 ♕xf7+ ♔h8 5 ♕xg7#. 3...♖xd4 4 ♖xb7+ +-.

4 ♕g2 ♖xd4 5 ♖xb7+ ♔f8 6 ♕h7+ ♔e8 7 ♖xb8+-

In the next game Boleslavsky – Dus-Chotimirsky, Moscow, 1942, White removed a defender by means of a clever interference tactic carried out by two mutually protected knights.

In New York, 1924, Capablanca, playing Black against Bogoljubow, used an interference tactic to gain a decisive advantage.
removed. A sacrifice is necessary to clear these critical pathways.

1...♘x*d* 2 cxd ♖xc 3 dxc

Black has sacrificed a knight, then the exchange, and is now a whole rook down. Black gains an important tempo on the next move by capturing with check. White’s last chance would have been to play 3 ♖d1 but even then, after 3...♖b5, it is Black who still has the upper hand.

3...♕xc5+

The white king cannot leave the back rank. Black has a new battery on the c-file which will lead to a winning pin of the queen.

4 ♔f1 ♖xc 1-0

When breaking through the king’s protective cover, the most important defenders are sometimes the pawns in front of the king. Many games are won by sacrificing material to remove one or more of these protective pawns. This is covered in some detail in the section on jostling the king.

For example, in the game Dobias – Podgorny, Prague, 1952, White sacrifices a rook to smash open Black’s kingside.

1 ♖e6!

The move serves a double purpose. One is to remove Black’s knight, the key defender protecting the h7 square. The other is to break up the kingside pawns.

1...♗e8

This prevents the immediate mate on h7. Black’s king can now escape via f8 while after 2 ♖xf6?! ♖xf6 3 ♖h7+ ♕f8 4 ♕h4 ♕e5 White’s attack runs out of steam. On the other hand, accepting the rook sacrifice would have led to mate: 1...fxe6 2 ♕g6+ ♖h8 3 ♖h6+ ♕g8 4 ♖h7+ ♕h8 5 ♕f5+ ♕g8 6 ♖xe6+ ♖f7 7 ♖xf7#.

2 ♖xg6! 1-0

White’s attack is unstoppable: 2...♖e7 3 ♕h7+ ♕xh7 4 ♖xh7+ ♕f8 5 ♕h8#; or 2...♕xe6 3 ♖xf7+.

Removing the defender and diversion were tactical themes used in the game Geller – Novotelnov, Moscow, 1951.

1 ♖xf8+!
Black decides to recapture with the king.

1... ♕xf8

The other possibility 1... ♕xf8 would have been followed by 2 ♕h7+ ♔h8 3 ♖g6+ ♔g8 4 ♕h7#. White now has an infiltration square on h8.

2 ♕h8+

Black’s reply is now forced.

2... ♔f7

White finds a remarkable resource involving a bishop sacrifice.

3 ♖g6+!

Black accepts the sacrifice.

3... ♔xg6

An elegant mate now follows.

Had the sacrifice been refused, White would have mated differently: 3... ♕e6 4 ♖g8+ ♔d7 5 ♖f5+ ♕e6 6 ♖xe6+ ♔d8 7 ♕d7#.

4 ♕h5#

It is quite remarkable how often sacrifices can be made to create such possibilities.

In the game Lerner – Sideif-Sade, Frunze, 1979, White used a diversion to exploit a back rank weakness and win material.
kingside in the game Ganguly – Spoelman, Wijk aan Zee, 2011.

1 ♗e4!

This splendid move is designed to remove Black’s key defender. White’s knight is immune from capture due to the pressure on the g7 square: 1...♗xe4? 2 ♖xg7+ ♔h8 3 ♖xh6#. Nor can the rook capture the knight. After 1...♖xe4 2 ♕xf6 White has pressure on the g-file: 2...g5 3 fxg6 (en passant) 3...fxg6 4 ♕f7+ ♔h8 5 ♖xg6+.

1...♗e7

2 ♖xf6!

White sacrifices the queen in order to remove the key defender.

2...♗xd6

2...♗xf6 is inadequate. 3 ♖xf6+ ♔h8 (3...gx6 4 ♖xf6 ♔g8 5 ♖xf7+ ♔h8 6 ♖f6+ ♔h7 7 ♖xb7+ ++) 4 ♖xe8+-.

3 ♖xg7+ ♔h8 4 ♕g5!

This is the icing on the cake! 4...♕xf5 5 ♖h7+ ♔g8 6 ♖h8#; or 4...hxg5 5 ♖xg5+ ♔h7 6 ♖h5+ ♔g8 7 ♖h8#.

4...♘xh2+

Black has nothing better than one last spite check before resigning.

5 ♔h1 1-0

There is no defence: 5...hxg5 6 ♖xg5+ ♔h7 7 ♖h5+ ♔g8 8 ♖h8#; or 5...♕xf5 6 ♖h7+ ♔g8 7 ♖h8#.

S  Simplification

Simplification of a position by exchanging pawns or pieces to arrive at a winning position is an important tactical motif. If one side has a material advantage then simplification of the position can enhance the superiority of the extra material.

Simplification to a winning endgame can help to avoid tactical complications that might arise due to counterplay by the opponent.

Here is a remarkable example of simplification from the game Alekhine – Shishkov, Estonia, 1919.

1 ♖xf2! gxf2

White’s position seems desperate. Black is offering the queen to obtain an unstoppable passed pawn. Black also has a mating attack after 1 ♖a2? f4 2 a6 f3 3 ♖g1 fxg2+ 4 ♖xg2 ♔f1+ 5 ♖g1 ♔h3#.

1 ♖xf2! gxf2

White’s first move seemed to be impossible because of the dangerous passed pawn it
created. White’s king cannot get to g1 to catch this pawn.

However, although Black was counting on this apparently winning pawn promotion, White has a remarkable simplifying resource that wins the game.

2 ♖xf5!

The surprising rook sacrifice wins an important tempo after Black captures the rook with the king. It also prevents Black from promoting the pawn.

2...♖xf5 3 g4+!

This key check wins a tempo and allows White’s king to reach the g2 square.

3...♔xg4 4 ♔g2

White has simplified to a winning position. The passed a-pawn cannot be stopped. White’s king is well placed to prevent Black from promoting either the f- or h-pawn: 4...f1♕ + 5 ♖xf1 ♖f4 6 a6 or 4...♖f4 5 ♖xf2 h5 6 a6 and White’s a-pawn promotes first.

Strong players can finesse many wins by edging out small advantages in endgames. Knowing how to simplify into endgames with a winning advantage is an important skill in a successful chess player’s repertoire. Here is an example from the World Championship match, Bogoljubow – Alekhine, Germany 1929.

The placement of the kings and pawns will be examined first. This strategy for analysing positions was described previously on click here.

Both sides have the same number of pawns, but there is a noticeable imbalance in the pawn structure. White has a passed b-pawn. Black has a backward e-pawn, which could be advanced in order to attack and possibly eliminate White’s d-pawn, leaving Black with a passed d-pawn.

If either side could remove a single enemy central pawn, a winning pawn endgame might be reached. If it were somehow possible to eliminate either White’s d-pawn or Black’s e-pawn, there might be a winning endgame within reach for one of the players.

Having looked closely at the pawn structure, next tactical possibilities in the position will be considered, which could result in a process of simplification to a winning pawn ending.

White to move indeed has such a tactical opportunity to simplify to a winning ending, winning the weak e-pawn along the way. He starts by removing heavy pieces with the help of an exchange sacrifice.

1 ♗xe7+!

This works in the present position because of the well centralised knight which has the potential of using its forking capabilities in a few moves.
1...♕xc7

Black captures the rook. Then White produces a nice intermezzo, gaining a tempo with check and bringing the knight closer.

2 ♘c5+!

Black only has two replies to keep the king within close proximity to the queen. One of those choices, 2...♔b8?, is inferior, as it allows 3 ♘a6+ with a devastating knight fork. So Black chose the alternative 2...♔b6. Now after the queens are exchanged White has another knight fork which wins the key e-pawn.

3 ♘xc7+ ♕xc7 4 ♙xe6+ 1–0

White has simplified into a winning endgame. Once 5 ♘xd8 is played White will bring the king to the g-file and capture the g-pawn. Black will have to keep a close watch on the b-pawn, while White’s h-pawn will be free to advance up the board. If Black tries to bring the king over to stop the h-pawn, then White’s b-pawn will be able to advance.

The resignation is an admission that the position has been simplified into what chess masters regard as an easy win.

4...♗d7 5 ♘xd8 ♕xd8

There are several ways to win. For example:
6 ♙c2 ♕e7 7 ♘d3 ♕e6 8 ♕e3 ♕f5 9 ♘h4+.
Another way would be 6 ♙c2 ♕e7 7 ♘c3 ♘d6 8 ♕b4 ♘c6 9 ♘xa3++. 

Simplification can be achieved by the powerful use of tactics. In the game Chalomejit – Isakov, Simferopol, 1947, White uses a pin, pawn forks, and a skewer, with simplification to a won position.

1 h4

Black attempts to relieve the attack by the pawn.

1...♗b4+ 2 ♙xe5 ♕xh4

White now introduces a second pawn fork.

3 f4

Once again Black relieves this pawn fork by means of a rook capture.

3...♗xf4
Now it will be over in a few more moves.

4 ♕xg7+ ♔xg7 5 ♖xg5+ ♔f7 6 ♖xf4 1-0

The endgame is lost for Black. By simplifying White has attained a position that Black can no longer defend.

The previous example shows how a number of tactical motifs can be combined to lead to an advantageous simplification.

Another example illustrating this idea, is from the game Gheorghiu – Kinnmark, The Hague, 1961. The number of different tactics employed should be noted.

The tactical bombardment begins with an exchange sacrifice.

1 ♖xd6 ♕xd6

Next a knight sacrifice exploits a threatening knight fork to soften up Black’s weak back rank.

2 ♖xf7+

White has nudged the black queen to d6. Black needs to take the knight with the rook to avoid losing the queen.

2... ♖xf7

Now White can infiltrate on the back rank with the rook.

3 ♖e8+

Black is in very serious trouble. Unfortunately it is necessary to reply to this move by blocking the check with the queen.

3... ♕f8

Black’s back rank weakness is evident. If the move 3... ♖f8 were played instead, White would reply with the powerful diversion 4 ♕d2!. Capturing White's queen would result in a back rank mate by 4... ♕xd2 5 ♖xf8#. Taking the rook would lose the queen: 4... ♖xe8 5 ♕xd6+-.

So after 3... ♕f8 White simplifies by exchanging heavy pieces.

4 ♖xf8+ ♖xf8

White now has a quiet but very strong move.

5 ♕d2

The move 5 ♕d2 exploits the x-ray attack along the a1-h8 diagonal. The g-pawn is pinned.
The main threat is 6 ♕xh6+ ♕g8 7 ♕xg7#. Black has to move the king off the long diagonal to get out of this deadly pin.

5...♕g8

The tactics keep appearing, one after another.

6 ♕d4

White has set up a powerful battery, attacking the weak g7 point. Black’s knight on c5 is hanging.

5...♖f7 7 ♖xc8 ♖xc8 8 ♕xc5 1-0

Simplification has led to an ending with White having a substantial material advantage.

Simplification can also be used to salvage half a point, drawing a game that would otherwise be lost.

One such example is from the game Lilienthal – Tolush, Pärnu, 1947.

1...♗g1+! 2 ♕xg1 ♕e2+ 3 ♔g2 ♕xg2+ 4 ♕xg2 ♕e4+

Black is the exchange down. White has strong pressure on the seventh rank, threatening a discovered attack with ♗e6+ followed by removing Black’s bishop on f5 and simplifying further to increase the advantage. But Black has a way of simplifying to reach equality.

6...♗f7 7 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 8 ♕xc5 1-0
The skewer regains the exchange.

5 ♕f2 ♘xb7=

The players agreed to a draw at this point.

White used simplification tactics to achieve a material advantage in the correspondence game Szabo – Nikitin, played in 1964.

The centre is closed. Material is equal. White’s pressure on the h-file, knight on e7 and passed f-pawn confer a positional advantage. White now forces a series of exchanges leading to material gain.

1 ♘xe7+ ♕xe7 2 f7!

This pawn promotion is the prelude to a nice winning combination. White could have also played 4 ♕xh7+ ♕xh7 5 f8♕ ♕xf8 6 ♕xf8+ ♕g7 7 ♕xd7, which would have essentially amounted to the same thing. Futile would have been 4...♕xg6 5 ♕xh7+ ♕xh7 because White mates, not by 6 ♕xh8 which takes longer, but with 6 ♕f7+ ♕h8 7 g6, when mate will follow quickly on h7 after Black’s few spite checks are exhausted.

4...♕xf8

The pawn advance creates a mating threat. 2...♕xh1 cannot be played as then White’s pawn would capture the rook, promote to a queen and deliver mate all on the very next move.

2...♗d8 3 ♘g6+ ♕g7

The attraction motif has nudged the king over one square, making possible a knight fork in the near future.

4 f8♕+

Now White enjoys the spoils of war.

5 ♕xh7+ ♕xh7 6 ♕xf8+ ♕g7 7 ♕xd7 1-0
Black is a minor piece down, staring at White’s dangerous advanced passed pawn on g5. The backward d6 pawn might prove to be a further liability. Simplification has left White with a superior position.

**Skewer**

A skewer is similar to a pin, but in a reverse form. The more valuable piece, be it the king, queen or rook, is in front instead of being pinned behind. A skewer can also occur with the attacking piece placed between two enemy pieces.

In an absolute skewer, the king is involved, whereas a relative skewer does not involve the king.

In the following position White obtains a winning advantage by using a skewer to win Black’s queen.

1 ♗g5+

Black must move the king out of check, thereby allowing White to play 2 ♗xe7.
It comes from the encounter, Smeets – Hou Yifan, Wijk aan Zee, 2008.

1...♖xe5+! 0-1

Black is able to simplify to a winning endgame. White resigned because of a killing skewer that would occur after the pawn race: 2 ♕xe5 ♕xe5+! 3 ♖xe5 ♘b3 4 ♕b6 (4 ♕c4 is too slow) 4...♖h2 5 ♕b7 ♕h1 6 ♕b8 ♕h2+. The skewer proves decisive.

A skewer was also used as a tactical blow to simplify into a winning endgame in the game Nijboer – Giri, Groningen, 2008.

1...♕g1+ 0-1

This move forces White’s king to the a-file. It also sets up the skewer by attacking the rook on a7.

2 ♗a2 ♖xa7! 0-1

The skewer will result in a decisive loss of material. After 3 ♕xa7 ♕a8 White’s queen is caught in a partial pin. The tactic works because the rook on h3 is attacked and Black gains an important tempo by recapturing White’s queen with check.

4 ♕xa8 ♕xa8+ 5 ♕b3 gxh6+

White would have still been a rook down after the alternative 4 ♕xe6 ♕xa7+ 5 ♕b1 ♕xf3. In this variation Black has also managed to simplify to a winning endgame.

Benjamin, playing White, used a barrage of tactics against Arnason at Novi Sad in 1990, which led up to a devastating skewer.

White begins this combination with a rook sacrifice.

1 ♕xg6+

Black has no choice but to accept the rook, leading to a discovered check.

1...♕xg6 2 ♗d6+
The discovered check has left Black’s king exposed with nowhere to hide.

2... ♔f6

Other moves by Black lead to mate: 2... ♔h6 3 ♞f5+ ♔g5 4 ♔g7# or 2... ♔g5 3 ♞xd8+ ♔h6 4 ♔f8+ ♔g5 5 ♔g7#. Now White can capture the rook and create a skewer, which wins Black’s queen.

3 ♞xd8+ ♔e6

White could have also won by playing 4 ♔c4+ or the immediate 4 ♔xh4.

4 ♔f5+

White will mate in a few more moves.

The game concluded:

7...a5 8 ♔e7+ ♔d5 9 ♔c8 ♔e6 10 ♔d7+ ♔b6 11 ♔b7#

A more complex example of a winning skewer arose in the game Quinteros – Kouatly, Lucerne, 1985.

Black commences with a knight sacrifice.

1... ♔xf3+ 2 gxf3

White could have held out longer with 2 ♔f2 but after 2... ♔xd4 3 ♔xd4 ♔e5 Black would still have the edge.

2... ♔g5+ 3 ♔f1 ♔xh3+

Black’s heavy pieces infiltrate with gain of tempo. 3 ♔h2 would have been followed by the queen sacrifice 3... ♔xh3+. Then after 4 ♔xh3 Black had the rook lift 4... ♔e6, heading for h6 to deliver mate.

4 ♔e2 ♔g2+ 5 ♔f2

White’s position has fallen apart. A skewer will now lead to a queen ambush.

5... ♔xf2+ 6 ♔xf2 ♔h2+ 0-1

The skewer picks up White’s queen, leaving Black with a large material advantage.

Skewers can play an important role in endgame tactics. Here is an example.
The absolute pin along the a8-h1 diagonal prevents Black’s g-pawn from promoting. Black can use a diversion, followed by a skewer to win.

1...♕g8+! 2♕xg8 g1♕+

When the skewered king moves off the g-file, Black plays 3...♕xg8 and wins.

Here is another example of using a skewer in the endgame.

White would like to promote the pawn.

1♕h8!

The position would be drawn if Black’s king were on g7 instead of f7 as White would not be able to create a skewer.

1...♖xc7 2♖h7+ followed by 2...♕e8 3♖xc7

It doesn’t matter where Black’s king moves; it must leave the seventh rank exposing the rook to attack.

Black’s other tries lose as well: 1...♕g7 2♕c8♕ and the endgame is easily won for White.

The other try for Black is to keep checking. White’s king then works its way towards Black’s

rook without allowing itself to be skewered on the h-file, i.e. 1...♗f1+ 2♗e4 ♕e1+ 3♗d3 ♗d1+ 4♗c2 and Black’s rook has run out of checks. White’s pawn will then promote, thus giving White an overwhelming advantage.

**Smothered Mate**

A smothered mate occurs when a king is cornered or surrounded by its own forces in such a way that an enemy piece, usually a knight, can deliver mate. The mating process can be accompanied by other tactical motifs such as a queen sacrifice, pin, back rank weakness, etc.

The smothered mate is also called Philidor’s mate or Philidor’s legacy in variations where a queen sacrifice is involved. Here is a basic pattern illustrating this idea.

1♗b3+ ♔h8

If Black plays 1...♔f8 then mate follows immediately by 2♕f7#.

2♗f7+ ♕g8 3♗h6+

The key move here involves this double check. The white queen and knight are now simultaneously checking Black. A double check forces Black to move the king. That is the only way ever to escape from a double check. Nothing else will do. The attacking player can then work out all the key variations in advance.

3...♔h8

Once again, returning to f8 ends the game sooner: 3...♔f8 4♕f7#.

4♕g8+! ♕xg8

The queen must be captured by the rook, since the knight also covers the g8 square,
preventing the king from capturing White’s queen. The queen sacrifice has left Black’s king smothered in the corner and the knight can now deliver the coup de grâce.

5 ♘f7#

This is one of those unusual situations in which a lone knight can deliver mate, without the support of its king and other pieces.

In some openings a smothered mate might occur early on as a result of a blunder.

Here is one such situation, arising in the Caro-Kann Defence.

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘c3 dxe4 4 ♘xe4 ♘d7 5 ♙e2?! This only wins because Black blunders on the next move. It can never be recommended to make a weak move, in the hope that the opponent will blunder or fall into a superficial trap.

White’s 5 ♙e2?! locks in the undeveloped bishop on f1 and prevents smooth co-ordination of the white pieces. Simpler and much better would have been the straightforward 5 ♘f3.

6 ♘d6#

Black’s pawn on the e-file is pinned, preventing the recapture of the knight. Black’s king has nowhere to move because it is completely smothered by its own pieces.

Another example of a smothered mate occurring in the opening is in the Budapest Gambit.

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e5 3 dxe5 ♘g4 4 ♗f4 ♘c6 5 ♘f3 b4+ 6 ♘bd2 ♙e7 7 a3 ♘xe5

8 axb4? ♘d3#

A semi-smothered mate involves similar tactical themes. The main difference is that the king is not entirely smothered but still cut off from flight squares by enemy pieces.

Here is an example of a situation where such a tactic might have occurred, in the game Bernstein – Larsen, Amsterdam 1954. The opening played is the Sicilian Defence.

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 c4 ♘g4 4 d4 cxd4 5 ♘xd4 ♘f6 6 ♘c3 g6 7 b3 ♗g7 8 ♘b2 ♘a5 9 ♘d2 ♘c6 10 ♘e3 ♘b4 11 ♘c1
Black played 11...♖xa2! setting a trap. White prudently avoided the trap by playing 12 ♘xa2.

Instead, had White played 12 ♘a1? to trap the knight, a semi-smothered mate might have occurred: 12...♘b4 13 ♖xa5 ♘c2#.

Black’s bishop on g4 cuts off two key flight squares on d1 and e2. White can neither move the king nor capture the checking knight – White’s king has been checkmated.

Often a player will spot a trap and avoid it by playing other moves. The trap ends up in the notes as a variation that was potentially there but never played.

Here too White did not fall into the trap but did lose a pawn and eventually the game.

Smothered mates do not occur frequently in tournament play, because chess players either avoid them or resign before their opponents have the opportunity to deliver them!

**Damiano**, a very early chess writer, described the following smothered mate in 1512. In the diagram it is White to play and mate in two moves.

```
1 ♕xh7+!
The knight and queen were both attacking h7. Black’s reply is forced.
1...♕xh7
The knight is now poised to deliver the smothered mate.
2 ♘f7#
The knight cannot be captured and the black king is smothered. It has no place to go. Despite having an overwhelming material advantage, Black has been checkmated.
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Another very old game from 1620 shows a smothered mate delivered by **Greco** playing Black against an unknown player. The opening was the Giuoco Piano.

```
1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗c4 ♗c5 4 0-0 ♘f6 5 ♖e1
5 ♘c3 would have been better. White’s 5 ♖e1 creates a weakness on f2 due to the action of the black bishop along the a7-g1 diagonal. Black’s knight is poised to move to g4.
5...0-0 6 ♗e7 ♘d4 exd4 8 e5?
This is a serious error. Black’s knight was heading for g4 anyway. Better was 8 cxd4 suppressing the black bishop’s designs against the f2 square.
8...♘g4 9 cxd4 ♘xd4! 10 ♘xd4 ♘h4 11 ♘f3
```
Now Black takes advantage of a battery on the a7-g1 diagonal. A queen sacrifice now sets up the smothered mate.

11...♕xf2+ 12 ♔h1 ♕g1+! 13 ♤xg1 ♤f2#

White would have also lost to a smothered mate the same way after 13 ♘xg1 ♤f2#.

Here’s an example of a smothered mate from the game Renold – Agassiz, Lausanne, 1903. The opening was the King’s Gambit Accepted.

1 e4 e5 2 f4 exf4 3 ♤f3 g5 4 ♤c3

The King’s Gambit is not played very frequently in modern day tournaments. White usually tries 4 h4 here to keep from being overrun on the kingside.

4...g4 5 ♤e5

The sharp sacrificial line 5 ♤c4 is more usual.

5...♕h4+ 6 g3 fxg3 7 ♤xg4 g2+ 8 ♤xh4 gxh1♕ 9 ♤h5 ♤e7 10 ♤f7 ♤f6

Black could have tried 10...♕h4+ 11 ♤xh4 ♤xf7 but the exposed position of the king is still undesirable. Another playable line was 11 ♥e2 ♤xh2+ 12 ♤d1 ♤f6.

11 ♤d6+

This double check sets up the mating combination.

11...♖xe8

If Black plays 11...♕f8 then there is the immediate 12 ♤f7#. A queen sacrifice now prepares the smothered mate.

12 ♤e8+! ♤xe8 13 ♤f7# 1-0

12...♕xe8 13 ♤f7# would not have changed the outcome.

Tactics involving smothered mates can arise in endgames.
Black’s king is unable to move from h8. It is cut off by White’s rook and the pawn on f6 that covers the g7 square. White’s f-pawn creates a powerful bind.

1 ♘h6

White threatens the smothered mate 2 ♘f7#. Black has one way to prevent it.

1... ♖f8

Now the semi-smothered mate motif appears again.

2 ♖g8+ ♖xg8 3 ♘xf7#

The white pawn on f6 plays a vital role in the mating pattern. It denies Black’s king access to the g7 flight square.

A salvo of tactics preceded a smothered mate in the game Ubilava – Agzamov, USSR, 1983.

1 ♗xe5+ ♘xe5 2 ♕xe5+

Black tries to defend by blocking the check.

2... ♖f6

Now White opens the g-file and sacrifices the queen.

3 gxf6!

After the queen is captured, a diversion sets up the smothered mate.

3... ♖xe5 4 ♕g8+

Black’s forced reply leads to an elegant finish.

4... ♖xg8 5 ♘f7#

The knight on h6 will eventually deliver the smothered mate. Prior to that, attacks will take place on the a1-h8 diagonal and on the g-file.

1 ♖xe5+ ♘xe5 2 ♖xe5+
Here too White managed to take advantage of an advanced pawn on the f-file to remove an important flight square for Black’s king.

A lovely smothered mate motif was used in the game Kandolin – Ojanen, Helsinki, 1962.

1...♘g4

This is the key move. The knight is heading for f2. Moving the knight has produced a discovered attack on White’s g5 bishop.

2♗xe7♕b6!

Black sacrifices a bishop in order to launch a deadly discovered check along the a7-g1 diagonal.

3♔h1

Black’s attack is already too strong for White to defend adequately.

3...♗f2+ 4♔g1

Black now uses a line clearing sacrifice to prepare the smothered mate.

4...♗e2+ 5♗xe2

Now Black’s beautiful sequence of moves is completed with a smothered mate.

5...♗h3+ 6♔h1♗g1+ 7♗xg1♗f2#

The following game Saunina – Chekhova, Sochi, 1980, ended with an unusual and spectacular smothered mate.

1♖xe4♕xe4 2♗g5

White sacrifices a rook, weakening Black’s protection of h7 and, more importantly, gains a tempo for the knight on the following move.

2...♗g6
Mate can be prevented by 2...♕xg7 but then 3 fxg7+ ♖xg7 4 ♗xe4 would leave Black hopelessly lost.

3 ♗xh7+!

The queen sacrifice gives White a beautiful smothered mate.

3...♕xh7 4 ♗xf7#

Finally here is an example of a smothered mate delivered by a bishop instead of a knight. Some might object to calling this a smothered mate but it shows a striking similarity to the previous example. It arose in the game Chudinovskii – Motylev, USSR, 1990.

1 ♖h8+ ♘xh8 2 ♕h7+ ♔xh7

Now a double check completes the attack.

3 ♖h5+ ♖g8 4 ♗h7#

Black’s king is surrounded by its own pieces, unable to avoid the bishop’s sting.

Swindle

Swindles often occur when a player has a winning advantage and becomes too complacent, making casual moves under the false assumption that the win will be achieved all by itself no matter what is played. The player who manages to pull off a swindle attempts to set a clever trap in a losing position, hoping that the opponent will take the bait.

Swindles can lead to a draw or even a win in a lost position.

Here is an example of a trap laid in the hope of a swindle, but where the bait was not accepted. It occurred in the game Sämisch – Helling, Dresden, 1936.
Black has just played ...e5 and is hoping for a swindle. A mistake here by White would allow Black to draw by perpetual check: 1 ♗xb4? ♗xb4+ 2 ♔e2 ♖d2+ 3 ♗e1 ♖d8+ and the discovered check forces White to repeat moves.

Black would have to be satisfied with the draw instead of pressing for more: 3... ♖c2+? 4 ♔d1 ♖xf2 5 ♗e2+ ♔d7 6 ♖h3 and White still wins.

Instead White played 1 ♖xh3 to avoid the trap. Then 1... ♕b6 (1... ♕xc4? 2 ♗d2 and the black queen is pinned.) followed by the remaining moves 2 ♕h8 ♕b7 3 ♕f1 ♗c5 4 ♖d8 ♗xe3 5 ♗d5+ 1-0

Technically this move might be considered as a blunder instead of a swindle. Nevertheless, things like this happen at all levels of chess. Granted, in this situation, there were only a few seconds left on the clock to finish the game.

A player might also make strong and unexpected moves to bring about a swindle, as happened in the game Green – Aitken, Sunderland, 1966.

White is a rook up and appears to have the upper hand. Black’s g-pawn will be stopped and White is threatening to play 2 ♕g4#.

Black came up with the surprising moves 1... ♗e1+ 2 ♕g2 ♗e2+! 3 ♕xg3 ♗e5+. Now White must play 4 ♕xe5 when Black has been stalemated.

Another related example is the following position arising from the game Wittmann – A. Rodriguez, Prague, 1980.

Here White is in trouble as Black threatens to win immediately with a queen check on the back rank.
Trying to parry the threat of 1...♕h1# would likely allow Black to obtain a dangerous passed pawn.

For example after 1 ♕d5 ♕xd5 2 ♖xd5 bxa2 3 ♖xa5+ ♕b3 4 ♖a6 ♕c4=. However White managed to draw by the clever tactic: 1 ♖xb3+ ♕xa2 2 ♖a3+

Now Black must avoid 2...♕b1? 3 ♕d1+ ♕b2 (3...♖c1 4 ♕b3#) 4 ♕a1#.

But after 2...♖xa3 3 ♕d3+ ♕xd3 it is a stalemate.

Black would also draw the game by stalemate after 2...♖b2 3 ♕b5+ ♖xa3 4 ♕d3+ as Black must capture the queen to avoid losing.

The next example was published in a fictional short story in the January 1964 British Chess Magazine.

Black blundered, by playing 1...fxg2. The move does threaten to promote the pawn or mate on the back rank but White now is able to swindle a win by 2 ♖e2+ ♕xe2 3 ♕b4+ cxb4 (3...♕a5 4 ♖c6+ ♕a4 5 ♕xa7#) 4 ♕a5+ bxa5 (4...♕xa5 5 ♕xa7#) 5 ♕c6#.

Black missed the win. Instead of first playing 1...fxg2 Black had 1...♕e1+ 2 ♕xe1 ♖xb2+ 3 ♖xb2 ♕c2+ 4 ♕a3 or 4 ♕a1 4...♕a2#.

Triangulation

Triangulation is a very powerful endgame tactic. By utilising the availability of an extra square, the stronger side exploits a triangulation manoeuvre to bring about the same position with the opposite side to move, thereby placing the opponent in zugzwang.

In the following endgame position arising from the game Alburt – Kasparov, Daugavpils, 1978, the future world champion used triangulation to win the game.
Black has an extra passed pawn. Ideally Black would like to advance the pawn to f3 and place the king on f4 but only when White has moved the king to f2 first. In that situation, White would be in zugzwang and would have to yield, allowing Black to reach g3, winning the rook pawn.

Another try would be to obtain a position where Black could place the king on e3 and then push the pawn to f2 without giving check.

1...f3+ 2 ♔f1

Black should avoid 2 ♔f2 because Black gains access to g3 by 2...♔f4 3 ♔f1 ♔g3+.

Black would like to reach this same position, with White to move. White would then be in zugzwang. In that situation if White played ♔f2 Black would gain the opposition with ...♔f4 and then be able to reach the critical g3 square. If White plays ♔e1 then Black would hold the opposition with ...♔e3. If White responds with ♔f1 the pawn can advance to f2 without giving check.

Therefore Black must proceed by triangulating.

2...♔f5

White cannot play 3 ♔f2 because Black has the winning reply, 3...♔f4. Black has therefore gained the opposition and White has lost the battle to control g3.

Instead White tries 3 ♔g1

Black now has a triangulating move.

3...♔e5! 0-1

If 4 ♔f1 ♔e4 5 ♔f2 (5 ♔e1 ♔e3) 5...♔f4 and the same position has been reached with White to move.

Or 4 ♔h2 ♔f4 5 ♔g1 ♔g3 and the h-pawn is lost. No matter what happens Black will promote a pawn and win.

In the following endgame study the stronger side uses triangulation and an unexpected pawn push to break through.
Black has the opposition. It is White to move. So White would like to reach the same position with Black to move.

1 ♕e4 ♕f6

Black cannot attempt a flanking manoeuvre. 1...d6 allows White to break through with 2 f6 gxf6 (2...e6 3 f7) 3 g7+.

2 ♕f4 ♕e7 3 ♕e5

As a result of the triangulation manoeuvre the same position has been reached as in the starting position but with Black to move. Black is now in zugzwang.

3...♕e8

Or 3...d7 4 f6 gxf6+ 5 xf6.

4 ♕e6 ♕f8 5 ♕d7 ♕g8

6 ♕e8

The alternative was no better: 6 ♕e7 ♕h8 7 f6 gxf6 (7...g8 8 f7+ ♕h8 9 f8♕#) 8 f7 f5 9 g7+ ♕h7 10 g8♕+ ♕h6 11 ♕g6#.

6...♕h8 7 f6

White must be careful to avoid the stalemate: 7 ♕f8=+. Black’s g-pawn must be sprung to allow White’s g-pawn to promote.

7...gxf6 8 ♕f7 f5 9 g7+ ♕h7 10 g8♕+ ♕h6 11 ♕g6#

Underpromotion

Underpromotion can effectively be an important tactical device when promoting to a queen would lead to stalemate. There are even situations where promoting to a knight might be a better choice for specific tactical reasons. Here are a few examples where underpromotion is advantageous.

The first is a well known endgame attributed to Saavedra, 1895.
White is about to promote the f7 pawn. Black’s rook cannot reach the back rank. If Black’s rook were on d5 instead, Black could simply play the rook to d8 and exchange it for the promoted pawn, which would result in a draw. Instead, all Black can do for the time being is to keep checking with the rook.

1... ♖e6+ 2 ♔g5

If White tries 2 ♔g7?, then 2... ♖e7 will pin the pawn, allowing it to be captured by the rook to make a draw.

2... ♖e5+ 3 ♔g4

White has to keep the king away from the f-file until the rook is no longer able to check from behind on f1. 3 ♔f4? would lose for White. Black would play 3... ♖e1 then 4 f8♕ ♖f1+ skewers the king and captures the promoted pawn, winning for Black. But after 4 ♔g5 ♖f1 5 ♔g6 Black will have to capture the pawn with a drawn result.

3... ♖e4+ 4 ♔g3 ♖e3+ 5 ♔f2 ♖e4

Black has this resourceful move available. If White promotes to a queen, the game is drawn by stalemate: 6 f8♕ ♖f4+ 7 ♕xf4 and Black’s king has no legal moves. Therefore White can only win by underpromoting to a rook.

6 f8♖!

The stalemate tactic no longer works for Black: 6... ♖f4+ 7 ♗xf4 ♔h2 8 ♗h4#. Things have changed. White now threatens 7 ♗h8#.

There is another threat as well. Trying to prevent the mate with 6... ♖h4 fails to 7 ♗g3. White simultaneously creates two threats – attacking the rook on h4 and mating on the back rank with 8 ♗f1#.

In the opening, Lasker’s Trap exploits the further striking theme of underpromotion to a knight. The Lasker Trap occurs in the Albin Counter Gambit. Black gets lured into the trap but it is not forced. With correct play Black can avoid this danger.

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e5

Black has replied with the Albin Counter Gambit, hoping to get the White player out of well-prepared Queen’s Gambit lines. It takes an enterprising player to adopt an offbeat opening to surprise an opponent in an effort to earn a full point in a critical last round game of a tournament.

1... dxe5 d4

Very sharp play now results. Both sides have offered a gambit pawn.

3 dxe5 d4

Now White must play accurately to avoid falling into the trap.
4 e3?

But not like this! 4 e3? is a mistake, leading to the Lasker trap. The move looks natural enough, developing and putting pressure on Black’s d4 pawn. However, as will soon be seen, this is a poor move.

The best continuation for White is probably 4 ♘f3 but White could also play 4 e4. A player can quickly run into problems in the opening by playing sub-standard moves.

4...♗b4+

Black attacks with a developing move, thereby gaining time.

5 ♗d2

After 5 ♘d2 dxe3 White is in trouble: 6 fxe3 ♘h4+ 7 g3 (7 ♕e2 ♘g4+ leaves Black with threats against the white queen after 8 ♘gf3 ♘c6=+. Then further pressure can be added by placing a rook on the d-file, perhaps by castling queenside.) 7...e4++. White’s doubled pawns on the e-file are very weak and the rook on h1 is hanging. The pin on White’s knight yields the e4 square to Black’s queen.

5...dxe3!

White’s position is deteriorating rapidly.

6 ♘xb4?

This is the Lasker trap. White should not play this move, even though it looks like the natural reply. Relatively best for White would have been 6 fxe3.

6...exf2+ 7 ♕e2

Black must be careful not to lose material: 7 ♗xf2 ♘xd1++. Underpromoting is very strong in this position as Black gains a tempo with check. 7...♕xd1+ 8 ♕xd1 ♘x1 9 ♘x1 offers Black nothing here, while 7...♗x1 8 ♕xd8+ ♕xd8 9 ♘x1 also does not give Black much.

8 ♕e1

The point of the underpromotion is illustrated by the key line 8 ♘x1 ♘g4+ and the skewer wins the white queen.

8...♗h4+

White is hopelessly lost after eight moves.
Instead Black would have been relatively better off after 9 REDENTIAL2d  Credential2c6 10  Credential2c3  Credential2g4 11  Credential2e1 0-0-0+ 12  Credential2c2 (12  Credential2c1  Credential2d1+ --+) 12…Credential2d4+ --.

9…Credential2e4+ 10  Credential2f2  Credential2xh1++

Black’s underpromotion to the knight on the seventh move was the tactical shot that made possible this huge advantage.

Another example of an advantage obtained by underpromotion is seen in the game Gulko – Grigoryan, Vilnius, 1971.

Here White’s e-pawn is about to promote.

1  Credential2f8+  Credential2xf8

1…Credential2h7 is punished by 2  Credential2g6#.

2  Credential2d5+  Credential2h7

White gets mated quickly after 2…Credential2f7 with the sequel 3  Credential2xf7+  Credential2h7 4  Credential2g6+  Credential2g8 5 e8Credential2#

Now promoting to a queen actually loses the game! 3 exf8 Credential2??  Credential2g1#.

Underpromotion is the correct approach.

3 exf8 Credential2 Credential2h8 4  Credential2eg6#

A very elegant mating pattern has quickly resulted from the use of the underpromotion tactic.

Vacating a Square

Vacating a key square may be a necessary tactic on certain occasions. It may be essential to clear a line, to give another piece freedom of movement, and so on. Here are a few illustrations of how such a tactic can be utilised.

The first example is taken from the game Alekhine – Johner, played in Zurich, 1934.
What stands out immediately in this position is that White’s bishop is very bad. White’s four advanced central pawns are all on white squares, limiting the scope of the bishop. However White solves this problem by vacating the central e4 and d5 squares with line clearing pawn sacrifices.

It is very instructive to observe how effective this tactic is in this particular situation. Within a few moves White’s bishop takes an active role in the future play.

1 e5!

This pawn sacrifice, vacating the e4 square, is the critical move.

1...dxe5

1...fxe5 was also possible, but White had the powerful retort 2 f6!. The point here is that after 2...xf6 3 xg4+ f7 4 e4± White’s position would have already improved. Moreover White will next eliminate Black’s pawn on f3, which has been exerting such a powerful bind by hemming in the white king on the first rank.

2 d6!

What a difference White’s last three moves have made. White’s bishop now threatens to deliver a deadly check on d5. Moreover, White has an active passed pawn on d6, capable of generating additional threats. Black needs to find an immediate way to deal with the threatened bishop check on d5.

2...c5

2...xd6 would have provided the bishop with even more activity along the a2-g8 diagonal after the very sharp move 3 c5!. For example 3...xc5 (3...xc5 4 b3+ +; 3...d5 4 xbd6 d4 5 b3+ e6 6 xe6+ +; 3...c7 4 b3+ g7 5 xg4+ [5 c6±] 5...h6 6 g8 e7 7 c6!) 4 b3+ +.

3 e4

3...d7

This blocks the passed d-pawn and gives the king slightly more freedom to manoeuvre. Black would run short of options after 3...d7 4 d5+ f8 5 c6+. In fact there would be no good continuation for Black as the attempt to infiltrate with 3...h7 allows White to continue 4 xg4+ g7 5 d5+ h7 6 h5+ h6 7 xf3+, when Black still has to be wary of the passed d-pawn.

4 h6 1-0
From a position where only a few moves ago White had a bad light-squared bishop, a won position has been achieved by vacating a few central squares.

4...\texttt{♕h7} would be followed by a quick mate: 5 \texttt{♗d5+ ♦h8} 6 \texttt{♕xf8+ ♦g8} 7 \texttt{♕xg8#}. The passed pawn shows its strength after 4...\texttt{♘h7} 5 \texttt{♗d5+ ♦h8} 6 \texttt{♕g6} as Black would be in zugzwang: 6...\texttt{♕g7} 7 \texttt{♔d7}+.

Zugzwang would also arise after 4...\texttt{♔f7} 5 \texttt{♗d5+ ♦e8} 6 \texttt{♕xf6} and it would be all over following 6...\texttt{♕h7} 7 \texttt{♗c6+ ♦d7} 8 \texttt{♕g6+ ♦xg6} 9 fxg6+.

The next example comes from the correspondence game Huczek – Jenner, Canada, 1986.

![Chessboard](image1)

Black has misplayed the opening and is now critically behind in development. Black’s pieces lack coordination and there are several glaring weaknesses in the position. The knight on g8 is locked in because of the bind created by White’s pawn on e5 and this renders the king’s rook useless as well. The short h5-e8 diagonal provides White with a good line of attack and all White needs is to deliver a queen or bishop check there. In addition, the f7, g6 and h5 squares are all extremely weak.

The rook on f1 is operating on an open file, able to assist in the assault on the opponent’s king. White’s queen is also very active on the d-file and adds further support to the battery on the d1-h5 diagonal.

Black’s king is extremely vulnerable. Currently it has no means of escape to the queenside and if White’s knight on f3 were not obstructing White’s king’s bishop then there would be an immediate mating finish by means of \texttt{♗h5+}. So White vacates the f3 square which activates both the e2 bishop and the f1 rook.

1 \texttt{♗h4! 1-o}

![Chessboard](image2)

White throws the knight into the wind. Depending on how Black responds, this knight can head for g6 in some variations. Black has no adequate way of responding, as the following lines demonstrate.

Capturing the errant knight with 1...\texttt{♘xh4} would give White a lovely win with a queen sacrifice. 2 \texttt{♗h5+ g6} (2...\texttt{♗e7} 3 \texttt{♕d6+ cxd6} 4 \texttt{exd6#}) 3 \texttt{♕xg6+ ♦e7} 4 \texttt{♕d6+ cxd6} 5 \texttt{exd6#}.

Trying to defend by giving up the king’s knight by 1...\texttt{♗f6} might have led to the following finish: 2 \texttt{♗h5+ g6}, (2...\texttt{♗xh5} 3 \texttt{♕xh5+ g6} 4 \texttt{♗g6#}) 3 \texttt{♕xg6! ♦xe5} (3...\texttt{♕xe4} 4 \texttt{♗xh8#}; 3...\texttt{♕h7} 4 \texttt{exf6+-}) 4 \texttt{♕xf6}+ 5 \texttt{♕f6} 5 \texttt{♗xe5+ ♦e7} 6 \texttt{♗c5+-}.

Giving up the other knight by 1...\texttt{♘d6} leaves White with several winning lines after 2 \texttt{♗h5+ g6}.

(a) 3 \texttt{♕xg6+ ♦f8} 4 \texttt{♗f3+} (4 \texttt{exf6} \texttt{♕d6} 5 \texttt{c5+-}; 4 \texttt{♗xd8+ ♦xd8} 5 \texttt{exf6} \texttt{♗xf6} \texttt{♗xf6} 7 \texttt{♗xf6+ ♦e7} 8 \texttt{♗f7+ ♦d8} 9 \texttt{♗d1+ +;}
Another interesting line would arise from the try 1...g6. White would have the very sharp reply 2 ♗h5!, which might have led to 2...♗xe5 3 ♖xg6 ♗f7 (3...♖xf6+ ♖xf6 5 ♙xe5+ ♘e7 6 ♗c5+ +) 4 ♕h8 ♘xd1 5 ♖xf7+ ♕f8 6 ♖xd1+.

There is an embarrassment of riches to choose from in this position. It is literally a gold mine of possibilities for White. After 1...♗xe5 2 ♘h5+ g6 3 ♖g6 ♘xd1 4 ♖xd1 there are the following lines of play:

(a) 4...♘xg6 5 ♗xg6#;
(b) 4...♗f6 5 ♖xf6+ ♕f7 6 ♘e8+ ♖f6 (6...♖xe8 7 ♘xe5#) 7 ♕e7+! ♕f8 (7...♖xe7 8 ♙c5#) 8 ♖xf6+ ♕f7 (8...♖xe7 9 ♙c5#) 9 ♘g7 ♖xe7 (9...♖xg7 10 ♖xf7#) 10 ♖xf7#;

All of these variations ended up in the footnotes to the game. In fact White’s vacating a square by 1 ♘h4! prompted an immediate resignation in what was admittedly a hopelessly lost position.

**Windmill Attack**

A windmill attack consists of a series of discovered checks which allow the moving piece to do a great deal of damage. The most common example is a rook on the seventh rank, supported by a bishop on the long diagonal, brutalising an opponent with a series of checks and captures.

An example from the game *Torre – Em. Lasker*, Moscow, 1925, shows that even a former world champion can be swept up by a windmill attack.

White takes advantage of the pin on the g-file.

1 ♖f6!

This move sets up the windmill attack. There is a double attack here. White’s bishop move has cleared the fifth rank, creating a discovered attack on Black’s queen. White’s rook and bishop will deliver the windmill attack after Black has accepted the pseudo-sacrifice of White’s queen.

1...♕xh5

This move gives White the necessary time to activate the windmill attack.

2 ♖xg7+ ♕h8 3 ♖xf7+

Notice how the windmill attack works. The discovered check allows White to capture the f7 pawn. Black’s reply is forced.

3...♗g8

Now the rook can return to activate the windmill attack again.

4 ♖g7+ ♕h8 5 ♖xb7+

The discovered check has now picked up the bishop on b7. All Black can do is pace back and forth with the king.
5...♗g8 6 ♗g7+ ♕h8

Here White decides not to repeat the windmill tactic with 7 ♖a7+. Opening the a-file would not be desirable for White as it would only activate Black’s rook along the a-file. Instead White uses the windmill one last time to attack Black’s queen.

7 ♖g5+ ♕h7 8 ♖xh5

The game continued for a few more moves but the damage had already been done.

8...♗g6 9 ♖h3 ♖xf6 10 ♖xh6+ ♗g5 11 ♖h3 ♖e8 12 ♖g3+ ♕f6 13 ♖f3+ ♕g6 14 a3

White has emerged with two extra connected passed pawns on the kingside and Black soon resigned.

Another example of a windmill attack comes from the game Antunac – Hübner, Dresden, 1969.

White is a minor piece down but White can exploit the pin on the queen to infiltrate with the rook on the seventh rank.

1 ♖e7!

The queen sacrifice will allow the rook and bishop to activate the windmill.

1...♕xh5

Now notice how effective the windmill is at winning back the queen, along with extra material.

2 ♖e7+ ♕f8 3 ♖xb7+ ♕e8 4 ♖e7+ ♕f8 5 ♖xh7+ 1-0

After 5...♕e8 White will play 6 ♖xh5 and remain two pawns up. Black’s rooks are not yet coordinated so no immediate counterplay can be generated.

In Farago – Kallai, Budapest, 1992, White also offered a queen to initiate a windmill attack.
White lured Black with a tempting move.

1 ♕xe4

Black should refuse the queen sacrifice and instead try to consolidate with a move such as 1...♗d7.

Pay heed to the familiar adage, “If it looks too good to be true, it probably is.”

1...♗xe4?

Now White exploits a windmill attack to simplify to a winning position.

2 ♖xg7+ ♔h8 3 ♖g3+ ♘f6 4 ♖xh3 1-0

Black is two pawns down with no immediate prospects of counterplay. This windmill attack exploited a favourable opportunity to capture the black queen.

In the vintage game Schiffers – Steinitz, Rostov-on-Don, 1896, White used a windmill attack and a queen sacrifice to achieve a checkmate.

After 1...♗xe5 2 ♟xd3 White still has multiple threats. 1...♗e5 2 ♖g7+ ♔h8 3 ♖e7+ ♖xe5+ 4 ♕xe5+ ♖xe5 5 ♖xe8+ ♔h7 6 ♖e5 and White will soon mate.

2 ♖g7+

This is the start of the windmill attack. Black’s reply is forced.

2...♖h8

Black is hopelessly lost, crushed by the imposing steamroller. Black’s rook must stay where it is due to the weakness of the back rank. It is now mate in five moves.

3 ♕e7+ ♔g8 4 ♕g7+ ♔h8 5 ♕e7+ ♕g8 6 ♕e8+ ♔h7 7 ♕f7#

The windmill attack is indeed a very powerful tactical weapon in every chess player’s arsenal.

Here is an example of a more unusual windmill attack which does not follow the pattern displayed in the previous examples. It comes from the game Nikolov – Zahariev, Bulgaria, 1982.

1 ♕xf7!

White disregards the threat on the queen.

1...dxe2
This is the start of an incredible sequence of moves. 1 ♘xb8?! would have allowed Black to equalise by 1...♗d4 + 2 ♔h1 ♘f2 + 3 ♔g2 ♘xb8=.

1...♔f8

Black has no choice but to place the king on f8 where it will be exposed to a discovered check along the a1-f8 diagonal. 1...♖h8 would lose immediately to 2 ♘xf7#. White’s position is overwhelmingly powerful.

2 ♘xc8+

The windmill attack begins to scavenge on the rotting meat.

2...♔g8

Again the black king faces an unfortunate predicament, having little choice but to move back into the windmill, since 2...♔e8 allows mate in two: 3 ♗b5+ ♔d8 4 ♘xf7#.

3 ♘e7+ ♔f8 4 ♘g6+

There is more to this move than just picking up a few more loose scraps. If Black plays 4...♔e8 then it is mate after 5 ♗b5+ ♔d8 6 ♘xf7#. So once again the windmill is reset.

4...♔g8 5 ♘e7+ ♔f8 6 ♘h7+

Now White goes in full bore for the king hunt.

6...♔e8 7 ♗b5+ ♔d8 8 ♘d1+ ♘c7

On each move White checks the king, gaining extra tempi to continue the onslaught.

9 ♘d5+ ♘d8

9...♘c8 allows 10 ♘c1+ ♘c7, (10...♔d8 11 ♗e7#) 11 ♘xc7+ ♔b8 12 ♗c5+-.

10 ♗e7+ ♔c8 11 ♘c1+ 1-0

Black has had enough. The blood letting would have continued until the very end:

11...♕c7 12 ♕xc7+ ♔b8 13 ♕c5 a6 14 ♕e7 ♖d4+ 15 ♖xd4 b6 16 ♕e5+ ♔c8 17 ♕xb6+ ♔d8 18 ♕e8#

**Winning Material**

Tactics that result in obtaining a material advantage are common in chess. Once such an advantage occurs, it can usually be exploited further by trading pieces or pawns, simplifying the position until the material superiority leads to a winning endgame.
Winning an opponent’s queen gives cause for a special celebration and is dealt with separately in the section on queen ambush.

One should ensure that trying to win material does not provide an opponent with counterplay. Pawn snatchers can and do frequently get punished.

Things to look for in determining if a tactic can lead to a material advantage include identifying any pawn or piece that is unguarded or weakly defended.

Loose or hanging pieces should be noted carefully. Pressure should be added using whatever tactical motifs might be suitable.

The first example is from a game played in England, 1947 between Alexander, with the white pieces, and Cordingley.

1... ♗xb7 ♕xb7

Now White has a very simple yet effective retort.

2 ♕d5 1-0

Black will lose a piece. Moving the queen, i.e. 2...c7, loses the rook: 3 ♕xa8. The key variation is 2...xd5 3 xe7+ ♔h8 4 xd5+-. 2...c6 does not hold either: 3 xc6 fb8 4 xb7 xb7 5 xe7+ +.

Another example, is given from the game Tunik – Veingold, Lviv, 1984.

1... ♝xd4!

The knight on d4 is not as well supported as it might appear.

2 ♝xd4

White could instead move the queen away from the d-file – to b3 for instance. Unfortunately in that scenario Black would have gained a material advantage with White having nothing at all to show for it.

2... e1+ 3 ♔f2

Of course 3 ♕e1? would be disastrous because of 3...♕xd4+.

3... ♝xd4+ 4 ♕xd4 xa1 0-1

Black has obtained a substantial material advantage. The extra knight and strong passed pawns on a6 and d5 give excellent winning chances.

Here is another example taken from the game Uchimura – Schain, USA, 1980.
Black has two extra pawns but White’s pieces are much better placed. The black rooks in particular are not yet well posted. White catches Black by surprise with a very good move.

1 $\text{b6}$!

This is an interference tactic, preventing Black’s queen from operating along the sixth rank to block on $h6$. If Black captures the rook with 1...$\text{axb6}$, White has 2 $\text{e7+ h8}$ 3 $\text{xh7+}$ 4 $\text{h5#}$. Black is also worse after 1...$\text{xb6}$ 2 $\text{xb6}$ $\text{axb6}$ 3 $\text{xc4}$. White then only needs to be wary of the weak back rank.

1...$\text{xd5}$

Black tries to remove the mate threat. What follows leaves Black significantly behind in material with doubled pawns on the a-file.

2 $\text{xa6}$ $\text{bxa6}$ 3 $\text{xd5}$ 1-0

After White pushes the pawn to $g3$, for instance, to secure a flight square for the king, White can then concentrate on exploiting the weaknesses in Black’s position.

Here is a nice tactical shot from the game Panczyk – Schurade, Zakopane, 1978.

White begins with an unexpected move.

1 $\text{a8}$!

Who would have seen that one coming!

1...$\text{xa8}$

White emerges the exchange and a pawn up after 1...$\text{xg6}$ 2 $\text{xa7}$ $\text{c6}$ 3 $\text{xb6+}$. White also comes out ahead after 1...$\text{b7}$ 2 $\text{xe7+}$ $\text{xe7}$ 3 $\text{xb8+}$.

2 $\text{xe7+ h7}$ 3 $\text{xc8}$ 1-0

White has won a bishop.

The next example, taken from the game van Spreckelsen – Weiss, Hamburg, 1964, features a tactical maelstrom including the weapons of a discovered attack, a queen sacrifice, and a discovered check that result in simplification to a winning material advantage.

The position is venomous. In this type of situation players must be able to pick up warning signals using their chess radar. Tactical shenanigans are about to be unleashed.

Some of Black’s strengths can be considered. The queen pins the f2 rook. White’s bishop is attacked by a pawn. Black’s bishop can check on
h7, gaining a tempo and attacking White’s queen.

1...♗xh2+

The best time to strike is when the position demands it!

2 ♘xh2 ♕xf2+!

This queen sacrifice is better than an immediate 2...♖xc4 as after 3 ♗xc4 White would have the advantage.

3 ♗xf2

With the king now on the f-file, Black can capture the bishop with tempo. This important zwischenzug, played before capturing the queen on c4, leads to a material advantage for Black.

3...fxe6+ 4 ♔e3 ♖xc4 0-1

Black has every reason to expect that the active rooks, the pawn majority on the kingside, and the important passed e-pawn will eventually lead to victory with good technique.

Another similar example shows how a material advantage can be reached by subjecting an opponent to a wide array of tactics. It is taken from the game Godena – Zurek, Litomerice, 1988.

Black's king is hemmed in the corner by its rook and pawns. This turns out to be a positional liability. The knight on b4 is also not well placed. Attacking White’s weak a-pawn like this with a single piece surely cannot be recommended.

White's rook on c3 is very active, operating on the c-file and capable of shifting over to h3 as necessary.

The centre is closed, but White finds a beautiful way to break in.

1 ♕xe6!

White’s attack comes out of the blue. The queen cannot be taken by playing 1...fxe6 because of the tactical reply 2 ♗g6+ hxg6 3 ♖h3+ ♔h4 4 ♖h4#. Black needs to attend to the bishop which is hanging on e7.

1...♗g5 2 ♖xf7!

Gaping holes have appeared. Black’s position looks far less secure than it was two moves ago.

2...♖gf8

Black gives the king some room to breathe and is threatening to win a piece. 2...♗xf4 3
xf4 xa2?! 4 h3 would allow White to continue the attack.

3 g6+!

Instead of a queen retreat, White sacrifices a knight to open the h-file.

3...hxg6 4 h3+ h6

Black blocks the h-file but in doing so pins the bishop on h6.

5 xg6 c6

White was threatening to play xh6 so Black decides to simplify the position to relieve the pressure on h6. White only has two pawns for the sacrificed knight at this point.

6 x6 c6

White now has a combination available, after which he will have gained a material advantage.

7 xh6 gxh6

Black would not have had anything to look forward to after 7...g8 8 g3 f7 9 e6+ or 7...ac8 8 c1+.

8 xh6+ g7 9 xc6 1-0

White has ended up with four extra pawns. Black will not be able to contend with the passed e-pawn, accompanied by an advancing kingside pawn roller and White’s control of the c-file.

X-Ray Attack

An x-ray attack can take a variety of forms. It usually involves an indirect action if a piece or several pieces operate behind one’s own or enemy pieces. When an x-ray attack is in operation it can generate tremendous piece activity.

Quite often lines need to be cleared to allow the x-ray attack to take effect. In that sense this tactic could be regarded as being related to a discovered attack.

The first example is from analysis of the exhibition game Fischer – Andersson, 1970.

White’s bishop on b2 is indirectly attacking Black’s king along the a1-h8 diagonal. This forms the x-ray attack in the present position.

1 xe6!

The queen sacrifice removes a key defender. The knight on e6 had a grip on the g7 square.

1...xe6 2 f7! 1-0
Black is defenceless against the passed f7 pawn and the discovered check from the rook that exploits the x-ray attack of the bishop on the long diagonal. For example 2...♖g6 3♗g8# or 2...h6 3♗g8+♗h7 4♗xf8+.

Khalifman – I. Sokolov, Wijk aan Zee, 1991, provides another beautiful example of an x-ray attack.

The bishop on e5 will eventually produce the x-ray attack, swinging into action the latent power of the pawn on f6. A double exchange sacrifice starts things off.

1♖xg6+fxg6

Black’s reply was necessary. 1...♗f8 would have allowed a quick mate with 2♖xh8#. 1...♗g7 2♖xg7+♗f8 3♗h8# was not much better.

2♖xh8+♗xh8

White would still have stood better after 2...♗f7 3♗h7+♗e6 4♗d4.

3f7+1-0

White picks up one of the rooks after 3...♖xe5 4♖h8+♗h7 5♗xf7+♗h6, (5...♖h8 6♗f6+) 6♗f4+ followed by 7♗xe5.

Another nice example of an x-ray attack occurred in Grynszpan – Kaminski, Poznan, 1961.

The x-ray attack will materialise along the a1-h8 diagonal. The bishop on a1, which is seemingly an unpretentious and passive spectator, soon proves its real worth.

To make any real progress with the attack White must find some way to break through on the kingside.

1♗g5!

Mate is threatened on h7, so the knight has to be accepted. 1...g6? 2♗xf7! gx5 3♗x6+♖h8 4♗g6#.

1...hx5 2♗g6!
One threat is 3 ♞e7+ ♘h8 4 ♘h3#.

2...fxg6

Black’s kingside pawn structure no longer looks nearly quite as nice as it did a few moves ago. The x-ray attack can now take effect.

3 ♖xg7+! ♕xg7 4 e6+ 1-0

The bishop now plays a prominent role:

4...♕g8 5 ♖xg6#; 4...♔h7 5 ♖h3+ ♕g8 6 ♕h8#.

**Yielding to Zugzwang**

Zugzwang, which in German means “compulsion to move,” is a situation which exists when a player, whose turn it is to play, can only make a move that worsens the position. Unlike some other games, a player cannot ‘pass’ in chess. Situations involving zugzwang are found most commonly in endgames.

In the following endgame position Black is in zugzwang.

If it were White to move the game would be drawn: 1 d7+ ♕d8 2 ♕d6. To win White has to advance the pawn to d7 without giving check. With Black to move the game is lost. White will be able to promote the pawn.

1...♗d8

Or 1...♗f8 2 ♕d7 ♕f7 3 ♕c8.

2 d7 ♕c7 3 ♕e7

Now the critical promotion square on d8 is covered by White’s king.

Mutual zugzwang can exist in certain positions where whichever side is to move is at a disadvantage.

In this position whichever side is to move must give way and allow their pawn to be captured. For example, if it is White to move, one winning line for Black is 1 ♕g4 ♕xe4 2 ♖g3 ♖d3 3 ♕f2 ♕e4 4 ♕e1 ♕e3 5 ♕d1 ♕f2 6 ♕d2 ♕e3+ 7 ♕d1 ♕e2+ 8 ♕d2 ♕e1#. The following endgame problem involving zugzwang is attributed to Paul Morphy.
White wins with 1 ♖h6!.

Black is in zugzwang.

1...gxh6

Any bishop move leaves h7 vulnerable. 1...♗d5 for instance allows 2 ♖xh7#.

2 g7#

In the next game Capablanca – Em. Lasker, Berlin, 1914, a rook sacrifice places Black in zugzwang, resulting in a won king and pawn vs king endgame.

1 ♖a8+! ♘xa8

The rook sacrifice must have come as quite a surprise. Black does not have a secure fortress.

Giving up the knight at this point does not improve matters: 1...♗xa8 2 ♕xc7 ♖a7 3 ♕c6 and Black is in zugzwang. 3...♖a8 4 ♕xb6 ♖b8 5 ♕a6 and zugzwang occurs again: 5...♖a8 (5...♗c8 6 ♕a7+-) 6 ♕b6 ♖b8 7 ♕c7 8 ♕a7+-.

The knight capture also places Black in zugzwang. Black has no choice but to give back the knight.

2 ♕c8 ♖c7 3 ♕xc7 ♖a8 4 ♕xb6

Black is in zugzwang once again.

4...♖b8 5 ♕c6 ♖a8 6 ♕b6 ♖b8 7 ♕b7 ♖a7

The pawn will promote to a rook or a queen for the win. What is critical to work out in this type of king and pawn endgame is how to advance the pawn to the seventh rank without placing the opponent’s king in check. Checking the enemy king by pushing the pawn to the seventh rank will lead to a stalemate, as has already been shown.

Minor piece endings can also involve zugzwang. Consider the following rook vs bishop ending.

1 ♕a8+! ♖xa8

White wins with 1 ♕a7+.

Black must play 1...♖b4 to protect the bishop.

2 ♕c2

Black is in zugzwang:

(1) Black is unable to access b3 with the king to maintain protection of the bishop.

(2) Any king move allows 3 ♕xa3 leaving a won king and rook vs king endgame.
(3) The bishop only has two permissible moves, 2...b2 or 2...c1, either of which allows White to take the bishop with the king.

Zugzwang is a common winning strategy in rook vs bishop endings. Here is an example from the game Tal – Zhidkov, USSR, 1972.

Here White played 1 h6+! After 1...xh6 2 g6+ h7 3 f6 e3 4 f7 White gained the opposition with Black’s king on the edge of the board.

This is an ideal position for White. The rook can now harass the bishop and manoeuvre into a position to deliver a fatal rook check on the h-file.

The game continued 4 a7 5 a6 b8 6 a8 c7 7 c8 f4 8 c4 g5 9 c3 1-0

Zugzwang! The threat of h3 cannot be satisfactorily met. For example: 9...d2 (9...h6 10 h3 h8 11 xh6#) 10 h3+ h6 11 h1 h8 12 xh6#.

Zugzwang can lead to a loss of material, as in the game Fischer – Rossetto, Argentina, 1959.

1 b3!

Black is in zugzwang after this very strong move. If the rook moves to a8 or e8 then White promotes with a discovered check: 1...e8 2 c8#. White can capture the rook with the queen on the next move.

The knight cannot move to e6 without being captured. If 1...d7 then 2 e6 wins. Moving the king also loses material for Black because then it relinquishes its protection of the knight and White can continue 2 b8 xc7 3 xf8.

The only thing left is to make pawn moves. Once these run out Black is compelled to make a losing move.

1...a5 2 a4 h6 3 h3 g5 4 g4 fxg4 1-0
Black resigned without waiting to be shown what will happen next.

In the game Spraggett – Glen, Montreal, 1975, Black to move resigned once the following position was reached.

Black is in zugzwang here. For example:
1...♗h8 2 ♘f8 ♖d8 3 ♖xb5+ ♕xb5 4 ♕xb7+ ♖b6 5 ♖xb6#; 1...♗xc5 2 ♖xb5#; 1...f5 2 gxf6 ♖h5 3 fxg7 ♖xg7+ 4 ♖g5 ♖g6 5 ♕c8+ ♕c7 6 ♖xe6+ ♕d6 7 exd6#.

In the game Pillsbury – Marshall, New York, 1901, Black got tied up in zugzwang.

Black’s first move is brilliant.

1...h6!

There is nothing useful that White can do. Despite the large amount of material left on the board, White is in zugzwang.

Here are some continuations:

(1) 2 ♕h2 ♖f3;
(2) 2 g4 ♖f3 3 ♖xf3 ♕h2#;
(3) 2 ♕c1 ♖b1;
(4) 2 ♖f1 ♖xf1 3 ♖xf1 ♖xf1 4 ♕e2 ♖xg1+;
(5) 2 ♕d1 ♕e2.

White was also forced to yield to zugzwang in the game Van der Wiel – Van Wely, Brussels, 1993.
Black has the opposition and uses it to full advantage.

1...g5!

The point is that 2 ♖xf6? fails immediately to mate, 2...g4#, while 2 ♖xg5 also leads to a quick mate by 2...♖h6+ 3 ♕h4 (3 ♕h6 ♕h5#) 3...♖h5 4 f5 ♖xh4#.

2 fxg5 ♖xh6 3 gxh6

3...♖h5

The bishop is pinned. White only has one move left.

4 h7 ♔f4! 0-1

White is in zugzwang. If White promotes the pawn immediately, the rook simply captures it and the bishop remains pinned. Moving the king to g2 allows Black to capture the bishop at once, while keeping White’s advanced h-pawn under control. Black’s rook will capture the bishop and win both of White’s pawns. Then the king and rook vs king endgame will be an easy win for Black.

Z Zwischenzug

The German word zwischenzug is the term used in chess to describe an intermediate move. It is also called an intermezzo.

By changing the move order, quite often with an in-between forcing move or one that poses a very serious threat, an advantage can sometimes gained.

Here is an example from the game Chekhover – Kan, Leningrad, 1933.

White wants to play 1 ♖xa2 capturing Black’s queen, but if White plays this move first, then Black replies 1...fxe5 and after 2 ♖a1 ♖e8 the position would be very good. For the time being the pawn on e5 is protected while the passed pawn on c4 is extremely dangerous. So instead White first plays a zwischenzug.

1 ♕d5+!

Though the queen will still be lost, after this move White will pick up in return Black’s rook and queen. Notice White’s battery on the a8-h1 diagonal.

If Black now plays 1...♖xd5 then White gains a tempo with a second zwischenzug.

2 ♖xd5+

This captures the rook and keeps Black in check.

2...♔h8 3 ♖xa2

Finally White captures the queen on a2, the difference being that in this line White has won a rook. Black’s passed pawn on c4 can now be halted and easily captured with subsequent simplification to a winning endgame.

A slightly different move order would also net White a rook after 1 ♕d5+! ♔h8 2 ♖xa2 ♖xd5 3 ♖xd5. However, move order can sometimes make a significant difference.

The next example involves a zwischenzug in a checkmating combination. It is taken from the game Vladimirov – Haritimov, USSR, 1977.
White begins with a surprising tactical shot.

1 ♕f6+!

The queen sacrifice must be accepted. 1...♔f8 would not prolong the struggle due to the instant mate 2 ♕h8#.

1...♘xf6

Now White unleashes a splendid zwischenzug.

2 ♖c5+!

The move order is absolutely critical. Capturing immediately on f6 would lose. Black’s king could find safety by way of the d-file, in spite of a potential discovered check on that file.

2...♗xc5 3 gxf6+ ♔f8 4 ♕h8#

When it is used appropriately, the zwischenzug can be a very subtle yet important way of securing a winning advantage.

### Tactical Exercises

In these exercises, the side to move will be able to checkmate or gain a decisive advantage using a variety of tactics. If several variations are available, each should give a winning advantage. Some may lead to checkmate while others may lead to some other type of advantage. The exercises get progressively more complex. For more effective learning, chess pieces should be used to display the positions on a board with or without coordinates, as required.
Evaluation Symbols

The following symbols are used throughout this book.

+ check
# checkmate
x captures!
Good move
?
Bad move
!? Interesting move
?! Questionable move
± White is slightly better
|= White has the upper hand
= Black has the upper hand
+- Decisive advantage for White
++ Decisive advantage for Black
∞ Position is unclear
△ With the idea
 Better is
|| With compensation
△ White to move in Diagram
▼ Black to move in Diagram
1. Barcza – Simagin, Moscow, 1949. 1...a3+ 2 bxa3 e2 0-1

2. Unzicker – Sarapu, Siegen, 1970. 1 g8+ xg8 2 f7#

3. Em. Lasker – Bier, New York, 1892. 1 xe4+ xe4 2 xe4

4. Karpov – Stojanović, Valjevo, 2007. 1 xh6+ gxh6 2 g8#

5. Em. Lasker – Bird, Liverpool, 1890. 1 g5+ hxg5 2 h1#

6. Fischer – Kumo, Cicero, 1964. 1 xh7+ xh7 2 h5#

7. Messina – Ben Said, Tromsø, 2014. 1 d5+ e8 2 e6#

8. Breustedt – Brameyer, Bützow, 1969: 1 xh5+ xh5 2 h7#

9. De Souza Mendes – Fischer, Mar del Plata, 1959. 1...a8+ 2 b4 d2#

10. Madl – Peng, Azov, 1990. 1 xe6+ xe6 2 xe6#

11. Torre – Craske, Stockholm, 1969. 1 g8+ xg8 2 h6 Δ g7#

12. Nogueiras – Polugaevsky, Moscow, 1990. 1 g5+ h5 2 h5#

13. Stahlberg – Becker, Buenos Aires, 1944. 1 e1+ xe1 2 g3#

14. Capablanca – Em. Lasker, Havana, 1921. 1 xf8+ xf8 2 xh7#

15. Lputian – Wang Zili, Beijing, 1991. 1 h8+! xh8 2 xg6 1-0

16. Blackburne – Ipswich, 1873. 1 xg6+ hxg6 2 h3#

17. Rasuvaev – Konstantinopolsky, Moscow, 1966. 1...c6 2 xc6 c2+

18. Tleptsok – Georgiadis, Dubai, 2015. 1...e3 2 xe3 f5+

19. Starck – Berthold, Gera, 1962. 1 f2 g6 2 f7+ xf7 3 exf7#

20. Druganov – Panteleyev, correspondence game, 1955. 1...d1+ 2 xd1 e2+ 3 xe2 b3#

21. Torre – Alekhine, Seville, 1922. 1...hxh3! 2 gxh3 f2+ 3 g1 xh3#

22. Eggenberger – Schumacher, Basel, 1959. 1 d2! xd2 2 e7+ h8 3 f7#

23. Platz – Lampe, Halle, 1957. 1 xf6+ xf6 2 f1+ e7 3 g5#

24. Parr – Wheatcroft, London, 1938. 1 h5 xd7 2 g5+ h8 3 xh6#

25. Gygli – Henneberger, Zurich, 1941. 1...e2+ 2 h1 xg4 3 hxg4 h5+ 4 gxh5 h4#

26. Alekhine – Em. Lasker, Zurich, 1934. 1 f5+ h8 2 xg6 1-0 2...hxg6 3 h3+ h6 4 xh6#

27. Paramonov – Schechtmann, Moscow, 1961. 1 xe5 1-0 1...xe5 2 d8#

28. Capablanca – Morris, New York, 1911. 1 e7 xe7 2 xf5 e5 3 xh7+ xh7 4 h5#

29. Abrahams – Winter, London, 1946. 1 h5+ xh5 2 xf5+ h6 3 xe4 xe4 4 d7 1-0

30. Jakwerth – Meyer, Switzerland, 1990. 1...xf3+ 2 xf3 (2 xf3 g4#) 2...xc4#}

31. J. Polgar – Bjerring, Dresden, 1995. 1 g1+ 2 b2 a3+ 3 xa3 c1#

32. Stoltz – Pilnik, Satishabaden, 1952. 1 h3+ 2 f4 xf3+ 3 xf3 e5#

33. Tavernier – Grodner, Charleville, 1952. 1 h4+ 2 g4 f5+ 3 xf5 g2#

34. Pyhala – Perelstein, Warsaw, 1989. 1 h4 2 xe4 xg3+ 3 xg3 xe4+

35. Popov – Angelov, Sofia, 1961. 1 d7 xd7 2 d6+ e7 3 h6+ e8 4 g8#

36. Romanishin – Plaskett, London, 1977. 1 xd7 1-0 1...xd7 2 xg7#; 1...xd7 2 xf6 Δ xg7#

37. Stahlberg – Lundin, Stockholm, 1937. 1 d1 xc3 2 xd7+ xf6 3 bxc3 1-0

38. Uhlmann – Dely, Budapest, 1962. 1...g2+ 2 xg2 e1+ 0-1

39. Minić – Honfi, Yugoslavia, 1966. 1 a7 1-0 1...xd5 2 xa8+ d8 3 xd8+ xd8 4 xd8#; 1...xa7 2 xg8 3 xd8 3 xd8#
59. Uhlmann – Pähtz, Halle, 1984. 1 ♕xe8+ ♘xe8 2 ♘d8+ ♙f3+ 3 ♘g2±
60. Rodriguez – Molina, France, 2016. 1...♘e1+ 2 ♘c1 ♗e1+ 3 ♗d1 ♗h6+ 4 ♗b1 ♙d1#
196. Volkevich – Lyskov, Moscow, 1958. 1...\text{xd}5 \text{ex}d5 (1...\text{xc}2 2 \text{xe}7+ \text{h}7 3 \text{xc}2+) 2 \text{xe}8+ \text{xc}8 3 \text{xc}8+ \text{h}7 4 \text{h}8+! \text{hx}8 5 \text{g}6+ \text{h}7 6 \text{xe}7±

190. Hartston – Whiteley, England, 1974. 1 \text{g}8+ \text{f}8 2 \text{g}6+ \text{g}6 (2...\text{f}7 3 \text{xd}6 fxg3 4 \text{exe}7+ \text{f}8 5 \text{xf}7+ \text{g}8 6 \text{gx}3+ \text{h}8 7 \text{h}7#) 3 \text{exe}7+ \text{d}8 4 \text{bd}7#

191. Antonio – Dao, Kuala Lumpur, 2005. 1...\text{xe}g7+ \text{xe}g7 2 \text{d}5 \text{f}1-0 2...\text{ex}d5 3 \text{f}5+ \text{g}8 4 \text{h}6#; 2...\text{e}5 3 \text{xe}c7 \text{ex}d4 4 \text{xd}4+ \text{g}8 5 \text{xe}8±

192. Harika – Stefanova, Tehran, 2016. 1 \text{h}5 \text{h}8 (1...\text{ff}7 2 \text{xe}g7 \text{xe}g7 3 \text{d}5+) 2 \text{f}6 \text{xf}6 (2...\text{h}7 3 \text{xe}5 4 \text{d}7+) 3 \text{gx}f6 \text{xf}6 4 \text{d}5 \text{b}7 5 \text{xe}5±

193. Buczek – Maculewicz, Poland, 1993. 1...\text{xa}3 2 \text{xa}3 (2 \text{xe}3 \text{d}1+ 3 \text{xd}1) 2...\text{d}1+ 3 \text{xd}1 \text{xd}1#

194. Browne – Kovacs, Sarajevo, 1970. 1...\text{xe}7+! \text{xe}h7 2 \text{h}4+ \text{g}7 3 \text{h}6+ \text{h}7 4 \text{f}8#

195. Brethes – Vachier-Lagrave, Biel, 2012. 1...\text{f}3+ 2 \text{g}2 (2 \text{xf}3 \text{f}2+) 2...\text{xe}g3+ 3 \text{f}1 \text{g}1#

196. Browne – Damjanović, Venice, 1971. 1 \text{h}6+ \text{gx}h6 2 \text{f}6+ \text{h}7 3 \text{f}7+ \text{h}8 4 \text{f}6#

197. Holmes – Vavra, Prague, 1993. 1...\text{h}3+ 2 \text{gx}h3 (2 \text{g}1 \text{e}1) 2...\text{f}3+ 3 \text{g}1 \text{e}1+ 4 \text{h}2 \text{xf}2#

198. Svidler – Kramnik, Moscow, 2011. 1...\text{a}8+! \text{xa}8 (1...\text{e}8 2 \text{xe}8) 2...\text{xa}8+ \text{e}8 3 \text{xe}8#

199. Jackson – Marshall, London, 1899. 1...\text{f}4+ 2 \text{xf}4 (2 \text{gx}f4 \text{f}2+) 2...\text{e}7+ 3 \text{g}5 \text{xe}5#

200. Gligorić – Radoićić, Ljubljana, 1947. 1...\text{h}5+ \text{gx}h5 2...\text{hx}h5+ \text{h}6 3...\text{h}6#

201. Aronian – Kramnik, Monaco, 2011. 1...\text{f}4+ 2...\text{xf}4 2 \text{f}7+ 3 \text{g}6 3...\text{xc}6#

202. Taimanov – Eliskases, Buenos Aires, 1960. 1...\text{hx}h6+ \text{gx}h6 (1...\text{g}8 2 \text{h}8) 2...\text{g}6#

203. Ehvest – Kruppa, Lviv, 1985. 1...\text{h}8+ \text{e}7 2...\text{f}6+ 3...\text{xf}6 (2...\text{e}8 3 \text{h}8+ \text{d}7 4...\text{xd}8+ –; 2...\text{d}7 3...\text{xd}4+ \text{xe}8 4 \text{xd}8+ \text{xd}8 5...\text{h}8+ \text{e}6 6...\text{h}4 \text{xd}2 7...\text{b}4+ –) 3...\text{ex}f6+ 4 \text{d}6 (3...\text{d}7 4 \text{xd}4+ ++) 4...\text{xc}4 5...\text{b}3 1-0 5...\text{xf}5 6...\text{f}1+ \text{c}4 7...\text{xc}4+ \text{b}4 8...\text{xf}7+ \text{b}5 9...\text{xd}8++

204. Bosboom-Lanchava – A. Muzychuk, Calvi, 2004. 1...\text{xd}3+ 2...\text{xd}3 \text{e}3+ 3...\text{d}4 \text{c}5+ 4...\text{d}5 \text{d}3#

205. Lagha – Golombek, Leipzig, 1960. 1...\text{xf}2 2...\text{xf}2 \text{h}h2+ 3...\text{f}1 \text{d}2 Δ ...\text{g}2#

206. Wei Xuan – So, Singapore, 2007. 1...\text{f}4+ 2...\text{gg}5 (2 \text{h}3 \text{h}4) 2...\text{b}6 3...\text{h}3 \text{d}8#

207. Kasparov – Guseinov, USSR, 1976. 1...\text{ex}f7 2...\text{xf}7 3...\text{h}8 \text{h}4+ Δ 4...\text{g}5#

208. Caruana – Vavra, Rogatska Slatina, 2009. 1...\text{a}7+ 2...\text{d}6 3...\text{f}4+ \text{e}5 3...\text{xb}8+ 4...\text{d}7 4...\text{c}6#

209. Fichtl – Blatny, Bratislava, 1956. 1...\text{d}6+ 2...\text{xc}6 \text{g}1+ 3...\text{xe} g1/2-1/2

210. Kasparov – Gelfand, Linares, 1993. 1...\text{g}4! 1-0 1...\text{g}6 2...\text{e}6 \text{g}7 3...\text{xd}7+ \text{xd}7 4...\text{xd}7+ –

211. J. Polgar – Gdanski, Budapest, 1993. 1...\text{gg}6+ \text{hxg}6 2...\text{h}7+ \text{f}7 3...\text{h}8\text{h}8 4...\text{g}5+ \text{e}8 5...\text{h}8#

212. Smyslov – Benko, Monaco, 1969. 1...\text{g}5+ \text{f}6? (1...\text{f}8 2...\text{f}1 \text{e}5 3...\text{h}4) 2...\text{f}1 \text{b}3 2...\text{f}4 3...\text{h}3 1-0 Δ \text{f}7#

213. O’Kelly – Defosse, Belgium, 1936. 1...\text{xf}2+ 2...\text{xf}2 \text{g}4+ 3...\text{f}3 (3 \text{g}1 \text{e}3) 3...\text{e}4+ 4...\text{xe}4 \text{gf}6+ 5...\text{f}3 \text{e}5+ 6...\text{f}2 \text{fg}4+ 7...\text{g}1 \text{e}3#

214. Mackenzie – Mason, Paris, 1878. 1...\text{h}6+ \text{hx}h6 2...\text{hf}5+ \text{xf}5 3...\text{xf}5+ \text{h}5 4...\text{g}4+ \text{xf}4 5...\text{g}3+ \text{h}5 6...\text{e}2#

215. Driksna – Straunis, correspondence game, 1968. 1...\text{c}2+ 2...\text{xc}2 \text{b}3+ 3...\text{xb}3 (or 3...\text{xb}3; 3...\text{b}1 \text{xd}1+ 4...\text{c}1 \text{xc}1#)

3...\text{xd}1#

216. Harper – Keres, Vancouver, 1975. 1...\text{f}3+ 2...\text{gf}3 (2...\text{f}2 \text{d}4+ 3...\text{g}3 [3...\text{e}2 \text{d}2] 3...\text{h}4; 2...\text{h}1 \text{h}2) 2...\text{g}3+ 3...\text{g}2 \text{d}2 0-1 Δ 4...\text{g}2#
1... e1? 2 h2 (2 f1 xg2#) 2... h1+ 3 xh1 (3 xh1 xg2#) 3... h3+ 4 g1 xg2#

238. Chigorin – Znosko-Borowski, Kiev, 1903. 1 e7+ 8 xxe7? (1... xe7 2 xe7 e6 3 xe6 xe6 [3... xe6 4 d8+ e8 5 xe8#] 4 d7+; 1... h8 2 xg6+ –) 2 d8+ e8 3 f8+ 1-0 3... xf8 4 xf8#

239. Amanov – Sanjeev, USSR, 1981. 1... xe3 2 fx3 (2 xe3 xf3+ 3 h1 xe3 4 e1 f4 5 e2 [5... e7 g3 6 e1 f2+] 5... e5+) 2... f2+ 3 h1 e5 4 g4 h5 5 e2 g3 0-1 6... h2#

240. Chudinovskih – Milyukovski, USSR, 1989. 1 xe6! fx6 (1... xe6 2 xg7+ h8 3 xh7+ g8 4 h8#) 2 xg7+ h8 3 xh7+ (3 e2+) 3... g8 4 g7+ h8 5 g6+ 0-0 e2 h2 6 g3+ 1-0 6... e5 7 a5 ex5+ f6 f8 a6 xf6#

241. Andres – Perez, Havana, 1987. 1 xd7 xd7 2 f6+ h6 (2... g8 3 e7+ xe7 4 dxe7 e8 5 d8+ 3 g5) 3 g5+ h5 4 f4+ (Also good is 4 g4+ xg4 5 fxg4+ xg4 6 d7+) 4... h4 5 h2 f2 6 g3+ a3 g3 7 g2 1-0 8 h1+ 1-0

242. Andreev – Cserna, Budapest, 1984. 1 h6+ h8 (1... gxh6 2 gxh6 g5 3 xg5#) 2 xg7+! xg7 3 d4+ f6 (3... f6 4 gxh6+ h8 5 g8+ xg8 6 g7#) 4 gxh6+ h8 (4... xh6 5 e3#) 5 g8+ xg8 6 x7#

243. Soozankar – Kulkarni, Dubai, 2015. 1... xh3 2 xg6 (2 gxh3 xg1#) 2... xh2 3 xh2 xh6 4 g3 (4... f1 h7+ +) 4... h7+ 5 g2 xg1 6 xg1 (6 gxh4 xh2 7 fxe5 5 ex5+ 6... fxg3+ 3

244. Lind – Gulbrandsen, Hamar, 1979. 1... f3+ 2 gx3 f3+ 3 g2 (3 h1 a3#) 3... a3 f3+ 4 a3 g3 (4 a3 xh6+ 5 a3 g3 4 h4#) 4... h6 5 xg5 g8! 6 x6 xf6 xg5+ 7 xg5 xg5+ 8 xh3 a2#

245. Jeromin – Gaponov, Kislovodsk, 1988. 1... f7! h8 (1... xh7 2 h7+ e6 3 f5+ 4 xe5 4 xe7+ xf4 5 e4+ g5 6 a7+ h7 4 g7 5 b5 6 a7+ h7 5 f3+ 5 h4 9... 8 h3#; 1... xh7 2 h7+ 8 h8 3 g8#) 2 g6+ 8 f8 3 h7+ xh7 4 8 g8#

246. Kasparov – Ribli, Tbilisi, 1989. 1 d8! xh5 (1... xd8 2 d5±) 2 d6 xf2 3 d5 e8 a4 xa4 (4... f5+ 5 g1 b1+ 6 g2 e4+ 7 3 f3 8 g4 9 f1+ 9 g3 10 f3 11 e3 c1+ 12 f2±) 5 d7 e6#

247. Jonov – Zelnin, USSR, 1980. 1 xg5 xg5 2 a6 x7 f7 (2... gxh6 3... h8+) 7 g7! xh7 5 6 xf6+ 7 g7 6 f8+ 8 xf7 9 g7+ e7+ 8 3 h7+ g8+ 4 x7+ e8 5 h8+! xh8 6 g8+ 7 d7 e6#

248. Pogorelov – Janocha, Prague, 1988. 1... xg5 2 f6+ h6 3 h8+ g7 4... f8+ 1 5 xg5 5... f8+ 6 g7+ 7 xg6+ 1-0 2 d4 e5 3 e8+! f7 3... xe8 4 g7# 4 g7+ e8 5... f8#

249. Makropoulos – Kállai, Calimanesti, 1984. 1 g3 g3... 2 g2 a6 3... d8 4... xe8 5... f8+ 6... xe8 7... f7#) 2... g3 3... e6 4... g6+ 5... xh6+ a6 6... h6# 4 g3 1-0 4... g8 5 g8+ g8 6... e6#

250. Rutschov – Eidelson, Tbilisi, 1976. 1... f1+ 2... a6 3... g8+ 4... 3... f1 4... 3... f1+ 3... e1#) 3... exf1 a2# 3

251. Katali, Study, 9th Century. 1 e3 g1 (1 e1 2 c3+ ++) 2 f5 3 d4 4 f4 Zugzwang. 3... c4 4... g3 d4 5 e1+ (or 5... f2++)

252. Luoma – Parkkari, Finland, 1990. 1... h3+ 2 cxb3 (2... bx3 1a1#) 2... c8+ 0-1 3 c5 xc5#

253. Björqvist – Timman, correspondence game, 1971. 1 h5 gxh5 (1... hxh5 2... h7#) 2... e8 fxe6 (2... e6 3... g5+ g7 4... xg5#) 3... g5+ f7 4... g6#

254. Bauer – Goeßner, Berlin, 1956. 1... xh6+ g6 (1... xh6 2... g5+ h7 3... h4+ g6 3... h5 4... xh5#) 4 f5# 2... g8+ 3... f5#

255. Przepiórka – Ahues, Kecskemét, 1927. 1... d1+ 2... g2 (2... f2 f3+ ++) 2... g1 3... xg1 f3+ ++ A 4... 7... e5

256. Sämisc – Reimann, Bremen, 1927. 1 e7! xe7 1... xe7 2... f7#; 1... xe7 2... d7++
281. Mamedyarov – Galstian, Peniscola, 2002. 1 ♚f7+ ♙xf7 (1...♚h8 2 ♛h7#) 2 ♛h7+ ♙f8 (2...♕f6 3 ♞e4#) 3 ♙xh6+ ♙g8 (3...♗f7 4 ♚d6 5 ♙xd5 6 ♙xd5#) 4 ♚d6+ ♙d5 5 ♙xd5#.

282. Dzagnidze – Samaganova, Tromsø, 2014. 1 ♙e8+ ♙f8 (1...♚h7 2 ♙f6+ ♙g7 3 ♙g8#) 2 ♙f6+ ♙d8 (2...♗g7 3 ♙g8#) 3 ♙xd8+ ♗e7 (3...♗g7 4 ♙g8#) 4 ♙e8#.

283. Boleslavsky – Makogonov, Moscow, 1940. 1 ♙h6+ ♙g6 (1...♚xh6 2 ♙xf6#; 1...♚h8 2 ♙xf6+ ♙g7 3 ♙xg7#) 2 ♙hx5+ ♙hx6 3 ♙xf6+ ♙hx5 4 ♙h1+ ♙g4 5 ♘f3#.

284. Polugaevsky – Nezhmetdinov, Sochi, 1958. 1...♗d5+ 2 ♙xd5 ♙cxd5+ 3 ♙h5 ♙b8+ 4 ♙a5 ♙c6+ 5 ♙a6 ♙b6# (or 5...♗c5#).

285. Ushenina – Velcheva, Kasadasi, 2006. 1 ♙e8+ ♙e7 2 ♙d5! ♗f6 (2...♗d6 3 ♙xe7+ ♙e6 4 ♙xe8) 3 ♙xe7+ ♙d6 4 ♗e5+ ♙xe5 (4...♕xe5 5 ♙c5#) 5 ♙c5+ ♙xe5 6 ♙xe5#.

286. Fähndrich – Mandelbaum, Vienna, 1887. 1 ♙f4+ ♙f6 2 ♙e5+ ♙g5 (2...♗f7 3 ♙h7+ ♙g8 4 ♙g7#) 3 ♙h5+ ♙hx5 4 ♙g7+ ♙h4 5 ♙xf5+ ♙xf6 6 ♙g3#.

287. Gligorić – Averbakh, Titovo Uzice, 1970. 1 ♙h6 ♙d7 (1...♕xh6 2 ♙d4+ ♙g8 3 ♙d5+ ♙g7 4 ♙xc6± ♛h7+) 2 ♙e6 ♙xe6 3 ♙d7 ♙d6 4 ♙d8+ ♙xd8 5 ♙xd8+ ♙g8 6 ♙xb6 1-0.

288. Eckart – Tarrasch, Nuremberg, 1888. 1...♗xd5 2 ♙xf6+ (♔2 ♙xf6) 2...♗xf6! 3 ♙xf6 (3 ♙e3 ♙xc2=) 3...♗c4+ 4 ♙g1 ♙e2+ 5 ♙f1 ♙c1+ 6 ♙g1 ♙e1#.

289. Friedmann – Thomson, Canada, 1949. 1 ♙b6+ ♙b8 (1...♕xb6 2 ♙a2+ ♙b8 3 ♙e5+ ♙c8 4 ♙a8#) 2 ♙h2 ♙hxh2 3 ♙e5+ ♙xe5 4 ♙d7+ ♙c8 5 ♙xe5 1-0 5...♕d8 6 ♙xg1; 5...♕e2 6 ♙e7.

290. Heppner – Goode, London, 1963. 1 ♙xg5+ ♙hxg5 (1...♕g6 2 ♙e4+ ♙xg5 3 ♙xg7+ ♙h5 4 ♙f3+ ♙g4 5 ♙xe4#) 2 ♙e4+ ♙h6 (2...♗f5 3 ♙xf5+ +++) 3 ♙h8+ ♙xh8 4 ♙h7#.

291. Fiegler – Dubinin, USSR, 1978. 1...♕e2+ 2 ♙h1 ♙xg3+ 3 ♙g1 (3 ♙f3) 4 ♙xf1; 3 ♙xg3 ♙h3+ 4 ♙g1 ♙xg2#) 3...♕e2+ 4 ♙h1 ♙xg2+ 5 ♙xg2 ♙g4+ 6 ♙h1 ♙f3#.

292. Popovici – Podgorny, Romania, 1979. 1 ♙xf6 ♙xe3 2 ♙f8+ ♙xf8 3 ♙xf8+ ♙h7 4 ♙e4+ ♙g6 5 ♙h1 ♙d4 6 ♙f7+ ♙g7 7 ♙h5 1-0 7...♔g3 8 hxg6+ ♙xg6 9 ♙xd7 exd5 10 ♙xg6+ ♙xg6 11 ♙g8+-

293. Westerinen – Sigurjónsson, New York, 1977. 1 ♙xg7+ ♙xg7 2 ♙d8+ ♙h8 (2...♗f7 3 ♙h5#) 3 ♙g8+ ♙xg8 4 ♙f6+ ♙g7 5 ♙xg7+ ♙g8 6 ♙xd4+ ♙f7 7 ♙f1+ (7 ♙g7+ ♙f8 8 ♙xb2 ♙xb2 9 ♙xh7#) 7...♕e7 8 ♙xb2 1-0 8...♕xb2 9 ♙c4 ♙b4 10 ♙b3 ♙d4+ 11 ♙e2±.

294. Gal – Hardicsay, Hungary, 1977. 1...♗xh2 2 ♙d4 (2 ♙xb2 ♙xe1+) 2...♕xe1+ 4 ♙h2 (4...♗f1 3 ♙b1 4 ♙xf1 dxc2 7 ♙c1 ♙b3++) 4...♕d3 5 ♙b1 dxc2 6 ♙xe1 ♙b3 0-1 7 ♙c1 ♙b2 8 ♙xc2 ♙b1#.

295. Tal – Suetin, Tbilisi, 1969. 1 ♙xe5 ♙dxe5 2 ♙xf7+ ♙d7 (2...♕f8 3 ♙h6#; 2...♕d8 3 ♙f8#+) 3 ♙f5+ ♙c6 4 ♙e4+ ♙d5 5 ♙xd5+ 1-0 5...♕d7 6 ♙f6+ ♙e7 7 ♙d5+ ♙d7 8 ♙f3 ♙xf8 9 ♙xf7#.

296. Mamedyarov – Timofeev, Moscow, 2004. 1 ♙g6+ ♙hxg6 (1...♕xg6 2 ♙h8+) 1...fxg6 2 ♙xd5 ♙xd5 3 ♙e4+ ♙xe4 4 ♙h5 3 ♙xd4+ 1...♕xd4 4 ♙xd7 ♙xg2 5 ♙xe5 ♙d4+ 6 ♙c6 ♙xc6 7 ♙xa8+ ♙h8 8 ♙bl 9 ♙f4+ ♙xf4 10 ♙xg3+ ♙xg3 11 ♙g4+ ♙e2 12 ♙xf7+ ♙xf7 13 ♙h4+ ♙g6 14 ♙xg6+ ♙f7 15 ♙e8 16 ♙f8#.

297. Achang – Rodriguez, Pinar del Rio, 1987. 1 ♙f5+ (1 ♙b3 also wins. 1...fxe5 [1...♗xa1 2 ♙f5+] 2 ♙xh7#) 1...♕xf5 2 ♙g7 gxh5 3 ♙h6 ♙xh6 4 ♙g6+ ♙xg6 5 ♙xe5 ♙h7 6 ♙e7 7 ♙g5# 2 ♙b3 ♙xa1 (2...fxe5 3 ♙e5±) 3 ♙xg8+ ♙g8 4 ♙xg8+ ♙h8 5 ♙f7# 4 ♙xh6+ ♙h8 (4...♕h7 5 ♙xf8#) 5 ♙xf8+ ♙h7 6 ♙g6#.

298. de Wit – Piket, Holland, 1983. 1 ♙xe7+ ♙xe7 (1...♕xe7 2 ♙d6+ ♙d8 3 ♙xb7+ ♙e8 4 ♙g6+ ♙f7 5 ♙xf7+ ♙xf7 6 ♙h7+ ♙f8 7 ♙h8+ ♙g8 8 ♙h6+ ♙e8 [8...♕e7 9 ♙g7+ ♙e8 10 ♙f8#]) 9 ♙xg8+ ♙e7 10 ♙g5# 2 ♙g5+ ♙f7 2...♕e8 3 ♙d6# 3 ♙h2 ♙h8 4 ♙d6+ (4 ♙h7+) 4...♕g8 5 ♙xh8+ ♙xh8 6 ♙f6+ ♙g8 7 ♙h1 0-1 ♙h8#.
314. Hou – Wu Jenjun, Wuxi, 2006. 1 ♕xg5+ ♕g6 1...hxg5 2 ♕h8+ ♕g6 3 ♕h6#) 2...hxg5 2...hxg5 3 ♕g5 4 ♕g5+ ♕h4 5 ♕h5 6 ♕g4#

315. Smer – Spassky, Antwerp, 1955. 1...♕h4+ 2 ♕xh4 (2...♕e4+ 3 ♕f2 ♕f3+ 4 ♕g2 ♕f4#) 2...♕h7+ 3 ♕g5 (3...♕f5+ 4 ♕g5 ♕g7+! 5 ♕h2 ♕g6+ 6 ♕h4 ♕g4#) 3...♕f6+ 4 ♕g4 ♕f5+ 5 ♕g5! 6 ♕h2 ♕g6+ 7 ♕h4 ♕g4#

316. Ljubojević – Padevsky, Nice, 1974. 1 ♕f6+ ♕xf6 2 ♕xf7+ ♕g7 3 ♕xg5+ hxg5 4 ♕h6 5...♕g8 (4...♕f8 5 hxg7#) 5 hxg7+ ♕h6 6 ♕xh3#

317. Spielman – Dyckhoff, Munich, 1921. 1 ♕d4 ♕g8 (1...♕xf6 2 ♕xf6+ ♕g8 3 ♕g7#) 2...♕g6+ 3 ♕f8 3...♕e8 4 ♕f7+ 5...♕d8 5 ♕g8+ ♕f8 6 ♕xf8#.

318. Fischer – Bolbochán, Stockholm, 1962. 1 ♕xe8+ ♕xe8 2 ♕xg8+ (2...♕e6+ ♕f8 3 ♕c8+ ♕d8#) 2...♕f8 (2...♕xf8 3 ♕e6+ ♕e7 4 ♕e8#) 3...♕e6+ ♕e7 4 ♕c8#

319 Anand – Polugaevsky, Monaco, 1992. 1 ♕g4 (Also winning is 1 ♕g6 ♕xg6 2 ♕xg6 ♕h3 3 ♕xh6#) 1...♕d7 1...♕f7 2...♕h7 3...♕xh7 4 ♕g8#) 2...♕g8+ 3...♕h7 (2...♕xg8 3...♕xg8#) 3...♕g7+ ♕xg7 4...♕xg7#

320. Vega – Abreu, Cuba, 1996. 1...♕c3+ 2 ♖xc3 ♖xc3 3...♕e1 ♕xa2 (Δ...♕xb3) 4...♕xa2 ♕a5+ 5...♕b1 ♕xb3 6...♕xb3 ♕xb3+ 7...♕c1 (7...♕c2 ♕a2+ 8...♕c1 ♕b2#) 7...♕a1+ 8...♕c2 ♕b2#

321. Müller – Demian, Romania, 1983. 1 ♕xa7 ♕xa7 1...♕f7 2...♕a6 ♕c6 3...♕b3 ♕f5 4...♕xb6+ 5...♕xb6+ 6...♕xb6+ 6...♕xb6+ (6...♕xb6+ ♕a8+) 2...♕a5+ ♕xa5 3...♕b8 3...♕c8+ ♕c7 3...♕xa8 4...♕a6+ ♕b8 5...♕b7# 4...♕c8+ ♕xc8 5...♕a6+ ♕b8 5...♕b7# 6...♕b7#) 3...♕a6+ ♕b8 4...♕b7#

322. Smyslov – Steiner, Groningen, 1946. 1 ♕d8 ♕f7 1...♕xd8 2...♕xd8+ ♕xf7 3...♕e5#; 1...♕h6 2...♕ex8+ ♕h7 3...♕f6+ ♕xf6 4...♕f7+ ♕h8 5...♕e8#) 2...♕e5+ ♕f6 (2...♕g8 3...♕xe8#) 3...♕d6#

323. Bronstein – Kotov, Moscow, 1946. 1 ♕h6 ♕f6 (1...♕f6 2...♕xg7+ ♕g8 3...♕xf6+ ♕f7 4...♕xe6+ ♕e8 5...♕xe7#) 1...♕f6 2...♕xg7+ ♕g8 3...♕xf6#) 2...♕xg7+ ♕xg7 3...♕xg7#

324. Cramling – Machlik, Tromso, 2014. 1...♕f5 gx6 (1...♕g8 2...♕h7+ ♕f7 3...♕h7+ ♕f4 4...♕xg7#) 2...♕xh6+ ♕g8 (2...♕h7 3...♕xh7#) 3...♕g4+ ♕f7 4...♕g7#

325. Najdorf – Gliksberg, Łódź, 1929. 1...♕xe6 ♕xe8 (1...♕xe6 2...♕xe6+ [2...♕xe6 3...♕xe6#] 2...♕xe6 3...♕xe6#; 1...♕xe8! 2...♕xe8+ ♕e3 3...♕xe6#) 2...♕xe8+ 3...♕e6 3...♕xe6#) 1...♕xe6+ 3...♕e6 4...♕xf8#

326. Feigen – Solodovnichenko, Russia, 1996. 1...♕g6+! hxg6 (1...♕g7 2...♕xf8 ♕xf8 3...♕xf8 4...♕f8 5...♕e8+ ♕f7 6...♕f7+ ♕g8 7...♕g8+ ♕f7 8...♕f7+ ♕g6 9...♕g6+ ♕h7 10...♕h7#)

327. Koltanowski – Schoenmann, The Hague, 1928. 1...♕f6+ ♕xf6 (1...♕g8 2...♕h6 ♕xf6 3...♕xf6+ ♕h8 4...♕xf6#) 2...♕xf6+ ♕g8 (2...♕g8 3...♕h6 4...♕g7#) 3...♕h6+ ♕g8 4...♕f5 5...♕h6#

328. Hübner – Kaplan, Houston, 1974. 1...♕f5+ ♕f6 (1...♕g6 2...♕g8+ ♕h5 3...♕e8#; 1...♕f7 2...♕e8+ ♕f6 3...♕f7 4...♕g6 4...♕e8#) 2...♕f8+ ♕g5 (2...♕g6 3...♕g7+ ♕h5 4...♕e8#) 3...♕h6+ ♕g4 4...♕h4#

329. Berescu – Gavrilov, Romania, 1996. 1...♕xe3! 2...♕xd8+ 3...♕xd8 3...♕h1 3...♕xe3+; 3...♕c1 ♕h5 4...♕g4+ 5...♕xf1 6...♕h2 6...♕d6+; 5...♕d5 6...♕d1+ 6...♕h2 6...♕d6+; 5...♕h5 6...♕d1+ 6...♕d1+ 6...♕d1+

330. Andreikin – Karjakin, Moscow, 2010. 1...♕f6+ ♕h8 1...♕g7 2...♕h5+ ♕g8 3...♕h7# 2...♕g4+ ♕f6 (2...♕g6 3...♕h6; 2...♕xd4 3...♕xf6+ 4...♕h6#) 3...♕xf6+ 4...♕xf6 (3...♕g8 4...♕h6#) 4...♕xf6+ ♕g8 5...♕h6#

331. Panno – Spassky, Gothenburg, 1955. 1...♕xh7+ ♕g8 (1...♕xh7 2...♕xf5+ ♕xf6 2...♕g8 3...♕g7#) 3...♕xf6+ ♕g8 4...♕g7#) 2...♕h8+! ♕xh8 3...♕xe5+ ♕f6 (3...♕g8 4...♕g7#) 4...♕xf6+ ♕g8 5...♕g7#

332. Kozak – Domanov, Elista, 1997. 1...♕e3+ 2...♕h1 (2...♕f3 3...♕e4+ 3...♕e2 4...♕c2#; 2...
333. Anand – Tischyay, Coimatore, 1987. 1...

334. Spraggett – Rousseau, Montreal, 1981. 1...

335. Fischer – Weinberger, Milwaukee, 1957. 1...

336. Carlsen – Diamant, Chalkidiki, 2003. 1...

337. Taimanov – Bazan, Buenos Aires, 1960. 1...

338. Keres – Alexandrescu, Munich, 1936. 1...

339. Schulten – Morphy, New York, 1857. 1...

340. Grischuk – Sokolov, Bled, 2002. 1...

341. Li – Hao, Yerevan, 2006. 1...

342. Capablanca – Masyutin, Kiev, 1914. 1...

343. Eljanov – Langheidrich, Balatonlelle, 2000. 1...

344. Gross – Hort, USSR, 1975. 1...

345. Wehnert – Liess, Sassnitz, 1962. 1...

346. Andruet – Abramovic, Torcy, 1989. 1...

347. Warmländer – Krasenkow, Berlin, 1990. 1...

348. Müller – Meher, GDR, 1989. 1...

349. Suttmuller – Tonoli, Brabant, 1990. 1...

350. Short – Biyiasis, Hastings, 1980. 1...
376. Bagirov – Gufeld, USSR, 1973. 1...
381. Giese – Alekhine, correspondence game, 1905: 1...
400. Tal – Koblencs, Jürmala, 1976. 1 f6
♖xe2 (1...♗xf6 2 ♕xd6+ ♕c7 3 ♕xc7+ [3
♗f4! ♕xd6 4 ♗xd6+ ♔c8 5 ♗xh2 fxg6 6 e5+-]
3...♔xc7 4 ♗f4+; 1...gxf6 2 g7 ♖g2 [2...♖xe2 3
g8♕ ♖xd2 4 ♕xe8+ ♕c8 5 ♗a7+ ♔xa7
(5...♔b7 6 ♕xe7+ ♕c7 [6...♔c6 7 ♖xd2+-] 7
♕xc7+ ♔xc7 ♖xd2+-)) 6 ♕xe7+ ♕b7 (6...♔b6
7 ♖xd2 d5 8 exd5 ♕c4 9 ♕xf6+-) 7 ♕xb7+
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