

Gambittales — Activity Book

A Spark & Anvil activity book — puzzles, questions, and fun from Gambittales.

Write in the book, circle your answers, and check the Answer Key at the back.

1. How the Pieces Move

Circle the correct answer

1. How does a rook move?

(A) One square in any direction (B) In straight lines — along rows and columns (C) In an L-shape (D) Diagonally only

2. How does a bishop move?

(A) One square at a time in any direction (B) Straight up and down only (C) Diagonally, any number of squares (D) In an L-shape

3. How does the queen move?

(A) Only in an L-shape (B) Only one square at a time (C) Straight OR diagonally, any number of squares (D) Only diagonally

4. How does the knight move?

(A) Straight lines only (B) Any number of squares straight (C) Diagonally only (D) In an L-shape (two then one, or one then two)

5. The knight is special because it can —

(A) move any distance (B) jump over other pieces (C) move twice per turn (D) capture the king

6. How far can a king move in one turn?

(A) One square in any direction (B) Any number of squares straight (C) In an L-shape (D) Any number of squares diagonally

Write the answer

7. How does a pawn normally move forward?

Answer: _____

8. On its VERY FIRST move, a pawn may move —

Answer: _____

9. How does a pawn CAPTURE?

Answer: _____

10. Which piece can NEVER move diagonally?

Answer: _____

Match each question to its answer

1. Which piece always stays on one color square? →
2. A knight on an empty board in the center can move to how many squares? →
3. Can a rook jump over a piece in its path? →
4. Which piece moves like BOTH a rook and a bishop? →
5. A bishop on a light square can move to — →

- (A) 8
 - (B) No — it is blocked by any piece in the way
 - (C) other light squares only
 - (D) The bishop
 - (E) The queen
-

2. Board, Setup & Notation

Circle the correct answer

11. A chessboard has how many squares in total?
(A) 32 (B) 64 (C) 81 (D) 100
12. The columns on a chessboard are called —
(A) rows only (B) diagonals (C) files (labeled a–h) (D) ranks
13. The rows on a chessboard are called —
(A) ranks (numbered 1–8) (B) columns (C) files (D) diagonals
14. Each square is named by —
(A) its rank then its file (like 4e) (B) a single number (C) its color (D) its file letter then its rank number (like e4)
15. When setting up, the bottom-right corner square for each player should be —
(A) always empty (B) a dark square (C) the king's square (D) a light square
16. Where does the white queen start?
(A) On the light square (d1) — 'queen on her color' (B) In the corner (C) Next to a rook (D) On a dark square

Write the answer

17. In notation, the letter 'N' stands for which piece?

Answer: _____

18. In notation, 'K' stands for —

Answer: _____

19. The move 'e4' means —

Answer: _____

20. In notation, an 'x' means —

Answer: _____

Match each question to its answer

1. The symbol '+' after a move means — →

2. The symbol '#' means — →

3. 'O-O' in notation means — →

4. 'O-O-O' means — →

5. How many files does a chessboard have? →

(A) queenside castling

(B) kingside castling

(C) 8

(D) check

(E) checkmate

3. Check, Checkmate & Stalemate

Circle the correct answer

21. What does 'check' mean?

(A) The game is a draw (B) The king has been captured (C) The king is under attack and must be made safe (D) A pawn reached the end

22. What is the goal of a chess game?

(A) To checkmate the opponent's king (B) To capture all pawns (C) To take the most pieces (D) To reach the last row

23. What is checkmate?

(A) A pawn promotes (B) Both kings are attacked (C) The king moves twice (D) The king is in check and has no legal way to escape

24. Which is NOT a legal way to escape check?

(A) Blocking the attack (B) Ignoring it and moving another piece elsewhere (C) Moving the king to safety (D) Capturing the attacking piece

25. The three ways to get out of check are move, block, or —

(A) promote a pawn (B) offer a draw (C) castle through the check (D) capture the attacking piece

26. What is stalemate?

(A) When a pawn promotes (B) A player has NO legal move but is NOT in check — it's a draw (C) A checkmate (D) A win for the player with more pieces

Write the answer

27. Stalemate results in —

Answer: _____

28. Can you ever leave your own king in check after your move?

Answer: _____

29. A king in check with an escape square is —

Answer: _____

30. The difference between checkmate and stalemate is —

Answer: _____

Match each question to its answer

1. If you are winning with lots of pieces, you should be careful NOT to — →

2. Is the king ever actually captured in chess? →

3. A move that gives check is written with — →

4. If your king is in check from a bishop far away, one option is to — →

5. You may NOT castle — →

(A) accidentally stalemate the enemy king

(B) while your king is in check

(C) block the diagonal with another piece

(D) a '+' symbol

(E) No — the game ends at checkmate, before capture

4. Piece Values & Trades

Circle the correct answer

31. Roughly how many points is a pawn worth?

(A) 9 (B) 5 (C) 1 (D) 3

32. A knight is worth about —

(A) 5 points (B) 3 points (C) 1 point (D) 9 points

33. A bishop is worth about —

(A) 1 point (B) 9 points (C) 3 points (D) 5 points

34. A rook is worth about —

(A) 9 points (B) 5 points (C) 1 point (D) 3 points

35. A queen is worth about —

(A) 9 points (B) 1 point (C) 3 points (D) 5 points

36. Trading a knight (3) for a rook (5) is —

(A) a good trade — you gain about 2 points (B) an even trade (C) against the rules
(D) a bad trade

Write the answer

37. Winning a rook for a bishop or knight is called —

Answer: _____

38. An 'even trade' means you and your opponent give up pieces of —

Answer: _____

39. Deliberately giving up material for a bigger advantage is called a —

Answer: _____

40. Accidentally losing a piece for nothing is a —

Answer: _____

Match each question to its answer

1. If you can win a queen (9) for a rook (5), you should usually — →

2. When you are AHEAD in material, trading pieces (not pawns) usually — →

3. When you are BEHIND in material, you usually want to — →

4. Two minor pieces (3+3=6) are generally worth more than — →

5. The king's fighting value in the endgame is roughly — →

(A) about 4 points (it becomes an active piece)

(B) a single rook (5)

(C) helps you, simplifying toward a win

(D) make the trade — you gain about 4 points

(E) avoid trades and keep pieces for chances

5. The Pin

Circle the correct answer

41. What is a pin in chess?

(A) A move that captures two pieces (B) An attack that freezes a piece because a more valuable piece is behind it (C) A type of castling (D) A way to promote a pawn

42. Which pieces can create a pin?

(A) The knight and pawn (B) The rook, bishop, and queen (the line pieces) (C) Only the queen (D) Only the king

43. An 'absolute pin' is when the piece behind the pinned piece is —

(A) the king (B) a pawn (C) a rook (D) another bishop

44. A 'relative pin' is when the piece behind is —

(A) a valuable piece (not the king) (B) a pawn only (C) the king (D) empty space

45. Why is a pinned piece a good target to ATTACK again?

(A) It gives check (B) It turns into a queen (C) It often can't move away, so you can pile up on it (D) It becomes invisible

46. Sir Pinwell embodies which tactic?

(A) The skewer (B) Castling (C) The fork (D) The pin

Write the answer

47. A bishop pins a knight to the king. The knight —

Answer: _____

48. The best way to BREAK a pin is often to —

Answer: _____

49. A rook on an open file pins an enemy bishop to the enemy rook behind it. This is a —

Answer: _____

50. Pins are powerful because a pinned piece —

Answer: _____

Match each question to its answer

1. If your knight is pinned to your king by a bishop, a good idea is to — →
2. A pin can set up a bigger tactic by — →
3. Which piece can NEVER be the one doing the pinning? →
4. A pinned pawn that would normally capture — →
5. Recognizing a pin helps you — →

- (A) challenge or block the bishop
 - (B) still cannot expose its king (absolute pin)
 - (C) both create them and avoid falling into them
 - (D) The knight
 - (E) freezing a defender so you can win another piece
-

6. The Fork

Circle the correct answer

51. What is a fork?

- (A) A piece that can't move (B) A castling move (C) One piece attacking two (or more) enemy pieces at the same time (D) A way to promote

52. Which piece is famous for forking because it can attack in many directions at once?

- (A) The bishop (B) The pawn (C) The rook (D) The knight

53. A 'royal fork' attacks the king and —

- (A) two pawns (B) a rook and a bishop (C) nothing else (D) the queen at the same time

54. Why is a fork so effective?

- (A) The opponent can only save ONE of the attacked pieces (B) It ends the game instantly (C) It promotes a pawn (D) It gives you two moves

55. A pawn can fork too — by attacking —

- (A) the whole back rank (B) two pieces straight ahead (C) two pieces diagonally at once (D) nothing

56. The Twin Knights of Fork Hill embody which tactic?

- (A) The fork (B) The skewer (C) Castling (D) The pin

Write the answer

57. A fork that attacks the king AND wins material works because —

Answer: _____

58. Which fork is usually the most valuable?

Answer: _____

59. To spot forks, look for enemy pieces that are —

Answer: _____

60. A knight on a strong central square is dangerous because —

Answer: _____

Match each question to its answer

1. To AVOID being forked, keep your king and queen — →

2. A queen can fork because — →

3. A fork is a type of — →

4. If a knight forks your king and rook, you must — →

5. A defended piece can still be forked if — →

(A) double attack

(B) off squares a single enemy piece could attack together

(C) move the king, then you lose the rook

(D) the OTHER forked piece is more valuable or the fork gives check

(E) it attacks in many directions at once

7. The Skewer

Circle the correct answer

61. What is a skewer?

(A) A fork of two pawns (B) A pinned pawn (C) A way to castle (D) An attack forcing a valuable piece to move, exposing a less valuable one behind it

62. A skewer is often called —

(A) a fork (B) a 'reverse pin' (C) castling (D) a double check

63. Which pieces can make a skewer?

(A) Only the king (B) Only pawns (C) The knight and pawn (D) The rook, bishop, and queen (line pieces)

64. Lady Skewer embodies which tactic?

(A) The skewer (B) The fork (C) The pin (D) Castling

65. In a skewer, the front (attacked) piece is usually —

(A) more valuable than the piece behind (B) always a pawn (C) less valuable than the piece behind (D) the king only

66. A rook gives check to a king with the enemy queen behind it. This is a —
(A) skewer (the king must move, losing the queen) (B) stalemate (C) fork (D) pin

Write the answer

67. The difference between a pin and a skewer is —

Answer: _____

68. A skewer that gives check is especially strong because —

Answer: _____

69. To set up a skewer, you want two enemy pieces —

Answer: _____

70. A bishop skewers along —

Answer: _____

Match each question to its answer

1. A rook skewers along — →
2. If your king and queen are lined up on an open file, you risk a — →
3. A skewer wins material by — →
4. Can a knight create a skewer? →
5. A skewer of the king in front and a rook behind wins — →

- (A) the rook
 - (B) a file or rank
 - (C) forcing the front piece away so you capture the one behind
 - (D) skewer
 - (E) No — skewers need a straight or diagonal line
-

8. Discovered & Double Attacks

Circle the correct answer

71. What is a discovered attack?

- (A) A pinned piece (B) Moving one piece to unveil an attack from a piece behind it
(C) A pawn promotion (D) Attacking two pieces with one piece

72. A discovered attack is powerful because —

- (A) it ends the game (B) it promotes a pawn (C) the moving piece can ALSO make its own threat (D) it can't be stopped ever

73. A 'discovered check' is when the REVEALED piece —
(A) castles (B) gives check to the enemy king (C) captures a pawn (D) promotes
74. The most devastating discovered attack is a —
(A) double check (both the mover and the revealed piece give check) (B) single pin
(C) stalemate (D) pawn fork
75. Against a double check, the defender can ONLY —
(A) ignore it (B) capture one attacker (C) move the king (D) block one check
76. In a discovered attack, the piece that MOVES is usually —
(A) free to make its own threat or capture (B) frozen (C) captured automatically
(D) promoted

Write the answer

77. A discovered attack requires —
Answer: _____
78. Which piece behind is needed for a discovered attack down a file?
Answer: _____
79. Which piece behind is needed for a discovered attack along a diagonal?
Answer: _____
80. A discovered attack differs from a fork because —
Answer: _____

Match each question to its answer

1. The best discovered attacks let the MOVING piece — →
 2. If a discovered check also attacks the queen with the moving piece, you usually —
→
 3. Double check is unstoppable except by — →
 4. A discovered attack is a kind of — →
 5. To find discovered attacks, look for — →
 - (A) capture something valuable or give check
 - (B) win the queen
 - (C) double attack
 - (D) a king move
 - (E) your own line-piece hidden behind a piece that can move
-

9. Basic Checkmate Patterns

Circle the correct answer

81. A 'back-rank mate' happens when —

(A) a rook or queen checks a king trapped by its own pawns on the back row (B) two knights fork (C) the king castles (D) a pawn promotes

82. To prevent a back-rank mate, a common move is to —

(A) trade the queen (B) make 'luft' by advancing a pawn near the king (C) push all pawns (D) move the king to the center

83. A basic king-and-queen vs king mate works by —

(A) giving endless checks (B) using the queen to box the king to the edge, king supporting (C) stalemating the king (D) promoting a pawn

84. The biggest danger when mating with a queen is —

(A) losing the queen (B) a back-rank mate against you (C) running out of pawns (D) accidental stalemate

85. A king-and-rook vs king mate drives the king to —

(A) a corner of its own color (B) the middle file (C) the center (D) the edge of the board

86. The 'smothered mate' is delivered by a —

(A) rook (B) bishop (C) pawn (D) knight, when the king is boxed in by its own pieces

Write the answer

87. Two rooks can checkmate a lone king using a —

Answer: _____

88. A checkmate requires the king to be in check AND —

Answer: _____

89. Which is a common mating pattern with a queen supported by a king?

Answer: _____

90. A 'ladder mate' (two rooks) works because —

Answer: _____

Match each question to its answer

1. Learning basic mates is important so you can — →
 2. A back-rank weakness is created by — →
 3. The pattern where a queen mates on the g7/g2 square next to a castled king (supported) is a — →
 4. When you have king + queen vs king, you should NOT — →
 5. A checkmate can sometimes be delivered by a lone — →
 - (A) common attacking mate near the castled king
 - (B) pawn (upon promotion / with support), or any piece with no escape for the king
 - (C) convert winning material into an actual win
 - (D) a king castled behind un-moved pawns with no escape square
 - (E) put the queen a knight's-move away and then stalemate
-

10. Opening Principles

Circle the correct answer

91. A key opening principle is to —
 - (A) bring the queen out first
 - (B) move only pawns on the edge
 - (C) castle on move one
 - (D) control the center
92. You should develop your —
 - (A) knights and bishops toward the center early
 - (B) king first
 - (C) queen first
 - (D) rooks first
93. It is usually best to castle —
 - (A) on move 30
 - (B) only if attacked
 - (C) early, to make your king safe
 - (D) late or never
94. A common opening mistake is to —
 - (A) develop knights
 - (B) control the center
 - (C) castle
 - (D) bring the queen out too early
95. Moving the same piece many times in the opening is bad because —
 - (A) it wastes time (tempo) while other pieces sit idle
 - (B) it's illegal
 - (C) it promotes
 - (D) the piece gets tired
96. 'Development' in chess means —
 - (A) moving your king around
 - (B) promoting
 - (C) getting your pieces out to active squares
 - (D) capturing pawns

Write the answer

97. Which is a good developing FIRST move for White?

Answer: _____

98. A 'knight on the rim is dim' means —

Answer: _____

99. After developing minor pieces and castling, you should —

Answer: _____

100. Fighting for the center helps because central pieces —

Answer: _____

Match each question to its answer

1. Castling does two good things: king safety and — →
2. Opening principles are guidelines, so you should — →
3. Grabbing a pawn in the opening at the cost of development is — →
4. A good rule for the opening is to develop with — →
5. Trading a developed piece for an undeveloped one usually — →

- (A) a purpose, toward active central squares
 - (B) often risky — development usually matters more early
 - (C) helps you, since you keep the lead in development
 - (D) follow them but stay alert to tactics
 - (E) activating a rook
-

11. Spotting Tactics

Circle the correct answer

101. A good first question each move is —

(A) 'Are any enemy pieces undefended (loose)?' (B) 'How many pawns are left?' (C) 'Whose turn was it last?' (D) 'What color are the squares?'

102. The checklist 'checks, captures, threats' helps you —

(A) decide who moves first (B) set up the board (C) count material only (D) systematically find forcing moves

103. Forcing moves are valuable because they —

(A) can't be answered (B) end the game (C) are always safe (D) limit the opponent's replies

104. Before capturing, you should count —

(A) attackers vs defenders on the square (B) the moves played (C) the total pawns
(D) the clock only

105. A key habit is to ask after your intended move —

(A) 'How many pieces do I have?' (B) 'What color am I?' (C) 'Is it lunchtime?' (D)
'What is my opponent's best reply?'

106. Undefended enemy pieces near each other suggest a possible —

(A) draw (B) stalemate (C) castle (D) fork or double attack

Write the answer

107. Two enemy pieces lined up on a file or diagonal suggest a possible —

Answer: _____

108. Calculation means —

Answer: _____

109. The best moves to calculate FIRST are —

Answer: _____

110. A blunder-check before moving means —

Answer: _____

Match each question to its answer

1. Tactics appear most often when — →

2. 'Loose pieces drop off' (LPDO) reminds you to — →

3. If you see a strong tactic, you should still — →

4. Pattern recognition (from solving puzzles) helps you — →

5. A 'zwischenzug' (in-between move) is — →

(A) watch for undefended pieces, yours and theirs

(B) a surprising move (often a check) inserted before an expected recapture

(C) double-check the opponent's defensive resources

(D) spot familiar tactics quickly in your games

(E) pieces are active and the king is exposed

12. Defense & King Safety

Circle the correct answer

111. The main reason to castle is to —

(A) make your king safer (B) win a pawn (C) give check (D) promote faster

112. The pawns in front of a castled king should usually —

(A) move to the center (B) stay put to shield the king (C) all rush forward (D) be traded immediately

113. Creating 'luft' means —

(A) promoting (B) trading queens (C) giving your king an escape square by advancing a pawn near it (D) attacking the center

114. When facing an attack on your king, a good idea is to —

(A) open more lines to your king (B) trade off the opponent's attacking pieces (C) ignore it (D) push your king forward

115. Opening lines near your own king is —

(A) always good (B) dangerous, since it helps the attacker (C) required (D) how you castle

116. A good defensive habit is to —

(A) leave the king alone (B) keep pieces near your king for defense when under attack (C) send all pieces to attack (D) trade all defenders

Write the answer

117. The safest place for the king in the middlegame is usually —

Answer: _____

118. If your opponent sacrifices a piece to attack your king, you should —

Answer: _____

119. A defended king with active counterplay can —

Answer: _____

120. Trading QUEENS often helps the DEFENDER because —

Answer: _____

Match each question to its answer

1. A back-rank weakness is fixed by — →

2. Leaving your king in the center too long is risky because — →

3. When you're being attacked, calculating the opponent's threats is — →

4. A defensive resource is a move that — →

5. Sacrificing a small amount of material to STOP an attack can be — →

- (A) open central lines expose it to attack
 - (B) a good practical defense
 - (C) creating luft or defending the back rank with a piece
 - (D) meets a threat, often by blocking, trading, or counterattacking
 - (E) essential before making your own plans
-

13. Endgame Basics

Circle the correct answer

121. In the endgame, the king becomes —

- (A) an active fighting piece (B) useless (C) unable to move (D) a pawn

122. A key endgame goal is to —

- (A) promote a pawn into a queen (B) avoid the center (C) keep the king home (D) trade all pawns

123. 'Opposition' is when the two kings —

- (A) stand next to each other (B) are on the same square (C) are in different corners (D) face each other with one square between, and the OTHER side must move

124. A pawn on the 7th rank (one from promoting) with support usually —

- (A) is worthless (B) promotes and wins (C) must be sacrificed (D) goes backward

125. The 'square of the pawn' rule helps you tell —

- (A) the board color (B) whether a lone king can catch a runaway pawn (C) how many pawns are left (D) who castled

126. King and pawn vs king is often won by —

- (A) keeping the king back (B) using the king to escort the pawn and gaining the opposition (C) pushing the pawn instantly (D) trading the pawn

Write the answer

127. In rook endgames, an active rook is best placed —

Answer: _____

128. A 'passed pawn' is a pawn that —

Answer: _____

129. In the endgame you should generally —

Answer: _____

130. Two connected passed pawns are strong because —

Answer: _____

Match each question to its answer

1. When ahead by a piece in the endgame, you should — →

2. Stalemate is a special danger in the endgame because — →

3. The opposition matters because the side WITHOUT the move — →

4. 'Zugzwang' means — →

5. A rook is usually better than a bishop or knight in the endgame because — →

(A) trade pawns carefully and use the extra piece to win

(B) can be forced to give ground

(C) few pieces make it easy to trap a lone king with no legal move

(D) a position where any move a player makes worsens their position

(E) it's more powerful on open boards

14. Pawn Play & Structure

Circle the correct answer

131. A 'doubled pawn' is —

(A) a promoted pawn (B) a pawn on the first rank (C) two of your pawns on the same file (D) two pawns side by side

132. An 'isolated pawn' is a pawn with —

(A) two pawns behind it (B) a queen behind it (C) no friendly pawns on the files beside it (D) a pawn directly in front

133. A 'passed pawn' is strong because —

(A) no enemy pawns can stop it from promoting (B) it can't move (C) it defends the king (D) it is doubled

134. A 'pawn chain' is —

(A) pawns diagonally defending one another (B) pawns on the same file (C) pawns on the first rank (D) a lone pawn

135. The base of a pawn chain is —

(A) always the strongest (B) the pawn that is not defended by another pawn — often the target (C) the front pawn only (D) the promoted pawn

136. A 'backward pawn' is —

(A) a pawn that has fallen behind its neighbors and can't easily advance (B) a passed pawn (C) a doubled pawn (D) the most advanced pawn

Write the answer

137. Pawn structure matters because pawns —

Answer: _____

138. Controlling the center with pawns gives you —

Answer: _____

139. Trading off an isolated pawn is often —

Answer: _____

140. A 'pawn majority' on one side of the board can be used to —

Answer: _____

Match each question to its answer

1. Pushing the pawns in front of your own king is risky because it — →

2. A 'pawn break' is — →

3. Doubled pawns can occasionally be useful because they — →

4. The best blockader of a passed pawn is often a — →

5. Creating a passed pawn usually requires — →

(A) grant a half-open file for a rook

(B) a favorable pawn majority or a pawn break

(C) a pawn move that challenges the opponent's pawns to open lines

(D) knight

(E) weakens your king's shelter

15. Strategy & Planning

Circle the correct answer

141. Strategy in chess means —

(A) counting pawns only (B) memorizing openings (C) your long-term plan, versus tactics (short-term shots) (D) moving fast

142. A good plan is based on —

(A) random choice (B) the clock only (C) your favorite piece (D) the features of the position (weaknesses, space, king safety)

- 143.** The famous saying is: 'A bad plan is better than —'
(A) an opening (B) no plan at all (C) a good plan (D) a tactic
- 144.** You should aim your pieces and pawns at —
(A) your own king (B) empty corners (C) your strongest pawn (D) the opponent's weaknesses
- 145.** Open files are valuable because —
(A) they trap the king (B) they can't be used (C) rooks placed on them control key lines (D) they promote pawns
- 146.** A 'weakness' you should try to create in the enemy camp is —
(A) an active rook (B) a target you can attack repeatedly (C) a safe king (D) a strong pawn chain

Write the answer

- 147.** Improving your worst-placed piece is —
Answer: _____
- 148.** The 'two weaknesses' principle says —
Answer: _____
- 149.** Space advantage lets you —
Answer: _____
- 150.** Before committing to a plan, you should check —
Answer: _____

Match each question to its answer

1. Prophylactic thinking means — →
 2. A good strategic question is — →
 3. Trading pieces is strategically good when it — →
 4. A knight is often better than a bishop in — →
 5. A bishop is often better than a knight in — →
- (A) open positions with pawns on both wings
(B) removes a good enemy piece or reaches a favorable endgame
(C) 'What are the weaknesses in each camp?'
(D) asking what the opponent WANTS and preventing it
(E) closed positions with fixed pawns
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16. Capstone: The Complete Tactician

Circle the correct answer

151. The pin, fork, and skewer are all —

(A) types of castling (B) opening moves (C) endgame-only ideas (D) tactics that win material by exploiting piece positions

152. Which tactic FREEZES a piece rather than forcing it to move?

(A) The pin (B) The fork (C) The skewer (D) The discovered attack

153. A single knight attacking the king and queen at once is a —

(A) pin (B) stalemate (C) fork (specifically a royal fork) (D) skewer

154. A checking move that reveals a second attacker behind the moving piece is a —

(A) simple capture (B) pin (C) discovered check (D) stalemate

155. Before playing any candidate move, the master habit is to check —

(A) the clock (B) checks, captures, and threats (C) your rating (D) the board color

156. A sound sacrifice is one where —

(A) it just looks flashy (B) the payoff (mate, attack, or material) exceeds what you give up (C) it captures any pawn (D) you were losing anyway

Write the answer

157. If you're ahead in material, the right general plan is to —

Answer: _____

158. A back-rank weakness means you should look for —

Answer: _____

159. Two enemy pieces lined up on an open file invite a —

Answer: _____

160. The safest moment to start an attack on the enemy king is when —

Answer: _____

Match each question to its answer

1. Combining a pin with a second attacker lets you — →

2. The difference between a fork and a discovered attack is — →

3. A double check can only be answered by — →

4. To convert a winning position, you should — →

5. The best overall way to improve your tactics is — →

- (A) stay alert for tactics and avoid stalemate
 - (B) moving the king
 - (C) a fork is one piece with two threats; a discovery uses two pieces
 - (D) solving puzzles regularly to build pattern recognition
 - (E) win the frozen piece
-

Riddle & Joke Break

Guess the answer, then check the key!

- 161.** In chess, which piece is worth the most points in the usual counting system?
- 162.** A tactic attacks two enemy pieces at once with a single piece, and neither is behind the other. What tactic is it?
- 163.** I pin a knight against the king, so the knight legally cannot move. What is this called?
- 164.** How many squares can a knight reach from a corner of the board?
- 165.** A skewer and a pin both attack two pieces in a line. What's the difference?
- 166.** What is it called when the king is attacked but can escape, block, or capture?
- 167.** A pawn reaches the far side of the board. What can it become?
- 168.** You move a bishop, and suddenly a rook behind it is giving check that wasn't there before. What tactic just happened?
- 169.** Why did the pawn feel so ambitious?
- 170.** Why is the knight the trickiest piece?
- 171.** Why did the pin feel powerful?
- 172.** Why did the fork get invited everywhere?
- 173.** Why did the bishop stay in its lane?
- 174.** Why did the rook feel most useful at the end of the game?

Fun Facts

- Did you know? Chess is over 1,500 years old! It began in India around the 6th century as a game called "chaturanga," and spread across the world, changing along the way.

- Did you know? There are more possible chess games than there are atoms in the observable universe! After just the first few moves, the number of possible positions is already astronomical.
 - Did you know? The queen used to be one of the weakest pieces, moving only one square diagonally. It became the powerhouse it is today around the 15th century, sometimes called "Mad Queen Chess"!
 - Did you know? The word "checkmate" comes from the Persian phrase "shah mat," meaning "the king is helpless" -- because in chess, you never actually capture the king, you trap it!
 - Did you know? The six core tactics -- pin, fork, skewer, discovered attack, double attack, and removing the defender -- appear in almost every game. Mastering them is like learning the alphabet of chess!
 - Did you know? The knight is the only piece that can jump over others, and it always lands on a square of the opposite color from where it started. It's the trickiest piece to visualize!
 - Did you know? Controlling the four center squares is a golden rule of chess openings. Pieces in the center attack more squares and have more freedom -- an edge piece is like a benched player!
 - Did you know? The shortest possible checkmate, "Fool's Mate," takes just two moves. The fastest way to LOSE a chess game is to ignore the safety of the squares around your own king!
-

Answer Key

1. B — In straight lines — along rows and columns
2. C — Diagonally, any number of squares
3. C — Straight OR diagonally, any number of squares
4. D — In an L-shape (two then one, or one then two)
5. B — jump over other pieces
6. A — One square in any direction
7. One square straight ahead
8. one OR two squares forward
9. One square diagonally forward
10. The rook

Matching (How the Pieces Move): 1→D, 2→A, 3→B, 4→E, 5→C

11. B — 64
12. C — files (labeled a–h)
13. A — ranks (numbered 1–8)
14. D — its file letter then its rank number (like e4)
15. D — a light square
16. A — On the light square (d1) — 'queen on her color'
17. Knight
18. King
19. a pawn moves to the e4 square

20. a capture

Matching (Board, Setup & Notation): 1→D, 2→E, 3→B, 4→A, 5→C

21. C — The king is under attack and must be made safe
22. A — To checkmate the opponent's king
23. D — The king is in check and has no legal way to escape
24. B — Ignoring it and moving another piece elsewhere
25. D — capture the attacking piece
26. B — A player has NO legal move but is NOT in check — it's a draw
27. a draw (nobody wins)
28. No — that move is illegal
29. in check, but NOT checkmate
30. in checkmate the king IS in check; in stalemate it is NOT

Matching (Check, Checkmate & Stalemate): 1→A, 2→E, 3→D, 4→C, 5→B

31. C — 1
32. B — 3 points
33. C — 3 points
34. B — 5 points
35. A — 9 points

36. A — a good trade — you gain about 2 points

37. winning the exchange

38. roughly equal value

39. sacrifice

40. blunder

Matching (Piece Values & Trades): 1→D, 2→C, 3→E, 4→B, 5→A

41. B — An attack that freezes a piece because a more valuable piece is behind it

42. B — The rook, bishop, and queen (the line pieces)

43. A — the king

44. A — a valuable piece (not the king)

45. C — It often can't move away, so you can pile up on it

46. D — The pin

47. cannot legally move (absolute pin)

48. block it, remove the attacker, or move the piece behind

49. relative pin

50. loses its defensive value while frozen

Matching (The Pin): 1→A, 2→E, 3→D, 4→B, 5→C

51. C — One piece attacking two (or more) enemy pieces at the same time

52. D — The knight

53. D — the queen at the same time

54. A — The opponent can only save ONE of the attacked pieces

55. C — two pieces diagonally at once

56. A — The fork

57. the king must escape check first

58. A knight forking the king and queen

59. on squares a single piece could attack together

60. it can fork pieces in many directions

Matching (The Fork): 1→B, 2→E, 3→A, 4→C, 5→D

61. D — An attack forcing a valuable piece to move, exposing a less valuable one behind it
62. B — a 'reverse pin'
63. D — The rook, bishop, and queen (line pieces)
64. A — The skewer
65. A — more valuable than the piece behind
66. A — skewer (the king must move, losing the queen)
67. which piece (valuable or less valuable) is in FRONT
68. the front piece (king) MUST move
69. lined up, valuable one in front, on a line you attack
70. a diagonal
Matching (The Skewer): 1→B, 2→D, 3→C, 4→E, 5→A
71. B — Moving one piece to unveil an attack from a piece behind it
72. C — the moving piece can ALSO make its own threat
73. B — gives check to the enemy king
74. A — double check (both the mover and the revealed piece give check)
75. C — move the king
76. A — free to make its own threat or capture
77. a line-piece behind a piece that moves off the line
78. A rook or queen
79. A bishop or queen
80. TWO pieces create the threats, not one
Matching (Discovered & Double Attacks): 1→A, 2→B, 3→D, 4→C, 5→E
81. A — a rook or queen checks a king trapped by its own pawns on the back row
82. B — make 'luft' by advancing a pawn near the king
83. B — using the queen to box the king to the edge, king supporting
84. D — accidental stalemate
85. D — the edge of the board

86. D — knight, when the king is boxed in by its own pieces
87. 'ladder' (rolling the king to the edge rank by rank)
88. have no legal escape, block, or capture
89. The king walks up to support a queen next to the enemy king
90. one rook always covers the king's escape rank
Matching (Basic Checkmate Patterns): 1→C, 2→D, 3→A, 4→E, 5→B
91. D — control the center
92. A — knights and bishops toward the center early
93. C — early, to make your king safe
94. D — bring the queen out too early
95. A — it wastes time (tempo) while other pieces sit idle
96. C — getting your pieces out to active squares
97. e4 or d4 (a central pawn)
98. knights are usually worse on the edge than in the center
99. connect and activate your rooks
100. control more squares and have more options
Matching (Opening Principles): 1→E, 2→D, 3→B, 4→A, 5→C
101. A — 'Are any enemy pieces undefended (loose)?'
102. D — systematically find forcing moves
103. D — limit the opponent's replies
104. A — attackers vs defenders on the square
105. D — 'What is my opponent's best reply?'
106. D — fork or double attack
107. pin or skewer
108. looking ahead move by move to see what happens
109. the most forcing ones (checks and captures)
110. making sure your move doesn't hang a piece or allow a tactic
Matching (Spotting Tactics): 1→E, 2→A, 3→C, 4→D, 5→B

111. A — make your king safer
112. B — stay put to shield the king
113. C — giving your king an escape square by advancing a pawn near it
114. B — trade off the opponent's attacking pieces
115. B — dangerous, since it helps the attacker
116. B — keep pieces near your king for defense when under attack
117. castled, behind an intact pawn shield
118. calculate carefully whether to accept and defend
119. turn defense into a winning counterattack
120. it removes the strongest attacking piece
Matching (Defense & King Safety): 1→C, 2→A, 3→E, 4→D, 5→B
121. A — an active fighting piece
122. A — promote a pawn into a queen
123. D — face each other with one square between, and the OTHER side must move
124. B — promotes and wins
125. B — whether a lone king can catch a runaway pawn
126. B — using the king to escort the pawn and gaining the opposition
127. behind a passed pawn
128. has no enemy pawns able to stop it from promoting
129. activate your king and create a passed pawn
130. they defend each other as they advance
Matching (Endgame Basics): 1→A, 2→C, 3→B, 4→D, 5→E
131. C — two of your pawns on the same file
132. C — no friendly pawns on the files beside it
133. A — no enemy pawns can stop it from promoting
134. A — pawns diagonally defending one another
135. B — the pawn that is not defended by another pawn — often the target
136. A — a pawn that has fallen behind its neighbors and can't easily advance

- 137. can't move backward, so their moves are permanent
- 138. more space and better piece mobility
- 139. good for the side that HAS it (removes a weakness)
- 140. create a passed pawn there
Matching (Pawn Play & Structure): 1→E, 2→C, 3→A, 4→D, 5→B
- 141. C — your long-term plan, versus tactics (short-term shots)
- 142. D — the features of the position (weaknesses, space, king safety)
- 143. B — no plan at all
- 144. D — the opponent's weaknesses
- 145. C — rooks placed on them control key lines
- 146. B — a target you can attack repeatedly
- 147. a reliable strategic idea
- 148. a defender usually can't hold TWO separate weaknesses at once
- 149. maneuver your pieces more freely than the cramped opponent
- 150. whether tactics allow it (calculate key lines)
Matching (Strategy & Planning): 1→D, 2→C, 3→B, 4→E, 5→A
- 151. D — tactics that win material by exploiting piece positions
- 152. A — The pin
- 153. C — fork (specifically a royal fork)
- 154. C — discovered check
- 155. B — checks, captures, and threats
- 156. B — the payoff (mate, attack, or material) exceeds what you give up
- 157. trade pieces and simplify toward a win
- 158. a rook or queen invasion to the back rank
- 159. pin or skewer
- 160. your own king is safe and pieces are developed
Matching (Capstone: The Complete Tactician): 1→E, 2→C, 3→B, 4→A, 5→D
- 161. The queen! It's worth 9 points, more than a rook (5), bishop or knight (3), or pawn

(1).

- 162. A fork! A knight fork hitting the king and queen is the classic example.
- 163. An absolute pin! When the king is behind the pinned piece, that piece can't move at all.
- 164. 2! From a corner, a knight has only two legal moves -- corners are the knight's worst home.
- 165. In a skewer the MORE valuable piece is in front and forced to move, exposing the piece behind; in a pin the valuable piece is behind, so the front piece can't move!
- 166. Check! It becomes checkmate only when there is no legal way out.
- 167. A queen, rook, bishop, or knight! Players almost always choose a queen, but "underpromoting" to a knight is occasionally the winning move.
- 168. A discovered attack (a discovered check)! Moving the front piece revealed the rook's line to the king.
- 169. Because it dreamed of reaching the other side and becoming a queen!
- 170. Because it's the only one that can jump to conclusions -- and over other pieces!
- 171. Because it kept a piece stuck, unable to move without exposing something bigger behind it!
- 172. Because it could attack two pieces at once!
- 173. Because it can only ever travel on one color of square!
- 174. Because open files are its highway to victory!

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