

GambitTales — Flashcards

A Spark & Anvil printable flashcard deck. Quiz yourself on the GambitTales cast's curriculum — one card at a time.

How to use these cards

Fold each sheet down the middle line so the answers are hidden. Read the **question** on the left, say your answer out loud, then **unfold** to check the right side. Testing yourself — then checking — is one of the most powerful ways to remember. Get one wrong? That's the best kind of practice: try it again tomorrow.

Want real flashcards? Cut along the fold line and the rows into cards — question on one side, answer on the other.

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GambitTales — Flashcards

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1. How the Pieces Move

⌘ Question (fold →)	Answer
How does a pawn normally move forward?	One square straight ahead — A pawn moves one square straight forward. It can never move backward.
A knight on an empty board in the center can move to how many squares?	8 — From a central square, a knight reaches 8 squares (all its L-moves). From a corner it reaches only 2.
Which piece always stays on one color square?	The bishop — Because it moves only diagonally, a bishop stays on its starting color for the entire game.
A queen on an open board is roughly worth how many pieces' power?	The most of any piece — The queen is the most powerful piece because she combines the rook's and bishop's range.
How does a bishop move?	Diagonally, any number of squares — A bishop moves diagonally any number of squares. Each bishop stays on one color the whole game.
Can the king move two squares in a normal move?	No — only one square (castling is a special exception) — Normally the king moves one square. The only time it moves two is the special castling move.
Which piece can reach every square on the board over a game?	The queen — The queen can reach any square. A single bishop cannot (it's stuck on one color).
How far can a king move in one turn?	One square in any direction — The king moves one square in any direction — straight or diagonal.
Understanding how each piece moves is important because —	it lets you plan attacks and see threats — Knowing how pieces move lets you see threats and plan attacks — the foundation of all chess thinking.
Two bishops working together can control —	both light and dark squares — Since each bishop covers one color, the two together control both light and dark squares — the 'bishop pair.'
How does the knight move?	In an L-shape (two then one, or one then two) — The knight moves in an L: two squares one way then one square at a right angle. It is the only piece that jumps over others.
How many squares does a pawn move when it captures?	One (diagonally) — A pawn captures exactly one square diagonally forward.
A rook starts a game in which position?	A corner of the board — Rooks begin in the four corners of the board.
How does a pawn CAPTURE?	One square diagonally forward — A pawn captures one square diagonally forward — different from how it moves straight ahead.
Which piece can NEVER move diagonally?	The rook — The rook moves only in straight lines; it can never move diagonally.
How does a rook move?	In straight lines — along rows and columns — A rook moves any number of squares in a straight line — along ranks (rows) and files (columns).
The knight's move can be	an 'L': 2 squares then 1 at a right angle — The knight moves in an L: two

described as —	squares in one direction, then one square at a right angle.
How does the queen move?	Straight OR diagonally, any number of squares — The queen combines the rook and bishop: she moves straight or diagonally any distance — the most powerful piece.
A bishop on a light square can move to —	other light squares only — A light-squared bishop can only ever reach light squares, because diagonal moves never change color.
Which piece would you use to jump OVER a wall of pawns?	The knight — The knight is the only piece that can jump over other pieces, so it can hop over a pawn wall.
Can a rook jump over a piece in its path?	No — it is blocked by any piece in the way — Only the knight jumps. A rook is blocked by any piece in its path and must stop before it (or capture it).
Which piece is the ONLY one that captures differently from how it moves?	The pawn — The pawn is unique: it moves straight forward but captures diagonally.
On its VERY FIRST move, a pawn may move —	one OR two squares forward — On its first move only, a pawn may advance one or two squares. After that, one square at a time.
The knight is special because it can —	jump over other pieces — The knight is the only piece that can jump over other pieces to reach its landing square.
Which piece moves like BOTH a rook and a bishop?	The queen — The queen moves like a rook (straight) and a bishop (diagonal) combined.

2. Board, Setup & Notation

⌂ Question (fold →)	Answer
When setting up, the bottom-right corner square for each player should be —	a light square — A famous setup rule: 'light on the right' — the near-right corner square is light for each player.
'O-O' in notation means —	kingside castling — 'O-O' is kingside (short) castling; 'O-O-O' is queenside (long) castling.
Writing down your moves during a game is called —	keeping score (notation) — Recording moves in notation is 'keeping score' — it lets you replay and study the game afterward.
The symbol '#' means —	checkmate — '#' means checkmate — the game is over.
The move 'e4' means —	a pawn moves to the e4 square — A move with no piece letter is a pawn move: 'e4' means a pawn moves to e4.
How many files does a chessboard have?	8 — There are 8 files, labeled a through h.
The e4 square is what color?	Light — e4 is a light square. (A quick trick: if file-letter position + rank number is odd, the square is light.)
The center of the board is made of which four squares?	d4, d5, e4, e5 — The four central squares are d4, d5, e4, and e5 — the most important area to control early.
Each square is named by —	its file letter then its rank number (like e4) — Each square has a coordinate: the file letter followed by the rank number, like e4.
The symbol '+' after a move means —	check — '+' means the move gives check — the enemy king is under attack.
The rows on a chessboard are called —	ranks (numbered 1-8) — The horizontal rows are ranks, numbered 1 through 8.
Before the game starts, how many pieces does each side have?	16 — Each side starts with 16 pieces: 8 pawns, 2 rooks, 2 knights, 2 bishops, a queen, and a king.
Where does the white queen start?	On the light square (d1) — 'queen on her color' — 'Queen on her color': the white queen starts on the light d1 square; the black queen on the dark d8.
In notation, the letter 'N' stands for which piece?	Knight — 'K' is the king, so the knight uses 'N'. Nf3 means a knight moves to f3.
In notation, 'K' stands for —	King — 'K' stands for the king. Kg1 means the king moves to g1.
In notation, an 'x' means —	a capture — 'x' marks a capture: Nxe5 means a knight captures the piece on e5.
Which is a correctly written move?	Nf3 — 'Nf3' is correct: the piece letter (N) followed by the destination square (f3).
A chessboard has how many squares in total?	64 — The board is 8 squares by 8 squares — 64 squares in all.
The columns on a chessboard are	files (labeled a-h) — The vertical columns are files, labeled a through h from

called —	left to right (from White's side).
Reading notation lets a player —	replay famous games and learn from them — Notation lets you read and replay recorded games — a key way to learn from strong players.
'O-O-O' means —	queenside castling — 'O-O-O' is queenside (long) castling — three O's for the longer king move.
A 'diagonal' on the board is —	a line of same-colored squares corner-to-corner — A diagonal is a slanted line of same-colored squares — the paths bishops travel.
Knowing the coordinate system helps you —	talk about positions clearly and record games — Coordinates give a shared language for squares, so players can discuss positions and record games precisely.
'Rxe5+' means —	a rook captures on e5 and gives check — 'Rxe5+' = Rook captures the piece on e5, and the move gives check (+).
Knowing where every piece starts helps you —	set up the board correctly and spot early threats — Knowing the starting position lets you set up correctly and recognize early threats and development goals.

3. Check, Checkmate & Stalemate

⌘ Question (fold →)	Answer
What is checkmate?	The king is in check and has no legal way to escape — Checkmate is check with no legal escape — no move can save the king, so the game ends.
What does 'check' mean?	The king is under attack and must be made safe — Check means the king is under attack. The player must respond immediately to make the king safe.
If you are winning with lots of pieces, you should be careful NOT to —	accidentally stalemate the enemy king — When winning, watch out for stalemate — trapping the king with no legal move but no check turns a win into a draw.
What is the goal of a chess game?	To checkmate the opponent's king — The goal is checkmate: attacking the king so it cannot escape.
The single most important rule about your king is —	never leave it in check after your move — You may never make a move that leaves your own king in check — king safety is the game's central rule.
The difference between checkmate and stalemate is —	in checkmate the king IS in check; in stalemate it is NOT — Both mean no legal move, but checkmate has the king IN check (a loss) while stalemate does not (a draw).
A 'double check' (two pieces checking at once) can only be escaped by —	moving the king — In a double check, blocking or capturing can't stop both attackers — the king MUST move.
Checkmate can be delivered by —	any piece, as long as the king can't escape — Any piece can deliver checkmate — what matters is that the king has no legal escape.
A king in check with an escape square is —	in check, but NOT checkmate — If the king can escape (or the check can be blocked/captured), it's check but not checkmate.
Can you ever leave your own king in check after your move?	No — that move is illegal — You may never make a move that leaves (or puts) your own king in check — such moves are illegal.
Two kings can never stand on —	squares next to each other — Kings can never be adjacent — moving next to the enemy king would put your king in check, which is illegal.
Stalemate results in —	a draw (nobody wins) — Stalemate is a draw — neither player wins, even if one has far more pieces.
Which is NOT a legal way to escape check?	Ignoring it and moving another piece elsewhere — You cannot ignore check. The three legal responses are: move the king, block the attack, or capture the attacker.
What is stalemate?	A player has NO legal move but is NOT in check — it's a draw — Stalemate: the player to move has no legal move but their king is NOT in check. The game is a draw.
Which ends the game as a WIN?	Checkmate — Checkmate ends the game as a win. Stalemate ends it as a draw; check does not end it at all.
Is the king ever actually captured in chess?	No — the game ends at checkmate, before capture — The king is never captured. The game ends at checkmate, when capture would be unavoidable next move.

If a player has legal moves and is not in check, the game —	continues — As long as there are legal moves and no checkmate/draw condition, the game simply continues.
A king can never move —	into a square where it would be in check — A king may never move into check — it cannot step onto a square attacked by an enemy piece.
A move that gives check is written with —	a '+' symbol — A '+' after a move indicates check; '#' indicates checkmate.
Recognizing checkmate quickly helps you —	finish won games and avoid missing threats — Spotting checkmate patterns lets you finish winning games and notice mate threats against your own king.
The most important piece to protect is —	your king — The king is the most important piece — its checkmate ends the game, so its safety comes first.
The three ways to get out of check are move, block, or —	capture the attacking piece — You escape check by moving the king, blocking the line, or capturing the attacking piece.
If your king is in check from a bishop far away, one option is to —	block the diagonal with another piece — Against a distant bishop check, you can block by placing a piece on the attacking diagonal (or move/capture).
If neither side can force checkmate (e.g. king vs king), the game is —	a draw (insufficient material) — If neither side has enough material to checkmate (like king vs king), the game is drawn — 'insufficient material.'
You may NOT castle —	while your king is in check — You cannot castle while in check (nor through or into check). Deal with the check another way.

4. Piece Values & Trades

⌘ Question (fold →)	Answer
When you are AHEAD in material, trading pieces (not pawns) usually —	helps you, simplifying toward a win — When ahead in material, trading pieces simplifies the position and makes your extra material more decisive.
A rook is worth about —	5 points — A rook is worth roughly 5 points.
Counting material helps you —	decide whether to trade, attack, or defend — Knowing piece values lets you judge trades and decide whether to press an attack or defend a worse position.
When you are BEHIND in material, you usually want to —	avoid trades and keep pieces for chances — When behind, keep pieces on the board — trading simplifies toward the opponent's winning endgame.
Accidentally losing a piece for nothing is a —	blunder — A blunder is losing material (or worse) by mistake — the opposite of a planned sacrifice.
Piece values are —	a useful guide, not an absolute rule — Values are a helpful guide, but the position matters too — an active knight can outshine a passive rook.
Two minor pieces (3+3=6) are generally worth more than —	a single rook (5) — Two minor pieces (about 6 points) generally outweigh a single rook (5) — especially working together.
Deliberately giving up material for a bigger advantage is called a —	sacrifice — A sacrifice gives up material intentionally to gain something bigger — an attack, checkmate, or a winning position.
Losing your queen for a pawn is —	a terrible trade (you lose ~8 points) — Giving a 9-point queen for a 1-point pawn loses about 8 points — a disaster unless it forces mate.
Giving up a bishop (3) to win a queen (9) is a —	great trade (you gain ~6 points) — Trading a 3-point bishop for a 9-point queen wins about 6 points — a great deal.
Before making any capture, a good habit is to check —	whether your piece can be safely recaptured — Before capturing, check if the square is defended — you don't want to win a pawn but lose a bigger piece to recapture.
A piece is 'hanging' when it is —	undefended and can be captured for free — A hanging piece is undefended and can be captured for free — always check that your pieces aren't hanging.
An 'even trade' means you and your opponent give up pieces of —	roughly equal value — An even trade swaps pieces of about the same value — like a knight for a bishop (both ~3).
Trading a knight (3) for a rook (5) is —	a good trade — you gain about 2 points — Giving a 3-point knight to win a 5-point rook is a favorable trade — you gain material ('winning the exchange').
A bishop is worth about —	3 points — A bishop is worth roughly 3 points — about the same as a knight.
The king's fighting value in the endgame is roughly —	about 4 points (it becomes an active piece) — Though never traded, the king's fighting strength in the endgame is about 4 points — activate it late in the game.
If you can win a queen (9) for a rook (5), you should usually —	make the trade — you gain about 4 points — Winning a 9-point queen for a 5-point rook is a big gain (~4 points) — usually excellent.

A 'material advantage' means you have —	more total point value in pieces — A material advantage means your pieces add up to more points than your opponent's.
A queen is worth about —	9 points — A queen is worth roughly 9 points — the most valuable piece after the king (which is priceless).
A sacrifice is only good if —	it gains something worth more than the material given — A sacrifice is sound only when the payoff (mate, a winning attack, or more material back) exceeds what you gave up.
Winning a rook for a bishop or knight is called —	winning the exchange — Trading a minor piece (bishop/knight, 3) to win a rook (5) is 'winning the exchange' — a common ~2-point edge.
An even material position means the game is usually decided by —	position, activity, and king safety — When material is equal, other factors decide: piece activity, king safety, pawn structure, and initiative.
A rook and a rook together (10) versus a queen (9) is —	roughly balanced, slightly favoring the rooks — Two rooks (~10) versus a queen (~9) is roughly balanced, often slightly favoring the coordinated rooks.
Roughly how many points is a pawn worth?	1 — A pawn is worth about 1 point — the baseline for comparing pieces.
A knight is worth about —	3 points — A knight is worth roughly 3 points (about three pawns).

5. The Pin

⌘ Question (fold →)	Answer
A pin can set up a bigger tactic by —	freezing a defender so you can win another piece — A pin can immobilize a defender, letting you win the piece it was defending — pins combine with other tactics.
If a piece is pinned to your queen (relative pin), moving it is —	legal, but usually loses the queen — In a relative pin you CAN move the piece, but you'd usually lose the more valuable piece behind — so you normally don't.
The best way to BREAK a pin is often to —	block it, remove the attacker, or move the piece behind — You break a pin by blocking the line, capturing the pinning piece, or moving the valuable piece out from behind.
A queen pins a rook to the king along a file. The rook is —	absolutely pinned and cannot move — The rook is pinned to the king (absolute) and cannot move without illegally exposing the king.
A rook on an open file pins an enemy bishop to the enemy rook behind it. This is a —	relative pin — With a rook (not the king) behind, it's a relative pin — the bishop can move but would lose the rook.
Learning the pin (Sir Pinwell's tactic) first is smart because —	it teaches you to look along lines for tactics — The pin trains you to scan the lines (files, ranks, diagonals) where most tactics live.
The safest square to place a piece so it's hard to pin is —	one where no valuable piece sits behind it on a line — Avoid lining up a piece with a more valuable piece (or king) on the same file, rank, or diagonal, which invites a pin.
Pins are powerful because a pinned piece —	loses its defensive value while frozen — A pinned piece can't do its job — it can't move to defend or attack, so it's effectively out of the game.
Why is a pinned piece a good target to ATTACK again?	It often can't move away, so you can pile up on it — Because a pinned piece can't (or shouldn't) move, you can attack it again and win it — 'pile up on the pin.'
What is a pin in chess?	An attack that freezes a piece because a more valuable piece is behind it — A pin attacks a piece that can't move because a more valuable piece (or the king) sits behind it on the same line.
A bishop pins a knight to the king. The knight —	cannot legally move (absolute pin) — Pinned to the king by the bishop, the knight cannot move — doing so would illegally expose the king.
A 'relative pin' is when the piece behind is —	a valuable piece (not the king) — In a relative pin, a valuable piece (like the queen) is behind. Moving the pinned piece is legal but loses that piece.
If your knight is pinned to your king by a bishop, a good idea is to —	challenge or block the bishop — Since the pinned knight can't move, defend by attacking the bishop, blocking the pin, or trading it off.
A piece pinned to the king cannot move because —	doing so would illegally expose the king to check — In an absolute pin, moving the pinned piece would expose the king to check — which is illegal, so it can't move.
A pinned pawn that would normally capture —	still cannot expose its king (absolute pin) — If capturing would expose its own king, a pinned pawn cannot make that capture — the absolute pin holds.

A common beginner trap is the pin of a knight on f6 (or f3) by a bishop — this is called the —	pin against the king or queen on the g-file/diagonal — A very common pin is Bg5 pinning a knight on f6 to the queen (or king) — an everyday opening motif.
An 'absolute pin' is when the piece behind the pinned piece is —	the king — In an absolute pin, the king is behind the pinned piece — so the pinned piece literally cannot move (that would be illegal).
Which piece can NEVER be the one doing the pinning?	The knight — A knight moves in L-shapes, not lines, so it can never create a pin.
Adding a second attacker to a pinned piece is a way to —	win it, since it can't run — Because the pinned piece can't escape, attacking it a second time often wins it outright.
Sir Pinwell embodies which tactic?	The pin — Sir Pinwell is the GambitTales character who embodies the pin.
Recognizing a pin helps you —	both create them and avoid falling into them — Knowing pins lets you set them up against your opponent and avoid getting your own pieces pinned.
Which pieces can create a pin?	The rook, bishop, and queen (the line pieces) — Only line-moving pieces — rook, bishop, queen — can pin, because a pin works along a straight or diagonal line.
A pin along a DIAGONAL is created by a —	bishop or queen — Diagonal pins are made by bishops (or the queen), since those pieces move diagonally.
A pin along a FILE or RANK is created by a —	rook or queen — Straight-line (file/rank) pins are made by rooks (or the queen).
A pin is a tactic that mainly —	restricts and wins enemy pieces — The pin restricts an enemy piece and often wins it — a core tactic in every chess player's toolkit.

6. The Fork

⌘ Question (fold →)	Answer
The first step to using forks is to —	notice undefended enemy pieces — Undefended ('loose') enemy pieces are prime fork targets — spotting them is the first step to forking.
A knight on a strong central square is dangerous because —	it can fork pieces in many directions — A centralized knight reaches up to 8 squares, giving it lots of forking chances in every direction.
The best defense against forks is —	keeping pieces defended and watching enemy knights — Keeping your pieces defended and tracking where enemy knights can jump prevents most forks.
Which fork is usually the most valuable?	A knight forking the king and queen — Forking the king and queen wins the most material — the queen (9 points) after the king moves.
A fork is a type of —	double attack — A fork is a double attack: one piece creating two threats at the same time.
A fork that attacks the king AND wins material works because —	the king must escape check first — When a fork gives check, the opponent must deal with the check first — letting you capture the other forked piece.
After a successful fork you usually end up —	ahead in material — A successful fork typically wins a piece, leaving you ahead in material.
A defended piece can still be forked if —	the OTHER forked piece is more valuable or the fork gives check — Even a defended piece falls to a fork if the fork gives check (forcing a king move) or the other target is worth more.
A queen can fork because —	it attacks in many directions at once — The queen's wide reach lets it attack several pieces at once — queen forks are common and powerful.
The Twin Knights of Fork Hill embody which tactic?	The fork — The Twin Knights of Fork Hill are the GambitTales characters who embody the fork.
If a knight forks your king and rook, you must —	move the king, then you lose the rook — The check on the king must be answered first (usually by moving), after which the forked rook is captured.
To AVOID being forked, keep your king and queen —	off squares a single enemy piece could attack together — Keep valuable pieces off squares that a single enemy piece (especially a knight) could attack simultaneously.
To spot forks, look for enemy pieces that are —	on squares a single piece could attack together — Look for enemy pieces (often undefended) positioned so one of your pieces could hit them both at once.
Forks win material because they exploit the rule that —	you get only ONE move per turn — A fork beats the one-move-per-turn limit: two simultaneous threats can't both be answered in a single move.
Mastering the fork (the Twin Knights' tactic) trains you to —	see multiple threats from one piece — Learning forks develops your eye for double attacks — seeing how one piece can threaten several targets.
Why is a fork so effective?	The opponent can only save ONE of the attacked pieces — A fork creates two threats at once; the opponent gets only one move, so one attacked piece is lost.

The knight's ability to fork comes from its —	unique L-shaped, jumping move — The knight's L-shaped, jumping move lets it attack scattered squares at once and leap into forking positions.
A pawn can fork too — by attacking —	two pieces diagonally at once — A pawn attacks the two squares diagonally ahead — if both hold enemy pieces, that's a pawn fork.
A knight fork is dangerous partly because a knight —	cannot be blocked (it jumps) — A knight jumps over pieces, so a knight fork can't be blocked — you must move a target or capture the knight.
A bishop can fork by attacking two pieces on —	the two diagonals it controls — A bishop forks two pieces that lie on the two diagonals radiating from its square.
A 'family fork' is a knight fork that hits —	the king, queen, and often a rook together — A 'family fork' is a devastating knight fork catching the king, queen, and sometimes a rook simultaneously.
Which piece is famous for forking because it can attack in many directions at once?	The knight — The knight is the classic forking piece — its L-shaped reach can attack several scattered pieces at once.
What is a fork?	One piece attacking two (or more) enemy pieces at the same time — A fork is a single piece attacking two or more enemy pieces at once — the opponent can only save one.
A rook fork typically attacks two pieces on —	the same rank or file — A rook forks two pieces lying on the same rank or file, since the rook attacks along straight lines.
A 'royal fork' attacks the king and —	the queen at the same time — A royal fork hits the king and queen together: the king must move out of check, and you win the queen.

7. The Skewer

⌂ Question (fold →)	Answer
The key to spotting a skewer is noticing —	two enemy pieces on the same line with the valuable one in front — Spot skewers by finding two enemy pieces on one line, valuable one in front, that your line-piece can attack.
Lady Skewer embodies which tactic?	The skewer — Lady Skewer is the GambitTales character who embodies the skewer.
A skewer of the king in front and a rook behind wins —	the rook — The king (front) must move out of check, exposing the rook behind, which you then capture.
A rook gives check to a king with the enemy queen behind it. This is a —	skewer (the king must move, losing the queen) — The king (front) must move out of check, exposing the queen behind — a classic winning skewer.
A skewer wins material by —	forcing the front piece away so you capture the one behind — The skewer forces the front piece to move, leaving the piece behind exposed for capture — winning material.
If your king and queen are lined up on an open file, you risk a —	skewer — King and queen lined up on an open line invite a skewer — a checking rook forces the king to move and wins the queen.
What is a skewer?	An attack forcing a valuable piece to move, exposing a less valuable one behind it — A skewer attacks a valuable piece so it must move, exposing a less valuable piece behind it to capture.
Which order describes a skewer correctly?	Valuable piece in front, less valuable behind — A skewer lines up the valuable piece in front and the less valuable behind — the reverse of a pin.
A queen can skewer because —	it moves along both straight lines and diagonals — The queen skewers along files, ranks, or diagonals, since it moves like both a rook and a bishop.
Can a knight create a skewer?	No — skewers need a straight or diagonal line — A knight can't skewer — skewers require a line (file, rank, or diagonal), which the knight's L-move doesn't create.
Skewers are most common in —	open positions and endgames with lined-up pieces — Skewers thrive on open lines — especially endgames where kings and rooks line up with little to block.
Mastering pin, fork, and skewer gives you —	the three most common winning tactics — Pin, fork, and skewer are the three most common tactics — together they win material in countless positions.
A rook skewers along —	a file or rank — A rook skewers two pieces along a file or rank.
Which pieces can make a skewer?	The rook, bishop, and queen (line pieces) — Only line-moving pieces — rook, bishop, queen — can skewer, since a skewer works along a line.
To defend against a skewer, you can —	avoid lining up valuable pieces on open lines — Prevent skewers by not lining up valuable pieces on open lines, and by keeping defenders or blockers available.
The difference between a pin and a skewer is —	which piece (valuable or less valuable) is in FRONT — In a pin the valuable piece is behind (frozen); in a skewer it's in front (forced to move, exposing what's behind).

A skewer is often called —	a 'reverse pin' — A skewer is like a reverse pin: the MORE valuable piece is in front and must move, exposing the piece behind.
A bishop skewers along —	a diagonal — A bishop skewers two pieces along a diagonal.
A skewer that gives check is especially strong because —	the front piece (king) MUST move — When the skewer checks the king, the king is forced to move, guaranteeing you capture the piece behind.
A winning skewer usually ends with you —	ahead in material — A successful skewer wins the exposed piece, leaving you ahead in material.
A skewer and a pin both work along —	lines (files, ranks, diagonals) — Both are line tactics using rook/bishop/queen; they differ only in whether the valuable piece is in front or behind.
In a skewer, the front (attacked) piece is usually —	more valuable than the piece behind — In a skewer the valuable piece is in front; it must move, exposing the (less valuable) piece behind to capture.
The skewer teaches the same skill as the pin —	looking along lines for lined-up pieces — Like the pin, the skewer trains you to scan lines for enemy pieces sharing a file, rank, or diagonal.
To make a skewer you place a rook, bishop, or queen so it —	attacks two lined-up pieces along one line — A skewer is made by attacking, along a line, two enemy pieces with the valuable one in front so it must move.
To set up a skewer, you want two enemy pieces —	lined up, valuable one in front, on a line you attack — A skewer needs two enemy pieces on one line, the valuable one in front, along a line your rook/bishop/queen controls.

8. Discovered & Double Attacks

⌘ Question (fold →)	Answer
Which piece behind is needed for a discovered attack down a file?	A rook or queen — A discovery down a file needs a rook or queen behind, since those attack along files.
In a discovered attack, the piece that MOVES is usually —	free to make its own threat or capture — The moving piece is unleashed to make its own threat (a capture, a fork, even a check) as it reveals the attack behind it.
A discovered attack differs from a fork because —	TWO pieces create the threats, not one — A fork is one piece making two threats; a discovered attack uses two pieces (the mover and the revealed one).
A discovered attack is set up by placing your line-piece —	behind a friendly piece that can move away — You set up a discovery by hiding a rook/bishop/queen behind a friendly piece that can later move to reveal the attack.
Which piece behind is needed for a discovered attack along a diagonal?	A bishop or queen — A discovery along a diagonal needs a bishop or queen behind.
Learning discovered and double attacks completes your grasp of —	how one move can make several threats — Discovered and double attacks round out the multi-threat tactics — seeing how a single move can threaten many things.
Discovered attacks reward players who —	look at what's BEHIND their own pieces — Finding discoveries means noticing your own line-pieces hidden behind other pieces, waiting to be unleashed.
The best discovered attacks let the MOVING piece —	capture something valuable or give check — A great discovery has the moving piece do real damage (win material or check) while the revealed attack also threatens.
The moving piece in a discovered check should ideally —	grab the biggest available target — Since the enemy must answer the discovered check, the moving piece should capture the most valuable target it can.
A common discovered-attack setup involves a —	bishop behind a knight that jumps to give a threat — A classic setup: a bishop behind a knight — the knight jumps (making its own threat) and reveals the bishop's attack.
If a discovered check also attacks the queen with the moving piece, you usually —	win the queen — The king must respond to the discovered check, so the moving piece's attack on the queen wins it.
A discovered attack and a double check both create —	more than one threat in a single move — Both pack more than one threat into a single move — the reason double attacks are so powerful.
Double check is unstoppable except by —	a king move — The only legal answer to a double check is moving the king.
A discovered attack is a kind of —	double attack — A discovered attack belongs to the double-attack family — two threats created in one move.
A discovered attack requires —	a line-piece behind a piece that moves off the line — You need a line-piece (rook, bishop, or queen) behind a friendly piece that can move off the line to

	reveal the attack.
The reason a double check forces a king move is that —	you cannot block or capture two checking pieces at once — A single move can't block or capture two checkers at once, so the king must move to escape a double check.
A discovered attack is powerful because —	the moving piece can ALSO make its own threat — Two threats appear at once: the revealed piece's attack AND the moving piece's own move/threat.
Against a double check, the defender can ONLY —	move the king — Blocking or capturing can't answer both checks, so the king is forced to move — nothing else is legal.
The most devastating discovered attack is a —	double check (both the mover and the revealed piece give check) — A double check — both the moving piece and the revealed piece check the king — forces the king to move (nothing else works).
To find discovered attacks, look for —	your own line-piece hidden behind a piece that can move — Scan for your rook/bishop/queen lined up behind a piece that could move off the line to reveal the attack.
What is a discovered attack?	Moving one piece to unveil an attack from a piece behind it — A discovered attack moves one piece out of the way, revealing an attack from a line-piece behind it.
A windmill is a repeating combination of —	discovered checks that win material each time — A 'windmill' is a devastating series of discovered checks that repeatedly wins material each cycle.
A 'discovered check' is when the REVEALED piece —	gives check to the enemy king — In a discovered check, moving a piece uncovers a check from the piece behind — while the moving piece grabs material.
Discovered attacks are hard to defend because —	the two threats come from different pieces at once — Two threats from two different pieces are tough to meet with a single defensive move.
The safest way to avoid a nasty discovered check is to —	keep your king off lines aimed at by hidden enemy pieces — Avoid discovered checks by keeping your king off lines where an enemy line-piece hides behind a moveable piece.

9. Basic Checkmate Patterns

⌘ Question (fold →)	Answer
A 'ladder mate' (two rooks) works because —	one rook always covers the king's escape rank — In a ladder mate, the two rooks alternate cutting off ranks so the king is steadily pushed back with no escape.
Before every move, checking for mate threats (yours and theirs) is —	a good habit that prevents disasters — Scanning for mate threats every move — both delivering and avoiding them — prevents blunders and finds wins.
A checkmate requires the king to be in check AND —	have no legal escape, block, or capture — Checkmate = check with no way out: the king can't move, the check can't be blocked, and the attacker can't be captured.
Learning basic mates is important so you can —	convert winning material into an actual win — Being ahead in material means nothing if you can't checkmate — basic mating patterns let you finish won games.
The pattern where a queen mates on the g7/g2 square next to a castled king (supported) is a —	common attacking mate near the castled king — Delivering a supported queen mate on g7 (or g2) next to the castled king is one of the most common attacking finishes.
A back-rank weakness is created by —	a king castled behind un-moved pawns with no escape square — A king castled behind three un-moved pawns has no escape square — a back-rank weakness a rook/queen can exploit.
A king-and-rook vs king mate drives the king to —	the edge of the board — King-and-rook mate uses the rook to cut off ranks/files while the king pushes the lone king to the edge for mate.
The lesson of studying mate patterns is that —	the same winning shapes appear over and over — Mating shapes recur constantly; recognizing them lets you deliver mates and avoid them quickly.
A knight-delivered mate on a king trapped by its own pieces is the famous —	smothered mate — That striking finish — a knight checking a king boxed in by its own pieces — is the smothered mate.
Which is a common mating pattern with a queen supported by a king?	The king walks up to support a queen next to the enemy king — A basic mate places the queen next to the enemy king, protected by your king so it can't be captured.
The purpose of learning mating patterns is ultimately to —	finish games you've worked hard to win — Mating patterns turn an advantage into a finished win — the whole point of the game.
Mate patterns are worth memorizing because —	they recur constantly in real games — The same mating shapes recur constantly, so recognizing them instantly lets you spot mates (and mate threats) fast.
When you have king + queen vs king, you should NOT —	put the queen a knight's-move away and then stalemate — A classic error is boxing the king so tightly (queen a knight's move away) that it's stalemate, not mate — avoid it.
A supported checkmate means the mating piece is —	defended, so the king can't capture it — In a supported mate, the checking piece is defended, so the king can't capture its way out — a key mating idea.
	pawn (upon promotion / with support), or any piece with no escape for

A checkmate can sometimes be delivered by a lone —	the king — Any piece can deliver mate if the king has no escape — even a pawn (especially a newly promoted one) with support.
The biggest danger when mating with a queen is —	accidental stalemate — When mating with a queen, beware stalemate — keep a legal move available for the enemy king until it's truly mate.
A basic king-and-queen vs king mate works by —	using the queen to box the king to the edge, king supporting — King-and-queen mate drives the lone king to the edge with the queen, then delivers mate with the king's support.
To prevent a back-rank mate, a common move is to —	make 'luft' by advancing a pawn near the king — Advancing a pawn near the castled king creates 'luft' (air) — an escape square that prevents back-rank mates.
Spotting an enemy back-rank weakness lets you —	look for a rook or queen infiltration to the back rank — If the enemy king lacks luft, look to invade the back rank with a rook or queen for a back-rank mate.
A 'helpmate' idea in practice means avoiding —	moves that free the enemy king when you're trying to mate — When mating, avoid moves that accidentally free the enemy king — tighten the net steadily toward a clean mate.
The '2 rooks vs king' method is reliable because it —	needs no help from your own king — Two rooks can mate a lone king by themselves (the ladder), without needing the king's help — very reliable.
A king can NEVER be used to give check because —	kings can't stand next to each other — Kings can't be adjacent, so a king can never deliver check — it supports mates but never gives them alone.
Two rooks can checkmate a lone king using a —	'ladder' (rolling the king to the edge rank by rank) — Two rooks mate by 'laddering' — each rook cuts off a rank in turn, rolling the king to the edge and mating it.
The 'smothered mate' is delivered by a —	knight, when the king is boxed in by its own pieces — A smothered mate is a knight check on a king completely surrounded ('smothered') by its own pieces, unable to escape.
A 'back-rank mate' happens when —	a rook or queen checks a king trapped by its own pawns on the back row — In a back-rank mate, a king boxed in by its own pawns is checkmated by a rook or queen on the back rank.

10. Opening Principles

⌂ Question (fold →)	Answer
A 'knight on the rim is dim' means —	knight s are usually worse on the edge than in the center — 'A knight on the rim is dim': an edge knight controls far fewer squares than a centralized one.
Which is a good developing FIRST move for White?	e4 or d4 (a central pawn) — Central pawn moves like e4 or d4 stake a claim in the center and open lines for the bishops and queen.
A 'gambit' is an opening where a player —	sacrifices a pawn for faster development or attack — A gambit offers a pawn (or more) in the opening to gain faster development, the center, or attacking chances.
Why avoid too many pawn moves in the opening?	Pawns don't develop your PIECES, and weaken squares — A couple of central pawn moves open lines, but too many neglect piece development and can weaken your position.
'Development' in chess means —	getting your pieces out to active squares — Development is bringing your pieces off their starting squares to active positions where they do work.
It is usually best to castle —	early, to make your king safe — Castling early tucks your king to safety and connects your rooks — usually do it in the first several moves.
A common opening mistake is to —	bring the queen out too early — Developing the queen too early lets the opponent gain time by attacking it, so you fall behind in development.
Connecting the rooks means —	no pieces stand between them on the back rank — Rooks are 'connected' when nothing stands between them on the back rank, so they protect each other and coordinate.
If your opponent breaks opening principles, you should —	develop soundly and look to punish their weaknesses — When the opponent violates principles (early queen, no development), keep developing soundly and exploit their lost time.
A good rule for the opening is to develop with —	a purpose, toward active central squares — Develop purposefully — each move should improve a piece toward an active, usually central, square.
A key opening principle is to —	control the center — Controlling the center (the d4/d5/e4/e5 area) is a core opening principle — central pieces have more reach.
The three big opening goals are center control, development, and —	king safety (castling) — The classic opening trio: control the center, develop your pieces, and get your king safe by castling.
If unsure what to do in the opening, a safe guideline is to —	develop a new piece toward the center — When unsure early, develop a new minor piece toward the center — it follows sound opening principles.
Trading a developed piece for an undeveloped one usually —	helps you, since you keep the lead in development — Trading your active piece for their idle one, or winning tempo, helps you stay ahead in development.
The opening sets up the game by —	getting your army ready to fight — The opening's job is to mobilize your army safely, setting up a strong middlegame.
Castling does two good things: king safety and —	activating a rook — Castling both safeguards the king and brings a rook toward the center, connecting the rooks.

A knight developed to f3 (or f6) is good because it —	controls central squares and helps kingside safety — Nf3 (or ...Nf6) develops toward the center, controls key squares, and supports kingside castling.
After developing minor pieces and castling, you should —	connect and activate your rooks — Once minors are out and you've castled, activate the rooks — place them on open or soon-to-open files.
Moving the same piece many times in the opening is bad because —	it wastes time (tempo) while other pieces sit idle — Repeatedly moving one piece wastes tempo — you should be developing a new piece toward the center each move.
Grabbing a pawn in the opening at the cost of development is —	often risky — development usually matters more early — Snatching a pawn while neglecting development is risky early on — a lead in development is often worth more than a pawn.
Fighting for the center helps because central pieces —	control more squares and have more options — Central pieces reach more squares and can swing to either side quickly — that's why the center is prized.
You should develop your —	knight and bishop toward the center early — Develop knights and bishops early toward active, central squares — get your army into the game.
Good opening habits make the rest of the game —	easier, with active pieces and a safe king — Sound opening play gives you active pieces and a safe king, making the middlegame far easier to handle.
Opening principles are guidelines, so you should —	follow them but stay alert to tactics — Principles guide good play, but always check for concrete tactics — a specific threat can override a general rule.
Which shows good opening play?	e4, develop knights and bishops, then castle — A healthy opening: claim the center, develop minor pieces toward it, and castle for safety.

11. Spotting Tactics

⌂ Question (fold →)	Answer
Forcing moves are valuable because they —	limit the opponent's replies — Forcing moves (checks, captures, big threats) limit the opponent's options, making calculation easier and often winning.
When it's your move, scanning for enemy THREATS first helps you —	avoid blundering into their tactics — Checking the opponent's threats first prevents you from launching your own plan while walking into theirs.
A key habit is to ask after your intended move —	'What is my opponent's best reply?' — Always ask what the opponent can do back — it prevents blunders and reveals whether your tactic really works.
'Removing the defender' is a tactic where you —	capture or deflect the piece guarding a target — Removing the defender means eliminating or deflecting the piece that guards a target, so you can then win the target.
Seeing a tactic is only useful if you also —	calculate it to the end to be sure it works — Spotting a tactic isn't enough — calculate it to a clear, favorable end before playing it.
A 'deflection' tactic —	forces a defending piece away from its duty — A deflection lures or forces a defending piece away from the square or piece it was guarding.
The most important tactical habit overall is to —	check for checks, captures, and threats every move — Checking for checks, captures, and threats — for both sides — every move is the master habit that finds tactics and avoids blunders.
A defended piece can still fall to a tactic if —	a fork gives check or a pin removes its defender — Even defended pieces fall when a check forces a king move, or when the piece's defender is pinned or removed.
Calculation means —	looking ahead move by move to see what happens — Calculation is looking ahead — 'if I do this, they must do that' — to see whether a tactic works.
A 'zwischenzug' (in-between move) is —	a surprising move (often a check) inserted before an expected recapture — A zwischenzug is an in-between move — often a check or threat — slipped in before the 'obvious' recapture, changing everything.
Undefended enemy pieces near each other suggest a possible —	fork or double attack — Two undefended pieces a single piece could hit together are classic fork/double-attack opportunities.
Which is the most reliable way to improve at tactics?	Regularly solving tactics puzzles — Consistent puzzle-solving is the most reliable way to sharpen tactical vision and pattern recognition.
If you see a strong tactic, you should still —	double-check the opponent's defensive resources — Even a promising tactic needs a check for the opponent's best defense before you commit to it.
Two enemy pieces lined up on a file or diagonal suggest a possible —	pin or skewer — Enemy pieces on the same line hint at a pin or skewer you might create with a rook, bishop, or queen.
'Loose pieces drop off' (LPDO) reminds you to —	watch for undefended pieces, yours and theirs — LPDO: undefended pieces tend to get lost to tactics — defend yours and hunt the opponent's.
The checklist 'checks, captures, threats' helps you —	systematically find forcing moves — Scanning all Checks, Captures, and Threats each move is a reliable way to find forcing tactical opportunities.

Building tactical vision helps every phase because —	tactics decide games in the opening, middlegame, and endgame — Tactical vision pays off in every phase — a missed or spotted tactic can decide a game at any moment.
The best moves to calculate FIRST are —	the most forcing ones (checks and captures) — Calculate forcing moves (checks, captures) first — they limit replies and often lead straight to the tactic.
Pattern recognition (from solving puzzles) helps you —	spot familiar tactics quickly in your games — Solving tactics puzzles builds pattern recognition, so you spot familiar winning shapes instantly in real games.
Tactics appear most often when —	pieces are active and the king is exposed — Tactics flourish where pieces are active and a king is exposed — look hardest for them then.
Before capturing, you should count —	attackers vs defenders on the square — Count how many of your pieces attack a square versus how many defend it before capturing, so you come out ahead.
The simplest daily practice to sharpen tactics is to —	solve a few tactics puzzles each day — Solving a few tactics puzzles daily steadily builds the pattern recognition that wins games.
A blunder-check before moving means —	making sure your move doesn't hang a piece or allow a tactic — A blunder-check confirms your intended move doesn't drop a piece or walk into an opponent's tactic.
Tactics usually reward the side with —	more active, better-coordinated pieces — The side with more active, coordinated pieces tends to get the tactical chances — activity breeds tactics.
A good first question each move is —	'Are any enemy pieces undefended (loose)?' — Undefended ('loose') pieces are prime tactical targets — spotting them is the first step to finding tactics.

12. Defense & King Safety

⌘ Question (fold →)	Answer
Keeping the pawn structure around your king intact —	denies the attacker open lines — An intact pawn shield keeps lines to your king closed, denying the attacker's pieces easy entry.
The best time to launch YOUR attack is usually when —	your own king is safe — Attack most confidently when your own king is safe — otherwise a counterattack can hit you first.
A castled king is safest when —	its pawn shield is intact and defenders are nearby — A castled king is safest with its pawn shield intact, nearby defenders, and no open lines aimed at it.
Opening lines near your own king is —	dangerous, since it helps the attacker — Opening files or diagonals near your king gives the attacker's rooks, bishops, and queen paths in — usually avoid it.
A defended king with active counterplay can —	turn defense into a winning counterattack — Solid defense combined with counterplay elsewhere can flip an attack into a winning counterattack.
The main reason to castle is to —	make your king safer — Castling tucks your king behind a pawn shield in the corner, making it much safer.
If your opponent sacrifices a piece to attack your king, you should —	calculate carefully whether to accept and defend — Against a sacrifice, calculate: accepting and defending accurately can win, but only if the attack doesn't break through.
If forced to choose, king safety usually comes —	before winning a small amount of material — King safety usually outranks grabbing a little material — no amount of material helps if you get checkmated.
Leaving your king in the center too long is risky because —	open central lines expose it to attack — A king stuck in the center is exposed to open central files and diagonals — castle to get it to safety.
A useful defensive question is —	'Which of my pieces defends my king, and can it be removed?' — Knowing which pieces defend your king — and whether the opponent can remove them — is key to staying safe.
Creating 'luft' means —	giving your king an escape square by advancing a pawn near it — Luft ('air') is an escape square made by nudging a pawn near the castled king, preventing back-rank mates.
Trading QUEENS often helps the DEFENDER because —	it removes the strongest attacking piece — The queen is the main attacking piece, so trading queens usually eases pressure on a king under attack.
A quick way to judge your king's safety is to ask —	'How many enemy pieces aim at my king's area?' — Counting how many enemy pieces target your king's area is a fast gauge of how safe (or exposed) your king is.
The overall lesson of king safety is —	protect your king first, then attack with confidence — Protecting your king first frees you to attack and maneuver with confidence — the foundation of sound play.
When facing an attack on your king, a good idea is to —	trade off the opponent's attacking pieces — Trading off the opponent's attacking pieces reduces the firepower aimed at your king — a core defensive idea.
Balancing attack and defense means —	not neglecting your king while pursuing your plans — Strong players balance attack and defense — pursuing plans while always keeping their own king safe.

A good defensive habit is to —	keep pieces near your king for defense when under attack — When your king is under fire, keep enough defenders nearby — don't send every piece off to attack.
Good defense often converts to a win because —	the attacker who over-extends can be counterattacked — A defender who holds firm can punish an over-extended attacker — surviving the attack often leads to a winning counter.
When you're being attacked, calculating the opponent's threats is —	essential before making your own plans — Accurate defense requires calculating the opponent's threats first, so you meet each one precisely.
A back-rank weakness is fixed by —	creating luft or defending the back rank with a piece — Fix a back-rank weakness by giving the king luft or by keeping a piece to guard the back rank.
Prophylaxis means —	making a move that prevents the opponent's plan before it starts — Prophylaxis is preventive play — a quiet move that stops the opponent's plan before it can begin.
The safest place for the king in the middlegame is usually —	castled, behind an intact pawn shield — In the middlegame the king is safest castled behind an intact pawn shield, away from central crossfire.
The pawns in front of a castled king should usually —	stay put to shield the king — The castled king's pawn shield protects it — pushing those pawns forward creates weaknesses and open lines to the king.
A defensive resource is a move that —	meets a threat, often by blocking, trading, or counterattacking — A defensive resource neutralizes a threat — by blocking, trading off attackers, defending the target, or counterattacking.
Sacrificing a small amount of material to STOP an attack can be —	a good practical defense — Returning a little material to defuse a dangerous attack is often a sound, practical defensive decision.

13. Endgame Basics

⌘ Question (fold →)	Answer
A lone king can stop a runaway pawn only if it can —	step into the 'square of the pawn' — The lone king catches a passed pawn only if it can enter the 'square of the pawn' — the box from the pawn to its promotion.
A far-advanced passed pawn is valuable because it —	forces the enemy to spend pieces stopping it — A dangerous passed pawn ties down enemy pieces to stop it, freeing your other pieces to act elsewhere.
In rook endgames, an active rook is best placed —	behind a passed pawn — The rule 'rooks belong behind passed pawns' — behind your own pawn it pushes it; behind theirs it restrains it.
In the endgame you should generally —	activate your king and create a passed pawn — A common winning plan: activate the king and create/push a passed pawn toward promotion.
A 'passed pawn' is a pawn that —	has no enemy pawns able to stop it from promoting — A passed pawn has no enemy pawns in front of it or on adjacent files to block or capture it — a strong asset.
The 'square of the pawn' rule helps you tell —	whether a lone king can catch a runaway pawn — The 'square of the pawn' is a mental box: if the enemy king can step into it, it catches the pawn; if not, the pawn queens.
A rook is usually better than a bishop or knight in the endgame because —	it's more powerful on open boards — As the board opens up in the endgame, the long-range rook (5) outshines the minor pieces (3) even more.
A key endgame goal is to —	promote a pawn into a queen — Promoting a pawn to a queen is a central endgame goal — a new queen usually decides the game.
Endgame study is valuable because —	many games are decided in the endgame — Many games reach an endgame, and sound technique there converts advantages — so endgame knowledge is well rewarded.
In the endgame, the king becomes —	an active fighting piece — With few pieces left and less mating danger, the king becomes a strong, active fighting piece in the endgame.
The opposition matters because the side WITHOUT the move —	can be forced to give ground — Whoever must move in an opposition standoff often has to step aside, letting the other king advance — a zugzwang idea.
A pawn on the 7th rank (one from promoting) with support usually —	promotes and wins — A supported pawn on the 7th rank is one step from a new queen — usually decisive.
To stop an enemy passed pawn, you can —	blockade it with a piece on the square in front — Blockading — placing a piece (a knight is ideal) directly in front of a passed pawn — stops it from advancing.
'Opposition' is when the two kings —	face each other with one square between, and the OTHER side must move — Opposition is kings a square apart on the same line; the side NOT to move 'has the opposition' and controls key squares.
Two connected passed pawns are strong because —	they defend each other as they advance — Connected passed pawns support each other's advance, making them very hard for a lone piece to stop.

When defending a worse endgame, aim for —	activity and drawing resources like stalemate or a fortress — In a worse endgame, seek active defense and drawing resources — stalemate tricks, a fortress, or holding the opposition.
In king-and-pawn endgames, the key idea is often —	who reaches key squares first with the king — King-and-pawn endgames hinge on the king reaching key squares (often in front of the pawn) first, using the opposition.
A 'fortress' in the endgame is —	a setup the weaker side holds to force a draw despite being down material — A fortress is a defensive formation the weaker side holds that the stronger side can't break — securing a draw.
When ahead by a piece in the endgame, you should —	trade pawns carefully and use the extra piece to win — With an extra piece, trade down (keeping the piece), then use it to win pawns and promote or mate.
The most basic endgame skill is —	checkmating with king and queen (or king and rook) vs a lone king — Every player should master the elementary mates (K+Q vs K, K+R vs K) to finish winning endgames.
'Zugzwang' means —	a position where any move a player makes worsens their position — Zugzwang is being forced to move when every available move damages your position — a frequent endgame theme.
Activating your king in the endgame is safe because —	with few pieces left, mating threats are rare — With most pieces traded, the risk of a mating attack drops, so the king can safely march out and fight.
The overall endgame mindset is —	activate the king, create a passer, and know the basic mates — Endgame success comes from an active king, a passed pawn, and knowing the elementary mating techniques.
King and pawn vs king is often won by —	using the king to escort the pawn and gaining the opposition — In king-and-pawn vs king, the king escorts the pawn and uses the opposition to force promotion.
Stalemate is a special danger in the endgame because —	few pieces make it easy to trap a lone king with no legal move — With few pieces, it's easy to accidentally leave the enemy king with no move but no check — a stalemate that throws away the win.

14. Pawn Play & Structure

⌘ Question (fold →)	Answer
A 'backward pawn' is —	a pawn that has fallen behind its neighbors and can't easily advance — A backward pawn lags behind its neighbors and can't safely advance, often becoming a target on a half-open file.
A passed pawn 'must be pushed' is a saying meaning —	advancing a passed pawn is often the right, active plan — 'A passed pawn must be pushed' captures the idea that advancing your passer is usually the right, active plan.
Pawn structure often determines —	your long-term plan (where to attack) — The pawn structure often dictates the plan — e.g., attack on the side where you have a pawn majority or the enemy has weaknesses.
Pawn structure matters because pawns —	can't move backward, so their moves are permanent — Because pawns never move backward, every pawn move permanently shapes the position — structure is long-lasting.
Doubled pawns can occasionally be useful because they —	grant a half-open file for a rook — Doubled pawns are usually a weakness, but they can open a half-open file that a rook uses, offering some compensation.
The best blockader of a passed pawn is usually a knight because it —	blockades AND still controls nearby squares — A knight blockades a passed pawn while still influencing nearby squares — unlike a rook or bishop, it isn't hemmed in.
A 'passed pawn' is strong because —	no enemy pawns can stop it from promoting — A passed pawn has no enemy pawns to block or capture it on its way to promotion — a powerful asset.
Weak squares (holes) in your position are —	squares no pawn can defend, where enemy pieces settle — A hole is a square your pawns can never defend; enemy pieces (especially knights) love to occupy such outposts.
A 'pawn majority' on one side of the board can be used to —	create a passed pawn there — A pawn majority (more pawns than the opponent on one wing) can be advanced to manufacture a passed pawn.
A 'pawn break' is —	a pawn move that challenges the opponent's pawns to open lines — A pawn break is a pawn advance that attacks the enemy pawn structure, opening lines for your pieces.
An 'isolated pawn' is a pawn with —	no friendly pawns on the files beside it — An isolated pawn has no friendly pawns on adjacent files, so pieces (not pawns) must defend it — a potential weakness.
Trading pieces when you have a passed pawn tends to —	help you, as fewer defenders can stop it — With a strong passed pawn, trading pieces reduces the defenders available to stop it, aiding its promotion.
The best blockader of a passed pawn is often a —	knight — A knight is an ideal blockader — sitting in front of a passed pawn while still influencing nearby squares.
A healthy pawn structure generally has —	few weaknesses (no needless isolated/doubled/backward pawns) — A healthy structure minimizes weaknesses — avoiding needless isolated, doubled, or backward pawns.
An 'outpost' is —	a square (often defended by a pawn) where your piece can't be driven off by enemy pawns — An outpost is an advanced square, ideally pawn-supported, where

	your piece sits safely — a knight outpost is especially strong.
Understanding pawn structure is called learning —	the 'soul' of the position (per Philidor) — Philidor called pawns 'the soul of chess' — their structure guides the plans and character of the whole position.
Controlling the center with pawns gives you —	more space and better piece mobility — Central pawns grant space and free movement for your pieces while cramping the opponent's.
Because pawn moves are permanent, you should —	think carefully before making them — Since pawn moves can't be undone, weigh each one carefully — a careless pawn move can create a lasting weakness.
A 'pawn chain' is —	pawns diagonally defending one another — A pawn chain is a diagonal line of pawns where each defends the one ahead — a solid structure.
Trading off an isolated pawn is often —	good for the side that HAS it (removes a weakness) — The side with an isolated pawn often benefits from trading it off to remove the long-term weakness.
A 'doubled pawn' is —	two of your pawns on the same file — Doubled pawns are two friendly pawns on the same file — often a slight weakness since they can't defend each other well.
Pushing the pawns in front of your own king is risky because it —	weakens your king's shelter — Advancing the pawns sheltering your king weakens its shelter and creates entry squares for the attacker.
Creating a passed pawn usually requires —	a favorable pawn majority or a pawn break — Passed pawns are created from a pawn majority or a well-timed pawn break that clears the file.
The base of a pawn chain is —	the pawn that is not defended by another pawn — often the target — The base of a pawn chain (the rearmost pawn) isn't defended by another pawn, so it's the classic point to attack.
The practical payoff of studying pawn structure is —	knowing where to attack and which pawns to target — Studying structure tells you where to attack and which enemy pawns to target — turning strategy into a concrete plan.

15. Strategy & Planning

⌘ Question (fold →)	Answer
When you have no immediate tactic, a reliable strategic move is to —	improve your worst-placed piece — With no tactic available, improving your worst-placed piece is a reliable way to strengthen your position.
Strategy in chess means —	your long-term plan, versus tactics (short-term shots) — Strategy is the long-term plan for a position; tactics are the short forcing sequences that carry it out.
Prophylactic thinking means —	asking what the opponent WANTS and preventing it — Prophylaxis: figure out the opponent's plan and prevent it, not just push your own agenda.
Improving your worst-placed piece is —	a reliable strategic idea — When unsure what to do, improve your worst-placed piece — a classic, reliable strategic guideline.
Open files are valuable because —	rooks placed on them control key lines — Open files (no pawns on them) are highways for rooks, letting them control lines and invade the enemy position.
Combining sound strategy with sharp tactics makes a player —	well-rounded and hard to beat — A player who plans strategically AND calculates tactically is well-rounded and much harder to beat.
A bishop is often better than a knight in —	open positions with pawns on both wings — In open positions, especially with action on both wings, the long-range bishop usually beats the short-stepping knight.
Piece activity means —	your pieces control many squares and have good targets — Active pieces control many squares and have real targets — activity is often worth more than a small material edge.
A 'good' bishop is one that is —	not blocked by its own pawns — A good bishop has open diagonals (its own pawns aren't on its color); a 'bad' bishop is hemmed in by its own pawns.
A long-term plan should be —	flexible and updated as the position changes — Plans should be flexible — update them as the position (and the opponent's ideas) change.
A good strategic question is —	'What are the weaknesses in each camp?' — Assessing both sides' weaknesses (and strengths) is the starting point for choosing a plan.
You should aim your pieces and pawns at —	the opponent's weaknesses — Direct your forces at the opponent's weaknesses — weak pawns, weak squares, or an exposed king.
The 'two weaknesses' principle says —	a defender usually can't hold TWO separate weaknesses at once — The principle of two weaknesses: create/attack a second front so the defender's forces are stretched too thin.
A knight is often better than a bishop in —	closed positions with fixed pawns — In closed positions with fixed pawn chains, the jumping knight often outperforms the blocked bishop.
The initiative means —	you are making threats and the opponent must react — Having the initiative means you're dictating play with threats while the opponent is forced to respond.
Ultimately, strategy helps you —	choose good moves when there's no immediate tactic — Strategy guides you in quiet positions where no tactic exists yet — giving your moves purpose and direction.
Before committing to a plan,	whether tactics allow it (calculate key lines) — A plan must survive concrete

you should check —	tactics — always calculate the key forcing lines before committing to it.
Trading pieces is strategically good when it —	removes a good enemy piece or reaches a favorable endgame — Trade purposefully — to eliminate a strong enemy piece, relieve pressure, or steer toward an endgame you'll win.
Space advantage lets you —	maneuver your pieces more freely than the cramped opponent — A space advantage gives your pieces more room to maneuver while the opponent's cramped pieces get in each other's way.
A 'weakness' you should try to create in the enemy camp is —	a target you can attack repeatedly — Provoking a lasting weakness (a backward pawn, a hole) gives you a fixed target to attack repeatedly.
Controlling key squares often matters more than —	grabbing every pawn — Sometimes controlling key squares or outposts is worth more than snatching a pawn — position over greed.
Good strategy and good tactics relate like —	the plan and the tools to carry it out — Strategy sets the goals; tactics are the concrete tools that achieve them — the two work hand in hand.
A good plan is based on —	the features of the position (weaknesses, space, king safety) — Sound plans grow from the position's features — pawn weaknesses, space, open files, and king safety.
A practical planning method is to —	assess the position, pick a target, then find moves toward it — A reliable method: assess the position, choose a target or plan, then find concrete moves that pursue it.
The famous saying is: 'A bad plan is better than —'	no plan at all — 'A bad plan is better than no plan' — even an imperfect plan gives direction, while aimless moves drift into trouble.

16. Capstone: The Complete Tactician

⌘ Question (fold →)	Answer
Which tactic FREEZES a piece rather than forcing it to move?	The pin — The pin freezes a piece (it can't or shouldn't move); the skewer forces the front piece to move away.
The most important thing to check every single move is —	'Is my king (or my opponent's king) in danger?' — Checking for danger to either king every move prevents disasters and finds mating chances.
A sound sacrifice is one where —	the payoff (mate, attack, or material) exceeds what you give up — A sacrifice is sound only when the concrete payoff — mate, a winning attack, or regained material — exceeds the cost.
A well-rounded chess player combines —	tactics, strategy, and endgame technique — A complete player blends sharp tactics, sound strategy, and solid endgame technique.
The best overall way to improve your tactics is —	solving puzzles regularly to build pattern recognition — Regular puzzle-solving builds the pattern recognition that lets you spot tactics instantly in real games.
Two enemy pieces lined up on an open file invite a —	pin or skewer — Pieces lined up on an open file are prime pin or skewer targets, depending on which is in front.
The difference between a fork and a discovered attack is —	a fork is one piece with two threats; a discovery uses two pieces — A fork = one piece making two threats; a discovered attack = two pieces (the mover and the revealed one) making threats.
A loose (undefended) enemy piece should make you look for a —	tactic to win it (fork, double attack, etc.) — An undefended piece is a tactical target — look for a fork or double attack to win it ('loose pieces drop off').
A back-rank weakness means you should look for —	a rook or queen invasion to the back rank — Against a king with no luft, look to invade the back rank with a rook or queen for a mate.
To convert a winning position, you should —	stay alert for tactics and avoid stalemate — Even when winning, stay alert — calculate carefully, watch for enemy tactics (swindles), and avoid stalemate.
Before playing any candidate move, the master habit is to check —	checks, captures, and threats — Scanning checks, captures, and threats — for you and the opponent — every move is the habit that finds tactics and avoids blunders.
A double check can only be answered by —	moving the king — A double check forces a king move — you can't block or capture your way out of two simultaneous checks.
After this course, you are ready to —	spot tactics and play with a plan in your own games — The capstone's goal: you can now spot tactics and play purposefully with a plan in your own games.
The most valuable habit this course teaches is to —	check for checks, captures, and threats every move — Checking for checks, captures, and threats every move — for both sides — is the habit that most improves your play.
A single knight attacking the king and queen at once is a —	fork (specifically a royal fork) — One knight hitting king and queen together is a fork — the prized royal fork.
Sir Pinwell, the Twin Knights, and Lady Skewer together	the three core tactics (pin, fork, skewer) — GambitTales' cast embodies the core tactics: Sir Pinwell (pin), the Twin Knights of Fork Hill (fork), and Lady Skewer

teach you —	(skewer).
Combining a pin with a second attacker lets you —	win the frozen piece — Pinning a piece and then attacking it again wins it, since the pinned piece can't escape.
The final lesson of GambitTales is that chess rewards —	seeing threats, planning ahead, and calculating carefully — Chess rewards the player who sees threats, plans ahead, and calculates carefully — the complete tactician.
The purpose of learning all these tactics is ultimately to —	win material and deliver checkmate — Tactics exist to win material and, ultimately, to deliver checkmate — they decide most games.
The safest moment to start an attack on the enemy king is when —	your own king is safe and pieces are developed — Attack when your king is safe and your pieces are developed — otherwise a counterattack may hit you first.
The pin, fork, and skewer are all —	tactics that win material by exploiting piece positions — Pin, fork, and skewer are the core tactics — each wins material by exploiting how enemy pieces are placed.
When you spot a promising tactic, before playing it you must —	calculate the opponent's best defense — Always calculate the opponent's best defense before committing to a tactic — make sure it truly works.
A checking move that reveals a second attacker behind the moving piece is a —	discovered check — That's a discovered check — the moving piece unveils a check from the piece behind it.
A player who calculates carefully AND plans strategically will —	make consistently strong moves — Combining careful calculation with sound planning produces consistently strong moves.
If you're ahead in material, the right general plan is to —	trade pieces and simplify toward a win — Ahead in material, trade pieces to simplify toward a winning endgame (while avoiding stalemate tricks).

Keep going

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