

GeneralsTale — Flashcards

A Spark & Anvil printable flashcard deck. Quiz yourself on the GeneralsTale 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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GeneralsTale — Flashcards

How to use these cards

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1. The Board & the River

⌂ Question (fold →)	Answer
In Xiangqi, pieces sit on the —	intersections (points where lines cross) — Unlike Western chess, Xiangqi pieces are placed on the intersections of the lines, not inside squares.
How many soldiers does each side have?	Five — Each side has five soldiers, lined up along the front rank across the board.
The Xiangqi board has how many files (vertical lines)?	Nine — The board has 9 vertical files and 10 horizontal ranks — pieces sit on the 9×10 grid of intersections.
The 3×3 marked area where the general stays is the —	palace — The palace is the 3×3 zone (with diagonal lines) that confines the general and advisors.
Which side of the board does each general 'live' on?	Its own half, inside its palace — Each general stays within its own palace on its own half of the board.
Which pieces CANNOT cross the river?	The elephants (and the general/advisors, who stay in the palace) — Elephants cannot cross the river (they defend their own side); the general and advisors stay in the palace.
The river is important strategically because it —	restricts elephants and empowers crossed soldiers — The river both limits elephants (they can't cross) and empowers soldiers (sideways moves once across).
The general and advisors together defend by staying —	inside the palace — The general and advisors are palace-bound defenders — the last line of protection.
Which piece is confined to the palace along with the general?	The advisors (guards) — The advisors (also called guards) stay inside the palace and defend the general.
Grandmaster Sunzi (the mentor) says the board is 'a river between two kingdoms.' This highlights —	that the river divides the two sides and shapes strategy — The river is the central feature dividing the two kingdoms — a vivid way to remember its strategic importance.
Soldiers gain extra power when they —	cross the river — Once a soldier crosses the river it may also move sideways, not only forward — a key power-up.
What happens if a player cannot make any legal move?	That player LOSES (stalemate is a loss in Xiangqi) — Unlike Western chess, a player with no legal move loses in Xiangqi — stalemate counts as a loss.
Learning the board FIRST matters because —	piece moves, the river, and the palace all depend on knowing the layout — Every rule — how pieces move, the river, the palace — builds on knowing the board layout, so it comes first.
Xiangqi's two armies are traditionally colored —	red and black — The two sides are red and black; red conventionally moves first.
Which is TRUE about Xiangqi and Western chess?	They are related but have different pieces and rules — Xiangqi and Western chess are related strategy games but differ in board, pieces, and several rules.
The diagonal lines drawn inside the palace show —	where the advisors move (diagonally within it) — The palace's diagonals mark the advisors' diagonal step within the 3×3 zone.

Two pieces cannot occupy the same point, so capturing means —	moving onto an enemy piece's point and removing it — To capture, a piece moves onto the enemy piece's intersection and removes it from the board.
How many pieces does each side start with?	16 — Each side has 16 pieces: 1 general, 2 advisors, 2 elephants, 2 horses, 2 chariots, 2 cannons, 5 soldiers.
Why do the piece rules matter so much in Xiangqi?	Each piece moves differently, giving every piece a distinct role — Xiangqi's charm is piece asymmetry — each type moves uniquely, so learning each piece's rule is essential.
A soldier that has NOT crossed the river can move —	one point straight forward only — Before crossing the river a soldier moves only one point straight forward.
Compared to Western chess, Xiangqi's board is —	larger, using a 9×10 grid of points — Xiangqi uses a 9×10 grid of intersections — more playing points than Western chess's 8×8 of squares.
The goal of Xiangqi is to —	checkmate the opponent's general — You win by checkmating the enemy general — trapping it so it cannot escape capture.
The board's symmetry means each side's setup is —	a mirror image of the other — The starting position is symmetric — each army mirrors the other, giving a fair, balanced start.
The blank strip across the middle of the board is called the —	river — The 'river' runs across the board's middle, dividing the two armies; certain pieces cannot cross it.
Which piece is generally the STRONGEST in Xiangqi?	The chariot (like a rook) — The chariot, moving any distance in a straight line, is usually the strongest piece.

2. The General & Advisors

⌘ Question (fold →)	Answer
Grandmaster Sunzi calls the general 'the heart of the kingdom.' This means —	protecting it is the whole point — lose it and the game ends — The general is the heart of your position: its safety is everything, since checkmate ends the game.
How many advisors does each side have?	Two — Each side has two advisors, positioned beside the general in the palace.
Can two advisors defend the same check at once?	They cover different palace points, so together they guard more escapes — The two advisors sit on different palace points, so together they cover more of the general's escape and blocking squares.
A general with NO advisors is often —	vulnerable, because checks are harder to block — Without advisors, a general struggles to block checks, so a palace stripped of guards is a common target.
If your general is in check, you MUST —	get out of check (block, move, or capture the attacker) immediately — As in chess, when your general is in check you must remove the check that very move — nothing else is legal.
Which pair of pieces NEVER leaves the palace?	The general and the advisors — Only the general and its two advisors are strictly confined to the palace all game.
Which move is legal for an advisor?	One point diagonally within the palace — An advisor moves exactly one point diagonally and only within the palace.
The 'flying general' rule says the two generals —	may NOT face each other directly on an open file with nothing between — The two generals cannot sit on the same file with no pieces between them — that 'flying general' facing is illegal.
Advisors and elephants together form the general's —	defensive shell around the palace — Advisors (in the palace) and elephants (nearby) form the defensive shell protecting the general.
Advisors are best used to —	shield the general inside the palace — Advisors are defensive: they stay home to shield the general from checks and attacks.
The flying-general rule effectively lets a general —	'attack' along an open file, since the enemy can't allow the face-off — Because the face-off is illegal, an exposed general on an open file acts like a threat — a subtle attacking idea.
Can the general leave the palace?	No — it must always stay inside the palace — The general can never leave the palace; it is confined to the 3×3 zone the whole game.
How does the general move?	One point straight (orthogonally), staying in the palace — The general moves one point orthogonally (up/down/left/right) and must stay inside the palace.
The key mindset for these palace pieces is —	defense first — keep the general safe above all — The general and advisors are defensive by nature; the guiding idea is to keep the general safe at all costs.
An advisor blocking a check is an example of —	using a defender to shield the general — Advisors often block enemy checks by interposing on the check's line — a core defensive job.
Because the general is confined, endgame checkmates often work by —	using the small palace to trap the general with few escape points — The palace's small size means a general has few escape points, so mates exploit that confinement.

Because advisors move diagonally and generals move straight, together they —	cover different points, complementing each other's defense — The general's orthogonal steps and the advisors' diagonal steps cover different points, giving fuller palace defense.
Why is the general such a weak MOVER but so important?	Losing it (checkmate) ends the game, so it's protected, not used to attack — The general moves feebly and is kept safe — the whole game is about protecting your general and trapping theirs.
How does an advisor (guard) move?	One point diagonally, staying in the palace — An advisor moves one point diagonally and, like the general, stays inside the palace.
Which move is legal for the general?	One point sideways within the palace — The general moves exactly one point orthogonally (including sideways) and only within the palace.
Why can't the general simply run away from danger like in some games?	It's trapped in the small palace, so it can't flee far — The general can't flee the palace, so defense must come from blocking and capturing, not running away.
The 'flying general' idea is unique to Xiangqi and shows that —	even a weak, confined piece can create a threat by geometry — The flying-general rule shows how position/geometry can make even a confined piece influence the board.
Keeping your advisors in place is important because —	missing advisors leave the general exposed to checks — Trading away advisors can fatally weaken your palace, leaving the general open to enemy checks.
An advisor can reach how many points inside the palace?	Five (the center and the four corners) — Moving only diagonally, an advisor can occupy the palace center and the four corner points — five points total.
If both generals end up on the same open file, the player who created that —	made an illegal move (it's not allowed) — You may not move into (or leave open) a position where the generals directly face each other — it's an illegal move.

3. The Elephant (Minister)

⌂ Question (fold →)	Answer
The elephant CANNOT move if —	a piece blocks its eye OR the move would cross the river — An elephant's move is illegal if its eye is blocked or if the destination is across the river.
Elephants and advisors together are called the general's —	defensive pieces (the 'shell') — Advisors and elephants are collectively the general's defensive pieces — the shell around the palace.
An elephant's two-point diagonal always lands on —	the same color region of points (a fixed set of squares) — The elephant always lands two diagonally, so it only ever reaches a fixed, limited set of points on its side.
An elephant defends best when it —	covers key diagonal points near its own palace — A well-placed elephant guards the diagonal approaches to its own palace.
The elephant demonstrates the app's theme of piece-asymmetry because —	its unique two-step-blockable-can't-cross rule gives it a distinct character — The elephant's distinctive rule set gives it a unique 'character' — exactly the piece-asymmetry GeneralsTale celebrates.
The elephant's limitations mostly make it —	a patient, positional defender rather than a flashy attacker — The elephant's value is quiet, positional defense — solid protection rather than dramatic attacking play.
Two elephants are usually kept to —	form a defensive shield in front of the palace — Kept together, the two elephants form a defensive shield protecting the general's approach.
If you must choose to keep an advisor OR an elephant late in a game, the choice depends on —	what threats you face (cannons vs chariots) — it's a judgment call — Which defender to keep depends on the enemy's attacking pieces; it's a judgment call, not a fixed rule.
Grandmaster Sunzi says the elephant is 'a patient wall.' The lesson is —	value steady defense, not just bold attack — The elephant models patient defense — a reminder that a steady wall is as valuable as a bold charge.
The elephant is mainly a —	defensive piece — Because it can't cross the river, the elephant is a defensive piece guarding its own side and the general.
Which describes the elephant accurately?	A blockable, river-bound, two-step diagonal defender — The elephant is a defensive piece: it steps exactly two diagonally, can be blocked, and can't cross the river.
How does the elephant move?	Exactly two points diagonally — The elephant moves exactly two points diagonally each move — tracing the shape of the character 田.
How many points can an unblocked elephant reach from the center of its side?	Seven — An elephant can reach up to seven points on its own half (fewer near edges or when blocked).
If a piece sits on the elephant's eye, the elephant —	cannot make that particular diagonal move — The elephant cannot jump; a piece on its eye (midpoint) blocks that move entirely.
Why can't the elephant help attack the enemy general directly?	It cannot cross the river to reach the enemy's side — The river confines the elephant to its own half, so it can't reach the enemy general to attack.
	in Xiangqi, pieces often block each other's paths — The elephant's

Because the elephant can be blocked, it teaches the idea that —	blockable eye is one of several Xiangqi mechanics where a piece in the way stops movement.
Compared to the Western bishop, the elephant is —	much more limited (fixed two-step, can't cross the river, can be blocked) — The elephant is far more limited than a bishop: a fixed two-step, blockable, and unable to cross the river.
Losing both elephants tends to —	weaken your defense against enemy cannons and chariots — Without elephants, your defensive shield is thinner and enemy cannons/chariots can more easily break through.
The elephant's move shape is often compared to the Chinese character —	田 (field) — The elephant's two-step diagonal traces 田 (field) — a helpful memory aid for its move.
'Blocking the elephant's eye' is a tactic where you —	place a piece on the elephant's midpoint so it can't move — By occupying the elephant's 'eye' (midpoint), you can pin it in place — a classic Xiangqi tactic.
A common beginner mistake is to —	push elephants forward as if they could attack — Beginners sometimes try to attack with elephants; since they can't cross the river, they belong on defense.
An elephant whose eye is blocked by an ENEMY piece —	still cannot make that move (blocking works with any color) — A piece of either color on the elephant's eye blocks the move — the elephant can never jump the midpoint.
Can the elephant cross the river?	No — it must stay on its own side — The elephant can never cross the river; it is a defender confined to its own half of the board.
The elephant can be BLOCKED by a piece at —	the midpoint of its diagonal path ('blocking the elephant's eye') — If a piece sits on the midpoint of the elephant's two-step diagonal (its 'eye'), the elephant cannot make that move.
Which piece pairs with the elephant as a fellow DEFENDER?	The advisor — The advisor (palace-bound) and elephant (river-bound) are the two main defensive pieces.

4. The Horse

⌘ Question (fold →)	Answer
To block an enemy horse's check, you might —	occupy the point that hobbles its leg (if the check hasn't happened yet) or interpose/capture — Against a horse, defense includes hobbling its leg beforehand, or interposing/capturing to answer a check.
The best summary of the horse is —	a tricky L-shaped attacker that must keep its legs free — The horse is a tricky L-shaped attacker whose power depends on keeping its legs unblocked.
The horse can cross the river —	yes, freely (unlike the elephant) — Unlike the elephant, the horse may freely cross the river and attack the enemy's half.
A horse near the edge of the board is usually —	less powerful (it reaches fewer points) — On the edge, a horse reaches fewer of its eight points, so horses are usually stronger toward the center.
How many points can a horse reach if NOT blocked?	Up to eight — An unblocked horse can reach up to eight points (fewer near edges or when a leg is hobbled).
Unlike the chess knight, the Xiangqi horse —	CANNOT jump — it can be blocked — The Xiangqi horse cannot jump; a piece in its path blocks it — a key difference from the chess knight.
Grandmaster Sunzi says 'a free horse gallops; a bound horse waits.' The lesson is —	keep your horse's paths open so it stays useful — A horse is only as good as its freedom to move — keep its legs open and it gallops; hobble it and it waits.
The horse's first step is —	one point orthogonally (straight) — The horse first steps one point straight, then one point diagonally outward — and the straight step is the one that can be blocked.
The horse becomes MORE dangerous in the late game because —	with fewer pieces around, its legs are rarely blocked — As pieces disappear, a horse's legs are less often blocked, so its mobility (and danger) rises in the endgame.
A common attacking idea is the 'horse checks supported by another piece,' which works because —	the general can't always escape the horse's L-shaped check — A supported horse can deliver awkward L-shaped checks that a confined general struggles to escape.
A horse is strong when placed —	in the open, with its legs unblocked, near the action — A horse thrives in open positions where its legs are free and it can reach many points.
Keeping a horse mobile is worth more than —	keeping it 'safe' but boxed in and unable to move — An active horse is far more valuable than a 'safe' but immobilized one — mobility is the horse's whole point.
A horse is 'hobbled' (blocked) when —	a piece sits directly beside it, in the first (orthogonal) step of its move — If a piece is directly adjacent in the direction the horse first steps, the horse's 'leg' is hobbled and it can't move that way.
How does the horse move?	Like a knight: one point straight then one point diagonally outward — The horse moves one point orthogonally then one point diagonally outward — an L, like the chess knight.
Compared to the chariot, the horse	shorter-range and blockable, but tricky with its L-shaped jumps of attack — The horse is shorter-range and blockable, but its L-shaped attacks

is —	are tricky; the chariot is the longer-range powerhouse.
Two horses can defend by —	covering key points around the palace with their L-shaped reach — A pair of horses can guard the approaches to the palace, using their L-shaped reach to cover key points.
A horse and a chariot working together are —	a powerful attacking duo — The horse and chariot cover complementary points and form one of Xiangqi's strongest attacking partnerships.
A hobbled-horse block is an example of the broader Xiangqi idea that —	controlling KEY points can disable an enemy piece — Hobbling shows how occupying a single key point can neutralize an enemy piece — a recurring positional idea.
Why does the hobbled-horse rule fit GeneralsTale's theme?	It gives the horse a unique vulnerability — part of its distinct character — The horse's hobble is a signature trait — the kind of piece-asymmetry that gives each piece its own character.
The 'hobbling the horse's leg' block means you can —	stop an enemy horse by placing a piece next to it — You can neutralize an enemy horse by occupying the point next to it that blocks its intended first step.
The horse's biggest weakness is —	that it can be hobbled (blocked) by a single adjacent piece — The horse's key weakness is the hobble: a single well-placed piece can shut down its move.
Because the horse can be blocked, good players try to —	keep the horse's legs free so it can move — A horse with blocked legs is nearly useless, so you keep its path clear to preserve its mobility.
If your horse is hobbled, the fix is often to —	remove or avoid the blocking piece so its leg is free — To free a hobbled horse, you remove the blocker or reroute so the horse's leg is no longer obstructed.
Which stops a horse: a piece on its landing point, or a piece beside its first step?	A piece beside its first step (hobbling the leg) — A horse is stopped by a piece adjacent in its first-step direction (hobbling the leg), not by a piece on the far landing point.
A horse and a soldier together near the palace can —	combine their different attacks to threaten the general — A horse's L-shaped reach plus a crossed soldier's forward/sideways attacks can combine into real threats near the palace.

5. The Chariot

⌘ Question (fold →)	Answer
A chariot behind its own soldiers can —	support them as they advance — Placed behind advancing soldiers, a chariot supports and protects them as they push forward.
How does the chariot move?	Any number of points in a straight line (orthogonally) — The chariot moves any number of points horizontally or vertically — exactly like a Western rook.
Which piece most resembles the Western rook?	The chariot — The chariot is Xiangqi's rook-equivalent — a straight-line slider of any distance.
A chariot's threat along a file forces the opponent to —	spend moves defending, giving you initiative — A chariot's threats make the opponent react, letting you keep the initiative and dictate play.
Because it's so strong, players often try to —	develop (activate) their chariots early and trade them favorably — Chariots are so valuable that you activate them early and avoid trading them for lesser pieces.
A chariot on an OPEN file (no pieces blocking) is —	very powerful — it controls the whole file — An open file lets the chariot control the entire line, threatening pieces and the palace from afar.
Grandmaster Sunzi calls the chariot 'the thunder of the army.' This captures —	its overwhelming long-range striking power — The chariot is the army's thunder — its long-range striking power dominates the board.
If both sides have equal material, an ACTIVE chariot vs a PASSIVE one usually favors —	the side with the active chariot — With equal material, the more active chariot often decides the game — activity outweighs a bare material count.
The chariot teaches the value of —	long-range power and open lines — The chariot embodies long-range power — a lesson in the value of controlling open lines.
Can the chariot jump over pieces?	No — it moves until blocked — The chariot cannot jump; it slides until it meets a piece, capturing an enemy or stopping before a friend.
Should you rush your chariot out with no plan?	No — activate it with purpose, toward good lines — Activate the chariot purposefully toward open lines and real targets, not aimlessly.
A chariot pinning an enemy piece against its general is —	a strong tactic that restricts the enemy — A chariot can pin an enemy piece in line with its general, since moving the pinned piece would expose the general.
The chariot is dangerous in the endgame because —	with fewer blockers, it dominates open lines — As pieces vanish, the chariot commands the open lines, making it a dominant endgame piece.
Trading a chariot is justified when —	it removes a bigger threat or leads to a winning position — Even a chariot can be traded when doing so removes a greater danger or clearly improves your position.
Two chariots working together can —	double on a file or rank for a powerful attack — Doubling both chariots on a file or rank creates a battering-ram attack that's hard to defend.
Why is 'controlling open files' a chariot principle?	The chariot's power is greatest on unobstructed lines — A chariot is strongest on open lines, so seizing open files is a core chariot strategy.

The chariot's simple rule (straight lines, no jump) makes it —	powerful yet easy to understand — a great piece to master first — The chariot's simple, strong rule makes it an ideal piece to master early on the road to good play.
A chariot that is 'passive' (stuck behind its own pieces) is —	not using its strength — activate it — A chariot trapped behind its own pieces wastes its power; you should activate it onto open lines.
The chariot is usually considered —	the strongest piece in Xiangqi — With its long straight-line range, the chariot is generally the most powerful and valuable piece.
The chariot's value means losing one for a horse or cannon is usually —	a bad trade (you lost your strongest piece) — Trading a chariot for a horse or cannon usually loses value, since the chariot is the strongest piece.
A chariot controlling a file near the enemy palace —	creates strong attacking pressure — A chariot on a file pointing into the enemy palace applies serious attacking pressure.
A chariot is best developed to —	an open file or rank where nothing blocks its path — A chariot reaches its full power on an open file or rank, so develop it where its path is clear.
A common attacking plan is 'chariot + horse + cannon' because —	they cover different kinds of points, creating unstoppable threats — The chariot, horse, and cannon attack in different ways, so together they create threats that are hard to meet.
On defense, a chariot can —	guard important files/ranks and capture attackers from afar — The chariot defends as well as it attacks, guarding key lines and capturing enemies from a distance.
Compared to the cannon, the chariot captures by —	moving onto the enemy piece directly (no screen needed) — The chariot captures directly by moving onto the target, unlike the cannon which needs a screen to jump.

6. The Cannon

⌂ Question (fold →)	Answer
Grandmaster Sunzi says the cannon 'strikes from behind a wall.' This captures —	that it needs a screen (the 'wall') to fire a capture — The cannon fires from behind a 'wall' (screen) — a vivid way to remember it needs exactly one piece to capture over.
A cannon can deliver a check by —	jumping a screen so it attacks the enemy general — A cannon checks by aligning with the enemy general over exactly one screen, threatening to capture it.
Can a cannon capture with NO screen between it and the target?	No — it needs exactly one screen to capture — Without a screen the cannon can only move (like a chariot); it cannot capture until there's exactly one piece to jump.
If there are ZERO pieces between a cannon and an enemy piece, the cannon —	cannot capture it (no screen), though it can move along the line — With no screen in between, a cannon cannot capture — it can only move along the line like a chariot.
The cannon is at its BEST when —	the board is busy, giving it many screens and targets — A cannon thrives on a busy board full of screens and targets — its power peaks in complex, crowded positions.
The cannon's unique rule makes it —	a distinctive piece with no exact Western-chess equivalent — The screen-jumping cannon has no direct equivalent in Western chess — a signature Xiangqi piece.
A cannon tends to get WEAKER in the endgame because —	with few pieces left, there are fewer screens to jump — As pieces disappear, screens become scarce, so a cannon often loses power in the endgame.
The best summary of the cannon is —	a chariot-mover that must jump exactly one screen to capture — The cannon moves like a chariot but captures only by jumping exactly one screen — its defining rule.
A cannon is often strong in the OPENING because —	the board is crowded, giving it many screens to jump — Early on, the crowded board provides plenty of screens, so cannons are especially dangerous in the opening.
A cannon with no available screen is temporarily —	unable to capture (only able to move) — Without a screen, a cannon can't capture — so its threats depend on screens being present.
Two cannons can attack together by —	using each other or other pieces as screens for double threats — A pair of cannons can create layered threats, each using pieces (or the other) as screens.
To defend against a cannon, you can —	remove or avoid providing the screen it needs — Since a cannon needs exactly one screen, removing that screen (or not providing one) neutralizes its capture.
How does the cannon MOVE when NOT capturing?	Like a chariot — straight lines, any distance, no jumping — When not capturing, the cannon moves exactly like a chariot: straight lines, any distance, no jumping.
A cannon aimed at the enemy	capture the general if the screen ever moves or by jumping it — With a

general with an advisor as the screen threatens to —	screen in place, a cannon threatens the general — a constant pressure on the enemy palace.
The single piece a cannon jumps to capture is called the —	screen (or cannon mount) — The jumped piece is the 'screen' or 'cannon mount' — exactly one piece, of either color, between cannon and target.
A cannon behind a horse ('cannon behind horse') is a common attacking setup because —	the horse acts as the screen for the cannon's threats — With a horse as its screen, the cannon can threaten captures/checks — a coordinated attacking pattern.
The 'central cannon' opening places a cannon —	on the central file, aiming at the enemy palace — The central cannon opening points a cannon down the middle file toward the enemy general — a classic aggressive start.
A common trap is to give the enemy cannon a screen by —	moving a piece into the line between it and your general — Carelessly placing a piece between an enemy cannon and your general hands the cannon the screen it needs — a common trap.
Can a cannon capture by jumping TWO pieces?	No — it must jump exactly ONE — The cannon jumps exactly one screen; two or more pieces between it and the target block the capture.
The 'empty-cannon' or screenless cannon can still —	move and control a file (it just can't capture without a screen) — Even without a screen, a cannon moves and controls files like a chariot; it simply can't capture until a screen appears.
Compared to a chariot, a cannon is —	similar in movement but different in capture (it needs a screen) — A cannon moves like a chariot but captures only over a screen — the capture rule is the key difference.
The cannon rewards players who think about —	which pieces are between it and its target (screens) — Good cannon play means always tracking how many pieces lie between the cannon and its target.
How does the cannon CAPTURE?	By jumping exactly one piece (a 'screen') to land on the target — To capture, the cannon must jump exactly one intervening piece (the 'screen') and land on the enemy target.
Why does the cannon fit GeneralsTale's piece-asymmetry theme so well?	Its jump-to-capture-with-a-screen rule is unlike any other piece — The cannon's need for a screen to capture is a totally distinct rule — a perfect example of piece asymmetry.
A clever defensive idea is to place YOUR piece as a would-be screen —	carefully, since it can enable the enemy cannon's capture — Any piece you place between an enemy cannon and a target can become the screen it needs — so watch what you expose.

7. The Soldier

⌂ Question (fold →)	Answer
A soldier deep in the enemy palace can help checkmate by —	controlling escape points with its forward/sideways moves — A soldier inside the enemy palace can cover the general's escape points, contributing to checkmate.
A soldier's value INCREASES as it —	advances and crosses the river toward the enemy palace — A soldier grows more valuable as it advances and crosses the river, peaking near the enemy palace.
Can a soldier EVER move backward?	No — never — A soldier can never retreat; it moves forward, and sideways only after crossing the river.
Keeping soldiers CONNECTED (side by side once across) is good because —	they defend each other and are harder to pick off — Connected crossed soldiers protect one another, making them harder for the enemy to capture.
Compared to a chess pawn, a Xiangqi soldier —	captures straight (not diagonally) and never promotes, but gains sideways moves — Unlike a chess pawn, the soldier captures straight ahead, never promotes, but gains sideways movement past the river.
Why can't you just rush all five soldiers forward carelessly?	Un-supported soldiers get captured, and pushes can't be undone — Unsupported soldiers are easily captured, and since pushes are permanent, you advance them carefully with support.
Two connected crossed soldiers can be dangerous because —	they support each other's advance near the palace — Crossed soldiers side by side can support each other, becoming a serious threat near the enemy palace.
The best summary of the soldier is —	a forward-only piece that gains sideways moves after the river and never retreats — The soldier moves forward (and sideways after the river), captures the same way, and never retreats or promotes.
The soldier teaches the lesson that —	even the weakest piece grows powerful in the right place — The soldier shows that even the humblest piece becomes powerful in the right place — near the enemy palace.
Because soldiers can't retreat, advancing one is —	a permanent commitment — think before pushing — A soldier can't come back, so pushing one is a permanent commitment that should be made with a plan.
Why are crossed soldiers valuable near the enemy palace?	Their sideways movement lets them attack and support mates — A crossed soldier's sideways move makes it a real attacker near the enemy palace, often assisting in checkmates.
A lone un-crossed soldier is usually —	a minor piece — useful mainly once it advances — A single un-crossed soldier is minor; its usefulness grows as it advances and crosses the river.
A soldier gives check by —	attacking the general along its (forward or sideways) move — A soldier checks by attacking the general along a legal move — straight ahead, or sideways once across the river.
Do Xiangqi soldiers 'promote'?	No — they never promote, but they gain sideways movement across the river — Xiangqi soldiers don't promote; crossing the river (gaining sideways

like chess pawns?	movement) is their only power increase.
How does a soldier capture?	The same way it moves (forward, or sideways after the river) — A soldier captures exactly the way it moves — straight forward, or sideways once across the river (never diagonally).
A soldier that has NOT crossed the river is —	limited to slow forward steps — Before the river a soldier is a slow forward-only piece — its real value comes after crossing.
After crossing the river, a soldier can ALSO move —	one point sideways (left or right) — Once across the river a soldier may also move one point sideways — but it can never move backward.
When trading pieces, a crossed soldier near the palace is often —	worth more than an un-crossed one far away — A crossed soldier near the enemy palace can be worth much more than a distant un-crossed one — location is key.
Two crossed soldiers side by side near the palace are dangerous mainly because —	each can cover the escape points the other threatens — Side-by-side crossed soldiers cover overlapping escape points, making them a serious threat near the enemy palace.
How many soldiers start on each side?	Five — Each side begins with five soldiers, spaced along the front rank.
How does a soldier move BEFORE crossing the river?	One point straight forward — Before the river, a soldier moves only one point straight forward.
Once a soldier can move sideways, it captures sideways too. This is because —	a soldier always captures the same way it moves — A soldier captures exactly as it moves, so a crossed soldier can capture sideways as well as forward.
Good soldier play is mostly about —	timing advances so they're supported and land where they matter — Effective soldier play is about well-timed, supported advances that place soldiers where they create real threats.
Grandmaster Sunzi says 'a soldier past the river never looks back.' This captures —	that soldiers commit forward — advance them wisely — A crossed soldier can never retreat — a reminder to advance soldiers with purpose, since the commitment is permanent.
The soldier's forward-only rule reflects the theme that —	each piece has a distinct character and set of limits — The soldier's forward-only (then sideways) rule is another example of the piece-asymmetry that gives Xiangqi its character.

8. Check, Checkmate & Stalemate

⌘ Question (fold →)	Answer
A general confined to the palace is easier to mate because —	it has few points to escape to — The palace's small size gives the general few escape points, which is what makes many Xiangqi mates possible.
To FORCE checkmate you usually need to —	attack the general while removing all its escapes and blockers — Checkmate is forced by attacking the general while its escape points and defenders are all removed or covered.
Winning at Xiangqi ultimately comes down to —	delivering checkmate (or forcing a loss like stalemate) before your opponent does — You win by checkmating the enemy general (or forcing a stalemate loss) before your own general is trapped.
A key difference from Western chess is that in Xiangqi —	stalemate is a LOSS, not a draw — One of the biggest rules differences: in Xiangqi a stalemated player loses, whereas in chess it's a draw.
The safest way to avoid surprise mates is to —	keep your defensive pieces (advisors/elephants) and watch enemy attackers — Keeping your palace defense intact and watching enemy attacking pieces is the best guard against surprise mates.
Grandmaster Sunzi says 'the game is won at the general, not the crowd.' This means —	trapping the general wins — capturing many pieces is only a means to that end — Victory is about the general: captures matter only insofar as they help you trap the enemy general.
In Xiangqi, if a player has NO legal move (stalemate), that player —	LOSES — Stalemate is a loss in Xiangqi (unlike Western chess, where it's a draw): a player with no legal move loses.
When your general is in check, you may respond by —	moving it, blocking the check, or capturing the attacker — You must end the check that move: move the general, interpose a piece to block, or capture the checking piece.
You should always check whether YOUR move leaves your general —	in check or facing the enemy general (both illegal) — A move that leaves your own general in check (or facing the enemy general) is illegal — always verify before moving.
Checkmate ends the game, so the whole game is a contest to —	protect your general while trapping the enemy's — Since checkmate wins, everything you do serves two aims: keep your general safe and trap the enemy general.
Blocking a check ('interposing') means —	placing one of your pieces on the line between the attacker and the general — Interposing blocks a check by placing a piece on the attacking line (works against chariots/cannons, not horse/soldier checks that can't be blocked).
A 'check' means —	the general is under direct attack and must be saved this move — A check is a direct threat to capture the general; the player in check must remove the threat immediately.
'Checkmate' means —	the general is in check and cannot escape — the game is won — Checkmate is a check the player cannot escape (no way to block, move, or capture) — it wins the game.
A check that the general	not checkmate (it had an escape) — If the general can legally move out of

escapes by moving is —	check, it isn't checkmate — mate requires no legal escape.
Perpetual-check rules exist to —	prevent a player from forcing a never-ending draw by repeating checks — The perpetual-check rule keeps games decisive by forbidding a player from repeating checks endlessly to escape a loss.
If your general is checked and you can capture the checking piece safely, that is —	a valid way to answer the check — Capturing the checking piece (safely) is one of the three legal ways to answer a check.
Which check usually CANNOT be blocked by interposing?	A horse's or soldier's check (adjacent/L-shaped, no line to block) — Horse and soldier checks attack from adjacent/L-shaped points with no line to interpose on, so you must move or capture.
The 'flying general' rule can DELIVER a win because —	you can't leave the generals facing on an open file, limiting the defender — Since the generals may not face each other on an open file, that rule can restrict the defender and help force mate.
To recognize checkmate, ask: is the general in check AND —	does it have NO legal way to escape, block, or capture? — It's checkmate when the general is in check and none of the three responses (move, block, capture) is available.
A player who is NOT in check but has no legal move —	loses (stalemate) — If a player has no legal move at all — even without being in check — that player loses in Xiangqi.
A soldier can give check because —	it attacks the general along its legal move (forward, or sideways after the river) — A soldier delivers check when it attacks the enemy general along a legal move — straight ahead, or sideways once across the river.
If your ONLY way out of check is illegal (e.g., it would expose your general to a face-off), then —	you have no legal move and are checkmated — If every response to a check is illegal (including a flying-general face-off), there is no legal move — it's checkmate.
A 'discovered check' happens when —	moving one piece uncovers a check from another piece behind it — A discovered check is revealed when a piece moves out of the way, uncovering an attack on the general from behind.
Perpetual check (checking forever to avoid losing) is —	not allowed — the checking side must stop or is penalized — Endless perpetual checking is forbidden; the checking player must vary the moves or forfeits the advantage/game.
Reducing the enemy's DEFENDERS (advisors/elephants) helps mate because —	fewer defenders means fewer ways to block or cover checks — Trading off the enemy's advisors and elephants opens the palace, making checks harder to block — a mating strategy.

9. Piece Values & Strength

⌘ Question (fold →)	Answer
A cannon and a horse are BOTH worth about —	less than a chariot but more than a lone defender — The horse and cannon are minor attacking pieces — below the chariot but above a lone advisor or elephant.
The smart way to use piece values is to —	treat them as a guide and always weigh the whole position — Use values as a helpful guide, but always weigh the actual position — activity, threats, and king safety.
Two minor pieces (say horse + cannon) vs one chariot is —	roughly balanced — two coordinated minors can rival a chariot — A chariot is strong, but two coordinated minor pieces (horse + cannon) can roughly match it — activity decides.
Why should beginners LEARN piece values?	To make smart trades and not lose strong pieces for weak ones — Knowing values helps you trade wisely and avoid giving up strong pieces for weaker ones.
Two defenders (advisors/elephants) are especially valuable when —	your general is under attack — When your general is under attack, keeping your defensive pieces is crucial — they block and cover checks.
Piece values shift with —	the phase of the game and how active each piece is — Values aren't fixed — they shift with the game phase (cannon early, horse late) and each piece's activity.
Advisors and elephants are valued for —	defense (guarding the general), not attack — Advisors and elephants are defensive; their value is in protecting the general, not attacking.
Grandmaster Sunzi says 'value is what a piece DOES, not what it is called.' This means —	a piece's real worth is its activity and role right now — A piece's true value is what it accomplishes in the position — activity and role matter more than its label.
Why does the horse's value often RISE over the game?	Fewer pieces means fewer hobbles, so it moves more freely — As pieces disappear, the horse's legs are rarely hobbled, so its mobility (and value) rises in the endgame.
The smartest way to think about piece values is —	as a guide, adjusted for activity and the game phase — Values are a guide; real worth shifts with each piece's activity and the phase of the game.
Losing BOTH advisors is dangerous mainly because —	the general has fewer ways to block checks — Without advisors, the general struggles to block checks, so a palace stripped of guards is a common mating target.
A horse and a cannon are usually considered —	roughly equal in value (each with different strengths) — Horses and cannons are roughly equal — the horse improves late, the cannon shines early — so context matters.
A soldier's value depends most on —	whether it has crossed the river and how close it is to the enemy palace — A soldier's worth swings on position: a crossed soldier near the enemy palace is far more valuable than a distant one.
A material lead helps, but it matters most when —	your pieces are also active and coordinated — Extra material wins games when the pieces are active and coordinated; a passive extra piece may do little.

Which is usually more valuable, a chariot or a horse?	The chariot — The chariot is worth more than a horse because of its greater range and reliability.
Piece values are a GUIDE, but the real question in any trade is —	does this trade improve my position or lead toward winning? — Values are a starting guide; the real test is whether a trade improves your position or advances the mate.
The MOST important 'value' in Xiangqi is really —	the general — its safety outweighs all material — The general is beyond value: its safety outweighs any material, since losing it ends the game.
Trading your chariot for the enemy's horse is usually —	a bad trade (you gave up more value) — Giving a chariot for a horse loses value — avoid it unless it wins something bigger (like forcing mate).
Which piece is generally the MOST valuable?	The chariot — The chariot, with its long straight-line range, is generally the most valuable piece.
Sacrificing a valuable piece can be CORRECT when —	it forces checkmate or a decisive advantage — Even the chariot can be sacrificed when it forces checkmate or a winning position — the goal outranks material.
Why does the cannon's value CHANGE over the game?	It's strong early (many screens) and weaker late (few screens) — The cannon relies on screens, which are plentiful early and scarce late — so its value falls as the game simplifies.
Which is the correct ranking (roughly) of raw strength?	Chariot > (horse ≈ cannon) > (advisor/elephant) > soldier (pre-river) — A rough ranking: chariot strongest, then horse ≈ cannon, then the defenders, with the pre-river soldier weakest.
An 'even trade' (like horse for cannon) is fine when —	it simplifies toward a position you understand or that favors you — Even trades are fine when they simplify toward a position that suits your plan or your understanding.
Attacking pieces (chariot/horse/cannon) are most valuable when —	you are attacking the enemy general — Chariots, horses, and cannons are your attacking force — most valuable when you're pressing the enemy general.
Giving up an advisor to stop a mating attack is —	often a good trade — your general's safety comes first — Sacrificing an advisor to blunt a mating attack is frequently correct — surviving matters more than the material.

10. Opening Principles

⌘ Question (fold →)	Answer
A good sign your opening went well is that —	your strong pieces are active and your general is safe — A successful opening leaves your strong pieces active and coordinated while your general stays safe.
The cannon is especially active in the opening because —	the crowded board gives it many screens — The full board provides many screens, so cannons create strong threats right from the opening.
Good opening play mostly means —	activating pieces, controlling the center, and keeping the general safe — Sound openings rest on three ideas: develop your pieces, control the center, and keep your general safe.
Coordinating chariot, horse, and cannon early sets up —	a strong, flexible attack later — Bringing your attacking pieces out in coordination prepares powerful, flexible attacks as the game develops.
A sound opening keeps the general —	safe, with its defenders (advisors/elephants) in good shape — Good openings maintain general safety, keeping advisors and elephants positioned to defend.
Blocking your own pieces' paths in the opening is —	a mistake — keep your strong pieces mobile — Clogging your own lines traps your strong pieces; keep paths open so chariots and horses stay mobile.
A common reply to the central cannon is the 'screen horses' defense, which —	develops both horses to guard the center — The 'screen horses' defense develops both horses to shield the center against the central cannon.
Developing a piece to a square where it does nothing is —	a wasted move — develop with purpose — Development should have a purpose; a piece moved to an idle square wastes a move the opponent can use.
Controlling the CENTER early helps because —	central pieces influence both sides of the board — Central control lets your pieces influence both wings, giving flexibility — a key opening idea.
Grandmaster Sunzi says 'a well-formed army needs no rush.' This means —	develop soundly and the attacking chances will come — A soundly developed position creates its own chances — patience in the opening pays off in the middlegame.
The best mindset for the opening is —	set up your forces soundly for the middlegame battle — The opening is about setting up soundly for the middlegame — patient, solid development beats reckless early attacks.
The 'central cannon' opening aims a cannon at —	the enemy's central file / palace — The central cannon opening points a cannon down the central file toward the enemy palace — a classic aggressive setup.
A 'flexible' opening is good because —	it keeps your options open to react to the opponent — Flexible development lets you adapt to the opponent's plan rather than committing to one rigid idea.
A good opening goal is to —	develop (activate) your strong pieces, especially the chariots — Openings aim to activate your pieces — especially the chariots — so they can influence the game.
Reacting to the opponent's setup is important because —	you should meet their threats and exploit their weaknesses — Openings are a dialogue: watch the opponent's setup to counter threats and target the weaknesses it creates.

Why avoid moving the SAME piece many times in the opening?	It wastes moves while other pieces stay undeveloped — Repeatedly moving one piece wastes time (tempo) while your other pieces sit idle — develop broadly instead.
A key opening principle shared with chess is —	develop pieces and keep your king (general) safe — Like chess, Xiangqi openings prize piece development and general (king) safety.
Overextending in the opening (attacking too early) risks —	leaving your own position weak and undeveloped — Attacking before you're developed can backfire, leaving your own position weak — build up first.
If unsure of an opening move, a safe default is to —	develop a strong piece toward the center or an open line — When in doubt, activate a strong piece toward the center or an open line — a reliable developing move.
Meeting a central-cannon attack usually starts with —	solid central defense (like screen horses) before counterattacking — Against a central cannon you first shore up the center (e.g., screen horses), then look to counterattack.
Why not bring your general out early?	It's confined to the palace and exposing it invites attack — The general can't leave the palace and is fragile; exposing it early only invites checks and attacks.
A balanced opening develops —	several pieces, not just one, coordinating them — Move a variety of pieces to coordinate an attack or defense, rather than shuffling one piece repeatedly.
Why develop chariots early?	They are your strongest pieces and need open lines to be effective — Chariots are strongest, so getting them onto open lines early makes your whole position more powerful.
Rushing all your soldiers forward in the opening is usually —	a mistake — it weakens your position without support — Charging soldiers early, unsupported, weakens your structure; develop your major pieces first.
Developing horses to good squares early means —	putting them where their legs are free and they guard key points — Develop horses to squares where their legs are unblocked and they cover important central points.

11. Cannon Tactics

⌘ Question (fold →)	Answer
Cannons combine especially well with —	a horse or chariot that supplies screens or extra threats — Cannons work best alongside a horse or chariot that provides screens and adds complementary threats.
A cannon's ideal target is often —	a piece defending the general, or the general itself over a screen — Cannons aim at the enemy's defensive pieces or the general itself, working over the required screen.
Cannons are strongest when the board is —	crowded, offering many screens and targets — A crowded board gives cannons many screens and targets, so they thrive in complex middlegames.
To keep an enemy cannon from checking your general, watch —	the number of pieces on the general's file (avoid giving it exactly one screen) — A cannon checks over exactly one screen, so watch your general's file and avoid leaving exactly one piece as a mount.
A 'screen sacrifice' idea is to —	let a screen be removed at the right moment to unleash or shut a cannon's fire — Advanced cannon play times when a screen appears or vanishes, opening or closing the cannon's line of fire deliberately.
The 'cannon behind horse' pattern uses the horse as —	the screen for the cannon's captures/checks — Placing a cannon behind your own horse lets the horse serve as the screen, powering cannon threats.
If an enemy cannon aims at your general over one screen, a safe response is to —	move the screen away (removing the check/threat) if that's legal — Moving the screen (when legal) breaks the cannon's line of fire, answering the check or threat.
To DEFEND against a cannon threat, you can —	remove the screen it relies on — Removing (or capturing) the screen a cannon needs neutralizes its capture — a core cannon defense.
The main SKILL of cannon tactics is —	arranging screens so your cannon threatens while denying the enemy theirs — Cannon mastery is screen management: setting up your own shots while denying the enemy the screens they need.
The reason cannons and horses pair well is —	the horse can serve as the cannon's screen while adding its own threats — A horse can both be the cannon's screen and create its own L-shaped threats, so the pair is very dangerous.
A dangerous trap is putting your OWN piece where it —	becomes the screen for an enemy cannon aimed at your general — Placing a piece between an enemy cannon and your general hands the cannon a screen — a common, dangerous trap.
A cannon can win material by —	threatening a valuable piece over a screen, forcing it to move or be lost — By lining up over a screen at a valuable target, a cannon forces the target to move or be captured — winning material.
Two cannons stacked on a file can —	use one as a screen for the other's powerful threats — Two cannons on one file can serve as each other's screen, generating strong layered threats.
Removing an enemy DEFENDER with a cannon helps because —	it opens the palace for follow-up threats — A cannon that captures an advisor or elephant opens the palace, setting up follow-up mating threats.
A cannon far from any screen	

is —	temporarily unable to capture (though it still controls a line) — With no screen available, a cannon can't capture, though it still controls its file like a chariot.
Because a cannon's power depends on screens, you must always —	count the pieces between the cannon and its target — Cannon tactics require counting the pieces in the line: zero = move only, one = can capture, two = blocked.
A cannon can create a threat by moving so that —	a screen appears in line with a valuable target — By aligning cannon, screen, and target on one line, the cannon threatens to jump the screen and capture.
A cannon check requires that between the cannon and the general there is —	exactly one screen — A cannon delivers check only when exactly one screen sits between it and the enemy general.
Advanced players use cannons to —	create threats that force the opponent to defend, gaining initiative — Skilled cannon play generates threats that make the opponent react, letting you keep the initiative.
A cannon with a fixed screen delivering repeated checks may run into —	the perpetual-check rule (you can't check forever) — Even strong cannon checks are bound by the perpetual-check rule — you cannot repeat checks forever.
Grandmaster Sunzi says 'the cannon rules the crowd.' This means —	in busy positions full of screens, the cannon is deadly — The cannon rules crowded positions, where screens abound and its jump-to-capture threats are most dangerous.
The 'hollow cannon' checkmate uses a cannon on the general's file with —	the general's own defender (or space) such that the general can't escape — A cannon aligned on the enemy general's file (with the right screen and no escape) is a classic mating pattern.
A cannon pinning a piece to the general works because —	the pinned piece is the screen, and moving it would expose the general — A cannon can pin the very piece that screens it, since moving that piece would expose the general to capture.
Every cannon capture requires —	exactly one screen between the cannon and its target — A cannon captures only by jumping exactly one piece (the screen/mount) to reach its target.
The best summary of cannon tactics is —	control screens to fire when you want and stop the enemy from firing — Cannon tactics come down to controlling screens — firing when it helps you and denying the enemy their shots.

12. Horse & Chariot Tactics

⌂ Question (fold →)	Answer
Chariot + horse + cannon together are called —	a strong attacking combination (a coordinated strike force) — The chariot, horse, and cannon each threaten differently, so together they form a powerful attacking combination.
Doubling chariots on a file creates —	overwhelming pressure that's hard to defend — Two chariots stacked on a file form a battering ram, applying pressure most defenses can't hold.
If your horse and the enemy general are aligned for an L-shaped check, you can —	consider delivering the check if it gains material or leads to mate — A horse check is worth making when it wins material or advances a mate — check with a purpose, not aimlessly.
Coordinating your pieces means —	having them support each other's threats rather than acting alone — Coordinated pieces support each other's threats, which is far more dangerous than pieces attacking alone.
A discovered attack with a horse happens when —	the horse moves and uncovers an attack from a chariot/cannon behind it — Moving the horse can uncover a chariot or cannon behind it, creating a discovered attack — often with the horse also threatening something.
Why combine tactics from different pieces?	Threats from multiple directions overload the defense — Attacking from several directions at once overloads the defense — the essence of combining piece tactics.
The best summary of horse & chariot tactics is —	keep them active and coordinated to overload the enemy's defense — Active, coordinated horse and chariot play overloads the defense — the heart of Xiangqi attacking tactics.
A common defensive resource against a horse is to —	block its leg (hobble it) or trade it off — Against an attacking horse, hobbling its leg or trading it off are the main defensive resources.
A horse and chariot attacking together are strong because —	they cover different points, creating threats hard to parry — The horse (L-shaped) and chariot (straight lines) cover different points, so together they overload the defense.
Chariot tactics reward controlling —	open files and ranks (lines with no blockers) — The chariot's power peaks on open lines, so seizing open files and ranks is central to chariot tactics.
Good middlegame play with these pieces is about —	creating and combining threats faster than the opponent can defend — The middlegame is a race of threats: coordinate your mobile pieces to create threats faster than they can be met.
A horse fork is a tactic where the horse —	attacks two enemy pieces at once with its L-shaped reach — A horse fork uses the horse's L-shaped reach to attack two pieces simultaneously — the opponent can save only one.
Combining a chariot's file pressure with a horse's checks is strong because —	the defender must cover two very different threats at once — A chariot's straight-line pressure plus a horse's L-shaped checks force the defender to cover two different threats, overloading it.
A horse near the enemy palace is dangerous because —	its L-shaped checks are awkward for a confined general to escape — A horse close to the enemy palace delivers awkward L-shaped checks that a palace-bound general finds hard to escape.

An 'overload' tactic works by —	attacking a defender that is guarding two things at once — Overloading targets a defender doing two jobs; when it must abandon one, you win material or force mate.
A 'chariot pin' restricts an enemy piece by —	lining it up in front of the general so it can't safely move — A chariot pins an enemy piece against its general: moving the pinned piece would expose the general to capture.
A horse that reaches a strong outpost near the palace is valuable because —	it's hard to remove and creates lasting threats — A horse on a secure outpost near the enemy palace is hard to dislodge and keeps creating threats.
A chariot sacrifice can be correct when it —	forces checkmate or removes the last defender before mate — Even a chariot may be sacrificed when doing so forces mate or clears the last defender — the mate justifies it.
To use a horse well in attack, keep its —	legs unblocked so it can reach its targets — A horse can only attack the points its legs allow, so keeping its legs free is essential for horse tactics.
The main skill of chariot tactics is —	seizing and using open lines to create threats and pins — Chariot tactics revolve around seizing open lines to threaten pieces, pin them, and pressure the general.
A skewer-like chariot tactic forces a valuable piece to move and —	exposes a piece behind it to capture — A chariot lined up through two enemy pieces can force the front one to move, letting you capture the piece behind it.
A chariot on an open file threatens —	any enemy piece (or the general) along that file — A chariot on an open file threatens everything along it, including the enemy general — powerful long-range pressure.
Keeping your horse's legs free during an attack is important because —	a hobbled horse suddenly can't reach its targets — An attacking horse is only as good as its free legs; a single hobble can shut down its threats.
A horse fork of the general and a chariot means —	the opponent must save the general, so you win the chariot — If a horse forks the general (check) and a chariot, the opponent must answer the check, letting you capture the chariot.
Grandmaster Sunzi says 'two blades cut deeper than one.' This means —	coordinated pieces attacking together are far stronger — Two pieces attacking in coordination ('two blades') are far more dangerous than either acting alone.

13. The Endgame

⌘ Question (fold →)	Answer
Keeping at least one attacker ACTIVE near the enemy palace is key because —	you need force there to deliver mate — You can't mate from afar with nothing near the palace — keep an active attacker close to the target.
A key endgame idea is to —	improve your pieces' activity before rushing to attack — Improving piece activity before attacking makes your endgame threats far stronger — activate, then strike.
In a simplified endgame, keeping your general SAFE matters because —	a single perpetual or surprise check can rescue a lost game — Even in the endgame a stray check or perpetual can save the losing side, so general safety still matters.
Why do many endgames come down to the chariot?	Its dominance on the open board makes it the deciding piece — Because the chariot dominates the open endgame board, it's frequently the piece that decides the result.
Converting a winning endgame means —	carefully turning your advantage into checkmate without blundering — Conversion is the careful technique of turning a winning advantage into an actual checkmate without slipping.
Keeping your general SAFE in the endgame is —	still essential — a stray check can turn a win into a loss — Even with few pieces, general safety matters — a surprise check or perpetual can spoil a winning endgame.
Trading down into a WON endgame is a good plan when —	you have a material or positional advantage to convert — When ahead, simplifying by trades reduces the opponent's chances and helps you convert your advantage.
Why is precise play more important in the endgame?	With few pieces, a single mistake often decides the game — In the endgame the margins are thin — a single inaccuracy can turn a win into a draw or loss.
A chariot vs a lone general with defenders requires you to —	break through the defenders to reach the general — To mate with a chariot, you must break through or around the enemy's advisors/elephants to reach the general.
The endgame rewards players who —	understand piece coordination and how each piece's value shifts — Endgame skill comes from understanding coordination and how values shift (chariot/horse up, cannon down).
To checkmate a lone general, you must —	cover all its escape points while delivering check — Mating a lone general means covering every escape point in the palace while giving check.
The best summary of the endgame is —	activate and coordinate your pieces to force mate, playing precisely — Endgames reward active, coordinated, precise play aimed at forcing checkmate.
Endgame technique is mostly about —	activating your pieces and coordinating them to force mate — Good endgame technique means activating and coordinating your remaining pieces to force checkmate.
The perpetual-check rule matters in the endgame because —	a losing side can't just check forever to force a draw — The perpetual-check rule prevents a losing side from checking forever, so the winning side can convert its advantage.

Grandmaster Sunzi says 'in the quiet, the chariot roars.' This means —	on the emptier endgame board, the chariot's power dominates — On the quiet, open endgame board the chariot's long-range power roars — it often dominates the finish.
A soldier that has crossed the river is especially useful in the endgame because —	its sideways movement helps trap the enemy general — A crossed soldier's sideways move is valuable in the endgame for covering escape points and helping mate.
The horse often becomes STRONGER in the endgame because —	with fewer pieces, its legs are rarely hobbled — An open endgame board rarely blocks the horse's legs, so it moves freely and grows in value.
A crossed soldier is a prized endgame piece because —	its sideways move helps cover the enemy general's escape squares — In the endgame a crossed soldier's sideways movement is ideal for covering the enemy general's escape points during a mate.
If you're MATERIALLY behind in the endgame, a resource is —	seeking perpetual check or a fortress to draw (within the rules) — When behind, look for drawing resources — a fortress, or a legal perpetual — though endless perpetual checking is barred.
The biggest reason precise play matters more in the endgame is —	with few pieces, one mistake can flip the result — Fewer pieces mean thinner margins, so a single inaccuracy in the endgame can turn a win into a draw or loss.
In the endgame (few pieces left), the chariot is —	usually dominant, controlling open lines — With few blockers left, the chariot dominates the open board — the strongest endgame piece.
With a chariot vs a defended general, your plan is usually to —	trade off or bypass the defenders, then mate with the chariot — To convert a chariot advantage, you break down or go around the advisors/elephants, then mate the exposed general.
A general and a single soldier can sometimes mate a lone general because —	the crossed soldier can cover escape points inside the small palace — In the tiny palace, a well-placed crossed soldier plus your general can sometimes trap a lone enemy general.
The cannon often becomes WEAKER in the endgame because —	there are fewer screens to jump — A cannon needs screens; as the board empties, screens vanish and the cannon loses striking power.
With equal material in the endgame, the winner is often decided by —	which side's pieces are more active — In equal endgames, superior piece activity usually decides — active, coordinated pieces beat passive ones.

14. Common Checkmate Patterns

⌘ Question (fold →)	Answer
The best way to get better at mating is to —	study common patterns and practice spotting them — Studying common mate patterns and practicing recognizing them is the fastest way to finish games well.
The core of every mate is —	check + no escape (all responses fail) — Every checkmate reduces to the same core: the general is in check with no legal escape, block, or capture.
Grandmaster Sunzi says 'know the ending before the battle.' This means —	recognizing mate patterns guides how you attack and defend — Knowing where the game can end (the mate patterns) guides your whole attack and defense — plan toward the finish.
A common mate uses a chariot to check the general when —	all the general's escape points are covered by other pieces — A chariot mate works when the chariot checks and the general's every escape point is already covered.
Recognizing mate PATTERNS helps you —	spot winning finishes and avoid getting mated — Knowing common mate patterns lets you spot your own winning finishes and recognize (and avoid) the enemy's.
A 'horse-and-cannon' mating pattern works because —	the horse and cannon cover different escape points while one checks — Horse and cannon cover different points, so together they can check while sealing the general's escapes.
Perpetual check is NOT a mate because —	the general keeps escaping each check — it just repeats — Perpetual check isn't mate — the general escapes each time — and the rules forbid repeating it forever.
Before a mate exists, the useful step is often to —	remove a defender guarding the general's escape — When no mate is there yet, removing a key defender often uncovers the escape square you need for the finish.
Practicing mate patterns improves your play because —	you finish won games and stop lost ones faster and more reliably — Mate patterns recur constantly; knowing them helps you convert winning attacks and defend against losing ones.
A double check is especially deadly because —	the general MUST move — no block or capture can stop two checkers — In a double check, blocking or capturing can't answer both attackers, so the general is forced to move — powerful for mating.
Recognizing that YOU are about to be mated lets you —	defend in time (block, trade, or add a defender) — Spotting an incoming mate lets you defend — interpose, trade off an attacker, or reinforce the palace.
The 'hollow cannon' mate involves a cannon —	on the enemy general's file delivering check with the escape squares covered — The hollow-cannon mate places a cannon on the general's file to check while its escape points are covered.
A cannon-and-chariot mate works when —	one supplies the screen/coverage while the other checks the trapped general — Chariot and cannon can mate together — one covers escapes (or acts as/uses a screen) while the other delivers the check.
A back-of-the-palace mate often uses —	a chariot or cannon on the general's back rank with escapes covered — Attacks on the general's back rank (with escapes covered) are a common mating idea, often via chariot or cannon.
A general with no advisors	much easier to checkmate — A general stripped of its defensive shell is far easier

or elephants is —	to mate, so stripping defenders is a common plan.
A soldier can DELIVER the final mating blow when —	it's crossed and covers the general's last escape while checking — A crossed soldier deep in the palace can deliver or support the final mate by covering escapes and checking.
The flying-general rule can COMPLETE a mate when —	the enemy general can't move because facing your general would be illegal — The flying-general rule can remove a general's escape point (it can't move into a face-off), completing a mate.
Stripping the enemy's advisors first helps mate because —	an undefended palace has fewer ways to block checks — Removing advisors opens the palace, so the general has fewer ways to block checks — a key mating step.
The fastest way to get better at finishing games is to —	study and practice recognizing common mate patterns — Mate patterns recur constantly, so studying and drilling them is the fastest way to finish won games reliably.
If a mate isn't there yet, the right idea is to —	improve your attackers and remove defenders first — When no mate exists yet, prepare it: activate more attackers and strip the enemy's defenders.
Sacrificing a piece to reach mate is justified when —	the resulting checkmate is forced — A sacrifice is justified when it leads to a forced checkmate — the mate outweighs any material given up.
To FIND a mate, ask —	is the general's escape shrinking, and can I check with the escapes covered? — Look for a check where every escape point is covered — that's the recipe for finding a forced mate.
A double check (two pieces checking at once) is powerful because —	the general MUST move — you can't block or capture two checkers — In a double check, blocking or capturing can't stop both attackers, so the general is forced to move — very strong for mating.
Mate patterns and defensive awareness are —	two sides of the same skill — knowing them helps both attack and defense — Recognizing mate patterns serves both roles: you deliver mates and you foresee (and prevent) the enemy's.
A mating attack usually needs —	enough attacking pieces near the enemy general — You need sufficient attacking force near the enemy general — you can't mate with nothing around the palace.

15. Repetition Rules & Etiquette

⌘ Question (fold →)	Answer
Good etiquette when you are clearly winning is to —	play on respectfully and finish the game cleanly — When winning, finishing cleanly and respectfully — without gloating or stalling — is good sportsmanship.
The best summary of these rules is —	you can't force a win by illegal repetition, and fair play is expected — In short: forcing a result by perpetual check/chase isn't allowed, and fair, respectful play is expected.
The repetition rules mainly protect —	the player with the advantage from being denied the win — By forbidding perpetual checks/chases, the rules protect the advantaged player's right to convert the win.
The perpetual-check rule is an example of a game rule that —	prevents one player from exploiting a loophole to avoid losing — The perpetual-check rule closes a loophole that would otherwise let a losing player force an unfair draw.
Learning the special rules (repetition, flying general, stalemate) early helps you —	avoid surprises and claim the results you deserve — Knowing the special rules early prevents surprises and lets you claim deserved wins or draws correctly.
The perpetual-check rule protects mainly —	the player with the advantage, so they can convert the win — By forbidding endless checks, the rule protects the advantaged player's right to convert the win.
These repetition rules exist to —	keep games decisive and prevent forcing an unfair draw by repeating — Repetition rules keep games decisive, stopping a player from forcing an unfair draw by repeating checks or chases.
The player who is CHECKING repeatedly to avoid a loss must —	find a different move (varying) or accept the consequence — The side delivering perpetual checks bears the responsibility to vary; refusing usually forfeits the point.
Etiquette when you have clearly lost is to —	resign or play on respectfully — not to stall unfairly — When clearly lost, resigning or playing on respectfully — without unfair stalling — is good etiquette.
Perpetual CHASE (endlessly chasing a piece to force repetition) is —	generally also forbidden, similar to perpetual check — Continually chasing a piece to force repetition is generally forbidden, much like perpetual check.
If you're WINNING and the opponent tries perpetual check, you should —	know that they must vary — you can play for the win — Since the opponent can't check forever, a winning player can rely on the rule and continue converting the advantage.
A THREEFOLD (or repeated) position with legal moves by both sides is usually judged as —	a draw — A position repeated through legal, non-forcing play by both sides is generally ruled a draw.
Etiquette and rules together reflect that Xiangqi is —	a centuries-old game with a tradition of fair, respectful play — Xiangqi is a centuries-old game whose rules and etiquette carry a long tradition of fair, respectful play.
If both players repeat moves	

without either forcing perpetual check/chase, the result is —	usually a draw by repetition — When a position repeats through legal, non-forcing play by both sides, the game is generally drawn.
Why can't a losing player simply repeat checks to draw?	The perpetual-check rule forbids it, so the winning side can convert — The perpetual-check rule stops a losing player from drawing by endless checks, letting the winning side convert.
A player unsure whether a repetition is legal should —	know the general principle: forcing perpetual check/chase is not allowed — The guiding principle: forcing a repetition via perpetual check or chase is not allowed; mutual non-forcing repetition is a draw.
Good etiquette during the game includes —	letting your opponent think without distraction — Allowing your opponent to think undistracted is part of respectful Xiangqi etiquette.
Perpetual check (checking endlessly to avoid losing) is —	not allowed — the checking side must vary or is penalized — Endless perpetual checking is forbidden; the checking player must stop or change, or forfeits the advantage/game.
Grandmaster Sunzi says 'a fair contest honors both players.' This means —	rules and etiquette make the game meaningful for everyone — A fair contest, played by the rules with mutual respect, honors both players — the heart of good sportsmanship.
Understanding these rules matters because —	you can claim your rights (avoid an unfair draw) or avoid breaking them — Knowing the repetition rules lets you claim a deserved win and avoid accidentally breaking them yourself.
The spirit behind ALL these rules is —	fair, decisive, respectful games — The repetition rules and etiquette all serve one spirit: fair, decisive, respectful games.
Good sportsmanship in Xiangqi includes —	playing honestly and respecting your opponent — Like all games, Xiangqi values honesty and respect for your opponent — good sportsmanship.
Respecting the rules and your opponent makes Xiangqi —	more enjoyable and fair for both players — Playing within the rules and respecting your opponent keeps the game fair and enjoyable for everyone.
When learning Xiangqi, it's smart to —	learn the special rules (repetition, flying general, stalemate) alongside the moves — Learning the special rules (repetition, flying general, stalemate-as-loss) alongside the moves avoids nasty surprises.
If a position repeats and neither side is forcing it improperly, the result is often —	a draw (by mutual repetition) — When a position repeats without either side breaking the perpetual rules, the game is typically drawn.

16. Putting It Together

⌘ Question (fold →)	Answer
Piece asymmetry means good players must —	think about how each different piece interacts with the others — Because every piece is different, strong play requires thinking about how the unique pieces interact and coordinate.
A sound game plan is to —	develop pieces, control the center, attack the general, and keep yours safe — A sound plan balances development, central control, attacking the enemy general, and defending your own.
Compared to Western chess, Xiangqi differs in that —	pieces sit on intersections, there's a river and palace, and stalemate is a loss — Key differences: intersections not squares, the river and palace, unique pieces (cannon), and stalemate counting as a loss.
A great habit to carry from GeneralsTale is to —	check both your threats and the opponent's before every move — Scanning for your threats AND the opponent's before moving is the habit that most improves your play.
The reason each piece's UNIQUE rule matters is that —	coordinating different powers is what creates real threats — Each piece's unique rule lets pieces combine in different ways; coordinating those differences is how real threats are built.
The cannon needs a screen, the elephant can't cross the river, the horse can be hobbled — these show that —	position and surrounding pieces matter as much as the piece itself — These rules show that a piece's power depends on its surroundings — position and interaction matter as much as the piece.
A player who understands each piece's CHARACTER can —	use each piece's strengths and cover its weaknesses — Understanding each piece's character lets you exploit its strengths and protect against its weaknesses.
The lasting lesson of Xiangqi's piece asymmetry is that —	differences, well understood and coordinated, are a source of strength — Xiangqi teaches that well-understood, coordinated differences — piece asymmetry — are exactly what make a position strong.
Putting it all together, victory comes from —	coordinating your unique pieces to trap the enemy general while guarding your own — Victory is coordinating your unique pieces to checkmate the enemy general while keeping your own general safe.
If Western chess and Xiangqi share one big idea, it is —	protect your king/general and try to checkmate the opponent's — Both games center on the same idea: keep your king/general safe and checkmate the opponent's.
The goal of Xiangqi, from start to finish, is to —	checkmate the enemy general while keeping yours safe — Every phase serves one goal: checkmate the enemy general while protecting your own.
Across the whole game, the smartest habit is to —	look for threats (yours and the opponent's) before every move — Before each move, scan for threats you can make and threats you must meet — the habit that most improves play.
The general is confined and weak, yet central because —	its capture (checkmate) ends the game — Though the general moves feebly, it's the center of the game — checkmating it wins, so its safety is everything.

Good attack means —	coordinating chariot, horse, cannon, and crossed soldiers against the enemy general — Effective attacks coordinate the mobile pieces (and crossed soldiers) to threaten and trap the enemy general.
A balanced player values —	both attack (mobile pieces) and defense (the general's shell) — The best players balance attacking with the mobile pieces and defending the general's shell.
The single most distinctive Xiangqi idea is —	piece asymmetry — each piece has a unique rule and character — Piece asymmetry — the cannon's screen, the elephant's river limit, the horse's hobble — is Xiangqi's signature richness.
Learning Xiangqi is rewarding because —	it blends memory, logic, and creativity across unique pieces — Xiangqi rewards memory, logic, and creativity across its unique pieces — a rich game to learn for life.
Why is Xiangqi considered deeply strategic?	The many unique pieces and rules create endless varied positions — Xiangqi's unique pieces and rules generate endlessly varied positions, giving the game great strategic depth.
The deepest lesson of GeneralsTale is that —	each piece's unique character makes the whole game rich — asymmetry is strength — GeneralsTale's core lesson: the unique character of each piece is what makes Xiangqi rich — asymmetry is the game's strength.
Good defense means —	keeping your general's shell (advisors/elephants) and watching enemy attackers — Solid defense keeps the general's protective shell intact and stays alert to the enemy's attacking pieces.
The river teaches the lesson that —	boundaries can both limit some pieces and empower others — The river limits elephants yet empowers crossed soldiers — a reminder that a boundary can cut both ways.
Grandmaster Sunzi's final teaching: 'Know each piece as a friend, and the army moves as one.' This means —	understanding every piece's character lets you coordinate them into a winning whole — Knowing each piece's unique character lets you coordinate the whole army — the essence of mastering Xiangqi.
Keeping your general safe while attacking theirs is —	the balance every strong player must strike — Strong play balances attacking the enemy general with defending your own — both goals, every move.
The best way to improve at Xiangqi is to —	learn the pieces deeply, study patterns, and review your games — Deeply learning the pieces, studying mate/tactical patterns, and reviewing your games is the path to improvement.
Piece values shift over the game, most notably —	the cannon fades and the horse rises as the board empties — As the board simplifies, the cannon (needing screens) fades and the horse (freed legs) rises — while the chariot stays strong.

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