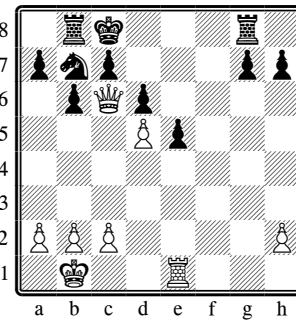
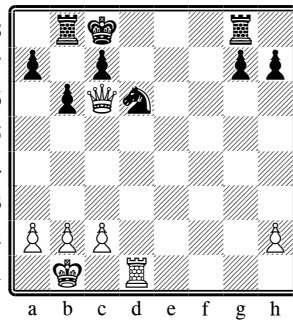
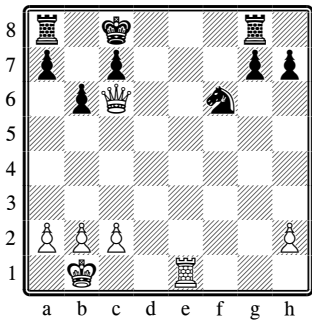


CHESS STRATEGY AND TACTICS

NOTICING THINGS



Perhaps the most important factor in chess skill is the ability to notice things. Let us draw a distinction between moves (or a sequence of moves) *you would normally notice without a lot of effort* and ones you might *discover* while considering all possible moves and calculating their responses. As we improve, we add to the move patterns that we normally notice. Even a beginner would normally notice, in the diagram at the left, that **the queen at c6 can capture the rook at a8**. A person with more experience would find nearly as obvious, in the middle diagram, that **the rook on d1 can capture the knight at d6**. With even more experience, a person would readily notice, in the last diagram, that **the rook at e1 might capture the pawn at e5**, or in the first diagram that **Re7 wins**.

The first question is, **how do we gain this experience**, so that we can readily notice more complex patterns?

The second question is more difficult and stems from a common phenomenon known as **chess blindness**. That is, while playing an actual game and distracted by calculations and plans or who-knows-what, we sometimes *fail to notice things* we would normally notice. **How can we pay better attention?**

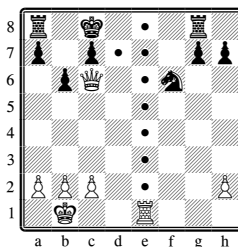
How do we gain experience?

- Discover patterns in your own games.
- Play better players.
- Review your games (with help).
- Go over historic games.

How can we pay better attention?

- Record your games! Otherwise, how can you review them to see what you missed?
- Look for patterns when you miss things so you can know when to be extra careful.

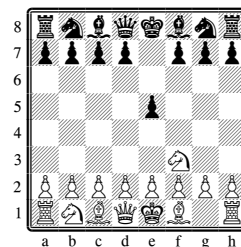
Avoid Tunnel Vision



Play continued 1. Re8+ Rxe8 2. Qxe8+ ...

White was so focused on his invasion at e8 that he wasn't paying attention to much else.

Beware Autopilot



Play began 1. Nf3 e5.

Black was following the guideline of playing a pawn to the center. Always think about your opponent's response!

Don't Move Too Quickly

Black then reacts quickly with 2 ... Kg7.

Slow down when you feel relief, panic, shock, or excitement.

Double-Check

Before making a move, double-check things! Is your opponent's previous move attacking anything?

Find Candidate Moves

Try to find at least two good moves to choose between.

Don't Pounce

The position isn't going anywhere.