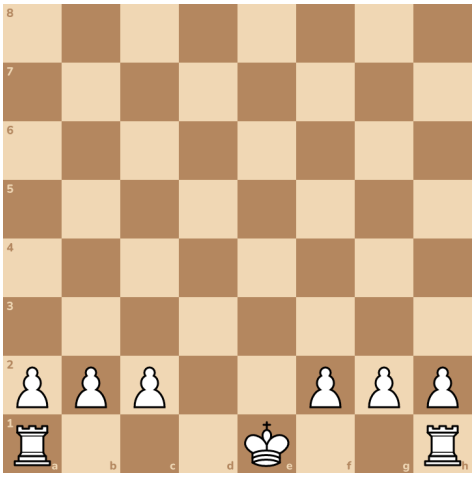
My Chess Family

How to castle in chess, and when you can't

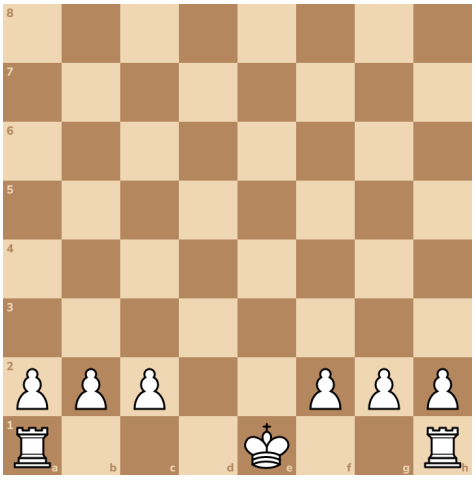
Try each question on a real board, then check the answers at the end of the sheet.

Castling

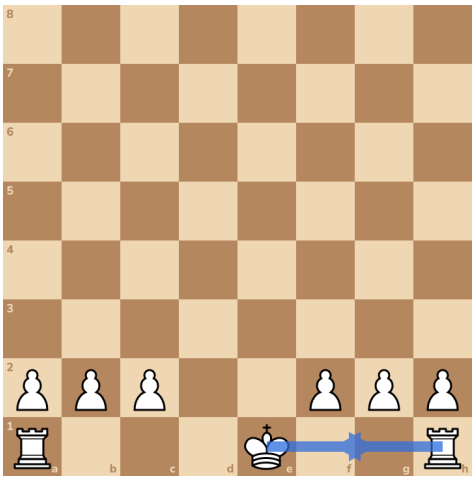
Castling is a special move. The king and a rook move at the same time!



Try it 1. Castle on the short side! Move your king two steps towards the rook on h1.

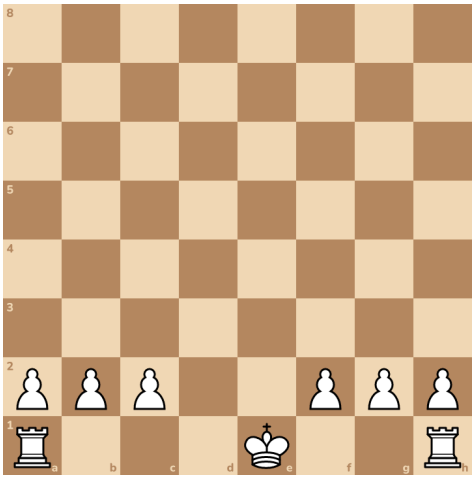


The king takes two steps towards a rook. Then the rook hops over to the other side of him.



Now the king is tucked safely in the corner, and the rook is ready to play.

Try it 2. You can castle on the long side too. Move your king two steps towards the rook on a1.



Long or short, the king always moves two steps. The rook lands right next to him.

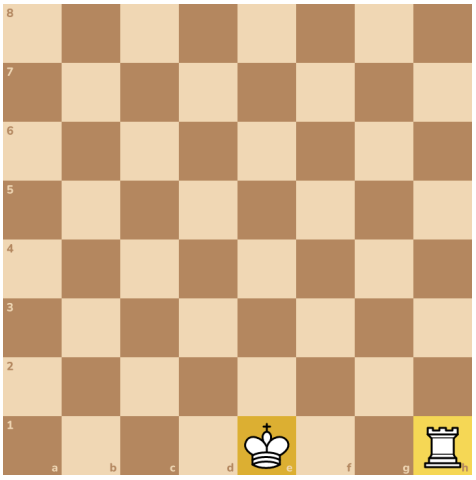
Try it 3. How many steps does the king take when he castles?

A: 1 **B: 2** **C: 3**

When you can't castle

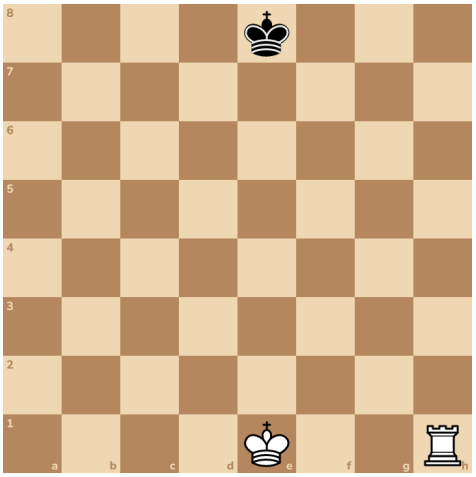
You can't always castle. There are a few rules.

Rule one. The king and the rook must not have moved yet in this game.



Try it 4. Here's a new position. In this game, the king already stepped to f1 and back to e1. Can White castle now?

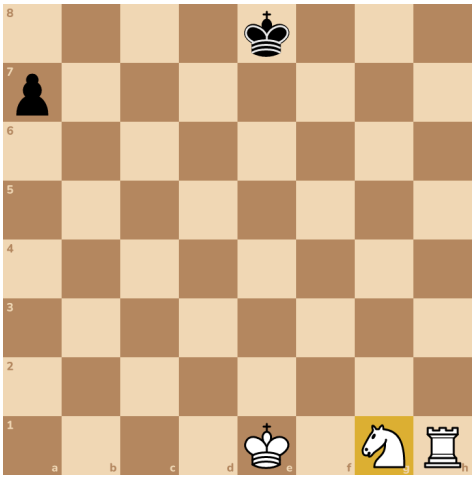
A: Yes **B: No**



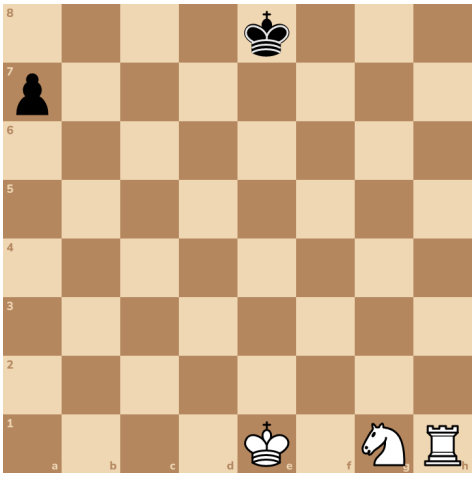
Try it 5. Here's another one. This time the rook moved to h2 and back to h1. Can White castle on the short side?

A: Yes **B: No**

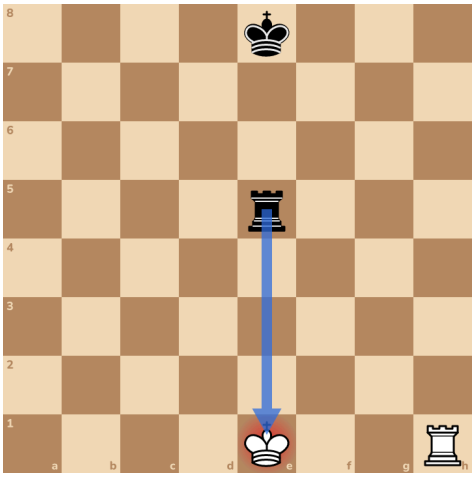
New position. Rule two. There must be no pieces in between. Here the knight is in the way.



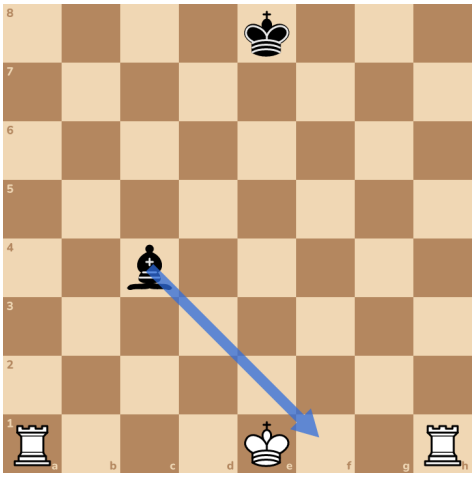
Try it 6. Jump your knight out of the way, to f3.



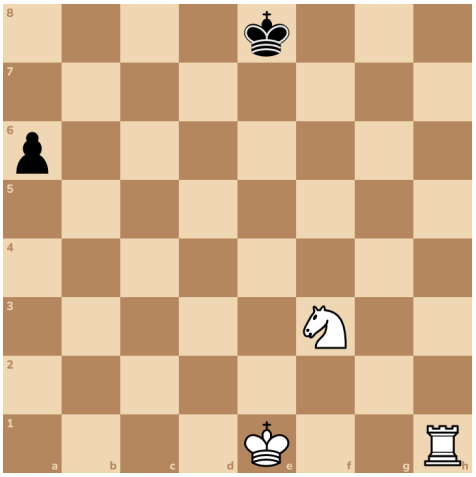
Here's a new position. Rule three. You can't castle when your king is in check.



New position. Rule four. The king can't cross a square an enemy piece is watching.



Try it 7. Now the way is clear. Castle!



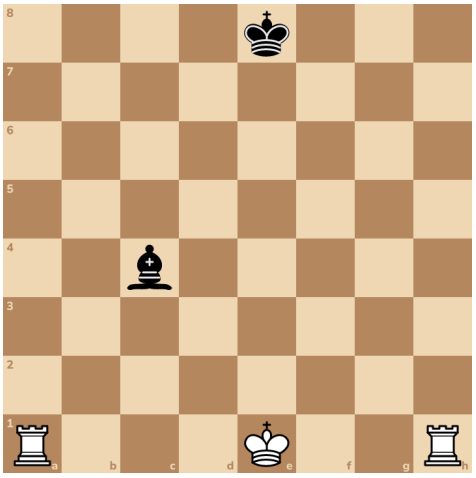
Try it 8. The black rook is giving check. Can White castle?

A: Yes **B: No**

Try it 9. The bishop is watching f1. Can White castle on the short side?

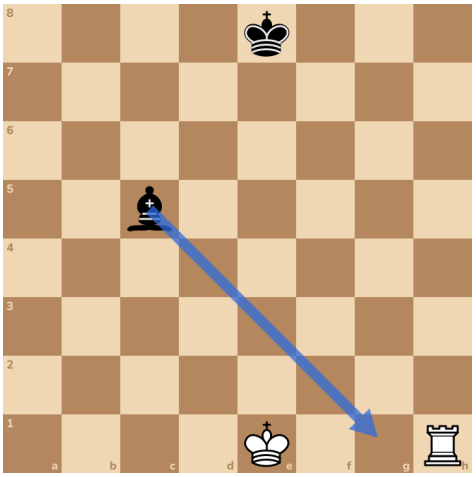
A: Yes **B: No**

Try it 10. But the long side is safe. Castle that way!



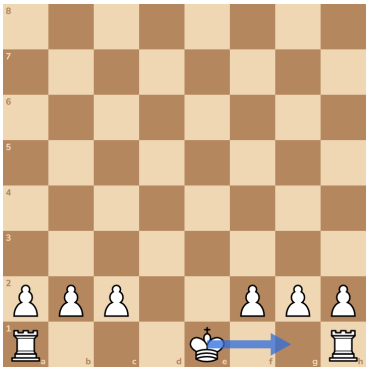
Try it 11. Here's a new position. The bishop is watching g1, where the king would land. Can White castle on the short side?

A: Yes **B: No**

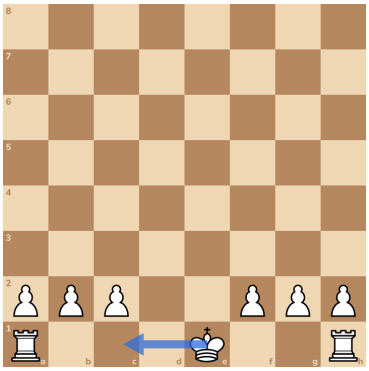


Answers

1. O-O



2. O-O-O



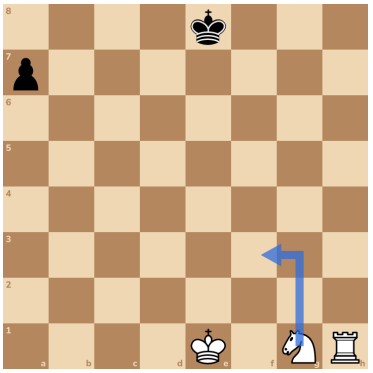
3. B: 2

Castle early in your games. It keeps your king safe!

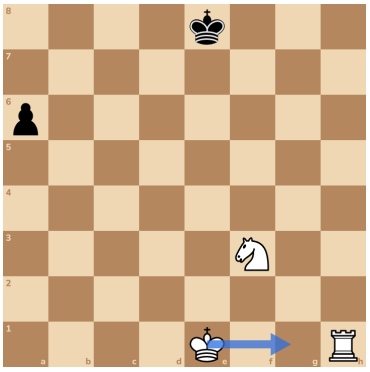
4. B: No

5. B: No

6. Nf3



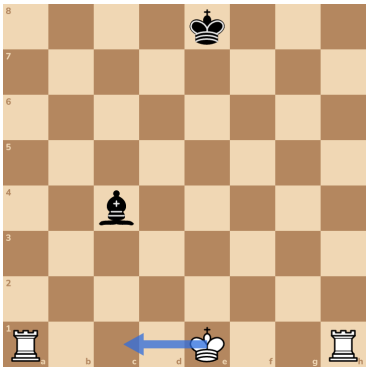
7. O-O



8. B: No

9. B: No

10. O-O-O



11. B: No

Well done! Not moved yet, nothing in between, not in check, and no watched squares to cross or land on.