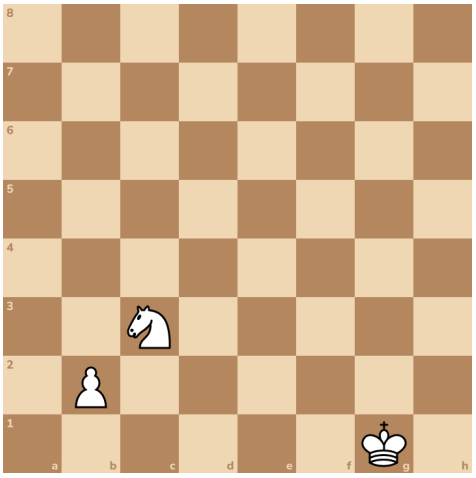
My Chess Family

Free or guarded? Keep your chess pieces safe

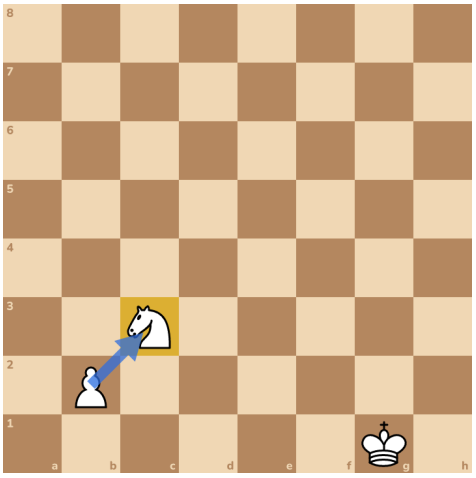
Try each question on a real board, then check the answers at the end of the sheet.

Guard your pieces

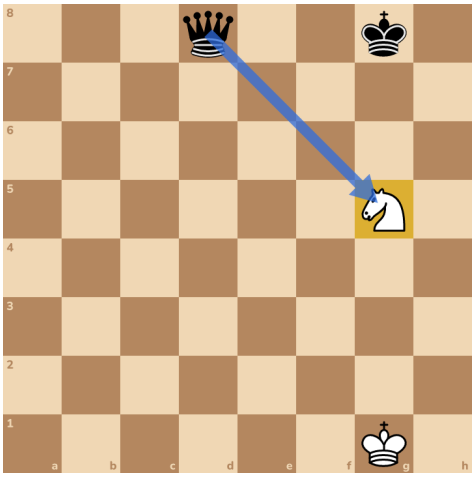
A piece is guarded when another of your pieces could take back if it's captured.



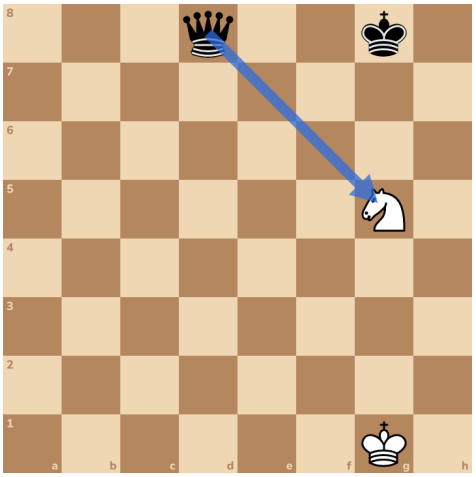
The pawn on b2 guards your knight. If the knight is taken, the pawn takes back.



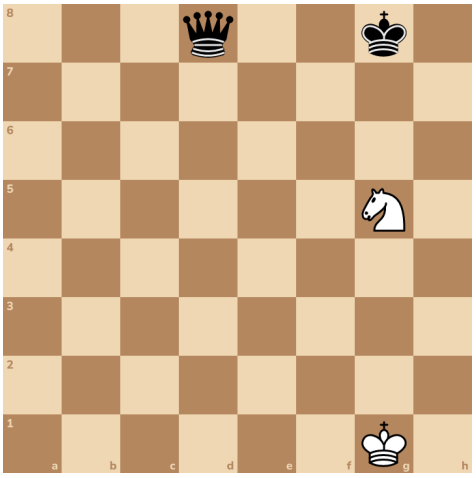
A piece that's attacked and not guarded is hanging. Here's a new position. Your knight is hanging!



The black queen attacks your knight, and nothing guards it. If you don't move it, she takes it for free.

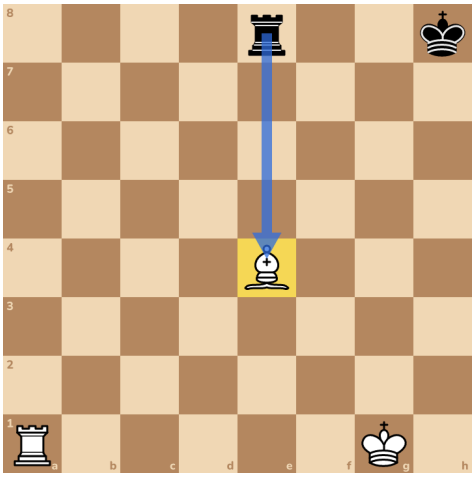


Try it 1. Save your knight! Move it to a square where nobody can take it.

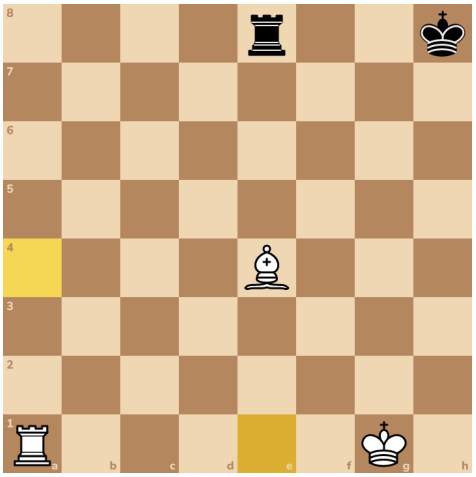


Safe! Before every move, ask yourself, are any of my pieces hanging?

Here's a new position. The black rook attacks your bishop on e4. This time, guard it instead of moving it.

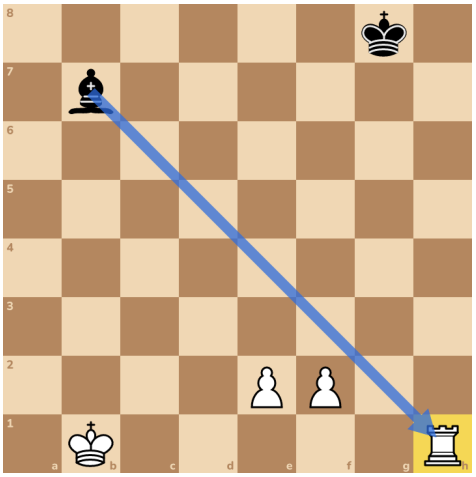


Try it 2. Move your rook so it guards the bishop.

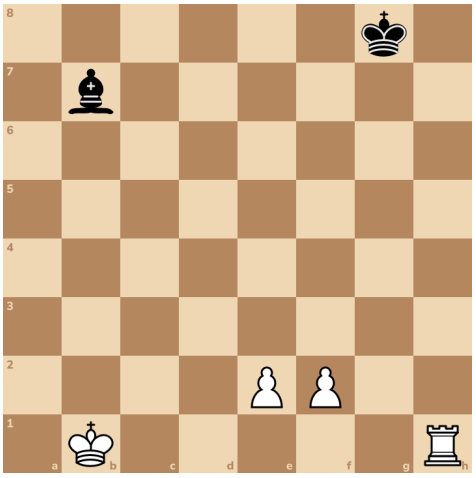


Guarded! Now if the rook takes your bishop, your rook takes back. You'd get 5 points for 3.

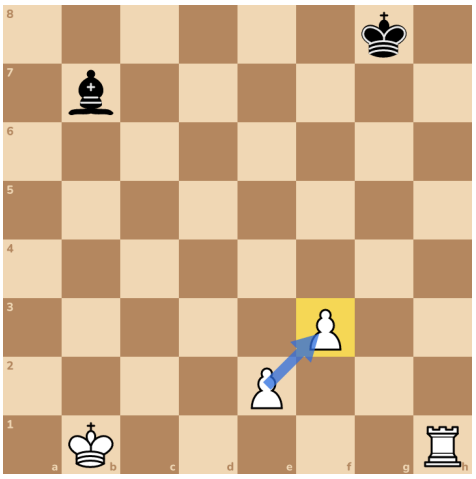
Here's a new position. The black bishop attacks your rook on h1. You can also save a piece by blocking. Put something in the way!



Try it 3. Block the bishop's line with a pawn that's guarded.

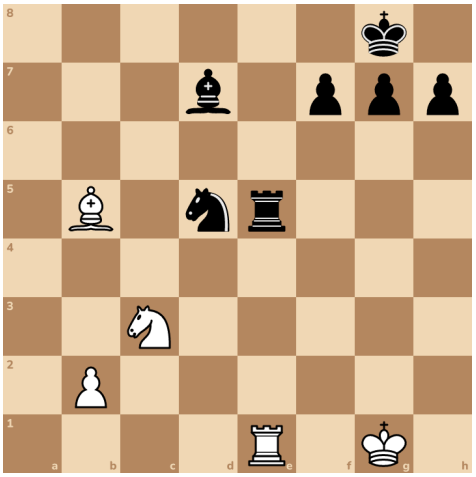


Blocked! The bishop can't reach your rook, and if it takes the pawn on f3, your e-pawn takes back.

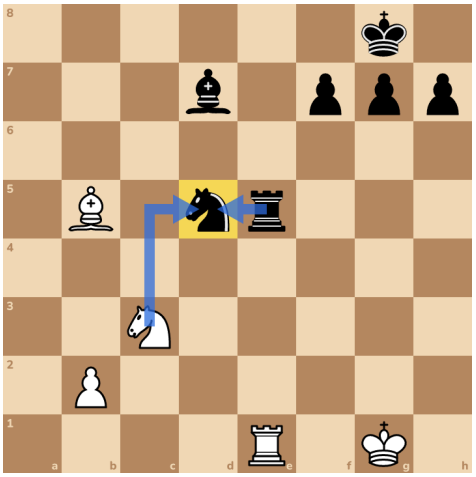


Free or guarded?

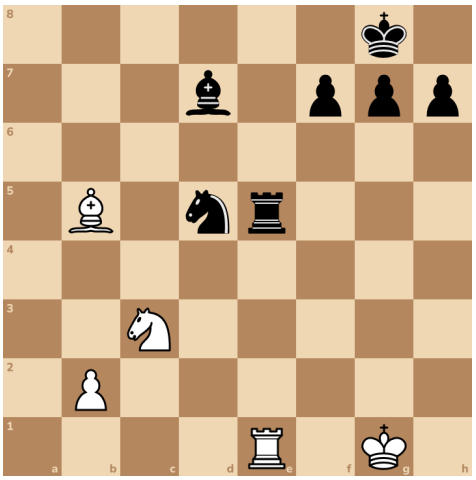
Before you capture, check two things. Do you attack it? And does anything guard it?



Your knight attacks the knight on d5. But the black rook guards it, so it isn't free.

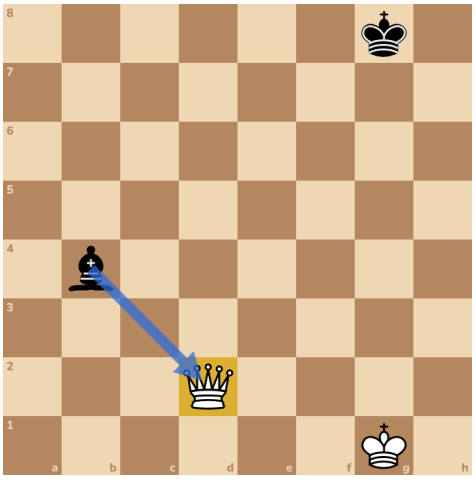


Try it 4. Point to every black piece you could take for free. You attack it, and nothing guards it.



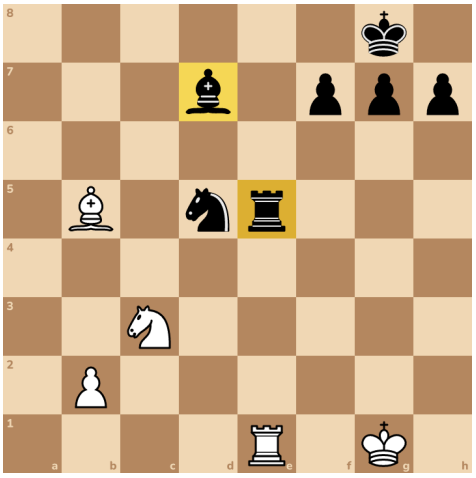
The rook, for free! The bishop was free too, but it's only worth 3.

Here's a new position. The black bishop attacks your queen! But nothing guards the bishop.

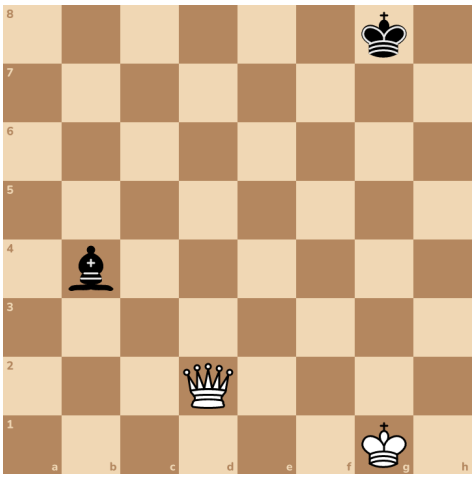


Gone! When something attacks your piece, you can move it, guard it, or take the attacker.

Try it 5. Take the free piece worth the most!

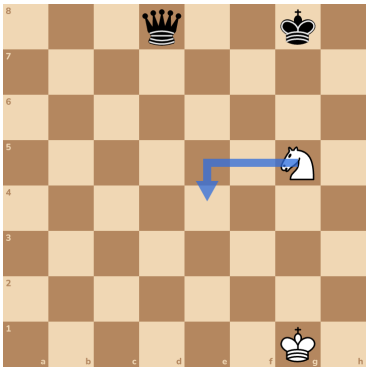


Try it 6. Don't run away. Take the attacker!

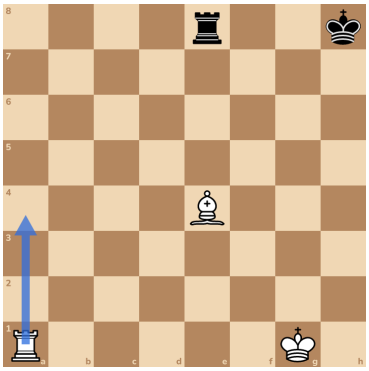


Answers

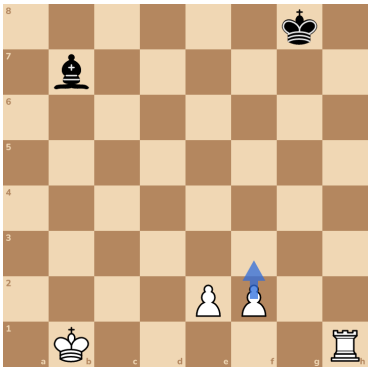
1. Ne4 or Ne6 or Nf3 or Nh3



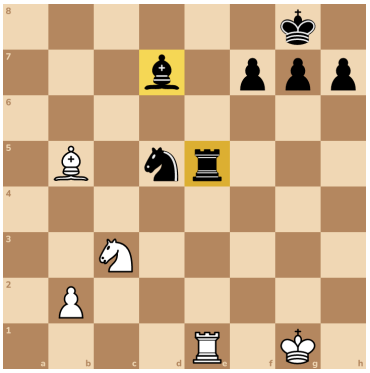
2. Ra4 or Re1



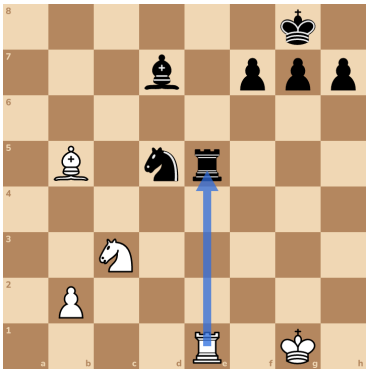
3. f3



4. e5, d7



5. Rxe5



6. Qxb4

