

# CHESS TIPS FOR JUNIORS

A series of leaflets for  
young chess players

## EN PASSANT

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## 6 'En passant'

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### The history of the move

En passant is one of the least-used moves in chess. But it's important to understand the move, because someone will take a pawn 'en passant' and you might even lose the game because of that.

Centuries ago, pawns were only allowed to move one square at a time, even on their first move. Then, in about the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the initial two-square option was introduced.

This met with objections from the traditional chess players, who felt that the two-square move was too generous. So it was agreed that if a pawn moved two squares, missing the square where it could have been taken by an opponent's pawn, then the opponent would be allowed to take it anyway.

The words 'en passant' are French, and mean 'in passing'.

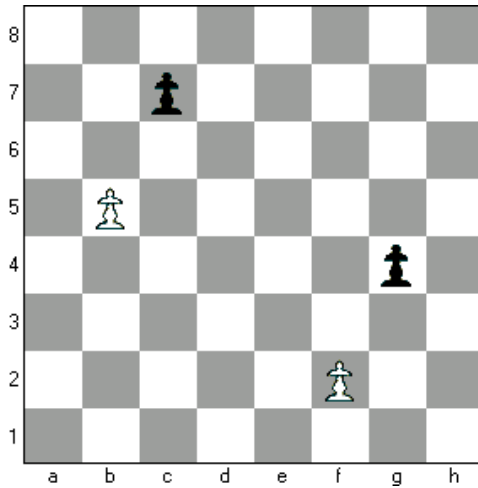
### What do the rules say?

The Laws of Chess state:

**"A pawn attacking a square crossed by an opponent's pawn which has advanced two squares in one move from its original square may capture this opponent's pawn as though the latter had been moved only one square. This capture may only be made on the move following this advance and is called an 'en passant' capture."**

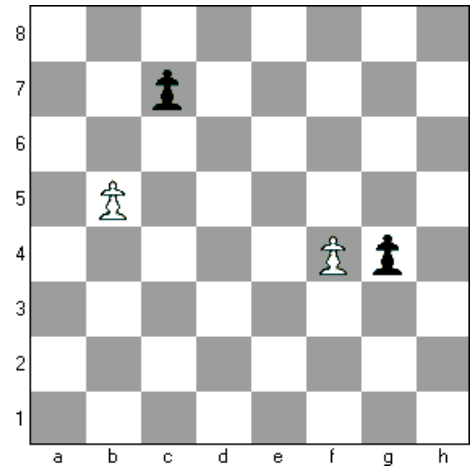
It's important to note that the en passant move can only be made **immediately** after your opponent has played a two-square pawn move.

Let's look at some examples:

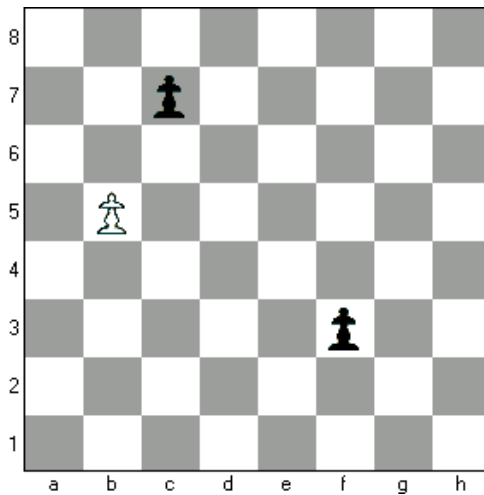


In this diagram, White is playing **up** the board. It's White to play.

If White plays f4 (pawn moves two squares from f2 to f4), the following position will occur:

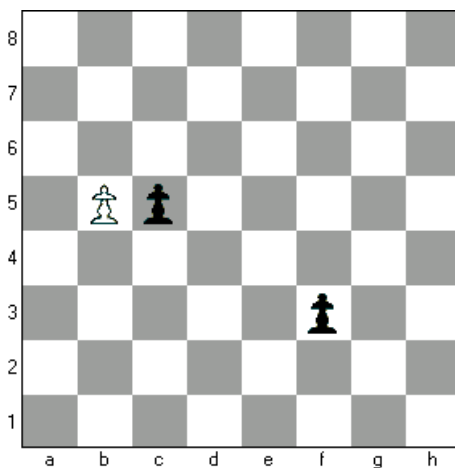


Black can then **take** the f-pawn (gxf3), as if the pawn had only moved one square:

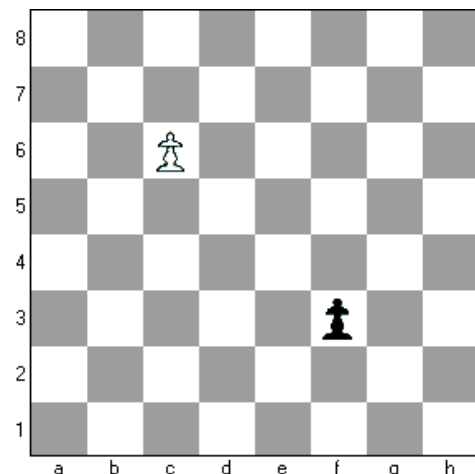


It's important to remember that the capture can **only** be made **on the next move**. As with all captures in chess, it is voluntary - you don't have to take it. But if you don't take it, you can't do so later in the game.

Now look at the other pawns on the b and c-files. Black has just moved the pawn from c7 to c5:

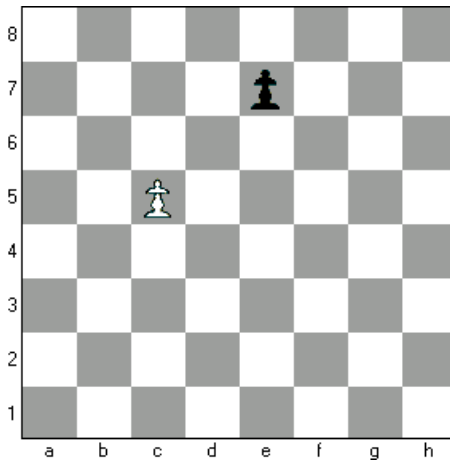


Now White can take the pawn (bxc6), provided it is done 'on the move' - **immediately**:



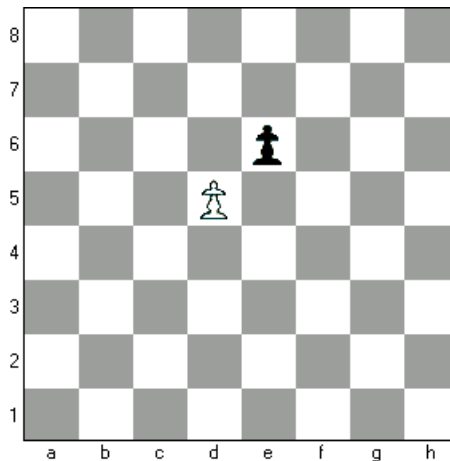
# EXERCISES (see answers below)

1



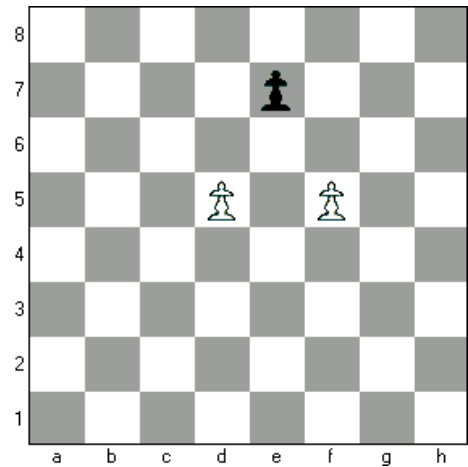
Black plays e7 - e5. Can White take the pawn en passant?

2



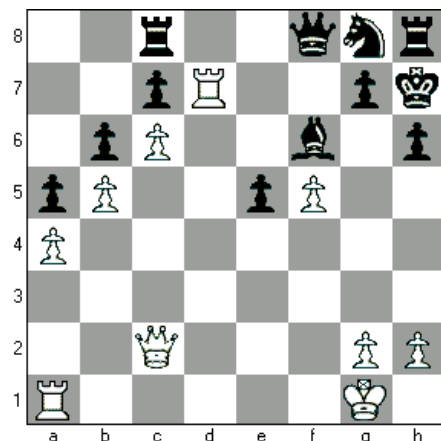
Black plays e6-e5. Can White take the pawn en passant?

3



Black plays e7-e5. What en passant moves can White play?

4



Black has just played e7-e5. How can White checkmate in one move?

## ANSWERS:

- 1 NO. The pawn is not on an adjacent file.
- 2 NO. The pawn must have already moved from e7 to e6, so it is not moving two squares, essential for an en passant capture.
- 3 Either dxe6 or fxe6.
- 4 fxe6 is checkmate!