

CHESS TIPS FOR JUNIORS

**A series of leaflets for
young chess players**

THE VALUE OF THE PIECES

4 The value of the pieces

Why is it important to know the value of each piece?

You already know that some pieces are stronger than others. But before you go any further it's REALLY IMPORTANT that you know how **much** the pieces are worth.

If you are about to take your opponent's Knight and in doing so, you will lose your Bishop, is that a GOOD exchange, a BAD exchange, or a FAIR exchange? You will only know the answer if you know how much each piece is worth.

How much are the pieces worth?

The weakest piece is the PAWN: that is worth ONE point.

The KNIGHT is stronger than the Pawn: it is worth THREE points.

The BISHOP is as good as a Knight: it is also worth THREE points.

The ROOK is stronger than Knight or Bishop: it is worth FIVE points.

The QUEEN is very strong: it is worth NINE points.

How much is the KING worth? Well, what's the biggest number you can think of? 100? 1,000,000? Infinity? The King is so valuable that you cannot afford to lose it (by being checkmated). So we say that the KING is worth "ALL THE MONEY IN THE WORLD". Remember that, and perhaps you'll never be checkmated again!

Exchanging pieces

When you swop off one (or more) of your pieces for one (or more) of your opponent's pieces, you need to know if the exchange is GOOD, BAD or FAIR. If it's GOOD, then go ahead and swop off. If it's BAD, don't do it. If it's FAIR, decide if it's a good idea or not. If you can take a STRONGER piece with a WEAKER piece, then do so!

Some examples of GOOD, BAD and FAIR exchanges:

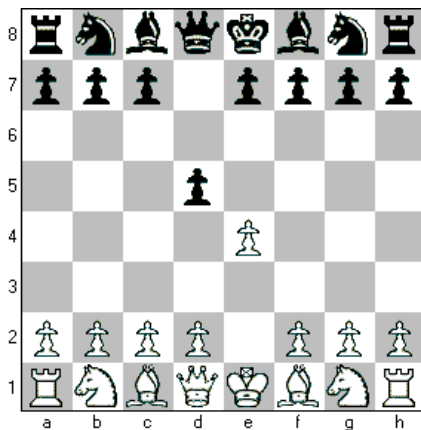


Diagram 1:

This is a straightforward FAIR exchange: a PAWN for a PAWN. White plays $exd5$ and Black replies $Qxd5$. Both sides have won a pawn.

Diagram 2:

One of the most common FAIR exchanges is Bishop for Knight. In this example either White Bishop can take a Knight ($Bxc6$ or $Bxf6$). After $Bxc6$, Black will reply $Bxc6$ = FAIR exchange. After $Bxf6$, Black will reply $Qxf6$ = FAIR exchange.

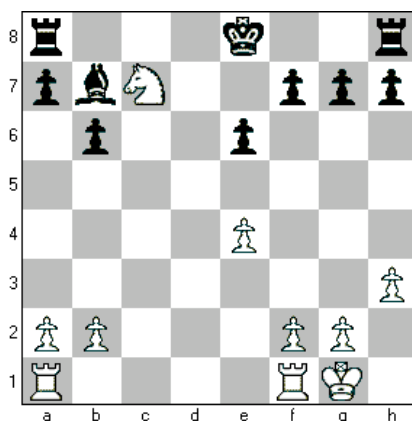
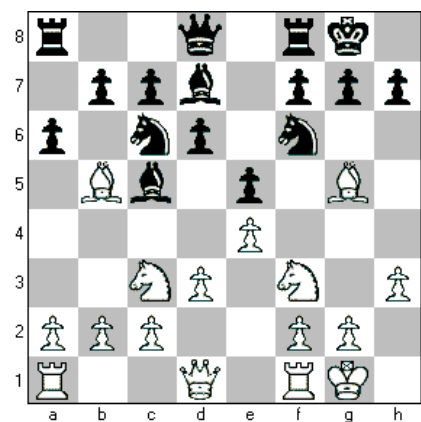
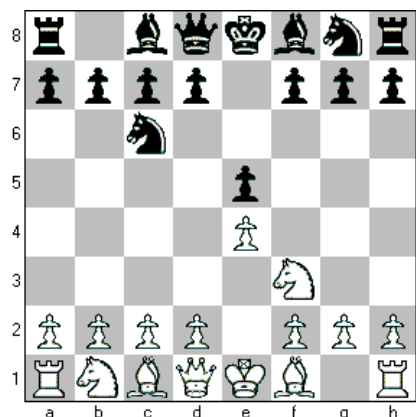


Diagram 3:

Now an example of a GOOD exchange. White has just played $Nc7+$, forking King and Rook. When the Black King moves, White will play $Nxa8$. Black can reply $Bxa8$. White has won the Rook (5 points) and lost the Knight (3 points). He has won $5 - 3 = +2$ points.

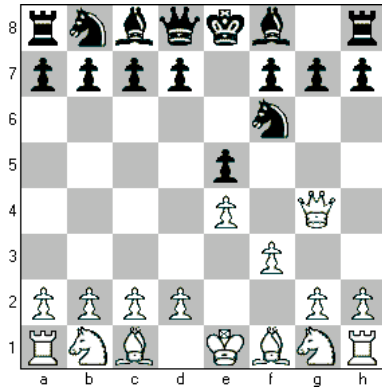
Diagram 4:

Here's an example of a BAD exchange. It's White's move and if he plays $Nxe5$, Black replies $Nxe5$. White has won a Pawn (1 point) and lost a Knight (3 points). $1 - 3 = -2$ points.



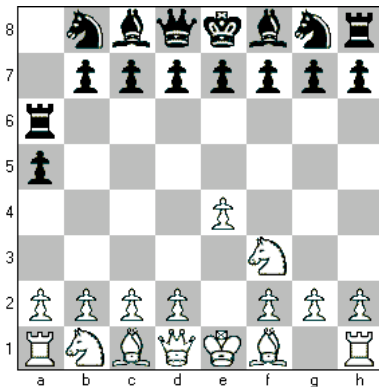
EXERCISES

1



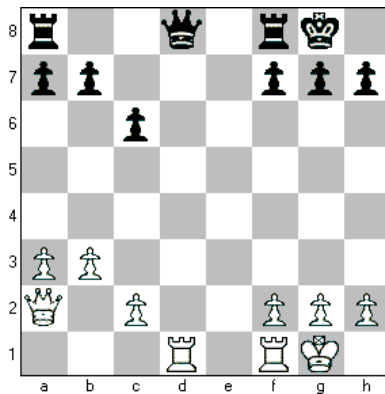
Black to play. There are 2 possible exchanges. One is GOOD and one is BAD.

2



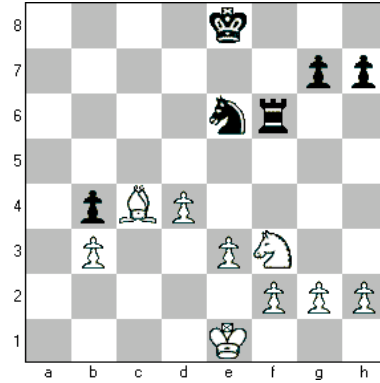
White to play. There is 1 possible exchange. Is it GOOD or BAD?

3



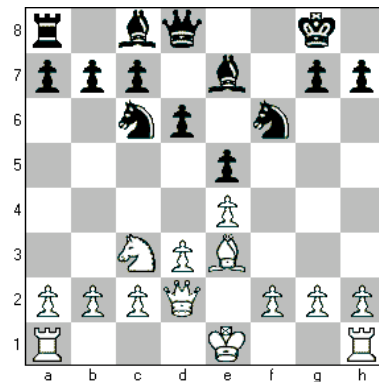
White to play. How many points will be gained after the exchange?

4



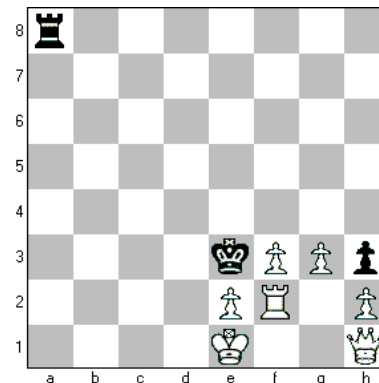
Who has more points, White or Black?

5



Who has more points, White or Black?

6



White to play. Having more points doesn't always mean you're going to win. Work out how Black can win, despite being 12 points down.