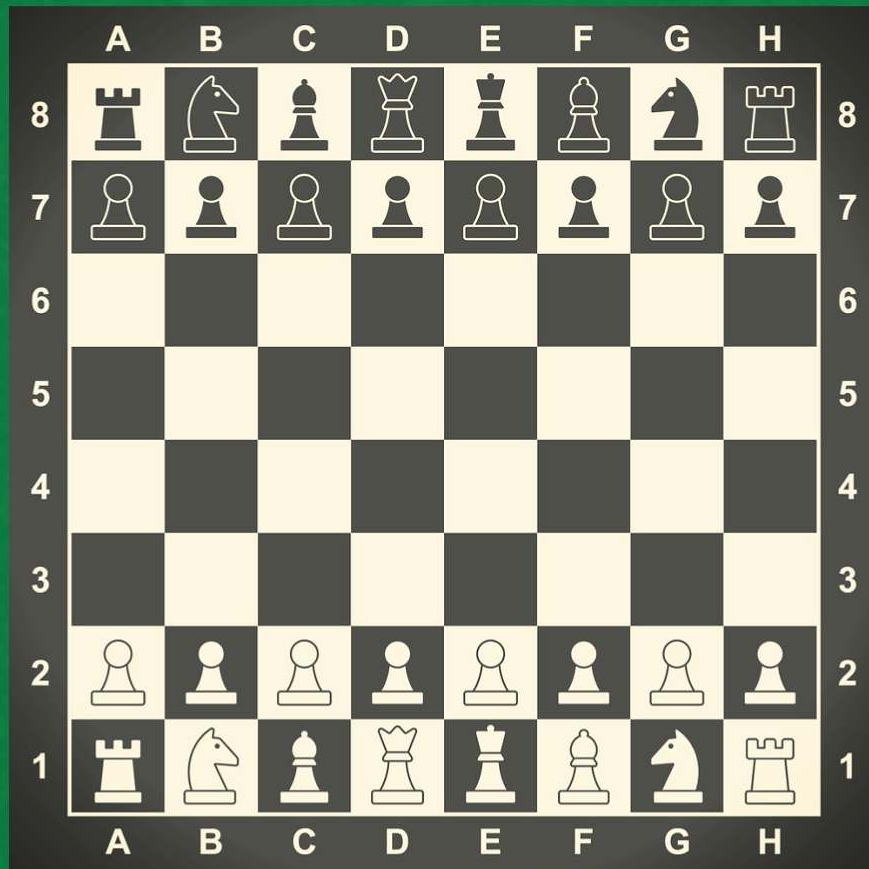


Chess Fundamentals

by

J.R. Capablanca



in

Algebraic Notation

CHESS

FUNDAMENTALS

BY

JOSÉ R. CAPABLANCA

CHESS CHAMPION OF THE WORLD

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PREFACE

Chess Fundamentals was first published thirteen years ago. Since then there have appeared at different times a number of articles dealing with the so-called Hypermodern Theory. Those who have read the articles may well have thought that something new, of vital importance, had been discovered. The fact is that the Hypermodern Theory is merely the application, during the opening stages generally, of the same old principles through the medium of somewhat new tactics. There has been no change in the fundamentals. The change has been only a change of form, and not always for the best at that.

In chess the tactics may change but the strategic fundamental principles are always the same, so that *Chess Fundamentals* is as good now as it was thirteen years ago. It will be as good a hundred years from now; as long in fact as the laws and rules of the game remain what they are at present. The reader may therefore go over the contents of the book with the assurance that there is in it everything he needs, and that there is nothing to be added and nothing to be changed. *Chess Fundamentals* was the one standard work of its kind thirteen years ago and the author firmly believes that it is the one standard work of its kind now.

J. R. CAPABLANCA

New York

Sept. 1, 1934

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CHESS FUNDAMENTALS

PART I

CHAPTER I

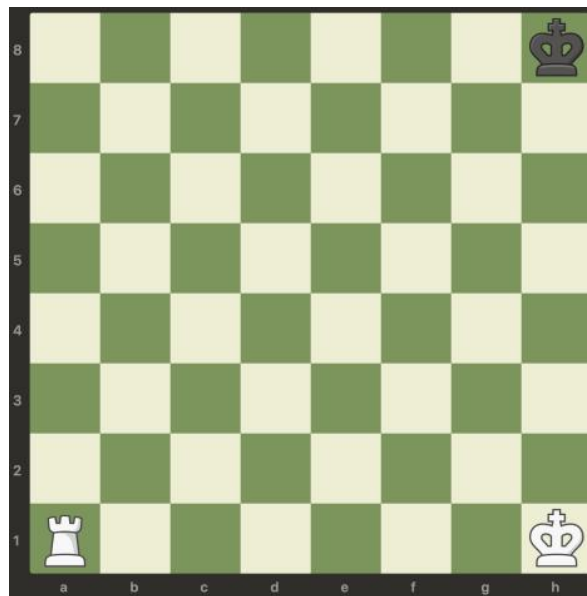
First Principles: Endings, Middle-Game and Openings

The first thing a student should do, is to familiarise himself with the power of the pieces. This can best be done by learning how to accomplish quickly some of the simple mates.

1. SOME SIMPLE MATES

Example 1.—The ending Rook and King against King.

The principle is to drive the opposing King to the last line on any side of the board.



In this position the power of the Rook is demonstrated by the first move, Ra7, which immediately confines the Black King to the last rank, and the mate is quickly accomplished by:

1. Ra7 Kg8 2. Kg2 ...

The combined action of King and Rook is needed to arrive at a position in which mate can be forced. The general principle for a beginner to follow is to keep his King as much as possible on the same rank, or, as in this case, file, as the opposing King.

When, in this case, the King has been brought to the sixth rank, it is better to place it, not on the same file, but on the one next to it towards the centre.

2. ...Kf8 3. Kf3 Ke8 4. Ke4 Kd8 5. Kd5 Kc8 6. Kd6 ...

Not Kc6, because then the Black King will go back to Kd8 and it will take much longer to mate.

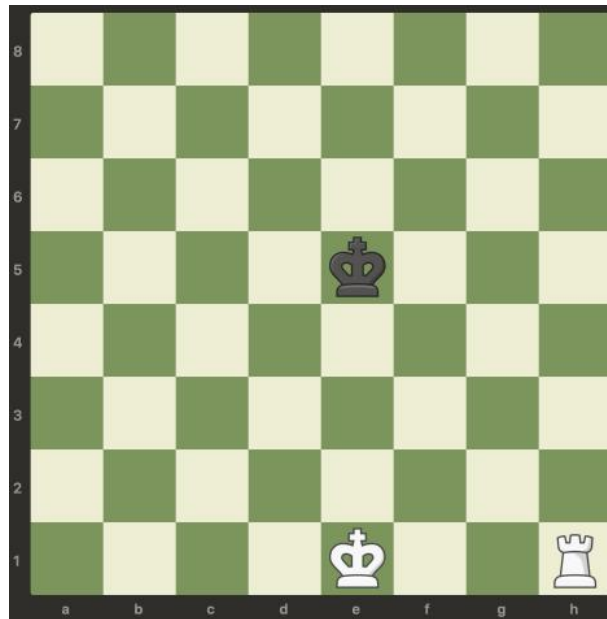
If now the King moves back to d8, Ra8# mates at once.

6. ... Kb8 7. Rc7 Ka8 8. Kc6 Kb8 9. Kb6 Ka8 10. Rc8#

It has taken exactly ten moves to mate from the original position.

On move 5 Black could have played Ke8, and, according to principle, White would have continued 6. Kd6 Kf8 (the Black King will ultimately be forced to move in front of the White King and be mated by Ra8#; 7. Ke6 Kg8 8. Kf6 Kh8 9. Kg6 Kg8 10. Ra8#

Example 2.



Since the Black King is in the centre of the board, the best way to proceed is to advance your own King thus:

1. Ke2 Kd5

2. Ke3

As the Rook has not yet come into play, it is better to advance the King straight into the centre of the board, not in front, but to one side of the other King. Should now the Black King move to Ke5, the Rook drives it back by Rh5+. On the other hand, if 2. ... Kc4 instead, then also 3. Rh5. If now 3. ... Kb4, there follows 4. Kd3; but if instead 3... Kc3; then 4. Rh4, keeping the King confined to as few squares as possible.

Now the ending may continue:

4. ... Kc2

5. Rc4+ Kb3

6. Kd3 Kb2

7. Rb4+ Ka3

8. Kc3 Ka2.

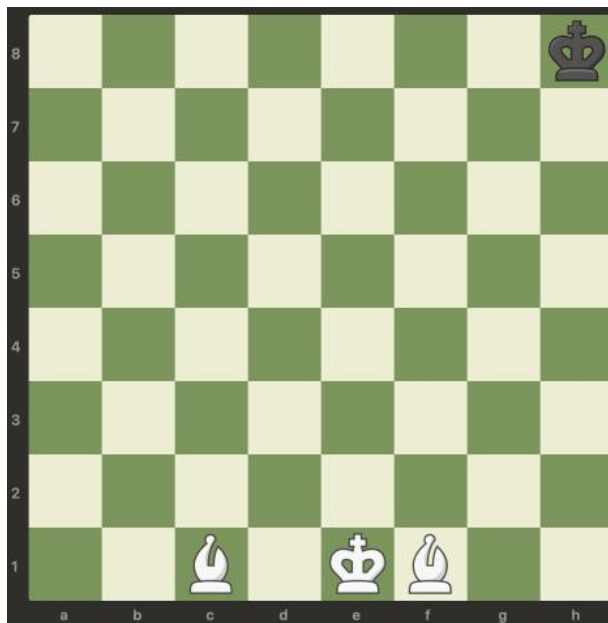
It should be noticed how often the White King has moved next to the Rook, not only to defend it, but also to reduce the mobility of the opposing King. Now

White mates in three moves thus:

9. Ra4+ Kb1

10. R any square on the Rook's file except Ra1 and Ra2 , forcing the Black King in front of the White, Kc1, 11.Ra1#. It has taken eleven moves to mate, and, under any conditions, I believe it should be done in under twenty. While it may be monotonous, it is worthwhile for the beginner to practice such things, as it will teach him the proper handling of his pieces.

Example 3.—Now we come to two Bishops and King against King.



Since the Black King is in the corner, White can play

1. Bd3 Kg7

2. Bg5 Kf7

3. Bf5 ... ,and already the Black King is confined to a few squares. If the Black King, in the original position, had been in the centre of the board, or away from the last row, White should have advanced his King, and then, with the aid of his Bishops, restricted the Black King's movements to as few squares as possible.

We might now continue: 3...Kg7 4. Kf2. In this ending the Black King must not only be driven to the edge of the board, but he must also be forced into a corner, and, before a mate can be given, the White King must be brought to the sixth rank and, at the same time, in one of the last two files; in this case either Kh6, Kg6, Kf7, Kg8, and as Kh6 and Kf6 are the nearest squares, it is to either of these squares that the King ought to go.

4. ... Kf7 5.Kg3 Kg7 6. Kh4 Kf7 7. Kh5 Kg7 8. Bg6 Kg8

9. Kh6 Kf8 . White must now mark time and move one of the Bishops, so as to force the Black King to go back;

10. Bh5 Kg8

11. Be7 Kh8. Now the White Bishop must take up a position from which it can give check next move along the White diagonal, when the Black King moves back to g8.

12. Bg4 Kg8

13. Be6+ Kh8

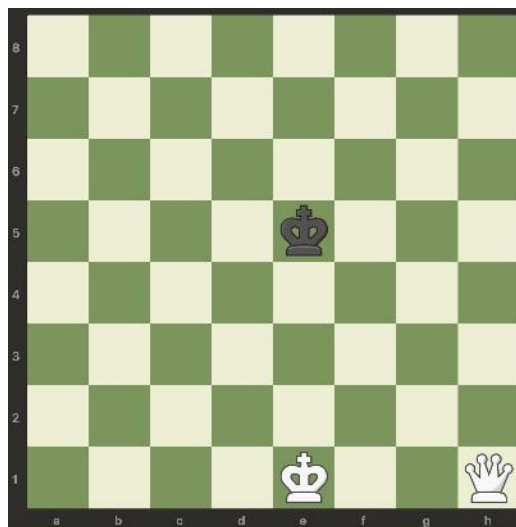
14. Bf6#

It has taken fourteen moves to force the mate and, in any position, it should be done in under thirty.

In all endings of this kind, care must be taken not to drift into a stalemate.

In this particular ending one should remember that the King must not only be driven to the edge of the board, but also into a corner. In all such endings, however, it is immaterial whether the King is forced

Example 4.—We now come to Queen and King against King. As the Queen combines the power of the Rook and the Bishop, it is the easiest mate of all and should always be accomplished in under ten moves. Take the following position:



A good way to begin is to make the first move with the Queen, trying to limit the Black King's mobility as much as possible. Thus: 1. Qc6 Kd4 2. Kd2. Already the Black King has only one available square 2....Ke5 3. Ke3 Kf5 4. Qd6 Kg5. (Should Black play Kg4, then Qe6 ch); 5. Qe6 Kh4 (if Kh5, Kf4 and mate next move) 6. Qg6 Kh3 7. Kf3 K moves 8. Q mates.

In this ending, as in the case of the Rook, the Black King must be forced to the edge of the board; only the Queen being so much more powerful than the Rook, the process is far easier and shorter. These are the three elementary endings and in all of these the principle is the same. In each case the co-operation of the King is needed. In order to force a mate without the aid of the King, at least two Rooks are required.

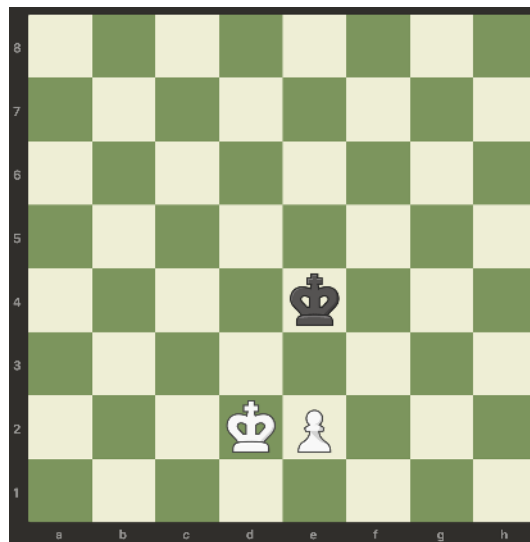
2. PAWN PROMOTION

The gain of a Pawn is the smallest material advantage that can be obtained in a game; and it often is sufficient to win, even when the Pawn is the only remaining unit, apart from the Kings. It is essential, speaking generally, that

the King should be in front of his Pawn, with at least one intervening square.

If the opposing King is directly in front of the Pawn, then the game cannot be won. This can best be explained by the following examples.

Example 5.



The position is drawn, and the way to proceed is for Black to keep the King always directly in front of the Pawn, and when it cannot be done, as for instance in this position because of the White King, then the Black King must be kept in front of the White King.

The play would proceed thus: 1. e3 Ke5 2. Kd3 Kd5. This is a very important move. Any other move would lose, as will be shown later. As the Black King cannot be kept close up to the Pawn, it must be brought as far forward as possible and, at the same time, in front of the White King.

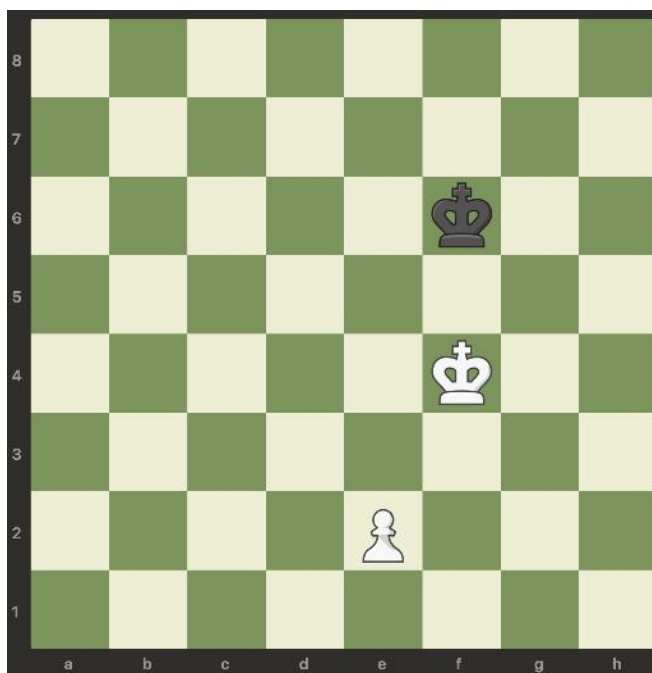
3. e4+ Ke5 4. Ke3 Ke6 5. Kf4 Kf6. Again the same case. As the White King comes up, the Black King must be kept in front of it, since it cannot be brought up to the Pawn.

6. e5+ Ke6 7. Ke4 Ke7 8. Kd5 Kd7 9. e6+ Ke7 10. Ke5 Ke8 11. Kd6 Kd8. If now White advances the Pawn, the Black King gets in front of it and White must either give up the Pawn or play Ke6, and a stale mate results. If instead of advancing the Pawn White withdraws his King, Black brings his King up to the Pawn and, when forced to go back, he moves to K *in front* of the Pawn ready to come up again or to move in front of the White King, as before, should the latter advance.

The whole mode of procedure is very important and the student should become thoroughly conversant with its details; for it involves principles to be taken up later on, and because many a beginner has lost identical positions from lack of proper knowledge.

At this stage of the book I cannot lay too much stress on its importance.

Example 6.—In this position White wins, as the King is in front of his Pawn and there is one intervening square.



The method to follow is to advance the King as far as is compatible with the safety of the Pawn and never to advance the Pawn until it is essential to its own safety.

Thus:

1. Ke4 Ke6.

Black does not allow the White King to advance, therefore White is now compelled to advance his Pawn so as to force Black to move away. He is then able to advance his own King.

2. e3 Kf6 3. Kd5 Ke7.

If Black had played 3...Kf5, then White would be forced to advance the Pawn to e4, since he could not advance his King without leaving Black the opportunity to play Ke4, winning the Pawn

Since he has not done so, it is better for White not to advance the Pawn yet, since its own safety does not require it, but to try to bring the King still further forward. Thus:

4. Ke5 Kd7 5. Kf6 Ke8.

Now the White Pawn is too far back and it may be brought up within protection of the King.

6. e4 Kd7.

Now it would not do to play Kf7, because Black would play Kd6, and White would have to bring back his King to protect the Pawn. Therefore he must continue.

7. e5 Ke8.

Had he moved anywhere else, White could have played Kf7, followed by the advance of the Pawn to e6, e7, e8; all these squares being protected by the King. As Black tries to prevent that, White must now force him to move away, at the same time always keeping the King in front of the Pawn. Thus:

8. Ke6.

e6 would make it a draw, as Black would then play Kc, and we would have a position similar to the one explained in connection with Example 5.

8. ... Kf8 9. Kd7.

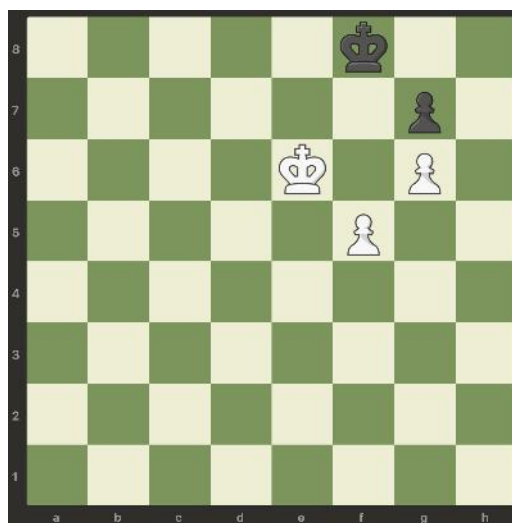
King moves and the White Pawn advances to e8, becomes a Queen, and it is all over.

This ending is like the previous one, and for the same reasons should be thoroughly understood before proceeding any further.

3. PAWN ENDINGS

I shall now give a couple of simple endings of two Pawns against one, or three against two, that the reader may see how they can be won. Fewer explanations will be given, as it is up to the student to work things out for himself. Furthermore, nobody can learn how to play well merely from the study of a book; it can only serve as a guide and the rest must be done by the teacher, if the student has one; if not, the student must realise by long and bitter experience the practical application of the many things explained in the book.

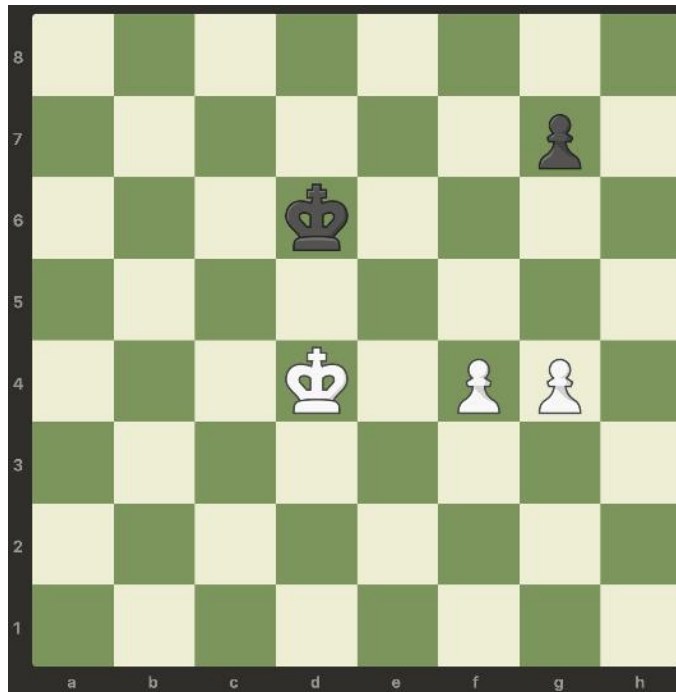
Example 7.



In this position White cannot win by playing 1. f6, because Black plays, not gxf6, which would lose, but 1...Kg8, and if then 2. fxg7 Kxg7, and draws, as shown in a previous case. If 2. f7+ Kf8, and White will never be able to Queen his Pawn without losing it. If 2. Ke7 gxf6 3. Kxf6 Kf8, and draws. White, however, can win the position given in the diagram by playing:

1. Kd7 Kg8 2. Ke7 Kh8 3. f6 gxf6. If 3...Kg8; 4 f7+ Kh8 5. f8=Q#.

4. Kf7 f5 5. g7+ Kh7 6. g8=Q+ Kh6 7. Qg6#.



Example 8.—In the above position White can't win by 1. f5. Black's best answer would be g6 draws. (The student should work this out.) He cannot win by 1. g5, because g6 draws. (This, because of the principle of the "*opposition*" which governs this ending as well as all the Pawn-endings already given, and which will be explained more fully later on.)

White can win, however, by playing: 1. Ke4 Ke6. (If 1...g6 2. Kd4 Ke6 3. Kc5 Kf6 4. Kd6 Kf7 5. g5 Kg7 6. Ke7 Kg8 7. Kf6 Kh7 8. Kf7 and White wins the Pawn.)

2. f5+ Kf6 3. Kf4 g6. (If this Pawn is kept back we arrive at the ending shown in Example 7.) 4. g5+ Kf7 5. f6 Ke6 6. Ke4 Kf7 7. Ke5 Kf8. White cannot force his Bishop's Pawn into Q (find out why), but by giving his Pawn up he can win the other Pawn and the game. Thus:

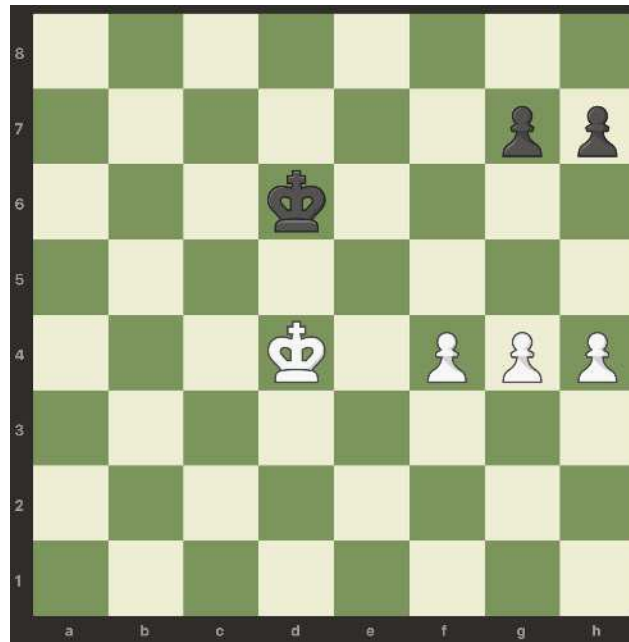
8. f7 Kxf7 9. Kd6 Kf8 10. Ke6 Kg7 11. Ke7 Kg8 12. Kf6 Kh7 13. Kf7 Kh8 14. Kxg6 Kg8.

There is still some resistance in Black's position. In fact, the only way to win is the one given here, as will easily be seen by experiment.

15. Kh6 (if Kf6 Kh7 and in order to win White must get back to the actual position, as against 16. g6+ Kh8 draws), Kh8 16. g6 Kg8 17. g7 Kf7 18. Kh7 and White Queens the Pawn and wins.

This ending, apparently so simple, should show the student the enormous difficulties to be surmounted, even when there are hardly any pieces left, when playing against an adversary who knows how to use the resources at his disposal, and it should show the student, also, the necessity of paying strict attention to these elementary things which form the basis of true mastership in Chess.

Example 9.—In this ending



White can win by advancing any of the three Pawns on the first move, but it is convenient to follow the general rule, whenever there is no good reason against it, of *advancing the Pawn that has no Pawn opposing it*. Thus we begin by—

1. f5 Ke7.

If g6, g6; and we have a similar ending to one of those shown above. If 1...h6; 2. g5.

2. Ke5 Kf7 3. g5 Ke7.

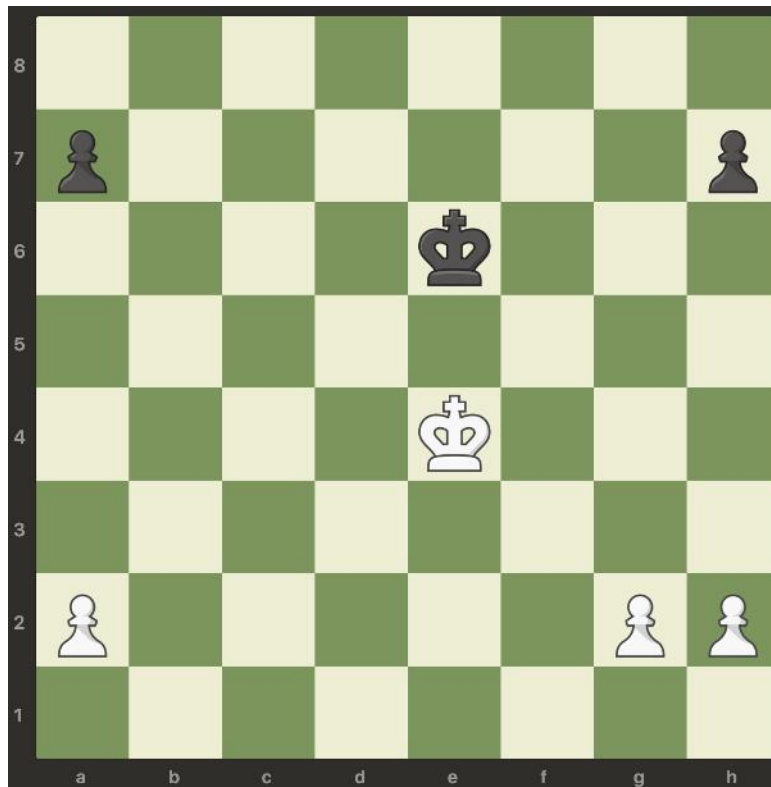
If 3...g6 4. f6 and if 3...h6 4. g6+, and in either case we have a similar ending to one of those already shown.

4. h5,

and by following it up with g6 we have the same ending previously shown. Should Black play 4...g6, then 5. hxg6 hxg6 6. f6+ with the same result.

Having now seen the cases when the Pawns are all on one side of the board we shall now examine a case when there are Pawns on both sides of the board.

Example 10.—In these cases the general rule is to act immediately on the side where you have the superior forces. Thus we have:



1. g4.

It is generally advisable to advance the Pawn that is free from opposition.

1. a5

Black makes an advance on the other side, and now White considers whether or not he should stop the advance. In this case either way wins, but generally the advance should be stopped when the opposing King is far away.

2. a4 Kf6 3. h4 Ke6.

If 3...Kg6, then simple counting will show that White goes to the other side with his King, wins the pawn at a5, and then Queens his single Pawn long before Black can do the same.

4. g5 Kf7 5. Kf5 Kg7 6. h5 Kf7.

If 6...h6 7. g6, and then the two Pawns defend themselves and White can go to the other side with his King, to win the other Pawn.

7. Ke5.

Now it is time to go to the other side with the King, win the Black Pawn and Queen the single Pawn. This is typical of all such endings and should be worked out by the student in this case and in similar cases which he can put up.

4. SOME WINNING POSITIONS IN THE MIDDLE-GAME

By the time the student has digested all that has been previously explained, he, no doubt, is anxious to get to the actual game and play with all the pieces. However, before considering the openings, we shall devote a little time to some combinations that often arise during the game, and which will give the reader some idea of the beauty of the game, once he becomes better acquainted with it.

Example 11.



It is Black's move, and thinking that White merely threatens to play Qh6 and to mate at g7, Black plays 1 ... Re8, threatening mate by way of Re1. White now uncovers his real and most effective threat, viz.:

1 ... Re8 2. Qxh7+ Kxh7 3. Rh3+ Kg8 4. Rh8#.

This same type of combination may come as the result of a somewhat more complicated position.

Example 12.



White is a piece behind, and unless he can win it back quickly he will lose; he therefore plays:

1. Nxc6 Bg5

He cannot take the Nc6 because White threatens mate by Qxh7+ followed by Rh3+.

2. Ne7+ Qxe7

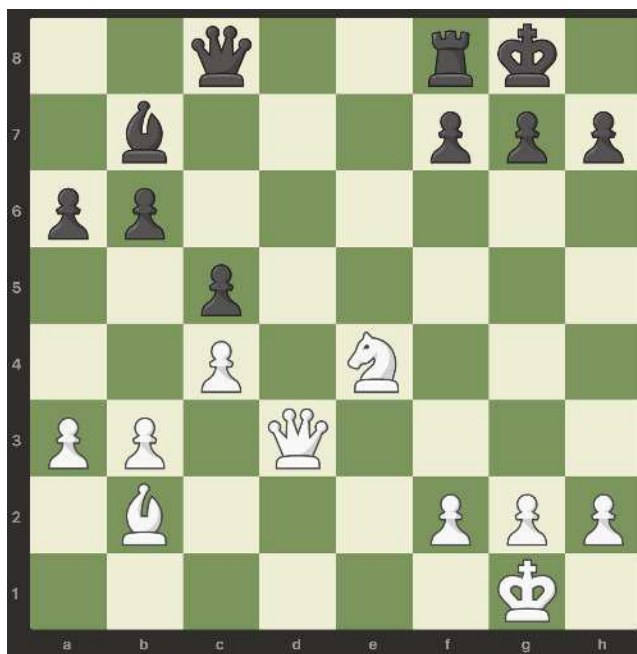
Again if Bxe7; Qxh7+, Kxh7; Rh3+, King moves; Rh8# mate.

3. Rxe7 Bxe7

4. Qd7

and White wins one of the two Bishops, remains with a Q and a B against a R and B, and should therefore win easily. These two examples show the danger of advancing the g pawn one square, after having Castled on that side.

Example 13.



This is another very interesting type of combination. Black has a Rook for a Knight and should therefore win, unless White is able to obtain some compensation immediately. White, in fact, mates in a few moves thus:

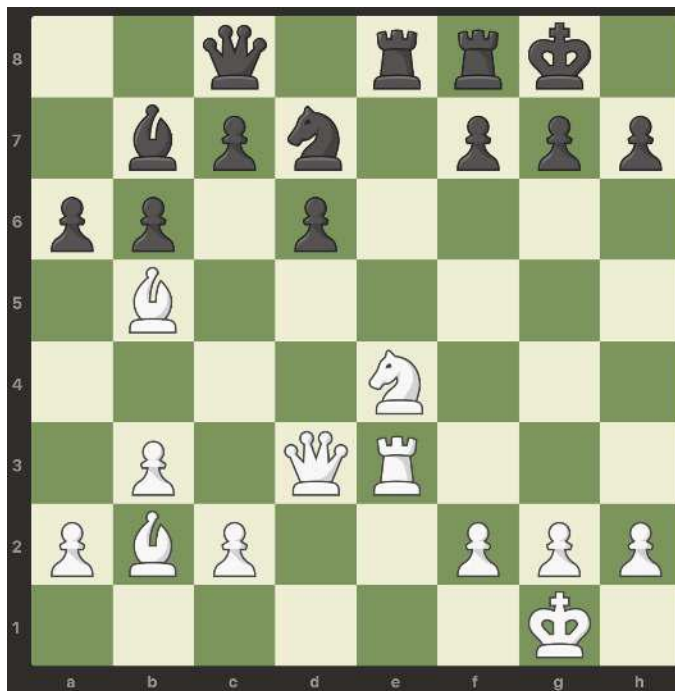
1. Nf6+ gx6

Forced, otherwise Qxh7# mates.

2. Qg3+ Kh8

3. Bxf6# mate.

Example 14.—The same type of combination occurs in a more complicated form in the following position.



1. Bxd7 Qxd7.

If ...Bxe4; Qf3 threatens mate, and therefore wins the Queen, which is already attacked.

2. Nf6+ gxf6

3. Rg3+ Kh8

4. Bxf6#

Example 15.—A very frequent type of combination is shown in the following position.



Here White is the exchange and a Pawn behind, but he can win quickly thus: 1. Bxh7+, Kxh7. (If 1...Kh8 2. Qh5 g6; 3. Qh6 and wins.)

2. Qh5+ Kg8 3. Ng5, and Black cannot stop mate at h7 except by sacrificing the Queen by Qe4, which would leave White with a Queen for a Rook.

Example 16.—This same type of combination is seen in a more complicated form in the following position.



White proceeds as follows: 1. Nxe7+ (this clears the line for the Bishop) Bxe7 (to stop the Knight from moving to g5 after the sacrifice of the Bishop); 2. Rxe7 Nxe7 best; 3. Bxh7+ Kxh7. (If 3. ... Kh8 4. Qh5 g6 5. Bxg6+ Kg7 6. Qh7+ Kf6 7. g5+ Ke6 8. Bxf7+ Rxf7 9. Qe4#.) 4. Qh5+ Kg8 5. Ng5 Rc8; 6. Qh7+ Kf8 7. Qh8+ Ng8 8. Nh7+ Ke7 9. Re1+ Kd8 10. Qxg8#.

This combination is rather long and has many variations, therefore a beginner will hardly be able to fathom it; but, knowing the type of combination, he might under similar circumstances undertake and carry out a brilliant attack which he would otherwise never think of. It will be seen that all the combinations shown have for a foundation the proper co-ordination of the pieces, which have all been brought to bear against a weak point.

5. RELATIVE VALUE OF THE PIECES

Before going on to the general principles of the openings, it is advisable to give the student an idea of the proper relative value of the pieces. There is no complete and accurate table for all of them, and the only thing to do is to compare the pieces separately.

For all general theoretical purposes the Bishop and the Knight have to be considered as of the same value, though it is my opinion that the Bishop will prove the more valuable piece in most cases; and it is well known that two Bishops are almost always better than two Knights.

The Bishop will be stronger against Pawns than the Knight, and in combination with Pawns will also be stronger against the Rook than the Knight will be.

A Bishop and a Rook are also stronger than a Knight and a Rook, but a Queen and a Knight may be stronger than a Queen and a Bishop.

A Bishop will often be worth more than three Pawns, but a Knight very seldom so, and may even not be worth so much.

A Rook will be worth a Knight and two Pawns, or a Bishop and two Pawns, but, as said before, the Bishop will be a better piece against the Rook.

Two Rooks are slightly stronger than a Queen. They are slightly weaker than two Knights and a Bishop, and a little more so than two Bishops and a Knight. The power of the Knight decreases as the pieces are changed off. The power of the Rook, on the contrary, increases.

The King, a purely *defensive* piece throughout the middle-game, becomes an *offensive* piece once all the pieces are off the board, and sometimes even when there are one or two minor pieces left. The handling of the King becomes of paramount importance once the end-game stage is reached.

6. GENERAL STRATEGY OF THE OPENING

The main thing is to *develop the pieces quickly*. Get them into play as fast as you can.

From the outset two moves, 1. e4 or 1. d4, open up lines for the Queen and a Bishop. Therefore, theoretically one of these two moves must be the best, as no other first move accomplishes so much.

Example 17.—Suppose we begin:

1. e4 e5

2. Nf3

This is both an attacking and a developing move. Black can now either reply with the identical move or play

2. Nc6

This developing move at the same time defends the King's Pawn.

3. Nc3 Nf6

These moves are of a purely developing nature.

4. Bb5

It is generally advisable not to bring this Bishop out until one Knight is out, preferably the King's Knight. The Bishop could also have been played to c4, but it is advisable whenever possible to combine development and attack.

4. Bb4

Black replies in the same manner, threatening a possible exchange of Bishop for Knight with Nxe5 to follow.

5. 0-0

an indirect way of preventing 5...Bxf3, which more experience or study will show to be bad. At the same time *the Rook is brought into action in the centre, a very important point.*

5. 0-0

Black follows the same line of reasoning.

6. d3 d6

These moves have a two-fold object, viz.: to protect the King's Pawn and to open the diagonal for the development of the Queen's Bishop.

7. Bg5



A very powerful move, which brings us to the middle-game stage, as there is already in view a combination to win quickly by Nd5. This threat makes it impossible for Black to continue the same course. (There is a long analysis showing that Black should lose if he also plays Bg4.) He is now forced to play 7...Bc3, as experience has shown, thus bringing up to notice three things.

First, the complete development of the opening has taken only seven moves. (This varies up to ten or twelve moves in some very exceptional cases. As a rule, eight should be enough.) Second, Black has been compelled to exchange a Bishop for a Knight, but as a compensation he has isolated White's a2 and doubled a Pawn. (This, at such an early stage of the game, is rather an advantage for White, as the Pawn is doubled towards the centre of the board.) Third, White by the exchange brings up a Pawn to control the square d4, puts Black on the defensive, as experience will show, and thus keeps the initiative, an unquestionable advantage. [1]

The strategical principles expounded above are the same for all the openings, only their tactical application varies according to the circumstances.

Before proceeding further I wish to lay stress on the following point which the student should bear in mind.

Before development has been completed no piece should be moved more than once, unless it is essential in order to obtain either material advantage or to secure freedom of action.

The beginner would do well to remember this, as well as what has already been stated: viz., bring out the Knights before bringing out the Bishops.

7. CONTROL OF THE CENTRE

The four squares, e4, d4, e5 and d5, are the centre squares, and control of these squares is called control of the centre. *The control of the centre is of great importance.* No violent attack can succeed without controlling at least two of these squares, and possibly three. Many a manoeuvre in the opening has for its sole object the control of the centre, which invariably ensures the initiative. It is well always to bear this in mind, since it will often be the reason of a series of moves which could not otherwise be properly understood. As this book progresses I shall dwell more fully on these different points. At present I shall devote some time to openings taken at random and explain the moves according to general principles. The student will in that way train his mind in the proper direction, and will thus have less trouble in finding a way out when confronted with a new and difficult situation.

Example 18.

1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 d6

A timid move. Black assumes a defensive attitude at once. On principle the move is wrong. In the openings, whenever possible, *pieces should be moved in preference to Pawns.*

3. d4

White takes the offensive immediately and strives to control the centre so as to have ample room to deploy his forces.

3. Nd7

Black does not wish to relinquish the centre and also prefers the text move to Nc6, which would be the more natural square for the N. But on

principle the move is wrong, because it blocks the action of the Queen's Bishop, and instead of facilitating the action of Black's pieces, tends, on the contrary, to cramp them.

4. Bc4 h6

Black is forced to pay the penalty of his previous move. Such a move on Black's part condemns by itself any form of opening that makes it necessary. White threatened Ng5 and Black could not stop it with 4...Be7, because of 5. dxe5 Nxe5 (if 5...dxe5 6. Qd5); 6. Nxe5 dxe5 7. Qh5, and White wins a Pawn and has besides a perfectly safe position.

5. Nc3 Nf6

6. Be3 Be7

7. Qe2

It should be noticed that White does not Castle yet. The reason is that he wants to deploy his forces first, and through the last move force Black to play c6 to make room for the Queen as White threatens Rd1, to be followed by dxe5. Black's other alternatives would finally force him to play exd4, thus abandoning the centre to White.

7. c6

8. Rd1 Qc7

9. 0 - 0

With this last move White completes his development, while Black is evidently somewhat hampered. A simple examination will suffice to show that White's position is unassailable. There are no weak spots in his armour, and his pieces are ready for any manœuvre that he may wish to carry out in order to begin the attack on the enemy's position.

The student should carefully study this example. It will show him that it is sometimes convenient to delay Castling. I have given the moves as they come to my mind without following any standard book on openings.

Whether the moves given by me agree or not with the standard works, I do not know, but at the present stage of this book it is not convenient to enter into discussions of mere technicalities which the student will be able to understand when he has become more proficient.

Example 19.

1. e4 e5

2. Nf3 d6

3. d4 Bg4

A bad move, which violates one of the principles set down, according to which at least one Knight should be developed before the Bishops are brought out, and also because it exchanges a Bishop for a Knight, which in the opening is generally bad, unless there is some compensation.

4. dxe5 Bxf3

4...dxe5 loses a Pawn.

5. Qxf3 dxe5

6. Bc4 Qf6

If 6...Nf6 7. Qb3 wins a Pawn.

7. Qb3 b6

8. Nc3 c6

To prevent Nd5.



Black, however, has no pieces out except his Queen, and White, with a Bishop and a Knight already developed, has a chance of obtaining an advantage quickly by playing Nd5 anyway. The student is left to work out the many variations arising from this position.

These examples will show the practical application of the principles previously enunciated. The student is warned against playing Pawns in preference to pieces at the beginning of the game, especially h3, h6, a3 and a6, which are moves very commonly indulged in by beginners.

8. TRAPS

I shall now give a few positions or traps to be avoided in the openings, and in which (practice has shown) beginners are often caught.

Example 20.



White plays:

1. dxe5 Nxe5

Black should have recaptured with the Pawn.

2. Nxe5 Bxd1

3. Bxf7+ Ke7

4. Nd5#

Example 21.



Black, having the move, should play e6. But suppose he plays Nf6 instead, then comes—

1. Bxf7+

Ne5 would also give White the advantage, the threat being of course if Bxd1; 2. Bxf7# mate. Nor does Bh4 help matters, because of 2. Qxh4 1... Be6 leaves Black with the inferior position. But White's move in the text secures an immediate material advantage, and the beginner at any rate should never miss such an opportunity for the sake of a speculative advantage in position.

1. Kxf7

2. Ne5+ K moves

3. Nxc4

and White has won a Pawn besides having the better position.

There are a good many other traps—in fact, there is a book written on traps on the chess board; but the type given above is the most common of all.

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Message from the eBook Creator



José Raúl Capablanca y Graupera was a Spaniard and Cuban chess player who was world chess champion from 1921 to 1927. A chess prodigy, he is widely renowned for his exceptional endgame skill and speed of play.

“Most players ... do not like losing, and consider defeat as something shameful. This is a wrong attitude. Those who wish to perfect themselves must regard their losses as lessons and learn from them what sorts of things to avoid in the future.”

-José Raúl Capablanca

I have been interested in gaining knowledge of chess from world-renowned Chess Champions like Emanuel Lasker, Alexander Alekhine, Paul Morphy, Bobby Fischer, Garry Kasparov, and several GM's that I try to follow.

One of the most critical aspects of learning chess for beginners is the fundamentals. I planned to buy several books that will help me set my foundation in chess, and none of them came close to world chess champion José Raúl Capablanca's Chess Fundamentals.

This book is meant for chess players in all levels of experience. Since I was a kid, I have been playing chess, and now that I have kids of my own, I wanted them to learn the game of chess not from me but the great mind of JR Capablanca. The Chess Fundamentals book is an excellent gift for anyone whom you think will enjoy learning chess with a straightforward approach and a thorough explanation of every game mentioned inside the book.

I like all the chapters of this book, but I focused on Chapter V, End-Game Strategy, and enjoyed the illustrative game in Part II. I hope you'll have fun reading this book! Enjoy learning the Chess Fundamentals!



Gary D Flores

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