
The Objective of Chess

Part 1 – Checkmate and Checking

The **prime objective** for each player (whether playing as White or as Black) is to reach **checkmate**. Often checkmate is referred to as mate. When checkmate occurs, the player who mated the opposing player's King wins the game.

Checkmate is reached by putting the opposing player's King under an immediate direct attack and threat of being captured by one or more of the player's Queen, Bishops, Knights, Rooks, and/or pawns, from which the opposing King cannot escape the attack.

An immediate direct attack on an opposing King from a single piece or pawn is called **check**. An attack also may occur simultaneously by two pieces, or a piece and a pawn, which is called - **double check**. The direct immediate attack/check on the King constitutes a threat of the opposing King possibly being captured. However, a King is never actually captured and removed from the chessboard.

While it is customary for a player to declare (say aloud) check when playing over-the-board (OTB), that is face-to-face, this is not obligatory under the Laws of Chess set out by the World Chess Federation (FIDE), a link to the laws is in my Chess Links. However, the rules for some OTB tournaments or under which a game is played may require a player to verbally state check, and more importantly usually to declare checkmate immediately upon making the attacking/checking move that results in checkmate. If he or she does not, the opposing player may call the checkmate and the game ends in a draw. A more serious variation for the failure to call a checkmate if the players agree is for the other player to win the game! When playing on an Internet chess playing site or with a computer chess game, the program "calls" the checkmate.

When a King is in check (whether single or double), the player with the King under attack may not make a move or advance a pawn that does not get his or her King out of check.

Checkmate occurs when a King is in check (under attack/threat to be captured) and:

- 1. cannot safely move to another square** (i.e., without getting into further check on the other square or is blocked from moving to that square because the other King is sitting on a square adjacent to that square); and

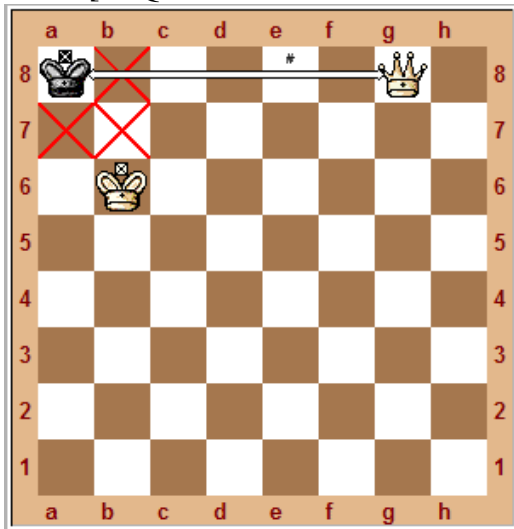
2. **the attacking piece or pawn cannot be captured;** and
3. **the check cannot be blocked:** the player with the King under attack has no piece that may be moved or pawn that may be advanced to be interposed on a square to block the direct line of the attack between the attacking piece and the King.

When a double check or checking by a Knight exists, blocking check is not possible.

Look at the following diagram of a simple checkmate. The white arrow between Black's King and White's Queen shows the direct attack (check - threatening to capture Black's King) by White's Queen. The Black # above the arrow signifies checkmate. The red Xs on squares a7, b7, and b8 signify Black's King cannot move to those squares: cannot move to b8 because would still be under attack by White's Queen; and, cannot move to squares a7 or b7, because a King can never move onto a square adjacent to a square upon which the other King is located. Black also has no piece or pawn that either can capture White's Queen to stop the attack, or that could be moved onto any of the squares b8 through f8 to block the attack. Therefore, Black's King is checkmated.

DIAGRAM OBJ-1 Checkmate Example

FEN: [k5Q1/8/1K6/8/8/8/8/8 b - - 0 65]



There are certain types of checks and checkmates given special labels: **fork check, combined fork check & double check, discovered check, discovered checkmate, & skewer.**

Briefly (these concepts will be expanded upon in later tutorials):

Fork check: is where the opposing King and an opposing piece, or opposing pawn, are both simultaneously under attack by a player's piece or pawn.

Combined fork check & double check: is where the opposing King is attacked by two pieces, or a piece and a pawn, one of which is also attacking another opposing piece or pawn (fork).

Discovered check: is where a player moves a piece or pawn, and another of the player's pieces puts the opposing King into check.

Discovered checkmate: is where a player moves a piece or pawn, and another of the player's pieces attacks/checks the opposing King, and results in checkmate.

Skewer: is where a player checks - with a piece - the opposing King that is shielding an opposing piece or pawn from attack. The position on the board requires the opposing King to move (or move and capture) to get out of check. When the opposing King does so, then the player is able to use the checking piece to capture the shielded opposing piece or pawn.

More broadly, skewering is not limited to attacking/checking the opposing King. Skewering may be done on an opposing piece that is shielding an opposing piece of lower value or an opposing pawn. When that opposing piece is moved (or moves and captures), then the player is able to capture the lower value opposing piece or opposing pawn.

Part 2 reviews and examines **attacks** and **threats** in broader contexts for playing chess.

Before proceeding, let's review "**rating**." Winning and losing (whether by checkmate or one of the alternatives to checkmate - resignation), or neither player winning by one of the other alternatives to checkmate: drawing or stalemating, effects a player's rating. A player may (but need not have) have an officially assigned and recognized skill level. There are many official chess organizations that assign ratings to players, e.g., such as the United States Chess Federation (USCF) and FIDE. In addition, there are numerous other organizations that assign ratings such online playing sites, for example the International Chess Club (ICC) and the Free Internet Chess Server (FICS), and other online Internet chess playing sites.

Players also often join local chess clubs, where games are played and competitions & tournaments occur (individually and in teams) both within the club and with other clubs - locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally. The organizations may have their own methods for determining ratings. They usually also have their own rules and regulations.

Many, though, follow, adopt, or apply in whole or in part FIDE's Laws of Chess, as well as other rules and regulations.

Part 2 – Attacks and Threats

Part 3 – Checkmates (simple and complex); Anatomy of Mate/Patterns; Mating Net; Pattern Recognition

Part 4 - Simple Checkmates and Controlling Squares

Part 5 - Rapid Checkmates

Part 6 - The Alternatives to Checkmate – Resignation; Draws; and Stalemate

Mark Lowery's Exciting World of Chess