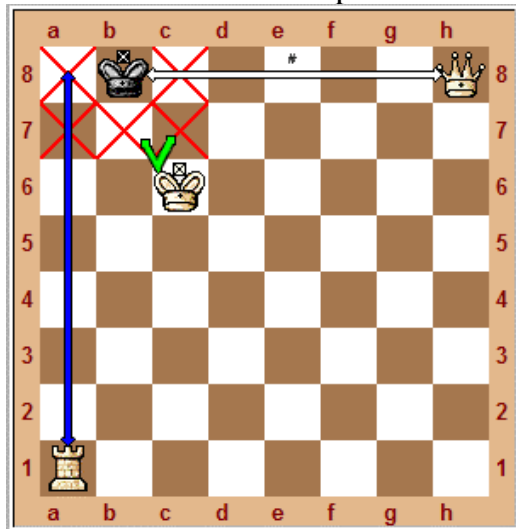

The Objective of Chess

Part 4 – Simple Checkmates and Controlling Squares

Below is an example of a simple checkmate. After the diagram is a brief overview of moving, and moving and capturing with the Queen, and analysis and explanation of the simple checkmate. The tutorial utilizes English Algebraic notation as is used throughout this website (the primary and often the official notation style widely used in the chess world). Many other notation styles have been used and are in use. Several common ones, including English Algebraic notation, are covered more extensively in the Notations tutorial. If you are unfamiliar with English Algebraic notation, there is an overview review in the Appendix at the end of this tutorial.

DIAGRAM OBJ-4 Simple Checkmate



In Part 2, there was available for review an overview of moving, and moving and capturing, with the King, Rook, and the pawns. In this tutorial, White's Queen is used for checkmating Black's King. Before moving to analysis and explanation of the simple checkmate shown in the diagram above, let's do a brief overview of moving, and moving and capturing, with a Queen.

A Queen may move, and move and capture, horizontally right and left along a rank, and vertically up and down a file, just as the Rook and with similar restrictions. A Queen further may do so along either diagonal line of squares extending from and touching the corner intersecting points of the square on which the Queen is located, both upwards to the left and downwards to the right, and upwards to the right and downwards to the left, with similar restrictions for ranks and files. The Queen's ability to move, and move and capture, in all directions makes its ability to attack and check the opposing King usually

the most flexible and dangerous piece on the board. This general principle, however, is subject to several very important exceptions that are covered in other tutorials. Let's turn to analysis and explanation of the simple checkmate diagrammed above.

The white arrow between White's Queen and Black's King with a black # above the arrow, signify the attack, check, and checkmate on Black's King by the Queen - which is controlling then entire length of Black's back rank (the eighth - 8th - rank). Therefore, Black's King cannot be moved to a8 or c8 to escape the check.

The blue arrow between White's Rook and a8, signifies the Rook is controlling a7 thereby blocking Black's King from moving to that square. Black's King would come under attack and check by White's Rook if moved to a7. A King cannot move to a square upon which the King would be under attack and in check. The Rook also is controlling a8, but because the Queen already controls that square then the Rook's control of that square is not necessary for the checkmate.

The green arrows between White's King and b7 and c7, signify the King is controlling those squares, thereby blocking Black's King from moving to those squares. A King may not move onto a square adjacent to the square on which the other King is located.

Black has no piece to move onto any of the empty squares in Black's back rank from c8 to g8 to block the attack and check by the Queen.

Therefore, Black's King cannot be moved to get out of check, signified by red Xs on a7, a8, b7, c7, and c8 (the five squares in the six-square anatomy of mate pattern for which the opposing King must be blocked from moving to in order to escape an attack and check). Black also cannot capture White's Queen because Black's King may only move one square at a time. Without any other pieces or pawns on the board and in position to capture the Queen, or block the attack and check, Black is checkmated.

During the game, when Black's King became all alone on the chessboard (Black player had lost all his or her other fighting units) it should be fairly obvious that checkmate of Black's King was forthcoming presuming the White player did not make a very serious mistake, **blunder**. Equally true most likely (but not necessarily) would be that as soon as the Black player only had a couple or a few pieces and/or pawns left on the chessboard, an ensuing checkmate of Black's King would probably occur.

In the simple checkmate diagrammed above, we see an example of the six-square anatomy of mate pattern. We also see examples of a basic essential element for creating a mating net, and in the game of chess for developing threats, developing attacks, and creating defensive alignment of pieces and/or pawns: **controlling squares** on the chessboard.

Controlling a square occurs in four primary effective ways:

1. when a player's piece or pawn is positioned on a square blocking an opposing pawn from advancing onto the square; or
2. when a player's piece or pawn is positioned on a square such that if an opposing piece moved (or moved and captured), or an opposing pawn advanced (or advanced and captured) onto an adjacent square, the player could capture that opposing piece or pawn safely (without it being subject to capture by the opposing player); or
3. the player has a piece or pawn that can capture the opposing piece or pawn, which then can be captured by the opposing player in a **trade** to the advantage of the player (the player breaks down or is setup to break down the opposing player's defense, is able to launch a mating attack, entombs the opposing King, and so on). [under FIDE's Official Laws of Chess, the term "**exchange**" is used to refer to a trade of equal value pieces, or pieces of relatively equal value such as a Bishop for a Knight, or a pawn for a pawn]; or
4. the player's piece or pawn prevents the opposing King from moving, or moving capturing, on that square.

There are more advanced concepts for controlling squares that are covered in other tutorials. For example, moving a piece to a square, or advancing a pawn to a square, or doing a capture with either, which forces the other player to capture the piece or pawn back, thereby causing a **diversion of that piece or pawn** to a square from which it either loses or is greatly inhibited in providing either offensive or defensive (or both) capabilities for the other player. A piece or pawn may control multiple squares at the same time, as shown by the example above. White's Rook is controlling the entire length of the a-file (a1 through a8). White's Queen is controlling the entire length of Black's back rank (8th rank) - a8 through h8. White's King is controlling b7 and c7. White's pieces are controlling other squares on the board, but control of those squares have no bearing on checkmating Black's King.

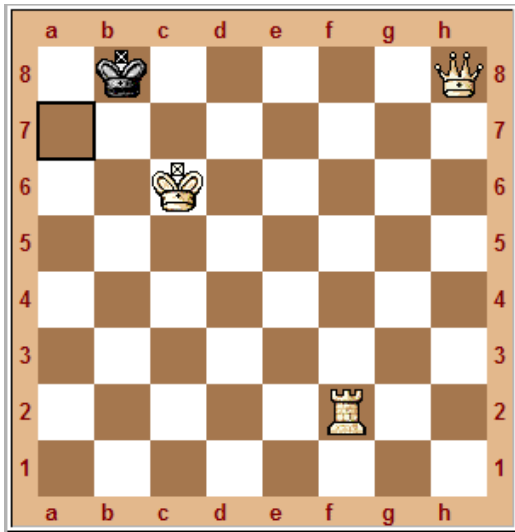
These concepts are developed more thoroughly in later tutorials. In this introductory part, the above example shows the connection between principles and concepts in the game of chess, e.g., in the above example pieces controlling squares thereby enveloping a mating net on Black's King within the six-square anatomy of mate pattern.

If White's Rook was not located at a1 or on an of the squares a2 through a6, providing control of a7, then Black's King would only be in check and not checkmated because Black's King could move to a7.

If White's Queen were checking Black's King from c7, then control of a8 by White's Rook would be necessary to checkmate because White's Queen would control a7, but not a8. White's Rook control of a8 would be necessary to block Black's King from moving to the square to escape the attack and check.

In this later variation on the mating net and anatomy of mate pattern, control of a7 by White's Rook would be unimportant because White's Queen would be controlling a7 while attacking and checking Black's King. Further, White's Queen would be controlling b7 and therefore White's King control of that square would be unimportant. However, White's King on c6 would be important to defend and protect White's Queen from being captured by Black's King. White's King could be located on b6, d7, or d8 and also provide defense and protection for White's Queen in that variation.

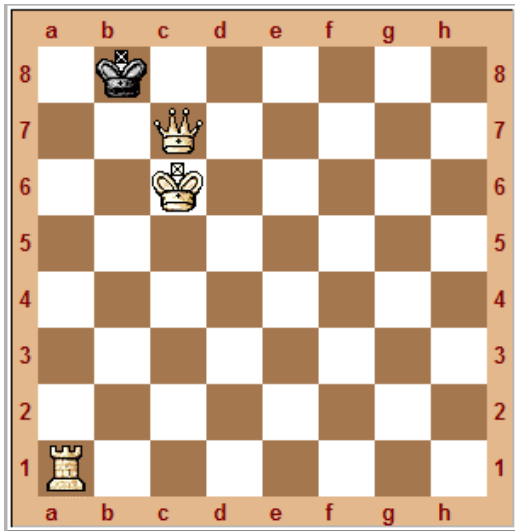
DIAGRAM OBJ-4A No Checkmate



The black border around a7 signifies that Black's King has the square as an escape from the attack and check by White's Queen. However, White would be able to checkmate Black's King on the next move with Ra2#.

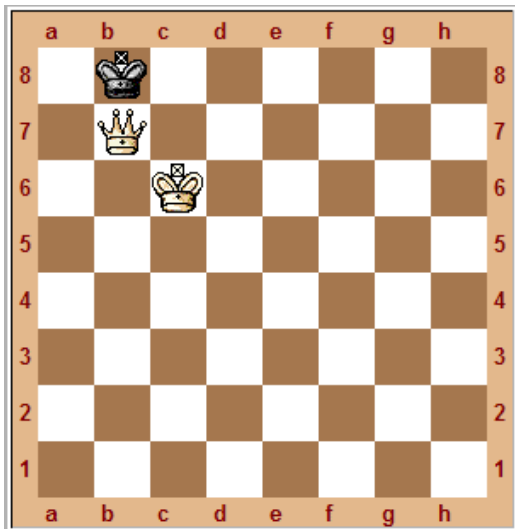
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DIAGRAM OBJ-4A Simple Checkmate
Variation 1



Let's conclude this introductory examination of a simple checkmate with another variation. Instead of White's Queen at c7, let's place White's Queen at b7. In this variation, White's Rook does not even need to be on the chessboard at all. The power of White's King for defense and protection of White's Queen naturally remains required, but not for blocking Black's King from moving to c7 because White's Queen would be controlling c7. In this variation, White's Queen does all the work: controlling all five squares in the mating net and six-square anatomy of mate pattern while attacking, checking, and checkmating Black's King on the checkmate square (b8).

DIAGRAM OBJ-4B Simple Checkmate
Variation 2



In learning chess, most chess coaches advocate the beginner learn as rapidly as possible to recognize **elemental patterns** in simple checkmates. Elemental patterns for simple checkmates are covered in depth in the Checking and Checkmating tutorials.

Learning elemental patterns for simple checkmates allows a player to build upon a foundation for developing more advanced patterns for checking & checkmating, avoiding being checked and/or checkmated and also to reach one of the alternative objectives: drawing or stalemating (covered in Part 6) to avoid losing a game that may otherwise appear to be lost. An example would be the Gaining a Draw Endgame example available at the website.

Developing an appreciation for, and understanding of, essential elemental patterns provides a critical step in learning and playing chess. Common sense dictates that a player hardly can be expected to play effectively in moving pieces and advancing pawns, engaging in captures, developing a game plan, and using tactics and strategy, unless he or she has a basic understanding of why he or she is doing so.

The above three basic concepts combine to form what I call the **Foundation for Playing Chess: Pattern Recognition, Developing a Plan, and Execution of the Plan**. The foundation forms the basis around which the tutorials are structured and designed to assist players in learning and playing chess. In the next section, basic rapid checkmates are covered to further develop the concept of pattern recognition.

Part 1 – Checkmate and Checking

Part 2 – Attacks and Threats

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

Part 5 - Rapid Checkmates

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

Mark Lowery’s Exciting World of Chess

APPENDIX - English Algebraic Notation Review

The following is a brief overview of English Algebraic notation and some symbols used for chess notation for understanding the explanation of the simple checkmate example in Part 4. There is more complexity than is provided here. More extensive coverage for both chess notation types and symbols are in the Notation Tutorial and Symbols Tutorial, and in other tutorials.

1. The basic format for English Algebraic notation is based on the files (a through h from left to right- file letters are in lowercase) and the ranks from bottom to top (1st through 8th rank - represented respectively by the numbers 1 through 8).

Each square on the chessboard is given a designation according to the file and rank in which the square is located. The board orientation normally is White at the bottom, Black at the top, with the lower left corner square a dark colored square.

The designation for that square would be a1. Each square on the chessboard similarly is given a designation based on the file and rank for where it is located (e.g., the upper right corner square would be h8).

2. The designations for files and ranks are combined with letter designations for the pieces - uppercase letters are used as follows: K for King, Q for Queen, R for Rook, B for Bishop, and N for Knight. No letter is used for pawns, instead the file letter for the file in which a pawn is located prior to advancing, or advancing and capturing, is used to represent the pawn.

3. A capture whether of a piece or a pawn is represented by the letter/symbol x.

4. Check is represented by the symbol +.

5. Checkmate is represented by the symbol # and usually a designation of who won the game (1-0 for a White win, and 0-1 for a Black win). If the players' draw or the game ends in a stalemate (covered in Part 6), no symbol is used, and the designation 1/2-1/2 is added to the end of the notation.

6. Notation is done in pairs (White first and then Black) representing a set of moves/pawn advances/captures by the players. Numbers starting with 1 are used per set. For example, 1.e4 e5 would represent the first set of opening pawn advances in the game by White and Black; and, 5.Nd2 Nf6 would represent the players' fifth set of moves with pieces.

7. For a move by a piece, the notation starts with that piece's letter designation followed by the square on which it lands after the move. In the example above for the

fifth set of moves by White and Black, White moved a Knight to the square d2 (square located in the d-file and in the second rank); and, Black moved a Knight to the square f6 (square located in the f-file and in the sixth rank).

8. For a capture by a piece, the notation starts with that piece's letter designation followed by the symbol/letter x followed by the square (designated by file and rank) on which the capture occurs and the piece lands. For example, if on the 21st of moves/pawn advances/captures by the players, White uses his or her Queen to capture Black's Rook on the square in the g-file and the seventh rank, the notation would be 21.Qxg7. If Black followed with capturing White's Queen with a Knight, the notation would be 21.Qxg7 Nxc7.

9. If a player checks the other player's King by making a move, or move and capture, the symbol + is added to the end of the notation. For example, if White's 21st move with the Queen capturing the Rook on g7 resulted in checking Black's King, the notation would be 21.Qxg7+.

10. If a player checkmates the other player's King by making a move, or move and capture, the symbol # and usually the designation of who won is added to the end of the notation. For example, if White's 21st move with the Queen capturing the Rook on g7 resulted in checkmating Black's King, the notation would be 21.Qxg7# 1-0, signifying the end of the game.

11. For advancing a pawn (which always advances vertically ahead in the same file) the notation starts with the file letter in which the pawn is located and then the rank of the square on which it lands. In the example above for the first set of pawn advances by White and Black, White advanced his or her pawn in the e-file to the square e4 (square located in the e-file and in the fourth rank); and, Black advanced his or her pawn in the e-file to the square e5 (square located in the e-file and in the fifth rank).

12. For advancing and capturing with a pawn (which always captures vertically and diagonally to the right or left ahead - changes files) the file letter of the file in which the pawn starts is used, followed by the symbol/letter x, followed by the square (file and rank) on which it lands. For example, if on the twelfth set of moves/pawn advances/captures by the players, White did a pawn capture of Black's Knight on f6 using White's pawn in the g- the notation would be 12.gxf6. As with moves, or moves and captures, by pieces, the symbols and notations above are added as appropriate. For example, if White's pawn capture resulted in checking Black's King, the notation would be 12.gxf6+.