

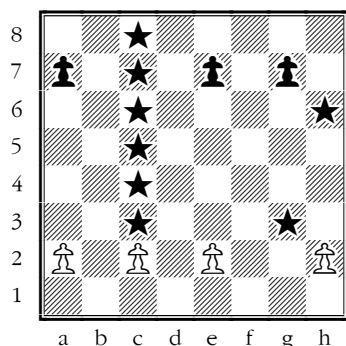
## Passed Pawns, Promoting & Other “Pawn Tactics”

### Part 1: Introduction to Passed Pawns and Basic Pawn Play Strategy

#### Concepts:

- What is a passed pawn?
- The “Big 3” passed pawn “advantages”:
- **Advantage #1 - Outside** passed pawn;
- **Advantage #2 - Protected** passed pawn;
- **Advantage #3 - Connected** passed pawns or “connected passers”.

#### Passed Pawns Must Be Pushed! With a Clear Path, Nothing Can Stop the Pawn!

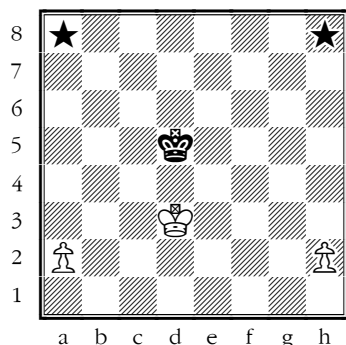


*Passed pawns have a “clear path” to their goal of promotion!*

A passed pawn is a pawn that has no opposing (enemy) pawns to deal with, neither on its file in front of it nor on the files next to it. As in our example diagram, the c-pawn is the only “passer” on the board for either white or black and can easily advance to the “Queening square” (c8) without worry of capture or blockade by an opponent’s pawn.

The ultimate goal of a passed pawn is to reach the other side of the board (8th rank for white or 1st rank for black) and “promote” to a bigger piece. Usually, a pawn will promote to a Queen, as she is the most valuable piece; however, certain occasions will call for “under-promotion” which means to promote to a piece other than the Queen.

#### Two Passed Pawns Are Better Than One, Which is No Fun for an Enemy King!

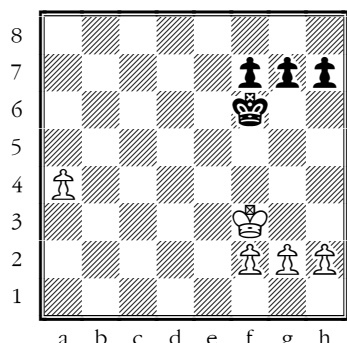


*There is no way black can stop both white’s pawns!*

Cases of “under-promotion” will be discussed in Part 2 when we deal with “promotion tactics”. For now, let’s discuss one more basic example of the power of a passed pawn and work our way toward understanding why the “Big 3” are such strong forces in a practical game.

Here we see a position where the black King stands no chance against the two powerful passed a and h pawns. After 1.h4 for example, the black King will have to commit to the h-pawn and after a few obvious moves it becomes clear that the pawns are too much: 1...Ke5 2.h5 Kf5 3.a4! Kg5 4.a5 Kxh5 5.a6 and white’s a-pawn “Queens” on a8...

## Passed Pawn Advantage #1 – The Outside Passed Pawn!

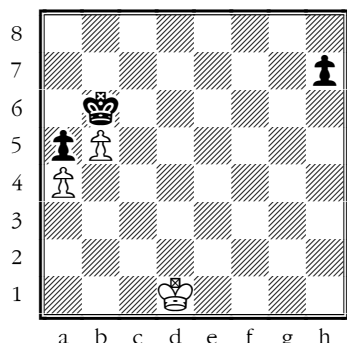


*After “distracting” the black King, white’s King moves in for the kill!*

Now that we understand the raw power of a passed pawn, it's time to learn a few practical and super deadly ways to use them. An “outside” passed pawn is defined as a passed pawn that is far away (usually at least three files) from the rest of the pawns or pawn groups remaining on the board.

Typically, an outside passer is **used as a decoy** to distract the enemy King away from what matters most: protecting his army! With black to play, the King is just in time to catch the a-pawn, but that isn't good enough to save the game after: 1...Ke6 2.a5! Kd6 3.a6 Kc6 4.a7 Kb7 5.Ke4! Kxa7 6.Kd5 Kb6 7.Kd6! – and the black King is cut off. White will continue 8.Ke7 then start munching on black's pawns...

## Passed Pawn Advantage #2 – The Protected Passed Pawn!

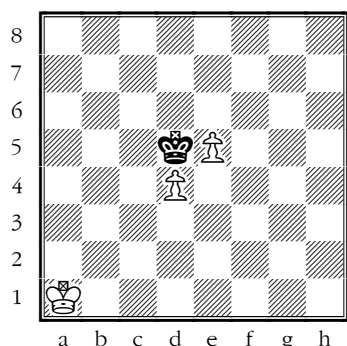


*Black's King is doomed to a life of blockading the passed pawn on b5!*

Perhaps the most powerful advantage a player can have in a King and Pawn ending (outside of being ahead material) is a “protected” passed pawn. A “protected passer” is a passed pawn that is **defended by another pawn**, making it impossible to remove without first removing the defender.

As you can see from this position the b5-pawn is passed, but even more importantly, it's **protected** by the “un-removable” a4-pawn. For example, if the black King ever tries to attack the a4-pawn with 1...Kc5-b4, the b-pawn pushes forward and cannot be stopped. White's King on the other hand can make the long journey to the other side of the board and capture the un-protected h-pawn with ease!

## Passed Pawn Advantage #3 – Connected Passed Pawns



*Like a protected passed pawn, connected passers can't be taken!*

“Connected” passed pawns are extremely strong in any type of position, but their powers are highlighted easily in the endgame. Here we see a position where the d4-pawn is serving as the protector of the e5-pawn. The black King can do nothing to change this situation, as capturing d4 would only allow the e-pawn to advance and promote.

Black's King is at the mercy of the pawns and must maintain a blockade of them until the white King joins the fight and inevitably helps his pawns advance and win. After: 1.Kb2 Ke6 2.Kc3 Kd5 3.Kd3 Ke6 4.Ke4 Ke7 5.d5 Kd7 6.e6+ Kd6 7.Kf5 Ke7 8.Ke5 Ke8 9.d6 Kd8 10.e7+ Kd7 11.Kf6 Ke8 12.d7+! Kxd7 13.Kf7 and next 14.e8=Queen...

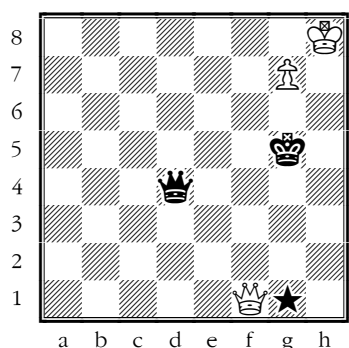
## Passed Pawns, Promoting & Other “Pawn Tactics”

### Part 2: Under-Promotion, Pawn Tactics and the “Rule of the Square”

#### Concepts:

- More practical passed pawn lessons!
- Promotion and “under-promotion” tactics!
- The Rule of the Square!

#### Passed Pawn “Promotion Tactics” – Example 1: The “Decoy” Sacrifice Skewer!

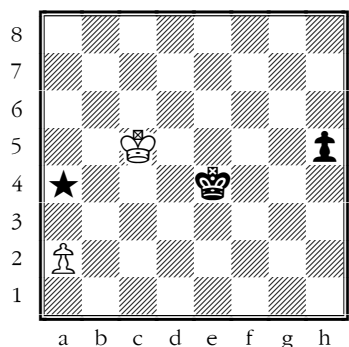


1. Qg1+! forces black's  
Queen to her  
final destination!

Understanding the basic goal of a passed pawn (to promote) is simple enough, but what types of positions and tactical hurdles might a player come across in a practical game? In Part 2 of this lesson we have assembled several commonly seen and highly useful tactical patterns!

Because it is natural to promote a pawn to a Queen or maybe a Rook – **as they are the most powerful** – there often occurs positions where a skewer tactic (see Lesson 10) exists at the end of a combination of moves. Here white is winning easily after the brilliant Queen sacrifice on g1! This decoy forces the black Queen to a bad square:  
1...Qxg1 2.g8=Queen+ is winning the black Queen!

#### Passed Pawn “Promotion Tactics” – Example 2: The “Pawn Race” Skewer!

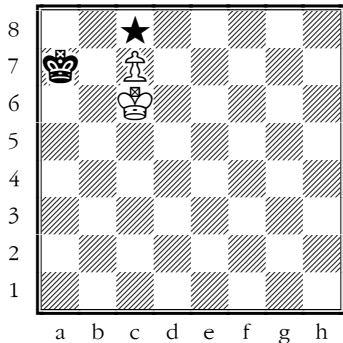


This common trick  
(skewer) occurs in many  
different types of  
“pawn races”!

Here we see perhaps the most famous example of a “promotion skewer” tactic. At the end of a long and forced, sequence of moves, white is winning in this position because of the **awkward placement of the black King**. After 1.a4! by white, the pawns are “off to the races”...

Black must continue with 1...h4 as any King move would leave him one move behind in the race. For example:  
1...Ke3 allows 2.a5 h4 3.a6 h3 4.a7 h2 and 5.a8=Queen **guarding the h1-square**. After black's forced 1...h4, white wins in the end with 2.a5 h3 3.a6 h2 4.a7 h1=Queen 5.a8=Queen+, and the black King is “skewered” to the Queen on h1. After the King moves to any legal square, white wins the black Queen and the game with 6.Qxh1!

## Under-Promotion – Example 1: Queen Stalemates, BUT Rook Checkmates!

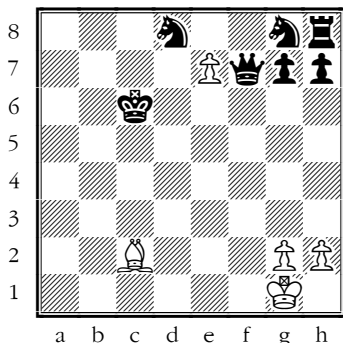


*Under-Promotion, though not common, is **VERY** useful to know about!*

Here we see a perfect example position to introduce us to the concept of “under-promotion”. Essentially, anytime you promote your pawn to a piece other than a Queen, you are under-promoting. In this example, 1.c8=Queen?? would stalemate the black King, ending the game in a draw.

Advancing the pawn to promote to a Rook (generally the first choice after a Queen) would not only avoid stalemate in this position, but end the game in two moves after: 1.c8=Rook! Ka6 2.Ra8 checkmate. Noted should be that promotion to any other piece (Knight or Bishop) like the Queen, would also lead to a forced draw due to the inability to checkmate with only one minor piece on the board...

## Under-Promotion – Example 2: The Power of an “Under-Promotion” Fork!

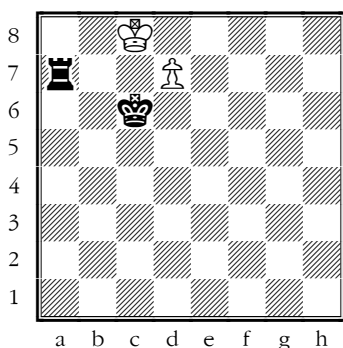


*This was a “study” by former World Champion Emanuel Lasker...*

Under-promotion as a means to avoid stalemating your opponent in a winning position is critical; however, just as interesting are cases where an under-promotion can take an otherwise losing position to an unclear, or perhaps, even winning position. Example 2 is exactly one of those times...

1.exd8=Knight is an extremely strong under-promotion that immediately “forks” (see Lesson 9) black's King on c6 with the Queen on f7. After black's King moves (forced), white will continue 2.Nxf7 and 3.Nxh8! In the end white will have gone from being down a Queen, Knight and Rook to being ahead a piece! Note that 1.exd8=Queen would have been an improvement, but still left white down lots of material!

## Under-Promotion – Example 3: Defensive Under-Promotion!

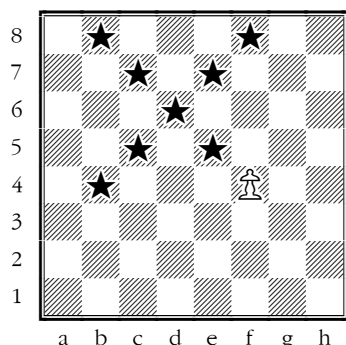


*1.d8=Knight with check is the **only** way for white to save the game...*

There are loads of possible examples of “defensive” under-promotion, with some leading to immediate stalemate in an otherwise lost positions, while others creating a “perpetual check.” Here we have selected a very common, and therefore practical, example of “under-promotion defense!”

This position is the “climax” of a very common endgame resulting from a “passed pawn race” where white is striving to promote the d-pawn and fight against the black Rook. Here black's king has moved in for the kill, and so white's only chance to continue the game is 1.d8=Knight with check (which is a draw in theory) as promoting to any other piece, including the Queen, would allow 1...Ra8 mate!

## The Rule of the Square – Example 1: “X” Marks the Box!

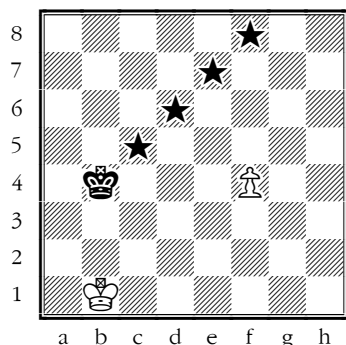


*In some cases, the Rule of the Square creates a perfect “X” on the board!*

**The Rule of the Square defined:** If the enemy King (in this case black) is within the **imaginary square or box** of the pawn, then the King can catch the pawn before it promotes. If the King is not within the box, the pawn can be “**queened**” without the support of its King (aka, the pawn runs free).

When we draw lines from the starting square of the pawn (f4) to b4, b8, f8 and back to f4 – we have created a square. When playing an endgame with passed pawns, quickly calculate whether or not your opponent’s King is within, or can get within on his/her move, the square. The imaginary “X” drawn from f4-b8 and b4-f8, represents the quickest path for the enemy King to catch the f-pawn.

## The Rule of the Square – Example 2: Within the Box, The Pawn Is Stopped!

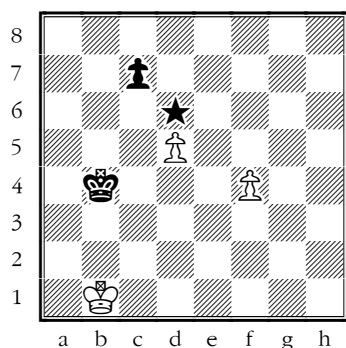


*Here we see how easily the black King catches the white pawn...*

Moving along the a3-f8 diagonal, the black King catches the white pawn even with white to move. With **white’s King standing no chance** to help his f-pawn before the black King reaches it, white has no better plan then to continue: 1.f5 Kc5 2.f6 Kd6 3.f7 Ke7, and the pawn is had by black!

Hopefully these first two example diagrams of the Rule of the Square have displayed clearly the ways of quickly finding out whether or not an enemy King can catch a passed pawn. The Rule of the Square can be applied to any pawn because the rules are simple: The enemy King is either in the Square and can catch the pawn, or he is not and he cannot stop the pawn. Now for a “square” tactic:

## The Rule of the Square – Example 3: Tactical Ideas That “Wreck” the Box!



*1.d6! Destroys black’s “clear path” and wins easily with the f-pawn!*

This common **tactical pattern** can occur in King and Pawn endings that involve the Rule of the Square. White could advance his f-pawn immediately, but the “Square Rule” tells us the black King can catch the pawn. Furthermore, the white King is still useless. What else can white try in this position to **“block”** the black King’s path to the f-pawn?

The winning move as mentioned beneath our diagram is 1.d6! This move forces 1...cxd6 – as otherwise the d-pawn queens – and after 2.f5 Kc5 3.f6 the black King is denied the d6-square by his own pawn. Whites d-pawn was used as a decoy to disrupt black’s “X” and clear path within the square. White will play 4.f7 and Queen the pawn, winning!





## Lesson 14

# Passed Pawns, Promoting & Other “Pawn Tactics”

### Instructor's Guide

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Learning to recognize (and utilize!) the power of a passed pawn is a huge step for every beginning chess player. These concepts will not only teach your student(s) to appreciate the value of pawn promotion, but also the value of every pawn in general. Once a beginning chess player begins converting victories simply because of one or two extra pawns, he/she will start placing more worth in the pawns throughout every stage of the game. Kids will no longer be giving their “little guys” away without worry of the consequences.

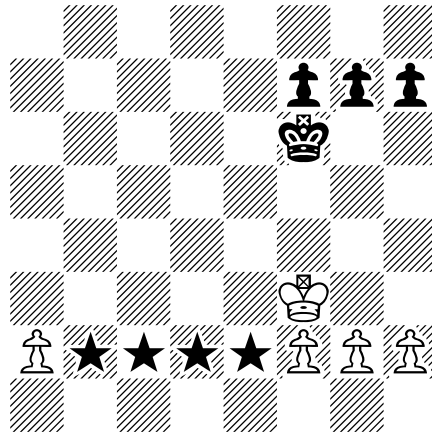
Because it is the most essential knowledge for a beginning chess player, we have included a “mini-game handout” to be used along with teaching your students about outside passed pawns. The mini-game “Converting Your Passers” will further drive home the “decoy principles” associated with using an outside passed pawn advantage in a practical game.

A coach/instructor may choose to break after Part 1 - Diagram 3, to allow for practice of the concepts. An important hint for children struggling with the more difficult stages of the “Converting Your Passers” mini-game is to remind them that activation of the white King toward the enemy pawns is important, and sometimes should be the first step, when converting an outside passed pawn advantage into a victory.

### **Practical Notes and Advice – Lesson 14:**

- In order to show the “true” value of a Protected Passed Pawn (using the position from Part 1, Diagram 4), a coach should walk the white King over to the h-file, and proceed to “wander” with the white King to random squares, back and forth, before moving forward to win on the Queen-side. This will highlight further that the black King is completely stuck to guarding the passed b-pawn.
- A coach should be sure to emphasize that under-promoting your pawns to any piece other than a Queen is only for special circumstances, like the examples given (Part 2) and the worksheets associated with the Lesson.
- Students will learn the Rule of the Square concept faster when they realize that when the King is inside the square/box, his quickest path (diagonally b4-f8 for example in Part 2, Diagram 7) to the “queening square” is never more than the amount of moves it would take the pawn to reach the queening square.

## Converting Your Passers!



- Level 1 (Easy): ♔ ♔ ♔ ♔ ♔ with outside passed **A2-Pawn** vs. Black's Diagramed Position  
 Level 2 (Beginner): ♔ ♔ ♔ ♔ ♔ with outside passed **B2-Pawn** vs. Black's Diagramed Position  
 Level 3 (Medium): ♔ ♔ ♔ ♔ ♔ with outside passed **C2-Pawn** vs. Black's Diagramed Position  
 Level 4 (Hard): ♔ ♔ ♔ ♔ ♔ with outside passed **D2-Pawn** vs. Black's Diagramed Position  
 Level 5 (Expert): ♔ ♔ ♔ ♔ ♔ with outside passed **E2-Pawn** vs. Black's Diagramed Position

**RULES/GOAL:** White to move and win the game!

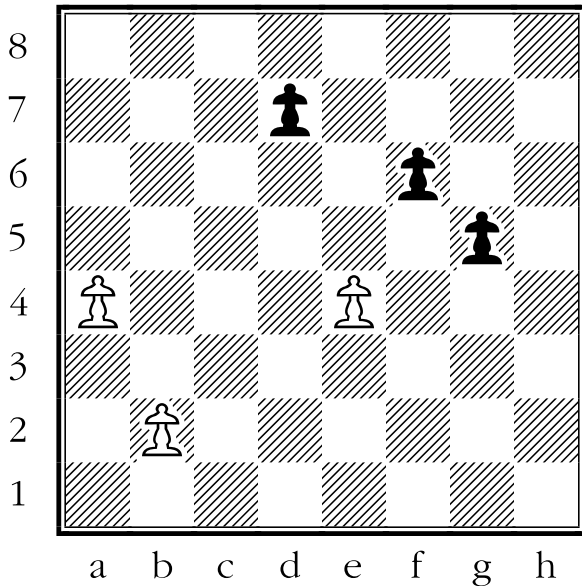
### Converting Your Outside Passer: Tips to the Game!

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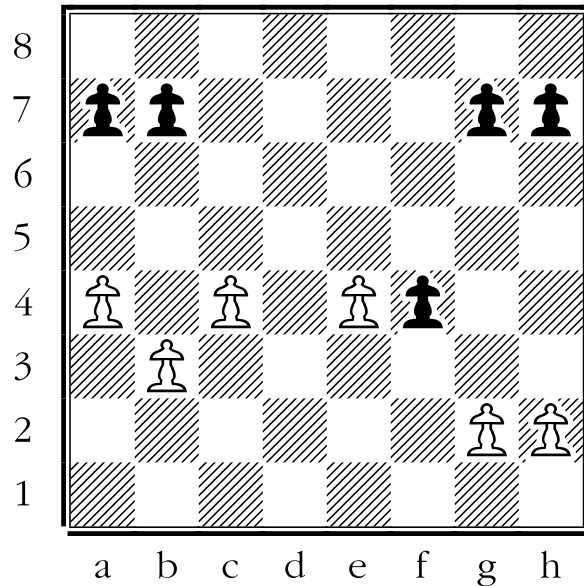
- Remember to use your King too! The goal of the position is not necessarily to “Queen” your outside passer, but to use it as a way to distract the enemy King away from his pawns!
- In Level 5 you must first **create your passed pawn** by exchanging pawns on the e-file. Your e-pawn is known as a “pretender” because even though there are no enemy pawns along the e-file directly in his way, he isn't a “real” passed pawn until he receives the help of his buddy (the f-pawn) and exchanges off black's f7-pawn to create a passer on the e-file. Advance the e and f pawn together as teammates!
- Play with a partner, or your coach, and rotate colors as each side completes a level.
- To make the game real tough (and more fun), play touch move with your partner and learn to play by “tournament rules”! Always think before you touch your pieces!

## Lesson 14: Circle the Passed Pawns!

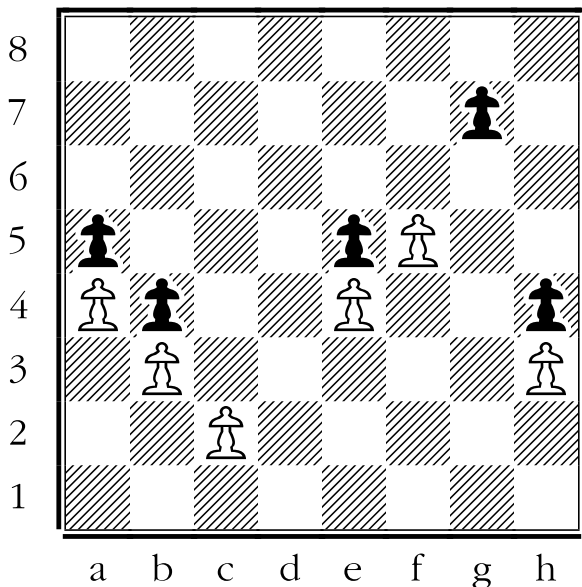
Circle all the passed pawns you can find, for both white and black, in each of the following diagrams. Find every passed pawn and write how many you found beneath the diagram.



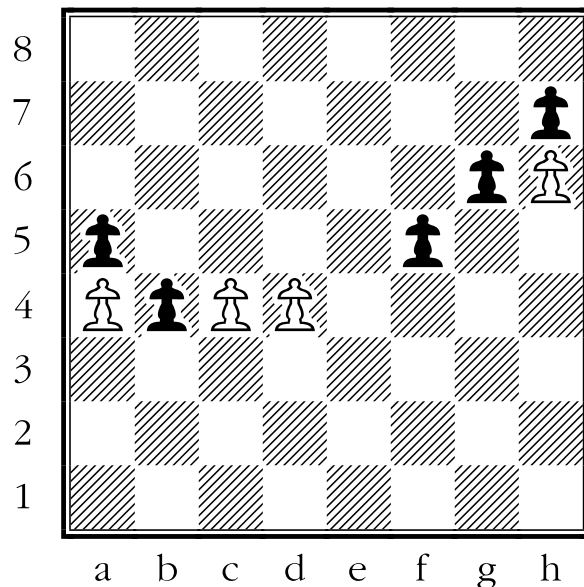
How many passed pawns are there?  
# of passed pawns:



How many passed pawns are there?  
# of passed pawns:



How many passed pawns are there?  
# of passed pawns:

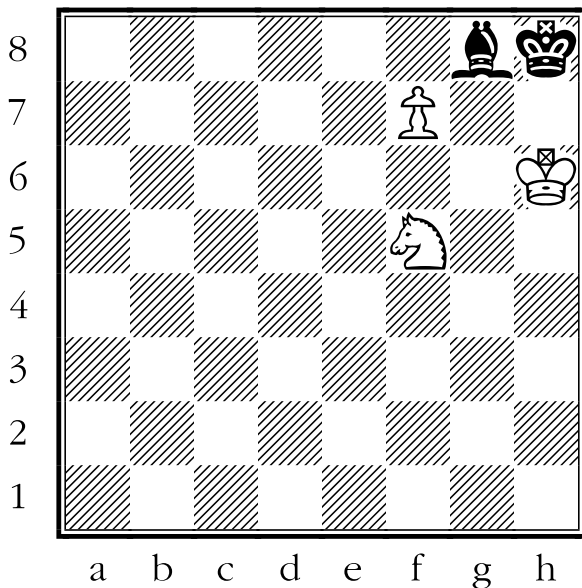


How many passed pawns are there?  
# of passed pawns:



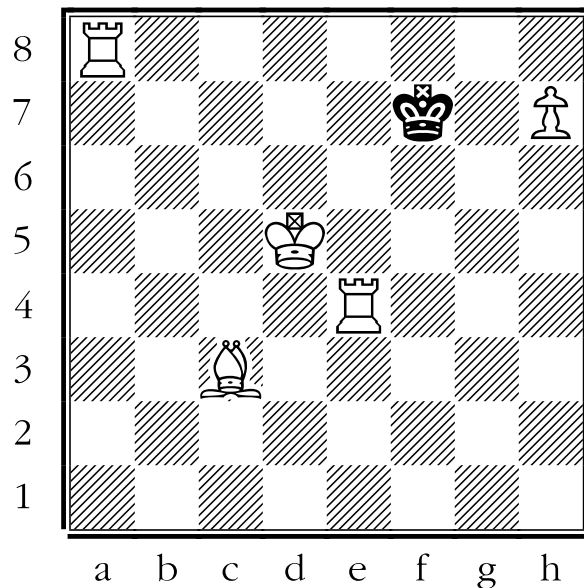
## Lesson 14: To “Under” or Promote?

The following diagrams contain examples of promotion, or in some cases, under-promotion. Read the diagram caption and circle “promote” (for a Queen) or “under-promote”. For bonus points, write the name of the piece you would promote to on the right side of each diagram.



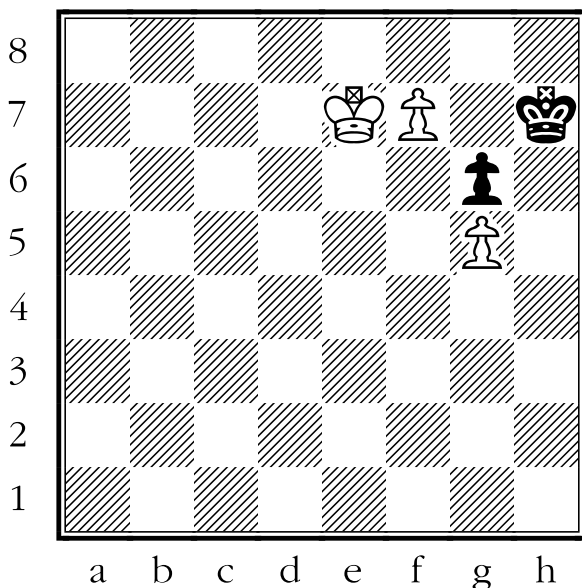
White has forced checkmate in three:

Promote?      **OR**      Under-promote?



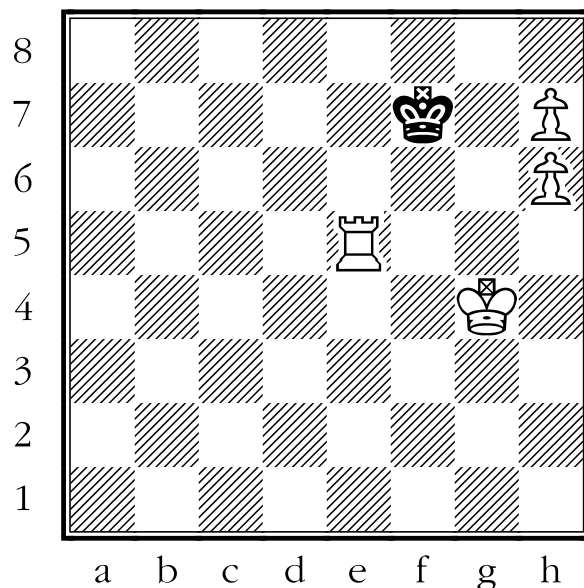
White has forced checkmate in three:

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White has forced checkmate in three:

Promote?      **OR**      Under-promote?



White has forced checkmate in three:

Promote?      **OR**      Under-promote?



## Lesson 14

# Passed Pawns, Promoting & Other “Pawn Tactics”

### Answer Key

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Worksheet Page 1 - “To 'Under' or Promote?”:

**Diagram #1** – *Under-Promote*: 1.f8=B! Bg8 anywhere 2.Ne7 black bishop anywhere 3.Bg7#!

**Diagram #2** – *Under-Promote*: 1.f8=R! is best. 1.f8=N or 1.f8=B are also good.

**Diagram #3** – *Under-Promote*: 1.h8=N!! checkmate!

**Diagram #4** – *Promote*: 1.h8=Q! Kg6 2.Qg7 checkmate!

Worksheet Page 2 - “Circle the Passed Pawns”:

**Diagram #1** – Three passed pawns: a4, b2, and g5.

**Diagram #2** – One passed pawn: e4.

**Diagram #3** – No passed pawns.

**Diagram #4** – Five passed pawns: b4, c4, d4, f5, and g6.