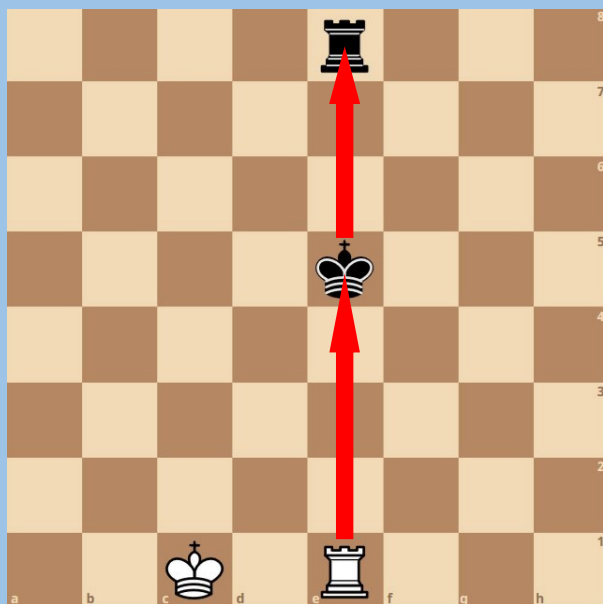


Lesson 15: Skewers and Pins

Skewered!



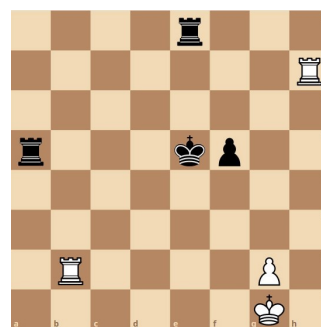
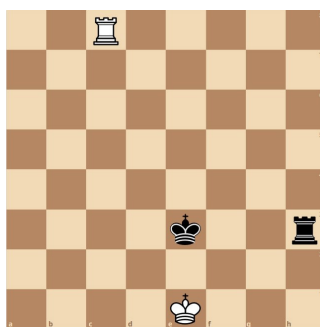
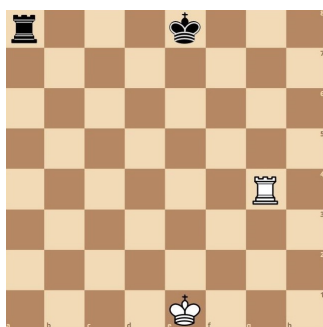
In the last worksheet we learned about the FORK: one piece attacking two or more pieces in *different* directions.

Here the White rook has placed Black in check. Black must escape the check by moving their king. White will then be able to capture the Black rook on e8.

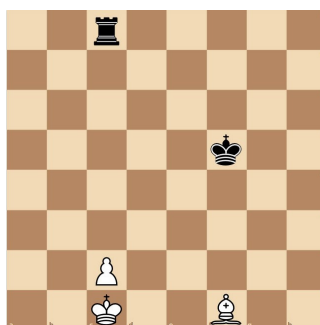
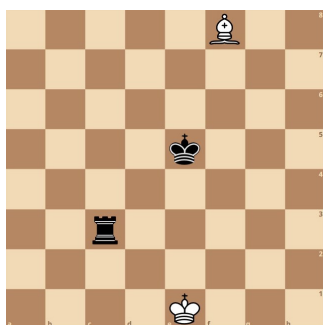
This is a new type of double attack. One piece creates two threats in the *same* direction. The more valuable piece is attacked first. When that moves, a less valuable piece behind is lost. This is called a SKEWER.

Puzzle Corner

Can you find a move for the White rook to safely skewer two of Black's pieces?



In the next three positions the skewer is delivered by a White bishop.





Pin and Win!

There's another tactic that is very similar to the dreaded skewer. Here the Black queen is attacked by the White bishop on b5. If the queen captures the bishop she'll be lost to the White knight on c3 (a six point gain for White).

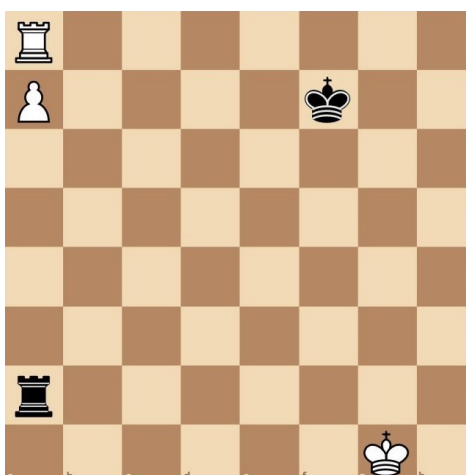
Black desperately wants to save the queen. However, if Black does try to move the queen to safety, the White bishop on b5 will be attacking the Black king on e8. Moving into check is an illegal move and is not allowed. The queen cannot move and is lost!

This is a third type of double attack. This time one piece (the White bishop) is attacking two pieces (the Black king and queen) in the same direction. The *less* valuable piece is threatened first. That is known as a PIN.

Pin them down

In the green box the queen *cannot* move to safety. In the blue box below, the knight on f6 *should not* move or the Black queen will be lost. In both cases, the pin restricts the opponent's choices. That's usually a good idea.

Grandmaster Test



To win this game White is going to need to move the rook on a8 out of the way in order to promote the pawn on a7. However, if White moves the rook to b8, Black simply captures the pawn with the rook on a2 and it's a draw. Can you find a better rook move for White?

Don't panic!



Having one of your pieces pinned isn't always a disaster. Here the Black knight on f6 and the White knight on c3 are both pinned. But they're defended and not in any immediate danger. The game goes on!

Grandmaster Test—Lesson 14

Answer: Black is forced to capture the White queen on h8. White then uses the knight on d6 to capture the Black rook on f7. That's a fork! Black must move the king. White then captures the queen on g5, emerging four points ahead. That's more than enough for a player like Petrosian: Spassky resigned.