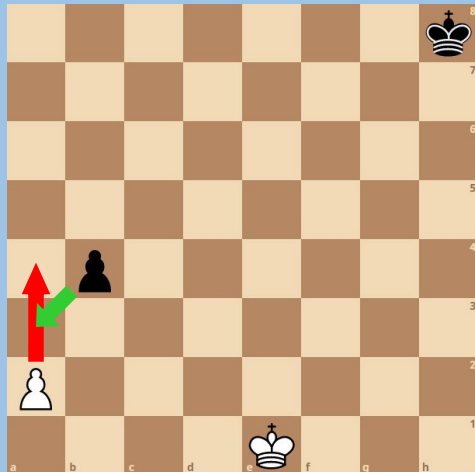


Lesson 22: The Mighty Pawn

A New Move: En Passant



Many years ago, pawns could only move one square at a time. In the position on the left White could not move their pawn without it being captured on a3. When a new rule was introduced allowing the pawn to move to a4 in one turn, it seemed unfair that White could avoid this capture. A final new rule was required.

If a pawn avoids capture by moving two squares instead of just one, an opposing pawn has a single chance to capture it as it passes. In the diagram above, if White moves their pawn to a4, Black can use the pawn on b4 to capture the White pawn. The White pawn leaves the board and the Black pawn finishes its move on a3. The pawn has been captured in passing or, in French, EN PASSANT.

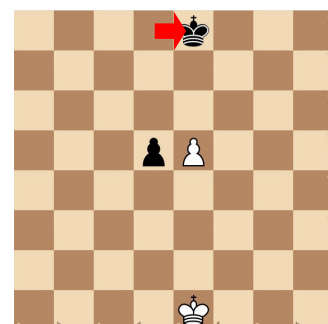
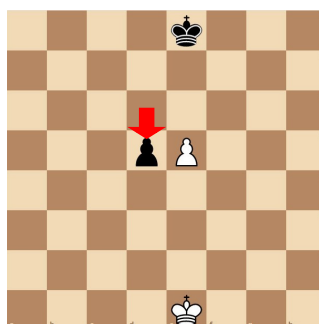
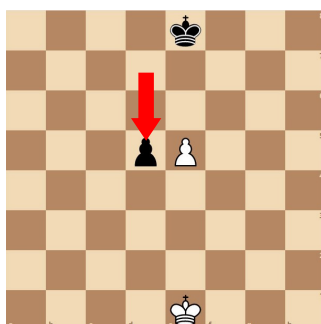
There are a few important things to note:

- The pawn that makes the en passant capture must be on the 5th rank.
- The pawn that is captured must have moved two squares.
- You can only capture en passant on your very next move.
- Only pawns can capture en passant.

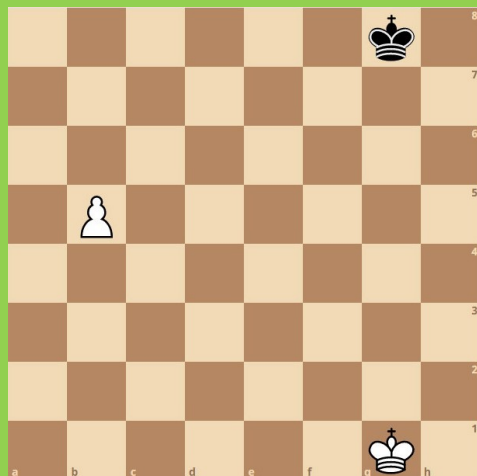
Now you know this rule, why not return to Lesson One and try playing Capture The Flag again, this time using the en passant rule. It's a very different game!

Puzzle Corner

Black's last move is shown by the arrow. Can you work out whether or not White is allowed to capture the pawn on d5 en passant?



Passed Pawns



When a pawn cannot be stopped by any of its opposing pawns, it is called a **PASSED PAWN**. Passed pawns can be very powerful in the end-game: you can try to push them down the board to promote to a new queen.

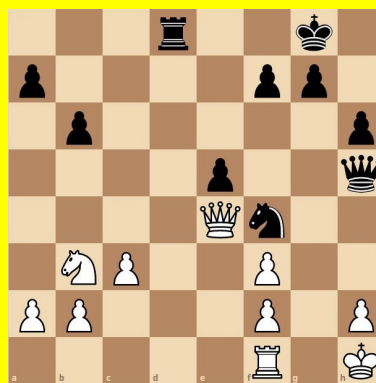
Here the White pawn on b5 is a passed pawn. The only way Black can try to stop it being promoted is to rush towards b8 with their king. But the Black king is too slow. The pawn will win the race, promote to a queen, and complete the victory with checkmate.

Weak Pawns

Pawns can be very powerful. Passed pawns can win you the game. When pawns are in diagonal chains they protect each other and can dominate the game. However, when pawns do not have any friends on the adjacent files they can become weak. On the left the White pawn on d4 cannot be pro-

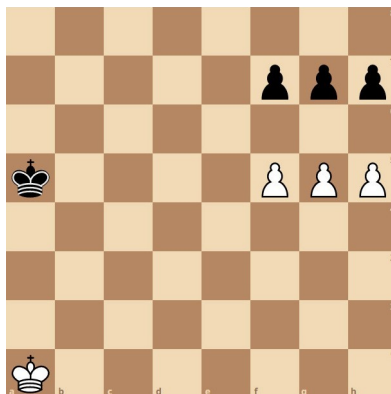


ected by any other White pawns. It is an **ISOLATED PAWN** and is vulnerable to attack. On the right White has **DOUBLED PAWNS** on the f-file. Not only can they be easily attacked, they are also not doing a very good job of protecting the White king.



Grandmaster Test

Black is threatening to move their king towards the kingside to capture the White pawns. Unless White can create a passed pawn quickly they'll be lost. Can you find a way to do that?



Did you know?

In medieval times, each pawn had its own name. The g-pawn was called the black-smith—it would look after the shoes of the knight's horse nearby. Can you think of names for your pawns? Do you have a favourite?