

Opening

Phases of a game

Control of the centre

Basic rules of the opening





Phases of a game

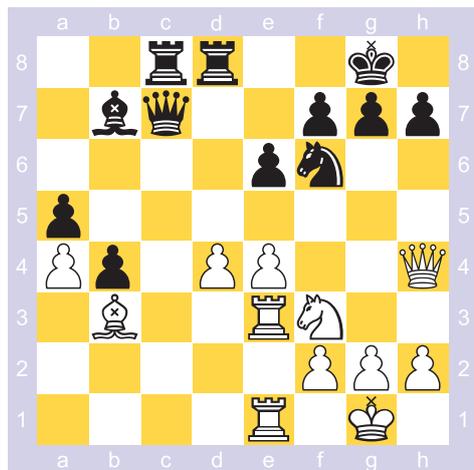
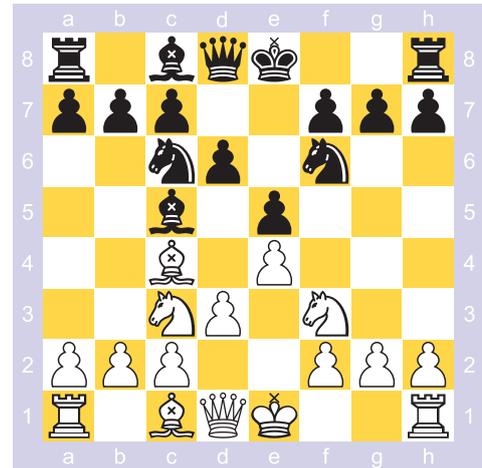
There are three phases in a chess game: opening, middlegame and endgame.

The opening

The first moves of a game are called the opening. The aim is to control the centre and to spread the pieces out.

The first moves determine the attack and defence strategies of the rest of the game. Because of this, it's very important not to make big mistakes at the beginning of the game.

Don't move the pieces without a plan.



The middlegame

The middlegame begins when the opening is over.

In the middlegame, moves are made to achieve:

- The capture of the opponent's pieces.
- The preparation to attack the opponent's king.
- The defence of our own king.

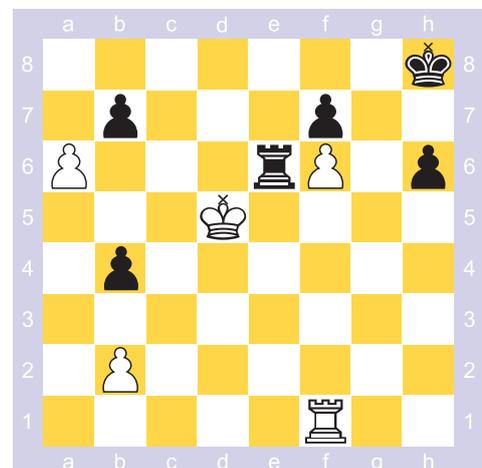
The maximum amount of pieces must be combined to achieve: the best position, the maximum pressure on the opponent and a good material advantage.

The endgame

The endgame comes after the middlegame. In the endgame there are few pieces left because of the exchanges and captures.

The aim in this phase is to checkmate the opponent's king after the advantages achieved in the middlegame.

The endgames must be played correctly, so that a game which could be clearly won is not finally lost. A mistake in this phase may cause the loss of the game.



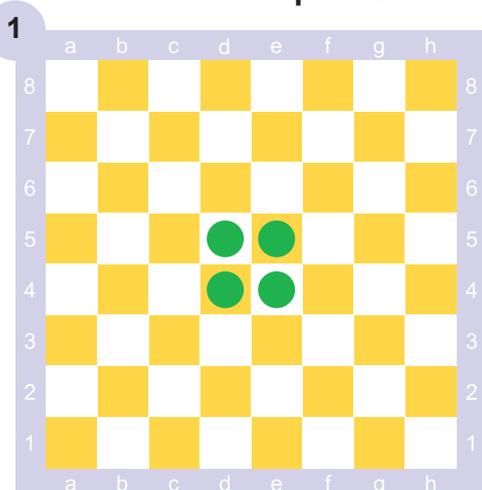


Control of the centre

One of the main goals of the opening is to control the squares in the centre of the chessboard with pawns and minor pieces.

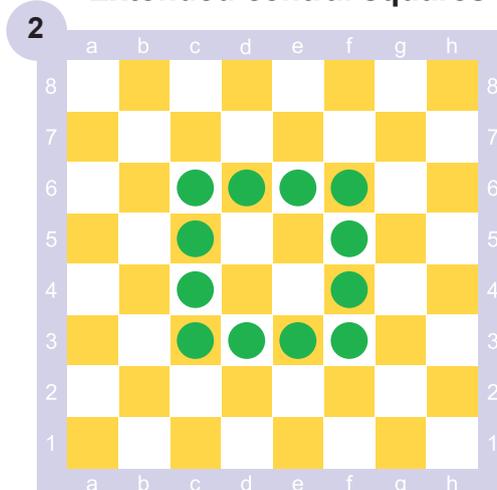
Remember that a square is controlled by a piece if it can capture an opponent's piece which moves to that square.

Central squares

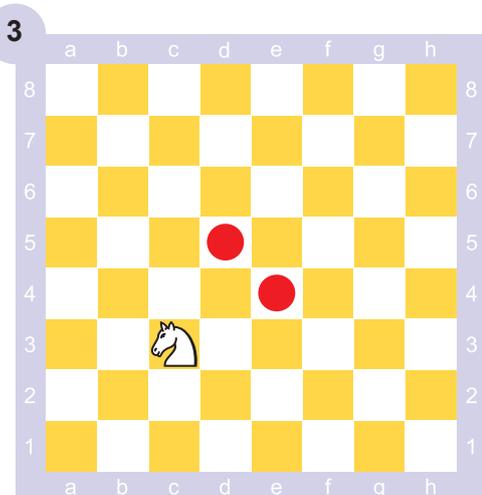


These four squares are the central area of the chessboard.

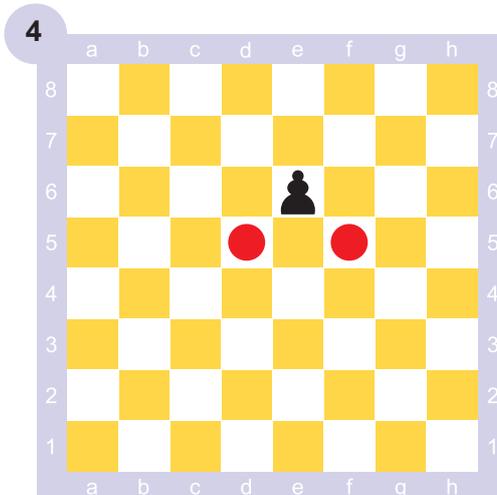
Extended central squares



These twelve squares can also be called central squares.



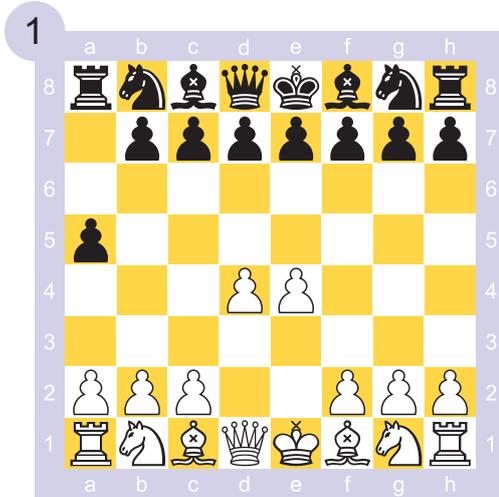
The knight controls the central squares highlighted with red circles.



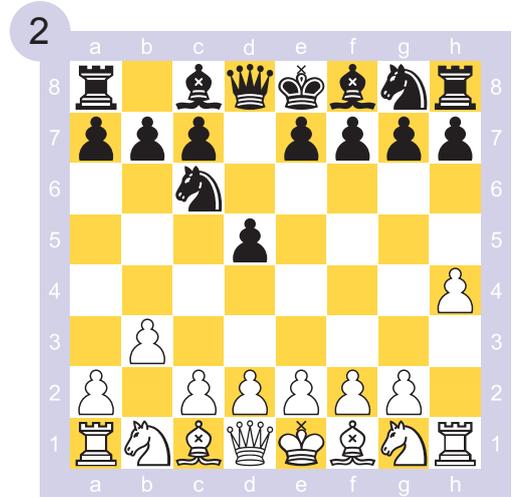
The pawn controls the central squares highlighted with red circles.

1

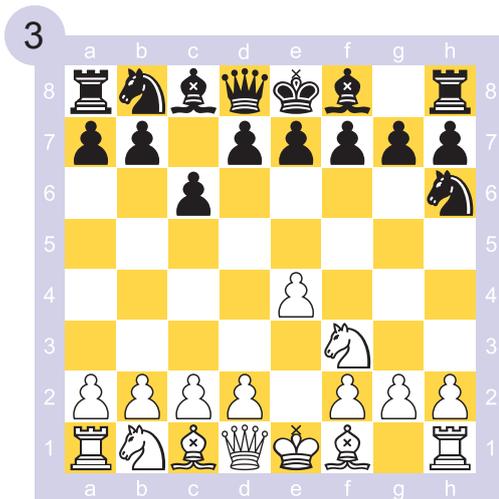
With a cross, mark the central or extended central squares that are controlled by the white pieces and with a circle, those controlled by the black ones. Finally, indicate which player controls more central squares.



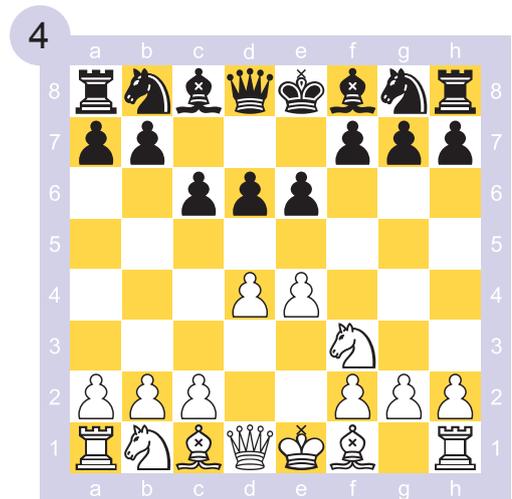
White Black



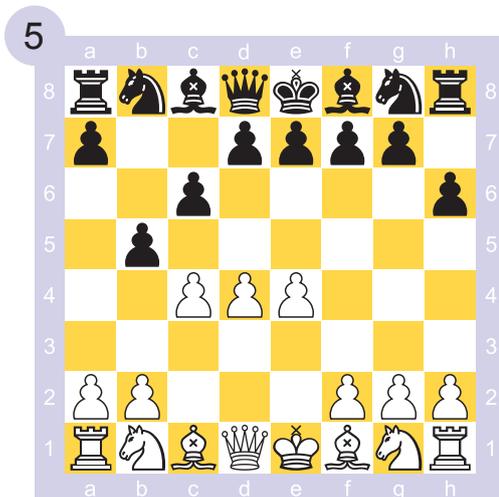
White Black



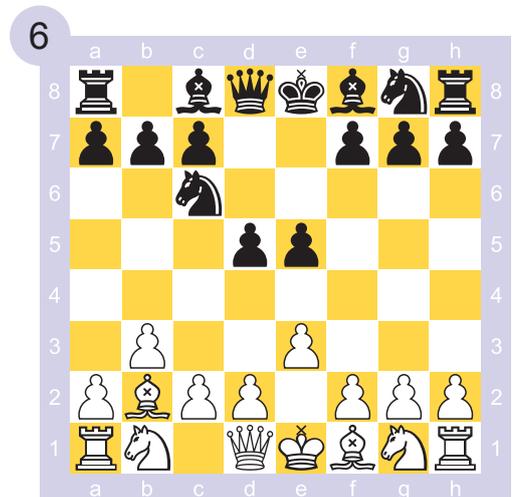
White Black



White Black



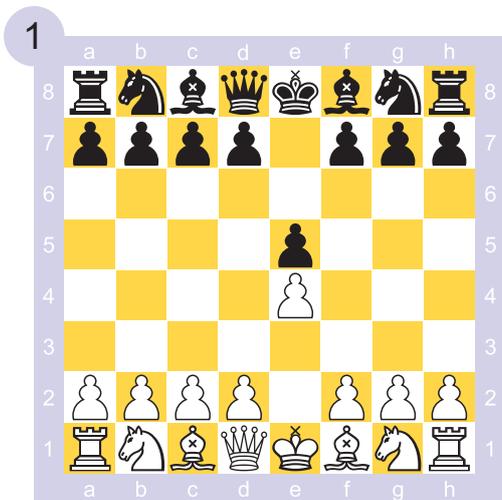
White Black



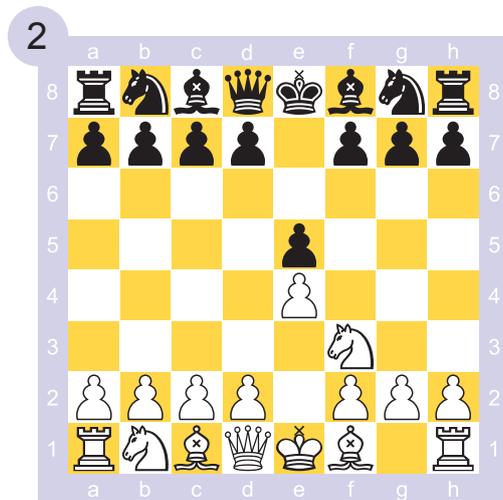
White Black

2

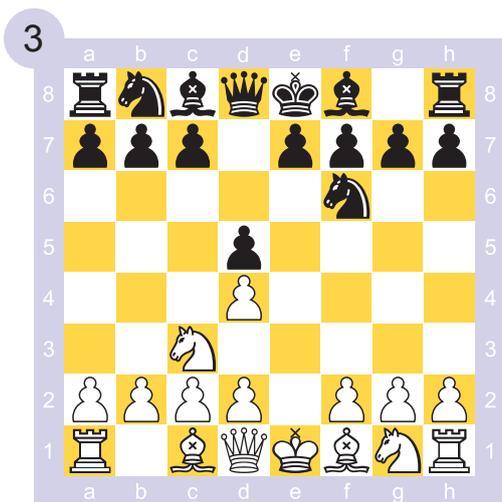
Circle the moves that make controlling the central squares (non-extended centre) possible.



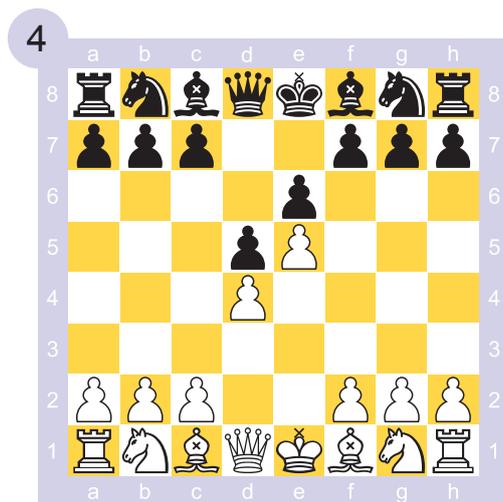
○ Nf3 a3 Nc3



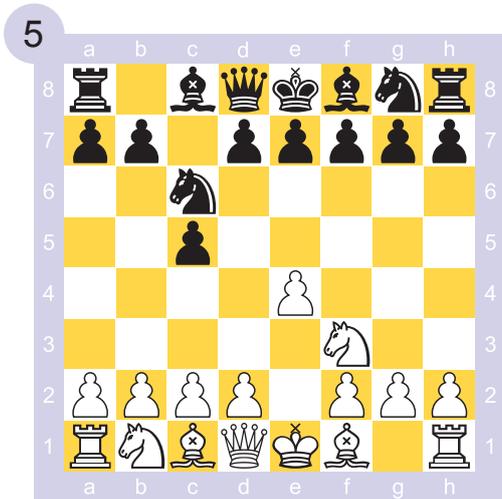
● Nf6 d6 h5



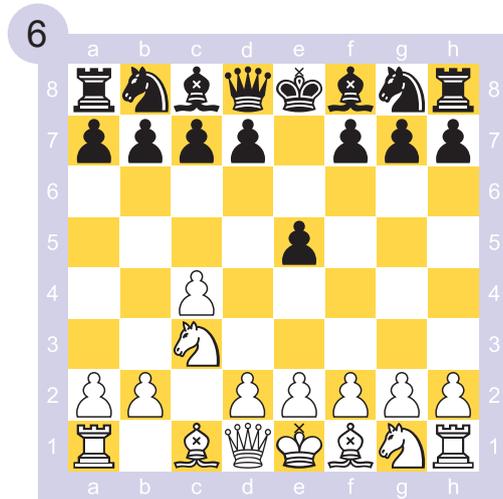
○ Nf3 Nh3 e3



● Nc6 c5 Bd7



○ Nc3 d4 b3



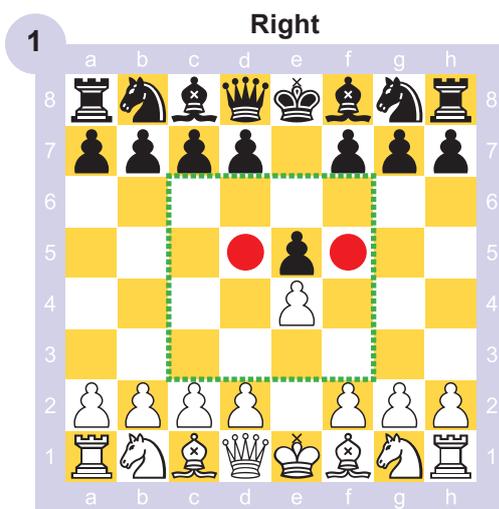
● Nf6 Na6 h6



Basic rules of the opening

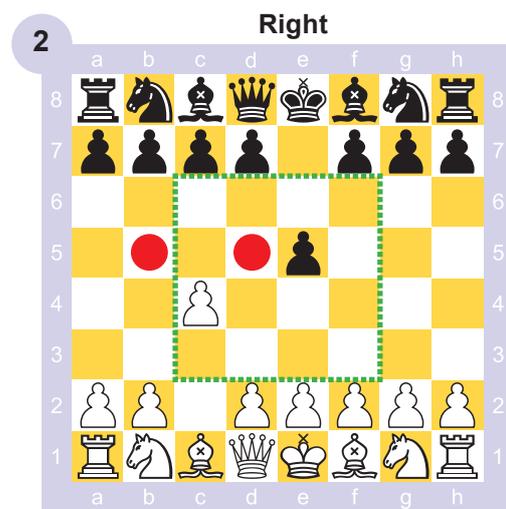
When a game is started, a set of basic rules should be followed; which serve as a guide for beginners. This way, big mistakes can be avoided.

1. Moving pawns forward to control the centre

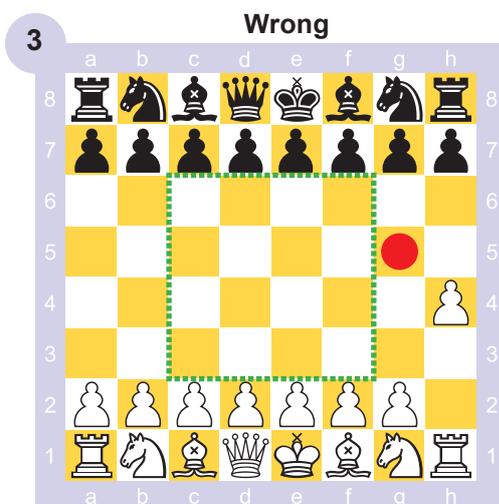


Generally, the first pawn to be moved is the king's or the queen's pawn (two squares).

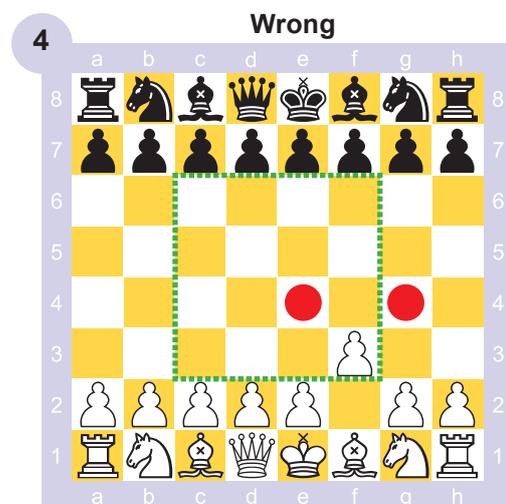
The circles show the squares controlled by the white pawn.



The pawn of the queenside bishop can be moved as well, but this strategy would need more knowledge about openings.



In the beginning, the rook's pawns are not moved because they don't help the bishops to spread out. It's not advisable to advance the knights' pawns in the first moves either.

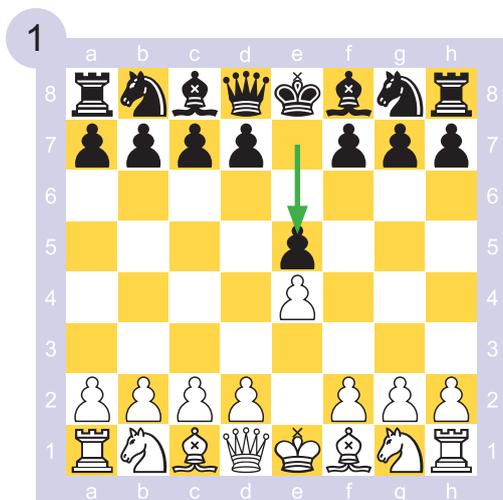


If the bishop's pawns are moved, the knight's movement should not be blocked. In this example, the bishops and the king's knight can't be moved to f3.

3

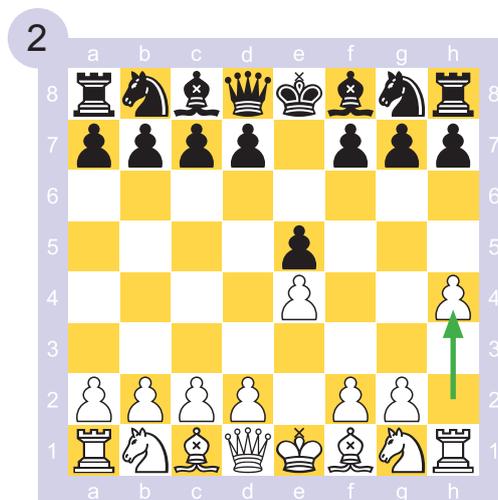
Assess the move shown and circle the right answer.

Draw a circle on the central squares that are controlled by the moved pawn.



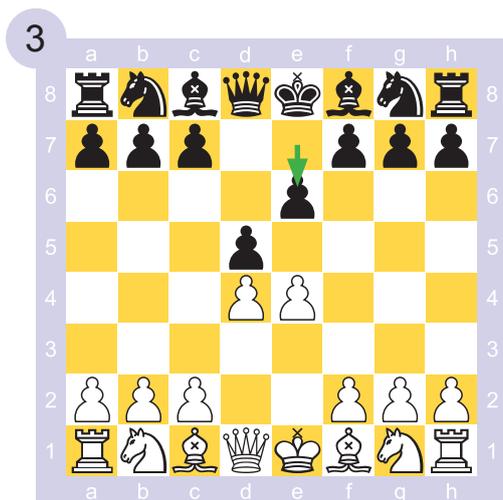
Right

Wrong



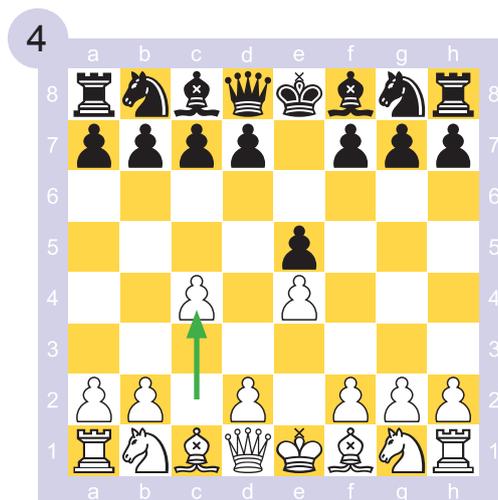
Right

Wrong



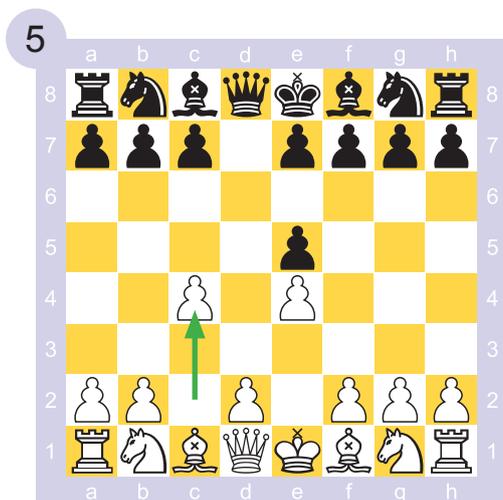
Right

Wrong



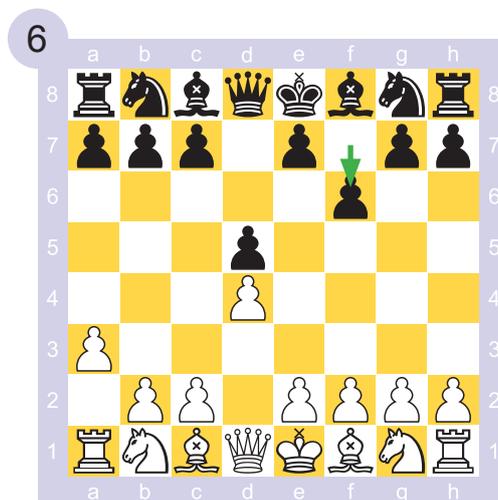
Right

Wrong



Right

Wrong



Right

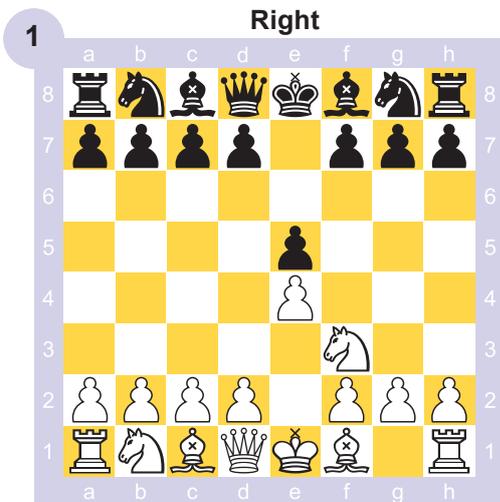
Wrong



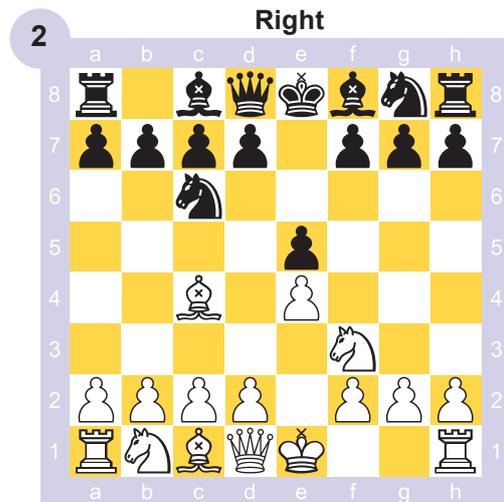
2. Spreading out the knights and the bishops as soon as possible

The movement of the central pawns makes it easier for the bishops to come into play. The squares occupied by these pawns should not block the way for the knights and the bishops to spread out.

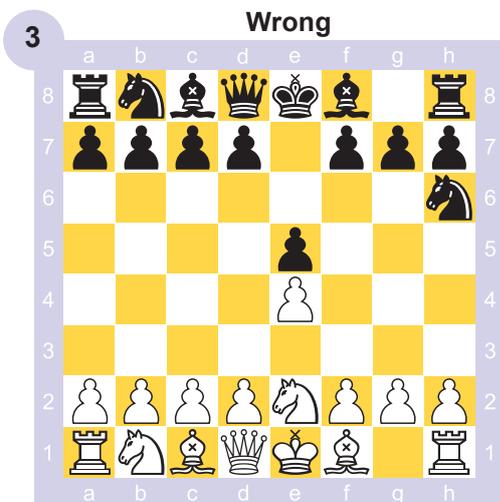
In the opening, you must try to spread out the minor pieces and then the major ones, with the minimum amount of moves possible.



When spreading out the knight, it's worth threatening your opponent's pieces or defending your own.

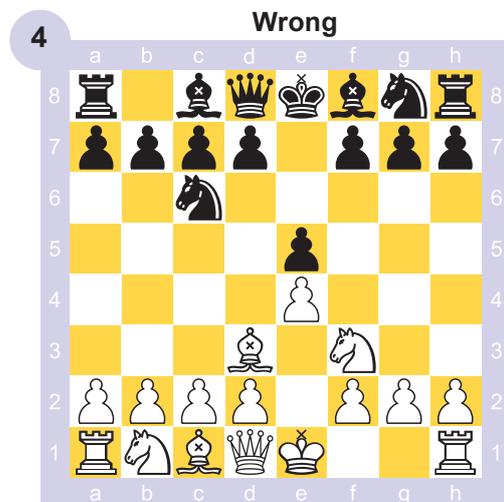


When moving the black knight, a minor piece is spread out. At the same time, the threatened black pawn is defended. Then, white has placed the bishop on c4.



The white knight doesn't allow the white bishop and the queen to move because it's blocking their diagonals.

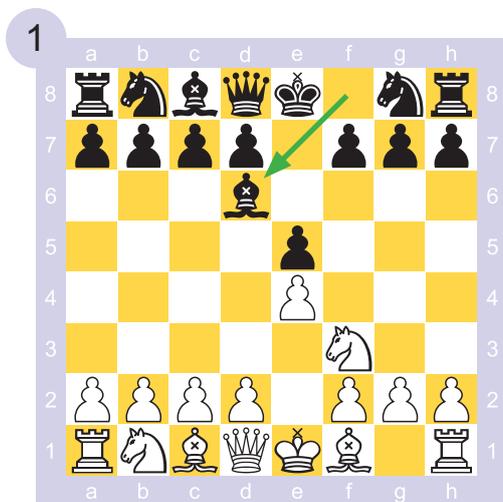
The black knight on the rook's file isn't controlling the centre.



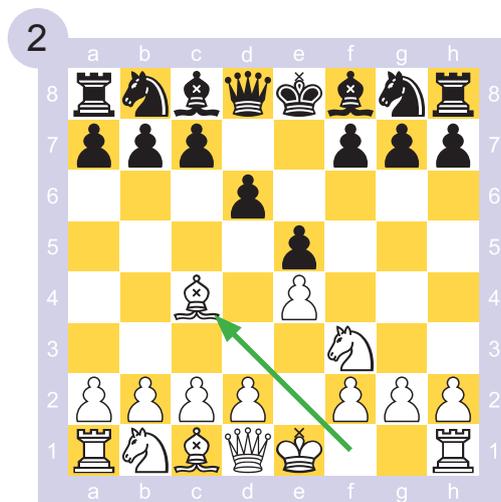
The white bishop blocks the advance of the queen's pawn and makes it difficult for white to spread out its black-squared bishop.

4

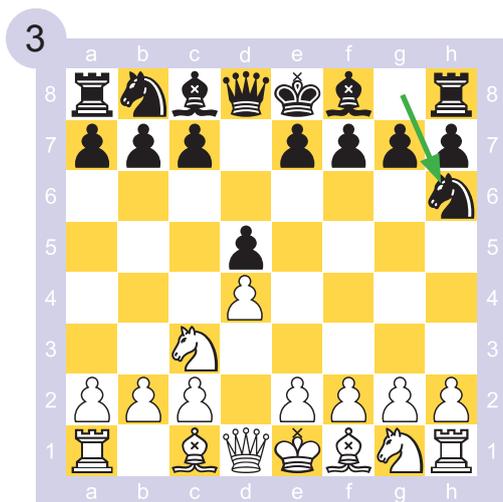
Assess the move shown and circle the correct answer.
 Draw a circle on the central squares that are controlled by the minor piece.



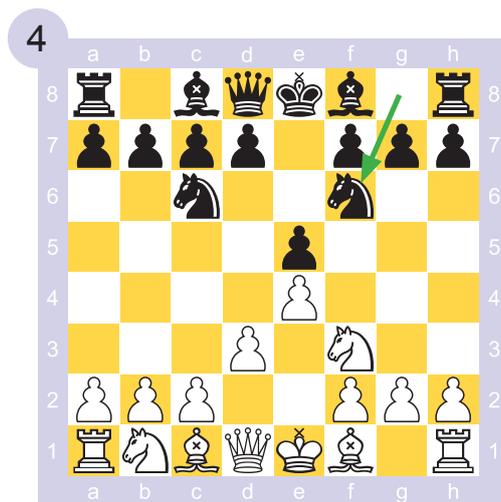
Right Wrong



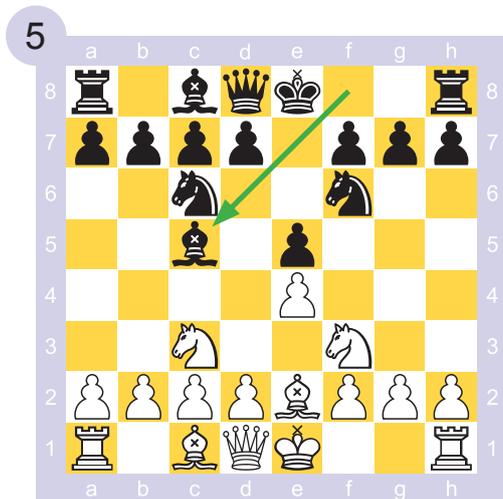
Right Wrong



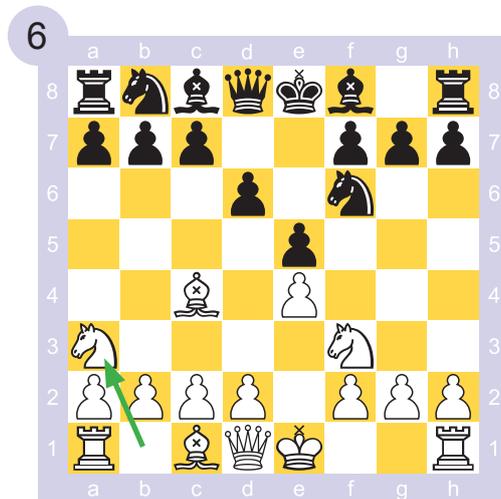
Right Wrong



Right Wrong



Right Wrong



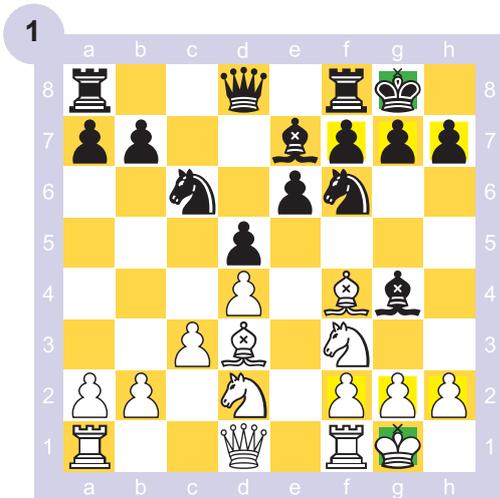
Right Wrong



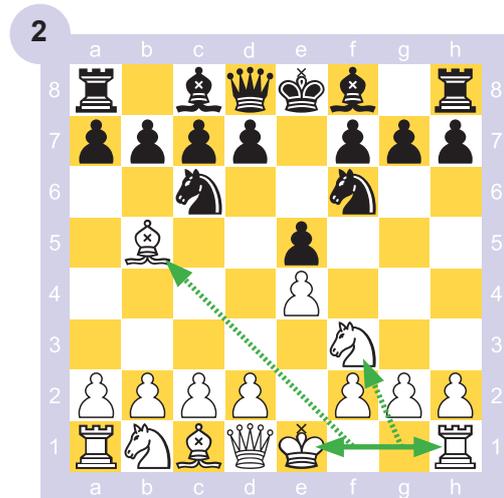
3. Castle as soon as possible

Castling makes the king's defence easier because the king is moved to a corner of the chessboard. Besides, there it's protected by the pawns it has in front.

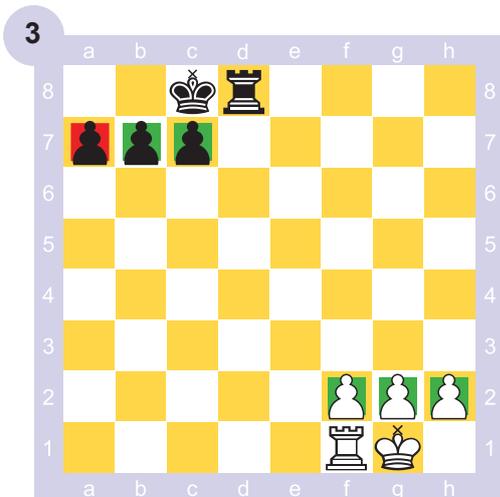
It also allows the rook to communicate with the other pieces.



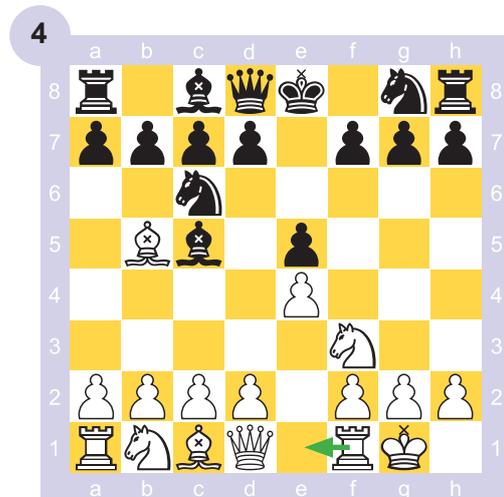
The two kings have castled. This way, they are protected by their own pawns, shown in yellow.



To make castling possible, the minor pieces which were between the king and the rook have been brought out.



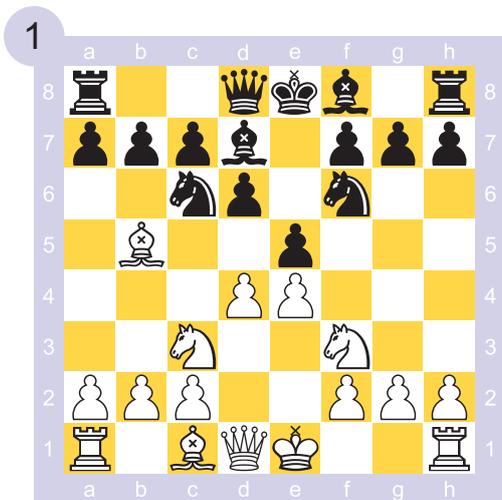
In queenside castling, the king is not so well protected. Besides, it's necessary to move one more piece (the queen). The rook's pawn is not being protected by its king.



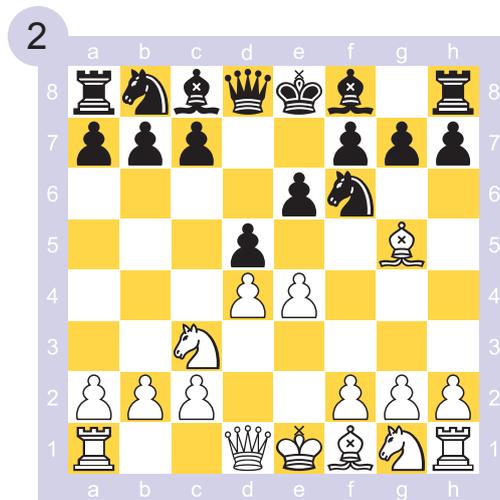
Castling allows moving the rook to the centre, that way other moves can be coordinated better with the pieces left on the board.

5

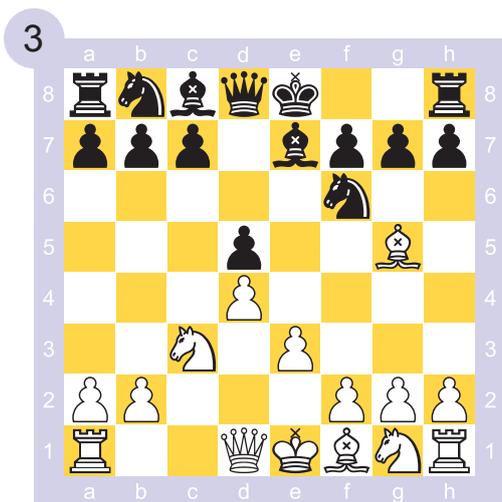
Circle the moves that allow the king to castle as soon as possible.



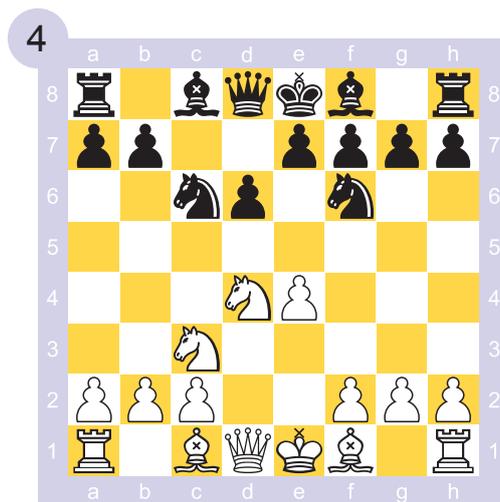
O-O h3 Rb1



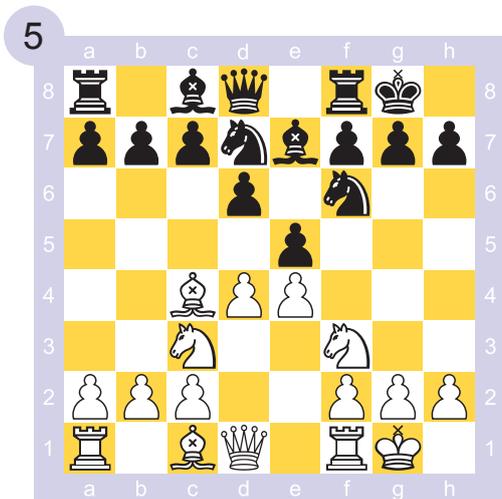
Nc6 Be7 c6



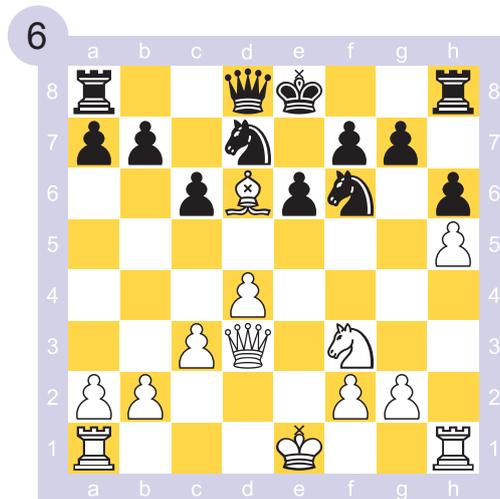
Na6 h6 O-O



Be3 a3 Be2



Qe2 Neither dxe5



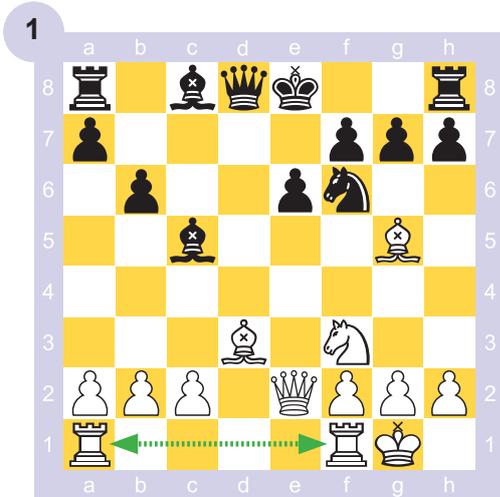
O-O Qa5 Nb6



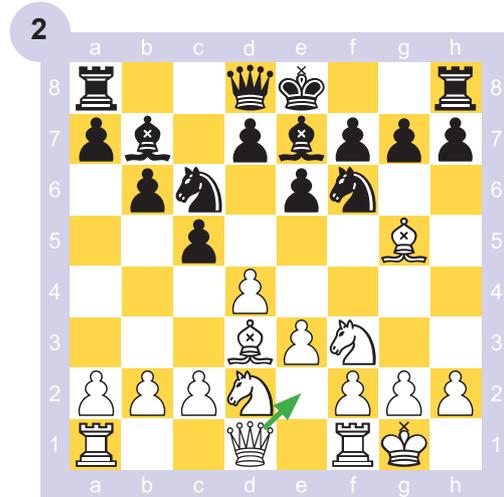
4. Connected rooks

After bringing out the minor pieces and the queen and finally castling, the two rooks of the same colour can become connected and defend together.

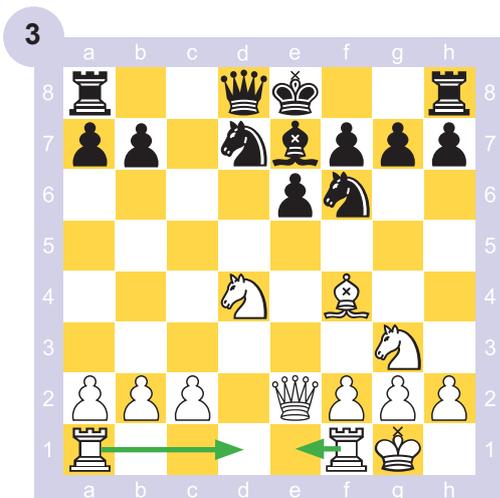
These guidelines help to understand the logic of the opening. However, the order in which these moves are made can change for defensive reasons or to take advantage of an opponent's mistakes.



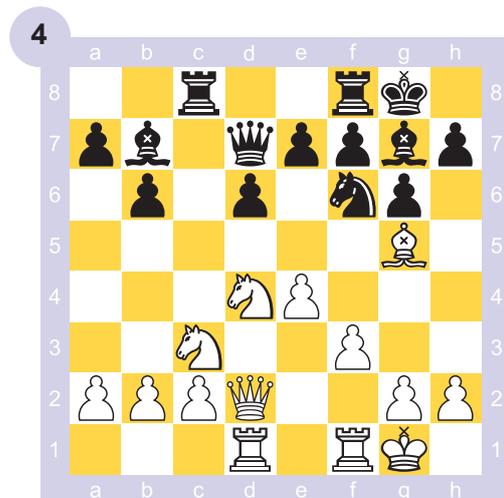
We can see that the rooks are connected on the first rank because there are no pieces between them.



To connect the rooks as soon as possible it's necessary to castle. That way, the queen and the minor pieces can also be spread out.



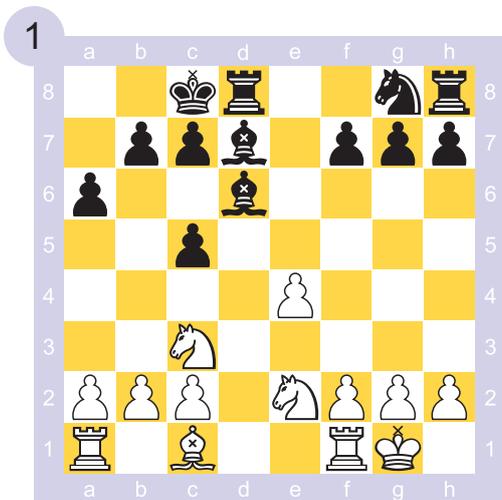
After being connected, the rooks can quickly occupy the central columns.



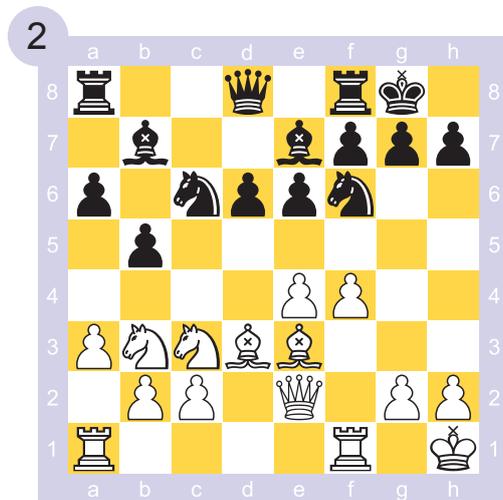
While the pieces are being spread out, you try to control the centre, the king's defence is prepared and the strategy for attacking the opponent's pieces is planned.

6

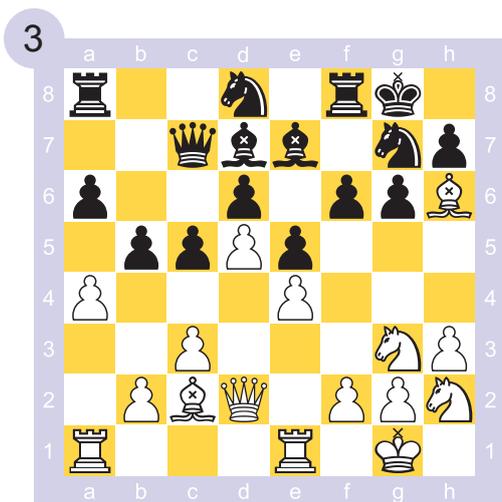
Circle the moves that allow the rooks to connect.



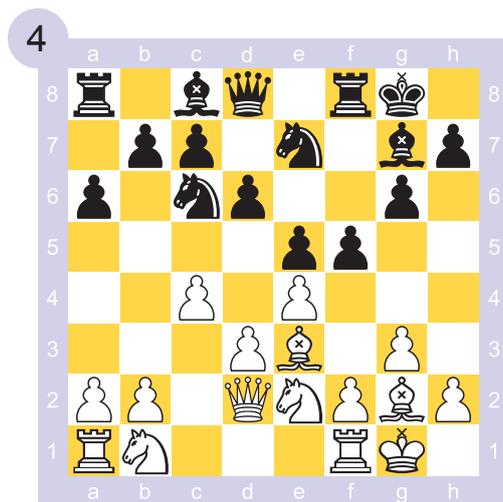
○ Nd5 h3 Be3



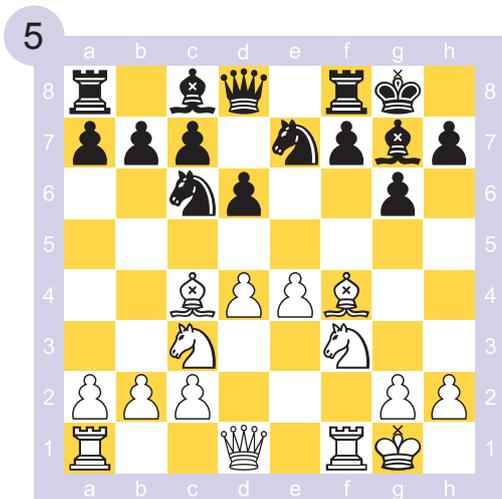
● g6 Nd7 Qc7



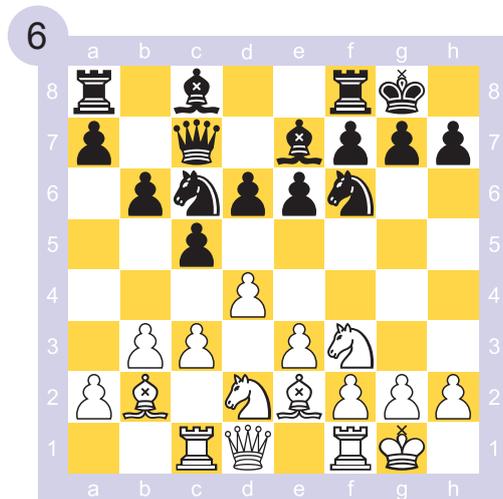
● c4 Rb8 Nf7



○ Nec3 Bh6 Nbc3



○ d5 Neither Qd2



● Bb7 a5 Nd5

