

Chess Tactics Quick Reference & Opening Principles

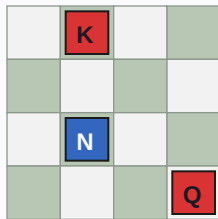
Forks, Pins, Skewers & The 4 Golden Opening Rules â€¢ Grades 2-12

TACTICAL AWARENESS: THE SECRET TO WINNING CHESS

Tactics are short, forced move sequences that win material (pieces) or deliver checkmate.

Mastering these 4 visual tactical motifs allows players to spot winning combinations in seconds!

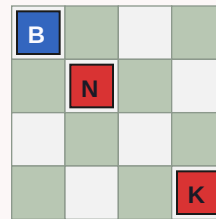
MOTIF 1: THE FORK (Double Attack)



White Knight attacks BOTH Black King and Black Queen simultaneously! King MUST move, allowing White to **capture Queen on next turn!**

Knights & Pawns make the deadliest forks.

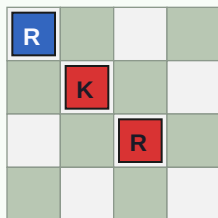
MOTIF 2: THE PIN (Frozen Piece)



White Bishop targets Black King. Black Knight **CANNOT** move because moving it would expose its King to illegal check! Knight is 'pinned' and helpless.

Rooks, Bishops, and Queens deliver pins.

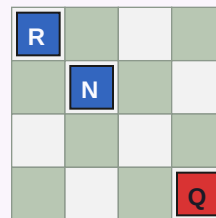
MOTIF 3: THE SKEWER (X-Ray Attack)



Rook attacks King directly. King is forced to step aside, leaving Black Rook behind it completely undefended! **White captures Rook on next turn.**

The opposite of a pin: the high-value piece is in front.

MOTIF 4: DISCOVERED ATTACK



Moving the White Knight unveils an ambush attack from the Rook behind it onto the Queen! Knight can also attack another piece **creating an unstoppable dual threat.**

Double check occurs when both pieces give check!

STANDARD PIECE VALUES & EXCHANGE ARITHMETIC

Pawn (P)	1 Point	Moves forward 1 square (2 on first move). Captures diagonally 1 square.
Knight (N)	3 Points	Moves in an 'L' shape (2 squares then 1). The only piece that can jump over others.
Bishop (B)	3 Points	Moves diagonally any distance. Stays on its original color square (light or dark).
Rook (R)	5 Points	Moves horizontally or vertically any distance. Dominates open files.
Queen (Q)	9 Points	Most powerful piece: combines Rook and Bishop powers in all 8 directions.
King (K)	Infinite	Moves 1 square any direction. Game ends immediately upon Checkmate.

Exchange Rule: Trading Rook (5) for Bishop (3) + Pawn (1) loses 1 point of value. Minor pieces (N & B) thrive in center!

The 4 Golden Opening Rules & Checkmate Patterns

UNICORN GAMES

How Grandmasters Control the Center, Develop & Castle Early

THE 4 GOLDEN PRINCIPLES OF THE OPENING

1. Control the Central Squares (e4, d4, e5, d5)

Pieces placed in the center control up to 4x more squares than pieces on the rim. Place your center pawns on e4 or d4 immediately.

2. Develop Minor Pieces Early (Knights before Bishops)

Get your Knights and Bishops off the back rank. Knights naturally belong on f3, c3, f6, c6. Never bring your Queen out too early!

3. King Safety & Early Castling

Castle within your first 7 to 10 moves (Kingside 0-0 or Queenside 0-0-0). Castling protects your King behind a wall of pawns and activates your Rook.

4. Never Move the Same Piece Twice in the Opening

Every move you spend re-adjusting the same piece is a lost 'tempo'. Your opponent will develop all their pieces and overwhelm you in attack.

Pattern 1: The Back-Rank Mate

A Rook or Queen delivers checkmate along the opponent's 8th rank because their King is trapped behind its own wall of 3 unmoved pawns (f7, g7, h7). Defense: Always o

Pattern 2: Defending Scholar's Mate (1.e4 e5 2.Qh5...)

Beginners often try 2.Qh5/Bc4 aiming at the weak f7 pawn. Never panic: Play 2...Nc6 defending e5, and after 3.Bc4 play 3...g6! attacking the Queen and easily refuting the

Pattern 3: The Smothered Mate

A lone Knight delivers checkmate against an enemy King that is completely surrounded ('smothered') by its own friendly pieces, leaving it with zero escape squares.

Pattern 4: The Ladder Mate (Two Rooks)

Two Rooks (or Queen + Rook) push the enemy King rank by rank toward the edge of the board like walking up a ladder. One Rook cuts off the escape rank while the other

PRACTICE DRILLS & COMPUTER LAB ACTIVITIES

♠ Drill A (Mate in 1): Practice spotting 1-move tactical checkmates with Pocket Chess daily puzzles.

♠ Drill B (Knight Tour): Place a Knight on a1. Navigate it to all 4 corners without repeating a square.

♠ Drill C (Pawn Endgame): Play King + 1 Pawn vs lone King. Practice 'opposition' to promote the pawn.

♠ Drill D (Blindfold Notation): Call out algebraic coordinates (e.g. e4, f7, c6) and identify square colors.

PLAY CHESS ON UNICORN GAMES (100% Free & School Unblocked):

♠ Pocket Chess (Bite-sized tactical puzzles): <https://www.unicorn.games/game/pocket-chess>

♠ Classic Chess vs Stockfish AI: <https://www.unicorn.games/game/chess>

♠ 1-Click Multiplayer Link: Send room link to classmate for instant match with zero sign-ups!

STUDENT TACTICAL CHECKLIST & LOG:

Student Name: _____ Club/Class: _____ Date: _____

1. Today's Pocket Chess Puzzles Solved: [] Level 1 [] Level 2 [] Level 3 [] Level 4 [] Level 5

2. Tactical Motif Spotting: What tactic won your favorite game today? (Circle one): Fork / Pin / Skewer / Back-Rank

3. My Opening Move was: 1. _____ and I castled on move: _____

Teacher Signature / Club Leader Check: _____