

A letter to parents

Welcome to Chess Puzzles!

My name is Dr. John Walter and I'll be helping College Hills fourth graders prepare for the UIL Chess Puzzles competition for College Station elementary schools scheduled for Friday, January 17, 2025.

It's very helpful if your child has some knowledge of chess, but newcomers are welcome and will learn quickly! Once they understand the basics, I'll be encouraging our team to play as often as possible. Playing will give them the feel for the various pieces and how they can be used to attack and defend. If they're just starting chess, we'll focus more on the basics and not so much on winning and losing. It's fun to watch their skills grow with every game. *(Tip: students especially love playing against, and occasionally beating, their parents!)*

Sometime in late November/early December we'll select the three students who will comprise our competition team for the College Station ISD contest in January. This is always a tough decision but the school district limits our team size to 3. They also limit each child to a single UIL subject, so if your child has two or three that they're considering they'll have to narrow it down to one.

I have a very basic website under development: <http://www.chesspuzzles.top/> . Here are a few sites that your student (and maybe you!) will find fun and helpful. You might bookmark them on your home computer so your child can easily access them:

<https://www.uiltexas.org/aplus/events/a-chess-puzzle>

A description of how the UIL Chess Puzzles competition works

<https://www.chesskid.com>

A great starting site for young people learning about chess

<https://www.thechesswebsite.com/chess-puzzles/easy-puzzles/>

Some easy puzzles to try

<https://www.apronus.com/chess/puzzles/>

We'll be practicing with this site at school

https://www.uiltexas.org/files/academics/aplus/Studying_for_Chess_Puzzlenew2016.pdf

How to prepare for the UIL Chess Puzzle contest

(over)

We'll meet at College Hills school on Mondays and Wednesdays at 12:40pm, using time we've carved out from lunch and recess. In years past I've let the students bring their lunches from the cafeteria to our meeting room so they can eat while we talk about chess...the students really enjoyed that special "privilege"!

If you wish to join us while we practice at school, you're more than welcome. It's an opportunity to learn or improve your chess skills and share time with your child doing something they enjoy. Sign in at the College Hills front office and they'll point you to the right room.

I'm looking forward to helping them learn or improve at the game of chess and maybe discover a pastime they can enjoy for the rest of their lives!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Walter" with a stylized flourish at the end.

John Walter

Email: jpw@johnpwalter.com

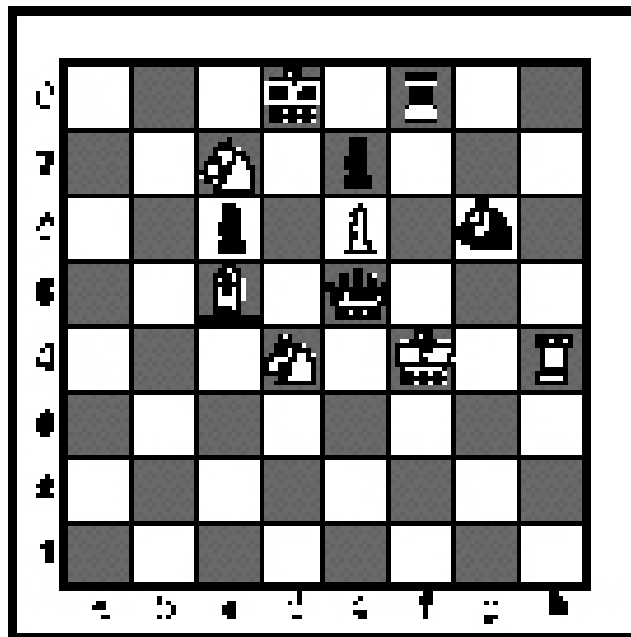
P.S. I'm attaching the UIL chess puzzle contest from 2016-17 so you and your student can have an idea what it will look like.

INVITATIONAL 2016-2017

A+ ACADEMICS



University Interscholastic League



Chess Puzzle Solving

grades 4 & 5

**DO NOT OPEN TEST
UNTIL TOLD TO DO SO**

IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS:

[Test-administrators, please read text in this box aloud.]

This is the UIL Chess Puzzle Solving Invitational Test for grades four and five. There are 20 questions on this test. You have 30 minutes to complete it. All questions are multiple choice. Use the answer sheet to mark your answers. Multiple choice answers purposely do not indicate check, checkmate, or e.p. symbols. You will be awarded one point for each correct answer. No deductions will be made for incorrect answers on this test. Finishing early is not rewarded, even to break ties. So use all of your time. Some of the questions may be hard, but all of the puzzles are interesting! Good luck and have fun!

If you don't already know chess notation, reading and referring to the section below on this page will help you.

How to read and answer questions on this test

- To answer the questions on this test, you'll need to know how to read chess moves. It's simple to do.
- Every square on the board has an "address" made up of a letter and a number.

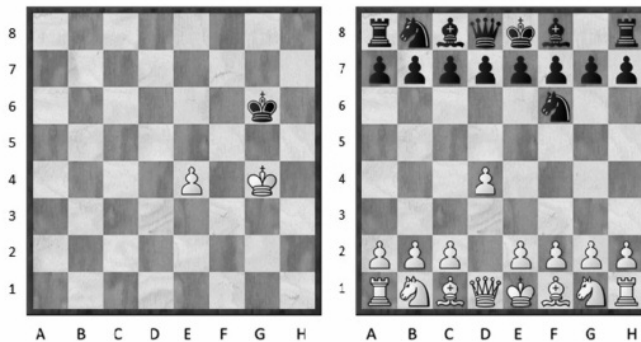


| Piece Names | Each chessman can also be represented by a symbol, except for the pawn. (Figurine Notation) |
|-------------|--|
| King | |
| Queen | |
| Rook | |
| Bishop | |
| Knight | |
| Pawn | a-h (We write the file it's on.) |

- To make them easy to read, the questions on this test use the figurine piece symbols on the right, above.
- When answering the puzzle questions, remember that white pawns move "up" the diagrams. Black pawns move "down" the diagrams.

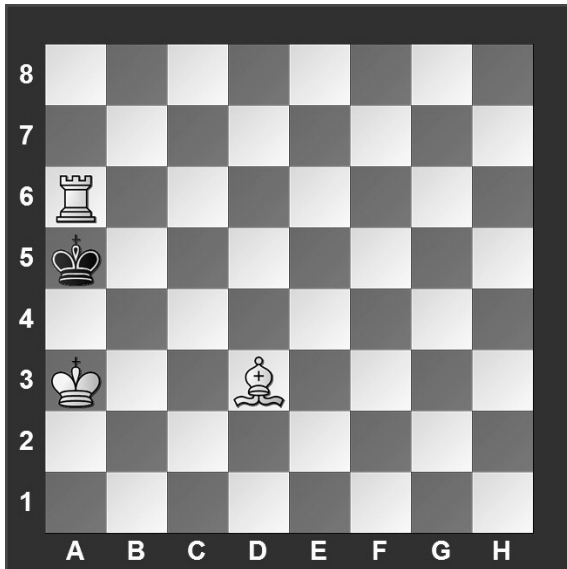
At right are two sample moves.

If you look closely at the diagrams in the questions below, you'll see that the frame around the diagram labels the ranks (1-8) and files (a-h) to help you.



White has just played **e4**. Black has just played ... **Nf6**.

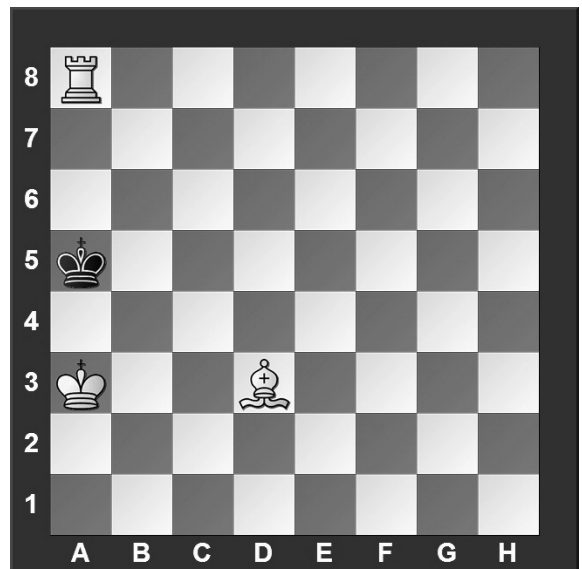
#1. Black to move



What best describes this situation?

- a) Black is in checkmate.
- b) Black is in stalemate.
- c) Black is in check.
- d) None of the above.

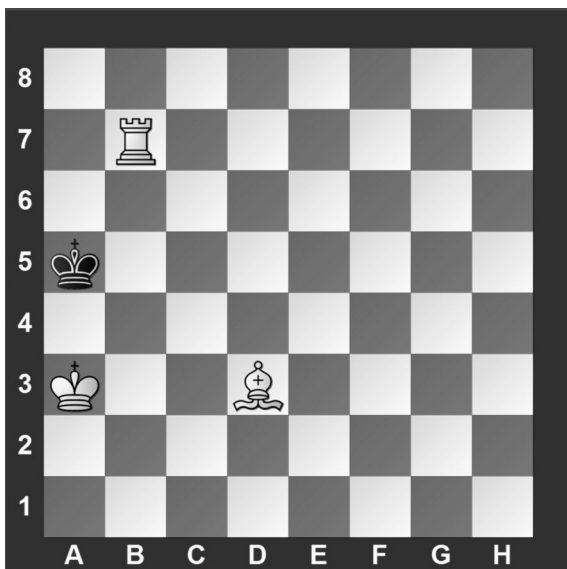
#2. Black to move



What best describes this situation?

- a) Black is in checkmate.
- b) Black is in stalemate.
- c) Black is in check.
- d) None of the above.

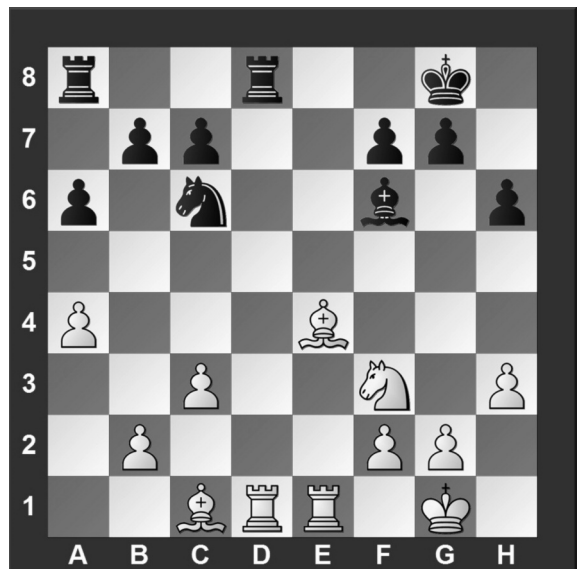
#3. Black to move



What best describes this situation?

- a) Black is in checkmate.
- b) Black is in stalemate.
- c) Black is in check.
- d) None of the above.

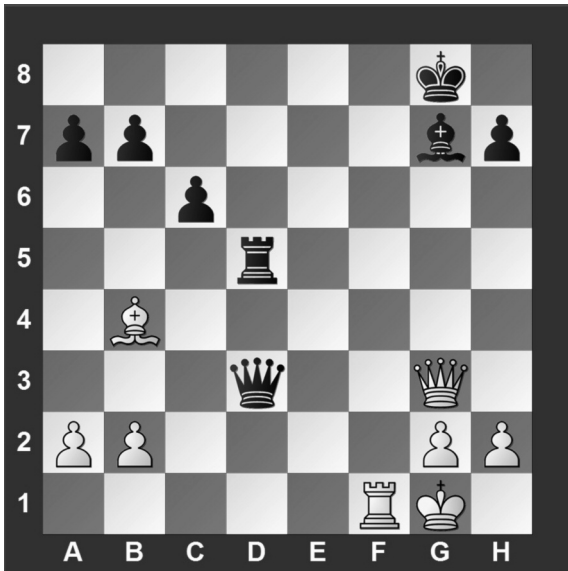
#4.



Which side has material advantage?

- a) White
- b) Black
- c) It's even.
- d) It's not possible to tell without knowing who is to move.

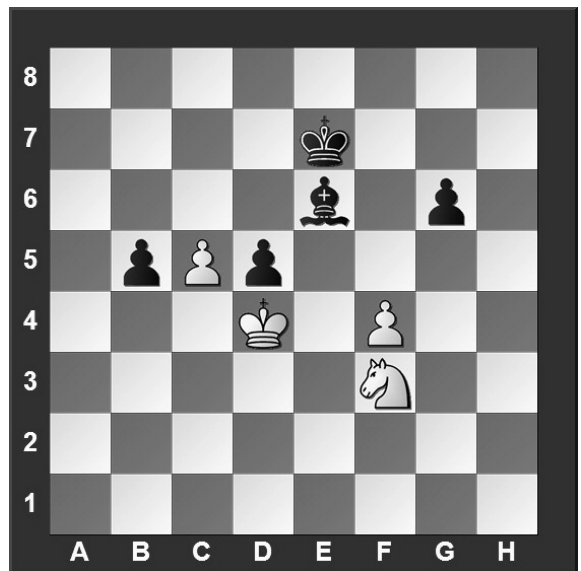
#5. White to move



White can checkmate Black in one move, what is the move?

- a) ♔b8
- b) ♔×g7
- c) ♖f8
- d) White can't checkmate Black in one move.

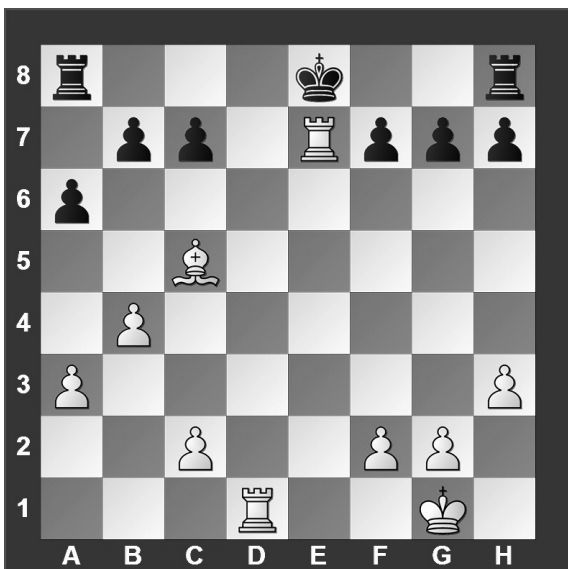
#6. White to move



Black just played b7 to b5. Which pawn can be taken?

- a) Black's b-pawn.
- b) Black's d-pawn.
- c) Black's g-pawn.
- d) White can't take a pawn.

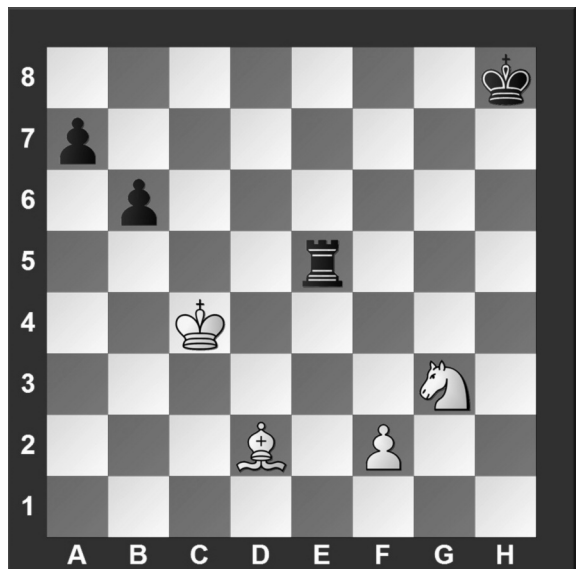
#7. Black to move



Which move below is legal for Black?

- a) Short Castle
- b) Long Castle
- c) Capture the Rook
- d) None of the above

#8. White to move



Which White piece can pin Black's rook?

- a) Bishop
- b) Knight
- c) King
- d) Pawn

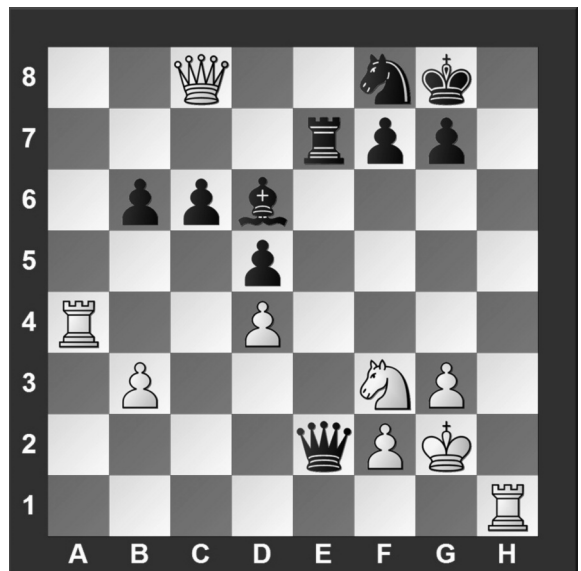
#9. White to move



What is White's best move?

- a) ♖×a4
- b) e5
- c) d5
- d) ♘g5

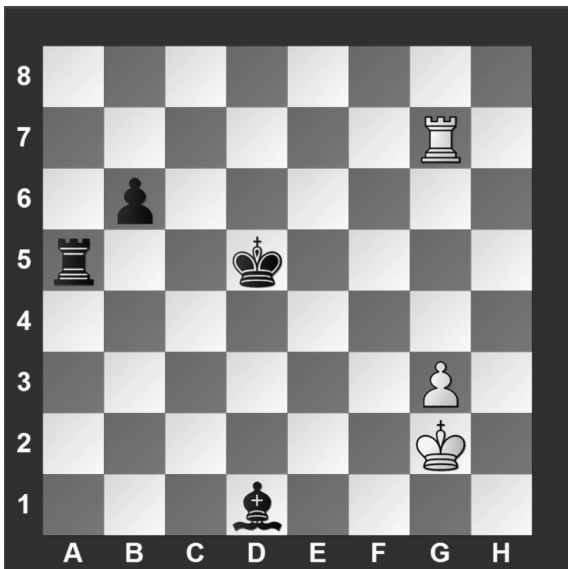
#10. White to move



White can checkmate Black in two moves, what is the *first* move?

- a) ♜a8
- b) ♜h8
- c) ♚×f8
- d) White can't checkmate Black in two moves.

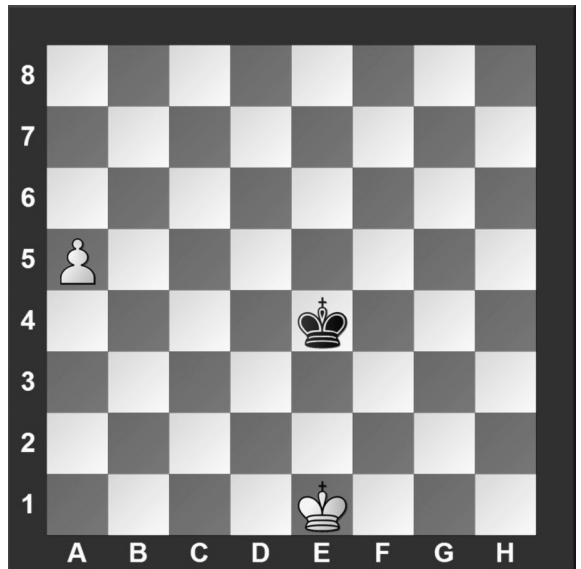
#11. White to move



What is the best move?

- a) ♜g5
- b) ♜d7
- c) ♜a7
- d) ♜b7

#12. Black to move



With Black to play, what is the outcome of the game?

- a) White wins.
- b) Black wins.
- c) Draw.
- d) It is not possible to tell.

#13. White to move



What is White's best move?

- a) f4
- b) Qf4
- c) ♖xh7
- d) ♘xf7

#14. White to move



What is White's best move?

- a) ♖d4
- b) ♖d6
- c) f4
- d) ♖b2

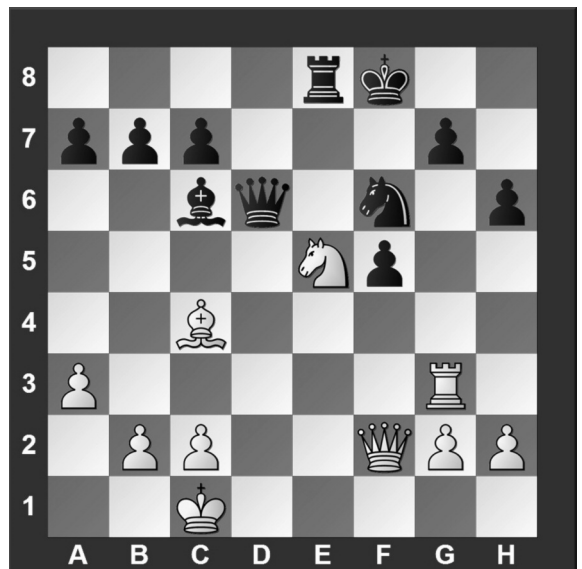
#15. White to move



White can trap Black's Queen, what is the move?

- a) ♘xd6
- b) ♖a5
- c) ♖b3
- d) White can't win Black's Queen

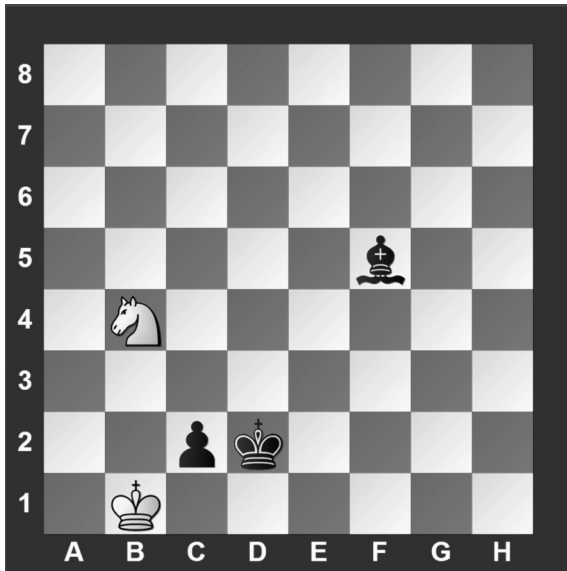
#16. White to move



White can checkmate Black in one move. Which piece can checkmate?

- a) Queen.
- b) Rook.
- c) Knight.
- d) White can't checkmate Black in one move

#17. White to move



If White to move, what is the outcome of the game?

- a) White wins.
- b) Draw.
- c) Black wins.
- d) It is not possible to tell.

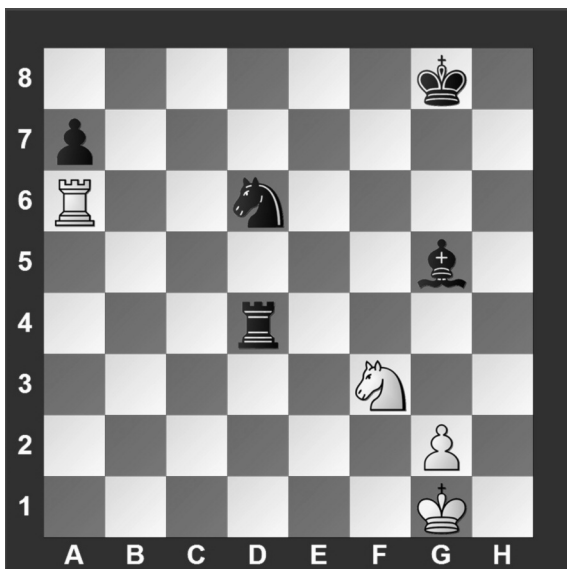
#18. White to move



White can checkmate Black in one move, what is the move?

- a) ♖×d5
- b) ♖g5
- c) ♔g5
- d) White can't checkmate Black in one move.

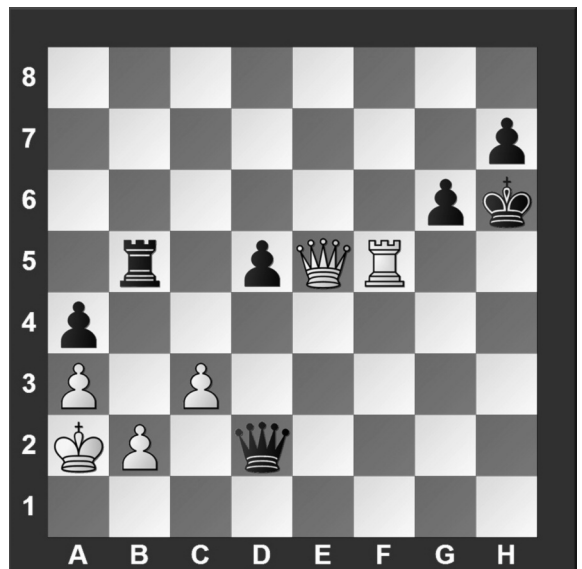
#19. White to move



What is White's best move?

- a) To take Black's pawn.
- b) To take Black's knight.
- c) To take Black's bishop.
- d) To take Black's rook.

#20. White to move



White can checkmate Black in two moves, what is the *first* move?

- a) ♔f4
- b) ♔g7
- c) ♖h5
- d) White can't checkmate Black in two moves.



University Interscholastic League
A+ Chess Puzzle Contest
2016-2017 Invitational – Grades 4 & 5

ANSWER KEY

Test

- | | | | |
|-----|---|-----|---|
| 1. | a | 11. | b |
| 2. | c | 12. | c |
| 3. | b | 13. | c |
| 4. | a | 14. | a |
| 5. | c | 15. | b |
| 6. | a | 16. | c |
| 7. | d | 17. | b |
| 8. | a | 18. | b |
| 9. | c | 19. | d |
| 10. | c | 20. | c |

Tiebreaker

- | | | | |
|----|---|----|---|
| 1. | a | 5. | a |
| 2. | a | 6. | b |
| 3. | a | 7. | b |
| 4. | c | 8. | c |