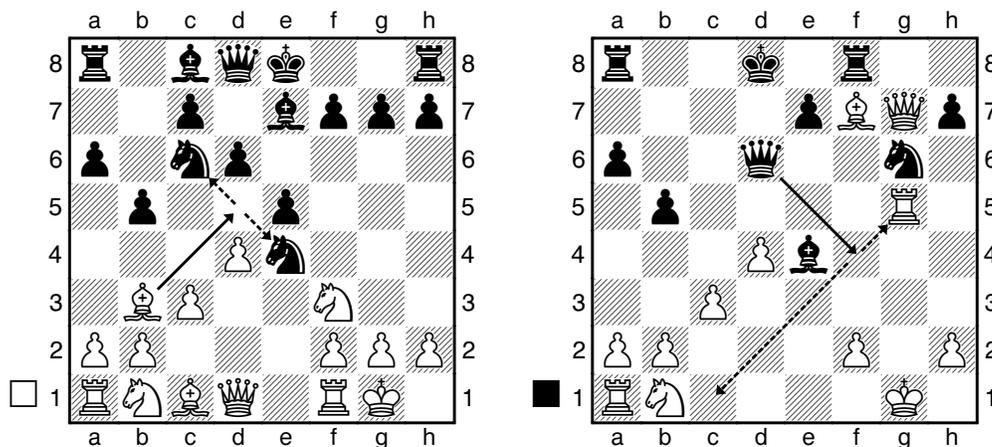


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1 Fork



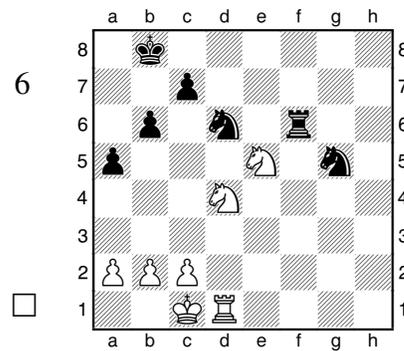
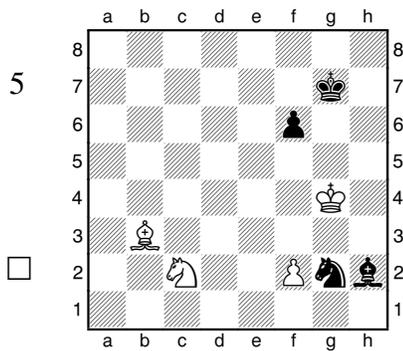
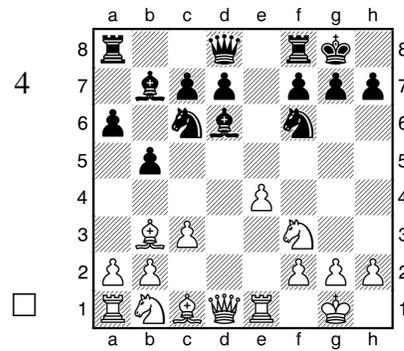
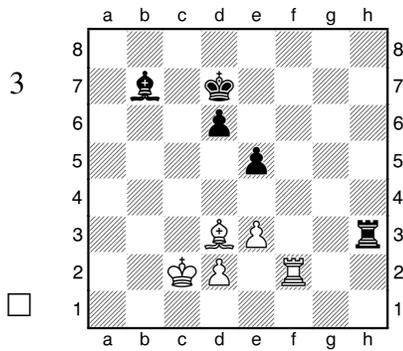
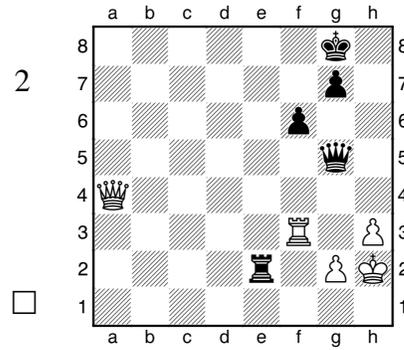
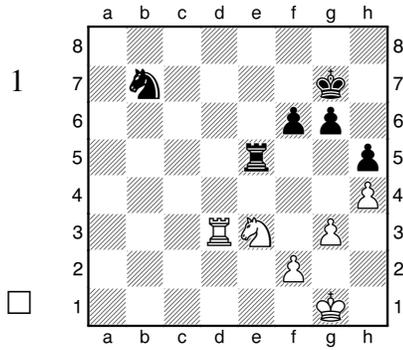
The *fork* is the most common chess tactic. In its basic form, one of your pieces attacks two enemy pieces at the same time. The left-hand diagram above is a good example. The two black knights are both undefended and lie on the same diagonal. White plays **1 ♞d5**, attacking the two knights. It's impossible for Black to defend both at the same time, so one knight is lost. Undefended pieces, such as the knights here, are often vulnerable to forks. A fork that gives a check is especially effective, because a check demands an immediate response.

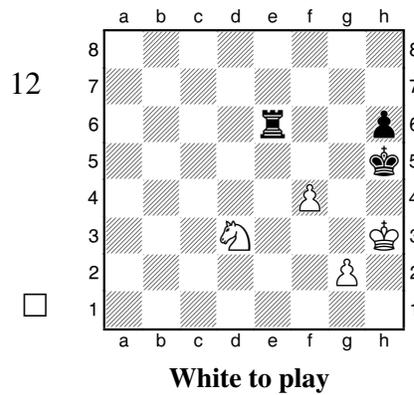
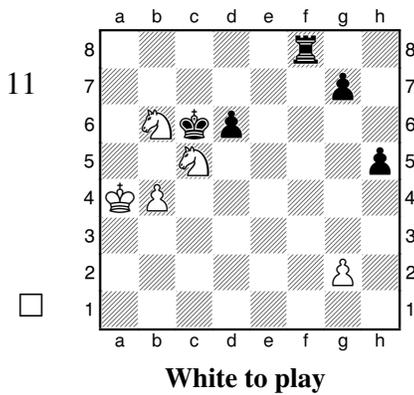
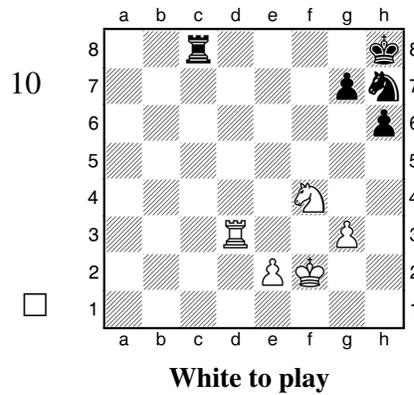
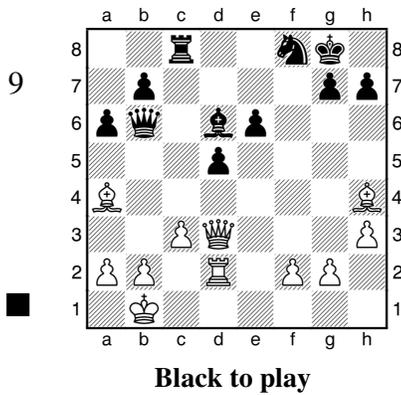
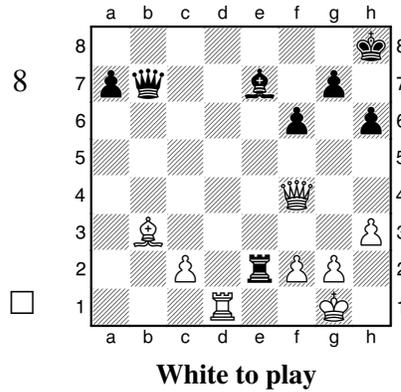
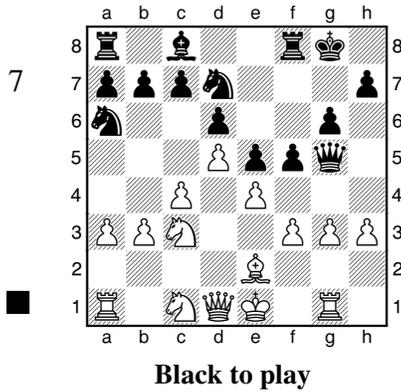
It's not always the case that a fork involves an attack on two enemy pieces. It can be, for example, that one 'prong' of the fork targets a piece, while another creates a threat of mate. The concept is still the same, that of one piece making two threats which cannot both be met, but this more refined version can be harder to spot. The right-hand diagram above is a case in point. Black plays **1... ♛f4**, threatening both **2... ♛c1#** and **2... ♛xg5+**. White cannot counter both the mate threat and the attack on the undefended rook. The queen and knight are the best pieces for delivering forks, as both have the power to operate in eight different directions, but any piece is capable of giving a fork.

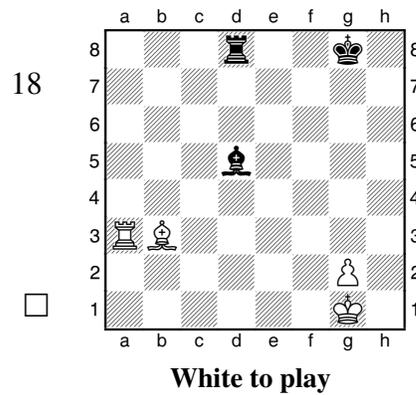
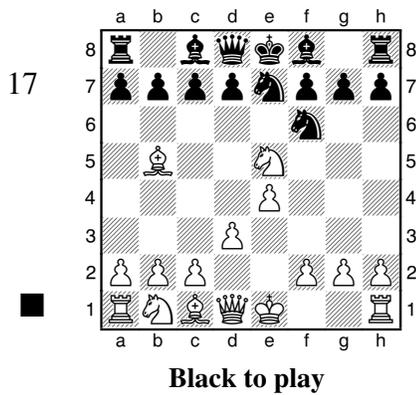
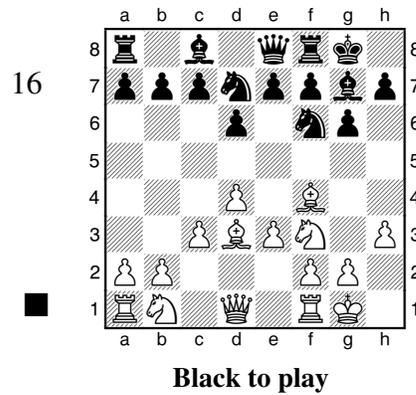
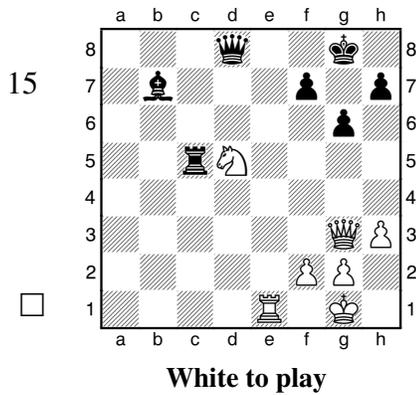
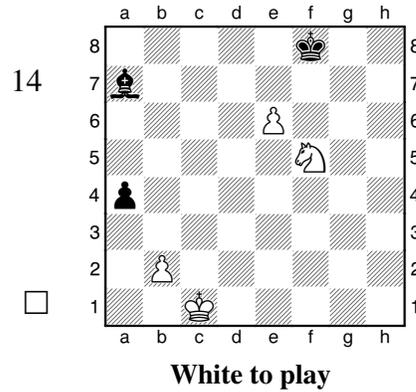
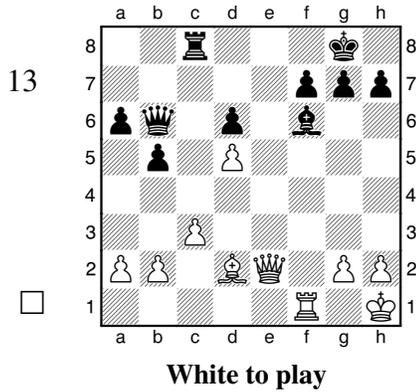
Here are some tips for solving the exercises:

- Look for undefended enemy pieces, as they may be vulnerable to forks. On the other hand, if you have undefended pieces, take care not to allow your opponent to fork them.
- Every check is a potential fork.
- In most of the exercises, the fork has to be set up by a preliminary action. This is generally a forcing move of some sort, such as a check or capture.

Exercises







Solutions to Fork Exercises

1) **1 ♖d7+** is a typical fork. White checks the black king and attacks the b7-knight. After the king moves, White simply takes the knight and wins a piece.

2) White has several checks, for example on b3, c4 and a8, but only one wins Black's rook: **1 ♖c4+**.

3) **1 ♗f5+** is a diagonal fork winning Black's rook.

4) **1 e5** forks bishop and knight and so wins a piece. The pawn must be sufficiently defended for this type of idea to work. Here it is attacked twice and defended twice, so Black also loses a piece if he takes the pawn.

5) Even the king is capable of delivering a fork: **1 ♔h3** attacks bishop and knight, winning a piece and the game.

6) White has three different knight checks, two harmless but one winning the black rook: **1 ♞d7+**.

7) The undefended c3-knight and g1-rook are vulnerable to the queen fork **1...♕e3**, when Black wins.

8) This is an example of a fork which targets an enemy piece and a mate threat rather than two enemy pieces. The deadly **1 ♖c4** sets up the twin threats of **2 ♖xe2** and **2 ♖g8#**, and so wins the rook.

9) You should have spotted the undefended bishops on a4 and h4, a sign that a fork is in the air. Black can exploit them by **1...♞c4**, winning a piece.

10) A preliminary check drives the black king into position for a fork: **1 ♜g6+ ♔g8 2 ♜e7+** and White wins the black rook.

11) Two knights working together can produce an amazing array of forks. After **1 b5+** there's no escape: **1...♞xb6 2 ♞d7+**, **1...♞c7 2 ♞e6+** or **1...♞xc5 2 ♞d7+** and Black loses his rook in every case.

12) **1 g4+ ♔g6 2 f5+** wins the rook.

13) A preliminary sacrifice opens the g-file and leads to a fork of king and rook: **1 ♜xf6! gxf6 2 ♖g4+** followed by **♖xc8+**.

14) Knights are very good at delivering forks and are a danger even in the endgame: **1 e7+ ♔e8 2 ♞d6+ ♔xe7** (or else the pawn promotes) **3 ♞c8+** and White wins the bishop.

15) A *decoy* (see Chapter 4) draws the black queen to a square allowing a fork: **1 ♜e8+! ♖xe8 2 ♞f6+ ♔f8 3 ♞xe8** and White wins queen for rook because **3...♔xe8** loses the rook to a second fork after **4 ♖e3+**.

16) Black can exploit the bunched-up white pieces in the centre by **1...e5 2 dxe5 dxe5 3 ♗g5** (or any other square) **3...e4**, winning a piece.

17) The undefended e5-knight is the victim here: **1...c6** attacks the bishop and after **2 ♗c4** (**2 ♗a4** is the same) **2...♖a5+** Black wins a piece.

18) In a surprising twist, White invests a rook to win rook and bishop: **1 ♜a8! ♜xa8** (**1...♗xb3 2 ♜xd8+** also wins for White) **2 ♗xd5+** followed by **3 ♗xa8**, and White is a piece up.

19) Black's pawns are the heroes here. One pawn sacrifices itself by **1...a4!** to allow another to fork two pieces after **2 ♗xa4 b5**.