Forks, pins, and skewers

**Forks:** A fork is when a piece attacks more than one piece at a time, in a way that, whichever piece is moved or protected, the other will be able to be captured. Knights are usually the most dangerous.

**Example 1:** (left board below). Start the game with: e4 e5, Nf3 Nc6, Nc3 Qe7, Nd5 Qe6, Nxc7+!! The king must be moved, after which the white knight can take the queen or the rook. Note that the white knight cannot be captured by black. That’s important!

**Example 2:** (right board above) White King on d1, Rook on f1; Black Ka8, Ba5, Nh5, white’s turn. Move the white rook to f5. Whichever piece escapes, white will get the other.

**Pins and Skewers:** pins are when a piece cannot move without exposing another piece to capture.

**Number 1:** (left board below) From the start: 1. e4 e5, d3 Nf6, Bg5 pins the knight to the queen.

**Number 2:** (center board above) White Kd2, Ral, Rh1. Black Ke8, Qe5, Bg8. White moves Rh-e1!! The white queen cannot escape, because then the king would be in check. The best move for black is …Qxe1+, Rxel+ with better chances for white.

**Skewers:** are somewhat the opposite of pins, because here the more important piece is in the front and must move out of the way, exposing another piece behind it. For an example, switch the black king and queen in the second pin example (board above at the right), then white Rh-e1+ forces the king to move away, after which the white rook is free to take the black queen.

**Exercises:** Work on forks, pins, and skewers in the endgame. Each player takes a king, rook, knight, bishop, and pawn, and takes turns putting them on the board so that no piece is threatened. Play as usual, except that you can only capture a piece if you do so with a fork, pin, or skewer.

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