UIL Chess Puzzles

Texas Tech Chess Program

UIL Practice Test

November 2012

UIL Chess Puzzles

UIL Chess Puzzle Practice Material

- This year's UIL Chess Puzzle Test includes "solve the mate" positions similar to last year's, but it also tests other kinds of chess knowledge—knowledge that relates directly to other school skills, such as basic geometrical reasoning and computation, as well as critical and creative thinking.

- Each test will still be 20 questions, and one point will be given for each correct answer. No deductions will be made for incorrect answers. Students will be given 30 minutes to complete the test. Finishing early is not rewarded, even to break ties.

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- Tie-breaking procedures have been changed. Tie breaks will now be decided by a more difficult test of 20 questions for which students have only 10 minutes. Incorrect answers are penalized by subtracting 1.25 from the final score. So, on the tie-break test, it's smart to be sure of an answer instead of racing to circle answers to all the questions.

- Below are some study guides and sample questions that reflect the general approach of this year's UIL Chess Puzzle Test.

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How to answer questions on the test.

- In order to answer many of the 20 questions on this test, you'll need to know how "to read and write chess." The system is called "figurine algebraic notation," or "FAN" for short. It's simple and depends on two easy systems, one for the board and one for the pieces.

- Every square on the board has an "address" made up of a letter and a number.

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Now we know that every square has a name.

Next we just have to learn how to read and write the names of the pieces that move across the board. See the next panel.

a8	b8	c8	d8	e8	f8	g8	h8
a7	b7	c7	d7	e7	f7	g7	h7
a6	b6	c6	d6	e6	f6	g6	h6
a5	b5	c5	d5	e5	f5	g5	h5
a4	b4	c4	d4	e4	f4	g4	h4
a3	b3	c3	d3	e3	f3	g3	h3
a2	b2	c2	d2	e2	f2	g2	h2
a1	b1	c1	d1	e1	f1	g1	h1

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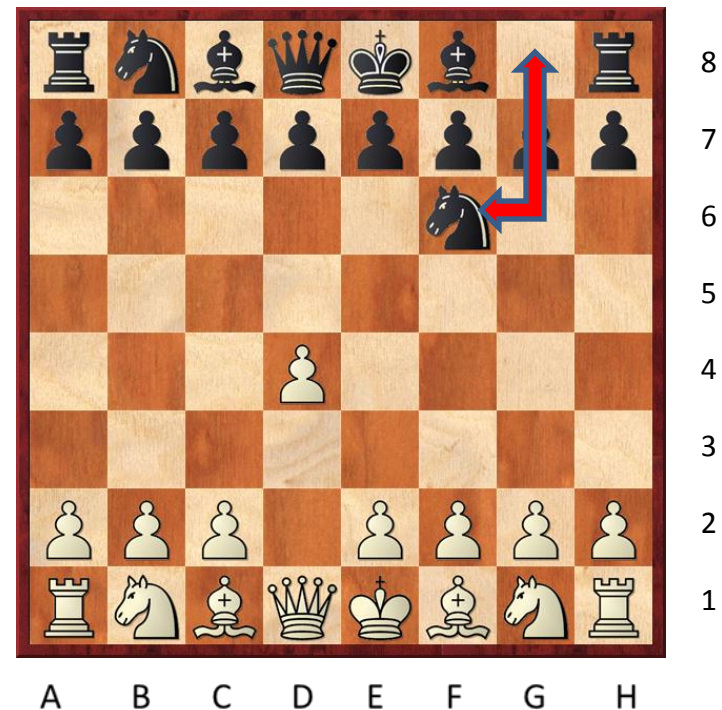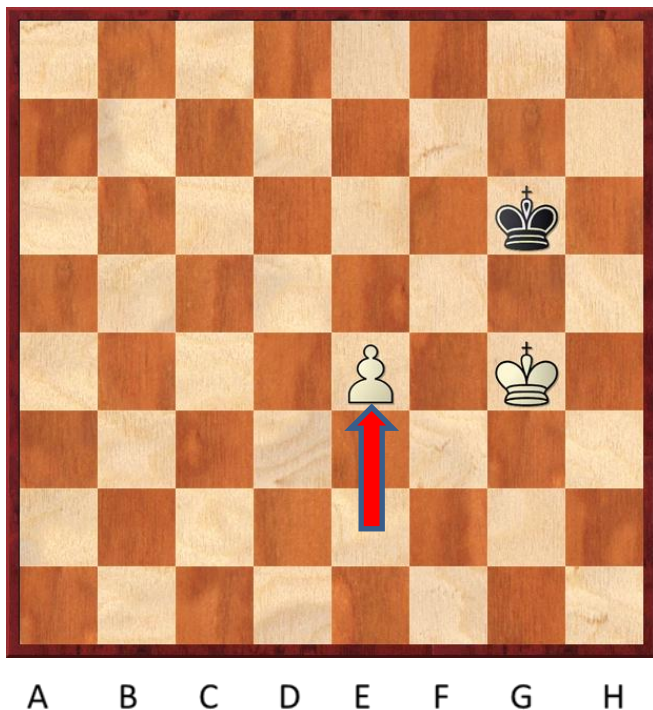| Every piece is indicated by a logical abbreviation:	Letter Abbreviation (Algebraic Notation)	Figurine Symbol (Figurine Algebraic Notation—used in the puzzles test.)
King	K	
Queen	Q	
Rook	R	
Bishop	B	
Knight (because "K" is already taken by the King!)	N	
Pawn (the file it's on)	(a-h)	

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- In the first diagram, White just played 1.e4
- In the second diagram, Black Played 1...♞f6

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The United States Chess Federation offers a concise explanation of algebraic notation here:

http://archive.uschess.org/beginners/read/

But the test makes it even easier by using *figurine* algebraic—using outlines of the pieces rather than letters.

Of course, you will also need to know how the pieces and pawns move. For a short but comprehensive course in moving the chess pieces, again go to the U.S. Chess Federation site:

http://archive.uschess.org/beginners/letsplay.pdf

Now answer each of the questions below. Be sure to read each question carefully and then choose the letter of the single, best answer from the choices below each question.
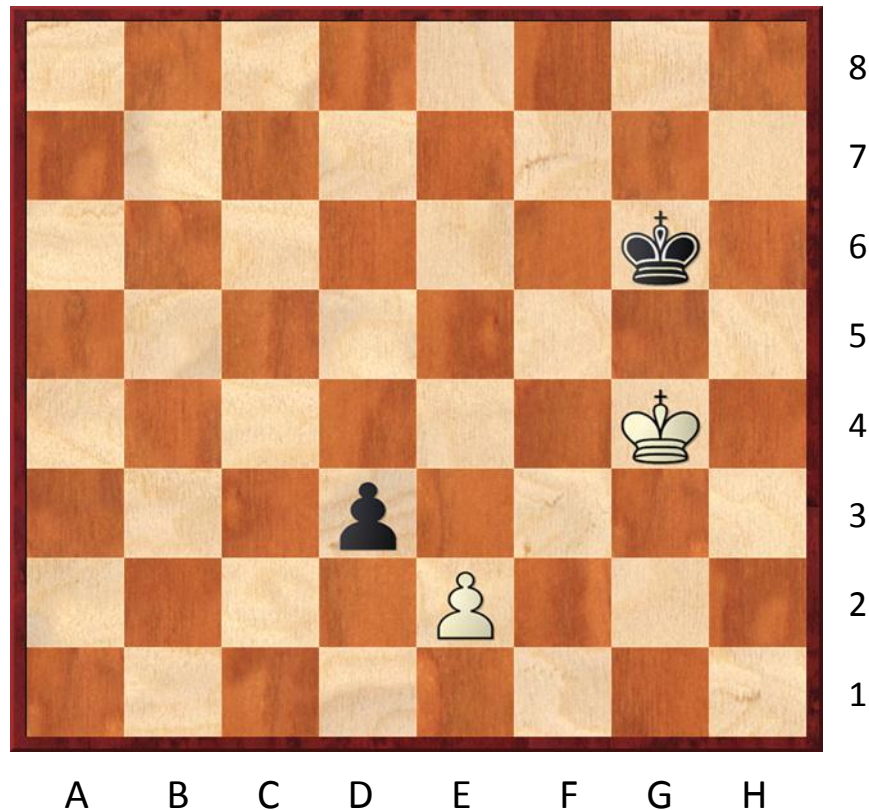
1- What squares can the white pawn in the diagram move to?

a) e3, e4, and d3

b) Only e4

c) Only e3

d) None of the above

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2- The chessboard is square-shaped with eight squares on each side. How many total squares does it have?

a) 32

b) 64

c) 72

d) None of the above

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3- Chess Players have names for the three kinds of "streets" on a chessboard made by connecting squares. Which kind of "streets" do Bishops travel on?
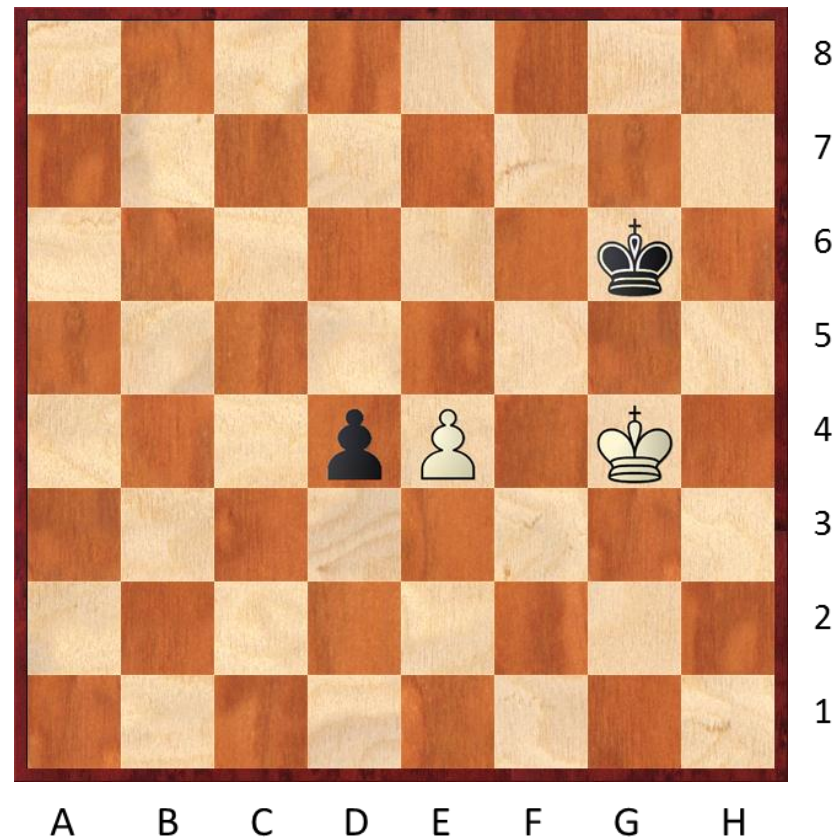
a) Ranks

b) Files

c) Rows

d) Diagonals

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4- It's Black's move. White has just played e2-e4. Is it possible for Black to capture the White pawn?

a) Yes, by moving to e3 and removing White's pawn.

b) Yes, by moving to d3 and removing White's pawn.

c) Yes, by removing the pawn on e4 and keeping the black pawn on d4.
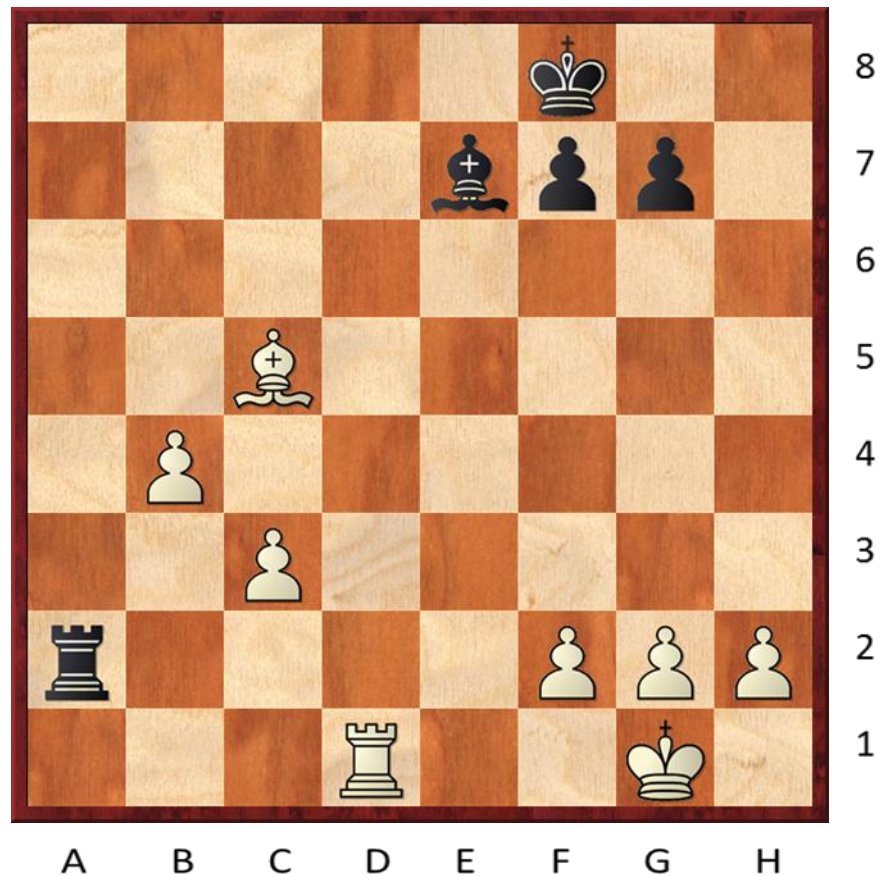
d) No, it's not possible.

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5- White to move and mate in one.
What's the move?

a) ♗e7
b) ♖e1
c) ♖d8
d) ♖b1

6- Which side has the greater value of material left on the board?

a) White

b) Black
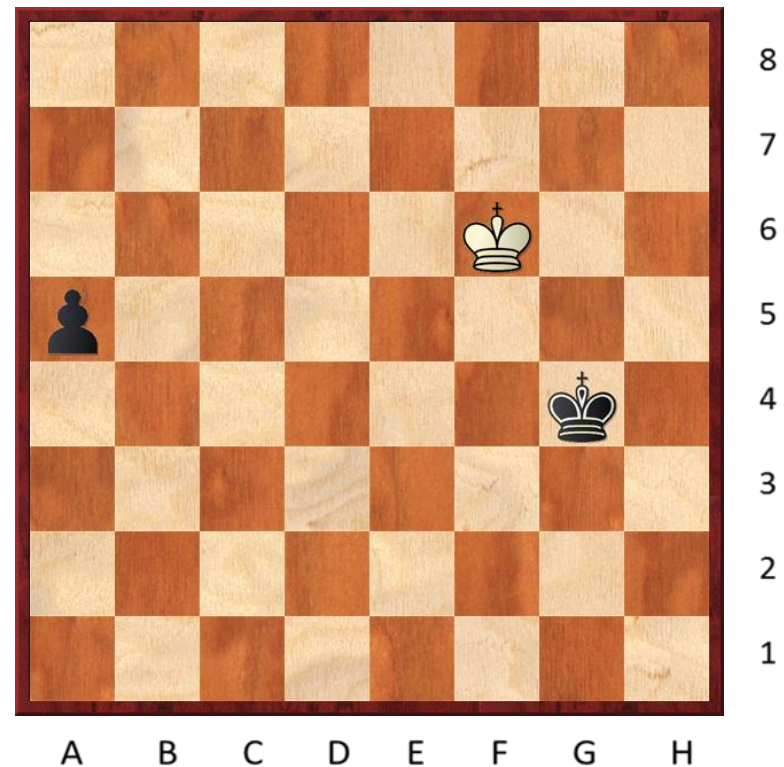
c) Material is equal.

d) It depends on whose move it is.

7- It's White's move. What move does he have to catch the pawn so that Black doesn't wind up with a Queen!

a) ♔e6

b) ♔e5

c) ♔e7

d) ♔g6
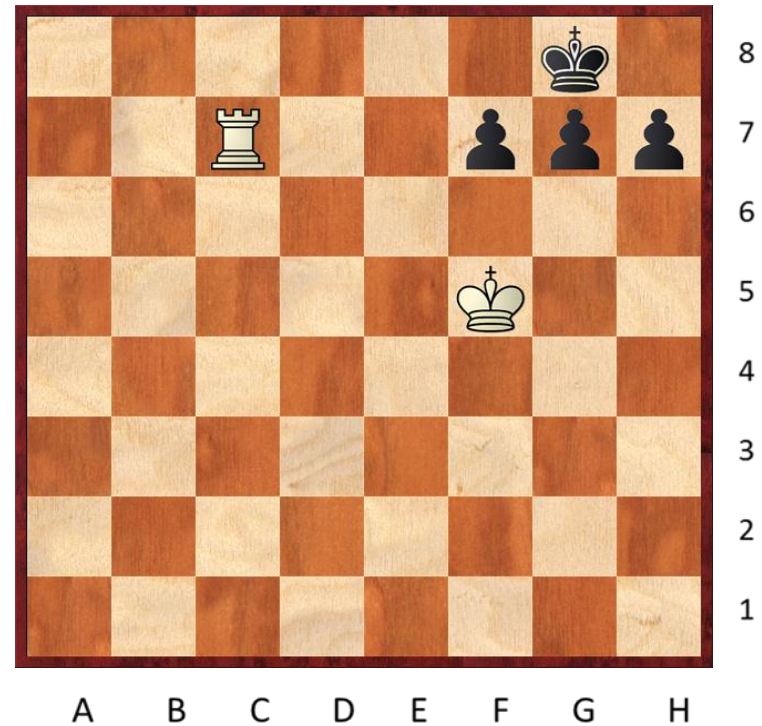
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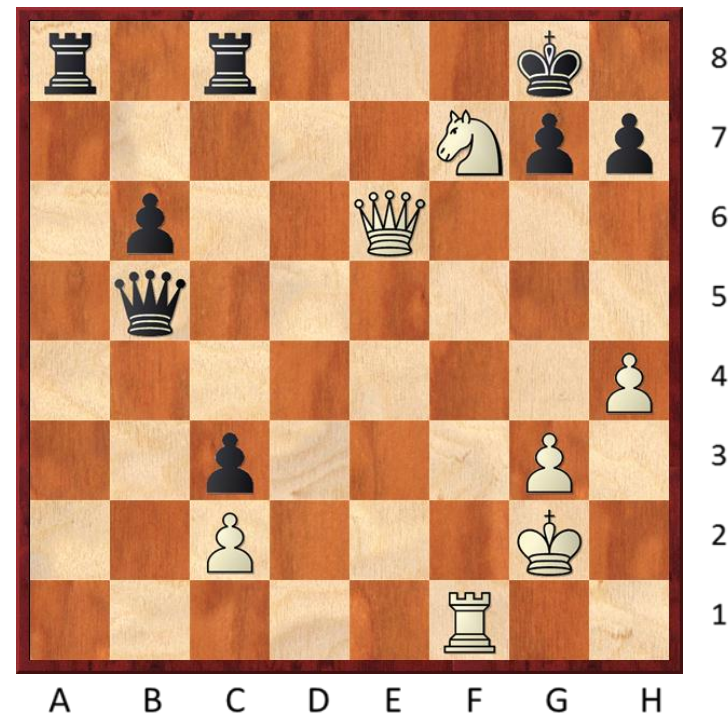8- What move checkmates Black immediately?

a) ♖d7

b) ♖c8

c) ♖c1

d) ♖c3

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9- It's White's move, and he can force checkmate in two moves. What move does he have to play
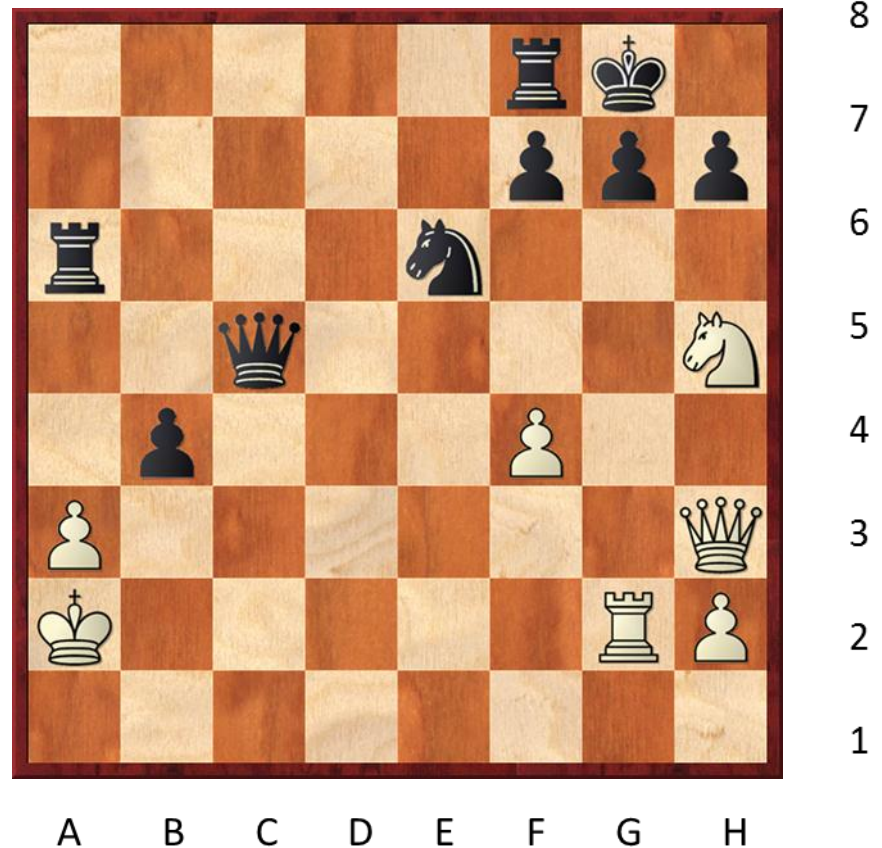
first to do this?

a) ♘h6+

b) ♘d6+

c) ♘d8+

d) ♘g5+

10- It's White's move, and he can force checkmate in two moves. What move does he

have to play first to do this?

a) ♕h4

b) ♕g4

c) ♕g3

d) ♘f6+

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Chess Puzzle Practice Test:

Correct answers and explanations

Below we give the correct answers to the practice test. Feel free to email us about questions or comments. We want to hear from you!

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Question #1

Correct Answer: a

Explanation: On its initial move, the pawn can move one square ahead or two moves ahead. Pawns capture diagonally, so taking the black pawn on d3 is a possible third move.

Question #2

Correct Answer: b

Explanation: The area of a rectangle is calculated by multiplying the length by the width, using any consistent unit of measurement: 8 x 8 = 64.

Question #3

Correct Answer: d

Explanation: Bishops move only on the "slanted" rows of squares, the diagonals. The other "streets" are ranks and files.

Question #4

Correct Answer: a

Explanation: This rule is called "en passant" or "in passing." It is a special pawn capture that can be made immediately after an opponent moves a pawn two squares forward from its starting position, and an enemy pawn could have captured it had it moved only one square forward. But this optional capture has to be made on the very next turn or the option is lost.

Question #5

Correct Answer: c

Explanation: By moving his rook on d1 to d8, White puts Black's king in check, and that king can't escape check. A king in check must get out of check immediately or it's checkmate—and checkmate ends the game. The side that is checkmated loses.

There are three ways a king can get out of check, if it's possible:

Move out of check;

Block the check with one of the king's own pieces;

Capture the checking piece.

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In this example, the black king can't move out of check because he's hemmed in by his own pieces. There is no friendly piece that can block the check by the white rook. So Black's last chance is to capture White's rook. But he can't play 1. … Bxe7xd8 because his bishop is pinned to his king by the white bishop. So Black is checkmated.

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Question #6

Correct Answer: b

Explanation: A simple way to explain the relative material values of the pieces is:

Queen = 9

Rook = 5

Bishop = 3

Knight = 3

Pawn = 1

Kings aren't counted in this way, since they are infinitely valuable.

So in the position diagrammed, Black's material adds up to 22. White's material adds up to 18.

Question #7

Correct Answer: b

Explanation: White's king must get in the "square of the pawn." No other move catches the pawn before it reaches the opposite side of the board and promotes. For an explanation of "The Rule of the Square," see
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King_and_pawn_versus_king_endgame

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Question #8

Correct Answer: b

Explanation: Moving the rook to c1 puts Black's king in check, and he can't escape because he is trapped on the back rank by his own pawns. Black has no piece that can block the check, and he can't capture White's rook. So it's checkmate.

Question #9

Correct Answer: c

Explanation: By moving 1. Nd8+, White *discovers* check on Black's king with White's queen. Black can't capture White's queen or block the check. So the black king must move. Because f8 is covered by the white rook on f1, the king's only move is 1. … Kh8. Then White can follow up with 2. Rf8, checkmate.

Another first move, 1. Nh6+ will mate in three moves: 1. … Kh8 2. Qg8! Rxg8 3. 3. Nf7 checkmate. But the challenge was to mate in only two moves, and only answer "c" does that.

Question #10

Correct Answer: d

Explanation: 1. Nf6+! forces the black king to move to play 1. … Kh8, and then White follows up with 2. Qxh7 checkmate. After 1. Nf6+!, Black cannot capture the white knight with 1. … gxf6 because his g-pawn is pinned by the white rook on g2. So his only move to get out of check is 1. … Kh8, which allows the checkmate by the white queen.