



# Analytical Thinking Method

As you consider your next chess move, it is essential to perform a reality check. Look at the whole board and analyze forcing moves (checks, captures, threats) for both sides. Make sure you analyze your opponent's key responses to the move(s) you are considering playing.

Ask yourself the following questions each turn to prevent simple mistakes:

- 1) Did my opponent's last move contain a **threat**? Is the threat **real** and something I need to respond to? Or am I able to ignore that move and continue with my plan?
- 2) Do my pieces have sufficient **protection**? Do I have a piece that is **hanging**? Does my opponent have an under-protected piece?
- 3) Is my **king safe**? What about the opponent's king? Can I take advantage of my opponent's king by, for example, preventing him from castling?
- 4) Did my opponent's last move **prevent** the threat posed by my previous move?
- 5) Do I still need to **develop** my pieces?



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6) Can I bring my rooks to an open file or in general, make them useful? Can I double up rooks on an open file? Do I need to still **open files** for my rooks?

7) Does my opponent have any weaknesses? What are the **targets** I should considering attacking (undefended pieces, under-protected pieces or squares, open king, etc.)?

8) How can I attack the target(s)? Any other weaknesses that can be exploited? What's the **plan**?

9) After looking away for a few seconds and revisiting the position with a completely clean, **unbiased mindset**, does the move I am about to make appear to be a mistake? Am I hanging a piece? Am I falling for a forced checkmate? Did I **analyze all forcing moves** (checks, captures, and threats)? Are my thoughts consistent with what I am calculating?

By applying the analytical thinking method, you will manage to examine positions more thoroughly and better organize your thoughts. To further improve at chess, be sure to check out our courses at [ChessUniversity.com](https://chessuniversity.com) and our **free preview lessons**. Players rated below 1600 Elo, check out the free videos on provoking and attacking targets: <https://chessuniversity.com/courses/provoking-and-attacking-targets-preview-lesson/>