10 The Pawn

You might think knights are odd, but pawns are really weird. They move and capture in different ways. They can’t go backwards (or sideways) or diagonally, except that they can ONLY capture diagonally. And that’s just for starters. We’ve got the Special Moves still to come.

A pawn on its starting square (you will see in a moment that White’s all start on the 2\textsuperscript{nd} rank) has a choice of moving forwards one or two squares.

Once a pawn has left its starting square, it can move only one square forwards at a time (“up” for White, “down” for Black – his start life on the 7\textsuperscript{th} rank).

The pawn on c2 has a choice. The pawn on e4 does not.

Nor does the pawn on g2 – it can’t move at all (it is blocked). Pawns can’t jump and they don’t take the way they move.

Remember, also, they cannot go backwards. Although pawns MOVE forwards in a straight line (“up” for White, “down” for Black), they TAKE diagonally – one square diagonally forwards (never backwards).

This pawn could take one of the coins on c5 and e5 or move to the vacant square d5.

When a pawn captures something, it occupies the same square the something stood on (c5 or e5 here). It does not jump over it – chess is not like draughts!

If it is White to move:

Two possible moves:

d3-d4 and e4xf5.

If it is Black to move:

Three possible moves:

d6-d5, f5-f4 and f5xe4.

Each player starts with eight pawns.
This is how they line up at the start of a game.

White’s across the 2\textsuperscript{nd} rank, Black’s across the 7\textsuperscript{th} rank.

Every pawn, as long as it is still on its starting square, has a choice of advancing one or two squares (assuming it is not blocked). That right applies throughout the game.

White to move.

Can the pawn on b2 take anything? (answer)

What about the pawn on f4, can it capture something? (answer)

Does either pawn have any other move(s)? (answer)

Black to move:

Can the pawn on a3 take anything? (answer)

What about the pawn on f5? (answer)

Does either pawn have any other move(s)? (answer)

How many moves does it take the pawn on a2 to reach the far end of the board? (answer)

How many moves does it take the pawn on h3 to reach the far end of the board? (answer)

How many different ways? (answer)

How many moves does the white pawn need to reach the far end of the board? (answer)

Is there a choice? (answer)

How many different ways? (answer)

[Only White makes moves here – Black stands motionless]
How many moves does the white pawn need to reach the far end of the board?

Is there a choice?

How many different ways?

Remember, a pawn cannot move backwards, so it seems it will be stuck forever (at least until it gets eaten) when it reaches the far end.

Instead, something magic happens.

That's in the Special Moves section.

This is a fun game to play.

White, to move, wins if she can capture all the black pawns.

Black wins if she can get a pawn to the far end (the 1st rank). There are two versions for Black:

Easier: just getting a pawn to the far end wins.

Harder: If White can take the pawn as soon as it arrives, Black has to be able immediately to take the queen.

ANSWERS

- 5th diagram:

Question 1: Yes! It can take the pawn on a3 (b2xa3)

Question 2:

No! (there is nothing on either e5 or g5, the squares on which it could capture if there was something there to be captured)

Question 3: Yes!

The pawn on b2 (not having moved yet) has a choice of two other moves (b2-b3 or b2-b4). The pawn on f4 is blocked (by the pawn on f) and can't move at all.
Question 4: Yes! It can take the pawn on b2 (...a3xb2)

Question 5:
Yes!

It can take the Bg4 (f5xg4 - It doesn't matter that it is blocked from moving forwards)

Question 6: Yes! The a3 pawn could advance to a2 (...a3-a2).

- 6th diagram:

Question 1: 5 or 6 depending whether it chooses the double step on its first move.

Question 2: 5

- 7th diagram:

Question 1: 5 is the quickest

Question 2: Yes!

Question 3:

3 different ways -

1. c2-c4-c5-c6-c7-c8
2. c2-c4xd5-d6-d7-d8
3. c2-c4xd5xe6-e7-e8