2 The King

The king can move forwards (up), backwards (down), sideways or diagonally (forwards or backwards), but only one square at a time.

Other things being equal, this king has a choice of 8 moves.

Each player has one king.

Here, the black king stands on e4.

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He can move to any one of the squares marked with an ‘x’.

Here they are, one white, one black, where they start the game.

They start opposite one another.

They start on the e-file.

They start on a square of opposite colour (white king on a “black” square and black king on a “white” square).

The king has lost the power to jump. Hundreds of years ago it was able to make a special move (King’s Leap) but he just can’t do it any more.

There are some other things that apply to the king (for example, he can’t move to a square occupied by one of his own chessmen), but we cannot consider those until we have introduced some of the other inhabitants.
But we can still carry on with some simple mazes.

Kings love money and there are some coins lying around waiting to be picked up on the following diagrams.

How many moves are needed to go to all the squares with coins?

The best answer is 9.

There are many routes. One good one is c3-c4-d5-c6-b7-c8-d8-e8-f8-g8.

Here 14 is the quickest.

You can go round via f6-c7-c1-f4-h4 or f4-c1-c7-f6-h4 but that’s 15!

The best is f4-h4-f6-c7-c1 which is only 14.

This time it’s 14.

d5 is the nearest square, but going that way (d5-h8-h1) takes 15 moves. Even worse is h1-h8-d5 (17).

Correct is h1-d5-h8.

Once you start a game, both kings remain on the board – always – until the game is over.

Then they, and all the other chessmen should be returned to their box (or wherever they live) or rearranged in the starting position ready for another game.