

Suggestions for effective thinking during a game

You to move

1. Have any tactical possibilities (for either player) arisen as consequence of your opponent's last move? First priority must be to deal with these.
2. Selection of possible moves ("candidate moves") for analysis. Important that you do this *before* starting analysis (otherwise you may miss good candidates).
3. Analyse each candidate move in turn. Don't jump from one to another until you have decided on the merits of the one under consideration.
4. Write down your chosen candidate move. Before playing it, last check for simple oversights (pieces *en prise*, etc). Play the move.

Your opponent to move

1. Look for general tactical motifs in the position ("Remember to watch out for back-rank mating tricks", "If I could get a N to e6, that would fork his Q and K", etc).
2. General strategic/positional assessment of the position ("My opponent has a promising king-side attack – would it be best to defend grimly, aim for counterplay on the queen-side or buy him off by sacrificing the exchange?", etc).

Examples of candidate moves and their systematic analysis



Ost Hansen – Nunn Teeside, 1974

20.Qxb7 Nd2#;
 20.f3 Qc5 21.Nh3 Nd2+ 22.Ke1 Qe3+ 23.Kd1 Qe2+ 24.Kc1 Nxb3+
 25.axb3 Qxc2#;
 20.Ke1 d2+ 21.Ke2 Rxf2+;
 20.Nf3 Qc5 21.Kg1 Qxf2+ 22.Kh2 Rxf3 23.Rhf1 (23.Qxb7 Rh3+)
 23...Qxh4+ 24.Kg1 Rxf1+ 25.Rxf1 Ng3 26.Ra1 (26.Rf3 Ne2+ 27.Kf1
 Qh1+ 28.Kf2 Qg1#) 26...Ne2+ 27.Kf1]
 20.Nh3 Nxf2 21.Nxf2 Qe2+ [21...Qe3 22.Kg1 Rxf2 23.Rh3 (23.Kh2 Ne5;
 23.Rh2 Re2+ 24.Kh1 Re1+ 25.Rxe1 Qxe1#; 23.g3 Rxc2+ 24.Kf1 Qf2#)
 23...Rf3+ 24.Kh2 Rxh3+ 25.gxh3 Qf2+ 26.Kh1 Nd8+]

Two knights (variation)

15.Ba4 Nd2+ 16.Kc3 Qe3+
 15.Nc3 Nc5#;
 15.Nbd2 Nxd2+ 16.Kc3 Qe3+
 15.Nd4 Bg6 16.Rf1 Qxg2
 Ne4+ 19.Kb3 Nc5+ 20.Kc3 Ne4+)
 15.Rf1 Nd2+ 16.Kc3 Qe3+ 17.Bd3



17.Kb4 a5#

17.Bd3 Ne4+ 18.Kb3 Qb6+;
 (16...Nd2+ 17.Kc3 Qe3+ 18.Bd3
 ;
 Ne4+ 18.Kb3 Qb6+)



Yusopov – Nogueiras Montpellier, 1985

1.Qd4 (With five (!) threats: Nxd5, Nb5, Ne4, Rb1, e6) [1.Rc2 Qb6 2.Rb1 Qc7] **1...f6** [1...Qb6 2.e6; 1...Ne6 2.Qxg4; 1...Ng6 2.e6; 1...h6 2.Nxd5; 1...Nh6 2.Nxd5] **2.exf6 gxf6 3.Bxf6 Rg8 4.Nb5 Qxb5 5.Bxb5 Ne6 6.Qb2 cxb5 7.Bh4 1–0**

Tactical theme 2: The trapped piece



Khodos – Mikenas Odessa, 1965

1...Ba8 [1...Rxe5 2.Nxb7 (2.f3 Rd5 3.Nxf7 Kxf7 4.Rc7+ Kf6 5.Rxb7 Rd1+ 6.Kf2 Rd2+ 7.Kg3 Rxb2) 2...Rd5 3.g3 Rd7] **2.f3 Rxe5 3.Rc7**



Dolmatov – Yurtaev Sochi, 1978

1.e6 Bxe6 [1...Bc6 2.Bd4 Rge7 3.Rae1] **2.Rae1 Bd7 3.Rxe8+ Bxe8 4.Re1 Bc6 5.Bd4**

Positional theme 2: positional exchange sacrifices

- One of the big "innovations" of the last 50 years – sacrifice of the exchange without immediate compensation (mating attack, recovery of sufficient material).

- Depends on analysis of given position – is my extra N/B *in this position* as strong/stronger than my opponent's extra R?

Defensive exchange sacrifice



Reshevsky – Petrosian Zurich, 1953

Petrosian's explanation: White is threatening h4, provoking a kingside weakness, to be followed by Bc1 with promising attacking chances for White. If ...Nb8, to be followed by Nd7-b6-d5, then Bf3 and d5. If 25...Rb7 (intending Ne7-d5) then 26. e6 Ne7 27.Bf3 Nd5? 28. Bxd5 Rxd5 29.Qf3. So:

25.. Re6 26.a4 Ne7 27.Bxe6 fxe6 28.Qf1 Nd5 29.Rf3 Bd3 30.Rxd3 cxd3 31.Qxd3 b4 32.cxb4 axb4 33.a5 Ra8 34.Ra1 Qc6 35.Bc1 Qc7 36.a6 Qb6 37.Bd2 b3 38.Qc4 h6 39.h3 b2 40.Rb1 Kh8 41.Be1

Exchange sacrifice to eliminate opponent's best piece

Tolush – Botvinnik Moscow, 1945
 19.Ba3 Rb6 20.Qg3 Qd8 21.Bd6
 24.Re1 Qh4 25.Qe5 Qf6 26.Qg3
 29.Bf3 b4 30.Qxh4 Rxh4 31.g3
 34.h4 Rb7 35.Kh2 Kxd6 36.g4 Nc3
 40.Kg2 Ra2 41.Be2 0-1



1945
 Rxd6 22.exd6 Bc6 23.h3 Kd7
 Rh4 27.Re3 Rf4 28.Be2 Qh4
 Rh8 32.cxb4 axb4 33.Rb1 Rb8
 37.Ra1 Nb5 38.Rd1 Ra7 39.h5 g5

Exchange sacrifice to disrupt

opponent's pawns



Ermenkov - Portisch Skara, 1980

14.0-0 Rxc3 15.bxc3 Nxe4 16.Nxe4 Bxe4 17.Bxe7 Qxe7 18.c4 Rc8
 19.Qe2 Nf6 20.Rac1 h5 21.cxb5 axb5 22.Qxb5 Qa7+ 23.Kh1 h4
 24.Qb3 Ng4 25.h3 Ne3 26.Rg1 Nxf5 27.Kh2 d5 28.c4 Rb8 29.Qc3 Qf2
 30.Qxe5 Rb2 31.cxd5 Qxg2+ 32.Rxg2 Rxg2+ 33.Kh1 Ng3+ 0-1

Britton - Nunn Islington, 1978

1.e4 g6 2.d4 Bg7 3.Nc3 d6 4.Nf3 a6 5.Be2 b5 6.0-0 Nd7 7.Re1 c5
 8.d5 Ngf6 9.Bf1 0-0 10.h3 Qc7 11.a3 Bb7 12.Bf4 Rad8 13.Qd2 Ne5
 14.Qe3 e6 15.Bxe5 dxe5 16.dxe6 fxe6 17.Nd2 Rd4 18.f3 Nh5 19.Ne2
 Nf4 20.Nxd4 exd4 21.Qf2 Be5 22.a4 Nh5 23.g4 Bg3 24.Qe2 Nf4
 25.Qd1 c4 26.axb5 axb5 27.Bg2 Bxe1 28.Qxe1 e5 29.Nf1 Qc5
 30.Kh2 d3 31.cxd3 Nxd3 32.Qd2 Qd4 33.Rb1 Bxe4 34.fxe4 Rf2

35.Qg5 Rxg2+ 36.Kxg2 Nf4+ 0-1 [37.Kf3 Qd3+ 38.Kf2 Qe2+ 39.Kg3 Qg2+ 40.Kh4 Qxh3#]