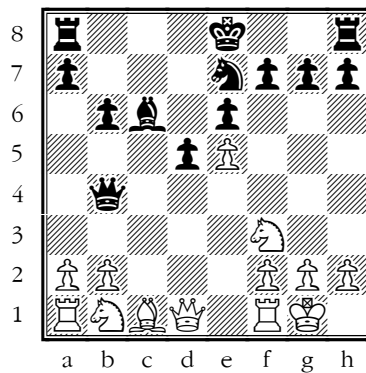# Winning and losing

If you are ahead:
* Don't relax
* Keep control
* Swap pieces off
* Leave pawns on

If you are behind:
* Don't give up
* Get some counterplay (or at least make a mess!)
* Swap pawns, not pieces

How do you want the game to go if you are White? How about if you are Black?

If you're winning, swap off pieces but not pawns
So that's what White wants to do.

If you're losing, swap off pawns but not pieces
So that's what Black wants to do.
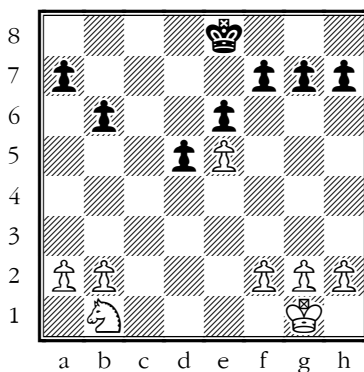
If White's plan is carried out perfectly, we will end up in a position like this one. Black's King won't be able to defend all the pawns nor keep out the white pieces, and White will soon have a Queen.
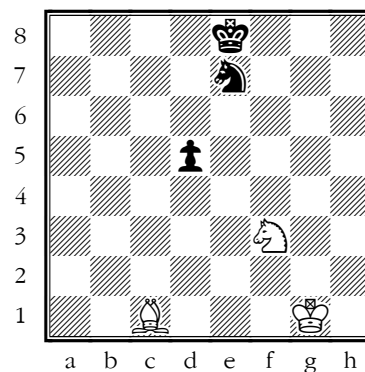
If Black's plan is carried out perfectly, we might end up in a position like this one. White is still a piece up, but White cannot win.

You nearly always have to be at least a Rook ahead, to win an endgame when you have no pawns.

These puzzles are all from the same match!
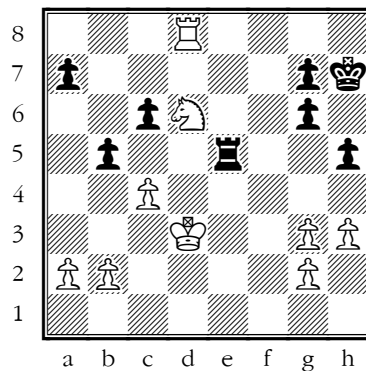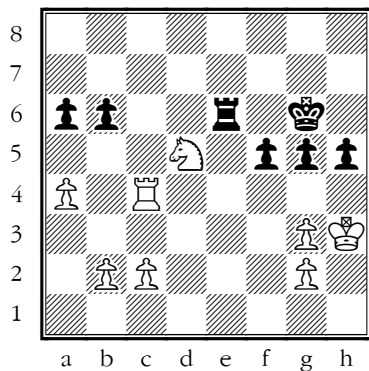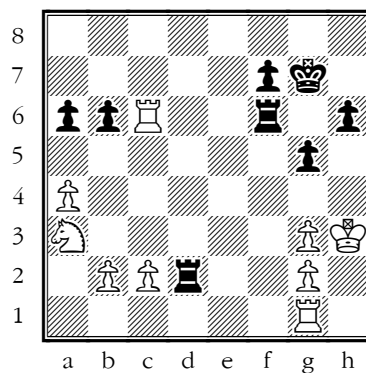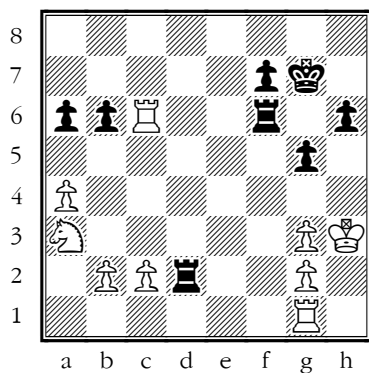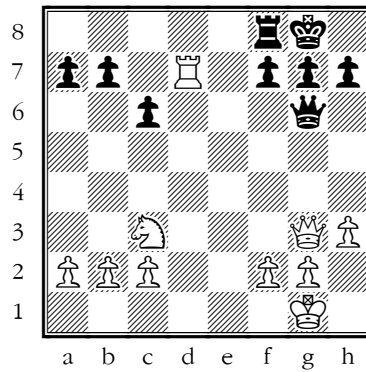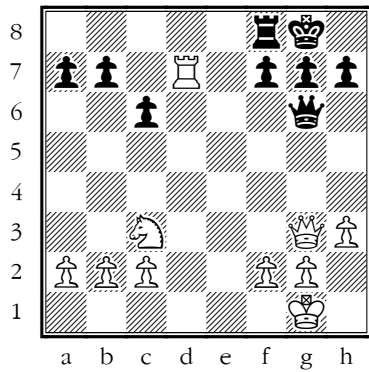
Winning won endgames (and drawing drawn ones)

The other sort of thing to work on, is practising winning endgames that are only just won. When you started playing chess, do you remember practising how to win with a K+Q against K, or K+R vs. K? Well, there is a whole sequence of these, getting gradually harder!

The Icelandic Chess Federation put together 36 graded puzzles. Find a partner, and find a position that you think is the hardest puzzle that you can do. Then take the White pieces, and make sure you get the right result as White, and then swap sides, and see if you can do better as Black!