

<a href="#">How can I practice a specific opening?.....</a>	<a href="#">1</a>
<a href="#">How do the levels work and how do they differ?.....</a>	<a href="#">1</a>
<a href="#">When and why do new levels become available? .....</a>	<a href="#">2</a>
<a href="#">When and why do new category levels become available?.....</a>	<a href="#">2</a>
<a href="#">Why should I choose to play in a higher category level?.....</a>	<a href="#">3</a>
<a href="#">How do hints and takebacks work?.....</a>	<a href="#">3</a>
<a href="#">Can I play Lucas Chess with other chess engines?.....</a>	<a href="#">3</a>
<a href="#">How can I make best use of the tutor's advice? .....</a>	<a href="#">4</a>
<a href="#">How do I back up my preferences and data?.....</a>	<a href="#">7</a>
<a href="#">What information is submitted when I post my scores?.....</a>	<a href="#">8</a>
<a href="#">How can I use Lucas Chess to work on tactics?.....</a>	<a href="#">9</a>
<a href="#">How can I quickly toggle the engine on and off?.....</a>	<a href="#">13</a>
<a href="#">How can I use Lucas Chess for more sophisticated analysis?.....</a>	<a href="#">13</a>
<a href="#">How can I learn from my own blunders in games?.....</a>	<a href="#">18</a>
<a href="#">How can I create my own training modules?.....</a>	<a href="#">24</a>
<a href="#">I'm using a book of chess problems, but the engine won't play the "right" moves, so I can't understand the author's solution. Is there anything I can do?.....</a>	<a href="#">27</a>
<a href="#">How do I resize the chessboard?.....</a>	<a href="#">28</a>

## • How can I practice a specific opening?

To practice a particular opening, click the **Training** button in the menu bar and then click **Game against an engine of your choice**. In the dialog box that appears, select the options you want, such as whether you want to play as white or black, the number of hints, the opponent and tutor engines, and the time control.

Then, in the Opening section at the bottom of the dialog box, click the **Undetermined** button. In the Opening dialog box that appears, use the list box to select a particular opening. With each selection you make, a new list box becomes available, so you can select the exact variation and sub-variation you want to play. Once you have made all your selections, click **Accept** and begin your game.

Note that you cannot choose to play a particular opening in normal, competitive mode (where you are automatically progressed through increasing levels of difficulty).

## How do the levels work and how do they differ?

The levels differ in three ways. First, the category levels of the program differ in the number of hints available to you. Once you exhaust the number of hints you can accept, the program will continue to provide hints on weak moves, but you can no longer accept them. Note that takebacks also count as hints: if you choose to change one of your moves using the Takeback button, you will have used up another of your allotted hints.

The number of hints per category level is as follows:

- Beginner: 7 hints
- Amateur: 5 hints
- Master Candidate: 3 hints

- Master: 2 hints
- Grandmaster Candidate: 1 hint, and once you choose to accept the hint (change your move), no further hints will appear
- Grandmaster: no hints

Second, regarding the numerals that appear after the level name (Beginner Level 1, 2, 3, etc.), these show the search depth of the engine. So at Beginner Level 1, the chess engine looks ahead only one move (two plys or half-moves: one move for White, and the following response for Black). At Beginner Level 2, the engine looks ahead two moves or four plys, and so on. As you improve your play, the engine automatically increases its strength by calculating longer sequences of possible moves to find what it considers the best response.

Third, there is a point system used by the program as you win games. The score for each game is calculated by multiplying the numerical playing level (search depth) by the number of points associated with each category.

The number of points associated with each category is as follows:

- Beginner: 5
- Amateur: 10
- Master Candidate: 20
- Master: 40
- Grandmaster Candidate: 80
- Grandmaster: 160

These calculated scores appear in the titlebar of the Lucas Chess program window and are used to submit your scores (Information menu > Post your score).

## **When and why do new levels become available?**

### **(Beginner Level 1, 2, 3..., Amateur Level 1, Master Candidate...)**

To advance to the next numerical level (that is, the next search-depth level within a category), you must win one game from that engine as White and one as Black. Then you are automatically “promoted” by the program (the engine increases its search depth by one additional move).

## **When and why do new category levels become available?**

### **(Amateur, Master Candidate, Master, Grandmaster Candidate, Grandmaster)**

When you first start the program, only Beginner Level 1 is available by default. Additional levels become available (active selections in the New Game menu) once you have advanced to the next numerical level in the previous category.

So, if you are at Beginner Level 1, no other categories are available. Once you have progressed to Beginner Level 2, you **could** choose to play at Amateur Level 1 as an alternative to continuing in the Beginner category. And once you have reached Beginner Level 4, you could choose to switch to the Amateur category and play until you have reached Amateur Level 3. To advance to a higher level in the new category (Amateur), you first need to return to the previous category (Beginner) and win more games to advance to higher levels there.

Until you have played in a new category, however, you will still see only the first numerical level displayed in the menu. In other words, if you stick to the Beginner levels – regardless of how high the search depth is currently – you will have to start playing the Amateur category at Level 1. The same rules apply for progressing through the numerical levels at each category (winning one game as White and one as Black).

## Why should I choose to play in a higher category level?

The only difference in the category levels is the number of hints you are offered (and that you can accept) and the points awarded. There is nothing wrong with staying at a given category and simply allowing the program to progress you to more advanced search depth levels within that category. Selecting a category level is simply a matter of personal preference, and whether you want to continue to be able to accept more (or fewer) hints. However, to better gauge your progress, you may choose to play at the higher category levels, where you will have to play with fewer hints to guide you (or with no hints, at the Grandmaster level).

## How do hints and takebacks work?

When playing rated games, the number of hints (or takebacks) you get is tied to the category level you are playing (Beginner, Amateur, etc.).

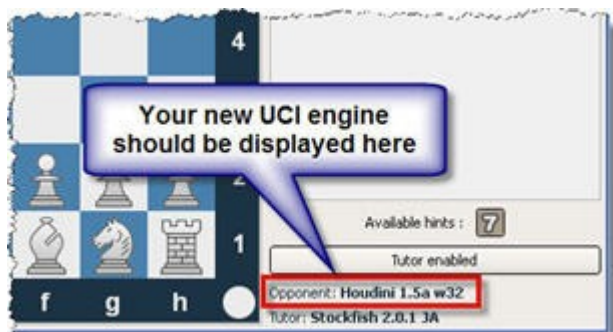
However, if you use the Training function – for example, to select a particular opening to practice against the computer – then the number of hints is essentially unlimited. In the “Game against an engine of your choice” dialog box, you can choose the number of hints available, up to a maximum of 99. You can also use the Takeback check box to control that function. If the Takeback box is filled (has a check mark in it), you can take back as many moves as you like, without limit. However, if the box is cleared, then you only have as many takebacks allowed as you have hints. Once you have used up all your allotted takebacks, the Takeback button disappears from the menu bar.

## Can I play Lucas Chess with other chess engines?

You can install additional UCI engines in Lucas Chess. To do so, start in the main window of Lucas Chess (not the game window) and follow these steps:

1. Click **Options > External Engines**.
2. In the External Engines dialog box, click **New**, browse to the folder containing the engine you have downloaded, select it, and then click **Open**.
3. In the engine’s dialog box that appears, review the settings, make any changes you want, and then click **Accept**.
4. Click **Save** to close the External Engines dialog box.
5. Click **Training > Game against an engine of your choice**.
6. In the Engines area of the dialog box, click the **Opponent** list box and select the UCI engine you installed. Any additional engines you install will have an asterisk (\*) next to the engine name.
7. Make any other selections you want (such as opening or tutor engine) and click **Accept** to close the “Game against...” dialog box.
8. The game board appears and you can begin playing against the new chess engine you installed.

9. In the bottom right of the chessboard interface, the opponent and tutor engines (if applicable) are displayed. You should see the name of your new engine in the Opponent field. If another engine name is displayed, repeat the preceding steps carefully, and be sure to select the new engine as the opponent.



**Note:** You can also select any UCI engine you install in Lucas Chess as the default tutor. In the main Lucas Chess window, click **Options > Configuration**. In the Configuration dialog box, click the **Tutor** tab and then use the **Engine** list box to select the engine you want to use as the default tutor. Click **Accept** to close the dialog box. The Lucas Chess window will close and then launch again with the new preferences saved.

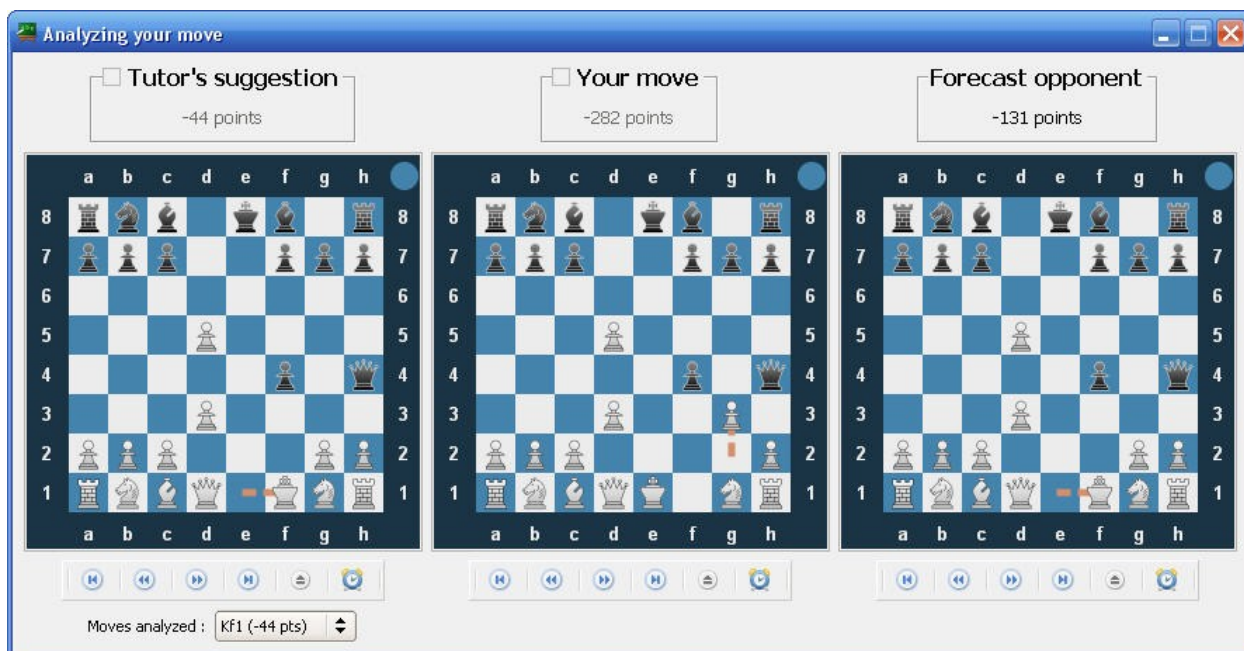
## How can I make best use of the tutor's advice?

### Some of the suggested moves don't make sense to me.

After you make a weak move in your game (and the tutor feature is enabled), the tutor window or hint window appears (this window is actually called Analyzing your move).

The tutor window contains three small chessboards. The first board displays the tutor's suggested move, the second shows the move you just made, and the third shows the move the chess engine you are playing against expected you to make (called "Forecast opponent"). Frequently, the tutor's suggested move and the "Forecast opponent" move will be the same; chess engines often tend to think alike. Most of the time, you will want to focus your attention on the first chessboard in the tutor window: the Tutor's suggestion.

If you want to accept the tutor's suggested move instead of the move you made, click the **Tutor's suggestion** check box. If you want to disregard the hint and stay with your move, click the **Your move** check box. You return to your game and the move you selected is made.



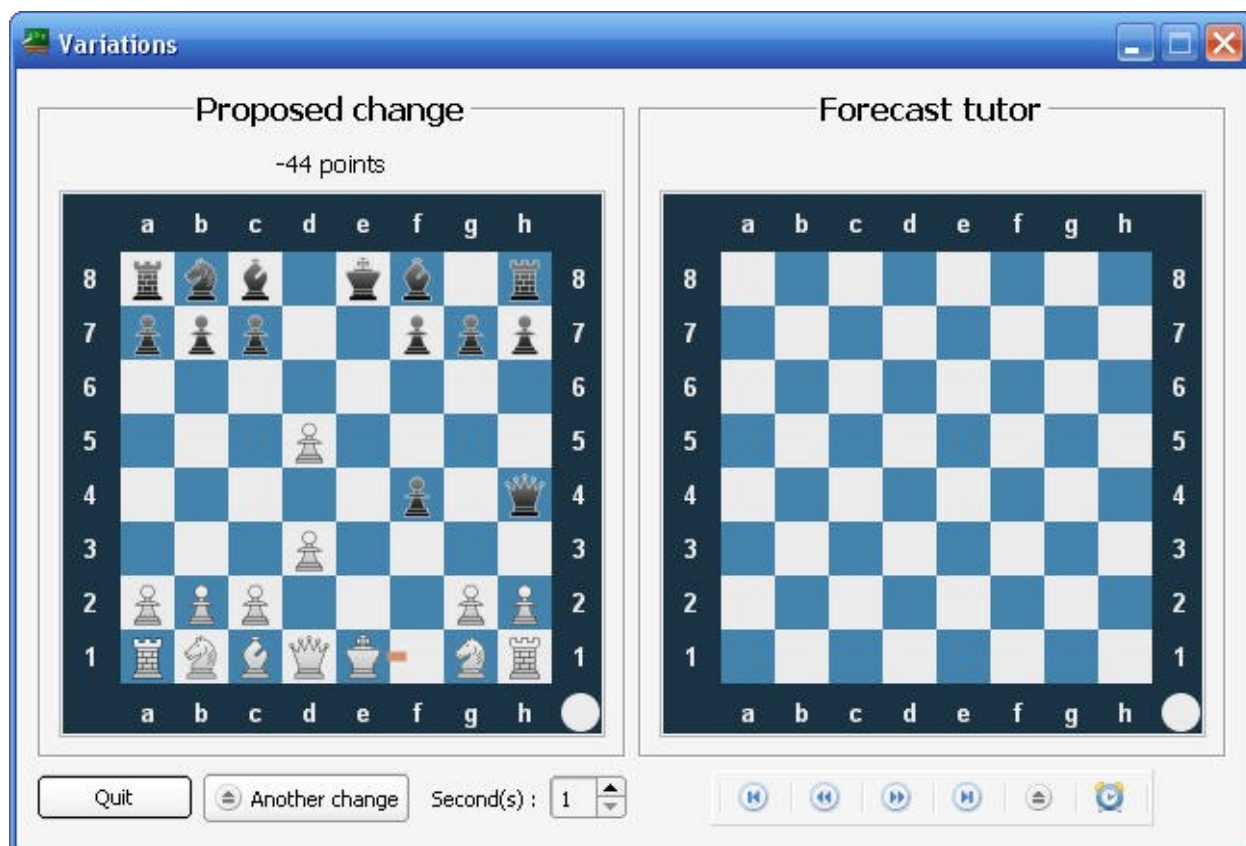
To make the best use of the tutor's advice and to understand the reasons behind some of the suggested moves, you will need to use the VCR-style toolbar beneath each of the mini-chessboards in the tutor window.



The buttons from left to right on the toolbar are named First move, Previous move, Next move, Last move, Analysis of variation, and Timed movement. You can use the first three buttons to move back and forth through the variation suggested by the tutor. The fourth button will jump to the last move in the variation (the final position). The sixth button is the **Timed movement** button, and looks like an alarm clock. If you want to animate the whole sequence of moves in the tutor's proposed variation – rather than click through each move individually – click the **Timed movement** button. It functions like the play button on a video player.

The fifth button is the **Analysis of variation** button. If you click this button, a Variations window appears. The Variations window allows you to try out different moves within a variation suggested by the tutor. Experimenting with "candidate" moves this way can be helpful when you are trying to understand the moves the tutor is suggesting. If you can't see the reason for a certain move, try replacing it with another move in the Variations window.

In the Variations window, there are two chessboards. The first one is called Proposed change. This board will display the same position as on the Tutor's suggestion board, *at the same point in the variation that you navigated to* (in the tutor window) using the VCR-style buttons. The second board in the Variations window is called Forecast tutor, and initially it will be empty.



In the example above, you can see that the tutor is suggesting that White moves his king to f1 in this position (notice the orange dashed line, which is very short in this example because the destination square is only one square away). If you wanted to know why the engine thinks this is a good move, you can use this Variations window to try another move and see what the refutation might be.



So, in this example, imagine you wanted to know why blocking the check with your g-pawn is **not** recommended. Use the Proposed change chessboard to make that move (g2-g3). Once you do, the Forecast tutor chessboard displays the new position, *after Black's reply to your new move*. Now, you can use the VCR-style buttons under the Forecast tutor board to play through the subsequent variation.



The graphic above shows our alternate move g3 and Black's reply to it, which is fxg3, as shown on the Forecast tutor board. You can play through the rest of the variation on the Forecast tutor board to see what the outcome will be. Then, you can compare this variation with the one proposed by the tutor in the tutor window (starting with Kf1, in our example). This way, you can experiment with different candidate moves and the resulting variations without affecting your actual game.

## How do I back up my preferences and data?

All user data for Lucas Chess are stored in the program's UsrData folder. By default, after installing the program, the folder is found here: C:\Program Files\AjedrezLucas\UsrData. To back up your data, simply copy the UsrData folder to another drive or burn to a CD or DVD. If you want to use Lucas Chess on another computer and retain your settings/rating, simply install Lucas Chess on that computer and replace the contents of the UsrData folder with the ones you backed up. (Be sure the program is not running when you overwrite the contents of this folder.)

## What information is submitted when I post my scores?

You can post your scores to enter the Lucas Chess rating competition (strictly for fun). To do so, click **Information > Post your score** in the main program window.

The information that will be sent to the Lucas Chess website includes:

- Your alias – this does not have to match the name in the program, and you can change it as often as you like.
- Scores. Use the check boxes to send only the Lucas-Elo scores or ratings for each engine and category you have played (or both). If you clear both check boxes, your previously submitted scores will be deleted from the website.
- The current date and time.
- User ID. When you install the program, you create an ID based on the current date and time and a random number to ensure that all IDs are different. This feature allows you to change your alias/nickname without having duplicate records posted on the site.

★ Post your score

Alias :

Information about sent data:

**Alias:** you want to appear in the ranking.  
**Id:** unique ID, created with a random number and the date where the program was used for the first time.  
**Current date:** the current date where data were sent.  
**Data are sent to the web site (data are sent crypted).**

☒ Ratings: for each engine and category.

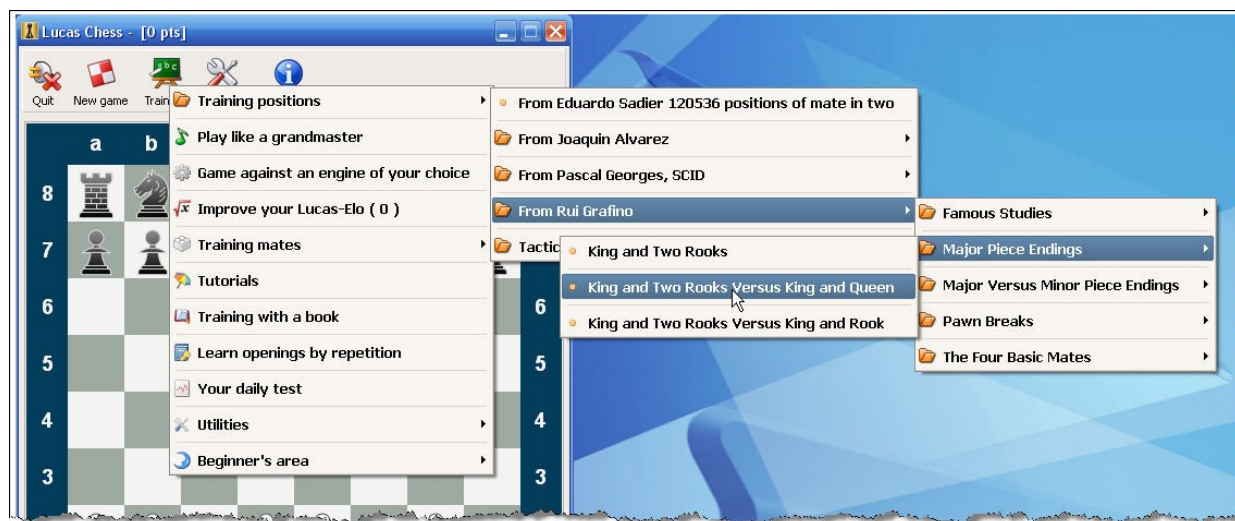
☒ Lucas-Elo



## How can I use Lucas Chess to work on tactics?

### Method 1

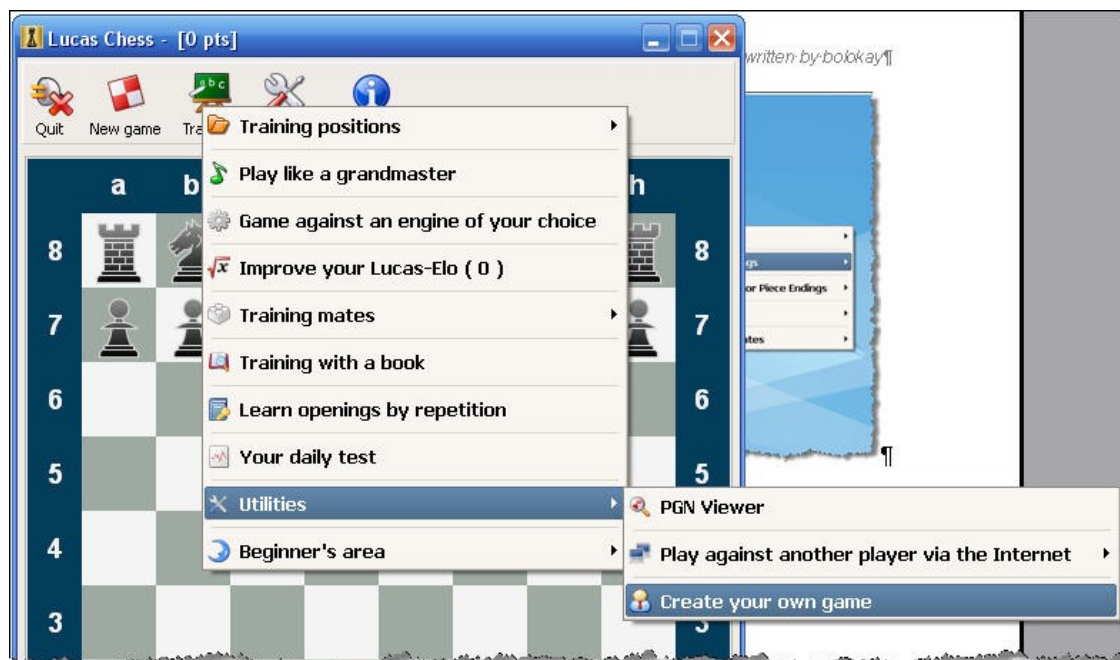
Lucas Chess includes several collections of training positions you can practice against. To access these collections, click **Training** > **Training positions** and then pick one of the collections that appear in the sub-menu. The folders in that sub-menu contain additional categorized sub-folders, such as From Rui Grafino > Famous Studies, Major Piece Endings, Major Versus Minor Piece Endings...



## Method 2

You can also use Lucas Chess to practice tactics using a conventional, published book of tactical positions or chess “puzzles.” To set up the position:

1. Click **Training > Utilities > Create your own game.**



2. Notice that the toolbar buttons have changed: you're now in the game window. Here, you can begin moving the pieces for both sides to arrive at the key position (if working on opening tactics). Or, you can set up a middlegame or endgame position, as described below.
3. Click **Config > Start Position**.



4. In the Position window, use the piece buttons and check boxes to set up the position (refer to the tips in the Help section at the bottom-left).
5. When done, click **Accept**.



### Position Window Tips

- To flip the board, so that the black pieces are on the bottom during the setup, double-click the white circle in the bottom-right corner of the chessboard. (This feature works in any Lucas Chess game window.)
- Clicking **Start position** will reset the chessmen to the standard start position. Do **not** click this button once you've arranged the pieces or you'll lose all your work!
- You can click **Copy FEN position** if you want to paste this position in another LC window or another chess application.
- If you have already copied a FEN position onto the clipboard from another window or program, you can click the **Paste FEN position** button to instantly create that position here.
- Clicking **Clear board** will, as you might expect, remove all the chessmen so you can quickly create an endgame position.

### Playing the Position

Now that you have set up the position, you're ready to start solving it and improving your tactical abilities. In the game window, you can make moves for both sides. Or, you can play the position against the computer. To do so, click **Config > Enable engine**. The engine is now turned on, and – after your next move – will remain enabled and play against you.

If the engine selects a move you don't want to play against, simply click the **Takeback** button, click **Config > Disable engine**, and then make the desired move for the opponent.

At this point, you can either turn the engine back on, or, if it's a complicated position and you want to remain in control of the variation and the opponent's move choices, use the handy engine toggle function! See the next topic to learn how this feature works.

## How can I quickly toggle the engine on and off?

When you're playing a position you've created (see previous topic, Method 2), you can leave the engine off to make the moves for both sides, and then only turn the engine on when you want it. Fortunately, you don't have to keep using the **Config > Enable/Disable engine** commands to do so. The nice thing about toggling the engine on and off is that you can do it whenever you want, even when it's your turn to move. This is a great way to see how to play against different defences, especially unexpected ones that the engine may come up with in tactical positions, and where you are beginning to lose a supposedly won position.

With the game in progress (and the engine disabled) press the keyboard shortcut **CTRL+1** to turn the engine on. The engine will make the next move and then immediately disable itself. After your next move, you can press **CTRL+1** again to turn the engine on again or make the opponent's move yourself. If, after toggling the engine on, the engine makes a move that you cannot figure out how to respond to adequately, press **CTRL+1** on your move, and the engine will quickly calculate a response and play it. You can even play through a position this way if you like, pressing **CTRL+1** after every move and watch the engine play against itself using the default settings. This is a good way to get some quick suggestions in a tactical position that you are having trouble solving on your own.

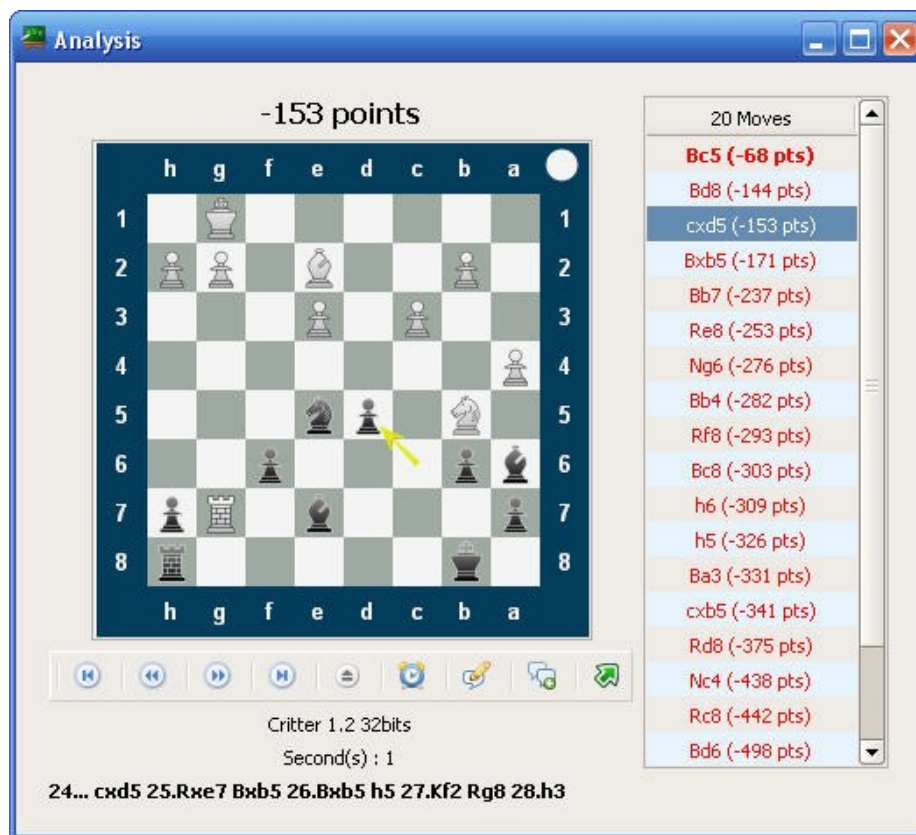
## How can I use Lucas Chess for more sophisticated analysis?

If the engine toggle described in the previous topic doesn't meet your needs, you can conduct more sophisticated analysis of potential multiple variations using the Analysis window and the View PGN functions.

After finishing a game against the engine in Lucas Chess (or after loading a PGN of any chess game using the **Training > Utilities > PGN Viewer** function):

1. In the game window, click any of the moves in the notation pane to navigate through the game.
2. When you find a move you want to analyze, double-click that move in the notation pane to launch the Analysis window.

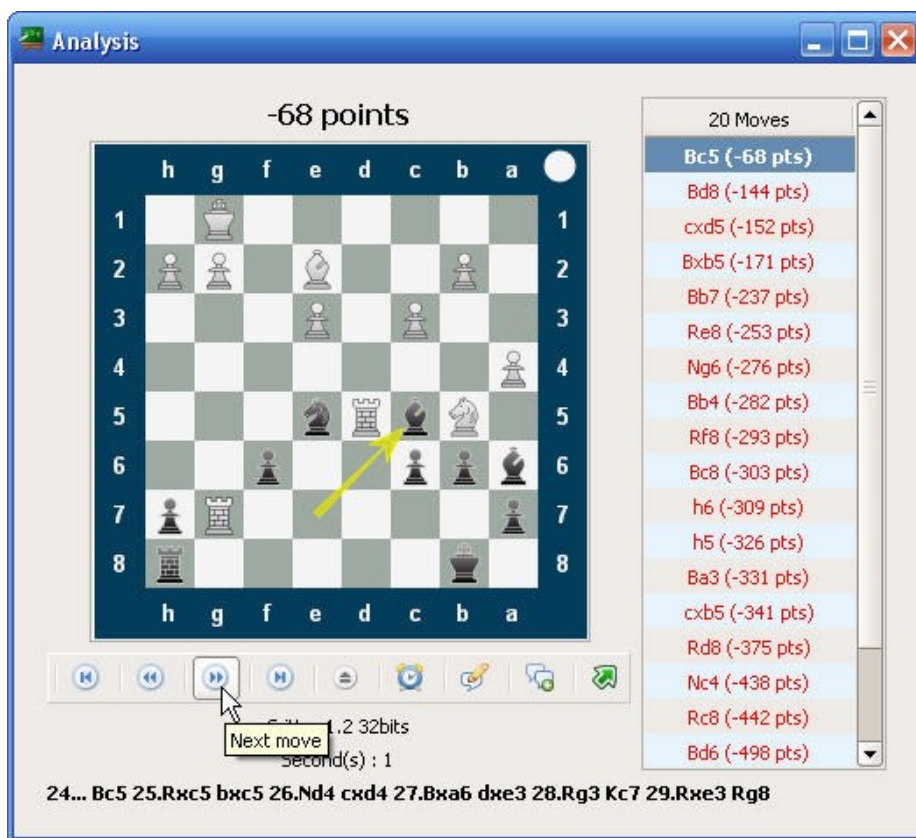
3. The Analysis window displays the move you made, its strength as determined by the default tutor engine (shown in points), as well as other possible moves. The strongest move is listed first, followed in descending order by weaker moves. In the example shown below, the move that Black played in the actual game is the third in the list, evaluated at -153 points. In this particular position, the strongest move is evaluated at -68 points.





4. Click any of the moves listed in this window to update the position on the chessboard with the alternative move.

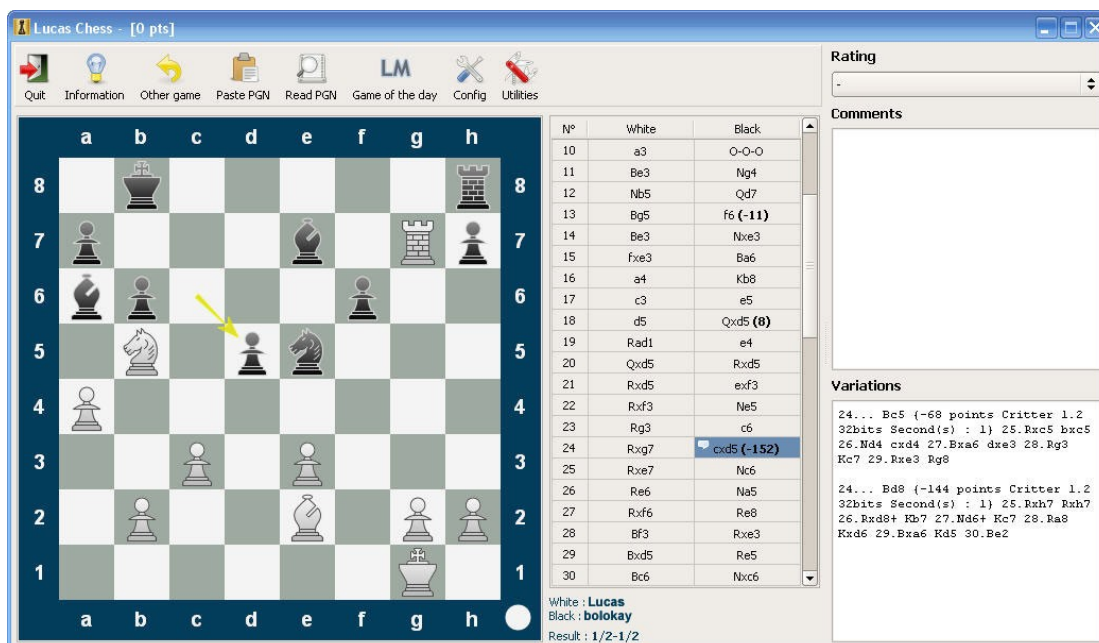


- If you want to study any of these alternative moves and see what might have happened if you chose that move instead, click the move in the list and then click the **Next move** button in the VCR-style toolbar and play through the variation. You can also see the moves for that particular variation listed in algebraic notation at the bottom of the window.



- To save that variation to the notation pane in the game window, click the **Save**  button.
- If instead you want to save **all** the variations listed, click the **Save++**  button.
- To return to the game window, click the **Close** button in the Analysis window.
- Back in the game window, right-click the notation pane to display the Comment and Variations fields. Alternatively, you can click **Config > View > PGN information** to show/hide these fields.

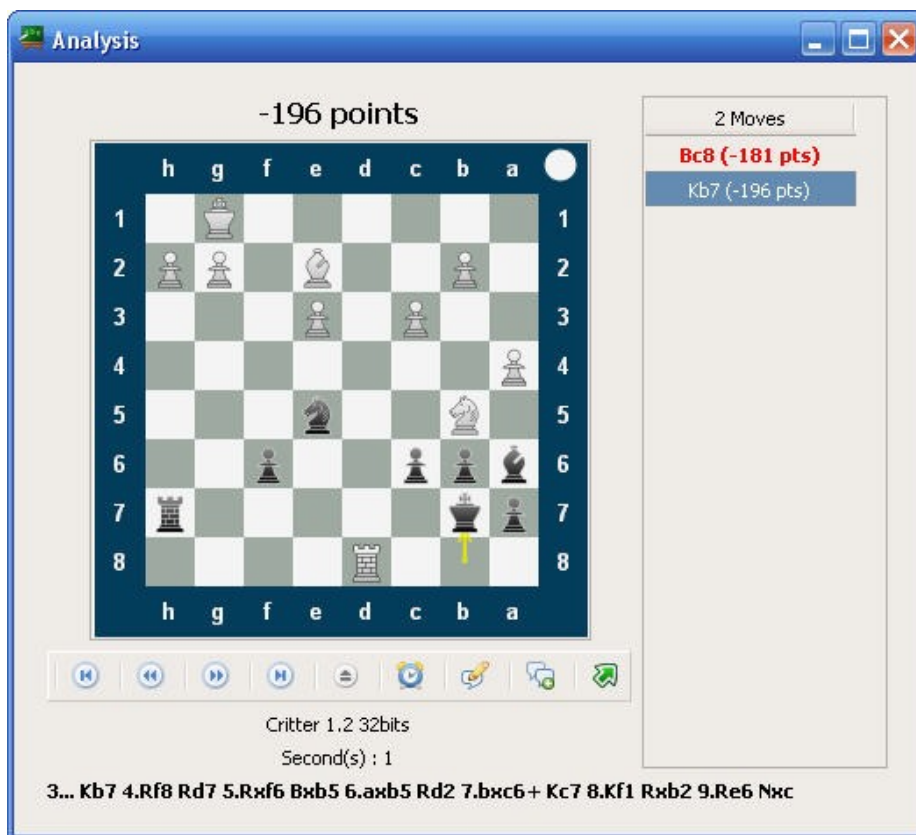
10. The variations you selected now appear in the Variations field of the game window.



11. Now that the variations you saved are listed in the game window, you can double-click any of those variations to open another window with that particular variation displayed and play through the moves by clicking each move in the notation pane.



12. Finally, you can even analyze the moves in this particular variation to generate more options. Double-click any of the moves in the notation pane of the Variation window.
13. A new Analysis window appears, showing the move you selected as well as numerous alternative moves.



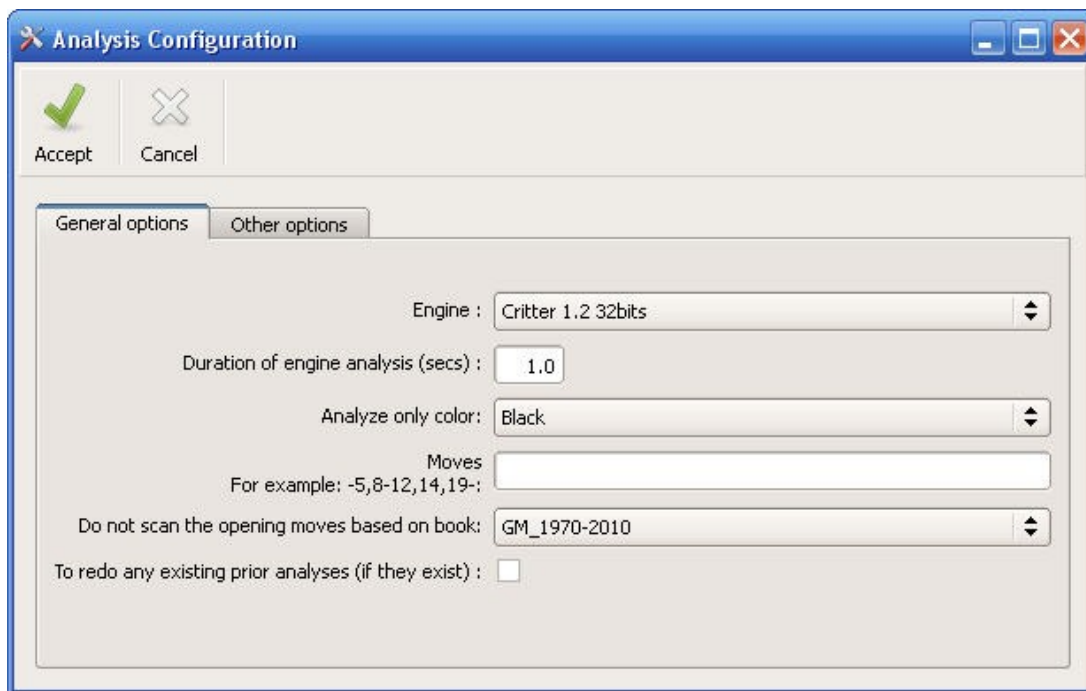
## How can I learn from my own blunders in games?

Lucas Chess allows you to analyze your games in detail and even train using blunders from your own games. (See the preceding topic for the basics of analyzing single moves within a game.)

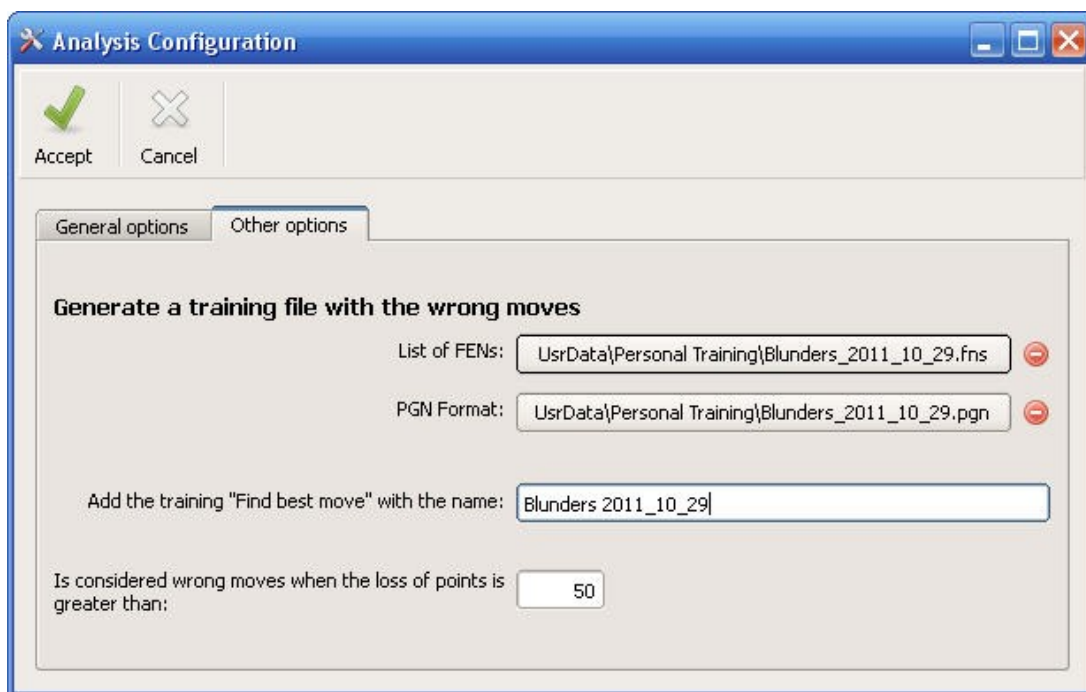
To practise playing positions from your own games where you made poor moves, follow the steps outlined below, which are separated into two stages:

### Stage 1 – Analyze the game

1. With the completed game onscreen (either a game you just finished playing or a PGN you opened with the PGN viewer), click **Config > View > PGN information**. You'll notice new fields on the right of the interface: Comments and Variations, as well as a Rating list box.
2. Click **Utilities > Analyze**.
3. In the General options tab of the Analysis Configuration window, select the engine you want to use and choose your other settings – such as which color and which moves to analyze. If you leave the Moves field blank, all moves for the color you select will be analyzed (except the moves present in the selected opening book).

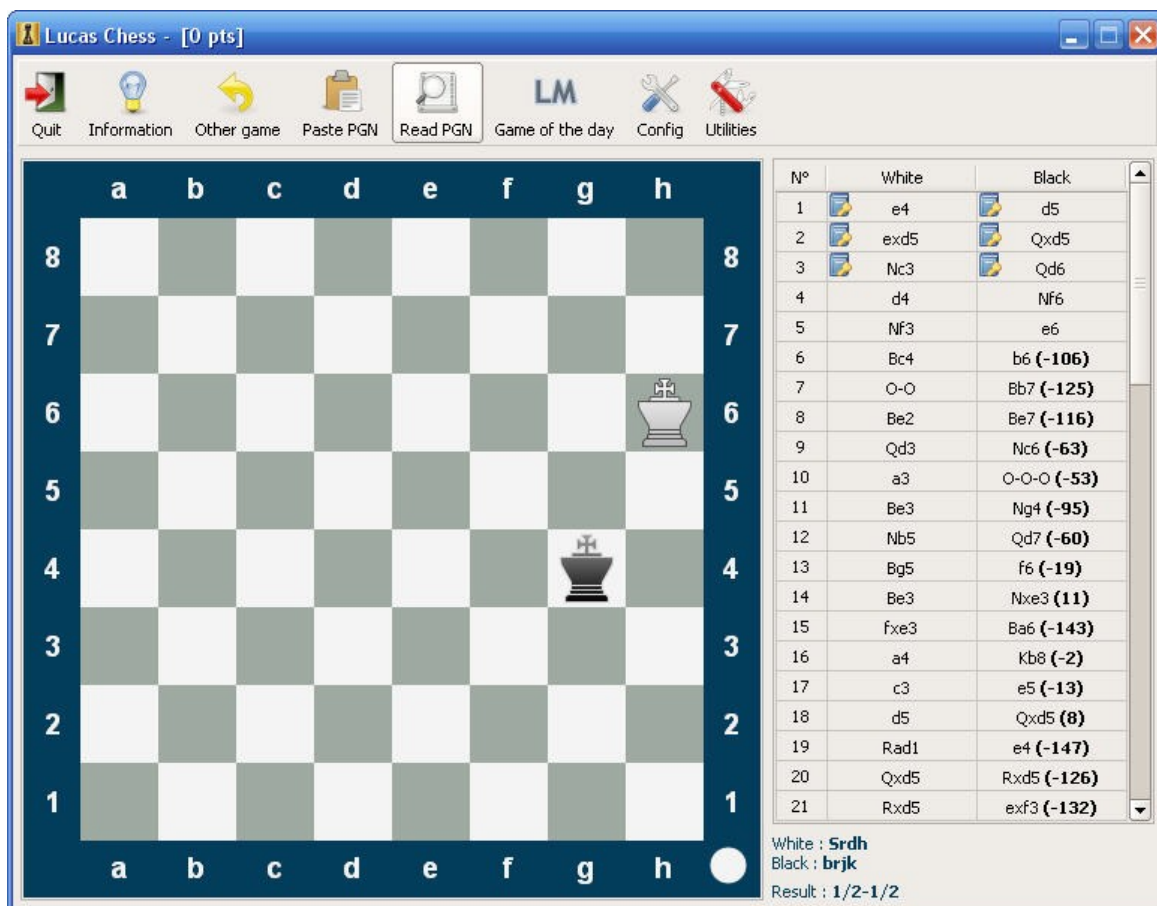


- Click the Other options tab and add file names for the training files. Be sure **not** to skip the third field, "Add the training "Find best move"... Without a file name entered here, you will not be able to use the Find best move feature, which is the key to training in these positions where you made blunders.



- Use the last field in the window to indicate the blunder threshold: the lower the value, the greater the number of sub-optimal moves that will be included in the training positions file and considered blunders.
- After configuring the settings, click **Accept**.

7. The moves in the notation pane now have scores attached to them. You can double-click any move to open the Analysis window and view alternative moves (see previous topic in this FAQ for more details on working with analyzed moves).

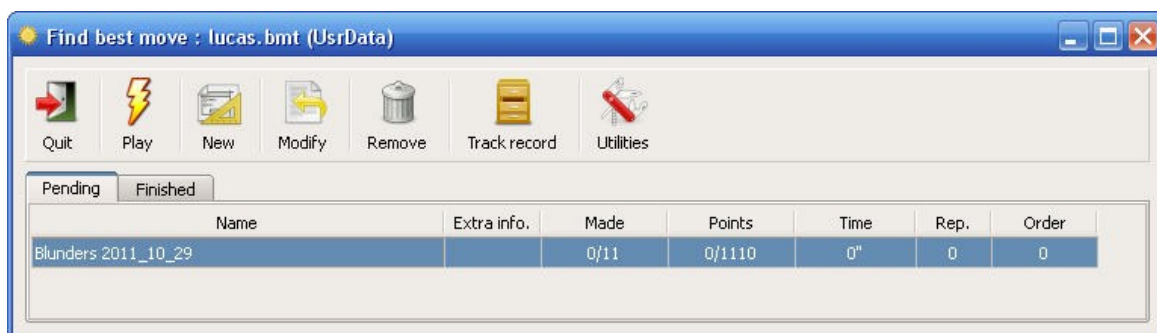


Now that you have analyzed the game, and generated a training file of positions, you can close this game window and return to the main window (click the **Quit** button on the toolbar). You are ready to enter the next stage and begin training yourself in these positions and learning to avoid making blunders.

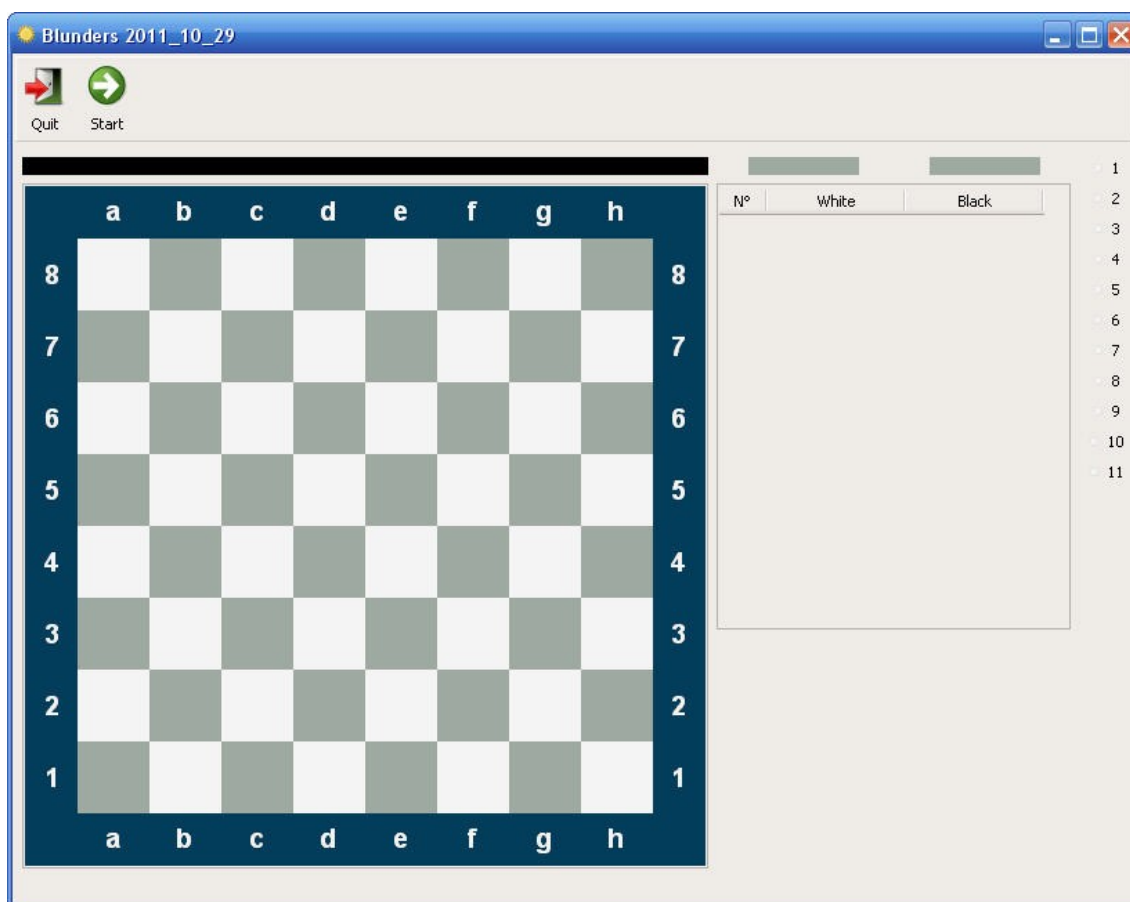


## Stage 2 – Find best move

1. In the main window, click **Training > Find best move**. The Find best move window appears.



2. If this is your first time using this feature, there will be only one file displayed. Otherwise, be sure to select the correct blunder file and then click **Play**. A blank chessboard appears with the file name you created in Stage 1 displayed in the titlebar.



3. Click the **Start** button. The Find best move training mode begins.

4. You are presented with the first training position (blunder) from your analyzed game. Try to make the strongest move in this position.



If the move you make is the strongest or “best” move (as determined by the engine during the analysis):

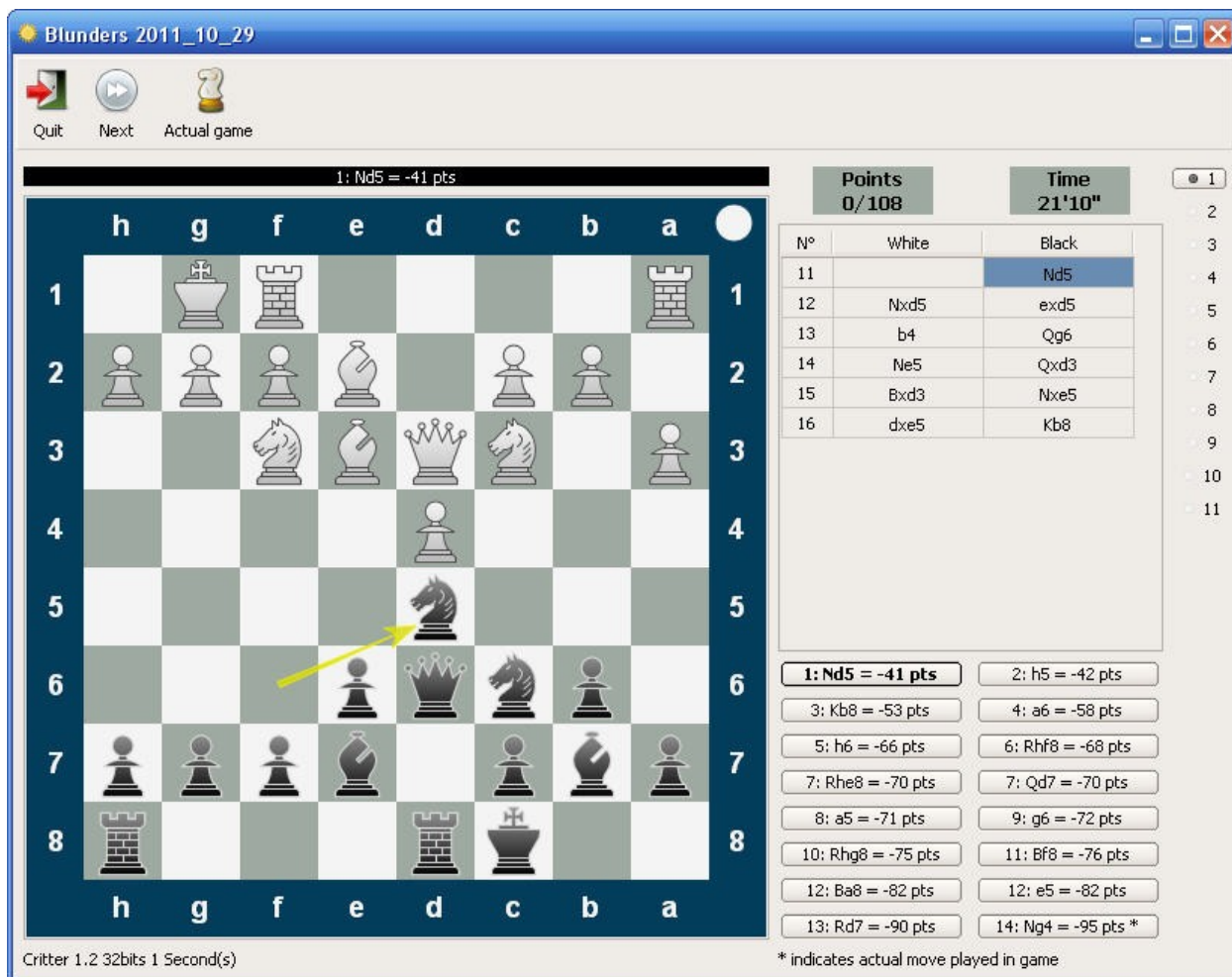
- The move is entered on the chessboard;
- The position is considered solved;
- The move is displayed in the bottom of the window in the number 1 position; and
- You can click the **Next** button on the toolbar to attempt to solve the second position in the training file.

If you make a move that is lower in the list (and therefore not the best move), a button appears in the lower right of the window, indicating the sort order of the move and its numerical evaluation. At the same time, the piece snaps back into place, so you can continue to try other moves. In the example below, you can see that both pawn to a6 (the fourth-strongest move) and pawn to a5 (the eighth strongest move) were attempted. Since neither of these moves are the strongest, we have to continue trying other moves.



If the move you make is not in the list of analyzed moves at all, there is no feedback and the piece you moved simply snaps back into place.

If you cannot find the strongest move and want to see the answer, click the **Help** button. You have resigned this position and are then shown the analyzed moves. In the example below, you can see that the best move in this position is Nd5. You can also see the move that you played in the actual game, which is notated in the list with an asterisk. In this example, it turns out that the move we played in the actual game was the last move analyzed (number 14) – which in this case, is the worst move in the list of analyzed variations.



Now that you have seen the correct answer and compared it with the move you played in the actual game, you can click the **Next** button on the toolbar to try again with the second position from the analyzed game.

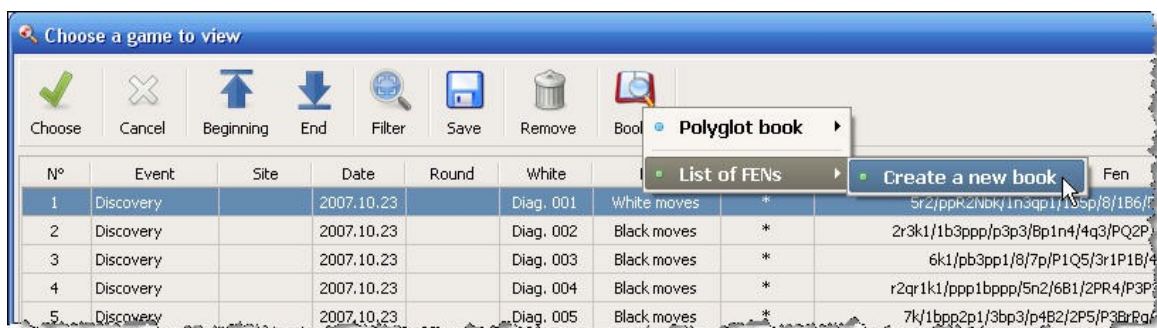
## How can I create my own training modules?

### Method 1

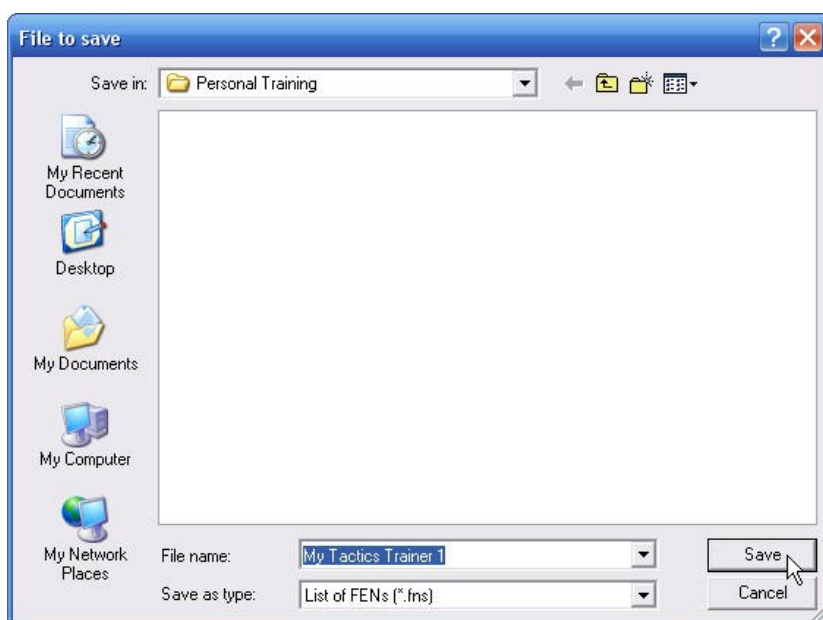
It's easy to create your own collections of training positions to use in Lucas Chess. The fastest way is to get a PGN database of positions you want to train against. You may find some free ones on the Internet, or you may want to create your own collection, for example, using a conventional chess tactics book. You can use a chess database program to save the positions from the book in a PGN database.

Once you have a PGN database of positions, you just need to open it and convert it to a list of FEN positions in Lucas Chess:

1. In the main Lucas Chess window, click **Training > Utilities > PGN Viewer**.
2. On the new menu bar that appears, click **Read PGN**.
3. Navigate to the folder containing your PGN database, select the file and then click **Open**.
4. In the list of positions (Choose a game to view), click the **Books** button, point to **List of FENs** and then click **Create a new book**.



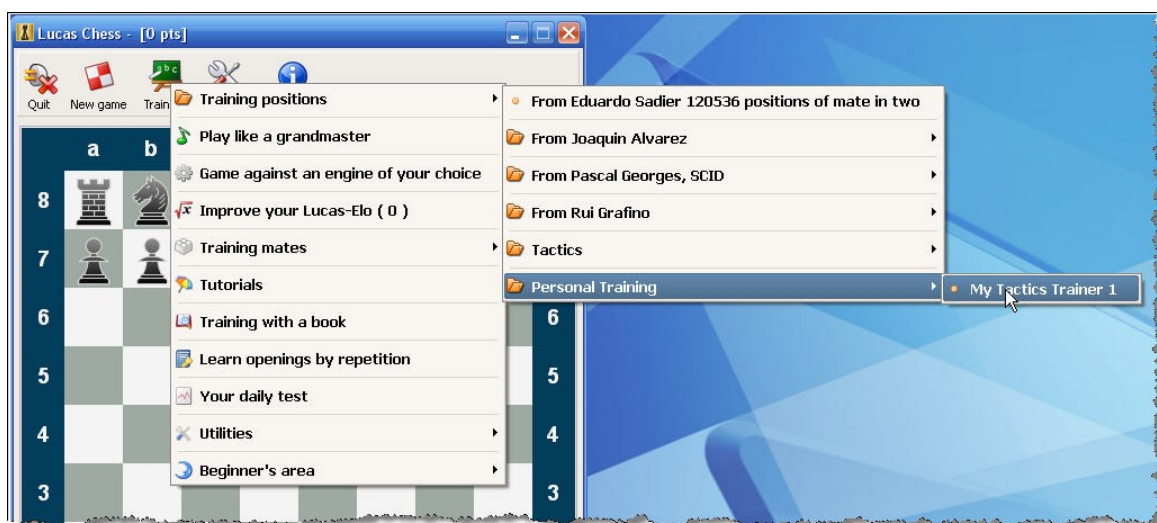
5. At this point, Lucas Chess creates a new subfolder called Personal Training inside the UsrData folder (which is inside the main program folder). In the “File to save” dialog box, create a name for your file and save the file (.fns) in the new subfolder.



6. Click **Continue** in the confirmation dialog box that appears.
7. Now that you have converted your PGN file and saved it, close the “Choose a game to view” window and then click **Quit** to close the PGN Viewer.



- Back in the main window of Lucas Chess, you will now find your new collection of training positions in the **Training > Training positions > Personal Training** menu.

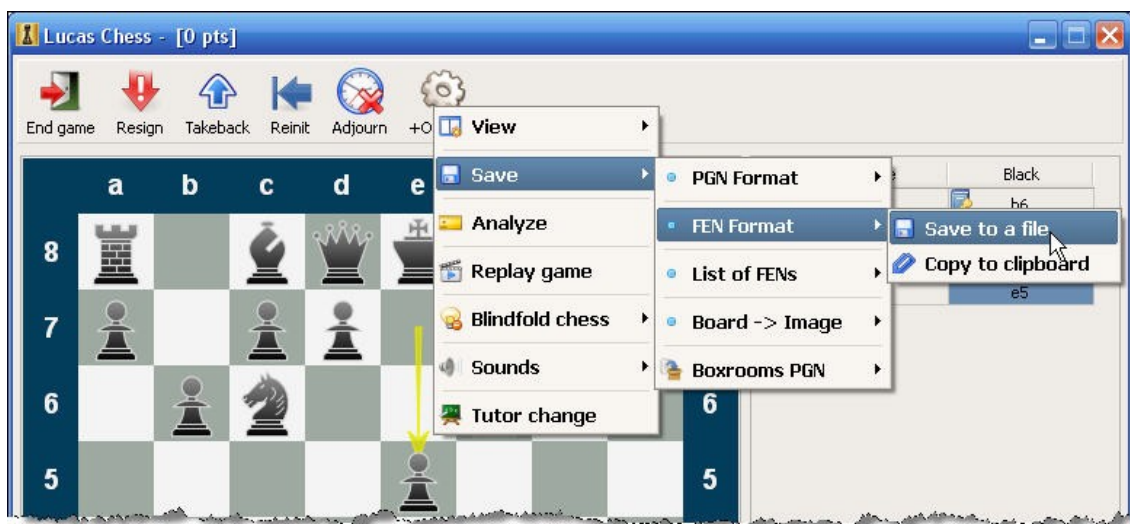


- After opening the new training module, you can play the position against the default chess engine. To navigate among the different positions/problems in the collection, click the **Next** (or **Previous**) button.

## Method 2

Another way to create training positions is to save them directly from within Lucas Chess. With a position on the Lucas Chess board that you want to save and practice:

- Click the **+Options** button on the menu bar.
- Point to **Save**, point to **FEN Format** and then click **Save to a file**.
- Save the FEN position in the Personal Training folder.



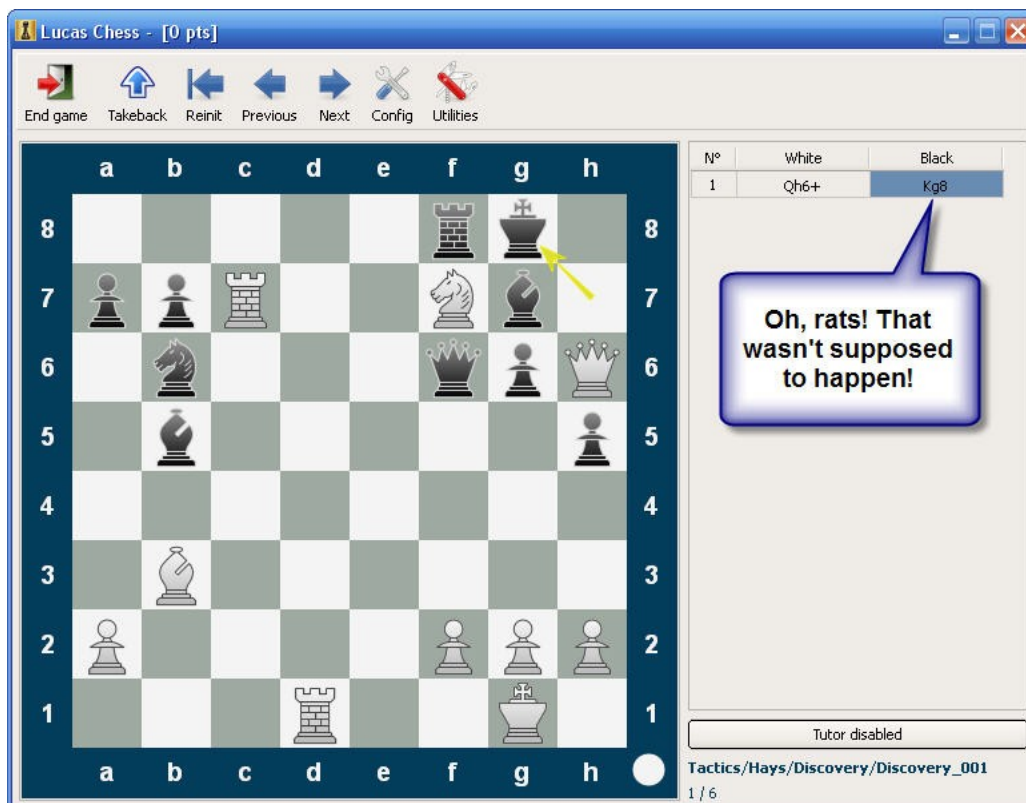
If you have a number of related positions, you may want to save them in an appropriately named subfolder within the Personal Training folder, such as Pins, Forks, etc.



## I'm using a book of chess problems, but the engine won't play the "right" moves, so I can't understand the author's solution. Is there anything I can do?

Chess authors and chess engines often have a different view of tactical positions and their solutions. The engine will usually choose moves that extend the game, whenever possible, even if the position is still technically lost. And occasionally the engine will find a superior defence, one that the author may have overlooked, possibly leading to a different outcome. So unless the solution to the puzzle you're working on is 100% forced (no other moves are possible), the published solution and the moves the engine picks will often differ. Fortunately, Lucas Chess includes a number of features you can use to practise solving the puzzle the way you want (i.e., force the opponent to play certain moves).

Let's say you're working on the following tactical problem. The author says the tactic being demonstrated is a discovery and gives the following solution: 1. Qh6+ Bxh6 2. Ng5+ Kh8 3. Rh7# 1-0. Wonderful! If Black cooperates and captures your queen with his bishop, then on your second move you launch a devastating double-check: the knight checks the king from g5 **and** reveals a discovered check from the rook on c7. But when you try to solve this problem using Lucas Chess, the engine won't cooperate and instead plays 1...Kg8. Now the nice discovery of 2. Ng5+ doesn't work. Even if you can figure out another way of winning for White, you want to learn the lesson the author intended. What to do?



To solve this problem and control the opponent's moves, refer to p. 12, under the heading *Playing the Position*, as well as the next topic on p. 13, *How can I quickly toggle the engine on and off*.

## How do I resize the chessboard?

You can choose from a number of preset sizes of the Lucas Chess interface. To change this setting:

1. Click **Options > Configuration** in the main window.
2. In the Configuration window, click the **Boards** tab.
3. Click the "Size of main board list box" and select the size you want. (Medium is the default setting).
4. Click **Accept** to save your changes.

