

When to Trade

Chess

The rules of thumb for exchanging, and the exceptions.

General guidance, subject to the specific position.

Situation	Trade?
Up material	Yes — simplify toward the endgame
Down material	No — keep pieces on, seek complications
Cramped position	Yes — trading frees space
Space advantage	No — trading relieves their cramp
Under attack	Trade attackers only
Better pawn structure	Yes — the endgame favours you
Have the bishop pair	Avoid trading either bishop

Trading queens defuses almost every attack. If you are being attacked, look hard for a queen trade.