

Making a Plan

Chess

How to decide what to do when the opening ends and no move is forced.

The standard assessment, in order.

1

Material

Count it. Being a pawn up changes every other judgement.

2

King safety

Both kings. This outranks almost everything else.

3

Pawn structure

Weaknesses, passed pawns, open files. It is the most permanent feature.

4

Piece activity

Which pieces are doing nothing? Improve the worst one.

5

Space and squares

Who controls the centre and the key outposts?

THEN CHOOSE

Better structure → simplify toward the endgame

Better activity → open lines and attack

Worse position → seek complications or trade attackers

The most useful single question: what is my worst piece, and how do I improve it? It generates a move in almost any position.