

Material Imbalances

Chess

What each unequal trade is worth, and when the numbers mislead.

Common imbalances and how they actually play.

Imbalance	Points	In practice
Rook for minor piece	+2	'The exchange'; matters in open positions
Two minors for a rook	+1 for minors	Minors are usually better
Three minors for a queen	+0 nominally	Minors often better
Queen for two rooks	+1 for rooks	Rooks better if coordinated
Bishop pair	+0.5 informal	Grows as the position opens
Two pawns for a piece	-1	Usually insufficient

Point values are a guide for beginners. Beyond that, activity and coordination decide these imbalances more than the arithmetic.