

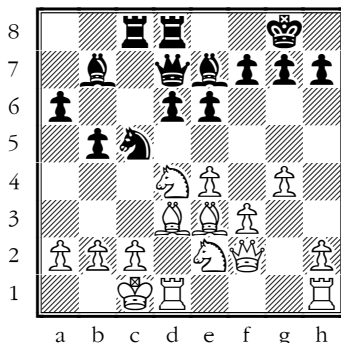
Advanced Endgame Play & Winning Technique

Part 1: Win When Winning: The Principles of Technique

Concepts:

- **The “3 Keepers”**: The principles of learning how to win when you are winning!
- #1 – “Keep” It Simple: Trade pieces; **DON'T** trade pawns; **simplify** the position!
- #2 – “Keep” an Eye Out: Watch for your desperate **opponent's** tricks!
- #3 – “Keep” Playing Chess: Play good chess moves; don't forget the basics!

Keep It Simple: The Principle of Knowing When and What to Trade When Winning!

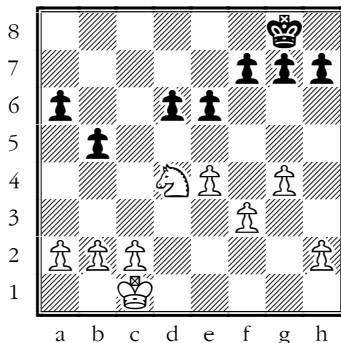


Did you notice that white is ahead a whole piece in this position?

Technique is a word used in chess to describe the patterns or ideas a player will use to win a game after achieving an advantage. If a player “shows good technique”, then he/she followed through with the right plans to convert their advantage from the beginning stages into a full point!

There are three principles to “keep to” when converting an advantage. The first rule of thumb is to “Keep It Simple”! This implies a few obvious things about having a large advantage, but the main tip is that when ahead material, often trading pieces with your opponent is the quickest road to victory. In our first position, which seems complicated now, if white is to trade off pieces the path becomes clear.

Keep It Simple – Continued: We “Simplify” the Position to Illustrate Your Goal!

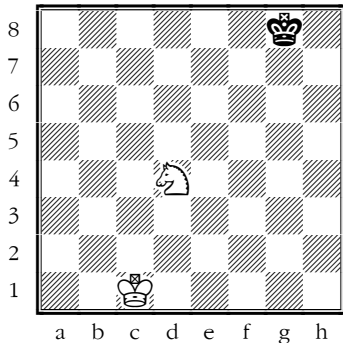


After trading pieces, white's Knight is left alone to control the game!

Here the position has been *simplified* from our initial example (Diagram 1). Note that all the **extra stuff complicating the position has been removed**, and white's piece advantage is more clear and will be much easier to use against black's remaining Pawns and King.

Though it is not likely all the pawns would have remained the same in a practical game, **this model displays clearly what a player should try to do in a perfect world.** White's remaining Knight is much more dominate now that the rest of the material has been traded. White should win this endgame easily with the extra piece...

Keep It Simple – Continued: When Ahead a Piece, Trade Pieces NOT Pawns!

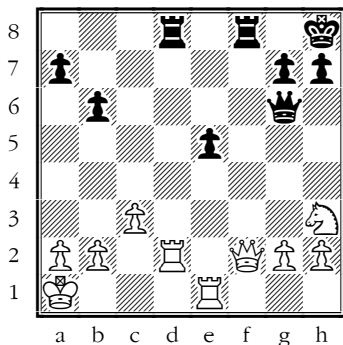


*Good Technique is: Trade pawns **ONLY** when you are ahead pawns!*

There is a phrase that many coaches use to break down the concepts and “right way” to simplify an advantage: “*When you are ahead **pieces** trade **pieces**, when you are ahead **pawns**, trade **pawns**”.* This exaggerated example position demonstrates those points very clearly.

Once again, our continued version of the previous diagram may not be the most realistic, but it does show what would happen if white traded all the pawns and didn't use the extra piece to “outplay” his opponent. Because it is impossible to checkmate an enemy King with any one minor (Knight or Bishop cannot checkmate the King on their own) it is very important **NOT** to trade too many pawns!

Keep An “Eye Out”: Don't Get Too Greedy When You are Winning!

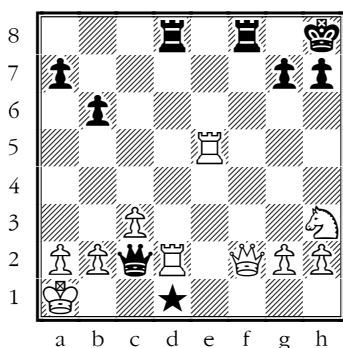


Should white capture the e5-pawn with the e1-Rook, or look to trade?

In our current diagram white is ahead by a piece (the h3-Knight has no counterpart). With best play, this advantage should be more than enough to win the game; however, it is easy to **get greedy and try for more** when playing a chess game. The e5-pawn is unprotected, but is it safe for white to capture? You must always “Keep An Eye Out” for threats!

Our second principle lays the ground work of “*prophylactic thinking*” (see Lesson 20). This rule implies that you should **value your opponent's threats** and all of **your** possible weaknesses *more* than your own plans, **especially** when you have already achieved enough of an advantage to win the game. Why take extra risk when you are winning?

Keep An “Eye Out”: When You are Winning, All Your Opponent Has Left is Tricks!

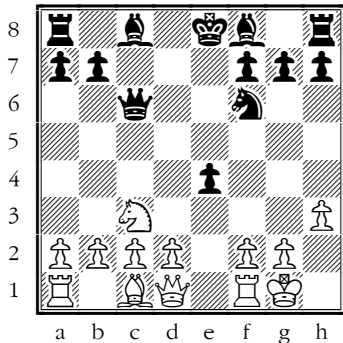


*White should have played 1.Rxd8 earlier, trading pieces and **simplifying**!*

In this game white made the huge mistake of wanting too much! By capturing the e5-pawn – white allowed an amazing counter-shot: 1...Qc2!!, based on exposing white's weak back rank (threatening 2...Qc1# for example). If white captures the Queen, 2.Rxc2 Rd1+ 3.Rc1 Rxc1 checkmate!

No other moves by white can avoid either back rank checkmate or the loss of material. Even the tricky 2.Qxf8+ doesn't help white after 2...Rxf8 3.Rxc2 Rf1+ then mate. As referenced beneath the diagram, white should have captured on d8 in the first position, then immediately protected the back rank with a simple move like 2.a3. It shows to **always stay aware of your own weaknesses!**

Keep Playing Chess – Example 1: “Keep Playing” in the Opening Stage...

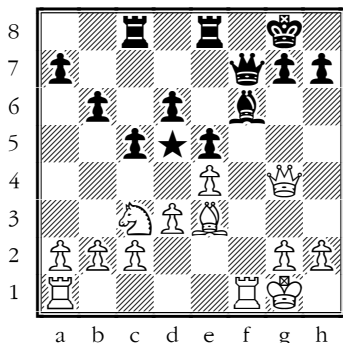


Here black is winning and should look to develop and safeguard the King!

Knowing *how* to simplify a position is key! Realizing that your opponent's threats have become **the priority** once you've achieved an advantage is very important. However, what should someone do in games where an advantage is clear, yet there seems to be **no easy way to simplify** the position – nor is there an obvious threat coming from the opponent? The answer to that question...

Might change throughout the different stages of a chess game, but if a material advantage is earned in the Opening (example 1), often there are still good **developing moves** to play. Here black should develop the bishops, get castled and bring the Rooks to the center before looking for more!

Keep Playing Chess – Example 2: “Keep Playing” in the Middlegame Stage...

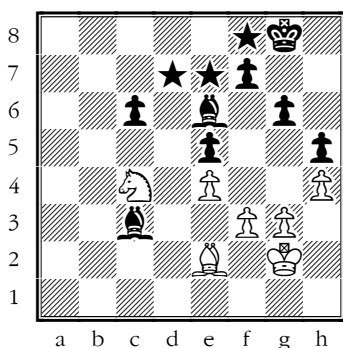


The “Out-Post” (Lesson 18) on d5 is a perfect home for the c3-Knight!

In a Middlegame where there are no immediate ways for a player to make good trades, one should look to improve the pieces they have by putting them on **better** squares. More active positions lead to good tactics and therefore better trades! White's best move here, 1.Nd5!, places the Knight on a great square that will likely lead to more good things...

A good example of not trading blindly when ahead material is to realize that moves like 1.Rxf6 or 1.Qxc8 (the only possible “trades” in the position) would not be good. Though both moves *technically* trade material, both would be a big loss in points and piece value. So the lesson is that a player should **not force trades** when ahead material.

Keep Playing Chess – Example 3: “Keep Playing” in the Endgame Stage...



As we learned in Lesson 13 – Part 3, King activity is **key** in the Endgame!

When ahead **large** amounts of material, the endgame is an easy “last stop” along the way to victory! However, when only a small material advantage separates the players, having good technique is critical. If trading on c4 isn't going to help, what should black's plan be in this ending, ?

1...Bxc4? would be a bad move by black because this trade doesn't help in the advance of the extra c-pawn. In fact, white would then possess the **only light squared bishop**, making black's job more difficult. The best approach for black is to activate the King (always good in endings). 1...Kf8!-e7-d7 followed by helping the passed c-pawn advance is black's best way to convert this advantage!

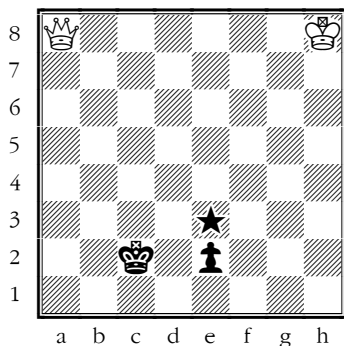
Advanced Endgame Play & Winning Technique

Part 2: The “Magic Square” Technique: Queen vs Advanced Pawn(s)

Concepts:

- Advanced endgame ideas!
- The “Magic Square” technique!
- More “Win When Winning” principles!

The “Magic” Technique; Step 1: Check From Behind, Reach the “Square” In Time!

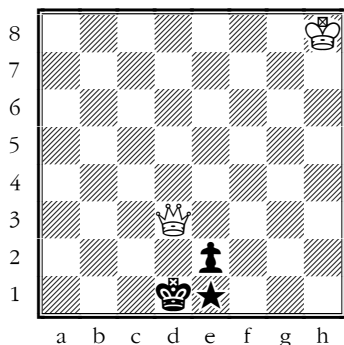


White must find a way to force the black King in front of his own pawn...

You are now ready to move onto more specific “*patterns*” of technique. **Technical patterns** are used in positions that require a particular kind of technique. Here the general ideas of the “keepers” will not apply. Instead, an **exact** approach must be taken in order to maintain the advantage and/or convert that advantage into a forced win!

A very commonly reached, though often misplayed, endgame that requires some technique is this Queen vs Pawn endgame. White has just Queened a pawn on a8, and must now stop black from doing the same. How? White must find a way to reach the “Magic Square” which, in this ending, is the only square the Queen can go to that isn't a check! The Magic Square changes, but in this case is e3.

The “Magic” Technique; Step 2: Take It Slow, Don't Let the King Say “No”!

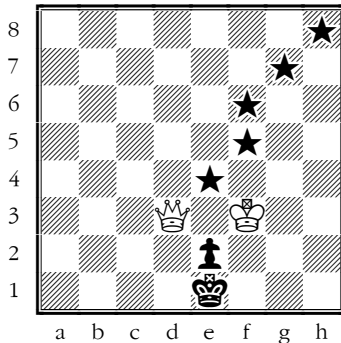


Follow the “repeating pattern” on a chessboard to see it in action!

The Magic Square is always the square directly behind the pawn. All three squares directly behind the advancing enemy pawn will prove very useful to white, but the main line from the first diagram would run: 1.Qe4+ Kd2 2.Qd4+ Kc2 3.Qe3! – using the Magic Square to force – 3...Kd1 and after 4.Qd3+ Ke1 the white King can inch closer.

The main lines of play show a repeating technical pattern that consistently **forces the black King where he doesn't want to go**, and the white King inches forward one square at a time. After: 4...Ke1 5.Kg7! Kf2 6.Qd4+ Kf1 7.Qf4+ Kg2 8.Qe3! (Magic Square) 8...Kf1 9.Qf3+ Ke1 10.Kf6 Kd2 11.Qf4+ Kd1 12.Qd4+ Kc2 13.Qe3! Kd1 14.Qd3+ Ke1 15.Kf5 and the pattern of “forcing the King in front” repeats!

The “Magic” Technique; Step 3: Bring In the King, Time for the Fat Lady to Sing!

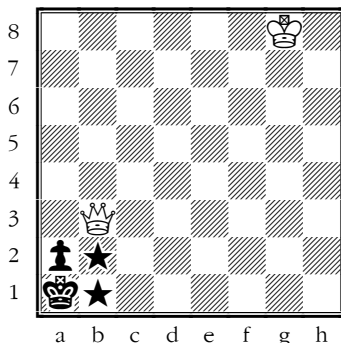


*The “Magic Square”
pattern of technique
works for most pawns!*

The current position is reached after a logical series of moves that follow our previous diagram: 15...Kf2 16.Qd4+ Kf1 17.Qf4+ Kg2 18.Qe3! (Magic Square again) 18...Kf1 19.Qf3+ Ke1 20.Ke4! (best) 20...Kd2 21.Qd3+! Ke1 (as any other move loses the pawn) and finally 22.Kf3, winning the pawn on the next move with checkmate soon to follow...

Note that the white Queen is able to force the black King in front of the e-pawn without the white King's help; however, as with most positions, the Queen cannot “end” the game by herself. The white King eventually provides the support needed to finish the job. This pattern works for the central and Knight pawns. See next diagrams:

The “Rook Pawn Draw”: Magic Square Technique Leads to Stalemate...

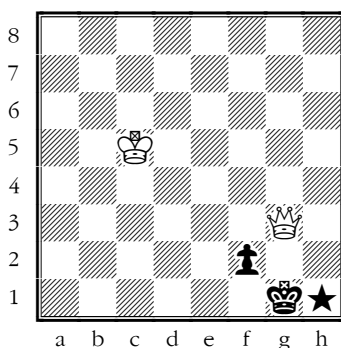


*Without a close King, the
Queen can't win against
the Rook Pawn!*

As mentioned, the Magic Square technique works against most the pawns. Our final diagrams provide the two exceptions. Though the pattern will make progress and eventually force the enemy King in front of the pawn, that exact pattern leads to an undesired result against the Rook Pawn: **The black King stalemates himself in the corner!**

Unless the position of the white King is close, white has no choice but to “un-stalemate” the black King by moving away with the Queen. For example: 1.Qd1+ Kb2 (threatening to Queen the a-pawn) 2.Qd2+ Kb1 3.Qb4+ Kc1 4.Qa3+ Kb1 5.Qb3+ Ka1 – and the pattern of stalemate repeats itself. White has no way of forcing the King to leave the corner..

The “Bishop Pawn Draw”: Magic Square Technique is Ineffective Due to Tricks!



*The Bishop Pawn offers
the defender a “different”
type of stalemate trick!*

Against the Bishop Pawn, the Magic Square technique is once again white's best chance of making progress. Some games have even been won by the Queen when black makes the terrible mistake of 1...Kf1?!, blocking the f-pawn and allowing the enemy King to make progress. The trick to these positions is that black's f-pawn is in no danger...

1...Kh1!! reveals a shocking truth: the Bishop Pawn cannot be captured without stalemating the black King! White now falls into the endless pattern of either constantly checking the black King (to avoid f1=Queen) or forcing him into a stalemated position in the corner of the board. This highly practical trick has escaped some chess masters, so learn it!



Advanced Endgame Play & Winning Technique

Instructor's Guide

Once an advantage is achieved, chess, unlike other games or sports, can be broken down to a science. If the principles of technique are followed, the correct plans are chosen, and care for our opponent's threats and “tricks” is taken – **a chess player should always “win when they are winning”!** If a chess player earns a clear advantage, their opponent is no longer competing on a “level playing field” – and that mindset should be taken into every game!

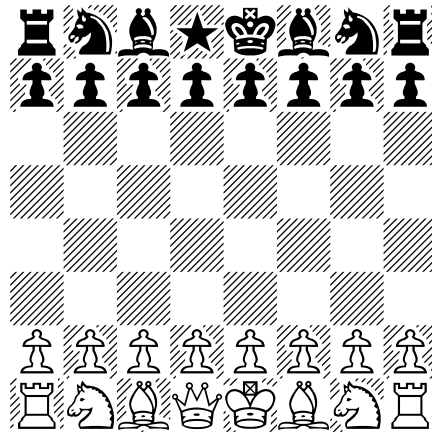
Of course we don't live in a perfect world! Even the best chess players in history have “blown it” from time to time, but the “keepers” (patterns of technique) are in place to make sure that doesn't happen to your “chess kids” (or at least not as often as it might happen to others). There are many technical patterns a chess player should memorize; however, we chose an example (Part 2) of high practical value and one that clearly displays a “repeating” idea.

The worksheets associated with Lesson 16 are very advanced and could easily be treated as “group studies” rather than “solo puzzle exercises”, depending on the level of your student(s). A chess player becomes truly confident when they **know** they can win when winning! Teach your students the principles of technique and watch their tournament scores go way up!

Practical Notes and Advice – Lesson 16:

- Use the “Win, When Winning” mini-game handout between Parts 1 and 2.
- Remind your student(s) that, assuming the best moves are played and the “Keeper” principles are followed, they should technically always be able to convert their advantages into victories!
- Good technique takes discipline and focus, so in order to instill good habits in your chess players, you must be prepared to stop and critique **every** moment your student(s) did not follow a “Keeper” principle – and “blew it” accordingly.
- The “repeating” pattern in Part 2 provides proof that some chess positions can be broken down into a “science.” When winning ideas are executed, your opponent's moves become irrelevant. Remind your students that they don't need to play “hope chess” to win games. It is a good feeling to know that the best moves can be coming from your opponent... and it doesn't make a difference!

Win, When Winning!



Level 1 (Easy): Full Starting Position vs. Black's Diagramed Position (no Queen)

Level 2 (Easy): Full Starting Position vs. Black's Two Rooks (a8 and h8) Missing

Level 3 (Medium): Full Starting Position vs. Black's Two Bishops (c8 and f8) Missing

Level 4 (Medium): Full Starting Position vs. Black's Two Knights (b8 and g8) Missing

Level 5 (Hard): Full Starting Position vs. One Black Minor Piece (randomly chosen) Missing

Level 6 (Expert): Full Starting Position vs. Two Black Pawns (randomly chosen) Missing

Level 7 (Expert): Full Starting Position vs. One Black Pawn (randomly chosen) Missing

Level 8 (Master): Make up your own "imbalance" and try to convert the advantage!

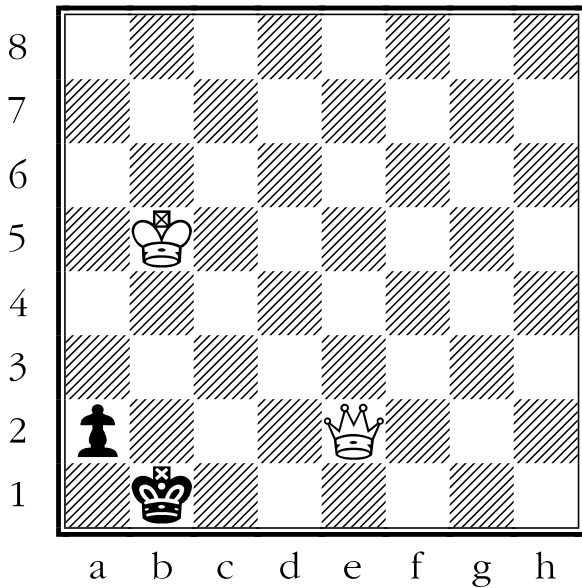
RULES/GOAL: White to move and win the game!

The "Keepers" of Technique Mini-game: Tips to the Game!

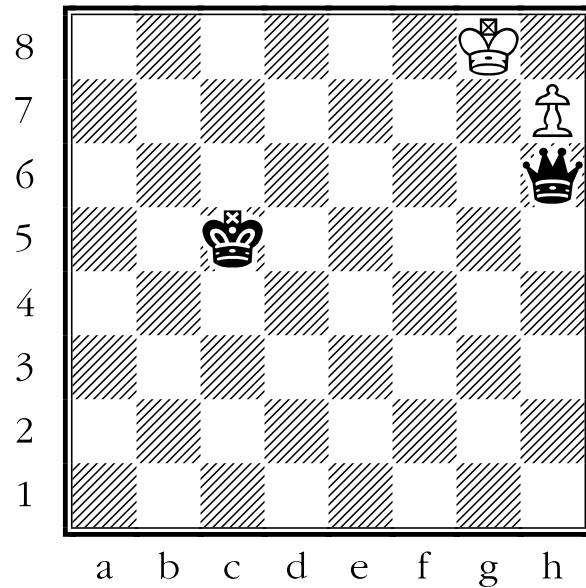
- Students should practice the positions, rotating the "winning" and "losing" sides (white and black) back and forth until white is winning the majority of the games.
- The "Keepers" of technique should be instrumental in helping a player win as white:
 1. **Keep it Simple:** Trade Pieces and Simplify the position when you are ahead material!
 2. **Keep an Eye Out:** White is winning here! Watch for tricks and white should win!
 3. **Keep Playing:** When no good trades exist, and your opponent doesn't seem to have any threats, ask yourself: Are my pieces on their best squares? Is my King safe? Can I attack a weakness? *Just keep playing good moves!*

Lesson 16: Is the King Too Close?

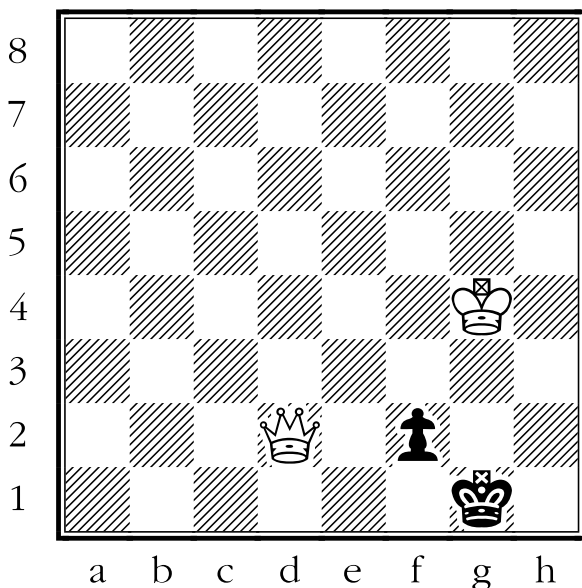
In the following diagrams the player with the Queen is trying to win against either a Bishop or Rook Pawn, both normally drawn endings. With a close King, there are sometimes tricks that help the King and Queen work together. Circle the correct answer.



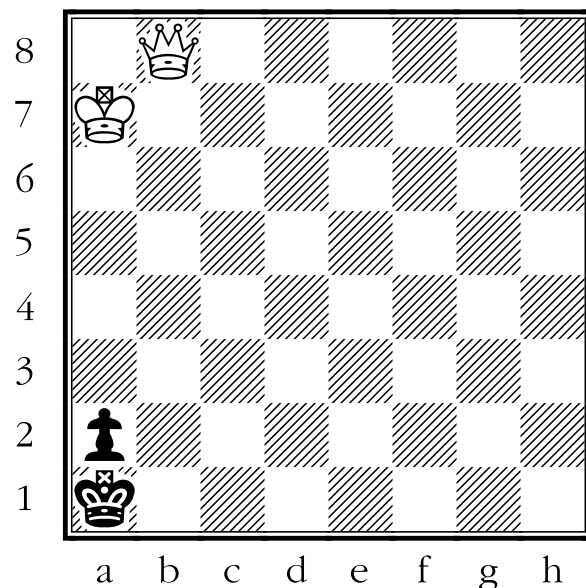
Is the white King close enough to win?:
Yes? Circle the correct answer No?



Is the black King close enough to win?:
Yes? Circle the correct answer No?



Is the white King close enough to win?:
Yes? Circle the correct answer No?



Is the white King close enough to win?:
Yes? Circle the correct answer No?



Advanced Endgame Play & Winning Technique

Answer Key

Worksheet Page – “Is the King too Close?”:

Diagram #1 – Yes. 1.Kb4! (or 1.Kc4 or 1.Ka4) 1...a1=Q 2.Kb3! - and the black Queen finds herself trapped in the corner. With no checks, there is no way to prevent checkmate by white in the coming two moves. For example: 2...Qd4 3.Qe1+ Qd1 4.Qxd1 checkmate.

Diagram #2 – Yes. 1.Kf3! (or 1.Kh3 but not 1.Kg3?? in view of 1...f1=N!!, forking the King and Queen and drawing the endgame) 1...f1=Q+ 2.Kg3 and the black Queen has no checks. Black is in Zugzwang and will be checkmated in a few moves. For example: 2...Q anywhere on the f-file, 3.Qg2 checkmate (2...Qf3+ or 2...Qf4+ are simply captured by the white King). If the black Queen moves anywhere along the f1-a6 diagonal, then 3.Qg2 is checkmate again.

Diagram #3 – No. The black King is too far.

Diagram #4 – Yes. In this amazing position there exists a trick to bring the white King within two ranks closer before potentially stalemating the black King: 1.Kb6!! - bringing the King closer and “un-stalemating” the black King by blocking the Queen on the b-file at the same time. 1...Kb1 or b2 2.Kc5+! Kc2 (2...Ka1 would simply allow white to continue the pattern or bringing the King closer with 3.Kb4) 3.Qh2+ Kb1 4.Kb4! a1=Q 5.Kb3 winning as in diagram 1.