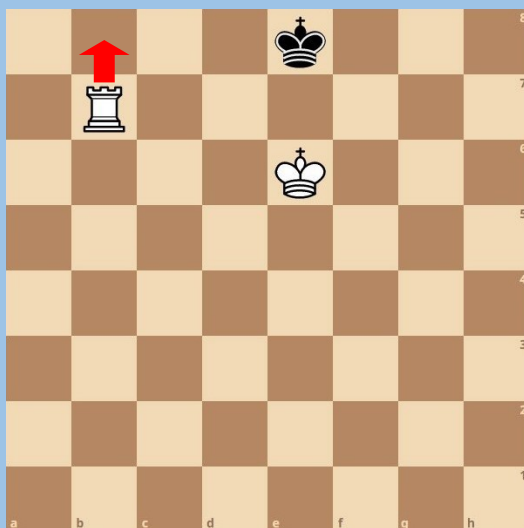


Lesson 23: King and Rook Checkmate

The Rook Checkmate



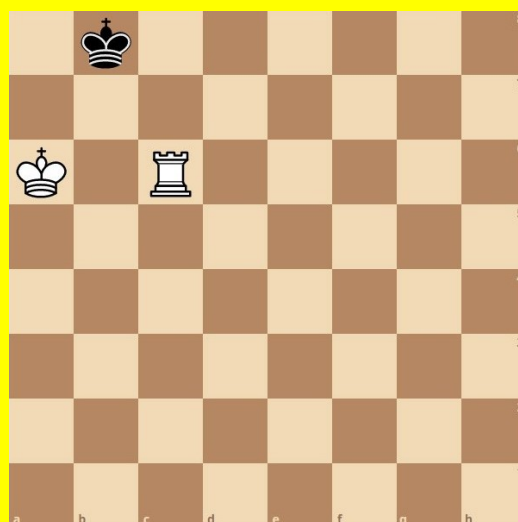
In Lesson 19 we showed you how to deliver checkmate with just a king and queen. Your pieces need to work together to force your opponent's king to the edge of the board where it can be trapped.

The technique is similar if you have a rook rather than a queen. However, there's only one type of checkmate available this time: a **BACK RANK** checkmate.

The Crucial Waiting Move

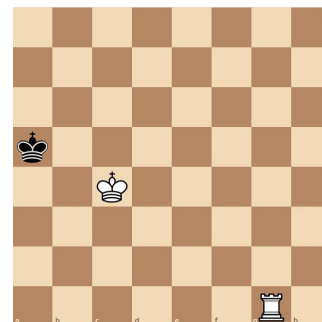
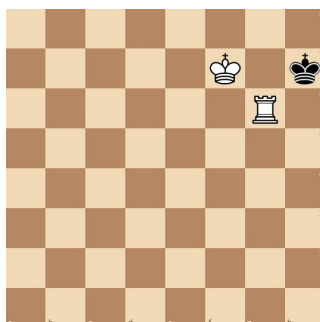
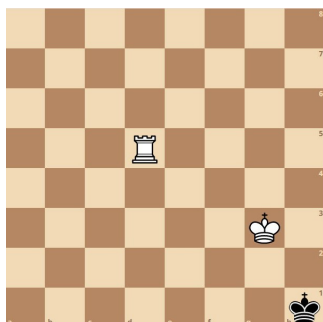
A rook isn't as powerful as a queen so it takes more patience to deliver the checkmate. Often you have to wait a move for the right position. Here it's White's move. The Black king is stuck on the squares b8 and a8. 1. Rc8+ immediately would lose the rook. 1. Rb6+ would allow the Black king to escape its trap by 1...Kc7.

Instead, White should wait a move by 1. Rc5 (or c4, c3, etc.). After 1...Ka8 it's checkmate by 2. Rc8.



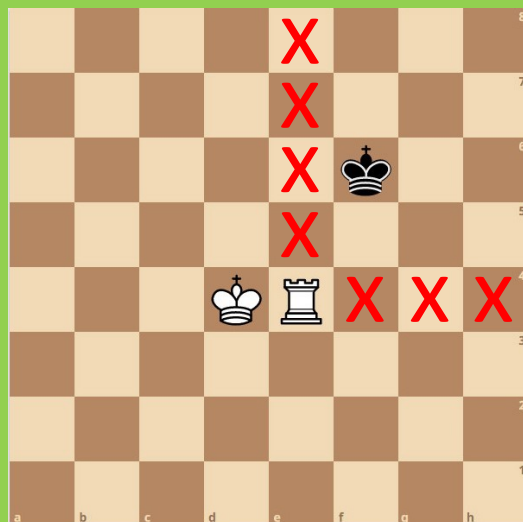
Puzzle Corner

Can you either find the immediate checkmate or a waiting move that leads to checkmate on the following move.



King and Rook Checkmate: Closing the Box

The Black king is trapped in a box of 12 squares. Just as in Lesson 19, we're going to follow a plan. On each move we either use the rook to make the box smaller, or bring our king closer to the action to support the rook. Let's try:



1. Re5

Our box now has nine squares.

1. Kf7

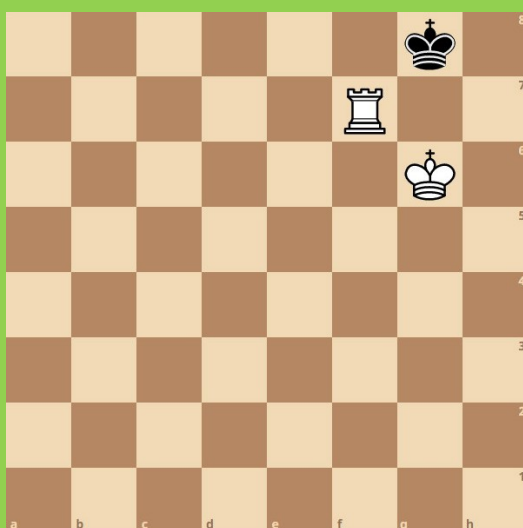
2. Ke4 Kf6

3. Kf4 Kg6

The White king has moved in to support. Now the box is reduced to six squares.

4. Rf5 Kg7

If 4...Kh6, 5. Rg5 and the box has three squares.



5. Kg5 Kh7

6. Rf7+ Kh8

7. Kg6 Kg8

We've reached the second diagram. Now for the crucial waiting move.

8. Rf6 Kh8

9. Rf8#

It's checkmate.

Practice Makes Perfect II

The king and rook checkmate is an essential chess skill. It takes practice and patience to learn the technique of supporting your rook with your king to force checkmate. Try putting White's king and a rook on their starting squares and the Black king on e5. It's actually checkmate in 14 moves. If you can manage that in 28 moves you're doing amazingly well!

Grandmaster Test—Lesson 22

Answer: White wins by sacrificing two pawns to promote the third: 1. g6 fxg6 2. h6 gxh6 3. f6 and the f-pawn queens. Or, 1. g6 hxg6 2. f6 gxf6 3. h6 and the h-pawn queens. It would be a mistake to begin with the f or h pawns: 1. f6 gxf6 2. g6 fxg6 and Black wins, or 1. h6 gxh6 2. gxh6 Kb5 and Black also wins.