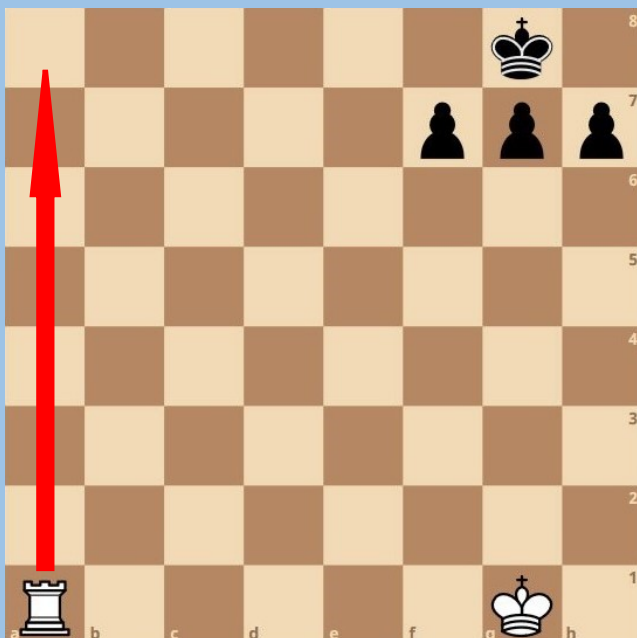


## Lesson 11: Simple Checkmates

### Back Rank Checkmate



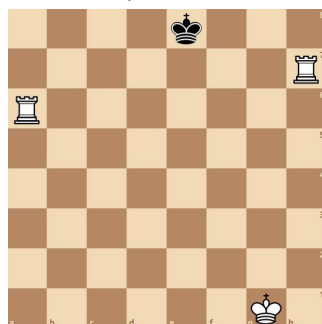
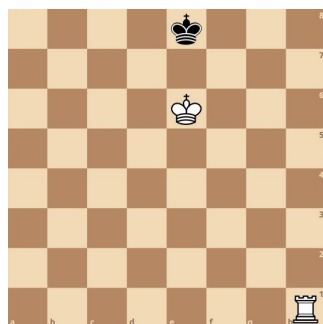
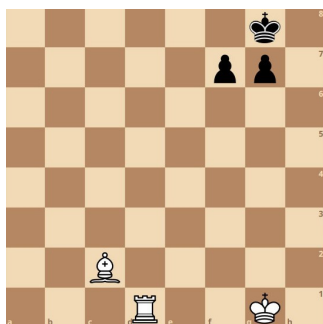
When you are new to chess it can be difficult to work out how to checkmate your opponent. The easiest place to trap a king is at the edge of the board; it has fewer escape squares there. Here, White can move her rook to a8, placing the Black king in check.

Black cannot **A**void the check, **B**lock it, nor **C**apture the rook. It's checkmate! The king is trapped on Black's first row. We call this a

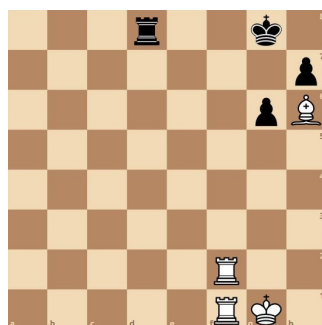
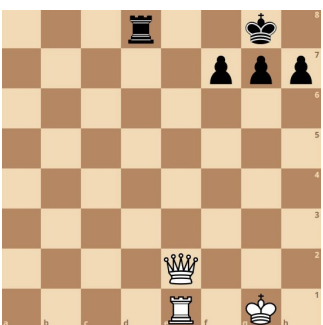
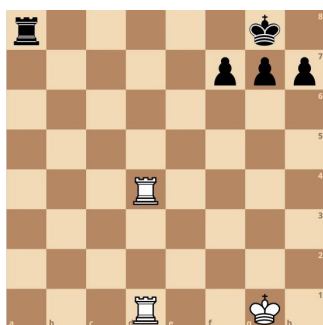
**BACK RANK CHECKMATE.**

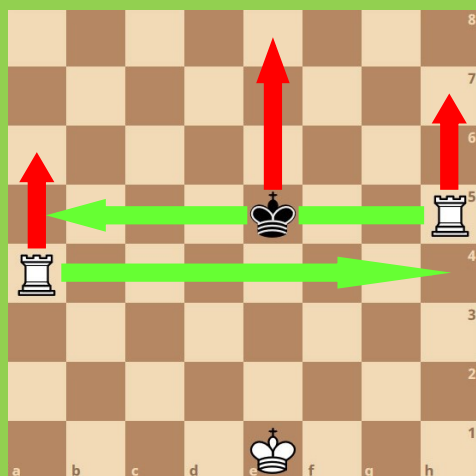
### Puzzle Corner

Can you find the back rank checkmate for White in these positions?



In the next three positions, White makes a move, Black's reply is forced and it's checkmate on White's second move. Can you work them out?





## The Lawnmower Checkmate

Sometimes you need to drive the king to the edge of the board to deliver a checkmate. Here, the Black king must escape the check from the White rook on h5. It cannot move forwards as White's rook on a4 attacks all the squares on their fourth rank.

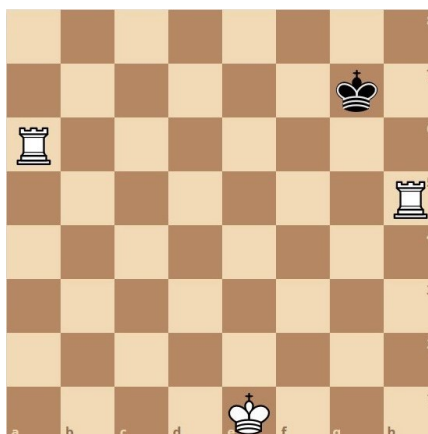
Suppose the Black king moves backwards to e6. White now moves the rook on a4 to a6. The Black king must move backwards again, to e7. Now White moves the rook on h5 to h7, forcing the Black king to e8. We have reached the third puzzle from the previous page.

You've seen the method. Can you find the move to complete the Lawnmower Checkmate?

### That hurts!

If you keep playing chess, over the next few months you will probably get caught out by a back rank checkmate many times. Do not worry. We've all fallen for it! Learn from your mistake, set the pieces up, and win the next game.

### Grandmaster Test



### Escape Hatch

Castling is a great move, placing your king behind a wall of pawns for safety. However, those pawns can also help your opponent deliver a back rank checkmate. Sometimes it's a good idea to make a hole for the king by moving your White pawn to h3 or a3 (h6 or a6 for Black).

White has been attempting a Lawnmower Checkmate but Black has defended well. If White moves the rook on h5 to h7 it will be captured by the Black king! Can you find a way for White to continue to drive the Black king towards the back rank? Answer next time.



### A Spectacular Finish

José Raúl Capablanca was World Chess Champion from 1921 to 1927. As Black he famously moved his queen to b2 attacking White's queen and rook. If White takes the Black queen, rook to d1 is checkmate!

### Grandmaster Test Lesson 10

**Answer:** Black's queen only has one way back to the rest of her army, via the square a3. White plays his pawn from a2 to a3, trapping the Black queen. Next move, White moves the rook from f1 to b1, attacking the queen. Now there's no escape!