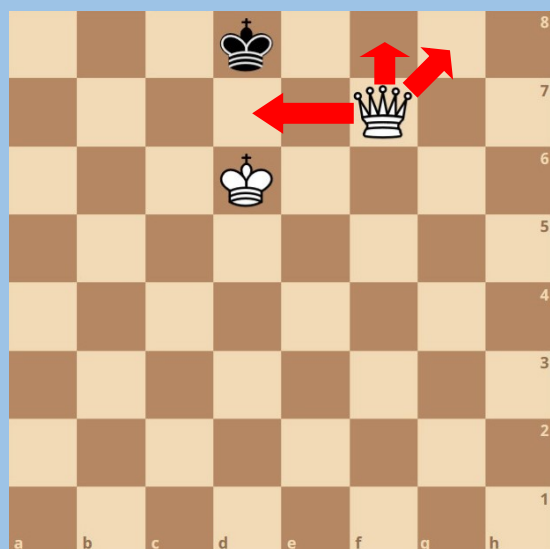


Lesson 19: King and Queen Checkmate

The Queen Checkmate

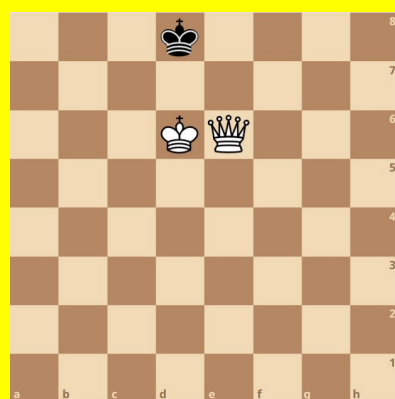


It's the end of a long game and you only have one piece left, your queen. Can you still win the game by checkmate? The answer is "yes", but you need to learn how to achieve it.

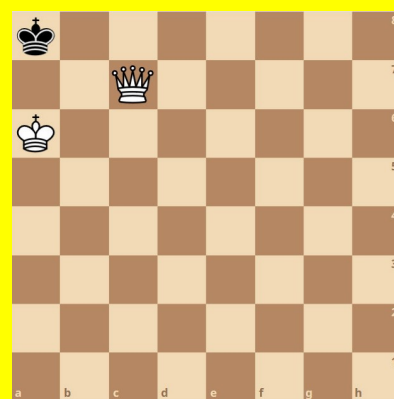
The first thing to note is that to deliver checkmate you will need to force your opponent's king to the edge of the board. Secondly, your king is going to have to help out. Your queen cannot get checkmate on her own.

In the diagram on the left, White can achieve a Bank Rank checkmate by moving the queen to f8 or g8, and a Kiss of Death checkmate by moving her to d7.

The Dreaded Stalemate

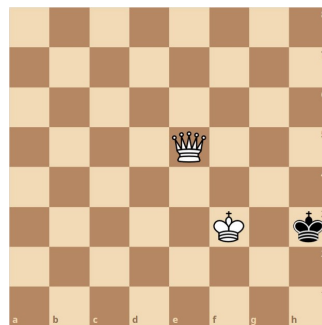
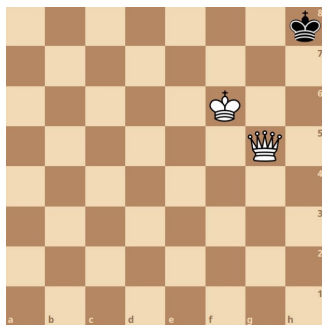


You are going to have to be careful to avoid stalemate. In both of these positions White is one move away from checkmate, but if it's Black's move the game is a draw by stalemate. Watch out!

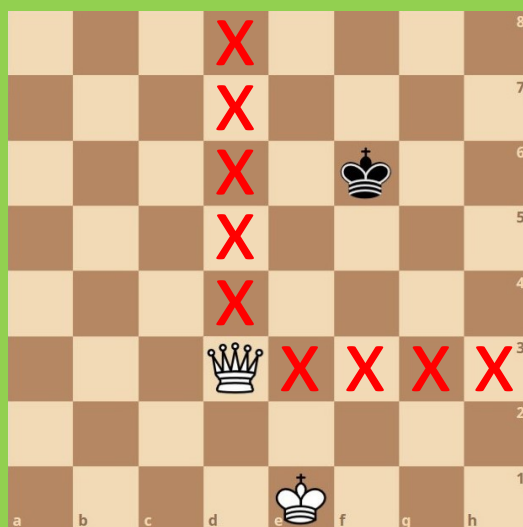


Puzzle Corner

Look at all the squares to which the White queen can move. Put a tick if that move would be checkmate and a cross if it's stalemate.



Step 1. Closing the Box



The Black king cannot escape from the box made by the White queen. There are 20 squares in the box. We need to drive the king to the edge of the board to get checkmate.

Each move White should try to make the box smaller*. First White moves the queen to e4. There are now 12 squares in the box. Black moves their king to g5 and White replies, playing their queen to f3, reducing the box to 10 squares. Black's king retreats to g6 and White's queen advances to f4; the box has

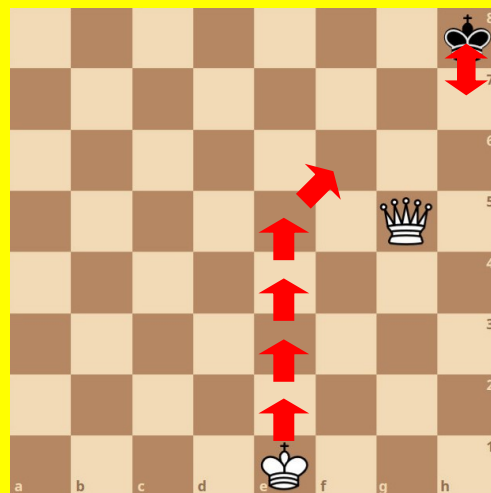
eight squares. Black's king steps back to h7 and White's queen moves forwards to g5. The box has three squares. Black has only one move: king to h8.

*If White can't make the box smaller, they should save time for Step 2 by moving their king closer. They'll be able to reduce the box on the next move.

Step 2. Bring in the King

It would be a mistake to make the box smaller than three squares. If White plays their queen to g6 it's stalemate! Instead, bring the White king up the board to help out. All Black can do is shuffle their king from h8 to h7 and back. Eventually the White king reaches f6.

We've reached the second position in the Puzzle Corner, with the Black king on h7. White can checkmate Black by moving their queen to g7.



Practice Makes Perfect

The king and queen checkmate is an essential chess skill but it does take practice. Try putting White's king and queen on their starting squares and the Black king on e5. If you can checkmate Black in fewer than ten moves you're doing amazingly well!

Grandmaster Test—Lesson 18

Answer: White played their queen to b8 with check. Black's only move to escape the check is to capture the queen with the knight on d7. The knight has been decoyed: White played their rook to d8 and it's checkmate!