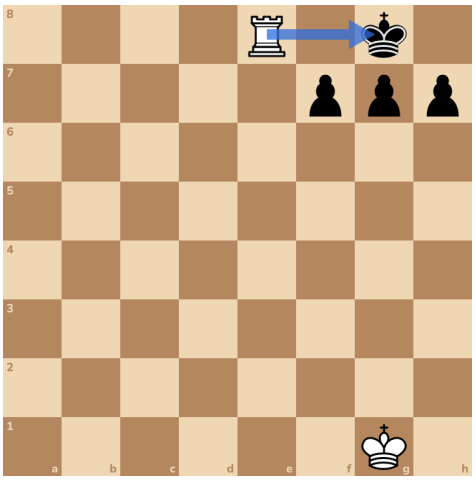
My Chess Family

What is a back-rank checkmate?

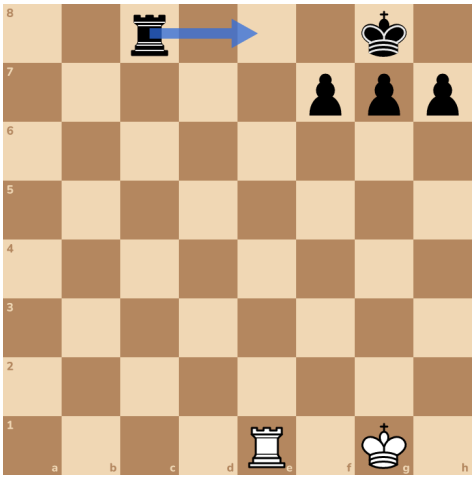
Try each question on a real board, then check the answers at the end of the sheet.

The trapped king

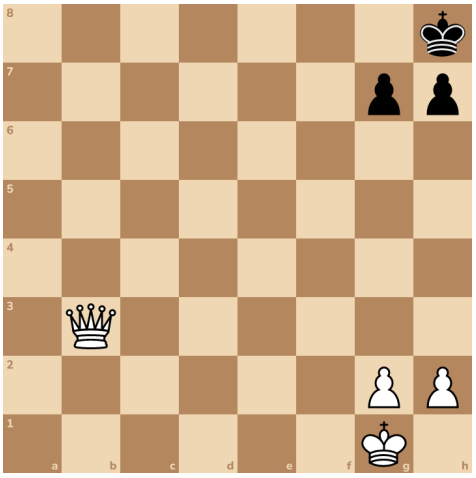
A king hiding behind his pawns can get trapped on the back row. A rook or queen there gives checkmate.



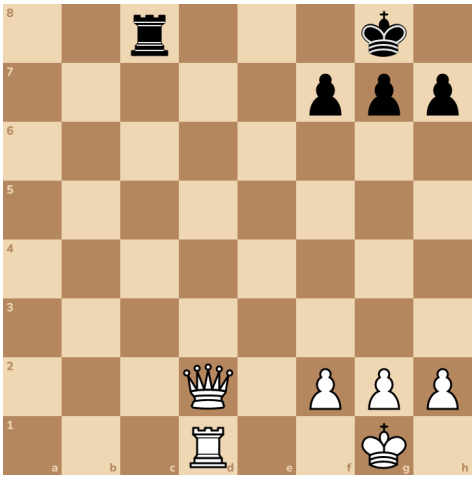
Here's a new position. Watch out. If a piece guards the back row, the checkmate doesn't work yet.



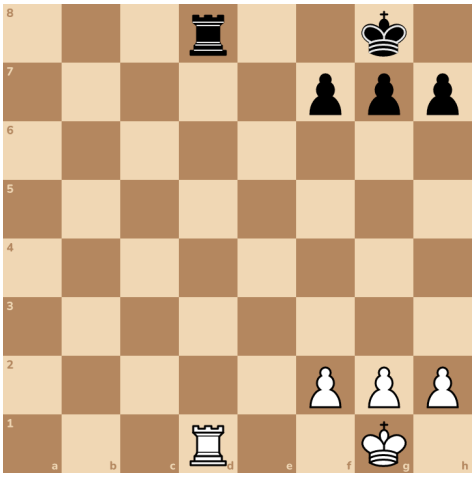
Try it 1. New position. Checkmate on the back row!



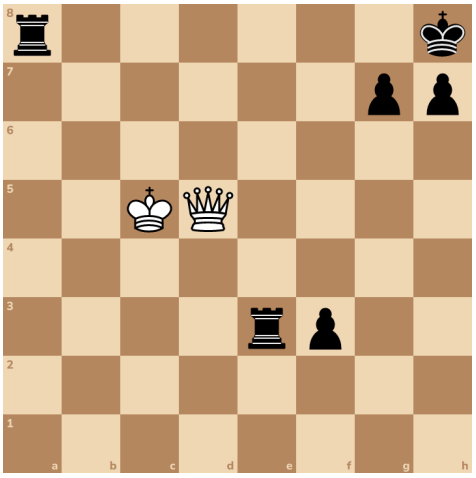
Try it 2. New position. A rook guards the back row. Give up your queen to pull it away!



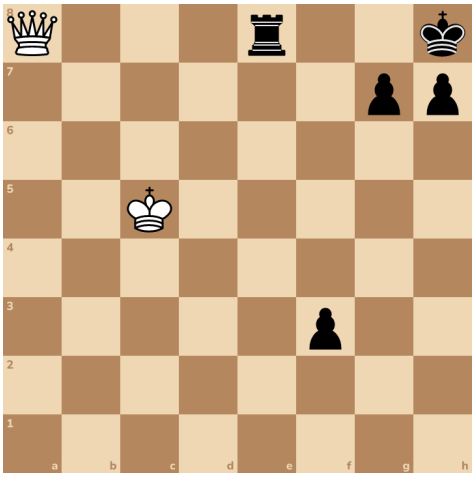
Try it 3. Now the back row is open. Checkmate!



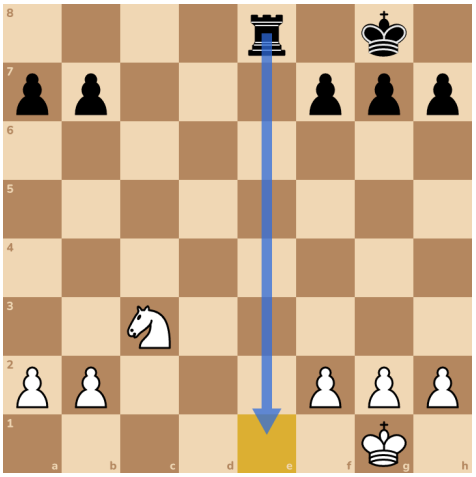
Try it 4. Here's another one. Take the rook with check, then finish with checkmate!



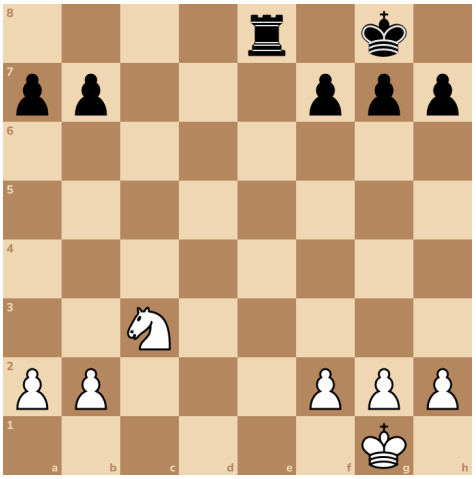
Try it 5. Checkmate!



Here's a new position. Your king can get trapped too! Black threatens Re1, checkmate. Your king can't get out past his pawns.



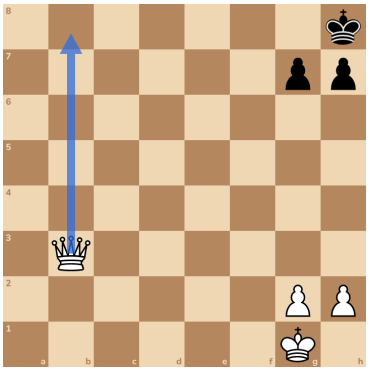
Try it 6. Push one of your king's pawns one square. That gives him an escape square, a square he can step out to.



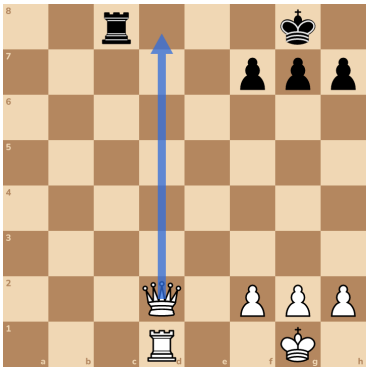
Now if the rook checks on your back row, your king steps out. That's why strong players give their king an escape square!

Answers

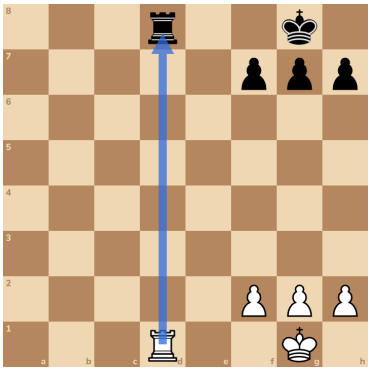
1. Qb8#



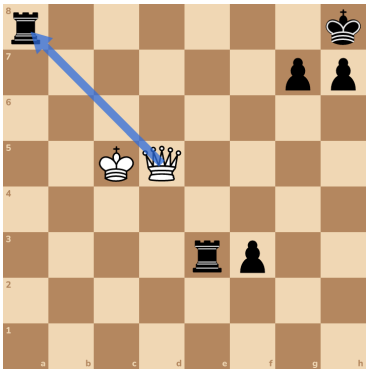
2. Qd8+



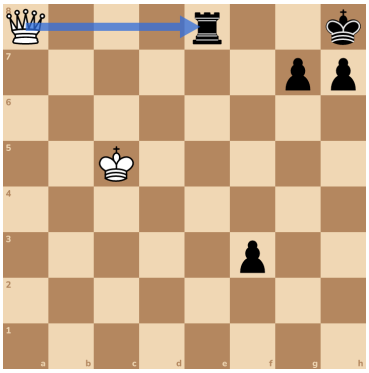
3. Rxd8#



4. Qxa8+



5. Qxe8#



6. h3 or g3 or f3

