

Checkmates

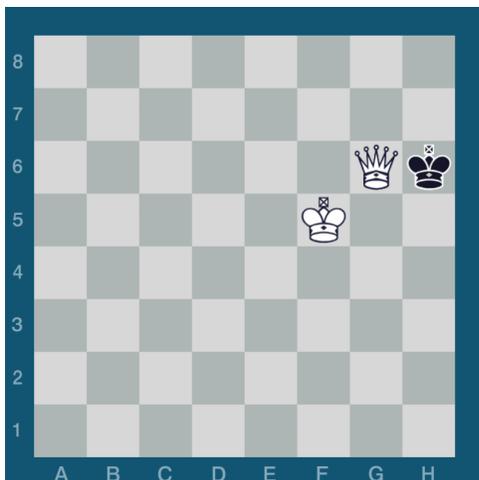
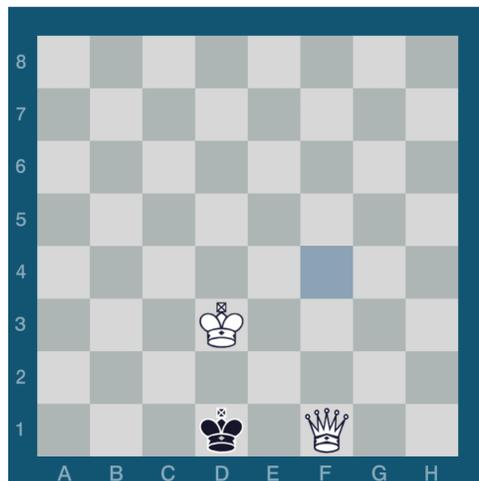
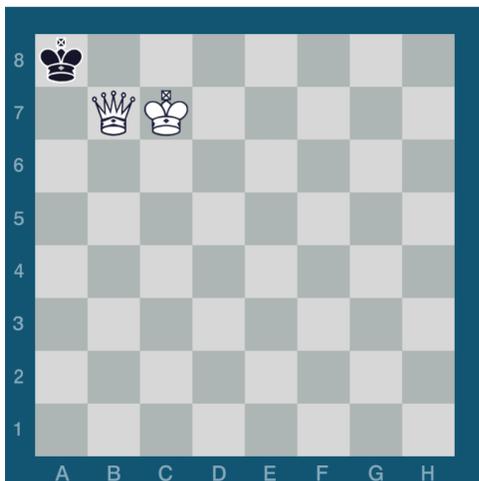
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According to the official rules, the game of chess is most frequently won when a player has mated its opponent's King. This is easily done with a number of pieces on the board, but when there are fewer pieces, the task of check mate is more difficult. You've probably experienced, more than once, a stalemate when you are up in material. In all of these examples, take care in the end to avoid a stalemate.

Check mate is easier to do with some pieces, and more difficult with others. In all cases, if your opponent is left with only the King, it's easier to force your opponent's King to the side or in the corner.

Using your King and Queen against your opponent's King is one of the easiest end games. The following shows three of many options to mate your opponent with a King and Queen.



Place your King and Queen in a random location on the board and force your opponent's King to the side or corner of the board similar to these three examples. Move your King towards the center of the board to force your opponent's King to the side, and use your Queen to decrease the size of a space available for your opponent's King. Your King will have to stay adjacent to your Queen to protect her. The moves you make as your opponent's King is forced to the side or the corner are important, especially the closer you get to check mate. Don't allow yourself a stalemate!

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A similar end game is when you're left with a King and Rook against your opponent's King. Some say this is an easier task since the Rook cannot move diagonally and it's not as easy to suffer a stalemate. Again, checkmate is most successful when moving your King to the center, and your Rook to decrease the space left for your opponent's King. The example to the right shows one of several positions for check mate. Place your King and Rook in a random location on the board and force your opponent's King to the side or corner of the board.

In some cases, it's easier to waste a move in order to force your opponent to move the way you want. For example, given the location of the pieces to the right, you would prefer that Black move its King to the same file as your White King, but what if it's your move? Waste a move by moving your Rook to d3, forcing Black to move its King to f8. What is your next move? Why, d8 of course!

An even easier mate is with two Rooks, or a Queen and a Rook. Simply force your opponent's King to the side and occupy two files or ranks with your two attackers. While keeping the two attackers on adjacent files or ranks, force your opponent's King to the side until it's mate.

If you've mastered check mate with the King and Queen, and the King and Rook, try something more challenging. For example, how would you mate your opponent with a King and two Bishops? Randomly set up the board with a King and two Bishops for White, and a King for Black. Play for awhile and force Black's King into the corner. Study how best to force your opponent in check mate. As you move your pieces, get used to the patterns of occupied squares the combination of all three pieces make.

Give up? Here's a hint - As you practice this check mate you will understand the power of two Bishops that work together to control two adjacent diagonals. of the locations you want for Black's King is on the following page.

