

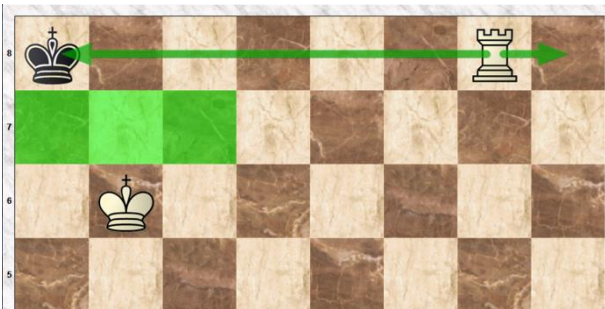
Rook and King vs Lone King

by Brad Horne

Hi again, in this study, I will show you how to mate quickly and easily with a Rook and King vs a Lone King.

This is one of the easiest endgame techniques to master, yet I still see some people struggling with it... some who really shouldn't be! There are actually two ways to do it, this study shows you the more elegant one 😊

The final positions you need to reach are quite simple:



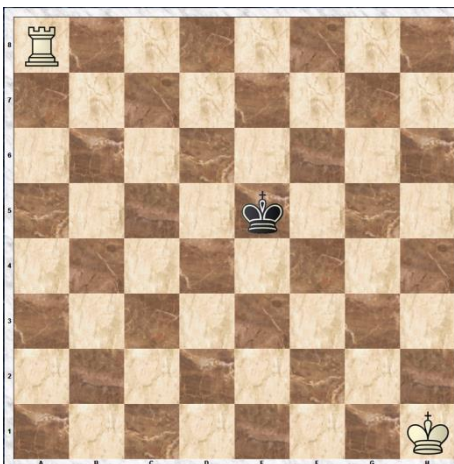
The defending king and your rook can be anywhere along the edge, provided the black king can't take it!



Notice how the white king creates a barrier of 3 squares. The power of the king must be used!

Ok, so how do you force this checkmate?

Let's begin with a position that is the *worst* for white! Make sure you have your board ready to follow along.



Ok, here we go. Firstly, we start by moving our king towards the defending king.

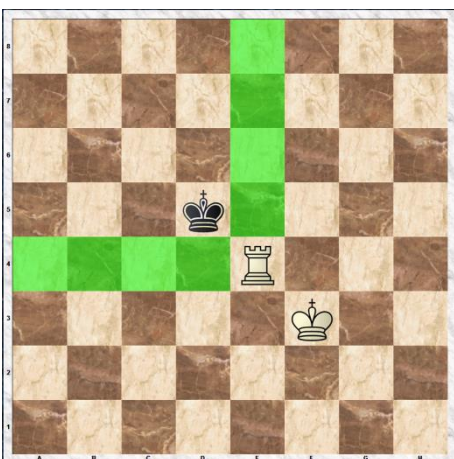
1.Kg2...Ke4. The black king tries to keep away from the edges.

2.Re8+. Again, I stress that there may be quicker mates than the one I give here, but the method I am striving here is simplicity, not necessarily the shortest possible mate. **2...Kd4.** The black king is trying to stay in the centre.

3.Kf3...Kd5 (again trying to hold in the centre).

The concept is to box the king by controlling squares with the rook and king. We then simply reduce the size of the box controlling squares.

4.Re4. Oooh, look, a box! Using this boxing idea, along with another concept (the zugzwang concept) that will soon become clear, you will be able to get this mate pretty fast!



4...Kd6.

5.Ke3. It doesn't matter which way you go, Kf4 works just as well.

5...Kd5.

6.Kd3...Kc5. Black could try also 6...Kd6, upon which white can very quickly further restrict the area black has with 7.Kc4. This is using the zugzwang concept – we will examine this option later. For now, we'll continue on.

7.Rd4. The box is now smaller! **7...Kc6.** Black could try 7...Kb5, but white can then just 8.Kc4 and the box is again smaller very quickly!

8.Kc4. This heads in the same direction as the 6...Kd6 option. Let's continue

to see how it works out.



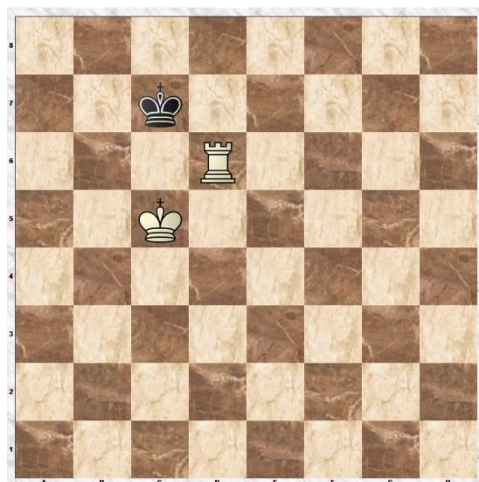
Although the white king cuts off the rook's power along the 4th rank, it doesn't matter because the king controls the squares needed for the box and if black tries to escape via the "gap" on a4, it only speeds up the mate.

8...Kb6.

9.Rd6+. White chops off the box by two! Watch carefully now, as the following demonstrates the zugzwang concept that helps you a lot during this endgame!

9...Kc7. Black has the option of **9...Ka5**, but this is just what white wants! Are you watching carefully?! At this point, if it were black's move, the only move is to walk straight into a mate! So we "burn a move" – give the move to black: **10.Rc6** (or d6, e6, f6, g6 or h6!). Black can only then do just that **10...Ka4** and **11.Ra6** is mate. This technique can be used anywhere on the board to help during this ending!

10.Kc5. That box is getting small now. We have to start thinking about **avoiding stalemate** now!! You should do this every time you are getting close to a mate! No matter what the endgame! It shouldn't be a problem here, but it's worth mentioning!



10...Kb7. Again, black could try **10...Kc8** but **11.Kb6...** (using that same zugzwang concept) **Kb8 12.Re8** is again, mate!

11.Rd7+. Black has four choices. Let's look at all of them:

11...Ka6. Can you see it?? Same idea! **12.Rc7...Ka6** and **13.Ra7#.**

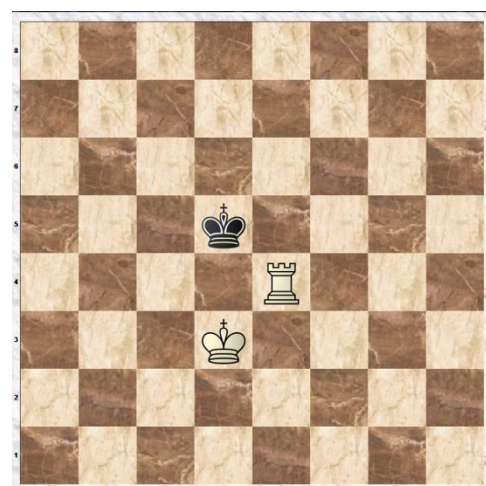
11...Kb8. Can you find this one? See if you can! **12.Kb6...Kc8 13.Rd6** (zugzwang!)...**Kb8** and **14.Rd8#.**

11...Ka8. Even easier! **12.Kb6...Kb8** and **13.Rd8#.**

The final choice is **11...Kc8.** Have a look and see if you can find the mate! Go on, I'll wait.

Ok, so I can't wait, I am only a document! **12.Kc6...Kb8. 13.Kb6...Kc8 14.Rd6...Kb8 15.Rd8#.** There we have it, completed to mate in 15 moves or less by following a boxing idea and a recurring theme of putting black in zugzwang. You should practice this over and over until it becomes very easy for you!

Finally, remember that I said we'd look at an option later? Well now it's later! Have a look back at move 6.



If black tries that **6...Kd6** idea, you should now be able to easily make sense of the move **7.Kc4.** It is that same zugzwang idea. Black moves **7...Kc6** and we have **8.Re6+** muching up two ranks. If he plays **7...Kd7** or **7...Kc7**, we get there even quicker with **8.Kc5.**

I'll follow a line of this through:

8...Kd7 9.Kd5...Kc7. 10.Kc5...Kd7. 11.Re5...Kc7. 12.Re7+...Kd8. 13.Kd6...Kc8. 14.Kc6...Kb8. 15.Re8+...Ka7. 16.Rc8...Ka6. 17.Ra8#.

I hope you study this endgame well! I don't want to see any of you now fail at mating a lone king when you have a rook! Happy chessing!