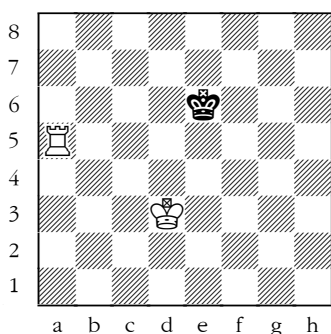


Basic Mate: King and Rook versus King

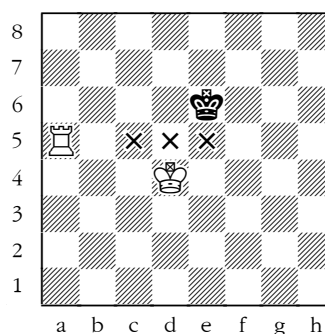
By Steven Craig Miller

In a *King and Rook versus King* situation, the most basic winning technique is based on using the king (with the rook at a distance) to push the opposing king to the edge of the board where he will be mated.

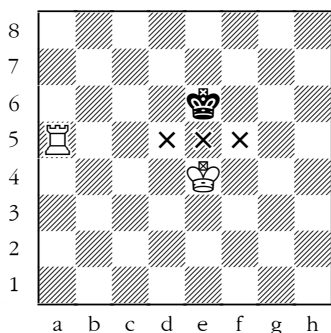


Black's king with 2. ♔d4, Black could simply return with 2. ... ♕e6, and white hasn't accomplished anything.

So, better than 1. ♕e4 is: 1. ♔d4.



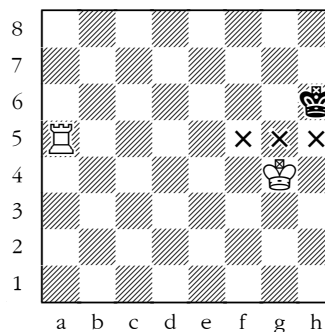
White's goal here is to use the three squares directly in front of the White's king as a barrier. First, let us look at the move 1. ♕e4.



If Black volunteers to move to the seventh rank, then White will play 2. ♖a6 in order to keep the Black king there. If Black plays 1. ... ♔d6, White will force the Black king to the seventh rank with 2. ♖a6. And if Black attempts to run away, White will chase the Black king to the edge of the board where it will be forced back to the seventh rank.

1. ... ♔f6
2. ♕e4 ♕g6
3. ♕f4 ♕h6
4. ♕g4

Because of the position of the White king, Black is unable to cross the squares d5, e5, & f5. If it was White's move, White could play ♖a6 and push the Black king back to the seventh rank. But since it is now Black's turn to move, Black can play 1. ... ♔d6 and if 2. ♖a6, the Black king is not forced to the seventh rank, but could play 2. ... ♕c5. And if White tried to chase the

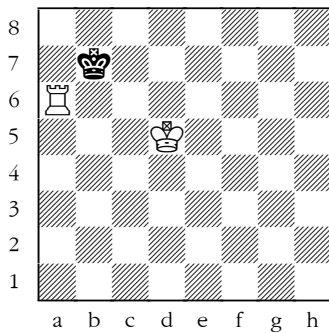


Now the Black king has no where to run.

4. ... ♖g6
5. ♜a6+ ♖f7
6. ♖g5

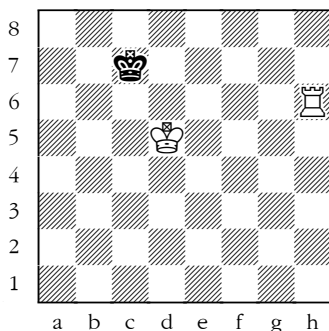
Now the White king again prepares to chase the Black king to the other edge of the board where it will force the Black king to the eight rank.

6. ... ♔e7
7. ♖f5 ♖d7
8. ♖e5 ♖c7
9. ♖d5 ♖b7



But now, White needs to switch the rook to the other side of the board (White does not want Black to capture the rook).

10. ♜h6 ♖c7



Now what should White play? White can only resume the chase after giving up another tempo!

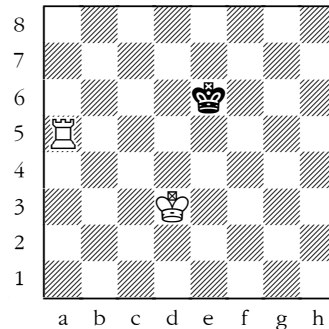
11. ♜g6 ♖b7

12. ♖c5 ♖a7
13. ♖b5 ♖b7
14. ♜g7+ ♖c8

And now the finish comes after one more chase across the board.

15. ♖b6 ♖d8
16. ♖c6 ♖e8
17. ♖d6 ♖f8
18. ♜a7 ♖e8
19. ♜b7 ♖f8
20. ♖e6 ♖g8
21. ♖f6 ♖h8
22. ♖g6 ♖g8
23. ♜b8#

Using this method, the mate took 23 moves, but it is possible to use the rook more effectively so as to limit Black's options. From the original diagram:



White can proceed as follows:

1. ♖d4 ♖f6 2. ♜e5 ♖g6 3. ♖e4 ♖f6 4. ♖f4 ♖g6 5. ♜f5 ♖h6 6. ♜g5 ♖h7 7. ♖f5 ♖h6 8. ♖f6 ♖h7 9. ♜g1 ♖h8 10. ♖f7 ♖h7 11. ♜h1#

Students should get out a set and board and go over these variations until they are certain that they have mastered this basic mate.