

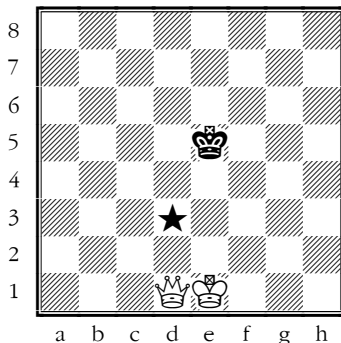
Basic Checkmates and Stalemate

Part 1: Basic Checkmates: King and Queen vs Lone King

Concepts:

- What is a checkmate *pattern*?
- Using the Queen!
- Coordinating and using your pieces together for a plan/goal!

Step 1, The Pattern: Queen moves a “Knight’s” check/move away from the King:

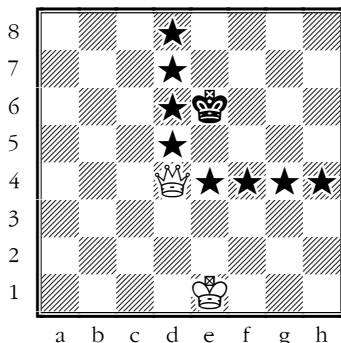


White moves 1.Qd3

Here we will continue our study of the “chess basics”. Now that we have taken the steps needed to learn the how the game is *played*, the next step is to learn how the game is *won*. Without knowledge of the basic checkmate **patterns and principles**, it is hard to justify learning anything more advanced (why learn how to “win a queen”, if you can’t even “checkmate with a queen”, right?).

Our first example shows an excellent starting position for learning, practicing, and mastering the basic checkmate: King and Queen vs King. There is a simple pattern and process for white to win this endgame 100% of the time...

The “Imaginary Box” or Force-field:

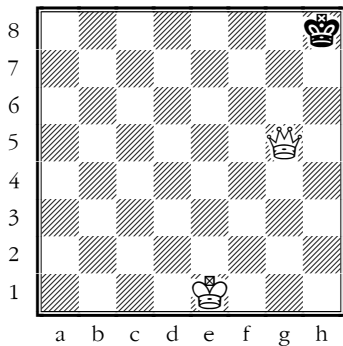


The position continues after 1.Qd3 (diagram 1)
1...Ke6 2.Qd4

When white moves the queen forward just **one square** at a time – whether diagonally or horizontally – as long as the “knight’s” distance is maintained, she (the Queen) creates an imaginary box (or “force-field”) around the enemy King. By repeating this pattern, the Queen is able to force the enemy King to the edge of the board, and eventually the corner, all by herself. Notice that a “Lone King” is unable to attack an enemy Queen without moving into check. This is key to understanding why this pattern works.

By following a natural set of moves such as 2...Kf7 3.Qe5 (Knight’s check) 3...Kf8 4.Qe6 Kg7 5.Qf5 Kg8 6.Qf6 Kh7 7.Qg5 we reach our next diagram...

Step 2, Stop the Queen – Bring In the King

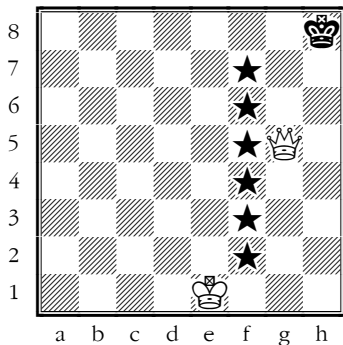


Position resulting after
7...Kh8

You will notice that once the black King has been forced to the edge of the board, it is no longer necessary to use the “Knight's check” pattern to make the box any smaller. In fact, if the Queen were to move to g6 after black plays ...Kh8 – the game would end in a stalemate – which is a draw (tie game). ***See Part 3: Stalemate for a more detailed description***

Instead of making the box smaller, it is now time to activate the King. First recognize the best square(s) for the King to “shoot for”. **HINT:** The King needs to find a square close enough to eventually protect his lady (the Queen)...

Follow the Stars, and Reach the Moon

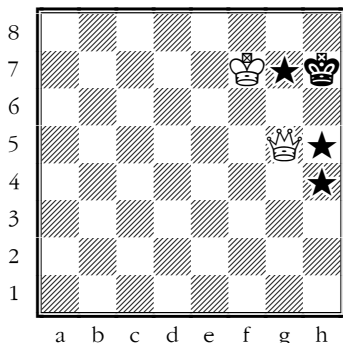


White's “winning path” is
highlighted with stars.

Because we can not bring the Queen any closer without immediately ending the game in a *stalemate*, we must find another way to make progress. It is very important that the Queen does not start giving “random” checks to the enemy King. In fact, **if the *King and Queen checkmate pattern* is executed properly, the only check given throughout the entire game should be checkmate.** The white Queen needs “protection” in order to move forward.

Displayed with stars is the quickest route for the white King to “join the fight”. In following this straight path, eventually the white King will find himself in direct “opposition” to the enemy King and in a great position to protect his Queen...

Step 3, King Helps the Queen – Ending the Game As a Team



Position reached after
8.Kf2 Kh7 9.Kf3 Kh8
10.Kf4 Kh8 11.Kf5 Kh7
12.Kf6 Kh8 13.Kf7 Kh7...

NOTE: 13.Qg7, immediately delivering checkmate was also possible in the variation given beneath our diagram; however, here we see the most ideal position for learning the King and Queen vs King checkmate pattern. White has three options to end the game: 14.Qg7#; 14.Qh5#; 14.Qh4#.

You can now practice this position, alternating the corner where you trap the King. Similar final positions, with three ways to play checkmate in one move, may also be: White King-g6 and Queen-e7 – Black King-g8; White King-b6 and Queen-d7 – Black King-b8; etc...

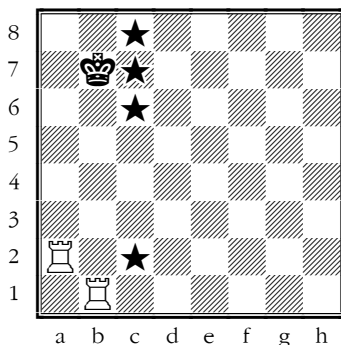
Basic Checkmates and Stalemate

Part 2: Basic Checkmates: “Rook Roller”, Two Rooks vs Lone King

Concepts:

- Coordination and cooperation with your pieces!
- Using the rooks!
- More checkmate *patterns!*

Step 1, The Pattern: One Rook At a Time – Leave the King Behind

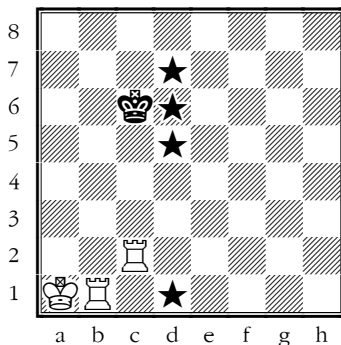


In the above position, black has no choice but to move to the c-file

When checkmating the enemy King with two Rooks there is a very simple pattern to follow. The first thing to realize is that you will **not need your King** to execute this particular *checkmate pattern*. To highlight this point, we have setup our first diagram with an ideal position for our Rooks, but no white King.

Secondly, remember that a Rook does **not** have to be close to the enemy King in order to force the King to do what the Rook wants. A rook on b1 controls **every square along the b-file**, which means an enemy King must find a safe square on one of the adjacent files: either a or c...

When Rotating “Rook Checks”, Always Lead with the Rook On the “Furthest” File

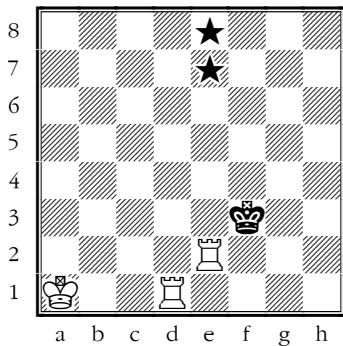


After 1...Kc6 white played 2.Rc2+ – Leaving the b-file under control

By leading the attack on the King with the Rook that was furthest away (the a-file Rook was farther from the c-file than the b1-Rook), white is beginning to **push** the King toward the opposite edge of the board (eventually landing on the h-file).

It is very important that the Rooks remain close together, *taking turns* to deliver the vital check. This pattern can repeat itself, without interruption, until the black King has ventured close enough to deliver an attack against one of the Rooks...

Step 2, Separate and Coordinate... Again



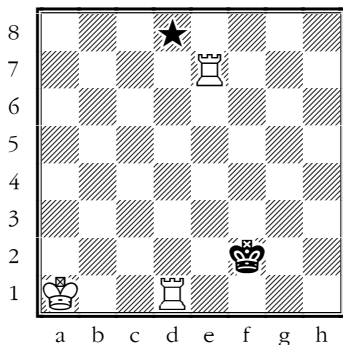
Position reached after
2...Kd5 3.Rd1+ Ke4
4.Re2+ and 4...Kf3

After black reaches his goal of attacking the lead Rook, white must – for the first time – separate the Rooks.

(NOTE: If black were not aggressive in this manner, the game would end quickly with the rooks repeating this “rotating check” pattern, and eventually delivering checkmate on the h-file).

The stars on e7 and e8 highlight the best two squares for the Rook on e2. After 5.Re7, for example, the enemy King faces a tough decision: Stay near the 1st rank – preventing the coming Rf1+; or race to the far side of the board, with hopes of catching the e7-Rook in time to delay checkmate for a little longer...

The Enemy King's Tough Decision

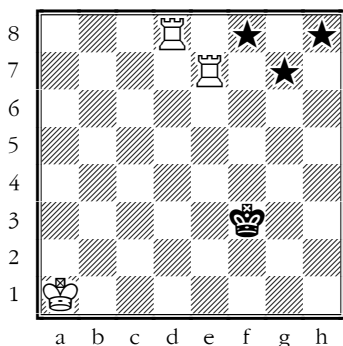


Black chose 5...Kf2 -
preventing Rf1+.

If instead black had chosen 5...Kf4 – attempting a “quick jog” to the other side of the board – we see the Rooks use the “**rotating checks pattern**”, even at a distance. White continues 6.Rf1+ Kg3 7.Rg8+ Kh2 – and instead of 8.Rh1+?? losing the Rook – the white Rooks rejoin forces to finish the game: 8.Rf7 followed by 9.Rh7#

After black's more stubborn move, preventing the Rook from checking on f1, white brings the Rooks – 6.Rd8! – back together, and prepares for their final “rock n’ roll tour”...

Step 3, “Rock n’ Roll” Rooks LOVE the “Edge” of the Board



Climax “rotating check”
sequence, position
reached after 6...Kf3

With the final three checks occurring on f8, g7, and h8 – in that respective order – the black King is helpless. White kicks off the final “Rook Roll” with 7.Rf8+ Kg4 8.Rg7+ Kh5 (the black King is *almost* close enough to delay the inevitable once again, but not quite) 9.Rh8#

As with our first two patterns, your opponent's willingness to “work with you” is irrelevant. This *mindset* is very important for a chess player's overall approach and improvement in the game of chess: It is good to develop plans of attack that **don't depend on your opponent being lazy**.

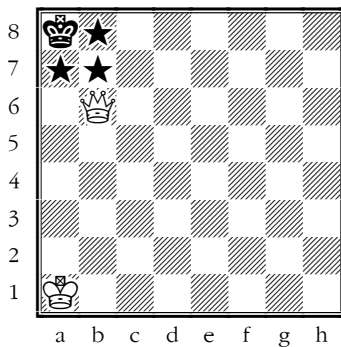
Basic Checkmates and Stalemate

Part 3: Stalemate (No Legal Moves) Explained

Concepts:

- Basic concept, definition and examples of *Stalemate!*

Stalemate Example 1

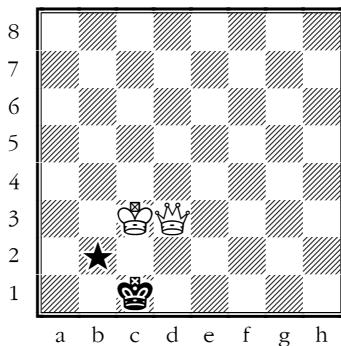


With black to move, the game is over (a stalemate being the final result)

When a player whose turn it is to move has **no legal moves** by any of his/her pieces, **but is not in check** – A stalemate has occurred, and the game is a draw (tie, with each player receiving $\frac{1}{2}$ a point).

In our first diagram, the white Queen on b6 controls every possible square that the black King can move to, and is therefore, placing black in stalemate. This common **stalemate position** can occur when white takes the “Knight’s Check” pattern too far (see Lesson 4, Part 1)...

Stalemate Example 2

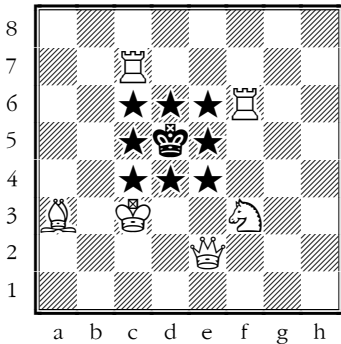


With black to play, a stalemate has once again occurred

Notice that black would be in stalemate if the white King were on b3 or a3 as well. With black to play, the position on the board is a stalemate. The white King guards b2, while the white Queen is controlling all of black’s remaining options. The black King is not in check, so we can see the difference between this position and one where the white Queen is delivering a checkmate – on c2, for example.

In this position, we can see the negative effects of **not using our suggested pattern** in Part 1 – but instead using the King and Queen together to box the King, where they inevitably “step on each others toes”...

Stalemate Example 3

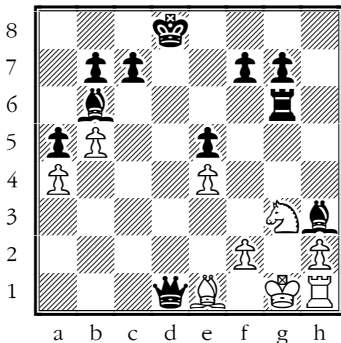


Black has no legal moves, as white controls every square

In this extremely improbable, yet not impossible position, we see an extravagant example of stalemate. Every square highlighted by a star is controlled by one or more of white's pieces, and though white would have multiple "mate-in-ones" if it were white to move, with black to play – this position is a draw.

One very important step in your growth as a chess player is the understanding that you **don't need to capture every enemy piece** in order to checkmate the King, and therefore win the game. This position should display the risks of having too many pieces, and not executing a basic checkmate pattern (perhaps one learned in Parts 1 or 2).

Stalemate Example 4

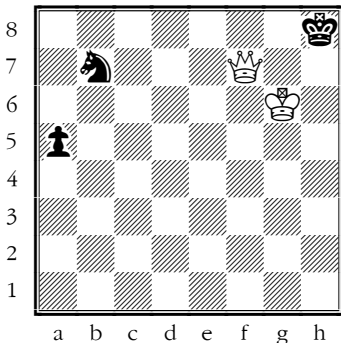


This famous stalemate occurred in Troitzky vs. Vogt, 1896

Example diagram #4 reveals that not all stalemate positions occur in the endgame. Black's last move was 1...Qxd1 – capturing white's sacrificed Queen and placing white in immediate stalemate.

Though white has many pieces, none can move: The Rook on h1 is trapped. The King can not move without being attacked by the h3-bishop. The Knight on g3, Bishop on e1, and Pawn on f2 are all "pinned" to the King (which means they can not move without placing their own King in check by an enemy piece). Finally, every other Pawn is simply blocked by an enemy piece or Pawn.

Example 5: Common Stalemate "Misunderstanding"



The above position is NOT stalemate

One common mistake made in regards to evaluating whether or not a given position is stalemate is shown here. Though the black King is trapped – having no legal moves – there remains *other pieces* that **must** move. White will follow with checkmate on g7, f8 or e8 next move.

Obviously to determine whether or not a position is stalemate, one should always look at the King's position, options for the King to move, and whether or not the King is in check; however, as we learned from the last two diagrams – the **King's position and ability to move is not the only thing that determines stalemate.**

Basic Checkmates and Stalemate

Instructor's Guide

When teaching the basic checkmate patterns, we recommend that students first memorize the three steps (may also be referred to as rules or principles) associated with each different checkmate. The coach's instruction/demonstration on either a demo-board, projector, or in some other “group learning” format is most effective when a child has no experience.

Subsequently, students should practice the position with a partner – preferably another student trying to master the same technique – alternating offense and defense a minimum of three to five times.

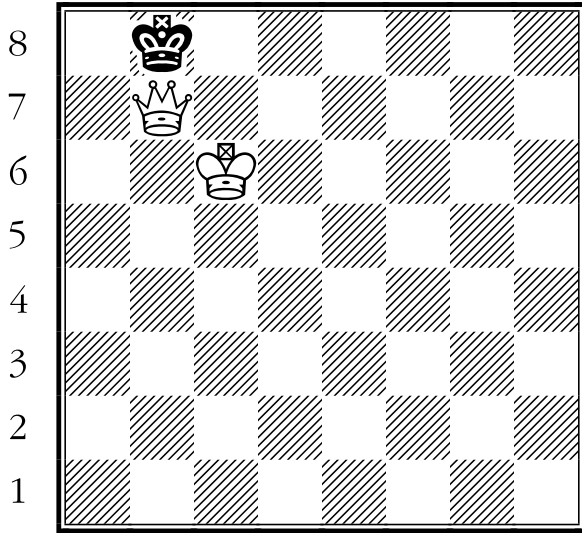
We recommend having students move quickly from learning stalemate (Part 3) to the practical “Checkmate or Stalemate?” Worksheets. Without the immediate application of their newfound knowledge, the differences between checkmate and stalemate will generally become confused in a child's mind. Coach's will find themselves answering many raised hands – all with some version of the same question: “Is this checkmate?” - or perhaps, “Am I stalemated or checkmated?”

Practical Notes and Advice – Lesson 4:

- Referencing the invisible “force-field” the Queen creates around the enemy King can help stimulate the imagination and the child's interest level when learning this basic checkmate pattern (Part 1).
- Reminding each student that **NO check** should be played by the Queen, until checkmate, can help instill discipline in the child's thought process (Part 1).
- Allowing the students to practice this checkmate pattern (Part 2) using only the two Rooks (without the white King on the board) can help the learning process. Until the children have developed a better understanding of the pattern, when “stumped”, children may reach to move their King rather than make the necessary effort to realize coordination between the Rooks.
- Students should move directly from Part 3 to “Checkmate or Stalemate” worksheets – ideally before the end of a class/session, while the ideas and differences between Checkmate and Stalemate are still fresh.

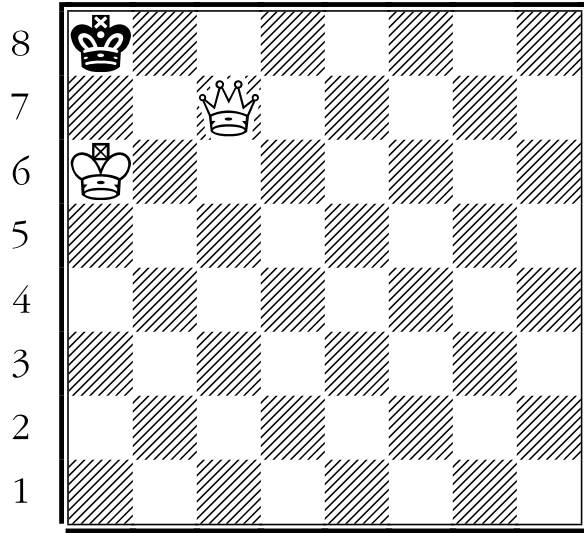
Lesson 4: Checkmate or Stalemate?

In each of these positions, the black King is in either “checkmate” or “stalemate”.
 Circle the correct answer beneath each diagram.



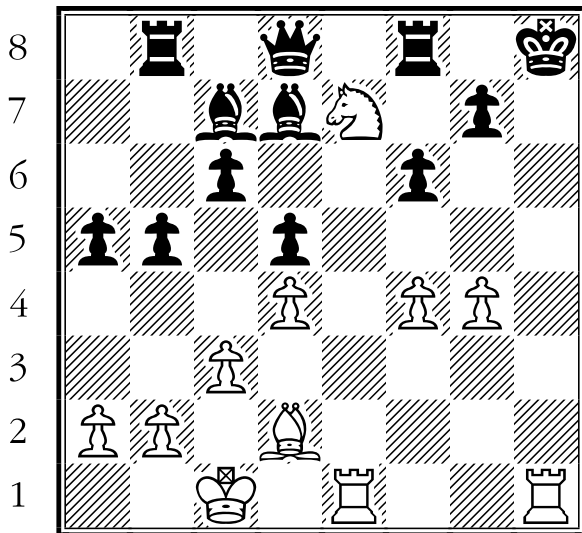
a b c d e f g h

Circle the correct answer:
Checkmate? or Stalemate?



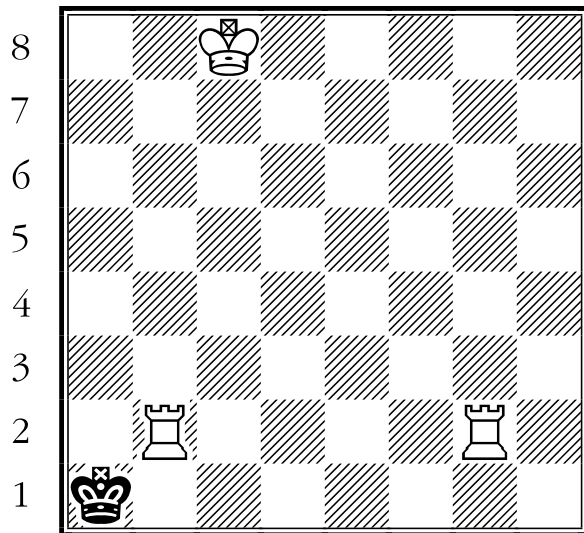
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a b c d e f g h

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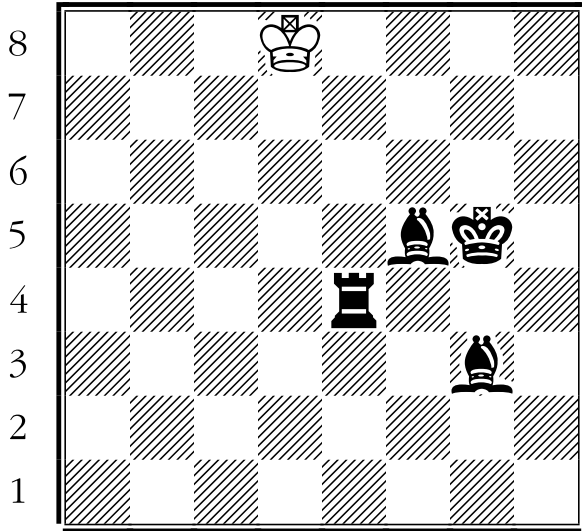


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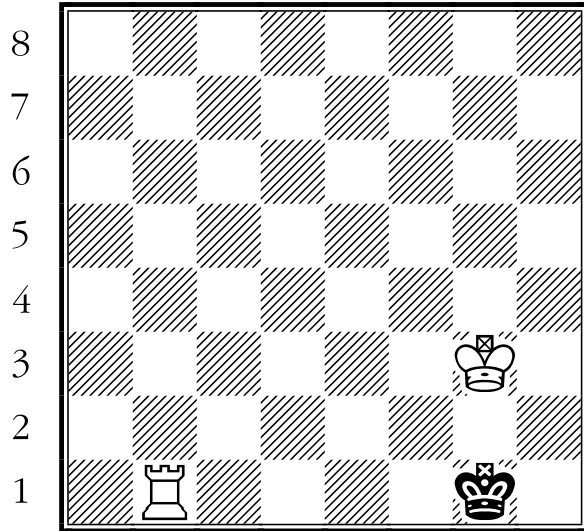
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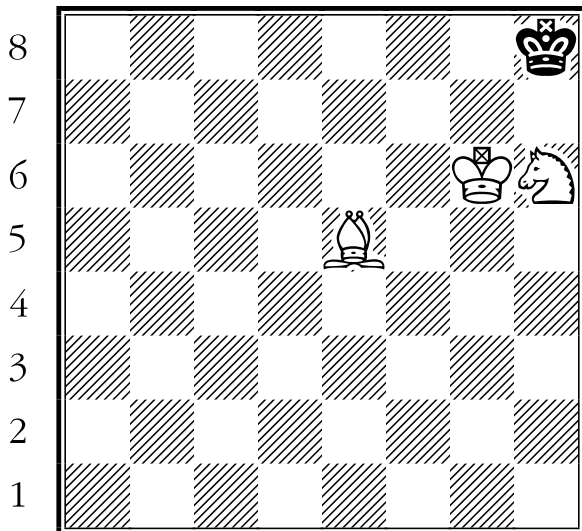
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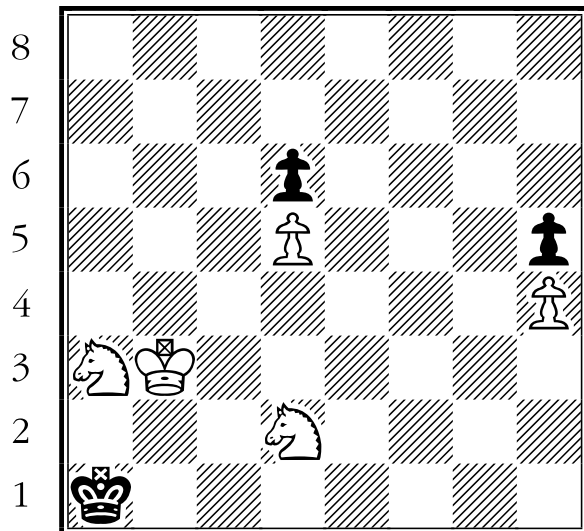
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Circle the correct answer:
Checkmate? or Stalemate?



a b c d e f g h

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Checkmate? or Stalemate?



a b c d e f g h

Circle the correct answer:
Checkmate? or Stalemate?

Basic Checkmates and Stalemate

Answer Key

Worksheet Page 1 – Checkmate or Stalemate?:

Diagram #1 – Checkmate

Diagram #2 – Checkmate

Diagram #3 – Stalemate

Diagram #4 – Stalemate

Worksheet Page 2 – Checkmate or Stalemate?:

Diagram #1 – Stalemate

Diagram #2 – Checkmate

Diagram #3 – Checkmate

Diagram #4 – Stalemate