

## Rooks on the 7th rank

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Rooks work extremely well together, either by line up on files (the vertical squares) or on ranks (the horizontal squares). The latter is particularly powerful when the rooks occupy the 7th rank (i.e. a7-h7 when White is attacking or a2-h2 when Black attacks).

See diagram (a)

White to play and force checkmate in 2 moves (easy if you remember the rules about mating with 2 rooks)

**HINT** the first move is not check

(a)

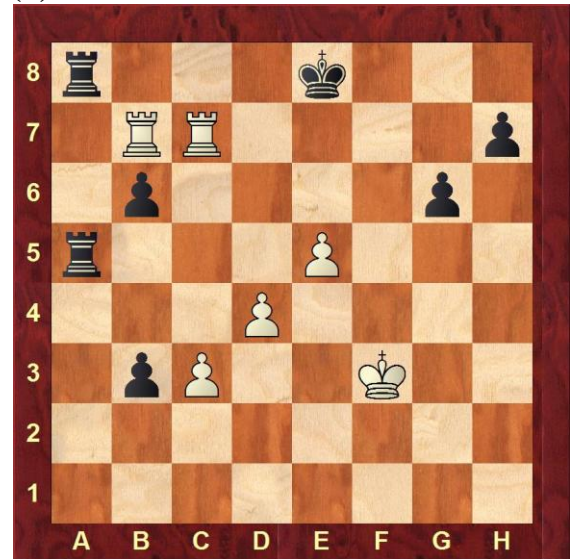


diagram (b)

So how does Black avoid the checkmates of the 8th rank?

Well the secret is to ensure the King always remains in contact with one of your opponents rooks.

(b)

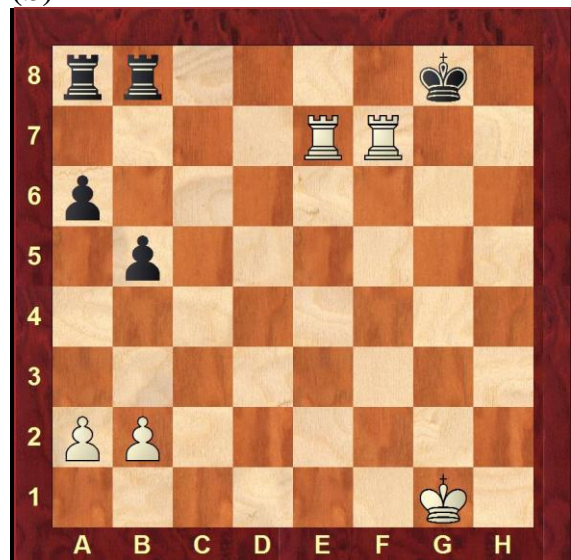


diagram (c)

This is the classic checkmate with 2 rooks on the seventh rank. Here White to play and deliver checkmate in 3 moves

HINT All 3 moves are checks!

(c)



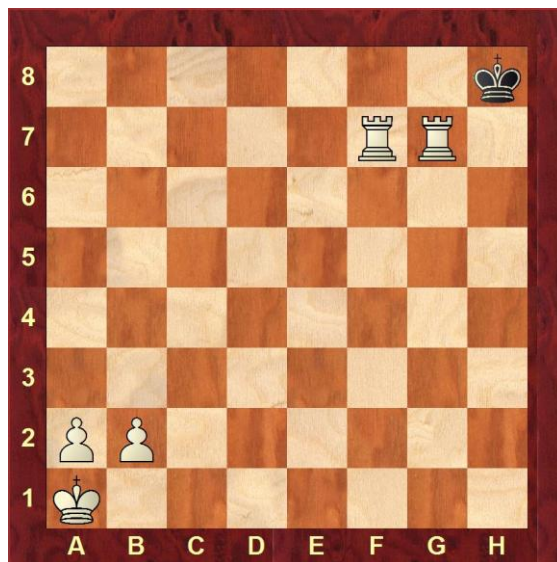
diagram (d)

1. There is a trap here. If it were Black to move what would be the result of the game?

2. With White to move can you move either the King or a pawn?

3. So how can White play to give a forced checkmate in 3 moves?

(d)



See all answers [HERE](#)

The Novice and Intermediate problems below continue the theme of rooks on the 7th rank. How many can you solve?

**This month's problems - Novice**

**Problem N45**



**N45. White to play and give checkmate in 5 moves or less**  
**HINT do not forget the humble pawn**

**Problem N46**



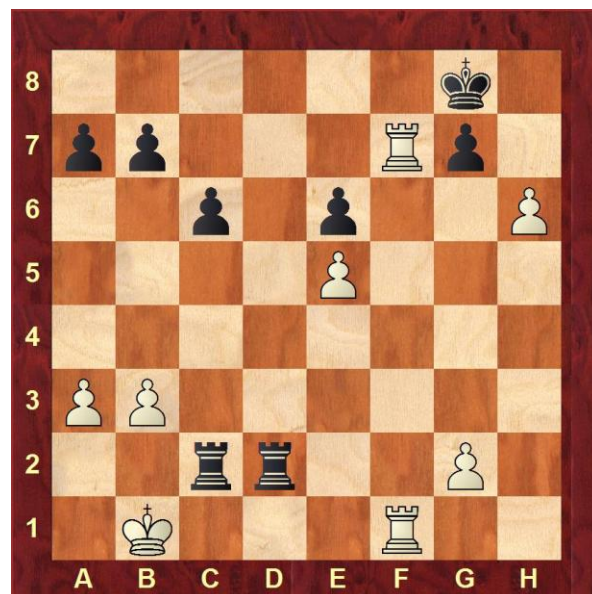
**N46. Black is in trouble here and is losing but what is the best move?**

**This month's problems - Intermediate**

**Problem I45**



**Problem I46**



145. You are White but it is Black's move - if they play Nb4 what is your reply?

146. (a) If you were White and it was your move, how do you win this game?  
(b) In fact it is Black to play - is there a winning line?

## Answers to Rook on the 7th Problems (return to Problems [HERE](#))

(a) White plays

1. Rxh7 any move by Black
2. Rh8#

(b) For example if White tries

1. Rg7+ Kh8
2. Rh7+ Kg8
3. Reg7+ Kf8
4. Rc7 Kg8

And so on to prevent White setting up the ladder mate in the g and h ranks

(c)

1. Rg7+ Kh8
2. Rxh7+ Kg8
3. Rcg7#

(d)

1. This would be stalemate if it were Black's move as the only piece that can be moved is the King (which is not in check at present) and any move by the King would put it in check.

2. Stalemate again - Black's King cannot move without moving to a square that is checked.

3. The correct way for White to play is:

1. Rh7+ Kg8 (only move)
2. Rd7 Kf8 (only move)
3. Rh8#

Please note that on move 2 White could also have played the rook to c7, b7 or a7. Well done if you also spotted this.

**So did you find the correct answer to all these problems? If you did then look for these type of moves in your games - they can occur quite often. Now try the Novice and Intermediate puzzles.**