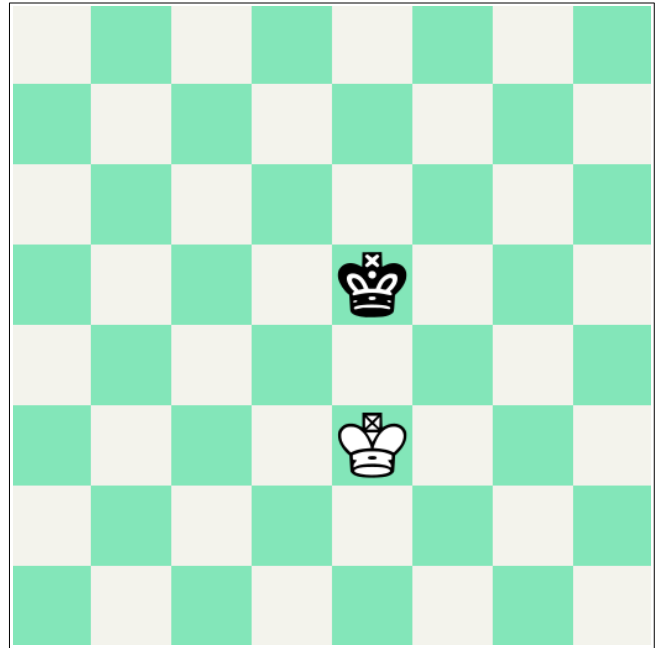


King and Pawn versus King

The Opposition

In chess when two kings oppose each other as shown the side that does not currently have the move is said to have *the opposition*. The side with the opposition can force his king to his opponent's side of the board. In the diagrammed position it's Black to move. *White* has the opposition. We see that after **1. ... Kd5 2. Kf4 Ke6 3. Ke4 Kf6 4. Kd5 Ke7 5. Ke5 Kd7 6. Kf6 Ke8 7. Ke6 Kf8 8. Kd7 Kf7 9. Kd8** White has forced his way to Black's first rank. There is nothing Black can do to prevent this because his king must give way.

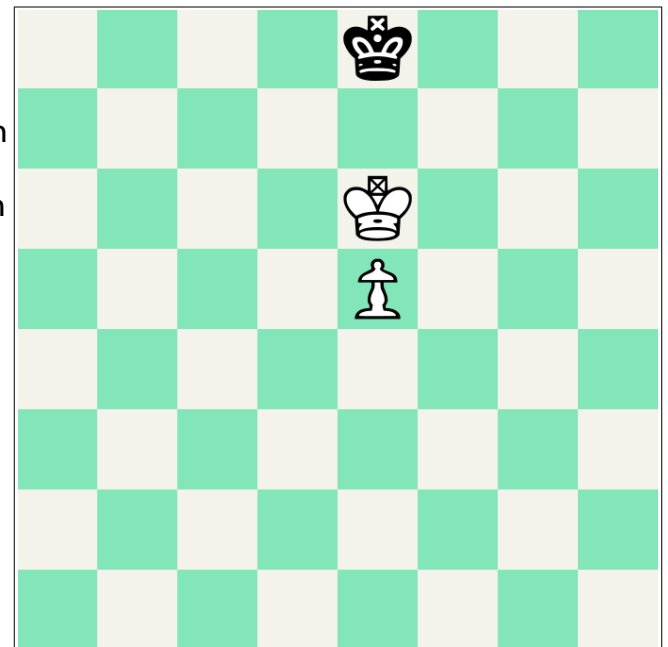
If it is White's move, then *Black* has the opposition and White can never force his way forward. After **1. Kd3 Kd5 2. Kc3 Kc5 3. Kd3 Kd5 4. Ke3 Ke5 5. Kf3 Kf5** it's pretty clear that White is at a standstill.



King and Pawn versus King

This is the fundamental position to be reached in king and pawn versus king endgames. The pawn must be on the fifth rank and its king must be on the sixth rank *ahead of the pawn*. White wins regardless of who has the opposition. The only time White cannot win is if the pawn is a rook's pawn (on the a- or h-files).

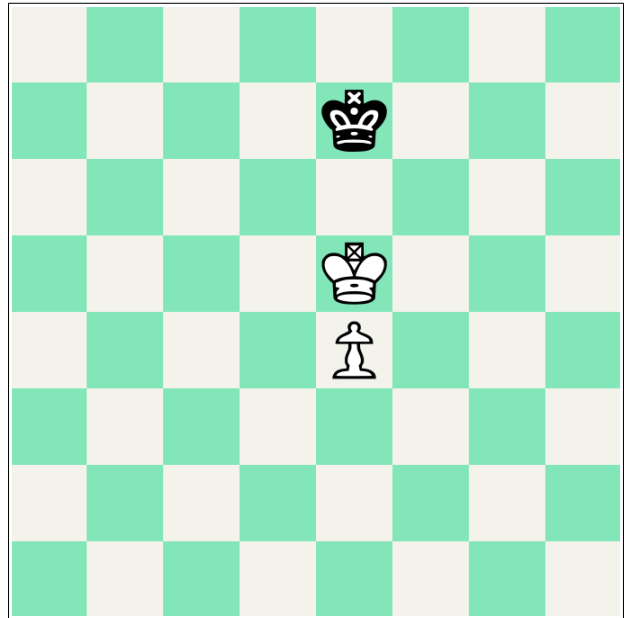
Not having the opposition is less favorable but White still wins: **1. Kd6 Kd8 2. e6 Ke8 3. e7**. If the pawn does not give check on the seventh when his king is on the sixth then the stronger side wins. Play continues **... Kf7 4. Kd7** and the pawn promotes.



With the opposition the win is more straightforward: **1. ... Kf8 2. Kd7 Kf7 3. e6+ Kf8 4. e7+ Kf7 5. e8=Q+** here the white king controls the queening square, so the check on the seventh is irrelevant.

If we move the position above down one rank, then the game depends on whose move it is. With the opposition Black draws; without the opposition he loses:

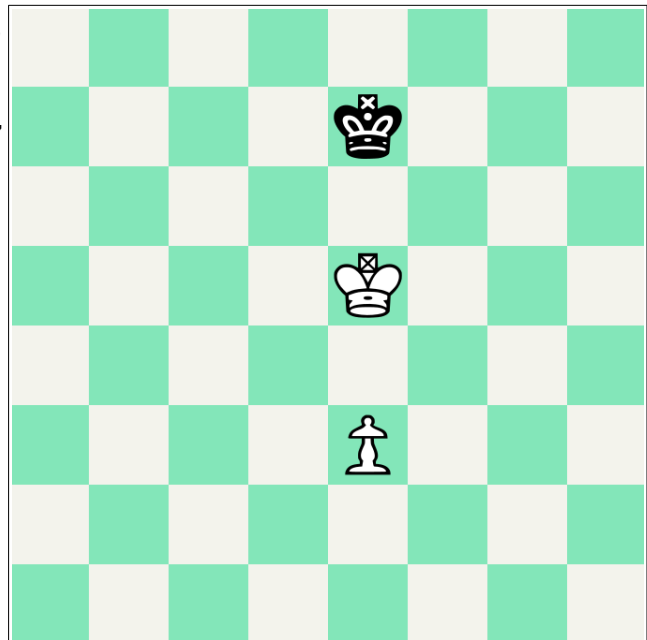
1. Kd5 Kd7 2. Ke5 Ke7 3. Kf5 Kf7. It's clear that White can make no progress with his king, so he must push the pawn. **4. e5 Ke7!** taking up an active position in front of the pawn (weaker moves lose: 4...Ke8 5. Ke6! taking the opposition and attaining the position above). As White cannot advance his king he must advance the pawn. **5. e6 Ke8!** Other moves lose. If 5...Kf8 6. Kf6! taking the opposition; if 5...Kd8 6. Kf6! taking the diagonal opposition. After 6...Ke8 7. e7 Kd7 8. Kf7 the pawn promotes. **6. Kf6 Kf8!** taking the opposition and with it, White's winning chances. **7. e7+ Ke8** White's only options are to stalemate Black or lose the pawn. Either way the game is a **draw**.



Without the opposition, Black's king must give way to White's king and Black loses: **1. ... Kf7 2. Kd6 Ke8 3. Ke6 Kd8 4. Kf7 Kd7 5. e5 Kd8 6. e6 Kc7 7. e7** and the pawn queens.

With the pawn on the third rank or further back, White wins with or without the opposition. If he does not have the opposition, he gains it by making a tempo move with the pawn: **1. e4! Kd7 2. Kf6 Ke8 3. Ke6 Kf8 4. Kd7 Kf7 5. e5 Kf8 6. e6 Kg7 7. e7.**

With the opposition the win is simpler: **1. ... Kd7 2. Kf6 Kd6 3. e4 Kd7 4. e5 Ke8 5. Ke6 Kf8 6. Kd7 Kf7 7. e6+ Kf8 8. e7+** and the pawn promotes.

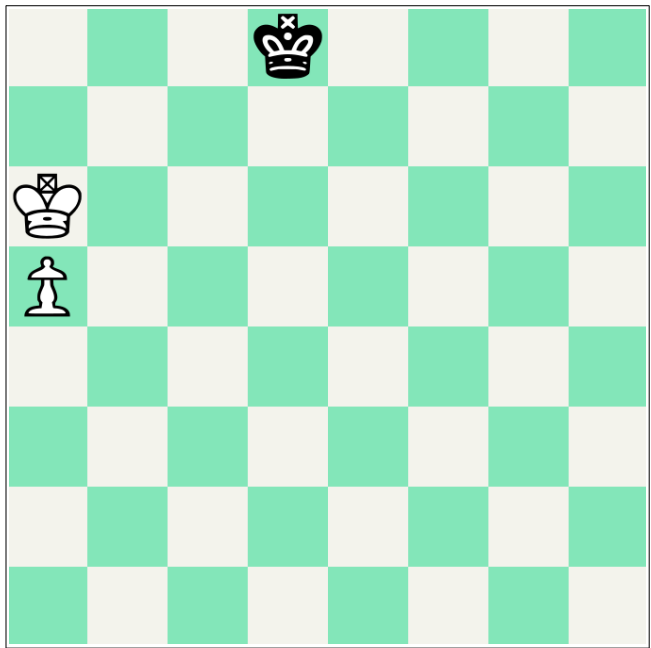


When there is a rook pawn Black draws if he can reach the corner.

Here, with the move Black draws by playing towards the corner: **1. ... Kc7! 2. Kb5 Kb7 3. a6+ Ka7 4. Ka5 Ka8 5. Kb6 Kb8 6. a7+ Ka8.**

If White tries to keep Black out of the corner, he stalemates himself: **1. ... Kc7 2. Ka7 Kc8 3. Ka8 Kc7 4. Ka7 Kc8 5. a6 Kc7 6. Ka8 Kc8 7. a7 Kc7 stalemate!** If White tries **6. Kb6 Kb8 7. a6 Ka8 8. a7 stalemate.**

With the move White wins because he keeps Black out of the corner: **1. Kb7! Kd7 2. a6 Kd8 3. a7 Kd7.** Note that **1. Kb6?** draws.

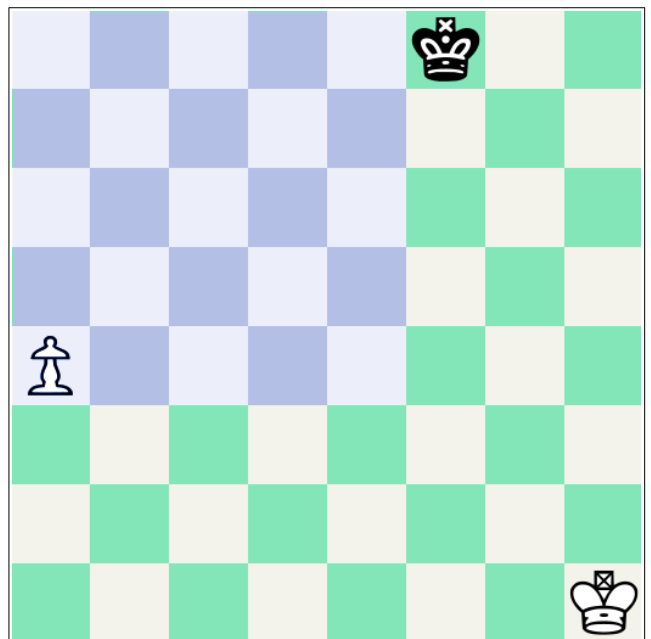


If White's king cannot support the pawn the result depends on whether Black's king can reach the pawn in time.

The blue area is known as the "Square of the pawn." Black draws if he gets into the Square, and loses otherwise.

With White to move, the Square shrinks and Black is kept out: **1. a5! Ke8 2. a6 Kd7 3. a7 Kc8 4. a8=Q+ wins.**

With the move however Black enters the Square and captures the new queen just in time: **1. ... Ke7 2. a5 Kd6 3. a6 Kc6 4. a7 Kb7 5. a8=Q+ Kxa8 draws.**



Remember, the King and Pawn versus King ending is *why you must know king and queen versus king*. You're not done when the pawn promotes to a queen! You still must checkmate your opponent (or if you are the weaker side, hope for a stalemate!).