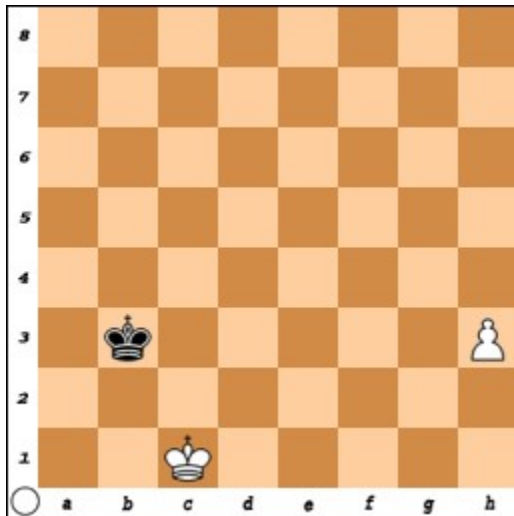


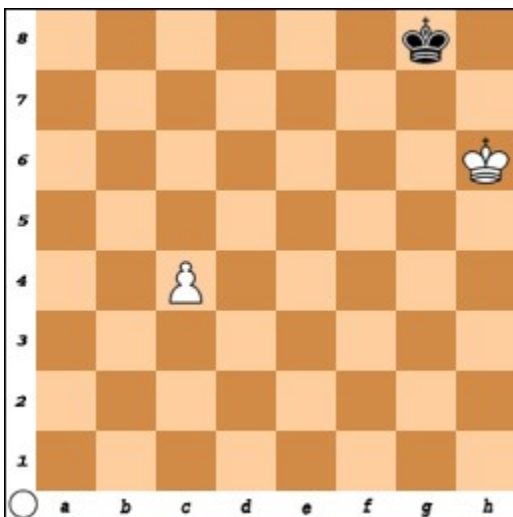
Basic King and Pawn Endings

I have selected several typical positions from king and pawn endgames. In all of these positions, white can win if he moves first. In many of these positions, black can draw if he moves first.



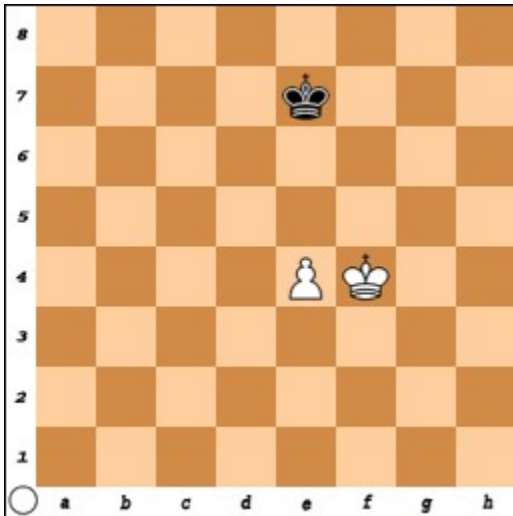
This first position is fundamental pawn pushing. White can play 1 h4, then draw an imaginary line on the diagonal from h4 to d8. This allows you to visualize the "box" of 25 squares going from h4-d4-d8-h8. Can the black king enter that square on his next move? No!, so the white pawn is immune from capture. White will continue pushing the h-pawn until it promotes on h8.

If black moves first, he can play 1...Kc3 and catch the pawn,



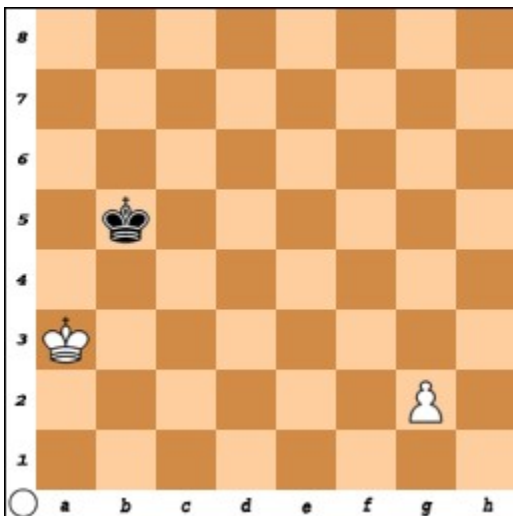
In this position we cannot simply push the c-pawn, as it will be caught by the black king. Instead, we need to bring our own king to the aid of the pawn with 1 Kg6! Kf8 2 Kf6 Ke8 3 Ke6 Kd8 4 Kd6 Kc8 5 Kc6 Kb8 6 Kd7 Kb7 7 c5 and the pawn will be escorted to the eighth rank protected by the white king. If black had played 5...Kd8 white would play 6 Kb7 with the same result.

If black moves first, he can play 1...Kf7 and either capture or get in front of the pawn where white will be unable to take the opposition.



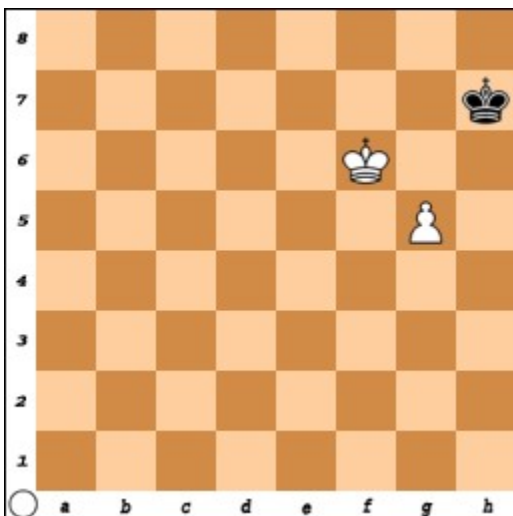
When trying to escort a pawn down the board, it is imperative to remember that the king must stay in front of the pawn. Here, white plays 1 Ke5!, taking the "opposition" (where the two kings face each other, and whose ever turn it is to move, must yield. Here black would like to stay put and block white's progress, but he must give way. After 1...Kd7 2 Kf6 Ke8 3 Ke6! gains the opposition again. Now 3...Kf8 4 Kd7 and white will escort the pawn to the eighth rank.

Black to move first plays 1...Ke6 and it's drawn.



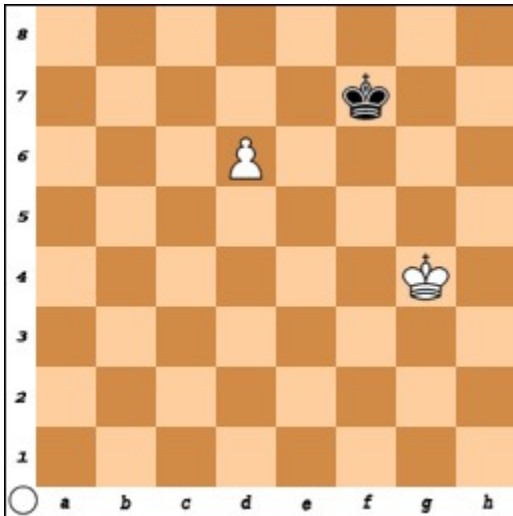
Here white must move across the board, taking the opposition along the way. 1 Kb3 Kc5 2 Kc3 Kd5 3 Kd3 Ke5 4 Ke3 Kf5 5 Kf3 Kg5 6 Kg3, now black must yield. 6...Kf5 7 Kh4 Kg6 8 Kg4 (again, the opposition) 8...Kf6 9 Kh5 Kg7 10 Kg5 (again) 10...Kf7 11 Kh6 Kg8 12 Kg6 (again) 12...Kf8. Now, it's time to bring the pawn up in **two** moves, 13 g4 Kg8 14 g5 Kf8 15 Kh7 and the pawn is escorted to the eighth rank. Note we moved the pawn twice to maintain the opposition.

Black moves first plays 1..Kc4 and can catch the pawn or block it leading to a draw.



This one is tricky because the pawn can't simply move forward without stalemating the black king. After 1 g6+? Kh8 2 g7+ Kg8 it's drawn. Correct play here is 1 Kf7 Kh8 2 Kg6 Kg8 3 Kh6 Kh8 4 g6 Kg8 7 g7 Kf7 8 Kh7 and the pawn promotes. Note that it was important to advance the pawn to the seventh rank *without giving check!*

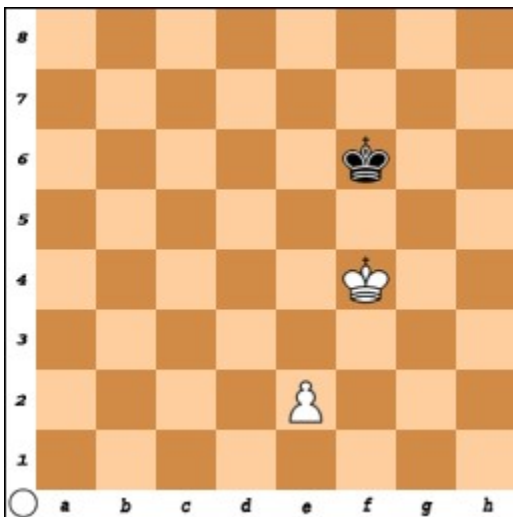
Even if black moves first here, white can still win. In fact it's easier for white to win if black moves first.



Here's another example where it's necessary to *maintain the opposition* and advance the pawn *without check*. White starts with 1 Kf5 (getting the opposition) Kf8 2 Kf6 (maintaining the opposition) 2...Ke8 3 Ke6 (still maintaining the opposition) 3...Kd8 4 d7 (without check) 4...Kc7 5 Ke7 and the pawn promotes.

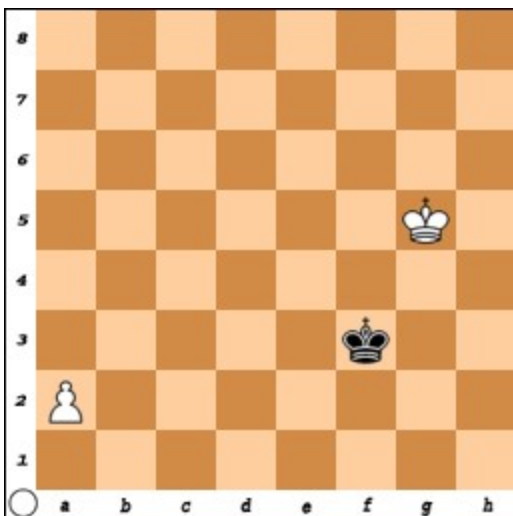
If white had played 2 Ke6 black could then play 2...Ke8 and black would have the opposition, the pawn could not be advanced without check, and the game would be drawn.

Black to move is 1...Ke6 draw.



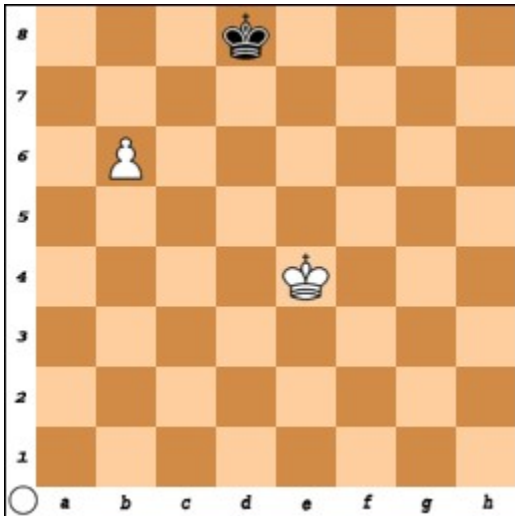
A simple example of taking the opposition. White plays 1 Ke4 Ke6. Now, it appears that black has the opposition, but after 2 e3! it is white that has the opposition. Black must yield! 2...Kd6 3 Kf5 Ke7 4 Ke5 Kd7 5 Kf6 Ke8 6 Ke6 Kd8 7 Kf7 and the pawn promotes.

With black to move, it's still a win for white.



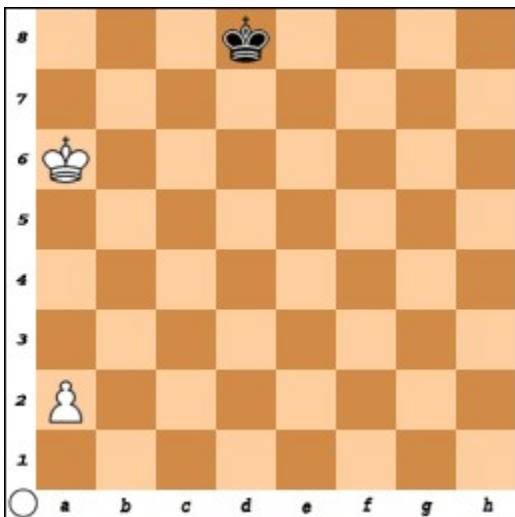
The white pawn cannot simply advance, as the black king can catch it. But the white king can come to its aid, and keep the black king from moving up the board. 1 Kf5 Ke3 2 Ke5 Kd3 3 Kd5 Kc3 4 Kc5 and now black cannot play 4...Kb3 as that square is attacked by the pawn. And any other move allows white to play 5 a4 and the pawn will promote.

Black to move is a draw after 1...Ke4. Black can capture or block the pawn.



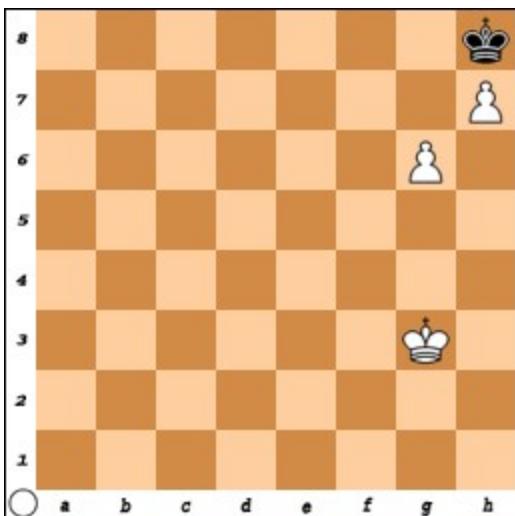
Here black can take the opposition, but white can use the pawn to get it back. Play starts 1 Kd5 Kd7 (black has the opposition) 2 Kc5 (black would like to play 2...Kc7 to maintain the opposition, but that square is controlled by the pawn}. Black tries 2...Kd8. White plays 3 Kd6! to take the opposition. 3...Kc8 4 Kc6 Kb8 5 b7 (without check) 5...Ka7 6 Kc7 and the pawn will promote.

Black to move is a draw after 1...Kc8 2 Kd5 Kb7 3 Kc5 Kb8 4 Kc6 Kc8 (to take the opposition) and the pawn can only be advanced with check.



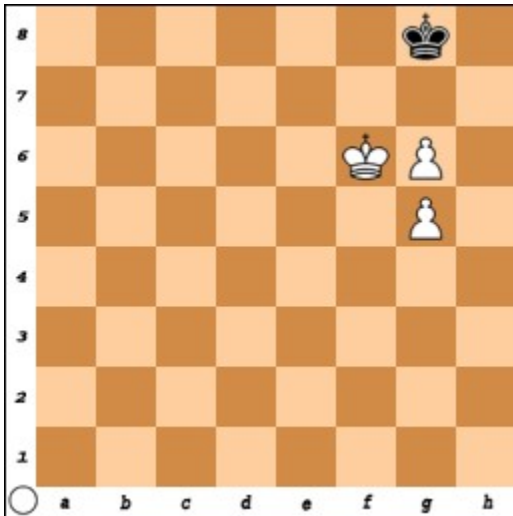
Rook pawns are notoriously drawish. In this position white has one move to preserve the win: 1 Kb7. This cuts off the black king (which would draw if it could reach c8). Once white establishes the king on b7, the pawn promotes easily.

With black to move the game is a draw after 1...Kc8. There's no way to escort the pawn now. The black king will head to a8, or move between c8 and c7 if the white king goes to a8.



This position is tricky. If the white king approaches too close to the black king he can accidentally give stalemate. The solution is to give up one pawn in order to advance the other pawn *without check*. Here's how it goes: 1 Kf4 Kg7 2 Kf5 Kh8 3 Kg5! Kg7 4 h8=Q+ Kxh8 5 Kf6 Kg8 6 g7 (without check) Kh7 7 Kf7 and the pawn promotes. Note the waiting move on move 3 for white.

Even with black to move, white wins this.



This is another position where you give up one pawn to promote the other. Stalemates abound in this position, so be careful! 1 g7 Kh7 2 g8=Q+ Kxg8 3 Kg6 (taking the opposition) 3...Kh8 4 Kf7 Kh7 5 g6+ Kh8 6 g7+ Kh7 7 g8=Q+, and it's all over but the shouting. This time you could advance the pawn with check, as the king was advanced enough to escort the pawn.

With black to move, the game should be drawn after 1...Kf8. If 2 g7+ Kg8 and white loses a pawn with no chance to promote the other, or gives stalemate.

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