



Welcome & Introduction

Welcome!

With the **ChessKid.com Curriculum** we set out to create an original, creative and extremely “kid friendly” way of learning the game of chess! While acquiring knowledge of the rules, basic fundamentals, as well as advanced strategies and tactics – coaches and beginning chess players alike will enjoy working through these lessons.

To create a system that would be both kid- and classroom-friendly, we brainstormed, outlined and designed a curriculum format to support a single goal:

Develop a child's ability, starting from the beginning stages (no knowledge of the game) of chess, and take them to the level of an experienced scholastic chess player.

We keep the language simple. However, while we believe children with a fourth- or fifth-grade reading level could work through this curriculum on their own, **the most practical application of this curriculum is instructor-guided**, and in many cases we recommend a *classroom format*. Most lessons are designed to be delivered in an hour – with optional worksheets to assign for independent learning.

The *Instructor's Guides* furnish lesson plans, provide practical advice, and even suggest ways to keep the experience fun! They also describe the “when and how” to allow for “mini-game” and “worksheet” practice during class. **We strongly recommend that coaches (whether teaching in groups or privately) review the lessons in their entirety first**, grasping the “big picture” goal of that lesson and all its parts, before teaching their student(s).

We invite everyone to enjoy the journey to chess mastery! Along the way, remember that each lesson, diagram, worksheet, and mini-game combine to cover all the key concepts, each serving the larger purpose of the curriculum as a whole.

Good luck and have fun!

Sincerely,

International Master Daniel Rensch (Username: ACEChess on www.ChessKid.com)

Co-Director of Content and Professional Relations

On behalf of the entire Chess.com and ChessKid.com Staff, as well as all others whom contributed to this project.

Find more “chess kids” at www.ChessKid.com!



Welcome & Introduction

Curriculum Contents

Welcome and Introduction

- How to Use This Curriculum by IM Daniel Rensch
- Introducing the Game and Learning the Chessboard Part 1 – *A brief history of the game, basic terminology and score keeping (Algebraic Notation)*
- Introducing the Game and Learning the Chessboard Part 2 – *Setting up the board and the value of the chessmen*

Section 1 – Starting Out: The Basics of Chess

Lesson 1

- *Meet the Players Part 1*
Introducing the King, Knight and pawn
- Mini-Game(s) 1 – The Farmer and the Piggies
- The Farmer and the Piggies Instructor's Sample
- Mini-Game(s) 2 – Pawn Wars
- Worksheet 1 – Moving the King
- Worksheet 2 – Moving the Knight
- Worksheet 3 – Moving the Pawn

Lesson 2

- *Meet the Players Part 2*
Introducing the Rook, Bishop and Queen
- Meet the Players Lessons 1 & 2 *Instructor's Guide*
- Worksheet 1 – Moving the Rook
- Worksheet 2 – Moving the Bishop
- Worksheet 3 – Moving the Queen

Lesson 3

- *The Aim (Goal) of a Chess Game*
- Part 1 – Check and How to Escape Check
- Part 2 – Checkmate and Introduction to Stalemate
- The Aim (Goal) of a Chess Game *Instructor's Guide*
- Worksheet 1 – Check the King
- Worksheet 2 – Capture the Checker
- Worksheet 3 – Blocking Check
- Worksheet 4 – Running From Check



Welcome & Introduction

- Worksheet 5 – Is This Checkmate
- The Aim (Goal) of a Chess Game *Answer Key*

Lesson 4

- *Basic Checkmates and Stalemate*
- Part 1 – Basic Checkmates, King and Queen vs Lone King
- Part 2 – Basic Checkmates, “Rook Roller” – Two Rooks vs Lone King
- Part 3 – Stalemate (No Legal Moves) Explained
- Basic Checkmates and Stalemate *Instructor's Guide*
- Worksheets 1 and 2 – Checkmate or Stalemate
- Basic Checkmates and Stalemate Worksheets *Answer Key*

Section 2 – The Basics of Playing, the “Phases” of Chess & the Opening

Lesson 5

- *How to Win a Chess Game*
- Part 1 – Destroying the Enemy and Counting Attackers Defenders
- Part 2 – The Special Move in Chess
- How to Win a Chess Game *Instructor's Guide*
- Worksheets 1 and 2 – Castling Quiz
- Worksheet 3 – Is It Defended
- Worksheet 4 – Doggy-Pile Quiz
- Worksheet 5 – Who's Hanging
- How to Win a Chess Game *Answer Key*

Super Pawns: “En Passant”

- *Super-Pawns: “En Passant” Handout*
- Worksheet 1 – Can You Capture *En Passant*?
- Can You Capture *En Passant*? *Answer Key*

Lesson 6

- *Phases of a Game, Planning & Your Opponent*
- Part 1 – The Three Phases of a Chess Game
- Part 2 – Learning the Basics of “Planning” in Chess
- Part 3 – Why Did My Opponent Move There
- Phases of a Game, Planning & Your Opponent *Instructor's Guide*
- Worksheets 1 and 2 – Checks and Captures
- Worksheet 3 – Attack the Queen
- Worksheet 4 – Why Did They Go There
- Checks, Captures, Queen Attacks and Your Opponent *Answer Key*



Welcome & Introduction

Lesson 7

- *The “Quick” Mates & Other Basic Checkmates*
- Part 1 – “Fools” Rush In, the “Fidgety King”, the “Knight's Dream”, Scholar's” and the Other Four Move Checkmate
- Part 2 – Other Basic Checkmate Ideas and Patterns
- The Quick Mates & Other Basic Checkmates *Instructor's Guide*
- Worksheets 1 and 2 – Famous Checkmates
- Worksheet 3 – Guarding f2 and f7
- The Quick Mates & Other Basic Checkmates Opponent *Answer Key*

Lesson 8

- *Starting Out a Chess Game: Opening Principles*
- Part 1 – The Basics of Development and Queen Play in the Opening
- Part 2 – Advanced Development: Controlling the Center; Connecting the Rooks; and Playing with a Purpose
- Starting Out a Chess Game: Opening Principles *Instructor's Guide*
- Worksheet 1 – Connect the Rooks
- Worksheet 2 – Counting Development
- Starting Out a Chess Game: Opening Principles Opponent *Answer Key*

Section 3 – Tactics, Tactics & More Tactics

Lesson 9

- *Chess Tactics: Double Attack & The Fork*
- Part 1 – Essential Tactical Knowledge: Double Attacks & The Fork
- Chess Tactics: Double Attack & The Fork *Instructor's Guide*
- Worksheet 1 – Which Is It
- Worksheets 2 and 3 – Knives & Forks
- Knives, Forks & Spoons Opponent *Answer Key*

Lesson 10

- *Chess Tactics: Learning to Pin & Skewer*
- Part 1 – Winning Chess Tactics: Learning to Pin
- Part 2 – Breaking the Pin
- Part 3 – Winning Chess Tactics: Learning to Skewer
- Chess Tactics: Learning to Pin & Skewer *Instructor's Guide*
- Worksheets 1 and 2 – Pin 'em & Skewer 'em
- Pin 'em & Skewer 'em *Answer Key*



Welcome & Introduction

Lesson 11

- *Chess Tactics: Discovered Attacks & Double Checks*
- Part 1 – Discovering Discovered Attacks in Chess
- Part 2 – More Discovered Attacks and Double Checks
- *Chess Tactics: Discovered Attacks & Double Checks Instructor's Guide*
- Worksheets 1 and 2 – Use Your Discovery
- Use Your Discovery *Answer Key*

Lesson 12

- *Chess Tactics: Deflect, Destroy & Remove*
- Part 1 – Removal of the Defender and Deflection
- *Chess Tactics: Deflect, Destroy & Remove Instructor's Guide*
- Worksheets 1 and 2 – Using Tactics to Win
- Using Tactics to Win *Answer Key*

Section 4 – Endgame Play: Passed Pawns, Technique & King Play

Lesson 13

- *Rook Mates, Zugzwang & King Play*
- Part 1 – Basic Checkmates: King and Rook vs Lone King
- Part 2 – Zugzwang Explaining and Examples
- Part 3 – King Play, King Power and King Activity
- *Rook Mates, Zugzwang & King Play Instructor's Guide*
- Mini-Game(s) – King Play Practice Games

Lesson 14

- *Passed Pawns, Promoting & Other “Pawn Tactics”*
- Part 1 – Introduction to Passed Pawns and Basic Pawn Play Strategy
- Part 2 – Under-Promotion, Pawn Tactics and the “Rule of the Square”
- *Passed Pawns, Promoting & Other “Pawn Tactics” Instructor's Guide*
- Mini-Game(s) – Converting Your Passers
- Worksheet 1 – Circle the Passed Pawns
- Worksheet 2 – To “Under” or Promote
- *Passed Pawns, Promoting & Other “Pawn Tactics” Answer Key*



Welcome & Introduction

Lesson 15

- *Opposition, Technique & Advanced King Play*
- Part 1 – Opposition Explained with Basic King and Pawn Endings
- Part 2 – Distant Opposition
- Part 3 – Irregular Opposition
- *Opposition, Technique & Advanced King Play Instructor's Guide*
- *Worksheets 1 and 2– King and Pawn Endings*
- *Opposition, Technique & Advanced King Play Answer Key*

Lesson 16

- *Advanced Endgame Play & Winning Technique*
- Part 1 – Win When Winning: The Principles of Technique
- Part 2 – The “Magic Square” Technique: Queen vs Advanced Pawn(s)
- *Advanced Endgame Play & Winning Technique Instructor's Guide*
- *Worksheet 1 – Is the King Too Close*
- *Advanced Endgame Play & Winning Technique Answer Key*

Section 5 – Positional Chess, Planning & Advanced Piece Play

Lesson 17

- *The Fundamentals of Positional Chess*
- Part 1 – Positional Chess: Doubled Pawns
- Part 2 – Positional Chess: Isolated Pawns
- Part 3 – Positional Chess: Backward Pawns and “Outpost” Squares
- *The Fundamentals of Positional Chess Instructor's Guide*
- *Worksheets 1 and 2 – Find the Weakness*
- *Find the Positional Weakness Answer Key*

Lesson 18

- *Learning to Play with the “Little Guys”*
- Part 1 – Pawn Majorities and Minorities: The Basics of Pawn Play
- Part 2 – The Basics of Pawn Structure and Advanced Pawn Play
- Part 3 – Advanced Pawn Play, Space and Building Strength
- *Learning to Play with the “Little Guys” Instructor's Guide*
- *Worksheets 1 and 2 – Playing with the Pawns*
- *Playing with the Pawns Answer Key*

Lesson 19

- *Bad Pieces & Other Advanced Piece Play*



Welcome & Introduction

- Part 1 – Cramped/Bad Pieces: “Nominal” vs “Absolute” Piece Power
- Part 2 – Sidelined Minor Pieces: “Knight on the Rim” & “Bad Bishop”
- Bad Pieces & Other Advanced Piece Play *Instructor’s Guide*

Lesson 20

- *Playing “Tournament Level” Chess Games & Planning*
- Part 1 – Finding High Level Plans and Critical Thinking in Chess
- Part 2 – Prophylactic Thinking in Chess
- Part 3 – Perpetual Check, Three-Fold Repetition & the 50-Move Draw
- Playing “Tournament Level” Chess Games & Planning *Instructor’s Guide*

Curriculum Summary by IM Daniel Rensch

Introducing the Game and Learning the Chessboard

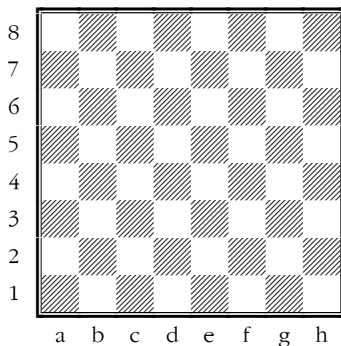
Introducing the Game of Chess, a Brief History and the Chessboard!

A short history of chess, as well as a few basics about the platform or “battlefield” on which you play...

Chess is one of the oldest games in the world! Its origins (where it came from) stem back to India over 1500 years ago. The original versions of chess were invented around 600 AD (that’s a long time ago!). India began to spread the game around the world, starting with countries such as Persia. Eventually, the game spread all over Europe and East Asia.

The “*modern version*” (meaning with the rules we use today) of the game began taking shape in Southern Europe around the 15th Century, and “tournament style” chess was being played in the mid 1800s. The first ever World Championship Match was held in 1886. Many exciting games have been played, and many great champions from all parts of our world have enjoyed and grown to love the game of chess – and we hope you will too!

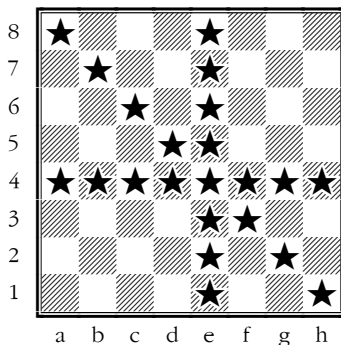
The Chessboard: 64-Squares Divided by Files, Ranks and Diagonals!



The game of chess is played on a perfectly square board. There are sixty-four squares on a chessboard, alternating light and dark (white and black).

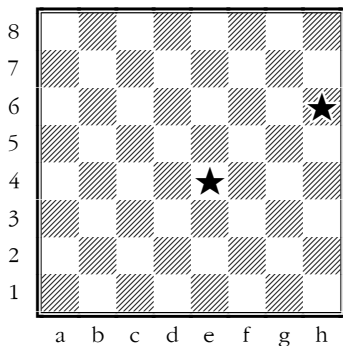
When you face a chessboard, the far right-bottom corner should always be a white/light square (from white or black’s perspective). This is very important when setting up the pieces, and so we use a fun phrase to remember this:

“Before we fight, you must have white/light on the right”! Of course you are only fighting on the chessboard!



The chessboard is divided and described in three different ways. We use the term “File(s)” to describe the letters (a-h) and the squares that go up from them. Every square on the “e-file” has been highlighted to show this. We use the term “Rank(s)” to describe every square in a straight line from where the numbers (1-8) begin. Every square along the “4th-rank” has been highlighted to show this. We use the term “Diagonal(s)” to describe every square moving sideways corner-to-corner (h1-a8 is a diagonal) and every square along the h1-a8 diagonal has a star.

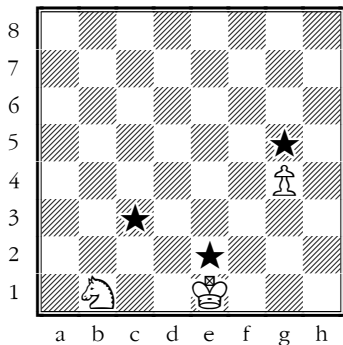
ScoreKeeping: The Basics of “Keeping Track” of a Game: Algebraic Notation!



In order to work through this curriculum, or ever play in a chess tournament, you will need to understand how to “**read**” a chessboard. There are many older forms of keeping track of the moves that are being played, but the best method we use in chess today is Algebraic Notation.

Each chess square has an “**address**” (a name that is different from every other square). If you look down from the square, you'll see a letter, and if you look to the left, a number. Each square's special “address” is that letter and number combined. When using Algebraic chess terms, we always say the letter first: There are stars on “e4” and “h6”.

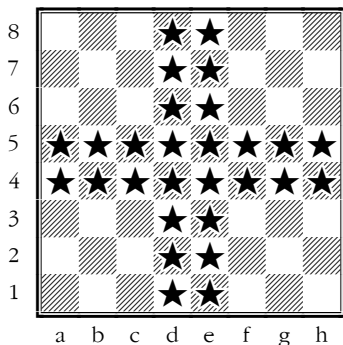
ScoreKeeping: How to Use Algebraic Notation!



We use Algebraic Notation in real games to keep a record of each move! We do this so that we can explain our games and positions to other players and coaches afterward, and so that there is proof, in the event of an argument, that the rules were followed in that chess game.

Here are some examples of how Algebraic Notation is used: **Ke2** (King moves from e1 to e2); **Nc3** (Knight moves from b1 to c3, and we use “N” for Knight); **g5** (we don't use the letter “P” when a pawn moves forward, but instead only write the square it moves to); etc. Use the upper-case, first letter, of the piece that is moving for all pieces besides the pawn (and N for Knight). When capturing a piece, write an “x” between the upper-case letter and the square: **Nxc3**.

More Chess “Terms”: Kingside, Queenside, White's Side, and Black's Side:



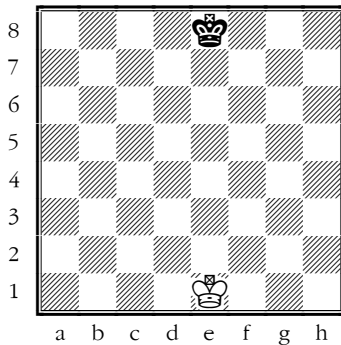
You will learn much more about how to read and use a chessboard as you read through our curriculum, but you now know the basics of “**chess terminology**” (which means the words we use while playing or describing a chess game).

The final fundamental chess terms you will need to be familiar with in order to study and learn from our curriculum are as follows: **Kingside** – this term describes every square and piece that is on the board from the e-file (the King's file) over to the h-file; **Queenside** – this references the entire board to the left of the d-file all the way to the a-file; **White's side** – the 1st to the 4th Rank; **Black's side** – the 5th to the 8th Rank. **You now speak chess!** Good job...

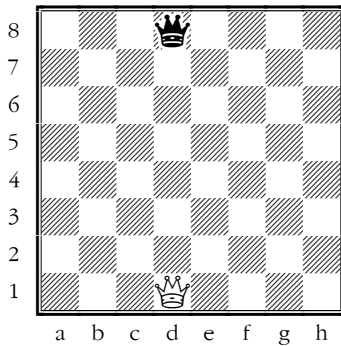
Setting Up a Chessboard & the Value of Your Chessmen

How to Set up a Chessboard and the Value of the Every Chess Piece

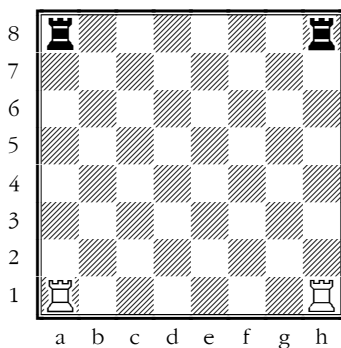
How to Set up a Chessboard from Start to Finish:



Each King is placed on its starting position: White King starts on e1 and the black King starts on e8. Note the Kings start on the **“opposite color”** square of their army (White King on black square; Black King on white square).

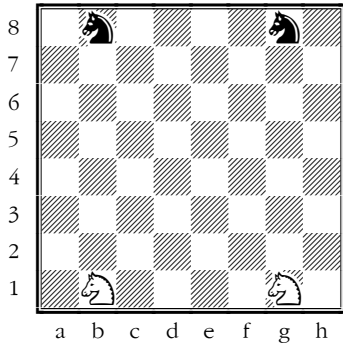


Each Queen is placed on its starting position: White Queen starts on d1 and the black Queen starts on d8. Note the Queens start the game on “their” color (Black Queen on black square; White Queen on white square).

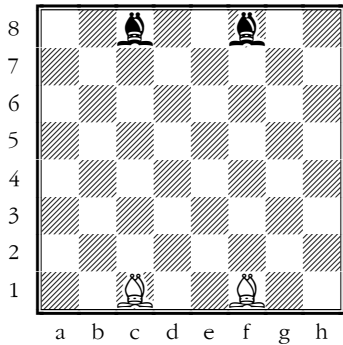


Each Rook is placed on its starting position in one of the four corners of the board: White Rooks are placed on a1 and h1 and the black Rooks placed on a8 and h8.

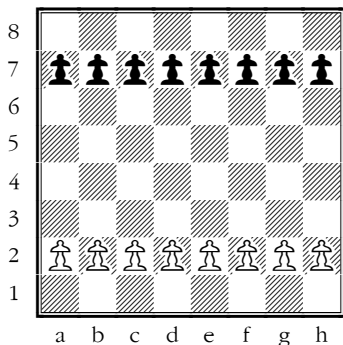
Welcome & Introduction



Each Knight is placed on its starting position: White Knights are placed on b1 and g1, and black Knights are placed on b8 and g8. The Knights start next to the Rooks.

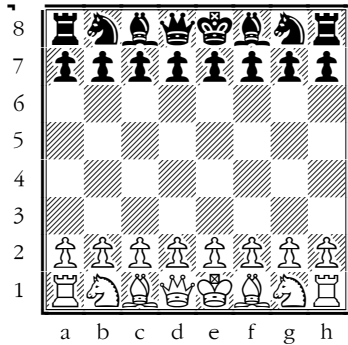


Each Bishop is placed on its starting position: White Bishops placed on c1 and f1, and the black Bishops are placed on c8 and f8.



Each player starts out with eight pawns. White's pawns are placed along the 2nd Rank from a2-h2, and black's pawns are placed along the 7th Rank from a7-h7.

The Chessboard is Complete: The Basic Rules and Introduction to the Chessmen!



Chess is a board game played between **two players**. Each player takes a turn to move, with white always moving first. The turns rotate (a player **must move** when it is his/her turn) every move after white makes the first move. The diagram you see is the **starting position** to every game of chess. White's pieces are always setup along the 1st and 2nd Ranks, with black's pieces occupying the 7th and 8th Ranks.

There are 32 chessmen! 16 chessmen for white, and 16 chessmen for black. A **chessman** is either a Piece or a Pawn. Each player starts out with one King, one Queen, two Rooks, two Knights, two Bishops, and eight Pawns.

Piece Values:

Over the years, experience has taught us that some pieces are more powerful than others. We have tried to capture that idea by assigning "**point values**" to the different chess pieces. These "points" are used to make decisions: "Should I give up my Queen for that Pawn?", as an example. Once you know and understand the point values, you will know the answer!

Point values don't always help you win the game because a game can still be won or lost by someone who is "**losing in total points**". *You win a chess game through Checkmate, not points* (see Lesson 3 for more on Checkmate)! Points are merely for making decisions. They help you choose and estimate who has more or less material in any given position.

	The Game
	9
	5
	3
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	1

Use your knowledge of the value of the chessmen to make good choices during a game!