



# Chess Rules- The Ultimate Guide for Beginners

By GM Igor Smirnov

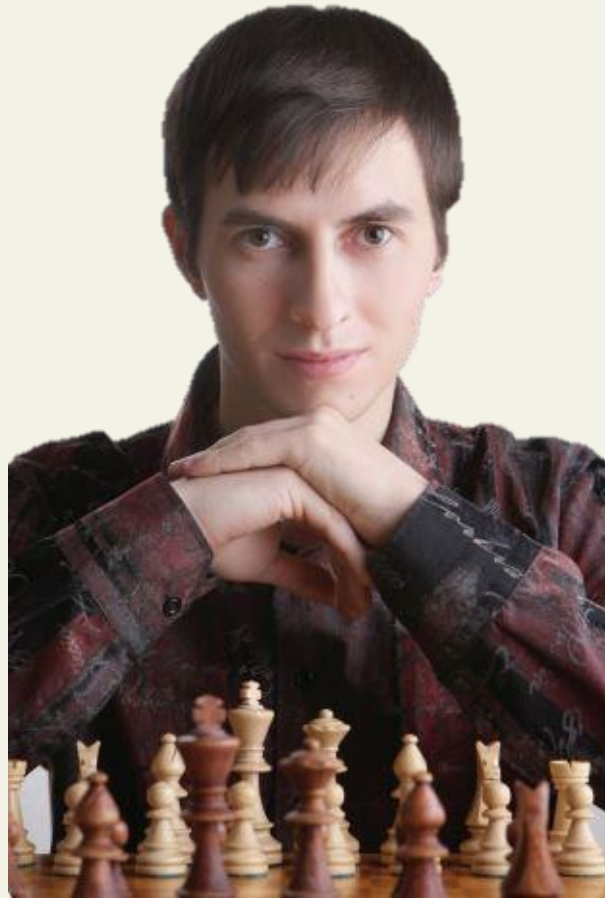
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# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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## Grandmaster Igor Smirnov

**Igor Smirnov** is a chess Grandmaster, coach, and holder of a Master's degree in psychology.

He's the founder of the “[Remote Chess Academy](#)” company that has helped thousands of students worldwide to improve their results.

GM Smirnov has developed lots of chess video lessons, articles, webinars and training courses, including the famous courses “The Grandmaster's Secrets”, “The Grandmaster's Positional Understanding”, and “Calculate Till Mate”.

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## THE ULTIMATE GUIDE

## CHESS RULES FOR BEGINNERS

By GM Igor Smirnov

Chess is the most intelligent game ever invented. It has a lot of things that are similar to life. It trains you to use all your resources to the maximum extent. Learning basic chess rules will help you build a strong foundation in chess. Many students do not have clear picture on these rules at their beginning stages.



That is why I decided to help beginners with basic chess rules.

Chess teaches you administration and to extract work from your subordinates. It is a battle between two monarchs. The king manages the troops. He plans the operation and executes it.

# 1

## Evolution of chess rules

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The rules of chess have evolved much over the centuries, from the early chess-like games played in India in the 6th century. For much of that time, the rules varied from area to area.

The modern rules first took form in Italy during the 13th century, giving more mobility to pieces that previously had more restricted movement (such as the queen and bishop).

Such modified rules entered into an accepted form during the late-15th or early 16th century.

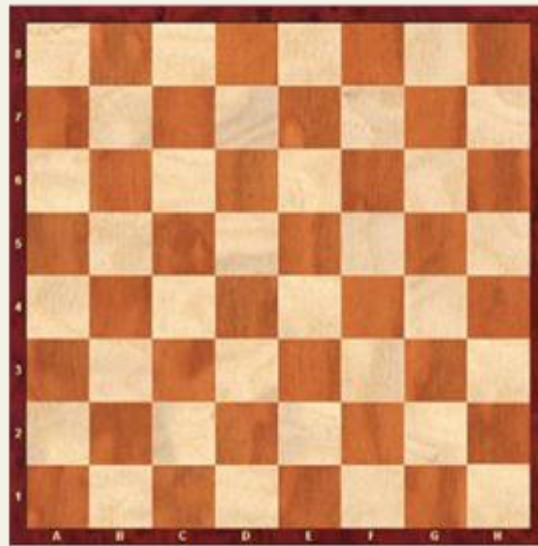
The basic moves of the king, rook, and knight remain unchanged. Pawns originally did not have the option of moving two squares on their first move and when promoted by reaching the eighth rank, could become a queen only.

# 2

## The chessboard

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Black side



White side

Chess is played on a square board divided into 64 squares (eight-by-eight) of alternating color.

No matter what the actual colors of the board, the lighter-colored squares are called "light" or "white" and the darker-colored squares are called "dark" or "black".

Sixteen White and sixteen Black pieces are placed on the board at the beginning of the game. The board is placed so that a white square is in each player's bottom-right corner.

Horizontal rows are called ranks and vertical rows are called files.

According to FIDE equipment standards, the length of side of a square should be twice the length of the diameter of the base of a pawn.



3

## Symbols of chess pieces

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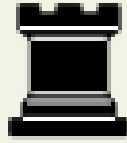
King



Queen



Knight



Rook



Bishop



Pawn

A chess piece, or chessman, is any of the 32 movable objects deployed on a chessboard used to play the game of chess. In a standard game of chess, each of the two players begins a game with the following 16 pieces:



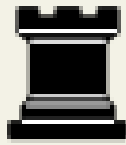
One



One



Two



Two



Two

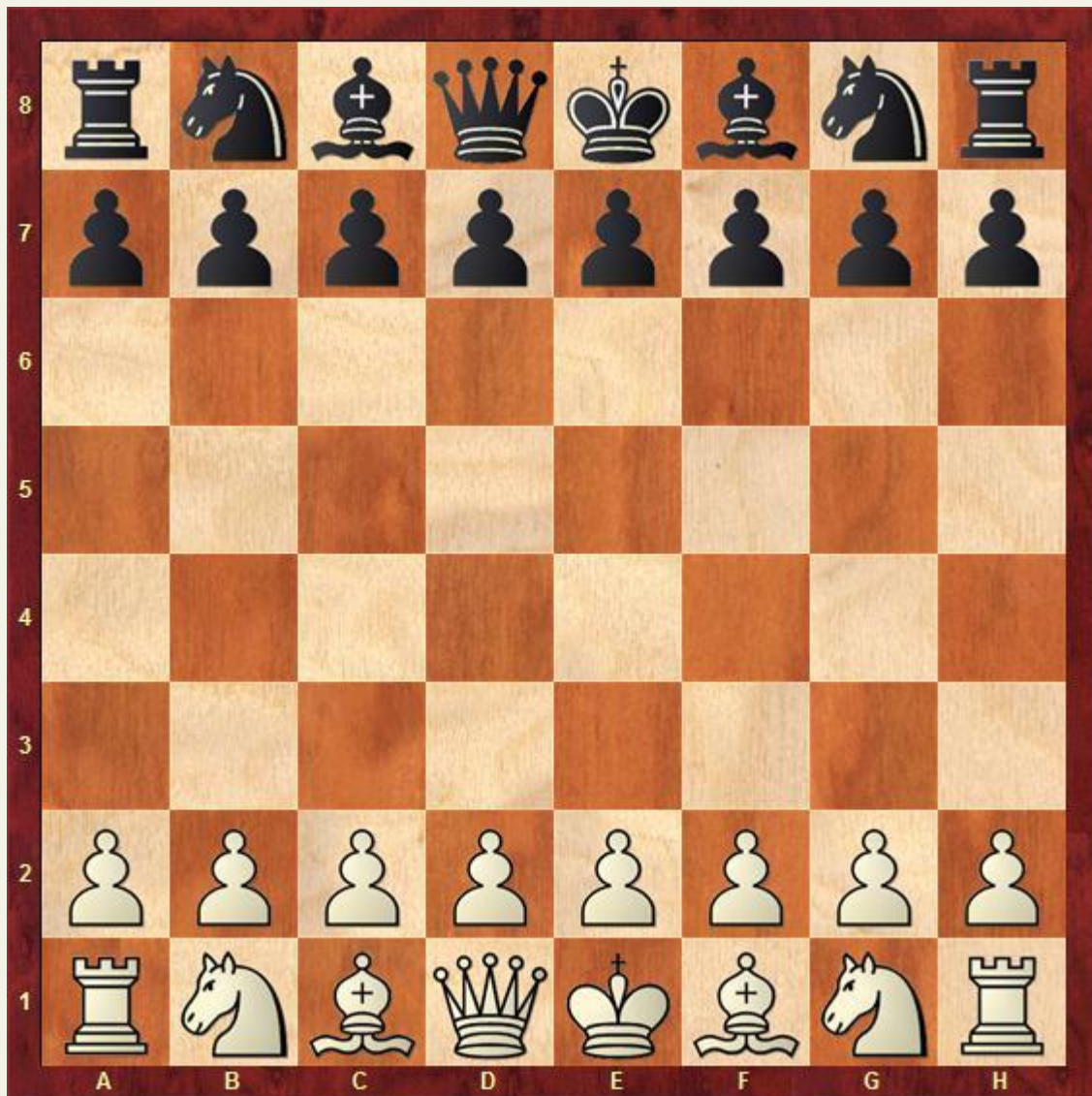


Eight



# 4

## Arrangements of pieces



This is the starting position of the game

At the beginning of the game, the pieces are arranged as shown in the diagram: for each side one king, one queen, two rooks, two bishops, two knights, and eight pawns. The pieces are placed, one on a single square, as follows:



The rooks are placed on the outside corners, right and left edge.



The knights are placed immediately inside the rooks.



The bishops are placed immediately inside the knights.



The queen is placed on the central square of the same color of that of the player: White queen on the white square and Black queen on the black square.



The king takes the vacant spot next to the queen.



The pawns are placed one square in front of all of the other pieces.

You cannot place more than one piece on a square at any time.



# 5

## Nature and objectives of the game

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The game of chess is played between two opponents who move their pieces alternately on a square board called a chessboard.

The player with the White pieces commences the game. A player is said to 'have the move' when his opponent's move has been completed.

The object of the game is to trap the opponent's king so that its escape is not possible (checkmate). If a player's king is threatened with capture, it is said to be in check, and the player must remove the threat of capture on the next move. If this cannot be done, the king is said to be in checkmate.

The objective of each player is to put the opponent's king under attack in such a way that the opponent has no legal move. The player who achieves this goal is said to have checkmated the opponent's king and to have won the game.

Leaving one's king under attack, exposing one's king to attack and also 'capturing' the opponent's king is not allowed – the opponent whose king has been checkmated has lost the game. If the position is such that neither player can possibly achieve a checkmate, the game is drawn.



Although the king is the most important piece, it is usually the weakest piece in the game until a later phase, the endgame.

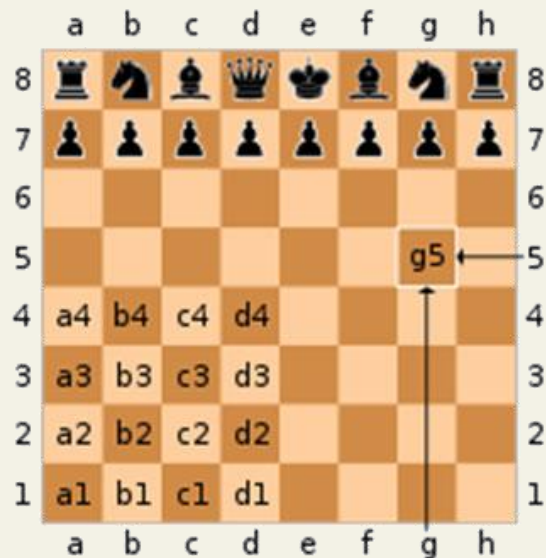
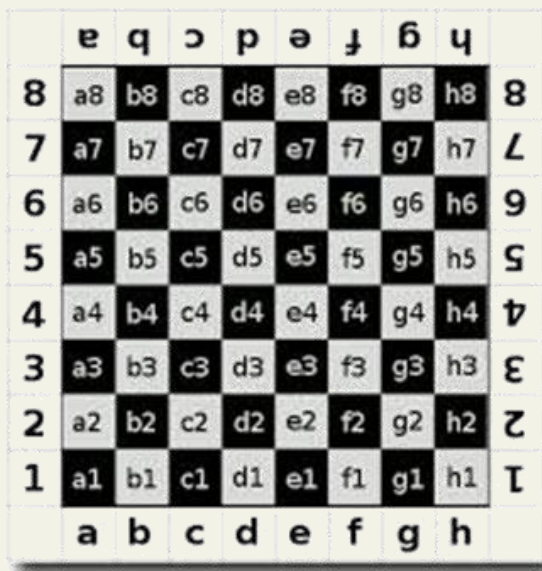
# 6

## Naming of squares

Keeping a record of chess moves will be very useful in improving your standard of chess. It is mandatory in all recognized tournaments, in order to settle disputes about illegal positions, overstepping time control and making claims for a draw by the fifty-move rule or repetition of position.

Each square of the chessboard is identified with a unique pair comprising a letter and a number. The vertical files are labelled in small letters "a" to "h", from White's left to White's right. Similarly, the horizontal ranks are numbered from 1 to 8.

Each square of the board, then, is uniquely identified by its file and rank (letter and number). The White queen, for example, starts the game on the square d1 and the Black queen on d8.



The following are the letters used in capitals to represent various pieces.



King - K



Bishop – B



Queen – Q



Knight – N



Rook – R



Pawn - No symbol

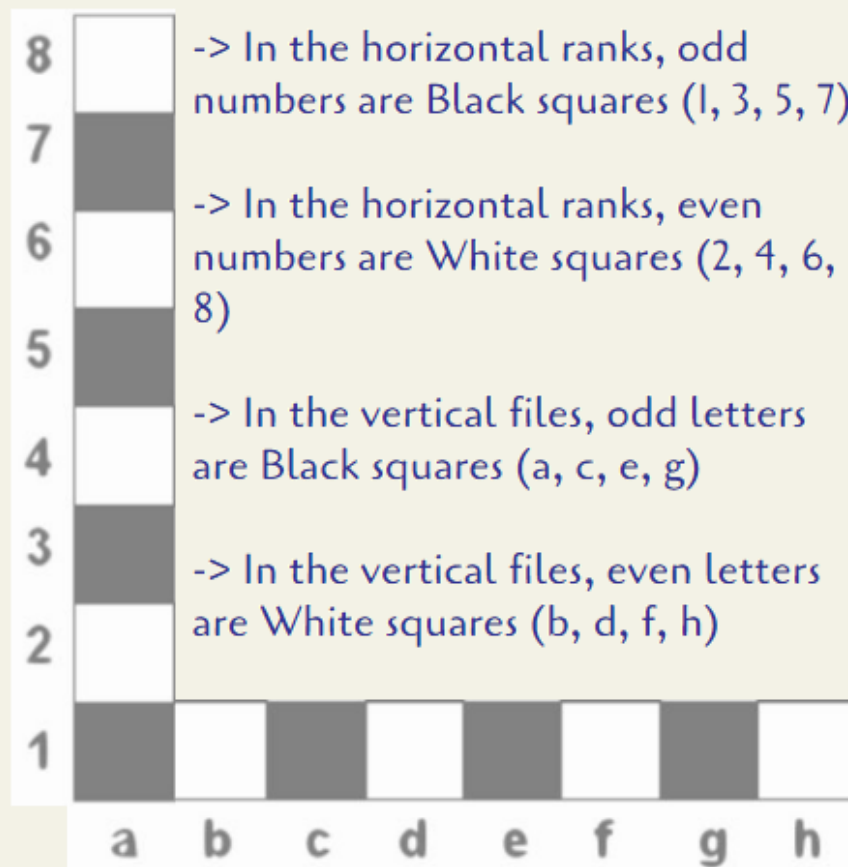
A pawn does not have any specific symbol but is represented by the name of the square it occupies, i.e. it is not indicated by its first letter but recognized by the absence of such a letter. Example: the moves are written e5, d4, a5 – not pe5, pd4, pa5.





## Colour classification

There are 64 squares on a chessboard – 32 White squares and 32 Black squares.



Hence, the rule for colour classification is:

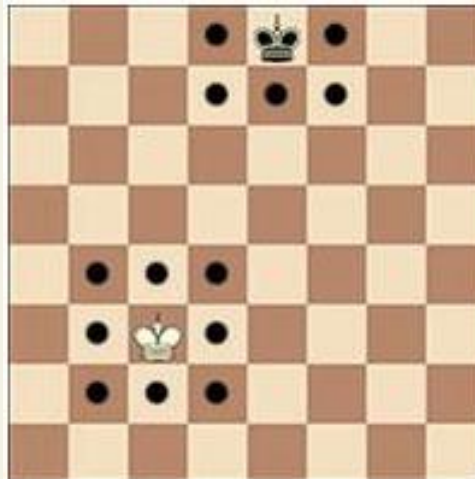
- i) Odd letter x odd number is a Black square – e.g. a1, c3
- ii) Even letter x even number is a Black square – e.g. b2, d4
- iii) Odd letter x even number is a White square – e.g. a2, c4
- iv) Even letter x odd number is a White square – e.g. b1, d3



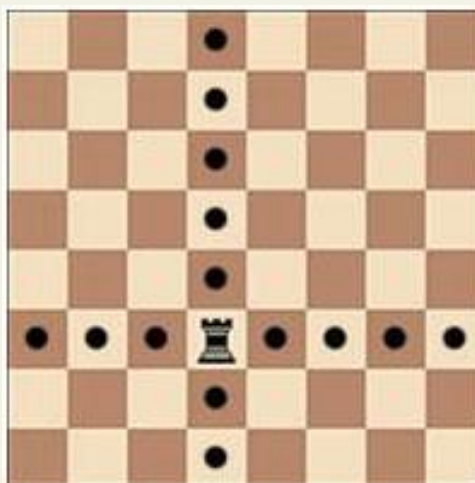
# 8

## Movement of the chess pieces

The king moves exactly one square horizontally, vertically or diagonally



The rook moves horizontally or vertically, through any number of unoccupied squares



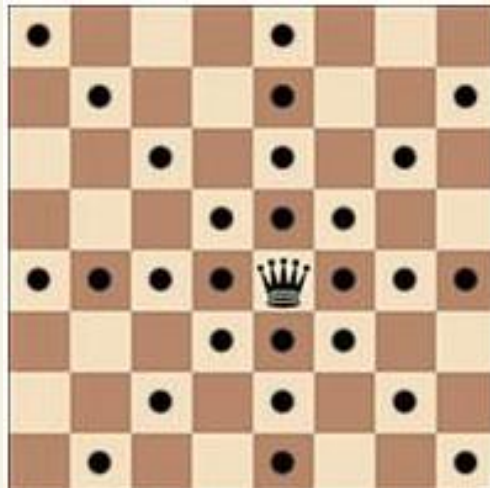


A bishop moves any number of vacant squares in any diagonal direction.



The queen moves any number of vacant squares in a horizontal, vertical or diagonal direction.

When making these moves, the bishop, rook or queen may not move over any intervening pieces.



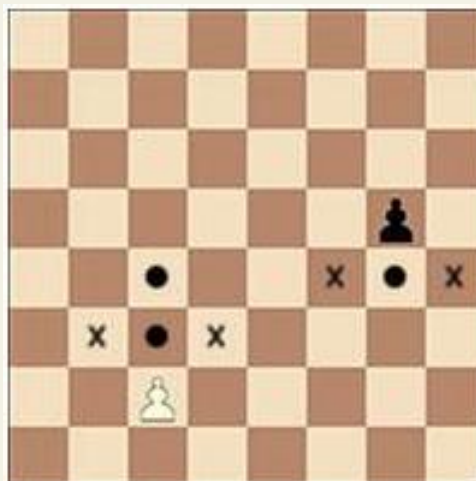
A knight moves to the nearest square not on the same rank, file or diagonal. (This can be thought of as moving two squares horizontally then one square vertically, or moving one square horizontally then two squares vertically— i.e. in an “L” pattern.)

The knight is not blocked by other pieces: it jumps to the new location.



Pawns have the most complex rules of movement:

A pawn moves straight forward one square, if that square is vacant. If it has not yet made its first move, a pawn also has the option of moving two squares straight forward, provided both squares are vacant. Pawns cannot move backwards.



# 9

## Special chess moves

### en passant capture

A pawn attacking a square crossed by an opponent's pawn which has advanced two squares in one move from its original square may capture this opponent's pawn as though the latter had been moved only one square. This capture is only legal in the following move:



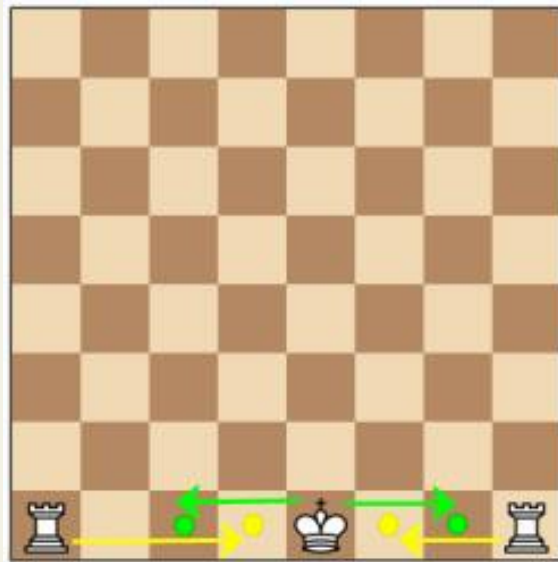
This advance is called an 'en passant' capture.

## Castling

There are two different ways of moving the king: by moving to any adjoining square not attacked by one or more of the opponent's pieces or by castling.

The latter is a move made by the king and either rook of the same colour along the player's first rank, counting as a single move of the king and executed as follows: the king is transferred from its original square two squares towards the rook on its original square, then that rook is transferred to the square the king has just crossed.

Note: For castling to be legal, the king or rook must not have been moved previously.



# 10

## Promoted Pawn

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We discussed in chapter 8 how pawns have the most complex rules of movement. Pawns can't move backwards, they can only move forward and capture sideways. What happens when a pawn reaches the farthest possible square?

Whenever a pawn (black or white) reaches the last rank, it can promote into a queen, rook, bishop, or knight. We can see that for white the last rank is the 8th rank, and for black it is the 1st rank.

While this may not happen very often in the early stages in the game, in the later stages pawn promotions determine the outcomes of games.



# 11

## Check and Checkmate

What is a check? Check is a condition in chess when a player's king is under threat of capture. The player who is in check must remove their king out of check in their next move.

There are three ways to remove a check:

1. Capture the piece that is giving check.

In the given example, we can see Black's king is in check. Black's only way to get rid of this check is by capturing the bishop on h7. Because the bishop on h7 is not protected by any piece, this is a legal move.





## 2. Moving the king away from check

As we can see, the bishop is now protected by the knight. Black can't capture the bishop; however, black can move his king to the h8 square.



## 3. Blocking the piece giving check

It is also possible to stop a check without moving the king.

In this position, black could move his king to h8 and move away from the line of attack; furthermore, he can place a piece in bishop's diagonal to protect his king.



Now that we've discussed the three ways in which you can check your opponent, let's look at the following position:

Black is in check. What are all the possible moves black can make to remove the threat of capture?

Think carefully and after you think all the possible moves, scroll at the end of the chapter to see the solution.



What happens when a player can't get out of check?

In other words, what if there is no legal move that allows a player to remove himself from check? When this happens, it is considered checkmate and the player who is checkmated loses the game.

This position is similar to the positions discussed earlier. The difference is that white can't capture the bishop or move himself out of bishop's line of attack. This means black is checkmated and white wins the game.







Solution to the problem:

There are six ways in which black can get out of check.

The king can move to a7 or a8

The rook can move to c7

The queen can move to c7 or d6

The knight can jump to e5.



# 12

## Draw

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There isn't always a winner and a loser in chess. There are several reasons why a chess of game may end in a draw:

1. Both players agree on a draw.
2. Both players have traded enough pieces so that it is impossible for either player to checkmate the other.
3. Either player can declare a draw if the same position is reached three times.
4. Either player can declare a draw if 50 chess moves (50 white and 50 black) have been made and not a single pawn move or a piece has been captured.
5. It is one's player turn to move, and while he is not in check, he does not have any legal moves. This is called stalemate

Let's look at a position to understand more what stalemate is.





We can see that white has no legal moves in this position. We can also see that black has cornered the king and has an extra queen.

If it was white to move, this position would be drawn, because white has no legal moves. If it was black to move, black could realize any move to avoid stalemate and checkmate white in the future.

## Relative value of chess pieces

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Because every single piece in chess has unique movement, they possess different strengths and weaknesses. For this reason, it is important to know the "value" or "points" each piece has. While these points do not give you an absolute tool to evaluate every single position in chess, they help you understand which trades are beneficial and which trades you should avoid.

Let's look at the relative value of every single piece:

- The pawn is worth 1 point
- The bishop is worth 3 points
- The knight is worth 3 points
- The rook is worth 5 points
- The queen is worth 9 points

Because whoever checkmates ("captures") the opponent's king immediately wins the game, it is said that the king has infinite value.

## The Three Stages of the game

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A game of chess is divided in three stages:

1. Opening

2. Middle game

3. Endgame

While not every single chess game goes through these three stages (some games might end in the opening or middle game), It is important to recognize at which stage of the game one is in while playing.

Chess is similar to war. You don't just jump right in battle. You first expand your territory (move chess pawns), then prepare your forces for battle (develop your pieces), and lastly start fighting. In chess, moving pawns not only helps you obtain space, but also frees up your pieces to move freely.



## I. Opening

The opening stage is the first phase of the game. This is where both sides develop their forces and “prepare” themselves for the middle game.

In chess, developing a piece means to place a piece in a square where it is more active. At the start of a chess game, all the pieces are behind pawns and possess limited mobility. When we move, or develop, our pieces, we’re improving their activity and preparing them for battle.

While there is no clear cut move that defines the end of the opening and the start of the middle game, it is usually considered middle game after both players have castled and developed their queens.

Here is an example of a game in its opening stage:



Nowadays, thanks to the analysis of computers and many strong players, there exist a vast amount of opening theory. In other words, after millions of chess games, players have realized which opening moves score better and which ones are less powerful.

At the highest level, players memorize hundreds of chess opening variations. This allows players to obtain the upper hand and make 10+ moves without much effort. Chess players have also given name to specific “openings” or sequence of moves. For example the diagram above is commonly referred to as the French Defense.

At this point, it is not important to memorize different chess openings, but it is important to recognize What a player must do in the opening stage.

### In the Opening you should:

- ❖ Develop your pieces!
- ❖ Protect your king. In part number two, we discussed an important move called “castling”. You want to castle in the opening stage.
- ❖ Avoid, if possible, moving the same piece twice. You want to develop all of your pieces.

## 2. Middle game

After both sides have developed their forces, the middle game phase begins. This is where the central battle of the chess game happens. Both sides develop a plan and attempt to execute it. Many chess games are determined in the middle game.





We can see the diagram above that both sides have castled and developed their queens. Both sides should create a plan and do their best to execute it.

### In the Middle game you should:

- ❖ Look for a plan! It does not matter if your plan is good or bad. A bad plan is better than no plan at all.
- ❖ Maximize the activity of your pieces. In the opening, you developed your pieces; however, in the middle game we may look for the optimal square for our pieces. Maybe we want to place our piece in a strong square, or exchange it. It is important to know what you want to do with your pieces.
- ❖ Protect your king. The ultimate goal in chess is to checkmate your opponent. Always make sure your king is safe and avoid weakening your king's defense.
- ❖ Think of your opponent. You're not the only one playing chess: Your opponent has a plan they also want to execute it. Always try to figure out what your opponent is planning to do next. This applies to all stages of the game.



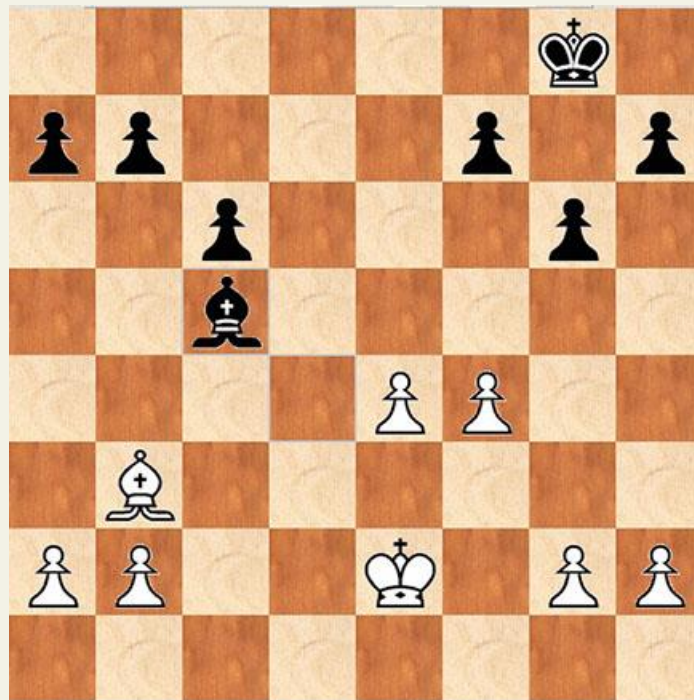
### 3. Endgame

Most chess games average around 40 moves, which means not all games reach the endgame. Throughout the course of the middle game, many pieces and pawns are exchanged.

We can define an endgame by the fact that the kings are very involved in the fight.

Usually, we want to protect our king in the opening and middle game stage; however, because many pieces have been traded, the king is usually safe.

In the endgame, the king plays a crucial role in determining the outcome of a game.



The above diagram demonstrates a very simple endgame. We can see the white king is in the center and is in no danger to be checkmated. Both sides only have one bishop.

In the Endgame game you should:

- ❖ Activate your king: This may seem counter intuitive, but the king is a very powerful piece in the endgame. Since both players have exchanged a vast amount of pieces, the king is usually safe.
- ❖ Promote your pawns. In the endgame, it is easier to promote pawns because both players have less pieces.
- ❖ Protect your pawns. Pawns are more valuable in the endgame, because they can become queens easily





## Quiz

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1.How many squares are there in a chessboard?

- A.72
- B.64
- C.66

2.How many Bishops can white have?

- A.2
- B.3
- C.4

3.True or False: The rooks are placed on the outside corners, right and left edge.

- A.True
- B.False

4.True or False: The pawns are placed two square in front of all of the other pieces

- A.True
- B.False

5.Which symbol is used to identify a pawn in chess?

- A.P
- B.S
- C.No symbol



6.Mark the correct statement

- A. The king moves exactly one square horizontally, vertically or diagonally
- B. A bishop moves any number of vacant squares in any diagonal direction
- C. The queen moves any number of vacant squares in a horizontal, vertical or diagonal direction
- D. All of the above

7.True or False: Pawns cannot move backwards

- A.True
- B.False

8. What happens when a pawn reaches the farthest possible square?

- A.Pawn promotes into a Bishop
- B.Pawn promotes into a queen, rook, bishop, or knight
- C.Pawn returns into its original position

9.How to remove a check? Mark that applies,

- A. Capture the piece that is giving check
- B. Moving the king away from check
- C. Blocking the piece giving check
- D. By castling

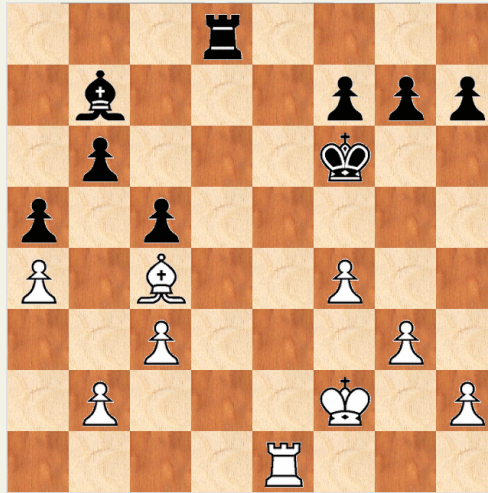
10.True or False: The King is worth 12 points

- A.True
- B.False



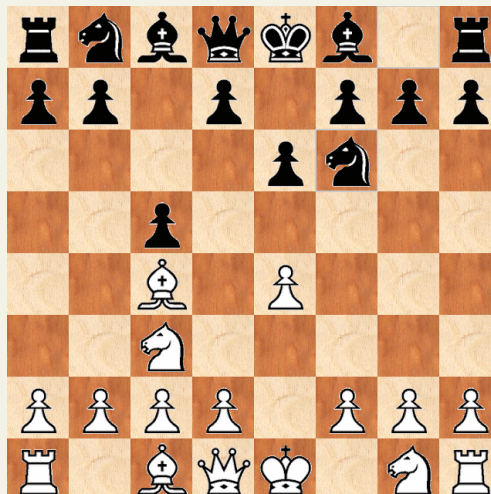
11. Find which stage of the game is represented in the figure

- A. Opening
- B. Middlegame
- C. Endgame



12. Find which stage of the game is represented in the figure

- A. Opening
- B. Middlegame
- C. Endgame



13. Find which stage of the game is represented in the figure

- A. Opening
- B. Middlegame
- C. Endgame



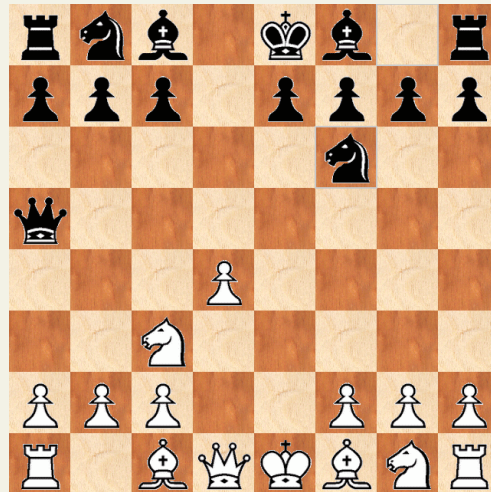
14. Find which stage of the game is represented in the figure

- A. Opening
- B. Middlegame
- C. Endgame



15. Find which stage of the game is represented in the figure

- A. Opening
- B. Middlegame
- C. Endgame





# Answers

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1.How many squares are there in a chessboard?

Answer: 64

2.How many Bishops can white have?

Answer: 2

3.True or False: The rooks are placed on the outside corners, right and left edge.

Answer: True

4.True or False: The pawns are placed two square in front of all of the other pieces

Answer: False

5.Which symbol is used to identify a pawn in chess?

Answer: No symbol

6.Mark the correct statement

Answer: All of the above

7.True or False: Pawns cannot move backwards

Answer: True

8. What happens when a pawn reaches the farthest possible square?

Answer: Pawn promotes into a queen, rook, bishop, or knight

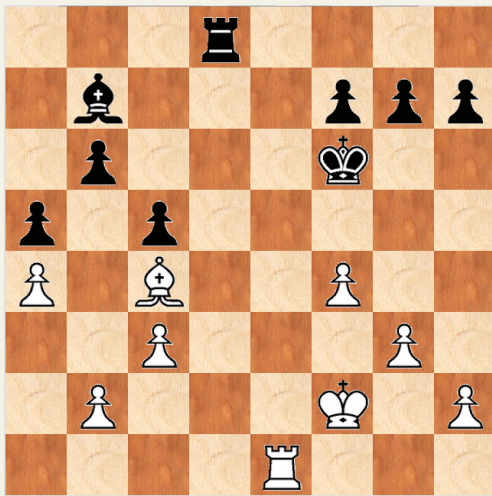




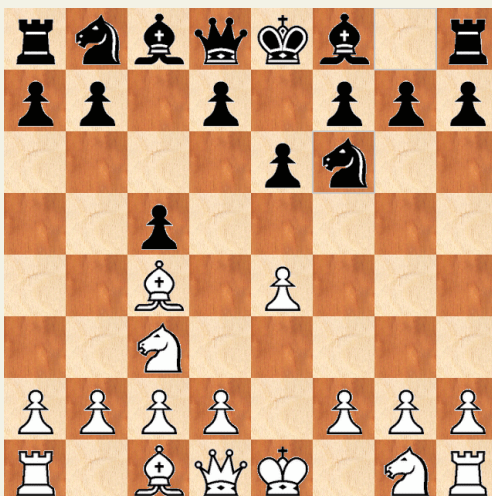
9. How to remove a check? Mark that applies,  
 Answers: A. Capture the piece that is giving check  
 B. Moving the king away from check  
 C. Blocking the piece giving check

10. True or False: The King is worth 12 points  
 Answer: False

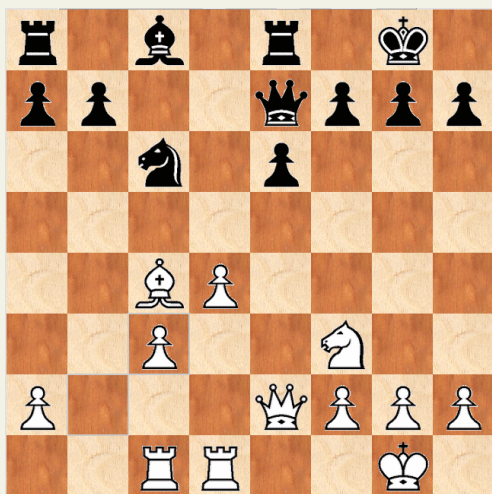
11. Endgame



12. Opening



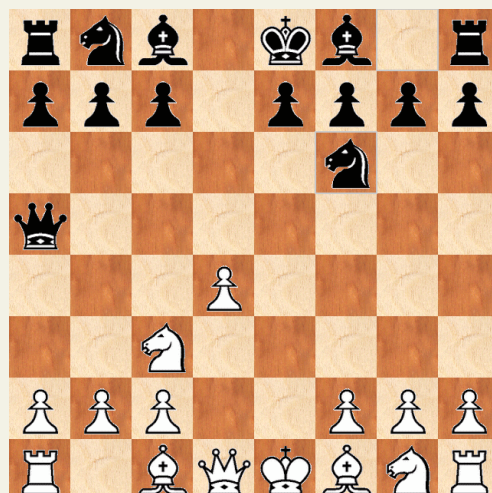
### 13.Middlegame



### 14.Middlegame



### 15.Opening





## Bonus lessons

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### 4. Five Tips Taken From The Best Chess Courses





Learn the most important strategic and positional rules that enable you to demolish your opponent



## The Grandmaster's Positional Understanding

One of the Top selling RCA courses

What our students say?



After studying the GM's Positional Understanding the wonderful thing is that now I understand why I was losing.



The results were too good for me, I started winning convincingly against 1900 rated players and the recent scalp was 2160 rated player.



LEARN MORE ABOUT THE COURSE

Now that we have covered all the basics, you're ready to start playing chess. Here is some advice for your future progress:

- ❖ Play a lot of chess: It may seem obvious, but it is very important to play regularly if you really want to improve.
- ❖ Sign up for our free ["Chess Training Plan for Rapid Improvement"](#) course. Our courses and articles are designed to improve your chess faster than any other method.
- ❖ Enjoy chess. When you enjoy doing something, learning is much faster and efficient. If you have fun playing chess, you will improve much faster.



# THANK YOU

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