

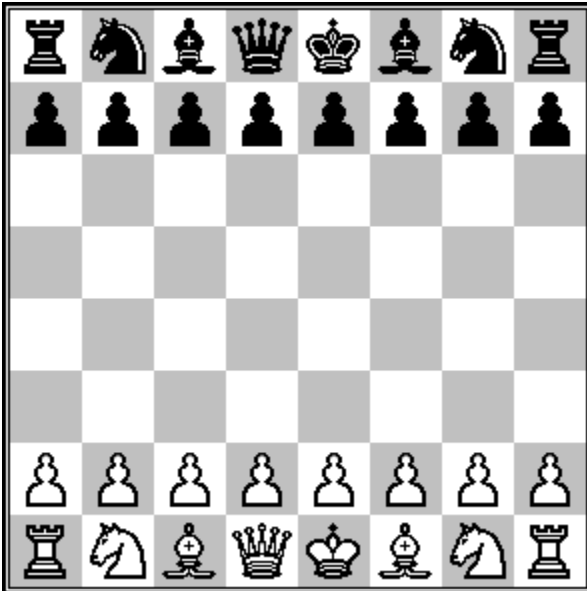
The Rules of Chess

Jason Hofferle

Chess is a game played on an 8x8 checkerboard with two armies of sixteen playing pieces. One person plays the white pieces, and the other player uses the black pieces. They alternate moves with white moving first.

- White always moves first

The opening position should be setup like this:



The two most important things to keep in mind in the initial setup are that the light-colored square is always in the lower right hand corner, and that the queens are always on their own color. The white queen on a light colored square and the black queen on a dark colored square.

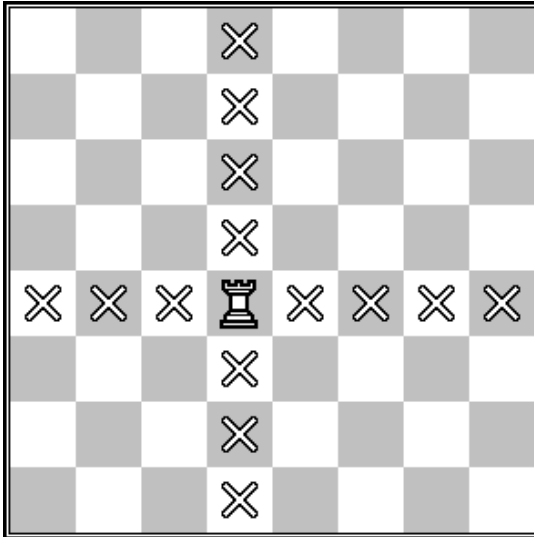
- Light on right
- Queen on color

The horizontal rows of squares are called ranks, and the vertical columns of squares are called files.

- Horizontal rows are called ranks
- Vertical columns are called files

The way the pieces move

The pieces that look like castles are called rooks. The rooks are some of your most powerful pieces. They can move as many squares as they like along ranks or files (horizontally or vertically) they cannot jump over pieces, and they cannot move diagonally. The white rook below can move to any of the squares marked with a cross.

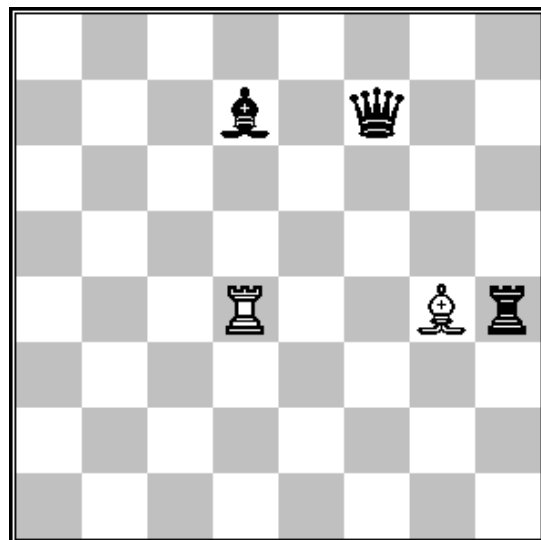


- Rooks move along ranks and files
- Rooks can move as many squares as they like

A rook can capture an opponent's piece if the rook is able to move to the square the opponent's piece occupies. To capture that piece, you simply move your rook to the square where your opponent's piece is, and remove the enemy's piece from the board.

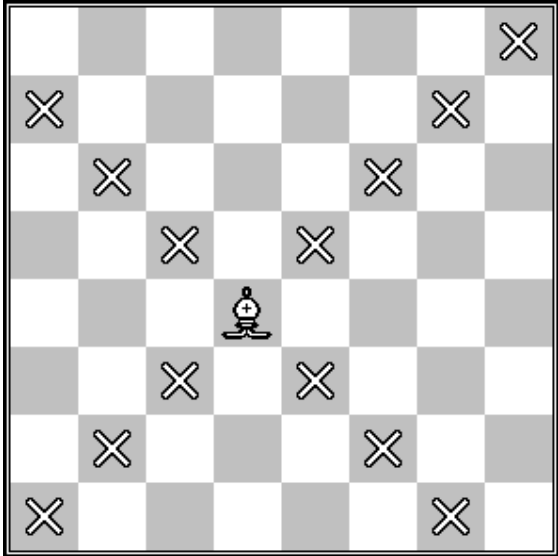
The white rook below can capture the black bishop, but cannot capture the black queen because he cannot move to her square. He also cannot capture the black rook because the white bishop is blocking him, and he cannot jump over pieces.

- Rooks capture by moving to the square the enemy piece occupies, and removing it from the board
- Rooks cannot jump over pieces

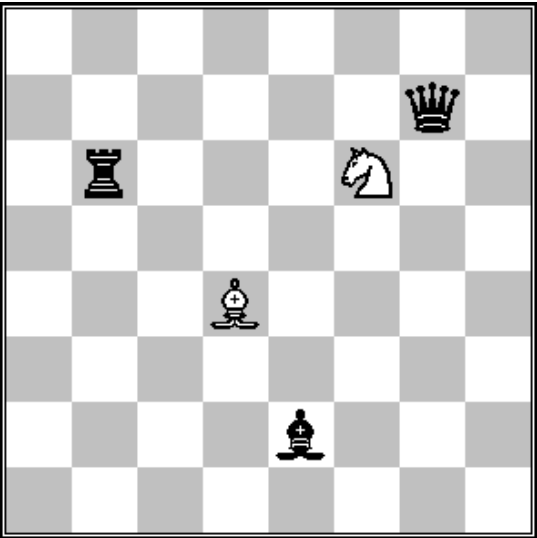


The bishops move very similar to the rooks, except they move along diagonals. Each player in a chess game starts off with one light square bishop, and one dark square bishop. These bishops will always move along the same colored squares that they start off on. The white bishop below can move to any of the squares with a cross.

- Bishops move along diagonals
- Bishops may move as many squares as they like

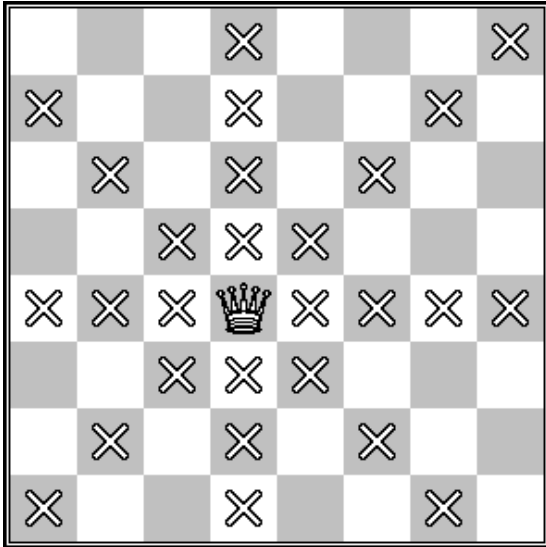


The white bishop below can capture the black rook, but cannot capture the black queen because it is blocked by the white knight. He will also never be able to capture the black bishop, because that bishop is on the white diagonals.



- Bishops capture by moving to the square the enemy piece occupies, and removing it from the board.
- Bishops cannot jump over pieces

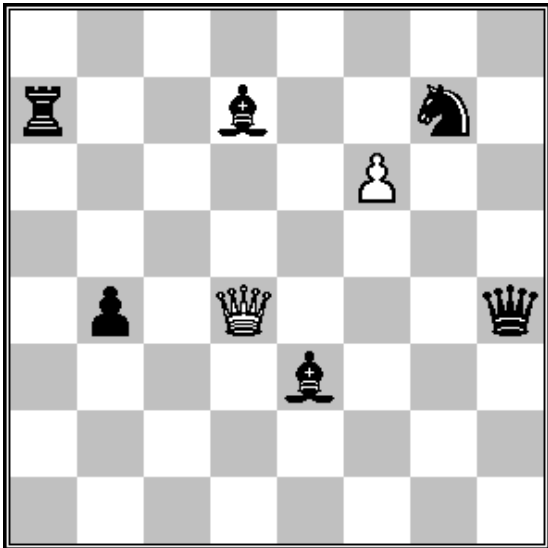
The queen is the most powerful piece on the chessboard. The queen is a combination of a rook and a bishop. She can move along ranks and files, and she can move along diagonals. However, she still cannot jump over pieces. The white queen below can move to any of the squares with a cross.



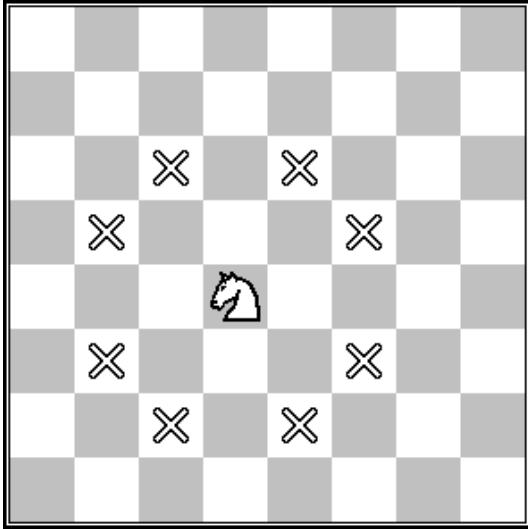
- The queen moves along ranks, files and along diagonals
- The queen may move as many squares as she likes

The white queen below can capture any of the black pieces except the black knight, because it is blocked by the white pawn.

- The queen captures by moving to the square the enemy piece occupies, and removing it from the board
- The queen cannot jump over pieces



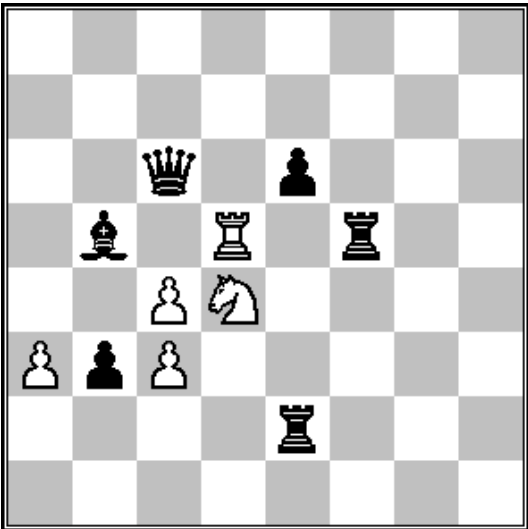
The knight moves differently than all the other pieces. The knight is the only piece that can jump over other pieces. The knight moves in an “L” shaped pattern. To try to put it in words, knights can move two squares forward or back, and then one square to the left or right, *or*, two squares left or right, and then one square forward or back. The white knight below can move to any of the squares with a cross.



- The knight moves in an “L” shaped pattern

The knight captures by landing on the square of the opponent’s piece, and removing that piece from the board. The white knight below can capture any of the black pieces.

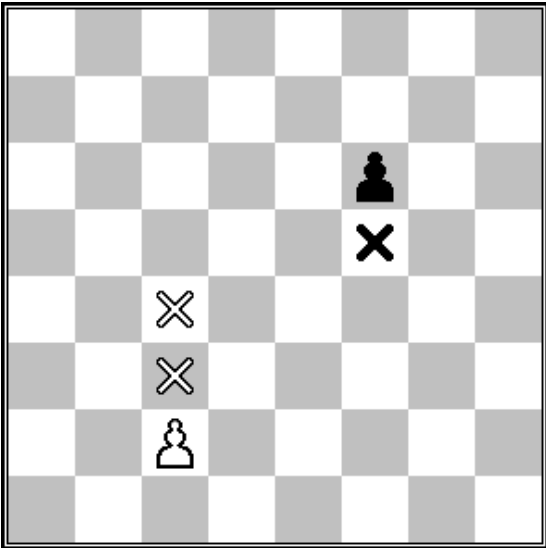
- The knight captures by landing on the square an enemy piece occupies, and removing it from the board
- The knight *can* jump over pieces



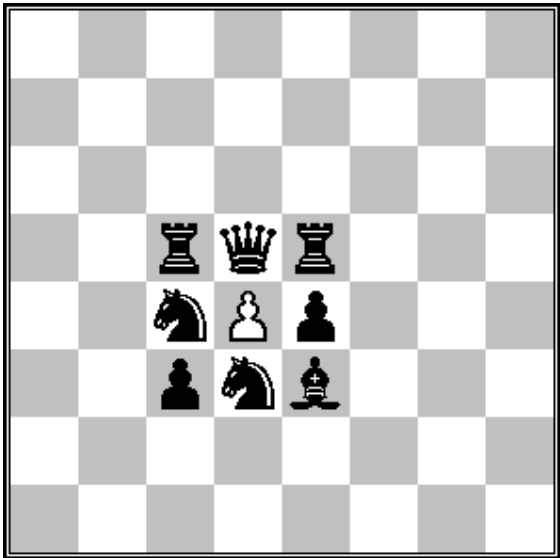
The pawns are different from the other pieces in that they move and capture differently. If a pawn is on its initial starting square, you can move it one square forward or two squares forward. After its first move, the pawn can only move one square forward per move. They cannot move backwards or sideways.

The white pawn below can move to either of the white crosses. The black pawn can only move to the black cross, because the black pawn has already moved from its original square.

- Pawns may only move forward
- Pawns may only move one square, except for their first move where they may move two spaces

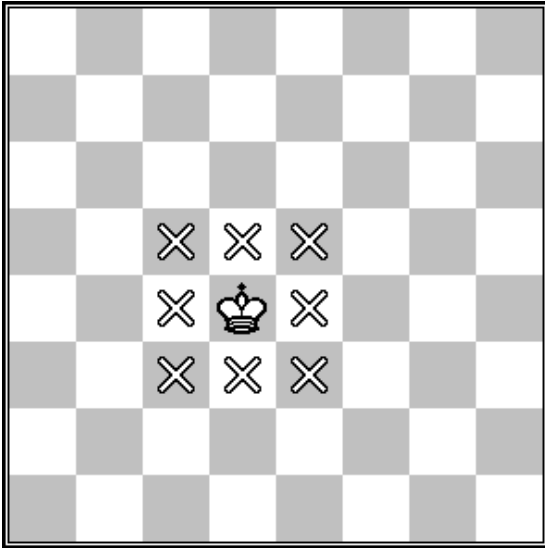


Pawns do not capture like the other pieces. They capture diagonally. The white pawn below can *only* capture the black rook. It cannot move forward, and it cannot move or capture any of the other pieces.



- Pawns capture *diagonally*
- Pawns cannot move forward if the square is occupied by another piece. It is “blocked”

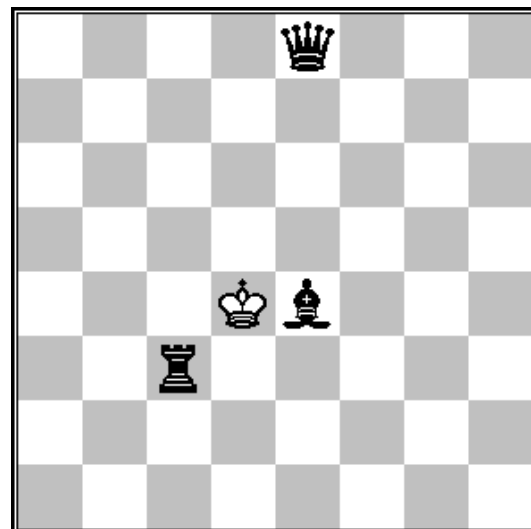
The king is your most valuable piece because if your opponent has the ability to capture your king, you lose the game. The king moves very much the same way as the queen, except the king can only move one square. The white king below can move to any of the squares with a cross.



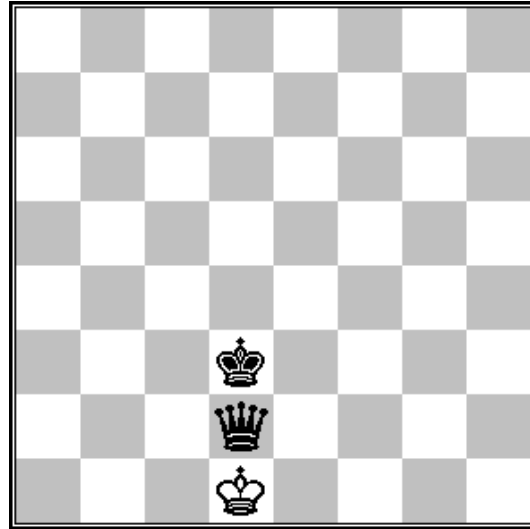
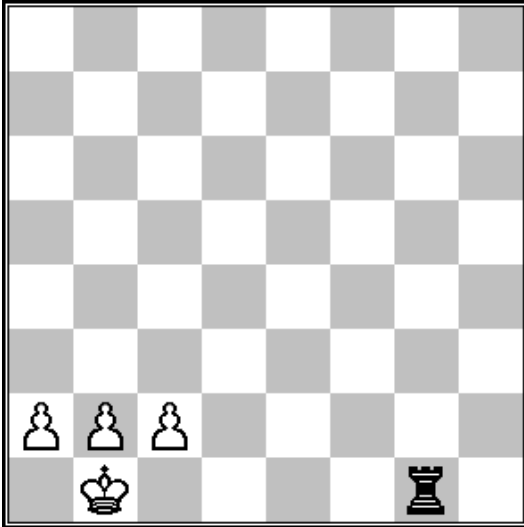
- Kings move along ranks, files and diagonals
- Kings can only move one square per turn

The king cannot move into check. Check is when your opponent can capture your king on his next move. It is illegal to move into check. The white king below can capture the black rook, but he cannot capture the black bishop. If he captured the bishop, he would be in check by the black queen, so capturing the bishop would be an illegal move.

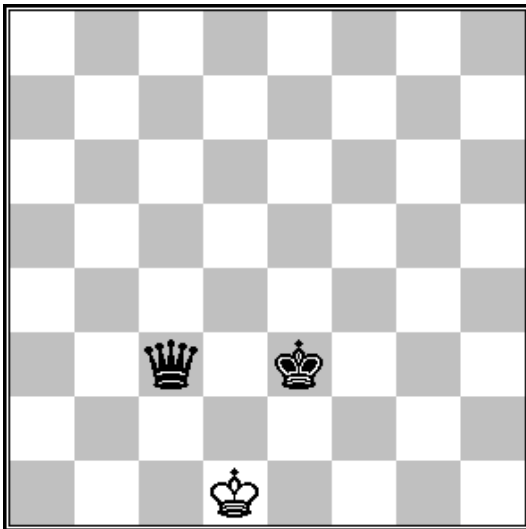
- Kings capture by moving to the square an enemy piece occupies, and removing it from the board
- Kings cannot move into check
- You cannot move another piece if it places your king in check



The object of the game is to checkmate your opponent's king. Checkmate is when you place the enemy king in check on your move, and your opponent cannot move out of check, or capture the piece attacking the king. The white king below is checkmated in both diagrams.



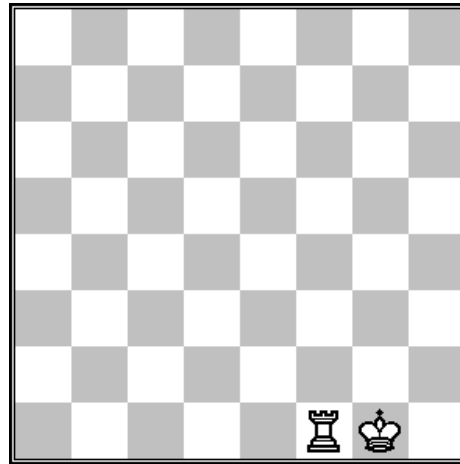
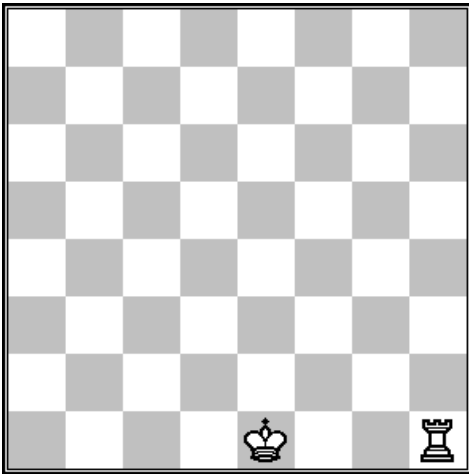
Stalemate is when your or your opponent has no legal moves. A stalemate is a draw. The white king below is stalemated because it is white's move, and white has no legal moves.



- Checkmate is when a player's king is in check, the king cannot move out of check, and the piece attacking the king cannot be captured.
- Stalemate is when a player's king is not in check, and that player has no legal moves

There are also more ways a game can end. Either side can offer a draw at any time during the game. If both players agree to a draw, the game ends as a tie. When a player faces a hopeless situation, that person may resign by knocking over his king. If the exact same position is reached three times over the course of the game, the game is automatically a draw. There are still other ways games can end, especially in tournament play, but these given are the most common for casual play.

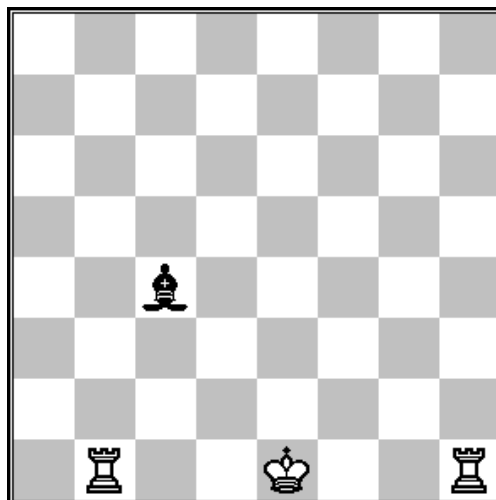
Castling is a special move where you actually move two pieces during one turn. When you castle, you move your king to the left or right two squares, and place the rook he's moving towards on the other side of the king. The white king below is shown before castling, and after.



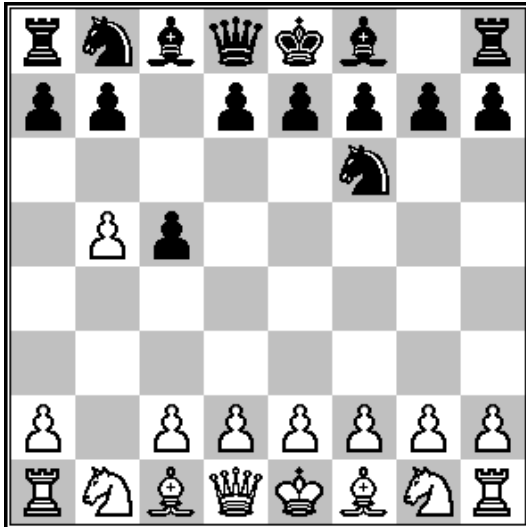
This is referred to as kingside castling, because you are castling with the rook on the king's side of the board. You can also castle queenside. Castling can only be done under special circumstances:

- You have not moved your king yet.
- You have not moved the rook you're castling with.
- There are no pieces between your king and the rook you're castling with.
- Your king is not in check.
- You are not castling through check.

Castling through check is when one of your opponent's pieces controls a square between your king and rook. The white king below cannot castle kingside because the black bishop controls one of the squares between the king and the king's rook. The white king also cannot castle queenside, because the queen's rook has already been moved once.



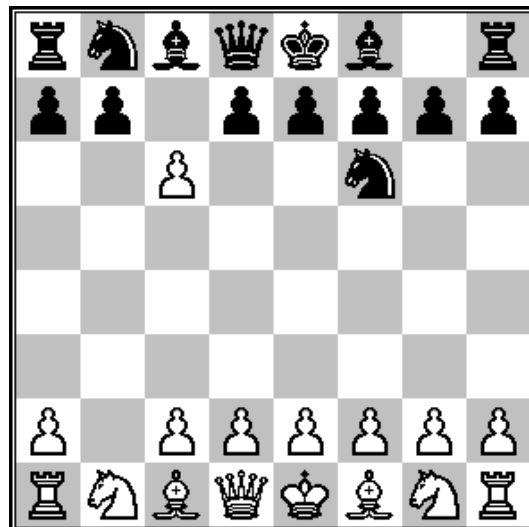
En Passant is a special pawn capture. It rarely occurs, but you still need to be aware of it. If an enemy pawn has advanced to the fifth rank, you may think you can advance your pawn two squares to “sneak” by your opponent’s pawn. This is what the en passant rule prevents. In the diagram below, black’s pawn has just advanced two squares from its original position, putting it right next to white’s pawn.



- A pawn can only capture en passant if it has moved to the fifth rank, and an opponent’s adjacent pawn has just moved two squares forward

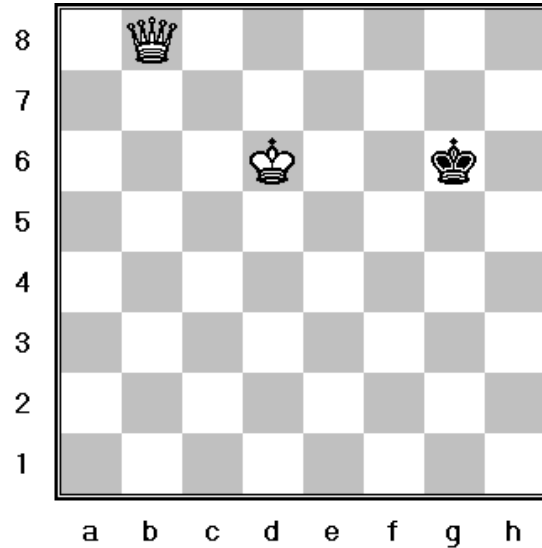
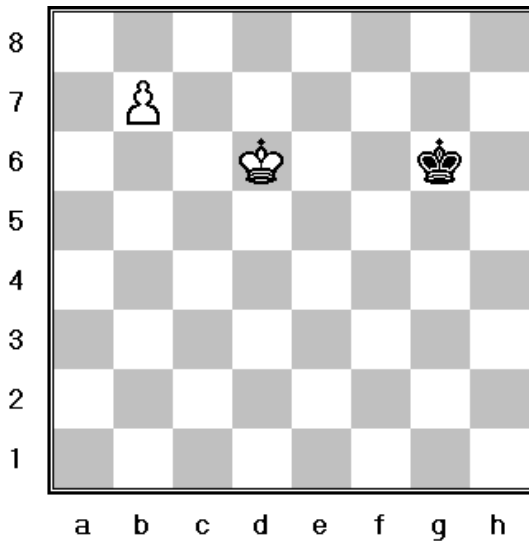
White can now capture that pawn as if black’s pawn had only moved one square. Below is what the board looks like after white captures en passant.

- If you do not capture en passant at the first opportunity to do so, you lose the right to capture your opponent’s pawn en passant.

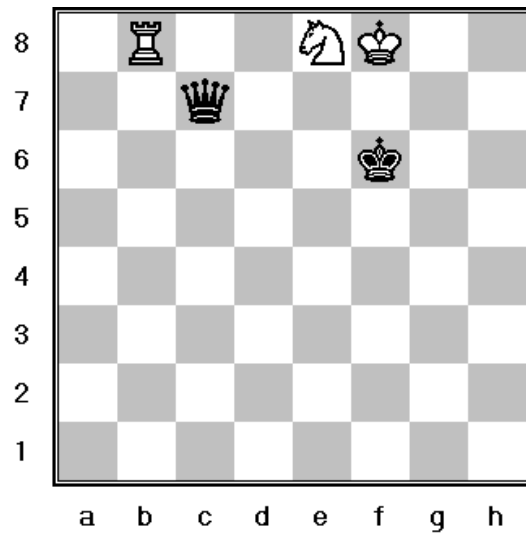
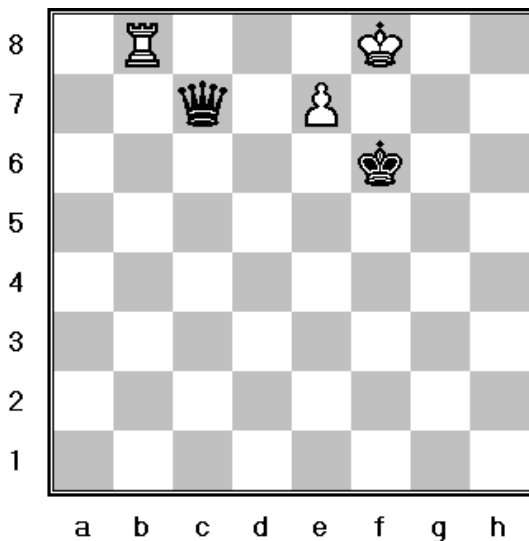


One last reminder, this is a limited time offer. In other words, you can't wait for another turn to capture a pawn en passant -- you either do it right after the enemy pawn has moved, or you can't do it at all.

There is another special move by a pawn that makes them especially valuable in the endgame. When a pawn reaches the 8th rank, (or the 1st rank if you're playing black) you can promote the pawn into any other piece that you like. Because of this, an advantage of a pawn may not seem like much in the middlegame, but at the end of a game, it can mean the difference between a win and a draw. The position on the left is right before white's move. After the pawn is promoted to a queen, the position looks like the one on the right.



Most of the time, you will choose to promote to a queen, since it's the most powerful piece. Below we see where it's best to promote to something other than a queen.

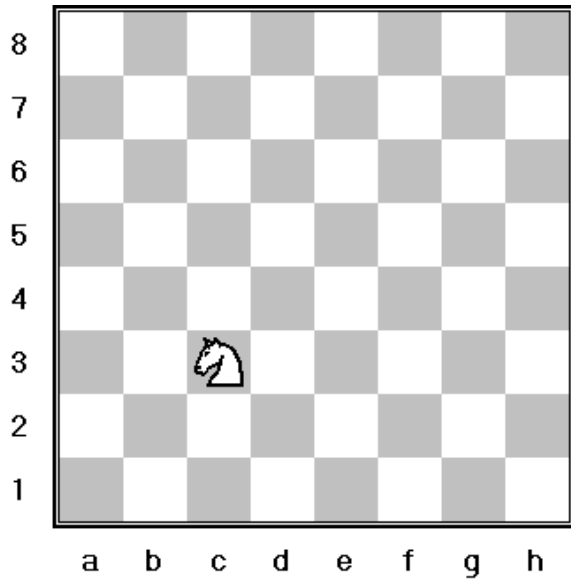


You can see that by promoting to a knight forks black's king and queen. Black has to move his king, allowing white to take the black queen and making for an easy win.

Chess Notation

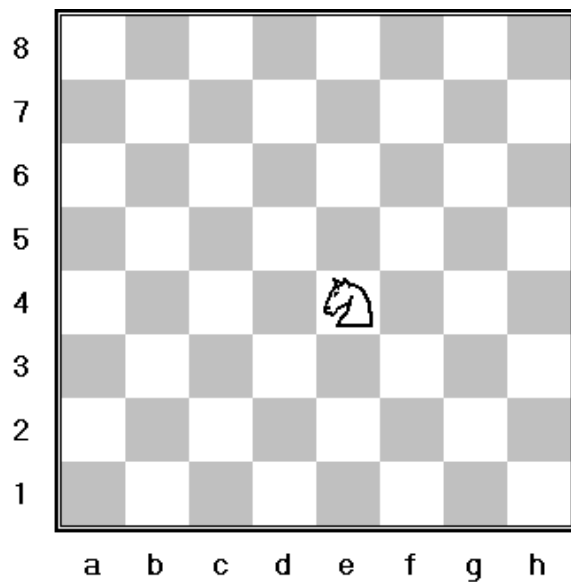
If you want to improve at chess, it is necessary to learn how games are recorded. Games are written in algebraic notation. This allows you to write down your moves as you play, then analyze the game later. It also allows you to read through the games of the masters, study openings and learn tactics and strategy.

Each square on the chessboard can be identified by a letter followed by a number. The board is always notated from white's side as follows:

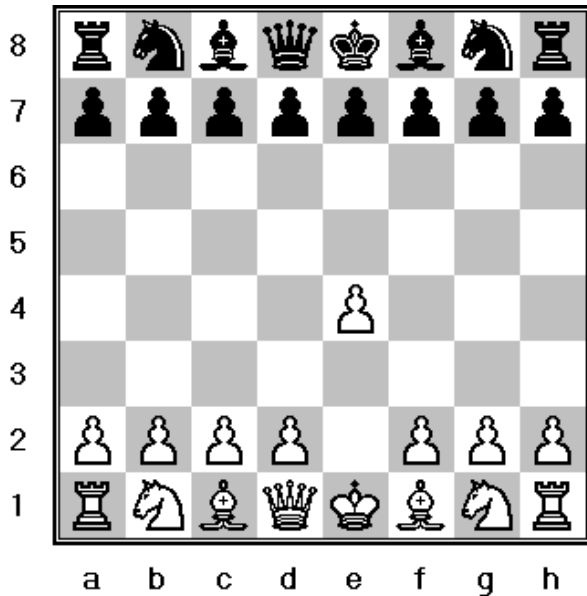


- The board is always numbered from white's point of view

The knight pictured above is on c3. Below, he has moved to e4. That is written at 1) Ne4.



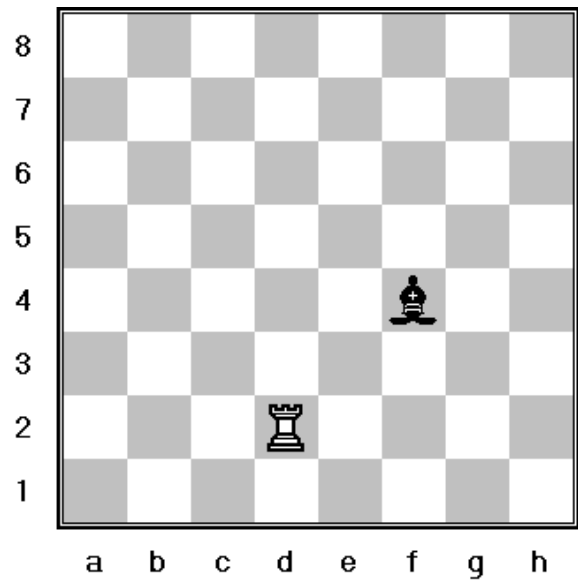
All of the pieces have letters to distinguish themselves. The queen is a Q, the king is a K, the rooks are R, the knights are N, the bishops are B. For pawn moves, only the square the pawn is moving to is given, such as 1) e4, shown below.



- For pawn moves, only the square the pawn is moving to is written down

When a piece captures another, a x is inserted. Below, if the bishop were to capture the rook on d2, it would be notated as "1)...Bxd2". Notice the three dots indicating it's black's move.

- Castling kingside is written as "o-o"
- Castling queenside is written as "o-o-o"



Castling is written as "o-o" for kingside castling, and "o-o-o" for queenside, or "long" castling.

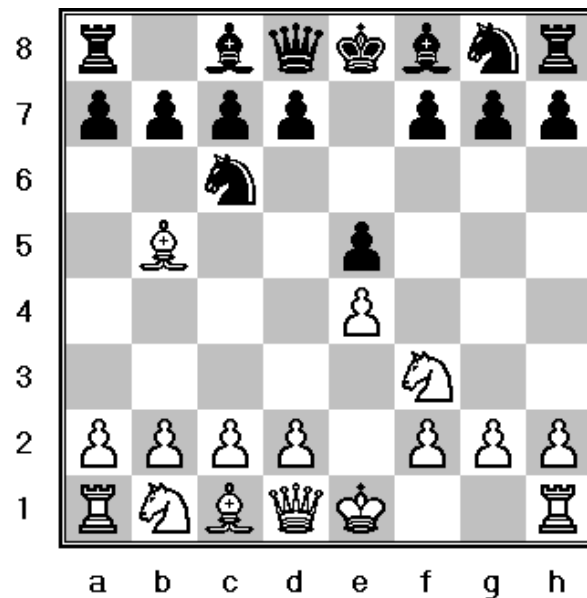
There are also special characters placed at the end of a move, indicating as described here:

+	Check
++	Checkmate
#	Checkmate
=	Position offers equal chances
!	A good move
!!	An excellent move
?	A bad move
??	A very bad move, a blunder
!?	An acceptable move, but with unknown results
?!	A speculative attempt to complicate

This is how the first few moves in an opening known as the Ruy Lopez would be notated:

1) e4 e5 2) Nf3 Nc6 3) Bb5!

If you played out these moves on a chessboard, it would look like this:



At the end of a recorded game, there will be a note as to who won as follows:

1-0 White wins
0-1 Black wins
½-½ Draw