

CHESS



The Complete Beginners Guide To Chess:
**Chess Openings, Endgame &
Important Strategies**

HENRY INGRAM

Chess

**The Complete Beginner's Guide to Playing
Chess**

Chess Openings, Endgame and Important Strategies

By Henry Ingram

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Introduction

Let's begin by asking an important question, "Why should you play chess?"

Do you want to become an expert and master all the necessary skills and strategies?

Surely, many of you will buy this book, but will doubt your ability to successfully play chess. A general misperception is that chess is only meant for those over fifty, and that it is rarely played by children or teenagers. In fact, chess is extremely popular among people in their teens, twenties, and early thirties. Today, chess is played in major countries around the world and is part of many game tournaments.

You may feel anxious about getting started with chess, because you think it's only a game for those who are exceptionally intelligent or clever. The truth is most people become chess experts, because they read many books and/or learn the skills and master them from their acquaintances.

Amongst all the invented games, chess is the game of royalty, held in considerable prestige throughout the centuries. Originally invented to be played by two intellectually curious players in the 6th century AD, over the years, it has evolved into its present form. One player takes the black pieces and the other takes the white pieces. They use their army of chess pieces until one player puts the other's king in a situation where they have no choice but to surrender: checkmate.

Chess exercises and stretches the mind; it develops important mental abilities that are useful in all aspects of life. It teaches critical thinking, concentration, problem solving, abstract reasoning, evaluation, strategic planning, pattern recognition, and creativity. Chess will teach you how to better able analyze situations and focus on important factors by eliminating distractions. The game is self-motivating. Your goal will be to attack and defend your key pieces, and fight your way to "checkmate."

The book is a perfect guide for both beginners and experts. You will learn the basics of chess, learn about how each piece sits on the board, master the moves and rules, and learn all the strategies that will help you win all your matches against your opponent. Learn more about this game of kings by reading on.

Where Chess Originated

A Brief History of Chess

Chess dates back more than 1500 years. The game may have originated in India in the 6th century AD (or sometime earlier, in the 5th century AD). Some historians, however, claim that the game likely originated in China. Records are unclear. But, most evidence points to the game starting in India, and later spreading to Persia. After Arabs conquered Persia, chess spread across the Muslims world. Later, it reached Southern European countries.

Modern chess evolved in Europe beginning in the 15th century. The game ruled countries and the period was referred to as the “Romantic Chess Era.” In the 1800s, the game was characterized by clever combinations of moves, a swashbuckling attitude, and brash sacrifices. Winning wasn’t that important; rather, style was what mattered most. The game focused more on one’s creative expressions than on technical skills or long-term strategies. Soon after, chess moved into the Dynamism Era.

At the beginning of the 19th century, chess, in its modern form, became a part of tournaments and championships. The first ever World Chess Championship was held in 1886. In the early 20th century, chess took a gigantic leap forward and a chess federation was established, which set standard chess rules. In the 21st century, chess’ popularity skyrocketed and software was developed. Players can also play chess online.

Origins of Chess

Chess originated in the 6th century in India's "Gupta Empire." The game was called "Chaturanga." This word translates from the four military divisions: cavalry, chariotry, infantry, and elephantry. These forms have now evolved into modern pieces: knight, rook, pawn, and bishop.

Chess later moved from India to Persia, and soon became an important part of Persian education (for the noble and elite classes). The Persians called it "Chatrang." It was later renamed "Shatranj," because Arab Muslims struggled with the "ch" and "ng" sounds. New rules were invented in this period.

After some time, players started to use the word "shah" (meaning "King" in Persian) whenever they would attack the opponent's king. They also used the term, "shah mat," meaning "helpless king" in Persian. In the modern game, this translates as "checkmate." Checkmate happens when the opponent's king can't escape an incoming attack or defend himself.

Chess later spread to many other countries; other variants of the game began to take shape. Silk traders, pilgrims, and other people soon carried chess to other areas. Slowly, the game became a game for the masses, rather than one only played by the elite. In the 10th century, chess moved further into Europe, and it was here that the game began to develop rapidly.

Many historical figures were avid chess players, including King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain, Euler (the famous mathematician), and Benjamin Franklin. For these people, chess was more than a mere idle amusement. By playing the game, they were able to hone valuable qualities, such as foresight, perseverance, and circumspection.

The Rules of the Game

The laws of chess, or the rules of the game, refer to certain rules that determine how one should play the game. While the origins of chess are somewhat vague, the modern rules of chess first originated in the Middle Ages. The rules have been continuously modified.

In previous centuries, rules also varied from place to place. The world chess organization has now set universal standardized rules (which are slightly modified from national ones). Fast chess, chess variants, online chess, and correspondence chess have their own slight rule variations.

The most basic rule is that chess is played between two people. Each player has sixteen pieces (of six different types). The pieces are arrayed on the board. The ultimate goal of each player is to “checkmate” his/her opponent. This means the opponent’s king is put into a situation in which capture is unavoidable. A chess game does not necessarily end with a “checkmate.” Often, players see their defeat coming and believe they will lose the game. Therefore, they voluntarily resign. In addition, sometimes, a game may end in a draw, called a “stalemate.”

The players take alternating turns. A player is entitled to move one piece each move. If the piece you move ends on a box occupied by the opponent’s piece, this means you have captured their piece. It is then permanently removed from the game.

Once you can make a move that leads to the capture of your opponent’s king, you win. This is known as the “checkmate stage,” in which an opponent has no other move left to save his/her king.

It is considered illegal to make any move that easily exposes your king to immediate capture. You cannot move into “check.” It is also illegal to attempt to force a draw or avoid defeat simply by repeating the same moves. In particular, one cannot make repeated checks. The responsibility lies on the attacker to use other moves to capture the king.

Apart from basic movements of chess pieces, the rules of the game also govern time control, player ethics, and conduct, recording moves with the appropriate chess notation, resolving any irregularities which may occur, and using the correct equipment.

Chess 101 - How to Play

Playing chess requires a board. The chessboard is a special board with 64 precisely divided, small squares. These squares are arrayed across the board in an eight by eight manner (with alternating colors). The board is quite similar to the one used in checkers (commonly called draughts) set by FIDE in 2008. Usually, board colors alternate between the standard white and black. These can truly be any color, but they must have a lighter and darker color scheme. No matter what colors the board has, the lighter colored squares are referred to as white, or light, boxes, and the darker colored squares are referred to as black, or dark, boxes.

The game has two players. One plays the white pieces, and the other controls the black ones. The player with the white chess pieces is “white,” and the player with the black pieces is “black.” The first rule is that the white player makes the first move. At every turn, players must make a move; it is against the rules to skip a move. Even if moving a piece is detrimental, you must make a move or else the game won’t continue.

The game has to continue until one king ends up in a “checkmate” situation, or the game is drawn, or until one player chooses to withdraw. In addition, chess can also be played under “timed conditions.” This means that the entire game play will be played within a fixed time, whoever exceeds the time limit prior to declaring a “checkmate” will ultimately lose the game. However, if you are able to capture the opponent’s king before time runs out, you will win that match. The timed chess game has different types of time control. Players can either have a fixed time or play the game during that entire period, or they can decide to make a certain number of moves within that time period. In such a planned game, players also have the option of extending the time, thereby increasing the number of moves they will likely make.

The official rules do not have a set rule on determining who plays the white pieces. This decision is open to specific tournament rules, in which case players mutually agree to let the colors be randomly assigned. A basic method followed by many players is to grab a random piece from the bag of pieces. They then reveal the color of the selected piece; if it is white, he/she has the first move.

Once the game starts, pieces are moved across the board using legal moves. The goal is to capture as many pieces of your opponent as possible. As the game advances, the game reaches a point where either you will put the other player into “check” and ultimately “checkmate,” or you will have to accept defeat. If you are in “check,” you can escape the situation by:

- Capturing the piece that is threatening your king with another piece, or using your king directly to remove that particular piece
- Moving your king away from the danger zone and placing it in a safe square
- Blocking your opponent’s path to your king by moving another piece in front of the opponent’s piece.

However, if you cannot do any of the above, then you will need to admit you are in “checkmate” and accept defeat. Also note that you cannot put yourself in “check.” This means you can’t make a move that will allow your opponent to capture your king on the next turn.

There are other options outlined below.

Stalemate

This is a special case in which a player is left with no other legal moves, but he or she isn't in check. A stalemate is a draw. It is the special fifty move rule, which means that if both players have made fifty moves without any capture by pawns, then the game is a draw.

Resign

At this stage, a player can withdraw or quit at any time and accept defeat.

The Distribution of the Pieces

In a chess game, the player gets sixteen pieces. There are sixteen white pieces and sixteen black. The pieces consist of one king, one queen, two rooks, two bishops, two knights, and eight pawns. The board has eight rows (also known as ranks numbered from one to eight), and it also has eight columns (also known as files, which are lettered from “a” to “h”).

Knowing the Chess Pieces and Their Abilities

Many beginners are confused about the differences between the queen and the king. In almost every chess set, the king has a small crown or a cross on. The queen is usually smaller and has a ridged edge at the top of her head. To better understand the rules, it is important to know about all the chess pieces and how they move. So, let's take a look at all the pieces and how they move.

King

The king is the most important piece in the game; however, it is also the weakest one. The king can move only one square in any direction, whether it is forward, backward, or sideways. The king also has a special and unique move, known as the castling move (which is discussed below). The king can never move himself into a position that is dangerous for him. The game is lost if you lose your king.

Castling

This special rule applies to the king and the rook. Castling allows you to do two important things:

- Get your king to safety
- Move your rook out of the corner and into the middle of the game.

You can move the king two squares to one side, and then shift the rook right next to the king on the opposite side. However, to be able to castle, the following conditions must be fulfilled.

- For the rook, it must be the first move
- For the king, it must be the first move
- The path between the king and rook must be clear (no pieces can block them)
- The king cannot be under "check," or must not have passed one

If you castle in one direction, the king will get closer to the side of the chess board. This is called a "kingside castling." If you castle to the other side, where the queen sits, it is called a "queenside castling." No matter what side it takes, the king will move only two squares when castling.

Queen

The queen is the most powerful piece in chess. She can move any number of squares along the rank, file, or diagonal. However, she is not allowed to leap over any other piece. She can attack in any manner she moves. However, like every other piece on the board, if she is captured, she is out of the game.

Rook

The rook, commonly known as the castle, may move as far as it can, but it can only move backwards, forwards, or sideways. It can also not leap over any other piece. Rooks are considered to be powerful pieces, especially when it comes to protecting and working with each other to attack the opponent.

Captures in a chess game are optional. The rook does not necessarily have to make any capture; it is allowed to capture other pieces only if you want it to.

Bishop

The bishop can move any number of squares, provided they are all diagonal. It cannot jump over pieces in its way. If the bishop starts on a black square, it has to move diagonally to a black one, and vice versa. The bishop is good for covering or protecting other pieces on the board.

On the board, you will have just two bishops for your chosen color. The one that sits on a white square is allowed to move diagonally on the white, and the black moves only on the black squares, diagonally.

Knight

Compared to all the other pieces, the knight moves in the most different ways. The head of the knight looks like a horse. It moves three squares in total — two squares in one direction, and then one more box at a right angle. This results in an “L” shape. It is also the only piece that can move over other chess pieces.

The knight can move two squares vertically or horizontally, and then one perpendicularly. Other pieces can never block the knight. It can easily jump over other pieces and capture the opponent's pieces. However, if it is placed in a corner, the knight is even more handicapped than the queen or bishop, and is even more vulnerable to being captured by the opponent.

Pawn

Pawns, on the other hand, are classified as the most complex pieces on the board. Pawns are unusual, because they can capture other pieces and move in different ways. They move forward, but they capture other pieces diagonally. Pawns can only move one square at a time, except for first moves, in which case, the pawns can move two squares forward. Pawns can capture pieces diagonally in front of them. They can never capture another piece going backwards. If a piece is blocking the pawn, it cannot move until the piece in front moves.

Pawn Promotion

If a pawn successfully reaches the other side of the board, then it can become any other piece (promotion). Note some people believe that a pawn may only be exchanged for a chess piece that was previously captured. This is not true. A pawn may be promoted to a queen.

En Passant

Another rule that applies to pawns is “en passant,” which in French means “in passing.” During a game, if the pawn moves two squares on its first move, and by doing so ends up next to an opponent's pawn (meaning that this pawn moves two squares away to escape the risk of capture), that pawn then has the option of capturing this first one it passes by. This move is only possible if the player notices it at first and acts immediately. Otherwise, the option to capture the pawn will expire.

Once you understand the names of the pieces and how they move, the next step is to learn how the board is set up. Where does each chess piece sit on the board? Read on to learn how to set up the board.

The Board Setup

The first step when playing chess is to correctly set up the pieces. You have to begin by first setting the board so that the bottom white square faces the right side. This means that both players will have white squares in the right corner of the board. Your pieces are set up on the two horizontal rows that are closest to you (on the bottom side). Unlike a game of checkers, chess will use all the square on the board.

The next step is to place a rook (also called a castle) on the two corners of the board. Make sure that you start with the rooks, which are easy to identify as tall pieces that move only in straight lines.

Once you have placed the rooks on the edges, place the knights (which have horse heads) besides them. Remember that knights can move a total of three squares, but they can only move in an “L” shape. They can also jump over other pieces. After placing the knights, place the bishops immediately next to them. While setting the pieces, keep moving towards the center of the board. Place the round-headed, tall bishops next to the knights. Bishops can only move diagonally.

While placing the bishops, check to ensure that one is on a black square, and the other is sitting on the white square. Now, if you are playing white, place your queen on the remaining white square (do the reverse if you are playing black). The queen, as the tallest piece, is easy to identify. She also has a spiked crown on her head. She is the most valuable piece in the game. On the last square remaining square of the first row, place the king. The king is the tallest piece. It has a rounded crown with a raised cross. Once you have placed the king, your entire first row is ready (this row is known as the rank). The king can move in any direction, but only once square at a time. This means that you have to make sure that other pieces surround and protect it.

Lastly, you place all the pawns on the second row. They stand arrayed in front of the other chess pieces. Pawns move forward only one space at a time. However, on the first move, they can move two spaces. Once you have placed all the pawns, your board is set and complete.

Castling and Promotion

Castling

In chess, castling involves exchanging the places of the king and one of the rooks. Two pieces are simultaneously moved in a single move. This move is only possible if neither the king nor the rook have previously moved. The squares between the rook and the king must be unoccupied, and the king must not be in “checkmate.”

The king moves two squares towards the rook, and the rook moves to the other side of the king (putting it immediately next to the king). Usually, castling protects the king behind a wall of pawns.

Castling Strategy

In the opening phase of a game, this move is an important one. It serves two valuable purposes:

- It moves the king into a safer position, far from the middle of the board;
- It moves the rook to “an active” position in the center. With this move, it is possible to put the opponent’s king in “checkmate.”

It is usually better to opt for kingside castling, because it keeps the king at a safer distance. The king stays closer to the edge of the board, and all other pawn pieces will stand closer to the king, in a file, protecting the king from attacks.

In queenside castling, however, the king is placed closer to the board’s center and pawns in the “a-file” (first row) will be undefended. Due to this move, the king is often moved over to the “b file,” so that it can defend the “a-pawn.” During this whole process, the king will move away from the center of the board, and the risk of attacks will increase. In addition, the castling move with the queen will require her moving away as well. It will take longer to achieve kingside castling. On the other hand, queenside castling has advantage as well. It places the rook efficiently in the board’s central “d-file.”

In chess, it is more common for both players to opt for kingside castling (rather than the queenside one). However, in rare cases, if one player opts for kingside castling, and the other chooses queenside castling, it is known as “opposite casting,” or the “opposite side castling.” This castling strategy usually ends in a fierce fight between the two players, as both players’ pawns are free to move forward and attack the opponent’s king. Examples of such moves are the Dragon Variation, Sicilian Defense, and the Yugoslav Attack, which we will discuss in future chapters.

If the king ends up moving before it gets the chance to castle, the player will still have the choice to maneuver the king to the edge of the board and the rook to the center. If the player chooses this way to reach a castling stage, by taking two to four moves, it is referred to as “artificial castling,” or “castling by hand strategy.”

Promotion

In chess, once a pawn reaches the eighth rank, it can immediately be promoted to any piece, based on the player's preference. The pawn could become a queen, bishop, rook, or knight. After promotion, a player may have two queens.

The threat of a pawn promotion often decides the game and leads to the "chess endgame move."

The queen is the most powerful piece on the board. Thus, the majority of pawns end up being promoted to a queen (rather than any other piece). This is often referred to as the "queening promotion." If a player decides to promote the pawn to another piece, it is known as "under promotion."

Promotion Strategy

Pawn promotion is often considered a key goal of a chess game. Pawns are not able to move backwards. This is why promoting them is important. If any pawns reach the eighth rank, they may promote themselves to be a queen, rook, bishop, or knight. Usually, when a game reaches this stage, the board is half empty, which gives pieces more freedom to move. Since the queen can move diagonally, most people prefer to promote their pawn to her status.

So, what happens if you exchange a pawn for a knight? Imagine a scenario in which the black queen is under threat from the white queen. Within the next several moves, she can move back to the king on the c7 row. On white's third move, the player could put the king into "checkmate" with knight to e8 or queen to h7. At the end of this move, the white pawn will be promoted to a knight, and the black king will be under pressure.

If the pawn was promoted to a queen in the above-mentioned scenario, it would have been easier to checkmate the opponent's king with a single diagonal move. However, promoting the pawn to a bishop also helps in attacking the opponent's king from a distance (ultimately aiding in victory).

Another scenario would have been when the rook attacks the king along a line from a distance. The pawn can be promoted to a rook and can attack the opponent's king in single file, leading to the player's victory.

With a queen promotion however, the pawn can easily put the opponent's king under checkmate pressure with a single diagonal move. To most players, this seems like the most appealing option on the board, ultimately leading to victory.

Competition Chess Rules

No matter when, with whom, or where you play chess, initial rules remain the same. The same goes for tournaments and competitions, where players must play on a chess board and strategically move their pieces to checkmate the opposing player's king. However, during competitions and tournaments, some special rules are put in place, to better organize the game. These rules are set by the FIDE Board, and they exist mainly to regulate the duration of the game and to avoid player disputes. Read on to learn more about the competition rules that you might encounter when playing a competition or tournament.

Basic Rules

Basic competition rules are the same as in a normal chess game. You must use only one hand to move a piece, and you must take it off as soon as you have made the appropriate move. Once you have moved a piece, it is illegal to reverse a move. If a player castles, he/she must first move the king with one hand, and then move the rook with the same hand. Once a pawn is promoted and pieces are moved accordingly, players are not allowed to touch those pieces again to reverse the moves. However, if the promotion is not final, then a new piece can make any valid move.

In a game, the player who successfully checkmates an opponent's king will be declared the winner, and the game ends. The player has to ensure that all the moves he/she makes are valid and legal. However, if an opponent believes that he/she will ultimately lose the match, they have permission to resign and let the other player win.

The game is a draw when a player has no other legal moves left and his/her king is not in check. At this stage, the game will reach a "stalemate." This will immediately end the game, as long as the move that leads to the stalemate was legal. The game also ends in a draw when the time comes that neither player can checkmate the opponent's king, nor can he/she make further legal moves. At such a point, the game has reached a "dead position." This will end the game; neither can claim victory.

The game also ends in a draw if pieces have been moved to an identical position on the board at least three times. Another draw situation results if both players have made fifty moves consecutively without moving any pawns and without capturing any pieces. Let's look at some basic competition rules you will encounter.

The Touch-Move-Rule

During a tournament or competition, if a player touches a piece with his/her hands in a way that indicates they want to make a move, then no matter what happens, they must move that piece. However, this is only permissible if the move is legal. As long as the player doesn't move the piece onto a new square, the piece can be moved to any other accessible square. If a player accidentally brushes against a piece, then it doesn't count as an intentional move.

If the player touches an opponent's piece, then if the move is legal, he/she must capture it with their piece. If the move isn't legal, then he/she must capture one of the opponent's first pieces on the board, as long as the move is legal. If the players are unable to decide on whether they touched their piece or one of their opponent's, it will be assumed that they touched their own piece and the capture of the opponent's piece will be annulled. If one player touches more than one chess piece, then he/she must capture each one in legal moves. An exception is made with the illegal castling move, in which case the king has to move if it can, otherwise the rook won't be allowed to move.

When the player is castling, he/she must touch the king first. If the player touches the rook first or both pieces simultaneously, then he/she must use the rook first and carry on with castling. This is possible only if the moves are legal. If the player is able to complete a two square move with the king without touching the rook, then he or she must move the rook in the correct moves that will make it a legal move. Otherwise, the whole castling will be considered illegal, and it must be withdrawn.

When a player successfully moves the pawn to the eighth rank, if the player takes his/her hand off the piece, then it can no longer be promoted to a different piece. However, the move will also not be considered valid unless the player promotes his/her piece before moving it to the next square. Basically, when a player decides to make a move, the Touch-Move rule states that the player must legally move the piece before touching any other chess pieces. This can be a slight challenge for most players. Players must stay vigilant while playing in a competition and make legal individual moves.

If a player wants to adjust a piece on the board, he/she must first announce "j'adoube," a French phrase meaning "I adjust." A player is strictly prohibited from touching other pieces on the board if it's not his/her turn, and he/she must wait until their turn to make a move.

The Fifty-Move Rule

This is another rule that states that if no capture has been made in the game, and if no pawn has moved in the previous fifty moves, the players can then claim a draw. This rule was introduced to prevent a player who had no chance of winning from continuously playing until an indefinite end comes about. This was a strategy used by some players who sought a win by exhausting their opponent and forcing him/her to quit the game instead.

There is no doubt that a master can easily make the necessary moves to earn a checkmate in well under the first 50 moves. Later, in the 20th century, it was observed that certain strategies and moves didn't lead to a victory. This meant additional moves and extra time.

The rule was then changed, allowing an additional 50 moves for players who were unable to end the game within the first 50 moves. However, this rule was only applicable if the player hadn't eliminated any pawns.

With this new rule, players were able to carry out additional combinations and find a path to victory. Over the years, more and more winning moves were discovered, making it significantly easier for players to win the match. In 1992, FIDE abolished all other exceptions and set the fifty move rule as the governing standard. Now, players must either win the game in the established number of moves, claim a draw, or simply accept defeat and quit the game.

The Rule Statement

The rule says that a draw is granted to players under the following conditions:

- The player writes it on their score sheet and declares their intentions to arbiters about their next moves, which will result in the final 50 moves. The player has to carefully assess and ensure that they didn't move any pawns prior to informing the arbiter;
- The claim should only be made after the first 50 moves;
- Under the 50 move rule, the game won't be automatically declared a draw unless the player himself/herself claims to do so under the rule. This means that the game can go on for as long as it can only until a point is reached when no other move will be valid and the player has to draw from his/her turn.

Practically speaking, when a player claims a draw under the fifty move rule, they are happy with their decision. FIDE amended some rules in 2014, which eliminated the possibilities of a “never ending” game. The FIDE rule states that if players make 75 moves consecutively without any capture or moving of a pawn, the game will come to a draw unless the players can manage to achieve a checkmate.

It is rare to see a game end under the fifty move rule. An example is the match played between Filipowicz and Smederevac in Polanica, Zdroj (1966), which was declared a draw on the 70th move without either player having captured any pieces.

Time Control in a Chess Tournament or Match

In chess tournaments, it is important that players record game play time. This is done so that each round can end appropriately and the tournament can successfully proceed. Time is usually monitored with a game clock, which handily records the total match duration. Sometimes, players end up in a “time pressure” situation (also known as Zeitnot), which is a scenario in which players have little time left to make remaining game moves.

For all major FIDE events, the World Chess Federation has set a single time control; this means a standard 90 minutes is given to both players. This time limit is enough for 40 moves after which the players can still get an extra 30 minutes to complete the entire game. An addition of 30 seconds per piece is given. Even though this is standard, exceptions may also be granted to players. Some World Championships have lasted for as long as 120 minutes for a total of 40 moves. Some, on the other hand, have lasted 60 minutes with 20 moves and an extra 15 minutes to end the game.

In general, the time durations given to each player will vary depending on the utilized game strategies. However, the classification of the tournament changes according to the time given to both players.

- **Short Time Limit:** this time control game category is not considered to be as important, because the players do not make the number of moves they should in that time period;
- **Lightening:** this is the quickest time limit; this represents 3 minutes or less per move;
- **Blitz:** this refers to a time limit of approximately 4 to 15 minutes per move. Anything under 20 minutes is considered a blitz;
- **Active:** this category is for moves made between 15 and 30 minutes.

Time Control Methodology

This refers to the time control approach that uses a game clock to regulate time variations. The methods used to measure time vary; let's assess some of the common methods.

Sudden Death

This is the most straightforward time control method in tournament chess. Each player is assigned a specific amount of time for the entire game. Once the time limit expires, the game ultimately ends, and it means that he/she lost.

Using an Hourglass

In this method, each player is given a clock. Each clock starts with a specific time, for example, one minute, five minutes, or ten minutes, and so on. While one player takes time to decide on a move, their time will decrease. On the other hand, time on the second player's clock will increase. This is similar to how an hourglass works. The sand in one portion empties out and fills the other side. It moves slowly, giving your opponent more time.

However, it should be noted that the sum of time on both clocks represents the same duration. This means that each player is allotted the same amount of time for the game. It just depends on who ends the game first, or if the game continues until its natural end. Once time completely runs out on one player's clock, the game will end and they will lose.

Overtime Formats

In this category, game time is further split into two categories: the main time and overtime. To switch between the two requires players to trigger a series of events. This often means that players must use up the main time allotted to them. In chess, if the player reaches the fixed number of moves they can then trigger “bonus time,” which is in addition to the fixed time. In chess competitions, this is a general rule, and it usually comes into play when the game goes beyond the standard 40 moves. This means that players can choose this method for 120 minute long games, complete the first 40 moves, and then add on an extra 30 minutes to complete the game.

Increment or Delay Method (Compensation)

This time control method requires the use of a special clock, known as the “delay clock.” There are three other forms that compensate players who lost time when making a move. To be able to make a move, the player must avoid decreasing available time.

The Simple Time Delay

If a player wants to make a move, the clock will wait (a delay period) before it will subtract time from the player’s remaining time. For a better picture, consider the following example.

Let’s say that the delay time is five seconds. The clock will wait for five seconds before it begins its countdown. Time does not accumulate, meaning that if the player makes a move within that delayed time, no time will be subtracted from the remaining match time.

The Bronstein Time Delay

This was a control method invented by the famous David Bronstein (a chess grandmaster). This time control method utilizes the same principles as that in the Simple Delay one. However, the only difference is that during each turn, players can see the amount of time they have before the clock starts counting down again.

Once the player’s turn is over, and if they ended up using less time in the delay period, time will be returned back to them, as if they hadn’t initially used it. If the time they used exceeds the delay time, the length of the delayed period will then be added to the player’s time.

The Fischer Time Delay (Time Increment)

Invented by the American World Chess Champion, Bobby Fischer, this time control method says that when a player’s turn comes, the delay or incremental time will be added to the player’s remaining time. For example, if the time delay was five seconds and the time remaining on the player’s clock is ten minutes, they will have ten minutes and five seconds added to their initial remaining time.

This simply means that time can be accumulated. If the player moves a piece within the delay period, their remaining game time will actually increase. In most competitions or FIDE events, this method is very common, and it is also seen on internet chess game servers.

This time delay term is usually referred to as an “increment.” This is because delay time and overtime sum together to give players extra time. In this case, the game is further divided into other time control fractions. The first fraction will include 40 moves, and the next one can be used to make

remaining moves. With these separate fractions, time control can be split between sudden death and the increment.

In most FIDE events, this method is used when the first 40 moves have been made in less than 90 minutes. A further 30 minutes is then given to the players to complete the full game. This adds another 30 minutes to the complete game time, and they have more than enough time to end it naturally.

Penalty Game Format of Chess Competitions

This method imposes a point penalty or a fine to a player who breaches their time limit. However, this is more commonly seen in games like “GO,” a Chinese version of chess. In chess competitions, if the player breaches the time limit, their penalty is clear enough-- “loss”. If they lose their game within the time limit, the opponent will be declared the winner, whereas if they exceed the time limit, they will have to claim a draw.

Recording Chess Moves

By now, you understand that the chess board is denoted with pairs of numbers and letters. Vertical files are lettered from “**a**” to “**h**” (from the left side of the white pieces, this is the queenside, all the way to the right). Likewise, horizontal ranks are numbered from “**1**” to “**8**” (starting from the nearest end of the white piece side of the chess board). With this lettering and numbering, it is easy to identify each square, and ranks can also be determined. For example, you should know that the white king starts from **the e1** square. The black knight sits on b8, and it can move to either **a6** or **c6**.

In a formal tournament or competition, each player has the chance to record the moves they make in chess notation. This helps settle any dispute or legal opposition. In case they violate any time delay methods or controls, they can make their claims by referring to the moves they have made and either draw on the fifty move rule or repeat positions. In matches held now, Algebraic Chess Notations are the most preferred way to record a game.

Other recording systems are also available. However, in matches, the current rule says that each move has to accurately correspond to the chess notations before writing them down on a paper or using any electronic device to make recordings. Before playing a game, each player has to first indicate an “=” sign on the scoreboard. Time notations should also be accurately recorded on the scoreboard or the recording sheet. In case the player has less than the prescribed five minutes left to complete their moves, they will not be required to record unless an extra thirty minute delay is added. With a scoreboard and a recording sheet, players must refer to them each time. This means they have to see the moves the opponent player has made and then record their own as they proceed.

Algebraic Notations in Chess

The Algebraic Notation (AN) is a standard method to describe and record moves in chess games. Among all organizations, magazines, newspapers, books, competitions, and tournaments, these notations are now common and serve as basic standards.

Algebraic notations are available in various languages and forms. However, they are mainly based on systems and standards set by Philipp Stamma, a pioneer and modern chess master. He is most famous for the chess books he published in France in 1737 (*The Noble Game of Chess*). Today, his rules are used by FIDE, as well as in most competitions.

Names of the Squares

On the chessboard, each square can be identified by a distinctive coordinate, which is a letter followed by a number. The files (vertical square columns) from queenside to the right of the kingside are labeled, a-to-h. The ranks (horizontal square rows) are numbered from 1 to 8, starting from the white side of the chessboard. Each square has a unique number and letter to identify its position.

Naming the Chess Pieces

Other than pawns, which are lettered with a lowercase “p,” the other pieces are all identified with an uppercase letter. The first letter is usually taken from the name of the pieces. This applies in different languages. For English-speaking players, “K” represents the King; “Q” represents the Queen; “R” represents the Rook; “B” represents the Bishop; and “N” stands for the Knight (because K has already been used for the King).

Other languages use different letters to represent chess pieces. For example, in French, players refer to the Bishop as “F,” which in French is “Fou.” However, the universal symbols and shapes of the chess pieces remain the same. Pawns are represented with lowercase letters mainly because distinguishing between them is not really necessary; this is because a pawn only moves one square at a time.

Move Notations

To indicate a piece's movement, the first uppercase letter is used, and then the square to which it moved. For example, Be5 means you moved the Bishop to the e5 square. Nf3 means that you moved your knight to the f3 square. c5 means you moved a "pawn" to the c5 square (for pawns, you do not need to use a lowercase p).

Capture Notations

When a player makes a capture, they have to denote that on the score sheet with an “X,” before describing the piece’s destination. Let’s say a player makes a capture Bxe5. This means that the bishop captured a piece on square e5. If a pawn captured a piece, the file from which it left is key to identifying the pawn’s location. For example, if the pawn on e-file captures a piece on d5, this will be noted as exd5. Sometimes, players use the “:” sign instead of “X” to describe the capture. They can either put in the “:” sign in the same place where the “X” would go, or at the end of the notation. For example, either “B:e5,” or “Be5:” are appropriate.

The captures made by en passant rules are indicated by specifying the pawn capture file with X and then the destination square. Note, this square isn’t the one of the captured pawns. After this, you can add the “e.p.” suffix, which represents en passant. An example is exd6e.p.

Notations for Identical Moves and Pieces

If two or more identical chess pieces move towards the same square, the piece making the move is then uniquely identified by specifying the letter of the piece, and then the notations follow in ascending or descending order. The notation depends on the:

- The file and their difference;
- The rank of the departing piece, whether the files are the same, but have differing ranks; or
- Both the rank and file. This occurs in rare cases where two or more pawns have been promoted.

Let's look at an example to better understand. With knights sitting on the g1 and d2 squares, which in both cases can move to f3, the move will be noted as Ngf3. If not, it can also be noted as Ndf3. Knights sitting on g5 and g1 can make moves, such as N1f3 or N5f3. As described above, "X" can be included to indicate a capture.

Notations for Pawn Promotion

Once the pawn moves to the eighth rank, it is promoted to either a queen or another option. Once the piece has been promoted, it is then indicated at the end of the move. For example, a pawn promoted to a queen is described as e8Q. Sometimes, the addition of an 'equal to' sign is also seen, but this represents the same promotion. For example, a pawn promotion could be recorded as e8(Q) or e8=Q. These, however, are not FIDE standards.

Offer to Draw a Game

In FIDE rules, an “=” sign is used to denote a draw on the score sheet right next to the piece move. However, this doesn't fall under chess' algebraic notation.

Castling Notations

Special notations are used to represent castling. For kingside castling, 0-0 is notated, 0-0-0 is used for queenside castling.

Checkmate

To show a checkmate state, the “+” symbol is usually used. Sometimes, the sign appears as a dagger, or alternatively, a “ch” abbreviation may be used. If the player’s king is in a double check situation, this is indicated with a double “++” or “dbl ch.”

Game Completion

Once a game ends, if the white player wins, it will be denoted 1-0, alternatively, 0-1 will be used for a black victory. If the scoreboard shows $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$, this indicates a draw. Other than these indications, no other symbol is used to describe a win or a loss.

Sometimes, the scoreboard will list information that states the black (or white) player resigned; this is simply a narrative to describe the scenario.

Irregularities

Like every other board game, chess also has some irregularities and exceptions that players must note. These are basically divided into illegal moves and illegal positions (which are discussed below).

Illegal Moves

If a player makes a move that is illegal, they must retract the move and make one that is considered to be legal. If possible, the player should make the move with that very piece they had moved initially. This is because the touch-move rule will apply here. If the player had made an illegal castling move, then the touch move rule will apply to the king and not to the rook piece.

When this happens, the judge or arbiter has to ensure that the time on the clock is readjusted. If the players didn't notice the mistake until they played ahead, the game would have to be restarted from the point of the incorrect position.

If the players were playing a blitz match, in which case the both players have a very short time limit to make a move, then the rule will vary. A player is only allowed to correct an illegal move if they aren't under any time pressure. If the player is under pressure, the opponent may ultimately claim victory if they make the next move. If the opponent makes a move that is also illegal, it will then be accepted without both players having to face any penalties.

Based on standard FIDE chess laws, an opponent is awarded an extra two clock minutes for an illegal move penalty. If a second illegal move is made by the same player, then the game will end for that player. If the opponent is able to make legal moves that will help them win, it is possible for them to win the game.

Illegal Positions

- If a game goes on for a while, and later it was discovered that the starting position was incorrect, the game has to restart from the beginning;
- If the game continues for a while, and the board was not appropriately set up, the game can continue. The arbiter just has to make sure that he/she corrects the board and places pieces where they belong;
- If the match started with players playing the wrong colored pieces, the game can still continue (unless the judge proposes a new rule for that particular game). Some organizations prefer to set other rules, depending on the particular game or match situation;
- If the player ends up knocking some chess pieces over, it is still their responsibility to replace them in their correct positions;
- If the players notice that an illegal move has been made, or pieces have been displaced, the game must be restored to a regular or legal state;
- If players are unable to determine the exact position of legal moves, the game has to go back to a position that was recorded as legal.

Player Conduct

- The players are strictly barred from undertaking any illegal action(s) that can abruptly end a game; the players are also not allowed to pick up a captured piece and try to replace it on the board. This is illegal and may result in the player being dismissed from the match;
- The two players are strictly prohibited from bringing any technological device to the game; this includes mobiles, pagers, laptops, iPads, or other similar items. Only the chessboard and score sheets are allowed;
- Unless the judge allows it, players are not allowed to receive calls during the match. If a player brings in his or her mobile phone and it rings, the game will be forfeited and end immediately;
- Score sheets are provided to players strictly for the purpose of recording game scores and game-related matters;
- Players are not allowed to annoy or distract their opponents in any way;
- If players do not follow these rules, they will have to quit the game or accept the penalty set by the arbiter;
- In case both players are unwilling to comply with basic rules, they will both be determined to have lost, and they will have to leave the game area.

The Arbiter and Their Role during the Match

Judges keep a sharp eye on things and decide if people are proceeding correctly or not. As with any other task. The chess arbiter monitors players and helps make decisions that are best for the competition. They do not have the permission to interfere in anyway else.

If the players break rules of the game, the arbiter is allowed to impose penalties as described below:

- They have the right to warn the player who is breaking the rules
- They can increase the opponent's time;
- If the player is cheating or trying to break the rules, the arbiter can reduce their game play time;
- They can immediately disqualify a player;
- They can remove points from the scoreboard;
- They can increase the number of scores made by players;
- They can expel the offending player from the match, venue, or tournament.

Tournament arbiters have permission to make necessary decisions in accordance with chess laws.

Equipment

Playing chess is not possible without equipment. This chapter provides preliminary information about chess pieces, sets, clocks, boards, and other important items that are specific to national or international tournaments.

Chess is a game that fits perfectly within any budget. The cost of a chess set ranges from a few dollars (for cardboard and plastic sets) to hundreds of dollars for well-carved sets that appeal to collectors.

Different Chess Equipment

Chess set

The set includes the board plus all other pieces (pawns, bishops, rooks, knights, the king, and the queen).

Chess sets are aesthetically attractive and sleekly designed. The color and sizes of pieces are precisely chosen to match and contrast with the board's squares.

Chess sets come in special travel versions, which are perfect for using during a train, plane, or car trips. These sets usually have pegged or magnetic pieces and a separate section or pocket to store remaining pieces.

For people who want to add a "fun touch" to their gaming experience, they can opt for themed sets, which have special motifs and designed armies that can battle each other. These pieces are custom made. You can find examples, like cats versus dogs, cowboys versus Indians, or other traditional rivals. These pieces not only look more decorative on the board, but they make the game fun and thrilling.

These special sets, however, aren't suitable for matches or tournaments. Imagine playing a tournament with a custom board. You would have to repeatedly ask the arbiter, "Sorry, which one is the knight again?"

The Chess Board

On the chess board, the squares are 1.25, and the size of the king's base is 1.3 (approx. 65mm). Squares with a size of 57mm are usually ideal for pieces in this age range. The darker squares on the chess board can vary from black, to dark green, or brown the lighter colored squares can either be white or off-white in color.

Although most chessboards have standard white and black squares, you can also find special ones made from black and red squares. Though this looks attractive, most players have said that these colors tend to strain eyes during a play.

For tournaments, special chess boards are made, which means they are built right into gaming tables. Like a standard chess board, the squares must have the right dimensions, and they should have adequate spaces or borders to place countdown timers and all captured chess pieces.

Most boards have coordinates printed on the sides, which show the algebraic notations for the squares. These come in handy for both amateur and professional players, giving an idea of which square each piece moves on to. These days, the most common choice among all players is the vinyl rollup board.

Chess Tables

For tournaments, the size of the table must have a minimum length twice that of an actual chess board, and the width should be 15 to 20 centimeters more than that of a chess board. For FIDE tournaments, players must use a table that is 120 by 80 centimeters. For both players, the height of the table and

chair has to be comfortable. It is necessary that chairs and tables do not make any noise while players play.

Chess Pieces

In 1849, the first ever original pieces created were referred to as “Staunton chess pieces.” They are still the standard ones used in all matches, and may be made out of plastic or wooden materials. They are usually white or black. Sometimes, you will find them in other colors, like dark wood or red.

Even though colors may vary, players still refer to them as “black” or “white.” On a standard chess board, the king must be 85 to 105 millimeters tall (this is about 3.35 to 4.13 inches). The diameter of the king has to be approximately 50% of its actual height. All other pieces need to be proportional to the king. This means pieces have to be well-balanced for height, width, and shape.

For beginners, you will find special pieces that have legal moves printed on the individual pieces. This makes it easier for beginners, like training wheels on a bicycle. Beginners quickly replace these introductory sets with normal ones.

When not in use, it is important to store pieces in some kind of container or pouch. Appropriate storage increases the lifespan of a chess set, and also makes it easier for people to transport it. Sometimes, you may also find special custom made or personalized gift boxes, which are ideal gifts for chess players.

Chess Clocks

In chess games where players use time control, adjacent game clocks (consisting of two buttons) may be used. One button stops the clock and the other starts the timer. These buttons prevent the clocks from simultaneously running. The clocks can either be digital or analog. Before the game starts, the arbiter has to decide which kind should be used for the game.

Historically, the first ever clocks used to record game time in a chess tournament were back in the early 19th century. In that era, hourglasses with sand were common clocks, keeping track of the time spent to finish the game. Each player had separate hourglasses to track time. They were eventually replaced by connecting two analog clocks. The time on one player’s clock starts ticking as soon as the other one makes a move and punches the clock.

In the analog clock, a flag will be sandwiched between 11:00 and 12:00 on both clocks. Once the minute hand comes closer to 12:00, the tip touches the flag and the clock continues to move ahead. This moves the flag from a vertical position to a horizontal one. Once the hand reaches 12:00 again, the flag drops. If the player hasn’t made any moves within that time, it will be recorded as a time loss.

These days, digital clocks — which allow players to more effectively control time — have become more popular. Whenever a player makes a move, they punch the clock, and it saves additional time.

An important feature of chess clocks is their sturdiness. During a match, players under pressure tend to punch the clock hard and sometimes even knock them to the floor. This is seen mostly in times of trouble and during blitz games. Another quality to note is loudness. The clock has to be audible, but not distracting.

Basic Requirements for Chess Clocks

- In tournaments, all clocks must operate in accordance with FIDE laws;
- The display has to clearly show the time remaining for each player's next move;
- The display must be visible from a distance of three meters;
- From 10 meters, the player must be able to clearly see moving clock hands;
- In a passing time control scenario, there must be a sign on the clock display to clearly signal when players pass the first time limit;
- If the clock is battery operated, it must have a "low battery" sign;
- Even if the battery gets low, it is important that it can run for at least ten more hours;
- For passing time controls, special attention should be given to the announcements;
- For delay timing systems or accumulative systems, if the time control has been passed by a player, the clock must not add additional time;
- In cases of a time penalty, an arbiter is allowed to grant corrections only within the next 60 seconds;
- With a simple manipulation, it should be easy to adjust the time;
- The clocks must have an easy-to-understand manual. If the clock is FIDE-endorsed, the rules must be stated.

Other Equipment

Apart from the above-mentioned equipment, you should also have a travel chess bag, which makes it a lot easier to carry your board, clock, pieces, and other equipment. This is especially important for tournament players in the United States. In Europe, tournaments provide players with all necessary equipment.

Score Sheets

To record your chess moves, it is important to keep a score sheet, especially in tournament and matches. Usually, these are distributed to players at the start of every round. However, most players prefer to record their individual scores in scorebooks.

Chess Strategies

Chess strategy is a key factor that makes the game royal and beautiful. Once you make the right opening moves, you and your opponent can begin unfolding new approaches. Soon, the “real chess game” begins and both of you will inevitably be hooked.

Everyone loves to study the theories behind opening moves and to learn new strategies and techniques that will pave your way to victory. However, the middle game is where players either win or give up. End game strategies are quite straightforward; you either win or lose.

Many chess players give up before they reach the end. Reading on, you will surely learn successful new tactics and strategies. This is an important area of chess. Without having an idea of basic strategies, you won't be able to win. At this point, there is so much information that comes your way, and playing the game can leave you overwhelmed. Let's look at strategies that can help you win in no time.

Three Basic Opening Chess Moves

Let's look at three opening chess strategies. When you see the chess board with all the chess pieces in their respective places, the first thought for a beginner is, "now, what am I supposed to do? There are so many pieces on the board and where do I begin?" Let's look at three moves that will help you make a strong and confident opening.

The first thing you have to understand is that the four center squares are "power squares," mainly because that is where the board's center is and that's exactly where you have to set a "control center." For example, if your knight sits on the center square, it controls up to eight additional squares. Clearly, that's a very strong position.

However, if your knight is on the center side square, it controls only four squares. Likewise, other pieces also have strong control only in the center of the board. As you begin the game, the first thing to think about is "center control." The first move you should make is moving your pawns to the board's center squares. It's always very important to try and get pawns into the center to better control the game.

The next vital step is "piece development." Just like a battle, you have to remember that the pieces are working for you. You have to give them a task. If they simply sit in the last row, they are not happy, because they have no work to do. This means you have to consider a way to try and get the last row of pieces out on the board and working for you.

Usually, the next pieces that the players move out are the knights, which sit beside the bishops. You could move a knight to "f3," and the other knight to "c3." These knights move the knights closer to the center of the board. You didn't move the knight to "h5," because it gives the knight the option to control only four squares (instead of eight). Always focus on the board's center.

Next, you need to move the two bishops out, again keeping your focus on the center of the board and controlling the center squares. After making this opening move, your next focus should be on the "safety of the king," which obviously is the key task of a chess game.

As a player, you should consider the king to be a baby. We know it is important to protect babies. The same applies to the king. The king must always be protected. The best way to protect your king in the first few moves is "castling." You can either castle on the "kingside" or the "queenside." Kingside castling is most preferable. To do that, you have to move the king two spaces towards the side, and then move the rook to the other side of the king. This keeps the king in a fortress-like position, guarded by other pieces. Now, let's look at some other common openings.

Ruy Lopez

This opening strategy is also known as the “Spanish opening in chess.” The Ruy Lopez strategy is quite simple and straightforward, just like the previously discussed strategy. This strategy doesn't require much brainpower. It is so common that you will see it in friendly games or tournaments.

Imagine that you are playing a match against your friend. You play the white pieces, and your opponent takes the black ones. Basic moves happen, like the white pawn (you) will move to e4 and the black pawn (your opponent) moves to e5. Next, you will move your knight to f3, and the black knight will respond by moving to c6. Further, you, as the white player, will pin down the black knight with your bishop; this move puts the knight in danger of being captured (as well as the pawn at e5).

The most common response by black is to move their pawn to a6. This move is done to try and divert the bishop from attacking the knight. However, as the white player, you have two options, to either attack the knight, or to retreat. In case you decide to attack the black knight, the opponent will still capture the bishop with his/her pawn.

Another move you can make is to keep the bishop, because we all know it has many distinct capabilities. You could pull the bishop back to c4 or a4. At this point, it is advised that you should retreat with the bishop to a4 for two reasons.

- It will keep the bishop safe from the black pawn's attack; and
- It pins your bishop to the knight you were initially targeting at the start of the game.

With such a move, the opponent will have to think carefully about other pawns and the knight. Instead, he/she will move his/her pawn to b5. The white player will then move the bishop back to b3. This is also a good position, because it allows the bishop to target opponent's f7 pawn. With this move, if the opponent decides to move the pawn from a6 to try and capture the white bishop, the white player can equally capture the black pawn with his/her pawn to a3.

However, the black player will try to move the bishop to f6. After this, the black player will be able to capture the white player's pawn on e5. In this situation, you should decide to go for kingside castling, because if the knight captures the pawn, then with the castling, your rook and queen can move out to control the center and get ready to attack the opponent.

Once you move the king, you can move your knight and capture the opponent's pawn on e5. Their king will be in "check." This is a very good situation for the white player. This is a common way of playing the Ruy Lopez opening. From this move, the opponent will likely move their bishop to e7, and then castle. You can then continue to attack the black pieces.

This tactic at times seems boring, but if you master the moves, then surely you will be able to make better middle game moves. So far, with these moves, you must have noticed that none of your white pieces have been captured.

The Sicilian Defense

Let's see Sicilian Defense basics. When most people see this opening, they are startled, because it is one of chess' biggest openings. There are probably more than ten variations that can be played in the Sicilian Defense. No matter how many times you play this strategy, you will always learn something new. Here, we will look at the raw basics of this defense strategy.

Usually, white will begin by moving its pawn to e4 and taking control over center squares. Instead of moving the black pawn to e5, the pawn on c7 will move to c5, which is counter center. White then proceeds with its knight on f3. At this point, there are so many other variations that you could play, but the most typical one is to move the pawn from d7 to d6; this creates a "small pawn chain" and opens the way for the bishop's advance.

The white pawn then moves from d2 to d4; this is a must capture for the black pawn and then the white captures the black pawn. With this move, you will see that white has a greater advantage, because the knight is out in the center, and the pawn as well. Now, the main aim of the black player is to try and stop the white player from removing its pawn from c2 to c4, which would create a "Maroczy Bind."

The Maroczy Bind allows an opponent to take greater control over the center and increase their chance of winning. To stop that from happening, the black will move the knight from g8 to f6; this makes it easier to attack the pawn on e4, and stop the white player from making the Maroczy move. A typical move that the white will make is to move its knight from b1 to c3.

Now, to stop an attack on the b5 square, which aims directly at the black's king, it is extremely important that the black player moves its pawn from a7 to a6 to stop the attack on the b5 square. This move stops the white player's knight from going to the b5 square. Additionally, it will also stop the white bishop on f1 from moving to b5. It will be forced to move to c4, or somewhere in the back. From this point, the game can move in any other direction.

The Italian Game or Giuoco Piano

In the history of chess, this is probably one of the oldest ever recorded game openings. It is said that these moves were developed by chess players, such as, Polerio and Damiano around the 16th century. It was further improved by Greco (1620), who gave this strategy its main theme.

For more than 300 years now, this strategy has been analyzed extensively. People sometimes refer to it as Giuoco Piano. However, this term particularly refers to the play after a player moves the bishop to c5.

This opening is slightly different. Most chess grand masters never prefer it, because it can lead to a draw (if not played well). However, this opening is considered a good one and helps to develop pieces. If the white player moves its pawn from e2 to e4, a possible move for the black will be to move its pawn from e7 to e5. If black moves its knight from b8 to c6, the Italian move is characterized by the white player moving their bishop to c4 (as opposed to b5). The opponent will then move their bishop from f8 to c5. The best play for white will now be to move their white pawn from c2 to c3 to be able to continue the game in a proper manner.

The player can then move their knight to f6, which will make it easier to attack the opponent's e4 pawn. The white player will then move their pawn to d4, and the black player will continue with kingside castling.

Offensive and Defensive Strategies

Whether you are new to chess or an expert, the most important thing to understand is the crucial balance between offensive and defensive strategies. Most inexperienced players are quick to go on the offensive to quickly crush their opponent. Although pulling this off can be rather impressive, the probability of such a quick offensive win (particularly against experienced players) is highly unlikely. The main flaw with an all-out offensive is that any experienced player can easily see the gaping holes in your defense. Expert players simply sit back and wait for their opponents to make a mistake.

Think of chess as a war, in which you have to defend your king, and simultaneously, make attempts to take your opponent's capitol. An army that bravely charges onto the battlefield with no defensive protection tends to quickly experience a crushing defeat.

This is the reason why it is essential to start a game with a balanced approach. It is essential to have both defensive and offensive strategies up your sleeve if you want to win. There are times when the best offensive move is to simply wait for your opponent to start an offensive attack and simply recognize the flaws in their approach. This will give you the added advantage of finding loopholes in their defense, rather than giving them an opportunity to find your own weaknesses.

It is essential to work on both your defensive and offensive skills. Below are some great defensive and offensive strategies that you can utilize.

Defensive Strategies

The French Defense

This move is a counterattack against the first white move – 1.e4. For the first black move, white expects black to move diagonally, a2-g8, which is the biggest weakness of black and allows the opponent to take control of center squares after 2.d5. Even some of the most experienced chess players find it difficult to play against the French Defense, since it is a unique and unexpected defense.

The greatest problem black will encounter is the blocked bishop on the queen side (which was blocked by the first 1.e6 move). Typically, the entire game revolves around this major flaw. It is essential to understand your weakness(es) if you want to win a chess game.

A major French Defense element is that black typically counterattacks on the queen's side, whilst white usually focuses on the king's side. The French Defense is ranked second in popularity to the Sicilian (against white's 1.e4 move). Since the majority of games start with 1.e4, this strategy is an ideal tool to liven up your chess game and throw your opponent off track.

Caro Kann

This is one of the most popular defensive openings, in response to the King Pawn 1.e4 opening strategy. Black can then respond with 1.c6 with a plan to thrust forward with d5 in the next move, and to attack the white central pawn on e4. This is one of very few strategies that will put black in equal competition in the main line. You could consider black as being in a better position, specifically at the end of the game (when the main line is played). This happens, because black doesn't have to compromise its pawn structure through this move and will have a considerably easy end game.

There are numerous Caro Kann Defense variations, but the main line carries on with 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Bf5. This is a crucial setup, which you must understand if you want to use Caro Kann. In various situations, opening with this strategy can gradually change to the French Defense. However, when playing the main line, black will typically have a pawn on c6. Afterwards, the light-squared bishop will be brought out by black and will make a move to e6. When black's pawn is on c6, the next move would be to bring the knight to d7, while supporting the future knight on f6. The black queen can be placed on c7, while the dark-squared bishop has various lines, and isn't blocked by pawns.

When the Caro Kann Defense isn't following the main lines, it will typically change into the French Defense. This means that you must have proper knowledge about the French Defense, if you want to use Caro Kann Defense.

This strategy isn't a flashy opening, and it isn't very aggressive. However, it is a rather sound defense that results in black having an advantage during the end game. If you have a strong foundation of end game strategies and pawn structure, this defense is definitely for you.

The Pirc Defense

This strategy is a hypermodern defense, which means that it doesn't make an attempt to control the game with pawns early on. In fact, black attacks the center with minor pieces from the sides. When the foundation has been set, it starts undermining white's center control.

There are only two major attacks that white can play against the Pirc Defense. The first move is the Austrian Attack which is one of the most aggressive moves in chess, in which white moves its f pawn towards f4. This step exposes white's king, but puts extra pressure on the black's king side. A great idea is to attack the king aggressively, which is castled on the fianchettoed bishop's side; this is what black does in the Pirc Defense (through the g6 move followed by Bg7). The second attack of white is the Classical System, in which the second knight moves to f3 and positions itself to create a stronger center control before white prepares to attack.

In both attacks, black has strong counter plays, but must be cautious about playing too passively. If black isn't careful, it can find itself in a dangerous position in which it is too cramped to move forward. The best thing for black to do is to attack the center for white, before the opponent has any chance of attacking.

The Dutch Defense

This strategy is a fairly active defense, especially against 1.d4. With the Dutch Defense, black aims to control the e4 square whilst entirely unbalancing the position. Further down the road, black will strengthen the attack on the white's king side. The main strategic element is that black's usual weak square (f7) becomes an even greater target. White will usually focus entirely on targeting that weakness. As a response, black will have some active pieces that aren't cramped and will offer an exciting attack against white.

White typically fianchetto the bishop of the king towards g2 aiming to place some support on e4 square which is being attacked by black. Black would probably fianchetto its bishop as well for adding pressure towards the dark squares. Since both black and white have various strategies, the majority of the game is quite active and lively with the Dutch Defense.

If you are one of those players who often encounter 1.d4 and dislike playing the Queen Gambit, this defense strategy gives you plenty of counterattacking options and is a rather good alternative.

The Alekhine Defense

This strategy is another hypermodern defense against the most used white e4 opening. Black allows white to start chasing its knight throughout the board by tempo gaining pawn moves which will assist white in gaining center control of the board. In the meantime, black will undermine white's overextended pawns.

The one thing black must remember is that once your knight is being chased around the board, black doesn't have the option of playing passively. It is essential that black attack white's center control, or else white will earn a devastating victory.

White typically has three main lines to select from. However, it usually begins with 1.e4 Nf6 2.e5 Nd5 3.d4 d6. This is where things begin to change based on the selected variant. White has the option to choose from an aggressive line of four pawn attacks, in which white would aim to place its four central pawns near the center. White may also play exchange variations which follow the pawn attack. However, the last pawn it would opt to exchange would be the d6 pawn.

Black has the option of playing a sharp line to capture with its king pawn. It may also choose an uber-aggressive and exciting strategy, capturing with its c pawn.

The Benoni Defense

This strategy is an extremely aggressive one that can be played by black in response to white's common d4 opening. Whilst numerous defense strategies aim to earn draws and close up against the pawn queen opening, the Benoni Defense provides black with numerous opportunities to not only equalize the game, but also gain an advantage to start playing for the win.

With the modern Benoni Defense, the major focus is white's center control of light squares, with the key pawns placed on d5, and black's center control of dark squares. Black would aim to fianchetto its king-side bishop towards g7, to add support on the dark squares.

As a white player, you want to maintain constant pressure on the d5 square, using it to set up outposts for minor pieces and to put more pressure on black.

As a black player, you would want to prevent white from putting pressure on you and preventing them from gaining outposts on the c6 and e6 squares. The Benoni Defense strategy typically opens up after the opening move. This indicates that bishops have more power compared with knights. This is why it is imperative to be cautious when it comes to trading bishops. Black would get many counter plays and would be able to play a great game, once things start opening up in the middle of the game.

The Slav Defense

This strategy is one of the most used opening defenses with GM's. This is primarily driven by two major factors. Firstly, it is the most solid line to play against the Queen's Gambit. Since the Queen's Gambit is the most popular opening at higher playing levels, the majority of expert players are fans of the Slav Defense. This defense strategy also provides opportunities for multiple variations. This means that players, who prefer to be creative and dislike playing similar variations in every game, will rather enjoy using the Slav Defense.

Black seeks to defend its pawn on d5 with its c6 pawn in the second move. This is because the pawn on the e file stays as required, and doesn't block the light-squared bishop.

In the Slav Defense's main line, white aims to dominate the center of the board, and black aims to control the b4 square, making a push towards the e5 and c5 squares.

The Grunfeld Defense

This strategy is another hypermodern defense. This means that black doesn't try to initially control the center with its pawns. Instead, it focuses on attacking the center from the sides, utilizing minor pieces. Once the foundation has been built, it starts undermining the white's center control.

There are three major lines in this defense strategy. The main line is exchange variations, and it is what the majority of players aim for when they approach the Grunfeld Defense. Black allows white to entirely dominate the center with its pawns, focusing its own energy on the d4 square. Instead of utilizing its special advantage in the center, white has to react to this threat by focusing its energy on defending its d4 pawn. With all white's pieces and pawns in the center, and no other strategy to rely on, things take a nasty turn for white if it starts losing focus.

For white players who dislike defending and prefer to attack more, the Russian variation prompts them to give up their strong pawn center and get the queen involved, to pressure black.

Since white's d4 opening has gained popularity from the GMs each year, it isn't surprising that the Grunfeld Defense strategy is regularly utilized in the game. It becomes quite deadly when capably used and can successfully halt even an experienced d4 player.

The King's Indian Defense

This strategy is one of the strongest defensive chess strategies. Black creates a solid defense around its king and aims to counter attack, depending on where white is the weakest.

Play in the King's Indian Defense starts with:

1. d4 Nf6
2. c4 g6
3. Nc3 Bg7
4. e4 d6.

This strategy is a hypermodern concept that offers center control to the white without attempting to control the game early on with pawns. Instead, black aims to develop its minor pieces early on, and then move its pawns to the center further on in the game.

Even though this defense is a strong opening for black, it's also rather passive in the initial stages. If you are an aggressive player, this move won't be enjoyable for you. Similar to other opening chess strategies, this strategy will provide numerous opportunities for counter play in the middle of the game.

Offensive Strategies

The King's Gambit

This offensive strategy is one of the oldest chess openings, for a good reason. The possibilities offered by this opening have intrigued some of the greatest chess minds, including: Fischer, Tal, and Spassky. White challenges black's center control in the second move and starts attacking black kingside.

Black has the option to decline or accept the gambit. The majority of black players prefer to accept this gambit, and try to counterattack white's now semi-exposed kingside. If black accepts the gambit, white must focus all of its attention on the f7 square, which becomes black's biggest weakness. After the move 2 exf4, white has two ideal options. One option is to start attacking immediately with 3.Bc4 to instantly pressure the f7 square. The second option for white is 3.Nf3. This will help defend against 3 Qh4+ and start to develop a kingside attack.

The best thing about the King's Gambit is that it is rather unpredictable. If the opponent isn't familiar with the correct defense, they will soon get into trouble. The majority of the games are open with dynamic and exciting lines. If you are a creative player and prefer using wild sacrifices and exotic combinations, the King's Gambit is an ideal opening for you.

The Benko Gambit

This offensive strategy is a well-respected and popular chess gambit. This is the reason why it is the main line stemming from Benoni Defense.

White has an option to either decline or accept this gambit by using Nf3. A few players prefer declining the gambit, if they aren't familiar with it. However, you almost always witness white accepting with cxb5.

Black's entire goal is to give up a pawn early to gain a larger advantage on the queen side. Black continues trying to give up one more pawn with a6. Numerous black players have no problems giving up their pawn due to the ideal attacking lines which result from the queen side of the attack.

In the Benko Gambit, if you are playing as a white player and want to avoid getting into the main line, defending your queenside throughout the game, then it is typical to give up a pawn and start focusing on center control. Remember this opening isn't for faint-hearted players. It is an extremely aggressive opening and must be played accordingly.

The Lay Down Sacrifice

This offensive strategy is another dangerous attacking weapon in chess. During non-master games, this strong move is hardly ever seen. The main aim of the sacrifice is prying open defensive protection in front of the enemy king.

This strategy is most effective when your opponent is forced to accept material. It is essential to avoid situations in which your opponent has an option of leaving a piece hanging and ignoring your gift.

In such a scenario, this move would probably fall under the Hope Chess category. You must create a situation in which your opponent has no choice but to accept your sacrifice, so that you can achieve an advantage.

The Bird's Opening

This offensive strategy has been ranked the 6th most popular opening; it is pretty aggressive. White begins by weakening its king side and initiates a flank attack with its f pawn on the center. The Bird's Opening is infrequently utilized at the top levels. However, a few great games in chess history have used this opening.

Once black defends with a d5 move, the game starts to transpose itself in a reverse Dutch Defense; in which white's opening move is d4 and black's response is f5. The main focus is on the dark squares, which makes a major difference compared with the typical light squares that a white player generally focuses on.

Whilst white's main minor piece is the light-squared bishop, in the Bird's Opening, a nod is given to the dark-squared bishop. White typically fianchettoes its bishop towards the queenside to b2, and places extra pressure on the dark squares.

The Budapest Gambit

This offensive strategy is the least popular gambit. Yet, it is a rather interesting play for black. For instance, in the main line, white may fall into a trap easily leading to an early checkmate.

Black, in its second move, aims to give up its pawn on e5, and begins developing its pieces to add pressure on the e5 pawn. Due to this, white won't be able to hold on to its extra pawn. Therefore, it will have to give up its pawn many times and continue to develop pieces without worrying about achieving a pawn advantage.

In the majority of gambits, the side giving up pieces usually dictates how the game continues. However, in the Budapest Gambit, a white player determines how the game will continue. On the main line, white determines whether it wants to acquire double pawns by staying up in material or acquire a double bishop pair by giving back the pawn. This doesn't mean that the game isn't playable for black, but utilizing this move gives white better options (compared with other gambits).

The Calabrese Counter Gambit

White uses the Italian strategy in hopes of quickly developing its light-squared bishop and dominating the center. Black uses the Calabrese Counter Gambit strategy to give up its f pawn to thwart white's entire game plan. The more aggressive attempts or moves white makes in the opening, the more traps it may potentially fall into.

Black typically ends up with powerful center control, whilst white pieces struggle to locate good squares to develop on. The white player has to be very careful and precise or it can get into trouble. If you play black and want a powerful attack, then the Calabrese Counter Gambit is the right strategy for you.

The Scotch Game

This is a strategy that has regained popularity recently, as numerous top players have started using the Scotch Game as a way of surprising their opponent (who is more likely prepared to face Ruy Lopez).

This strategy is like the Center Game strategy, in which d4 opens lines for development and also offers white center control early on. In the Scotch Game, black has an option to develop easily, while white must aim to take advantage of its special center control.

Chess players who prefer playing 1.e4 must learn the Scotch Game, since there are various subtle traps in which black can fall into which would give the white player an overwhelming advantage. The majority of players would expect white to play 3.Bc4 or 3.Bb5. However, when white incorporates the Scotch Game by making a different move, 3.d4, the opponent is bound to make some amateur mistake, which would open the door for the white player to take better control of the game.

It is essential for the black player to learn the Scotch Game to better understand and recognize different lines and spot the one that best fits your playing style. This strategy is an opening in which if you aren't prepared can lead you towards trouble quite early on in the game. This is the reason it is essential to learn concepts of the Scotch Game.

The Smith Morra Gambit

This strategy is an aggressive and sharp line against black's Sicilian Defense. If you play white and make an e4 move for any length of time, then you are bound to encounter the Sicilian Defense many times. This gambit is best only for players who prefer to play aggressively (just like with the majority of gambits). White aims to not just take out black from the normal Sicilian lines, but also to use its development advantage to overwhelm the black king.

White typically aims to put its bishop on c4 to attack the weak f7 pawn, focusing on the castle kingside, once its knight is on f3. Eventually, white aims to place its rooks on the semi open d file and the open c file. Afterwards, white would have various potential attacking lines at its disposal.

The black player must play very carefully. Various Sicilian defenders end up playing the Smith Morra Gambit.

The Vienna Game

This strategy is a fundamentally sound chess opening. The Vienna Game follows the majority of central opening principles and enables significant creativity for both non-aggressive and aggressive players. There are three options for black to respond to the Vienna Game strategy. These options are: 2.Nf6, 2.Bc5, and 2.Nc6.

Every black response paves the way for white to select how to move the game forward. White has the option of leading a quiet game through simply developing minor pieces towards the middle, opting to stay ahead in space and time. White also has the option of moving to f4, and playing the gambit and transposing it into different King's Gambit lines.

For players who enjoy playing the Three Knights Game, the Halloween Gambit, the King's Gambit, or simply prefer a different move than Ruy Lopes, this opening is best for them. The Vienna Game is easy to learn and offers plenty of options, which the opponent isn't prepared for.

Conclusion

Chess is an ideal exercise for your mind. It develops crucial cognitive abilities, such as pattern recognition, strategic planning, increased concentration, and critical thinking, as well as many more. Learning the art of playing chess will enhance your focus and your ability to more effectively analyze situations.

After completing this book, you now have basic chess knowledge. In no time at all, you will become an expert player. This book has taught you different strategies. You have learned how to defend and how to attack.

What are you waiting for? Go challenge your friend to a game of chess and apply the new techniques and strategies that you have learned with the help of this book.

Good luck!

Chess Terms – A Glossary

Activity – defines the freedom of movement or the mobility of chess pieces. Each active piece has a better possibility of positively influencing the game's outcome, compared with an inactive piece (an underdeveloped, blocked, or cramped piece). An active piece is a key way of assessing a chess position.

Adjournment – an over-the-board game might get adjourned, when it isn't concluded in a single session. Once the game is adjourned, one player gets to seal their next move inside an envelope to keep it secret. The sealed envelope is only revealed once the game is resumed at the specified time. An adjournment is a rare occurrence today, since tournament organizers prefer concluding even long games in a single session. The play rate required by most international tournaments is 40 moves within 2 hours, 20 moves within an hour, and for the remaining game, players get 30 extra minutes. The last part of time control is sudden death, which doesn't need any adjournment.

Advantage – this term defines the winning potential of a color (or one side of the chess game). It is typically based on chess piece positions on the board. If one color (or one side) appears to be winning the game, then that side is said to have a plus, pull, edge, or an 'advantage.' For example, a 'clear advantage' is sufficient to win if correctly played, whereas a 'slight advantage' simply provides improved practical chances, even though the player may draw the position with a better play. A judgment of an advantage should take into consideration complex criteria like the king's safety (one side's king is more safe compared with the other), activity (the enhanced influence of pieces), space (more room for maneuvering), material (more pawns or pieces), or other major weaknesses (such as a backward pawn).

Attack – a coordinating attempt to aggressively gain advantage. The main aim of the majority of the attacks is to checkmate the opponent's king. A carefully executed attack usually forces the opponent to sacrifice pieces as a defense or to accept weaknesses that lead to an advantage for an opponent's attack.

Blockade – a tactical method and a special decoy. This term defines a scenario in which the pawn advance is prevented by placing a piece directly in front of the pawn.

Backward Pawn – this is a pawn that can't be protected by the rest of the pawns on its flanks, as they have moved far ahead. The backward pawn is a primary weakness in the chess position, since it has more chances of getting attacked. Its defense requires pieces that are better engaged in another plan.

Bad Bishop – this is a bishop whose movement has been typically decreased, because of a friendly pawn positioned on the same colored squares.

Checkmate – a position in which the king has no chances of avoiding capture. This is the objective end of a chess game.

Closed – this is a term which defines a position in which pawns block the movement of pieces around a certain area or the whole board. This is the very opposite of an open position.

Combination – this is a position's tactical exploitation (forced moves) that lead to a player's advantage.

Cramped – this is the quality of the chess position, which prevents freedom of movement or the mobility of pieces positioned behind pawns of the same color. A cramped position means there is a lack of space. If a player's position is cramped, then the player lacks the freedom to move (compared with its opponent). A cramped player can't switch play from a certain part of the board to another, as quickly as the opponent can. The cramped position is one of the major elements in assessing a chess position.

Development – this is the method of moving pieces from their original places to a position in which these pieces can better help the player.

Doubled Pawns – this means two same-colored pawns on the same file. This is usually seen as a disadvantage, since the pawns can't defend one another.

Fianchetto – this is a chess position, evolved through developing the bishop on a long diagonal, specifically g2 and/or b2 squares. This is a pretty strong position, as the bishop can exert maximum pressure along its longest diagonal. The term is derived from 'fianco,' an Italian word meaning 'flank.'

File – this is the vertical (down and up) row of squares. Both players' kings start the game on the same file.

Fish – this refers to bad chess players.

Forced – a set of moves or a single move needed to prevent a bad result.

Gambit – this is a speculative material sacrifice for some compensation, like an advantage. Gambits typically involve sacrificing a pawn or a minor piece when the game has reached a complex phase (like a middle game or an opening). This move is challenging, but possible to counter. An obvious material sacrifice for an apparent advantage is known as a combination, not a gambit.

Grandmaster – a highly rated and outstanding chess player.

Horse – this is an informal word that refers to a knight. This word is typically used by young players.

Howler – this refers to a bad move. It is a mistake which overlooked a clear tactical response. It is also referred to as a blunder.

Mate – this is a shortened version of checkmate. It means a king has no chances to avoid capture.

Material – this refers to chess pieces. The player who has better valued pieces left to play with has a material advantage. Material is another main quality used to assess a chess position.

Middle Game – this is the second phase of a game, right after the opening and before the end game. In

the middle game, pieces have finished developing or are almost complete, and numerous pieces have been traded or captured as players initiate creative plans or strategies.

Open – this means a position in which pawns aren't blocking pieces from moving in certain parts or all of the board. This is the complete opposite of a closed position.

Opening – this refers to the initial phase of the game before the middle and end game. In this phase, players attempt to rapidly develop their pieces, try gaining space for the pieces to move around, and start bringing their king to safety. Various interesting opening lines are documented and analyzed extensively in computer databases and texts.

Over the board – this refers to playing chess on a chess board, as opposed to by email or post.

Passed Pawn – this is an advantage in a chess game, in which the pawn's progress isn't blocked or guarded by enemy pawns.

Position – this refers to the arrangement of chess pieces. The player who has a better placement of pieces has a 'positional advantage.'

Promotion – once the pawn reaches the last rank, the player can replace it with their choice of a knight, bishop, rook, or queen. If a pawn survives and reaches the last rank, it is rewarded with a promotion to a higher valued piece.

Queening a Pawn – this is a unique scenario of a pawn promotion to a queen. This term is usually used to define a promotion in general, as a pawn is typically promoted to a queen.

Rank – this refers to the horizontal (right to left) row of squares. All pawns start the game from the player's second rank.

Rating – this refers to the ability of the player, usually a numeric score.

Sacrifice – deliberately losing pieces to gain a potential advantage.

Sealed Move – this is a way of secretly recording the next move in an adjourned game (till the game is resumed at a later time).

Space – this refers to a chess position that enables better freedom of movement or improved mobility for pieces that are positioned behind the pawns. This is the very opposite of cramped. If a player's position appears to have more space, then it means that the player has more freedom to move compared with his/her opponent. The player with better space can easily switch the game from one end of the board to another, rather quickly.

Smothered Mate – this is a phrase that defines a checkmate in which there isn't any escape, as its own pieces are blocking its escape routes.

Stalemate – this refers to a game that ends in a draw, as there aren't any legal moves left.

Strategy – this term defines a usual thought process needed to plan the chess game. The strategy has more to do with moves that will be performed in the distant future than calculating the next move.

Study – this refers to a composed endgame position, in which significant thought and artful play is needed end the game in a draw or victory. Commentators typically refer to a position as a study if it is unusually artistic and/or difficult.

Sudden Death – this is the time duration in a chess game during which all remaining moves should be completed. The usually rate of play in the majority of international tournaments is 40 moves within 2 hours, 20 moves in 1 hour, and 30 minutes for the remainder of the game. The last 30 minutes to finish the rest of the game is called sudden death.

Tactics – this is a term which refers to a short sequence of moves, including threats and counter threats.

Tempo – this refers to the turn at move. This means chess time as opposed to clock time. This is a slight advantage or an initiative in time for pursuing one's plans. It is also called a half move or a ply in computer chess terminology. It means the characteristic rhythm or rate of a chess game.

Time Control – this indicates the time limit that a chess player has to finish a certain number of moves.

Time Trouble – this refers to a situation in which a player must finish up a disproportionate number of moves before time control.

Under Promotion – this means a pawn is promoted to a piece other than the queen. A player can under promote the pawn to gain a better advantage or to avoid a stalemate.

Weakness – this means a flaw in a position, for example, a bad bishop, a shortage of space, a blocked pawn, or any other flaw which ups the chance of losing.

Win – this happens when the winning player checkmates or accepts the resignation of an opponent before a checkmate. A win usually occurs when an opponent makes a second to last blunder or mistake.

Winning Position – this refers to a chess position from which a player should win with correct play. There are numerous challenging winning positions that can still end in a draw or a loss with alert play by the opponent.

Woodpusher – this term refers to a bad chess player.