



Hickory Chess Club

hickorychessclub.org

How to Play Chess

The basics of chess are fairly simple, but the details an accomplished player has to master aren't. First, you'll want to concentrate on learning the moves and rules. Feel free to skim over the later details until you're ready. If you keep playing, it's all stuff you'll need to know someday.

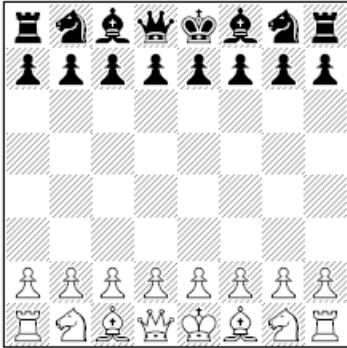
way. The queen on the empty board above can move to any one of 27 different squares, less from the edge or corner.

move, it's best to think of it as jumping directly to the square, as in the previous diagram, no matter what's in the way. It's the only piece which can ignore obstacles that way.

captured. Two kings can't stand next to each other- it takes an illegal move!

Castling is a special move the king and a rook can make once in a game if certain conditions are met:

The Set and Board

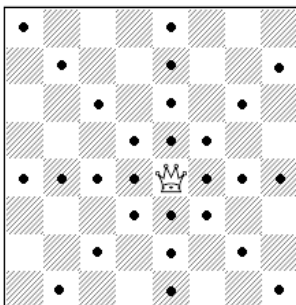


This is the chess board, with the chessmen in starting position. Note that the board is always set up with a light square at the bottom right-hand corner. Also note that both queens (the "pointy crown-looking" pieces) are on squares of their own color facing each other; remember "Queen on her color". Finally note that besides the king, there are two each of the other pieces in mirror positions. The sides are called "White" and "Black", regardless of the actual colors of your set. The squares are usually called "light" and "dark".

The pieces, starting with the bottom row, L-R, are the Rook (or "castle"), the Knight (or "horse", but you'll sound ignorant if you call them that in front of serious chess players), the Bishop, the Queen, the King, the Bishop, the Knight, and the Rook. The men on the row above that are the pawns.

The Moves

Queen

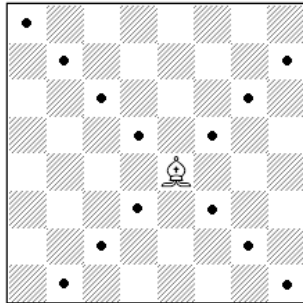


The Queen is usually the second-tallest piece. The Queen moves in any straight line as long as nothing is in the

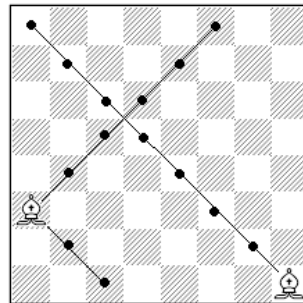
The Knight, which usually looks like a horse, moves to the nearest square of the opposite color which is not adjacent. Really. Just remember that the move is an "L":

Not all possible "L"s are marked on the diagram below, because the "L" isn't real- it's a way of finding the right squares. Once you're used to the

Bishop

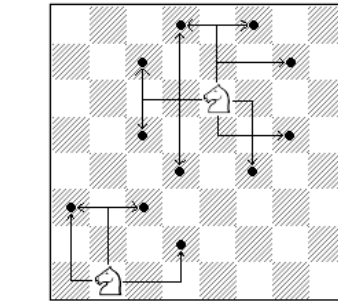
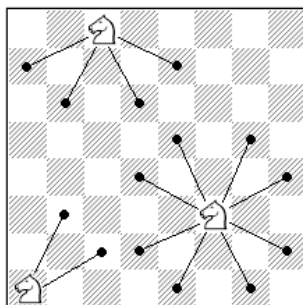


The Bishop, which usually has a round, pointed top with a groove on the front, meant to resemble the hat real bishops wore, moves diagonally. Like the knight, it can move to more squares from the center of the board than the edge or corner. In the diagram above, it attacks, (or can move to- chessmen move into an enemy-occupied square to capture) 13 squares. The bishops below attack only seven squares apiece.

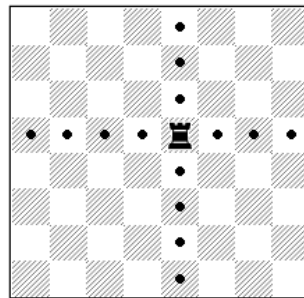


Bishops only move to squares of the color on which they start; you have one on each color.

Knight

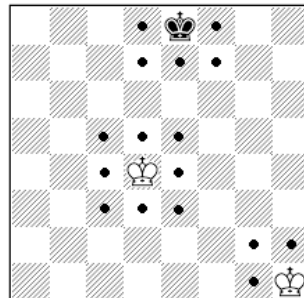


Rook



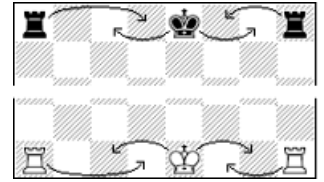
The Rook, which usually looks like a castle tower, moves in a straight line. It's the second-most powerful piece, and the only one that moves to the same number of spaces, 14, at the edge or corner.

King

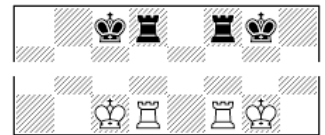


The King, which usually has a cross on top, (chess reached it's "modern" form in medieval Europe, thus royalty and castles instead of generals and tanks) and is the tallest piece, moves one square in any direction.

But there are some special details. The king is your most important piece; *checkmating* him is the object of the game. When your king is *checked*, (an opposing piece attacks the king's square) a move that doesn't protect the king is illegal. You can move one of your pieces between the king and the attacker (unless it's a knight), capture it, or move the king. The king can't move to any square attacked by an enemy piece, because he would be

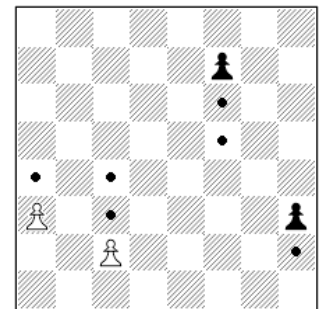


The king moves two spaces, and the rook on that side moves to the space the king passed over; this counts as one move. You can only castle if the pieces between the king and the rook have moved out of the way, the king hasn't moved during the game, the rook hasn't moved during the game, the king isn't in check, AND won't pass over or to a square under attack (the rook can).



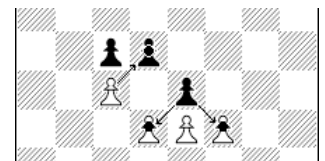
When the castling king passes over the square the queen started the game on, left, the move is known as a "queenside" or "long" castle, because the queen-side rook had to move further. When the king castles on his own side of the board, right, it's known as "kingside" or "short" castling.

Pawn



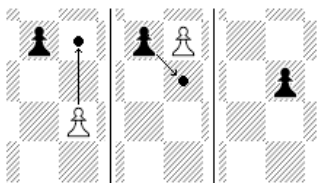
The Pawn, those little round-topped men in a row in front, moves forward one space at a time, (like the ones on the edges above). On its first move, a pawn may move one space or two, (as the other pawns above on their original rows, can). The pawn moves forward only, not back or sideways.

The pawn is the only man which can't capture with its regular move. It captures moving diagonally forward:



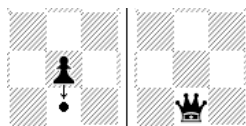
No pawn can capture something directly in front of it. Think of it as a foot-soldier who advances straight over a battlefield at a walk, armed with a big two-prong pitchfork like a "Y". An opponent who steps between the tines of the fork is safe, but one who comes up at an angle is in trouble.

Because of the two-move option, a pawn in the right place can make a special capture move:



This is called "en passant", French for "in passing". When the opponent's pawn makes its first (double-step) move so as to end beside a pawn of yours, you may instantly take it as if it had only moved one space. You must make the en passant move at the first opportunity; if you make any other move first, the chance is gone.

If a pawn makes it to the opposite edge of the board, it will be promoted to any non-pawn but a king:



Naturally, this is called "promotion", or "queening", since you'll usually promote to queen. Unlike en passant capture, this is something you'll use frequently. You may have as many queens as you can promote.

Essential Rules

When a king is in check and can't in any way escape, he is **Checkmated**.

It's the object of the game. Black wins- right. White is checkmated. The white king can't take the queen because she's protected by the black king, and the white king may not move to a square where he can be taken on the opponent's turn. Plus, the white king is in the corner, and has nowhere to escape to in one move.



White always moves first in a game; someone has to. The usual custom is for a player to hide pawns of different colors in each hand; his opponent chooses a hand, and takes that color. Subsequent games they alternate.

You may not move a man blocking check if it exposes the king to check.

If you touch a piece, you have to move it. A move is final when you let go. The *touch move rule* isn't always enforced in casual games, even among serious chess players, but get in the habit of observing it.

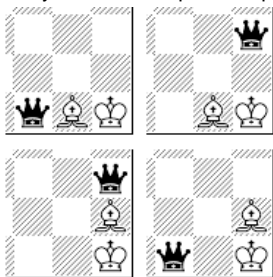
You have to move on your turn. This is called "zugzwang", a German term for the compulsion to move. If your

king isn't in check, and you don't have a legal move, you are *stalemated*, and the game is a tie, or *draw*.

If 50 moves go by without a capture or pawn move, the game is drawn. This is difficult to prove when the game is not being recorded.

Players may agree to a draw at any time during a game.

If a player can keep checking forever, (you can move to protect your king, but you can't escape or stop him:



he draws by *perpetual check*.

When a player can demonstrate that the same position has occurred three times during a game, that game is drawn. Another reason to record.

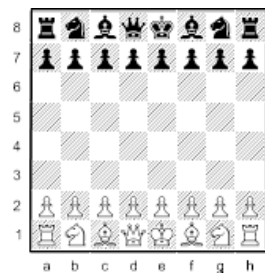
When there is not enough force on the board for either side to checkmate, (for instance a lone king versus a king and a bishop,) the game is drawn by *insufficient force*.

Relative Value of Pieces

If the pawn is valued at 1, bishops and knights are worth 3, the rook 5, and the queen 9; the king is priceless. These values only have bearing on the game in the sense that they help you evaluate whether it's worth losing a piece taking another piece, whether to risk letting a piece be taken. You should usually be glad to exchange a knight for a rook.

Your pieces should be set up to protect each other, and when one is attacked, ask yourself: is this piece worth less, as much, more than the attacker? Is it protected as many times as it's attacked? Is it protecting something I'll also lose if it's taken?

Notation: Writing Games Down



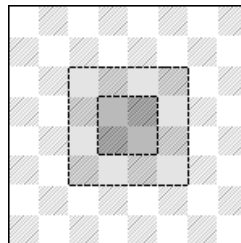
The ranks (horizontal rows- the pawns are on the 2nd and 7th) on the board are numbered 1-8, and the files (vertical rows- queens are on the d file) are lettered a-h (lowercase). Pieces are written with capital letters: king- K, queen- Q, bishop- B, knight- N, and rook- R.

Write the piece and the destination coordinate, like so: Qf1. Pawn moves

need only the coordinate: e4. A capture is written with an x, thus: Qxf1.

An e4 pawn capturing the d5 pawn would be exd5. A move that gives check has a plus at the end: exd4+. Checkmate is ++. Castling is O-O kingside, O-O-O queenside- count the spaces the rook moves. If a move could be made by either of two pieces of the same kind, add a letter or number from the origin coordinate: Nce2, instead of Ne2. If you see ... in front of a move, it's a black move- "... is in place of a white move. Pawn promotion moves go like: f1(Q). When capturing en passant, append "e.p." to the move: fxg4(e.p.). Number your moves in advance if you can.

Center Control & Strategy

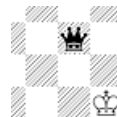


A major part of the early strategy of the game revolves around controlling the four squares in the center of the board, from which the bishop and queen are most powerful, and to some extent the 12 around them, outside which the knight loses moves.

The sure mark of a player who doesn't know what he's doing is to open with the pawns in front of his rooks (to let them out). Castling makes that unnecessary. Open with your center pawns, bring out knights and bishops to protect them and get your pieces out on the board, castle as soon as it's prudent and you can, and keep your pieces protecting each other. Don't bring out your queen too early- she's so valuable that she has to flee every time she's attacked. That wastes moves; try not to move your pieces more than once in the first 10 moves unless your opponent hangs (leaves unprotected where you can take it at no cost) a piece. If you get ahead in material, gladly trade pieces and pawns. If you're behind, try not to, and look for a chance to catch up.

Basic Endgames

In all endgames, be careful of giving check until the mating move is ready. Be careful not to stalemate him accidentally, especially with the queen: when she's a knight-move away, *this* can happen. Leave him a legal move until the end.

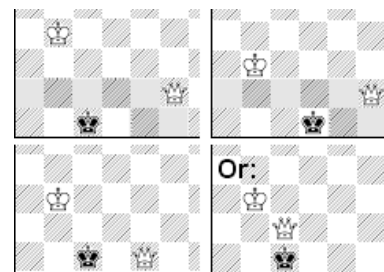


One pawn added to any of these endgames could change everything.

King & Queen v. King

Back the opposing king against the edge. A king can't get next to an enemy queen unless she's dumb

enough to move next to him unprotected, so it should be easy.

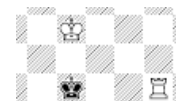


Your queen commands a line of squares his king can't cross, making a box. Use your queen to trap him against the edge, bring up your king to hold him there with the surrounding squares that neither can enter, and checkmate.

King & Rook v. King

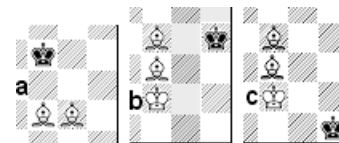
Again, back the other king to an edge, reducing the box the rook has him trapped in when prudent.

Your king has to help; protecting the rook and herding the opponent.



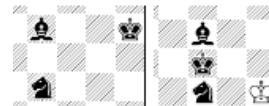
King & Two Bishops v. King

The bishops together control a black & white diagonal the enemy king can't cross. Use your king, being careful he doesn't get in the way. The bishops must coordinate, and remember that the opponent's king can't get next to them when they're side-by-side, **a**.



Once he's at the edge, use them to drive him into the corner. In **b**, he's outside the corridor white's king has left, but is blocked from leaving by the bishops. **b** to **c**; ...Kh3. Bg5(blocks Kh4),Kh2. Bg4 (blocks Kh3 & allows-),Kh1. Bf6 (waiting move- Bf4 gives stalemate), Kh2. Bf4+,Kh1. Bf3++.

King, Knight & Bishop v. King



The most tedious of endings, which takes too long to explain adequately. Read a book for this. But note that a bishop and knight on the same color one square apart form a barrier. The last diagram shows the mate, with the opponent driven into the corner of the bishop's color.

Final Advice

Practice. It gets easier.

Teach friends and/or family to play-chess should be social and you'll have someone to practice against besides a computer. You'll still need a computer to practice those boring endgames- and let you take back moves!