

# How to Play Chess

**A Beginner's Manual**



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## Introduction

The game of chess is a two player game that originated in Asia. It is one of the most ancient games in the world. Chess requires a keen sense of strategy and challenges beginners and experts alike. There are many strategies and game-plays you can use in chess, but as a beginner, all you need to learn are the basic rules. This manual is designed to teach you all you need to know to start playing. Once you learn how to play, you will be ready to challenge a friend and have hours of fun playing this absorbing game of strategy.

## The Chess Pieces



**Diagram 1**

Chess is played with 16 pieces that represent your attacking army. One player uses a black set of pieces and the other a white set. The names of the pieces are based on the feudal society of the Middle Ages. Before you continue, look at **Diagram 1** and familiarize yourself with the names of the pieces. The pieces are arranged in order of value. The pawn is worth the least, while the king is worth the most.

Each player should have 8 pawns, 2 rooks, 2 knights, 2 bishops, 1 queen, and 1 king.

## Setting up the Board

The chess board is made of 64 black and white squares divided into 8 rows and 8 columns. Every time you start a new game, you need to arrange the pieces in a special order on the board. Place the pieces as indicated in **Diagram 2**.



**Diagram 2: All pieces in their start-up positions on the board.**

Players assume positions opposite each other. The order of the pieces is as follows:

**Row 1 and Row 8:** rook, knight, bishop, queen, king, bishop, knight, rook

**Row 2 and Row 7:** All 8 pawns

The one rule to remember is this:

**White player:** Place your queen on a white square.

**Black player:** Place your queen on a black square.

### ***Object of the Game***

The object of the game is to trap the other player's king. When the king is defeated, the game is over. The other pieces are used to either defend or attack. The key is to keep your opponent on the defensive.

### ***Piece Movement***

Players take turns to move one piece only. You cannot skip a turn – you must move a piece every turn.

### ***Capturing a piece***

To capture a piece, your piece must land on the same square as your opponent's piece. If you capture a piece, remove the captured piece from the board.

Keep the following in mind:

- You cannot move to a square already occupied by one of your own pieces.
- With the exception of the knight (see **The Knight** below), you cannot jump over other pieces on the board when moving.

Each piece moves in a unique way. Below are the special moves of each piece. Study these moves and know them well before you start playing.



### The Pawn

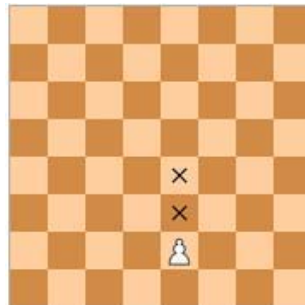
The pawn moves one square forward with each turn. It cannot move sideways or backwards.

#### Take Note:

The pawn can only move forward if the square is empty. If the pawn comes up against any piece directly in its path, it cannot move or attack – it is blocked.

#### Special Moves:

- On its *first move only*, the pawn can move one or two squares forward, as indicated in **Diagram 3** below.



**Diagram 3**

- The pawn can move diagonally to attack. The pawn can capture an opponents piece to the upper left or upper right of it.

In **Diagram 4** the pawn can either

- a. move one square forward or
- b. capture any one of the black rooks, thus moving diagonally to occupy the white square previously occupied by the rook.



Diagram 4

- **Attacking *En Passant*** (sideways):

If your pawn is in the fifth row and your opponent's pawn is still in its starting position, you have the advantage. Your opponent may try to move a pawn two squares forward on its first move in an attempt to pass you. In this case, you may capture your opponent's pawn *as if he had just moved one square forward*.

In **Diagram 5**, the black pawn has just moved two squares forward from its starting position. The white pawn can either

- move one square forward or
- move diagonally to the left, effectively capturing the black pawn and removing it from the board.



Diagram 5

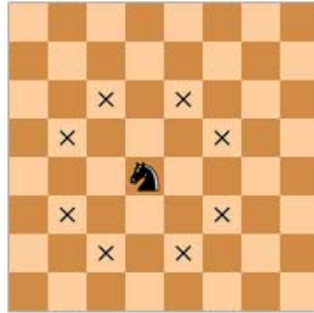
### Pawn Promotion:

If your pawn manages to advance all the way to the eighth row on the other side of the board, you can change it into any piece you like (except a king). It is a good idea to change the pawn into a queen, as it's the most powerful piece.



### The Knight

The knight moves in an "L" shape, two squares horizontally or vertically in any direction and one square to the side. This means that a knight in the middle of the board can choose from eight squares to land on (see **Diagram 6**).

**Diagram 6****Special Moves:**

- The knight jumps. This means that you cannot move to any square within the “L” shape except for the one at the end of the “L”.  
The advantage to this is that you can jump over any other pieces that are right next to you and avoid being trapped.
- Because the knight is *the only piece that can jump*, it is the only piece (besides from the pawn) that you can move at the start of the game.

**The Bishop**

The bishop can move diagonally only along any unoccupied square on the board (see **Diagram 7**).

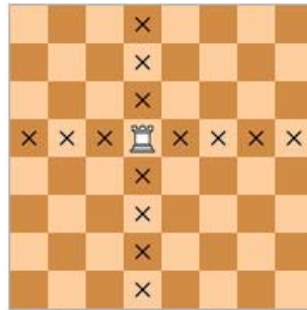
**Diagram 7****Take Note:**

The bishop will remain on the same colour square for the duration of the game.  
For example, the white bishop in **Diagram 7** can never capture pieces sitting on black squares.



## The Rook

The rook – or castle as it's also called – can move horizontally or vertically along any unoccupied square on the board (see **Diagram 8**).



**Diagram 8**

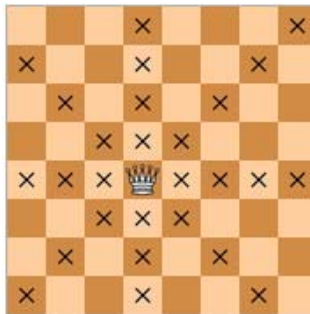
### Take Note:

The rook is involved in a special move called castling (see **The King – Special Move** below).



## The Queen

The queen is the most powerful piece on the board. It can move horizontally, vertically or diagonally along any unoccupied square on the board (see **Diagram 9**). The queen moves like a bishop and rook combined.



**Diagram 9**



## The King

The king can move only one square in any direction (see **Diagram 10**).



**Diagram 10****Take Note:**

The king cannot capture an opponent's piece if it puts the king in check or checkmate (See **Winning the Game** below).

**Special Move:**

The king and the rook can perform a special manoeuvre called *castling*. Castling is used to protect the king and can only be performed once during a game.

**Castling Conditions:**

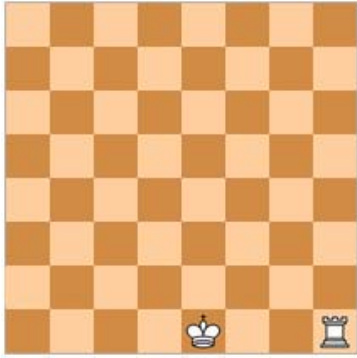
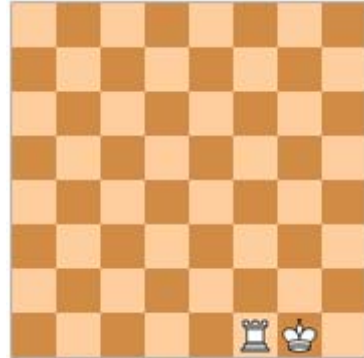
- The player must never have moved the rook or king up until that point in the game.
- The squares between the king and the rook must be unoccupied.
- The king cannot be under attack, pass through any squares under attack or land in a square that is under attack.

Note: There are no restrictions on the rook being under attack.

**How to Castle:**

- The king moves two squares toward the rook.
- The rook hops over the king to its other side.

**Diagram 11** shows the king and rook meeting all castling conditions. **Diagram 12** shows the board after the king and rook have castled.

**Diagram 11: Before castling****Diagram 12: After castling**

## Winning the Game

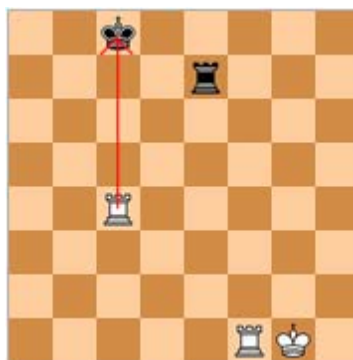
To win the game, you need to trap your opponent's king so that it has nowhere to move.

## Check

If the king is under attack, then it is in check. Although you may ignore attacks on your other pieces for strategic reasons, *you cannot ignore check*. You must save your king.

Look at **Diagram 13**. The black king is under attack by a white castle. There are several ways the black king can escape check:

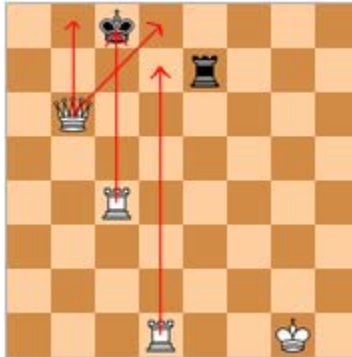
- a. The black king can move out of the way
- b. The black castle can move left to position itself in front of the black king

**Diagram 13**

## Checkmate

If you have your opponent's king in check and it cannot escape, then checkmate is declared and you are the winner.

Look at **Diagram 14**. The black king is under attack by a white castle. There is nowhere for the black king to move because the other white castle and queen have the other squares covered.



**Diagram 14**

## Stalemate

If your opponent's king is not in check, yet there are no places for it to go, then a stalemate is declared. In this case, the game is a draw.

Look at **Diagram 15**. The black king is not under attack, but it cannot move anywhere without putting itself in check.



**Diagram 15**

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You're now ready to play. Practice often to get the feel of the game. When you're comfortable with moving the pieces around the board, you'll be ready to learn some of the more advanced strategies you can use to overcome your opponent.

[Graphics source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chess>]