

Step 1: Setup, Turns, and Taking Pieces

Setup:

The board is setup as shown. There should always be a white square at the closest right-hand side for both players. Remember that the queen must be on a square that matches her color.

Turns:

White always moves first, and players alternate turns. Players can only move one piece at a time, except when castling (explained later).

Taking Pieces:

Players take pieces when they encounter an opponent in their movement path. Only pawns take differently than they move (explained later). Players cannot take or move through their own pieces.

Step 2: Pawn Movement

Pawns only move forward. On the first move a pawn can move one or two spaces, every subsequent move can only be one space. Pawns move diagonally to take opponents.

Pawn Promotion:

If a pawn reaches the opposite side of the board, it is promoted to a higher piece (except king). There is no limit to how many pawns can be promoted.

Step 3: Rook

Rooks move in a continuous line forwards, backwards and side-to-side.

Step 4: Knight

Knights are the only pieces that "jump" off the board. Unlike other pieces they are not blocked if there are pieces between them and their destination square.

To make it easier to remember how a knight moves think of an L. Two spaces in a direction forward, backward or side-to-side, and one space at a right turn.

Step 5: Bishop

Bishops move in continuous diagonal lines in any direction.

Step 6: Queen

The queen moves in continuous diagonal and straight lines. Forward, backward and side-to-side.

Step 7: King

The king can move in any direction, one square at a time.

A king cannot move to a square that is under attack by the opponent.

Step 8: Special Move: Castling

Castling is the only move that allows two pieces to move during the same turn.

During castling a king moves two spaces towards the rook that it will castle with, and the rook jumps to the other side. The king can castle to either side as long as:

1. The king has not moved.
2. The king is not in check.
3. The king does not move through or into check.
4. There are no pieces between the king and castling-side rook.
5. The castling-side rook has not moved.

It does not matter:

- A. If the king was in check, but is no longer.
- B. If the rook can be attacked by an opponent's piece before castling.

Step 9: Special Move: En Passant

En passant is a special movement for pawns attacking pawns. It only applies if your opponent moves a pawn two spaces, and its destination space is next to your pawn. You can take the opposing piece by moving forward-diagonal to your pawn's attacked square.

Step 10: Check

A king is in check when an opponent's piece is in a position that can attack the king. A player must move their king out of check, block the check or capture the attacking piece.

A player cannot move their king into check.

Step 11: Checkmate

Putting an opponent's king in "checkmate" is the only way to win the game.

A king is in checkmate if it is in check, the opponent's piece that has the king in check cannot be captured, the check cannot be blocked, and the king cannot move to a square that is not under attack.

In the illustration the white queen has the black king in check, and all of the spaces where the king can move can be attacked by the queen. The king cannot take the queen, because the knight is protecting the queen. The black bishop cannot block the queen. This is checkmate.

Step 12: Stalemate

Simply put, a "Stalemate" is a tie. It is achieved if there are no legal moves for a player to make.

In this illustration it is white's turn. All spaces around the king are being attacked, but the king is not in check, therefore it cannot move. The only other white piece, the pawn, is blocked by the king. Because movement is impossible, the game is a stalemate.

If white had another piece somewhere on the board that was not blocked, it would have to move. The game would continue.

Step 13: Basic Strategy

Chess is an incredibly complex strategic game, and it is impossible to go into all of the possible tactics one could use to win. However, I wanted to leave the new player with a few hints that will hopefully aid in victory.

Piece Value:

Obviously you want to protect your pieces from capture, but it helps to know which pieces are the strongest so you can decide who to save if you must choose between two. A good explanation of piece value is available on [Wikipedia](#)

Queen: Strongest = Most Value

Rook

Bishop, Knight

Pawn: Weakest = Least Value

The bishop and the knight are commonly considered equal on the value scale, however many feel (myself included) that the bishop has a slight edge over the knight.

Pawns become more valuable as they near promotion.

Pawn Promotion:

Although a pawn can be promoted to a variety of pieces, the strongest choice is almost always to promote to queen.

Board Control:

When building defenses, remember to look at the board and gauge how strong you are in certain areas of the board. Try and keep power distributed fairly evenly, and bring pieces over to add strength if you see an attack coming.

When attacking, it's a bad idea to let any of your pieces become cut off from your main force. I find it helpful to have a support piece in mind when making an attack. Using pieces in tandem almost always yields a better result than using one piece alone.

Step 14: Go Play

So now you know the basics. Go get a board and play! No one around?

[Natwarlal](#) is a good, free chess program.

[Chessclub.com](#) is an online club you can join, but it has a fee. However, there are tournaments where you can win cash prizes. You can even watch grandmasters play.

3.1. The Rules of Chess

Chess is played on a square board of eight rows (called ranks and denoted with numbers 1 to 8) and eight columns (called files and denoted with letters a to h) of squares. The colors of the sixty-four squares alternate between light and dark, and are referred to as "light squares" and "dark squares". The chessboard is placed so that each player has a white square in the near right hand corner, and the pieces are set out as shown in the diagram, with each queen on a square that matches its color.

Each player begins the game with sixteen pieces: each player's pieces comprise one king, one queen, two rooks, two bishops, two knights and eight pawns. One player, referred to as White, controls the white pieces and the other player, Black, controls the black pieces; White is always the first player to move. The colors are chosen either by a friendly agreement, by a game of chance or by a tournament director. The players alternate moving one piece at a time (with the exception of castling, when two pieces are moved at the same time). Pieces are moved to either an unoccupied square, or one occupied by an opponent's piece, capturing it and removing it from play. With one exception (en passant), all pieces capture opponent's pieces by moving to the square that the opponent's piece occupies.

- 3.1.1.[King](#)
- 3.1.2.[Rook](#)
- 3.1.3.[Bishop](#)
- 3.1.4.[Queen](#)
- 3.1.5.[Knight](#)
- 3.1.6.[Pawns](#)
- 3.1.7.[Remaining movement rules](#)

3.1.1. King

When a king is under direct attack by one (or possibly two) of the opponent's pieces, the player is said to be in check. When in check, only moves that remove the king from attack are permitted. The player must not make any move that would place his king in check. The object of the game is to checkmate the opponent; this occurs when the opponent's king is in check, and there are no moves that remove the king from attack.

The king can move only one square horizontally, vertically, or diagonally. Once in the game, each king is allowed to make a special double move, to castle. Castling consists of moving the king two squares towards a rook, then moving the rook onto the square

over which the king crossed. Castling is only permissible if all of the following conditions hold:

- The player must never have moved both the king and the rook involved in castling.
- There must be no pieces between the king and the rook.
- The king may not currently be in check, nor may the king pass through squares that are under attack by enemy pieces. As with any move, castling is illegal if it would place the king in check.
- The king and the rook must be on the same rank (to exclude castling with a promoted pawn).

3.1.2. Rook

The rook moves any number of vacant squares vertically or horizontally (it is also involved in the king's special move of castling).

3.1.3. Bishop

The bishop moves any number of vacant squares in any direction diagonally. Note that a bishop never changes square color, therefore players speak about "light-squared" or "dark-squared" bishops.

3.1.4. Queen

The queen can move any number of vacant squares diagonally, horizontally, or vertically.

3.1.5. Knight

The knight can jump over occupied squares and moves two spaces horizontally and one space vertically or vice versa, making an "L" shape. A knight in the middle of the board has eight squares to which it can move. Note that every time a knight moves, it changes square color.

3.1.6. Pawns

Pawns have the most complex rules of movement: A pawn can move forward one square, if that square is unoccupied. If it has not moved yet, the pawn has the option of moving two squares forward, if both squares in front of the pawn are unoccupied. A pawn cannot move backward. When such an initial two square advance is made that

puts that pawn horizontally adjacent to an opponent's pawn, the opponent's pawn can capture that pawn "en passant" as if it moved forward only one square rather than two, but only on the immediately subsequent move. Pawns are the only pieces that capture differently than they move. They can capture an enemy piece on either of the two spaces adjacent to the space in front of them (i.e., the two squares diagonally in front of them), but cannot move to these spaces if they are vacant. If a pawn advances all the way to its eighth rank, it is then promoted (converted) to a queen, rook, bishop, or knight of the same color. In practice, the pawn is almost always promoted to a queen.

3.1.7. Remaining movement rules

With the exception of the knight, pieces cannot jump over each other. One's own pieces ("friendly pieces") cannot be passed if they are in the line of movement, and a friendly piece can never replace another friendly piece. Enemy pieces cannot be passed, but they can be "captured". When a piece is captured (or taken), the attacking piece replaces the enemy piece on its square (en passant being the only exception). The captured piece is thus removed from the game and may not be returned to play for the remainder of the game. The king cannot be captured, only put in check. If a player is unable to get the king out of check, checkmate results, with the loss of the game.

Chess games do not have to end in checkmate — either player may resign if the situation looks hopeless. Games also may end in a draw (tie). A draw can occur in several situations, including draw by agreement, stalemate, threefold repetition of a position, the fifty move rule, or a draw by impossibility of checkmate (usually because of insufficient material to checkmate).

3.2. Timed Games

Games can be played with a time-limit by setting a move time when creating a new game. In timed games each player has a certain amount of time available for deciding which moves to make, and the time remaining for each player decreases only when it is their turn to move.

3.3. Game Draw

A game that ends without victory for either player. Most drawn games are draws by agreement based upon the rules. The other ways that a game can end in a draw are

stalemate, three-fold repetition, the fifty-move rule, and insufficient material. A position is said to be a draw (or a drawn position) if either player can, through correct play, eventually force the game into a position where the game must end in a draw, regardless of the moves made by the other player.

- 3.3.1.[Stalemate](#)
- 3.3.2.[Threefold repetition](#)
- 3.3.3.[Fifty move rule](#)
- 3.3.4.[Insufficient material](#)

3.3.1. Stalemate

A stalemate is a position in which the player whose turn it is to move has no legal move and his king is not in check. A stalemate results in an immediate draw.

3.3.2. Threefold Repetition

The game is drawn if the same position occurs three times with the same player to move, and with each player having the same set of legal moves each time (the latter includes the right to take en passant and the right to castle).

3.3.3. Fifty Move Rule

The fifty move rule states that the game is drawn after fifty moves from each side without a pawn move or capture.

3.3.4. Insufficient Material

An endgame scenario in which all pawns have been captured, and one side has only its king remaining while the other is down to just a king or a king plus one knight or one bishop. The position is a draw because it is impossible for the dominant side to deliver checkmate regardless of play. Situations where checkmate is possible only if the inferior side blunders are covered by the fifty-move rule.