



Shri Surya Narayan Mandir Youth Chess Club Introductory Information

Compiled by Rohan Bisram

Opening Prayers

OM sumukhkascha ekadantascha, kapilok gajakarnakah, lambodharascha vikato, vignanasho vinayakah, dhumra kaytur gana-dhyaksho, bhaala chandro gajananah, dwaadas hai taani naamaani, yah pathay shrunu yaa dapi

OM saraswati namastubhyam varaday kaama rupini vidya arambham karishyaami sidhir bhavatu may saada

Closing Prayers

OM asato maa sat gamaya, tamaso maa jyotir gamaya, mrityor maa amritam gamaya

OM purnamada purnamidam purnat purnamudachyatay purnasya purnamadaya punameva vashisyatay om shantih shantih shantih



History of Chess

The earliest known version of *Chess started in India* in the 6th century. At that time, it was called 'Chaturanga', which in Sanskrit means "having 4 limbs". These four limbs which symbolize an army are the elephants, chariots, horsemen, and the foot soldiers. The elephants are the present day bishops, the chariots are the rooks, the horsemen are the knights, and finally the foot soldiers are the Pawns. Each side also has a general, the King and a Queen who was the King's advisor. Today the Queen is the strongest player and the King must be protected and saved from attacks from the opponent. Chess or Chaturanga is similar to a battle game. The game is all about strategy, figuring out how to get the opponents King, while defending yours. Life is like a chess board you have to plan ahead and choose your moves carefully.

One of the most famous Chess players to come out of India is Viswanathan Anand. He enjoyed success in both the national and the international levels and received a number of prestigious awards, for his excellence in chess. In 1998 he became the first Grand Master of India.

Why Learn Chess?

Chess turns problem-solving and learning into a game

Chess is fun and motivational. It develops self-esteem, builds team spirit and increases concentration.

Chess is a thinking game. It encourages you to use patterns and logical reasoning to solve problems.

Chess is for everyone.

Chess makes kids smarter. It does so by teaching the following skills:

Planning – Learn to develop longer range goals and take the necessary steps toward bringing them to fruition. You learn to reevaluate your game plan as situation changes and juggle multiple options simultaneously.

Focus - In chess you need to observe carefully and concentrate fully. If you don't watch what is happening, then you can't respond appropriately, no matter how smart you are.

Weighing Options - You don't have to do the first thing that pops into your mind. You learn to identify alternatives and to consider the pros and cons of them.

Visualize – In Chess you need to imagine a sequence of actions before it happens. You strengthen your ability to visualize by training to shift the pieces in your mind, first one, and then several moves ahead.

Thinking Ahead – In chess you are forced to think first and then act. Over time, chess helps develop patience and thoughtfulness.

Analyze – You need to evaluate the results of specific actions and sequences. In Chess decisions are better when guided by logic and reasoning rather than impulse. This is the same in real life as well.

Thinking Abstractly – In life as well as in Chess you need to step back periodically from the details and consider the bigger picture. You use what you learn from one situation and apply it to others.

The beauty of chess is that it stimulates children's minds and helps them to build these skills while enjoying themselves. As a result, children become more critical thinkers, better problem solvers, and more independent decision makers. It has been proven that children who participate in Chess scores better on standardized test.

SSNM Rules

- Chess is a quiet and contemplative game so keep noise and unnecessary conversation to a minimum
- Absolutely no hitting/fighting, yelling, name calling, or teasing
- Follow the rules of chess and follow the basic rules of good sportsmanship
- If you break these rules you will be expelled from the Chess Club. (Three strikes and you are out)

*The information in this guide was provided by Edward Scimia, About.com. Please visit <http://chess.about.com/> for additional information. *Permission for personal as well as SSNM Chess Club usage was requested and granted by Edward Scimia.*

The Rules of Chess: A Quick Guide on How to Play Chess

By [Edward Scimia](#), About.com Guide

How the Pieces Move

There are six pieces in chess, each of which move in a unique way. All pieces do share some common traits. For instance, no piece is allowed to land on a square occupied by a friendly piece. If a piece lands on a square occupied by an enemy piece, that enemy is captured and removed from the board. Also, with the exception of the knight, pieces are not permitted to jump over other pieces. Clicking on the name of each piece will open a more detailed guide on that piece's movements.

The Rook: The rook usually looks like a small tower. It is allowed to move in a straight line horizontally or vertically, for any number of squares.

The Bishop: The bishop moves in a straight line diagonally, for any number of squares.

The Queen: The queen is a combination of a rook and a bishop -- it may move any number of squares in a straight line, either horizontally, vertically, or diagonally. The queen is the most powerful piece in chess.

The King: The king can also move in any direction, including diagonally. However, he can only move one square at a time. The king is the most important piece in chess, as the imminent capture of the king means the game is over.

The Knight: The knight -- which usually looks like a horse -- moves in an irregular pattern that can be described in several ways. This strange movement is usually referred to as an "L-shape", as the knight move can also be described as moving two squares vertically or horizontally, then making a "turn" left or right and moving one more square. From the center of the board, this means the knight can move to eight different squares.

The knight is also the only piece that is allowed to leap over other pieces. Note that the knight doesn't capture pieces it jumps over; it can only capture a piece that it lands on.

The Pawn: Pawns are the shortest and weakest pieces in chess. Pawns are also the only pieces in chess that move one way, but capture in another fashion. Unlike other pieces, pawns can only move forward, not backwards. They may only move directly forward one square at a time, unless they are still on the square on which they began the game; if it is the pawn's first move, it has the option of moving one or two squares, directly forward.

However, a pawn cannot capture a piece directly in front of it. Pawns can only capture a piece by moving one square forward *diagonally*.

Special Moves: There are a few notable exceptions to the rules listed above. They include [castling](#) (a move where the king and a rook both move at the same time), [en passant](#) (an unusual pawn capture), and [pawn promotion](#) (a situation that occurs if a pawn reaches the end of the board, where the pawn may "promote" to a stronger piece).

Setting Up the Chessboard

Before starting the game, make sure you have a light-colored square in the bottom right hand corner for each player.

Each player places his rooks on the bottom-left and bottom-right squares on their first row in front of them on the board. The knights are also placed on the first row of squares, next to the rooks. The bishops take the next two

squares towards the center of the back row. Finally, you should have two empty squares at the middle of your back rank; these two squares belong to the king and queen. These two pieces are placed using the rule "queen on color" -- the White queen goes on the light square, while the Black queen goes on its dark square. The king takes the other square.

Finally, your eight pawns will go on the squares on the second rank -- right in front of your larger pieces.

How to Win

When a player's king is under attack and threatened with capture, we say that the king is in [check](#). When in check, that player must take action to avoid having his king captured; this can be accomplished by moving the king, capturing the attacking piece, or (except in the case of a knight check) by blocking the attack.

A game of chess is usually won by [checkmate](#) -- a situation in which a player's king is being attacked, and there is no means for the king to avoid being captured on the next turn. To win the game, the victorious player doesn't actually capture the enemy king; once the capture is inevitable, checkmate has occurred and the game is over. A player who knows defeat is inevitable may also resign the game rather than wait to be checkmated.

There are also several ways a game of chess might end without a winner. In this case, we say that the result is a draw. The most common ways to draw a game in casual play are by [stalemate](#), or by the players agreeing to a draw. Other draws include threefold repetition (the same exact position occurring three times with the same player to move) or the "50-move rule" (a situation in which no pawn has been moved and no piece has been captured for 50 consecutive moves by each player).

If you think you've got the rules of chess listed on this page down pat, you should be ready to play! If you need more information or details, check out a more comprehensive guide on [how to play chess](#).

The Relative Value of the Pieces

By [Edward Scimia](#), About.com Guide

During a chess game, you will often be required to exchange one piece for another. Perhaps you can capture a rook, but this will allow your opponent to capture one of your bishops.

How do we know when a trade is good for us? There are many factors to consider, but beginners should become accustomed with the basic value of each piece. This serves as a rough guide that can tell you at a glance which side has more [material](#) (the side with more material usually has a significant advantage), as well as give you some guidance when making exchanges.

Generally, you want to make trades that allow you to capture more material than your opponent, and avoid the reverse. However, not all pieces are created equal.

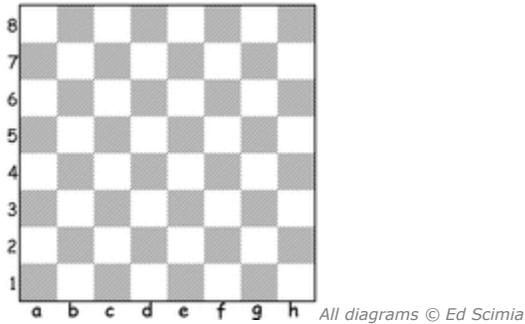
- **Pawns** are the basic units of chess, and are given a value of **1**. All other pieces are valued in terms of how many pawns they are worth.
- The minor pieces, **bishops and knights**, are each considered to be worth about **3** pawns. Some books give bishops a slightly higher value than knights, such as 3.25.
- **Rooks** are worth about **5** pawns. This makes them worth slightly less than two minor pieces.

- **Queens** are worth approximately **9** pawns. A queen is worth nearly as much as two rooks.

You'll notice one piece is missing from our list: the king. The king can never be exchanged, and losing your king means the game is immediately over. Thus, the king's value is **infinite** -- no cost is too high to avoid [checkmate](#).

How to Read and Write Algebraic Chess Notation

By [Edward Scimia](#), About.com Guide



One of the most important things you can do to improve at chess is learn how to read and write chess notation. Knowing notation is crucial to learning from books and the games of stronger players, and also allows you to record your own games for later review.

Luckily, it only takes a few minutes to learn notation. In this article, you'll learn how to read and write algebraic notation -- the most common form of notation used today.

First, it's important to understand how the squares are named. The diagram shows the coordinates used to name the ranks and files. From White's perspective, the files from left to right are named "a" through "h." The ranks are numbered 1 through 8, beginning with the rank containing White's pieces. Each square is named by combining its file and rank. For instance, the square the White king begins the game on is e1, while the Black queen starts on d8.

Algebraic notation also uses abbreviations for each type of piece. There are fairly simple to remember; in most cases, the abbreviation is the first letter of the piece's name.

- **B**ishop
- **R**ook
- **Q**ueen
- **K**ing
- **kN**ight

Note that the knight is abbreviated as N, to avoid confusion with the king. Also notice that pawns aren't assigned an abbreviation; for pawn moves, only the square names are used.

The basics of notation are very simple. To note a move, simply write the abbreviation of the piece moving, along with the square the piece is moving to. For example, moving a bishop to the d7 square is notated by writing **Bd7**. Pawn moves use only the square name; moving a pawn to e4 is written simply as **e4**. When written, moves are numbered as pairs; **1. e4 Nc6** would tell us that on his first move, White moved his e-pawn to e4, and Black responded by moving his knight to c6.

Capturing a piece is notated by placing an **x** between the piece abbreviation and the square name. So, if a knight captures a piece on a4, the correct notation is **Nxa4**. When a pawn makes a capture, we need to point out what file the pawn came from. If a pawn on e4 captures a piece on f5, the correct notation is **exf5**.

If a move results in a [check](#), a + is usually added to the end of the move - for example, **Qd8+**. [Checkmate](#) is usually designated by either ++ or #.

[Castling](#) is denoted differently depending on which side the king is castled to. Castling kingside is represented by **0-0**, while queenside castling is notated with **0-0-0**.

Sometimes, more than one of the same type of piece could be moving to the target square. For instance, perhaps you have rooks on both a1 and f1, and move one of them to d1. Simply writing Rd1 wouldn't give us enough information; either of the rooks might have moved there. Instead, we add a little extra information so that we know which rook made the move. If it was the a1 rook, we'd write **Rad1**.

Some special pawn moves are worth noting. [Pawn promotion](#) is written by adding an = followed by the abbreviation of the piece that pawn was promoted to. For example, promoting a pawn on a8 to a queen can be notated as **a8=Q**. [En passant](#) can be treated as a normal capture, or if you feel the need to specify, you can add an e.p. or other note to the end of the move.

In addition to move lists, you might see additional annotations while reviewing a game. These analysis marks are commonly used to point out good, bad, or interesting moves.

- !! - brilliant move
- ! - good move
- ? - bad move
- ?? - terrible move/blunder
- !? - interesting move
- ?! - questionable move

This may seem like a lot of information to remember, but after a few games, chess notation will become second nature. A very short practice game follows -- if you follow the moves correctly, it should end in the famous checkmate for White known as Scholar's Mate.

1. e4 e5
2. Bc4 Nc6
3. Qf3 Bc5??
4. Qxf7++

The Most Common Chess Openings

By [Edward Scimia](#), About.com Guide

There are an endless number of possible variations in chess, even after just a few moves have been played. That said, some chess openings are time-tested and popular. Recognizing and understanding the basics of these openings will increase your confidence in the opening phase of the game.

Ruy Lopez



All d

The Ruy Lopez (also known as the Spanish Game) is named after the Spanish priest who analyzed this opening in 1561. Nearly half a millennium later, the Ruy is now one of the most popular chess openings at all levels. Numerous variations have been deeply studied, and a wide variety of strategic plans are available to both White and Black.

The starting position of the Ruy Lopez is reached after 1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5.

Popular lines in the Ruy Lopez include - but are certainly not limited to - the [Morphy Defense](#), the [Steinitz Defense](#), and the [Berlin Defense](#). Each of these and several other popular variations leads to numerous sub-variations.

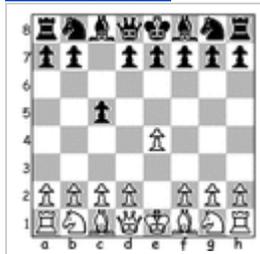
Italian Game



First developed in the 1600s and perhaps the oldest of chess openings, the Italian Game is reached by the moves 1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4. It remained quite popular through the 19th century, but today has been supplanted by the Ruy Lopez as White's favorite choice on the third move. Bc4 eyes Black's potentially weak f7 pawn, but improved defensive technique has shown this to be less dangerous to Black than Bb5. Still, the Italian Game often leads to aggressive, open positions which can be fun to play. This opening is still seen at all levels - and is quite popular among club players.

Popular variations in the Italian Game include the [Giuoco Piano](#), the [Two Knights Defense](#) and the [Hungarian Defense](#).

Sicilian Defense



The Sicilian Defense (1. e4 c5) is currently Black's most popular response to e4, especially at the highest levels of chess. By playing c5, Black immediately fights for the center and attacks d4, but avoids the symmetry of e5. The Sicilian Defense typically leads to a complex and dangerous struggle where both sides can play for a win.

There are many distinct variations in the Sicilian Defense, each of which lead to different types of positions; some of the most popular include the [Closed Sicilian](#), the [Classical Sicilian](#), the [Dragon Variation](#) and the [Najdorf Variation](#).

French Defense



The French Defense (1. e4 e6) concedes central space to White and limits the scope of his king's bishop, but prevents tactics against f7 while allowing Black to have activity on the queenside and counterplay in the center.

After the most typical line of 2. d4 d5, White's e-pawn is immediately pressured, and White must decide how to deal with this - leading to several popular variations. Some of the most common include the Exchange Variation, the Advance Variation, the Tarrasch Variation, the Winawer Variation and the Classical Variation.

Caro-Kann Defense



Like the French, the Caro-Kann Defense (1. e4 c6) prepares d5 on Black's second move to challenge White's e4 pawn. The Caro-Kann is extremely solid, but not as dynamic as many of Black's other defenses against e4. Compared to the French, Black has avoided blocking his king's bishop, but will require a second move to play c5 - a source of counterplay in both defenses.

Popular variations in the Caro-Kann include the Classical Variation, the Advance Variation, the Exchange Variation and the Panov-Botvinnik Attack.

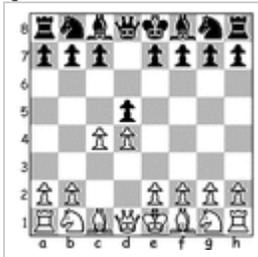
Pirc Defense



Originally seen as an inferior opening, the Pirc Defense (1. e4 d6) is today known as a solid choice. Black allows White to build an imposing center, then attempts to turn that center into a target for attack.

Some common variations in the Pirc Defense include the Classical System and the Austrian Attack.

Queen's Gambit



White players who prefer a quieter, more positional game tend to prefer 1. d4 to 1. e4, after which the c4 break is the best way to play for an advantage (either on the second move or soon after). The Queen's Gambit, marked by the moves 1. d4 d5 2. c4, is one of the oldest known chess openings. This classical approach "offers" a pawn (in reality, Black cannot expect to hold onto the pawn if he chooses to capture it) in exchange for a stronger center.

Black has several options, including the Queen's Gambit Accepted, the Queen's Gambit Declined, and the Slav Defense.

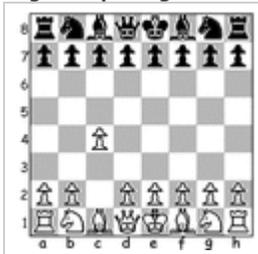
Indian Defenses



After 1. d4, Black is not obligated to play d5 in response. Today, the most popular response to d4 is Nf6, which leads to a collection of openings known as the Indian Defenses. These openings, while less solid than the classical d5, offer more immediate opportunities for counterplay.

There are many popular lines arising after Nf6, including the King's Indian Defense, the Nimzo-Indian Defense, the Queen's Indian Defense and the Grünfeld Defense.

English Opening



The English Opening is a flexible choice for White. The English often transposes into openings normally seen after 1. d4, either exactly or with slight variations due to move order. It is also possible to enter a "reversed" Sicilian Defense if Black responds with e5, where White is playing the Sicilian with an extra tempo.

One well-known setup that can arise from the English Opening is the Hedgehog Defense.

Réti Opening



The Réti Opening (1. Nf3) is named after the great chess master Richard Réti. Like 1. d4 and 1. c4, the Réti also generally leads to closed positions, and all three moves can transpose into similar setups.

One possible formation for White is the King's Indian Attack.

Five Ways to Improve Your Chess

By [Edward Scimia](#), About.com Guide

Every chess player is constantly looking to improve their game, and there's plenty of debate on the best way to get better. Some players try to play as many games as possible, others solve countless tactical puzzles, and many study theory until they know their favorite openings inside and out.

Of course, there's no one improvement method that's best for everyone. However, the five activities in this article are ones that players, coaches and trainers have found to be effective methods for most players, and they should make up the core of any training you do to improve your chess.

1. Play More Chess

This one may seem obvious, but many players forget that experience is an important and necessary part of chess improvement. Playing is what allows you to put the knowledge gained during study into practice, and work on solving practical problems during games without the aid of the prompts given in puzzle books.

Some games are more valuable for improving your chess than others. Long games -- games where each player has an hour or more of thinking time -- allow time for seriously analyzing positions and practicing [time management](#). [Blitz](#) games are useful for quickly learning openings or improving your chess intuition. For training purposes, long games are best, but keep in mind that blitz games can be learning experiences too.

2. Study Annotated Master Games

Playing over the games of masters is a great way to improve your chess. These games show how strong players use their pieces, formulate plans, and execute endgames.

There are numerous game collections out there with annotated games you can play through. You might pick a collection of games played (and perhaps even annotated) by one of your favorite players. Alternately, there are tournament books that analyze all of the games from a given event, such as *New York 1924* or [St. Petersburg 1909](#). For beginners, something with more complete annotations, such as Irving Chernev's *Logical Chess Move By Move: Every Move Explained* might be best.

3. Review Your Own Games

While learning from the games of others is helpful, nothing beats learning from your own mistakes. Reviewing your own games is a crucial step in chess improvement, as it allows you to critically examine your strengths and weaknesses and figure out where your biggest mistakes occur. Make it a habit to [record the moves](#) whenever you play so that you can review the game later.

It is best to have a stronger player analyze your games with you. A stronger player will inevitably see things you missed, and can provide helpful feedback on where you need improvement. Computer chess programs can also analyze your games, and are great for pointing out tactical mistakes, but can't give the "human" feedback that a stronger player can.

4. Tactics, Tactics, Tactics

[Tactics](#) decide the result of most chess games, especially for beginning and improving players. Firming up these skills will allow you to pick off inadequately defended pieces or find surprising checkmates against unsuspecting opponents -- and more importantly, learning these patterns will help you defend against tactical threats during games.

There are many books that have collections of tactical problems. Even better, interactive software programs such as *Chess Tactics Art* allow you to play through problems and get instant feedback without having to set up positions on a board. One free option is the [Chess Tactics Server](#), an online tactics trainer that can guide you towards problems of an appropriate difficulty level.

5. Private Chess Lessons

Having your own personal chess trainer can be a rewarding experience. Someone who works with you over a period of time will get a good feel for your game, and can craft lessons tailored to your needs. To find a suitable teacher, you may want to ask other local players, particularly those who play in clubs and tournaments, if they can recommend a good teacher.

Keep in mind that the strongest players tend to give the most expensive lessons, but you may benefit just as much from a somewhat weaker (but still strong) player without paying a premium rate. Also, online lessons are often available on chess servers for much lower rates. It's not quite the same as meeting with a teacher in person, but confers many of the same benefits.

Basic Rules of Tournament Chess

By [Edward Scimia](#), About.com Guide

Tournament chess is played mostly with the same rules as casual chess. If you're not sure how the pieces move or what the object of the game is, you should brush up on the [basic rules of chess](#).

Tournament chess is also governed by a myriad of rules and regulations. Official rule books contain hundreds of pages detailing regulations for every possible dispute or situation one might come across during a chess tournament.

Players aren't expected to memorize the entire rule book. Simply understanding some of the most important rules is more than enough to confidently play in any tournament.

When in doubt, ask!

Never hesitate to ask a tournament director (TD) to clarify any confusion you may have about the rules. If you and an opponent have a disagreement, stop the clocks, find a director, and ask them to make a ruling.

If you touch a piece, you must move it.

This is known as the touch-move rule, and is often a source of difficulty for players new to tournaments. It also requires you to capture an opponent's piece if you touch it. This rule only applies if you can make a legal move with the piece you touched.

There are some exceptions. If you accidentally brush a piece, you are not required to move it. If a piece is awkwardly placed, you can adjust it; simply say "I adjust" before touching the piece to make it clear to your opponent that you don't intend to move it.

Most tournaments require players to record their moves.

This helps provide evidence of what has occurred during the game in case of a dispute. In order to record your game, you will need to learn how to read and write chess notation.

Never interfere with a game in progress.

In most chess tournaments, you'll be able to walk around the playing area and watch other games, provided you do so quietly. Observers are forbidden from telling players anything about their games, even if they notice a violation of the rules.

Turn off your cell phone.

In recent years, new rules have been written to deal with loud phones, which can break the concentration of chess players. If your phone rings in the playing area, you will likely be subject to a penalty, and may even have to forfeit your game.

Understand how to use a chess clock.

Tournament chess is played with time limits, which vary by event. Time is kept by using a chess clock. Using these clocks can be distracting at first, but will soon become second nature. Most importantly, remember to hit your clock after each move you make – this stops your clock and starts your opponent's time. Also, be sure to use the same hand to move your pieces and touch the clock.

After the game is over, record your result.

Win, lose, or draw, both players are required to make sure the proper result is recorded. If you're not sure where to mark down your result, ask a director for help.