

# ChessKid

Beginners' Guide To

# CHESS



# ChessKid Beginners' Guide To Chess

This Ebook is written for you, ChessKid — not for your parents or teachers (but invite them to read along with you). Have you watched other kids or family members play chess and wanted to know all the important information so that you can play too? Do you want to learn how to enjoy the game as well as to get really good at it? In this guide, we unlock the secrets of chess in one Ebook that many players have taken years to learn.

Let [ChessKid](#) help you learn to play chess — and win games — in a fun way. First, what is ChessKid? It's the world's number-one chess site for kids! Our experience of helping kids stay motivated to learn and improve their chess skills can benefit you, particularly as you begin to play the game.

Created for students from absolute beginners to kids who have already played in rated tournaments, ChessKid is fun for kids as well as parents, teachers, and coaches. New content is being added all the time to the site.



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*"Tactics flow from a superior position."*

-Bobby Fischer,  
American Grandmaster

# Chessboard And Pieces

The chessboard is where all the magic happens. Here are the basics of what you should know and answers to questions that many new players ask.



- ▶ Start by learning about the chessboard and chess pieces. Watch this [video by FunMasterMike](#).
- ▶ Do you know the names of the pieces and how they move? After you understand how the board is set up, learn more about chess pieces in this [video by FunMasterMike](#).
- ▶ Want to learn to play chess really quickly? [Watch this fun video](#).

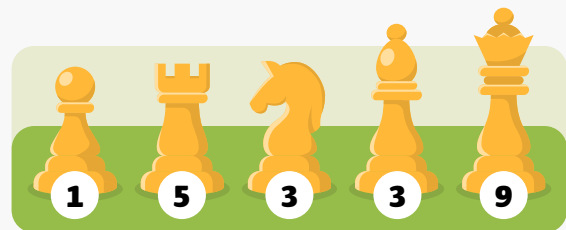


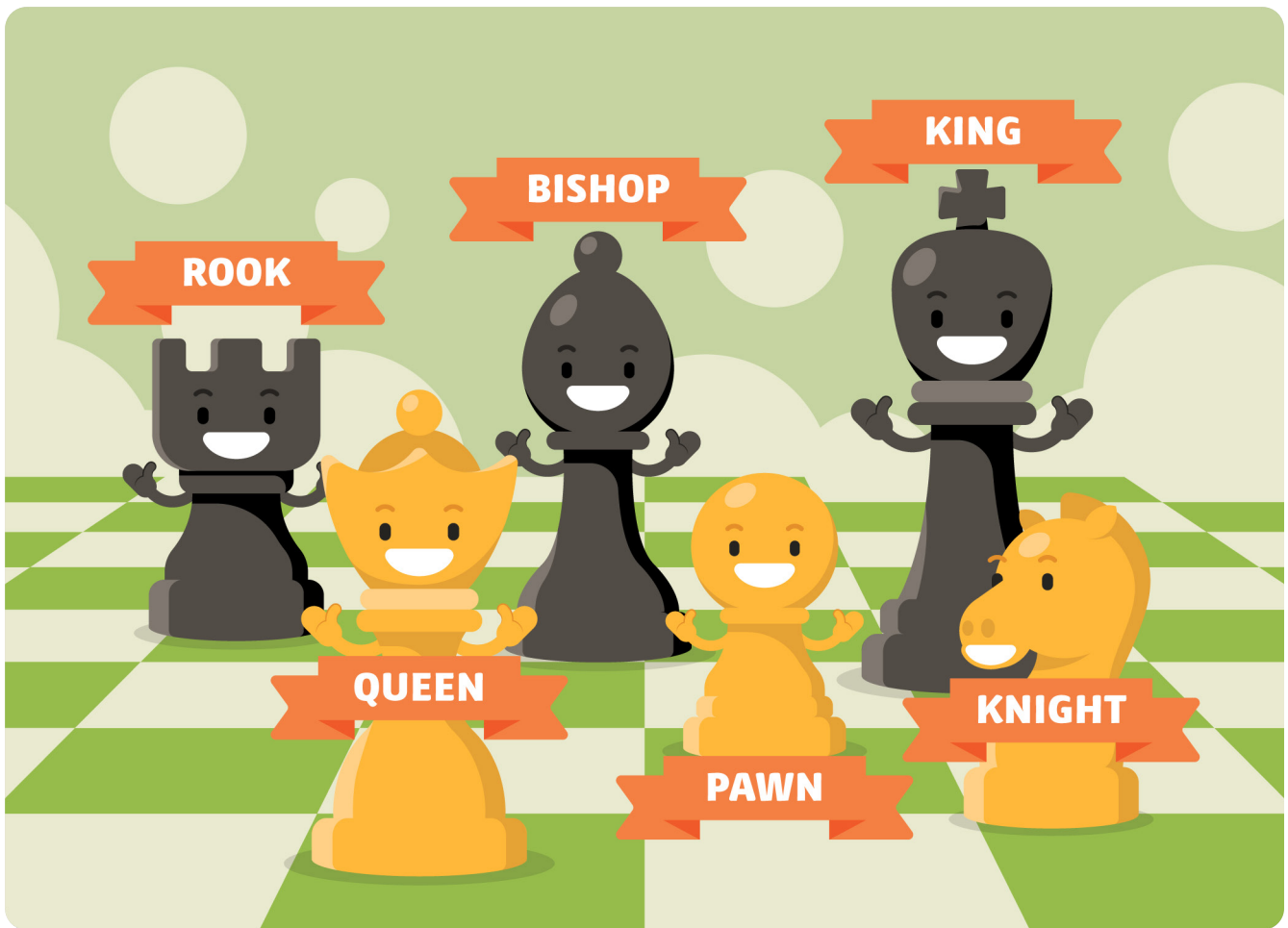
▶ Understand the importance of each piece, which is explained by FunMasterMike.

- The king has a special importance in chess. [Learn in this video](#).
- The queen is so powerful. This video explains why. [Learn in this video](#).
- The rook is the second most powerful piece in chess. Watch this video about rooks. [Learn in this video](#).
- The bishop moves powerfully along a diagonal. Watch how the bishop moves. [Learn in this video](#).
- The knight can help you leap to victory. Learn in this video how a knight's move is unusual. [Learn in this video](#).
- The pawn is "the soul of chess." If you don't know why, watch this video. [Learn in this video](#).

▶ Each chess piece has a value. Do you know each one? [Read this article to learn more](#).

▶ As you learn about the pieces, also learn to set up a chessboard correctly by watching this [video](#).



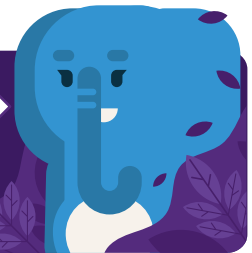


This infographic on chess pieces and how they move is also downloadable [here](#).



- ▶ Do you realize that sometimes pieces can be good or bad? [Learn more by watching this video.](#)
- ▶ When a game is played, a clock is often used to manage time and keep a game exciting. [Learn about chess clocks in this video.](#)
- ▶ Can you use math skills when playing chess? Learn from FunMasterMike about using math when deciding to [exchange chess pieces.](#)

**CHESSKID TIP:** Use the [Vision trainer](#) on ChessKid to improve your quickness for recognizing squares on the chessboard.



*"When you see a good move, look for a better one."*

-- Emanuel Lasker,  
world chess champion for 27 years

# Opening Principles

Every phase of the chess game is important, but the first one – known as the opening – is critical for determining if one player can achieve an advantage early over the other. Here is what you should know:



- ▶ Before you learn important information about the opening, do you know the phases of a chess game? [Learn about them in this video.](#)
- ▶ What are the important principles in the opening? [Read this article.](#)
- ▶ What are some common mistakes in the opening? [Learn more in this article.](#)
- ▶ How should a beginning player study chess openings? [Read this article.](#)
- ▶ Do you know how to open a game – and how not to open one? [Watch this video to learn more.](#)
- ▶ What happens when one player focuses on development and the other side forgets? [Watch this video for opening ideas.](#)
- ▶ Learn more about opening ideas. [This video explains more.](#)
- ▶ What should the first moves be? [Watch this video about first moves.](#)
- ▶ Do you know it's important to bring pieces out in the correct order and to avoid bringing out the queen too early? [Watch this video to understand why.](#)
- ▶ What are some traps to avoid in the opening phase of a game? [Watch this video about traps.](#)

- ▶ Are you prepared to avoid common traps in the opening? [Watch FunMasterMike explain his favorite traps in this video.](#)
- ▶ Do you want to be sneaky with opening traps? [Watch this video if you are sneaky.](#)
- ▶ Do you really, really want to be sneaky with opening traps? [Watch this second video on being really, really sneaky.](#)
- ▶ Do you know the chess term “gambit”? [Read about it in this article.](#)
- ▶ Are you ready to make your first moves in a chess game? Learn from the advice of FunMasterMike in a two-part video series:

**Part 1**

**Part 2**

- ▶ Want to learn even more about the basics of playing chess? [Learn more by watching this video.](#)
- ▶ Now learn about the magic of chess. [Watch this video.](#)



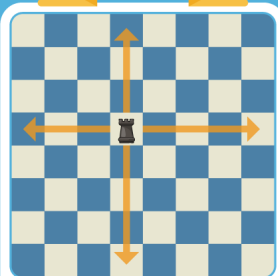
**CHESSKID TIP:** Practice the first moves of several openings by reviewing related videos in the [ChessKid library](#).



# ChessKid

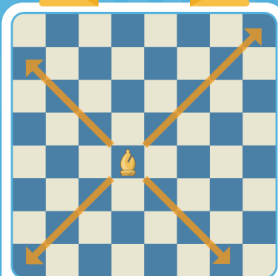
## How The Chess Pieces Move

### ROOK



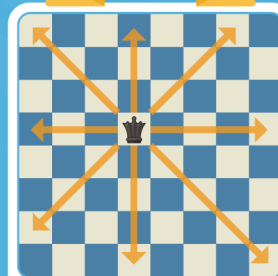
The rook can move as many squares as it likes left or right (horizontal), or up and down (vertical) as long as it isn't blocked. The rook moves like a "+" sign.

### BISHOP



The bishop moves in a diagonal line, as many squares as it likes as long as it isn't blocked by a piece. The bishop moves like the letter "X."

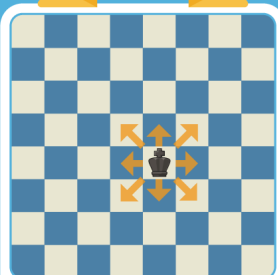
### QUEEN



The queen moves any number of squares vertically, horizontally or diagonally. She moves like a rook and bishop combined.

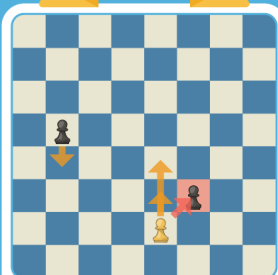


### KING



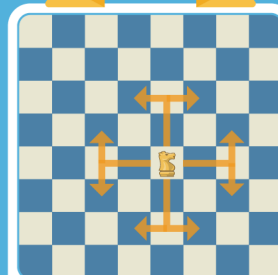
The king is a slow piece. He can only move (or capture) one square in any direction. When a king is attacked, it is called "check." It is the only piece that cannot be captured.

### PAWN



On the pawn's first move, it can move forward one or two squares. If a pawn has already moved, then it can move forward just one square at a time. Pawns capture diagonally one square.

### KNIGHT



The knight moves in a "L" shape, two squares in one direction, and then one square in the other direction. Knights are the only pieces that can jump over other pieces.



# Tactics

Tactics are important concepts for a new player to learn. Tactics happen in chess when a player makes a move that gets an advantage or an immediate opportunity, such as a material gain or checkmate. Because these moves are forcing, the opponent cannot escape them. [Learn why in this video.](#)

Several tactics are very basic to chess and often appear in chess games. In the ChessKid library are several videos that explain these basic tactics:



## ► Pin

- Read what it is and see an example.
- Watch a video that explains more.

## ► Fork

- Read what it is and see an example.
- Watch a video that explains more.

## ► Discovered Attack

- Read what it is and see an example.
- Watch a video that explains more.

## ► Skewer

- Read what it is and see an example.
- Watch a video that explains more.

**CHESSKID TIP:** To improve how you recognize when tactics can be played in a game, practice solving puzzles on ChessKid.



The infographic is titled "ChessKid Chess Tactics" and is set against a green and white checkered background. It features four panels, each with a chessboard diagram and a cartoon character illustrating a tactic: "Powerful Pin" with a yellow queen, "Scary Skewer" with a black king, "Fearsome Fork" with a black knight, and "Dynamic Discovered" with a yellow king. Each panel includes a brief text explanation of the tactic. At the bottom, there are social media icons, the ChessKid.com website, and logos for Google Play and the App Store.

This infographic on tactics is also [downloadable here.](#)





These four basic tactics are just the beginning of what you need to know. After you understand them, you should be ready to learn more advanced tactics, such as



- ▶ Double attack, when two pieces of an opponent are attacked at the same time. [Learn more in this video.](#)
- ▶ Remove the defender, a concept that exposes a vulnerable piece. [Watch this video to understand this tactic.](#)
- ▶ Decoy and deflection, a technique for drawing your opponent's piece to or away from a specific square. [This video helps you understand more.](#)
- ▶ Interference, an important tactic that breaks a connection between your opponent's pieces. [Learn about this tactic in this video.](#)

**CHESSKID TIP:** Use the Workout feature on ChessKid to practice checkmate patterns and endgame tactics.



- ▶ Learn from ChessKid FM Tani Adewumi about tactics in this [video](#).
- ▶ Can you be like a calculator when you play chess? [Learn from FunMasterMike in this video.](#)
- ▶ Do you want to see the best tactics in world championship history? [Watch this video.](#)

There are even more tactics to learn. After you have become familiar with these tactics, go to the ChessKid video series on “Tactics” and learn more about these and other concepts. For example, the tactic of double-check is explained in this [video](#) – and there’s more.



*“The pin is mightier than the sword.”*

-- Fred Reinfeld,  
American chess author

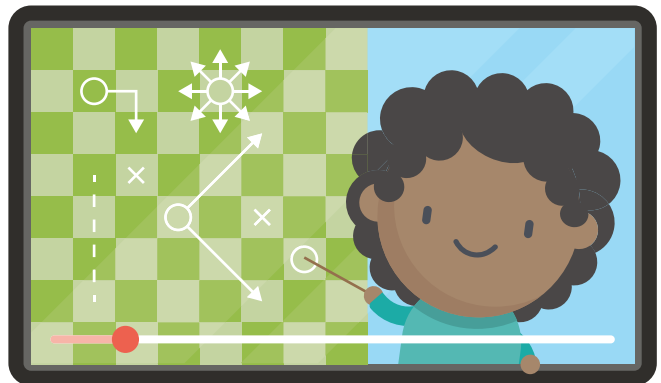


# Strategy

Chess strategy, in contrast to tactics, is a long-term plan for creating a winning advantage in a game.





- ▶ Chess strategy is an important concept for a new player to know. [Learn what chess strategy is in this video.](#)
- ▶ Because strategy involves developing a plan that may involve many moves, visualizing several moves in advance is important. [Learn how in this video.](#)
- ▶ Do you know how to plan in chess? [Watch this video to learn basic planning ideas.](#)
- ▶ All strategic concepts have the purpose of winning a game. [Learn about checkmate, the ultimate goal of chess in this video.](#)
- ▶ Checking your opponent's king is the most forcing move you can make in chess. Do you know the strategic concept of knowing the right time to check? [This video explains this concept.](#)
- ▶ Do you know the strategy of how to checkmate an opponent? Can you recognize the common checkmating patterns? [Watch this video.](#)
- ▶ Learn more about checkmating patterns from FunMasterMike. [Watch this video about 10 fancy patterns.](#)
- ▶ A strategic goal in chess is to use your pieces together powerfully. Do you know how to combine the power of your pieces? [Learn more in this video.](#)



- ▶ The strategic concept of defense is as important as attacking concepts. Learn about the difference between active and passive defense. [Watch this video.](#)
- ▶ Learn more about defense and the three basic rules for defending the king. [This video explains this strategy.](#)
- ▶ Learn about the strategic concept of tempo and what it means. [Watch is this video.](#)
- ▶ Another strategic concept is opposition. It involves using your king to control critical squares in an endgame. [Learn more in this video.](#)
- ▶ When you understand the concept of opposition, you may be ready to learn more advanced information about moving the king in an endgame. [Watch this video.](#)
- ▶ Developing a pawn storm is an important strategic concept. Do you know what it means and how to develop one? [Watch this video.](#)
- ▶ Creating space advantages on the chessboard is a valuable strategy. [Learn more in this video.](#)
- ▶ Occupying the seventh rank with a rook in an endgame gives you a great strategic advantage. Do you know why? [Watch this video.](#)
- ▶ The strategy of activating the rooks is important after the opening phase. Learn about the concept of rook lifts. [This video explains the strategy.](#)



*"The tactician knows what to do when there is something to do; whereas the strategist knows what to do when there is nothing to do."*

-- Gerald Abrahams,  
English chess author

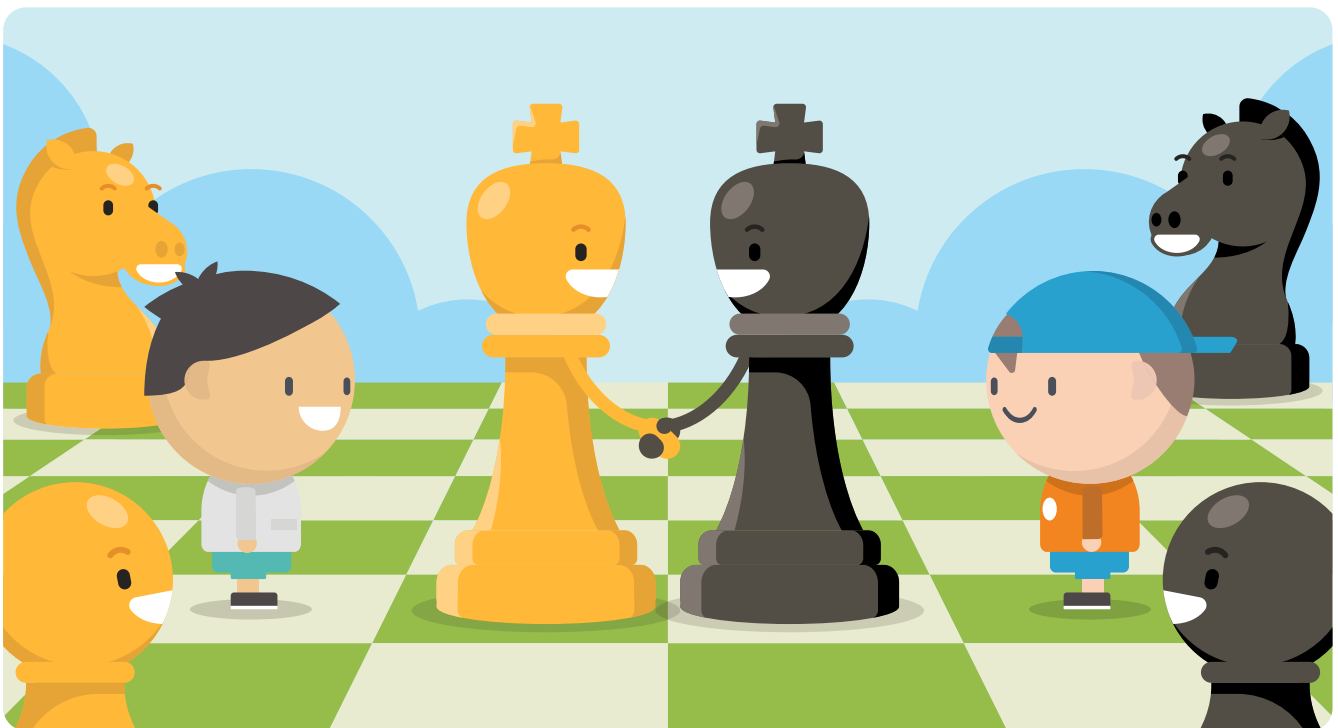
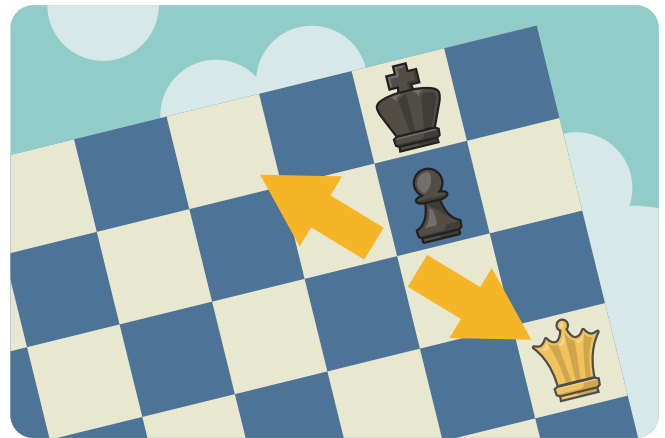
# Draws

In chess, you can draw in more than one way – in fact, there are five ways.



- ▶ Do you know all of the ways to draw a chess game? [Watch this video.](#)
- ▶ Is a stalemate a draw? Learn more in this [video](#) or this [video](#).
- ▶ Next learn these stalemate tricks. [This video explains the tricks.](#)
- ▶ Perpetual check is another way to achieve a draw. [Learn how in this video.](#)
- ▶ Can you force a draw? [Learn how in this video.](#)

**CHESSKID TIP:** If you don't want a game to end in a stalemate, make sure an opponent's king can move unless you can checkmate it.

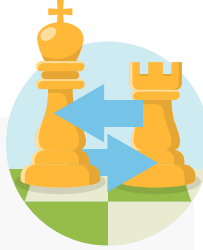


# Special Moves

To a new player, several moves in chess look quite unusual. After reviewing this section, you will understand them and be better prepared to use them in a game.

► **Castling** is a move that helps to safeguard the king.

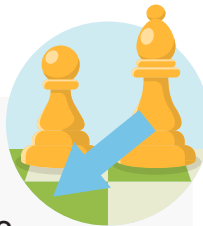
- Watch FunMasterMike explain how in this [video](#).
- Because opposite-side castling often occurs, you should be familiar with this concept. [Watch this video](#).
- Do you know when not to castle? [Watch this video](#).



► **En passant.** New players sometimes cannot believe that an en passant capture is legal. It is! Learn in this [video](#).

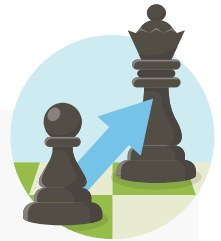


► **Fianchetto.** A move that places a bishop in a powerful position is known as fianchetto. Learn about this move in this [video](#).



► **Pawn promotion** is a valuable move in the endgame phase of chess.

- Promoting a pawn is an important reward for playing an endgame successfully. [Learn why in this video](#).
- Not every pawn promotion results in a queen. Do you know why? [Watch this video](#).



*"Chess is the gymnasium of the mind."*

-- Blaise Pascal,  
inventor of mechanical calculator,  
hydraulic press, and syringe

**CHESSKID TIP:** Because many new players are not familiar with en passant captures, be prepared to explain this special move to an opponent — even ask, "Are you familiar with en passant?"



# Notation

Chess notation is important for new players to know. By studying their past games, new players can identify poor moves to avoid as well as strong moves to repeat when similar positions occur again on the chessboard. Studying past games is difficult without chess notation, which is a system of recording and describing moves. Because ChessKid automatically records the moves of a game in algebraic notation, they can be easily reviewed later. Knowing chess notation unlocks this analysis.

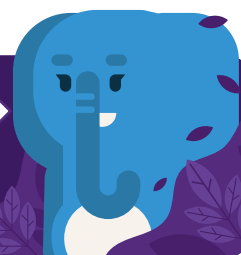
Knowing chess notation is also important for being prepared to play in rated tournaments. (For guidance on tournament preparations, make sure your parent, teacher, or coach has reviewed the “Playing in Chess Tournaments” section in ChessKid’s Parent Survival Ebook, which is easily downloadable [here](#).)

Here are some questions (with links to answers) that new players ask about chess notation (most answers are taken from a specific ChessKid webpage, but this section includes other resources as well):



- ▶ What is **chess notation**?
- ▶ What is **algebraic notation**?
- ▶ Why is recording **moves important**?
- ▶ What **special symbols** are used?
- ▶ How is a **complex move** recorded?
- ▶ What are other **notation types**?
- ▶ Why are **chess score sheets important**?
- ▶ Can I download free chess notations sheets?  
Yes, you can from ChessKid [here](#).

**CHESSKID TIP:** After you play a game, use the Analysis tool to review the moves and observe how they are recorded in algebraic notation.



These two videos are also helpful:

- ▶ Learn more about how to record moves. [Watch this video.](#)
- ▶ Would you like another video that demonstrates notation? [Watch this one.](#)

**CHESSKID TIP:** When you start to record a game played over the board, ask your opponent to record the moves too. Then compare each other’s record at the end of the game.

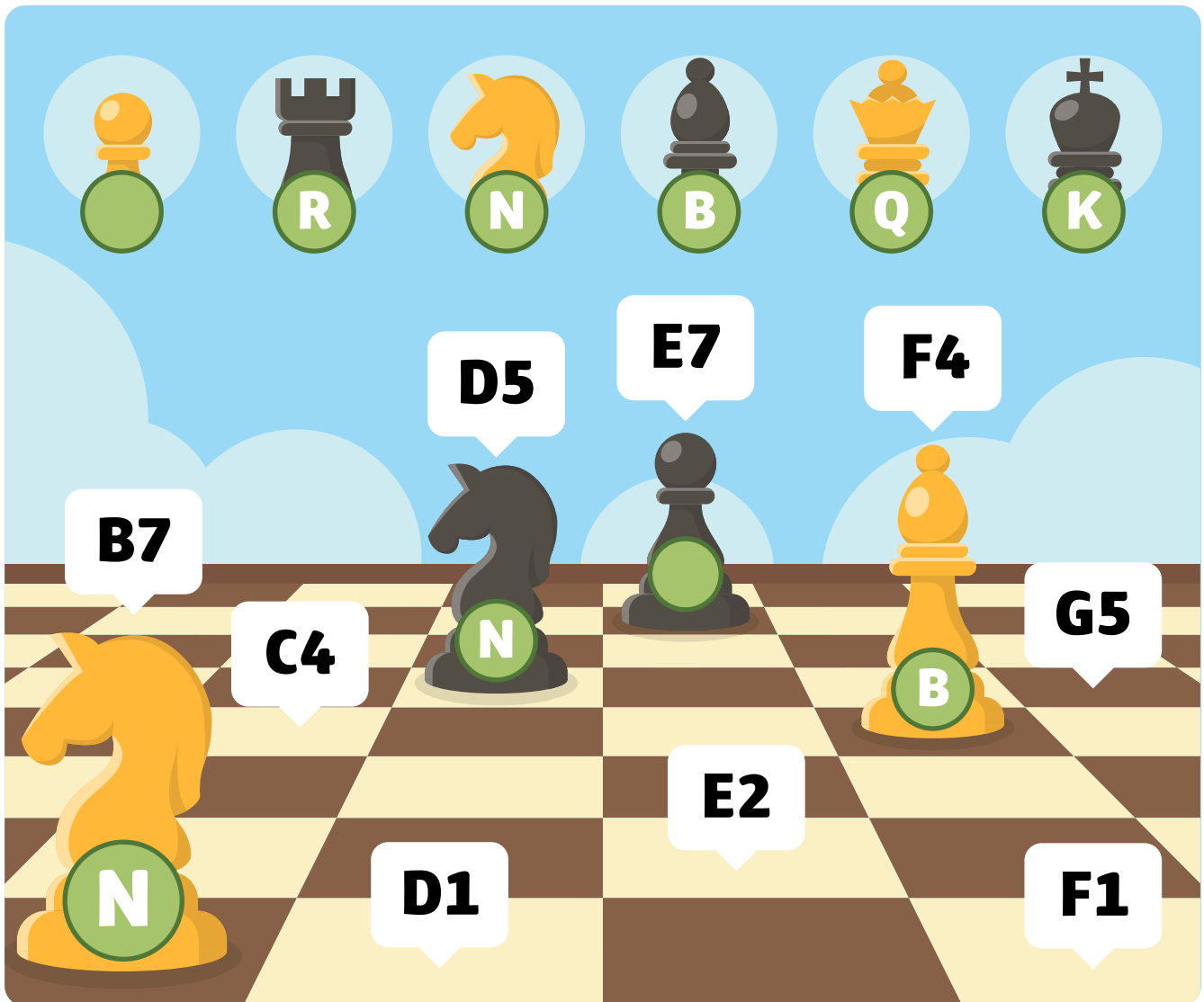




Here are two other helpful notation resources for you:

- ▶ **Case Study:** Learn how being able to record moves helped young chess players in a statewide tournament. [This video explains.](#)
- ▶ **Resources:** Buy a pad of 100 carbonless copy sheets from the ChessKid Shop [here.](#)

**CHESSKID TIP:** Practice chess notation during friendly games so that you are prepared to record moves accurately in tournaments.



# Analyzing Games

Smart chess players always analyze their games after they have been played. Analyzing games has been made so easy by ChessKid because it has its own built-in **Analysis tool**. Whether you play online or over the board, ChessKid can help you study past games and improve your chess skills.

For games played online with ChessKid, just click the “Analyze” button when the games are over. For games played over the board, load moves of the games into the Game Analysis feature of ChessKid. When you are ready to review, click through the moves with the Analysis tool that shows which moves are strong and which ones are weak. Here are several important tips about analyzing games.



- ▶ How can ChessKid’s Analysis tool help a beginning player? [Learn the top five ways to use it in this article.](#)
- ▶ What steps are involved in analyzing a game? [Read this article.](#)
- ▶ For games played online with ChessKid, how do kids access their games? [Learn how in this article.](#)
- ▶ As you analyze moves and study chess more, also learn how chess puzzles are composed with creative and beautiful solutions. [Watch this video.](#)

**CHESSKID TIP:** Always analyze every game after you have played it.



- ▶ Each one shows important points and teaches mistakes to avoid.
  - [Answering Attacks With Attacks](#)
  - [Attacking Tactics And More](#)
  - [Best Attacks And More](#)
  - [Bishop-And-Knight Mate Technique](#)
  - [Biggest Mistake In Chess And More](#)
  - [Common Mistakes](#)
  - [Complicated Positions](#)
  - [Creativity And Activity](#)
  - [Discovered Attack That Leads To Mate](#)
  - [Endgame Challenges](#)
  - [Endgame Success](#)
  - [Endgame Tactics](#)
  - [Controlling Center Of The Chessboard](#)
  - [King Walk And More](#)
  - [Knight Outpost And More](#)
  - [Opening Techniques And More](#)
  - [Opposite-Colored Bishops And More](#)
  - [Pawn Structure And More](#)
  - [Piece Development And More](#)
  - [Queen-And-Pawn Endings And More](#)
  - [Queen Pawns And More](#)
  - [Rook-And-Pawn Endgame](#)
  - [Snow Plow](#)
  - [Sharp Defense And More](#)
  - [Stalemate Traps](#)





# Chess Etiquette

“Etiquette” is a very formal word that means appropriate behavior. “Chess etiquette” includes several important do’s and don’ts. Some you may already know, others probably seem logical without any explanation, and a few become clearer when you begin playing in rated tournaments. These expectations are for games played over the board. In addition, for online play, ChessKid’s rules for fair play are used for games played on its server. Learn more about ChessKid’s rules in [this article](#) as well as in [this video](#).

## DO’S

✓  
Do greet your opponent in a pleasant way before the game begins. One way is to say, “My name is ..”, and it’s nice to meet you.”

✓  
Do notify a tournament director immediately if your opponent doesn’t follow the rules.

✓  
Do silence your phone if you have one before a game begins.

✓  
Do find a quiet place to discuss a game if you want to review it when it is over to avoid distracting other players.

✓  
Do stay at or near your game while it is in progress. Of course, you may take a bathroom break when necessary. In addition, you may be permitted to watch other nearby games while you wait on your opponent to make a move.

✓  
Do thank your opponent for playing a game with a handshake.

✓  
Do ask a tournament director to clarify any rule or procedure if you have a question or concern.

✓  
Do be a good winner as well as a good loser when a game ends.

✓  
Do be polite and as calm as possible when discussing any concern with a tournament director.

✓  
Do play each game fairly by the rules so that both players have fun and gain from the experience.

# History Of Chess

Chess has a rich history. The more you know about it, the more you will love the game.



- ▶ Learn about a brief history of the game. [Watch this video.](#)
- ▶ Knowing about the history of the chess helps to understand why some rule changes have been made to improve how games are played. One important change is the en passant rule. This [video](#) explains more about this rule and its connection to the history of chess.
- ▶ Learn about the Lewis Chessmen, medieval pieces carved from walrus ivory in the 12th century. [Read this article.](#)
- ▶ Chess pieces had different shapes until 1849 when chess master Howard Staunton created a special design that's still the most popular one. Find your own set with the Staunton design in the [ChessKid Shop](#).
- ▶ The first international tournament did not occur until 1575 when Italian players traveled to Spain to compete. One player, Ruy Lopez, remains famous in chess history for his notable opening. [This video explains.](#)
- ▶ An important part of chess history is being able to compare one player to another. Learn about the Elo rating system in this [video](#).

- ▶ Chess titles have been given to the best of the best throughout the history of the game. Grandmaster is the most elite title. [Learn about it in this video.](#)
- ▶ The International Chess Federation, known as FIDE, helps to preserve the rich traditions of chess and promote the game around the world. Learn more about its important role in this [video](#).
- ▶ Many national organizations are also important for promoting the rich history of chess and the game itself. One example is the U.S. Chess Federation. Learn about it in this [video](#).
- ▶ Learn about the journey that chess has taken from early 19th-century developments to the present day through books in the [ChessKid Shop](#) such as [Modern Chess from Steinitz to the 21st Century](#).

**CHESSKID TIP:** If you are a Scout, you may want to use this Ebook as a resource for achieving the merit badges related to chess. [Learn more in this article.](#)



# Conclusion

What else is useful? Sometimes you may hear a term that you don't know. Many important terms are explained for you by ChessKid in its [glossary](#). Bookmark it so that you can find it easily.

Finally, this Ebook is another one in a series that ChessKid has prepared to help you, although the other two are written for adults. However, you and your family, friends, coaches, and teachers may find them helpful:

- ▶ **ChessKid's Parent Survival Handbook** has expert tips and resources that guide parents each step of the way in helping their kids learn and play chess.
- ▶ **ChessKid's Guide for Teaching Chess** has tips for engaging a beginning chess student.
- ▶ Keep up-to-date with all the new stories and events by following ChessKid on our social media.

