

The Rules Of Chess & How To Play The Game

Chess is a game of skill and strategy, but you must first learn the basic rules and play a few games before working on various techniques to improve your game.

A chessboard has 64 alternately coloured dark and light squares. Each of two players has a King with a cross on top, a Queen topped with a crown, two Rooks with castle shaped tops, two Bishops marked with clefts, two Knights with horse heads and eight Pawns, with a different colour of pieces for each player. The players face each other with a light square on each player's bottom right corner of the board. Each one puts the pieces of his colour on his side of the board. The Rooks go in the corners, the Knights on the adjacent squares, the Bishops next, and the Queen on her colour's square with the King next to her. The eight Pawns occupy the row in front of the main pieces.

The King and Queen can move in any direction; on the diagonal, sideways, backward or forward to any unoccupied square, but the two opposing Kings may never occupy adjoining squares. The King can move only one square each turn, but the Queen can go any distance if there are no intervening obstacles. Both King and Queen capture an opposing piece by landing on its square and removing it from the board.

The Bishop and Rook can move any distance in one direction each turn. The Rook moves only horizontally or vertically, and the Bishop moves only diagonally. They cannot jump over or replace pieces of their own colour, but they can capture an opposing piece by landing on its square and removing the piece.

A Rook can also work with the King to make the castling move one time in a game. The King moves two squares left or right toward the Rook, and the Rook moves to the square on the King's other side. Castling can only occur if both pieces have not moved yet, the squares between the two are not occupied and the King is not in check.

The Knight always moves following an "L" pattern of three squares and can jump over pieces of either colour. It moves left, right, forward or backward one or two squares and turns one or two squares to form the "L" pattern. If the space to which it moves is occupied by an opposing piece, the Knight captures and removes it.

A player can choose to move a Pawn either one or two squares forward on the first move, but may move it only one square forward each subsequent time. It can capture a piece on either diagonally adjoining square in front of it and then occupy that square. A Pawn can be captured by another Pawn in passing when it begins by moving two squares. If it lands beside an opposing Pawn, the opposing one can capture it and move to the square it jumped over. A player exchanges a Pawn for his choice of pieces, usually a queen, if it reaches the eighth row.

The game's object is to capture the opposing King, and the pieces move in different ways to achieve that goal. Players take turns moving one piece at a time with a white piece making the first move.

When a King has no path of escape from an attack, it is checkmated, and the opponent wins the game. When a player attacks a King, he warns his opponent by saying, "Check," so the opponent can avoid the checkmate by moving his King, capturing the attacking piece or placing a Pawn or piece between his King and the attacker.

A game may end in a draw if neither player is able to checkmate the opposing player's King.

After becoming familiar with these rules, you can develop numerous tactics to make the game even more enjoyable.