

Basics and object of the game

Chess is an abstract strategy game and involves no hidden information. It is played on a square chessboard with 64 squares arranged in an eight-by-eight grid. At the start, each player (one controlling the white pieces, the other controlling the black pieces) controls sixteen pieces: one king, one queen, two rooks, two knights, two bishops, and eight pawns. The object of the game is to checkmate the opponent's king, whereby the king is under immediate attack (in „check“) and there is no way to remove it from attack on the next move. There are also several ways a game can end in a draw.

Rules

The rules of chess are published by FIDE (Fédération Internationale des Échecs), chess's international governing body, in its Handbook. Rules published by national governing bodies, or by unaffiliated chess organizations, commercial publishers, etc., may differ. FIDE's rules were most recently revised in 2018.

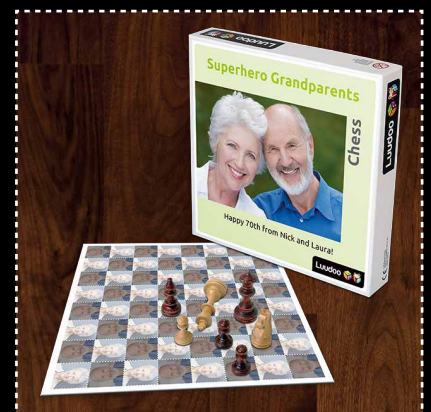
Setup

Chess pieces are divided into white and black sets. While the sets may not be literally white and black (e.g. the light set may be a yellowish or off-white color, the dark set may be red), they are always referred to as „white“ and „black“. Each set consists of 16 pieces: one king, one queen, two rooks, two bishops, two knights, and eight pawns. The players of the sets are referred to as White and Black, respectively.

The game is played on a square board of eight rows (called ranks, denoted 1 to 8 from bottom to top according to White's perspective) and eight columns (called files, denoted a to h from left to right according to White's perspective). The 64 squares alternate in color and are referred to as light and dark squares. The chessboard is placed with a light square at the right-hand corner nearest to each player. Thus, each queen starts on a square of its own color (the white queen on a light square; the black queen on a dark square).

Movement

In competitive games, the colors are allocated by the organizers; in informal games, the colors are usually decided randomly, for example by a coin toss, or by one player concealing a white pawn in one hand and a black pawn in the other, and having the opponent choose. White moves first, after which players alternate turns, moving one piece per turn (except



for castling, when two pieces are moved). A piece is moved to either an unoccupied square or one occupied by an opponent's piece, which is captured and removed from play. With the sole exception of en passant, all pieces capture by moving to the square that the opponent's piece occupies.

Moving is compulsory; it is illegal to skip a turn, even when having to move is detrimental. A player may not make any move that would put or leave the player's own king in check. If the player to move has no legal move, the game is over; the result is either checkmate (a loss for the player with no legal move) if the king is in check, or stalemate (a draw) if the king is not.

Each piece has its own way of moving:

- The king moves one square in any direction. The king also has a special move called castling that involves also moving a rook.
- A rook can move any number of squares along a rank or file, but cannot leap over other pieces. Along with the king, a rook is involved during the king's castling move.
- A bishop can move any number of squares diagonally, but cannot leap over other pieces.
- A queen combines the power of a rook and bishop and can move any number of squares along a rank, file, or diagonal, but cannot leap over other pieces.
- A knight moves to any of the closest squares that are not on the same rank, file, or diagonal. (Thus the move forms an „L“-shape: two squares vertically and one square horizontally, or two squares horizontally and one square vertically.) The knight is the only piece that can leap over other pieces.
- A pawn can move forward to the unoccupied square immediately in front of it on the same file, or on its first move it can advance two squares along the same file, provided both squares are unoccupied; or the pawn can capture an opponent's piece on a square diagonally in front of it on an adjacent file, by moving to that square. A pawn has two special moves: the en passant capture and promotion.

Castling

Once in every game, each king can make a special move, known as castling. Castling consists of moving the king two squares along the first rank toward a rook on the player's first rank, and then placing the rook on the last square that the king crossed. Castling is permissible if the following conditions are met:

- Neither the king nor the rook has previously moved during the game.
- There are no pieces between the king and the rook.
- The king is not in check, and will not pass through or land on any square attacked by an enemy piece. (Note that castling is permitted if the rook is under attack, or if the rook crosses an attacked square.)

En passant

When a pawn makes a two-step advance from its starting position and there is an opponent's pawn on a square next to the destination square on an adjacent file, then the opponent's pawn can capture it en passant („in passing“), moving to the square the pawn passed over. This can be done only on the very next turn; otherwise, the right to do so is forfeited.

Promotion

When a pawn advances to the eighth rank, as a part of the move it is promoted and must be exchanged for the player's choice of queen, rook, bishop, or knight of the same color. Usually, the pawn is chosen to be promoted to a queen, but in some cases, another piece is chosen; this is called underpromotion. There is no restriction on the piece promoted to, so it is possible to have more pieces of the same type than at the start of the game (e.g., two or more queens).

End of the game

Check and checkmate

When a king is under immediate attack by one or two of the opponent's pieces, it is said to be in check. A move in response to a check is legal only if it results in a position where the king is no longer in check. This can involve capturing the checking piece; interposing a piece between the checking piece and the king (which is possible only if the attacking piece is a queen, rook, or bishop and there is a square between it and the king); or moving the king to a square where it is not under attack. Castling is not a permissible response to a check.

The object of the game is to checkmate the opponent; this occurs when the opponent's king is in check, and there is no legal way to remove it from attack. It is never legal for a player to make a move that puts or leaves the player's own king in check. In casual games, it is common to announce „check“ when putting the opponent's king in check, but this is not required by the rules of chess and is not usually done in tournaments.

Stalemate and dead position

If the player to move has no legal moves, but is not in check, the position is a stalemate, and the game is drawn.

If the game reaches a dead position, in which neither player is able to checkmate the other by any legal sequence of moves, the game is drawn. For example, if only the kings are on the board, all other pieces having been captured, checkmate is impossible and the game is drawn by this rule.

On the other hand, if both players still have a knight there is a highly unlikely yet theoretical possibility of checkmate, so this rule does not apply. This rule supersedes the previous rule which referred to „insufficient material“, extending it to include other positions where checkmate is impossible such as blocked pawn endings where the pawns cannot be attacked.

Other rules

Games can also be won in the following ways:

- Resignation: A player may resign, conceding the game to the opponent. Most tournament players consider it good etiquette to resign in a hopeless position.
- Win on time: In games with a time control, a player wins if the opponent runs out of time, even if the opponent has a superior position, as long as the player has a theoretical possibility to checkmate the opponent were the game to continue.
- Forfeit: A player who cheats, violates the rules, or violates the rules of conduct specified for the particular tournament, can be forfeited.

There are also several ways games can end in a draw:

- **Draw by agreement:** In tournament chess, draws are most commonly reached by mutual agreement between the players. The correct procedure is to verbally offer the draw, make a move, then start the opponent's clock. Traditionally, players have been allowed to agree to a draw at any point in the game, occasionally even without playing a move; in recent years efforts have been made to discourage short draws, for example by forbidding draw offers before move thirty.
- **Threefold repetition:** This most commonly occurs when neither side is able to avoid repeating moves without incurring a disadvantage. In this situation, either player can claim a draw; this requires the players to keep a valid written record of the game so that the claim can be verified by the arbiter if challenged. The three occurrences of the position need not occur on consecutive moves for a claim to be valid. The addition of the fivefold repetition rule in 2014 requires the arbiter to intervene immediately and declare the game a draw after five occurrences of the same position, consecutive or otherwise, without requiring a claim by either player. FIDE rules make no mention of perpetual check; this is merely a specific type of draw by threefold repetition.
- **Fifty-move rule:** If during the previous 50 moves no pawn has been moved and no capture has been made, either player can claim a draw. The addition of the seventy-five-move rule in 2014 requires the arbiter to intervene and immediately declare the game drawn after 75 moves without a pawn move or capture, without requiring a claim by either player. There are several known endgames where it is possible to force a mate but it requires more than 50 moves before a pawn move or capture is made; examples include some endgames with two knights against a pawn and some pawnless endgames such as queen against two bishops. Historically, FIDE has sometimes revised the fifty-move rule to make exceptions for these endgames, but these have since been repealed. Some correspondence chess organizations do not enforce the fifty-move rule.
- **Draw on time:** In games with a time control, the game is drawn if a player is out of time and no sequence of legal moves would allow the opponent to checkmate the player.

Time control

In competition, chess games are played with a time control. If a player's time runs out before the game is completed, the game is automatically lost (provided the opponent has enough pieces left to deliver checkmate). The duration of a game ranges from long (or „classical“) games, which can take up to seven hours (even longer if adjournments are permitted), to bullet chess (under 3 minutes per player for the entire game). Intermediate between these are rapid chess games, lasting between 20 minutes and two hours per game, a popular time control in amateur weekend tournaments.

Time is controlled using a chess clock that has two displays, one for each player's remaining time. Analog chess clocks have been largely replaced by digital clocks, which allow for time controls with increments.

Time controls are also enforced in correspondence chess competition. A typical time control is 50 days for every 10 moves.