



CHESS!!

CASTLE project

Teacher's handbook - first level
Student age group: 7 to 10 years



www.castleproject.eu

First level handbook

This manual is to be referred to for the first 10 lessons. It can be used both to check that course objectives have been achieved in the classroom and for doing consolidation lessons for the first-level WEB path. It should be easy for any teacher who has completed level 1 of Victor's chess house website (i.e. earned 12 cups) to understand the content of the manual and how to use it.

For free access for teachers, send an email to info@alfierebianco.com.

The first ten lessons of the CASTLE course are presented as follows:

- a) In the yellow panels on the right, the rules are set out, which are to be explained to students by the teacher. They have been written so as to be easily understandable for the students (age: 7-10).
- b) In the white panels on the left, there are general instructions and guidance for teachers, an explanation of how to work with the class during the practical parts of the lessons, as well as positions to be put on the demonstration chessboard for the teacher's presentation of a topic at the beginning of every lesson.

The lessons are fundamentally the same as those available online so, in essence, in this manual the same topics are presented in the same order as on the Victor's chess house website, namely:

- 1) A little legend about the origin of chess (this is optional; it not part of the WEB program - you can find the legend about Sissa at the end of the manual), an explanation of the chessboard, the coordinates and the starting position of the pieces.
- 2) The king, how it captures, and the first golden rule for the king.
- 3) The rook, the second golden rule for the king, and giving check.
- 4) Checkmate.
- 5) The bishop.
- 6) The queen.
- 7) The knight.
- 8) The pawn.
- 9) Castling and development.
- 10) A draw due to insufficient material or stalemate.

The topics above must be explained so that students can correctly play a game involving all the pieces, i.e. respect the basic rules described later (two rules are not presented: a draw that occurs because of the triple repetition of a position or because 50 moves have been played without a piece being captured or a pawn move. They are not presented because they are rather complicated and are not usually relevant to the games children play during this phase).

The lessons in this manual are designed to last an hour. However, if less or more time is available on a given day it is possible to finish before all topics have been presented and resume where you left off in the next lesson.

It is highly recommended that the following time allocation be used for each topic that make up each lesson: 15/20 minutes of explanation, always followed by 10/15 minutes in which the children can explore the ideas over the board (i.e. minigames and complete games - see below).

Another way to consolidate student's understanding of what has been taught is to get them to read the four basic lessons in Victor's chess house (the chessboard, the king, the rook and checkmate). These can be found in the lessons room: click on the appropriate books in the bookcase.

The main goal of the first level manual is to make sure pupils understand when a chess game has finished, i.e. victory by checkmate, or a draw due to lack of material or stalemate: students are not allowed to autonomously or semi-autonomously resign a game (i.e. request intervention by the teacher), as it is far more instructive to play to the very end of the game.

The second and final goal of the course is to allow and facilitate the playing of unsupervised games of chess at school during school hours (in the canteen, during breaks, etc.) using the chess equipment provided, as well as in their free time, either at home or playing online against kids their own age from around the world.

LESSON 1

What is chess?

Give a brief overview of the game of chess, which is essential as many might know virtually nothing about the game. One way of doing this is compare it to draughts (many children have at least a basic knowledge of how draughts is played: the fundamental difference is draughts is won by capturing all your opponent's pieces or by making it impossible for the opponent to make a move, whereas in chess the objective is to checkmate the king. One way of explaining checkmate is to present it as a battle between two royal armies that ends when the commander of one of the armies - the king – is put into a kind of prison. The game is immediately over when this happens). It can be presented in other ways too: as the first virtual game in history, the legend of Sissa, etc. Regardless of the way you choose to present the game, the ultimate goal is always to explain the concept of checkmate.

The chessboard

Draw attention to the empty demo board, and give them an overview of the chessboard: it is made up of 64 squares of two alternating colours. As mentioned, it is often effective to present the board as a battlefield on which two armies meet. The board is divided into vertical columns of 8 squares, which should be referred to as files. These are identified with letters: the a-file, the b-file, etc. It is also divided into horizontal rows of 8 squares called ranks, which are identified with numbers: 1, 2, 3, etc. Each square has a name that is composed of the appropriate letter and number. 'To tell people where this knight is (put it on the demo board), first I read the letter for the file (D) then the number of the rank (4): this knight is on the D4 square. If I put it here (changing the position of the knight), which square is it on?' Give some further examples. The chessboard is in the correct position if there is a white square in the bottom right corner of the board.

Chess terms

You must start using the alpha-numeric coordinates immediately when you give the position of pieces on the board (this is why it is one of the first things to be explained). You must always refer to a square by its name (however, for younger children it is possible to use an alternative word to square, for example house: the B8-house, the D2-house etc.). You must never say, 'I put the knight here or there' or 'it was better to go with the queen over there'. Never stop using correct chess terminology (the knight on C3, the D4-pawn, and so on). The above is of fundamental importance as it gives order to the chessboard and the pieces on it will be easily used and recognised by the children.

Equipment

Until now, the chess equipment is kept out of sight (the kids will only get distracted if they are given it immediately). Instruct the children to form pairs and to sit to the side of the desks so everyone has a clear view of the demo board. It is essential to create heterogeneous pairs, e.g. a more attentive pupil with a less attentive one, a quicker student with a slower one, or a more knowledgeable pupil with one who is less knowledgeable or who has no knowledge at all, etc. (if someone already knows the rules, or some of them, they will work with those who have zero knowledge, NOT with a companion who already knows something). When pairs are heterogeneous, they correct and engage with each other independently while doing the exercises.

Exercise - The arrangement of the pieces At this point each pair can start, with the assistance of the teacher at the demo chessboard, to become familiar with the various pieces and where to place them correctly. The chessboards are handed over first, they are placed in desks or tables with a white square in the right-hand corner. At this point the teacher asks: 'Who has the corner square H1? Who has A8?' The 'owners' of the H1-square will be given the white pieces, the owners of the A8-square, the black ones. The bags with the pieces are handed to the pairs and everyone can put their 'army' on the desktop, but to one side of the the board. The rook is the first piece to be shown on the demo board. You show it to the children, you tell them what its name is, and you ask the kids to find it among their pieces. The teacher places the four rooks in each of the corners of the demo board and asks the students to do the same on their boards. Having verified that every pair has done this correctly, we continue, in the same way with the other pieces. The pieces should be looked at in the following order: R (rooks), N (Knights) and B (Bishops). After this has been done, there will be two empty squares left on the back rank. The queen is put on the appropriate square first, stating the rule The queen on her own colour. The king is then put on the only remaining vacant square on the back rank. Last of all are the pawns. This whole process should not take more than 20 minutes (if the legend of Sissa is read, 25 minutes should be enough).

THE CHESSBOARD

Chess is played on a **chessboard**.

It is made up of 64 squares of two different colours that alternate: 32 light-coloured squares and 32 dark.

The chessboard should be placed so that in front of each player there is a white square in the bottom right-hand corner.

The chessboard is divided into 8 vertical columns of 8 squares that are called **files** and 8 horizontal rows of 8 squares called **ranks**.

An oblique line of squares is called a **diagonal**.

To give a name to every square we use algebraic notation (letters and numbers).

On the edges of chessboards provided, there are identifying letters above and below each file.

Likewise, there are numbers to the left and right of every rank.

For example, to identify the location of the black queen in the **diagram**, first you read the letter of the file on which it placed and then the number of the rank: in this case the file is 'D' and the rank is '8': in other words the queen stands on the intersection of the D-file and the 8th rank – it stands on the D8-square.

When playing, you use the **pieces** and the **pawns**: the pieces can move **forward and backward**, while the pawns **can only move forward**.

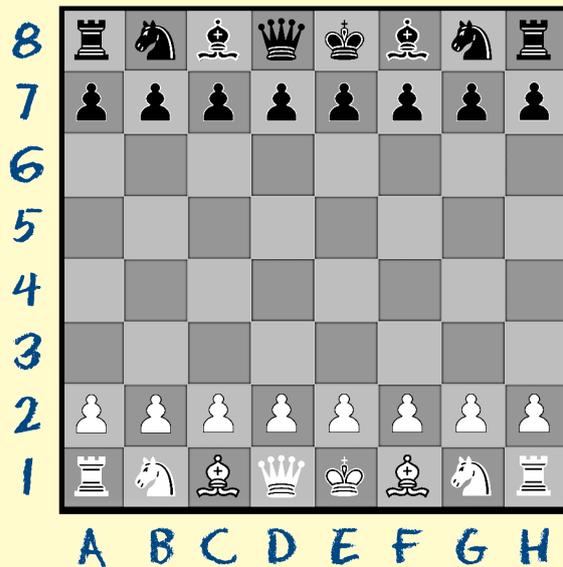
The white pawns stand on the 2nd rank while the black pawns stand on the 7th. The white pieces (rooks, knights, bishops, queen and king) are situated on the 1st rank, whereas the black pieces are placed on the 8th. Look carefully at where each piece is placed!

If the pieces have been set up correctly, White will have the H1-square in front of him in the bottom righthand corner and Black will have the A8-square in the same position: now you can begin the game, with each player taking turns to play a move.

Remember that **the person with the white pieces always makes the first move of the game**.



DIAGRAM



The king



The queen



The rook



The knight



The bishop



The pawn

TIME ALLOCATION

The duration of the part of the lesson involving the demo board should never exceed 15 minutes – 20 at the most – as after this the attention of the class drops enormously. If this happens, don't reprimand students. You have simply gone over time, and it is now the moment for the children to put into practice what they have just been taught. After enough time has passed to verify that everything has been understood, you move onto a new topic.

During the part of the lesson when the kids play games, they will talk and sometimes let off steam. You should monitor what they are doing, but usually it is best not to talk very much. Just keep an eye on all the chessboards to make sure all the moves are legal: often one of the two players will notice if a move is illegal. You should intervene if they don't realise this has happened. Otherwise, simply let the kids have fun and explore the position/game by themselves.

The amount of time dedicated to explanation and playing determines the whole rhythm of the course. The children will respond positively to this and gain confidence. With a quick hand movement, what you have just explained as a concept quickly becomes a reality for them. The children listen more carefully as they know the moment to turn theory into practice on their own boards will soon arrive. In short, they will concentrate more in the first part so that they can play better in the second part.

We must try to make them protagonists when they play. If you respect them when they are at the board, they will respect you when you are at the demo board. In every lesson the ideal is 50% theory and 50% practice: this can vary, depending on what lesson it is and what class you are teaching. Toward the end of the course you can increase practice to as much as 60/70 %, but always with the appropriate level of supervision. They should never be left unsupervised.

First golden rule for the person conducting the course (forgive the red type, but these rules cannot be emphasised too strongly or too often):

During activities, a topic should never be explained on the demo board unless the children then have opportunity to experiment with it over the board.

Second golden rule for the instructor:

Try to avoid presentations at the demo board that are longer than 15 minutes. As soon as the explanation is concluded, start the practical part related to the topic at hand.

The third and last golden rule for the instructor (the most difficult to observe!):

Respect the first two golden rules for the entire duration of the course.

LESSON 2

The king

Present the king using the demo board, showing how it moves. Emphasize that the opponent's king is the objective in every chess game.

We use the king to introduce the concept of 'capturing' ('taking' an opponent's piece is possible, for all the pieces and pawns, only if the capturing piece can immediately move to the square the targeted piece or pawn is standing on). Give an example on the demo board, by putting a piece or pieces on a square directly adjacent to the king. Then move pieces a couple of squares away from the king and ask the kids, 'Can the king capture it now?'. Obviously, this is never possible as the king cannot move more than one square at a time. Tell them, for teaching purposes, that a target piece cannot move, and then ask the kids to suggest routes the king can take to capture it.

The first golden rule for the king

Before moving on to the practical part, introduce the first golden rule (see the rule for the exact wording), which is applied during the first exercise (without having yet introduced the rook). Illustrate the first golden rule for the king on the demo board, noting that the minimum distance between two kings, as a result of the rule, is always one square horizontally, vertically or diagonally.

If by mistake, or through ignorance, they are placed on adjacent squares this means that a player has made an illegal move, and therefore it must be taken back: stop the game, return the position to just before the king move was made and the player must now make another king move.

THE KING

The **king** is the most important piece of all: **checkmating the king is the objective of every player in every game.**

The king moves **a single square** at a time in any direction: horizontal, vertical or diagonal; **forward, back, right or left.**

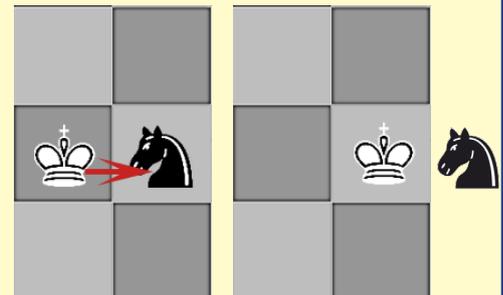
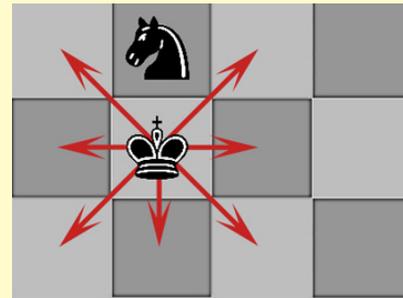
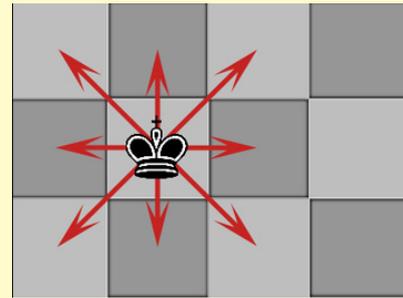
Like every other piece and the pawns, the king cannot go onto a square if it is already occupied by a piece or a pawn of its own colour.

Look at the second diagram, how many **moves** can the black king make?

Only 7: the 7 unoccupied adjacent squares, but it cannot move to where the black knight is standing.

The king can **capture** (take) any piece (except the opponent's king; you will understand why in a few moments) and an adversary pawn simply by occupying the square that piece or pawn is located on.

In the game of chess, all the pieces and the pawns can capture any opponent's piece or pawn if they can reach the square the target piece or pawn occupies. The captured piece is then removed from the chessboard.



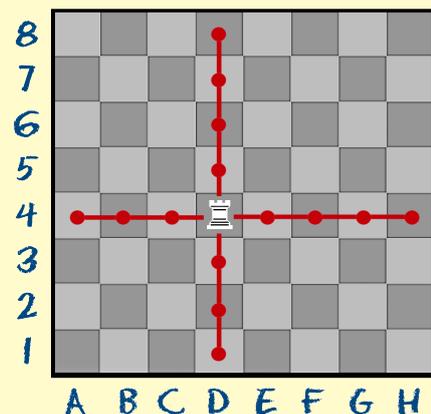
THE ROOK

The **rook** can **move as many squares as it wishes to.**

However, it can move only up and down the vertical files or back and forth along the horizontal ranks.

You cannot move it along the diagonal; this is illegal.

Look at the diagram. Starting from the D4 square, the rook can choose to go to any of the following squares: if it moves vertically, D5, D6, D7, D8, D3, D2, and D1, or, if it moves horizontally, E4, F4, G4, H4, C4, B4, and A4.



Exercise

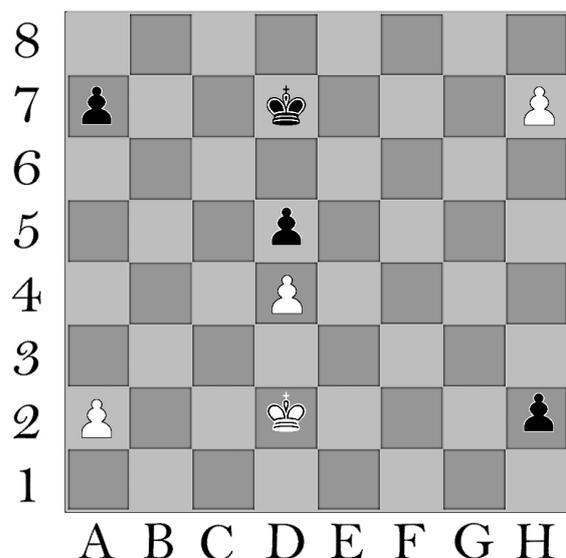
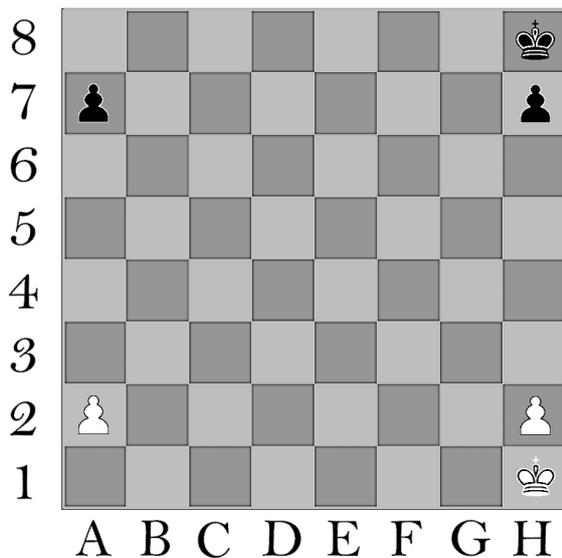
After the explanation, there is an exercise: get the kids to put two kings and two pawns for each player on their chessboards (showing them the position on the demo board and saying the coordinates if you wish). Once the position is on the kids' boards, they play a minigame called FLAGS: the winner is the one who is first to capture their opponent's two pawns (at Victor's chess house, real FLAGS are used as elements that can be captured – during minigame exercises the flags are represented by pawns). However, they must find the shortest path, and always respect the first golden rule for the king, (namely kings must always have at least one square between them, and one king CAN NEVER CAPTURE THE OTHER). Of course, they must also respect the other rules: the king can only move one square at a time, that players alternate their moves etc.

Obviously, until you explain the characteristics of the pawn, its sole purpose is to indicate squares to be reached. In other words, pawns NEVER MOVE (and therefore the kings can pass through squares where real pawns can capture) and they only perform this function for the most basic exercises (in practice, pawns only act as FLAGS in all the minigames, i.e. they are not yet pieces that participate in the minigame; it would make no difference if you were to place them lying on their sides).

The way the pawn moves and captures will be explained last of all. A starting position like the one on the left below is fine. All the positions in the minigames are very simple so you can invent others involving the same pieces before or during the lesson.

This is also the case for the other minigames that follow, and you can add one or two extra pawns if the students are quicker to understand.

Start with the easiest positions, let them play them several times over the board, and after about ten minutes introduce the second.



Minigames (FLAGS).

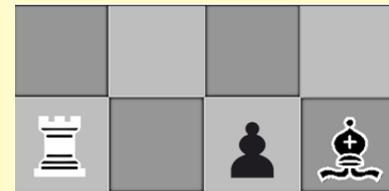
A minigame is very useful, because it is the moment when, during the various stages of the course, you can check if everything has been understood. Sometimes a glance is enough to evaluate how a pair of players are doing, and you should only intervene only when it is necessary, and without stopping the whole class but only working with one pair of players at a time.

The other opportunity you will encounter is to observe how more talented children make your work easier as they will avoid playing with those who do not respect the rules, and they will correct their classmates by painless example. It may happen that the more gifted students will understand how to defend their last pawn with the king, giving you the opportunity to introduce the first draw concept. Using flags, you can always involve the whole class, without excluding kids who have less aptitude or who are less attentive. During minigames, White or Black can take turns moving first (the same positions will be played several times). When the whole class can play a game with all the pieces, pairs should no longer be heterogenous, because motivation and learning is impeded if one player is always winning or losing.

In the diagram the white rook can capture the black bishop in one move.



In the other diagram below it cannot capture the bishop, it must stop on the previous square to capture the pawn. **This rule applies to all pieces that can move as many squares as they want.**



GOLDEN RULES FOR THE KING

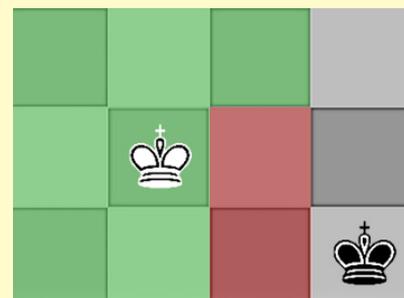
A game of chess is won by the player who gives **checkmate**, which is when they can demonstrate that the adversary king can longer avoid capture.

To understand what checkmate is, we must first learn **the two golden rules for the king**:

The first golden rule for the king is:

The king can never go on a square where it can be captured.

Look at the diagram: in order not to break the first golden rule for the king, the white king can move only to one of the green squares; if it moves onto either of the red squares, it will be too close the black king, which could capture it. Therefore, **you cannot move it to either of those two squares, because these would be illegal moves.**



The application of the first golden rule for the king means **two kings can never be on squares next to each other!**

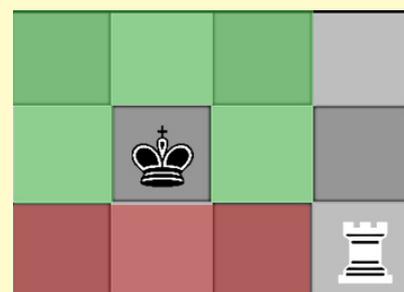
And, indeed, the red squares are off limits for both kings.

This rule also applies in regard to other pieces and pawns: the king can never place himself on a square where an opponent's pieces or pawns can capture him.

Look at the last diagram. The black king cannot go onto the red squares because they are controlled by the white rook. However, it can move onto the green squares!

It is not a problem if you make an illegal move: **the game is interrupted, the piece that made the irregular move is returned to the square it was on, and you resume the game by making a legal move.**

Two kings can never be on squares next to each other!



LESSON 3

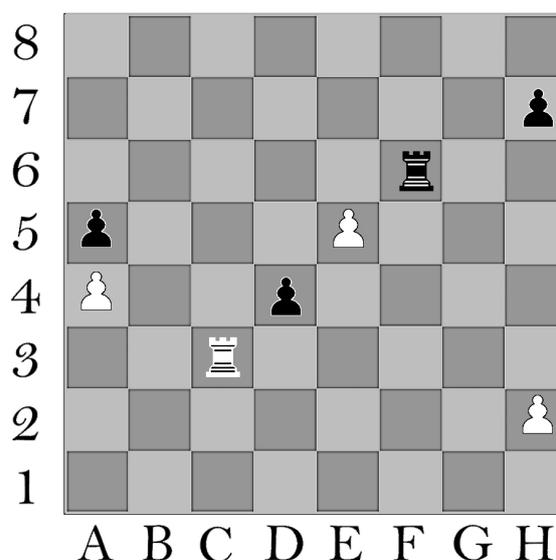
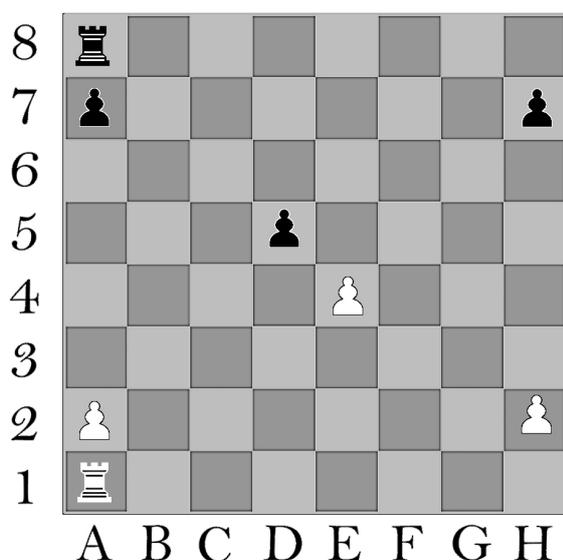
The rook

Introduce the rook on the demo board, showing examples of its movement and highlighting the fact that it can capture 'from afar' (but it can't jump over pieces in its path!) and that no matter where it placed on an empty chessboard, it always has 14 moves (at the very most, the king has 8 moves, which makes it clear why the rook is more powerful, even if less important).

Put example positions on the demo board and ask what could be the quickest way to capture (like those in Shortcuts at Victor's chess house, but shown on the demo board).

Exercise

Use flags for practicing how the rook moves and captures. The winner is the first one to take all the other player's pawns or captures their rook (from this moment they must understand that in chess ALL PIECES CAN BE CAPTURED, EXCEPT FOR THE KINGS, WHICH ARE NEVER CAPTURED - see further ahead). You can use the two positions below or others. The important thing is that they are balanced.



The second golden rule

This is the fundamental rule of the course, and while it is not difficult to understand, it is important that the kids understand that it always applies.

To understand this rule, we start with the first golden rule for the king. Put a king near the edge of the empty demo board and ask, 'How many moves can he make?'. Five! Then you add a rook so that it controls some of the squares around the king. "And now, how many moves can the king make? Only two! This is because the king can no longer go where the rook can take it. You CANNOT MAKE THESE MOVES!

'But if it is the rook's turn to move not the king's, couldn't the rook move to a square from which it can capture the king and then do so if the king does not see the threat?' At this point the second golden rule comes into force. It states that THE KING MUST SAVE ITSELF FROM THE ROOK'S THREAT TO CAPTURE, and therefore it must go to a square where the rook can no longer take it. If the king does not save itself, then an ILLEGAL MOVE has been made. THIS IS NOT ALLOWED. As noted, it is not a problem if this happens. Play is interrupted and a legal move is made. To make this idea more accessible, you can make a parallel with other games and sports they know, 'When playing football can a player hold the ball with their hands? Nooo! Of course not. And what happens if they do? Then the referee blows his whistle and the game is interrupted. The ref makes everyone go back to where they were before the foul happened. Illegal moves in chess are like fouls in football or other sports: we must always start again from the position just before it was made, i.e. we can't continue to play as if nothing happened!'.
The king is never captured.

So, if we apply both golden rules, we will understand that that the king is never taken. Kids usually ask, 'So how do you win?'. To win you must checkmate the king, which does not mean you physically capture the king, but only that you can DEMONSTRATE that there is no way the king can avoid capture on the next move. These are the two golden rules that, if respected, lead to understanding what checkmate is.

The second golden rule is:
 if someone is about to capture the king (we say 'check' after we make the move) **we are obliged** to defend it.

With the exception of another king, every piece and pawn can try to capture the opponent's king, and when the threatening move has just been made, you need to say to your companion 'check!'

Observe the diagrams: it's white's move and he repositions the rook from d5 to h5 and says 'check'.

Indeed, the black king is 'in check', i.e. 'the rook is about to take it ... but now it is the player with black pieces turn to move!

In this case, the second golden rule applies to the black king, who will move to the g2-square (or to g1), where the rook can not arrive.

Look at the second diagram: the h2-square is red because if the king moved there, it is still threatened by the rook and, therefore, this would be an illegal move.

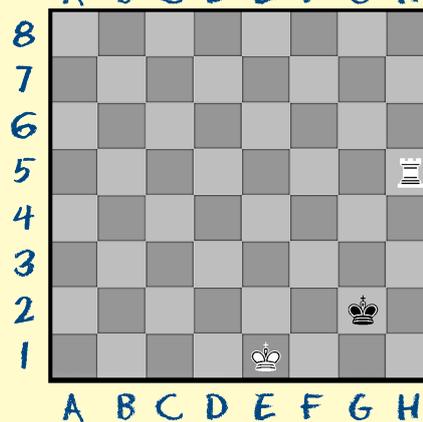
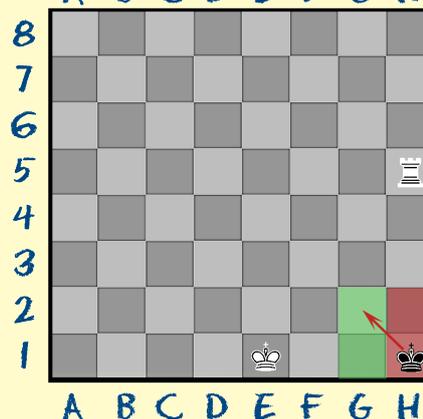
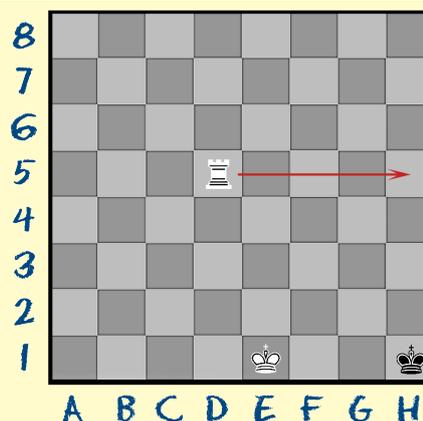
THE KING IS NEVER CAPTURED!

So far, we have learned that under no circumstances can the king go to or remain on squares controlled by an opposing piece or pawn: it would be an illegal move that **must be taken back**.

This means that **the king can never be taken**, even if a player allows it to happen because they are distracted!

If during the game a king is captured, **we know for certain that we have broken one of the two golden rules**.

If you realise this has happened, the game should be interrupted, and the game goes back to when the king was still on the chessboard.



In this match the king was captured by the bishop. It is clear the two players still have not learned how to play chess properly!

Exercise

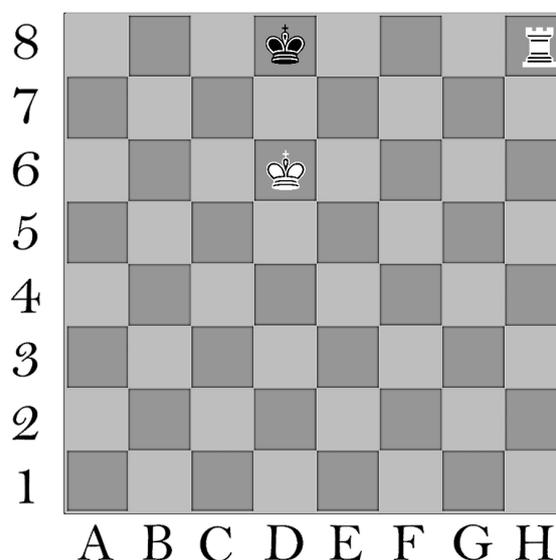
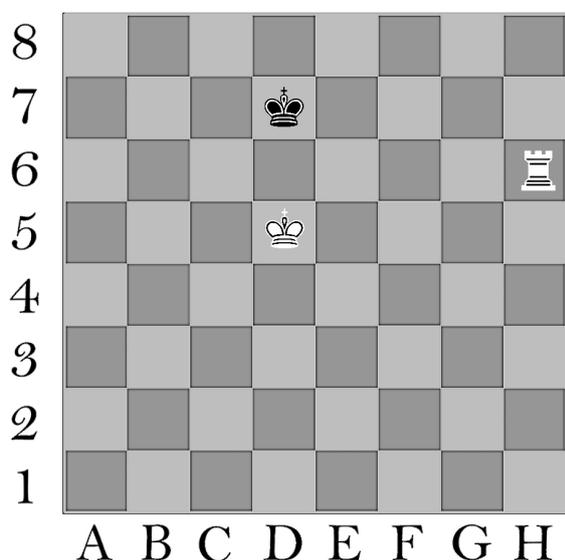
One player has only a king and the other only a rook. The player with the rook has to put the king in check 10 times, counting aloud, and saying 'Check!' every time the king is threatened. The other player has to save their king every time it is threatened. If a player makes an illegal move, the other player must report it and is awarded one point each time this happens. Once each player has played both sides of the position, the one who has made fewer illegal moves (or who has been awarded more points, which is the same thing) will win. If a player manages to capture other's rook (this can happen) he wins immediately, and the game is played again with a change of sides. If neither player makes a mistake, or they make the same number of irregular moves, the result is a draw.

LESSON 4

Checkmate

Demonstrate the two golden rules again on the demo board, i.e. putting the king in check and illegal moves. By counting through all the possible moves, you can identify which are illegal, and we discover that the king can put in check and it has ZERO moves available to avoid this.

That's checkmate! Start with the position on the left below, pointing out that if it is the black king's turn to move, there are only 5 moves available, and that it is IMPOSSIBLE to take either the rook or the king. At this point you start to explain the checkmating procedure. It is White's move, and he puts the



rook on H7 saying, 'Check!'. The black king's only options are to escape to C8, or D8 or E8 as he cannot move to E6, D6, C6 as he could be taken by his opponent's king (first golden rule). He cannot go in E7 or C7 as he can still be taken by the rook (second golden rule). Point out that in this position the king has only three possible moves. Choose to move it to C8. Now it's White's turn and he moves his king to D6. Now it's Black's move again. Ask the question 'How many moves does Black have now?'

Two! It's up to him which one to play. 'Let's say he chooses to move to D8'. At this point White moves the rook to H8 and once more says 'Check!' (See the diagram on the right). 'Where can the black king go to save himself from the rook?'. Check each square with the kids: 'Can it go to D7? Nooo! The white king can capture it there!'. Evaluate each square, ONE BY ONE, then observe that the black king has arrived at the point when it has ZERO MOVES. He cannot avoid being captured in any way, so check has become CHECKMATE, and White is victorious. The king is never actually captured (taken off the board) when checkmate is delivered. As Black cannot make a legal move, there will not be a subsequent move by White. Another way to see it, is that the word 'checkmate' is a DECLARATION of victory. Therefore, it is really important that you actually checkmate you can't just say it and then not be able to demonstrate that the king cannot escape if your opponent doesn't believe you! So always check every square and be sure that there are ZERO MOVES + CHECK.

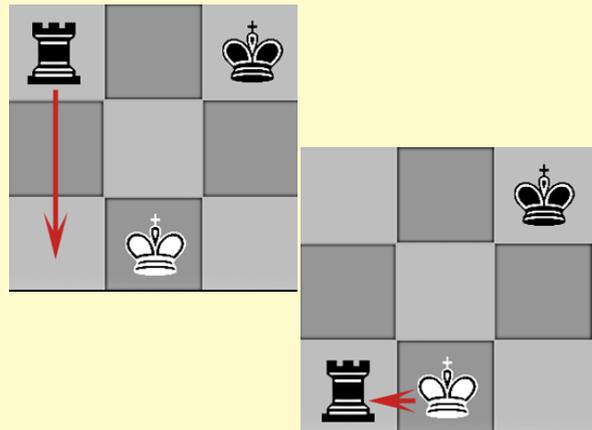
CHECKMATE

While reading the last paragraph you might have asked yourself:
'but if the king isn't captured, how do i win?'

Well, you must know that **the checkmated king always remains on the chessboard**, because checkmate is only **a declaration** that the king can no longer escape, not that you intend to take it! To understand how we can demonstrate that checkmate has indeed occurred, we must return to king checks. Note that **there are no more than 3 ways to defend a king when it is in check**.

1) Capture the piece or the pawn that is giving check.

Look at the diagrams: in the first, the black rook moves to the square next to the white king to give check.



The white king, however, can simply take it as there isn't a square between the rook and the king. that was easy. No more rook, no more check!

In the third diagram, there is also a white rook, which can take the black rook, and thereby eliminate the piece that is checking the king.



2) Put one of your pieces or a pawns between the king and piece giving check.

in this diagram the king is threatened by the black rook, but it cannot take it because it is too far away.

However, the white rook can be placed between the black rook and the king, and the king has been saved.

The black rook can take the white rook, but not the king.



If this happens, it would be on a square next to white king, which will be able to capture it, defending itself from check in the same way as in the first diagram.



Exercise

The starting position is like the one first used (the black king is on the 7th rank). It's White to move and the objective is to checkmate Black. On average, 15% of third-grade students succeed. This 'minigame' is essential for you, especially for checking that the golden rules have been understood. At this stage, endgame technique is not important yet, and it's too early to teach it and it doesn't matter if checkmate is achieved. The important thing is that they understand the need to restrict the opponent's King to one side, and that they must also use the King to succeed in doing this. If the rook is captured ... draw! If they cannot deliver checkmate... draw! When a player manages to checkmate, verify that both players understand that this has happened, and take advantage of the moment to congratulate both of them on achieving the goal (i.e. that they both understand why checkmate has occurred, not because one of the players delivered checkmate). Do not emphasize that one player might be better than another. However, you can utilize a stronger player by moving them to where this advantage in strength could be more useful! Make sure you keep moving from one chessboard to another: when children are having difficulty, you can set up the position again and show them how it can be done. However, make sure you intervene only at the end and not while play is underway, unless illegal moves have been played. Repeat the exercise several times, inverting the colours (do this by turning the board, so both always have H1 at the bottom right of the board).

The three ways of defending against check

It is important to point out how other pieces on the board can be used to defend a king that is in check. So they understand easily, examples on the demo board can involve just a black rook (see the examples in the rules section). However, the ideal moment to check if the kids have a complete understanding of checkmate is every time they are playing with all the pieces. Instruction should be given WITH A LOT OF PATIENCE.

Children who already know the rules

There may be students who know the rules, or believe they do. If they really do know them, they can be of help to you by playing with others who do not know them, identifying and correcting illegal moves made by their companions. It must be explained to them that all the rules will be dealt with at the right time and that what they know now is so they can begin to play now. Do not allow them to ask questions that are not pertinent to the topic being dealt with at any particular time, and remind the kids that this is a course for everyone, and so more knowledgeable children will have to wait a bit before they can play with all the pieces, even if they are already 'know how'. Until games involving all the pieces are played, prevent kids with greater knowledge from pairing up with each other (unless for some reason this is useful for you).

Introducing the pieces

For each new piece you can note their respective characteristics and peculiarities: range of action, capturing examples and 'short roads'. It is important to give the relative strength and value of each piece so that the kids understand, for example, that it is better to capture an unprotected queen that is worth 9 points than an unprotected knight that is worth only 3 (While these are the main topics at level 2, it is necessary to quickly mention them now). Each presentation of a new piece on the demo board must include a demonstration of how the piece can checkmate (in one move), using the diagrams to begin with. After this, and every time, use flag exercises to consolidate what they have learnt. From now on, the aim is for the children to be able to play with all the pieces, while you continue to monitor their understanding of checkmate in every lesson as understanding this is the principal goal of the course.

Therefore, use the presentation of EVERY new piece to remind them how the golden rules relate to check and checkmate, before moving on to the practical part of the lesson.

3) Moving the king to another square (but not one where it would be in check...).

The king simply moves to a square where it will be safe, avoiding going to where another piece can capture it. Look at the diagram on the right.

Remember the first golden rule for the king!

Finally we see what checkmate is!!

Look at the second diagram: the white rook has put the black king in check, and, as you know, the king must defend itself: how can it do this?

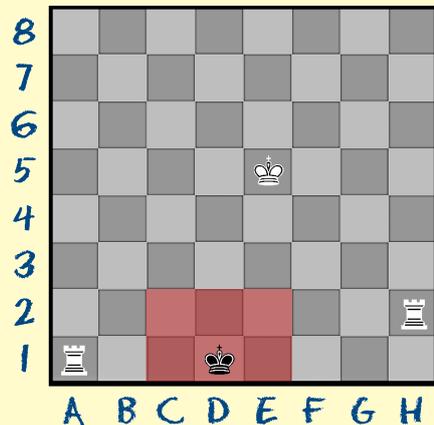
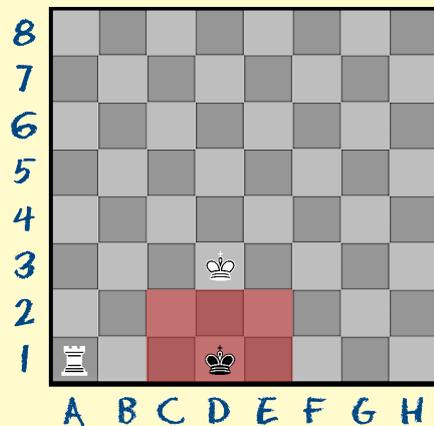
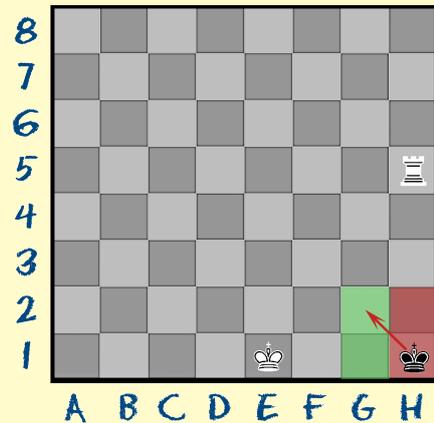
It cannot escape to a square where it would be safe as in addition to the rook there is also the white king (the squares denied to the black king are all red).

The rook cannot be captured by the king because it is too far away; there is no black piece or pawn that can take the rook or even places itself between the rook and the king to block the check.

As none of the three possible ways to defend the king are available, check becomes checkmate and the game ends immediately, with victory going to the one who has delivered checkmate.

Remember that checkmate occurs only when there is no way to remove the threat to the king.

Look the last diagram: two rooks can checkmate without the help of the king

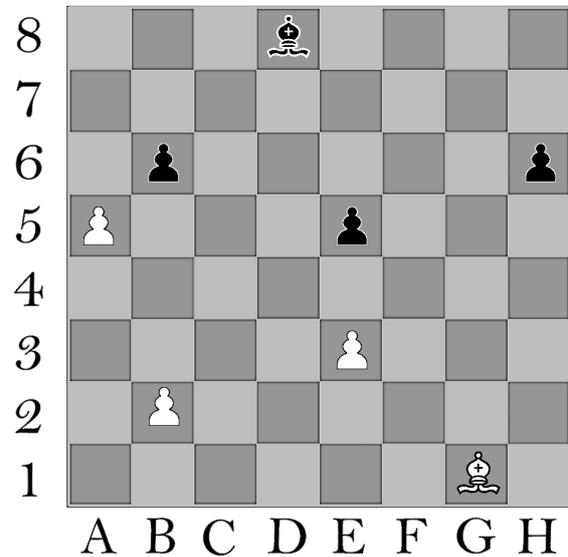
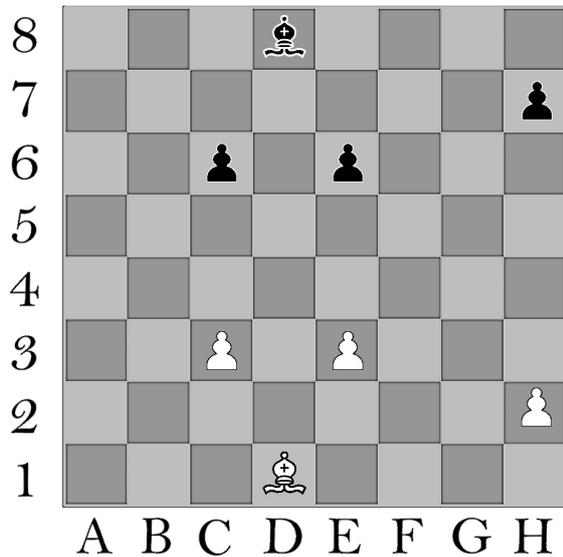


Obviously, any piece or pawn is able to deliver checkmate, further on you will see numerous examples.

LESSON 5

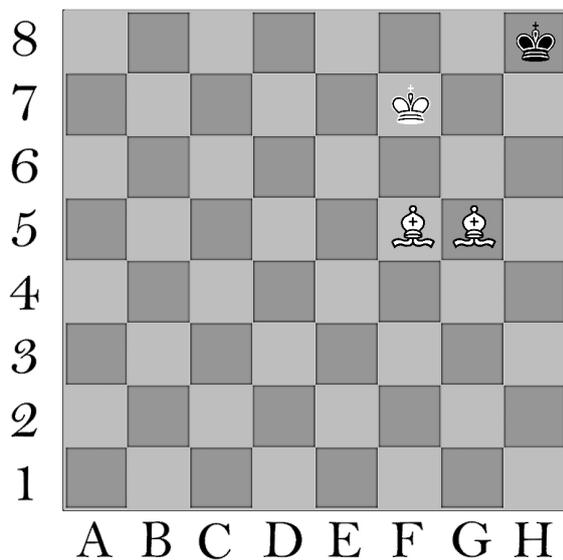
The bishop

Present the bishop on the demo board, then move on to the flag exercises (first the position on the left and then the one on the right).

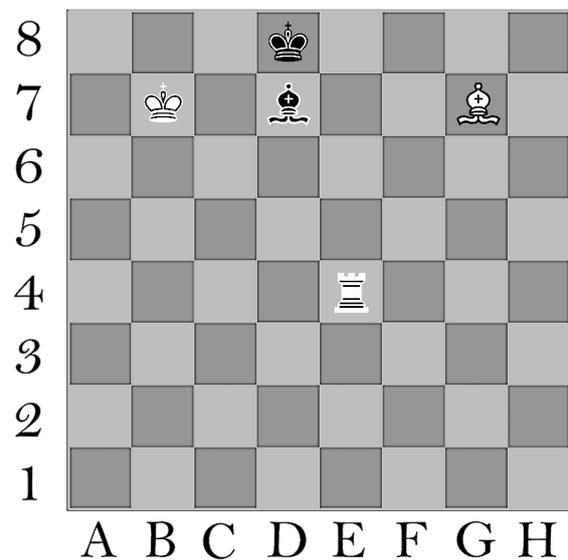


Some kids may find it difficult to keep a bishop on the one diagonal. Note that in the first exercise the bishops can never encounter each other because they are on different coloured diagonals. The children will discover this for themselves (unless they capture the adversary bishop by jumping or straying off diagonals!).

Bishop mate-in-one positions:



Bishop on F6 checkmate



Bishop on F6 checkmate

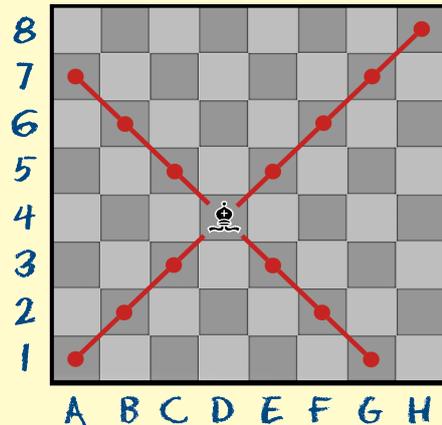
THE BISHOP

It moves as many squares as it wants.

It moves only on the diagonals, and in any direction.

It can not move horizontally or vertically: either would be illegal.

In the diagram the bishop can choose to go to following squares in a single move: A1, B2, C3, E5, F6, G7, H8, A7, B6, C5, E3, F2, G1.



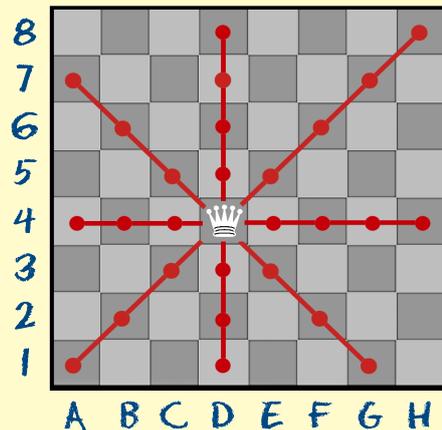
THE QUEEN

The queen moves as many squares as she wants.

The queen is the strongest piece, but she is less important than the king!

She moves along files vertically, across the ranks horizontally, or diagonally.

The queen can move like a rook and bishop combined.



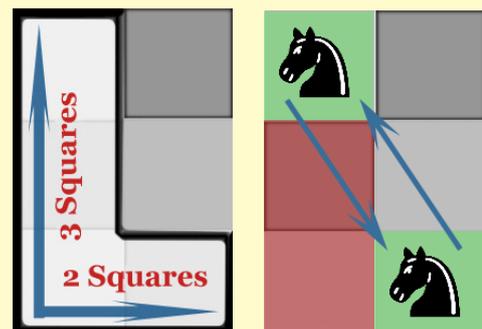
In the diagram, the queen on d4 can choose to go to following squares in a single move: if she wants to move like a rook, to D1, D2, D3, D5, D6, D7, D8, A4, B4, C4, E4, F4, G4, H4, or if you want to move like a bishop, to A1, B2, C3, E5, F6, G7, H8, G1, F2, E3, C5, B6, A7

THE KNIGHT

Among the chess pieces, the knight is unique in the way it moves: instead of moving in single straight lines as all the other pieces do, he makes a jumping movement that can be traced with two lines.

To understand where a knight can jump to, imagine a letter 'L' drawn on the chessboard; 3 squares for the long part and 2 squares for the short part. It can jump from one of the end points of the L to the other.

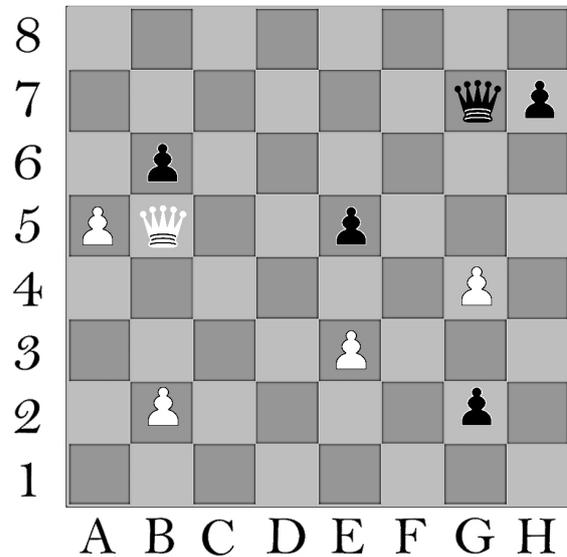
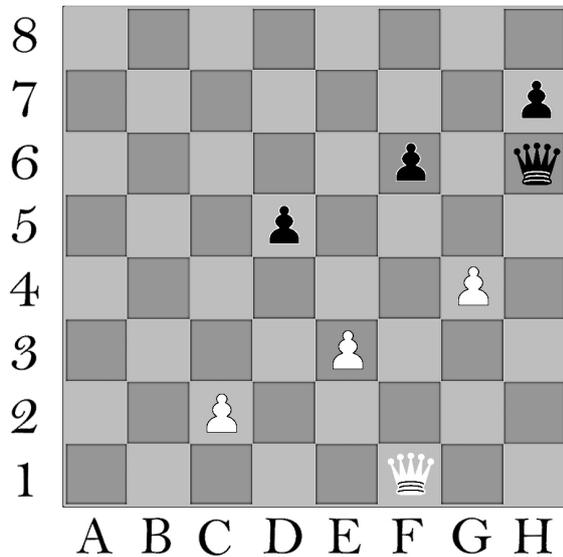
In the diagram, the knight jumps from one green square to the other, both downward and upward.



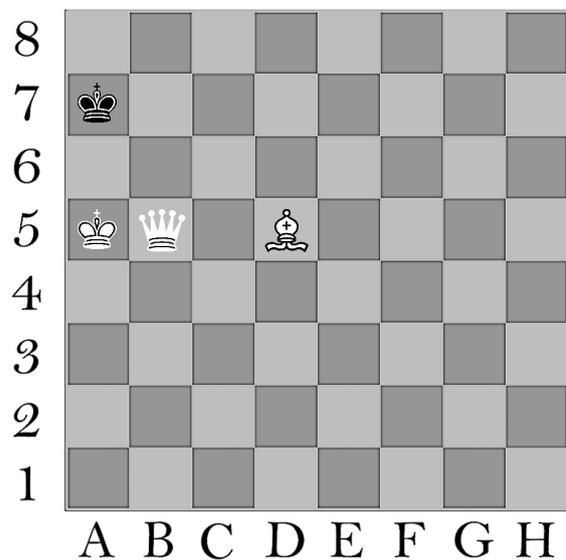
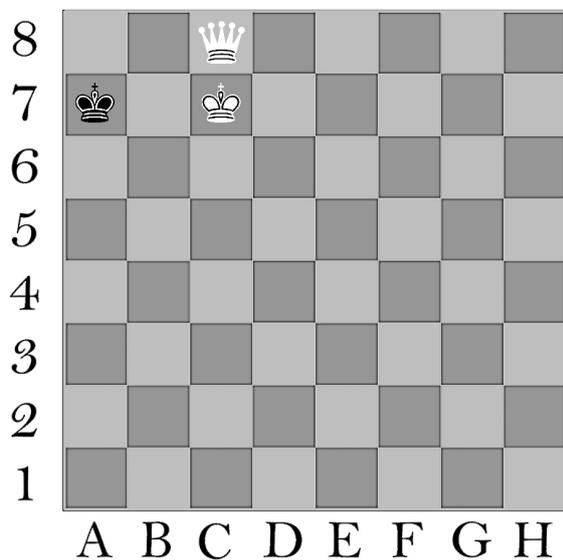
LESSON 6

The queen

Present the queen on the demo board, then move on to the flag exercises (first the position on the left and then the one on the right).



Queen mate-in-one positions:



Queen on b7 – Checkmate

Queen on b7 (or b6) – Checkmate

You should note that even though the queen stands on the square next to the opponent's king, she cannot be captured as she is defended by her king. This is so because the king (in this case Black's one) cannot go onto a square (even if it is done in order to capture) where he can be captured – the first golden rule for the king! Obviously, this is the same for any other piece and pawn that threatens the king: if they are DEFENDED by another piece, a king can NEVER capture them.

This 'L' can be revolved any way you like: upside down, flipped left or right, on its side ... the important thing is that it is always made up 2 squares and 3.

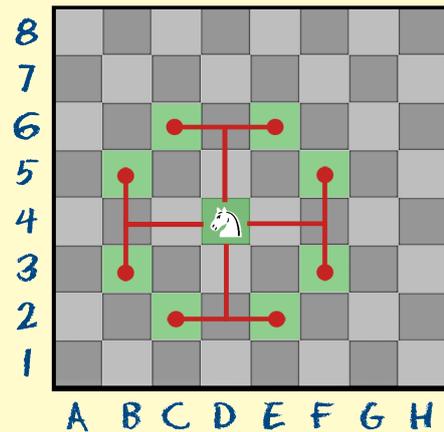
Look at the diagram. the knight can move, also to capture, to the following squares: C2, E2, F3, F5, E6, C6, B5, and B3.

The knight only captures on the arrival square.

It cannot capture on any square between the departure square and the square where it lands.

Indeed, the knight jumps over any pieces or pawns between the departure and arrival square, be they white or black.

In the last diagram, the knight can jump to capture the queen in a single move. However, the rook and the bishop are not captured because to capture a piece or pawn is necessary to occupy the square the piece or pawn is standing on. When the knight passes over the squares of the rook and the bishop it is in mid-air.



THE PAWN

The pawn moves vertically forward one empty square at a time; he can never go backward.

On its first move, the pawn can choose between moving forward one square or two squares: this rule apply to all the 8 pawns.

It moves only to empty squares; if the square in front of a pawn is already occupied by an opponent's pawn or piece, it cannot take it: the pawn marches forward in one way and captures in another.

To capture, it moves diagonally one square to the right or to the left.

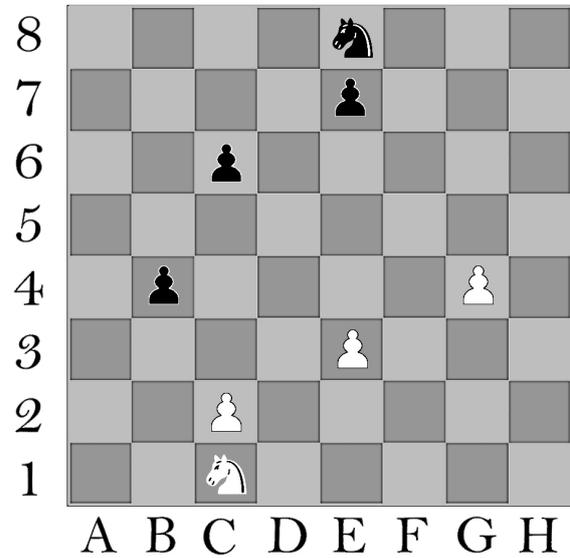
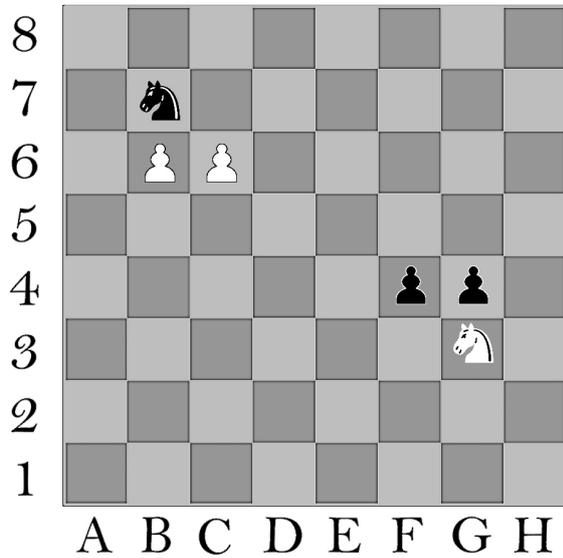
In the diagram, the pawn on b2 cannot move, while the one on a2 can take the rook diagonally or move forward vertically. As it is in its initial position, the pawn can choose between moving one square or two squares.



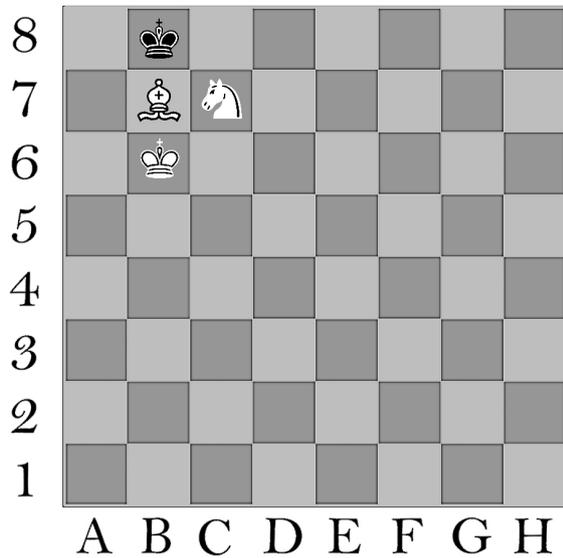
LESSON 7

The knight

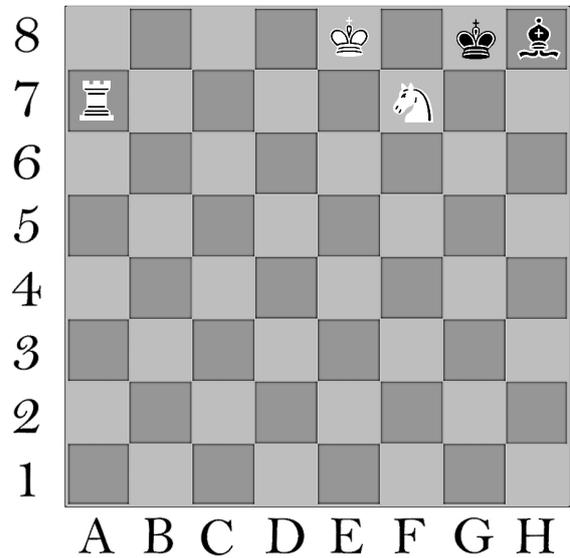
Present the knight on the demo board, then move on to the flag exercises (first the position on the left and then the one on the right)



Knight mate-in-one positions:



Knight on a6 – Checkmate



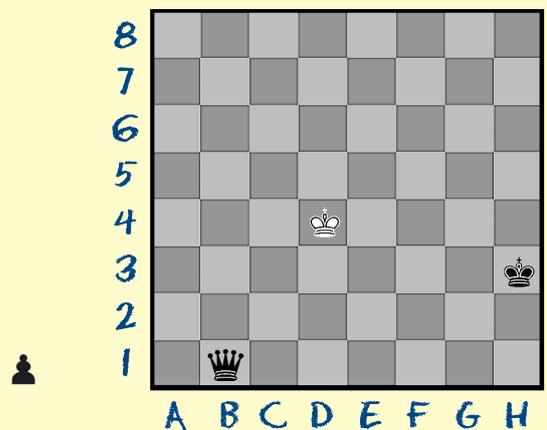
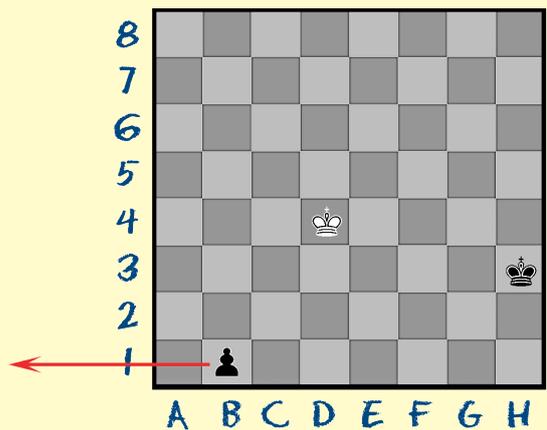
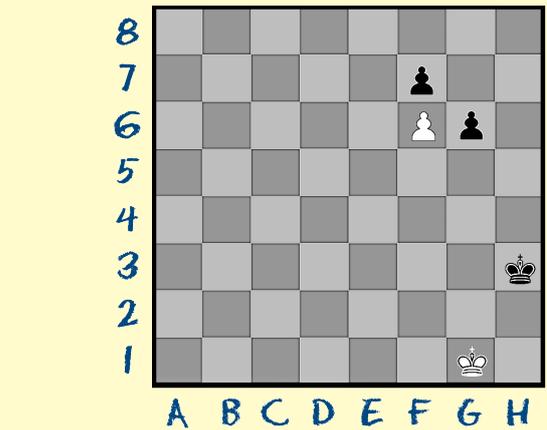
Knight on h6 – Checkmate

In the first diagram on the right, the pawns on f7 and on f6 do not have any squares to move to, while the one on g6 can move forward one square, but not two. **This is because if the pawn is on g6, it has already used its first move**, and therefore from then on he can only move one square at a time.

If there are not pieces on the squares where the pawn is allowed to capture, he cannot move to them; in other words, **the pawn moves diagonally only when capturing a piece or pawn!** if you have another look at the first diagram, you can see that the white pawn on b2 cannot move to a3, and also not to c3, as there aren't pieces he can capture on these squares.

An extraordinary thing happens whenever a pawn arrives at the other end of the chessboard: as he is at the edge of the chessboard, he cannot continue to move forward, and he is not allowed to move backwards either ... **so he is substituted by another piece; he can no longer remain a pawn!**

When this happens, you need to remove the pawn from the chessboard and **put a queen in its place** (almost always the pawn becomes a queen because it is the most powerful piece). However, if you want to, you can also replace it with a rook, a bishop or a knight, but never with a king because you can have only one king!



CASTLING

Castling is a special move because the king and a rook are allowed to move at the same time.

Castling is a very useful move because the king goes to a safe place. It is like he is protected by a heavily fortified castle.

Look at the first two diagrams: first you must move the king 2 squares toward the rook: after the rook jumps over the king and lands on the square directly next to it: even though the two pieces change position, this is a single move!



Lesson 8

The pawn

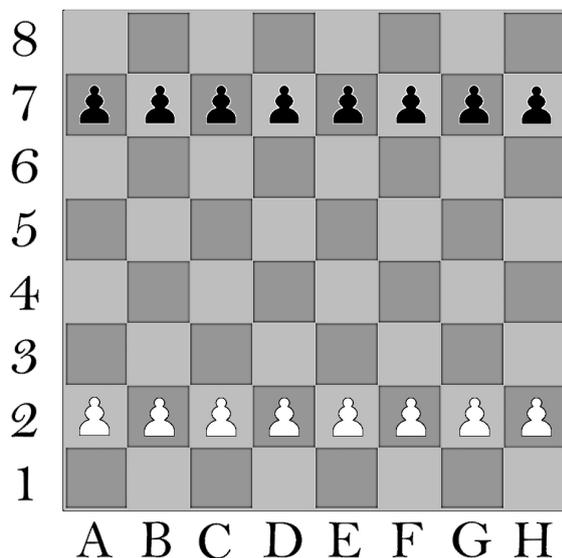
Present the pawn on the demo board. First, point out that usually it marches ahead one square at a time, then explain how it is only allowed to capture diagonally, and then show them how promotion works: 'When the pawn reaches the other side of the chessboard, it cannot go any further and it can't turn back either. Therefore, he **MUST** 'transform' into another piece of his choosing: either the queen, rook, bishop or knight. He cannot become a king, because there can only be one king, and he cannot remain a pawn. Usually cunning players turn it into a queen!'

Explain that the initial two-square move is done because the pawn is in a hurry to become a queen, but you must be very careful to make sure this is a good idea (you have to calculate what will happen if your opponent chooses to capture it). Explain the en passant rule at the end of the minigame. Even if this situation never arises in their games, it is a rule that they need to know.

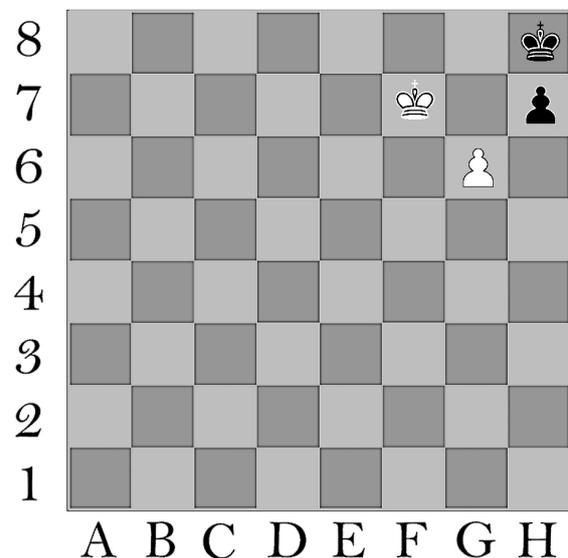
The winner of the minigame is the first who promotes any of his pawns to a queen. The win is confirmed when the player says 'Queen!' The game is then repeated. White always moves first.

Exercise

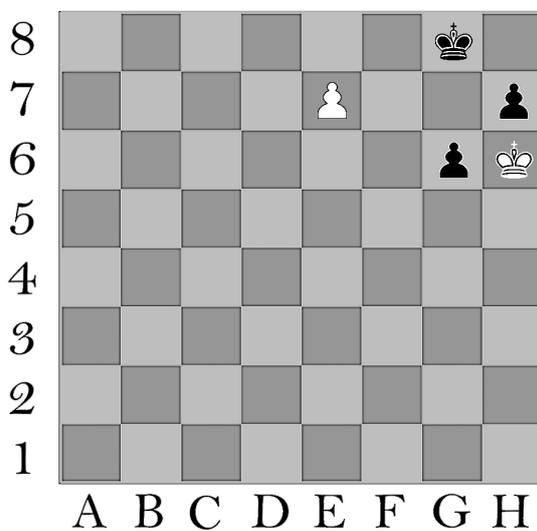
This is the initial position for the minigame



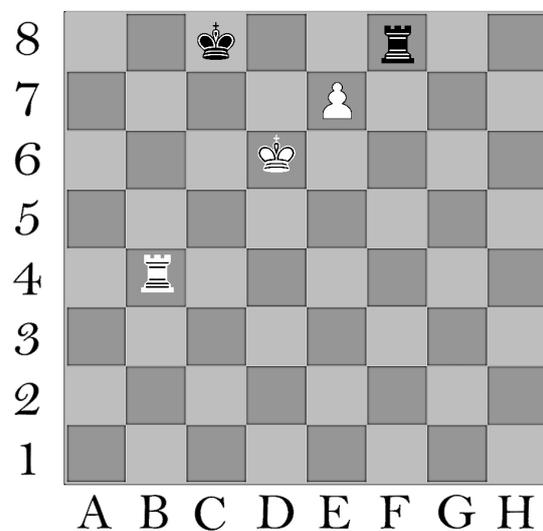
Example of pawns checkmating



White pawn on G7 - checkmate



Pawn on E8 = queen! - Checkmate



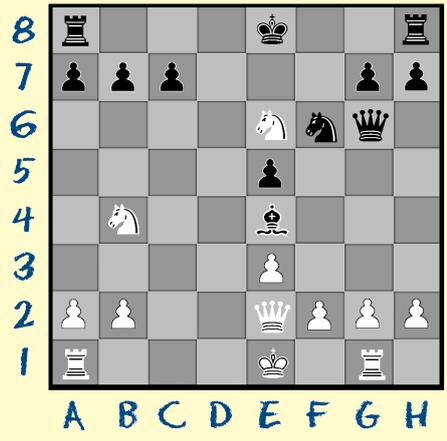
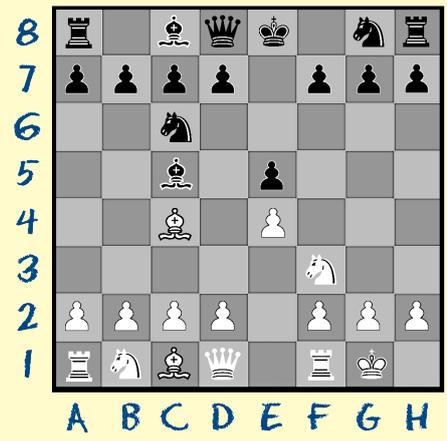
Pawn captures rook = queen (or rook)! Checkmate

As you can see, the king has built himself a castle. He is well protected by a wall of three pawns, with a knight standing guard in front and the rook to his side: he is now much safer than before!

You can castle only if neither the king nor the rook has made a previous move, and there cannot be a piece standing between the king and the rook, be it white or black.

The king should not be in check and the king cannot cross over or arrive on a square on which it is in check.

Castling can be done only once in a game, and you can choose to do it with either of the two rooks. Because of the different distances the king travels, castling can be 'short' or 'long'. It depends which unmoved rook you choose to castle with.



In the diagram above black cannot castle short (moving the H8-rook) because the F8-square is controlled by the white knight (the king can not pass through a threatened square; remember the golden rules), or long (moving the A8 rook) because the knight also controls the D8-square.

In contrast, white is allowed to castle long. It is true that the black bishop controls the B1-square, but it is the white rook that must cross this square, not the king!

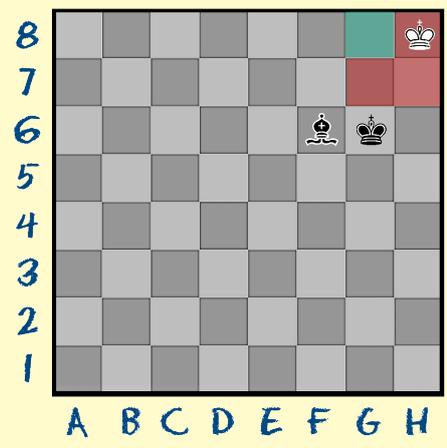
DRAWN GAME

A chess game is drawn when neither of the two players is able to give checkmate. The result of the match is a tie.

A draw can occur in different ways:

1) draw because there is insufficient material left.

Examples are when there are only two kings on the chessboard, or a king against a king and a knight, or a king and bishop.



Think about it! How can a lone king checkmate the other king if he cannot go onto a square directly next to him?

It is not even possible if the king has the help of a bishop (or a knight)! Look at the diagram: the white king is in a corner of the chessboard, but if the bishop checks it by moving to the F6-square, supported by the black king on G6, the white can escape to g8. if instead the black king is located on f8, the white king can escape to H7.

LESSON 9

Castling

Explain the castling on the demo board, indicating that it is a very useful move because it allows you to build a 'castle' around the king where it is safe. At the same time castling allows one of the rooks to come into play. From this point on you can let them play with all the pieces, mentioning for now only the draw that occurs because of lack of material: it is easy for them to understand that when there are only two kings left there can be no winner and, the game is over. Little explanation is needed (draws are explained in the next lesson). Make castling 'obligatory' in every game, otherwise the kids won't do it. Castling is such an important move it is wise to force them to get some practice with it.

Development

To better understand the need for castling, introduce the concept of development (and never stop stressing its importance). In every game the kids must always complete development. Development is completed when all the pieces are developed, i.e. they have moved from their initial square to any other square (pawn moves are not developing moves – only moves with pieces) and the king has castled.

To underline the importance of development, you can show the kids a game on the demo board that concludes with early checkmate simply because one of the two players does not develop and does not even castle (Morphy vs Count Isouard is perfect). Also explain the concept of attack and defence of a pawn, or a piece, during the opening: you can point out that development is essential ... but in trying to do so you cannot disregard the moves of your opponent.

Go through the game and get the kids to call out when castling occurs.

Using all the pieces

Chess is a particularly valuable teaching tool as it involves countless important skills that will serve children for the rest of their lives. Kids learn to think logically, and it increases their ability to concentrate. However, for these benefits to be fully achieved, it is necessary to keep them experimenting with the movement of all the pieces while they play. Do not allow them to idly move only the pawns, or just a bishop and a knight from time to time, even if it is understandable that they will have difficulty handling 16 pieces (+16) all at once. This is precisely the challenge: to stimulate their visuo-spatial ability first of all, and then subsequently introduce more strategic concepts over time (maybe the following year). Many do not move the queen to prevent the opponent from exchanging her. Even if a queen exchange does not lose material, children often think they will lose without her! Do not incite competitiveness as this can lead to paralysis.

The game with all the pieces

Now it's time to play their first game with all the pieces. This is the moment all the kids have been waiting for. You promised this, so let them play a lot.

Before getting underway, it is necessary to introduce two important rules, which will be observed throughout the course:

- 1) none of children can decide that a game is finished **AUTONOMOUSLY**; they must call you so that you can check that the game has concluded correctly;
 - 2) when an illegal move occurs (if they notice it), and you are not present, they must call you.
- When a real checkmate occurs, let everyone know and celebrate it so there is party atmosphere. After all, we are seeing the first fruits of the course. When a game ends, try to change pairing, winners with winners. Be careful if someone loses continuously; you should help them to win at least one game.

The end of the game

Every proper game must have a conclusion, i.e. we must know who won and who lost. Otherwise it is not much fun. To have a result for games that have not been completed because of lack of time or slowness (which is more than normal for a starter course), it is necessary to use a point system. When the time to play ends, each of the boys will add up the total number of points for the pieces on their chessboard using the piece values given earlier in the manual. (they don't count those in the 'cemetery' - namely, captured pieces that have been placed next to the board). You can award two more points for those who castled if you wish). You need a minimum advantage of two points

2) Draw by stalemate.

When a player has **no more legal moves available**, and **at the same time, his king is not in check**, the match ends in a draw by stalemate.

In a clearly lost position, stalemate is about the only way defeat can be avoided!

In the first diagram, if it's black's turn to move, it's stalemate.

If it's white's turn, it's immediately checkmate with rook to a7.

Please note: **in this position the king cannot capture the rook!**

This would violate the first golden rule for the king, i.e. moving to a square where the knight checks him.

In the second diagram, if it's black turn, it's stalemate once again!

The king does not have a legal move, because every move will put the king in check.

3) Draw by perpetual check

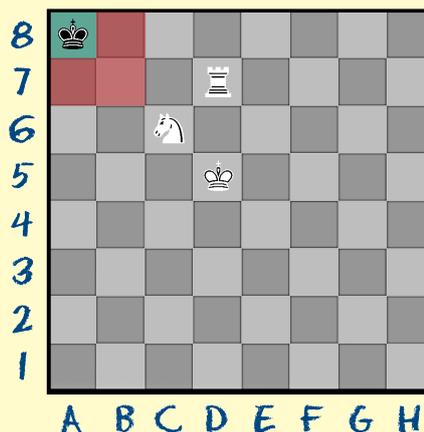
This occurs when you can repeatedly check the king, obviously without checkmating him, **and your companion cannot do anything to avoid this.**

In the diagram, black has just moved the queen to g4, checking the king.

The white king can only defend himself by moving to h1, but after that, the queen will give check again from f3.

Now the white king must return to g1, where it will be checked again from g4 (as before) and nothing can be done to stop this sequence ... **they could go on doing this forever!**

Once again, black can sometimes draw a 'lost' game if white lets him off the hook by allowing perpetual check!



There are other rules that allow a draw: the threefold repetition rule and the 50 moves rule. You will learn these when you are a little more expert. games played at school very rarely involve these rules!

to win (make sure it is not a drawn position!). If a player has only a one-point advantage point, it is a draw. Using the point-system accustoms the children to correctly understand the value of the pieces, and they will quickly learn they will lose if they keep making disadvantageous exchanges. **YOU SHOULD TELL THE CHILDREN THE COUNTING UP POINTS TO DECIDE A GAME IS ONLY DONE AT SCHOOL. THIS DOES NOT HAPPEN FOR NORMAL GAMES!**

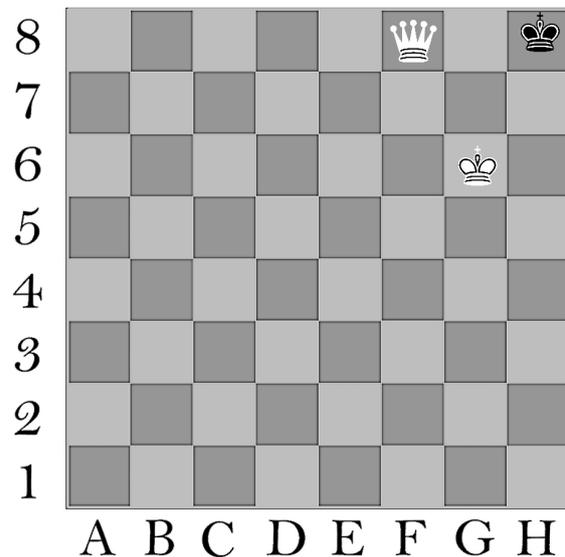
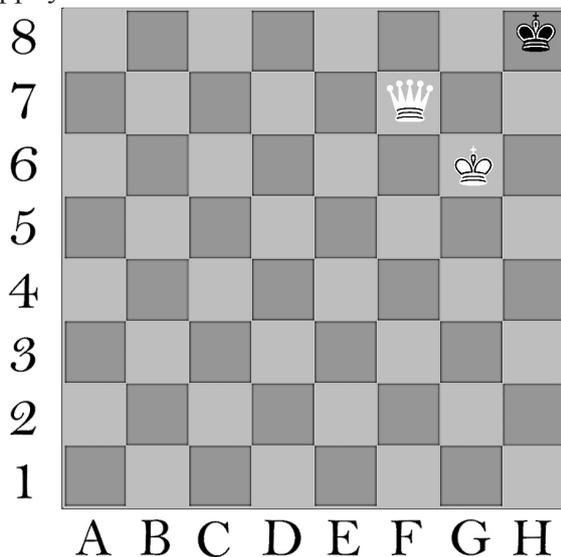
In a starter course, initially, you must not assume that when a child is told a rook is worth more than a pawn, they will understand why: you must explain to them why it's worth more. Always underline that a player with more pieces is the one who checkmates, in other words, **THEY HAVE A MATERIAL ADVANTAGE**. This must be an unequivocal point, do not lessen its force by discussing rare exceptions: in chess all the soundest rules have exceptions, but this is not the time to consider these. At this stage, your students need certainties to learn. Minigames are no longer necessary now; from here on, you will monitor their learning by observing games played and with discussion.

LESSON 10

Drawn game

The most commonly occurring draws are stalemate and lack of material. You do not need to introduce perpetual check at this stage if you think it might confuse some students.

Stalemate is frequent but should never be confused with checkmate! Even if they are somewhat similar, there is the big difference (besides the obvious difference between victory and defeat of course) that stalemate is a way for players with a big disadvantage to 'save themselves', i.e. to equalize the game instead of losing it. It is important to underline this as it explains why you should NEVER GIVE UP, even if it looks like you are losing for sure. You can try to explain stalemate in this way: 'Imagine that there is a bandit hidden in a cave, and there are policemen outside who want to capture him. What do they need to do to arrest him? Is it enough to wait for him to come out of the cave? Nooo! Because if the bandit in the cave has plenty to eat and drink and a nice place to sleep, he can stay in the cave for 10 years and never leave and he will never be caught! In order to finish things, the police have to enter the cave and capture the bandit there or outside if he tries to escape! The captain who commands the police, would not be very impressed if his forces say to him, 'We have captured the bandit', but, in fact, he is sitting happily in his cave.



In the position on the left we have the bandit (black king) in the 'cave', H8, and the policemen (the white queen and the king) who want to capture him: if it's Black's turn to move, it is stalemate and the bandit can remain in the cave for 10 years (this is the application of the first golden rule for the king: the black king does not have a legal move) and so he will never be caught! If it's White's turn to move, the policemen can capture the bandit (the king) because the police ENTERED the cave, and therefore we have checkmate (see the position on the right). The difference is obvious: in the first example, the queen does not capture on H8 (so she does not enter the cave), while in the second example, she enters: so now the cave (H8) is no longer safe for the bandit. We have checkmate.

EN PASSANT CAPTURE

This rule applies **only to pawns and only when a pawn makes its first move and chooses to move 2 squares in a single move instead of moving one square.**

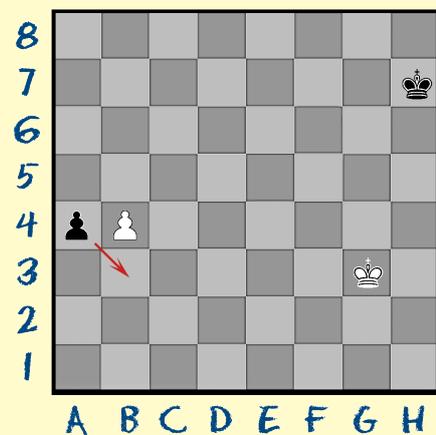
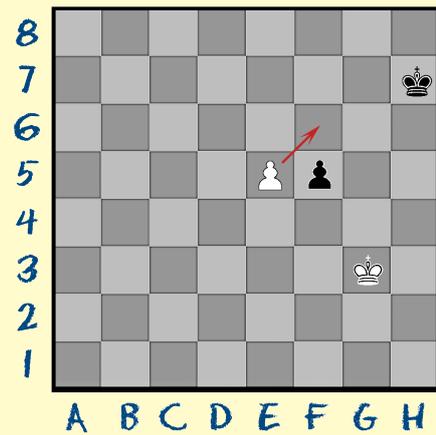
In the diagram the black pawn on f7 moved to f5 by advancing 2 squares, which it can do because this is its first move.

The white pawn on e5 can take it while it is passing by (we use the french words 'en passant' to describe this capture). it is as if the black pawn has moved only one square.

In the second diagram the black pawn on a4 could also capture the white one on b4 en passant.

Remember that the white pawns must be on the 5th rank to capture black pawns en passant while the black pawns must be on the 4th rank. A pawn can only capture en passant if they are on a file to the left or right of the pawn that has just advance two squares.

If you decide to capture en passant, you have to do so immediately. **If you wait a move, you can not longer do it.**



THE RELATIVE VALUE OF THE PIECES

The different pieces **do not have equal strength!** Therefore, you must know the relative value of each piece, which is indicated by giving it a number of points. For example, have you noted that a king can checkmate with the help of a rook, while he cannot do this with the help of a bishop or a knight? This means that the rook is stronger than a bishop or a knight. In other words, **it is worth more!**

The queen is more powerful than the rook, because she can also move diagonally, while **the rook cannot!**

The pawn is worth less than everyone, (if it does not become a queen ...) because it moves very slowly.

As checkmating the king is the objective of the game, **he is worth more than all the other pieces together!**



THE KING
IS BEYOND VALUE



THE BISHOP
IS WORTH
3 POINTS



THE QUEEN
IS WORTH
9 POINTS



THE KNIGHT
IS WORTH
3 POINTS



THE ROOK
IS WORTH
5 POINTS



THE PAWN
IS WORTH
1 POINT

General considerations

In this manual we only want to give an overview, which should be respected in terms of time, purpose and proposed topics.

Our intention is not to stifle the strengths that each teacher can develop with experience. Therefore, teachers are not limited to the examples given in the manual for the various topics and they are most welcome to use other forms of interaction with students based on different types of class exercises even if they have not been mentioned here.

The principal learning driver that teachers can activate in their students is MOTIVATION, which is the direct result of ENTHUSIASM, which in turn is fostered by the kids having opportunities to use their creativity.

These first 10 lessons are designed to quickly enable students to play a complete game with all the pieces in accordance with the rules they have been taught. It is important that this happens as soon as possible so that a real love for the game is established as they play each other, both in and out of the classroom: UNSCHEDULED AND FREE-TIME PRACTICE is an invaluable extra for the teacher, as kids gain motivation and experience even when they are unsupervised or alone.

It is therefore strongly recommended to encourage children taking part in the course to play in breaks, at home AGAINST EACH OTHER AND ON THE WEB, and, if they want to, at a local chess club (if there is one).

Recreational play in free time serves to stimulate the emergence of group dynamics, which is absolutely necessary to achieve the true potential of chess in a school setting.

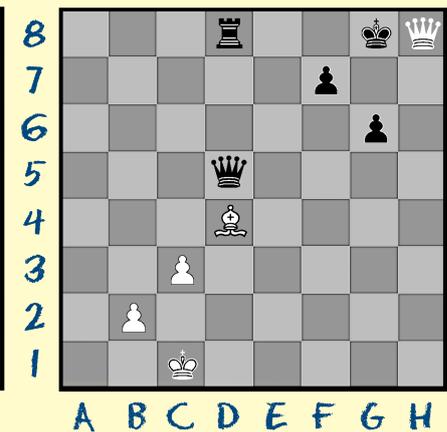
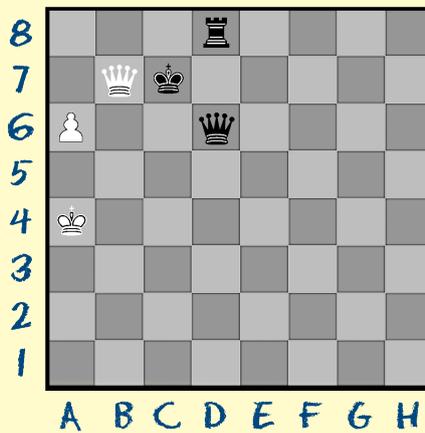
WEB Monitoring

Victor's chess house has a tool for monitoring the activities carried out by the students.

Anyone interested in receiving a PDF file via email with the current data for their class (time logged on, points obtained, and the level reached for each user) can request it (free of charge) by writing to info@alfierebianco.com

CHECKMATES

HERE YOU WILL FIND A SERIES OF DIAGRAMS: **IN EACH ONE WHITE HAS JUST CHECKMATED THE BLACK KING**. LOOK AT THESE CAREFULLY SO YOU CAN LEARN MANY DIFFERENT WAYS TO GIVE CHECKMATE AND BECOME A GOOD PLAYER!



If **THE COURSE** in your class **HAS FINISHED**, AND YOU WANT TO CONTINUE TO PLAY, you can do so at home: **invite some of your schoolmates and other friends to play chess!** You can also play **AT ANY CHESS CLUB** that is close to you. A list of chess clubs can be found on your national chess federation's website.

If cannot find anyone to play with, **continue to visit Victor's chess house**, where you can play lots of games with other kids!

The legend of Sissa: the origin of chess

There is a very old legend about Sissa, the inventor of chess, that involves an illustration of exponential growth (namely, the successive redoubling of a single grain of wheat on a chessboard produces an astronomically high number of grains). This has proved to be very popular and it is a nice way to warm kids up before the course starts. Children love the exotic nature of the legend and the fact that the final number of grains is so unexpectedly high. In mathematical terms, the ever-doubling grains of wheat is expressed as 2 to the 64th power (equivalent to 18,446,744,073,709,55,615).

Here is one version of the legend that can recounted to the class:

... Centuries ago, there was in India a wise and powerful King who wished to instruct his people on the importance of planning, reflection, harmony and sacrifice for their personal benefit and for the wellbeing and prosperity of the kingdom as a whole. A royal command was issued instructing the most learned men in the kingdom to invent a game that would demonstrate the benefit of all these qualities in a way that would delight and entertain his subjects. The results were dismal and none of the courtiers showed any interest at all in the more than 1001 games that were presented at court. One day a young Brahman by the name of Sissa Ben Dahir asked to be received by the king. Upon his entry to the throne room, Sissa was overcome by its magnificence. The walls were decorated with precious jewels whose sparkling colours reflected on the polished white marble floor. The gentle perfume of the finest sandalwood floated in the air. All the courtiers were in attendance, the rank of each shown by the colour and length of the feathers that shot up from their silk turbans. The Brahman was questioned in accordance with ceremonial custom by one of the king's nobles. 'Who are you? Where are you from? What business do you have with His Magnificence, King and Lord of Taligana?'. 'My name is Sissa Ben Dahir,' the young Brahman replied, 'and I come from the village of Namir, thirty days' walk from this beautiful city. We have had news that the King desires a game that instructs and entertains, and I wish to present my humble offering, which I believe is as good for the mind as it is for the soul. I have given it the name 'chess', which means 'Game of Kings'. Sissa presented a simple wooden board divided into 64 squares of two different coloured woods. On the board he placed unusual figures that represented the armies of two warring kingdoms. Sissa explained that the object of the game was to capture and imprison the king that leads the opposing army. Each man in the army moved in a specific way and it took the King a while before he remembered all of their movements. But once he had, he realised that it was indeed the most beautiful and instructive game and involved skills such as planning, evaluation and calculation. The King was very astute, and he quickly understood that the game was exactly what he wanted as it also showed a king's wellbeing depends on the harmony, loyalty, and sacrifice of his subjects, and that the subjects' wellbeing depends on the wise leadership of their king. He immediately ordered the court artisans to reproduce the board and pieces and to distribute them to all his subjects, so that they may learn the lessons of true service to King and Kingdom while they relaxed and had fun.

Indeed, so taken was the King by the excellence of the game, that he smiled down upon Sissa benevolently and told him that he could ask for any reward that was in the King's power to grant. Sissa amazed the entire court with the humble request of one grain of wheat for the first square on the chessboard, two for the second, four for the third, and so on, the number of grains doubling for each of the remaining sixty-four squares. This modest request was met with laughter by those in the court. When it came to acquiring wealth, the learned Sissa seemed anything but wise. Instead of gold or jewels, he seemed to be content with what would amount to a small bag of wheat. The King laughed mightily and requested Sissa to ask for a prize worthy of his brilliance. But Sissa softly repeated his request. Not wishing to spoil what was obviously a gesture of humility, the bemused King shrugged his shoulders and ordered that the number of grains to be counted and presented to the Brahman. Several hours later the grim-faced court bookkeeper nervously approached the Prince. After many hours of frantic calculation, the astonishing truth had been revealed: the total number of grains was eighteen quintillion, four hundred and forty-six quadrillion, seven hundred and forty-four trillion, seventy-four billion, seven hundred and nine million, five hundred and fifty-one thousand, six hundred and fifteen (18,446,744,073,709,55,615). All the wheat crops from around the world would not be sufficient to pay the King's reward. When Sissa saw the look of shock on the King's face, he said, 'Forgive me Your Magnificence. Your happiness is the greatest reward I can receive, and I wish no other. My little joke with the wheat was only intended to amuse you and to demonstrate to all that from a humble first step great things can come'. The king had never met a man as wise as Sissa. Chess was proclaimed the Royal Game and Sissa was appointed the King's Councillor for life.'

C.A.S.T.L.E. : a Chess curriculum to Advance Students' Thinking and Learning skills in primary Education.

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English version



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