

Chess for Kids and Parents

From the start till the first tournament

Heinz Brunthaler

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Quality Chess

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Name that square!

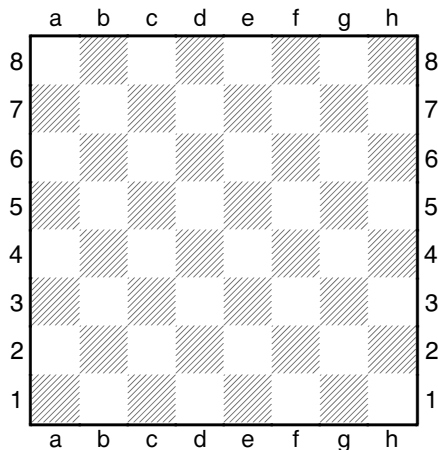
We learn about chess notation

Chess notation, i.e. writing down and "reading" of chess moves is absolutely necessary for all chess training. Knowing the notation helps us to read chess books, to note down our own (training) games and to play through them later in order to find mistakes and improvements or to show our games to other people.

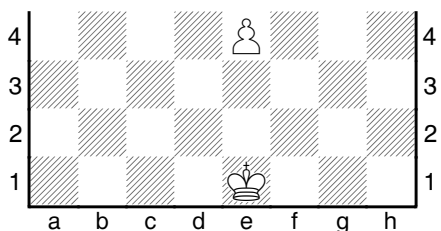
So let's take a closer look at our chessboard:

Round about it we can see numbers and letters. It reminds you of the game "battleships", doesn't it?

And that is exactly how chess notation works. We can describe each square by its co-ordinates. So each square has a "name", which we can use to identify it.



a8	b8	c8	d8	e8	f8	g8	h8
a7	b7	c7	d7	e7	f7	g7	h7
a6	b6	c6	d6	e6	f6	g6	h6
a5	b5	c5	d5	e5	f5	g5	h5
a4	b4	c4	d4	e4	f4	g4	h4
a3	b3	c3	d3	e3	f3	g3	h3
a2	b2	c2	d2	e2	f2	g2	h2
a1	b1	c1	d1	e1	f1	g1	h1



On rank 1 and file e we have the king. In chess notation we say the letters first, so the king is standing on square **e1**.

What is the name of the square on which the pawn in front of the king is standing?

The solution is on the next page.

Solution: the pawn is standing on square **e4**.

To give the name of a piece, we always use an abbreviation:

- King   = K
- Queen   = Q
- Rook   = R
- Bishop   = B
- Knight   = N

So these are all called "**pieces**" (they are like the officers in an army).

But, generally speaking, all the men on the board (including the pawns) are also called "**pieces**".

The distinction is not important as yet, but when we get further on, we will make use of the specific terms "pieces" and "pawns".

To describe a move, there are two possibilities:

- Short notation
- Long notation

In short notation you only say which square the piece lands on. In our example, if the king were to move from square e1 to square e2, we would write **Ke2** (a move to the square e2 and the name of the piece which moved there in front of it, i.e. the king to e2 = Ke2).

In long notation you say, **from which square and to which square** the move was made and you put a **hyphen** between the names of the two squares, so in our example **Ke1-e2**.

The latter is easier to understand for those who are learning chess, and for that reason **in this book we use almost exclusively** this form of notation.

Occasionally, we will use short notation for short comments or for pointing out plans or goals, e.g. "... and White wins, as soon as he has brought his king to b2". Moreover in the text we very occasionally use a "p", e.g. pe4.

Exercise No. 1: Write down in long notation the moves which White and Black have made.

(The order of the moves does not matter.)

	<p>White:</p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p>	<p>Black:</p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p>
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(See page 18 for answers)

There are a few more important symbols:

- If you take a piece, the hyphen is replaced by an **x**, so:

x = takes

*In older chess books, you sometimes find a colon instead of an x. It means the same thing; **: = takes**.*

- Short (or kingside) castling is written **0-0**.
- Long (or queenside) castling is written **0-0-0**.
- Taking "en passant" (taking a pawn as it passes) is written by adding **e.p.** to the pawn move. (If you do not know this move, it doesn't matter. We'll explain it later.)
- If the king is checked, this is shown by a **+**.
- If it is mate, there is a **#** (In old books we sometimes find **++**)

In chess books and magazines, games and positions are printed with some **evaluations** and **annotations** for the reader:

- ? after a move, tells us that it was a **weak move**.
- Logically two question marks indicate that it was an even weaker move: ??.

(Generally speaking, the move was not twice as bad as normal, but really, really stupid, e.g. the queen was given away or mate on the next move was overlooked). At the start, unfortunately, we will have to use this annotation a lot in our games!

- Of course there are also **strong moves**. These are given an ! and if it was a really good, perhaps even a brilliant, move, then the special sign is two exclamation marks: !!.

We can concern ourselves with that a bit more in a couple of years; for the moment, it is important not to collect too many ? and ??.

There are other symbols used to comment on moves or positions, but at the start we don't need to know or learn them.

To sum up, here's a quick list of the special symbols:

0-0	= kingside castling
0-0-0	= queenside castling
+	= check
#	= mate
?	= weak move, mistake
??	= bad mistake
!	= strong move
!!	= very strong move