



Co-funded by
the European Union



Improving chess trainers' methodologies and abilities to motivate and retain children at clubs

Project nr. 101133315

Best Practices Guidebook

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Deliverable N°: D1.1

Deliverable name: Best Practices Guidebook

Version: V1

Release date:

Dissemination level: Public

Status:

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Introduction

The GAMBIT Best Practices Guidebook serves as a comprehensive resource for chess educators, trainers, and institutions aiming to enhance chess education through innovative methodologies. Developed as part of the Erasmus+ GAMBIT project, this guidebook is based on extensive research, needs assessments, and expert contributions from the Judit Polgar Chess Foundation. By documenting and sharing best practices, the guidebook aims to inspire and support chess trainers in creating engaging, inclusive, and sustainable chess programs for all learners.

Objectives of the Guidebook

1. **Enhance Chess Education:** Provide actionable strategies and innovative methodologies for teaching chess at various levels.
2. **Increase Motivation & Retention:** Equip trainers with tools to sustain children's engagement in chess, particularly focusing on girls and underrepresented groups.
3. **Promote Inclusivity & Gender Balance:** Develop approaches to engage girls and rural communities, addressing common barriers to participation.
4. **Improve Competitive & Lifelong Learning:** Strengthen the transition from casual to competitive play, fostering a lifelong love for chess.
5. **Develop Scalable Training Models:** Share methodologies and structures that can be adapted to diverse educational contexts across Europe.

Overview of the GAMBIT Project

What is GAMBIT?

GAMBIT is an Erasmus+ funded initiative aimed at training, motivating, and retaining children aged 7-12 in chess, with a special focus on girls and those from rural areas. By strengthening chess clubs through enhanced trainer education and improved methodologies, the project fosters skill development, motivation, and social inclusion.



Project Participants

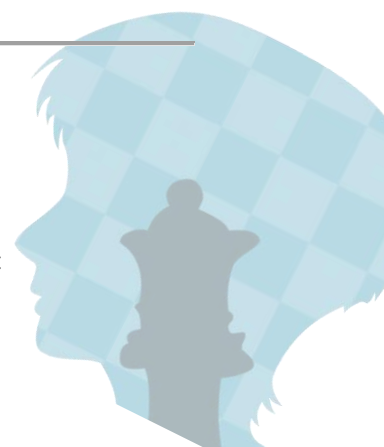
- Club d'Escacs Llinars (Spain)
- Leon Candia Chess Club (Greece)
- Judit Polgár Chess Foundation (Hungary)
- Győri Sakk-kör (Hungary)



Best Practices in Chess Education

Topics Covered During the Training

- Strategies and techniques for motivation
- Tips to retain girls in chess
- Introduction to Judit Polgár's methodology: The Chess Palace Program
- Chess methodology: Judit Polgar's *How to Become a Champion* (The chessboard, moves, values of the pieces, decision-making, checkmate patterns)
- Understanding key tactical themes
- Opening principles (what to do and what to avoid)
- Tricks for learning and mastering new openings
- Building an opening repertoire
- How to Teach Middlegames Effectively
- Game Ideas: Calculation and Planning
- The importance of calculation
- Middlegame tactics
- Transitioning from middlegame to endgame (simplification strategies)
- Essential endgame tips and practical exercises
- How to analyze games and tournaments (learning from mistakes)
- How to Create an Effective Training Plan
- Motivational and Practical Tips for Chess Coaches



Key Teaching Strategies

- **Encouraging Engagement & Motivation:** Gamification techniques, storytelling in chess training, and integrating real-world applications.
 - **Adapting to Different Skill Levels:** Differentiated instruction techniques for beginners, intermediate, and advanced players.
 - **Gender-Inclusive Training Approaches:** Strategies for retaining girls in chess, highlighting female role models, and creating supportive learning environments.
 - **Hybrid & Digital Learning Integration:** Use of online chess platforms (e.g., ChessKid, Chessable) to complement in-person training.
-

Inclusion and Retention Strategies

- **Motivating Girls in Chess:** Role models, female-led coaching sessions, separate events, and breaking stereotypes.
 - **Building Long-Term Engagement:** Creating structured chess pathways from beginner to tournament level.
 - **Using Chess for Social Inclusion:** Implementing chess programs in underserved communities.
-



Summary of or Best Practices for Each Topic

Strategies and Techniques for Motivation

1. Teach your students to get into the state of FLOW.

Flow is a mental state of complete immersion in an activity, where a person experiences **focused concentration, deep enjoyment, and a sense of effortless involvement.**

To achieve flow in chess, you need to create the right mental and environmental conditions for deep concentration and optimal performance. Here are specific techniques for entering flow while playing or studying chess:

- ***Set Clear Goals***
During games: Focus on a clear objective—controlling the center, improving piece activity, or executing a specific strategy.
During training: Work on one skill at a time, such as openings, tactics, or endgames.
- ***Find the Right Challenge-Skill Balance***
Play against opponents who are slightly (4%) stronger than you (not too weak, not too strong).
Use time controls that challenge you but don't overwhelm you (e.g., classical or rapid instead of ultra-bullet).
If an opponent is too strong, focus on learning rather than winning.
- ***Eliminate Distractions***
Play in a quiet environment to maintain deep concentration.
Turn off notifications and avoid multitasking during training or games.
If playing online, avoid switching tabs or checking messages.
- ***Train with Immediate Feedback***
Use tactics trainers and get instant feedback on mistakes.
Review games immediately after playing to reinforce learning.
Use chess engines carefully—first analyze on your own before checking Stockfish.
- ***Get into the Right Mental State Before Playing***
Have a pre-game ritual: deep breathing, stretching, or visualization.



Calm your mind: If nervous, take slow deep breaths to relax before your game.

Use visualization: Picture yourself executing your strategy and winning positions.

- ***Stay Fully Engaged During the Game***

Enter "tunnel vision" mode—focus only on the board, ignore everything else.

Feel the rhythm of the game: Get absorbed in the position and think ahead naturally.

Avoid rushing: Even in blitz, stay composed and think before moving.

- ***Maintain Intrinsic Motivation***

Enjoy the process of solving chess puzzles and discovering new strategies.

Focus on the joy of learning rather than just winning.

If frustrated after a loss, analyze what went well and what to improve instead of tilting.

- ***Use Music or Silence (Depending on Your Style)***

Some players concentrate better with classical music or ambient noise.

Others need complete silence to stay in flow.

Experiment and see what works best for you.

- ***Take Effective Breaks***

Don't overtrain—after a long session, take a short break to refresh your mind.

Do a physical reset: Stand up, walk, or stretch between games.

Switch between different chess activities (e.g., mix tactics, endgames, and game reviews).

- ***Review & Reflect to Sustain Flow***

After a deep game, analyze without rushing—reflect on patterns and key moments.

Celebrate small improvements rather than focusing only on rating gains.

Write a chess journal to track thoughts, emotions, and discoveries after key games.

- ***Bonus: Rapidly Enter Flow in a Game***

Deep breath before the first move—calm yourself.

Fixate on the position—mentally immerse yourself in the board.

Think in patterns—recognize structures and motifs instead of brute-force calculation.

Trust your intuition—if an idea "feels" right, analyze it with confidence.

Useful link:

[Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi: Flow, the secret to happiness](#)



2. Use GROWTH mindset when you evaluate the children

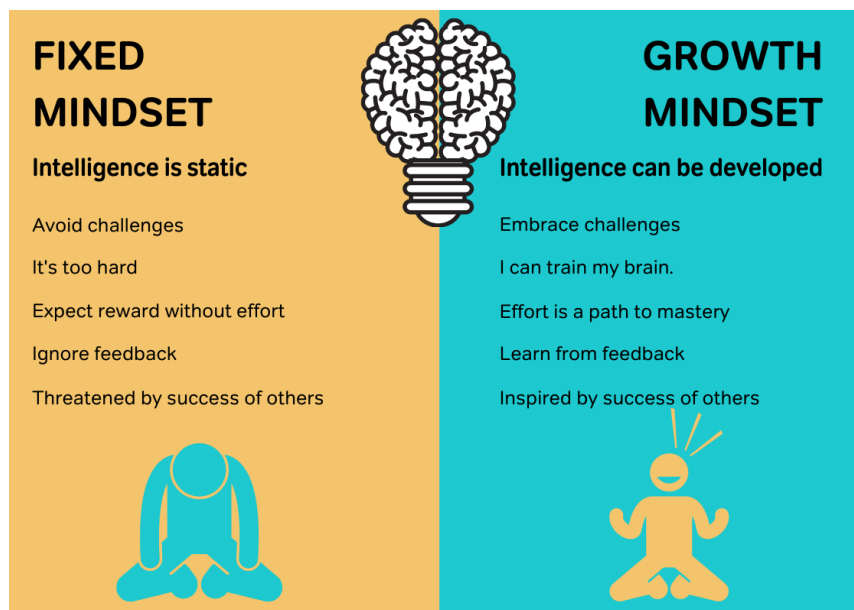
Carol Dweck's Growth Mindset Theory explains how our beliefs about intelligence and ability shape our learning, motivation, and success. She distinguishes between two mindsets:

Growth Mindset

- Intelligence and abilities can be developed with effort, learning, and persistence.
- Challenges are opportunities to grow rather than threats.
- Failure is a chance to learn and improve, not a sign of incompetence.
- People with this mindset embrace effort, seek feedback, and persist through obstacles.

Fixed Mindset

- Intelligence and abilities are static—either you have them or you don't.
- Challenges are avoided to prevent failure or embarrassment.
- Failure is seen as proof of lack of ability, leading to giving up easily.
- People with this mindset avoid effort, ignore feedback, and feel threatened by others' success.



How to Develop a Growth Mindset

- Embrace challenges as learning opportunities.
- Reframe failure as feedback for improvement.
- Replace "I can't" with "I can't yet."
- Seek effort and persistence rather than just results.
- Learn from others' success instead of feeling intimidated.

Applying a Growth Mindset to Chess & Effective Praise for Children

Carol Dweck's growth mindset is especially useful in chess, where persistence, learning from mistakes, and effort are key to improvement. Here's how both players and coaches can apply these principles effectively.

How Chess Players Can Develop a Growth Mindset?

◇ Reframe Mistakes & Losses as Learning Opportunities

- Instead of "I lost because I'm bad at chess," say "I lost because I need to work on endgames."
- Analyze games without self-blame—focus on patterns of mistakes instead of feeling discouraged.

◆ Focus on Effort & Strategy Over Natural Talent

- Don't think "I'm just not good at tactics." Instead, say "I can improve my tactics with practice."
- Avoid labeling others as "geniuses" or "naturally gifted"—everyone improves with effort.

◆ Seek Challenges Instead of Avoiding Them



- Play against stronger opponents, even if it feels frustrating.
- Solve harder chess puzzles that push your limits.
- Experiment with new openings and learn from mistakes rather than fearing failure.

♦ Use "Yet" to Shift Your Thinking

- Instead of saying "I can't play positional chess," say "I can't play positional chess YET."
- Recognizing that skills develop over time helps reduce frustration.

How Coaches Can Encourage a Growth Mindset in Children?

♦ Praise Effort, Strategy & Improvement (Not Just Talent or Wins)

✗ Instead of: "Wow, you're so smart at chess!"

✓ Say: "I love how you kept looking for the best move, even when the position was tough!"

✗ Instead of: "You're a natural at tactics!"

✓ Say: "I can see how much effort you've put into your tactics training—it's paying off!"

💡 Why?

- Praising intelligence or talent alone can create a fixed mindset (kids may feel pressure to always appear "smart" and avoid difficult challenges).
- Praising effort, learning, and resilience encourages kids to embrace difficulties.

♦ Encourage Curiosity & Problem-Solving

- Ask: "What do you think was your best move in this game?"
- Instead of just saying "That was a mistake," ask: "What other moves did you consider?"
- Teach that every position is a puzzle to be explored rather than feared.



◆ Reward Persistence, Not Just Results

- Recognize trying new openings, working through tough positions, and staying focused rather than just winning.
- Example: “You played a great game today! I saw how you thought through every move, even under time pressure.”

◆ Normalize Learning from Losses

- Instead of asking, "Did you win?", ask, "What did you learn from that game?"
- Help kids analyze their losses without judgment: "This was a tough position—what would you do differently next time?"

◆ Teach the Power of “Yet”

- If a child says, "I'm bad at chess," remind them: "You're not great at it YET, but you're improving every day!"
- This small shift in language helps reinforce growth over time.

Growth Mindset in Chess Training

◆ Train with Gradual, Step-by-Step Goals

- Instead of focusing on rating jumps, aim for small improvements:
 - Solve 10 puzzles a day.
 - Try a new opening and analyze your results.
 - Play one slow, thoughtful game daily instead of blitz-only.



◆ Encourage Reviewing Games Instead of Just Playing More

- Teach kids that post-game analysis is where real growth happens.
- Praise them for going back and thinking about their moves, even if they lost.

◆ Keep Chess Fun & Engaging

- Mix training formats: play, solve puzzles, watch games, and discuss strategy.
 - Make improvement feel like an exciting journey rather than a race to a high rating.
-

Takeaways for Players & Coaches

- Losing is learning—encourage analysis, not frustration.
- Effort matters more than talent—praise persistence, not just wins.
- Mistakes help growth—normalize failure as part of improvement.
- Mindset is key—teach kids that abilities develop over time with effort.

Useful links:

[The Growth Mindset | Carol Dweck | Talks at Google](#)

[The power of believing that you can improve](#)

[Developing a Growth Mindset with Carol Dweck](#)

Useful book for chess coaches: [Barry Hymer and Peter Wells: Chess Improvement](#)



Tips to Retain Girls in Chess

Encouraging more girls to participate in chess requires creating an inclusive, supportive, and inspiring environment. The following strategies help break down barriers and foster long-term engagement:

- **No Tolerance for Bullying:** Establish a zero-tolerance policy against bullying to ensure girls feel safe and welcome in chess clubs and competitions.
- **Separate Classes and Events:** While integration is key, occasionally organizing separate classes or events for girls can help build confidence and encourage participation.
- **Highlight Female Role Models:** Introduce players to inspiring figures such as the [Polgar Sisters](#) and the story of [Queen of Katwe](#) to show that success in chess is achievable.
- **Safe and Supportive Learning Spaces:** Create an encouraging environment where girls feel comfortable expressing themselves and developing their skills.
- **Incentivize Participation:** Organize open tournaments with special prizes for girls to celebrate their achievements and encourage further involvement.
- **Combat Gender Bias:**
 - [Gender Bias in Chess](#) - article on Chessbase
 - [Dr. David Smerdon's Facts and Myths about Gender in Chess](#)
 - [Jerry Nash's What Kind of PERSON Do We Want Our Daughters to Become?](#)
- **Encourage Leadership Roles:** Provide opportunities for girls to become chess mentors, captains, or tournament organizers to foster confidence and leadership skills.
- **Use Gender-Inclusive Language:** Ensure communication, materials, and discussions use language that is welcoming and free from stereotypes.
- **Foster Peer Support Networks:** Create girl-friendly communities within chess clubs to strengthen social bonds and encourage long-term engagement.
- [Join the official ChessKid Official Girls Club](#)
- [Play Fun Judit on ChessKid](#): Fun Judit is a friendly, approachable opponent who plays like a champion, but at a level that's perfect for learning!



By implementing these strategies, trainers and clubs can foster a more inclusive chess culture and inspire more girls to remain engaged in the game.

Encouraging Tips to Girls and Coaches from Judit Polgar:

Encourage girls to fight and not give up!

Praising a girl by saying she's talented enough to become a women's world champion is good—but we can do even better. Instead, saying "You can be the best in the world" removes any limits on her dreams.



I prefer the approach when a coach says: "You're talented, so why not become the best you can?"

Do not limit girls just because they are girls.

My parents never set limits on me; they always encouraged my sisters and me to be the best we could be in chess.

Break free from stereotypes and show the world what you're capable of! Let your courage on the chessboard inspire others to follow suit!



Introduction to the Judit Polgár Method

The **Judit Polgar Method** is a groundbreaking educational approach that leverages the game of chess to foster intellectual, emotional, and social development in children. Developed by **Judit Polgar**, the strongest female chess player in history and experts on chess and pedagogy, the method reflects Judit's belief that chess is much more than a game—it is a powerful learning tool that nurtures a child's thinking, creativity, and resilience. The method is built on two main pillars: the **Chess Palace Program** (ages 4-10) and the **How to Become a Champion** book (ages 8+), each designed to meet the developmental needs of different age groups. The exercises selected in the following sections are well-suited to the target age group of the GAMBIT project: children aged 7 to 12.

The Judit Polgar Method provides a continuum of development—from imaginative play to purposeful chess mastery. At its core lies a commitment to nurturing the whole child through an enriching learning experience that emphasizes motivation as a driving force at every stage. Whether a child is stepping into the fantasy world of the Chess Palace or aiming for their first tournament win, **motivation** fuels their curiosity, engagement, and confidence.

This method goes beyond chess—it builds the foundations for **lifelong learning, resilience, and creative problem-solving**. By encouraging children to think like champions, the Judit Polgar Method empowers them not only to excel in chess, but to navigate the broader challenges of life with joy and determination.



The Chess Palace Program

- Developed for children aged 4-10, it is a motivating, playful, and complex skill development program that can be applied at home, in preschool, and in school environments.
- Based on the basic rules and tools of chess.
- Its central element is the fantasy Chess Palace, which serves as a passage between imagination, reality, and chess.
- Supports the acquisition of structured, creative, and logical thinking skills.
- Develops problem-solving abilities.
- Its application is supported by books, colorful and creative tools, animated videos, its own YouTube channel, online games, teacher training sessions, and an active professional Facebook group with 1500 members.
- The program can be effectively applied to children with special needs.
- The Chess Palace Program is part of the Judit Polgar Method and is the intellectual property of the Judit Polgar Chess Foundation.

The Chess Palace Program focuses on comprehensive skill development, with six key areas: communication, movement and fine motor skills, self-control, memory, creativity and combination and collaboration.

The Chess Palace is an interactive playground designed for children aged 4-10, representing the world around us on the chessboard in a creative form. This is the central element of the Chess Palace Program, providing a passage between imagination, reality, and chess. The fantasy world of the Chess Palace and its characters were envisioned by Judit Polgár, the greatest female chess players of all time. Various scenes are depicted in each publication.

Visual engagement, gamification, and positive reinforcement are essential elements in effectively supporting children's development.



Chess Palace book series:

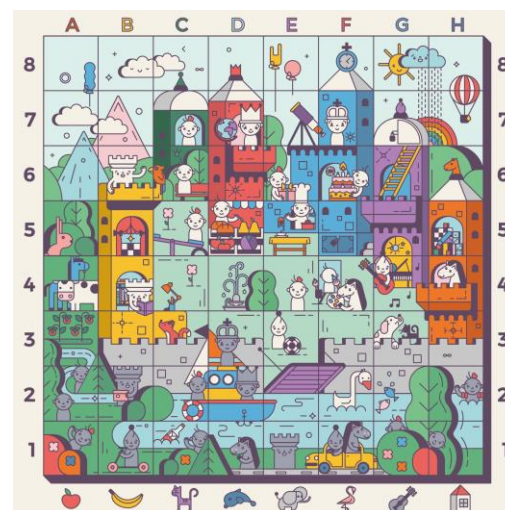
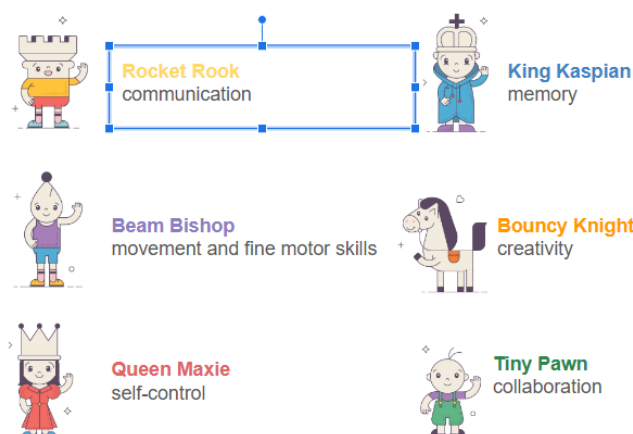
It includes interactive stories, exercises and chess puzzles. Available only in Hungarian. To be published in English in the near future.



The structure of each book:

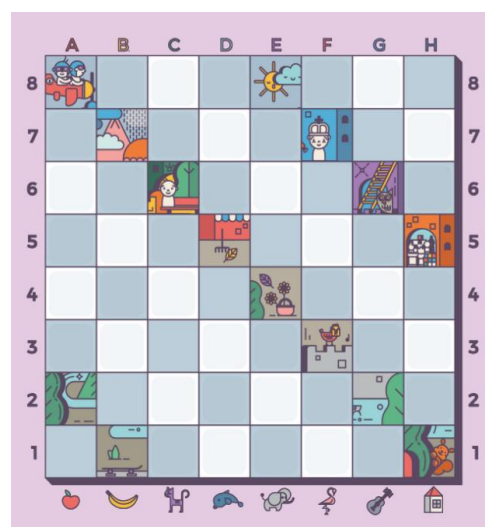
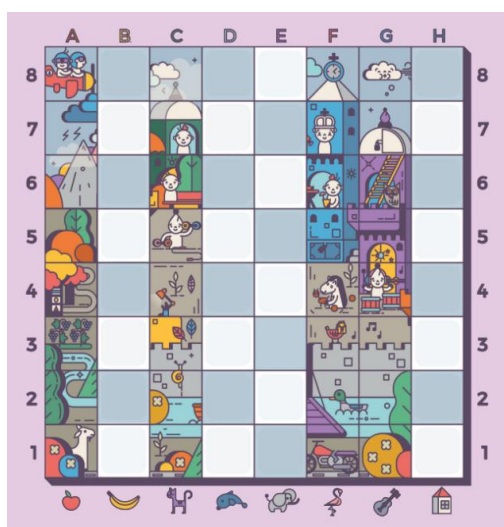
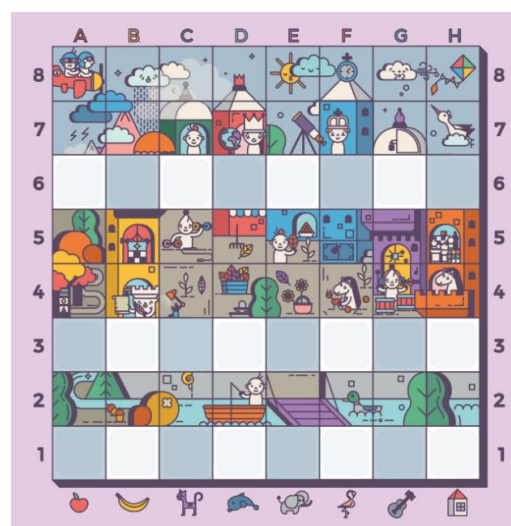
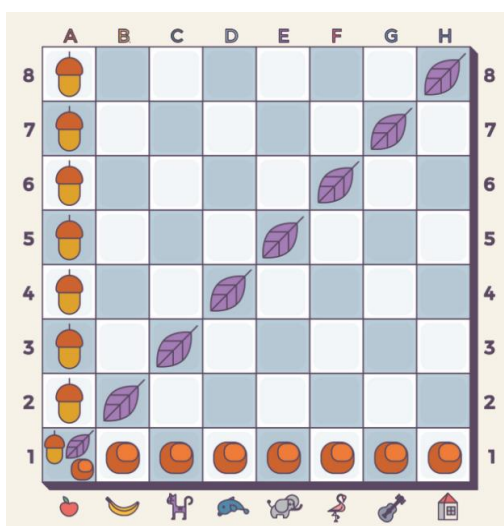
- The Chessboard
- Starting Position
- Value of the Pieces
- How the Pieces Move
- How the Pieces Capture
- Check, Checkmate and Draw

Residents of the Chess Palace and the area they develop:

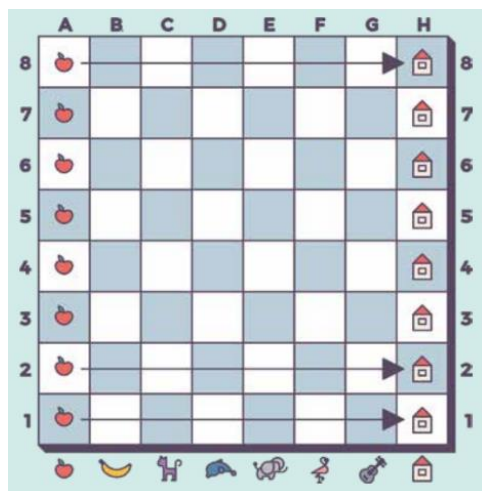


Connecting the Chessboard & Chess Palace:

This is how we introduce the chessboard to children. We show them that the chessboard and the Chess Palace have a lot in common—they both consist of an 8x8 grid. Using images of both, we highlight the files, ranks, and diagonals, helping the children visualize these key elements. This approach allows them to transition smoothly between the Chess Palace and the chessboard.

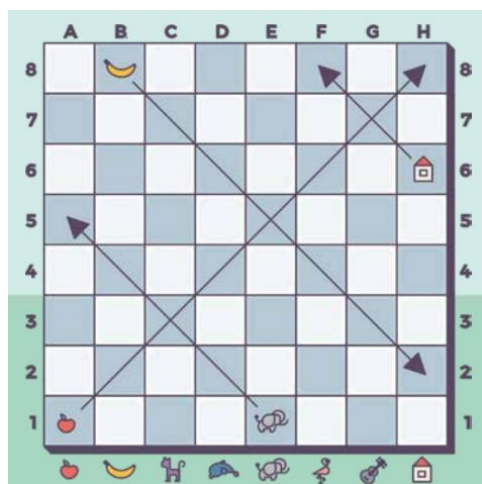
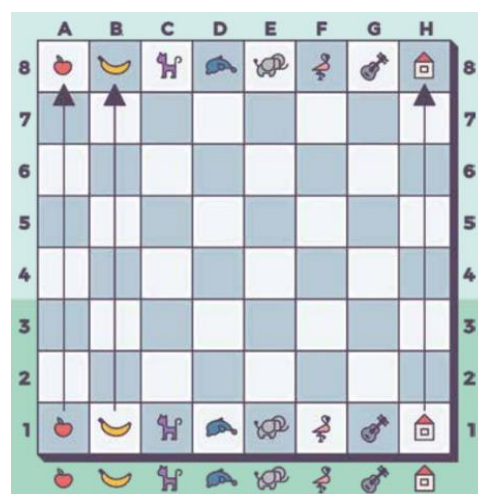


Exercises on the chessboard for ranks, files and diagonals



How do you move the pieces on the chessboard? Draw a straight line from the apples to the tiny houses. First trace the line with your finger and then draw the lines with a pencil.

You can also move along the files, not just the ranks. Connect the shapes with their matching pairs by first tracing from the bottom up and top to bottom with your finger and then drawing the lines from the bottom up with your pencil.

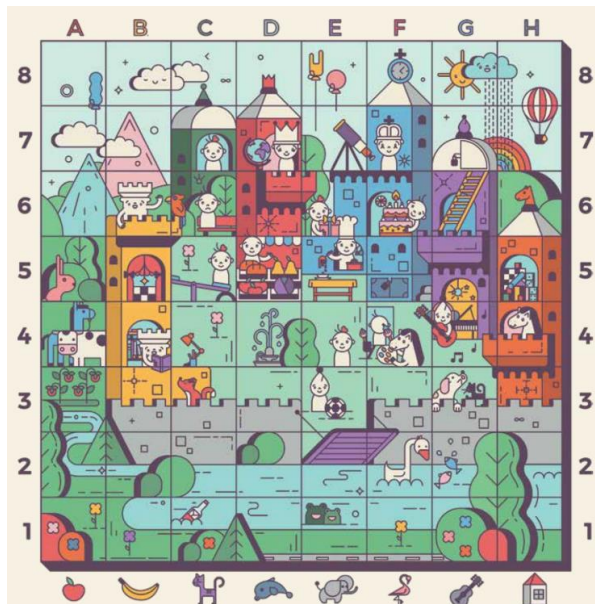


How many black diagonals have arrows drawn in them? Where is the start and where is the finish? Can you name the square that you arrived to? Which is the longest diagonal and what is its name?



Practice orientation in the Chess Palace (on the chessboard):

*In the Chess Palace, we call the files streets
and we call the ranks house numbers.
The storyteller Rocket Rook lives at 4 Banana
Street. Can you spot him?*



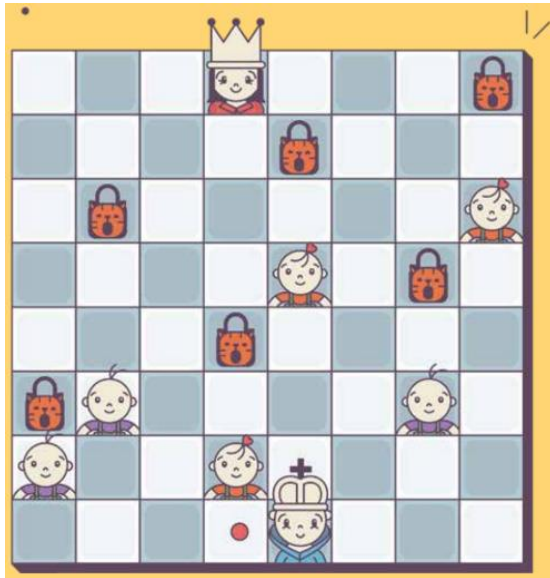
	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
8	→ → → →	↑ ↑ → ↑	↑ ↑ ↑ → →	↑ → → → → → ↓	→ → → ↑ ↑ ↑ →		
7							
6							
5							
4							
3							
2							
1							

On every weekday, Rocket Rook sets off from Banana Street 4 to visit a friend. Whom did Rocket Rook visit each day? Follow all his routes, but be careful, one arrow means a progress of one square only. Name the piece that Rocket Rook visited each day. Say and draw the name of the square where the friend lives. For Saturday and Sunday, it is your turn to plan a route for him.

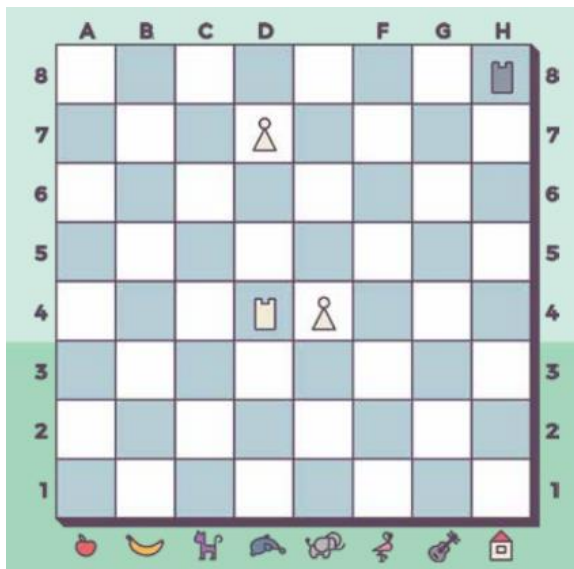


Practicing the moves of the pieces:

Plan a route. Place your finger on Queen Maxie and lead her to King Kaspian. You can move in any direction, but take care, you must not step on a lock. How many moves do you need to get to the red dot? Count the moves out loud.

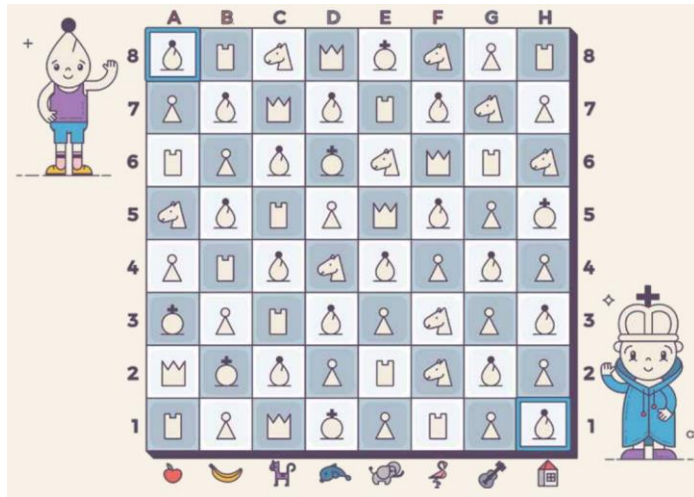


Let's pick up the locks from the floor of the ballroom, it will be quicker if we do it together. Show which pawn can pick up which lock. How many single steps does each pawn have to make to reach its lock, but not step on it? Count the steps out loud. If the pawns were your friends, what names would you give them?



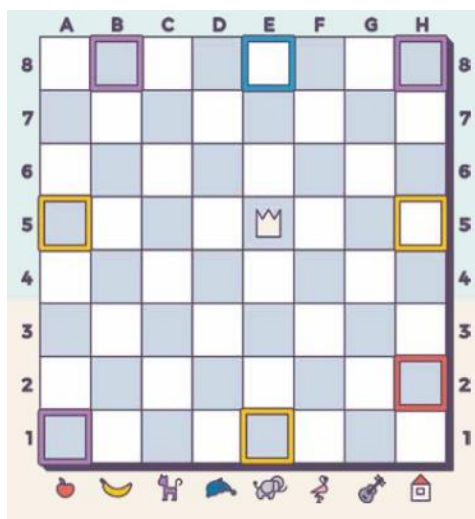
Which rook can move in more directions, the white one or the black one? Circle it.



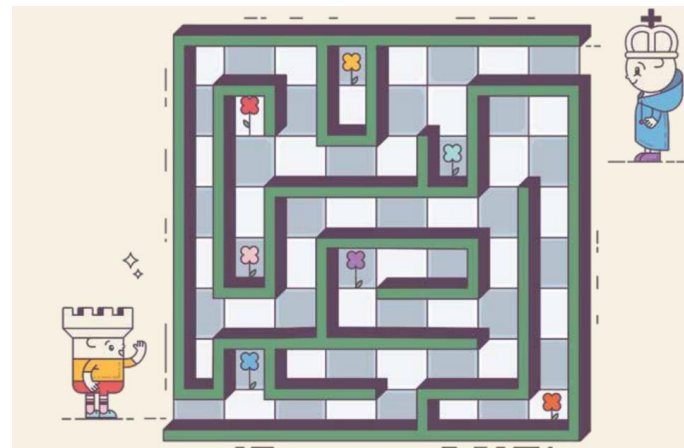


Beam Bishop was in a hurry to King Kaspian to tell him about his idea for the obstacle course. Keep him company and go with him. You can only step the squares marked with the Bishop sign. Start from the square Apple Street 8.

Rocket Rook was invited over to King Kaspian, and he needs to cross a maze to get there. Help him find his way.

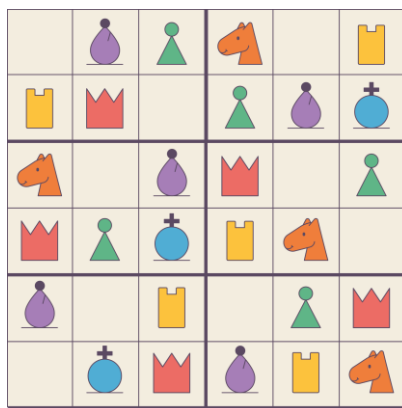
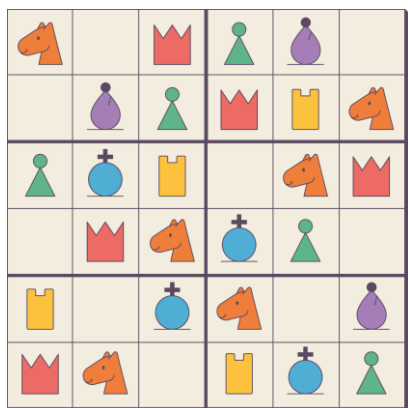


From the middle of the chessboard, the queen can move in eight directions. Take her in every direction and say which square you got to.



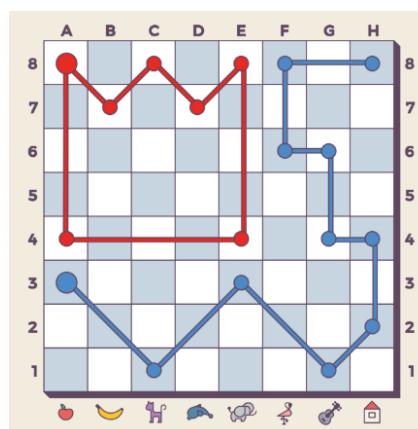
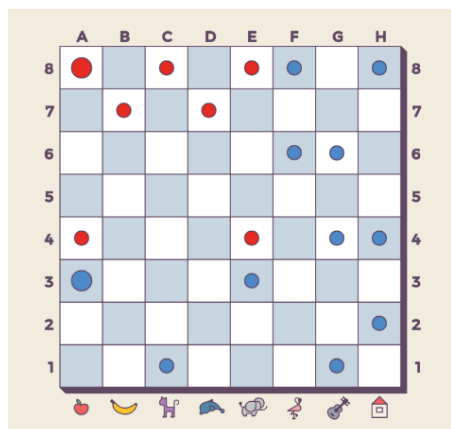
Other Fun Activities

Chess Sudoku:



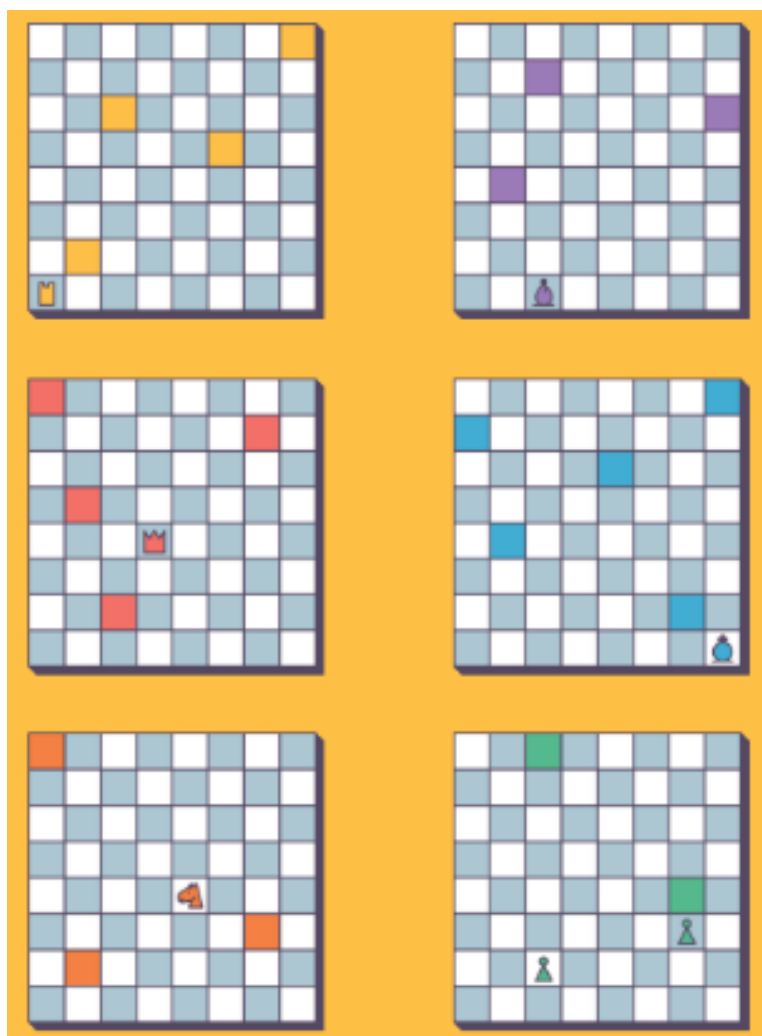
Drawing on the chessboard:

Copy this onto your erasable chessboard and connect the dots of the same color in such a way that you preferably do not lift your pencil, and step on each dot only once. Start drawing from the largest dot!



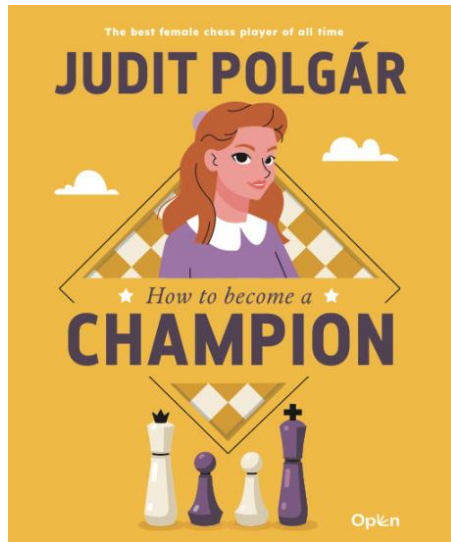
Judit Polgar:

“This was one of my favorite games on the chessboard, it was how I practiced the moves. The goal was to reach the marked square via the shortest route possible with the given piece. Once I had done that, I toured the whole board with the piece. Start the way I did: try reaching the colored squares via the shortest route possible.”



Chess Methodology: Judit Polgar - How to Become a Champion

targets learners who are motivated to explore chess more seriously—possibly even participating in competitions.



- Judit's childhood stories
- Exercises, puzzles and games
- Age group: 8+
- Available only in Hungarian and Slovenian
- Planned to be published in English in 2025-2026.



The Chessboard and the Moves

It's very important to play games with your beginner kids on the chessboard. It's NOT recommended to play a whole chess game with all the pieces on the board. Introduce them to the chessboard first!

To become a good chess player, kids first need to memorize the squares on the chessboard: If they know the squares of the chessboard by heart, they can better orientate and with greater ease during a game. So they should practice recalling the color of the squares from memory.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	
8	a8	b8	c8	d8	e8	f8	g8	h8	8
7	a7	b7	c7	d7	e7	f7	g7	h7	7
6	a6	b6	c6	d6	e6	f6	g6	h6	6
5	a5	b5	c5	d5	e5	f5	g5	h5	5
4	a4	b4	c4	d4	e4	f4	g4	h4	4
3	a3	b3	c3	d3	e3	f3	g3	h3	3
2	a2	b2	c2	d2	e2	f2	g2	h2	2
1	a1	b1	c1	d1	e1	f1	g1	h1	1
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	

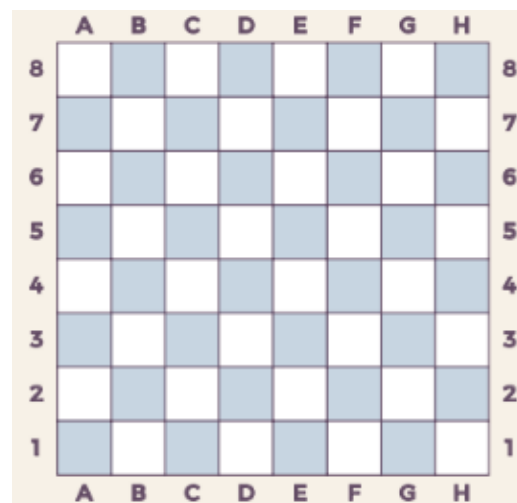
Exercises for remembering the color of the squares:

1. Circle the central squares from the notations below. Using an orange pencil, write the name of the central squares on the board, and then put a frame around it.

e4 c6 d5 h2 a4 b4 f5 g3 d4 e5 c5 f4

2. Circle the squares that are in the back ranks! Color the back ranks purple on the board, then write the appropriate notations on the squares.

e1 d8 b3 d2 h8 c1 b1 a1 g6 h1 f1 g8



Memory Game: Once the children are very familiar with the board—knowing exactly which square is which and the corresponding colors—you can take it a step further with a blindfold variation. In this version, the board is hidden from view, and the coach calls out a square (e.g., "C5"). The children must then recall and name the color of that square from memory.

Once the children are familiar with **how the pieces move**, they can move on to the following practice activities.

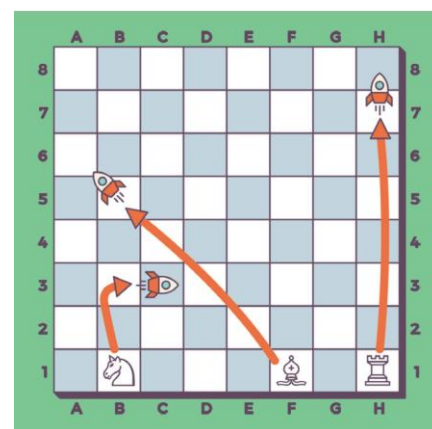
In this exercise, you have to decide whether it is a knight, a bishop, or a rook that can make the move described by the notation. Write the letter symbolizing the piece above the move:

Knight – N, Bishop – B, Rook – R

1.

a7-c5	b3-d5	d8-f7	a3-c3	b4-c6	e8-g6	b7-a5	f7-e5	c2-b3	g8-g6
-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------
2.

b8-d6	b7-c6	b5-c5	a8-b6	c2-b4	e6-f4	f7-g6	e7-d6	c1-e3	d3-e5
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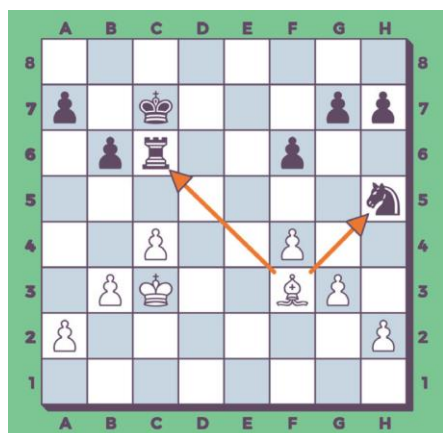


First, show the move on the board. Later you can do it blindfolded.



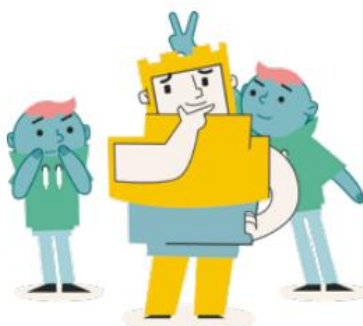
Queen		9
Rook		5
Bishop		3
Knight		3
Pawn		1

After mastering the movement of the pieces we can teach the **value** of them.



Decision-making is really important in every level of chess. *Which piece should we take in the following position?*

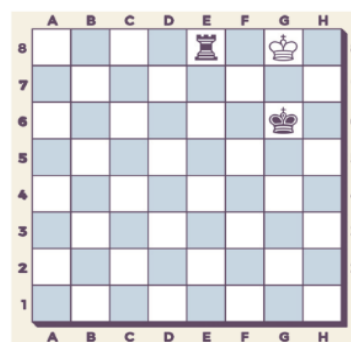
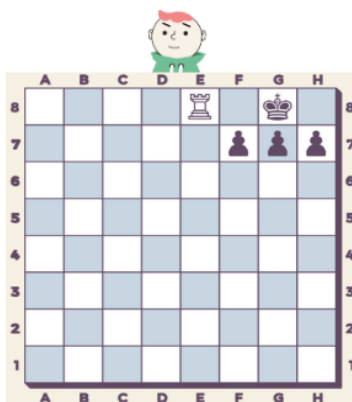
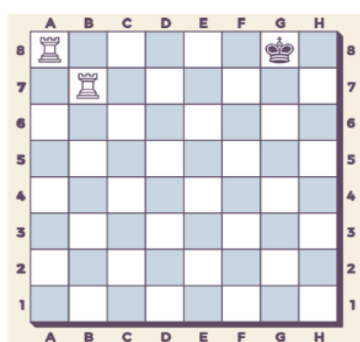
It's a bit tricky question because the rook is more valuable than a knight but if we take the rook, Black can just simply recapture and we only win 2 points ($5-3=2$) but if we take the knight for free we will win 3 points without losing any!



Teaching checkmate patterns (from basic to advanced levels)

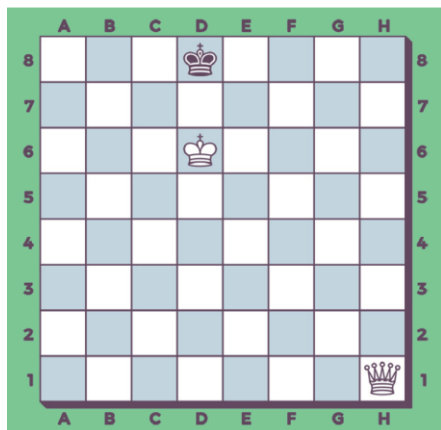
The goal of a chess game is to checkmate your opponent. Checkmate occurs when a player's king is in check and has no legal move to escape the threat. Delivering checkmate ends the game and results in a win for the attacking player.

See below a few example of back rank mates:



It's very important to be familiar with the basic checkmate patterns to win a game. You can start teaching how to give **checkmate in 1 move** with the queen.

White can checkmate in two different ways with **Qh8** and **Qa8**.



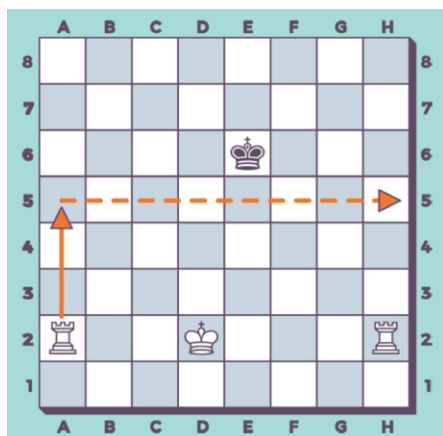
I recommend starting with simple exercises to help children learn and practice directly on the chessboard. Once they become familiar with common patterns, you can enhance their memory by setting up a position and asking them to close their eyes and give the solution. Another effective method is to let them study the position for five seconds, then remove all the pieces and have them recreate both the position and the solution from memory. For a more playful approach, encourage them to visualize the position in their minds and solve the problem without looking at the board.



This training method can be repeated using a variety of patterns and positions to build their skills over time.

After teaching how the queen gives checkmate to the king. You can continue how to give checkmate with 2 rooks. Later with only one rook which requires more patience and more technique.

Mate with 2 rooks



The easiest way to checkmate the king is through the teamwork of two rooks or one rook and the queen. As in soccer, teamwork is an essential aspect of the game of chess, and the aim is to push the king to the edge of the board. Let's see how this is done.! First, the king's room for maneuver must be reduced. We block the king's escape route with a rook: **1.Ra5** This way, the black king is constrained to one-half of the board. With **1...Kf6** the king moves sideways. If the black king were to move towards its back rank, e.g., **1...Kf7**, the rook could then move to **2.Ra6** further reducing the opponent's area to roam.

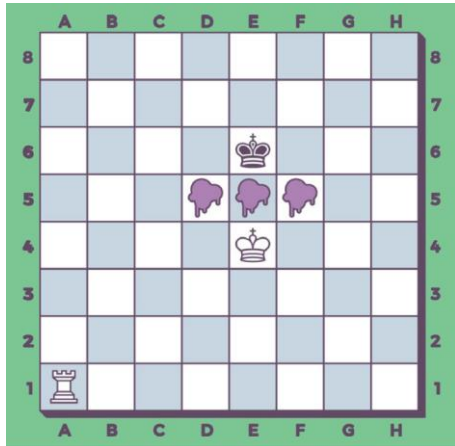
2.Rh6+ The operation to force the king to the edge is on. It is the rook in the rear that will need to check, otherwise the king has a head start. **2...Kg7**

As the king now attacked the rook on h6, that rook cannot continue to push it to the edge, as it is too close to the king. Be careful, the king can capture as well! The rook must be moved to the other side in a way that won't result in the two rooks holding each other back. **3.Rb6 Kf7**

4.Ra7+ The king is gradually pushed towards the edge. For the checkmate, as I have mentioned, the king must be forced to the very edge. **4...Ke8** Once the black king is forced to its back rank, it is time to checkmate. **4.Rb8** Checkmate



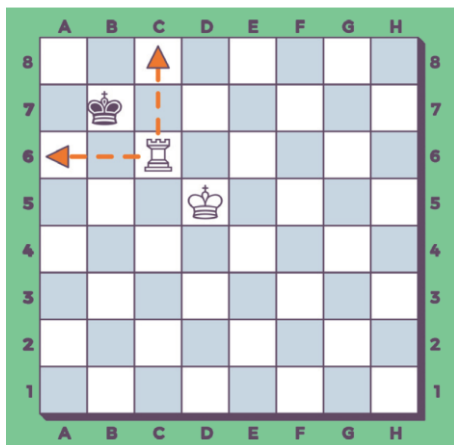
We should teach our students how to push the Black king to the edge of the board.



The opponent's king has to be pushed to the edge to either rank 1 or rank 8 or to file a or file h. But help is again of the essence; one piece cannot do it alone. It is very important to keep this in mind. Otherwise, we'll end up chasing the king around to no end. The helper, in this case, is the king. There are several ways to force the opponent's king to the edge of the board. We'll now get acquainted with one of them. What matters is the pushing of the king. The blocking piece will now be the king of the attacking party. A king can adequately block the opponent's king if they are facing one another.

1. Ra6+ If the two kings face one another, the opponent's king can be pushed towards the edge, forcing the black king to retreat. **1...Kd7** **2. Ke5** The opponent's king has to be followed in the pattern of a knight move, together with the rook, constraining the king's movement to an ever-smaller area. This would yield no results: 2. Kd5 Ke7 3. Ke5 Kd7 4. Kd5 Ke7 5.Ke5 Kd7

2...Kc7 In case 2...Ke7 then 3. Ra7+, and the king is pushed back further. **3.K d5 Kb7 4.Rc6**



The black king is now confined to a very small space.

4...Ka7 5.Kc5 Help is on its way! **5.Rc7+?** We must not let the king flee its cage. **5...Kb6**

5...Kb7 If **5...Kb8** **6.Kb6**, and there is only one place for the black king to go. **6...Ka8 7.Rc8** Checkmate.

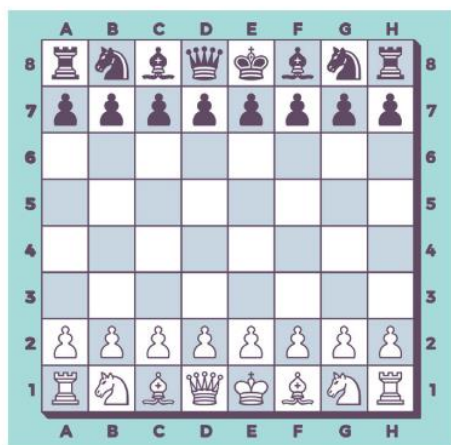
6.Kb5 Ka7 7. Rc7+ Kb8 8.Kb6 Ka8 and 9.Rc8 Checkmate.





Finally, let me add that it's important to teach not only checkmate motifs involving just 3–4 pieces, but also other typical checkmate patterns that use more pieces. Some of my childhood favorites include the Smothered Mate, Reti's Mate, Opera Mate, Double Knight Mate, Legal's Mate, and Damiano's Bishop Mate. You can find plenty of examples [HERE](#), along with many practice opportunities—for instance, on ChessKid.com.

Brain Teaser



From the starting position how can we reach the second diagram position within only 5 legal moves played by each side? The solution: 1.e4 Nf6 2. Qe2 Nxe4 3.f3 Ng3 4.Qxe7+ Qxe7+ 5.Kf2 Nxh1#

Never forget that chess is a game, chess is fun, chess is a common language to all. Kids need encouragement, positive feedback and passionate teachers around. Enjoy!



Further Chess Teaching Material

From here onwards until the end of this section, you'll find a compilation of useful teaching techniques by IM and FIDE Trainer Ármin Juhász, drawn from both his in-person and online training sessions.

Understanding Key Tactical Themes

'Chess is 99 percent tactics.' - Richard Teichmann

While I have great respect for Richard Teichmann, a notable German chess player, I don't fully agree with his philosophy. Chess encompasses much more than just tactics—it includes opening theory, strategic concepts, planning, endgame motifs, and more.

But I do agree that tactics and calculation are among the most crucial aspects of the game. For that reason, I recommend introducing the following tactical themes to students from an early age:

1. Double Attack (the most common tactical motif)
2. Fork (the second most common tactical motif)
3. Pin (almost every chess game contains a pin at least once)
4. Intermediate Moves
5. Overloaded Piece
6. Deflection
7. Elimination of the Defender Piece
8. Breakthrough
9. Endgame tactics
10. Power of the passed pawn



As an example, let me share a beautiful checkmate idea where White sacrifices his queen to eliminate a key defending pawn.

1. Qxh7+ Kxh7
2. Rh3#



Opening Principles (what to do and what to avoid)

The opening is the first phase of a chess game and can have a significant impact on the final result. Whether a player is competing at the amateur club level or the master level, it's essential to be familiar with basic opening lines and principles.

For example, in amateur youth tournaments, it's not uncommon to see games ending in checkmate within the first 10 moves. While it's rare, even masters can occasionally lose that quickly—often due to lack of concentration or a mix-up in preparation.

Although games are rarely won in the opening, it's possible to play for a small advantage with White, or—when playing as Black—be satisfied with achieving equality.

What are the 3 golden rules of the chess openings?

- 1. Occupy or control the centre with the pawns**
- 2. Develop your minor pieces**
- 3. Bring your king to safety (most of the time it means to castle)**



Here is an interesting position where you can compare White's and Black's positions. White has a clear advantage. Do you know why?

White has better control of the centre, more active pieces, space advantage, safer king. We can call this setup the bullhead formation. *Can you picture the head of the bull with the 'horns' of c4 and f4?*



Let me add a few important opening principles that are good to know:

- Develop your pieces as actively as possible.
- As a general rule, develop knights before bishops.
- Open the position when you have a lead in development.
- Aim to control the center not just with pawns, but with your pieces as well.

What should you avoid in the opening?

- Don't move the same piece multiple times without a clear reason.
- Avoid unnecessary pawn moves that don't help with development or central control.
- Don't bring your queen out too early—it can become a target.
- Don't block your own pieces with awkward pawn or piece placement.
- Avoid moving the pawns in front of your castled king, as it can weaken your king's safety.

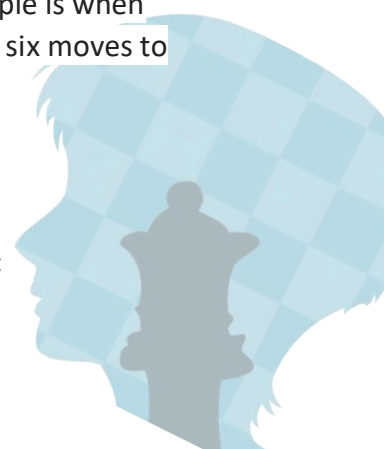


Finally, let me show you an example of the Italian Opening, where both White and Black complete their development correctly.

Tricks for Learning and Mastering New Openings

Opening traps and tricks exist at all levels of chess. In children's tournaments, it's quite common to see attempts at the Scholar's Mate—starting with 1.e4 2.Qh5, 3.Bc4, and 4.Qxf7#.

But even at the highest levels, surprises in the opening can occur. A famous example is when the 15th World Chess Champion, Viswanathan Anand, lost a classical game in just six moves to



Grandmaster Alonso Zapata—proof that even elite players can fall victim to early tactical tricks if caught off guard.

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.Nxe5 d6 4.Nf3 Nxe4 5.Nc3 Bf5?? 6.Qe2 1-0



Black resigned here because he is about to lose his e4 knight since after Qe7 Nd5 wins material.

Based on my experience, here are the seven essential steps to truly mastering a new opening:

1. Study the theoretical parts and take notes on the key motifs.
2. Analyze sample games and connect them to the theory.
3. Memorize typical opening tricks and motifs.
4. Test your understanding in practice games, either online or with a friend.
5. Review and analyze your practice games thoroughly, identifying mistakes and adjusting your understanding.
6. Memorize the theoretical parts in detail. This should be easier now, as you've already encountered the motifs, gained some practical experience, and established a solid theoretical base.
7. Play the opening in a real tournament. This step carries some risk, so it's important to be as focused and prepared as possible."





*Let's have a look at one of the main lines of the **Sicilian Dragon** variation.*

What are the plans for White?

- Opening the h-file with h4-h5
- Trading dark squared bishops in order to eliminate the most important defender of the Black king
- Push g4-g5 in order to send the f6 knight to a passive square

What are the plans for Black?

- Create counterplay in the centre with ...d5
- Sacrifice an exchange on c3 in order to weaken White's pawn structure and his king's safety.
- Trade queens
- Exchange the e3 bishop for a knight

Building an Opening Repertoire

First of all let's discuss what is an opening repertoire? An opening repertoire is a collection of the openings that you usually play.



When you decide to develop an opening repertoire you should keep in mind a few important points. These are:

- Your playing style
- Your time to study chess
- Your current level
- The time control of the tournaments where you plan to play
- Your previously mastered lines

Out of these key points, I would highlight the first one. For example, if you are a positional player it's not a very clever idea to play the Sicilian Dragon with Black since it is one of the sharpest and most tactical lines for Black. But to choose for example the Caro-Kann Defence or the French Defence can be a good idea. It is solid, safe and the lines are pretty easy to understand.

To continue the line if you have a limited amount of time for working on your openings (or maybe on your chess in general) then I would recommend playing simple openings like the Reti Opening or the London System rather than the Sicilian Najdorf or the Benoni Defence.

Last but not least, I recommend choosing an opening that matches your current level—or is just slightly more advanced to help you grow.



For example, a popular and effective choice in kids' tournaments is the Vienna Gambit, which begins with 1.e4 e5 2.Hc3 Hf6 3.f4.

But when you become a strong club player you will face 3...d5! relatively soon your quick wins will disappear.



Of course, there are also many openings that are suitable at all levels, such as the Queen's Gambit, the Spanish Opening or the Italian Game.

Finally let me explain the last two points. I believe it's good to know that there are good blitz weapons in chess like the Volga Gambit or the Budapest Gambit because they are tricky and your opponent might spend more time finding the correct plan than usual. But in classical time control, time plays a less decisive role, and the objective strength of the move becomes more important.

I also think it's helpful to know that some openings are like 'brothers'—they share similar to each other. For example, if you've already played the Caro-Kann Defence, you might find it easier to pick up the French Defence, since the pawn structures and strategic plans often overlap. On the other hand, switching to an opening like the Petroff Defence might be more challenging, as it's typically more open and tactical in nature.

Where can you create an opening repertoire?

- ChessBase
- Chess Assistant
- Lichess
- Chess.com

You should select modern master games and you can also mix them with your own games. I would recommend starting with the main lines and only after that working on the sidelines.

One can use statistics to see which lines are more popular recently and which lines have a better score. I like to use Lichess for this.

A useful link where you can find master games and also online games:

<https://lichess.org/analysis>



How to Teach Middlegames Effectively

What middlegame topics should we teach for beginners and hobby players?



The importance of an open file

White has a clear edge due to his development advantage and thanks to his active pieces on the c-file.



The pair of the bishops

White has a better position due to his bishop pair.



Space advantage due to our superior pawn structure



Game Ideas: Calculation and Planning

After the opening part of the game, we will reach the middlegame. I very often hear that this is the most difficult part of the game since it's both hard to learn and hard to teach. But I think that a good chess coach should be ready to teach middlegames too.

You can categorize the middlegames in several ways: tactical, strategic, dynamic, positional, sharp, etc.

One important question we should address right from the start is: what is the difference between a tactical position and a positional one?

In a **tactical position** we are trying to reach a short term goal with calculation like giving mate, winning material. We often use forcing moves (check, capture, attack, intermediate moves) to reach our goal. But in **positional chess** we usually play for a long term advantage and try to create weaknesses in our opponent's position like for example a weak pawn, weak square, badly placed piece.

The 4 most important positional questions that you can ask yourself if you are looking for a good plan:

- How can I improve my position?
- Where are the weaknesses in my opponent's position?
- What is my opponent's idea and how can I prevent it?
- Which one is my worst-placed piece and how can I make it better?
- Of course, it sounds too easy. But let me show an example where you can use these questions.



First of all, let's evaluate the position.



1. Safety of the king: I believe that White's king is in total safety but the Black king is in real danger.
2. Material: the material situation is equal.
3. Activity of the pieces: White is more active on the kingside and Black is more active on the queenside.
4. Pawn structure: White has space advantage due to his e5 and g5 pawns.

So all in all we can say that White is better. But how to find the right plan?

What is the weakness in Black's position? The lonely king on g8.

How can I build an attack against it? By doubling the rooks and potentially bringing the queen to the h-file as well.

So what should we play? Grandmaster Dominguez Perez played Rh4 with the plan of Rdh1 and Qh3 and he won quickly.

As you can see this is quite logical! 😊

If I remember correctly Anatoly Karpov said that if you have no good plan, always double your rooks!

Finally let me share one more useful idea with you, which is called the **Akopian rule**. I learned this from a Chessmood YouTube video and I found it very helpful.

Akopian rule: It is a good idea to sacrifice a pawn if you can improve the position of at least 2 of your pieces or you can weaken the position of at least two pieces of your opponent.





For example:

After 1.e5! dxe5 2.Ne4 White enjoys a clear advantage with great attacking possibilities.

We open up the diagonal of the d3 bishop. We free the e4 square for the knight and we also block the f6 bishop.

The Importance of Calculation

Calculation is the single most important thing in chess. But what is it? Well, it's not so easy to explain but it's easier to demonstrate. I would say it is visualizing a sequence of moves and responses before making a move, without physically moving the pieces. Or analyzing the possible moves and their consequences in advance in your head. It requires creativity, good memory, and good visualization skills.

Of course, we should start with 1 or 2 moves exercises and only after you master it go for more complicated positions. But what to calculate? When calculating, it's often recommended to start with CCTV, as Judit Polgar emphasizes in her excellent book [*Master your Chess with Judit Polgar*](#).

Your calculational toolkit is called CCTV- Checks, Captures and Threats Variations. You should assume that there are tactics in every position and try to find the most forcing lines.



Let me demonstrate it with a nice game which was played by Pichugin with the White pieces against Fradkin with the Black pieces, played in 1931.



How can White win the game with forcing moves?

1. Nf6+ Qxf6
2. Rfe1+ Be6
3. Ba4+ Nxa4
4. Qd7 #

Middlegame Tactics

Since we've already covered the opening principles and learned how to build an opening repertoire, we'll most likely reach a playable middlegame after the initial phase of the game.

In the middlegame, we should look for tactical opportunities—especially when our opponent has tactical weaknesses such as: unprotected pieces, weak king, weak squares, backrank problems, a piece which can barely move.



Typical tactical themes which are recommended to teach: Double attack, Pin, Skewer, Eliminating the defender piece, Decoy, Fork, Deflection, Discovery, Clearance, Intermediate moves, Mating nets



Here is an educational example. White to play and win.

The correct move which was played by Hikaru Nakamura is Qf3. This is a double attack since White is threatening to give mate on f8 (backrank problems) and also threatens to take the c6 bishop.

Black resigned here.

You can find great tactical databases on lichess where your students can practice individually as well.

Link: <https://lichess.org/training/themes>

Solving 10 tactical puzzles a day can improve the calculational skills of the players. It helps to recognize the tactical patterns more easily and they also boost the players' confidence since they might find a tactic in a lost position and save the game.

More online games to improve the players tactical skills:

<https://lichess.org/streak>

<https://lichess.org/storm>

<https://lichess.org/racer>

<https://lichess.org/training>



<https://www.chess.com/puzzles/rated>

<https://www.chess.com/puzzles/rush>

<https://www.chess.com/daily-chess-puzzle>

<https://www.chess.com/puzzles/learning>

Transitioning from Middlegame to Endgame (Simplification Strategies)

After the middlegame we can reach the third/last part of the game which is called the endgame.

The endgame is different in many ways from the middlegame. For example, there are fewer pieces on the board, the pawns are getting more attention than before, and usually the king is entering the game as well since he should not worry about getting mated as earlier. Of course, there are endgames where it's a good idea to still hide the king, for example in some Queen endgames.

Find here a few tips about when it is a good idea to simplify the middlegame to an endgame:

- When you have material advantage
- When you have a better pawn structure
- When you have an active king
- When you have queenside pawn majority

I often tell my students that they should start thinking about the endgame while they're still in the middlegame. Why? Because if you have for example a double isolated pawn then most probably it's better to keep the queen's on the board and try to search for dynamic solutions rather than exchanging.

Experienced players like to say that it's easier to convert your material advantage in the endgame than in the middlegame.

Here is an example where GM Antipov played a very nice combination.



White to move and win. White played Qxf8 check and after Kxf8 we have Ng5 discovery check to win the queen on e6.



For example:

1. Qxf8+ Kxf8
2. Ng5+ Bxf1
3. Nxe6+ Ke7
4. Kxf1 Kxe6
5. c6 wins for White since we have two extra pawns in the endgame.

It's also good to know that when you have material advantage, usually you will have the best winning chances in pure pawn endgames and the worst winning chances in an opposite color bishop ending.

Finally, we can categorize the type of endgame in several ways. For example:

- Pawn endgames
- Bishop endgames
- Knight endgames
- Rook endgames
- Queen endgames
- Dynamic endgames
- Tactical endgames
- Complex endgames
- Sharp endgames

Essential Endgame Tips and Practical Exercises

In this chapter, we'll explore some fundamental endgame tips and rules. At the end, I'll also share a few instructive game examples that kids enjoy, as **they offer a fun opportunity** to immediately apply their endgame knowledge.



One of the most common endgame principles—and one you’ve likely heard from many chess players—is this: **The king is a powerful piece—use it!**

The role of the king changes dramatically throughout a chess game. In the opening, we prioritize its safety by castling. During the middlegame, we often focus on attacking the opponent’s king while protecting our own. But in the endgame, the king becomes a central figure. You can’t deliver checkmate with just a queen or a rook without the help of your king. He usually helps the passed pawns to promote or blocks the opponent’s pawn from being promoted.



Here you can see how the White king supports the d-pawn on its journey to promotion.

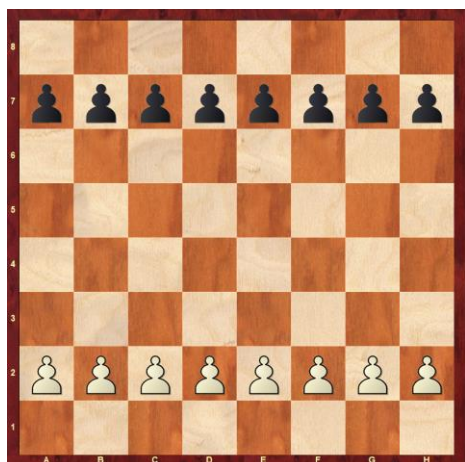
Other simple endgame principles to know:

- The easiest endings to win are pure pawn endings.
- Passed pawns must be pushed.
- Don’t place pawns on the same color squares as your bishop. (This is the rule of Capablanca)
- Bishops are better than knights when there are more pawn islands.
- Rooks belong behind passed pawns. (We call it Tarrasch rook)
- The easiest endings to draw are those with bishops of opposite colour.
- Doubled, isolated and blockaded pawns are weak. Avoid them!
- A rook on the seventh rank is sufficient compensation for a pawn.

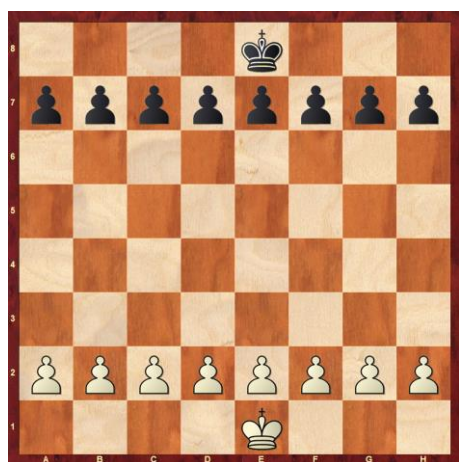
You can practice endgame tactics on this website: <https://lichess.org/training/endgame>



Finally, let me share a few educational endgame examples. These games give kids valuable experience with different types of endgame situations, helping to build both their skills and their self-confidence—especially during tournaments.

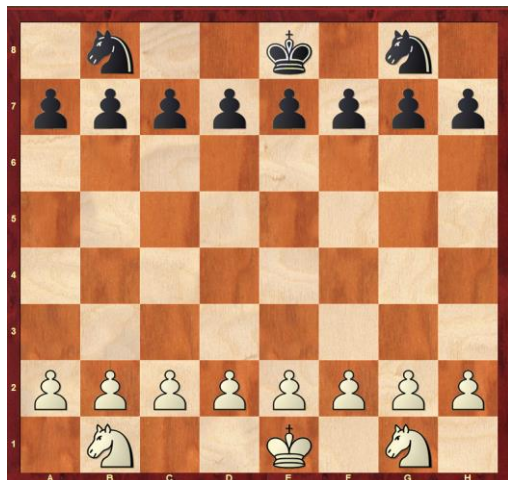


We can call this the **pawn race**. The side that reaches the opponent's back rank first with their pawn usually wins the game.

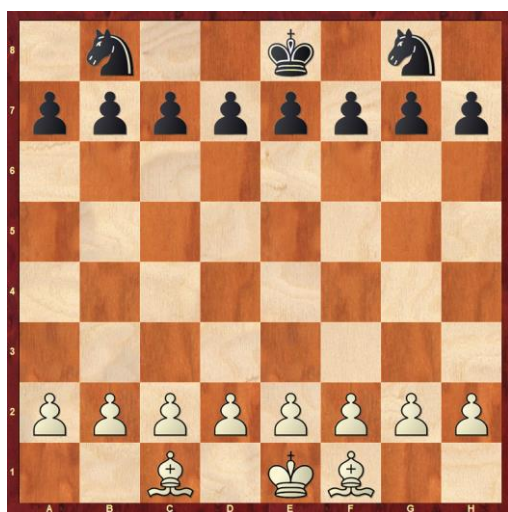


In this next game the players can practice **pure pawn endgames** with the classical chess rules.





In this game the players can practice **knight endgames** with the classical chess rules.



Here the players can practice **asymmetrical endgames** with the classical chess rules.



How to Analyze Games and Tournaments (Learning from Mistakes)

One of the most important ways to improve in chess is by learning from your own mistakes. How can you do this? The answer is simple: by analyzing your games.

You can analyze your games with your coach, your opponent, a computer (engine), a training partner—or even on your own.

I usually recommend that my students start by analyzing their games either with their opponent or by themselves, and only afterward use a computer for support. While the engine will certainly point out stronger moves, game analysis isn't just about spotting mistakes—it's about understanding them and learning how to correct them.

After each game, I like to highlight the following points:

- Which was the first new opening move of my opponent? Did I answer it correctly? If not, how am I going to correct it next time?
- Where was the critical opening, middlegame and endgame position?
- How was my time control? Where did I spend more time than needed?
- What are my main conclusions about the game?
- What am I going to do differently next time?

If you'd like to highlight a **critical opening position**, we usually mark it in **blue**. The **critical middlegame position** is **red**. And the **critical endgame position** is **green**.

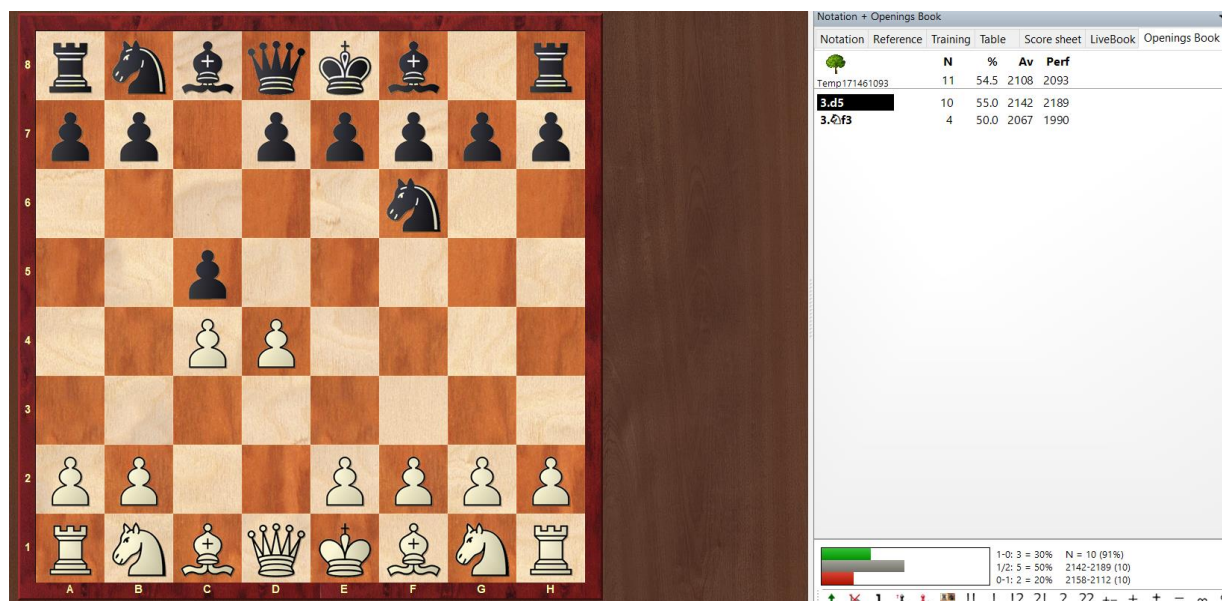
You can not only analyse a game but you can analyse your tournament as well. For example, after the event you can ask yourself the following questions?

- Did I play better in the beginning or did I play better in the last rounds?
- Was my opening preparation successful?
- Was I mentally and physically well prepared?
- Am I happy with the final result?
- What am I going to do differently next time?



If you feel that you are stuck at a certain level it might be a good idea to ask an experienced player or coach to help you. From 7-9 classical games a chess master can give you tips on how to improve the weaknesses they see.

ChessBase can also help you with statistics. For example:



You can see which move was played more and with which move did White scored better. This can be useful for analysing your own games or when you prepare against another player.

Finally, it's very important to give positive feedback to your students. Even if they lost a game instead of just focusing on their mistakes it's important to emphasise the good moves.

A good chess coach always tries to encourage their students no matter what the result is.

Even top grandmasters are making mistakes and losing games. We should teach our students that after a lost game the tournament goes on and we have plenty of chances to fight back.

I also like to show my students the games I've lost to teach them that **we often learn more from our mistakes than from our victories.**



How to Create an Effective Training Plan

If you or your student wants to improve at chess, it's highly recommended to create a personal training plan. Why? Because it helps you work systematically on your weaknesses and learn in a more focused way.

In addition, you can use a training calendar to track your daily progress. Of course, we're not top grandmasters training 6 to 12 hours a day—so it's perfectly fine to skip a day now and then. What matters most is that **when you *do* train, you give it your full attention**. Mute your phone, turn off the TV, and focus completely on your chess.

You can also set **weekly and monthly goals** for yourself. For example:

- Read a chess book
- Solve 100 puzzles on Lichess
- Learn a new opening
- Reach an 1800 rapid rating

When is a training plan truly effective?

- When it's personal and tailored to your level and playing style
- When it's varied enough to keep things interesting
- When it motivates you to work hard
- When it includes clear, measurable goals

I also recommend finding a training partner who shares your ambition. You can exchange ideas, ask each other questions, and analyze games together. Ideally, your partner should be around the same level as you for the best learning experience.



Motivational and Practical Tips for Chess Coaches

- **Organize your chess databases** at least once a month to keep your material fresh and easy to access.
- **Update your databases** with recent examples. Kids often relate more to current games played by today's masters than to older World Championship matches.
- **Learn from other coaches.** Sharing experiences and methods can open new perspectives and improve your own approach.
- **Stay inspired.** Read books, watch videos, attend lectures, or sit in on other classes to keep your teaching fresh and engaging.
- **Ask for feedback from your students.** Find out what they enjoyed or found helpful in the training—it's a great way to improve your sessions and connect with them better.
- **Keep working on your own chess.** Your personal dedication and improvement will set a strong example and inspire your students to do the same.
- **Stay updated with current chess news.** Being well-informed helps you connect more with your students and shows that you're actively involved in the chess world.



Testimonials and Impact

Throughout the GAMBIT project, trainers and participants have shared valuable feedback and reflections, highlighting the program's success in shaping a positive, inclusive, and effective chess learning environment. Below are some excerpts and insights from their responses:

Trainer Testimonials

"The GAMBIT project has greatly influenced my ability to motivate and retain children."

— *Nagy Zoltán András, GYSK (Hungary)*

"I've learned new techniques to make classes more engaging. The application and materials have added value to our daily sessions."

— *Gorka Parra, Llinars (Spain)*

"One of the most effective tools I'll continue to use is the combined use of physical and online lessons. It provides flexibility and keeps the sessions dynamic."

— *Marc Pozanco Romasanta, Llinars (Spain)*

"All the meetings with the other trainers were memorable and helped build a sense of community and shared purpose."

— *Núria Español Bada, Club Escacs Llinars (Spain)*

"Overall it was a really inspiring experience for me. The session on openings based on gambits was especially valuable for showing how to teach initiative in a dynamic way. The project helped me structure and organize my material better."

— *Kostas Klokas, Leon Candia Chess Club (Greece)*

Highlights from the Project

- Trainers consistently rated the clarity and usefulness of the Heraklion sessions highly, especially the classes led by Ármin and Katalin.



- Tools such as the Chess Palace books and motivational games were mentioned as standout resources.
- The project's international exchanges were valued not only for their content but also for building connections:
"Meeting new people who are also passionate about chess education was truly inspiring."

Children's Voice

"I feel so lucky to be able to play chess with friends from other countries!" — *David, 10 years old*

"It was really amazing to meet Judit and so many other players. I also enjoyed making new chess friends across the world" — *Aliki Kloka, 10 years old*

"It is an experience I will remember all my life. Looking forward to the next trip!!" — *Anastasia Bakali, 10 years old*

Areas for Growth

Participants also offered constructive feedback:

- Some classes were perceived as challenging for younger children.
- Several respondents wished for more consistent participation in online sessions.
- A desire for greater cross-club interaction among children was noted.



Conclusion

The Best Practices Guidebook is more than a collection of tips—it is a roadmap for creating meaningful, inclusive, and sustainable chess education experiences. Through the GAMBIT project, we've gathered insights from expert trainers, innovative methodologies like the Judit Polgar Method, and the voices of children themselves.

By applying these best practices, trainers can foster a love for chess that extends far beyond the board—nurturing critical thinking, resilience, and a sense of community. As we look ahead, let this guidebook serve not only as a resource, but as a reminder of the powerful role chess can play in shaping young minds and bridging cultures.

Let's continue to inspire, teach, and grow—one move at a time.



Appendix

Judit Polgar Teaches Chess - Digital Material:



JUDIT POLGAR CHESS PALACE
EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

<https://en.sakkpalota.hu/>

Chess Palace is an innovative educational program designed for children aged 4-10, utilizing the fundamentals of chess to develop structured, creative, and logical thinking skills through a fantasy-themed curriculum.



Animation series about the moves of the pieces: [The Chessboard](#)
[Checkmate](#) [The King](#) [The Knight](#) [The Queen](#) [The Bishop](#) [The Basics](#) [The Rook](#) [The Pawn](#)



[Play Judit](#)

Within the app, in the „Play Judit” section, users can choose from 7 different profiles of Judit with varying levels of playing strength, ranging from age 5 to 29.



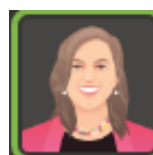
[Fun Judit Bot on Chesskid.com](#)

Fun Judit is a friendly, approachable opponent who plays like a champion, but at a level that's perfect for learning!



[Judit Polgar's Chess Courses](#)

available on Chessable.com



[Judit Bot on Chess.com](#)



Judit Polgar's Books:



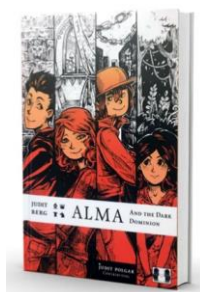
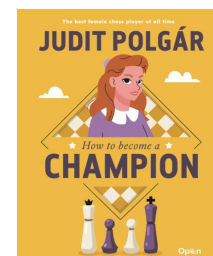
[Chess Palace Book Series - 6 volumes](#)

Available only in Hungarian.

To be published in English in 2026.

[How to Become a Champion](#)

Available only in Hungarian. Planned to be published in English in 2025-2026.



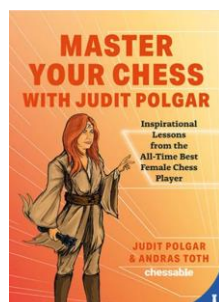
[Alma by Judit Berg and Judit Polgar](#)

For young readers about chess, adventures, friendship and life.

Includes the game of J. Polgar vs V. Anand.

[Judit Polgar Teaches Chess Trilogy](#)

Available also in: English Hungarian, German, French, Spanish and Chinese



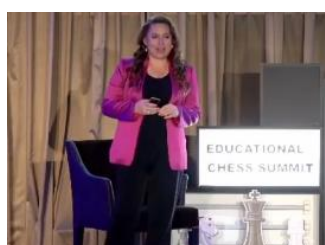
[Master Your Chess with Judit Polgar](#)



Other Resources by/on Judit Polgar:



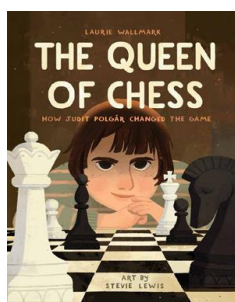
[Judit Polgar Ted Talk - Giving checkmate is always fun](#)



[The Magic of Chess](#) - Judit's talk at the Educational Chess Summit 2024 on the Youtube channel of Judit Polgar's Global Chess Festival, where you can find other interesting lectures on chess in education.



[The Polgar Girls](#) - Third episode for an animated series project introducing Judit Polgar, Zsotia Polgar and Zsuzsa Polgar, the Olympic gold medalist chess grandmasters.



[Laurie Wallmark: The Queen of Chess: How Judit Polgár Changed the Game](#)

Available also in Hungarian [HERE](#).



Other Useful Educational Websites, Apps and Resources

We recommend these sites to bring more diversity to a standard chess class over the board.



<https://www.chesskid.com/>

ChessKid.com is a safe, free online platform where children can learn and play chess through interactive lessons, puzzles, and games against peers or computer opponents.



[The ChessKid Official Girls Club](https://www.chesskid.com/girls-club/)

This club provides a welcoming space for girls to challenge themselves and improve their creativity, decision-making, and concentration — all skills that help in school and beyond. Most importantly, this club is about making new friends and having fun!



<https://www.chessable.com/>

A training platform that utilizes spaced repetition to help players study and retain openings, tactics, strategy, and endgames through interactive courses. Perfect platform for online classes.



<https://logiqboard.com/>

LogiqBoard is an interactive, shareable online chessboard designed for real-time collaboration, enabling users to play chess, strategy games, and engage in math and logic activities together without registration.



<https://www.exiquiz.com/>

A gamified, GPS and QR code-based educational platform that promotes learning through movement, enabling students to develop problem-solving skills and teamwork by completing tasks in outdoor settings.



<https://www.chessity.com/>



It is a game-based program for learning chess, independently, at one's own space in an entertaining way. It can be used by coaches as well to teach chess.



<https://edu.fide.com/>

On the website of FIDE's Chess in Education Commission you can find lots of recommended books, online tools and links.



<https://museum.fide.com/>

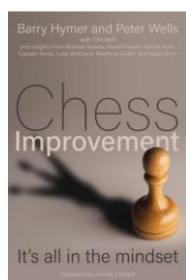
The FIDE Chess Museum website offers rich historical insights, artifacts, and educational resources that can enhance chess education by connecting learners with the game's cultural and historical heritage.



[Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi: Flow, the secret to happiness](#)



[The Growth Mindset | Carol Dweck](#)



[Barry Hymer and Peter Wells: Chess Improvement](#)

