

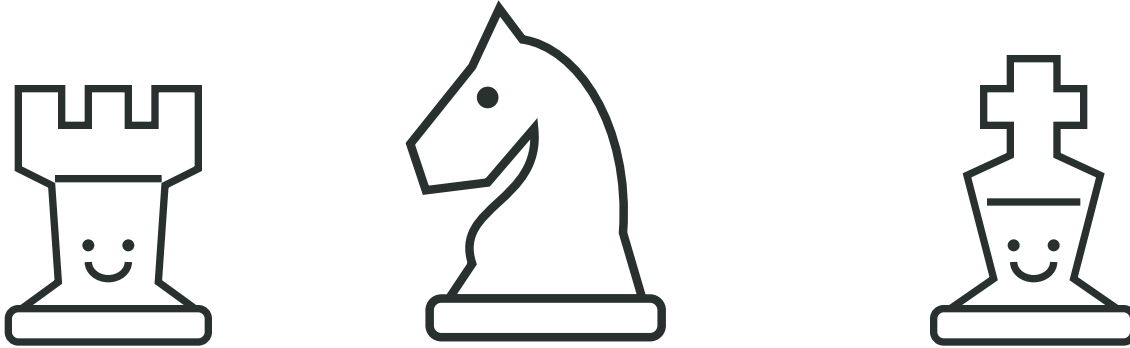
THE SAGE DAD

LEARN CHESS / COLOR, NOTICE, PLAY

START HERE / A VISUAL CHESS ADVENTURE

Small moves. Big discoveries.

Color a piece. Trace its path. Try a tiny game. A standalone collection and companion to The Sage Dad chess book.



YOUR ROUTE THROUGH THE COLLECTION

1

Meet the pieces | pages 3-9

Start with the board, then explore one piece at a time.

2

Learn together | pages 10-15

Discover captures, setup, king safety and two short games.

3

Play real chess | pages 16-20

Add special moves, simple tactics and a friendly first game.

Print only what you need. Board: page 21. Pieces: page 22.

Grown-up answers: pages 23-24. Read the teaching guide on page 2.

No book or chess set is required. Use the paper kit or an existing set.

GROWN-UP CUE

For ages 4-7, begin with one coloring-and-movement page and 5-10 minutes of play. Older beginners can use the same route without coloring.

A little help for the grown-up

Choose by experience first. Age changes the support, not the starting line.

GATHER A FEW THINGS

Pencil, crayons, a chess set or pages 21-22. An adult can cut the paper pieces. Print at 100% on US Letter; A4 fit-to-page also works if board and tokens use the same setting.

NEW TO CHESS?

Begin at page 3. Introduce the rook and bishop before adding more pieces. Return to an earlier page whenever a new position feels confusing.

ALREADY KNOW THE MOVES?

Try blockers and pawn choices on pages 10-11. Continue to check and game endings on pages 13-14. Save tactics for after king safety makes sense.

ADJUST THE SUPPORT

Ages 4-7: read aloud; point, color and move a piece. Ages 7-9: ask for a prediction and a reason. Ages 10-12: test a second position. Ages 13+: compare choices and explain what the opponent could do.

USE A FOUR-PART RHYTHM

Notice the picture. Show one example. Let the learner try. Ask them to teach it back. In a 20-minute session, leave at least half the time for moving pieces or playing.

WITH THE BOOK OR ON ITS OWN

After a matching book section, choose its piece or idea here. Without the book, follow the page order. These pages do not assume any book chapter, character or earlier lesson.

LOOK FOR UNDERSTANDING

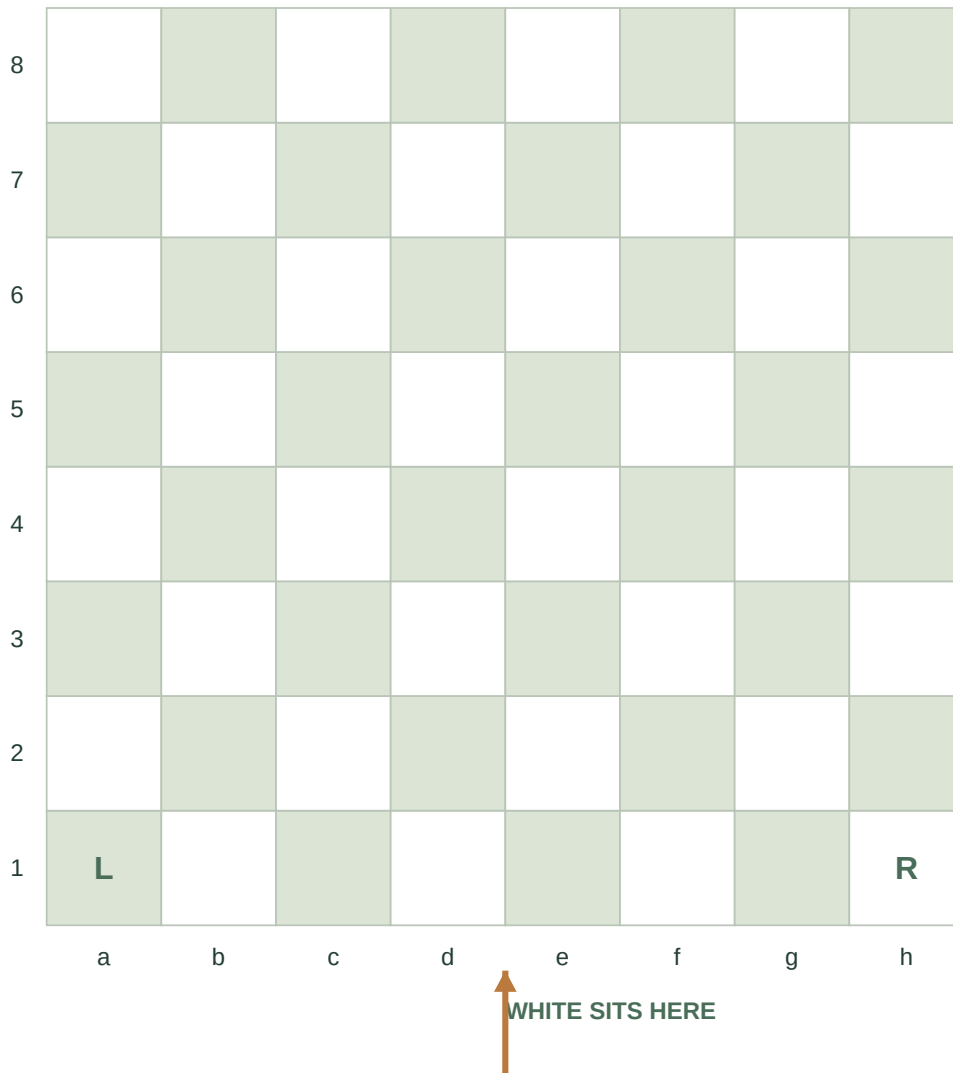
Ask: "Show me another move like that. Why does it work?" A fresh example tells you more than a completed coloring page. Accept pointing or speaking instead of writing.

GROWN-UP CUE

Stop after a useful discovery. Learning games are labeled when they change the rules; actual chess keeps both kings safe and ends without capturing a king.

Find your way around

Chess pieces stand inside squares. A board has 8 rows and 8 columns.



1. Put your right hand beside the R corner. That corner is light.
2. Trace one row across and one column up with your finger.
3. Color the four middle squares: d4, e4, d5 and e5.

GROWN-UP CUE

Say "light on the right" from either player's seat. Letters name columns; numbers name rows. A square name combines them, such as d4. No memorizing needed.

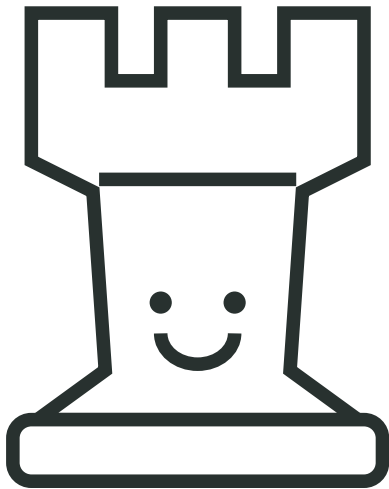
THE SAGE DAD

LEARN CHESS / COLOR, NOTICE, PLAY

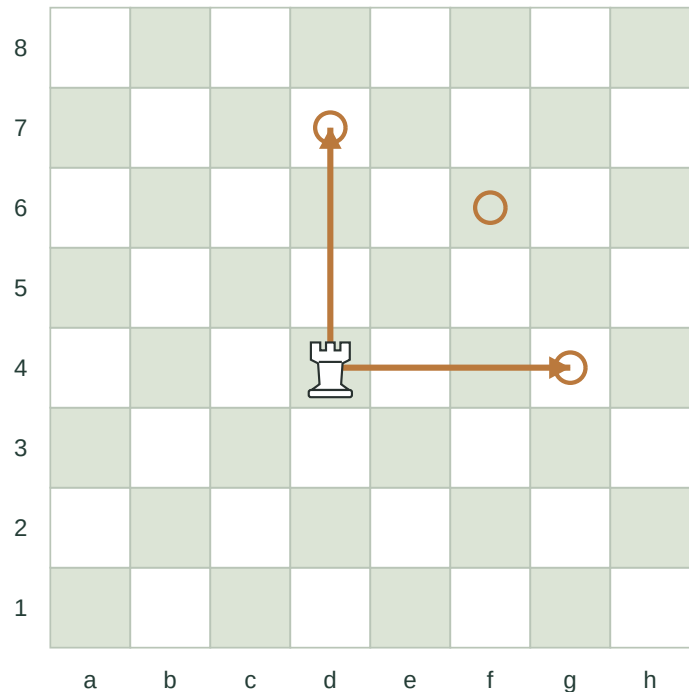
MEET A PIECE / NEW LEARNERS / 5-10 MINUTES

Rook roads

Straight along a row or column. As far as the clear path allows.



COLOR ME



TRACE. THEN CHOOSE.

1

Make it yours

Color the large piece. Say its name while you point to the small one.

2

Follow a path

Trace a straight road up. Then trace one sideways.

3

Find the possible destinations

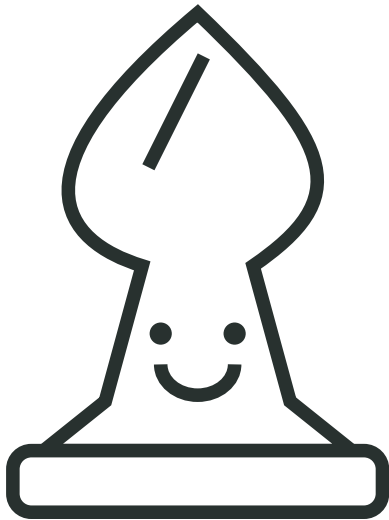
Which two ringed squares can it reach? Circle them; cross out the other one.

GROWN-UP CUE

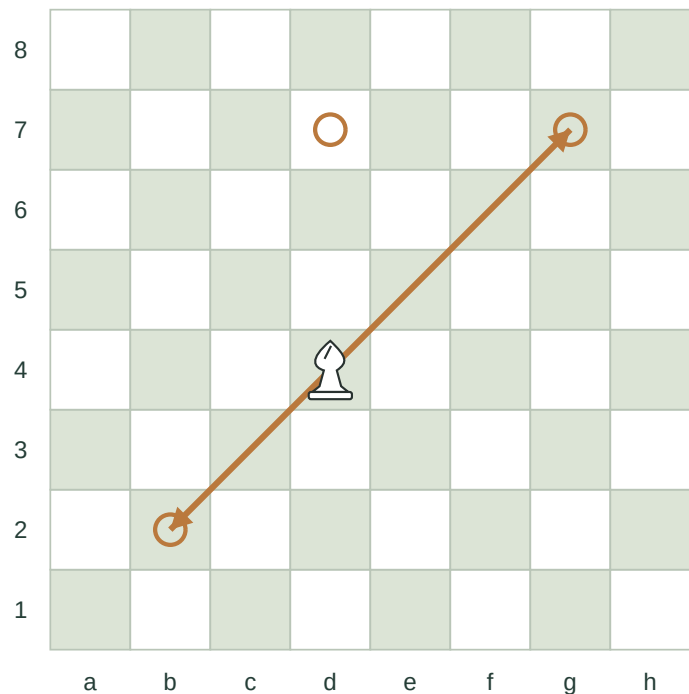
A rook cannot turn a corner during one move or jump over another piece.

Bishop trails

Diagonal means slanting from corner to corner of the squares.



COLOR ME



TRACE. THEN CHOOSE.

1 Make it yours

Color the large piece. Say its name while you point to the small one.

2 Follow a path

Trace each slanting path. Notice the color of every square.

3 Find the possible destinations

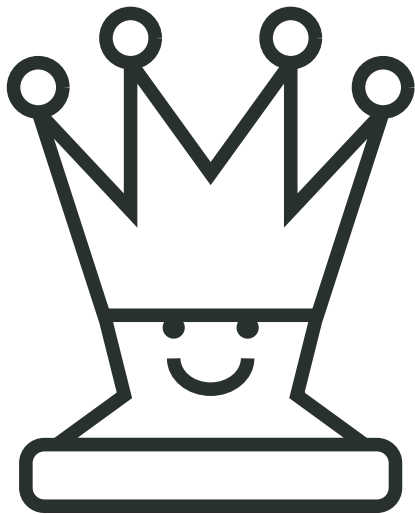
Which two ringed squares can it reach? Circle them; cross out the other one.

GROWN-UP CUE

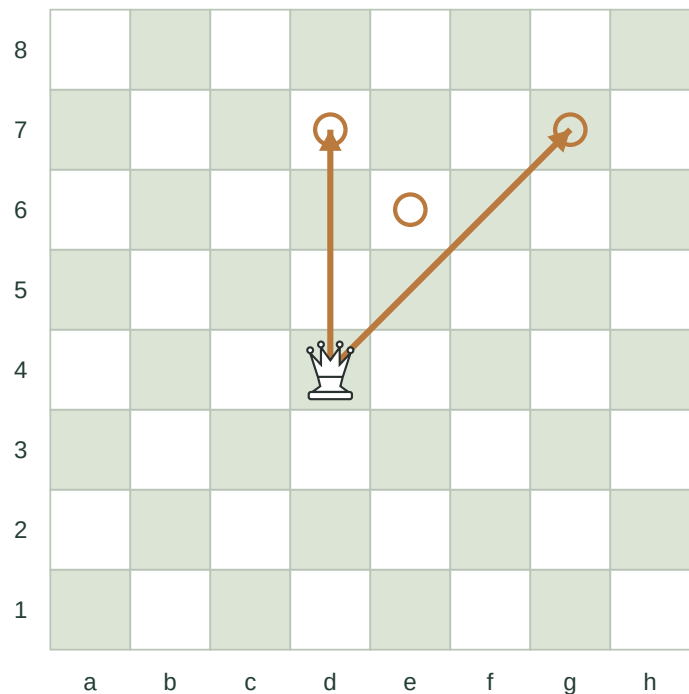
A bishop stays on its starting square color. It cannot jump over a piece.

Queen pathways

The queen can use rook roads OR bishop trails in one move.



COLOR ME



TRACE. THEN CHOOSE.

1 Make it yours

Color the large piece. Say its name while you point to the small one.

2 Follow a path

Trace one straight path and one diagonal path.

3 Find the possible destinations

Which two ringed squares can it reach? Circle them; cross out the other one.

GROWN-UP CUE

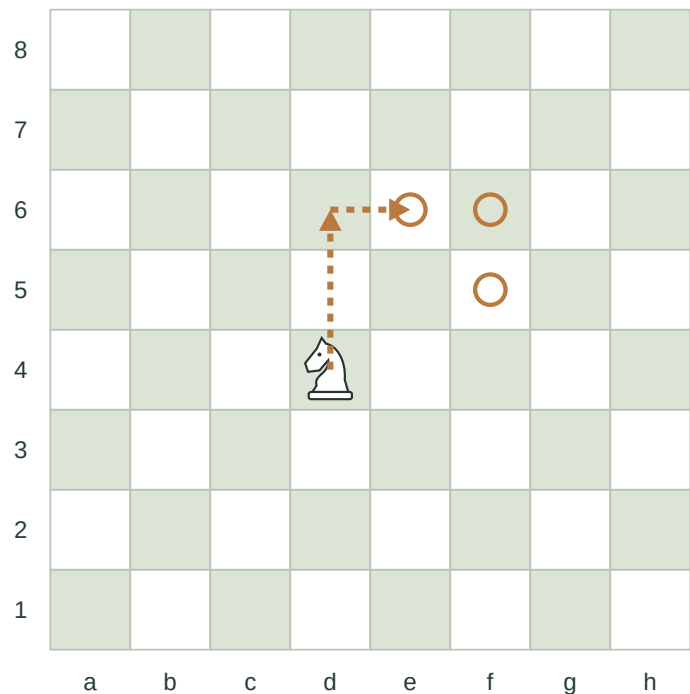
The queen does not turn halfway through a move. Like the rook and bishop, it cannot jump.

Knight jumps

Two squares one way, then one sideways: an L-shaped jump.



COLOR ME



TRACE. THEN CHOOSE.

1 Make it yours

Color the large piece. Say its name while you point to the small one.

2 Follow a path

Use your finger: two up, one right. Land on e6.

3 Find the possible destinations

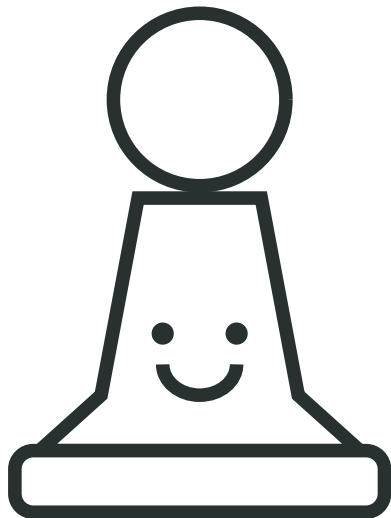
Which two ringed squares can it reach? Try two right, one up as well.

GROWN-UP CUE

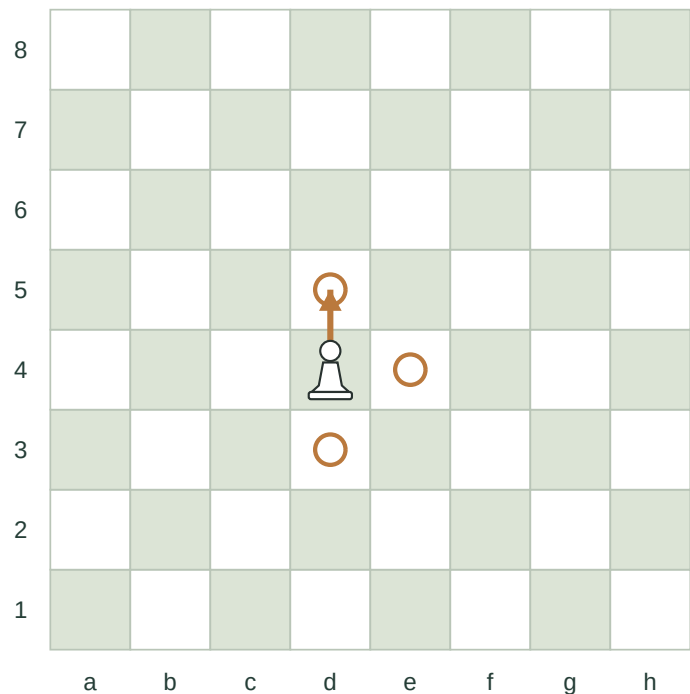
The knight jumps over pieces. Only its landing square matters: no landing on your own piece.

Pawn parade

This is a WHITE pawn. It usually steps one empty square up this page.



COLOR ME



TRACE. THEN CHOOSE.

1 Make it yours

Color the large piece. Say its name while you point to the small one.

2 Follow a path

Trace forward from d4 to d5. It never steps backward.

3 Find the possible destinations

Which ringed square is one step forward? Cross out the other two.

GROWN-UP CUE

Black pawns go the opposite way. A pawn captures one square diagonally forward; it does not capture straight ahead.

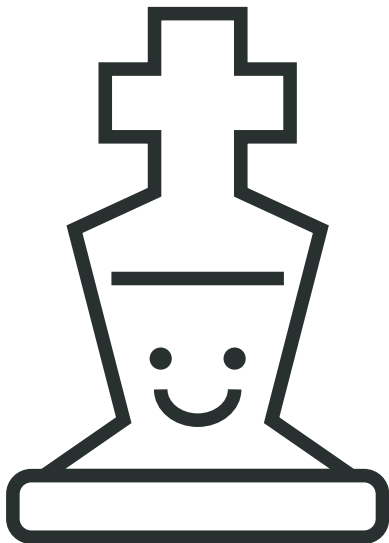
THE SAGE DAD

LEARN CHESS / COLOR, NOTICE, PLAY

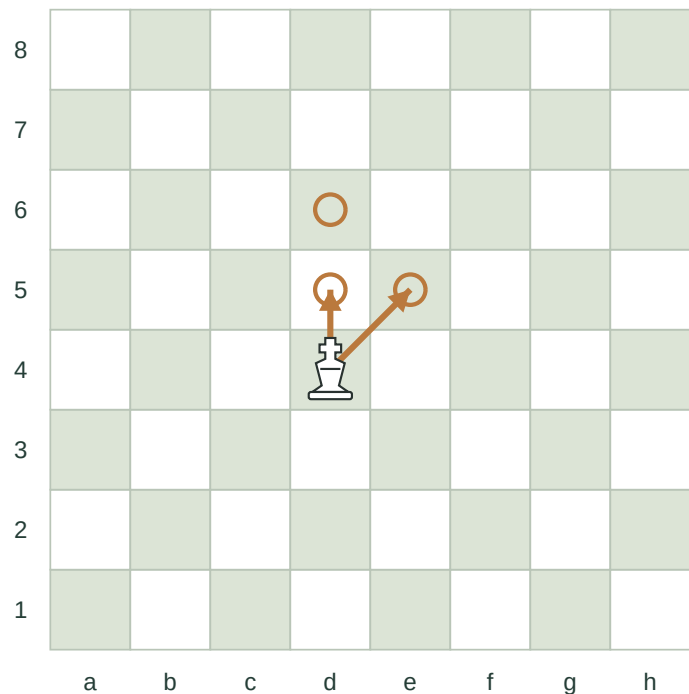
MEET A PIECE / NEW LEARNERS / 5-10 MINUTES

King steps

One square in any direction - only when that square is safe.



COLOR ME



TRACE. THEN CHOOSE.

1

Make it yours

Color the large piece. Say its name while you point to the small one.

2

Follow a path

Trace one tiny straight step and one tiny diagonal step.

3

Find the possible destinations

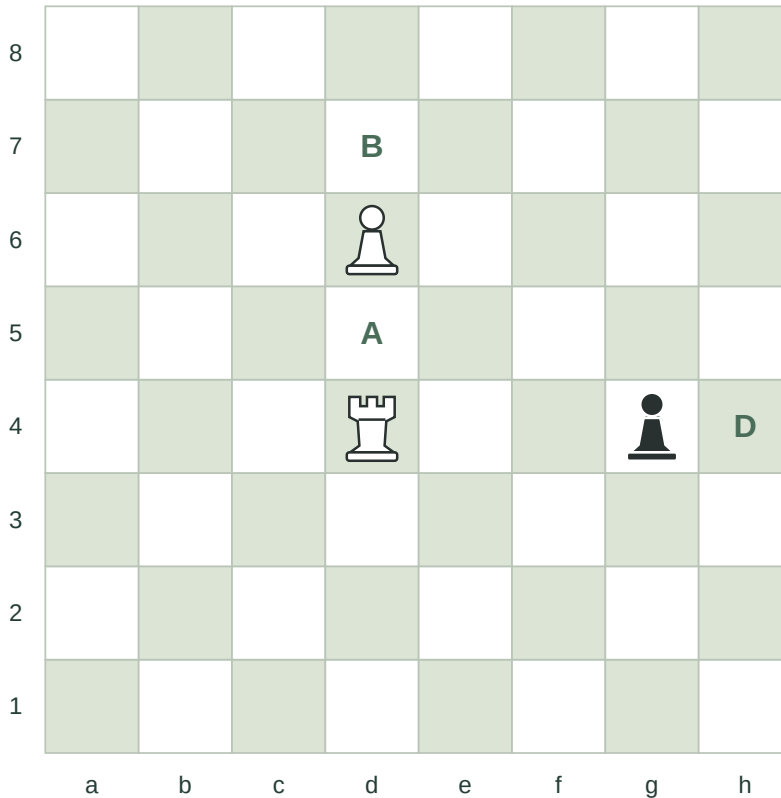
Which two ringed squares are just one step away? Cross out the other one.

GROWN-UP CUE

This is a movement-only picture. In a game, the king may never enter an attacked square. Two kings must stay apart.

Stop, capture, or jump?

A friendly piece blocks you. An enemy piece may be captured if your move reaches it.



ROOK CHOICES

White rook at d4.

A: d5

B: d7

C: g4

D: h4

Circle every allowed destination.

Movement drill: no kings shown.

1 Follow the path

The rook may stop at d5. Its own pawn on d6 blocks the squares beyond.

2 Try a capture

Move to g4 and remove the black pawn. Stop there for this turn.

3 Swap in a knight

Replace the rook with a white knight on d4. It can jump to e6 even with the pawn on d6.

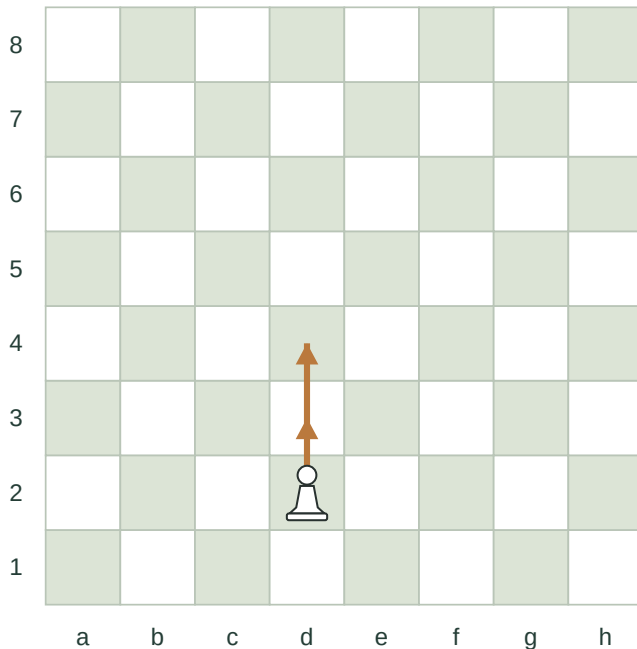
GROWN-UP CUE

Answer: A and C. Capturing is optional unless it is your only legal way out of check. A capture replaces the opponent's piece; the two do not share a square.

Pawns have two different jobs

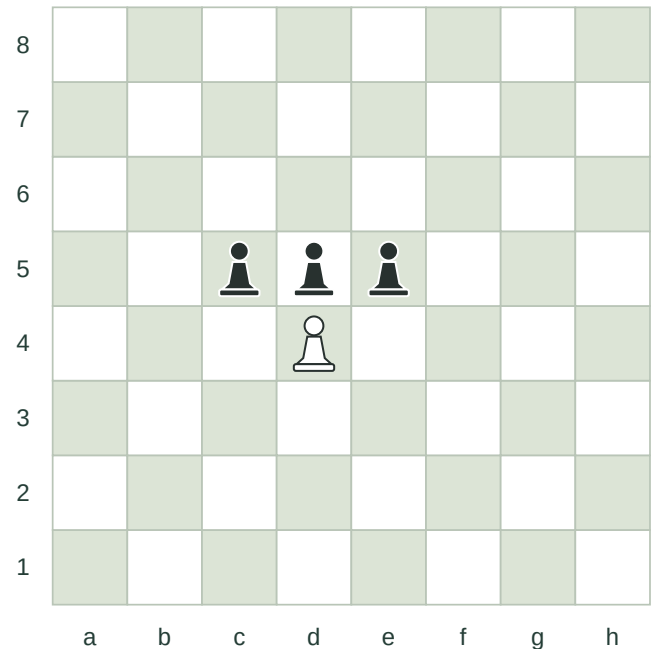
White moves up these diagrams. Black moves down. The arrows are not the same for both colors.

A / FIRST MOVE



A: Choose d3 OR d4. The two-step is allowed only from the starting rank, with both squares empty.

B / A CAPTURE CHOICE



B: Circle the two pieces this pawn could capture. Can it capture the piece directly ahead?

TRY THE BLACK SIDE

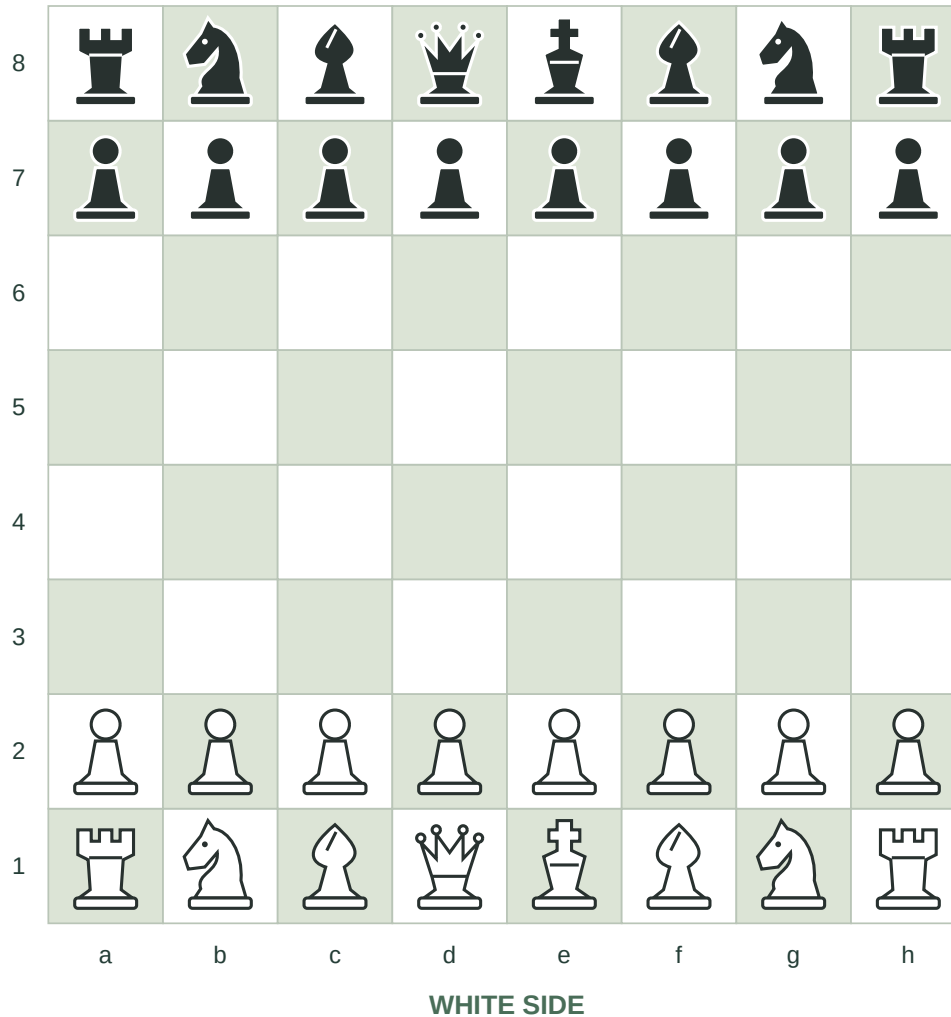
Put a black pawn on e7. It may move to e6 or e5 if the path is clear. Later, from e5 it captures on d4 or f4 when an enemy is there. Draw a down arrow with your finger.

GROWN-UP CUE

B: c5 or e5, one capture per turn. The black pawn on d5 blocks the forward step. On a starting two-step a pawn may not jump an occupied square.

Build the starting position

Set up one side at a time. White moves first; then take turns.



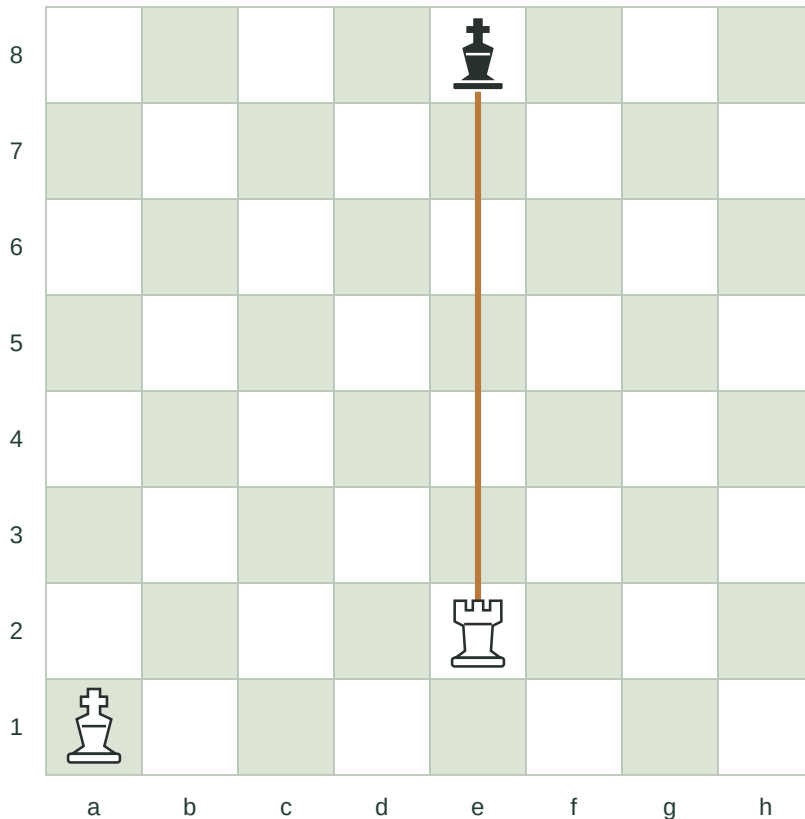
1. Put rooks in corners, then knights, then bishops.
2. Queen on her own color: White d1, Black d8. King beside her.
3. Add eight pawns in front. Compare your setup with the picture.

GROWN-UP CUE

There are 16 pieces per side. Use page 22 for the complete paper set. Ask the learner to find the two kings, the two queens, and the light right-hand corner.

Keep the king safe

Check means the king is attacked. The next move must make that king safe.



BLACK TO MOVE

The rook attacks up the e-file.

Can Black move to d8?

Can Black move to e7?

Circle a safe destination.

THREE WAYS TO ANSWER CHECK

1

Move

Move the king to a safe square.

2

Capture

Capture the checking piece, if doing so makes your king safe.

3

Block

Put a piece in the attack line, when possible. A knight check cannot be blocked.

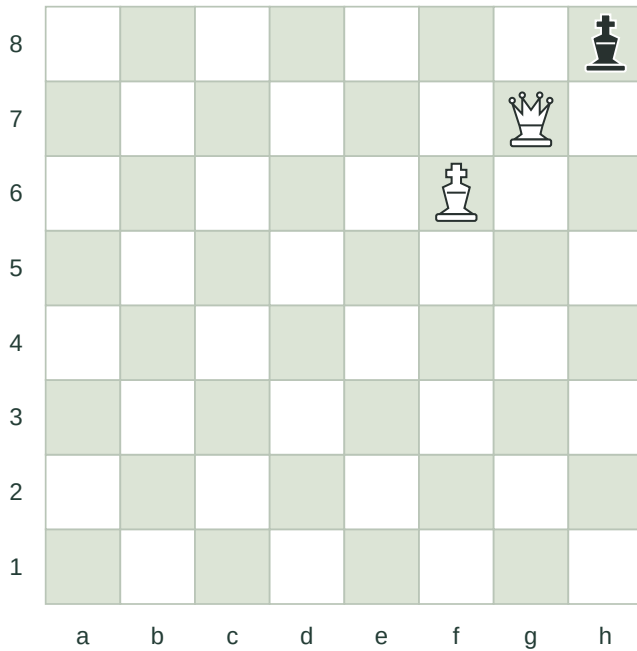
GROWN-UP CUE

Here d8, f8, d7 and f7 are safe; e7 is attacked. You never capture a king. In every real position, check all enemy attacks before choosing a king move.

Checkmate or stalemate?

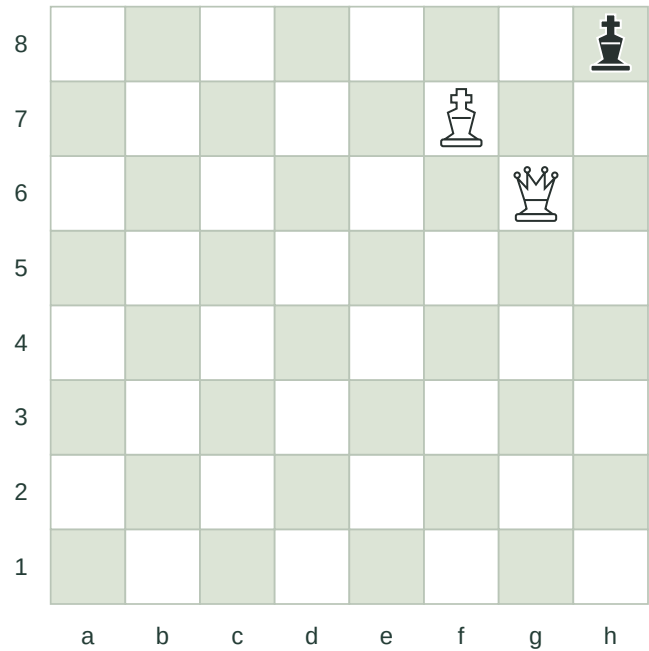
First ask: is the king in check? Then ask: does that side have any legal move?

A / BLACK TO MOVE



A: Trace the queen's attack. Can the king escape? Can it capture the queen safely?

B / BLACK TO MOVE



B: Is h8 attacked? Test g8, g7 and h7. Is any move legal?

CHECK + no legal escape = CHECKMATE. The other player wins.

NO CHECK + no legal move = STALEMATE. The game is a draw.

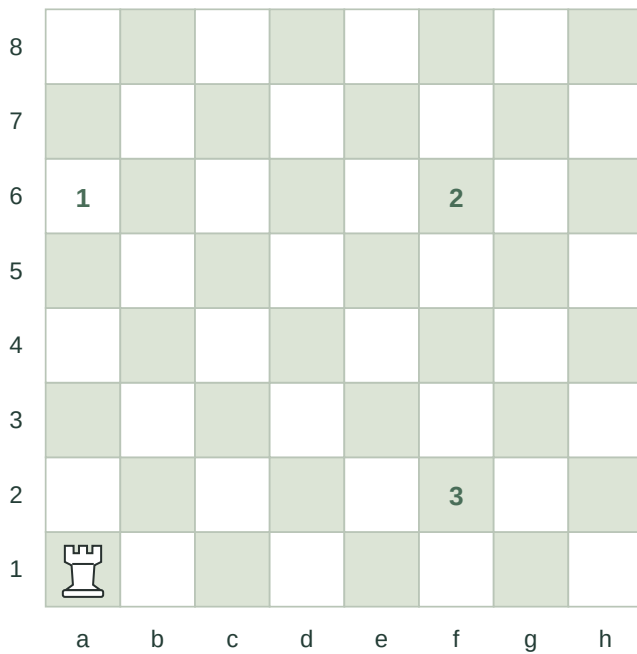
GROWN-UP CUE

A is checkmate: the king on f6 protects the queen. B is stalemate: h8 is safe, but all destinations are attacked. No legal move means no move by ANY piece.

Play before the full game

These are practice games with changed goals. They are not full chess.

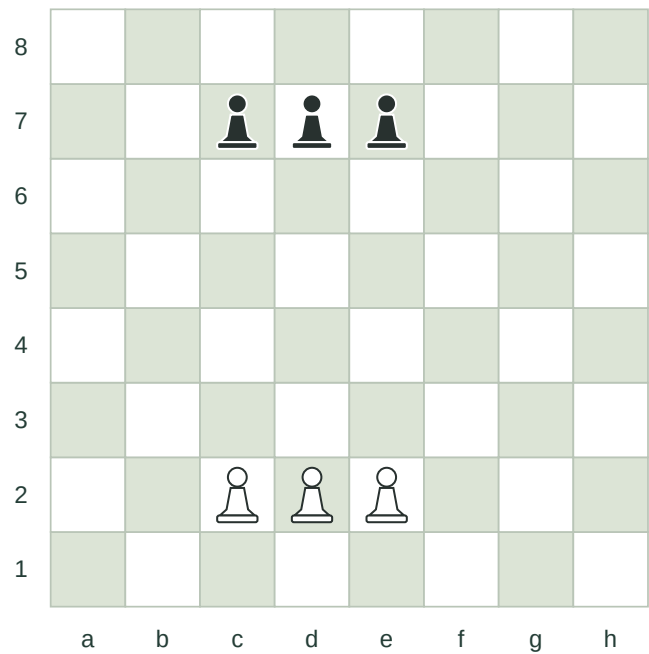
A / ROOK DELIVERY



Cooperate: Deliver to 1, then 2, then 3. Trace one rook move per turn.

Change it: Add a friendly pawn at a4. Find a new route around it.

B / PAWN CROSSING



Compete kindly: White starts. Use normal pawn steps and captures. First pawn reaching the far side wins.

No legal move? That side loses this minigame. Skip en passant for now.

PLAY AGAIN

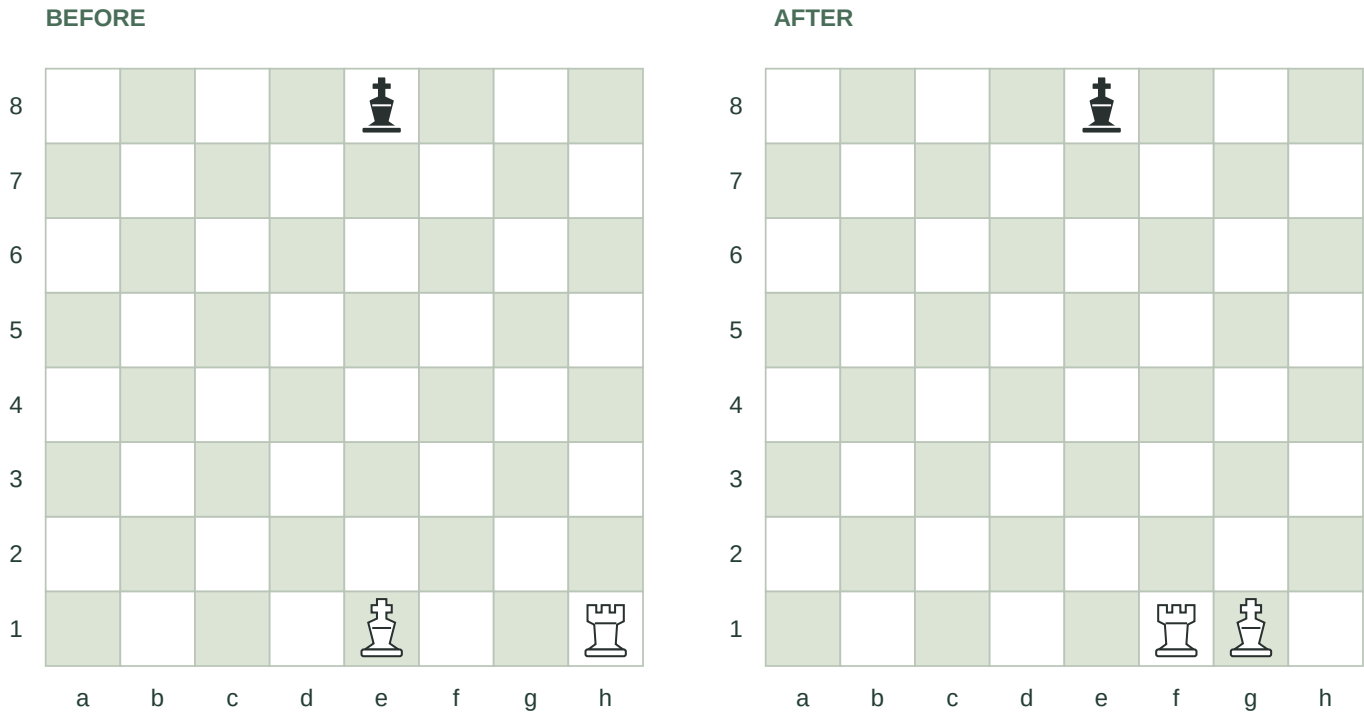
Swap roles or colors. Ask: "What did you notice before you moved?"

GROWN-UP CUE

Rook example: a1-a6-f6-f2. With a4 blocked, try a1-b1-b6-a6-f6-f2. In full chess, promotion replaces reaching-the-edge victory; page 17 explains it.

The king and rook team up

Castling is one move with two pieces. These pictures show White castling on the king side.



Move the king first: e1 to g1, then the rook h1 to f1.

On the queen side: king e1 to c1, rook a1 to d1.

ALL FOUR CHECKS MUST PASS

1. This king and this rook have never moved.
2. All squares between them are empty.
3. The king is not in check.
4. The king does not cross or land on an attacked square.

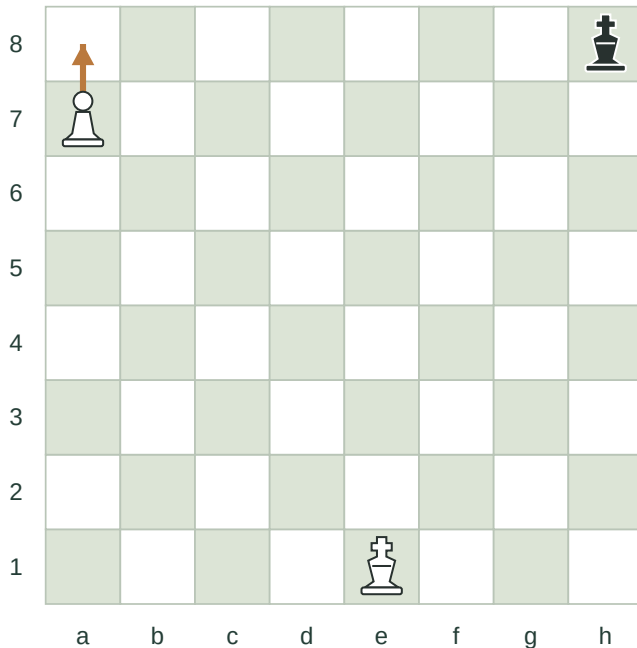
GROWN-UP CUE

Black uses rank 8 instead of rank 1. A rook may be attacked and castling can still be allowed; the king's starting, crossing and landing squares must be safe.

Two special pawn moments

Learn promotion first. Keep en passant as a reference until its exact situation occurs.

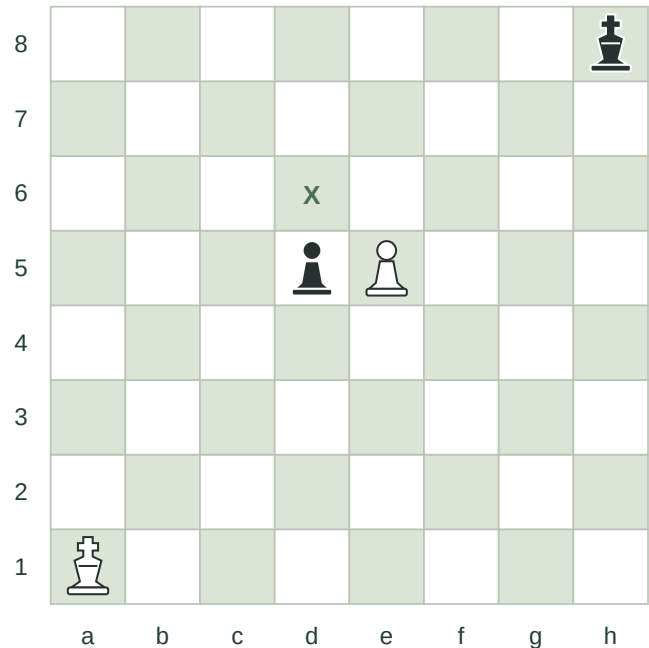
A / PROMOTION



A white pawn reaching rank 8 becomes a queen, rook, bishop or knight of its own color, immediately.

Choose one. A second queen is allowed. Black promotes on rank 1.

B / EN PASSANT



Black has **just** moved d7-d5. White may now play e5-d6 and remove the black pawn from d5.

This special capture is available only on the very next move.

TELL THE STORY

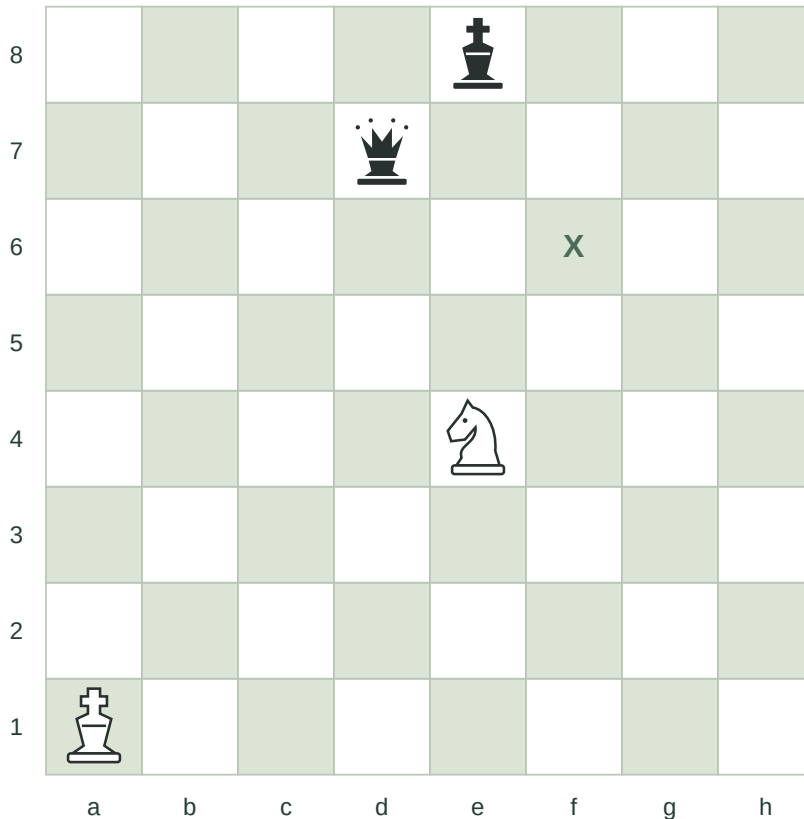
Why is the black pawn removed from d5 even though White lands on d6?

GROWN-UP CUE

En passant treats the just-moved pawn as if it had advanced only one square. It must also leave your own king safe. You cannot save this option for a later turn.

Notice two threats at once

A fork attacks two targets. Predict the attacks before moving the knight.



WHITE TO MOVE

Move the knight from e4 to f6.

Trace an L from f6 to the king.

Trace another L from f6 to the queen.

1 Name the targets

Which two pieces does the knight attack from f6?

2 Give Black a turn

Black must answer the check. Try moving the king to f8.

3 Finish the idea

Can the knight now capture the queen on d7? Show its jump.

GROWN-UP CUE

Yes: f6 attacks e8 and d7. After ...Kf8, Nx d7 wins the queen. A fork is a useful pattern, not a promise that every two-target attack wins material.

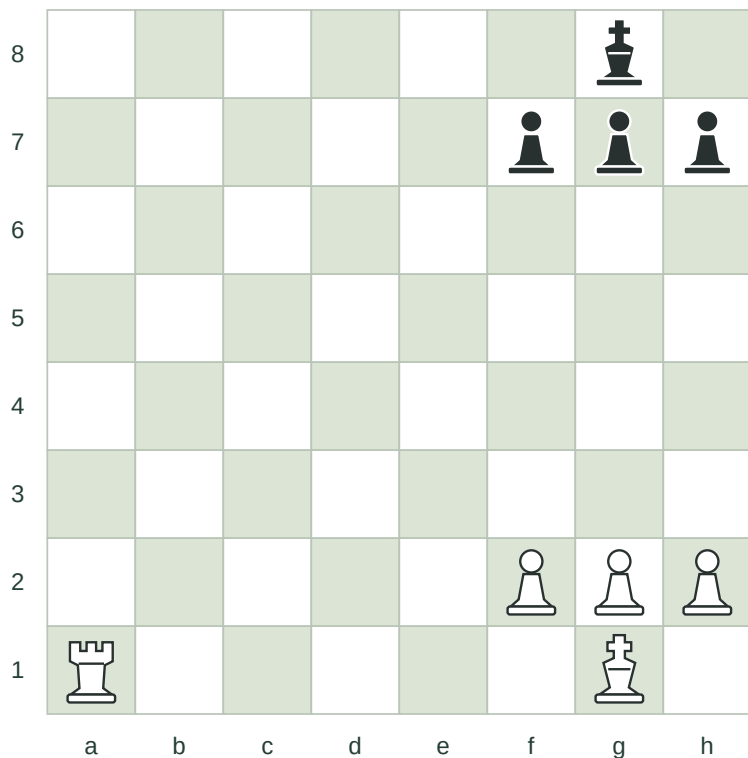
THE SAGE DAD

LEARN CHESS / COLOR, NOTICE, PLAY

11 / THINKING AHEAD / STRETCH

Make a plan. Test a reply.

A good idea still needs a legal move and a look at the opponent's reply.



WHITE TO MOVE

The a-file is open: no pawn of either color is on it.

Try Ra7. Predict Black's reply ...Kf8.

Then test Ra8. Is it check?

MY PLAN IN THREE PARTS

My target or idea:

One legal move:

A reply I must consider:

GROWN-UP CUE

Ra7 is legal. After ...Kf8, Ra8+ is check along rank 8. This is one possible line, not forced best play. Ask the learner to test a different legal Black reply.

Your first friendly chess game

Use page 21 and the pieces on page 22, or your own chess set.

1 Set up and choose colors

Use page 12. White starts. Move one piece per turn, except castling. You cannot skip a turn in chess.

2 Pause before each move

Is my king in check? Does this piece move that way? Is the path clear? Will my king be safe afterward?

3 Make room for learning

Agree before starting whether you will allow take-backs for learning. Pause and discuss an illegal move, then choose a legal one.

4 Recognize the ending

Checkmate wins. Stalemate is a draw. A player may resign; players can agree to a draw. With only two kings, neither can give mate, so it is a draw.

5 Keep one discovery

Say: "I noticed ____, so I tried ____." Thank your partner. A short unfinished game can still be a successful practice session.

READY FOR THE NEXT STEP?

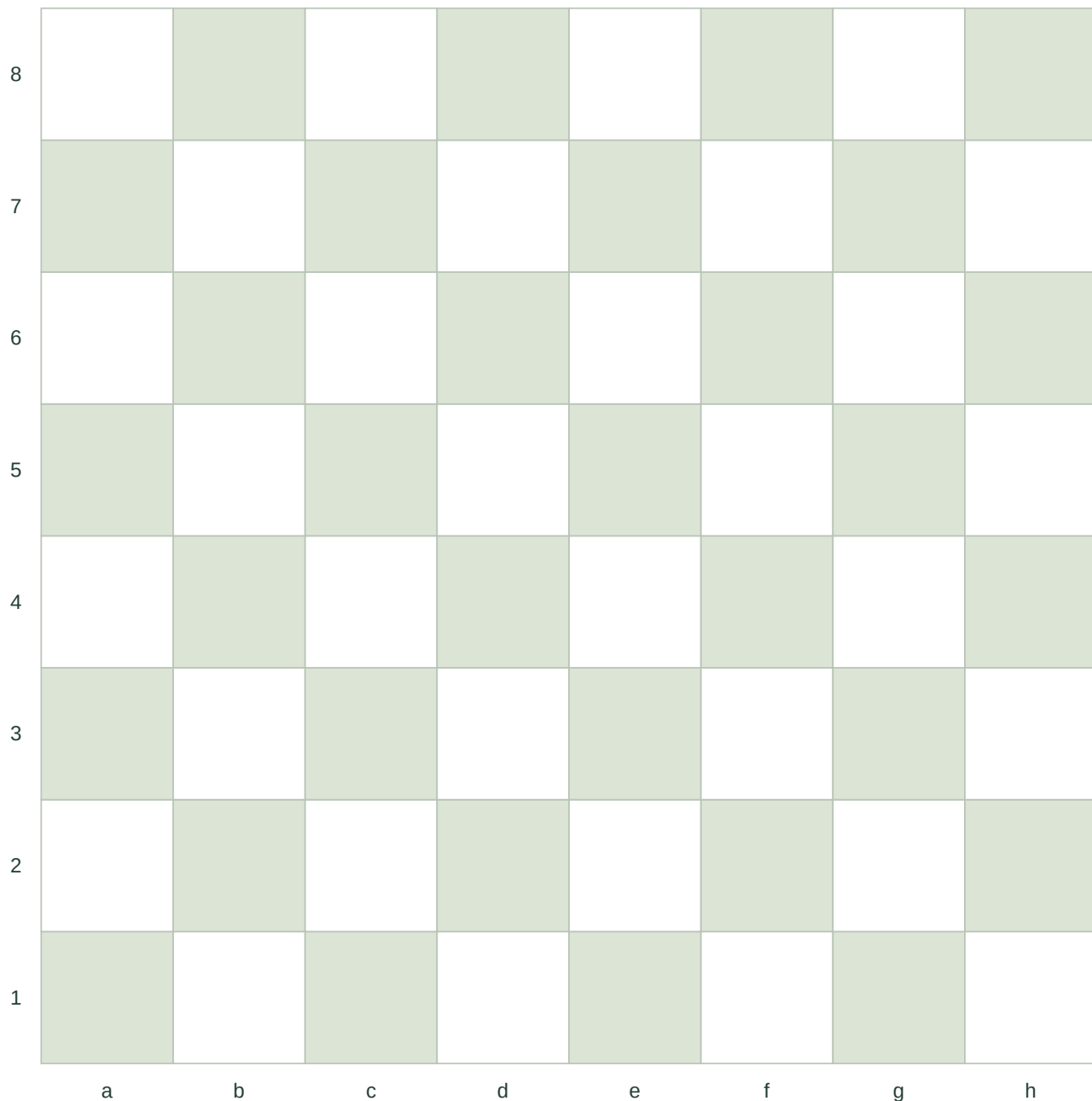
Try a fresh position and explain your choice. Then explore simple mates, forks and protected pieces. Tournament rules also cover repetition, move-count draws, clocks and touch-move; use the official reference on page 24 when needed.

GROWN-UP CUE

Praise noticing, explaining and trying again. Keep the goal as understanding a move, rather than winning every game or finishing every page.

Your print-and-play chessboard

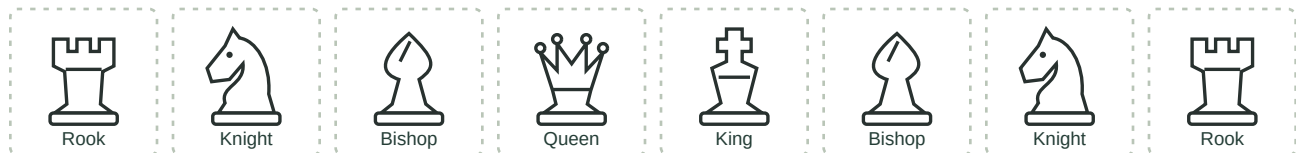
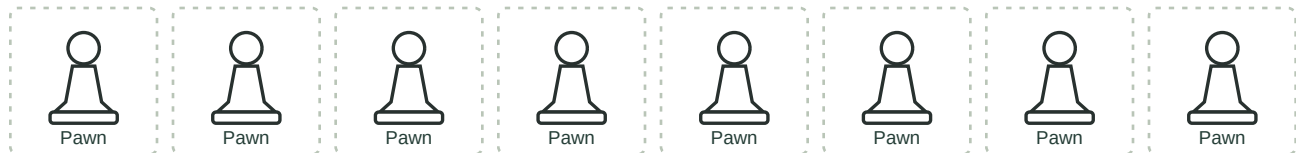
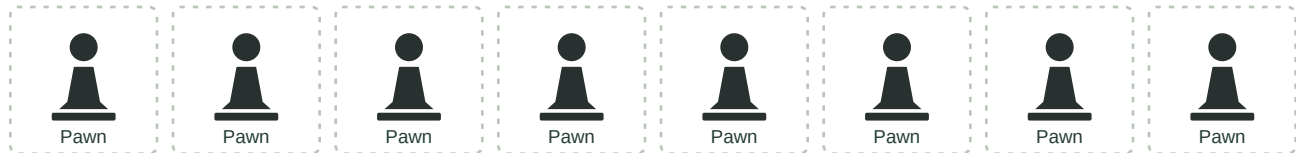
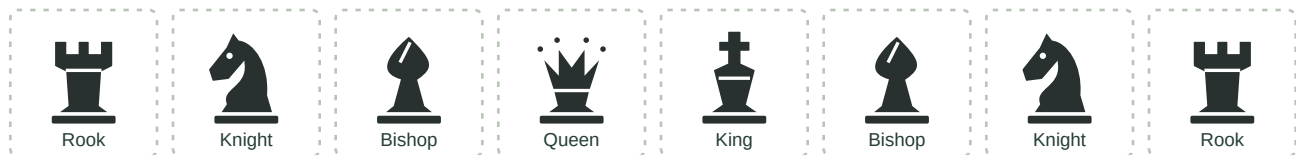
Pieces go in squares. Seat White at the bottom. Light square on the right.



Use the matching pieces on page 22. Print both pages at the same scale.
For a bigger movement game, draw a floor board and let the learner walk a piece's path.

Make your own chess set

Cut around each tile. Keep White outlined and Black dark so both sides are easy to identify.



GIVE YOUR TEAM A NAME

GROWN-UP CUE

Tiles fit the page 21 board. An adult can cut and store them in an envelope. For learners who may mouth small pieces, point or draw instead of using loose tokens.

Answers that help you teach

Ask for the reason, then try one fresh example. Coloring choices have no right answer.

PAGE 3 / BOARD

The right corner is h1 for White and a8 for Black; both are light. Center: d4, e4, d5, e5.

PAGES 4-9 / PIECE CHOICES

Rook: d7, g4. Bishop: g7, b2. Queen: d7, g7. Knight: e6, f5. White pawn: d5. King: d5, e5 in the empty movement picture. The circled targets are examples, not all possible moves.

PAGE 10 / BLOCKERS

A (d5) and C (g4) are allowed. The pawn on d6 blocks d7; the enemy on g4 stops the rook from reaching h4 in that move. A knight can jump from d4 to e6.

PAGE 11 / PAWNS

A: d3 or d4, if both needed squares are clear. B: c5 or e5; d5 is blocked and cannot be captured straight ahead. A pawn never moves backward.

PAGE 12 / SETUP

Back ranks: rook, knight, bishop, queen, king, bishop, knight, rook. Pawns on ranks 2 and 7. White queen d1 and king e1; Black queen d8 and king e8.

PAGE 13 / CHECK

The rook checks along the e-file. Safe king moves: d8, f8, d7, f7. The king cannot stay in check or go to e7.

PAGE 14 / ENDINGS

A is mate: h8 is attacked and g7 is protected by the white king on f6. B is stalemate: h8 is not attacked; g8, g7 and h7 are attacked. Black has no other pieces to move.

GROWN-UP CUE

If a learner answers from memory, move the pieces to a new place and ask again. In real chess, a movement pattern is legal only when your own king stays safe.

Keep the discovery going

Use these notes to explain the move, not just mark an answer.

PAGES 15-17 / GAMES AND SPECIAL MOVES

Rook route: a1-a6-f6-f2. A blocker needs a detour. Castling: king g1, rook f1; all four conditions on page 16 are required. Promotion may create a second queen. En passant lands on d6 and removes the pawn from d5 immediately after ...d7-d5.

PAGES 18-19 / THINKING AHEAD

The knight on f6 checks e8 and attacks d7. After ...Kf8 it can take the queen. In the rook plan, Ra7 ...Kf8 Ra8+ is a legal checking line, not a forced sequence.

PAGES 20-22 / PLAY AND REFLECT

Look for legal turns, clear captures and safe kings. Use the full setup on page 12. Let learners explain one discovery; written notation is optional.

BEYOND THIS FOUNDATIONS COLLECTION

Revisit the book for deeper strategy. Next topics can include pins, pawn structure, opposition and basic king-and-rook mates. These need guided positions, not simply an empty board.

TEACHING IDEAS AND RULES CHECKED

Chess in Schools and Communities: gradual teaching with minigames.

<https://www.chessinschools.co.uk/csc-curriculum>

ChessKid: Getting Started; one piece, then checks and endings.

<https://www.chesskid.com/learn/articles/video-series-getting-started>

FIDE: official chess laws, including special moves and draws.

<https://handbook.fide.com/chapter/E012023>

Original Sage Dad activities and vector illustrations. External resources informed the teaching approach and rule checks; their artwork and worksheets are not reproduced. Reviewed October 2026.