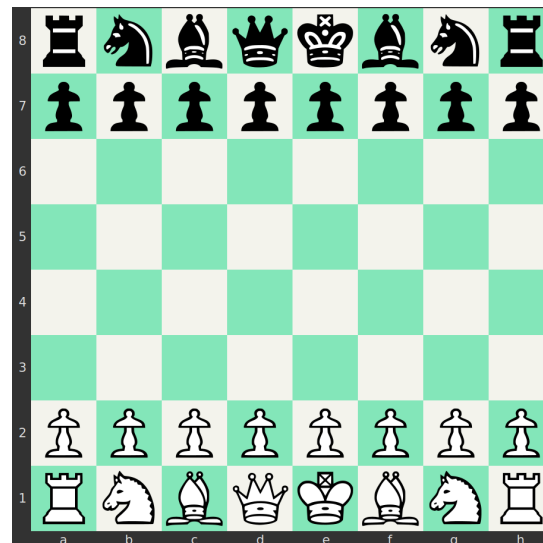


# Chess Notation

Chess notation is how we write down chess games.  
Why is writing down chess games important?

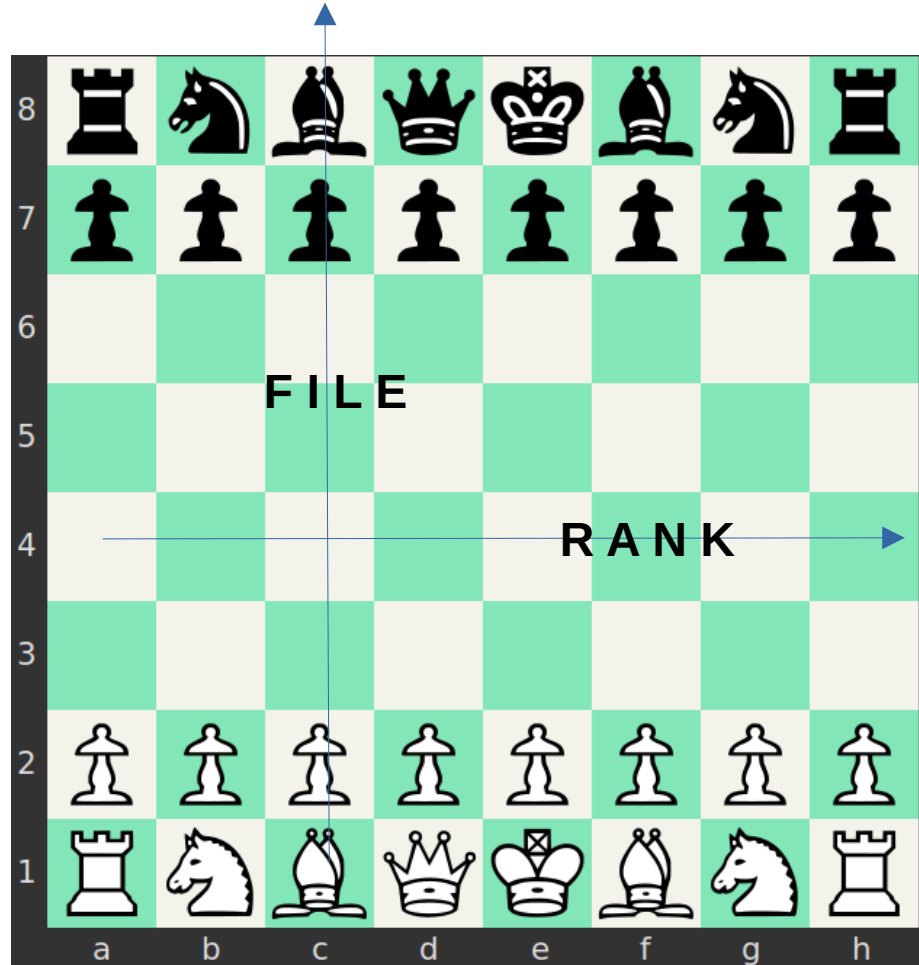
- So we won't forget our games!
- To learn from our mistakes!
- To read chess articles and books!
- Because we sometimes have to! (tournaments)



# Algebraic Notation

The form of chess notation used today is called "algebraic notation."

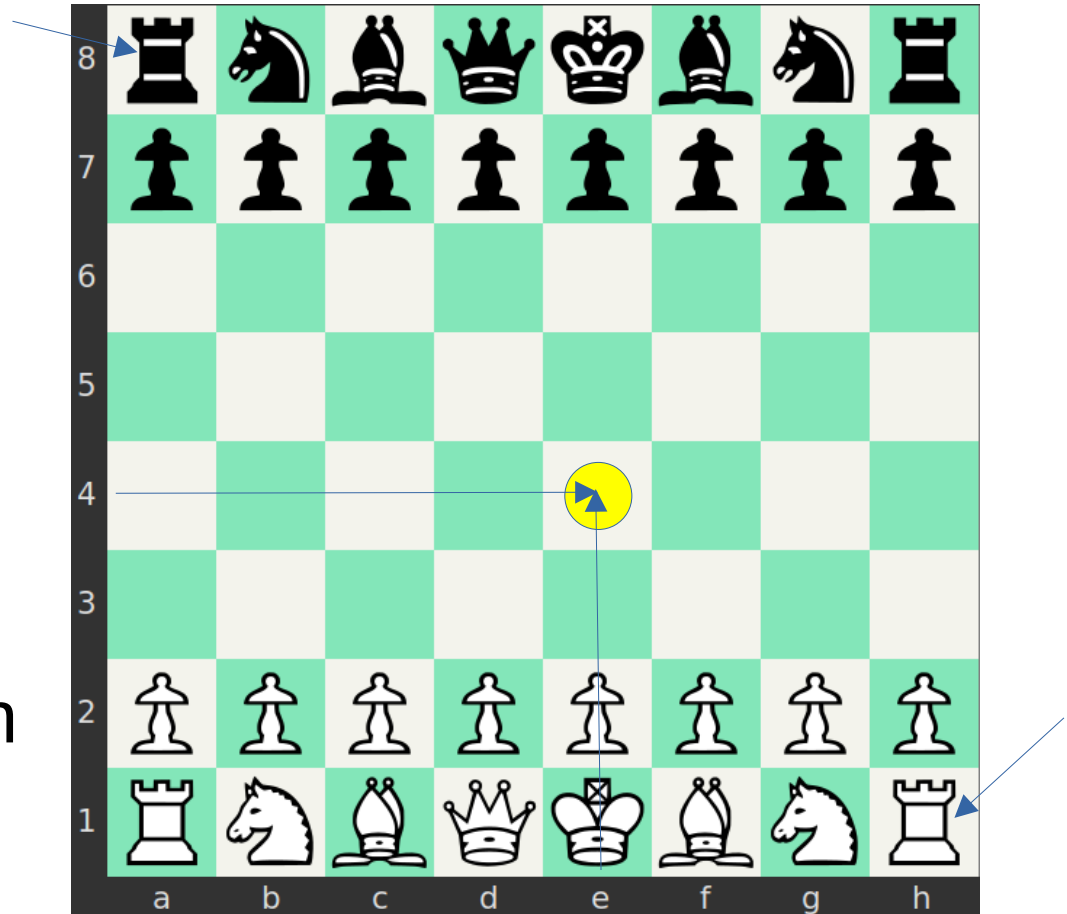
The columns of squares **a** through **h** are called files. The rows of squares **1** through **8** are called ranks.



# Algebraic Notation

The square with the yellow dot is e4.

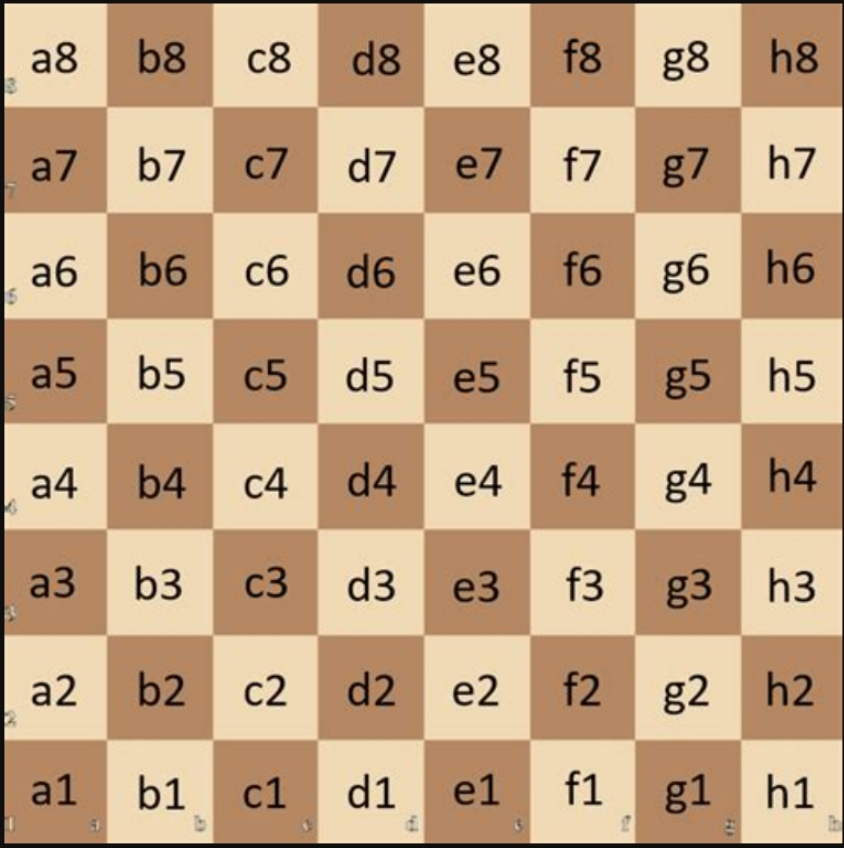
The pieces and board must be placed so that White's King's Rook is on h1 and Black's Queen's Rook is on a8. There must be a white square in the lower-right hand corner.



# Algebraic Notation

In a similar way you can see that every square has a unique name. To name a square, write the **file** of the square then the **rank** as shown by this chess board.

**Remember: The names are the same whether from White's or Black's point of view!**



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

# Symbols for the pieces

KING = K

QUEEN = Q

ROOK = R

BISHOP = B

KNIGHT = N

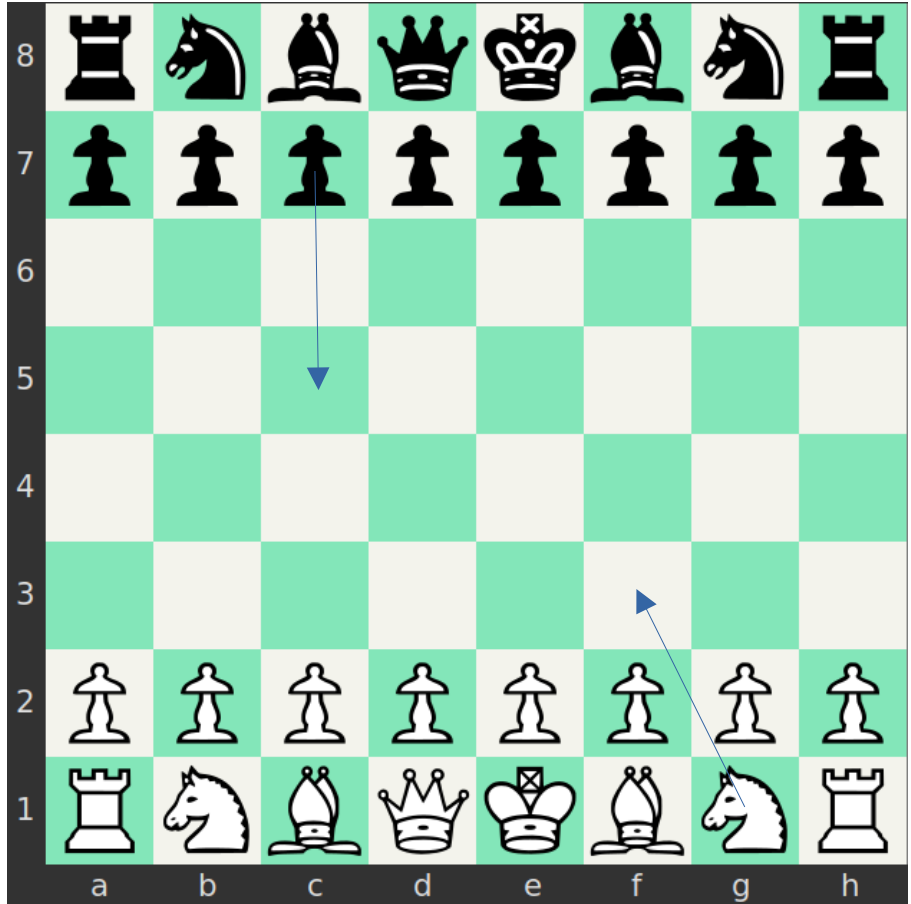
PAWN = No symbol

To write the Knight move  
shown, we would write:

**Nf3**

To write the Pawn move  
shown, we would just write the  
square the Pawn moves to:

**c5**



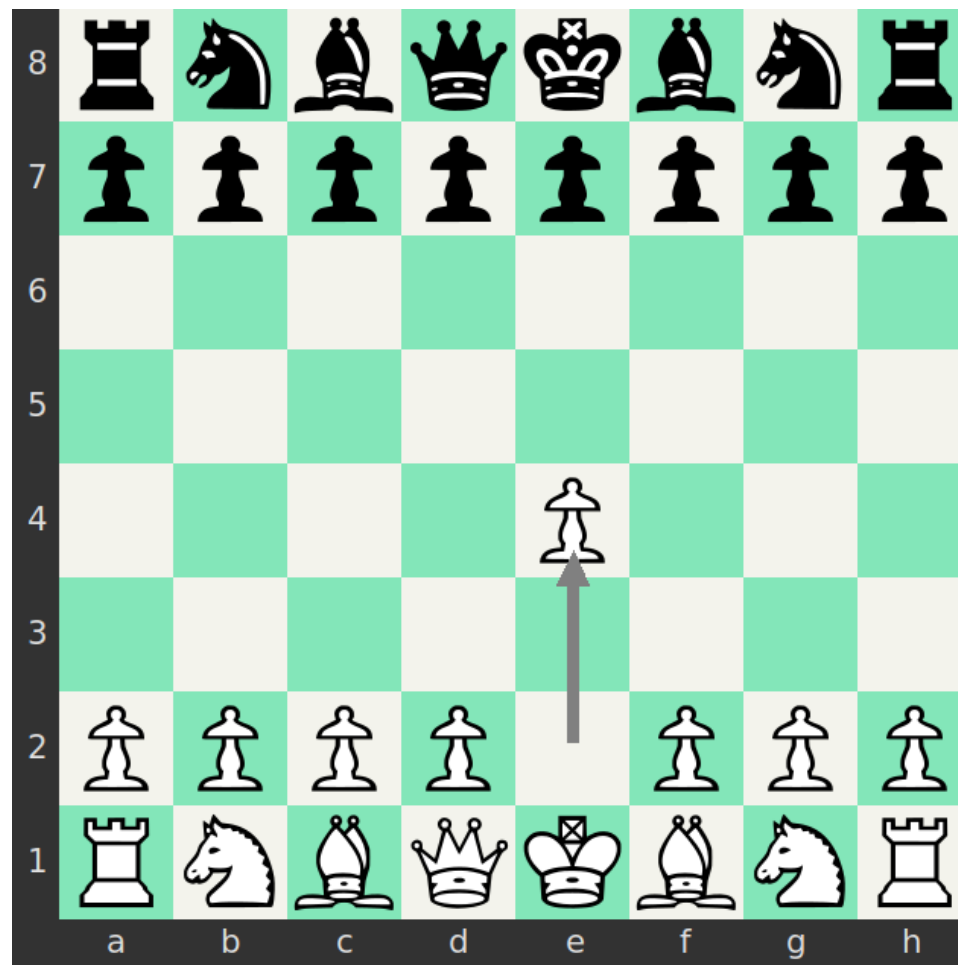
# An Example Game

WHITE

BLACK

1. e4

...



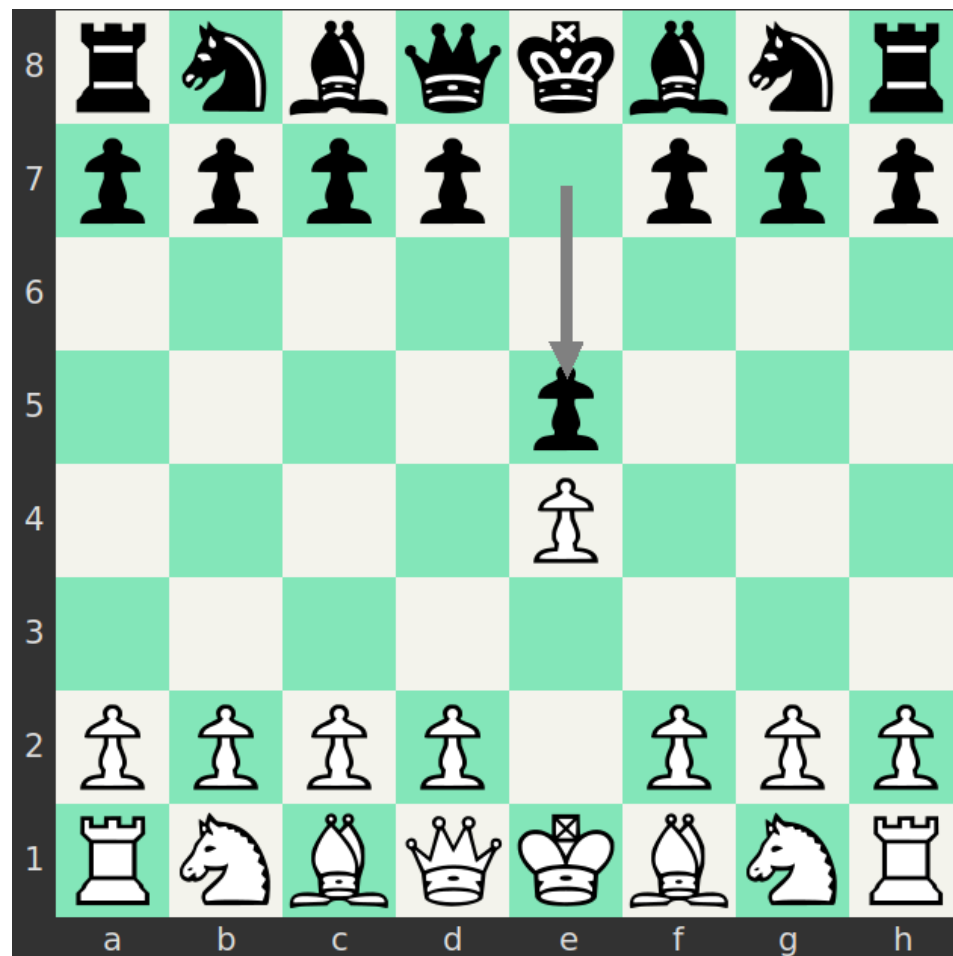
# An Example Game

WHITE

BLACK

1. e4

e5



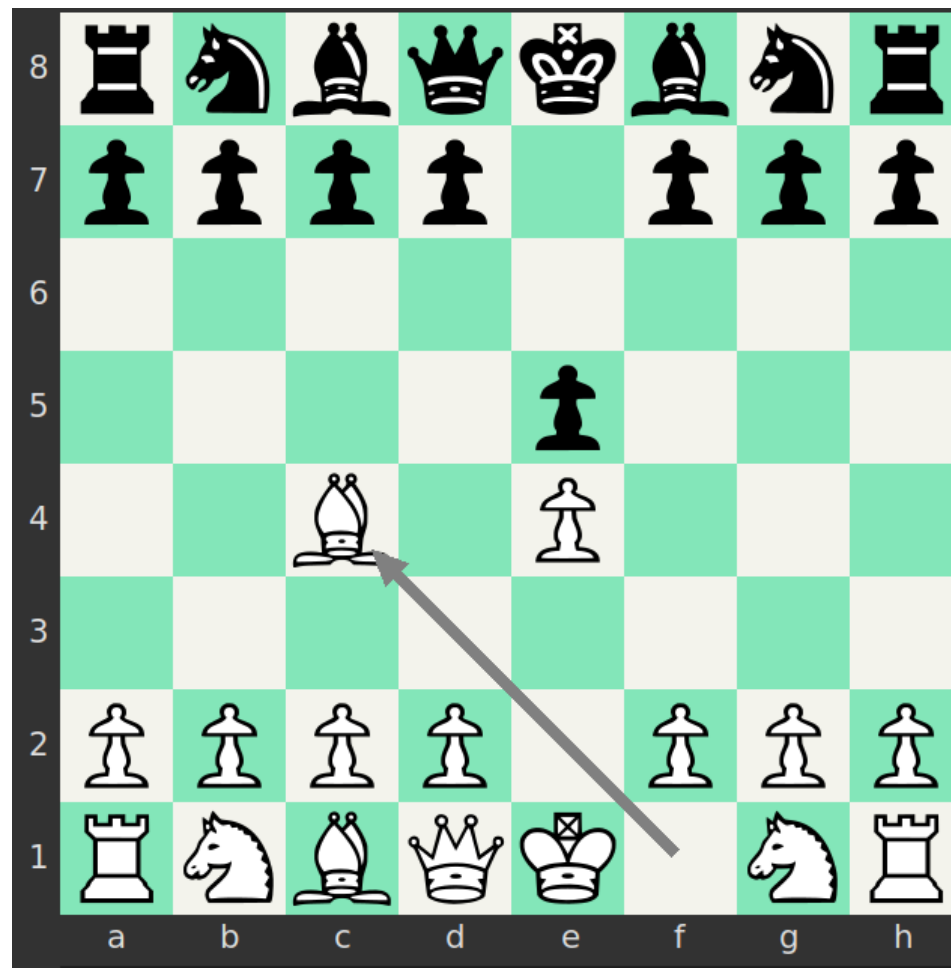
# An Example Game

WHITE

BLACK

1. e4
2. Bc4

e5  
...





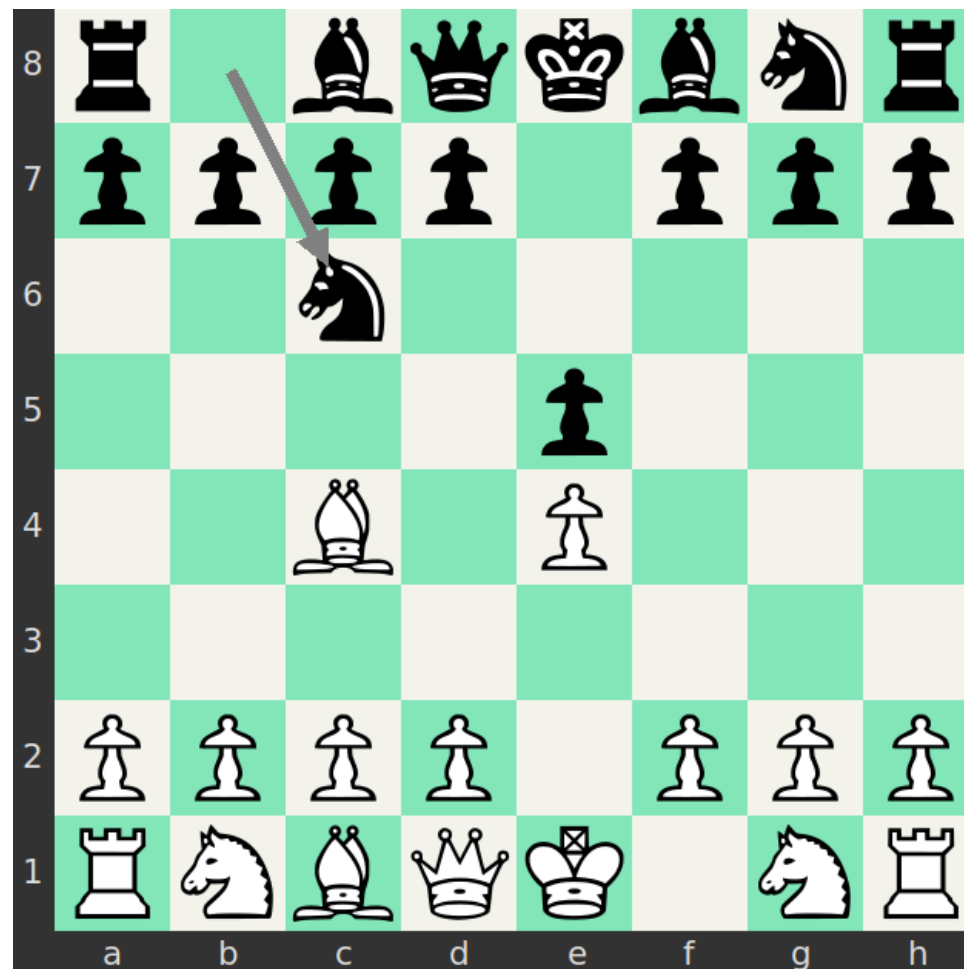
# An Example Game

WHITE

BLACK

1. e4
2. Bc4

- e5
- Nc6



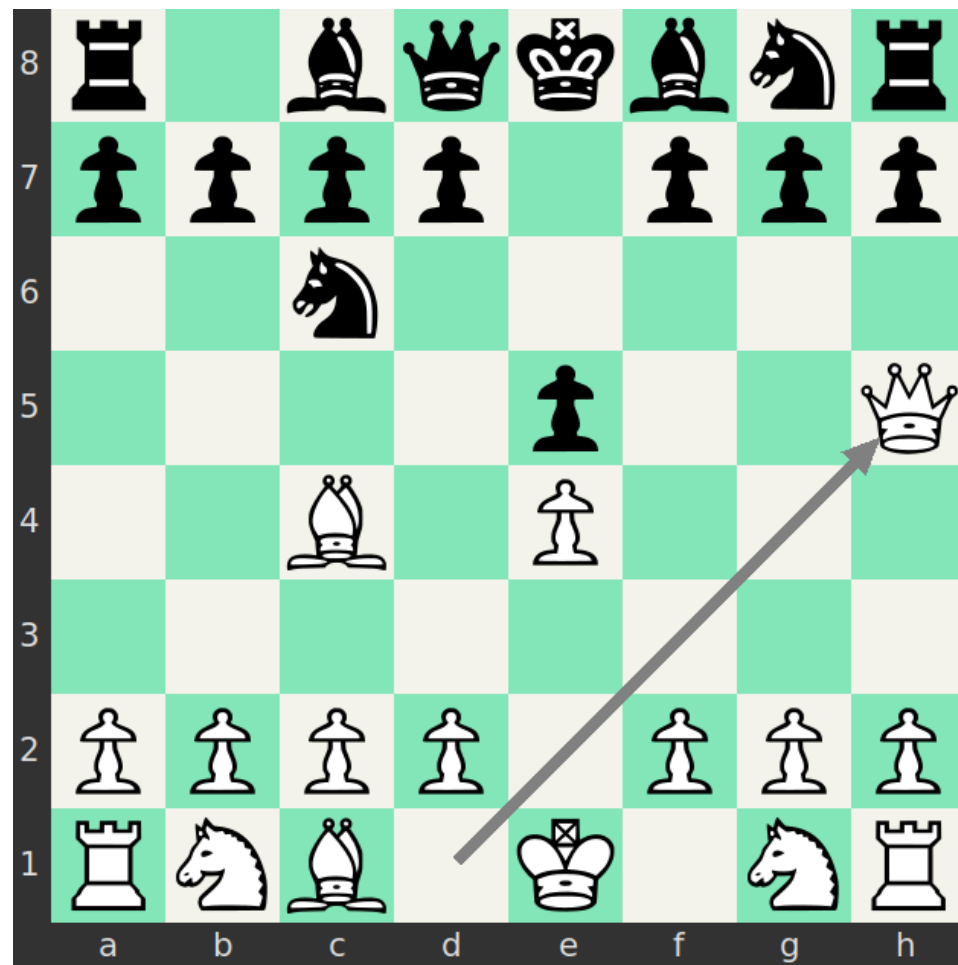
# An Example Game

WHITE

BLACK

1. e4
2. Bc4
3. Qh5

- e5
- Nc6
- ...



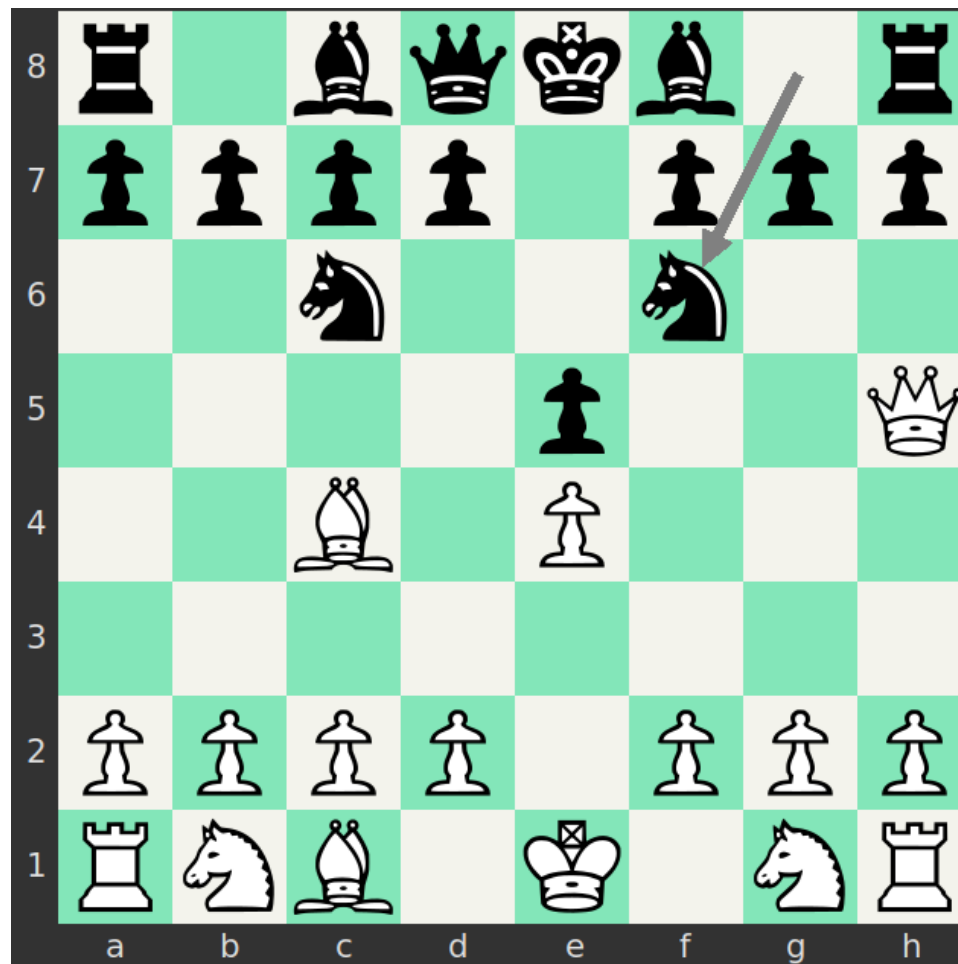
# An Example Game

WHITE

BLACK

1. e4
2. Bc4
3. Qh5

- e5
- Nc6
- Nf6



# An Example Game

WHITE

BLACK

- |    |              |     |
|----|--------------|-----|
| 1. | e4           | e5  |
| 2. | Bc4          | Nc6 |
| 3. | Qh5          | Nf6 |
| 4. | <u>Qxf7#</u> |     |

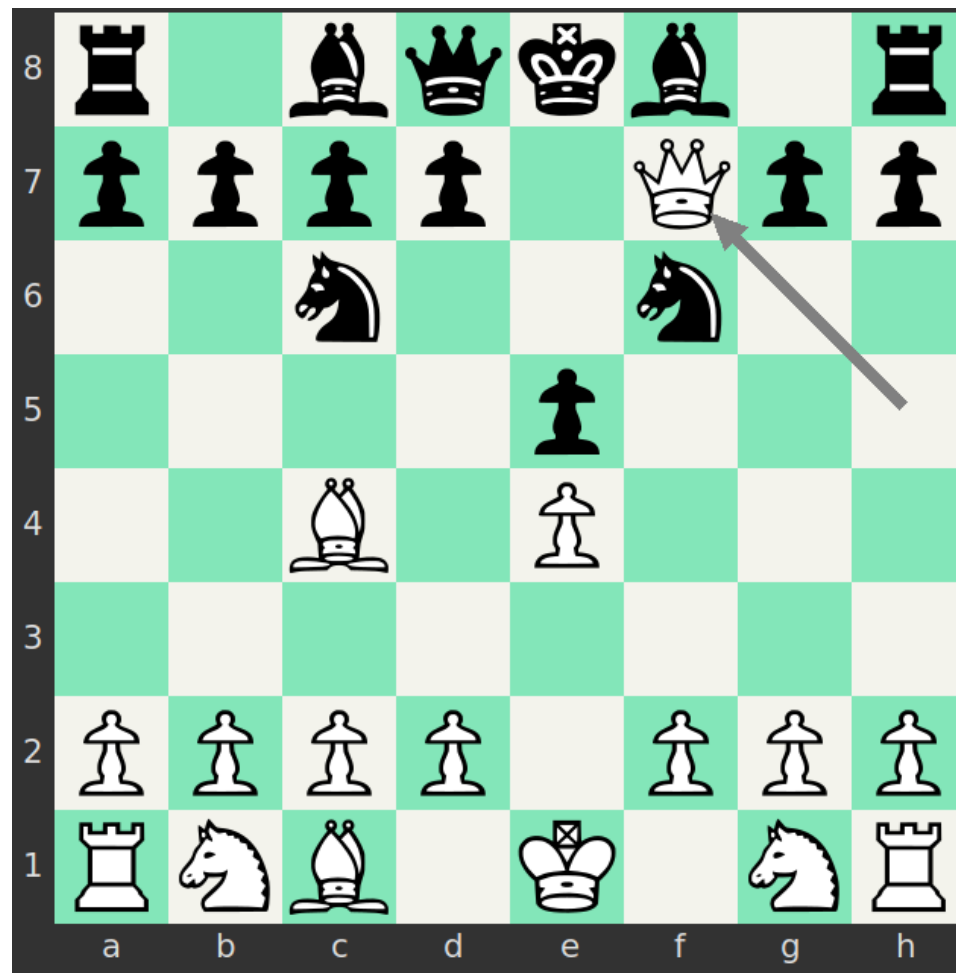
Some chess symbols:

? = bad move

! = good move

# = checkmate

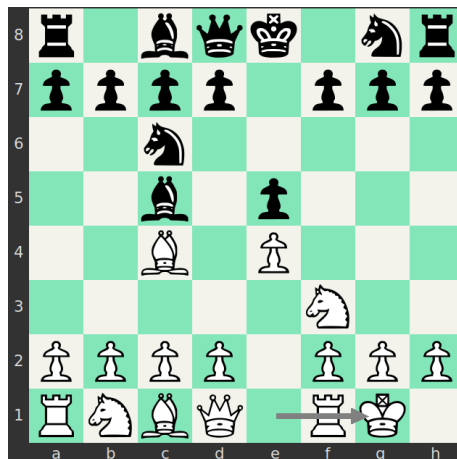
x = captures at



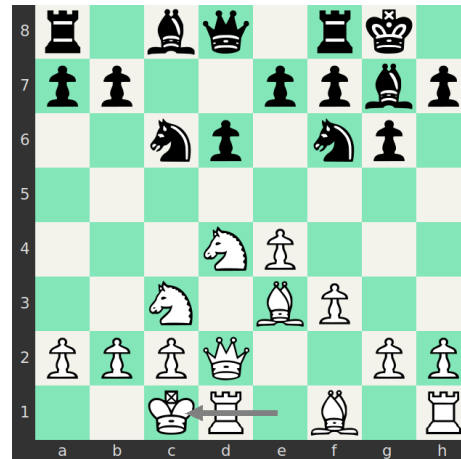
# How to write castling - it's easy!

Here is how we write  
castling:

**O-O** = castles kingside  
**O-O-O** = castles queenside



In this position, White  
castles kingside. We  
write this as **O-O**.



In this position, White  
castles queenside. We  
write this as **O-O-O**.

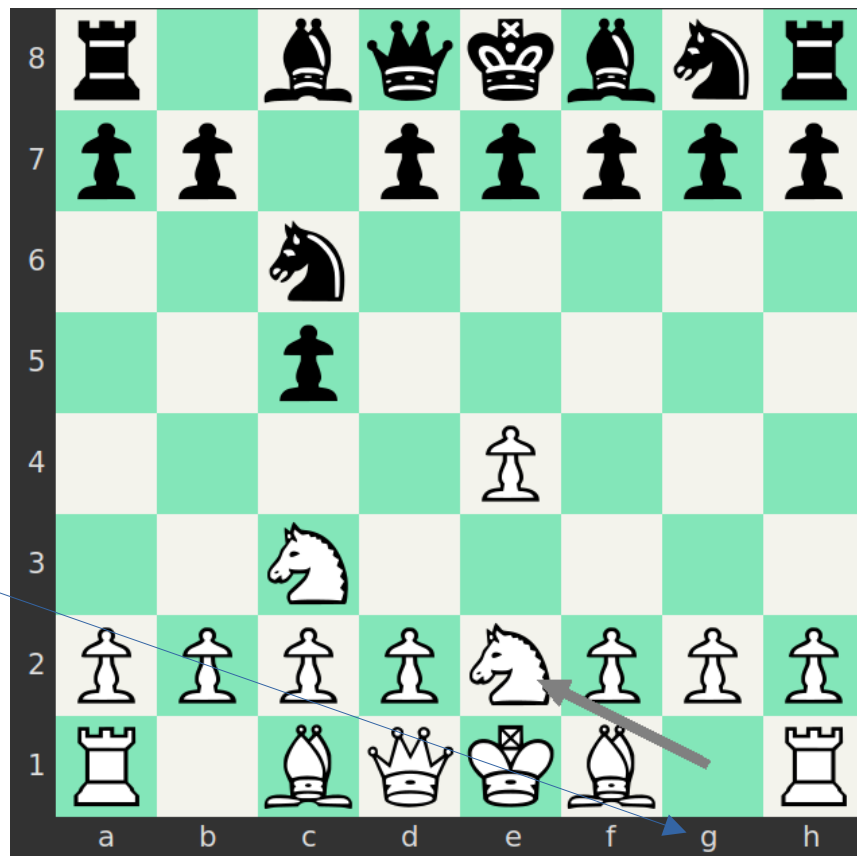
We can see that Black  
has already castled  
kingside (O-O).

# When more than one piece can move to a particular square.

Sometimes, more than one piece can move to a particular square. In the position at right, both White knights can move to e2. The move with the arrow is written:

Nge2

We use the name of the FILE the knight is on to distinguish it from the other knight.



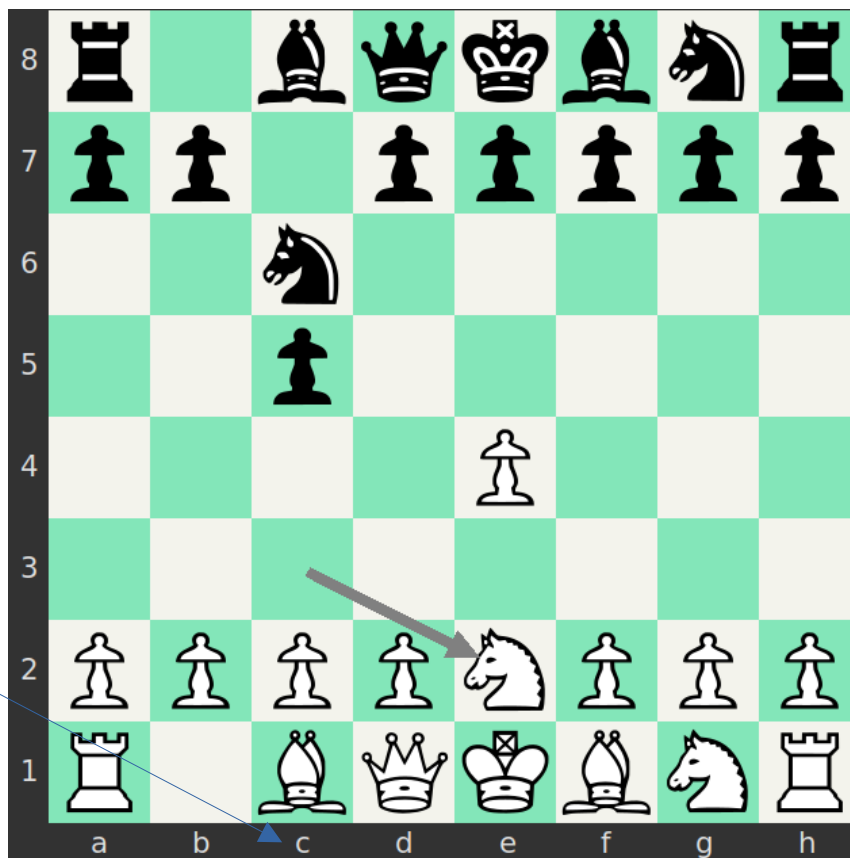
# When more than one piece can move to a particular square.

In this slightly different position, we see that the knight on c3 has moved to e2.

The move with the arrow is written:

Nce2

Again, we use the name of the FILE the knight is on to distinguish it from the other knight.

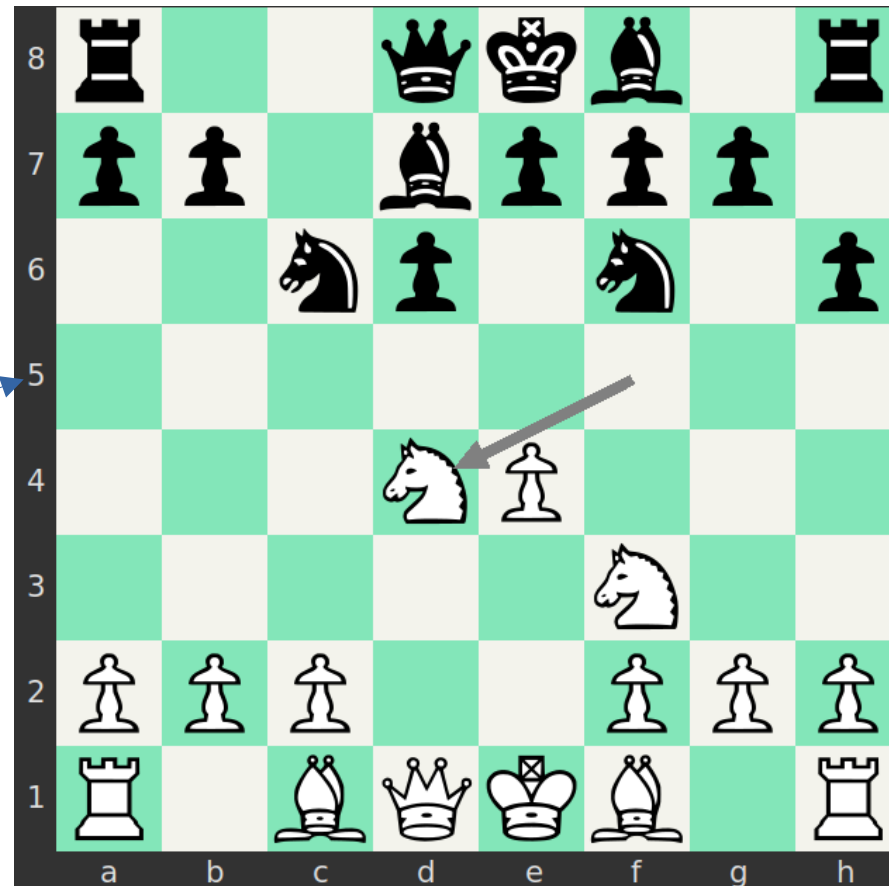


# When more than one piece can move to a particular square.

In this position, the white knight on f5 has just captured the black pawn on d4. Because the white knight on f3 can also make this capture and the knights are on the same file, we would distinguish between the two knights by using the RANK like this:

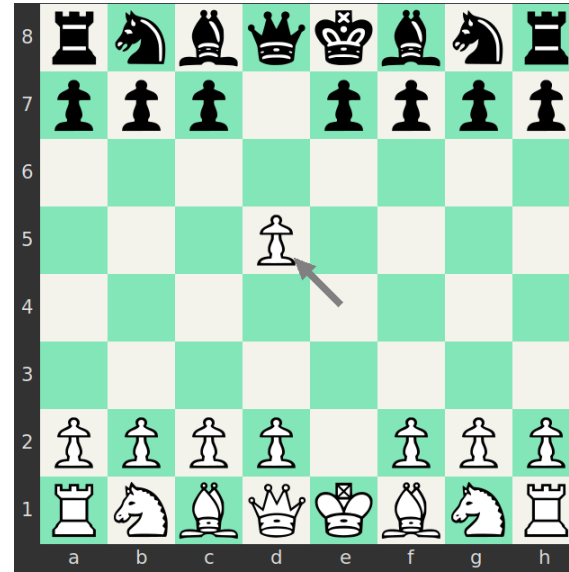
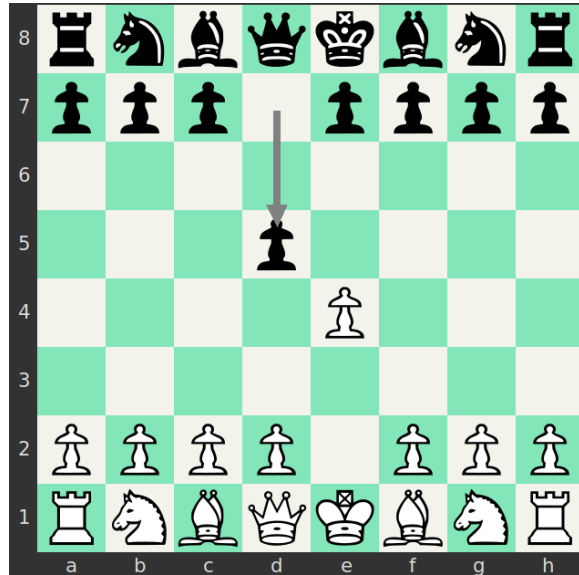
N5xd4

Don't forget about the "x" for capturing! And remember, we use "N" for knight as "K" is for King!





# How to write Pawn captures



**exd5**

In the diagram at left, Black just played ...d5. In the diagram at right, White has captured the pawn. This capture would be written **exd5**. For pawn captures, we write the FILE that the pawn is on, an **x** for "captures at", and then the SQUARE that the pawn captures on.

Note that *en passant* is written the same way. You can also add "e.p." for clarity.

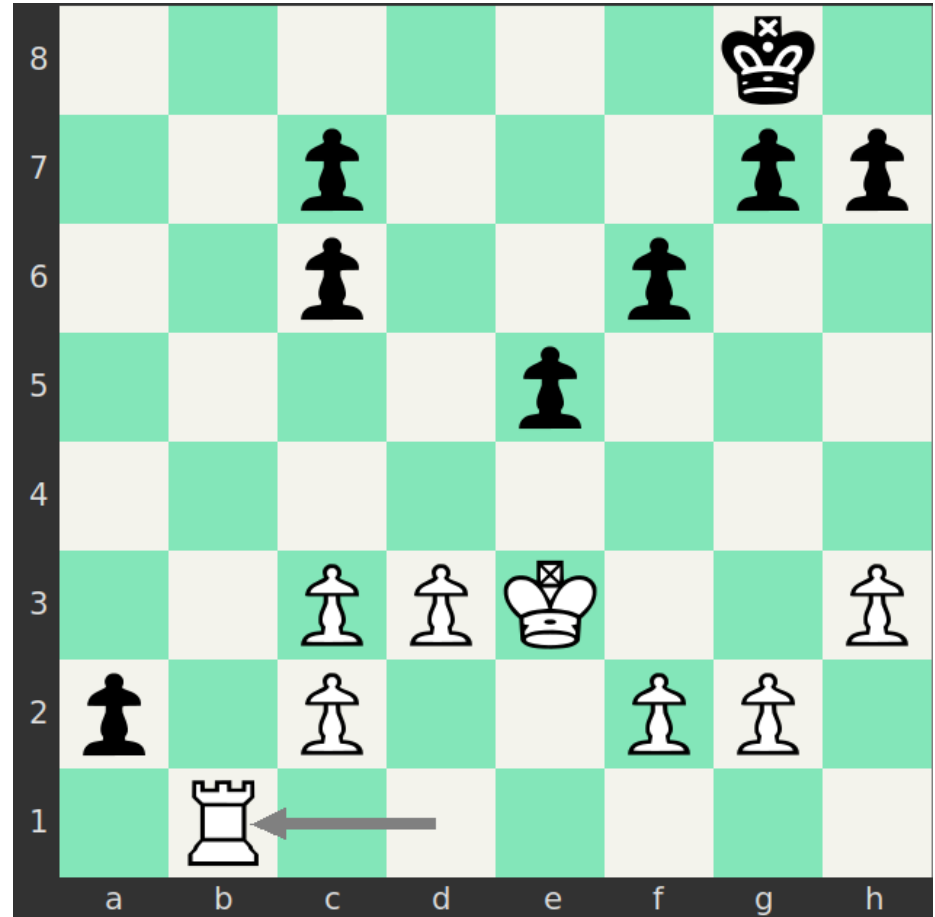
# Pawn promotion

To write a Pawn promotion, simply write the square that the Pawn moves to (or captures on), an equals sign (=), then the symbol of the piece you're promoting the Pawn to. For example:

a8=Q

This means Pawn moves to a8 and promotes to a Queen. In the position at right, White has just captured Black's rook with Rxb1. Pawn-takes-rook-and-promotes-to-queen would be written: **axb1=Q**.

Don't forget the **x** for captures!



# Other notes and symbols

As you begin to read more chess material you'll come across other notes and symbols used in chess notation. Here is a list of the most common:

+ = check

# = checkmate

? = Bad move

! = Good move

?? = Blunder

!! = Outstanding move

!? = Interesting move

?! = Doubtful move

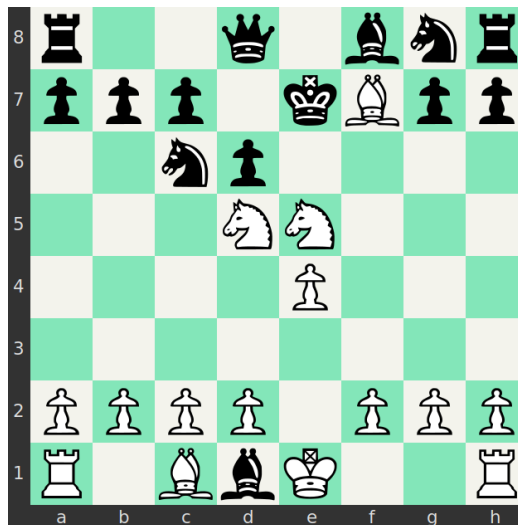
1-0 = White won

0-1 = Black won

1/2-1/2 = Draw

Can you play through these moves? If you reach the position below, you've done it correctly!

**1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 d6 3. Bc4 Bg4 4. Nc3 Nc6 5. Nxe5 Bxd1? 6. Bxf7+ Ke7 7. Nd5#**



This famous position is known as Legal's Mate.

Notice Black's bishop next to White's king. White sacrificed his Queen to achieve this checkmate!

What should Black have played instead of 5...Bxd1?

# Play through a longer game

Can you play through the following moves from one of my games?

1. e4 Nf6 2. e5 Nd5 3. c4 Nb6 4. d4 d6 5. Nf3 dxe5 6. Nxe5 e6 7. Qf3 f6 8. Qh5+ g6 9. Nxg6 hxg6 10. Qxh8 Qxd4 11. Nc3 Qe5+ 12. Be3 Nc6 13. Be2 Nb4 14. O-O Bd7 15. Rac1 O-O-O 16. Qh4 g5 17. Qg3 Qa5 18. a3 Nc6 19. Nb5 a6? 20. Qxc7#

If you reach the position at right, good job!  
If not, go back and check to see where you made a mistake.

The checkmate can be hard to spot! Why can't Black's king capture White's queen?

