



## Keeping Score

Just like a musician needs a musical score, chess players need a score – a written record – of their game. This score can serve several purposes, including making claims about certain rules during the game (such as a draw by the 3-fold repetition of position rule) and also serve the player by letting them review their games and learn from their mistakes.

## Algebraic Chess Notation

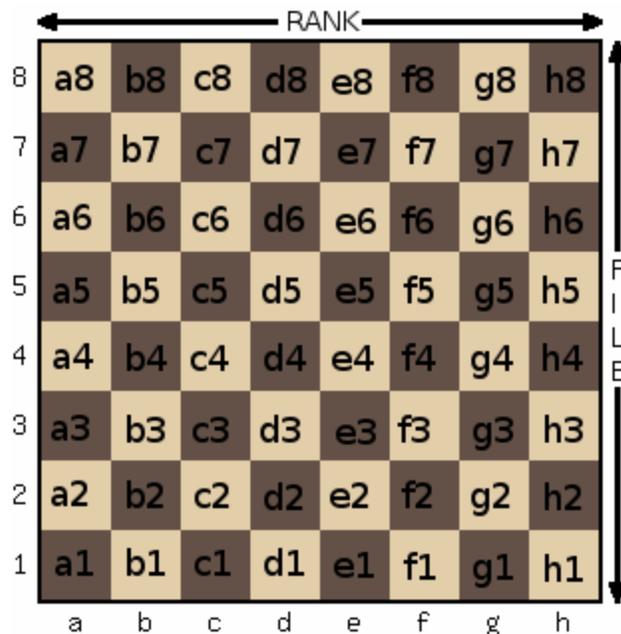
The most common chess notation used today is Algebraic Notation. If you wish to improve at chess, you must learn chess notation immediately. This will allow you to:

Review your games with strong players to see where you can improve

Learn from the games (and mistakes of) other players

There are many free web sites containing information about chess games and openings - all detailed using chess notation. Algebraic chess notation may be used to represent piece positions, moves, captures, pawn promotion, castling, check, checkmate, and end of game.

To start, each square on a chess board is given a unique name using a single letter and number combination representing the intersection of a rank and file. With the chess board placed with White's pieces on the bottom rows, a rank is a horizontal row and a file is a vertical column. Files are represented using lower case letters a through h. Ranks are represented using numbers 1 through 8. Refer to the diagram below.



We can now describe white's king as starting on square e1 and black's rooks start on squares a8 and h8. To describe a move though, we need to expand Algebraic chess notation to include the piece being moved, the destination square and an action. A move consists of a single turn for both you and your opponent. For the purpose of reducing ambiguity when describing chess moves, the piece being moved is also identified. Pieces are identified using uppercase letters or the absence of a letter. This is detailed below:

K - King

Q - Queen



R - Rook

B - Bishop

N - Knight

No letter - Pawn

To describe a move, you first indicate the abbreviated piece name and the the square to which the piece is moved for whites turn, followed by the abbreviated piece name and the destination square for blacks turn. For example, given there is a white pawn on d2 and a black knight on g8, "d4 Nf6" indicates white moves a pawn to d4 and black moves a knight to f6. If two identically named pieces can move into the same designated square, an additional rank, file or rank and file is given to uniquely identify the piece. Only the minimal amount of information is given to uniquely identify the piece. For example Ngf6 indicates that the knight on file g moves into square f6.

A series of moves are listed with each move given a numbered sequence. Ellipses may be used to split a move into two lines as follows:

1. d4 Nf6

2. Nc3 Nc6

This is an annotation. It is used to add a description to the move below. Note the description only describes whites move.

3. e3

When we describe blacks move, we need to put ellipses in place of whites move. Note that the number sequence has not incremented.

3. ... h5

4. Nb5 Nb4

To indicate a capture, an x is inserted between the piece and the destination square. For

example "Nxb5" indicates that the Knight will move to square b5 and capture the piece located on that square.

Additional annotation is used for special moves as detailed below:

+ Check

# Checkmate

O-O King side castle

O-O-O Queen side castle

Pawn promotion requires the identifier of the piece to which the pawn is promoted to be appended to the end of the move. For example, g8Q indicates that the pawn moves to square g8 and is promoted to a queen. Finally, the end of a game may be written as 0-1 if black wins or 1-0 if white wins. This nomenclature is especially useful if a player resigns. A draw may be indicated by 1/2-1/2. Below is the transcript of one of the most famous games by Bobby Fischer. This game is often labeled the "Game of the Century." Believe it or not, he was 13 years old when he played this game.

1. Nf3 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 Bg7 4. d4 O-O 5. Bf4 d5 6. Qb3 dxc4 7. Qxc4 c6 8. e4 Nbd7 9. Rd1 Nb6 10. Qc5 Bg4 11. Bg5 Na4 12. Qa3 Nxc3 13. bxc3 Nxe4 14. Bxe7 Qb6 15. Bc4 Nxc3 16. Bc5 Rfe8+ 17. Kf1 Be6 18. Bxb6 Bxc4+ 19. Kg1 Ne2+ 20. Kf1 Nxd4+ 21. Kg1 Ne2+ 22. Kf1 Nc3+ 23. Kg1 axb6 24. Qb4 Ra4 25. Qxb6 Nxd1 26. h3 Rxa2 27. Kh2 Nxf2 28. Re1 Rxe1 29. Qd8+ Bf8 30. Nxe1 Bd5 31. Nf3 Ne4 32. Qb8 b5 33. h4 h5 34. Ne5 Kg7 35. Kg1 Bc5+ 36. Kf1 Ng3+ 37. Ke1 Bb4+ 38. Kd1 Bb3+ 39. Kc1 Ne2+ 40. Kb1 Nc3+ 41. Kc1 Rc2# 0-1

In conclusion, when describing a chess game, one must use an unambiguous and internationally recognized notation of some form. Currently, the most popular chess notation is Algebraic notation.