



New to Chess? START HERE!

by Hal Bogner

For someone who has never played chess before, or who wants to review the rules or practice the basics, USCF and Chess Magnet School have teamed up to provide a free, interactive way to learn the rules of chess online. "Learn to Play Chess" is a Java applet, and if you have a fairly recent computer (OS X 10.3 or Windows 98 and above) with an Internet connection, you can use it by going to www.uschess.org, clicking on "New to Chess?", and following the "Learn to Play Chess" link.

Learn the Rules:

All of the rules you need to play your first game are explained in 20 short lessons. These include: *The Names of the Pieces*, *Queen Moves*, *Escaping Check*, *Castling Mechanics*, *Stalemate*, *Notation*, and more. Each lesson is followed by a short exercise, so you can practice what you learn.

The program will automatically lead you through each lesson in turn. However, there is also a [Lesson] button that brings up the list of all available lessons, giving you a way to jump directly to the lesson or exercise of your choice.

Along the way, you will also pick up some chess terminology, and you will learn how to read, write and even speak chess notation, which is the way chess moves are described and recorded for posterity.

Play the Computer

When you are ready to play a game, you can practice against a computerized opponent by clicking the [Play] button. The computer won't mind if you take moves back—but don't try that against an opponent in a tournament!—and it won't complain if you switch sides in the middle of the game, either.

The computer will even give odds of a Knight, a Queen, or most of its pieces—so you can get the hang of playing without having to worry too much about having your pieces gobbled up.

The computer is patient—you can take as long as you want for your moves—and you can decide whether you want to think for only a few seconds each move when it plays, or for a longer time (which means, a tougher game).

You can begin each game from the usual starting position or, for the truly adventurous, you can start from a "Shuffle Chess" setup selected by the computer at random!

Practice Checkmate

Since the goal of chess is checkmating the opponent, you might want to get some practice. Click [Play] and [Practice Checkmate], and you can choose which pieces you get to use to chase down the computer's defenseless King.

You certainly want to prove you can give checkmate with two Rooks or a Queen. Next, you need to learn how to finish off your opponent when you are the one with the last Rook. Mating with two Bishops is tricky, but fun, and useful to understand. And if you're up for a challenge, try checkmating the computer's lone King with just a Knight and a Bishop—it's harder than you think!

You don't need to master everything the first time—but once you know the rules, and play a few practice games, you'll be ready to battle it out against your friends or family members.

Remember—even if it's not in the rules—one of the most important goals in chess is to have fun!

Below: You can tell by the below, the program is designed for fun! Right: A sampling of the lessons and follow-up exercises.

USCF & Chess Magnet - The Rules of Chess
The Game of Chess 2

Black

2 / 3

The objective of the game of chess is:

- Fun
- Check
- Checkmate
- Hitting a home run

Select (or Double-Click) a Lesson or Exercise

Lessons	Exercises
The Names of the Pieces - Lesson	The Names of the Pieces - Exercise
The Initial Position - Lesson	The Initial Position - Exercise
The Game of Chess - Lesson	The Game of Chess - Exercise
Bishop Moves - Lesson	Bishop Moves - Exercise
Rook Moves - Lesson	Rook Moves - Exercise
Queen Moves - Lesson	Queen Moves - Exercise
Knight Moves - Lesson	Knight Moves - Exercise
Pawn Moves - Lesson	Pawn Moves - Exercise
Pawn Promotion - Lesson	Pawn Promotion - Exercise
King Moves - Lesson	King Moves - Exercise
Piece Values - Lesson	Piece Values - Exercise
Check - Lesson	Check - Exercise
Checkmate - Lesson	Checkmate - Exercise
Escaping Check - Lesson	Escaping Check - Exercise
Castling Mechanics - Lesson	Castling Mechanics - Exercise
Legal Moves - Lesson	Legal Moves - Exercise
Stalemate - Lesson	Stalemate - Exercise
Draw - Lesson	Draw - Exercise
Notation - Lesson	Notation - Exercise

Select
Practice Checkmate
Cancel

Java Applet Window