

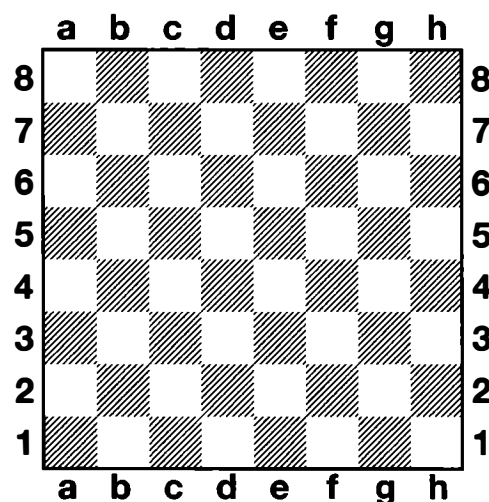
# Learning Chess Notation

Now for something that will really impress your family and friends – reading and writing **algebraic chess notation**!

Here is an empty chessboard, with the algebraic notation coordinates written around the edges to help you.

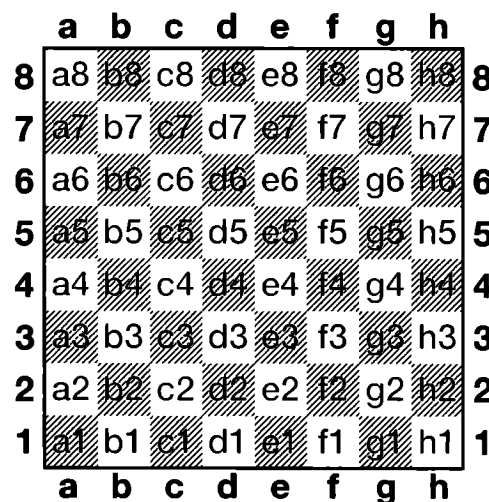
You can see that the **files** – going **up** the board – are labeled **a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h**.

The **ranks** – going **across** the board – are labeled **1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8** from White's side of the board.



The beauty of this grid-like system is that every square on the board has a name of its own, as you can see from this diagram.

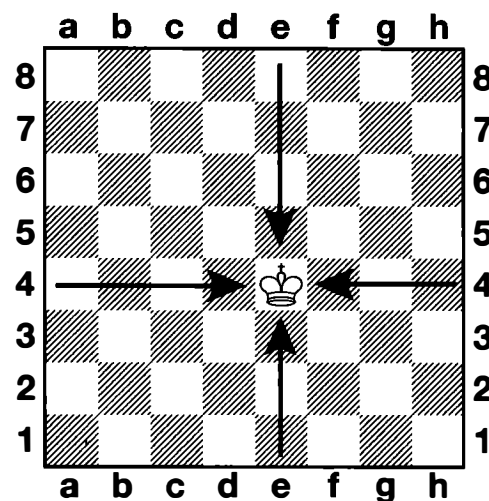
Because **every square has its own name**, it is very easy to describe a move.



Let's work out which square the white king is standing on. You might already be able to work it out by yourself.

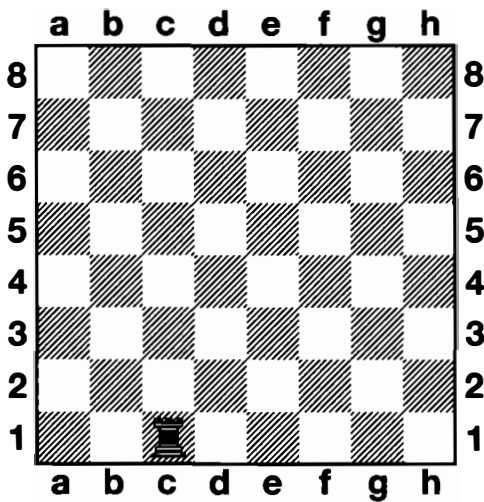
The arrows help to show that the king is standing on the **e-file**, and also on **rank number 4**.

Therefore, the king is standing on the square **e4**.



## Practicing Chess Notation

Here are some pieces sitting on the chessboard. Work out the name of the square that each piece is on.

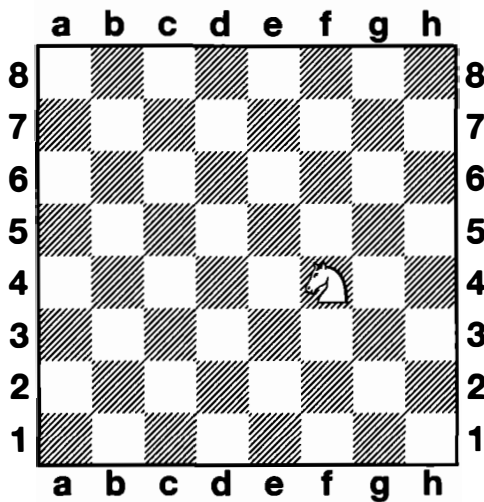


**Where is the black rook?**

The rook is on the c-file.

The rook is on rank number 1.

The rook is on **c1**.

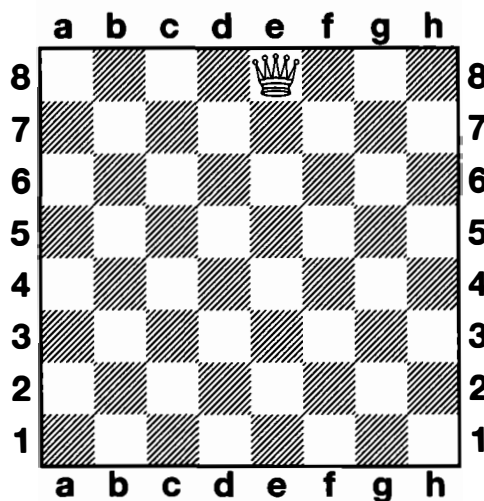


**Where is the white knight?**

The knight is on the f-file.

The knight is on rank number 4.

The knight is on **f4**.



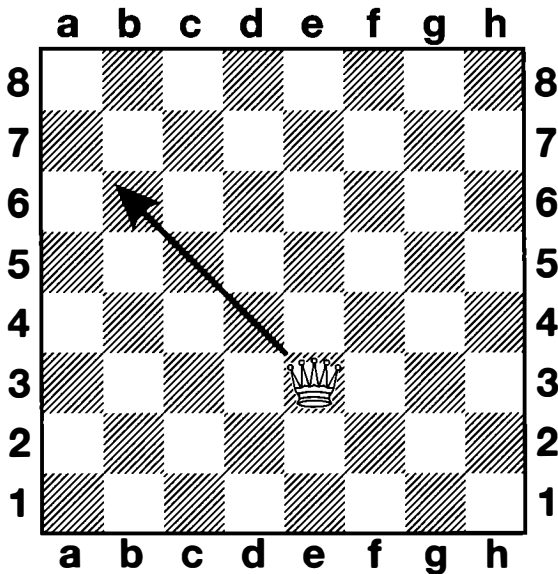
**Where is the white queen?**

The queen is on the e-file.

The queen is on rank number 8.

The queen is on **e8**.

## How to Read & Write Chess Moves



To record a chess move, you write down only the square it moves **to**. You also need to say which piece it is.

The move indicated by the arrow would be shown as: ♛b6.

This means the **queen** moves to the **b6 square**.

In chess books, you will usually see a little queen symbol, ♛. But when you're writing it down yourself, it is much easier to write the letter **Q** than to draw a queen.

Here are the letters we use for the pieces, to write the moves down ourselves.

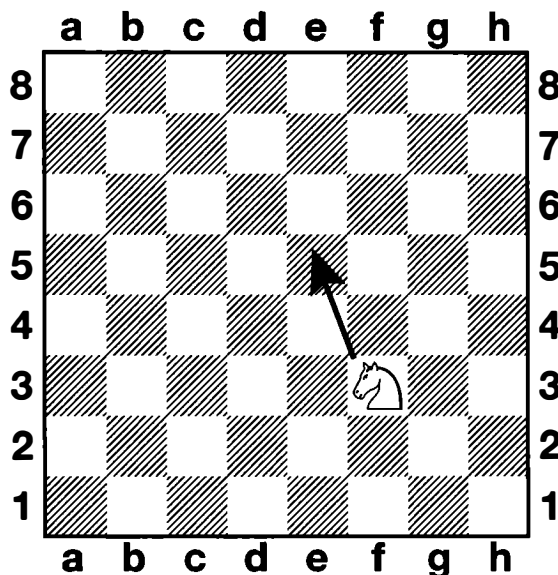
**N** is for **Kn**ight     **Q** is for **Que**en

**B** is for **B**ishop     **K** is for **K**ing

**R** is for **R**ook

*There is no symbol or letter needed to show pawn moves. We'll explain that in a moment.*

You are probably wondering why we use the letter **N** for a **Kn**ight! This is because **K** is kept for the **K**ing. Besides, 'knight' sounds like it begins with N.

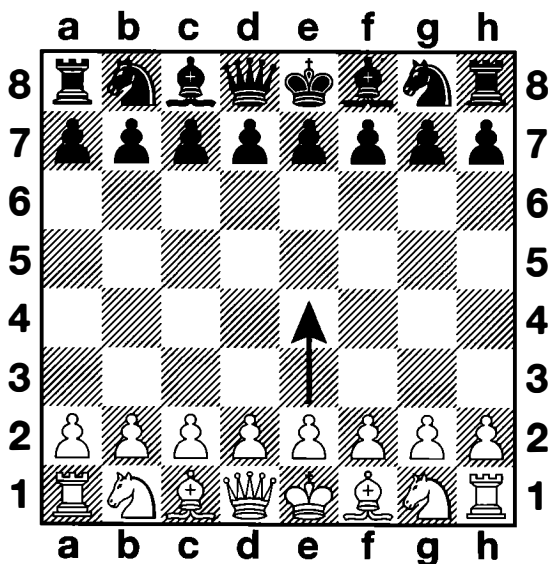


Let's practice writing down the move shown by the arrow in the diagram. White's **knight** is moving to the **e5** square (shown as ♞e5 if we saw it in a book).

If you were writing the move yourself, it would be written:

**Ne5**

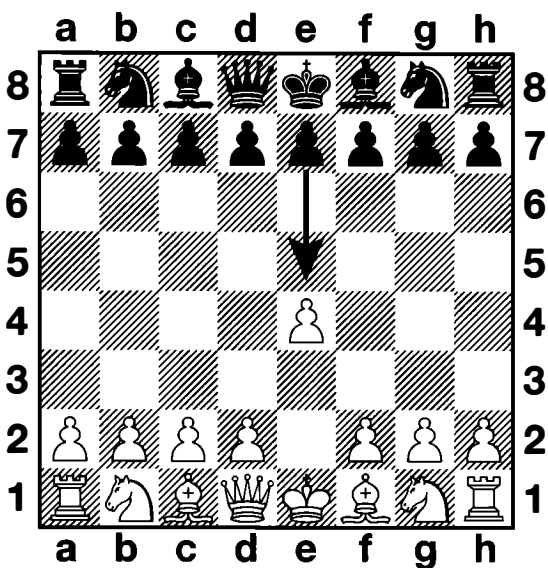
## How to Read & Write Chess Moves



We don't use any symbols for pawns. You just give the destination square. Because of the way pawns move there is no confusion, as only one pawn can move to the square. It is also usual to number the moves. So we show the move indicated by the arrow as:

**1 e4**

This means on **move 1** of the game the white pawn moved to the **e4 square**. The next diagram shows the completed move.

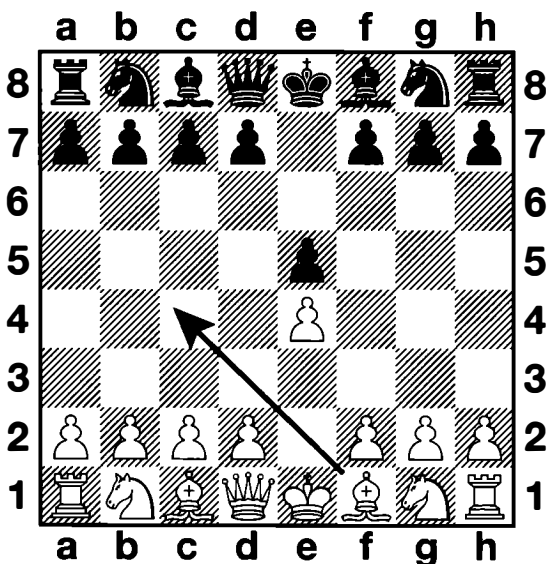


Now it is Black's turn! Let's say Black replies to White's first move, by moving his own pawn to the e5 square. You write this next to the white move. So the recorded moves so far would now be written:

**1 e4**

**e5**

The next diagram shows the position.



Each side has played one move. Now, on move **two**, let's say White decides to move his **bishop** to the **c4 square**. After that move, the complete game notation so far would be written like this:

**1 e4**

**e5**

**2 ♗ c4**

## Some Facts About Algebraic Chess Notation

- Algebraic chess notation is used all over the world. You could even understand the moves of a chess game in a Russian magazine!
- A different chess notation, called Descriptive Notation, was popular some years ago. But these days most people use the simpler algebraic.

Event	USA Championship	Date	2002
White	A. Shabalov	Black	L. Christiansen
Opening	Opponent's Grade		

1	d4	Nf6	26	Qd3	Nxg2
2	c4	e6	27	Kxg2	Qh4
3	Nf3	b6	28	Kg1	Nxf2
4	Nc3	Bb7	29	Qf1	Rxc1
5	a3	d5	30	Rxc1	Ne4
6	cxd5	exd5	31	Nxe4	dxe4
7	g3	Bd6	32	Qf2	Qh5
8	Bg2	O-O	33	f5	Kh7
9	O-O	Nbd7	34	Qf4	Rf6
10	Bf4	Bxf4	35	Rf1	Bh3
11	gxf4	c5	36	Rc1	Bxf5
12	e3	Rc8	37	Nxf5	Rxf5
13	Rc1	Ne4	38	O-1	
14	Ne2	Qe7	39		
15	Ng3	Rfd8	40		
16	Bh3	Rc7	41		
17	Qe2	Nf8	42		
18	Rfd1	Bc8	43		
19	Bg2	Bg4	44		
20	dxcs	bxc5	45		
21	Qc2	Rab	46		
22	Re1	Ng6	47		
23	b4	h6	48		
24	Nd4	Nh4	49		
25	bxc5	Rxc5	50		

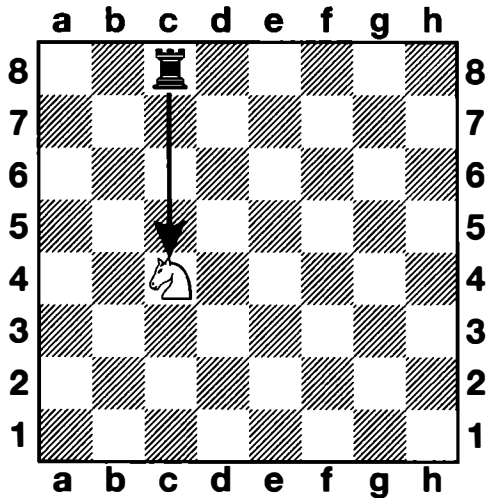
A typical scoresheet of a game might look like this. In serious competitions both players must write out a scoresheet during the game.

This game (from the USA Championship in Seattle) lasted 37 moves. Black won when White decided his position was lost, and RESIGNED.

Games between strong players often end with one player resigning. A player can resign at any time if he thinks his position is hopeless.

## How to Read & Write Chess Moves

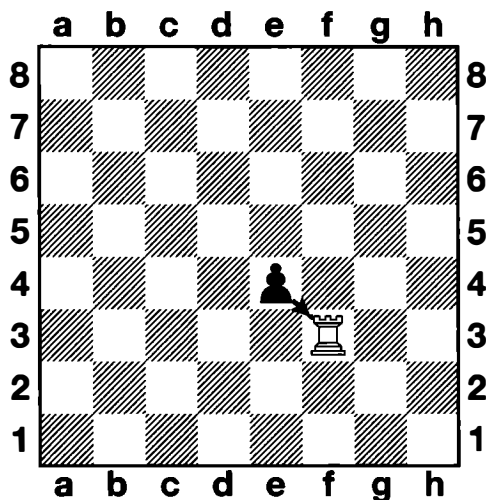
We've seen how easy it is to record the first few moves of a game in algebraic notation. Now let's see how you write down the capture symbol.



When a piece takes another piece, it is helpful to indicate this by writing the symbol "x" for capture. For example, in this position the black rook can capture the white knight. This is written:

1... ♖xc4

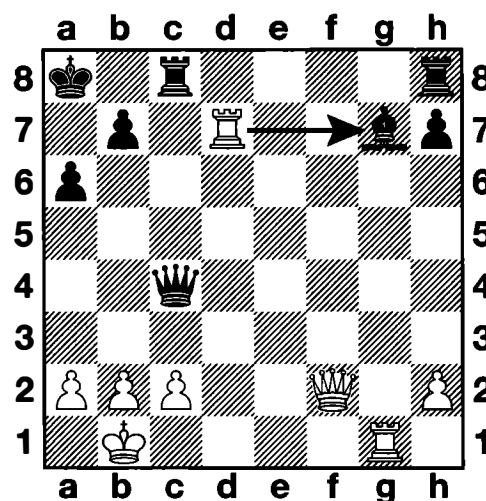
You'll also notice there are three dots after the move number 1. This shows it is a move by Black.



In this position the black pawn can capture the white rook. We write this move as:

1...exf3

The black pawn came from the e-file and took the rook on f3.



Here's a tricky one – White can capture the black bishop with **either** of his two rooks. So writing 1 ♖xg7 is not quite correct. We need to show *which* rook makes the capture!

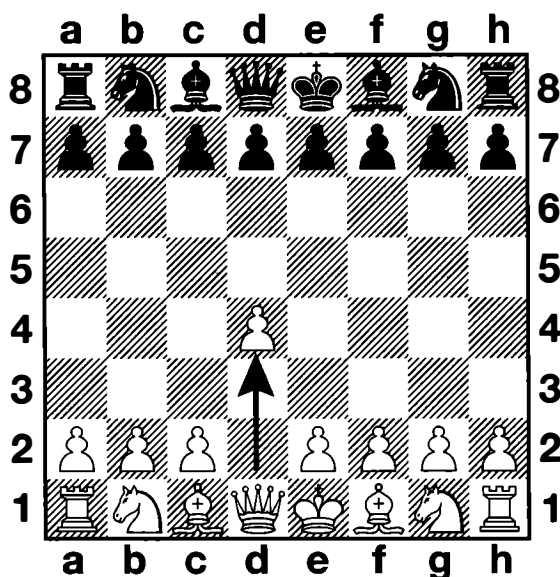
1 ♖dxd7

The notation shows that it is the rook on the d-file that makes the capture. White's **rook** on the d-file captures the black bishop on g7.

## ***Terribly Tough Test Number Five***

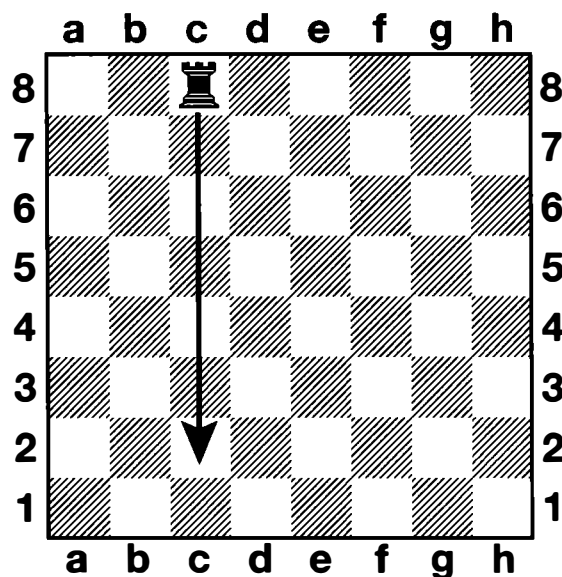
Win 1 point for every correct answer. Your challenge here is to write down, in **algebraic chess notation**, the move shown by the arrow in each diagram.

*Solutions: page 108.*



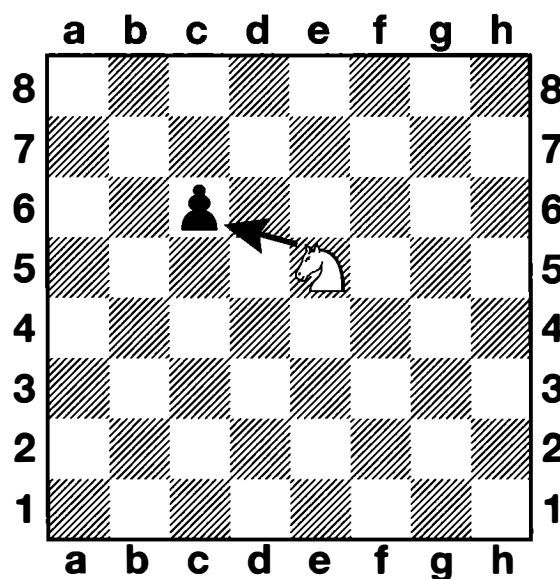
### 1) White to move

On his first move, White has advanced his d-pawn two squares, to the d4 square. How would you write this move in chess notation?



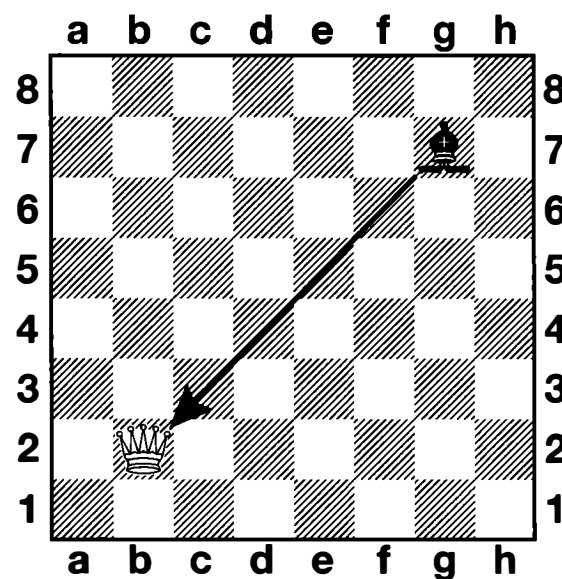
### 2) Black to move

How would you write the rook move (shown by the arrow) that Black is about to make?



### 3) White to move

The white knight is about to capture the black pawn. How would you write this move down?



### 4) Black to move

The black bishop is about to capture the white queen. How would you write this move down?