



THE  
POCKET  
GUIDE TO  
CHESS

JONATHAN BERRY

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# I. LAWS OF CHESS

*This is shorter than the official Laws,  
but complete*

Chess is a game between two players. White moves first, then Black, then White again until the game is over. Each player has 8 pawns (♙), 2 rooks (♖♜), 2 knights (♘♞), 2 bishops (♗♝), a queen (♑) and a king (♔), set up as in Diagram 1. The white pawns move up the board; the black pawns move down.

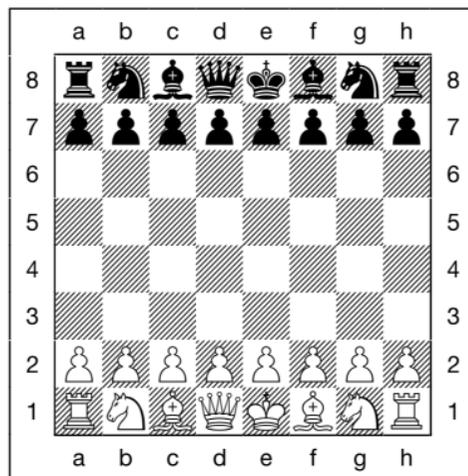
The king is the most important piece. **Check** is a move which attacks the opposing king. A move must not leave (or put) one's own king in check.

The game is won when the opposing king is in check and no move can get the king out of check. That is called **checkmate**. So the purpose of chess is to win the king, but to capture the king is forbidden, even in fast chess. The game is **drawn** when a player has no move, but

the king is not in check. That is called **stalemate**.

The pawn moves one square forward; however, on its first move it may move one or two

**Diagram 1**





## 2. GOTCHAS

*Detailed rules where it is important to know the nuances*

1. A light (white) square is always in the (lower) right corner: “white is right”;
2. The queen goes on the square of her own color;
3. You must use only one hand to move. In tournament play, you must use that same hand to punch the **clock**;
4. **Touch move**: a piece that is touched must be moved or captured. If it is necessary to adjust a piece on its square, when it is your turn to move, first say “*j’adoube*” or “I adjust.”
5. **Castling** is a special move of king and rook, both previously unmoved and unpromoted, with no piece between them. The king goes two squares

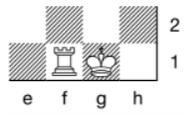
towards the rook, then the rook goes to the other side of the king. Castling is temporarily prevented if the king’s square, or its destination square, or the square in between, is under attack.

**Diagram 3**



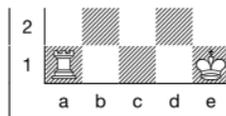
*Short castling:  
before the move*

**Diagram 4**



*Short castling:  
after the move*

6. In castling the king must be touched first. Moving the rook first completes your move and castling is no longer allowed. (I did not make this rule!)

**Diagram 5**

*Long castling:  
before the move*

**Diagram 6**

*Long castling:  
after the move*

7. If a pawn takes a double-step first move, then *for the next move only*, an opposing pawn may capture it as if it had only moved a single step. This is called **capturing en passant** (see Diagrams 7-9).
8. Talking is not allowed in a tournament, except to say “j’adoube” or to offer or accept a draw. Repetitive draw offers are bothering to the opponent, which is not allowed.

**Diagram 7**

*En passant:  
before*

**Diagram 8**

*En passant:  
double step*

**Diagram 9**

*En passant:  
on the next  
move only*

9. Draws other than by stalemate or agreement.
  - a) A game may be drawn by **three-fold repetition** of position. When the same position, with the same side to move and each side having the same moves available (including castling and en passant), has arisen or could be made to arise for a third time.

- b) Likewise for the **fifty-move rule**. If neither side has moved a pawn nor captured anything in the preceding 50 moves for each side, the game may be claimed a draw.
  - c) If a move is required to create situation a) or b), you must write it on the scoresheet and **not** make it on the board. Inform the arbiter (tournament director) that you are making a draw claim, while it is still your turn to move.
10. The **arbiter (tournament director)** may be asked about the rules at any time during the game.
  11. **FIDE** Rule 10.2 allows a player, with less than 2 minutes to make all the rest of the moves, to claim a draw, if the position is clearly drawn. The details are

obscure, so it is best to ask the arbiter while you still have plenty of time. In particular, how do you get the arbiter to start counting towards the 50-move rule, without you incurring a time penalty?

12. In most tournaments, moves must be recorded. You may not record your move before you play it—new rule in 2005.

Some of these rules (3, 6, 8-12) apply only to tournaments and should not be overly enforced in casual play. However, it would not hurt to point out, for example, rules 3 and 6, if the opponent castles by picking up the king with one hand and the rook with the other. That innocent habit could cause the player trouble at a tournament. “Touch move” (4), on the other hand, is a good one to use, even at home. Chess advice at its most basic is: “Think, then move”.

## A HANDY GUIDE WITH THE ANSWERS TO YOUR CHESS QUESTIONS!

Do you know how to checkmate with a bishop and a knight? Do you know the difference between a pin and a fork? Do you remember the best defense against the Queen's Gambit?

If you answered 'No' to any of these questions, this is the book you need! Whether you are just starting out as a chess player, or simply want to brush up on a few fine points of the game, you will find the answers to your questions here, carefully explained and illustrated. This book is a concise but complete survey of every aspect of the game of chess: a great first book for the beginner, and a useful reference for the intermediate player.



Chess master **JONATHAN BERRY** writes a regular column for *The Globe & Mail*, Canada's national newspaper, and is often an arbiter at world chess events. He lives on Vancouver Island, on Canada's west coast.



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