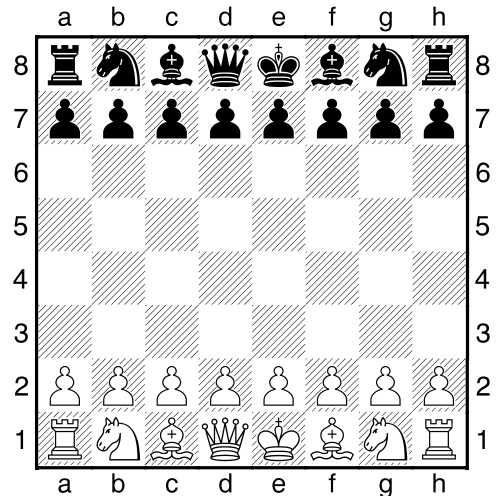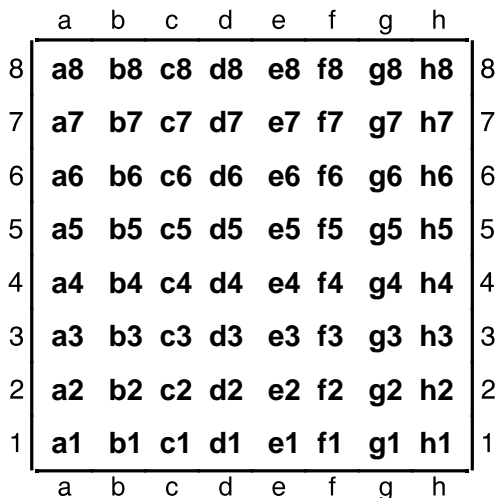♟♜♞♝♛♚♝♞♜♙

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How to Read and Write Chess Notation

Adapted from the U.S. Chess Federation

There are many different ways to write chess moves. The most popular (and easiest) method is called algebraic notation. The main idea is that every square has a name, like this:

	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	
8	a8	b8	c8	d8	e8	f8	g8	h8	8
7	a7	b7	c7	d7	e7	f7	g7	h7	7
6	a6	b6	c6	d6	e6	f6	g6	h6	6
5	a5	b5	c5	d5	e5	f5	g5	h5	5
4	a4	b4	c4	d4	e4	f4	g4	h4	4
3	a3	b3	c3	d3	e3	f3	g3	h3	3
2	a2	b2	c2	d2	e2	f2	g2	h2	2
1	a1	b1	c1	d1	e1	f1	g1	h1	1
	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	

It looks very complicated but it's not! Each square on a chessboard has a first name (a letter) and a last name (a number). The letter identifies a file (column in the diagram) and the number identifies a rank (row in the diagram).

To identify the piece you are moving you just need to use a single capital letter:

K = King
Q = Queen
R = Rook
B = Bishop
N = Knight

Note that "P" is not used. Chess players have agreed that a move without a letter (such as "e4") is understood to be a pawn move.

You are almost ready to start using chess notation. Just pay attention to the following symbols:

x = Take or Capture
0-0 = K-side castle
0-0-0 = Q-side castle
+ = check
++ = double check
 # = checkmate
! = good move
? = questionable/weak move
?? = blunder

Playing over your games, identifying mistakes and finding better moves is the best thing you can do to improve.

Here is a brief sample game:

White	Black
1. e4	**e5**
2. Nf3	**d6**
3. Nc3	**Bg4**
4. Bc4	**g6**
5. Nxe5	**Bxd1**
6. Bxf7+	**Ke7**
7. Nd5#	

Another sample game appears on the back of this sheet.

**Morphy,Paul - Duke of Brunswick
& Count Isouard [C41]**
Paris - Opera House, 1858

1. e4	**e5**
2. Nf3	**d6**
3. d4	**Bg4?** [3...exd4]
4. dxe5	**Bxf3**
5. Qxf3	**dxe5**
6. Bc4	**Nf6?**
7. Qb3	**Qe7**(Forced. Why?)
8. Nc3!	
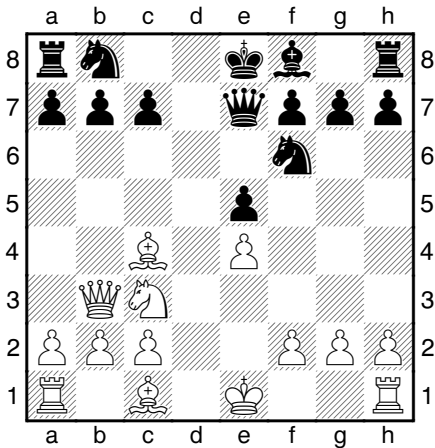
8. ...	**c6**
9. Bg5	**b5?** [9...Qc7]
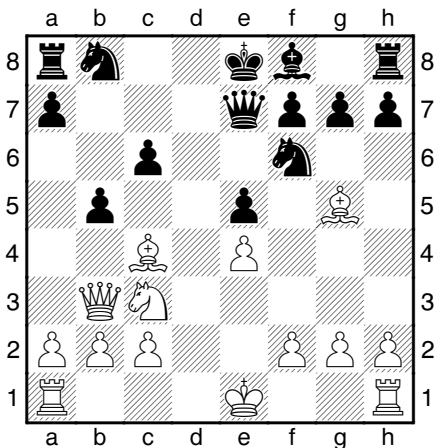
10. Nxb5!	**cxb5**
11. Bxb5+	**Nbd7**
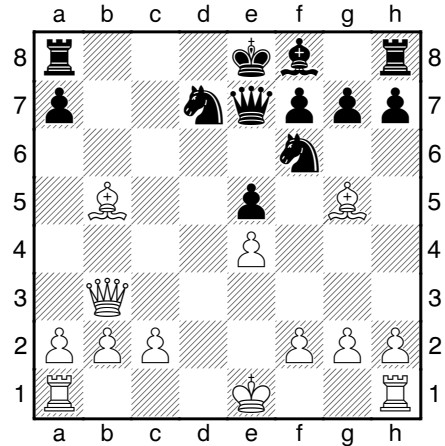
12. 0–0–0	**Rd8**
13. Rxd7!	**Rxd7**
14. Rd1	**Qe6**
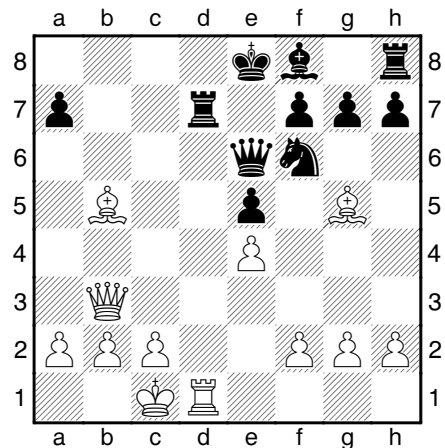
15. Bxd7+	**Nxd7**

16. Qb8+!!	**Nxb8**
17. Rd8#	**1–0**