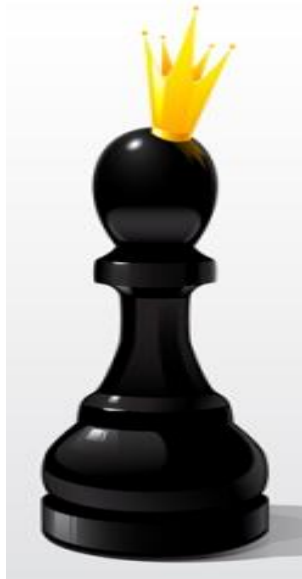


Creating a Scholastic Chess Club



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Why Have Chess in Schools?

Chess is a unique game of strategy. No two games are ever the same. It is estimated that the number of possible 40 move games exceeds the number of stars in the universe. The variety and complexity of problems one must face in a game are fascinating. Chess has been studied by psychologists, mathematicians, economists, and computer scientists to crack its secrets and develop models of thought to apply to the real world.

A game of chess tests every facet of a person's cognitive ability and character. One must be able to develop plans, make choices, calculate deeply, evaluate constantly, keep track of multiple variables, recognize patterns, apply lessons learned from the past, and control a boiling pot of emotions. This is all done in a limited time frame that is both stressful and exhilarating. The artistic quality of the game allows a wide scope for the development of the imagination. In many ways, chess is a sport too. It taxes a player's energy and requires him/her to face all of the issues of proper sportsmanship.

Around the world, numerous studies have been done on the effects of learning chess in school. Over thirty countries have chess as part of their standard curriculum. In Canada, programs have been developed based on the recognition of the correlation of chess playing and the development of math skills. Provinces that use chess in the schools outperform other provinces. Russia has used chess to stimulate and motivate students in both math and science. Recent studies in the United States are looking at how chess is improving reading scores. In these studies, it was discovered that the learning of chess affects the part of the brain involved with language formation. Learning chess, in many ways, is like learning a new, visually-based language.

Most of the experimental and correlation studies show that chess playing groups outperformed control groups significantly on standardized tests and overall in grades. Below is a summary of the effects the research is pointing out.

- Chess improves a child's ability to think rationally
- Chess increases cognitive skills
- Chess increases critical thinking and evaluation
- Chess improves the ability to recognize patterns
- Chess improves communication skills
- Chess instills a sense of self worth and confidence
- Chess increases concentration and focus on details
- Chess teaches that there is a consequence to actions
- Chess improves responsibility for one's behavior
- Chess improve mental alertness
- Chess provides multiple quality problems to solve
- Chess removes barriers between students and between students and adults
- Chess helps children make friends more easily in a safe framework for discussion and social interaction
- Chess improves attendance in school, a key factor in increasing grades
- Chess allows girls to compete with boys on an equal basis
- Chess fosters and honors non-traditional cognitive styles
- Chess provides immediate feedback, rewards and punishment for problem solving
- Chess provides an avenue for introspection to examine personal decisions and behavior.
- Chess integrates multiple learning styles
- Chess fosters independent thinking
- Chess improves motivation to excel
- Chess improves reading performance
- Chess builds life skills

Another reason to have chess in school is because it is fun. Children who are having fun are more relaxed and learn better.

A Brief History of Chess

Chess has a long and storied history. This is one of the features many children and adults love about the game. There is so much history to explore and so many anecdotes to learn. We do not absolutely know the game's origins. It is a mystery which has challenged chess historians and anthropologists for evidence. According to one source, the game seems to have been developed in 4th century B.C. in India. Others sources date the origin at around the 7th century A.D. because of literary references to a strategy game.

Persian literature says that the game was brought from India to Persia by Alexander the Great. Archaeological digs have found an intricately carved stone that appears to be chess piece, but the date of its creation is difficult to pinpoint. Egyptians claim that the game is several thousand years old and was created as another amusement for the Pharaohs. Most historians say the weight of evidence favors the origin in India, but they differ on the date of origination.

In any event, the game, in its original form, was a slower game to play. The pieces had more limited powers. As a result, the game could take many hours, even days, to finish. That was fine for the monarchs as they had plenty of leisure time to wile away the hours of a game. It was also fine for the merchants who likely spread the game through their travels. The endless hours on the Silk Road allowed plenty of time to play chess while riding horse or camel, passing a small set back and forth or playing in the evening by the light of a campfire.

By the 900's A.D., chess had spread to Persian and to Arabic lands. It became a favorite game of the caliphs, though sometimes frowned upon by the religious establishment at various times. When the Crusades turned Europe and the Middle East into turmoil, the game became known to westerners. The Crusader nobility brought the game to Europe. Its intricacies were taught to both boys and girls of the noble class. There are many stories in the Middle Ages of fair ladies playing chess with knights.

The game, as we know it today, was radically changed in the 1500's to speed it up. The new moves of castling and en passant were added. The queen was given greater powers to move. These changes gave the game more flair and a quicker pace. The early masters of the game discovered or devised tactical tricks to create quick attacks on the opposing king. Those who played for money could now play many games in a day or evening rather than just one. Matches occurred, pitting the best players of one country against another's champion. Books were written on the game to instruct and extol its values. After printing his first book, a copy of the Bible, the second book that Gutenberg published with his new printing press was a book on chess.

During the next several hundred years, chess continued to evolve and become more complex. Openings were developed, setting out special move orders to array the pieces. The composer and chess master, Andre Danican Philidor, explored the use of the pawns in developing plans and strategies. Many new tactical motifs were discovered through play by strong players. More books appeared with whole games and fragments to popularize the game.

The modern era was ushered in during the mid-1800's through the games of the American Paul Morphy. The young champion of the United States challenged the great masters of Europe and defeated them. His style was clean and pure. It synthesized tactical and strategic elements into a whole. His calculations were deep and accurate. Players were compelled to study his games. New theories and principles were set forth. These were tested in a new format. Instead of just matches between individuals, tournaments were created that pitted larger numbers of players against each other in formal sporting competitions. They have continued to this day, getting larger all of the time. In 2009, the Supnationals, a set of combined scholastic tournaments, drew over 5200 young players plus coaches, parents, and chess celebrities to Nashville, Tennessee to vie for the coveted titles of national champion. It was one of the largest competitions in history.

There is more that could be said about chess history, but we will leave this as a task for the kids in your club to explore as they learn the game.

Scholastic Chess Club

Are you ready to work hard, laugh a lot, and have fun every day? Then start a chess club in your school. You do not have to be an expert player to do this. You don't even have to know how to move the pieces. The organizational skills you use with other fields will work fine with chess.

Many of the kids in your school already know how to play. They, at least, know how the pieces move. It is the role of the organizer of the club to supervise them and provide a base for continued practice. Over time, you will encourage and help them learn to play the game better. You will even learn new things yourself. That is one of the beauties of the game, continuous discovery. Let's get started.

I. Chess Ecology

Every club needs an adequate place to play. It can be a classroom, a multipurpose room, conference room, cafeteria, or a library. It should be well lit and airy with a lot of space for kids to move around.

There should be a number of rectangular tables which are long and .wide enough to hold two boards and sets. Classroom desks are usually too small. The desk tops are often angled upward. They limit you to tiny sets with cheap, light pieces that always seem to find their way to drop to the floor and get damaged. The tables can be set any way you wish, but having them set in rows makes it easier to run an event. A round table is good for displays, discussion, formal club meetings, or as a base of operations for the teacher/organizer. Round tables, unless they are small, are very awkward on which to play chess.

Having a place to store materials is a must. It is good to have a locked cabinet to protect expensive materials like chess clocks. Ideally, the cabinet should be in the club room. Carting things back and forth is a drain of energy and wastes time. But, sometimes, you do not have that luxury, so be prepared to have volunteers or designated players to carry sets, boards, etc. from one place to where you will play.

Try to play in an area that is temperate. Playing chess is fun if you don't have to worry about shivering or sweating. School cafeterias can often be chilly because of the exhaust fans in the ceiling. In a classroom, you can more easily regulate temperatures by opening or closing windows and doors. Play in a place where the air is flowing so that it does not get stuffy.

Most school lighting is adequate for your purposes. Fluorescent lighting is the norm. Older schools seem to always have the type that has an annoying incessant buzz. Try your best to have lighting that is easy on the eyes.

Noise can be a problem, both inside and outside of the club. Having a place to play where the sound is dampened by ceiling tiles or materials on the walls is ideal. School cafeterias are particularly loud; the sound almost echoes. Having a room next to the band room can be a nightmare. High levels of ambient noise are distracting. The kids will be a little noisy, too, at times. Many games are exciting and elicit laughter to release tension. You cannot keep it perfectly quiet. Nor should you. Socializing is an important element in the development of a chess player.

II. Chess Equipment

There are a variety of types of chess equipment you will want for your club. The larger the club, the more you will want to have on hand. No one likes to stand around waiting for a game because there are not enough chess sets.

Below is a list of items needed for the average chess club.

- **10 or more chess sets.** The sets should be of the same style and size. The style that is preferable for club and

tournament use is called Staunton style. The chess sets should have kings that are 3.5 to 3.75 inches in height with corresponding sized other pieces. Kids love to play with larger sets. Even little ones want to play with them. As younger children are more tactile in nature, they find it comforting to hold and bang the pieces down on the board. You should have sturdy plastic sets that are not hollow. They are generally inexpensive to buy and last virtually forever with normal use. Double weighted and triple weighted sets are available, but they are not recommended for club use. Over time, the glue inside dries out and the weights fall out and you are left with cheesy looking hollow pieces that are more likely to break. The chess sets should have a paper felt or regular felt bottom. This helps to avoid scratching the boards and are less noisy. The felt is easily replaceable. The cost of the sets range from \$6 to \$9 and can be purchased from the US Chess Federation or a number of other dealers. If you purchase ten or more, there are usually discounts for buying in bulk. Also, try to have a few smaller sets as extras. They can be used for analysis, too.

- **10 or more vinyl chess boards.** These should correspond to the size of your sets. The boards should have squares that are 2 to 2.75 inches in width. Colors of the boards vary. The most normal color of boards have green and white squares. These colors are cooler and easier on the eyes. Some of your players might like pink and white, orange and white, red and white, or blue and white squares, but the color contrasts are difficult to look at for long periods of time. Vinyl boards with a thin cloth backing are easy to clean with a damp cloth. Warn the kids to be careful and not scratch the colors. Banging pieces can scratch the boards. Encourage the kids not to bang the pieces down. It not only damages the boards, it is noisy, and poor etiquette. Vinyl boards cost as much as the sets. They are about \$8 to buy. Once again, buying in bulk can get you discounts. Having a couple of spare boards doesn't hurt.
- **Container to hold all of the chess sets for storage or travel.** If you have to move the sets to another area, a wheeled container or cart is a must to avoid injury.
- **Mailing tubes to store the vinyl boards.** These protect boards from scratching. A large tube can hold 5 or more boards easily and convenient to carry.
- **Large binder(s) with chess information about and for your club.** These will contain membership rosters, forms masters, tournament forms, transparencies, advertising, introductory sheets, diagram handouts, letterhead, club logo, and other information for your club. One binder can contain all chess learning information. Keep all of your paperwork organized. Develop a set of masters, so that you can make copies.
- **Box with extra pens, pencils, and other stationery items that are used for the club alone.** You should encourage the kids to write down the moves of long, serious games and all tournament games. Someone will always need a pencil or pen.
- **Signs, banners, and other advertising to promote the club.**
- **U.S. Chess Federation: Official Rules of Chess, 5th edition.** Updates to the rule can be found on the USCF website at: www.main.uschess.org. You want a copy of the rulebook to learn the rules, resolve disputes, and run tournaments. The book has numerous tips to help a club grow.
- **Library of chess books for use by the players.** Have a few books on hand to loan to students for study.

Optional items you might want to have:

- **Demonstration board.** This can have slots for the pieces or be magnetic. The cost is around \$40 to \$50 but is worth it for demonstrating positions to a group. A good thing is to let the kids show one of their games for analysis and critical review.
- **Overhead projector for use with transparencies.**
- **Chess clocks.** How many you need is up to you. Some kids may bring in their own clocks to us in the club. Having two to four on hand is okay for a start. Digital clocks with delay or increment capability are preferred to analogue (wind-up) clocks. Chess tournaments prefer that digital clocks be used. However, analogue clocks are fine for general purpose club usage, 5 minute chess, etc. They are sturdy and less expensive than digital clocks. Digital clocks range in cost from \$40 to \$120. Make sure a manual is included to explain how to set it. Analogue models run from \$30 to \$40 in price.
- **Chess tournament pairing program.** For small events, this is not necessary. For large events, with 100+ players, they are very useful and save time. The two most common programs are Swiss-Sys and WinTD. Each is around \$90 to \$100 in cost. Be prepared to spend some time to learn how to use the program.
- **Paper pairing cards and other tournament forms to run a chess tournament.** Crosstables, quad sheets and other forms help to manage a small tournament easily.

Some special items to consider for your club:

- **Club logo, letterhead.** These can be designed on a computer. Let the kids be creative and design the artwork, lettering, etc.
- **Laminated membership cards**
- **T-shirts, polo shirts, sweatshirts, bags, and other items with the club logo.** Selling these can be a good fundraiser for a club. Team members can wear shirts with the club logo to tournaments and matches.

III. Chess players

The chess club should be open to all players from all grades, teachers, and other staff members. Encourage participation by other adults to play with the kids. Having the school principal drop in for a game would be interesting and, maybe, a little humbling. Break down the barriers, so the kids can become confident playing adults, as well as, their peers.

Especially encourage the girls to play, too. Don't let it become an all boys club. Girls learn and can play just as well as the boys, no matter what the age. They are just as competitive.

It is common for some players to want to play the same people all the time. Mix it up, make everyone play all the other players in the club. Design activities for all to participate.

Take into consideration the needs of players who are physically challenged. Make appropriate accommodations for their comfort and ease to play. Students in wheelchairs may need special tables. Sight impaired may require the use of special peg sets so that they can feel the pieces. These players will likely have their own sets to use. Assistants can move the pieces for them on a larger board.

You may also have to deal with kids who are emotionally challenged or have some level of learning disability. Welcome them to play. Be patient with them and be prepared to spend extra time helping them. After a while, they will be just fine. The tactile nature of the game appeals to many kids in special education who have learning disabilities. You may find that they can outperform the high IQ kids.

Give the kids things to do to run the club. Let them get the chess sets and boards to put out and put away. Have them involved with all decision-making. After all, it is their club. When they feel some ownership, they respect the club, the school, and each other more. They'll make sure the equipment and all of the other items are in order.

IV. Club organization

A chess club can be organized and run in many ways. You can have a tightly organized club with a constitution and elected officers. It is just as easy to set up a club with a teacher/sponsor as the leader who makes sure everything is done correctly. It is up to the organizer and the kids how "official" they want to be.

If you want to have officers, have elections for the following roles: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Team Captain (if you have a team). Other jobs can be created as needs arise. A club constitution can be written and used as a comparative exercise in social studies learning. At a minimum, a constitution should have the following:

1. Name of the organization
2. Purposes of the club
3. When the club meets: day and time
4. Membership with rules on who may be a member. Rights and duties of membership can be included.
5. Officers, their duties, and the electoral process.
6. Types of activities that the club will do.
7. Amendment process to the constitution

Keep the constitution simple and readable. Have the kids write it. Advise only on the language. When they are finished and vote on it, have someone type it up and put it on parchment paper. It can be framed and placed in the chess club room

A more informal organization puts most of the responsibility on the teacher or sponsor to run things. It is good to at least one other adult to help out and supervise when you cannot be there. Like all chess players, the kids do not care who is running things. All they care about is playing chess,

V. Activities

After getting the club up and running for awhile, you are going to want to have a series of activities for the kids to do. This keeps them excited, involved, and instills a greater sense of ownership in the club. All of the below have been tried in various scholastic clubs. Consider this an idea set. Add your own and the kids' ideas to the list.

- Chess tournaments at the school. Can be unrated or rated by the US Chess Federation through an affiliate. Might want to make the school an affiliate. Cost is about \$40 per year. Magazines come to the club every month
- Intramural chess matches.
- Matches with other school teams.
- Participation in a chess league.
- Play in the State Scholastic Championships. Send a number of kids to play to earn titles and increase their USCF rating.
- Play in the National Championships or the Supernationals.
- Put on a chess play.
- Have a match between Turkeys (adults) and Pilgrims (kids) near Thanksgiving.
- Trip to Canada to play scholastic players from that country. Big organizing job.
- Trip to the US Chess Center in Washington, DC to play against scholastic team.
- Make posters or other artwork about chess to be displayed in the club and/or in the school.
- Make wooden chess pieces and boards in the wood shop of the school.
- Guest lecturer on chess.
- Simultaneous exhibition against a strong player. A strong local player or a guest master or grandmaster could play 20 or more games at the same time.
- Club rating ladder. Devise your own rating system and rank your players through casual play and competition
- Solve chess problems.
- Opening theme day. Everyone has to play a certain opening during club session or in a tournament.

Chess and the K-4 player

The following items and questions have to be addressed by the novice or K-4 player. He or she should have a base of knowledge or be able to answer these questions at this level.

Basics

1. Do you know how each piece moves?

2. What values are given to the chess pieces?

- Pawn 1
- Knight 3+
- Bishop 3+
- Rook 5
- Queen 9 or 10
- King Depends on the position; in endgame roughly 4

3. Do you know how to checkmate with...

- K + Q vs. K
- Q + R vs. K or R + R vs. King
- R + K vs. K

4. What are the three phases of a chess game?

- Opening
- Middlegame
- Endgame

5. Do you know the Rules of Chess? What do the following chess rules mean?

- Touch-move rule
- 50 move rule
- Repetition of position
- Illegal move
- En passant
- Promotion of a pawn

6. Do you know chess notation?

7. What are the two most common types of notation?

- Algebraic
- Descriptive

8. Why is it important to know chess notation?

- To be able to read books and magazines on chess
- To record moves of your games on a score sheet or in a scorebook

- To go over the games to find out what you did well or poorly. Find mistakes.

9. Do you know how to find and read your pairings at a chess tournament?

10. Do you know how to record results at a chess tournament?

11. Do you know how to read a crosstable?

12. What should you do if you have a problem during a game?

- See a tournament director.
- Do not argue with your opponent.

13. What should you do between rounds of a chess tournament?

14. What should your parents be doing while you are playing?

15. Do you understand the “rules” of chess etiquette?

- Shake hands before and after a game
- Do not disturb the opponent or anyone else
- Do not cry or whine if you lose. Do not be a sore loser.
- Do not get overly excited about winning in front of your opponent. Be a gracious winner.
- If time allows, go over the game with your opponent.

Openings

1. What are your goals in the opening?

- Development of your minor pieces to good squares
- Control of the center
- King safety

2. What would be an ideal setup of your pieces in the opening?

3. Do you pay attention to threats to your pieces and pawns? Can you make threats?

4. Do you play 1.e4 or 1.d4 openings with the White pieces?

5. What is your defense to 1.e4?

6. What is your defense to 1.d4?

7. Do you have any books on openings?

Middlegame

1. Do you understand the following basic tactics?

- Pin
- Fork
- Skewer
- Discovered attack
- Double attack

2. Do you understand the following positional ideas?

- Outpost
- Control of an open file
- Control of a diagonal
- Rook on the 7th rank
- Good bishop vs. bad bishop
- Good bishop vs. knight
- Good knight vs. bishop
- Good and bad pawn structures

3. Do you know some of the basic checkmate patterns in the middlegame?

- Back rank mate
- Battery mates
- Scholar's mate and how to defend it
- Checkmates with minor pieces

4. How should you think of or treat pawns?

- "Pawns are my friends"

Endgame

1. Do you understand the following terms with regard to K+ P endings?

- Opposition
- Triangulation
- "Shouldering" or "budging" using the king

2. Do you know the basic plan or technique for winning a K+P ending? What is the “little buddy” method when you are up a pawn?
3. Do you know the drawing methods in K+P endings?
4. Where does the king generally belong in the ending?

My observation of young children in casual play and tournament games shows that they make a number of typical mistakes. These must be addressed for them to be successful. They also make similar mistakes in their academic subjects. Through chess we may be able to find and correct these other problems.

- *Impulsive moves.* They play the first move that pops into their heads without examining any others. This behavior is a result of playing too fast. They have difficulty slowing down because their brains absorb stimuli and think too fast. It takes effort to make them slow down and look deeper than one move. They must be shown that every action has a consequence.
- *Inattention.* Sometimes they even get bored during a long game or when their opponent thinks long over a move. This often leads to “hanging” a piece or pawn, allowing a back rank mate, missing simple threats, or forgetting to write down a move on their score sheet. They are also easily distracted by their own and others behavior.
- *Difficulty in distinguishing the difference in concentrating and staying alert.* They tend to not notice or ignore important details. Increasing their base knowledge of patterns helps them to notice nuances of position. They must be taught to see and address threats. It doesn’t matter how long you sit staring at the board, you have to see patterns emerge.
- *Lack of coordination of the pieces.* They have difficulty in using multiple pieces to attack or defend. This leads to using the same piece to make several moves in a row to no effect. Dealing with a number of variables is not easy for them. The pieces and the position changes in value after every move.
- *They see things in small chunks.* The younger the child the greater likelihood that he/she is looking at only 1 to 4 squares at a time. As they improve they will then notice nine to twelve squares where the action is taking place. Only an experienced player can see and grasp what is going on over the whole board. Because of this smaller focus they have difficulty in developing broad plans.

What they are really good at is thinking in long chains of moves. When there are no distracting variations, I am always amazed how quickly a child can calculate simple sequential series of moves in endings. They appear to hold positions and images in their minds with greater sharpness than adults. Many young children are more tactile and visual than aural. Telling them the right moves is not good enough. They must see and experience over the board the idea or concept you are teaching. Directed play on a theme reinforces the idea. Their memories, based on the sharpness with which they see the images you are showing, are good at then storing the concepts. The repetition of playing good ideas over and over reduces mistakes. Through successful implementation of these good ideas, they are then more likely to be motivated to learn more.

It has to be done in a fun way or they turn off their minds. When I teach, I use funny stories, analogies, and often silly sayings to keep them “up” in energy during lessons. I ask many questions and solicit their input with “What do you think?”, “Why?”, or “What do you see?” to keep them actively engaged in the process of learning chess. Passive learning, especially for boys, is often counterproductive for the development of long term memory. The questioning process also gives me an insight into their learning style, their habits of thought, and how they rate or evaluate data in their minds. This gives me a chance to do a qualitative assessment of their progress in thinking. Over time, the depth of their answers improves.

Remarkably, they are able to stay on task, and keep high levels of attention, even through long chess sessions or classes. Why? Because they are having fun! Shhhh, don’t tell them at first that they are learning how to think better. Let them discover it through play and tell you. Like all other high order primates, we learn through play.

Chess for Intermediate Players - Grades 5-12 and/or USCF 1000 to 1600

Intermediate level players should have an increased base of knowledge and be able to answer the following questions:

1. What is your opening repertoire?

- With White, do you play 1.e4, 1.d4, or some other opening move?
- With Black, what is your main defense to 1.e4? Do you have a secondary defense?
- With Black, what is your main defense to 1.d4? Do you have a secondary defense?
- How deeply do you prepare your openings?

2. What opening books do you use to study?

3. What are your goals in the opening?

- Development of your minor pieces, rooks, and good placement of the Queen
- Control of the 16 center squares
- King safety
- Transition to good attacking or defensive plans.
- Threat awareness. Looking for traps

4. Identify good and bad pawn structures in the opening and middlegame.

5. Can you explain what the term domination means with regard to the minor pieces?

6. Be able to give examples for the follow chess tactics:

- Pin
- Fork
- X-ray attack or skewer
- Double attack
- Discovered attack and discovered check
- Deflection and decoy
- Clearance
- Annihilation of the defense
- Destruction of the pawn structure
- Zwischenzug
- Interference
- Perpetual attack/check
- Stalemate

7. Do you know the basic checkmate patterns? How often do you review them?

8. Do you know the fundamentals of K+P endings? Do you understand the following terms?

- Opposition
- Triangulation
- Zugzwang
- Budging
- Winning with and outside passed pawn - “little buddy” technique

9. Do you know the following techniques in R+P endings?

- Philidor position
- Lucena position
- R+BP+RP vs. R
- Winning and drawing positions with an outside passed pawn

10. Have you studied some model games in R+P endings? For example:

- Tarrasch - Thorold
- Capablanca - Tartakower
- Rubinstein - Lasker
- Flohr – Vidmar

11. What positional concepts are you familiar with? Do you understand the following ideas?

- Color control
- Prophylaxis
- Control of files
- Control of a rank; the 7th rank, the 8th rank
- Power of the two bishops
- Good bishop vs. bad bishop
- Good bishop vs. knight
- Good knight vs. bishop
- Outposting of minor pieces or the rooks
- Gambits and other sacrifices for the initiative
- Good and bad exchanges of the pieces
- Improving your worst placed piece
- Pawn breaks and pawn rams
- King power

12. Do you know various drawing techniques in the endgame?

- Fortress
- Reduction of material
- R + B vs. R
- R + N vs. R
- Wrong bishop + RP
- Perpetual check
- Stalemate
- 50 move rule

13. How familiar are you with the Rules of Chess? Do you have a Rulebook?

14. Do you know how to operate a chess clock?

15. Do you know the procedures involved in playing in a chess competition?

- How to enter an event
- Finding pairings
- Writing your moves on score sheet
- Recording of result
- Play in team competitions
- Review and objective analysis of games by yourself and with a coach to identify good and poor aspects of play.

Players on the intermediate level often still make some of the same mistakes as those at the novice level. Continued practice can limit these mistakes but never fully eliminate them. Why? We are human and, therefore, not perfect every day. Mistakes are based on what we “see.” Major areas of concern are:

- *Lack of attention.* Middle school and high school kids are just as easily distracted as the little ones. Maintaining focus has to be practiced. Distracters must be identified and ignored. Kids tend to want to listen to music when they play. For some kids, it helps them to stay in the flow of the game. However, I am not sure it helps very much when difficult problems start to appear which require deep calculation and evaluation.
- *Reliance on memory.* When kids improve, there is a tendency to memorize opening variations. This can lead to paying less attention to details in solving problems. Since memory is not perfect, blunders happen because of mixed up move orders. Pattern recognition fluctuates. While memory is a useful tool, it is no substitute for staying aware, on the alert for differences. It is better to understand an opening and have methods to analyze than memorize long strings of moves.
- *Hubris.* Once some kids know a little, they think they know everything. They plunge in and blunder along making continuous mistakes. Two behaviors may manifest. First, denial that they made a mistake, which makes it harder to correct. They lose their objectivity, which is very bad for a chess player. They have to be shown the reason for the mistake and how to correct it. Second, frustration which leads them to want to quit solving problems altogether. They lack patience. This type of player has waning motivation which will transfer to other areas. They must be shown successful ways to improve. It is important that they learn to persist... to slog on.
- *Skepticism/Cynicism.* Chess kids tend to test everything. They accept nothing without proof. This can have its good and bad aspects. They can use their increasing analytical skills as weapons. It is important to press the importance of objectivity and freedom from biases in the analysis of problems. They must not cut off the search for information and be willing to compare and contrast other points of view. In chess, as in life, there is still a lot that is unclear and uncertain. The development of perspective and a taste for nuance is essential.

One of the good qualities I noticed among chess playing students in the middle school and high school is that they tend to develop a high tolerance for frustration. They like hard problems and will persevere to solve them no matter how long it takes. Kids who do not play chess tend to take a stab or two at a math problem, for example, and then quit. Chess kids tend to plow through the difficulties and try other methods, even unusual creative ones, to solve. Over time, they develop the emotional and mental stamina to stay on the beam and finish long tests and other academic tasks without flagging. If nothing else, if we can develop this perseverance in the kids, I believe we will end up with successful students.

10 Good Books for Beginning Players or for a Chess Club Library

1. **64 Things You Need to Know in Chess** by John Walker
2. **Your First Chess Games** by A.J. Gillam
3. **Logical Chess: Move by Move** by Irving Chernev
4. **Understanding Chess Move by Move** by John Nunn
5. **Chess Tactics for Kids**
6. **How to Beat Your Dad at Chess**
7. **Weapons of Chess** by Bruce Pandolfini
8. **Silman's Complete Endgame Course** by Jeremy Silman
9. **Ultimate Chess Puzzle Book** by John Emms
10. **Chess for Tomorrow's Champions** by John Walker

This is a tough choice to limit it to ten. There are so many classics I could add, but they are often out of print or are in descriptive notation rather than the algebraic notation favored by publishers. I have tried to select books that are inexpensive but give a good bang for the buck.

Here is a list of old classics:

1. **The Game of Chess** by Seigbert Tarrasch
2. **Lasker's Manual of Chess** by Emanuel Lasker
3. **Chess Fundamentals** by Jose Raoul Capablanca
4. **My System** by Aron Nimzovich (still available and in algebraic notation)
5. **Judgment and Planning in Chess** by Max Euwe
6. **Basic Chess Endings** by Reuben Fine
7. **Pawn Power in Chess** by Hans Kmoch (still available and in algebraic notation)
8. **Chess Praxis** by Aron Nimzovich (still available and in algebraic notation)
9. **Modern Chess Strategy** by Ludek Pachman
10. **How Not to Play Chess** by E. Znosko-Borovsky

Some of these can still be found in old bookstores or online at exorbitant prices. Good hunting!

Top Books on Chess Tactics and Combinations

1. **Chess Tactics for Kids**. All motifs covered. For novice players
2. **How to Beat Your Dad at Chess**. Checkmate patterns. For novice to low intermediate players
3. **Attacking the King** by John Walker. Tactical patterns, checkmate patterns
4. **Chess: 5334 Problems, Combinations, and Games** by Laszlo Polgar. Literally thousands of checkmates. Puzzles can be converted tests or transparencies. For beginning to intermediate level players.
5. **Winning Chess Exercises for Kids** by Jeff Coakley. Hundreds of puzzles for novice and intermediate players. Tested in the schools with Canadian children. This book is optimal for use with young and beginning players. Designed to motivate players to continue work in chess. Explains concepts very well. One of my favorite books to use with kids. Companion book in Winning Chess Strategy for kids.
6. **Ultimate Chess Puzzle Book** by John Emms. 1000+ puzzles on several levels plus graded tests. For all levels of players.
7. **How to Become a Deadly Chess Tactician** by David Lemoir. Very well explained. For intermediate to advanced

players.

8. ***The Magic of Chess Tactics*** by Claus Dieter Meyer and Karsten Muller. A tactical training book for advanced players. Many difficult positions to test analytical skills.
9. ***The Chess Café Puzzle Book*** by Karsten Muller. Covers all tactical motifs; many examples. Tests are included. For intermediate and advanced players.
10. ***Attack with Mikhail Tal*** by Mikhail Tal and Iakov Damsky. A book by a former World Champion and a trainer on how to look for tactics in a game. First rate in explanation of thought processes. Many test puzzles to reinforce concepts. For intermediate and advance players.
11. ***Combinational Motifs*** by Maxim Blokh. One of my favorite puzzle books. Puzzles are set on levels of difficulty from 1 (easy) to 13 (ridiculously hard). Many puzzles can be solved from both sides to play. A good training book for advanced players, but also easy for even novice players to use. Can be used to make tests or have analysis sessions. This is a Russian training manual for young talents.
12. ***Imagination in Chess*** by Paata Gaprindashvili. Explores methodologies of analyzing chess positions. Compares with logic, computer analytical trees, and other methods of problem solving. Seems designed to turn players into masters and grandmasters. Some of the terminology is difficult to grasp at first. For advanced players. Good for analytical sessions and training.
13. ***1001 Brilliant Sacrifices and Combinations*** by Fred Reinfeld. The classic book of chess combinations. At least one modern puzzle book has taken puzzles from this gem of a book. Inexpensive. Answers in descriptive notation rather than in algebraic. Can be used for tests, analysis, and training. Pitched to all levels in its time, this is a little hard for some novice players. For intermediate level players and above. Some consider the book dated, but the puzzles are good tests of skill.
14. ***1001 Ways to Checkmate*** by Fred Reinfeld. The companion book to 1001 Brilliant.... Inexpensive. Answers in descriptive notation. For all levels of players, but novices might find it difficult.
15. ***Find the Checkmate*** by Gary Lane. A nice book that helps players to find checkmates. Graded puzzles with some funny evaluations. For novice to intermediate level players.
16. ***Encyclopedia of Chess Combinations***. Book format is designed similarly to the Blokh book above. The book has over 1200 puzzles in novice and intermediate level sections. Good for making tests, analysis, or training. I look at this as a book mainly for high intermediate and advanced players. Expensive and hard to find.
17. ***Excelling at Combinational Play*** by Jacob Aagaard. Part of a series of instructional and training books. Hundreds of puzzles to solve. For high intermediate and advanced players.

I tend to like tactical books that have hundreds and hundreds of puzzles with varying degrees of difficulty. Finding and solving chess tactics in a game is the major work of a player. The development of pattern recognition skills takes time and patience. The methods of solving may be transferable to other academic areas. Chess players deal with analytical trees that are similar to mathematical logic and computer algorithms all the time. In some European and Russian schools, children play chess or do puzzles in the morning before they take math and science classes.

With my students, I use all sorts of tactical puzzles to develop the imagination and depth of analysis. I have found that very young players have the ability to calculate long variations while keeping the images or patterns of the original position and subsequent positions very sharply in their minds with little degradation. Older players find that positions fade the deeper they calculate.

Emphasis with young players should be on tactics, tactics, and more tactics. As their tactical skills increase, positional concepts and endgame knowledge can be added.

Top 10+ books on Chess Strategy/Middle Game

1. ***My System*** by Aron Nimzovich. Generally appeals to players who are age 11 or older. Younger players have problems with the concepts and terminology
2. ***Chess Strategy for Club Players*** by Herman Grooten. Selected as a book of the year by reviewers. Detailed examples plus diagram sets to test analytical skills. For intermediate and advanced players. A 5 star book, will become a modern classic.
3. ***Modern Chess Strategy*** by Ludek Pachman. All modern books derive material from this old classic.
4. ***The Middle Game in Chess*** by Max Euwe. This two volume set was the top book on strategy for decades. Written by a world champion. Looked on today as somewhat dated, but the analysis and explanation are excellent for intermediate and above players.
5. ***Giants of Chess Strategy*** by Neil McDonald. A fine overview of strategically concepts as played by great champions. I rate this highly as it gives a more palatable view of Nimzovich's concepts as well as modern dynamic play.
6. ***Middle Game Strategy with the Carlsbad Pawn Structure*** by Robert Leininger. A well thought out coverage of critical pawn structures. I rate this highly.
7. ***Chess Praxis*** by Aron Nimzovich. The great master annotates games and explains his ideas with greater detail. For intermediate and above players.
8. ***Excelling at Positional Chess*** by Jacob Aagard. Part of a series of books by this author but can stand alone. Teaches how to evaluate and analyze using positional concepts. Numerous diagrams to test your skills. For advanced players.
9. ***Simple Chess*** by John Emms. A good basic overview of many positional concepts. He also wrote a companion book, *More Simple Chess*, which covers more advanced topics. Excellent books for intermediate and even advanced players. I rate these highly.
10. ***Secrets of Modern Chess Strategy*** by John Watson and ***Chess Strategy in Action*** by John Watson. These two modern books were considered books of the year by reviewers. Looks at Nimzovich's ideas as they evolved and compare with the dynamic style that is played today in top level chess. Discusses the idea of "rules" in chess and how they are interpreted or broken by top players. For intermediates who have read Nimzovich's *My System* and/or *Chess Praxis* and advanced players.

Top 10 Books on Chess Endgames

1. ***Silman's Complete Endgame Course*** by Jeremy Silman. The book is set up to introduce endgame concepts as he needs them while his other skill levels are increasing. Each chapter provides particular concepts for every 200 points on the US Chess Federation rating scale. For novices to develop into intermediate and then advanced players. Structure of the book is well thought out. Concepts are built up layer upon layer to help reinforcement of understanding. Players can learn at their own pace. Tests at the end of each chapter.
2. ***Practical Endgame Play: Mastering the Basics*** by Efstratios Grivas. This modern book was written by a noted grandmaster and trainer. Numerous examples for novice and intermediate players. A little pricey. For intermediate level and above.
3. ***Fundamental Chess Endings*** by Karsten Muller. A complete encyclopedia of all basic endgames. Depth of coverage is impressive. Also has many diagram tests. For intermediate and above. A little pricey.
4. ***Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual*** by Mark Dvoretsky. Dvoretsky is considered by many to be the top trainer in the world. Many of his students have become grandmasters. This is basically the training book he uses with them to impart basic endgame ideas. Very pricey book, one edition comes with a computer disk. Set up to show basic things and then shifts to show harder material and examples of how even Grandmasters can mess up an ending. For advanced players for the most part, but lower levels may learn some concepts.
5. ***Excelling at Technical Chess*** by Jacob Aagaard. Another book in a series by Aagaard on how to develop chess skills. Numerous examples and puzzles that can be used for analysis and tests. For intermediate and advanced players.
6. ***Practical Endgame Play: Beyond the Basics*** by Glenn Flear. A big book with statistical analysis of the frequency of endgames with multiple pieces. Covers ground not tackled by other endgame books. For advanced players. Expensive.
7. ***Test Your Endgame Thinking*** by Glenn Flear. Numerous examples and tests on endgame knowledge and skills. Can be considered a training manual in endgame analysis. For intermediate and advanced players.
8. ***Learn from the Legends: Chess Champions at their Best*** by Mihail Marin. This book looks at how the greatest masters contributed their special understanding of chess endgame. Deeply analyzed endgame positions. For advanced players.
9. ***How to Play Chess Endings*** by Karsten Muller and Wolfgang Pacheken. This is an excellent book that explores a number of general endgame concepts. Numerous examples to reinforce understanding. Many test positions. Good for analysis sessions or individual lessons. In the back of the book is a list of endgame "rules". Pricey but worth it for the dedicated player. For intermediate and advance players.
10. ***Capablanca's Best Chess Endings*** by Irving Chernev. Very inexpensive. This is a collection of the best games and endings of one of the greatest players in history. This should be read by every player. For novices and above. If you can afford only one endgame book, this is it.

Chess Websites

Recently, I was asked, “*What is a good website to teach kids the moves of the pieces?*” After doing a search of the internet, I think I found a good one. www.chesskid.com is a free site with sections for parents and coaches to use.

Another common question is: *What are the main websites for playing chess online?* I do not play online (too busy) so here are some recommendations from friends.

gameknot.com A friend raves about this site. It has tournaments, correspondence chess, and blitz features. There is also an opening library. The site maintains your stats of wins, losses, draws, openings used, and more. This is a pay site. There are monthly and/or yearly fees to play.

playchess.com

chess.com

chessclub.com - Internet Chess Club (ICC) This is the largest of the sites. Many strong players compete on this site. It contains instruction, blitz, and longer game features. There is a charge for this site, but it has been considered the gold standard for chess playing websites for years.

frechess.org - Free Internet Chess Server (FICS) This is another large site with many features. As stated, it is free.

instantchess.com

postcardchess.com A student of mine showed me this recently. It is a correspondence chess website.

EEK! A Halloween Trick or Treat Tip

Here is a chess opening to try in honor of Halloween. It is called the Frankenstein-Dracula Variation. The line is part of the Vienna Opening. This sideline was christened in the early 1970's by an English master who said that this is the type of opening the monster of Dr. Frankenstein and the fiendish Dracula would play if they were to engage in a game of chess on a cold, dreary evening. Frankenstein moves in a straightforward fashion taking anything he can to sate his hunger while Dracula draws his opponent on in a mesmerizing set of complications before striking back.

Frankenstein Dracula

1. e4 e5

2. Nc3

The start of the Vienna Opening, probably influenced by the good doctor who constructed him.

2. Nf6

3. Bc4

White develops swiftly. The bishop points at the f7 square.

3. Nxe4

The most aggressive move, hoping for 4. Nxe4 d5! forking the bishop and knight and gaining immediate equality.

4. Qh5

With a growl, the monster plays for checkmate!

4. Nd6

Saves the knight and defends f7 from the checkmate threat. Dracula has stolen a pawn and threatens to take the White bishop.

5. Bb3 Nc6

Dracula dares his foe to attack him. Quieter and safer is 5.....Be7.

6. Nb5

Frankenstein plays for the direct threat of 7. Nxd6 and 8. Qxf7 mate. Black's next moves seem to be forced by panic or so he would like his opponent to think!

6. g6

Defends the threat and makes a threat of his own.

7. Qf3

Renews the threat of capturing the knight and then mate. The monster will not be denied his prey, but Dracula enshrouds him with a mystifying defense.

7. f5

8. Qd5

Always forward with direct threats.

8. Qe7

Defends the checkmate once and for all. Dracula tempts his foe with chance to win a piece.

9. Nxc7+ Kd8

10. Nxa8 b6

Dracula coolly traps the knight and begins making threats of his own. If undisturbed, he will playBb7 andNd4 trapping and winning the monster's queen in the center of the board.

This is the basic tabiyah or starting position for the Frankenstein-Dracula Variation. White has won a rook, but his knight is trapped and will be lost. He must deal with the potential threat to his queen. There is an imbalance in material, favoring White, but Black has tactical and positional compensation. He is better developed and ready to strike back. Thousands of games have been played with no clear showing who has the ultimate advantage. This is a fun position to analyze in the quiet of an evening or test your tactical abilities in brawling 5 minute chess games with your friends.

At this point, White has no less than eight (!) reasonable possibilities. He must get his pieces developed and his king to safety. The latter two are the most studied and explored in tournaments.

- 11. Qd3 Tame, and so unlike the monster.
- 11. a4 Ignores the threat to the queen.
- 11. c3 A move that does little to stop Black's initiative
- 11. d4 Offers a pawn to free the bishop.
- 11. Nf3 A very complex line designed to untrap the knight in the corner.
- 11. Qf3 White runs away, but theoreticians do not like this move.
- 11. Nxb6 White gets something for the knight.
- 11. d3 The main line, at present.

Here is a sampling of the moves in the main line.

11. d3 Bb7

12. h4

To threaten 13. Bg5 winning the queen.

12. ... f4

To block the threat. 12....h6 runs into 13. Qf3 Nd4 14. Qg3 when the White Queen is safe from attack and Black must pursue complications to equalize.

13. Qf3

Black has an important decision to make here. He has tried both 13.... Nd4 with enormous complications and 13.... Bh6, the path most theoreticians have taken.

The silicon monsters in their dank dungeons have been consulted when the wits of man have grown weary. The beasts have given contradictory advice on the best paths to tread. Now it is your turn. Shall you be the oh so direct Frankenstein's monster or the cunning Dracula who enshrouds his victims in mists and dread? Try this opening in practice games after you have supped on Halloween candy.

In our chess club, we wrote a play about this variation and put it on in public. In costume and using a laser pointer, "Dracula" demonstrated a game with the help of his vampire assistants who went through the crowd looking for victims while teasing Dracula about his play with the monster. We had cookies and had fun exploring the line.

Mini-Games

There are a number of chess variants and mini-games that kids can try. Some help you to play better chess by making you think more deeply. Others are just fun. Below are a few of my favorites.

- **Tom and Jerry** - This is a battle between pawns and the Queen. Line up 8 white pawns (mice) on their regular squares on the chess board. Place the Queen (cat) on d8. White moves first. The object is to get a pawn to the other end of the board before the queen can take all of the pawns. It is not as easy as it looks. You have to plan ahead and calculate deeply to keep the Queen busy. If just one pawn makes it to the end, the mice get the cheese!
- **Peasants Revolt** - A battle between the Knights and the pawns. White has his pawns arrayed on their regular squares on the second rank and a king on e1. Black has Knights on b8, c8, f8, g8, and a King on e8. This is good practice for maneuvering the Knights and playing against them. White learns the value of having the King help and protect his pawns. The Knights should win, but it isn't easy. If White gets a pawn to the end of the board and promotes to a Queen, the Knights will be in big trouble.
- **Giveaway Chess** - The goal is to give away or have your opponent capture all of your pieces, including your King. The pieces are set up on their regular squares to begin. White starts and moves a piece or pawn. Each player tries to force his opponent to take a piece. All captures are forced. If a pawn makes it to the other side, it must promote to a Queen. Whoever loses all of his pieces first wins. A draw occurs if one side can no longer move a piece. Another draw occurs if each side has only a bishop left and they are on opposite colors. There are other draws where there is just a piece or two left and neither side can force the other to capture. This is a fun game with a lot of laughter and groans. Here is the beginning of a sample game:

1. e4 d6 2.Qg4 Bxg4 3.Kd1 Bxd1 4.Nh3 Bxc2 5.Bd3 Bxb1 6.Bxh7 Bxa2 7.Rxa2 Rxh7 8.Rxa7 Rxh3 9.gxh3 Rxa7 10.a4 Rxa4 11.b4 Rxb4 12.Bb2 Rxb2 13.Na3 Rxd2 14.Rd1 Rxf2 and so on until all of the pieces are gone. Note how bad Black's first move turned out to be!

There are many other variants, but these are most like the regular game. Learn how to play real chess first before playing these games. Beware of playing Giveaway Chess to relax between rounds of a tournament! I have heard the cry, "Oh no, I just gave away my Queen! I forgot we were playing a real game!" many times over the years. Have fun!

The Little Buddy System, a Tip for Endgame Play

One of the most important endings in chess is the care and nurturing of an outside passed pawn. The general strategy is to exchange or trade all of the pieces to get to a pure King and pawn ending. The King and pawn walk up the board together. Then the pawn, the “little buddy” is sacrificed so that the King can go to the other side of the board and “eat” all of the enemy pawns. This allows the other pawns to march down the board to promote to a Queen. Then it is a simple matter of endgame technique to win the K+Q vs. K ending.

Example format: Place White pawns on b2, f2, g2, and h2 and a White King on c2. Place Black pawns on f7, g7, h7. Put the Black King on c4. Play begins as follows:

1. b3+ Kb4 2. Kb2 Kb5 3. Kc3 Kc5 taking the “opposition”. Notice the following dance by the Kings and the little pawn. 4. b4+ Kb5 5. Kb3 Kb6 6. Kc4 Kc6 7. b5+ Kb6 8. Kb4 Kb7 9. Kc5 Kc7 10. b6+ Kb7 11. Kb5 Kb8 12. Kc6 Kc8 Now White has a choice: Run his opponent out of pawn moves or racing to the other side to “eat” the pawns. Note that if there were no other pawns on the board, Black would draw after 13. b7+ Kb8 14. Kb6 with a stalemate.

Method 1 13. f4 f5 14. g3 g6 15. h3 h6 16. h4 h5 17. b7+ Kb8 18. Kb6 g5 19. fxg5 f4 20. g6 f3 21. g7 f2 22. g8 # (checkmate)

Method 2 13 Kd6 Kb7 14. Ke7 f5 15. f4 Kxb6 16. Kf7 g6 17. Kg7 Kc6 18. Kxh7 Kd6 19. Kxg6 Ke6 20. h4 Ke7. White will promote one of the pawns to a Queen and play for a standard checkmate.

Kids tend to like the second method. It is so satisfying to capture or “eat” all of the little pawns or “cookies” of the opponent. Experiment and try out this simple pawn endgame. The side with the extra outside pawn should win all of the time.

Here is an example game from the late, great US and World Champion Robert J. Fischer using the ‘little buddy’ system to defeat another top level Grandmaster.

Robert J. Fischer vs. Bent Larsen, Candidates Match, Denver, CO 1971 Game 5

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 Nc6 6. Bc4 e6 7. Bb3 Be7 8. Be3 O-O 9. O-O Bd7 10. f4 Qc8 11. f5! Nxd4! 12. Bxd4 exf5 13. Qd3 fxe4 14. Nxe4 Nxe4 15. Qxe4 Be6 16. Rf3! Qc6 17. Re1! Qxe4 18. Rxe4 d5 19. Rg3 g6 20. Bxd4 Bd6 21. Rxe6 Bxg3 22. Re7 Bd6 23. Rxb7 Rac8 24. f4 a5 25. Ra7 26. g3 Rfe8 27. Kf1 Re7 28. Bf6 Re3 29. Bc3 h5 30. Ra6! The Rook and Bishops have worked well together. Fischer threatens Rxc6 or Rc6 exploiting the tactic of a pin. 30....Be5 31. Bd2! Rd6 32. Ke2 Rd5 33. Bc3 Rxc4 34. Bd5xc4 Rxc4 35. Kd3! Rc5 36. Rxa5 A perfect move as it liquidates or exchanges into a won endgame with an outside passed pawn. 36.....Rxa5 37. Bxa5 Bxb2 38. a4 Kf8 39. Bc3 Bxc3 Even if he avoids exchanging the Bishop, Black will lose it later trying to stop the advancing pawn. 40. Kxc3 Ke7 41. Kd4 Kd6 42. a5 f6 43. a6 Stop and look at the board. White will sacrifice the “little buddy” to win the other pawns. All he needs is one to win. In Grandmaster games the game would usually already have ended with a resignation by Black with respect for the opponent’s endgame skills, but Larsen stubbornly plays on for a few more moves. 43. Kc6 44. a7 Kb7 45. Kd5 h4 46. Ke6 and Larsen resigned.

I first taught the “little buddy” system to an 8 year old young lady. She liked to play the White side of the Ruy Lopez: Exchange Variation. (1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4. Bxc6 dxc6) The pawn structure lent itself to

exchanging all of the pieces and leaving Black with an inferior pawn structure in the ending unless he was very careful. We worked out how she should play the King and pawn ending over and over again until she felt comfortable with the strategy.

Several weeks later she was playing in a tournament game with a 12 year old boy who towered over her and had a rating advantage of several hundred points. Normally, kids feel intimidated by age and size of opponents as well as the rating. My little student smiled when the pawn structure of the Ruy Lopez: Exchange Variation appeared on her board. She happily exchanged piece after piece. I stood a considerable distance away watching the boy squirm in his chair, his face getting red as he realized how bad his position was.

At this point, I heard her tiny little voice say "Goodbye, little buddy." She even waved at the little outside passed pawn. I had to leave the room to keep from laughing. She proceeded to "eat" all of his "cookies." He resigned by knocking over the pieces when he was down 3 pawns and had all of his friends come over to watch him lose. She went to shake his hand and say "Tough game," as I taught her, to display sportsmanship and respect at the end of the game. He ignored her, wouldn't shake hands and walked away. She skipped into the other room to tell me that she won. I asked her what she learned from the game. She giggled, "Pawns are my friends." It was a running joke with my students to know this phrase and repeat it whenever I asked who their "friends" were. She also said, "He was very rude. He knocked over the pieces and would not shake hands." I explained to her that people find it tough to lose, especially to precocious little girls. I told her that she had been a little rude, too. Next time, don't wave at your "little buddy"! She giggled again and agreed.

Chess Club: Equipment and Other Needs

- 10 chess sets with 3.5" to 2.75" kings. This is the standard size used in tournaments.
- 10 vinyl boards with 2" to 2.75" squares. These come in many colors, but the preferable colors are green and white.
- Container to hold all of the chess sets for storage or travel
- Mailing tubes for storage of the vinyl boards.
- Large binder for chess forms masters, transparencies, and other club information.
- Box with extra pens, pencils, stapler, tape, and other stationery supplies.
- Booklet on how to run a chess club.
- Signs, banners, advertising flyers to promote your club.
- Library of chess books for use by club players
- U.S. Chess Federation: Official Rules of Chess, 5th edition. Updates to the rulebook are on the USCF website, www.uschess.org.

Optional Items:

- Demonstration board
- Overhead projector for use with transparencies
- Chess clocks. How many is up to you, but you could start with 2 to 4. Digital clocks that are delay and/or increment capable are preferred to analogue (wind-up) clocks. Tournaments generally prefer digital clocks to be used. However, the analogue clocks are good for general purpose club usage, 5 minute chess, etc. They are sturdy and less expensive than digital clocks.
- Chess tournament pairing program. Two of the most common programs used today are Swiss-Sys and WinTD. Each is around \$90 to \$100. They are used to run large tournaments.
- If you do not want to use a pairing program, paper pairing cards and crosstables can be used to run a tournament.
- Chess playing computer program for use on classroom computer. There are a number of programs available. The best are Fritz, Rybka, Shredder, Hiarcs, and Chess Master. Each provides challenging games to students and has large game databases. The programs can be used to analyze games.

Special Items:

- Club logo, letterhead.
- Laminated membership cards
- T-shirts, polo shirts, sweatshirts, bags and other item with the club logo. Selling these can be a good fundraiser for a club. Club/Team members can wear shirts with club logo to tournaments.