

Chess Notes, January 2018

This handout outlines some things we have been working on in Oakton Chess Club. We encourage you to use this handout to review with your student.

We are learning how to pay attention:

- How to sit up properly in a willing to learn position
- How to shake hands before starting
- How to set up the chess board

Questions to ask your student:

- Where was chess first played? **India**
- How many squares on the chessboard? **64**
- What is the purpose of the game? **to check mate the king**
- What is checkmate? **the king is under attack and cannot get out**
- Who plays first? **white**

Major pieces: Queen and Rook

Minor pieces: Knight and Bishop

There are three types of lines on a chessboard:

- Diagonals
- Ranks (1-8) (rows, side to side)
- Files (a-h) (columns, up and down)

How to set up the chess board:

- Black is on ranks 7 and 8
- Queen is on her own color

Each chess piece is worth:

- | | | |
|-------------|--------------|--------------------|
| ■ Queen - 9 | ■ Knight - 3 | ■ King - priceless |
| ■ Rook - 5 | ■ Bishop - 3 | ■ Pawn - 1 |

In chess, each square has a name.

- First the file letter, then the rank number
- There are four center squares: **d5, e5, d4, e4**

We have been telling the students that the a-h on the chessboard (the names of the files) stands for **Always Be Careful, Don't Ever Forget Good Habits.**

We have been teaching the students to start a game like this:

1. Fight to gain control of the center:
 - a. move pawn in front of King up two spaces
2. Promote knights and bishops:
 - a. bring out both knights (moving them toward the center)
 - b. bring out the first bishop (to threaten opponent's knight)
 - c. move the pawn in front of the Queen up one
 - d. bring out the second bishop (to threaten opponent's other knight)
3. Castle on the king's side like this:
 - a. move the king over two spaces (toward the side of the board)
 - b. move the rook over two spaces (to the other side of the King)
4. Move the Queen up one square (to make room for the rooks)
5. Move rooks to where King and Queen were (to bring them into play)

"Putting the question to the bishop": After the opening outlined above, bring one of the pawns on the sides up to threaten the opponent's bishop.

Why do we castle? We castle to protect the king (tuck him away) and to bring the rook into the game (so that it is not stuck on the side).

A knight is strongest on the center squares. Knights should not be on the sides. When all the knights come out first, it is called a "four knights opening."

Some things to consider during a game:

- When someone makes a move, always ask yourself *why* they did it. Try to figure out their plans to stop them.
- When a piece is "under a pin" you can't move that piece away or your opponent will take another one of your pieces.
- A "threat" is when someone wants to take one of your pieces. Always look for threats against your pieces.
- When someone takes one of your pieces, always try to take back.
- When something is on your side of the board, chase it away.
- When you could take an opponent's piece with more than one of your pieces, take with the piece of lesser value.
- An "illegal move" is a move that is against the rules of the game.

Counting: When you trade a piece – take and take back – count the value of each piece (see "worth" above) to determine whether it is a good exchange.

Blockade: Putting a piece in the way to block your opponent.

Students may practice chess for free online at: <https://www.chesskid.com>.