



# TRAINING MODULES

## for Chess Players, on Soft Skills

Partner: Latvian Chess Federation

Module's title: Introduction to the game of chess (Theoretical  
Part)



Including Chess As a Re-education Up-Skilling tool

## Summary

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# 1- BACKGROUND AND SCOPE

## 1.1 Background

*Why is this module included in Icarus' Toolkit? Why is it important for the chess players, in order to be able to teach soft skills? What is its methodology?*

**Goethe: Chess is “the touchstone of the intellect.”**

**Classical Chess game** - it is a mental competition between two partners (opponents, players), between whites and blacks, which takes place on a special table, where chess pieces are moved alternately in a certain order, in accordance with accepted rules. The pieces are often not literally white and black, but usually contrasting light and dark colours.

Chess combines the components of sport, science and art. Chess is a democratic sport where there is age, gender and democracy of personal freedom. Everyone can compete equally. Young with old, man with woman. The key is the player's art of managing chess pieces with strategy. A person can have different life circumstances, but no one can take away a person's freedom to think. We emphasise that **chess is freedom to think**.

Each chess game is unique, because on the one hand, the course of the game is determined by the knowledge and experience of the players, the ability to see the square, the strategy of the game, and on the other hand, the player's own connection with the chess game. The chess game can be played with or without a chess clock, with or without recording the moves. The player who has white pieces starts the game. None of the partners has the right to make two moves in a row. What colour pieces each partner should play with is determined by the drawing of lot.



Photo from facebook.com, Latvian Chess Federation

Chess is a universal sport because you can play chess with a computer program or with another opponent remotely, in distance. In such cases, there must be confidence that there will be no cheating - that it will not happen that the principles of the game will be preserved, where only two players play without the help of others. Even if there is nothing available, not a computer, not another opponent, not even a chessboard, you can play chess in your head. If you have the ability to remember the moves of the chess game and how the position changes accordingly, it is possible to play with yourself, play in your head. Such super freedom is chess game!

## 1.2 Main subject

*What is the main subject of the module? What are the competences developed?*

When a person decides to start playing chess, he must understand, accept and follow all the laws and rules of the game adopted in chess. They are observed by everyone who sits down at the chess table

In theoretical training module introduction to the game of chess was described sequentially in a manner including topics:

- 1.) What is chess;
- 2.) What is the history of chess;
- 3.) Getting to know the chess table and chess pieces;

- 4.) Important chess terms;
- 5.) Chess game strategy: beginning, middle game, end game;
- 6.) Moves of chess pieces;
- 7.) Chess clock and key time controls in chess.

## 1.3 Target

*What is the specific target group(s)?*

The target group of the practice is adult educators, trainers, mentors, and other stakeholders who are interested in providing training to those who wishes to learn to play chess.

## 1.4. Chess history

The origins of the game of chess can be found in India. There is a legend about how chess was created. According to it in the 6th century AD Sissa Ben Dahir presented a new game to the king Shihram. King was so impressed by the complexity and strategical depth of the game that asked what reward Sissa desired. Sissa replied that the king could place one grain of wheat (in other sources - rice) to a square, then twice on the second square and double grains until the last 64th square was filled. The king without any doubt agreed to a modest (as he thought) request. The problem appeared when the king's servants started to fill squares and quickly realized the enormity of Sissa's request. The legend is an allegory for the exponential growth of calculation complexity in a game of chess however true origins of chess are more obscure and is likely, that evolution of this table game went through a combination of cultural influences and gameplay innovations in India, Persia, Arab world and later as a final stage of becoming chess as we know it today in Europe.

## 2- OUTLINE

### 2.1 Description

*Please enter the full outline of the module.*

The game of chess is played on a square chessboard, with each player controlling an army of 16 pieces: a king, a queen, two rooks, two knights, two bishops, and eight pawns. The goal of the game is to checkmate your opponent's king, which means putting it in a position where it cannot escape capture.

Each player starts the game with their pieces arranged in a specific way on the board. The board is divided into 64 squares, with each player's pieces arranged on the first and second rows (or ranks) of the board.

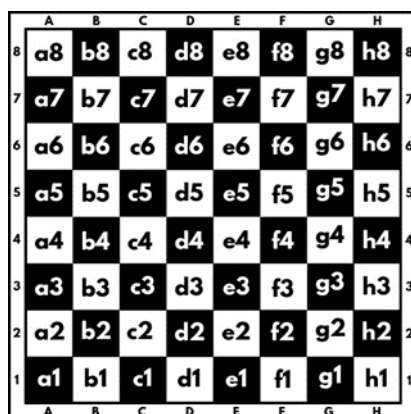
The white player always moves first, and players take turns making one move per turn. The pieces are moved according to specific rules, with each type of piece moving in a different way. For example, the rook can move any number of squares along a rank or file, the bishop can move any number of squares along a diagonal, and the pawn can move one square forward (or two squares on its first move) but can capture an opponent's piece by moving one square diagonally. See below for a detailed description.

#### **Chessboard and chess pieces.**

During the game, the chessboard must be placed between the two opponents so that the white corner square (namely h1 or a8) is located to the right of each player. The chessboard is divided into sixty-four white and black squares, eight in each row. At the beginning of the game, white pieces are always placed in the first and second rows, and black pieces are placed in the seventh and eighth rows. Each piece occupies only one space. It is important to remember that at the beginning of the game, white's queen is always on the white square, and black's queen is always on the black square.

Sixteen pieces stand on each side of the chessboard. The white and black pieces on the table stand symmetrically, facing each other. The pieces are placed as follows: (from the left), The Rook, The Knight, The Bishop, The Queen, The Bishop, The Knight and The Rook. A pawn stands in front of each piece.





These pieces are as follows:

A white king

usually indicated by the symbol

A white queen

usually indicated by the symbol

Two white rooks

usually indicated by the symbol

Two white bishops

usually indicated by the symbol

Two white knights

usually indicated by the symbol

Eight white pawns

usually indicated by the symbol

A black king

usually indicated by the symbol

A black queen

usually indicated by the symbol

Two black rooks

usually indicated by the symbol

Two black bishops

usually indicated by the symbol

Two black knights

usually indicated by the symbol

Eight black pawns

usually indicated by the symbol



## Basic chess terms.

### Checkmate

Checkmate is a situation of attack on the king when 3 conditions are met. The king can't escape, the attacking piece can't be captured and it is not possible to block the attack. In short, checkmate is an attack on the King that your opponent can't escape. There are three main ways to win or lose a chess game: checkmate, resignation and timeout.

### Check

This is also an attack on the king, but unlike checkmate, this is one that your opponent *can* escape.

### Stalemate

The player to move is not in check, but they can't move any of their pieces. It is a draw.

### Capture

Capture refers to taking a piece from the board, so your opponent is a piece down.

### En passant

A pawn that moves two squares forward can be taken by an opposing pawn that's directly next to it on the following move.

### Promotion

A pawn that reaches the end of the board, pawn can be exchanged as part of the same move on the same square for a new queen, rook, bishop or knight of the same colour (just not the king or another pawn).

### Touch move

If player touches a piece, he has to move it. Once player let go of a piece, the move is made and cannot be taken back.

### The strategy of the chess game: opening, middle game, endgame.

The main strategy of the game is to develop the pieces, giving the best positions, while at the same time protecting the king. The best chances at the beginning of the game are given by the so-called "opening's" knowledge. The opening provides tactics for further play. They average 5-15 opening moves that have already been studied by many analysts. Openings are from both whites and blacks. The best opening even after hundreds of years from white's is probably still 1. e4. White's must expect that there are many moves to answer the standard e4. Traditionally, e5 can be answered, but the Sicilian defence c5 can be the other the most likely option. Historically chess openings are named after a place/city/region where it was first discovered or played or where the most famous publisher and author came from.



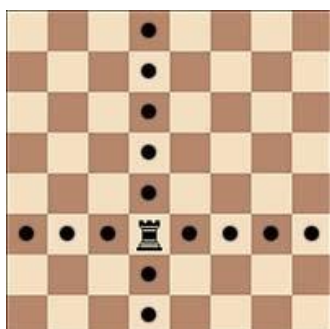
In the same time, many variations and openings are named not after the first player, who played it, but after the main influencer and analyst of the variation or opening played (for example: The French Defense, The Italian Game, The London System etc.) There are openings named after the person who played them for the first time or an opening is named for the player who was the first to popularise it or to publish analysis of it (for example Alekhine's Defence, etc.). Sometimes chess openings are even named after animals (for example: Black Lion Defense 1. e4 d6 etc.), and some openings are even given strange names that don't make any sense. The player chooses an opening that best suits his character and play style. If a player likes to play in an attacking style, he chooses one opening, if he likes to defend more, the player realises it in the corresponding opening. The opening is the stage of the game in which players develop their pieces, get their king to safety, and attempt to control the center. After the opening, the game enters the middle game, where the most active action takes place, namely, in the middle game players begin to attack each other, and defend. The endgame is when most of the pieces are off of the board. Each of these stages of the game has developed principles on how best to play to win the game.

Players are given one point (1) for a win, zero point (0) for a loss. The third result that is possible is a draw (1/2).

## Moves of chess pieces.

### The Rook

The rook may move to any square along the file or the rank on which it stands. In other words, the rook moves in a straight line, horizontally and vertically, one or more spaces at a time, unless another piece stands in its way. A rook cannot jump over another figure. If an opponent's piece stands in its way, the rook can capture it by standing in its place.



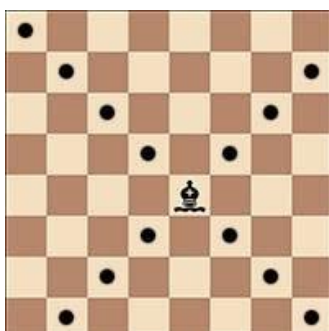
## The Knight

The knight move can be described as a compound movement in an 'L' shape – two squares vertically and one horizontally, and vice versa. In its move, the knight (white or black) always goes from the white square to the black square or from the black square to the white square, but never the knight can go from the white square to the white square or from the black square to the black square. The knight can capture any piece standing on the end square of the knight's move. The knight is the only piece that can jump over other pieces.



## The Bishop

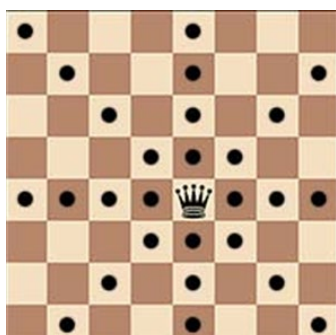
The bishop may move to any square along a diagonal on which it stands. The bishop moves diagonally across one or more squares at a time, if there is no other piece in its diagonal. The bishop cannot jump over other pieces, but bishop can capture another piece. Each bishop is matched with the colour of its original square, so each of the opponent has one bishop of black squares (so called black-squared bishop) and one bishop of white squares (white-squared bishop).





### The Queen

The queen may move to any square along the file, the rank or a diagonal on which it stands. Basically, the queen move combines rook and rook moves. The queen cannot jump over other pieces, but can capture a piece. The queen is one of the most valuable chess pieces.

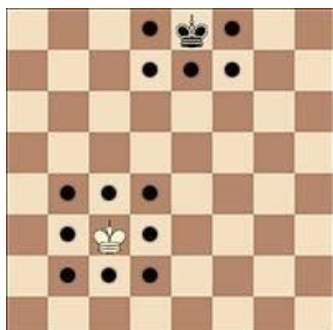


Remember: when making these moves the bishop, rook or queen may not move over any intervening pieces.

### The King

There are two different ways of moving the king: first, by moving to any adjoining square not attacked by one or more of the opponent's pieces. In another words: the knight may move to one of the squares nearest to that on which it stands.

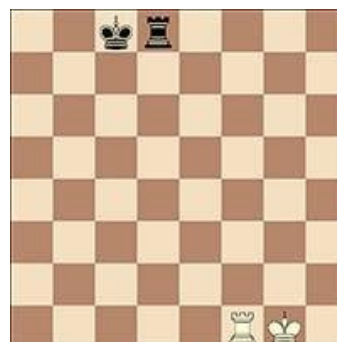




The other way of the king is so called **'castling'**. This is a move of the king and either rook of the same colour along the player's first rank, counting as a single move of the king and executed as follows: the king is transferred from its original square two squares towards the rook on its original square, then that rook is transferred to the square the king has just crossed.



*Before white kingside castling  
Before black queenside castling*



*After white kingside castling  
After black queenside castling*



*Before white queenside castling  
Before black kingside castling*



*After white queenside castling  
After black kingside castling*

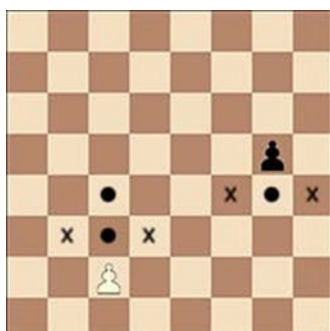
The right to castle has been lost:

- a. if the king has already moved, or
- b. with a rook that has already moved.

Castling is prevented temporarily:

- a. if the square on which the king stands, or the square which it must cross, or the square which it is to occupy, is attacked by one or more of the opponent's pieces, or
- b. if there is any piece between the king and the rook with which castling is to be effected.

## The Pawn



The Pawn moves directly forward to the unoccupied square, never backward or to the side. Pawns move exactly one square forward; though each Pawn may



advance two squares forward the first time it is moved, if both squares are unoccupied. Pawns capture a piece that is one square diagonally forward.

### **Zugzwang.**

Zugzwang is a German word which translates to "compulsion to move." Zugzwang basically means, "It is your turn to move, and all of your moves are bad!" There is no "pass" or "skip a move" in chess, so sometimes having to move can lose the game! (chess.com)

Remember. Learning the game of chess is easy, but learning to play chess well is difficult, because "Chess is the art of analysis." (Mikhail Botvinnik, The sixth [World Chess Champion](#)).

### **Chess clock. Time controls.**

In order to address this problem, and make sure that no player overly delays a game, chess clocks were invented.

Nowadays, you will find that chess clocks stand beside chess boards in nearly all situations - playing under the permanent threat of time running out is said to add even more excitement to a game of chess, and knowing how to manage time pressure is now a factor that helps determine your strength as a player.

The first chess clocks that were invented were called analog clocks, and they are still used from time to time in chess tournaments. However, they have practically been replaced by digital clocks in all situations, since they happen to offer more accuracy and a greater array of options. For instance, it is impossible to add an increment per move when using an analog chess clock, which is a major drawback in the current context of chess tournaments.





In this practice, we focus on time controls: the mechanisms that are used in chess tournaments to ensure that matches can finish in a timely way, so that the tournament can proceed in a reasonable time frame.

We can divide time controls in roughly four sections, from the fastest to the slowest: bullet chess, blitz chess, rapid chess and classical chess. All of these time controls

have their own distinctive features, and we are now going to analyse each of them individually.

### **Bullet chess**

As the name indicates, this time control refers to chess games that are as fast as bullets - namely games that have less than three minutes for each player.

This time control is not very common in tournament chess, as it is considered that less than three minutes is not enough to produce high-quality games. It is more common in online chess, for a variety of reasons:

There are no practical problems, such as a player accidentally knocking over his pieces or his opponent's;

It is possible to play with pre-moves in most online chess websites (a move that is made before the opponent replies, and which will automatically be played on the board with no time deduction if it is still legal after the opponent's move);

Usually, when playing online, people want to optimise the time they spend by playing as many games as possible. Obviously, faster time controls = a higher number of games in a given amount of time.

### **Blitz chess**

In blitz games, each of the players has less than 10 minutes to complete the game. This may be in a sudden death format, which means that there is a limited amount of time for each player and that the game ends after the time runs out.



However, the emergence of digital clocks has also made it possible to add a small increment of time for each move played by each player.

The blitz time control that is used in official FIDE (World Chess Federation) events, and the most common globally, is three minutes for the whole game, plus two seconds of increment for each move.

### **Rapid chess**

The rapid time control is very broad: it refers to games that have between 10 and 60 minutes. Just like blitz games, there may or may not be an increment per move

in rapid chess - nowadays, it is rather uncommon to find a tournament that has sudden death time controls, as they are said to negatively impact the quality of the games.

The most common rapid time controls you will find are between 15 and 25 minutes per game with an increment of 3 to 10 seconds per move, as that is the most reasonable midpoint between blitz and classical chess.

FIDE's official rapid time control is of fifteen minutes for the entire game, plus an increment of ten seconds for each move.

### **Classical chess**

The most common time control in tournament chess is the classical one, and also the one that is regarded as the most "respectable" variation of chess.

In classical chess, players have a lot more time to think their moves through, in comparison with the faster controls we have just mentioned. This leads to deeper analysis and, most likely, a shorter amount of mistakes.

While there are many variations of classical chess, the most widely used one is 90 minutes for the entire game, with a 30-second increment for each move played.

This is the time control that you will find in most classical tournaments out there. However, if you happen to play in an official FIDE event, this will also be the time



control used - with a seemingly small, but very important change: after move 40, players get an extra 30 minutes for the rest of the game.

In the Candidates Tournament and the World Chess Championship match, perhaps the most relevant FIDE events, the classical time control used is a bit more complex: 100 minutes for the first 40 moves, followed by 50 minutes for the next 20 moves (until the 60th move), followed by 15 minutes for the rest of the game, with a 30-second increment starting from move one.

Here is a summary of the time controls below:

Name	Time	Description
Bullet	Less than 3 minutes: usually 1 minute for each player or 2 minutes for each player with an increment of 1 second per move.	Fastest time control, more common in online chess.
Blitz	Less than 10 minutes: usually 3 minutes for each player with an increment of 2 seconds per move.	Fastest time control that is played in official chess tournaments played on the board.
Rapid	Games between 10 and 60 minutes: usually between 15 and 25 minutes for each player with an increment of 3-10 seconds per move.	Not being as slow as classical games, it allows for tournaments that can be played in less time and still present a good quality of play.
Classical	Usually 90 minutes for each player with an increment of 30 seconds per move, sometimes with an extra 30 minutes for each player after the 40th move.	The most common time control in tournament chess, since it allows for deeper analysis and less mistakes.

## 2.2 Aim/goal

*Please describe the aim(s) and goal(s) of the module: what are the objectives that the practice wants to reach?*

The goal of these theoretical tutorials is to give clear and understandable instructions on how to start playing chess.

## 2.3 Learning Outcomes

*What learning outcomes are expected from the practice in order to consider it successful? What will the participant learn? How will the training help their behavioural competences?*

Learning outcomes will be considered achieved when a person, sitting down at the chess table, is able to play chess, observing all the rules and can use a chess clock (optional).

## 2.4 Training Approach

*What kind of training/teaching methodology will be implemented in the practical part? Is there a literature/bibliography (not mandatory)?*

In the practical part, various tasks will be discussed, which check whether the skills of playing chess have been acquired.

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## 4. DISCLAIMER

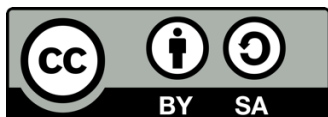
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