

# How to Read and Write Algebraic Chess Notation

You're going to quickly learn everything you need to know about reading and writing chess moves, called "chess notation". There's even an actual real-life "scoresheet" below that shows exactly how to write your moves in a chess tournament or chess club. This is the official recording document for recording chess moves. These [scoresheets](#) are used by the US Chess Federation, the official chess governing body in the United States.

**Algebraic Chess Notation** is today's universally accepted chess language. Though there are other styles, algebraic notation has been accepted as the standard by the international chess organization called FIDE. FIDE governs all world-class chess competitions.

Chess notation is easy to learn! You'll understand it like the experts in the next 10 minutes. Just continue reading and/or watch the special [chess notation video](#) included.

## Why should I write down my chess moves?

There are many good reasons for writing down your chess moves. Chess notation enables you to record your games for playback later. That day you played a superb game of chess... wouldn't you like to be able to play through it later and show your friends? Recording the game with chess notation enables you to study, replay, or show the game later!

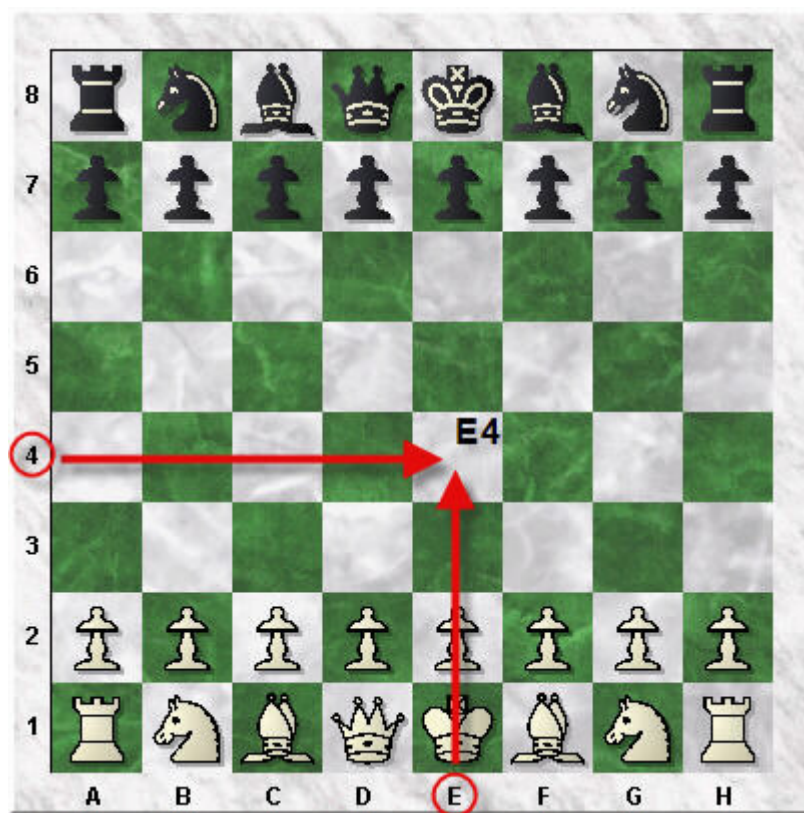
You can also read and play through games of great players to learn and improve your own chess game! There is a wealth of materials both in book and digital form allowing you to study the chess moves of great chess players.

Chess competitions actually require recording of moves from the beginning scholastic levels to chess championship levels. The reason for this is that the game can be followed and recreated to any position in case there is a dispute. There are also chess rules based on the number of moves played and these can only be applied if recording has taken place.

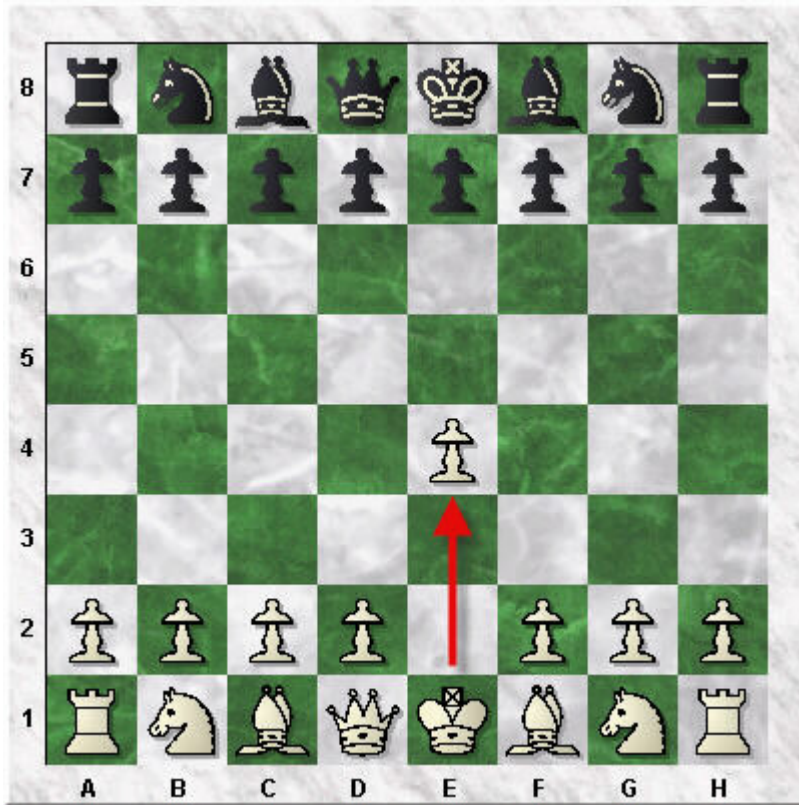
Many players like to record their chess games and later enter those games into chess database software which allows them to further study and analyse their game. The [chess software](#) will analyse and point out mistakes or places where they could have played much better moves. It's a great way to improve your chess play. It's almost a secret weapon since a remarkably small percentage of chessplayers utilize this concept of chess improvement - and the tools are right there!

## Learn Chess Notation

To write chess notation you must indicate the **piece** and the **square** it's moving to. Notice how each piece is abbreviated with a single letter except the pawn! If no piece is named it's assumed that a pawn move is made. Notice also how the Knight is abbreviated with a "N" not "K"



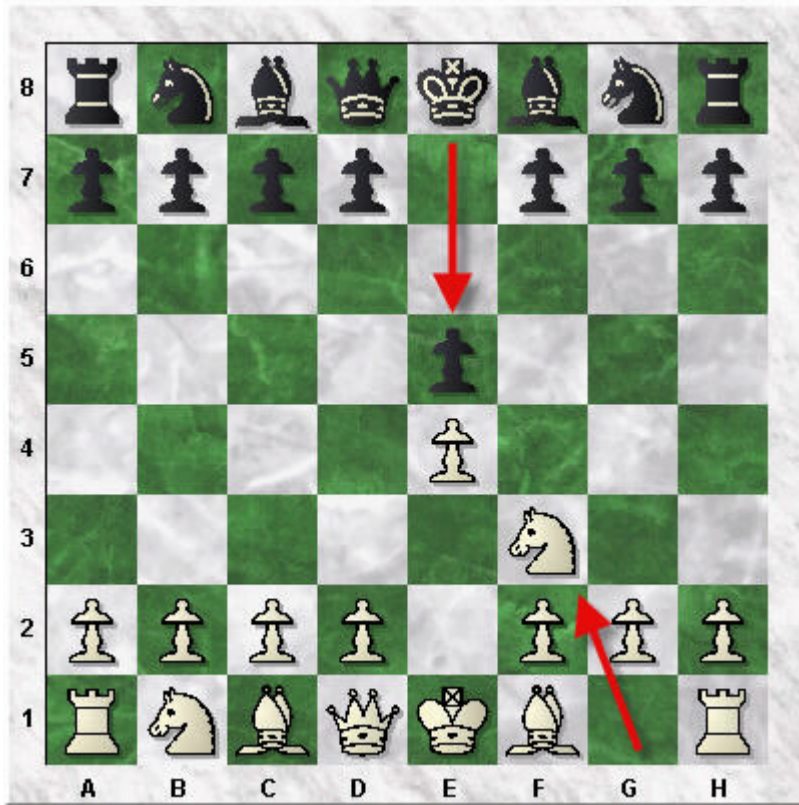
In the following diagram I made the first move pawn to **e4**. The name of this move is simply "e4". (since the pawn's name is not written)



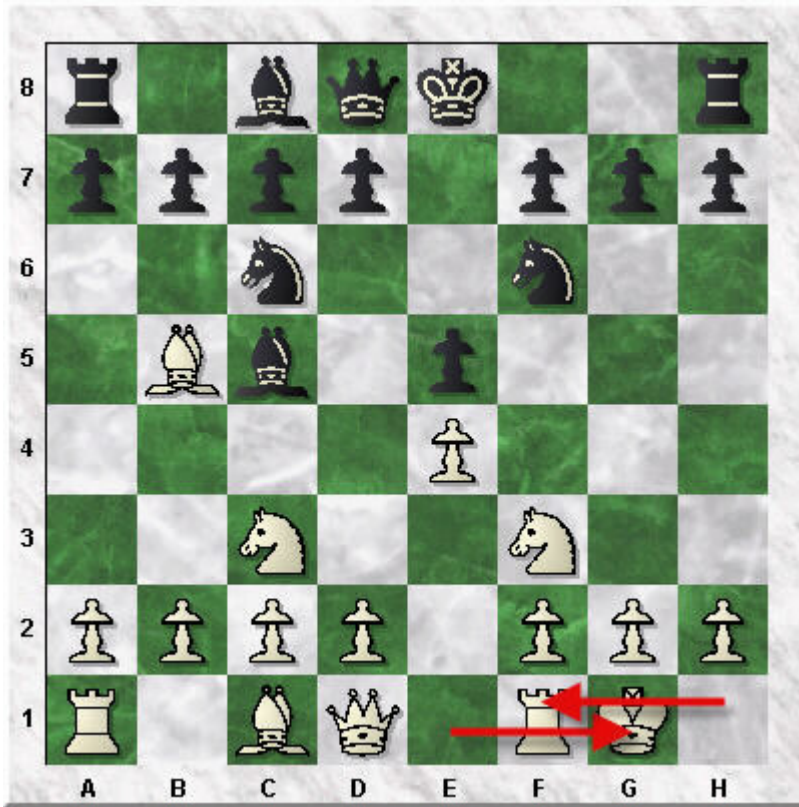
Notice how this is shown on the sample scoresheet. By the way, this is an official chess scoresheet that is used in USCF rated chess tournaments. I've included it here for you to quickly get a concept of how this will appear when you actually record your games.

Official Score Sheet		Chess4Life <small>teaching life skills through chess</small>		13555 Bel-Red Road Suite 200 Bellevue, WA 98005 425-283-0549 www.chess4life.com	
EVENT <i>Demo</i>			DATE <i>6-30-2006</i>		
ROUND	BOARD	SECTION	OPENING <i>Ruy Lopez</i>		
WHITE (name of player) <i>Raphael</i>			BLACK (name of player) <i>Hiancs 10</i>		
WHITE	BLACK	WHITE	BLACK		
1	<i>e4</i>	<i>e5</i>		26	
2	<i>Nf3</i>	<i>Nc6</i>		27	
3	<i>Bb5</i>	<i>Nf6</i>		28	
4	<i>Nc3</i>	<i>Bc5</i>		29	
5	<i>O-O</i>	<i>d5</i>		30	
6	<i>exd5</i>	<i>Nxd5</i>		31	
7	<i>Nxd5</i>	<i>Qxd5</i>		32	
8	<i>Bxc6+</i>	<i>bxc6</i>		33	
9	<i>c3</i>	<i>Q-O</i>		34	
10	<i>Ngs</i>	<i>e4</i>		35	
11	<i>d4</i>	<i>exd3 (cp) !</i>		36	
12	<i>Qf3</i>	<i>d2</i>		37	
13	<i>Qxd5</i>	<i>dxc1=Q</i>		38	
14	<i>Raxc1</i>	<i>cxd5</i>		39	
15	<i>Kf1</i>	<i>Bb7</i>		40	
16	<i>f4</i>	<i>Rfe8</i>		41	
17	<i>Nh3</i>	<i>Rad8</i>		42	
18	<i>g3</i>	<i>Be3</i>		43	
19	<i>Rcd1</i>	<i>f6</i>		44	
20	<i>Rfe1</i>	<i>d4++</i>		45	
21				46	
22				47	
23				48	
24				49	
25				50	
RESULTS: <input type="checkbox"/> WHITE WON <input type="checkbox"/> DRAW <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BLACK WON					
SIGNATURE <i>X</i>			SIGNATURE <i>X</i>		

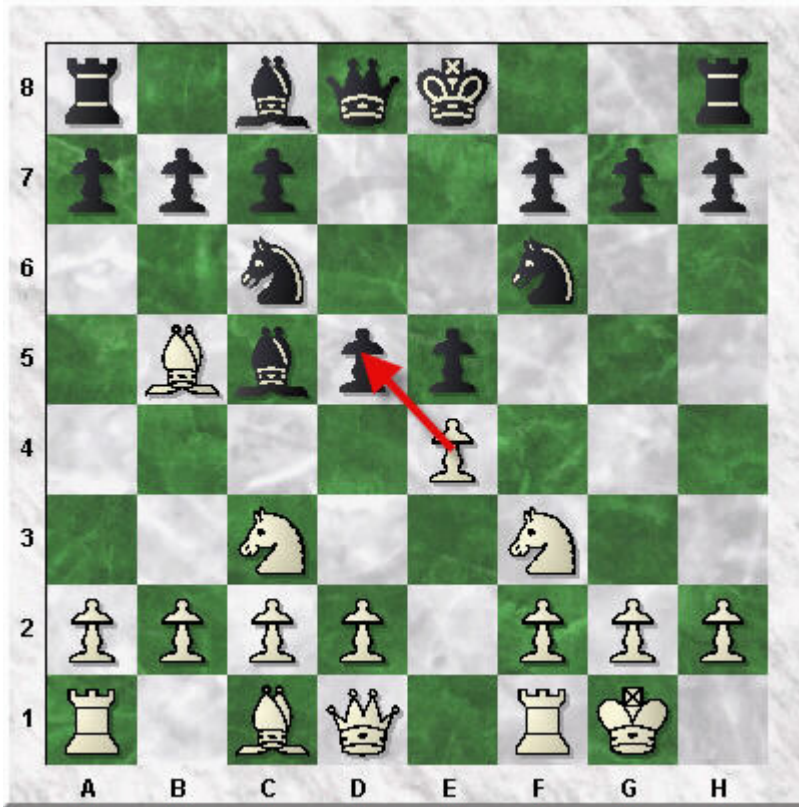
Now black has made a pawn move... this is written as **e5**.  
 Next, White has replied with **Nf3**. Notice how the name of the piece is written as well as the name of the square.



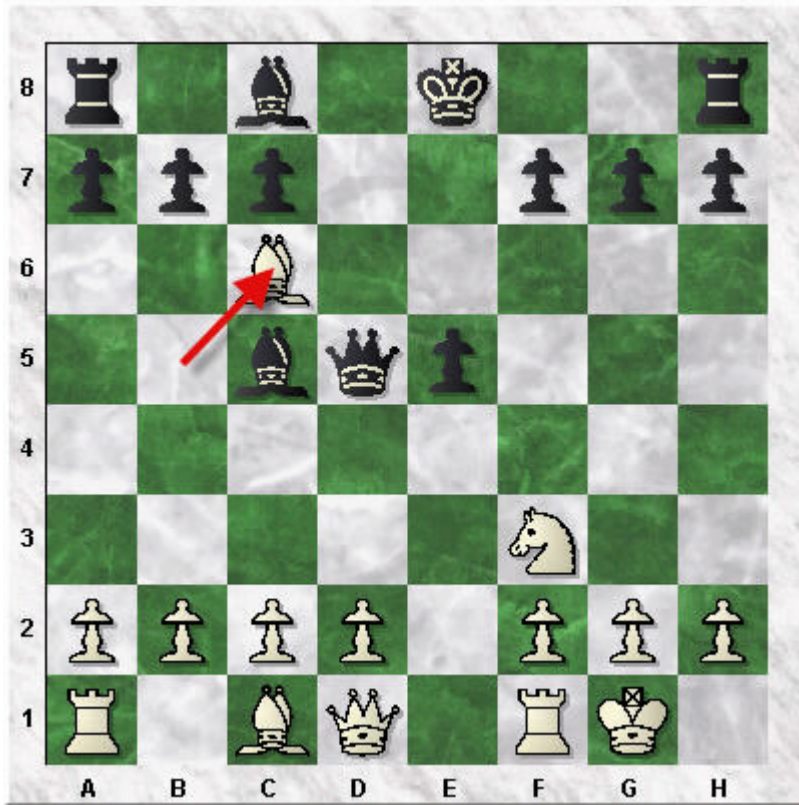
Now, we're going to fast forward to some special moves. See in the next diagram how white has made a special move called **castling kingside**. This move is written as **0-0**. If the King castles on the **queenside** (to the other direction on the chessboard) it would be written as **0-0-0**.



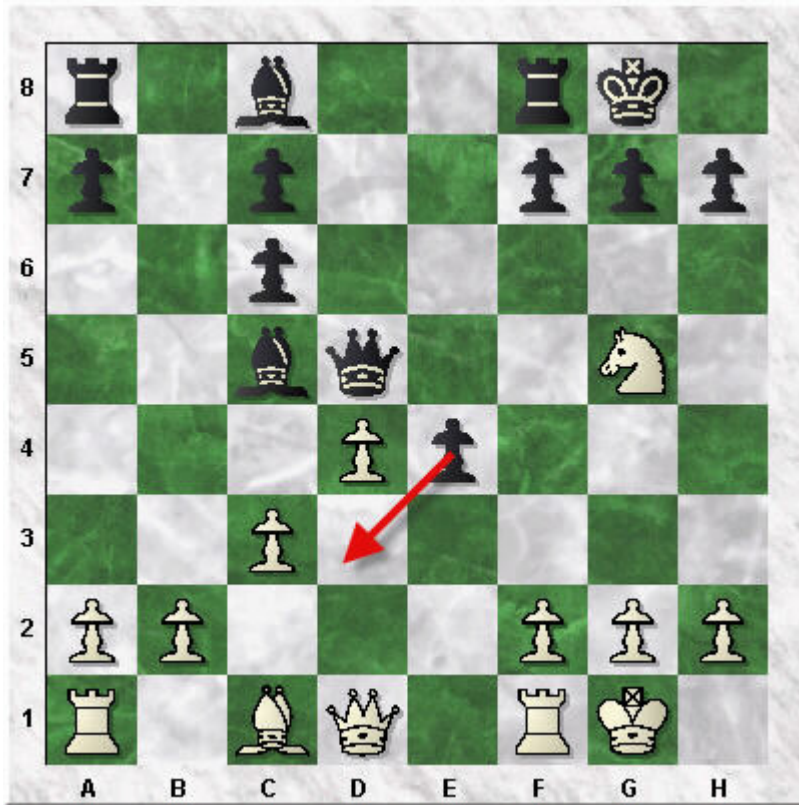
In the next diagram, White is going to capture Black's pawn on **d5**. This move is called **exd5**. When a "capture" is made this is indicated with an **x**.



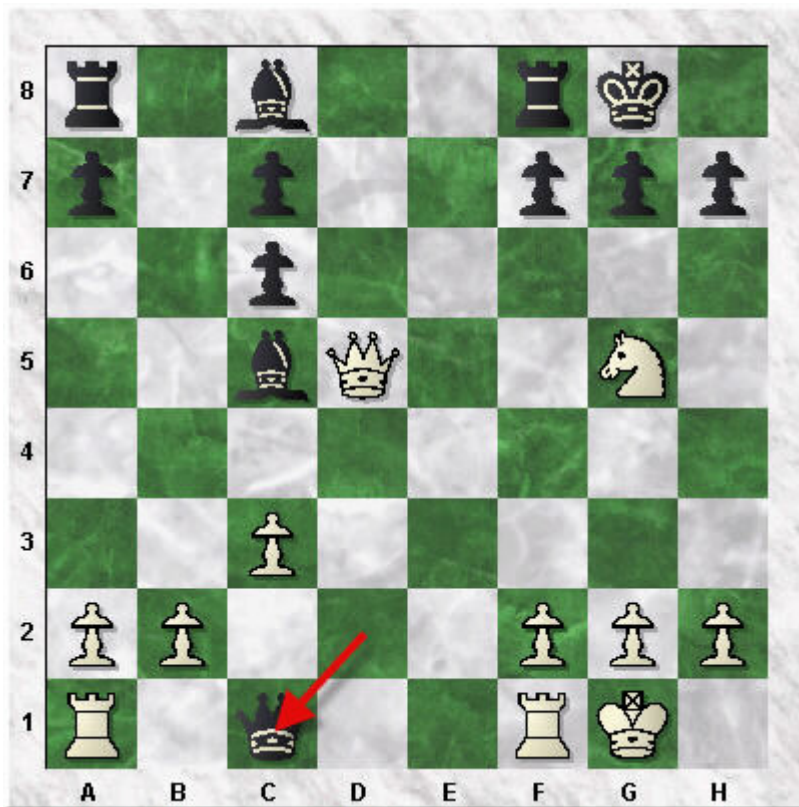
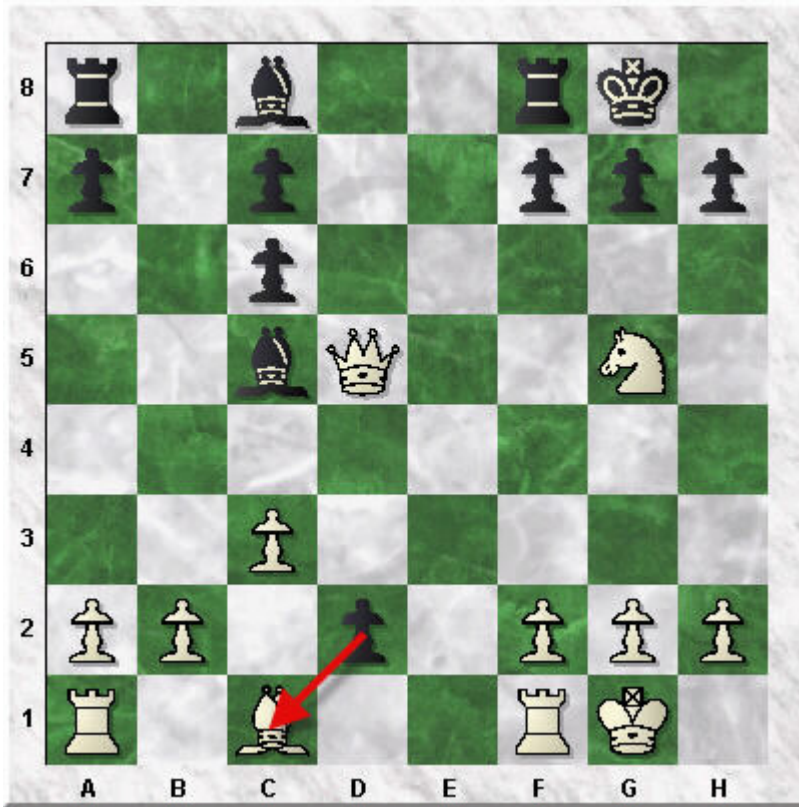
Next, White captures the Knight on c6. This move is written as **Bxc6+**. Notice the "+" sign. This represents "check" since Black's King is now in check.



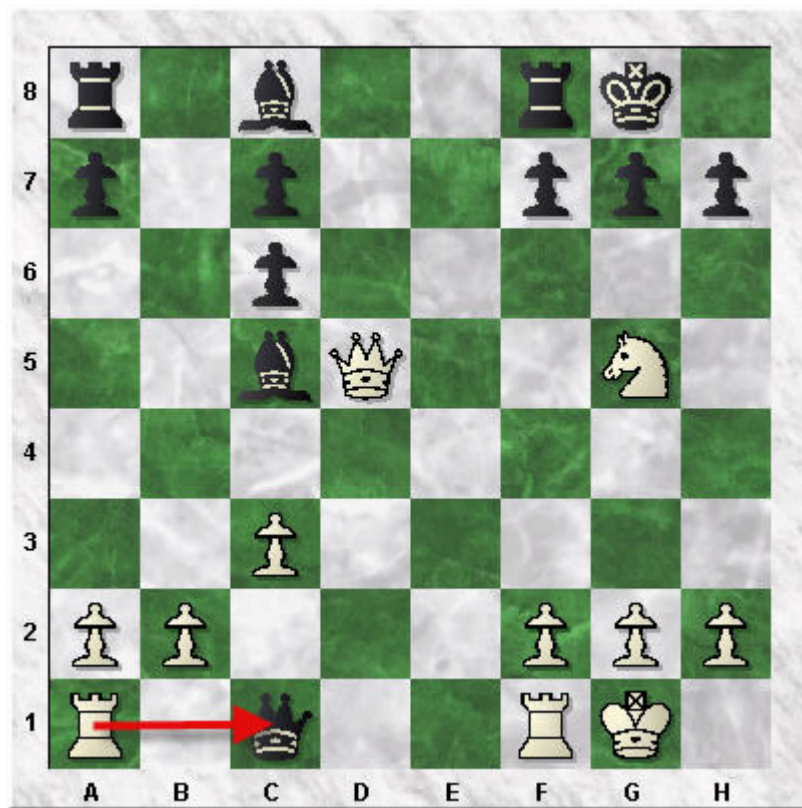
White just moved **d4**. Black's next move **exd3(ep)**, called *en passant* captures white's d4 pawn while moving his pawn to d3.



After several more moves, Black captures White's Bishop on c1 with **dx c1=Q**. That's about as complicated as it gets! This means pawn captures piece on c1 and promotes it to a Queen. Black could promote it to any other piece he chooses, but Queen's are nearly always the best choice.



Next, notice how the next move is **Raxc1**. Note that either the rook on **A1 OR F1** can capture the queen. This means that the "a" must be included to indicate which rook.



In this next position, white makes a winning move, **d3++**, pawn to d3 CHECKMATE!. By now you've probably guessed that this game was created as an illustration since White has made some very awful moves just asking for trouble...



- ? **Bad move**
- ?? **Terrible move (blunder)**
- !? **Interesting move**
- ?! **Dubious move**

Notice how some of these comments have been placed on the scoresheet shown above. Now you have a solid, practical introduction to chess notation, and a scoresheet that actually shows you how it should look in the real world.

## Chess Notation Video Demo

Here's a video demonstration of the above demo chess game. Just click on the video to play. It will open in a new window.

Notation | Score sheet | Openings Book

Raphael       Hiarcs 10

Tournament \_\_\_\_\_

Round \_\_\_\_\_ Date 30.06.2006 Result 0-1

ECO C48: Four Knights: 4 Bb5, replies other than 4...Bb4

1	e4	e5	21
2	Nf3	Nc6	22
3	Bb5	Nf6	23
4	Nc3	Bc5	24
5	O-O	d5	25
6	exd5	Nxd5	26
7	Nxd5	Qxd5	27
8	Bxc6+	bxc6	28
9	c3	O-O	29
10	Ng5	e4	30
11	d4	exd3	31
12	Qf3	d2	32
13	Qxd5	dxc1Q	33
14	Rxc1	cxd5	34
15	Kh1	Bb7	35
16	f4	Rfe8	36
17	Nh3	Rad8	37
18	g3	Bc3	38
19	Rcd1	f6	39
20	Rfe1	d4#	40

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Raphael Neff  
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