Official Chess Rules, Simplified

A one-page summary of the FIDE Laws of Chess in force from 1 January 2023. Article numbers in brackets. For tournaments, the full Laws and the organiser's rules always take precedence.

1. The board and pieces

- Place the board so each player has a **light square in the right-hand corner** (Art. 2.1).
- Back rank, left to right from White's side: rook, knight, bishop, queen, king, bishop, knight, rook. Pawns on the second rank.
- **Queen on her own colour**: the white queen on d1 (light), the black queen on d8 (dark).
- **White moves first**, then the players alternate (Art. 1.2).

2. How the pieces move

- **King**: one square in any direction (3.8.1).
- **Queen**: any number of squares along a rank, file or diagonal (3.4).
- **Rook**: any number of squares along a rank or file (3.3).
- **Bishop**: any number of squares along a diagonal (3.2).
- **Knight**: an "L" (two squares one way, one square sideways). The only piece that can jump (3.6).
- **Pawn**: one square forward, or two from its starting square; captures one square diagonally forward (3.7).
- Queens, rooks and bishops cannot jump over pieces (3.5).

3. Special moves

- **Castling** (3.8.2): king moves two squares toward a rook; the rook jumps to the square the king crossed. Not allowed if the king or that rook has moved, if the king is in check, or if the king would cross or land on an attacked square, or with pieces in between.
- **En passant** (3.7.3): if a pawn advances two squares and lands beside an enemy pawn, that pawn may capture it as if it had moved one square, **on the very next move only**.
- **Promotion** (3.7.3): a pawn reaching the last rank must become a queen, rook, bishop or knight of the same colour, chosen freely, even if the original is still on the board.

4. Check, checkmate, stalemate

- **Check**: the king is attacked. You may not make a move that leaves or puts your own king in check (3.9).
- **Checkmate**: the king is in check and there is no legal move. The game is won (1.4.1).
- **Stalemate**: the player to move has no legal move but is **not** in check. The game is drawn (5.2.1).

5. How a game is drawn

- **Agreement** between the players, after each has made at least one move (5.2.3).
- **Dead position**: neither side can checkmate by any legal series of moves, for example king against king (5.2.2).
- **Threefold repetition**: claimable when the same position occurs three times with the same player to move (9.2).
- **50-move rule**: claimable after 50 moves by each side with no capture and no pawn move (9.3).
- **Automatic draws**: fivefold repetition, or 75 moves each with no capture or pawn move, end the game without a claim (9.6).

6. Touch-move and adjusting

- If you deliberately **touch your own piece**, you must move it if it has a legal move; if you touch an opponent's piece, you must capture it if you can (4.3).
- To straighten a piece, say "**I adjust**" (or "j'adoube") first, and only on your own turn (4.2).
- Touching the king and then a rook means you must castle if it is legal (4.4).
- A move is made when you **let go of the piece** on its new square (4.7).

7. Clocks, illegal moves and phones

- Press the clock with the **same hand** that moved the piece (6.2). If your time runs out you lose, unless your opponent cannot possibly checkmate you, which is a draw (6.9).
- **Illegal move** in a standard game: the position is restored and your opponent gets 2 extra minutes; a second illegal move loses (7.5.5). In rapid and blitz the time bonus is 1 minute (Appendix A.3).
- **Recording**: in standard games both players write down every move (8.1), except when under 5 minutes remain without an increment of 30 seconds or more (8.4).
- **Phones and devices**: having an unauthorised device evidently on you in the playing venue normally means losing the game (11.3).

Source: FIDE Laws of Chess (rcc.fide.com, handbook.fide.com, chapter E01). Free to print and share. chessmovefinder.com/blog/official-chess-rules · Find the best move in any position at chessmovefinder.com