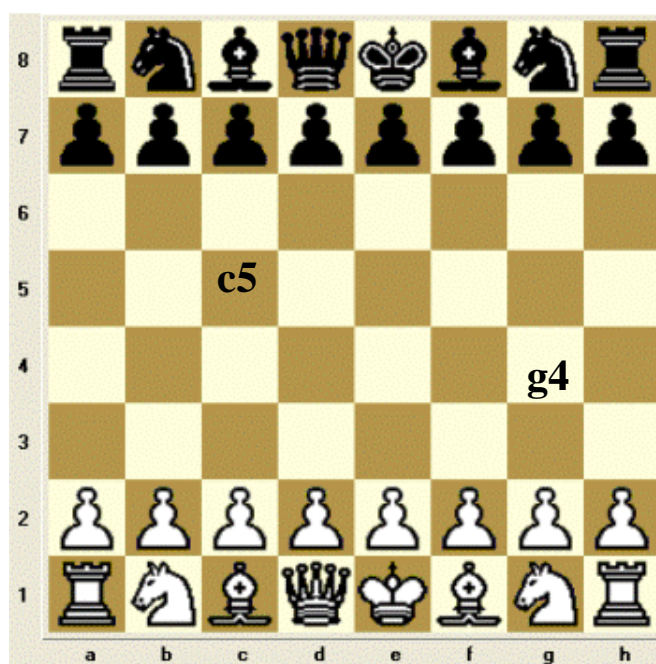


How to Read & Write Chess

(Algebraic Notation)

There are many different ways to write chess moves. The most popular method (described below) is called *algebraic notation*.

In Algebraic notation, each square has a unique letter/number identifier. We find this identifier from the intersection of the file (vertical column) and rank (horizontal row). The files are lettered **a** to **h**, and are always in lower case. The rows are numbered **1** to **8**. The square **a1** is always closest to the White player's left hand, thus the numbering system is the same for both players (Black has the square **h8** closest to his left hand). In the diagram below, the squares **c5** and **g4** are marked on the board.



We use *lower case* letters to denote the files (vertical columns); this is because the pieces are abbreviated by *capital letters*. The different cases are less likely to cause confusion, **b** for the b-file and **B** for the Bishop. The letters for the pieces are:

K=King, Q=Queen, R=Rook, B=Bishop, N=Knight

Notice that the Knight is N, since K is reserved for the King. A move is written by using the abbreviation for the piece that moves followed by the square the piece moves to (**Nf6** = "the knight moves to the f6 square"). You will have noted that pawns have no abbreviation; this is because a pawn move is written simply as the destination square the pawn has moved to; (**d4** = "pawn on the d-file moves to the d4 square" - remembering that pawns have no capital letter).

A capture by a piece is written as the abbreviation for the capturing piece, followed by an **x** and finally the square the capture takes place on (**Bxe5** = "the Bishop captures on e5").

A pawn capture is written as the file the capturing pawn stands on, followed by an **x**, and finally the square the capture takes place on (**dxe5** = "the pawn on the d-file captures on e5").

Other moves:

Castling king-side is written **0-0**

Castling queen-side is written **0-0-0**

En passant capture is indicated by **e.p.** written immediately after the move.

Check is indicated by **+** after the move.

Pawn promotion is indicated by the pawn move then adding **=** and then the abbreviation for the piece the pawn promotes to (**c8=Q** "the pawn on the c file moves to the c8 square and promotes to a Queen").

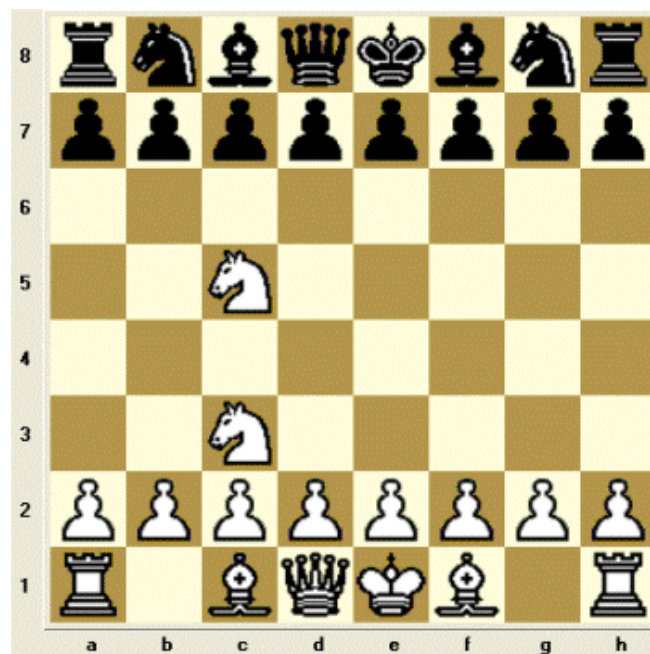
Ambiguous moves (where more than one piece can move to the destination square) are taken care of by putting an extra rank or file in to make it clear which piece or pawn moved

Rae1 = "the rook on the a-file moves to the e1 square"

The move above uses the *file* to indicate which rook is moved.

N3e4 = "the knight on the third rank moves to e4"

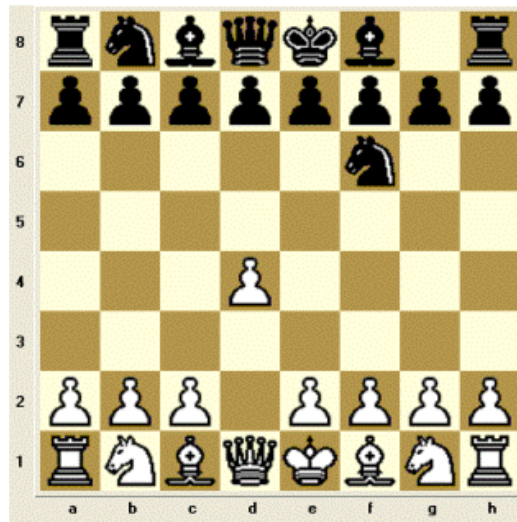
This move tells us that there is another knight who can move to the e4 square, so we have specified which knight by using the *rank* that the knight sits on (see diagram).



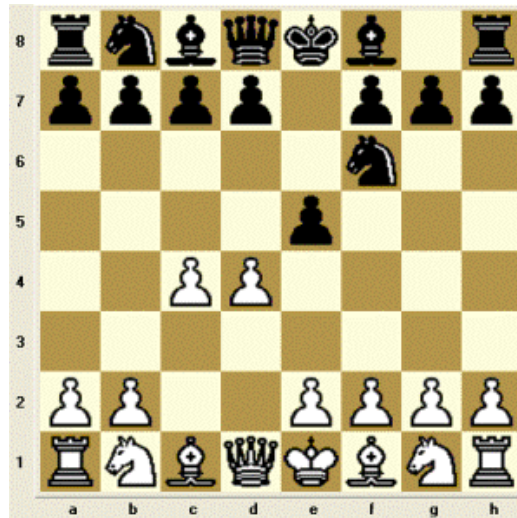
In this case it is insufficient to say **Nce4** as *both* knights are on the c-file.

Here is an example of notation from the Budapest Defense;

1.d4 Nf6



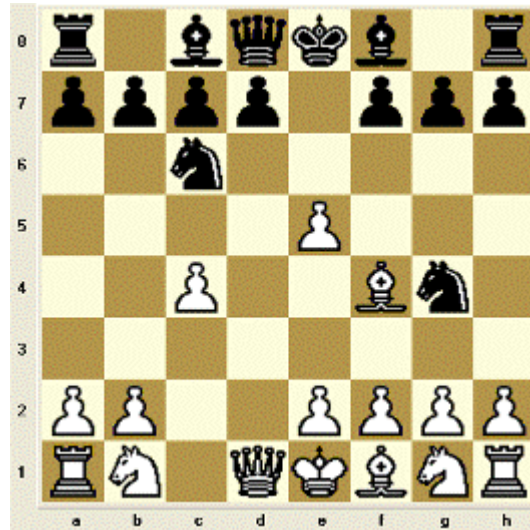
2.c4 e5



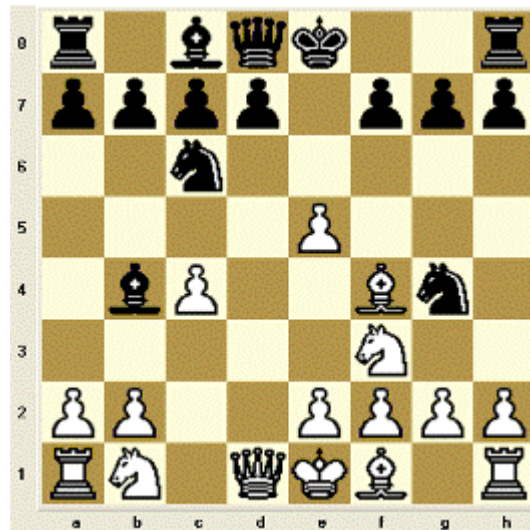
3.dxe5 Ng4



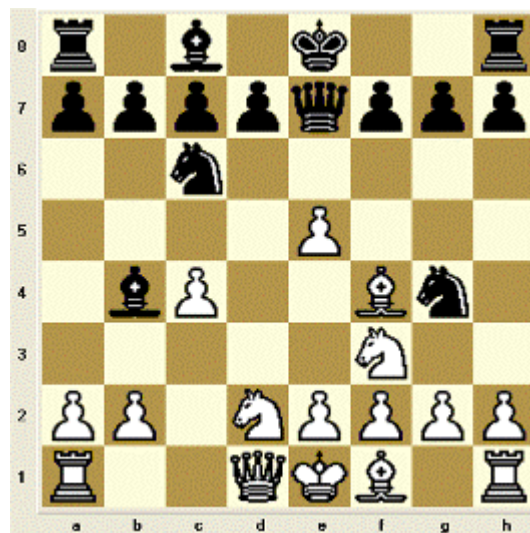
4.Bf4 Nc6



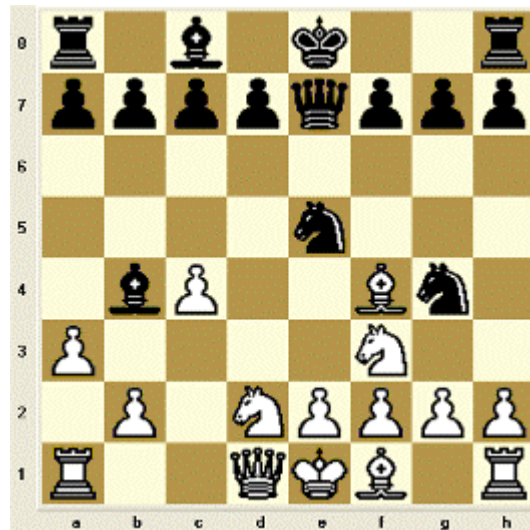
5.Nf3 Bb4+



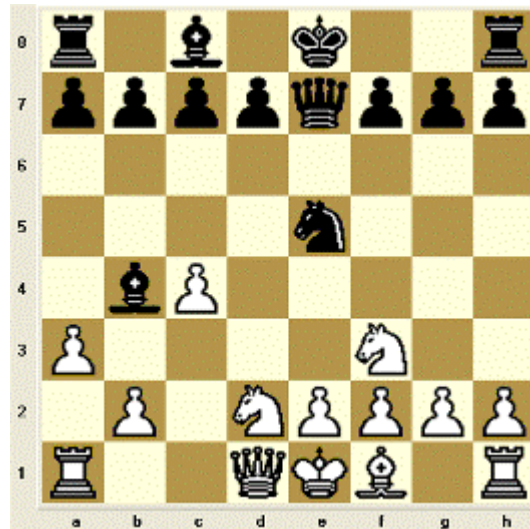
6.Nbd2 Qe7



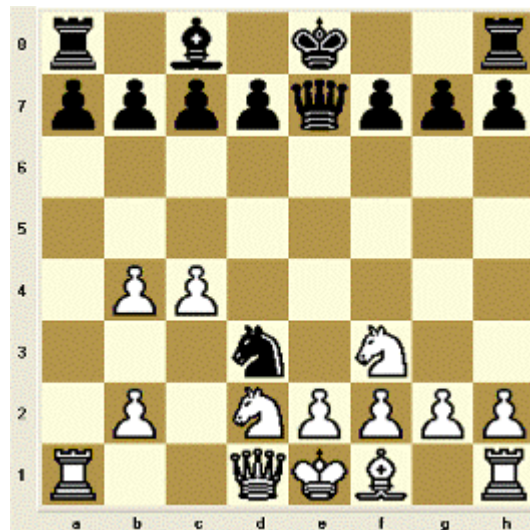
7.a3 Ncxe5



8.Bxe5 Nxe5



9.axb4 Nd3#



In summary:

K King

Q Queen

R Rook

B Bishop

N Knight

a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h Vertical columns or Files

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 Horizontal rows or Ranks

x Take or Capture

0-0 kingside castle

0-0-0 queenside castle

+ check

= Pawn promotion

Other punctuation symbols are sometimes used after the move to provide commentary or describe a particularly good (or bad) move.

! good move

? bad move

?? very bad move or blunder.

!? interesting move.

e.p. en passant capture

checkmate

1-0 Win to white.

0-1 Win to black.

½ - ½ A draw.