



Chess – (Middle School and Up)

This class is for beginner to intermediate level chess players. Learn to love the game while studying tactics and strategy with Tom.

Introduction to Chess:

This is an eight lesson introduction to the game of chess, which assumes no prior knowledge of the game. We discuss the rules of the game and the movement of the pieces, and the basic elements of strategy.

In **Lessons 1 and 2**, I introduce the game, showing the pieces, the rules, and a sample game, so that new students can get a feel for what to do when playing. We begin discussing how to tell when a move is good or bad in the sample game.

Lesson 3 is about the opening, the portion of the chess game when both sides station their armies on strong squares for the coming battle. I recommend some simple openings that are effective for beginners, and discuss the principles of openings. That is to say, I give advice on how to find a move in an opening you are unfamiliar with, based on the ideas of activating your pieces as much as possible.

Lessons 4, 5 and 6 all deal with different types of positions that can come out of openings, when the armies start engaging each other. This is called the Middlegame. We discuss the fundamental dichotomy between positions which are called open versus closed, and show some model games from grandmasters as to how to deal with each of these situations. Furthermore, we discuss piece combinations, known as tactics, which are opportunities to punish your opponent's mistakes, so that you can get ahead.

In **Lessons 7 and 8**, we discuss the ending of a chess game, where the objective is to either checkmate your opponent with your superior piece advantage, or to promote a pawn to a queen, and checkmate. We will show some common checkmates, as well as the most useful endgame principle, known as the Opposition of Kings.

Chess Endgames:

This series is going to be approximately 36 lessons long, as we're about half way done, and assumes some knowledge of the game of chess, but also summarizes the endgame ideas from the introduction for those who may not have started there. The book roughly follows Silman's Complete Endgame Course, covering positions from the basic through the Philidor and Lucena positions. The first few lessons deal with some slightly harder checkmating patterns, for when you are ahead, but not as dramatically as in the tutorial. Then, the remainder of the tutorial lessons deal with common themes in the endgame, and how different sets of pieces match up against each other. For example:

- When can a knight or bishop be fast enough to stop a passed pawn?
- How can I use less pawns to secure a draw against more pawns?
- Why do I sometimes seem to get into stalemates with my a and h pawns?
- Can two bishops checkmate a king?

In the second half of the series, we apply this knowledge to the endgames of the past. Great players such as Staunton, Anderssen, Morphy, Steinitz, Paulsen lived in a time between the Romantic stylings of the 19th century, and the soon-to-be solid style of the 20th century, and so they grappled with many of the same problems we deal with in the first part. We'll start this part with a summary of the more romantic era of chess, with the match between McDonnell and LaBourdonnais, who was the first unofficial world champion, before analyzing the games of the greats, looking at important matches covered in former World Chess Champion Gary Kasparov's famous book *My Great Predecessors*. As we bump into new endgame themes not covered in the tutorial, we will introduce them in this part, building on the foundations from the first part.

Every lesson contains moments to pause the video and find the winning move(s), both in the lesson, and at the end, where we consider tactical themes and winning combinations. The analysis throughout this tutorial series should be appropriate for students in the range of chess rating of 800-1500.