THE EIGHT RANKS METHOD

FAMILY GUIDE

FOR FAMILIES OF EVERY RANK

THE EIGHT RANKS METHOD™

How a cycle runs, what Rank Day weighs, and how to help at home in ten minutes a day.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

FOR FAMILIES · EVERY RANK · NO CHESS NEEDED

Written by Moheb Girgis, FIDE National Instructor

Chess that produces evidence.

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THE EIGHT RANKS METHOD

Eight ranks. One board. Total mastery.

THE EIGHT RANKS METHOD™

Family Guide

for families of every rank

How a cycle runs · Rank Day · the report · rank by rank

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Written by Moheb Girgis, FIDE National Instructor · FIDE ID 39935400

The Eight Ranks Method · New York

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This book belongs to _____

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Family Guide
The Eight Ranks Method™ · for families of every rank

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10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

This guide prints no chess diagrams or puzzle positions; the moves it writes out are examples of notation.

The Eight Ranks Method is designed to produce evidence aligned to the six attributes of the New York State Portrait of a Graduate.
Not issued, approved or endorsed by the New York State Education Department or any school district. Schools decide how to use its reports.

LOOK INSIDE

Contents

Welcome 4

How the method works 5

- Chess with a report card 5
- The eight ranks and four tiers 5
- How Rank Day works 5
- The Rank Progress Report 6
- Safety at a licensed site 7
- What the research says 7
- How this connects to New York's Portrait of a Graduate 7

Rank by rank 8

- White Belt 8
- Yellow Belt 9
- Orange Belt 11
- Green Belt 13
- Blue Belt 15
- Purple Belt 17
- Brown Belt 20
- Black Belt 22

Rank Day and the cycle at a glance 26

- What Rank Day weighs, by tier (percent of the total) 26
- Our cycle 27
- How to read the diagrams and the moves 28
- Program words 29
- Chess words you will hear 29
- Questions to ask at the end of the cycle 32

Questions families ask 33

About the author 34

LOOK INSIDE

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Welcome

This guide is for the families of learners in The Eight Ranks Method™, a chess curriculum in eight ranks for learners from age six to adult, taught at licensed sites. It explains how a twelve-week cycle runs, what happens on Rank Day, how to read the Rank Progress Report, and, rank by rank, what your learner studies and how you can help at home in ten minutes a day. No chess knowledge is needed to use it.

Each rank has its own Student Book, which the learner uses in class and at home. The licensed provider, the school, club, library or coach that runs the program, can answer any question about your learner's cycle.

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How the method works

PART 1

Chess with a report card

Each rank is one twelve-week cycle of five chapters, five labs, the Game Lab and the Conduct and Service strand. At the end of the cycle your learner sits Rank Day and brings home a **Rank Progress Report**: six attribute scores, each with the evidence written next to it, and, if the standard is met, the next rank.

The eight ranks and four tiers

Tier	Ranks	What changes
Foundation	White, Yellow	The rules become habits; one cycle per rank
Builder	Orange, Green	Calculation and planning; the first exhibit (a portfolio piece) starts at Orange
Competitor	Blue, Purple	Engines, data and experiments; at least two cycles per rank
Master	Brown, Black	Teaching, research and the capstone; at least two cycles per rank

LOOK INSIDE

Every rank covers the same five pillars of chess (Openings and Development, Tactics and Calculation, Strategy and Positional Play, Defensive Resilience, Endgame Technique), and every chapter ends with a STEM lab in seven parts: predict, measure, record, show, conclude, connect and an exit ticket. Two strands run through the whole cycle: the Game Lab (the learner's own recorded and annotated games) and Conduct and Service (courtesy, honesty and help given to the club).

How Rank Day works

Rank Day comes at the end of the cycle. What your learner sits depends on the tier of the rank:

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Tier	Quiz	Puzzles	Games	Oral	Length
Foundation (White, Yellow)	20 items, 20 minutes (read aloud: twice at White, on request at Yellow)	10 puzzles, 20 minutes	2 games, 10 minutes a side	3 minutes on one position	about two hours
Builder (Orange, Green)	25 items, 25 minutes	15 puzzles, 30 minutes	2 games, 15 minutes a side	5 minutes on one position	about two hours and forty-five minutes, sometimes two sessions
Competitor (Blue, Purple)	30 items, 30 minutes	20 puzzles, 40 minutes	3 games, 20 minutes a side	a 5-minute review of one of their own games to the group	two sessions (A and B)
Master (Brown, Black)	35 items, 35 minutes	20 puzzles, 45 minutes	3 games, 25 minutes a side plus 5 seconds a move	a 10-minute review with questions; Black adds the 15-minute Capstone Defense	two sessions (A and B)

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The labs, the annotated games, the conduct record and, from Orange, the exhibit count too. The instructor combines the scores into a rank score out of 100; the pass rules are in the next section. One instructor runs a Rank Day session for up to eight learners; with nine to sixteen learners, the site holds a second session.

Results are not announced on the day. The report arrives within two weeks, pass or fail. A learner who scores 60 to 69 retakes, once and within four weeks, only the parts scored below Proficient; below 60 repeats the cycle. Repeating is normal, and the report says exactly what to work on.

The Rank Progress Report

After Rank Day the learner receives a Rank Progress Report within two weeks. It scores six attributes on a four-step scale (Beginning, Developing, Proficient, Advanced): Academically Prepared, Creative Innovator, Critical Thinker, Effective Communicator, Global Citizen, and Reflective and Future Focused. A rank is earned with a total of 70 or higher, no attribute below Developing, conduct at Proficient, and the minimum time in

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the rank (one cycle in the Foundation and Builder tiers, two in the Competitor and Master tiers). No rank is skipped, except by the placement rule: a learner who already plays may start above White after a placement check when first joining. A learner who does not earn the rank this cycle repeats the cycle with the report as a plan; that is how the method is meant to work, not a failure.

Safety at a licensed site

One certified instructor teaches and scores every session and every Rank Day; there is no second-adult requirement. Older students may help as student leaders, but student leaders never score, are never alone with younger learners, and are never responsible for safety. Each site follows its own background-check rules; the licensed provider can tell you which checks apply.

What the research says

Studies of chess in schools point in two directions. A 2016 review of 24 studies found a moderate average benefit for mathematics. A 2017 Danish study found that replacing one mathematics lesson a week with chess-based mathematics improved test scores, most for children who were bored or unhappy in school. A randomized trial in England, with 4,009 pupils in 100 primary schools, taught chess as a stand-alone subject for 30 hours and found no change in mathematics, reading or science scores. We take both results seriously. The Eight Ranks Method does not assume that chess skill will quietly turn into school skill. Every chapter ends with a STEM Lab in which the student measures, graphs and reasons about the chess idea in the language of math and computer science.

Sources: *Sala and Gobet*, 2016, *Educational Research Review*; *Rosholm, Mikkelsen and Gumede*, 2017, *PLOS ONE*; *Education Endowment Foundation*, 2016; *Jerrim and others*, 2018.

How this connects to New York's Portrait of a Graduate

New York adopted six attributes for every graduate in July 2025: Academically Prepared, Creative Innovator, Critical Thinker, Effective Communicator, Global Citizen, and Reflective and Future Focused. Our rank reports score your learner on those six attributes using behaviors an instructor can observe at the board and on paper. The reports are ours, not the state's, and each school decides how to use them. What they give you is a record, in the state's own vocabulary, of skills your learner practiced and the evidence behind each score.

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