THE EIGHT RANKS METHOD

GAME LAB JOURNAL

FORTY GAMES, STUDIED

THE EIGHT RANKS METHOD™

Record every game. Find the three moments that decided it. Play better next time.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

THE GAME LAB · EVERY RANK

Written by Moheb Girgis, FIDE National Instructor

Chess that produces evidence.

eightranksmethod.com

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THE EIGHT RANKS METHOD

Eight ranks. One board. Total mastery.

THE EIGHT RANKS METHOD™

Game Lab Journal

forty games, recorded and studied

The Game Lab strand · every rank

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

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

The Eight Ranks Method · New York

This book belongs to _____

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Game Lab Journal
The Eight Ranks Method™ · forty games, recorded and studied

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10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

The one sample game in this journal, on the page of symbols, was checked move by move by computer (python-chess); every board in the journal is empty for the learner to draw on.

The Eight Ranks Method is designed to produce evidence aligned to the six attributes of the New York State Portrait of a Graduate.
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How to use this journal

This journal is for the **Game Lab**, the strand of The Eight Ranks Method™ in which you record your own games and learn from them. It holds forty games. Each game has two pages: a scoresheet for the moves, and a page for what happened after the game, with three small boards for the three moments that decided it.

During the game. Write each move after it is played: your move after you make it and before you press the clock, your opponent's move as soon as they make it. Never write a move before you play it; the rules of chess forbid it. White's moves go in the White column and Black's in the Black column. If your rank plays with a clock, write the time left on your clock in the Clock column after your move. Write neatly; this is the record of your game.

Time control is how much time each player has (for example 10 minutes each); Round is the game's number in a tournament. Leave a box empty if it does not apply.

After the game. On the same day, play the game again from your scoresheet. Find the three key moments: the move where the game changed, your best move, and your biggest mistake. Draw each position on a small board, tick who is to move, write what you saw then and what you see now, and show the page to your instructor.

Keep the index. Fill in one line of "My games" for every game, so you and your instructor can find any game quickly and see your progress across the season.

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What your rank asks for

Rank	Games handed in	What each game needs
White	2	The scoresheet and three “I played ___ because ___” comments; one comment is about a mistake
Yellow	2	Three comments: my move, my opponent’s idea, the mistake
Orange	3	Three key moments drawn, each with a “because” comment: one about my opponent’s idea, one about a mistake
Green	3	As Orange, plus one calculated line “if … then … then …”
Blue	4, with a clock	The clock time after each move; the engine comparison table; the critical moment; two comments
Purple	4, with a clock	As Blue, plus the plan at move 12 written as a hypothesis
Brown	5 with a clock, and 1 master-game study	As Purple, plus the engine depth, a prophylaxis line and a third comment that names your study
Black	5 with a clock, and 1 master-game study	The Brown method, in the structure of your capstone

Your graded games go on the Game Lab pages of your Student Book. Use this journal for every other game you play, and copy your best ones across.

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How to write the moves

Every diagram is drawn from White's side: White's pieces start at the bottom, Black's at the top. The letters a to h name the files (the columns) from left to right; the numbers 1 to 8 name the ranks (the rows) from bottom to top. A square is its file letter and its rank number, so the bottom-left corner is a1 and the top-right corner is h8. When you draw a position, tick who is to move under the board.

Piece	Letter	Symbol
King	K	♔ ♚
Queen	Q	♕ ♛
Rook	R	♖ ♜
Bishop	B	♗ ♝
Knight	N	♘ ♞
Pawn	(no letter)	♙ ♟

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A move is written as the piece letter and the square it goes to: Nf3 means a knight moves to f3; e4 means a pawn moves to e4. x means a capture (Bxe5), + means check, # means checkmate, O-O is castling on the king's side and O-O-O on the queen's side, e8=Q means a pawn promotes to a queen. Sometimes the starting square is written too, with a dash: d7-d5 means the pawn on d7 moves to d5, and a plan written b2-b4-b5 means the b-pawn goes from b2 to b4 and then to b5. This way of writing moves is called algebraic notation. It is the one in the official rules of chess (the FIDE Laws of Chess, Appendix C). The rules write castling with zeros (0-0) and promotion without the equals sign (e8Q). This book uses the letter O and the equals sign, as most English chess books do.

Chess piece drawings by Colin M. L. Burnett, used under the BSD license.

Four more things you will need on a scoresheet. A pawn that captures is written with the letter of the file it came from: exd5 means the pawn on the e-file captures on d5. If two of your pieces of the same kind can reach the same square, add the file or rank they came from: Nbd2 (the knight from the b-file), R1e1 (the rook from the first rank). En passant is written like any pawn capture, with e.p. after it: exd6 e.p. A pawn can promote to any piece except a king: e8=Q, e8=R, e8=B, e8=N. If a player offers a draw, write (=) after that move.

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The symbols, and a game written down

Symbol	Meaning
x	captures
+	check
#	checkmate
O-O / O-O-O	castling on the king's side / the queen's side
=Q	promotion (to a queen)
e.p.	en passant
! / ?	a good move / a mistake
??	a very bad mistake (a blunder)
(=)	a draw offer
1-0, 0-1, ½-½	White won, Black won, draw

A short game, written exactly as on a scoresheet. White's fourth move is checkmate, so the last move ends with # and the result is 1-0. Every move was checked by computer (python-chess).

#	White	Black
1	e4	e5
2	Bc4	Nc6
3	Qh5	Nf6??
4	Qxf7#	
	Result: 1-0	

Black's third move was the blunder: 3...g6 or 3...Qe7 would have stopped the mate on f7. Your instructor will show you how to defend against this early queen attack.

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The four courtesies and the Eight Ranks Code

1. **Handshake.** Before the first move, “Good luck”; after the last move, “Good game”, whether you won or lost.
2. **Touch-move.** If you touch one of your pieces on your turn, you must move it; if you touch an enemy piece, you must capture it if you can. To straighten a piece, say “adjust” first.
3. **Quiet board.** No talking during a game except “check”, “draw?” and “I resign”.
4. **Record to the end.** Write every move, including the last one, even when you are losing.

THE EIGHT RANKS CODE. Courtesy. Honesty. Perseverance. Self-control. Curiosity.

I show courtesy to every opponent and every teacher. I am honest about my moves, my results and my mistakes. I persevere when a position is hard and when a cycle is repeated. I control my hands, my voice and my clock. I stay curious about every game, every lab and every idea.

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My games

#	Date	Opponent	My color	Result	Opening	Page
1						
2						
3						
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7						
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