THE EIGHT RANKS METHOD

RANK 3 OF 8

ORANGE BELT

STUDENT BOOK

THE EIGHT RANKS METHOD™

Twelve weeks. Your own games, collected and studied. A third rank, earned.



BOOK 3 OF 8 · BUILDER TIER

Written by Moheb Girgis, FIDE National Instructor

Chess that produces evidence.

eightranksmethod.com

THE EIGHT RANKS METHOD

Eight ranks. One board. Total mastery.

THE EIGHT RANKS METHOD™

Orange Belt

Student Book

Builder · Rank 3 of 8 · Book 3 of 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 _____

Site _____

Cycle _____

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First edition, 2026 · Version 1.2
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Every chess position in this book has been checked by a chess engine (Stockfish) or is completely solved.

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.

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How to read a diagram

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. The small square beside the board shows whose move it is: a white square at the bottom right means White to move, a black square at the top right means Black to move.

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 is standard algebraic notation, the notation of Appendix C of the FIDE Laws of Chess; the Laws print castling with the figure zero (0-0 and 0-0-0) and promotion without the equals sign (e8Q), and 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.

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How to use this book

Orange belt is the first Builder rank. You now calculate two or three moves, you keep a Blunder Log, you keep a repertoire of your own, and you serve as recorder for a club game. Each chapter ends with exercises; their answers follow the exercises, and the Review, progress-check and quiz answers are at the back. From this belt on you also build an Exhibit of Evidence (My Game Collection), described in this book after the Game Lab pages.

This book covers twelve weeks. Take one chapter every two weeks. Read the chapter in the first week and do the exercises. Do the STEM lab in the second week. When you see Try it or Exercises, stop and do the task at a board. The Review box asks about earlier chapters. Answer it before you go on. If a chapter felt hard, use the Help box. If it felt easy, use the Stretch box. Use the Game Lab pages for your own games. Write three games with three key moments each. The family corner has one question for home. Ask someone to ask it to you. The progress check ends each chapter. Answer all five items, then check them. Your exhibit, My Game Collection, is due as a draft in week 9 and final in week 11. Rank Day comes in week 12. Bring this book with the five labs done, your Game Lab pages and your signed conduct log; your instructor already has your exhibit, handed in in week 11.

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Everything for one cycle

One book carries one twelve-week cycle. Here is what is inside it, counted.

Chapters	5, one for each pillar, each with its exercises (Try it boxes where the chapter has them), a Help box, a Stretch box and a progress check
Review boxes	4, one at the start of Chapters 2 to 5
STEM labs	5, one for each chapter, each with its seven parts and its standards footer
Diagrams	81, every one drawn from a verified position
Model games	2 (Morphy's Opera Game and Réti against Tartakower), played through move by move
Puzzle practice and endgame drills	36 positions: 32 completely solved, 4 engine-verified (Stockfish)
Game Lab pages	3 game records to fill in with your own games
Family corners	5, one question for each chapter (one every two weeks) for the adult at home
Glossary	62 chess words explained
Practice quiz	20 questions in the four Rank Day forms, with answers
Exhibit of Evidence	My Game Collection

The licensed site provides: the instructor, the boards and sets, the clocks, the Rank Day papers (the Knowledge Quiz and the Puzzle Set, seen only on Rank Day), the scoring, the Rank Progress Report within two weeks of Rank Day, and the certificate and rank at the ceremony. This book is yours to write in and keep.

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LAUNCH

CHAPTER 1 · PILLAR 1 · OPENINGS AND DEVELOPMENT

Tempo and a first repertoire

By the end of this chapter you will be able to

- Define a tempo and count the tempi each side has spent.
- Play one line as White and two lines as Black to move ten, with a plan.
- Write each line on a card with its plan at move ten.

Launch This chapter ends with STEM Lab O1.1: Tempo Counting.

I can: define a tempo and count tempi lost in an opening; play one line as White and two lines as Black to move ten, with a plan at the end.

1.1 A tempo is one unit of time

Each move is a tempo. Development is a race to use tempi well: a piece moved twice before the others have moved once has spent a tempo. In the Two Knights Defense, Diagram 1.1, White's knight has moved twice (f3, g5) and Black's knight twice (c6, a5); the position is sharp because both sides have spent tempi on threats rather than development.

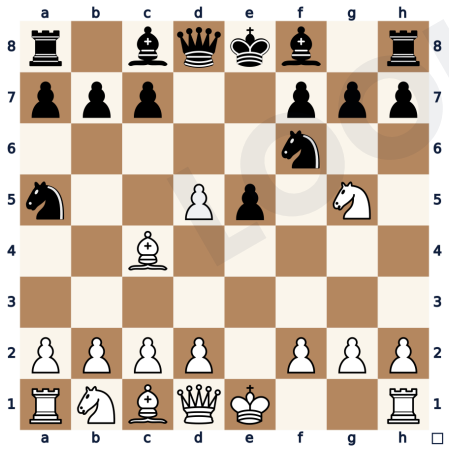


Diagram 1.1. Two Knights Defense after 5...Na5. White to move. Count the tempi: White has moved the knight twice and captured once; Black has moved two knights three times in total.

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1.2 Your first repertoire

A repertoire is the set of openings you know to move ten with a plan. For Orange belt, know one line as White (the Italian from the Yellow book, with 4.c3 and 5.d3) and two replies as Black: against 1.e4, the Italian with ...Bc5; against 1.d4, 1...d5 2.c4 e6 (the Queen's Gambit Declined) with ...Nf6, ...Be7, ...O-O and ...c6, a solid shape where every piece has a square. Write each line on a card with the plan at move ten; that card is the start of the repertoire tree you will draw at Brown belt.

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Black against 1.d4: 1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 Be7 5.e3 O-O 6.Nf3 Nbd7 7.Rc1 c6 8.Bd3 dxc4 9.Bxc4 Nd5 10.Bxe7 Qxe7. Plan: ...Nxc3 and ...e5 to free the c8 bishop.

Black against 1.e4: 1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.c3 Nf6 5.d3 d6 6.O-O O-O 7.Re1 a6 8.Bb3 Ba7 9.h3 h6 10.Nbd2 Re8. Plan: ...Be6 to trade White's best bishop.

1.3 Exercises

1. In Diagram 1.1, count every tempo each side has spent on knights. Which side has more pieces developed?
2. Write the first ten moves of your Black line against 1.d4 with one reason each.
3. Name the three opening rules from the White book and give one example of a move that breaks each.

Answers: 1. Knight moves: White 2 (Nf3, Ng5), Black 3 (Nc6, Nf6, Na5). Pieces developed: two each. White has the knight on g5 and the bishop on c4; Black has the knights on f6 and a5. White has also spent a move capturing on d5 (exd5), and Black has spent one knight move (Na5) chasing the bishop. 2. For example 1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 Be7 5.e3 O-O 6.Nf3 Nbd7 7.Rc1 c6 8.Bd3 dxc4 9.Bxc4 Nd5 10.Bxe7 Qxe7, with the plan ... Nxc3 and ...e5. 3. Center (1.a3 breaks it), knights and bishops out (2.Qh5 breaks it), king safe (leaving the king on e1 at move 12 breaks it).

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HELP · IF THIS FELT HARD

Reread section 1.1 and the caption under Diagram 1.1. Then take one game from your Game Lab pages and count the tempi each side spent in the first ten moves. Counting is the whole skill here, and it gets faster each time.

STRETCH · IF THIS FELT EASY

Write your White line to move ten on a card, with the plan at the end. Play it three times against a partner and mark the first move that left your card. Add that reply to the card, with one answer to it.

PROGRESS CHECK · CHAPTER 1

1. What is a tempo?
2. In Diagram 1.1, how many times has White's knight moved, and to which squares?
3. Name your two Black lines for Orange belt.
4. Explain in your own words how a piece can waste a tempo.
5. Write White's first five moves of your Italian line.

Answers are in the back of the book.

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FAMILY CORNER · WHAT TO ASK YOUR LEARNER THIS WEEK

What is a tempo, and what move did you castle on in your last game?

A good answer sounds like: A tempo is one move. Your learner gives a move number; the Orange target is castling by move 8, and a later number usually means a tempo was wasted, such as moving one piece twice.

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